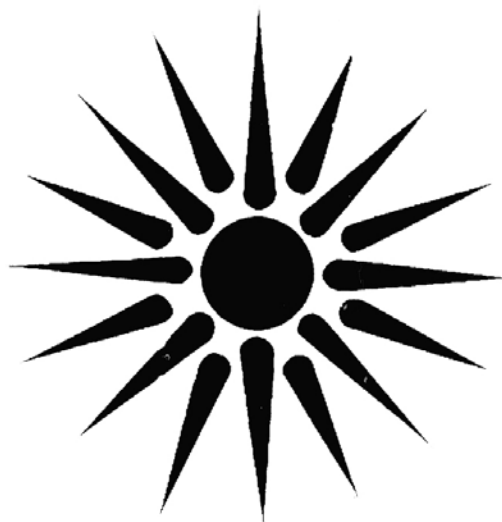


Paskal Mitrevski
and his Time
(1912-1978)



By
Tashko Mamurovski

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

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Published by:

Risto Stefov Publications
rstefov@hotmail.com

Toronto, Canada

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e-book edition

March 5, 2016

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Foreword

Paskal Mitrevski belongs to the plethora of most prominent Macedonian fighters, revolutionaries and leaders of the Macedonian people's national liberation movement (in a common struggle with the Greek progressive powers) who struggled to attain national and social freedom. As a well-educated intellectual, a graduate of law school and as a person with patriotic feelings, Paskal, with his youthful enthusiasm, dedicated the best years of his life to the Macedonian national liberation movement. Step by step he gradually rose to a high place in the hierarchy of the Macedonian leadership in the national movement, taking the role of secretary in the SNOF Kostur Region District Board, Chairman of the Macedonian Political Committee in Greece and later NOF Secretary in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and President of the Main Board of NOF Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. In 1949 he was appointed Minister of Supplies in the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. He was also part of the KOEM (Communist Organization in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia) and other leaderships. Later he, along with a group of NOF leaders, was accused by the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) of being "Tito's agent" in the ranks of NOD in Greece and they were sent to the Stalinist prisons and concentration camps.

Keeping the above in mind, we believe Paskal Mitrevski deserves special attention in the Macedonian historiography and for that reason we have decided to look at his life, his revolutionary work and his role in the affirmation of the Macedonian national struggle.

In the context of Paskal Mitrevski's life, we also want to examine events and conditions in which he lived, worked and fought because through his biography we can shed light on the Macedonian people's overall struggle, who, after Macedonia's 1913 partition, were led to very complicated and difficult circumstances in achieving their national ideals.

In this monograph we will try to show Paskal Mitrevski's exclusive revolutionary activities and contribution to the Macedonian people's national liberation movement in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, as well as his contributions after he was released

from the Soviet prisons, his repatriation in the Republic of Macedonia and his role in senior leadership positions.

We hope that this book will be a serious contribution to the clarification of Paskal Mitrevski's personality as well as highlight his work and contribution to the Macedonian people's national liberation movement. We hope that this book will do a lot more for this political and revolutionary leader, who dedicated his life to the struggle during the Liberation War and the Greek Civil War, than Macedonia's historical science has done thus far.

The first part of this book will deal with Paskal Mitrevski's biography during the struggle, especially during the period from 1941 to 1949. The second part will present selected articles written by him at that time, which will greatly complement his biography.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Paskal Mitrevski's family and all his comrades who helped in the preparation of this monograph, especially the late Mincho Fotev, NOMS Central Committee Secretary for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and member of the top NOF leadership for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia; Evdokia Foteva-Vera, AFZG Central Committee Secretary for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and member of the top NOF leadership for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia; the late Pavle Rakovski, member of the NOF Main Board for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia responsible for agitation and propaganda in NOF for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia; Lambro Cholakov, member of the NOF Main Board for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and NOF District Committee Secretary for Kostur and Prespa Regions; the late Lazo Poplazarov, member of the NOF Main Board for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and NOF District Committee Secretary for Lerin and Voden Regions; Todor Simovski, EPON Organizational District Committee Secretary for Voden, Katerini, Ber and Kukush Regions for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and official NOF functionary for Gumendzhe and Enidzhevardar Regions; Urania Iurukova, member of the NOF Central Council Executive Committee and a member of the AFZH Central Board Secretariat; Angel Gatsev, member of the MAO District Committee for Voden Region; Hristo Andonovski, participant in the Liberation War and

member of the immediate NOF leadership in the NOF agitation and propaganda department for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and the entire Political Commission leadership for Macedonia under Greece.

I would also like to warmly thank the reviewers of this book, the aforementioned Todor Simovski, professional member of the Institute of National History in Skopje, and Academic Dr. Alexander Matkovski, science adviser at the Institute of National History in Skopje.

I dedicate this book to all Macedonian fighters who fought and gave their lives for the Macedonian people's freedom, for the affirmation of the Macedonian national identity and for our dignity.

The author (Tashko Mamurovski)

PART ONE

Chapter One

Paskal Mitrevski and the Macedonian People's struggle in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in the period 1941-1949

Paskal Mitrevski's political affiliation

Paskal Mitrevski's first steps in the revolutionary movement in Greece and Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia

The Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, in their long struggle against their tormentors, have made many sacrifices on the altar of freedom for their homeland. Their heroism in the struggle for national freedom reached its peak during the Second World War (1941-1945) and especially during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), during the struggle waged against the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers and against the Greek postwar regimes. The Macedonian communists and revolutionaries were the initiators, founders and organizers of several communist Macedonian liberation organizations such as VMRO (united) (Created before World War II), MAO, SNOF, NOF, NOMS, AFZH, KOEM and others. Thanks to these organizations a strong nationwide Macedonian national liberation movement was created in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. In the struggle that was waged against the foreign occupiers and against the Greek reactionaries, together with the Greek progressive forces, the Macedonian patriots and anti-fascists from this part of Macedonia sacrificed over 20,000 people, many of whom were prominent fighters, organizers and leaders of the Macedonian military and political organizations, commanders and political commissars of partisan units.

Among the salient Macedonian fighters, communists, revolutionaries and organizers of the Macedonian national movement in this part of Macedonia, who until the end of his life honestly and consistently fought for the freedom of his people and who now occupies a prominent place, was Paskal Mitrevski. (The part that refers to Paskal Mitrevski's pre-war activity comes from

his own autobiography entitled “Biographical notes from the struggle”. This information is kept in the Paskal Mitrevski family private archives.)

Paskal Mitrevski was born in 1912 to a farming family in a small Macedonian village called Chuka, in Kostur Region. (For more geographical, historical and ethnic information about the village Chuka see Todor Simovski’s book “Settlements in Aegean Macedonia”, book 1. geographical, ethnic and economic characteristics. INI Skopje, 1978, p. 95.) A little later, together with his parents, Paskal moved to the city Rupishta, Kostur Region, where his father Gligor worked in the shoemaking business. Paskal finished high school in the city Kostur and received his law degree from the law faculty in Solun in 1938. (Paskal Mitrevski, biographical notes from the struggle.)

Thanks to his progressive ideas he was accepted by OKNE, the urban youth communist organization in Kostur in 1930, whose members were involved in organizing an illegal circle of that organization in the Kostur gymnasium.

During his studies at the Law Faculty in Solun, Paskal Mitrevski made connections with OKNE, the communist youth organization at the university, and joined its ranks. Because of his revolutionary activities, which he manifested in the ranks of OKNE in Solun, at some point he became involved with several CPG anti-fascist and communist youth organizations and then became a member of the CPG in the northeast part of Solun (St. Demetrius Kafe-Kule, Edi-Kule). (Paskal Mitrevski, Biographical notes from the struggle.) Depending on the specific situations and needs in the field, he was often entrusted with organizing, printing and distributing illegal party propaganda material.

However, in order to get a more accurate picture of Paskal Mitrevski’s revolutionary activities in the period from 1932 to 1936, we need to emphasize the fact that, despite his engagements in Solun where he was studying, he was also very active in Kostur Region during the summer holidays when he returned home. His summer activities greatly contributed to the preparation of favourable conditions for the CPG’s revival in Rupishta, in the

creation of local Party and youth organizations, and in the expansion of CPG ideals and political impact in the town and outside of it. (Paskal Mitrevski, contribution to his autobiographical memories kept in the Paskal Mitrevski family private archives.) For doing this he was prosecuted by the Greek authorities, convicted and imprisoned.

At this point it is important to mention that the Metaxas dictatorship came into power on August 4, 1936. It was introduced in Greece by fascist dictator, retired General Ioannis Metaxas. Consequently, almost all CPG organizations in Solun, Voden, Lerin, Kostur and other cities suffered a heavy blow. There were mass arrests and reprisals carried out against all communists and revolutionaries. Provocative actions were even taken inside the ranks of the CPG with the help of agents deposited there by the fascist regime. Under these difficult conditions Paskal Mitrevski was forced to conduct his illegal activities covertly while staying in Solun. He worked for the Party at the faculty up until the end of his studies, performing tasks under the new conditions.

Towards the end of his studies, in 1938, Paskal Mitrevski was arrested by the Greek authorities and jailed at central police headquarters in Solun where he was held for a month. After that he was escorted by armed guards to the Greek army divisional garrison in Kozheni where he was jailed for another twenty or so days. (Paskal Mitrevski, contribution to his autobiographical memories kept in the Paskal Mitrevski family private archives.)

Given that he had not done his compulsory military service, Paskal Mitrevski was sent to the 28th Regiment of the above mentioned divisional garrison in Kozheni where he was recruited by the regiment unit for criminals labeled “dangerous” communists. It is worth mentioning here that Paskal Mitrevski served in the same regiment as his fellow citizens Yannis Pachuras, Elia Papadimitriou-Liakos (originally from the village Kalevishta, Kostur Region), who later became a political commissar of a large ELAS unit and colonel in DAG, and Vasil Peiov from the village Gabresh, Kostur Region.

During the 18 months that Paskal Mitrevski spent in Kozheni, he was repeatedly tortured and humiliated. Under penalty he was also

forced to perform heavy labour duties unloading coal, wood, flour, manure, etc.

After his military service, Paskal Mitrevski returned to his family in Rupishta. By this time the Ioannis Metaxas regime had subdued all CPG organizations but had failed to fully break the Party in Kostur Region. Unfortunately it had suffered a heavy blow which had rendered it inactive. The communists in the region were forced to work under difficult conditions, relying on individual contacts for the activities that they carried out during this period. Paskal Mitrevski had managed to avoid being arrested because he was absent from Kostur during the summer of 1936 when all the arrests took place.

German attack on Greece and Greece's capitulation

Many Macedonians were mobilized into the Greek military to fight for foreign interests after the start of the Greek-Italian War on October 28, 1940. Paskal Mitrevski, along with many other Macedonians, was sent to fight the Italian aggressor at the Albanian Front.

In April 1941, after Greece was occupied by German troops, Paskal Mitrevski left the Albanian front and returned to his home where he later joined the anti-fascist struggle.

As was mentioned earlier, the local CPG Party organizations in Rupishta, and elsewhere in Kostur Region, were completely broken down by the former Greek regime. So an important question came to mind among the local communists and among the antifascists in general, and that was “what measures would have to be undertaken after Hitler’s armies were defeated by the USSR (June 22, 1941)?” Relationships between the local organizations and the CPG Regional Committee for Macedonia and Thrace had long been interrupted. So, in this difficult situation, a group of communists from Rupishta, among whom was Paskal Mitrevski, took the initiative to restore and strengthen the CPG Party organization and draw on its membership to struggle against the occupiers. To perform that task the group of communists from Rupishta held a meeting in the city in late June 1941, during which they decided to start organizing illegal

antifascist groups of three or four tasked to collect and hide weapons abandoned by the capitulating Greek army, which was forced by the German army to retreat from the battlefields in the Albanian front. In the meantime the same antifascist groups managed to acquire typewriters, mimeographs and other printing equipment for printing leaflets, etc. As for organization combat units, the communists from Rupishta managed to establish several units consisting of three or four fighters inside Rupishta as well as in the surrounding region. (Paskal Mitrevski, contribution to his autobiographical memories kept in the Paskal Mitrevski family private archives.)

Paskal Mitrevski moved to the city Kostur in September 1941 and opened his law office, which had earlier been banned by the Ioannis Metaxas regime because of his communist and revolutionary activities. (Paskal Mitrevski, contribution to his autobiographical memories kept in the Paskal Mitrevski family private archives.)

After renewing his connection with the CPG in Kostur, Paskal was tasked with joining the EAM (National Liberation Front) founded on September 27, 1941. A little later, in December of the same year, he was given another difficult task, namely to establish organizational links with a large number of villages in the central and western part of Kostur Region in order to expand EAM as well as to organize an illegal network of communication and propaganda links. It is important at this point to mention that at that time, September and October 1941, the resistance movement attempted to organize partisan combat units in all of Greece to fight against the occupation. However, because of some bloody dramatic events, the CPG Central Committee decided to disband the units because at that time it was deemed not possible to start an armed uprising. (For more information on the causes and course of the bloody dramatic events see the book “Dramatic uprising and Bulgarian fascist crimes” by Hristo Andonovski, INI Report, Skopje, 1964, V, 1, p. 57-74.)

About a year later, in October 1942, the Italian occupier had a breakthrough in Kostur Region and arrested many CPG and EAM activists and leaders of the resistance movement. To avoid being arrested, the Party ordered Paskal Mitrevski to leave. Paskal left Kostur early the next year and disappeared. Being unable to find

him, the Italians completely demolished his law office. Still being unable to find him, in February 1943 the Italians and Italian collaborators went to Rupishta where Paskal's family lived and burned down his father's house.

Macedonian fighters in ELAS

After he left Kostur, Paskal Mitrevski took on the task to strengthen and consolidate new CPG formations and party organizations in places where the CPG had never existed before and then became involved in the formation of ELAS guerrilla groups.

At the same time a group of resistance activists mostly from Rupishta, among whom was Paskal Mitrevski, with help from the local CPG and EAM organizations, organized an armed guerrilla group in Kostur Region to fight against the occupiers. A little later, in the spring of 1943, the same group of activists organized two guerrilla groups in Kostenaria and Nestransko Regions. (The partisan groups were composed mostly of Macedonian fighters and resistance movement activists who, despite having to fight against the occupiers, also, through education, had to counter German, Italian and greater Bulgarian propaganda as well as fight against the counter bands in Kostur Region. For more information on this see: "The CPG and the Macedonian National Question (1918-1974)" a June 22, 1960 report regarding some of the anti-Macedonian ELAS actions performed in 1943 in the Kostur Region, written by Andreas Dzhimas, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo. Documents regarding the attitude of the Communist Party of Greece towards the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974. Selection, editing, annotation and translations done by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski. Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1982, Doc. 248, pp. 565-568.)

These ELAS fighter groups were led directly by the CPG District Committee for Kostur Region.

The emergence and military actions of these ELAS groups, comprised mostly of Macedonian fighters, significantly boosted the fighting morale in the indigenous Macedonian population and in the Greek colonist population in Kostur Region. This created the right conditions for an uprising and initiated the first major military

guerrilla actions in February and March of 1943, which took place at the Iankovets Bridge in Naselits Region on the River Fardikambos and in the village Nestram, Kostur Region.

The same day the village Nestram was liberated by the partisans, more than 20 young people volunteered to join the fighters, included among them were three young women.

(As mentioned earlier ELAS groups began to form in the first months of 1943 and started to perform successful actions against the occupiers. One of the most important actions was the battle at the Fardikambos River on March 6 and 7, 1943. The partisan groups in this battle, belonging to Voio, Grevena and Siatishtta, attacked the Italians and captured an entire battalion, 603 soldiers and officers. See: CPG District Committee Report for Voio; development of NOB in this area of Kostur from December 1941 to April 1943. Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in World War II in the years 1941 to 1943. Documents regarding the participation of Macedonians from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia in World War II from 1941 to 1943. Translation, editing and commentary done by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski and Fani Buchkova-Martinova. Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1985, T. VII, No.1, doc. 86, p.204. See also doc.103, p. 241-242 and doc.112, p. 264-266.)

(The action of ELAS partisans in the capture of the village Nestram was executed on March 4, 1943. For more information on this see the April 17, 1943 report by Dr. Draganov, Bulgarian Minister of the Interior; Bitola area Directorate No. 305. A photocopy of this document can be found in Todor Simovski's archives. Simovski is a consultant at INI. See also: Janis Pachuras, partisan movements in Kostur Region. Documents remain with the author.)

After some time, the two Kostur partisan units, together with other ELAS reserve groups, attacked and liberated the town Rupishtta. (See the book "Free territories in Macedonia in 1943", by Risto Kiriazovski, Kostur Region in 1943, INI, Skopje, 1975, p. 271. See also Bitola area Directorate, no. 305). The moment the partisans entered Rupishtta they were greeted by the joyful population which took to the streets en masse. The same day, the CPG and EAM held

a rally in the city centre calling for all to rise against the occupiers and agitated for mass involvement in the anti-fascist struggle.

However, due to strong pressure from the Italian army, the ELAS partisans (after a five-day stay in Rupishta) were forced to withdraw and flee to the mountains. But despite their failure, this ELAS guerrilla event was a great historic victory for the resistance movement. Namely, this town is considered to be among the first Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonian towns to be liberated by the ELAS partisans.

At this point it is important to mention the fact that, despite the combat successes achieved by the ELAS guerrillas in this region, the Kostur liberation resistance movement leadership was faced with yet another very severe crisis. The crisis was triggered by a Greek nationalist group belonging to Kirtsidakis, Pashalis Baskakis, Kosta Zisi, Mandoropoulos, Nikos Papathanasiou, etc., which attacked at the very forefront of the ELAS units. But thanks to the vigilance and determination of the resistance leadership this group was arrested and put out of action in the village Zabrdeni, Kostur Region, where it was tried and, towards the end of April 1943, liquidated in the village Nestram. (See report on the development of the partisan movement in the area of Pindos (Kostur-Naselitsa-Grevena) in the period from January to May 1943. Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in World War II from 1941 to 1943, Doc. 112, p. 267-268).

(Kirtsodakis was a reserve lieutenant in the Greek army from Crete. He entered the ranks of ELAS in early March 1943. After a short time ELAS discovered that he was a PAO agent. His mission was to carry out plots against ELAS. At the end of March of the same year his gang was captured by ELAS. He, together with other officers of the reactionary movement, was arrested and then sentenced to death by firing squad.)

(Pashalis Baskakis was a chief of police in Rupishta and in the village Chetirok, Kostur Region, during the Metaxas dictatorship. He was a well-known torturer of the Macedonian people. In early March 1943 he was amongst the first combatants to enter the Kostur detachments. After a short time it became known that he had been

ordered by PAO to join ELAS and carry out a plot against it. At the end of March, the same year, he deserted ELAS. Then in early April 1943, together with other Greek nationalists, he organized a counter-revolutionary band in the village Zabrdeni, Kostur Region. On April 9, 1943 this band was destroyed by ELAS. Baskakis, along with his associates, was arrested by ELAS, and then sentenced to death by firing squad.)

(Kosta Zisi was a PAO agent tasked with plotting against the partisans of ELAS. In early April 1943 he was arrested in the village Zabrdeni, Kostur Region, where he had organized a counter-revolutionary band. He was executed by firing squad on April 9, 1943.)

(Mandaropulos entered the ranks of ELAS in early March 1943 but it was discovered that he was an agent deposited there by PAO to commit conspiratorial acts against the ELAS partisan units in Kostur Region. He was arrested in the village Zabrdeni, Kostur Region, by the partisans from the ELAS 28th Regiment and sentenced to death by firing squad.)

(Nikos Papathanasiou entered the ranks of ELAS in Kostur Region in early March 1943, in order to commit conspiratorial acts against the partisan movement. He, together with other Greeks (Group of ELAS officers), organized a counter-revolutionary gang in the village Zabrdeni, Kostur Region. He was arrested on April 9, 1943 by the partisans of ELAS 28th Regiment and liquidated.)

(The investigation and trial conducted against the counter-revolutionaries was led by Lazo Trpovski from the village D'mbeni, Kostur Region. Lazo was a revolutionary and CPG instructor for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. After they were found guilty of wrong-doing the counter-bandits were liquidated at the end of April 1943 in the village Nestram, Kostur Region.)

Of course the situation on the ground in Kostur Region was well-exploited by the occupiers in order to achieve their own militant aims. They particularly boosted their own propaganda activities during this period, in relation to the armed counter-band units in Kostur Region. (For more information on the emergence and

activities of the counter-band movement in Kostur region, see Tashko Mamurovski, “Bulgarian propaganda in Southwest and Central Aegean Macedonia (1941-1944)”, INI, Skopje, 1989, p.184.)

Given the situation in Kostur Region, the CPG District Committee for Kostur Region and ELAS Headquarters issued a directive to form a special ELAS detachment composed of shock units, mostly of prominent Macedonian communists whose task was to severely act against the enemy. (Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions in the Aegean part of Macedonia (1941-1951), INI, Skopje, 1987, p.53.) This detachment, which was initially led by Nikola Kachela and later by Paskal Mitrevski, performed a number of successful synchronized actions against the occupying armies and against the counter-bands. (Nikola Kachela, a native of Rupishta, was an activist in the communist movement before the Second World War. In the time of NOB he was amongst the first to join the ranks of ELAS and to participate in various military assignments.)

With their combat actions, agitation and propaganda in Kostur Region the partisan groups greatly contributed to the mobilization of the Macedonian population in the ranks of the anti-fascist movement. Led by Paskal Mitrevski, many Macedonian fighters successfully carried out their duties by various forms and means. They were the ones who distributed leaflets, made calls to join the resistance movement, maintained contact with other Macedonians, repeatedly urged the people not to support the counter-bands, etc. Thanks to the tireless effort of these groups, which later grew into a detachment, a number of counter-band members abandoned their counter-bands in the Kostur Region villages and joined the partisan groups, including the one led by Paskal Mitrevski.

The first major action carried out by these groups was against the collaborators and counter-bands in Rupishta on June 10, 1943. It was a successful campaign and many of the counter-bandits not only surrendered their weapons but also joined the ranks of ELAS. (See Macedonian archives, Skopje, collection, AE 359. See also Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions..., pp. 53-54.)

Chapter Two

SNOF's emergence and activities in Kostur Region

Paskal Mitrevski leader of SNOF in Kostur Region

The CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships were concerned with the situation that existed in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, especially with the existence and daily actions of the armed counter-bands in Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions. There was also concern and discontent among the Macedonian communists for their nationalistic and chauvinistic attitudes towards the Macedonian national question. Under pressure and persistent requests from the Macedonian activists, the leaderships were forced to consent to the establishment of a separate Macedonian People's Liberation Organization SNOF (Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Front) for the Macedonians in Lerin and Kostur Regions. (For more information on the establishment and activities of SNOF in Kostur and Lerin Regions see Hristo Andonovski, "The Organization SNOF in Lerin, Kostur and the Macedonia Regional Committee in Voden Regions. Voice of INI, Skopje, 1966, X 2-3, p. 5-46. See Naum Peiov, "SNOF in the ranks of ELAS in Aegean Macedonia". Voice of the Aegeans, Skopje 1953, p. 105. Also see Paskal Mitrevski, "Thirty years since the first conference of SNOF (I-P)". Nova Makedonija Skopje, 1973, December 25 and 26.)

It is important to mention at this point that SNOF was created primarily due to the fact that the CPG and EAM leaderships were unable to achieve "national unity" with the Greek government in exile and with the civil parties inside Greece. (A CPG and EAM delegation flew to Cairo in August 1943 to meet with the Greek government in exile in order to negotiate a common basis for national and political unity. However, due to the inflexibility of the Greek King and the civil parties, the negotiations ended in failure. The CPG and EAM delegations were slandered and expelled from Cairo. After that relations between ELAS and EDES were strained at best, which helped the English and the Greek government in exile to achieve their aims. For more information see Wood House, "To milo tis eridos: I Eliniki antistasi ke i politiki ton megalon dinameon" (Greek resistance and major powers' policies), Athens,

1975. See Stefanos Sarafis, "ELAS, s.s.s.l" translated from Greek and kept in the INI archives. Also see "Aegean Macedonia in World War II (January 1 to August 31, 1944), Vol. VII, book 2, Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1987. Documents on the participation of the Macedonians from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia in the Anti-Fascist War and in the Greek Civil War 1941-1949. Translation and comments by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski, doc. 128, p. 299, note 316.)

However, on the other hand, the formation of SNOF greatly contributed to making contact with Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, Communist Party of Yugoslavia Central Committee delegate in Macedonia, in the summer of 1943. (During the occupation, more precisely from the end of February 1943 until the end of the occupation, with some breaks, a delegation of the CPY Central Committee and the Supreme Headquarters of NOV and POJ resided in Vardar (Republic of) Macedonia) together with Greek resistance leaders, particularly with Andreas Dzhimas, then member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo and ELAS General Headquarters, during which time discussions were held with members of the CPM Central Committee included in which were Tsvetko Uzunovski-Abas and other representatives from the CPG Regional Committee for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in Solun, in September 1943. (See sources for the liberation war and revolution in Macedonia from 1941 to 1945, T. I. No.2. INI, Skopje, 1968, Doc. 61, p. 321.)

(Tsvetko Uzunovski-Abas was a member of the CPM Central Committee and Political Commissar in NOV and POM General Headquarters up to August 1944.)

In that sense a meeting was held at the end of September 1943 in the village Snicheni, Kostur Region, between Hristos Kalfas-Andreas, CPG District Committee Secretary for Western Macedonia, Antonis Andonopoulos-Periklis, CPG District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region, and Thanassis Kartsunis, CPG District Committee Secretary for Kozheni Region. The meeting was also attended by Paskal Mitrevski in the capacity of Commander of the Macedonian units in ELAS. The three CPG secretaries agreed that there was a need to establish a separate Macedonian anti-fascist organization in

Kostur and Lerin Regions, but on condition that it would be guided by the CPG and EAM leaderships.

(In 1936 Hristos Kalfas-Andreas was arrested and interned in Akronavplion. For the duration of the occupation he was CPG Bureau Secretary for Western Macedonia. He died in February 1944.)

(From 1941 to early 1943 Antonis Andonopoulos-Periklis was leader of the OPLA diversionary groups in Solun. From the beginning of 1943 until the end of the war he was CPG District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region. He went into hiding after the war. During the Greek Civil War he was Political Commissar in one of DAG's larger units. He died in 1947.)

In his explanation given during this meeting, Paskal Mitrevski stressed the need to submit a concrete proposal that, in the interest of a common Macedonian and Greek people's struggle, a separate Macedonian People's Liberation Organization be created. This would be the only correct way out of the complex military and political situation the country had found itself in. Among other things Mitrevski also said the following:

“...The Macedonian organization will not only mobilize the entire combat potential of the Macedonian people in the struggle against the occupiers and against the great Bulgaria propaganda to the maximum, but it will also bind the brotherhood and unity between the Macedonian and Greek people and will shape a consistent policy of national equality for the Macedonian people in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia...” (Quote taken from Paskal Mitrevski's autobiography.)

Several days after the meeting took place, after Hristos Kalfas-Andreas left Kostur Region, the Macedonian CPG Bureau made a decision and obliged the Kostur Region CPG District Committee to agree to form a People's Macedonian Organization within its own district with the potential for future expansion in other districts of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. So this is how SNOF, the Macedonian organization in Kostur and Lerin Regions, was formed. It is interesting to mention at this point that the period during which

SNOF was formed coincides, and not by accident, with the period during which the Macedonian Liberation Organization (MAO) in Voden Region was forcibly dissolved by cowardly murders of prominent Macedonian communists and revolutionaries from Voden Region. Included among those murdered were Pando Dzhikata, Kosta Postaikov, Lazo Duichev and Krsto Manchov, all from the village Chegana. This forced dissolution was carried out by the Voden District CPG. (This information was obtained from Giorgi Angelov's notes regarding the revolutionary and communist movement in Ostrov Region. Giorgi was from the village Rusilovo, Voden Region. This information is kept in the INI archives.)

SNOF in Kostur Region was established on October 20, 1943 in the village D'mbeni in Kiriako Dzhalev's house. SNOF in Lerin Region was formed in November in the village Belkamen.

The constituent conference for SNOF for Kostur Region was held in late December 1943 in the village Krchishta, Kostur Region, and for SNOF for Lerin Region on December 26-27 of the same year in the village Belkamen. (See information for the dissolution of SNOF compiled by Leonidas Stringos, CPG Secretary of the Macedonian Bureau, "CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974", doc. 249, p. 569.)

At the same meeting after SNOF's formation was introduced, new appointments were made to head the Kostur and Lerin Region Districts. Paskal Mitrevski was appointed Secretary in charge of the Kostur District and Petre Pilaev from the village Ekshi-Su, Lerin Region, was put in charge of the Lerin District.

During the First SNOF Conference for Kostur Region, held in the village Krchishta, Paskal Mitrevski produced a report in which, among other things, he wrote the following:

"...The establishment of SNOF in Kostur Region will create and spread national awareness through the Macedonian people. Through this organization the aspirations and desires of the Macedonian people, in this part of Macedonia, to achieve their national rights to live free and develop culturally will be fulfilled. By doing this we have taken a step forward towards the affirmation of the

Macedonian people's struggle who, in a joint struggle with the Greek people, are fighting against the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation forces to free this country..." (Quote taken from Paskal Mitrevski's autobiography.)

But, as we shall see later, the Macedonian Liberation Organization SNOF in Kostur and Lerin Regions was short-lived. It was dissolved by the CPG for "technical reasons" because it conflicted with the Macedonian National Question during the National Liberation War. But whether it liked it or not, the CPG did recognize the existence of a Macedonian identity as well as the affirmation of the Macedonian struggle against the occupiers. To a certain extent the CPG was prepared to implement, in principle, national equality for the Macedonian people. SNOF became a decisive political factor in the mobilization and in the overall combat potential of the Macedonian people. It was also an irreplaceable forger of brotherhood and unity between the Macedonian and Greek progressive forces struggling in a common struggle against a common enemy.

During its existence in Kostur Region, SNOF published a newspaper called "The Slavo-Macedonian Voice". The newspaper was published in the Macedonian language using the Macedonian Cyrillic Alphabet. The editor and chief responsible for this newspaper was Lazo Poplazarov, a teacher from the village Dobrolishta, Kostur Region, who at the same time was a member of the SNOF Secretariat. Among others Paskal Mitrevski, then Secretary of SNOF for Kostur Region, was responsible for the concept and content of the newspaper. The newspaper editorial board consisted of Panaiot Ralev, Zhivko Poptraikov and Vasko Karadzha.

The newspaper "Slavo-Macedonian Voice" came out in small format, in shapilograf, in Cyrillic, four to six pages long, with a circulation of 300 to 400 copies. It is assumed this newspaper was the first newspaper to appear in this territory of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia during the Second World War. The newspaper aroused great interest and admiration among the Macedonian population in Kostur Region and was read as much by individuals as it was read by groups of Macedonian people. The newspaper also helped many Macedonian people to study their native language.

(Lidia Simoska, “Macedonian periodical literature in Aegean Macedonia during the National Liberation Struggle (1942 to 1944)”. Historical pre-Slavic periodical in Aegean Macedonia. Voice of INI, Skopje, 1975, XIX, 2, p. 145-174.)

The SNOF Kostur Region leadership, headed by Secretary Paskal Mitrevski, urged the CPG and EAM leaderships to expand NOF to other regions of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, i.e. to be the sole bearer of the Macedonian people’s political power and equal representative in the anti-fascist EAM coalition. A meeting was scheduled to bring SNOF from both Kostur and Lerin Regions together during which their platform and strategic objectives were to be defined, which included the Macedonian people’s struggle in this part of Macedonia and their national liberation and unification goals. The SNOF delegation from Kostur Region was headed by Paskal Mitrevski and the SNOF delegation from Lerin Region was headed by Petre Pilaev. The meeting was scheduled for January 28, 1944 in the village Tsrnovishta, Kostur Region. (Macedonian archives, Skopje, Kut. 20 / 242A. See also Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions., p. 24.) Unfortunately misunderstandings between the representatives of both parties began to arise and they failed to find common ground and resolve their differences. No agreement was reached with regards to the unification of the two organizations or with the planned SNOF expansion throughout Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. (Macedonian archives, Skopje, Kut. 19/179.)

The Kostur Region SNOF leadership repeatedly demanded of the CPG and EAM that only CPG and SNOF organizations exist in Macedonian settlements. It was a justified request on the part of SNOF to make, as a condition of equal partnership in the struggle against a common enemy. And even though the two groups of SNOF could not merge and come out as a single independent SNOF organization for all of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, the meeting in Tsrnovishta was of historical importance for the Macedonian people in this part of Macedonia. As was done many times before, the wishes of the Macedonian people to unify were, yet again, voiced before the CPG leadership. The SNOF District leadership, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, consistently and persistently defended Mitrevski’s views before the CPG and EAM leaderships

and constantly pointed out that, in the interest of brotherhood and unity and in the interest of the joint Macedonian and Greek people's struggle, the Macedonian people must be organized to unite in the ranks of SNOF, which would be extended to other regions of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

It was unjustified and unjustifiable that an already existing Macedonian National Liberation Organization be established as an equal by permission from the CPG and with recognition from EAM and ELAS. How could some parts of the Macedonian people belong to SNOF and other parts of the same people belong to Greek national liberation organizations? Unfortunately this was the direction the CPG and EAM had taken with regards to SNOF and the Macedonian people. This, unfortunately, reflected negatively on the morale, political and national unity of the Macedonian people in this part of Macedonia and disrupted the Macedonian struggle against the occupiers. What the CPG was doing was contrary to the vital interests of the Macedonian people.

As was mentioned earlier, even though the two SNOF organizations did not merge and did not expand into all of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, as a single Macedonian national anti-fascist organization, their very formation had a big impact on the ideological development in the national liberation struggle of the Macedonian people in Lerin, Kostur and other Regions. SNOF's appearance and activities in the struggle against the occupiers and domestic traitors moved the Macedonian masses forward and lifted them to a higher level. This intention not only upset the political and military plans of the occupiers and their domestic servants, but radically altered the ratio of forces in favour of the struggle against the propaganda and plans for a greater Bulgaria which, through its agents and domestic traitors, sought to sway the struggle in the opposite direction of the Macedonian people's national aspirations.

Within the six months of its existence, SNOF in Kostur Region amassed in its ranks about 2,490 men and about 2,280 women. (See Macedonian archives. AE: 70-74.) The number of people recruited by SNOF in Lerin Region amounted to more than 10,000. (See Hristo Andonovski, "The Macedonians in Greece in the struggle against fascism (1940-1944)", INI, Skopje, 1968, p. 116.) SNOF

emerged as a true leader and organizer of the Macedonian people's struggle in Kostur and Lerin Regions against the foreign occupiers and against the domestic traitors. Regarding SNOF's activities in Kostur Region, an article written on April 3, 1944 and published in the newspaper "Slavo-Macedonian voice", among other things, stated the following:

"SNOF is the only people's liberation organization which will meet the Macedonian people's national and social demands. SNOF is the new VMRO for the Macedonians, which will lead them to the end of the work of Ilinden..." (See the newspaper "Slavo-Macedonian voice", from April 3, 1944, located in the Macedonian archives. Also see "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945, T.I. Documents on the participation of Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia in the Anti-Fascist War of 1941-1945. Edited by Risto Kiriazovski, Vasil Peiov and Todor Simovski, Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1971, doc. 56, p. 65.)

One of SNOF's main tasks in Kostur and Lerin Regions was to declare war on supporters of the Bulgarian Court and on Vancho Mihailov whose propaganda endeavoured to turn the Macedonian population in the wrong direction.

(Vancho Mihailov worked for the VMRO in Bulgaria since 1918. He was Todor Alexandrov's successor. He was one of the organizers who killed progressive people in the Macedonian liberation movement. He left Bulgaria and went to live in Prague, Vienna and other cities in Europe. During the Second World War he took up residence in Zagreb with Ante Pavelich. He served as the main German reserve to put pressure on the Bulgarian government. He was the organizer and inspirer of the fascist forces in Macedonia in the struggle against the national liberation movement. He died in Rome in 1991.)

In denouncing the slander coming from the Greek nationalists and reactionaries about SNOF's alleged cooperation with the counter-bands in Kostur Region, the newspaper "Slavo-Macedonian voice" wrote:

“...The autonomists are fascists who want to subjugate our people under fascism. SNOF, as the true heir of VMRO, was born from the people’s aspirations for freedom, to struggle and to continue the fight against the occupier and to exterminate every traitor who intends to keep the fascist tyranny alive...” (Quote taken from the newspaper “Slavo-Macedonian voice”, published on April 3, 1944. Also see “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945”, T.I..., doc. 56, p. 86.)

With its own propaganda and agitation in print in the Macedonian language and with its own persuasion tactics, SNOF greatly contributed to the exposure of the great Bulgaria propaganda and to the fight against the domestic occupier servants in Kostur and Lerin Region. This was evident from one of the SNOF Kostur Region District Board announcements made to the people in that region on March 3, 1944. Among other things, the announcement said:

“...The Slavo-Macedonian nation, united by SNOF, can no longer be deceived and armed to fight against the anti-fascist fighters. If up until now the Slavo-Macedonian and the Greek people have proven to be generous and forgiving towards those who were deceived and armed by the enemy, they will no longer be forgiven. Those who are armed by the counter-bands will no longer be forgiven and the same goes for the Greeks who are organized in PAO, ESA, IVE, etc., because these individuals are no longer deceived but are consciously entering into the enemy lines...” (Quote taken from the same edition, doc. 19, p. 35.)

And indeed, thanks to the daily agitation conducted in Kostur Region by the SNOF leadership and other Macedonian resistance activists, counter-band fighters began to abandon their bands and either returned home or joined ELAS.

It is important to mention at this point that one of the most important events for SNOF in Kostur Region was its second annual conference held in the village D’mbeni, Kostur Region, on April 12, 1944. The conference was attended by about 500 SNOF delegates, District EAM and ELAS guests, Western Macedonia CPG Bureau guests and guests from other national liberation organizations including some from the English military mission.

This conference was significant with regard to several important decisions made to further the struggle's development. Included among the tasks that SNOF in Kostur Region committed itself to doing were:

1. To develop national awareness among the Macedonian people;
2. To counteract counter-reactions in the region;
3. To organize intelligence and counterintelligence services in the reactionary villages;
4. To develop explanatory propaganda for the purpose of explaining SNOF's tasks;
5. To organize educational activities in the region;
6. To assist ELAS, by all means possible, in the struggle against the occupiers and domestic traitors;
7. To enlarge SNOF in the struggle against the enemy and so on.

(See excerpts from the conclusions of the Kostur Region SNOF Second Conference. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945, T.I..., doc.74, p. 86.)

A new SNOF District leadership was also chosen during this conference. It consisted of 21 people. Paskal Mitrevski, Lazo Damovski-Oshenski and Andon Dzhalev made up the SNOF District secretariat. (See list of Kostur Region SNOF District Board members selected during the SNOF Second Conference. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945, T.I..., doc. 73, p. 84. This list however is missing Lazo Poplazarov from the village Dobrolishta, Kostur Region. According to information provided by Evdokia Baliova-Vera, who was also a member of the Kostur Region SNOF District Board, Lazo Poplazarov was a member of the immediate Kostur Region SNOF leadership and editor and chief of the newspaper "Slavo-Macedonian voice".)

(Lazo Damovski-Oshenski was from the village Osheni, Kostur Region. He was arrested by the Greek police many times because of his revolutionary activities. During WW II he was imprisoned on the island Akronavplion. After his release in July 1941, he became actively involved in the anti-fascist movement. Later he became CPG District Committee Secretary for Larissa and then for Epirus.

In January 1944 he went to Kostur Region and was included in the NOF leadership. He did not agree with the CPG's position regarding the Macedonian National Question being excluded from CPG policies. After the Varkiza agreement was signed, Damovski fled to the Republic of Macedonia where he was included in the political life of that country. He died in Skopje in 1970.)

Included among the 21 people in the District leadership were also Simo Kalcho, Blagoi Dimitrov, Andrea Pandulev, Iani Kokinov, Andon Boshkov, Lazo Hadziev, Hristo Iankulov, Naum Peiov, Evdokia Baliova-Vera, Dimitar Siskovski, Lambro Moshov, Risto Papatraianov, Vasilka Galeva, Hrisanthi Tsanzovska, Hristo Dimitrov, Vasko Karadzha, Pando Kalimanov, and Liuta Valsamovski. (See list of Kostur Region SNOF District Board members. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945, T.I..., doc. 72, p. 83, and doc. 73, pp. 84-85.)

(Naum Peiov was from the village Gabresh, Kostur Region. He was a member of the CPG before the Second World War. In 1939 he was arrested by the Greek police. During the Second World War, or more precisely in the autumn of 1943, he was named commander of the Macedonian detachment "Lazo Trpovski" an activist of SNOF. Because of the CPG and ELAS's attitude towards the Macedonian National Question, in a sign of protest on May 16, 1944 Peiov and a group of Macedonians from Kostur Region fled to Vardar (Republic of) Macedonia. In November of the same year he was made deputy commander of the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia.)

(Evdokia Baliova-Vera was from the village D'mbeni, Kostur Region. She was a member of the Kostur Region SNOF District Board. In June 1944 she was appointed deputy political commissar of the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. In November 1944 she was appointed deputy political commissar of the Second Company of the 4th Battalion of the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. In July 1945 she was appointed secretary of the NOF District Committee for Sorovich and Kailari Regions. In May 1946 she was appointed Secretary of AFZH in Lerin Region. In November 1946 she was appointed Secretary of AFZH for Aegean (Greek occupied)

Macedonia. In 1949 she became vice president of the all-Greek Union of Women in Greece. In December 1949 Vera, along with a number of NOF leaders, was slandered as an “Agent of Tito” in the CPG and DAG ranks, was arrested by the CPG leadership and tried in Moscow. After that she and the other leaders were all sent to the concentration camps in Siberia. In 1955 she was released from prison and was fully rehabilitated. By rank she was a captain in DAG. She is now [1992] living in Skopje [and since has died].)

(Dimitar Siskovski was from the village Zhupanishta, Kostur Region. He was a member of the CPG before the Second World War. In the fall of 1943 he was appointed political commissar of the “Lazo Trpovski” Macedonian detachment and was later appointed political commissar of a regiment in the Lerin-Kostur “Goche” Macedonian battalion. One time he was NOF committee district secretary for Kostur Region. He died in Skopje in 1987.)

(Lambro Moshov was from the village D’mbeni, Kostur Region. He was a participant in the 1903 Ilinden Uprising. In 1907 he became a member of the Socialist Alliance in America. In 1935 he became a member of the CPG. He was arrested by the Greek police and was sent to the Akronavplion internment prison where he stayed until 1941. He was again arrested by the Italians and put in prison where he stayed until 1943.)

Macedonian Kostur Region reserve units in the ELAS composition

In the Kostur Region villages and beyond there were other organizations outside of SNOF, which were created and organized as extras and reserve Macedonian units in ELAS known as SNOV (Slavo-Macedonian Liberation Army), Slavo-Macedonian Liberation Boards, People’s Courts, National Solidarity and other anti-fascist organizations whose members, to a large extent, were also members of SNOF.

The SNOV reserve units in the ELAS composition in Kostur Region were formed in the middle of January 1944 by a decision made by the Kostur Region CPG District Committee. These reserve units were formed especially in the regions in which counter-band units

operated. One such reserve unit was formed in February 1944 in Koreshtata under Mihailo Keramitchiev from the village Gabresh, Kostur Region. In a very short time this group mobilized a massive number of Macedonians who wanted to fight against the occupiers and against the domestic traitors. Stressing its importance and contribution to the fight against the foreign invaders, in one of his reports sent to the Kostur Region SNOF District Board Mihailo Keramitchiev, among other things, wrote the following:

“With the campaign we are conducting in the Slavo-Macedonian Koreshtata villages, it is my responsibility and opportunity to report that the Slavo-Macedonian people are eager to join our fight which we are now leading against the fascists who are choking the people’s human and other freedoms... The organized military reserve force to date is 370 people of whom 210 are armed with rifles... The Koreshtata Group consists of 50 fighters who are brave and determined to land a direct hit on the enemy. (See Letter from Mihailo Keramitchiev to Paskal Mitrevski, Kostur Region SNOF District Board Secretary. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945, T.I..., doc.17, pp. 31-32.)

The kind of activities carried out by the reserve ELAS units in Kostur Region were highlighted by Greek Army General D. Zafeiropoulos and publicist Polis Ioannidis who, in the landmark report entitled “Gotse’s mystery”, in excerpt 167 among other things, wrote:

“The SNOF groups had freedom of movement within the ranks of ELAS and were assisted when they were in a difficult situation in the struggle against the occupiers and against the armed counter-bands and, indeed, it disarmed the counter-bands in Breshteni, Galishta, Zhelegozhe, Chetirok, Snicheni, Tikveni, Chereshnitsa and Zagorichani.” (Historic report from Polis Ioanidis entitled “Gotse’s mystery”. Newspaper “Ellinikos Voras”, January 8, 1955, excerpt 167.)

SNOF’s dissolution and resulting consequences

As future events showed, the rapid increase in the number of members in SNOF, and thus the mass involvement of the

Macedonian people from Kostur, Lerin and other Regions of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in the anti-fascist struggle against the foreign invaders and against the domestic traitors, seriously upset the CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships. It seems that by the end of April 1944 the top CPG leadership made a decision to disband SNOF in Kostur and Lerin Regions. The justification given was that SNOF's influence was "harmful" to the popularization of the Greek masses in the ranks of EAM. But this was only an excuse.

The real reason for SNOF being disbanded was completely different. In fact the CPG and EAM leaderships, during NOB, constantly made elaborate efforts to find common ground with the Greek right-wing parties inside Greece and with the Greek government in exile, with aims at achieving "National Unity" for all of Greece. But there were conditions attached to this for which the CPG and EAM leaderships had to make concessions. These conditions were put forward by the Greek government in exile and by the civil parties inside Greece during an earlier agreement, signed on February 24, 1944 in Plaka, between ELAS and the units on Napoleon Zervas. This agreement was reached in order to stop the fighting between ELAS and Zervas's forces in Epirus, which had begun in early October 1943 (see Stefanos Sarafis, *ELAS...* and Risto Kiriazovski, *Macedonian National Institutions...*, p. 58.) But despite this agreement to end the fighting with Zervas, the CPG and EAM leaderships agreed to continue negotiating in order to achieve full political unity in Greece. However, in order to create the "right conditions" for negotiating with the Greek right-wing parties, the CPG, in addition to making other concessions, was required to disband SNOF by the end of April 1944. (So far no document was found with a date for the dissolution of SNOF in Kostur Region. However, looking at various events that took place at that time, it can be assumed that the date was the end of April 1944.) The Lebanon Agreement for forming a "National Unity Government" was signed on May 20, 1944 by the CPG and EAM on one side and by the Greek government in exile on the other. In a few words we can say that in order to make things easy to achieve "National Unity", the Greek resistance movement leadership sacrificed not only the interests of the Macedonian people but also the Greek people's objectives in the anti-fascist struggle.

(Napoleon Zervas was a Colonel in the pre WWII Greek army. He was Commander and Chief of the EDES Greek nationalist guerrilla units during the occupation. After the war he became minister of the Greek army in the royalist government.)

As expected, the CPG followed through with SNOF's disbanding just to satisfy requirements put forth by the political right and completely ignored the revolutionary aspirations of the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, thus betraying its own members and fighters. This act, of course, caused severe anxiety in the Macedonian people and an extremely tense situation between the CPG, EAM and ELAS and the Macedonian leadership in Kostur and Lerin Regions. In protest, a group of Macedonians fled to the Republic of Macedonia in the first half of May 1944.

Included among those who fled were a number of Kostur Region Macedonian SNOF organizers, activists and fighters, led by Naum Peiov from the village Gabresh. A group of SNOF activists and fighters from Lerin Region were led by brothers Giorgi and Ilia Turundzhiev from the village Ekshi-Su. A group of Macedonian fighters were about to enter the composition of the ELAS battalion "Vicho" (Atanas Koroveshov, Vasil Makrievski and Pando Shiperkov, all from the village Smrdesh, Kostur Region, and others). The Macedonians, SNOF activists and fighters who broke away from ELAS, later joined the newly formed First Macedonian Assault Brigade in Vardar Macedonia and continued to fight against the occupiers and domestic traitors.

Because these groups left Greek occupied Macedonia and fled to the Republic of Macedonia, the CPG and ELAS labeled every Macedonian who fled a "traitor". The people who fled were also accused of bringing discontent between the Macedonian and Greek people and of causing a split in their unity. By doing so, the CPG and ELAS leaderships not only slandered the Macedonian communists and fighters but declared them "traitors", "deserters", "autonomists", "collaborators", etc., only because they protested against what the CPG and ELAS had done against the Macedonian cause. The CPG and ELAS expressed invalid and chauvinistic

attitudes towards the Macedonian national Question in Greece, which were made very clear with SNOF's dissolution.

(The CPG's decision to dissolve SNOF, take over its units and place them under the Greek resistance leadership was yet another concession made to satisfy the Greek bourgeois parties and the Greek government in exile in order to achieve "national unity". The Lebanon Agreement was signed in May 1944 at a great cost to the Macedonian people. The Macedonians, of course, could not agree with the CPG's decision and with such a policy, so they reacted sharply. But in order to liquidate the Macedonian resistance in Kostur, Lerin and other places in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, the CPG leadership resorted to using terrorist measures. It authorized arresting members of the SNOF District Committee for Kostur Region. Included among those arrested were Paskal Mitrevski, Lazo Damovski-Oshenski, Lazo Poplazarov as well as the technical staff of the newspaper "Slavo-Macedonian voice". To make sure they did not escape or were not freed, the captives were taken to the ELAS IX Division Headquarters located in the village Zhupan, Naselichka Region. For more information on this see proclamation of ELAS Detachment "Vicho" to the Macedonian people in Koreshtata, Kostur Region. This proclamation is a condemnation of the ELAS group of Macedonian fighters who, in response to the CPG's invalid terms on the Macedonian National Question, crossed over into the Republic of Macedonia. "CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974", doc. 66, p. 183. Also see the report from the Kostur Region CPG District Committee to the CPG Macedonian Bureau, in relation to the situation in the region after the group of Macedonian fighters fled from the ELAS composition. See doc. 73, p. 199.)

The incorrect measures that the CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships took against SNOF and the Macedonian leaders and fighters proved that they were meant to deny the Macedonian people's identity as Macedonians, to deny the existence of the Macedonian nation and to make sure the Macedonian people did not succeed in developing their Macedonian national and revolutionary ways. As an organizer and driving force of the national liberation struggle in Greece, the CPG leadership was obliged not only to recognize the national rights of the Macedonian people, but also to work towards implementing

national equality for them inside the Greek State. However, as we said earlier, the CPG created SNOF because it needed a tool in its hands to fight against the Bulgarian propaganda and against the counter-bands which “threatened” Greek interests in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. The CPG leadership’s discriminatory and opportunistic ways against SNOF and against the Macedonian people stemmed from the Megalo-Greek chauvinistic tendencies from which the CPG had not escaped. This kind of attitude and discriminatory policies carried out by Greeks against the Macedonian people was what created the counter-band movement in Greek occupied Macedonia in the first place. It is important at this point to remind the reader of the existence of the Metaxas dictatorship and the damage it had done to the Macedonian cause, which bears a great historic responsibility for the creation and dissemination of the so-called “autonomist” movements in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. By dissolving SNOF, the CPG created favourable conditions for the rapid spread of the autonomist movements, this time under Ivan Mihailov’s leadership and under the patronage of “Mother Bulgaria”, and with the blessing of the Germans, of course, dangerously jeopardizing the “Greek character” of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

Paskal Mitrevski, who until then had served as secretary of the Kostur Region SNOF District Board, was quite shocked, as were other members of the SNOF leadership, by the CPG District Committee’s actions in the dissolution of SNOF. He persistently and repeatedly appealed to the CPG leadership insisting that: “No brotherhood and unity between the Macedonian and Greek people can exist, let alone be strengthened, without the existence and recognition of a distinct Macedonian organization, without the consistent implementation of policies and without true equality between the Macedonian and Greek people...” Mitrevski made sure to stress his point that the decision to dissolve SNOF would have dire consequences in the implementation of a joint struggle against the occupiers.

However, despite all of Paskal Mitrevski’s warnings, the CPG leadership still stood in support of its initial decision to dissolve SNOF and liquidate the Macedonian resistance in Lerin and Kostur Regions caused by the dissolution SNOF. The CPG was no different

in its action than the fascists when it took terrorist measures against the Macedonian people who, until then, were its allies. As mentioned earlier, the CPG arrested all members of the Kostur Region SNOF District Board and took them to the ELAS Division IX headquarters to secure them. (See “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945”, T.I..., doc. 106, p. 120.) The CPG leadership conducted many terrorist actions against the Macedonians, not only in Kostur and Lerin Regions, but also in other parts of Greek occupied Macedonia.

In short, the solution the CPG leadership took to dissolve SNOF was not done accidentally or in error but by a major constituent element of its policy to precisely break the Macedonian liberation movement. The official explanation then given by the CPG, that SNOF’s existence reportedly created “discontent” in the Greek masses, was not true because it was well-known that members of SNOF fought alongside the Greek fighters in the ranks of the CPG, EAM and ELAS against the occupiers. It was also well-known that SNOF units were among other resistance units that fought against the counter-band movement in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

SNOF was not the only Macedonian national asset in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia during the Second World War, but it was a major revolutionary factor which clearly defined the ideological orientation for further development of the Macedonian national movement. The CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships unfortunately never wanted SNOF to have political status, to play a political role in a national program, or to have real political orientation. The CPG and other Greek resistance movement organizations, firstly, constantly and openly put pressure on SNOF demanding that it limit its organizational structure to rural areas where the Macedonian population was a vast majority. They demanded that only EAM organizations be established in mixed population areas where the Turkish Christian settlers and colonists co-existed together with Macedonian people. Secondly, SNOF was constantly pressured to narrow its objectives and activities and focus exclusively on curbing Bulgarian political and militant activities and fighting against the supremisist and autonomist agents in this part of Macedonia.

As mentioned earlier, due to expressing dissatisfaction with SNOF's dissolution, Paskal Mitrevski, along with the other Kostur Region SNOF District Board leaders, editorial and technical newspaper staff, was arrested and placed under guard in the village Zhupan where he was interrogated under strict supervision. But thanks to interventions on the part of NOB from the Republic of Macedonia and protests by the Macedonian people in Kostur Region, he was released and attached to the Kostur Region CPG District Committee.

Chapter Three

Questions regarding the creation of separate Macedonian units in ELAS

The Macedonian partisan battalion “Goche” in the ELAS composition

The issue of forming separate Macedonian partisan units in ELAS in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia is undoubtedly a key issue that especially characterizes the CPG’s real politic toward the Macedonian national liberation movement in this part of Macedonia. Here we will briefly look at the reasons why the CPG changed its attitude towards the Macedonian people and allowed them to form their own special partisan units within ELAS.

Markos Vafiadis, then member of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace and commissar of the group of ELAS divisions from Macedonia, in his biography, written by Dragan Klakiki, tried to explain how the idea of forming special Macedonian units in ELAS came up. (Dragan Kliakiki “General Markos”, Globus, Zagreb 1979, p. 254.)

Vafiadis, in a statement he made, had said: “ELAS Headquarters, through the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace, was forced to set up special Macedonian units within ELAS in Voden, Lerin and Kostur Regions in order to attract Macedonians into ELAS and to pull them away from fighting the counter-bands...” (Dragan Kliakiki “General Markos”, Globus, Zagreb 1979, p. 74.)

(Markos Vafiadis had been a member of the CPG Central Committee since 1942. At the same time he was second secretary of the CPG Macedonian Bureau and “Kapetanos” of the group of ELAS divisions in Macedonia. During the Greek Civil War he was military commander of DAG General Headquarters and President and First Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. In 1946, more precisely in May of that year, he conducted negotiations with Paskal Mitrevski, then Secretary of the NOF Central Committee for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, to achieve agreement on the

unification of the Macedonian partisan units with the partisan units belonging to the CPG. He died in Athens in 1992.)

Macedonian partisan units within ELAS materialized soon after SNOF was dissolved. In connection with his explanation, we need to point out one particular thing about what Markos Vafiadis had said. Namely, about the ELAS headquarters being “forced” to create “special Macedonian units” within ELAS, which was true but what Vafiadis did not say was that these Macedonian units were not allowed to attract large numbers of Macedonians and were not really created because the Greeks wanted Macedonian units in ELAS. As life has shown, this was yet another misleading manoeuvre aimed at arousing hope in the Macedonian population and turning it towards the CPG, EAM and ELAS. In practical terms, this was another ploy to use the Macedonian people to do the CPG’s bidding and this was done under the leadership of the Macedonian communists and former SNOF leaders and activists.

In Kostur and Lerin Regions it happened something like this:

The CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships, during the liberation war in Greece, were under the illusion that they could only achieve full political union and “national unity” with the Greek civil parties in the country, with the government in exile and with the English by making concessions to the Greek political right and the English.

Guided by this strategy and tactics, the CPG and ELAS leaderships signed an agreement on July 5, 1943 to place ELAS under British command to be led by British Headquarters for the Middle East. They agreed to form joint headquarters for the guerrilla forces in Greece. They agreed to reject previous commitments made in June 20 to 25, 1943 to representatives of the Communist Parties of Yugoslavia and Albania, for establishing a joint Balkan liberation headquarters. The CPG also signed the Plaka Agreement on February 24, 1944 to end hostilities between ELAS and EDES. And finally, as part of those agreements, the CPG dissolved SNOF.

In the same spirit, CPG, EAM and PEEA representatives went to Lebanon and, from May 15 to May 20, 1944, negotiated terms for “national unity” and forming a government in Greece. They did this

with representatives from the civil parties in the country and with the Greek government in exile. The CPG, EAM and PEEA delegation, on May 20, 1944, overstepped its own powers and, by signing the Lebanon Agreement, capitulated to the political right. By signing this Agreement it allowed the political right to launch a broad offensive against the resistance movement forces. (See Lebanon Agreement concluded between the Greek government in exile and the civil parties on one hand and the CPG, EAM and PEEA on the other for the formation of a “national unity” government in Greece. Aegean Macedonia in the anti-fascist struggle (January 1-August 31, 1944...), doc. 61, pp. 128-131. Also see Stefanos Sarafis, ELAS...).

However, a large part of the CPG and EAM leaderships, back in Greece, did not approve and outright rejected the Lebanon Agreement. But annulling the Agreement by the CPG left would have meant renewing the war with the internal enemy. To achieve complete victory the CPG needed to not only activate all the internal revolutionary forces, but had to also closely cooperate with the liberation movement in the Balkans, especially with NOV in Yugoslavia. For those reasons, in early June 1944, PEEA appointed Andreas Dzhimas, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, as the official representative in NKOF of NOV in Yugoslavia. (Sending Andreas Dzhimas to the Supreme Headquarters of NOV and POJ was decided back in March 1944. To this end Andreas Dzhimas started in the first decade of April, and in VSH of NOV and POJ, based in Vis, he arrived on June 17, 1944.)

On June 24, 1944, in a telegram addressed to Andreas Dzhimas, Georgios Santos, CPG Central Committee Secretary, asked Dzhimas to inform Tito that: “There is need not only for political work but also for some action from the Serbian Macedonians (meaning the Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia) to cooperate with us against our common enemy. Recruit and create (he was thinking of the Voden Region Macedonian battalion) Macedonian partisan units...” (Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions ..., p. 70.)

(Georgios Santos became a member of the CPG Central Committee in 1925 and the CPG Central Committee Politburo from 1925 to

1931 and from 1934 to 1947. He was appointed CPG Central Committee Secretary during the CPG Central Committee 8th Plenum held in January 1942. He died in May 1947 in Athens.)

As we can see from the telegram, the CPG and ELAS were in need of Macedonian partisan units to fight against the occupiers and against the domestic traitors, but they too were also engaged in the defense of Greek interests in Macedonia. Special comments about this, at this point, are not necessary.

Faced with the heavy situation they found themselves in, the ELAS units, because of the daily enemy offensive actions against them, requested from the Greek resistance leadership through its representative in NOV and the General Headquarters of POJ, Andreas Dzhimas, with a telegram, to once again contact the NOV leadership of Yugoslavia and demand that they send Macedonian units from the Republic of Macedonia in the direction of Lerin-Vicho and Ostrovo-Kaimakchalan-Sobotsko, to connect with Greek ELAS units.

In this difficult military and political situation in Greece, the Greek CPG and ELAS leaderships were forced to negotiate with General Headquarters of NOB, Republic of Macedonia, for the return of what the CPG earlier termed “secessionists” from Karaorman and agreed to form separate Macedonian units within ELAS. Indeed the need for re-acquiring the Macedonian fighters from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia would have required the CPG leadership to take into account their wishes and meet their requirements. And that’s what happened. Under pressure from the Macedonian masses during the Macedonian national Ilinden holiday, on August 2, 1944, the Macedonian people in the village Pozdivishta, Kostur Region, and Renos Mihaleas, intelligence leader and responsible for Macedonians issues in the 9th ELAS Division, in the presence of a CPG delegation and a CPM Party delegation, formed the Lerin-Kostur Macedonian battalion popularly named the “Goche Battalion”. The Voden battalion was formed earlier. Its composition consisted of Macedonian fighters who had returned from Karaorman (under agreement between the CPG and the CPM), Macedonian fighters who served in the ELAS units, Macedonian fighters who served in the ELAS reserves and other Macedonian

volunteer fighters. The Lerin-Kostur Macedonian battalion was named after Gotse Delchev, the famous Macedonian revolutionary and ideologist. The Goche Battalion was placed within the 28th ELAS Regiment, registered by orders from ELAS under number IIa. Because of his “reckless” action, deemed reckless by the CPG, Renos Mihaleas was later sharply criticized by the top CPG leadership and eventually demoted.

(Renos Mihaleas was an official of the CPG before the Second World War. He was recruited by the CPG because he was often imprisoned and interned by the Greek authorities for his communist activities. After his release from prison in early 1944, he was appointed CPG Party Secretary responsible for the 2nd Political Bureau at the ELAS 9th Division. While serving in this division he was entrusted to deal with the Macedonian Question. In the beginning he had a negative position towards the Macedonian National Question but with the development of events that position was corrected, as evidenced by his letters and reports of that time. In his letters he warned of the consequences that may arise due to the CPG’s poor policy towards the Macedonian people and towards the Macedonian National Question.)

(A special partisan unit comprised exclusively of Macedonians from Meglen and Voden Regions was formed in the composition of the ELAS 30th Regiment on June 16, 1944, at Mount Kaimakchalan. The command structure of the Macedonian unit consisted as follows: Lefteris Fundulakis, a former officer of the Greek army from Crete was appointed commander, Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov from Voden was appointed political commissar and Pavle Rakovski from the village Dolno Kleshtino, Lerin Region, was appointed third member of the Battalion Headquarters. Others appointed to the leadership included Giorgi Atanasov Blazhe from the village Prebidishte, Meglen Region, Giorgi Iakata Gushi from Voden and Sotir from Solun Region. This all-Macedonian unit became a battalion in a short time which, in October 1944, came into conflict with the CPG and ELAS leaderships and was forced to cross over the border into the Republic of Macedonia where it was restructured into the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia and continued to fight against the occupiers and domestic traitors. For more information on this see Pavle Rakovski,

The Communist Party of Greece and the Macedonians (observations, thoughts, and memories). Macedonian book, Skopje, 1990. Also see Pavle Rakovski, Dawn is born in the deep night (observations, thoughts, and memories). This information is kept in the INI archives. See Tashko Mamurovski, The ELAS Voden Macedonian battalion (Thirty-eight years after its formation), Voice of INI, Skopje, 1981, XXV, 2-3, pp. 185-197).

