

WANDERERS

A novel



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(Translated from Macedonian to English and edited by
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Wanderers

A Novel

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For the desolation that now rules Greek occupied Macedonia, our birthplace, and for the lost illusions of the wanderers now drifting in the whirlwind of fate, casualties of the Greek Civil War (1945-1949)

SKOPJE, 2016

My motive was born immediately after the war

I started in 1951 in Tashkent. But I did not finish the novel

I stayed stupefied in my own thoughts

You can say until my old age

Always wondering!

What led me to this transformation in life!?

(As it did the majority of Macedonians)

To join the Greek Civil War (1945-1949)

From then to this day I remain without a clear answer

To this day I am still looking....

My memories of my comrades and of the Curse of Macedonia are
still intact

My memories and the blood loss burn in me

Lost through the deadly actions

Through which the ideological activists led us

Through the red scaffold all the way to hell...

To this day they keep my suspicions awake...

PAVLE RAKOVSKI'S STORY

Pavle Rakovski went from a prominent national champion to a victim of the communist regime.

I dedicate this book to Pavle Rakovski - Gotse son of Mara and Miaile, who after his death, did not received a grave in his homeland Macedonia because he refused to accept the lies told by his comrades. He received his rehabilitation after he died. His personal story is quite unusual, but interesting. He was a village boy, a cow herder who politically matured in captivity in Stalin's camps in Siberia...

The consequences become clear and understandable only after you gain good knowledge of the events that took place which, until now, was not possible without clarifying the politics that led this "Macedonian nationalist" to captivity in Siberia.

I still remember the meaning of ideological democracy

I (Stoian Kochov) met Rakovski only one time during the Greek Civil War.

The second time we met was in September 1949, following DAG's liquidation. We met in the camp of Bureli in Albania.

The third time we met was in 1956 in Tashkent after Rakovski left Alma-Ata. He stayed with me in Tashkent and asked me to take him to see Comrade Tsifroni, CPG Party Secretary. He wanted to return and stay with us veterans.

Our fourth meeting was in the shelters in Skopje...

I went to his funeral. While I cried for him his comrades from NOF and AFZH, who until yesterday slandered him and called him a "Russian spy", had positive things to say about him... now that he

was dead. His comrades had a picture with all of them in it. It was taken in Alma-Ata. They brought the picture to Skopje and cut Rakovski's head off because they did not want to be seen with him. They did not want the "Russian spy" they created with their false accusations to be in the same picture with them.

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Part I

The Macedonian people were obedient to the ideological propagandists who at that time used ignorance as an invisible force in their application of “red rule in the yard” when everything that was done was justified with the excuse that “it was decided from the top”.

(All secret acts committed by the ideological activities of NOF and AFZH in the name of ideological democracy, at a time when lies were prevalent (1945-1949) in Greek occupied Macedonia, are now gathered in one place)

“The exiled is better than his pursuers...” Baruh de Spinoza

CHAPTER ONE - Wanderers returning to their roots

The van stopped, pushing a whirlwind of dust in front of the big gate. The gate was opened by a servant who only greeted the driver. The van pulled in and accelerated through a side street and stopped directly between two barracks.

There were dozens of men and women in the yard aimlessly walking about. They were wearing diverse outfits, Russian, Polish, Czech, Hungarian... When they saw the newcomers arrive, most of them ran towards the vehicle. Those who remained behind seemed to be arguing about something... they were sitting down on the pavement arguing about the Hungarian national development in the Carpathian Region under Romanian control. The caretaker of the shelter, with a bundle of keys in hand, stood at entrance number three and waited. The newcomers got off the van and picked up their suitcases and various bags. A man, skillfully holding a piece of paper in his teeth, wearing an Asiatic overcoat and a lush Russian “forashka”, led the way walking in military steps. He was followed by two women and a child. The driver turned the van around and left while winking at the child. The only sound made in the corridor was that of the caretaker’s footsteps. He wore heavy shoes. The caretaker handed them the key to room number thirteen; an asymmetric room with five beds, a sink and a mirror.

When the caretaker figured that Dobrin Suvogorski was the head of the family, he asked him to sign the register and take charge of the room. He also showed him the latrines and the dining room and informed him of the times meals were served according to the shelter schedule. When the caretaker left everyone sat wherever they wanted. The beds rattled and crackled. One bed was left empty.

Before sitting down Rumena Suvogorska examined the room, looking at the stained sheets on her bed, stained with oil drops. Every corner of the sheets and every pillow was stamped with the administration’s stamp. The floor boards were smeared with black burned oil. The faucet was dripping. A coat hanger hung on the door. There was a large speaker above the door, slightly tilted, through which soft music was playing. Rumena glanced at the

ceiling and stared at the light. It was a weak light. She cynically grinned and looked at Dobrin.

“The shelters are the same everywhere! For ten years we have been wandering from one shelter to another... someone else’s sheets, abused beds, dirty pillows and shared latrines. How long do I have to smell the stench of someone else’s urine?” she asked Dobrin.

“How much longer do I have to wait at the door of a collective toilet? How many more times do I have to crouch on a stinking toilet? How many more times do I have to listen to strange men urinating in the stall next to me...?” she added.

She then looked down and, with a sad look on her face, said: “My child stinks of disinfectant, chorine and DDT...” she then angrily stormed off the bed and went to the mirror hanging over the sink and began to comb her hair:

“I feed him (her son) with common spoons that other people have eaten with... who knows what kind of diseases they had... who knows what kind of idiots they were... Look at him!” she said pointing at her son while looking at Dobrin. “He looks like an agitator... a propagandist. Even his limbs lost symmetry. He doesn’t know how to play... all he does is hang around us... us, the good for nothing... He has learned to eavesdrop and confidentially whisper... ‘only to you...’ like he is some sort of illegal alien. And what can I say about the ten years I have been ogled by senile old men? Sometimes full of malice because they have become powerless...” she let out an ironic laugh then placed her long hair over Dobrin’s shoulder and reminded him of how much she hated these shelters. She said: “Applications... stamps... statements... proof... I have ten different baptismal dates. Which one is the real one!?” she said and laughed out loud. “I used an alias at the first shelter they took us in. In the others I only provided wrong dates...”

Dobrin turned around and said: “Why do you want to upset me so much?”

I know there are two-faced people out there; one for the women and the other for other people. It is not my fault the revolution created

people like that. I know that women, even now, are not made to be understood but to be loved my dear dove...!”

Her mother Petra looked at Rumena, still combing her hair in front of the mirror, came closer, tenderly stroked her face and said:

“My dear Rumena, although you have gone through a lot of pain, you still have a beautiful character...”

Petra has lived with Rumena in five different shelters. Rumena, seeming like she was uplifted a little, turned to her mother and, in a childish like voice, said:

“Oh, mommy, mommy! If only Dobrin had such love for me, like he boasted when he married me, I would not have the time to comb my hair in front of this mirror.”

Rumena then turned, looked at herself in the mirror and said: “Hmm, where is my power... without a male revolutionary with self-importance? This is what happens when they come to power, they become refined egoists. Mother! When a woman is no longer desired she needs to do everything... except cry. Am I not the woman of a revolutionary...? He knows enough to convince me that any pomp will spoil a man. This is how revolutionaries are treated...” she said, shook her head and lost her comb which tumbled to the ground. Dobrin kept quiet and to himself. He did not listen to anyone let alone to his wife... and he did not participate in any conversation... the less people knew about him the better. But he did feel guilty for all the failures. Now, listening to Rumena ramble on, he felt he had to say something.

“May I say that you did have a choice; you had a choice to choose your husband...” he said. Rumena, seemingly eager, immediately responded: “Yes, I chose you because you were handsome and a noble man and occupied a good position in society. I wanted to be the wife of such a man. And now I have the right to be happy and respected for my position in society next to you. And as you say ‘The truth will win’. But please be reminded that lies and slander can revisit us here again, my good Dobrin! You my good Dobrin spent eight years in the camps.

You see, our lives have been one relentless struggle, wandering around and lost in space..." she said and then angrily turned the handle on the tap that was constantly dripping. Then, with an apparent grimace of desperation on her face, she shook her hand and said:

"Now we expect to spend our time and lives in shelters and camps... and there are many of them... Do you remember? Elbasan, Bureli, Warsaw, Wroclaw, Zgorzelets, Liublianka, Butirka, Lefortovo, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Varkuta, Alma - Ata, Tashkent, Craiova and what next? For us justice is delayed... I just want to say I have this feeling..." she concluded.

Dobrin wanted to say something strong but decided not to. He turned to her and said: "It would appear that you were expecting to be liberated by some nobleman... But so what if I am a common man? I want to be free from everyone's mercy. Mercy for me is humiliation. A man should not be granted mercy. If he does he will feel like a prisoner..." he said.

"Do you think that you being welcomed depends on you exclusively, my dear Dobrin? No it does not depend on you... it depends on others... and you should very well know that," she said.

"I was a soldier and I served my people. And if now it is still too early to be recognized, then what...? But you, with your great pessimism, know once and for all that you cannot make me lose hope. But I really can't find any other way for you to love me more. You can see that I am nothing now... Were your expectations of me so unrealistic that you now lost faith in me...?" he said and went to bed. He then placed his hat over his eyes and, through his teeth, muttered: "Enough!"

"My dear daughter, I had performed my duties with your father. You are not like me... When I suffered for your father I was happy. Now, when I return to Lerin I will tell him that. Your father spent a long part of his life in the Greek island prison camps. What should I be demanding of him? And know that a man looks further down the road..." said her mother Petra Prstenarova.

“Mother, I did this for ten years... in these shelters. They put me on duty... it was demanded of me. Now I want to be a woman! It is no longer my duty to do what others demand of me!” she replied.

Rumena nervously settled down. She pulled items out of her suitcases, readjusted them and put them back again. Once in a while she looked up, casting a glance at the walls, looking at the various scratches, patterns, signatures left behind by others who came and went. She then began to mumble: “Oh, it doesn’t matter where I look; where I cast my eyes... my thoughts... nowhere do I find happiness... Everything stinks, everything is rotten, and everything is grey and old..

Something is suppressing my feelings. I feel like I am full of apathy, deep and dangerous apathy leading me to despair. I feel empty in my heart. I am a woman and need time to live in hope because I am the wife of a revolutionary... a worthless revolutionary...

Shelters! They are everywhere. They all look and smell the same... the caretaker... the clinking of dishes... the music... the marches... My son is always listening to all of it and has lost his right mind... He calls the marches the God of opus! Am I mad for speaking like this? My son was unfortunately born in all this. And this is what he wants now...”

Rumena went closer to the window, glanced over the bed and pulled out the notebook in which Dobrin had written various notes. She then began to read:

“The Slovenians left us on dead guard and we waited thrown into oblivion, even before Samoila, we lived in the crick of time which excretes malice...”

Vicho, 1947.

Rumena flipped over several pages and began to read again.

“They say we look like mummies wrapped during the Bronze Age...”

“Well, what can I say Dobrin?!” she sighed and stared out the window somewhere far away. “That’s my poet!” she added and fell on her bed overcome by laughter. They all woke up listening to her laughing hysterically and yelling out loud: “Hey, poet of mine!”

She then kept looking at them lying in their beds and said: “Now we really look like mummies...”

Dobrin rubbed his eyes and humbly said: “I was having a strange dream. Do you want me to tell you about it?”

Rumena, looking at him indifferently, said:

“You still idealize some things, don’t you? You have the right to, we live in hope. So, there is still something to dream about eh... they say that hope is the second soul. Okay then, tell us about your latest dream...”

Dobrin felt uncomfortable in the silence that followed.

“You think I idealize things? Hmm...” he said with a guilty tone of voice.

“You should know that he who loves his homeland passionately is very sensitive about what belongs to him, is excitable by insults, but is elated and proud of what he supports!” he added.

Rumena looked down at him sideways and said: “Hey, my Dobrin... what can I say...” and waited for him to tell her about his dream. Dobrin in the meantime, red in the face, lowered his eyes and looked down at the ground. He looked angry and did not want to say anything. It seemed as if his throat was constricted with anger. So instead of talking about his dream, Dobrin waited for a moment until he calmed down and, with a sad tone of voice, as much as he could make himself sound sad given the circumstances, asked her:

“Did I ever hate your mother? And why would I hate your mother? Yes, I happened to hate my own birth mother...” Everyone turned their eyes towards Dobrin and looked at him, waiting to hear what else he had to say.

“When I was a student I hated my mother for not being able to speak Greek. I hated her until I finished high school. This is how much my Greek teacher had brainwashed me. When he said ‘these natives here are of barbaric origin’, I felt humiliated because I was born of such parents. But at the completion of my studies, in Solun, I felt very guilty down to my soul, a guilt I carry with me to this day,” he said and paused for a moment.

Everyone watched him with interest.

“But I said I was going to tell you about my dream. I dreamt I was giving a lecture on the Macedonian National Question in Lerin. There were many people in the audience. I got much applause and all the older people ran up to me and kissed me. At that point I felt like I was reborn... but I felt ashamed in front of my mother and father. Within me I still carried the guilt from my high school days when that someone whom I respected and trusted poisoned my blood and wanted to uproot me from my bloodline... This is how my dream went. And now in the summer of 1949, in the glare of the great military fire, I, along with others, was accused of being a spy and a traitor to the revolution. This was done to me for the second time; this time by the Greek communist party leadership. The first time this was done to me it was done by the Greek government regime; that time I was accused of awakening the Macedonian masses...”

Rumena looked at him strangely and said: “Well, you dreamt of something you shouldn’t have...” and began to laugh.

CHAPTER TWO - In history there is no revolution without victims

A door was heard slamming in the hallway but the deafening sound quickly disappeared. Everyone in the room went silent as Suvogorski made a motion to express his thoughts.

“A person never knows where time and life will take them,” he said and shrugged his shoulders making it obvious that things were very clear. “Every revolution is paid for with victims and there is no revolution without victims. The entire history of mankind is a history of sacrifices...” he added.

Rumena listened motionless, only blinking her eyes.

“Sometimes it seems very simple for a person to be a communist. Then years pass, like a flowing river, and all that is collected is a handful of memories... and you don't know whether you are right or wrong...” said Dobrin ending unexpectedly. He remembered all sorts of things, both important and trivial. He sighed, and turned to Rumena who was terribly confused when she interrupted him without waiting for him to finish talking.

“Oh Dobrin, Dobrin...” she said while raising her eyebrows, “Save your memories for your memoirs. I know you very well. I look at you and feel chills down my spine every time your mind gets these memories. But I am still waiting for the Party to do something for you... perhaps in the near future...?”

Dobrin walked over and sat on his bed looking like he was lost.

“What are you trying to tell me?!” Dobrin asked Rumena loudly. “What are these things you are saying? Are you anti-communist?”

Rumena put both her hands over her face and kept quiet until her anger subsided and then said: “You communists are as hard as a walnut and just as stubborn.”

“For God's sake woman...” he replied and looked at her.

She looked back at him and said: “You are still a fanatic. You still believe what your comrades tell you and you refuse to think of our future. That work you did was the work of the party. Your fellow fighters are now sitting in front of a colour television and have shelves of unopened books...”

“There are so many things you think of... Well I don't think of all those things because I would need two more lifetimes to get up that high in the Party and to get a party post to suit your taste,” he replied.

“I think it is easier than you think...” she said.

“God damn it... all you think about is money, money, money...” he replied angrily and looked away.

“I am just talking...” she said. “It makes it easier for me when I talk about it. Not because I want to pester you, but I want us to look at the truth in the eye together. These shelters have become our higher educational institutions and we should not remain silent about things.”

Dobrin was silent... deep in his own thoughts.

After a short pause Rumena smiled and said: “Dobrin, you have not told me how you became a communist?”

Dobrin looked at her and smiled then said: “Good idea... I will tell you.”

He repositioned himself on the bed and began to talk. He said: “I remember. All I remember from World War I was the thundering of cannons at the Solun front and the local hosts hiding the bodies of certain army personnel belonging to the warring armies. When the French army left we had peace in our village.

Before that all of Lerin was full of Serbians and Montenegrins who declared that from now on they would be the authority here. There were there for six months doing what they felt like doing, swearing and cursing and grabbing everything that passed within three

hundred metres of the house. The Montenegrins were not like that. There was this one fellow named Velko who was as tall as two of our people. He said that this was the Lord's heaven, not rocks, but soil and foliage to fill your eyes. He wanted to bring his beloved wife here, have more than ten children and start a mini Montenegro. Maybe he died like that... with hope.

One morning in 1913 the Serbians moved towards Bitola. We hardly took a breath before the Greek army arrived and took their place. They too began to do whatever they felt like... to people of the same faith. They tormented the people and showed them what hell was like. Then in 1924 the first settlers and colonists appeared in the village. They arrived together with the police chief. They were called "Madzhiri".

The police chief's name was Spanos Petrakis. He arrived in the village Kleshchina without much fuss. He was settled in Gele Bizgovski's newly built house which was two houses away from ours.

The police chief showed my grandmother Risa a piece of paper; an official letter... which frightened her.

She first ran up to us all flustered. Unable to understand what she was saying, my grandfather Ilia asked her: 'Who is this man?' 'A bigwig,' she replied with a crackle in her voice, and continued: 'He set up a table and chairs and with a large nail he attached a picture of his king, which he brought with him.'

'Big deal... Where is this uninvited 'bigwig' from?' asked my grandfather. 'Even the stately Turkish Aga's did not do that. We cannot trust him...' my grandfather said to us in confidence. Then my grandmother Risa, with a worried tone of voice, said: 'But he said that now he is the police chief of Kleshchina...'

My mother Maria was beautiful and a smart woman. She was holding my hand. She knew how to take care of the family, keep the peace and bring happiness to everyone. I felt her eyes looking at me, stabbing at me from the depths of her heart.

As the people poured towards the middle of the village, I felt fear clutching at my heart. I watched my grandfather march like a soldier on the way to meet the man of power.

The police chief turned towards us and showed us his grim face. It looked elongated. After a long silence he finally spoke.

He said: ‘Peasants! I was named police chief for this village...’ but we did not understand whether he was talking to us or to the Madzhiri. He called us Turkish-speaking Greeks from the Pond in Asia Minor. He said we were the descendants of some wandering Greek people, Greeks by genus, and that we had been sent here to share the empty houses and fields. I suppose he was talking to the colonists and settlers.

Some of the Madzhiri looked like living skeletons. The women wore tight pajamas. Their skin was sagging and looked like tanned leather. Their eyes were huge and hungry looking. There were empty houses in the village, emptied a few days before when fifteen Islamized Macedonian families were violently uprooted, loaded into wagons and deported to who knows where in Anatolia...

We called the Islamized Macedonians ‘Torbeshi’. They were good people, but felt like they were carrying the guilt of their ancestors. My grandfather liked them. He used to say that they are our people. We were of the same blood but of different religion. They were our people who had to change their faith because they were very poor. They changed their religion about 200 years ago when the terrible Turk Tchaoush Kaliman was in charge of our village. They spoke Macedonian just like the rest of us here, with a Turkish word here and there. But because they were Muslims they were deported to Anatolia. They screamed and yelled saying that they were Macedonians, native to this land, but the Greek authorities did not care.

My grandfather Ilia took a few steps forward and, in front of everyone, told the police chief a thing or two about the ‘Torbeshi’. He even told him why they were called Torbeshi. He told the police chief that these houses and lands belonged to them, to our people,

from time immemorial, and even the worst kind of Turk would not disturb them.

We, the children, having nothing interesting to do, gathered around my grandfather Ilia and listened to him talking.

Spanos Petrakis stood there with his hands behind his back and his chest sticking out. His coat was decorated with shiny buttons and pockets. Suddenly he stood up straight and, with clenched teeth, yelled out ‘Silence dog! Silence...!’

There was dead silence. My grandfather Ilia stood up straight, looking like he had gotten his youthful vigour back, took another step forward and courageously said: ‘They were good people, that’s why you exiled them. And so what if they were of another faith...? They were of Macedonian blood...! We know nothing of the ones you brought here now... We know nothing of their faith or their language. Who in God’s name will now help us communicate with them, and understand what they say...? The soil here needs to be dug and ploughed... These people came with empty hands. They have no tools... Who is going to support them? May God forgive me, but why do you mix the people like this? Are these people victims?’

‘Silence!’ yelled the police chief, taking out a folded piece of paper from his chest pocket and began to unfold it. He then looked at the faces of the newcomers sitting in front of him, looking guilty, waiting to be shown their houses and properties. After that he gazed at those stuffing their mouths with corn bread and ingesting horse meat out of a can. He then turned his gaze to the young women suckling their babies and rocking them to keep them quiet.

Excited, the police chief began to speak. He said: ‘This is an order! I am ordering the arrest of this rebel because he is opposing the noble cause to provide care for these people and is in opposition of his majesty the king of Greece.’

Then, while pointing at the Madzhiri, the police chief added: ‘These people have been afflicted by our blood enemies - the Turks! Rather than offering them a helping hand, this rebel and well-known freedom fighter, who has fought for the freedom of some united

Macedonia, is asking why these good and tormented people are coming to their own homeland Hellas?

This rebel wants to desecrate our faith but he does not know that he too has remained here only because he is Christian...’

My grandfather Ilia got very excited, raised his arm up and interrupted the police chief. He said: ‘Excuse me Mister! Those are your words! But that’s not how it is! We are people, Christians, now we are a people without a country!’

The police chief became very upset and yelled: ‘I arrest you in the name of the law!’

My grandfather then yelled back: ‘Mr. Police Chief, you are making a big mistake!’

Among the people in the village square there were Greek policemen with whips in their hands. They ran towards my grandfather and began to beat him. He fell to the ground and curled into a ball trying to defend himself.

The women began to weep and begged the police chief to stop the madness,” concluded Dobrin and then looked at Rumena in the eyes and said: “This is history, evidence, well-preserved in the very corner of my mind.”

Dobrin then continued with his story of how he became a communist. He said: “I can still see my grandfather Ilia lying there, black and blue, wrapped in a fresh calf skin. Then suddenly he had a heart attack and was fighting to breathe. He opened his eyes. They were bloodshot... He never spoke again... Even today I still hear a voice whispering and ringing in my soul about that old man.”

CHAPTER THREE – Silence with a feeling of guilt...

Rumena came closer to him. Dobrin mumbled something and asked:

“Should I stop talking?”

“There is no reason for you to stop talking,” she said. “I want to know what’s inside you, inside your consciousness... and I want to figure out what made you want to fight, to have such beliefs, and not just some abstract images and political slogans which you can turn left or right according to circumstances...” said Rumena with a serious look on her face.

“My mother loved me with all her devotion and that inspired me and gave me more impetus. She gave me her humility and inner peace and the will to never lose hope,” replied Dobrin.

“But that does not tell me why you became a communist and why communists congregate in an area in which caution and suspicion are your wisdom in life...” said Rumena inquisitively and adjusted herself on the bed that creaked due to loose springs.

“Let me ask you something, why do you women desire to be the centre of attention and that’s like a condition for your frame of mind...” replied Dobrin while smiling.

There was silence, a momentary pause. Rumena looked at Dobrin with a sad look on her face and said:

“Well, my biggest concern, which still bothers me, is that I lack self-confidence. And now it happens in moments of depression.

Through the years of emigration I have been feeling inadequate, like I could not succeed in anything that I didn’t work hard at. Perhaps this is because my friends rebuke me with their views and I am seen as a woman and an enemy of the Party. I was miserable while you were in Siberia. In Poland I hung around the workers’ restaurants unhappy. Perhaps that’s why I am so aggressive. I spent a lot of time being unhappy especially in my young age when my soul was forming. And whatever goes in their soul a person carries with them

all their life,” concluded Rumena, leaned on the iron bed frame and went silent.

Dobrin felt guilty for her bad luck. The strong sense of guilt troubled him and he subconsciously felt like he needed to say something in order to neutralize his internal unrest. But it was Rumena who spoke first:

“A person without ‘religion’ will fail! My dear Dobrin...” she said and continued.

“But the politicians, they know very well how to easily plant religions, even man-made religions; Hitler planted National Socialism, Mussolini Fascism, Stalin Bolshevism...”

“I have said too much already... But let me remind you that everyone who has climbed to the top of the pyramid has stood there alone...” Rumena concluded.

“I have never thought of it that way...” replied Dobrin with a serious tone of voice and continued:

“And what should I do now?” he asked curiously.

“Continue to tell me about yourself, I want to know more about your past. I have put all my hopes and trust in you,” replied Rumena.

“Politics is ultimately an art of living...” said Dobrin. “It’s an old truth that people can’t exist without imagination, without religion, without an ideology... which professes a better tomorrow not only for humanity, but also for the entire universe...”

I remember a man named Vasiliu. He was a leader of the Lerin scouts. One day he approached me and shoved several scouting books at me.

‘Read them,’ he said. The books were filled with practical and useful articles. I decided to become a scout. However, very quickly my fellow scouts convinced me that the scouts belonged to a ‘bourgeois’ organization, so I left and for a long time after that I

thought about the company and friendships I would have had if I had stayed. One day a man named Theoharidis asked me if I wanted to join the OKNE, a communist organization for the youth of Greece. I didn't want to so I said: 'I don't want to leave my parents and my school just to deal with revolutionary work...' He smiled and said nothing. Then in April 1933 I was the fifth person to join OKNE.

I used to hang around the Organization. I spent my time thinking about things plus my time passed without me being bored. After I finished school, director Theodoros Kotronis asked me if I wanted to lay a wreath at the tomb of Pavlos Melas in the village of Statica, where he was killed, as a representative of the Lerin gymnasium.

Kotronis insisted that we must respect our 'liberators' and said: 'It is true that you stepped into private life, however, you are still our disciple. You will think of a few meaningful words to say when you lay the wreath. I am sure you will represent our school commendably...'

I thought of my grandfather Ilia and what happened to him and wanted to decline the offer to lay the wreath. Plus I did not have enough confidence in myself to step up in front of a crowd. This was perhaps because I spent so much time in my younger years feeling miserable... because I lost my grandfather Ilia.

I do not know exactly why. But I was a little thrown when my mother said to me: 'Go, sign yourself up for the entry exams at the gymnasium... we will somehow manage to pay for your education...'

My parents must have known that, as the child of 'Xenophones' (foreign language speakers), I probably only had a symbolic chance of being registered but would have to pay fully for the registration and the quarterly exams. But they took a chance anyway.

Strange as it was, Theodoros Kotronis showed care for me. Day after day I felt more inspired.

Classical rules were affirmed throughout my entire schooling days - conditions and objectives on how to act. Now I have no doubt how our people became 'Torbeshi' under Ottoman rule ... with all that mental anguish... and how they disappeared in Anatolia..."

"In other words, Kotronis knew very well that without faith it was impossible to please anyone, not even God..." - interrupted Rumena while smiling at Dobrin.

Dobrin looked at her with a sad look on his face. Rumena continued: "Calm down, calm down Dobrin! Still, the most crucial and frightening thing was not casual faith but superstition, because even an honest man can be a victim of superstition. Oh, my Dobrin, that's how a person could become a small person... even when a person is great he can still be small..."

By now Dobrin was completely confused. He stopped talking about his experiences because he felt like there was a trap set in front of him. Perhaps temptation was not always a sin... it was a sin only sometimes...

It was one of Dobrin's friends who said to him: "This is all nonsense... you must always look ahead... that's what life requires of you..."

Dobrin continued: "The next morning I found myself at the meeting place. It was filled with representatives from the military, police, judicial, public authorities, municipality, trade unions, players and other clubs. There was an entire column of cars. It was a great meeting. Many priests, prelates, officers and other serious gentlemen with white collars, from Lerin and Kostur, also attended the meeting. It was like that every year. It was a day during which the living honoured the dead.

After the priests completed the religious ceremony, a man with a high-pitched voice read a short essay about Pavlos Melas during which he called Melas a 'liberator' of Macedonia. Then other people passed by, said a few words and placed wreaths on Melas's monument. I too placed a wreath and stepped all over my

grandfather Ilia's dignity... and still, to this day, I don't know why I did that.

At one point a man, wearing a Greek Andartes (illegal armed bandit) uniform, approached the monument and, while laying the wreath, spoke Macedonian in front of the police and other Greek officials. He said:

'Pavle! Pavle! Do you remember when you and I went to my aunt Iovanitsa's place and she gave us warm bread and freshly made cheese? Oh, Pavle, Pavle!' said the man sighing deeply and ending with the words: 'Aide eonia i mni...!' (Let it be your everlasting glory.) After that the man walked proudly back to his place of honour. Some of the women put their hands over their mouths, while others looked puzzled. Some of the Greek officials found it necessary to express condemnation; it was seen on their faces. Most showed understanding and smiled.

He was one of Melas's fellow co-fighters. Melas was leader of the Greek Andartes in Macedonia. I approached the man and, in a whispering voice, asked: 'Where are you from?'

'From Chernovishta... I am a companion of Kote from Rula,' he replied.

At that moment I felt like my own hands were dipped in blood and I almost asked him:

'Did you cut off Lazo Pop Traikov's head together?' but I didn't.

I looked at the man wearing an Andart uniform and chills ran down my spine. His pale eyes reminded me of my grandfather Ilia. I said to myself, 'this man is betraying his own people and he is not even aware of it...'

Could the man not see that he looked like a caricature? What kind of a Greek was he? And I, look at me, I offended my grandfather by placing a wreath on a so-called Greek hero, the very man who killed our revolutionary leaders. He killed the very men who fought for our rights and for our freedom!

I thought to myself: 'Perhaps it is conditions and objectives that determine how a man should act, against his will and conscience...'

At that very moment the trees shook from a great roar of thunder and rain began to pour. The cemetery emptied quickly under the heavy rain and the flowers and wreaths floated in the muddy water.

'God must want to punish the traitors gathered around a foreigner's grave...' muttered an old man looking at us like we were a herd of bewildered beasts," concluded Dobrin.

CHAPTER FOUR – The hall went silent in the sound of footsteps

They sat on their beds.

Dobrin read in silence but always with his old anticipation present; anticipating that, at any moment now, something might happen. But knowing his own character well, that he was like this all his life, tormented him, especially in new situations.

Rumena, on the other hand, was a beautiful woman. She was silent most of the time except when she talked and argued with Dobrin.

The graceful steps of the duty officer could be heard from afar slowly fading along the great grey corridor.

“Do you hear that?” asked Rumena.

“Hear what?” asked Dobrin and perked up his ears to listen.

“The lack of footsteps...” she replied and laughed out loud.

The clock kept ticking... They were waiting for their turn to be examined, for the duty officer to enter their place and see how they were doing... None of them could predict the future and what waited for them... Perhaps in the silence they would wither away and vanish.

Rumena always scolded Dobrin because of his Party affiliation. She poured scorn and fiercely attacked him. She accused him of destroying her youth. She accused him of his limited consciousness and wanted to know why he would not tell people about his career, which tormented her to unprecedented fury. Again and again she listened to him say it was his duty. Everyone in a revolution must do their best and when the revolution is over everything would fall into place by itself... Fear constantly gripped at Dobrin’s heart... Having to remain on the waiting list tormented Rumena. It was horror and torture living like this. Perhaps someone had a hand in meddling with their fate and muddying their hopes and aspirations...

“Would you say that this is a time without love?” asked Dobrin looking at Rumena with a tiny smile on his face.

“Yes...” she answered. “It is time to start following life. I have never seen you pray before meals or after eating”.

“But you know that forty years have passed without religion and now, after I have accepted Marxist ideology and atheism, you want me to pray? That’s really funny, right?” replied Dobrin.

“That’s what you say. You want to say that the beliefs of the Party are the same as the belief of the state. You also want to say that they, Party and state, together, are timeless. But are they? Or are you an inspirer and an organizer of a system that has taken physical and spiritual control of the people? If you ask me, you are all peculiar and strange people. You mistrust and suspect everyone. This pathological suspicion is a result of wanting absolute power over everything. And this kind of government is the reason for introspection and termination of communication with the ordinary needs for relaxing the soul. The government is like instinct. But in your case, someone uprooted that seed and without that instinct you are just naïve,” said Rumena.

“No, that’s not right! This is only your opinion,” replied Dobrin.

“Yes, all we are left with is stupid and empty arguments to outwit one another. But we both know that our future depends on others... I believe that people are born with the capacity to be human and not to be Party members... to have Party status and to follow the Party ideology,” said Rumena and lay down on the iron bed, showing that she was not afraid of expressing her opinion.

“Listen to me Rumena!” Dobrin said with a non-threatening tone of voice. “Do you think any of these investigators could understand me? Our comrades know we are here, of course they know. But do you know what? For years I carried a secret wish in the depth of my soul in the Siberian prisons, and that wish was to return to my mother...”

I remember it was summer, 1934. I was tormented by despair and had no perspective on life after finishing high school. I came home and my head was full of black thoughts. My mother waited for me for a long time and after I arrived she took me to the door of the back room where she had cooked a meal, just for me, consisting of boiled potatoes. She said: 'Go inside and eat now...' But when I went inside there was nothing there for me to eat. I thought perhaps that my sisters were hungry and ate all the food. I could not blame them... Then when I went out in the yard I heard my mother's voice. She asked me if I ate. I answered: 'Yes, yes I ate...'

Suicide appeared to be the only option for me as a way out. I found my father's gun. It only had five bullets but I was satisfied that it would do the job if I used it on my temple. I decided to do it in the basement. I entered the concrete cage and closed the door quietly behind me. I was alone trying to overcome my claustrophobia. It was a foggy grey morning in Lerin and the sun had just barely passed the narrow border. I firmly squeezed the clapper, which somewhere deep inside sounded like a strange bell ringing. Fear of the truth made me think of my mother, seeing me sprawled with my brain scattered. What a blow this would be to her! I was the only boy in the family and she was so proud of me. I will persevere, I thought. As evidence, I accepted defeat to my powerlessness before the finger of fate. At that moment I was just powerless. I went back to the room and picked up something religious. I began to read as a way of finding salvation. It opened a terrifying sea of opportunities in the basement of my psyche. I read about asceticism, which amazed me with its pragmatism, about frustration and all the features of narcissism, a sense of omnipotence... it required from its followers their absolute trust, obedience, asceticism, sexual restraint, existence, getting up early before sunrise, prayers, non-use of alcohol and narcotics and suicide was prohibited. I became soaking wet from my perspiration. I also read that the believers possess fascinating abilities. They are skilled controversialists and usually preach tolerance and social justice, but also are able to control their aggression.

I thought about it and wanted to become a teacher so that I could teach good things.

I enrolled in the Solun Pedagogical Academy on September 1, 1934 and shortly afterwards began a new life as a student, but according to military law I was summoned to do my duty and fulfill my military obligation. Sixteen months later I was back from Athens as a sergeant of the Greek army. I felt safe and no longer wanted to enter the room of imaginary crimes. But then I became angry again when I found out that the new director had written me off for having ‘indigenous ancestors’, (he was kicked out of the school because he was Macedonian) something he found out from my earlier studies. This was during the Metaxas years.

When I went to see him he turned to me and said: ‘Ah, this is you... how unfortunate, my dear sir, you have no right...’

I returned to Lerin with a heavy heart ... Now what? I thought.

The only one who welcomed me back was my same old friend. I barely lifted my eyes when I heard him say: ‘King George II is coming to Lerin tomorrow on a tour of Macedonia.’ I remembered his words: ‘Nonsense, put yourself together and move on! Life requires it of you...’

The next day, all dressed in my officer’s uniform, I asked to take part in the reception. I spoke briefly, mainly about the obstinacy of my director. I then concluded with the words: ‘I went to serve the motherland and the director insisted on punishing me for it!’

