

[From August 10th to the 15th, 1949 the Monarcho-Fascists carried out a violent, hellish attack against DAG with unprecedented air support supplied by the United States. The poet Atso Shopov was right when he wrote the poem “Gramos” telling us that “no bird can fly in Vicho from the hail of bombs and grenades”. This struggle has been objectively presented in two volumes by Greek historian Giorgos Margaritis, a professor at the University of Crete. Margaritis has relied on the memoirs of prominent anti-Fascists for his source material. The information presented is the best example I have read that describes why DAG aborted Vicho and pulled out of Gramos, leaving the population unprotected and running for its life.

One hundred and thirty bombing runs were made on August 10th, 1949 by the American supplied air support using “Dakota” and “Spitfire” military aircraft to bomb units of DAG and columns of fleeing refugees. The next few days the military aircraft did the same, at the same pace, providing air support for the Monarcho-Fascist artillery and infantry. There was not a square foot of space that had not been bombed on Mount Vicho, on Lisets, on Mount Malimadi and in Prespa along the Albanian and Yugoslav border. The entire area had been bombed with aerial bombs, grenades, napalm bombs and rockets and was garnished with machine gun fire by the dive-bombing aircraft. This clearly indicates the conditions under which DAG was placed and the kind of pot its fighters were put in to boil. There was an insurmountable amount of pressure and worry placed on the fighters not only for saving their own lives but also for caring for the wounded and for saving the huge columns of fleeing refugees. DAG was again attacked in Gramos with the same vigour. It was under these circumstances, created mainly by foreign intervention, that the “freedom-loving democrats” of Gramos dropped the “last flag”.

DAG was defeated by the Monarcho-Fascists on Mount Gramos on August 30th, 1949 with Anglo-American support. After Vicho fell to enemy hands, Nikos Zahariadis, General Secretary of the CPG Central Committee, said: “Gramos will be the tomb of the Monarcho-Fascists.” But that did not turn out to be the case. DAG suffered numerous casualties but, had it not backed down and fled to Albania, the opposite would have been true. Gramos would have been the tomb for DAG. For the longest part, after removing

General Markos Vafiadis from his command and after abandoning the proven military strategies of the so-called “Supreme War Council Law”, Zahariadis worked personally with his Politburo installing new “military strategists” who had absolutely no relevant experience. Units of DAG from Gramos and from other places withdrew to Albanian territory.

The main culprits for DAG’s defeat naturally were Nikos Zahariadis, General Secretary of the CPG Central Committee and his Politburo. But that’s not who they found guilty. Instead of laying blame where it squarely belonged, Zahariadis and his clique pointed their fingers at the Macedonians, specifically at the NOF and AFZH leadership and at the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. In Bureli, a town in Albania, Zahariadis staged a fake political trial, similar to those staged by Informburo countries. He had the last word.

On October 2nd, 1949 we were camped in a meadow under some olive trees beside a creek outside Elbasan. There was a beautiful white building on top of the hill. It had been converted into a hospital for the sick and wounded DAG fighters, cared for by doctors and nurses who were also members of DAG. There were both Macedonian and Greek patients and caregivers in the hospital, they were people who had fought shoulder to shoulder in the struggle and who had suffered and celebrated together. All the anti-Fascists were united as one people then and had the same goal.

From earlier on, October 2nd was designated International Day of Peace in honour of the International Congress which was held in Prague on April 20th, 1949 as well as in Paris and Tokyo. A delegation from Greece also attended the Congress including representatives from Macedonian organizations. We, the cadres of NOF, AFZH, DAG, Ministers of the Interim Government of Greece and members of the CPG Central Committee were planning and making preparations for that extra-special occasion to mark this day with an appropriate program followed by speeches from several leading cadres, including some from the Macedonian side.

Even before the celebrations began many fighters and civilians began to gather and fill the hospital courtyard. Around 8 o’clock a

jeep arrived carrying an officer from DAG Headquarters, whom I did not recognize. As soon as he got off the jeep the officer came in the direction where we were standing: Mihail Maliov, Urania Iurukova, Tashko Hadzhiianov, Gora Petrichevski, my (not yet married) spouse Mincho Fotev and I. The officer knew me. When he came close to me he said: “Comrade Vera, this letter (he handed me a blue envelope) is for you from Comrade Bardzhotas, he wants to meet with you at his place.” Vasilis Bardzhotas was a political commissar of the DAG General Staff and a member of the CPG Politburo inner circle. I quickly opened the envelope. In it was a short letter with the following text: “Comrade Vera, You, Mincho, Urania and Hadzhiianov, the moment you receive this letter, are to immediately get in the jeep and come to Bureli” signed “Vasilis Bardzhotas”. When I read the letter I was stunned, I froze like lightning had just struck me. I looked at my friends all around me. I had the feeling that something bad was going to happen and I could not get that feeling out of my head; an evil feeling that had been hovering in my head for a while now.

My friends looked at me strangely as I was eager to tell them what the letter said. Mincho became impatient and grabbed the letter out of my hand. I quietly squeezed my words out of my mouth and said: “Us four: Mincho, Urania, Hadzhiianov and I are being called to immediately take the jeep and go to Bureli, to DAG’s General Headquarters”. There was silence. The message was worrisome to everyone and we all kept silent. A group of civilian men and women traveling with DAG units from the free territory, with whom we had camped together in that place, surrounded us and wondered what was going on.

We told our friend Gogo Petrushevski, a seasoned NOF fighter, that “we were sure that they would arrest us. If you can, leave now because you will suffer the same fate.” I also told some of my fellow villagers, my aunts and a first cousin that I was sure they would arrest us. This kind of threat against the central NOF leadership had been “circulating” for a long time and now they were putting it into practice in order to hide the real culprits for DAG’s defeat. Despite the threats that we would be liquidated, taken by some provocateurs, we were and remained to the end faithful to the people whom we organized, fought with, died with and rejoiced with.]

Vera was one of Zahariadis's staunchest followers and she truly believed they were going to win the war, like Zahariadis had told them.

There are volumes of evidence in our history books and among the eye witnesses who survived the dreaded Greek Civil War, which leads me to believe that the Greek Civil War was a perpetrated war to get rid of the Macedonians from Greece, just like the British wanted. But, I believe, the 10 points listed above are sufficient evidence to give credence to my theory and to also confirm the behaviour of the players in this war which otherwise would seem illogical.

RISE OF THE MACEDONIAN REBEL COUNTER-BANDS

The moment Germany invaded Greece, the Greek government capitulated and the troops fighting against Italy on the Albanian front were abandoned. The majority of the soldiers fighting at this front were Macedonians and after Greece surrendered they were abandoned, left without provisions or support. Without orders to disband they remained at the front. The Germans found them starving. After disarming them they sent them home.

Some time after Greece was occupied by Germany, Greek occupied Macedonia was placed under German, Italian and Bulgarian control. Kostur Region was placed under Italian control but the Macedonian people living there were still having problems with the Greek Fascists who used every opportunity to harass them. So, some of the village elders turned to the Italians for protection. But instead of protecting them, the Italians gave them arms so that they could protect themselves and the Macedonians were able to repel the Greek tormentors.

In the absence of the Greeks the people in Kostur, as well as in other places in Greek occupied Macedonia, found a new freedom they had never experienced before in their lives. The Italians allowed them to speak their Macedonian language openly in the streets without being arrested, fined, or jailed. The Macedonians took advantage of this

freedom and began to read and write in Macedonian, even perform liturgy in the Macedonian language in church.

Kostur Region village Macedonian armed counter-bands protected their villages from Greek attacks and combined together to form larger bands to protect themselves from bigger dangers. They became a formidable force in the region.

“This Macedonian patriotism was put into action on March 5th, 1943 in Kostur Region when an Assembly of 48 members, representatives of the various villages, was convened and decided to form the “Macedonian Committee” for Kostur Region whose aim was to defend the 54 to 60 villages in that region. They were allowed to arm themselves because they needed protection from the Greeks. Everything else that has been said about them is a lie.” (Stoian Kochov)

Unfortunately, being occupied by Italy, an ally of Bulgaria, the Bulgarians too had access to Kostur Region and used their propaganda to not only convince some of these Macedonians to support the Bulgarian cause, but also to convince the world that these bands were “actually Bulgarian”. Some of the fighters in the Kostur bands did join the Bulgarians and began to spread Bulgarian propaganda among the people and as tensions mounted they did commit crimes against the Macedonian people. Both the Greeks and Bulgarians unfortunately used these incidents to vilify all the Kostur counter-bands and label them criminal and Fascist.

People still write me to tell me that these people were “no-good Bulgarians”. But what leads me to believe that they were neither criminals nor Bulgarian Fascists, with the exception of a few, is the fact that they spoke Macedonian, allowed the Macedonian language to be taught and to be used in church. They also operated under a code of conduct that protected the Macedonian people and supported the Macedonian cause.

The fact is the Kostur rebels were guided by Delchev’s philosophy and by the Macedonian freedom fighters who believed that if you die for something then die for Macedonia. And this is exactly what led them to create their own Macedonian army and refused to be

subservient to the Greek government or to the Communists (internationalists) and that is exactly why they were vilified and destroyed.

History will record the strategy of the eternal rebel desire: to have our identity and language returned, to protect our families, properties and villages and to remain masters of our grandfather's hearth.

“First: The rebels, as the rightful sons of these Macedonian lands, brought back the Kostur dialect of the Macedonian language, which for years had been prohibited from being spoken, by Greek law;

Second: The rebels re-opened the Macedonian churches and liturgy was conducted in the Macedonian language and so were other rites including baptisms, weddings and funerals;

Third: The local militia addressed the people in their native Macedonian language.” (Stoian Kočov)

The Kostur rebels believed in driving the Greeks out of Macedonia and forming a united Macedonian state. Why would they do that if they were fighting for the Bulgarian cause?

At about the same time, when Russia began to push the Nazis out of Russian soil, a resistance movement started growing in the Balkans with aims at driving the occupiers out. This resistance movement was organized by the communists at a grass roots level. The Macedonians also began to organize their own resistance movements in the various regions of Greek occupied Macedonia including Kostur, Lerin and Voden.

Unfortunately, instead of combining and forming a single Macedonian force, the Greek communists “convinced” the Macedonians to join the Greeks and fight a united front against the occupier. From this point on the Greeks took the upper hand and began to control the entire movement including the one started by the Macedonians.

The National Liberation Front (EAM) in Greece was formed on September 27, 1941 without any Macedonian markings. Its aims were to expel the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers, establishing the integrity of Greece, establishing the self-determination of Cyprus, the Dodecanese and Northern Epirus but nothing was said anywhere about the Macedonians.

After EAM was formed and joined by the CPG, it called on the entire Greek population to resist fascism. Then, in a joint meeting with the CPG Central Committee, it called for organizing a resistance army. This new Greek Army, appropriately named ELAS, was created on February 15, 1942 with the appearance of its first ELAS military units. The first detachment of ELAS formed in Greek occupied Macedonia was in Kostur on December 7, 1942 and it consisted of 10 Macedonians, 7 Greeks and 2 Vlachs.

