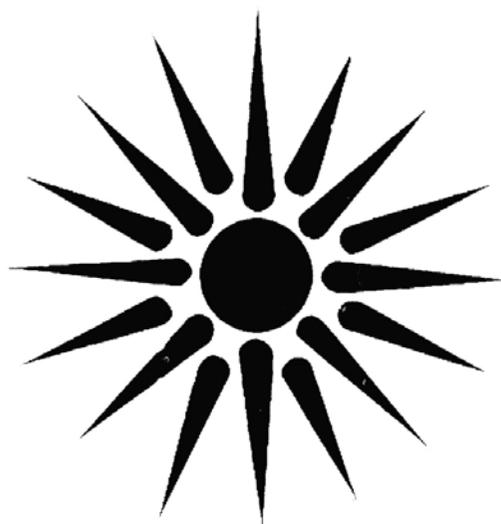


AUTOBIOGRAPHY

*Or my
Suffering*



By
Pavle Rakovski

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

Autobiography – Or my Suffering

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Author's Remarks

a) The text that follows is the result of an unusually persistent encouragement by Tashko Mamurovski, a senior expert and collaborator working at the INI memoirs department in Skopje.

Personally I thought, and I still think, that I did nothing of importance before the war about which I should be speaking specifically. Other than that my work, published or unpublished, generally speaks for me.

In any case, it is a fact that I rose from a cow herding village boy in Greek occupied Macedonia to a political prisoner in the camps of Beria-Stalin in Siberia... How did I do that?

Well, I was forced to agree with the idea that my personal story is quite unusual and, perhaps, interesting. So, with much encouragement, I decided to tell it...

b) Among other things that I wrote in my biography (memories of my past), I examined the “patriotic” line taken during the CPG Central Committee VI Plenum, held on July 1, 1941. Is there any connection, and can there be a connection, between my biography and the CPG Central Committee VI Plenum?

Of course there is... it is inevitable.

It is a relationship between reason and consequence. The “patriotic” line taken at the CPG Central Committee VI Plenum and the policy led by the CPG leadership in general, at the time when ELAS and DAG were active, were practically the main factors why the democratic forces in Greece were defeated. My actions were conditional on that policy. The consequences of my actions will become clear and understandable only after my reasons are made clear. My reasons and the actions I took are not possible to understand without a clear understanding of the policy that caused them. Therefore I must first talk about the conditions which led me to become a “Macedonian nationalist” and a prisoner in Siberia.

Besides that, through my biography, a person can also become acquainted with many things in Macedonia's history including the history of the National Liberation Movement, the National Liberation War and the Greek Civil War. There is nothing wrong with that, of course. This book cannot stand on its own without a basis but can be useful material as an attachment to history, a necessary source material for future historians...

c) I started writing the book by referring to my old notes but soon found it to be pretty boring. I resumed writing but this time from scratch. But by doing so, understandably, I missed some important moments. Later, however, I made more notes and added them at the end in the "Attachments and notes... section."

Pavle Rakovski

I was brought into to this world by an honest family living in the village Dolno Kleshtina, Lerin Region. Dolno Kleshtina is an ordinary village surrounded by orchards and farmland. In a notebook my father Mihail kept, I found confirmation that I was born exactly on May 23, 1913. In their division of the spoils, the invading partners, Greece and Serbia, who together with Bulgaria invaded, occupied and partitioned Macedonia, installed the Greek-Serbian border inside Macedonia equidistantly between Lerin and Bitola. My village was left on the Greek side in Lerin Region a few kilometres away from the artificially installed border.

My grandfather Ilio, my father's father, and his brother Dedo (grandpa) Dime were pechalbars (migrant workers), and worked as lumberjacks in Vlachia (Thessaly?). They lived in the same forest where they worked but the living conditions there were very poor, especially their diet. They suffered a lot. One time they survived on bread and hot peppers alone for nine days. Bite a chunk of bread and lick a hot pepper. They suffered. When they returned home they built a new brick house alongside the old one. So, I grew up in these two houses. The one unusual thing about them was that they stood two metres apart and were connected by a covered bridge on the second floor...

My father too was a Pechalbar for a while but without much success. He left for America in the spring of 1914 and returned after the end of the First World War. He was not able to save enough money so he left for America again. But because of the economic crisis he was turned back and landed in Cuba. He would have almost died of hunger in Havana had it not been for a Greek man from the Peloponnesus, from the town Gition, who helped him. The Greek man was shining shoes on the street when he first saw my father looking through garbage bins trying to find something to eat. My father looked very thin and barely able to keep his legs moving. The Greek man called him over and asked him to take his place while he went to get something to eat in the restaurant across the street. He told him that whatever he earned while he was away he got to keep. The men rejoiced when they found out that they were both Greek citizens. They decided to stay together. It was easier for both of them. They alternated shining shoes and selling newspapers. When they made enough money they returned to Greece...

All I remember from the First World War were the rumbling of the cannons at the Solun front. I also remember hiding our calf from being taken by various conquering armies that marched through our village. My folks used to cover it up with vines in the corner of the barn...

At last the war ended and the foreign soldiers left. There was peace in the village. But soon after that the Greek police came and opened a police station. I can't say that they treated the people right. Even today, more than half a century later, I still remember an ugly incident that took place. I saw a policeman beating a man with a whip in the village square. The man tried to defend himself while begging him to stop: "Aman Kirie! Aman Kirie!" (Please Sir! Please Sir!) he kept moaning.

I liked going to school. It was compulsory by law for us so-called "Xenophones" (foreign language speakers) to go to Greek language pre-school for two years in order to learn to speak Greek. We studied in a room of an ordinary village house. In addition to the little benches they provided for us to sit on, there was a large colour painting of the Greek king and queen hanging on the wall. I had never seen such clean and beautiful people. It was nice to look at them. But I quickly became disappointed. I didn't understand a single word the Greek teacher said. I decided there was no reason for me to go to school and waste my time for nothing. Unfortunately there was the matter of the law to which my parents would have to answer. If I didn't go my parents would be punished. So my dad did everything to prevent it. He put me over his shoulder and took me back to school. Even today I remember looking at his heels, one after the other, as he moved towards the school...

That was the beginning. But in general, I was a good student... among the best...

My mother Maria was a beautiful and smart woman. Her family did not want her to marry my father, so she eloped. She was determined and restrained. I have never heard her speak her loudly. She found that insulting. She was also a very hard worker. Among other things,

she brought with her forty embroidered dresses. She did the embroidering herself when she was younger.

Dedo (grandpa) Dime was pretty worn out before he died. He had a son who was a priest but his son disliked serving in the Greek church because he neither spoke Greek nor did he want to learn to speak Greek. In time he fled to Bitola and from there he went to Sveta Gora where he probably died. He was his only child. With his son gone and because he was happy with being cared for and well looked after by my mother, old grandpa Dime wanted to put her as the only heir in his will. But she did not want to. At her request, grandpa Dime put his brother Ilio's two sons as equal heirs - my father and his brother, Uncle Iovan. My mother took care of everyone and kept the peace. She made sure the entire family was well looked after and happy...

The first colonist and settler families from Asia Minor began to arrive in our village in 1924. They occupied the houses and fields of about fifteen Macedonian Muslim families who were violently and forcefully driven out and sent to Turkey. But, even though these driven out families were Muslims for "centuries" they did not understand a word of the Koran. They understood as much of the Koran as we Macedonians understood of the Greek gospel. They were Macedonians who, a long time ago, converted to Islam, not because they wanted to be Muslims, but to improve their living conditions in order to survive. In addition to Macedonian they also spoke a unique but simple Turkish language. When she was a little girl my mother lived next to the home of a Muslim family. The woman of the house would often yell:

"Marie!... Ver saacho preku pleto, mari!..." (Maria!... Pass the saach over the fence, mari!...) (A saach is a dome-shaped iron cover about a foot to two in diameter, used for baking food in the fireplace. A pan would be placed in the heated fireplace and covered with a saach and the saach would then be covered with hot coals. It essentially served as an oven in the fireplace.)

With the gradual loss of our lands to the colonists, we were slowly becoming very poor. At the same time pechalba (migrant work) did not yield much so our family, like many other families, decided to

move to Lerin... We were under the belief that both my father and uncle would be working “like all the other people” in Lerin, we would do fine. We sold our houses and several of our fields and with the money we built a house in Lerin. The construction lasted two years. Sometime in April 1926 we finally became residents of Lerin. Because I did not finish my school year in the village I lost it and had to repeat it. The next school year I began in the first grade in the elementary school in Lerin. Eventually I completed all my primary education in Lerin...

With a horse and a two-wheeled buggy, my uncle Iovan worked as a minicab driver. It was a good job and he was happy doing it but it was not very profitable. My father worked as a cook in America but in Lerin he was unemployed for a long time. In time, my mother became friends with Vlach woman, Mrs. Pitika, whose husband owned a café. Through her, my mother was able to get my father a job as a waiter in that café but for a very small monthly salary...

The two brothers did not last too long to have many children. Today, many years after their death, out of the ten children (each having five), only four are alive. It was a hard life full of poverty for everyone. Eventually the two brothers separated. They divided their house in Lerin but life did not become any easier...

After I finished elementary school, I started working as an apprentice in a shoemaking shop. Three weeks later I left. The boss was unbearable. With Mrs. Pitika’s help I began to work in her brother’s dairy, but only for a month and a half. “That kind of work is not for me,” I explained to my mother and father. I envied the children who were preparing for the entrance exams in the gymnasium. My parents surely must have noticed. One day my mother said to me: “Go apply at the gymnasium (high school), we will find a way to pay for your tuition somehow...” She knew that being the child of a father who had many children and as a “xenophon” (foreign language speaker in Greece or as a Macedonian) I would only be “symbolically” enrolled and would only have to pay for the three month control exam... In other words, my mother did this to make my wish come true knowing full well that I would have a small chance of being accepted, never mind graduate from the Gymnasium.

On September 1, 1929 I made my way into the gymnasium. I swam in happiness... But at the same time I knew we could not afford this because we were poor. But my mother always knew how to save the situation. It was a time when neither my father worked nor my mother was at home... they did not even have enough money to buy me a quill to write with (of course, in those days we did not have pens like we do today). I don't know how we did it but, despite everything, not only did my parents find the means to pay for my education but I made my way all through the four year program to the final school year 1933-1934. I received an "apolitirion" (graduation diploma); a document that proved I had successfully completed all the courses offered at the gymnasium in the four years...

Sometime during my third year in the gymnasium, a man named Vasiliou, leader of the Lerin Region scouts, approached me and handed me some scout books. He said: "Read them and then decide if you want to become a member." I read the books and found them to be full with practical and useful things. So that summer I became a scout. But soon I discovered that the scout organization was run by the "bourgeoisie". The young people I associated with in the scouts reassured me of that. So I left. However, later, I again met the same Vasiliou scout leader but this time he was a DAG fighter (he was fighting against the bourgeoisie and against the Monarcho-fascist regime). A few years ago he came to Skopje from Romania and paid me a visit...

There was a house located between Gorna and Dolna Kleshtina, in an orchard beside the Lerin-Bitola road. This was the home of my teacher Kalaiadzidis. His son Liontis and I were classmates. We finished the gymnasium together. I often visited this family and they loved me. I loved them too. They were very nice to me. Later the entire family took part in ELAS and in DAG. Two sisters died on the same day while fighting. Their parents also died during the conflict. Only Liotis, his brother Socrates and their youngest sister are still alive today. When I was with these people I met Gianis Apostolos from Gorna Kleshtina with whom I became good friends. He was the one who first introduced me to the works of Marx and Engels...

Sometime later, after I left the scouts, my classmate Theoharis Karasavidis suggested that I join OKNE the Communist Youth Organization of Greece. I said no. I am not ready to take on such a responsibility. I can't and don't want to leave my parents or my studies just to pursue revolutionary work. He smiled and stopped pushing me. A few days later, after a long walk in the town centre, we returned to Vasilios Mavropoulos's room "to rest". Among us were Liontis Kalaihzidis and another person, I believe it was Ioanis Kevrekidis. Here I found out that if you were a Communist you had to belong to OKNE. In other words, you had to be in the ranks of the communist youth in order to be considered a communist. They all had joined the Lerin OKNE cell and none of them had left their parents or their studies. So, sometime in April or May 1933, I too joined and became the fifth member in their cell.

Soon after I finished my schooling, the principal of the gymnasium, a man named Theodoros Kotronis, stopped me on the street. I often talked with him as a representative of my own class or as a representative of the association of classes. But this time he asked me to represent the Lerin gymnasium in a wreath laying ceremony for Pavlos Melas. In other words, he asked me to lay a wreath on behalf of our school on Melas's tomb in the village Statitsa, where Melas was killed. He said: "It is true that you have now stepped into your own life but you will always be our student. I am sure you will come up with a few suitable words to say when you lay the wreath. I am also sure that you will be a worthy representative of our school." My gut reaction was to say no but at that very moment I could not find the courage. Even though I did not like doing this, I said yes, I accepted the task. The next morning I found myself in a gathering place among representatives of the military, police, judicial, state authorities, church clergy, municipal leaders, trade union leaders, sport club representatives and representatives of various other associations. An entire column of cars drove off for Statitsa.

It was a great gathering. There were many people in attendance including priests and bishops, army and police officers, serious gentlemen with white collars from Lerin and Kostur, representatives of the rural municipalities from Kostur and Lerin Regions and villagers from the surrounding villages. This was an annual event

known for “honouring the dead”, but in reality it was propaganda intended for the living. So, they were all working under a plan. And it was a good plan that worked...

When the priests were done with the religious part of the ceremony, one of them read a short essay about Melas and his contributions. Then a line formed and a number of people, representatives from the various organizations, each stepped up, said a few words, and then laid their wreath on the grave. I was among them. At one point, a man went up wearing a Greek Andart (fighter for the Greek cause against the Macedonians) dress and then did something unheard of. The man laid the wreath on Melas’s tomb and in front of many Greek officers, officials and ordinary people, gave his speech loudly in the Macedonian language. He said:

“Pavle, my dear Pavle! Do you remember the time when we were together and went to my aunt Iovanitsa’s place, and she gave us warm bread and soft cheese? Oh, Pavle, Pavle!” The man then sighed deeply and ended his speech with the words: “Aide, eonia i mni!” ...

Only the last words “eonia” and “mni/mi /” were Greek and very poorly spoken at that. Obviously, the village priest, and in similar cases, these words were often repeated in village cemeteries, so somehow this man had learned them. Walking proudly, he returned to the place where he had stood earlier. Shocked to hear Macedonian being spoken in front of Greek authorities, some women covered their mouths and, like other people, looked at each other with amazement. Some of the Greek officials, looked at the man condescendingly, and frowned. But most showed understanding and smiled proudly. The man wore a Greek andart uniform and was a friend of Melas, the dead leader of the Greek Andarts in Macedonia. I went closer to him and whispered:

“Where are you from Sir?”

“I am from Chernovishta, and you?” he replied.

The man was totally illiterate. He was another Kote from Rulia. How did the Greeks acquire him to fight for them? With gifts, for

sure, just like they had with Kote. They bribed Kote with twenty gold coins then skillfully manipulated him to become a natural rival to his comrade Lazo Poptraikov. The totally illiterate Kote was convinced to betray his educated friend Lazo Poptraikov and his freedom fighters. Kote pointed them out to the Ottoman army and it besieged and liquidated them. By doing so, the Greeks kept the back door open for themselves and Kote, who had nothing to do with the Greeks, became an instant “Greek”. But the people returned the favour in the same way. They pointed out Kote to the Ottomans and he too was arrested and liquidated. The priest Laocon was right when he said: “Fear the Danans (Greeks) especially when they bring gifts!” But the totally ignorant Trojans did not believe him, so their city was invaded, robbed and destroyed along with all of them. Ignorant Kote’s name today is used by the Greeks like a flag. The Greeks renamed his village from Rulia to Kota in his honour! They also raised a bronze monument of him... I look at the man dressed in a Greek andart uniform and all I could think of is his betrayal of his Macedonian native nation and... him being totally unaware of what he had done. The poor man can’t see that he is only a Greek caricature and that he can never be a Greek. I too unfortunately laid a wreath at Melas’s grave and in my speech called him a hero and a soldier in the service of greater Greek interests. “The conditions and goals determine how one acts. One may need to act against their will and conscience under certain circumstances. If they allowed me to be who I really was - a child of a humble people, the Macedonians, I would have acted differently!” This I learned from Gianis Apostolos, a long time ago. He was a communist and a great person. He told me: “Our way of resisting and fighting will change to match the changing conditions...” I believe that to be true.

CPG Secretary General Nikos Zahariadis stood at the top of the CPG with help from the Asfalia (Security service). He was arrested many times and yet many times he was able to escape the hands of the Asfalia. Ivan Karaivanov, a man who for years led the Comintern Personnel Department for the Balkan Communist leadership has noted that the Asfalia and Zahariadis’s tactics strongly resembles those of the Japanese police with their agents in the ranks of the Japanese Communist Movement. In May 1941, Zah/sa took over the Gestapo. The Dachau camp was used as its headquarters where Zahariadis was employed (in a warm, clean and

dry place) as an interpreter and as a supposed organizer of the Communist Greeks, Poles, Germans, etc., to fight against Hitler's politics at the camp. Karaivanov had no doubt that the time would come when, with help from the documents, Zahariadis's real role at the Dachau camp would be uncovered. Zahariadis was the only communist leader who was left alive. He was taken over by the English in May 1945. He spent three weeks in London as a guest of the Intelligence Service and then, with a special military plane, his English hosts delivered him to Greece. He landed in Athens on May 29, 1945. But it was not too late to pay them back. Then, at the 12th CPG Central Committee Plenum, the first plenum headed by Zahariadis upon his return, he declared England to be a "great friend" to Greece, and its military and political presence in Greece served Greece's national interests with regards to its northern borders! This Greek "patriot" and agent of international anti-Communism knew the role of a great communist and played it well. There is no doubt that Zahariadis was well aware of the rules, terms and objectives on how to act. Zahariadis was a prime example of an actor, which should be a valuable lesson for the Greek communist movement.

While writing this I wrote it to express my views about things... about my findings. I wrote it for myself as I remembered it. This is what an autobiography is. Let us continue...

The summer of 1934 was a critical time for me. After I finished my education in the gymnasium (high school) I was not capable of doing any kind of work. Furthering my education was not being discussed. So, where to now?! What's ahead for me...?

Tired of the hopeless and disparaging situation I found myself in, one day I came home with a head full of dark thoughts. My mother was waiting for me; she called me from the room upstairs to tell me that she had hidden my lunch, boiled potatoes, somewhere in the cellar. I went down to the basement but I couldn't find where my mother said she had left it. My hungry sisters had eaten all of it. I said nothing to my mother about that. It made no sense. I stood there for a while and then left the basement. My mother must have heard me moving and wanted to know if I was done. "Did you eat?" she asked. "Yes! Yes, I did!" I replied.

The same day I contemplated suicide as my only way out of the emotional mess I was in. I looked for and found my father's gun. There were five bullets in it. One was already in the chamber. I decided to do it in the basement. But just as I entered the basement I imagined my mother coming in and seeing me there stretched out with my brains blown out. What a blow that would be to her! Even though she had four daughters, the oldest being eleven years younger than me, I was the only son she had and of whom she was very proud. No! I thought. I can't put her through this... It would be very painful for her. I will endure. I will endure with her, with my father and with my sisters.

This summer I decided to start a light gymnastics training program with my friend Teoharis Karasavidis. We printed several hundred fliers and glued them on the poles around the city. We had over thirty responses. In the two summer months (July and August) we earned over ten thousand drachmas.

With this money I decided to enroll in the Solun Law School. But, as it turned out, it was impossible. The enrollment and examination fees were far more than I could afford. But, before returning back to Lerin, I read in the Solun newspaper "Macedonia" that all schools in Greece had been closed and in their place seven pedagogical academies were opened, one in Solun and the other six in other parts of Greece. Candidates with completed secondary education were being accepted. Enrollment and exams were free.

I had only one worry about this. I found out that the pedagogical academy in Solun was accepting only forty students in all subjects, through entrance exams. The problem was that there were more than four times the number of applicants. So, unless I had an "uncle" to support my application, I figured I had absolutely no chance of getting in... But I decided to try, I had nothing to lose. I would never forgive myself if I didn't try. And who knows, I might get in.

I tried and got in. All I can say is that those who had "uncles" were no better off. In some cases having an "uncle" made the situation even worse. The czarists of Pangalos Tsaldaris's Populist Party were in power, so the "uncle" as a person of power was the king himself.

Zobanakis, the director of the Pedagogical Academy, however, proved to be a democrat to the bone and did not pay any attention to the pleadings of the “uncle”...

I started my course on September 1, 1934. I did not really want to become a teacher but what else was there for me to do?! I always felt sorry for people who worked as teachers and the miserable lives they led. But in my case it was a fate I could not escape!

The first forty students at the Pedagogical Academy were soon constituted in the “Student Community”. I was a prominent member of that community. I was elected president by secret ballot. In short, I successfully started my life as a student.

Sometime in February 1935, I received my orders to join the military. They were compulsory orders that could not be refused. The old law that foresaw postponement did not take into account the students of the Pedagogical Academy. Of course, it was changed later, but for now I was forced to stop studying and join the army. I went to Athens and reported to the Centre for the Preparation of Reserve Officers in the Greek Army... Sixteen months later I was released from the army with a rank “Antipolohagos”. Passing through Solun I went back to the Pedagogical Academy. Here I found a new director who, if he lived in Italy or Germany, would have been wearing a black shirt. I introduced myself. He said to me: “Ah, that must be you... Sadly, my dear sir, you have no right to re-enroll and attend classes here. Try another place...!”

“On what basis do you say that?” I asked.

“Based on the law, which states that a student who lost two years, one after another, has no right to continue...!” he replied.

“Sorry, but that does not apply to me. I only lost one year!” I said.

But he did not want to hear what I had to say. He said I had no right, and that was that...

I returned to Lerin heartbroken... What do I do now?

But, as it turned out, I found a way out.

By then the thirty year revolutionary struggle was on the rise all throughout Europe. The ruling bourgeoisie was forced to give up its favourite bourgeois democracies and establish open dictatorships. The most dangerous ones existed in Germany, Greece and Spain. The main factor that contributed to the development of the dictatorship in Greece was Macedonia. The CPG won ten parliamentary seats in the Greek parliament in the 1926 elections, six of which were elected in Macedonia, and the other four all throughout Greece. Then, after Eleftherios Venizelos's anti-Communist law "Idionimon" expired, the CPG received about 60,000 votes in the September 25, 1932 elections and contributed ten parliamentary seats. The Left leaning Agricultural Party received about 70,000 votes and contributed eleven parliamentary seats. In total, about 130,000 votes and 21 seats were attributed to the Left. Most of these votes were received in Macedonia. In the upcoming elections on July 1935, the CPG alone received around 100,000 votes. Again, most of these votes were received in Macedonia.

One hundred thousand votes amounted to over one hundred thousand members and supporters that included adult men and women as well as young people who had the right to vote. This was a real army of supporters, the majority of whom were in Macedonia. This kind of force behind the CPG, and still growing, represented a mortal danger to the bourgeoisie. It soon became obvious that Macedonia was becoming the main focus of the revolution...

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

It is generally known what happened after that.

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

On the other hand, the Greek “patriots” at the top of the CPG leadership, led by Nikos Zahariadis, through the CPG Central Committee III Plenum and through the CPG Central Committee VI Congress, held in March and December 1935, in a demonstrative manner, put down the democratic rights of the Macedonian people by treating Greek occupied Macedonia as an integral part of the old Greek state and the Macedonian people as an ethnic minority in Greece thus robbing them of their right to self-determination. This naturally was a blow for the Macedonian people given the conditions that the CPG was growing stronger and more influential primarily because of their support in Macedonia. There is no logical explanation for this except to slow down and even reverse the Macedonian people’s support for the CPG (2). This naturally stifled the workers’ movement and, with it, the revolution in Greece. The top CPG leadership’s goal was, as it turned out, to break the hefty sympathy and adherence of the Macedonian people to the CPG, and turn them against the CPG, so that the CPG in Macedonia would be isolated and weakened...

However, as it turned out, it was not possible to take away that which the Macedonians did not have. Macedonians could not lose what they did not have. They had lived under such “distressed” conditions for a long time. The anti-Macedonian decision taken at the CPG VI Congress was not at all felt down on the ground and, practically, nothing changed...

In the meantime, right from the onset, the reactionary dark forces, led by the Glizsburg-Metaxas axis, attempting to organize a coup and to establish a surprise dictatorship, ran into financial difficulties. It turned out that the then capitalist leaders in Greece did not have a good understanding of what was required to implement an open dictatorship and showed no willingness to finance such a venture without their funds being returned. The contemporary press (especially the Party press) often wrote about this, warning the public about the reactionaries preparing for a coup and the impact it would have on their daily lives.

“Give a little now, so that you don’t lose everything later!” was Metaxas’s motto in convincing the capitalists to support him.

But, no one was giving! The work was not done and time was passing by.

And then, the unexpected happened. Stilianos Sklavenas, head of the Group of Communist MPs in the Greek Parliament and member of the CPG Central Committee, announced in the Greek parliament, all over Greece and to the world that the CPG would fight for the Macedonian nation's recognition and for the Macedonian people's self-determination! That is for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia!

It was a classic, well-timed, provocative verbal maneuver to get the bourgeoisie propaganda going in the most CRITICAL MOMENT in order to storm the CPG, anathematizing it as the bearer of the "Slavic danger" against Greece. And indeed the CPG's immense strength and authority made the capitalists think twice about their lack of financial support for the coup.

The CPG leadership, with Zahariadis at the helm, did not hesitate to help out its opposition at this most CRITICAL time. Right after Sklavenas's announcement about the Macedonian National Question, the CPG took one step further and organized a huge wave of strikes and demonstrations all across Greece. Once again this wave reached its peak in Macedonia, in Solun on May 8 and 9, 1936. Here, the army joined the demonstrating workers and took control of the city (3) forcing the police to retreat and to barricade itself in the police stations. Members of the CPG Central Committee also joined the demonstrations and, on behalf of the CPG, the Communist Group of Parliamentarians and the "Popular Front" (4), read a joint proclamation to the people of Greece which condemned the killings carried out by the Metaxas government and called on Greek people everywhere to follow the Macedonian example in Solun; to unite and fight with everything they had to impose their own will! The killings they condemned were perpetrated by the police who shot at the protesters and, among other things, killed the military commander's sister. The military commander was a major in the Greek army. He led the Greek army in the joint demonstrations in Solun. Of course, the appointment of this major as

the military commander at the demonstrations was no coincidence and neither was the murder of his sister... They were both set up...

And thus, the goal was achieved. The necessary and non-returnable funds were found in abundance in no time. Otherwise, immediately afterwards, the victory achieved by the people in Solun was quickly destroyed and turned into a reactionary triumph. In effect, Zahariadis and the top CPG leadership sent K. Theos, a member of the CPG Central Committee, to supposedly “negotiate” the capitulation of the uprising with General Metaxas’s government, to allegedly prevent “reprisals” against the demonstrators by the government. In the end the rebel leaders and CPG activists received their directives to send the people home and back to their jobs and the soldiers back to their barracks.

After that Zahariadis made the following comment: “The party did not intend to take power, because organizationally and technically it was not ‘ready’ ...” The inevitable question that arises from this comment is:

“Then, why did the CPG order the people to demonstrate and declare victory in Solun?”

Let us also say that the CPG did not intend to change anything already established at the VI Congress with regards to the Macedonian National Question, and yet Sklavenas announced at the Greek parliament, contrary to CPG policy, that he was in support of the right of the Macedonian nation to self-determination and secession from the Greek state...

After having formally returned to the bourgeois camp, Eleftherios Stavridis, former “CPG Secretary General” (as he called himself), and CPG deputy in the Greek parliament, said: “It is quite clear that the events on May 9, 1936 in Solun were a strategic maneuver taken by Metaxas to justify the establishment of a dictatorship. He used the CPG’s strike movement... Allowed the CPG to lead and pull the masses out so that the capital of Northern Greece would appear to be taken over by the Communists, and when all this achieved his anticipated strategic objective, he counter-attacked... This Metaxas

maneuver was miraculous from a political and strategic point of view!” (5)

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

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

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

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

After securing the necessary funds, sometime in June-July 1936, as part of the preparations for the coup, King Georgios II went on a tour in Greek occupied Macedonia. His aim was to suppress the CPG’s strength and authority through influence and by encouraging the anti-Communist forces to fight harder and, above all, to elaborate on the details of the plan of action of how the coup was to be carried out in the Macedonian cities.

The King, of course, also came to Lerin. I decided to take a chance and come out and greet him. I put on my military officer’s uniform and showed up for the reception at the appointed time. I briefly said a few words about how arbitrarily I had been treated by my school

director. In my conclusion I said: “I was inducted into the army to serve my fatherland, and the director punished me for it!” The king looked at the letter I was holding in my hand and asked: “Did you write about this in the letter you are holding?”

“Yes!” I said.

“Leave it with me and don’t worry!” he replied.

He took the letter and put it on the coffee table next to him. He extended his hand. I shook it. He squeezed hard... I noticed a tiny smile on his lips. He gave me the impression that I need not worry.

The coup was carried out during the night of August 3/4. Lerin was boiling with military and police patrols. There were tanks there too. Many arrests took place. I was afraid that I too would be arrested and spent the night in anticipation. By morning I had not been arrested!

I was relieved. This proved that my name had not yet been added to the Asfalia’s black list. A little later I received official evidence of this. I received a letter from the King’s office or perhaps it was from the Prime Minister Metaxas’s office, I don’t remember the details, but my case was resolved in my favour...

I visited the director at the Pedagogical Academy. He greeted me with a wide smile on his face, as if he was looking forward to seeing me. He had also received a letter from the same place. “Who would have thought that you had such ties in high places?” he said clumsily with a smile...

My studies at the Pedagogical Academy took two years. All the students from my generation were gone. The next generation students were now in their second year, but they knew my story. I was accepted as a student by all generations. I was the oldest student in the school. They all sympathized with me.

Soon the old director left and a man named Kokinis took his place at the Pedagogical Academy. He was a fine man and well-educated. With his help I made contact with a director of a gymnasium, and

through him I got a job to tutor students needing help with their subjects. I visited them at home. In February 1937 I fell ill. It was cold and I didn't have a coat and, while coming back from tutoring one of my students, I got a bad cold. I lay in bed for twenty days. Kokinis gave me 300 drachmas from the Pedagogical Academy's petty cash and hired the Solun city health inspector, a renowned doctor, who also gave lectures at the Pedagogical Academy, to examine me and prescribe medications. The students also held a fundraiser for me and raised over 200 drams. They often visited me. Their visits lifted my spirits far more than any medicines could and I was back on my feet. But the illness was so exhausting that the first time I tried to get out of bed I only managed to reach the door and fell unconscious. My recovery lasted twenty days...

An OKNE (Communist Youth Organization of Greece for Solun) Conference was held in Solun sometime in May, 1937. It was held outside of the city in a place called Kiuri, not far from the village Azvestohori. The Pedagogical Academy sent two delegates. Myself from the first year and another student, I believe his name was Papargiris, from the second year. The Conference went well and successfully completed its work. In other words, the agents from the Asfalia did not prevent it from achieving its objectives...

I spent my summer vacation in Lerin training young people light gymnastics. With the money I earned and by saving as much as I could, I managed to survive almost the first half of my second (1937-1938) year in the Pedagogical Academy. Unfortunately sometime after I returned to Solun, I got sick again. One fateful day our professor of physical education decided not to do the usual warm up exercises that we did every morning and made us run the one hundred metre dash cold. This was not good for my organism. I came last. I immediately felt sick. I leaned on the wall feeling light-headed and fainted. I woke up in a classroom stretched out on one of the desks. People were rubbing my chest. The worst part about this was that my sister Dimitra got wind of this. While in Lerin, someone told her that "something bad happened to me". She immediately wrote me a letter asking me to write back and let her know what had happened...

After that my life became even more difficult. My work teaching was scant at best and I became dependent on my parents. Evidently they had to make great sacrifices so that I could finish my studies. I returned home to Lerin in early June 1938 with a teacher's diploma in my hand and with a higher vocational education. Of course, I immediately submitted an application to the Ministry of Education in Athens. I prayed that I be employed anywhere, but I preferred to be sent to Voden or Voden Region.

During the six months I waited for a response to be employed I worked on an investigative report of a news story. An intellectual went mad and killed his wife because she fell in love with another man! I researched this story and wrote a fairly detailed report about it.

Finally I received some good news from Athens. I got a job! I started working in early January 1939, at the elementary school in the villages Hrida and Tsakones, i.e. in the villages Tsakoni and Bidzhovo Maalo by their Macedonian names. Then, at the request of the district inspector, I was appointed director of the school.

I never wanted to be a teacher. But the circumstances forced me to become one. I convinced myself that this would only be the first stage of my career and I that would achieve something more in life. Having no opportunity to further my education in an institution, I decided to educate myself, through reading books. I read quite a few. I even dreamt about following Gorky's path and leaving something behind to help the next generation improve their lives. The article I mentioned earlier, about the intellectual who killed his wife, is an example and a tangible expression my dreams. I still have that article today, it has been preserved. When my mother visited me here in Skopje in 1964, she brought it to me. I translated it and I have it ready in the Macedonian language under the title "Vampires".

Things in the school went well. Both the students and adults accepted me and liked me. The 1938-1939 school year ended successfully. Then, sometime in July 1939, when Italy was threatening to invade Greece and a preventive mobilization was taking place, I met my future and first wife Niki Kachorova from the

village Sorovich. But soon after Greece and Italy signed a “non-proliferation treaty” I was demobilized. The new 1939-1940 school year began normally. Then I got an urgent invitation to go to the district office in Subotsko and see officer Korinas, a Vlach by origin, born in Sorovich. By then I had married Niki in Sorovich and he knew me. He led the 2nd Bureau information service of the Greek Army stationed along the border sector. He asked me to enlist everyone in the village Tsakoni and Bidzhovo Maalo, particularly Hristo Andonovski, now a resident of Skopje, Kosta Markovski, now a resident of Kavadartsi, Vangel Tsakonchev, now a resident of Skopje, and Georgi Baltakov killed a few years later. The first three were students and intellectuals, the last one was a businessman in the village.

I agreed and went on my way to look for them.

I individually informed the first three that Officer Korinas was looking for them and that I was to “deliver them to him”. They were grateful for that. But, unfortunately, I could not convince Baltakov. I visited him at his home. He offered me rakia and snacks and left me there alone... He escaped. I then asked one of the other three, I think it was Andonovski, to give him the message that Officer Korinas was looking for him...

Life flowed calmly but tensions were high. King Gligzburg and General Metaxas’s fascist regime was stubbornly pursuing the democratic forces all throughout the Greek state, especially in Macedonia. Terror was raging everywhere. Mass arrests were carried out in the surrounding villages. In the neighbouring village Poliani, for example, 70 people were arrested and taken away the same day. By bribing the “corrupt conscience” of certain individuals (the terms borrowed from a Party document), they managed to infiltrate the Party’s governing bodies. The fascist regime was able to take over almost all of the more important officials and active members of the CPG, which caused “heavy blows to the Party”. The ruling bourgeoisie, that is, the Gligzburg-Metaxas axis and their patrons the English imperialists, were more and more afraid of Greece’s inner enemy, than they were of the Rome-Berlin axis...

There was no Party organization in Tsakoni and Bidzhovo Maalo. Generally the left leaning people there laid low and anxiously awaited their fate. But there were no betrayals and no harm came to them. No one was arrested. On October 28, 1940, fascist Italy attacked Greece and I found myself on the frontline.

The CPG leaders and activists imprisoned in the Acronavillon prison made a proposal to the Metaxas government to allow them to take measures to strengthen themselves both on the battlefield and on the inner front. Namely, they demanded that they be allowed to go all the way to the front and, on the inside, stop the prosecutions against the CPG and the democratic forces in general.

Metaxas and the English, however, turned them down.

In April 1941, the Germans invaded Greece and the Greek leadership capitulated... The Asfalia handed over all Communist prisoners to the Gestapo to be physically liquidated.

After Greece capitulated to Germany, the front in Albania was abandoned along with the Greek army. I had to walk home on foot to Lerin all the way from Albania. With the fall of Crete on May 31, 1941, Greece was under complete occupation. It was now divided into three occupation zones - German, Italian and Bulgarian.

When I returned I was informed by the education services in Lerin that the schools all throughout Greece were still functioning, so I went back to my old job.

By then the occupiers had confiscated almost all available vehicles and large amounts of food. Large city and town centres were left without food. Hundreds of thousands of people were left to starve. The villages were flooded with city people looking for food. They were prepared to sell the clothes off their backs for a handful of corn or beans.

There were no students attending classes and the schools did not work at all. Everyone was afraid of being arrested and physically liquidated. The local reactionary elements took it upon themselves

to rise and carry out treachery against their own people in aid of the Gestapo and the Gestapo had no problem with that.

There was a great need to defend the people. I knew from before that Hrisostomos Hilipoulos, director of the school in Poliani, Nikos Evdoridis, director of the school in Dolno Pozharsko and Georgios Georgiadis, a teacher in Subotsko, were Communists. Many people were afraid of being betrayed so they spent the nights away from their homes. After contacting the people I knew well, we decided to defend ourselves against the spies by creating what we called “party cells” each consisting of three armed individuals. Each cell was tasked with organizing resistance. They were to begin collecting the abandoned weapons the soldiers, returning from the Albanian front, had left behind. They were also tasked with liquidating dangerous spies, collecting food and medicines and finding secure shelter for those who were abused and tortured and in danger of being killed by the occupiers and the local reactionaries.

My first associates in Tsakoni in this relationship were Hristo Andonovski, Kosta Markovski, and Vangel Tsakonchev. Each created their own separate cell thus widening and expanding the Party network. Hiliopoulos, Evdoridis and I, in the meantime, acted as the Party’s governing body in our region and oversaw their functions.

Sometime in April-May 1942 Comrade Nikos or Psileas (which means a tall man in Greek) arrived, and our Party organization was subordinated to the CPG Voden Region District Committee leadership.

Shortly afterwards, Comrade Vasilis, member of the District Committee, an incredibly fat person, responsible for issues in the ELAS reserves, ordered me to create an ELAS reserve unit based in the village Piperia. The population there knew me and trusted me, so it was no problem for me to become a commander of an ELAS reserve unit. Later the unit I created and led participated in the attacks and destruction of the quisling police stations in Meglen Region.

As a gesture of recognition, the District Committee gave me a new directive. My orders were to go to Ostrovo, to the neighbouring district, and take over command of the ELAS reserve battalion, which at the time, I was told, was based in the village Ostrovo. It was November 1943, and bitterly cold, my trip was difficult. But, as it turned out, I was a commander without an army. Such a battalion did not exist. It was my job to create it...

The Macedonian population there was unsure of what was going to happen. It stood on the sidelines waiting. This was the first time I found out that a Macedonian national organization (SNOF) had been formed in the neighbouring Lerin district. I became very curious as to why we in Meglen Region were not informed and knew nothing about this? Why did SNOF exist only there, and not here and everywhere where Macedonians lived?

After several hours of rowing with the help of a young fisherman named Pando Georgievski from Ostrovo, now a resident of Skopje, I made my way across the lake in Ostrovo and arrived in the village Patele in Lerin Region. There I made contact with the SNOF activists... After returning to my own district I wrote a letter and sent it to the CPG District Committee for Voden Region in which I pointed out that the Macedonian population in Voden Region was left unguarded and at the disposal of the enemy and its propaganda. EAM and ELAS were Greek national organizations whose programs did not envisage any rights for the Macedonian people. This has created distrust and reservations among the Macedonians. I suggested that SNOF be expanded here in Voden Region... I was well aware that by doing this I openly declared myself against the CPG's anti-Macedonian policy applied here. I also wrote that I, of course, could not have taken into account all the contributing factors that the CPG used to draft such a policy and, possibly, I could be wrong. I then asked them not to leave me wondering and, if I was wrong, they should point it out...

They completely ignored my request. SNOF was not expanded and no one said that I was wrong about anything. About a month later, in May, 1944, they disbanded and destroyed SNOF everywhere, wherever it existed in Lerin and Kostur Regions...

I stayed in Ostrovo District for about seven months. Even though I failed to create a complete battalion, I was able to create two complete units which I can proudly say were well-organized and capable. I was told this by my ELAS comrades who had military experience. One of my units took part in the ELAS combat actions against the collaborator Kolaras in the village Muralar. I was ordered to make the unit ready and available.

In the middle of May 1944, the District Committee ordered me to go back to Meglen Region. They also handed me a letter to deliver to Barba Traiko (Nikos Papasermitsis) who then was secretary of the Macedonian district committee based in the village Tresino. After reading the letter, Barba Traiko showed some respect for me and gave me special attention. Together we visited the Macedonian villages in the region, spoke at rallies and agitated and explained our position to the people. But we did not prevent the appearance of the Bulgarian unit, led by Bulgarian officer Dimchev, in Voden which, I believe, I was sent to prevent. Around June 15, 1944, I suggested to the regional committee that in order for us to stop our people from joining the Bulgarian unit, it was important that we establish separate Macedonian military formations within ELAS. My suggestion was taken seriously and Macedonian formations began to appear. Secretary Barba Tpaiko explained this and received approval from the District Committee. (6)

About a month later, Blazhe (Georgi Atanasov) and I began mobilizing fighters in the Macedonian villages. Mobilization for the ELAS Voden Macedonian Battalion began on July 16, 1944.

Unfortunately, the District Committee in Voden, for some reason, thought that these formations were the work of the Macedonian Partisans from the Yugoslav part of Macedonia. (7) Regarding this, Oche (Vangel Aianovski), a CPG activist, wrote that Dzhodzho Urdov, then organizational secretary of the District Committee, was given the task to go to Kaimakchalan and lead a raid against them and disband this “newly created Yugoslav Army”. And if he encountered resistance, to use all necessary force... (8)

But before any harm was done, Barba Tpaiko arrived in Voden District and explained to the Committee that these were “our local

Macedonian formations”... and that there was no need to attack them.

We were very careful on how we presented our Macedonian unit. We made sure people understood that it was a Macedonian unit. It represented the material strength of the Macedonian national idea. We made sure the people heard us and not our enemy’s propaganda, which professed that it was a Greek partisan unit disguised to fool the misguided Macedonians. Our ideological and political work was done through leaflets and announcements. We were also planning to publish a newspaper but it did not materialize. We gave up using the Cyrillic alphabet, because it looked like the Bulgarian one, to avoid Greek propaganda. We also stopped using the Greek alphabet for similar reasons. I had to invent a special temporary Macedonian alphabet. (9)

Petros (Hristos Moshos) representative of the ELAS 10th division was one of the first people to pay us a visit to see what was going on. It was explained to him that this Macedonian unit, these volunteer fighters, were here because they were invited to join the Macedonian unit in accordance with a decision made by the Tresino Macedonian regional committee to create a Macedonian unit. He could not even refrain from hiding his fury. He yelled out: “Why did this have to be done now and separately? Why was this not done at the very beginning and as part of the ELAS units?” He then stormed out leaving us to wonder what had happened... The fate of our Macedonian unit seemed to be completely uncertain right from the start...

Two and a half weeks later Barba Tpaiko returned. Barba Nikos (Tahis Papadopoulos), first District Committee secretary, Dzhodzho Urdov, second District Committee secretary, and Petros (Hristos Moshos), who was there earlier, came with him. By then about 300 volunteers had already joined the battalion. As a gesture of recognition for my previous work they offered me command of the battalion. But I graciously declined. The reason for suggesting that I take command, I believe, was to recognize my contribution in putting together and organizing the ELAS reserves, for coming up with the idea of forming a Macedonian unit, something the District Committee had tried in Voden but failed, and for the military

exercises I organized and conducted with the unit... In my explanation for declining the offer I said: “I don’t think I can take responsibility for the fate of the entire battalion, I don’t have the experience...” Even then, I had no doubt that as a commander I would be given orders that I would not agree with, as well as dangerous missions that would have put the battalion in great danger; I could not live with that. So Dzhodzho Urdov, a CPG representative, was appointed head of the battalion. His military sub-commander, or second in command, was a Greek man from Crete named Levteris Foundoulakis. I was appointed third in command, responsible for the ideological and political needs of the fighters.

Foundoulakis did not speak Macedonian so he had no contact with the fighters. And even though Dzhodzho Urdov had good common sense, he lacked the vocabulary and avoided making contact and speaking in front of the fighters. So, as a command representative, I was constantly with the fighters, which meant that the battalion was practically in my hands. This explains how I was able to convince the battalion to cross into the Yugoslav part of Macedonia.

Many years later, General Markos will confirm this: “The Voden Macedonian battalion withdrew to Kavadarsti, Republic of Macedonia through Kozhuv Mountain. It did this to escape the danger of being attacked and disarmed...” Of course by Markos’s orders. “By doing this the Macedonian Voden battalion, unlike the Macedonian Lerin-Kostur ELAS battalion, avoided an attack.” For more details about this see my INI text entitled “The dawn is born in the deep night”... (10)

In November 1944, the “Aegean Brigade” was formed in Bitola. (11)

The “Aegean Brigade” was disbanded in April 1945, by the Political Commission for Aegean Macedonia. Created in its place was a new five-member founding NOF Bureau for Aegean Macedonia. It was comprised of Paskal Mitrevski, head of the Bureau and members Dzhodzho, Keramidzhiev, Koroveshov and Rakovski (author of this book)... Until November 21, 1946, NOF for Aegean Macedonia was run by the CPM Central Committee, i.e. by the CPY, first by Dimitar Aleksievski-Pekar and then by Nikola Minchev. From that

date forward NOF for Aegean Macedonia was subordinated to the CPG Central Committee Politburo leadership, i.e. to CPG General Secretary Nikos Zahariadis. The three NOF battalions were merged in DAG and placed under Markos's command.

Of course, it was wrong for the CPY and its Central Committee to interfere in the CPG's affairs in Greek occupied Macedonia just as it was wrong for the CPB to interfere in the CPY's affairs in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia. But, on the other hand, the Macedonian people in the People's Republic of Macedonia had full rights to be interested in the fate of the Macedonian people in the neighbouring countries. It was their duty! Bulgarian interference, however, was an entirely different affair.

According to Dragan Kliakich, Markos Vafiadis's biographer, while compiling his biography, Markos said: "It should be openly said that the CPG Central Committee's position on the Macedonian Question was wrong and very harmful to the Movement... Zahariadis had taken that direction because he was under Georgios Papandreou's influence. Papandreou's program for 'national unity' had no room for the Macedonians and for him 'no Macedonian Question existed in Greece'..." (12) Georgios Papandreou was Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's father.

Of course, it was not only Zahariadis who worked against the Macedonians. The CPG Central Committee also took a similar position during its VI Plenum on July 1, 1941 and carried it to the end without Zahariadis, who at the time was in Gestapo hands.

The VI Plenum Resolution (13) is of significant importance for determining the CPG line towards the Macedonian National Question, as well as the historical moment when this line was adopted. With its establishment and implementation, as a generally "patriotic" line, it proved to be one of the most crucial events in recent Greek history. The road the CPG took for the sake of "national unity" with the domestic bourgeoisie and its parties, while struggling for the "national liberation" of the country and for the "strategic border security" it took against its neighbours, was a road to a special war fought against the very forces that fought for the democratization of the country and for the "social liberation" of the

people in Greece, which in itself was a war against the CPG itself. This is how history will see the line the CPG took during the VI Plenum Resolution.

Here are some facts:

- Goebbels said: “Europe will die so that Germany will live...” (14) Greece was monstrously robbed and left as a wasteland filled with death. Hundreds of thousands of innocent people of all ages experienced a terrible slow death due to hunger. There were also mass exterminations and destruction all throughout the Greek state. According to a German report dated July 6, 1943, regarding the political situation in Greece: “Ninety percent (90%) of the Greeks were unilaterally unfriendly towards the axis forces and were ready for an open uprising...” (15) But, in fact, there was no such open uprising. The CPG and EAM leaders skillfully directed the masses to take their anger out against the foreign occupiers in countless strikes, demonstrations and uneven battles in the streets. These forms of struggle, however, were harmless to the domestic bourgeoisie and to the policies of Greece’s patrons, the English imperialists.

- The atrocities committed by the occupiers slowly, steadily and massively drove the people to the mountains to organize a resistance movement. By mid-1943 there was a massive popular struggle brewing all throughout the Greek state. It was at that crucial moment that the National Liberation Army of Greece (ELAS) and the CPG-EAM-ELAC leaderships were placed under English command. Both General Headquarters as well as all other military Headquarters were staffed by British officers who executed the orders given to them by the British General Staff serving at the Middle East Headquarters. Large units, divisions, groups of divisions, etc., were in fact placed in the hands of the English Intelligence Service. This was verified by Vasilis Bardzhotas, DAG chief of staff and member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, in an article published in NEOS COSMOS. (16)

- THE TASK, set out by the CPG Central Committee during its VI Plenum, held on July 1, 1941, before Party, that is, in front of “Every Special Communist”, was to ORGANIZE THE PEOPLE

FOR A NATIONAL UPRISING. This TASK, however, was silently neglected, and yet, when the atrocities committed by the occupiers forced the people to rise, despite being placed under English control, the CPG Central Committee, with its proclamation, on the occasion of the dissolution of the Comintern, declared that: “The Party of the Proletariat, the Communist Party of Greece, is fighting for national liberation today, and then, after the war is over, it will fight for a People’s Democracy...!” The struggle for the social liberation of the people was unfortunately suspended... “Postponed” for after the war! (17) This proclamation was practically a preventive measure to suppress ELAS’s public tendencies, in whose ranks the Communists played the main role, from turning the “national struggle” into a socialist revolution.

- The program task initiated to ensure possible cooperation with the other nations fighting against the Axis powers, and the coordination of the Greek people’s struggle with the people’s struggles of other nations, was not realized as expected. In fact what happened was completely inconsistent and downright scandalous. In mid-1943, CPG-ELAS representatives Thilemahos Ververis and Andreas Dzimas contacted communist representatives of the national liberation war in Yugoslavia and Albania and initiated talks about forming a people’s revolutionary union. An agreement was finally reached but only on a military and political basis. Among other things, according to a document written in French, of which I have a photocopy, the three (Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania) envisioned establishing a joint “Balkan Headquarters”. (18)

But, instead of following up with what had been agreed to with their neighbours, our Greek comrades in the CPG, EAM and ELAS went with the English... Ververis and Dzimas were, of course, criticized for this... But it was not difficult to see why the “patriotic” left leaders changed their minds... Had the people’s revolutionary union been formed as planned then this union would have to not only fight against the occupiers but it would also have to jointly participate in the class struggle in each country and eventually;

a) Confront the domestic bourgeoisie and, in Greece, its patrons the Anglo-Americans;

b) Bring change to the class and social character of the revolution, particularly in Greece; and

c) Create favourable conditions for developing a strong Macedonian people's liberation movement. In other words, if a people's revolutionary union was formed it would have created the right conditions for resolving the Macedonian National Question in favour of the Macedonian people, which would have meant that such a union would;

a) Deviate from or violate the already established CPG Party line for "national unity" and the "national front". It would violate the non-confrontation agreement the Left, particularly EAM, had made with the domestic bourgeoisie and with the Anglo-Americans;

b) Deviate from or violate the already established Party policies for a "national liberation" through a "national struggle" in "national unity" with the bourgeoisie; and

c) Deviate from and violate the Party policy which demanded the suppression of any kind of Macedonian movement and from disabling the start of any anti-fascist Macedonian national liberation movement...

These were some of the reasons why the Greek Left "annulled all agreements regarding the creation of a joint Balkan headquarters and ended cooperation between the communist parties in Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania regarding this matter." (Tempo)... In the interest of objectivity and the truth let us, at this point, say that on September 21, 1943, Tito sent Tempo, the Yugoslav representative in this matter, a message with a directive "not to create a Balkan headquarters" because it had become "politically incorrect". Regarding the "struggle for the Balkans" (1981, 134) Tempo wrote: "Comrade Tito felt that there should be guiding military centres in each country, and the necessary coordination of operations against the occupier should be provided from an allied base, through the military or political representatives at national headquarters!"

Like I said earlier, our Greek CPG, EAM and ELAS comrades, instead of developing a "socialist revolution" together with their

neighbours, went with the English and turned the people's revolution into a "national struggle", a struggle for "national liberation" working against a socialist revolution.

- Let us now look at one little minor fact.

Svetozar Vukmanovich-Tempo, a delegate and CPY Central Committee representative, stayed in Greece for about twenty days in the summer of 1943. He had meetings and lengthy talks with Georgios Siantos, then CPG secretary, and other CPG, EAM and ELAS senior officials. It is interesting to see what he had to say about that. On September 1, 1943, Tempo wrote:

"The Communist Party of Greece, together with EAM and ELAS, run their policies by relying mainly on English support. This, of course, does not mean that the CPG does not popularize the Soviet Union and the Red Army. But the entire National Liberation Movement today is tied first to England. In all their gatherings they (CPG/EAM/ELAS) primarily popularized England first and then its allies, the Americans and the Soviet Union in that order. This is done in order not to colour the national liberation movement too much. They say they lead policies which are in support of England because the English headquarters is closest to them and because they want to use English weapons to arm their entire army which, they say, will later be used against any imperialist who tries to interfere in the internal affairs of Greece.

But in reality, they already allow the English to interfere in the internal affairs of Greece. The deal they made with the Middle East English headquarters is actually a good example of English interference in Greece's internal affairs. On the basis of that agreement, they also agreed to allow Zervas (from the domestic bourgeoisie) the right to organize his army on the entire liberated territory. On the basis of that agreement, the English succeeded in preventing the realization of the Balkan Headquarters." (19)

Allow me to continue...

Christopher Montague Bunthouse (Chris), a well-known Service Intelligence agent operating in Greece, a deputy chief and head of

the British military mission, in other words a competent and authoritative individual, wrote: “If there were no British officers in the resistance movement in Greece, not only Greek but also European history would have gone in a completely different direction... The presence of the British military mission in Greece from 1943 to 1944 prevented communists in Greece from taking absolute control of that country. If the Communists took power in September 1944, after the Germans withdrew, in the eyes of the world, it would have been difficult to deprive them of that power!” (20)

By putting ELAS under the command and control of the British, a maneuver of historical significance, our Greek CPG, EAM and ELAS comrades rejected an alliance with the people’s revolutions in the Balkans...

The EAM Coalition, i.e. the Left headed by the CPG, on its own, had already managed to achieve a very wide and unanimous Greek people’s national unity never before seen in Greek history. And yet the same Left persistently and systematically propagated the idea that it needed “national unity” with the Bourgeois parties and politicians, including those who supported the Germans and others who supported the English, against the EAM. The united Left wanted “national unity” with a government that was in exile, created, supported and financed by the British. Why? Why was the Left persistently popularizing the authority of the British among the Greek people?

Then, with the Lebanon Agreement, signed in May 1944, the CPG, EAM and ELAS voluntarily and officially gave up any claim to power when they recognized the Greek government in exile as the “legitimate government of Greece” and as the “government of national unity”. But there was more than that... The Left also acknowledged that ELAS was not a national army and agreed to creating a national army in the near future and placing it under the authority of the English created puppet government and attaching it to the Middle East command run by the English General Staff. In other words, the Left took advice from the British, its enemy, to dissolve ELAS, its own army, and replace it with a “national” army not of its choice. (21)

The Caserta Agreement, signed in September 1944, paved the way for British troops to invade Greek territory right after the Germans left Athens. In fact there was an agreement reached between Churchill and Hitler that the British would not attack the Germans leaving Greece, provided they did not destroy the road infrastructure. I read the following comment in the Greek press: “With this agreement the British fox achieved a double goal. It left the German forces untouched so they could fight against the Russians and, it took Greece without firing a shot!” As it turned out, British troops hurriedly came to Greece only to prevent ELAS from taking important strategic positions such as Athens and other places. On top of that, as per the Caserta Agreement, the Left accepted and proclaimed British General Skobi as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in Greece! In other words, no ELAC unit could act or move without orders from Skobi! (22)

But, it would appear that the British were not comfortable with an active ELAS in Greece so an armed conflict was provoked in Athens in December 1944. It was a well-staged provocation which called for disarming, dissolving and liquidating ELAS. There is no doubt that Georgios Siantos and Mitsos Partselidis, CPG Central Committee Politburo representatives, were the main culprits in this... It was they who signed the Varkiza Agreement on February 12, 1945, and with those signatures almost all ELAS units throughout Greece were disarmed and disbanded. The only units that remained active were those in Athens, which belonged to the ELAS territorial reserves. These ELAS units were combined with the domestic reactionary units and handed over to the British. What is most characteristic about this is that Siantos and Partsalidis arbitrarily went behind the Politburo’s back and signed an agreement for which they were not authorized. By doing so they violated the requirements for an unconditional general amnesty, which was set by the Politburo in order to protect the ELAS fighters and democratic forces from persecution.

When we take into consideration the number of strikes and demonstrations that took place against the occupiers in cities all throughout Greece and the millions of people mobilized to do this which, as mentioned earlier, encompassed about 90% of the Greek

population, according to a German report, then it becomes clear that the conditions were right for creating a huge revolutionary army which would have inflicted a heavy blow against the occupier, as was done in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, etc., and which could have prevented the British from invading Greece... However, in this case as the old Macedonian expression goes “the mountain just bore a mouse!” From the millions that participated in the mass demonstrations against the occupier, our comrades the EAM coalition, that is, the Left headed by the CPG and its top leadership, managed to convince only several tens of thousands to join ELAS and then quickly placed them under British control to be clandestinely liquidated...

Yes, the people who genuinely fought for Greece’s liberation and who aspired to fight for democracy and social rights, were in fact isolated and liquidated. This liquidation was carried out by the same people who the Left, mainly the CPG top leadership, recognized as the authority in Greece and allowed it to take power, when it could have prevented it. Here is what Averof, head of the opposition, had to say years later, in the Greek parliament in January 1984: “During the first round of fighting between 1942 and 1944, EAM and ELAS were capable and could have easily become the sole master of Greece and would not have had to make compromises... During the second round of fighting, around December 1944, it could have also again taken power. It could have easily become master of Greece in the early days and between December 14 and December 18, 1944, had it not undertaken major military actions against EDES forces in Epirus, 500 km away from the main battle in Athens....” On December 14, 1944, ELAS 8th Division achieved great success against the English forces in Moshato-Kallithea. During the night of December, 17 and 18, 1944, ELAS 2nd Division violently attacked Kifissia and captured about 500 English airmen and 50 officers along with their commander. The same night the 3rd Athenian Brigade captured the Averof Prison and seized several hundred politicians, generals and occupier collaborators... Why did ELAS have to take action against EDES instead of going directly to Athens? And why were some of the most elite ELAS units and most talented commanders engaged against EDES, an insignificant force?

It is important to also mention that the CPG missed out on another chance to take power. Had the CPG really abandoned the tragic collision in December 1944, it could have truly occupied a prominent position, and perhaps a dominant position, in the political life of the country. At the end of 1944, it came very close to taking power. It had allies in all layers of the population... It had penetrated into all the pores of society, and its opponents were weak and disorganized. It commanded political order which provided many reliable and concrete advantages, which over time could have been decisive...

So, forgive me if I find it difficult to understand why the CPG missed all those chances and never did come to power! (23)

On August 18, 1982, the Greek parliament adopted a law to recognize the contribution of the Greek people who fought in the 1941 to 1944 liberation war under the leadership of the CPG, EAM and ELAS. They were recognized as a national resistance force which fought against the fascist occupation. While speaking in parliament, Evangelos Gianopoulos then Minister of Labour, among other things, said: "History as it is known today has been very much twisted and criminalized. The Right over the years has poisoned the Greek population leading it to believe that the national liberation war was some kind of preparation for the CPG to seize power! It is time that we correct that perception by presenting our testimony. Being part of ELAS as a commander of a battalion, I can personally testify about that time. If EAM, in other words ELAS, wanted to grab power on October 12 when the Germans left Athens, even before 1944, they could have been in power within 4 hours!"

Minister Gianopoulos's comments, of course, were published in the Greek press. The above quote was obtained from the Athens newspaper "Elevterotipia" number 2114 published on August 19, 1982...

There is no doubt that the CPG leadership was dominated by Greek "patriots" led by Georgios Siantos, who in turn led a special and successful war against the people's forces; the very people who fought to liberate Greece and to bring democracy to that country, the true warriors of the national liberation struggle and the socialist

revolution. The CPG failed to take power not because it couldn't but because it did not want to. And, like Minister Gianopoulos said, if it wanted to, it would have done it within four hours...

The line the CPG adopted in its July 1, 1941 CPG Central Committee VI Plenum towards the Macedonian people and the line it adopted towards "national unity" with the domestic bourgeoisie, have actually and inevitably become and will remain in history as the most consistent anti-Macedonian lines. Without any exaggeration, it can be said that Secretary Georgios Siantos and those behind and around him, have accepted and implemented the same "national unity" program supported by the domestic bourgeoisie and by Georgios Papandreou and for them "there is no Macedonian National Question" in Greece.

The Macedonians closely watched the politics the Greek "patriots" in the CPG leadership played during the national liberation war, in other words during the time EAM and ELAS were active, and have written about them. Some of these observations were later published in "Pogledi" number 8/1980, in "Glasnik" no. 2 / 19-82 and in "Istoria" no. 1/77 and 1/78. This information, now resting in the archives, may be easily accessible to the researcher but it is difficult for the ordinary reader to get. That is why I will try to briefly describe the basic elements of those politics...

There is no information about the Macedonian people or non-Greek people in the VI Plenum resolution, not a word. It is clear why. To speak of such people, Macedonians for example, would mean that the CPG would have to acknowledge that Macedonians existed in the Greek state and as such their human rights must be recognized before the Greek and international public. In other words, the CPG would then have to create the conditions for a practical solution to the Macedonian National Question. But none of this need be done if the "non-Greek" people living within the Greek borders are ignored under the pretense that they don't exist. But, by not mentioning the Macedonians in its resolutions the CPG placed them at a complete disadvantage regarding their human and democratic rights. This, however, was not done out of simple neglect. It was carefully avoided in the spirit of the "accepted" concept that "for Greece there is no Macedonian National Question", that is, in the spirit of the

“patriotic” general line of “national unity” between the Left (EAM) and the domestic bourgeoisie who did not tolerate the existence of so-called “Slavs” in the Greek state.

The CPG Central Committee held its Second CPG Conference and four more plenums during the national liberation war against the fascists in the period from October 1941 to 1944. According to official documents the Macedonian people were not once mentioned anywhere as existing or taking part in that conflict. Even though the Macedonian people were their natural ally in this war, in the worker’s movement and in the social revolution, the leftists were very careful to avoid mentioning them by their rightful name, i.e. Macedonians. The only exception to this was the VIII Plenum Resolution. The CPG Central Committee VIII Plenum was held in January 1942, and mentioned in its resolution, among a few other words, were the words “Slavophone Macedonians”. (24)

Who were these so-called “Slavophone Macedonians”?

In publishing the famous Bakiris interview, the Party newspaper “Laiki Foni”, among other things, explained that the citation made was referring to the “Bulgarophone Greeks”. (25)

In his book “O ELAS” (1946, 331), General Stefanos Sarafis, then ELAS Supreme Commander, referred to Macedonians as “Slavophone Greeks”.

Naturally, two weeks later, the CPG Central Committee’s organ KOMEP No 16, August 1943, beautifully explained:

“There is no longer national confusion in Greek Macedonia... The Slavic and Turkish populations have been evicted according to the conventions, and the Greek population has been collected from all countries in the Balkans and from Asia Minor and brought to Greek Macedonia... which has become as Greek as any other area in Old Greece...” (p. 331).

At about the same time, in the summer of 1943, “Rizospastis”, the CPG’s central organ, began to publish the famous saying: “After the

population exchanges Macedonia is as Greek as the Greek district of Athenian Attica...”

Well, one cannot even imagine that Macedonians or any other non-Greek people would exist in old Greece or Attica at that time... And, according to our Greek friends and CPG, EAM and ELAS leaders, or at least according to their official documents of that time, there were no Macedonians in Macedonia... the Attica of “Rizospastis”, but only “Slavophones” who were part of the Hellenic (Greek) people...

It is important at this point to mention that the CPG supported a policy of “full equality for minorities”. This policy was adopted at the CPG Central Committee III plenum in March 1935 and confirmed at the CPG VI Congress in December 1935. If there were no Macedonians or any other non-Greek people living in Greece, then what “minorities” was the CPG supporting?

The CPG during its VI Congress, regarding the Macedonian National Question, underlined: “The Party will not stop declaring that in the end the Macedonian Question will be resolved in a brotherly way with the victory of the Soviet government in the Balkans, which will break all dishonest settlement agreements and take every practical measure so as to eliminate or correct the injustices perpetrated by the imperialist... Only then will the Macedonian people achieve their full national status!” (26)

So, according to the statement mentioned above, made at its VI Congress, the CPG in fact indirectly recognized the distinctiveness, that is, the national distinctiveness of the Macedonian people. It recognized that such a people did exist in Greece. Unfortunately these were just nice words and empty phrases. These people (the CPG cadres) were the decision makers and architects of what was said and what was done. These same people who on the one hand verbally claimed to be supporting the Macedonians, on the other, committed anti-Macedonian acts. In May 1944, the National Council (“Ethnikon Simvoulion”) of Democratic Greece was summoned exactly after the CPG disbanded SNOF in Greek occupied Macedonia by completely ignoring the Macedonian people’s wishes and desires and, with a special act, they lumped the

Macedonian people under the Greek nation and thereby proclaimed the “Greek character” of Macedonia and concluded that “Macedonia was Greek”. (27)

So, here are some of the more important facts in this regard:

I) Instead of allowing the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia to form and maintain their own Macedonian organizations, the CPG imposed on them Greek national organizations such EAM, ELAS, EPON, EA and others and urged the Macedonian people to join their ranks and fight for “the national liberation” of Greece and for its “strategic security” along the borders with its neighbours.

II) Instead of appointing or electing Macedonians to lead the Macedonian districts in Greek occupied Macedonia, the CPG appointed “selected Greeks” or “Party officials” in the Party committees, who were not only non-Macedonians but who also harboured anti-Macedonian sentiments. Years later the CPG Central Committee Politburo was forced to admit that these people were “avant-garde-ists and chauvinists who supported a Greater Greece!” (28)

III) From the many loyal Macedonian communists and CPG activists who served in the national liberation movement, not one was elevated or allowed to rise to the helm. Macedonian activists were engaged everywhere, on all things in and out of Macedonia, but not in organizing the Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement. And those who showed promise and initiative, such as Karadza and Trpovski, were lost, disappeared early from the Macedonian national liberation movement, and in an unusual manner. This not only beheaded all Macedonian hopes but also fulfilled Greek wishes that the Macedonians would never rise or come to the fore.

IV) When conditions were right and the neighbouring nations rose up in the struggle against the occupiers, fighting for their own freedom and survival, when the Macedonian people in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia joined the national liberation war to fight for our Macedonian freedom; their acts and deeds very much influenced the

Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia and their involvement in the struggle in Greek occupied Macedonia became inevitable. The pressure from below, from the Macedonian communists and from the groundbreakers, grew so much that the Greek leaders, as the old Greek saying goes “Pioumeni tin Anangin filotomian” (the inevitable inevitability becomes a well-intentioned readiness), were prompted to allow the formation of Macedonian organizations. The Macedonian Anti-Fascist Organization (MAO) was formed in Voden in 1942. The Slavo-Macedonian People’s Liberation Front (SNOF) was formed in Lerin in November, 1943. SNOF in Lerin-Kostur Region was formed in January, 1944... It seemed that the Macedonians would eventually gain the right to their own organization and struggle on their own behalf, side by side with the Greek people, for their survival and for a decent life in the Greek state. But this proved to be just another Greek maneuver, a tactical deviation, which our Greek comrades planned for their own benefit. Namely:

- The communist Greeks allowed these Macedonian organizations to form in order to 1) attract the Macedonians into organizations that they felt they could control, and 2) avoid the creation of a strong Macedonian counter-autonomist movement that would seriously jeopardize the Greek position and interests in Greek occupied Macedonia; and
- By being under its watchful eye and control the CPG could exert pressure on the Macedonian national liberation movement and gradually and over time diminish its strength until it was suffocated, just like it did with MRO (United).

The Party leaders who suffocated MRO (United) tried to use their experience to suffocate MAO in Voden and SNOF in Lerin-Kostur Region. It was by no accident that MAO was limited to the city Voden, and SNOF to the Lerin and Kostur Regions. The CPG wanted these organizations to stay low key but they did not have much success. MAO in Voden and SNOF in the Lerin-Kostur Region were well accepted by the Macedonian people and with much excitement, and, surprisingly, they transformed the organization into dynamic revolutionary organizations with unexpectedly strong Macedonian nationalism. Obviously, this was

done as a reaction to decades of Greek suppression sponsored by official Greece. No Macedonian was happy with the idea that “Macedonia is Attica and that there is no Macedonian National Question for Greece”. The Greek leaders, on the other hand, could not accept a strong Macedonian national movement and so an open attack against the Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement became inevitable.

Like MAO, SNOF too was dissolved and destroyed...

V) The Left sources of information that followed the national liberation war against the occupiers were exclusively controlled by the CPG, EAM, ELAS and EPON. They decided what was published and what wasn't. While serving in Meglen Region, in Voden District, I was not aware that both MAO and SNOF had been dissolved. I only found out after I left. There was no information, not even rumours, circulating about that... So what did that mean? It became clear to me that our friends in the CPG refused to divulge any information about the Macedonians... anywhere. The reason for this was that they did not want to let Macedonians in one place know of what other Macedonians were doing in another place, because that would inevitably encourage and stir them to act. Also, any news about the Macedonians or about their struggle in general, i.e. struggling as a non-Greek nation, would have meant affirmation of their existence in Greece. It would have been an affirmation of their struggle to survive as Macedonians in the Greek state. And that could not, and would not be allowed to come out given that it was well claimed in Greek circles that “Macedonia was (or should be) Attica” and the Macedonian people were (or should be) “Slavophone-Greeks”...

VI) The communication channels connecting the CPG, EAM, ELAS and EPON districts in Greek occupied Macedonia were never meant to be links between the Macedonian CPG organizations and the Macedonian leadership and activities in those districts. The fact that Macedonians, at different times and in different places, had to fight in order to create various organizations against the will of the CPG, tells us that our Greek friends took extraordinary preventive measures to stifle the Macedonian anti-fascist revolutionary forces

to keep them divided and isolated in their districts and from other districts, so that they could be easily controlled and suppressed.

This well-conceived and accomplished isolation and disconnection of the Macedonian antifascist organizations from each other in the Macedonian districts, was truly a heavy blow to the Macedonian antifascist struggle, which significantly damaged its initiation and development...

VII) As I previously mentioned, around the middle of 1943, Tilamahos Ververis and Andreas Dzimas, representatives of the CPG and ELAS, met with representatives from the Communist parties and from the National Liberation War organizations in Yugoslavia and Albania, and reached an agreement to form a national revolutionary union and come up with a military and political plan on how to work together. But soon afterwards, the Greek side gave up on that agreement because it figured that such a union with its neighbours would create favourable conditions for the development of a massive Macedonian liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia...

VIII) The Greek CPG, EAM and ELAS leaders did not refuse to discuss cooperation, so a meeting was scheduled between the CPG and the CPM (CPY) for early September 1943, to take place somewhere outside Solun. After a long discussion, a cooperation agreement was reached with several points. Under points 5 and 6, the Greek side undertook to “create a Macedonian language” and to “form separate Macedonian military units”. (29) But nothing of this ever materialized. This agreement was totally ignored by the Greek side.

Here are some characteristic moments:

Pando Dzhikata, a Macedonian revolutionary from the village Chegan, Voden Region, was arrested by an ELAS formation and was executed soon afterwards. Five others were also executed. The five belonged to a commission set up by responsible members belonging to the CPG, EAM, ELAS, EPON and EA and sent to protest Pando Dzhikata’s arrest. The five were also natives of Chegan, Pando Dzhikata’s village. They were shot because they

demanded that Pando Dzhikata be released. These people were executed shortly after the CPG-CPM agreement was made outside of Solun for the cooperation between the two Parties and movements... But the Macedonian people knew exactly why Pando Dzhikata had been shot. On the occasion of the 40th “Ilinden” anniversary, Pando Dzhikata wrote an article and submitted it for publication in the newspaper “Tsrvna Dzvezda”, a local MAO paper in Voden, in which, among other things, he called on the Macedonian people to “mature into worthy heirs of the Ilinden Uprising”. He was also found guilty of cooperating with the Macedonian partisan units from the Yugoslav part of Macedonia...