The King looked at the letter I was holding in my hand and asked: ‘Did you write about that in the letter?’ I said ‘Yes!’ ‘Leave it with me and don’t worry!’ he said.

I took the letter and put it on the table beside him. He extended his hand. I took it and we shook hands. He squeezed my hand tightly but with a barely noticeable smile. Yeah right, it looked to me like he really cared and I had nothing to worry about!

Then, during the night of August 4, another coup took place. This was the fourth government coup. Lerin was filled with military tanks and police patrols. They were carrying out mass arrests. I became very nervous expecting to be arrested by morning. But then I was not! I

was relieved. This was proof that my name was not in the National Security's black list for being a member of OKNE.

The same day I received official information from the office of the King informing me that my case had been positively resolved.

When I went to see the director of the Pedagogical Academy he welcomed me with a big smile and showed me how happy he was to see me. But in his eyes I read: 'Who would have thought that you had such lavish and great connections!' ..." concluded Dobrin.

"So, was this the way to achieve a high mark of dignity?" asked Rumena with a tone of uncertainty in her voice.

"It is indeed strange..." muttered Dobrin. "But one thing was for sure, while I was in school there was one thing deliberately instilled into the students and that was the belief in the purity and unity of the Greek people, language and culture.

There were also other things. Each year the school had a parade in which the uprising against the 'Turks' was presented. The story would begin with the Greek general killing many of his captors, all in one day, and would end with a special recognition of his sword. All school books praised those Byzantine emperors who managed to keep the savages from the East out of the empire.

Every epoch had a list of heroes who fought for the purity of Greece.

When I recognized that such an education would only result in intellectual arrogance and moral poverty, I came to the realization that there was a strong afro-Asian influence in the early Aegean cultures. I realized that Alexander the Great did spread Greek culture in the East, but was carrying out a campaign of terror and destruction. I understood that Solun had a Jewish culture equal to that of Vienna but the Greeks then destroyed it. I felt ashamed knowing that communities living in Macedonia and Thrace were treated like outcasts only because their language was not Greek.

When I understood all this I became an unlucky man for the second time,” concluded Dobrin.

CHAPTER FIVE – The Roads and mountains were full of people

“The next day,” said Dobrin, “we received news that at dawn on April 6, 1941 the Germans had invaded Greece and their tanks were rumbling in. In the meantime the Greek army was still in Albania. The Greek security services could not wait to hand over the alleged communists, that they held in their jails, to the Gestapo to be physically liquidated.

Many of the soldiers fighting for the Greek army in Albania had to return home on foot because they had been abandoned. The vast majority were Macedonians. The schools were closed and there was fear of arrests and killings everywhere.

Before the war had started I was sent to teach in the villages Tsakoni and Bidzhovo in Voden Region. I left Lerin hoping to find a new life in my work. In Tsakoni I spent the morning going around without purpose fussing under the sun, and after that arranging the register of my class. I gathered, I thought and occasionally I stuck my head out into the hallway and stared at the empty classrooms.

I silently repeated the names of my students. I felt like a man uttering prayers. I never wanted to be a teacher. I dreamed of going down the road following Gorky, to cast out my misconceptions about myself.

I remembered the words of Ianis Apostolos, a great communist, who said: ‘...It is possible, under certain circumstances, to proceed against your own will and conscience. If! But, leave behind that which you really are... a child of an enslaved people, a Macedonian!’ ...”

“Let the almighty God bless you, but did you ever preach this to the others?” interrupted Rumena, with an authoritative tone of voice, and continued: “The Macedonian National Question is the biggest pain of the heart and soul in the Macedonian people, no matter in which time you find yourself... It has always been that way, as my grandfather said so many times,” said Rumena.

“At first I kept quiet,” said Dobrin, “I thought it was not necessary to convince everyone of the communist ideology, but when dark justice fell upon us in those terrible times, it was shame for a man to sit idly by and do nothing.

The shackles, death, common hope became awful every day things. But the ‘Greek patriots’ were quick to adapt to the new politics.

Headed by Nikos Zahariadis, those ‘Greek patriots’ were on top of the Communist ladder and wasted no time to attack the Macedonians. The Macedonians were attacked during the CPG Central Committee 3rd Plenum and during the CPG Sixth Congress held in December 1935, demonstrably removing the Macedonian people’s democratic rights, treating them like a national minority without any rights, especially the right to self-determination. Perhaps this is why a village cow herder like myself became a politburo enemy and sent to Stalin’s camps of Beria and Siberia.”

“Exactly... they attacked you...” replied Rumena. “So, then and there you should have started changing your life and not listen to the ‘the cat is in the bag’ type promises. You know what the Greeks are like... they will look you in the eye and lie to your face... They sure know how to make promises...”

“Oh, that is just lovely. How nice of you to tell me all this now, my dear,” said Dobrin with a smile on his face and bowed slightly, seeming as if he was glad to have received this information and continued:

“Then things went a little sideways. The mountains and roads became filled with refugees. There were soldiers wearing raincoats, rags, jackets... They had fled the cities and barracks where they were tormented by the Germans and their servants.

The Germans confiscated everything they could get their hands on in the cities... including all the vehicles and food. The villages were flooded with hungry people who were willing to sell everything, including the shirts on their backs, for a little piece of bread and some beans.

The barbarian invaders quoting Goebbels kept repeating the slogan: “Europe will die so that Germany can live.” There was death and destruction everywhere. Hundreds of innocent people of all ages starved to death... a horrible slow death. The people were exterminated en masse and there was no end to the shootings and destruction.

The EAM and CPG leadership skillfully directed the masses to vent their anger against the foreigners.

Then on June 1, 1941, during the 6th Plenum, a Proclamation was made to organize the masses to begin a national uprising!

During this Proclamation the communists said:

“The ultimate goal is socialism, the Party of the proletariat, the Communist Party of Greece. Today we are fighting for national liberation and after that, after the war, for a people’s democracy!”

But in order to achieve a people’s democracy the Macedonian people had to win... Everything depended on us winning...”

“Weren’t you afraid of what might happen if you didn’t win?” asked Rumena.

“No! I was never afraid of that...” replied Dobrin.

Dobrin did not object to Rumena’s off the wall questions. He knew how stubborn she could be. He knew that Rumena was very delicate, excessively emotionally sensitive and valuable. So he allowed her, more often than not, to drag him to the places of his past, examining whether perhaps he could have made better choices in life and avoided the pitfalls that got him here. Her behavior did not make much difference to how Dobrin felt.

She was a woman full of humour, less aggressive when discussing the status of women, and very much upset when discussing women in communism. She would say that these women needed to dispense with their glittering façade and concentrate on developing and appreciating the inner qualities of life.

The time for women being decorated like Christmas trees was over for Rumena. This is how she saw things. This is how, from this high and tranquil position, she observed people's misfortunes and sometimes laughed and sometimes shook her head when she saw a woman dressed up to the hilt walking beside her man of political distinction; but ironically this is what she wanted for herself.

"Are you sleeping well?" asked Rumena.

"Only from time to time... I take a nap here and there..." replied Dobrin.

"I have been having trouble sleeping. The last couple of nights I couldn't sleep much, I don't know what's wrong... Do you think maybe we will finally have our lives back...? Or maybe we will just imagine that we have our lives back...?" asked Rumena.

Like behaving in a surprise traumatic situation, Rumena's approach to things was to completely surrender to the power of tears and make some sounds from her nose and throat.

"My dear Rumena, you are some kind of fighter. But you are my fighter, aren't you?" asked Dobrin and continued: "Do you think those tears of yours will give you an advantage?"

"No!" she said abruptly and continued. "But you should know that there are men out there who feel it is their duty to take action when a woman sheds tears... You tell that when I die, it will be less difficult for me if I remember that we were revolutionaries, and perhaps it will be less difficult for you when you think of the investigators who had no names... and no surnames... and that they were all called 'Comrade'..."

The next day, the weather was warm, the day was great and everything was neither alive nor dead. To Rumena the arrival of morning seemed infinitely distant. She was always looking for something to pass her hours of boredom. She usually repacked her clothing in her suitcases. She showed her feminine curiosity as she

examined her beautiful silk garments, gently pushing them down with both hands.

“This one is from you. I remember your words when you said to me: ‘What would I get in return if I get you this pleasant novelty, Rumina?’ It was in Alma-Ata,” remarked Rumina as she sorted through her suitcases.

“A man like myself, with my character and my broken spirit, cannot be surprised by anything, my dear Rumena!” replied Dobrin.

“I don’t forget anything! That’s what keeps me going, my dear Dobrin,” said Rumena and continued.

“You communists are interesting people, especially when you think that we women should worship you like true gods and at the same time you are women haters. Your system of strict obedience entails ‘blind obedience’. But that is important to you. The horror overwhelms me when I think about it...” concluded Rumena.

Feeling like hot breath was wafting behind him, Dobrin took a few silent steps towards Rumena and in a deep manly tone of voice asked: “And what exactly do you mean by that?”

Rumena grabbed a bottle of “pertsovka” vodka and a can of “saliotka” fish from her nylon bag. She opened the bottle of vodka and poured some in a couple of glasses.

“Good God, what is happening to you?” Dobrin cried out, looking anxious.

“This is a Russian drink, the kind of vodka that Stalin drank to tranquillize himself. It was a means of pacifying himself because of the subconscious feelings that constantly hovered inside him... feelings that needed to be revealed and discussed. As for me, I need to find a way to get out of these shelters... but how and to go where?” replied Rumena.

Dobrin may have often leafed through Lenin’s works, watched television or listened to the radio. But he was a very sincere and

honest person and Rumena was never able to find flaws in him, such as vulnerability, until she learned how much it meant to him to hear her praise him about how he served communist internationalism.

“Dobrin you and I are part of a world that is disappearing... here, drink some, alcohol neutralizes fear...”

“My God! I could hear my interrogator’s voice last night. It sounded like it was very close and we were all chained together and kneeling before him...” said Dobrin and continued. “I persevered. I am here. But it did not end...”

“What? It did not end?” yelled Rumena suffocating from rage. “Are you serious?”

“No it did not end! Maybe these things will inflict a mortal blow, they will begin to spring up when we get out of this shelter,” replied Dobrin.

“Oh, my dear Dobrin you have been enduring sleeplessness, torture, hunger, fighting... how can your poor heart withstand all that? Your heart is not made of steel or stone... it’s simply a muscle. This disgusting war, a blessing for some, is not for you. And I too am overwhelmed by my fate being terrorized!” said Rumena and looked outside.

The sun was shining through the window and the room was warm and cozy. “The Masons believe the sun is the bearer of truth, courage and justice and the moon is a symbol of pure love...” said Dobrin.

CHAPTER SIX - From Siberia to Idrizovo prison

The fog and cold rain over Idrovo Prison brought Dobrin back to reality. From his experience in the Siberian prisons he was well aware of the ways of prison. He pulled out a piece of paper and began to draw an image of Rumena standing there straight with her head held high looking unusually glorious and proud, hiding her less noble traits but not her expression of her infinite sadness. She looked like a tragic queen.

Even a man like Dobrin, who devoted little attention to Rumena's requirements, felt somehow defeated and dejected, and when he showed her the drawing, with her perfect image, she turned to him and her face flared up like it had caught on fire. He found himself in Rumena's arms.

"So, the further away I am from you the deeper I am inside you. My beloved Dobrin, fill your heart with joy with me. Don't torment yourself, live a little! Know and take everything from me while you still have the power... Don't forget that today is our thirteenth anniversary since we have been married and we have only been together a few months. You in Siberia and me in Poland," said Rumena and smiled.

"Dear Dobrin how much happier would we be if we were in Vicho again? The tall grass studded with white buds, the purple flowers, that our people call irises, the blue and bright flowers and the ferns our souls so much desired... There was something sweet in the air that spring in 1948..." said Rumena then turned to Dobrin and said:

"Dear Dobrin did you really feel how much you had conquered with me?"

"Yes, my dear, I really felt..." replied Dobrin, grabbed her by the waist and they both laughed as they slowly headed for their bed.

"I was infinitely wild in my life and I slipped away with many but now I am all yours my love. However, I could not love anyone as I have loved you. But you know that by order of the Party they wanted me to marry a number of mutilated people who were

important to the Party? They suggested all kinds. So let us celebrate this day like a holiday of our love and never forget it in this world, and especially in the hereafter, because that is now in all of us..." said Rumena.

"Nothing is forever my dear..." said Dobrin with his eyes closed, but his joy and splendor could be read on his face.

"But your kiss was Russian, a Party brotherly kiss..." said Rumena and continued: "Maybe because of your eternal dreams of living under communism, your life has become absent from my home!"

"Why would you think it's a Russian kiss?" asked Dobrin and smiled.

"Well, do the Russians not kiss three times...? The first for the Father, the second for the Son and the third of the Holy Spirit...? Oh, my dear Dobrin, you do kiss like a Russian, and you don't even know for whom you kiss!" replied Rumena.

"In the distant 1948, there in the ferns, your kiss ripped something out of my soul. Now, this same kiss of yours reminded me of Brezhnev's kisses welcoming people from the fraternal republics. I remember Brezhnev watching on television to figure out how to kiss an emperor. He watched Emperor Haile Selassie kiss Todor Zhivkov. Todor then attempted to hug him but the emperor did not accept his embrace, not like those from our republics," said Dobrin.

"Please don't mention the kings because you know where we are. The old Greeks too used to kiss, and a lot. This I have read in history. Plutarch assailed Pericles, the greatest ancient statesman, because he used to kiss his wife twice a day, morning and evening!" said Rumena and continued.

"And you, you don't even do it once a week. Oh, my dear Dobrin the red lips need to be kissed because they are for kissing... There is nothing left to be revealed... no specific philosophical dialectic. This is my decade-long lament because of my inability as a woman to be kissed!" concluded Rumena.

“I admit it! I could never disagree with you... there...” confessed Dobrin.

“And you communists unknowingly have given up on so many things that the Lord God gives to ordinary human beings. Perhaps this is also how women discarded old communists like ‘old purses’ and replaced them with younger men. We both live painful lives and yet you still hold on to the faith that communism offers you... At least for the moment we have something to talk about before we age and completely lose our memories. It was an overwhelming experience for me when my parents divorced. I watched my mother go through tremendous emotional pain. I don’t want to get hurt the same way...” replied Rumena.

“I would not do that to you...” replied Dobrin.

“Oh, my dear Dobrin, I know you like I know myself. When I was alone in Poland, at night I spent my time with only one person and that was God. I was very happy when I thought of us being together. I was happy but had no idea whether you still loved me or not? I waited for the moment when we would meet again. One foggy day, I remember it was snowing hard when I received a letter from you... What can I tell you? For the last decade I had been in shelters with many beds side by side, speakers blaring, smelly feet, the places stunk like a morgue, tired women sleeping and dreaming after returning from the third shift... and the wet towels... The baths were filled with shaven hair, the taps were leaking like crying eyes... When I read your letter I screamed with joy. Finally I thought, in a few months we will be together again! It was as if you whispered to me ‘let us live again’, but not like this and not without our own home. It was yours and my obligation... I had expectations... I wanted our meeting to be nice, I wanted you to kiss me differently, not just plainly like a Party bigwig. I did not want the Party to come between us. The Party was telling me to leave you because they said you were a traitor to its political ideals. The organization NOF was declared a spy ring and deemed treacherous to the cause and a new organization was formed. It was called ‘Ilinden’. Do you see how easily the communists change their mind about things? But then, immediately after that, the great disappointment arrived. The party offered me to a man with one leg and two fingers missing from his

right hand. In everything he looked like a real animal. He had extremely strong jaws. His eyes were big and bloodshot. His gaze was unusually harsh and his body was compact with muscles. I don't know why the Party wanted me to mind this awkward accident of war. Many girls were made 'happy'... It was the Party's obligation. At that time it was not important what you thought and how you felt. Truth and only truth... cruel and frightful truth... Now I don't want to think about it, I don't want to know that maybe one day everything will change, even our feelings, and that I will hurt a little less. But I never thought that our love, born in that warm night full of stars, would subside and freeze... My world, which was illuminated by the vibrant colours of joy, love and tenderness, suddenly blurred and mixed with the grey of a cold autumn day in a shelter in Zgozhalets, Poland. My love for you got mixed with what the Party demanded of me. Perhaps naively... but then I managed to find a bright beam through the yellow leaves and continued to live with the memories of it," concluded Rumena.

Dobrin lay sprawled on the narrow iron bed with no room to turn. He did not open his eyes, but from his bare chest he looked pleased. The bed creaked. Rumena got up and felt like a good mood was coming over her.

"Do you remember?" she asked.

"Remember what?" replied Dobrin.

"Lying on our bed after we were married... Oh, that endless forest! The bed of ferns... the aroma of spring... Maybe it did not last too long but..." said Rumena.

Rumena rinsed a couple of shot glasses, cut two marinated cucumbers and filled the glasses with Russian vodka.

"I will drink to my lamentations Russian style...!" cheered Rumena.

Suddenly a very loud voice came over the loudspeaker.

"Attention! Attention! Dobrin Suvogorski please report to interrogator Strogov in pavilion one, room number two."

The announcement was repeated several times. Rumena listened carefully. Then when the announcement was over she waved her hand in front the mirror like it was no concern of hers. She then picked up a pencil and began to write things on the walls, different things including slogans she had heard during the revolution and in the shelters.

They went silent. The only noise heard were the caretaker's footsteps outside in the hall coming towards them.

Rumena, listening to the footsteps, remember what prison guard Zosia Polotskaia had told her a long time ago: "...Do you know how the interrogators kill? With a smile! The victim never suspects that death is approaching. Discussions, laughing, as if life was a wonderful thing, are carried on with a smile. And then... suddenly... bang. You are gone. Death comes suddenly..."

CHAPTER SEVEN - Finally at home...

Even though Strogov was trained to have the inherent manners of an interrogator, he looked a little confused when their eyes met. Dobrin looked relaxed and stood there like an experienced “guilty” person and closely followed Strogov’s movements.

“Finally at home...” said Strogov, looked away, smiled with an ironic smile and added: “After that Pyrrhic victory of yours...”

“Yes!” confirmed Dobrin with a slight feeling of revolt.

“Well here we are Dobrin, everything is in order...” said Strogov and at that very moment the monitor walked in. He was an officer who could walk in without permission. He secretly broke the news that Rumena had had a nervous breakdown.

Excited, Strogov came out and apologetically interrupted Dobrin for a moment. Various people were walking in the hallway and the doctor with two nurses just came out of room number thirteen in Pavilion four. The doctor immediately spoke and said Rumena is now “at peace”.

“We gave her a double dose of sedatives. It’s political hysteria and it’s not dangerous.” concluded the doctor and then smiled at and exchanged glances with Strogov. After that Strogov turned to Dobrin with military rigour. Dobrin noticed his ears were red as he slowly started to speak.

“Well Dobrin, allow me to welcome you home. You, as you know, are coming from the Siberian camps - LTL (Ispravitelnie trudovie lagaria (Labour camps for re-education)). “Nu, kak, dumaete tovarish Surogovski previlino ias skazal? (But, what do you think Comrade Suvogorski, do I speak properly?)

Suvogorski was surprised by his correct pronunciation of Russian and dared to say: “Vi harasho govorite Ruski, Tavarish Strogov” (You speak Russian well, Comrade Strogov).

Strogov, with his high military rank, felt he did not need to allow familiarity to develop between him and Dobrin and sharply said:

“My job requires me to ask you some questions!” Strogov then informed Dobrin that he should start talking, answering all his questions, as it is customary, and not ask questions of his own or make idle comments.

Dobrin looked at him and with a serious tone of voice began to tell his story: “Well, we, a group of Macedonians, as you know, were accused of having ties to international reactionaries and of having organized activities in its favour, and according to Article 58, paragraph 4 and 11 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code (Osoboe Soveshtanie – pri Vrhovniot sud na SSSR) it was decided that I be sentenced to ten years in prison with deprivation of personal freedom and put to work in the Labour camps for re-education. I was a fighter in the Democratic Army of Greece and fought for the national liberation of the Macedonian people. And even then I wondered how could I have broken the Russian Code while fighting in Macedonia under Greece? But justice was on the side of the stronger and as Krilov once said: ‘Silnii svegda pobezhdaet bez silinogo’ (The strong always wins over the weaker).

Strogov then asked Dobrin to tell him more about the camp structure and about the regime in the camps. Strogov had been familiar with them from a long time ago but was interested in knowing more.

“Dobrin, tell me more about the Russian regime...” Strogov said.

“Well, the regimes in all the socialist camp are the same,” replied Dobrin.

“How do you know what they are like here?” asked Strogov in a stern tone of voice.

Dobrin was a bit startled but quickly recovered and said:

“I think the entire Eastern Bloc regime is the same... You know that the prisons and the camps in the socialist countries are worse than those in the capitalist countries.”

“And how can you be so sure?” asked Strogov.

“Well, I have enough experience...” replied Dobrin.

“Sit down then and write down all those experiences in detail for me. Everything that happened to you there,” requested Strogov.

Dobrin thought about it for a moment and looked at Strogov as if wanting to ask him why he needed all this information. Was it so that he, God forbid, could build such prisons in Macedonia? Do I have to be the one that brings this technology to Macedonia? I fought for freedom and not for building things that the interrogators can use to torture people... And which people will they be torturing? Us?! He is looking for something impossible...” Dobrin thought to himself and put both hands on his face.

Strogov frowned at him and stood behind the desk looking grim and only sometimes smiling mischievously.

“It is time that we recognize our own history and place less importance on things. People protect documents more than the truth, because the truth is always relative,” answered Suvogorski.

“What kind of thinking is that?! It is well known that it is most likely due to remorse,” replied Strogov abruptly, who usually used terms like “probable” and “possible”.

“I only say what I know and always am good-willed to tell about what made us prisoners,” said Dobrin.

“And what is that?” asked Strogov curiously.

“I think that the brain plays a major role in a man’s balance. This is what my white-haired Armenian friend Kandikian once told me. He was a specialist in parapsychology and said: ‘Stress is a basis for diseases’. He had learned to interpret the vibrations of certain body organs...” replied Dobrin.

“How?” yelled Strogov.

“Well, if your gallbladder vibrates it gives pleasure to your soul. Or if a woman’s uterus vibrates on the left side then she would get an easier job in the camp...”

After listening to Dobrin speak, Strogov, with a dignified look, interrupted and said: “What?! What?!”

“Well, it’s like this... If your neck vibrates because you received bad news, you will feel sick but soon you will rejoice,” added Dobrin.

“If this is some sort of science then tell me what does it mean when my right hand vibrates?!” asked Strogov.

Without hesitation Dobrin said: “The right hand brings profit, but if your right arch vibrates then you will come into conflict with a persistent person but you will soon resolve it.”

Strogov sat down, made himself comfortable on the reclining soft chair and, with much unnecessary courage, said:

“I have heard about dreams and that they represent something but I, as an officer and an atheist, don’t believe in such nonsense...” Dobrin said this fondly but still he was overwhelmed by curiosity and wanted to know more about this Siberian prison school. He continued: “I recently dreamt about sitting on a balcony...” he said, fearing that he now may become open to interrogation.

“On the balcony?! Sitting on the balcony? My friend Kandikian would interpret that as if you were on a treasure hunt, but there is a risk in the short-term, you won’t have much chance of success, you don’t have much confidence in your current post, be on guard against the enemy,” replied Dobrin.

“And...? I am listening!” said Strogov.

“Well, if your navel were to vibrate that would indicate great honour and you would benefit from that. The other day Rumena dreamt of

an acacia plant, and that is a sign of some sort of accident with your sight, as I was told by the Armenian Kandikian,” replied Dobrin.

“So, you remember all these things from your Armenian friend and most likely it is a long list of such vibrations,” said Strogov.

“It is hard to forget some things if you are shoehorned in your own hideout. How can I forget what happened in 1947 in Gramos? As a representative of NOF (National Liberation Front) General Headquarters, I visited our fighters who, after the brotherhood and unity between us and the Greeks, were sent to fight in the depths of Greece. There I met a boy with an older looking exterior but physically and spiritually premature. But besides that he was a boy in the true sense of the word. His face was elongated and he in no way looked like a shepherd boy. He looked more like an old man who had gone through a hell of a number of tough experiences...

Whispering to me he said: ‘I did not come here to fight for the glory of Greece and for the Greeks, I came here to die for my mother Macedonia. I did not leave my flock of sheep, grab my rifle and backpack for Greece. I will not suffer for the glory of Greece, but only for Macedonia! Let the Lord be my judge if I am wrong... A few days ago when I was asked to take an oath for Greece, I declined,’ he said.

This is the oath the boy was expected to take: ‘I, son of the people of Greece and fighter of DAG (Democratic Army of Greece), swear that I will fight with a gun in my hand and will shed my blood, and if needed I will give my life to uphold our national freedom, our borders and the inviolability of my Hellas... And if I show distrust and behave badly then I accept my punishment from the unrelenting hand of my motherland Greece and let the punishment be strict,’...” concluded Dobrin.

“So you, the people of NOF, sent our people to fight down in Greece, not in Macedonia to defend their homes?!” asked Strogov surprised.

“Yes. But we will see about that. What else could I have done, except listen to the burning words of this boy? I was quite taken by his sincere love for Macedonia and for everything Macedonian.

The road to the truth is difficult, dangerous and uncertain...” replied Dobrin in a low tone of voice.

“And?! And what is the truth?” asked Strogov.

“The truth is that the ‘brotherhood and unity’ deal was agreed on in Belgrade in October 1946 by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (Ivan Karaivanov) and the Communist Party of Greece (Yannis Ioanidis) and then we (NOF) were invited to see the CPM Central Committee Secretary who told us the following:

‘Now you will go down there. Your leader in the struggle will be the CPG. The CPG’s line is the correct line... Place your confidence in the CPG. Fight with all available means against chauvinism, separatism and local trends, ’...” replied Dobrin.

“And you! I see you already have started to pick away at our state secrets!?” commented Strogov.

“No I am not.... But people do want to know the truth,” replied Dobrin.

“That’s not truth! Mere fabrications!” yelled Strogov, stood up, put his hands behind his back and nervously began to pace around the room.

“And what about the fate of all these people?” asked Dobrin.

“Those were your failures! I told you what I am interested in. You are the ones from NOF who campaigned and agitated the people and told them that this was a revolution and called on them to fight with the slogan ‘now or never’ and told them to fight in continuation of the famous Ilinden Uprising. And now, because of your own failure, you want to put the blame on others... I told you what I am interested in!” blasted Strogov.

“So our destiny is to blame ourselves and not to condemn those who actually pushed us into this war...” replied Dobrin.

Dobrin took a long sigh. It was hard to believe that he had just been asked to forget his past, to forget that he was in prison... and for all the others too to forget everything. This is his fate... to forget...

CHAPTER EIGHT - New Year 1950 in a stolipinski wagon

Dobrin perked up his ears when he felt Strogov's breath behind him, wanting to give him a pencil and a few blank sheets of paper. So far he had not spoken to anyone about this and he was feeling angry and bitter. He felt like the entire world lived in some kind of contamination chamber, being there to be probed, to be examined, to be blamed, to have its scabby wounds opened and to even die as unworthy. Strogov's request to talk about it now made him furious and he did not want to start, he stared at Strogov sinking into the armchair, probably feeling some trepidation in his veins, and as his friend Kandikian used to say: "If the crown on the right side of your head vibrated, then you would find yourself in front of a judge, and if your chin vibrated then you would be getting advice..."

At one point Dobrin's mind wandered back to the piled up heaps of facts, in history, but not because of the benevolence of Lawrence Beria and Joseph Goebbels, but because of the evil they created. Of those two inspirers and organizers of a system of physical and spiritual control of two "revolutionary" countries, one was the father of the Gulag and the Soviet bomb, and the other covered genocide with a fig leaf. Now, Strogov was asking Dobrin to describe the Gulag for him. "Oh, my Siberian gulags, that dead bed in the world!" Dobrin thought to himself.

They again made Dobrin scream in the silence, in the silence of the fiercest Gulag!

Shortly before midnight in 1950, on his way to Moscow somewhere before Kiev, sitting in a stolipinski wagon, Dobrin was dreaming about a lofty tribune of white marble, under an open sky. Four monumental columns rose high skyward in the four corners of the palace. The moon was full and from it emanated light with a pinkish tinge shining everywhere, even in the distant horizon, and reflected back from the human faces and eyes of the crowd in the forum facing him.

He dreamt standing there and holding a tablet in his hands, like that of Moses and the Ten Commandments, but this tablet was framed and under glass with text divided into two columns. The first was

directed at the Macedonian people, but it could have been directed at the entire world. Dobrin read the text with an unusually strong voice.

He suddenly woke up; perhaps he heard his own voice.

His big brother did not hear him. He was deafened by the noise of the triumphant achievement of socialism, the noise of champagne, but all Dobrin could hear was tic-tac, tic-tac, tic-tac, which made him feel even colder and shrinking from the cold. He felt like the iron all around him was sucking the heat out of him.

It was a cold, frosty day, the snow was crunchy and Dobrin was curled up like a hedgehog. Every muscle in his body was shivering. Parked about ten metres away from the wagon was a black prison car. Unexpectedly, Dobrin found himself tied up like a mummy and tossed in a box. He felt like screaming... “My God,” he said to himself, “it feels like they are squeezing the life out of me. Here I am in my own homeland and they are about to judge me?!”

It was dark, pitch black but with his knees and back he could feel the metal walls. Right in front of his nose was a small rectangular opening for breathing. Not even savage beasts deserve this kind of treatment, never mind people.

The prison car was sliding all over the place, moving slowly and unsteadily through the streets of Moscow. It was hellishly cold in the box. Dobrin said to himself, “If this cold continues like this they will find a frozen mummy in this box with frozen thoughts from a different time...”

But eventually the car arrived at Lefortov prison. Two muscular guards pulled Dobrin out of the box and escorted him into a building, one leading and the other following right behind. They took a few steps down stairs, walked down a long corridor with many doors on both sides and stopped in front of number 513. The guard in front unlocked the door and slowly opened it while watching Dobrin’s eyes. It was a heavy black door probably made of oak. It was ten centimetres thick and reinforced with iron hoops.

The guard behind him pushed Dobrin into the cell and locked the door behind him. Dobrin said to himself: "So, this is the room I earned in the land of Socialism." This was a room where mornings began without nights and where fear and uncertainty were rampant...

The cell was almost square, about two metres wide and slightly over two metres long. It was about three metres high with thick walls. On the ceiling opposite the door there was a small hole reinforced with yellowish glass. Sometimes through the day the hole opened on its own. Air from the outside flowed inside leaping like a snake and carrying the smell somewhere away from Moscow.

The cell was dark, especially when it was cloudy outside. When it turned dark outside the hanging lamp, suspended from the ceiling like a strangled rat, came on. Dobrin thought to himself that being in here he would no longer be able to see the sun rise. It was like all the stars in his soul had died... The cell was very cold. There was no window from which to see land or sky, people or birds. His heart still beat regularly and evenly in the charred nights. He measured the length of the battlefield. There was no commitment, no laughter, except the laughter of the powerful over the weak.

Dobrin stood two steps away from the door. A strong odour of old sour dirt, sweat, semen, nails, hairs and saliva from clotted blood hit his nose. It was all mixed with the smell of rot coming from the old bedcover which perhaps was still protecting the fear of some warrior from the wars. The wound in his broken heart began to open and his soul was filling with ash, desolation and silence...

There elongated shadows of his ancestors were not there. Everything was collected in a single dot, even the meaning of every campaign was covered with a slave's robe...

Clearly worn out on the floor, on the opposite wall towards the little yellow hole substituting for a window, was a tiny path. This is where Dobrin's predecessor probably paced back and forth.

He would turn at the sink on the left wall and go towards the hole of the toilet. It was immediately next to him in the left corner. Beyond there the floor looked like it was covered with some sort of gray

carpet. The layer was thick and laden with hairs and dust... A narrow bed with rusty feet dug into the floor was resting along the right wall. And here, next to Dobrin was a small wooden folding table and a wooden tripod stool. So, here he was expected to sleep and eat on the right side and piss and shit on the left side and to clean his butt with his bare hands, and if he wanted he could wash it off with cold water that flowed out of a rusty pipe. Dobrin also had a bit more floor space in the middle of the cell between the sink and the bed where he could take a of couple steps forward and couple back just like his predecessor had, who secretly withered and disappeared like dry grass...

Every morning they gave Dobrin a broom, a basin and a cloth (torn underwear). The very first day he cleaned the floor and found out that it was paved. After that, every day he washed the floor and the high walls using his stool to climb on. Because of that Dobrin was probably treated a bit nicer than his predecessor who had lived in the dirt... One of the guards told him that he was a lunatic. General Nikita Igorovich Grnenko was his name and here he fought in the battlefield of loneliness.

He left staring eyes in the walls... Petrified. He talked to himself and continuously, time and time again, kept persistently repeating all the battles... and kept inflaming his soul with their fires, but no one was able to enter his hiding place...

Now Strogov demanded that Dobrin talk about the regime. Maybe it would not be too much if he told him something. Of course Dobrin was still a marked man even though the case against him and against the rest of the NOF leaders was eventually dropped. The case was dropped due to lack of evidence. The verdict was overturned because there was no evidence to support the alleged crimes committed by these individuals. They were found not guilty and were legally rehabilitated. All the humiliation, the violence against them, the pain suffered, were left hanging in the air like the light in the cell, dirty and laden with fly spatter and dust and... Without a legal basis.

This was yet another instance of “the strong being right” when they were clearly wrong and “the weak being wrong” when they had

clearly committed no crimes... But, until then, Dobrin was very naïve. He stood very close to the cruel reality of the cruel truth, which a common man could not experience in a future communist country... or any other country with such regimes in power... Attempting to stick to the truth when the truth was not wanted resulted not only in physical pain, but also in moral disarmament, spiritual torment and endless self-humiliation!

Dobrin pretended to be sleeping when three men entered his cell around midnight.

They ordered him to strip naked and stand in the corner facing the wall. Dobrin did what he was ordered and stood waiting while they deliberately, slowly did their search. Sometimes they took an hour or two, treating him as if he did not exist. They spoke to each other quietly and calmly and laughed lightly and cheerfully. Dobrin did not pay any attention to them.

Dobrin called them shadows. They did not need to be silent. These “comrades” saw him as a helpless person; sometimes they tended to show him “compassion” and exceptional “kindness”. But when they thought the prisoner would show no willingness for “cooperation”, they immediately turned into brutal beasts. Being nice to him did not work with Dobrin so they would start yelling at him: “Come here! Stretch your arms up! Separate your fingers! Turn your palms over! Show your armpits! Open your mouth and say a.a.a.a!” and so on.

They looked under his tongue, making him move it left and right. They looked between his teeth and down his throat. They looked up his nose and ears like he was a horse for sale. They ordered him to spread his legs and examined his genitals, turning them to the right then to the left. Dobrin felt both shame and fear. His genitals shrank like those of a small child. It was also because of the cold.

They ordered him to show his feet. Turn his back, bend over forward and spread his buttocks with his hands! Dobrin did not know what they were looking for... After that they left noisily, leaving Dobrin looking like Adam with his clothes and bedding tossed on the asphalt floor. For them, Dobrin was only an exhibit

and not a communist or a fighter against Anglo-American imperialism as was declared in NOF's 1st Congress.