Here is the ELAS oath that everyone who joined ELAS had to take: “I swear that I will fight to the last drop of my blood for the complete liberation, stability and independence of Greece. I will fight to preserve the integrity of the Greek people and the establishment of order and basic human rights... by performing due diligence and demonstrating discipline. I will follow orders and instructions from my superiors and I will avoid every process that may turn me into a traitor against the Greek people.” Still nothing about the Macedonian people.

And as the allies started to gain the upper hand over the occupiers and the German army began to retreat, the armed counter-band groups, such as the ones I mentioned earlier in Kostur Region, started to become a problem for the Greeks. EAM and the CPG communists wanted them eradicated.

The Greeks could have put a Greek armed force to pursue and eradicate the Kostur rebels but they didn't. The CPG decided to create an all Macedonian force and let it deal with them.

SNOF CREATED TO DESTROY THE MACEDONIAN REBEL COUNTER-BANDS

“The CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships, ‘concerned’ about the situation that existed in Greek occupied Macedonia, especially in Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions, decided to create a separate Macedonian organization; SNOF (Slavo-Macedonia National Liberation Front). SNOF, for Kostur and Lerin Regions, was created on October 20, 1943 and for Voden Region a little later. The people who created SNOF were Greeks who belonged to the CPG District Committee for Western Macedonia; Hristos Kalfas (Andreas), Antonis Andonopoulos (Periklis), CPG District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region and Thanassis Kartsunis, CPG District Committee Secretary for Kozhani Region.” (See the book: “Giorgi R. Peikov (1915-1991)” by Stoian Kochov, Skopje 1995, for more information.)

Why did the Greeks insist on using the prefix “Slavo”? There were no “other” Macedonians in Greece! They used the prefix “Slavo” to distinguish them from whom? Why were the Greeks so keen on hiding the Macedonian identity in Greek occupied Macedonia? If not to, yet again, deny the Macedonian people their rights and their rightful place in their own homeland? Who were these “Slavo-Macedonians”?

SNOF was allowed to recruit only for a short period of time, after that its fighters were subordinated to ELAS. On September 16, 1944 all military units belonging to the Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Army (SNOV) were disbanded.

It is a historic fact that the CPG and EAM leadership, up until April 1944, used SNOF for its own political and military aims, primarily in dealing with the armed bands. Then in the beginning of May 1944 the CPG disbanded SNOF and SNOV (its armed wing) because they say SNOF had become an obstacle in the CPG’s negotiations with the Greek government in exile and with the other coalition government parties scheduled to meet in mid-May 1944.

The CPG did not explain who was objecting and why they were having problems with the Macedonians being armed, even though

they were allies in the struggle against the occupiers and even though SNOF was instrumental in the removal of the armed bands in Greek occupied Macedonia. The CPG did not even object to the British and Greek government request to disband SNOF.

So, less than 6 months after it was created by strangers and foreigners, SNOF was disbanded, again by strangers and foreigners, even after proving that it was a great asset to the CPG.

Clearly, the Greeks on the entire political spectrum had a problem with the Macedonians, both with SNOF and with the armed Kostur bands.

So after getting SNOF to do the dirty work for the Greeks, the CPG ordered SNOF to disband.

SNOF and its fighters were told, through Greek communist propaganda, that the armed bands in Kostur and other regions in Macedonia were “Bulgarian Fascists” who were fighting for the Bulgarian cause. The Macedonian partisans that were sent to destroy them had no idea that these bands were Macedonian. In other words, through deceit, SNOF was sent to liquidate its own people.

This was yet another “unfortunate” Macedonian mistake in a string of historic mistakes.

Macedonians “must” learn not to be so trusting! Macedonians must learn that they cannot depend on foreigners and strangers to lead them and tell them what to do! Macedonians must grasp the fact that the world around them was built on lies and deception and no one cares about them!

In short, the Macedonians were lied to and used to disarm and destroy the Macedonian village bands.

Even before SNOF was disbanded, relations between the Greek communists and the SNOF leadership were abysmal to say the least.

The Greeks were promising “cooperation” between SNOF and ELAS but that cooperation never materialized.

TENSIONS MOUNT

Many Macedonian leaders, particularly Ilia Dimovski Gotse, a Macedonian battalion commander, were upset and unhappy about the Macedonian situation in Greece.

Then tensions came to a climax in October when Ilia Dimovski Gotse found himself face to face with ELAS units deployed in front of his SNOF units ready to attack them.

Instead of fighting, Ilia Dimovski Gotse, along with 800 of his fighters, crossed over the Yugoslav border and entered the Republic of Macedonia. He did not want a direct confrontation with ELAS, especially with the Macedonian fighters who had joined ELAS. And especially not on Macedonian soil. The implications would have been horrendous to say the least...

First the Greeks wanted to disband the battalions, later they wanted to move them south, outside of Macedonia. But Ilia Dimovski Gotse refused their orders. He told the Greeks that the fighters in his battalion were all Macedonians and wanted to stay in Macedonia to protect their families and the Macedonian people. His fighters were all volunteers; kids who joined his force to fight for Macedonia and not for Greece. They were simple people who were fed up with Greek aggression and wanted it to end.

Their strength was in their patriotism and that worried the Greeks. But the Greeks used their patriotism against them. First, they used it to destroy the Macedonian armed village bands on account that they were allegedly "Bulgarian bands". Then they promised the Macedonians political and military cooperation. Later they promised the Macedonians human rights and equality... This was purposely done to get the Macedonians to do their bidding. The Greek communists even promised the Macedonians complete independence. But, none of these promises materialized... They were all Greek lies.

GREEKS MANIPULATING THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE

In those days anything was believable because the world was in constant flux. The Macedonian people on the other side of the artificial border, the ones who had been occupied by Serbia not too long ago, had just gained their independence and now had their own country, a Yugoslav Republic... with human and national rights...

So yes, it was believable! The Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia felt they too could and should be recognized and given their human and national rights. Why not?

Their need to “believe” unfortunately clouded their Macedonian minds and blinded them from seeing the signs and the fact that they were being manipulated.

Everything was always within their reach but always out of their grasp. The Greeks made sure of that. The Greeks took full advantage of their patriotism and naivety and used it against them.

But this was nothing new. The Bulgarians manipulated the Macedonians during their 1903 Ilinden Uprising to get them to rise up against a stronger opponent and they did... As a result of that we not only lost to the Ottomans, ten years later, in 1913, our country was invaded, occupied and partitioned by three new foes who we assumed were our Christian brothers.

As I mentioned earlier, the turning point for Greece was when Stalin and Churchill decided that Greece would go to the British sphere of influence and no socialist system would be allowed to take place in Greece. But given that Greece was over 80% in favour of a socialist system, Stalin pushed the point that Greece’s future should be decided by an election. Both Churchill and Stalin agreed on that point and decided to put that matter into the hands of the Greek people.

It was agreed that an election would take place. It was also agreed that the election would take place under certain conditions. One of those conditions was that all armed groups inside Greece were to be disarmed, including ELAS, the communist led army.

And, as I mentioned earlier, the Macedonian units were to be disbanded and all Macedonian organizations were to be shut down and eliminated. That was Churchill's request.

The British and the Greek political right were certain they could not possibly win the elections fair and square so they began to take measures against their opposition.

As the national election date in March 1946 approached, terror and pressure on the Macedonian people increased dramatically. On March 5th, 1946 members of the National Guard jailed 10 people from the village Nered. They were all taken to court and, without a shred of evidence, accused of being members of illegal organizations. Similar events took place in the villages Neokazi, Popozhani, Boreshnitsa and Sekulevo.

On March 13th, 1946 10 people from the village Petoratsi were sued in the Lerin court and were given 10 to 15 year prison sentences. They were accused of belonging to illegal socialist organizations. Among those sued were Bitko Mijalev, Lazo Damianov, Naso Zhinzov and Vasil Popov.

Another 18 people from the village Setina were also sued by the same court and handed 8 to 10 year prison sentences. These people were accused of various crimes. Their accuser was the teacher Miltiadis Dulukas who was a witness at their trials.

The amount of violence used by the Greek government was much greater than in the past. Even the death penalty was used against Leftists between 1945 and 1950. This overshadowed the violence perpetrated in all previous and subsequent periods.

It is interesting to point out that while Greek governments in the immediate postwar period were disinclined to carry out death sentences against known and convicted German collaborators and war criminals, such reservations were much less in evidence against the Leftists and against Macedonians especially after the 1946 elections.

While the British and the Greek press continued to speak of free elections in Greece, the nationalist and chauvinistic elements continued to rain terror on the civilian population, arresting and imprisoning people uncontrollably. By the time the elections took place on March 31st, 1946, almost all of the former resistance fighters were either missing or serving jail sentences under trumped up charges.

Terror and persecution escalated before the elections and peaked on the day of the elections, prompting even Sofulis himself, who was running for office, to say: "It is impossible to hold impartial elections under these conditions." Not only were people terrorized to vote for whomever their tormentors wanted but there were also all sorts of other irregularities which were being ignored by the state apparatus.

Interestingly some of these irregularities were confirmed by British, Colonel Shepard who was quoted by the newspaper "New Democracy" on December 8th, 1947 as saying: "During the election a Greek officer was watching a British officer and finally got enough nerve to speak to him. The Greek officer boasted to the British officer about how his regime was capable of creating conditions where 100% of the people would vote for the royalists. 'Even if not 100% then at least 95% and for those 5% who vote differently we will call them the enemies of the regime and invent reasons as needed to bring them in' explained the Greek officer."

The March 31st, 1946 Greek elections were a total farce, not only because of the coercion by the rightist regime forcing voters to vote for them but also because of the perpetrated election fraud. In most European countries like France, Italy and others the population had naturally shrunk because of the war but not in Greece. In spite of the half million deaths due to starvation and war, Greece, according to the number of people who voted in 1946, showed a massive population increase, much greater than those voting in 1936. For example, 1,753,000 voters participated in the 1936 elections and 2,200,000 voters participated in the 1946 elections (voting in Greece was mandatory). Above that another 250,000 voters, known democrats were intentionally left off the lists so that they could not vote.

Please note that NOF was formed on April 23, 1945 under Tito and Kulishevski's leadership and was dispatched to Greece by Kulishevski in the fall of the same year. The elections in Greece were scheduled to take place on March 31st, 1946. Why would Tito and Kulishevski prepare and dispatch NOF to Greek occupied Macedonia to start a new conflict even before the elections had taken place unless they knew something beforehand? The election was the key to ending the conflict by letting the people decide what course to take.