Military actions performed by the “Goche Battalion”

The Lerin-Kostur “Goche” Macedonian battalion was formed within the ELAS structure. It’s command structure consisted of Kosmas Spanos-Aminda appointed commander, Ilia Dimovski-Goche appointed “Kapetanos” and Risto Kolentsev-Kokinis appointed political commissar. But Kosmas Spanos-Aminda actually never took command of the battalion, both functions, i.e. Commander and Kapetanos, were performed by Ilia Dimovski-Goche. Later, Dimitar Tupurkovski-Titan was appointed Chief of Staff of the battalion.

(Kosmas Spanos-Aminda was from the village Lehovo, Lerin Region. He was Albanian by ethnicity. He was appointed battalion commander in ELAS. In DAG he was appointed political commissar of DAG “Vicho” General Headquarters and commander of the 18th DAG Brigade. He now (as of 1992) lives in Greece).

(Ilia Dimovski-Goche was from the village Statitsa, Kostur Region. He became a member of the CPG and VMRO (united) at a young age. During the Metaxas dictatorship Ilia was persecuted and imprisoned by the Greek authorities. He was among the first activists in Lerin Region to become a unit leader. In 1943 he became leader of the Vicho partisan unit. In August 1944 he was appointed political commissar (Kapetanos) of the Lerin-Kostur “Goche” Macedonian battalion. In October 1944 when he was commander of the same battalion, he came into collision with the CPG and fled to the Republic of Macedonia along with the battalion. In November 1944 he became commander of the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. During the Greek Civil War he led one of the larger DAG units. He was awarded the Partisan Memorial Award. Ilia died in Skopje on June 26, 1961.)

(The function “Kapetanios” in the ELAS formations was meant to be a political assistant to the military commander and a second signatory. The position was responsible for implementing CPG and ELAS policies.)

(Risto Kolentsev-Kokinos was from Lerin. During NOB, according to Party lines, he was responsible for the Lerin-Kostur Macedonian battalion “Goche”. In 1945 he joined NOF where he occupied various positions including member of the Lerin Region NOF District Board, president of the people’s government in Lerin Region and secretary of the Lerin Region KOEM District Committee. He died in 1986 in Skopje.)

(Dimitar Tupurkovski-Titan was from the village Oshchima, Lerin Region. He had joined the communist movement before World War II. In 1943 he became commander of the detachment “Lazo Trpovski”. In November the following year he became commander of the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. Later he was appointed Chief of the National Liberation Brigade in the Republic of Macedonia. He achieved the rank of Major in the Yugoslav National Army. He died in Skopje in 1980.)

The first day the “Goche” battalion became active it was tasked with disarming the armed villages in Kostur and Lerin Regions that were armed by the enemy. These armed villages were considered enemy outposts in defense of larger enemy garrisons. By disarming these villages a wide space was opened for ELAS units to manoeuvre, thereby creating good conditions for freeing Kostur, Lerin and other major towns in the region.

After all preparations were made the “Goche” battalion went into action the same evening. But instead of attacking the armed villages, the battalion was able to persuade many to disarm without a fight. Included among the villages that were disarmed were Prekopana, Olisha, Tiolishta, Sheshtevo and Chereshnitsa. The only village that resisted was Chereshnitsa in which 5 partisans were wounded, two of them were Russians. One of them later died from his wounds. (According to accounts given by Evdokia Baliova-Vera.)

Around the middle of August 1944, ELAS partisans again visited the village Chereshnitsa and captured 13 counter-band fighters who were then taken to the village Pozdivishta, Kostur Region and, by order of the Vicho ELAS Headquarters, sentenced to death and executed outside the village. (According to accounts given by Vasko Makrievski.)

During the months of August and September 1944, the “Goche” Macedonian battalion called on the armed villagers, armed by the occupiers, to hand over their weapons. Many handed over their weapons and voluntarily entered the ranks of the Macedonian battalion. Included among the villages that handed over their weapons en masse were Mokreni, Bobishta, Zagorichani, Kumanichevo, Olishta and B’mboki. The counter-bandits that joined the Macedonian battalion proved to be brave fighters when they fought against the occupiers. (The “Goche” Macedonian battalion eliminated the last remaining strongholds of the counter-bands in the villages Prekopana, Olishta, Tiolishta, Setoma, Sheshtevo and other villages.)

In September 1944 the “Goche” Macedonian battalion, along other ELAS units, attacked the city Lerin and held it for about 8 hours. They killed several German soldiers and collaborators during the battle and burned warehouses full of weapons and gasoline. (Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions..., pp. 80-81.)

The “Goche” Macedonian battalion fighters were responsible for many of the battles waged against the German occupiers and their domestic collaborators in the area between the Albanian border and the city Lerin. They liquidated all the German sentries placed along the Korcha to Lerin and Kostur to Lerin roads.

A glorious rally

Sometime in mid-September 1944, on the occasion of the German withdrawal from Kostur Region, a magnificent rally was organized in the city Kostur. The rally was attended by many people from the city and surrounding area. People in the audience urged Paskal Mitrevski to step up to the podium and say a few words. There were also those who chanted: “We want Paskal...!” and demanded that he

speak to them. Demands from the audience for Paskal Mitrevski to step up to the podium and speak did not stop despite the explanation given by Andonopoulos-Periklis, CPG Kostur Region District Committee Secretary, that Paskal Mitrevski was not on the agenda to speak. However, after persistent demands from the people he appeared on the stage. In his speech, among other things, he said:

“...The Macedonian people, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Greek people will never allow things to return to the old ways. The Macedonian people, with their self-sacrifices in this struggle, have won their right to national freedom and human rights, including the right to self-determination as proclaimed by the Atlantic Charter...” (Paskal Mitrevski’s autobiography.)

Paskal Mitrevski’s last words caused dissatisfaction among the CPG and ELAS leaders who attended the rally. They immediately began to openly attack him. Fearing for his life Mitrevski fled Kostur the same day and climbed up Mount Vicho where he joined the newly formed “Goche” Macedonian battalion. From Mount Vicho he then crossed the border into the Republic of Macedonia where he met with comrades from the CPM Central Committee leadership and from the NOV and POM General Headquarters and discussed the new crisis situation in relation to the Greek resistance leadership and the CPG’s intention to liquidate the “Goche” Macedonian battalion.

A few days later ELAS 28th Regiment Headquarters issued an arrest warrant for Paskal Mitrevski and to immediately liquidate him if he attempted escape. Fortunately that did not happen because the Macedonian people managed to hide him and the other leaders who were pursued. It is important at this point to mention that many such repressive measures and other nationalist excesses were taken against the Macedonian anti-fascist fighters by the CPG and ELAS leaderships. At this point the CPG and ELAS leaderships adopted a decision to forcefully disarm the two Macedonian battalions created in Voden and in Kostur and Lerin Regions, and implement repressive measures against the “unruly” Macedonian fighters.

The “Goche” Macedonian Battalion’s secession from the ELAS composition

As was expected, all the success achieved by the “Goche” Macedonian battalion seemed dire and disturbing to the Greek CPG and ELAS leaderships. Because of this, and for other reasons, ELAS 28th Regiment Headquarters issued an order to the Headquarters of the Macedonian battalion, demanding that it punish all those Macedonian fighters who had once (in the first decade of May 1944) “fled” to Karaorman and immediately dismiss all those Macedonians who were in leadership positions. In the same order they prohibited the Macedonian fighters from wearing the five pointed star symbol and forbade them from wearing the red scarf around their necks. They also forbade them from greeting each other with a clenched fist. They were also ordered to stop giving orders in the Macedonian language and stop recruiting Macedonian fighters into the ranks of the “Goche” battalion without approval from the CPG and ELAS leaderships.

(The Caserta Agreement was signed on September 26, 1944 in Caserta Italy. It was signed between the CPG, EAM and ELAS on the one side and the Greek government in exile, headed by George Papandreou, and the British Headquarters for the Middle East on the other side. This Agreement was about the Greek guerrilla forces being placed under the command of the Greek government in exile. The Greek government in exile, on the other hand, surrendered its right to English General Scobie. This Agreement, naturally, was yet another CPG concession to the Greek government in exile. By signing this Agreement the CPG sealed the fate of NOB in Greece. For more information see Stefanos Sarafis, ELAS.)

(It is important to note at this point that despite the overwhelming sentiment of the Macedonian masses to join the ranks of ELAS and jointly fight against the occupiers, the CPG leadership would not allow it. The Macedonian battalion “Goche” was forbidden from recruiting new fighters from the ranks of the Macedonian people. For more information see “The CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974”, doc. 101, pp. 243-244, note 176.)

From what has been said above, it should be clear that the Greek CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships endeavoured to disband the “Goche” battalion at all costs. To carry this out, the CPG and ELAS Headquarters in early October 1944 issued orders to merge the units

from the “Goche” battalion with other ELAS units and transfer them to Siatishtha Region, in order to strengthen the ELAS units in that area. (Based on the decision made by the CPG Central Committee, 9th Division ELAS Command issued orders to transfer the Lerin-Kostur “Goche” Macedonian battalion to Siatishtha, Kozheni Region. See letter sent from Gregorios Zonatas, 28th ELAS Regiment Commander, to Ilia Dimovski-Goche in which Zonatas lays out the consequences of disobeying the order if the Macedonian battalion in Vicho was not relocated to Siatishtha. Also see doc. 105, pp. 248-249, note 186.)

To this end, on October 10, 1944, ELAS 28th Regiment Headquarters issued a special proclamation to the veterans of the “Goche” battalion which spelled out the order and warned that those who refused to relocate to Siatishtha would be charged with treason. This ELAS 28th Regiment order literally suggested that individual Macedonian fighters abandon the “Goche” battalion, weapons and all, or otherwise they would be declared deserters and traitors to the struggle. Among other things the proclamation also stated the following:

“...We urge all fighters of the former battalion (meaning the “Goche” battalion) to immediately obey this order and take your arms and ammunition and go to places from where you will be picked up and delivered to the new regiment that is forming in the village Negovan... This is your last warning. Anyone who does not comply with this order will be declared a traitor...” (CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974, doc. 111, p. 258.)

Naturally, “Goche” Battalion Headquarters energetically rejected the orders issued by the ELAS 28th Regiment calling them unacceptable and making it clear to ELAS 28th Regiment that it reserved the right, in future, to refuse its orders and those of higher ELAS command.

A little later, about mid-October 1944, the Greek CPG and ELAS leaderships (Leonidas Stringos and Ioanis Ioanidis) sent a delegation to visit with the CPM leadership and with NOV and POM Headquarters in the Republic of Macedonia, in order to discuss options for eliminating the crisis that had occurred in bilateral relations and other issues regarding the Macedonian National

Question. The delegation consisted of Renos Mihaleas representative from the ELAS 9th Division, Mihail Keramitchiev representative from PEEA, Kostur Region, and Lambro Cholakov CPG Party Secretary of ELAS units acting in Gramos and Vicho Regions. (Lambro Cholakov, NOB of the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia. Notes kept by the author.)

(Renos Mihaleas had been sent to NOV and POM Headquarters before. The last time was in June 1944 when he conducted talks for the return of the Macedonian fighters who had fled to Karaorman after their secession from the ranks of ELAS.)

After a long trip the delegation arrived in the village Gorno Vranovtsi, Veles Region, at the central CPM, NOV and POM Headquarters and, the same day, met with the partisan unit leadership in the Republic of Macedonia.

In the discussions between the Greek resistance leadership representatives, the CPM Central Committee representatives and representatives of NOV and POM Headquarters, the Greeks, among other things, requested that Paskal Mitrevski be handed over so that he could be tried for “desertion” from the ranks of the Greek resistance movement. However, the CPM, NOV and POM leaders informed the Greek representatives that they had their facts wrong and that there was irrefutable evidence of the CPG, EAM and ELAS acting irregularly towards the Macedonian National Question. So the Greeks returned to Greece without having achieved their intended objective. (Lambro Cholakov, NOB of the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia. Notes held by the author.)

After the “Goche” Macedonian Battalion leadership refused to accept the 28th Regiment’s orders, the Greek ELAS leadership began to group its scattered units around the fighters of the Macedonian battalion. Given the situation, “Goche” Battalion Headquarters took appropriate measures to secure its units by taking strategic measures in the heights of Mount Bigla, and without a pause in its fight against the Germans, expected an attack from the ELAS units. And that’s exactly what happened. A few days later units from the ELAS 28th Regiment began to attack the “Goche” Battalion. Macedonian Battalion Headquarters still believed and hoped that a common

ground of understanding could be found... But that did not happen...

(The “Goche” Macedonian Battalion did not execute the order to relocate as ordered by ELAS 28th Regiment Headquarters. The battalion fighters left their positions and were recruited as new fighters joining on a voluntary basis. CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974, doc. 108, p. 254, note 191.)

(Even though the Macedonian CPG Bureau pleaded to the Group of ELAS divisions in Macedonia to instruct the command of ELAS 9th Division (General Kalabalikis) not to attack the “Goche” Battalion, Kalabalikis obtained consent from ELAS Headquarters and attacked the Macedonian battalion anyway. See CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974, doc. 124, pp. 282-283, note 240.)

Facing a large concentration of ELAS forces, in order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed on both sides, the “Goche” Macedonian Battalion Headquarters on October 12, 1944 withdrew its fighters from the territory of Greece and, through Prespa, led them to the Republic of Macedonia. The fighters then regrouped outside Bitola and on October 16, 1944 relocated to the village Graesnitsa, Bitola Region, where they were assigned to the Macedonian units of NOV and POJ and led to fight against the local collaborators and the German army retreating from Lerin towards Bitola and Prilep.

The Voden Macedonian Battalion, which at the time was acting on Mount Kaimakchalan within the composition of ELAS 30th Regiment, suffered the same fate. (For more information see Pavle Rakovski, Dawn is born in the deep night.) When the Macedonian Voden Battalion Headquarters, led by Pavle Rakovski from the village Dolno Kleshtino, Lerin Region, realized that the CPG and ELAS leaderships were preparing to disband the battalion because it supposedly was wakening “separatism and nationalism” in the Greek and Macedonian fighters, it ordered the entire battalion to leave and cross over to the Republic of Macedonia. So in order to avoid bloodshed and conflict with the ELAS units, on the night of October 12 and 13, 1944, the Macedonian Voden Battalion crossed over the border and entered the Republic of Macedonia. (See October 6, 1944, letter from Nacho Angelkovski Rochko to the

Macedonian Headquarters. CPM Central Committee, AE, 1565. A copy of this letter can be found with Todor Simovski, an INI consultant.)

On November 18, 1944, after Bitola was freed from the Germans, the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia was formed. It was composed of veteran fighters from the two Macedonian Battalions that had earlier fled Greek occupied Macedonia. The Brigade's command was comprised of Commander Ilija Dimovski-Goche, Deputy Commander Naum Peiov, Political Commissar Mihailo Keramitchiev, Deputy Political Commissar Vangel Aianovski-Oche and Brigade Chief of Staff Steve Georgiev Dimov. In the beginning Vangel Aianovski-Oche was appointed CPM Brigade Party Secretary but he left for a new position and was replaced by Vasil Makrievski. Mincho Fotev was appointed Brigade Youth (SKOJ) Secretary.

(Vangel Aianovski-Oche was from Voden. He had been a Communist and party activist before World War II. In 1942 he became secretary of MAO, the Macedonian Liberation Organization in Voden. In November 1944 he became deputy political commissar of the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. Later, in late spring 1945, he became secretary of the Voden Region NOF District committee, then a member of the Main NOF Executive Board for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia).

While active, the command composition of the Brigade had to undergo various changes. This was required for the struggle. Due to Mihail Keramitchiev's long absence, for example, Dinko Delevski from Voden was appointed Brigade Political Commissar, etc.

The secession of the Macedonian fighters from the ELAS composition and their transfer to the Republic of Macedonia, seen in the light of the then historical developments and ultimate outcome, was a consequence of long-term policies and practices. This phase of the Macedonian people's National Liberation Struggle is characterized by two main ideological currents and contradictions. On the one hand there was deep craving on the part of the Macedonian masses for major changes, emerging from their strong desire for national freedom and human rights. The old illusions and

limitations of the same old Greek policy began to crumble before them. On the other hand the narrow views and policies of the CPG and EAM leaderships, towards the Macedonian people, inevitably generated widespread dissatisfaction and distrust in the Macedonian masses towards those policies. We can clearly see this from the October 15, 1945 proclamation sent by the “Goche” Macedonian Battalion Headquarters to all its fighters and to the Macedonian people, which among other things, stated:

“We cannot be silent and not respond when our rights are being taken away, when the rights of our oppressed people, who for many years fought against the Hitlerist and Fascist occupiers, are being taken away. We cannot keep quiet and not expose the completely false and despicable order of the 28th Regiment issued against us. All of our partisans know that they are fighting for our freedom. They all know that we share that struggle with the ELAS partisans and that, until now, they never turned away from the EAM and ELAS line. Even today we are ready to die alongside the honest Greek people. We categorically declare to the entire world that:

1. We are not criminals like the 28th Infantry Regiment has made us to be in its call on December 19, 1944. Those 1,500 Macedonian partisans represent the population in Kostur and Lerin Regions. If all of us partisans, children of Macedonia, are criminals like the 28th Infantry Regiment has labeled us, then the entire Macedonian population; every single Macedonian is a criminal.

2. The great big lie and fabrication is that we left our position a long time ago and that we took counter-action against ELAS’s intentions against us. You all know that our units were pursued and disarmed by the Greek ELAS Andartes (bandits). You all know that ELAS troops left from Kostur and Prespa Regions so that they could cut us off, capture and disarm us. So we had to take measures to avoid fratricide and ensure the tranquility of all of our brothers. They ordered us to go south, to Greece, only to break the Macedonian partisan movement...” (This proclamation was issued by the “Goche” Macedonian Battalion Headquarters to the Macedonian people to explain why the Macedonian fighters left the ELAS composition. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945, T.I ..., doc. 171, pp. 233-235.)

From what has been stated above, it is clear that the road the CPG and EAM leaderships took in addressing the situation with the Macedonian Battalion, with the usual Greek nationalistic mentality, violence and discrimination against the Macedonian people, led to the Macedonian Battalion's split from ELAS and its exit to the Republic of Macedonia.

Paskal Mitrevski – Political Committee Secretary for Greek occupied Macedonia

With the exodus of the Macedonian fighters to the Republic of Macedonia, towards the end of October 1944, a political body was formed to develop a program and platform to induct the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia into the new reality against the Greek aggressive reactionary forces which were lashing out against the entire Macedonian population, with the ultimate goal of physically liquidating them or driving them out beyond the Greek borders. To do this a Provisional Political Committee for Macedonia under Greece was formed and headed by Paskal Mitrevski as its secretary.

The significance of this political body is that on November 12, 1944 it issued a proclamation, written by Paskal Mitrevski, to the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, which spelled out the reasons why the Macedonian fighters left ELAS. Part of the proclamation reads as follows:

“...We entered the struggle with full faith believing that our Greek comrades from ELAS will not leave us to slide back into the old slave cell (he was thinking of the Metaxas dictatorship) after struggling with them for three years in a common struggle to expel the occupiers and to gain our right to self-determination in accordance with the Atlantic Charter. After three years of struggling, however, not only did we not gain the right to speak and fight for our self-determination, but our friends in ELAS wanted to attack us and disarm us by force. They called us fascists and separatists and refused to hear our contribution to the struggle, which earned us the right to decide our own destiny, the right to self-determination like General Tempo (Svetozar Vukmanovich), Marshal Tito's

representative, had said in his speech to the national rally in Bitola on November 7, 1944..." (Proclamation of the Political Commissar for Macedonia under Greece. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1941 to 1945, T.I..., doc. 189, p. 268.)

A month later the Provisional Political Committee for Macedonia under Greece changed its name to Political Committee for Macedonia under Greece. The new Political Committee was created on December 3, 1944 in Bitola in the presence of about 200 delegates, during the Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonian refugee Conference. Included among the delegates were refugees from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, representatives of the Macedonian battalions from Greek occupied Macedonia and from the Republic of Macedonia, among whom was also Dimitar Vlahov, a well-known Macedonian revolutionary. He was elected onto a Board of 29 members. The Organization's immediate leadership consisted of 10 members including Paskal Mitrevski (Secretary), Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov (Deputy Secretary), Naum Shupurkovski, Todor Nikolov (leader of Conference), George Turundzhiev, Pavle Rakovski, Giorgi Atanasov Blaze, Lazo Poplazarov, Mihailo Keramitchiev and Naum Peiov. From its ranks the Committee also elected its Secretariat consisting of 5 members, Paskal Mitrevski, Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov, Naum Shupurkovski, Lazo Poplazarov and Todor Nikolov. (Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions..., p. 40.)

The speeches, the presented papers and the discussions that took place during this Conference were dominated by the reasons why the Macedonian Battalions left ELAS and what to do about the Macedonian situation in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, with respect to the persecutions committed by German occupiers in that country. However, even though the CPG and ELAS leaderships led a nationalistic policy towards the Macedonian people, many of the Macedonian fighters who had fled demonstrated their desire to return home in order to continue the struggle against the Greek reactionaries and against the English interventionists.

Speaking about the Macedonian people's tragic situation in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, Dimitar Vlahov in his welcoming speech, among other things, said the following:

“...Even now the most basic human, national and political rights of our people are still not recognized. Our people are ruthlessly persecuted only because they identify themselves as Macedonians and speak their Macedonian language...” (“Nova Makedonija”, organ of NOF in the Republic of Macedonia, yr. 1, no. 11, December 9, 1944.)

Paskal Mitrevski’s work as Secretary of the Political Committee for Macedonia under Greece lasted until February 1945. At this point the CPM Central Committee sent Mitrevski to Belgrade to attend a quarterly partisan political course organized by the CPY Central Committee. He was replaced by Giorgi Turundzhiev from the village Ekshi-Su, Lerin Region.

Chapter Four

The Macedonians from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in NOB under new conditions

A terrorist regime working against the Macedonian population

Within days of the ELAS units being disarmed, as a result of the Varkiza Agreement, the Greek reactionaries, assisted by British troops, usurped power in the Greek state and imposed a terrorist regime against the people. The Greek political right in charge of the Greek state's government thrust itself and all its forces against the democratic movement in the country, especially against the Macedonian population with aims at physically exterminating it, and not just because of its Macedonian national identity but also because during the National Liberation Struggle it resolutely sided with the democratic forces in Greece and fought against foreign occupiers and for its human, national and social rights. (For more information on this see the numerous documents generated during that time that are now located in the Macedonian archives in several sequels in the series: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1941-1945".)

(The Varkiza Agreement was signed on February 12, 1945 in Varkiza, located near Athens. It was signed between representatives from the Greek government and the CPG and EAM. It was signed to terminate the Civil War which had begun on December 4, 1944 in Athens, when ELAS units collided with the Greek government army, police and British interventionist troops. The Varkiza Agreement was a means to end the armed resistance in Greece, which called for the demobilization of ELAS units by handing over their weapons. As a consequence of this Agreement and as a result of disarming ELAS, the Greek political right took it upon itself to initiate terror activities against the left, especially against the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia, with aims at expelling the Macedonian population from its native home and driving it outside of the Greek borders. A translated version of this Agreement was published in "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945", T.I..., doc. 200, pp. 298-301.)

In regards to the above, Todor Simovski wrote the following:

“Disarmed, the CPG, EAM and ELAS found themselves in an inferior position the second day after they surrendered their weapons. The moment ELAS was decommissioned the political right initiated unprecedented terror in Greece. The terror received special dimensions in the part of Macedonia under Greece, where the Macedonian people were exposed to mistreatment and physical abuse. The terror applied against the Macedonian people was intended to fulfill a British government aim to physically liquidate or forcibly expel 120,000 Macedonian people from this region of Greek occupied Macedonia as was mandated by Sir Ronald Reginald Liper, British Ambassador to Greece in Athens.” (See Todor Simovski, “British policy in World War II and the Macedonian National Question” with particular reference to Prilep and Prilep Region. See the book “Prilep and Prilep Region in NOB 1944”, May 15, 1945. (Materials Science Meeting held on March 14, 15 and 16, 1983. Book I/1. Municipal Board of the Veterans Union of NOB in Prilep, Skopje, 1985, p. 258.)

As a consequence of the Varkiza Agreement, terror against the Macedonian people continued to increase with each passing day. The Macedonian people were harassed, persecuted, arrested, raped, robbed and murdered. The Macedonian people’s houses and properties, including entire villages, were burned down and destroyed on a daily basis. The Greek police and gendarmes were authorized by the Greek government to use any means possible to pursue and arrest Macedonian patriots, especially communists and former Macedonian ELAS fighters. The Greek prosecutors and interrogators then used false testimonies from provocative nationalist elements to accuse these Macedonians of being Bulgarophiles, traitors to the Greek people and ordinary criminals. The military courts then prosecuted the innocent Macedonians and sentenced them to life imprisonment to be served in the infamous Greek prisons and uninhabitable Greek islands.

Besides the daily persecutions and murders conducted by the Greek authorities against the Macedonian population, Greek nationalist organizations such as PAO (Pan-Hellenic Liberation Organization), BEH (Royal Greek youth), X-tes and other former associates of the foreign occupiers organized special armed gangs composed of

criminals, murderers and other fanatics and carried out terror activities against populated Macedonian areas. An example of this was a speech given by Kostinas, a Greek reactionary, given in the village Kavalaris, Kukush Region during which Kostinas advised his countrymen as follows:

“Greeks, democrats, monarchists and communists unite against the great danger that threatens our country. Bare your chests against the Slav communists who want to destroy the Balkan countries. Be proud that you are Greeks and, if you want to, you can be communists but be Greek communists and not the so-called brothers of Slavs. Do not go to the Bulgarians and Yugoslavs, they want to enslave us and destroy Hellenism. You can call yourselves communists, we will not hold that against you, but you must think above all about Greece, about one great Greece, not like today’s communists and a small number of Macedonians living in Greek Macedonia who want to sell Greece to Tito and to Georgiev (he was thinking of Giorgi Dimitrov, a Bulgarian politician, an international labour movement leader, General Secretary of BPG (k), and president of the Bulgarian government since 1946). Tito is protesting because we arrest Slavs in Macedonia but that’s nothing, they should all be buried in holes and none of them should be left alive, none of them, because today they are urging the Communist Party to respond to our national aspirations. Be assured that all those who think about a Greater Macedonia will be cleansed. It is very sad to refer to yourselves as brothers of Slavs, or of Bulgarians, who represent nothing before the Greeks...” (See NOF top leadership report of the situation in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945, T.II. Documents of the Macedonian people’s participation in the Greek Civil War in 1945. Translation and editing by Risto Kiriazovski and Todor Simovski, Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1973, doc. 115, p. 212.)

The Greek reactionary forces organized and held similar rallies in several villages in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. One such rally was held in the city Enidzhe-Vardar where, among other things speeches were given by various people including the Governor of Macedonia and the District Chief of Enidzhe-Vardar. The speakers ended their speeches with slogans like: “Let the Bulgarians leave Greece!”, “Death to Tito!”, “Sofia to Moscow!”, “Macedonia is

Greek and no one can take it away!”, “There are no Macedonians in Macedonia!”, “Only Greeks live in Macedonia!” and other such racist slogans. (See NOF top leadership report about the situation in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945, T.II. Documents for the participation of Macedonians from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia in the Greek Civil War in 1945. Translation and editing by Risto Kiriazovski and Todor Simovski, Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1973, doc. 115, p. 213.)

There were Greek terror groups springing up everywhere, in almost every settlement in this part of Macedonia. The leaders of these groups were well-known to the Macedonian people because they were former associates of the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers. Operating in the Central and Western parts of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia were Frantsiskos Kolaras-Tsezos, Giorgios Mitroutsis-Gifas, Andreas Papadopoulos, Theodoros Skotidas, Iordanis Spiropoulos, Mihail-Aga, Bafas, Limneos and others. (See document entitled “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945”, T.II...)

The situation was the same in all parts of Greek occupied Macedonian including Seres, Drama and Kavala. The terrorist groups belonging to Andon Chaoush, Nikolaos Kozaris, Capetanio Pantelis Kondakos, Anastas Aga, Kyriakos Hristoforidis, Christos Dimopoulos, Prokopis, Joakim and others terrorized, pillaged, raped, attacked and indiscriminately beat the Macedonian people and burned their homes and properties.

The reactionaries in the eastern part of Greek occupied Macedonia, with particular rage, especially lashed out against the Macedonian villages in order to force the villagers to abandon their places of birth. In the Seres Region villages of Kula, Frashtani, Mertatovo, Melnikich, Sadek and Kalendra the Macedonian population constantly complained about the horrors the Greek bands committed against them. The Greek reactionaries called the Macedonian people “Bulgarians” and insisted that they all leave and go to Bulgaria soon or face the consequences of being cleansed. (See “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945”, T.II... doc. 149, p. 289.)

Every single Macedonian was exposed to violence and every single Macedonian's life and dignity was left in the hands of these Greek terrorists who played hangmen with the Macedonian population. Men were beaten to death and their houses were burned down. No one was spared from their violence, especially women, including very young girls and elderly women. Sometimes women and girls were raped in front of their husbands and parents. These Greeks were violent criminals who cared nothing for life and human dignity. They broke into people's homes in the middle of the night when people were sleeping and attacked and pillaged them. They killed people on the spot without remorse. These Greek criminals often cut off the heads of Macedonians, impaled them on spikes and carried them around to villages to frighten the people.

Here are some statistics that illustrate the Macedonian situation in Greek occupied Macedonia with regards to the terror unleashed against the Macedonian people by the Greek nationalists in the period from 1945 to 1946. Namely, 400 persons were liquidated, 440 women and girls were raped, 8,145 people were imprisoned, 4,209 people were tried, 3,215 people were convicted, 13,529 people were interned, 13 people went mad from being badly beaten, 1,291 houses were burned, 80 villages were looted, 1,605 families were robbed, 45 villages were emptied of their residents and 1,943 families were evicted from their homes. (Risto Kiriazovski, *Macedonian national institutions...*, p. 102. For more information on this see "Etsi Arhise o enfilios" (This is how the Civil War began.) Athens 1987 pp. 1-395.)

To save their lives, a vast number of Macedonians were forced to leave their homes and either run away to the mountains or cross over the borders into one of the neighbouring people's republics and become refugees. More than 20,000 Macedonians fled to the People's Republic of Macedonia alone by the end of 1946. (See Memorandum from political refugees from Aegean Macedonia in Yugoslavia submitted to the UN Inquiry Commission in March 1947. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1947, T.IV. Documents outlining the participation of the Macedonian people, from the Aegean part of Macedonia, in the Greek Civil War, 1947. Translation and editing by Risto Kiriazovski and Todor Simovski. Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1980, doc, 24, p. 62.)

The Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia were given the following alternatives: submit to humiliation and persecution which may have ended in their physical destruction; abandon their homes and ancestral lands, perhaps forever, and flee the country; or arm themselves and fight back. As mentioned above, some fled the unbearable situation but the majority, as they have historically done before, chose the traditional path like many previous generations and faced the enemy on their own and defended their honour and freedom.

NOF's emergence in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia

As expected, the Macedonian communists and former Macedonian ELAS fighters who had fled to the Republic of Macedonia earlier could not stand idle while their families and friends back home were facing a difficult and unbearable situation, brought upon them by the Greek political right and its armed gangs. They had no choice but to launch various initiatives including the creation of Macedonian organizations to assist the struggle of the Macedonian people in that part of Macedonia, which now was fighting not only for its human, national and social rights but also for its survival. To meet this objective, on April 23, 1945, before Germany's capitulation, the Macedonian National Liberation organization NOF (National Liberation Front) for the Macedonians from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia was established. Simultaneously with NOF, the organization NOMS (National Liberation Youth Union) and AFZH (Anti-Fascist Front of Women) were also established.

The highest governing body (Main Board) of the NOF leadership was constituted on May 21, 1945 and consisted of six full members: Paskal Miterevski as political secretary, Pavle Rakovski, Mincho Fotev, Atanas Koroveshov, Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov and Mihailo Keramitchiev.

(Pavle Rakovski was from Dolno Kleshtino, Lerin Region. He was a teacher by profession. During NOB he was a reserve ELAS activist in Ostrovo and Meglen Regions. In June 1944 he became a member of the Voden Macedonian ELAS Battalion in Kaimakchalan, responsible for the political and moral education of the fighters. In a

protest against the CPG's irregular position regarding the Macedonian National Question, during the first half of October 1944, he rebelled and led the Voden Macedonian battalion over the border into the Republic of Macedonia. In December 1944 he became a member of the Political Committee for Macedonia under Greece. In April 1945 he was appointed to the NOF (Main Board) leadership for the Macedonians from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia responsible for agitation and propaganda. In early October 1949, along with the rest of the NOF Main Board, he was accused by the CPG Greek leadership of being a Yugoslav agent operating in the ranks of the CPG and DAG and was imprisoned in the Stalinist camps in Siberia. He died in 1990 in Skopje.)

(Mincho Fotev was from Rupishta, Kostur Region. He was a member of the CPG before the war. During NOB he was a fighter in the first detachment in Kostur Region and later appointed assistant in the ELAS 28th Regiment counter-intelligence services. With the establishment of the "Goche" Macedonian Battalion, he was appointed Political Commissar in one of its units. In November 1944 he became secretary of SKOJ, the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. In April 1945 he became a member of the NOF Main Board leadership for the Macedonians from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. In November 1946 he was elected member of the EPON Regional Committee Secretariat for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and Thrace. During the NOF 2nd Congress he was elected member of the NOF Executive Committee while, at the same time, serving as President of the NOMS Main Board for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. In early October 1949, along with the rest of the NOF Main Board, he was accused by the CPG Greek leadership of being a Yugoslav agent, arrested and imprisoned in the Stalinist camps in Siberia. After relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR were normalized he was freed. He died in Skopje in 1987.)

(Atanas Koroveshov was from the village Smrdesh, Kostur Region. He became a fighter in the "Lazo Trpovski" unit in 1943. In May 1944, in a protest over the Greek communist irregular position towards the Macedonian national Question, he, along with a group of Macedonian fighters from Kostur Region, crossed over the border into the Republic of Macedonia. In July 1944 he was appointed

commander of a battalion in the First Assault Brigade in the Republic of Macedonia and fought against the occupiers. Towards the end of July 1944 he returned to Kostur Region and immediately joined the ranks of NOB in Greece and ended up in the “Goche” Macedonian Battalion. In a second protest against the CPG’s irregular position regarding the Macedonian National Question, during the first half of October 1944, he rebelled and fled to the Republic of Macedonia. In October 1944 he joined the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia and continued to fight against the occupiers and domestic traitors. In April 1945 he became a member of the NOF Main Board leadership. He died heroically in battle on September 2, 1944, near the village Kornishor, Enidzhevardar Region, fighting against the Greek government forces.)

(Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov was from Voden. In 1942 he became a CPG Activist. In 1942 he was elected CPG District Committee Organizational Secretary for Voden Region. In the fall of 1943 he became a member of the CPG Regional Committee Plenum for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. In July 1944 he became political commissar of the Voden Macedonian Battalion in Kaimakchalan. In November 1944 he was elected to the Political Committee for Macedonia under Greece. In April 1945 he was appointed member of the NOF Main Board for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. In November 1946 he was appointed member of DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. He died in June 1947.)

(Mihailo Keramitchiev was from the village Gabresh, Kostur Region. His joining the revolutionary and communist movement was triggered, before World War II, by his imprisonment by the Greek authorities. In early 1944 he became commander of the SNOF Macedonian partisan reserve unit in Kostur Region, which acted within the ELAS reserves. In 1944 he became a member of PEEA (Political Committee of National Liberation). However, following the collision with the CPG in October 1944 he crossed over the border into the Republic of Macedonia. In November 1944 he became the first political commissar in the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. In December 1944 he became a member of the Political Committee under Greece. In April

1945 he became a member of the NOF Main Board for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Later he became secretary and president of NOF. He attained the rank Lieutenant Colonel in DAG. He died in Skopje in 1981.)

NOF's goals and objectives

NOF set the following objectives:

1. The Macedonian people from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia are to conduct an irreconcilable struggle in order to achieve their national and social rights;
2. Achieve affirmation of national identity;
3. Revise the Macedonian National Question in regards to the current political life in Greece;
4. Organize resistance against the terror and genocide systematically waged by the Greek reactionary authorities against the Macedonian population;
5. Strengthen national unity among the Macedonian people;
6. Expose Vancho Mihailov's activities and supporters and smash their spy network in this part of Macedonia. As Anglo-American agents they are fighting against the national rights of the Macedonian people;
7. Expose Anglo-American plans aimed at turning Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia into a base for espionage and subversive activities against the People's Republic of Macedonia, against all of Yugoslavia and against all the other Balkan people's republics;
8. Strengthen the brotherhood and unity between the Macedonian and Greek people and between the Macedonians and all the progressive forces in Greece who are fighting against a common enemy;

9. Organize the Macedonian people's struggle so that the artificial divide between the Macedonians from all parts of Macedonia are bridged, especially with the People's Republic of Macedonia which represents the Piedmont for the liberation and unification of the entire Macedonian nation.

(For more information on NOF's goals and objectives see NOF Main Board leadership report published in the newspaper "Bilten" (Newsletter), no. 9, on March 15, 1946. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946, T. III. Documents outlining the participation of Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia in the Greek Civil War in 1946. Translation and editing by Risto Kiriazovski and Todor Simovski. Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1976, doc. 80, pp. 189- 192.)

During the May 21, 1945 NOF constituent meeting, it was decided to appoint Mincho Fotev Secretary of NOMS and Atanas Koroveshov responsible for military issues.

At the same meeting Paskal Mitrevski, as NOF Central Committee Secretary, spoke in a historical context about NOF's historical role, NOF Main Board's responsibility and the tasks that lay ahead for NOF. He also spoke about the political situation in Greece and the terror waged against the Macedonian people by the Greek reactionary forces.

Reactions to NOF's formation

The news of NOF's creation was received with great joy and optimism by the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia. Many Macedonians saw NOF as a continuation of the Ilinden tradition; fight for national rights and survival.

Unfortunately NOF's appearance angered the Greek right-wing parties and organizations raising their hatred for the Macedonian people even higher. The Greek reactionaries deemed NOF "treacherous", "autonomist" and extremely "dangerous" to Greek national interests. The entire Greek reactionary press was up in arms conducting a harsh anti-Macedonian campaign.

(At the time the main Greek nationalist newspapers were “Elliniki Foni” (Greek voice), organ of the Monarchists in Lerin, “Ellinikos Voras” (Greek North), a reactionary newspaper in Solun, “Nea alithia” (New Truth), a reactionary newspaper in Athens, “Fos” (Light), a reactionary newspaper in Athens, “Makedonia” (Macedonia) a newspaper in Solun, and others.)

NOF’s appearance enticed the Greek government and its nationalist organizations to strengthen the terrorist activities against the Macedonian population. As a result, Greek authorities and Greek nationalist organizations began to spy on NOF organizations on a daily basis. Every activist or member of NOF arrested was cruelly punished, mistreated and sentenced to life imprisonment or given a lengthy prison sentence by the Greek military courts. The Greek police were authorized to liquidate NOF members, organizers and activists without a trial. This is what was done to Atanas Koroveshov, NOF Main Board member from the village Smrdesh, Kostur Region and his friends Gino Kosta-Babiancheto from the village Babiani, Enidzhevardar Region and Atanas Luvchev from the village Barovitsa, Gumendzhitsa Region. The three NOF field organizers were liquidated on September 2, 1945 during an unequal skirmish with the enemy near the village Kornishor, Enidzhevardar Region.

(For more information on Atanas Koroveshov’s revolutionary activities and tragic death see S. Atanasov, “NOF’s first blood”. Voice of the Aegeans, Skopje, 1951, September 4, II, 14, p. 4. Tashko Mamurovski, “Activities of the Revolutionary Atanas Koroveshov (1918-1945)”. History, Skopje, 1985, XXI, 2, pp. 221-231, Memoriam program marking events and characters of the revolutionary past of the Macedonian people in Skopje. Skopje, 1973, part III, (busts), p. 10. Handwritten documents stored in INI and Hristo Andonovski, Farewell to Naso and Kosta. Emigrant calendar, Skopje, 1969, p. 160.)

Gligor Kiosev from Rupishta, and Aleko Vasilev from Gumendzhe, who was liquidated on September 17, 1945 along with his fellow NOF activists from Gumendzhe Region, Peno Karamutkin from the village Kriva, Girorgi Iudob, Giorgi Sh. Krlev, Traiko P. Aitov,

Giorgi T. Shashev, Icho G. Trtev, Hristo Gatev (all from the village Barovitsa, Gumendzhe Region) and Mino Parlapanov from the village Vlgatsi, Gumendzhe Region. (For more information on the tragic death of the nine NOF activists from the Gumendzhe Region see Hristo Andonovski, "Five years after the death of the nine in Paiak". Voice of the Aegeans, Skopje, 1950, October 1, I, 2. See Tashko Mamurovski, The tragedy of the nine anti-fascists in Paiak Mountain. History, Skopje, 1979, XV, 2, pp.131-136.)

History will never forget the unforgettable tragic cases of arrests, torture, trials in the Greek military courts, shootings and especially the torture of Mirka Gineva from the village Rusilovo, Voden Region, the Macedonian People's heroine and Voden Region AFZH District Board Secretary, along with her companions and NOF activists Tome Mihailov from village Gugovo, Petre Popdimitrov, Voden Director and NOF activist, Dimitar Limbov, Regional NOF activist from the village Vladovo, Giorgi Proiv from Voden, NOF Regional activist, Risto Stoianov from the village Mesimer, NOF Regional activist, and the Greek Georgios Mustakidis-Aleko from the village Karasinantsi, Gumendzhe Region, CPG leader for Voden Region.

Mirka Gineva was the first woman in Greece to be executed by a military court because she was found guilty of "political" activities. She was executed on July 26, 1946 in the Enidzhevardar cemetery.

(For more details on Mirka Gineva's revolutionary activities and those of her companions, see Hristo Andonovski, Irina Gineva-Mirka. Voice of the Aegeans, Skopje, 1952, July 2, III, 24. Also see Hristo Andonovski, "Mirka Ginova", Nova Makedonija Skopje, 1971, July 26 to 30; teacher of Rusilovo, Nova Makedonija, Skopje, 1967, March 7; Vangel Aianovski-Oche, the Aegean Joan of Arc. Nova Makedonija, Skopje, 1970, August 5 to 9; Tashko Mamurovski, Mirka Ginova (1916-1946). Tashko Mamurovski, Bright characters from Aegean Macedonia (1945-1949), Skopje, 1987, pp. 27-42, and "Memories" of Mirka Gineva's activities by Todor Simovski. Notes kept by the author.)

A year later, the beastly Greeks tortured and burned the homes of AFZH activist sisters Niki and Vesa Strezov and their neighbour

Matka Popova from the village Ekshi-Su, Lerin Region. The Greek torturers tortured the women with red hot iron rods. The women died of their wounds. The Greeks were especially cruel to Matka Popova who they tortured in front of her husband and four minor children.

During the same year the beastly Greeks brutally cut up Sika Stezhova in front of her ten year-old son. She was the sister of brutally murdered Vesa and Niki. After a lengthy torture, the torturer Baburis slaughtered Sika in the prison. There were many such dire and horrendous murders committed by the Greeks in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Besides the looting, murders, mass arrests and bloody terror committed against the Macedonian civilian population, the Greek authorities, through their reactionary organizations, organized nationalist demonstrations in the Macedonian villages and cities threatening the population with slogans such as “Death to the Bulgarians communists!” “Bulgarians leave this country!” and so on. The demonstrations were conducted with Greek nationalist songs being sung loudly. The protesters were openly threatening the people that if they, referring to them as “Bulgarians”, did not leave Greece all of them would be liquidated.

A group of Greek MP’s proposed to the Greek Parliament to pass a special law against the “Bulgarians” in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia to do to them as was done to the “Sudetenlanders” in Czechoslovakia.

(The people of “Sudetenland” were a German minority in Czechoslovakia who, before World War, were a scattered fifth column of German nationalists and chauvinists who during the war committed countless crimes against the Czechoslovakian people. After the war the Czechoslovakian government expelled them all to Germany.)

The Greek right-wing newspapers “Ellinikos Voras”, “Nea Alithia”, “Makedonia” and others openly insisted that the Greek authorities expel the “Sudetenlanders” from Greek occupied Macedonia.

(For more information on this see the August 7, 1945 report compiled by the NOF Main Board leadership on the situation of the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, published in the newspaper "Bulletin" no. 9, on March 15, 1946. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946, T. III..., doc. 80, pp. 188-190. Also see article the published in the Solun party newspaper "Laiki foni" (People's Voice), on July 3, 1946, entitled "The true and false Sudetenlanders". CPG and the Macedonian National Question (1918-1974)..., doc. 162, pp. 386-390, and "Sudetenland repeated". Doc. 165, pp. 392-395.)

NOF's establishment upset the Anglo-American diplomatic representatives in Greece, who then began to label the entire Macedonian population "Autonomists", led by Ivan Mihailov to realize his militant plans. To achieve its objectives the Anglo-American diplomatic missions insisted on establishing spy and sabotage centres in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia to not only work against the Aegean Macedonian national liberation movement but also against the Macedonian movement in the People's Republic of Macedonia. To achieve this, the English opened a consulate office in Lerin headed by an Englishman known as Hills.

(See article written by Leonidas Stringos, CPG Regional Bureau Secretary for Macedonia and Thrace, entitled "Struggle for democracy and the problem with the Slavo-Macedonians", published in the newspaper "Protoporos" no. 1, on February 7, 1946. CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974, doc. 170, pp. 401-402.)

(Also see doc. 169, p. 401, doc. 176, p. 412. See Voden Region EAM District Committee Memorandum submitted to the UN Inquiry Commission on March 1947, regarding the terror caused by the Greek right in Voden Region, Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in NOB 1947 T.IV..., doc. 25, p. 97 and the Paper submitted by Mihailo Keramitchiev, NOF Main Board Secretary, on May 29, 1947, to NOF at Mount Kaimakchalan. Also see doc. 30, p. 157, same edition, also doc. 49. p. 214.)

The CPG's attitude towards NOF

It is important at this point to mention that even the CPG and EAM leaderships protested against NOF's establishment. Even before they found out what NOF was all about, they began to rudely attack its leadership calling it "adventurous" and "agents of Ivan Mikhailov" which, over time, split the Greek and Macedonian democratic movement. Some CPG and EAM district leaders did not hesitate to call on the Greek government, its army and gendarmerie to liquidate NOF members and activists. This is exactly what happened with the CPG Regional Committee in Kostur Region. In June 1945 the CPG leadership in Kostur Region printed leaflets and publicly distributed them calling on the Greek government and its police force to persecute and liquidate the NOF "Bulgarian autonomists". (See Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945 T.II..., doc. 52, pp. 98-99.) There was another incident of this in the village Kotori in Lerin Region where Stratos Kentros, CPG Regional Secretary for Lerin Region, during a Party meeting, among other things, said the following in the presence of the Chief of Police:

"They (referring to NOF members) are counter-bands and autonomists and that is why we need to persecute them and persuade the villagers not to give them bread or any other help..." (See report by Paskal Mitrevski dated November 14, 1945, about the political situation in Lerin Region. Also see doc. 187, p. 355.)

Similarly, the CPG District Committee for Voden Region in its June 28, 1945 proclamation sent to its CPG membership and to the people in the region condemned NOF and accused it of being an autonomist and counter-band organization with aims at splitting territory from Greece. Among other things the proclamation read:

"In today's peaceful struggle..., obstacles are being created by suspicious elements. They appear with weapons and empty promises to try and drag the Slavo-Macedonians into the networks to fulfill their unachievable plans. They are suspicious and anarchist elements, followers of the role and work of brigands..." (See doc. 48, pp. 94-95.)

Regarding the CPG and EAM leadership's negative attitude towards NOF's formation, Paskal Mitrevski in his capacity as Head of NOF,

in a report dated September 1945, among other things, wrote the following:

“The Kostur Region CPG District Committee printed and gave out leaflets inviting the people to ask the Voulgaris government (Petros Voulgaris was a Greek admiral and head of the Greek Royalist Party) to arrest these ‘Ohrana’ supporters and ‘bandits’, i.e. the best comrades who led the struggle for bread, freedom, equality, democracy, brotherhood and unity. The same Party people who, with their propaganda and various slogans which they liberally threw even in our ranks, managed to drag with them comrades from the army and forced them to desert and surrender their arms to the English... Party Cadres roamed the countryside intimidating our people saying to them ‘It would be too bad for you if you give them bread and a roof; if you escape from the Burandari you will not escape from us’. Similarly they went to some Macedonian and Greek villages shouting while referring to members of NOF: ‘They belong to ‘Ohrana’, they are fascists and thugs. If you see them you should immediately call the police or the civil authorities to help catch them.’” The above message was read by the Burandari at a gathering after which the ferocious terror began... (See September 1945 report by Paskal Mitrevski regarding the CPG attitude towards the Macedonians of NOF. Doc. 153, pp. 298-300.)

(The Burandari were members of the Greek National Army, formed after the Varkiza Agreement was signed. Because of their well-known vandalism and the way they conducted themselves against the democratic population, the people began to call them “Burandari”, named after the Greek Colonel Burandas who, during the occupation, was in charge of the quisling units serving the occupiers.)

In the same report Paskal Mitrevski also wrote:

“...The CPG Cadres from Lerin attacked us because we took the attitude to sabotage Voulgaris’s mobilization by not allowing Macedonians and Greeks to serve in the Greek army. And on this issue they again find reasons to attack us and slander us saying that we are fascists, members of ‘Ohrana’, etc...”

“While traveling through the Kailari Region Macedonian villages, Ypsilantis, a former captain of ELAS and now CPG organizer, was intimidating the villagers by threatening to cut their throats if the joined NOF...”

“Captain Stathis, former ELAS Political Commissar, went from village to villages in Enidzhe-Vardar and Gumendzhe Regions and yelled: “Beat those spies and informants who are sold to the Intelligence Service and who earlier were sold to Ohrana” (a military counter-band autonomist formation based in the same town, in service of the occupier). The Party led similar tactics in Seres and Drama Regions, calling on the people: “It would be better if you Macedonians go to Bulgaria because you enjoyed the Bulgarian occupation.” In every Macedonian district, at every opportunity, during every meeting, the CPG leadership never failed to emphasize that Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia was an integral part of Greece and anyone who has different ideas needs to be smashed...” (See September 1945 report by Paskal Mitrevski in regards to the CPG’s attitude towards NOF and the Macedonian people. Also see doc. 153, pp. 298-300.)

Regarding such defamatory acts against NOF and the Macedonian people on the part of the CPG and EAM leaderships, in another report Paskal Mitrevski, on November 14, 1945, among other things, wrote the following:

“...The CPG continues with the same provocative tactics and open policy... Some CPG members manifest a certain mood and take certain actions with full cooperation from the authorities... they surrender our political cadres to the enemy while labeling them counter-bandits and autonomists, like those for example from the village Boreshnitsa (Lerin Region)...” (See September 1945 report by Paskal Mitrevski regarding the CPG’s attitude towards NOF and the Macedonian people. Also see doc. 187, p. 355.)

There are many such doings, highlighted by Paskal Mitrevski, on the part of the chauvinistic attitude of the Greek CPG and EAM leaderships towards NOF and the Macedonian National Question.

From the reports written by Paskal Mitrevski and other similar documents, it is clear that the CPG exhibited a nationalistic and racist attitude towards the Macedonian people and towards the Macedonian National Question and thus it would have been impossible for NOF to be able to achieve any cooperation and unity with the CPG. But despite the difficulties imposed on NOF, a little later the two sides came to an understanding and did agree to achieve unity but under completely different circumstances. More on this later.

In short, the hostilities emanating from the CPG and EAM towards NOF were due to the fact that NOF was a new and powerful political force in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia with a clear set of objectives regarding the Macedonian National Question and regarding current socio-political issues in Greece. The CPG and EAM leaderships refused to recognize NOF because that would have actually meant that they would have to amend their great Greek nationalistic stance towards the Macedonian National Question, which would then have obliged them to urge the Greek government and Greek society to recognize the existence of the Macedonian nation and afford the Macedonian people their rights according to acceptable international standards and norms. But the CPG and EAM did not want to do that!

NOF's organizational structure

As mentioned earlier, among other things discussed were NOF's organizational and personnel issues during NOF's constitutive meeting. The NOF leadership, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, made a decision to form five NOF District Boards in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. The regions chosen were Kostur, Lerin, Voden, Enidzhe-Vardar-Gumendzhe and the Eastern Districts (Seres and Drama). The District organizational structures, the NOF, NOMS and AFZH regional and city governing bodies were also determined during that meeting. Lambro Cholakov from the village Smrdesh, Kostur Region, was appointed NOF District Board Secretary for Kostur Region. Risto Iankovski was appointed NOF District Board Secretary for Lerin Region. Vangel Aianovski-Oche from Voden was appointed NOF District Board Secretary for Voden Region. Ivan Nichev from Gumentsa was appointed NOF District Board

Secretary for Enidzhe-Vardar-Gumendzhe Regions. It was not determined, at that time, who was going to be NOF Secretary of Eastern Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia (Seres and Drama). This was due to the difficult conditions of the job. However, a decision was made by the NOF Main Board to create appropriate work conditions for the area and send the instructor Mihail Apostolov-Graniti from the village Krchishta, Kostur Region.

(For more information on NOF's structure see Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946, T.III..., doc. 9, pp. 23-24. Also see Risto Kiriazovski, the National Liberation Front and other Macedonian organizations in Aegean Macedonia (1945-1949). Culture, Skopje, 1985, pp. 116-130.)

(Mihail Apostolov-Graniti was a participant in ELAS and in the First Macedonian Assault Brigade from Greek occupied Macedonia. In November 1946 he became a member of Vicho DAG Partisan Headquarters. He died at the end of March 1948 as a DAG Battalion commissar.)

It is understandable that, due to various arrests and executions of NOF Cadres by the Greek reactionary authorities, with time there were changes to NOF's organizational structure on all levels. (For more information on this see Risto Kiriazovski, the National Liberation Front and other organizations..., p. 120.)

During the above-mentioned NOF Main Board constitutive meeting, a decision was made to establish a NOF Agitation and Propaganda department which would act as the main NOF organ and issue newsletters on NOF's behalf. Paskal Mitrevski was tasked with setting up this department. (Paskal Mitrevski, struggle autobiographical notes...)

Because of the cruel terror waged by the Greek reactionary forces against the Macedonian population, during the NOF leadership meeting it was decided to organize field self-defense measures against the government armed groups. The armed NOF self-defense groups would resist the Greek government armed gangs approaching their village by engaging the entire Macedonian population en masse to block the gangs from entering houses, while the armed NOF

groups resisted the armed gangs when they appeared in the Macedonian villages. In short, the purpose of the armed NOF groups was to assist the people in preserving their lives, honour and property. At the same meeting it was also decided that the activities of these groups would be directly managed by the NOF District or by the field NOF District or Regional secretaries responsible for those regions.

Because of the terror waged against the Macedonian population, as mentioned earlier, thousands of Macedonians, women, old and young people, had no choice but to leave their homes, their homeland and place of birth and become refugees in the People's Republic of Macedonia. The number of Macedonian refugees kept growing with each passing day. Because of this, during the same meeting, the NOF Main Board leadership decided to appeal to the government of the People's Republic of Macedonia to allow it to establish a separate Board inside the Republic of Macedonia so that NOF could practically and effectively carry out all work related to the acceptance and care of the refugees. A special Board for refugees based in Skopje was established to perform that task. Giorgi Bonchev from Drama Region was appointed Board President and Paskal Mitrevski Board Secretary. (Paskal Mitrevski, struggle autobiographical notes...)

After its constitutive meeting, the NOF Main Board leadership and its members immediately departed for the field in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia and energetically began to work on accomplishing the tasks they set out to do during the NOF Main Board meeting. Paskal Mitrevski left for Lerin Region. Mincho Fotev and Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov left for Kostur Region. Pavle Rakovski left for Voden Region. Atanas Koroveshov left for Enidzhe-Vardar-Gumenzhe Regions, while Mihailo Keramitchiev left for Eastern Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, i.e. Seres and Drama Regions.

(Mincho Fotev, "The development path of NOF and NOB of the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia". Notes stored in a private archive held by the author's family. See Risto Kiriazovski, the National Liberation Front and other organizations..., p. 117.)

Consequently, four NOF District Boards were formed in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia by mid-June 1945. They were the Kostur, Lerin, Voden and Enidzhe-Vardar-Gumendzhe Boards. By the end of August 1945, NOF Boards were also established inside the cities Enidzhe-Vardar, Voden, Lerin and Rupishta. Eight NOF District and several Regional Boards were established during the same period. Each NOF Board consisted of five members. By the end of October 1945 nearly all of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia was covered with NOF, NOMS and AFZH organizations. The only region that lagged behind was Eastern Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia (Seres and Drama). As mentioned earlier, due to the difficult conditions of operating in that region NOF lacked adequate staff to easily penetrate settlements there.

The fact that NOF accomplished so much in such a short time, expanding its strength and organizing its positions among the broad masses of the Macedonian population, speaks loudly about how much enthusiasm there was among the Macedonian people and how quickly they accepted this national liberation organization. Indeed, the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia saw NOF and found in it new continuance for their struggle and for their national survival and freedom. NOF strictly enforced the national liberation struggle and expressed the libertarian aspirations of the Macedonian people. NOF was the chief organizer and leader of the mass strikes, demonstrations, protests and rallies undertaken by the people in Voden, Lerin, Rupishta and other Macedonian cities.

NOV's victorious outcome and the revolutions of all nations and nationalities in Yugoslavia had a positive effect causing NOF's rapid and intense development. And so was the joint struggle in the creation of the People's Republic of Macedonia within the Yugoslav federation. This too, very much inspired the liberation movement in the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia. Besides the fraternal, moral, material and political assistance the people from the Republic of Macedonia or from the free part of Macedonia had to offer, those people's optimism exhorted and encouraged the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia to carry on the struggle.

Chapter Five

The CPG's attitude towards NOF in relation to the so-called "unity"

Reasons for bad relations between NOF and the CPG and EAM

From what was said up to now, the main reason for the bad relationship between NOF on one side and the CPG and EAM on the other was the CPG and EAM leadership's refusal to recognize and deal with the Macedonian National Question in the way it actually existed. According to the CPG and EAM leaderships, the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia were a small ethnic group such as the Vlachs, Roma, Jews and Armenians who lived in Greece. The CPG and EAM, like they had for the small minorities, wanted to recognize the Macedonian CPG and EAM leaders only as a small minority with equal civil rights.

The CPG and EAM did not agree with NOF's measures undertaken for the self-defense of the Macedonian people in the wider area of Greek occupied Macedonia. The CPG and EAM leaderships qualified this action as "terrorism" and therefore strongly condemned it because, in their words, this type of struggle bothered the Greek reactionaries and caused them to bring anarchy to the country. (For more information on this see CPG Party Proclamation in Ber, February 18, 1946, with which NOF was declared an autonomist organization and that the ranks of NOF were managed by "adventurous and suspicious elements". Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946, T. III..., doc. 50, p. 119.)

The self-defense activities organized by NOF for the Macedonian people to defend themselves against terror were not initiated to challenge Greek nationalist and chauvinist repression but to resist against the torture and torment of the Macedonian people. Were the Macedonian people expected to remain idle while Greek nationalist gangs systematically exterminated them? Were they expected to remain docile in front of these infamous Greek criminals? They had no choice but to raise their hands and resist the evil!

But what irritated the CPG leadership the most, among other things, was the fact that about 80% of the Macedonian communists left the

CPG ranks and joined NOF, NOMS and AFZH. Hundreds of Macedonian communists and other patriots left the CPG in the Bulkes (Vojvodina) refugee camps alone, in March 1946, to join NOF.

Guided by the aspirations and desires of the Macedonian people, the NOF leadership defended itself against the CPG onslaught by repeatedly stating its position that: “The Macedonian people will realize their national rights by winning the struggle in this revolution. But in order to achieve that, in addition to organizing in NOF, NOMS and AFZH, they also need to organize in their own Macedonian army and other national organizations.” (Risto Kiriazovski, the National Liberation Front and other organizations..., pp. 149-150.)

While analyzing the CPG leadership’s irregular position towards NOF, Dr. Risto Kiriazovski, scientific adviser at INI, in one of his publications, among other things, wrote the following:

“...NOF’s attitude towards the (Macedonian) National Question, NOF’s very existence and that of the other Macedonian organizations and Macedonian units were obstacles to the compromise in the CPG’s illusionary endeavour that the political right was seeking a peaceful resolution to the Greek problem. The CPG leadership not only did not recognize NOF as a national and democratic organization, but even from the beginning of its establishment it began a smear campaign against it, qualifying it as autonomist, separatist, etc...” (Risto Kiriazovski, the National Liberation Front and other organizations..., pp. 149-150.) As a continuation of the same issue, elsewhere in his works, Kiriazovski wrote the following:

“...For as long as the CPG was under the impression that it would be able to impose (on the political right) a peaceful and democratic solution regarding the Greek Question, it continued its attacks against NOF because it viewed NOF’s existence as an obstacle to its politics and tactics. But after the CPG was convinced that a peaceful resolution was only an illusion, due to the intransigence of the political right, and after the CPG decided to wage an armed struggle, it began to change its attitude and approach towards NOF. At that

point it recognized NOF as a democratic and anti-fascist organization. The first to do this was CPG General Secretary Nikos Zahariadis during the CPG Plenum for Macedonia and Thrace in Solun held on December 26, 1945..." (Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions..., p. 105.)

But despite all the attacks, slander and accusations that NOF received from the CPG, NOF's leadership always acted calmly and patiently. The only and most orderly response that the NOF leadership gave was its consistent policy and program objectives adopted during its constitutive meeting. This was necessary and expected. The NOF leadership, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, could not and would not allow itself to enter into a confrontation with the CPG leadership. The NOF leadership was deeply convinced that only through a joint struggle with the Greek progressive people, against a common enemy, would it be able to fight for its people's national and social rights. Considering this permanent commitment, the NOF leadership always sought and persistently advocated to remove all misunderstandings and thus normalize strained bilateral relations. However, the road to the embodiment of unity between the two peoples was dire, difficult and labourious and, as we said before, this was because the CPG leadership continued to pursue unprincipled nationalist policies, instead of proper resolutions, towards Macedonian National Question.

In that sense, towards the middle of May 1946 under very difficult conditions, Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Main Board Secretary, in agreement with the CPG, left for Solun to meet with the CPG leadership in order to settle or negotiate a way of achieving unity between NOF and the CPG. When he arrived Mitrevski met with Leonidas Stringos, CPG Provincial Committee Secretary for Macedonia and Thrace. After that Mitrevski had plans to go to Athens and meet with CPG Secretary General Nikos Zahariadis but because it was very dangerous to travel in those days he did not go. (See June 1946 report from Paskal Mitrevski to the CPM Central Committee. The report is kept in the Paskal Mitrevski family private archives.)

During the meeting in Solun, Mitrevski personally made sure that Stringos was well aware of NOF's program principles and, more

importantly, of the need to have a common understanding of the basic issues that were of interest to both sides.

Several days after Mitrevski and Stringos met, in a speech delivered at the CPG Central Committee 3rd Plenum for Macedonia and Thrace, on June 16, 1946, in Solun, Nikos Zahariadis recognized NOF as a progressive and democratic organization representing the Macedonian people in Greece. His speech was published in the CPG newspapers “Rizospastis” and “Laiki foni” on June 19, 1946 and received much publicity. In his speech, among other things, Zahariadis said the following:

“...I spoke... with NOF representatives (Paskal Mitrevski), a democratic organization that represents the Macedonian minority in our country.”