Dobrin tried to keep his dignity and wondered why communist views were written and proclaimed for his Macedonians? Why were these communists making promises they never intended to keep?

He was caught up in despair through the shadow of yesteryear, experiencing insomnia and restlessness deep down to his soul.

Dobrin's interrogations began the first night he arrived. They were done regularly, but never during the day. They lasted several hours. The interrogators were changing and different each time. Dobrin was made to sit on a stool which stiffened his body. Before daybreak he was escorted back to his cell.

And as he tried to fall sleep he heard the guard yell "padiom!" and he had to get up again.

During the day he paced back and forth for hours in his two metre square cell like a nervous bear. He could not sit for too long and again he paced. He tried hard to encourage himself to "endure". He did not want them to break him. But his torment was long and lasting...

During his insomnia he licked his wounds. He spent his nights seeming like he was lying beside a dead warrior with his eyes wide open. The warrior's silent screams and unfelt breath blew against Dobrin's sad eyes. Dawn was breaking giving birth to a new day...

There were also long and harsh days. They would not allow Dobrin to close his eyelids. But he still managed to get some sleep. He slept upright. He stood with legs spread, leaning on his hands against the cold wall right under the tiny window. The guard behind the door looked through the peephole and saw him standing there assuming he was awake.

Dobrin decided to put together a number of short stories with motifs of our struggle. One story, two stories, three stories... he developed in his own head because he was not allowed to have a pencil and

paper. One time he dreamt about his own grave... its walls were covered with a mosaic. It rose half a metre off the ground, close, with the cover tilted... The plate was the same but the hole in the ground was not yet dug. Grass was growing over it and it was waiting... After that Dobrin was told that the guard must now watch his face and hands while he was in bed sleeping. Since then Dobrin slept with his head toward the tiny window. The air flow was biting him like a snake. He felt thin eyelashes, secretly cutting the golden thread of his love for his fatherland. There were no magical fragrances, only rot and decay...

Once time while dreaming he turned towards the wall. The guard immediately and rudely woke him up. After that he lay there like a corpse and did not dare move. It was winter, his first winter in the land of socialism, and he had not seen the sun. The weather was mostly grim just like all the staff in Lefortovo. There was barely any daylight visible through the murky glass. Sometimes the lamp was burning all day and all night. It was strange how silence could be unbearable. There was absolutely no sound, no voice or whisper. Dobrin felt like death was creeping beside him.

Dobrin was severed from the world, isolated, blown away to some desolate place and left there to rot... And all he heard was silence. Sometimes he thought he heard a muffled cough. But then he thought it was his own blood circulating through his body, rushing through his protruding veins to put out the fire in his fireplace which was still not yet extinguished. Even though here death was chosen before its time, the words "Believe in the revolution! Believe in communism!" were never forgotten and were shouted often.

This is how time was spent sitting around the night table, under the swing of fear and silence. And boundless hope was placed in the future that smiling and bright revolutionary faces one day would emerge from all the cells... registered only by the guards who constantly peeped through the spy holes to see in what position the prisoners were sleeping.

Dobrin was possessed with wanting to see the sky and the stars during the night. His soul was flooded with unrest wishing to take a deep breath of fresh air... He asked the interrogator Firsov to move

him to another cell but did not have the courage to tell him why. He did not want to appear weak. He sat there quietly on his stool like a heroic figure sitting on top of a cliff. That night it was very cold. For a moment he dreamt that he was in Skopje slowly walking down a street. Then, as he turned, he saw members of the CPG Central Committee walking along the opposite side of the street. It looked like they had just come out of a meeting and all but three left. The three turned towards him. The one in the middle pulled out a revolver and aimed at him. He shot him the moment Dobrin turned to run. He shot him below the right shoulder blade. Dobrin felt the pain in his liver. Dobrin thought of the Gorki case when Gorki shot himself in his own chest, but did not die... The dream was very clear and realistic for Dobrin. In fact, it reminded him of the Greek leadership criticisms. The criticisms and accusations aimed directly at him... shooting him in the back. They accused him of forming NOF on April 23, 1945 in Skopje. They called him an agent of the Intelligence services, of the military police, and of all the world's agencies. They criticized him for the speech he gave at the NOF 2nd Congress in the village Nivitsi in Prespa on March 25, 1949. In a report entitled "Ideological Foundations of NOF" he said the following: "And now, we here, hundreds of representatives of the Macedonian people, proclaim to the whole world our new core asset - the right to self-determination, the right to organize our own Macedonian national and state life the way we want it." But all that remained of that was only on paper. Why? Later the entire NOF leadership was arrested. After that Dobrin was ashamed of being a Communist. He was ashamed of the manipulation that had been committed against the Macedonian people.

"Oh, my dear people! What is with all these games, what is with all these words? What is going to happen to us?" yelled Dobrin in silence.

"My dear God, I am your son... I remember the echo that confused my mind, it is even more confused now, especially when I heard myself screaming: 'Believe in the revolution!'..." again Dobrin yelled in silence.

The next day, as usual, the guard went to his door and yelled "Padiom!" Dobrin was washing himself when he suddenly got a bad

headache and thought his head felt unusually heavy. It felt like his head was in a vice grip and fresh blood was spattering out of it. He thought, maybe he was wounded in the chest!

They gave him an unusually large injection in the small of his back. It hurt terribly and the pain lasted for a week. They returned him to his cell. He had a bad lung infection. After that he was allowed to cover his shoulders and hands with his blanket. But when this “compassion” ended, for the next three months they swore and cursed at him and gave him “shchi” (pickled cabbage stew) to eat in the morning, “shchi” at lunch and “shchi” in the evening. Shchi – shchi – shchi. Shchi during the first month, shchi during the second month and shchi during the third month. He only ate shchi and smelled like shchi. Every time he heard the word “shchi” he felt like vomiting. One day after he entered the second quarter of eating shchi, the terrible Lieutenant asked him: “Why do you refuse to eat the food?! Are you on a hunger strike? Are you a malicious person?”

“No! But from the tip of my toes to the top of my head, I am full of pickled cabbage. My blood is turned into cabbage stew. My body, my soul and my breath reek of spoiled cabbage. My stomach can no longer digest it. My body is giving up on it... maybe because it has ground more than a wagon full of cabbage. I can’t help it, my body is rejecting it...” replied Dobrin.

The Lieutenant smiled and said: “Nu harasho, tepper davai tolisko kartoshka...” (Okay then, now we will only give you potatoes...)

And so the next day he was given a “kartoshka” (potato) in the morning, for lunch and in the evening and for many days after that... “kartoshka”, “kartoshka”, “kartoshka”. In the second quarter of the first month “kartoshka”, in the second quarter of the second month “kartoshka”...

“Well, eating potatoes day after day was better than being dead because that is what Zahariadis was going to do to us NOF leaders if we remained in his hands,” said Dobrin to himself. He would have done it out of rage... Or out of need to cover up his own dirty deeds. Dead people can’t talk. That’s for sure. Now if Dobrin were to get

out of prison then he would have a chance to reveal to the world the Greek anti-Macedonian policy and bring justice to the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia. And so he thought. But, at the same he would have to reveal something sinister about the communists that would damage their sacred authority and crack the bunker of “Marxism”. It would also expose those who activated the “Macedonian syndrome” of our (self-) destruction. Dobrin thought that if he were freed he would reveal the truth buried in the dust and rubble of time and free those who had been unjustly blamed and persecuted. He would also have to admit to himself that he was lied to and turned into a fool. He thought about this night after night in silence...

Months passed. Interrogator Firsov was unrelenting and impatient and even arranged theatrics for Dobrin. Dobrin was well aware that the ongoings next door were staged for especially for him... Firsov had someone, perhaps an actor, scream in pain in the next interrogation room just to scare Dobrin into confessing his sins. “Listen, listen,” said Firsov in a quiet voice and moments later asked to Dobrin to start talking, threatening that something like that would happen to him if he didn’t tell him what he wanted to know.

There was nothing to tell other than the truth but obviously that’s not what the interrogators wanted to hear so Dobrin, in a calm tone of voice, turned to Firsov and said: “I do want to apologize to my people because I am guilty of killing eighteen thousand fighters and uprooting one hundred and fifty thousand civilians from their homeland and sending them to oblivion. And let’s not forget the hundreds of Macedonian villages that I destroyed and that they completely disappeared from the map...”

Firsov was quick to jump in. He said: “Only someone like yourself dares say that. A kind of socialist reactionary of the international kind who operates against the Soviet Union and is an agent working for international imperialism. This was a fair struggle of the proletariat for socialism in Greece. Got that?!”

This was the kind of justice practiced by the strong over the weak. This is how Interrogator Lieutenant Colonel Vasilii Petrovich Firsov saw things from his point of view.

“Well, this is how the deck of cards which determined our fate was stacked for us Macedonians. And this is how we played it...”
Dobrin thought to himself.

CHAPTER NINE – Kuzmian Piurkovski Professor of Anthropology

Kuzmian Piurkovski, Professor of Anthropology, smiled at Dobrin and said:

“All you communists want to do is be celebrated like you are true gods, saviours, like you are the initiators of history and everyone’s luck and happiness depends on you...”

Every evening he went with Dobrin... holding his hands behind his back. The Professor did this until July 1952, when Dobrin was taken to Eastern Siberia to camp O-41.

By then 52 months had passed since October 3, 1949, when Dobrin was arrested by the Greek CPG leaders in the stormy camp in Albania. The first three months he spent in solitary confinement in Tirana. The rest he spent in Moscow but only three months with Professor Kuzmian Piurkovski. The moment Dobrin introduced himself and said that he was a communist, the professor smiled and said:

“All you communists want to do is be celebrated like you are true gods, saviours, like you are the initiators of history and everyone’s luck and happiness depends on you. Your birth places, the objects with which you served yourselves, the tombs and monuments, all become “holy” works which not only point to respect, but to a real religious cult, the kind of cult on which vows and oaths are taken. Public holidays are created and even museums are raised in your names...”

That day, quite suddenly, the door flung open and a Chechen guard, strong like a gorilla, appeared. The professor stopped talking about the communists and presented a friendly face. The Chechen then sharply ordered Dobrin to go with him. He must have forgotten to tie his hands behind his back, but out of habit Dobrin put them behind his back anyway. The guard took him to an office where Greek Captain Ioannidis, captain of the MVD troops, and special interrogator Colonel Nikitin were waiting for him. Ioannidis showed him a “legal” document that he was holding. Dobrin asked if he

could read it himself. Ioannidis replied: “No! We are judging you here, not you us...” Ioannidis then began to talk in a high and temperate tone of voice. He said: “We are here representing the USSR Supreme Court by which, according to Act AO – 238, you are condemned to ten years imprisonment with deprivation of personal freedom to be served in the Re-Educational Labor Camps – ITL, and to declare that the formal part of this investigation is completed as of May 30, 1952...”

This was done on the basis of Article 58, paragraphs 4 and 11 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code. “For being liaison to American and international reactionaries and for having organized activities in their favour...”

Dobrin felt a sharp pain cutting inside his stomach. He was greatly disappointed in the judicial system because he had different ideas of what the judicial system would be like in the Soviet Union. He thought justice here in a socialist society would be fair, just and more humane... Dobrin suddenly felt as if someone had just lifted a veil that had been covering his eyes and kept them from seeing reality...

No court... no trial... He was just sentenced...!?

Dobrin found himself without the right to see his indictment, without the right to challenge the witnesses or question statements made by his associates who testified against him. He was never given the right to defend himself. Not even the “Holy Inquisitions” acted this way with their accused. Dobrin wondered why such methods were still in use now after they had been long condemned by history. Even after this he could still not understand how he could have violated the Criminal Code of the USSR? How a Macedonian, fighting his mortal enemy in Greek occupied Macedonia, could have broken the law in the USSR? Clearly the communists were no better than the Greek chauvinists in this regard...

Dobrin sat in his cell in the train car and listened to the rhythmic clatter of the wheels hitting the rails all the way from Moscow to Eastern Siberia. The journey was part of his sentence. A special guard sat behind the iron bars in the hallway above his head. Once

in a while the guard took a couple of steps away and then returned again. He never spoke to Dobrin but stood by him, hugging his machine gun. He did not look menacing, not like the other guard. This reminded Dobrin of Professor Piurkovski who, on Dobrin's departure, was left alone in the cell back in the prison in Moscow. Dobrin parted without saying goodbye to the professor. Piurkovski hated the Communists because they killed his brother in "Katinska forest". He was a senior officer. His father educated them in Paris and as Professor Piurkovski said: "We just wanted to be loyal to our homeland Poland..." and did not want to kneel before anyone or take any oaths. Not like us, the leaders of NOF, who did exactly that when we all spoke the well chosen words: "We swear that we will follow Nikos Zahariadis, who is our destiny and our future. We will believe whatever happens and we will defend him with our lives."

This is what Professor Piurkovski told Dobrin and then asked: "Why did you, as a people, take that route and where did you think it was going to take you?" He spoke to Dobrin during the night and Dobrin, of course, wanted to hear more of his thoughts.

"You communists sure know how to find faults with words of international importance, and a person is left to blame himself or even to admit that he is an agent of Anglo-American imperialism, even though he himself did no such thing or had no inclination of doing such a thing. First the Communists will make you obedient to a point of being euphoric and then you will do anything in the name of the people, even if you yourself participate in your own genocide. It happened to you Macedonians didn't it?" asked the professor.

He then added: "It happened to you, the people of NOF! Right?!"

The professor paused for a moment, looked at Dobrin and said: "It happened to you Suvogorski didn't it?! You communists, you are a kind of people who never asked yourselves: 'Why did the Greeks change the ethnic composition in your indigenous country? Why did they change your personal names? Why did they rename your identity and call you "Slavo-Macedonians"? And why did they drive all of you en mass to participate in this crazy war? Why, Suvogorski, why, why? Why are these Asia Minor settlers and colonists the Macedonians now and you, the real Macedonians, are

outside of your homeland roaming the world? And after all that was done to you by these communists you still remain loyal and faithful to them and to their communist ideals? Are you going to trust them to continue to decide your fate and that of your people? You, you Suvogorski and the people of NOF, you are the ones responsible for driving the Macedonian people in this mindless war, a war that was invented by someone else! I believe that you, the leaders of NOF and AFZH, were responsible for unleashing this..." concluded the professor. "Yes it was us; we unleashed the psychological terror in our homeland... We did this under orders from others..." Dobrin thought to himself. This was also an attack on his inner peace... But then why were we sent to Siberia? Was it to remove us so that the real criminals of this crime would never be revealed? Why were we the good soldiers of this war being punished for following orders?

The wheels of the train car stopped clattering and a voice was heard yelling: "Novosibirskaiia".

They lined up the prisoners and led them into the prison showers. The showers were steaming like volcanoes. They could hear the flow of clear Siberian water. They were handed liquid soap and were unsure of how to use it, until they realized they should soap themselves away from the gushing water first before stepping under the shower. This was the first time Dobrin had seen so many deformed bodies, impoverished, chewed by scabies and with recessed bottoms... But in the shower they all looked like they were having fun being splashed by the squirting water while playing with their genitals... While looking at Dobrin through the gushing steam, wide-eyed Lazar Rogozharov said: "Did you ever imagine that a person from NOF could be having a shower in Novosibirsk?" He then cracked up laughing and laughing until a loud voice was heard yelling: "Enough!"

The hot water seemed to have relaxed Dobrin because he quickly fell asleep in the train car traveling on the Trans-Siberian rail line. He thought he heard a loud voice yelling: "People! Hey, you good Macedonians! Go back to your homeland, this is not your revolution, this is a scam for your genocide! Here you won't be dying for your fatherland. I am not the one who invented all this

evil! Go back to your homeland; this is someone else's sinister deception!"

Dobrin woke up when the train arrived in the city Taished in Camp O-41. This is where Dobrin was renamed to number AO-238 (O-41).

"Oh my God what have I done? I was one of those who told our people that this war was a continuation of our Ilinden struggle, our iconic ideal worth dying for... Oh my God my tormented brain is going to explode..." Dobrin thought to himself.

At camp they immediately cut his hair and after that they gave him two servings of "borch" (sauerkraut) which he ate with satisfaction.

Suddenly Dobrin became more curious than worried.

He began to read the slogans. He walked through the entire camp from end to end like a daft person. He then went to listen to a choir, to watch a theater group and later he joined an orchestra. He practiced playing the violin but when the drummer Igor Vasilievich Kedro died, Dobrin was appointed drummer by decree of the maestro Ivan Petrovich Kokotkin. Kokotkin said to him: "If you are a true communist then you will be the best solution to this problem..."

Dobrin was like a stray dog in the camp. When folk music was played the folk dancers yelled "Davai siline!" (Strike harder!) Dobrin did, he beat the drum harder and faster. Kokotkin often got angry at him but not the Russian musicians; they were satisfied with his performances. They all danced the "robiashi"; Russians, Germans, Poles, Romanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Czechoslovaks, Hungarians, Macedonians, Mongols, Chinese, Koreans and Yugoslavs, who sometimes addressed Dobrin with the words "Udri burazeru (Strike storm maker)! Let it be heard far and wide that we communists are dancing together with the fascists, here in this camp..."

The city Taished looked like a campsite loaded with locomotives and smoke. Dobrin's skin was dry, cold and odorless; perhaps it was

from the locomotive smoke. One day Dobrin was taken to the O-25 encampment, searched and photographed. They were neither angry nor happy with him; they just invited him to an office and gave him food for three days. They then took him outside. There was a black dog sitting opposite Dobrin at the exit watching him motionlessly.

Dobrin's eyes were sunken deep into his eye cavities and did not have a spark. Someone with a creaking voice addressed Dobrin from behind. He said "Gatov"! Dobrin replied "Davno!"

Dobrin felt some satisfaction when the old doorman told him: "Nu molodoi chelovek, schaslivogo puti I vse haroshova... (Young man, have a safe journey and all the best...)"

There was a new life in front of Dobrin. He had his documents and he was free!?

Dawn in Taishedskata was gray and stormy. He cheerful sat under a Berioza and repeated the words that he had composed in his cell, which to this day he has not written down... this way he could carry them as a burden in his soul...

Strogov had difficulty hiding his ironic smile when he saw Dobrin writing on the last page. Perhaps he would have written more if someone had given him more pages.

Strogov kept looking at Dobrin and waiting for him to hand him everything that he had written. There was silence. They were both silent while staring at the pile of pages. Dobrin thought: "What nonsense. Words without meaning... These are my own personal thoughts... my poems... they don't belong to the police..." Dobrin then raised his head while looking at Strogov and, with sparkling eyes, said: "I will only recite a verse from some of my poems..."

Without waiting for Strogov's approval, delighted he began...

“The Slavs left us in dead guard waiting; being thrown into oblivion since before Samoil and we lived in the cramp of time that secreted venom...”

“From us they created a hand endless in the world of the future indefinitely strict and bleak...”

“The wind blows on us taking strange paths and our graves have no logical order...”

“We wake up wet from the endless rains of evil and the next day we pave the way to find ourselves...”

“On our hills we have left eternal guards and in forgiveness, and in premonition we filled their graves with songs...”

While sitting in his cell Dobrin sometimes screamed out loud. One time the Russian guard outside said to him: “You in there! Stop raving...” He then turned to the guard next to him and said: “I don’t understand a word he is saying! Hey, Shiort, do you know what he is saying?” The guard then yelled at Dobrin and said: “Rave all you want... it has nothing to do with me.” He then turned to the other guard and said: “Perhaps the man has gone mad and what of it... He is a Greek political immigrant, and he rattles some things that are not Greek... He is completely mixed up; Slavs, dead guards, Samoil. Maybe it’s his father, who the devil knows... I repeatedly reported this to my Greek boss. One time he came here and listened. He then told me that this man was Greek, and the Greek bosses say he was a traitor at an international level... They fought together in Greece. But I can do nothing to help him. Right now the Greek bosses are our brothers in communism and we should trust them. The chief told me that this man betrayed the revolution in Greece and that I must guard him well, but he has already gone mad...”

Hearing this from Dobrin made Strogov laugh out loud. But all Dobrin wanted to do was tell Strogov that the Russians and the Greeks were working together in “fraternal service”. This made Dobrin think. He thought to himself:

“What can I do? Perhaps not now... Is being an “internationalist” still in fashion or has that phase passed...?” That’s how it was before and after the revolution, when Dobrin and the Macedonian people were shouting: “Hey, you, you there! You can be imitators of Homer, do you hear? But we Macedonians want our national freedom!” And they, in front of their diplomatic commitments, raised their hands and shoulders up in the air, as a sign of peace, and everyone except for us was left with was a clear conscience, and they, the epigones, were left with a blissful smile on their faces. In fact, when they were forcing us to crawl in their trenches, their psychologists and historians were saying that this was done for our religious rite.

They were telling the world that we did not cooperate with them, not because of fear but because of conscience... Yes, Dobrin remembered rejoicing under the Russian berioska like a little child... A Korean was looking at him. His name was Kim Lan. He said to Dobrin, we Koreans have a saying: “If you put a fish in a bowl with water it will think you have given it freedom... You, Dobrin, you should know that you and I will spend our lives in a bowl of water”.

In May 1957, after spending several months in the camp, Dobrin found himself inside the gates of the Alma-Ata Interior Ministry. They read him a new sentence at the military college in the USSR Supreme Court. It read as follows: “The earlier verdict against you (AO-238) read in the earlier hearing has been canceled due to lack of evidence.”

Many people suffered and died in this way, which leads a person to ask: “How and why were so many people falsely accused of being traitors and sent to prison?”

“Maybe there are no such cases here...?” Dobrin asked Strogov.

Not expecting a question like that, Strogov felt as if he was seemingly now facing an interrogator.

“Dobrin, I have often asked myself the same question. And of course it is time to tell the truth. The truth is destined to fight against falsehood. And the greatest friend of truth is time. But you are

already in your homeland, so leave it to time to show you the truth.” replied Strogov.

“Dobrin, these are the rules... We can’t make claims because we have no evidence, but we think maybe you have been re-educated... We think that you came here as an agent!” added Strogov.

Dobrin was shocked by the comment and his eyes opened wide.

“Meaning, reason cannot prevail... And here I am... I came back because I wanted my child to learn my native language and to be raised and grow among my people...” Dobrin thought to himself and blurted out: “I am no ones agent!”

“Listen here, I would sacrifice ten Dobrins for our Yugoslavia!” replied Strogov loudly with a strange tone of voice and an emphasized sense of patriotism.

“Do I still have to wait? Here too in my homeland? Is justice delayed for me again? Rumena was right when she said: ‘I look like a tattered hermit... like an old, polished stone with a naked back...’

I understand, it will be just like it has been. Joy and evil will continue to welcome me in the shelters, in those hatcheries of strange misfortunes... in those eternal cold healing places of ours... and perhaps they will allow me to pick my own grave? It is a heavy offense waged against me. Strogov certainly knows that ‘there can be no guilt without proof’, yet he is ready to ‘sacrifice’ ten like me! Only in the interest of Yugoslavia, for which I too became a Siberian captive...” Dobrin thought to himself.

“Has it been forgotten that we, the leaders of NOF, on April 23, 1945, were given a piece of paper on which was written the task to go back to Greek occupied Macedonia and raise the Macedonian people in a socialist revolution? Who asked for this? We, the Macedonian people, did not ask for this! We were told! Is it not known that we the leaders of NOF were convicted of being Yugoslav agents? Do they not know that...! Doesn’t Strogov know that I am only a Macedonian and not a Yugoslav Macedonian?! He should know that only I, from all of us, wanted to return to my

comrades and show them that the Greeks had no right to manipulate our people.

Why did I take this path and where am I going next? I have now become an enemy of both the CPG and the CPY...

It turned out that we had no idea how to die for our fatherland, because one cannot defend his homeland by abandoning it and by uprooting his people.

As a communist I never believed that communists from other nations could push and sacrifice a small nation to a point of genocide for their own interests! Never! Never have I believed that!" Dobrin thought to himself.

It has been raining. Now the sun is shining. One was being exchanged for the other... rain then, suddenly, sunshine... Dobrin was returned to the barracks number 4 room 13.

CHAPTER TEN – I have read the statute of the party in my dreams

“They gave us lunch,” said Rumena looking excitedly at Dobrin. Dobrin spent the entire day with Strogov. He looked pale.

“What’s wrong Dobrin? What happened?! So here too they opened a file on you?! Oh, my God, this torment has no end... how ironic? Oh, my dear Dobrin. You are my misfortune. I am 35 years old and still wander around the world and still I have to read the statute of the party.

I never wanted to be close and cuddle with your party sycophants. My dear Dobrin, I only did what was absolutely necessary in order for me to comply with their requirements. That’s it!

We have been turned into machines, all the time you are leading me into some kind of obedience... You are all typical soldiers, armed citizens and party majesties... It is time that you, my dear Dobrin, learn to think with your own head, and then I think maybe we will be free from the Party... Your collective is like a flock of sheep grazing in May grasses, but when the wolf comes each one of you runs all alone. Is this what is happening to you revolutionaries? I wanted to tell you a long time ago, during our wanderings, to stop believing in the political Party pyramid. Do you think everyone is blind with hatred like you? They are your comrades, right? They now think they love their motherland, but that is destructive work, my dear Dobrin, especially when everyone is allowed to do whatever they want in the name of the people... This is how it is now. Time provides an opportunity for fanatical beliefs and that’s how it’s going to be. Everything that is under your control you expect to be obedient. You then bend over to everything that is above you with only one purpose, to be obedient... And too bad for those who lose the line of balance, like us... we are persecuted in the name of the people... This is our fate my dear Dobrin. And now you can wait for the truth to win. And if by any chance it comes to that, do you think it will undermine the conscience of your tormentors the likes of Firsov, Panteleev and now Strogov?

Our value is what people say it is, or I should say those who think they represent the people...” concluded Rumena.

Forty-five year old Dobrin had literally been through everything, even more so than anyone should. He sat there looking at Rumena. He then turned his blurred eyes and looked at the books lying on the table. The books left him with an impression of something alien, hostile and unnecessary... He pushed them aside and leaned on the table. Thoughts from yesteryear began to enter his mind stirring up old memories.

“Our people’s commitment to the CPG was truly great,” said Dobrin looking at Rumena and feeling like a culprit, and continued: “My uncle Iovan had a horse and a wagon; you know the kind that you flip to unload. He was proletarian and delivered sand to construction sites in Lerin. To get the job done faster he took me with him to help him. I was less than fourteen years old at the time. One day, sometime in 1936, we were out of town and followed the river to dig-up more sand. My uncle Iovan took some leaflets out of his breast pocket. They had a large red design of a hammer and sickle stamped over the text. He then stopped the wagon, shoved a number of them into my hand and said: ‘Run up to the road and scatter them along so that people can learn what communism is all about.’ He then turned to me, looked me in the eyes and said: ‘This is our party, the party of the poor and oppressed people... it would be great if we voted for someone who wants us and understands us. This is a party that will allow us to speak in the city in front of everyone, not to hide when we speak Macedonian...’

My uncle Iovan’s words left quite an impression on me. My father thought the same but never spoke to me or told me anything about communism... He worked day and night so that I could become a teacher, but I became a revolutionary instead, which my father now would not accept. When I was in Siberia he became heart broken. He loved me very much, I was an only child and he wanted me to be a teacher,” concluded Dobrin.

“Each revolution is paid for with casualties. Nothing is gained without casualties...” replied Rumena as if seeking justification.

“Also, and most unfortunate, the road to our destiny is now more intricate, my dear Dobrin...” added Rumena.

“What? What strange reasoning is that? What are you trying to say?” asked Dobrin.

“I clearly remember when you were in power, and the first thing I learned about relationships was how to behave with the party elite. It was an important moment to be part of a powerful man, to be ready and to be in the mood to dance the tango with him. In those days I believed in you and you stretched a smile of satisfaction on your face. Yet, still you were afraid of inviting the first lady, because that depended on the mood of the one we called the ‘wise leader’...” replied Rumena.

Dobrin seemingly felt calmer and accepted the fact that Rumena was in one of those moods and that it was best to allow her to calm down normally. His silence was the best medicine for that.

Unfortunately Dobrin could not remain silent for too long and said: “Just at that very moment my first protest boiled over in me, for the first time I had met an elite with a concerned conscience of preserving party hegemony. I admit that those moments were strange... It seemed that something subconscious drove me to try to smile, as if something satisfying entered my pleasure centre and made me happy. These were not insignificant things, but evidence of something that had taken root in many of us.

You know that the language of love is in your eyes... This is how I fell in love with you. Sometimes you met my eyes with your kind smile and for a long time I did not know why. I did not know what that was. And what was it? Let us go back there to that thing that never was... Are you saying that in the whole history of mankind everything is sacrifices? This is the first time I ever heard of that in my entire life,” said Dobrin and smiled with a big smile.

“Is that the kind of history you communists are going to leave behind? You should be able to see for yourself Dobrin that people are not interested in being reminded of casualties, especially by a person returning from the camps. It is in poor taste and rude to them.

The moral constraints of most of these elites have moved away and gone somewhere else. But not yours, you have put yourself in a position by remaining true to yourself. You still defend the purity of your Party line... Why? Is this not the same Party which has decided your fate by convincingly pointing a finger in our direction? Have we not suffered enough already? How long must our fate rest in its hands? Are our lives going to be a puzzle even here in our homeland? Will there be more Firsovs, Panteleevs and now Strogovs that will want to profit thanks to the insensitive lies with which they are making attempts to discredit you? I can never forgive myself for letting myself be so unhappy! In the past I dreamt of receptions, solemn moments in large salons, meeting with decked out people, chatting with carefree people... All this made me go nuts for you my dear Dobrin... Perhaps you should have tried harder to conform to your beloved 'wise leader' and maybe today you would have been in better humour. Maybe we would have succeeded in having everything we wanted. But now you are just stuck in these camps and shelters," concluded Rumena.

Dobrin lowered his head, looking guilty and said: "Tomorrow we will be moving to a shelter in 'Kisela Voda' ..."

"You never said anything about moving before. In the last ten hours you spent with him, did Strogov say anything about us, about our future?" asked Rumena.

"No. He said nothing about us. He was mostly interested in the regimes in Siberia and in the 're-education labour camps'. He was also interested in knowing more about the interrogation techniques employed in 'Butirka' and 'Lefortovo'. He made detailed notes of the Bolshevik methods of interrogation. You know that these camps are of the most perfect type, right? Strogov himself admitted that they are still experimenting there..." replied Dobrin.

"Do they want to build similar types here?" Rumena asked flippantly.

Dobrin smiled and said: "Maybe my conversation with Strogov will yield nothing. But I can tell you this, I asked him: 'Now that I have gathered my family at last, how long is it going to take before the

investigation that is now opened against me is completed?’ And do you know what he said? He said the investigation against me was opened when my comrades and co-fighters Apostol Marakovski, Risto Kolarov, Lazor Rogozharov, Filip Hadzievski, Silian Liliakov, Manol Forevski, Olivera Petchka and Neveska Timianova arrived here. They all made statements accusing me of having betrayed the NOF leadership. Strogov said to me: ‘Dobrin, I am part of the ‘iron fist’ of the Party... We presume... we do not argue, because all this is testimony... that is why we think you are an agent...’ He did not say whose agent I was but from our conversation I assumed that I was now a Soviet spy...

And as I remember, Firsov also told me that he too was an ‘iron fist’ of the Party. Yes, so far the entire communist police are an ‘iron fist’ of the Party,” concluded Dobrin.

“A Russian spy?” said Rumena with a surprised look on her face. “Are you communists all related? Zahariadis accused Markos of being a spy and sent him to Russia to be treated for a mental disorder. When the wheel of history turned, General Markos sent a letter to the KPSS Central Committee in which he accused Zahariadis of being a spy and an international traitor. According to Markos, the main reason for sending the letter was not to indict Zahariadis but to clear the air about himself. Markos wanted to dissociate himself from Zahariadis and from speculation and gossip that he too was an agent of British intelligence just like Zahariadis. So, you are a Russian spy now!? Oh, my dear Dobrin, what next? In Russia the Russians said that you were a large caliber English spy and because of people like you the partisans lost the civil war. And so this will become one of the historic reasons for the defeat of the progressive movement. Even Stalin accepted this.

Yes, you communists are all the same. Who else would have done this to you but your dear friend, comrade and co-fighter Apostol Makarovski and your other closest associates? Now have a good look at how things are unwinding. Zahariadis committed suicide in a Siberian village and Markos is in Athens. Makarovski has a villa and you live in a shelter. Here you can see that the line in the horizon is blurring. But what is most interesting about all this is that

all you communists do this in the name of the people. Why?" asked Rumena.

Rumena's harsh talk forced Dobrin to listen to her well and for some reason listening to her made him happy, but Dobrin, as usual, always thought of the worst: "When a man is hit from the inside he needs to be durable!" he thought to himself.

After a short pause Rumena looked at Dobrin, all slumped forward, and said: "Don't get me wrong, my dear Dobrin. But the real communists are gone forever. They are long gone, and less and less of them exist in the world. They have been replaced by those of the 'iron fist' and those who descended at the end of the fist, the likes of Firsov and Strogov... If we had real communists in power we would not have these slimy leeches pushing us around. Why would real communists need interrogators? They would not fear the truth and man's capabilities. But your kind of communists, the current strain of communists are the ones who invented the camps, the torture chamber, the slogans, etc., and you say your main concern is the Party and the welfare of the people," concluded Rumena.

Dobrin looked at Rumena and said: "I could never do what Makarovski did. I could never abandon my co-fighters and talk like that behind their backs. I always wanted to be together with them, to share their fate. Up to this point we were characterized by something no nation had, and the least I wanted to do was to save the heads of our leadership. This is why my dear Rumena, I wanted to go back to Tashkent to the prison camps and stay there until all our people were returned. I wanted to bring back all those people who during the war had confidence in us, in NOF, and not in the Greeks.

I was completely puzzled when Strogov, as if feeling sorry for me, said: 'Dobrin, you should wait for some future revolution...' But I will not allow them to break me. I will not give them the satisfaction... I am Macedonian and nothing else, my dear Rumena.

When I refused to accept the award of merit from Zahariadis, which he gave me for NOF having awakened the national consciousness of our people managed by the slogan 'Young and old into the ranks of DAG', I wrote that I was not going to accept it as a symbol of

protest against the Party hegemony over the Macedonian people. Also, during the ceremony I said: ‘The mass participation of the Macedonian people is an expression of their need for national liberation and not for the sole victory of the communist system.’ And because of that I said I was accused of suddenly developing an ‘anti-Party’ attitude. I was then removed from office on charges that I was only supporting the heroic struggle of the Macedonian people irrespective of the needs of the Greek people. Makarovski and the others were all there but said nothing. Later, when Zahariadis decided to take revenge on us, we all became the same. All members of NOF who were in the secretariat were stuck in the ‘re-education labour camps’ in Siberia to share our fate with the Sabbatarians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Greek Catholics, Old Believers, Belarusians, SS and Gestapo, Ukrainians and Moldavians, smugglers and spies from Iran and Turkey, Hungarians and Poles, Bulgarians and Yugoslavs... all convicted under the Russian Federation Criminal Code Article 58, Paragraphs 4 and 11.

Do you see Rumena, the kind of burden the USSR Central Committee and our esteemed ‘wise leader’ Zaharidis saddled me with? But things have changed since then and still I don’t know why Marakovski, and who ever else, is doing this to me today,” concluded Dobrin.

The next day they were put in a van and transferred to the “Kisela Voda” shelter and placed in a room with four beds and with a view looking at the “Sveti Giorgi” monastery.