This happened to many Macedonian revolutionaries and tells a story about the Greek leadership’s attitude towards the Macedonian people and about the Party’s policy towards the Macedonian anti-fascists liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia. Of course, Greek plans were one thing and developments of the Macedonian reality on the ground were another. After SNOF was liquidated in May 1944, under very tense conditions, the Greeks had to act so they ordered the formation of two units, one in Lerin-Kostur Region and the other in Voden Region. This was done sometime in July 1944...

From the top they ordered the formation of two units...

But the bottom, the base, instead of forming two units it formed two battalions! (30)

The top reacted but could do nothing because a call for volunteers to join the battalions had already been sent out and volunteers were arriving in droves...!

The reaction to stop the formation of the Macedonian battalions had little effect...

As the battalions began to visit the Macedonian villages, their very existence brought joy and warmed the hearts of the oppressed Macedonian people. By doing so, according to Greek accounts, they were “spreading Macedonian nationalist propaganda” and “awakening Macedonian nationalist sentiments” among the

Macedonian people, which severely affected the “Greek character” of Macedonia. After this demonstration they could no longer be regarded as “Slavophone Greeks”. The Greek comrades, of course, saw danger in this. Their Greek position and their “national interests” were being compromised in this part of Macedonia. So, as soon as the rapid and efficient ELAS Macedonian battalions broke up the autonomist movement and its organized counter-band military force, they were disarmed and disbanded...

It was a real drama!

This is what General Markos Vafiadis said regarding the Lerin-Kostur Region Macedonian battalion: “The CPG Central Committee Politburo sent a confidential letter addressed to the ELAS 28th Brigade Commissar ordering him to order the ELAS Macedonian battalion to travel south and ultimately be attacked and disarmed because it posed a danger...” And that is exactly what happened. While the Macedonian battalion was fighting against the Germans on Bigla Mountain it was attacked by partisan units from the ELAS 28th Brigade... (31)

The battalion did not fight back. It disengaged from the battle against the Germans and, in order to avoid bloodshed, withdrew from Greek occupied Macedonia and crossed over the border into the now Republic of Macedonia. As soon as the battalion crossed the border its command wrote a letter explaining its departure and rejected Greek claims as to why it was attacked and what had happened. Among other things the letter said: “The explanation given by our comrades as to why we left our position abruptly is a big lie, a fabrication. We were left with no choice but to take defensive measures against ELAS’s intentions against us. You are all aware that one of our units was captured and disarmed by the Greek Andartes. You all know that ELAS units were dispatched from Kostur Region and from Prespa to surround and disarm us... We simply took measures to avoid fratricide. They ordered us to go south to old Greece for one and only one reason, to destroy the Macedonian partisan movement!” (32)

The same thing happened to the Macedonian Voden battalion. Greek ELAS units were secretly dispatched, as they were in the case of the

Lerin-Kostur battalion, to disarm and pacify the Voden battalion. Further to his comments mentioned above, this is what General Markos Vafiadis had to say about this:

“Before it could be attacked and disarmed (under Marko’s orders, of course) the Voden battalion retreated to Kavadarsti through Kozhuv Mountain.” This took place during the night of October 12 and 13, 1944. I (Pavle Rakovski) maneuvered the battalion and avoided being attacked.

The Party wasted no time in starting what became known as the “well-known campaign” and other rumours which pitted Macedonians against Macedonians, especially against the Macedonian Communists and leaders of the battalions. They were called “Ohraniti” (members of the Bulgarian Ohrana organization), crypto-fascists, traitors, adventurers and so on.

This is what Markos said about that: “The CPG Provincial Committee for Macedonia and Thrace sent a directive to all CPG Committees in Voden, Lerin and Kostur Regions accusing the ELAS Macedonian units, which had left the country, of committing a treasonous counterrevolutionary act...” This resulted in the mistreatment of many civilians especially the parents, wives and relatives of the Macedonian leaders who had fled. Many of these civilians were arrested and sent to the same prison camps where the occupier collaborators were kept. (33) At that time my wife Niki went to live with her parents in Sorovich where she gave birth to our son. She too was arrested and sent to a women’s camp to serve time with the women who went with the occupying officers and soldiers. She was devastated by her experience and protested by not eating. Fortunately she was saved by a man named Kosta Siaperas, a communist, fellow school mate and a friend from the Lerin Gymnasium. As an official inspector in Lerin, Kosta Siaperas was able to visit the camp and get my wife out. She went back to living with her parents but lived under the constant fear that she might be arrested again. Eventually she fled the village and walked to Bitola. She was so exhausted that she fell ill and died. Our son had died in Sorovich a little earlier.

“What a gross mistake...!” remarked Markos. (34)

Perhaps... But only in a tactical sense. The incredible “behind the back” attack against the Macedonian battalion and the tragic and desperate acts committed against the people around it, were no doubt inspired by Greek fears that the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement could no longer be controlled... and that somehow this was in violation of Party policies... and that this was very dangerous for the Greek position and for Greek interests in Greek occupied Macedonia...

In fact, as it is well-known, Markos himself ordered the ELAS division in Greek occupied Macedonia to: “Totally destroy the emerging Slavophones.” (35)

The fact is: As the commissar of all ELAS Group Divisions in Greek occupied Macedonia, Markos, together with Commander Evripidis Bakirdzis, ordered all ELAS Macedonian partisan units to be totally crushed. Why? Because they were seen or characterized as “rising Slavophones”. But if what the ELAS Macedonian partisans were doing was characterized as “rising”, it certainly was a very unusual “rising”. The Greek units attacked them from behind and the Macedonian units were forced to defend themselves. But instead of fighting back to defend themselves, they avoided the attack altogether. They did this in order to avoid bloodshed. In other words, they did not resist but retreated to avoid shedding blood. They did not rise at all but withdrew to the Republic of Macedonia.

The term “Slavophones” also comes into play here. Not Macedonians, but Slavophones. Sarafis and Bakirdzis publicly called Macedonians “Slavophone Greeks” and the “Ethnicon Simvoulion” (National Council) referred to them simply as Greek people. All this was done in the spirit of the anti-Macedonian concept that “there are no Macedonians in Macedonia” and that there is no “Macedonian National Question” for Greece...

So, according to the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace, that is, the leadership of the CPG, “the separation of the Macedonian units from ELAS” was not, and does not signify anything else other than a “treacherous counterrevolutionary act!...” Perhaps this is why Markos, nowadays, after decades of silence, calls the Macedonian

Partisans “a Trojan horse in ELAS” (page 74) in his biography by Dragan Kliakich. By twisting the facts Markos tried to prove that the “special Macedonian units”, formed by “ELAC Headquarters” itself, were really a danger to Greece and played a “treacherous role” in the ranks of ELAS.

It is well-understood, of course, that the existence of Macedonian partisans strongly affected the “Greek character” of Macedonia. The Macedonians... the Atticans of Rizospastis, could no longer be characterized as “Slavophone Greeks” not only because they were not, but also because they did not show a sense of genuine Greek origin... All they wanted to do was be Macedonians and the existence of the Macedonian armed units, which publicly identified themselves as Macedonian, were encouraging them. As a result many Macedonians rejected their Greek names and surnames and took back their own Macedonian names. More than that. They even rebelled against the CPG, EAM, ELAS and Marko’s “erroneous attitude” and demanded that they be recognized as Macedonians and be allowed to have their own Macedonian national organizations, their own armed units, and be allowed to lead their own political struggle and fight for their own national, democratic rights and freedoms as equal partners with the Greek people.

That is correct. That’s how it was. But how can the Macedonian people be accused of “wrongdoing” when all they were doing was looking after their own interests? The struggle of an enslaved nation fighting for its survival and freedom was a natural thing to do, which means what they were doing was “right”. In principle and in practice what the Macedonian people were doing was legitimate. The working class struggle led by the communist party is one such historical event, an example of a social-political force that not only recognizes the rights of the working class but also protects them. Unfortunately that was not the case with the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia. The Greek workers’ and communist movements did not do what they were expected to do for the Macedonian people. The CPG failed it its historic responsibility to protect the Macedonian people...

Not only did the CPG fail to protect the rights of the Macedonian people, but during the national liberation war against the occupiers,

a decisive and critical revolutionary period, it systematically prevented them from developing their own Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement. More than that. It publicly declared that the Macedonian people were Greek, “Slavophone Greeks”, and called upon them to fight for the “national liberation” of Greece, but not for any democratic rights or freedom for themselves.

And because of that, the Macedonian partisans and the Macedonian people in general were victims of Greek chauvinism... perpetrated by our Greek comrades and top leaders of the CPG, EAM and ELAS...

For the CPG Central Committee Politburo to then proclaim that the Macedonian partisans were “a danger to Greece” and today to call them a “Trojan horse”, could only mean that they had committed some kind of treacherous act in their role while serving in the ranks of ELAS. And what treacherous acts did they commit? None!

So, the true and only reason why the Macedonian partisans were condemned by the top Left Greeks leadership, was because the Macedonians made an effort to struggle in order to survive as Macedonians;

The Macedonians were punished because they could not reconcile with the open Greek request for them to only be “Slavophone Greeks”, a fate that would completely disadvantage them and condemn the entire Macedonian nation... condemn it to disappear in the name of foreign interests.

Naturally, this was a projection of a far-reaching ongoing Greek anti-Macedonian campaign...

Unfortunately, even though such drastic measures were taken against the Macedonian people, i.e. to negate their existence and to stifle their progress as Macedonians, all in the name of Greek interests, it has not been captured by Greek authors. Even former CPG, EAM, ELAS and DAG leaders and officials have refrained from publicly speaking about the Macedonians and their role in the national liberation war. This shows how careful our Greek friends are and the old, well-known and traditional tactics they have applied

to avoid speaking and writing about the existence of a non-Greek Slavic people in the Greek state. We have to admit that they have done a bang-up job to avoid popularizing and publicly supporting the Macedonian struggle for elementary human rights, i.e. for creating the right conditions for survival and for a decent life as Macedonians in the Greek state...

Our Greek friends always had justifications for everything, such as:

The domestic bourgeoisie are very sensitive towards the Macedonian National Question... We have to be careful not to anger the bourgeoisie and turn them against the workers' movement and against the CPG. We did what we had to do in order not to turn the bourgeoisie against the Macedonian people themselves... A national issue can not be raised to the detriment of the workers' movement and to the detriment of the Party...

These kinds of justifications were nothing more than excuses for the CPG to do what it wanted. These excuses were very effective before the CPG began to collude with the bourgeoisie and accepted the bourgeoisie idea that "Macedonians do not exist in Greece". While supporting a policy of "full equality for minorities" our comrades and top leaders of the CPG, EAM and ELAS, resolutely accepted the same position as the domestic bourgeoisie that there were "no Macedonians in Macedonia" and the CPG, in that regard, became an extended arm of the bourgeoisie in the suppression of the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement. This means that the official CPG Party line was passed over and, instead of protecting the rights of the minorities, i.e. the Macedonians, the CPG initiated chauvinistic tendencies and a liquidation policy to get rid of the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia...

While trying to explain to his Yugoslavian biographer Dragan Kliakich, and to the whole world, why Greek ELAS units attacked the Macedonian ELAS units, General Markos Vafiadis, as we saw earlier, tried hard to load the whole thing on Zahariadis. Greek authors, however, bypassed it and in a way hid the truth about his contribution as a CPG, EAM and ELAS functionary so that the

“fate” of the Macedonian people, in this part of Macedonia, would be very difficult and dramatic...

In this relationship, the party press did not lag too far behind.

“The correctness of the line on a given question does not exclude individual irregularities when dealing with that issue. This also happened when the Macedonian Question was discussed during the first phase of the armed struggle (against the fascist occupiers (1941-1944)) and later (during the Greek Civil War), claims the newspaper “Neos Kosmos” organ of the CPC Central Committee, in its editorial article (something like a programming document) while explaining the Party’s policy in that period regarding the Macedonian National Question.” (36)

In other words, nothing serious happened... Only “individual irregularities” which the “correctness of the line” does not exclude when dealing with the issue!

In a situation where there was great desire to blur and conceal the real CPG leadership’s thesis and politics, everything that could be done was done, up until 1974. (37) Everything was done to keep the truth away from the Macedonian activists and the Macedonian people in general including the promotion of such slogans as “there is no Macedonian Question for Greece”, “Macedonia has a Greek character”, “Macedonia is Attica”, the “Macedonian people are Slavophone Greeks”, and so on. Then, suddenly, the Macedonian Question and the Macedonian problem in the Greek state, ceased to exist... again... Yes! That is exactly what happened. The Macedonian National Question ceased to exist! It ceased to exist for the leadership of the Greek communist movement, apparently, again... and as they used to say, “due to the extreme sensitivity of the domestic bourgeoisie...”

This was nothing unusual for the Macedonian people who lived under the Greek thumb. These were old and well-known Greek anti-Macedonian tactics, a “Macedonian disease” the Greek “patriots” in the CPG leadership carried in the hearts since the day the CPG was established in November 1918. You will find more information on this CPG “Macedonian disease” and its symptoms from the onset, in

another of my texts. Here, of course, I will only talk about the most important symptoms associated with, and the harm done to me personally. So, let us continue... At the beginning of this autobiographical story, I promised to tell you how I got to become a political prisoner in the Beria-Stalin Siberian camps. Here, in this part of my narration, I will present you with a series of events and symptoms which directly contributed to my fate and shaped my destiny. I will talk about how I was thrown into the forefront of the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement and how I became a member of the political commission for Aegean Macedonia and one of the founders and leaders of NOF in Greek occupied Macedonia...

Let us continue...

Towards the end of October 1944, I was appointed member of the Political Commission for Aegean Macedonia which, six months later, in April 1945, self disbanded under a directive issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia (in other words the CPY). Then, on April 23, 1945, a NOF leadership committee for Aegean Macedonia was constituted of which I was an active member.

My role as a member of the political committee was to lead the agitation and propaganda department, that is, to edit the “planned” newspaper, a body of the political committee. I was asked to and I wrote an editorial article. But when I brought it to Krste Tsirvenkovski to review it, he was not happy. He said: “Don’t do this, comrade, don’t do this!” At the time I was very bitter and angry about the injustices committed against our Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement, and I put it all in this article... Was it because they thought that I was, we were, from Greek occupied Macedonia that we could only be fighters and no more... unsuitable to be politicians... or was it something else? The so-called “planned” newspaper was never realized.

Before that I had to put up with annoyances and inactivity but then, sometime in January 1945, I went to Dzhodzho’s office, who at that time was Committee Secretary of the political committee, and asked him for an assignment. He agreed to allow me to go to the Staravina Base in Kaimakchalan. I stayed at the base until the beginning of

April 1945, after which, on request, I went to Skopje. I visited Meglen Region (Karadzova) several times. I went to some of the villages where I had recruited volunteer fighters for the ELAS Voden Macedonian battalion. I wanted to gauge the mood of the people and to personally inform them of news from the battalion fighters... Although expected, what I observed on the ground surprised me. Our Greek comrades, with all their might, tried to hide the truth as to why the battalion had left Greek occupied Macedonia. Their propaganda campaign was twisted and politicized. The battalion's leaders were portrayed as dangerous political adventurers, especially Dzhodzho Urdov and Gotse (myself Pavle Rakovski). Namely, a defamatory propaganda campaign was conducted widely claiming, among other things, that "Dzhodzho and Gotse had sold the battalion for large sums of money...", that "they sold your children!" And that "they are filthy traitors!"...

After thinking about this for a while I came to the conclusion that it was necessary for us to act urgently, to break this defamatory attack and to defend the honour of our leaders and our battalion by exposing the truth as to why the battalion had really left... From this and from other urgent and inevitable needs, TOMO, the Secret Macedonian Liberation Organization, emerged. It was born exactly at the same place where the battalion was born. Its aim was to spread the truth about the battalion's departure deep among the Macedonian organizations and people. If this was not done the battalion's departure would be remembered as a meaningless adventure...

I took my idea to Dzhodzho, of course. But, with the founding of NOF, and in order to avoid unnecessary discussions such as why, how, who decided and who authorized what, and so on, Dzhodzho advised me to keep quiet about this and get to work on developing NOF. I had nothing against that so I followed his advice. (38)

Regarding this, I read in "Istoria" number 2/1981, organ of the Association of Historians, that: "Pavle Rakovski was spreading disinformation regarding the question of who founded TOMO, the Secret Macedonian Liberation Organization, in 1945 in Voden Region. Rakovski claims that Vangel Aianovski-Oche was not the founder of TOMO, and that he has proclaimed himself to be the

founder of this organization. It is true that documents from TOMO's establishment and activities have not been preserved, which is understandable given the time and conditions under which it was formed and was active. However, while Aianovski has a document from that time which mentions TOMO and its activities, no such thing is mentioned in Pavle Rakovski's many reports. His explanation that the political committee for Macedonia under Greece, and the NOF leadership, kept TOMO's establishment a secret, is not convincing. How is it possible to organize and run so many branches in a network and, at the same time, keep such an organization a secret, especially from its own leadership? If for some reason Rakovski needed to keep this organization a secret in 1945, there was no reason for him to keep it secret later. And another thing, while Aianovski details the entire organizational structure in his works (referring to the book 'Aegean Storms') showing a list of people who worked as activists or as members of the organization, Paul Rakovski only states that he went to Voden, formed TOMO and nothing more!" (p. 290)

In his book "Aegean Storms" (INI, 1975, pp. 167-170), Aianovski wrote that on April 28, 1945, he convened the first TOMO district conference in Voden Region. It was attended by delegates from the city Voden and from the surrounding villages. He wrote that he personally opened the meeting which was then chaired by Petre Popov (who died later) from Dolno Rodovo. According to Aianovski this was the agenda:

1. TOMO activity report.
2. Change the name TOMO to NOF (People's Liberation Front).
3. Elect NOF district board for Voden...

Aianovski took the floor for the first agenda item. "Pavle Rakovski, representative of the political committee for the Macedonians under Greece, then took the floor for the second agenda item, and after welcoming the delegates, presented the political committee's decision to create NOF by renaming TOMO to NOF, which was then accepted..."

Aianovski wrote the above more than three decades after it took place... So, what can I say about it? Well, instead of me talking, I will leave the facts and documents to speak for me.

- The political committee at that time, on April 28, 1945, did not exist so I could not have been its delegated or its representative.

- During the founding of NOF for Aegean Macedonia and the appointment of its bureau, on April 23, 1945, in Skopje, it was decided that all members of this bureau would remain in Skopje for the May 1st, 1945 holiday, and then everyone would leave and report to their assigned districts. So, on April 28, 1945, I was not in Voden Region.

- Sometime near the end of May 1945, as was decided earlier, our bureau gathered for another meeting. Dimitar Aleksievski-Pekar chaired it. In my notepad, dated May 27, 1945, among other things I wrote: "Last month we decided to hold a district meeting next month for the purpose of choosing a district board and to discuss other issues." (39) And in a note dated June 27, 1945, among other things, I wrote: "On June 20, 1945, I convened and held a district meeting a few kilometers outside of Voden. We did not however get the desired attendance we expected. No delegates from Voden and from Meglen Pole attended. Those from Voden could not attend because the city was blockaded. Those from Meglen Pole did not get the invitations on time because the courier had an incident along the road and was delayed. However, 125 delegates from 28 separate villages did attend. The meeting went well and took a serious and splendid tone being chaired by an old gray haired man from the Ilinden era..." (40) "Because I didn't know any of the activists from the city Voden, I always had to consult with Dzhodzho regarding their personnel issues." "Aianovski was sent to Voden in December 1944 to monitor the situation and to report on events. I made a point of inviting him to this meeting and, on Dzhodzho's suggestion he was appointed first president of NOF (TOMO) for Voden Region. I figured this would make his job easier for which he was sent to the field!" It is not difficult to see that, according to my notes from that time, nothing was mentioned about a district conference taking place in Voden Region on April 28, 1945...

- Let us now have a look at Aianovski's notes preserved from that time, in which, according to "Istoria" number 2/1981, "TOMO and its activities were mentioned". Firstly Aionovski's document is not unique. There is also a second document from that time, i.e. from the first half of 1945. Both documents were published in a collection of documents entitled "Aegean Macedonia in the Second World War", second volume. The first document was published under line number 39, p. 75, and the second under line number 54, p. 101-104. They were not signed, but based on the channel by which they were obtained it is known who sent them. Apart from that, based on the handwriting on the photocopied the manuscripts, contained in the collection, the same person wrote both of them (Aianovski).

The first manuscript is entitled. "Military Information Bulletin from June 16, 1945". The second manuscript is entitled "Information Bulletin". Both were written on June 16, 1945, so they were probably sent to various different addresses. About the first manuscript editors Dr. Risto Kiriazovki and Tosho Simovski wrote that this information was authored by Vangel Aianovski-Oche who reported on the military and political situation in Voden Region". Here is the content of that report:

"Military Information Bulletin from June 16, 1945.

It is certain. Special movements of English mechanized forces have been observed. Every day armored cars are sent to inspect the border, especially in the regions around Meglen and Ostrovo. They also inspect the border watch towers and guard houses. It has not been determined to which battalion they belong and who their commander is. Several officers and a number of soldiers have arrived in the city Voden to reinforce the 303 battalion. Lively and nervous activities have been observed in the Greek-English intelligence bureau. The Greek authorities in Voden have compiled lists of Macedonians by name but we have not yet learned why they have compiled them. The political and military world and most of the population in our district is nervous because of the published news that three mechanized Russian divisions have arrived at the Greek-Bulgarian border. The Macedonian people are thrilled with this news. The Greek government through the press has advised that the arrival of the Russians at the Greek-Bulgarian border has

nothing to do with Greece, and that this is an internal Bulgaria matter. On May 26, 1945, a gendarmerie with four officers arrived in our city. One them is a major and commander of the gendarmerie. In the next report we will inform you about the number and names of the commanders as well as their purpose...”

As we can see, it is completely unfounded to argue that “TOMO and its activities” have been mentioned anywhere in Aianovski’s first document. There is not a word about it at all. Perhaps someone made a mistake with the accounts in this document. Perhaps they were referring to the second document. Perhaps they incorrectly considered it to be a document of TOMO. Regarding the second document the editorial board consisting of Kiriazovski and Simovski said that it was a “TOMO Information Bulletin reporting on the situation in Voden Region”, which is completely arbitrary and unfounded... Here is what, among other things, was written in that document: “Economics, newsletter 16.06.1945. This morning the Napoleon was worth 12, and in the afternoon it jumped to 9,000. Food items continue to be in abundance. No goods have been hidden. The people are generally satisfied. I am sending you a series of newspapers outlining measures taken by Varvaresos, Minister of Finance, where you will learn more about the economic situation in the entire country...” (41)

Of course, this was typical of Aianovski who, as always, was a nit-picker while doing the job for which he was sent here to do. In fact, the photocopied manuscript, mentioned earlier, undoubtedly confirms that Aianovski was the author of this document. But besides that, TOMO had no reason to send a series of newspapers outlining Varvresos’s economic measures.

Aianovski however does mentions TOMO twice in this document:

a) “...The entire army is not fascist; there are good men among the soldiers... who are expected to connect with our organization TOMO...” (42)

b) “The number of Grkomani (Macedonians loyal to Greece) in those villages is very small and efforts are being made to attract them in TOMO...” (43)

As we can see, there was no mention made in Aianovski's documents from that time, about a district conference taking place in Voden Region on April 28, 1945, when TOMO was supposedly renamed and replaced by NOF. Aianovski knew nothing about this, and when he wrote these documents on June 16, 1945, as per "a" and "b" above, he was talking about TOMO, he knew nothing about NOF.

In his book "Aegean Storms" Aianovski seems to be silent about the June 20, 1945, NOF (TOMO) meeting in which he personally participated and was elected district president. Did he forget about it? Did he get the dates mixed up? I could not tell you what he did, all I can say is that three decades later, he invented the April 28, 1945 NOF-TOMO district conference... But that's not all. Namely, after making frequent contacts with his friends Kiriazovsky and Simovski, reviewers of his book "Aegean Storms" and editors of an extensive collection of archival materials about "Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war", Aianovski somehow learned that there was no information on this, as well as on who founded TOMO in Voden Region. So, either by his own initiative or at the suggestion of someone else, he solved his problem by associating his say 5 or 6, 10 or 15 or even 20 or 26 auxiliary reporters in Voden and Voden Region, with the political organization TOMO and portrayed himself as the initiator, founder and secretary-general of TOMO which he claims to have founded on January 20, 1945. In his book "Aegean Storms" Aianovski paints a beautiful picture of TOMO and its activities under his leadership. One of those activities, that allegedly crowned his achievements, was convening the first district conference held on April 28, 1945. But where are Aianovski's documents that directly confirm this? Apparently after he found out that he had no such documents he went ahead to confirm his claims indirectly. Five years before his book "Aegean Storms" was published, Aianovski published a number of articles on the life and struggle of Mirka Ginova in the Skopje daily "Nova Makedonija" printed on August 5 to 10, 1970, XXVI, no. 8455-8460. In one article, entitled "Mirka was helping the fighters", among other things, Aianovski wrote: "The first TOMO regional conference was held in June 1945, when the name was changed from TOMO to NOF, an organized military-political force for the

Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia. Mirka Ginova was at the conference and was elected member of the NOF regulatory board secretariat for Voden Region..." which, of course, was correct. Aianovski was elected first president and Mirka was elected member of the secretariat and AFZH president for Voden Region...

It is interesting to note that Aianovski's fictional date from the "Aegean Storms" also appeared in the famous pilot "Chronology" edition sponsored by the "Association of Fighters from the National Liberation War". Here it was said that Vangel Aianovski-Oche formed the political organization TOMO on January 20, 1945 and convened a regional TOMO conference on April 28, 1945...

Of course, if the same nit-picking Aianovski, who was so pedantic with his notes about minor things such as how much a Napoleon was worth in the market in Voden in a single day, and how many villagers participated in a meeting, surely he would have left tangible evidence if he had founded a political organization such as TOMO. He would certainly have left some written documentation about a great event such as this. And of course, there would be no dilemma about it here and now. Surely there would have been something written in the many "newsletters" from that time if such an event had taken place. The editors and researchers would have found it if such a document existed and had been placed in the multi-volume collection of archival documents in the history of the Macedonian people. But such a document had not been found because it does not exist at all! The researchers found nothing about the first half of 1945 in the pile of Aianovski's archival documents. Neither did the researchers find anything of significance in the bulletins they were placing in the second volume of the collection of archival materials...

And so we come to the conclusion that: New items had been added to the book "Aegean Storms" and to the pilot "Chronology" which have been created, rewritten and adjusted to fit a history created for one's own measures and tastes...

Aianovski, accidentally or deliberately, has completely ignored his older documents he had left behind. Then, in his book "Aegean Storms" published in 1975, he openly declared that he founded

TOMO on January 20, 1945, and convened the first regional Voden Region conference on April 28, 1945...

Contrary to what was said in both mine and Aianovski's original documents from that time, the magazine "Istoria" (History) wrote that Aianovski was the founder of TOMO in the collection of documents entitled "Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war" quote number (2/1981).

I personally think that the emergence of TOMO was a basic need for our people to resist on mass the hypocritical anti-Macedonian politics conducted by our Greek friends. And that is what is important for the history of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia. TOMO was the result of the Macedonian activists and of the Macedonian people in general, coming together in an effort to defend themselves on the ground against Greek aggression. I said nothing to Pekar at the first bureau meeting held on May 28, 1945, about my personal accomplishments just to be praised, even though a few months ago I established a Macedonian organization in the field and that same organization was quickly expanded from Karadzova all the way to Voden. But I did that! Then years later, in 1972, while I was writing my book entitled "Vo dlabokata nok zorata se ragia" (In the deep night, dawn is born) which can be obtained from INI, I talked about the conditions on the ground being responsible for imposing the need to organize the people which resulted in the formation of TOMO. Of course, I never guessed that later people would call me a petty liar, and a usurper of other people's work and glory! Perhaps I did not have to take the direction I did with this, but I was forced to do it in my defense. This was a slanderous distortion of the facts. An attack on my contribution to the Macedonian national liberation movement and on me as a person who was directly involved in the mentioned events as a leader in these Macedonian organizations. It would be the same as saying: "Look at the dishonest kind of people that constituted the top leadership of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia." That is why I could not just let it go! I offered my rebuttal and my own documents to "Nova Makedonija", "Glasnik", "Istoria", "Sovremenost", and other publications, but the people in charge ignored them and refused to publish them. Now,

here I am writing my biography and defending the truth and myself...

Let us continue...

The fact that the CPM (CPY) leadership recognized and appointed Paskal Mitrevski top leader in our movement said a lot to me, but, at the same time I knew nothing about him. A little later Vera gave me an overseas newspaper with an article about Mitrevski in which he exclusively talked about himself and about his involvement in matters in which he was never involved. Dzhozho was the most important Party figure among us. Dzhodzo was appointed second secretary of the CPG District Committee and member of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace (in the widest composition). There was not a word about Dzhozho in the article... So I thought to myself for a person to act this way, to credit himself with everything, especially with the work of others, this person must lack dignity and good principles. Sadly, I was not mistaken... Mitrevski valued everything and everyone not according to how much they contributed to the promotion of our movement, but according to how much they contributed to his personal authority and to his own career. Mitrevski endeavored to remove everyone from their leadership positions in the field, especially those who worked hard and were very capable, only because they were inclined to support Keramidziev or Peiov. We had a lot strong clashes in the Bureau. In June 1946, even though I was sick at the time, I was sent as neutral person to Kostur and Lerin Regions to evaluate the situation on the ground. (44) I reported that the leaders and activists in question were hard working people who were well liked and respected by the local population. My report unfortunately upset Mitrevski. One evening while we were dining alone in the "Moscow" restaurant (it was later destroyed by the earthquake) I decided to ask him if I could speak with him frankly. The fact that he was the "number one" figure in our movement has always been the object of our attention. As his associate and comrade, I thought that I should be open with him and tell him what I thought was negative about him. Of course, I wanted to help him with this, not to turn him into an enemy. I said: "If you are prepared to listen to me without getting angry, I will start!" He sat there quietly and calmly as he assured me that he would listen with interest and would not get angry. That

evening I tried to convince him that he needed to act much more convincingly as the leader of our movement. I told him that he needed to stop putting his own alleged interests and his own career above the interests of the movement. I gave him examples of what I meant and of what he was doing wrong. That evening I brought up the name Machiavelli in our conversation for the first time. I told him that he had no principles... And that the only single principle he had was to ignore the principles of his people. I told him that morals and honesty for him seemed like foolish things. I told him that he honoured nothing and no one. I told him he needed to show deep respect and modesty in front of his people even if he had to act while doing it. I told him that his inability to be convincing and persuasive was harmful to our movement. I told him that because of that capable comrades and leaders like Ilia Dimovski-Goche, Naum Shupurkovski-Leon, Lazo Oshenski, Naum Peiov, Trifko Popov, Dzhodzho Turundzov and others were alienated. I told him that he constantly strived to surround himself with people who thought like him, etc... He calmly listened to me without saying a word. In the end he shook my hand and thanked me. He looked frank. But I knew he was acting...

To learn more about the top Macedonian leadership's "ups and downs" in the Macedonian liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia consult my other works found in INI under the title "In the deep night dawn is born" (1972). Historians and researchers are welcome. But in order to maintain continuity in my autobiographical presentation, I will briefly summarize some of the characteristic "incidents" I survived and their influence on my activities... Nothing changed after I had my talk with Mitrevski at the "Moscow" restaurant. His attitude towards his people remained the same. But, as his uncompromising associate, I felt it was my duty to defend the interests of the movement. I decided to write a summary report about the "shortcomings in our movement" and forwarded it to the CPM Central Committee. The Central Committee however (Tsvetko Uzunovski-Abas) rejected it and informed me that the summary report would have to be reviewed and accepted by our leadership bureau before anything could be done. At a glance it seemed like it was the right thing to do. Unfortunately no action was taken to "correct" the situation. This, by itself tells me that Mitrevski was occupying a privileged position which allowed him to influence the

leadership in Skopje. When the issue finally surfaced, Mitrevski naturally repented with much sincerity and self-criticism, which I believe was just an act, and seized the opportunity to put it to rest. And, while still playing the role of my sincere comrade he found ways to provoke me.

The problems that Greece was experiencing at the time were under consideration at the UN. The Soviet delegation had proposed reconciliation, general amnesty and general elections. One evening when we went for a walk Mitrevski asked me: “What do you think will happen to NOF if there is reconciliation, if we are given a general amnesty and if we are allowed to go back home?”

“There can be no reconciliation if NOF is liquidated!” I replied.

“But what if NOF is recognized as a democratic organization and then they find reasons to dissolve it!...” he said.

“What reasons could they possibly find after they recognize it...?” I asked.

“They will accuse all the NOF cadres of being agents of OZNA and spies. They will make claims that NOF is not a democratic organization but a spy ring, etc. They will then find someone who will admit to that...” Mitrevski explained.

I couldn't disagree.

During one of our meetings, in the presence of Nikola Minchev, we asked if we can request from OZNA not to convert NOF's apparatus into its own, but to orient itself towards the creation of a special apparatus.

At the next Bureau meeting I spoke about this and about some other issues. Mitrevski did not say anything about this. Later he apologized...

I was not called in to provide an explanation. Obviously, my “suspicious” loyalty or, more precisely, my “disloyalty” was self-evident. Or perhaps instead of me, Mitrevski himself, under his own

authority as head of the Bureau, gave them enough of an explanation... (You can find more information on this in my book "In the deep night dawn is born", p.236).

One more example:

I worked with the local residents collecting information on the Macedonian population for a long time which included how many Macedonian families lived in each village, in each district and so on, in Greek occupied Macedonia. When I was finished and after I had the information systematized, I had to travel to Belgrade and hand it over to the Yugoslav authorities as well as answer questions if required.

One day Mitrevski came to the bureau office. I was on duty sitting there. He looked around for a bit and then went out. It seemed to me like he was checking to see if I was there. About half an hour later he came back and told me to go and see Kolishevski, he was waiting for me.

I went immediately. His office was about three hundred meters away.

Kolishevski was not happy to see me. He was angry and yelled at me in a high tone of voice. He said he was waiting for me for a long time... But he had no right to behave like that and to humiliate me. But, I grinned and kept quiet. To his question if the material was ready...I said: "Yes!" Unfortunately someone else was sent to Belgrade to take credit for my work. (You can find more information on this in my book "In the deep night dawn is born", p.237).

There isn't and there can be no doubt that with this kind of masterful intrigue, which must be recognized, Mitrevski managed to draw and use the CPM leadership to remove many of our capable comrades from their positions. As for me, I was just stunned, but not completely knocked out...

The crossing of the ELAS Macedonian battalions into Yugoslavia or more accurately into the People's Republic of Macedonia, of course

was an event of great historical and political significance. Above all, this was a Macedonian revolutionary act against the discrimination, suppression and hindrance perpetrated by the CPG leadership “patriots” against the Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement. But this was nothing new. The Greeks from the entire Greek political spectrum, on the one hand, have been oppressing the Macedonian people since Macedonia’s illegal invasion, occupation and partition in 1912, 1913. And ever since then, the Macedonian people, on the other hand, have been trying to re-gain what they lost. So, there is absolutely nothing wrong with the Macedonian people trying to regain their independence and trying to reunite their Macedonia, which is an act of self-determination of a people clearly expressing a desire to live unified.... even if they have to live with the other Yugoslav nations.

The Greeks, of course, had no illusions about this Greek-Macedonian relationship. As early as 1945, my father received an official document from a Greek military court. It was my “my death sentence”. I was accused and found guilty “of high treason” against the Greek state and sentenced to death.

One time my comrades and members of NOF, sent me copies of the Solun Greek newspapers “To fos” and “Makedonia” as well as a book entitled “The Macedonian Question From the Aspect of Events in Almopia”, (the old Greek name of Meglen Region), in which my activities among the “native people” were deemed as high treason against the Greek state and nation.

Years later in Lerin, my father received another document with a new death sentence against me from another Greek military court. I was again accused of treason against Greece. It happened again later, for a third time...

This Greek negative attitude taken against me confirms that I was doing the right thing for the Macedonian cause and for the people, which gave me great pleasure and made me proud. It was recognition of my work and came directly from my opponent!

But, at the same time, I truly believe that my political, and possibly my physical liquidation, was planned here in Skopje. One of my

neighbours from Lerin, going by the name Hadzhi-Iliev, was sent here to keep an eye on me... to provoke me into doing something I would later regret. It is too long of a story for me to tackle it all here so I will only say a couple basic things about it.

a) I spoke about him with Dimitar Aleksievski-Pekar, then head of OZNA for Macedonia. He said nothing! But then the person who followed me like a shadow, a constant companion, suddenly disappeared forever... just like that! And Pekar miraculously forgot about it...

b) One day Hadzi-Iliev approached me and told me something provocative. He said: "Because you are a good friend I will tell you something very important. A group of Skopje chemists from Afion are making hashish. You often cross the border and no one searches you. All you need to do is transfer some hashish to Voden. You know there is a channel that links Voden, Solun, Alexandria, Cairo. There is plenty of money... brother... gold! Kilograms of gold! For the organization (meaning for NOF), and some for yourself... What do you say, huh?"

Hadzi-Iliev was well aware that I always gave my all to the struggle and I would have given even more if I had the chance. My wife Niki Kachorova was tortured in the ELAS camps together with the prostitutes, spies, and collaborators of the Italian, German and Bulgarian fascists. She did not endure and died before her time... Our son also died a little earlier. I lost them both and here I was still fighting in the struggle. In other words, I was not in this struggle for myself and for profit. Of course he emphasized that the "gold" would be for NOF however he couldn't help himself but say that "some of it would be for me!"

It was a very interesting proposal! I told him I will think about it and get back to him later...

But, instead of getting back to him, I went straight to Pekar and, low and behold, Hadzi-Iliev disappeared...

I was shaken and deeply offended. Apparently I had a powerful enemy who had the power to influence OZNA...

It was sometime in the middle of November 1946. I went from Enidzh-Vardar, through Gevgelia, to Kostur Region where, on November 21, 1946, I attended a NOF leadership meeting. While passing through Gevgelia, Aleko Kiaev, head of the local OZNA, told me that the people in Skopje were looking for me and wanted me to get in touch with OZNA in Skopje. But I did not want to meet with those people so I asked Aleko to convey my message and tell them that I wasn't going to Skopje, I had no work there. In other words I defied their orders. THAT WAS THE FIRST INCIDENT when the "blackness" in our ranks directly affected my actions.

In October 1949, on Zahariadis's orders and on those of the CPG and DAG leaderships, I was arrested as a Yugoslav agent. Vlantas, then a member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo and a DAG General, gave me half a pad of paper and three newly sharpened pencils and said:

"Write! Write down your betrayals from the start, from the time when you became Tito's agent in Skopje!"

I barely wrote two and a half pages. I focused mainly on the following three most fundamental things in my life:

- a) Doing my work. I worked with my heart all the time, to organize our people on mass to become involved in the joint struggle with the Greek people against the reactionaries and their foreign patrons.
- b) Being in the field. I felt free and at home among out people... but not when I was wasting my time in Skopje.
- c) Being in Skopje. In Skopje I was treated like an alien, a suspicious element, for which I have material evidence. In other words I saw for myself that I was an undesirable element, which had to be removed, even by some insidious manner, if necessary. And so on and so forth, in that spirit...

Of course what I wrote was completely unnecessary. But what Vlantas said to me rubbed me the wrong way. And so, this was the

SECOND INCIDENT, when the “blackness” in our ranks directly affected my actions.

Back in Skopje, I did nothing to expose the provocateur or those who sent the provocateur after me, and neither did I abandon what I was doing for our Macedonia. The provocations and provocateurs were just another occurrence in my everyday life with the movement. I continued with my active participation in leading our people in the revolutionary struggle, as if nothing had happened...

Something else also happened worth noting at this point. At different times and under different circumstances it was pointed out to me by a couple of comrades, that the “Security Services” allegedly and “in an official capacity” needed to “conduct security checks” on the various cadres. So, I ask myself, was this done to find dirt on them and prepare them for their grave if necessary...? This cannot be dismissed. I find this humiliating to have to point it out... but I am forced to.

As I mentioned earlier my enemies sentenced me to death three times... I am assuming here for working for our movement’s interests which was contrary to our enemy’s interests.

The crossing over of the ELAS Voden Macedonian Battalion to the People’s Republic of Macedonia, i.e. to Federal Yugoslavia, was an act of great political and historical significance and it was carried out under my command and initiative.

My activities as a member of the NOF top leadership and one of its founders, without a doubt have their value and importance...

These values, I mention here have been perceived even by our opponent, and yet here I am having been set aside and accused of wrong doing, of things I have not done... invented things. They created a trap for me and tried to push me into it. Who needed this trap and why was it necessary? The provocateur, who also had influence in OZNA, kept trying to get rid of me and by doing so allowed me to find out for myself that I was being politically liquidated, i.e. removed. As it turned out, there were some comrades who believed I too had the “dangerous” weakness just like the many

comrades who had been removed from our Macedonian national liberation movement. In particular, it turned out that, as they did, I also managed to see Mitrevski's true character and, as a consequence, without hesitation, "I was allowed" to have different opinions from his, that is, to oppose him...

Here I will refer to a characteristic moment from our movement in this part of Macedonia. Personal ambitions and a struggle for supremacy is a phenomenon that occurs in almost every movement. The difference from one case to another however is in the intensity and size of the phenomenon.

This kind of phenomenon, personal ambitions and a struggle for supremacy, also existed in the ranks of our Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement. I prepared a brochure entitled "NOF" (1947), with Keramidziev's knowledge and some cooperation. The brochure was intended for the delegates of the 1st NOF Congress. In it I wrote about NOF's ideological foundations and the struggle our people were leading alongside the Greek people. Mitrevski made an "objection" exactly on the same day the congress was held. Our Greek friends, understandably, were expecting that. It turned out that Keramidziev too was expecting it, who then accepted Mitrevski's "objection". Maybe I am wrong, but it looked to me like both of them were afraid that I was becoming too popular. The brochure was scrapped for allegedly having "nationalistic" content. In other words it was not given out to the delegates and almost all the samples were burned by Kotsopoulos. In the brochure's introduction I wrote:

"The Slovo-Macedonian National Liberation Movement is a reality. Its beginning is merging with the beginning of the national resistance movement of the Greek people.

Organizationally – the movement is forming under NOF.

Politically - its goals are formed in NOF's political program.

Extremism, of course, is not absent - but it will be successfully eradicated in time.

Today the movement is imposed in the consciousness of all - even in the consciousness of our enemies. It exists, acts and puts its own stamp on the situation here in Macedonia. 'Elections' and 'referendum' - these are confirming examples that appear before our eyes. Regarding the case of 'election' from 100% abstinence, they did not fall below 70% regionally. In the case of the 'referendum', the same percentage of people who had the opportunity to vote, voted with white (blank) ballots. This was all NOF's work:

The movement has friends... the Greek democratic people are its friends.

The movement has its enemies - they are the enemies of democracy in Greece. But the movement has friends and enemies outside of Greece. They are the friends and enemies of Greek people abroad. But:

How did this happen? ... What are the causes?"

This was the introduction in the brochure. Then, immediately under number 1, the title of the next paragraph, was the answer to the question asked:

"IT EXPRESSES THE TRUE NEEDS FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE SLAVO-MACEDONIAN PEOPLE!

The aforementioned struggle for supremacy had no relation to the character of our Macedonian anti-fascist movement. The movement itself was always clean, temperate and strong, because it was universal and unique. This, indeed, was a very characteristic moment. The struggle for supremacy in NOF did not take place at the ground level with the participation of the masses, but mainly up at the top leadership level with the assistance of external factors such as the CPG and CPM leaderships. The first to take advantage of their differences was the CPG which hijacked the struggle for its own special purposes. The CPM too, skillfully dragged along and used it for its special purposes. Given my personal experience with both I have no doubt about this at all. The events themselves, as we experienced them, confirm this bitter truth about us...

As I mentioned earlier, in November 1946, NOF was placed under the CPG leadership while its military formations in the mountains Paiak, Kaimakchalan and Vicho were placed under the command of DAG. This is what was said about this in the famous INI edition entitled “Aegean Storms”: “The NOF leadership in Voden Region was charged with having made an agreement with the CPG to betray the expectations of the Macedonian people. This was a ‘second Varkiza (betrayal) for the Macedonians’... The activists in Voden Region pointed out that this was a wrong move that would negatively affect the development of the Macedonian liberation movement and the struggle against the Monarcho-fascists in Greece...” (45)

Of course, nobody in Voden Region ever told me that merging our combat units with those of the Greek people was a wrong move and by which we failed the expectations of the Macedonian people. In reality, as it happened, just after the units were merged the struggle against the Monarcho-fascists began to gain momentum and became more massive. Here again Aianovski, author of “Aegean Storms”, used his imagination when he put his words on paper three decades later, and decided to politically bury the entire NOF-KOEM managing asset which struggled on the hot terrain, by proclaiming that they, by name and surname, were all traitors! (46) It is certain, and not without foundation, that the well-known comments Vangel Aianovski made in “Aegean Storms” were structured with the “revolution” beginning and ending with himself. Aianovski wrote a beautiful autobiography in which he threw mud on others, and at the same time highly praised himself with someone else’s effort...

As for me, who truly appreciated Aianovski’s contributions as an activist of the Macedonian national liberation movement, it was incomprehensible how low this man had allowed himself to fall.

This affected me as well. Some years after the book “Aegean Storms” was published, the editorial board of the journal “Istoria” (2/1981) announced:

“In regard to the reaction of the Macedonians in Voden Region... against the NOF-CPG merging agreement as was carried out in November 1946, Rakovski simply and without much thought argued

that the agreement was not NOF's work, but that the leadership was allegedly given a directive from above. Rakovski alluded to the fact that the directive allegedly came from the CPY. Here Pavle Rakovski was playing with very dangerous misinformation. The most cruel misinformation is that the Yugoslav leadership gave the NOF leadership a directive, with no discussion, to unite with the CPG (of course, this is arbitrary, a fabrication, with no evidence to confirm it). But the truth is completely different. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia's leadership, in the interests of the struggle, suggested to NOF to settle with the CPG and unite its forces under conditions acceptable to both sides. In fact, Pavle Rakovski himself and other NOF leaders have written in their reports about the CPG's failure to comply with the agreement. What this means is that if there was a direct order and not an agreement, then there could not have been a place for negotiations and an agreement..." (p. 291)

It is hard for me to understand why they would want to distort history. Namely, the truth is exactly that... the truth. The agreement was not "negotiated" by NOF's leadership. It was communicated down to the NOF leadership (to the secretariat) as a directive from above, both from the CPM, CPY and from CPG. The "agreement" and other relevant issues were worked out between the two Communist Parties (Tempo-Ververis-Zimas, Tempo-Siantos, Tsvetko Uzunovski-Leonidas Stringos, Mitrevski-Zahariadis, etc.) and openly published, so it makes no sense in this case to make it a secret. It is well-known that Mitrevski followed the CPY/CPM Central Committee's direction and instructions when he was negotiating the establishment of the disrupted combat unity between the Greek and Macedonian revolutionary movements with the Greek side, i.e. between the CPG and NOF. Here is one of those published reports by Mitrevski on how the negotiations and the difficulties that were encountered took place:

REPORT

"The four comrades from the main leadership were located in four different places. Comrade Dzhodzho was located in Kaimakchalan, Comrade Pavle Rakovski in Paiak, Comrade Keramidziev in Vicho and Comrade Mincho (Fotev) in Gramos in Epirus. I took statements

from all four who were characteristically in agreement with the points as they applied to each of their areas separately...”

Other than that, Mitrevski has also long and widely spoken about the above-mentioned basic points. In the fourth point, among other things, he wrote:

“4) After the last negotiations and cooperation that I had with Comrade Zahariadis and other CPG comrades, it was jointly determined as to how we would cooperate in our merging with the CPG. All points were well covered. Had these points been genuinely accepted by the CPG, the problem would have been solved, and we would have been back to work in our respective areas. But, sadly, lacking the courage to implement what was agreed upon on the baseline that we had covered together, the CPG comrades began to distort things... The points on which our work basically collapsed were:

a) The military question. There is no doubt that Comrade Zahariadis was in complete agreement with the preservation of the Macedonian groups as completely separate units, without any thought of merging them with the Greek units. Each area, however, would share a common Headquarters for both groups. Zahariadis clearly said to me that both Macedonian and Greek units would exist in the first phase so that we could establish a Macedonian army with its own headquarters. Now the CPG comrades, who hold Party positions in various areas, endeavour to dismantle the Macedonian groups, and they demand that the Macedonian partisans join the Greek units. In other words, there would be no Macedonian groups...”

In the fifth point, among other things, Mitrevski wrote:

“5) Another issue with which our people did not agree was the way the Party set up the NOB (National Liberation War) paramilitary cadres in the common CPG party leaderships and other political organizations... They expressed aspirations for changing the party and in general NOF’s managerial staff with their own people who care very little for NOF. They are striving, not for NOF’s empowerment, but for its weakening, so that tomorrow it may de facto disperse, as was the case with the old SNOF...” (47)

On November 21, 1946, at the extraordinary meeting of the Secretariat, i.e. of NOF's Presidency, held in the village Turie, Lerin Region, Mitrevski together with Skotidas, CPG representative and DAG general, delivered the final agreement point by point as issued by a directive from above. This is what happened. This is the truth... Actually, from Mitrevski's published reports, it is not difficult to figure out who was leading and managing the course and the difficulties in the Voden negotiations. However, the "Istoria" editorial board has taken it upon itself to publicly declare me an anti-party element that spread the "harshesht" and "most dangerous misinformation" against the CPM (CPY), only because I pointed out the fact that the agreement was not the work of the NOF leadership, of which I was a member, but the work of both the CPM (CPY) and CPG leaderships. However, the most abnormal and unacceptable issue with them seemed to be something else. When I called the "Istoria" editorial office a year ago, offering them information with proof that would crystallize and establish the truth, they rejected my offer. I then wrote a letter, dated April 20, 1983, asking Dr. Risto Kiriazovski why I had been insulted personally. Even more than that... Why I was publicly accused of being an anti-party element that "spreads brutal attacks and slander against the CPM and CPY in general..." ("Istoria", 2/81, p. 295.) Nothing came of it. However, as a matter of fact I did notice Kiriazovski starting to address more questions from our recent history. And with the publication of "Istoria", put forward those questions on the agenda for other historians and for the general public to address. Of course, that was perfectly normal. The publication itself in its existence was contributing to clarifying historical issues and coming closer to the truth... In the accompanying text I sent Kiriazovski I wrote: "I take no pleasure and will not throw back personal insults and accusations against you because it would be disrespectful to the readers. I am only interested in dealing with the clarification of events and in establishing the truth with help from known source documents from that time. In doing so, I am firmly convinced that by defending the truth I am most effectively defending myself... Do not succumb to pressures and refuse the attached text. I know from personal experience that they will come and they will tell you something similar... Discontinue this discussion because these things are not good for public consumption. However, this is not the case with the

accompanying text. I work exclusively with already published documents from that time...”

They apologized but again refused my request...

Now let us go back... According to the agreement:

Mitreviski was co-opted member of the CPG Provincial Bureau for Macedonia-Thrace, and made an instructor of NOF.

Dzhodzhko was co-opted member of DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia and a representative of NOF.

Mincho Fotev was co-opted member of the EPON Provincial Bureau, and a representative of NOMS.

Keramidziev, Rakovski and Vera were co-opted to lead the NOF secretariat.

The NOF Presidents at the district boards were to assume the functions of instructors in their districts, and others would be selected to take their place.

NOF was to be placed under the CPG leadership, which would be realized directly and through Mitrevski.

The NOF military units were to be placed under DAG command as separate Macedonian units...

This agreement, as it was well-known, was well played by the Greek side. The Macedonian military formations were withdrawn from Macedonia and sent deep into the Greek south, where they were destroyed... The NOF leadership itself was also destroyed through the NOF Congress and via the NOF Central Council 1st Plenum, when NOF's current leadership was replaced with a “new anti-Macedonian leadership” consisting mainly of Greek Supremacists.

It is true that “Rakovski himself, as well as other NOF leaders, wrote about the CPG defaulting on this agreement in their reports”. But there is more. It was said that: “If the agreement was given only

as a directive, then it means that there could not have been a place for objections!” But all this is a kind of verbal acrobatics that supports a false claim. What were these often talked about objections...? Condemning the act “of being played” means asking for consistency in the application of the agreement, i.e. supporting it, and not objecting to it.

And that’s what happened to me:

“Pavle Rakovski not once, and by no accident, has emphasized that NOF has never been independent and was influenced and managed by the CPM (CPY)... What is the goal and in whose interest is this misinformation being spread by him..?”

The above statement was quoted in the journal “Istoria” on page 293. They continue to publicly accuse me of spreading “disinformation” against the CPM (CPY).

Simply unbelievable! “O kosmos tohi timbano, ke mis krifo kamari!” (A drum beats to the world, and we make a secret of it!) This is how the neighbouring people around Greece are expressing themselves as to what was happening... Let us now list a few more important facts:

The withdrawal of the ELAS Macedonian battalions to the People’s Republic of Macedonia, with the consent of the CPM (CPY) of course, was no secret to anyone...

The creation of the Political Commission for Aegean Macedonia in Bitola, led by representatives of the CPM Central Committee, cannot be a secret. It happened publicly in front of the people of Bitola and in front of the world, and a program declaration was published...

The political commission organized protest rallies with the Macedonians in Bitola who had fled Greek occupied Macedonia. I was there with them.

On November 18, 1944, a representative from the NOV and POJ General Headquarters for Macedonia gave the then newly formed

Aegean Brigade a battle flag. The flag was presented in front of the Political Committee and in front of a large number of spectators. The event ended with the battalions and the brigade parading in front of the Political Committee and in front of the people of Bitola...

In April 1945, the Political Committee ceased to exist and was replaced by the NOF Central Executive Board for Aegean Macedonia, which was constituted on April 23, 1945 by the CPM Central Committee. NOF's activities were managed by the CPM Central Committee through its representatives (Pekar and Minchev). Almost every report generated by this leadership regarding the situation in Greek occupied Macedonia was published in the edition "Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War". Sadly the editorial board did not specify to whom these NOF reports were directed. Were they naively making an attempt to hide something that was commonly known? Everyone knew about our frequent visits to the field and about our returning to Skopje for meetings with members of the main leadership. By that I am saying everyone who was interested in all of Skopje and Bitola knew about us, including the CPG representatives who resided in Skopje. Even the report content itself unambiguously showed to whom those reports were directed...

According to published documents, as early as June 1943, Tempo took a trip to central Greece in order to reach a military and political alliance agreement for a joint Balkan Headquarters with the CPG and ELAS, which apparently was achieved. But the Greek side abandoned this agreement in August 1943... only because of Macedonia...

Also, according to published documents of that time, in September 1943, a representative of the CPM Central Committee met with a representative of the CPG and managed to reach an agreement in which, among other things, the Greek side was to issue a Macedonian newspaper, in the Macedonian language, and to create separate Macedonian partisan units. But this agreement too was not implemented by the Greek side...

These are some of the more important, and otherwise well-known, events in which the interests and concerns of the victorious socialist revolution in Yugoslavia came to the fore regarding the fate of the “national struggle” in neighbouring Greece in general, and especially regarding the fate of our Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement. Of course, such interests and concerns are quite understandable and justified when one takes into consideration the fact that the “patriotic” CPG line for “national unity” with the domestic bourgeoisie practically meant a line of anti-communism, anti-socialism (and anti-Macedonian-ism) which led to a “national struggle” subordinated to the English imperialists. There is no doubt that this line was anti-Macedonian because the Macedonians came under severe fire with much discrimination, suppression and the destruction of the Macedonian national liberation movement. Another thing; The dissolution of the independent Political Commission along with the Aegean Brigade and the formation of the NOF organization, which was dependent on the CPM-CPY, was a hasty solution, or whatever you want to call it, which provoked much reaction on the Greek side at the expense of our people. We will talk about it later...

But despite what I presented and offered, the editorial office still accused me of being an anti-Party element that spreads misinformation... Although widely familiar with the events presented, the publication “Istoria” still tried to arbitrarily and unreasonably publicly declare me a menace. So, I would like to ask: “What was the purpose or my motive for creating this misinformation?” I don’t think there is anyone out there who will take this low blow seriously...

On November 21, 1946, during a meeting held in the village Turie, Lerin Region, at the time when “unity” was established, new tasks were assigned to each individual. My task was to urgently find the necessary people and technical means to organize a central agitation and propaganda department at the central council and begin publishing the newspaper “Nepokoren” and the magazine “Nova Makedonika” central organs of NOF and AFZH, as well as issuing leaflets, brochures and other cultural and educational material and propaganda. I arrived in Skopje sometime in late November. As it turned out I had to stay there all of December and did not return to

the field until January 4, 1947. By then I had acquired all the necessary technical means as well as the people, which included Paskal Paskalevski, Foti Ilkovski and Naso Gitovski, to do the job. Before leaving Skopje I decided to go to the CPM Central Committee office and visit my comrades but I only found Comrade Tsvetko Uzunovski-Abas. We had a few cordial words and a brief conversation about the establishment of “unity” with the Greek side. From my long-standing personal experience with our Greek friends I was well aware that such a “unity” between Macedonians and Greeks could easily be compared to the unity established between the Hindu soldiers and their English commanders. I said to Comrade Abas: “Our Greek friends are not honest. They will remove us all from the NOF leadership and will appoint their own people who they trust and they will be picked from a pool of Greek supremacists... What will we do then...?”

“There is no returning to us... You will be disciplined... You will go, even as simple soldiers if it’s necessary, wherever they send you...” replied Comrade Abas.

What did he mean by that? Did he mean that our Macedonian anti-fascist movement in Greek occupied Macedonia ceased to have a backbone? At least that was my impression... But, as it turned out, we were abandoned by our previous backers... It would appear that the victorious socialist revolution in Yugoslavia could no longer interfere in the development of events in neighbouring Greece. The CPY Central Committee tried to influence this development, but only through letters to the CPG Central Committee... letters that were hushed up and completely ignored. Of course, it was not possible to expect anything different from the CPG leadership which had a tendency to ignore things and simply not implement them, even if their signatures were on them. Our Macedonian anti-fascist movement was literally left without a spine!

Immediately after returning to the field, my NOF agitation and propaganda department was ready to begin work. The only thing that remained was where to establish it. I was waiting for orders from the Party leadership, i.e. from the CPG Bureau for Macedonia-Thrace, on where to establish our headquarters from where we were

expected to accommodate and organize ties with NOF, AFZH and NOMS and to serve the various DAG units.

After some delay, Petris, CPG Bureau organizing secretary, picked out the village Kotili on Mount Voios as our headquarters. I found it to be far beyond the NOF, AFZH and NOMS areas, but we did as we were ordered by Petris who promised to provide us with “immediate party assistance”.

We were isolated, without any connections and too far from NOF, AFZF and NOMS so what kind of work were we expected to do? On top of that the Party assistance that was promised never materialized. But, despite the many difficulties we had, we slowly began to establish connections... But just then, a new “Party directive” was issued, ordering us to destroy the connections we made and to immediately leave Kotili, head for the liberated territory and wait for a new directive!

On our way we stopped in one of the villages and waited for ten days for our new directive to arrive. But nothing! No one contacted us. Then, something unexpected happened. Three Spitfires appeared out of the blue and in clear open skies and began to bomb the house in which we were staying. After circling the village, during the first pass they then lined up and began to drop bombs on the very house we were in. They flew over us several times, dropped their bombs and then left. Some of the bombs did hit the house and caused extensive structural damage but none of us was hit, and neither was our equipment... The village was headquarters to a large DAG unit. This village also accommodated some of the heads of political organizations. But, as it turned out, they only bombed the house we were in! Obviously, someone must have informed them and pointed out the target for the enemy spitfires...

As it turned out, our NOF, AFZH and NOMS agitation and propaganda department headquarters was moved to a village called Likorahi in Epirus (outside of Greek occupied Macedonia). If Kotili was far beyond the areas where NOF, AFZH and NOMS operated, Likorahi was not even in Macedonia at all. But here we were told we would have “immediate party assistance”, and we would receive materials for our work through Party channels.

However, days, weeks and months passed by and no “party assistance” or materials arrived! But to be honest, I had no illusions about any of this...

Located in the woods not far above the village Likorahi was DAG’s General Headquarters. I went there to see Stringos whom I met for the first time. He received me in his office, a spacious barracks made of planks. I assume he had invited me there to see what I looked like. (48) He probably wanted to see what the “traitor” who “stole” the ELAS Macedonian battalion from Kaimakchalan looked like. I must have inconvenienced him when he was secretary of the Bureau for Macedonia. He was sitting in front of his massive table drinking coffee. He had a hardened face looking like it was made of grey clay. After a quick inquisitive glance at me his eyes drifted towards the window. I greeted him but he ignored my greeting. I looked right at his face but he continued to look through the window with “devastating” indifference, completely “ignoring” my presence. He gave me the impression that the branches in front of his window were more important than me. He held himself more superior than any of the gods of Olympus could, before an ordinary mortal. Obviously, by doing this he wanted to let me know that for him I was nothing and nobody. He continued to drink coffee, watching the branches in front of his window, without saying a single word. He did not even ask me to sit down...

Sometime later during a meeting with Zahariadis, we proposed to separate the Macedonian fighters from the common units and create unique Macedonian DAG units. The idea was to have Greek and Macedonian units compete against each other to see who would have greater success, which would contribute more to their fighting skills and so on. By doing so, we would strengthen and improve our combat activities in all of DAG.

He thought about it for a few seconds and said no! He then went on to say that all current battalions and brigades need to be disbanded because this is no good!

And that was the end of that point, which got me thinking. Why is this “no good”? Competition is always good and will achieve much more in DAG than what we currently have.

Then I found the answer:

It is “no good” because there were Greek fears that the Macedonian side of the struggle would be strongly promoted, with the addition of many new volunteers and, above all, would be widely promoted in the entire world. With such a struggle the Macedonian people would write their own Macedonian history, as it happened, fighting together with their Greek comrades in a common struggle, and the Macedonian struggle could no longer be hidden or presented as a Greek struggle. This, it seems to me, is why Zahariadis so quickly gave up on the competition idea in general and on reinforcing DAG in particular. Only later, especially after the conclusion of the CPG Central Committee VI Extended Plenum held in March 1956, I finally and slowly came to the realization that Zahariadis was generally responsible for “undermining DAG’s victory”... (49)

Anyway, Zahariadis was right in this case. Namely, if we were to separate the Macedonian fighters from the common units and create unique Macedonian units it would have meant that there were no uniquely “GREEK” battalions and brigades in the main revolutionary hotspot in Greek occupied Macedonia. After “unity” was established, and according to the NOF directive, Macedonian fighters began to join DAG en masse. So, there is no other way to describe this than to say these battalions and brigades were created with Macedonians... So here we were and this bloated man named Stringos, standing in front of me, in reality looked like a hilarious caricature. Why was he posturing like a god? Was he that ignorant? I don’t know. I briefly said, what he already knew, “I don’t have any work here... I am leaving!”

He did not even try to stop me. In his superior tone of voice he lazily mumbled:

“So, go then!”

With this unique blurt of three words, this man from the Party of Olympus started and ended his conversation with me... a mere mortal man... The NOF-AFZH-NOMS central agitation and propaganda department returned to Macedonia and, on May 1, 1947, LONG AFTER “UNITY” WAS ESTABLISHED, we managed to publish the first issue of “Nepokoren” with barely one hundred copies and in a very small format the size of a math exercise book. We had no paper! We were only allowed to obtain paper from the regional Party organs and from nowhere else. Why was this, I don’t know? I tried to convince Keramidziev to organize the purchase of the bulk of our paper independently from Lerin, Kostur, Voden or Solun, but he disagreed. He said this would violate the Party’s directive which stated that: “Paper supplies must be obtained only through the party...” This was ridiculous... It would have made more sense if he had said he simply did not want to spend the organization’s money on paper...

We did our best and utilized our resources to the maximum to continue to operate the Macedonian press. In the second issue of “Nepokoren” we included information on the 1st NOF-AFZH-NOMS Conference Resolution and managed to print 70 copies of which 20 were sent to Voden Region. Unfortunately, during their delivery the courier was arrested and the newspapers were destroyed. The newspapers were destroyed and the courier was arrested by Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis, a Party committee secretary in Voden.

The printed word in the native Macedonian language, which for decades had been banned by official Greece, was in public again being spread from hand to hand and bringing excitement and warming the hearts of the Macedonian people. The resurfacing of the Macedonian language alone was a significant driving force that mobilized the Macedonian people in the struggle for their survival and for a decent life in the Greek state. It was this kind of driving force that frightened our Greek Party and DAG comrades who wasted no time to suppress it and prevent it from developing. The fact that in the entire year of 1947, the Macedonian newspaper “Nepokoren”, and let us not speak of “Nova Makedonka”, managed to come out only five times, editions 1 to 5, shows not only how our Greek comrades used everything in their arsenal to suppress and

destroy it, but also how determined the people in the agitation and propaganda department were in keeping it going...

Regarding the question of NOF being “independent” here is what was said in the works “Istoria”: “The claim that Oche (Aianovski) made that NOF was independent, and according to Pavle Rakovski that it was losing its independence because its leadership was at fault, is simple demagogy... It shows that Pavle Rakovski had given up on the very thing for which he himself had always advocated. The fact is that NOF, despite having been put under the leadership of the CPG in November 1946, managed to preserve its autonomy until its First Congress in January 1948. NOF’s autonomy was lost when Zahariadis managed to infiltrate NOF and place his own people into it, who then opposed the NOF leadership.” (50)

Of course, this explanation makes sense if you look at the situation from the distance. This was the opinion of people who were not in the process, that is, not only were they not participants in the events, but draw the wrong conclusions about the appearance of things from afar. And the phrase “NOF... losing its independence because its leadership was at fault...” is only spoken by the need to strike at the NOF leadership and, in the spirit of Aianovski’s well-known effort, to scorn and disqualify those comrades. Otherwise, there is no talk of NOF’s autonomy. Namely, NOF was a Macedonian organization headed by the communists and members of the CPM/CPY and the CPG. Accordingly, NOF was never a separate independent organization that stood between the two communist parties. The Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia was the subject of controversy, discussion and cooperation between the CPM/CPY and the CPG. Tempo was in Greece, Abas was in Solun and there were other similar contacts made over time. The various phases of the Macedonian liberation movement did not occur spontaneously or “independently”. It was a reflection of the engagement and activities in both the CPM/CPY and CPG. After NOF was formed, it operated for a year and a half under the CPM/CPY’s leadership. NOF was also under the CPM/CPY leadership when it was transferred and placed under the CPG leadership. In other words, the Macedonian communists who stood at the helm of the Macedonian liberation movement always worked under the leadership of the CPM/CPY or CPG. This is how

it was... But, of course, some call it misinformation and plain demagoguery. And then when NOF was put under the CPG they speak of losing its autonomy because the NOF leadership was somehow “at fault”. And that, I suppose, explains everything...

Let us now take a closer look at the unfounded assertion that NOF managed to preserve its autonomy until its First Congress. Here are some of the specific events that took place:

After visiting the Macedonian squads and units and after enforcing the unity agreement, Mitrevski disappeared from the terrain for a period of six months. He isolated himself in Skopje at the Greek representative’s office working on some “Party directives”.

Rakovski was with NOF’s central agitation and propaganda department working on some appropriate “party directives” and remained isolated for a period of six months in Voios, Epirus, outside the reach of the NOF organizations.

Keramidzhiev and Vera were left alone for a period of six months, and thus far it is unknown what kind of “party directive” they were working on. In other words, it is unknown where they were and what they were doing. Perhaps Keramidzhiev wrote about it in his memoirs?

Historically, this was the last check of the correctness of the famous Greek chauvinistic “theory” that claims that: “There is no Macedonian nation and therefore there can be no genuine Macedonian movement!” According to the same Greeks, these NOF people were not Macedonians but “adventurous elements” who were out there sowing seeds of discontentment in the peaceful ‘Slavophone’ villages. Remove them, neutralize them and everything will be fine and peaceful again. At the time of the unity agreement, the goal was to open a frontal attack, instigated by the leaders of the “split”, under the influence and pressure from the huge party authority... But that was not achieved... It did not come true. So now, immediately after the agreement, they tried to isolate the leaders to see what would happen... whether the NOF movement would fail or not...

As was said earlier, according to the “unity” agreement, the immediate secretariat of NOF was reduced to Keramidzhiev, Rakovski and Vera. This was their new assignment. They were tasked by the Party to carry out their assignments in a way that suited the Party. But even after six months of isolation, members of this secretariat still managed to come together for a meeting and, as we know, decided to choose Vangel Aianovski-Oche member of the secretariat responsible for organizational matters... which was done. But nothing became of Aianovski. The Party intervened and reversed the decision... Aianovski was then immediately dismissed...

According to the “unity” agreement, NOF and its agitation and propaganda department was to act in accordance with party guidelines, working closely with the Party leadership and party organizations in Greek occupied Macedonia. The NOF agitation and propaganda department was to closely cooperate with the other corresponding party agitation and propaganda departments for its supply of necessary materials and paper. Anything above that would be taken care of by the Party leadership, that is, the Party organization.

According to the above events presented here, there is no doubt that NOF was not “autonomous” and the CPG leadership responsible for managing it could not hide its anti-Macedonian character...

These are the facts. It was not after the 1st NOF Congress, but immediately after the “unity” agreement was made that the Greek leaders began to implement their plans to destroy NOF and the Macedonian liberation movement in general...

It would be interesting, as a valuable lesson, to see how and why Zahariadis and the CPG leadership accepted and acknowledged NOF. The accepted thesis in our historiography is that Zahariadis reversed his policy regarding NOF as a result of the decision made to militarily engage the Monarcho-fascists in Greece, something that could not have been imagined without the Macedonians and without NOF. But it is well-known that Zahariadis did not want a military confrontation with the Monarcho-fascists. He did what he did in order to undermine DAG’s victory, for which he was expelled from

the party. If that was so our accepted thesis then falls short and must be rejected.

Now let us look at the events and let the facts speak for themselves.

As we all know, the unfriendly campaign against the Macedonian communists and against the activists of the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement was initiated by Siantos's CPG leadership during the national liberation war against the fascist occupiers, and was continued by Zahariadis's leadership at an even greater intensity.

But, parallel to that, something new, invented and cunning came up.

On May 16, 1944, the "Etnikon Simvoulion" (National Council) passed an Act in which the Macedonian people were treated as Greeks and the "Greek character" of Macedonia was proclaimed.

In the meantime, the central Party organs KOMEP and RIZOPASTIS proclaimed that Macedonia was Attica (meaning there were no Macedonians in Macedonia). In contrast to that, the Party newspaper LAIKI FONY quoted ELAS commanders Bakirdzis and Sarafis claiming that the Macedonian people were Slavophone Greeks.

On the other hand we have program documents from EAM, ELAS and PEEA, which completely ignore the existence of the Macedonian people.

There is also the Greek concept that "no Macedonian Question exists for Greece", which gave birth to the anti-Macedonian policy with regards to the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement.

Then, contrary to all that, THE PARTY PRESS BEGAN TO LEAD A DIFFERENT KIND OF CAMPAIGN:

On June 16, 1945, the newspaper "Rizospastis" published an article entitled POLICY OF NATIONAL EQUALITY. Among other things, it said that the CPG's position regarding the

MACEDONIAN QUESTION was full equality for the
MACEDONIAN NATIONAL MINORITY in the Greek state.

On July 8, 1945, “Rizospastis” published another article entitled “THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SLAVO-MACEDONIANS”. In this article it stressed that the Macedonian people were a separate nation, with their own history, culture, language, traditions, songs, etc., which are similar to those of the “Slavo-Macedonians in Yugoslavia”. The article went on to say that the historical truth about the Slavo-Macedonians must be emphasized and that they should not be accused of being “Bulgarians” and that the Slavo-Macedonians played the most resolute role in destroying the counter-bands...

On August 24, 1945, according to LAIKI FONI from August 25, 1945, Zahariadis stood in front of 120,000 people in Solun and, among other things, spoke about the very difficult situation the Macedonians were facing due to a terror campaign waged against them by the Greek racists elements, and asked the Party and the other democratic organizations to help them in their fight against terror, to take them under their own protection, and so on...

At a CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace meeting, held on December 26 and 27, 1945, for the first time Zahariadis spoke about the Macedonian national liberation movement and publicly said that NOF was a people’s democratic organization with which he needed to co-operate. According to LAIKI FONI from December 28, 1945, Zahariadis said: “We go shoulder to shoulder with the Slavo-Macedonians against the domestic Monarcho-fascists and against the counter-band autonomists and their foreign backers who encourage and finance them both...”