“...Our policy regarding the Macedonian Question and the Slavo-Macedonian minority remains clear: full equality for the Slavo-Macedonians who represent a valuable and worthy part of the people of Greece who, like the Greeks, have the right to possess and cultivate the land of their fathers, to speak and be educated in their own language, to sing their songs, dance their dances, to follow the religion which they wish and to have free and legal organizations such as NOF”. (CPG and the Macedonian National Question..., doc. 163, pp. 390-391. At this point it is important to point out that before this NOF-CPG reconciliation, Nikos Zahariadis in his CPG Plenum for Macedonia and Thrace, held in Solun, in his speeches on December 28, 1945 and later on April 11 and 12, 1946, recognized NOF as a democratic and anti-fascist organization for the Macedonians who were struggling for freedom and democratic rights for all the people in Greece. Also see doc. 149, p. 339, doc, 158, p. 366-367 and doc. 159, p. 367-368.)

NOF-CPG unification

After returning from the meeting in Solun, Paskal Mitrevski briefed the NOF Main Board on the talks he had with the Greek CPG leaders, highlighting that almost all conditions were accepted by both sides. It seemed that a way was now found that would lead to the realization of unity between NOF and the CPG... But that unity

was not there yet... The difficulties for achieving unity between NOF and the CPG were well explained by Paskal Mitrevski in a report dated September 13, 1946, in which he wrote the following:

“During the last conversation that I had with CPG Central Committee General Secretary Nikos Zahariadis and other CPG Central Committee officials, we had a common understanding of our positions and accepted the principles on which to unify NOF and the CPG. If these views were realized, the problem would have been solved and we would have significantly increased our work and movement in our areas. However, the Greek comrades were obliged to make decisions that deviated from what we understood and distorted things. Nikos Zahariadis, for example, agreed to fully preserve the Macedonian partisan units and allow them to function separately, i.e. not to merge with the Greek units and then constitute a joint staff for each area. Zahariadis also said that the existence of separate Macedonian partisan units would be the first stage in the creation of a Macedonian army and Headquarters. But despite Zahariadis’s position on this, CPG representatives in the various fields insisted on breaking up the Macedonian units, i.e. demanding that the Macedonian partisan units enter the Greek units, arguing that these were the instructions they received from high up in the Party leadership.” (See September 13, 1946 report by Paskal Mitrevski regarding negotiations held with the CPG Greek leaders for achieving unity between NOF and the CPG, i.e. uniting Macedonian and Greek partisan units. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946. T. III..., doc. 171, p. 380.)

Based on the agreement reached with Nikos Zahariadis, the NOF leadership, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, was expected to propose Macedonian cadres by way of appointing appropriate CPG organs. However this agreement, which was reached with Zahariadis, was rejected. Ioanis Ioanidis, CPG Central Committee Organizing Secretary, during a meeting with a NOF representative, categorically said that, except for Paskal Mitrevski who would be co-opted in the CPG Central Committee Macedonian Bureau, all other proposed NOF staff would have to be elected at a party meeting through “democratic processes”. (See September 13, 1946 report by Paskal Mitrevski regarding negotiations held with the CPG Greek leaders for achieving unity between NOF and the CPG, i.e. uniting

Macedonian and Greek partisan units. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946. T. III..., doc. 171, p. 381.)

In the second half of September 1946, Markos Vafiadis, commander of DAG and later President of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, gave the NOF leadership an ultimatum with the following conditions for NOF's unification with the CPG:

1. Dismantle the NOF Macedonian partisan units and order the Macedonian fighters to join the CPG units because (in the opinion of most CPG leaders) the existence of Macedonian partisans "weakened the CPG's control over them". (But as mentioned earlier, only two months before that Nikos Zahariadis consented to having Macedonian special units with their own staff in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. So here we have more new combinations and manipulations.)

2. In regards to the question of military unit command composition, the CPG reserves the right to appoint "commanders" in whom the CPG has full confidence. They must be, above all, Greeks but the groups they lead can be composed of Macedonians if the Party finds them suitable.

3. As for appointing Macedonian NOF members into the CPG leadership in the region of Macedonia, the CPG's position is: "It is not necessary to have Macedonian leaders in the Macedonian provinces governed by bodies of the Party. It is only important that they be able to have confidence in the Party." (Naum Peiov, "The Macedonians in the Greek Civil War", INI, Skopje, 1968, pp. 147-148. Also see Risto Kirazovski, Macedonian national institutions... p. 113.)

Of course none of the NOF leaders would agree with such inconsiderate conditions for NOF's unification with the CPG. This is what Mihailo Keramitchiev, member of the NOF Main Board leadership, had to say during a NOF district committee meeting between NOF and the CPG held in Lerin:

"1. We insist that the creation of new and the existence of old Macedonian partisan units be continued;

2. We will not accept the CPG Macedonian Bureau's contrary decision;
3. We will abide by the agreement at all costs;
4. If the CPG attempts to impose its views by force, we will also use force to defend our position;
5. As a NOF representative I declare that any action aimed at breaking the NOF Macedonian units will be considered hostile and we will take appropriate measures.”

(See letter from Stratos Kentros, CPG District Committee Secretary for Lerin Region, dated October 14, 1946 to Kostas Shaperas, in which he informs Shaperas of the negotiations that NOF led regarding NOF's unification with the CPG. CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974..., doc. 168, p. 397-398.)

But despite all the difficulties that NOF went through to achieve cooperation with the CPG, the Macedonian leaders never once attempted to deceive the Greek leaders that it was high time to agree to something imaginary. And indeed, after traveling a long and arduous road, on October 14, 1946 due to NOF's persistence and due to the fact that Zahariadis had publicly recognized the Macedonian organization as a democratic and anti-fascist organization of Macedonian people, the two sides finally agreed on the unification of NOF and the CPG. The Agreement contained the following conditions:

1. NOF is to remain as an independent organization and a legitimate representative of the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, but under CPG guidance;
2. NOMS, the Macedonian Youth Organization, is to be disbanded and its members are to join EPON, the Greek Youth Organization;
3. NOF is to publish its own newspaper in the Macedonian language, as an independent organ of the NOF Main Board;

4. All former Macedonian communists, who were members of the CPY, to automatically become members of the CPG;
5. All NOF Partisan units to unite with DAG units and NOF military and political staff to be deployed and given appropriate command duties at DAG military headquarters;
6. Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Board Secretary, to be appointed member of the CPG Regional Committee Secretariat for Macedonia and Thrace;
7. Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov, member of the NOF Central Committee, to be appointed member of the Chiefs of Staff of DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia;
8. Mincho Fotev, member of the NOF Central Committee and outgoing Secretary of NOMS, to be appointed member of the Regional Committee EPON Secretariat for Macedonia and Thrace. (“Aegean Macedonia on NOB 1945 to 1949”, AE: 445/1/1946. Macedonian archives, Skopje.)

In the second half of October 1946 the NOF Main Board leadership, in an incomplete composition consisting of Paskal Mitrevski, Ilija Dimovski Goche and Mincho Fotev, was received by Kulishevski, CPM Central Committee secretary. The topic of discussion was the situation in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia and NOF’s relationship with the CPG. The CPM leadership indicated that normalizing NOF’s unity with the CPG was of vital importance to the national liberation movement of the Macedonians in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia. At the end of the conversation Kulishevski said the following to the NOF Macedonian leaders:

“You will now go back down there... (He was thinking of Aegean Macedonia). The leader of your struggle will be the CPG... The CPG line is the right line... You should have confidence in it... All the problems you have you will decide with the CPG. Be careful not go to any faction but enter normally under the CPG leadership. Fight for solid unity with the Greek people and fight with all your

available forces against chauvinism, separatism and local trends...”
(Mincho Fotev, Development through the organization NOF...)

Two years later, in 1948, Paskal Mitrevski said the following regarding the above words spoken to him by Kolishevski:

“...These words that Lazo Kolishevski said to us have been engraved deep in my soul and in my national awareness. They will be my roadmap and my example for furthering my revolutionary actions...”
(A letter from Paskal Mitrevski to Mincho Fotev (Tsilo), NOMS Central Committee Secretary for Aegean Macedonia. The letter is kept in Mincho Fotev’s private family archives.)

Heeding Kolishevski’s instructions regarding the realization of the unification between NOF and the CPG, on October 19, 1946 Paskal Mitrevski, Ilia Dimovski Goche and Mincho Fotev traveled over Albanian territory and through the backroads returning home to Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. The next day Paskal Mitrevski, with the assistance of a CPG special courier, sent a letter requesting to meet with Markos Vafiadis. Ilia Dimovski Goche left for Mount Vicho and joined the NOF units at the Vicho Headquarters. Mincho Fotev left for Kostur Region to inform the Kostur Region NOF District leadership and other governing bodies of the terms of agreement for the unity between NOF and the CPG.

A meeting between Paskal Mitrevski and Markos Vafiadis, DAG General Headquarters Commander, was set up and a merger plan was put together on how to merge the NOF partisan units with those of the CPG. In other words, how the NOF Macedonian units would be deployed in the field for the best possible results.

(See letter from Paskal Mitrevski to Lazar Kolishevski, CPM Central Committee Secretary. The letter is stored in the Paskal Mitrevski family archives. Here we will use the opportunity to also say that up until the NOF and CPG units were merged, the NOF military composition consisted of over 500 Macedonian fighters tasked with protecting the Macedonian population from the terror waged by Greek nationalist gangs. The fighters were deployed as follows: 200 on Mount Kaimakchalan, 130 on Mount Vicho and 80 on Mount Paiak. The largest NOF unit was formed on Mount Paiak

and led by Kocho Kirov as its Commander and Kosta Gatsev as its Political Commissar. See notes by Todor Simovski, NOF functionary in Gumendzhe and Enidzhe-Vardar Regions. There were also 20 fighters deployed on Mount Negush and 80 on Mount Gramos. See the September 13, 1946 report by Pascal Mitrevski on the unification negotiations between NOF and the CPG regarding the partisan mergers... Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946, T.III... doc. 171, p. 379. It was perfectly logical after the Varkiza Agreement for NOF to form separate Macedonian partisan units in order to protect the Macedonian population from the Greek terrorist actions waged by the Greek authorities. In Voden Region for example, a Macedonian detachment was formed in “Gaganets” Region near the village Krontselovo at the beginning of March 1945. This detachment was led by Risto Kordalov, Tushi Keramitchiev and Risto Shorev (all of Voden). The Headquarters for this detachment, which later grew into a battalion, was on Mountain Kaimakchalan.

A little later, on May 14, 1945, the top NOF leadership decided to form more armed resistance bands to resist Greek terror in other parts of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Based on this decision, NOF created armed resistance groups in Kostur and Prespa Regions led by Panaiot Kondov, Vasil Popov, Leonid Mutkov, Lazo Iamakov, Miltiadi Kovachev, Giorgi Kalkov, Risto Shapkov and other NOF leaders. Each group consisted of 6 to 12 fighters. See “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945”, AE: 185/45. Also see Risto Kiriazovski, *Macedonian national institutions...*, p. 173-174. In the course of 1946 all these groups grew into large squads and conducted intense military action to protect the Macedonian population from terror waged by the Greek nationalist gangs.)

On November 21, 1946, sometime after Paskal Mitrevski had his meeting with Markos Vafiadis, he went to Mount Vicho. There in the village Bapchor, Kostur Region, he met with some of the NOF Main Board membership in Kole Kanto’s house. Attending the meeting were Paskal Mitrevski, Mihailo Keramitchiev, Pavle Rakovski, Ilia Dimovski, Goche, Mincho Fotev and Evdokia Baliova-Vera as an equal member of the NOF Main Board. (Baliova-Vera memoirs stored in Vera’s private archives). Vera at

the time was AHZH Secretary for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

At the Bapchor meeting Paskal Mitrevski informed the other NOF leaders about his talk with Vafiadis. The information he shared was mainly about the mechanics of implementing the agreement reached between NOF and the CPG. Given the extremely tense situation in Greece at that time, and the fact that there were constant and daily clashes between partisan groups and Greek government forces, Mitrevski stated that in his meeting with Vafiadis it was made clear that priority must be given to the merging of NOF partisan units with those of the CPG. As a result Vafiadis requested that the NOF leadership urgently dispatch Macedonian fighters, around 500 of them, from the NOF units to strengthen the DAG units inside Greece (south of Mount Olympus). The NOF Main Board did exactly that. (Paskal Mitrevski, Critical review of Vangel Aianovski Oche's work, "Aegean storms", published by INI, Skopje, 1975, Voice of INI, Skopje, 1977, XXI, 2-3, p. 201. Risto Kiriazovski, National Liberation Front and other Macedonian organizations..., p. 165. For more information on this also see Pavle Rakovski, the Communist Party of Greece and the Macedonians (Observations, thoughts, knowledge). Macedonian book, Skopje, 1990, p. 131-135). The Macedonian units were led by Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov and Lazo Poplazarov. Macedonian units from Mount Paiak were also dispatched inside Greece (south of Mount Olympus).

At the Bapchor meeting the top NOF leadership also agreed to direct all NOF and AFZH District organizations to begin mobilizing the entire Macedonian nation en masse, to fight against the Greek Monarcho-Fascists and to assist DAG on a voluntary basis to mobilize as many Macedonian fighters as possible into DAG's ranks. To realize this, Paskal Mitrevski and Mincho Fotev agreed to travel to Solun to the seat of EPON and the CPG Regional Committee, to meet with EPON and CPG officials in order to arrange cooperation between the organizations NOF, EPON and the CPG.

The NOF leadership, again at the Bapchor meeting, agreed that while Paskal Mitrevski was away traveling to Solun, Mihailo Keramitchiev would act as NOF Main Board Secretary. (See Paskal

Mitrevski's biographical notes of the struggle... also see Evdokia Baliova-Vera, "Memoirs"...))

A few days later Paskal Mitrevski, Mihailo Keramitchiev and Evdokia Baliova Vera left Mount Vicho and went to Voden Region in order to implement the NOF-CPG agreement there. Paskal Mitrevski and Evdokia Baliova Vera then left Voden Region and went to Mount Paiak to meet with Mincho Fotev in order to implement the NOF-CPG agreement there as well. In the meantime Pavle Rakovski was preparing the NOF newspapers "Nepokoren" and "Bilten" for publication.

Chapter Six

Macedonian participation in DAG and their contribution

United Nations Inquiry Commission visits Greece

The first successes that the DAG partisans had on the ground in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, such as the one in the village Liumnitsa, Gumendzhe Region on November 13, 1946, encouraged the Macedonian and Greek partisans to fight on. This, which looked like a civil war, caused some fear and embarrassment in the new Greek regime. So to avoid an imminent catastrophe and to throw suspicion elsewhere, the Greek government complained to the United Nations that the civil war and the guerilla movement inside Greece were imported and aided by its Balkan neighbours, mainly by Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria.

(See Proclamation drafted on November 14, 1946 by the partisan Paiak-Kaimakchalan General Staff, which talks about the armed raids in the village Liumnitsa and their results. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946, T.III..., doc. 186, p. 414. See Communiqué from the Headquarters of the armed partisan units in Paiak-Kaimakchalan about their completed action against the government forces in Liumnitsa, Maiadak and Oshin on November 13, 1946. Also see doc. 187, pp. 415-416.)

(See statement made by Markos Vafiadis, Commander of DAG General Headquarters, on January 1, 1947 about what caused the Greek Civil War. Aegean Macedonia in NOB, T.IV..., doc. 2, p. 7. Also see open letter from Panos Kapetanios, DAG General Headquarters representative for Central Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, in January 1947, to the UN Inquiry Commission in Greece, explaining the causes of the Greek Civil War. Also see doc. 7, pp. 37- 38.)

At Greece's request a special committee of the United Nations called the "Inquiry Commission" arrived in Greece in February 1947, in order to investigate the matter at hand. As we said earlier, the Greek government had already accused neighbouring Balkan countries of allegedly being directly responsible for inflaming the

civil war in Greece. The Greek government had reported this to the United Nations during the Paris Peace Conference about a year before.

While the Inquiry Commission was visiting Greece, the NOF leadership, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, with help from its agitation and propaganda department, prepares its own counter-arguments to clarify the true reasons why there was a civil war in Greece and then used its own Macedonian language press to publicize it. To fulfill this task the NOF Main Board issued a special directive to all its managerial bodies, tasking them to take appropriate measures and organize as many protest committees as possible to seek members of the Inquiry Commission and provide them with petitions and evidence that pointed to the main and only culprit for the civil war in Greece; the Greek government. (See April 1947 letter from Mihailo Keramitchiev, NOF Main Board Secretary to the NOF District Board Secretaries, doc. 29, p. 146.) It was the Greek government that planned the terror and thrust it against the democratic population in Greece, especially against the Macedonian population in order to physically destroy and banish the Macedonian people from their homes in Greek occupied Macedonia.

As the leading personality in the Macedonian national liberation movement, Paskal Mitrevski constantly reassured the Macedonian people that: “For as long as the United Nations Inquiry Commission was in Greece, NOF will strive to fight bravely and persistently and will prove to it who the real culprits are and who led the country into a civil disaster.” (Paskal Mitrevski’s biographical notes from the struggle...)

After preparing a presentation to show the real causes for the civil war in Greece, NOF sought to prove to the world’s progressive public that Macedonian people had lived in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia for centuries as a separate and distinct Macedonian nation, and that these same Macedonian people fought en masse and made many sacrifices together with the progressive forces in Greece during World War II. They fought against the foreign occupiers and as a result earned the right to attain their freedom. Also the NOF leadership endeavoured to inform the international community that the Macedonian people, despite their

loyalty to the Greek state, were a disadvantaged people and that since the first days after the capitulating Varkiza Agreement was signed, the entire Macedonian nation had been experiencing national tragedy. This was also argued by Andrei Gromiko, a prominent Soviet diplomat and former USSR Foreign Minister. In his exposé given to the Security Council at the United Nations, on July 10, 1947, for the difficult position the Macedonian people were in, Gromiko said the following:

“An important place in the Inquiry Commission’s report is the question of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and the situation of the Macedonian and Albanian minorities in Greece. The Greek government has raised accusations against Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, accusing these countries of importing the partisan movement to Greece and of having measures to split territory from Greece. However, the multitude of facts and statements made by local witnesses interviewed in that part of Macedonia show these to be baseless accusations.

The terror implemented over these national minorities by the current Greek regime through the gendarmerie, the army and the Greek nationalist bands is waged in order to subjugate and destroy these minorities. They naturally resisted and this, of course, is what led to the creation of the partisan units. The Greek government today is sowing what it planted in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. If you read statements made by Macedonian witnesses you will see that the Greek authorities not only declared war on the Macedonian national culture but also closed all Macedonian schools and banned the use of the Macedonian language, the mother tongue of the Macedonian people. On top of that the Greek government implemented policies to exterminate the entire Macedonian population in Greece, which currently numbers over 250,000 people.

The Macedonian minority is deeply rooted in its traditions and has its own language and a very old culture. The Macedonian minority needs to be recognized as a nation with its own rights...” This is what Andrei Gromiko said. His statements are correct because he had good knowledge of the political situation across the Balkans and in Greece. (The Greek authorities have implemented a policy of extermination against the Macedonian population in Greece.

Gromiko's exposé presented to the Security Council. Nova Makedonija, Skopje, July 11, 1947.)

NOF was very successful with its protests to the Inquiry Commission. It submitted over 50 memorandums, petitions and other documents, which documented terrorist acts committed by the Greek nationalist gangs. Included amongst these terrorist acts were killings, mass arrests, looting of properties, persecutions, rapes, abuses of people, trials of innocent persons and so on. (One of these memoranda was published in the "Aegean Macedonia in NOB", T.IV., edition which deserves mention: Memorandum from the political refugees from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in Yugoslavia, submitted to the UN Inquiry Commission (doc. 24, pp. 62-72) and the Memorandum from the EAM District Committee for Voden Region submitted to the Inquiry Commission on the Greek terror committed by the political right in Voden Region, doc. 25, pp. 73-129. Both memos were about the Greek terrorist acts committed by the political right against the Macedonian people. The first memo was about the entire region of Greek occupied Macedonia and the second memo was about Voden Region.)

NOF's active body

As mentioned earlier, NOF's great success in implementing its agreement with the CPG and in motivating the Macedonian people to participate en masse in the fight against the Greek reactionaries clearly testifies to the impact NOF had on the Macedonian population. This was a big surprise to the CPG leadership and, as shall see, it immediately began to terminate the process of unity based on the agreed upon terms. The CPG leadership decided to abandon the common principles it shared with the NOF leadership, which determined the forms and methods for achieving cooperation between NOF and AFZH on one side and the CPG and DAG on the other. But despite this the Macedonian people, led by NOF, did not lose hope. They still believed in the "sincere" intentions of their Greek CPG "comrades".

On May 20, 1947 a NOF Conference was held on Mount Kaimakchalan, in the "Mishov Kolibi" locality. This Conference was arranged in order to clarify misunderstandings between the

NOF leadership and its agreement with the CPG PK for Macedonia and Thrace. This Conference was held in the absence of Paskal Mitrevski, former NOF Central Committee Secretary. This particular “NOF Conference”, in historic terms, became known as the “NOF’s active body” Conference. During the Conference Mihailo Keramitchiev, NOF Main Board Secretary, submitted a report detailing the internal military and political situation, weaknesses in the conduct of the struggle and NOF’s future tasks. The report was published in “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1947”, T.IV..., doc. 30, pp. 149-177.

Some of the delegates during this Conference were interested to know why Paskal Mitrevski was not there and what had happened to him. In answering their questions Georgios Erithriadis Petris, CPG Regional Committee representative for Macedonia and Thrace, who chaired this meeting, nervously said that “Paskal Mitrevski can’t lead from Skopje... his broom to sweep was given to me... From now on NOF belongs to the CPG...” (Evdokia Baliova-Vera, “Memoirs”...) Of course Erithriadis’s statement created a tense atmosphere between the CPG and the Conference participants but somehow the situation still remained calm...

About 40 NOF and AFZH leaders and another 15 invited guests and representatives of the CPG, EAM, AKE, EPON and DAG attended the Conference. (Evdokia Baliova-Vera, “Memoirs”...)

A new NOF leadership and NOF Coordinating Bureau, composed of five members, was appointed at this Conference. The five appointed members were Mihailo Keramitchiev (NOF Secretary), Vangel Aianovski Oche (responsible for organizational issues), Pavle Rakovski (responsible for agitation and propaganda), Lambro Cholakov (responsible for financial matters) and Evdokia Baliova-Vera (AFZH Secretary for Aegean Macedonia). (Risto Kiriazovski, the National Liberation Front..., p. 187.)

Here we should immediately disclose that the decisions made at this NOF Conference and adopted under pressure from the CPG (Georgios Erithriadis Petris) would inflict major damage to NOF and to the Macedonian national liberation movement in this part of Macedonia. After this NOF Conference, internal relations between

NOF and the CPG became very extreme indeed. From this point on, NOF was practically stripped of all its governing powers. It lost its ability to independently decide on all matters and to lead independently. It was only allowed to function within CPG global policy and strategy. The newly elected NOF Coordinating Bureau virtually had no power and was only a political figure or a representative body of NOF. Its powers were limited to basically presenting initiatives and proposals to the CPG leadership to resolve and ensure enforcement before the competent CPG and DAG authorities.

The NOF Coordinating Bureau also accepted the CPG's position that the AKE, a basic Greek Agricultural party, needed to be installed in the Macedonian villages. This clearly shows that the CPG wanted a Greek political presence, via the Greek Agricultural Party, in Greek occupied Macedonia with its own political position at the base.

In the same context, the NOF Coordinating Bureau accepted a proposal from the above mentioned Petris, CPG representative, that the NOF leadership should now end its NOF mandate and enter DAG's ranks as common fighters, namely in order to cut ties with the NOF Macedonian fighters in DAG.

After the NOF Conference, AFZH became an independent organization which later formed its own Main Committee headed by Evdokia Baliova Vera as secretary. The AFZH Main Board operated in the field in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia until the end of the Greek Civil War.

In brief terms, the NOF leadership accepted the CPG's new position as stated above and, from being a massive and unified organization, NOF became a powerless and disorganized organization separated from its Macedonian fighting and from the Macedonian people. The CPG leadership, in time, limited NOF's activities to performing menial CPG assigned tasks. In other words NOF became a total servant of the CPG only good for spilling Macedonian blood and perishing on the battlefield.

It is understandable that relations between the Macedonian people and the CPG and DAG became strained after this, but the CPG did not stop there. From this moment on the CPG leadership became very rigid and radically changed its attitude to the detriment of the Macedonian national liberation movement. This is what it ordered: Each NOF leader and activist who did not want to accept the decisions made during the NOF Conference would be slandered and persecuted. Over one hundred NOF and AFZH leaders, through false accusations, were expelled and declared enemies of the struggle. Under such allegations the CPG leadership managed to remove, among others, Paskal Mitrevski, Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov and Mincho Fotev from their leadership positions.

The CPG's discriminatory attitude towards NOF and its leaders was contrary to earlier agreements made by NOF and the CPG for merging NOF Macedonian partisan units with the CPG's Greek units. The CPG leadership clearly broke its promises and commitments, thereby once again betraying the Macedonian people and robbing them of their national and social rights.

NOF's first Congress

The crisis that engulfed NOF after the NOF Conference had negative impact on the morale of the Macedonian fighters in DAG, which affected the Macedonian population's mass mobilization in the struggle against the Greek Monarcho-Fascists and Anglo-American interventionists. Seeing how unfavourable the situation had become, the CPG leadership, on the advice of NOF leaders, tried to correct its wrong attitude towards NOF and towards the Macedonian people by removing its irregularities on the Macedonian National Question. And as we shall see, the CPG leadership had no choice but to do so because it needed to mobilize new DAG fighters and new sacrificial victims from the Macedonian population.

As mentioned earlier, the CPG removed Paskal Mitrevski from his position as NOF leader. This is because Paskal Mitrevski and NOF rejected the CPG's opportunistic attitude and its irregular stand on the Macedonian National Question. After that the CPG kept Paskal Mitrevski under tight control, isolating him from the struggle and

from NOF. However, because of the crisis that arose in the ranks of NOF, the CPG and DAG, the CPG was forced to release Mitrevski from isolation and to reinstate him in the NOF leadership.

After Mitrevski was returned to his former position in NOF, he proposed that a NOF Congress be convened. This would be termed the “First NOF Congress” and would examine the issues related to the crisis that occurred in the relationship between NOF, the CPG and DAG. Mitrevski’s proposal drew widespread support from the entire NOF membership. Mitrevski’s initiative was also endorsed by the CPG Central Committee leadership. However, with such consent the CPG wanted to reach a compromise in order to achieve its own objectives, namely to mobilize and sacrifice fighters from amid the Macedonian ranks.

The First NOF Congress of the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia was held on January 13, 1948, at the Sv. Dimitria Church in the village V’mbel, Kostur Region. Mihailo Keramitchiev, the outgoing NOF Coordinating Bureau Secretary, delivered the main report at the Congress. (The material delivered at the Congress was published in the edition “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948,” T.V. Documents about the Macedonian people’s (from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia) participation in the Greek Civil War in 1948. Translation and editing by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski and Fani Butskova Martinova. Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1981, pp. 16-49). The Congress delegates elected their own NOF Central Council from the 35 members and 18 candidate members. (A list of the NOF Central Council elected during the First NOF Congress was published in the edition “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948”, T.V..., doc. 16, pp. 44-45.)

Included among the leaders elected in the NOF Central Council were Paskal Mitrevski (Secretary) and Mihailo Keramitchiev (President). The NOF Secretariat was also elected during the First NOF Congress with the highest NOF organ being the NOF Executive Bureau.

It is important at this point to mention that two significant documents of historical value were adopted during the First NOF Congress, these were NOF’s Program and Statute. (The NOF

Program and Statute were published in the edition “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948”, T.V..., doc. 12, pp. 33-38 and doc. 13, pp. 39-42.) During the NOF First Congress the CPG leadership also made a decision to form a CPG Party cell within NOF.

It is also important at this point to mention that even before the Congress was scheduled, there were repeated discussions between the NOF leadership about appealing for the return of the NOMS Macedonian youth organization. But Ioanis Ioanidis, CPG Central Committee Secretary, who at the time was running the Congress, flatly rejected the idea saying that “there was no need to form a Macedonian youth organization because the Macedonian youth preferred to be in the ranks of EPON... and that was excellent”. (Mincho Fotev, Development through NOF...)

But despite the various difficulties NOF had with the CPG, the First NOF Congress was a success and inspired many Macedonians to join the struggle and enter DAG’s ranks. The Congress also gave the Macedonian population optimism, encouragement and hope. The newly elected NOF Central Council obtained all the necessary authorization to act in public and in the political life of the Macedonian people. After the First NOF Congress, the NOF leadership, especially Paskal Mitrevski NOF Central Council Secretary, did everything possible to re-establish NOF’s democratic norms and functions. Mitrevski especially took care to maintain unity between NOF and the Macedonian people and to successfully implement all the tasks adopted during the First NOF Congress. By maintaining this position NOF ensured growth in the people’s enthusiasm to struggle, just like their Ilinden predecessors had, in order to attain their freedom and their national rights.

After the creation of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, on December 23, 1947, NOF, as a political supporter of the national government, succeeded in organizing national councils in many Macedonian villages and helped them manage their activities, and so on. NOF also managed to organize special work groups to assist DAG in transferring wounded fighters, delivering weapons and food, building bunkers, etc., all from the Macedonian composition. Furthermore, the NOF membership set up various craft workshops for sewing, shoemaking, knitting, etc., to serve DAG’s

needs. Almost the entire Macedonian population in the semi-free territory was organized en masse and engaged in auxiliary activities serving DAG.

It is important at this point to mention that NOF also operated behind enemy lines organizing special diversionary armed units and carrying out acts of sabotage. As an example, we can cite Zhivko Shanev and Mati Mateia Bulev's diversionary units. Zhivko Shanev was from the village Zhelin, Kostur Region. He was a member of the NOF District Board for Kostur Region. Mati Mateia Bulev was from the village Ekshi-Su, Lerin Region.

(The Macedonian population massively participated in the struggle and greatly contributed to DAG's success. See article by Pando Vainata, DAG Lieutenant colonel, entitled "The Democratic Army and the Slavo-Macedonians", document "Dimokratikos Stratos", organ of DAG General Headquarters, no. 10, X, 1948. We used Vainata's article according to: "The CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974"..., doc. 188, pp. 431-433 and the editorial article in "Neos Kosmos", organ of the CPG Central Committee, entitled "The Macedonian National Question in the light of the CPG Central Committee 6th Plenum, published in February 1957, no. 2. Here we used the same edition, doc. 241, pp. 553-554.)

(Mati Mateia Bulev was a communist before the Second World War and a member of VMRO (United). He was imprisoned by the Greek authorities. During the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation he was actively involved in ELAS. He was among the first fighters to join the NOF groups in 1945 and the ranks of DAG in 1946. He proved himself an excellent and courageous fighter as a DAG unit leader leading a diversionary group. He died heroically on April 19, 1949. For more information on his revolutionary activities see Tashko Mamurovski, Bright individuals from Aegean Macedonia (1945-1949), Studenski zbor, Skopje, 1987, pp. 128-134.)

Around the middle of the spring in 1948, the CPG Central Committee invited Paskal Mitrevski, Mihailo Keramitchiev, Evdokia Baliova Vera and Stavre Kochev Kochopoulos to go to DAG General Headquarters where they would be briefed and dispatched to the People's Republic of Albania, and from there to

the People's Republic of Macedonia to meet with the CPM Central Committee leadership in order to harmonize organizational matters relating to bilateral relations. (This was probably to recruit new Macedonian fighters and more sacrificial lambs for the Monarcho-Fascist cannons?). Whatever their purpose, a military jeep took them to Albania. There they were settled in the Greek contact office in Korcha. From there they traveled to Resen, Republic of Macedonia where they met up with leaders from the CPM Central Committee, including Lazar Kolishevski and Dimitar Aleksievski Pekar. The meeting was held in the night, during which CPM Central Committee Secretary Kolishevski informed the NOF leaders (in agreement with the CPG leadership) that Dimitar Aleksievski Pekar was going with them to the territory of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia where he was going to be engaged in solving outstanding mutual issues. Kolishevski spent a long time speaking about this to Paskal Mitrevski and Mihailo Keramitchiev. (Evdokia Baliova Vera, "Memoirs"...))

Dimitar Aleksievski Pekar spent a few weeks visiting the NOF Main Board Headquarters, the CPG Central Committee office and DAG General Headquarters, after which he was suddenly summoned by the CPG Central Committee leadership with orders to immediately leave the territory of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

We should mention at this point that around this time, late June 1948, relations between the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party and the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party began to sour, and with it soured relations between the CPG and the CPY.

In the first ten days of July 1948, the Greek government grouped its militia units in the Mount Gramos sector in preparation for DAG's attack and destruction. Regarding this, CPG leader Nikos Zahariadis invited NOF leaders Paskal Mitrevski, Mihailo Keramitchiev, Evdokia Baliova Vera and Stavre Kochev to report to the Mount Pind DAG General Headquarters located in Northern Epirus, below the village Pirsogiani, near the River Sarandaporos, to inform them about some military and political issues related to the concentration of government troops in the Mount Gramos vicinity and about the new Party situation after the Informburo published its Resolution

against Yugoslavia. (The Informburo Resolution of June 28, 1948 was directed against the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, of which Nikos Zahariadis was informed in early July 1948. See CPG Central Committee Politburo circulation letter sent to DAG's political commissars, explaining the Informburo's resolution against the CPY and the CPG's position on the matter. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948, T.V..., doc. 140, p. 260.)

At that time the Greek royal aviation was constantly flying over the territory observing partisan positions on Mount Gramos. One day, after the Informburo publicized its dislike of Yugoslavia, while flying over Alevitsa Region the Greek government planes dropped propaganda leaflets informing the partisans of "Stalin's attack against Tito" because "Yugoslavia has veered away from socialism", that "friendly relations between those countries have ended", etc. The NOF leadership, of course, interpreted this as pure propaganda and Greek fabrications, loudly laughing at the notion. This, to the NOF leadership, was as logical as the Greek nationalist propaganda claiming Yugoslavia wanted to attack Greece with plans to "occupy" Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and later join it to Yugoslavia. This was interpreted as pure propaganda aiming to further tarnish Yugoslavia.

After arriving at DAG General Headquarters, the NOF leaders were immediately summoned by Zahariadis for an important announcement. After a brief update on NOF's status, Zahariadis asked the NOF leaders if they were familiar with the current situation in Yugoslavia. Looking somewhat confused and puzzled the NOF leaders admitted to knowing nothing. His question, however, seemed suspicious because it matched the contents of the enemy's proclamation which they were clutching in their hands. One of the NOF leaders gave Zahariadis the propaganda leaflet. After looking at it briefly, Zahariadis admitted that, unfortunately, the enemy was telling the truth. He also informed the NOF leaders that a Resolution had been drafted by the Informburo in Bucharest condemning the CPY's current politics and declaring the CPY leadership "agents" of imperialism and betrayers of socialism. As Zahariadis spoke, the NOF leaders became very confused and stunned at the unexpected bad news. But after Zahariadis perceived their confusion, he nervously told them the following:

“Our Party... We are in a war situation with the Greek Monarcho-Fascists. For the time being our relations with Yugoslavia and Tito will remain the same. Our comrade Tito and Harry Pollitt from England were my best friends from the time of the Comintern”. (Evdokia Baliova Vera, “Memoirs”...)

Zahariadis repeatedly expressed his “confidence” in his “friendship” with the CPY and Tito until 1949, when he took an open hostile stance toward Yugoslavia and Tito.

At the end of their meeting Zahariadis told the Macedonian NOF leaders the following:

“Comrades, a complex situation has occurred in our region which forced me to invite you here so that I can inform you and warn you not to fall into any provocation that may require you to act in favour of the Macedonian element”. (Evdokia Baliova Vera, “Memoirs”...)

Decisions made during the NOF Central Council First Plenum

Decisions made during the First NOF Congress were accepted with enthusiasm and optimism by the Macedonian patriots in that part of Macedonia. The Macedonian people were encouraged to join DAG’s ranks en masse and were ready to devote themselves to the struggle against the Greek Monarcho-Fascists in order to gain their freedom. But at this point it is also important to mention that, from the first days after the First NOF Congress was held, anomalies and weaknesses began to surface in the NOF ranks, mostly related to the implementation of program objectives adopted at the Congress. These anomalies were a result of the biases people had in regards to CPG-NOG relations. Included among those who were biased against these relations and against the Macedonian people in general were Ioanis Ioanidis, CPG Central Committee Secretary, and Leonidas Stringos, CPG Regional Committee Secretary for Macedonia and Thrace. There were also others who directly maintained links with NOF. This condition with time actually worsened, so the NOF Central Council was encouraged to have its First Plenum in order to clear such anomalies and misunderstandings.

(Ioanis Ioanidis was born in Bulgaria but moved to Greece before World War II and settled in Volos. He became a CPG member in the 1920s and Party leader of a Party organization in Eastern Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in 1928. He was appointed member of the CPG Central Committee during the 4th CPG Congress that was held in the same year. In December 1930 he became a member and, in March 1931, he was appointed CPG District Committee Secretary of the CPG in Solun. In 1931 he was appointed member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo. In April 1933 he was sent to Moscow as a CPG representative. His stay in Acropolia was organized by the Greek section of the Comintern and lasted from early 1938 to early May 1942. From 1942 until the end of the war he served as the CPG Central Committee Organizing Secretary. In 1961 he was expelled from the CPG Central Committee. He died in Romania in 1967.)

(Leonidas Stringos became a member of the CPG Central Committee in 1931 and joined the CPG Central Committee Politburo in 1942. In February 1942 he was appointed CPG Secretary of the Macedonian Bureau. During the Greek Civil War he was a minister in the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece and a political commissar of a large DAG unit.)

The First NOF Central Council Plenum was held at the request of Mihailo Keramitchiev, NOF Central Council President, on August 8, 1948 in the village of Bukovo, Prespa Region, a few weeks after the Informburo Resolution against Yugoslavia was published.

(For more information on the work done by NOF and the intrigues attempted by the CPG leadership during the First NOF Central Council Plenum, see “Resolution of the First NOF Central Board Plenum “Divisive fighting between the NOF leaders”. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948, T.V..., doc. 164, pp. 302-304. See Report by Ilia Dimovski Goche and Vangel Aianovski Oche, on the First NOF Central Board Plenum. See doc. 166, pp. 305-310, CPG Central Committee Politburo resolution which negatively evaluated the NOF leadership’s work. CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974, doc. 186, pp. 424-426. The negative CPG resolution was another of Zahariadis’s plans to discredit NOF, submit its leaders to his will and remove any influence the People’s Republic of Macedonia may have had on the Macedonian liberation

movement in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. The NOF Secretary and President were suspended from their duties on the basis of this CPG fabricated resolution. See note 412.)

The work done at the NOF Plenum was closely followed by a CPG Central Committee Party delegation headed by Ioanis Ioanidis, CPG Central Committee Secretary, and Miltiadis Porfirogenis. As soon as the Plenum started there were mutual accusations between Mihailo Keramitchiev and Paskal Mitrevski. It was obvious that this situation was skillfully used by the CPG Central Committee Politburo to exclude those two from their duties and leadership functions but without dismissing them from the NOF Central Council. This was done under the pretext that, in the ranks of NOD in Greece, they committed “fractional activities” and were “dispersing” the unity of the two peoples in the struggle. After their exclusion, the CPG leadership replaced them by appointing Stavro Kochev NOF Central Council President and Vangel Koichev Secretary. At this point it is important to add that according to NOF’s organizational structure or status, adopted at the First NOF Congress, the NOF Central Council Secretary functioned as a political figure, in other words responded to political issues in the NOF organization, but after the Second NOF Congress, which was to take place later, that function was given to the president.

(Stavro Kochev was from the village Banitsa, Lerin Region. He was a lawyer by profession. He was also a SNOF founder and leader in Lerin Region. During the Greek Civil War he performed various political and military functions. He was President of the people’s National District government in Lerin Region, Secretary of the NOF party group, member of the top NOF leadership, government representative in the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, etc. After the Greek Civil War he became a member of the “Ilinden” organization. He died in Sofia in 1976.)

(Vangel Koichev was actively involved in the Second World War during the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation. In 1946 he joined NOF and became a member of the NOF District Board for Lerin Region. Later he became commander of the People’s Militia in Kostur and Lerin Regions. He was also NOF Central Committee

Secretary for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and a member of the DAG Military Council.)

Another NOF military and political Conference was held on October 3, 1948 in the village Rudari, Prespa Region. This Conference was personally attended by Nikos Zahariadis, CPG Central Committee General Secretary. Among other things discussed there, was NOF's situation starting from the day that Mitrevski and Keramitchiev were removed from their duties. During this Conference the CPG leadership decided to completely remove Mitrevski and Keramitchiev not only from the NOF Central Council but also from NOF. (Evdokia Baliova Vera, "Memoirs"...))

The NOF Central Council, at the end of the Conference, was comprised of Vangel Koichev (Secretary), Stavro Kochev (President) and Evdokia Baliova Vera, (Vice-President). Vera was also AFZH Main Board Secretary. During the Conference Nikos Zahariadis asked Paskal Mitrevski what he would like to do, i.e. where he wanted to work while being suspended from the NOF leadership. Proud and dignified Paskal Mitrevski stood up, approached his NOF and CPG colleagues, and said:

"I am a communist and a fighter... I will go wherever the Party sends me..." To that Zahariadis replied: "Then go and join the ranks of DAG and fight like an exemplary fighter..." And that's exactly what happened. On October 5, 1948 Paskal Mitrevski was sent to the ranks of the DAG 107th Brigade to serve as an ordinary fighter. The order for this came directly from Nikos Zahariadis.

(See September 25, 1948 letter from Vangel Koichev to the CPG Politburo regarding deployment and duties for suspended NOF leaders. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948, T. V..., doc. 177, p. 326.)

(Paskal Mitrevski accepted the decision made by the CPG Central Committee regarding his deployment with dignity and courage. This was verified by Pavle Rakovski. Here is what Rakovski wrote: "...Both suspended leaders (meaning Paskal Mitrevski and Mihailo Keramitchiev) had to leave for the ranks of DAG where they could easily be killed. Mitrevski was a brave man and remained as such. He stuck to his principles with dignity, with some expression of

humility and determination...” See Pavle Rakovski, Communist Party of Greece and the Macedonian people..., p. 145.)

However after the DAG units were relocated from Mount Gramos in August 1949, due to extreme enemy pressure, the CPG’s position began to deteriorate. There were large divergences in the ranks of the CPG Central Committee leadership even before the serious crisis broke out. The main culprit for the crisis, according to claims made by Nikos Zahariadis, was Markos Vafiadis, DAG General Headquarters Commander. Vafiadis was suspended from his position and responsibilities in August 1948 while he was still DAG’s Commander and Chief and President of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece.

(The CPG leadership, headed by Nikos Zahariadis, suspended Markos Vafiadis from his position as Commander and Chief of DAG and from the CPG Central Committee Secretariat because of his views that “DAG should not lead a frontal campaign and should continue fighting a guerrilla warfare”. For more information on this, see the January 31, 1949 CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum Resolution. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI. See documents of the Macedonian participation in the Greek Civil War in 1949 by the Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia. Translation and editing done by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski and by Fani Butskova Martinova. Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1983, doc. 15, pp. 37-39, and statements made by Mihailo Keramitchiev, Ilia Dimovski Goche and Vangel Aianovski Oche on February 10, 1949 in connection with the talks between the CPG and NOF in Skopje. Also see doc. 26, pp. 76-77.)

Because of the crisis that emerged in the ranks of the CPG Central Committee leadership, the CPG was forced to hold its CPG Central Committee Fourth Plenum. The Fourth Plenum was held on July 28 and 29, 1948 just before Markos Vafiadis was suspended. Among other things the following was concluded: “The CPG leadership failed to destroy the opportunistic capitulation and reluctance within the party organization... It failed to initiate a nation-wide movement in cities, etc.” On one hand this was true but on the other hand, as we shall see later, the CPG Informburo’s resolve was one of the main reasons that there was further disruption not only to the CPG

leadership but also to NOF. Due to this CPG inconsistency toward NOF and towards the Macedonian people and their struggle, NOF gradually began to lose its action capabilities, of course, with dire and grave consequences for furthering the Macedonian Struggle and, through it, DAG's success.

(See CPG Central Committee 4th Plenum Resolution July 28 and 29, 1948. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948, T.V..., doc. 155, p. 286.)

The NOF organizers and activists who were concerned about the difficult position their Organization was found in began to react sharply, demanding that the CPG correct its attitude and fully meet the obligations it undertook in October 1946 regarding the NOF-CPG merger and implement its part of the Agreement. Due to these sharp and persistent requests, the CPG Central Committee leadership decided to reinstate the unduly suspended NOF leaders back into NOF's ranks. This also applied to Paskal Mitrevski. He and other suspended NOF leaders were returned to their leadership positions in the NOF Main Board. This is how it took place:

As we mentioned earlier, after Paskal Mitrevski was suspended from his position as NOF Central Council Secretary, a decision adopted at the First NOF Central Council Plenum under pressure from the CPG leader in attendance, he was sent to the DAG 107th Brigade to serve in its ranks as an "exemplary" fighter. But in the first half of December 1948 he was ordered to leave the DAG 107th Brigade and report to Zahariadis, CPG Secretary General (Paskal Mitrevski, biographical notes from the struggle...). At his meeting with Zahariadis, Mitrevski was told that DAG 107th Brigade Command gave him a good evaluation of his performance, fighting abilities and bravery while serving with that Brigade. Because of that, DAG Headquarters decided to promote him to political commissioner with orders to report to DAG's 14th Brigade which, together with other DAG units, was to participate in the capture of the cities Voden, Negush and Sobotsko. (Paskal Mitrevski, Critical review of Vangel Aianovski Oche's work, "Aegean storms"..., p. 204. Paskal Mitrevski, biographical notes from the struggle...)

Paskal Mitrevski's contributions and evaluation of bravery and fighting skills in the battles for the capture of the cities mentioned

above were assessed as positive by DAG Command Headquarters. (Paskal Mitrevski, Critical review of Vangel Aianovski Oche's work, "Aegean storms"..., p. 204. Paskal Mitrevski, biographical notes from the struggle...)

At this point it is important to mention that during the battles for the capture of Voden, Giorgios Giorgiadis, Commander of the DAG 114th Brigade, "showed himself" to be indecisive and despondent because immediately afterwards he was tried by the DAG General Headquarters military court and shot to death.

Paskal Mitrevski's positive assessment as a courageous fighter became public knowledge among the DAG fighters all the way up to DAG Headquarters. In fact, while giving a speech on how to fight the enemy and win, at a DAG gathering in the Vicho free territory, Vassilis Bardzhotas, Political Commissar of DAG General Headquarters and CPG Central Committee Politburo member, praised Paskal Mitrevski for his fighting abilities and bravery. (Paskal Mitrevski, Critical review of Vangel Aianovski Oche's work, "Aegean storms"..., p. 204. Paskal Mitrevski, biographical notes from the struggle...) Zahariadis too praised Mitrevski for his fighting courage during a NOF Central Council Executive Board session. Among other things he said:

"The time Paskal Mitrevski spent during his suspension from the NOF Central Council leadership was exemplary and heroic". (Evdokia Baliova Vera, "Memoirs"...)

After the aforementioned battles took place and after the DAG units returned to the territory on Mount Vicho, during the second half of February 1949, Paskal Mitrevski was temporarily released from DAG's ranks and assigned to prepare a report that would be presented at the forthcoming NOF Second Congress. At this point it is important to point out that the real reasons for Paskal Mitrevski's return, as well as the return of the other suspended NOF leaders, was because the CPG and DAG wanted to mobilize more fighters from the ranks of the Macedonian people. Sadly this time the CPG was willing to mobilize everyone. And it did. It even mobilized children from the ranks of the minor children who were residing in the

People's Republics outside of Greece's borders and unfortunately even pregnant women.

NOF's Second Congress

The crisis, which again had gripped NOF, called for convening the Second NOF Congress as soon as possible in order to remove a number of problems, anomalies and errors that NOF had amassed. And as we very well know, the problems NOF faced during every crisis were due to the CPG Central Committee leadership's meddling and attitude towards the Macedonian National Question. Namely, the CPG Central Committee during its Fifth Plenum, which took place in January 1949, changed its position by taking the words "national equality" for the Macedonian minority in Greece and replacing them with the words "the right to self-determination" for the Macedonian people. A few days later the CPG Central Committee coined the slogan: "A free Macedonian state within a Balkan Federation".

(See CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum Resolution in which, among other things, the CPG accepted a new position on the Macedonian National Question. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 15, p. 44.)

(Specifically, three days later, the CPG leadership publicized the slogan: "The creation of a Macedonian state within a Balkan Federation." See speech by Nikos Zahariadis delivered during the NOF Central Council Second Plenum. In his speech Zahariadis recognized the Macedonian people's right to form a separate Macedonian state. Doc. 20, pp. 54-55. Of course with this slogan, given the existence of a Macedonian national republic within the Yugoslav Federation, the CPG leadership persistently sought to include the Macedonian National Question as an integral part of the Informburo's anti-Yugoslav propaganda campaign. This was confirmed by a letter from the CPY Central Committee sent to the CPG Central Committee, which outlined the harm that could be done to the democratic movement in Greece as a result of this decision made by the CPG Central Committee. The letter reads as follows:

To the CPG Central Committee

In regards to today's CPG policy towards the Macedonian National Question, the CPY Central Committee finds it necessary to point out the following facts:

1. The CPY Central Committee believes that the line taken during the 5th Plenum regarding the Question of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, on that basis, is correct and useful for today's liberation struggle of the Greek people.

2. However the CPY Central Committee is amazed and the more so because in your NOF 2nd Plenum in Vicho you had taken a Resolution that stated that in March the NOF Congress would proclaim the unification of Macedonia as a unique, equal and independent Macedonian state within the People's Democratic Federation of Balkan peoples.

The CPY Central Committee considers that such a position is not in accordance with the decision of the Plenum and is detrimental and dangerous for the further development of the Greek people's struggle and could undermine the unity of DAG fighters, which today is a basic need for your struggle.

3. The CPY Central Committee's view is based on the following:

a) Calling for an independent Macedonian state within a Balkan Federation today is not a good idea. This only distracts the Greek and Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia from the main task which is to jointly struggle against the Monarcho-Fascists. It is incomprehensible how one party can claim to have a solution for the entire Macedonian nation in all three parts, be it for the Macedonians in Aegean and Pirin, which can resolve the Macedonian National Question in its entirety, without having any talks or an agreement with the People's Republic of Macedonia, which has the majority of the Macedonian nation. We believe such a policy is against the SFRY. This kind of attitude only serves to arm the Monarcho-Fascists and Anglo-Americans against the Greek people's liberation struggle and creates contention between the Balkan nations.

Therefore, the CPY Central Committee recommends that the CPG refrain from such conduct and stop this kind of politics from taking place during NOF's Congress. At the same time please give us an explanation of what were your views, i.e. who led you to decide on this issue without consulting the CPY Central Committee. Also please provide your answer regarding the following: After your radio station announced NOF's decision, Bulgarian newspapers wrote stories about it, to which we are forced to answer through our press..." CPY Central Committee, March 3, 1949. The document can be found in "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949", T.VI..., doc. 44, pp. 105-106.)

From this it should be clear that the CPG leadership had taken a frivolous position and played games with the Macedonian people's feeling, betraying them... making promises it never intended to keep.

The Second NOF Congress was held on March 25 and 26, 1949 in the church of the village Nivitsi in Prespa Region. Before that the NOF Central Council appealed to the National Front in the People's Republic of Macedonia to send them several posters and other propaganda materials to symbolize the importance of the Congress. The Macedonian National Front sent a number of copies of two types of posters, congress badges and other propaganda materials. (Evdokia Baliova Vera, "Memoirs"...))

The Congress was attended by over 350 delegates from the various districts and NOF district organizations, about 150 of them were NOF members who served in DAG's ranks. Almost the entire NOF Central Council membership was also in attendance. In total there were over 700 delegates among whom were also CPG members including Nikos Zahariadis who led the CPG delegation. Other guests included members of the AKE led by Ioanis Vurnas, members of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece and from DAG General Headquarters led by Kostas Giftodimos Karagiorgis, Minister and General. There were also delegates from the Turkish ethnicity in Greece and a delegation of the so-called Macedonian Organization in Bulgaria, which was led by its president Risto Kalaidziev. The Congress also invited a delegation

from the Popular Front, People's Republic of Macedonia but, for obvious reasons, this delegation did not take part in the Congress.

(For more information on the greeting telegram sent to the Second NOF Congress from the "Macedonians in Bulgaria" delegation, which did not attend the Congress, see "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949", T.VI..., doc. 85, p. 180.)

In Mihailo Keramitchiev's absence (NOF Central Council President) the meeting of the Second NOF Congress was officially opened by Evdokia Baliova Vera, NOF Central Council Vice President. And with that, the Second NOF Congress began its work.

The main paper read at the Congress was the report which Paskal Mitrevski wrote and was adopted by the NOF Central Council Secretariat. The paper was read by Vangel Koichev, temporary NOF Central Council Secretary. (Congress documents from the Second NOF Congress published in the same edition, doc. 67, pp. 137-139, doc. 75, pp. 155-157, and doc. 76, p. 158.)

In their statements, the Congress delegates emphasized the importance of paying particular attention to the importance of unity between the Macedonian and Greek people in their common struggle.

It is important at this time to point out that the Congress was facing difficulties right from the start. Zahariadis, with his machinations and demagogic attitudes, which were contrary to the national interests of the Macedonian people, not only sabotaged the Congress but also insisted that it be used for anti-Yugoslav purposes in the spirit of the Informburo.

Risto Kalaidzhiev, the delegate from the "Macedonian Organization" from the People's Republic of Bulgaria, also took part in the Congress. Unfortunately, right from the start when the Congress opened, in the spirit of the Informburo, he openly began his attacks against Yugoslavia and against the People's Republic of Macedonia. Because of this person's defamatory approach, many of the Congress participants were offended and disgusted. Some participants left the congress hall in protest.

Tasks adopted during NOF's Second Congress

In the final stages of the Second NOF Congress, the delegates adopted several important tasks. The most important ones were:

1. To develop and strengthen national unity among the Macedonian people;
2. To develop and strengthen unity between the progressive Macedonian and Greek people as the main condition for success in the joint struggle;
3. To consolidate the ranks of NOF and AFZH and, in parallel with it, restore NOMS, the Macedonian youth organization;
4. NOF, AFZH and other military structures to advocate for massive mobilization of fighters from the Macedonian population and to build a strong fighting potential in the struggle against the enemy;
5. NOF to become a true bearer of the people's government and to gain ethnic equality in all areas of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia;
6. The NOF Central leadership to seek to establish genuine relations and cooperation with all progressive organizations in Greece, which are fighting on DAG's side.

(See Resolution adopted during the Second NOF Congress, Chapter II, Attitudes, Solutions, Tasks... doc. 76, pp. 159-162.)

Before the Second NOF Congress ended, a new NOF Central Council of 51 full and 34 candidate members was elected by secret ballot. (See voting list for the election of the NOF Main Board membership proposed at the Second NOF Congress, Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 74, pp. 154- 155.) The presidency for the NOF Central Council, consisting of 5 members, was also chosen during the NOF Central Council constitutive meeting. Paskal Mitrevski was elected President, Evdokia Baliova Vera was elected Vice President, Mihali Maliov was named

Secretary and Pavle Rakovski and Vangel Koichev were elected members. (See announcement for the NOF Central Council Executive Board meeting, April 1, 1949 in which the NOF Central Council Executive Board Presidency was elected. Also see doc. 88, pp. 184-185.) Eleven members and 3 candidate members were also elected during the same NOF Central Council session. Elected to the NOF Executive Committee were Paskal Mitrevski, Evdokia Baliova Vera, Mihali Maliov, Pavle Rakovski, Vangel Koichev, Mincho Fotev, Stavro Kochev, Krsto Mangov, Vangel Nichev, Urania Iurukova and Tashos Goushopoulos Maki. Candidates for the NOF Executive Committee were Lambro Cholakov, Andon Sikavitsa and Dimitar Prikov.

At the same meeting NOF Central Council made a decision to appoint a number of NOF representatives to the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. Paskal Mitrevski was appointed Minister of supplies. Stavro Kochev was appointed President of the Directorate for national minorities living in Greece. Vangel Koichev was appointed member of the DAG High Military Council. Krsto Mangov and Andon Sikavitsa were appointed trustees (Mangov to the Liberation Boards and Sikavitsa to handle questions regarding education and training for Macedonians).

(See announcement made by the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece on the occasion of its reorganization of NOF representatives and participants. Doc. 92, pp. 192-193 and doc. 98, p. 206.)

While implementing CPG Central Committee demands at a NOF Central Council meeting, held on April 1, 1949, NOF made its decision to renew NOMS, the Macedonian youth organization. Based on this decision, NOF Central Council appointed Mincho Fotev, former NOMS Secretary, to President of the new NOMS Main Board. Included among those appointed to NOMS were the former NOMS leaders Todor Kochev Victor, Tashko Hadzhiianev, Gogo Petrichevski, Petre Asprovski, Mahi Pilaeva and Petre Shorev Fidan, thus restoring the Macedonian youth organization for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. This was necessary because DAG was in demand for new fighters from the Macedonian youth. That NOF leadership was well-aware of this and was guided primarily by the

need to fight to the finish. NOMS leadership addressed this point through a Proclamation to the Macedonian youth, calling on them to become engaged in the ranks of NOMS en masse and to fight against the Greek oppressors.

(As mentioned earlier, the CPG leadership during its 5th Plenum, in January 1949, called for “equality for the Macedonian minority within the Greek state” and accepted the idea of “Self-determination for the Macedonian people”. In the spirit of this new position on the Macedonian National Question, the CPG Central Committee decided to allow the renewal of NOMS.)

(See NOF Central Council announcement in connection with the decision made to rebuild NOMS in Aegean Macedonia.)

(See information about meeting held on May 6, 1949 for renewing NOMS. Also see doc. 117, pp. 247-248. Announcement to rebuild NOMS, doc. 118, p. 248.)

(See May 6, 1949, NOMS Proclamation on the occasion of NOMS renewal, doc. 119, pp. 249-250.)

From the very first day, after the Second NOF Congress, NOF members and supporters began to work with great love and sacrifice in order to realize the tasks adopted at the Congress. Thanks to the tireless efforts of these Macedonian patriots, in a short time NOF was able to expand and consolidate its position in DAG’s ranks, in the people’s government and in all the structures in the Macedonian national liberation movement.

In short, here are a few examples of NOF’s role and contribution to DAG and the armed struggle:

1. Thanks to NOF’s tireless effort and dedication, over 14,000 Macedonian fighters are fighting in DAG’s ranks for a total of 40,000 fighters. Soon nearly the entire Macedonian population will be fighting in DAG auxiliary units. (Risto Kiriazovski, National Liberation Front and other Macedonian organizations in Aegean Macedonia..., p. 389.)

2. NOF was an active player in the reorganization of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. As mentioned earlier, NOF fought hard to have representation in the Provisional government composition with Paskal Mitrevski being appointed Minister of supplies and Vangel Koichev appointed NOF representative in the DAG Military High Council.

3. This time around, for reasons mentioned earlier, NOF had representation in the form of assistant political commissars in almost every DAG military Headquarters, starting from the battalions up to DAG General Headquarters. Mincho Fotev, for example, was appointed NOF assistant political commissar in DAG General Headquarters. Mincho also served as NOMS Main Board President. (Paskal Mitrevski, Critical review of Vangel Aianovski Oche's work, "Aegean storms"..., p. 205.)

4. Similarly Evdokia Baliova Vera, who served as AFZH Central Committee Secretary, was also appointed Vice President of the All-Greek Women's organization in Greece. (Evdokia Baliova Vera. "Memoirs"...))

NOF was a carrier of the people's political power in all regions of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and chose its own candidates for the District National Liberation Board elections in the towns and villages. For example, Krste Mangov was elected President of the National Liberation Board in Kostur Region and Risto Kolentsev Kokinos President of the National Liberation Board in Lerin Region.

(Krste Mangov was from the village D'mbeni, Kostur Region. He was a CPG member before the Second World War. During NOB he was actively involved in the struggle against the occupiers. In 1945 and 1947 he was NOF District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region, later he was elected President of the National Government in Kostur Region. He died on August 11, 1949 in the village Breznitsa, Kostur Region. See Tashko Mamurovski, Bright characters from Aegean Macedonia (1945-1949), p. 75-79.)

Both Krste Mangov and Riste Kolentsev Kokinos were members of the NOF Central Council.

At this point it is important to mention that, at that time, the CPG leadership, headed by Nikos Zahariadis, was growing in popularity among the Macedonian people because of NOF's dynamics and consistent National Liberation policies and ideals to which the Macedonian people were attached. Because of this, the CPG was forced to give NOF and the Macedonian people tribute for their massive participation and sacrifices made in the common struggle with the Greek progressive people against the domestic and foreign enemies. As confirmation of this we will highlight a few of the statements made by the top CPG and Provisional government leaders and by DAG General Staff officials. Nikos Zahariadis, for example, in his welcoming speech delivered at the First KOEM (Communist Organization for Aegean Macedonia) District Conference for Lerin Region, among other things, said the following:

“...NOF represents the Macedonian liberation movement. Basically NOF is the expression of the Macedonian people's aspiration to fight and to achieve social liberation and national establishment...” (See Nikos Zahariadis's July 15, 1949 welcoming speech given during the First KOEM District Conference for Lerin Region. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 174, p. 370.)

In a CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum Resolution document, which talks about the Macedonian contribution to DAG, among other things, pointed out is the following:

“... The Slavo-Macedonian people in Northern Greece gave their all for the struggle, have fought and are still fighting with unprecedented heroism and self-sacrifice that deserves our admiration...” (See January 31, 1949, CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum Resolution where, among other things, the new position on the Macedonian National Question was accepted which entitled the Macedonian people to “self-determination”, doc. 15, p. 44.)

As a representative of the Provisional government and DAG General Headquarters, General Kostas Givtodimos Karageorgis in his welcoming speech delivered at the Second NOF Congress regarding the sacrifices the Macedonian people made in the struggle for freedom, among other things, said:

“...There are few places on earth that are soaked with so much blood, where the people are so very few and have suffered so much under various burdens and slavery, as those in Macedonia...”
“...For fifty years the Macedonian people have persistently fought and sacrificed themselves for self-determination and freedom...”
(See speech delivered by Kostas Givtodimos Karageorgis, at the Second NOF Congress, on March 26, 1949, doc. 69, p. 143-144.)

Rula Koukoulou, Secretary of the All Greek Union of Democratic women (wife of Nikos Zahariadis), in a speech delivered during the First Conference of the Democratic women in Greece, regarding the heroism found in Macedonian women, said the following:

“...The Slavo-Macedonian women have a special place in our great struggle. They are the female heroes of the Slavo-Macedonia people who, for years, were tortured by fascist tyranny. With even greater evil and rage they are now being persecuted by the fascists in the new (Anglo-American) occupation. The Slavo-Macedonian women in AFZH stand proud and fight. First in the country to be pierced by an enemy bullet, in this new occupation, was Irina Ginova-Mirka...”
(See part of the paper Rula Koukoulou, Secretary of the All Greek Democratic Union of Women, submitted to the March 3, 1949, First Conference..., doc. 45, p. 107.)

Vasilis Bardzhotas, DAG General Staff Political Commissar, in a speech delivered to the DAG Political Commissars at the March 20, 1949 Conference regarding the Macedonian fighter contribution in DAG’s ranks, among other things, said the following:

“...The Slavo-Macedonian fighters and officers are considered the best that DAG has to offer. They fought and still fight bravely. These heroic people give their best. They sacrificed their children, their property, their houses... Every house has a wounded or dead person. The DAG Vicho Mountain unit fighters are 20 to 50% Slavo-Macedonians...” (See speech delivered on March 20, 1949, by Vasilis Bardzhotas, DAG General Headquarters Political Commissar at the DAG Commissar Conference in Vicho, doc. 63, p. 129.)