The room was long and poorly ventilated and when they opened the windows the aroma of candles flooded the interior. That day was a holiday, “Giurgiovdén”, and people were gathering in the monastery and preparing for a celebration.

After the liturgy, the people sat outside and enjoyed eating the food they had brought with them. Some of the larger groups were Gypsies. They left a positive impression on the newcomer Suvogorvski family. Rumena and Dobrin spent the entire day leaning on their elbows at the window, enjoying the aroma of roasted lamb with garlic and onions, and watching the Gypsies dance to Gypsy music. Dobrin was envious of their freedom, of their

happiness. They seemed like a happy people without the worries that plague modern man.

“This is true socialist freedom...” said Rumena with enthusiasm.

“Yes, a man can raise his head up high when the same noble feeling is shared by all the people... Indeed, these people would never have acted in bad faith in their hearts. Those are the benefits of freedom...” replied Dobrin and began to prepare the bed by removing the dirty covers, which obviously had not been washed for a long time, and replacing them with the graying sheets and covers stamped with the words “social” which had been long boiled and washed in military laundries.

To the left and right side of each door in the hallway there were several ragged boots of various sizes for walking outside and going to the common toilets, which were quite a distance from the residence. The elderly always had trouble climbing up the steep slope, especially in muddy weather. That is why Gele Madzhukovski, God rest his soul, an old resident in the common dwellings, built his own invention, a staircase to the place where the male and female toilets were separated. He suffered from inflammation of the bladder for a long time and going to the toilet became a concern for him. But besides his personal problem he had also observed that many of the residents were relieving themselves in the corners of the building. One morning he saw Malina Turimandzhova squatting, relieving herself under the Suvogorski window.

Gele Mandzhukovski is also remembered for another act of kindness he did for these people. He hammered out a large nail, slightly inclined, and placed it inside the toilet door. This was used as a hook for holding cut pieces of newspaper that were used for toilet paper so that people did not have to bring paper with them every time they went to the toilet. Unfortunately the free toilet paper was used excessively by certain people and dropped outside of the toilet hole. It was not a big deal until someone decided to turn it into a political problem. One day a piece of newspaper became glued on the cement pad and everyone began to pee on it. The photograph in the newspaper was peed on every day until someone decided to report it

to the authorities. A few days later Mile Mitsaikov examined the spot and concluded that it had been done by certain residents of the building.

Typical pornographic images used in latrines like these did not exist in these days and this looked like the work of some youths who were still under the influence of the “Komsomol” in those countries, and there were rumours that they were also peering through the cracks in the women’s toilet.

The hallway was crowded every morning with people aggressively passing one another. But then there were also those who showed great respect for the women. One day Rumena was rushing through the hallway and came upon a man who had come from Czechoslovakia. The man made a gentle gesture by raising his hand, seeming like he was inviting her to tango with him.

For years each of the residents were referred to by the country from which they came... Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Russia, etc. Those who came from Czechoslovakia always moved aside to let others pass and none of them left their wooden crates they traveled with stacked in the halls. The crates belonged mostly to those who came from Tashkent and Poland. Those who came from Poland argued the most and were the most likely to insult you by calling you “holera iasna” (pure cholera).

Almost every door was opened in the morning as the people moved through the narrow hallway. Warm and heavy odors radiated from the rooms into the hallway which made Rumena move fast through certain zones. Inside diverse music was played until late evening. The more often played songs were “kozachok”, “Linka Malinka”, “Volga, Russian River Volga” but sometimes they offered a tango. The news was carried in the morning, with the obvious obstacles, and when selecting a desired station, on which a lot of time was spent, men were becoming increasingly nervous and showing it by sudden coughs. Listening to the news gave the men something to talk about during their daily game of dominoes or while playing the game “Dzhandar” (cop). And while looking for the desired station and hearing the speaker say “Moscow is speaking” or any other station from Warsaw, Bucharest, Sofia, Athens, etc., the people in

the rooms would suddenly go silent, only the voices from outside the hall could be heard.

These people also had their own problems, not only with the common hallway and facing crowds but also personal problems. Like Gele Mandzhukovski who had an acute inflammation of the bladder, others too had similar problems which drove them to and from the toilet all night long, dragging the dilapidated boots on their feet. Rumena Suvogorska also had a problem. She was unable to find a solution for these people and bring order in the building and thinking about that made her stay awake all night. She was unable to sleep because of the irritability of her sensitive nervous system. Her fussing often woke Dobrin.

“Dobrin, Dobrin, are you asleep?” she asked twisting, upset in her creaky single bed.

“Where were you this late?” asked Dobrin drowsily.

“Oh, my dear Dobrin, you wanted to live in a base... Now it seems that you are enjoying the fruits of your accomplishments as a revolutionary,” snapped Rumena.

“Okay, okay... stop your whining,” replied Dobrin.

“Of course, I practically knew nothing about such shelters. In fact, I did it because of love. Do you find it nice here! How nice do you find it here? We take baths in a bucket. I pour water on you... you pour water on me... out of a pot... very economical, right? I really don't understand you... I will be honest with you, apart from your face and body there is nothing else about you that is nice...

Think of your education, which you all call ‘revolutionary’. Thank God, I am in no need of such an education...” said Rumena ironically and continued: “Whatever you say, I don't believe a word of it. I could have been a queen, and not a peasant woman to be washing my body with a pot full of water in shelters. Thank you, you are a good man, but you have to understand that you are not going to have immunity as a revolutionary forever. I will never forget the time when we were at a reception at the trenches in Vineni

when Zahariadis presented all the NOF leaders with medals. Those who have now turned against you were also there and they too received medals even though they did not want to return back to the base. They received their medals and looked like heroes, and you? Listen my dear Dobrin, they are politicians and you are not a politician. Are you seeking revenge for the Greek communists having deceived you? And now that you have an audience how successful have you been in convincing them that you have been wronged? Believe me when I tell you no one cares about that and about you. Which politician from your communist lineage has so far recognized his errors? And if they do recognize their errors you can bet that they will be removed from the list of eligible cadres for promotion...

You knew even then that the medals your 'esteemed wise leader' gave you were a farce. Your own conscience was eating away at you from the inside because you knew those medals were given to you on account of you surrendering the Macedonian people to the Party. It was due to the success of the Party's hegemony over the Macedonian people that earned you those medals and as the slogan said, to 'totally eradicate the Macedonian people'. We should not have had any knowledge of that, my dear Dobrin, except for the wisdom to survive along with the 'elite' and they in turn would have respected you. But no... and now I am reading your memoirs in which you say that tendentiously you were brought down, as a 'party element' charged with saying positive things about the Macedonian people's effort, and not wanting to go international. But in regards to that question, none of you have any merit in the matter, because as declared leaders of NOF, you were completely entrusted to the command of the Greek communists. About which you as revolutionaries whine to this day. People remember well that they trusted you and not the Greeks. How can people forget that it was you calling on them to sacrifice themselves... It was you calling on them to give up their children by the thousands... evacuated from their homes to supposedly save them. These were children less than fifteen years old... This was an act worthy of Hitler and of you, the communists 'elite'... Now I look at you and see a guilty conscience but where is the conscience of your close associates who were also involved in this? Do you think your sincere attitude will be reflected in your memoirs? Why would you think that anyone would believe

you after your close associates, your ‘elite’ sold you out to the Russians as a Yugoslav spy? And now that they are back here they even dare to label you a ‘Russian spy’. Oh, my dear Dobrin, one thing is for sure about them, they will soon forget internationalism... but not you, because you want another fight for justice, in the base, in Tashkent where the fighters are, the same fighters who were not even under the influence of NOF, but were ordinary soldiers. They are a defeated army that has nowhere to go. And you still haven’t realized that the Greeks no longer need you. They are done with us Macedonians and you helped them do their job... now we don’t exist. As you can see, the Greeks, your partners, are now returning to their homes, and we? We can’t return because they tell us we are not ‘Greek by genus’.

This also applies to the leaders. It equally applies to all who raised a hand against their own life! Tell me, what wife of an official will afford herself such a thing? In time, my dear Dobrin, you will realize that our fate is sealed. It is a power thing when a man realizes that proving something is not important, especially when no one wants to know about it. Even the interrogators themselves treat this as an enigmatic game until the culprit dies and his exclusion remains for generations. On stage even confusion must be clear...” concluded Rumena.

“Why do you allow yourself to talk to me like this on a daily basis?” yelled Dobrin in a high tone of voice wishing to be left alone.

“Not so loud... you will wake up Delian... at least he shouldn’t be feeling guilty. Tomorrow is a busy day for him at school. But he is a strange child; history is not an important subject for him. Let him be an engineer, maybe he will forget all this and will have a peaceful future...” replied Rumena.

“Oh, some stormy life we have... Do these pale men and women here even care how early in the morning they get up...?” Like soldiers...?” said Dobrin while stretching on his creaky iron bed.

Dobrin looked at Rumena and said: “They line up in front of the toilets, after that they go for some warm bread and whatever... after

that they want to be free for lunch when their wives call them from the open window. Some life ha...?”

All men except Dobrin played dominoes under the big leafy trees, telling their stories with quieted down tones. In the streets they are known as the “Aegeans” a group of embittered people who fought in battles at Gramos and Vicho and who constantly criticized the military tactics of one General Gusias who by profession was a shoemaker, but was a loyal member of the Party with much experience in politics...

Dobrin painstakingly worked on his pensive project which he called “Denunciation of the Greek policy towards the Macedonians” and spent all day hammering on his typewriter, densely writing several copies, giving particular importance to citations that showed impositions made on the Macedonian national question by the various leaders, and strictly taking good care to capture every statement made, which today the western world might find important. He worked on this project for years, but he never published it because those responsible for publishing books were asked in advance to prevent it from being published. They were asked to say that the manuscript was not reviewed from the right angle. This naturally resulted in Dobrin having to go back and review it and provide more proof. A never ending cycle...

As the years went by, Rumena increasingly entered into the essence of things. She remembered when she was a young girl and how she made life difficult for her mother because her mother would not give her permission to join the partisans. Of course now she knows why and accepts that she knew nothing about communism, with the exception of a few quotations from Stalin, which she had heard in her youth assemblies.

One day Mitse Dinevichin appeared in front of the door with a smile on his face. Mitse was a resident of the shelter “Chair”. He was an honest man and a decent fighter who always spoke as if giving a speech. He was a teacher, a graduate of a two-month course he had taken during the Greek Civil War. He often visited the Suvogorski family because he respected their old friendship since the days of the war. But now he was there to further discuss the failure and the total

disintegration of the revolution in Greece. Rumena participated less and less in these contentious issues and appreciated that a lot of the memoirs circulating around were lies and full of contempt. Rumena's heart had become insensitive and her thoughts about these issues were becoming distant. She appreciated that there was no sense in continuing to analyze the lost revolution. After having a stormy argument the men came up with a question: "Twenty years have passed. Why haven't we been recognized as fighters for national rights in a common struggle with the Greeks? Why do we continue to live like guilty culprits?"

"To be recognized by whom?" asked Rumena angrily. "By the communists...!? They have returned to their homes, and we? We continue to wander in shelters..."

"We need to be recognized by our own people!" thundered Mitse Dinevichin.

"Ah, by our own people...?! I misunderstood... Why, you don't have a card? They gave us one from the Social. Here, this is what is written on it: 'Board of Aegean issues and care for returnees from Eastern European countries'..." replied Rumena.

"My dear Rumena, the people of every country do that for their fighters..." answered Mitse with a hidden expression that there was more to the "Aegeans" than meets the eye.

"We did not come back to our homeland to live in the 'ghettos' in 'Avtokomanda', in 'Kisela Voda', in 'Chair', in 'Gorche Petrov', in "Tri chesmi' and in other such shelters. What have we fought for if not for Macedonia? Are we not part of this nation!?" added Mitse.

"Oh, my dear Mitse..." replied Rumena laughingly, with an ironic tone of voice. "I don't understand you either, but it's good that you are still committed to your revolutionary ideals... you and that Dobrin of mine. Thank God, that you both still have that revolutionary spirit. The divisions you are running into, my dear teacher are ideological and not Macedonian. Many times I have said the same thing to my Dobrin. Our history is full of divisions, divisions that come from inside but mostly from outside. Do you

remember the divisions our predecessors faced during Ottoman rule when Macedonia fell into their hands? The Ottomans began to divide us, turning us into Muslims. Some of it was voluntary some by force, but nonetheless, they divided us into Muslims and Christians. During the 19th and 20th centuries we were again divided into Serbians, Bulgarians, Greeks and Albanians. Their goal was to turn us into Serbo-philes, Bulgaro-philes, Greco-philes, Albano-philes... Our uprisings were failing because of our divisions. Then came the Balkan wars which inflicted the most tragic of all division. They partitioned our Macedonia and created four pieces out of it: Vardar, Aegean, Pirin and one part that is not even named by the Albanians. We welcomed the Second World War with a little sigh, thinking that perhaps now we could overcome our divisions? We created our own republic, but again it was in the hands of others at gunpoint... both foreigners and Macedonians. When one part of us in the south (Greek occupied Macedonia) rose up and rebelled our brother in the north moved only one finger and allowed a column of Macedonian children to pass through and then to be scattered throughout Eastern Europe. For many years this part of our homeland had forgotten us. Then it remembered and began to collect its children. Now we are back, of course, but we have to go through the corridors of Idrizovo Prison so that the likes of Strogov and the Secretariat of the Interior can take security measures. If the enemy does not exist then we will invent it, so now we have been declared second-class citizens. Not only that, but we have been divided into Aegeans and Vardarians and we have left the Pirinians in Bulgaria to cry under Mount Pirin. And of those who were left behind in Greek occupied Macedonia? What is to happen to them? To be more confident in ourselves, we ordinary Macedonians were divided into eligible and ineligible citizens..." said Rumena and stepped out into the hallway to boil some coffee.

The hallway smelled like a cafeteria kitchen from the aroma of the various foods being cooked. The most aromatic of all was the food the "Hungarians" cooked. This is what the residents called those Macedonians who had returned from Hungary and who were masters in cooking goulash. The Romanians were famous for "momaligat" (cornmeal). The Poles for boiled greens, the Czechs for fried potatoes, and the Russians for boiled "borshch" (sauerkraut) pretty much advertised as the healthiest food that was socially

recognized in the entire socialist camp under the motto “healthy food, healthy body”. And this is how the aroma of all those foods circled around the hallway on a daily basis except for Fridays, when beans were boiled. The food naturally attracted cockroaches which appeared in the hallway for the first time. No doubt they were brought there from the different countries people came from. These were more aggressive cockroaches than those found in Macedonia. They were not afraid to come out in the light. The residents used a variety of toxins but the cockroaches became immune to them. In desperation the people began to call them “B-15 Russian tanks”. Then as the cockroach population grew the cockroaches expanded into a larger habitat and moved into the other shelters occupied by the “Aegeans”.

“Dobrin, it looks like Rumena is disappointed in all this... She no longer holds the ideals. It is good that she endured for the last six years. My Lina thinks differently. She often says: “So what if we remain under state care for a little longer...” said Mitse and angrily stepped on a cockroach that was rushing by him.

“The coffee is ready...” announced Rumena smiling.

“You at least have clean water here. The pumped water in “Chair” smells like shit...” said Mitse while slurping his coffee.

“Are you saying that the groundwater is polluted?” asked Rumena and then turned to Dobrin and said:

“You, go to the General as soon as possible. I can no longer live in these shelters. I have turned into a cockroach killer. I can’t take it any more. My nerves are shattered. I crush them with my hands and I don’t know why I despise these vermin so much. The entire place smells of food and naphthalene. We are mired in mud here and I hate wearing those filthy boots. Oh, my dear Dobrin, not even Genghis Khan’s soldiers served for this long...” concluded Rumena.

“Calm down my dear... Be strong. You know what they say about the communists... they are a special breed of people...” replied Dobrin.

“Oh, my dear God, so far I have never met a communist and I really don’t know what they are like or if they are like us or not... I don’t want my son Delian to have a gene from the caste of the schemers, egoists, suck ups, opinionated and stubborn internationalists... God forbid he will rot in shelters, let him remain a pure Macedonian in mind only, without any ideology. And you my dear Dobrin, you will understand that one day, but unfortunately a lot of time has to pass. You like to write about the worm of division from a long time ago, which ate away into our souls and stopped us from becoming organized and at the same time you talk to those who offer you no understanding. God, where is the benefit in that!?! Can I ask you something? ‘What people in the world accept outsiders to determine their extent of justice and freedom?’ No one! But you, the leaders of NOF, trusted the CPG and the CPY; basically you trusted the Greeks and Yugoslavs, strangers, to decide your destiny. Oh, how strange and capricious is that?! And here you are with your comrades. Have you read the reviews of your book reviewed by Deliplashovski, Peshodovski and Bezlikoustov? Here, I will read you what Deliplashovski said. He said: “...Dobrin Suvogorski’s work is nonsense and does not offer any benefits. It contains text and provocative statements that are against the Yugoslav leadership and therefore I suggest this book not be granted the use of a wider audience’.

Did you get that?! You don’t matter. I don’t matter. So must Delian too not matter? Oh my God, when will those people who have Macedonian feelings materialize?!

Maybe when that happens all the outsiders will be silenced and we will dance to the beat of our own drums.

Oh dear God, bring back our divine origin!” concluded Rumena.

CHAPTER ELEVEN – Rumena travels to Canada

Rumena took a trip to Canada to visit Frosina and see for herself how people live in that rotten capitalism.

One clear morning after breakfast Rumena left for Canada to visit her aunt Frosina. Dobrin and Delian stayed home. Dobrin took responsibility for looking after the house and doing all the chores.

“Please look after my Delian...” were the last words Rumena uttered before boarding the plane.

“And who else is going to look after him?!” replied Dobrin with an irritated tone of voice while waving his hand at Rumena who was boarding the plane.

After waiting a few years they finally got their apartment and decorated it with what little they had. It was simple in taste considering the way they lived and the kind of lifestyle they were used to. Iron beds, a table and a few chairs without armrests. Dobrin took over one of the bedrooms and converted it into an office where he had everything arranged to his liking. He was now working on his third book which bordered on fiction. He received negative reviews on his first two books which was quite disappointing. By switching to fiction Dobrin figured he would have better luck and forget that his work was judged inadequate. He now developed a philosophical attitude towards his offenders and believed that they could be forgiven but their insults could not be forgotten, so he tried to be understanding and forgiving. He decided to forgive others but not himself. Difficult as it was, he also seriously began to look at himself and concluded that somehow he was confused and the actions of a changing world did not exactly match his expectations. He also came to the realization that if he continued to move forward in this direction Rumena might leave him because she could no longer live with him. Dobrin had fallen from grace, and in Rumena’s words because he was a “purist” always seeking the truth. She now went to Canada to see her aunt Frosina and find out for herself how people in that rotten capitalist world lived.

The more Dobrin explained the course of his life, the sadder Rumena became. The many years of living in shelters, the endless conversations and arguments, the many attempts to right the wrongs, the personal disappointments... were all taking a toll on Dobrin. He eventually reached a point in his life when he said “It is time Comrades, for socialism to become not vanity but remorse, a poster of roadmaps, a quotation of the top leaders, spiritual food...”

His words become empty and Dobrin, discharged from the Party, found himself in the special composition of the unfit.

So, after Rumena left for Canada, Dobrin began to feel cold, lying alone on the iron bed, hands shaking and folded on his stomach. He lay there thinking of how to tackle the writing of a novel entitled “Persecuted”, an idea he had had for a long time. A lot of space in the novel was devoted to the secrecy and boredom of historic time during which he tried to convince himself that the everlasting passion and suffering of his people resulted from the fact that people were well-informed and determined and, as a result of that, in the end they lost hope. With his thesis he now had proven that the organized social shelters and camps were places for rehabilitation of human desires. He himself now felt differently and admitted that earlier in his life he was not like that, earlier he loved the Party more than children, and was constantly saying that to Rumena. And that is why his initial choice for the title was “re-education”, a fiction novel. Now that his self-esteem was returning he was digging deeper in the secrets of his mind hidden in the tall ferns, looking into the essence of things, as if feeling with his fingers glued to the innermost sufferings and knowledge of the soul. Inakovich, one of his two eminent so-called critics of the time, wrote a book review in which, among other things, he said: “The about 250 page manuscript written by Suvogorski talks about the ‘Aegean syndrome’, the genocide of his Aegean people forced into exodus after the tragic ending of the civil war in Greece and after the destruction of the national liberation struggle. Therefore, this writer for the most part is preoccupied with the long creative period without any special values in his writing. Evidence of this is his sincerity in his writing with pathetic tones. Suvogorski has his own motives, but has no expression. Most importantly his expression is raped and he speaks with a political vocabulary, here and there amateurishly and

aesthetically inarticulate. The impression is that he is not an educated writer. His writing is like the writing of an amateur, with elements of opportunism. His talent is rudimentary, the kind that can be found far away from the main developments of contemporary Macedonian prose...”

Dobrin shook his head and smiled. His clean, sweaty face looked like the face of an honest person who firmly believed that now he had been completely freed from everything and had found himself in a special part of the unfit. He felt sad about having to explain the course of his life and the deeper he looked the sadder he felt. He had no idea how to heal or deal with his wounds residing in the deep recesses of his own mind. He lay on his iron bed feeling exhausted like an old horse, his heart trembling. He asked himself: “Is it possible that my homeland has abandoned me...?” He overcame his cold feeling and frailness while browsing through the letters, appeals and protests that were written by the USSR General Prosecutor. He felt that he must still talk about this? And why not?! The truth must not be avoided! “Be calm Dobrin,” he said to himself while thinking of another approach to his problem hoping to make some headway this time.

“Well things look clear from here,” Dobrin said to himself and shrugged his shoulders. He looked out the window. The sky was cloudy. It was early in the morning and the shelter seemed dark and cold. The sun needed to be high up before it could shine inside. He then looked up and thought of all the people that he had left behind. A slight smile covered his face when he thought of Rumena.

His son Delian was sleeping in the dining room next to him. He looked so innocent. He knew nothing about the kind of communism that was needed to enter a second phase... for the unfit... He knew nothing about religion either, except what he learned from textbooks in the newest program of targeted education. Dobrin, like an old teacher and lover of classical schooling, had his own categorical opinion about such a program and would often say that children could become as much prepared for the future as horses were prepared to carry straw. He dismissed the kind of education offered as culturally arbitrary, distorted and perverted. He relied on his own firm convictions and, more than ever before, he now wanted to

explore the essence of things. Having restored his self-esteem, he stepped out anew in the real world and was re-examining all he knew about himself in the socialist world. He often woke up in the middle of the night in his brightly lit apartment sitting among books of Marxist literature, surrounded by memories of imagination. He would sit there until dawn and then would open the window to listen to the birds sing and to the footsteps of pedestrians passing by. He had no hope. He was tired of the pace of going through his thoughts. The only thing he now had was his patience... He had been expelled from the Party a long time ago. He was expelled from his life as he knew it and from his views about the world. His face was weak and filled with exhaustion. It looked rigid and pale like the pages of his many yellowed books that surrounded him during his entire life.

He woke Delian in the morning to prepare him for work. To him Delian looked like a crippled sapling in a lush and fully developed socialist forest. To him even poor innocent Delian was perhaps guilty of something. But being free from ideological baggage, Delian was a happy person. After having to wait a long time to be offered a job, through a connection in Greece, he was now working for Manoli Dzimbrov's private enterprise.

Dobrin kept everything that ailed him to himself. He was not ready to talk about it. He was patient and often told Rumena to be quiet... to be afraid of things... but to never discredit the revolution...

But as negative events continued to mount in his life he finally began to acknowledge his inability to face the truth. A certain fear began to engulf him from the moment he awoke. He was afraid of secrets and was beginning to forget things... everything. At the same time he realized that if he could not show his reality it meant that it did not exist. But if it did exist then he too did not exist. Now he could exist and not exist... to be and not to be... he was not there, he was different and he was not the same. "My Lord! My reality has become a dream!" he yelled out. He was overcome with despair... But his strong defense mechanisms in his subconscious mind quickly brought to light the real culprit for these dark thoughts. He said to himself: "I was an active participant in the Popular Resistance against the German occupation. I then participated in the Greek Civil War in the ranks of the Democratic forces and fought

against the reactionaries and against the Anglo-American intervention. The leadership accused me of treason... of treason... The leaders..." he concluded and stopped talking.

PROTEST AND APPEAL TO SVR

“From Dobrin Suvogorski, charged with being a contributor to the ‘Intelligence service’, and an ‘agent of Tito’ and sent to the socialist camp... Now a ‘Russian spy’ and ‘...?’” Dobrin wrote, while attempting to compose a protest letter.

“I am compelled to remind you that here in Skopje, on April 23, 1945, the CPM Central Committee constituted the NOF Founding Bureau for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Fortunately (or unfortunately) it happened and I was one of those five people who laid the foundation...” he wrote, looked outside and continued:

“With this letter I protest against my exclusion and ask for your protection. I know there have been many statements made against me from a long time ago by people who were afraid of endangering their careers and wanted to disassociate themselves from me. They were the ones who invented the idea that I am some sort of Russian agent. But that is only slander, disgusting slander which I have always refuted. With this letter of protest I have decided to seek your protection and rehabilitation, not so much for me but more so for my wife and son...

I want to believe that you will consider my plea and show some understanding and goodwill, especially for an old fighter and his family, and release me from these fabricated charges that I had to endure for a long time... After having endured five and a half years in the Siberian prison camps, four and a half years of internment in Kazakhstan for being a ‘Macedonian nationalist’, I finally received my visa to return to Macedonia. Then, unexpectedly, my family and I were escorted off the train in Subotitsa and transferred to Pancevo in a prison car. There, we were placed under house arrest in a military compound. After that we were interrogated by Strogov. He interrogated me for ten days and my wife for four days. In the end he said to me, ‘Dobrin, we can’t ascertain anything because we have no evidence, but we still think you came back as an agent...’ I denied the charges but it was all done in vain. On top of that he insulted me when, at one point, he said, ‘I would have done this to ten Suvogorski’s for the sake of our Yugoslavia...’ ‘Our Yugoslavia!?’ What kind of odd patriotism is that? Was this personal or...? One

more thing, a little less bitter - our couriers were recognized as fighters and received their dignity by law, except for me... I made a fatal error and waited for twenty-six years to pass... it is a long time... the humiliation must stop, I am a son of this nation, and not of your government, I am a Macedonian fighter who fought for my people, and not for your government...

I admit: At this point, with some bitterness, I remember that I earlier addressed the CPG Central Committee and Chemerski, its President, but my address had the fate of a cry in the wilderness... Now that reminder makes me humble... I remain a son of the tormented Macedonian people and you, Strogov, you can check after I am dead to see if I am still alive...

Dobrin Suvogorski
March 25, 1985
Skopje”

Dobrin picked up the letter and read it over. He then looked up and began to wonder if being involved in politics was perhaps unique in our nature.

“Am I satisfied that I truly captured the essence of what I wanted to say?” Dobrin asked himself. He then looked up and began to think about the war and if it perhaps had a selective biological and psychological grip on people... and, maybe this was necessary for every nation... “But we are a small nation and the people’s behaviour would not lead to destruction... And I am a Russian spy!?” he said to himself out loud while repeatedly laughing out loud in the dark of night.

“My life has become pointless and without perspective... not worth it...” he said to himself. He thought of the time in August 1949, when he was removed from NOF and demoted from a functionary to an ordinary soldier and sent to the front line in Gramos to fight in the last decisive battle against the Monarcho-Fascists.

“Even then they wanted to eliminate me physically...” Dobrin said to himself. “That task was entrusted to the Commander of the Independent Battalion, the one with the heavy weapons, at DAG

Division 10. That man was a major named Hrisostomos...” Dobrin remembered.

Dobrin kept himself busy going through his weary thoughts until dawn. He remembered how he had created the Macedonian alphabet, the first Macedonian primer in 1945 and used it until 1947 in order to facilitate the cultural and educational elevation of the Macedonian people in Lerin, Voden and Kostur Regions. He was happy to know that he had helped more than ten thousand Macedonian students learn the Macedonian language. He listened to them... how freely they spoke Macedonian and sang Macedonian songs. How easily they rejected their Greek slave names and adopted the Macedonian names their mothers had given them. He remembered editing the newspaper “Nepokoren”... After that his thoughts took him to the opening of the first course for teachers... He remembered telling them: “This course here will prepare all of you to become teachers...” He then perked up his ears and imagined the long applause he received. With eyes closed he began to fold his fingers one by one as he remembered the new schools he opened. “Zhelevo, Orovnik, Strkovo, Rabi, German...” he said. One by one he mentioned all 87 of them, remembering the desolation that Metaxas had left behind. His mind was churning like gurgling clear water, escaping from a mountain spring. He was especially proud of the speech he gave in Prague on April 27, 1949... He was proud of chanting in the Macedonian language in the Czechoslovak parliament, where the First World Congress was held on World Peace. Fueled by the applause of the audience he yelled out:

“On behalf of the Macedonian people, from this part of Macedonia, who, since the Balkan Wars, have lived together with the Greek people under the same oppressive and exploitative bourgeois regime in Greece, I cordially welcome the delegates from our socialist sun, the great Soviet Union, the delegates from heroic China, the delegates from democratic Spain and all the delegates from the democratic and peace-loving countries in the socialist camp... No matter what happens, regardless of the casualties, we the Macedonian people, along with the heroic Greek people, will win our freedom and peace...”

Long live freedom and peace in the entire world! Long live the great Stalin!”

At one point Dobrin felt relaxed and completely calm, as if he was recognized by the people, the world public, the socialist working class, by all the thinkers of the socialist camp... But then when a piece of paper fell into his hand he became noticeably upset. He looked around and tried to avoid looking at the paper. But, with great difficulty, he then mastered his unwillingness to look and, despite his need to go to sleep, he began to read:

“In regards to international reaction and for organized activities working in its favour, according to Article 58, paragraphs 4 and 11 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code – ‘Osoboe Soveshchanie’ – it was decided by the USSR Supreme Court to: ‘Condemn Dobrin Mikhailovich Suvogorski to a ten-year prison term, by confiscating his personal freedom, to be served in the ‘Isledovatelnie Trudovie’ forced labour camps in – ITL – Siberia’.”

After reading the letter Dobrin became visibly upset and very angry. He turned around and smashed the window. But it did not close so he pushed hard again. Dry crumbs of glue fell on his palm... “This is what powers do...” he mumbled to himself. He lay on his bare bed curled up into a ball, staring at the ceiling. He meditated for a long time thinking about the revolution which, in his dream, appeared to him as a dead beauty with uncovered breasts and a naked blue body, like the well-kept awful bodies they kept in the ITL camps in Varkuta. He suddenly woke up as if hit by some reality. Then, before his eyes, he saw figures appear dressed in long leather coats. They were his interrogators Comrades Firsov, Panteliev, Strogov...

He remembered Lieutenant Colonel Firsov interrogating him during the time he was in solitary confinement in Moscow for two years and five months from January 4, 1950 to the end of May 1952.

CHAPTER TWELVE – Iron men needed in Yugoslavia

Like the “iron men”, not only for those “iron times”, but also for today... they are needed here in Yugoslavia, Comrade Suvogorski. We need them here but not to be loyal to Joseph (Stalin), but to Josip (Tito)...

It was a beautiful sunny day. The humming of bees could be heard everywhere. The domino players were sitting on their three-legged chairs and, with undisguised pleasure, were stacking their dominos in arrays. Mitse Dinevichin, a teacher from Dolna Prespa, was not interested in such games because he was worried about the consequences of the revolutionary process and, with great interest, followed Master Alekso Shlipkovski's presentation, who at the time was explaining the mistakes made in the experiment to create a “new person”, when it was still in the design stages. Of course, everyone thought this was their problem because everyone was part of the building process when communism was built. But most of the builders did not want to torture their brains with such sensitive theories and imaginary anatomy.

“We, that is to say, worked fiercely on the construction of the ‘new person’...” said Alekso Shlipkovski and continued. “We were laying the foundation for the entire socialist camp. The whole nut of the past political laboratory, however, has disappeared... evaporated and gone from the collective with all its experimental content and its bizarre engineering... It has disappeared from almost the entire socialist world. It has failed as an experiment... If you look around you today... if you ask an ordinary person, even something simple, there before your eyes you will meet a creature, an ideologically aggressive creature, a separated person, a fearful and uncertain humanoid, all melted away in a strange faceless crowd. Look around you Comrade Mitse, what is the difference between us who came here from Poland and with you who came here from Russia? You were involved convincingly in a technology that was building the heroes of labour. Perhaps this was because you were closer to the general laboratory for building ‘real socialism’.

You all came back here like paupers with nothing. You looked like the figures you see in the icons in churches. You enjoyed being

paraded around with labour lapels around you necks... You were satisfied to have achieved the norm and during your free time you read novels on 'How to temper steel' or 'Mother' and you became melted in the alloy... and you became the 'new people'. You became the 'iron men' and not only for those 'iron times'... And, as Comrade Suvogorski often says, the communists were men of special paste, and from them came the 'Soviet man'." concluded Alekso Shlipkovski.

"God! You are the scourge... God! You truly are the scourge... Mr. Shlipkovski..." yelled Mitse Dinevichin angrily.

"What were we fighting for then ...? Or did we all want to be revisionists. You with all that knowledge... Why are you telling us that now!? You know that thousands, if not millions of people, sacrificed their lives for the ideals of communism... Are you not aware of that Mr. Shlipkovski? Why are you now vilifying socialism?" yelled Mitse Dinevichin and continued.

"What kind of delusions are you using to undermine the ranks of the communist movement? Are you well? You speak against the socialism that made you a man and find flaws in everything. Mr. Shlipkovski, my grandfather used to say: 'Feed a dog to bark at you...' I now see that you are crazy. Nevertheless, I did not expect such poison to spill out of your disgusting mouth. When did you, Mr. Shlipkovski, become as humane as to explain these theoretical questions? Because these questions are purely bourgeois views!" said Dinevichin and looked around at everyone.

"I believe that Mr. Shlipkovski is not a communist! Or if he was he should have been thrown out from our ranks like a rag..." yelled Ilo Kalinchevski angrily, slapped the last domino tile in the tray, lifted himself from the three-legged stool and, with droopy eyebrows looking huge like an angry bear, threatened to physically harm young Shlipkovski. Angrier than Ilo Kalinchevski was Mitse Dinevichin who said:

"You, Mr. Shlipkovski, you don't know how to defend socialism. And you should know that it is people like you who encourage others to say ugly things about something for which we gave our

lives. It's people like you who keep silent in front of the enemy... who defect and abandon their companions. For me these people are deserters... My dear Mr. Shlipkovski, please allow me to ask you. Did you allow them, down there (in Greek occupied Macedonia), to agitate in front of your nose... or not? Dear Mr. Shlipkovski you can wear a starched shirt but you don't seem to be able to make them shut their rambling mouths. Maybe in a while you will allow them to ask you what we fought for, who we fought against, and if we needed to fight... Great! Awesome! Could you not tell them that every revolution is paid for with spilled blood and death? What do the Russians say? They say that there is no revolution without sacrifice... You should know that and instill it in your mind, my dear Mr. Shlipkovski," said Ilo Mechkarot, adjusted himself on the three-legged stool and continued. "We should be proud of being revolutionaries. Many of us died in the name of the revolution or on behalf of our leaders, for our ideals. No one should die for the wind. I have been listening to you for days now arguing about things that happened a long time ago, for which we already have answers... answered by bigger heads. History has changed, my brothers, and it will continue to run its course but only if it is not undermined. We are and will remain internationalists, and you dear Mr. Shlipkovski, you should know what it means to have a human soul..." said Ilo Mechkarot, licked his finger and adjusted the domino.