Right after the CPY and CPG agreed on what to do regarding the continuation of the war in Greek occupied Macedonia, Lazar Kulishevski, Secretary of the CPM Central Committee, invited the NOF Board, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, for a briefing during which Kulishevski said the following: "Now you go down there (in Greek occupied Macedonia). The CPG is now responsible for you. You must have faith in the CPG. Its policy on the Macedonian question is clear. Any questions that may surface will now be decided by the leadership of the CPG Party. Be careful not to splinter or stray from the Party. You are to work under its directives. You are to struggle and fight to strengthen your unity with the Greek people and fight hard with all your strength against chauvinism, separatism and localized tendencies."

Also let me remind you of what Rakovski said: "... During our meeting with Kulishevski when we were preparing to return to Aegean Macedonia in order to lay the foundations of the revolution, Kulishevski, in his first class cynical speech, said to us: ... 'That we Macedonians were a talented people, with appallingly visible international and revolutionary orientation, with a sense of tact and strategy' and that Tito told him: 'Now is your moment!'..."

The elections in Greece were scheduled for March 31st, 1946. NOF was already dispatched to Greek occupied Macedonia in the fall of 1945 to start a conflict.

Immediately after the March 31st, 1946 elections, when it was made abundantly clear to everyone that the elections in Greece were neither fair nor democratic, many small Macedonian groups re-

armed and took to the mountains, Kaimakchalan, Paiak and Vicho, not only to save themselves but to fight back and provide protection for their families and villages.

Many detachments led successful battles in several villages including Lukovits in Voden Region and Sarakinovo in Lerin Region. Thousands of Macedonians expressed their readiness to fight for freedom in Greek occupied Macedonia and many more were prepared to leave the ranks of the regular army and join the Partisan units.

The first fighters to show desire to abandon the regular army and cross over to the Partisans were a group of soldiers from a unit stationed in the village Pondokersia in Kukush Region. Similar desires were expressed by a group of men from the 5th division stationed in Kozhani.

When the Greek authorities found out, the men were court-martialed by a military court which sentenced 14 soldiers and 1 officer to death, 22 soldiers received life imprisonment and 23 others were handed down lesser sentences. All the above mentioned soldiers were accused of cooperating with the Partisans.

START OF THE GREEK CIVIL WAR

Most historians would argue that the Greek Civil War began on December 3rd, 1944 with the bloody demonstrations in Athens when the police opened fire and killed a number of demonstrators. But it would be more appropriate to attribute the beginning of the Greek Civil War to March 31st, 1946 the day of the elections, the day when, instead of voting, many Partisans re-armed and rebelled against the Greek Government.

The rebellion manifested itself as an attack on the Greek right which began in the village “Lithohorion”, situated in Thessaly east of Mount Olympus directly south of Katerini. Other attacks soon followed and in no time the conflict escalated into a full scale war, engulfing not only Greece but also Greek occupied Macedonia.

In a bizarre turn of events, the National Liberation Army of Greece (ELAS), which less than a year before had turned their guns on Macedonian fighters, now regrouped as the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) and extended its hand in friendship. It seems that all was forgiven and forgotten when the former National Liberation Army of Greece leadership asked the Macedonians for their help. This time the Greek communists came with offers of “equal rights”, “recognition” and even possibilities of “re-unification with the Republic of Macedonia”.

Many Partisan fighters from Greek occupied Macedonia who had crossed over into the Republic of Macedonia the year before got their chance to return home. On their return they organized themselves under a new organization bearing the name the National Liberation Front (NOF).

Many Macedonians were well-aware of the saying “beware of Greeks bearing gifts” and knew that the Greek offer was too good to be true. But there was always that small ray of hope that perhaps this time the outcome for Macedonia might be different. Besides, their families, homes and lives were in Greek occupied Macedonia. What other choice did they really have?

They returned because they were lonely, loved their families and because they had to live with the guilt of having to leave their loved ones in dire straits. Every Macedonian born in Macedonia, even in the most desolate places, knows the feeling of homesickness and yearns to return.

And so the seeds of deceit that were planted earlier began to germinate. The Macedonians were fooled into joining the so-called Greek Civil War knowing nothing and perhaps suspecting very little of where this storm was going to take them. And where did this storm take them? To their own extinction, just like Britain wanted.

MASSIVE EVACUATION OF MACEDONIANS

After the conflict started, details about which can be found in my books, in Stoian Kochov's books and in Petre Nakovski's books which I translated from Macedonian to English, Greek occupied Macedonia began to be emptied of its population in a dramatic way.

Just to give you an idea of how dramatic it was, just look at my own village Oshchima. In 1939 my village had about 600 residents. In 1949 it had only 60 residents. This was not a small loss; this was a disaster from which the village never recovered.

By the time I left Oshchima in 1966 there were less than 10 people, only three families left. In 2015 there was only one family left. The entire village is in ruins.

A lot of people were killed fighting in the war, being bombed by American planes and being murdered by the Greek fascists. The majority left and crossed over the border into Albania; pushed north and out of their homeland by the Greek army.

This was typical of all the villages in Lerin, Kostur and Voden Regions.

A flood of people, that no one wanted, ended up in the camps over the Albanian border. They left their homes to save themselves from the Greek bombs and hoped to return when the conflict was over. That was their plan. They left their homes because they were told to.

[“The front has been breached! The front has been breached!” voices called out, bringing fear and spreading it among the people. The horror grew. People were frightened and panic filled the air. It was time to flee, to run away.

Messengers on horseback were running around everywhere warning people, telling them to leave, showing them which way to take and where to go. Irritated, they spurred their horses to run through the village streets while they yelled: “Leave! Leave! The Greek army is coming! Leave now!”

With the pounding of horse hooves, for as long as the warnings lasted, like echoes repeating again and again, was the message: “Leave! Leave! The front has been breached! The Greek army is coming! They will beat you, rape you and kill you! They will hang people and burn everything! Leave now!”

The horsemen who had orders to sow the seeds of fear and horror into the people crossed over Preval and split up at the crossroads, one ran to Bukovik, L’k and Drenovo and the others took the road to German.

People in Prespa were gathering their most important things, from what remained, and packing them in sacks. There was yelling, screaming, pleading and crying. The roads were packed with people leaving. A woman was wailing at the top of her voice looking up and cursing the sky. Winds of fear hovered over the people spreading panic and horror, making them run. The people who passed Perovo, the narrow passage where the water flows between the two Prespa lakes, and took the road to Vineni could see the rising smoke and flames behind them. They could also see the same horsemen who had warned them to leave, burning the wheat fields. Flames were now consuming the mature grains from which bread was made...

The thick smoke generated by the cannon and mortar fire covering the mountains and valleys was blown away by the wind and the sky had opened up. The broken stones were warmed by the summer sun.

No one dared move. The hill seemed dead. The enemy was monitoring the region with binoculars from over yonder. They were combing every bush and every stone. The slightest movement awakened the cannons and the hill was on fire again.

Explosions burned the piles of broken rock. The days in August were long. Tired, numbed, faces were glued to the ground, coiled they squatted in the shallow trenches. The sun was hot and the earth was burning. The Sergeant repeated the order: “Not a single step back, hold your ground to the last one!”

Every attempt to take a new position was met with death. There was not even 300 metres to the forest behind them. It would be safer there. The space between them and the forest was bare like a shaven head. The silence and anticipation was torturing them.

The earth was baked by the sun and burned by grenades. They broke stone with their dull pickaxes. They shoveled soil and broken stone with their bare hands. Their hands were raw, bleeding and full of sores. Their bodies baked, burned and blistered with bubbles full of yellow fluid.] (Petre Nakovski).

The Greek government closed the border behind them and would not allow anyone back, not even the women and children. No Macedonian was allowed to return ever since to this day. The Macedonian refugee children who were evacuated in 1948 are still not allowed to return. Having no prospect of returning home, the Macedonian flood of refugees and fighters was settled in the camps in Albania until a place could be found for them to go.

Russia decided to take the fighters. Most of the civilians were taken by Poland. The refugee children who were evacuated earlier were taken mostly by Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary with some being taken by other countries including Bulgaria. Some of the refugees remained in Albania, but a very small number. Albania took some, East Germany took some.

EVACUATION OF MACEDONIAN CHILDREN FROM GREECE

The children left home in 1948. They were sent to Yugoslavia first and then they were separated and sent to the other countries. The children were not told that they would be separated which, from what we are told, was basically done for educational purposes, they wanted them in different age groups and certain countries wanted a certain age group and so on. The youngest ones ended up staying in Yugoslavia.

When the Royalist and Republican Greek Government began to use heavy artillery and aerial bombardment, the idea for evacuating the children quickly gained CPG support and the “save the children”

program was born. Before the program was put into action it gained approval from the Macedonian National Liberation Front (NOF), the Women's Antifascist Front (AFZH) and the Red Cross. The host countries, willing to look after the children, were contacted to gain their approval and information campaigns were begun to inform the people about the program. The district and village organizations were also asked to participate and were eventually given the responsibility of organizing and implementing the actual evacuations.

When the authorities in the Greek Government found out about the "save the children" program they initiated their own so-called "pedomazoma" (collect the children) campaign. The Greek army upon capturing Macedonian villages was ordered to evacuate the children, by force if necessary. After being gathered at various camps the children were eventually sent to the Greek Island Leros. There they were enrolled in schools to study religion and became wards of the Greek Queen Fredericka.

After the conclusion of the Greek Civil War (1951-52) some children from the "pedomazoma" were returned to their homes in Greek occupied Macedonia. Most, especially those whose parents were killed or had fled the country as refugees, became wards of the Greek State and remained in dormitories until adulthood. All the children who remained at Leros were completely Hellenized and were never heard from again.

The Leros camps became active again after 1952, this time with children who had returned from the "save the children" program from Eastern European Block countries who had to declare themselves Greek in order to be allowed back. As a result of Red Cross intervention some children were allowed to return home. Unfortunately the Greek authorities collected them and sent them to the camps in Leros where they were kept until the fall of 1959 before they were released.

Pressure from the community prompted organizers of the "save the children" program to expedite the evacuation process to stop the "Burandari" (nickname for Greek Government soldiers and policemen) from taking more children.

The evacuations carried out by the Partisans were done strictly on a voluntary basis. It was up to the child's parents or guardians to decide whether the child was to be evacuated or not. No child was ever evacuated by force or without consent, but fear and peer pressure were certainly motivating factors.

The evacuation zones were selected based on the severity of the conflict and the degree of danger it posed to the children. Central command organizers decided on the selection criteria and qualifications for which children were to be evacuated. The lists included all children between the ages of two and fourteen as well as all orphans, disabled and special children.

Before the evacuation was put into effect, women over the age of eighteen were enlisted from the local population and from the Partisan ranks to be trained to handle young children.

Widows of fallen Partisans were also recruited as "surrogate mothers" to accompany and assist the children through the evacuation process and during their stay in the host countries.

The evacuation program began to gain momentum in early March 1948, starting with the recruitment and training of the special teachers. The actual evacuations were carried out en masse starting on March 25th through to March 30th, 1948 until all the designated villages were evacuated.