On January 13, 1946, Rizopastis defended the “Slavo-Macedonians against the terrible and incredible ill-treatment...” The persecution of the Macedonian people was described as “the greatest and most terrible persecution known to mankind in the history of Greece... An entire army of terrorists is spilling unprecedented rage and perpetrating unspeakable atrocities against them. They are being tortured, arrested, tormented like animals, robbed of their possessions and women and girls are being raped. The mercenaries

relentlessly raid and devastate their villages... I (Solon Grigoriadis author of the article) saw a village in which 90% of the men were arrested and taken away. Some villages were completely empty...! They all fled en masse. A whole village was fleeing to the mountains to seek shelter. Some people were fleeing to Yugoslavia to save themselves...!”

On February 7, 1946, Leonidas Stringos, Secretary of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace, in an article titled “The struggle for democracy and the problem with the Slavo-Macedonians”, published in PROTOPOROS (number 1/1946), a monthly organ of the same Bureau, explained the CPG’s position with regards to the Macedonian Question, and then advocated for greater cooperation and understanding between the CPG and NOF...

The reactionary (Monarcho-Fascist) press in its anti-Macedonian hysteria, especially in Solun, tried to portray the Macedonian people as the “Sudetes of Greece” and, allegedly in the interests of peace in Greece and the Balkans, demanded that they be forcibly expelled from the Greek state. In an editorial article entitled “True and False Sudetes” published in May 1946, in response to the reactionary press article “Protoporos”, organ of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace, in disclosing the aims of this defamatory campaign, described the Czechoslovak Sudetes as a fifth column in their role in favour of Hitler’s Germany and pointed out the fact that the Macedonian people took a massive part in the struggle against the fascist occupiers and, on top of that, they were also responsible for breaking up the counter-band autonomist movement in Greek occupied Macedonia, so it is not possible to look at them any different than as a progressive anti-fascist factor or material force of peace and democracy in Greece and the Balkans.

There were more such stories published by the central Party press. It was as if they were coming around and painting a different picture of the Macedonians all around Greek occupied Macedonia, especially around the Macedonian countryside and the main party organizations on the ground. At first glance this looked like the Greek leadership, in a “twist”, had “changed” their attitude towards the Macedonian liberation movement and towards the Macedonian

people. This is how the situation was also evaluated by our Macedonian leading authors and by our historiography.

But we should not be fooling ourselves. At the same time our Greek comrades and Party leaders led this new and different campaign in the press, a campaign of friendship and solidarity with the Macedonian people, they continued with their hostile campaign against leading Macedonian Communists, the most conscious people and most active bearers of the Macedonian national ideals. The goal here was obvious. While pretending they were all for the Macedonian cause, they compromised, slandered and destroyed the most valuable Macedonian people, the leaders of the movement. And with their destruction they aimed to behead and defile the Macedonian national liberation movement until it was destroyed.

Proof of this was delivered in February 1946, during the CPG Central Committee II Plenum. Despite the “nice things” the CPG press was publishing about the Macedonian people in general, the CPG officially treated the Macedonians NOT AS PART OF ANOTHER AND UNIQUE NATION, but as a “mass of people”, a “Slavophone population” which lived in Greek occupied Macedonia on the lands of the Greek state. During the II Plenum the CPG proclaimed that it will fight for “the recognition of rights and equality” (51) as a Slavophone population, but without NOF’s leadership. And so the Party regional press (local) in Macedonia continued its hostilities against the NOF leadership, even after the II Plenum.

The fact that NOF was founded without the participation of our Greek friends, without their assistance and contrary to their wishes and plans, exacerbated their anti-Macedonian sentiments. And as General Markos used to say, this was a “gross mistake” made by the top CPG leadership. As I have already said it was only a matter of time before the leading Macedonians would be destroyed. There was extreme pressure from the Party authorities for that to happen so that the Macedonian national liberation movement would slowly be diversified until it disappeared.

But, in spite of the CPG’s effort to destroy NOF, instead of weakening and decaying, the Macedonian national liberation

movement grew, expanded and became more significant, especially NOF's armed wing. Unfortunately all this worked against "Greek national interests" and was getting dangerously close to jeopardizing the "Greek character" of Macedonia.

So, tactics had to change...

Zahariadis again turned to the Party press and began to promote his new tactics. Using the Macedonian people's natural aspiration for freedom, he called on the Macedonian fighters to join the Greek revolutionary forces in a "unified struggle" led by the CPG. With his declarations, which turned out to be just empty words, Zahariadis recognized NOF and, like a kind of Trojan horse entering the wide door of a fortress, managed to take possession of it.

And as NOF fell into his hands, so did its military formations. They too fell into Zahariadis's hands...!

The first thing the Zahariadis leadership sought to achieve immediately after establishing "unity" was to prevent the NOF leadership from doing its work. And it succeeded... For the next six months after "unity" was established, that is from November 21, 1946 to May 20, 1947, when the NOF leaders got together for a meeting, the NOF leadership sat idle. In other words Paskal Mitrevski, then instructor of the CPG Macedonian Committee, and the NOF Secretariat consisting of Keramidziev, Rakovski and Vera did not meet at all or take any action to guide the organization. In the meantime the NOF-AFZH organizations on the ground waited to see what would happen because they had no confidence in their Greek comrades who were in charge of them.

I was very upset when I came back to Macedonia from Epirus. Upon my return I managed to convince comrades Vera and Keramidiev that our Greek friends had aims to turn NOF into a dysfunctional organization and strip it of its revolutionary character and effectiveness. I suggested it was time for us to resist. It was time to call a meeting, gather all the regional and district leaderships, sit down and talk to the people, raise their morale and resume our revolutionary activities in the Macedonian villages. I then presented my agitation and propaganda department's really ambitious plans,

which included plans to introduce Macedonian culture and education through the publication of news bulletins and brochures and by creating Macedonian choirs, Macedonian theaters, organizing plays in the villages, offering Macedonian courses for Macedonian teachers, publishing Macedonian textbooks, publishing materials that highlighted the struggle, etc. In other words, create a Macedonian cultural, artistic and educational movement in parallel with NOF's armed struggle. In addition to that I also proposed that we seek ways to expand our secretariat as follows:

I proposed that Keramidziev be appointed political secretary, a new comrade be appointed in charge of organizational matters, Vera be appointed secretary of AFZH, and I, Pavle Rakovski, be exclusively devoted to realizing my plans. I proposed we appoint Vangel Aianovski-Oche secretary of organizational matters. I thought he was the most promising among the regional activists for that role. Keramidzhiev then said to me:

“I don't understand... why you would want to elevate someone else above you?!”

I was surprised by his remark. He was still thinking of “a career” even under these circumstances...

“It would be in the interest of our struggle!” I replied.

Keramidzhiev just shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. After that the NOF secretariat agreed to convene a meeting and appoint Aianovski NOF organizational secretary. As is well-known, and many people witnessed this, I then went before the acting body and, among other things, explained my proposal, which was then accepted.

However, this is what was said about me in “Istoria” regarding to that:

“In order to attach himself to the importance of playing a major role in NOF, Pavle Rakovski claims that Aianovski was elected ‘MEMBERS OF THE NOF NARROW LEADERSHIP’ during the NOF meeting held in May 20, 1947. Rakovski claims that this

allegedly took place at Rakovski's own initiative and responsibility. Does Pavle Rakovski truly believe he can convince anyone with such an assertion? The question of which comrades made up the NOF leadership was not and could not have been an individual's task, at least not Pavle Rakovski's task, but of the CPG and NOF leaderships. Rakovski's non-objectivity was also expressed through his statement that Aianovski was elected "member of the leadership" but is silent about the fact that Aianovski was elected organizational secretary, which means the he was the second top man in the organization!"

"Continuing with his disinformation and fabrications, Rakovski claims that soon after the meeting, in June 1947, Paskal Mitrevski, then member of the Macedonian CPG Bureau, arrived with a directive from the Bureau calling for Aianovski's immediate suspension from the NOF secretariat, and for Pavle Rakovski to be punished by a Party reprimand. According to Rakovski, the reason for Aianovski's suspension was because of "something else"... While he gave no reason for his own punishment... None of this, however, corresponded to the truth! After months of absence from the movement Mitrevski arrived in June 1947, but not from the Macedonian Bureau, from Yugoslavia. Mitrevski submitted his proposal to the Macedonian Bureau for Aianovski's removal as well as for other NOF leaders, in August 1947, but it was not accepted by the Bureau. Also, no meeting or any forum was held until the NOF I Congress, held in January, 1948, during which NOF personnel changes were made. Moreover, the organizational report for the NOF I Congress was prepared by Aianovski, which proves that he was an organizational secretary at the Congress...!" (52)

It would appear that from what was written in "Istoria", the authors are in support of Aianovski's arguments that with the implementation of the "unity" agreement, when the NOF leadership was reorganized, he was accepted by the Greek side as a member of the narrow NOF leadership. I quote: "The following people were appointed in the new NOF central leadership: The then leader Paskal Mitrevski, after the agreement, was co-opted as a member of the CPG Provincial Committee for Macedonia, Mihail Keramidzhiev was appointed NOF political secretary and Vangel Aianovski-Oche... etc., were appointed members..." (53) But, understandably,

Aianovski was silent and said nothing about being appointed member of the narrow leadership. But, according to “Istoria” and according to his own claims, Aianovski was NOF organizing secretary since November 21, 1946, the day “unity” was established, and remained so until the NOF I Congress held on January 13, 1948. And because of this, Pavle Rakovski was publicly declared a person without dignity, who does not know how to respect himself let alone the historical truth and “continues with his fabrications and disinformation and nothing that he says corresponds to the truth...!”

However, on page 239 of his book “Aegean Storms” Aianovski himself denies all this. He himself has acknowledged that until May 20, 1947, that is until NOF’s meeting, he was employed as an instructor in Voden Region. In addition to that because he was guilty of some crimes, the Greek side of CPG and ELAS had him arrested and sent to prison in the months of September and October 1944. Some people in Voden Region accused him of accepting corn from the Bulgarians, but only the Greek side knew the real reason why he was arrested. Then, after he was released from prison he took shelter in the ranks of the Voden Macedonian battalion just hours before the battalion departed and crossed over the border. The people of Voden did not get the chance to let us know about him until much later. And then, after he was appointed organizational secretary of NOF, the Greek side intervened and suspended him.

In connection to this, on page 15 of my text entitled “Problems with our recent history”, the text that the editorial board of “Istoria” declined to publish, I wrote:

“Soon after the June 1947 meeting, Paskal Mitrevski, then member of the CPG Provincial Bureau, arrived with a directive from the Bureau to immediately suspend Aianovski from the secretariat. And I, Rakovski, received a party reprimand for my part in recommending him. For my part I suppose I, Rakovski, was reprimanded for recommending someone I did not know.” Naturally how was I expected to know all of Aianovski’s other dealings? Especially since no one said anything to me and nothing was published in the press mentioning Aianovski. After that Aianovski continued to function as an instructor in Voden Region.

Later, during the NOF I Congress, held on January 13, 1948, Aianovski was not even considered and did not enter the list of candidates for the top NOF leadership constituted by the CPG Central Committee Politburo.

Later, in September 1948, Aianovski fled to the People's Republic of Macedonia and left the struggle and the movement.

This means that even though Aianovski was appointed member of the narrow NOF leadership he never succeeded in doing any work. He never took part in any of the NOF secretariat working meetings.

But, in spite of what was said and done, after the NOF meeting, Aianovski acted like a NOF “organizing secretary”, especially in the field! Therefore it is not beyond reason to assume that Aianovski was still seen as “NOF organizing secretary” after he was suspended, especially by those who were not aware of his suspension, and for him to have received correspondence from them, addressing him as “NOF organizing secretary”. And it is not beyond reason that Aianovski carefully collected and guarded all those documents, as well as any other documents he obtained during the Macedonian national liberation movement from the time of ELAS and DAG, and then delivered them to writers like Dr. Risto Kiriazovski who then published them in the edition “Aegean Macedonia at the National Liberation War” and in his own works, which elevated him to “the second man in command of NOF...”

The establishment of “unity” in November 12, 1946, gave the Greek leaders the opportunity to lead a devastating blow against the Macedonian national liberation movement from inside, from within the ranks of NOF.

By knowing their intentions, which in fact were obvious to all of us, Paskal Mitrevski, then instructor of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia in NOF, self-initiated and secretly from all of us in the NOF narrow leadership, sent a letter to Zahariadis in which he said:

“We need to clean NOF from the “nationalists” and bring new blood to it!” Dr. Risto Kiriazovski has a photocopy of this letter in his archives.

Mitrevski himself was actively involved in implementing NOF's "purge" and "revitalization". This was confirmed in an article published in "Glasnik" No. 2-3 / 1977, an organ of INI, where Mitrevski said, when he was secretary of the Macedonian NOF leadership (he did not say he was a CPG instructor), immediately after "unity" was established, he met with General Markos and his deputy Kikitsas and decided:

To send the Macedonian fighters to act in the "interior of Greece" and the Greek DAG units to act in Macedonia...

In his biography written by Kliakich, General Markos said: "By agreement between DAG Commander Markos and Macedonian NOF leader Paskal Mitrevski... one part of the DAG combat units remained in Aegean Macedonia to continue the fighting, while the other part, Macedonians and Greeks, left for the interior of Greece..." (p. 122)

One way or another, this may have been justified and of course with benevolence... which was done. But there were consequences:

I. The Macedonian units with their military presence and political activities flared up the revolutionary desire in the Macedonian people, from whom DAG's ranks swelled up. But because of that, the "Greek character" of Greek occupied Macedonia suffered greatly. But, with their withdrawal away from Macedonia and "into the interior of Greece", the Macedonian units stopped influencing the "dangerous" situation in Macedonia. This unfortunately was not only a blow against the Macedonian national liberation movement, but also a blow against DAG and the uprising in general.

II. The Greek units that remained behind and replaced the Macedonian units were basically left behind to control the situation and, more or less, save the "Greek character" of Macedonia. They were sent there to suppress the Macedonian revolutionary spirit and prevent the revolution from escalating. This was a preventive measure taken in order to control and squelch the Macedonian national liberation movement.

III. Hundreds of thousands of Greek people in the interior of Greece were shaken up by the appearance of Macedonian units. They feared that these soldiers belonged to international Slavic brigades which, according to the rival propaganda, allegedly entered Greece through the territory of their northern neighbours and escaped in the centres and from DAG reserves and turned the uprising into a reserve for counter revolutionaries. But that was not all. In its measures to avoid misunderstandings, instead of informing the Greek people of Epirus that these soldiers were Macedonians from inside Greece, 8th Division DAG command ordered the Macedonian fighters not to speak, sing, dance or in any way express their Macedonian identity and represent themselves to the people only as Greeks!

IV. Pinned in uneven battles against a more organized, better armed and trained superior opponent, the Macedonian units in the interior of Greece were gradually liquidated. To make it easier, as there was no other purpose for this, the Macedonian unit commanders were removed and replaced with Greek commanders. There were, of course, protests and resistance but those who protested and resisted were charged with heavy penalties that included executions. Among those executed was a friend of mine named Kradzhova, a woman from the village Tsakni, Meglen Region. There was also, of course, the NOF directive: "To discipline DAG command."

Having in mind that these Macedonian units were elite Macedonian revolutionary units composed of people who had been persecuted for a long time and who fought as fearless bearers of the Macedonian national ideal, one cannot avoid but conclude that their liquidation was a mass "cleansing" of Macedonian "patriots".

This was indeed a heavy blow against the Macedonian national liberation movement, against NOF, against the Macedonian people, against DAG and, no doubt, against the uprising itself...

Unfortunately none of the Greek authors who wrote about this saw or mentioned these consequences. They were silent about it and blatantly wanted to blur and obscure the truth by persistently claiming that all this was done in favour of "achieving equality for the Macedonian people".

Like the Greek authors, our Greek Party leaders and comrades responsible for the revolution and for what happened in it, also do not perceive these consequences. They too speak of “full equality for the Macedonians”... According to Markos: “Soon after ‘unity’ was achieved the revolutionary struggle expanded... Thanks to the NOF leadership’s decisive attitude, the Macedonian people’s expectations of becoming equal were expressed in all areas of the socio-political and public life in the liberated territories. Since then, until the end of the Greek Civil War, there was not a single authority in the people’s government on the territory of Aegean Macedonia, from municipal to district to the highest governmental forum, in which the Macedonian people were not represented!” (Taken from Markos Vafiadis’s biography.) (54)

Mitrevski too wanted to say something regarding the direction our Greek friends took with regards to the crimes they committed against the Macedonian people at that time. In an issue of “Glasnik” he said: “Wrongdoing and mistakes... they truly had their place in the activities and actions of DAG command and the CPG central and regional leaderships in relation to the Macedonians.” (Page 204.) But no one is without mistakes. Life cannot be without them. According to Mitrevski “the Macedonian people achieved equality” and he found “tangible material” in the fact that:

“Many Macedonian cadres rose and took up senior management positions in the movement...!” (Page 203.)

In defending the principles, i.e. the consistency of our Greek comrades, Mitrevski through “Glasnik”, organ of Macedonian historians and our historiography, quite seriously claims that, apart from himself, **SOME MONTHS BEFORE DAG’S DEFEAT**, Macedonians “were raised to senior management positions in the movement”, people such as Kotsopoulos and Koitsis, in other words Kochev and Koichev, names they were given when they were appointed representatives of the Macedonians. They were the only ones plus Mitrevski. Mitrevski was appointed “Minister of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece”, Kotsopoulos “Chief Director of the General Directorate of National Minorities in Greece”, and Koitsis “member of DAG Military Squads...”

Similarly, Markos also said: “Macedonians were in the leadership of DAG in similar positions. In many counts, battalions, brigades and other larger military formations, the commander or political commissar was a Macedonian!” (55)

Mitrevski (like an echo) made similar claims:

“Macedonians were placed in the leadership structures of DAG in similar positions. In a significant part of the units, battalions, brigades and other larger military formations, their commanders or political officers were Macedonians!” (56)

Mitrevski tried to illustrate and prove this by citing specific names of DAG commanders and political officers:

“Pando Vaena (he was talking about the famous Pantelis Vaina) was commander of the DAG 18th Brigade, then of DAG 11th division.

Liako Papadimitriou was commander of the 10th DAG division.

Ahilea Papaioanou was Commander of the 103rd brigade.

Paskal Mitrevski was political commissar of the 14th brigade.

Anastas Gushevski (he was talking about the famous Tasios Gusieopoulos) was political commissar of the 18th brigade.

Dimitrios Prikos was commander of the 18th brigade...” (57)

As we can see, from all the names mentioned only Mitrevski was from the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement, i.e. from NOF, the rest were naturalized “Greek patriots”, that is, they were supporters of the Greek supremacy model. In other words, they were of a Macedonian background but literally worked for the Greek cause.

Of course, as we know today and as was well-known in the ranks of NOF then, all these people never belonged in the ranks of the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement. But, there is more than that. Some did not even feel Macedonian. But Mitrevski,

defiantly and publicly, through “Glasnik” insists that: “The prominent cadres of the Macedonian National Liberation Movement” were the bearers of the Macedonian people’s true interests in the Greek state...! (58)

That’s what our leading Greek comrades were doing then and that’s what they are still doing today...

In no time at all the Macedonian units ceased to exist as an organized military force, and with that the Macedonian liberation movement became terribly impoverished and weakened. But there is more. The most prominent Macedonian activists struggling in the Macedonian liberation movement, as well as other important Macedonian individuals, for one reason or another, were liquidated.

This is what “Istoria” has publicly charged me with in connection with what I said above: “Pavle Rakovski on the one hand argues that the CPG could not be an adversary to the Macedonians, and on the other hand claims that the CPG liquidated more prominent Macedonian activists... The examples he gives are arbitrary, since the said comrades died heroically in battle fighting the enemy...!” (59)

According to “Istoria”, I have indeed painted an ugly picture...

But let us leave that issue and let us have a look at how things stood in those days. It was believed that the Greek Communist Movement, that is, the CPG in principle was not and could not have been an enemy of the Macedonian people. Members and cadres of the CPG were persecuted, arrested, sent to jail, and generally mistreated by the Greek authorities because they publicly defended the democratic rights and freedom of the Macedonian people in the Greek state... Now let us have a look at who was leading the CPG at that time. The CPG was led by people the likes of Stavridis, Sargologos, Maximos, etc., and later by Siantos and then by Zahariadis... It was later revealed that these people were exponents of the domestic bourgeoisie and the international anti-communist movement. And after they were exposed they were expelled from the Party for exactly those reasons. There is no doubt that their role was to damage the general Communist movement and the people’s

revolution in Greece and because of them the people's rights, freedom and interests suffered, not only those of the Macedonian people but also those of the Greek people. This was no secret. The CPG suffered several such crises, divisions, treachery, etc., within its ranks and especially in its central leadership, causing devastation to the people's revolution in Solun and Macedonia in general in 1936, in Athens and in all of Greece in general in 1944, in Vicho and Gramos and in the rest of Greece in 1949, which we will discuss later. The Macedonian political organizations MAO in Voden and SNOF in Lerin and Kostur Regions were dissolved and so was NOF later. All these Macedonian organizations suffered a similar fate because of our Greek "patriots" in the CPG. The CPG leadership was responsible for the destruction of all NOF institutions including those initiated by the central agitation and propaganda department, which included the Macedonian theater, choir, folk song and dance ensemble, brass bands, school for teachers, seminars for Macedonian teachers, etc. The CPG leadership was also responsible for the liquidation of the elite NOF military formations and an unknown number of prominent Macedonian activists. But, we cannot entirely blame all of it on the communist movement, i.e. on the CPG... Here are the names of some of the individuals who were directly or indirectly liquidated, about whom I found out later. These were the first and most prominent Macedonians to join the struggle and die EARLY and in an UNUSUAL manner. Among them was Tashko Karadzhatia who was sent to work in Katerini, north of Olympus, but could not stand the job. One day he decided to come to Solun to speak directly with the people from the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace. He arrived in the Bureau's central telegraph offices on April 8, 1942. But instead of being greeted by the people from the Bureau, he was captured by Asfalia (security service) agents who were waiting for him. He was then handed over to the Gestapo and executed on May 25, 1942.

Lazo Trpovski was another such individual. One day Trpovski received a directive to report to the CPG Bureau in Solun. The Asfalia knew exactly which day he was going to arrive and exactly where he was going to go so they waited for him and killed him in an ambush...

With their death, the most promising Macedonian activists were removed from the scene.

Later Georgi Urdov-Dzhodzho, NOF representative at DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia, was executed in a similar way. He was on the road following the orders he was given when he found himself surrounded by enemies. Dzhodzho used his last bullet on himself to avoid capture. This is what Dzhodzho's personal courier had said, who was left alive, obviously because Dzhodzho's enemies had nothing against him. As it turned out, those so-called "enemies" were a number of "executioners" sent to intercept Dzhodzho and liquidate him. Because, according to Georgi Kachakot, former commander of "Ohrana" (Bulgarian organization) in Voden, Dzhodzho was responsible for the Voden battalion leaving Greek occupied Macedonia. Georgi Kachakot fled to the Republic of Macedonia with the ELAS Voden Macedonian battalion. Before that he had spent many years in prison in Solun from where he knew some of Dzhodzho's executioners. In a conversation they later told him that Dzhodzho was responsible for the fate of the battalion and that he had to pay for it with his head. According to them, the battalion should not have fled to Yugoslavia!

In a confidential conversation I had with Vangel Shamardanov, then commissar of the DAG battalion and former president of the NOF regional board for Voden Region, he said to me that he was afraid of his Greek "comrades" and was worried that one day they would make him "disappear!" Unfortunately Shamardanov did not escape that which he feared the most... They shot him in the back!

Lazo Koroveshovski was a weapons specialist in Lerin. He was a cheerful and well-built man, a good fighter with authority and well-liked and influential among Macedonians fighters in DAG. He was not killed in combat. He was killed somewhere behind the scenes when he went to the cauldron to get his food. They said a "stray" bullet left him dead. But the sniper who killed him was never identified...

Petre Tanurov was a former commander of the ELAS 1st unit in the Voden battalion, which was sent to fight on Paiak Mountain under the direct command of Captain Statis. The unit was under Statis's

direct command and guidance when it “evaporated”, disappeared into thin air, shortly after the battalion left for the People’s Republic of Macedonia. After losing half of their fighters on the hill they were defending, Tanurov and his Greek commissar decided to retreat and abandon their position. Grasping at the opportunity to correct this wrong, Dimitrios Vlantas, then member of Zahariadis’s Politburo and a DAG General, saw to it that these two be severely punished. He had them court marshaled and requested from the court’s president, Macedonian activist Hristo Kolenchev-Kokinov, that they be sentenced to death and executed by firing squad. Of course, only Tanurov was shot to death but not the Greek person...

Georgi Kalkov, a prominent activist working for the Macedonian national liberation movement in Kostur Region, told me during a meeting we had with Keramidzhiev that he was convinced that he was going to be killed if he returned back to the unit he had left. He begged us to do something... to at least temporarily detain him for some other work in NOF. But because he was a DAG officer and commander of the unit, we told him he had to go back, while we tried to do something for him... Kalkov, like Shamdanov, did not make a mistake in his assessment of things. He was killed upon his return... When there is a war fighters will die! That is what we were told...

There was also the case of the brave sergeant whose name I believe was Tanas Markovski, a beautiful illustration of how far the Greek chauvinists were prepared to go. Similar to Lazo Koroveshovski, Markovski was always at the forefront leading his fighters into battle. He was first to lead a firefight and the last to dance in the line dance. His authority was well-recognized and because of that he had to be liquidated. He had to be liquidated because he was a brave fighter, because he was well-liked and an influential leader and most importantly because he was a Macedonian “a lot more that the CPG could allow” (Todor Simovski). He was liquidated behind the scenes, shot in the head while leading a Macedonian dance. This time too the sniper remained unidentified...

Tanas Koroveshov, member of the NOF founding bureau, was killed by betrayal!

We will never know how many more Macedonians were killed this way...

This was disheartening and weighed heavily on us but we were not surprised. It was something that was done on a daily basis in front of our eyes. It was very difficult for me as well, being seen as a “Macedonian nationalist” and a constant target... But all this was not about me or about us, it was about our heroic struggle as Macedonian fighters moving “FORWARD TO THE LAST ONE”. The expression was often heard being yelled by the Greek DAG unit commanders. The enemy too was familiar with the Macedonians and how they fought... to their last breath... For this and perhaps for other reasons, the enemy treated the Macedonian fighters differently from the Greeks. When a wounded DAG fighter fell into enemy hands if he or she was Macedonian they were shot dead, whereas if they were Greek they would be captured. Naturally, regardless of how they were treated, the Macedonians had their own reasons for fighting with their heart, to their last breath. Here is what Markos Vafiadis said about that: “They participated in the Greek people’s great liberation struggle against the occupiers... They fought with inherent courage and skill... They lost countless heroes!” (60)

The Macedonians were robbed of everything, their contributions, their existence, their heroism, even their sacrifices as they fought to their “last breath”. All Macedonian deeds were concealed on purpose and the Macedonian heroes were represented as Greek heroes. Here is a classic example that undoubtedly shows how the struggle of the Macedonian people was appropriated and presented as a Greek struggle. In the capital works “Istoria tou emfiliou polemou 1945-1949, to devtero Andartiko” (History of the Civil War 1945-1949, the second guerrilla war), Volume III, there is a photograph on page 714 of the Macedonian heroine Mirka Ginova. In the text that follows they DO NOT say that “Mirka was a prominent leader in the Macedonian national liberation movement. Instead, they say that “Irimi Gini was a young teacher who was convicted by a military court and executed in Ianitsa, before the plebiscite, along with six other convicts. She was the first woman executed in recent Greek history...!”

And this is what the Party press and other publications were doing on a daily basis...

An extremely discriminatory policy against the Macedonians fighters was applied in order to avoid everything Macedonian, including the Macedonian names of those who died heroically for the struggle.

The number of Macedonians, ordinary fighters, officers, leaders, etc., involved in the struggle was huge.

Yet very few were commanders of units.

It was even rarer to see a Macedonian leading a battalion.

There was only one Macedonian with such a high rank. His name was Vaina. He was a division commander and, unfortunately, a Grkoman (a Macedonian loyal to the Greek cause and a supremacist). I say only one because Vaina was the only one who presented himself as a Macedonian.

But that was not all. Things came to a boil when Vasilis Bardzhotas, then member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo and political commissar of DAG General Staff, refused to recognize that: “The political commissars assigned to DAG units did not understand the significance of the special political work the Macedonians were doing. Some of these commissars also appeared to possess chauvinistic tendencies towards the Macedonians... There were also vast differences and inequalities in the promotion of Macedonians and these commissars had a bad attitude towards the Macedonian fighters!” (61)

As is well-known, this scandalously open anti-Macedonian “personnel policy” had long sparked the spirit in us, in the NOF ranks and in the leadership structures. There were protests and demands but without much success. We had no choice but to subordinate ourselves to the Greek leaders in the name of combat unity.

“There were many reasons for dissatisfaction among the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia. They were not allowed to run their own affairs in the people’s government, they were not allowed to run their Macedonian units in DAG, they were not allowed to run their own Macedonian organizations and, their Macedonian national liberation movement was constantly compromised. The Macedonian cadres in Greek occupied Macedonia were discriminated against for having participated in the People’s Liberation Army in the FPRY. DAG refused to recognize the ranks they had achieved in the Yugoslav army, and the CPG refused to recognize their CPY Party memberships. All these negative acts, perpetrated by the Greeks, were certainly reasons for dissatisfaction among the Macedonians. But most of all, the Macedonian people were dissatisfied with the negative approach taken against the Macedonian National Question, especially during the CPG Central Committee’s V Plenum...”

The above paragraph was quoted in “Istoria” (2/1981), p. 295-296, taken from a letter sent from the CPY Central Committee to the CPG Central Committee, in my defense of my alleged attacks... Namely, I wrote that “the Macedonian communists and NOF leaders had fallen on hard times. They felt abandoned. This was not my sentimental view of things; it was an expression of the harsh reality on the ground...”

Did that mean that I did not have the right to complain...? Did it mean that the CPM/CPY really did not abandon us...? However, like this and other similar letters I wrote and interventions I made, my complaints were screams in the desert that fell on deaf ears. They brought us no result and no one knew about them. The Greek side completely ignored them... just as they ignored many of the agreements and documents they had signed! We were practically left on our own and without a spine...

But, instead of us talking about this, let the events themselves speak for us.

Around the middle of 1947, the NOF Central Council received a directive signed by Zahariadis requesting that the NOF secretariat and central agitation and propaganda department, in full force,

immediately attend a meeting with Zahariadis at DAG Headquarters located in Gramos, Epirus. The directive also defined the route we would be taking from our headquarters through the villages Prekopana, Kostarazi, Pesiak, past the little church on the hill, and further to the village Likorahi in Epirus, from where we would be escorted to DAG Headquarters by a special courier.

We immediately realized that the route specified was very dangerous. We needed to take a safer route. After we decided what route to take, Mitrevski changed his mind and thought it was best that we take the route Zahariadis specified so as not to leave a bad impression!

About fifteen people in total were invited and left for the road early in the evening the night before. In the dark of night we crossed the Bistritsa River, and at about 1 am we reached the village Pesiak. It was silent... like a cemetery. We decided to stop and take a break... a happy coincidence, which saved our lives. Keramidzhiev was hungry, so he suggested that we go and get some food. We knocked on a few doors but found the houses had been abandoned... We came across a bench in one of the yards and decided to sit down and have a cigarette... In the dark of night we heard an old man speaking in Macedonian. He told us that three days ago a hostile army had arrived in the village and, every night, set an ambush outside the village. The old man pointed in the direction with his hand. Had we continued to walk we would have fallen directly into the hands of the enemy...!

Was this a coincidence or an attempt to behead NOF and liquidate the leading ideological and political cadres of the Macedonian national liberation movement? ...Especially at a time when the Macedonian units were falling victim to political deception...

We escaped that trap... but they did not give up on their plans...

They did not dare make another attempt the same way... they instead resorted to doing what the Bulgarians had done in the past... The Bulgarians used to infiltrate the leading positions in the Macedonian Liberation Movement with people of Macedonian descent who were loyal to the Bulgarian cause and who inflicted

heavy blows against the Macedonians. Zahariadis had a similar Greek model where he used people of Macedonian descent but loyal to the Greek cause. Zahariadis did this during the 1st NOF Congress held on January 13, 1948 and again during the 1st NOF Central Council Plenum held on August 8, 1948, during which time he carefully prepared and carried out the appointment of Kotzopoulos (Kochev) and Koitsis (Koi chev), mentioned earlier, to NOF leadership positions. One was appointed NOF secretary, the other NOF Central Council president. And as mentioned earlier, both of these people were opponents of NOF and loyal to the Greek cause. Several more people just like them, over time, were appointed to the NOF Central Council and to the Executive Council.

In line with his request to “cleanse NOF of the nationalists and to inject new blood into it,” Mitrevski pledged to facilitate this work by himself becoming the bearer and implementer of Zahariadis’s staffing requirements for NOF.

I resisted and protested for treating us and our people like a flock of sheep. I couldn’t stand to watch what was happening. I couldn’t stand to see our yesterday’s opponents become today’s NOF’s leaders. I had no problem with people joining NOF, but first they had to prove themselves... work in the districts for a while... win our people’s recognition and trust, so that the most capable of them could be chosen to become leaders. But not like this...!

The four of us; Mitrevski, as CPG instructor in NOF, Keramidzhiev, Rakovski and Vera, as NOF Central Council secretariat members, had 2 or 3 meetings prior to the Congress. Mitrevski was persistent which resulted in us having harsh words with him. We blamed Mitrevski of being treasonous and at one point the discussion got so hot we almost drew our pistols out... Keramidzhiev and Vera shared my opinions but when Mitrevski told us that he was following the Party line, the other two relented...

During the 1st NOF Congress, just before the vote for NOF governing bodies took place, Ioanidis took me to the side and said my candidacy for the NOF Central Council was dropped for now. Ioanidis was member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo responsible for producing the list of NOF candidates. I was told that

Mitrevski had made some objection and “until the Party cleared the matter” my place in the new five-member secretariat would remain vacant. Perhaps Mitrevski thought that “at last” he had me removed from NOF and from the Macedonian national liberation movement. However, I was well aware that it was not Mitrevski but our Greek friends who were anxious to get rid of me... an “active Macedonian nationalist”. When I found my moment I quietly whispered in Mitrevski’s ear. I said: “You are fooling yourself if you believe you are strengthening your position by removing me. Soon after they get rid of me they will get rid of you...” But he did not flinch. He smiled at me with confidence... Then, during the NOF Central Council I Plenum, he publicly and, of course, falsely accused Keramidzhiev of planning to physically liquidate Kotsopoulos and Koizis, and asked that he be removed from the NOF leadership!

However, it was already too late. About a month before that, our Greek comrades had decided to do something... According to General Markos: “On July 1, 1948, the CPG Central Committee Politburo decided to suspend Keramidzhiev from office as President, and remove Paskal Mitrevski from his duty as NOF Central Council Secretary, because they had both committed unprincipled factionist acts in the struggle!” (62)

With the “new leaders” at the helm... and, of course, according to our leading Greek comrades, bearers of the true interests of the Macedonian people in the Greek state, NOF and the Macedonian people gradually had to be reoriented: instead of looking towards Skopje as their national centre, they were required to look towards Athens... like the good “Slavophone Greeks” they were, in the spirit of the Grkoman motto “We are part of Greece and part of the Greek people!”

After the Plenum ended, by chance, or perhaps not, just as we were coming out of the door, Mitrevski pressed against me and, in the same way I had done before, whispered in my ear. He said in Greek:

“Ihes dikeo!” (You were right!)

And what was achieved by all that? In the spirit of “unity” there was nothing left of the NOF Macedonian leadership after the

reorganization and nothing was left of the Macedonian units, particularly of those “in the interior of Greece”...

Obviously, this was a well-planned Greek offensive against the Macedonian national ideal... It destroyed its most active bearers. Here are some highlights of the more important characteristic moments in this relationship:

A school for Macedonian teachers was established and operated within the framework of the central agitation and propaganda department (November, 1947). It was soon abolished and turned into a Greek teacher’s school for “Slavophones” that looked like a Macedonian school.

A Macedonian primer was created within the framework of the central agitation and propaganda department which contained pictures with descriptions of the Macedonian people’s anti-fascist struggle together with the Greek people. We were not allowed to compile a second part of the primer. Instead, the second part was compiled by Kostas Siaperas starting with a large image of Zahariadis. The pictures were painted by Bulgarian painters, and the primer was printed in Romania.

Macedonian NOF-AFZH cultural and art groups were founded and initially operated within the framework of the central agitation and propaganda department. We had a Macedonian theater which, unfortunately, performed only one play in the large, great church in the village Zhelevo, Lerin Region. We had an opera, a choir, and a folk group wearing traditional Macedonian folk costumes. We had 20 girls ages 14 to 16 who danced, sang and performed for Macedonian audiences. The CPG Central Committee decided to abolish this group first. Later the Provisional Government of Greece adopted a separate resolution to abolish everything perceived to spread Macedonian nationalism!

In April 1948, our central agitation and propaganda department was liquidated and replaced with a department staffed by Greek chauvinists. Our staff was “mobilized” and each individual was dispatched to a different DAG unit. Personally, I was sent to DAG

Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia in the composition of the Kamarilata.

Unfortunately the central agitation and propaganda department was not the only one to be liquidated. A large number of NOF activists were also mobilized and scattered all around the terrain. Even still, the Greeks were unable to achieve their full goal because NOF organizations continued to operate...After that several hundred NOF activists were “mobilized” and individually scattered across the various DAG units. This was practically an act aimed at murdering NOF...

There was also the people’s Macedonian brass band composed of folk musicians under the leadership of the popular folk musician Kara-Timio or simply Timio. Wherever this band appeared it played Macedonian songs, irking the Greek chauvinists from all parties. The most popular song and most often played was: “A bre Makedoneche, kade se spremash borba te Cheka...” This orchestra was taken away from NOF and assigned to Vaina and Gusiopoulos’s unit (18th Taksiarhia), then allegedly placed under the authority of DAG Headquarters and dissolved. It appears that this band too was guilty of spreading nationalism...!

We need to say something more here about some of the questions raised in “Istoria”...

According to “Istoria”: “Pavle Rakovski has argued that the central agitation and propaganda department of NOF was liquidated by the CPG, which is not true...!” (Page 294.) “Istoria” claims that only personnel changes were made... The department was not only not liquidated, it was expanded and its publishing activities were increased (they were thinking it was expanded with people who had no Yugoslav influence). “Istoria” claims that: “Furthermore, Rakovski has stated that the Macedonian school for teachers was abolished. This was another of Rakovski’s fabrications. The teacher’s course was abolished because the children were evacuated to neighbouring democracies in March 1948, where similar courses and seminars were organized...!” (Page 294.)

This is a case where the man says “Good day Grandma!” and Grandma answers “I am collecting firewood my boy!” Grandma was clearly deaf. Here I, Rakovski, am talking about the Macedonian teacher’s school being abolished in December 1947 when I personally worked in the village German where the school operated. “Istoria” on the other hand is talking about the “teacher’s course” or the Greek teacher training school abolished in February 1948, which operated in the village Zhelevo, because the children were evacuated in March 1948! This is a kind of verbal acrobatics designed to not only hit Rakovski below the belt but to also blur and conceal the truth.

And this is the truth.

As I said, the Macedonian central agitation and propaganda department was dissolved or liquidated as I stated earlier, in order to be replaced with a new Greek chauvinistic and supremacist agitation and propaganda department that would work and publish material relevant to Greek interests... which would make it anti-Macedonian...

I will say it again! The Macedonian school for teachers was abolished, liquidated, in order to be replaced by a Greek supremacist Macedonian look-alike school...

What “Istoria” said about similar schools being established in the Eastern European countries in which the Macedonian children were evacuated, is true. But the way things were actually done undoubtedly shows that:

Even outside of Greece, the Greek communists, like all other Greeks, made sure that the Macedonian people were not represented for who they were.

The Greek communists insisted that the Macedonian fighters and refugees who left Greece, including the 28,000 children who were evacuated to Eastern European countries in 1948, were Greeks. The authorities of the countries where these Macedonians landed were told that these people were “Greek political refugees” with Greek

names. (63) When it was discovered that these people spoke Macedonian and insisted that they were Macedonians, the Greeks informed the authorities that they were “Slavophone Greeks” and their needs would be taken care of. They took care of their educational needs by creating a special alphabet, different from the Macedonian alphabet, with a special grammar, that is, a literary language based on the mutilated version of Kotsopoulos’s Macedonian language, but very different from the Macedonian literary language spoken in the Republic of Macedonia... Clearly this means that deception was used in order to say that “these Macedonians” or “Slavophone Greeks” as the communists called them, were a “different people” than their counterparts in the Republic of Macedonia.

And in the case of the Macedonian agitation and propaganda teacher’s seminar, mentioned in “Istoria”, there is nothing contributing to the fact that:

The MACEDONIAN side and the GREEK-SUPREMICIST (Grkoman) side are two diametrically opposed concepts and realities, mutually exclusive from one another. One is a negation of the other. The Grkomani cannot be Macedonians and vice versa. Naturally without knowing the “hard reality” about this, it is better for a person to keep quiet and not engage in discussions about these things...

This also happened to me:

The editorial board of “Istoria” looked at a number of pages from my notes, and using that information publicly announced that:

“In order for Pavle Rakovski to attach himself to the importance and to... conceal the real motives for his return from DAG to NOF, stated that this was done in order to repair... the famous electrified situation that caused a wave of ‘desertion’ of Macedonian fighters from the ranks of DAG because of the suspensions of the above-mentioned NOF leaders. Rakovski argued that his influence was supposedly so strong that at the time when the Macedonians were revolting, because of the suspension of the above-mentioned leaders, they were also deserting. For that reason Nikos Zahariadis was

forced to bring Rakovski back to the NOF leadership...” I believe here they were talking about the February 1949 situation when Zahariadis, during the NOF II Plenum, proposed that the NOF three-member secretariat, composed of Kotsopoulos, Koichis and Vera, be expanded to five members to include Mitrevski and myself... (64)

I will try to clarify things:

It was March 1947. A group of NOF and AFZH activists were traveling towards Preval in Prespa not from the side of the river Bistritsa where the hill was long and quite steep, but from the Prespa plateau, where the uphill was flatter and easier to navigate. We were traveling straight up on foot and away from the road. When we arrived at Preval I passed out and fell unconscious. My comrades brought me back to consciousness by rubbing my face, neck and chest with snow...

On June 20, 1949, the KOEM resolution was adopted. I was again suspended from the NOF secretariat and sent to the Gramos front as an ordinary fighter. During the night of June 21 and 22, I left Prespa with a small group of fighters and set off for Gramos. Mincho Fotev was part of the same group. He was on his way to Gramos and, as a representative of KOEM-NOF, was expected to visit a number of units in Gramos. Along the way Fotev gave me his horse to ride and we alternately walked together. I happened to be riding the horse through a dangerous part of the road near “Helona” locality. Like everyone else, I too began to climb up the hill but not on top of the horse, it was too dangerous, on foot, running uphill, holding the horse by the reins. But soon I got very tired so I lay down and watched the flashing bullets flying over the horse and getting lost somewhere above us. The enemy was attempting to close off this passage because it led to the border with Albania (an escape route)... When I got to the top of the hill, I said to Fotev: “I had to sit down and rest because I almost fainted...!”

Fotev said: “I saw you...!”

This was the only necessary introduction. But here is the main thing I want to say:

As I mentioned earlier, when, in April 1948, the Macedonian central NOF agitation and propaganda department was stripped of its Macedonian staff and replaced with Grkomans (Greek-Supremacists), I found myself at DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia, located in the village of Pevkofito, where I was appointed member of the Kamarila. A month to a month and a half later, after nothing had happened except for boredom and anticipation... I sat down and wrote a letter to DAG General Dimitrios Vlantas, then member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo. This same letter was taken out of context when it was published in Volume V of the edition “Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War”. In the letter I wrote that because I had heart problems and was prone to fainting spells, I didn’t think I would do well as a fighter with a rifle in my hand. There was danger that I would disappoint my fellow fighters and I would fail in my mission as a leading activist in the Macedonian national liberation movement. I begged Vlantas not to do this to me...

I was prepared to carry the rifle as well as be given the chance to work on the side of the Headquarters newspaper intended for Macedonian fighters, published in the Macedonian language, which would have enabled me to “shoot at the enemy with all the guns of the Macedonian fighters...”

Vlantas did not reply and neither did he take me back to NOF...

As I said, this letter was published... The first part of the letter, where I speak about my weakness and my BEGGING, it appears, was not touched at all... But the second part, in which I made my request, was redone... According to what was published, they claim that “Rakovski, in order to avoid the rifle, asked to ‘edit a single column’... But they avoided to mention the one thing that angered, and perhaps frightened, the Greek “patriot” Vlandas, what I said about “convincing the entire Macedonian army” which, at the time was a majority, through the Macedonian language side of the newspaper, to fight with all its might, which prompted Vlandas to expel me...

But things were different than what they seemed. Here is a sequence of events:

When Vlantas expelled me (Rakovski) I was not an official, but a simple editor, after which time I continued to work on the Macedonian publications under the supervision of Kotsopoulos but only for a short time. After I had a few unpleasant run-ins with him I left.

A little later Mitrevski was returned from DAG. And:

On Zahariadis's recommendation, during the NOF Central Council II Plenum, we were both re-appointed members of the NOF Central Council (then - Presidency).

We know about Mitrevski. Zahariadis publicly called him a "palikari" at least one time in the army, which roughly translates to "heroic" or "brave". But in my case (Rakovski), according to "Istoria", like Mitrevski I too was rewarded with an appointment to the most trusted position in the NOF leadership, even though I was a "coward" in the army...!

Clearly my accusers have it in for me... They continue:

"Pavle Rakovski stated that on the 1st NOF Plenum held on August 1948, he, among other NOF leaders, was removed, which is not true. According to the publication "Nepokoren" an organ of NOF, which announced the decision to suspend Mihail Keramidzhiev (NOF president), and Paskal Mitrevski (NOF secretary), delivering a massive blow to the organization, Pavle Rakovski provocatively published an article in which he praised the CPG and its leader Nikos Zahariadis of being the most consistent friend, protector and ally of the Macedonian people...!" (65)

Some would say this is a classic example of absence of benevolence. It is well-known among the NOF leadership structure, those who are still alive, that I was removed from NOF during the NOF 1st Congress on Mitrevski's objection and there is no reason to claim anything else...

Regarding the so-called "provocative" article, this is what happened: The article was published on the occasion of the 30th jubilee since

the founding of the CPG. It was published in “Nepokoren” number 17 in December 1948; five months after the NOF Central Council I Plenum took place!

As is well-known, our Greek “patriots” at the top CPG and DAG leadership consistently defied the Macedonian reality even after the People’s Republic of Macedonia emerged as a national state of the Macedonian people in the Yugoslav federation. They defied the Macedonian reality even with the existence of a strong Macedonian national Movement in Greek occupied Macedonia. Our Greek comrades at the top of the CPG and DAG planned and carried out a general offensive against the Macedonian national ideal and physically destroyed a huge percentage of its active bearers, “the Macedonian nationalists” and Macedonian patriots.

It was under these conditions that I edited the articles for “Nepokoren”, defying Zahariadis’s chauvinistic anti-Macedonian policy and the anti-Macedonian attitudes of all those around and behind him. In the “Nepokoren” article I wrote about the Macedonian people, I referred to them as SPECIAL PEOPLE, INDEPENDENT PEOPLE, NON-GREEK PEOPLE, a nation that enjoys or should enjoy full equality with the Greek people, which is struggling and should be struggling organized under its own NOF, AFZH and NOMS MACEDONIAN NATIONAL organizations, as it must, and therefore, should have its own MACEDONIAN, and not Greek, newspapers and magazines.

Here is the title of the article: THE GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY (CPG) - ORGANIZER, LEADER AND GUIDE OF THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL AND NATIONAL FREEDOM.

Here are the sub-titles in the article: “CPG - CHAMPION OF SOCIAL AND NATIONAL FREEDOM”, “NIKOS ZAHARIADIS”, “CPG - DEFENDER OF THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE IN GREECE”, “CPG - ASSISTING OUR PEOPLE”, “CPG SHOWS THE WAY TO SALVATION”, “CPG POLICY – A PRINCIPAL POLICY...”

Unfortunately those in “Istoria” call this “glorification”... Their bias and non-objectivity does not allow them to see it for what it is... “Not glorification”... This was an article written on the occasion of the CPG’s 30th anniversary and expressed how we the Macedonians perceived, expected and demanded from the Party and its leadership...

With what I did, of course, I did not please Zahariadis and our Greek friends at the top of the CPG and DAG leaderships, and soon I was booted out. Once again I was suspended from the secretariat and sent to the Gramos front to fight as an ordinary DAG fighter. After that I was sent to prison under accusations that I was a dangerous and active “Macedonian nationalist”... This will be further discussed later...

These were the facts...

When NOF was passed on from the CPM/CPY to the CPG and placed under the CPG leadership, NOF’s connection to the CPM/CPY was completely cut and NOF became isolated. After that we received no information on life and the progress made in the People’s Republic of Macedonia and we had nothing about that to print in “Nepokoren”. But it was more than that... Before “unity” was established, persecution of Macedonians, anti-Macedonian acts, and political crimes against the Macedonian people were on the rise and escalating.

THIS WAS A REAL WAR AGAINST THE MACEDONIANS...

And again it turned out that the Macedonian spirit could be destroyed by, more or less, “neutralizing” its most important carriers. Grafted on top of NOF was a “new (non-Macedonian) leadership”, but it was unable to feed from the juices of its base, unable to be the carrier of the Macedonian people’s national ideals and demands and to stand on a Macedonian foundation... so it dried up. Namely, it remained isolated, helpless and superfluous. The Macedonian foundation did not accept the foreign body attached to it... and rejected it...

But that did not stop the Party leaders from taking things over in quite a spectacular way to accommodate the “Slavophone Macedonians”, according to the expression coined during the CPG Central Committee VIII Plenum held in 1942, or the “Slavophone Macedonian population” coined during the CPG Central Committee II Plenum held in 1946, by allowing the Greek newspaper “Levterotis”, organ of DAG Headquarters in Kaimakchalan, to begin publishing in the Macedonian language under the title “Osloboditel”.

A special printing machine was obtained for printing Macedonian newsletters and, of course, using Macedonian letters.

They found a young man from Lerin Region in the ranks of DAG, who worked with a printing press and they, of course, found me and returned me from the army to edit the newspaper, but under the watchful eye of a censor, who was none other than Kotsopoulos himself. In addition to “Levterotis”, “Nepokoren”, “Nova Makedonka” and the informative newspaper “Bilten” were resurrected and published in the crippled so-called Macedonian language spoken by Zahariadis’s disciples...

The three central Macedonian newspapers, the third being “Bilten” which Zahariadis invented and “generously” added to the others, began to print in a three times larger format and multiple times, namely: each separately, and in two thousand copies.

The network of correspondents in the DAG units and Macedonian villages was renewed and expanded.

And so was the network of those responsible for receiving and group reading the Macedonian press in the DAG units, DAG hospitals and Macedonian villages...

But even with all this, the situation did not change. The Greeks could not get the desired results they were expecting, especially after they decapitated NOF of its Macedonian leaders. For the Macedonians the struggle became pointless and meaningless. But this is perhaps what Zahariadis really wanted; to cause the famous wave of mass desertions in the Macedonians fighters and to deliver a

heavy blow against DAG. He managed to extinguish the enthusiasm all the way down to the field organizations that had been stripped of their Macedonian cadres. All activities in the Macedonian villages stopped; and the movement sank into a deep but eloquent silence...

Dangerous tension began to build up in a daunting atmosphere of anticipation. The people did not know what to make of it and were afraid something terrible was going to happen. This was indeed a heavy blow against the uprising in “Northern Greece”, which the CPG Central Committee, during its January 1949 V Plenum, referred to as “Macedonia”.

This was the end of the first phase of the broad offensive against the Macedonian ideal and against its bearers the Macedonian cadres and their Macedonian organizations. Like the open frontal attacks carried out before “unity” was established these attacks were also carried out internally against NOF and were directed solely against the frontline Macedonian activists. And as I mentioned earlier, the famous Greek chauvinistic thesis came to the fore: “There is no Macedonian nation, but only ‘Slavophones’ living in Greek (occupied) Macedonia, in the lands of the Greek state...” (CPG Central Committee II Plenum Resolution, February 1946.) The Greek explanation given for the existence of a Macedonian movement in Greece was that there was no Macedonian national movement, but only some “adventurous elements” sowing seeds of confusion in the “Slavophone” villages. If they were removed, that is if they were isolated, order and peace could be brought everywhere! They tried to “isolate” the “adventurers”, “traitors” and “Ohrana agents” from the people by vilifying the Macedonian “rebellion” leaders through the abundant party press in Macedonia, as well as through the EAM and ELAS press. But without success! Anyone looking through the archives will not fail to find hypocrisy during this entire open frontal attack period. The official Greek explanation for everything that was happening hypocritically came down to some sort of “adventurous element” among certain Macedonian cadres being the reason for the “problems” and eventually for the “split”! At the same time these same Greeks officially kept silent about the rights of the Macedonian people. This robbed them of the most elementary rights to organize a struggle for freedom, during this historic moment, and to lead it on their own

under their own name as an independent non-Greek nation. The CPG and DAG top leaders persistently keep silent on this because, hypocritically, according to them “Macedonia was Attica, and no Macedonian Question existed for Greece...”

During the course of the struggle, the Greek leaders tried and physically removed a large number of Macedonian activists from within NOF, especially those believed to be “nationalists” and “dangerous” for the Greek cause. But that did not give them the desired results they were expecting, “peace and order” between the Macedonian people on the ground and on the front. In fact the opposite happened. An arduous and painful situation began to develop and, as I mentioned earlier, “the new Greek-imposed NOF leadership” became completely helpless and superfluous.

The Greek Party leadership eventually admitted to itself what it already knew, and that was that this was not an “artificial mess” allegedly sown by “adventurous elements” in the peaceful Slavophone villages, but a full-fledged movement whose bearers were the Macedonian people themselves. This was a unique and real **MACEDONIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT...**

The actions taken by the Greek chauvinists from the top Party leadership were very typical and well-distinguished. The Greeks were well-aware that the Macedonian people themselves were the bearers of the original Macedonian national liberation movement and the same Greeks never paused or stopped their anti-Macedonian campaign at any time during the course of the struggle and beyond...

Let us track the events:

So, to turn things around, that is to do something to change the conditions of ultimate tension and uncertainty, our friends in the top CPG Greek leadership, during their CPG Central Committee V Plenum, held January 1949, decided to resolutely turn the clock back and take the position and terminology taken during the CPG Third Extraordinary Congress in 1924. Namely, the Macedonian people here in this part of Macedonia were once again recognized as an “oppressed” people who were part of another nation, with

appropriate rights to self-determination up to secession from the Greek state.

The text reads as follows:

“The Macedonian people in Northern Greece gave their all to the struggle and are fighting heroically and, as such, should be admired for their self-sacrifices. There should be no doubt that, as a result of DAG’s victory and the people’s revolution, the Macedonian people will achieve their complete national establishment as they wish, for having shed their blood today...!” (66)

But, as we well know, since its founding in November 1918, the CPG’s program did not have a single word about any Macedonians and their democratic rights in the Greek state. The Macedonian people were always viewed by the CPG as Greek people!

As we also know, the position and terminology the CPG adopted during its CPG 1924 Congress was agreed to in the presence of Comintern and Balkan Communist Federation representatives. This was agreed to, but only formally, to please these international forums. What the CPG in fact did, was adopt an element of the declarative CPG political line accepted only for external needs and was never applied internally. In the spirit of this new CPG attitude and as its practical application on the ground, the CPG leadership, as mentioned before, to do its part agreed to allow MRO (United) to exist in Greek occupied Macedonia as a representative of the Macedonian minority in Greece. But instead of supporting the immediate creation of MRO (United) as a minority organization of the Macedonian people, the CPG, through its Party press, initiated a verbal war between those CPG factions who were FOR recognizing the Macedonian people as a separate non-Greek people, and those who were AGAINST such a recognition, the likes of Kordatos and Apostolidis, who at that time were the first CPG Central Committee secretaries, as well as others. This “verbal war” gave the impression that the CPG was seriously working on solving the Macedonian National Question. But, as we know, this was not true. In fact both the “for” and “against” factions were equally afraid and in fact did everything in their power to avoid the appearance of a Macedonian national liberation movement. But in spite of all their effort, the

Macedonian people began to organize such a movement. And then, a decade later, when the CPG was criticized and heavily pressured from the outside, it had no choice but to prepare for the creation of MRO (United). And yet again, the whole thing was masterfully reduced to only a few formal and futile meetings, held before and after the CPG V Congress in March 1934, during which K. Vermitis, delegate of Western Macedonia, skillfully and precisely timed asking the question: “Does a Macedonian National Question exist for the Party...?” This supposedly was a question for the Party’s basic organizations... In other words, it was a survey of the Party’s organizations to supposedly solicit opinions. Naturally this, along with all the other delay tactics, stifled the MRO (United) which was formed soon after the CPG V Congress, and left it on paper and without any political clout. The stillborn MRO (United) Central Council did nothing and, of course, nothing remained of it. Andrea Chipov and the other leaders tried to activate MRO (United), but the CPG would not allow them. They even acquired a printing press with which they intended to print a Macedonian newspaper and other material in the Macedonian language, but the Greeks banned them and seized their printing machinery. They tried to import Macedonian publications from abroad such as the newspapers “Balkanska Federatsia” and “Makedonsko Delo”, which the Greek leaders seemed to tolerate at first, but soon they banned them too. On top of that, the Greek police captured and liquidated on the spot, Georgi Kontselchev from Voden, the man who imported and delivered the newspapers in Solun.

As we mentioned earlier, in addition to the above, the CPG, during its CPG Central Committee III Plenum, held about a year after the CPG V Congress, instead of offering the Macedonian people the right to self-determination and secession, adopted a new stand which was “full equality for the minorities”. Before that, these were the words the CPG used during its IV Congress held in December 1936, to convey this message:

“Such a change does not mean abandoning the Marxist-Leninist principle of self-determination of nations... The population in the Greek part of Macedonia today is Greek in its majority, and the Marxist-Leninist principle, or old slogan (party line), for self-

determination, under the present conditions, needs to be replaced...”
(67)

It is not difficult to see that Zahariadis and company have clearly committed brutal injustices against the Macedonian people through the CPG and in the name of the CPG. In fact they have flipped and flopped and turned one hundred and eighty degrees when it suited them, directly negating the rights of the Macedonian people.

I. The CPG never gave up on the self-determination principle for occupied and oppressed peoples and for their separation from the oppressive nation. But the rights of the indigenous people were negated only because of the Turkish Christian colonists from Asia Minor, deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia in the early 1920's, who the CPG now recognize as a majority. The rights to self-determination for the indigenous people, i.e. the Macedonians, were trumped in favour of and to the benefit of the colonists, who the CPG considered to be the majority on traditional Macedonian lands acquired by the Greeks through imperialist means.

II. Even though this part of Macedonia was invaded, occupied and annexed by Greece in 1912, 1913, by force and by imperial means, land that never belonged to Greece, the Macedonian people were treated like they were forever part of the Greek people and their Greek homeland. This, of course, was done by force, coercion and oppression. Even though it is historically clear that this land belongs to the Macedonian people, the Macedonians have no right to be Macedonians, speak their Macedonian language and practice their Macedonian culture and traditions and, according to all Greek factions, including the CPG, have no right to self-determination.

III. Even though it is well-known that Macedonia existed as a whole during and prior to the Ottoman occupation and the Macedonian people's homeland represented an ethnic whole that was occupied not only by Greece but also by Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania, the CPG leadership still ignored these facts and defiantly denied the existence of the Macedonian nation. This means that the CPG was working along and had actually accepted the famous imperialist thesis and policy of the Balkan bourgeoisie: “That Macedonia is a geographical point, or space, to which its neighbours have the right

to fill with any national content except for Macedonians”. And that is exactly what the Greeks were doing which was acceptable to the CPG.

IV. As we already mentioned earlier, the CPG was quick to condemn the imperialist policies of the domestic bourgeoisie, proclaiming that they had annexed part of Macedonia as an inalienable part of the Greek homeland and through persecution and eviction of Macedonians and Muslims and importation of Turkish Christian colonists, artificially altered the national composition of the population in favour of the Greek ethnic element. However, the CPG itself hypocritically adopted this very same domestic bourgeoisie and imperialistic policy. It later explained itself that it had to do this, supposedly in the “interests of the labour movement and the revolution in Greece” when in fact there was an easier and more believable explanation. Zahariadis and company did this for “Greek national (Greater Greece) interests...”

The question that arises from this is:

Were Zahariadis and company honest during the CPG Central Committee V Plenum held in January 1949, when they offered the Macedonian people the “rights to self-determination up to secession from the Greek state...?”

What need did Zahariadis and company have in 1949, to bring back the CPG’s 1924 position and terminology...?

Let the facts speak for themselves!

Only a few months later, on June 20, 1949, a document came out criticizing the 1924 attitude and terminology, no doubt written by Zahariadis himself, and imposed on KOEM to adopt it as its resolution. (68) A few months later, in October 1949, during the CPG Central Committee VI Plenum, this position and its terminology were abolished.

Of course, the conclusion was that Zahariadis and company did not really know exactly what they wanted. As it turned out this was not “a principled stand” on the Macedonian National Question, but only

a tactical maneuver that had a specific goal. Here's what it was all about:

As early as October 23, 1948, DAG Supreme Military Council, headed by Zahariadis, ORDERED a general mobilization to be carried out which was out to include the mobilization of all remaining women and girls in the Macedonian villages in the liberated border zone. This was to include all women who were not mobilized because they were building trenches and bunkers or were left behind because they were ill. In other words, this order included the mobilization of practically every single Macedonian woman that existed in Lerin and Kostur Regions. This was well-explained in General Markos's biography compiled by Dragan Kliakich (p.250).

Everything that was done by the CPG in Greece was in fact done for one and only one reason; to involve the Macedonian people en masse in a revolution that would bring about their demise. There is no doubt that Zahariadis was involved in a conspiracy to drive the Macedonian people out of Greek occupied Macedonia in a legal and legitimate manner. There is no doubt that this was his goal from the start, from when he was brought to Greece by the English to "legally cleanse" Greece of its Macedonian and communist menace. And how better than to have the Macedonians pick up guns and fight against the Greeks for the sovereignty of Greek occupied Macedonia. What the Macedonian people did not know was that this was a ploy to have them pick up guns so that Greece would have no choice but to fight back to "save itself". And that is exactly what happened... The rest are details of who did what to whom...

Zahariadis's demonstrative parade of recognizing the right of the Macedonian people to self-determination and secession from the Greek state was another act of demagoguery, a tactical maneuver that exerted enormous psychological, moral and political pressure, which was ABSOLUTELY NEEDED to succeed in MOBILIZING the entire Macedonian population in his quest to destroy it.

And, as is well-known, the CPG and DAG leaders succeeded in achieving their objective. "All the Macedonian people in Lerin and Kostur Region were mobilized!" (Markos) In this way, in fact, all Macedonian families were broken up. Men and women, girls and

boys, were scattered in various DAG units, while the Macedonian children were sent over the border... The native hearths were abandoned and the Macedonian villages were left empty and desolate!

In other words, the fate of the entire Macedonian population INVOLVED in this way was tied with the fate of the DAG units. And as we now know, after Markos was removed from DAG command, the DAG units had their fate sealed. In other words, Zahariadis had them converted from hit and run partisan style fighters to frontal soldiers, a sitting target for the enemy to play target practice, sitting motionless under the target of an enormous military machine, to be indiscriminately slaughtered...

We can't deny what happened and we can't say that the end did not justify the means, but the reality is what it is, irrespective of what we would like to believe. Zahariadis and company took every measure possible to make sure that it not only liquidated and drove the Macedonian people out of their ancestral hearth, but made sure that DAG was robbed of its victory. Not only did Zahariadis not secure an equitable surrender but boasted that DAG was going to be victorious, even after it was destroyed, and no such thing was necessary. It should have been obvious to everyone on which side Zahariadis stood, the very moment he declared that England was "a great friend" to Greece and that England was going to do everything in its power to satisfy Greece's national needs, including guaranteeing its positions on its northern borders. In other words, Greek occupied Macedonia would never be able to separate from Greece. At the same time England, and later the United States, paid for DAG's defeat and the CPG's downfall.

After Zahariadis drove DAG to the ground in August 1949, he made sure that everyone, including the old and frail, left Greek occupied Macedonia and crossed the border to Albania. Once out of the country, the Greeks closed the border and refused to allow anyone back in. So, according to a population census from 1951, 46 Macedonian villages completely disappeared, the residents left without leaving a single soul behind. While in another 179 Macedonian villages the population was halved or significantly reduced. (69)

After Zahariadis and the CPG leadership was done pushing the Macedonian people out of their ancestral lands, the Greek army and authorities did the rest; bombing and burning down the Macedonian villages until they were destroyed and devoid of their Macedonian population. The empty villages were then repopulated with “loyal Greek” colonists from Epirus and southern Greece.

This was yet another great if not THE GREATEST FAR REACHING ETHNIC CLEANSING ACTION by the Greek side against the Macedonian population and against the Macedonian national liberation movement and, unfortunately, it was done through the CPG and on behalf of the CPG.

This was a MASSIVE ETHNIC CLEANSING ACT perpetrated by the Greeks against the very core of Macedonian patriotism. Anyone who did not see themselves as a “Slavophone Greek” and dared to declare themselves a Macedonian, and by doing so, according to our “Greek patriots”, not only endangered the “Greek character” of Macedonia, but also “Greek national interests” in Macedonia, fell victim to this MASSIVE ETHNIC CLEANSING ACT.

This was yet the most inhuman act the CPG leadership perpetrated against the Macedonian people in its practices since its inception. It was during this historical moment, when the Macedonian people finally found a way to rise above slavery, when the CPG falsely and traitorously wormed its way into the Macedonian hearts by pretending that it cared for them and committed the most serious crimes against them... The Greeks obviously saw NOF’s appearance in April 1945 as a signal of danger because, two months later, during the CPG Central Committee XII Plenum, it directly reacted to its presence by “firmly opposing any territorial claim from any side against Greece. The preservation of the Greek state territorial integrity was the first and highest priority task of every ‘Greek patriot’ ...!” (70) As can be seen from official CPG Central Committee Politburo documents, the Greek side feared that “Tito was going to annex Aegean Macedonia”, (71) through NOF, or with the help of the movement started by NOF. The CPG openly discussed “Tito’s warring plans against Greek Macedonia!” (72)

These Greek fears from Tito and Yugoslavia annexing Greek occupied Macedonian were fuelled by many activities that included the withdrawal of the Macedonian battalions to Yugoslavia, the formation of the Aegean shock brigade under a Yugoslav military flag with intentions of forming new units, the formation of the Political Commission for Aegean Macedonia, the founding of NOF by the CPM/CPY, and so on... This certainly must have agitated the Greeks and seems to have been the basis of the increase in Greek criminal behaviour against the Macedonians... (73)

Here is another unpleasant thing that happened to me.

Here are some more accusations made against me through the pages of "Istoria" (2/81), by the editorial board: "In order to compromise Aianovski and to present him as a 'careerist', Pavle Rakovski claims that, by CPG leadership insistence, Aianovski was not appointed to the organization's secretariat at the 1st NOF Congress in January, 1948. Further to that, Rakovski claims that in 1948 Aianovski transferred to the People's Republic of Macedonia as an alleged career move. In order to put an end to the speculation about Aianovski's alleged "desertion" or his "abandonment of the movement"... we are obliged to present some undeniable facts. The new NOF Secretary Vangel Koichev was appointed during the NOF Central Council I Plenum in August 1948, who then, through a letter, informed the CPG Central Committee Politburo that the NOF Executive Board had decided, in addition to Mihail Keramidzhiev, to send Ilia Dimovski-Goche to Yugoslavia in order to recruit fighters for DAG. According to the same letter, Goche suggested that Vangel Aianovski-Oche be sent with him to assist him, to which NOF's Executive Board agreed. Despite Aianovski's disagreements with the Informburo, this proves that Aianovski was sent to the Republic of Macedonia to recruit Macedonian fighters for DAG, and denies Rakovski's claim that Aianovski 'voluntarily abandoned the movement'..." (74)

This is what Keramidzhiev said during a meeting in Skopje sometime at the beginning of February 1949: "As you are all familiar with the CPG Central Committee decision, I came here on October 12, 1948, for two reasons: a) To get medical help for

myself, and, b) as Comrade Goche's first assistant in finding new forces and forming Macedonian units..." (75)

Based on the NOF Executive Council's decision to send Ilia Dimovski-Goche to Yugoslavia to recruit fighters for DAG, in addition to Mihail Keramidzhiev, it follows that the two men were sent across the border at approximately the same time.

But, sometime during the first ten days of September 1948, Vangel Aianovski and Slavianka, while in Voden Region, received an invitation or a directive to go to Prespa for a meeting. But, probably because of difficulties caused by the enemy, after leaving Kaimakchalan, Vangel and Slavianka ended up in Bitola instead of going to Prespa. The fact that Aianovski did not go back to Prespa shows that he intended to leave the movement. Besides Slavianka, he also took with him Mirka, AFZH secretary for Voden Region, and Zora AFZH organizing secretary for Voden Region who also left the movement. Here is what was said about that in a document written by Vera.

"Dear Comrade Slavianka. All the AFZH leaders from Lerin and Kostur Region, who have gathered at a meeting, have decided that our organization (AFZH) needs to prepare for the All-Greek 1st Conference for Women and for the NOF 2nd Congress. Besides this, we here at the meeting have condemned the course of action taken by the AFZH leaders Slavianka V. AFZH Secretary, Mirka AFZH Secretary for Voden Region, and Zora AFZH organizing secretary for Voden Region, who left the organization and found themselves in Yugoslavia. How and why they did this is unknown to us (AFZH), therefore we cannot make our final decision without talking to you. During our meeting it was decided to send you this letter and invite you to return to our AFZH Central Council headquarters between January 25 and 30 (1949)...

January 13, 1949
Vera, Secretary" (76)

But apart from this letter, sent in the name of AFZH and those present at the meeting, Vera also sent another letter from herself in

which she used harsher words. Here is what Slavianka said about that at a meeting in Skopje:

“I received a letter from Comrade Vera in which she calls me a deserter...!” (77)

Here is what Vangel Aianovski said in his book “Aegean Storms”: “The real Macedonian cadres, fiercely defamed and persecuted, were forced to leave the movement and cross into the People’s Republic of Macedonia...” (p. 339). The fact is Aianovski and Slavianka were the only ones from the top leadership to arbitrarily abandon the movement...

Most probably Aianovski and Slavianka would have been formally charged with deserting but they found a way to avoid it. They were assigned to Goche and Keramidzhiev to assist them with their tasks and their defection was swept under the rug. Everything else that was said here was done to muddy the water, and had nothing to do with “Aianovski and Slavianka’s arbitrary abandoning of their posts”...

NOF’s Central Council II plenum was held only three days after the CPG Central Committee’s V Plenum (February 3, 1949). The NOF resolution adopted sounded like the speech Zahariadis gave, which sounded like the resolution adopted during the CPG Central Committee V Plenum. During NOF’s II plenum it was also decided to convene the II NOF Congress in March 1949. Here is what Zahariadis said: “The Macedonian people’s National Question should be affirmed at the Congress. The Macedonian people with their participation in today’s struggle have begun to create an independent Macedonian state within the Balkan Federation!” (78) According to the adopted resolution: “The Second NOF Congress will be a Congress that will proclaim NOF’s new program principles that represent the centuries-old desire of our people. It will proclaim the unification of Macedonia in a single independent Macedonian state within the framework of the Balkan people’s democratic Federation. Our people have earned this with their many years of dedication to the bloody struggle. NOF’s II Congress will proclaim the Macedonian people’s national uprising... it will turn its attention especially to the enslaved Macedonian population in the cities Lerin,

Kostur, Voden, Gumendzhe, Seres, Drama and others...” In other words, this was the plan for TOTAL MOBILIZATION and CLEANSING of the “Macedonian patriots” on the ground! (79)

Accordingly, at Zahariadis’s persistence, the NOF II Plenum made its proclamation and asked the Macedonian people to renounce the existence of the People’s Republic of Macedonia, something that existed and that they already had, and to begin to chase something in the wind, something which they did not have and which did not exist... This, obviously, was also an attack on the constitutional order and against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People’s Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Recognizing that he had solved his problem, Zahariadis called me into his office, gave me the following text, and ordered me to immediately publish it in the NOF newspaper “Nepokoren”. Here is what he wrote:

“ANNOUNCEMENT

At its meeting held on March 9, 1949, NOF Central Council discussed the course of preparations for the NOF II Congress and the additional measures needed to achieve a successful Congress. In addition, the Central Council also debated the distortion of truth and slanderous campaign the Monarcho-Fascists in Athens and their Anglo-American masters have waged against the NOF Congress.