German Mongushev or Uchenoto Kuskule (Educated Shorty), that's what the shelter residents called him, stood up like a clumsy dog and with his high-pitched voice addressed the gathering. He said:

"The young man is telling us things that would raise a man's hair. The well-educated Mr. Shlipkovski with a master's degree, it seems, has developed his own theories of socialism and the 'new man' but you Mr. Shlipkovski have not finished learning everything. If you had you would have know that socialism has attained eternal ideals for humanity. People already recognize that in themselves and no longer find themselves in the narrow national framework. They burn with love for mankind, and not infrequently... They are always ready to lay down their lives, heroically to defend socialism. They equally admit that they will fight and die, and when they die they die for a sacred purpose. These people can be described as traditional

and historical with only a few words... they are the sons and daughters of the world.”

German Mongushev then turned to Mitse Dinevichin and scolded him like he was some kind of old dog. He said: “Oh, my dear Teacher... Why do we need to allow ‘theorists’ like him who, like worms, want to eat the core of socialism? Instead of thanking the great Stalin for accepting us we resort to this kind of behaviour... and you Mr. Master’s degree, Stalin gave you the opportunity to be called a scholar, to be developing theories, but if you are not a communist what is there for you to discuss?”

“Do you even know what communism is?” yelled Mongushev, while intensely staring at Shlipkovski.

“I know what communism is...” replied Shlipkovski calmly.

“Well, if you know, then take a good look at Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie’s last government. Selassie hired a peasant to look after his dogs... And every time one of those dogs came and sat near the feet of one of his ministers, the dog keeper put a pillow on the ground for the dog to sit on. The pillows were especially made for the dogs...” said Mongushev.

Everyone laughed.

“What is so funny?” asked Shlipkovski and continued.

“I don’t understand... what does that have to do with Socialism? Such things also exist in socialism. Was it not Ceausescu who made an announcement that he had appointed one of his dogs a colonel and assigned it a full time driver to drive it around?!”

“Hold on there Mr.! This is pure provocation!!! yelled Ilo Kalinchevski angrily and continued. “This is defamation of socialism and nothing else... People! The man is beginning to play with open cards...”

“The young man is talking nonsense...” replied Mitse Dinevichin and handed Shlipkovski a well-used, dusty and yellowed five edition publication.

“Here! Learn about Marxism!” he said.

“I have read all of them...” replied Shlipkovski.

The books had a dedication signed by some guy named Saposhnikov, president of immigrants, with the message “Sincere wishes to Mitse Dinevinchin for his success in constructing socialism in his country”.

“You seem to be indifferent to all this...” said Ilia Kalinchevski to Pandil Mianchev who sat beside him.

“If I get too excited I will be covered in a rash,” replied Pandil in a low tone of voice.

“What...?” asked Ilia.

“You heard me!” replied Pandil.

“Are you trying to tell me not to waste my words on this fool? You are probably right, people like him are filthy lice...” said Ilia Kalinchevski.

“Most young people are inherently unstable. But by the time they become adults, if you guide them properly, they will find their way... it is a continuous and sickly process...” said Dobrin Suvogorski who had just returned with a full bag of books. “But the construction of the ‘new person’ is an inevitable process...” added Suvogorski.

“You are absolutely correct, Comrade Dobrin!” responded Mitse Dinevichin.

A fat messy woman, madly in love with her husband Henry Maruzelski, popped her head out of a window and called out “lunch”. Henry was a handsome man who had slept with every

woman he had met in Zgorzelets. He was also rude, unsympathetic and a self-centered Pole! But at that moment he too expressed his opinion about socialism. He said:

“There are two things of importance in life: eating and having friends, so why care about building a society...?”

“Why are you telling me these stupidities, Henry? You talk as if we are living in Christ’s time...” said Mitse Dinevichin.

“I hear you Mitse... In fact I hear you every day talk about the same thing... over and over again. Right...! You fifteen ‘Aegeans’ will rescue internationalism...” said Henry with a little grin on his face and left for home to eat lunch.

All those remaining behind were surprised by Henry’s comments. And as they watched him climb the stairs, Henry looked at them and said: “I have only one life, my brothers, and I take every opportunity to live it as I see fit and not as somebody else has suggested. But you, what have you learned? All you learned in Uzbekistan, Mitse, is how to comb cotton and nothing else, and where are you going to apply this craft you learned in Macedonia?” Henry asked Mitse Dinevichin with a mocking tone of voice and continued.

“And now you are eager to get into the establishment and to be supported by state money. All you do is take, take, take!! You dirty bastard. You are all dirty bastards. Every one of you is waiting to be blessed as a fighter under the name internationalist. Why are you not in the government, in all streams of life, but only a few of you are in the militia? You bastards you! Do you not see that the dwellings they built for you look like ghettos? Perhaps this way it is easier to brainwash you, especially when your minds are full of distorted ideas. You are ‘everything’ except that which you are supposed to be... that you are not...

Internationalists?! That’s so funny. Do you ever wonder how much the internationalists care about you? Do you not see how they have misled you...? You followed their lead and you lost everything... You even lost your father’s hearth... Have ever asked yourselves why? You dirty bastards you! You even joined the revolution under

a foreign flag. Oh, my dear fighters, a Pole did not do this to you. Poles are born to remain Poles and not Slavo-Macedonians, or whatever else they call you. Where do you get the idea that you have no connection with the ancient Macedonians when you share the same home with them? And who told you that when the Slavs arrived in Macedonia they destroyed everything that was there in your country for centuries?” asked Henry and stopped at the top of the stairs looking down on them.

“Oh my God, what a disgusting louse... living among us...!” said Ilija Mechkarot with an astonished tone of voice, only to be interrupted by a hoarse voice coming from the other end of the shelter. It was the same woman calling her husband for the third time. He, on the other hand, all he wanted to do was swear and curse at her. And like he used to say, the Party did not want him, not even as a low ranking official. But how was Ristana Kalincheva to know that an important discussion was taking place about issues that concerned the communist society?

“That handsome man must be drunk...” said Pandil Mianchev – Iskrata in a loud voice.

“No! I am not drunk. I am just sick and tired of living in these stinking shelters and ghettos...” replied Henry and continued. “I have only one life and I want to live in a palace, maybe in a castle. Sitting under large chandeliers and eating Russian caviar, drinking only wine, pressed by the feet of nuns. Like all the great men who live a socialist life,” concluded Henry with a courageous sounding tone of voice.

“Wow! This man must be completely mixed up!” said German Mongushev.

“Why don’t you spit on your brother-in-laws face, you idiot?” yelled German Mongushev at Icho Zhunglovski who sat huddled on his tripod stool like he had been hit by an apoplectic stroke.

“It’s very easy to hit a blind man, isn’t it?” replied Ilo Mechkarot who was already thinking of punching Henry in the face for making such statements.

But at that very moment Alekso Shlipkovski addressed Mitse Dinevichin by saying:

“There is some truth in what Henry is saying. These are not just empty words but perhaps it is too early for us to talk about it. Poles are brave people. They have individuality, not like us who follow the old ways... whatever an old Party instructor tells us. I have thoughts like him too. What, do you think we were mature when we willingly entered into a pre-tailored revolution? I say no!

Poles would never have fought under a foreign flag and been led by foreign generals. And look at the kind of commanders we had: Gusias the shoemaker, Markos the tobacco picker... who eventually devastated Macedonia.

This, Comrade Mitse, what we are doing here is stupid. Poles are not like us,” concluded Shlipkovski.

“What are you babbling about you idiot? Are you talking about the same revolution for which the great Stalin himself gave us recognition and in which we fought heroically?” yelled Ilo Mechkarot and then turned towards Henry Maruzelski and, while waving his arms angrily, said:

“And you, you good for nothing! You have been eating socialist bread from the day you opened your mouth.”

After the kind of comments Henry made he became an enemy and his wife became the woman of the enemy, to be stared at with ugly stares each time she passed through the public corridor. She became the wife of Henry the Pole. But she was not alone, she had her mother Fania Zhunglovska and with her she shared her troubles and suffering.

Icho Zhunglovski was boycotted and expelled from the domino games. He was punished for allowing Henry to marry his sister ten years ago and for being Henry Maruzelski’s brother-in-law. Icho should have known better even then and should have been vigilant against the enemy. The party cell appreciated that Icho had had

enough life experience to know better. With further research the Party cell linked Alekso Shlipkovski with Icho Zhunglovski. They found them to be third generation relatives. So they figured that it was no coincidence that they requested to have rooms close together in the shelter, so that they could work together spreading their anti-socialist propaganda. It was assumed that this right here was a flashpoint of anti-socialist agitation.

Fear and anxiety were rampant among the people in the shelters, in meetings in the toilets, everywhere. People were afraid to share their views. They were even afraid to come face to face with Henry. Henry, the most handsome man in the shelters, once considered to be the most important resident there, was now wandering around all alone, often talking to himself, saying:

“Bastards! Real bastards! What kind of people have you become? Judges, jury and executioners in the name of blind faith... Your minds have become moldy and you are acting like zombies...”

It was afternoon and as usual all the domino players had again gathered together at their usual meeting place under the big tree, on top of which a number of crows on the run had gathered. All the players, except for those who had been kicked out, were preparing their domino trays and arranging their dominos on the table to play a new game. Ilo Kalinchev Mechkarot, naked from the waist up, was clutching an old pad with a cardboard cover under his left underarm. The pad looked like it was damaged and pages were missing. The pages in the pad looked moist and moldy. The hand-written pages looked like they had been put there many years ago, perhaps back in 1949 and a small part in 1950. These were lecture notes for mastering Marxism, remnants from a different political time, taken during the lectures held in “Krasni ugolok” attended after work in the evenings.

Ilo Kalinchev sat on his stool and began to leaf through the pad, turning each page with his thick rheumatic fingers, wanted to show Alesko Shlipkovski that he was up to date with all aspects of life including the theoretical aspects of Marxism. He wanted to say:

“Let us talk about Marxist theory... Let us talk about the Macedonian national question, the revolution, the international communist movement, the emancipation of women, the tactics of the Social Democrats... or let us even talk about the character of the ‘new person’.” But instead of saying all those things Kalinchev, with an overdose of irony, said:

“What more can you possibly know than what is written here in this pad, Mr. master’s degree?”

“What you wrote in your pad while you were half-asleep during those evenings may be enough for you but that’s not everything. Besides, you probably don’t even know, or you will never know anything about the subject on which you wrote. So why are you still keeping the pad? Throw it away; it will make life easier for you. Here now you will have to learn something else,” replied Alesko Shlipkovski to Kalinchev and then turned to Ilo Mechkarot and said:

“Do you know what ‘self-governance’ is?”

“It is revisionism of the socialist system,” replied German Mangushev – Uchenoto Kuskule.

“So I take it you are against ‘self-governance’ then? I take it you are against a means of providing opportunities for direct governance of the working people, and not in the way they are governed in the places where you come from where people are told what to do and they do what they are told. Or keep silent no matter what they are told to do, blindly following their chief’s orders! said Alekso Shlipkovski, turned, faced the others and said:

“Was it not like that, huh?”

“Did you ever believe in your life that someone could speak so boldly in front of us about something for which we were ready to give our lives, eh?” asked Ilo while facing German.

“Never!” replied German shaking his head.

“So it would appear that you were fighting with an unclear purpose? Right? It would appear that your ‘national interests’ were all jumbled up with the interests of internationalism and you eventually ended up fighting for class change. And here you are knocking on your chests claiming you fought for our ‘national interests’... You only believe what you are told, right? Ask yourselves this: Under what Macedonian symbols did you fight? What were your strategic goals? Where are the documents proving that someone declared war on Macedonia that forced you to grab guns to defend your homeland? In other words, you fought for none of the above. So it would appear that you followed the old and stale “brotherly slogan” to save the communist ass..., right?” concluded Alekso Shlipkovski.

“Hey, comrade! Sit over here! You openly trample on and criticize our brightest ideals for a brotherhood of nations. It is best that you leave right now or we will throw you out... friend!” said Ilo Mechkarot with a serious and angry tone of voice.

During the games Pandil Mianchev - Iskrata always sat opposite Ilo. Pandil had a low forehead, a short thick neck and big ears, a little bigger than normal compared to the size of his head.

Pandil – Iskrata also had a notebook similar to Ilo’s but his wife, Pandoitsa, had probably misplaced it somewhere in one of her luggage chests. In the early years he was a bit worried about the Party authorities accepting him because he was not authorized to be educated in the People’s Militia school. Maybe even today he had similar worries. He had carried this pain for years. He had devoted his life wanting to belong in a socialist society but he was not sure if he had been fully accepted.

While pointing with his index finger to a yellowed page, Ilo Mechkarot, with some difficulty, began to read: “On October 6, 1949 all fighters were outfitted with suits, coats and 500 rubles, a gift from the great Stalin.”

A broad smile appeared on Pandil – Iskrata’s face and, while pulling on his big nose, he said: “A suit and also a pair of Asian style shoes for everyone...”

“And don’t forget the Chinese shirts...” said Ilia Mechkarot in a complementary tone of voice as if wanting to warn those who were blabbing criticisms against socialism, as in the case of his own son who once told everyone here that not all people were honest in the construction of socialism.

Pandil often openly and indignantly discussed Riste, his son, a graduate of sociology, and his employment.

“You Uncle Pandil, you always tell the truth, right?” asked Alekso.

“Yes, that’s what I fought for!” Pandil replied sharply.

“I can see that you can’t stand injustice, right?” asked Alekso.

“Yes, young people need to work. We are old and done working. But as you know not all of us are retired, but we need to move aside to get out of the way. When I went to the Central Committee, I did not go there to ask for love, I went there to ask for justice. And honestly, Comrade Bito took me in like I was some kind of functionary. I thought to myself, ‘this is justice’. I thought these old fighters were truly for the people. It all felt good. He asked me all sorts of questions. I talked and he wrote. He filled half his notebook with notes. When I stopped talking he stopped writing. I looked at him and said ‘these are my troubles’. I did not know anyone here but I was principled and we both knew that he was following the Party line. I believed in the party and in the Central Committee. When we were done he said: ‘Good, Comrade Pandil.’ I thought to myself, ‘This will show my ungrateful son Riste why we fought.’ We will continue with the truth to the end. I stood up to thank him, to say that it was nice to meet him and for giving me his time. Then I asked him: ‘Comrade Bito, when should I come back to get an answer?’ He looked at me and said: ‘You don’t need to come back...’

To this day I remember and know why he said I did not need to come back... but he wrote down everything about me, including my shoe size...” concluded Pandil.

Everyone, except for Ilo, laughed out loud. Ilo gave Pandil a funny look while Pandil was stacking his domino plate with number six and said to Ilo, “You are blocked...”

At that moment Stavre Kafedzhiev, a guest from the shelter “Avtokomanda”, appeared from behind the water tap monument. He was welcomed by all with great kindness. Everyone present knew Stavre and considered him to be one of the most educated and prominent activists from the group of immigrants who had arrived from Poland. Kafedzhiev was one of the last ones to go to “Idrizovo” prison. Of course he had no idea that returnees were sent to prison before they were screened for entry into the country. He knew nothing of the outstanding order, given a long time ago, to put returning Macedonians in prison so that they could be interrogated by the Yugoslav authorities. He also did not know that the order had being recanted only a few days ago. One hot July Friday afternoon, Kafedzhiev and his family decided to voluntarily appear before the duty officer in front of the prison to let him know that they were coming from Zgorzelets and that they wanted permanent residency here in their homeland. But as soon as the duty officer heard the first few words, he asked: “And who told you to come here? You know that for a few days now we have stopped taking returnees to Idrizovo. Besides, today is Friday and you will have to wait until Monday, when the authorized officers return and take care of all formalities.”

Stavre Kafedzhiev shrugged his shoulders, looked at his wife and children and walked behind the man who expressed interest in finding a place for them to stay until Monday. He took them to a room and told them to sleep there. He also gave them clean sheets for the beds and left. They were so tired they immediately fell asleep. The next day, when it was light, they noticed they had slept in a jail cell on squeaky iron beds. Even though they saw where they were, they were not very worried because they had come to this place voluntarily. They were sure there would be inns that would take them later and that this was only temporary. After all they were in Skopje, Macedonia, in their own homeland. Thinking about that filled their hearts with joy. Their plight was finally over and they felt like they were at home. It was a warm Monday, eight o’clock in the morning, when they received their wake-up call from the duty

officer, prompting them to go and see the authorized officials who in fact were two UDBA officers in civilian clothes. One of them introduced himself while the other was busy reading the newspaper and making comments on the sports results from Sunday's match. At this point the Kafedzhiev family was asked to tell their entire biography, activities and motives for wanting to move here. As head of the family Stavre saw nothing wrong with that, especially since they were coming from another country. He thought to himself, 'We are new here and they want to know everything about us...' But during this so-called "information" session something began to upset Stavre. All of a sudden he angrily asked:

"Are we being interrogated or are we just having a conversation? If we are being interrogated then we will stop answering any more of your questions because we are not guilty of anything. I understand the need to be legitimized and to be integrated into this socialist society but this needs to be done through a proper framework..." said Stavre to the UDBA officers.

There were three questions in particular that drew Kafedzhiev's attention. The first was what he thought of Yugoslavia, the second was why he wanted to come here and the third was what he thought of the USSR and Bulgaria.

Stavre had known about these "standard" questions from before, from his friends when he was in Poland, so he immediately said:

"I love the USSR as the first country of socialism, home of the Great October Revolution and a supporter of all socialist countries and movements, but I am aware of some things that are not very good there, that is why I am an anti-Stalinist."

Stavre paused for a moment, looking as if he was thinking what to say next, and then continued. "I regard Bulgaria as a socialist country and the Bulgarian people as being close to our people, but I also disagree with the Bulgarian leadership's politics, especially towards the 'Macedonian Question'..." Stavre paused, seeming like he had not said everything he needed to say.

At this point the two officers looked at each other and one of them said: “How strange...”

Stavre became confused by the officer’s comment.

The officer continued: “From all the Aegean returnees we have interrogated, who went through ‘Idrizovo’, you are the only one who has openly and with all honesty confessed that you are sympathetic to the Soviet Union and that you recognize the closeness to Bulgaria. All the people we have interrogated so far wanted either to avoid answering the question or to say something against these countries.”

For a moment Stavre felt some satisfaction but then he remembered that all these questions were being discussed in Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Soviet Union as preparation for the returnees. He then felt like a student who had stolen the questions and had cheated on an examination.

The officer then unexpectedly asked: “Do you think that the Russians and Bulgarians have similar sympathies towards us the Macedonians, Comrade Stavre?”

“I believe they do, why wouldn’t they... they are internationalists after all. They are educated in the spirit of the ideals of a future communist society. The new Soviet person is before us, there is nothing left of capitalism there...” replied Stavre with a great deal of confidence.

Calmly sipping his coffee the officer then asked: “What would you like to be called here in Macedonia?”

“Stavre Kafedzhiev!” he replied with a calm voice and eyes wide open. He then said:

“Of course, just like they used to call me back in my village... by my original name. Once again, I want to be called Stavre Kafedzhiev.”

“You can’t have your name ending in ‘ev’ and ‘ov’ because those are Bulgarian names. You will have to be called Kafedzhievski and only that!” replied the officer. Stavre however disagreed. He said: “Even the Macedonian giants had names ending in ‘ev’ and ‘ov’, including Gotse Delchev, Petrov, Karev, Uzunov, Chakalarov, Hadzhidimov, Poptrajkov and many others. Besides that, the Greeks have already changed my surname to Kafedzhis.” After that Stavre rhymed off a number of Polish surnames such as “Iaruzelski, Psezhinski, Drzhinski, Vasilevsky and so on... And can we Macedonians say that these are Macedonian family names...?” he asked and then went on to rhyme off a list of Russian surnames such as “Saposhnikov, Maslov, Kirov, Voreshnikov, Petrov and so on... And can we say that these are Bulgarian names...? No! Only Greeks do this to our people... they put an ‘s’ at the end of our names and then say ‘you are Greeks’...” added Stavre.

With his explanation Kafedzhiev thought that he had made some gains towards winning his argument for keeping his name the way it was. Unfortunately the officers were not in agreement and, by making such arguments, things became even more difficult for Stavre. At one point Stavre became so frustrated that he demanded that the officers return his documents because he said he was prepared to go back to Poland. Surprised by his demands the officers went silent. Then, after looking at one another, one of them said: “We don’t need to involve Poland in this over you; Yugoslavia and Poland have good relations.”

Seeing that he could not make any gains over having his name the way he wanted it, Stavre moved on to the next part of the interrogation. At this point he felt a little more confident about the kind of answers he was going to provide because he was being asked to speak about life in socialist Poland; something with which he was familiar. He began by telling them about the development period, the five-year national plan and the development of scientific methods. He did this by using strictly scientific terms. At one point he noticed the officers listening to him with their mouths open. Regarding his needs to come to Yugoslavia; he said he had two main reasons. The first was his Macedonian patriotism and his Macedonia in general. The second was the Yugoslav system. As an internationalist, he loved Yugoslavia’s attractive self-governing

management system, which was rated very high in the socialist construction of the Yugoslav multinational community. After hearing that, the officers became confused and stopped questioning him. Then, some moment later, one of them asked: “I am sure, Comrade Kafedzhiev, that you must certainly know someone from our leadership?”

The question further strengthened Kafedzhiev’s confidence and he answered in a socialist manner: “Of course not...”

The same day the Kafedzhiev family was moved to the “Avtokomanda” shelter, proving to him that he was fully capable of showing off his socialist self-governing pedigree. He could not believe that finally he was a free citizen.

Now he was no longer under the control of the Party. He was in his fifties and had a job busying himself with analyzing the past... the revolution and its defeat, the dirty history, the exodus, the plight of going through Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Russia...

Stavre remembered the constant adjustments, having to learn new languages, the meetings, the parting, violations of dignity... But most of all he did not want to remember the thoughts he had had in Poland, when he was in favour of the Greek Communist Party and when he had been forced to sort things out in his own mind because he had been dropped from the Party and sent from Bulgaria to Poland as punishment. He was being punished by the Party and it hurt... it still hurt... his wounds had not healed... wounds that to this day he hid from his own fighters... from a future communist society in which humanity was expected to march. This tormented him, bothered him every day and made him restless with unexplained mental disorders.

In Vroslav he was employed in a factory called “PA-FA-VAG”. He remembered well Radomski, a Social Democrat who treated him like his own son and helped him enroll in the School of Social Sciences at the PORP Central Committee in Warsaw. How could he forget Buzhdinski, the good Jewish lady, who insisted that he enter the school party-less? She did that because she wanted Kafedzhiev

to discover more and prove to him that he would be treated fairly even if he did not belong to the Party.

When Kafedzhief found out that she was a Jew he experienced something inexplicable (that the communists treated the Jews with respect). He felt as if he had gotten wings and a new faith in the ideals of communism. He then bought a pin with Lenin's image and had worn it on his lapel ever since.

The Jewish woman at the time was director of the school. She was the widow of Comrade Stanislav Buzhdinski, a well-respected Polish communist and associate of Lenin's. In 1938 Stalin, after accusing him of being a "traitor", monstrously liquidated him along with the entire Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. Stavre Kafedzhief was most touched when, during his acceptance reception, Mrs. Buzhdinski said: "Comrades, here is another tragedy of a revolutionary... We need to accept him as a student. Future communist society will need people like him..."

After that Kafedzhiev's faith in Communism was restored and from then on he devoted his time to the sacred task of building socialism. As if following Buzhdinski's recipe, after Kafedzhiev took residency at the shelter in Macedonia, he met with many people, fellow fighters from Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Russia and learned many nasty as well as nice things. Above all he was concerned about the Aegean (Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia) division. The Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia, living in the Republic of Macedonia, were divided into two opposing groups. Their differences stemmed from the revolution's ideology. The people had lost patience... things that took place had been warped and distorted in favour of one group or the other. Kafedzhiev's task was to study this phenomenon and determine whether it was present in all revolutions and choose a Leninist course to correct it. His biggest fear, however, was that people were already biased because their leaders and the leaders of their rivals strove to win more of them to their side by using their positions in state functions.

Kafedzhiev alleged the Party was meddling in unprincipled politics, which he believed were contrary to Leninist principles.

Kafedzhiev also discovered other abnormalities. These phenomena, he thought, were contrary to human and rational norms. Some institutions created obstacles in the smooth “Aegean” population’s integration into the local environments. He observed that even though the “Aegeans” were politically and professionally better prepared to assist with social developments, they were being bypassed in their quest for employment because it was believed that they were allegedly infected with Eastern ideologies. As a person who respected the rights of equality in people, after some research which he conducted on his own, Kafedzhiev found that the “Aegeans” were discriminated against. He did his research using Eastern methods that few people were familiar with, and from the individual cases he studied he created systemic tables and graphs about the places where the “Aegeans” were settled, the countries where they came from and the shelters in Skopje and across Macedonia where they lived. After Kafedzhiev identified the points of all the “hot spots”, it became clear to him what he needed to do. According to his own ideas, it was about time that he alerted the Marxist scientific minds about these complex conceptual issues brewing between the Ephesians. Unfortunately he had no idea how to do it and spent a long time pondering, relying mostly on his compatriots, returnees from Poland, for answers. He thought that only they had been brought up in a free environment and were capable of liberal thinking, thanks to the Polish system. Here he found the appropriate support he was looking for and appreciated the interesting phenomenon that required special sociological and psychological attention.

Unfortunately no sociologists or psychologists were aware or had spoken about this problem. The only ones aware were the politicians who were sniffing at their feet. History too had not matured enough and was far from recording the epic battles that took place in Vicho and Gramos and the impressive heroes of that War. Kafedzhiev believed that his statements and Marxist views one day would mature and grow and he would be able to organize a campaign for identifying the “Aegean” ideological stratification. This problem however plagued him for days on end and gave him sleepless nights. Ever since he discovered it he experienced many moments of almost unbearable enthusiasm - with and without reason.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – Rumena Returns from Canada

“You are very beautiful. America helped you to become even more beautified. The shelters here made you age faster...” said Dobrin to Rumena.

It was six o’clock in the morning and Rumena was not there. Dobrin waited concerned. He thought perhaps the plane had been delayed. He then looked out the window in his room and saw her outside loaded with suitcases.

Rumena was strong in nature and had never abandoned her faith. Her eyes reflected her inner strength.

Her two-year absence from Dobrin, however, gave her some anxiety. But now she had forgotten everything, especially after she saw Dobrin open the door.

“Oh, thank God!” said Delian, their son.

“I am sorry, I am truly sorry...” replied Rumena. “But I did not know what else to do.”

“Good morning!” Rumena said to Dobrin who stood there motionless. His gentle face radiated kindness but he was debilitated by a serious illness. He went back to bed.

A little later Rumena went to Dobrin’s room. She said: “I am glad you liked the gifts, Dobrin...” and bent down to kiss him. She initially felt his anger on his lips but it was passing. His lips felt gentle to the touch. With their silent kiss it seemed like everything was forgiven.

“The belt is from my aunt Frosina’s late husband. The suit too is from him. As you can see it looks like it was never worn. My aunt Frosina said he was a good man, a great gentleman,” said Rumena.

In addition to her other fantasies, Rumena was now dreaming of wealth, even though she was well-aware of her domestic situation.

Her feelings for Dobrin were different and unusual, as if she had lost her desire to constantly attack him and to fight and win.

“Now at least, you don’t have to worry about clothes,” Rumena said to Dobrin.

“I brought even more clothes for everyone. The Americans are rich...” she said with enthusiasm like she was struck by some kind of good luck.

She got up and quickly got dressed. She was troubled and tormented by thoughts of Dobrin’s condition. She stood in front of the mirror and corrected her make-up. Dobrin was looking at her with a staring expression. Her face reflected honesty and fatigue. She was full of love and patience. He couldn’t help himself but say:

“You are very beautiful. America helped you to become even more beautified. The shelters here made you age faster...”

“I knew you would say that, my dear Dobrin...” replied Rumena, and turned towards him with her hair let down.

Rumena was now avoiding the usual quarrels she had had with Dobrin about his shortcomings with the authorities who refused to recognize his contributions. Now she smiled more often and was more kind to him. But her thoughts were still directed towards the future, often thinking what life would be like...

But now, after a lengthy denial, it was clear to her. Perhaps that was why Dobrin was sick, she thought. Her sad memories again brought out haunting thoughts and she began to feel the pain of their embittered life. Both Rumena and Dobrin were thinking the same thing; all that remained of their lives was roaming in shelters and argumentation.

“My God, the injustices truly make me sick! And I blamed you for this all this time...” said Rumena to Dobrin.

Sometimes Rumena stood there self-absorbed in her own thoughts and wandering imagination, waiting and hoping that times would

change. “Perhaps the time will come when there is justice and prosperity, at least for the young, for my Delian...” she thought to herself. Similar thoughts also ran through her head when she looked at Dobrin, now sick. “I hope Delian does not inherit our anathema...” she thought to herself.

In socialism, during their lives, parents only leave a stretched black-red thread for their children. People may ask themselves: “Who is that young man? Why are they not helping that boy? That young man comes from an anathematized family and no one has said anything good about him. You will be mistaken if you think differently. The fruit of the pear does not fall too far from the pear tree. The past does not lie.”

Slightly frightened and somewhat upset, Rumena wanted to forget things. She said to herself: “What a horrible thought that is! Should we even think that people will never change?” She shook her head and, in a low but sad tone of voice, said: “Only God has the power and strength. Let him do everything in his power to fix things...”

She no longer believed in anything. These were just empty phrases she had heard from other people from her past. She remembered them and spoke them like old worn out objects which she had discarded from her head.

For some reason she thought of people who cut their hair short, down to the skin, and then their skulls became sunburned and their eyebrows dense and dark just like the people who threatened the future.

She held a photo of Dobrin in her hand. Dobrin had sent her this photo from Taishot, a city in Siberia. He looked like one of those people. He was wearing a rough, grey coat. His boots were untied and he looked like a bag full of lice-ridden rags. He was an enemy of the revolutionary fatherland, an enemy of the people. He came out of the cold cells all re-educated and rehabilitated. She now loved and clutched that photo tight in her hand because it told the whole story about her husband.

She remembered the Party slogans that went something like this: “Send the suspicious types to the camps to carry out their sentences. No investigation is needed! No prosecution is necessary! Because it will lead us astray and will give them time to recover. The Party Secretary’s word is enough. The Secretaries are the sons of the Party...”

One morning Rumena stuck her face against the window glass and stared at the shelter for a long time.

Her heart was gripped by anxiety. She wanted to visit some old people she knew. She dressed herself in one of her aunt Frosina’s dresses, tied her hair in a bun, put a number of old-fashioned rings on her fingers and in her hands she held a large purse with a shiny buckle on it. On the way there she felt strange and uncertain. Part of the reason was her high heeled shoes. They made her look taller but also unstable on her feet. But, at the same time, gave her special charm, as if she was an older lady.

“What joy? What happiness?” said the first woman that met her on the way.

The perfume that emanated from her body filled the hallway and made the women envious as they inhaled the aroma of this American frankincense, like Henry Maruzelski’s wife had told her.

Each of the women she passed by wanted to invite her to her home. Rumena, however, was happy and glad to be invited to Lina Dinevichina’s home.

“You look beautiful, Rumena,” said Lina while pulling a hair off her dress.

“Well, America is America. What can we do? We are still drifters here. We will fight with these creatures here...” replied Rumena as she squashed a cockroach with her leather shoe.

“Why do you look so sad?” asked Rumena addressing Mitse Dinevichin. “You look like you lost a game of dominoes.”

“No, no, it’s nothing like that...” answered Mitse sounding like he was involved in some sort of partisan conspiracy.

“Okay, okay, tell Rumena what’s ailing you, she is one of us. Whatever it is you are hiding will come out sooner or later...” said Lina to her husband. Mitse adjusted himself and leaned forward, as if confessing to the Party. He then grabbed his chin and said:

“We experienced a schism between us. Now nobody is talking to anybody. We are deeply divided on the conceptual issue of constructing socialism.”

“I don’t understand why...” said Rumena. “I can’t believe it’s true!” she concluded wondering why.

“The people are becoming belligerent and don’t like each other. They are beginning to give up on the fundamental tenets of the labour movement. This was an unprecedented act. Do you want to know more?” asked Mitse.

“Yes,” answered Rumena curiously and continued. “It is nice to get rid of the craziness...”

“Good! Then I will tell you. But are you sure?” asked Mitse wondering if it was a good idea to tell her these things.

“My dear Mitse, if I was not sure I would have said so!” answered Rumena and then said: “Only yesterday Dobrin said to me:

‘Forgive me, Rumena, but it looks like I am obsessed with what you love. I spent my entire life filled with empty illusions about everything.’ This is what Dobrin said to me...” concluded Rumena.

“If that is so, why then are you not spitting in my face?” said Mitse indignantly.

“Well, that’s the way it is!” replied Rumena.

Mitse began to laugh out loud. “Why are you laughing so much if you are so unhappy?” asked his wife Lina.

“Am laughing because it will be much worse if they turn my soul upside down like they did to Alekso Shlipkovski,” replied Mitse.

Rumena became upset and began to curse.

“Control yourself, Rumena! No need to raise your voice!” ordered Mitse.

“You can do what you want! I don’t want to discuss this matter any longer...” said Rumena abruptly. “Why? Because you personally have a long-standing experience with the Party?” asked Mitse indignantly, considering it as one of the key issues.

“Well, you get nothing for it nor will anyone be guaranteed anything for it. It is like a forgotten love. But in love one usually has photographs and love letters. But in the case of the Party what do you have? The Party card?! And what will that buy you today? What can you get today from the interest of your membership?” asked Rumena laughing out loud.

“Why are you talking like that? You were happy to have seen America and now you spit on everything? You surprise me! It is very unusual for a revolutionary woman and a leader of the revolution to speak like this!” said Mitse.

“What are you trying to tell me? Do you still live in delusions or what...?” replied Rumena.

Rumena was not done with Mitse but at that very moment she thought of Dobrin and his condition, which made her sad. She could not find an answer for the thirty years or so of suffering. It was also hopeless arguing with people who had no understanding of what it was like to be on the other side of the receiving end.

“Do you know what is happening to all of us who are in the shelter? Surely you do not! Those who returned from Poland are all revisionists and believe in nothing. And those who returned from Romania are neither here nor there. Go ahead and build socialism with them. Czechoslovakia... they all fit best in self-government.

But what is amazing is that several of them who returned from Hungary keep to themselves and refuse to accept the Red Army's intervention. Only we from Tashkent... we have a strong stand, we are unwavering internationalists. This is called loyalty not bullshit. Some see something of capitalism and change their minds... just like you..." said Mitse to Rumena with an angry tone of voice.

"You surprise me Mitse..." replied Rumena while stepping on another cockroach that crossed her path in front of her legs.

"You say I surprise you? What would you say if I told you that some of us are marked men...?" said Mitse.

"How and why are you marked, my good man?" asked Rumena curiously and indignantly.

"Just like that! When the Greek King came here for a visit, several of us were taken into custody. When Khrushchev came they did the same. Now, a month ago, King Haile Saile came here and the same was done. It would appear that any time a statesman comes here we get the same treatment..." explained Mitse, the teacher from Dolna Prespa.