Most children were transported through Yugoslavia and were sent to Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Some were evacuated through Albania and Bulgaria. As the numbers of the evacuated rose, children were also sent to East Germany and the USSR.

It is estimated that about 28,000 children in all were evacuated, most of them from northwestern Greek occupied Macedonia. Although smaller in number some orphans, children of Partisans and children of families who were in trouble with the Greek Government authorities, were also evacuated.

When their turn came the children from each village were summoned and escorted by Partisan guides to the closest designated border crossing. For their safety the children traveled under the cover of darkness and away from the main roads. In some cases, due to heavy aerial attacks and falling bombs, some villages evacuated their children in haste without escorts and they became stranded in the snow-covered mountains without shelter.

Mothers prepared luggage, a change of clothing, food and eating utensils before escorting their little ones to the designated meeting places. With eyes tearing, mothers said goodbye to their loved ones before sending them into the hands of destiny. Their cries could be heard for a long time as they disappeared into the distance. It didn't take too long before the emptiness was felt and many mothers could not stop crying, contemplating the fate of their little ones.

The children walked in single file behind their surrogate mothers, holding hands. The older children comforted the young as they moved into seclusion.

Under the cover of darkness they silently slipped over the terrain, avoiding roads and open spaces, being constantly reminded by their Partisan guides to keep quiet. They crossed over high mountains and steep slopes ever mindful and vigilant of the flying Greek menace above as they made their way to the borders.

The lucky ones spent the nights indoors in designated villages. The others slept outdoors in the open spaces of the frigid mountains questioning the wisdom of their elders and wondering, which was more dangerous the falling bombs or the freezing cold.

The orphanage in Leros was created especially for housing the children from the war zone. It was supported and sponsored by Queen Frederica.

Regarding the orphaned Macedonian children who ended up in Leros and in the hands of Frederica, they were adopted by Greek families and brought up as Greeks. Some of them later found out that they were not Greeks. I know one lady from Zhelevo, my

mother's friend, who was brought up by a Greek family. But she found her way back.

The people who remained behind were mostly supporters of the Greek regime in power. There were also those, the unfortunate ones who were caught before they could leave and who belonged to families that openly identified as Macedonians. And let us not forget those who were socialist sympathizers.

After the so-called Greek Civil War was over only horror and fear ruled the land. Those who fought on the losing side became reclusive and wanted to forget the past... but they were constantly harassed and reminded of it by those who won.

The Greeks expressed great hatred for those Macedonians... who only fought for human rights and for wanting to be free. This fear became ingrained in the people's psyche and by the time I was born, it was normal to be afraid and reclusive, it was part of daily life in Greek occupied Macedonia. That's why we left Greece... That's why the villages kept emptying.

AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE GREEK CIVIL WAR

One of those unfortunate people to get caught and remain in Greece, after the Greek Civil War was over, was my father Nikola. Nikola was forcibly taken from his village, along with a number of other men, on April 17th, 1947 and sent to the Greek island prison camps. He was kept in prison until January 17th, 1952, the day he arrived back in Oshchima.

On several occasions I asked my father what he had done and why he was sent to prison but to the day he died he did not know, because no one would tell him. All he knew was what his jailers told him, "that he was a danger to the Greek state".

Later, as I began to research the so-called Greek Civil War, I found out that my father was a victim of American policies in Greece. He was a victim of Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet's military tactics.

On March 1, 1947, U.S. President Harry Truman announced the decision to proclaim the “Truman Doctrine” for engaging the U.S. in Greece. Greece was granted credit and advanced military equipment to equip its government army. At the same time Van Fleet, an American General anti-guerrilla specialist, was made available to the Greek government.

With Van Fleet’s strategy and tactics applied in the last battles fought in the Vicho and Gramos battlefields, DAG was defeated and ejected outside of Greece.

So what exactly was Van Fleet’s strategy and how did it involve my father... and he didn’t know about it?

Van Fleet was familiar with the concept of how to starve a guerrilla army. In order to do that, he said, you will have to rob it of the ability to feed itself and of the ability to recruit new fighters.

Most of the food and recruits that supplied the partisan army came from the Macedonian mountain villages.

To stop the food supply all residents from the small villages were removed and placed in towns and large villages. These places were guarded by the Greek army and by the Greek police. Curfews and restrictions of movement were then placed so that no one could move without authorization. This cut off most of the food supply to the partisans.

To stop the partisans from recruiting new fighters, the Greek government arrested basically every man capable of carrying a gun who was not loyal to the government or was affiliated with the partisan movement. All these people were arrested and sent to the Greek island prison camps.

My father was affiliated with the partisan movement. All his brothers and sisters were partisans and fighting in the war. He was the only young person left home to look after the farm and his aging mother and father, so he became a target of Van Fleet’s strategy.

So, to starve the partisans out, Van Fleet basically emptied all the small villages of their population and arrested every man who might be a potential partisan.

The people from the small villages were moved to the large ones because the Greeks didn't have enough policemen to send to every village to defend it. The move, of course, was done by force.

All the villagers were moved. They moved them into already occupied houses and told the people that they had to share their space and their food. Then the Greeks went looking for and hunting down partisans who were on the move.

The civilian population had limited mobility and curfews were in effect, even in the large villages where people were guarded by the police.

But in spite of what Van Fleet had done, his Greek forces still could not defeat the Partisans.

On August 10 – 14, 1949, a Greek government offensive was initiated against DAG. A force of 60,000 Greek government troops, commanded by General Van Fleet of the U.S.A., organized in 6 divisions from all branches of the military, with 200 tanks and armoured cars and with about 100 aircraft of all types, was unleashed on Mount Vicho.

Opposing this force was commander Michos Vlandas of the resistance with 9,863 fighters and 40 cannons. DAG was defeated in the period during August 13 and 14 with 1,859 dead, wounded, missing and captured fighters. The Government side sustained only 256 dead and 1,336 wounded.

On August 15-16, 1949, DAG units retreated into Albania but in the following days about 6,000 were transferred to reinforce the fighting on Mount Gramos.

On August 20, 1949 the CPG Central Committee Politburo held a meeting and promised its fighters that "Gramos has all the means necessary to deliver the enemy a death blow" and coined the slogan

“Gramos will become the tomb of the Monarcho-Fascists Government troops”. That, however, never happened! All Zahariadis wanted to do was kill more Macedonians.

There is now a bust of General James A. Van Fleet in the city Kostur, who did a lot for the Greek government army to end the Greek Civil War.

This is yet another statue to rub in the faces of the Macedonian people to remind them of the genocide they experienced at the hands of the Greeks and foreign powers.

In spite of everything the Greeks had done, even with American help, they still could not defeat the partisans. So they began to use napalm.

Here is what Van Fleet said to a number of Greek officers during a meeting while pointing at a map:

[“Well, dear generals, you only have to take two handfuls of space. Two handfuls of space and nothing more! We dressed and fed your army well and armed it with the best weapons we have. Now you have everything! The most modern aircraft, the most modern cannons, mine throwers, mortars, napalm bombs and bazookas!”

Van Fleet paused for a moment, looked at the audience and continued:

“Being in possession of such weapons should boost your courage but for only five days, gentlemen, in just five days you can put an end to this war”. He hit the map with his left hand and continued, “here 90 aircraft will drop their bombs and napalm, hundreds of artillery pieces will thunder and just as many mortars will be dropped. On top of that, nearly 80 thousand troops, assisted by over two hundred tanks and armored cars will be stomping this ground! For no more than five days! Don’t take the communists out of the trenches and bunkers, leave them there dead...”

You have five days and if you don’t destroy the enemy in these five days, adios amigos, we’re gone... The American taxpayer spent a lot

of money for you and for this war,” concluded Van Fleet.] (Petre Nakovski)

On the tenth day (August 20th) since the beginning of the “great battle” for Gramos, with the approval of General Van Fleet, head of the U.S. military mission in Greece, the air force renewed its attacks, this time with napalm bombs, thus unleashing a new, never before seen horror against the Partisans... And still the front could not be broken... It did not even move...

[That day the airplanes came shortly before noon. They did not drop bombs or fire on us with their machine guns. First they flew low then high and we could see barrels being dropped from not too high above our positions which exploded about fifty to a hundred meters above us. Fire and flames fell on us. Everything began to burn. Everything burned, the ground, the trees, the rocks, the mountain, we were burning too... Those people, who unfortunately got splashed by this never before seen burning fluid, caught fire and burned like candles.

There was squealing, screaming and many sounds of horror as people rushed out of the trenches looking to the sky and begging for help. All you could see are flames running at you screaming and begging for help, flames that you had to put out with your bare hands?! We fought the flames all day, then, at night, under the light of a full moon, we buried the burned corpses in mass graves.

The aircraft attacked us in this manner, with that damn fire, several more times, but we quickly learned we could avoid being burned by burying ourselves deep into the ground. We dug tunnels in the bunkers and trenches and before the barrels fell we hid underground like moles.] (Petre Nakovski)

The offensive began on August 10th, 1949 but the war did not end until August 30th 1949.

Earlier I mentioned that the partisan fighters were sent to Russia, more precisely to the Soviet Union; to Uzbekistan. Why do you think only the fighters were sent to the Soviet Union?

If you recall, during the Greek Civil War Stalin was having difficulties with Tito which led to Yugoslavia breaking relations with the other socialist countries.

According to secret CIA documents, the conflict between Stalin and Tito was about Tito not adhering to the idea that the Soviet leader did not want problems with the allies America and England because of the Yalta agreement. So Tito continued to supply the communist rebels in Greece with weapons, equipment and officer corps to fight on the Greek partisan side. Stalin sent a letter to Tito criticizing him for opening the “Greek line” and for helping the Greek communists who started a fight that had no chance of success because Athens was supported by America, “the most powerful country in the world”.

One of Greece’s most prominent historiographers - Tassos Vournas, in his book “History of modern Greece – the Civil War”, on page 176 wrote that Stalin, on February 10, 1948, literally told the Yugoslav delegation in Moscow that: “I do not agree with you, my Yugoslav comrades that the revolution in Greece should continue. That struggle has no hope of success. What do you think, the UK and the USA, the strongest countries in the world, will allow it to bring down a line of communication with the Mediterranean Sea? Nonsense! And there’s almost nothing of naval forces! No! The revolution in Greece should stop, as quickly as possible.”

So, why would Stalin want the Macedonian fighters from the Greek Civil War, especially since he did not approve of the struggle, to be sent to the Soviet Union? And why did Tito want to continue helping the struggle after Stalin told him to stop and gave him a good reason for it. And then, before the war ended, why did Tito close the border and refuse to allow Macedonians fighters entry into Yugoslavia unless they disarmed? Yes, Yugoslavia would not allow them entry unless they surrendered their arms.

I have not found evidence to support this, but I was told that Stalin had threatened Tito with creating an independent Macedonian state out of the People’s Republic of Macedonia with aims at breaking up Federal Yugoslavia. And he was going to use the Macedonian fighters to do it.