At the same Conference Vassilis Bardzhotas was forced to acknowledge irregularities and taunts against the Macedonian DAG fighters perpetrated by Greek nationalists and chauvinists, who also served in DAG's ranks.

There are many such statements made by top CPG and DAG leaders referring to the great Macedonian contribution, not only of the Macedonian fighters who bravely fought in DAG's ranks but also of the entire Macedonian population, as a nation, for the enormous sacrifices it made for this struggle.

At this point it is important to mention that NOF, in the framework of its activities, consistently affirmed its respect for international plans. NOF representatives regularly attended various international meetings and events, be it through the composition of delegations from the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece or other Greek progressive organizations, or as direct representatives of NOF. For example, NOF took part in the International Congress of the World Organization of Democratic Women, held in December 1948 in Budapest, through AFZH. AFZH delegates from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, headed by Evdokia Baliova Vera, AFZH Main Board Secretary, attended this Congress along with the delegation of Democratic women from Greece. It is also important to mention that Evdokia Baliova Vera was elected a candidate member of the Secretariat of the World Organization of Democratic Women during this Congress. (Evdokia Baliova Vera, "Memoirs" ...)

NOF also took part in the International Peace Congress held in Prague in April 1949. NOF representatives entered the Congress as part of the composition of the Greek democratic delegation. Included among the Macedonians from NOF who participated were Evdokia Baliova Vera in her capacity as vice president of the NOF Central Council, Pavle Rakovski as member of the NOF Central Council and Andon Sikavitsa. Pavle Rakovski during his speech welcomed all the delegates in the Macedonian language.

(See Organizing Committee of Greece Proclamation, March 27, 1949, regarding the holding of the World Congress for supporters of peace, for the tasks of the Congress and for Greece's participation in

the Congress. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 79, pp. 170-171.)

(Pavle Rakovski's speech paraphrased in whole can be found in his "Autobiography", kept in the Rakovski family private archives. Part of speech, translated into the Greek language, was published in the edition: Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 109, pp. 224-225.) Rakovski's speech was received with tumultuous applause.

A three member delegation from the CPG and the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece attended Giorgi Dimitrov's funeral. Dimitrov was a prominent leader of the International Labour and Communist Movement and President of the Republic of Bulgaria. One of those delegates was Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Central Council President and Minister of Supplies in the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. (Paskal Mitrevski, Contributions to his autobiography...)

We can see that, through all the above mentioned activities, the Macedonian people's voice (from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia) has been manifested through their liberation movements.

However, it is very important to note that Nikos Zahariadis, CPG General Secretary, always had a fickle and demagogic attitude towards the Macedonians. And so the time had come again for him to defame Paskal Mitrevski and tarnish his reputation. This time Mitrevski and the entire NOF Central Council leaders were accused of being "Yugoslav agents" who were allegedly deposited in the CPG ranks by Tito. On March 24, 1949 Zahariadis convened an emergency meeting with NOF and DAG military and political leaders in the school building of the village Nivitsi, Prespa Region, with a single item on the agenda:

"Paskal Mitrevski, determine his attitude towards Yugoslavia".

Rather surprised, Mitrevski found enough strength to refute and dispel these libelous provocations during his address. At the end of his speech Mitrevski angrily said:

“...No one can convince me today that Tito’s Yugoslavia has gone down the road of capitalism. I, as a Communist and a fighter in the Democratic armies of Greece, will continue to fight against the Greek Monarcho-Fascists and against the Anglo-American imperialists for the final liberation of my people...” (Paskal Mitrevski, Contributions to his autobiography...)

Zahariadis’s fickle and frivolous attitudes towards the Macedonian National Question can be verified in a number of documents from that time, published in the edition “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949”. More information on this can be found in the Macedonian archives under the title “CPG and the Macedonian National Question (1918-1974), published by the same archive.

After Mitrevski spoke at the March 24, 1949 meeting, all of the Macedonians that were in attendance greeted him with applause and congratulated him for his courage, for standing up to Zahariadis and for setting the record straight with Tito and Yugoslavia. Zahariadis angrily walked out without saying a word...

Zahariadis’s logic was strange indeed. His approach to the Macedonian National Question was even stranger. He was an experienced and fanatic demagogue who many times demonstrated his care for a Greater Greece and his distaste for the courage of the NOF Macedonian leaders and DAG fighters, attacking them and accusing them of being enemies of the democratic movement in Greece.

Chapter Seven

The CPG's attitude towards NOF after the Informburo Resolution

The CPG's devastating activities against NOF after the Informburo Resolution

The attacks and pressures from the CPG against NOF and against the Macedonian people never stopped. But as mentioned earlier CPG culmination was reached after the Informburo published its anti-CPY and anti-Yugoslavia Resolution in June 1948. This infamous Informburo Resolution prompted the CPG to again change its position on the Macedonian National Question. In fact, as was mentioned earlier, the CPG during its CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum took out the words "full equality" for the Macedonian people in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia and replaced them with the words "right to self-determination". Several days later the CPG came up with the slogan "United Macedonia within a Balkan Federation". It was well-known that this abnormal CPG attitude towards NOF and towards the Macedonian National Question was to create further tensions between NOF and the CPG on one hand and between the CPG and the CPY on the other.

(See June 30, 1948 CPG Central Committee Politburo circulating letter sent to the DAG Political Commissars to familiarize them with the Informburo's Resolution against the CPY and to inform them of the CPG's position regarding this matter. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948, T.V..., doc. 140, p. 260.)

(See the part of the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum Resolution which talks about the recognition for the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people. CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974..., doc. 191, pp. 437-438.)

(See statement made by the NOF Board about the 2nd NOF Plenum in which, among other things, a decision was made to convene the 2nd NOF Congress during which the Proclamation for the "Unification of the Macedonian people", in a single Macedonian state within the framework of the Balkan Federation, was to be made. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 19, p. 54. The

CPG leadership's change in attitude towards the Macedonian National Question was motivated, according to the CPG, to involve the Macedonian people en masse in the struggle against the enemy on the one hand and to elevate the pressure the CPY was exercising against the democratic movement in Greece on the other. Both of these CPG allegations, of course, proved to be false. It was common knowledge that the Macedonian people would have participated en masse in the war and would have supported DAG anyway with any CPG promises. The CPG did this purely in the spirit of the Informburo's anti-Yugoslav and anti-Macedonian campaign.)

It is difficult to dispute the irrefutable fact that the CPG leadership was inconsistent and opportunistic in its dealing with NOF and with the Macedonian national liberation movement in this part of Macedonia. Here for example, is what Ahileas Papaioanou wrote in his book "Testament to Nikos Zahariadis", published in Greece in 1986, about what Nikos Zahariadis, among other things, had said:

"...Our position towards the Slavo-Macedonian minority was always correct. Equality... This position was an old position that our Party had adopted. The CPG was honoured to be the first Party in the Balkans to not agree with the position of a 3rd International calling for an Autonomous Macedonia in the spirit of a Balkan Federation. The CPG was the most patriotic party in Greece and has never disputed Greek territorial sovereignty. The CPG would have never reached the point of having to give someone an inch of our Greek homeland, no one..." (Ahileas Papaioanou, "I diatiki tou Niku Zahariadis" (Testament to Nikos Zahariadis), 1986, p. 26.)

Further down in the same book Zahariadis angrily said:

"...Recognizing NOF was one of our mistakes in regard to the national question. It was imposed by the then situation... a necessary evil..." (P. 32). NOF, the NOF leadership in the liberated territory, I repeat, was a necessary evil... We could not avoid it because the reaction from Skopje was very strong. That is why supervising NOF for me was a delicate point in our struggle in the free territory..." (p. 52.)

Zahariadis's hostile attitude towards NOF can be seen in another of his articles. As a continuation of this he emphasized the following:

“NOF was created by Tito and Kulishevsky... Its founders and core leadership was composed of Tito's agents like Mitrevski, Keramitchiev, Goche, Rakovski and others, with goals to advance the interests of Belgrade leaders in Aegean Macedonia... To use the Slavo-Macedonian question to achieve their nationalist plans - acquisition of Aegean Macedonia...” (The CPG from 1918 to 1952, p 271.) No comment is necessary here.

As he himself has admitted to this, after the Informburo Resolution, Zahariadis personally undertook the task of managing NOF. Of course his goal was clear... With his “authority” over the Macedonian masses he sought, at any price, to use NOF against Yugoslavia and against Macedonian aims. In other words, he insisted on using NOF as a political instrument against the CPY, Yugoslavia and the People's Republic of Macedonia. (For more information on this see relevant parts in “Aegean Macedonia in NOB”, T.VI and in “CPG and the Macedonian National Question 1918-1974”.)

After his failure to win over NOF and turn it into an anti-Yugoslav weapon to satisfy his own purposes, Zahariadis invented another so-called Macedonian organization and imposed it on the Macedonian people. This time the CPG General Secretary created the organization KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia). At its founding meeting, on March 27, 1949, Zahariadis appointed the Organization's Committee comprised of Mihali Maliov, Vangel Koichev, Paskal Mitrevski, Stavro Kochev, Evdokia Baliova Vera, Vangel Nichev, Urania Pirovska, Hristo Kolentsev and Tashko Hadzhiianev. This Committee was tasked with leading KOEM until a Party leadership was elected at an all-Macedonian KOEM Conference. The First KOEM Conference was held on August 2nd, 1949. At Zahariadis's request, 17 regular and 14 deputy KOEM members were selected. Included among the regular members chosen were Mihali Maliov, Vangel Koichev, Stavro Kochev, Hristo Kolentsev, Andon Sikavitsa, Paskal Mitrevski, Tashos Gushopoulos, Pando Vaina, Sterio Dachov, Evdokia Baliova Vera, Ziso Deliovski, Lazo Poplazarov, Vangel Nichev, Urania

Iurukova, Traiko Popsermedzhiev, Giorgi Nedelkov and Foti Urumov. Included among the deputy members chosen for the KOEM leadership were Krsto Mangov, Ahileas Papaioanou, Lambro Gakidov Dzhavela, Dimitar Prikov, Argir Kuzevski, Paskal Paskalevski, Atanas Angelovski, Mincho Fotev, Lambro Moshov, Micho Velaki, Mahi Pilaeva, Hrisanthi Tsanzovska, and Andonia Filipova.

(KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia). NOF agitation and propaganda edition, May 1949, stored in the Macedonian archives in Skopje. For more of the same see “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949”, T.VI..., doc. 80, p. 172, doc. 81, pp. 172-176 and doc. 82, pp. 177-178.)

(See letter from Nikos Zahariadis to Mihali Maliov, KOEM Secretary, which lists the names of other people to be elected to the KOEM leadership. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 80, p. 172, doc. 81, pp. 172-176 and doc. 82, pp. 177-178.)

However, as future events would show, there was nothing to justify the formation of KOEM... According to statements made by its members, it had nothing to do with the Macedonian people’s struggle in that part of Macedonia. Except for the KOEM Resolution, which put pressure on the CPG leadership to escalate its anti-Yugoslav and anti-Macedonian attacks, there was nothing there that aided the Macedonian people’s liberation work. The CPG’s main aim for creating KOEM was to take power away from the NOF leadership and turn it into an instrument of anti-Macedonian and anti-Yugoslav propaganda to satisfy the Informburo.

The “KOEM Resolution”

There are several versions explaining the manner and circumstances under which the “KOEM Resolution” was fabricated.

In connection with one version, Paskal Mitrevski argues that it happened like this:

Nikos Zahariadis called for an extraordinary meeting (KOEM’s Conference) to be held on June 20, 1949 in a cave outside the

village Viniani (between the villages Orovo and Nivitsi, Prespa Region). Invited were the NOF and KOEM leaderships. The cave was surrounded by DAG guards. Besides the KOEM cadres there were also a number of prominent Macedonian DAG fighters who attended the meeting, 54 people in total. Included among those who attended were Pavle Rakovski, Mihali Maliov, Vangel Koichev, Stavre Kochev, Risto Kolentsev, Lazo Poplazarov, German Petrov, Dimitar Velaki, Dimitar Gubidenski, Dimitar Prikov, Tane Naumov, Kiril Liapchev, Paskal Paskalevski, Filip Kalkov, Tego Stoichinin, Sterio Dachov, Krsto Mangov, Mincho Fotev, Tashko Bozinovski, Urania Iurukova, Mihail Popspirov, Marika Elkova, Kole Panov, Tanas Angelovski, Hrisanthi Tsanzovska, Lambro Cholakov, Ziso Deliovski, Donka Filipova, Pavle Shamandurovski, Pavle Kufev, Vasilka Chepova, Dorche Glufchev, Traiko Popsermedzhiev, Kole Simitchiev, Gogo Petrichevski, Mahi Pilaeva, Petre Shorev, Kalio Apchev, Foti Ilkovski, Ahileas Papaioanou, Petre Romev, Tashos Gushopoulos (Gushevski), Pando Vainata, Urania Alilomova (Rakovska), and Paskal Mitrevski.

(Pavle Rakovski, the Communist Party of Greece and Macedonia..., p. 183. Vangel Aianovski Oche, Aegean storms..., p. 374.)

(Newspaper “Nepokoren”, organ of the NOF Central Council, June 1949. Vangel Aianovski Oche, Aegean storms..., pp. 383-389. Photocopy listing meeting participants.)

The reason for holding the KOEM Conference was given in a letter, written in Skopje on June 2, 1949 by Mihailo Keramitchiev and Ilia Dimovski Goche, addressed to the CPG Central Committee. While returning from the International Peace Congress Pavle Rakovski, NOF Main Board member, passed through Skopje where he met with Mihailo Keramitchiev and Ilia Dimovski Goche. They handed him the letter and told him to deliver it to the CPG Central Committee Headquarters. According to Paskal Mitrevski, Zahariadis was immediately informed and made aware of the contents of the letter as soon as Rakovski entered the DAG free territory in Prespa Region. (Even though the letter is extensive, we feel it has significance and its contents are included in full at the end of this book.)

In his autobiography Paskal Mitrevski wrote that when Zahariadis gave a speech to the Macedonian NOF and KOEM delegates at the KOEM First Conference, during his opening remarks he mentioned Mihailo Keramitchiev and Ilia Dimovski Goche's letter, characterizing it as provocative and more "proof" of the subversive and hostile activities (supposedly) committed and continuing to be committed by the CPY against the CPG and against the national liberation movement in Greece through this treacherous group of CPY agents. On top of that, during a presentation, Zahariadis characterized NOF as an organization of agents working for the Yugoslav intelligence services and accused the NOF leaders of being CPY agents.

(In point 6 of the KOEM Resolution which Zahariadis himself wrote, Zahariadis openly accuses the CPY of directing "discordant and divisive" activities against the CPG and DAG. According to Zahariadis, three spy centres operated in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. One was a political centre and was operated by the CPM and personally guided by its Secretary Kolishevski. The second centre was operated by OZNA and the third was operated by the 2nd Bureau Headquarters of the Yugoslav Army. The first centre oversaw the other two, whose work was purely espionage and disruptive. Again according to Zahariadis, the centres had their own special organizations and agents inside the CPG and NOF which operated in the entire territory of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Their aim was to undermine the CPG from the inside. See KOEM Leadership Resolution, 20. VI, 1949. Brochure "Elefteri Elada", June 1949, p. 5.)

During the KOEM Conference, Mitrevski was scheduled to speak right after Zahariadis. But as soon as Zahariadis finished his speech he stopped Mitrevski from going to the podium and prevented him from speaking, ironically telling him that: "The leader is the last to speak and to end the speeches." (Paskal Mitrevski, Contributions to his autobiography...)

After Zahariadis's speech, discussions were conducted under a tense atmosphere knowing that they were all in a sad situation. Nevertheless some of the NOF and KOEM members attending the Conference, such as Mihali Maliov, Mincho Fotev and others, found

the courage to express their dissatisfaction in defense of NOF and the Macedonian Struggle. Dissatisfied with this Zahariadis turned to Mihali Maliov, who then was also secretary of KOEM, and said: “Sit down Malio!... You saw what Mitrevski’s horse was carrying and you grabbed it by the tail...” (Pavle Rakovski, “About my past”. Autobiography. Kept in the Pavle Rakovski family private archives. Evdokia Baliova Vera, “Memoirs”...)

Paskal Mitrevski was not allowed to speak until the end of the Conference. In his speech, among other things, Mitrevski said the following:

“NOF has never been anyone’s spy agency, then or now... Quite the opposite, from the first day it was born NOF has remained clear and consistent with its aims; to aid the Macedonian people of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in their struggle to free themselves from the Greek political right and from the foreign interventionists. During this struggle NOF has grown into a wide and popular organization. It is a great injustice and an insult to be accusing NOF of such things. It is an even greater injustice today to blame NOF for what some individuals have done, who a long time ago abandoned the front line...” (Paskal Mitrevski, Contributions to his autobiography...)

Regarding the letter Mihailo Keramitchiev and Ilia Dimovski Goche wrote, in his speech, Mitrevski said:

“...For me, based on the opinions expressed and assumptions made in this letter, the letter was not written at the behest of the responsible political factors in Skopje or with their knowledge...”
As proof of this Mitrevski said:

“...The form and content of the letter, which in many places was erased, overwritten, incomplete and improvised, are extremely serious. They (Mihailo Keramitchiev and Ilia Dimovski Goche) placed certain conditions for their return to Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia at the moment, after the Informburo Resolution against the CPY leadership was in effect, the borders were closed and the smear campaign against Yugoslavia was in full effect...”

In his memoirs Paskal Mitrevski also said the following:

“...The way NOF was characterized and treated, as an organization of foreign agents, was insulting to the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia and has degraded and devalued their four years of struggle, which now may adversely affect the combat situation...” (Paskal Mitrevski, Contributions to his autobiography...)

After hearing what Paskal Mitrevski and the other NOF and KOEM leaders had to say, Nikos Zahariadis nervously concluded the meeting with the words: “The Party will take all necessary measures to suppress all enemy activities and thwart any plots that Belgrade may have devised through this treacherous clique and its agents against the national liberation movement in Greece.”

According to Paskal Mitrevski, twenty or so days after the KOEM Conference took place; the famous KOEM conclusion was published in the newspapers as a parody and a plain fraud. Namely, when Zahariadis along with Mitsos Partsalidis (Provisional Democratic Government of Greece President in 1949) left the meeting, they left behind a blank piece of paper on the table and everyone present was told to sign “the third” side of the piece of paper.

We need to emphasize here, underlined Paskal Mitrevski, that “there was no inspection or registration during the signing process. The registration of participants was carried out at the beginning of the meeting. Besides, I am aware that a number of senior executives attending the NOF and KOEM Conference did not sign the paper and those who did sign, their signatures were quite unreadable. (This was verified by Lambro Cholakov from the village Smrdes, Kostur Region. Cholakov was a member of the top NOF leadership and a participant if this Conference. “NOB Memoirs” kept by the author). Rather, this document, not in the least reflects the will of the majority of participants at the Conference. This list too was actually an arbitrary product of its authors, who staged the entire meeting to achieve their objectives”. (Zahariadis and Partsalidis too did not sign the list because their signatures are missing from the said list”).

Following the Conference there was a period during which NOF cadres were monitored and put under growing systematic pressure.

Contrary to Paskal Mitrevski and Lambro Cholakov's positions regarding the Resolution, Pavle Rakovski, member of the top NOF leadership responsible for NOF's agitation and propaganda campaigns, said the following:

"...Soon after its formation (KOEM), on the night of June 19/20, 1949, Zahariadis read over the Resolution and demanded that the 45 Macedonian CPG members and political and military cadres present adopt it by public vote, and those who voted "for", sign it. Each person who was present was given a copy of the Resolution, dated June 15, 1949, in order to become familiar with its content. I was present and I was given a copy. It was pro-Informburo and anti-CPY. In other words, the document blamed Yugoslavia for conducting intelligence activities against Greece, against the CPG and against the Liberation War that involved the Greek and Macedonian people. It also accused the CPY of working in favour of Anglo-American imperialism." According to the document "KOEM declared that the CPY had abandoned the people's democratic block and that the people of Yugoslavia, including the Macedonians, were handed over to the hands of imperialism". (Pavle Rakovski, the Communist Party of Greece and the Macedonians..., p. 177.)

In addition to the above, Pavle Rakovski also wrote:

"...But as Kiriazovski has correctly pointed out, the Resolution should not be considered a Macedonian Resolution..." (Risto Kiriazovski, the National Liberation Front and other organizations... p. 305.) "The Resolution was concocted by the CPG leadership days before it was seen by any Macedonian and clearly it was based on accusations of 'espionage' against NOF which allegedly spied for Yugoslavia and, through it, benefited Anglo-American imperialism.

With this Resolution the Greek CPG leadership sought to legalize the already launched witch-hunt campaign of mass persecution of the Macedonians who were already accused of being 'Tito's agents'.

As a member of the NOF Central Council Secretariat, I tried to refute the accusations of ‘espionage’ leveled against NOF and made it clear that I did not spread propaganda for Tito or for Yugoslavia. And as you know, I was the only one of the 45 present at this meeting who was punished and sent to the Gramos front, Aparades Sector, to fight as a common soldier.” (Pavle Rakovski, the Communist Party of Greece and Macedonia ..., p. 178.)

“Whatever it was, I signed the Resolution. Not because I was a Party member who had to follow the Party leadership discipline, but because the Party for me did not mean following blindly. In October 1944 I came to an open clash with the Greek leaders and in a sign of protest and active resistance I took away the ELAS Macedonian battalion from the Greek commander (about 480 fighters) and brought it here to the People’s Republic of Macedonia (clearly in compliance with Dzhodzho Urdov). (Pavle Rakovski, the Communist Party of Greece and Macedonia..., p. 180.)

Why did almost everyone, including Pavle Rakovski, sign the KOEM Resolution, and by signing approve its content? Why did they do that? On behalf of himself, in response to that question, Pavle Rakovski said:

“I can only speak for myself, of course, but as a direct witness of the others and an accomplice at this event, I think the majority accepted and signed the proposed ‘Party document’ as their duty to the Party, and amid thinly-veiled threats and terrorism (we were surrounded by a unit of autonomists).

Yet regardless of all that, the fact that the Macedonian liberation movement leadership did not go along the line of an open clash with the Greek leaders, did not cause a new rift, did not cause a disaster in DAG... practically shows that we did not betray our people or the struggle, or the part of the Greek people who struggled with us. We proved that we were not traitors to DAG or to the insurgency. By doing this we gave the people in the CPG and DAG leaderships ‘proof’ that NOF and its leaders were not spies conducting espionage for the CPY or for Yugoslavia and Yugoslavia was not involved in organizing DAG’s defeat or sabotaging the uprising in

Greece...” (Pavle Rakovski, the Communist Party of Greece and Macedonia..., p. 183.)

NOF leadership arrests and trial

On July 3, 1949 the Greek government royal troops began their decisive offensive against the DAG 24th Brigade units in Mount Kaimakchalan. After four hard and bloody days of fighting, the Brigade was overpowered and forced to withdraw into Yugoslav territory.

The CPG and DAG leaderships, in order to justify the tragic losses in Kaimakchalan and put the blame elsewhere, insisted that a secret agreement had been reached on July 4, 1949 between Yugoslav and Greek royal officers in Kaimakchalan so that Yugoslavian authorities would allow Greek government troops to attack DAG units from behind. It was alleged that, according to this agreement, on July 5, 1949, Greek government units using Yugoslav space would attack from behind and rout out units of the DAG 24th Brigade. And thus the fictional “attack from behind” was invented.

After the disastrous defeat at Kaimakchalan, the fighters from the DAG 24th Brigade moved to Yugoslavia and in the statements they made they denied claims made by the CPG and DAG leaderships about being attacked from behind in that sector. It was also uncovered that the alleged attack from behind was an invented lie and a provocation to justify DAG’s defeat.

(For more information on the infamous “attack from behind” see Alekos Papapanaiotou, The truth about “the attack from behind”. Voice of INI, Skopje, 1970, XIV, 2-3, pp. 351-379. See Kosmas Spanos Aminda, “Anamnis Enos Kapetanios”. Author’s memoirs of DAG’s struggles in Mount Kaimakchalan. Also see relevant documents in “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949”, T.VI..., doc. 170, p. 36, doc. 171, pp. 365-366, and doc. 173, pp. 367-370.)

A month later, on August 10, 1949, Greek government forces launched a major offensive against the main DAG forces on Mount Vicho. To do this the enemy dedicated 5 divisions with 100 medium field and mountain cannons, 300 tanks and armoured cars and 90

airplanes; 80,000 government troops in total. The DAG forces were comprised of two divisions, several smaller units and a DAG reserve officers' school. (See CPG Central Committee Politburo Resolution, August 20, 1949, the Battle for Vicho. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 198, pp. 419-424.)

On the first day of the offensive the government forces breached the DAG defensive line and achieved great success. Within six days DAG lost about 800 fighters and another 600 went missing. On August 13, 1949 DAG command ordered its units to start leaving Vicho. On August 17, 1949 the last DAG unit withdrew. The majority of the units crossed over into Albanian territory. (Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian political emigration from Aegean Macedonia to Eastern Europe. *Kultura*, Skopje, 1989, pp. 49-50. Also see Georgios Kikitsas, DAG's last battle. (Memoirs). *Voice of INI*, Skopje, 1971, XV, 1, 225-277.)

But, despite DAG's devastating defeat at Vicho, the CPG leadership decided to continue the fighting on Mount Gramos. About 6,000 fighters who were withdrawn from Vicho to Albania were hastily transferred to Gramos.

After four tough and bloody battles the DAG units in Gramos, unable to withstand the pressure from a stronger opponent, on August 29 and 30, 1949, abandoned Gramos and moved to Albania. After DAG's defeat in Gramos its military activities virtually ceased. August 29, 1949 is regarded as the end of the Greek Civil War.

As mentioned several times earlier, the CPG under Zahariadis's leadership carried out activities against NOF and its leaders publicly after the anti-CPY Informburo Resolution was published. But these anti-NOF activities did not come to full expression until DAG was defeated at Vicho and Gramos in August 1949. At this point the CPG leadership brutally interrupted NOF's activities by arresting its leaders and accused them of being the main "culprits" for DAG's defeat. About this in his biography, among other things Paskal Mitrevski wrote the following:

“...After DAG’s withdrawal to Albania, the first step taken was to highlight a reason for DAG’s defeat and to begin a wide promotion of it. The CPG coined the slogan “betrayal” as the main reason for DAG’s defeat perpetrated by the CPY’s disruptive and counter-revolutionary activities against DAG; which were allegedly conducted through the NOF leaders; who were allegedly CPY agents. This was their starting point for causing hysteria and a smear campaign of unheard dimensions against NOF. On top of turning NOF’s friends against it, this also encouraged the enemy to escalate its terror activities against not only NOF but also the entire Macedonian population. As a result of this there was an increase in anti-Macedonian and chauvinistic activities against the Macedonian liberation movement, especially against those Macedonians and cadres of NOF who the CPG considered to be under CPY ideological influence. The CPG ordered the arrest of the NOF leadership under those circumstances. I was the first to be arrested and placed in custody at the Bureli camp in Albania where DAG’s main forces were stationed and where DAG’s Headquarters was established. I was required to give a written statement on the situation in Yugoslavia and on the CPY’s “betrayal” of the CPG as well as to outline NOF’s hostile role and activities in all this... (Paskal Mitrevski, autobiography...)

“Then, under those circumstances, the CPG held a stormy Party Conference on September 29 and 30, 1949. It was attended by 325 delegates from the various DAG units that had retreated from Vicho and Gramos and by some Soviet and Albanian officers. In his speech, in the spirit of the Informburo, Zahariadis blasted the CPY leadership and its NOF “agents” on the ground in Greece, blaming them as the main culprits for DAG’s defeat. (Risto Kiriazovski, the Macedonian political emigration..., pp. 49-50. Vangel Aianovski Oche, Aegean storms..., pp. 405-406.)

But, in order to instill greater political and psychological control and to induce wide psychosis, fear and terror in the Macedonians, two days after the Conference, on October 2, 1949, in the same camp, the CPG, under Zahariadis’s directions, scheduled a General Conference for the Macedonian fighters and officers in DAG as well as NOF, NOMS and AFZH activists. During this Conference the NOF leaders were publicly anathematized and branded “traitors”

and the main “culprits” for DAG’s defeat. The Conference, held in a dire, difficult and tense atmosphere, was aimed at creating “the proper mood” for the arrest and indictment for high treason of the NOF leaders. (Paskal Mitrevski, autobiographical notes of the struggle...) In order to give the Conference greater importance, it was attended by almost all CPG Central Committee Politburo members, by members of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, by DAG military leaders and by Petrov, a representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR.

After the introductions, Nikos Zahariadis opened the Conference with the following words:

“Here in front of you stands a terrible man, a great traitor and the chief agent responsible for DAG’s defeat. You all know him. His name is Paskal Mitrevski, the Greek Raik. Inevitably the safe fate awaits him here unless he shows enough courage and honesty and admits to having committed these grave violations, which for years he has performed against the national liberation struggle and under orders and instructions from Tito’s treacherous counterrevolutionary clique”.

(Laslo Raik was a Hungarian revolutionary and communist who, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1938), fought on the side of the International Brigades. After returning to his country in 1941 he became secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Hungary and then top leader of the resistance movement against Hitler’s coalition in his country. In 1944 he was arrested and deported to Germany. After the war he returned to Hungary and took office in the Hungarian government, first as interior minister and then as minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1948, at the time of the Informburo, he was slandered as an enemy of the state and, during a show trial, was sentenced to death. In 1956 he was posthumously rehabilitated as a victim of a personality cult.)

“Right after Zahariadis spoke, thousands of voices chanted ‘death to the traitor!’ ‘Hang him up!’ ‘Lynch him, lynch him!’ and so on... Hundreds spit at me and hundreds more raised and shook their fists at me. Many who suffered from contusions (or not) fell to the floor and shouted filthy words at me. The atmosphere became chaotic and

very noisy all throughout the entire Conference,. Wrote Paskal Mitrevski in his autobiography.

Nikos Zahariadis spoke for a long time taking his anger against Yugoslavia and at the Yugoslav Communist Party in the sense that the CPY leaders were tools of imperialism and of global counter-reaction and that they planned the liquidation of the Greek national liberation movement and, in that context, he lashed out at NOF and its leaders who, in his opinion, were turned into ordinary agents and spies who worked for Yugoslavia and for its intelligence services.

(Here we should point out that, even though the discussions from this Conference were not documented or captured in any minutes, from what was said by those who attended the Conference (Pavle Rakovski, Evdokia Baliova Vera, Lambro Cholakov, Lazo Poplazarov and others) we have learned that the CPG leadership, headed by Nikos Zahariadis, attacked Yugoslavia and the CPY leadership in the most brutal manner. In the same way the CPG leadership also attacked NOF and its leadership, especially Paskal Mitrevski. The NOF leaders were accused of being the main culprits for DAG's defeat and as agents of imperialism, according to allegations made by the CPY, they were also responsible for smashing the Greek Democratic Movement.)

After Zahariadis spoke, and used the same tone and aggression against the CPY and NOF leaderships, Michos Partsalidis, Petros Roussos and others took the podium.

After Partsalidis was done speaking, Paskal Mitrevski took the podium and found the strength and courage to categorically reject all attacks against him and against the other NOF leaders, calling the accusations unfounded and tendentious. In his speech, among other things, Mitrevski also said the following:

“...My twenty year career as a revolutionary is rich with examples of my unbreakable devotion and fidelity to socialism, democracy and to the liberation of my country. The vast majority of the fighters present here know me well so let them turn to their own conscience and let them tell you when, at what point in my revolutionary career did I abandon my revolutionary duties and start working for myself?

The CPG leadership knows the answer to this very well. Nevertheless, they are looking to throw mud in my face by labeling me the main culprit for DAG's defeat". (Paskal Mitrevski, autobiography...)

In regards to the CPG leadership's allegations against NOF and its leaders, labeling them CPY agents, intelligence Services agents, etc., Mitrevski, in his speech, said the following:

"...It simply is not true! ...Although I am fully aware of the situation that I am in, at the moment in the interest of historical truth, I want to make it clear that: I and the other NOF leaders who led NOF for almost five years have never, from the CPY, received any instructions or tasks to perform that were hostile, disruptive or spy work...or work against the CPG or DAG or against the Greek national liberation movement in general.

Please also allow me to say this: I was one of the most principled and uncompromising protagonists who consistently fought for unity between the Greek and Macedonian people in this current struggle which we led against the occupiers and Monarcho-Fascists. There is plenty of evidence to prove this..." (Paskal Mitrevski, autobiography...)

At this point Zahariadis made a hand gesture accompanied by the words: "Take a look at the insolence! It alludes to our Party!" After that, the Conference chairman forced Mitrevski off the podium.

As mentioned earlier, after Zahariadis labeled the NOF leaders "Tito's agents" he asked the CPG Central Committee to adopt a motion to arrest and investigate them.

Several days later, on October 7, 1949, in agreement with Mehmet Shehu, Albanian President, and in the presence of Petrov, representative of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the NOF top leadership was arrested. Included among those arrested were Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Central Council President and Minister of Supplies in the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, and DAG Lieutenant Colonel by rank; Evdokia Baliova Vera, AFZH Central Committee Secretary, NOF Central Council Vice President,

and Vice President of the All-Greek Democratic Union of Women in Greece, and DAG Captain by rank; Mihali Maliov, NOF and KOEM Central Council Secretary; Mincho Fotev, NOMS Main Board President, member of the NOF Executive Committee and Assistant Political Commissar of DAG General Headquarters; Pavle Rakovski, member of the NOF Central Council Presidency responsible for agitation and propaganda; Urania Iurukova, member of the NOF Central Council Executive Committee and member of the AFZH Main Board Secretariat; Lambro Cholakov, NOF District Board President of Kostur Region and member of the NOF Central Council Executive Committee; Lazo Poplazarov, member of the NOF Central Council, and DAG Captain by rank; Risto Kolentsev Kokinos, member of the NOF Central Council, and National Board President for Lerin Region; and Tashko Hadzhiiianev, member of the NOF Central Council, and member the NOMS Main Board Presidency. (Dragan Kliakich, *Siberia for "Tito's agents". Stradania grupe iz Egeike Makedonije*. Stip. Duga, 1983, January 1, IX (XXV) no. 231, p. 55.)

On October 9, 1949, the arrested NOF leaders were imprisoned in the Bureli prison and on October 14, 1949 were transferred to a central prison in Tirana where they were individually isolated in solitary confinement cells.

(As was often written in the Macedonian historiography about the arrest and imprisonment of the NOF leaders, it was also written that DAG General Headquarters Security Services, led by Periklis Kalodikis, investigated the captives but, according to accounts given by the captives themselves, no such investigation was conducted because the Albanian leadership (for their own accounts) forbade the CPG leaders from performing such activities. From a letter from the CPG Central Committee Politburo to the Albanian Communist Party Politburo, dated October 27, 1949, we can see the CPG protesting against the Albanian security organs of having "hijacked" the arrested NOF leaders and not allowing the CPG Greek authorities to carry out their investigation. See *Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949*, T.VI..., doc. 217, pp. 458-459.

INI consultant Todor Simovski, in connection with this, said that a few years later when he met up with Periklis Kalodikis in Bucharest,

he asked Kalodikis what the motive was for arresting the NOF leaders and what he found during his investigation. In the presence of Theodoros Papapanaiotou Alekos (former commissar and commander of the DAG 24th Brigade) Kalodikis said that “they (NOF leaders) had to answer for DAG’s defeat in order to cover up Nikos Zahariadis’s sins (at that time Kalodikis was in conflict with Zahariadis), and that after the investigation they were to be liquidated by a staged trial but, at the last moment, at the discretion of Petrov (the Soviet representative), the Albanian authorities took them away from the detention where we were holding them by force.” This, of course, enraged Zahariadis because he was aware that they would be transferred to the Soviet Union and that there they would be interrogated and prove that they were not guilty; thus discrediting Zahariadis himself because it would prove that he deliberately defamed the NOF Macedonian leaders.)

At this point it is important to emphasize that, in protest of the NOF leaders being arrested, the Macedonian people in the People’s Republic of Macedonia organized numerous protests and rallies in which many Macedonians from the liberated part of Macedonia expressed their solidarity towards the Macedonian people from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. One such rally was organized in Skopje by the Macedonian refugees from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. (The same Macedonian refugees sent a protest letter to the UN and to the international public. See Resolution from the refugees from Aegean Macedonia dated November 27, 1949. Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949, T.VI..., doc. 222, pp. 469-479.) This letter, among other things, said the following:

“Yesterday (November 27, 1949) refugees from Aegean Macedonia gathered at the ‘Freedom Square’ in Skopje where they held a protest in which they vigorously protested against the wild terror perpetrated by the Greek Monarcho-Fascists against the Macedonian people with aims at cleansing the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia. They also protested against the terror and arrests carried out by the traitor Zahariadis who arrested the Macedonian leaders and Democratic Army of Greece fighters, in order to hide his own and his Party’s role and responsibility in the disaster, and blame it on Yugoslavia and on the National Liberation Front... By putting

pressure on the national liberation front leaders, Zahariadis wants to condemn Yugoslavia which allegedly betrayed the struggle of the Greek people. Among the national liberation front leaders that Zahariadis has arrested, included are Paskal Mitrevski, Pavle Rakovski, Kicha Baleva Vera, Mincho Fotevski, Urania Pirovska, Lambro Cholakov, Lazo Poplazarov, Tashko Hadzhiianov and Mihali Maliov..." (See "Nova Makedonija", Skopje, November 29, 1949, p. 7. Also see statement made by Gogo Petrichevski member of NOMS Main Board for Aegean Macedonia, "Nova Makedonija", November 27, 1949, p. 2.)

On December 14, 1949 the Macedonian NOF leaders were loaded onto the Soviet freighter "Michurin" at the port of Durres in Albania, and transported to the USSR. They arrived at the port of Odessa on December 25, 1949 and were handed over to the Soviet security Services who then locked them up in a prison in Odessa. On January 1, 1950 the detainees were loaded onto a train with special prison wagons called "Stopilinskie" and transported to Moscow where they were handed over to the USSR Ministry of State Security, which then imprisoned them in the "Liublianka" prison in Moscow. A little later they were transferred to other prisons in Moscow including Lefortovo, Butiraskaia and Suhanovka. (Pavle Rakovski, "Robiashi" and "Under investigation". Memoirs, preserved in the INI archives; Mincho Fotev, Developments through NOF...; Paskal Mitrevski, autobiography, and Dragan Kliakich, Siberia for "Tito's agents"..., p. 55-56.)

The interrogations of the NOF leaders in Moscow lasted from January 1950 until May 1952. During this time the detainees were locked up in solitary confinement or in individual cells. The interrogations were conducted around the clock from 1200 to 1700 hours and from 2300 to 0500 hours (12 noon to 5pm and from 11pm to 5am) by a group of Soviet officers, led by Colonel Rubliov, head of the Second Department of the USSR Ministry of State Security. Included among the interrogators were Major Pandelev, Colonel Viktor Petrov Firtsov, Colonel Evgeni Kostandinovich Nikitin, and Lieutenant Colonel Andrei Pogrebniak. The interrogations were done in the Greek language because the Soviet service did not have Macedonian speaking translators. The translators were Soviet officers of Greek origin. Included among the translators were

Captain Hristos Dzhumiadis, Captain Ioanidis, and Lieutenant Aristotelis Papounidis.

(Pavle Rakovski, “Robiashi” and “Under investigation”. Memoirs, documents preserved in the INI archives; Mincho Fotev, Development through NOF...; Paskal Mitrevski, autobiography... and Dragan Kliakich, Siberia for “Tito’s agents”..., p. 55-56.)

Most of what we have learned about the interrogations of the Macedonian NOF leaders in the USSR was from those being interrogated. Here is what Paskal Mitrevski said:

“...In December 1949 all of us (NOF leaders) were loaded on a Soviet ship and sent across the Black Sea to Moscow where we were immediately locked up in the well-known Liublianka prison. Interrogations were conducted for more than two and a half years. I was held in the Liublianka prison for three months and then was transferred to Lefortovo prison, and eventually was sent to the prisons Suhanovsk and Butirsk. All the while the interrogations were ongoing I was kept in solitary confinement. From the beginning I was subjected to strong, systematic and total physical, moral and spiritual pressure because the authorities believed that I was the key and if the key could be broken it would pave the way for the outcome they were looking for; providing proof that Yugoslavia indeed committed ‘treason’ and organized ‘conspiracy’ against the Greek national liberation movement. At this point I want to say that the most difficult moments in my life were the moments that I lived through the unbearable and despicable acts while I was imprisoned in the appalling cells in Suhanovsk prison, located about 50 kilometres outside of Moscow...” (Paskal Mitrevski, autobiography...)

And what did the Soviets want from Paskal Mitrevski and from the other NOF leaders? Here is what Mitrevski said:

“First, they wanted me to say that I organized a spy network on the Aegean Macedonian terrain, allegedly organized to work for the Yugoslav intelligence services and, on that basis, through illegal channels, I was regularly supplying them with written reports that included DAG numbers, DAG movements and DAG positions. And

these reports allegedly informed the Yugoslav services which in turn supplied that information to the appropriate American, English and Greek intelligence services. And that these reports were the main reason for the heavy blows inflicted on DAG which brought it to its final defeat. It was alleged that instructions and a plan for organizing and implementing this task were reportedly directly provided by Rankovich (Alexander) in Belgrade during a meeting organized especially for this purpose. The meeting was allegedly attended by English, American and Greek military attachés from the English, American and Greek embassies accredited in Belgrade.

Second, they wanted me to say that I (allegedly) received my orders, corresponding tasks and instructions for carrying out terrorist acts against prominent CPG leaders directly from Tito and Rankovich. They also wanted me to say that I (allegedly) did this in order to create chaos in DAG's ranks so that DAG would fail in the liberation war against the Monarcho-Fascists and Anglo American interventionists.

Third, they wanted me to say that a directive was (allegedly) issued by the Yugoslav intelligence services to factors in Skopje to (allegedly) organize mass Macedonian fighter desertions from DAG's ranks and mass defections to Yugoslavia. They also wanted me to say that I pursued that directive through specific channels and stations that the Yugoslav intelligence services had organized and set up along the border and inside Aegean Macedonia..." (Paskal Mitrevski, autobiography...)

From what Mitrevski has told us we can clearly see the difficult situation he was in and the severity and enormity of pressure he was under. They wanted "group Mitrevski" to admit to having "international links" which consistently served "Tito's clique".

A person may ask themselves: "Why was this done?" Given the relation between the USSR and Yugoslavia at that time, the Stalinist Informburo protagonists needed to construct a process through which they could further enrich their arsenal and defamatory smear campaign against Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Communist Party. A convincing basis for this assumption can be found in the

interrogations conducted especially during 1950 and the first half of 1951.

It is important to mention at this point that, despite the repressive measures the interrogators used they failed to break the will and endurance of the Macedonian revolutionaries which sprang from their boundless faith in the ideals for which they fought for nearly all their lives. The interrogators failed to gain a single confession regarding the aforementioned fictional and monstrous accusations and demands. Thus, the Stalinist plans to initiate trials failed miserably.

Here is what Mincho Fotev had to say regarding the time he spent in the Stalinist prisons:

“One night we arrived in Moscow. One by one the guards separated us and, while tied up, put us in iron cages with strong bars like we were some sort of rare and powerful beasts. They then took us to the prisons in Moscow. First to Liublianka and then to Lefortovo...”
(Mincho Fotev, *Developments through NOF...*)

“I always dreamed,” said Urania Iurukova, “that some day after the war ended I would visit the country in which socialism won; the Soviet Union and Moscow. However, when I came out of the prison car, with the first step I took I stared down at a military bayonet. The place was crawling with armed soldiers pointing their guns at us. I was overtaken by deep apathy and disillusionment. The prison officials ordered us to quickly “undress”. After that we were “disinfected” and ordered to “shower”... After that I was taken to a prison cell. It was two and half metres long and half a metre wide, with a tiny, narrow window. The interrogations were started and went on every night from 11 pm to 5 am. My interrogations were done under the watchful eyes of Lieutenant Colonel Firtsev, Major Pandelev and Lieutenant Colonel Nikita. An officer of Greek origin called Ioanidis did the translating. Chief Investigator Firtsov was rude and tactless and so was Lieutenant Pogrebniak. They constantly yelled at me: ‘Admit it... you’re an agent of OZNA and the Intelligence Service!’ ‘What was your job?!’ ‘Tell us about your links!’ The same thing every night!” (Urania Iurukova, *memoirs*. Dragan Kliakich, *Siberia for “Tito’s agents”...*, p. 56.)

“I lived in a dark cell,” said Evdokia Baliova Vera. “Countless times I measured it with my feet... It was sixteen foot lengths long and eight foot lengths wide. I was locked behind an iron door with a small window, through which the guards constantly peeped. The guards had two commands for me: “Let’s go” and “Don’t do that!” It was forbidden for me to speak, to laugh, to cry, to whimper... In other words it was forbidden for me to make any sound. I only spoke to myself without making a sound... I could only speak when I was interrogated and only to answer the questions being asked...” (Evdokia Baliova Vera, “memoirs”... Dragan Kliakich, Siberia for “Tito’s agents”..., p. 55.)

Here is what Pavle Rakovski has to say about his painful time he spent in the Stalinist prisons:

“After spending two years and eight months in strict isolation in Moscow prisons, on May 30, 1952 I was informed that: “In regards to the international reaction and organized activity in its favour” according to Article 58, paragraph 4 and 11 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, the Supreme Court of the USSR, has imposed a ten year sentence against me depriving me of my personal freedom. A ten year sentence which I had to serve in forced labour in the “Correctional Labour Camps”. (Pavle Rakovski, “Robiashi” and “Under Investigation”...)

In addition to the above, Pavle Rakovski also wrote:

“How could I have possibly violated the Russian Federation’s Criminal Code in the Greek (occupied) part of my country by taking part in the struggle of our people for our basic rights?” In regards to his own question he wrote: “It was justice from the stronger. A natural iron law of the stronger...” (Pavle Rakovski, “Robiashi” and “Under Investigation”...)

About his time he spent in the Soviet prisons Risto Kolentsev wrote:

“In Moscow I was locked up in Lefortovsk Prison, in cell number 203, and then I was transferred to Butirsk Prison, cell number 168. I was locked in those dark cells for three years in a row. I was only

allowed to come out during the night under strict guard supervision so that the interrogators could question me to ‘prove’ that I was associated with the ‘Yugoslav military police and Intelligence Service’ in order to ‘destroy’ the Greek liberation movement and the people’s struggle for democracy, for which I fought all my life...” (Risto Kolentsev, memoirs. Dragan Kliakich, Siberia for “Tito’s agents”..., p. 56.)

About the terrible time he spent in the Soviet prisons, Tashko Hadzhiiianev said the following:

“I was accused of implementing ‘Tito’s policies’ in the CPG and DAG ranks and of allegedly promoting counter-revolutionary activities... I endured three years in the Soviet Union prisons in Lefortovo, Suhanovk and Butirskaia where I was isolated in a separate cell and repeatedly tortured. I was only allowed to come out at night during interrogations so that I would admit to being “an agent of Tito” and the international bourgeoisie, with aims at breaking the national liberation movement in Greece. Of course I could not admit to that because it was all a lie... concocted by Zahariadis...” (Risto Kolentsev, memoirs. Dragan Kliakich, Siberia for “Tito’s agents”..., p. 56.)

It is obvious from the testimonies given above, by the prisoners themselves, that the charges aimed against the Macedonian NOF leaders were mainly directed at Yugoslavia, the People’s Republic of Macedonia and the CPY. That is why, in the same indictment and judgment, beside the names of the convicted NOF leaders were the names of the Yugoslav state and party leaders and those of the People’s Republic of Macedonia.

The NOF leadership’s fate after the trials in the USSR

The Macedonian NOF leaders were administratively sentenced by a special USSR State Security Ministry Commission, with sentences ranging from 8 to 25 years of hard labour to be served in the Soviet concentration camps. Paskal Mitrevski received the harshest sentence of 25 years of hard labour. Mincho Fotev was sentenced to 10 years. Lambro Cholakov, Risto Kolentsev Kokinos and Tashko Hadzhiiianev were each sentenced to 8 years in prison. They were all

sent to the concentration camps located about 40 kilometres away from the Arctic Ocean in the city Vorkuta, in the autonomous province called Komi-ASSR. There they worked processing coal in difficult conditions and in temperatures that dropped to 56 degrees centigrade below zero. (Mincho Fotev, *Developments through NOF...*; Dragan Kliakich, *Siberia for "Tito's agents"...*, p. 56.)

About his time he spent as a prisoner in the Vorkuta camps, Paskal Mitrevski wrote the following:

"... My sentence was 25 years imprisonment in the concentration camp in Vorkuta. I stayed in this camp less than a year..." (Paskal Mitrevski, *autobiography...*)

However, an important event concerning Paskal Mitrevski took place in this camp, which needs to be noted. Namely, in the winter of 1952-1953, Mitrevski together with some officers from the Soviet Army, who were being punished for various offenses and were serving their sentences in the Vorkuta camps, along with some Soviet aviation officers, illegally left the camp. They began to clear the snow off a plane that from time to time supplied mail and other materials to the camp. When they were discovered they were shot at by the guards. The guards returned them to the camp and because they broke the rules they were sentenced to new and harsher sentences to be served in the harshest prison in the Soviet Unions, the Nizhni Novgorod. The aviator named Krilov, who was expected to fly the escape aircraft, was sent to the Gulag Archipelago camp, the one Solzhenitsyn wrote about.

(Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *"The Gulag Archipelago"*, T. I. Belgrade, 1988, p. 81. About this, Solzhenitsyn wrote that: "There were Marko's partisans in the Gulag Archipelago". Solzhenitsyn was thinking of Paskal Mitrevski when he wrote that. Also see Evdokia Baliova Vera, "memoirs"...)

That same judgment was read in camp "Column 21" on the "Tanshenska" route to Siberia, where Evdokia Baliova Vera was serving her sentence (in the Soviet prisons and concentration camps Vera used two names). When the column chief read the judgment of the "robiashi" who tried to escape from the camp in the Vorkuta

Camp, Vera instinctively made a sound and all prisoners turned to look at her. For Vera this was great encouragement; to know that at least some of her comrades were still alive... “Encouragements in moments like this are difficult to describe...” (Evdokia Baliova Vera, “memoirs...)

Regarding the situation in the Vorkuta camp, Mincho Fotev said the following:

“After 26 months of interrogation, on April 19, 1952, the USSR Supreme Military Court sentences me to 10 years imprisonment. I was sent to the forced labour camps in Vorkuta. All prisoners there worked 10 hours a day digging in the Pechersk coal mines. It took us an hour to get to the mine and another hour to return to the barracks. We worked long and hard in the cold polar wind, freezing to the bone. After that we returned to our cabins in ward number 9 where we mixed with prisoners from other nations. There were many here from Germany, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Poland and other countries. Most of them were convicted of similar crimes like mine: “Being involved in counter-revolutionary activities.” (Mincho Fotev, Developments through NOF...)

The other prisoners, Evdokia Baliova Vera, Urania Iurukova and Lazo Poplazarov, were sentenced to 8 years in prison while Pavle Rakovski was sentenced to 10 years. They were sent to the concentration camps in Siberia. Mihali Maliov was sentenced to 5 years.

About his difficult time in the Siberian prison camps, Pavle Rakovski wrote the following:

“...I have fallen into a social pit where they throw the social outcasts of Asia and Europe. Here one can find fanatics of various religious sects and enemies of the Soviet power including Jehovah’s Witnesses, Greek Catholics, Old Believers, old calendar Orthodox Christians, etc. Belarusian spies, saboteurs and terrorists, Trotskyites, German SS and Gestapo (they were many), Ukrainian and Moldavian rebels, smugglers and spies from Iran and Turkey, Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Yugoslav Ustashes and Chetniks, Japanese, Chinese, Mandzhurians, Koreans, open

fascists, professional spies, terrorists and various thieves and vagabonds... All these people were blind from hate towards what I valued the most and to which I could give the most of myself. I lived alone among them, cautiously, because if I accidentally stepped on one of these reptiles I would be gone forever..." (Pavle Rakovski, "Robiashi" and "Under Investigation"...)

On this, as a continuation of what she said earlier, Urania Iurukova said:

"...After two and a half years, on May 21, 1952, I was taken from the prison to an office where the interrogator read me the verdict that I was sentenced by the USSR military court to 8 years imprisonment with hard labour to be served in a concentration camp... I was then taken to Siberia, to the Krasnoyarsk concentration camp in the Irkutsk region, at number AO-441..." (Urania Iurukova, memoirs... Also see Dragan Kliakich, Siberia for "Tito's agents"..., p. 56)

From what has been said above one would rightly be asking: "Did the Macedonian NOF leaders and revolutionaries, who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the ideals and freedom of the Macedonian people, deserve such a punishment?" This definitely needs a separate response.

The NOF leaders who were arrested and then jailed by the CPG leadership, headed by Nikos Zahariadis, continued to be jailed in the Eastern European countries where they were evacuated after DAG was defeated. Included among the many Macedonians jailed were Nikola Panov, NOF Central Council member and NOF District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region; Todor Kochev Victor, NOF Central Council member and NOMS Main Board Presidency member; Traiche Supelov, NOF District Board member for Kostur Region; Petre Asprov, NOMS Main Board member; German Damovski Stariot, NOF Central Council member and NOF District Board Presidency member for Lerin Region; Kosta Kirkov, NOF District Board member for Lerin Region; and Andon Sikavitsa, NOF Central Council Executive Committee candidate member. All these men and others not mentioned here were charged, convicted and imprisoned as "dangerous", "nationalists", "separatists", "counter-revolutionaries" and "Yugoslav agents" who operated in the ranks of

the Greek democratic movement. Hundreds of Macedonians, members and supporters of NOF, were arrested and jailed by the security services and then charged with suspicion of being “Tito’s agents” who were tasked with performing damaging activities against the CPG and DAG. All this was done by the CPG leadership headed by Nikos Zahariadis. At one point over 100 Macedonian NOF members and supporters were jailed in Albanian prisons alone, 30 of those jailed were women and girls.

(In connection with this, an article was written in which, among other things, the following was said: “...When DAG was still active and a short period afterwards, Zahariadis implemented a policy to slander and persecute as many Slavo-Macedonian activists and popular fighters as possible. There was no proof of this but it was very easy for him to label these Macedonian leaders and activists as ‘foreign agents’, ‘enemies of the people’, etc. On the basis of these ‘false accusations’, in the period from 1948 to 1949, many Slavo-Macedonians were arrested and prosecuted. A characteristic fact of this is the arrest of a number of Slavo-Macedonian activists immediately after DAG abandoned Vicho and Gramos and the accusations that they were ‘Tito’s agents’. These arrests were organized by the CPG leadership, in other words by Zahariadis...”

Written opinions from the CPG splinter group (early June 1956) regarding Nikos Zahariadis’s policy in relation to the Macedonian National Question. The document is kept in the Macedonian archives, K-21/158. CPG and the Macedonian National Question..., doc. 232, pp. 530-531.)

NOF’s dissolution

As mentioned earlier, days after DAG’s defeat, the CPG leadership began to attack the Macedonian NOF leadership in the most brutal ways. The CPG did this not only inside Greece but also outside, in the presence of Macedonian and Greek political emigrants, calling the Macedonian revolutionaries “agents of Yugoslavia” and accusing them of being “the main culprits” for DAG’s defeat, guilty of “derailing” the democratic movement in Greece and so on. According to official statements made at that time by some CPG Central Committee leaders, which were included in party documents and in statements made in public appearances, DAG’s defeat was

attributed to CPY “betrayals” carried out through NOF, which were allegedly created by the CPY Central Committee leadership in order to cause discord in the ranks of the Greek resistance movement, in the ranks of the CPG and in the ranks of DAG. The CPG Central Committee leadership, in January 1952, used these kinds of “false arguments” to justify NOF’s dissolution and to replace NOF with “Ilinden”, a pro-Infornburo organization, with aims at exploiting anti-Yugoslav and Anti-Macedonian (Republic of Macedonia) sentiments.

(The “Ilinden” organization was established at its founding Congress on April 2 and 3, 1952 in the village Kroschenko, near the city Zheshuv, Eastern Poland. About 500 Macedonian political emigrants were settled there. For more information on “Ilinden’s” formation and on its goals and objectives, see Risto Kiriazovski, Macedonian national institutions..., pp. 230-245.)

From what has been said above it should be clear that the accusations made against NOF, by the CPG leaders and Zahariadis, were invented lies, invented in order to put the blame and DAG’s shameful defeat elsewhere. These lies were invented to convince DAG’s fighters, who put their lives on the line for the CPG, that it was not the CPG’s fault that they lost... that it was the fault of the Macedonians, the CPY and Tito. The CPG, which alone led DAG to this disaster, took the easy way out by blaming the innocent for what it did... As confirmation of our findings we would like to put the following facts forward:

1. NOF was one of the determining factors for DAG’s creation and popularization. Thanks to NOF’s uncompromising work, a huge number of brave and honest Macedonian fighters joined DAG’s ranks and fought until the end of the civil war.
2. The majority of the Macedonian people joined DAG’s ranks, fought bravely and, even though they suffered huge human losses and material damage, continued to fight to the end under NOF’s beckoning call. Dozens of Macedonian villages were burned and completely destroyed.

3. NOF not only did not implement foreign (Yugoslav) policies in DAG's ranks, as the CPG repeatedly claimed, but consistently fought for the realization of its People's Liberation as was outlined in its program; to protect the Macedonian people's national and social interests.

4. The same CPG leadership headed by Nikos Zahariadis, which condemned NOF as a "counter-revolutionary" organization and as a "traitor" to the liberation movement in Greece, had many times complimented, spoke highly of and appreciated NOF's role and importance in the democratic movement. As mentioned earlier, Zahariadis himself publicly spoke about NOF's role and importance at the First Lerin Region KOEM District Conference. (Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949. T.VI..., doc. 174, p. 370.) If the top CPG leader himself admitted to this: "Why then did the CPG leadership condemn and eventually disband NOF?!" As an answer to this question we would like to put the following facts forward:

1. The victorious People's Liberation War and the Yugoslav People's Revolution had great influence on the Macedonian people in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia. These successes prompted the wider Macedonian masses to continue their just struggle for national and social liberation. Of course the Yugoslav examples seemed to bother the Greek CPG leadership which did not want these successes to be expanded into Greek occupied Macedonia. The CPG leaders were quick to extinguish such desires for freedom.

2. In an attempt to hide its own mistakes in DAG's defeat, the CPG leadership, as is well-known, put the guilt on the CPY and through it on the NOF leaders. As for the Democratic forces in Greece being allegedly "hit from behind", it again put the blame on the CPY and NOF but failed to provide the necessary proof.

3. The CPG leadership made good use of the Informburo Resolution, not only to slander the CPY and Yugoslavia but also to disorient NOF, discredit the Macedonian people's contribution to the struggle and dishonour the Macedonian revolutionaries.

Today, after so many years have passed, it is naive to believe that, during the Greek Civil War, the Macedonian NOF leaders and DAG fighters participated in DAG's ranks as some sort of "Yugoslav agents" and enemies of their own struggle. All this was concocted by the CPG leadership with Zahariadis at the helm... It was all pure lies and propaganda.

After Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, Goergi Malenkov took on the Soviet government helm followed by Nikita Khrushchev. During the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee 20th Congress, Khrushchev strongly condemned Stalin's personality cult. As a result, in March 1955 strained relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were normalized and later so were relations between the CPG and SKY.

(See part of the CPG Central Committee Politburo report submitted at the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum in December 1955. Among other things it highlights the issue of normalization of relations between the CPG and SKY. See CPG and the Macedonian National Question..., doc. pp. 524-525. Also see CPG Central Coordination Committee 5th Plenum Declaration regarding normalization of relations between the CPG and SKY, doc. 230, p. 524.)

The changes that had taken place in the political life at the top of the Soviet Party and government were greeted with joy and optimism. There was now hope that the innocent Macedonian resistance movement fighters, who were falsely imprisoned and suffered in Stalin's concentration camps, might be freed. And thanks to these changes they were indeed released from the Siberian prisons and moved to an internment camp in Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, a Soviet Union Republic. So after spending five years in strict isolation, "the group Mitrevski" (except for Mihali Maliov), was once again reconnected.

(Pavle Rakovski, "Robiashi" and "Under Investigation"..., Evdokia Baliova Vera, "Memoirs", Mincho Fotev, Developments through NOF...).

Later, the Macedonian leaders were invited to go to the Kazakhstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Headquarters where Soviet authorities gave them the following good news:

“You were wrongly convicted... Your guilt was never established... the Soviet Union Supreme Military Court has adopted a decision to deem you politically rehabilitated. Your time spent in prison will be measured from the day of your arrest. Our investigation did not prove that you, the leaders of the National Liberation Front for Aegean Macedonia, belonged to any reactionary group but rather that you were all active participants in the National Liberation War in Greece, who were given senior leadership positions in the resistance movement throughout the period until your arrest. In that sense you were victims of the gross violations of fraternal relations between our nations...” (Dragan Kliakich, Siberia “Tito agents”..., p. 57.)

Of course the good news was a welcome shock for the interned Macedonian leaders. A little later they were deemed rehabilitated by Leonid Brezhnev, Communist Party of Kazakhstan Central Committee Secretary.

After making contact with the Yugoslav Embassy in Moscow, the Macedonian leaders and former prisoners, to the last one, left the Soviet Union and went to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia where they participated in the construction of the socialist system. For their revolutionary stamina in the Stalinist prisons and camps and for their contribution to the construction a socialist society in the Republic of Macedonia, they all were awarded the highest accolades the Yugoslav republics and Josip Tito, President of Yugoslavia, could award. Paskal Mitrevski gained great recognition in the Republic of Macedonia and was entrusted with the highest socio-political management functions. He was appointed District Deputy of the agricultural works in the Republic of Macedonia, Chief Judge of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia Constitutional Court and member of the Republic’s Council. He worked tirelessly for the good of his homeland until his death on February 10, 1978. He was buried in the Aleia Cemetery in Skopje among the most privileged with the highest state and party honours.

After Paskal Mitrevski died, his family received numerous telegrams of condolences from prominent members of the Macedonian state and from Party figures. Here is what some of them said:

The telegram from Lazar Kolishevski, former president of Yugoslavia, among other things said:

“...My sincere condolences to the Mitrevski family for the passing of Comrade Paskal, member of the Republic’s Council, accredited revolutionary and fighter for the freedom of our people...”

Angel Chemerski, President of the SK Macedonia Central Committee, in a telegram said:

“...With Paskal Mitrevski’s passing we lost one of the most prominent Party and military leaders in the struggle against fascism and one of the fighters for the national and social freedom of the Macedonian people...”

In his telegram Kiro Gligorov, a prominent leader of the Macedonian people’s liberation movement, said:

“On the occasion of Comrade Paskal Mitrevski’s premature death, a prominent revolutionary, communist and fighter for the liberation and unification of the Macedonian people, please accept my deep condolences...”

Blagoia Taleski, President of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia Parliament, in his telegram said:

“...Comrade Paskal Mitrevski will forever remain in our memories as one of the foremost fighters against fascism, a fighter for national and social freedom for the Macedonian people and a consistent policy fighter in the union of communists...” (Telegrams are kept in the private Paskal Mitrevski family archives.)

Six months after Paskal Mitrevski’s passing a memorial was held at his grave at which Markos Vafiadis, former DAG General Headquarters Commander and staunch opponent of Mitrevski, was present. Vafiadis, who in 1946 stubbornly argued with Mitrevski

about the proper and honest way to implement unity between the NOF Macedonian partisan units and those of the CPG, and who did not recognize the Macedonian people as a separate nation, now came to Skopje and, while standing in front of Mitevski's grave, he said the following:

“Dear friends,

I want to say a few words... I don't know your language, I wanted to learn it but under those circumstances I didn't...