Rumena burst out laughing and finally, with tears in her eyes, said:

"Look, you say are internationalists! But in America, Canada and Australia our people know nothing of such things. Only here we are nurturing the mind with such escapades..." said Rumena, but before she was finished Mitse interrupted her and said:

"Control yourself, Rumena! Don't step on our ideals. There are many who negate our labour movement and socialism in our glorious history and we don't need any more..." said Mitse in a firm tone of voice.

"That's the way it is, my good man. It's usually the victims who are the biggest believers. But did you ever wonder why? Think about it. How could you have been deceived if you were not a victim of deception? I am certain we have been deceived about this

revolution, and even more so by whom... and it is by their doing that we are here in these shelters wasting way. Do you see what is happening here?! They are a breed of internationalist snouts, strong and adapted to life... indestructible... and I know they follow us around everywhere. They get under our skin... drain our blood... and ruin our minds. Nothing can destroy them except if we all get out naked and burn these shelters down along with our destiny, because if we don't do this we will suffer to death in them. Maybe then our minds will rest, there will be no one to spread the infection and we will all be healed..." replied Rumena.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN – Dobrin’s last days

That night great weight and silence reigned in the apartment. Before eating his food Dobrin put his hands together as if praying. He then spread his arms and placed his hands in a position to receive mercy. His jaw was clamped and the skin on his face was dry.

“I am already dead; there is nothing more I can say... it is not worth living in the ashes of extinction. A person needs to gather his strength and completely break with his past...” said Dobrin to himself while staring at his books with indifference.

Delian cleaned off the crumbs from Dobrin’s bed and, with special care, covered Dobrin’s feet with a spare blanket. Dobrin thanked him with a slight smile on his lopsided mouth. Dobrin could still talk but with much difficulty. He closed his eyes and drowned into a state of melancholy.

The night seemed to be close to his face. Snow was falling outside and clinging to the window. Sometimes he opened his eyes. His body was experiencing moments of brief, periodic but disturbing trembling.

“Perhaps it was fear of death?” he thought to himself. After receiving the injection to reduce his pain he closed his eyes in hopes of falling asleep. Thinking about it sometimes he amazed himself about his own past: “Where did I find the strength to go through life with such pride... with such courage... Oh, Dobrin, Dobrin... We were revolutionaries... we were called revolutionaries... and for that reason we needed to be people from a ‘special school’ or from a special breed?” he would say to himself.

Dobrin was very sensitive and would not accept even a hint of false guilt to fall on him. From infancy he had been unhappy and his life was a tragedy, but life forced him to endure, not to break the thread of living, to strengthen his resolve and to be normal.

He quietly turned his head but did not look at the picture of Rumena resting on the window sill of the main window in the room. He looked past the picture, far away, perhaps somewhere where death

was not looming. He now lay there sick with darkened eyes and arms relaxed. He felt himself slipping away and his sense of reality evaporating like the mist in a summer morning. His eyes looked like they were asking for forgiveness, but when the door suddenly creaked open and Rumena walked in his eyes filled with joy.

“I have news... wonderful news! I can’t be any happier!” said Rumena looking radiant and happy.

“What a shocker! A shocker Dobrin!” she added.

“What?” asked Dobrin with some difficulty, opening his dry mouth and the eyelids of his bloodshot eyes.

“They recognized it. I will read it to you!” she said and began to read:

“Subject: Notice concerning application number 13 5935, October 5, 1989, SKOPJE

Based on the positive opinion under the Law (“Official Gazette of the CPM”, No.23/80)...

Please note that with respect to the application submitted by Dobrin Suvogorski on behalf of the Commission, the Special Commission of the National Board of SZB from NOB of Macedonia, according to the Law, has given a positive opinion to the ELAS and NODEM participants. According to this opinion and statements made by members of the Commission, regarding the responsibility of high ranking officials in the military and political authorities during the Liberation War in Greece - Aegean Macedonia from 1941-1945, the Commission has recognized their capacity as positive.

(Referring to ELAS and the organs in the Democratic Army of Greece as well as organs of the Macedonian political organizations in Aegean Macedonia 1946-1949 (NODEM).)

Chief of staff”

All excited Rumena kissed Dobrin and then triumphantly yelled out:

“Dobrin, Dobrin! Finally, after thirty years, they recognized your contribution!! This is Justice! And not revenge by your comrades.”

Dobrin sat up. He had a menacing look on his face. This was a man with a super-ego who was now trying to regain control of his body, to move it away from death. He looked like he was afraid of what he had learned over the years and how his sickness had put him in bed, a bed which smelled of camphor and sweat. The two of them sat motionless in silence. They did not want to talk any more; they had had enough pain and agony.

Rumena used to encourage him by saying:

“You look much better today Dobrin... Sit up a little. You know me, I don’t like men who babble too much about the past...” and by saying:

“Can I get you some milk?” while adjusting his bed.

Dobrin again sunk into his thoughts... remembering his past. He was remembering about the time he was in the Siberian prisons, a fate which was violently broken and at one time had the colour of absence. The only thing he could do in the cell was think; he could not speak, not even utter a single word, not when he was in pain, angry, afraid, ashamed... not even when he wanted to laugh. He had only himself... to go to bed was like lying in a grave, but death refused to touch him, even though it was always there with him, near him, there in the damp walls. He passed the Siberian nights in silence with his eyes and mouth closed... lying on top of that terrible ice, under the pale moon, under those distant stars...

You don’t want to measure time. Why would you even want daylight in such a desolate place? Siberia was like that for centuries and Dobrin was there stuck in the frost, dragging wooden beams through the impassable tundra. The snow was frosted and squeaked under his bare feet as he made his way to his destination, pointed to by frozen bayonets. Here and there he hugged a big tree trunk like it was his sister and just for one moment he wanted to tell her the whole truth. The darkness in the tundra was warmer and gave

Dobrin moments of absence and instinctively warmed his soul much more than did the milky Siberian sun. A sip of hot tea was always welcome...

“Dobrin, take your milk...” said Rumena in a kind and pleading tone of voice.

Dobrin suddenly opened his eyes... They were full of fear.

“What happened?” whispered Rumena.

“Nothing...” replied Dobrin. “I thought I heard something...”

“Did someone come in?” asked Rumena and got up to look.

“No, it’s not that...” replied Dobrin.

“So what is it, then?” asked Rumena.

“It seemed like it was far away... It sounded like cannon shells falling,” replied Dobrin and perked up his ears.

“I must have imagined it all...” he then concluded.

“Lord I want this night to end quickly...” he said to himself.

Cannon blasts were echoing in his head, stirring up bad memories. His memories always began in the present and quickly ended up in the past.

His memories kept racing through the dark February night. Dark figures wandered around in the snowy fields inside his head. People, seeming like they were bracing for the frosty wind, were moving quickly. He again heard terrible thunderstorms... the thunder of war. Tanks, cannons, rifles, machine guns... all kinds of guns... all firing... Wounded people bleeding... The sky was clear and the moon was shining bright. The column was marching towards Kaimakchalan. Smoke, tongues of flame and the smell of burnt blood were in the air.

The villages, lined up one behind another, were burning in his mind. Only their charred walls remained standing black above the snowdrifts. Three days and nights passed and the battle kept raging. The years 1940 to 1949 raced through his mind. He looked ahead with a rigid gaze. Then suddenly he asked himself: "Are we fighting for victory?" He looked down at the black blood... the blood of our soldiers... People were crying for our dead people... "Is this how death comes to us?" he asked himself.

There was silence, as if in this mortal hour he wanted to make mention of them again.

"Look at the mortally wounded soldier... he feels the urge... with burnt lips he mumbles... Why? Why? The emptiness, which undoubtedly follows death... which finally extinguishes fire and time... and then erases all traces of existence... Yes, your hatred destroys your spirit just like war does your body. Will our pride ever lift our bitter fate to the truth? They finally admitted this after thirty years? They recognized my contribution! They finally did!?" whispered Dobrin to himself.

He looked out the window at the snow. It was like a movie screen... air, fire, water, soldiers... and a play of destiny.

One might be afraid of what they have learned over the years. Where does a man find the strength to go through life with pride and with such courage?

He remembered what Socrates once said to his disciples: "Fearing death is stupid. For as long as I am here, death is not here. But when death comes I will not be here. In other words, death and I will never meet."

Many thoughts came to his mind for which he tried to find answers... he knew that every creature tried to resist death. Dobrin's eyes seemed like they were looking for something... searching... perhaps for a prayer... or perhaps for a curse... he wanted another hour, another minute... he had many things to say about his devotion to his homeland... for which one time he was prepared to give his

young life. Perhaps then his fatherland would have received him differently... not slandered, not detested... in his own grave.

He closed his eyes and no longer looked out of the window.

The morning light flooded the window and the sun's rays illuminated the walls of the room. Dobrin Suvogorski lay there dead, covered with a white sheet.

It was cold, very cold at the cemetery. The mourners were many. Strogov appeared in the courtyard and at the chapel. He was very discreet and no one noticed him. Maybe he was writing his last notes for Dobrin Suvogorski's file.

The procession went up the slope. It passed the parcel of cemetery reserved for the fighters and arrived at the parcel of cemetery reserved for the common people. They all walked in silence, up to the fresh hole dug in the ground... Dobrin's final resting place... Near the freshly dug soil lay an old cross and a bundle of old bones.

The speeches were held here. One of the mourners said: "Dobrin Suvogorski did not die now; he died thirty years ago..."

Perhaps the man wanted to say more but a strong wind blew and made his cold lips tremble. The man fell silent as he looked at Dobrin's dead body.

Then, along with the others, he threw a handful of soil on the lowered coffin.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN – Memories of a bitter past

Alma-Ata is a city in Kazakhstan where all convicted members of NOF were temporarily taken after serving their punishment in the Siberian camps. After returning to Yugoslavia, Dobrin Suvogorski became known as the “Russian spy”.

I don’t know. I don’t understand anything about our misfortune. They say death is not as frightening to be crucified or to be buried alive, than it is to have your whole family sentenced to death by your own co-fighters and like-minded communist comrades.

Well, it would appear that those few who had difficulty becoming “Loyal Yugoslavs” had committed “sins” and needed to be punished. Those who punished them knew that the punished would seek revenge - Communist justice in the “name of the people”.

This also happened again in Alma-Ata. *

What happened to us?!

* Alma –Ata is a city in Kazakhstan where all the convicted NOF leaders were temporarily taken after their sentences, partly served in the Siberian camps, were annulled. There was disagreement between the NOF leaders of whether to go to Tashkent or return to Yugoslavia. The idea was to go to Tashkent and join the many Macedonian DAG fighters who were relocated there and prove to them that it was not them but the Greek communists who were to blame for the failure of the Greek Civil War. But at that time relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia were not at their best and almost all the NOF leaders wanted to return to Yugoslavia, leaving only one behind. Then when he returned to Yugoslavia they accused him of committing treason and named him the “Russian spy”.

“I know nothing of what happened to my father and mother. No one seems to know what happened to them except for where my father was buried and that he was buried in another man’s grave. If someone were to ask me to tell them what happened to them I would not be able to... because I don’t know myself. I now rarely think

about them but I always remember what they said: ‘Delian, you must remain silent! Because you don’t know anything and you don’t need to know anything about these things and about the Party...’ and so reprimanded I remain in the shelters.

I now understand what they could not understand.

My mother had a squeaky voice, especially when she yelled at me and my father. Sometimes we all grieved, we were always sad. Discontentment seemed to be our usual companion in life. People avoided us and went the other way to hide from us... Even the weather bothered us.

My mother used to say: ‘Our Aegeans (former CPG Communists), now Yugoslav Communists, are ruthless, worse than the Holy Spirit...’

It was a blow of fate that my mother met her end from the dreaded Alzheimer’s disease. She could not go anywhere or do anything because of her illness. Little by little she forgot everything; the disease destroyed her brain cells.

I never dabbled in history and I am not versed in it. That was a subject for my parents Dobrin and Rumena, and look what happened to them.

Up to the point when he died, Dobrin used to say: ‘I am a Macedonian communist and I am paying my debt...’ And Rumena, always with her cynical smile, showed her dignity differently when she used to say: ‘Courage is the ability of the soul to unflinchingly meet its obligations and decisively struggle with the difficulties and perils of life against bold liars...’

She was a recognizable woman with swollen, bloodshot eyes looking like those people who have difficulty sleeping. She had a greyish looking face looking like those people who are bleached by the wind. Her hands were constantly restless. She gazed at people when she looked at them and stared at their faces. She constantly changed her facial expression making it challenging to understand what she was thinking and feeling. Her mood also changed often,

from being uncertain to being confused, to being distrustful, to being unpleasant. One time a man from the veteran's association came towards her at my father's grave. He looked agitated and his hands were trembling. He looked like he had forgotten something important that he was expected to remember but he could not remember what it was. My mother good-naturedly smiled at him but when she saw an older woman standing beside him, she stopped smiling. The woman was fat and had a red and ugly face. She was wearing a black dress, the kind of dress that mourners wear, that was too small for her. She circled around in front of my father's grave tightly clutching a bouquet of flowers against her chest. The flowers looked wilted. It was a hot day and the scorching sun was beating down on them. The woman apparently knew my father and wanted to take part in the ceremony together with the man, who introduced himself as a representative of the Veterans Association of Macedonia. She said that my father was rehabilitated now and asked if they could read a few words that were written on a piece of paper for this occasion. Here is what was written:

‘...In addition to being an organizer and a champion of national rights and freedoms, you also created a Macedonian alphabet with 24 letters for the spiritual flourishing of your people in the midst of the war in Aegean Macedonia.

Your national feelings and love for your people came to a peak in the summer of 1944, with the formation of the Voden Macedonian battalion.

In addition to your contribution in the formation of the Macedonian army, you also created the alphabet with which the proclamation to the Macedonian people in Voden, as well as many songs and the march for the Voden Battalion, were written.

You were and remain to be a fighter and a cultural activist for the Macedonian people. They accused you of being an ‘agent working for Tito’ in the Siberian prison camps but that was only a communist delusion concocted by the CPG.

You dedicated your life to your homeland and to all of us, your comrades. You were never ‘Tito’s agent’ or a ‘Russian spy’, yet, today, here you are REHABILITATED!”

After the speech was read my mother was both happy and sad. Meeting these people and hearing what they had to say both encouraged and energized her. Her eyes became focused and she began to stare at the wilted flowers. She remembered something... She remembered my father’s funeral ten years ago. The only people who attended the funeral were me, the gravediggers and my mother...

Now she had a full smile on her face. Her heart began to beat faster and she felt a burning and itching sensation in her throat which made her swallow several times. She walked in front of the gathering and said:

“What can I say about his sins and repentance...? You say the offender has been rehabilitated... And by that you mean he does not need his reputation, honesty and honour restored... But let me say this: His comrades are the real criminals here who, with the power of the Party, through institutions, destroyed my husband’s life by falsely calling him a ‘Russian spy’. And for his punishment to be even harsher, his comrades depersonalized him. From a Macedonian they ‘upgraded’ him to an ‘ineligible’ Yugoslav. Hundreds of people like him suffered and died only because they wanted to see a free and independent united Macedonia. Many of them never returned to their families because they perished in the cells of foreign prisons.

They never lost their reputation in the eyes of their people, even though they were tried in ‘the name of the people’. They never lost their honour either... It was only elevated to new heights...!”

None of this makes any sense to me. These people are now saying that we have not been humiliated? And that we should stand proud alongside them? Stand alongside with the same people who “rehabilitated” my father? A man who died in grief and despair and who was buried in someone else’s grave... in a desolate place...?

Suddenly we all felt the meaninglessness of our own misfortunes and suffering.

Maybe now someone from the Lerin Region villages might recognize who Rumena and Dobrin Suvogorski were... in their deserted homeland where now only ruins remain...

Part II

EXCERPTS FROM DOBRIN SUVOGORSKI'S DIARY

RAKOVSKI - PART 2

CHAPTER ONE - The wanderers called the shelters “our universities”

It was very early in the morning and no one noticed what time it was when we heard a loud knock on the big door of the shelter. We all ran quickly to open it. The person knocking was persistent because he wanted to meet us, the wanderers of the world, as much as we wanted to meet him.

All of us who had left our homeland and were now immigrants often talked about our teacher Dobrin Suvogorski who taught us Marxism-Leninism and the importance of the Comintern. Together we sang the “International”, which roared from Moscow all the way down to Kostur, Lerin, Voden... but after the Greek Civil War (1945-1949) it disappeared... gone into oblivion. Now the desolation that rules kills all.

He was a communist to the bone capable of ordering people around without shouting, almost in silence. He made decisions alone about most things. He always made it clear what could be done and what couldn't be done, in every given situation.

When he looked at us all sitting down on our iron beds he looked like his eyes were sparkling. And indeed, his eyes looked like they were filled with tears as he took a big step over the threshold to enter the room.

I was surprised to see a person show up, who no one had invited. But then, for a moment, I thought of how things were in the past...

The moment Suvogorski entered the shelter he greeted everyone, one by one, leaned over one of the iron beds, and said: “I am happy to tell you that I am back from Siberia!”

He then addressed everyone by saying: “This may not be quite clear to you, but what I want to do is tell you that I feel guilty and want to share some things with you. I want to share them with the people with whom I fought side by side, which left great devastation in our homeland! The truth is, what happened to us was not our fault. We did what we were told to do and we followed someone else's terrible

strategy because we had no strategy of our own. This is how we ended up being driven out of our ancestral hearth.

I discovered this during a long Siberian winter. One of the Russian interrogators literally told me: ‘Comrade Suvogorski, you sacrificed yourself and the Macedonian people simply for foreign interests. You know very well that during the years 1945 to 1949 you Macedonians were under Greek control. You were under the same dark, cloudy conditions that you were under about one hundred years ago. This is why we Russians have the saying ‘those who rule make the rules’, which you Macedonians have yet to learn. So here are some facts as to why you could not achieve that which you were falsely led to believe you could achieve:

1. To this day all researchers are amazed as to how the CPG masterminded the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) under the pretense that socialism was possible in Greece, when the whole world knew that during the Yalta Conference, held between February 4 and 11, 1945, Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt, in the presence of their foreign ministers, decided that Greece was 90% under the British and American sphere of influence and that in Yalta Stalin guaranteed that no socialist system would be implemented in Greece even with the Greek Civil War taking place. So there was only one reason for having the Greek Civil War and that was to ethnically cleanse the Macedonian population from Greece. This was done by internationalizing the problem and by doing it by legal means. This was done to make more space for the Asia Minor settlers and colonists deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia during the 1920’s. See: Φ0371/43649 - 00201 P. 20431/1009/67.

2. About dividing the Balkans into spheres of influence, in his memoirs Churchill described the division as follows: ‘We arrived in Moscow in the late hours of October 9, 1944. We had the first significant meeting and counseling arranged in the Kremlin on October 10. Present in the meeting were Stalin, Molotov, Eden and myself (Churchill). The Majors Bierce and Popov did the translating for us...’ In other words the division of spheres of influence was such that Greece was left almost entirely to British influence and as a result Britain had the right, as needed at any time, to be able to intervene with all possible means.

3. The policy of the Soviet Union towards the ‘Macedonian Question’ was a function of global policy and strategy in general, and with Greece in particular. The ‘Macedonian Question’ and the attitude of the English, Americans and Greeks towards the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, Stalin treated as a cover for his own policies that he implemented in the countries that fell under his influence after World War II. During the Second World War the communist parties in the countries that included parts of divided Macedonia firmly respected the declarative principles of the Great Powers, which called for ‘not altering prewar borders’. The following should also be known: It was on Stalin’s initiative that the Comintern was dissolved. The Comintern had formally recognized the right of independence of each Communist Party and supported the thesis of ‘one country one party’. When Stalin made a deal with the other Great Powers in Moscow in October, 1944, to divide the Balkans into spheres of influence, the Balkan borders were already intact and they were not going to change no matter what. This was Stalin’s answer to all of us Macedonians who were looking to Russia to save us. This was the first blow against us and shows how we lost our united spiritual system, i.e. our nation was left without a strategy for the spiritual survival of our ethnic space in the Balkans.

4. At about the same time Stalin sold us out, the CPG became the new almighty master of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia and the consequences of that were not small. The ‘new order’ needed victims for its activities and there were plenty of Macedonians to go around. The all important slogan was invented which called for ‘All to arms! Everything for freedom!’

As a nation and as individual people, were we the Macedonians intellectually, politically and militarily prepared and able to preserve the territorial integrity of Greek occupied Macedonia and the compactness of the Macedonian population during World War II?

When the Great Powers divided the Balkans into spheres of influence their position was a ‘policy of status quo’. At the same time the permanent border separating Greece and Yugoslavia

became an International border belonging to the two opposing camps.

Why did we Macedonians think that we could defy the Great Powers and bring down an International border, the iron curtain that divided the two opposing Great Power camps all on our own – with help from the Greek communists?

Did NOF have any strategy of its own regarding this? Obviously not! This is why our people were led by foreigners whose main goal was to lead us to hell and to ethnically cleanse us from our homeland.

There is a lesson here for the ‘Guardians of Aegean History’ who believe that ‘we had no other alternative’ but to take the course we took. Please explain to us what would have happened if the Greek Civil War had never taken place, if we Macedonians had not joined the Democratic Army of Greece and if NOF had never been formed and managed by the CPM/CPY? Would we have suffered the same fate; so many of us being killed and so many, many more of us being permanently driven out of our homes, with no hope of ever returning? Would we have experienced the same disaster? And how much worse would it have been had we not done all those things?

These issues are very sensitive and charged with emotion. Even now, so many years later, we refuse to accept that we had been duped. We refuse to accept that acts of evil had been perpetrated against us and we unwittingly had participated in a campaign of self-destruction. The secrets of our past are dark but they must come out one day so that we can learn from them and not repeat our mistakes in the future. There is no question that we were led by foreigners and fought and sacrificed our lives for foreign interests and, worst of all, we did all this against our own interests... How gullible is that?

There are many contradictions to our story and most are due to the fact that our history, up until recently, had been written under censorship and under arbitration so that the truth could be well hidden... and so that we would never be able to find the root of the evil and the dark secrets of our genocide. All this was meant to destruct us from looking in the right places... And all this was done

in favour of daily politics, of maintaining good neighbourly relations, particularly between Greece and Yugoslavia.

But now things need to change. We know from history which wars were successful and which ones were disastrous. Every civilized nation looks at its own history for its values and lessons learned before it moves forward. And so the time has come for Macedonian historians to begin looking at Macedonia's history from the Macedonian people's point of view and apply lessons learned for our future. We can't ignore the fact that for a couple of centuries now Greece has been kept alive, with help from its patrons, and has been allowed to slaughter Macedonians in order to appropriate Macedonian lands, history and culture. We Macedonians need to learn this fact and erase the illusion that "someone else" is more interested in us than we are, and that "someone else" is willing to help us for our sake and not for their own personal interest. It is a fact that the Macedonian people have been divided and this has weakened us and brought us disunity. It is a fact that Hellenism has been used in Greece to eradicate us. These are facts and important lessons to be learned so that we can better be prepared for the future. We cannot dismiss the crimes committed against us because they are painful and bitter, or because we are embarrassed, or because we want to have better relations with our enemies; those who committed the crimes against us. Several genocides have been committed against our people and we have become "wanderers" and drifters in this world. We have been driven out of our homeland, not because we are guilty of something but to serve foreign and illegal interests. If we continue to go in the same direction we have been going up until now, we will not only permanently lose our homeland but we will admit to "National defeat" and prove to the world that we were "wrong" and that those who committed the genocides against us were "right". Events that took place in the three and a half years of so-called Greek Civil War are confirmation of the old truth that the Greek Civil War was no coincidence; the ideological violence was conveniently perpetrated against us. The violent mobilization of so many Macedonian people, who did their best, and in return received death, persecution, destruction of their homes and exile was no coincidence. And the fact that we are not allowed to go back, not even to light a candle on the graves of those who gave their lives for us, is also no coincidence. All this was perpetrated to

permanently “get rid” of the Macedonian presence from Greek occupied Macedonia. This is a fact.

5. On January 30 and 31, 1949 the CPG Central Committee, during its 5th Plenum, introduced the slogan: “A United Macedonian State within a Balkan Federation.” Then, on March 7, 1949, the same CPG Central Committee denied introducing such a slogan. This “denial” was accepted by the NOF leadership during its 2nd NOF Plenum held on February 3, 1949, even before the CPG denied it. On August 14, 1949, after the frontal battles for Vicho were fought and lost, Vasilis Bardzhiotas, Supreme Political Commissar, introduced the slogan: “Gramos will become the tomb of the Monarcho-Fascist government army.” This was an army that numbered ten times that of DAG, its opponent. Then on August 29, 1949, when the last battles were taking place on Mount Gramos, before the war was lost, DAG Headquarters announced that: “...the DAG units were pulling out from Gramos and heading for Albania because they had completed their heroic task...” Unfortunately that “heroic task” was DAG’s capitulation and liquidation. Then on October 7, 1949, while camped in Albania in a region called “Bureli”, the CPG declared it lost the war because of the spies and traitors to the revolution present among them. And those spies and traitors, the CPG pointed out, were the 11 NOF, AFZH and NOMS members, all Macedonians, and called for their execution. But because the Albanian authorities would not allow such gruesome acts to take place in their country, the 11 were sent to the Siberian prison camps. The CPG, of course, did this to place the guilt on the Macedonians so that the guilty Greeks in the CPG could be “guilt free”. And thus a new CPG slogan was introduced: “Guilty without guilt!”

6. On March 23, 1949, the CPG created the organization KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia) and declared that the Macedonian people were a “bright spot” in history. In its resolution KOEM declared that: “The CPY created the national - democratic bloc; the Yugoslav nations, including the Macedonians, and then handed them over to the imperialists...” But our history (the mainstream history about the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia) says: “The adopted resolution of KOEM and of all organizations in NOF, AFZH and DAG fighters served as a means

of implementing a hysterical campaign against Yugoslavia and its leadership.” On June 16, 1949 the AFZH Executive Board called on all Macedonian women to the defense of the Vicho front line.

7. Tito and Stalin fight over “Greek Line”

The main reason why Stalin and Tito were fighting was because Marshal Tito refused to stop supplying the partisans in Greece with weapons and equipment during the Greek Civil War, as revealed by secret CIA documents.

Secret CIA documents

Recently declassified United States National Security Agency (NSA) secret documents have revealed that the world was on the brink of a Third World War, involving nuclear weapons, during the epic clash between Stalin and Tito. This may seem incredible but Tito and Stalin’s tiff, which began in 1946, almost started a world war. And all this was because Yugoslavia was supplying the partisans in Greece with aid, weapons and ammunition during the Greek Civil War. CIA declassified secret documents have revealed that in the years after the Second World War great geopolitical power games for the redistribution of borders had been played on the Republic of Macedonia’s southern border. The 11 page NSA analysis has revealed the real cause for the feud between Tito and Stalin. This will be fascinating reading for historians who collect puzzle pieces for the mosaic of the so-called “Greek Civil War” especially about the Macedonians who participated in the partisan battalions and in helping the Yugoslav army. This analysis shows how far the two opposing Great Power sides were prepared to go in the fierce Cold War that followed World War II.

8. Soviet proposals to the CPG for ending the Greek Civil War

On April 11, 1949 Zahariadis was summoned to Moscow where Stalin personally gave him a directive to end the armed struggle in Greece. Stalin’s decision to end the armed struggle in Greece was based on information he had received on plans to attack Albania during the summer offensive against DAG. The Greek government

army and NATO were preparing to attack Albania and, because of its conflict with Yugoslavia, the USSR would not be able to help.

On April 20, 1949 Zahariadis informed the immediate CPG leadership of Stalin's directive and made plans to withdraw DAG from Greece, which according to Stalin should have been done by the end of May 1949.

But then on May 4, 1949, the Soviet administration suddenly reversed its decision and told Zahariadis to temporarily postpone DAG's early withdrawal and continue the struggle.

So the question is: "In view of these facts, can we Macedonians believe that we were a political and military factor in the Greek Civil War and that we had power to command DAG, in whose ranks over 15,000 Macedonian fighters from our villages served, like our mainstream history has led us to believe?"

Should we even waste words on the foreign manipulations committed against us or on our NOF and AFZH leaders who themselves were heavily manipulated?! Our so-called NOF "spiritual" leaders, who chose to remain in our service and who called for a "total mobilization" of our people, perhaps unbeknown to them, became the leaders of our fateful march to oblivion... Instead of worrying which Party to serve – the CPY or the CPG – perhaps they should have cared a bit more about the fate of the Macedonian people and a bit more about the "march" they took them to.

The truth, as hard as it is to accept, needs to come out. Over 70 years have already passed and generations have come and gone, and we continue believing fairy tales; rather than to admit that we, again, "failed to fulfill our national objectives" (screwed up). We have failed in the face of many complex problems created by internal and external factors. We failed to properly evaluate our aims and capability to deliver results in view of the situation and conditions imposed on us. In other words, we had no realistic strategic plans and we relied on foreigners (our eternal enemies) to deliver us to where we thought we were going. It was a grave mistake of the Macedonian leadership to rely heavily on the CPY (which

abandoned us) and the CPG (which destroyed us), two foreign entities, to unreservedly implement our political interests... It was never in their interests, as it turned out and as events have shown, to do that, except to support and encourage us on our mission to our GENOCIDE.

9. Decades later, after the Greek Civil War ended, General Markos Vafiadis returned to Greece and in a couple of interviews with the Athens's daily "Ta Nea" and with Solun's "Ellinikos Voras" Markos said: "Zahariadis wanted the disaster he created... He planned it that way... We were betrayed by the Party leadership...!" (See "Ellinikos Voras", August 1978.) Later in the interviews he said: "At the time I did not know that Zahariadis was a provocateur... that he was playing the English and American game..." (See Dim. Gousidis.) A correspondent asked Markos: "What evidence do you have that puts the blame on Zahariadis? Do you have any documents, Mr. Vafiadis?" To which Markos replied: "Yes, there are documents? I have papers... And the events themselves speak about it!" (See "Ta Nea", August 22, 1978.)

10. In February 1953 Ankara led trilateral talks for forming a Balkan pact of friendship and cooperation between Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey. In August 1954 an amended pact was signed and put into effect in Bled (Yugoslavia) about a "military alliance" between the three signatories. The Balkan Pact of 1953 is evidence, a moment in time, of when the west openly offered support to Yugoslavia to protect it from communist camp threats, a pact that did not last too long. In 1961 the three countries agreed that the "Balkan Pact" was dead.

But the signing of the Balkan Pact created consequences for the "Macedonian Question". To get this deal Yugoslavia had to make concessions to please Greece. The following concessions were made: The "Association of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia" was dissolved and the newspaper "Voice of the Aegeans" was silenced.

It was a real war against Macedonian-ism...

Everyone opened their eyes wide open as Suvogorski calmly continued with his story:

“I now want to tell my story,” he said. “I arrived in Siberia more curious than concerned. And as the saying goes ‘lies have short legs and can’t go too far’. I was sure I would not be in prison for long...

I was arrested on October 3, 1949 on orders from Zahariadis and the CPG Central Committee.

On May 30, 1952 I was informed of my charges and that I was charged in accordance with Article 58, paragraph 4 and 11 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code for committing a number of international crimes to do with organized activities... I don’t want to torment you any more with this so that’s all I am going to tell you for now.

The night train from Belgrade arrived in Skopje on March 1, 1960. It was early in the morning and the platform was empty. Several security personnel came over to greet me but apparently not to help me. With my family and with hands full of suitcases we headed for the only address I knew; to my friend Vangel Aianovski Oche’s house. But he did not greet me as his old revolutionary leader and friend. In the afternoon when I asked him if we could take a walk through Skopje, he did not come with me. Instead he sent someone else; one of his ‘aids’. I was his guest for only that evening. The next day I moved into the shelter in ‘Chair’... And from that day forward the ‘university’ in the shelter was open...”

“When I arrived,” Dobrin continued, “the long-time residents of the shelter were asking each other if this truly was the Suvogorski they knew, the man who taught them Marxism-Leninism and the importance of the Comintern. Was this the man with whom they sang the ‘international’ song that roared from Moscow all the way

down to Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions, but which, after the Greek Civil War (1945-1949), was gone into oblivion?

I looked around and what did I see? Rows of people sitting on iron beds looking in my direction, showing some joy in their sparkling eyes. I took a big step over the threshold and entered...

An uninvited man just appeared... no one had invited him... His sudden appearance started me thinking of some details from the past..."

But what Suvogorski strictly kept to himself (instilled in him by the Communists) was the bloodiest story of the Greek Civil War. He was ready and prepared to expose and uncover those people who were members of the Party, who were among the communist hierarchy who he believed were the architects of our disaster. He had been taught to always have a watchful eye and to dutifully perform Party tasks exactly the way they were decided from above: "Everything for the struggle... everything for victory..." and this is how he tasked and ordered his own subordinates. He felt proud when tasks were performed according to plan. He proudly fulfilled NOF and AFZH tasks exactly as ordered by the CPG and by the CPM/CPY.

There he was now leaning on his cane and wearing a Russian overcoat. And on his head he wore a hat made from the skin of a Persian lamb.

He looked for us for days. He wanted to see us. He wanted to know how we were doing. He wanted to know what we were doing in the shelters and how we were coping. He wanted to know how many times and why we were counting and re-counting the number of bricks on the walls... We lived useless lives... as if expecting to soon die... We felt all alone... Until yesterday we were companions and co-fighters... today we rot together but alone... Life stinks to high heaven... like sour soup...

Old, weak, bent over, slim looking with a hoarse voice, Suvogorski kept walking. He took cautious and temperate steps; at least that's what it looked like from the distance. And in its depth his voice

trembled, echoing in the hallway of the old shelter in “Chair”. He greeted us in poor Russian mixed with Macedonian: “Zdrastvuite moi dorogie nezaboraveni sobortsi! Sonot mi se ostvari. Slava Bogi... Mi se stvari sonot...” (Greetings my comrades and unforgotten co-fighters! I have realized my dream. Glory to God! My dream has materialized...)

Behind the baggy wrinkles on his temple and slightly frowning furrowed brow, of course, he still carried the ugly images that were imprinted in his brain in the “Taished 041” detention camp in the USSR. His face was unreadable, inaccessible and stern. His tight lips, his stern look, were indications that he was thinking of something important, probing while taking small steps towards me with arms open, getting ready to embrace me. And in his hand he held a book entitled “Sources of totalitarianism” by Hannah Arendt.

Suvogorski was like that. He was a pretty stubborn person, even though no one thought of him as being stubborn or evil.

Well, this is how he was. I knew him from a long time ago. I was with him during the hellish war. He always wanted to take on stronger opponents and argue with them until they surrendered... after long and terrible deliberations. Deep inside him he wanted a protégé. He craved for someone stronger than himself, a self-proclaimed Marxist or even an internationalist...?

I looked at him and kept staring at him... It took me a while to picture him from present to past. To remember him, how he looked during our youth. There, in front of me, stood a white-haired old man who very much resembled my teacher Suvogorski. Here, in front of me, stood the same partisan and ideological activist who taught me survival skills during the culmination of fascism as a universal evil. Here was the man who taught me what communism and fascism were all about. Both ideologies, he said, were capable of bloodying the hands of its supporters in their romantic quest to win power and especially the moment after political theory turns into hard practice. Suvogorski is still saying the same thing, that both ideologies are harmful, but far from being the same.