Fearing the popular movement and activation of the Macedonian people, the enemies of the Macedonian people are endeavouring, by all means possible, to destroy their unity with the Greek people. They are making all efforts to destroy the brotherhood that can only bring victory. They are spreading rumours that the NOF II Congress is expected to declare the creation of a Macedonian state, that it will join Yugoslavia or Greece or Bulgaria, within the framework of a Balkan democratic federation.

Our enemies have always sought to find betrayal where they felt they can make most use of it. But the truth is different. The Second NOF Congress is a congress about the struggle, a congress about striving, about the activation of indestructible unity, a congress about organizing victory, which will come as a result of the great sacrifices made and freedom won for the people who will normalize

their own lives, state and social order as they wish, united with their brothers, in cooperation and solidarity and with the mutual assistance of all democratic nations...

NOF Central Council, March 9, 1949.”

The above text was also published in the DAG General Headquarters army newspaper “Pros ti niki” (to victory), on March 10, 1949. (80)

Unfortunately this was yet another of Zahariadis’s ruses! The idea of “the creation of an independent Macedonian state within a Balkan democratic federation” was soon abandoned. And as we all now know the NOF II Congress took place on March 25 and 26, 1949, and the only things that were discussed were those covered in the spirit of the CPG Central Committee V Plenum, which called for the self-determination of the Macedonian people. Not a word was mentioned about the creation of an independent Macedonian state.

It was well-known that the CPY Central Committee had intervened several times in these affairs. In one of its telegrams, dated March 5, 1949, sent to the CPG Central Committee, among other things, it said: “We consider it our duty to reiterate that your position on the question about the line of the NOF Congress in Aegean Macedonia is not correct and that it can only bring harm, not only to the liberation struggle of the Greek people, but also to the relations between the Balkan peoples and the communist parties. The fact that the Bulgarian press already wrote about this issue, taking the same position, shows that the position on the Macedonian Question is an integral part of today’s campaign against the new Yugoslavia. We consider this a paradoxical departure from your basic task, especially at a time when your Party is leading a difficult and decisive struggle. Its inclusion in this combination is a direct attack against the new Yugoslavia. The Monarcho-fascist press has already made use of your position and is looking for ways to break up the unity of the liberation movement in Greece.” (81)

The Greek communists not only ignored these telegrams but also the cooperation documents they had signed with the CPY Central Committee in relation to these matters. The Greek leaders who put

their signatures on these documents simply and completely ignored them. So the objective researcher who needs to know where the slogan for “creating an independent Macedonian state” originated, must look elsewhere.

Based on known events and documents of that time, let us try to clarify a few things. Personally, I believe Zahariadis’s main goal with the position he had taken during the CPG Central Committee V plenum regarding the self-determination of the Macedonian people in Lerin, Kostur, Voden, Gumenzhe, Seres, Drama, and other Regions, and with NOF’s Central Council II plenum line and proclamation of the new NOF program principles, i.e. calling for the unification of all of Macedonia into a single independent Macedonian state, etc, as well as sending the Macedonian children across the border, which was done in 1948, was to achieve exactly what he wanted to achieve and that was:

- a) To succeed in performing a total mobilization of every single Macedonian into DAG, which would lead to the total dismemberment of all Macedonian families, to the demise of entire Macedonian villages, to the total cleansing of the Macedonian terrain from all “Macedonian patriots”, and
- b) The successful break-up of the liberation movement unity in Greece, which would lead to decisively undermining DAG’s victory and the uprising. This was later proven and that was why Zahariadis was expelled from the Party and died “lonely and despised” in 1973.

Another thing that Zahariadis did with his position taken on the Macedonian National Question is that he gave the Bulgarian press reasons to campaign against the new Yugoslavia. The CPG, as we later found out, publicly came out in favour of the Informburo and against the new Yugoslavia with the resolution it adopted only eight months later. This was done during the CPG Central Committee VI Plenum held in October 1949.

Following the logic of events, which I personally experienced and understood the reason for dropping the “new slogan” only a week after it was adopted was because one week was enough to have it advertised! In other words, the intended goal was achieved! To have

allowed it to exist any longer, meaning to have allowed the recognition of the existence of a Macedonian people in the Greek state, the unification of Macedonia, and the creation of a Macedonian state, was not at all in the interest of Greece. The text which Zahariadis gave me and ordered me to publish in the NOF newspaper “Nepokoren”, whose number I don’t remember off hand, and the similar one published in the DAG newspaper “Pros ti niki” on March 8, 1949, judging by the style, was compiled by Zahariadis himself, but I cannot say that it was not requested or agreed to by the opponent (the Monarcho-fascists) in Athens...

My role in the NOF II Congress was to compile a report on the work done by the central agitation and propaganda department, the situation on the ideological front, the general tasks performed by NOF, as well as the tasks performed by each NOF member separately. (82) The political report should have been prepared by Vangel Koichev, then NOF president, but a request was made (ordered) to have Paskal Mitrevski write it. Mitrevski at that time was ex-secretary of NOF, and CPG instructor in NOF. Mitrevski was given the opportunity to capitalize on someone else’s labour without having done the work. Not everyone could swallow that. I worked together with Mitrevski, in the same room, and we each did our own work. I saw Mitrevski take a red pocketbook and some kind of abstract paper that Kolishevski had written and began to copy it quickly. With some necessary changes to topographical names and with some adjustments, Mitrevski managed to be ready within the set deadline. Not me. Zahariadis arrived, took the final political report, and left me working...

He gave it to Koichev to read. Poor Koichev! It was written in Macedonian and Koichev could hardly understand Macedonian... He began reading it but could not pronounce the words properly and he sounded like a foreigner... unusual and far from the folk speech and expressions he understood. His tongue seemed to roll in his mouth and the words that came out of it could hardly be recognized. Nobody understood anything. Page by page he passed through the pages with an obvious affliction and was drenched in sweat by the time he was done. It was a real drama! When he was done Zahariadis smiled, and as if Koichev was the real culprit, and said: “Mas nroppise oluz!” (He embarrassed as all!). Koichev was not a

bad person. He was a simple man, a coal miner, an old communist and a good revolutionary. Zahariadis used him and appointed him president in order to infiltrate NOF. As NOF president, appointed by Zahariadis at the NOF Central Council I plenum on August 8, 1948, Koichev had the opportunity to send his son, along with other young fighters, to study abroad and become an officer. But Koichev did not take advantage of that and kept his son at home. To that he said: “The revolution is underway and we have to fight, there will be plenty of time to learn after our victory!” Koichev blindly believed in the infallibility of the Party leadership and their “collective mind”. Zahariadis used this to work against NOF, that is, to work against the Macedonian national liberation movement. Here is a good example of how Zahariadis and his cohorts worked. After making many long attempts and trying various ways he failed to break up the marriage with my wife and longtime friend Urania Alilomova, i.e. to have her give up on me and act against me and Yugoslavia, Zahariadis decided to liquidate her physically together with our little daughter Mira. This took place in Poland. After Koichev was appointed, as the most suitable candidate for this job, according to Zahariadis, he and his men, shortly after midnight, knocked on Urania’s locked door. No one responded so they broke in. The room was empty! They quickly ran to the neighbouring door, woke the neighbours and searched everywhere. They then went to the ground floor and searched every room in the building. They found nothing! The young mother and girl were not in the building at all. People admitted seeing them entering their room the evening before but had no idea where they were now. Disappointed, Koichev left the building without performing his task...

Here is how Urania and our little girl disappeared:

A Greek couple somehow found out that Urania and Mira were going to be killed that night. Since they were not “obedient robots” like our Koichev, and were capable of “reason”, they decided to prevent this crime. After the building fell into silence, the Greek woman climbed to the upper floor and entered Urania’s room. She told Urania: “You have to go right now because you will be liquidated tonight!” “Where do I go?!” she asked. The woman told her to go with her. They all went quietly down to the ground floor where the Greek couple resided. “They will not be looking for you

here!” the woman told them. The husband remained calm and they all waited for several hours before the assassins arrived. When they broke Urania’s door, the Greek man, like many others, went out to see what was going on. When he found out that they were searching all the rooms, including those of the Greeks, he ran down and helped them go out a window. He let Urania with her little girl flee in the outdoors for the night... They were later sheltered by a family of Poles...

Once their search for Urania became public knowledge they stopped pursuing her. Because of this and because of the harshness Zahariadis, Koichev and their cohorts used against NOF cadres in general, the Macedonian people soon began to realize what was going on and protested. After disbanding NOF, the “Ilinden” organization was formed and staffed with a few “selected” people and slowly but surely began to turn into a national Macedonian organization, acting in the defense of the unprotected cadres, fighters and people in general. So “Ilinden” too was dissolved. Koichev, to some extent had also changed and it was decided to have him liquidated. Even though he was severely ill, they sent him to work in some kind of mine where he struggled for a long time but he could not die. He sent his wife to convince Urania and beg her to come and visit him before he died. He told her: “I want to confess to you and thank you for managing to escape that night. I have one less terrible crime to weigh on my soul... I was ordered to kill you and your little girl that night! I beg you, please, forgive me!”

“I know that you did not want to kill me. So be at peace, I am not angry with you!” replied Urania.

The man was relieved and died peacefully a little later. His story was sad like those of so many others like him...

After Koichev read the political report during the Congress they called me. They listened to me very carefully, especially Zahariadis. In the end, Zahariadis asked me to give him my notes “to study them” he said. He did not give them back to me...

Immediately after the Second NOF Congress, on March 27, 1949, KOEM was established. KOEM was an element that underlined the

uniqueness of the Macedonian people and appeared as the first step in the application of the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people. There is no doubt that KOEM was created at this time to influence the success of the “total mobilization” of the Macedonian population and the planned expulsion of the Macedonian villagers from the border zone.

Sometime during the first ten days of April 1949, Zahariadis asked me to go see him. He added my name to a delegation that consisted of Vera, Tane Naumov, Vangel Nichev and Todor Kotsopoulos. We were told to leave for Sofia to participate in the festivities in honour of Iane Sandanski. By doing this we were returning the favour to the Macedonian delegation from Bulgaria for participating in our NOF II Congress. Here I need to open a parenthesis. Hristo Kalaidziev was my personal guest. He wanted to talk alone, face to face. He made a great impression on me with all the things he was doing. He asked me: “Under what flag did you start the movement?” I said: “I started and I continue to fight as a Macedonian for the rights and freedoms of our Macedonian people. We are fighting together with the Greek people, because we have a common enemy and we are more successful by joining forces!” He kept silent for a moment and then said: “You can’t even imagine the favour you did me by telling me this!” I looked at him and thought: “My dear Macedonia! This dear old man, Hristo Kalaidziev, is the president of the Union of Macedonian Societies in Bulgaria, but does not even know that we exist here (in Greek occupied Macedonia) as Macedonians and wants to know if we started the struggle as Macedonians under a Macedonian flag...!” Here I close the parenthesis.

Our first rest on our way to Sofia was Skopje. There I met and had long discussions with Ilia Dimovski-Goche, Keramidziev and their assistants Aianovski and Slavianka. In early January 1949, each received a letter from NOF inviting them to return to take part in the NOF Central Council pre-Congress Plenum known as the NOF II Plenum. (83) They ignored the invitation and did not come to participate. Here is what was said about that in a letter sent from the CPY Central Committee to the CPG Central Committee:

“It is our understanding that the Aegean Macedonians are not allowed to take leadership positions in DAG, in the people’s government, or in mass organizations...

It is our understanding that the cadres from Aegean Macedonia who participated in the Federal Yugoslavia People’s liberation army are being discriminated against. DAG does not recognize the acts these people performed and ranks they achieved in the Yugoslav National Army. The CPG does not even accept CPY Party memberships...

This naturally, is enough of a reason for the Aegean Macedonians to be dissatisfied and points to the necessity that a more correct approach is needed to resolving the Macedonian National Question...

It follows from this that the actions you have taken are undoubtedly the reason for the dissatisfaction that has occurred with certain individuals or a group of people in Aegean Macedonia who are currently in the territory of Federal Yugoslavia...” (84)

The “dissatisfaction” with the Greek side, described above, was experienced by every single Macedonian person in the Macedonian national liberation movement, especially in NOF. But if we look at the number of people who “defected” as a result, it amounts to only four from the NOF leadership. Why were only the four of them in the People’s Republic of Macedonia, the same four who abandoned the battle on the ground and now refuse to return? It would appear that these four comrades had their own special reasons for this. Goche, for example, tried to get involved in the struggle several times but failed because the Greeks did not want him to join DAG. The Greeks did not like Mitrevski or NOF and he knew that, naturally that is why he refused to return. He did not want to come back and be indifferent and humiliated...

Keramidzhiev, on the other hand, had quite different reasons. He was convinced, and not without foundation, that he would be physically liquidated. It was August 8, 1949 and the NOF Central Council Plenum has just been completed. Mitrevski and Keramidzhiev were removed from the NOF leadership and were due to leave and join the army as ordered. Keramidzhiev was very

worried and kept asking: “What should I do?” He had no doubts that he would be “liquidated” in the army. There were three of us Keramidzhiev, Goche and myself. Goche used to joke: “If they kill you, you will become a Macedonian hero...!” Looking at him sitting there, in the meadow, surprisingly comfortable, with his hair all messy and his eyes and cheeks looking swollen, I gave him an idea. I said to him: “It appears to me you have the look of an epileptic. If you should fall down and have an epileptic attack, I am sure they will send you to Skopje for treatment. No army in the world would induct an epileptic. And, indeed, Keramidzhiev left for Skopje to cure the epilepsy I had created for him. Much later I found out that, in addition to the fear he had of being liquidated, Keramidzhiev had another serious reason for not joining the army where the risk of death was high. I found out that when he left he took all of NOF and AFZH’s money with him. Included in that money were also 800 gold coins. The fact that he “expropriated” that money explains everything... Vangel Aianovski-Oche, Slavianka, Mirka and Zora refused to return because they willingly fled to the People’s Republic of Macedonia. They did not want to return and take chances of not surviving...

And there are those who seek to present all this as “disagreements” with the “CPG’s Informburo policy” when clearly, from the letter sent by the CPY to the CPG, mentioned earlier, it was due to complaints lodged by “individuals or a group of persons”. These “persons” who obviously did not want to return, brought their complaints to the CPM competent factors who then, through the CPY, cancelled their return. About a month later, after returning from Sofia, these same “individuals” asked me not to return to the battlefield and to remain with them in the Republic of Macedonia. I did not accept. I could not do such a thing. I said: “I don’t want to be one of those people who left the struggle at the very moment when there were decisive battles taking place in Vicho and Gramos. I don’t want to be an example of someone who abandoned the fight...” They wrote a letter to the CPG Central Committee. Keramidzhiev wrote it and both he and Goche signed it. The letter was long. Keramidzhiev had to do this and I generally agreed with it. I took it to the addressee even though it caused me great inconvenience. I will talk about this letter later... We arrived in Bulgaria on time. We ran into difficulties. It turned out that our visit

and participation in the ceremonies in honour of Sandanski were not coordinated with the Bulgarian side. They were surprised when I explained to them why we had come. We stayed in the telegraph office for three days. I used our telegraph contacts to get in touch with Kostas Tsiaperas, the CPG representative in the Bulgarian Communist Party. I asked him to take our request to the competent authorities and let them know that if they don't accept us as a delegation by tomorrow afternoon we are going back. They got back to us and told us that we could attend the festivities, but not as a Macedonian delegation, and without any speeches. We accepted. It would have been nice to have been represented as a Macedonian delegation from Greek occupied Macedonia but it would have been worse if we were not allowed to attend at all. At least this way we could observe the festivities and listen to the speeches. In the meantime Vera and I were appointed members of the Greek delegation and ordered by Zahariadis to immediately leave for Prague to attend the 1st World Peace Congress. We flew there and arrived around noon on April 23, 1949, during the third day of the Congress. Our delegation was headed by the renowned surgeon and university professor (Pergros) Kokalis. Members of the delegation included Zahariadis's wife Kukuli, members of "Democratic Greece" acting as representatives of various Greek socio-political organizations and DAG female and male fighters. I was surprised to see Done Sikavitsa there among them, and disgusted when I found out that he was not allowed to take part in the ceremonies. Meaning, Macedonian blood that was spilled along with Greek blood was not appreciated or respected at all. As a Macedonian, I felt this was a personal insult. I told Kokalis and Kukuli openly: "What kind of friends are you when, before the entire world, you represent our common struggle only as a Greek struggle...!?" Kokalis was then elected part of the honorary presidency of the Congress and, after I spoke to him, expressed a willingness to accept me as a representative of the Macedonian fighters and people. I just want to say this openly and express my opinion... I was very upset with this whole situation. Clearly this Greek "patriot" (Kokalis) was well aware that the main hotspot of the revolution was in Macedonia and the Macedonian people were its main driving force. Those people fighting there were Macedonians yet, out here, they were not only "not mentioned", but were not even allowed to represent themselves. The Macedonian people were expected to sacrifice themselves for

the revolution and yet here, before the World Congress, they counted as nothing. Why did I have to rise up, like the well-known Macedonian rebel they knew me to be, to have to ask to be represented? Was this not Kokalis's responsibility and his obligation to make sure his partners, the Macedonian people, also be represented? Kokalis and Kukuli were senior Party officials but I hardly saw them as that. This is a fact that I did not try to hide especially from Viktor P. Firsov, an interrogator at a prison in Moscow. From his questions, I could see that they (the Greeks), in statements made against me, described me as an incurable "Macedonian nationalist..." something to be frowned upon.

The World Congress for Peace was simultaneously held in Paris and Prague. The French issued visas for only two or three people for each delegation. The one in Prague was incomparably more numerous. It was afternoon, April 27, 1949. There was an unexpected silence in the Czechoslovak Parliament. Fatigue was obviously the main culprit as well as the academically humble and monotonous voices of those who participated (German, American, and Japanese) which drove the delegates into a slumber. At that very moment it was announced that an extraordinary Macedonian would be coming up on stage, who had just arrived from the battlefield in Greece. Then I heard my name and surname mentioned. The entire Czech Parliament came alive. They all applauded. I thought: "They surely are applauding me as a descendant of Alexander the Great, at least most of them..." I whispered to Done Sikavitsa: "They wouldn't let you perform but they are letting me go up. Watch what I am going to do!" I was very angry and personally offended; I went up on the stage. The applause became louder. With a tough and decisive tone of voice full of dignity I began to thunder:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades!

"In the name of that part of the Macedonian people who, since the Balkan Wars, have lived together with the Greek people under the same oppressive exploitative regime - the regime of the bourgeois-Chiflik-Sybian oligarchy in Greece, I warmly salute the delegates of our socialist sun - the Great Soviet Union, the delegates of the heroic Chinese people, the delegates of Democratic Spain and all of you

here, as well as those in Paris, the partisans of peace, delegates of democratic and peace-loving nations in the world...!”

They began to clap again. Everyone got up. They gave me a standing ovation. I waited for the clapping to end. I continued: “It was difficult for the Greek people to live under the exploitative regime of the reactionary clique. But it was even harder for us Macedonians. We did not have any rights and today we still have no right to show our faces anywhere where the Monarcho-Fascists rule and absolutely not as Macedonians. Macedonian grandmothers, who speak no other language but Macedonian, cannot freely mourn their dead in the Macedonian language, not even in church or at a cemetery. We are forced to think, talk and learn in Greek only. They demand of us to give up who we are and to become Greeks. If we resist then they call us “Paleovulgari” (an insulting and pejorative word). They arrest us, abuse us, jail us and physically liquidate us through their military courts or without a trial. Tens of thousands of Macedonian men and women today rot in the prison camps in the dry and desolate Aegean islands. Hundreds of Macedonian men and women have been physically liquidated with and without a trial. But we, the still enslaved Macedonians, remain unrepentant. And today, under the flag of our glorious Communist Party - the CPG, led by our beloved comrade Nikos Zahariadis, organized and led by our organization NOF, we are all going into battle alongside our brothers the Greek people, fighting against Monarcho-fascism - servant of the Anglo-American imperialists. All of us, our entire families, are in the ranks of the Democratic Army of Greece. Brothers, sisters, wives, all Macedonian mothers of two or three children, heroically hold a rifle in hand and fight against the enemy...!”

They all got up again. Standing and applauding. I waited again. When they stopped, with a lowered tone and a suggestive voice, I said:

“The CPG Central Committee Resolution adopted during the IV Plenum, held last year, reads as follows: ‘The Plenum outlines the outstanding contribution of the Macedonian people in a joint effort for freedom. The participation of the Macedonian people in the national liberation struggle is universal and total!’ The CPG Central

Committee Resolution adopted during the V Plenum, held less than three months ago, reads as follows: ‘The Macedonian people in northern Greece have given their all to the struggle and are struggling with such heroism and such self-sacrifice that it has aroused our admiration. As a result of the success of the Revolution and the Democratic Army’s victory, there should be no doubt that the Macedonian people will get the opportunity to organize and develop their own national and social life, as they themselves desire it...’ Our enemies, sounding particularly rabid lately, are using the airwaves through radio Athens and London and their press to slander our struggle, to distort the truth in an attempt to break our unity sworn in blood with the Greek people. But we very well know that all of their upheaval around our struggle and around the Macedonian Question is nothing more than bitter nostalgia for the irreversible passage of time when these gentlemen held the Macedonian people’s fate in their hands, and their success in pitting the Balkan people one against another in order to enrich themselves, turning their innocent brotherly blood into gold, are over. But, we and our fraternal Greek people very well know that we can only see the light of day if we remain united... otherwise disaster will befall us... That is why we protect our unity like we protect our own eyes... We are also aware that with our struggle for freedom and peace in our country, despite Anglo-American plans to escalate the war, and contrary to those plans, we together with the Greek people have taken our place in the international front with the peace-loving nations which are fighting for liberty and peace in the world. We understand that we are soldiers of international democracy, soldiers of world peace. And it is precisely this knowledge that makes us even more determined in our struggle...” They again stood up and applauded. I paused. When the clapping subsided I continued: “We, together with the Greek people, deeply believe in victory. We deeply believe that we Macedonians too will see the light of day and will revive ourselves like all free nations. This is because we believe deeply that the forces of democracy in the world, headed by the great Soviet Union, are invincible... I would like to express, here before all of you, our enthusiasm and our gratitude to Comrade Gottwald’s brotherly country for giving us the opportunity to speak loudly at this tribune. Whatever needs to be done, however many we need to sacrifice, we, together with the heroic Greek people, will

win freedom and peace in our country...! Long leave freedom and peace all around the world...!”

As if by command they all got up and clapped. I slowly got off the podium and found my way back to my seat. All eyes were on me and I believe they were pleased and approved of what I said. When I got back to my seat where the Greek delegation was sitting, Kokalis, Kukulu, and the other Greek delegates, including Done Sikavitsa, congratulated me one after another under the intense noise of clapping. After the clapping subsided another speaker was called up to the podium. Kukulu said: “Megaloprepa ke enthatika antiprosopovtike o Macedonikos laos...!” (The Macedonian people presented themselves dynamically and magnificently to the Congress!). But, because my speech was an afterthought and not part of the program, it was not translated and not handed out to the delegates. A little later, two people from the Congressional Journal editorial staff arrived and, of course, they did not speak Macedonian. With my help explaining my terms and thoughts to a Bulgarian and to a Yugoslavian person, my speech was eventually translated to Czech. The next day I found my speech published in several languages in the congressional newspaper. The other speeches were marked by quotation marks. It was an honour and a recognition for me. Mine was the most interesting and most successful speech of the day...

I will agree with anyone who thinks that we should not have been so intensely involved in the Prague event. Believe me I don't want to boast. But what happened at home was indecent and humiliating. I have no choice but to step up and defend the truth and myself. I am talking about what was said about me regarding this in the VI edition of “Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War”, No. 109, pages 224-225, in a document entitled “COMRAD PAVLE RAKOVSKI'S SPEECH”. This is what was written: “Pavle Rakovski, speaking at the Congress in Prague, among other things, said the following...” But what follows is not what I said in my speech and in itself, has no value. This, without a doubt, was a forgery that only an enemy would do. I am not exaggerating here, judge for yourselves: Those parts where the participation of the Macedonian people was emphasized (as per the CPG Central Committee IV Plenum Resolution), which I highlighted, were left

out. In my estimation someone saw this as a hostile act. The part where I said: “The Macedonian people in northern Greece have given their all to the struggle and are struggling with such heroism and such self-sacrifice that it has aroused our admiration. As a result of the success of the Revolution and the Democratic Army’s victory, there should be no doubt that the Macedonian people will get the opportunity to organize and develop their own national and social life, as they themselves desire it...” was also omitted. Instead of what I said, someone else attributed the following to me: “We deeply believe that the Macedonian people will also see the light of day and live freely and fraternally with the Greek people!” (p. 225.) With this I was accused of having made statements to the World Congress which are against the Macedonian people’s line of self-determination in Greek occupied Macedonia, which was proclaimed during the V Plenum only about three months ago. I was accused of demanding “minority rights to live freely and fraternally with the Greek people” instead of “organizing and developing our own national and social life, as we ourselves desire it...” This was nothing less than pure malice against me. They also claimed that the document on which the above information was written was typed up in the Greek language with the identifier AE: 51/a/49. Clearly this was not my document because I neither typed my speech nor did I write it any Greek document.

As it turns out, some Greek person got a hold of the World Congress materials, which of course were distributed worldwide, and decided to perform surgery on my speech. But what is of interest here is, “how did this forged document become part of the source materials in the Macedonian archives? As it turned out, according to Radio Mileva, at that time many such “forged” reports often turned up and later ended up as “source documents” in the archives. Anyway, the fact is that this “forged” document ended up in the VI edition of “Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War” and was used as an authentic document to portray the history of the Macedonian people! (85)

On April 30, 1949 I returned to Sofia while Vera remained in Prague with Kuku. Kostas Siaperas and I decided to visit our wounded and sick at the Sofia hospitals. Many of the wounded Macedonians asked me to make sure that Macedonians were added to the auxiliary

staff, which at the time was all made up of Greeks. I insisted that Kosta clear up this problem as a psychological need for the sick.

As I did before Vera and I left for Prague, and now without her, I made sure I visited my friend Naum Peiov. I visited him at the Yugoslav Embassy in Bulgaria. One evening he kept me at his place and I slept at his house. That's when I found out that the Security people followed me everywhere. I visited the Berkovitsa camp where I established a NOF organization. I wanted to go to Eastern Macedonia, but I was not allowed. On my return to Sofia a security agent escorted me everywhere I went, allegedly for my personal safety. Later he took me to a police station in Sofia because, he said, the police chief wanted to speak with me. He opened the door to the police building and let me in. I entered a bare room which had a wooden floor and a window with bars. There was a tattered chair on the floor, the kind that had a knitted seat. It was missing a leg. He literally clutched my hand, pulled my bag out of my grasp and locked the door behind us. "Yes, I am Yugoslavian, I visited our Embassy, but I did nothing against Bulgaria and its people. What does one have to do here to get locked up...?" I said. "We will see. Patience..." he replied. About ten to fifteen minutes later, I guess after my bag was checked out, the police chief entered the room. He began to interrogate me: "Who are you? What is your name? Why and how did you come to Bulgaria?" he asked. Before answering any of his questions I said to him: "There is a man named Kostas Siaperas, who is a representative of my Communist Party who sits at the Politburo of your Communist Party. We were schoolchildren and grew up together. He knows I was coming back from Berkovitsa and is waiting for me. Call him by phone and he will tell you who I am, what my name is and why and how I came to Bulgaria...!"

He looked at me strangely with a distrustful look. I did not flinch. He decided to make the phone call. As soon as he hung up he released me. Unfortunately Siaperas became suspicious... A long time ago I lived with his brother in Solun, but alone, without his Bulgarian wife. Recently I received a letter from Solun. He wrote: "I will try and bring my wife here... I have always been on the black list and harassed by the police in Bulgaria!" Just as a reminder: Siaperas was the author of the second part of the Macedonian primer

written with the “Serbian” alphabet. On top of that it would not be out of the question if Siaperas was also guilty of some other sins.

I was not allowed to leave Bulgaria until May 19, 1949. Then, the moment I arrived in Skopje I faced new problems. I found the CPG branch contact office closed. This is what I wrote about that at that time in my report: “I was prepared to leave, but our contacts could not send me back, because in the meantime the contact office had been ordered to stop all activities...” (86) I stayed in Skopje for eleven days. On the eleventh day I went to see Lazo Kolishevski, at my request. The next day I was driven by a military jeep from Skopje to the Greek-Yugoslav border. I finally returned to our liberated territory. In the same report as above, I wrote that during my eleven day stay in Skopje I met with Dimitar Aleksievski-Pekar and Nikola Minchev, under whose direct leadership NOF was founded and worked for about a year and a half. Pekar invited me to lunch and Minchev to dinner. This is what I wrote about that in my report: “They asked me about the war we were leading and they talked about the situation at home (Republic of Macedonia). They impressed me with their trust in themselves. If I had avoided them, I think it would not have been appropriate, because it would not have served anyone...” I delivered the letter from Goche and Keramidzhiev to my superiors Mihali Malio then secretary of KOEM and Paskal Mitrevski then president of NOF, who had a direct connection to Zahariadis and the CPG Central Committee. Mitrevski’s intriguing mind began to work. He persuaded Malio to open the letter and see if it was appropriate to give to the CPG Central Committee, to whom it was addressed. They held it for about two weeks. They handed it over to the CPG Central Committee open and said they had received it open from me. In a document compiled on June 20, 1949, and imposed as a party document which was then adopted by the KOEM leadership, Zahariadis wrote: “Comrades Paskal Mitrevski and Mihali Malio bear responsibility for handing the CPG Central Committee a letter with an unjustified 12 day delay. This should be characterized as a serious anti-party procedure because of the fact that comrade Rakovski helped to spread the contents of the letter widely, a letter he was not entitled to read himself...” (87)

And this is what happened to me as a result of that:

With regards to the KOEM resolution there was a quote in “Istoria” (2/81, pp. 297-293), which said: “Pavle Rakovski sharply reacted to Vangel Aianovski’s assessment that ‘one part of the old NOF cadres did not find the strength to resist and succumbed to the pressure, becoming obedient pawns of the CPG-DAG leadership, performing tasks that were often against the interests of the Macedonian people...’ Aianovski’s assessment is correct in describing that part of the NOF leadership. That part of the NOF leadership not only signed the so-called ‘KOEM resolution’, a criminal document, but also implemented it in practice by taking direct and indirect action in persecuting Macedonians, that is, those Macedonians who did not accept the Informburo anti-Yugoslav policy. How else can these leaders, who are personally responsible for executing innocent Macedonians being accused of alleged working in favour of the Yugoslav news service, be described?” Of course there is no mention here of “who” these leaders were. Are they talking about Gusiopoulos? It continues: “How can those NOF leaders with their own lips and libelous and false written information, take part in the informational campaign and machinations in order to blame Yugoslavia as an alleged culprit for the defeat of the Greek liberation movement? Therefore, it is not about ‘Aianovski’s unfounded tendency to tarnish and disqualify the NOF leadership’, but rather about objectively exposing historical facts that should serve as a lesson...!”

This, no doubt, was an attempt to give me a swift kick below the belt. Indirectly, as a member of the “old NOF cadres”, I was charged with performing criminal anti-Macedonian and anti-Yugoslav acts. Let us take a closer look: It is true that Vangel Aianovski wrote the following in his book “Aegean Storms”: “Sadly some of NOF’s old cadres did not find the strength to resist and succumbed to the pressure put on them by the CPG and DAG leaders and, as a result, they became their organs performing tasks that were often against the interests of the Macedonian people...!” (p. 339.) It was also said that because of Rakovski’s “sharp reaction”, “Istoria” had to react in this way. Its editors wrote the following:

“It is amazing indeed. He withdrew himself from the pressure and then threw mud on everyone else who remained in the struggle under the same pressure conditions...!”

Why blame only “one part of the old NOF cadres” and this should not be ignored, when the entire KOEM-NOF leadership was placed under the same scrutiny? The entire group was placed under the same pressure and “did not find the strength to oppose the CPG-DAG leaders and thus succumbed to their pressure” and signed the KOEM resolution. This took place in Prespa in an area called “Africa”, inside a large cave, where the seat of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece and DAG General Headquarters were located. There were several queues of benches for sitting and the cave was lit by electric lighting. We gathered in the cave, the entire KOEM-NOF military-political leadership, without knowing where we were going to meet with Zahariadis. Then Zahariadis appeared along with Mitsos Partselidis, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo and President of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, and Periklis head of the 2nd Bureau espionage-counter-espionage department. Zahariadis pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket and read it aloud. He then explained that this was part of the Party line and asked everyone to accept it and sign it individually. Zahariadis then took the piece of paper with two-column signatures and looked at it carefully. He then folded it, put it in his pocket and, with a treacherous tone of voice, said: “Posi arages ine ilikrinis...?” (How many here are honest...?) If the original piece of paper is ever found my signature sits somewhere between the 15th and the 20th line while Urania Rakovski’s signature is not there at all. Urania Rakovski herself, on the way back, confessed that she did not sign the piece of paper. I criticized her for it in front of everyone. I said: “This is not the time for open confrontation and new divisions...! You should have signed it...!” Mitrevski said: “Ask to sign it later! Tell them you were busy with your three-month-old baby...! They will kill us all...!” Vaina said: “I did not expect that from you...” Vangel Koichev was also there and began to yell at her. He was also annoyed... The piece of paper Aianovski used in his publication, obviously, was not the same as the one I remember. A Greek hand must have re-worked it and released it. I know that because the names on the “re-worked” piece of paper were Greek, whereas the names on the original document

were Macedonian. For example Tane Naumov never called himself “Tanas” and I did not sign the document as “Pavlos”. I signed it as Pavle. There were other similar examples, which prove that the document Aianovski possessed was not a copy of the original document we signed that day...

I was sitting several rows from the front and signed the piece of paper after the people who were sitting in front of me. The list Aianovski had showed me, I was the first to sign the piece of paper. But, despite everyone else having signed the piece of paper, I was the only person accused of being in contact with “Tito’s agents” in Skopje and Sofia. I was the only one being suspended from the NOF secretariat. So, the entire thing was made to look like I was the first to sign the piece of paper and to generally accept the resolution, and therefore I deserved a unique punishment.

Urania did not sign the piece of paper at all but appeared on the list as “Urania Rakovski” because, supposedly, that is what she was called. Urania, however, went by the name “Urania Alilomova”. A year or two later, while in emigration, and after a court decision, because she had a child, she received the surname “Rakovska” (and not Rakovski as indicated in the list) and ceased to appear as unmarried with a child...

I know that Mitrevski and some of the others did not admit to signing the KOEM resolution probably because they were afraid of being charged and called to account. But we signed a Party document. Similar documents have been signed, adopted and published by many well-known, great and celebrated Communist Parties in the world. When our comrades found out about this, that is, it was not a crime to having signed such a document and in fact signing a “Party” document was a great privilege, they admitted to it and became friendly and cooperative with the CPY. What did we know and who were we to defend and save the CPY? We were a small regional organization located in the northern border areas of the Greek state. We were an organization founded by the CPY/CPM, led by several of us and placed under the leadership and membership of the CPG by the CPY... A delicate situation, right? What should we have done? Formally, yes, we had to do what we did as members of the CPG. But what were we supposed to do as

ex-members of the CPY? Were we to follow the line of open confrontation with the leadership of the CPG? To start new rifts? We were in a cave surrounded by a multitude of armed soldiers, armed with automatic weapons. They could have had our heads shot off. A new rift would have triggered DAG's disintegration... the units in Kaimakchalan, Vicho and Gramos would have been torn apart. This was the basis for Zahariadis's accusations of the CPY undermining DAG and the revolution. DAG's weakening would have made an easy Monarcho-fascist victory in neighbouring Greece...!

Of course, I did not want any trouble and I did not want DAG to fall apart or the revolution to fail. All I could think of were the words: "You have to do what you have to do! Under certain circumstances, you may need to act against your own will and conscience... But remain who you really are - the son of an enslaved people... If circumstances were different we would have struggled and resisted differently." Zahariadis wanted to attribute DAG's unavoidable defeat, which by the way he himself caused, to the CPY and Yugoslavia. In the KOEM resolution, which he himself wrote, in point 6 he openly accuses the CPY of "creating an internal rift for the purpose of undermining the CPG and DAG..." According to Zahariadis there were three main operations: "The first was the political operation managed by the CPM and personally by Kolishevski, its secretary. The second operation was led by OZNA, and the third by the Yugoslav Army II Bureau. The first oversaw the other two whose work was purely to spy and conduct subversive and self-serving operations in the CPG, in NOF and generally in Greek occupied Macedonia, with its own special organizations and triads, agents, contact points, etc., each striving for the same goal - to undermine the CPG, and especially NOF!" (88)

The truth is Zahariadis tried to conceal his own betrayal of DAG and the revolution by accusing the CPY and Yugoslavia of "betrayal". It is an undeniable fact that after Zahariadis failed to show "Yugoslav betrayal" through the KOEM "trick", he was forced to invent a new "trick", the famous "attack from behind". He tried to convince everyone that Yugoslavia attacked DAG from behind. But, as it turned out, there was no such attack and Yugoslavia had nothing to do with DAG's defeat. I have no doubt that anyone researching this

subject based on the events that took place and based on the documents left behind, will easily find the truth; convening the KOEM meeting “five minutes to twelve” on the eve of DAG’s defeat was nothing more than a provocative act with an obvious goal to provoke a new split in the leadership in order to accelerate DAG’s defeat...

Zahariadis had me personally in mind when he wrote item 18 of the resolution in which he said: “KOEM decisively condemns any crypto-Titoist subversion in the ranks of NOF, AFZH and DAG. This is the last warning for Comrade Rakovski and his like-minded comrades who, as they did in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, made contact with Tito’s agents and are now here in Free Greece spreading propaganda in favour of Tito and his betrayal. I am suspending Rakovski from every function and deploying him to DAG where, with a rifle in hand, he will have to wash his mistakes that led him to treason!” (89)

A day or two later, I left for Gramos to join the front in the Arapades sector as an ordinary fighter. And here, fighting on the first line in battle, besides facing danger from the enemy ahead, I twice happily avoided death from behind. I will talk about this in detail later...

Now the question is who were those “other” NOF Macedonian leaders and cadres about whom Aianovski wrote in “Aegean Storms” and Kiriazovski in “Istoria”, who “did not accept the anti-Yugoslavian politics of the Informburo...”

I believe they were talking about those NOF leaders and cadres who were not in the country, the likes of Goche and Keramidzhiev and their assistants Aianovski and Slavianka. They must have been the ones to “find the strength to resist” from afar, from outside the country. Perhaps that is why they refused to return to the field because they were going to find harassment? Obviously it was not a “betrayal” for Aianovski to have fled the battlefield and to have abandoned the struggle... They could do no wrong... But we, on the other hand, who remained behind and fought, were placed in the same category as the “Grkomani” (Macedonians loyal to the Greek cause) who infiltrated the NOF-KOEM leadership, and were accused of having committed crimes against the Macedonian

national liberation movement and against the Macedonian people. Naturally, the Macedonian cadres resisted and fought under these difficult conditions as much as they could and the fact that they became “organs” of the CPG shows convincingly the duress they were under. It is a fact that they were arrested, severely mistreated and almost executed. They only remained alive because the Albanian authorities refused to allow the Greeks to execute them on Albanian soil. They were tried and found guilty of being “Tito’s agents”, for which they served long sentences. But what does Aianovski have to say about that? Here is what he wrote:

“Treachery is loved by all, and traitors by none...” (90)

This was one of the most stubborn endeavours to tarnish and disqualify the entire NOF-KOEM leadership, to ignore their contribution and to rob them of the difficult struggle they led at home on the ground...

Here is something else that happened to me. I submitted my review of the book “Aegean Storms” in which I spoke about Aianovski’s endeavours, which was then published in “Istoria” number 1/1978. Then, a few years later, this was published in “Istoria” (2/81): “In order to confront Aianovski with the entire NOF managerial asset, Rakovski, in his review, groundlessly and stubbornly argues that Aianovski is the one who allegedly attacked the entire NOF leadership because it signed the KOEM resolution against the CPY on June 20, 1949. However, the truth is different altogether. Aianovski sharply criticized only those NOF-KOEM leaders who not only signed the KOEM resolution, but rather pronounced it, and in practice, implemented it...” (p. 288.)

Let us have a closer look at things. In “Aegean Storms” on page 406, Aianovski wrote that the overall KOEM-NOF leadership, i.e. all those (without exception) who then were fought on the ground and constituted the “KOEM-NOF managing asset” (among whom he is not), are proclaimed traitors, and not in general, but specifically pointing to each individual, by name and surname! (pp. 383-389.) This is the truth... There is no “different truth”. I have not argued “groundlessly” or “stubbornly” in my review, and above all I

did not confront Aianovski with the entire KOEM-NOF managerial asset. Aianovski did that himself...

If one were to read Vangel Aianovski's book "Aegean Storms" they will get the impression that the revolution in Greek occupied Macedonia began and ended with Aianovski. He has the tendency to practically disqualify and eliminate, i.e. politically bury the entire KOEM-NOF management asset. And this was not done by accident...

But the question is why does Aianovski want to politically bury them?

So that he, himself alone can remain clean and upright...!

The editors of "Istoria" wrote: "In order for him (Rakovski) to minimize Aianovski's revolutionary activity, or to achieve some other goal, he is "insinuating" that Aianovski and the Political Commission for the Macedonians under Greece, were working on some kind of informative activity, and not on organizational and political activities. It is very clear who Pavle Rakovski is serving with this suspicious misinformation - those who put themselves on the side of the Informburo!" (91)

Simply unbelievable! There is no such "insinuation" in my review. There is no "insinuation" that the Political Commission, of which I was a member, dealt with "SOME KIND OF INFORMATIVE ACTIVITY AND NOT WITH ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES". There is nothing else there but to conclude that this was pure speculation so that they can say "Rakovski spread a lot of suspicious misinformation that served those who put themselves on the side of the Informburo." Their wish was to present me as a supporter of the Informburo and therefore very biased and malicious. By removing me from the picture as a reliable critic of Aianovski's revolutionary activities there would be no one else to minimize his glory. Then he alone would remain to be the foremost story teller of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia. Thanks to Dr. Kiriazovski, a lot of the material, reports, newsletters, etc., he wrote over the years ended up in the main content of separate volumes in

the “Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War” edition. His name was also entered in the encyclopedia and he was described as a famous revolutionary. Conclusion: You can achieve a lot more with a pen sitting in the background than you can with a rifle in hand fighting at the front line!

Forgive me but at this point I would like to point out some of the charges brought against me before the public through the pages of “Istoria” - a fact that obliges me to do so.

“Pavle Rakovski irresponsibly and loudly stated (in the above-mentioned review) that in “Aegean Storms” and in “Chronology” issued by the Union of the Associations of Fighters from the National Liberation Army of Macedonia in 1973, that is, in our historiography of the Macedonian national liberation movement in the Aegean part of Macedonia, events were supposedly rewritten and adjusted. Rakovski utterly and irresponsibly said: ‘This was done by some people who are bitter about their own fate because they were unable to participate in the movement, that is, they were thrown out and eventually dropped out of the movement, and now they are making an effort, through such publications, to convince the public that they were the soul of the movement. And those who stayed at the front lines of the movement (because of some kind of natural selection) are nowhere to be found in these publications, or mud has been thrown at them, or they are proclaimed traitors...’ Rakovski here is extremely biased and malicious. According to him, his ‘comrades who have fallen from the movement’ are those Macedonians and leadership cadres from the Aegean part of Macedonia who in the angry CPG anti-Yugoslav campaign in early 1949 came into conflict with the leadership of the CPG, both in terms of defamation against the CPY, and in relation to the Macedonian National Question. (The truth is that the CPG initiated this campaign in October 1949, during the CPG Central Committee VI Plenum.) All of these comrades took up various functions in the People’s Republic of Macedonia and with their efforts contributed to the reconstruction of our homeland and, in bad times, proved to be consistent fighters and sons of the people and the Party in the struggle against the Informburo. (Apparently Goche, Keramidzhiev and their assistants Aianovski and Slavianka were not mentioned

here.) And here Pavle Rakovski dares to call these comrades ‘outcasts of the movement!’...” (92)

As we can see they are having problems explaining things. The Macedonian leaders who remained and fought in the front of the movement and in the battlefields are either not mentioned in our national history, or mud is thrown at them... Some, like myself, were even declared traitors... This, it appears, was one way of skipping the scandalous fact that they were denying it all by putting the “ultimate irresponsibility” on Rakovski. Rakovski was a liar and he lied about everything. They were certain that no one was going to check! And to emphasize this: “The comrades taking various functions in the People’s Republic of Macedonia and with their labour contributing to the reconstruction of our country... and in very difficult times proved themselves to be consistent fighters and sons of their people and the Party in the struggle against the Informburo”, and to impose it as “the only healthy driving force, as the soul of the movement at that difficult time in Greek occupied Macedonia...” is truly rich indeed!

This is historical injustice! The struggle in which our comrades in the Republic of Macedonia participated was done from their offices where they were clean and warm, nicely dressed and well fed. This is not and cannot be the same as fighting in the armed struggle fighting on two fronts on Paiak, Vicho, Kaimakchalan and Gramos mountains. Sitting in the office is not the same as fighting against the Athens regime forces, against the Greek “patriots” in the CPG and DAG ranks, and against their robotic obedient “Grkomani”. It was their duty to do whatever they needed to do as officials in the People’s Republic of Macedonia, but let us face facts, they were absent from the decisive battles that took place during the last year of the armed struggle from the fall of 1948 to the fall of 1949. There is nothing they can say to change that...! And to underline: “These same comrades... who in very difficult times proved themselves to be consistent fighters and sons of their people and the Party in the fight against Informburo...”, who Pavle Rakovski dares to call “outcasts of the movement”... is obviously another attempt to inflict another hard blow below my belt...

This too was written: “In order to challenge or downplay the activities of MAO, the Macedonian anti-fascist organization, Pavle Rakovski said that during 1942 and 1943, he allegedly worked in isolation as an illegal person (undercover) in the Voden districts of Meglen and Ostrovo. He claims that he never received any news or information. This however, is more misinformation being spread by Pavle Rakovski. Namely, in 1943 he did not work as an illegal person because there was no need for illegal work given the fact that the said districts were freed...!” (93)

This is ridiculous! Ostrovo District, through which the Solun-Voden-Bitola road passed, was under German occupation until November 3, 1944. This was when the Germans withdrew from Greece. I worked there as an illegal together with young Tosho Simovski-Laki and others. I worked there from November 1943 to May 1944, a total of about seven months. It was not until many years later, here in Skopje, when Simovski found out about MAO from the people of Voden Region, that I also found out. Like I said, we were isolated and heard nothing and knew nothing about MAO while we were there, in the field. So to say that “my goal was to challenge and belittle MAO’s activities”, especially after informing them that I knew nothing about it, is an attempt to distract from the main issue which I pointed out to be “the anti-Macedonian PRACTICES that the CPG, EAM and ELAS conducted”. MAO was not allowed to expand outside of the city Voden and was completely liquidated after its short existence. The main and essential issue here is: the negative and real attitude of the Greek leadership exercised against the Macedonian national liberation movement, i.e. against MAO, and not some ridiculous question of whether I (Rakovski) worked there legally or not...!

There is more: “Pavle Rakovski disagrees with Aianovski and claims that MAO was the first Macedonian organization in Aegean Macedonia over the course of the Second World War. Whereas Aianovski claims that MAO was the first organization of the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia during the period of the occupation... Rakovski has made similar claims in connection with the newspaper “Tsrvena Dzevezda” (Red Star), an organ of MAO, which operated in 1942 and 1943. In order to deny Aianovski’s claim, Rakovski stated that the newspaper “Rizospastis”, organ of

the CPG Central Committee, occasionally published letters from Macedonia in the Macedonian language and this, he claims, was in the beginning of the 1930's. This claim made by Rakovski is also not true...!" (94)

It is strange how easily the truth can be distorted. I have the book "Aegean Storms" here in my hand. The subject of discussion is "THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN VODEN REGION AND NOF IN AEGEAN MACEDONIA". This subject is discussed here on the front page. The first part of the book generally talks about "THE STRUGGLE OF THE VODEN REGION PROLETARIAT AND THE ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE FROM 1919 TO 1945. In other words, it is not only DURING THE COURSE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, or DURING THE PERIOD OF THE OCCUPATION, but from 1919 to 1945. And here on page 94 there is a statement made that "MAO was the first organization of the Macedonian people in Aegean Macedonia, which called for a national liberation struggle..." This is rewriting history. The historical truth is that this same thing was done earlier (in the mid-1930's) and it was done by the self-styled and short-lived Macedonian organization MRO (United). There is also the claim made here that the MAO newspaper "Red Star" was the first newspaper written in the Macedonian language, which also does not correspond to the historical truth. As is well-known Andrea Chipov's newspaper "Zemiodelsko zname" (Agricultural flag) appeared in the Macedonian language in the early 1930's in Lerin Region and managed to print seven issues...

The expressions "DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR" and "THE TIME OF THE OCCUPATION" are not in Aianovski's text. But, unfortunately those claims had to be made because there was a need for them to kick me below the belt. That is why, I believe, they were inserted there.

The case with "Rizospastis"... that was quite another thing. Soon after MRO (United) was formed the Macedonian people began to write letters to "Rizospastis" with demands to have them published in their original form and in the Macedonian language. Some of these letters were indeed published in the Macedonian language, not with the Cyrillic alphabet but with the Greek alphabet. Examples of

these can be found in “Rizospastis” number 203/7141 published in October 3, 1934 or in number 213/7151 on October 13, 1934, ten days later. (95) Historically, this was a short-term tactical move, a maneuver to deflect pressure from the “Slavophone” communists and their demands to have their own revolutionary press...

I have also been publicly accused as follows: “Pavle Rakovski has disputed Aianovski’s claim that a pre-Congress meeting was held in 1947 between NOF and CPG representatives to come up with a list of NOF leaders to be appointed during the 1st NOF Congress. Pavle Rakovski truly has no measure of objectivity. He very well knew that, not one, but two such meetings were held through which the CPG actually infiltrated NOF with its own people. It also removed some of the old NOF cadres among whom was Aianovski, who Pavle Rakovski himself then opposed...!” (96)

The truth is, I participated in those meetings and, although we did not keep a record, I should know what happened. And now we have Aianovski and Kiriazovski, who were not even there and did not take part in those meetings, telling me what happened. This is a classic move of tactlessness. But no, it is not about tact, it’s about something else. Let us see what Aianovski said... In his book “Aegean Storms” he said: “At the CPG Central Committee pre-Congress meeting... through its representatives Ioanidis and Stringos, members of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, the CPG demanded the removal of Vangel Aianovski-Oche, NOF organizing secretary for Aegean Macedonia... This request encountered opposition from those present, with the exception of Paskal Mitrevski who fully supported the CPG Central Committee decision. Ioanidis and Stringos did not allow any further discussion on the issue by setting a Party veto. Despite the controversy the CPG decision was accepted...!” (p. 253)

It is characteristic of “NOF organizing secretary” Aianovski and Dr. Kiriazovski to provide “different” information. The first part, on page 253 above, stated that the pre-Congress meeting was held in the village Rula on January 12, 1948, while the second part stated that not one, but two meetings were held in early 1947.

As I have already stated earlier, Aianovski, in “Aegean Storms”, claims that with the implementation of the agreement, the CPG, on November 21, 1946, reorganized the “NOF central leadership” appointing Paskal Mitrevski member of the CPG Provincial Committee for Macedonia, Mihail Keramidzhiev NOF Secretary, and Vangel Aianovski-Oche, etc., members of the leadership... (p. 234.)

He did not say it directly but indirectly he has suggested that Aianovski was appointed second or organizational secretary of NOF after Keramidzhiev who, of course, was the first or political secretary of NOF. Further into his book, again talking about the NOF asset (May 20, 1947), Aianovski said this about the previous NOF leadership: “It consisted of 8 people (7 attendants), two of whom were in charge of special functions and Mihail Keramidzhiev - Secretary, Pavle Rakovski - agitation, Evdokia Baleva-Vera - AFZH, while the remaining members were used as instructors and directly led and assisted the NOF District Committees. These were Vangel Nichev in Gumenzhe District, Vangel Aianovski-Oche in Voden District, etc.” (p. 239.) The NOF Executive Council was headed by the Secretariat Keramidzhiev, Rakovski and Vera.

So, according to his own accounts, Aianovski was not the “NOF organizing secretary”, but an instructor in Voden Region.

Aianovski has written extensively about NOF’s work but has said very little to nothing about his appointment to “organizational secretary” and has remained silent on his immediate suspension after the CPG intervention. Nothing happens without a reason, not even this. Georgios Eritriadis-Petris at the time was the CPG representative in the NOF active. He was the organizational secretary of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace. He criticized me in front of Karamidzhiev and Vera for nominating Aianovski for that position. I did not know, until we started talking about him, that Aianovski was going to be suspended as was decided by the Party. One of the charges was that he had signed a police statement condemning communist activities as betrayal... another charge was that he had received Bulgarian legitimacy from the “club” in Solun... another was because he was engaged in spy activities... and so on. And, soon enough, a directive did come down

from Paskal Mitrevski, then CPG instructor at NOF, suspending him from his duties. Aianovski was called in and given the news. From there Aianovski went to work in the field as an instructor. Due to the nature of this issue, it was decided his suspension was enough of a punishment and that it should not be announced in the press because it was already taken care of. Aianovski too kept quiet about this while working in the field. But keeping quiet was not everything he was doing... A few decades later, he, with help from Dr. Risto Kiriazovski, managed to provide what he called “undeniable evidence” that he (Aianovski) was the “second person in command of NOF”. This “information” was published in “Aegean Storms” as well as in many places in the “Aegean Macedonia and the national liberation struggle” edition. In “Aegean Storms”, starting on page 245, Aianovski included a report written by Vangel Shamardanov-Iindenski, a political commissar of the DAG Kaimakchalan battalion. The report was addressed to “Oche - senior leadership of NOF”, and dated August 30, 1947. This was proof, according to Aianovski, that he held that position. If Aianovski had written in “Aegean Storms” that he was appointed NOF organizational secretary and then suspended, this document would have been totally invalid. But by not telling that he was “suspended” and with this document in his possession, no one was going to deny Aianovski’s own “say so” that he was the “NOF organizing secretary” until the 1st NOF Congress held on January 13, 1948. Later on, in his book “Aegean Storms”, on page 358, while talking about the decisions made during the 1st NOF Congress, Aianovski said: “Because of showing disobedience to the CPG some of the NOF leaders were (on recommendation of the ‘CPG Central Committee deputies’) removed from the list...” He meant leaders such as Vangel Aianovski the organizing secretary of the NOF Main Board. On page 235, however, he wrote in detail how this decision was made (by a “Party veto” from the CPG Central Committee representatives) at the pre-Congress meeting of the central leadership. Years later Simovski asked me: “Why do the documents of the secretariat not bear Aianovski’s signature...?” I told him because, after the NOF asset was selected, Aianovski was suspended and continued to work as an instructor in Voden Region. If one were to look at the documents of the time, including those provided by Aianovski, they would easily find out that Aianovski was never organizing secretary of NOF. His signature was absent from the

documents because he did not participate in any of the secretariat working sessions. Even Dr. Risto Kiriazovski KNEW that none of documents generated by the NOF secretariat had Aianovski's signature on them. Obviously this was a carefully prepared attempt on Aianovski's part to "create" his own history with someone else's effort and measures...

This is what Kiriazovski wrote on page 293 in "Istoria": "Pavle Rakovski blames the editors of the collections "Aegean Macedonia and the national liberation struggle" for a friendly twist and tendency to "beautify" Aianovski's biography. As one of the editors, with full moral and professional responsibility, I stand behind everything written about Aianovski's revolutionary activities and I think that the editors fulfilled their obligation to the man who remained faithful to his people..."

As I mentioned earlier, when considering the question of who and how TOMO was established, what happened at the convening of the first regional conference in Voden Region, as well as the recently mentioned removal of the "NOF organizing secretary" allegedly by a "Party Veto" at the pre-Congress meeting, we have to conclude that, from what was said in Aianovski's "Aegean Storms" and in Kiriazovski's "Chronology" ("Aegean Macedonia and the national liberation struggle"), that events have been invented and history has been re-written in order to satisfy one's actions and tastes. It was not unusual to refer to Aianovski as the "NOF organizing secretary" in "Chronology" (p. 174 and 182), which also alleges that "requests" were made to remove him the first time by the "CPG Macedonian Bureau" in November 1947, and the second time during the "NOF Central Council" pre-Congress meeting in January 1948. These so-called "requests", however, are total fabrications. Vangel Aianovski was "suspended" shortly after the NOF asset was selected in May 1947, and afterwards, like I said before, continued to work as an instructor. Kiriazovski, however, insisted that it was not like that, as if he were there, and has used every opportunity to elevate Aianovski as the most important person in the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia. In a recently published series of articles in the newspaper "Nova Makedonija", about the struggle of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, as part of an educational and cultural plan, for example,

Kiriazovski did not fail to mention that: “MAO, the Macedonian anti-fascist organization in Voden Region, after requests were made by the Macedonian people, and after the CPG District Committee for Voden Region approved it, was formed in April 1942. The founder and leader of MAO was Vangel Aianovski-Oche. The goal of the organization was, in addition to fighting for the expulsion of the occupiers, to fight for the acquisition of national rights for the Macedonian people. MAO developed a wide range of activities and achieved major successes in involving the Macedonian people in the struggle. MAO also issued its own newspaper called ‘Tsrvena Dzvezda’ (Red Star)...” The truth, however, is that MAO was established by the Greek leaders, exactly the same way MRO (United) was established. When the Greeks saw that MAO functioned well, unlike the stillborn fictional MRO (United), and was being transformed into a dynamic revolutionary organization (despite being constrained in Voden) the Greeks liquidated it... This is proof that MAO was yet another “Greek project” that served its useful purpose before it was killed... But, contrary to the evidence provided, Kiriazovski continued to insist that “Aianovski was one of the most important leaders of NOF”. He said this in his “Chronology” three times as well as twice in Aianovski’s biographical data (p. 59 and 85) and once at the end of the book, together with the biographies of CPG and NOF leaders. He did not do this for anyone else. It was a conscious effort to impose Aianovski in the consciousness of the uninformed readers, especially in the CPM, and more widely, as an important, and most precisely, as the most important leader of all, a true revolutionary in Greek occupied Macedonia. This friendly affection has come to the fore by the fact that Kiriazovski tried to “beautify” Aianovski’s biography at the cost of violating the dignity of his own profession as a historian. He did this in volume V, in volume VI and in other volumes of “Aegean Macedonia and the national liberation struggle”.

In Aianovski’s biography, among other things, Kiriazovski wrote: “He was a communist from the pre-war period...” But the truth is, about which Aianovski wrote in his book “Aegean Storms”, that he signed a police declaration and became a renegade. He condemned all communist activities as treasonous... Unfortunately Kiriazovski is silent on that.

The statement: “Aianovski was the founder of the MAO in Voden Region in 1942...!” is false! The CPG founded and disbanded MAO. Aianovski was not engaged in any of it...

It was said that: “Aianovski was appointed Assistant Commissar of the Aegean Brigade in November 1944!” But what was not said is that, as a result, he only participated in the brigade’s parade in front of the Political Committee on November 18, 1944. After that he was withdrawn and sent to Voden to monitor and report on the situation there. This explains why Aianovski was not in the Headquarters’ composition when the Brigade entered into action against the Balisti. But, of course, nothing was said about that either.

It was said that: “TOMO, the ‘Secret Macedonian Liberation Organization’, was formed in Voden Region in January 1945, and led by Aianovski until the First District Conference, held on April 28, 1945...” But nothing was said about Aianovski’s own reports contradicting that... This information too was consciously ignored...

It was said that: “Aianovski became secretary of the NOF District Committee for Voden Region in the spring of 1945, after that he became member of the Executive Board and organizational secretary of the NOF Main Board for Aegean Macedonia...!” (97)

It is true that Aianovski, at my recommendation, was appointed first president, i.e. Secretary of the first TOMO District Committee, at the TOMO-NOF district conference on June 20, 1945. It is also true that during the reorganization of the NOF staff structure as per the Agreement with the CPG, in November 1946, Aianovski became member of the NOF Executive Board with the position of instructor in Voden Region. But it is not true that he became an organizing secretary of NOF because after the election he was suspended and continued to work as an instructor. This explains why Aianovski never took part in any of the Secretariat working meetings, and his signature did not appear in any of the Secretariat documents.

This same “friendly and clear affection” was shown by Dr. Kiriazovski for Aianovski, during the drafting of the trial edition of the National Committee of Fighters’ “Chronology”. As the editor-in-

chief of the “Chronology”, Kiriazovski followed every step Aianovski took in Voden Region like he was one of the most important leaders. He made sure to mention every meeting Aianovski attended in Voden Region, and when and where the meetings were held. Everything was catalogued like it was “very important work” and not like the ordinary and routine organizational work Aianovski was doing... and not only in Voden Region... On top of that Aianovski, of course, was portrayed as the only one person arranging these events and then writing about them in his notebooks... which Kiriazovski then took and turned into public knowledge...

A lot of “invented activities” were entered into the history of our Macedonian national liberation movement, in the name of science. I say this not only because Kiriazovski personally tried to “trample on me” in public, that is to portray me as a negligent anti-party hostile element that invented slander against the CPM/CPY, while publicly portraying Aianovski as the only famous revolutionary in Greek occupied Macedonia; the same person who far surpassed everyone in writing and systematically inventing deeds he had never done before. No! I say this because I believe Dr. Kiriazovski was generally unprincipled, subjective and ill-intentioned. Unfortunately, I am not the only target here. I also remember what they did to Urania Iurukova. This is what he said about her: “In March-April 1944, ‘dressed in white’ Urania was seen among the occupiers in Kostur working against our Macedonian national liberation movement...” (98) But that is not true. She was a well-known hero during the struggle fighting for DAG and was appointed secretary of the AFZH General Board and member of the NOF Executive Board. As for the other Urania, Urania Alilomova, she was twice appointed member of the NOF Central Council, once in the 1st and again in the 2nd NOF Congress. (99) But Dr. Kiriazovski, while citing her biography at the end of volume VI of “Aegean Macedonia and the national liberation struggle”, kept silent about that... (p. 481.) Of course that was unfair...

Let us continue...

After I was removed from the NOF leadership and demoted to an ordinary fighter I was sent to DAG Headquarters where I was

unexpectedly and politely welcomed by Commissar Bardzhotas. Mincho Fotev and I arrived there on June 23, 1949. After a good meal and some rest, Bardzhotas gave me a horse and a courier (escort) and sent me to DAG 10th Division Headquarters. There too I was unexpectedly and politely welcomed... like it was by some kind of order from above. I was then sent to the “annexartito tagma” (independent battalion) which handled heavy weapons, heavy machine guns and mortar cannons. There I met Hrisostomos, the battalion commander, a healthy looking man with bright, yellowish red eyelashes, eyebrows and hair. He was also polite to me. Located somewhere below us on the cliff was a line of bunkers equipped with heavy machine guns. That evening I was assigned to “guard duty”. The first thing I did was sit down behind a heavy machine gun and fire a short burst to test it. There were other fighters there with me. They were assigned to assist me. Our unit commander was a cheerful fighter from Thessaly named Georgios Hadzharas. I was impressed with how the line of bunkers with heavy machine guns was interconnected via trenches. July passed almost without any major incidents. Below us down at the bottom of the hill was a river which served as a border between us and our opponent who was entrenched at the top of the hill on the opposite side of the gorge. I guess you can call this the lull before the decisive battle that was going to take place in August 1949. My services as a machine gunner did not last long. Early in July I was assigned to operate an 81-mm heavy mortar cannon. My commander was an 18 year old young man named Micho Sarievski from the village Kolomnati, Lerin Region. His left arm was in a gypsum cast and it hung from his neck. He, together with several other young Macedonian fighters of similar age, left the hospital in Elbasan (Albania) without being discharged, and arrived at the front on their own. Even though their wounds were not healed, they were not sent back to the hospital. They were sent to the front line instead. The mortar cannon I was operating was located about a hundred metres higher up the hill, behind the heavy machine gun bunker line. No one could pass by us. Commander Hrisostomos made sure of that. While on duty I was given seven targets to hit. Each target was identified by a piece of stick stuck in the ground in front of me with a number pinned to it. Each number and target was written on an empty cigarette box and the sticks were stuck in the ground in a semicircle in front of me. To this day I am sad about the damage I inflicted on the enemy in those

days... But it was war. One day I received orders to fire five shells one after another at target number 3. The target was a tiny hill almost at the bottom of the gorge that looked like a turtle. It was densely covered with brush. I was told two enemy units were hiding in it. I fired the five shells. Then I was told that the units were nearly destroyed and there were many dead bodies left on the ground and in the brush... Then, one morning as I was looking down monitoring the terrain, I noticed enemy scouts coming out of the woods and crawling along the grassy open ground on the opposite side of the gorge. We were hiding in the shade while the early morning sun was shining brightly on top of the scouts. They decided to take a rest and bunched up behind some stones. I fired one shell and it fell right on top of them. When the smoke and dust cleared I saw nothing moving. Sometime later on, our opponent decided to destroy the dense forest on our side of the hill. He used about a dozen mortar cannons and began to systematically burn down our side square by square. He used a five-minute barrage on each square. "He wants to destroy your mortar cannon but does not know exactly where it is...!" explained Commander Hrisostomos. Initially mortar shells kept flying over us and landing somewhere around hill 110 where our supply corps was located in the upper line of bunkers. Hrisostomos decided to go to Headquarters while, from time to time, I fired shells at the seven targets one by one. Soon a critical situation developed. Square by square the barrage of fire came closer to us. Five minutes later we found ourselves inside the square that was under fire. It was terrible listening to the shells exploding, seeming like they were falling on top of us. Our unit commissar, a man named Spiros, a villager from Thessaly, along with the rest of the mortar staff, ran off to take refuge in the sleeping bunker. I yelled at them but they could not hear me from the noise. They even waited for me to go with them and became concerned when I did not arrive. I thought to myself: "If I continue firing they will think that I am somewhere else. If I stop firing they will think I am in this square taking shelter and burn it to the ground..." When the shells were incoming, I hid under my mortar cannon and after they exploded I quickly fired back at them in response on target number five. I didn't stop firing and five minutes later they moved on to the next square. While being shelled, for the sake of our "greater" security, I continued to fire with the same rhythm. I only stopped when they passed on to a next square...!

When my unit attended the “dimokratiki sinkedrosi” (democratic gathering), Commissar Spiros and the other fighters praised me for my initiative and asked that I be recognized and decorated. But I did not want the attention so I said: “I was only doing my job...! If you really want to know, I did it out of fear! Yes! Out of fear because if we were discovered we would all have been killed...!” Fotis, the battalion commissar, in private later told me that he was obliged to make this request to General Headquarters on behalf of the fighters, even if I insisted against it. I reminded him that I was sent here to be punished and that this was a prison sentence for me so I needed to be careful not to send the wrong message! A year or two later while serving in a Moscow prison my interrogator, a man named Firsov, told me that Fotis had indeed submitted the request to General Staff for me to be decorated. Firsov said to me: “I see that you have shown yourself to be heroic in Gramos...!” Fotis was an honest and courageous fighter... He suggested, or I should say he “demanded” that I be recognized for my deeds... but they decided to label me a traitor and liquidate me! This is how it happened:

The date was August 24, 1949. The enemy artillery was thrashing us. A courier came over and said something to Commissar Spiros. He quickly gathered seven of the mortar cannon staff and left. He left me and a woman fighter named Maria, a Macedonian from Nestram, Kostur Region, to operate the cannon. About an hour later an officer from Headquarters frantically ran towards me. I don't remember his name but I do remember he was a Macedonian from the village Aitos, Lerin Region. He jumped into the hole where the mortar cannon was resting and, while puffing, trying to catch his breath, in a panicky tone of voice told me that the bunker with the heavy machine gun below and directly under us had been captured and occupied by the enemy. Nothing could be seen from the trees where I was standing. He also told me that enemy soldiers had been climbing up hill 110, about 150 metres to the right of our position, and had captured the supply corps located about 300 metres above us. After he informed me he jumped out of the hole and ran back to headquarters from where he came. The direction to my left was still free so I could have abandoned the mortar cannon and I too could have withdrawn to battalion headquarters. But unfortunately no such order was given to me. I was only informed of the situation and left

there to decide on my own what to do. I had a handgun in my possession and a single thought. There was no way they were going to capture me alive. I decided that I would stand my ground and fight for as long as my ammunition lasted and then throw a grenade in the bunker to destroy it... I did not know Maria that well because we were together for only a few days. They sent her here from somewhere else but she was doing well on her own. Moments later I saw Hrisostomos, the battalion commander approaching. He came down into the mortar's nest and told me the same thing - that the bunker below had been captured and that the enemy had climbed up hill 110 and taken over the supply corps. I asked him why he was not using his reserves to fight back until reinforcements arrived. He said the reserves were with Fotis and not accessible but he assured me that he would look into the situation and "see what could be done". In the meantime he told me to keep firing the mortar gun at the gorge, and to make sure that I destroyed the bunker that was captured and occupied by the enemy. He then jumped out of the mortar nest and got lost behind the bushes on the way towards the headquarters bunker... And here is what really happened: The bunker below us and the supply corps were not taken by the enemy at all. They put the fear and panic into the Macedonian officer at headquarters and sent him to put the fear and panic into me. This was a "planned" event and they wanted me to act on it. But I found it interesting that they sent a Macedonian officer to inform me of the situation without any orders as to what I was expected to do. And then there was Hrisostomos telling me to bomb one of our own bunkers? That did not make sense to me! Had I left the mortar nest, like they expected me to, I would have been charged with "desertion". I am not speculating about this. I know this for a fact because, even though I did not leave my post, they told my commander, young Micho Sarievski, that I had deserted on the night of August 29, 1949. Then, after the Party and the government made the decision to withdraw our fighters to Albania, they ordered Sarievski to hunt me down and kill me. In the meantime, after Hrisostomos became tired of waiting for me to bomb the bunker while hiding behind the bushes, he came back to face me again. He personally wanted to ambush me bombing our own bunker so that he could claim: "That traitor Rakovski attacked our heavy machine gunners to help the enemy." Obviously this was well-planned to the last detail... On August 29, we were ordered to disable the mortar

and retreat. Only then did I find out that our bunker below had not been captured at all and what I was told a lie. The unit manning the bunker and their cheerful commander Georgios Hadzharas were all alive and well. Then when I met up with Hadzharas we had a nice conversation during which he asked me: “Why did you want to kill us, huh?” I took him aside and said: “Major Hrisostomos told me that you had been captured and killed by the enemy and that your bunker was occupied by the Burantades (a nickname for the enemy)”. He was surprised. He then said: “Why did that bastard want to kill us?” and after that he remained silent. Obviously Hrisostomos hid behind the bushes to ambush me, but seeing that his words had no effect on me he came back to taunt me. He stood on a pile of soil in front of the mortar cannon and began to conduct my firing like an orchestra conductor. Fire at the gorge... Fire at the bunker... Fire here... Fire there... In the meantime enemy cannon shells were passing over us and falling everywhere on hill 110. “Why do you expose yourself like this?” I called out to him. “Come down here before you get killed...!” He looked my way. Our eyes met. I still remember his long motionless killer look. He looked at me like he wanted to kill me... The next mistake they made was to send Micho Sarievski to kill me...