But since none of this materialized, I am led to believe that it was only a bluff. But this does not answer the question as to why Tito continued to support the struggle in Greek occupied Macedonia, knowing full well that the struggle was not going to succeed because the United States was about to crush it. On top of that, why didn't the United States object to Tito's involvement in supporting this conflict? In fact Yugoslav and American relations were never as good as they were during this period of time?

It doesn't make any sense, does it? Unless, of course, Yugoslavia was working together with the United States and with Greece, in an attempt to control the war inside Greece and prevent it from ending prematurely, that is before the communists were crushed and the Macedonian people were evicted from their homeland.

They wanted to make conditions so unbearable so that all the Macedonian people would leave and abandon their homeland just like Britain wanted.

And is this not exactly what happened?

GREECE – AN ARTIFICIAL CREATION

Greece was created by the West and has been supported by the West. Greece has been the bulwark for Britain in the prevention of Russia entering the Mediterranean waters.

In the old days the British were sympathetic to the Greek cause but at the same time they wanted a strong Turkey to counter Russia. Initially, the British were prepared to support Turkey to prevent Russia from gaining control of the Turkish Straits and threatening the Mediterranean trade routes.

“Canning (a British politician, 1812-1862) had planned to head off Russia's advance, not by direct opposition, but by associating her with England and France in a policy of emancipation, aimed at erecting national States out of the component parts of the Turkish Empire. Such States could be relied upon to withstand Russian encroachment on their independence, if once they were set free from

the Turk. The creation of the Kingdom of Greece was the immediate outcome of Canning's policy" (Page 372, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

Greece was a "Western creation" for the purpose of achieving two objectives. One, to keep Russia out of the Mediterranean Sea and two, to break up the Ottoman occupied Slav lands into small, nationally divergent, easily manageable and loyal states.

Created by the Western Powers, the new Balkan States would be loyal to their creator; British politicians were counting on it. The Western Powers introduced "nationalism" in the Balkans as a way of replacing the Ottoman Empire, not with a single state but with many "divergent", manageably sized states. Nationalism, however, was not a way with which Balkan people identified before the 19th century.

For over 2,300 years the Balkan region was without borders and without a sense of national identity. For over 1,800 years the people in the region lived with "religion as the only unifying force" which brought them together and allowed them to live in peace. Lack of borders and freedom of movement allowed the diverse people to travel anywhere within the empire to settle and mix with other people.

So, how does one create "national consciousness" where one does not exist?

Ignoring the fact that the Ottoman Empire of the 19th century was a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural pluralistic society, the Western Powers initiated the nation building process anyway.

To them, it didn't matter what kind of "nations" they were building, provided that the new nations were a "non-Slav" singular society that agreed to keep Russia out of the Mediterranean Sea.

Unfortunately, Macedonia did not fit the Western Power mold and was never allowed to become an independent state. And to make sure it never did, it was partitioned into four parts and given to four different and divergent states with aims at destroying it.

So, what happened to Macedonia during the Greek Civil War was a continuation of what had been happening to it for over 150 years since the modern Serbian (1806), Greek (1828) and later Bulgarian (1878) and Albanian (1912) states were created.

After the Greek Civil War ended and the Greek borders were closed to the Macedonian fighters and refugees, Greece took measures, legal measures, to prevent the Macedonian people from re-entering the border and returning to their homes.

Let me backtrack a bit and say something very important because this is evidence, I believe, that the Greek Government, even before the Greek Civil War had ended, had plans “to deal with the Macedonians in Greece”.

“In 1947, during the Greek Civil War, legal act L-2 was issued. This meant that all those who left Greece without the consent of the Greek government were stripped of their Greek citizenship and banned from returning to Greece. The law applied to Greeks and Macedonians, but in its modernized version the act is binding only on Macedonians. It prevents Macedonians, but not former Communist Greeks who fought against the winning side, from returning to Greece and reclaiming property.

On January 20, 1948 legal act M was issued. This allowed the Greek government to confiscate the property of those who were stripped of their Greek citizenship. The law was updated in 1985 to exclude Greeks, but was still binding on Macedonians. (See pages 116-117, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

Clearly acts L-2 and M were designed to work against the interests of the Macedonian people. Even innocent Macedonians who left before the Civil War were not allowed to return. The way acts L-2 and M were enforced over the years brings another question to mind.

If there were no Macedonians living in Greece, as the Greeks claim, then what nationality were these people the Greek Government refused to allow back?

Why is it that Greek law makes the distinction between Macedonians and Greeks when it suits Greece but not when it benefits the Macedonians?

This also reinforces my theory that Greece all along intended to exile as many Macedonians as possible and enacted these laws in preparation for it.

As mentioned earlier, in the spring of 1948, to save the children, a temporary evacuation program was introduced and implemented on a voluntary basis. It is estimated that about 28,000 children from the ages of 2 to 14 were rounded up and taken across the border into Yugoslavia. From there they were sent to various Eastern European Block countries.

Again, I want to point out that the evacuation program was sponsored and organized by the Greek Partisan Leadership which was fully versed in “Greek Law” (act L-2). Yet they carried out the children’s evacuation program and lied to the trusting mothers that the evacuation was only a temporary measure and that the children would be returned.

Almost all the Macedonian children who were evacuated in 1948 are still not allowed entry into Greece. Don’t tell me that the communists did not know that these children would never be allowed to return?

They knew that there were laws that would prevent every refugee who left Greece without government permission, from returning to Greece. Yet this information was never made available to the Macedonian parents. Why?

MACEDONIAN SCHOOLS IN GREECE

One positive thing that the CPG did was to allow the Macedonian people to establish Macedonian language schools in the so-called “liberated territories” (Partisan held territories).

A school to educate teachers in the Macedonian language was opened in the village German in Prespa Region in December 1947. The aim here was to prepare Macedonian language teachers who in turn would teach Macedonian children the Macedonian language.

Among the regions that received Macedonian language education at the time were the villages in the free territories of Vicho and Kaimakchalan. Even though this program only lasted several months, 87 Macedonian schools were opened with the participation of over 10,000 students.

The Macedonians were happy to be taught Macedonian in school. The Greeks were the ones who were not happy. The Macedonians knew very well that they were under occupation and played by the rules. They had seen occupations come and go and no one was sure what the future would bring. But the Greeks, even in areas where they were a minority, were not happy to see Macedonians speaking Macedonian and learning to read and write in Macedonian.

GREEK ABUSES AGAINST THE MACEDONIANS

The Greeks wanted nothing to do with anything Macedonian and would have loved to see everything Macedonian wiped out. By 1928, 1,497 Macedonian place names in the Greek occupied Macedonia were Hellenized (LAW 4096) and all Cyrillic (Macedonian) inscriptions found in churches, on tombstones and icons were destroyed (or overwritten) prompting English Journalist V. Hild to say, “The Greeks do not only persecute living Slavs (Macedonians)..., but they even persecute dead ones. They do not leave them in peace even in the graves. They erase the Slavonic inscriptions on the headstones, remove the bones and burn them.”

It is traumatic to have a people's history ripped from under them like the Greeks did to the Macedonians, to have every place name and every person's name changed. We feel that trauma to this day.

I have people write me, asking me to tell them the Greek name of their village because they only know the Macedonian name. These are people who are born in Canada, the USA and Australia whose parents have already died and who now want to go to Greek occupied Macedonia and visit the village of their ancestors but they don't know what it's called in Greek.

Some had already gone to Greek occupied Macedonia but returned disappointed because no one could tell them where the village was because they had never heard of its Macedonian name.

We even have problems identifying each other as people. There are many people from my village who I don't know by their Greek names. Unless they tell me their Macedonian name and which Macedonian family they belong to, I won't know who they are.

My village "Oshchima" was renamed to "Trigonon" by the Greeks in the 1920's and there is no history of it before that because it was not only renamed, its Macedonian name was completely erased. This was done to every village, town, city, river, mountain, lake and every person's name. We were erased out of existence.

Even before Greece had secured its grip on Macedonia, officials were sent to administer "the new lands". The first official Greek administrator arrived in Solun near the end of October 1912, accompanied by two judges, five customs officials, ten consulate clerks, a contingent of reporters and journalists and 168 Cretan soldiers.

Among other things, the first order of business was to "Hellenize the New Lands".

"After the Greeks occupied Aegean Macedonia, they closed the Slavic language schools and churches and expelled the priests. The Macedonian language and names were forbidden, and the Macedonians were referred to as Bulgarians, Serbians or natives.

By law promulgated on November 21, 1926, all place names (toponymia) were Hellenized; that is the names of cities, villages, rivers and mountains were discarded and Greek names put in their place. At the same time the Macedonians were forced to change their first and surnames; every Macedonian surname had to end in ‘ou’, ‘os’, ‘es’, or ‘poulos’.

The news of these acts and the new, official Greek names were published in the Greek government daily ‘Efimeris tis Kiverniseos’ no. 322 and 324 of November 21 and 23, 1926.

The requirement to use these Greek names is officially binding to this day. All evidence of the Macedonian language was compulsorily removed from churches, monuments, archeological finds and cemeteries. Slavonic church or secular literature was seized and burned. The use of the Macedonian language was strictly forbidden also in personal communication between parents and children, among villagers, at weddings and work parties, and in burial rituals.” (For more information see page 109, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

In the years following World War I, the Macedonian people underwent extensive measures of systematic denationalization. The applications of these “denationalization schemes” were so extensive and aggressively pursued that in the long-term, they eroded the will of the Macedonian people to resist.

“In Greece, in 1929 during the rule of Elepeterios Venizelos, a legal act was issued ‘On the protection of public order’. In line with this Act each demand for nationality rights is regarded as high treason. This law is still in force.

On December 18, 1936, Metaxas’s dictatorial government issued a legal Act ‘On the activity against state security’ on the strength of which thousands of Macedonians were arrested, imprisoned, expelled or exiled (EXORIA) on arid, inhospitable Greek islands, where many perished. Their crime? Being ethnic Macedonian by birth.

On September 7, 1938 legal Act No. 2366 was issued banning the use of the Macedonian language. All Macedonian localities were flooded with posters: 'Speak Greek'. Evening schools were opened in which adult Macedonians were taught Greek. Not a single Macedonian school functioned at the time." (See page 8, What Europe has Forgotten: The Struggle of the Aegean Macedonians, A Report by the Association of the Macedonians in Poland)

Many Macedonians were fined, beaten and jailed for speaking Macedonian. Adults and school children alike were further humiliated by being forced to drink castor oil when caught speaking Macedonian.

Such was the life for the Macedonians under Greek rule... in their own ancestral homeland and place of birth no less.

MACEDONIANS LEAVING MACEDONIA

The Macedonian people have been living under one rule or another and have been leaving Macedonia since Macedonia was occupied by the Romans. Many went north and east and established Macedonian colonies. More recently, many had fled Macedonia during the various uprising against the Ottomans and some ended up north of Macedonia as far north as Russia. There was a Macedonian colony established in Russia during the 18th century.