In an effort to break the silence I said: “Tell me something about yourself...”

He looked at me with a stern look on his face while I stood there frozen in silence, thinking how much the man had aged and the big difference between us. It seemed like I had been rejuvenated in the past 65 years while he had aged terribly. Something was obviously tormenting him. The one thing that tormented him the most was that it was too painful for him to think about the many things that bothered him; the war, the Siberian prisons... He is even unable to write about them because it is too difficult for him to think about them... When things were fresh in his mind they refused to give him a pencil and paper to write on. Especially in the Siberian prisons... not even an ordinary pencil and some plain paper.

“Zdravo Dobrin!” I said. “Don’t just stand there, please come in and sit down. Please sit here...”

Even though he was lost in his own thoughts, he still looked at me carefully, not so much as to recognize me, but because he wanted to make sure I was ready to listen to all his secrets which he carried around with him during his ideological activism days, especially during the civil war years (1945-1949), and when he was under constant surveillance and torment in the Siberian camps.

When our eyes met, the two of us stood there in silence staring at each other. In his eyes I could see desperation and love for us all, his former co-fighters. When he smiled I noticed the same unchanging expression he had had a half century ago. It was my teacher alright... I recognized that smile. It was the same smile from our past from when we talked about our future, of building a caring and democratic society favourable to all. Most of us remembered him from the time when Suvogorski stood in front of the Macedonian villagers and spoke about Lenin’s principle... and we were all happy.

I still remember and carry with me the idea from when we talked about a “United Macedonia”.

Look at him now. He is shaking... he is in pain. He looks angry and full of grief because we lost the war. His revolutionary ideals for a "United Macedonia" never materialized. He acquired these convictions in January 1945 when he began to study the draft Agreement being negotiated by the Yugoslav and Bulgarian governments during which time the first article was written: "The Government of Bulgaria and the Government of Yugoslavia declare that the approach taken to the South Slav unification will be done through joint education provided by the two federal states and will be called 'Federation of South Slavs' (FSS). It will have joint national representatives, joint foreign ministries and a military. Ultimately all joint institutions and ministries will be established under a joint FSS constitution..."

Suvogorski was a measured and cautious person in all his articulations. He was filled with admirable restraint and mystery.

I welcomed him to his homeland. He sat down. His darting eyes calmed down and, as he looked me in the eyes, I asked him:

"How are you my dear teacher?"

He was happy because our meeting was cordial, open and pleasant, but very emotional and moving at times. After he recovered from his emotional episodes he would smile with red glowing cheeks. He was still very emotional about his turbulent past even 65 years later. He tried very hard to let me know that he always cared for us. He said:

"You know that I always thought of you all. I know that you lived with nostalgia for our homeland. So, half a century or so later, here we are, in Macedonia..."

"I remember; you always socialized with the Socialists..." I replied.

Dobrin adjusted himself and said: "Well, I went further than socialism, I wanted to follow the communist movement. But every ideology has its pathology. Just like nationalism and communism. I

was against any nationalism because nationalism is dangerous, and you saw how Greeks and Macedonians behaved even though they were all members of the CPG...”

Dobrin went silent for a moment, then, looking somewhat strange, like he was guilty of something, said: “When I think of all these things I feel like I am digging my own grave. I get this sinking feeling in my heart...”

We Macedonians failed to form a Communist Party because we adhered to Lenin’s principle: “One state one party...” and we Macedonians under Greece chose to remain as orphans in the Communist Party of Greece. And what happened to us as a result?

When Macedonians began to leave Greece and join Parties abroad (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania) they did what they were told and served the communist party’s interests, irrespective of their own interests. For example, look at what happened during the civil war when some followed Tito’s CPY and others Zahariadis’s CPG. Both parties were working against Macedonian interests and at the same time they had Macedonians working against each other. The results were overwhelmingly counterproductive, primarily against the Macedonians. The needs of the Macedonian people were completely ignored while Macedonians were fighting against Macedonians. And what is the truth? The truth is that it has been this way for ages... Macedonians have been manipulated by outsiders to fight amongst themselves...” concluded Dobrin.

At that moment Bozhin Ristuichin walked in. He opened the newspaper he was holding and, with a hoarse sounding voice, said: “No one has ever saved themselves from being exposed and no one has ever failed to confess. Researchers are now preoccupied with us, studying NOF and AFZH’s role in the political struggle. Unfortunately their current allegiance and commitments do not allow them to tell the truth... what the Macedonian people really experienced and that they now find themselves in exile, rooted out of their homes and centuries-old native lands...”

My grandfather used to say: ‘In those days, if you discovered something not right or evil happening to your people and dared to

talk about it, then, sooner or later, you could expect to be dead'..." concluded Bozhin.

Yes, my grandfather also used to say: "You can run from poverty but you can't run from poor people..."

Suvogorski continued: "I chose a more dangerous route. I was expected to sacrifice my family, my homeland, my right to my property and the brightest values of my personal life. It was demanded of me to do this in the simple service of the proletarian masses and to vigorously denounce the bourgeois elite. Each generation is led to believe that it is a contemporary of major change and yet, to this day, nothing has changed over so many years. Unlike other generations, our generation was the bearer of the Sovietization of the Balkans and the world. But, as it turned out we were only victims, because in the countries where socialism was a system and collapsed, much stronger raw capitalism was born. Even inequality has increased dramatically. Today's generation is the carrier of modern change which gives realism to economic, political and cultural changes, all united under Globalization. Today is a time when capitalism is spreading around the globe faster than ever before. And, yes, I am really taken aback by what is happening!"

I then said to him: "I know that you have talked to us about a human society in view of a "program for a beautiful world" and have given us so much evidence and sketches of what had been planned in those days. I also know why you did this and with it you could have taken us to the end of the world. Besides that, everyone who knew you had told us that you were an honest man, and that you were prepared to give all the vast wealth of the world to the poor people.

He then said: "I remember well the history lessons about the lords who depended on the half-enslaved peasants for their wealth and power. I don't know under whose initiative this was, but one morning the people from the villages Iasnopole and Rudino woke up amazed: Written on every fence, on every brick wall, on every goat path were the slogans:

‘Destroy the monarchy!’, ‘Destroy patriotism!’, ‘Destroy religion!’
‘Our goal is Communism!’...” concluded Dobrin in a loud voice.

His voice was calm and natural, and loud as it should be, but in its depth it still quivered. He stared deeply at us all... bringing all the women, who had long been conversing among themselves, to silence.

Dobrin the teacher was now looking down. He was silent and for a long time he refused to look at us. Then, with a sick stare in his eyes, he said:

“If you really want to know the truth, the only thing that ideological activism did for the Macedonian people in Greece, in those fateful years, particularly from 1945 to 1949, in the name of building our Macedonian national identity and our unity, was that it exposed us to our genocide. Look at what we were promised and look at what we received... GENOCIDE!!” he yelled out loud.

He continued: “This was a time when the Great Powers were playing chess games in Yalta and the prize was the division of spheres of influence in the Balkans. I am also very sad and bitter... Dear God, I don’t think you have ever heard the Russian proverb which goes something like this: ‘With a bullet you can kill a person but with a word you can lead battalions to war’...”

“Yes! I have heard of that Russian proverb...” I replied.

“In those days we needed to be convinced that ‘capitalism’ was rotten,” he said, “and that our path to freedom was mapped out for us. Their way of seizing power was through a united and depersonalized people and once the people were depersonalized it was easy to lead them with a leader who had a personal touch and a lot of ‘charisma’...”

After he said that, Dobrin looked at me and, with a confident look in his eyes, said: “It was a time of miracles for the Greek and Yugoslav Communist Parties. It was done intentionally... All generations needed to be ideologically ‘reeled in’. In fact, we all ate up the socialist ideology and doctrine and we thought it was heaven for all

those who had long suffered and had been enslaved, especially our small Macedonian nation...”

There was silence in the shelter, even an old dog that was barking outside had stopped barking.

The shelter was furnished with very old furniture. The bed frames were made of iron bars. The residents were jokingly saying that the beds were especially made for us “wanderers” and so-called “Aegeans”... a derogatory term which we all detested.

Anyway, this is how the beds were made. If a person sat on one, it creaked and crunched like a pile of marbles had fallen on the floor. They made a loud noise each time a person moved on them.

But now everything and everyone was silent, waiting for Dobrin to continue with his stories which, for years, while he was in exile, had been locked in his mind and his tongue had been tied.

He sat silently at the edge of a bed and look at everyone one by one. After he looked at me he continued:

“There are many examples that confirm the historical truth that the Greek propaganda in Macedonia under Greece had fought hard against each Macedonian family. It used the worst methods possible, including terror, to force them out of their homes. This reminds me of the time when the Macedonian people were forced to get rid of the Macedonian icons from their homes and replace them with Greek ones. My grandparents used to say: ‘May God protect us from these damned Greeks!’...” concluded Dobrin and went silent.

Then, a sudden and strong creak broke the silence. Bozhin Ristuichin moved closer to the edge of his bed and said: “We Macedonians have suffered immensely so that our descendants are born Macedonians and not buried as Greeks. Is God helping these Greeks?!”

Well, this is how life was for us and we all thought that we could live humanely in a communist society, but as it turned out that too was a lie, the communist leaders lied to us and we Macedonians

experienced the same things from them as we experienced from the others. But in doing so, this time they first mobilized our souls, after that, as it turned out during the Civil war years 1945 to 1949, they offered us “brotherhood” but that too turned out to be a lie. It was a time of many lies... It was a time when everyone wanted to have a red card and to be a communist. And when we found ourselves in those lines, as my grandfather used to say: ‘When you find yourself among the blind you have to close one eye’...” concluded Bozhin Ristuichin.

We all cracked up laughing; even Suvogorski, but our laughter had a trace of irony.

I said to Dobrin: “You used to say to us: ‘Look at that steep slope over there! This is where your climb to freedom begins.’ You also used to say: ‘Look at that lake... that river... that deep well... There, sitting at the bottom is freedom’. You used to say: ‘Do you see that short, slightly dried unhappy tree? Well, freedom hangs from it. Do you feel your neck, throat and heart? This is your saviour from slavery’ ... Isn’t this what you used to tell us?”

Dobrin asked for a glass of water... After taking a few sips he said:

“Yes, but history teaches us, if we care to learn from it, that we need a change of government, a new state of mind in which awareness of democracy, tolerance, human rights and freedom will prevail.

Now I wonder if such things could really happen in my little divided country.

Revolutionary ideas are born from opposing tyranny and injustice, on the one hand, and hope for a better world, on the other. We Communists did not believe in God but wanted a radical break with the constant society. With the revolution we sought to resist continuity and start a new beginning in history. You all know what Sartre, who is an atheist, not a Christian, has said in his book ‘Existentialism is Humanism’. He said: ‘Even if there is a God, nothing will change; that is our opinion. We, of course, do not believe that God exists, but it is not in the work of his existence that man should handle himself. Man needs to convince himself that

nothing can save him from himself, even if there is proof of the existence of God. Everything depends on the inner sense of what people feel, which is in line with them and with the world' ...” concluded Dobrin.

I said to him: “In other words, your criticism of the then society was the way that it was structured, but you wanted it to be structured in a different way. And was it not your curiosity of the future, of what you thought a person needs to hope for, that drove you in that direction?”

We know that this kind of behaviour is inherent in the human spirit. But then why did you, on the other hand, marginalize the national interests of the oppressed minorities in Greece?”

He said: “In the beginning, in order to win over the masses, the secret of success was communist agitation and creating chaos. Our aim was ‘to multiply and increase national feelings, habits, passions and living conditions for all people, so that something like chaos could be achieved in which no one would be able to understand where they belonged in the mess.” When this was going on, I felt like I belonged here, with my people, helping them make the right choice. The easiest way to manipulate someone, our villagers, when they are confused, is to show them the way, the right way. In such a mess they could have just as easily been manipulated by the other side.

The new socialist order proclaimed in Greece turned into a new disorder in which the new-old strongmen were now supported by the new-strongest in the world.

The new order also opened a big door (to divide the world into spheres of influence, according to the Yalta Agreement) for full American domination in Greece.

It happened exactly like Erich Fromm (1900-1980), an Armenian psychoanalyst, had predicted: “Desire for power has no root in strength but in weakness...” concluded Dobrin.

CHAPTER TWO - (Self) sacrificing the Macedonian people and leaving nothing behind

Dobrin quoting Fromm reminded me of what Andrei Tarkovski once had said:

“A person should aspire to spiritual greatness. He or she should strive to leave something good behind so that people might study and interpret it for thousands of years. A person should never just leave ruins so that they are only mentioned when people talk about disasters.” Russian writer Andrei Tarkovski (1932-1986)

The next series of questions I asked Suvogorski were: “Could we Macedonians have saved our homes from the disaster that took place after World War II? Did we Macedonians need to get involved in the civil war in Greece?”

After looking at Suvogorski for a reaction, I continued: “What is the truth? Who directed the fate of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia that resulted in our genocide? And for whom did we (self) sacrifice ourselves and lose our father’s eternal home? For whom did we become wanderers in the world? Were the communists that cunning to have manipulated us to do this to ourselves? Were the communists this immoral?”

I used strong words which made Suvogorski very unhappy. I could see it in his face as he stared at me wickedly. He curled forward looking like he had swallowed fire and it was burning in the pit of his gut. But, in spite of his discomfort, he kept silent and listened to me as I continued:

“Did we Macedonians in that period of time have a unified Macedonian revolutionary platform?”

Suvogorski now began to look at me curiously as I persistently looked him in the eye and continued with my fiery questions. But before I was finished he interrupted me and said:

“We Macedonian Communists, who lived in Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria at that time (before WW II), had no contact with each other. We were completely isolated from one another.

But I can personally tell you that we Macedonians could have, once and for all, put an end to this harmful Macedonian syndrome, because otherwise we would have lost a lot... and that is exactly what happened to us later.

With regards to your question of ‘what were our Macedonian national interests in the civil war?’ We had none... not only that, we had no say in it... were not allowed to take part in the daily politics, not even make petty political points... or any other interpretations thereof, because nothing depended on us Macedonians... absolutely nothing. Everything about our ‘involvement’ was artificially created through rumours and lies.

Suvogorski stopped talking for a moment, took a deep breath, and said: “It was hard to feel human when you were a slave to the Greeks, regardless of who was in power, the communists or the Monarcho-fascists...”

And what happened later? Well, various contacts began to materialize, especially during World War II (1940-1943).

Most members of the Communist Party of Macedonia’s Regional Committee were also members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia... up until 1940 at which time the First CPM Provincial Conference was held on September 8, 1940, during which the first Macedonian Revolutionary Regional program was accepted. The proclamation adopted during this Conference, in part, read: “Ilinden is the Day of the Macedonian revolution, a bright light and the Macedonian flag...” The Resolution adopted, in part, read: “The policy of national repression, assimilation, wild terror, relocation, and destruction of everything Macedonian, erasure of the Macedonian culture, language and songs implemented thus far is being heavily challenged. The long-time suffering, deprived and enslaved Macedonian population is finding itself before a great struggle...”

Metodia Shatorov – Sharlo was appointed Party Secretary at the Conference. Shatorov was a man with high Macedonian awareness and sufficiently familiar with the problems facing the Macedonian people. Beside him was Kuzman Iosifovski, a highly valued member of the Party Committee. It was said that Kuzman Iosifovski followed Gotse Delchev's ideals and was viewed as a second Delchev for Macedonia. Shatorov and Iosifovski called for unity of the entire Macedonian nation in all parts of occupied Macedonia in a struggle against a common enemy: the regime, the looting, the violence and national oppression, regardless of where these evils were taking place, be it in the parts of Macedonia that were under Serbian, Bulgarian, or Greek slavery. The liberation of Macedonia was seen as the liberation of all of portioned Macedonia, not just parts of it. This was contrary to what the Communist Party wanted, which was to opt for a partial solution within existing borders. On August 20, 1940, in an article entitled "Liberating Macedonia from the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek yoke of imperialism", Shatorov wrote: "...The Macedonians are not at fault for not having their own state. At fault here are the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek imperialists who, with their alliances, have invaded, occupied, portioned and enslaved Macedonia..."

Under Shatorov's leadership the CPM Regional Committee called for; - the liberation of Macedonia under a joint struggle together with the other Balkan nations; - the formation of an independent Macedonian national political party entity and for the CPY to replace the Central Committee for Yugoslavia, which was the political party entity in Macedonia; - based on historical traditions of the struggle, it called for a sovereign Macedonian Republic to be organized but not under Yugoslav sovereignty; - the Regional Committee's goals were to be decisive in the national liberation of a sovereign state in its entirety, and not just what the CPY desired "to liberate only the Macedonian part within Yugoslavia..." and many other such CPY requirements that contradicted the Macedonian point of view.

The Communist International and its time

It was a time of truth when the CPY, the CPB and the CPG were members, more precisely, parts of the same strong authoritarian organization, or common superior authority - the Communist International (Comintern) whose decisions were binding. It was not possible in such an organized constellation for one entity to do anything alone. At the same time no Party organization or Party could accept anything without a decision from this high authority.

On May 26, 1941 Shatorov was invited to talks with the CPB Central Committee in Sofia. During his meeting with the Bulgarian party leaders, Shatorov was given approval to link the CPM Regional Committee to the Bulgarian Party as was decided by the Comintern and personally by Georgi Dimitrov. For Shatorov this meant that he had received approval from the highest body and, as a Party cadre, he knew very well what that meant. Shatorov officially accepted the decision... But his mistake was not in accepting the decision, but in his failure to immediately inform the CPY Central Committee. He was hoping that “those up above would understand...”

Placed under Yugoslav Party observation

In the meantime a CPY appointed instructor arrived in Macedonia and brought with him a signed letter, signed by Tito himself on July 24, 1941, which criticized Shatorov's behaviour and poor performance. The instructor had orders to remove Shatorov from his position as Secretary and to ban him from the Party. This naturally prompted a Party meeting to convene in Macedonia on August 17, 1941. The meeting was attended by Petar Bogdanov, a delegate from the CPY Central Committee, whose job was to clarify the situation in regards to Shatorov's Party status and to once again convince the attendees that the idea of connecting the Party organization with the Bulgarian party was truly a decision made by the Comintern. This is exactly what Petar Bogdanov also told Dragan Pavlovich, another delegate from the CPY Central Committee who then in turn informed his own Central Committee.

Approximately ten days later a telegram from the Comintern, addressed to the Regional Committee, was delivered by the Bulgarian Red Cross, ordering it to: “Keep Macedonia in Yugoslavia for practical and meaningful reasons because at the moment our main struggle is being waged against the German and Italian occupiers and their agents. Given the military situation in Macedonia, it is imperative that we create close cooperation between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, particularly on the ground...”

This order, for example, clearly shows who actually made all the decisions in Macedonia... and it certainly was not Shatorov. This order also put an end to the uncertainty and to the many questions being asked about the direction of the revolutionary program in Macedonia. Shatorov, being taken out of the decision making process, was then placed under severe isolation.

The Greek Communist Party's political platform

On July 18, 1943 General Sarafis, commander of ELAS Headquarters, and Colonel Eddie Myers, of the English mission, signed a declaration at ELAS Headquarters according to which ELAS was to be placed under Middle East allied army command and all the operations it undertook would be conducted on the orders of English command. (See book: “ELAS”, by Stefanos Sarafis, page 120.)

As a result of this Agreement, English command began to heavily influence ELAS developments determining what operations it was to conduct, especially in relation to the nationalist EDES and EKKA formations which, even though they had no significant power, were imposed on ELAS as partners and were directed by the same British officials who had signed the two Agreements: the Plaka and Caserta Agreements, while completely restricting ELAS's independence during the most opportune moments when the communists were ready to take power in Greece.

The above information was obtained from statements made by Vasilis Bardzhiotis, Commissar of DAG Headquarters and member

of the CPG Central Committee Politburo. (Neos Kosmos no. 2/1957.)

Sometime in mid-1943 a massive popular struggle was waged all throughout Greece. It was exactly at this time that ELAS, the then People's Liberation Army, and the CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships were put under English command. All Headquarters, including ELAS General Headquarters, were manned by British officers who in turn followed orders issued by the Middle East British General Staff. All large units, divisions, groups, etc., were actually in the hands of the Intelligence Service.

In the summer of 1943 Svetozar Vukmanovich – Tempo, representative of the CPY Central Committee, spent about 10 days in Greece.

The CPG together with EAM and ELAS were then leading events mainly by following English policy. This, of course, does not mean that the CPG did not popularize the Soviet Union and the Red Army. But its overall national liberation movement, in those days, was primarily geared towards English interests.

Christopher Montagu Bunthauz (Chris), Deputy Chief Intelligence Service representative in Greece and later head of the British Military Mission, said:

“If we did not have British officers in the resistance movement in Greece, not only would Greek history but also European history have gone in a different direction...”

The presence of the British military mission in Greece prevented the communists from taking power in 1943 and 1944. The communists were in fact placed under absolute control. If the communists were to have taken over the government in September, 1944, while the Germans were retreating from Greece, it would have been very difficult to take it back, especially in the eyes of world public...!”

Review of events - April 1940

There are historic records of Tito, CPY General Secretary, having given a dramatic speech, who, at that time, warned Macedonia's neighbours that: "This poor oppressed country dipped in blood is not here to serve as a royal ornamental crown to someone, or to be a dowry for the Serbian, Bulgarian, or Greek bourgeoisie. The Macedonians are not Serbians Bulgarians, or Greeks. They are Macedonians, a nation entitled to their own freedom and independence..."

Macedonians under the British mission's watchful eye and the Greek Communist Party, ELAS and EAM

The Macedonian Organizations SNOF (Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Front) and SNOB (Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Army), as mentioned earlier, were created in the fall of 1943 in Greece as a way to liquidate the Kostur Region and other counter-bands existing in Greek occupied Macedonia.

The Founding Conference for the creation of SNOF in Kostur Region took place on December 24, 1943, and for Lerin Region on December 26 and 27, 1943.

At the Founding Conference Tempo provided the instructions on which SNOF was to be created. This was based on a platform for a joint struggle between the Macedonian and the Greek people. The basic settings for the platform were:

1. Unity between the Macedonian and the Greek people, in the Aegean part of Macedonia, as a condition for a victorious struggle against fascism;
2. Mobilize the Macedonian masses into ELAS units in aid of the armed struggle and in the defeat of the occupiers;

3. Initiate a political and armed struggle against the counter-bands, Kalchev, Mihailov and the Gestapo who, with their autonomist propaganda, are seeking to create problems between the Macedonian and Greek people;

4. Persuade the Macedonian people to struggle together with the Greek people, as part of EAM and against the occupiers. The Macedonian people, with help from the Greek people, will realize their national aspirations and the right to self-determination based on the Atlantic Charter principles and on all other resolutions offered by the allied powers. By doing all this, the SNOF District Committee, for the first time, will officially put the “Macedonian National Question” before the Communist Party of Greece.

While SNOF was still in its infancy, the CPG unfortunately had already restricted all its initiatives. The only initiative SNOF was allowed to carry out was to eliminate the counter-bands. The CPG did this because of the EAM and PEEA program principles agreed to by the Greek government in exile and by the British mission, which did not recognize the rights of the Macedonian people. So, in fact, the only reason for creating the Macedonian forces was to eliminate the counter-bands... to get the Macedonians to eliminate their own kind... leaving the British and the Greeks guilt free...of any wrongdoing.

Historical fact: Up until April 1944, the CPG and EAM Leaderships used SNOF for their own political and military purposes, particularly the showdown with the counter-band movement.

For the Macedonian people this was pure CPG manipulation modeled after the infamous Balkan syndrome of patriots and traitors, now a Macedonian syndrome of patriots and traitors.

And this is why the so-called patriotic Macedonian partisans had a showdown with the Macedonian counter-band Bulgarian traitors... Or was it the Macedonian patriotic counter-bands having a showdown with the Macedonian communist traitors. But, no matter which point of view you take, it was “...Macedonians fighting against Macedonians...”

Being unsuccessful in destroying the Macedonian counter-bands in Greek occupied Macedonia on their own, the Greeks charged Siantos, a CPG leader, to come up with a solution. Siantos in turn asked for help from the CPY and as a result met with the Montenegrin Tempo.

In their talks in August 1943, Tempo suggested to Siantos that he create special all-Macedonian units in Greek occupied Macedonia and instruct them to begin spreading propaganda and agitate the Macedonian people in the Macedonian language.

And this is exactly how SNOF was formed and organized... But it was not Macedonians who created SNOF... Let us be clear on that.

There was a sudden and strong creaking sound created by one of the beds. The person sitting on the bed, a resident of the same shelter, leaned forward and said:

“A while ago I read something in a history book. The title of the book, I believe, was: ‘The Macedonian National Liberation Platform in the Aegean part of Macedonia (January 1944)’. It was written by Dr. Alexander Litovski, and published in Skopje in 2008. On page 233, as I recall, Dr. Litovski, among other things, wrote: ‘... in its treatment of the Macedonian National Question in Aegean Macedonia the institutionalization of the Macedonian liberation movement in the Aegean part of Macedonia, was accomplished through SNOF.’ On page 236 Dr. Litovski wrote: ‘In fact, when considering SNOF’s political and propaganda activities, one can clearly see two dominant strands of action. First, action aimed at attracting the Macedonian population in EAM and the CPG, and second, action aimed at strengthening a separate Macedonian national identity in the Aegean part of Macedonia’...”

Suvogorski stood there silent... moving his head from side to side.

Then, in a high tone of voice, Bozhin Risuichin blurted out, saying: “It is easy to make statements when you don’t take into account the core reality of the situation...”

“Does this Macedonian historian, Dr. Litovski, not know that the ‘S’ in SNOF, ‘Slavo-Macedonians’, represents a tribal attribute? There is nothing more painful and demeaning for a Macedonian than to see Macedonian science, after so many years (half century) celebrating fraud, perpetrated by foreigners the likes of Siantos and Tempo, who were representatives of the left, of the CPG and the CPY, who made ‘useful idiots’ out of us Macedonians...” replied Suvogorski and went silent.

After a long pause Suvogorski continued: “Yes, that was a historic time, a time which history has recorded as ‘the time of the Balkan syndrome...’ of patriots and traitors... a phenomenon that has divided us Macedonians...”

It was a time when we Macedonians, renamed to ‘Slavo-Macedonians’ by the Greek communists, were well manipulated into doing dirty deeds, fighting in the Greek Civil War, a war not of our making, and paying for it with our blood to please foreigners who worked against our interests...

Did the CPG (the Greek Communists) ever truly depart from the racist and assimilationist laws adopted by the Greek government? If it did then why did the CPG disband SNOF in May of 1944? Why was SNOF the main obstacle for the CPG in its middle of May 1944 negotiations with the Greek government in exile and with the civil parties in Greece in its attempts to form a coalition government?

The CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships created SNOF for only one reason. They were supposedly concerned about the situation that existed on the ground in Greek occupied Macedonia, which they themselves supposedly could not handle; the elimination of the Macedonian rebel counter-bands in Lerin, Voden and especially in Kostur Region. The Greek communists supposedly found themselves in a bind and had no other choice but to form SNOF, a

Macedonian organization, to deal with the Greek problem. However, there was another reason in this diabolical Greek and British plan, about which little was known until recently. The reason for getting “Macedonians” to eliminate “Macedonians” was so that this kind of war crime would not be blamed on the Greeks. The communists did their part to convince the Macedonians to do their bidding while the British refused to recognize a Macedonian entity... and if such an entity was not recognized it meant that it did not exist. And if it did not exist then no rights would be granted to it in accordance with the Atlantic Charter. There should be no doubt in anyone’s mind that SNOF was purposely created so that no legal blame could be placed on the British or on the Greeks for the destruction of the Macedonian counter-bands. The vast majority of these bands were patriotic Macedonian fighters fighting to protect the Macedonian people from the Greeks and from the Bulgarians. These patriotic bands were fighting for the Macedonian cause and to create a free and independent Macedonia, something that the Greeks and their British patrons did not want the world to know. So, what better way to destroy these Macedonian bands than to have Macedonians destroy them? So, the creation and organization of SNOF was intentionally and purposely perpetrated by the Greeks from the CPG District Committee for Western Macedonia, the likes of Hristos Kalfas (Andreas), Antonis Antonopoulos (Periklis), CPG District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region, and Thanasis Kartsunis, CPG District Committee Secretary for Kozhani Region, in order to destroy the Macedonian counter-bands and place the blame on the Macedonian communists for doing it... even though these Macedonians were totally oblivious to their actions and blindly followed what they were told.

Dissolving SNOF

Within six months of its formation, SNOF in Kostur Region, with help from ELAS, managed to restore order and win over a large number of counter-bandits.

Having 4,770 members among their ranks, the Macedonian counter-bands, being exposed to SNOF, quickly realized that SNOF’s entire composition consisted strictly of Macedonians, which led them to believe that SNOF was a strictly Macedonian organization

struggling to meet the national and social demands of Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia. They believed that SNOF was the new IMRO for the Macedonian people following in the footsteps of Ilinden... (See: "Slavo-Macedonian Voice", number 3, April 1944.)

Despite all the promises it made to the Macedonian people, once SNOF accomplished its intended task, the CPG dissolved it. This proves that the promises made were only lies and manipulations to get the Macedonians unknowingly involved in its dirty deeds. The Greek government in exile and the British wanted the Macedonian counter-bands eliminated and the CPG did exactly that without directly staining its own hands in Macedonian blood. The CPG did this, we are told, because it supposedly wanted to achieve "national unity" with the Greek bourgeois parties and with the government in exile with which it had signed the notorious Lebanon capitulatory agreement on May 20, 1944, which sealed the fate of the democratic people's struggle and especially the fate of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Then, on September 26, 1944, the CPG, EAM, ELAS, Papandeu's Greek government in exile and British Headquarters for the Middle East signed the Caserta Agreement in Italy. This Agreement called for all the Greek guerrilla forces to be placed under the command of the Greek government in exile. However, the Greek government in exile then passed on this responsibility to English General Skobie. Naturally, this Agreement was yet another concession that the Greek leadership resistance made to the Greek government in exile.

Suvogorski said: "On May 5, 1944 the Great Powers began their negotiations for the division of the Balkans into spheres of influence. Britain gained supremacy over Greece and the Soviet Union over Romania. On May 20, 1944 the CPG, EAM and ELAS signed the Lebanon Agreement with the royal Greek government and, under pressure from the British, dissolved the coalition government.

The Macedonian communists did not agree with the Lebanon Agreement and during a Conference, held on June 25, 1944, unanimously voted to cancel the Agreement. They also voted for the People's Liberation Struggle to begin applying revolutionary tactics which would strictly rely on its own forces and on the People's Liberation Struggle of the Yugoslav people. As a result the CPG leadership was fractured into two groups, one willing to accept the Lebanon Agreement and the other wanting to cancel it.

The group that advocated for accepting the Agreement prevailed. Colonel Grogori Popov, heading the Soviet military mission, who arrived in the free territory in Greek occupied Macedonia on June 28, 1944, was mainly responsible for repairing the division. Knowing the bigger picture of world events, especially of the organization that Stalin had created in Russia with a one-party dictatorship under a totalitarian regime, and of the other revolutionary communist parties worldwide with totalitarian movements, Popov advised the local communists that Stalin did not approve of divisions within the communist parties. He had succeeded in creating totalitarian regimes by abandoning internal party democracies and transforming national parties into branches of the Comintern led by Moscow. Moscow was the absolute centre for managing all communist parties.

Years later, Soviet citizen Grigori Popov, high up in the ranks of the Soviet party, had only this to say:

‘Here is the Directive... This is what Comrade Stalin wants!’

On August 17, 1944, the CPG Central Committee accepted the Agreement and began to participate in the coalition government led by Georgios Papandreou.”

CHAPTER THREE - The Aegean Brigade moves into Tito's army

At a meeting, Stringos, a member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, said: "The Central Committee had warned Ilia Dimovski - Gotse and Peiov that their behaviour would not bring them any good.

We continued to tell the Slavo-Macedonian communists to subjugate themselves to the Party if they wanted their lives spared. But they did not want to. And if they did not want to then they could go to hell..." This was followed by applause.

Radiogram:

From: Hristos Moshos,
To: ELAS group divisions in Macedonia,
Re: Reporting the desertion of the Voden Macedonian battalion from ELAS to Vardar Macedonia.
No. EP 162 Paiak, very urgent.

On October 14, 1944, the Slavo-Macedonian Kaimakchalan partisan unit (the Voden Battalion) left for Serbia (Vardar Macedonia) without our knowledge. A delegate to negotiate its return was sent to Serbian Macedonia. We believe the unit was seduced by Macedonian partisan cadres.

October 17, 1944.

Petros (Hristos Moshos)

In mid-September 1944 the Macedonian political and military leadership (from Vardar Macedonia), in accordance with the decisions made by ASNOM, took serious measures for the liberation and unification of Macedonia. On September 23, 1944, NOV and

POM Headquarters sent directives to the commanders of the Lerin, Kostur and Voden Battalions as follows:

“Carry out an extensive recruitment program of combatants from the ranks of the Macedonians. All combatants were to receive weapons, ammunition and other war material from NOV and POM General Headquarters. They were to prepare for operations against the Germans in the Aegean part of Macedonia and Greece which would include NOV and POM units.” A few days later, the Lerin-Kostur battalion exploded in size. It grew to about 1500 soldiers and officers. The Voden Macedonian battalion grew to 575 soldiers and officers. But the CPG and ELAS tried to disband the Macedonian battalions because they allegedly had information that these battalions were preparing an attack on Solun. And because of that CPG and CPY relations began to strain again. On October 4, 1944, Svetozar Vukmanovich - Tempo told POJ Supreme Headquarters that he had informed the Macedonian ELAS units not to agree to be disbanded and that they should transfer to Vardar Macedonia. During the night of October 4, 1944 and on October 14, 1944, the Macedonian battalions crossed over into Vardar Macedonia.

In the context of the two battalions leaving Greek occupied Macedonia and crossing over into the Republic of Macedonia, we in fact abandoned our centuries-old aspiration to free our piece of land. Going to Yugoslavia, to Tito's Army, however, as our research has shown, was not by chance. That too was perpetrated so that we would abandon the defense of our fatherland. This was the first step of the long plot to remove us from our homes, from our people, in order for our enemies to maximize the depth of our Macedonian tragedy. This was a time when the CPY (Tito) and the CPG (Zahariadis), with their pseudo concerns, showed “interest” in us, giving us our freedom then taking it away from us, leading us to our destruction.

But more tragic than that has been our mainstream history, the so-called “History of the Aegeans” or should I say “History of the victims of foreign interests”, which has turned our tragedy into triumph and which, in the last 60 years, has been calling our

experience a revolution and thereby covering up everything that led us to our genocide.

CHAPTER FOUR - Truths and controversies about the Greek Civil War (1945-1949)

The biggest manipulation perpetrated against the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia after the Second World War: “From one lie to another...”

Historian Risto Kiriazovski has confirmed that: “NOF (National Liberation Front) for the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia was founded in Skopje on April 23, 1945, under the initiative of the CPY-CPM leadership.” He has also confirmed that, simultaneously within NOF, AFZH, the Women’s organization, and NOMS, the organization for the young, were also founded. It is interesting to note at this point that there was no such “Women’s organization” for the Greek women during the Greek Civil War.

1. Question: “Were these Macedonian organizations created for a future strategy? Were these organization founded for the purpose of some future need not yet defined but concocted by the CPG headed by Zahariadis and by the CPM/CPY headed by Tito?!” asked Mitre Delovichin politely, a disabled man with a missing hand which he lost while fighting in Gramos.