I was arrested on October 3, 1949 at the Bureli camp inside Albania, under the suspicion of being a “Yugoslav agent”. The same thing also happened to the following Macedonian NOF leaders: Malio, Hadziianev, Vera, Mitrevski, Fotev, Poplazarov, Kolentsev, Iurukova and Cholakov. They wanted to execute us there and then but the Albanian authorities intervened and took us under their jurisdiction. Our Greek comrades protested as follows:

“TO: THE POLITBURO OF THE ALBANIAN PARTY

FROM: THE CPG CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Dear comrades,

With this letter we would like to ask you the following questions:

1. A certain number of Tito’s agents operating in our ranks have been apprehended and jailed in accordance with a CPG decision

made during a Vicho-Gramos DAG unit Conference held on September 30, 1949 and in accordance with a decision made during a general meeting held afterwards with the Slavo-Macedonian fighters. This is also in agreement with Mehmed Shehu. The arrests were made in order to put an end to the anti-revolutionary activity of the aforementioned agents, as well as to discover their accomplices which still exist, both in the ranks of the fighters who retreated from Greece and in the units acting there, as well as those existing among the Slavo-Macedonian refugees in the People's republics. In order to discover and liquidate their accomplices we need to act quickly. Therefore we need to begin and end the investigation quickly. However, 25 days have already passed and not only did the investigation not begin, despite of our endeavour and the frequent urging of Comrade Mehmed Shehu, but quite the opposite, our Comrade (Periklis Kalodikis), who is familiar with the whole issue and was supposed to take part in the investigation, was completely excluded from the matter and has become the object of the investigation.

2. This delay unfortunately has caused us great harm. The accomplices of Tito's agents, whom we have already arrested, were inside our units and have been operating in Greece. They have fled to Yugoslavia, surrendered our units and did us great damage. This will now probably happen with Tito's agents who have left Greece with the Slavo-Macedonian refugees and are now in the People's republics. Had we finished the investigation in time, they surely would not have done much harm. You realize that by prolonging the investigation you are creating serious problems for both of us. We are asking you to put an end to this situation. We consider your Comrade Georgi's (lieutenant of the Albanian Security Service 'Sigurimi') suggestions unacceptable. Even though he is responsible for this matter, we do not accept Georgi's idea that the investigation should begin in December and we ask you to allow us to do our own investigation or, if possible, to hand over the prisoners to another people's republic and end the delays which have harmful consequences for our movement.

3. As we mention in part 1, our comrade who was appointed to investigate Tito's agents, has himself become the object of the investigation. Our impression is that your investigation, according

to the way it was conducted, and from what we understand from our dealings with Georgi, you are moving in a direction to put the CPG's policy regarding the Macedonian National Question into review from the time our Party was founded. Why does Comrade Georgi, on the issue of your requirement to acquaint yourselves with the CPG's policy regarding the Macedonian Question, prefer to take the path of the investigation and why have you not asked us for a more credible opinion of the problem that interests you? Our belief is that you have or hold your own reservations on the CPG's policies not only on the Macedonian Question, but also on the recent period, Hitler's 1941-1944, before and after Varkiza...

October 27, 1949, CPG Central Committee Politburo." (100)

Our Albanian comrades stood their ground and kept us in prison in isolation in Tirana until mid-December 1949. Then, after six days on a ship following the Aegean Sea, the Dardanelles, Marmots, Bosphorus and the Black Sea, we arrived at a prison in Odessa. After nine days of "vacation" in Odessa we arrived in Moscow through Kiev.

More information about what happened to me after that can be found later on the attachments entitled "Robiashi" and "Under investigation". They were written at different times and on different occasions. But they are an important part of my biography.

Now please, turn the page...!

ROBIASHI (101)

1. Condemned without a trial...

We were eleven Macedonians. Eleven leading activists of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia. We were arrested on orders from Zahariadis and the CPG Central Committee. I was arrested on October 3, 1949...

I was placed in strict isolation and solitary confinement for two years and eight months while the interrogations in Moscow lasted

two years and five months. (I will write about that in a separate document). On May 30, 1952 I was told:

For having ties with international reactionaries and for organizing activity in their favour in accordance with Article 58, items 4 and 11 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code, the USSR Supreme Court Special Council decided to sentence you to ten years of deprivation of personal liberty and forced labour in the “Correctional Labour Camps” - ITL, without the right to write any letters to anyone... I was not even allowed to write to my aging parents or friends and tell them that I was alive and where I was located. At the time I did not even know where my wife and child were and that they had been taken away...

The very moment the verdict was read I felt very bitter and angry...

The Russian Federation **FORCEFULLY CARRIED** me out and put me behind iron bars inside a Stolipinski prison wagon, and after that I was locked up in a Moscow prison. So, the question is:

“How did I and how could I have violated the Russian Federation Criminal Code in my own homeland in Greek occupied Macedonia while taking part in our people’s struggle for our elementary human, civil and national rights...? On top of that, why was I not brought before a court, and why was I not given the opportunity to defend myself...?”

This looked to me like “justice of the strong against the weak”. This was the so-called Iron **NATURAL LAW** of the Strong applied against the weak. After I grasped this cruel reality I became very cautious. I figured that protesting would be futile, wrong and probably dangerous. I convinced myself to refrain from making objections... I maintained a low profile for as long as I could, that is for as long as this justice of the strong was applied... as a happy moment in our unhappiness. Namely, if we remained in Zahariadis’ hands, we all would have been dead a long time ago...

Knowing that everything flowed with time and changed, I also knew that a lie too naturally had short legs and could not go far...

I arrived in Eastern Siberia (Irkutsk Oblast) to serve my sentence with a certain feeling that I would not be here in these Correctional labour camps for too long. I arrived with my morale very high...

2. Hard times...

In January 1955, by some internal need, I had a great desire to write some things down. This is what I wrote:

“January 10, 1955... It is hard... I have fallen into a social pit in which social waste from many Asian and European nations is thrown. These are the so-called fanatics from various religious sects including Sabbaths, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Greek Catholics, Old Believers, followers of the Orthodox Old Testament, Christians and so on, all of them considered enemies of the Soviet government. In addition to them there are also those who have been accused of being Russians spies, saboteurs, terrorists, Bukharinians, Trotskyites, Gestapo, Ukrainians and Moldavian separatists, smugglers and spies from Iran and Turkey, Hungarians, Poles, Czechoslovakians, Bulgarians, Yugoslavian Ustashases and Chetniks, Japanese, Chinese, Manchu, Koreans, open fascists, professional pawns and terrorists, lumbar proletarians, scoundrels, jokers and drifters... All these people are blind with hate for which I gave everything that a man has and can possibly give. I live among them now all alone, very cautiously, because if I were to accidentally step on the tail of one of these reptiles, I might as well consider myself dead. The danger of being attacked by any of them is always there even without stepping on their tail. Three times now I have been in this extremely difficult position, once in 1953 and twice in 1954. I always try to maintain my coolness, that is, the calm that radiated out of me and with which I am able to cool and calm down the attacker without causing an attack on anyone else who is around. I think that the feeling of my human dignity and the knowledge that I have as a Communist, stand very high above these subjects and gives me the ability to do this.

I have been here barely three months, in this camp, named 0-41, and I have often spotted those of the S.S. glancing at me like they knew me or knew of me. To them, I am not a political prisoner who, until recently, wore, like they did, a number on my back, that is, I

represented a number. (In 1954, one year after Stalin's death, those numbers were abolished. The prisoners stopped wearing them on their backs.) Two days ago, while looking at me and pointing at me by tilting his head, one of them said to the others:

‘Tsvain kizhte hat dizei man ...’ (This man is two-faced...) The German then lowered his voice and I could no longer hear what he was saying...

And here, at this point, the following words came to mind: ‘One day the NOF leaders will sit on a court bench and will pay.’ This is what Olimprios, a DAG Headquarters Coordinator at the Kaimakchalan whom I knew from before, said. He was a brutal teacher. He finished teacher's school in Lerin when I was still in the gymnasium so we knew each other from then. He said this to me sometime in April-May 1947. Obviously he thought I was Greek and that is why he confided in me and expressed his chauvinism by telling me what the Party leaders and DAG were planning for the Macedonian national liberation movement, that is, against NOF...

And here we are! We, the NOF leaders, are paying dearly just as our heroic Macedonian people have paid in the past in Greek occupied Macedonia. We are paying for their classical organizational incompetence and well-organized betrayal...

But the day will come, when the black speck of betrayal, with which these people tried to blacken NOF and its leaders, will blacken and defile them and History will expose them, for being the main culprits for the tragic end of the popular revolution in Greece...”

3. An unexpected turn of events...

Three weeks later I wrote the following:

“January 31, 1955. They took me to the Central Camp 0-25, near the large railway station in the town Taishet, on the Trans-Siberian Railway (Irkutsk oblast). I've been here for twelve days. They called me in and took the address of my parents in Lerin. I was also photographed. This was the day before yesterday. Today they supplied me with food for three days. This means that I will be

traveling by train for three days. The days after that I don't know. What will happen next...? I don't know. All indications, primarily by the attitude of the camp authorities, suggest that something pleasant is going to happen. I have no doubt that I am on the threshold of a new life... I dreamt again about the huge dragon that I often dream about, moving above my head over the ceiling of my cell. In this dream I often hide in a church. But this time the dragon was far and high in the sky and then turned into a dragon-shaped paper with a long tail. At one point a flock of blackbirds attacked it and split it into pieces... Clearly, this is just a vivid projection of what my subconscious is telling me.

But what brought about this change...?

I don't know. In my case there was no indication or reason for this. My release could be the result of a variety of reasons. I will soon find out...Patience...!..

Our struggle has been slandered. The Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia was deemed... counterrevolutionary. They say it helped our opponent (the reactionaries). NOF organized the Macedonian people in the struggle and sent them to DAG's ranks. They were dedicated and devoted to the revolution. They were determined fighters. Entire Macedonian villages and entire Macedonian families, regardless of sex, joined... but now they say the Macedonian involvement had a counterrevolutionary role. They say that this helped the reactionaries. They say the Macedonian mass participation in the struggle prompted the Greek people to fight back en masse against the revolution.

In the end the enemy finally managed to involve a large mass of Greek people and got them to fight against the revolution and win – that's true.

In order to succeed in this, the enemy, among other things, in its propaganda campaigns against the revolution, used the existence of NOF and the participation of the Macedonian people in the organized struggle – and that is also true.

But does this mean that NOF and the Macedonian people's participation in the struggle are guilty of what they are being accused...?

DEFINITELY NO...!

The Macedonian people's struggle for freedom and elementary human, civil and national rights against the Greek government was a social phenomenon. The initiation of the Macedonian national liberation movement was a LEGAL ACT as any social phenomenon would be. It was an iron clad historic event with a need to develop a process of life for the Macedonian people. What occurred during the Second World War was a natural consequence of historic change, and not only in Greek occupied Macedonia but also in the entire Balkans in general. It was inevitable and unstoppable, like any occurrence in nature. If a rainstorm damages a field the storm is not to blame... If the Macedonian national liberation movement harmed the field of politics then the blame should be placed on the leadership that initiated this movement - the Party politics and the bad Party leadership policies are to blame...

Exposing the truth about the Macedonian participation in the struggle is an imperative task that every Macedonian patriot must undertake and should begin immediately. It will be my task from the very moment I am released..."

4. Prisoners...

Great honesty and courage are needed for a large country to publicly acknowledge its mistake against a small country. The Soviet communist Party leaders, led by Nikita Khrushchev, had that honesty and courage and publicly declared their wrong-doing. They also condemned Stalin's destructive policy towards the CPY and Yugoslavia.

By doing this the Soviet leadership publicly acknowledged that I did not work for the "international reactionaries" or for the Yugoslav leaders...

Given the new situation, the USSR Supreme Court “Special Counsel” reviewed our case... The change was not easy but a new verdict was reached. My penalty was reduced to five and a half years... time already served...

Suddenly I found myself “free” in Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan and together with my friends Mitrevski, Poplazarov, Cholakov, Hadzhianevski, Nikolova (Vera), Iurukova, Fotev and Kolenchev. (Maliiov and a DAG captain, a Macedonian, I forget his name, were never again together with this group.)

We were “free” but only in the sense that we were released from prison and left on the streets of Alma-Ata. Otherwise, we did not have a choice... We were brought here by coercion and now we had no right to leave the city...

At first we all got together in a small room. The room belonged to a Russian man who Kolentsev and Mitrevski had met on the train on our way here. It was cramped but we all slept on the floor, one beside the other, exactly like sardines in a can. Thanks to our Russian friend we got another room at his sister’s place. With help from Kazakhstan’s Red Crescent, we slowly settled down. We all managed to get jobs. Almost all of us worked as controllers (ticket checkers) in the public transit buses. But there was no fundamental change in our position. We were ex-convicts, and now exiles...

This is how we were treated there...

5. Appeal...

After Tito’s visit to Moscow in June 1956, I proposed to the comrades that we launch an appeal to the USSR Supreme Court. I don’t know WHY and HOW but Mitrevski convinced or intimidated the others and they would not support my idea. I felt like this man was trying hard to work against me and behind my back. I felt like he was preparing some kind of intrigue against me... In June 1952, Poplazarov and I were brought to camp 0-25, in the town Taishet where we remained together for three months. Before that I had not had much contact with Poplazarov and we almost did not know each other. But here we became good friends. One day he asked me if,

when I was in Moscow, they allowed me to read the minutes of our hearings and sign them for confirmation. I told him yes. They gave them to me too and I read them, he said. And from what I read I saw that you did not try to implicate me with anything. Yes, I said to him, I have been careful not to say anything which would make the situation difficult for anyone in the group... He then said to me that all the time that he was with Mitrevski in the ship and in the prison cell he tried to persuade everyone that we should be afraid of you. He said that, in order to ease your own situation, you were prepared to collude with Mitrevski against the rest of us, and that you were going to “invent” things against each. He claimed that you were prepared to do this and you would do it – but not him. He then asked us to make up things, fictional things, about you...

He only convinced Vera Nikolova and she then tried to make up things that would make me look like a Yugoslav spy who worked against the CPG and against DAG. That is why I was brought to face her, “to look her in the eye”, as the Russians used to say. Mitrevski, of course, did the same. He invented the idea that;

a) I was an OZNA agent, and

b) I was secretary of the political committee (I was neither one nor the other).

I was accused of recruiting agents and sending them to the field to undermine the CPG and DAG. As a result, Lieutenant Colonel Viktor Petrovich Firsov, my interrogator, twice led me to confront Mitrevski...

Both Poplazarov and I concluded that Mitrevski did this himself, that is, he tried to provoke false accusations against me and against the others in order to make my situation the most difficult, hoping that the Russians would find it more difficult to decide which two to execute. And if they decided to execute only one of us, he was hoping it would be me...! But why do this now? What was he afraid of (if he was at all afraid) and how would it have helped our situation by giving up on the appeal? This was unclear to me.

I decided to appeal on my own anyway and submitted the request on my behalf. If Tito was a “tavarish” (friend) of Khrushchev, and we have been sentenced for being Tito’s supporters, I wrote, then the very grounds for the indictment and the verdict should clearly be dismissed. So I appeal to you to review our cases...

6. Collision...

A few months later, in May 1957, we were invited to go to the Kazakh Ministry of Internal Affairs. Here they familiarized us with the new “Military Collegium’s” verdict at the USSR Supreme Court for which we had to sign to conform. (Apparently, it was now called the former Special Council). The earlier rulings were ANNULLED. The very ACT against us, due to “ostustvia sostava prestuplenia” (in the absence of evidence?) was LIQUIDATED. We were legally rehabilitated... Soon afterwards, we were granted newly built apartments in Alma-Ata Region of KIZ (Kazakh Agricultural Institute), in the 272nd quarter...

Then came my “public clash” with Mitrevski. To the question: “What do we do next...?” Mitrevski’s idea was to immediately apply for visas and leave for Skopje. My idea was to remain here among our people. I was convinced that our place was among the thousands of our fighters and people who had immigrated here in this country. We needed to be there and not to allow Kotsopoulos, Gusiopoulos and the other “Opouloses” to act and to disorient our people... which unfortunately did happen. Thousands of Macedonians were later sent to Bulgaria instead of the People’s Republic of Macedonia... For more information on this see v/k “Nova Makedonija”, May 27, 1961.

In a friendly way, Poplazarov tried to convince me differently. He said:

“If you fall back into the hands of the Greek leaders again, this time they will send a truck to run you over and they will say it was an accident...!”

I said: “I am not excluding that possibility... But now that it is well-known that thousands of our young men and women voluntarily

went to the front and were killed, we should not go back to them...? Because it is too dangerous?! This looks like desertion to me..."

Poplazarov looked insulted. I offended him without wanting to...

One day while we were in the courtyard of the Alma-Ata Bus Authority, Mitrevski said to me:

"I know why you want to stay. It's not because you say you don't want the various "Opouloses" to disorient our people but because you want to return with a hero's aura in my absence. Kotsopoulos and Gusiopoulos mean nothing to you because you alone want to be and remain the new leader of the Aegean Macedonians. That's why you want to stay...!"

I knew Mitrevski well. Everything and everyone he looked at, he saw through a prism of personal interest to groom his own career. I got to know him well from how he reacted to people, how he treated people and from his attitude towards things and events. Even though I knew him well, I was still surprised by his attitude towards me. But, despite what he said, without hesitation and with a serious tone of voice I said to him:

"Don't leave, stay here, I will help you, and generally I will stay out of your way, I will stay in the background and not in front of the people in gatherings."

He just smiled without saying a word. In the evening he gathered all the others and brought them to the room where I was staying together with Hadziianevski and Cholakov (we had not yet moved into our new apartments), and in a serious and official tone of voice he accused me of... betraying the Macedonian people and of betraying them... He said without unity in the group we would be leaving our skeletons here... By that he meant that "without all of us agreeing, it would be difficult to get visas for Yugoslavia". He then walked out with his mouth foaming...

This reminded me of another time, in 1945, when Mitrevski and I were at Hristo Andonovski's place in Bitola. A beautiful young woman walked in and complained about a young man named Rade

having slept with her and then not wanting to marry her. The young woman was an AFZH regional activist. Rade, according to her, was also there, they both had arrived from the field. We sent her to get Rade and bring him here to see Mitrevski...

Outside of a few swear words that came out of Mitrevski's mouth, we all kept quiet in the presence of this young woman. When she left, Mitrevski turned to me and said "watch what I will do to that ruffian...!"

Rade arrived but without the young woman so Mitrevski started to belittle him, quietly and calmly at first then loudly and angrily. As he got angrier Mitrevski's face began to turn red, his eyes became fiery and he began to foam at the mouth...

After being yelled at Rade agreed to marry the young woman and left. Mitrevski then began to laugh... I congratulated him on his acting ability and on his powers of persuasion...

But because I knew him well his "acting" had no effect on me, especially here in Alma-Ata. But that was not the case with the others. However, I did tell him that I did not believe that this was how he truly felt and that what he said he believed to be true. I told him that at this point both you and I know that you are acting dishonorably and this is not the first time. I left it at that. Time will surely tell who the betrayer was!

It all ended with that... A staged attack against me... I stood my ground and wondered if he was going to accost me. But, of course, the others intervened. After that he went with the others, while Kadzhiianevski, Cholakov and I unhappily prepared for sleep...

7. Pointless insistence...

Soon afterwards, two Macedonian representatives from the Party organization arrived here from Tashkent. One was Ralis Timios, now a resident of Skopje, and the other I did not know. The CPG Central Committee had convened its VI Extended Plenum in March 1956 and the two men were sent here to familiarize us with the various issues discussed. Zahariadis and the policies of his "Greek

Axis” were condemned for allowing the English to be present in Greece during the Greek Civil War of 1945-1949. It was discovered that it was the English presence in Greece that weakened the Greek people’s resistance and undermined DAG’s victory. Ralis and the other man, apparently under pressure from underneath, were sent to familiarize us with the VI Plenum and to inform us that a decision was made to remove Zahariadis from his position as CPG Secretary General. It was through these two men that I asked the Party leadership in Tashkent to help me return to our political immigrants...

Unfortunately my requests were landing on deaf ears. A little later, at a gathering of Macedonian political immigrants in Bulgaria, Kotsopoulos asked: “Why was Rakovski, who expressed a desire to return, still isolated in Alma-Ata?” The answer given was: “Rakovski has isolated himself in Alma-Ata because he did not like the (supposed) apartment he was offered in Tashkent...”

And so the Party’s top leadership, the real oppressors of the Macedonian nation, continued to lead the Macedonian fighters and lie to them not only about the wrong these Greeks committed against them and against the Macedonian people, but also about our (the NOF leadership’s) destiny...

Mitrevski and Kolintsev were the first to receive their visas and left for Yugoslavia. That was soon after I had my “collision” with Mitrevski. Then, one after another, at different time intervals, they all left. This is what I wrote in my notebook:

“I wrote letters to the CPG Central Committee through the Communist Party of Kazakhstan Central Committee, for which I received no answer. Then I made a request to the CPG Central Committee, through the Communist Party of Uzbekistan Central Committee, to allow me to return and live together with our political immigrants in Tashkent or anywhere else where there were Macedonian political immigrants. I begged them to let me do this because I felt that I could benefit both the Party and our people. However, it seems that even after Zahariadis was removed, his cronies and well-known “friends” of ours still remained in charge of the CPG and preferred me to be as far away as possible. That, of

course, was not because they were afraid of me - one man. No... They were afraid of the truth... They were afraid of the truth which I carried and expressed... I sent them an article I had recently written entitled 'Critical review of the CPG's policies towards us Macedonians...' they remained silent on that... But all their interventions and silence were in vain... No one ever succeeded in killing the truth through interventions and silence. Sooner or later the truth always comes out and wins...!"

In August 1956, my wife and daughter arrived in the USSR from Poland. I left my little girl when she was three months old and met her again, for the first time, when she was seven years old. I contacted the officer of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and spoke to a captain who was familiar with my case and who knew that my family had arrived. She agreed with me that it was unfair for my wife and child to share my fate as a prisoner. But she did not have the authority to personally grant me permission to go to Tashkent. Since I received no reply to the letters I sent from here, I needed to personally go to the CPG Central Committee in Tashkent and they would then clear my way to go to our people there...

She referred me to a supervisor, a Major in the MVD army. He received me and acted humanely. He granted me a leave of absence for five days, plus two days on the road, for a total of seven days.

Because the railways were very crowded, the trip was long, the summer heat was unbearable and because of my fragile health, my wife and I decided to sell a winter coat she brought for me from Poland and purchase a round trip airline ticket to Tashkent. I did not have any other expenses. I stayed with Stoian Kochov in Tashkent, now a resident of Skopje... I was kindly received by P. Dimitriou from the Greek leadership who listened to my request carefully and confirmed that my letters from Alma-Ata as well as my article were received by the CPG Central Committee. I was told that due to the backlog at the immigration centre, my request for joining our immigrants had not yet been considered but he said he would help me with my request to move to Tashkent with my family. He said he would send me some financial assistance as soon as he acquired an apartment for me.

I returned to Alma-Ata and immediately went to see the Major. But there was no trace of him. They had moved him. While these people (Greeks from the CPG) smiled at me in Tashkent, here they sharply protested to the Soviet authorities as to why I was allowed to travel...

I fought hard for two long years in an attempt to obtain permission to be with our Macedonian political immigrants before I came to the hard realization that these doors were tightly locked for me. Staying in Alma-Ata any longer was pointless. I submitted a written request to the Yugoslav Embassy in Moscow to issue me a Yugoslav passport and visa to return to Skopje. I received the documents fairly quickly. However, it was incomprehensible to me why the Soviet authorities refused to grant me their visa so that I could leave. After many promises and a lot of stalling they simply refused to give me my visa...

I could not explain why. Why were Macedonians from Tashkent, and my comrades here, being issued Soviet visas and I was not...?

I came to the conclusion that the Greek leaders had something to do with it. For a long time they did not want me to join our political immigrants and now they didn't want me to join my people in the People's Republic of Macedonia. Could it be for the same reason; to prevent me from uncovering the truth about their unprincipled anti-Macedonian position; to stop me from uncovering their genocidal plans against the Macedonian people? Perhaps I am exaggerating and overestimating the value of the article I wrote... But it is a fact that, until that time, no one had written such a convincing and argumentative article that exposed the anti-Macedonian essence of their politics, as I did. In that regard and not without any foundation, I don't believe that the Greek leaders, one way or another, cared much about my analysis of their policies and whether it was going to become public and found out by the people or by the CPG membership...

After receiving my Yugoslav passport and visa, I lost one year and eight months in a persistent struggle, in the form of written and oral protests and requests to various Soviet organs of power and institutions, including to the editorial office of the Moscow "Pravda"

and through it to Krushchev himself, to the USSR General Prosecutor, and so on. I lost one year and eight months trying to leave the USSR and return to the People's Republic of Macedonia.

Finally I achieved my goal with one letter which deserves attention. Here is what I wrote:

8. TO THE USSR GENERAL PROSECUTOR IN MOSCOW

From the political immigrant Pavle Mihailov Rakovski, a resident of g. Alma-Ata 15, kv-1 272-a, house number 16, apartment 2.

Dear comrade General Prosecutor of the USSR,

I am Macedonian by nationality, from the Greek part of Macedonia. (We Macedonians are the southernmost Slavic people in Southeastern Europe.)

I was an active participant in the People's Resistance against the German occupation. After that I participated in the Greek Civil War from 1946 to 1949, in the ranks of the democratic forces and fought against the reactionaries and against the Anglo-American interventionists...

Unfortunately, as we now know, the Greek Civil War ended in failure for the democratic forces in the country. Our leadership, the Communist Party of Greece leadership, which then found itself in Albania, accused me of treason. I, along with other Macedonian political workers, was arrested and handed over to the Albanian authorities. I spent over two months in jail in Tirana, being placed in strict isolation and solitary confinement. After that, on January 4, 1950, I was brought to the USSR and taken to Moscow. I remained there in solitary confinement and under interrogation (interrogated by Lieutenant-Colonel FIRSOV V.P.) for two years and five months, that is, to the end of May 1952. In accordance with Article 58, 4 and 11, the USSR Supreme Court Special Council then sentenced me to ten years in prison without personal freedom and without the right to communicate with my parents, wife or comrades. That is, without the ability to let my friends and relatives know my condition and my whereabouts. I was then sent to the

Correctional Labour Camps – ITL in Eastern Siberia to serve my sentence...

My verdict was again reviewed in December 1954, and the duration of my sentence was reduced. I was then released from prison in March 1955. After that, at my written request, my sentence was once again re-examined. As a result, in May 1956, the Military Collegium at the USSR Supreme Court annulled my previous judgments and the very case AO-238 itself was dropped “due to lack of evidence of offenses being committed”.

In other words, everything that was undertaken against me in all those years was without foundation. I was grossly slandered and humiliated at rallies, at meetings, through the radio, through the press and through all other means the CPG Central Committee had in its possession. I was under constant attack and morally and physically tormented...

But, it appears that even after I was found “not guilty” of all charges, rehabilitated and released, some Greek CPG leaders still continue to harass me. They would not allow me to join our political immigrants here. Those in the CPG Central Committee would not even allow me to return to the collective, even after I wrote to them many times and asked them for their permission. They have me isolated in Alma-Ata and have deprived me of the right to participate in the social and political life of my native nation. On top of that they have also condemned me to live in poverty. Namely, during all these years I have been here, I was not given the opportunity to earn anything more than my food (476 rubles a month). I don't have any clothes or shoes and my apartment is completely bare...

My life has become hopeless, senseless and unworthy of living. Being here and living under these condition makes me believe that I would have been better off being dead, killed at the Gramos front in August, 1949, during the last decisive battle against the enemy. The task to take my life was entrusted to Major Hrisostomos, Commander of the Independent heavy weapon's Battalion (“Aneksartitot Tagma”) at the Democratic Army of Greece's 19th Division... And I must say that, for ten years now, ten years in a

row, after Hrisostomos failed to liquidate me, some of the CPG leadership have been after me and constantly attempting to harm me...

I contacted the Yugoslav Embassy in Moscow with a request to allow me to permanently move to the People's Republic of Macedonia, a federal unit of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Soon afterwards I received the necessary Yugoslav documents. I then contacted the competent Soviet authorities here, with a written request that I be allowed to return to my homeland. This was in July 1958. I had to wait eight months for an answer and that answer was negative. The PRO UVD of the Regional Committee of the Council of Defense in Alma-Ata responded negatively to me. They refused to allow me to return to my homeland, and they refused to tell me the reason for their negative decision.

But one thing is clear:

There was no need for the Soviet authorities to isolate me before and there is no need for them to further isolate me now. The Soviet authorities should have allowed me to travel from Alma-Ata as they allowed my eight comrades and the hundreds, if not thousands, of other Macedonians who traveled to our homeland from Tashkent.

However, the fact remains that:

I was violently removed from my native nation and my right to participate in the social and political life of my people has been trampled.

I am sentenced to a miserable existence and to live in poverty. I am treated cruelly and constantly humiliated and there is no reason for it. I feel demoralized and my morale is going down with each passing day. I feel like a caged animal without hope...

I am no more than a mere prisoner here. My movements are limited only to the areas of the city in which I live...

I would like to also mention that my wife and daughter are also here. They came from Poland (Poland also has a large number of political immigrants from Greece) and share the same fate as me...

This is obviously an unlawful act of injustice perpetrated against me and my family. We are being punished without been given the opportunity to defend ourselves. They have not even informed us of what the charges are against us...

Comrade Prosecutor General of the USSR, I call on you to please do everything you can, in the spirit of the Soviet Constitution, the most advanced Constitution in the world, in the spirit of the Soviet legal system, to help my case. It is my right and my desire as a Macedonian to live in the People's Republic of Macedonia, to grow old there and to bring up my children among my native Macedonian people. This is what I want... Here I feel like a tree branch that flew off its native tree as a consequence of a violent storm and is now condemned to rot without a trace of where it fell. I am deeply convinced that with your intervention, my family and I will avoid the "fate" of such a branch - the "fate" prepared by those in the CPG leadership who wish me harm... I am certain that with your help I will return to my native nation and start a full and real life, like a normal human being...

With respect, Pavle Rakovski
Alma-Ata, April 13, 1959.

9. Heading for Subotitsa...

When my Yugoslav passport stamped with the Soviet visa arrived I began to prepare for my trip. In the meantime I submitted a written request to the Regional Post office to have my mail forwarded to Yugoslavia, to Vangel Aianovski's address in Skopje.

Then I noticed that my Yugoslav visa had already expired. That worried me. I was sure this was by no accident; it was yet another blow against me. I had to stay in Alma-Ata until I got a new Yugoslav visa. I sent my passport to Moscow, to the Yugoslav Embassy, and asked them renew my visa, explaining that my visa expired because I was not issued a Soviet visa until now.

I then went back to the regional post office and explained to the person in charge that my trip was delayed and that I was waiting for my passport to arrive from Moscow. I begged him to look for it and send it to me here and not to Yugoslavia.

The post office official wrote something down in his notebook.

Ten days later, when the passport did not arrive, I went back to the post office to find out what had happened. The person I was talking to confirmed that my passport was sent to Yugoslavia. I went to see the person in charge and all he could do was apologize. He forgot to warn the officers in the second shift...

This was yet another heavy blow against me, not only because of the “inconveniences” but also because both my wife and I had quit our jobs and had no money. The money the Red Cross gave us was spent for our travel tickets. I never did get my passport back and I began to doubt everything and everyone. I did not even get a written apology from the post office in Alma-Ata. Months passed under tense uncertainty. Fortunately they hired me back at my job and I was able to make some money. Finally, our Embassy pulled me out of a difficult situation: they issued me a new Yugoslav passport...

I immediately contacted the Russian Captain who had helped me out earlier and asked her to transfer my visa to the new passport, which she did...

On February 17, 1960, I was a thousand miles away, traveling by train away from Alma-Ata. I was traveling together with my wife and now with my two children. My son was just born. We were headed for Yugoslav territory... for Subotitsa...

10. A Soviet spy...

My happiness and feeling of being secure were interrupted by the officer who took me and my family off the train.

We spent the entire day in a waiting room...

In the evening I was then placed in some kind of night train and, accompanied by one of the people from the “interior”, was escorted to Belgrade. Then, in the dimmed part of the station, they quickly transferred me to a prison car. Later they put me in a room together with my wife and children, at the militia station prison in Panchevo.

The interrogation began on the third day. I was interrogated by Kiro Sotirovski-Strogov, a representative of the SVR service from Skopje. He had a stenographer with him with a typewriter. I was interrogated every day for ten days in a row. In the end Sotirovski said to me:

“However, Pavle, we think ... we do not claim, because we don’t have any evidence, but we think that you are coming here as an agent...!”

He did not say whose agent. And there was no need. From the questions that he asked me in the ten days, everything was clear to me. We understood each other perfectly...

I genuinely accepted my new struggle. You must accept life as it is. I was expecting something like this... I am sure Mitrevski had something to do with it... In his great concern that I not be accepted as the “new leader” of the Aegean Macedonians, he, while still in Alma-Ata, quickly sent letters to disseminate my supposed “treachery” everywhere. They even had my wife convinced to give up on me while she was still in Poland, and she almost did. They told the Yugoslav authorities that I did not agree with the proposed solution to the Macedonian Question, as was currently practiced in Federal Yugoslavia, and that is why I did not come with them to Skopje when they left. They even accused me of being a Zahariadis supporter and supported Zahariadis’s solution to the Macedonian question in the Greek state. I was accused of saying that the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia had no connections with the Macedonian people in the People’s Republic of Macedonia and that they should eternally remain and be added to the Greek people so that they are assimilated and disappeared to the last one...

In that spirit, with the exception of Hadzhiianevski and Iurukova, they all made such accusations in the letters they sent out about me, which I indirectly found out from Sotirovski's questions. And that was not the end of it. From Sotirovski's questions I became aware of yet another aspect of my "betrayal", that is, I also found out what Mitrevski and company were saying to the authorities in Skopje.

As a result I was charged with being a Soviet agent when I arrived in Skopje...!

It was a precisely calculated blow, conceived and performed on the basis of speculation that relied mainly on certain differences and disagreements between the Soviet and Yugoslav leaderships. Here again they expressed concern that the Skopje leadership should not accept me as the "new leader" of the Aegean immigrants in the field. This, obviously, would have reflected badly on all of those who abandoned the field and fled to Skopje.

Besides that, the "new leader" would reorganize the staff and even replace the old staff with new people. By doing this the "new leader" would inevitably take the old staff from the limelight and send them to the background. The old staff then, just like that, would lose its importance in a single movement. In that respect I was a REAL DANGER to their future as leaders... Not that Mitrevski and the others were any good at their jobs... They were considered important only because they held high positions in the Organization and for that reason their word carried some weight. But I was clean, and that was my advantage over them - they had to lie to get there. What made me bitter was the fact that my ex-comrades deliberately twisted the truth and conscientiously betrayed me by lying about my absence when they arrived in Skopje.

Let me also say that I was not only a potential danger to their ambitions and future interests, but with my attitude, on top of that, I was prepared to inform all our people that these "leaders" dropped the ball on thousands of our fighters and political refugees and left them behind. Instead of staying and sharing their fate, they simply rushed to get a cushy position in Skopje...

I told them that right to their faces. What they did I call “desertion” and I said that in the presence of Poplazarov. After our “rehabilitation” in the USSR we all felt like winners. Like some kind of heroes... My actions unfortunately were spoiling their mood... But then what I did after that and the position I took may have been tactically wrong. I was challenging everything and very vocal about it with a tone of irony. Even my friend Poplazarov from camp 0-25 began to hate me. I saw the same hatred in the eyes of the others. They were planning to come home with an aura of heroes, but my actions tarnished the glare out of their aura. Almost all of them were hostile to me... and silent! The question that was put before them was:

“Why did Rakovski return to the fighters, and they did not...?”

How does one answer that...? They had no choice. They had to act as they did before. They blackened me in order for themselves to look clean - to be accepted, and for me to be rejected. It was the only way to neutralize the problem. They correctly calculated that:

“The same lie told by all of them will act as the truth...”

11. The letter...

At the end of my interrogation Kiro Sotirovski surprised me with his questions about a letter that I took to the Kazakh Interior Ministry. That happened about five years before that and I had forgotten about the letter. I could not now, at the beginning of 1972, after twelve years have passed, precisely say what I told Sotirovski but I have been thinking about it since then. I tried hard to remember. It was not only Sotirovski’s questions that forced me to do this but also the way I was treated about it in Skopje. I was tormented by it...

This is a reconstruction of what I remember:

Vera and I were released from prison on March 26, 1955. We were serving our sentences in the Russian city Potma. After that everyone else was released within one month with Urania Iurukova being released last. While I was still in the prison yard, in front of the main gate, that is, before I left the prison camp, a Yugoslav gave me a

letter and asked me to put it in a mail box as soon as I got there... wherever I was going... Without thinking, given the excitement of the moment of stepping out of the camp's gate, I took the letter. It was a nothing thing for me to do and I would be doing the man a service and make him happy in the process. But then when I got to Alma-Ata and I remembered the letter, I thought: "Who was this man who gave me the letter?" The Potma Camp was the last stage from where prisoners are released. The regime is very liberal there. Men and women live together. Correspondence with the outside world was allowed, clearly, not without censorship. Why did this man want to avoid censorship...? And most of all, I saw that the man was not afraid of the guards and, almost publicly, in the busiest place in front of the main gate, handed me the letter. And on top of that the guards checked me, took two of my notebooks that I was carrying with me, and released me without finding the letter. I began to think that this may be some kind of setup which could complicate my situation and place me in a dangerous position...?

I spoke about it with Vera and Mitrevski. I think it was the first or the second day after we arrived in Alma-Ata, that is, before we arrived at the court house. Mitrevski said do whatever you want. In other words my problem had nothing to do with him. Vera was of the same opinion and said you decide what you want to do.

I figured I could do one of three things: Destroy the letter, put it in a mailbox, or give it to the authorities in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

I decided to give it to the authorities. I was almost convinced that it was from them and it would be best to visit the Ministry of Internal Affairs and hand it over to them. That's what I thought. I visited the Ministry and handed it over to them. I also told them how the letter found its way into my hands...

Days passed and I heard nothing. In other words everything was okay...

Then, suddenly, when we all had forgotten about it, I received an invitation by mail to visit the Ministry of Internal Affairs... We all wondered what it could be? When I arrived at the Ministry they

asked me to explain my experience with the letter in writing... I was left alone in a two-door office to write it. In the corridor adjacent to this office was the office of the department chief. According to our travel tickets from the Potma camp, Vera and I came directly here from the railway station, as soon as we arrived in Alma-Ata. The chief's office also had a door leading to the corridor.

As soon as I started to write, the chief's door opened and I saw Fotev, Poplazarov and Cholakov go in. They were escorted in immediately and the door was closed behind them. That was all...

Unfortunately, this simple and unique case for which I was personally summoned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, my ex-comrades consciously turned into yet another one of my "secret visits" to the Ministry of the Interior, thus turning me into a Soviet agent.

But the worst thing about this is something else, something that no one had asked. What, in general, or even specifically, did I do as a "Soviet agent" ...?

Yes, Sotirovski said. "We have no evidence...!"

Yet, at the same time, they treated me here like there are no dilemmas and just like I was some kind of agent...

They correctly calculated. The lie perpetrated by all of them would act as the truth...

The one sharp and unavoidable question I can't get out of my mind, however, is:

"How and why did the three (Fotev, Poplazarov and Cholakov) find themselves in the Ministry of the Interior and talking to the Chief of the Department, of all people?"

Why did they do that in secret and behind my back?

Why did they leave the office door, where I was placed to write the statement, open?

Mitrevski and Vera publicly and openly accused me of being a Yugoslav agent in Moscow who allegedly worked undercover against the CPG and DAG, and these other three (Fotev, Poplazarov and Cholakov) here, in Alma-Ata, secretly went to the chief, or perhaps he invited them, and then, suddenly, they appeared in front of me at precisely the moment when I was writing my statement. Was this so that they could catch me in the act and then declare that I was there writing one of my “regular reports” to the Ministry? Was this a setup to be caught by Mitrevski’s group doing my “deed” as a Soviet agent...?

But, why did Mitrevski need me to be seen as a Soviet agent?

The most obvious reason why Mitrevski and company needed me to be seen as a Soviet agent was so that they could defame and “expose” me. This had to be done by all of them so that they would look clean and be accepted as heroes in Skopje and I would be rejected as a traitor. Mitrevski and Vera, in particular, used me to cover up their own “mistakes” that they had made during the interrogations in Moscow against Yugoslavia. By pointing me out, they were doing their patriotic duty for Yugoslavia, i.e. for the People’s Republic of Macedonia. But why was the Soviet Ministry of the Interior helping them in this regard...? Was all this connected with the fact that I was violently detained in Alma-Ata all those years and not allowed return to Yugoslavia? I believe their aim was to smear me enough in Skopje to a point where the Yugoslav authorities would be convinced of my guilt. They wanted to prove to Skopje that I did not want to return because I was a compromised Soviet agent, which would undoubtedly once again confirm my “betrayal” and, at the same time, their “purity” and patriotic sentiments especially to my prosecutors? What benefits could the Soviet authorities have gained from this? Only the devil knows for sure...

At one point the Russian captain who was helping me asked me: “Why don’t you apply for a Soviet citizenship, why don’t you want live in the USSR...?”

I said to her: “I can’t reconcile myself with the kind of life I live here...” She then immediately said: “By receiving a Soviet citizenship your life will be completely changed and you will have many opportunities for your personal prosperity...”

I then calmly and quietly said: “My place is with my native people...”

Perhaps with all of this they really wanted me to stay in the USSR...?

Perhaps...

It was the way it was but the fact remains that both Mitrevski and Vera told the Moscow authorities that I was a Yugoslav agent working against the CPG and DAG while they took an anti-Yugoslav position. Then, in Skopje they accused me of being a Soviet agent who worked against Yugoslavia while they took an anti-USSR position. The most characteristic thing about all this is that they lied in both cases... Forgive me for saying this but I am not the painter of their portrait here. They have done that on their own... It’s a self-portrait...

At the end of this passage allow me to say that, with the accusations made against me, Mitrevski and company achieved what the Greek leaders aspired - to prevent me from participating in the social and political life of our people - to prevent me from telling the truth about the CPG’s “real” policies towards the Macedonian national liberation movement and other Macedonian issues in general. At the moment I am removed from everything and my writing is being rejected... Someone always intervenes and finds a way to refuse my articles. (102) This is how it is, at least for now...

2. Tuberculosis...

After reading this a friend of mine said:

“Enough with your disputes with Mitrevski! They are becoming boring. Write about something else. Write about the hardships of our people, how they were oppressed from every direction, how they

found the strength to grab weapons and fight... and so on. Write about that...!”

This is how it is in life. There is nothing without risk. People need to understand... I have no intention of chasing the wind by arguing with Mitrevski and company. They no longer interest me. At one point in our lives we were the leaders of the Macedonian national liberation movement (NOF) in Greek occupied Macedonia. While threading events, especially those which looked like bickering, I was just attempting to describe the state of affairs in our leadership. I was attempting to describe the “tuberculosis” that the NOF organism and the Macedonian armed uprising in that part of Macedonia had contracted. This is actually an old and well-known disease that re-occurs in Macedonian uprisings. The desires, personal interests, careers, adventures and unhealthy ambitions of suspect individuals are always skillfully exploited by the enemy and by external factors to break the inner front of the Macedonian people. The Supremacists and supporters of the Greek “Megali Idea” (Greater Greece) were one such factor. Kotsopoulos and, in general, all the “opoulose’s” in Greek occupied Macedonia, as well the “oviche’s” in Serbian occupied Macedonia, were nothing more than Supremacist Greeks and Serbians...

There is no doubt that external factors made use of these sick ambitions and personal interests in the NOF leadership in Greek occupied Macedonia. They used them to weaken and destroy the unity in the ranks of NOF and the Macedonian armed uprising. They also used them to blur and conceal the historic truth about this struggle; by acting dishonestly and without respect for the Macedonian people and against the many Macedonian fighters who laid down their lives for this struggle...

The events about which I spoke here may sound like “quarrels” but only because they took place in unusual settings when we were investigated and imprisoned. But they are nothing new. They are characteristic symptoms that reveal and illuminate the NATURE of the chronic bad state of affairs in the NOF leadership. That is why I have exposed them here...

What specifically happened to me in Skopje is another story. I am not even sure if I should be talking about it at all.

Skopje, 1972.

UNDER INVESTIGATION (103)

1. Projection...

It has been two decades since my ordeal in the USSR. I am now slowly but stubbornly collecting material, especially copies of the original Communist Party of Greece documents. I systematize, compare and analyze them. I work patiently to unearth the opportunism, that is, the Greek chauvinist anti-Macedonian policies the Greek leaders implemented against us. Last night I had a dream on two occasions:

I saw a winged young woman leap out of the depths of the earth from a volcanic orifice, a living image of Niki by the sculptor Peonios. Her white transparent robe was fluttering as she was flying. Without waving her wings, she flew and landed beside me. She had a baby in her arms...

I woke up. Then...

I saw a girl dressed in a black maxi dress and like a kite she floated in the air without moving her hands or feet, and then left my room through the wide open window and disappeared into the deep blue sky, like it was pulled by some magnetic force...

I woke up. The winged black (sadness, worry) Niki (victory, success) who had landed beside me with a baby in her hands (responsibility, worries), now left me... Of course, this was only a projection, in beautiful pictures, of what I strongly grieved and worked to achieve.

2. On the way to Moscow...

I had a similar experience on my way to Moscow, somewhere before or after Kiev, on the night of January 1 or 2, 1950, in the

Stolipinski prison wagon, when I saw (dreamt of) a large slab of white marble hovering in the open air. Doric style pillars rose from its four corners pointing high towards the sky. The rising sun shone on the marble, especially on the pillars and made them look like they were radiating their own pink light. All around it, to the distant horizon, were people, many people, an endless sea of human faces and eyes, and they all were facing the stage. These were the nations of the world.

I stood on the stage. In my hands I held a tablet similar to the one Moses held with the Ten Commandments, only this one was framed. There were two columns of writing under the glass citing the rights of the Macedonian people. I addressed the peoples of the world by reading the text with an unusually loud voice...

My own voice then woke me up...

Those nights on my way to Moscow I also experienced this:

I found myself sitting at the edge of a tall and long mountainous granite ridge. In the slab of granite below me was a cozy comfortable room - a bunker. The CPG Central Committee Politburo was sheltered there. Far down in the valley, rivers ran on both sides of the ridge and further down were low, gentle hills looking like waves. They were covered by a huge crowd of people. At one point I noticed a crack on the granite just above the bunker, a ruinous crack that was about to shatter the granite. They said I had caused that crack. They said that I had done it in front of the entire world. They said I had damaged the bunker where the Greek leaders were sheltered...

These, of course, were only dreams, projections in my own mind of the brilliant images I was experiencing when I was a prisoner. Dreams of my plans to defend the rights of our Macedonian people in the Greek state... Dreams of breaking the bunker of their "Marxism"...

With these dreams I arrived in Moscow as a prisoner late at night on January 3, 1950...

3. Cell - solitary confinement...

It was very cold outside and the snow was crunching with every step. I was very cold and uncomfortable. Every muscle in my body was shivering and shaking. A prison car was waiting about ten metres away from the train wagon I was in. They put me in it. Unexpectedly and sadly, I found myself sitting in a box. It was dark inside. My knees and back, my shoulders and elbows were touching the metallic walls on the inside of the box. There were only about ten centimetres of free space above my head. I felt closed in like a mummy in a casket. There was a rectangular hole in front of my nose to breathe. My escort gave me no consideration that I was a human being. A man in the hands of this Service was no longer a man. This is how I felt. This is how they treated me... not as a man but as a beast. The prison car began to move very slowly and slipped and slid as it went on its way. It was hellishly cold. If the trip took any longer I would have frozen to death. They would have found a real frozen mummy in the box...

Finally we arrived in Lefortovo prison. Two of them escorted me in, one in front and the other behind me. We went down several stairs. It was a long hallway with many doors on both sides. We stopped in front of one of those doors. My escort in front of me unlocked the door and opened it slowly. It was a black and heavy door probably made of oak wood. It was about ten centimetres thick reinforced with iron bars. They pushed me inside and locked the door behind me.

This was my cell... my solitary confinement. My cell was a square box of about two metres wide, three metres long and three metres high. Opposite the door, high up beyond the metre thick ceiling, was a very small window. The window consisted of three layers of thick yellow glass through which was incorporated a wire mesh. The window was not completely sealed. Each layer of glass was about a couple of centimetres shorter than the window on one side and the three layers were alternatively layered to allow air to flow in between them and down into the cell. It was dark inside especially when there was no sunlight outside. An electric light bulb hung from the ceiling and was lit when there was no sunlight during the day.

This is where I was going to spend about two years of my life... and get used to it. But my first impression of it was horrifying. After I was shoved into the cell I stood there about two steps away from the door. The first thing that hit me was a sharp smell of dust and a stench of old, sour filth. I looked around. On the floor in front of me, on the opposite wall under the window, I could clearly see a path worn into the floor. This is where my predecessor had paced back and forth. He turned at the sink on the left wall and stopped at the little cup substituting for a toilet next to me in the left corner. Past that the floor looked like it was covered with some kind of grey carpet. It was a thick layer of hairs and dust which had accumulated over time. There was a narrow bunk along the right wall with its legs sunk into the floor. A little further, directly in front of me, was a little wooden table with a wooden chair under it. So, here, to the right, was where I was going to eat and sleep. And here on the left, was where I was going to wash, do my business and clean my butt with my bare hands. And in between to my left and my right was a little space of a few steps where I was going to do my walking... just like my predecessor had done.

One happy circumstance was that every morning I was given a broom, a basin and a cloth. I cleaned the asphalt floor. I washed it every day, as well as the high base on the walls. In that respect, it seems that this regime was somewhat milder than the regime of my predecessor who literally lived in dirt.

4. Might is right...

I mentioned the regime. Perhaps it would not be a waste of time if I said something about that. A quarter of a century later I still remember it and bitterly resent it.

All charges against me and against the others were dropped and our sentences were annulled altogether. According to them this was because of "lack of evidence of having committed any crimes". The verdicts were overturned and we were found innocent, that is, we were legally rehabilitated. Unfortunately everything that was done to us, the torment, the humiliations, the violence... everything that we had sacrificed... remained unresolved and hanging in the air. We were left without legal recourse. Crimes were committed against us

and there was nothing we could do because in our case “might was right”.

Sometime after midnight they would barge into my cell, three of them, and violently wake me up from a deep sleep. Then they would order me to get completely naked and stand in the corner facing the walls. They would deliberately take their time searching every spot in the cell. Perhaps today was the day that they would take me to have a bath and a change of clothing or perhaps a change of sheets, etc. I never knew and they did not want me to know anything at all of what was going to happen. I had nothing I could call my own, I only had what they gave me. But it was all the same to them as they carefully searched my cell anyway. They searched my underwear, my clothing, my socks, shoes and everything that was on the bed. In doing so, they would calmly talk to each and laugh paying absolutely no attention to me. Forgetting that I was there and pretending I did not exist... They were seasoned prison guards and did this without care. So, about an hour to an hour and a half later they would finally engage me and order me to come over, stretch my arms out, stretch my fingers open, turn over my hands, uncover my underarms, open my mouth, raise up my tongue, move my tongue to the left, move my tongue to the right, raise my lips to expose my teeth... They would look at my teeth then move to my nose and ears and look inside them like I was some kind of horse being sold in the market. Then they would order me to spread my legs wide open and they would look at my genitals from the left then from the right and then from under while talking about them among themselves... Then they would order me to turn my back, bend down and spread by butt cheeks. One would then say to the others: “maybe he is hiding something in his butt hole...?”

Then, without interrupting their conversation, they would leave me standing there buck naked and my clothes and bedding scattered all over the floor! For them, I was just an object, “material to work with”. As for me, I was trying to be humble and maintain my dignity...

They were like “Robots...!” That’s what I thought of them, and I was just an object, material with which they worked.

5. Life in solitary confinement

Now let's put some order to this story. Let's start from the beginning...

The interrogations began the first night immediately after I arrived. During the first year they were regular, almost every night and never during the day. They lasted five to eight hours. The interrogator had a deputy and they switched places. I sat on a little wooden stool and often my butt became numb. My entire body was frozen and ached. Before they had their break they had me escorted back to my cell. As soon as I fell asleep they were back to get me.

I often paced for hours. A couple of steps forward than a couple of steps back, over and over again. I would sit down for a short while and then start pacing again. I was constantly thinking. I tried to stay optimistic. I had to endure. I tried hard not to let my inner peace be disturbed. My strength was in my tranquility and inner peace. As a preventative measure I often plunged to work compiling a collection of short stories about the national liberation movement, one story, then a second story, then a third story... constantly working out the details. I needed to write them down and for that I needed a pencil and paper which they would not give me, so I thought, but I didn't know for sure. They may have given them to me but I didn't want to reveal to them even the slightest of my weaknesses or needs. To make it easier for me to remember my stories I used rhythm following the folk verse: "Eleno, Mome, Eleno!" I narrated a short story using several thousand such short verses. But it was hard...! They did not allow sleeping during the day but there were days when my need for sleep was insurmountable. They did not even allow me to lean on anything... not even on the coffee table. There was no sleep at all, not even a nap during the day. But I slept! I slept while standing. With my legs spread apart I leaned against the cold wall below the window. I sheltered myself from the cold wall with my hands. During the days when the electric light was off, because the sun was shining or the snow was causing a glare, it was difficult to see inside the cell from the outside and the guards in the corridors could not tell if I had my eyes open or closed. They looked through the spy hole in the door and all they could see was me standing up. One day I dreamt that I was staring at my own grave in a cemetery.

The coffin shone with a mosaic of colours and stood about half a metre high. The coffin lid lay close by. That too was shining with a mosaic of colours. My grave had not yet been dug. The spot was all grassy and green, which made me very happy...

I even experienced difficulties with “trivialities”. At one point during my solitary confinement the guards ordered me to sleep with my face and arms exposed at all times. I had to sleep on my back facing the window on the ceiling with my arms out of the covers. I had to endure the cold air flowing inside and down on me. I could not sleep on my side, especially facing the wall, and when I did turn in my sleep, the guard rudely woke me up...

It was winter, my first winter. The weather was mostly cold and dreary. There was hardly any light coming down from the tiny windows above. The electric lamp was on around the clock. It was strange how unbearable silence can be. There was absolutely no sound, no voice or whisper. You felt like you were not in a normal world anymore, you felt like you were isolated somewhere in the depths of the earth. I listened to the silence. It sounded like some kind of distorted noise in the distance. It was probably my own blood flow that I was hearing. I felt nostalgic for the sky. Oh, if I could only see a piece of the sky in the day and a star at night! I often thought of asking Firsov, my interrogator, to move me to another cell. But I did not think it would be right to let him know my weakness. I thought about it for two or three weeks. In the end, I decided to keep quiet.

There were days (only in the day, never at night) when I thought something amazing was going to happen. The air would tremble with strong sound waves. It sounded like some huge machines were working somewhere nearby, or more correctly underground, under the building. It felt like the floor, the walls... the entire cell was vibrating and shaking. I would yell at the top of my voice but the sound would get lost. I could not even hear my own voice. Then I would start singing. I would sing the few colourful and cheerful songs I knew. It made me feel better... Finally I would get my chance to do all the yelling I wanted...

6. “Darkness...”

Something like this happened to me.

That particular night was very cold. I dreamt that I was slowly walking down a Skopje street. At one point, I turned and looked back. I saw members of the CPG Central Committee coming out from a side street. They were there for a meeting which they had just finished. Everybody, except for three men, went the other way. The three men came my way and followed me. The man in the middle pulled out a gun and aimed it at me. He shot at me at precisely the moment when I turned. He hit me under my right shoulder. I thought: "Surely he must have pierced my right lung, but it is not fatal!" (I was familiar with the Gorky case. He shot himself in the chest and pierced his lungs, but did not die).

My dream was stunningly clear and very realistic. In fact, it was an accurate picture of what really happened to me. Namely, the Greek leaders did exactly this to me - they shot me in the back.

Then, in the morning, like every other morning, my guard loudly barked the word "padiom!" I jumped out of the bed, to the floor and to the washbasin on the wall. I began washing. My head felt unusually heavy. It felt like it was in a clamp and it was tightening. My head was about to explode. I spit blood. It looked like pink wine. I thought to myself: "Damn, I am really wounded...!"

After I washed my face I stood up... I saw darkness before my eyes...

I regained consciousness in the prison hospital. They took me to the x-ray room. They took x-rays. They took an x-ray of the spot on my back where I dreamt I was shot. They then gave me a huge injection of something in my lower back. I felt horrible and was in pain for an entire week. The next day they sent me back to my cell. I felt a strange pressure under my right shoulder. It felt like a metal finger pushing its way out from the inside. This sensation lasted for about two years. And ever since then, for many years, at first more often and later less often, the spot was very itchy and felt like a healing wound. I can feel it even now.

After that I was allowed to cover my shoulders, that is, to put my arms under the covers...

7. Calmness, patience...

I was firmly resolved to endure my ordeal and submit to the humiliation and the plight associated with me being a prisoner in solitary confinement. When I thought of Piade and Cholakovich serving in a bourgeois prison with a table full of books and with the sun shining on them... and being able to translate Marx's book "Capital"..., I saw that I, one hundred times less of a "beast" than them, in a socialist prison was subjected by a regime that was one hundred times more severe. And yet...! Had we remained in Zahariadis's hands we would have been liquidated a long time ago. But no such thing will happen to us here. So one day, whenever it is, I will have my freedom. Then...! Yes. I already said this... Then I will undertake a systematic disclosure of the Greek leadership's anti-Macedonian policy and fight to defend the rights of our people in the Greek state. By doing so, I would shatter their undeniable authority and damage the bunker of their "Marxism".

I contribute my consistent mood of calmness of my spirit and my patience to my deep conviction that the slander perpetrated by the Greek leadership against me and against the Macedonian people, one day will crumble and be washed away. In the spring they began to give me Russian fiction books to read. They gave me one or two small books every week. They also began to take me for a 15-minute walk, alone, of course. The yard was divided into smaller plots fenced with well-mated thick planks, three to four metres high. I walked in circles in one of those plots keeping my hands behind my back. The guard watched me from above from a balcony path made of planks. I was not allowed to stop walking. One time I saw an airplane flying through the sky leaving behind an exhaust trail. This was my first time. Then, without even being aware, I stopped and curiously watched the airplane fly. The guard screamed at me. These prison guards are funny people... They only speak... You only hear them and realize that they have a voice when you break the rules. I tried several times to speak with them, to ask them something. They did not react at all. They were like robots doing only what they were programmed to do...

It was certainly a great relief to have books to read and to walk outside. Recognizing two or three Russian words in a sentence that were similar to Macedonian helped me understand the meaning of more words. It was sluggish but interesting. I was constantly enriching my vocabulary with Russian words. In time reading became easier and I was glad to read Gorki, Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Leo and Alexey Tolstoy, Turgeniev, etc.

About two years later I was transferred to the Butir Prison. My cell there was spatial in comparison to my last cell. The cell had two beds. Past the beds the cell wall was tiled and had a real window. It looked more like a bright double room than a cell. There was no washbasin or toilet inside the cell. Every morning and evening I was led down a long hallway to the end of the building for those things. They also brought the German Kurt Nast here. He was President Pick's personal driver. Things were much better now. At least I had someone to talk to. He knew a little Russian. Three months later they moved him. I remained alone until June 1952, when I was moved to East Siberia...

8. Slandering...

Here is something about the content and course of my interrogations.

As I mentioned earlier, my interrogations began the first night I arrived. Lieutenant Colonel Firsov was assisted by a captain who was a Russian Greek (and who spoke Greek). I was showered with questions such as the following:

Which officer, from which foreign intelligence, recruited you...?

What tasks were you given...?

Which of them did you complete, and which did you not complete...?

Why did you not execute the last tasks...?

I felt the hairs on the back of my neck standing up. I was very surprised and confused. I did not expect that. These charges felt like heavy physical blows to my head. My blood was boiling and rising to my head. My neck, ears and face felt like they were on fire and burning.

After I calmed down a bit I asked for an explanation as to why I was asked this particular kind of question and how did they relate to the struggle against the imperialists in the West in which I was involved. I said to him that I had already signed such a statement, and with your help, because I didn't know any other officers from any other intelligence service...

The interrogator looked surprised and thought for a moment. He then said that he was only asking these kinds of questions to get to the truth... I immediately felt relieved. I was feeling much better now. I answered all his questions but none of them had anything to do with the truth. Nothing like that had ever happened to me...

Months passed. The interrogator stubbornly tried to get me to confess... He applied various interrogative techniques. He started from afar, covered every angle while tightening the interrogation in hopes of "cornering" me in his hunt. One time he brought a Greek book. The Greek leaders published many such books. His Greek assistant opened it in front of me while making sure I did not see the title on the cover. He pointed to a page inside and read a paragraph that said when I was attending "Didaskalioto" (Teacher's school), I was an agent of the Asfalia (Greek Security Service) and that I denounced the Didaskalisti (School teachers) before my time. In another place in the book he showed me something which I then read myself. It said that I was a senior official in the Metaxas semi-fascist youth organization EON, and I that was a falangarhist (phalangist)...!

So, according to them I was a former agent of the Asfalia and a fascist...!

I defended myself vigorously by telling them that the "real events" that took place were far different from the fictional ones in these books and that these events took place at certain locations and at

certain times. The truth is that I did not study at the “Didaskalio” and I was never a member of EON. These were fabrications. They showed me what was said in the book but it was by no chance that they “failed” to show me when and where I was a “phalangerhist” or when and where I was studying in the “Didaskalio”. The Party as well as everyone who knew me, of course, knew that these things were not true. Obviously this was done to defame me. The publishers of this party edition used the book erroneously to defame me. Allow me to explain: There was a man named Georgi Rakovski from our native village. He was loyal to the Greek cause. He was admitted to the National Boarding School in Lerin and was educated at the Greek state’s expense at the “Didaskalio”. He wanted to become a Greek teacher. He was a phalangerhist and possibly an agent of the Asfalia. The author of the book, probably a Didaskalist from Georgi’s past who was not happy with Georgi, was talking about Georgi Rakovski. In any case, what I am trying to say here is that the ex-Didaskalist was talking about Georgi Rakovski and not about me. He did not even know me. But the Greeks who wanted to defame me did not care about that and probably neglected to tell the interrogator that the book was talking about another Rakovski. So, I ended up being accused of what another person had done...!

9. Pressure tactics

I suffered the most from statements made by two individuals from our group. They were Mitrevski and Vera. Mitrevski told the interrogators that I was an OZNA official and that I was recruiting agents and sending them to the field to do undercover work against the CPG and DAG. He claimed that, as secretary of the political committee, I had recruited agents and sent them into the field to damage the CPG and DAG. Vera claimed that while she and I were passing through Skopje to go Bulgaria as members of a delegation headed by me, I visited Keramidzhiev and gave him spy material. She said she saw this personally.

Firsov pierced my soul trying to get me to confess about these things. It was not easy for him either. He spent countless nights interrogating me over and over again about the same thing. When he failed to get what he wanted from me through ordinary interrogative tricks, he began to use specific pressure tactics. First he arranged to

have an acoustic session of physical torture. He had someone in the next room behind closed doors scream in agony presumably from being physically tortured. As for me, I calmly listened and tried to find the right elements to act out my horrors. At one point, while nodding his head pointing towards next door, Firsov said:

“Do you want something similar to that to happen to you...?”

I calmly said: “I would not be surprised. The moment I sit on this chair, I have to be prepared for everything...” I then calmly sat down and said: “It all depends on you!”

Nothing like that happened to me, but I don't think I owe it to Firsov. It would appear that from my reaction, he concluded that I was not intimidated by physical torture, so he moved on to different pressure tactics. He began to work on my dignity and nerves. First he ordered searches of my cell like the ones I described earlier, in hopes of humiliating and intimidating me. He then had the guards issue me a cloth and a bucket and lead me to clean the prison Turkish-style toilets. He did this for three days to see what effect it would have on me. The most unbearable part about this, of course, was the lack of sleep on my part. I was not allowed sleep during the day and I spent most of my nights standing against the wall or cleaning toilets. And for the short moments I was allowed to sleep I had to face the door. So when the guard, looking through the spy hole, noticed that I had my eyes closed he would make a terribly loud metallic sound in front of my cell door that would violently waken me. It felt like a sharp needle had penetrated into my brain. I would jump off my bed. At first I was wondering what that was...? What had happened...? After that I would sit on the bed for a long time and wait... but nothing would happen... There would be absolute silence. Then I would lie down again and moments after I fell asleep “bang” another terribly sharp sound. I wondered what the hell it could be. What did it mean...?! I then focused my eyes on the spy hole. I could make out a shadow standing behind the door, probably spying on me. Oh well, what was I to do? There would be no sleep for me this night. So I would lie down and stare at the ceiling. I would then sense the guard adjusting his legs to make himself more comfortable. If I paid careful attention I could hear the creaking of his boots as he adjusted his feet. I would then

deliberately close my eyes but there would be no sharp and loud sound. And then would hope that perhaps there would be no more of those sharp loud sounds. I hoped so and if there was one, I hoped it would not startle me. I would slowly relax and fall asleep. But as soon as I fell asleep “bang” another sound would be made, this time even louder. This would go on all night long. They would not leave me alone until morning and would only allow me five, fifteen, thirty minutes of sleep in total before my wake up call. I had no choice but to get up because they kept watch over me all day long. Then in the evening, the cycle would begin all over again. Clearly, this was Firsov’s work to break me down...

On the fourth day I was taken to a doctor who carefully checked my heart. After that the torment was renewed during the evening. The next day my heart was checked again. Tormented by night and disturbed by day... that was my routine. My life was getting unbearable. How the hell was a person expected to move on? I was terribly disturbed. I had survived crisis situations several times... but not like this one. For a while I felt like I was going to “explode”. I felt the need to wildly attack the door and swear and yell like a madman. But I knew it would be madness so I found the strength to stay calm. The ninth day was the last time they checked my heart and allowed me to sleep all night. The next day passed peacefully. Then, during the night they took me for questioning. Firsov sat silently for a long time browsing over the notes from the previous interrogations. When he was done he asked:

“How are you? How are you feeling...?” He was hoping that I was going to break down.

“I am feeling fine, normal, thank you...!” I lied.

“What is normal...?” he asked.

I smiled reluctantly, and said:

“Well, like being in jail... under investigation...!”

And so he continued with his questions.

As an OZNA official, what rank did you have...?

What people, by name and surname, did you send to the field to undermine the work...?

What kind of tasks did you give them to perform...?

I stood my ground and firmly defended myself. I kept telling him, this is pure fabrication...!

10. Cabbage soup

A three month period followed without interrogations but with a new kind of torture - bad food. The food they gave me was terribly uniform and weak. Breakfast consisted of “shchi” (boiled sour cabbage soup). For lunch and dinner I was given “shchi”. This went on for a month. “Shchi”, “shchi”, “shchi” and nothing but “shchi” three times a day every day...

I was firmly resolved to... survive this. I was prepared to physically maintain myself as much as possible. Things got harder with time but I held on for a second month. My body was saturated with cabbage and it began to refuse it. Sometime in the middle of the third month, just smelling it from afar caused me to vomit. I returned the portions of “shchi” untouched. I only ate bread. It went like that for a week. At the end of the third month, three of them came to visit me one night. A senior lieutenant, a corporal and a soldier (guard).

“Why do you refuse, and return the food...? Are you on a hunger strike...?” I was asked.

“No,” I replied. “I eat what I can. I am pumped up full of cabbage from the top of my head to the bottom of my heels. My blood has turned into cabbage sauce. My breath, my body and my soul stink of rotten cabbage...!”

They laughed and left.

Shortly afterwards two of them took me to interrogation. Firsov showered me with questions:

From when until when were you secretary of the political committee...?

Who are the people you sent into the field and what were their specific tasks?

What specific spying material did you surrender to Keramidzhiev in Skopje...?

I calmly and firmly refused to answer his questions telling him that all this was just pure fiction, and that I had no way of knowing who concocted it and why... Lately I began to dream the same dream which I had dreamt a long time ago, when the interrogations first began. I dreamt that I stood alone in the middle of a church, a basilica, which had a ceiling painted like the sky with stars. There was a black crack curving along the ceiling above me extending along the wall down to the floor. But the crack on the wall was not really any crack. It was a tunnel in which a huge dragon crept. I could clearly see how its powerful body moved slowly...

The church symbolized the prison. The dragon above my head symbolized the lurking danger. This was my situation. My dream was a picturesque projection of my understanding of my situation... Yes, Firsov was persistent and dangerous. But to admit to things that were not true was not what I had in mind. It would be stupid and hopeless.

In the end I came face to face with the two from our Group. I had two “gripes” with Mitrevski and one with Vera. And here we found out who was lying... Since then, my interrogator left me alone to get some sleep and my food situation improved...

11. To Eastern Siberia

Two years and eight months have passed since the day I was arrested on October 2, 1949, by the Greek leaders and locked up in the Bureli detention camp in Albania. I spent the first three months

in solitary confinement in Tirana. And with the exception of being with Kurt Nast, the German prisoner for three months, I spent the rest of my time in solitary confinement in Moscow. The interrogations were formally completed on May 30, 1952. That day, and yes it was during the day, they took me to an office. The Greek captain in the Ministry of Internal Affairs offered to translate the verdict and the other documents for me but I asked if I could read them myself. It appears that some “Special advisory” group at the USSR Supreme Court had convicted me (while I was pacing back and forth in my cell) to ten years forced labour without any personal freedom, to be served at the Correctional Labor Camps - ITL. This was done on the basis of Article 58, items 4 and 11 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code. I was found guilty of having links to the international reactionaries and guilty of organizing activities in their favour.

I was very angry and strongly disappointed. I had a completely different notion of Justice, believing that this was the Judiciary of the most humane society, the socialist society, in which a person was valued the most.

I was convicted without a trial...

The right to be acquainted with the indictment... the right to know who had testified against me and what they had said... the right to defend myself alone or with the help of an attorney... the right to raise objections to irregularities... all of these rights were taken away from me. I did not have any rights... or opportunities. Even the “Holy Inquisition” offered more to their captives. Why was this happening today...? At the time none of this was clear to me, especially how I could have violated the Russian Federation Criminal Code in the Greek part of my homeland while fighting against my mortal enemy and the enemy of our nation, the Greek chauvinists that belonged to the political right...

In mid-June 1952, they sent me from Moscow to Eastern Siberia to serve my sentence...

I lay there in a solitary confinement cell on board a train listening to the smooth steel wheels clinking over the rail joints. Above my

head, in the corridor behind the bars, stood a special armed guard assigned to me. I had a special armed guard in Moscow. He would pace two steps away, come back and peep through the spy hole. This one did not move at all. He just stood there holding his machine gun against his stomach. He looked menacing... I had no idea what was waiting for me... We will see... It was probably another attempt at psychological terror. It was a cold-blooded and obvious attack on my inner peace... Attempts of this kind were psychological harassment. I was the only one who did not know what was going to happen to me... All will be revealed in time...

We had a rest in Novosibirsk. I had a bath and change of underwear. I met Lazo Poplazarov for the first time since we were arrested here in the prison bath. He looked at me with his eyes wide open and said he never imagined that I could survive my ordeal let alone come out so muscular...

I looked at him curiously... Clearly my body was swollen and not with muscles so I pressed one of my fingers into my chest causing a depression which took a long time to return and straighten out.

We stayed here a couple of days and then continued on our way East. Our prison wagon was attached to the end of a freight train and we slowly-slowly moved along...

One night while traveling on the Trans-Siberian train, I dreamt that I was looking up high on a heap of holy white bones belonging to Macedonians... belonging to the fighters who died for Macedonia. A large number of them were resting on a marble scene at the top of a tall hill fully exposed to sunlight. Their reflective glow shined back looking like a glowing goddess, a lovely pink girl symbolizing Macedonian Freedom. Beside her stood History (an image of the goddesses), looking at her daughter, admiring her motherly. Then I heard her say:

“Daughter you are strong and beautiful, and you belong to the future...!”

To her left she was holding Macedonian Freedom by her hand, helping her stand up. Beside her was an older sister called

Democracy, a very beautiful woman, better known as Balkan Democracy (because she was born in the Balkans). And below them stood democratic Mankind who watched this scene with interest and lively sympathy...

This was a brilliant and lively picture. I often marvel at the mechanism in man that has the ability to do this. This beautiful image I dreamt was only a reflection of my understanding of historical events. It was my conviction that History, in creating the multinational Yugoslav state, in creating in it a strong communist party incapable of “persistent sin” over the Macedonian national question, and within all this creating a centre and a guarantee for Macedonian Freedom, has created the conditions so that Macedonian Freedom can be resolved and can endure!

Balkan Democracy, the older sister, had nothing to do with that Democracy that was born in ancient Athens, in the Athenian society of slaveholders, and which then was used by the bourgeoisie in this world. This was a different kind of Democracy, an unprecedented popular and widespread Democracy that was born from the struggles of the fraternity and rebelliousness of the Yugoslav people and grew and strengthened within the National Liberation Committees, the AVNOJ Sittings and the Constitution of New Yugoslavia...

I was more curious than worried when we arrived in Eastern Siberia, and like the saying goes “a lie has short legs and can’t go very far”. I was sure that I would not be a prisoner for the many years I was sent here to serve...