After I came here I wanted to meet up with Comrade Paskal but my wish was not fulfilled... He died suddenly... and young.

Comrades!

Comrade Paskal for me was one of the best Slavo-Macedonian Cadres. He was indeed a prominent Slavo-Macedonian leader. And another reason why I respected Comrade Paskal: He defended the rights of the Slavo-Macedonian minority on the one hand and enforced the CPG line on minorities on the other. He was for full equality for minorities.

He was a faithful companion and a capable leader, unconscionable, especially in Greek terms, who acknowledged the CPG leadership at the time. He unflinchingly stood up to those in the CPG who trampled on the interests of the Slavo-Macedonia people.

Comrades,

I told you that when I came here to Skopje, I wanted to very much meet with Mitrevski, but sadly... I wish you all to live long lives and to remember him, value him and to respect him for his contribution to the popular struggle.”

(Before coming to Mitrevski's grave, Markos Vafiadis's speech was translated by Todor Kochev, from the village Banitsa, Lerin Region. Kochev was a revolutionary and a NOMS leader. Vafiadis's speech is kept in Evdokia Baliova Vera's private family archives.)

Thirty five years later, in 1978, Markos Vafiadis said all these things at Mitrevski's grave, why couldn't he have said these same things during the Liberation War (1941-1944) or in 1946 when Paskal Mitrevski was negotiating unity between the Macedonian and Greek partisan units?

Here, at the end of this part of the book, we want to underline that through this monograph about Paskal Mitrevski's revolutionary activities, we would like to pay humble tribute and homage to him and to all his fellow fighters and prominent SNOF and NOF leaders, among whom included Vasil Aleksovski, Kiro Popvasilev, Giorgi Dzhodzho Urdov, Atanas Koroveshov, Mirka Ginova, Pando Shiperkov, Vangel Shamardanov Ilinden, Zhivko Popov, Mihail Apostolov Graniti, Pando Trpovski Buntovski, Krsto Mangov, Iani Pirovski, Lazo Angelovski, Todor Doitsinov Morava, Ivan Kovatsev Orfeas, Andon Dzhalev, Kiriako Dzhalev, Trifko Popov, Panaiot Karadzov and Vasil Chochev; people who gave their lives for the Macedonian people's freedom.

Instead of a conclusion

In analyzing Paskal Mitrevski's entire career in Greek occupied Macedonia in the period from 1941 to 1949, and in examining the various accompanying reports, letters, memoirs, etc., we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Paskal Mitrevski was closely associated with the shaping of programs and activities carried out by the Macedonian National Liberation organizations, especially by SNOF and NOF. These programs were very much influenced by Mitrevski's views and ideas on the Macedonian National Question.
2. As a member of the CPG and as a prominent member of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement, Paskal Mitrevski always advocated and persistently called on the CPG to respect the Macedonian people and to implement fair and equitable policies for them within the Greek state. Mitrevski consistently fought to protect the Macedonian people's national and social rights.
3. Paskal Mitrevski had special respect for the CPY and sympathized with its correct attitude towards the Yugoslav peoples and especially towards the national minorities in Yugoslavia. The CPY's "right attitude" towards the national minorities served as a great example for Paskal Mitrevski on how to properly approach the Macedonian National Question in Greek occupied Macedonia. Unfortunately Mitrevski's appreciation of the CPY's attitude during the Informburo crisis did not help him. In fact it gave Nikos Zahariadis and the CPG leadership ammunition to defame him and label him and the other NOF leaders as "dangerous Yugoslav agents" and, as we saw, eventually send him and the others to prison for many years.
4. Paskal Mitrevski remained an honest fighter, principled in his actions and true to the ideals of the struggle until the end of his life.

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- Ефедрикос ЕЛАС - Орган на Дивизијата на резервниот ЕЛАС.
- Лаики Фони - Орган на Покраинскиот комитет на КПГ за Македонија.
- Македонија - Солунски весник.
- Махитис - Орган на Семакедонскиот комитет на ЕЛАС.
- Македонија - Орган на Матицата на иселениците од Македонија - Скопје.
- Нова Македонија - Орган на Социјалистичкиот сојуз на работниот народ на Македонија - Скопје
- Славјаномкедонски глас - Орган на Окружниот одбор на СНОФ за Костурско.
- Разгледи - Списание за литература, уметност и култура – Скопје.
- Тесалоники - Солунски весник.

IV. MEMOIRS

Баљова Евдокија-Фотева, “Сеќавања”. Се чуваат кај авторот.

- Гацев Ангел, Спомени од минатото на Воден и Воденско. Се чуваат кај авторот.

- Качела Никола, Сеќавања од борбата. Се чуваат кај авторот.

- Ловач Ристо, Спомени. Се чуваат во архивот на ИНИ.

- Макриевиќи Васил, Спомени од НОБ. Се чуваат кај авторот.

- Митревски Паскал, Биографски белешки од борбата. Се чуваат кај авторот.

- Митревски Паскал, Прилог кон автобиографијата. Се чуваат кај авторот.

- Пачурас Јанис, Партизанското движење на ЕЛАС во Костурско. Сеќавања се чуваат кај авторот.

- Раковски Павле, Во длабоката ноќ зората се раѓа. Сеќавања се чуваат во архивот на ИНИ.

- Фотев Минчо, Врховистите во служба на окупаторот (1941-1944). Сеќавања се чуваат кај авторот.

- Фотев Минчо, Развојниот пат на организацијата НОФ во Егејска Македонија. Сеќавања, се чуваат кај авторот.

- Чолаков Ламбро, НОБ во Егејска Македонија. Сеќавања, се чуваат кај авторот.

PART TWO

Paskal Mitrevski's contributions to NOB in Aegean Macedonia and to the Greek Civil War (selection)

2.1 - Notes on the contents of the articles

As mentioned earlier, the first part of this book examined Paskal Mitrevski's life and activities based on events that were taking place in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia and in Greece in the period from 1941 to 1949. In this part of the book we will look at selected texts, reports, letters, etc., that Paskal Mitrevski wrote during the same period.

These documents will give us a better picture of the political situation in Greece and in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. They will give us a more detailed look at the Macedonian participation in the struggle against the foreign invaders and against the Greek reactionary terror aimed at the Macedonian population in that part of Macedonia. The documents will also give us a realistic picture of the relationship between the CPG-EAM on one hand and SNOF and NOF on the other. They will provide us with a better view of how the Macedonian people and the Macedonian National Question were treated, how the organizations in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia were structured and will better inform us of the manner and methods by which the agreement between NOF and the CPG were implemented in order to unite the Greek and Macedonian partisan units. The documents will also provide us with some details on the Macedonian people's massive participation in the antifascist struggle against foreign occupation and in DAG's ranks.

In reviewing the then political situation in Greece, we have found from his reports that Paskal Mitrevski paid special attention to the various Greek political party programs and their dismissive and discriminatory attitude towards the Macedonian people. He also paid special attention to the English policies implemented in the Balkans, especially in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, which had aims at turning it into a subversive base against the neighbouring people's republics, etc.

The documents included in this part of the book not only reflect the political situation in Greece, especially in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in the period 1941-1949, but through them we begin to understand Paskal Mitrevski's personality, national sentiments, political maturity, education, skill in law, etc.

Given all this, the documents included in this part of the book are a rich illustration of Paskal Mitrevski's revolutionary activities. Thanks to his work on this we get a chance to peek, through this monographic study, not only at Paskal Mitrevski's character but also at his life's work. And even though there are some gaps, we still get to view a wide picture of Paskal Mitrevski's activities and contributions to the promotion of the Macedonian national struggle.

2.2 - April 15, 1944, Report on SNOF's political and organizational activities and situation in Kostur Region, written by Paskal Mitrevski, SNOF District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region

h) ... And now, we can say with pleasure that in 1944 we organized women and, more importantly, women members of SNOF, with rifle in hand to serve as guards, or to participate and perform dangerous tasks in areas occupied by the enemy and by the reactionaries. SNOF, along with the ELAS reserves it created, managed to disarm a number of villages which sheltered reactionary armed bands. SNOF managed to expel the armed reactionaries and thwart the Bulgarian fascists (Mihailov-Kaltchev) and their plans to establish spheres of political influence in the various villages. And in the end, SNOF managed to expand its influence through the broader masses. But despite this progress, we could not achieve the strategic goals of each of the revolutionary organizations, i.e. to attract the majority of our people. Also we could not develop the necessary revolutionary spirit among our members and organize cohesion, discipline and determination and, above all, unite them under one organized bond, something that would make them bold revolutionary organizations, able to strongly react to any temptation. As a result of these shortcomings and weaknesses, a sequence of villages were influenced by the camouflage, organized lies and violence perpetrated by the occupier sponsored armed bands which re-armed themselves in Chereshnitsa, Sheshtevo, Izglibi, Tikveni and other villages.

Face of the reactionaries. The reactionaries appeared with two faces: one with the face of Kalchev's Bulgaro-phils and the other with the face of PAO's Greco-phils. PAO found its base in a small number of Greko-phil elements, and this was our own fault. We allowed a number of rotten Gestapo elements to freely operate in some of the villages. We should have approached these misguided Greco-phil elements in these villages with more tact, but we didn't. An error was also made by the Party leadership, for its heavy handedness on some Greco-phil and great idealistic families (Srnrdesh leadership). But now, with the blow it received from SNOF, PAO can no longer be brought to life in the SNOF villages. However, Kalchev's Bulgaro-phils continue to exist. They found a secure base in the area

around the villages Zagorichani and Chetirok (and other villages). The Mihailov-Kalchev connection there has used dangerous intrigues like making statements that the Bulgarian Army is coming to occupy Macedonia... and like autonomy for the Macedonians..., etc., in order to fool the less aware into becoming allies of the anti-popular Bulgarian fascist offensive. But despite all this our organization has managed to politically neutralize Kalchev's Bulgaro-phil propaganda and disarm a number of villages in order to prevent the danger from spreading out from the reactionary cores.

Weaknesses: we did not attack decisively and on time. We were carrying out a somewhat loose and flexible policy. We did not place enough influence on the role played by certain crypto-Fascist Slavo-Macedonians who continued to maintain links with Kalchev and his armed bands. We did not liquidate some of the strong fanatics who managed to conceal vipers in our bosoms and who at the time were carrying out Kalchev's orders to arm the villages. We waited for a military intervention, even though with our own forces and with the ELAS reserves we could have used some obscure situations to at least take Sheshtevo, only if we were a bit more politically energetic and agile. We had given our Cadres orders to carry this out but they did not do it on time. Military command did not help us in this case either.

National unity and raising national awareness in the Slavo-Macedonians. Two central issues that preoccupied our organization were: the national unity of our people and the awakening of their national consciousness. We considered both issues to be very serious and required our full attention because a people without unity and without an awakened national consciousness are not a decisive and consistent force in a difficult People's Liberation struggle. Indeed, despite the unfavourable objective and subjective conditions in which we found ourselves when we started working, we managed to create some unity in a significant portion of our people. We managed to awaken their national consciousness and use them in the service of the national liberation struggle. But a good part of our people, who stood in two opposing orientations, were an obstacle to our revolutionary and national unification: the part that was seduced by Bulgarian fascist influence and the other part, which even though it found itself on our side, did not accept the

significance of the revolutionary unity of the entire Slavo-Macedonian nation, to represent a single power in the national liberation struggle. What was required at this juncture was: for us to take the misguided people away from the arms of the reactionaries and traitors and at the same time destroy them (reactionaries and traitors). After that we could have explained the importance of national unity and the awakening of the national consciousness to our people.

Mutual understanding and benefits from bridging the two peoples. We had some advancement in this sector but due to some errors and shortcomings on the part of the SNOF and EAM Cadres, we did not achieve the expected results, i.e. full understanding and moral unity. The direction in the struggle the EAM and SNOF Cadres were expected to take was not bridged; in fact it did not exist. The completely revolutionary, moral and ideological unity and the understanding of particular interests and vital problems of the common struggle were not accepted. It is not enough to just talk at meetings and have public debates for reconciliation but, in practice, for every given case, we needed to prove and help both our people to become aware and boldly embrace this unity. Then when we could clearly and fully see mutual feelings growing between them, we could finally lay the foundations for reconciliation.

Request for immediate activation of economic unity. It is true that our organization, since its inception, attached great importance to this sector and dealt with these problems. SNOF took both individual and mass action to solve the economic problems in its area of influence, which was caused by the occupiers and by Kalchev's terror groups. And finally, when a wide demonstration was called to take place in Kostur, our organization made all preparations and secured the participation of more than 1200 people. The other organizations were not ready and as a result the demonstration was postponed. In every case the people benefited from our actions. When the situation called for it the organization delivered to the people; it gave them soap, sugar, butter, beans, cloth, etc... it even paid their taxes. But what it lacked in its actions was conscious and organized unity and vital leadership. With the exception of the villages in Dobrolishta and Breshteni Regions we were unable to organize any other cooperatives. Regarding this

question, the people of Koreshtata did not have faith in our plans because of lack of tradition and collective consciousness, which in the past did not really grow here. Our weakness too, if I may point out, to explain the significance of the cooperatives as a decisive weapon in the hands of the people did not help the situation. We now believe the harder thing to overcome was our weakness.

Cultural and educational work and the press. Our people were uneducated and unenlightened. The many years of slavery left them politically unstable. Then, with help from the various foreign propaganda machines, the population was politically polarized in various directions. As a result both anti-popular and anti-Slavo-Macedonian influence was able to find fertile soil here. This is why our organization had to work extra hard and often pay particular attention to the basic people's revolutionary, national and historic needs and supply them with the necessary materials to sharpen their ideological and political criteria. But we were still unable to organize systematic cultural and educational programs. This was due to lack of technical means and to initiate a revolutionary and patriotic educational movement as an important and wide educational factor. And when we made such an effort and were ready to organize such an educational system, we were not allowed (District council of EPON).

At the end we created a special group to work exclusively on educational matters which regularly published a weekly newspaper and other printed material. But in order for this to be the vital organ of our people and the messenger of our revolution, it needed to be supplemented with the Greek alphabet. Unfortunately this was not done due to technical reasons, we had no typewriter with Greek letters and we needed to find one at any cost.

Militancy and activation of the movement. Progress was made in the area around the village D'mbeni (especially around Smrdesh). There was no action taken in the area around Drenoveni due to lack of participation. But lately there is encouragement because some progress, but not complete progress, was made in the areas around the villages Visheni and Dobrolishta, especially in the two revolutionary villages Chetirok and Tikveni. The area around the

village Breshteni is in a good mood for fighting. The reactionaries are in control of the village Zagorichani.

Partisans. We expelled 500 partisans from the villages under SNOF's control. We could have expelled an even greater number but, because of poor leadership in our organization and in the brigade, the last action collapsed and we only expelled 240 more partisans from SNOF.

Help for ELAS. We helped ELAS by giving it 600 oki (units of weight) of grain and other foodstuff as well as wool and other materials. What is most important is that the spirit of giving was high in our people. They were willing to make many voluntary material sacrifices.

For the months that the ELAS units operated in Koreshtata Region, they depended on the local population of the surrounding villages to feed them.

ELAS reserves, Youth, Solidarity. In most SNOF controlled villages our organization arranged the bases for the ELAS reserves. For months the ELAS reserve leadership, for that region, was nowhere to be found. With the ELAS reserves which we created, we attacked the reactionaries and disarmed an entire sequence of villages. But ELAS lacked organizational unity and, still, to this day it remains unconvinced about special leadership.

The youth (EPON) is well advanced, except in the village Visheni area. The EPON leadership of the Slavo-Macedonian youth needs to be better prepared and provided with studious national, historical and revolutionary material. This needs to be done in order to better explain to the Macedonian people the people's democratic and socialist character of the national liberation struggle. All that needs to be tied to the objectives of the current struggle, targeting the youth towards a socialist, anti-fascist and peaceful spirit.

Our national solidarity had many weaknesses, but now it is acquiring more Slavo-Macedonian Cadres and it will continue with much success. Our organization is helping national solidarity in all its efforts.

April 15, 1944
For the Regional Committee
Pashalis

h) ...The first page from this document is missing.

The document has been translated from Greek to Macedonian and published in the edition of “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945”, T.I... doc. 79, p. 91-94.

2.3 - The letter, dated December 6, 1944, was sent from the Political Commission of Macedonia under Greece (Paskal Mitrevski) to the CPM Central Committee to inform the CPM of a decision made for the First Aegean Brigade to participate in the struggle against the British military intervention on the side of ELAS

Political Commission of Macedonia under Greece
Bitola, December 6, 1944.

To the CPM Central Committee

There is an indication that EAM-ELAS in Greece is decisively entering a war against fascism and against the Greek reactionaries. It appears that it will take immediate measures which will develop very quickly. Because we Macedonians represent a military force of more than two thousand fighters, the political committee at its meeting has decided to include the Macedonian people in this struggle so that they too can participate in the creation of an all democratic popular front. A proposal has been put forward for creating a democratic and quick solution to the national aspirations of the Macedonian people.

Now that the democratic forces in Greece are being urged to participate we too need to become organized and tie the Macedonian people with the Greek people to the struggle against fascism and against the Greek reactionaries. We need to find the means to impose this popular force to provide a means of solving the Macedonian National Question. This is what we have decided.

A pan democratic people's front, which will include both the Greek and Macedonian people, is in the forecast; it is imminent. It will be formed independently of us, by necessity of the struggle, with or without our approval. And we should not expect a proposal to be put forward to us by EAM-ELAS.

Perhaps ELAS does not want to be seen as taking the initiative to extend its hand of friendship to us.

Therefore we should not hesitate. We need to go back to our people and lead our nation to rise and join the Greek people and to achieve unity in this decisive burning struggle.

Sooner or later we will realize that we need EAM and ELAS's understanding and cooperation to form a Macedonian army, to freely mobilize, to form political and cultural organizations for our nation, etc.

The political committee is of the opinion and has decided to send a military force composed of our (Macedonian) units to our places (Macedonia) to urge the (Macedonian) people to join the struggle en masse in this new direction.

With that we will now remain here and wait for them (people) to accept the EAM-ELAS initiative and proposal which, now that the situation is becoming critical, can take effect. This is not only practical but also in general benefits the struggle of the Greek and Macedonian people for creating a strong pan democratic front against the Greek reactionaries.

As for us, if you show any hesitation they will certainly falsely accuse us of being a Macedonian people's political and military force (separatists looking to break away from Greece). That is why, at the same time, we need to take a first step towards an understanding with the EAM-ELAS leadership.

The same Political Commission has decided to send our fighters to our people in order to inform and enlighten them of the new psychological and ideological rise. This was a decision made by the Political Commission but, before we make any serious mistakes, we would like to seek your opinions, especially about the above two points. We will also need your help in supplying our military with clothing and other things that an army needs in this miserable situation.

We are waiting for a response as soon as possible because the clock is ticking.

Similarly, the Political Commission considers it necessary and a means to create centres for mobilizing our (Macedonian) people in our (Macedonian) regions so that they can, en masse, join our (Macedonian) ranks or so that they can join the common (Greek and Macedonian) units in the common and fraternal struggle with the Greek people.

For the Political Commission:

Pascal

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1-41-1945", AE: 287

The original document of the following report was written in the Macedonian language. It was published in the edition: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1944-1945", T.I..., doc. 196, p. 284-286.

2.4 - Paskal Mitrevski's report here, dated September 1945, describes the CPG's attitude towards NOF and the Macedonian people behind it

The Kostur District Party Committee issued leaflets with which it invited the people to ask the Vulgaris's Greek government to arrest the "Ohrana-ists" and "bandits", i.e. the best Macedonian comrades who lead the struggle for bread, freedom, equality, democracy, brotherhood and unity. The same Party people and a number of their comrades from the Greek army, after propagating their propaganda and various slanderous slogans, joined the Macedonian ranks and began to force Macedonian fighters to desert and to hand over their weapons to the English. Among those who infiltrated the Macedonian ranks were Socrat Papaiani and Vasil Karkorevski, who the Party took under its wings and appointed them members and cadres.

We have many examples like this. Party personnel roaming the villages were intimidating our people by saying: "You will be sorry if you give them bread and a roof over their heads!" and "If you survive the Burandari you will not be safe from us!" They also went to Macedonian and Greek villages and shouted: "They are 'Ohrana-ists', fascists and bandits! When you see them you should immediately call the police and other state authorities and help them catch them." When the Burandari found out what was said about the Macedonians they escalated their terror activities against the Macedonian population.

Another case has to do with smuggling. The Party organizes regular contraband exports of various products from Albania to Greece. Its collaborator is Aristidis Pishiotas from Rupishta, Kostur Region, a well-known collaborator of the Germans and Italians, and now a collaborator of the Burandari and the Intelligence Services. He is a known smuggler and black-marketer who became rich with help from the Italian Carabinieri and the Gestapo whom he served. Now he works with the Intelligence Service and the Burandari, committing various treasonous offenses. He and his clique have informed on over 300 people from Rupishta and have sent them to prison where they remain to this day. Takis Dosopoulos, a CPG representative, now works with Aristidis Pishiotas under the

following conditions: Takis Dosopoulos brings goods from Albania to the Greek border and Aristidis Pishiotas takes possession of them. At the moment Takis Dosopoulos has paid for the goods. Confiscation takes place in Greek-Macedonian territory, after the goods were surrendered and paid for Dosopoulos insisted that we return the goods; because, as he himself told us, he could not continue the lucrative trade... the Party has a lot to lose from this because, like he told us, the Party could not find a better and more honest smuggler... This is how we stand with the smuggling. Our people will be very disappointed if they find out the goods were taken by Pishiotas.

The CPG cadres from the city Lerin decided not to respond to these allegations and instead they decided to sabotage Vulgaris's mobilization by not allowing the Macedonian and Greek people to serve in his army. And on this issue they (CPG) again found reasons to attack and swear at us, saying that we are "Ohrana-ists", fascists, etc. This explains, for example, why one of our cadres deserted our ranks. This cadre was Lazo Heliovitovski, who at a meeting told us that he could not contradict the CPG, which has agreed to perform mobilization when ELAS openly called for a mobilization. ELAS was helped by Leon Turundzhov without taking any measures against them. Heliovitovski said that we should not be taking a stand against the party mobilizing. All this discord in implementing the CPG line in our ranks was organized by Sloboda and Stathis, representatives of ELAS, with help from Leon Turundzov's clique. The same job was done by the immigrants, taking advantage of their difficult living conditions. In Lerin District the CPG collected all the suspicious elements who deserted from our army (from the villages Palaistra, Rosen and others) and in the villages where the deserters were born they organized ambushes to attack us with assistance from the Burandari.

Ipsilantis, a former ELAS Captain now CPG organizer, walks through the Macedonian villages in Kailari Region intimidating the villagers, telling them that he will cut their throats if they join NOF. At the same time he allows the reactionaries to conduct their terrorist acts unchecked and to cause substantive destruction. In Voden Region the Party openly issued calls condemning us as bandits and organs of the "Ohrana". And when the reactionaries find

out about this they rub their hands with joy. Our comrades have gone this far to frighten our people, threatening to burn their houses if they join NOF, as Comrade Otse has informed us.

Captain Stathis, a former ELAS political commissar, went to the villages in Enidzhe-Vardar and Gumendzhe Regions and shouted: “Beat those informers who sold themselves to the Intelligence Service and who formerly sold themselves to the Ohrana”. The Party used the same tactics in Seres and Drama Regions saying: “It will be better for all of us if you Macedonians leave and go to Bulgaria because you were much exposed to the Bulgarian occupation.” In all the Macedonian districts, in all its Party meetings and conferences, the Party has always maintained that Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia is an integral part of Greece and any one who has other ideas will be demolished. These words also reflect the Party line on the Macedonian National Question. Zahariadis himself in his speeches and statements has often said that the CPG will fight with all its might against any kind of territorial pretensions towards the accession of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia to other countries, no matter from where these pretensions come. Also that Party has agreed to grant the Slavo-Macedonians equality in three districts: Kostur, Lerin and Voden. The Party is silent regarding the other districts, as if no Slavo-Macedonians exist there. Our movement has been associated with the face of Gelev, a lawyer from Lerin who is now located in Bitola. Gelev is well-known for his Bulgaro-Fascist politics. Gelev has also been used as an object for attacking our people by the reactionaries. In a few words their foreign policy is as follows:

A week ago an EAM delegation, headed by Comrade Siantos, CPG 2nd Secretary, appeared before the Regent Damaskinos and, among other things, said that EAM has agreed to the unification of Northern Epirus to Eastern Thrace, the Dodecanese and Cyprus. The delegation said nothing about strategic reform of the border with Bulgaria. But in previous statements and decisions made by the EAM and the Party, their attitude has been that if a strategic reform of the Greek-Bulgarian border was to take place it would have to be in favour of Greece.

AM. Collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 370.
Typed document written in the Macedonian language. Published in
the edition "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945", T.II..., doc. 153, p.
298-300.

2.5 - November 14, 1945, report by Paskal Mitrevski regarding NOF's organizational activities and political situation in Lerin Region

Report on NOF District Committee no. 2 (Lerin Region Committee)

Finally, yesterday I held a meeting with District Committee no.1 (Lerin Region) after having had the cooperation of two members from that District. I believe that you already know that the third member has still not arrived. The following was discovered during the meeting: The reactionaries have changed the form of their activities. They have abandoned their open attacks and violence against the people but are still carrying out concealed terror attacks.

Terror against the masses has been replaced with terrorizing individuals. By doing so the reactionaries are attempting to deceive the masses that there is some sort of security policy that protects the citizens. This is evident from the fact that they have taken no action against those who were tormented by the wild terror during the summer and left for the mountains, and who now have returned to their homes. It is the same with those who have deserted our ranks or fled illegally as refugees and surrendered. The reactionaries leave them alone and have guaranteed their freedom.

On the other hand UNRA, and the entire apparatus for sharing food that has been sent to the villages and cities, has been turned into a real institution for breaking down and damaging our movement. This means that every village, with rare exceptions, has been infested with agents who work for the interests of the reactionaries. Besides these agents there is another secret apparatus of 2 to 3 individuals in every village who play the role of a secret Gestapo and who have been given orders to monitor and report on our movements. They, of course, are paid a salary the same as an undercover policeman. They are paid by the state security. Through these entities, as well as through those mentioned above and through some who have "idealistic" views, the reactionaries are attempting to create some kind of national basis; launch some kind of massive reactionary patriotic organization, like the organizations Pavlos Melas, the National Front, the National Youth, etc.

The truth is, in spite of their effort, the reactionaries are not finding fertile ground among the Macedonian masses. Their basis in the Macedonian villages are absolutely tight and limited and attract a small number of people; the type without a conscience. The only thing they succeeded in, to a large extent, was to narrow the struggle. The reactionaries, however, have solid footing in the villages where the majority of the people are Profigi, Vlachs and Albanians. This is what we have on the reactionaries.

Unfortunately this is mainly due to the fact that the EAM movement and the EAM organizations in these villages were liquidated and made inert during the first days the terror was started. The other two former Democratic parties did not have suitable staff to develop political activities in these villages, even though they had influence in the past which still existed in these days. All of these vulnerabilities were exploited by the reactionaries who still have a stronghold on the Profigi, Albanian and Vlach villages. The vast majority of the Macedonian people in the Macedonian villages have kept up their spirits but not as far as to the extent that they would fight if the circumstances required them. This is due to the pressure put on them by the reactionaries (terrorism, fraud, corruption) on the one hand and due to organizational weaknesses on our part, on the other.

From an organizational point of view our weaknesses are serious. Most of the villages are still left with the old organizations, which in some villages are inert while in other villages they exist but only formally because of lack of direction and guidance. Only Region no.2 and some villages in Region no.1 are in good shape. Here the organizations are alive, active and functioning normally. Here members meet regularly, pay their dues and have a sense of responsibility as organized members. In other areas and in the city there is nothing concrete. The comrades, who we sent on the ground after the last reorganization, are not active enough and have not been able to embrace and reach out to the main village organizations. They gathered and chose a place in some mountain and built a hut from where they try to run the District. But they are afraid of search parties and troop movements that enter the villages and the field. They are isolated from their base and from practical and specific actions. They are content to function but only through letters. These

sectarian tactics and lack of resolve have resulted in the leadership not being able to reach its base, except as a distant voice. After this statement, along with the other tasks I received from the above, I have put in place the request that: Our cadres must go inside the villages and inside the city and, with absolute secrecy, open offices for our staff to function. The cadres immediately left and have taken their place in their districts, the second day after they were given their assignments. It was also decided to send a committee to the city. I will write to you later about the results of this.

The CPG has continued to exercise the same tactics of open polemics, which have reached provocation levels. Some CPG members and cadres have created conditions for action and have taken action against us with cooperation from the authorities. They have arrested our political cadres under the pretext that they were “counter-revolutionaries” or “autonomists”, like those in the village Boreshnitsa for example. During a legal meeting held in the village Kotori, convened by the Party District Committee, regarding one of the regions not fully succeeding because of delays, District Secretary Stratos Kentros, speaking before the 5 delegates present at the meeting and in the presence of the village police chief, said: “They are ‘counter-bands’ and ‘autonomists’ that should be prosecuted. We should plead with the villagers not to give them bread and not to help them.” We have many examples of similar cases relating to the CPG District authorities.

On the economic side, even though our friends have set such a task, no serious effort has been invested because no positive results have been achieved, but something has been achieved in this sector. Our organization has collected grain in many villages. In addition to that, yesterday our organization put forth a proposal to purchase two pairs of shoes for our barefoot comrades.

Now, with great seriousness, the task has been set, and set as a plan to collect 35 gold Napoleon coins for this month, in addition to the revenues that will be collected in kind.

Tomorrow I leave for the reorganization of District no 2 (Sorovich-Kailar Regions). I believe that we will soon convene a meeting there.

I must not forget to also inform you that 4 police and military units stationed in the villages are operational and circulating. These units, lately, have begun a campaign to encircle and search the villages.

We are trying to avoid possible collisions or other consequences.

November 14, 1945

With friendly greetings,
Mihos (Paskal Mitrevski)

I forgot to mention that two members of the District Committee, our comrades Trifon Malinovski and Marche (no last name provided), left their district posts and escaped before I returned. As was noted, these comrades neither informed nor received permission from the District to leave. They claimed that they were ill. There is some basis for Marche's claim but not for Trifon's. The comrades from the District Board are of the opinion that Comrade Trifon Malinovski abandoned his post more because of despondency and difficult working conditions than of being sick. The District Board has unanimously agreed to replace them with two temporary people until a final decision is made. The new comrades have already taken office and are ready to start work. These comrades are good men, tested, true and decisive and will remain at their posts despite all the difficulties and dangers.

Some information on the terror...

A reactionary search patrol from Kotori, led by Diogenis, caught Giorgi Mishovski, Kosta Mishovski and Vasil Shopov and beat the men relentlessly with iron objects until they spat blood and fell unconscious. The reason for their torture was that the men did not want to make a donation of food products demanded of them for the war effort without getting paid. After the men were arrested and beaten their homes were looted. Petra Miliangova from the village Dolno Kotori was also captured and beaten and after that she was tied up and sent to a prison in Solun.

In Lerin they arrested and expelled the Panev brothers from their homes because they had the audacity to say that they are

Macedonians. In addition, I am sending you a note that describes the situation prevailing in the city.

My opinion is that it should be published, especially because it describes the typical situation that existed during the occupation when these people openly operated as collaborators of the occupiers and now they are free and work for today's fascist authorities.

My report needs to be translated by our comrade in agitation and that will be proper.

AM. Collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1946", AE: 478. The document is translated from Greek and published in the edition: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945", T.II..., doc. 187, p. 353-356.

2.6 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski), dated January 12, 1946, regarding NOF's organizational structure and activities in the Aegean part of Macedonia

Organizational Statement

Organizational alignment:

Kostur District

Kostur District is divided into 3 sections: Prespa, Korestia and Polie. Created from this division were the district committees for all sections and the three central committees for the central corresponding sections. The District Committee is composed of the following people:

1. Lambro Cholakov, Secretary, 2. German German, 3. Kole Shishkov and 4. Iane Pirovetski, NOMS-SKOJ Secretary.

1st Central Committee in Prespa is composed of: 1) Niko Panovski, Secretary, 2) D. Asprovski, NOMS, and 3) Alexi Mirchev.

2nd Central Committee in Korestia is composed of 1) Vasil Chochoy, Secretary, 2) Kiriako Tsalevski, 3) Hristo Lovachki, NOMS and 4) A. Chafarovski.

3rd Central Committee in Polie is composed of 1) Pando Trpovski, Secretary, 2) Vangel Mirkovski, 3) Taki Gubidenski, NOMS, and 4) Tashko Lazarov.

Prespa is subdivided into two regions. German Region with 16 villages is headed by a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Petre Aspros, Secretary (illegal), 2) Luka Nikolov (illegal), 3) Aleko (legal), and 4) Hristo (legal); and Afrika Region headed by the Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Alex Mirchev, Secretary (illegal), 2) Aleksievski NOMS), and 3) Boro (legal).

Korestia is subdivided into three regions. Dranovenski Region with 14 villages, now without a Regional Committee; Tihovlishki Region with 18 villages, now without a Regional Committee, and;

D'mbenski Region with 9 villages, now without a Regional Committee. The comrades who were asked to be Secretaries of the above committees unduly abandoned their regions a few days ago.

Polie is subdivided into 3 regions and one sub-region. Zhupanishki Region with 12 villages is headed by a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Taki Gubidenski, Secretary (legal), 2) N. Pavlovski (legal), and 3) Sotir Timiovski (illegal); Hrupishki Region with 10 villages is headed by a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Pando, and 2) Sotir Romaniski (legal); Kostanariski Region with 19 villages is headed by a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Vangel Mirchevski, Secretary (illegal), 2) Ilio Zafirov (legal), 3) Giorgi Kalchev (legal) and, 4) Aristidi Papazisov (legal); Kalevishki Sub-Region with 6 villages is still without a Regional Committee because there are no developments there.

Now let us have a look at our Organizational forces:

In Prespa with 23 villages we have representation in 18.

In German Region we have organizational bases in the following villages:

- 1) German: 3 member NOF board and 3 member NOMS board. Three dozen NOF and three dozen NOMS.
- 2) Medovo: 3 member NOF board and 3 member NOMS board. One dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.
- 3) Strkovo: 3 member NOF board and 3 member NOMS board. One dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.
- 4) Orovnik: NOF and NOMS boards. Two dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.
- 5) Bukovo: NOF and NOMS boards. One dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.
- 6) Besvina: NOF and NOMS boards. Two dozen NOF and two dozen NOMS.

7) In the villages: Vali, L'k, Drenovo, Rulia, Trnaa and Oshchima we have NOF and NOMS boards. How many are organized in dozens and how many dozens we have is unknown.

In Afrika Region we have organizational bases in the following villages:

1) Turnovo: NOF and NOMS boards. One dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.

2) Grazhdano: 3 member NOF and NOMS board. One dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.

3) Orovo: NOF and NOMS boards. Two dozen NOF and two dozen NOMS.

4) In the villages Nivitsi, Neropochishte, and Ahil we have NOF and NOMS boards. We also have organized dozens but we do not know how many.

The situation in Korestia is bad. This is primarily due to divisions in the people and people being afraid, and due to us being late in our leadership's resolve and intervention in this district. Outside of the secretary, who has remained in the district and who wants to leave, the other members have abandoned their posts. They have never before left the duties assigned to them. Characteristically, none of them were able to legally do the entire section. Lately a question posed by Kole Shishkov, board committee member, has surfaced. We invited him to come so that we can consider his question. But this question has its own history. The leadership is already familiar with the lessons of this question to which an appropriate answer will be given and sent to you.

Our organizational district bases are being abandoned in many of the villages because the cadres have not being given specific instructions. In most of these district villages we have lost our contacts and our networks. It should be noted that this was one of the best sections where we had much success in the past in

developing versatile organizational networks and achieved mass mobilization.

In Polie with 54 villages we have representation in 33.

In Zhupanski Region we have organizational bases in the following villages:

- 1) Zhupanishta: NOF and NOMS boards. Three dozen NOF and two dozen NOMS. We also have a 3 member SKOJ bureau.
- 2) Dobrolishta: NOF and NOMS boards, 3 AFZH and 3 SKOJ members. Two dozen NOF and two dozen NOMS.
- 3) Chetirok: 3 member NOF and 3 member NOMS boards.
- 4) Grache: NOF and NOMS boards. Two dozen NOF and two dozen NOMS. We also have a 4 member SKOJ and AFZH with women.
- 5) Stenko: NOF and NOMS boards. A dozen NOF and a dozen NOMS.
- 6) Chuka: NOF and NOMS boards. SKOJ and AFZH. A dozen NOF and a dozen NOMS.
- 7) Nestram: We only have a base.

In Hrupishki Region we have organizational bases but what we have specifically is unknown.

- 1) Zhelin: NOF and NOMS boards. Two dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.
- 2) Izglebi: NOF and NOMS boards. How many dozens? Unknown.
- 3) Galishta: NOF and NOMS boards. One dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.
- 4) Beshcheni: NOF and NOMS boards. One dozen NOF and one dozen NOMS.

5) In the villages Psore, Maniak, and Ludovo we have bases but what else we have we are not sure.

In Kostanariski Region we have organizational bases in the following villages:

1) Ezerets: NOF and NOMS boards. SKOJ. Two dozen NOF and a dozen NOMS. We also have a 3 member SKOJ.

2) Doleni: NOF and NOMS boards. A dozen NOF and a dozen NOMS.

3) Mangila: NOF and NOMS boards. A dozen NOF and a dozen NOMS.

4) Konsko (a Greek village): we have bases.

In other villages in the region we have bases but we don't know specifically what we have except in the 5 villages in the area in which we have no organizations.

We have no representation in the Kalevishki Sub-Region villages, except for some weak contacts. A terror campaign has recently been initiated in this district with many people being arrested and tormented, particularly in the Prespa section. Our organization is fighting the situation by attempting to unite the masses inside (the reactionaries are finding it difficult to find people in the villages to work for them) and, together with some protest committees, we are organizing residents in the city Lerin.

Another case of resisting on the part of our people in this district is mass mobilization of our Youth from the village D'mbeni and sending them to Kostur, in front of the district court to protest against measures taken by the police chiefs who are arresting and jailing groups of girls and children because they sang folk and revolutionary songs. This mobilization succeeded in freeing the detainees. But the reactionaries began a new and more severe terror campaign. We have other cases of resistance: all organized militant committees were sent to Polie Section to demonstrate against the

improper distribution of food from UNRA by the municipal authorities.

As a result of our protests we managed to change the municipal president in the village Zhuzheltsi. But in general this success was very small. A more serious question, which arises in our organization in this district, is a measure of the masses performing free (slave) labour on the roads and bridges given that the authorities and police call only on Macedonians to do this kind of work. This fascist measure is taking a large toll on the Macedonian villages. A correct approach to this issue could mobilize the masses in our favour. Our organization however is either unable to assess the situation or, because of other weaknesses, we are not able to organize and prepare our people for the struggle.

Lerin District

Lerin District is divided into two sections, 1) Lerin, and 2) Sorovich - Kailiari.

As a consequence we have a district committee. The district committee is composed of three members: 1) L. Poplazarov, Secretary, 2) Hristo Kokinov, 3) Tane Naumovski.

1st Section: The Lerin Central Committee is composed of 6 members: 1) Zivko Popovski, Secretary, 2) Nikola Padkov, 3) Vangel Geshkoski, 4) Kosta Chingovski, 5) Tane Karkachev, and 6) Ilio Katipovski.

2nd Section: The Sorovich - Kailiari Central Committee is composed of four members: 1) Evdokia Baliova Vera, Secretary, 2) Trpche Kotovski, 3) Viktor Kochevski, 4) Pando Ekshisuvski, NOMS.

The Lerin section has four regions and one sub-region:

I. Buf Region has 11 villages and a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Ilia Kiatipov, Secretary, 2) Traian (legal).

II. Kotori Region has 16 villages and a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Vangel Geskovski, Secretary, 2) Giorgi Kolev, 3) Atanas Papadimitrov, and 4) Kata AFZH. The last three are legal.

III. Banitsa Region has 8 villages and a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Tane Karkachov, Secretary, 2) Pando Pandov (legal).

IV. Ovchareni Region has 11 villages and a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Kosta Chingovski, and 2) Gioorgi (legal).

V. Turie Sub-Region has 6 villages with Kosta Chikov as its Secretary.

2) The Sorovich - Kailiari section has 3 regions:

I. Eksisu Region has 5 villages and a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Viktor Kochovski, Secretary, 2) Harisi Kocho, 3) Kianto. The last two are legal.

II. Aitos Region has 8 villages with Trpche Kostovski as its Secretary.

III. Mokreni Region has 16 villages and a Regional Committee consisting of: 1) Pande Eksisovski, Secretary, 2) Giorgi Kiantov (legal).

Let us now examine the organizational strength:

Of the 52 villages in the Lerin Section we have representation in 43.

Buf Region villages:

1) Buf: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 3 NOF quintuples, and 3 NOMS quintuples.

2) Kladorabi: 3 member Party, 3 member NOF, 3 member NOMS, 2 member SKOJ, 6 women AFZH, 3 NOF quintuples, and 3 NOMS quintuples.

- 3) Kalinik: 1 Party base, 3 member NOF, 3 member NOMS, 3 NOF quintuples, 1 NOMS quintuples.
- 4) Kabasnitsa: 3 member NOF.
- 5) Sveta Petka: 3 member NOF, 3 member NOMS. AFZH, 3 NOF quintuples and 1 NOMS quintuple.
- 6) Klabuchishta: NOF and NOMS.
- 7) Negochani: frontal board.

We have no bases in the 5 remaining villages in this region.

Kotori Region villages:

- 1) Gorno Kotori: Frontal and NOMS Boards, 2 NOF quintuples, and 2 NOMS quintuples.
- 2) Dolno Kotori: Party base, 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 5 NOF quintuples, and 2 NOMS quintuples.
- 3) Kuchkoveni: 3 member Party group, 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 3 NOF quintuples, and 2 NOMS quintuples. There are also 5 women in AFZH.
- 4) Armenooro: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 18 comrades organized in NOF and 1 NOMS quintuple.
- 5) Nevoliani: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 36 organized in NOF and 12 in NOMS.
- 6) Neret: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board. We don't know how many organized there are.
- 7) Lagen: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, Party base with 2 members, 4 women in AFZH, 14 organized in NOF and 12 in NOMS.

8) Krapeshina: 3 Party and 2 SKOJ members, 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 4 NOF quintuples, and 3 NOMS quintuples.

We don't have specifics about the rest of the villages.

Banitsa Region villages:

1) Banitsa: We don't know what we have.

2) Gornichovo: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 3 NOF quintuples.

3) Rosen: 3 member Party base. NOF Board, NOMS Board, 18 organized in NOF and 10 in NOMS.

4) Zabrdeni: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 2 NOF quintuples.

5) Boreshnitsa: NOF Board, NOMS Board, 3 NOF quintuples. After our organization was attacked one of our cadres was jailed.

6) Stanitsa: 3 members Party base in Rudnik.

We have no specific information on the remaining villages.

Ovchareni Region villages:

1) Ovchareni: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 6 NOF quintuples and 5 NOMS quintuples.

2) Neokaze: 3 member Party base. NOF Board, NOMS Board, 4 NOF quintuples and 3 NOMS quintuples.

3) Vrbeni: NOF Board, NOMS Board.

4) Setina: 3 member Party base. NOF Board, NOMS Board, 22 organized NOMS, 3 NOF quintuples.

5) Krushoradi: 4 member Party base. NOF Board, NOMS Board, 15 organized in NOF and 22 in NOMS.

We have no specific information for the rest of the villages.

Turie Sub-Region villages:

1) Turie: 3 member Party group. NOF Board, NOMS Board, 4 NOF quintuples and 5 NOMS quintuples, 2 member SKOJ board.

2) Bapchor: 3 member Party Group. NOF Board, NOMS Board, 30 organized in NOF and 15 in NOMS. There is also AFZH.

3) Trsie: 2 member Party group. NOF and NOMS Boards, 3 groups in NOF and 3 in NOMS. We also have a 3 member SKOJ board.

4) Armensko: 3 member Party group. NOF and NOMS boards, 3 NOF quintuples and 3 NOMS quintuples.

5) Mateshnitsa: 3 member Party group. NOF and NOMS Boards, 2 groups in NOF and 1 group in NOMS, 5 women in AFZH.

6) Kalugeritsa: 3 member Party group. 3 member SKOJ, AFZH, NOF Board with 30 organized, NOMS Board with 20 organized.

Of the 28 villages in Sorovich – Kailari we have influence in 18.

Eksisu Region villages:

1) Eksisu: 3 member Party group. 3 member NOF Board with 78 organized members, NOMS Board with 50 organized members, 10 young ladies, 2 members of SKOJ and an AFZH.

2) Pateli: 3 member Party group. NOF Board with 80 organized members, NOMS Board with 50 organized, and AFZH with 4 women.

3) Sorovich: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, but we don't know how many quintuples we have.

4) Tsereovo: we have 8 organized in NOF and 6 in NOMS.

5) Petersko: 2 member Party base. We have 6 organized in NOF and 8 NOMS.

Aitos Region villages:

1) Aitos: 3 member Party group. We have 25 organized in NOF and 20 in NOMS. We also have 3 members in SKOJ.

2) Liubetina: 3 member Party group. We have 17 organized in NOF, 8 in NOMS and 10 AFZH.

3) Strebreno: We have 10 organized in a 3 member Board. We have a 3 member NOMS Board with 8 organized.

4) Rudnik: we only have bases.

We have no specific information on the remaining villages.

Mokreni Region villages:

1) Mokreni: 3 member Party group. We have 70 members in NOF and 25 in NOMS along with 12 young people. We also have 3 members in SKOJ.

2) Rakita: 3 member NOF Board with 12 organized, 3 member NOMS Board with 7 organized.

3) Palior: 3 member NOF Board with 15 members, 3 member NOMS Board.

We have no specific information on the rest of the villages. We also have no influence in most of these villages.

In addition to the above villages we also have the city Lerin which is divided into 3 regions; Chiflik, Tsentar and Sveti Nikola.

The City Committee is composed of three members: 1) Andoni Pistrovski, Secretary, 2) Vasil Dimov, and 3) Vasil Stoikov, NOMS.

The Regional Committee for Chiflik Region is composed of: 1) Mihail Zhivoichev, Secretary, 2) Vangel Gerchakov, 3) Todor Garzhulev.

The Regional Committee for Tsentar Region is composed of: 1) Ilia Kazia, Secretary, 2) Lazar Vrliev, 3) Micho Kanton.

The Regional Committee for Sveti Nikola is composed of: 1) Traiko Buzhek, 2) Shime Ichev.

We do not have details on exactly how many are organized in the city.

Lately our political forces in the greater Lerin area have begun to develop and take the democratic path. In recent months our forces have been exposed to severe and cruel terror, which began earlier and has escalated with time. The CPG and EAM forces, especially in the city and the villages where a large number of Prosfigi (Turkish Christian colonists and settlers) exist, which were earlier paralyzed by reactionary attacks, began to strengthen and work openly. This became public after the latest movement that was organized and managed by some of our organizations and some of those of the EAM and the GPG.

We participated in a large demonstration on January 5, 1946 in which the majority of the demonstrators were Macedonians. The demonstration was organized by the EAM Committee. What matters in this case is that the EAM Committee leadership addressed the city committee of our organization and wanted to review our assistance in the success of the demonstration. The fact is that our contribution to the success of the demonstration was huge. Almost 3/4 of the success was due to our organizational activities in the city and surrounding villages, with mass Macedonian participation in this demonstration. And what is more significant is that the demonstration succeeded which will push things forward.

The aim of this demonstration was for the masses to demand general political amnesty and representation in the government. The masses coined slogans such as: Democratic freedom and rights for the

Macedonians people; Stop the terror, the torment and the arrests... That demonstration, together with other activities which we will mention later, resulted in our organization succeeding to oppose the basic problems that preoccupied our people.

We have a problem with the mass issuing of court orders and, without proof, jailing Macedonians for allegedly being “Ohranists”. In the city Lerin alone, 600 such orders were issued. This practice was slowed down after the demonstrations. Obviously this “special court” is composed of judges who are fascists and collaborators such as the merchant Misiosis Periklis and the lawyer Ianis Gakidis. The so-called “witnesses” they parade before the court to testify against our people are also well-known Gestapo agents, such as Panagiotis Chapouris, organ of Olvale and Hans, leaders of the Gestapo in Lerin during the occupation, and others like Atanas Michou and Bonis who served the Gestapo during the occupation. So far they have sentenced five Macedonians from 2-10 years in prison. The judgments have now been stopped. In great part this success is due to the positive and determined work of our organization.

Other movements: A committee of 40 people from the villages Armensko, Mateshnitsa and Kalugeritsa complained to the English consul and to the authorities in Lerin about Delianis, commander of the Burandar battalion, who took anti-popular actions in their villages. Delianis, who at the time was in the village Armensko, was burning the barns in that village.

The village Armensko has a large number of young people who are well-organized and determined fighters. They were sent by the Lerin Committee to break up Delianis’s terror actions in the surrounding villages. Delianis had banned the songs from the liberation struggle and beat and jailed anyone who sang them, including very young girls. These are some of the other reasons, as mentioned earlier, why we organized the protests.

The Lerin organization also initiated action to help the prisoners. It collected 90,000 drahmas (Greek currency), 50 packs of cigarettes and a variety of goods and products that were secretly distributed to prisoners regardless of whether they were Greeks or Macedonians.

This gesture was well appreciated by the prisoners and by the general population in that city. Our organization also took action to promote fair distribution of the food and other materials sent by UNRA. In many villages we achieved major success with this including in the villages Kotori, Trsie, Mateshnitsa, Ekshi-Su, Armensko, Voshtarani and Krapeshina. In some villages, like Trsie and Kotori, we managed to replace the presidents and the committees responsible for distributing the UNRA products.

In the village Ekshi-Su the people themselves selected the committee to distribute the UNRA materials. This action was initiated by our organization in order to remove the fascist elements from taking control. This means that, even though it is slight, our organization has made some progress in this direction. Lately the CPG has been coming closer and showing interest in cooperating with us. Unfortunately the CPG lacks a coherent, brave, clean and unique position on this issue. In Kostur Region, for example, it continues with its threats and provocations and informing our cadres to the government. We learned of this from the CPG itself, specifically from Kosta, CPG District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region, who informed on us to the government. The CPG is doing the same against our Cadres everywhere. On top of that, CPG members have taken direct action against our cadres, like the one in the village Dobrolishta where two CPG cadres captured and beat one of our secretaries from that region.

Voden District

Voden District is divided into two sections, 1) Karadzhova and 2) Ostrovo.

The city Voden has its own separate District Committee consisting of 5 members: 1) Vangel Aianov, Secretary, 2) Tasho Hadzhiiyanov, NOMS, 3) Petre Popov, 4) Iani Sarakachanov, 5) Vangel Shamardanov.

Karadzhova Section is composed of 4 members: 1) Apostol Apostolski, Secretary, 2) Iani Kalaidziev, 3) Hristo Shorev, and 4) Andrea Shekerski, NOMS.

Ostrovo Section is composed of 5 members: 1) Goche Rodnivchev, Secretary, 2) Hristo Bukovalov, 3) Panaiot Mesimeriotov, 4) Petar Shorov NOMS, and 5) Kole Pazarinov.

The City (Voden) Committee is composed of 5 members: 1) Aleko Pechinarov, Secretary, 2) Iani Iakovski, NOMS, 3) Marika Samarencheva, 4) Hristo Pepkovski, and 5) Kosta Nishankovski.

Recently we experienced expansion and conducted reforms in the regions but we still don't know how many regions have been established. Similarly we still don't have specific information about our organizational bases in the villages in both of these sections. This is because, on the one hand, Comrade Pavle Rakovski was sick and could not go out to the field to get an accurate idea about our organizational status. On the other hand, the District Delegate did not make the effort to gather this information and send it to us as we asked. But, based on information that we have from the other areas and from the general development of the work there, we believe our organization has advanced significantly in this sector is widening our organizational influence. The city is divided into seven districts, five of which are inhabited by Macedonians. Each neighbourhood has a neighbourhood committee.

This is what the strength of our organizations looks like in these quarters (neighbourhoods):

III quarter. NOF is organized 80%, NOMS 80%, AFZH 25%.

IV quarter. NOF 75%, NOMS 80%, AFZH 75%.

V quarter. NOF 90%, NOMS 100%, AFZH 40%.

VI quarter. NOF 75%, NOMS 90%, AFZH 40%.

VII quarter. NOF 70%, NOMS 90%, AFZH 40%.

This number reflects the percentage of the whole Macedonian population living in those neighbourhoods.

Our main strength in the factories is:

- a) Seferdzhi Factory: NOF 40%, NOMS 90%, AFZH we have a group.
- b) “Gorna Estia” Factory: NOF 50%, NOMS 60%, AFZH we have a group.
- c) “Dolna Estia” Factory: NOF 70%, NOMS 90%.
- d) Konopena Factory: NOF 98%, NOMS 100%, AFZH we have a group.
- e) “Chichi” Factory: NOF 50%, NOMS 55%, AFZH we have a group.

The above percentages refer to Macedonian workers.

Movement. The Burandari jailed our people in the villages Rodivo and Krontselovo but all the people rose up and those jailed were freed. The Burandari jailed our people in Sobotsko Region and when they opened fire on civilians and killed one of them, the people massively rose up, disarmed the Burandari and destroyed their guns with stones. Riots and strikes took place in the city Voden to protest against low wages and rising costs. Our organizations led these protests and became involved in the vigorous movements and strikes.

Gumenzhe - Enidzhe Vardar District

This district is divided into two sections: Gumenzhe and Enidzhe Vardar.

The District Committee is composed of two members: 1) Ivan Nichev, Secretary, and 2) Ivan Kovachev, NOMS.

The Gumenzhe Section Committee is composed of three members: 1) Vangel Nichev, Secretary, 2) Kosta Gatsov, and 3) Atanas Kufaloski (legal).

The Enidzhe Vardar Section has no members in its Committee. Its two members were killed during an attack on the village Barovitsa.

Gumendzhe Section has three Regions: 1) Liumnitsa Region: Kosta Gatsov, Secretary, and two other legal members. 2) Barovitsa Region: its 2 member Committee was killed during an attack on the village Barovitsa. 3) Kufalia Region: Atanas Kufalovski, Secretary (legal).

In the 52 villages that compose Gumendzhe Section, Prosfigi (Christian Turks) live in 25 villages, Macedonians live in 21 and Vlachs live in 6. Some of the villages are mixed.

In Liumnitsa Region we have organized the following villages:

- 1). Liumnitsa (Vlach): 3 member Front Board, 3 member NOMS Board.
- 2) Kupa (Vlach): 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board.
- 3). Luguntsi (Vlach): 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board.
- 4) Birislavtsi (Vlach): 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board.
- 5) Osheni (Vlach): we have a base.
- 6) Sehovo: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board.
- 7) Machukovo: we have a base.

In Barovitsa Region we have organized the following villages:

- 1) Barovica: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board, 12 are organized in NOF and 15 in NOMS.
- 2) Kriva: NOF and NOMS Boards. 20 organized in NOF and 15 in NOMS. We have SKOJ.

- 3). Ramna: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board.
- 4) Petkaz: NOF base with 3 members.
- 5) Tsrna Reka: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board.
- 6) Boemitsa: we have a Front base.

In Kufalia Region we have organized 8 villages:

- 1) Koufalia: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board. 20 are organized in NOF and 15 in NOMS.
- 2) Iledzhik: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board. 15 are organized in NOF and 12 in NOMS.
- 3). Petrovo: 3 member NOF Board, 3 member NOMS Board.

We have no specific information on the remaining 5 villages in this region.

Only 5 villages have been organized in the Enidzhe Vardar Section in the Babiani Region and they are 1) Babiani, 2) Kornishor, 3) Krushari, 4) Tudortsi and 5) Mandalevo. We have no specific information from this region because, after the attack on the village Barovitsa, we lost 9 of our people and soon afterwards we lost our network.

The City Gumenzhe has its own City Committee consisting of 5 legal members and a secretary. Hristo Liakov is the Secretary.

Gumenzhe city is divided into Regions. Each Region has a 3 member Regional Committee. Also, each Regional Board has 3 NOMS members who also belong to SKOJ.

In the “koprineta filatura” (silk spinning) part of the city we have a three party committee. This committee has organized groups of NOMS and AFZH. Four hundred women and girls work in this filatura. In the city cooperative we have a 3 member NOF base. One of those NOF members is president of the same cooperative.

Issues that preoccupy our organization:

1) Our organizations took the initiative to organize and actively participate in the worker's strike in the city Gumedzhe filatura. The strike was a full success.

2) On the issue of terror we were unable to implement ensuing action, except individually like in the villages Tsrna Reka and Kriva where people defended themselves and came to the rescue of others en masse and attacked several spies and armed gangs which continuously terrorized the villages. Unfortunately the terror continues. Our organization is not strong enough to arrange mass resistance in our people. On the one hand, this is due to the successive blows our organization has suffered such as imprisonments, murders, etc., and on the other we have not been able to develop and activate mass armed resistance.

3) On the question of providing seed to the farmers and properly dispensing the materials from UNRA, we again have shown to be weak in organizing our people, with the exception of the city Gumendzhe and the village Kufalovo where we had success. This problem still exists and remains serious. The masses can be stirred up around this problem only through hard work. Let us also keep in mind that the farmers are finding themselves in misery. Lately there have been serious fermentations around the question of setting up a representative government and general political amnesty. Our people, led by our organization, are active participants in this fermentation alongside the democratic powers in this country.

Seres District

Here our organization has not taken any concrete measures to organize geographical divisions, sections and so on. All we have here is one village. The village is Kula with another 4 or 5 nearby villages where we have tried just about everything; but we could not establish stable bases. The fact is that we made mistakes. During the summer, when conditions were more suitable, if our comrades who were sent there had tried harder and persisted a little longer, the situation today would have been different.

The District Secretary Giorgi Iakovski along with two couriers is located there now. These days we are also preparing to send two more people, Mihal Granitov who was there earlier and Kiriako Tsalev, whom we have tasked to create legal conditions for us to stay there. If that is not possible they are to secure deep illegal presence and, in this way, we can expand and strengthen our organizations there.

January 12, 1946.
For the Leadership,
Secretary: Paskal

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 24/1

The document was typed in the Macedonian language. Published in the edition "Aegean Macedonia in the NOB 1946", T.III..., doc. 9, p. 23-34.

2.7 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski), February 1946, regarding NOF's political situation and activities in Aegean Macedonia

Political situation in Greece

The Black Front has completely mastered political life in Greece. Sofoulis's government is finding itself under its rule. The state apparatus, the army and the security bodies are in its hands.

Events leading to the coup in Kalamata, Peloponnesus were not random but represent the start of a well-prepared plan on the part of the Black Front for a more general coup in all of Greece. The strengthening of the democratic position, which has recently accelerated under EAM's political leadership, the strikes and other democratic events such as protests meetings, etc., are closely followed and intimidating to the Black Front and to the reactionary forces. That is why they want to sign an agreement between Venizelos and the other parties that belong to the Monarcho-Fascist political right and cause more events like the one in Kalamata. In the meantime, the other Monarcho-Fascist terrorist organizations X, VEM, under protection from the Democratic Centre, have armed themselves with guns from the English army and with the guns surrendered by ELAS after the Varkiza Agreement was signed.

At the same time these above mentioned organizations were reorganized militarily and technically and almost became military formations with officers from the regular army assigned to them. Even new criminal organizations began to surface, like VAK (Royal Shock Organization), tasked with killing democratically minded citizens and moderating "nationalists" to organize provocations against EAM. There was also the organization "Visantina Ksifi" (Byzantine shields) which came on the scene and advocated the restoration of the former Byzantine Empire and the principle of dualism between Greece in the Balkans and Turkey and the Middle East.

In the same way, members of Drazha Mihailovich and Balists emerged in Meglen Region armed, wearing Greek military uniforms and serving in the Greek military. But in a few days these elements

suddenly disappeared. According to our information, these elements used the Meglen Region villages, Zborsko, Baovo and Pozhar, as their bases. They crossed the border dressed in civilian clothes. To cross the border on the Yugoslav side, they passed through the villages Gradeshnitsa, Vitolishte and Mrezhichko and from there they went to Kavadartsi and then to Skopje.

The same thing happened in the village Rakovo, Lerin Region. More of Drazha Mihailovich's bandits and Balists, originating from Kisia and Ostrets, gathered there. On January 22, 1946 eight of them went down to the battalion based in Lerin and were given shoes and clothing.

In the meantime more suspicious movements were observed in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Lately there were suspicious movements made by VEM (Union of fascist officers) and by Andon Chaush. On January 20, 1946 a Black Front meeting was convened in Seres that was attended by 50 Black Front Monarcho-Fascist participants. Included among those who attended were Kichos, Seres' Chief of Police, and Major Nikolopoulos, Chief of Security. Then suddenly, Andon Chaush disappeared from Drama. It appears that he was organizing gangs. Then Theodoros Matrakos, a well-known factor of SAM, appeared in V'rtikop in order to organize armed Monarcho-Fascist groups. There was a continuous flow of weapons being transferred to Seres, Drama, Ber, Maglen and other Macedonian towns, without interruption by various SAM and Black Front agents. As a result of these accelerated movements and meetings, three battalions were formed; one in the Seres Nigrita sector, one in Ber and Voden and the third in Kozheni. At the same time Ber and Negush were blockaded by armed VAK and English soldiers. Bafas, the Chief of Police in Voden and member of SAM, issued a statement strongly demanding that, in the next three days, every foreigner, who had not lived there before December 1944, was to leave town.

At the same time the right-wing press launched a furious campaign insisting that the CPG allegedly issued a proclamation in Voden supporting the "autonomists" and that it issued this proclamation together with the CPM, which is a body of the CPG in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

Other irreconcilable Monarcho-Fascist newspapers like “Ethnikos Kirikis”, which on January 21, 1946 while spitting fire and fury against the Macedonians, demanded that the Macedonian people be forcibly removed, without delay, from the “Greek territory”.

On the other hand, the Progressive Front forces, under EAM leadership, have called on the democratic people in Greece to reject, by all means, the danger resulting from the Monarcho-Fascist coup. The EAM leadership has called on the other parties, organizations and individuals who currently are not in the EAM political coalition, but want to be called democrats and want to be in the “democratic centre”, to unite in one general people’s democratic front and struggle against the combined Black Front forces.

The Sofoulis government, by its reluctance and hesitation to fight against the Black Front, has been accused of leading the country towards Monarcho-Fascism. English official policy is being blamed for interference in Greek internal affairs and of scandalous English mixing in the use of the Black Front, characterizing the English forces in Greece as occupation forces.

Characteristic are some moments, more or less, given to us by CPG and EAM positions against the Monarcho-Fascist danger. On January 23, 1946 the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace issued a proclamation urging the people in Macedonia and Thrace to be in a state of readiness in order to be able to participate in general strikes and walkouts to crush the fascist coup. They are calling on the democratic soldiers and officers to resist with weapons, if necessary, with each such attempt, etc.