More recently, during the 19th century, many fled to Bulgaria. When Bulgaria became independent it attracted Macedonian pechalbari (migrant workers), who left their homes before and after the failed 1903 Ilinden Uprising. Many decided to make Bulgaria their permanent home. According to Macedonian activists in Bulgaria, as many as 2 million Macedonians have settled over the years in Bulgaria.

After 1878, while the Ottoman economy in Macedonia was crashing down by leaps and bounds, the Bulgarian economy was improving dramatically. This was partly due to the cheap labour provided by a large influx of Macedonian pechalbari (migrant workers). Experiencing a very different life in Sofia, in contrast to life in the

village, many Macedonian pechalbari were seduced into believing the Bulgarian propaganda that Macedonians are Bulgarians, and many decided to make Bulgaria their home.

What is interesting about that is that the descendants of those Macedonians today are the staunchest Bulgarians, even though they know that they are Macedonians. The Macedonians who decided to remain in Bulgaria were not attached to the lands. In other words they had no land or farms of their own to work on and their options of finding good paying jobs were limited.

Many decided to become educated to widen their prospects. Being educated they were able to take on work in the Bulgarian government and advance upwards. Georgi Dimitrov, leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party and Secretary of the Comintern, for example, was a Macedonian. Even today there are many members of Parliament in the Bulgarian government who are of Macedonian descent.

I have a friend, an Armenian academic, a PhD, who runs a museum in the States. He was educated in Bulgaria. He told me that most Bulgarian academics know the truth about Macedonia but will not talk. I am sure most academics in Greece know the truth about Macedonia also and they don't dare say a word either. They can't say anything because they will lose their jobs.

The Macedonian immigrant population in Russia from the 18th century has already been assimilated and today it is lost. A lot of names of prominent Macedonians who left for Russia have been recorded in history but it would be difficult to find their descendants because Macedonian names are so similar to Russian names. But it should be easier to find Macedonians in Bulgaria because they emigrated more recently. Unfortunately they can't declare themselves Macedonian because Bulgaria does not recognize the Macedonian identity.

Things in Greece haven't changed much either. It's quieted down but it is still oppressive, especially after the Greek Civil War. From what I am told, about 85% of the Greek people before the civil war were in favour of having a socialist system but they had to settle for

what they got, an “oppressive system”, at least for the Macedonians, because that’s what Britain and the United States wanted.

I know this was not what the Macedonian people wanted but this couldn’t have been good for the majority of the Greek people either. Perhaps that is why so many Greeks dislike Americans...

GREECE – BULGARIA AND THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION

Both Greece and Bulgaria have painted themselves into a corner with regards to “the Macedonian National Question”, i.e. what to do with the Macedonian people, especially now that the Republic of Macedonia has emerged as an independent Macedonian state.

The Americans, the British and their Western allies created the “Macedonian problem” by being belligerent towards the Macedonian people since the Ottoman Empire began to fall apart... but to be more accurate, since the Roman Empire conquered and partitioned Macedonia into pieces.

Even today the Americans and their European allies are behind the so-called “name dispute”. They want Macedonia to change its name because they want Macedonia to cease to exist! They want Macedonia to change its own name as the first step to self-destruction.

Every single international convention and every single human right in existence has been violated in order to achieve this objective – “persuade Macedonia to change its name so that it can begin to self-destruct”. This is the road the Great Powers have taken today to solve the Macedonian problem.

I am convinced Greece on its own does not have the power to have done all these things, including commit genocide against the Macedonian people, several times, and get away with it. Greater powers are at hand behind Greece, pulling the strings...

MACEDONIANS EXILED FROM THEIR HOMELAND IN GREECE

Regarding the Macedonian people who were driven out of Greek occupied Macedonia by the violence of the Greek Civil War, as I mentioned earlier, initially they were sent from Albania to the various Eastern European countries but mostly to Poland and the USSR. A few years later many made attempts to move to the Republic of Macedonia, Canada, the USA and Australia but were restricted by the iron curtain.

In fact, what is ironic about this is that the Macedonian people were led by Zahariadis and his partner Tito into believing that they could unite Greek occupied Macedonia with the People's Republic of Macedonia while an international border, i.e. "the iron curtain" ran between them.

Years later, after re-uniting with their children who were living in different countries, most Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia settled in the Republic of Macedonia.

Those who had family members living in Canada, the USA and Australia emigrated over the years to join them. The situation, after the 1970's, has basically remained static. These Macedonians, having declared themselves as Macedonians, are still unwelcome by Greece which has not only exiled them but has also confiscated their properties.

THE TERM SLAVO-MACEDONIANS

Years ago when the communists on the left of the political spectrum decided to recognize the existence of Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia they decided to call them "Slavo-Macedonians". The Greeks belonging to the middle and the right of the political spectrum did not recognize the existence of any Macedonian group living in Greece. For them there were no Macedonians living in Greece.

So what does this mean? Why Slavo-Macedonians and not just Macedonians? There were no other groups of people who were

called “Macedonians”? So why Slavo-Macedonians, to distinguish them from whom?!

I believe the word “Slavo” as a prefix to the word Macedonians has a different meaning for different people. “Slavo” is a tribal term not a national term.

To the Macedonians it means “Slavic” Macedonians, an acceptable term at the time, which defined them as Slavic speaking Macedonians. Well, at least it was better than calling them “endopii” (indigenous) Greeks.

To the progressive Greeks the word “Slavo” meant they were Greek people who spoke a Slavic language and lived in geographic Macedonia.

To the fascist Greeks it meant foreigners who came to Greece from the Slavic countries pretending to be Macedonians so that they could carve out a chunk of Macedonia and steal it from them.

According to the Fascists, with Metaxas as their idol, only pure Greeks who descended from the ancient Greeks lived in Greece.

To the people of the outside world, who have been conditioned to associate Macedonia with “Ancient Greece”, “Slavo” implied “Slavic”, a tribal people who do not belong in Macedonia. In other words, to the outside world, a “Slavo-Macedonian” was someone who was not of Macedonian origin, who was a Slav, a settler and a newcomer, whose ancestors arrived in Macedonia during the 6th century AD. In other words, a “Slavo-Macedonian” could not possibly be a Macedonian because the “real” Macedonians were Greek.

EFFECTS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA DECLARING ITS INDEPENDENCE

Well, let us look and see what happened after the Republic of Macedonia surfaced as an independent state.

In 1988 when it became inevitable that a new Macedonian State was about to be declared, from the breakup of the Yugoslav federation, the word “Macedonia” became very popular in Greece.

After attempting to extinguish the name for seventy-six years, the Greek State reversed its policy and made Macedonia a very popular word in the Greek vocabulary. It even renamed its northern province (Greek occupied Macedonia) to Macedonia, claiming for historical reasons that it was the only legitimate Macedonia and belonged to Greece.

Also after all the years of claiming that only Greeks lived in Macedonia, Greek authorities almost overnight “invented” a new ethnicity called “Greek Macedonians”. This new ethnicity, it appears, is Macedonian but of Greek origin, descendents from the ancient Macedonians and rightful heirs to the Macedonian heritage.

The present population of Greek occupied Macedonia is approximately 2 million people. Approximately 1 million are of direct Macedonian descent. After nearly a century of systematic effort to denationalize the Macedonians, many have succumbed and developed a Greek consciousness and refer to themselves as Greeks or “Greek Macedonians”. But this only happened after the Republic of Macedonia became an independent state.

The Greek state has always portrayed the Greek identity as being more cultured and superior. The Macedonian identity has always been portrayed as an uncivilized, barbaric and dirty presence within a pure Greek space.

As I mentioned earlier, the psychological aim was to make people abandon using the Macedonian language. It has gotten to the point where one is looked down upon for speaking Macedonian. The language is referred to as the “local idiom.”

It is interesting to note that the Macedonian language is recognized internationally but it is forbidden in Greece. After three generations of policies of denationalization by the Greek state, the Macedonian consciousness among the population has been badly damaged to the point where those who retain their Macedonian consciousness fear to declare it openly.

This fear is difficult to comprehend by those who grew up in free and open societies. You have to experience it to understand it.

Among the older generation of Macedonians the fear is pervasive and ingrained. It is as if the person is always on guard for his actions and words for fear that he will be betrayed or heard by Greek authorities.

When one Macedonian was pressed further on this issue he blurted out in exasperation, “It (fear) has gotten into the genes!”

The other 1 million of the 2 million people, who live in Greek occupied Macedonia, are non-Greek colonists and settlers who were brought to Greek occupied Macedonia over the years, predominantly from Asia Minor, as late as the 1920's.

In fact, according to the same Greeks who yesterday were yelling and screaming that “there is no such thing as a Macedonian”, a sentence that has been yelled in my face many times, were now claiming that there are Macedonians. They were saying that Asia Minor Christian Turk colonists are the “real” Macedonians and we, the rightful heirs to the Macedonian heritage, were “Slavs”, “Skopjans”, “Bulgarians”, “Old Bulgarians” and many other derogatory words that they found in their vocabulary.

HOW MACEDONIA BECAME GREEK – A HISTORY

1. It is a well-documented fact that Greece, in 1912, 1913 during the two Balkan wars, entered and forcibly occupied Macedonian territory illegally without the consent of the Macedonian people. It then, along with its partners Bulgaria and Serbia, went on a rampage

bombing Macedonian villages and indiscriminately killing and murdering entire populations (first genocide).

2. It is a well-documented fact that as soon as Greece consolidated its hold on Greek Occupied Macedonia, it murdered or forcibly exiled all Macedonians who refused to accept its conditions (second genocide).

3. It is a well-documented fact that after ethnically cleansing the Macedonian population, Greece brought Greek settlers from Asia Minor, Epirus and other regions and settled them on Macedonian territory, mostly on the lands of the exiled Macedonians, without their consent.

4. It is a well-documented fact that during the early 1920's Greece began a campaign of denationalization by banning the Macedonian language and making it illegal to speak Macedonian in Macedonia. It then proceeded to forcibly change all peoples' names and toponyms.

5. It is also a well-documented fact that during the Greek Civil War, Greece exiled a large part of the Macedonian population, including the refugee children, illegally expropriated properties and issued them to new settlers (third genocide).

The territory which Greece today calls "Greek Macedonia" is in fact "Greek Occupied Macedonia" and has been occupied since 1912. The so-called "Greek Macedonians" are not really Macedonians at all, in fact the majority of them are Christian Turks and other settlers and colonists who Greece has been depositing on Macedonian lands since the Balkan wars (1912, 1913).

During 1989 to 1993 the Greek Foreign Ministry, headed by Andonis Samaras, used a secret fund to pay Greek journalists \$130 million dollars (US) to promote the "Greek-ness" of Macedonia! Although these funds were originally intended for external promotion, according to the testimony of former Prime Minister Constantinos Mitsotakis, they ended up in the pockets of Greek journalists.