Skopje, 1976.

I took the night train from Belgrade and arrived in Skopje on March 1, 1960. It was early morning and the platform was empty. A few people from the Security Services were there waiting for me... I could see it in their eyes that they were not there to help me. With the coach wagon overloaded with my family and baggage I headed for the only address I knew – to my friend Vangel Aianovski-Oche. He, unfortunately, did not welcome me as his former superior and as an old friend. In the afternoon when I wanted to take a walk through the streets of Skopje he did not come with me. He sent one of his

“agitators” to accompany me. But, no matter what, that night I was his guest. The next day I moved to a hotel.

We had not seen each other since May 1949 when I was passing through Skopje returning from Prague through Sofia. This was and remains to be my last direct contact with him. The reason for this was, with passing time I found out many unsettling things about him. He had gained power and began to intimidate the activists from Voden Region and in general all the people from Greek occupied Macedonia. He even forced Georgi Iakata-Gushi, who with his military unit provided support for the withdrawal of the ELAS Voden Macedonian Battalion to Yugoslavia, to go back to Greek occupied Macedonia. He did and died there. He sent old Communists, like Kiro Kachev, and others, to jail and had them tortured... Through all this a disturbing thought kept circling through my mind: “Aianovski can have you killed over the telephone...!”

I know of many instances from my comrades from Voden Region who did not submit their memoirs to INI (Institute of National History) because they were afraid of Aianovski. And it would appear that their fears were justified. Aianovski never once missed an opportunity to take revenge. I don't have to go far to prove this. One time I was personally asked by the editorial board of the magazine “Istoria” to write a critique on Aianovski's book “Aegean Storms”. In it Aianovski had written things about many events and people. But I did a critique only on those events in which I directly had participated. Aianovski did not like what I said and as a result he took revenge on me by making sure that I was deprived of my pension supplement... His argument was that I did not earn it therefore I did not deserve it. He did more than that. He also made sure Urania Rakovska was also deprived of her pension supplement. Urania was elected regular member of the NOF Central Council both at the 1st and 2nd Congress. At the 1st AFZH Congress she was elected member of the Executive Council. As member of the KOEM managerial active she was editor-in-chief of the AFZH newspaper “Nova Makedonka”. Before that she was AFZH Secretary in Lerin District.

A friend of mine who caught me writing these lines said:

“It’s dangerous to write things like about Aianovski... Aren’t you afraid of him...?”

In retrospect I should have been afraid. But this is how I am. I did many things knowing they were dangerous. And it was by no accident that I ended up a prisoner in Stalin’s camps in Siberia. After that Aianovski allowed himself to fall so low that he began to perform his official duties like they were his private work...

When I told Urania Iurukova, an AFZH activist who had achieved much in her life, what was happening to me and my wife, she was amazed that Aianovski would deny me and my wife our pension supplements but would approve of giving a hefty supplement to Nuli Raleva...

Urania then said: “Both the Aianovski and Paiov families are receiving their full pension supplements and you and Urania have been refused! Why are you keeping silent about it...? Why aren’t you complaining...? Go to the Central Committee President... the Executive Council President... the Union of Fighters... Tell them what’s happening... Start demanding...!”

“I can’t...” I said to Urania. “It’s about money and... I am ashamed to ask... To bother them...”

My wife, my two children and I, lived in a single room with three beds for over three years. I didn’t pay rent, of course. Both my wife and I were unemployed. As aid I received 20,000 dinars a month. We lived hard lives full of uncertainty. I tried to meet with Lazo (Kolishevski) but without success. Sometime earlier he had embraced and kissed me while escorting me out of his office. Now he didn’t even want to see me. I got the message... I should expect nothing from my visits to state halls and party buildings. I was written off... I was disloyal to them... “We don’t make claims because we don’t have evidence... but we think you are here as an agent...!” This is what the SVR representative told me in Panchevo. I had to wait for the time to change... when telling the truth would benefit me... And in that sense, eight years later, I visited the same SVR representative who this time received me kindly...

I looked him in the eye and said: “Do you still think that I came back with my wife and children as an agent?!” He laughed and said:

“Well, Pavle...! We are not children...?!”

Yes we are not children because five minutes after they have a fight, children get back together and continue to play. In my case it was different. They hung this sign around my neck with the inscription “Agent” which remained there for a lifetime because “we are not children”. It turned out to be exactly as he said to me during the interrogations in Panchevo: “And for this, for our Yugoslavia, I would sacrifice ten Rakovski...!”

Patriotism is sure strange. I am not guilty of anything, and of course he knows that. There is no guilt without proof yet he is ready to sacrifice ten of me... for patriotism...! I was taught to use caution in front of a man with authority so I said nothing back to him... I could see that my suffering and sacrifices meant nothing to him. And how is it of interest to “our Yugoslavia” to sacrifice an innocent person for it? Doing that would, obviously, work against Yugoslavia and would be a crime against humanity...

About a month to a month and a half after we arrived, people came to visit us every day without interruption. They were people who knew us, friends, comrades, people from the security services who probably wanted to find out who was coming to see us, and so on. But after they found out that I was not an official... and that I may end up in jail because I was under investigation, the river of people, understandably, dried up. There were also “characteristic moments”. One of these moments was when Lambro Cholakov, one of my wife’s relatives, found out that we were in Skopje and living in the Bristol hotel. He made the following comment to someone: “What...? They are free...? They are not in jail...?” This happened immediately after we arrived.

Much later, about 5 or 6 years ago we were at a comrade’s funeral. On the way back one of my comrades driving his car through the settlement Chair, where I lived, suggested to his passengers that they stop off here at my place. Urania Iurukova, a passenger in the car,

objected and said: “I am not going to that traitor’s place...! The people will stone me if I do...!”

In other words, I was almost totally isolated from everyone. Only two or three people came to see me, among whom was a man from the Security Services. Of course, I had nothing to hide and was even happy to see him. I thought that it was good of him to come and see me and sooner or later he would discover that he... they all, were mistaken about me.

For my part, I decided to help. There are people among our people as there are people among the Soviet people who are prepared and would gladly help a person in trouble. Some of them helped me. They offered me their hospitality and friendship but I never did write them to thank them because I didn’t want to cause them trouble or give them headaches. If I sent them a letter it would get them in trouble with the security services... The police would probably think there were hidden messages in the letter and they would torment the recipients to find out what it was... For the same reason I don’t go, and I will not go, visiting anyone. I don’t want the security people to think that I am an “agent trying to create a network...” To this day no one has invited me to participate in any socio-political organization or activities. Neither have I, consciously, tried to be invited or to intervene in becoming an “active socialist!” I don’t want them to think that “the agent is trying to penetrate the system...”

The only thing that I have asked in writing (and not just once) was for them to recognize my CPM/CPY membership and length of service in both the CPM/CPY and CPG Organizations. But I was denied... One time the Central Committee suggested that I submit a request to the basic social collective organization where I once worked (O.U “13 November”, Skopje) and ask them to admit me as a new member in the Party. In fact, this meant that my previous and lengthy service would be deleted. I peacefully protested... but it was in vain. I eventually accepted thinking that this was better than nothing...

But nothing came of it. Krsto Velkovski, the person in charge of registering people, apologized to me and told me he could not register me because my entry was blocked from above.

From the time I was politically aware I have been a Communist. In fact it felt to me like I was born a Communist. During my interrogations in Moscow the interrogator asked me:

“When did you register and who invited you to join the Party?!”

I was not able to answer his question! I was surprised myself. Then I discussed this with Mitrevski in Alma-Ata. It was he who passed this information on to Skopje. Then, when I arrived in Skopje, the Central Committee asked me to tell them the full name of the person who registered me in the Party...

There too I did not have an answer... Perhaps this is why I am a non-party person today. Perhaps... It is true that I was never invited, neither by the CPG nor by the CPM/CPY, to join by plea or by petition. I entered the CPG and the CPM/CPY in concert, along with many others, as a leader of an organized group. Therefore my party membership should have been recognized just like it was recognized for so many others...

Back in the Moscow prisons and then in the Siberian camps, I was determined to survive so that when I got out and got my freedom, I could expose the political deception, that is, the CPG leadership's hypocritical policies towards our people. I started that job in Alma-Ata, and I continued it here in Skopje. I was confident that this was the only social sector where, as an “active socialist”, I could contribute to the defense of the rights of our people, revealing the CPG leadership's criminal policies to the membership and to the wider public.

But I found it even more difficult than I anticipated! My articles were taken by the editorial staff and then rejected. The Aianovski-Kiriazovski tandem acted with much success. So much so that the I.S. commission, in which Aianovski was a member, blocked my pension allowance because, according to him, I was not involved in any social activities “after the war”. And on top of that, in an article

in the journal “Istoria” (2/1981), as I mentioned earlier, he even tried to present me as an “informer” and an anti-Party and anti-Yugoslav element who attempted to defame the CPM/CPY.

But what seemed impossible did happen. With a lot of struggling and support from my comrades, one of my articles was accepted and published in the last issue of the journal Glasnik No. 2-3/1982 (published in March 1984). I was finally able to publish information that dealt with the CPG anti-Macedonian policies and circumstances under which these policies were applied when the ELAS Voden Macedonian Battalion withdrew from Greek occupied Macedonia and landed in the Republic of Macedonia.

Of course, this was a good sign for now. In the meantime I was still isolated, ignored, and written off. In any case, I will take a chance and I will submit my biography and my conclusions on which I have worked for over a quarter century doing research and documenting events. But I will talk about this later. Now I would like to finish my biography...

Both my wife Urania and I had great difficulties finding employment. We even experienced difficulties while we were employed. But I will only talk about what happened to me. First, I was employed as a journalist working for the “Trudbenik” Trade Union newspaper. But immediately I felt uncomfortable and uncertain. As a “Trudbenik” journalist I was obliged to visit various work places and write about them. But nobody guaranteed me that, by the questions I asked, I would not be accused of doing the work of an “agent”. I was in real danger from which I needed to distance myself as soon as possible... As it turned out, Dr. Tanas Malinov, also from Lerin Region like myself, who managed a medical institution, was in need of an assistant manager. He basically offered me the job if I wanted it. I accepted it, of course, with much gratitude. I gave up my job as a reporter and accepted the assistant manager job working for Dr. Milanov on a two month trial basis. I don’t know who intervened, Dr. Malinov would not tell me, but two months later I was out of work again...

After that I applied at the Secretariat of Education for a job to teach grade eight at a middle school. I knew how to teach and had some

experience from back home... and it was harmless work. They asked me for a diploma which I did not have. Where was I going to get the diploma? I left all my personal documents back home before I was sent to the front in Gramos. Then from Gramos I was forced to flee to Albania... and from there I ended up in Siberia. They knew I had no documents, of course, and no diploma. I was accepted as a Yugoslav citizen, for which they gave me a Yugoslav citizenship and an identity card, based on information I gave them and on statements made by witnesses on my behalf, so I should have been accepted as a teacher based on the same principles... But my enemies managed to find some people who informed the Secretariat that I was not a qualified teacher, but an ordinary Greek teacher who taught in the lower grades. These were fabrications made by the same people who did not want me to come to the Republic of Macedonia. And now that I was here, they tried to make my life miserable and force me to leave. I refused to stay in the USSR because I wanted to be here... Now that I am here I am not going anywhere. I prefer to remain here and fight. I personally went to the Secretariat of Education and in front of the officials I said: "I am a graduate from the Classical Gymnasium in Lerin and from the Pedagogical Academy in Solun. Why has my application not been taken under consideration?" At the same time I was well aware that they had received statements that contradicted what I had said... Their explanation was that they could not let me work with children without checking if I had proper training. They told me they would formally request information from the Solun Pedagogical Academy to confirm my graduation. I did not mind that but at the same time I did not believe that they would want to do that. And indeed, a month or two later, their answer was that "Pavle Rakovski" did not graduate from that institution! Formally that was true because in Greece I was called "Pavlos Rakovalis" and not Pavle Rakovski.

I asked Hristo Andonovski, a publicist in Skopje, and Kosta Markovski, a trade unionist in Kavadarci, two of my old colleagues who also graduated from the Solun Pedagogical Academy a year after I did, to confirm my graduation...

After that the Academy asked me if I would agree to take an exam in the subject that I would choose to teach.

I immediately accepted. I was not afraid to take the exam. I deliberately opted for mathematics, a subject that was usually considered the most difficult. But I also decided to master other teaching material, such as history and geography, so that they couldn't say that I was just an ordinary teacher. Realizing that math was a very wide subject, when I arrived for my test I asked: "On which math topics will you be examining me...?" Those in the Secretariat had no answer so they sent me to see the president of the examination committee, a professor at the Skopje Pedagogical Academy.

When I found him I introduced myself and told him why I was there. He looked at me with a frosty look and said: "I have nothing to tell you...!" and then shut the door in my face. It would appear my enemies had got to him and succeeded in filling his head with lies about me...

I went back to the Secretariat and they gave me the address of a teacher in the Pedagogical Academy who was a member of the examination committee. I visited her at her home. She received me kindly and told me that they would be examining me on the theoretical details on the material taught from grade 5 to grade 8...

Soon after that I paid a visit to the inquiry committee consisting of the two above mentioned teachers in the Pedagogical Academy and one university professor (Platon Dimich). However, the topic I was given to be tested on was not material for grades 5 to 8, so I calmly said:

"I was told that I would be examined on the material taught from 5 to grade 8 and only in theoretical detail. Why am I being examined on this...?"

Their explanation was that I needed to be examined on all the material that was taught in the Pedagogical Academy...!

I said: "Okay then, I will see you after I am done with the exam!" and sat down to review the material.

I was soon done and, with great difficulty, I succeeded in getting my teacher's certificate in mathematics.

After that I was given a post as assistant director in a school that was under construction and told that when the school was ready and if I organized it well, I would be its director. And, as usual, they took a lot of shots at me. But when the building was ready and classrooms were outfitted with desks and teaching material, someone else sat in the executive armchair. I remained an assistant director. And it did not take long before I came into conflict with him. It appeared that the director did not follow the law the way it was intended to be applied and kept violating it. More specifically he did not apply the proper rules when hiring teachers. He did not hire teachers based on their qualifications but rather based on the recommendation of his friends and following the advice of the head of the municipality's Department for Social Affairs. The majority of the teachers were selected based on favouritism. In other words he did not hire the best teachers available to us. This put the school's success and reputation in jeopardy and worked against the interests of the students and their parents.

Later I noticed the school custodian working more and more in private homes during working hours doing electrical work while being paid by the school. The bills for electrical materials were also getting abnormally large.

I also noticed the director lending out the one hundred or so chairs used during celebrations in the gym, to a wedding, like they were his own property, and some of the chairs came back damaged or did not come back at all...

I also did not have good relations with the head of the Kisela Voda municipality department of social affairs. I did not want to, and could not stand the man. Most teachers and school staff were appointed through him without going through the proper selection process. He was the person who also handled the funding of the school construction and equipment used in the school. According to our documents he did not deliver all the school equipment identified in the invoices. Included among the equipment he did not deliver was a thick door on wheels that was to be installed between the

inventory room and the gym, as well as a decorative telephone table that was to be placed in the director's office. These items were charged in the invoices but I could not find them in the school... As an assistant director or representative of the school, I went to the contractor's warehouse to inquire. And... I did. I found out that the head of the Kisela Voda municipality, the contractor and several of their close associates used the money to "celebrate" the success of their cooperation... at the expense of the school. The big heavy door and the decorative table never made it to the school...

I complained of course... I sent letters, reports... I even wrote to the Central Committee... I never did find out if my letters even reached the addressees or whether my complaints had any effect... I might as well have dropped them in a well...

All this was very difficult for me... I was in constant arguments with the school's director. The school superintendent came to see the school often... We were visited by the assembly president of the municipality and by the municipal committee secretary. They all demanded that I "reconcile" my differences with the director. They did not understand or did not want to hear what I had to say. They saw nothing wrong with the abuse of the school funds and assets about which I was complaining, which was the real reason for our "bad interpersonal relationship". In their estimation my "griping" was about the fact that he, not I, was appointed director of the school. And, of course, the director could not be at fault for that. They appointed him. If it was not him, then it would have been someone else. That's how they saw things. There was also the fact that they had promised me the director's position after I completed all the work... on which they did not deliver. Who should I be blaming for that? One or more of these people did whatever they could to make my life miserable. The director was a friend of the chief (head of the Kisela Voda municipality). They graduated together from the school of management... So why would I think he would support me?

Something else also happened to me. I was summoned to the municipality by the head of the Department of Education. This was the first time I met him. He pulled a document out of a drawer and handed it to me. It was a record of school board meetings duly

signed by the board president (a security services member) and by the director. They both had concluded that assistant director Pavle Rakovski should be removed from the school because he did not respond well to the ideological field of expertise!

I looked at him directly in his eyes and firmly said: “Both the meetings and their conclusion are inventions. This document is also a forgery...”

The other members of the school board convinced me to sue those responsible for the forgery and I did but the court cleared them because of lack of evidence! When I went to appeal the verdict they asked me to produce the minutes, that is, the document in which those allegations were made. They assured me that they could not find such a document because it did not exist. I went back to look for it myself but it was not there... the entire book of records had disappeared. The school was left without its records...

On the day when I was going to trial, I was attacked by two people. They pushed me off my bicycle and, during my fall, I was slightly injured on my leg below my knee. At first I defended myself by trying to tell them that I did not know them and that they surely must have made a mistake because I had nothing to do with them. But they kept quiet while attempting to beat me. One of them punched me in the left eye. I got upset and hit him back. He staggered like a drunk and sat down on the back seat of a motorcycle parked next to the pavement. I turned to the other, but he was already running towards the first. He sat down on the motorcycle front seat, turned it on, and they quickly disappeared around the corner.

When I was inside the courtroom I pulled my pant leg up. My leg near my foot was bloodstained but no one in the courtroom said anything... they were silent and unfriendly. I saw no compassion for me or condemnation for those who had done this to me. I was very upset and ready to leave the trial but I had to restrain myself because if I walked out they would be sending me to jail for contempt... for insulting the court. The trial unfortunately was in vain...

Understandably “organized socialist forces” were at work here. They acted not on the basis of evidence presented to them, but on the basis of what they were told from above. They did not express themselves as a socialist union, as an affiliate union or as a kind of union that looked after its members. They simply obeyed the directives given to them from above. In separate meetings, the teaching council and the school board reached the same conclusion and that was to let the directors themselves sort out their problems in the interest of education and the general functioning of the school. Soon afterwards, the municipal factors called a general assembly of the entire collective, from guards, cleaners... up to directors, and demanded that the directors be removed from their duty and be demoted to teachers. I was demoted from assistant director to teacher. After that they tried to remove me from my job as a teacher, that is, they wanted to get me fired. This time, they tried to do this through the new director. There were three mathematics teachers in the school, myself and two women. Under the pretext of wanting to improve our teaching methods, the director organized mutual classroom visits where the other two teachers would observe the teaching of the third teacher. Of course all this started with me first.

At this point it became quite clear to me... what this was all about. From what I gathered, they told the two women teachers that I had “questionable skills” and their task as professionals was to prove that...

I loved the children and they always like me. I had no problems with any of them here or at home in Voden Region. I worked with them well. I displayed a cheerful mood, which was easily passed on to my students. I cheerfully taught the material with many funny but happy examples. None of my students were bored. Everyone was engaged. And, at the end of class, when I asked them to give me examples of what they had learned, they were all eager to do it...

After they observed me at work my colleagues refused to testify against me. As a result the “mutual visits for the improvement of teaching” were soon abandoned and forgotten...

Of course, I knew exactly who was behind everything that was happening to me. I had no reason to be angry at the municipal

authorities. If I were in their place I would have done the same thing. Someone else wanted me to be unemployed, written off, ignored, and cast out. Someone else wanted me to be destroyed politically and socially unsuccessful, because of the things they said and certified with their signatures, against me... that I was a “foreign agent”. And, above all, each small success on my part in our community, in fact, would constitute denial and condemnation of their statements against me. In other words they defended themselves by trying to destroy me...

Most of the time I managed to be peaceful and accept life as it was. But they acted in a way that made it difficult to appreciate and respect them, even as my enemies. Simply put their hostility caused me rage. They had no trace of human dignity in them! By misusing their positions they even attacked my wife Urania and my daughter Mira.

For many years Mira was paid lower wages, less than her colleagues who did the same work, simply because she was the daughter of an alleged “foreign agent”. When she went with her company to Belgrade to do a presentation for one of Tito’s birthdays, the security people grabbed her at the door and held her. Their reason...? She was the daughter of a “foreign agent”!

With the boldness and perseverance of a righteous woman, accompanied by tears and loud protests, Mira made the work of the Chief of Security very difficult. He looked at her very carefully and said “this is nonsense!” He then let her in to participate in the performance for Tito.

Urania also received lower wages than her co-workers for years, even though she had proven to the Faculty of Economics (which made her write an exam which she passed) that she had completed her secondary education and that, according to the labour law, she should have received an “average” income. But in spite of being paid less she did not quit her job. When she retired they denied her a pension because she was the wife of an alleged “foreign agent”. And hers was the only case in the history of the “Idadia” Health Centre in Skopje where she worked...

The new school director was an interesting man with years of senior management experience. He was a reserve officer in the Royal Yugoslav Army. After that he was mobilized by Tsar Boris's Bulgarian fascist army and served in Eastern (Greek occupied) Macedonia where, three days later, his raging fascist army killed about three thousand anti-fascists, Greeks and Macedonians.

This was unbelievable! A former officer of a fascist army is now a director in our school... and this after we won our socialist revolution? And my boss too...?!

Of course I am exaggerating... But am I wrong? Perhaps the man had special merits... But I confess I was not aware of any of them... Fortunately for me, I soon qualified for retirement and was about to join the ranks of the retired and, as a friend of mine used to joke, the ranks of the destitute. But he was wrong. It is not true. On the contrary... Retirement seemed much more reasonable to me than working... under those conditions. First, the veteran's pension I was receiving was much higher than the teacher's income I was paid. Second, I stopped being a thorn in the people's backsides at the school and things did become calmer...

Today is June 15, 1984. I received the following letter by mail:

Socialist Republic of Macedonia
ARCHIVE OF MACEDONIA
No. 05-313 / 2-84
June 11, 1984 Skopje.

TO PAVLE RAKOVSKI
Ul. "Resen" no. 6 / 1-4
91000 SKOPJE

In connection to your last letter to the Archives of Macedonia, allow me to inform you of the following:

1) The Archives of Macedonia has published the speech you gave at the 1st World Peace Congress in Prague as per the newspaper "Ptos ti niki".

2) It is not up to us to determine if this newspaper falsified or shortened your speech. If it was falsified or illegally shortened you should have been protesting then and not today.

3) It is important for the Archives of Macedonia to authentically translate and fully publish the mentioned speech.

Accordingly, any further correspondence around this issue I consider superfluous.

DIRECTOR

Alexander Alexiev (S.R.)

(Publisher)

“U me pisis, kan me pisis...!” is an old Greek saying which means “You did not convince me even if you convinced me!” It refers to people who don’t want to understand... They told me: “You should have been protesting then, not today”. It was widely known and they should have known this: The Greek side did a lot of things against the Macedonians and “then” when we, the Macedonian national liberation leadership “protested”... we were sentenced to death. It is only a happy coincidence that today we are still alive. We found ourselves in prisons in Siberia under heavy CPG Central Committee allegations because of those protests. But all of this was in the past, and protesting today cannot apply to things that happened “then”... in the past, so I am told.

Today I am protesting! I have to, because instead of publishing my speech in full like I had given it at the Congress, which was published by several newspapers and existed everywhere in the world, and was also given to the Greek delegation, they published a Greek forgery. I am protesting, I have to protest because in our Macedonian historical Archives they are portraying me as an opponent of the Macedonian people... They are portraying me as someone who worked against self-determination for the Macedonian people... They are turning me into an opponent of the then CPG line, which only three months before that, during its V Plenum, adopted the resolution for self-determination for the Macedonian people... Obviously, the fact that I was one of the NOF founders

now being portrayed as a “Grkoman” (loyal to the Greek cause) does not seem to bother the people at the Macedonian Archives...

I will have to agree with them that any correspondence with these people who are not prepared to hear my side of the story would be superfluous...

As I have already mentioned, with the letters he sent from Alma-Ata and from here (Skopje), Mitrevski did his best to betray me to the authorities and to the public with fictional accusations. Just a few days after I came to Skopje I decided to pay him a visit, to look him in the eye... but I made the mistake of telling Aianovski and Keramidzhiev about this beforehand. Perhaps they informed him... or maybe not. I deliberately went to see him around lunch time (1 pm). His wife Olympia answered the door with a mouthful of food and told me that Paskal (Mitrevski) was out. She did not fully open the door or invite me in. She just shut the door and went back inside. I left without seeing him.

Later, after Aianovski published his book “Aegean Storms”, in which he declared to the world that the entire NOF-KOEM leadership was made up of “treacherous” people, I sent Mitrevski one of my articles, through another person, and asked him for his cooperation in dealing with this. He accepted my offer and, along with his wife Olympia, came to see me at my home. We met two or three times after that both in my home and outside in the “Chardak” area. I explained to him that I wrote the article as a means of defending the group from Aianovski’s intentions to disqualify us as good leaders. Aianovski obviously exaggerated a great deal and needed to be corrected. He told the world that our struggle on the dangerous terrain was a betrayal, but his departure (desertion) from the same struggle was done in the interest of our homeland and the Party...!

Mitrevski listened to me carefully and thought about it for a while but was not sure if my arguments sounded convincing enough. At the same time he did not propose anything new or offer anything different... There was also a moment during which he admitted that he had done me a great deal of harm. I agreed with him and told him that I too could have done better but all this was in the past... Now it

was time to act in the present and see what we could do to defend the truth and ourselves.

As I predicted Mitrevski chose to defend the group and accused Aianovski of inventing things and spreading misinformation. Mitrevski's best defense, as was well-known, was to attack his opponent head on...

I did not hate Mitrevski or the people in his circle. Not only could I not afford to hate anyone but it would be humiliating for me if I did. I always believed that people should be accepted for who they are along with their faults, especially the activists of our Macedonian national liberation movement. They should be respected and should respect one another for their accomplishments. The very fact that, in the course of our Macedonian national liberation movement, they rose up the ranks to become prominent activists and leaders makes them worthy of respect. Those who don't respect them and have a closed heart about them are their enemies and if they are Macedonians then that makes them "doubtful Macedonian patriots"... In that regard, everyone would be wrong if they thought I hated Aianovski and Kiriazovski. I don't do things like that in general. I simply see them as my opponents with whom I conduct my polemics in the defense of the truth and myself (such is life). In a sense, I am even grateful for these polemics. If I agreed with all their published materials then I would have no reason to write and a significant part of my texts would not have been written...

I have repeatedly asked Naum Peiov to "do something" in order to overcome the misunderstandings and bad relations between our leading activists from Greek occupied Macedonia. I said to him: "You have been elevated to the top by this development of events. You are currently standing at the highest level. Show some initiative and sort things out between them... follow the Party line..."

He did nothing... I don't think because he didn't want to. It would appear it was not up to him...

In my frustration I turned to the chairman of the SKM Central Committee. I wrote him a letter dated April 19, 1976, in which, among other things, I said: "Thirty years have passed and mutual

relations between our activists remain at their lowest... All these people are communists... So what has the Party done to improve their relations? Why is the Party absent in all this...?"

And yet again nothing was done! The Party did not bring the people together and did nothing to bring order.

I don't believe this was negligence on anyone's part. I think and I believe that this was part of an already established policy. The same policy used to dissolve the Refugee Main Board and the newspaper "Egeiski Glas" (Aegean Voice). Obviously, with this policy there were attempts, on one hand, to show that political immigrants from Greece do not exist in Yugoslavia, and on the other, to issue passports to refugees that could not be used to travel to neighbouring Greece... to visit places of origin and relatives.

It is difficult to understand why it is necessary for our state and Party leadership to have us Macedonians from Greece scattered everywhere... to argue amongst ourselves... to be disorganized and silent... and without the opportunity to go back to visit our places of birth. And, in general, why was it necessary for us not to be political immigrants when it is widely known that we were political immigrants... forced out at gunpoint to leave our native hearth and take shelter across the border...

There are no refugees from Greece to Yugoslavia?! This was pure distortion of the truth and concealment of reality. If there were no refugees from Greece in Yugoslavia then there can be no such problem between Yugoslavia and Greece. If there were no refugees from Greece in Yugoslavia then, of course, there was no need to negotiate their return to their birthplaces... or to worry about regulating their pensions, compensations and the like.

Yes! The Socialist Republic of Macedonia was a common homeland for all of us Macedonians...

But that's not right! One time a good friend of mine from Prilep, wondering about what I had said, asked me:

“How can a person feel like a political emigrant in their own homeland?!”

Allow me to explain. Anyone who thinks that MACEDONIA IS THE FATHERLAND OF ALL MACEDONIANS, and that a small part of Macedonia, like the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, is every Macedonian’s homeland, is not right!

Since I already live in Macedonia then why do I have nostalgic pain (sorrow) for my homeland in Lerin Region? Why do Macedonians who left for overseas countries want to return to their places of birth? Why would a person from Lerin Region want to return to Lerin Region and a person from Kumanovo Region want to return to Kumanovo Region? They are both returning to Macedonia... right? The reason is because they want to return to their native place: the person from Lerin wants to return to Lerin, the person from Kumanovo wants to return to Kumanovo, and not the other way around...! I asked my friend how he felt about being in Bitola, a stones throw from neighbouring Prilep? Did he see Bitola as home or as a nice place to visit...?!

More recently I came into contact with one of the highest state institutions in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. At the reception desk I introduced myself as Pavle Rakovski, an immigrant from Aegean Macedonia. I was received promptly, very kindly and I would say warmly. In carrying out my civic duty (for which I don’t think someone should be on a payroll...), I left a long letter describing the unhealthy situations that existed in various sectors of our socio-political life. This is why I went there... They didn’t ask me why I felt like a political immigrant... when at the same time I was a citizen of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and the SFRY. If they did I would have said: Simply because I refuse to accept the idea of abandoning my place of birth... even though I live in the capital of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. I refused to give up my birthplace and my right to return to where I was born... Because if I did I would feel like a traitor especially for the work I had done for our people and for our Macedonia in general...

I did not write the exact words down and I don’t remember whose words they were, but I believe they were the words of writer Petre

M. Andreevski, recently published in the press which went something like this: “We first began to yell - Solun is ours! Then we left Solun and began to yell - Trieste is ours...! In other words, we gave up on parts of our Macedonia for fear of being labeled nationalists...!”

Perhaps I didn't quote the words exactly as they were said but you get the idea...

As for me, I can feel and appreciate this Macedonian's resentment...

It would appear that at that time that policy was directed solely towards us refugees from Greek occupied Macedonia. The policy was designed to prevent us from making demands for our rights as refugees. In other words, we were expected to forget what had happened to us... the persecution... the struggle... the exiling... so that there would be no interference in Greece's internal affairs. This was done in the name of general Yugoslav interests, in the name of general Balkan interests, in the interest of world peace, in the interest of broad cooperation, rapprochement and friendly relations primarily among the Balkan peoples. In short, the problem of the recognition and liberation of all the Macedonian people was left in the hands of the Balkan people, i.e. the Balkan leaders... When I first heard of this I was reminded of what I had heard before.

In early March 1947 I had a meeting in one of the Kostur Region villages with a Bulgarian delegate. He was a member of the United Nations Inquiry Commission sent to Greece to investigate the war situation. In talking with him about a united Macedonia he said that Bulgaria was not prepared and would never give up Pirin (Bulgarian occupied) Macedonia. It was very painful he said. It would be less painful he said if Bulgaria was to enter into a Federation with Yugoslavia, then the two parts of Macedonia could combine less painfully for Bulgaria... The same was true with Greece and the Greek (occupied) part of Macedonia. No one wants to give up their gains from the imperialist division of Macedonia to please someone else... in this case Yugoslavia. Each one of these countries worked hard to become bigger and stronger..., he said. (104)

The Bulgarian man, whose name I can't remember, seemed to be a logical thinker. He said to me that the Macedonian people should wait for when the neighbours are forced to agree among themselves and voluntarily allow the Macedonian people to live free and as equals within a Balkan Federation.

I said to him, a strong, well-organized, nationwide Macedonian liberation movement is needed to facilitate that work. I said, as a Macedonian I don't believe our neighbours will voluntarily renounce their hegemony over us and give up our material treasures... they need to be forced...!

He smiled and, with a confirming movement of his head, agreed with me.

Whoever said "there are no friends or enemies in politics... only interests!" was correct. Interests move the world and create history. In the Balkans the interests of our neighbours were brought together in order to fight against the Ottomans so that they could occupy and annex Macedonian territories. After they did that, yesterday's allies turned against one another and became enemies only because their interests had shifted. And we all know what happened after that; Macedonia was divided and the Macedonian people became dismembered. This was a terrible blow against the Macedonian national liberation movement and was delivered by our neighbours who turned out to be our most dangerous opponents. In fact, I believe that our neighbours became allies, and with the blessing of their patrons, rushed to invade and occupy Macedonia because they were afraid of us Macedonians forming our own state... In other words, the former enemies became allies in an effort to stop us from becoming independent from the Ottomans... And then, the former allies became enemies again when they had achieved their objective and occupied Macedonia by driving the Ottomans out. They knew that the Ottomans were already thinking of making Macedonia an autonomous Ottoman province. And it would have been only a matter of time before Macedonia would have gained its independence. But our neighbours, and especially their patrons the Great Powers, did not want that. Also, as we know, Bulgaria entered the war (Balkan wars) because it figured it had lost the Macedonians because they were preparing to create their own Macedonian state

independent of Bulgaria... and were not following Bulgarian wishes to join Bulgaria.

The Macedonian national liberation movement in all parts of occupied Macedonia became a natural ally of the worker and communist movements. This is because the Macedonian people, theoretically, believed that their interests coincided with the interests of the democratic struggles in those countries. But in reality, as it turned out, that was not always the case. The CPG leadership, with its two-pronged policy, went as far as calling the Macedonian people “Slavophone Greeks”. In other words the CPG declared that the Macedonian people were Greeks who spoke a Slavic language. On top of that they banned the Macedonian language, banned the Macedonian grammar and the Macedonian literary language, and replaced them with new Greek editions of the alphabet and grammar. They then especially created a literary language for their “Slavophone Greeks”. The state party leadership in Bulgaria, simply and publicly, declared that there were no Macedonians in Macedonia, but only Bulgarians! In Yugoslavia, however, similar trends were successfully prevented. The Macedonian people, who until yesterday were called “Southern Serbs”, took matters into their own hands and managed to remain Macedonians. This was because the basic interests of the revolution and the very existence of the CPY, as a general Yugoslav Communist Party, allowed no space and opportunity to “sin” over the national question of the people in Yugoslavia. This is quite understandable because the CPY was and still generally remains a Yugoslav Party and the bearer of the fundamental interests of all the Yugoslav people.

These gains, however, were not free or easily obtained. The Yugoslav federation was built through a fierce mass struggle with many victims on all sides. And as Gotse Delchev used to say “freedom gained for the Macedonian people will be gained through a hard struggle by the Macedonian people!” On top of that, circumstances in multinational Yugoslavia were more favourable for the Macedonian people living there... where multiple nationalities were welcome.

Over time both Bulgaria and Greece, for mutual interests, used Macedonia and the Macedonian people as coins for personal gains.

Based on known population exchange conventions, Bulgaria allowed Greek expansionists to free themselves from an entire army of about 85,000 of our most rebellious and anti-Greek Macedonians. This was a hard blow and an anti-Macedonian act...

Today we are witnessing something similar. Instead of taking our army of refugees, indisputably the most revolutionary and advanced Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, and defending its human rights, placing it under our protection and demanding that it be returned in its native place among its living relatives, we are trying to hide it. Instead of helping the Macedonian political refugees, Yugoslavia and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia have been trying to assimilate them by offering them citizenship, allowing them to fight among one another and be disorganized, and without a voice. In other words they are telling us to forget our native places and that the Socialist Republic of Macedonia is now our new home as it is the homeland of all Macedonians. And as I mentioned earlier, quoting a Macedonian patriot: "We gave up the other parts of our homeland for fear of being labeled nationalists!"

According to information obtained from original Party documents, Dr. Risto Kiriazovski reported that when we left Greek occupied Macedonia we left behind 11,000 dead, people killed during the fighting, 46 Macedonian villages destroyed and completely emptied of their inhabitants, 179 Macedonian villages somewhat emptied or with a significantly reduced number of inhabitants... If we were sent back we could have been joined by our relatives, now scattered all over the world, and we could have begun a new life. On top of that the Macedonian national spirit would have been strengthened, and, in the words of our patriot poet: "Makedonsko ime – nema da zagine"! (The Macedonian name - will not perish!)

Instead of sending us back to take our place on our ancestral lands, they have allowed the Greek state to flood our Macedonian villages and towns with Greek colonists, spreading them all over our Macedonia without "restraint" and in the process they have considerably facilitated in the "Hellenization" of our homeland...

Why is Yugoslavia doing this for Greece? What is its obligation? Why does Yugoslavia feel it is its constitutional right and duty to take in Macedonians from all parts of Macedonia and beyond...?

Of course, in spite of everything, there should be no doubt that this was a historical moment which required Yugoslavia to do so, that is, it was part of the policy of the day to take in people belonging to the ethnicities of the Republics, which also applied to us...

Now that I am writing my autobiography, I want to mention that, on various occasions I have addressed these kinds of questions to the editorial offices of our various media outlets, and to some institutions and management bodies. As it turned out, this was about the only type of socio-political activity I could do since I was “removed, ignored or written off” from political, social and academic life. In my letter to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia’s Presidency, mentioned earlier, I describe some unhealthy conditions in our social and political life here in Macedonia. Here is what I wrote:

TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF v/k “NOVA MAKEDONIJA”
in SKOPJE

In the weekly issue of “NOVA MAKEDONIJA” dated September 18, 1977, in the section “MINI QUIZ”, it is quite misleading to say that the term “Philippi” was derived from the Latin language.

As history has shown, Demosthenes, the Athenian orator and celebrated speaker from mid-4th century BC, protested with his flaming speeches against Philip II of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great), and against the pro-Macedonian politics of some prominent Athenians, including against Eshchines, the other glorified orator. Latin did not exist in Macedonia at that time because the Roman state was limited to the Apennine Peninsula, rather than all around Rome.

It was not the then Romans, but the then City States which named Demosthenes’s speeches against the Macedonian king Philip II, “Philippics”.

Philippic (singular), Philippi (plural). These terms remained known in history, that is, these terms were borrowed from the City States and adopted in other languages. “Philippics” in our language, should mean - sharp, bold criticisms...

Skopje, September 20, 1977,
Your regular reader,
Pavle Rakovski (Resenska 6, Sk.)

TO THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL HISTORY IN SKOPJE

As a Macedonian, citizen of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, that is, of SFR Yugoslavia, I am providing you with the attached material with the intention of helping you to see and to overcome an unwelcome situation in Macedonian affairs...

The same material was submitted to:
The SKM Central Committee Presidency
The Republic's SVR
The editorial board of “Communist” (the Macedonian edition)
The editorial Board of “Nova Makedonija”...

Skopje, May 6, 1980.

With much respect,
Pavle Rakovski
(Resenska 6 / 1-4, Skopje)

And here's something from that material:

TO THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL HISTORY - SKOPJE
(To the Science Council or competent authority)

Subject: Writing the history of the turbulent events in neighbouring Greece, i.e. Greek occupied Macedonia, in the periods from 1940 to 1945 and from 1945 to 1949, was entrusted to persons who, judging by their work, are not always up to the job.

A.

The book “The Communist Party of Greece in the War and in the Resistance, 1940-1945”, published by “KAZANTZA”, Athens 1974, is the work of Alekos Papa-Panaiotou, in other words, Theodoros Papa-Panaiotou.

Alekos Papa-Panaiotou, or Theodoros Papa-Panaiotou during the struggle was a DAG commissar working at General Headquarters at Mount Kaimakchalan.

That is exactly his “topic” here in INI on which he has been working and which is going to be published by INI as a separate book in Macedonian. In this work, which is briefly but beautifully and clearly presented, the author talks about the CPG’s policies in that period, discusses the EAM, ELAS and PEEA programs, talks about the agreements made with representatives of the British General Staff in the Middle East (Mediterranean), talks about the agreements made with the domestic bourgeoisie and, in the end, talks about ELAS’s dissolution.

However, Comrade Aleksos is silent on the topic of CPG policies and Party politics in general, with regards to our people. Comrade Aleksos has said nothing about how horribly our people have been treated by the CPG in Aegean Macedonia. It is as if our people did not exist at all... It is as if such policies were never enacted in the Greek state... This is something common to all Greek authors, who wrote on this subject. It doesn’t matter who they are. It doesn’t matter if they were former generals of ELAS, former generals of DAG, commissars, commanders, members of the Politburo or members of the CPG Central Committee; they all treat the Macedonians as if they do not exist. And this specific case is no exception. Comrade Alekos is following a Greek line that all disciplines follow...

Therefore being familiar with the events and having supporting documents in my possession I am willing to try and help in this matter. I feel I need and should show “what happened and why”.

(It is my intention to continue to present events that led the CPG leadership to enact anti-Macedonian policies during the Macedonian

national liberation movement but for now I need to continue with this specific topic.)

As I mentioned earlier, all Greek authors are silent when it comes to the Macedonians and Greek policies enacted against them.

Comrade Alekos with his Greek edition is trying to do exactly that, even here at the Macedonian Institute of National History (INI). Like all Greek authors Comrade Alekos has ignored some events and is silent on them while thoroughly examining others. There is not a single word in his works about the Party politics enacted against the Macedonians, or about the history of the Macedonian national liberation struggle which existed in that period. He acts like a man who has not heard anything and does not know anything about the existence of any Macedonian national liberation movement. He acts like he knows nothing about the kind of Party policies the CPG enacted against the Macedonian movement. And not just that: Being in charge of the “Theme Project”, of the work being done at INI, he vigorously opposes anyone who tries to bring anything outside of what he has written himself. He insists that “it is not true”. He insists that by “slandering the CPG the CPY is also slandered... because the CPY co-operated with the CPG...!” If I remember correctly he reacted in this way when I brought one of my texts to INI and gave it to him to review it (in fact his review exists and can be examined)...

But Comrade Alekos is wrong! He is wrong for hiding those who promised “full equality of minorities” as per the official CPG Party line, and instead delivered a chauvinistic policy against the Macedonian people. He is also wrong in demanding that we not slander the Party and its Marxist principles, after what the CPG did to us...

As one of the founders and as a member of the top NOF leadership I had the opportunity to witness how our Comrade Alekos treated the Macedonians at General Headquarters at Kaimakchalan. In April-May 1947, about 5 to 6 months after “unity” was established on November 21, 1946, I had the opportunity to see Comrade Alekos register the Macedonian fighters. He recorded them as Greeks by nationality and wrote down their Greek names. He then addressed

them as “Greek people...!” and “Greek brothers...!” without mentioning a single word that they were Macedonians. He ignored the fact that the units in that part of the region were composed mainly of Macedonians (about 70-85%).

I then personally went to see Comrade Alekos and vigorously protested his actions demanding that he immediately correct them...

But, the only thing I achieved in doing was to have them label me an “active nationalist”. A little later, Petris, then CPG Bureau Organizing Secretary for Macedonia and Thrace, reprimanded me with the words: “...and after all this you tell me that you had a Greek education and Greek manners...!”

In the Greek edition of his INI project, Comrade Alekos played the role of implementer of the idea that: “There are no Macedonians in the Seaside part (Greek occupied) of Macedonia and that there is no ‘Macedonian Question’ in Greece...” It is truly strange that Comrade Alekos was invited and allowed to write “our history”, i.e. the history of the Macedonian national liberation movement in that part of Macedonia in the period from 1940 to 1945...

B.

As an INI project, Theodoros Papa-Panaiotou and Risto Kiriazovski took on the leading roles to write the works: “The Worker Movement, the CPG and the national liberation movement of the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia.”

Theodoros Papa-Panaiotou took on the work of processing the historical material from the period 1940 to 1945. How well he did with this material can be beautifully seen in his Greek edition of “The CPG in the War and in the Resistance 1940-1945” which can be found in the INI library.

Risto Kiriazovski took on the work of processing the historical materials from the period 1945 to 1949, which included “NOF and other Macedonian organizations in Aegean Macedonia from 1945 to 1949”. The work was entitled: “CPG leadership attitude and position towards the Macedonian national question in Aegean Macedonia

from 1945 to 1949. Kiriazovski offered to publish a shortened version of this theme, about 50 pages, in the magazine “Istoria”. The editors of “Istoria” sent me this text, with a cover letter, and asked me to review it and give them my written assessment. And so I did... but Kiriazovski was not happy with it. He said to me: “This is my theme which I have produced and I will not change anything in it. I am prepared to rate it, defend it and reach my own conclusions...”

And here is how he rated the situation and the conclusions he offered:

On page 1 of his text, Kiriazovski evaluated that our Greek comrades, i.e. the CPG leadership, “officially never contested that the Macedonians were a separate nation...”

This categorical assertion that accentuates the Greek principles of our Greek comrades towards the Macedonians, as opposed to emphasizing facts, is completely unfounded and random. Here is a brief reminder of the facts:

1) During the first six years since the CPG’s founding in November 1918, its program (an official document) contained not a word about any Macedonian or any non-Greek people. All the people in Greece have been referred to as... Greek people.

(After that I wrote about events pointing out the CPG’s deep anti-Macedonian policy, and ended with:)

10) After DAG’s inevitable defeat, after our struggle had failed, after we left the Greek territory, NOF, the material force of the Macedonian national idea and the Organization of the Macedonians fighters and people, was openly attacked and disbanded. In its place the CPG formed a new organization, especially for the “Slavophones” which in fact was designed to struggle against the Macedonian national idea... and not for it. For this purpose, they (the CPG leaders) carefully selected “Janissary” of Macedonian origin to staff the new organization. They called it “Ilinden” primarily to hide their real intentions behind it and to cling to the Macedonian resistance. In fact they were planning to kill the spirit

of Ilinden with the help of an organization named Ilinden. Here are some facts about that:

The Greek leaders and self-styled tailors of the Macedonian people's fate decided to take away the Macedonian alphabet from the Macedonian people and imposed on them something alien that suited their Greek taste. They also took away their Macedonian literary language and their Macedonian grammar by prohibiting them from using them in the schools, by the press and generally by the Macedonian public. What was already Macedonian was replaced with a new Macedonian grammar and a new Macedonian literary language both concocted by Kotsopoulos and the other "opouloses". After that it was left to the "Ilinden" publishing department to promote this concoction and to publish the new textbooks and its new literary values... And did the Macedonian people know that this was actually a "Greek concoction" and not a Macedonian one...? No they did not! The Greeks promoted themselves as a principled, civilized and cultured people but in practice showed themselves to be neither "principled", "cultured", nor "civilized"... especially when it came to delivering on their promises such as the "self-determination of the Macedonian people" and "full equality" for the Macedonian people.

In other words the Greek communists were no better than the Greek bourgeois and all other Greeks before them who promoted the well-known anti-Macedonian thesis of non-recognition and carrying out their infamous policy of denying the existence of a Macedonian nation, language, culture... in the entire ethnic, geographic and historic Macedonia... including in Greek occupied Macedonia!

This was yet another attempt to break down the Macedonian nation, culture and language. In addition to breaking down the Macedonian territory through its invasion, occupation, division and annexation by the neighbouring monarchies through the Balkan wars, the CPG's aim here was to break down the Macedonian people's language and culture in order to prove to the world that the vocabulary used inside the Greek state is really only an internal Greek phenomenon, only an eloquent part of the Greek people, the bilingual Greeks, who have nothing to do with the Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia in Federal Yugoslavia... According to

the logic of this crude anti-Macedonian act, the Macedonians who survived the Greek-bourgeois genocide, that is, the Greek denationalization and assimilation policy, cannot and must not exist except as a complimentary addition to the Greek people, and as a people's sacrifice... In time they are destined to disappear... As for the rest, because they work against Greek national interests, they must be viewed as actors working for foreign interests...! Of course, it was not an easy job to destroy a people like us Macedonians. Our primordial forces that keep us going are well hidden, like they are in every healthy and strong nation, and with every chance we get we replace the lost and heal the wounds of the injured. But, like all others before them, this time too our Greek comrades, the CPG leaders, tried everything in their power to destroy us but they proved to be unable. They failed to change the character and nature of the Macedonian phenomenon. They tried this inside our homeland and they tried it outside but it did not work. They called us "Slavophone Greeks" meaning Greeks who spoke a Slavic language but we did not buy it... They formed an organization called "Ilinden", something near and dear to our hearts, but that too we did not buy... But not only did we not buy it..., it backfired on the Greeks...

As the number of "Slavophone Greeks" grew under heavy Greek influence, so did their anti-Macedonian sentiments to which the Macedonian people caught on and began to openly rebel against. In this way, "Ilinden" the organization began to increasingly receive its colour as the national Macedonian organization in the spirit of Ilinden, and became more and more the material force of the Macedonian national ideal. Because of this, it did not take long for our Greek comrades to dissolve it. The "Ilinden" organization and its Macedonian pages in the Greek newspapers were abolished in almost every centre among the Macedonians including among the Macedonian émigrés. By doing so, the Greeks, yet again, robbed the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia of all their rights. They robbed them of their opportunity to organize, develop and continue their struggle for elementary human rights. They robbed them of their struggle to survive as Macedonians and, on top of that, ended their chances of creating a decent life in the Greek state as Macedonians, or as a non-Greek nation...

But of course, one is not going to find any of this in the Greek books, and outside of some “nice and meaningless words” spoken, the many Greek authors are silent on the subject of the real Greek policies and attitudes exercised against the Macedonian people. But they do more than that. They use many empty words to blur and cover up the fact that minorities were recognized and that the Macedonian people were promised “equality” during the critical period of the Greek Civil War. But later the official response to this was: “The correctness of the line for a given question did not exclude individual irregularities in handling that question... (And if I understand this correctly, the official line is that the CPG ‘simply made a mistake...’) This also happened when the CPG was dealing with the ‘Slavo-Macedonian Question’ during the first phase of the armed struggle (referring to the national liberation war, 1941- 1944) and later (during the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949).” This was a Party editorial published in the Party magazine “Neos Cosmos” No. 2/1957, p. 8, in an attempt to explain the CPG policy applied on the Macedonian Question.

So, according to the “official” explanation “nothing serious took place”, and whatever small things did take place... they were “irregularities”. In other words, even though the official CPG line was in favour of “full equality for minorities”, Macedonia was still proclaimed to be as Greek as Attica... and the Macedonian people were only “Slavophone Greeks”. This, naturally, was done to suppress the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement... with the use of weapons... and to remove all traces of the bearers of the Macedonian national liberation movement. On top of that, in order to negate the fact that a real Macedonian liberation movement existed and to cover it up, they claimed it was a “Grkoman” (Macedonians loyal to Greece) movement. And to further confuse the Macedonian issue, the Greeks took steps to not only rob the Macedonian people of their culture and language, but imposed a “Greek created” alphabet, grammar and language... especially created for their “Slavophone Greeks”. This is reality... these are steps the Greek communists took to negate the Macedonian movement... which, obviously, today cannot be considered or qualified as APPLICATIONS of the official line, nor as random misstatements in the implementation of the official line. These are

things, however, that cannot be accepted as simple mistakes and understood as simple “irregularities”...!

Even though there are plenty of illusions and self-deceptions, we must distinguish fact from fiction and seek to understand the truth. The Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia were victims of a dangerous dual policy with a single purpose in mind – to officially negate the existence of the Macedonian people in Greece. One part of the policy is the pro-minority declaration principle, and the second, the one practiced, is the anti-Macedonian course of action. The first is there to hide the second...

In an attempt to launch his own assessment in our historiography, historian Risto Kiriazovski has made claims that the Greek leaders never officially objected to the fact that the Macedonian people were a separate nation. In doing so he has joined the Greek leaders in their endeavours to apply their chauvinistic policies against the Macedonian people and keep the truth veiled and blocked from the public and from the CPG membership.

This is not the only one. There are many similar such assessments in Kiriazovski’s texts that have entered our historiography, which objectively do not have and cannot have another function other than:

Twisting the historical truth, and together with the beautiful words written by the Greek side, blur, overshadow and cover up the Greek leadership’s chauvinistic policies against the Macedonian people...

It is well-known that Kiriazovski never belonged in the ranks of the Macedonian national liberation movement and has always sat on the opposite side of the barricade. He also negated and was an active opponent of NOF... So, it is truly strange that, judging by his writing, such an incurable “Grkoman” (loyal to the Greek cause) can be given the responsibility to write the history of the Macedonian national liberation movement in that part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia for the period from 1945 to 1949...

We know that Theodoros Papa-Panaiotou (Alekos) made a request to the INI authorities to allow him to conduct an audit of the archive

material with the intent of “purging” from INI and from other archives all memorials and written testimonies that “slandered the CPG”. He asked that this material be excluded from our history and be destroyed. By using his position as a former and current CPG official and head of the INI project “The worker movement, the CPG and the Macedonian national liberation movement in Aegean Macedonia”, Comrade Alekos tried to protect the CPG leaders from being found out for what they did to the Macedonian people and from being condemned and denounced. Ignoring its Marxist principles... breaking its own official line on “self-determination to secession”... breaking its own official line on “full equality for minorities”... the CPG leadership, in the name of the CPG itself, committed chauvinistic acts against the Macedonian national liberation movement and against the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia... In other words, the CPG became an extended arm of the Greek reactionaries and took on their role to destroy the Macedonian nation in Greece. This above-mentioned request to eliminate the defamatory information against the CPG, made by our comrade Alekos, was supported by another “historian” of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Aegean Macedonia, and that historian was Kiriazovski, who carried special weight and importance and was recognized as an expert in the subject.

I must confess that, as a Macedonian and a citizen of this Yugoslav community, I look at the INI situation with much bitterness and resentment.

But, at the same time I am confident that when a “special commission” (if one is established sooner than later) is formed it will be able to save and preserve this valuable documentation of our past. We need to be able to preserve everything we have on the Macedonian national liberation movement, not only to safeguard our past but to also be able to defend ourselves in the future... so that one day we can expose the truth about the CPG...

Skopje, March 23, 1980

Here is another turn of events:

TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD “COMMUNIST” - SKOPJE

Comrades,

The accompanying text “Discussion on the topic: The Communist Party of Greece and the Macedonian national question” refers to the extensive collection of CPG policy documents on the Macedonian national question that recently appeared in a text in the Macedonian archives in Skopje.

As fate would have it, I was at the forefront of the Macedonian liberation movement in that part of Macedonia during ELAS, that is, during the National Liberation War, and during DAG, or the Greek Civil War and, being a direct participant in both of those struggles, I felt obliged to intervene in defense of the truth.

I believe an attempt has been made to blur and conceal the truth about certain events in a carefully chosen selection of documents presented in the collection and in the commentary and preface of this work. This qualifies to be described as a genuine anti-Macedonian diversion of historical science... The attached text is the result of an analysis done on the collection with aims at clarifying events and getting to the truth, in terms of identifying the policies of the Greek leaders, and their actual role and function, which should be included in the collection.

The fact that Greek authors (former EAM, ELAS, DAG and CPG officials, some of them current CPG officials) are silent, that is, they avoid talking about the CPG and its destructive policies against the Macedonian people, and similarly -

The fact that here, among us, in our Institute for National History (INI), nothing has come to the surface after all the decades of work, even though people know that the CPG policies implemented against the Macedonian people were truly gruesome and shameful... speaks loudly that there are attempts made to obscure them...

Many people over time have entrusted INI with their historical documents so that they would be properly processed as historical

material but, obviously, this is not being done. Quite the opposite! According to the directives given to them, the people at INI have implemented a policy of concealment, that is, to hide the truth of what really took place and to conceal the Greek acts perpetrated against the Macedonian people, which in fact are political crimes.

This collection of documents is yet another confirmation and proof that our history is being altered as we speak in order to conceal the truth. In fact, this collection is an attempt to point our historiography in the wrong direction, and as mentioned in the preface, by use of a “scientific” methodology. With the selected documents and materials and the commentary in the preface, this collection is a facade behind which it is difficult to sense and identify the cruel anti-Macedonian acts perpetrated by our Greek “patriots” from the CPG leadership against the Macedonian people.

This, however, must not be allowed to happen. The “anti-Macedonian acts” committed by the CPG leadership must be disclosed to the CPG membership and to the public in general in defense of the Macedonian people... in the name of the Greek worker and communist movement... in the name of the Macedonian national liberation movement... in the name of the joint revolutionary struggle.... And you, comrades, need to step up and to do this immediately...

Should you need any more information, or any more details about this, do not hesitate to contact me. I am always available (my telephone number is 261-750)...

Skopje, 12. VII. 1982,
Regards, Pavle Rakovski

Of course, I also sent the above document, with an appropriate cover letter, to the MACEDONIAN ARCHIVES...

Here is something (the beginning) from my document which amounted to over 70 pages.

Recently the “Macedonian Archives” published a collection of documents about the Communist Party of Greece’s policies regarding the Macedonian Question...

The collection, considered a significant accomplishment, was introduced to the public in the Saturday edition of the NOVA MAKEDONIJA newspaper, published on June 12, 1982.

And, of course, there are reasons why it was a significant accomplishment.

First, it filled a significant gap in our historiography by making two hundred and fifty (250) of the many existing documents available to historians and the general public. Second, it indisputably, convincingly and irrefutably pointed to the fact that Macedonians do not only exist but struggled to acquire their democratic rights and freedoms in the Greek state which, undoubtedly, is of great historical and political significance...

But, in the interest of forming a more complete picture of the historical truth, that is, of better informing the public, it is necessary to present some additional and important facts that are NOT INCLUDED in the collection. Here is brief summary:

A. – From the establishment of the CPG to the Fascist occupation.

1) During the first six years after the founding of the CPG, the Macedonian people were treated as Greeks. There was not a single word mentioned about Macedonians in any of the CPG official documents or in the Party program. They were treated like they were Greek people!

The same thing (Macedonians were referred to as Greeks) was done during the fascist occupation of Greece and subsequently during the national liberation war (ELAS), the Greek Civil War (DAG), and the period after the Greek Civil War (in immigration)... until this day. The CPG leadership applied a dual policy towards the Macedonian people; a declarative and a practical policy. In other words, the CPG said one thing and did another in regards to the Macedonian question. But, instead of publicly presenting all

elements of the CPG policies with equal emphasis, the collection has made an attempt to emphasize the declarative elements and to deemphasize the practical elements. In other words it is speaking up about what was said and keeping quiet about what was done. The collection would have been fine if everything was included. But it was not! Then, in the preface we read:

“With the documents and materials included, and by using a scientific basis, the purpose of this collection is to contribute to the clarification of the CPG’s policies on the Macedonian national question from the CPG’s founding in November 1918, to 1974, when the CPG officially last treated this question ... The available documents, in their entirety, represent the continuity of the CPG’s POLICIES and PRACTICES with regards to the Macedonian national question and the CPG’s attitude towards the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia.”

In other words, this document claims that the CPG’s “verbal” policy was the practical and real policy... which is not true...!

I submitted the following text to INI:

30th Anniversary of ASNOM - ASNOM, NOB and the CPG

By P(avle) R(akovski)

Both the people’s revolution and the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greece were defeated by the international and domestic reactionary forces. They were defeated through the liquidation of the “Greek National Liberation Army” or ELAS in 1941 to 1944 and again, for a second time, when the “Democratic Army of Greece” or DAG was disastrously crushed in 1945 to 1949 in its own “fortified defensive positions”.

The main driving forces in DAG were the Macedonian fighters with the bulk of the fighting taking place in the northern part (Greek occupied Macedonia) of the Greek state. As a result, the Macedonian people suffered the most and acquitted the greatest losses. For this reason, it is understandable that the Macedonian

people would be interested in learning the truth of what happened, i.e. in understanding the real causes of the catastrophic disaster...

The Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences - MANU, in the framework of the 30th ASNOM anniversary celebration, organized a Symposium with the theme: "ASNOM – the realization of the ideas for creating a Macedonian state and its international echoes and reflections."

Being the most notable member of NOF, Paskal Mitrevski, former NOF president of the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia, took part in this Symposium with a presentation entitled: "The first organs of the people's government and the formation of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece during the Greek Civil War, 1945- 1949."

Comrade Mitrevski presented the following basic concepts and events of that time (I quote):

1) "The Greek people, along with him and the Macedonian people, were among the first to rise in the fight against fascism..., and achieved significant successes and results, but because of foreign military intervention they fell under new slavery..." (under the then established Monarcho-fascist regime.)

2) "The resistance offered by the people... would inevitably lead to DAG's establishment, and spur a painstaking struggle for the liberation of the country. One of the results of that struggle was the establishment of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece and the recognition of the national rights and freedoms of the Macedonian people in the Aegean part of Macedonia..."

3) "This recognition was actually a significant benefit for the Macedonian people and, at the same time, a sort of echo of the ASNOM decisions."

4) "In a comparative sense, there are certain degrees of diversity, both in terms of the approach and manner, among the acts adopted and decisions made by ASNOM and the corresponding acts adopted by the provisional democratic government of Greece. There are also

certain degrees of diversity among the motives and forms of their adoption... However, as an integral whole of the Macedonian people's liberation struggle goals and interests, they are implicitly convergent..." (In simple words he wants to say that, with their similar content, they equally served the liberation struggle of the Macedonian people, that is, they lead to the same final goal).

5) "The first ASNOM session had a positive and strong echo on the fighters and on the broader Macedonian masses all throughout Aegean Macedonia."

6) "Due to mistakes... omissions... weaknesses in the CPG and DAG leaderships... the democratic forces were faced with their final defeat..."

This, according to Comrade Mitrevski, was the "general true picture of events..." However, looking at things closely, more carefully and in a logical sense, we will be forced to conclude that much of this "general true picture of events" needs to be corrected.

Mistakes!? Omissions!? Weaknesses!? This is simplified to the extreme! It seems that the only weakness here is in our assessment of the events of that time. As far as I am aware, all the books that talk about the national liberation war in Greece, which are published here in Macedonia, talk only about the policy mistakes made by Greek leaders (CPG, EAM, ELAS, DAG). Their well-intentioned motives are not denied (although betrayal is betrayal regardless of the intentions of the perpetrator). However there are also the basic questions that need to be asked, namely:

a) The people's revolution and ELAS, its army, suffered defeat not on the battlefield but by voluntarily surrendering to the enemy. ELAS held almost all of Greece, and there was no battle fought! If this is not betrayal, then what is...? (105)

b) The people's revolution and DAG, its army, again suffered defeat. DAG was a small but mobile rebel army with its forces present everywhere and unreachable to its opponent. But, contrary to logic, DAG was pinned down in a frontal attack. In other words the mobile army was forced to stand still, like a motionless target, so

that its opponent could deliver a heavy blow against it. Its opponent, the Royal Army, was better trained, better equipped, better armed and ten times more numerous. The small but mobile army was “ordered” to fight at a front and this is why its opponent was able to smash it to pieces... And, if this too is not betrayal, then what is...? (106)

Behind both of the cases mentioned above, stood a definite general political line. This political line was not a “mistake”, an “omission” or a “weakness”, but a deliberate attempt to achieve specific goals. Everything that was done was part and parcel of a strict and consistent implementation of that general line. And to claim that the Greek leaders... wandered all over the place... did not know what they wanted and how to achieve it... did not follow the Party the line... at the very least are delusions and an escape from the truth.

Here is how ELAS and the people’s revolution were defeated:

During its CPG Central Committee VI Plenum, held in July 1941, the CPG leaders decided to call on all the Greek people, on all the parties and organizations including on all the bourgeois parties and organizations, to form a national front (EAM) against the fascist occupation, and for the people’s liberation. But what was characteristic of this is that it was not done by not organizing a massive armed struggle, not creating a liberation army, but by conducting illegal activities in the cities such as economic and political strikes, demonstrations and by fighting in the streets. (107)

This is what General Stefanos Sarafis, ELAS Supreme Commander, among other things, wrote about this in his famous book “O ELAS”: “The Greek people, under the leadership of the EAM organizations, began their resistance in cities with protests, strikes and other bold actions, and ultimately organized the partisan army...!” (Page 92.) At the same time (and this is also very characteristic) the CPG leadership completely ignored the disadvantaged Macedonian people in the Greek state and their needs in regards to their struggle for democratic rights and freedom. To have given attention to Macedonian people and to have spoken about the Macedonian national question, in fact, would have meant that the CPG would have to expose itself and raise this issue before the public and offer a

resolution. But what the CPG really wanted was to completely ignore the Macedonian issue.

This is how the CPG acted and this was the CPG's real policy, both in terms of the Greek people's liberation struggle, and in relation to the Macedonian national liberation movement, and there is no other way that it can be explained. Facts are facts and they have their own logic. Namely, the lightly armed proletariat, almost naked and constantly exposed to the heavy occupiers' blows in the cities, would have no chance of a decisive victory. But, by taking this route, the CPG was able to exclude the possibility of starting a people's (social) revolution, and thus avoided the danger of creating conditions for a practical resolution of the Macedonian national Question in Greece. The assumption here was that Greece would be liberated when the allies from the West and the Middle East came to liberate it. And with their help, Greece would re-establish its positions and borders in the north, and regain the Greek territories annexed by the Bulgarian fascists.

The other alternative would have been for the CPG to orient itself towards a social revolution, and instead of suppressing and "postponing it" (108), embracing it in a revolutionary decisive democracy consistent with that of the "Slav-speakers" in Macedonia which would have led to a confrontation with the domestic bourgeoisie and its patrons the Anglo-Americans. And, in the event of success, the Greek position and interests in Macedonia would become problematic. To work on that line would have meant to work against Greece...

In essence this was the CPG leadership's general line followed in Greece. The CPG had to work in line with Greek national interests, but at the same time, it had to blur and conceal its true motives with arbitrary interpretations, so as not to draw the attention of the public. Unfortunately, this was not good for the people's revolution in Greece and especially not for the Macedonian people...

But then things didn't go the way the CPG wanted them to. The fascist terror in Greece gradually sent more and more people to the mountains who then formed partisan units and began to build a national revolutionary army (ELAS). By the middle of 1943 there

were many people who had left the cities and joined the partisan units operating in the mountains. All of these units were taken over by the Party leadership. In the meantime, a strong democratic national liberation movement was brewing in Macedonia among the “Slav-speaking” people. It was under these conditions that contact between the governing factors in Albania, Greece and Yugoslavia (Tempo) was made and an agreement was reached to create an alliance, and based on a military and political plan, to open a common Balkan General Headquarters... and so on.

The CPG leadership, led by Georgios Siantos, however, had an immediate response. It first criticized the CPG-ELAS representatives for their “naïve” nature in this matter, and then renounced the already accepted and signed Agreement and declared it invalid. And, instead of joining the Balkan people’s revolutionary alliance, the CPG connected itself to the English. ELAS was put under English command and under the control of the British General Staff for the Middle East. British officers then rapidly began to join all ELAS unit headquarters. At the same time, the CPG opened a frontal attack against the “Slavophones” and against their liberation movement.

This is how the CPG conducted itself and carried out its policies both in terms of the people’s revolutions in the neighbouring nations, and in terms of the revolutionary struggle of the “Slavophones” here at home in Greek occupied Macedonia. However, there is no doubt that, had the CPG joined the people’s revolution alliance with the neighbouring nations, there would have been an inevitable confrontation with the domestic bourgeoisie and its patrons the Anglo-Americans. On the other hand, if the CPG had joined the Balkan alliance it would have changed the class and social character of the revolution in Greece and would have created favourable conditions for developing a stronger Macedonian liberation movement. This would have established the right conditions for a practical resolution to the Macedonian National Question. In other words, Greece would have lost its part of Macedonia... and this would have been a treasonous act against Greece.

This is why our “Greek patriots”, the CPG leadership, rejected the Balkan people’s revolution alliance, turned to the English and the domestic bourgeoisie, and allowed all ELAS unit headquarters to be staffed with British officers. This, in effect, was insurance for the prevention of the “national struggle” turning into a social revolution.

With all that out of the way, the CPG then turned its attention to dismantling, breaking up and disabling the Macedonian national liberation movement from being launched...

These were the actual events and the logic behind them as to why they took place. They are clear and unambiguous and reveal the ideas, aims and actions of those who perpetrated them. To blur them and conceal them by arbitrary interpretations, not to bring them to light in the public eye and in the eye of the CPG membership is, obviously, doing a bad service to both the Greek people’s revolutionary struggle and to our Macedonian struggle.

This is what Chris Wounthouse, a well-known British Intelligence Service agent and former head of the British military mission in Greece, wrote: “If the resistance movement in Greece was not staffed with British officers, not only Greece but all of Europe would have gone in quite a different direction... The presence of the British military mission in Greece prevented the Communists from putting Greece under absolute control in 1943-1944. If the Communists took power in Greece in September 1944, when the Germans were withdrawing, it would have been difficult to take that power away from them in the eyes of the world public, and Greece today would be behind the Iron Curtain...” (109)

As one can clearly see Chris Wounthouse had no reasons to worry about covering up the betrayal of those who invited the British officers to join all ELAS unit headquarters. He competently and authoritatively points out the far-reaching consequences of this policy.

What possible reasons could we have not to do the same...? (Expose the truth.)

And as I have previously mentioned, on July 2, 1943, on the occasion of the dissolution of the Third International, the CPG Central Committee addressed the Greek people with a proclamation in which it said that it was waiting for its final goal and that socialism, the proletarian party, the Communist Party of Greece... are all fighting today for national liberation, and after that war was over they will be fighting for a people's democracy...!

So, from the above statement the CPG publicly admitted that the struggle for the Greek people's social liberation was "postponed" until the war for liberation was over. In other words the Greek people were publicly denied their chance to fight for social justice when the time was right. Then when the armed struggle ended, the CPG leadership promised to start a new struggle against the bourgeoisie, as was specified in its proclamation. This, however, was done only at rallies in order to "win the majority vote". (110)

But that's not all. ELAS in its nature was a people's revolutionary army whose command structure consisted mostly of communists who could have easily transitioned from a "national struggle" into a "social revolution". The proclamation was only a preventative measure to suppress communist tendencies among the communist leaders and masses.

What possible reasons could we have to hide this information from the public and from the CPG membership...?

On July 5, 1943, a document was signed in which "ELAS was granted the status of an allied army under the command of (British) General Staff for the Middle East. All operations that it was to undertake were to be carried out on orders from (British) General Staff..." wrote Sarafis, ELAS Commander-in-Chief, in his famous book: "O ELAS". (111)

According to Vasilis Bardzhotas, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo and political commissar of DAG headquarters: "All large units, divisions and groups of divisions were in fact in the hands of the British Intelligence Service!" (112) And so the entire situation found itself... in experienced hands. Our CPG leadership

and “Greek patriots” could now sigh in relief because the future of Greece was in good hands...

After this the entire situation began to roll downhill, faster and faster. On July 18, 1943, a document was signed in which EDES and EKKA, the quisling forces organized by the domestic bourgeoisie and the English, which fought against EAM-ELAS while collaborating with the occupiers, were recognized as... liberation forces. But there was more... A joint Chief of Staff was established. “On July 29, 1943, the first meeting at the British military mission headquarters was called, in which the following appointments were decided:

- From the British military mission: Colonel Eddy, then head of the Mission. Lieutenant Colonel Chris, his assistant and deputy. Major Wallace, political adviser, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of England. Captain Ross, Eddy’s adjutant.
- From ELAS: Colonel Sarafis, ELAS Supreme Commander. Comrade Aris Velouhiotis, political commissar of ELAS Headquarters. Comrade Samariniotis.
- From EDES: Colonel Napoleon Zervas and Komninos Piroamglou. Additionally, Colonel Mavromatis and Major Gikopoulos, designated as permanent representatives of EDES in the Joint Chiefs of Staff...
- Later, representatives of EKKA joined in...! (Sarafis) (113)

By doing this the British were formally and de facto recognized as the leaders in the struggle and given the right to interfere in Greece’s internal affairs. The British took advantage of that and began to solve the problems in Greece by pitting Greeks against Greeks... for their own benefit, of course. Namely, by combining all the quisling forces under their command including EDES, EKKA, PAO, IVE, Andon Chaush, etc., they organized a massive blow against ELAS in northern Greece.

ELAS, however, emerged victorious only thanks to its fighters and to the support they received from the broad masses...