The CPG has emphasized that it is ready to support any measure that the government will take against the Monarcho-Fascists and to protect the people’s freedoms. It has concluded that the only way to decisively counter this danger is through massive, general people’s risings and protests with EAM’s participation in the government. In other articles published by EAM’s democratic press in the newspapers “Laiki Foni” and “Eleftheria” in the last 10 days of January 1946, in the same spirit, there were calls for the people to be ready to use force to suppress all attempts made by the Monarcho-

Fascists. But it did not explain what kind of force to use. Further on it highlighted that: In the event the Monarcho-Fascists initiate a coup we will help all those forces, government or not, who will resist. And continued: The only salvation for normal political life and order is by widening the Sofoulis government with broad EAM participation. In the same spirit Apostolidis, EAM Secretary for Macedonia and Thrace, at a gathering at “Iraklis” on January 21, 1946, attended by around 100,000 people, said: We want Democratic Unity for all Greeks outside of the Black Front exploiters. We want Democratic People’s unity and vigilance for destroying the Black Front plague. We want Democratic unity for normal political life, order, national sovereignty and independence. We want Democratic unity inside the government with EAM’s broad participation with Sofoulis, establishing equal democratic rights and freedom and honest elections. In a Resolution the rally demanded decisive EAM participation in the government and declared the necessity for confronting the plutocratic neo-fascists and their plans and conspiracies by political unity in the general democratic population. In the same spirit Zahariadis said: “Respond by any means possible” that applies to cases of terrorist attacks by criminal Monarcho-Fascist gangs. Respond “in the name of self-defense...” But after the Kalamata events this slogan became less popular amongst the masses called to action.

Unfortunately many of the “centre” parties hesitated to respond to the EAM appeal for creating a general democratic front. This includes the ELD (Greek National Democracy) party of Zvolos - Tsirimokos. Only the Socialist Party responded but unfortunately this party represents an insignificant political group. At the same time many other democratic organizations and associations, which were under the influence of the Centre, were reluctant to join EAM. The EODA (Greek organization of Greek officers) also did not respond. The fact is that the leaderships of these Centre parties, together with their false democratic growth, are panicking in the face of these abnormal developments. They are afraid of the general democratic front; the people’s front and the people’s revolt as it is building massively. They are trying to distract the people from the Monarcho-Fascist danger with “lies” that the economic agreement between Greece and England will save this country and they fill their sections in the newspapers with that. Sofoulis and those around

him are playing a “third situation” role by feeling out the democratic movement process and, through its fears and its classic anticipation, they are gradually leading them into the arms of the right and into anti-democratic solutions. If they can deceive the masses it will be good; otherwise they would have played the game openly and together “united” under the protection of the Greek foreign factors. There is an insurmountable gap in their contradictions on the monarchy and on old party interests. For as long as it is possible they will keep the masses distracted and disinterested.

This explains Sofoulis’s spasmodic movement, contradictory statements, indecision and his so-called democratic politics. To the proposal that the Black Front participate in the EAM alliance, as agreed by the right, Venizelos replied that he agreed but did not agree with the way it was done because by principle he is a democrat. Regarding EAM’s declaration on the need for a general democratic front, he was sometimes silent and sometimes loudly declared that the guarantee for democracy is the Centre. In the meantime his government harbours famous reactionaries and philo-Fascists, the likes of Rentis, as Minister of Internal Affairs, and Meredithis as Minister of Northern Greece who does not hesitate, not even for a moment, to participate with the Black Front and commit conspiracies against the people. In the meantime EAM’s insistence for democratic unity is, more or less, responsive to the broad masses of the working people, but the petty bourgeois layers are afraid of the Monarcho-Fascist scarecrow and hesitate to join just as society is headed for an imminent collision. Generally this has been the position of the ELD-EODA and other democratic organizations.

In short, this is the current political situation in Greece.

Situation in the districts

Kostur District:

What I have found from what Comrade Secretary (Lambro Cholakov from the village Smrdesh, Kostur Region) has told me and from my own observations, is that our organization in this district did not fully perform its tasks, it did not do the required daily work and it did not specifically deal with the problems our people were

experiencing. This is because the movement did not become a living expression in its daily struggle and central political ideals. Instead there is a very strong desire for the idea of national-liberation without objectively dissociating from the revolutionary possibilities. However, in the absence of the subjective factor, a living organization, concentrated, unique and unbreakable, especially consolidated with internal unity, free from internal disputes and anomalies and so on... The fact is that none of those factors exist because the district as a whole is in a backward situation, mainly due to veiled divisions, which are entrenched and have poisoned most of the district, due to the familiar trends that have been created there. Specially affected are the Poletto surroundings which have been transformed into a centre of all types of disunity and evil. The last striking manifestation of such disunity paralyzed our party apparatus for months and shook the confidence in our people, especially in Kole Shihskovski and Tashko Lazarevski, with whom you are familiar. This disunity is not only local, its strings, consciously or unconsciously, extend to the top. Maybe it's bad that it started but it's worse as that evil continues, which seriously terrifies our organization. The comrades of our leadership who are from there could take a more decisive stance and unleash the district from this whip. The problem can perhaps be solved by making compromises and by something else, but I do not know with what else. There is only one solution that will kill this disease, fully arming to the end, but sadly that did not happen. However, there is an objective observation, which at the same is a compelling need to implement rapid and wide internal cleaning to free the district of all these divisions.

Most serious issues that have arisen in the district:

- 1) Unbearable terror has been perpetrated by the local authorities, police and local armed gangs. Lately the terror has been manifested in a new form with long, five years to life, prison sentences under trumped up charges and staged false accusations. After these people are convicted their properties are confiscated. A more serious problem, which is a real unknown to the people of our area, is that more than 4,000 indictments have been issued against Macedonians charging them with belonging to the Bulgarian counter-bands. At this point there is a need to say that many of these accusations were

staged; these are false accusations against the Macedonian people, especially against those who, from the early days of the partisan movement, fought in the ranks of EAM-ELAS against the occupiers. This issue is a problem for the district because of the extreme and dangerous measures taken to frighten the Macedonian people with full political and economic destruction.

Andreas Dzhimas, along with two other lawyers from the National Solidarity Union, arrived in Kostur in the last days of January to defend the Macedonian detainees during their trials. After coming into contact with CPG members, Dzhimas worked with them to advise CPG District Party representatives in these cases, but his involvement was short-lived because Comrade Dzhimas was arrested by the police and sentenced to one year in prison because, in a protest telegram he sent to the Central Committee, he used the words “terror against the Slavo-Macedonians”, something that the Fascist judges found offensive and treasonous. In order to protest this issue we took the following action, which we also passed on to the Comrade Secretary in the District: To organize protest action committees to prepare and organize mass protests against the staged trials and terror; to demand the release of detainees who were not charged and those who were falsely accused; to actively organize massive abstention of those charged and stop them from appearing in court; to represent those who are called by prescriptive invitations to trial for similar staged charges and fight to set back the fascist measures; to organize mass self-defense against the terror, where there are no prerequisites against attacks and provocations organized by the armed gangs, etc.

2) This issue concerns the pillaging and theft openly carried out by the authorities and the general distribution of food from UNRA.

3) This issue concerns the massive use of free (slave) labour ordered by the police which is provided solely and exclusively by Macedonians.

We have issued the following directive regarding the last two issues: to organize dedicated committees to take charge of increasing the supply and distribution of food from UNRA and to place it under the control of people’s committees; to assist the villagers with

borrowing money and obtaining seeds and fertilizer from the agricultural bank; to work for the immediate termination of mass free labour imposed on the Macedonian people by unpopular fascist measures. Simultaneously we are also making an effort towards coordinating our actions in a united struggle with the Greeks, Vlachs, etc., by strengthening our relationships, sympathy and solidarity, mainly on the issue of mass trials and slave labour.

In terms of protest actions, apart from individual actions to increase and correct distribution of food from UNRA, which in most cases ended in success, the actions taken in the Poleto area, and several self-defense appearances in the Prespa area, up to now this district has seriously lagged behind. Koreshtata area has shows no activity.

The CPG. Before Dzhimas arrived in Kostur, the CPG cadres continued with the same tactics; controversy, distortion and defamation. They fanatically perverted statements made by Zahariadis about NOF, claiming that Zahariadis only recognized NOF in Voden, since this is the only organization he formed and was managed by the CPG. (Sterio Datsev, CPG district activist). After Dzhimas's arrival they changed their tactics by agreeing with Zahariadis's statements that NOF is a democratic anti-fascist organization. Now it remains to be seen what tactics the CPG District leadership will employ in regards to Dzhimas's attitude. However, regardless of the aforementioned problems, our organization has managed to basically realize unity and brotherhood in some villages, in the countryside; like in the villages Sliveni, Dobrolishta and Skumsko where we have joint committees, etc.

Lerin District

Recently we have had some enhanced progress in this district. This shows that we have created an organization which three months ago did not exist there. Our apparatus has stabilized and has received internal organizational cohesion and unity. It lives the life and struggles of the district, which to some extent has been organized and managed successfully. What it lacks is initiative to fully embrace the spirit of mass activity at a level required for objective conditions and capabilities.

Our organization's greatest success in this district is that we have managed to influence almost all the villages in Kailari and in the outskirts of Kozheni. It was impossible for us to get close to these remote villages for seven months because of the terror orgies and killings perpetrated by Kapetanios Kolaras and Michal Aga, German collaborators during the occupation, when they were the absolute masters of the people's lives, honour and property. But with the mass struggle, with the struggle and protest committees, with the unbreakable unity and brotherhood forged between the democratic Greeks, the Macedonian people and the refugees, we succeeded, to some extent, to break Kapetanios Kolaras and Michal Aga's regimes. In general our organizational and political influence lately has expanded in the villages that have yet to be influenced by us. At the same time the district has been lagging behind in the sector organizational struggle and popular actions.

1) Actions. On January 24, 1946 a meeting was held in Lerin under the combined initiative of EAM and NOF. Generally the meeting went well but could have been attended by more people. The purpose of the meeting was; to find ways to stop the terror and the staged trials; to get general political amnesty and a coalition government with EAM participation.

2) On January 14, 1946 the people of Ekshi Su held a rally. Thanks to the initiative put forth by Petros, former EAM National MP and now EAM and NOF member, the rally was a crowned success.

Requirements: remove the occupation collaborators from the government; obtain general political amnesty; stop the terror; disrupt the people's mass trials; help the villagers... The people coined the slogans: People's government, equality and national rights for the Macedonian people.

As a result of the above actions, the trials were temporarily stopped and the terror was slowed down.

3) Mass joint committees of refugees and Macedonians from the Kailari villages are struggling to stop the terror, to obtain loans and seeds from the agricultural bank and to increase the food from UNRA. Unity is achieved from below. This was a NOF initiative. In

the course of these actions EAM also participated. The result was a break in the terror and increased food from UNRA. Similarly the refugees succeeded in showing readiness to appear en masse as witnesses during the trial to protect the Macedonian people.

4) There was mass movement in Ovchareni Region calling for the annulment of the election lists, which were compiled by the fascist presidents of the municipalities. Names of people who have been long dead were found in the lists. The authorities in Lerin were forced to send employees to investigate the issue. Representatives of the people will be assigned to review the results.

Current issues that are of interest to the District at this time: 1) mass trials, 2) distribution of food from UNRA, 3) loans from the Agricultural Bank, 4) cleaning the cooperatives and municipalities from fascist elements... (The document ended here prematurely.)

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 70. The original document was handwritten in the Greek language. It was translated to Macedonian and published in the edition: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946", T.III..., doc. 33, p. 86-93.

**2.8 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski),
February 9, 1946, regarding NOF's organizational structure in
Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia**

Kostur District

1. Prespa Vicinity

A) German Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) German	-	28	35	2	10
2) Rabi	-	4	5	-	-
3) P'pli	-	-	-	-	-
4) Medovo	-	12	13	-	6
5) Rudary	-	4	8	-	3
6) Shtrkovo	-	8	12	-	2
7) Orovnik	-	16	12	-	-
8) Bukovo	-	10	14	-	4
9) Besfina	-	14	16	-	13
10) L'k	-	4	3	-	-
11) Drenovo	-	6	8	-	5
12) Rulia	-	8	20	-	12
13) Zhelevo	-	6	4	-	15
14) Psoderi	-	-	-	-	-
15) Trnaa	-	30	40	-	15
16) Oshchima	-	30	40	-	15

B) Afrika Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Nivitsi	-	5	10	-	-
2) Orovo	2	10	12	-	6
3) Frazhdano	3	25	37	3	15
4) Vineni	-	-	-	-	-
5) Drobitishte	2	13	6	-	10
6) Trnovo	-	8	3	-	4
7) Ail	-	9	8	-	7

2. Koreshtata Vicinity

A) D'mbeni Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) D'mbeni	3	10	25	2	5
2) Krchishte	-	5	4	-	6
3) Lobanitsa	-	5	8	-	3
4) Kosinets	-	4	10	-	5
5) Smrdesh	3	20	30	3	15
6) V'mbel	2	25	20	-	15
7) Breznitsa	-	-	-	-	-
8) Novoseliani	-	-	-	-	-
9) Papratko	-	-	-	-	-

B) Drenoveni Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Gabresh	-	8	10	-	5
2) Drenoveni	-	8	12	-	4
3) Pozdivishta	-	14	12	-	8
4) Chrnovishta	-	5	4	-	-
5) Kolomnati	-	4	7	-	-
6) Statitsa	-	5	8	-	4
7) Gorna Statitsa	-	-	-	-	-
8) Aposkep	3	12	14	-	2
9) Zherveni	-	-	-	-	-
10) Sheshteovo	-	15	18	-	8
11) Gorno Drenoveni	-	4	6	-	-
12) Setoma	-	-	-	-	-
13) Chereshnitsa	-	-	-	-	-
14) Blatsa	-	-	-	-	-

C) Tiolishta Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
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1) Visheni	-	6	3	-	-
2) B'mboki	-	4	2	-	-
3) Kondorobi	-	-	-	-	-
4) Lichishta	-	-	-	-	-
5) Olisha	-	-	-	-	-
6) Gorentsi	-	-	-	-	-
7) Churilovo	-	-	-	-	-
8) Zagorichani	-	-	-	-	-
9) Kumanichevo	-	-	-	-	-
10) Bobishta	-	-	-	-	-
11) Mavrovo	-	-	-	-	-
12) Zdraltsi	-	-	-	-	-
13) Dupiak	-	-	-	-	-
14) Fotinishta (refugees)	-	-	-	-	-

3. Poletto Vicinity

A) Zhupanishta Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Zhupanishta	3	28	40	4	20
2) Maniak	-	4	3	-	4
3) Tikveni	-	6	8	-	5
4) Dobrolishta	4	30	35	3	15
5) Chetirok	-	8	15	-	6
6) Drenichevo	-	4	5	-	-
7) Grache	-	18	25	4	5
8) Chuka	2	12	14	-	-
9) Stensko	-	10	12	-	-
10) Radigozhe	-	-	-	-	-
11) Nestram	-	12	15	-	-
12) Osheni	-	-	-	-	-

B) Rupishta Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Rupishta	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
2) Izglibe	-	4	6	-	-

3) Zhelin	-	16	8	-	6
4) Tsakoni	-	-	-	-	-
5) Zhelegozhe	-	2	-	-	-
6) Galishta	3	15	18	2	8
7) Psore	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
8) Ludovo	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
9) Breshtani	2	12	10	-	5
10) Gosno	-	-	-	-	-

C) Kostenaria Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Ezerets	3	24	15	2	6
2) Skumsko	-	8	6	-	-
3) Olobrade	-	4	2	-	-
4) Snicheni	-	8	12	-	-
5) Mangila	-	12	10	-	-
6) Marchishta	-	3	4	-	-
7) Doleni	2	14	8	-	6
8) Shesheltsi	3	25	17	2	8
9) Starichani	-	5	3	-	-
10) Nestim	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
11) Boiani	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
12) Libishevo	-	-	-	-	-
13) Zhikovishta	-	4	3	-	-
14) Shkrapari	-	Base	-	-	-
15) Semasi	-	Base	-	-	-
16) Markoveni	-	-	-	-	-
17) Pesiak	-	Base	-	-	-
18) Bela Tsrkva	-	Base	-	-	-

D) Kalevishta Region

Villages

- 1) Kalevishta
- 2) Ianoveni
- 3) Slimnishta

- 4) Pilkati
- 5) Omotsko

We have established links only in these villages located on the border between Greece and Albania and some effort had been made to lay foundations. The results are not yet known.

Meetings: The District Committee held two meetings in January. The Poleto Vicinity Committee held one and the Regional Committees each held two. The other vicinity committees did not hold any meetings last month because of the familiar wrangling that took place there.

February 9, 1946
For the Organizational Leadership
Secretary,
Paskal

AM, collection; "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949, AE: 86.

The original document was handwritten in the Greek language. It was translated to Macedonian and published in the edition "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946", T.III..., doc. 42, p. 97-100.

**2.9 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski),
February 9, 1946, regarding NOF's situation in Lerin and
Voden Districts**

I. Lerin District

1. Lerin Vicinity

A) Buf Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Buf	-	17	15	-	8
2) Kladorobi	3	18	12	2	6
3) Kalenik	1	12	8	-	4
4) Kabashnitsa	-	5	6	-	-
5) Sveta Petka	-	15	8	-	5
6) Opshirino	-	-	-	-	-
7) Bitusha	-	-	-	-	-
8) Rakovo	-	-	-	-	-
9) Klavichishta	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
10) Negochani	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
11) Gorno Kalenik	-	-	-	-	-
12) Dolno Kalenik	-	-	-	-	-
13) Nov Kavkaz		Prosfigi (Christian Turks)			

B) Kotori Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Gorno Kotori	-	12	10	-	-
2) Dolno Kotori	3	17	12	-	-
3) Kuchkoveni	3	12	10	-	6
4) Armenoro	-	Board3	2	-	-
5) Nevoliani	-	6	5	-	-
6) Neret	-	12	15	-	-
7) Lageni	4	14	17	2	8
8) Krapeshino	3	16	14	-	4
9) Pesochinitsa	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
10) Lazheni	-	-	-	-	-

11) Maala	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
12) Leskovets	-	6	8	-	-
13) Vrtolom	-	-	-	-	-
14) Negovan	Albanian village, a Base for NOF and NOMS				
15) Bel Kamen	-	-	-	-	-

C) Banitsa Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Banitsa	-	8	12	-	-
2) Gornichovo	-	12	10	-	-
3) Rosen	3	15	12	-	-
4) Zabrdeni	-	14	8	-	-
5) Boreshnitsa	-	10	14	-	-
6) Zhel. Stanitsa	3	8	-	-	-

D) Ovchareni Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Ovchareni	-	20	30	-	6
2) Krushoradi	4	25	36	3	8
3) Setina	3	12	23	3	5
4) Neokazi	3	17	25	2	6
5) Vrbeni	-	6	8	-	3
6) Popozhani	-	8	10	-	4
7) Sakulevo	-	6	3	-	-
8) Sredno Selo	-	-	-	-	-
9) Asanovo	-	4	5	-	-

E) Turie Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Turie	3	25	22	3	5
2) Trsie	3	26	25	3	8
3) Bapchor	3	30	22	2	6
4) Armensko	3	20	10	-	4
5) Kalugerina	4	24	25	3	16

6) Mateshnitsa	3	10	8	-	6
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2. Sorovich – Kailari Vicinity

A) Ekshi-Su Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Ekshi-Su	3	45	69	4	10
2) Pateli	3	68	45	3	20
3) Sorovich	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
4) Petersko	2	7	8	-	-
5) Tserevo	2	18	7	-	-

B) Aitos Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Aitos	3	28	222	2	4
2) Liubetino	3	13	21	-	10
3) Rudnik	-	4	-	-	-
4) Zelenich	-	5	6	-	-
5) Srebreno	-	12	8	-	-
6) Prekopana	-	10	6	-	-
7) Neveska		Vlach village			
8) Lehovo		Albanian village			

C) Mokreni Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Mokreni	3	42	50	3	10
2) Palior	2	15	12	-	5
3) Rakita	-	14	10	-	-
4) Eleovo (Laka?)	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
5) Embore	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
6) Debrets	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
7) Radunishta	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
8) Konui	2	8	12	-	3

9) Biraltsi	-	6	11	-	-
10) Trepishta	-	15	10	-	6
11) Boshovtsi	3	11	8	-	9
12) Dorutovo	2	15	12	-	5
13) Lipintsi	-	Board3	Board3	-	-
14) Trebino	-	contacts	-	-	-
15) Komanoo	-	contacts	-	-	-
16) Rantsi	-	contacts	-	-	-

City Lerin District

The City Lerin District is divided into three Regions: 1) Chiflik Region, 2) Tsentar Region, and 3) Sveti Nikola Region.

Both the City and Regional organizational Committees are complete. Around 200 are organized but we don't have an accurate overview of how many are organized in NOF and how many in NOMS, in AFZH, etc., and how many in each region.

Meetings: The District Committee held two meetings in January. The Regional Committee for Lerin held one meeting. The Regional Committee for Sorovich - Kailari held two meetings. The City Committee held two. The Regional leaders did not hold any special meetings but the cadres met twice.

February 9, 1946

For the Organizational Leadership
Secretary,
Paskal, s.r.

II. Voden District

1. Meglen Vicinity

A) Krontselevo Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Krontselevo	-	170	180	-	100
2) Teovo	-	120	135	-	60

3) Vladovo	-	30	15	-	-
4) Nisia	-	27	32	-	25
5) V'ikoianevo	-	64	75	-	40
6) Samar	-	8	10	-	3
7) Sveti Ilia	-	18	-	-	-
8) Pochev	-	88	90	-	50
9) Sarakinovo	-	67	60	-	46
10) Dolno Rodivo	-	140	180	-	100
11) Gorno Rodivo	-	80	95	-	63
12) Tresilo	-	18	26	-	-
13) Lukovets	-	-	-	-	-

The organization in village Lukovets is not functioning because of the great terror perpetrated against the population which forced compromising tendencies. The District Committee was criticized because it was not in its right to disperse the entire organization, only those who initiated the compromising tendencies.

B) S'botsko Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) S'botsko	-	30	20	-	15
2) Tudorche	-	19	-	-	-
3) Bidzhova Mahala	-	14	9	-	8
4) Bizovo	-	25	17	-	14
5) Tsakov Chuflik	-	72	63	-	42
6) Strupino	-	65	60	-	18
7) Straishta	-	23	35	-	8
8) Stapina	-	10	15	-	-
9) Tsakoni					
10) Gorno Pozhar					
11) Baovo					
12) V'ichishta					

There were organizations in the last 4 villages but due to the latest terror activities conducted in these villages, we have lost our connections.

2. Ostrovo Vacity

A) Ostrovo Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Gugovo	-	53	40	-	25
2) K'drovo	-	8	12	-	-
3) Ostrovo	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
4) Chegan	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
5) Rusilovo	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
6) Zhervi	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
7) Drushka	-	Board5	Board5	-	-

There are others organized in the last five villages but only the boards function, with great difficulty, because government troops and police are stationed in those villages, which creates great terror.

B) Mesimer Region

Village (Members)	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH
1) Mesimer	-	55	40	-	28
2) Iavorani	-	120	38	-	60
3) Pod	-	15	22	-	8
4) Orizari	-	49	38	-	40
5) Oshliani	-	20	11	-	48
6) V'ngeni	-	12	8	-	-
7) Rizovo	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
8) Kamenik	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
9) Vrtikop	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
10) Lipoor	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3
11) Arsen	-	Board5	Board5	-	Board3

C) Tsrno Marinovo Region

- 1) Tsrno Marinovo
- 2) Prahiani
- 3) Chuchig's
- 4) Krushari
- 5) Gorno Selo

- 6) Vlahi
- 7) Liparinovo
- 8) Kolibite

These villages have recently been added to a third region. These villages are located around Negush. There are foundations laid in all the villages but the number organized is not known. There are two activists there, one from the district and the other from the vicinity, dressed in shepherd's clothing.

3. Voden City Vicinity

City quarters

Member	Party	NOF	NOMS	SKOJ	AFZH	Note
1) I quarter	-	-	-	-	-	Prosfigi
2) II quarter	-	-	-	-	-	Prosfigi
3) III quarter	-	50	110	-	18	
4) IV quarter	-	270	278	-	215	
5) V quarter	-	330	187		220	
6) VI quarter	-	178	57		78	
7) VII quarter	-	645	400		260	

In the above mentioned quarters we have both Party and SKOJ cells.

Factories

	NOF	NOMS	AFZH
I) Factory Tsini	17	46	38
II) Factory Estia	28	32	27
III) Factory Seferdzhi	10	11	8
IV) Factory hemp	24	40	27

Meetings: All authorities in the District, from District to Regional Committees and local boards, are functioning properly. Except for the Ostrovo Vicinity Committee which cannot hold meetings but its members meet regularly.

Notes: This district has witnessed significant progress in the common struggle for the unity and brotherhood sector with the Greek and refugee element, especially in the Meglen Vicinity and town. More villages are accepting our line and are fighting under our leadership.

February 9, 1946

For the Organizational leadership

Secretary,

Paskal, s.r.

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 87. The original text was in handwritten Greek manuscript. Published in the edition: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946", doc. 43. p. 100-103 and 103-106.

2.10 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski), February 16, 1946, regarding the military and political situation in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia

Situation in Aegean Macedonian with regards to the coup perpetrated by “X”

New armed forces made up of units whose command staff is comprised exclusively of “X” officers began to arrive on February 6, 1945 in the Lerin District, particularly in the Sorovich Vicinity and surrounding villages. With the arrival of a battalion in the village Ekshi-Su a meeting was convened during which the Battalion Commander declared that: “All Macedonians and Albanians must be prepared to leave because in the next 50 days they will be leaving Greece.” In the same village the Commander broke up two weddings because the village girls were singing Macedonian songs when the brides appeared from their homes. The same commander forbade the Macedonian people from speaking Macedonian in their homes, threatening them with death. He declared that he would order his military to shoot people if he heard them speaking in that language. Generally this district is flooded with “X” military units and so is Kostur District. A group of about 200 Balisti rebels arrived in the village Rakovo recently. This group has its own command. It has been supplied from Lerin.

Kozheni is the centre where the “X” forces are arriving and are being sectioned off for transport to other parts of Western and Central Macedonia.

Lately we have seen serious “X” and “Black Front” movements in Karadzhovala. We have also discovered a secret letter from Zervas sent to his followers, which advises them to be ready to attack at a moments notice because soon the signal will be given to commence a coup.

There are rumours circulating that the military stationed in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia will be replaced with units composed of “X” and Zervas soldiers. The military units in Gumendzhe and Enidze Vardar have already been replaced. The terror there is unprecedented. They dispensed 60 rifles and 10 machine guns in

Gumendzhe to members of the “Black Front”. For a few days now the village population is forbidden from moving from village to village. The “Black Front” is a complete master of state services in this district.

The EAM has renewed its military organizations in Greece, like the Organization OPLA (protection of movement) and its reserve force. This means that EAM will provide armed resistance in case of a coup.

We have given our organization in Eastern Macedonia a directive to prepare, so that in a given moment it can provide EAM full armed support.

More than 5,000 indictments have been issued in Kostur Region and several thousand more are pending. These are indictments issued against Macedonians who are accused of being members and supporters of “Ohrana” and, regardless of whether these accusations are true or false, these people are summoned to go to court to be tried and, in almost every case, they are found guilty and sentenced to 10, 15, 20, 101 years in prison and even to death. Their properties are then confiscated. In the last few days army units arrived in this part of the district and blocked the villages, especially those which have been given indictments or which are yet to be given indictments, and lead the people straight to the courts. Yesterday 8 people arrived in Bitola from these villages. Regarding this, our position is to prevent these people from going to trial and help them flee but remain in Eastern Macedonia. But the problem is where to accommodate them? We can’t accommodate them in the mountain because it’s a big problem. One outlet is to pass them over the border.

S.F, – S.N.

February 16, 1946.

For the Aegean leadership:

Paskal, s.r.

AM, collection: “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949”, AE: 103.

The original document was typed in the Macedonian language.
Published in the edition: “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1946”, doc.
48. p. 115-116.

2.11 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski), March 7, 1946, regarding the general political situation in Greece and in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia

Political situation and the coup

After its agreement with Venizelos and the political right, the Black Front began to openly attack the villages with aims at increasing chaos, suppressing the democratic will of the people and strengthening the domination of foreign and domestic exploiters. In the last weeks and recent days, the Greek Monarcho-Fascists have caused general alarm after arming themselves with guns and machine guns, etc., taken out from the English and state warehouses. The events that took place in Kalamata, the open challenges and killings committed by Sourlas (leader of the Monarcho-Fascist armed) in the town Lamia, the intensification of terror and coordinated movements with Andon Chaoush and Mihail Aga, and other Monarcho-Fascists spies in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in their daily killings, indicate that the reactionary forces are doing exactly what the foreign instigators and leaders want them to do.

The volumes of terror acts that are being committed by the criminal gang from the right nowadays have surpassed all previous volumes. This means that there is no way we can maintain the peace in a democratic way, or have free, flawless and honest elections while the foreign and domestic exploiters orient themselves closer to fascist and violent revolutionary solutions. The presence of foreign observers will not change anything; they will not be able to change this reality. It is in England's interest to impose, by any means possible with all its forces, its servants the Monarcho-Fascist Black Front criminals so that it can then show the world that it implemented fair policies in Greece approved by the Greek people.

On the other hand, the Americans, as they have said themselves, are not competent to point to a solution or to record the dimensions of falsification and terror. It is clear that the arrival of foreign observers is simply an attempt by the British and domestic reactionary circles to give legal form to the electoral coup that they are preparing. The core of the problem is as follows: Will the Monarcho-Fascist right

try to openly, and in a violent way, implement a coup before and independently of the elections? If the elections are held on March 31, 1946, and it is certain that British troops will be based in Greece, then the reactionaries will avoid such a coup because they will take the government with a legal coup, i.e. with the election. But again if the elections are postponed, which is very likely, then what happens will depend on what kind of internal and external events develop. But in any case the Black Front will not give up on the coup, even if there is a small chance for a democratic change in the country. Because of this, fear of an overthrow remains alive. In such a case two questions come to mind: What will be our position in the event of a violent external electoral coup? And what will our position be in case of an election coup or in case of a two-month election postponement and its rescheduling under the same conditions? These questions are tied to the coordination of forces in Greece and Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and to our organizational and technical preparations, opportunities, resources and ultimately with the democratic force's position of this country.

The Black Front is a violent military and political force. Before the December developments, the resistance movement made mistakes like signing the Lebanon Agreement, EAM joining the government national unity with the likes of Papandreou, a fascist agent of English policy, and after the December events it concluded the Varkiza Agreement with absolutely no guarantees, giving the Black Front the opportunity to take the entire state apparatus in its hands and economically and militarily strengthen and develop its positions. The truth is that EAM gave up its forces in the consolidation process. The latest movements, strikes, etc., prove that we have a process with which to develop a democratic movement. But at the same time, there are fundamental weaknesses in this movement. The ELAS leadership could get rid of the narrow economic spirit in the trade union movements and was unable to give all these movements and strikes political character. It failed again and again everywhere it made such an attempt, including at the strikes in Athens, Piraeus and at the general driver strike in Solun.

Secondly EAM failed to solidify, connect and strengthen the agricultural alliance, the proletariat and other working masses in the cities. EAM's impact on the agricultural workers has been

strengthened, especially among the village working classes; unfortunately even there EAM is weak, incoherent and rough. But we cannot dispute the fact that EAM is a powerful force in the country.

Specifically, the resistance movement parties enjoy superiority in Thessaly, Epirus, Evia and in the cities of Athens, Piraeus, Patras, Volos and Corinth where the democratic movement is strong and aggressive. Conversely, the Monarcho-Fascist right wing parties and all other Black Front parties rule by forcibly choking the democratic expression out of the people, especially in the whole of the Peloponnesus, Central Greece and in most of the Greek islands.

In Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia forces are deployed in Halkidiki, Kozheni Region, Seres Region, Drama Region, Solun Pole, and Enidzhe Vardar Region where the situation is regulated by the reactionary forces through organized Monarcho-Fascist criminal gangs. In the cities Solun, Seres, Kavala as well as in the Kukush, Katerina, Ber and Negush Regions the resistance is strong. As for Kostur, Lerin, Voden, and Gumendze Regions, together with the mountainous regions, NOF is the strongest political force. We should not worry about places where the democratic movement stands high and is strong and where the reactionary forces have bases, some weaker and some stronger. The centre parties are third in a row and the masses that follow them are mainly middle class people who are characterized by their doubts and their decay. In addition to that, using some special political and economic reasons, they manage to attract some more layers.

On the question of relations between EAM and the Centre parties, EAM steadfastly attributes that to unity and alliance from top to bottom, from leadership to base level. The leadership is cut down..... (the text is damaged and illegible here) and sold. EAM, until now, has failed at base level to cause a split, to achieve political gains, to separate the basic masses because EAM is fighting hard to convince the leadership rather than strengthen the unity and carry out its work in life so that the masses, which are under the influence of the Centre, will throw themselves against the Monarcho-Fascists.

The CPG and EAM's position regarding the Monarcho-Fascist coup can be summarized as follows: "Mass widespread self-defense against the devastating terror." The criminal, plutocratic and neo-fascist regime, which is the cause of this unilateral civil war, should not be allowed to gain power; we need to respond to our enemies by similar means. If we examine and evaluate this position through the prism of determination and momentary critical criteria, we will see that we are lacking will and a clear position on resistance in case of a Monarch-Fascist coup. We should not be looking at the February 15, 1946 CPG Central Committee 2nd Plenum conclusion which calls for a delay in taking organizational measures. The fact is that we have many areas that have weak links between themselves and their centres. At the same time we lack funds and better materials. ELAS surrendered 50,000 rifles and machine guns. Most of its secret warehouses were betrayed and discovered. There is very little hope that EAM can be supplied with weapons by taking them from our enemies. The armed criminal gangs today are well connected, fanatical and in no way similar to the security battalions that existed at the time of the occupation. SAN (Military Officer's Union) and the Black Front have fully mastered the military apparatus and it would be very easy for them to disarm the democratic fighters on the eve of the coup, something which they have already begun.

As for our people, in the Macedonian districts Lerin, Voden, Kostur and to some extent Gumendzhe the call for armed resistance has been accepted by the vast majority of the masses. We can easily and quickly achieve organizational and technical preparation if, above all, we put such a task before our people and start working hard. But in the case of direct action, without exception we will need part of the activists.

The weapons we possess are very few and not enough to support an armed struggle, so the question is: Can we seriously support an armed resistance front in the Macedonian districts under such conditions? Can we support the resistance if it does not extend to all Macedonian regions and across Greece? Of course we can because we believe EAM, according to its own claims, has been armed for resistance in case the Monarcho-Fascists attempt such a coup.

The issue of elections.

The most fundamental problem that preoccupies the minds of the Greek public today is the election. It seems that there were three opinions at issue. Should there be postponement of the elections. No, seemed to be the opinion of the Black Front parties. Their opinion is supported by a statement made by Bevin about the Regent Damaskinos who expressed desire to conduct elections on March 31, 1946 at any cost. There are those who are of the opinion that the election should be postponed two months. This opinion stems from the various political parties in the Centre and various parties around them which need more time to prepare. Sofoulis however agrees with his boss Bevin, who put him up to this, saying that the election will take place on March 31, 1946 if his government can be persuaded that election conduct will be assured. Sofoulis and all those around him are afraid of losing the elections and because of that he has reason to be doubtful and indecisive. A third opinion circulating around was that the elections should be postponed indefinitely in order to conduct genuine and peaceful elections. They should be delayed as late as September. This opinion is supported by the EAM parties.

If the elections take place in March or a little later, under the same regime, it is certain that the EAM parties will not participate. We too need to take such a stance, even more so because the Sofoulis government is placing us outside the law during the elections, in accordance with his decree and in accordance with the familiar allegations accusing us of being “autonomists”. But the issue does not end here. If there is indispensable need for us to stop a violent fascist coup, for the vitality of our people, then we should be doing everything to stop an election coup. This will require a coordinated and fierce struggle against Sofoulis’s government in order to establish a representative government that will conduct fraud-free and peaceful elections. But if such an election is conducted against our will then we should simply abstain from voting or we should throw all our forces to frustrate the elections by all means possible. And in this case we should be closely following what EAM and all the other parties are doing.

But in this case the decisive upsurge of the democratic movement in Greece, associated with external events, will provide a reason for a

political shift in order to form a representative government, then, if that government is broad and purely democratic, our right to participate in the elections will be easily recognized. But if the government is closer to the reactionary parties and trends, then we will have to fight to be recognized. In my opinion, as events develop, we should be taking a clear and firm position on all these issues.

Mass trials

A new form of attack, perpetrated by the Black Front against the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, was the mass trials with fictional and trumped up charges alleging that certain Macedonians were “autonomists”, “counter-band” members and so on. This was another method the Fascist and Gestapo officials in the Greek judiciary used to seek political and economic justice and physical extermination of the Macedonian people. Hundreds and thousands of Macedonians were sentenced to death and to long prison sentences, ranging from 20 years to life, through such false accusations. Most of these Macedonians were activists during the national liberation war and fought against the occupiers. After the trials all their assets, movable and immovable, were seized. Two thousand Macedonians were held in prison without being convicted on the assumption that they may have been “counter-bandits”. Hundreds of them died in prison from torture. At the same time the courts issued thousands of indictments and arrests warrants for falsely accused Macedonians. In Kostur District alone they issued thousands of indictments. Harsh sentences were handed down to 150 Macedonians in Rupishta, Kostur Region. Of those more than 80% were partisans and, in one way or another, took part in the anti-fascist movement in the first days of the national liberation struggle to liberate Greece from the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers. At the same time those who collaborated with the occupiers, including Macedonians, were free and protected by the system. Some even worked for the system. Hundreds of Macedonians from Lerin Region were locked up in the Lerin prisons. At the same time 600 more indictments, under false accusations, were issued for Macedonians living inside the city Lerin.

Day by day the number of mass arrests and trials kept growing and the terror became more ominous. Our people were experiencing days of extreme horror and wild terror. Our organization addressed these medieval measures by attempting to mobilize the masses. In many cases we had success but not enough to start a widespread movement in all of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, to be able to shake up the reactionaries. This was because our organization was weak with organizational shortcomings. It was unable to empower our people to take decisive resistance action en masse. And as a result we did very little to stop the trials and the terror, which in no time were renewed with even more vigour.

It would not be too much to say that this is the most sensitive issue for our people. What scares our people the most is confiscation of property. We have cases where families were thrown out on the street without giving them a day's bread. This, to a large extent, undermines the morale of our people. It will take a lot of work, hard work, to vigorously mobilize all our forces in order to stop this evil. Recently we received directives to organize conferences in each village, during which we will adopt resolutions to get the people to protest against the terror and mass trials. These resolutions will be sent to the heads of the Yugoslav delegation at the United Nations, to Comrade Edward Kardeli and to the Secretariat of the United Nations.

At the same time we coined the slogan: "Defendants don't go before the court! Fight back to end the mass trials!"

The leaderships on the ground have received directives to act vigorously in that direction. By all means to frustrate the danger, which aims to completely destroy and enslave our people.

Our movement and the CPG

After the statements CPG leader Zahariadis made in regards to recognizing NOF as a democratic anti-fascist organization, old tactics, controversies and defamations made against our organization by CPG and EAM personnel, which inflicted enormous damage in the consolidation and rise of our democratic movement in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, began to subside. According to recent

reports coming from our field leadership, we are nowadays involved in negotiations with them (CPG and EAM) to gain their cooperation in the general struggle for solving our people's immediate problems. They understand that NOF has deep roots in the people and has become a significant political force in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Our actions and strikes that we organized in Voden, Lerin and even in Kostur and Gumendzhe Regions have not been without meaning and without influence for them. What the CPG comrades have failed to understand is that it is necessary to have stable and indisputable unity between the various democratic people who live throughout Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. They insist that Greeks should not be organized in NOF, NOMS and AFZH. These should be exclusively Slavo-Macedonian organizations recruiting only Slavo-Macedonians who live in these districts. At the same time they (CPG and EAM) will organize the same Slavo-Macedonians in their own anti-fascist organizations, especially in the Agrarian Party. From our side, our position is clearly defined. NOF is the only People's organization in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia which, following the correct political line, is paving the way for brotherhood and unity between all the peoples in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Through fraternity with the Greek people we can lead our people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia in the battle against fascism and for democracy, alongside all the anti-fascist forces in Greece. On the other hand the CPG, with its CPG Central Committee 2nd Plenum decision made on February 15, 1946, has confirmed that it holds the following attitude: "Equality for the Slavo-Macedonians in the Greek territory." And again has talked about national rights and the right to self-determination.

Internal organizational situation

We could not solve all of our people's problems on the ground and because of that we have not been able to organize the masses. Our organizations are new and lack fruitful experience, organizational skills and ways and methods to work. But despite all that, we have had a number of successes and have moved forward in our work. We have managed to involve some of our people in the struggles and arranged a series of strikes (in Voden) and other movements and actions (in Lerin and Kostur). We have not allowed our people to

lose hope despite the wild terror and persecutions carried out by the Monarcho-Fascists. But despite all that, there is no way that we can say that we have answers to the many questions that have been asked and that are still asked by our people. Weaknesses seem to appear for two reasons:

1) The crises and tests that our movement went through because of its ideological and disunity characteristics, and;

2) Lack of unity, homogeneity, deep monolithic, secure, and active and collective leadership.

Regarding the first reason, this was a result of people who never came to appreciate our movement, who always fled from the suffering in our struggle (Leon, Trifon, Turonzdov, etc.). Since they dropped off from our ranks and from the certain phases through which our movement passed, they have been criticizing our movement, as we will see in a different report which I have attached to this book. In many of my reports I have underlined their hostilities against our struggle and against the political line of our movement because I have lived with them and personally became familiar with their actions and practices in life.

Regarding the second reason, the leadership was torn apart immediately after our Comrade Koroveshov was murdered and after Oshenski took over the leadership. Before he took over the leadership, Oshenski was involved in causing disunity and division between the immigrants, spreading rumours of alleged incompetence in the movement's leadership and activists, causing wide dissatisfaction and discontent. By doing this, his aim was to create a position for himself so that he could fulfill his personal ambitions.

The later divisions to appear (Tashko Lazarovski, Lovachov, Shishkov, etc.), like the earlier series of undisciplined actions, were not random events but remnants of a source originating from there. The damage we suffered as a result of all this is clear. Our leaders could not function without running into obstacles in their work. The leadership inside was torn apart as a result of Oshenski and his quest

to create a base for himself. The essence is that his character was not good, made obvious by his unjust actions in every aspect.

Another reason hampering our development was lack of unity and discipline in our leadership. Decisions were not easily made and many times we faced opposition to our actions, something which negatively reflected in our work and in the entire organization.

But regardless of what we said earlier and of all the other underlying weaknesses in our work, we need to move forward and take appropriate steps to fix the apparatus on the ground. We need to take serious steps and work hard to educate our field personnel on party and ideological matters. If we achieve this then we can move on to refine and cleanse the apparatus from incompetence, timidity and of suspicious elements which get in the way of success. This certainly will strengthen our organizations and give us the capability to achieve more. It will allow our leadership to properly respond to the difficult tasks lying ahead. At the same time it is necessary for us to lead a ruthless struggle against the remnants of those who cause division and discontent and eradicate this disease. Otherwise we will not be able to understand and manage events in the process and at various stages of our movement, especially when these events develop at lightning speeds.

Also, one of the basic questions which needs consideration is the issue of instructors. Today's leadership structure: only two of us are available on the ground, myself and Dzhodzho. Keramitchiev and Minata are at..... Oshenski is busy with....., Rakovski is busy with the agitation and propaganda sector. Unfortunately, with only the two of us, we can't encompass all the sectors on the ground. I have informed you about this need before. Having more instructors will definitely help us a lot more in doing our work. The leadership will be able to directly and specifically live with all the necessities, with all the problems, weaknesses and progress of the organization and our movement. Even more so in today's conditions, field leaders should be under constant supervision and control and under the watchful eye of the top leadership. My opinion is that we need to reorganize and tighten our leadership with even fewer people by sending instructors.

I recommend the following comrades be appointed as instructors:
Giorgi Ianovski, Giele Aianov, Hristo Kokinov and Vasil Makriev...
If you can't get Vasil then I recommend you get comrade Vangel
Nichev.

March 7, 1946.

Pascal, s.r.

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 173.
The document was in Greek. Published in the same edition: doc. 77,
p. 175-183.

2.12 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski), March 1946, regarding the political and military situation and NOF's activities in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia

Exposé

Political situation

March 31st is approaching. This is the date that elections are scheduled to take place in Greece. And as that date gets closer the crisis seems to intensify and the resistance grows stronger and harder. The political view in Greece is that we have a mess; chaos and anarchy. The economic view is no better, the masses are economically enslaved and the country is facing complete economic bankruptcy. And on top of all this we have the menacing nightmare of a Monarcho-Fascist coup and violent and lawless elections. The Black Front is threatening to spill blood in the country if the elections are delayed. The Black Front is pressuring and intimidating Sofoulis and the ministers in his government to have the elections because there will be consequences. Above all this, the terror which was commenced in all of Greece, but especially in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, so far is unprecedented.

Sofoulis who is a slave to the commitments he made to the British government when he took power that, without exception, he will have the election on March 31, 1946 called on the services of a number of crooked associates to roam the streets and demand that the elections be held on March 31st; a fixed date. At the same time Sofoulis was telling his Liberal party to be ready for the elections. But in order to maximize this decision, yesterday he left for Solun where he plans to give a campaign speech. Sofoulis and the leadership of his party are ammunition for Bevin's reactionary English policy and Greek liberal plutocracy, which is already taking steps towards a full reactionary takeover through Black Front political domination. The rest is smoke and mirrors to appear that Greece is democratic.

The supreme apparatus of the Liberal Party is rigid, the middle apparatus, regardless of how upset and restless it is, looking at everything evolving before its eyes, has remained undecided. In the

people's strata, where the Liberal Party has some influence, up to now there is no movement in its ranks to show a decisive turn.

Serious fragmentation is taking place in the Centre parties, primarily in Kafandaris's progressive party. He and four of his ministers have resigned as a result of these fermentations. This problem is also evident in other political circles around the centre. These problems are caused mainly by the indecision in the general democratic circle regarding what action to take against the Monarcho-Fascists.

The left parties that are outside of EAM, like Sofianopoulos's party of the left Democrats, Zvolosov's ELD (People's Democracy in Greece) party and Hadzhibeos's party of the left liberals lately have been firmly oriented towards EAM's objectives in the general democratic front. This is becoming apparent from the fact that they are making statements and appearances together with the EAM parties. They too will not participate in the elections and for them to participate the following must take place:

- 1) Immediate establishment of a democratic government with resistance movement participation.
- 2) Postpone the elections for two months.
- 3) Take immediate and swift measures to cleanse the state apparatus, particularly the military apparatus and the security battalions. At minimum the apparatus must be cleansed of the people who were in the services of the fascist occupier battalions and the collaborators who cooperated with the occupiers.
- 4) Provide general political amnesty, and
- 5) Clean up the voter lists by removing the names that don't belong there. Extend the deadline for voter registration and open opportunities for the tens of thousands of democrats who are missing from the electoral lists to be put on them.

Similar also is Zahariadis's characteristic statement through which he sounded the alarm. Zahariadis's statement, together with the other facts and circumstances mentioned earlier, have given us a

harsh picture of events that are unfolding in this country, particularly:

- 1) The danger of an election coup.
- 2) The strength of the right, and the Black Front, to hold power in their hands and to create a fascist state under the auspices of the English forces, and
- 3) The weakness of the EAM parties in their effort to unite the democratic block and lead the democratic forces in the struggle against the right.

The fact that Zahariadis separated the mandates at 50%, breaks down all previous presumption of electoral strength on both sides, the strength of the left which is in the democratic bloc, on one side, and the strength of the old democratic centre which is on the other side.

But in this case the fact encompasses two things: either, according to lasting opinion, the old democratic centre still has considerable influence over the masses or with this political goal Zahariadis aims to stop the old democratic centre, particularly the Liberal Party, and move it away from its reactionary tendencies and make use of the government to realign the election process and prepare and organize the democratic forces in all decisive cases.

NOF and the democratic forces in Greece

After working long and hard to develop its activities in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, after following the correct political line, after applying proper tactics to problems associated with the struggle against the Monarcho-Fascists, NOF has developed deep roots among the broad Macedonian masses. And today we can say with certainty that NOF represents a political force that plays a significant role in the democratic forces in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. In this entire process NOF had to fight not only against the Black Front and the Greek reactionaries, which by their terrorist activities have drowned our people in blood, particularly the democratic movement and the ideological sector, but also against

the CPG and EAM leaderships from top to bottom, and against the EAM led democratic forces which have conducted a policy of relentless controversy and isolation. NOF had to fight against a systemic libelous campaign and against false charges and allegations that NOF is an “autonomous” movement of the Bulgarian “Ohrana”. Given all this, NOF not only did not isolate itself but led a broad layer of the Macedonian people in a hot struggle and suffered many losses.

The CPG and EAM could not see (refused to look at) this reality, they could not acknowledge this truth, the fruit that historical conditions bore; they refused to recognize that a whole nation fought and wanted to fight consistently against the fascists and for national liberation. Zahariadis in January 1946, for the first time, recognized NOF as a democratic and anti-fascist organization. This was during a speech that he delivered at a Plenum session convened by the CPG Regional Committee of Macedonia and Thrace. Ever since then, things improved slightly for NOF but also revealed the CPG and EAM’s true position towards (against) NOF.

More specifically: A month earlier, in Kostur District, Dzhimas, CPG Central Committee representative for EAM in Macedonia and Thrace, instructed CPG and EAM personnel to stop the polemics against NOF and to assist in organizing the Slavo-Macedonians. By doing this he, in effect, recognized NOF as an anti-fascist and democratic organization.

Fifteen days ago a meeting between the Lerin District Secretary of our organization and two Greek CPG representatives took place in Lerin District. One of the Greek representatives was from the CPG Lerin District and the other was a representative of the Agrarian Party, same district. During the meeting the Greek representatives recognized the value of NOF as the organization of the Slavo-Macedonian people. At the same time the Greeks wanted NOF to agree to allow the Slavo-Macedonians and members of NOF to also organize in the Agrarian Party of Greece. But our representatives, in accordance with a previous decision they had made, refused the Greek proposal. They said that this would not strengthen but rather weaken the struggle of our people. This will split the unity of our

forces. Having two leaderships will expose them to danger and, instead of activating them, it will render them passive.

Ten days ago a meeting took place in Voden District between Voden District NOF representatives and Voden District CPG representatives. The meeting was also attended by Comrade Nikos, representative of the CPG Regional Committee for Macedonia and Thrace. Several questions came up for discussion but at the end the CPG representatives recognized NOF as an anti-fascist People's Liberation Organization. They also recognized NOF's role and necessity and gave directives to the Slavo-Macedonians in their organizations to join NOF. As for the Greeks, Vlachs and others living in Macedonia, the Greek representatives insisted they do not join NOF and join the CPG, EAM, the Greek Agrarian Party, or any other Greek national liberation organization of their choice. As an appropriate way for EAM and NOF to work together, and if this is achieved by agreement, then the Greeks, Vlachs and others can enter NOF's ranks. In regards to protests, strikes, rallies, etc., agreements were made that our committees can each act independently but our actions must be coordinated. They agreed to allow NOF representatives to join the leaderships of trade unions, professional associations and others. These decisions will be reviewed after they are studied by both organizations. They accepted responsibility, with the lawyers from the National Solidarity available to EAM to protect NOF members in the court in those cases where members have been arrested and are awaiting trial. Through the newspapers and through the CPG and EAM press they are preparing to campaign for NOF's recognition and legalization. They did not agree with our position to sabotage the army mobilization. But will not oppose us if we continued to apply our position, which was decided by the top NOF leadership.

A similar meeting took place in Gumendzhe – Enidzhe Vardar District between CPG and NOF representatives, in which similar issues were discussed and agreements made with our CPG comrades in the field of cooperation in organizing the Slavo-Macedonians in NOF. In the above mentioned progress we made in our relations with the CPG we confirmed one more thing. Yesterday, in Gumendzhe – Enidzhe Vardar District we received reliable information that the CPG Regional Committee for Macedonia and

Thrace, a few days ago convened a meeting during which a position was taken to allow all Slavo-Macedonian personnel who are found and work in the ranks of the Greek National Liberation organizations to immediately join NOF and work in its organizations. Implementation of this resolution is already in progress. Two cadres, who were working in the EAM and in the Greek Agrarian Party, arrived at our organization and have asked to work for NOF. As we can see the CPG has shown sincerity and understanding. If this act continues to be expressed by the same understanding and sincerity, sooner or later we will make gains in our common struggle. Unfortunately, the truth is that there are questions to which we have no answers and no agreements. We have firmly made our position clear. We want all the ethnicities living in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia to join NOF including Greeks, Vlachs and others, and not just the Slavo-Macedonians. NOF is everything in this general struggle and will do everything possible to bring unity and brotherhood between Macedonians, Greeks, Vlachs and others living in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. NOF will be a powerful force and of massive strength in this relationship, resulting in a stronger general democratic movement in Greece.

The CPG, on the other hand, has made it clear that it does not want to deal with this issue at this time. In the same way, we (NOF and the CPG) have different views in regards to the Sofoulis government. We support the idea of creating the necessary conditions for free and honest elections as something the Sofoulis government must do. The CPG's position on this, a month ago, was for the democratic resistance movement to participate in the Sofoulis government. Zahariadis's latest statements have confirmed this.

These differences should not stand in our way as obstacles in these critical times when we need unity in the democratic forces and to coordinate our activities. My view is that NOF must maintain its line and principles on how to organize, activate and deploy our forces. At the same time, we need to get even closer to the other democratic forces in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and throughout Greece regarding all events: elections, coup, etc., because this way we will have a better chance at succeeding.

With the launch of the pre-election campaign in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia the terror has been increasing in all these areas. Our people are literally made targets of the Monarcho-Fascist rage. Persecutions, arrests, roadblocks, etc., are rampant and increasing in all the villages. It would not be out of character or unrealistic to say that the Black Front has openly declared war on the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia with aims at destroying them by any means possible. But in spite of all this our people will not bend; they patiently endure the hardship, which is admirable. As I will show you later, we have examples of heroism which are rare cases in history. Now let us visit the other districts.

Voden District

In the city Voden, as it is in the entire district, the terror perpetrated by the police is raging. Every hour and every minute the Monarcho-Fascists SAN bands, the gendarmes, etc., are spreading all over the villages in this district like a spider web and liberally exacting their rage and anger on the people, torturing and killing our citizens.

Major Bafas, commander of the gendarmes, a Jesuit and spy since birth, is in charge of this black gang. Major Bafas was a collaborator, a man with no conscience and an organ of the treacherous anti-people English policy in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. The fact that this district is found near the border is a pretext for this unbearable terror. And so these rabid people, led by the dark forces in them, perform orgies in the middle of the day unobstructed.

Another tyrant in this district is Kapetanios Ekonomopoulos, chief of public security in the city Voden and a favourite of the English. He speaks openly: "I do not recognize Sofoulis's plays... the legal courts and the law – that's me." Ekonomopoulos is a cunning individual responsible for the blockades and attacks. He is the organizer and leader of the fascist organization in the city Voden connected to Perchempi.

Operating in Enidzhe Vardar is Kondakos, captain of the police force in Kozheni Region. Kondakos is the third leg of the tripod in

this satrapy. Following are a number of anti-popular orgies performed by his ilk:

On the 6th of this month the state security stormed the workers' club in the city Voden, and when they began their search Ekonomopoulos arrived with a number of armed masked men belonging to the various fascist organizations, including EPEN. They smashed the doors and windows of the building and then began to beat the workers. More than 30 people were beaten, some severely. Included among those who were severely beaten were Haril Madzarov, Hristo Vakadarov, Petre Vasev, Hristo Markovski, Kosta Xanthopoulos, Elli Papadopoulou and Giorgi Samarinov, who are all now in hospital. At the same time a wave of mass arrests flooded the area. Twenty four people from the village Teovo were arrested, jailed and tortured. Someone betrayed NOF in Karadzhova resulting in 60 NOF members being arrested, including four of our legal staff. Another 25 Macedonians were arrested in Orovo. Two of our staff were taken during an ambush and arrested. One of those was Vera, AFZH organizer for the entire section. She was badly wounded and nothing is known about her life at this time.

The village Krontselovo was severely attacked and plundered and many people were arrested and jailed in the city Voden. The people underwent terrible plight and suffered indescribable agony. Over night the people were led out in the terrain and forced to dig their own graves in the dark while they were told that they would be executed and put in these graves if they even considered working for, or joining NOF. One 60 year-old man, after being violently forced to dig his own grave and made to lie in it, boldly and openly said: "I am a Macedonian and an honest labourer. I will be honoured to die this way. You, on the other hand, are nothing more than fascists and tormentors of the people!"

At the same time in Karadzhova, the Black Front strengthened its activities and, in front of the police, armed more Monarcho-Fascist gangs and sent them off to terrorize more people. Monarcho-Fascist gang activities are unrestrained. They burn, destroy, torture, and kill without any concern. As a consequence of this situation, and the successive blows we have received, our organization is in crisis. Our organizations are under attack and we have to endure terrible terror.

In some regions we were forced to abandon our bases and networks. Many of our legal personnel in the city Voden, because of fear, are not carrying out our directives. Because of all of this we are forced to reorganize some of our forces. For starters, the people led by our organization in the village Sarakinovo have massively and angrily demonstrated against the attacks organized by the police and by the armed Monarcho-Fascists. As a result two villagers were arrested but police left the village.

The same day the people were arrested, the villagers in the village Dolno Rodivo stormed the police station and freed them.

NOF has been organizing in the city and in many villages and is combating terror with protests organized by protest committees. At the same time it is also attempting to solve immediate economic problems. Lately, after NOF's initiative in cooperation with EAM, a decision was made to prepare a general district rally to be held in the city Voden during the week.

At the same time the NOF Voden District Committee, on account of the extreme, long and difficult situation created by the Monarcho-Fascist terror in the District, has decided to organize armed groups with aims at executing the traitors and eliminating the armed Monarcho-Fascist gangs in this district.

Lerin District

The unchecked terror in this district continued all through the winter and now continues with greater vigour. The main problem we face is the mass trials. Many people have avoided the harsh judgments and torment by crossing the border. These people will remain there and will fight from there. Our organization has made certain achievements in this sector but everything is still not as it should be because we have not been able to organize something that would end the mass trials.

Located in the city Lerin is Evan's office. Evans works for the British Intelligence Services, well-known and famous for his anti-Yugoslav machinations and anti-Macedonian propaganda that he frequently spreads around. He is tied to and has organized the

appearance of the Balisti and of Drazha Mihailovich's gang in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. The Macedonian language has been banned and outlawed in this (Lerin) district.

Kostur District

The terror in Kostur District had exceeded all other districts. The armed Monarcho-Fascist gangs, under the auspices of the police, have spread throughout the entire terrain and were terrorizing the population. The local authorities were intimidating the Macedonian people threatening that they would not provide them with UNRA rations unless they came to their side (take the side of the Monarcho-Fascists).

In order to allow Macedonian children to enroll in school programs they (Monarcho-Fascists) were asking the children to declare that they would renounce their national identity (they were asking children to renounce their Macedonian ethnicity in order to receive food in the school canteens). They prohibited the Macedonian language from being spoken under threats of being taken to court. Traveling from village to village was prohibited without police permission. A number of villages were attacked and large numbers of people were arrested and jailed as an intimidation tactic to shut down our organizations. Villages were blockaded with roadblocks, houses were robbed and women and girls were raped. This has become rampant, particularly in the countryside and especially in the villages D'mbeni and Kosinets. Last week 600 Macedonian people, who were arrested and kept in the prisons in Kostur, were secretly transferred during the night to an unknown destination. They continue to arrest, prosecute and jail people nonstop. A few days ago they loaded 800 heavy machine guns in Shatishta and secretly transported them by truck to the cities Kostur and Rupishsta.

But, in spite of all this, the morale of our people is high (and well-respected). After each Monarcho-Fascist attack our organizations respond with a counterattack through demonstrations and protests. About 7% of the municipalities and agricultural cooperatives have come to our side. We managed to come in contact with many of our people through these cooperatives. Characteristically, all

Macedonians who were arrested and wrongly imprisoned under misleading testimonies in the courts have boldly answered our call and reasserted their Macedonian identity even though they were threatened with death if they did not renounce it. Not one of them gave them (the Monarcho-Fascists) the pleasure of hearing them say that they were not Macedonians or to claim another identity. The police killed two Macedonian people in the village Tiolishta because they supposedly were enquiring about leaving the village. But the truth is they were killed because they refused to renounce their Macedonian national identity.

Paskal

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 223. Original text was typed is in the Macedonian language. Published in the same edition: doc. 97, p. 225-232.

2.13 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski), May 1946, regarding the political and military situation in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and NOF's relations with the CPG

Exposé

According to the latest news, for the first time our organizations are standing up to the systematic action and all other means the Black Front is using. The reactionaries have mobilized all their apparatus, by blood and by fire, to suppress the people's resistance wherever it is expressed. All these things that are taking place are unprecedented. This is like going back to the beastly methods, provocations and bloody terror the Gestapo and Hitler's Germans were committing.

Here is what Comrade Otse, Voden District Secretary, had to say: Everyday Slavo-Macedonians are being arrested and brutally beaten and tortured in inhumane ways. Our organizations are operating legally but our situation is dire. Our organization in the city Voden is no longer operational but we still have an operating network. We are fighting frantically to preserve and keep the resistance alive but the question is how much longer will our staff hold out? Many of our cadres fear for their lives. Many of our legal activists, especially those in the factories, are being arrested and imprisoned. Every expression our people make in the political field is done through the protest committees, through protests, rallies and other actions, to which the authorities respond with armed force and spill our blood. This is literally killing our people's spirit and they are seeking new solutions for the resistance. People are calling on us to save them; they are begging us to give them guns! We are in better shape in the villages. On April 10-12, 1946 the Black Front, the gendarmerie and a number of armed spies took preemptive general cleansing action to arrest our cadres and attack our organizations. But their actions did not succeed and in revenge they plunder the houses, arrested many people and brutally tortured them.

The Kostur District Committee Secretary told us the same thing: The terror is growing worse with each passing day. People are being arrested and jailed en masse; men, women and even children are

being regularly beaten and are struggling with unprecedented torment and torture. Almost all the women in the village Chuka were arrested and jailed because they publicly protested en masse against the gendarmes forcing their husbands to vote for the Black Front. Now all these women are in jail in the Kostur prisons. A substantial number of our people have fled to the mountains to save themselves. The wild terror continues around the clock. They are blockading the villages and shooting everyone in sight, even worse than the Italians and Germans did during the occupation.

The general situation in our districts is particularly critical. The Black Front has openly declared a one-sided war against our people. Its main goal is to decapitate our organizations, to neutralize our people's ability to struggle and to force our people to submit to its inhumane ways. To achieve its aspirations, the Black Front will not hesitate to use even more destructive measures than the occupiers used. Our people are struggling by legal means and are expressing their desires through the law but it seems not to matter. The division of UNRA products has been discontinued and all these products are now given only to the fascists. When people (three, four, or ten) go and protest about not getting their share of UNRA goods, at minimum, they are arrested. Our actions that carry more massive character are being countered with arms and without any discussions or negotiations. These fascist ways of responding to our people have convinced many that our political forms of struggle are not working and they are losing faith in them and in us. In this sector we are seriously being looked at with loss of confidence and much fatigue. The dominating idea now is arms; our forces are looking to arms for "freedom or death!" This spirit is expressed en masse everywhere. This is what the people are looking for to save themselves from this danger. It is important to keep the masses in their bases. We need to show the masses that they are needed for a confrontational level of action. We need to show them that all possibilities have not been exhausted in this base. At the same time we need to immediately and vigorously move to regroup our forces and organize them and maintain the masses active. Our district leaders, who found themselves surprised by these events, have received strong and swift directives to go in this direction, with serious precautions not to attract spontaneity in the masses, but to correctly and securely manage them. At the same time, the position taken by our Comrade

Secretary a few days ago is to conduct ourselves with much precision and ultimate secrecy in the field. To this end, responsible comrades from our organizational leadership have been dispatched to the field.