There is much, much more that can be said about the Greek position and its denial of the existence of the Macedonians but all they are doing is lying to themselves and to the world in order to cover up what they have done and hope that we will go away and leave them alone.

The Greeks refuse to look at the problem from our point of view, from the Macedonian point of view, and see how much damage they have done to us and how badly they have hurt us over the years.

It is also ironic that the Macedonian people are called “indigenous” and at the same time they are called “Slavs” who don’t belong in Macedonia. Again, here the Greeks painted themselves into a corner. The moment they prohibited their own people from calling them Macedonians, they had to call them something. Initially they called them “Bulgarians” and “Serbians”. Then, when Greece declared itself 98% pure Greek and 2% Muslim Greek, they had very little left to call them... to distinguish them from the “loyal” Greeks... so they began to call them “locals” but “locals” what? Everyone was local, even the newcomer colonists. So they began to call the Macedonians “endopii” meaning indigenous.

When a Macedonian arrived in the Greek court and the judge asked him to present his case the lawyer would say he is “endopios” for whom a translator would be required. There were actually educated Macedonians, certified by the Greek government, to be court translators. These certificates are still in existence. I have seen one.

This means that Greece had recognized that the Macedonian people spoke a unique language in the region that was not Bulgarian or Serbian, which they called an “idiom”. The age-old Macedonian language that enlightened Eastern Europe, the Greeks called an idiom. How bizarre is that?

I also have a copy of a Greek personal identification card that has the name “Oshchima” on it as a place of origin; a place that today Greece says does not exist... and never existed.

And then we have the “Abecedar”, the Macedonian primer.

A book of great importance to Macedonian linguistics and historiography was published in Athens; was the primer entitled ABECEDAR (A B C), printed in the Latin alphabet, and intended for the children of the Macedonian national minority in Greece.

“In 1920 Greece signed before the League of Nations a treaty obliging it to grant certain rights to the minorities of non-Greek origin in Greece. Four years later, in 1924, at the suggestion of the League of Nations, Greece and Bulgaria signed the well-known Kalfov-Politis Protocol under which Bulgaria was obliged to grant the Greek minority in Bulgaria their minority rights (language, schools and other rights), while Greece, recognizing the Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia as a ‘Bulgarian’ minority, was to grant them their minority rights. This agreement was seemingly very much in favour of Bulgaria, but when in 1925 the Greek government undertook certain concrete steps towards the publication of the first primer made for the specific needs of that minority, it made it clear that there were no grounds on which Bulgaria could be officially interested in any ‘Bulgarian minority’ or expect the primer to be in Bulgarian, for that minority - though speaking a Slav language - was neither Bulgarian nor Serbian.

The very fact that official Greece did not, either de jure or do facto, see the Macedonians as a Bulgarian minority, but rather as a separate Slav group (‘Slav speaking minority’), is of particular significance. The primer, published in the Latin alphabet, was based on the Lerin - Bilola dialect. After Gianelli’s Dictionary dating from the 16th Century, and the Daniloviot Cetirijazicnik written in the 19th century, this was yet another book written in the Macedonian vernacular. The primer was mailed to some regions in Western Aegean-Macedonia (Kostur, Lerin and Voden), and the school authorities prepared to give Macedonian children, from the first to the fourth grade of the elementary school, instruction in their own mother tongue. (Grigorios Dafnis, ‘Greece between the two world wars’, ‘Elefteria’ newspaper, March 15, 1953, Dionisios Romas in ‘Elefteria’ newspaper of October 9 and 12, 1954 and Dimitrios Vazuglis in Racial and religious minorities in Greece and Bulgaria, 1954)

The Greek governments have never made a sincere attempt to solve the question of the Macedonians and their ethnic rights in Greece. Thus, while measures were being undertaken for the opening of Macedonian schools, a clash between the Greek and Bulgarian armies at Petrich was concocted, which was then followed by a massacre of the innocent Macedonian population in the village of Trlis near Serres. All this was aimed at creating an attitude of insecurity within the Macedonians so that they themselves would give up the recognition of their minority rights and eventually seek safety by moving to Bulgaria. The Greek governments also skillfully used the Yugoslav-Bulgarian disagreements on the question of the Macedonians in Greece, and with organized pressure on the Macedonian population, as was the case in the village of Trlis, tried to dismiss the Macedonian ethnic question from the agenda through forced resettlement of the Macedonian population outside of Greece.

The ABECEDAR, which actually never reached the Macedonian children, is in itself a powerful testimony not only of the existence of the large Macedonian ethnic minority in Greece, but also of the fact that Greece was under an obligation before the League of Nations to undertake certain measures in order to grant this particular minority their rights” (Hristo Andonovski).

Here’s what happened back in 1925;

During this period of immense suffering, the Macedonian people had a glimmer of hope that conditions might improve as a result of the Treaty of Serves which Greece signed earlier in August 10, 1920. According to conditions of the Treaty, under Articles 7, 8 and 9, the Greek government was to undertake certain obligations regarding “the protection of the non-Greek national minorities in Greece”. These Articles specifically stated free use of language and education. Initially Greece sought to neglect its obligations, however in March 1925 the League of Nations directed Greece to fulfill its obligations. By May 1925 an elementary school reader was published in the Macedonian language, it was known as the ABECEDAR. The ABECEDAR was to be used by Macedonian children in Macedonian schools which were yet to open in Aegean Macedonia.

Strong reactions immediately came from Serbia and Bulgaria.

Serbia and Bulgaria were caught totally by surprise, both were furious that the Macedonian book ABECEDAR was not printed in the Serbian or Bulgarian language respectively.

Serbia threatened to break its treaty of alliance with Greece and to commence negotiations with Bulgaria for the division of Aegean Macedonia. Threats came from the Bulgarians, protesting loudly that they had previously signed an Accord with Greece which recognized the Macedonians as “Bulgarians”.

What occurred next is truly a rare example, the Greek representative at the League of Nations Vasilis Dendramis responded by defending the Macedonian language as being “neither Bulgarian nor Serbian, but an independent language”. He listed various linguists and linguistic maps as evidence to support his claim of the independence of the Macedonian language. This high-ranking Greek official representing the Greek state not only recognized the existence of the Macedonian identity, but openly defended and supported it.

However, Serbian and Bulgarian objections, together with internal opposition in Greece, prevented the Abecedar from ever reaching the Macedonian children. The Abecedar was destroyed but remains as a reminder to the Greek government of the Macedonians as a separate national entity.

OLD INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPERS PROVE MACEDONIANS EXIST

Another thing worth mentioning here is what was found in newspaper archives. While the Greeks were screaming and yelling that Tito created the Macedonian and that no Macedonians existed before Tito, western libraries began to digitize their archival materials, especially the newspapers from the early 1900’s. And guess what?

These newspapers were saying Macedonians existed and were fighting against the Ottomans during the 1903 Ilinden Uprising and not “Bulgarians” as the Greeks were claiming.

Before major libraries started digging up old newspapers, scanning and digitizing them and making them available online and accessible from the internet, the Greeks had us convinced that Macedonians did not exist; they had all died off a long time ago. But when we pointed out that there are people today who call themselves Macedonians and showed them examples, they brushed that off and said those people were not “real” Macedonians but “Slavs.” But when we asked for an explanation as to how they become Macedonians, the Greeks explained that “Tito created them when he created the People’s Republic of Macedonia.” And what purpose would Tito have to create these Macedonians, we asked? Most Greeks believed that “Tito created these Macedonians in order to lay claim to Greek-Macedonia!” You know, the one that the Greeks “liberated” in 1913.

The Greeks had convinced the entire world that “Macedonians did not exist” and that “the Modern Macedonians were created by Tito.” To this day I get e-mails from Greeks attesting to this “fact!”

But when old newspapers, especially major dailies from the late 1800’s and early 1900’s were made available on the internet, we began to see that Macedonians did exist even before Tito was born. This was indeed a puzzling problem, especially if we were to believe both the Greeks who tell no lies and all the major daily English language newspapers which reported on the Macedonians even before Tito was born.

Faced with this dilemma a number of us got together and after many hours of brainstorming, thanks to a fellow called True Macedonian, we found our answer.

The only thing that explained how Tito could have created the Modern Macedonians as per Greek testimonies and how Macedonians existed before his time, as documented by all those newspapers, was that “Tito must have had a time machine and went back in time to create the Macedonians”.

Like today’s major dailies that report on world events on a daily basis, so did the dailies of a century or so ago. The newspapers were reporting on all sorts of activities in the Balkans and in Macedonia,

including on the Macedonians preparing and executing the 1903 Macedonian National Ilinden Uprising against the Ottoman Empire.

If we “must” believe that Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslav dictator, along with the Communists, “invented” the Macedonians then we must also believe that Tito possessed a “Time Machine” because the Macedonians existed way before Tito’s time.

Almost every e-mail I have received from Greeks in the last half dozen years or so mention the name “Tito” as the “creator” of the Macedonian ethnic identity. “You are not Macedonians, you are Slavs and you came to the Balkans in the 6th century AD” seems to be the standard Greek definition of a Modern Macedonian. But if we are all Slavs and came to the Balkans in the 6th century AD then how did we become Macedonians? Well the Greeks have a ready answer for that too. They say “Tito created the Macedonian ethnic identity”.

Greeks, it seems, feel very uncomfortable when a question pops up for which they have no ready made answers but on the question of “How did the Macedonians become Macedonians?” they are pretty sure Tito created them.

“Greek propagandists and Greek government officials have brainwashed their Greek citizens into believing that Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslav dictator, along with the Communists, ‘invented’ the Macedonians. The Bulgarians too, like the Greeks, are in denial when it comes to the existence of a Macedonian nation,” says True Macedonian.

One puzzling question however. “What identity were these people before Tito ‘made’ them into Macedonians”? I guess we will have to turn to the Greeks for that answer!

Following are old newspaper articles that prove Macedonians existed before Tito’s time;

“Iron and Steel Supplement – Labor...Macedonians...17” (“Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania”, Part III, Industrial Statistics, Vol. XXXV, 1907, page 73)

By the way registered on page 73 you will also find Greeks...159 and Slavish...3,408.

“Labor Supplements – Sole and Harness Leather...Macedonians...43” (“Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania”, Part III, Industrial Statistics, Vol. XXXV, 1907, page 191)

Registered on page 191 you will also find Greeks...20 and Slavonians...285.