In the meantime the CPG started an aggressive campaign against the Macedonian people and against their liberation movement which was completely out of character. In other words, the CPG, through its central organs the by-weekly magazine “Neos kosmos” and the newspaper “Rizospatis”, began a propaganda campaign telling the Greek people and the world public that Macedonia under Greece (Greek occupied Macedonia), after the exchange of populations, became so Greek that it was as Greek as any other Greek district in Old Greece. (114) In other words, the CPG was telling the world that there were no Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia... only Greeks. But then General Stefanos Sarafis, commander of ELAS, went on to testify about the “Slavophones” present in ELAS. He wrote the following in his book “O ELAS” after visiting the village Perivoli (Kostur Region) to inspect the 2nd Battalion of the 28th ELAS Brigade: “The entire 2nd Battalion is made up of Slavophone Greeks...” In other words it was made up of Macedonians. (115) He was referring to the Lerin-Kostur Macedonian battalion led by Ilia Dimovski-Goche from Statitsa.

And then we have General Evripidis Bakirdzhis, commander of the ELAS Group of divisions in Macedonia, who in the spirit of the CPG’s above-mentioned central organs, together with the Party newsletter “Laiki foni”, in a special interview, also informed the world that the “Slavophones” were nothing more than “Bulgarophone Greeks”! (116)

In other words, for these people (CPG) there were no Macedonians in (Greek occupied) Macedonia, only “Slavophone” Greeks, belonging to the “Slavophone” part of the Greek people. It was no wonder that the National Council (“Ethnikon Simvoulion”) of “Democratic Greece”, just born in the flames of the revolution, when it convened in May 1944 somewhere in the free territory, completely ignored the Macedonian people, that is, it treated them as Greek people and proclaimed the Greek character of Macedonia. (117)

We should have known that this was always part of the famous Greek Bourgeois anti-Macedonian policy, now being implemented through the CPG and through the revolution...

We became aware that we were not alone, when the Macedonian people began to form the People's Republic of Macedonia in the composition of Yugoslavia under the AVNOJ (National Anti-Fascist Liberation Council of Yugoslavia) and then ASNOM (Anti-fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia) conditions, when huge masses began to appear in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia so they too could be mobilized and organized into a huge force.

When the Macedonian people began to resolutely prepare for a struggle en masse... the CPG, recognizing that it was their natural and legitimate right, began to organize itself and develop its own struggle in order to emerge from its humiliating position of having ignored a completely disadvantaged and subjugated people...

It was precisely at this time and under these conditions that the "Greek patriots" from the CPG leadership responded with their consistent application of their well-established line for a "national front", i.e. for "national unity" with the domestic bourgeoisie. This was the right time for them to implement their anti-Macedonian policy of non-recognition and denying the very existence of the Macedonian people. This was the CPG's decisive struggle for suppressing and ultimately choking the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greece.

Anyone who is familiar with the history of the CPG knows very well that these anti-Macedonian tendencies were representative of the long-standing CPG "Macedonian disease" which the CPG contracted when it was first established in November 1918 and, depending on the conditions, one way or another, surfaced in its policies of practice against the Macedonian people. (118) In other words, this CPG "disease" did not start or was caused by the establishment of ASNOM and its solutions.

However, it did surface and take shape and sharpness during given historical moments including the moment of ASNOM. Namely, the solutions offered by ASNOM and the emergence of the People's Republic of Macedonia, which unusually ignited the revolutionary struggle in this part (Greek occupied) of Macedonia, was the

contributory force, which for the first time forced the CPG's "Macedonian disease" into the open. This was the first time it was stripped naked from the CPG's demagogic disguises and false democracy in relation to the Macedonian people.

This is how it was. The CPG's decision to take a harder stand against the Macedonian people in Greece was a reflection of the decisions made at ASNOM.

But that was not all. As early as January 1944, at its CPG Central Committee X Plenum, the CPG leadership publicly opted for... "Strengthening Greek national interests!" in the north part of Greece. The CPG, at its X Plenum, specifically proclaimed that it will fight against its northern neighbours on its "strategic borders" the same way the domestic bourgeoisies were fighting". (119) In other words the party of the proletariat, i.e. the Communist Party of Greece, was placed under the yoke of the domestic bourgeoisie cart to jointly widen the Greek state borders by annexing new foreign territories to the north...

On May 20, 1944, the Treaty of Lebanon was signed, with which:

a) The CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships voluntarily and officially renounced any pretensions to take power in Greece and recognized the bourgeois government in exile as the "legitimate government of Greece" and as the "government of national unity".

b) Once again the CPG publicly and officially stood in the same position as the domestic bourgeoisie against its neighbours with a request for "full approval of Greece's national rights" which, among other things, meant a request to occupy and annex the rest of Macedonia (the Republic of Macedonia and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia) and Northern Epirus (Southern Albania). (120)

c) The soldiers and officers in the Greek military formations in the Middle East, who supported the CPG, EAM and ELAS, found themselves in a precarious position being treacherously accused of being involved in anti-national activities. This, however, was a ruse to conceal and justify the English intervention to defame and cleanse them.

d) The traitors acknowledged that ELAS was not a “non-partisan national army,” and the creation of an army, as a matter of time, would be left to the authority of the bourgeois government and the British General Staff for the Middle East. In other words it was time to decide when to raise the question of dissolving ELAS... (121)

The Treaty of Caserta was signed on September 26, 1944. By way of this Treaty the English were able to invade Athens and the Greek territory that the Germans were abandoning. The English did not invade Greece to chase out the Germans but to oppose ELAS. (122) That is, to prevent ELAS from taking important strategic positions in Athens and other places. The CPG leadership made sure this plan was successfully implemented. They then accepted British General Skobi as the supreme commander of the armed forces in Greece, that is, they subordinated ELAS to him, so that ELAS units could not move or act on their own, except under his orders. (123)

At the end, after a provoked military conflict in Athens (December 1944), the CPG leadership signed the Varkiza Agreement to disarm and dissolve ELAS. The Agreement was signed by Georgios Siantos and Mitsos Partsalidis. With the exception of some reserve units operating in Athens, ELAS was disarmed, dissolved and liquidated all throughout Greece. The ELAS reserve units were eventually defeated by the combined government in exile forces and by the English. (124)

In analyzing its own actions, the CPG, during its Third CPG Conference, decided to declare Georgios Siantos, Secretary of the Central Committee, a traitor, arguing that: “The betrayal against the revolution was consciously carried out by Georgios Siantos alone...” (125) There can be no doubt that, as surely as it was betrayal, it was not carried out by Siantos alone.

But what kind of reason could we have, to see things differently than what they actually are when we are talking about... some kind of mistakes made by the Greek leaders in their politics...?

Things were done the same way even under Secretary General Nikos Zahariadis’s watch. The CPG leadership, while the CPG was

still headed by Secretary General Nikos Zahariadis after the Greek Civil War ended, in its CPG Central Committee VI Extended Plenum in March 1956, condemned Zahariadis and removed him from the Party leadership because he was responsible for justifying the English presence in Greece, which weakened the resistance movement and undermined DAG's victory... The CPG leaders avoided using the term "betrayal" to describe what Zahariadis had done because they themselves were also involved...

But the facts are the facts and they are here to stay. Namely, faced with the newly emerging situation in the north (ASNOM, i.e. the formation of the Republic of Macedonia in the Yugoslav composition and the founding of NOF the national revolutionary organization for the Macedonians in the Greek occupied part of Macedonia), the CPG, at its CPG Central Committee XII Plenum, held in June 1945, declared that there was an uncertainty that was threatening the Greek positions and borders in the north. The CPG resolutely opposed any territorial claim by any party against Greece. The preservation of territorial integrity was the first task of every Greek patriot! (126) This was why the CPG turned to England, whose presence and support was considered to be "Greece's saving grace". The XII Plenum Resolution also proclaimed England as Greece's "great friend" (127) and after that, to the end, the English line was being implemented.

While cooperating with England and reconciling its internal plans domestically, the CPG was simultaneously working on plans to suppress and break the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia...

Basically this was the general line followed by the CPG leadership while it was led by Nikos Zahariadis. And by doing so the Macedonian people's fate was left in these "patriotic Greek" hands who, as mentioned above, had a single aim... get rid of the Macedonian liberation movement along with the Macedonian people. And that is exactly what happened in the end. And the fact that none of these Macedonians were allowed to return to their homes in Greek occupied Macedonia after the war was over, proves it.

This is what Leonidas Stringos, member of the Politburo, said:

“Had our Party decided, in the course of 1946-1947, to start an armed struggle, with a decisive mobilization policy to increase DAG’s military effectiveness, the issue of reserves, one of the most basic issues, would have been successfully resolved in a timely manner. But, in the meantime, Zahariadis told us that ‘our forces in Macedonia should not have more than two thousand fighters’...!” (128) This means that Zahariadis did not want the buildup of a strong Macedonian force in Greek occupied Macedonia. Why? When clearly such a force would have helped DAG’s military effectiveness!

This is what Panagiotis Mavromatis, member of the Central Committee and the Provincial Bureau for Macedonia-Thrace, said:

“After the II Plenum took place in February 1946, the Provincial Bureau informed Zahariadis that over 25,000 volunteer fighters could be mobilized within a month. To this Zahariadis replied: “There is no need, the entire idea of starting an armed conflict is only a bluff...!” (129)

DAG Headquarters:

A letter from DAG Headquarters was sent to the CPG Central Committee Politburo in January 1947, asking for people, military equipment and other materials, so that DAG could successfully oppose and break its opponents’ impending general offensive. The request was rejected saying that the CPG’s motivation was not to take power through an armed struggle... (130)

General Markos, Supreme Commander of DAG:

The period between 1946 and 1947 was most suitable for developing the armed struggle, even for taking power... Over almost the entire 1946, the CPG leadership showed apathy over the drama that ordinary members of the Party and former ELAS fighters had to experience at the hands of the Greek government. Then, when the issue of seizing power was raised by activists from field party committees in the first months of 1947, Zahariadis’s position was:

“We are not going to take power for the time being. We will see, maybe in 1948...!” During this time, the Party leadership kept insisting that the Party’s primary tasks were to solve economic problems and work on “symphiliosis” (reconciliation) issues. The ELAS fighters were forbidden from becoming partisans. And those who insisted, because they could no longer stomach the unbearable terror committed by the Monarcho-fascists against them, were called “cowards”, “suspicious people” and “provocateurs”! (131)

There were many such criticisms and accusations... The actions the CPG took, which worked against the Greek people’s revolutionary struggle, stemmed precisely from the CPG’s established general line of “democratic co-operation” with England and “reconciliation” with its opponent the domestic bourgeoisie. Even though the entire CPG leadership voted to adopt this line, the CPG leaders later voted to condemn only Zahariadis for it.

Now let us follow some other events:

In August 1948, Zahariadis appointed himself head of the high DAG military council. He became the highest authority in the DAG leadership. By his own appointment Zahariadis was able to seize General Markos’s authority as Supreme Commander. Later, in November of the same year, Markos was completely removed from DAG and excluded from the Politburo and the CPG Central Committee. This, according to Zahariadis, was done because... Markos was an opportunist... However, according to the flow of events and the logic behind them, the real cause for Marko’s removal was something else...

Markos was of the opinion that DAG should remain a mobile partisan army with fast maneuverability. This was most suitable for a small rebel army, such as DAG, if it wanted to achieve success against a more numerous and modern armed adversary. DAG units were in constant motion and had the ability to hit and run and deliver sudden and unexpected blows. With unexpected rapid concentrations the partisans were able create a favourable ratio of forces capable of attacking an enemy ten times larger in number and even achieve victories. As is well-known, the British lost their ability to finance and support the war effort in Greece but rather

than surrendering to the partisans they asked the Americans to intervene. With an injection of new American funds and assistance the Greek government was able to create new military divisions in the winter of 1948 and spring of 1949, modernizing the Greek army and expanding it to over three hundred thousand well-armed soldiers. But the problem they faced was that DAG was mobile and inaccessible. Every attack was futile because DAG was present everywhere but was nowhere to be found...!

Then the most incredible thing happened. Markos was removed from DAG and his other positions in the Party... with barely saving his own head...!

Contrary to Zahariadis's wishes to maintain "friendly relations" with the English and to follow the line of "reconciliation" with the domestic bourgeoisie and with the government in Athens, which was set up by England, Markos allowed DAG to grow and, combined with the general strikes, demonstrations and street fighting in the various centres, kept fighting back against the establishment in Athens. If continued this would have inevitably led to the removal of the reactionaries from power. It was because of this that Zahariadis had Markos removed. Zahariadis, in his report during the CPG Central Committee's XII Plenum, had long explored the possibility and need for England's "friendly presence" in Greece, finding it to be necessary in order "to ensure that the Greek position and Greek borders in the north" were secure. An indispensable prerequisite for this was the reconciliation with the domestic bourgeoisie. DAG, born of intolerable terror, was actually not needed. On the contrary, its vigilant and numerical growth was very carefully monitored to make sure it never reached the critical point that would jeopardize England's presence in Greece. And yet, after all that, it turned out to be quite insufficient. Years passed, Greek governments in Athens fell one after another, and England itself was still forced to "protect Greece", even if it had to leave it in American hands. (132)

General Markos's removal from DAG was an obvious and inescapable Anglo-American need...

After removing Markos from DAG command, Zahariadis stripped DAG of its maneuverability and its ability to conduct partisan warfare, which was DAG's basic strength, and shackled DAG to the ground to take a frontal, stationary "defensive position".

This was the beginning of the end for DAG and for the uprising in Greece in general. Zahariadis decided to change the game. Now DAG's opponent knew at all times where DAG's forces were and always had the initiative and the ability to attack them and, of course, it did attack them at every opportunity. The government forces were ten times larger and armed with the most modern arms which included aviation, heavy artillery, and tanks. They were fighting against a lightly armed stationary army without aviation, heavy artillery or tanks.

The results of this are well-known: DAG was beaten to pulp...

Shortly after DAG suffered a catastrophic defeat, one of the opposing generals said: The good Greek God (meaning the bourgeoisie in Greece) wanted Zahariadis to win over Markos...! Otherwise, today Greece (the bourgeoisie in Greece) would not exist...!

And that is true... But the question here is: was there an agent of the "good God", i.e. the opponent in the CPG and DAG leaderships headed by Zahariadis...? We don't know for sure but we will let history and time take care of that. As for now, it is not that important for us to know. Something else, however, is far more important: it was important that the opponent was allowed to break DAG and finally defeat the people's revolution in Greece. There is no doubt that betrayal was involved... Why was Greece's position and Greece's northern border in danger? With help from NOF was Tito going to usurp Greek occupied Macedonia? (133) Why was there a general line established calling for the CPG's "reconciliation" with the domestic bourgeoisie, its domestic enemy? Why did the CPG want to co-operate with England, its enemy, to solve Greek problems? Why was the armed struggle excluded as the main means in the CPG's politics? And, was there really a need for an armed uprising? But for objective reasons, it was inevitable that DAG was going to happen but its ability to advance was hampered by lack of

progress, failure and decay... Why? These are not “minor” and forgivable mistakes that the CPG leadership made... These are calculated treasonous acts that took place on purpose...

And what about the Macedonians and their struggle for free national existence? The CPG was very afraid that Greece was going to lose Macedonia if the Macedonian people in Greece were allowed to develop their own free struggle. This fear was further compounded right after ASNOM and the creation of the Republic of Macedonia in the Yugoslav Federation.

The CPG leadership said nothing, not a word, about the rights of the Macedonian people in its XII plenum or during its VII Congress. It did not want to say anything because if it did it was afraid it would only intensify the Macedonian revolutionary struggle. The CPG leadership behaved as if there were no Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia while, at the same time, it fought fiercely against the Macedonian national liberation movement.

But as the Macedonian movement began to strengthen, the CPG was pressured to “say something” about the Macedonians and, in its usual anti-Macedonian spirit, it did... At its II plenum held in February, 1946, the CPG managed to squeeze the words: “The Slavic speaking population that lives in Greek Macedonia, inside the Greek state...” (134), and at the same time, with a relentless boldness, the CPG continued its hostile campaign against the Macedonian communists and other patriots, activists, and bearers of the Macedonian national ideal.

Failure forced the CPG to change tactics.

Failing to destroy NOF from the outside, the CPG decided to recognize it giving itself the opportunity to try to destroy it and the Macedonian liberation movement from the inside. The CPG did this by gradually infiltrating NOF and replacing its governing bodies with “Grkomani” (Supremacist Macedonians loyal to the Greek cause), and in various ways “removing” and “neutralizing” all active bearers of the Macedonian ideal, both inside NOF and outside.

But, as it turned out, they were unable to destroy the Macedonian ideal by simply “neutralizing” its active bearers because the entire Macedonian population was and remains to be the main bearer of the Macedonian ideal. BUT THAT WAS NOT ALL!

In other words, after General Markos and his deputy General Kikitsas were removed from DAG Supreme Command, and Zahariadis decided to change DAG’s strategy from acting as a rapidly mobile hit and run partisan army, to acting as a stationary army taking “defensive positions” at a front, the CPG implemented plans to mobilize every single person from the Macedonian villages in the liberated border zone. This total mobilization of all remaining women and girls (135), in fact, was the next CPG maneuver to destroy the entire Macedonian population... and all bearers of the Macedonian ideal. And how better than to make them a stationary target for the Greek army to pulverize... And that is exactly what happened!

To do this the CPG used unprecedented never before seen demagoguery. After stripping the villages of their children, who in the spring of 1948 were removed from the war zone and sent to various Eastern European countries, the CPG Central Committee, through its V Plenum and through the NOF Central Council II Plenum, ordered the formation of a separate Macedonian battalion and the creation of an all Macedonian communist party organization known as KOEM. During NOF’s II Congress it made an announcement letting the Macedonian people know that it had formed KOEM out of the actives in NOF and the Provisional Government of Greece. Now that the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia had their own Party, they in effect qualified to be a nation. This meant that the CPG had recognized the rights of the Macedonian people and with that recognition they had the right to self-determination with the right to secede from Greece (136). If true, this would have been huge for the Macedonian people. It would have meant that they could now unite all the Macedonian people in all the Macedonian regions in divided Macedonia IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A NATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC BALKAN PEOPLE’S FEDERATION (137). But it was yet another ruse... The CPG maneuver, however, worked:

The Macedonian villages around the border areas in Lerin, Kostur and Voden Regions were emptied of their people. The entire population found itself in DAG's ranks at the front. And, while the Macedonians were fighting to earn those "promised rights" that the CPG had promised them, they were exposed to total destruction. They were used as cannon fodder for the Greek army... This is what happened and this is how the CPG and its Greek "patriots" attempted to remove the Macedonian ideal out of the Macedonian people.

BUT THAT, APPARENTLY, WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR THE CPG. It also had to get rid of the very young and the very old Macedonians by creating the right conditions for them to flee across the border, along with remnants of the beaten down DAG units. Here the CPG got help from the government in Athens which showed great determination to burn down every Macedonian village in its path of destruction. In other words, by burning and destroying everything that was Macedonian in the villages, the Greek government opened up space to settle the Macedonian villages with Greek colonists from Epirus and the south of Greece.

After the Macedonian population was driven out of its homeland and forced to flee across the border to save itself, the CPG began to ferociously attack the Macedonian people, particularly the NOF leadership, for losing the war, i.e. for its own failures... In other words, the Macedonian organization which organized the Macedonian fighters and people, the core military power in DAG and the uprising in the north (138), according to the CPG was a "crypto-fascist" and "reactionary" organization, which supposedly tried "to turn the Macedonian liberation movement from a revolution into a counterrevolution" (139). NOF was immediately dissolved and its leaders were arrested and sentenced to death. Was this done to get rid of witnesses? Of people like me who would eventually find out what they were up to? What do you think?

After the CPG got rid of NOF it formed "Ilinden", another organization for the Macedonians. A letter, written by Zahariadis and read at the "Ilinden" founding congress by Vainas, was full of verbal "revolutionary consistency", i.e. of demagoguery, both in

relation to the Macedonian national revolutionary tradition, as well as in relation to national democratic rights and freedoms.

“Ilinden”, of course, was staffed with carefully selected Grkomani, or “Slavophone” Greeks loyal to the Greek cause. The CPG created “Ilinden” as an organ to struggle against the Macedonian national ideal. It was created to wipe out the Macedonian alphabet and replace it with an “alien” form. And it did exactly that. Instead of using the existing Macedonian alphabet it introduced another alphabet especially created for the “Slavophone” Greeks. The existing Macedonian literary language and Macedonian grammar were also rejected because they were allegedly imposed by “opportunists” for profit. They were then replaced with a mutilated version of the Macedonian language as was spoken by Kotsopoulos, Gousiopoulos and all the other “Opouloses”. On that basis a new Macedonian grammar and new Macedonian literary language were created and every effort was made to publish material that encompassed the familiar old and new literary values of the language.

This was part and parcel of the famous Greek-Bulgarian anti-Macedonian policy of not recognizing the existence of a single Macedonian nation, a single Macedonian language, and a single Macedonian culture. And this latest anti-Macedonian act, by the way, was perpetrated by the CPG in the socialist countries, a fair distance away from the Greek state.

Apparently it was not enough for the Greek “patriots” in the CPG leadership to have Macedonia divided by its territory and the Macedonian people’s economic life and development, they also wanted to have them divided by language and culture, with the sole aim of:

Making Macedonia and the Macedonian people’s disintegration permanent, and hence preserving and strengthening the Greek position and interests in the north...

Apparently it was not enough for the Greek “patriots” in the CPG leadership to have Macedonians in Greece. And, in the name of Greek “national interests” all those Macedonians who survived the

Greek-bourgeois genocide, that is, the Greek-bourgeois policy of denationalization and assimilation, could not be allowed not exist as Macedonians except as “Slavophone” Greeks, a complimentary addition to the Greek people. Otherwise they would have to be assimilated or gotten rid of by any other means possible to the last one...!

But, despite the CPG’s grand effort to achieve this with false promises and deceit, there was strong influence and positive developments in Macedonian affairs, which the CPG could not overcome with words alone. This time the Greek CPG leaders were forced to remove their communist mask, of being “friends of the Macedonian people”, and openly emerge as the self-appointed architects of the Macedonian people’s fate.

The ASNOM decision and the emergence of the Republic of Macedonia had a lot to do with bursting the CPG ulcer with regards to the “Macedonian disease” from which the CPG was suffering from. But, unfortunately, I must say that our historiography has taken the wrong track in relation to this...

I received the following letter from MANU in regards to this:

MACEDONIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Number 12-6/171-74
10. II 1975
SKOPJE

TO PAVLE RAKOVSKI
Skopje, Resenska 38/1-4

The organizing committee of the symposium held in October 1974, dedicated to ASNOM, reviewed your report submitted to the Academy on December 5, 1974.

Because your report was submitted after the Symposium was held and was not part of the program, the organizing committee, in accordance with its rules, cannot publish it in the journal as part of the proceedings.

Please contact the Institute of National History (INI) or some other interested authority.

BOARD PRESIDENT
Academic Mihailo Apostolski

INI did not respond at all...! They responded by being silent...

5) As I pointed out earlier, the affairs between those who left the movement in Greek occupied Macedonia and fled to the Republic of Macedonia and those who remained home to fight, were not sorted out even after three decades had passed, even though all those people were communists. I addressed a letter regarding this to the president of the CKM Central Committee.

Yes, I was isolated, ignored and written off, but I could no longer keep silent. Here are the contents of that letter:

Comrade President,

The accompanying text referring to the works “Aegean Storms” published by INI in Skopje is not for publication. It is for your information and to point out a couple of unpleasant facts:

a) Surely you must know what is happening amongst our people – among the protagonists of the extraordinary revolutionary effort of our people in the Greek (occupied) part of Macedonia, who fought in the period from 1941 to 1949.

Surely you must have known and have found it strange that the mutual relations between the various former leaders of the struggle in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia are not good? Is it a normal phenomenon to see people quarrel and disagree over events that took place so many years ago? This has been happening everywhere with all the leaders of the movement without exception. There is always a breakthrough and reconciliation. But the strange thing about these people, the leadership from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, is that, thirty years later there is bad blood between them, even though all these people are communists. Why is the Party absent in all this...?

b) Unfortunately all of this is inevitably reflected in our historiography of that period. Bias, prejudice, sympathy, antipathy... towards one person or another is increasingly widespread in our historiography. While people are criticized and the history of events is being altered, some people remain silent, while others... well, they invent things... You will find evidence of this in the attached text. This, of course, can be anything except for history. I would like to inform you that the Institute for National History (INI) in Skopje, has been unknowingly or perhaps knowingly, publishing these kinds of works. So, in this case too, the Party seems to be absent. Why...?

Sorry. I could no longer keep silent...

Skopje, April 19, 1976
With much respect,
Pavle Rakovski
Retired

Stamped:

CENTRAL COMMITTEE UNION OF COMMUNISTS IN
MACEDONIA

Received on 19. IV 1976.

Signature: Unreadable

6) I sent the following text to the editorial board of "Nova Makedonija" under the title "IT'S MORE THAN NECESSARY... IT'S NICE...!"

There was an article written by Nikola Shalvarinov and Sotir Andonovski, published on Saturday February 19, 1983, which refers to events in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia that took place during the national liberation war against the fascist occupation. The article was entitled "A HEATED DEBATE AT THE POZDIVISHTA MEETING". In the same Saturday issue you also published a letter sent to you by Angel Radev, which also refers to events in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia that took place

during the national liberation war against the fascist occupation. The letter was entitled “THE YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO BECOME FAMILIAR”.

Both of these articles were published as part of a series of articles dealing with the “struggle of the Macedonian People in the Aegean (Greek occupied) Part of Macedonia”. They were also part of the cultural and educational plan prepared by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski, which were recently published in “NOVA MAKEDONIJA”.

In addition to the above, there were also other articles, written by Tashko Mamurovski and Dr. Risto Kiriazovski, published in the latest issues of the renowned history magazines “GLASNIK” and “ISTORIA” which also relate to the history of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and the CPG and Greek attitude towards it. Glasnik has also published a significant part of Lazar Lazarov’s contribution under the title “REGARDING THE QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION OF THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL RIGHTS IN AEGEAN AND PIRIN MACEDONIA RAISED AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE IN 1946”.

In more recent times we have been witness to the publishing of several interesting books such as “THE GREEK COLONIZATION OF AEGEAN MACEDONIA (1912-1940)” by MA Stojan Kiselinovski, “DOCUMENTS ABOUT THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE’S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL RIGHTS” in two volumes, published by the University of Skopje, “DOCUMENTS ON CPG POLICIES TOWARDS THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION (1918-1974)”, published by the Macedonian Archives, etc.

It is with great pleasure that we can conclude that the ice has been broken by the SKM VIII Congress and that the river of information about Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and the struggles of the Macedonian people outside the territory of the Republic of Macedonia has started to flow. It is a joyous event that gives us hope that the awkward situation we have been in will be overcome when:

a) Those in Zagreb, who prepare the encyclopedias, stop obscuring the information on Greek occupied and Bulgarian occupied (Aegean and Pirin) Macedonia. Unfortunately what has already been published with remain on library shelves as long as those books last, shaping the “knowledge” of many generations to come. (Taken from Boris Nonevski’s famous protests.)

b) The children in Macedonia begin to learn about our struggle in Greek occupied Macedonia. Based on what we found out in one of the high schools here in Skopje, it appears that students are not taught anything about our struggle. The students in this particular high school, and it would appear in all our schools, know nothing about the existence of the Macedonian struggle in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. If this continues it will mean that there is political initiative to cause diversion, i.e. to conceal the truth.

Obviously, this river of information about the Macedonians in Greek occupied and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia must run continuously and nonstop. It’s more than necessary... it’s nice...!

Let us go back to the above-mentioned articles published in “NOVA MAKEDONIJA” (to join them to the river of information on Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia).

Nikola Shalvarinov and Sotir Andonovski, among other things, wrote the following: “We would like to take this opportunity to present you with this article only as a motive to point out that even when facts are presented, without being interpreted in relation to the then situations and conflicts, the ignorant reader could get the wrong idea about the whole truth...” This was also true when course books for Macedonian teachers and primers and workbooks for children were prepared (in Greek occupied Macedonia). On one occasion, “because Cyrillic letters were not available, the text was written on a matrix with plain pencil and then the letters were poked with a needle. One hundred and fifty copied of the primer were made this way.”

Shalvarinov and Andonovski then asked:

“Why did the committee spend so much effort to make Cyrillic letters when the Macedonian people in Vardar (Republic of) Macedonia could have given them valuable help if they had asked for it...? Was it wrong to ask for cooperation from free Macedonia for such a significant national endeavour...?”

The Greek leaders from the CPG, EAM and ELAS, unfortunately, did not do that, neither did they allow the Macedonian people themselves to ask for help. All this was pointed out by Shalvarinov and Andonovski - the teaching courses, the Macedonian schools, the books... all the things that took place at a time when the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia could have used help from the Macedonian people in the Republic of Macedonia in order to realize their Macedonian national rights. But everything, even the toughest things, had to be done the hard way. The Greeks only allowed these things to take place, not to help them, but to deceive the Macedonians...

However, the true aim of the Greek leaders would only become clear later when the Macedonian people found themselves in East European countries. There the Greeks would persistently try to impose another alphabet, grammar and literary language on them, different from their own, especially created for the “Slavophone” Greeks. And that is exactly what happened...

This attempt was made by the CPG and in the name of the CPG, i.e. split the Macedonian people linguistically and culturally to prove to the world that the Macedonians in Greece were a different people than those across the border living in the Republic of Macedonia. It was not enough that the Macedonian people were split by territory, politically and economically, achieved by the neighbouring monarchies through the Balkan wars, and now they had to be split culturally and linguistically. What this means, I think, is very clear and does not need any further comment.

With a certain tone of protest, well-justified in my opinion, Shalvarinov and Andonovski highlighted certain practices where information could be distorted. Most recently this information was disseminated to the Yugoslav public through newspapers, books and magazines. One such example was an article written about Markos

published in “Duga” which had distortions about many things. It was symptomatic, for example, for journalist Kliakich (Markos’s biographer), in a journalistic manner, to completely and unconsciously sensationalize things that took place in the Greek and Macedonian national liberation movements in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. His writing style, however, introduced anxiety in Macedonia and especially in the Macedonian people from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia...

It was no sin, of course, for journalist Kliakich to write things... in a journalistic way. What came out of all this is that Kliakich may have been altogether “misinformed”... But, irrespective of that, we must recognize who were and who were not our friends. Undoubtedly, our friends were those Greeks who sympathized with the Macedonian national liberation movement. The Greek CPG and ELAS official who allowed the formation of our Macedonian ELAS Lerin-Kostur Battalion on August 2, 1944, on ILINDEN, was undoubtedly our friend. The Greek “patriots”, who sharply criticized him for “forming an entire battalion when his orders were to form a single unit”, were not our friends!

Those who declared that this battalion was a threat to the Greek state and ordered its transfer to the Greek south, in other words to face disaster (and indeed it was attacked but without success), were not our friends.

Those who ordered a “total destruction” of the Macedonian partisans in ELAS, especially in Lerin, Kostur, and Voden Regions, were not our friends.

Those who spread and deployed the elite ELAS divisions here and there in Macedonia along the northern border in order to prevent a possible communist invasion from the north, in other words the same divisions that could have prevented the English troops from invading Greece, are not our friends.

Those who ordered the dissolution of the Macedonian national anti-fascist organizations MAO (Macedonian anti-fascist organization) in Voden and SNOF (Slavo-Macedonian People’s Liberation Front) in

Kostur and Lerin Regions, only because they grew rapidly and turned into dynamic revolutionary organizations, are not our friends.

Those who, after “unity” was established in November 1946, ordered the NOF Macedonian battalions to go to southern Greece and fight there, leaving only the Greek DAG units to fight in Macedonia (Markos), were not our friends.

Those who in southern Greece liquidated the Macedonian battalions, as an organized military force, were not our friends.

Note: the Macedonian NOF battalions could not be liquidated in Macedonia, so to make their liquidation easier, the Greeks sent them to southern Greece. There the Macedonian commanders were removed and replaced with Greek commanders. Of course, there were protests and resistance, but those who protested were heavily penalized. One of those protesters was shot to death. He was a personal friend of mine from the village Tsakoni, Meglen Region. And besides being killed, there was a NOF directive for him to be disciplined at DAG command.

Those who proclaimed NOF to be a “traitorous, disloyal and counter-revolutionary” organization, and persecuted and harassed the Macedonian activists, Macedonian fighters and Macedonian people in general, were not our friends.

Those who forced the Macedonian people, after being exiled from their homeland, to declare themselves “Slavophone” Greeks with Greek names, to the host country authorities, were not our friends.

Those self-appointed architects of the Macedonian people’s destiny, who were prepared to deny the Macedonian people their Macedonian culture by forbidding them to use their own oral and written Macedonian language and imposing on them some forged concoction created by the “Opouloses” suitable to Greek taste, were not our friends.

The Greek “patriots” in the CPG leadership were not our friends.

Those who have taken the lives of the many Macedonians who were at the forefront of the Macedonian national liberation movement, either openly murdered or executed by hidden snipers, were not our friends. Their numbers were no less than the Palestinians killed by the Jews. Yesterday a statement made by Arafat was delivered on television. Arafat, among other things, said that sooner or later the Palestinians will win and will have their own state with Jerusalem as their capital. It is impossible to even imagine Palestinians in their own capital welcoming and honouring Sharon, a Jew. It would look monstrous. But this, unfortunately, is happening to us here and now. Many of the famous Greek “patriots” who were our most dangerous enemies and enemies of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia, are allowed to come here, and are here in the Republic of Macedonia, staying with us for long periods of time. On top of that we welcome them with open arms, accept them and honour them as our friends... Where is our dignity, our Macedonian pride and principles...? People here say “it is just politics”. But how can we shake the hand of someone who wants to destroy us? How can we welcome a person into our home who claims that we Macedonians don’t exist? Excuse me but this is not just politics...

Shalvarinov and Andonovski are quite right when they say that information peddled as the “truth” to the Yugoslav public (with Marko’s book and the article published in “Duga”) brings disorder to Macedonia and especially to Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia.

At this point I would like to point out that not all things were right in the articles written by some of these authors. Namely, they are not right to treat the suffering of people as simply “journalistic” stories, particularly those people from Greek occupied Macedonia who were falsely accused of being “Tito’s agents” and sent to prison to serve severe prison sentences. From my personal experience, I can assure them that the two years and eight months I spent in isolation, in a square box in solitary confinement, and then the time I spent in forced labour camps under guard at the Beria-Stalin camps was a bitter and terrible experience, and must not be taken lightly. It is very difficult to talk about it and emotionally draining...

Now let us move on to another article that appeared in the same Saturday edition in “NOVA MAKEDONIJA”. This was a letter written by Comrade Angel Radev in which, with a tone of protest, he talks about “missing information” in the series of articles written by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski. Kiriazovski has talked about the western part of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, about places like Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions but has said nothing about the eastern part, about places like Drama, Seres, Kavala, Kukush, etc...

And rightly so, Comrade Radev should be asking a historian why there is no information on the eastern region and what historians are doing to come up with such information. He adds that extensive articles should be written “about the Macedonian people’s lives, the work they did and action they took before, during and after the war. These articles should contain a lot more information, especially about the eastern part of Greek occupied Macedonia, than simply a cultural and educational plan...”

The history of the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, as well as other parts of Macedonia, writes Comrade Radev, is full of long-term torment, humiliation and plundering from the various occupiers... More about this should be written in our history books in order to preserve it for our future generations especially for those in Greek occupied Macedonia who have been completely isolated by the Greek state!

That’s what Comrade Radev is asking for.

Obviously, a normal Macedonian can’t think and feel differently. It is a joint request by all Macedonian people: Our youth must also be acquainted with the Macedonian people’s struggle outside of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia or Yugoslavia. We all say: It’s more than just necessary...!

Pavle Rakovski
Resenska 6/1-4, Skopje

TO THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL HISTORY - SKOPJE

Comrade Director,

Following Todor Simovski's suggestion, I prepared some material for "GLASNIK", two booklets to be exact. The titles were "The CPG and the Macedonians", 1-a, and "The CPG and the Macedonians during the national liberation war" 2-a.

I then handed the booklets to Dusko Simonovski for review. The "Glasnik" editorial board examined them but only accepted one. Included among the reviewers were Dr. Vlado Ivanovski and Todor Simovski. A while later I was called into INI and introduced to the reviews. We made some corrections to the booklet and gave it a new title "Some opinions around the CPG's policy on the Macedonian national question during the Second World War and the Greek Civil War". Even with this "long title" the booklet remains to be published.

It has been months. Recently the "Glasnik" editorial board informed me that it made a decision to publish it. Yesterday, December 18th, I went to see Dusko Simonovski. He only gave me back the second booklet, the one that was rejected. He told me the first one was gone. That was one thing. The other and more important thing is that the text of the second booklet, page by page was removed from the cover and then placed back and tied in the cover... upside down.

Comrade Director

Something like this also happened to me another time. Following Todor Simovski's suggestion, I prepared a brochure entitled "The Macedonian Revolutionary Press in Aegean Macedonia". In my day, I was a member of the Secretariat, i.e. of the NOF Central Council presidency, responsible for the affairs of the ideological front. I organized and managed the publication of NOF's central bodies the newspaper "NEPOKOREN", the magazine "NOVA MAKEDONKA", and the newspaper "BILTEN", as well as leaflets, brochures and the like.

After examining it, Simovski said the brochure looked very interesting and, without asking me, gave it to his colleague Risto Kiriazovski. I did not agree with that and I immediately went to see Kiriazovski and asked him to give it back to me. He told me he did

not have it with him and must have left it at home. He then asked me to come back the next day. To make a long story short, he gave it back to me two months later. I was told that there was no place for it to be published in "GLASNIK". A while later, however, a brochure entitled "The Macedonian Revolutionary Press in Aegean Macedonia" by Risto Kiriazovski, appeared...

Specifically, please:

- a) Find out - why the once accepted material was rejected.
- b) Find out - which one of your people made copies without my authorization.
- c) Find my booklets and return them to me...

I remain confident that you will not allow this to diminish the reputation of our Institute for National History...

Skopje, Dec. 19 1975
With respect
Pavle Rakovski
Resenska 6/1-4, Skopje

Stamped:

INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL HISTORY
Received: 19. 12. 72.
Org. Unit number
03819

Only one booklet was returned. They remained silent on the rest of the material...

THE FOLLOWING TEXT, ALONG WITH A PROTEST LETTER,
WAS SUBMITTED TO THE SKM CENTRAL COMMITTEE:

UNACCEPTABLE

(Critical Remarks)

Not too long ago, the Institute of National History (INI) in Skopje published a well-formed book under the title “Aegean Storms”, in which it was declared that former members of the Communist Party Aegean Macedonia (KOEM) leadership, i.e. the People’s Liberation Front (NOF) in the Aegean part of Macedonia, were traitors who worked against the interests of the Macedonian people.

Some time later, the author of this work submitted a 30 page article to the Directorate of INI. By looking at already published original documents from that time, there is undeniably and clearly something not right with this article. It is an undeniable fact that the author of the book “Aegean Storms” has invented many of the things he claimed. His claims are based on superficial logic that miss the truth, cast mud on others, and bury the Macedonian KOEM-NOF leaders politically. Moreover, he alluded to the fact and made claims that the KOEM-NOF leaders be declared traitors, as they were declared by their opponents and then sentenced to long jail terms. On top of that he has insulted the leaders by asking that the following phrase be placed on their tombstones:

“Treachery is loved by everyone, and traitors are loved by no one...” (page 406).

It is always a joyous event to see a new book about the liberation struggle of our people in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia come out. It deservingly honours our people’s huge human and material sacrifices. In doing so, it is understandable that sometimes the author’s weaknesses appear in that book, as was the case with the book “Aegean Storms”. But what is disappointing and difficult to understand is why would the publisher not want to remove or correct these proven, discovered injustices and untruths? Specifically, here’s what happened. Corrections to the above-mentioned text were made and submitted to the directorate of INI. After the corrections were examined and presumably accepted, they asked that they be left at their disposal, which was done. Unfortunately they did not publish any of the material. Almost two years have passed since the corrections were submitted and nothing has been done.

That is why I wrote this letter and here is my reason:

Lidia Simovska's book "Macedonian periodical journalism in Aegean Macedonia during the national liberation war and the Greek Civil War, 1941-1949", is expected to be published soon. On December 26, 1977, Radio Skopje did a broadcast with one part of the book where Simovska herself read a dozen pages, during the "Lights of the Past" program. It should be pointed out that this was a wonderful thing, especially since it was part of her dissertation. In her work, while she quoted information from original documents, newspapers, magazines, etc., she also added her own brief comments which created a unique, beautiful and rich image of the full heroic and self-sacrificing liberation struggle of our people from this part of Macedonia in the mentioned period.

However, according to the subject matter, this new book also follows the same line of the book "Aegean Storms" claiming that the leading KOEM-NOF Macedonian activists in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia were traitors.

Our wide democracy is great here especially with freedom of speech. But in this case, that freedom is being abused. Case and point: While the KOEM-NOF leaders, by Decree from Josip Broz Tito, President of the SFRY, were awarded high praise for their work in the battlefield, there are people here who have publicly accused them of being traitors for doing the same work.

Let us briefly look at how this is done, or more correctly how Lidia has tried to do this in her otherwise significant work. On page 59 of her manuscript (which was made available to me) Lidia wrote:

"With the newly formed NOF leadership (at the NOF Central Council I Plenum on August 8, 1948) made up predominantly of so-called Grkomani (Macedonians loyal to Greece), who exclusively now and before served the Greek cause and the CPG on the one hand, and by applying strong pressure and the threat of death on the remaining NOF staff and on the editorial board of "Nepokoren", on the other, Zahariadis was able to succeed in carrying out his anti-Macedonian policy in a practical way. It (NOF) has increasingly popularized the CPG, its leadership and itself, while concealing its true motives, because it needed to further mobilize Macedonian

fighters with its hypocritical views and slogans about the Macedonian national struggle, and by claiming that: “The CPG is a protector of the Macedonian people in Greece”.

And immediately after that, Lidia informs the reader that:

“This came to the fore in the first of its kind article written by Pavle Rakovski, editor of ‘Nepokoren’, known until then as a supporter of full rights for the Macedonian people. In the article entitled ‘The Macedonian National Liberation Movement expresses its real needs for the development of the Macedonian people’, he struggles to express NOF’s political line in a correct sense. At the beginning of the article he wrote: ‘The Macedonian National Liberation Movement is a reality...’ Organizationally this was formed in NOF: His political goals have become NOF’s political program...”

Further down in his presentation he becomes confused because, due to the newly emerged situation and the control over him, he is unable to bring to the end his earlier known attitudes which were NOF’s views...” (page 59.)

Meaning, because of this “first of its kind article” of Rakovski’s, in which he is “confused”, and as Lidia puts it, Zahariadis’s anti-Macedonian practical line “came to the fore”, one can conclude that Rakovski too is anti-Macedonian.

This is a very important conclusion, especially since it refers to the activities of a former NOF leader, and it seems Lidia was the first to publicly formulate it. This is perhaps believable to readers who are not familiar with the events of the struggle and pay no attention to details. There is, however, something missing in this conclusion, namely, Lidia has not cited or quoted a single word from this article or from any other of Rakovski’s articles, to substantiate her conclusion. She should have cited or quoted at least something, a phrase or two about what was ambiguous, confusing or anti-Macedonian. Therefore this kind of conclusion is without foundation and will remain floating in the air, as arbitrary and incorrect...

On page 60 Lidia wrote:

“From now on ‘NEPOKOREN’ will carry loud titles ‘FOR THE GREAT GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH LURKS OVER THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE LIKE IT IS THEIR PROTECTOR AND SAVIOUR.’....

IN THAT SPIRIT, on December 10, 1948, under number 17, NEPOKOREN carried the following articles entitled:

‘THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE (CPG) - ORGANIZER, GIVER AND LEADER OF THE PEOPLE’S STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL AND NATIONAL FREEDOM’.

‘CPG – INITIATOR OF SOCIAL AND NATIONAL FREEDOM’, ‘NIKOS ZAHARIADIS’, ‘CPG – PROTECTOR OF THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE IN GREECE’, ‘CPG ASSISTING OUR PEOPLE’, ‘CPG POINTING TO THE ROAD OF SALVATION’, ‘CPG POLICY - PRINCIPLED POLITICS’ ...”

I decided to capitalize the above titles because they do not correspond to the truth. Namely, no such alleged titles of any such “articles” appeared in the December 10, 1948 issue of “Nepokoren”. All this is invented and untrue. The only article about the CPG that I (Rakovski) wrote was the article about the CPG’s 30th anniversary jubilee - 30 years since the CPG’s inception. It would appear that the title of this article and the subtitles in the text were consciously altered to look like “titles of many articles”. Unfortunately by doing this and by not taking care to make the appropriate corrections, and necessary adjustments, Lidia damaged her own reputation and principles. In other words she made claims about things that do not exist...

But in order for Lidia to show how things were done “in that spirit”, i.e. in the anti-Macedonian spirit, she used quotes from another of Rakovski’s articles. This is what she wrote:

“The Macedonian people, writes Rakovski, enjoy full social, political and national equality with the Greek people in the free territories. He is fighting organized in these people’s national organizations. Our political organizations NOF and AFZH are already renowned and have Macedonian newspapers and magazines.

NEPOKOREN – is an organ of NOF, NOVA MAKEDONKA – a magazine, is an organ of AFZH and BILTEN – is a NOF newspaper. All these are printed by the thousands in the same printing house where the Greek newspapers are printed...” (page 60.)

This was written and published in December 1948.

As is well-known, Zahariadis refused to accept the Macedonian reality - the emergence and existence of the People’s Republic of Macedonia as a nation state of the Macedonian people in the Yugoslav composition and - the emergence and existence of a strong Macedonian Liberation Movement (NOF) here, in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia. This was made obvious during the CPG Central Committee II Plenum, held in February 1946, during which Zahariadis pronounced and treated the Macedonian people like they were some kind of nationally incomplete “Slavophone population” and like some “Slavophone Macedonians who lived in Greek Macedonia on the territory of the Greek state”.

After this Plenum, all previous CPG hostilities against NOF looked like a picnic. The new hostilities were more like a real war against the Macedonian national ideal, that is, against the active bearers of the Macedonian national ideal. In Siantos’s time, during the national liberation war against the fascist occupation, the “Slavophone Macedonians” (this is what they were first called during the CPG Central Committee VIII Plenum resolution in February 1942) were treated like “Slavophone Greeks”. Zahariadis, however, was a bit more cautious and, without using such expressions, continued to use the same kind of anti-Macedonian policy. Namely, he continued Siantos’s hostilities with much less intensity.

But his open frontal struggle proved to be unsuccessful. Instead of weakening it, he amplified NOF. Eventually Zahariadis was forced to use different tactics. As is well-known, with a declarative acknowledgment of NOF, he succeeded in getting his hands on it and on its military formations - the NOF Macedonian battalions (November 21, 1946).

On top of the well-known heavy political crimes perpetrated against the Macedonian people, the CPG began to eliminate the more

important and active bearers of the Macedonian national ideal. More precisely:

It ordered the Macedonian battalions to withdraw to the southern part of Greece and, after their commanders were replaced by Greeks, ordered their destruction.

It then ordered the physical liquidation of many individuals, mostly prominent Macedonian activists like Dzhodzho, Shamardanov, Koroveshovski, Tanurov, Kalkov, etc.

At the same time it dissolved and disbanded the NOF central agitation and propaganda department. Rakovski and the other members were individually inducted into DAG's ranks as simple fighters and sent to join the various DAG units in the front.

The Macedonian teachers' school and seminars were abolished.

The NOF cultural and art groups were dissolved.

The Macedonian national brass band was also disbanded and its leader, folk musician Timo, was later killed. This was a remarkable band whose Macedonian folk melody echoed in the mountains wherever it played.

But the worst thing the CPG did in all this was that it beheaded NOF of its founding leadership. Zahariadis and the CPG leaders, through the NOF I Congress (January 1948) and through the NOF Central Council I Plenum (August 1948), prepared and executed the removal of the NOF leadership, that is, they "neutralized" three out of the initial five NOF founding members - Mitrevski, Keramidzhiev, and Rakovski. The other two Dzhodzho and Koroveshovski were killed. The NOF founding leadership was replaced with a "new leadership" (the tandem Kotsopoulos-Koitsis), and NOF gradually began to turn into an anti-Macedonian organization. In other words, it began to lose its Macedonian national spirit, its Macedonian national colours, and to reorient itself towards Athens and, in the spirit of the Greek cause, promote the idea that "we are part of Greece... we are part of the Greek people..."

A tense, electrified and dangerous situation began to develop that was followed by a wave of Macedonians deserting DAG's ranks. Rakovski was brought back from the army followed by Mitrevski and, after the NOF Central Council II plenum was held, at Zahariadis's request, they were both reinstated in the NOF leadership. By then Keramidzhiev had left Greece and gone to seek medical treatment in the Republic of Macedonia. He remained and worked in Skopje. NOF regional activists and leaders had also fled the war and withdrawn to the Republic of Macedonia...

It was under these conditions, i.e. Zahariadis's chauvinistic anti-Macedonian politics, that Rakovski was returned from the army in order to help consolidate the "new NOF leadership". And, according to "Nepokoren", to consolidate NOF-AFZH, the central organs, as a Macedonian people's organization... as a distinct people, as a self-serving people, as a non-Greek nation that enjoys (should enjoy) full equality with the Greek people who are struggling (should be struggling) organized in their own Macedonian national organizations as they are (must be). NOF and AFZH have (should have) their own Macedonian (and not Greek) newspapers and magazines...

Because of this Rakovski was later suspended and sent to DAG as an ordinary fighter and dispatched to the Gramos front (Arapades Sector) where he fought and was later arrested and jailed for being a dangerous Macedonian "nationalist"...

This, in its essence, is what happened...

But then we have people like Lidia who would not hesitate to use this information in any way possible to achieve their objectives. Their intentions are quite clear. They want Rakovski to look like a person who popularized the CPG and as a result of that to label him as anti-Macedonian...

But Lidia's witch-hunt did not end with Rakovski. She had reached similar conclusions about NOF itself. The NOF leadership and the "Nepokoren" editorial board were also negatively presented in her writing. This is what Lidia wrote about them:

“Gradually they lost their independence and turned into tools and apologists for Zahariadis and for CPG policies...” (p. 57.)

This is how our historiography, whose main bearers are the INI researchers, who work on the “historical material and problems” that have to do with Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, treat our KOEM-NOF leaders and our people who fought in that struggle in general. Sadly they are seen as nothing more than traitors...

Let us now have a look at some things more closely, basic moments in history that should be analyzed and discussed, but instead our main bearers have chosen to hide them by being silent...

1) It was believed that the Greek Communist Movement and the CPG, in principle, were not and could not be enemies of the Macedonian people. This was because CPG members and cadres were persecuted, arrested, sentenced, and sent to prison because they publicly defended the rights of the Macedonian people in the Greek state. The most famous of these trials was the one in Solun, where fifteen Greek CPG activists were convicted and sentenced to a total of eighty (80) years of hard labour.

This, of course, was not and could not be “anti-Macedonian politics” - to tell the Macedonian people about this and propagate solidarity between the two nations...

2) It is a historical fact that exponents of the domestic bourgeoisie and the international anti-communist movement took over the CPG leadership. Included among them were Stavridis, Puliopoulos, Maximos, Sargogolos, etc., then Siantos, followed by Zahariadis. They were eventually exposed, some completely, some partially, and expelled from the party. But not before they damaged the general communist movement and the people’s revolution in Greece. Because of them the people’s interests, rights and freedom suffered, not only the interests of the Macedonian but also those of the Greek people. The abnormal number of crisis situations inside the CPG, the break in its ranks, open treachery, the devastating defeats of the people’s revolution in 1936, 1944, 1949... they are all indication of this.

Naturally they keep silent because they are not willing and will not blame the communist movement and the CPG for this...

3) The Macedonian liberation movement, in all its phases (such as MAO, SOF, SNOF, TOMO, NOF, KOEM) never stopped, not even for a moment, to express to the Macedonian people the needs for change and development. By their very existence, they highlighted the Macedonian national question in front of the Greek and world public (asking for a practical solution), affirming the struggle and legitimate rights of the Macedonian people in the Greek state.

And this is how it was...

4) The Macedonian national liberation movement was a subject of controversy, discussion, and cooperation between the CPM (CPY) and the CPG. Tempo was sent to Greece and Abas to Solun. There were also other contacts made over time. The various stages of the Macedonian liberation movement did not occur spontaneously. They were reflections in the course of activities carried out by the CPG and the CPM/CPY. After NOF was formed in Skopje it worked for a year and a half under the influence, assistance, and leadership of the CPM/CPY, and not “independently”. Similarly NOF was transferred from CPM/CPY hands to the hands of the CPG under a CPM/CPY directive. This is how it happened. NOF was informed of this transfer in the CPM Central Committee building in which I had the privilege to express my opinion and to inform everyone present that “Zahariadis was not honest in his convictions”. Namely, I was certain that he would remove the NOF leadership and replace it with his own people – Grkomani (Macedonian supremacists loyal to the Greek cause). What, then? How are we to act under these conditions...?

The answer to that was: “Whatever happens don’t return to us... You will be disciplined. You will go as simple fighters wherever they send you...”

The Macedonian communists, leaders and members of NOF, accepted their role and generally led the Macedonian national

liberation movement, but it was always done under the leadership of the CPG or the CPM/CPY.

This is exactly how it was and it would be misinformation and mere demagogy to write and speak about any sort of “independence” NOF had and that it lost it when it was handed over to the CPG leadership...

5) After NOF was handed over to the CPG on November 21, 1946, it was completely cut off and isolated from the CPM/CPY. “Nepokoren” had no opportunity to receive or publish information about life and progress in the People’s Republic of Macedonia and in Yugoslavia. But there was more to it than that. Before “unity” was established, anti-Macedonian acts had dramatically escalated and, as I mentioned earlier, they had led to severe political crimes perpetrated against the Macedonian people. Then it became clear to us that “there was no return for us no matter what happened”, which in fact meant “don’t wait for support from the CPM/CPY, no matter what happens...” Obviously, by doing this the CPM/CPY, in fact, not only surrendered NOF to Zahariadis, but literally destroyed all bridges, preventing any and all CPM/CPY interventions in support of NOF.

Just because the CPM/CPY remained silent on the issue, did not mean that it approved of Zahariadis’s anti-Macedonian-anti-Yugoslav policy. But, regardless of that, it was hard for the Macedonian communists and NOF leaders not to feel abandoned. It was hard for them to have sentimental views of things given the harsh reality they were under...

6) Zahariadis founded KOEM on March 27, 1949, under which he collected all Macedonian military and political cadres. Less than three months later, on June 20, 1949, he called a KOEM meeting. He attended the meeting in person during which he outlined, in the form of a party document, his famous resolution against the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and against Tito, that is, against the CPM and the political leadership of the People’s Republic of Macedonia. He then demanded that it be adopted and individually signed by everyone.

The CPG itself, however, never did publish, under its own name, such a document supporting the Informburo and condemning the CPY. The small regional KOEM organization, however, was in no position to act on behalf of the CPG in this matter so why ask it to do this? It is likely that there was another purpose for this. According to logic and the actual facts, it was a provocation, a trap set to trap:

a) The Macedonian military and political cadres.

If the KOEM leaders were to refuse to sign the document, because of sympathies for the CPM/CPY, then they would come into collision with the CPG. Of course they could not have taken into account, and perhaps did not even know about the Tito-Stalin collision. A collision between KOEM and the CPG would certainly cause cleavage and confrontation within the CPG and DAG leaderships. This would inevitably lead to the disintegration of DAG units which would be catastrophic for DAG. Then Zahariadis could blame KOEM as being the main and public triggers for the defeat of the people's revolution and for the downfall of the Macedonian liberation movement. As an integral part, the KOEM leadership would then be labeled traitorous to both the Greek and the Macedonian people. And that, of course, would be enough to earn it its liquidation.

If, on the other hand, the KOEM leaders decided to sign the document against the CPY/CPM and against the leadership of the People's Republic of Macedonia, they would discredit themselves in the eyes of the "Skopje leaders" and in the eyes of the CPY. And that, it seems, was most important and most acceptable to Zahariadis...

b) This was also a provocation and a trap against the "Skopje leaders" and against the CPY.

Namely, if the KOEM leaders signed the document (and that's what happened) against the CPM/CPY and against the People's Republic of Macedonia's leadership then, perhaps in response (this is what Zahariadis was certainly hoping for), the "Skopje leaders" and the CPY would declare the KOEM leaders traitors and would

anathematize them. That, of course, would be a brilliant move on Zahariadis's part. By doing so the "Skopje leaders" and the CPY would not only remove themselves from the game but would abandon the so-called "Slavophones" altogether for at least one generation. Then, led by enthusiastic anti-Macedonian leaders, these "Slavophones" would have nowhere to turn except to remain as an internal Greek phenomenon - as a "Slavophone" speaking part of the Greek people...

After everyone signed Zahariadis said:

How many of them are honest...?

One month passed. A second and a third month passed... and no anathema from Skopje. Then, on October 3, 1949, in a dangerous and insincere tone of voice, Zahariadis publicly proclaimed them traitors and "agents of the CPY and Tito", who allegedly worked to undermine the CPG and DAG. He then accused them of working against the Greek and Macedonian people's common struggle. This was done in the spirit of Zahariadis's famous fabrication of the "attack from behind".

Zahariadis even popularized the slogan "Death to the Traitors!"

However, because of Beria's interest in these "CPY and Tito agents" they were plucked from Zahariadis's hands, because Zahariadis would have liquidated them out of anger and sent them away to the USSR. In Moscow, ten of these Macedonians received jail terms for a total of ninety-six (96) years of hard labour. Although not as planned, Zahariadis did get rid of them.

Furthermore, Zahariadis dissolved NOF and replaced it with a new organization tailor-made for the "Slavophones" and staffed it with his choice of Macedonian Janissary's, "Slavophone Greeks". Fearing a dangerous reaction from the Macedonian masses and from the Macedonian fighters, he named it "Ilinden" as a preventive measure. And while using the name "Ilinden" he tried to kill the spirit of Ilinden. Namely, the Macedonian alphabet was thrown out and a new alphabet was hastily created based on the Russian alphabet. The Macedonian literary language and Macedonian

grammar were also removed from use. The spoken language was replaced with a crippled Macedonian language based on the one spoken by Kotsopoulos, Koichis and others. A new grammar and a new literary language were then compiled especially for the “Slavophones”. The “Ilinden” publishing department was tasked with promoting all the works, publishing new school textbooks and upholding the literary values of this new so-called literary language.

So now, on top of having the Macedonian territories divided, on top of having the Macedonian people living under different economies which were achieved by the Macedonian people’s neighbouring monarchies through the Balkan wars, Zahariadis tried to break the Macedonian language and culture in order to prove to the world that the “Slavophones” living in the Greek state are just a Greek internal problem... They are a “Slavophone” part of the Greek people... and in that, as is well-known, a huge number of Macedonians were ruined...

“Treachery is loved by everyone, and traitors are loved by no one...”

And, as I said earlier, the above phrase has been used as a kind of political epitaph for the KOEM-NOF leaders and activists who were declared traitors and politically buried in the book “Aegean Storms”.

Both the author of the book “Aegean Storms” and the INI reviewers and collaborators, mentioned earlier, who allowed this book to be published, are prominent people and known for their efforts and attempts to politically bury the KOEM-NOF leadership. They are the political grave diggers who want to politically destroy the KOEM-NOF people who Zahariadis proclaimed as traitors, just because at a “moment of weakness”, because of their lack of faith, succumbed, and out of fear committed treason and signed Zahariadis’s document which spoke against the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and against Tito, and respectively against the CPM and the political leadership of the People’s Republic of Macedonia. They were then arrested because of their treachery and yes, no one likes traitors...

This, of course, is just formal and superficial logic. Since every animal has four legs does not mean that everything that has four legs is an animal. Is my desk an animal because it has four legs? Anyone today who is interested in the history of that time knows that Zahariadis's expert maneuver with the KOEM resolution missed its mark. Namely, the military and political leaders of the Macedonian national liberation movement did not follow the line of open confrontation with the CPG and DAG's leaderships. They did not cause a new split in DAG. DAG did not disintegrate on the eve of the last and decisive battle with the enemy. The KOEM leaders did not betray the joint struggle and were not traitors to the Macedonian and Greek people.

Zahariadis even failed in his other alternative. His idea to get the "Skopje leaders" and the CPY caught up in his scheme to anathematize the KOEM-NOF leaders did not work either. On the contrary! As I have mentioned before, everyone that is here today, as many as there are left and settled in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, were decorated for their activities in the then struggle by the President of the Republic with appropriate high decorations.

But, as you can see, there is someone who doesn't agree with this. And, in a rather lame and irresponsible manner, is publicly declaring them traitors.

And who gave them this right...? Who needs these sandstorms and why? It is not a joke to publicly call someone a traitor! But this exactly what is happening to the former leaders of the Macedonian liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia...! What evil god or demon skillfully pitted Macedonian against Macedonian like it did during the time when Macedonians were killed on the streets of Sofia...? Skopje, however, is not Sofia and this must not be allowed to happen here. Moreover, all these people are Communists... Unfortunately the Party is absent in all this. The authorities are silent and are standing on the sidelines, as if waiting for the "Aegeans" to eliminate each other. Why is that...?

What is happening here is absolutely unacceptable and must not be allowed to happen.

Young Lidia, as well as the author of “Aegean Storms”, is mistaken to have accepted the role in this sad story to denigrate the leaders from that part of Macedonia...

P. R.

Today, on November 14, 1984, I received the following invitation by mail:

INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL HISTORY

Pos. Fax 591

Tel. 239-036

Skopje - Yugoslavia

Dear comrade,

There is a department within the Institute of National History (INI) which is responsible for collecting memoirs and other material from the participants of the revolutionary movement from the pre-war period as well as from the national liberation war and from the revolution's in Vardar (Republic of), Pirin (Bulgarian occupied) and Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Up until now a vast number of memoirs, reconstructions, chronicles, etc., have been collected from about 1300 people who participated in those struggles.

We appreciate your active participation in the national liberation war and in the revolution, and we invite you to become engaged in our wide-ranging action collecting and writing memoirs.

The collected memoir material will be purchased, recorded and deposited in the department at the Institute of National History. We call upon you to make your valuable contribution, to bring light to our not so distant historic past, and to help us tackle the events associated with your revolutionary activities. The memoir department will endeavour to provide you with all the help and cooperation you will need to write your memoirs.

Please answer us to let us know if you accept our call and go to the Institute of National History to make arrangements for our further mutual cooperation.

We are awaiting your positive response.

Thank you.

DIRECTOR

(Publisher) Professor Dr. Dancho Zografski / s.r.

This is how I decided to introduce this subject because it was of special importance to me. Namely, during the last twenty five or so years after I settled and lived in Skopje, this document was the first (and remains the only one) that I received. This was the only institution in the Republic, among the many controversial bearers of social and political life, to call on me to assist.

I gladly accepted, of course.

Soon afterwards I offered one manuscript entitled “On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Aegean Brigade”. In short, using facts and language commonly known about these events, I pointed to the historical truth about the formation of the two Macedonian battalions, highlighting the contrary wishes and plans of the Greek resistance leaders; this being the reason why the Lerin-Kostur battalion only managed to survive on the field barely two months and the Voden battalion a little longer. I also pointed to the fact that the battalions were attacked by ELAS with orders to liquidate them; this being their reason for their withdrawal to the Yugoslav part of Macedonia.

But that was not how the story of the battalions was reported by the media, especially by Radio Skopje and “Nova Makedonija”. In other words, the history of the circumstances under which each of the two battalions was created was distorted. Namely, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Aegean Brigade, Radio Skopje, on November 14, 1984, in the program dedicated to the “Brigade of the Aegean rebels” and “Nova Makedonija” on November 19, 1984, announced that the two Macedonian battalions (on whose basis the Aegean Brigade was founded) were created on the initiative, that is, on a decision made by the Greek resistance

leaders. This led me to ask the question: “Does this mean that we are totally ignorant of things, or is it something worse...? Are we playing “politics” by lying to our people...?” This remains to be seen...

Then I offered a more elaborate manuscript under the title “As a Macedonian communist - I MUST PROTEST...” This was “twisting the facts” about which every Macedonian must protest...

I also offered them my handwritten “Autobiography”, on which I am still working...

This also happened to me: On November 16, 1984, the day before the 40th anniversary celebration of the formation of the Aegean Brigade, Comrade Todor Simovski telephoned me. He was a well-known person. He owned his own house in the centre of Skopje, an apartment somewhere in Iadran locality, a summer house in the Lake Prespa area, his own orchard of several hundred trees on Zaichev Rid just outside Skopje, and collected a monthly income at the Institute of National History. I know this from personal contacts with him and his family. He had a superior look about him with the self-confidence of a big boss. And because he was a man of an SVR in Skopje, he considered himself a pillar of our community. He looked amazing... At the Institute of National History he passionately defended our community from some of my attacks! One time, looking very angry, he approached me and, in a high tone of voice, yelled at me in front of an audience. He said: “Who do you think you are? How can you publish state secrets and attack the state...!?” To my knowledge, I wrote about NOF being formed and guided by the CPM/CPY for a year and a half... By writing about this here and now means that I admit that I have not forgotten what he did to me or forgiven him for the ugly scene he created. But... that was a long time ago... Now on with the phone call...

He said: “The celebration will be held in Bitola tomorrow, you should come!”

I said to him: “I am a man who has been disciplined. I prefer to remain in the corner where I have been tossed for the last 25 years...!”

He said: “I will never want to see you again if you don’t come! You have to come!”

I asked: “Is this someone’s order that I should come?”

He said: “No...! This is my wish. I want us to go together...!”

Then, in a raised tone of voice, I said: “And where were you for the last 25 years? Why did you go alone and not ask me to go with you to the numerous meetings and symposia where issues about our fighters and our movement were discussed...?”

“You should come!” he insisted.

As usual, even in this case, I was ignored, that is, I was left out of the preparation and performance of the celebration. Even if I wanted to participate I didn’t know anything about the proceedings. I simply attended as a guest of Simovski who, in fact, had nothing to do with the brigade. The only common thing he had with the brigade was that both he and the brigade were from Greek occupied Macedonia.

I minded my own business and stayed in the corner where they put me...

Now let us return to our subject.

I was talking about my own work and contribution to our historical knowledge. Over time I submitted many extensive articles to a variety of institutions. Before the Skopje earthquake, Georgi Abadziev, then deputy director of the Institute of National History, rejected one of my articles with the words: “We can’t publish your article at this time... However, it is important that you have written it. Its time will come...!”

Two years later, Comrade Dushko Tsrvenkovski from “Kultura” rejected my manuscript entitled “THE CPG AND THE MACEDONIANS IN THE SHADOW OF THE MEGALI IDEA”. Two or three years after that the editorial staff of “Nasha Kniga” told me they were impressed by the originality of my paper which

they accepted and were ready to print. I was interviewed by Hristo Andonovski who gave me a positive review and by Naum Peiov who was critical of my work. Namely, he said that some of the information in the article was inaccurate and needed to be removed. One example he used was my write-up on the provocateur Sklavenas and his appearance in the Greek parliament on April 27, 1936. About that Peiov wrote: "Sklavenas used his parliamentary immunity. He told the Greek parliament what he could not tell anyone outside of it!" Peiov then demanded that I remove everything I wrote in my article about Sklavenas. I argued with him and told him that, in this case, it was not a matter of utilizing parliamentary immunity, the CPG was already legal. There were ten lawmakers in parliament headed by Sklavenas. What Sklavenas said in parliament was announced to the press. All the material discussed in parliament was made available to the Party and to the press. In fact, the Macedonian Question had been freely and openly discussed four months earlier, in December 1935, at the CPG VI Congress. After that the editorial staff of "Nasha Kniga" told me: "They couldn't publish my work... because Naum Peiov had placed a veto on it!"

Frankly, I did not expect this from Naum Peiov, especially since I recommended him for his position as reviewer. It is true that my interpretation of events was fundamentally different than his which he had written in his books and his review, but I did not think that he would defend himself this way... with a veto.

On the table in front of me I had three copies of a handwritten and one copy a typed fifty-three paged article entitled: "THE LOGIC OF THINGS" (ASNOM, NOB and the CPG). Below the title I had written: "People are not judged by their declarations, good intentions or programs. Their works are valued and classified according to their consequences. This text was built on that basis. It was a critique of the various uncritical conceptions about events of that time which still prevail in our historiography." I wrote this on the occasion of the 30th ASNOM anniversary but I did not offer it anywhere in its entirety. I prepared an abbreviated version of twenty typed pages that I offered to MANU and INI. I have already mentioned that text in a previous presentation.

Two or three years later in 1978, I visited the “Vecher” editorial office and offered them a 56 page typed article. I proposed that they use one of two titles. An academic title such as: “PROBLEMS WITH OUR NEWEST HISTORY” as a way of looking for the historical truth, and a polemic title such as: “THE FOX AND THE WOLF” as a way of looking at political deception. They could use either title if they chose to publish it. At the end of the text I added a note in which I wrote:

Many of my texts on the subject of the struggle for survival carried out by our people in the seaside part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia have been published in “Glasnik” as number 3/1968, in the “Communist” as number 737 on May 7, 1971, in “Istoria” as number 1/1977, in the “Communist” as number 738 on May 14, 1971, and in “Istoria” as number 1/1978. Some of my manuscripts were purchased by INI in Skopje, including the manuscript “In the deep of night, dawn is born” mentioned here earlier. The purpose of this text is to draw the attention of the CPG membership and the general public to the question of the CPG leadership’s attitude (140) in relation to the Macedonian national question and to the Macedonian national liberation movement in that part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia. It is important to bring this “attitude” out into the open and to show that it was pure political “deception” that proved to be very costly for our people... In other words many of the things the CPG said were empty words and did not correspond to what the CPG did. So, it is of no use inviting people who are not aware of these things to write our history. And because many of them already committed their versions of history to paper they would not be willing to give them up. They in fact may tell you the same thing they told me, that what I am writing is “rash, an unarguable interpretation of events...” Therefore I would like to offer you my text for your consideration. I will come back about a month from now to take it back if it is not accepted for publication... In case you need me, call me by phone...”

About a month later I went back to the “Vecher” editorial office. The editor-in-chief handed me back my manuscript and said:

“Do you realize the kind of explosions it would cause if I publish this kind of information...?”

I should have known better. This article suffered the same fate as my 80 page typed article entitled “The Macedonian Revolutionary Press in Aegean Macedonia”, that I mentioned earlier. Following are my introductory pages:

Twenty-five years of Macedonian statehood - these are, among other things, twenty-five years of free Macedonian journalism and press.

It is essential to say something about Macedonian journalism and the free press here during an important occasion such as the anniversary jubilee of the Macedonian State. It is also vital to say something about Macedonian journalism and the press in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, that is, to mention the work of a small but famous group of Macedonians who, for the first time since this part of Macedonia was occupied and divided, found itself under the Greek state. A small group of people who organized themselves and engaged in journalistic work locally (not abroad), a kind of work performed exclusively for the interest of the Macedonian people, for the interest of the Macedonian national liberation movement in this part of Macedonia, and for the interest of the people’s revolution in Greece.

It is not possible for one person in a single instance to say everything about the work of these Macedonian journalists who worked under the most difficult conditions. This work is of great importance not only because of the fact that it was done for the first time since 1913, but also for the fact that it was done under extreme conditions when the national existence of the Macedonian people was and is still denied in Greece.

Obviously, more needs to be done... This issue must be given more extensive and exhaustive consideration... and it needs to be done by historians. My presentation, however successful it may seem, is merely material for future work. But I will say as much as I can, in a general sense, because it is very important... because neither the journalists from the free part of Macedonia, nor our historians here, (141) to date, have accepted this subject as an object of their interest...

The People's Liberation Front (NOF) in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia arose en masse in the spring and summer of 1945 at which time the people's revolution in Greece was booming. Despite widespread and open support from foreign intervention the reactionary government in Athens could not hold power. Governments fell one after another giving way to new sets of occupiers.

The People's Liberation Front in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia very quickly developed into a dynamic, national revolutionary organization. It organized as a political force of the Macedonian national liberation movement. It then emerged and developed into an integral part of the popular revolution in Greece, that is, as a natural ally of the Greek revolution.

Before they were given that task, none of the NOF Central Council agitation and propaganda members had dealt with journalism. Also, none of the NOF governing bodies had ever been politicians before they were appointed to those positions. This means that the Greeks did not want qualified Macedonians to occupy such positions. This was the case with every position of authority everywhere in Greek occupied Macedonia after the Balkan wars. The Macedonian people as a separate non-Greek nation did not exist for the Greek authorities.