What is happening with the CPG and its position in this? We found out that in the last few days Captain Stathis, an old ELAS captain, put together the first groups of fighters on Mount Paiak above Enidzhe Vardar and on Mount Vermion above the city Negosh. At the same time he informed our people that he will be sending a group of fighters to Kaimakchalan. Our people have informed us that they have formed a Macedonian battalion on Mount Kaimakchalan consisting of three units, which they appropriately named “3rd Macedonian Battalion”. They have weapons to arm only one unit but with insufficient ammunition. The battalion, according to information we received, is to merge with the ELAS unit that will be arriving at this district.

Similarly, a meeting was convened in Kostur District between our District and the CPG District Committee for Kostur. This was to get agreement on points, on objectives and on NOF’s political line in regards to taking measures against Black Front attacks, for organizing armed groups, etc. We ran into some difficulties on the question of whether NOF members can join the GZP (Greek Agrarian Party), something that our comrades from the CPG wanted. The view taken was that we already have allowed members of NOF to join the GZP. As to the question of the groups, the Kostur District Committee has implemented measures so that each section can accommodate a group.

The following is another serious question. The Lerin District Committee has informed us that there is a warehouse full of weapons outside the village Banitsa, near Piperka Mountain, with nearly 2,000 guns. They were hidden there by ELAS after the Varkiza Agreement was signed. But those who know the whereabouts of the warehouse and who were put in charge of hiding the weapons are now refugees. No one else knows where the warehouse is, not even the CPG Lerin District Committee.

We are informing you of this fact and waiting for your response. We need to find and uncover the warehouse in order to meet our immediate needs for weapons for the first groups. In the meantime we will organize a more reliable way to acquire these weapons from the warehouse and distribute them.

For the organizational leadership
Paskal, s.r.

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 332
The original text was typed in the Macedonian language. Published in the same edition: doc. 135, p. 301-302.

2.14 - NOF Main Board Leadership Report (Paskal Mitrevski), September 13, 1946, regarding the negotiations between NOF and the CPG for the unification of the Macedonian and Greek partisans, the failure of some party solutions as well as the general political situation in Greece after the referendum

Four comrades from the main leadership are located at four different points. Comrade Dzhodzho is located in Kaimakchalan, Comrade Pavle Rakovski is in Paiak, Comrade Keramitchiev is in Vicho and Comrade Mina is in Gramos towards Epirus. I took statements from the four who typically agree with the following basic points excluding the secondary local features, which apply to each area separately.

1) The ever increasing destructive terror lately, perpetrated by the Monarcho-Fascists against the Macedonian population, has not yielded expected results for the reactionaries. Even though our people are literally destroyed, their spirits remain strong and their hatred for the Monarcho-Fascists is becoming stronger and wilder. Their faith in NOF in the meantime is growing stronger. Our people are fighting under NOF's banner and are ready to be tested. This is the truth.

2) Because of the constant attacks against us everywhere, we are rebuilding and enhancing our organizations NOF, NOMS, AFZH. However, it is difficult to rebuild in areas where mass terror has exceeded barbarism and where reactionary forces are stationed permanently. For this reason and due to lack of vigilance, we have bases in villages that have been hit hard. But generally our organizations are becoming effective in regrouping our forces and organizing our people's struggle. The main useful weapon we lack, which can help our work everywhere, is organized agitation. We have staff but we lack the technical means. Many times our district committees have sent appeals in this sector and many have returned asking us for help. Some time ago our organizational leadership sent you a list of necessary technical resources that we need for each of the districts and for the central illegal field apparatus for the Macedonian language. We can obtain Greek letters from elsewhere, so that in this way we can begin to issue our main "NOF for Aegean Macedonia" newspaper, something that will have enormous impact.

This issue should be taken very seriously and resolved quickly. If you don't help us from over there it will be impossible to operate our technical and illegal apparatus and we will be limited to simple leaflets in Greek.

3) Recently we reinforced our forces in the military sector. We have about 500 partisans in the mountains of central and western Aegean Macedonia. They are distributed as follows: about 200 in Kaimakchalan, 130 in Vicho, 80 in Paiak, 20 in Negush Mountain and about 80 in Gramos. The internal structure of our forces is as follows: groups have 10-15 people while units have 40-50. The higher military formations (militias, brigades, etc.) have not yet been formed. Outside of the military function of these groups we are still working on the internal, political and party functions. We are delayed because of the abnormal situation that exists between us and the CPG District Committee, which uses assimilation tactics and attitudes which we reject. We are going to operate our party bases until a definitive resolution is found. Earlier the military actions of our groups were limited but now we have launched our enhanced action (activities) in this sector with successful results.

A real problem for us is lack of weapons and ammunition. The absence of weapons is vast and obvious. Because of that we are finding ourselves at a lower level than the ELAS groups; the CPG people use this in their assimilating aspirations. Many of the guns that our groups possess don't work, while many fighters in the groups have no guns. We are sacrificing our partisans when we send them to battle with only five bullets. As a result our clashes are very short. The police stations we attacked have supplied us with little ammunition, less than what we spend. The Greek reactionaries know this and only supply their gangs and police stations with limited arms and ammunition, enough for one firefight. Of course we are not talking about organized actions during which the military and police are well-armed. The lack of weapons and ammunition is a serious problem. Winter is coming. Our main task now is to create a free zone in our areas where we can spend the winter; otherwise we will have difficulties maintaining our troops in the field. Weapons are an immediate necessity: We need English and German shmaizers, machine guns, semi-automatic guns, bazookas as well as bullets and ammunition for the German and English shmaizers and

for the Italian and Czechoslovakian Barrettas. We also have a serious need for clothing, especially shoes. In all the reports that our comrades from the Main Leadership have sent you, they have mentioned this particular issue. With the coming of winter most our partisans will have to campaign almost naked and barefoot. So far we have experienced dire incidents of colds and various other diseases.

We also need medical supplies and drugs; we have none. Many of our fighters were wounded in battle and we have nothing to treat them with, not even bandages to dress their wounds. We are desperate for medical supplies.

During our most recent attacks our fighters have noticed that the Monarcho-Fascists have reinforced their gangs. Attacks carried out by the reactionary units against the peaceful population are inflicting disaster but are having little success when they target our armed forces. The typical strength in the local armed reactionary gangs and armed public authorities is about 750. Of course almost all of them are Greeks and Prosfigi (Turkish settlers from Asia Minor). Lately, in Lerin and Kostur Regions, the Monarcho-Fascist gangs have been struck by panic. They who once were the nightmare of our villages are now panicking.

4) After my last discussions with Zahariadis and the other CPG comrades there were certain common positions which would have required our cooperation with the CPG. We did not leave a single point untouched or undecided. If all what we discussed was realized, our current problems would be gone and we could all focus on our work building our movements in our respective areas. Unfortunately our CPG comrades took a line drawn to distort things, so the whole thing collapsed. One point of contention was the military question:

There was no commitment from Zahariadis on the issue of keeping the Macedonian groups separate and not joining them with the Greek units. We were prepared to have joint headquarters in every area. Zahariadis, however, made it clear to me that by allowing us to have separate Macedonian units today would be the first step to creating a Macedonian army tomorrow, with its own headquarters. Now our CPG friends who represent the party in various districts

insist that we break up the Macedonian groups and send the Macedonian partisans to join the Greek units. In other words, they want no Macedonian military units to exist in their districts. The CPG district leaderships claim that this request came straight from the top. Our refusal to abide by this has placed us in a precarious position. We have been struggling for two years since we freed ourselves from the occupiers and since the Varkiza agreement was signed. NOF has been well entrenched within the broad Macedonian masses and we cannot agree with such a fundamental change. I prefer not to emphasize our experiences with our top CPG comrades wanting to dominate the decision making process and who prefer to have exclusivity on issues involving the appointment of personnel after we establish a joint headquarters, and so on. I believe we can get over this through greater understanding of the issues. At this point I would like to point out that our CPG regional friends are not the only ones responsible for the above mentioned issues. These issues go all the way up to the top. It would appear that the Bureau of the CPG Committee for Aegean Macedonia and Thrace has not issued a clear mandate to its political authorities on the military issue. They have definitely left this issue open for interpretation, which in the districts has been interpreted as “no Macedonian military units are allowed to exist” and that the Macedonian fighters must join the Greek units in the creation of a single national Greek army in the mountains. This way the reactionaries will have fewer reasons to vilify the Greek national resistance in the mountains. This is of course is not true; otherwise we would have easily been able to realize our aims regarding the decisions we made with Zahariadis.

5) Another issue on which we disagreed was their (CPG's) insistence that NOF's party cadres join the CPG and other Greek political organizations. They looked at NOF like they used to look at SNOF, with no prestige and being, and insisted that the NOF leadership be replaced with persons of their liking, completely disregarding our feelings and disrespecting our opinions as equals. They were not looking for reasons to strengthen NOF; they were looking for ways to weaken it so that tomorrow they could say it was getting old and useless like SNOF, and that it was about time that it retired just like SNOF did. They are forgetting that NOF existed for two years and struggled to create a strong party apparatus brought up in the spirit of the Yugoslav Party. They are forgetting

that NOF, in the two years of resisting, has created good fighters, who in some cases attracted world attention, exemplified by Mirka Ginova and the 7 who were killed in Enidzhe Vardar. None of the NOF personnel who stood before the firing squad became regretful and abandoned their principles to avoid death like in other incidents. They (CPG) are forgetting the countless NOF victims who gave their lives for the struggle and the countless heroic feats they performed during their lives. They were communists and party members who were inspired by the CPY.

Our agreement with Zahariadis was to compose a list of our party cadres with the appropriate position proposed for each. Our proposal would have had the same balance. Everything would have been done by cooptation. We agreed to do this for the three district committees, Kostur, Lerin and Voden where more NOF Macedonians were to enter. Now they are proposing something different. During the first round, as I was told by Comrade Ioanidis from the CPG Politburo, I can be appointed by cooptation for which the Politburo will be responsible, as for the others, Comrade Ioanidis insisted that they all be elected democratically by a party congregation. At the same time CPG representatives in the field say how many and who they want will be appointed by the CPG District Committees without taking into account our proposals. This means that they have the authority to appoint none of us, no one that follows our party line. They can appoint fewer Macedonians and only those who follow the CPG party line. It is true that the party needs to be vigilant but here it does not refer to vigilance, but to strive to remove our NOF party apparatus. Zaharadis's spirit, however, was completely different. Zahariadis considered NOF to be a democratic movement which existed for years and wanted NOF to continue to exist and therefore have its own consideration for choosing its party leadership.

But with everything that was going on, it was our honest and open approach to honour our agreements and avoid interference. We cooperated with the CPG and EAM in organizing and coordinating military and political activities.

In some areas, like Kaimakchalan and Paiak for example, we established General Headquarters for the military sector.

Even though these assimilatory tactics existed and the CPG district representatives were openly attempting to destroy NOF's integrity, NOF has remained intact and in some ways has improved. In other words, it has not fallen out of its lines. Not a single partisan has expressed a desire to join the Greek groups. But it is rather ironic that Greek partisans have expressed desires to join our groups, contrary to what their leaders want them to do. This of course is happening because NOF has some influence in the Greek strata, particularly in some of the villages where Prosfigi are organized under NOF. In our opinion specific things need to be definitely resolved, and in good faith. We have already begun to do that. What remains now is to eliminate other obstacles. For the time Comrade Ioanidis is here this problem too can be solved.

Most recent political events in Greece:

The political crisis was still ongoing as the referendum date approached in Greece. This is because the leaders of the various political parties, after expressing their opinions, created confusion in an already electrified atmosphere. Only a few minor and insignificant parties recognized the referendum. They were Papandreou's Democratic Socialist Party, Kanellopoulos's United Party and Zervas's National Party. All these parties were internal parliamentary bodies which did not participate in the government. They openly announced that they recognize the referendum, which now means that they are ready to be placed in the service of the Chaldaris government.

Sofoulis, the leader of the Liberal Party in the centre, as well as the leader of the National Organization of Democratic Officers, together with Milonas of the Democratic Agrarian Party, have said that they do not recognize the referendum and that the regime issue in Greece still remains unresolved.

Sofoklis Venizelos, leader of the Liberal Party, has not yet taken any stand for or against the referendum.

The EAM parties, left-wing liberals and Zvolos, leader of the Union of People's Republic, have reported that they stand against the referendum.

During a peace conference, in his speech Moshe Piade posed a question which concerned Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Partsalidis, EAM General Secretary, responding to questions from reporters asking “What will EAM’s position be if Greece was attacked?” said: “EAM will not fight for Greece’s totality but only for the destruction of the Monarcho-Fascist government.”

On the other hand, through the actions of the Greek partisans, they (CPG and EAM) continued to reinforce their forces in parallel with the bold actions of the NOF partisans. In regards to this, Deputy Prime Minister Gonatas said that after Tsaldaris returns to Greece serious measures will be taken against the leaders of the left parties that support the partisans.

November 13, 1946.

For the Organizational Leadership

Secretary:

Paskal, s.r.

Attached I am sending you a statement given by EAM and a report from Comrade Mihail Keramichiev sent to the CPG Macedonian Bureau.

Paskal, s.r.

AM, collection: “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949”, AE: 420.

The original document was typed in Macedonian. Published in the same edition: doc. 171, p. 378-383.

2.15 - Report from Paskal Mitrevski, dated April 19, 1947, regarding relations between NOF and the CPG and regarding the means by which the unification agreement was implemented

With this letter I want to inform you mostly about two issues: the first issue is about my coming here and the second about the difficulties the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia are going through in the struggle as part of the democratic resistance in Greece together with the Greek people who, due to chauvinistic tendencies and tactics, are isolating us by a series of tactics perpetrated by the CPG district and other CPG leaders from higher up. These tactics are perpetrated against NOF and against the best Macedonian fighters and leaders of the Macedonian people.

As you well know, I left on February 2, 1947. My coming here was deliberately distorted by Ilia, a CPG representative, in order to slander me. My reasons for leaving were made very clear to this comrade, which is confirmed by the documents I gave him. He however chose to ignore the truth and instead reported me to the authorities, with whom he maintains contact, telling them that I had no party business coming here and that I had no specific directives in this matter. At the same time he did not explain why I was here.

His intent in doing this was to simply doubt my revolutionary following and to show that I was abandoning my party responsibilities. In other words, he wanted to present me as a compromised and irresponsible comrade.

This by itself is nothing, it has no great significance, but in a system where our CPG comrades are looking for ways to curb our responsibilities in the Macedonian peripheries, it does have significance.

Regarding this issue, as a revolutionary I am obliged to protest in order to protect my honour and my dignity against these untruths that are perpetrated against me and spread by Comrade Ilia. So in my capacity as leader, entrusted with this responsibility, on one hand I want to reject this perpetrated accusation and, on the other, I want to truthfully inform you of how things have progressed.

As you know, in the month of October 1946, under a directive from you, I went to see Comrade Markos, Supreme Commander of the Greek Democratic Army. I found and met with him on Mount Hashia located between Thessaly and Aegean Macedonia. During our meeting we discussed the issues resulting from the new NOF-CPG, EAM line and tasks and we agreed on certain practical solutions.

After that Comrade Markos handed me a piece of paper and asked me to read it. It was a directive issued by Comrade Ianidis, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo Secretariat. The letter was an original copy issued to Markos. In accordance with this directive, Markos tasked me to go to all the Macedonian peripheries in Aegean Macedonia and, on the spot, implement this new line. Then, upon my completion of the last periphery (Enidze Vardar, Gumendzhe), I was to immediately and without delay go to Solun where I was to write a report about my work and what I am going to work on in the future, and submit it to the Regional Committee Bureau of which I am a member.

The directive I was given said that I was to go as soon as possible. The road which I was to take, according to the Bureau, was to be determined by Comrade Markos. And sure enough Comrade Markos pointed the way. He said that upon my arrival at the city Voden, if the Voden District Committee had a more reliable way to travel, then I was to take it, otherwise when I was finished my last periphery in Enidzhe Vardar, Gumendzhe my directive was... continued Markos, to follow the well-known canal in Doiran where last summer I passed by three times, i.e. Doiran – Kukush - Solun. To help me accomplish this task Comrade Pano, President of the Supreme Headquarters from the Headquarters for Central Aegean Macedonia, and Comrade Stati, General Headquarters Commander in Paiak Mountain, were employed to connect me with the network. And if that was not possible, continued Markos, i.e. if the network failed to get me through... then I was to return back here and Markos would send me by the sea with a boat drifting along the Pieria Mountain coast (Katerini), but mainly along the channel where I was to arrive at my appointed place... this would have been the shortest and most reliable way to my destination.

This is exactly what Markos had recommended for my travels...

The Voden District Committee categorically insisted that I go through Voden to Solun, not only because there was no other secure road, but in general there was no channel that I could use. Therefore I had to go through other channels.

Comrade Pano who I found on Negush Mountain, and who knew about my mission, gave me everything I needed for my connections for continuing on to Solun via the Headquarters in Krusha, Kukush Region. I gave the above documents to Comrade Ilija.

I left for Kaimakchalan Mountain and Karadzovo Region to do my job. A few days later I arrived in Paiak Mountain where I again met up with Comrade Pano who, at that time, had gone there to do some other work. There, he informed me that our (CPG) courier service was no longer working and that the couriers had withdrawn their services. In such a case, I informed him, that I had to return to Comrade Markos and take the sea route to my destination. But Pano assured me that he would find another means for me to travel. He said he would give me two of his couriers to take me there...

In connection with this process I have copies of the documents I gave Comrade Ilias. But I still don't know why Comrade Pano did not tell me that I didn't need to go and that I should not have gone, neither did he tell me why he arranged for me to go a different way. I believe that Comrade Pano is not fully aware of the entire scandal. This is how I ended up here. I was definitely given a directive to get to my destination as soon as possible and I did arrive at the predetermined place (Solun), mainly via the predetermined way by which I was to travel.

When I met up with Comrade Ilias after my crossing, I told him what my mission was and the directive I was given; to get to Solun as soon as possible and to make arrangements for my departure and contacts in Kukush. At that point I gave him the documents that I had with me and he told me to be ready because I was leaving in two days. However, as we now know, Comrade Ilias met with Comrade Pano and things did not work out. The same day that I was expected

to leave, he came to me and said it was important that I wait a while because the Kukush-Solun canal was not working. Later when we met again, he told me that battles were being fought at Krusha (Kukush), etc.

The way in which Ilias spoke to me and the many contradictions that came out of his mouth upset me so I asked him to give me a clearer explanation. At the same time I asked him to inform all the comrades responsible for these matters and to get an exact response from them as to why I was there. I wanted to make sure that there were no misunderstandings and that there would be no problems for me later. But Comrade Ilias told me that all this was not necessary, that the comrades responsible had nothing to do with this issue and that such a deep question did not exist. He said that I did not need to ask such questions when I met up with any of the responsible comrades. And once again Comrade Ilias did not give me an exact response, leaving me to doubt things. In other words, he led me to believe something was up. This was clear to me that he set me up, made me follow this path illegally and I moved independently of any directive. Notwithstanding, from a moral standpoint, I will bring this issue to the Regional Committee Bureau, of which I am a member, but at the same time it will be a long and hard battle for me, that is why I have chosen to inform you and give you the objective truth about this matter. I have an obligation to defend my revolutionary honour. It is important to me. So I will remain a fighter of Macedonia and I will fight for Macedonia to the end. I will fulfill the responsibilities I was given, I will fight within the CPG for the victory of the People's Republic of Greece.

You gave me a difficult task and wanted to know if I could follow it and I was willing to die for the will of the Party. I assure you that I am prepared for this... now and to the end.

I am ending this issue with sincerity and expressing my sorrow for this unfortunate situation, I understand how important it is, as you shall see later, to find myself down and to be able to have arrived as soon as possible to my place at the Regional Committee Bureau.

And now I would like to talk about the second issue, the one that the Party leadership has a problem with, I am referring to the

Macedonian resistance movement developed in the Macedonian territories. We have employed the entire NOF apparatus, including cadres and activists, to assist in the implementation of the new line and in the merger between the Macedonian political and people's democratic movement organizations with those of the entire democratic movement in Greece. The new line has found understanding in the Macedonian fighters because it is a practical move which expresses desire for brotherhood and unity. The time for this is ripe and as a result of NOF's hard work the people have become more conscious and are ready to go in this direction. The people led by NOF are being shaped to struggle in a massive political resistance and are being made ready to take their place in the general battlefield against the Monarcho-Fascists and against this second occupation; this is mainly due to our support from the CPG. But in order for these changes to take effect; i.e. in the relations between NOF and the CPG/EAM which are currently being made, plus to solve other and more general problems in the general struggle, we have to be included in the process of the struggle for a People's Republic. If this is done to follow some political line, in itself being a field of top political issues, or if we found ourselves in a practical situation where this line needs to be implemented for practical reasons, it will become clear for two reasons:

1) From a political and ideological standpoint most Greek people are not prepared to accept and understand the existence of the Macedonian people and their struggle, let alone struggle in a sincere alliance with them. But it is clear that the fury of the struggle and the economic conditions will bring necessity for change as well as for spiritual closeness, as much as the subjective factors will.

2) Chauvinism, like arteriosclerosis, is imbedded in the minds of some of our Greek comrades who are entrusted by the Party to lead the Macedonian peripheries. Especially now, as a result of the developing Macedonian movement, they suffer from "chronic" mistrust just like a few of the top CPG leaders do towards the Macedonian leadership.

We will start with the military. The spirit that reigns in the leaders of the army is that they constantly underestimate the value of the

Macedonian cadres. This kind of thinking has its own expression in the systematic exclusion of Macedonian leaders from various initiatives and functions. Regardless of the objective criteria, the need of the struggle and the interests of the Party, the CPG continuously keeps appointing Greek leaders, especially in the Macedonian peripheries. For example, in a row of headquarters and peripheries with a Macedonian population in the Gramos, Vermion, Kaimakchalan and Paiak Headquarters not a single Macedonian has been appointed member of the headquarters. The only non-typical situation is at Vicho Mountain headquarters and this is because the entire staff there is composed of local Macedonian people and almost all the partisans are Macedonians.

With lack of respect on Comrade Markos's face, which is characteristic of him when we talk, he said to me: "The Macedonians need to be tested and to distinguish themselves first before we can consider them for appointments." I told him that I agreed with him and asked him how and when he would be testing and allowing the Macedonians to distinguish themselves? Comrade Markos did not answer. Similarly Comrade Markos was against the formation of the NOF central leadership as a central authority. He only wanted NOF leaders in the districts. I insisted that we were not prepared to accept amendments to orders given from above and the fact that there were organizational principles for such a body to exist. Then, after thinking about it, Comrade Markos accepted that there was a need to establish a central leadership.

On other matters I reached understanding and friendly relations with Comrade Markos.

Comrade Pano is a representative of the Democratic Army Headquarters in Central Macedonia. This Comrade is responsible for the Macedonian partisan units in Kaimakchalan being without arms until January 1947. Pano consistently and persistently undermined the connection and unity of the Macedonian groups. At the end he forcefully disarmed the Macedonian partisans in Paiak, bringing discontent and dissatisfaction. He is a Comrade with great chauvinism in himself. This comrade wrote the famous directive, many months after NOF was recognized by Comrade Zahariadis, which attacked NOF's integrity accusing it of being an organization

composed of “Ohranists” and autonomists. Before that he was CPG Secretary of the Ber District. The Macedonian partisans there did not care for him simply because he did not care for them. I made contact with him while leaving these districts on my way to implementing the new line in the military sector. In the first place he did not respond to me properly, not as a person, not as a comrade, not as a colleague and not even as a leader. He treated me as if I was something strange and he was some great leader.

I had a long discussion with him, attempting to convince him that we needed unity between our groups and that we also had to develop the partisan movement in these three regions so that the several Macedonians who were tested and had proven themselves could join the headquarter leaderships in Paiak, Kaimakchalan and Vermion. After I said this, in an angry tone of voice, he said: “That is not possible because there are no such Macedonians!” He said this in spite of the Kaimakchalan units being composed of 5/6^{ths} Macedonians.

I insisted that one or two important positions, political or unit command, be filled with a Macedonian. There were many capable Macedonians of doing those jobs. But the Party vetoed my request and put an end to this issue.

Comrade Stathis is also in this sector. He is Commander of the Paiak Headquarters. This Comrade is responsible for carrying out isolation and destruction tactics against Macedonian personnel. He has dismissed a large number of Macedonian personnel from their positions without cause and has removed even more from the military. He vilified our devoted fighter Ivan Kovachev, who has a remarkable combat career, with trumped up charges of allegedly fleeing battle without authorization. He did this to ruin his reputation so that he could remove him from the military. But his plan did not work and later it was proven that the whole damned thing was a dastardly machination. This is the reason why two active cadres, Aleko (Pishutov) and Filip (do not know his last name) were put in isolation for four months. Stathis’s chauvinistic spirit even comes out in the leaflets he issues at his headquarters. Leaflets are regularly issued in the Macedonian peripheries under the title: “Brother Greeks and Slavo-Macedonians.” In leaflets which he issued in

Paiak headquarters he used the title: “Greek men and women”, with no reference to Macedonians or even Slavo-Macedonians. Let it be known that 60% of the population in the districts around this headquarters is Macedonian and the majority of the partisans belonging to this headquarters are Macedonians. (Voden, Gumendzhe, Enidzhe Vardar.)

In another leaflet issued by the same headquarters, responding to a reactionary company, he wrote: “We are not Ohranists or autonomists, and neither are we NOF-ists of which you accuse us!”

Indifferently Comrade Stathis has placed NOF with the autonomists and Ohranists. When I mentioned this to him he acknowledged that it was a mistake. But mistake or not these consistent accusations are anti-Macedonian and anti-front. Plus the irregularities and exaggerations that took place in the villages Skra (he is referring to the village Liumnitsa and to the November 13, 1946 events when units from Paiak, in addition to liquidating government units, also liquidated members of NOF) and Karpi (he is referring to the village Tsrna Reka in Gumendze-Vardar Region) are being attributed to Comrade Pano and Kapetanios Mavro (Hristos Palamas). NOF comrades who worked in those villages have accused them of committing these irregularities and of spreading anti-Macedonian sentiments. About this, the Comrades gave me a number of documents written in the Greek language which I aim to take to the Regional Committee Bureau. There is also the dispute between Comrade Stathis and Comrades Iovan Kovachev (NOF District Committee member) and Kosta Gachov (Unit Commander). This is yet another case of a chauvinistic outburst against the Macedonians. Here Stathis informed Macedonians not to consciously work for NOF and if they made mistakes not to worry. If they made intentional mistakes in NOF then the Party would favour them even more.

Comrade Tanas Zhoga (known as Athanasios Zhogas) is CPG Kostur District Committee Secretary. Before NOF was connected with the CPG his main preoccupation was slandering NOF. He continued this tactic even after NOF entered into partnership with the CPG. When I met with him I asked him not to slander NOF personnel because they did not deserve it. I explained to him that his

acts were causing damage to our relations and were detrimental to the movement in this district. I explained to him that his tactics carried chauvinistic tendencies. But as soon as I moved away from the district, Comrade Zhogas went back to doing the same thing. He even managed to split the cadres in that district into two camps; NOF Macedonians and anti-NOF Macedonians and Greeks, just like sheep and goats. With the second group he created an anti-NOF circle and a different NOF party contrary to the fact that legally such a party already existed and was regularly elected.

In a separate incident Comrade Iani Pirovesovski, a Macedonian member of NOF and the CPG Kostur District Committee, for nearly 4 months was not invited to participate in any of the district meetings. Nor was he once invited to consult with Zhogas regarding his services. He was simply isolated for the sole purpose of removing him from party life and from the daily routines and practices. This type of behaviour had negative effects on people and the damage from such practices was enormous as confirmed by the NOF leadership in these districts. Every initiative that Mango, NOF District Committee Secretary for Kostur District, made up was either taken away from him or outright rejected. He was deprived of every single initiative he made.

(Here Mitrevski was referring to Stavro Mangov from the village D'mbeni, Kostur Region. He had been a progressive revolutionary since World War II. He also participated in the Second World War. Similarly he participated in the Greek Civil War during which time he was NOF District Committee Secretary and President of the National Committee for Kostur District. He died on August 11, 1949.)

Lately they have implemented a new attitude that, in my opinion, is certainly not approved by the Party. A new directive has been issued to form EAM organizations in the Macedonian villages in parallel to our organizations. But according to its program principles, NOF is already an integral part of EAM and can carry out its own policies with regards to the Macedonian masses. On top of that, NOF, in its national form, is a special national representative of the Macedonian people and has made an alliance inside the general democratic front with the Greek people (EAM). Now how can they justify this

duality? Comrade Zhogas, no doubt, has done this with intent to liquidate NOF and replace it with EAM.

The following is another case of a chauvinistic phenomenon. Comrade Markos sent with me Comrade Nikos Skotidas (Nikos Theoharopoulos), a military specialist, to help me set up the partisan arrangements in the Gramos and Vicho Headquarters. When we arrived at those peripheries, Skotidas met with Comrade Todor Evtimiadi, CPG District Committee Secretary for Lerin District, and with Comrade Zhogas, CPG District Committee Secretary for Kostur District. After they met, these two comrades made every effort to convince Comrade Skotidas not to allow more than one Macedonian to enter the Vicho Headquarters. "It is very important for the Headquarters to remain in Greeks hands!" they told him. I found this out directly from Comrade Skotidas, who accused the other two of being great chauvinists. These are only several of the many cases of chauvinism which many of our Greek comrades possessed.

Generally speaking mistrust, chauvinism, narrow sectarian spirit, tendencies to isolate, dismissals and various other machinations, dynamic distancing of prominent Macedonian personnel, tendencies to weaken NOF, causing damage to the mobilization of Macedonians in the struggle against a common enemy... are distinctive features that characterize many of our Greek friends who are empowered to be responsible for the Party leadership in the Macedonian territories.

It is not an exaggeration; it is a fact that Party members who were also members of NOF never did live the Party life, neither in essence nor formally. This was because of certain CPG attitudes towards those specific Macedonians. But this exclusion, because of various prejudicial causes, did not happen without detriment to the interests of the party.

Clearly this tactic is exhausting and terribly disappointing to our staff and to our nation, which affects NOF's unity and stability shapes the spirit of faith and self-confidence that reigns in our fighters and activists in this heroic people's struggles, as well as the faith in victory in these difficulties which are not supposed to exist.

Naturally this tactic needs to change for the sake of the struggle. Our territories have become even more militant than before. The Party needs to become stronger for the sake of succeeding and gaining power in our territories. My opinion is that, as a first measure, the party, at a given point in time, needs to distance certain individuals such as Comrades Pano, Stathis and Zhoga from the Macedonian territories because their presence here is harmful and negative for the work of the Party and for the general struggle. Plus the Party needs to do everything possible to win back the spirit of the Macedonian people. The Party needs to help NOF develop properly with a proper leadership in order to intensify mass Macedonian involvement in the general struggle for this common cause.

I intend to expose all these things and generally stop the entire situation by taking these issues to the Regional Committee Bureau as soon as I get there.

April 19, 1947

Sincerely,
Paskal

N.B. Here is another case regarding Comrade Pano's characteristic opinions. While I was working at the Enidzhe Vardar – Gumendzhe District, at the request of Comrade Pano, we called a meeting of the Paiak military personnel which was attended by Greek and Macedonian staff. The meeting was called in order to evaluate the new line of combining the partisan forces. Following in this theme I spoke as I was expected. After me Comrade Pano spoke and among other things, he said: "When we form a people's republic in Greece it would be better for the Macedonians to live within Greece instead of going with Serbia (Yugoslavia). Here or there the Macedonians should be thinking of remaining in Greece."

Later I spoke with Comrade Pano in order to clarify this issue about the Macedonians and where they should stand because the problem was not whether the Macedonians, after a democratic victory, would remain in Greece or go to Yugoslavia, etc., but that the Macedonians need to be in the struggle in order to achieve this victory of the people's republic of Greece. They need to be in the struggle to

achieve a democratic union between the Macedonian and the Greek people. This is the only way we can achieve our rights and freedom.

April 19, 1947

Paskal

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 138/47.

The original document was handwritten in the Macedonian language. Published in the edition "Aegean Macedonia in NOB", T.IV..., doc. 28, p. 132-141.

2.16 - The following letter was sent from Paskal Mitrevski to Ioannis Ioannidis, CPG Central Committee Secretary, on April 2, 1948 to inform him of the views taken by members of the NOF Secretariat regarding the mobilization schedule of personnel in DAG

Dear Comrade Iani,

Pursuant to the order I received from you, I went to the centre and convened a meeting of the Secretariat where I presented your position.

As of today the headquarters has been moved. We have transferred it to Breznitsa.

On the issue of mobilizing staff, after a long discussion, we achieved an agreement:

a) The following comrades are to be included in the mobilization process and are to join the army. The first three are members of the NOF Executive Board and the last two are members of the NOF Central Council: 1) Pavle Rakovski, 2) Lazo Poplazarov, 3) Mihail Maliov, 4) Lambro Cholakov, 5) Vangel Aianovski Oche. There was much discussion on the issue of deployment functions. Each one of us expressed our opinion regarding the proposals being put forth and at the end we came to an agreement.

This is what Keramitchiev proposed: Pavle Rakovski and Lazo Poplazarov to be appointed political commissars of the brigades, Vangel Aianovski Oche to be appointed government representative of the region, Mihail Maliov to be appointed political commissar of the battalion and Lambro Cholakov to be appointed quartermaster of the battalion.

This is what Vera proposed: Rakovski and Poplazarov to be appointed political commissars of the brigades, Cholakov and Maliov to be appointed political commissars of the battalions and Aianovski Oche to be appointed intelligence officer in the brigade.

This is what Kochopoulos proposed: Rakovski, Poplazarov and Maliov to be appointed in command of the battalion, Cholakov and Oche to be appointed in the units.

This is what I (Paskal Mitrevski) proposed: We are always working for the selection of key cadres for our organization, before and now, especially for selecting members for the Executive Board and for the Central Council. That fact should be properly assessed. Basically what needs to be done here is to assess the military capability of each person separately in relation to the functions that need to be performed. My opinion is that the most basic thing to do is assign everyone to a battalion (command). However, at this point I am unable to determine what role each should play in the battalion. This role should be determined based on a person's biography, work, merit and abilities. In addition I would like to remind you that Pavle Rakovski was a reserve lieutenant in an automotive unit when he was serving in the civil military. My opinion is that he should be matched or closely matched to a job in accordance with his specialty, if necessary. Also I believe that Poplazarov and Cholakov (the others I don't know that well) were artillery sergeants in the civil army.

b) About Andon Sikavitsa and Paskal Paskalevski, members of the Central Council who are now specifically engaged in Central Agitation and Propaganda, we all agreed that one should remain in Agitation and Propaganda and be exempt from mobilization and the other one can be mobilized in the military. Comrades Keramitchiev, Kochopoulos and Vera think Paskalevski should remain in Agitation and Propaganda because he is more familiar with the Macedonian language. I think Sikavitsa should stay because he has a better grasp of the political line and better abilities in Agitation and Propaganda. Besides that Sikavitsa is a harder worker, more modest and has more experience and ability to work in Agitation and Propaganda. During the first occupation in 1943 he was responsible for conducting Agitation and Propaganda for the Kostur District CPG District Committee, for EAM for Kostur Region and for NOF, a service he continued to provide even after the Varkiza Agreement was signed. In other words, Sikavitsa is more suitable for Agitation and Propaganda. He knows the Macedonian language but if he has any difficulties we are here help him. We can assign Risto Poptraianov

to help him with the language. Risto is a 55 year-old man who now works at the Court of Appeals in Kostur. Furthermore, Sikavitsa is sick and the doctor will certainly release him. Also, Paskalevski is increasingly using more Bulgarian words than Macedonian (he has been visiting Bulgaria). He is a comrade with a less developed sense of party responsibility and a more developed feeling of personal influence. My opinion is, as I said, to send Paskalevski to the army to do cultural and artistic work.

Regarding Sikavitsa, Kochopoulos proposed to appoint him to a military unit (to do political work) and Keramitchiev and Vera proposed to send him to do Agitation and Propaganda work in the military.

Everyone's opinion about the cultural and artistic group, along with its leader Foti Ilkovski, is to have it join the army. There is also a Comrade named Naskos. He was a student at a technical college. He should also join the army where he can appropriately be engaged in his specialization.

We are proposing that Aleko Duka, a typist in our Agitation and Propaganda section, be exempt from mobilization and remain in Agitation and Propaganda.

As for the other technical staff and for the Central Council couriers, we have agreed to send them all to the army except for Stavre Cholakov and Mitre Markovski. Chokalov will be my courier and Markovski will be Keramitchiev's courier. We propose that these two be temporarily exempted from mobilization until we find others to replace them. Comrade Vera has requested to keep courier Petre Angelov. I proposed that she replace Angelov with a woman courier. But Vera is insisting she wants to keep her old courier.

c) Kostur District. We are all in agreement regarding the Kostur District cadres, namely to be freed so that they can work in the organization: 1) Nikola Panov, District Board Secretary, 2) Vasil Chochov Assistant Secretary, 3) Ziso Shanev to become a contact for Rupishta, to form groups there and lead them. That work he has already begun, 4) Risto Kichomanov to become a contact for the occupied villages in Zagoricheni District, and 5) Sotir Manov and

Sotir Ralev to remain couriers for the District Board, who, in our opinion, are necessary until we find replacements.

We propose that the other cadres in the district be mobilized and offer the following suggestions for each one of them separately:

- 1) Philip Kalkov: Unit quartermaster or quartermaster in the general geographical area.
- 2) Hristo Evangelov: Unit Political Commissar.
- 3) Nikola Kantov: Unit Political Commissar.
- 4) Hristo Tsitulev: Platoon Commander.
- 5) Filip Malkov: was in agitation and propaganda in District Board. To be used appropriately.
- 6) Spase: Platoon cadre or cadre of ten.
- 7) Mihail Karaliev: cadre in platoon or of ten.
- 8) Kosta Popaleksov: cadre in platoon or of ten.
- 9) Ziso Aposkeparov: –
- 10) Stavre Vasilev: –
- 11) Marko Filipov: -
- 12) Tome Atanasov: -

d) Lerin District. We are all in agreement that these cadres in Lerin District should be relieved and left to work in the organization:

- 1) Tane Naumov, District Board Secretary, 2) Hristo Doichinov for Buf Region to liaise with Lerin for serious work in that city, 3) Vane Peiov for Lerin Region Pole, 4) Grigor Hadzhikiriakov for Sorovich and Kailari, and 5) Sotir Iovanov District Board courier until we find a replacement.

Proposed cadres for mobilization:

- 1) Ilo Lazarov: Regiment Political Commissar.
- 2) Vangel Fermanov: Platoon cadre (political).
- 3) Sterio Kovachev: Platoon.
- 4) Trifko Robev: Platoon.
- 5) Stoiko Angelov: Platoon.
- 6) Kosta Varikov: Platoon.
- 7) Lazo Asprov: Platoon.
- 8) Traian Lebamov: Platoon or cadre of ten.

- 9) Mihail Bitsakov: Suitable for groups, free shooters. Last year was DAG unit Commissar.
- 10) Iani Banichotov: -
- 11) Simo Bragianov: -
- 12) Giorgi Markovski: -
- 13) German Giakovski: -
- 14) Simo Popdimitrov: -
- 15) Lazo Turimanchev –

As you can see we have kept the staff in the district boards to a minimum, secretaries along with two or three other cadres necessary to continue the work.

One more issue. Until now Tanas Makriev worked for the Central Council, sometimes as courier and sometimes as a technical person. He performed tasks for Keramitchiev and for Vera. He was basically entrusted with that one job. The question now is should he be mobilized? Vera and Keramitchiev insist that he should not and that he should remain available to the organization and work in the Koreshtata geographical area. My opinion and the opinion of Kochopoulos are to mobilize him into the army.

The opinion of the Secretariat with regards to Comrade Vangel Nichev, member of the Executive Board, is to remain in the organization and in Eastern Macedonia where he worked before. About a month ago this comrade was called in to work in our headquarters. Now we need to get him back to his old position. Comrade Vasilis personally knows more about this matter.

We called a meeting on the 4th of the month for all staff from both districts. Please give us your response, if possible, before then.

April 2, 1948.

With fraternal greetings,
Paskalis

AM, collection: “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949”, AE: 79/6
The original document was handwritten in Greek. Translated to Macedonian and published in the edition “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1948”, T.V..., doc. 94, p. 171-175.

2.17 - The following report, on NOF's activities for April 1948, dated May 9, 1938, was written by Paskal Mitrevski and sent to the CPG Central Committee Politburo

Report

The work done by the organization in the last month can be summarized as follows:

1) Mobilization: After deciding to mobilize, a meeting was held in each district to explain our decision to the cadres and the tasks assigned to them in DAG. Except for a small number of unhappy people, the mobilization was a success in all three districts. Most of the people who complained claimed to be sick but very few incidents have been reported. The vast majority of our staff demonstrated full readiness for their new task. In total 59 cadres from Kostur and Lerin Districts and 39 from Voden District have joined DAG. On the negative side, some of our people were disappointed with the appointed positions and were expecting something higher and more senior. This created an atmosphere of disappointment among a larger number of our staff. They are also noticing and have expressed opinions about the vast difference between Greek and Macedonian positions. There is also the matter of the chauvinist characters. Mihail Keramitchiev looked at this in some detail but his investigation did not reveal anything tangible.

Our main weakness is that we did not take enough time to properly orientate our staff and explain to them that this is the nature of war and that the principles of war require us to deploy them in DAG. I have talked about the chauvinistic elements in my previous reports.

2) Reorganization: After mobilizing our personnel our immediate task was to reorganize the district authorities and indeed we did that. With the exception of those who were sick and unfit, we also mobilized by age all those who were not mobilized in DAG. In the meantime we set up a program to attract new cadres in our bases. By doing this we attracted 5 new cadres in Voden with whom we constituted the Voden District Board, we also attracted 6 in Lerin and 7 in Kostur. We distributed the staff in the various sectors and every one is working in their respective area. The new situation has

some drawbacks because all the sectors are not yet filled but the organization is handling this and through its program it will attract new personnel, especially in the occupied areas.

3) AFZH Conferences and the Congress: In addition to activating the AFZH cadres we also activated the NOF cadres to assist with the Congress and the conferences. The work done in the two month period before the Congress has created much interest in the Macedonian people, which opened the way for more women to join the Macedonian women's movement. In their participation in the conferences and the Congress, the Macedonian women have given their commitment to fight and to further strengthen their relationship with the struggle. If the organization had better distribution we surely would have had better, more positive and more productive results. Unfortunately we lacked a good plan and proper slogans.

Another major deficiency that we had was the absence of people in the Congress and conferences from the occupied territories and, to some extent, from the semi-controlled territories. Not even half of the region was represented in the Congress. The 300 delegates who attended were all from the free villages. Most free villages sent 10 to 15 delegates each. The occupied areas were not at all represented, never mind the cities. Voden District for example had representation from only one sector and it was from several villages only. There were only two sectors representing Kostur Region and only delegates from Buf represented Lerin Region. This was primarily due to the extremely difficult conditions prevailing in the occupied areas and not due to people not wanting to work in those areas.

Here we should emphasize something else that is related to the previously mentioned weaknesses. The comrades from the old AFZH Central Council Executive Board gathered around Vera in the seat of the Central Council and in the AFZH district boards, did not circulate in the occupied and semi-controlled territories and did not coordinate their tasks to cover the Congress and conferences. Such opportunities, more or less, existed. Many times I told Vera to deploy her forces (her staff) and get closer to the base. It seems that she did not want to grasp that requirement, as much as it was needed.

Here is another major weakness. When a decision was made to hold the AFZH Congress, one of the most important tasks for its implementation was to add more partisans to DAG. One of the main reasons for having the Congress and the conferences was to provide a basis for broader experience for the Macedonian Women in the armed struggle. This aim unfortunately was almost not realized or realized at a minimum. The 100 to 150 Macedonian Partisans who joined DAG in the months before the Congress was not the percentage we could compare to after the Congress.

How can we explain that? The occupied areas, as mentioned earlier, were not covered. At the core they were the main sources from which we could have drawn strength for DAG. On top of that we were unable to maximize on the use of massive Macedonian participation and on its faith in the struggle. We were unable to convince the people to stop hesitating and take up weapons. The AFZH cadres did not actively and steadfastly connect with the base and with the pulse of the base. The AFZH cadres did not live with the problems with which the women in the occupied areas lived and worked. They often gathered in large meetings or made a call to the village office and then the job for them was done and they disappeared from the base and from life in that base.

Furthermore, it is very important how we conduct ourselves with the people. There was the case of one of the AFZH leaders, or more specifically the AFZH District Board Secretary for Kostur District, who said to a woman responsible for a village: "Come on, go away, you gypsy." I discussed this issue with Comrade Vera and emphasized the importance of good conduct when dealing with the people but it seems that not much effort was made to address this weakness.

4) Our work for DAG, for the People's government and in the occupied territories: As a result of our hard work, in March, our organization had much success in recruiting volunteer partisans into DAG. In the following month we had a certain decline in the same sector. It was certainly not because of less effort but even with expanded effort the results were still modest. This may be due to the mobilization of personnel and the reorganization of the district

authorities. But it is mainly due to the perception that prevails, which is work cannot be done with leftover staff.

This standpoint was criticized so intense effort was made to acquire more partisans, particularly in the illegal areas.

Serious effort has been made to assist DAG. The organization has managed to gather 4000 oki (units of measure) of grain for DAG from the Zagorichani – Koreshtata Region alone. Banitsa Region provided 1500 oki of wheat. In total our cadres collected 10,000 oki of grain from Kostur Pole and delivered it to DAG. Also, many villages organized individual action under the initiative of our organization and achieved great results. In addition to the grain a large number of cattle were collected as aid for DAG. More work to supply DAG could have certainly been done if the organizations, especially the staff, had penetrated deeper into the occupied areas. If that was done we could have had better success in many more places including Lerin Pole.

We have not done as much work as we could have in the sector of the national government. As a result, many of the issues that preoccupied the villages still persist. People are not activated to the extent they need to be in order to massively participate in matters of government work. Many of the people's boards are still without initiatives but that does not mean that we have done nothing here.

On the subject of children, our staff has activated the people and is working very actively.

On the issue of sowing, our organization has contributed significantly and no small deal is the help contributed to our hospitals, etc. Also of importance are the events our staff have organized to help start the people's government in Prespa Statitsa, Konomladi, etc.

Recently, in collaboration with the District Council, we created so-called women's committees at the district boards in both Kostur and Lerin Districts. Also, a few days ago we hired men and women cadres to address the current and central problem of acquiring food,

dealing with refugees, sowing, reorganizing the people's councils, etc.

At this point we also need to mention a few weaknesses. There is an acute problem with children in a number of villages, especially in Kostur District. A single line was not followed; personal promises and family influences prevailed. Many villages sent children from 16 to 17 years of age, while in other villages they prevented them from going. And as I found out, in the village Krchishte, even children as young as 5 and 6 years old were not allowed to go. There are villages which sent children 17 years of age, which has caused something of an outcry. For example, Tanas Kontos's son from the village D'mbeni, a technician (warehouseman) from the Kostur District, was sent. There are also anomalies with the educators who were sent to guide the children. Namely, we have allocated girls who are unfit for the struggle to act as guides and leaders of the children. In many cases the people's militia was forced to intervene to prevent the worst. A typical case took place in the village Breznitsa, Kostur Region, where the district president, despite being warned by the people's militia, demanded that some girl named Milka be appointed guide of the children, against whom there were many allegations. She was excluded from this duty at the last moment but only with police intervention. There were such cases in other villages as well.

Similarly our organization helped with the supply of salt in the villages. But due to poor provisional estimates a string of villages in Zagorichani and Nestrame regions were left without salt and are now suffering. We now have a problem in the Zagorichani villages where the farmers have sheep and no salt to process the milk. The milk is spoiling and being destroyed due to lack of salt. If we had not given Koreshtata too much salt and if we had allocated our supply based on the needs of the region, then today we would not have such a problem.

Another issue that is of interest to the villages is the issue of shepherds. People who are being dismissed from DAG as incapable of fighting are sent to work in the districts and are not utilized properly by the organization. Meanwhile the villages complain because their livestock is in danger of being destroyed.

Regarding the above three cases I have promptly, orally and by letter informed the government delegation.

My opinion about the children: I believe that the small number of children aged 14 to 15 years old who remained in the villages, in which the situation is worsening, should be sent but this should be restricted to villages where the situation is dire.

Our work in the occupied areas is exhibiting serious weaknesses. This is primarily due to the extremely difficult circumstances created by the Monarcho-Fascists and the lack of resolve on the part of our staff. Also one of our major weaknesses is that we did not study the situation and create a systemic plan for a technical organization in those areas. Our staff enters many areas that are held by the enemy, creates links and contacts, distributes printed material but has not been able to create a solid base to work. This question seriously preoccupies our organization and we are attempting to resolve it.

The situation is somewhat better in Lerin Pole, Banitsa Region and Lerin Region where our cadres spend a lot of time. Conversely in Voden, Gumendzhe, Enidzhe Vardar and other cities we only maintain the usual contacts, like we do in Rupishta, Lerin, Sorovich and Voden. We don't have contacts in Enidzhe Vardar - Gumendzhe. Our most serious weakness is that we have not been able to recruit partisans from those cities, except for Rupishta where we recently recruited 20 partisans and 4 from Voden.

5) Agitation and Propaganda: Almost all the comrades who worked for the Press and for Agitation and Propaganda have been mobilized into the Army. Following after this is the task to organize the work so as not to interrupt the newspaper publications. We have found two technicians, one for typing and the other for mimeo graphic work. The other work requirements for the newspaper we will do ourselves. On April 24, 1948 the first edition of "Nepokoren" will come out with 500 copies. "Nova Makedonka" will have 300 copies and a proclamation of 800 copies. These publications had some technical flaws but in future editions we will try to avoid them. Other printed materials that we are preparing are "Eksormisi" and

“Ta nea mas”, which we will regularly deliver to our bases in the free and occupied villages. But the material is scarce, especially “Ta nea mas”. We need more copies.

6) On May 3, 1948 the Secretariat convened a session during which we discussed the situation and organizational problems and made the following the decisions:

1) To exert greater efforts to implement the decisions made during the AFZH Congress.

2) To strengthen our work in terms of aiding DAG and to recruit as many partisans as possible from the occupied territories and from the cities. To strengthen our work to provide supplies for DAG and to organize an information network.

3) To assist the people’s government, and in doing that the central question remains: mandatory contribution of food. We also have the question of refugees, seats and the reorganization of the people’s councils.

4) To develop and systematically organize our work in the occupied areas and cities.

5) To better organize the work of the Agitation and Propaganda department: To publish the newspapers “Nepokoren” and “Nova Makedonka” by May 15. To issue a proclamation to the armed Macedonians to throw away their arms. To issue a proclamation to the others who the Monarcho-Fascists have concentrated in centres, to get rid of their hesitation... to not hesitate to come with us.

6) To organize mass meetings in the free villages in order to raise the morale of the people and to popularize the nature of war.

To reorganize the local NOF-AFZH Boards in the villages where required so that we can intensify and reinforce the struggle with good leaders.

At this point we need to emphasize that the morale of the people has been seriously declining lately. This is mainly due to two reasons:

one, the number of our troops in Vicho is declining and two, the people's committees are losing their strength in the villages mainly because they have not been able to solve a number of issues. Along with them the NOF and AFZH local boards are losing their authority. The reactionaries are capitalizing on this and are rearing their heads. And precisely because of this we have put forth the last two tasks.

Similarly, the Secretariat has discussed the contents of the letter that was brought to them by Pavle Rakovski, authorized by Comrades Lazo Poplazarov, Ilia Dimovski Goche and Vangel Aianovski Oche. Through that letter the comrades were seeking to convene a central council plenum to examine the critical situation and to issue a manifesto to the Macedonian people. The letter was sent from DAG Headquarters for Western Macedonia where they had gone to do some recruiting. All are members of the Central Council. The letter was not signed by Comrade Mihail Maliov, member of the Executive Board, and Lambro Cholakov member of the Central Council.

The Secretariat discussed much of the letter but at the end our views were divided. Comrades Mihail Keramitchiev, Stavros Kochopoulos and Vera agree that we should convene a plenum immediately and afterwards make such a proposal to you. Conversely, I see no need for the immediate convening of a plenum. Firstly and most importantly the situation is extremely critical and is characterized with military intensity. It requires for all the forces to be on alert. Besides that, NOF's Congress has already determined the central directions of our work and we now need to realize its objectives. There is nothing that is new.

As for the manifesto, my opinion is that we put this question for your consideration and if the politics require it to be necessary and to be expedited then let it be done, but we need you to give us the main lines to be included to enable the Secretariat to issue such a manifesto without the need of convening a plenum for that purpose. And one more thing: the aforementioned comrades who signed the letter, except for Goche, before they went to recruit, passed by in our office and we had a discussion with them and no such thing was mentioned. This issue was uncovered 4 days later...

We are definitely waiting for your orders of whether or not we have a Central Council Plenum and to issue the manifesto.

I am attaching the letter from our comrades.

May 9, 1948

Paskalis

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 101/1.

The original document was handwritten in Greek. Published in the same edition: doc. 121, p. 222-228.

2.18 - The following is a letter from Paskal Mitrevski to Miltiadis Porfirogenis, CPG Central Committee member and Minister of the Interim Government of Greece, dated May 28, 1948

Comrade Miltiadis,

In this report I am sending you I have asked a number of questions for you to consider and to ensure a prompt delivery of weapons.

I am also sending you 18 copies of the newspaper “Nepokoren”, three for you and 15 to be delivered to the Agitation and Propaganda Department at Headquarters. I am also sending you several appeals we gave out and three Monarcho-Fascist newspapers.

We require some items for the needs of our Agitation and Propaganda Department; please take care to send them to us at the earliest opportunity:

- 1) Waxed paper and mimeograph ink, because we have none. If possible send us good waxed paper because cheap paper easily tears up and the letters come out messy. And ink, if possible, let it be in tubes. Send us a bit more waxed paper and more ink because our printing presses also serve the needs of the people’s boards in Kostur and Lerin Regions, as well as the National militia and others.
- 2) A mimeograph roller, if you have one, or special mimeograph paste.
- 3) Ribbons for typewriters, carbon paper and writing paper.

We are also faced with another basic need, namely, if you can send us shoes and some clothing. The shoes are a problem because up to now we have not found a way to be supplied. We are in an immediate need of 15 to 20 pairs of shoes.

There is another issue that we need to emphasize and that you need to consider, namely the economic situation of the population in Kostur Pole and Kostenaria Regions in Kostur District. The population there is desperate, especially after the last large mass

contribution. Many families together with those who could contribute grain and livestock have left their homes and moved to the liberated territories. Their grain was taken by our army with a promise that the army would look after supplying them with food. Their sheep were also taken and many of the herds have already been slaughtered and distributed to the army. The remaining herds have been taken to our army in the 14th Brigade as trophies. The people who are now in the free villages demand that their sheep be returned to them. Please take a look at this issue and see what can be done. As you can see, in economic terms, their life is in a very difficult situation.

Similarly, our cadres who work in Kostur Pole have reported that our quartermasters have gone to some villages and taken all the grain. They have left none for the farmers and their families to feed themselves. As reported, this happened even to partisan families. These acts were committed by units of the 14th Regiment in the villages Tikveni, Zhupanishta, Izglebi and Zhelin.

There is also severe lack of salt in the same surrounding area in the occupied villages. These villages are completely blockaded and the villagers cannot get in or out. They can't even go to the cities to make their purchases. If something can be done for them, please let us know.

From what we have learned from our cadres who work in Rupishta, there is strong opposition coming from the occupied population in Rupishta against the occupiers. The villagers who were forced to leave their villages and sent to Rupishta are now demanding to be released so that they can return to their villages. Some have already returned. Another item to note is that our cadres have noticed that the morale in the occupiers seems to be falling, especially among the most recently armed guards, some of whom are now willing to drop their guns. There is much effort being made from our side to bring greater reluctance in their ranks.

Also another case you need to keep in mind. From the information we have from the Lerin field staff, many of the partisans who desert and cross over the Yugoslav border are presenting themselves as

refugees. The desertion seems to originate at the outskirts of the village Buf, Western Kaimakchalan and Lerin Pole.

Along with the report I am sending you 1) a statement from Kosta Hrisafi, 2) a statement from Hrisanthi, AFZH activist.

With fraternal greetings,
Paskalis

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 111 /
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The original document was handwritten in Greek. Published in the same edition: doc. 130, p. 242-244.

2.19 - The following is a letter from Paskal Mitrevski to Nikos Zahariadis, dated November 3, 1948 in Kos, and is based on statements made by Giorgi Petrichevski regarding the unhealthy Greek attitude towards the Macedonian fighters and NOF cadres

Comrade Nikos,

After returning from our meeting I ran into Gogo Petritsi, NOF cadre for Voden, who 20 days ago came from there. He is the only cadre in from District Board who has not left...

I had a long discussion with him and he told me the following:

One of the main reasons why our cadres are leaving their posts is because of the political and psychological conditions that prevail in those places.

The NOF cadres are constantly being humiliated openly; this is an expression of the current situation.

There is not a single NOF cadre given responsible duty among the units in Kaimakchalan – Paiak. This has created a negative psychological atmosphere full of emptiness and dissatisfaction.

On top of that NOF is being completely ignored and not supported. It is being ignored by the entire local leadership.

None of the NOF cadres have been promoted in spite of the suggestions made, even after the People's Militia and the People's Government were established in these areas. Here is what Gogo specifically said about that: "There is a single point to stress here. The cadres psychologically, deep down, believe that there is hegemony amongst those who came here from Bulkesh. If you come from Bulkesh you are automatically a captain or you are assigned to responsible work. But we have noticed that many of those easily surrender to the enemy. We, on the other hand, have been fighting for three years and are being dumped on and mistrusted."

Certainly the foundation on which this question our comrade is basing may be subjective, however he has identified the existence of a serious situation in that area.

In addition he has also identified some activities that took place there:

1. During the offensives, Comrade Mirka, AFZH District Board Secretary for Voden District, had taken charge of the women stretcher carriers. One time she asked the quartermaster if she could have something to eat. At that very moment Sokratis Kalaidzhidis, Captain and political commissar responsible for recruitment and weapons at the Headquarters, arrived and immediately began to yell at her. He said: “You trash, why have you come here?! Can you tell us where you fought?! Like hell you can because you have never fought, hell you have not even fired a single bullet. I will tie you up and send you to the Military Court...” At the same time he asked the others to bring him a rope so that he could tie her up, all the while yelling and threatening to remove his belt and bludgeon her.

Gogo was present at the scene. After 1945 Mirka was sent illegally to that district and is a proven fighter.

2. The attitudes of Himaros (Vasilis Kanatsios) and Fotinos (Dimitrios Evgatsopoulos) towards the Slavo-Macedonian fighters, according to Gogo, was deplorable. They, together with Giorgala (Theodoros Giorgalas), a unit sergeant, were heard swearing and yelling at the Slavo-Macedonian fighters. One time Giorgala pushed his pistol against Traiche, a Slavo-Macedonian fighter from Chegan, and threatened to kill him. The next day the fighter escaped to Yugoslavia. Another time he beat someone and that person surrendered to the enemy. I don't know the name of this last person.

3. Two Greek fighters crossed the border and surrendered to the Yugoslav authorities. The border authorities sent them back. He did not send them to be court marshaled but sent them back to their units, while for the same offenses, by military tribunal, he convicted and executed 5 Slavo-Macedonians.

Many people have complained about these incidents. In another case, when other Slavo-Macedonians were sentenced to death, the firing squad refused to execute them. Gogo recently obtain this information from others.

Bozinos (Atanas Kirovski), national militia commander of the militia for Voden Region, called Kosta Kirou (Kocho Kirov) a provocateur. Earlier Kosta Kirou had worked for NOF and later was appointed head of the quartermasters in one of the units.

In my opinion measures must be taken to remove Sokratis Kalaidzhidis, Bozinos and Theofilos (Nikos Hadzhopoulos, local investigator at Headquarters), and others like them, from these areas because their actions are compromising the fighters, the staff and all the people.

Also, as Gogo informed me, many people have fled to Yugoslavia lately in stages from this district; over 100 fighters and leaders.

In my opinion, especially after the departure of all these people, the situation is becoming serious and must be immediately investigated. I am of the opinion that the first measure to be taken is to appoint some strong and proven Macedonian military personnel to take over some of these duties in the local units.

If there are no important military reasons, then I recommend Major Nikolaos Proso (Giuro), who is originally from this area and has served in the units there, be appointed to such a position.

After that, regardless of the arrival of the NOF staff from the district, it is imperative to immediately send one or two of the most senior Central Council staff, i.e. Malios (Mihali Maliov) and/or Mangos (Krstev Mangov). At the same time it is important to promote many of the local staff. If cadres cannot be immediately found in the local area, then they can be taken from other districts and temporarily be sent there.

With fraternal greetings,
Paskalis

The same: doc. 185, p. 345-347.

2.20 - The following is a letter from Paskal Mitrevski to Nikos Zahariadis, dated November 20, 1948, familiarizing him with some cruel acts committed by DAG's 14th Brigade fighters in the Macedonian villages in Koreshtata

Comrade Nikos,

The issue of cruel acts committed in the villages Gorno and Dolno Drenoveni, Konomladi, Pozdivishta and Gabresh, about which I informed you yesterday, consist of the following:

The person who informed me is called Dimitrios Soukaris; he is from the village Tsrnovishta. He is responsible for the refugees in Oshchima. According to his notification:

1. The woman who was harassed is called Lambrina Petropoulou from Gorno Drenoveni. The partisans who molested her were from the 14th Brigade. He did not know their names because they could not be identified in the dark. At the same time they took and slaughtered a pig. They broke a cask of wine and took about 50 oki, the rest they spilled on the ground. At the same time they assaulted two other women from the same village. Then the perpetrators forced the three women to dance the dance "Eleno Mome".

Lambrina Petropoulou has three sons who are partisans in DAG, one of them was killed and the other two were wounded. She also has a daughter who is a partisan and another daughter who led a group of children to the people's republics. Soukaris first heard about this case from Kostas Andaris, quartermaster of a unit in the 14th Brigade, and Ahileas Zinacos, a policeman, but later he heard about it from others when he visited the village himself.

2. Soukaris also reported this incident. Namely, the fighter Dim. Popadin from Gorno Drenoveni, who served in the 14th Brigade, went to his village to do some work. When he entered his house he found his mother beaten and crying and his wife had been pulled by her hair by fighters also from the 14th Brigade. The next day he took his wife with him and they both surrendered to the enemy at Bukovik locality. Popadin was a partisan and a good fighter. He joined the partisans in May 1947 and was wounded in last year's operations in Gramos and Grevena.

3. Another incident reported by Soukaris. Petros Panopoulos from the village Tsrnovishta is the father of three partisans. All three were wounded. Petros himself, in the past and now, is a victim of the struggle. One evening some partisans from the 14th Brigade broke into his house to steal things but because his wife objected they grabbed her, dropped her on the floor and trampled on her abdomen.

Panopoulos himself said to Soukaris: “After this incident every evening I collect stones, pick up my ax and guard my house. And if I hear someone coming I will kill them to end this evil.” He also said: “If this situation continues I will burn my own house and go to Kostur and I will report this to all the newspapers so that the world will know what my boys have done to me!”

4. Similarly, one evening, a number of partisans from the same brigade entered the village Konomladi, grabbed about 30 residents and took them outside of the village. They then returned to the village and robbed houses.

“After that, the people,” Soukaris said, “did not open their doors at night when partisans knocked on the door and hid in their attics because they were afraid of being harassed by the partisans. Fear and indignation reigns among the inhabitants in those villages...” These words come directly from our cadre Dimitrios Soukaris.

Soukaris also said that these anti-popular actions were brought before the people’s government, before the national militia and before division X.

November 29, 1948
With fraternal greetings,
Paskalis

AM, collection: “Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949”, AE 198/A, 1948

The original document was handwritten in Greek. Published in the same edition: doc. 197, p. 369-370.