“Labor Supplements – Tanning Extracts...Macedonians...3” (“Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania”, Part III, Industrial Statistics, Vol. XXXV, 1907, page 247)

“Saklabah, The Sclavonians, supposed by the Arabians to be descended from Seclab, a son of Japhet. Under this name, however, the Mahometans comprehend often the Servians, Bulgarians, Moesians, Thracians, Albanians, Macedonians and the northern parts of Greece.” (“An English Arabic Dictionary” by Josiph Catafago, 1858, page 131)

“Mr. Gladstone and the Balkan Confederation. – The Byron Society, which is actively engaged in disseminating appeals in Greece and Bulgaria to help the cause of the Macedonians, has communicated to its agents a letter from Mr. Gladstone for distribution in the vernacular in South-Eastern Europe. The Society aims at inducing the Greek, Servian and Bulgarian governments to come to an early agreement in reference to the Macedonian question. The letter is as follows: - ‘Hawarden Castle Jan. 19, 1897. Dear, Sir, the hopelessness of the Turkish Government should make me witness with delight its being swept out of the countries which it tortures. Next to the Ottoman Government nothing can be more deplorable and blameworthy than jealousies between Greek and Slav and plans by the states already existing for appropriating other territory. Why not Macedonia for the Macedonians as well as Bulgaria for the Bulgarians and Servia for the Servians? And if they are small and weak, let them bind themselves together for defense, so that they

may not be scattered by others, either great or small, which would probably be the effect of their quarreling among themselves. Your very faithful, W. E. Gladstone.” (“New York Times”, February 6th, 1897.)

“Christians in Turkey

To the Editor of the New York Times:

The writer read with much interest a letter in THE TIMES of to-day relating to the Macedonian disturbances. It has been said that ‘The worst Christian Government is better than the best Muslim Government’, but Mr. Burman, the writer of the letter in question, apparently thinks Turkish rule good enough in its way or feels that international justice demands that Turkey in Europe be preserved at any price. He speaks of ‘acts of retribution on the part of their (the Macedonians’) Turkish masters.’ As the Turks have long referred to the Christians in their dominions as ‘dogs’ the term is perhaps a very apt one.

K. C. Bataille, Orange N. J., August 11, 1900.”

“The Serai stands in an open space, near the south-east corner of the Castron: it is a vast irregular pile of buildings... The great hall of this building was crowded with attendants of every variety in costumes, from red-shawled Macedonians and turbaned Osmanli, to the Albanian with his shaggy white capote, and the Greek archon in robes of ermine and enormous calpac.” (“Travels in Sicily Greece and Albania” by Rev. Thos. Smart Hughes, 1820, page 472.)

“Since the Christian era, as we have said, a successive downpour of foreigners from the north into Greece has ensued. In the sixth century came the Avars and the Slavs, bringing death and disaster. A more potent and lasting influence upon the country was probably produced by the slower and more peaceful infiltration of the Slavs into Thessaly and Epirus from the end of the seventh century onward. A result of this is that Slavic place-names to-day occur all over the Peloponnesus in the open country where settlements could readily be made. The most important immigration of all is probably that of the Albanians, who, from the thirteenth century until the

advent of the Turks, incessantly overran the land.” (“The Races of Europe A Sociological Study”, by William Z. Ripley, Ph.D., 1910, page 408).

This is only a very minute sample of what there is out there about how Tito created the Macedonian identity as per Greek claims. I have an entire book written about this with quotes from newspaper articles from major European, American, Canadian and Australian newspapers from the late 1800’s and early 1900’s when, supposedly, no Macedonians existed. The book is called “Come take a Ride in Tito’s Time Machine”.

I am at a loss for words about how the Greek people can lie to your face with such overwhelming evidence that disproves their claims and still expect to be taken seriously!

In my opinion these Greeks have zero credibility and have done injustice not only to the Macedonians but to their own cause. But then why should they care? They are inside our homes, nice and warm, while we roam the streets freezing and looking for justice.

And who is going to provide this justice?

The Great Powers or international law wielded by the same Great Powers? When are we Macedonians going to learn?

GREEKS MARRYING MACEDONIANS TO ASSIMILATE THEM

The Greeks actually sent military and administrative personnel to Greek occupied Macedonia and ordered them to marry Macedonian women so that they could assimilate the Macedonian population. They were doing the same thing the Ottomans were doing. They were putting people in certain places to hold power. The silly thing about that is that the mother is usually the one who teaches the children who they are and the first language they speak. That is why it is called “the mother tongue” and not the “father tongue”.

And this is why Greeks are intellectually superior to the Macedonians.

IS THERE ANY MACEDONIAN LIFE LEFT IN GREECE TODAY?

Even though the world was changing all around us, the Macedonians in Greece continued to suffer abuses at the hands of the Greek government.

During the late 1950's inhabitants of several villages in the Lerin, Kostur and Voden Regions were forced to take oaths swearing loyalty to Greece and denouncing their Macedonian ethnicity and mother language.

This policy of denationalization continued to meet with resistance however, as the Macedonian people continued to feel Macedonian and speak their Macedonian language in secret.

With the imminent breakup of Yugoslavia, the oppressed Macedonians in Greece also began to feel the fervor and started to form their own movements, which gave birth to such organizations as the Macedonian Movement for Balkan Prosperity and Vinozhito.

In regards to developments with the Macedonians in Greece, on September 8th, 1995 members of the ethnic Macedonian political party in Greece, the RAINBOW PARTY, also known as the "VINOZHITO PARTY" in Macedonian, opened an office in Lerin.

On January 19th, 1997 a Second Conference of the "RAINBOW" party was held in Lerin and was attended by 76 delegates of all local units. A Political Manifesto and Organizational Principles were adopted and a Central Council comprised of 19 members was elected.

The Central Council held its first session in Voden on January 26th, 1997 and elected a five-member Political Secretariat, an Economic Commission, an Editors Council, etc.

In its Political Manifesto "RAINBOW" has aired its wish to cooperate with all democratic and anti-nationalist forces in the country in its struggle for peace and European integration.

The RAINBOW PARTY is a member of the European Free Alliance which has been standing up for the rights of stateless nations, peoples and regions for decades.

Other development with regards to the Macedonians in Greece includes the opening of the Greek branch of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL), an organization dedicated to the preservation of lesser used languages in Europe.

Across the European Union, no fewer than forty million people speak languages in their everyday lives, which are different from the official language of the state in which they are living. At present this figure represents 10% of the total European population but shortly, with the expansion of the Union, the number of people speaking a different language from the official language of their state will be much, much greater. Greece, too, is no exception; however vigorously the state may deny it, the facts tell their own story. A by no means negligible section of the Greek population is bilingual. It is not possible to provide precise figures, since none of the censuses carried out to date has included a question on language. The one exception was the census of 1920, yet the figures it yielded for the northern regions of the country were never published.

Moreover, the long-standing policy of marginalization and suppression has succeeded, naturally enough, in reducing the actual number of those speaking the non-official languages. This hostile treatment of heteroglossy in Greece had its beginnings in the early days of the modern Greek state, 190 years ago. In those areas of the country where Arvanitika (Albanian) was prevalent, every effort was made to discourage its use. There was perhaps some justification for this in the desperate efforts being made to unite the regional populations into a single Greek state, using as a means to this end a policy of homogenization of the various populations.

Macedonians such as Nase Parisis, who is currently President of the Greek branch of EBLUL, are striving to introduce the Macedonian languages into the Greek educational system.

In 1995 Human Rights Watch - Helsinki condemned Greece for the oppression of its ethnic Macedonian minority, which Greece denies exists. Both Amnesty International and the European Parliament urged Greece to recognize the Macedonian language and to stop oppressing ethnic Macedonians living within its borders.

IS THERE ANY MACEDONIAN LIFE LEFT IN BULGARIA TODAY?

In regards to Macedonians in Bulgaria, political changes after the capitulation of fascist Bulgaria and the September 9th, 1944 coup d'état positively influenced the Macedonians in Pirin. On August 9, 1946 the Communist Party of Bulgaria, under the leadership of Georgi Dimitrov, officially recognized the Macedonian nation and the right of the Bulgarian controlled part of Macedonia to attach itself to the People's Republic of Macedonia. After World War II the Macedonians in Bulgaria were recognized as a separate and distinct ethnicity. Demographic data from a free census in 1946 revealed that the majority of the population in Pirin Macedonia declared itself to be ethnic Macedonian. There was a period of cultural autonomy and affirmation of Macedonian national and cultural values. The Macedonian literary language and national history were introduced into the educational system and almost 32,000 students were taught Macedonian. In 1947 in Gorna Djumaja (Blagoevgrad) the first Macedonian bookstore, reading room and Regional Macedonian National Theater were opened. Macedonian newspapers such as "Pirinsko delo", "Nova Makedonija", "Mlad borec" etc. were also published. Literary, cultural and artistic associations were founded, contributing to the spread of Macedonian culture.

In the 1956 census conducted by the Bulgarian government, 63.7% of the population living in Pirin Macedonia declared itself Macedonian. Since that census, and after Tito broke relations with Russia and Bulgaria, Bulgaria changed its attitude and negated the existence of Macedonians thus forbidding the expression of the Macedonian ethnicity and language. Another census conducted in 1965 shows only 8,750 or less than 1% of the total population living in the district of Blagoevgrad to be Macedonians. This was a region

with the highest percentage of Macedonians shown to live there by a previous census.

In 1989 a group of Macedonians formed the United Macedonian Organization - Ilinden (OMO Ilinden) with aims at gaining cultural and national autonomy for the Macedonians in Pirin. OMO Ilinden PIRIN was a political party of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. It was registered as a political party in 1999 and participated in municipal elections in October 1999, where it elected five local officials. However, on February 29, 2000 the Constitutional Court in Bulgaria declared OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN unconstitutional. This was in direct violation of the right to freedom of association and the right to freedom from discrimination.

The Bulgarian government refuses to acknowledge the existence of the large Macedonian minority in Pirin Macedonia and continues to violate its basic human rights. Members and supporters of OMO Ilinden PIRIN (political party and human rights organization) and OMO Ilinden (human and minority rights organization) have been videotaped, harassed, beaten, fined and even imprisoned simply for asserting their ethnic Macedonian identity.

IS THERE ANY MACEDONIAN LIFE LEFT IN ALBANIA TODAY?

In regards to the Macedonians in Albania, at the local elections in Albania, held on February 18, 2007, a Macedonian from the party Macedonian Alliance for European Integration (MAEI) was, for the first time, elected as mayor. Edmond Temelko, a 36-year-old veterinarian turned politician won the mayoral position in Prespa municipality, making him the first Macedonian elected in Albania.

Macedonians in Albania are still unable to fully exercise their basic human rights such as obtain schooling in their mother tongue, using Macedonian national symbols and participation in state institutions. Macedonians fought hard to register their political party, the Macedonian Alliance for European Integration with success which is a major accomplishment for Macedonians, because they demonstrated maturity and voted for themselves. By doing so they

showed Albanian society that they were part of it and would take an active role in dealing with issues in the country.

The Prespa municipality has nine towns, inhabited mostly by ethnic Macedonians who speak their own language and foster their own cultural heritage. The Macedonian language will become the second official language and all Macedonian landmarks will be given their original names which were changed during Enver Hodza's regime.

Albania gained the Mala Prespa region from Greece in 1919 in exchange for some Albanian lands in Epirus.

ACRONYMS

AFZH - Women's Anti-Fascist Front
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
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