The newly appointed and inexperienced journalists working for the NOF Central Committee agitation and propaganda department were expected to overcome the huge difficulties and obstacles in their work on their own. On top of that none of the Macedonians in this department had formally studied Macedonian. Therefore none of them were expected to read or write in Macedonian. This is because the Macedonian language was banned by the Greek authorities and made illegal to speak in the streets, the market, and even at home in private.

Despite their shortcomings these journalists began to work writing articles for the NOF newspaper "Nepokoren", which appeared in May 1947, and for the AFZH newspaper "Nova Makedonka" which appeared later. Unfortunately these newspapers were targeting readers who did not know how to read Macedonian. This was

mostly due to the fact that the Macedonian language was banned in Greece since 1913 but also because the Macedonian alphabet was introduced very recently.

This obstacle, however, was unexpectedly and quickly overcome.

Almost every Macedonian person expressed a great desire to be able to read in the Macedonian language, which greatly inspired the journalists not only to learn to write in Macedonian but to teach people how to read.

After that, several thousands of the Macedonian fighters who left with the Macedonian battalions and other groups of people, who for several reasons found themselves staying for some time in the People's Republic of Macedonia, when they returned brought their knowledge of the Macedonian alphabet back and passed it on to others, disseminating it to everyone who wanted to learn it...

Included among the special measures taken by the group of journalists from the NOF agitation and propaganda department was the initiative to expediently and systematically spread the Macedonian alphabet and Macedonian literacy among the Macedonian people. This was done by:

a) Starting a Macedonian two-day course to teach teachers. Here the future teachers were obliged to learn to read and write using the Macedonian alphabet. They were taught a dozen or more important grammatical rules, important moments from the Macedonian people's national history, and the NOF march and other popular Macedonian songs. In addition to that they listened to the news from the fronts.

b) Creating a Macedonian primer by using the official Macedonian alphabet with pictures and text that reflected the Macedonian people's national liberation struggle from this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia and the newly established unity with the Greek people.

The course and the primer were born by the revolution and served the revolution. Unfortunately the revolution failed and with it the

course ceased to exist. But the teachers who succeeded in completing the course, with the primer in hand, continued to spread Macedonian literacy to thousands of Macedonian children, especially to those 28,000 who were evacuated without their parents and were accepted by friendly European socialist countries.

The greatest difficulty, that is, the greatest obstacle in the work of the NOF agitation and propaganda department was, without exception, the CPG leadership's unconditional absence of understanding. The CPG leadership showed great hostility towards the spread of Macedonian literacy... mostly concealed... and sometimes open...

I am fully aware that these are harsh words. But to call them what they really are is honest and necessary. Otherwise, as a former member of that group of journalists, that is, as an organizer of the work, leader of the group, and as a former journalist, I consider it my right and my duty to inform you of the conditions and the climate under which these Macedonian journalists worked and the Macedonian press was developed and operated in that part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia. I can tell you that the conditions and climate were created by the people's revolution, that is, by the Greek Civil War and the CPG itself with its policies towards the Macedonian national question. But I would like to begin by telling you something about the period before and after the people's revolution and the Greek Civil War, and I find the 25th anniversary of Macedonia becoming a state and with its freedom of speech, without a doubt, is the most suitable moment for such a thing...

I almost forgot to mention an important article entitled: "PROTEST LETTER TO THE SKM CENTRAL COMMITTEE". While having a cup of coffee with him, I asked my friend and colleague what he thought about me writing this article. While looking at my cup he said: "You will explode!" I looked back at him. My friend's tortured face and limbs were scarred with war wounds. And it was no joke I did explode... I began to describe myself as one of the first Macedonians to join the Macedonian national liberation movement in that part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia. After that I began to describe everything that Paskal Mitrevski did to me from 1945 onwards. How he worked against me personally and how I never did

see him as my leader. I was protesting because my revolutionary activities were not appreciated... He was disrespectful to me and always stood in my way. I was openly looking for rehabilitation. I strongly believe that our community owes me recognition for my sacrifices. And I am not talking about placing a wreath on my tombstone after I am dead. I would like to be acknowledged, even a little, but now, immediately, while I am still alive and breathing! Placing a wreath on my tombstone after I am dead is propaganda for the living...

But this “explosion” of mine had the effect of a cry in the wilderness... a knock on the door of the deaf... I should have known better than to expect anything from the very people who condemned me... and who write me off. It was naive on my part to expect or demand such a thing from them. My hope is that there will be a new shift in people’s perception and they will have their reasons to accept me. This is one of the reasons why I would like have my autobiography filed at the SVR. Clearly I no longer care for myself personally. I need my rehabilitation to protect my wife and children from various dangers...

In the meantime I will continue with my activities and contributions... Here in front of me I have a manuscript entitled “A view from the neighbour’s backyard”. It is a collection of short, satirical and humorous stories. Most of them were translated from Greek to Macedonian. Skopje 1978. Following the front page is a NOTE:

The book, “A view from the neighbour’s yard”, is less about “a view” and more about “well-intentioned measures and thoughtfulness” in the spirit of the time in which we live... and, as politicians would often say, “In the spirit of Helsinki”.

We are witnessing a general effort being made to democratize relations between nations and states. The borders are being opened enabling free movement of people in all directions. This allows broad communication and harmony between people. This much mobility has never before been allowed, in the history of mankind. We have much mobility between statesmen in mutual visits... and much agreement like never before seen. Establishing democratic and

friendly relations between states is beneficial to cooperation and mutual trust. Humanity is becoming more human and cultured. A historical process has begun with aims at delivering a significant future for mankind. A process leading to a future without cataclysms, crematoriums, barbarism...!

We need more books like this to be translated which provide a good means for communication and getting acquainted with other cultures...

There are approximately fifty stories about animals in this book in the form of short stories and storytelling cartoons, which were taken from the pages of the most popular weekly Greek magazines such as “Trust to geliou”, “Romandzo”, “Tisavros”, etc. These stories add to the Greek cultural refinement and advance the artistic fruits of Greek society. Each story introduces a satirical text and cartoons as an echo, and as an immediate reflection, of life in the “neighbour’s yard” in neighbouring Greece.

They say you get to know the Greek people best through their satire and humour full of laughs, ridicule, condemnation and regrets. Indeed, by reading this book full of Greek satire and humour, the readers will feel like they know the Greek people and will seem like they have come closer to them...

There is no political satire relating to the politics of official Greece. It is risky to take this domestic Greek flower out of the “neighbour’s yard”. Those who can’t forgive could proclaim the book as “sticking your nose where it doesn’t belong” and interfering in other people’s affairs...

And now, dear reader, go ahead and turn the page...!

A really popular text and cartoon of the ordinary Greek follows:

MISFORTUNE COMES TO A PERSON WITH GOOD WILL

It was Uranitsa’s idea to go to a place where a buzuki was playing. I had my reservations and objected. I said: “We are not that kind of

people Lale my dear”. She looked at me with wide open eyes and said: “Why not...? Are those who go there any better than us...?”

After that I figured it is best to show some good will and stop complaining. We went to a local buzuki that same evening. It was a strange thing to see! Little by little the passionate music carried me off! Influenced by the ambience I began to forget my troubles. And when I saw the others ordering plates and breaking them on the dancing tide, I too called the waiter and ordered three dozen plates...!

Uranitsa vigorously intervened and said: “What’s wrong with you! Why did you order the plates? You want to look like a gentleman with deep pockets... you poor creature...?”

By then I was already completely overtaken by the ambience and did not hear anything she said. I had already had a few drinks too many and my vanity had taken hold of me...

“Tonight I will chew iron...!” I yelled out, “Let death die...!”

“Sit still...!” she whispered sternly through her teeth.

“Tonight we are celebrating...!” I grunted in a loud voice.

“Get a grip Onufri...!” she yelled, “You are making an ass of yourself... Damn it!”

“I will pay for them and I will break them!” I hissed back at her like a bumblebee and called the waiter again: “Bring me the plates you clumsy oaf...!”

He quickly ran back and brought me the plates.

“Give them to me...!” ordered Uranitsa and took them. “Now you got me going...!” she yelled.

She did not waste any time before she started breaking the dishes one by one over my head while smiling at the audience in the room... As if that was not enough, at the same time, the singer

deliberately blurted the words “I am a man... I am doing what I like...” right into the song.

Imagine the kind of situation that was...!

(Romance)

The manuscript “KITKA PLEVELI” is a selection of short satirical and humorous stories translated from Russian to Macedonian. I have used this book to try to show the kind of humour that exists in the USSR. I offered it in two or three places without success.

I am particularly fond of the manuscript entitled “THE MACEDONIANS AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR - THE GREEK CIVIL WAR”. This was written on the occasion of the publishing of the book “General Markos” by Dragan Kliakich, GLOBUS edition, Zagreb 1979. Skopje 1980.

That was the cover page. And written under point 1 was:

“Recently, a book by Dragan Kliakich, entitled “General Markos” appeared in our bookstores, published by Zagreb’s GLOBUS in 1979.

Several works have been published in neighbouring Greece on the same topic, i.e. the national liberation war and the Greek Civil War, but none can be compared to Dragan Kliakich’s book by the strength of his arguments presented and his clear interpretation of events. The reason for that is simple: None of the Greek authors have far-reaching testimony like that of Dragan Kliakich.

a) Testimony given by Svetozar Vukmanovich-Tempo:

As delegate of NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, Tempo visited ELAS Headquarters in the middle of 1943 in order to exchange experiences and establish maximum cooperation. He had several meetings and lengthy talks with the competent resistance leaders in Greece. At that time ELAS command was headed by Andreas Dzhimas, Aris Velouhiotis, Stephanos Sarafis and CPG secretary Georgios Siantos. Because of the profoundly different strategy and

tactics used by the Greek resistance leaders, there was no significant cooperation. Tempo highlighted those differences in his testimony. Given this, the reader should have no difficulty understanding why the resistance movement in Greece suffered a disaster even though ELAS held almost all of Greece in its hands...

b) Testimony given by Ivan Karaivanov:

Karaivanov worked in the Comintern executive council and in the Balkan communist Parties personnel department from the beginning of the 1930's to the end of 1937. In his book "People and Pygmies" (1950) Karaivanov wrote a great deal about the various communist leaders who he had the opportunity to meet and get to know. A decade later he visited DAG Headquarters on Mount Pind and, together with General Markos, reviewed DAG's combat positions. Karaivanov followed developments in Greece with great interest. Karaivanov's book "People and Pygmies" was published after DAG was defeated and after the uprising in Greece ended. According to Kliakich this is what, among other things, Karaivanov thought of Zahariadis:

I. "In 1926, Zahariadis was appointed secretary of the youth communist organization in Solun. He was arrested and imprisoned in the Edikule prison but escaped three months later. After that he was summoned to go to Athens where he became a member of the Communist Youth of Greece Central Committee and was sent back to work in Solun. He was again arrested but managed to again escape when he was being escorted to prison. Zahariadis was appointed Party Secretary of the party organization in Piraeus in May 1926. Towards the end of 1926 the police arrested him again, but he managed to flee for the third time. In 1927 the police arrested him in Volos and again he managed to escape for the fourth time. Zahariadis escaped again, for the fifth time, this time from the hands of the police in 1928 when they were taking him up the underground Athens-Piraeus railway..."

"I mentioned all these incidents," wrote Karaivanov, "so that our readers can see how Zahariadis managed to slip out of the hands of the authorities and be saved so many times..." Immediately after that Karaivanov wrote: "Zahariadis's escapes are reminiscent of the

escapades practiced by the Japanese police with their agents among the Communists in the first years after the First World War...”

II. – According to what was written in the first volume of Zahariadis’s biography, published in 1949 in Sofia in the Bulgarian language, the “Greek Reporting Service and the English” handed Zahariadis to Hitler’s people on May 20, 1941. According to Karaivanov the “Gestapo took him to prison in Vienna where he was immediately subjected to a hearing, but Zahariadis did not say anything about the CPG and ended the hearings with statements made against Hitler and Greece’s German and Italian occupiers.” Karaivanov did not find it necessary to comment about this case. Zahariadis’s apparent heroism and especially how he was tolerated by the Gestapo, speaks for itself... In other words the whole thing was staged...

III. – According to Karaivanov “The Gestapo then transferred Zahariadis to the Dachau concentration camp. Here he invested all his strength in organizing not only the Greek Communists but also the German Communists, as well as the Communists of other European nations who lived in Hitler’s hell and fought against Hitler’s politics in the camp...” Karaivanov wanted his readers to know what kind of person Zahariadis was and what he did in the Dachau camp. Karaivanov wrote: “Zahariadis organized all the Communists and fought against Hitler’s politics but we are adding this passage out of his biography because we want our readers to remember him. No leader of the communist parties was left alive by Hitler’s people, with the exception of the famous Trogler who showed himself to be a traitor during Dimitrov’s trial in Leipzig and, of course, Zahariadis who was allowed to organize the Communists and fight against Hitler’s politics in Dachau...!” Following that Karaivanov wrote: “It will only be a matter of time before the documents from Dachau come to light and we will know Zahariadis’s true role in Dachau...”

IV. After Hitler’s Germany capitulated, the English took Zahariadis over from the Gestapo who “for some reason” was kept alive and, according to Greek sources, was kept safe and sound at their German headquarters working as an interpreter from where, according to his biography, he was freed by the English and

Americans. Then, after about a three-week stay in London, out of the goodness of his English hosts, he was shipped out on a special plane which brought him to Athens on May 29, 1945. Zahariadis was then again formally elected CPG Secretary General at the CPG VII Congress in October 1945. Karaivanov wrote:

“Historically speaking Zahariadis did not link the labour movement with the partisan movement. The partisan struggle in Greece was a villager struggle under CPG leadership. And this was a weakness for the partisan movement. Without the working class as the core and without the people’s intelligentsia, the partisan units could not play their liberating role... That Zahariadis knew very well...”

This is true. The partisan movement was never tied to the workers’ movement. It remained isolated from the proletariat in the cities and from the people’s intelligentsia. But there was more than that: Soon after the CPG Central Committee II Plenum was held in February 1946, say by the middle of 1946, the Party organizations in the villages were dissolved. In other words the CPG did not act in the villages. It was also characteristic that Markos, from the very beginning, was given a directive not to create Party cells and Party organizations in the partisan units...

From what Karaivanov wrote and from what Kliakich deduced, it can be concluded that Zahariadis was a retired police agent (page 223), an agent of international anti-communism...

c) General Markos’s testimony:

Based on his own diary and source documents of that time, Markos Vafiadis has gone into great detail to describe the rise and development of the Greek Civil War. This is what Leo Mathes wrote in “Reich Publishing” (p. 13): “That is possible, with a most surprising view, an interesting kind of book...” but not only “with a more surprising view...” As DAG Supreme Commander Markos was a very important person for the history of the Greek Civil War. The information he provided was first-hand, authentic and original. And this is exactly what is not found in similar works by Greek authors. Undoubtedly, Tempo, Karaivanov, and Markos’s testimonies are the element that elevated Kliakick’s work above that

of many Greek authors, both in terms of weight of arguments and clear interpretation of events. After the reader becomes acquainted with their testimonials, he or she will clearly know the reason why the revolutionary forces suffered defeat in succession and why the revolution in Greece failed.

All of this is under point 1. And beyond that are fifty typed pages in which I argue about the deviations from the historical truth. I sent the handwritten document to Dragan Kliakich by mail. He came to Skopje and came to my home to visit me. He was a pleasant man. Branko Kavkale, my friend from Prilep, was there with me when Kliakich said: "Pavle, I quoted you as Marx" in General Markos's second edition. He then turned to my wife Urania and said: "You don't even know who you have for a husband..." In general, I got the impression that he was impressed with my handwritten document...

I will digress for a moment to say something that happened that was very important to me. Today is Monday, March 25, 1985. I am tired but satisfied to sit behind my desk. I submitted the following document, which I wrote because I was boiling inside, to the SKM Central Committee Presidency, registered at the 28th branch office as number 1371/1, and sent a second copy to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia President's secretary. Here is the text in full:

"My letter - a protest and an application for protection, was sent to the SVR of SRM. I am citing it here to show you what this is all about:

To the Republic Secretariat of the SRM Interior - Skopje

PROTEST AND PLEA

From Pavle Rakovski (Resenska 6 / 1-4, Skopje).

I would like to remind you that the NOF Founding Bureau for Aegean Macedonia was constituted on April 23, 1945, here in Skopje, in the CPM (SKM) Central Committee premises. Up until NOF was placed under the leadership of the CPG, that is during the year and a half after it was founded, its founders, the five members

of the founding bureau, met regularly and received assignments here in the premises of the Central Committee. Fortunately or unfortunately, as it happened, I was one of those five members who laid NOF's foundation...

This year will be the 40th year since NOF was founded in the Macedonian territories under Greece, for which preparations are being made to celebrate its anniversary. Radio Skopje was broadcasting a special show yesterday in which prominent former NOF activists participated...

It is well-known that the members of the NOF Founding Bureau were and remained to be closest to the central leadership... It is also well-known that out of those five, two fell in the field, and another two died recently here in Skopje. Fortunately or unfortunately, out of the five, I happened to be still alive and well but was not invited to participate in the Radio Skopje broadcast mentioned above... In other words I was ignored...!

This is a moral and political blow, a terrible insult not only to me but to thousands of comrades... This is reminiscent of the time I was in Voden Region when important public gatherings were held with the fighters... to which I was not invited. It was well-known to everyone that I brought the Voden Macedonian battalion to ELAS and that I was its commander. Yet I was ignored. You may not believe me if I told you that I was not affected by this... I thought to myself, the person who called these gatherings, a famous activist from Voden, wanted to show off with someone else's feathers (I have his own written evidence of it). I also thought of how humiliating this was for me and surprisingly he did not see it that way. Well, I let him have it his way! However, this... the case with Radio Skopje, I can not ignore...

With this letter I protest and ask for protection. I know there are people who have made statements against me, that I supposedly was some kind of agent of the USSR. But that's just filthy slander which I have always rejected. Besides, these statements by themselves prove nothing. In my case they are only desires to put me in jeopardy. These people, however, are afraid that I might endanger their careers and for that reason they want to get rid of me. Why am

I being attacked for so long? It seems that I made a bad mistake of waiting and lost the time that would have helped me and would have worked for the benefit of the truth! (I also told this to Kiro Sotirovski-Strogov when I was still in Panchevo)...

Radio Mileva announced that the show host of the 40th anniversary special show on Radio Skopje, mentioned earlier, had intended to call me and ask me to attend the show as one of NOF's main leadership activists but someone in your service stopped him. I can't help myself but ask: 'What specifically have I done to be treated this way...?'

I was advised to go through the legal system but I did not accept that advice. Instead I decided to write you this letter of protest and seek your protection. I am looking to you to clear me of this and to obtain my rehabilitation. I don't want this for me personally as I have already lived my life. I need the rehabilitation to protect my wife and children from various abuses, I owe them this. I want to believe that you will show the necessary understanding and goodwill, and you will help an old fighter and his family to get rid of further troubles..."

That was the content of the letter... But I also used the opportunity to further inform them of my ordeals. Here is what I wrote:

"After having spent five and a half years being a prisoner sentenced to hard labour in the Siberian camps and four and a half years interned in Kazakhstan, for being a supporter of 'Macedonian nationalism', i.e. an agent of the CPY and Yugoslavia, I finally received a Soviet visa to come to Skopje.

When I arrived at Subotitsa I was unexpectedly taken off the train with my wife, two children and our luggage. My wife had come from Poland to join me in Kazakhstan and now we were all headed for Skopje... so I thought. Accompanied by a man from the 'interior' we were put on a night train and sent to Belgrade. We were then transferred from Belgrade to Panchevo by a prisoner car. We were then locked up in a room at a police station.

We were locked up for three days before Kiro Sotirovski-Strogov, a representative from the Interior Ministry, arrived. He brought with him a typist and a typewriter. He 'interrogated' me for ten days. My wife was interrogated for three or four days. After the interrogation was over he said: 'Pavle, we do not make claims, because we do not have any evidence, but we think you came here as an agent...!' I denied the allegations but all my effort was in vain. I told him I came here because I wanted my children to learn their mother tongue and to grow up among their own native people... I am not an agent...!

It was a bitter surprise to me when, at one point, he said: 'I would sacrifice ten Rakovski's for this Yugoslavia...!'

This was strange patriotism indeed! Egoistically, and above all without cause, he denied my patriotism. Clearly, this was a serious offense. He certainly knew that there can be NO GUILT without evidence, yet he was ready to 'sacrifice' ten people like me! I thought to myself this comrade was not right at all. This was not and could not be in Yugoslavia's interests to sacrifice an innocent person like myself who was a prisoner in Siberia because I was supposedly loyal to Yugoslavia. This was working against Yugoslav interests and was a crime against humanity...!

I did not try to defend myself or Yugoslavia before this man of authority, mainly as a precautionary measure because I could clearly see the danger I could be in because, obviously, my 'sacrifice' meant nothing to him. I refrained. Instead of arguing with him, I calmly said to him that 'if you don't believe me when I tell you I am an agent I have no choice but to wait. I must wait for the right occasion when time begins to work for the benefit of the truth... and that will help me...!'

I waited too long and that was a fatal error on my part. Over twenty-six years have passed since then. It has been quite a long time yet the truth has not yet surfaced. I was mistaken to believe that someone of authority would have a conscience and speak up. My removal from everything was continued while I was ignored, written off... sacrificed. Clearly, because of this, my entire family has gone

through hell. We have survived many inconveniences... including my wife and children...

It was well-known that my wife and daughter were almost murdered before they fled. There were orders to have her physically liquidated because she was accused of being a 'Macedonian nationalist' and for not giving up her husband Pavle Rakovski. Everything in their power was done to get her to say that Pavle Rakovski was a 'Yugoslav agent' and that she should turn against him and against Yugoslavia... But she didn't. After she escaped to Poland she was mistreated by members of the Greek leadership's secret services who, over time, went to Yugoslavia where they were well-accepted, settled and ironically given cushy positions. So my wife would like to know: 'Why are we being punished and exposed to ridicule by the very people who until yesterday were agents working for foreign interests...?'

And another, but no less bitter thing: Our people who served as couriers in the struggle, by law received their envisaged 'special allowance' with their pensions. I did not get mine... I was denied. My wife was also denied. Apparently we did not deserve it... not as much as our couriers... They found formal reasons to refuse us. This was a difficult moral and political blow... and given the high inflation, also a heavy blow to our economic survival. My "friend" sitting in the relevant IC commission, fitting into the created situation, managed to abuse his function and, for his own special reasons, did this to us...

Believe me Comrades, I have had enough! I waited long enough for the truth to come out... I can no longer accept to remain a 'sacrifice'. No one has the right to do this to me. While I was fighting in the battlefield during the long struggle, I was sentenced to death three times by a Greek military court. These three death sentences imposed on me by my enemy are the highest decorations I could have received on the battlefield... No one can say that these death sentences were given to me for 'nothing'. And here, you see, some people who lack a conscience, have concocted a situation to make my life a living hell, continuously denigrating and humiliating me in front of thousands of my comrades...

Comrades, it can't be this way anymore. The degrading treatment that I have been subjected to must stop. The accusations that I have been disloyal to my fatherland must end. Just because someone in the SVR thought I was an agent, without providing a shred of evidence, does not make me an agent. One can love their fatherland and work for it from far away, even from over the ocean. I have a sister overseas who loves her fatherland... But, setting all that aside, today I chose to ask you for your help to secure my family. I am addressing you and asking you to protect my family. I am asking you to find a way to end this torment and treat me and my family fairly.

I must confess that at this moment, with some bitterness, I am reminded of what happened when I addressed Chemerski, SKM Central Committee President, when my address had the fate of a scream in the wilderness. This was because, according to Radio Mileva, Urania Iurukova gave damning testimony against me. I have faith that this letter will not be ignored and you will do everything necessary to help end these tribulations for me and for my family...

Skopje, March 25, 1985

With respect

Pavle Rakovski”

NOTES:

1 “History of the Macedonian people”, book three, INI 1969, p. 263.

2 The adherence of our people to the CPG, indeed (as always) was great. To illustrate my point I will talk about a characteristic episode from my childhood.

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

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

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

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

“This is our Party,” he said to me while tapping his index finger at the red sickle and hammer on the leaflet. “This is a party for all the poor people... It will be good if we get one of our candidates elected in the Greek parliament ...!”

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

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

2 Solun was the second largest city in the Greek state, labeled by the Greek propaganda “sympathetic”, which means, Solun alongside Athens was also a capital of Greece.

3 This was the Coalition of the then Left formed by the Communist Party of Greece. It included the Agricultural Party of Greece, the Socialist Party of Greece, the Workers' Social Democratic Party, the General Confederation of Workers, the United Confederation of Workers, and the Independent Workers' Union. An Agreement for a joint struggle against the ruling reactionaries was reached and signed on October 5, 1934, under the name "Laikon Metopon" (People's Front). (Rizospastis, October 6, 1934.)

4 Elefterios Stavridis, "Behind the scenes of the CPG", Athens 1953, p. 493.

5 The initial needs for adopting the decision to establish a Macedonian unit were as follows:

With their cruelty and inhumanity the Greek bourgeois authorities forced the Macedonian people to leave their homes and move around the world outside the Greek state. As for the Macedonian people who were unable to do so, the Greek authorities, with their policies, permanently destroyed all sympathy and attachment to the Greek state and nation and imposed a need for resistance.

The autonomist counter-movement with the slogan forward for a "free autonomous Macedonia" IS DANGEROUSLY WIDENING on the basis of the absence of attachment to the Greek state and the strong aspiration to be free from slavery in this country.

The CPG party line is "full equality of minorities". The situation created in our country imperatively demands that we impose a CONSISTANT APPLICATION of that line, turning equality from words into action... A Macedonian military unit has appeared in Kaimakchalan. It has appeared as a Macedonian national military and political centre that would attract many young Macedonian revolutionaries from Voden and the wider region. We can use this to destroy the autonomist movement with its military formation as well as the hated Greek gendarmes, which receive their arms from the German repositories and which served the Germans. We have sufficient reasons to destroy them.

Creating a separate Macedonian military unit in Voden Region within ELAS, even though it is consistent with the application of the party line, both for equality and for mobilizing the people in an armed struggle, is still a matter for which we don't have a separate directive. But if our regional committee, that is why we are here, is to raise the people in an armed struggle against the occupiers, no one will be looking to cut-off our heads, for a consistent and successful implementation of the party line...

We need to pay particular attention to the struggle against the counter-band autonomist movement... that is against Ohrana. This struggle must not be led on the basis of old divisions – Patriarchates against Exarchates and vice versa. No, it should not be a partisan unit of “Grkomani” fighting against the Ohrana “Bugaromani”. That would be a tragedy. Our Macedonian military unit should appear as a material force of the Macedonian national ideal...!

We will act in that spirit.

The mobilization was started in the village Dolno Pozharsko (known as an Exarchate village), and continued in the village Baovo (known as a Patriarchate village). The mobilization was a success. And as is well-known, the ELAS Voden Macedonian Battalion recruited most of its volunteer fighters from these two villages. (Glasnik XXVI, No. 2-3, Skopje 1982, pp. 250-251.)

6 In June 1943, Svetozar Vukmanovich-Tempo, a delegate of the CPY Central Committee in Macedonia, made contact with representatives of the CPG, EAM and ELAS in an attempt to negotiate a military and political cooperation agreement. Tempo also raised the question of launching and developing a Macedonian national liberation movement in the Greek part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia by creating separate Macedonian units within ELAS. But none of that was accomplished. According to Tempo the Greek side “annulled all conclusions reached... especially those relating to Macedonia”. (Sources of Freedom, War and Revolution in Macedonia 1941-1945, Volume I, Second book, p. 236.) Later, at the beginning of September 1943, representatives from the CPG Central Committee met with representatives from the CPM Central Committee near Solun and reached an agreement which called for

the Greek side to create separate Macedonian units within ELAS. (Ibid. p. 320.) This time too nothing happened. This Agreement was also ignored by our Greek friends. That is how things were done in those days. So, when news arrived at the CPG District Committee for Voden Region, that many Macedonians were going to Kaimakchalan... the CPG's response was that this was an illegal act committed by Macedonians from the Yugoslav part of Macedonia...

7 Vangel Aianovski-Oche, "Aegean Storms", INI 1975, p. 136.

8 In connection with this, here are some specific details. The stories told were true; the battalion grew larger by the hour. The influx of new fighters from the villages and from the city Voden was so great that our Greek friends had to find a way to slow it down. They created a "medical commission" and ordered it to examine the new recruits and send them back to their homes declaring them incapable of fighting, despite their excellent health. But, despite the rejections, about a month and a half later, sometime at the end of July 1944, the battalion consisted of 750 fighters in six units. The battalion had its own organization, supply chain, and weaponry workshop. About the same time an order was issued from ELAS X Division directing the battalion to stop recruiting volunteers! Given the circumstances of what was actually happening the order meant stop mobilizing Macedonians and stop creating a Macedonian military force!

The covert or silently implemented embargo on news coming out of Lerin and Kostur Regions regarding the development of the Macedonian national liberation movement there... the establishment of SNOF in only these two regions... the inability to create SNOF in Voden Region... the dissolution of SNOF in Lerin and Kostur Regions... and, on top of that ordering the battalion to stop recruiting volunteers, I interpret as anti-Macedonian acts...!

The battalion stopped growing. Without waiting for help from anywhere, and feeling the urgent need to do something, I fended off the blow against developing and strengthening our Macedonian national liberation movement by creating a Macedonian alphabet. Specifically, here's what brought me to that idea: the existence of the six Macedonian units, the sound of the Macedonian war songs

everywhere, wherever the units appeared, acted spiritually and admirably towards the people. With that in mind, I realized:

We will have even greater success if, besides speaking and singing in Macedonian, a Macedonian alphabet appeared, and people began to read and write in Macedonian... (up until then they were used to “borrowing” the Greek and the Bulgarian alphabet, but it was clear that neither the one nor the other could be accepted as their own).

The new alphabet was first taught to the fighters. Down to the last one... To make it easier to learn it, the alphabet was painted in colours on a large placard and hung on a beech tree in the centre of the camp. The idea for painting it on a placard and the actual painting was done by comrades Petre Sarakinov and Dinko Deliov, both from Voden. Each fighter then copied it into his or her notebook with their combat songs. Many made copies and sent them home to their parents, friends, relatives..., in the Macedonian villages. On top of that I printed convenient leaflets with the alphabet and with the Macedonian combat songs and distributed them in the villages. At the same time, I was looking to find the necessary people and technical means to publish a Macedonian newspaper.

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

being scornful of each other, they were mainly responsible for propagating Greek and Bulgarian propaganda. This was done mostly in the past but is still present to this day. Namely, apart from the elderly people, like it or not, the Macedonian people were forced to learn the Greek alphabet. But, on the other hand, we can't underestimate the effort of the Bulgarian propaganda during the fascist occupation... The alphabet I compiled was tailored to combat this situation and remove the Greek and Bulgarian influences. The conditions during the struggle were right for the Macedonian alphabet to be easily and quickly accepted and adopted without too much resistance and thus be transformed into an instrument of the Macedonian antifascist national liberation movement...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Long live the name Macedonia!
September 5, 1944

The above text was taken from my manuscript which has been preserved in the Macedonian archives in Skopje. The language it appears in here has been slightly changed to correspond to the modern Macedonian language. The original was written in the

dialectal language corresponding to the Lerin and Voden Region dialects. You can say that it was written in my original “Slavophone” Greek language. Namely, it was written in a mixture of words and expressions from the Lerin and Voden Region Macedonian dialects, which today linguists and historians will find very interesting...

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

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

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

We are definitely a unique people, with our own unique language and therefore we should have our own separate Macedonian

alphabet. The time will come when Macedonian scholars will compile a complete Macedonian alphabet. This is only temporary, for now... I concluded.

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

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

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

On October 12, 1944, the same day the Germans were leaving Athens, I put myself in charge of the battalion and, through a number of maneuvers, managed to avoid colliding with the ELAS forces sent to disarm and dissolve our battalion. This took place on the night of October 12th to October 13th... On the morning of October 12th, Dzhodzho took it upon himself to "detach" himself from Levertis Foundoulakis, his Greek officer in charge of "assisting in military matters". Dzhodzho caught up with the battalion at Tikveshia at the Vatasha... (For more information on this event and about the alphabet in the quotation, see "In the deep night, dawn is born", pp. 31-36 and in v/k "Communist", May 7, 1971.)

9 However, only an investigative historian will seek and find it, and not an ordinary reader. Besides that, this is a biography and such a big and important event cannot be absent. Here I will outline some of the most important details:

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

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

I agreed.

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

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

It was Rochko from Vatasha.

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

It was wonderful to know that...!

And, as the expression goes, I decided to show him all my cards. Yes, I said, our relations with our Greek friends are not good at all. The Party leaders act like provocateurs... They are openly anti-Party and anti-Macedonian. There is no longer anything in the party line that supports equality. SNOF was dissolved last May and they have generally banned all Macedonian organizations. They rejected our new volunteers in the Battalion and stopped us from creating a Macedonian revolutionary military force. We now expect that they

will dissolve the battalion any day. The trainers from Voden Region recently had a conference in Krontsedevo. They received a directive to open schools in the free territory. And only Greek schools... everywhere... also in the Macedonian villages... The same way it was before. In short: they are struggling with all their might to stifle the Macedonian national liberation movement. That's how things are here with us...!

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

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

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

Rochko said he would do it.

After our quick agreement was concluded I returned to Krontselevo. The next day the villager appeared again. He said he had something important for Goche (Rakovski) and Dzhodzho. Dzhodzho and I went to see him together. When Dzhodzho found out what this was all about he began to turn his head. The conditions... the secret meeting with a representative from that part of Macedonia... were all a shock to him...

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

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

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

did not exist for the Party and that was because supposedly no Macedonians existed as a separate people?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I proposed a plan, and Dzhodzho accepted it:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I was certain they would go back running.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And as I was sure, they did not return. I did not hear from them or about them for decades. Only recently I found out what happened to them. They immediately went back to report to those who sent them to the battalion and... they were arrested. When those in Greek

command found out that they had come from across the border and that Goche himself had sent them back, they arrested them. And as to why the battalion defected? They said nothing. They were charged for being part of the defection and suffered as if they were Goche's people who "sold out to the Serbians". And from how it looks, it appears that Sotir or Sotirios, as leader of this "group of spies", paid with his own head. He was gone and never heard of again... Georgios Kondilis on the other hand is still alive and, I believe, lives in Poland. A few years ago Nikos Kantardzhis moved to Skopje and now calls himself Kole Kantardziev. He came to possess an apartment and a high paying job incredibly fast and easy. He lived comfortably until recently when he died. Meanwhile, back in the village, Rochko informed me that everything was prepared for the battalion to be accepted and placed on rest in Batasha. We arrived there in the afternoon and organized the fighters to stay in the various houses.

Dzhodzho caught up with us and joined us there.

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

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

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

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

They asked for Dzhodzho.

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

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

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

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

This happened on October 14, 1944 and reminded me of something very sad and bitter that took place just a couple of weeks after the Macedonian battalion was formed in Voden Region, when the CPG, with quick action on the part of ELAS XXX Regiment in the Voden Region Macedonian villages, on the night between June 26 and 27, 1944, arrested many Macedonian villagers accused of possessing hidden weapons. Included among the villages attacked were Zhervi, Chegana, Rusilovo, Drushka, Gugovo, Nisia, Teovo, Vladovo and Mesimer. Most of these villages were organized by the resistance movement, especially Chegana, Zhervi, Rusilovo, Drusko, Teovo, Vladovo, which were organized 100 per cent by the Resistance movement, and there was no doubt that there was anything suspicious going on, especially hidden weapons. Nevertheless, these people, most of whom were partisans, communists, members of the CPG, were taken hostage and many liquidated. Included among those liquidated were; Dimitar Leska from the village Chegana, an old communist who spent many years in the infamous Akronavlia

prison, and Gele Popov, an old communist from the village Vladovo.

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

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

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

fighters from these villages who joined the battalion could be counted on the fingers of one hand...!

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

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

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

Bitola was boiling with partisans.

Of course, we were not guests here. We were in our own free Macedonian state, a federal unit of Federal Democratic Yugoslavia. The People’s Republic of Macedonia state and Party leadership was our leadership, we accepted it as ours... The reputation of the governing people here, as were Tito’s governing people, was enormous. We felt absolutely positive...

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

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

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

10 However, one should bear in mind that the CPG, during its CPG Central Committee X Plenum Declaration, in January 1944, and with the Treaty of Lebanon in May 1944, was the first to reach out and grab Yugoslav territories, demanding from its Allies “strategic security” for a Greek border to the north. This was confirmed by the fact that the CPY appeared to be conducting “defensive maneuvers” against such a move...

Dragan Kliakich, General Markos, Globus - Zagreb 1979, p. 75.

11 KOMEP 5/1943, editorial article.

12 STARMATH-STARMAATA, Hronikon tis ethnikes antistasis 1940-1944, (To arms – to arms, chronicles of the national resistance 1940-1944), PLE (Party publishing department) edition, 1967, p. 27.

13 Neos Kosmos no. 9/1950.

14 STARMATA - STARMATA... p. 587.

15

16

17 Sources... cit. volume and book, p. 263.

18 From the “Wehrmacht Secret Archives”, v/k “To Vima”, July 11, 1963, or: Hristo Andonovski, “Macedonians under Greece in the fight against fascism”, Skopje 1968, p. 214.

19 STARMATA - STARMATA... for more information on this see pages 330-333.

20 SARANDA HRONIA TU KKE (Forty years of CPG), Party edition 1958, p. 715.

21 Evangelos Averov, “Fotia ke tsekuri” (Fire and ax), Athens 1975, p. 171.

22 Saranda hronia tu KKE... p. 147.

23 “Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war”, Volume I, Doc. 191, p. 522.

24 TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952, vasika dokumenta,... p. 75.

25 Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War, Volume I, Doc. 104, p. 407. The proclamation of the “Greek character” of Macedonia, by itself, was no guarantee that there would be no unpleasant surprises. The presence of the Macedonian national liberation movement, so to speak, was felt in the air all over the Macedonian territory. It was smoldering... So there was an imperative need to defend the “Greek character” of Macedonia, which demanded and required a series of successful preventive measures to stop the initiation and development of the Macedonian national liberation movement and, above all, to prevent the creation of Macedonian military units as was done in neighbouring Yugoslavia...

26 TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952,... p. 268.

27 Sources for the liberation war and revolution in Macedonia, 1941-1945, vol. I, book two, p. 320.

28 Instead of forming a military unit August 2, 1944 (Ilinden), as expected, Renos Mihaleas, ELAS IX Division representative, formed the Kostur-Lerin ELAS Macedonian battalion. This was done about a month and a half after the Voden Macedonian battalion was formed. Because of this Mihaleas ran into trouble with Leonidas Stringos, CPG Bureau secretary for Macedonia and Thrace. This is

what Renos Mihaleas wrote about that moment: “The Secretary: ‘Why did you establish an entire battalion when the order was to form only one unit in Lerin and Voden Regions...?’ Renos: ‘And what would have been the damage if divisions were formed...?’ The Secretary: ‘You are naïve. If the Macedonians had divisions, we Greeks would not be in Macedonia...!’ ...” (I have personally seen a copy of this document at INI.)

29 Dragan Kliakich, “General Markos” p. 75.

30 Letovikov in its entirety is published in Volume I of the edition “Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war”. Here I quoted Hristo Andonovski, “The truth about Aegean Macedonia”, Skopje 1971, which in fact has an original copy of this leaflet.

31 Dragan Kliakich, “General Markos”, p. 75.

32 Ibid.

33 Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war, Volume I, Doc. 174, p. 238.

34 NEOS COSMOS number 2/1957, p. 8.

35 See: “The CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974”, documents on the attitude of the Communist Party of Greece towards the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974, selection, editorial, commentary and translation by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian Archives edition, Skopje 1982, p. VII...

36 In connection with this, see “Deep Night, the dawn is born”. I spoke about the circumstances under which TOMO was formed in detail twelve years ago:

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

Dzhodzho approved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We had a long talk.

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

I remained in the village and allowed myself plenty of time to think. I recruited their sons into the battalion and then took them over the

border to the People's Republic of Macedonia. What was I going to do from here on...?

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

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

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

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

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

One by one they gathered until late night. Fifteen in total came to see me. I appointed each TOMO board president of the TOMO

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

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

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

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

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

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

I stayed in a single room in a home in Staravina with a window facing Kaimakchalan. I sat there looking outside, thinking and

writing. I recorded many events in which I was directly and indirectly involved. I described the life of a Macedonian person and their existence under the Greek regimes. And, thanks to my friend Hristo Andonovski, I am now again in possession of the manuscript which I wrote at that time. I have been meaning to offer it for publication.

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

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

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

As I mentioned earlier, at that time I had high regards for Mitrevski because of the trust the leadership of the Republic of Macedonia had placed on him. I appreciated and respected that simply and openly. And that, it seemed to me, is why I too was appointed to NOF's top leadership body.

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

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

37 “Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war”, Volume II, Doc. 25, p. 56.

38 Ibid, Doc. 47, p. 91.

39 Ibid, Doc. 54, p. 102.

40 Ibid, Doc. 54, p. 103.

41 Ibid, Doc. 54, p. 104.

42 Because of a heart defect that I was born with I could not walk fast or for long periods of time. As we were descending down the mountains to Lerin Valley, we passed the Lerin-Psoderi road. The exertion was too much for my heart so I passed out and remained unconscious. Because the group was in a hurry to cross the river and take shelter in a grove on the other side, it left me behind. The group was led by Hristo Kolenchev-Kokinos. Because it was close to the city Lerin, crossing of the river was very dangerous. However, one of the people in the group named Argir, from the Kostur villages, was very surprised that a “senior member of the NOF leadership” would be left behind just like that. He immediately left the safety of the grove on his own initiative and came back to see me. It was sometime after midnight and by then I was already conscious but fearing I might lose contact with the group I lay where they had left me. With Argir’s help I managed to eventually join the group. While in the grove they had decided to take a break and wait for us... A few days later, after I finished the work which I was sent to do, I had to cross the border with a special courier. While I was with the NOF District Committee for Lerin Region, I was told that Hristo Kolenchev-Kokinos, who knew the paths well, was going back over the border that same evening, and that I should go with him... I didn’t say anything. That night we took to the road.

It was about midnight when I began to feel the signs of exhaustion coming over me after which I suggested to Kolenchev that we take a ten or fifteen minute rest break. Nervously and through his clenched teeth Kolenchev whispered to me:

“We can’t, the border is in front of us...” and continued to walk away and disappeared in the dark of night...

Years later he made a false statement against me, accusing me of being an official soviet agent...!

I never had any other contact with Kolenchev. The only thing we had in common was that we both lived and grew up in Lerin. He was two years behind me in the gymnasium which means that we did not play together nor did we do our homework together. We never had the opportunity or any reason to argue or to hold a grudge. During the national liberation war and during the Macedonian national liberation movement I was working in Voden Region and he was working here in Lerin and Kostur Regions. This walking and returning across the border was the first and only time we were together. So, I don’t know why he had an almost pathological antipathy towards me...?

I have not written anything about this episode. That is why I did it here and now... it was an unpleasant episode in my life...

43 Vangel Aianovski-Oche, “Aegean Storms”, INI 1975, p. 233.

44 Ibid, p. 4-6.

45 “Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war”, vol. III, p. 378, 380 and 381, or document number 171.

46 Those working for the organization “Ohrana” were members of a counter-autonomist military formation based in the city Voden. To put the Macedonians down, our Greek friends were accusing the leading activists of the Macedonian national liberation movement of being members of “Ohrana”. This was immediately after the Macedonian units split from ELAS, which the CPG Bureau for Macedonia declared “a treacherous counterrevolutionary act”. So, it is no surprise that General Markos, in his biography by Dragan Kliakich, called these Macedonian units a “Trojan horse” in ELAS which played a treacherous role! On page 74 of his biography Markos had Kliakich write that “Dimchev, the agent of the Bulgarian organization ‘Ohrana’ managed to round up Macedonians

in Voden and in about a month or two he gathered about 700 of them. He then armed them and, alongside the Germans, had them terrorizing the population... Dimchev, the Bulgarian agent, stubbornly believed that the Macedonians would be inclined and would succeed in winning over a large number of Macedonians. That is why he tried to establish a connection with the Macedonian partisan battalion that operated in Kaimakchalan. Dimchev met with Dzhodzhov Urdov, partisan commissar of the Macedonian battalion, in the village Teovo, near Voden. Dimchev then suggested that the Macedonian battalion join the counter-band units while Commissar Dzhodzhov asked that all counter-band units join his battalion, except for those who committed violent acts... They would be brought to justice...” and so on.

As we can see from the above, Markos would like us to believe that there was a connection between Bulgarian agent Dimchev and the ELAS Macedonian battalion! This, however, was nothing more than a deliberate low blow on Markos's part hoping to mislead the uninformed reader into believing that the Macedonian battalion had really played a treacherous role in the ranks of ELAS. But in reality things were completely different. At that time, that is in mid-September after Bulgaria had switched sides, because of his position Markos knew very well that Andon Kalchev, organizer and head of “Ohrana” and the autonomist movement in Western Macedonia, demanded that he be accepted by ELAS so that he could fight against the Germans. In a letter dated September 16, 1944, Gianis Antoniadis-Teofilos, member of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace, wrote to Leonidas Stringos-Aleksos, then secretary of the same Bureau, “that Kalchev”, among other things, “wanted to come over to our side. Concerning this, we are negotiating with him to also bring over his supporters...!” (See: THE CPG AND THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION 1918-1974, Skopje, 1982, Doc 93, p. 233, edited by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski.) Dzhodzhov and Dimchev met at Dimchev's request within the framework of these negotiations. As is well-known, the negotiations between Teofilos and Kalchev and between Dzhodzhov and Dimchev ended in success. I don't know what took place in the Teofilos and Kalchev negotiations but I do know exactly what took place between Dzhodzhov and Dimchev. Simply put we could not allow or accept entangling the Macedonian fighters in Voden Region to become part

of the “Ohrana” units, as Dimchev had demanded. Our position was to disband “Ohrana”, take over its weapons and accept those who wanted to join our battalion. Those who didn’t want to join and had not committed any crimes were free to leave and go home. Those who had committed crimes would be punished. Dimchev, however, saw no guarantee for his own safety in all this and rejected our proposal. When the “Ohrana” fighters discovered why their leaders would not allow them to join our battalion, they made their own decision. They deserted “Ohrana” and joined our battalion en masse... To use Marko’s words, “Dimchev was left in a lurch”. In other words “Ohrana” was liquidated without firing a shot! This left Marko’s accusations, mentioned above, baseless...

47 As was mentioned earlier, the Asfalia (Greek security services) handed Zahariadis over to the Gestapo in May 1941. The Gestapo handed him to the British Intelligence Service in May 1945. Zahariadis was not harmed in any way during that time. After a three-week stay in London, on May 29, 1945, a special English plane took him from London to Athens.

Zahariadis returned their favour admirably. Namely:

In the presence of the still large and well-organized democratic force, headed by the CPG-EAM, the British had a great need for a well-executed propaganda campaign that would alleviate the consequences of an open British military intervention against ELAS.

In other words the British were in need of strengthening their relations with the Greeks in control, who would provide them with a comfortable return to Greece with as little military forces and cost as possible...

This was a great propaganda offensive of huge scale and duration and, unfortunately, of huge effect. But Zahariadis, it should be recognized, performed admirably and with great skill not only through the CPG but also on behalf of the CPG. By flashing around the Greek-Bulgarian fictional scarecrow known as the “Slavic danger” to Greece, he effectively justified the British military and political presence in Greece, as a “national need”, to secure Greece’s northern borders.

And by doing this he managed to suppress the Greek people's resistance, which then undermined the uprising and DAG's victory, leading to its final defeat and to the defeat of the democratic forces (the Left) in Greece... which was the British goal all along...

After the fact, after the situation, as was carried out by Secretary General Zahariadis, was analyzed during the CPG Central Committee's VI expanded plenary session, held in March 1956, Zahariadis was removed from his position as leader of the Party. He was later exiled from Greece.

He persistently, but without success, strived to obtain a visa to return to Greece so that he could be with his friends the domestic reactionaries and with his sponsors the Anglo-Americans.

He even went on a hunger strike, but without success. He died in 1973 lonely, completely abandoned and despised...

48 "Istoria", 2/1981, p. 293.

49 TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952... p. 149.

50 "Istoria", 2/1981, p. 291.

51 Vangel Aianovski-Oche, "Aegean Storms", p. 234.

52 Dragan Kliakich, "General Markos", p. 122.

53 Ibid.

54 "Glasnik" 2-3/1977, p. 204.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 This was written by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski on page 294.

58 From the interview with the Zagreb-based VUS, January 29, 1977, p. 53.

59 DIMOKRATIKOS STRATOS, organ of DAG Headquarters, no. 1/1949, p. 27.

60 Dragan Kliakich, “General Markos”, p. 249.

61 The following document is characteristic of that behaviour. A MEMORANDUM from 161 Macedonians, prisoners in the Pavlos Melas prisons in Solun, was given to the United Nations Inquiry Commission. The MEMORANDUM was protesting against the Greek political right defaming NOF, alleging that NOF was reportedly fighting for Macedonia’s Autonomy. It was well-known by then however, that NOF, the Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement, fought against and liquidated the autonomist counter-band movement that was organized and managed by the occupiers. The MEMORANDUM was dated March 1, 1947.

The MEMORANDUM was handed over to the UN Inquiry Commission by Kostas Siriniotis, a Greek lawyer, journalist and director of the Solun Party newspaper LAIKI FONI, an organ of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace. Kostas Siriniotis was also a prisoner serving a jail sentence in the same jail as the Macedonians, when he was interviewed by the Inquiry Commission regarding the situation in Greece.

Considering the fact that the NOF and AFZH members, working in the field from one end of Macedonia to the other, rejected their Greek names and took back their Macedonian names, one cannot help but wonder: “why did these 161 Macedonians sign their protest Memorandum with their “Slavophone Greek” names starting with Germanos Epitropoulos, Simos Vosenidis, Evtimios Usilkis, Simos Manialidis, Pantelis Kosmasopoulos, etc., and ending with Ioanis Karaianis, Evstatio Mitskas, Periklis Kirzatis, K. Doinidis, Dimitrios Pirzonas, Dimitrios Mitsos and Nikos Zirtas...? It is not hard to see that Kostas Sirinitis, the official CPG lawyer, was involved here. He “expertly” explained to the Macedonians that in order for the Memorandum to be credible and take root, it must be signed with the names that were recorded in the prison

documentation. “It had to be that way...” and by doing so this Greek “patriot” managed to swindle the Macedonians into representing themselves as “Slavophone Greeks” and NOF as a Greek-Supremacist or “Grkoman” movement... This MEMORANDUM was included among the 250 other documents in the collection: CPG AND THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION 1918-1974, in Dr. Risto Kiriazovski’s editorial, commentary and translation under order number 173, p. 406-409. Kiriazovski noted that the signatures were original...!

62 “Istoria”, 2/1981, p. 294.

63 Ibid.

64 TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952, p. 195. Or: DIMOKRATIKOS STRATOS 2/49.

65 Ibid, p. 74.

66 KOEM leadership resolution, brochure, “Nea Elada”, 1949, p. 8.

67 On p. 174-175 and 179-184 in the famous INI edition “Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece” by Naum Peiov, all these villages are identified by name and region and by the number of inhabitants that remained or disappeared.

68 Ibid, p. 271.

69 TO KKE AP TO 1918-1952, p. 110.

70 Ibid, p. 205.

71 “NOF was created by Tito and Kulishevski... Its founding leadership core consisted of Mitrevski, Keramidziev, Gotse, Rakovski and others, with the sole aim of enhancing Belgrade’s interests in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Belgrade’s intent was to use the ‘Slavo-Macedonian question’ for the realization of its own national plans - the accession of Aegean Macedonia...” Zahariadis wrote this. It was then adopted by a CPG Macedonian special counsel. After that it was reviewed and accepted by the CPG

Central Committee Politburo. This is how the Greek side saw and understood things. Also see *ibid*, p. 271.

72 “Istoria” / 1981, p. 292.

73 Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war, Vol. VI, Doc. 26, p. 71.

74 *Ibid*, p. 13, Doc. no. 6.

75 *Ibid*, p. 74, Doc. no. 26.

76 *Ibid*, p. 55, Doc. no. 20.

77 *Ibid*, 54, Doc. no. 19.

78 *Ibid*, p. 120-121, Doc. no. 55.

79 *Ibid*, p. 112, Doc. no. 49.

80 See part of the abstract in Volume VI of “Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war” edition, p. 147, Doc. no. 70.

81 *Ibid*, documents number 8, 9, 10, and 11, p. 15-18.

82 “Istoria” no. 2/1981, p. 296.

83 I informed the publisher, the Archives of Macedonia, by letter in connection with this. In a letter of reply, Director Aleksiev informed me that the document was taken from the DAG Headquarters newspaper and was published on the basis of the materials preserved from the Prague Congress. He suggested to me, that if I was in possession of my speech, to provide him with a transcript. I immediately did that. But because my speech was published in its entirety in the Congress newspaper, I requested to see the materials from the Prague Congress and on the basis of that it was revealed that it was a forgery. They took my telephone number so that they could inform me when to come back. After a month or two passed, I stopped believing their promises...

- 84 Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war, vol. VI, p. 337.
- 85 KOEM leadership resolution, 20.6.1949, brochure, ed. "Elevteri Elada", June 1949, p. 12.
- 86 Ibid, p. 5.
- 87 Ibid, p. 13.
- 88 Aianovski, "Aegean Storms", p. 406.
- 89 "Istoria" no. 2/1981, p. 289.
- 90 Ibid, p. 290-291.
- 91 Ibid, p. 289.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Josif Popovski, "The Macedonian question in the pages of 'Rizospastis' between the two wars", "Kultura" - Skopje 1982, p. 236 and 239.
- 94 "Istoria" 2/1981, p. 292.
- 95 Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war, vol. VI, p. 481.
- 96 Ibid, Volume I, p. 56-57.
- 97 Ibid, Volume V, p. 45 and volume VI, p. 154.
- 98 Ibid, Vol. VI, p. 458.
- 99 Purchased by INI.

100 At that time the editorial board of "Sovremenost" (Contemporary) publicly accepted to publish one my texts. Unfortunately they did not do that, even with a positive review from academician Mihailo Apostolski. Not less characteristic was the case with the "Glasnik" (Messenger) editorial board. I offered them two

articles which they reviewed and accepted for publication in the next issue of “Glasnik”. A few months later, “Glasnik” came out without my articles. With help from the director of INI, I sent them a letter asking for an explanation. I wanted to know why the “accepted” articles were rejected. They responded with... “silence!” On the occasion of the 38th anniversary of the formation of the Voden battalion, I offered a text to “Nova Makedonija” in which I described the conditions under which the ELAS Voden Macedonian Battalion was founded and acted. They asked Dr. Orde Ivanovski to review it. Ivanovski did not review it because he claimed “it was not in his field”. They intended to give it to Dr. Risto Kiriazovski but I told them to “give it to anyone but him!” and I explained why. The text was not only stopped, but photocopies of it were seen at Vangel Aianovski-Oche and Dr. Risto Kiriazovski’s place. That’s how it was... they operated above the law...

101 Purchased by INI.

102 “For as long as the national consciousness of the Macedonian people was maturing and the national liberation movement was getting better on its feet and in the struggle against foreign propaganda and against armed actions in Macedonia, even the neighbouring aspirants around Macedonia became more concerned and manifested their aspirations towards Macedonia even more openly, because... they knew that the Macedonians were not Serbians or Bulgarians but equally far from it. All of this forced responsible political circles to leave the old road that Macedonians are Serbians and Bulgarians, which would not bring them the desired results, and try to come to an agreement on how to divide Macedonia. This new view manifested itself in the ‘Serbian-Bulgarian Agreement’ with their 1912 ‘secret annex’...” (Dr. Petar Stoianov, Macedonia during the Balkan and First World War 1912-1918, INI Skopje 1969, p. 229.)

When the 1912 “Serbian-Bulgarian Agreement” was created, Milovan G. Milovanovich, then president of the Serbian government, said: “We are ready for everything and we will enter into any combination, with God or with the devil if we need to, in order to resolve the Macedonian question in our favour, without

which Serbia cannot live...” (Branko Perovich et al., *First Balkan way 1912-1913*, Belgrade 1959, p. 84.)

Dr. Stoian Danev, then President of the Bulgarian National Assembly, recognizing the goals of the Macedonian National Liberation Movement, openly admitted that: “Bulgaria declared the war because the Macedonian Bulgarians had lost their cause and went their own way!” (Dimitar Mitrev, *Literature and the past*, Skopje, 1959, p. 103.)

103 On p. 33-35 of this text I cited the testimonies of Evangelos Gianopoulos and Evangelos Averos. Evangelos Gianopoulos was former commander of an ELAS battalion and now a minister in the PAOK government. Evangelos Gianopoulos was head of the opposition in the Greek parliament. This text illustrates beautifully why, to their dismay, the CPG did not let them take a change on taking power, or just “grabbing” the government which, according to Minister Gianopoulos, they could have done in a matter of four hours...

104 A whole decade later, General Markos, in a special interview with the Athens newspaper TA NEA and with the Solun newspaper ELINIKOS VORAS, finally said: “Zahariadis loved that catastrophe... He worked for it with a plan... We were betrayed by the leadership of the Party!” (See ELINIKOS VORAS, August 3, 1978.) Markos also said: “At the time I still had not come to the conclusion that Zahariadis was a provocateur... Zahariadis played the English and American game...” Dim. Gusidis, a correspondent asked Markos: “What evidence do you have for all the accusations you made today? Are there any documents...?” Markos’s reply was: “I have documents... And the events speak for themselves...!” (See TA NEA, August 22, 1978)...

105 Written in the capital edition of the PLE (Party publishing department) “ST ARMATA - ST ARMATA”, *hronikon tis etnikis Antistasis 1940-1944*, (To arms – to arms, chronicle of the national resistance 1940-1944), 1967, p. 24, was: “One could see that the ARMED STRUGGLE WAS NEGLECTED. It was not well-organized and promoted, although there were possibilities for this with objective and favourable conditions!”

106 As I have already mentioned: on behalf of the CPG Central Committee, the Party leadership in its Proclamation dated July 2, 1943, on the occasion of the dissolution of the Comintern, announced that: “Waiting for the ultimate goal - the Socialist Party of the Proletariat and the Communist Party of Greece are today fighting for national liberation, and then, after the war is over, they will fight for a people’s democracy...” (See: ST ARMATA... p. 587.) Meaning, the fight for the social liberation of the Greek people was suspended... was not led... was “put off” for after the war.

107 The Wehrmacht Secret Archives, v/k TO VIMA dated July 11, 1963, according to Hristo Andonovski “MACEDONIANS UNDER GREECE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM”, 1940-1944, Skopje 1968, p. 214.

108 ST ARMATA... p. 587.

109 Sarafis, O ELAS, p. 120...

110 NEOS COSMOS, No. 9/1950 Bardzhotas’s article: I POLITIKI STELEHON TU KKE STON KERO TIS ETHNIKIS ANTISTASIS (CPG Personnel Policy During the National Resistance)...

111 Sarafis 142...

112 Written in the August 16, 1943 edition of KOMEPEP (abbreviation for KOMUNISTIKI EPITEORISI - Communist Revision) No. 16, was: “There is no longer national confusion in Greek Macedonia... The Slavic and Turkish populations have been evicted according to the conventions... The Greek population has been collected from all countries in the Balkans and from Asia Minor and brought to Greek Macedonia... which became as Greek as any other Greek region of Old Greece...” (p. 331.) At about the same time in the summer of 1943, RIZOSPASTIS published its renowned thesis in which, among other things, was said: “Macedonia, after the exchange of populations, is as Greek as the Athens district of Attica...!”

113 Sarafis, O ELAS, 1946, p. 331...

114 AEGEAN MACEDONIA IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR, Volume I, document number 191, p. 522...

115 Ibid, document number 104, p. 407...

116 The CPG Founding Congress, in November 1918, called for the right to self-determination for the Greek population outside the Greek state (Cyprus, Northern Epirus, etc.) but did not do the same for Macedonian people who came under Greek rule five years earlier. In the first six years after it was founded, the CPG programs did not have a single word about the existence or rights of the Macedonian people. There was more to it than that... The CPG treated the Macedonian people as... Greeks... The first time the CPG recognized the existence of the Macedonian people inside Greece and their rights to self-determination was during the CPG's 3rd Extraordinary Congress held in December 1924, in the presence of Comintern representatives in the Balkan Communist Federation. Greek leaders accepted this recognition in the spirit of the new line. In other words to do the same in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia as was done in Vardar (Serbian occupied) and in Pirin (Bulgarian occupied) Macedonia (VMRO (United)). But instead of doing that, the Greeks were very careful not to place the Macedonian people under the influence of the new line and to avoid creating a Macedonian liberation movement. But, in response to pressures from the above-mentioned international forums, the CPG in its V Congress, held in March 1934, declared that there were no Macedonians in Greece. The CPG did this through a delegate from a densely populated Macedonian area in Western Macedonia. Delegate K. Vermitis emphasized that there was "no basis" for a Macedonian national question in Macedonia because the Macedonian people were already Hellenized and did not exist as a separate non-Greek nation. (Vermitis's comments were published in the March 6th, 1934 partisan journal "MARKSSISTIKI BIBLIOTIKI", number 6/1934.) However, after this congress, the CPG was forced to join the VMRO (United) formation, which in Greece turned out to be a fictitious organization. The CPG simply told a number of Macedonians in its ranks that from now on they were the VMRO (United). The stillborn VMRO (United) Central Committee was absolutely prevented from doing anything. Their

printing press with Cyrillic letters, which VMRO (United) purchased and Andrea Chipov managed with the intention of establishing contact with the broad Macedonian masses by issuing a Macedonian newspaper, was seized: “The conditions in Greece did not allow the issuance of a Slavic newspaper...!” VMRO (United) also tried to import the newspapers “Macedonian Works” and “Balkan Federation” from abroad but soon that too was prohibited by the CPG Party leadership (Zahariadis). The person who purchased and distributed the newspapers in Solun, a man named Georgi Krontselchev, was beaten and immediately liquidated by the police...

117 For the declaration made during the X Plenum in January 1944. See: SARANTA HRONIA TU KKE (Forty years of CPG), Central Committee of the CPG 1958 edition, p. 505, or: ST ARMATA... p. 586...

118 The eighth chapter (or article) of the Lebanon Agreement called for “full national rights for Greece”. According to this chapter (or article) this practically meant: “Creating a new free and Greater Greece”. (See: HRONIKON TU AGONA; ST ARMATA ST ARMATA, ISTORIA TIS ETHNIKIS ANTISTASIS, edition “GIANAKOS”, volume III p. 200.) As I mentioned earlier, a few months before this, in January 1944, the CPG leadership, during its CPG Central Committee X Plenum, made this line the official Party line “for strategic borders”. In the spirit of all this, a document entitled “Greece Has the Right!” came to light, and was published by the press. It was then distributed all throughout Greece as a leaflet in which it was specifically requested that:

a) The northern borders of Greece are to include Northern Epirus (Albanian territory-PR), because with the secret London Treaty of 1915 and with the Venizelos-Tigoni Treaty of 1919, i.e. when Albania’s division was planned, this area was granted to Greece.

b) The entire mountain range in the Rhodope Mountains and the Sultan Dere, Egri Dere, Dri Dere, Ali Chelebi plains, in other words, the entire Pirin Macedonia region should be given to Greece in order to secure its northern borders.

c) Regulating Greece's borders towards Yugoslavia so that Greece could have an opportunity to protect the flow, through which the German forces penetrated Greece in 1941. Thus, the Solun Hinterland would have to be expanded.

d) The issue of borders towards neighbouring and friendly Turkey was not settled. But if the question regarding the Dardanelles and Constantinople were to be raised, Greece's views on that issue, which have long been known, should not be ignored.

e) The Greek borders should include all unrepresented Greek populations in the Dodecanese and Cyprus which, historically, ethnologically and socially, are part of the Greek people... (See: Athens newspaper "Eleftheria", February 6, 1945, also see: Hristo Andonovski: "Macedonians under Greece in the fight against fascism", INI, 1968, pp. 154-155)...

119 ST ARMATA... p. 330-332, according to Naum Peiov: "Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece", INI 1968, p. 187 and so on...

120 An official German archival document was published in Greece: "The Churchill-Hitler Agreement" regarding the free and uninterrupted withdrawal of German forces from Greece. About that the Athens newspaper TA NEA wrote: "The British fox has achieved a double goal - it left the German forces to fight against the Russians and seized Greece unhindered..." (TA NEA, January 14, 1978, page 12, column "To vivlion")...

121 As a thesis for its "40th Anniversary" the CPG, during its CPG Central Committee IX Plenum, held in August 1958, recognized that the Greek Armed Forces, with "The Caserta Agreement, were placed under the command of English General Skobi", and "that prohibited ELAS from entering big cities and important strategic regions including Athens, Central and Eastern Macedonia, Epirus, etc...." (See: SARANDA HRONIA TU KKE, CPG Central Committee 1958 edition, p. 715)...

122 It was characteristic for Siantos and Partsalidis to have signed an agreement which they were not authorized to sign. As it was

well-known the CPG Central Committee Politburo had authorized these two to sign the agreement which called for the dissolution of ELAS, but it was supposed to be done under “unconditional general amnesty”, which was intended to protect all from prosecution including themselves, members of the CPG and ELAS fighters. According to “Hronikon tu agona”: “CPG Central Committee Politburo representatives Georgios Siantos and Mitsos Partsalidis... have violated the condition for a general unconditional amnesty, which was set by the Politburo. The Varkiza Agreement which called for disarming the movement in fact turned out to be unconditional capitulation.... On the one hand it gave the English the opportunity to restore the Monarcho-Fascists in Greece so that they could completely break down the people’s democratic forces and consolidate their power in Greece and, on the other, created a serious obstacle to the rapid political and organizational consolidation for the people’s democratic forces...!” (Party edition of HRONIKON TU AGONA (Chronicle of War) 1878-1951, p. 49.)

123 See: TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952, p. 219. OR: NEOS COSMOS number 10/1950.

124 See: TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952, p. 110...

125

126 The Resolution reads: “The Plenum proclaims that with our presence and with support from our two great friends - England and Russia, our peaceful development depends on the Greek brotherly agreement and democratic cooperation with the northern Balkan democracies...” Here Russia is mentioned after England. But this was just diplomatic courtesy designed to blur and conceal the truth. Namely, in his opening statement Zahariadis, as I already mentioned, was very specific about the English presence in Greece as being necessary “to ensure our positions and our borders in the north...” (see: Brochure APOFASIS TIS 12 Olomelias, telikos logos Nikos Zahariadis - 12th PLENUM DECISION, opening statement and conclusion by Nikos Zahariadis, CPG Central Committee 1946 edition, p. 21. OR: FORTY YEARS OF CPG, p. 645)...

127 NEOS COSMOS 4-5 / 1957. Or: Hristo Andonovski, THE TRUTH ABOUT AEGEAN MACEDONIA, 1971, p. 226.

128 NEOS COSMOS 4-5 / 1957. Hristo Andonovski, THE TRUTH ABOUT AEGEAN MACEDONIA, p. 197...

129 CHRONOLOGY, Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war, Republic Board of the Union of Fighters edition, 1974, p. 141...

130 NEOS COSMOS 4-5 / 1957. Hristo Andonovski, THE TRUTH ABOUT AEGEAN MACEDONIA, p. 226...

131 On October 18, 1944, Georgios Papandreou left Cairo and arrived in Athens with the government in exile. After two reorganizations, one on October 24 and the other in November 2, 1944, his government fell. The next government, headed by Nikolaos Plastiras, also fell after two months in power. It was replaced by an “administrative government” headed by a naval officer named Petros Vulgaris. After reorganizing on August 11, 1945, Petros Vulgaris was forced to withdraw from power on October 17, 1945. Archbishop Damaskinos, the regent, comes to power after that but only for two weeks. On November 1, 1945, Georgios Kanelopoulos managed to form a new government, but only for three weeks. After that it fell too. There was great need to legitimize and strengthen the power of the reactionaries but it had to be done through “elections”. For that reason the British, on November 22, 1945, chose their own candidate and party - the Liberals... headed by Themistoklis Sofoulis. At this critical juncture the CPG (Zahariadis), on November 25, 1945, during public meetings, advised (see COMEP 12/1945), both the civilian citizens and those serving in the armed forces, that they had the right, by all means possible, to prevent a coup d’etat instigated by the political right by observing and following Sofoulis’s directives. By doing this the CPG gave this government the general support it needed to carry out its own “election coup” by “forging” the March 31, 1946 election... The CPG-EAM’s lack of participation in the elections, which no doubt was a staged and significant maneuver, held back huge masses of people from voting and allowed the British and the domestic reactionaries to gain victory and to develop legitimacy, which “was granted to the Monarchists of the Populist Party, and

“LEGALIZED” the way to restoring the Monarchy and strengthening the power of the counterrevolution in Greece; a prerequisite for finally breaking the Left. This was the Anglo-American game played by the CPG, especially by Markos and Zahariadis... the events speak for themselves... we were betrayed by the CPG leadership...!

132 TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952, p. 271...

133 Ibid, p. 149...

134 “Those who were not mobilized were left behind to build fortifications, or were left behind due to illness. With this order, practically ALL MACEDONIANS FROM LERIN and KOSTUR REGIONS were mobilized...” said General Markos (Kliakich, 250).

135 The following was said during the CPG Central Committee V Plenum, held in January 1949: “The Slavo-Macedonian people in Northern Greece gave their all to the struggle with great heroism and self-sacrifice which aroused our admiration. There should be no doubt that when DAG comes out victorious and we win the people’s revolution, the Macedonian people will accomplish their complete national establishment as they wish, for the blood they are shedding today...” (TO KKE AP 1931-1952, p. 195. Or: DEMOCRATIKOS STRATOS, No. 2/1949.)

136 This was also expressed during the CPG 3rd Congress held in December 1924! (KKE, episima kimena - CPG, official texts, vol. I, 1918-1924, PLE 1964, p. 515)... After the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum was held on January 30-31, 1949, the NOF Central Council II Plenum was held on February 3-4, 1949. Zahariadis, who personally led NOF affairs at the time, “proposed” a Resolution which was then adopted by open vote (raising of the arm). Among other things, the Resolution said: “The Second Plenum has decided to convene a Second NOF Congress in March 1949... The Second NOF Congress will proclaim the new NOF programming principles that represent the century-long aspiration of our people. The second congress will announce the unification of the Macedonian people in a single independent state in the framework of a People’s

Democratic Balkan Federation...!” (See: NEPO, Turkish and KOREN, February 15, 1949)...

137 As is well-known, the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece passed a law on August 27, 1948, to allow the formation of a high military council which then took over the military leadership and DAG’s other activities. Markos was suspended as supreme commander. On the same day a special Decree was enacted, on the basis of which eight divisions were formed from the overall DAG forces. Three divisions, the 9th, 10th, and 11th were formed in Western Macedonia, where the Macedonian people were a large majority. The rest were formed as follows: The 8th was formed in Epirus, the 1st in Thessaly, the 2nd in Rumeli, the 3rd in the Peloponnesus and the 6th in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. It is true that the divisions in Western Macedonia had a certain percentage of Greeks in their ranks but the divisions in the neighbouring areas such as Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Thessaly and Epirus, especially in Epirus, also had a larger percentage of Macedonians in their ranks. The case of the 8th Division in Epirus was characteristic: The command of this division was forced to order the Macedonians not to speak their own language, not to sing or play Macedonian songs, not to dance Macedonian folk dances, and to represent themselves as Greeks... because this was, they were told, in the interests of the struggle! Namely, because the uninformed population in Epirus, under enemy influence, was fleeing from the formations believing that they were “international Slav brigades” that allegedly penetrated Greece from the territory of its northern neighbours. This shows indisputably that this division was composed mainly of Macedonian fighters. Therefore, the truth is that Macedonia became the main focus of the revolution, and the Macedonians fighters and people represented DAG’s main strike force...

138 TO KKE AP TO 1931-1952, p. 272...

139 I used quotation marks here because this was the title of a text belonging to Dr. Risto Kiriazovski. It was very similar to the title “Attitudes and Practice” of the CPG leadership from Naum Peiov’s text...

140 A few months after I offered my booklet for publication to “Glasnik”, an INI organ, it was rejected and returned to me. However, some five or six months later, I read a column on “new books” in “Nova Makedonija” and there, among them, was the title “The Macedonian Revolutionary Press in Aegean Macedonia” by Risto Kiriazovski...