2.21 - This letter was written by Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Secretariat member and Minister of the Interim Democratic Government of Greece, dated April 14, 1949, addressed to the CPG Central Committee Politburo, regarding issues that have risen as a result of mobilizing minors into DAG

Comrades,

We have been seriously preoccupied with the issue of children being brought back from the People's Republics and mobilized. Among them there are both male and female children ages 12 and 13 who are now being recruited in the village Shtrkovo. The other children are not older than 16. In total there are 35 children. Most of these children are from the village Zhelevo.

The children's return has been discovered by the villagers and has created a serious ethnic problem, especially about the 12 and 13 year olds, both male and female. These children were brought back because of their physical size and their ages were never questioned.

This question preoccupied us another time but we found a solution in our consultation with you.

Of course I am not referring here to the difficulties the issue has created for us. I am sure with more work our organization will overcome the problem. Here I am generally referring to a principle, an ethical problem which we are being forced to take into account. This has created a moral situation where the people are questioning our actions. It has created a negative moral impression which will interfere with the broader deployment of our forces and development of our movement. Understandably bringing back 10 or 15 underage children cannot solve our problem of meeting our recruitment needs. It also looks like those responsible for the dormitories misconstrued things. And what is worse is that their care for the children will be seen as not good.

There is also the specific case of Timios who is responsible for the "Tulkesh" home in Romania. His attitude can be characterized as terrible at best. He torments and demoralizes children psychologically and has created an atmosphere of distaste.

Here's what the children told Comrade Malio, sent there by the NOF Central Committee for an inspection:

“Timios gathered the children in the home and in a violent and loud tone of voice yelled: ‘You must go and join the struggle. Those of you who do not want to go I will stamp a cross on your foreheads so that you are branded as bastards.’...”

This is what he said to 12 to 15 year old children.

Similarly, for trifling matters he threatened the children with expressions like: “I will teach you... for the things you do you resemble the sharks of Truman...” etc.

Also he would not allow the children to write letters in the Macedonian language. He withheld presents, especially their money, sent to the children from parents and relatives from America and other countries. Children were saying that he (Timios) spent their money.

Another incident was Timios's accosting of 12 year-old Aleko Stefo (Aleksandar Stefov from Oshchima). The boy was in tears when he told Malio what Timios had done to him because he did not sweep the courtyard. He left the boy standing outside in the December cold for 4 hours wearing only his underwear. After that he did not allow him to eat for 24 hours. He beat up the same boy and when he was down he kicked him and rolled him around. The boy said Timios's hands were swollen from beating the children.

Another time Timios undressed the children and forced them to go naked, wearing only underwear, and after that left them hungry for long periods of time.

Certainly children sometimes do naive things and make certain mistakes, but the measures taken against them do not need to be always negative and drastic. We also need to show them something positive, for their psychological development.

The worst is that when the children return here they will tell their parents and relatives what was done to them and, as you know, the villagers will talk amongst themselves. When we found out about this from the people we dispatched Comrade Malio to investigate the situation and based on his findings to restrict such voices.

It is necessary to investigate these cases. In the meantime our opinion is to remove Timios, as soon as possible, before more damage is done.

Similarly we recommend that the children, ages 12 to 15, who were brought back be immediately returned.

In cases such as these we believe it is necessary to notify the parents through a special announcement, of course verbally or by any other means which you may want to recommend.

We also believe that in future the age limit of children being sent back from the people's republics should not be less than 15 years.

Comrade Koichev, with whom we spoke yesterday, will also be talking to you regarding this issue.

Please give us your answers on these issues or, if you like, we can pay you a visit to further discuss them. We can make ourselves available to further discuss the children's homes and the idea of sending Slavo-Macedonian staff to identify the problems and implement practical solutions in addressing the issues with the Slavo-Macedonians.

April 14, 1949.

With fraternal greetings,
Paskal

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", AE: 47/b
The original document was handwritten in the Greek language.
Published in the edition "Aegean Macedonia in the NOB 1949",
T.VI..., doc. 100, p. 211-213.

2.22 - Speech given by Paskal Mitrevski on May 16, 1949, at a DAG gathering on Mount Gramos about the military and political situation and DAG's prospects

Comrades, ladies and gentlemen,

We have come here to share your successes, your unbelievable courage and the results of your difficult but victorious campaign on this glorious Mount Gramos where your great heroism is being celebrated with a banner of freedom and democracy.

We are here with the Interim Democratic Government of Greece, led by its president and our beloved EAM leader Comrade Michos Partsalidis.

The entire Greek and Macedonian population of the free and occupied territories has turned its attention towards you. It has turned its face towards us, towards the courageous fighters for peace and freedom with great admiration and boundless gratitude.

You with your heroic and successful assaults have crippled the much hated enemy and liberated almost all of Gramos.

Gramos – a solid front

Our victory in Gramos is of great importance. Today, after Vicho, we hold in our hands a second powerful, extensive and solid front that brings turmoil to Truman's mercenaries and has stifled our enemy's plans and preparation for the 1949 assault on DAG. This success has strengthened all other fronts that DAG has opened in all floors of our country: Rumeli, Thessaly, Central Macedonia and the Peloponnesus. And in continuing the third front in our enemy's neck, in the town centres, with consistent and increased activities, we sow fear and panic in the Monarcho-Fascists which confuses and weakens them.

Your success and victories clearly demonstrate the strength of the people's democratic movement in our country. This is the strength of millions, of all working Greek and Macedonian people who seek peace and freedom. The participation of the Macedonian people in

our people's democratic movement is great and consistent. Before the unprecedented Monarcho-Fascist terrorist outrage, dangerous to our national survival and a threat to the Macedonian people's physical existence, there was only one way to take: Unity with the Greek people and fight a tough and relentless fight against the foreign imperialists and their local agents the Monarcho-Fascists. This is when all patriotic forces came together and fought an honest fight under the banner of the National Liberation Front (NOF). Our best sons and daughters, our best people rose up and joined DAG to fight a determined fight for life and freedom.

The people's uprising, which began in 1945, and which today encompasses the broad layers of the Macedonian people, has been strengthened and rooted in our people's cruel and bloody battles, which have been sparked by our aspirations for our national liberation movement which, above all, has become our fortress which has triumphantly withstood all tests and has helped us cross the difficult path through unity and political union of the National Liberation Forces of our people with the CPG Greek democratic forces. This is a cruel but glorious time which we have invested in our national liberation movement headed by NOF, our national revolutionary organization. NOF is the way to our popular uprising and to our national salvation.

We will win because we are united!

For 4 years the Macedonian people have heroically led this struggle with deep faith in victory. We will win because we are united... Greek and Macedonian people, both together and with other minorities in our country, make up a non-fragmented Democratic Front which has been harsh tempered in a common fight that has shed the blood of our best sons. This front is invincible. The enemy - Americans and Monarcho-Fascists are enraged and will do everything they can to stop us. But we say - NO! This front has become a fortress with countless victims, with super human effort inherent in shared ideals of freedom and democracy and is invincible. Macedonians once and for all have chosen their path. This is the path of inseparable fighting unity with the Greek people. This is the way to smash tyranny.

Thanks to the total participation of the democratic people in a common struggle and thanks to the previously unheard of courage and blood of the best sons of our people who fought in the ranks of DAG, today we have secured major people's and national benefits in all sectors of our struggle which enlighten and strengthen our national liberation aspirations.

We are for a people's democracy!

We are for a people's democracy and independence of Greece. With this acquisition, with faith and confidence, the Macedonian people will lay the foundation for their national rights, national freedom and its people's democratic future. The decisions made during the CPG's 5th Plenum, the orders given and decisions made during the historic NOF 2nd Congress, with guaranteed national liberation benefits for the Macedonian people, will be fulfilled by a final and definitive victory against the Anglo-American imperialists and Monarcho-Fascist aggressors.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Heroic advocates of freedom fear not to move forward in your great people's liberation.

You have a tremendous force that the enemy lacks. The enemy is supported only by foreign arms and betrayal.

You have the complete and generous support of the people. This is a great moral and material force that can crush the sold out Monarcho-Fascists.

For this occasion I am obliged to bring you warm greetings and conviction from the proud and rebellious people in the Vicho area who have, not for a single moment, forgotten their debt to the heroes of DAG.

These people have given everything in support of the struggle; building roads, plowing and sowing fields and doing everything to support DAG.

They are not afraid of difficulties and the sacrifices they make. They deeply believe in the ideals and goals of DAG's national liberation aims and aspirations. Everything that happens in Vicho happens on every floor in our country.

These proud and rebellious people, Greeks and Macedonians, with such an avant-garde heroism like yours, will bring us victory.

Long live the unity between the Greek and Macedonian people and other minorities living in our country!

AM, collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945-1949", Bulletin no. 62, May 16, 1949, p. 1-4. The original document was written in Macedonian. Published in the same edition: doc. 131, p. 270-273.

2.23 - The following article, by Paskal Mitrevski, published on May 20, 1949, in the newspaper “Bilten” under the title “Monarcho-Fascist terror against the Macedonians”

By Comrade Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Main Board President

Monarcho-Fascism is an inhuman terrorist outrage that has thrown itself against the entire democratic population in western Macedonia. It spills blood everywhere and sows disaster. The traitor lapdog Papagos, the rabid dog of Anglo-American imperialism, is unable to compete with unyielding DAG to satisfy the Athens Monarcho-Fascist clique that is washed in blood, and its American masters who have hysterically thrust themselves upon the people. They will need to justify the hard hit and defeat that they received in Gramos to their Lords. And all that, as you know, is it not in harmony with the whole policy of killing and blood that the Athenian slaves shamelessly implemented recently? Is this not a continuation of the anti-popular fury that brought four years of bleeding and devastation to this country?

The Monarcho-Fascist minister of war has been furiously screaming: “Only war and blood, only blood and war, will resolve the Greek question.”

The vicious Tsaldaris, Monarcho-Fascist Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Athens government and prominent provocateur in political “diplomacy”, with a similar tone, has invited the “nation” to suffer more disasters and spill more blood. And above all, for two years now that Super General Van Fleet, who is swimming in the people’s blood, is singing the same song over and over again that the solution Greece needs can only come through arms and the “national army” and through devastation and blood.

This means blood and fratricidal butchery, the blood of a one-sided war, from the side of the Anglo-American imperialists and their Monarcho-Fascist agents.

On the other hand, the interim democratic government of Greece made a proposal to the United Nations and to the International Peace Congress for reconciliation in the country. This proposal was made

at the time when DAG, more than ever before, was strong and capable of bringing the great people's liberation to fruition. Our drive, sincere wish, and will, is to only serve the interests of the people.

But to this new reconciliation attempt, to the attempt to reconcile the people of Greece, among whom are the Macedonian people who have decisively participated in this struggle, the Athens Monarcho-Fascist terrorists have responded with a new and hideous bloody terror.

The great Athens chauvinistic Monarcho-Fascist click lashed out against the Macedonian people with peculiar and unprecedented fury. They looted the villages in Zagoricheni Region. Dozens of women and children were killed. Hundreds of people in Zagoricheni Region were chained in shackles and subjected to torture in the Kostur prisons. About 800 villagers from Nestram were arrested and thrown in prison.

The Gestapo attacked the villages Zhelin, Izglibe and Rupishsta and, with unsurpassed sadism, burned homes with people in them. They burned old people and young children alive without care. They killed people in the streets without care.

Over 100 Macedonians from Kailari Region were dragged into the Kozheni prisons.

The Lerin prisons are filled with our people, with democratic citizens, after the new mass arrests began. The same thing has happened in Karadzhova, Voden, Enidzhe Vardar and other places.

Lately over 1,500 Macedonians have become victims of these inhuman and bloody terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Monarcho-Fascists against our people.

The Athens executioners and Anglo-American invaders, using these unheard of terrorist means, want to drown our common Macedonian and Greek struggle and popular aspiration for peace, freedom and democracy, in blood.

For our people who have been placed in such a situation where our nation is being destroyed en masse, we raise a protest and ask from the free nations and from the international community to end these terrible acts perpetrated by the Monarcho-Fascists which have only one purpose; by blood and fire, to enslave our people and to drown in blood our irrefutable will for peace and freedom.

“Bilten” no. 63, May 20, 1949, p. 1-4.

The document, in Macedonian, was published in the same edition: doc. 136, p. 277-279.

2.24 - The following is a letter from Mihailo Keramitchiev and Ilia Dimovski Goche, sent to the CPG Central Committee on June 2, 1949, criticizing the CPG's policies and practices in regards to the Macedonian National Question

To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece
In free Greece

Comrades,

The allegations aimed at us by the new CPG members who led and today lead the Macedonian National Question, be it either orally at party meetings or in writing – July 15, 1948 CPG Central Committee Politburo Resolution of the CPG Central Committee 4th and 5th Plenary Sessions, was to force the issue through NOF - not mentioning us personally – are characterizing us as follows:

1. That we have ambitions to divide; leading a fight for personal exaltation, that we impose ourselves on others, etc.
2. That we are organs of the reactionaries because we exploit specific situations in the people's democracy, that we are affected by opportunistic theories, whose centre is located outside of Greece, and that we are simply opportunists.
3. That we organized the desertions of Macedonian fighters from DAG.
4. That our headquarters in Skopje has become a refugee centre for aiding and concentrating the despondent, the suspicious and the Macedonian chauvinistic elements, and that we are breaking the unity of the Macedonian fighters in DAG and the unity between the Macedonian and Greek people.
5. That we are seeking the immediate unification of Aegean (Greek occupied) and Vardar (Serbian occupied) Macedonia.
6. That it is our fault; i.e. we are holding back thousands of Macedonians from fighting in DAG and that is why DAG's Headquarters and the CPG Central Committee are forced to

mobilize, arm and send Macedonian women over 40 years of age, sick and maimed fighters and Macedonian children ages 13 and 14 to the front lines, and so on.

7. That we, especially Keramitchiev, are using the slogan: “Free and independent Macedonia within a Balkan federation”.

8. That we are guilty of not having “mutual understanding” and no agreement can work with us.

9. That we are afraid and have run away to save our skins and that we hide like mice.

10. That we are typical traitors, organs of the reactionaries and destroyers of the unity between the Macedonian and Greek people.

Comrades,

We believe that it is our duty to once again respond to your accusations. Today, like before, let us remind you and let us exhibit our views on the issue of your NOF leadership and your relationship to the Macedonian National Question in general in Greece. Similarly, let us explain to you the reasons for our stay in Yugoslavia and our position.

You are well-aware that our organization NOF and its predecessor SNOF, whose establishment was approved by the Politburo of the CPG Central Committee in October 1943, were proposed by the active Macedonian leaders. It was approved to exist and to act, albeit to a limited extent, in Kostur and later in Lerin Districts.

You are well-aware that SNOF proved that, in part, it was unique and could function correctly as a National Liberation Organization for the Macedonians in Greece, and that this organization was the only way and means to successfully break the armed counter-bands (armed by the occupiers during the Second World War), which was done in the interest of creating democratic unity in the Macedonian people in Greece and strengthening the Macedonian national consciousness, to successfully develop brotherhood and unity

between the Macedonian people in Greece as well as between the Macedonians and the Greeks.

You are also well-aware that the SNOF leadership was imprisoned by ELAS in May 1944, by order and approval of Party representatives (Macedonian Bureau of Western Macedonia) and that after that, Comrade Naum Peiov and 80 Macedonian partisans, fled ELAS and joined the Macedonian units in the Yugoslav Partisan forces. How did SNOF come to be liquidated? (SNOF in Kostur and Lerin Regions was disbanded in May 1944 by order issued by the CPG). How were the Macedonian units in ELAS liquidated? Is this not why over 1,000 Macedonian fighters and leaders crossed over into Yugoslavia? (In October 1944, ELAS General Headquarters ordered the Macedonian battalions to relocate deeper south into Greek territory so that they could be disarmed. The Macedonian battalion leadership did not agree and in order to avoid a collision and bloodshed, it withdrew its units to Vardar Macedonia, where they continued the struggle until their final victory over fascism.) Why was all this done?

Because, as you well know, Comrade Zahariadis, during the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenary Session in January 1949, made an anti-Macedonian agreement with the great Greek chauvinistic elements and ELAS opportunists, and was unable to resolve the Macedonian National Question.

You are well aware that our organization NOF is a continuation of SNOF, and that it was founded and appeared in the last decade of April 1945; that it was the rightful leader of the Macedonian people; that it came to their aid to save them from the Monarcho-Fascists and Anglo-American imperialists; and to connect and convert them into a strong (natural) ally of the Greek people in a common democratic struggle. But despite all that, as soon as NOF began to work, it became the number one target for destruction not only by the Monarcho-Fascists but also a target of a CPG smear campaign. Why was this done? Because NOF opposed the terms of the characteristically treasonous Varkiza Treaty (February 12, 1945), which Comrade Zahariadis and the CPG Central Committee signed and approved during the 5th Plenary Meeting.

All of you know and we all know that from September 1944 until March 1946, as was said and written, members, officers and even senior CPG leaders and the CPG body itself – “Rizospastis”, dubbed the dozen or so Macedonian leaders as traitors, Intelligence Service agents, separatists, autonomists and so on.

It is well-known that Comrade Zahariadis, in his speech in Solun in March 1946, took a positive view of NOF and urged the CPG leaders and members to work with NOF because NOF was a democratic organization which met the interests of the Macedonian movement in Greece. (Nikos Zahariadis, CPG Central Committee General Secretary took a positive attitude towards NOF on December 28, 1945 and on April 11 and 12, 1946 in Solun).

It has never been a secret that NOF did not come under direct CPG leadership until November 24, 1946. But based on what and how was NOF subordinated and came under absolute CPG Central Committee leadership? You very well know, like many Macedonian cadres and leaders as well as the Macedonian people know that NOF's subordination to the CPG was based on a written agreement between NOF and the CPG. NOF was put under CPG control on November 21, 1946 based on an agreement concluded on October 14, 1946 to unite NOF and the CPG.

The agreement called for:

1) The Macedonian party organization in the Aegean part of Macedonia to fully join the CPG. Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Secretary, to join the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace, and Giorgi (Dzhodzho) Urdov to join the Regional Committee Plenum. After these changes are made the CPG Regional Committee for Macedonia and Thrace is to reorganize other Macedonian personnel.

2) To establish a NOF central leadership in Aegean Macedonia. Mihail Keramitchiev and Paskal Mitrevski are to join the central leadership. The Party Committee for Aegean Macedonia and Thrace will be responsible for the central NOF leadership's work. The central leadership will have its own press which will print in both Macedonian and Greek. Its editor will be Pavle Rakovski, until then

member of the top NOF leadership for Aegean Macedonia responsible for agitation and propaganda.

3) Mincho Fotev, until then member of the NOF Main Board for Aegean Macedonia responsible for youth issues, is to join EPON for Macedonia and Thrace.

4) To achieve full organizational, political and combat unity of the partisan movements in Greece and Aegean Macedonia. Special Macedonian partisan units are to be formed. The Macedonian military and political staff in the partisan movement will have the same rights as Greeks according to their ability.

5) Giorgi Urdov, until then member of the NOF Main Board for Aegean Macedonia, will oversee the proper Party line implementation in the partisan movement in Aegean Macedonia and in the Headquarters of the Partisan Movement in Aegean Macedonia and Thrace.

(The above information was taken from the collection: "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1945 to 1949", AE: 445/1/49. Macedonian archives.)

Everybody knows that, based on the above agreement, the CPG was committed to taking one NOF leader and placing them in the CPG Central Committee; to taking two or three NOF leaders and placing them in the CPG Macedonian Bureau and one in DAG Headquarters. The party secretaries of the organization in the Macedonian provinces - Kostur, Lerin and Voden, should have been Macedonians so that the Macedonian people could eventually be represented equally with their NOF staff in all the common democratic struggle organizations. Based on that agreement NOF accepted the task to put itself and act fully and comprehensively under the CPG leadership and to cease all dependence on outside (of Greece) leadership. NOF agreed to disband existing party cells in the Macedonian villages and eventually dismantled the 1,200 existing Macedonian fighters and placed them under DAG General Staff command. NOF committed in full to the aforementioned agreement. NOF immediately disbanded the party cells and Macedonian units, one unit from Kostur and Lerin Region and

another in Voden Region. In total more than 1,000 Macedonian fighters were ordered to go to Hasia and Thessaly, to join the much smaller Greek partisan units and to act together in creating, strengthening and developing the Democratic Army in that area. And finally, NOF itself fell under direct CPG leadership. And all this has provided all preconditions for the establishment, strengthening and development of the democratic struggle in the country. All this was done to strengthen the brotherhood and unity between the Macedonian and Greek people.

And when our NOF comrades fully fulfilled their obligations in connection with the above, in the interests of the Macedonian people and in the interest of the common struggle in Greece, and they fulfilled their part of the agreement between NOF and the CPG, what did the CPG do? Did the CPG fulfill its part of the bargain? NO! No NOF Macedonian leader was appointed to the CPG Central Committee! No NOF Macedonian leaders were appointed to the CPG Macedonian Bureau or to DAG Headquarters. Only Dzhodzhov (Giorgi Urdov) was admitted as quartermaster in DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia.

Instead of appointing 2 or 3 Macedonians to the CPG Macedonian Bureau, you only appointed Comrade Paskal (Paskal Mitrevski) who was only a designate of the CPG Central Committee and only formally, because from the beginning of 1947 to July 1948 he did not attend any of the Bureau meetings. Instead of appointing Macedonian Party secretaries in the Kostur and Lerin provinces according to the agreement, you appointed Greeks, specifically Comrade Zhogas (Thanasis Zhogas), Eftimiadis and Katsakos. The only Macedonian you appointed was Comrade Atanas Goustopoulos to Voden and Gumendzhe Districts in mid-1947, but he was not a member of NOF. It was well-known that Goustopoulos opposed NOF and worked against the Macedonian people. And not only that, he tended to promote Greek managing staff in DAG and in various other Party and political organizations, etc. Everywhere he went he put down and showed contempt for the Macedonian staff.

So, comrades, to be more specific, the CPG leadership did not fulfill or implement its part of the 1946 CPG-NOF agreement. Then,

comrades, we justifiably conclude with our first question: “Why did the CPG leadership not meet its part of the NOF-CPG agreement?”

Comrades,

In continuation, as a consequence of the CPG failing to meet its obligations regarding the NOF-CPG agreement, and as a result of poor leadership on the part of the CPG, the CPG attitude towards NOF and towards the Macedonian National Question became hostile. Competent CPG representatives showed open contempt for the Macedonian people. This caused damage to the revolutionary democratic forces, especially to the NOF leadership, and in general to all the Macedonian people, which resulted in the creation of two camps.

In one camp stood the people who insisted that the CPG fulfill its part of the bargain and appoint the Macedonian cadres it agreed to appoint. In the other camp stood those who were saying that the Macedonian people were given everything and things were flowing like milk and honey. In short there is a conscious and unconscious rise against the Macedonian people and its cadres being in the struggle, and those who stand in this camp want no discussion about it. They feel discussions are in vain and downright dangerous. There are those who opposed NOF, vilify the Macedonian cadres and demand that they fall under CPG leadership. The situation is becoming frightening for the Macedonian cadres, for the initiators of this agreement as well as for the creation and affirmation of SNOF and NOF. The people who became the targets here were the same people who were the first to join ELAS and the first Macedonian fighters who joined DAG on November 24, 1946.

Not only were the forces divided but there were divergent views even inside NOF because of the above-mentioned reasons, and even the comrades of the CPG Central Committee, who looked after the Macedonian National Question, not only did not analyze the causes of this split but spoke with satisfaction that it was a “personal struggle” for “personal control” in the policies towards NOF, which led the Macedonian people in a struggle for life and death. You said “leave them and let us see what they make of this”, “just watch them” and follow the policy of “divide and conquer”. Let us not

dwell on this too much because relations in NOF were tightened and a solution to a normal NOF internal situation was sought. Better yet, a situation was sought to even properly resolve the Macedonian National Question. Then, following the Cominform resolution against the CPY, the CPG Central Committee Politburo met and passed the famous July 15, 1948 resolution which was adopted during the NOF Central Committee 1st Plenary Session in August 1948. Here are the results that were concluded:

1. The abnormal internal situation in NOF and the reasons why Macedonian cadres were not appointed or advanced were because of the disagreements and personal power struggle between Mitrevski and Keramitchiev.
2. This “personal” and unprincipled friction was harmful to the Macedonian and Greek people.
3. Comrades Mitrevski and Keramitchiev are to be removed from NOF because they failed to popularize the armed struggle among the Macedonian people and many Macedonian partisans failed to join DAG’s ranks.
4. The activities of the people’s government were not strengthened and not developed in the Macedonian regions.

Comrades,

You may tell us that we talk too much. You may say that we are discourteous for exposing all this. You may accuse us of jumping to conclusions prematurely. But what we are giving you here, what we are quoting here, are only a small sample of the facts. While you are reading this letter ask yourselves: “Why did the CPG Central Committee party leadership fail to come to an agreement with NOF regarding the Macedonian National Question?” Because Comrades Stringos (Leonidas Stringos) and Porfirogenis (Miltiadis Porfirogenis) were conducting an entirely different policy which allowed them to implement a policy of “divide and conquer” in NOF! Why was the Macedonian struggle undermined and NOF cadres not promoted or appointed to key positions? Why was the July 15, 1948 CPG Central Committee Politburo decision, which

became a decision of the NOF Central Committee on August 8, 1948, incorrect? Just because there was mutual misunderstanding between Mitrevski and Keramitchiev does not mean that it was a personal struggle between the two men.

Comrades, here is why: because, as quoted above, the CPG Central Committee failed to fulfil its part of the bargain in the CPG-NOF agreement. The CPG failed to deliver on its 1946 contractual obligations on the principle of equality for the Macedonian people. The CPG failed to acknowledge and meet the needs and desires of the Macedonian people. The CPG's failure to deliver on these points naturally negatively impacted NOF, especially in the eyes of the Macedonian partisans and among the Macedonian people. This was also the main and singular reason for the split. The fact is that until August 7, 1948 (1st NOF Plenary Session) there were 14,000 Macedonian partisans in DAG, meaning 5 brigades, 21 battalions, and it is a fact that by that time DAG had only one Macedonian Brigade commander, Comrade Pando Vainovski, and one political commissar, Comrade Anastas Gushopoulos, who were not even NOF cadres and only five Macedonian majors. It was the same in the lower units. It is also a fact that there was not a single Macedonian leader in DAG Headquarters in Western, Central, or Eastern Macedonia. This proves that, according to CPG Central Committee practices, the principle of equality for the Macedonians in DAG are not applied properly because, according to CPG practices on who leads in DAG, only 1.6% applies to Macedonians. Let us now see how the rights and principles of equality of the Macedonians is applied in the sector of the people's government.

In the interim democratic government of Greece, established on December 23, 1947, there was not a single Macedonian minister. There were twelve governors, three for Western, Eastern and Central Macedonia and they were all Greeks. There were no Macedonians in the Directorate for National Minorities. This is a classic example of inequality and misrepresentation.

Now let us have a look at how many Macedonians were present in the CPG Party and what their positions were in it. We mentioned earlier that Comrade Mitrevski was assigned to the CPG Central Committee but he did not join it. Only Comrade Mitrevski was

included, and only formally, in the Macedonian Bureau. The same applied to the Macedonians in DAG and in the people's government.

We said that Macedonian leaders, no matter how necessary they were, were not sought out or assigned to positions. We also need to ask: "Was there not a party group, a party organization inside the struggle? Were NOF and AFZH not living and governing bodies of the Macedonian people?" Earlier we mentioned that NOF and AFZH functioned from November 11, 1946 until August 7, 1948, for 20 continuous months, and were the only correct national liberation organizations of the Macedonian people with difficult tasks and responsibilities. So is it unfair to ask why these people were not given the responsibilities they deserved? Was it fair that they were excluded from the Party groups and Party organizations? Even those who were included, from the most senior to the most junior positions, were not allowed to participate in party life.

Comrade Stavro Kochopoulos, selected by the CPG Central Committee immediately after the 1st NOF Congress (January 13, 1948) and appointed party leader of NOF until August 8, 1948, one day before the NOF Central Board Plenary session, never held a single NOF Central Board Executive Committee meeting.

(The NOF Party group, headed by Stavre Kochev (Kochopoulos), was established on March 27, 1948.)

In other words, for 20 months NOF and AFZH managed and acted on their own without a Party organization and of course with no party liability and no party control. From the foregoing two things are clear: First, there was no equal representation of the Macedonian people in the people's government, in DAG and in other organizations and formations of the democratic struggle. This means that the principle of equality (there is a question of equality) was not realized. Second, the CPG Central Committee closed the door on the Macedonian people and the Macedonian cadres. The CPG never placed a Party group in NOF or in AFZH for 20 months. We know that the Party could have had its own cells anywhere, even in the most democratic bodies, consisting of only 5 democratic members. The Party had five patriots in a workshop, in an association, in a facility and so on. Yet it had no Party cell in an entire organization,

which managed an entire nation within the democratic movement in Greece which, due to its specific national situation, was a target of the Anglo-American imperialists and the Monarcho-Fascists and their agents who were bent on completely destroying this nation. This was the most delicate and strongest revolutionary movement in Greece during the entire struggle and yet the CPG had no party cell in it! So where is the principle of equality here?

So, comrades, NOF did not achieve national equality and equal representation for the Macedonian people in the democratic movement in the country because of the CPG and because of those comrades in the CPG who were responsible for overseeing the Macedonian National Question. The CPG is at fault and guilty of not establishing party cells, organization and a party life in NOF. The CPG Central Committee is at fault and guilty of not taking party control and responsibility for the Macedonian people. And by not doing so created a rift and opened the door for arguments... This is why the Macedonian people failed to obtain equality. Furthermore, Comrades, the CPG Central Committee is at fault for allowing the split in NOF to become permanent. Naturally there were arguments and a rift because our Comrades Keramitchiev, Goche (Ilia Dimovski), Oche (Vangel Aianovski), Rakovski (Pavle Rakovski), Slavianka (Steriana Vangelova), Vera (Evdokia Baliova), Nichev (Vangel Nichev) and the remaining NOF cadres were endeavoring to apply the principle of equality to the Macedonian people, to form a party organization in NOF, to provide a peaceful and democratic life and to justly and sincerely elevate the Macedonian cadres to responsible positions. But then Comrades, they were resisted by those who possessed the great Greek chauvinistic spirit which extended from the bottom all the way to the top of the CPG leadership. There was no one from the CPG who objected to these ongoing harassments or stepped in to put an end to the quarreling. In fact, the CPG allowed this bias and hypocrisy to continue by turning a blind eye, regardless of the damage it was doing to the cohesion of the movement. Furthermore, you comrades in the CPG are guilty of praising those who made mistakes and reassured everyone that everything was going well.

For proof of what we said above, we urge you to read the reports we sent you so far, of which we kept copies. We would also like to refer

you to the speeches and minutes of our various NOF meetings. We urge you to read the speeches and remarks we made during our 1st NOF Plenary meeting so that you can confirm for yourselves that everything we have said so far is true. CPG Central Committee members are at fault and guilty of not investigating the causes that split NOF; for allowing the rift to continue and for not putting an end to it before it became permanent. Furthermore, we can say that the CPG Central Committee is at fault for appointing a third factor in the NOF senior leadership; mainly for allowing the appointment of anti-NOF cadres, the likes of S. Kochopoulos and A. Gushopoulos, to lead NOF. The CPG demonstrated its hypocrisy when it allowed these appointments and by doing so widened the rift in NOF. This is living proof that the CPG has aims to destroy the living part of NOF and to stifle its voice and its righteous demands. In spite of everything that has transpired in NOF and in the Macedonian people, the CPG still maintains that “everything is flowing like milk and honey in NOF”! NOF cannot be made responsible for failing to solve the Macedonian National Question when that very same question rests in the hands of the CPG Central Committee!

Comrade Kochopoulos was appointed NOF Party secretary even though the majority of the NOF Central Council Executive Board did not approve. This took place on March 15, 1948 during a NOF Central Council meeting in the presence of Comrade Bardzhotas. (The NOF Executive Committee meeting was held on March 27, 1948.) Comrades Kochopoulos and Goushopoulos were made executives in NOF even though Comrade Goushopoulos dissolved almost all of NOF in Voden District (we present you with Comrade Oche’s report from April sent to the CPG Central Committee). Comrades Kochopoulos and Goushopoulos were NOF’s worst opponents, critics and slanderers up until November 1948, and yet they were appointed to NOF. This, comrades, was also done with the knowledge of the CPG Central Committee.

Comrades, from the items we analyzed and presented up to now, we can conclude that the CPG Central Committee (from November 24, 1946 to August 7, 1948) not only mismanaged NOF and the Macedonian leadership, but it disregarded the Macedonian people’s wishes and desires and mishandled the Macedonian National

Question in general. We are right when we say that our Comrades Leonidas Stringos and Miltiadis Porfirogenis, and all the others who dealt with NOF and the Macedonian National Question, proved indifferent to NOF's issues and to the Macedonian people's interests. In fact they went even further than that when they allowed "divide and conquer" politics to become influential in NOF. We can rightly say that the Macedonian leaders and the Macedonian struggle were undermined and devalued so that the Macedonian people would not achieve their equality.

We can rightly say that the decisions the CPG Central Committee Politburo made on July 15, 1948 and those made by the NOF Central Board on July 7, 1948 were wrong, and here is why:

1. The division inside NOF blamed on Comrades Keramitchiev and Mitrevski was not "factious", "unprincipled" and a "personal struggle for power" like the CPG has concluded. Ask yourselves the question, why are we fighting? Why are we leading a persistent struggle? We are fighting for the realization of the rights of the Macedonian people. We are struggling to bring into effect the principle of equality for our people. Our fight is to achieve such a principle. On top of leading a struggle we begged for a Party group to be established in NOF, so that the Party could be closer to the people. We were leading a struggle against the Party being distanced from an entire organization, from an entire nation, which is the most important principle for a Party. It is clear that our struggle in this sector was principled.

We struggled to repair the deteriorating situation caused by our CPG Central Committee comrades who led with NOF; to remove NOF's leadership from the country's spheres of influence. We have shown that they (CPG) did not want internal unity, one direction coordinated activities between NOF and AFZH, NOF fair and proper personnel policies... and this shows that we were waging a principled struggle.

And another thing, we led a struggle against the great Greek chauvinists who were present among the Greek cadres in DAG such as Kiriakos (Iraklis Meletiadis) in Kaimakchalan and Lefteris (Lefteris Katsakos) in Vicho who, in the presence of the party

leadership, unjustifiably killed 20 Macedonians and then fled with the worst anti-Macedonian and fanatical elements, traitors and Macedonians in villages who portrayed themselves as Greeks. These traitors then helped these criminals escape to the cities where they surrendered to the Monarcho-Fascists. We also struggled against these kinds of hostilities aimed against NOF and against the Macedonian people, which were defended by representatives of the CPG.

Comrades, our struggle was not “fractious”, “unprincipled”, or “supremacist”. Our struggle was honest and principled. Our struggle was not anti-democratic, nor harmful to the Macedonian and Greek people as you mentioned in your resolution. Our struggle was democratic. This was how things stood, which naturally challenges the third accusation you made which said: “because of the fractious and unprincipled disagreements between Mitrevski and Keramitchiev the Macedonian cadres were not advanced”, and that “because of the mistakes made by senior NOF leaders the Macedonian people failed to join the partisan ranks en masse”. This accusation too has no leg to stand on because, comrades, it is a fact, as mentioned earlier, that the CPG Central Committee did not implement its part of the agreement between NOF and the CPG. The CPG did not fulfill its obligation and did not deliver on its promises to the Macedonian people in general. What is even more wrong is what is said further down the resolution that NOF did not deliver on recruiting Macedonians en masse in the partisan ranks. This accusation is false because NOF, in spite of all the problems it was having and without Party support, by July 7, 1948 managed to recruit 14,000 Macedonian fighters from a population of 250,000 Macedonian people. Yet the CPG Central Committee and DAG Headquarters, with all their power and control all over Greece, managed to recruit only 25,000 Greek partisans from a population of 7 million people. So if we compare the populations and the percentages recruited we will find that there were 17 times less Greek partisans recruited than Macedonians. Let us also keep in mind that, due to its unhealthy relationship and misunderstandings with the CPG Central Committee, NOF could not contribute more. All this proves that not only is this accusation false but how valuable NOF’s contribution turned out to be in the democratic movement in Greece.

In the fourth indictment of your resolution you talk about the people's government in the Macedonian districts being weak and insufficiently developed because of the "unprincipled, fractious and personal struggle for power". You say that it was not worthy because if it was, it would not have been governed by Greek governors who did not understand the Macedonian reality and who did not know the local conditions. NOF needed more rights to deal with these issues. NOF did not have those rights and neither was its authoritative opinion regarded as competent, as in for example when it wanted to send cadres to be treated for tuberculosis. Furthermore let us look at what the CPG Central Committee said about NOF in its 4th Plenum, held on July 29, 1948, in its resolution. It said: "The Macedonian people massively participate in today's democratic struggle." Now let us take into consideration what Zahariadis meant during the NOF Secretariat meeting with Mitrevski, Keramitchiev, Vera and Kochopoulos, held in Gramos on June 29, when he said the Macedonian people in DAG and the people's government are not represented on an equal basis, and that the CPG Central Committee and Politburo bear the greatest responsibility for the poor state in which NOF is found. Did he mean leave them alone and "let's see what they will do?" He meant the Macedonian national reality was being undermined through these prejudices. Zahariadis himself, in front of the Macedonian military cadres, on October 5, 1948, said: "Comrades Stringos and Porfirigenis were full of bias in regards to NOF and have proven to be unable to resolve the Macedonian National Question".

The CPG Central Committee Politburo Resolution is even more wrong when we have a look at the NOF Central Board 1st Plenary meeting when all the blame for all ills was put on the NOF top leadership because of this "unprincipled personal struggle" between Mitrevski and Keramitchiev, leaving out all CPG Central Committee accountabilities and responsibilities in the improper governance of the partisans and the CPG's part in how it improperly managed NOF and the Macedonian National Question.

The resolution becomes even more unjust and more erratic by the fact that it was personally signed by comrade Zahariadis who, at the NOF Secretariat meeting on June 29, 1948, himself publicly

attacked Stringos and Porfirogenis for being biased against NOF and for being unable or unwilling to act on the Macedonian National Question. Then, after NOF's 1st plenary session, Zahariadis personally took over the management of the Macedonian National Question and personally took responsibility for correcting a range of issues which are now being blamed on NOF. The facts, however, show that not only is the resolution unfair and that we have been wronged, but that we had far less responsibility in dealing with these issues than did the other side (CPG). In conclusion the situation calls for the following questions to be asked:

1. What were the reasons for the CPG failing to act on the NOF – CPG agreement?
2. Why were the wrong people, certain CPG Central Committee comrades, put in place to implement the Macedonian National Question, to manage NOF and to generally look after the interests of the Macedonian people?
3. Why were comrades who were chauvinistic towards NOF appointed to manage NOF and the Macedonian Struggle?
4. Why did NOF and AFZH remain without a Party group for 20 months?
5. Why was the 1st NOF Plenary resolution deemed unjust?
6. And finally, why did Comrade Zahariadis contradict himself in regards to managing the Macedonian National Question?

Comrades, you are well-aware that most NOF Central Board cadres voted against holding the 1st NOF Central Board Plenary meeting (August 8, 1948). We made our views very clear about that. Similarly, we made our views clear about the above mentioned CPG Central Committee's failure to deal with the Macedonian National Question and with NOF. We received this resolution with a partisan view, since it was imposed on NOF by Ioanidis (Ganis Ioanidis) and Porfirogenis at the most critical moment when DAG was fighting in Gramos. Every bit of resistance had consequences not only of breaking NOF, the Macedonian people and the Macedonian

partisans, but also of breaking our defenses and DAG's defense in Gramos and thus making it impossible to open a second front in Vicho since the Monarcho-Fascists were already there and were holding Vicho. We acted because we calculated the enormous negative consequences that would take place if we did the opposite. We have calculated this situation much better than the CPG Central Committee had done and it allowed us to reach the said resolution.

In fact, we were much disciplined not because the resolution was fair but because we wanted to mend the split. We acted because we were looking after our interests in the democratic movement in Greece (through a prism), and also because acting conformed with NOF's interests and the interests of the Macedonian people and the country in general. We acted because we did not want to break the democratic movement in Greece. We acted because we believed that Comrade Zahariadis would create the right condition to form Macedonian units because that is what he officially said. We acted because we believed there would be Macedonian representatives in the interim democratic government ministries, in DAG General Headquarters, in the office of the national minorities, etc.

Comrades, let us now have a look at how the CPG Central Committee acted with NOF and with the Macedonian National Question immediately after the NOF Central Board 1st Plenary meeting, after Mitrevski and Keramitchiev were distanced from the Secretariat, and after August 10, 1948. Let us see how the CPG managed and made decisions on matters from that day to this day. We do not intend to engage in many details. We will limit our views to the most important events that have played and are still playing out, and will make comparisons between what was said and what was done with regards to NOF and the Macedonian people's interests to see if what was done was in fact in the interests of the joint democratic movement in Greece. We will also do this to disclose to you the reasons why we did not agree with Comrade Porfirogenis, member of the CPG Central Committee, when he together with Comrades Mitrevski, Mangovski (Krstev Mangov), and Marika (Marika Elkova) came here in March of this year to "convince us" not to return. (Miltiadis Porfirogenis and several NOF leaders, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, went to Skopje in the first ten

days in February 1949). They even tried to convince us in writing not to return, for the following reasons:

1. Comrades, you are well-aware that for 55 days after August 10, 1948, that is until October 5, 1948, comrades Mitrevski and Keramitchiev were isolated in Bukovik, Prespa Region. And by your orders they were prohibited from doing any work, be it in DAG's ranks or in NOF, even though the CPG Central Committee Politburo, on August 15, 1948 had ordered these two, through a specific resolution, to immediately enter DAG's ranks as lieutenants – political commissars; ranks assigned to them by special order from DAG General Headquarters (by General Markos). But at the same time they were not permitted to undertake any work in NOF even though, pursuant to the above decision, they continued to be members of the NOF Executive Board. In that period nothing was done to improve Comrade Keramitchiev's health. But not only that, there was something more going on here.

You already know, Comrades, that the former NOF slanderers and NOF opponents, such as the likes of Comrades Koichev (Vangel Koiche), Stavro Kochopoulos, Anastas Goushopoulos (Maki) and company, who joined the NOF Executive Board and the NOF Secretariat under the persistent efforts of Ioanidis, who during the 1st NOF Congress, held on January 13, 1948, were selected without a secret ballot (which you denied us), and could not wait to pounce not only on Comrade Ilia Dimovski Goche, who was removed from DAG's ranks 5 months ago without knowing why, but also against comrades Oche, Slavianka and others.

2. You are well-aware, Comrades, that after the 2nd NOF Plenary session and after the removal of comrades Mitrevski and Keramitchiev from the NOF Secretariat, again under the persistence of Comrade Ioanidis, and without a secret vote, Comrades Koichev and Kochopoulos were appointed in NOF. Comrade Koichev, National militia commander for Lerin and Kostur Regions was appointed NOF Secretary and Comrade Kochopoulos was appointed NOF President. The only Macedonians appointed to worthwhile ranks in DAG were Vaina (Pando Vainata) and Maki. What does all this mean? It means that NOF and the Macedonian National Question were overtaken by anti-people's - frontline elements.

3. You very well know, Comrades, that after the NOF Central Board Resolution on May 8, 1948, and after the removal of comrades Mitrevski and Keramitchiev from the NOF Secretariat, Comrade Zahariadis personally took over the management of NOF and the Macedonian National Question. You very well know that on October 4, 1948, Zahariadis convened a meeting of all Macedonian NOF and AFZH cadres to “persuade” the Macedonian leaders and the Macedonian people that Mitrevski and Keramitchiev were “unprincipled”, “fractious” and fought for personal gains, power and control. You very well know, comrades, that in this meeting comrade Zahariadis, among other things, said that Comrade Porfirogenis (who was managing NOF and the Macedonian question up to August 8, 1948) was full of bias towards NOF and towards the Macedonian people and that he proved to be completely incapable of management of the Macedonian National Question. Besides that, the CPG Central Committee was also responsible for the abnormal situation in NOF and that it was a crime that the CPG did not deliver what the Macedonian people were promised and that they deserved to have their own representatives in DAG Headquarters, in the interim democratic government and in the office of the national minorities.

4. You very well know, Comrades, that Zahariadis personally took over the management of NOF and the Macedonian National Question and that he formally announced this during the meeting. He also declared that he would create a party group in NOF, appoint Macedonians to the interim Democratic government ministries, appoint Macedonians to DAG Headquarters, as well as to the office of national minorities. And besides all that, he also promised to create Macedonian units as part of DAG with their own direct leadership.

5. You very well know, Comrades, we accepted these decisions based on the fact that Comrade Zahariadis admitted that mistakes had been made and that Comrade Zahariadis promised to correct those mistakes himself. From what was said it should be clear to you now that we did the right thing and that it was the CPG Central Committee Politburo that decided that these commitments were not favourable to the CPG and forced us to adopt them under the NOF

Central Board 1st Plenary resolution. We did this and endured it in order to avoid a split in the brotherhood and unity between the Greek and Macedonian people.

6. You are well aware, Comrades, that after all this, Comrade Ilia Dimovski Goche and Keramitchiev assisting Goche were given the task to organize Macedonian units and recruit Macedonian fighters from the existing capable forces which had fled to Yugoslavia. The same task was given to Comrades Todor Kochopoulos Viktor and Lazo Poplazarov, to go to Albania and recruit Macedonian fighters from there. As you are well-aware a celebration was organized to celebrate the formation of the 1st Macedonian unit in January 1949. (The 1st Battalion was led by Major Comrade Atanas Angelovski Garefis.)

You very well know, Comrades, that Comrades Ilia Dimovski and Keramitchiev convinced some 300 Macedonians to join the Macedonian units being prepared in Yugoslavia. In their attempts to recruit Macedonians in Yugoslavia they ran into huge difficulties because the Macedonians there were well-aware of the promises made by the Party that were never delivered and that the leaders that led the democratic movement in Greece did not think much of NOF and considered NOF unworthy of their consideration. The Macedonian people in Yugoslavia were well-aware that the principles of equality were not implemented and were not applied to the Macedonian people in Greece. Along with that, you very well know, Comrades, that Comrades Lazar Poplazarov and Todor Kochopoulos persuaded hundreds of Macedonians in Albania to enter the ranks of Macedonian units. Furthermore, Comrades, you are well-aware that during the last ten days of February this year, based on your orders through DAG Headquarters, the Macedonian battalion "Garefis" was disbanded under the pretext that they could not represent a certain cell of the Macedonian units because 90% of the people were women. Similarly, as a continuation of this process, you are well aware that the Comrades who were brought here by Lazo Poplazarov and Todor Kochopoulos were not allowed to enter the Macedonian units as they were promised. In fact they were disbursed in various other units. All this was done without the knowledge of Ilia Dimovski and Mihail Keramitchiev. So in fact the promises that Comrade Zahariadis made, according to his official

statement (as mentioned above), were not fulfilled and the one and only Macedonian unit that was established in DAG's ranks, justifying it as a Macedonian unit of DAG in XI Division, was comprised of 60 % Greeks.

You already know, Comrades, that in September 1948 we collected about 1,000 Macedonians from the villages German and Rabi near the Yugoslav border. These people were forced to leave their villages because they were at the front line. You already know that these Macedonians were old people, children, sick, women and unable to fight. They all expressed a desire to move to Yugoslavia where tens of thousands of Macedonians fled to seek refuge. The wishes of these Macedonians unfortunately were not fulfilled because you would not allow them to cross into Yugoslavia. In fact you were forcing them to go to Albania. Now it is common knowledge that these people did not leave and were concentrated in various villages and exposed to daily aerial bombardments, resulting in numerous casualties.

8. You already know, Comrades, that in your decisions, as well as in the decisions made during the NOF Central Council 2nd Plenary Resolution, the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenary Session and the NOF 2nd Congress, as well as in many verbal references you made during various party meetings and conferences, you called us traitors, opportunists, organs of the reactionaries, etc.

Why did we present you with the above points? Because we want to prove to you that the Resolution taken during the 1st NOF Plenary Meeting, i.e. after Comrade Zahariadis took over the management of NOF and the Macedonian National Question, and after promising that the Macedonian National Question would be resolved to benefit the Macedonian people and the democratic movement Greece, nothing was done. The so-called "mistakes" continued to be made as usual, which were harmful and detrimental to the Macedonian people. Mistakes such as:

1. Contrary to what Comrade Zahariadis officially promised and ordered; i.e. to form Macedonian combat units because today nothing prevents it; and that the creation of Macedonian units today is only natural and logical; and that this will not only retain the

Macedonian partisans in DAG's ranks, but will also build new reserves from the occupied Macedonian territories; it will bring back refugees who had left the country, etc. The creation of these Macedonian units will not only stabilize the struggle but will also increase our fighting potential (as per comments made by Comrade Porfirogenis). But none of this happened; even today you have not formed such units!

2. By not allowing the creation of the Macedonian units, you have demonstrated an unwillingness to comply with what Comrade Zahariadis had decided and formally promised and now you are compromising us here. In the eyes of the refugees you have turned us into liars (we told the refugees that we had the right to form Macedonian units, as per Zahariadis's promises). And you, you have compromised yourselves terribly as unworthy of your promises and with that you have confirmed to us that you cannot be trusted, especially your leadership with the Macedonian National Question. By doing this you have also compromised yourselves in front of the Macedonian partisans who are in the ranks of DAG, in front of whom you publicly said that Macedonian units would be formed.

3. You have not allowed the elderly parents, the unfit women and even the small children of the fallen, or of the living Macedonian fighters who today are fighting in DAG, to cross into Yugoslavia. What is worse is that you forced them to go to Albania where you could hold them concentrated in various villages, exposed to frequent bombardments. This tells us that you are not interested in allowing the Macedonian people to even save themselves from certain death. This also tells us that, while on the one hand you speak of the Macedonian National Question being "correctly" solved, on the other, and during the most critical moments, you separate us from our brothers in the People's Republic of Macedonia. By doing this you are committing those Macedonian people, who are unable to struggle, to death. By doing this allow us to tell you that you are losing your reputation and the trust among the Macedonian people as a whole and among the Macedonian fighters in DAG, the very sons and daughters of the aforementioned, as well as of the 40,000 Aegean Macedonian refugees who now find themselves in foreign countries.

4. The fact that today Comrade Vangel Koichev, member of the Military Council of DAG General Headquarters, Comrade S. Kochopoulos, chairman of the National Minorities, Comrade Maki, Division Political Commissar and others like them, who earlier were major opponents of SNOF and NOF and who had no authority or trust among the Macedonian people, were placed in charge of NOF. (Makis Anastas Goushopulos was not a division political commissar. He was political commissar of the DAG 18th Brigade.)

All these people who were biased against the Macedonian people were put in charge of looking after Macedonian interests and everything that is Macedonian; NOF, the Macedonian people, the Macedonian National Question and so on... This tells us that you have no intention of contributing anything good but quite the opposite; you have demonstrated a willingness to do damage to NOF and to everything that is Macedonian. The facts point in that direction...

5. In addition to these injustices and negative consequences you committed against us, you have now, in an incomprehensible way, tried to pin your mistakes and omissions on us by distorting the truth and the reality and by throwing yourselves on our backs and on the backs of our neighbouring nations and their leaders.

Comrades,

Regarding your leadership in NOF and regarding the general Macedonian National Question up until the 1st NOF Central Board Plenary meeting, held on August 8, 1948, we raise the following:

1. Why did NOF remain without a Party group for 20 months?
2. Why did you not fulfill the 1946 written agreement between NOF and the CPG?
3. Why did the CPG Central Committee comrades appoint biased people, who opposed NOF and the Macedonian people, into the NOF leadership? Why were they put in charge of managing the Macedonian people and the Macedonian National Question?

4. Why were the principles and practices of equality and rights for the Macedonian people not realized and enforced?

5. Why did the CPG Central Committee Politburo insist on having the infamous and completely unfair NOF Central Board 1st Plenary meeting and why is it trying so hard to make it look legitimate?

6. Why did the CPG Central Committee Politburo allow NOF to operate for 20 months under abnormal circumstances? Why did it not step in and deal with the aforementioned issues? Now after the 1st NOF Plenary meeting and after the current management took over control of the Macedonian National Question, a new set of questions come to mind:

1. Why were the Macedonian military units disbanded? Why were the decisions and the official promise to have Macedonian combat units annulled by Comrade Zahariadis?

Why was the First Division consisting of 60% Macedonians called a Greek unit and not a Macedonian unit? The other units also had 60-70% Macedonians.

Why did you not establish, even today, Macedonian units?

2. Why did the CPG Central Committee, with full knowledge, decide to erect a “wall of China” between the same Macedonian people living in the People’s Republic of Macedonia and in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia? Why not allow thousands of Macedonians unable to fight to pass into the People’s Republic of Macedonia? Why force them to cross into Albania? Why then hold them in concentration camps in Albania and expose them to certain death. The bombardments in Albania claimed an average of ten victims per day!

3. Why were the highest responsible positions available to Macedonians filled with cadres of the likes of Koichev, Kochopoulos, Maki, etc., who are well-known anti-Macedonians, of whom the Macedonians were suspicious and who have no credible authority among the Macedonian people and cadres? This is expressed by the fact that lately on one hand no Macedonian has

been elected secretary of NOF, and on the other there are many gifted Macedonians with all kinds of leadership abilities who are completely ignored. Every Macedonian cadre who has been appointed has been appointed to a low and insignificant function.

4. Why have you in the past and now in the present still slander and attack us? We have proven to you in writing that we have not committed any of the acts of which you accuse us. We have repeatedly shown you that we have done nothing wrong and that we are on the right and democratic path. We are patiently looking forward to resolving the Macedonian National Question in a proper and effective manner in favour of the democratic movement in Greece.

Comrades,

We are not pessimists and we do not look down on this phenomenon. We are looking for the right thing to be done and for Comrade Zahariadis to correct past mistakes and failures, especially those which apply to the Macedonian National Question. We don't pretend to be people without mistakes and who can do no wrong... There are many thousands of Macedonians here who, along with us, are glad that Comrade Zahariadis, even though he is two years late, has decided to create a party group (meaning the formation of KOEM on March 27, 1949) in NOF and for the Macedonian people, knowing that NOF's leadership today could solve many of the problems that plague the Macedonian people if it has representation in the interim democratic government of Greece.

But since the Macedonian people have no representation in the interim democratic government ministries, or in DAG General Headquarters, or in the office of the national minorities, and not to mention that there are no Macedonian cadres in senior DAG positions, and that no Macedonian today has any clear idea of the reality of the Macedonian question, Comrade Zahariadis openly criticized those CPG comrades who had nothing to do with the Macedonian National Question. He even expressed self-criticism of the CPG Central Committee Politburo. All this is well and creates some kind of opportunity and prospect for the Macedonian National Question and for the Macedonian fighters and people, but we can't

continue to fool ourselves that Comrade Zahariadis will somehow do the right thing when the entire attitude of the CPG Central Committee towards NOF, towards the Macedonian National Question and Macedonian people is completely wrong. The CPG's attitude towards the Macedonian National Question today is not in touch with the Macedonian reality, with the Macedonian people and with the very democratic movement in Greece.

We are emphasizing this, Comrades, because it is a fact! Today you will not allow the formation of Macedonian units yet you are more than willing to put the mothers, fathers and children of the fighters who are fighting for you in jeopardy. You would rather have them killed than allow them to come here (People's Republic of Macedonia). You prefer to promote those Macedonian cadres who today are anti-Macedonian, against everything Macedonian, who don't understand or care about the Macedonian National Question, who are there for personal and career ambitions, who have proven to be wrongdoers and who have wronged the Macedonian people, than to promote Macedonians who care about Macedonian issues. On top of that you simultaneously and unfairly attack and slander us with fabricated accusations. This, comrades, clearly shows that today your policy towards NOF and towards the Macedonian people is not only damaging and will not solve the Macedonian National Question equitably (as was said on August 8, 1948), but you are now giving the Macedonian people, and especially the Macedonian fighters, reasons to mistrust you. You and your leadership are playing with the fate of the Macedonian people! You are creating conditions for Macedonian DAG fighters to defect. You are demoralizing the Macedonian people and diminishing their potential to struggle. For what are they struggling? You are tearing apart the inner unity of the Macedonian people and so on. Besides all that, your actions are killing the possibility of finding new Macedonian fighters who would be willing to put their lives on the line for Greece. By your accounts, DAG reserves for the general democratic movement in Greece, yesterday and today, was and remains to be the most delicate issue, something which in your opinion was the main obstacle that your prospects and previous solutions have failed and, by the hand of our common enemy, the democratic movement has been damaged.

What else can we say about the processes which the Macedonian people there (in Greek occupied Macedonia) have to live with when, in the period from August 8, 1948 onwards until recently, Zahariadis personally led NOF and the Macedonian National Question and is now managed by incapable people, full of prejudices against NOF and against the Macedonian people, as it was earlier, according to Comrade Zahariadis himself, by the incapable comrades Porfirogenis and Stringos.

What else can we say about you calling us and to this day call us spies, deserters, cowards, etc., when you very well know that we are not any of those things and that we do not want to “immediately unite Aegean Macedonia with Vardar Macedonia” as Comrade Porfirogenis has announced. This is his half fiction, because you have not created the conditions for a free and independent Macedonia, you made this up yourselves and you had the NOF newspaper “Nepokoren” publish it so that you could blame NOF.

What else can we say when you very well know that up to now and from now on until the end, we were and are committed to leading this worthy struggle for the rights of the Macedonian people, without fear of death.

We just want to let you know that your entire CPG Central Committee policies and tactics from 1941 until now were never proper or fair to the Macedonian people. In fact they were downright undeserving, demeaning and anti-Macedonian. At the same time you seemed to be very distrustful of NOF and the Macedonian people and were never sure if they should participate in any revolutionary initiatives. In other words, you cared little or none at all about how the Macedonian National Question was handled, as long as it was handled to the disadvantage of the Macedonian people.

And in the end, Comrades, just because you say we are, and you like to call us “agents of the Tito clique”, does not mean that we are! We are nobody’s agents, but Macedonian fighters who are fighting for the Macedonian people and for democracy! We are honest people with truthful spirits and good hearts. As for Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party, we can tell you verbally or in writing that we are not being forced to be on their side or against the Informburo. At the

same time we can also tell you that we, as Macedonians, are prepared to declare to you in writing that Tito, the Yugoslav Communist Party, the CPM... have rightly and permanently solved the Macedonian National Question in its entirety and therefore we cannot believe that Tito, the Yugoslav Communist Party and the CPM have become traitors, and that they have gone to the camp of the imperialists. If we are wrong, then provide us with the evidence, the facts and deeds, not only words and promises filled with distortions, half-truths and fiction.

Comrades,

We don't know what you will think and what you will say when, once again, you become familiar with our views, wishes and requirements. Like you wished up to now and like you wish to qualify and characterize us, one thing is important - to look for the truth! It is equally important for us as it is for you to get to the truth despite all the condemnations, distortions and falsifications created by M. Porfirigenis, the truth is there if you desire to find it. We have said much of what we wanted to say and provided you with our justifications.

And despite of all this, we and thousands of Macedonian fighters here today want to come back and continue to fight heroically for our worthy cause. To successfully and fully implement solutions, provide opportunities and fulfil demands made by the Macedonian people from Aegean Macedonia and by the Macedonian fighters.

1. To act, most energetically, to form Macedonian units with their own Macedonian Headquarters as part of DAG and under DAG's General Headquarters.
2. To allow every Macedonian to freely join the Macedonian units, be they fighters of DAG or returning immigrants.
3. These units must operate in Macedonia while not in combat.
4. The Macedonian units must be led by Macedonian elected Macedonian leaders, elected by the Macedonian fighters themselves who will be led.

5. Comrades Koichev, Kochopoulos and Gushopoulos-Maki are to be removed from their duties and replaced by Macedonian staff which the NOF Central Board will select.
6. Allow all people who are old, disabled and sick, including women and children, to cross into SFRY territory.
7. Refrain from mobilizing and sending Macedonian children ages 13, 14 and 15 to the front lines, as per your current orders. Refrain from mobilizing women older than 36 years of age. Refrain from mobilizing maimed and seriously ill men fighters, such as you are doing today, and turning them into unnecessary victims.
8. Allow the Macedonian children who are now outside of Greece to be given a Macedonian revolutionary education and stop pushing your great Greek assimilation policies on them, which is characteristic of current practices in order to prevent 80% of the Macedonian children from learning their mother language.
9. Establish free cultural and educational relations between the Macedonians in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia (the free territory) and Macedonians in the People's Republic of Macedonia. Allow mutual visits between leaders of the Macedonian people from both parts of Macedonia.
10. Allow NOF to freely agitate that the CPY has correctly solved the Macedonian National Question and how it was unresolved or left unresolved by the Bulgarian Communist Party.
11. All elections must be conducted by secret ballot including those for party leaders and officers in NOF, AFZH, interim democratic government, and so on.
12. Put an end to anti-Tito, anti-Yugoslav propaganda and vice versa. End all propaganda on both sides.
13. The CPG Central Committee must recognize, not only orally but in writing, that the CPG Central Committee itself is to blame for all past injustices committed against NOF and against the Macedonian

National Question; that we (NOF) are the least guilty and therefore desire to provide moral recognition for the correctness of a consistent struggle.

14. Do not punish the Macedonian people who had fled to Yugoslavia from the ranks of DAG and do not consider them to be deserters and traitors.

15. For the above points to be effective and legitimate we will require a mutual written agreement. We, along with many thousands of Macedonians, have decided to come back and to continue to fight.

All the above mentioned promises and requests have been based and are still based on the assumption that the Macedonian National Question will be solved correctly and equitably by every communist party. But many of the questions are questions of principle which, even on our part, have yet to be determined or are determined to improperly justify our struggle, our position and our current practices.

In case you again decide to reject our requests (as did Comrade Porfirogenis) because you disagree with us, we are telling right now, as we have told you before, we will bear no historic responsibility for what happened and for what will happen to the detriment of the Greek people.

M. Keramitchiev, s.r.
Goche, s.r.

The document has been translated from Greek to Macedonian and published in the edition "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949", T.VI. Documents of the participation of Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia in the Greek Civil War in 1949. Translation and editing by Dr. Risto Kiriazovski and Fani Butskova Martinova. Macedonian archives, Skopje, 1983, doc. 152, p. 311-331.

Acronyms

AFZH	- Women's Anti-Fascist Front
AKE	- Agrarian party of Greece
ASNOM	- Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation of
Macedonia	
BRP(k)	- Communist Party of Bulgaria
CPG	- Communist Party of Greece
CPM	- Communist Party of Macedonia
CPY	- Communist Party of Yugoslavia
CVG	- Greek Civil War
DAG	- Democratic Army of Greece
EAM	- National Liberation Front
ELAS	- National Liberation Army of Greece
EON	- National Youth Organization
EPON	- All Greek National Youth Organization
KOEM	- Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia
KOS	- Counter-intelligence Sector of JAN
NKVD	- People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
NOB	- People's Liberation War (WW II)
NOBG	- Peoples Liberation Struggle in Greece
NOBM	- Peoples Liberation Struggle in Macedonia
NOF	- Peoples' Liberation Front
NOMS	- Peoples' Liberation Youth Organization
OKNE	- Communist Youth Organization of Greece
ONOO	- Local People's Liberation Council
OZNA	- People's Defense Division
PAO	- Pan-Hellenic Liberation Organization
PDEG	- Pan-Greek Democratic Union of Women
PDOG	- International Federation of Democratic Women
POJ	- Partisan Units of Yugoslavia
SID	- Information Services of the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs
SNOF	- Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Front
SKP(b)	- Communist Party of the Soviet Union
UDBA	- Directorate of State Security
USSR	- United Soviet Socialist Republics