After a short pause he continued: “It would appear that with the formation of AFZH which was to include our women, we practically broke our Macedonian family tradition and turned our families into political families...”

Suvogorski sighed deeply and said: “You are exactly right... Let us not deceive one another! These political games we were expected to play were negotiated in Belgrade between Tito and Zahariadis who had agreed to involve the entire Macedonian population, including our women, in a massive war, in a way that is unheard of in the world to this day. The hook was baited and tossed into the water and they knew that the Macedonians would bite.

Meaning, with the establishment of NOF, we Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia, in the decade from 1940 to 1949, found ourselves in the grip of binary politics; from a position of longing for a “United Macedonia” to losing our ancestral homes...”

One of the people sitting down in the back got all excited, sprang up from his bed causing the bed springs to creak loudly, and asked:

“Didn’t NOF have a vision of where it was going?!”

Suvogorski calmly said: “If there was one, mainstream history, I mean the history about us Aegean Macedonians, has made no clear mention of it, especially the political messages for involving the women en masse to perform various tasks after their children were taken away and sent abroad. Things were never made clear...”

Suvogorski, looking back at the man, felt like he had not properly answered his question. He then said: “I mean, you can make a world of assumptions and use your imagination but the truth can only be found in the facts. The truth will come out when the indisputable facts replace the assumptions.

We also need to say that, it is a fact that just after the Second World War and during the Greek Civil War, a Macedonian speaking population largely dominated Aegean Macedonia and all agitation done by NOF and AFZH was done in the Macedonian language, which was hopeful and supported some of our national rights. We even had Macedonian schools for our children.

The banned Macedonian language, for which so many people were fined and beaten by the Greek police for speaking it, was again echoing in our village streets. Because of this and because the CPG did not object to it, people began to gain confidence in the CPG and began to believe that the system and the state in which the Macedonians were cruelly tortured, was beginning to fall apart.

Unfortunately, as it turned out, this too was a lie, used by the communists to bait us. The only thing, it appears, they wanted from these organizations (NOF, AFZH and NOMS) was to mobilize the Macedonian population en masse into the war effort, especially the Macedonian population living in the compact areas like Kostur, Lerin, Voden, Gumendzhe and Kukush Regions.

From the outcome of these events one thing should be clear; the purpose the strategists had in mind was to break down the traditional Macedonian family and turn it into a political family. By doing so they were able to easily manipulate... and even blackmail... the Macedonian population into doing whatever they wanted. The ideological matrix they built was put into operation... its aim was to remove the Macedonians from the Macedonian family and home. This was done under the control of the communist ideology...

This becomes obvious when you ask yourself the following questions:

1. Against whom were these Macedonian organizations and their fronts formed?
2. Who was the opposition in these fronts?
3. What were the aims of this struggle?

Someone back there asked if this was a directive given by Tito and Kolishevski or by Tsvetko Uzunov – Abas? I would say by all of them...

Well, we saw what happened to us earlier, in previous years... the kinds of conflicts we experienced... and now, with the establishment of NOF and the other Macedonian organizations, our ‘Road to Freedom’ was defined... we were seduced by foreign propaganda clothed in Macedonian patriotism...”

Suvogorski adjusted himself slightly, leaned forward, opened his eyes wide and said:

“Allow me to do this in order. My understanding from my lengthy research and analysis is that we Macedonians in Greece, in the hands of the CPY and CPG, have become victims and subjects of retaliation. We have fallen victim to the Greek and Yugoslav ideological views and state policies. What is an even greater paradox is that Britain and the United States of America have stood and are still standing behind the Greek government on the ‘Macedonian Question’. Meaning, what to do with us Macedonians in Greece now

that it has become apparent that we do exist, after years of non-existence? How would Britain explain to the world, especially to Stalin, how we came about? And, what will Britain do if Stalin says... demands... for us Macedonians in Greece to be recognized and, as per the Atlantic Charter, be granted the right to form our own state? But, as it turned out, Greece conveniently fell under the British sphere of influence and under British protection... and Britain was basically allowed to do whatever it wanted in Greece. Unfortunately for us Macedonians, at the time we had no idea of what had been agreed to in Yalta on May 5, 1944, when negotiations were taking place for the division of the Balkans into spheres of influence. Unfortunately for us, Britain gained supremacy over Greece (and the Soviet Union over Romania) and as we know, on May 20, 1944, under pressure from the British, the CPG, EAM and ELAS signed the dreaded Lebanon Agreement with the royal government and it dissolved the coalition government. And then we thought we would win the war and reunite our Macedonia!? What foolishness... what irony...!

Back in 1944 and 1945 a small group of elite intellectuals, who later comprised NOF, in place of properly planning our future allowed themselves to be manipulated by Yugoslavia and surrendered our destiny to the Greeks, resulting in our genocide and in being exiled from our ancestral homes and lands. An unforgiving mistake has been made showing how unprepared and unaware we were during this historic moment in time. Knowing how ignorant, misinformed and unprepared we were, a certain type of Greeks and Yugoslavs took advantage of us by dangling in front of us the one thing we all cared most about; 'our Macedonia to be freed and reunited!' They used our patriotism to make us do their bidding... And after we fell into their grip, we did not have the strength or the common sense to escape...

Ours has been a hidden history. A secret kept for five decades, the history of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia.

It is really strange that for five decades the Macedonian people blamed themselves for what happened to them in Greek occupied Macedonia, being completely clueless that they had been manipulated... And yes, we are also to be blamed... for our

stupidity and for blindly following orders from strangers. But the greatest blame of them all falls on the historians, particularly on our historians, who should have discovered the truth a long time ago and informed us about it. But, instead, they tried to be ‘politically correct’ and covered it up... and for five decades they let us believe that we had done something very wrong. Our historians made us believe that our tragedy and genocide was a revolution in which we ‘supposedly’ fought for something ‘noble’. Yes, perhaps those were our intentions... but then look at what happened. We fought to reunite our Macedonia and we ended up being exiled from our ancestral homes forever! Yes we had been duped... But, what is most interesting about all this is that the Greeks carried out their well-known policies towards us all throughout the Greek Civil War, policies that were well-known to us and later towards NOF: ‘Talk softly and carry a big stick.’ Their ultimate goal was for us to pick up guns and become involved in the war they created for us... and then drive us out. And who was to blame them? Unfortunately they could not do it alone because no one trusted the Greeks. They needed some ‘unaware’ Macedonians, putting it mildly, to do the job for them... Just like they did with SNOF and the Macedonian counter-bands a few years earlier... This is precisely why the Macedonian organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS were created. They became the military drummers who sent our people to war to get killed for someone else. The NOF leadership was caught between a rock and a hard place when it began to follow directives from the two powerful communist parties, the CPY and the CPG, which spoke sweet words but made our people pay with blood and with the loss of our fatherland. From our point of view it was NOF which led our people to ‘Liberty or Death’ in this so-called ‘Holy War’ or ‘Socialist Revolution’ depending on who you ask. They were led to this only because the Macedonian people believed and trusted their Macedonian leaders... and their Macedonian leaders who promised them freedom, human rights and a united and independent Macedonia... sent them to their death, destruction and eviction from their homeland... This is the Macedonian truth! This is what it looked like from the inside! It was NOF’s responsibility to verify those directives given to it from above and to make sure they agreed with the interests of the Macedonian people. The Macedonian people trusted NOF and, as far as they were concerned,

NOF let them down because it did not do its job to protect them!
Another tragic moment in our Macedonian history!

When the NOF leadership realized that it too was stuck in a multi-layered and complex problem, it was too late, it too had become a victim of the same alien ideological systems, and found itself before 'communist justice' in Siberia. And, as you all know, I was part of that leadership and paid a hefty price for my mistakes.

Fifty years later, given the evidence available to us, we still have historians like Kiriazovski who say: "Finally, with bitterness and anger, we can conclude that the CPG not only did not take its Macedonian comrades, who bled together with the Greeks, under its protection... and not only did it not oppose the above decision (referring to Law 400/76) made by the Papandreou government, but it evaluated it positively. This time too the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia were again let down by the Greek Communists..."

The question is: "Was this just an 'infidelity' the Greek communists committed, like Kiriazovski says, or were they doing this on purpose under a well thought out plan, a plan that is active to this day?"

The rights of the Macedonians in Greece

If the facts presented in the newspaper "Zora" in Sobotsko, published in "Nova Makedonija" on April 8, 1995 are correct, then there is another notorious truth that we need to know about. The "Zora" article said: "According to the CPG in Lerin Region, the United States of America destabilized Greece." On the occasion of USA Vice Consul David Suler's visit to Solun, to meet with leaders of the Lerin Rainbow party, the CPG District Committee for Lerin Region issued a statement condemning the USA for destabilizing the Balkans with their imperialistic policy of divide and conquer. The "Zora" article, among other things, also said: "It is a case that pierces the eyes because the CPG is a party, which had promised the Macedonian people equality and self-determination..." The fact that the CPG decided to emphasize these promises, with aims at securing allies during the Greek Civil War, with well-known consequences, were promises that it did not intend to keep and went as far as to

deny that it ever made these promises, gives us the right to label this Party evil, criminal and inhuman. Further on “Zora” wrote: “In the end, here is a characteristic CPG document to remind the gentlemen of the Lerin leadership of the then CPG composition when it was a true revolutionary organization, organizing massive organizations for each national minority (Macedonians, Turks, Albanians, Jews and others) and unifying the anti-fascist forces within them...” In the chapter about the “Macedonian Question” it said: “...The ruling class had carried out its oppressive policy in the most inhuman way through terror and suppression of the rights of the national minorities living in Greece, first among whom were the Macedonians.” The CPG’s defense for the rights of Macedonian people was presented as “national treason”. (Decision of the 6th Congress, 1935, “Communist Review”, number 2.3/1936.)

Our historiography was designed to make the Macedonian people accept responsibility for everything that happened and that was done to them during the Greek Civil War; that NOF was the responsible party for creating the violent political situation in Greek occupied Macedonia. This naturally freed the real strategists and designers that caused the Macedonian genocide not only from historical responsibility but also from suspicion.

Greek occupied Macedonians in DAG’s history and the national and political implications from NOF’s enslavement to the CPY and CPG.

Does our history have open questions on the following: First, whether we, the Macedonians, if after the Second World War did not join the people’s front, through the organization NOF (established in Skopje on April 23, 1945 at the CPM/CPY Central Committee), would we have missed the historic chance to resolve the “Macedonian Question” in Greece? Second, who actually mobilized us and with what strategic objectives was NOF established to lead the armed resistance? Why did we discard the alternative (not to join the resistance movement)? Was it because it was less glorious? Did we need to defeat our enemy for not allowing us to achieve our centuries-old aspiration – to have our own country back? Third, why did we pick up arms even before the Greek Civil War had started? Was the option of starting an armed resistance ours

or the strategic goal of foreigners organized by ideological activists who had aims at perpetrating genocide against us?

In the new order the CPG became the almighty master over the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, and the consequences from that were overwhelming. In the new order, importance was measured with sacrifices under the all important slogan: “All to arms, everything for victory!”

* Were we Macedonians, as a nation, intellectually, politically and militarily prepared and able to preserve the territorial integrity of Greek occupied Macedonia and the compactness of the Macedonian population in World War II?

* After the Great Powers, in their affairs, divided the world into spheres of influence everything became “status quo”. The international state borders dividing Greece and Yugoslavia after the Second World War became the unbreakable borders of the two camps?

* With the world stage set the way it was, what chance did NOF have in achieving its stated goals, especially with the iron curtain as a border between Greek occupied Macedonia and the Republic of Macedonia?

* If history has no answers as to “why things happened” and only tells us “how things happened” then in that too there is wisdom. However, in this analysis perhaps those guards of the “History of the Aegeans”, who still say that there was no other option available to us, will find it seriously difficult to answer the question: If this is how things happened then how would things have happened if the democratic forces in Greece, the Greek Civil War and so on were located in other parts of Greece and, of course, if NOF had not been created and managed by the CPM/CPY? In other words, how would events have developed for us Macedonians had NOF not existed at all? Would we have had the same kind of massive coercion and experienced the same kind of disaster?

These questions are obviously very sensitive and charged with emotion, even at this late moment in time as we think of

approaching this issue with a constructive attitude and look at our past secrets of darkness. There is no doubt that we are facing severe reactions and shock. It is not easy to accept what was done, what we did, what we believed was the right thing to do then... unbeknownst to us... that it would be fraud. It is not easy to accept that certain ideological activists of the day, who we trusted, not only fooled us to do what they wanted us to do but later cooked our history to make us feel guilty for what we did... or failed to do... and for not achieving what we set out to achieve... for not accomplishing the impossible... something that was never possible no matter how hard we tried... no matter how many lives we sacrificed. No one wants to hear that we sacrificed all those lives and it was done for nothing... Worse than that, for perpetrating fraud that worked against our interests and made us lose our ancestral homes and lands... a fraud in which we were willing participants... without even knowing it. This is why it is not enough to just know “how things happened” without knowing “why things happened” and who did this to us. We should know that we blindly followed the directives of others even though our objectives were not so clear. We should know that all kinds of stumbling blocks were put before us that made no sense to us and yet we never questioned them, or looked for other possibilities... that perhaps those who were leading us may have had different motives? We never questioned “why” would the same people, to whom our lands were given only yesterday, now want to help us get them back? We never questioned what would happen to these people if our lands were given back to us? Where would they have gone? And worst of all, “overnight” we assumed that these people were our friends... We assumed that our enemies yesterday were suddenly our friends and working for “our” interests... and not once did we ever consider... question... or even cross our minds that things might not be what they seemed? When you just know and accept only “how things happened” and never question “why things happened” and refuse to explore “all your options” then you end up being led into oblivion. And it does not help when your “history” is written under the censorship of those who actually committed the fraud and want the truth kept deep down in darkness. But this is exactly what has happened, our history has been written under censorship with the historical truth hidden from us for over half a century, so that we never find the roots of evil and the dark secrets of our genocide... and all this was accomplished through

distractions, mystifications, cynicisms and through pushing the facts aside in favour of daily politics.

We know from history that all successful or disastrous wars provide people with historic value. We know that every civilized nation uses critical analysis to evaluate its history in order to obtain important information about its past. So, isn't it about time that our Macedonian historians do the same? If not our historians then who will provide our future generations with the valuable lesson our past has taught us? How will we navigate our future without such information? It seems that we have accepted that nothing relevant took place in Greece since our occupation about a century ago, forgetting that the Greeks slaughtered our people and appropriated our Macedonia. Had we remembered that, then we would have taken appropriate measures to protect ourselves and not live under the illusion that "someone else", perhaps the Greeks themselves, would come and help us achieve our centuries-old aspirations. Had we paid attention to our history we would have known that Hellenism was not our friend... it was not there to help us... The Greeks did not occupy Macedonia for our benefit... And, of course, the Greek communists did not lure us into their Greek Civil War, a war of their making, to save us... They did all these things because it served their interests... and we are in the way of their interests. But there is more... Having limited knowledge of our past, the way we experienced it, has placed us in a compromising position where we have to rely on outsiders, mainly on our enemies, to tell us who we are, where we come from and if we exist or not. This "phenomenon" has created divisions, disunity and false allegiances among us. Divided as we are we have become easy prey for our enemies to manipulate us and lead us into oblivion... from defeat to defeat... from disaster to disaster... from genocide to genocide... and to our eviction from our ancestral homes and lands. Testimonies from the three-and-a-half year Greek Civil War have confirmed the old truth that this war too was no coincidence, that the ideological violence, the violent mobilization of the Macedonian people, who gave their best, in return received death, persecution, destruction of their homes and permanent eviction. To this day, we still cannot go back to our homes, not even to light a candle for our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers who died believing that they were fighting for the Macedonian cause, which turned out to be a

fraud, a perpetrated act, a sinister political plot to get rid of us. We hope that now you understand why it is important to know your “real” history... If we all do our best to write our own true history then, perhaps, future generations will not repeat our mistakes.

* What happened with NOF was a tragedy. In its three-and-a-half year existence NOF followed strict orders and program goals which continuously evolved towards serving foreign interests. Initially, when NOF was first established on April 23, 1945, it was managed by the CPM/CPY. This was until November 21, 1946 when its program objective was: “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia.” This was the period during which it acted independently from the CPG and was led by the CPM/CPY (see Kirazovski, 1995/10.) There is no doubt that NOF’s optimal strategic goal, under the management of the CPM/CPY, was to recruit all the Macedonian people in Greece into the People’s Liberation Front, in order to implement its program objective.

So the question is why was NOF, the Macedonian Liberation Front, created in Yugoslavia and sent to Greek occupied Macedonia to prepare for a new conflict right after World War II ended and before the Greek Civil War had started?

The ELAS fighters who had earlier left Greek occupied Macedonia and gone to Yugoslavia, came under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of Macedonia (CPY/CPM). It was from these fighters that, in Skopje on April 23, 1945, the organization NOF was formed under the initiative of the CPY/CPM and sent to organize the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia in preparation for a new conflict - the Greek Civil War.

This shows that the Greek Civil War was foreseen before it happened. It was anticipated. Yugoslavia knew about it and was probably part of it. The top Yugoslav leadership must have known about it. And how was that possible? Could they see into the future? The only way Yugoslavia would have known was if Yugoslavia was part of the conspiracy to get rid of the Macedonians from Greece. And it should be no surprise that this plan was already in motion by

1945 when NOF was created. There was no other easy way that Britain could have gotten rid of the Macedonians from Greece without Yugoslav help. The fact that Yugoslavia put together NOF to start a new war in Greece proves it.

NOF was created on April 23, 1945 before the Greek Civil War was even thought of. The Greek Civil War did not officially begin until March 31, 1946, by a decision of the CPG Second Plenum held on February 12, 1946. It did not happen by accident; it was planned.

After the Second World War, the Greek Civil War was a new test for the Macedonian people. The war had a dual purpose; one, to expel the Macedonian population, and for that reason the war was located inside Greek occupied Macedonia; and two, to liquidate the Communists who obviously were grossly misinformed and wanted to create socialism inside the British Protectorate of Greece.

* If we are to accept the “strategic objective” that the CPM/CPY actually cared about the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, then why, less than three months earlier, did the highest Yugoslav bodies oppose the slogan: “Turn all weapons towards Solun...” i.e. “To Solun and not to the Srem front!” All Macedonian soldiers who demonstrated for going to Solun were ruthlessly punished and some murdered. This was done by Yugoslavs against their own army, the army that Tito himself created. This, obviously, was done because Tito and Yugoslavia were “well-aware” of the division of spheres of influence and that Solun was untouchable because it had already been decided by the Great Powers that Solun would stay in Greece and that Greece fell under the British sphere of influence. Knowing all this, then why would Tito, through the CPM/CPY, only three months later, change his position and approve a plan for the Macedonians “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia” being fully aware of the consequences that may result from the division of spheres of influence?

Just knowing “what happened” does not explain the absurdity of what our mainstream history has recorded, mainly that NOF was created “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-

determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia”. Our mainstream history has led us to believe that this was NOF’s “actual” objective, when in fact this was incorrect. The fact of the matter is that the architects and planners of the Macedonian people’s demise, since the beginning, needed NOF to rally the Macedonian people. They needed NOF to re-awaken the Macedonian people’s old national feelings and rally them to join the struggle quickly and in massive numbers. The real objective for NOF was to involve the entire Macedonian population in the war effort in Greek occupied Macedonia, so that Greece and its allies Britain and the United States would deal with them appropriately in accordance to their interests. During this period until November 21, 1946, according to our scant information, NOF managed to organize 5 large regions, 10 districts, 3 urban areas and 32 small regions and staff them with 120 professional NOF, NOMS and AFZH people. In the entire region of Greek occupied Macedonia, NOF managed to organize 220 villages with more than 170 rural and urban organizations staffed by 4,832 NOMS members and 2,201 AFZH Macedonian and Vlach women members. In August, over 100 fighters were acting in the area of Vicho and more than 500 NOF partisans acted in Central and Western Macedonia. The NOF partisans were deployed as follows: 200 in Kaimakchalan, 80 in Paiko, 120 in Vicho and 80 Gramos. The Macedonian fighters were divided into small units of 10-15 and larger units numbering 40-50 partisans. A larger group, a battalion, was also formed in Voden Region. (Kiriazovski, 1985/143.)

* We simply don’t know whether the NOF leadership believed it or not, or whether anyone in NOF had any reservations about its objective “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia”, but from events that followed, NOF would, in part, be responsible for creating a local hotspot for a future war in Greek occupied Macedonia. How this war was going to be started was yet unknown. NOF’s initial task was to establish itself in Greek occupied Macedonia.

* At this point we need to ask ourselves: “Why would the CPM/CPY encourage NOF to prepare for war in Greek occupied Macedonia in order “...to struggle to attain national rights and the

right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia”, when Tito and CPM/CPY communists were fully aware of the signed Varkiza Agreement under which the political left had handed over power to the political right? Why would the CPM/CPY encourage NOF to prepare for war in Greek occupied Macedonia when, on October 1944, Stalin and Churchill decided that Greece would fall under British and American influence? We Macedonians, including NOF, may not have known about these agreements but the CPM, CPY and the CPG certainly knew about them. They certainly knew that what they were proposing: “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia” would be impossible under the conditions that existed at that time. And, of course, there was that “surprise” statement made by Marshal Tito in Moscow for the New York Times during which he said: “If the Macedonians in Greece express a desire to unite with the Macedonians in Yugoslavia, then we will respect their wishes.” And how should we interpret this statement made by Tito when, at a meeting with Stergios Anastasidis, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, held in Belgrade on September 15, 1944, Tito himself said: “Yugoslavia has no pretensions and no claims on Greek Macedonia and the whole campaign about this unification has nothing to do with anything, it is just an opinion. You can share this news with the Greek people and let them know that we have no claims on Greek Macedonia. The question of changing borders is now in international hands and we should not be rushing that issue...”

Here is what historian Dr. Ivan Katardziev wrote about this in a “Nova Makedonija” article published on January 1, 1994: “The Macedonian National Movement made a mistake in its quest to unite the territory of Macedonia... It was unrealistic to seek reunification of other parts of Macedonia to Vardar Macedonia within Yugoslavia and to call Vardar Macedonia the Piedmont of the reunification. NOB constantly asked for such a reunification but, due to resistance, mainly from Britain, we could do no more than to continue to ask...”

What the CPY and the CPG did with NOF, the National Liberation front for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, was

a catastrophic scenario, a great evil, from our point of view. A catastrophic scenario perpetrated by the architects of the Greek Civil War against the Macedonian people in Greece, creating the right conditions for our extermination. And those who did not buy into it, well, they were simply told: “If you are not with us then you are a fascist and against us!” It was a dark time when new and old ambiguities intertwined and came into conflict. There was much confusion between expectations and reality that ranged from a united Macedonia, a Balkan federation, a Confederation, Autonomy and finally our eviction from our homeland... contradiction after contradiction not only of “words” but also of “actions” between what was promised and what was actually delivered. The brutal strangers and ideological activists spared no words to make promises of which they had no intention of delivering. They had one objective in mind; to get the Macedonian people involved in the war so that they could be “legally” destroyed; expelled from their ancestral homeland forever. But that was not all... The communists in Greece and Yugoslavia were not the only perpetrators of our demise... The Greeks on the political right, the fascists as our people appropriately called them, they too were involved in the same conspiracy. They were the ones “passing the laws” that would strip us of our citizenship, our properties and our ability to return to our homeland... They were the ones who created the nationalist gangs who terrorized us and made sure we fled... The Greek prosecutors and investigative authorities responsible for the Greek legal system were also involved, accusing the Macedonian people of being bandits, traitors, adventurers, secessionists and crypto fascists. On top of that, the Greek government continuously sought legal ways to destroy the Macedonian people both physically and spiritually, that is why it adopted laws such as 4124/45; 753/45; 453/45; 43/45; TOD/45; Decree D/46 and others. As can be seen, all these laws were enacted before the Greek Civil War started on March 31, 1946!

When NOF was unable to motivate the Macedonian people to re-arm themselves and go to the mountains, the Greek political right escalated the so-called “white terror” campaign and began to torment the Macedonian population to no end.

The war (WWII) was over, so why was there a need to torment the population? Most people after World War II wanted to end all hostilities, to rest and live in peace. They were craving peace. The Macedonian people were craving peace. They had had enough of wars. That is why the Macedonian people were reluctant to pick up arms and go to the mountains. When NOF failed to motivate the Macedonian people to rise and fight, the Greek reactionaries stepped in and resorted to using Metaxas's tactics to terrorize the people and get them to fight back or leave their homes and run off over the border. This was the expected reaction.

The idea here was to have the Macedonian people raise arms against Greece so that Greece would have "no other choice but to defend itself against an aggressor who wanted to carve out parts of its territory"! Yugoslavia, for the sake of having good relations with the West, naturally prepared the groundwork through the creation and indoctrination of NOF and AFZH (Women's Anti-Fascist Front) with aims at starting an armed uprising in Greek occupied Macedonia. The Macedonian people, however, did not want to fight and initially refused to participate. To get them motivated the Greek right, the Fascists, pitched in and initiated what was later termed the "white terror". Greeks indiscriminately began to kill people and burn properties and homes. Fearing for their lives many Macedonians fled to the mountains (Vicho and Gramos) where they were armed and trained to protect themselves. And this is how the conflict was started. This was a war that would be fatal to the Macedonian people; it had to be an ideological war in order to involve the international factor (US and Britain); a war that Greece would have no choice but to fight in order to save its territory. This was going to be a legal genocide because these "Slavs" were prepared to carve out Greek territory! The Macedonians were told they needed the guns to protect themselves but as soon as the shooting started they were told they were fighting to "re-unite their Macedonia" and after Yugoslavia abandoned them they were told they were fighting for their human rights to gain equality with the Greeks. Then, when the war became very hot, they were told to fight for their lives; "to fight or die!"

There was not a single Macedonian, in those days, who not only publicly proclaimed that he or she was fighting to re-unite

Macedonia but many Macedonians were made to believe that it was possible to do that! And why do you suppose they believed that? Because the architects of this war, through NOV and AFZH, told them so..., naturally through lies and deception!

Again, there was no reason for starting this war because it had been decided by the Great Powers that Greek occupied Macedonia was staying with Greece. So, the most likely reason why this war was started, which actually makes sense, was to eradicate the communist menace and to exterminate the Macedonian population.

After the Greek Civil War was officially started by the CPG on March 31, 1946, NOF's second period began which lasted from November 21, 1946 until December 23, 1947 when the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece was formed. The government's first act was to shackle NOF, which for the Macedonian people was a political tragedy. A delicate balance was reached between the CPY and the CPG and NOF was put under a big CPG stick. The CPG now demanded strict obedience from every member of NOF. And why is that? Why did the CPG want a political servant instead of a partner? The CPG wanted to fetter NOF and use it as it saw fit in its destructive policies aimed at the Macedonian population. This was the kind of justice served by the CPG, where it turned our best patriots into traitors and sent the entire Macedonian population to purgatory. This was the time when every Macedonian was told that it was his or her fault for what had happened; they were told to accept responsibility for all failures because the Macedonians were traitors, the only traitors who deserted the CPG and who worked with foreign agencies to sabotage the same war in which they were spilling their own blood.

On October 4, 1946 an agreement was reached in Belgrade between the CPM/CPY and the CPG to unify the Greek democratic forces and NOF, in other words, to put NOF under direct CPG control. The agreement was allegedly imposed by the Soviet Union, wanting Yugoslavia to accept the CPG leadership. Present at the meeting were Aleksandar Rankovich, Milovan Gialas, Kolishevski, Tsvetsko Uzunov, and Paskal Mitrevski (see: Kiriazovski 1995/204).

On November 21, 1946 the agreement was reviewed by Ivan Karaivanov from the CPY and by Ioannis Ioannidis from the CPG, after which NOF's program and aims were changed to read: "...NOF will struggle in alliance with the Greek people and will fight to protect the Macedonian people from physical harm..." In other words, NOF will follow and abide by the CPG's goals and objectives. But as soon as this "unification" took place NOF was greeted with the CPG broomstick. In time NOF became unsuitable and undesirable. This confirms that at this point in time NOF was tethered and unable to operate on its own. It was unable to work for Macedonian interests and, being told what to do, became an instrument of the CPG and began to work for foreign interests. So the question is: "What part of this is considered a 'Macedonian revolution' and a continuation of our bright Ilinden struggle?" How can historians call this "tactic of foreigners", this "catastrophe", this "treacherous act", this "betrayal by the CPG", a Macedonian revolution? But that is not all. This very treacherous act of surrendering NOF to the CPG further divided the Macedonian people. Those Macedonians, loyal to the CPM/CPY, who remained in Yugoslavia (the Republic of Macedonia) and who watched what was happening to the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia saw this as a treasonous act, NOF "selling out" to the CPG and to Greek nostalgia. While the Macedonian people, loyal to the CPG, who were fighting and spilling their blood in Greece saw those in the Republic of Macedonia as "traitors" and "deserters", who had left their families behind to save their own skins. Now we have yet another Macedonian division which, no doubt, further served foreign interests...

The CPM, standing between the CPY and the CPG, sacrificed the Macedonian people and legalized the annexation of Greek occupied Macedonia.

As an elite organization, formed by the CPM/CPY, NOF had fulfilled its program objectives and subsequently was handed over to the CPG to begin a new mandate. Its new mandate was to "hand over" the Macedonian people to the CPG and allow it to become their new omnipotent ruler. After the Macedonian people were mobilized en masse, the CPG became totally "responsible for the Slavo-Macedonians" but continued with the elusion that NOF was

still in charge, especially in the ranks of DAG. Now NOF's main priority task, as ordered by the CPG, was to make "ideological soldiers" out of the Macedonians so that it would make it easier for them to join the disastrous civil war scenario. The new slogan became: "Everything for the struggle and for freedom!"

What is most unfortunate about this experience is that NOF, at least outwardly, still played the heroic role of freedom fighter, fostering strong spiritual and national unity and projecting a sense of patriotic confidence all in the "name of the people!", a mandatory part of its everyday political vocabulary, a motive and an alibi for the ideological and military turmoil. This indeed took place in our history which raises the question:

"If it were not for NOF, how would it have been possible to attract so many people from the Macedonian villages to join DAG and become casualties of this foreign inspired war?" There was no Macedonian village in Greek occupied Macedonia that did not lose a large portion of its population... to have 60 to 100 casualties! There was no family that was unaffected... Yet this happened and the Macedonian people fought heroically. They were the true warriors in DAG. Unfortunately, because of our bondage to the CPY and to the CPG through NOF, we lost everything...

NOF's third period lasted from December 23, 1947 until DAG was liquidated. This was a time when NOF accepted the Provisional Democratic Government's program on the national question: "Recognition of equality of the national minorities and their free national activities..." (See: AE: 179/47.)

By willingly or unwillingly leaning toward the CPY or towards the CPG, NOF lost its independence, if it ever had any, which resulted in the Macedonian people falling into foreign hands. After NOF was passed on from the CPY to the CPG, the CPG showed much care and gave the NOF leadership much attention. But, as time has shown, all this was done intentionally to lull the Macedonian people into a sense of false security. Then, slowly and over time, the CPG manipulated the Macedonian people into taking part in the Greek Civil War, which for the Macedonians was a foreign war and not of their making. The moment they picked up weapons and fought

against the Greek government they became a target of extermination. Because now they left Greece with no choice but to fight back in order to save its integrity. This was the long-term plan all along. To get the Macedonians involved in the disastrous war, the Greek communists told them all sorts of lies that ranged from “fighting to re-unite Macedonia”, “fighting to create an independent Republic of Macedonia within Greece”, “fighting for their rights as equals in Greece”, to “fighting for their survival”. In the meantime the Greek government was telling the Greek people that the Macedonians were “foreign Slav bandits” fighting to break away and steal their Macedonia and attach it to Yugoslavia. The rest of the world, particularly the western world, was told that this was a “Civil War” between the terrible communists who wanted to install socialism in Greece and the democratic Greek people who just wanted to live free and happy in a western democracy.

Unfortunately none of the above turned out to be true. As events have shown and as it turned out in the end, “this war” was nothing more than a legal means to destroy communism and to exterminate the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia. This long period of uncertainty that involved the entire spectrum of the Macedonian population, including infants and children, was an exhaustive, brutal and permanent violent act against the Macedonian people which forever scarred them and left them in limbo, drifting around the world while their Macedonia rested in desolation devoid of its indigenous population. This war gave Greece and its patrons what they had always wanted, a Macedonia without Macedonians. I will say it again. The “Greek Civil War” was not a grass roots war between “Greeks” fighting “Greeks” for social and political change, it was a war of “extermination” during which “genocide” was perpetrated against the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia under the watchful eye of the world. To cover it up, we have been told that “Macedonians do not exist...”

If our ancestors throughout history were tormented to no end, they were bent but never broken. They survived six centuries of Ottoman slavery, a century of foreign propaganda but were only bent and never broken. We, on the other hand, after less than half a decade in the Greek Civil War, were not only broken, we had lost everything... We lost our ancestral hearth, the very thing that

defined us as Macedonians. This was no coincidence; this was a perpetrated act by some very powerful people. But that was not the end of our torment... Our history had been written for us telling us that somehow we were guilty of all the crimes committed against us... It was our fault for experiencing genocide... for our eviction from our homes... for our isolation... for being turned into drifters roaming the world! It is no coincidence that today we struggle to find our place in the world as Macedonians and are finding it difficult to name our tiny country Macedonia. Nothing is a coincidence...

It was no coincidence that we struggled in the services of the CPY, in the services of the CPG, in leaving our homes to escape death... It was no coincidence that we were not allowed to return... These were deliberate political acts, committed under the watchful eye of the world, and to this day this perpetrated genocide has been kept a secret. Those magnificent Generals, the likes of the incompetent Gusias, Markos and Vlandas, did not fight all those battles to conquer Lerin, Voden, Sobotsko, Negosh, Vicho and Gramos for us. They did not fight to liberate them so that they could give them back to us. They fought to “get rid” of us so that they could make Greece “pure”, populated by 100% pure Greeks!

Today every DAG fighter should be asking himself or herself the following questions:

1. What communist party in the world would perpetrate genocide against its own members who died for its objectives?
2. What general would abandon his army if the very soldiers who fought for him were considered heroes?
3. Why is the CPG, even today, afraid of telling the truth about the civil war, about DAG's history the way it was and about that one undeniable fact that the Macedonian identity existed and still exists to this day in Greece?

What is most tragic is that the people who called themselves “DAG warriors”, the people who were mobilized in DAG by NOF and fought in the war, were driven out of their homeland and left out

there to roam the world. Upon their return, not to their homes in Greek occupied Macedonia, but to their homeland in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, the NOF leaders, with the exception of the top leaders who were sent to Siberia, were welcomed back with honours. The fighters, meanwhile, and the thousands of refugees, including children, elderly, and the sick and wounded, were left to roam the world in the various camps, as “Greek political immigrants”, waiting for the end of their lives. Why did the Republic of Macedonia not take every Macedonian from Greek occupied Macedonia and place them in the villages in the western part of the Republic and let them build new lives there? These Macedonians were used to living in villages. They were hardworking people and would have greatly contributed to the Macedonian and Yugoslavian economy. Unfortunately that was not done! It was not done because, even in the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people’s destiny was in foreign hands. Because of this, even today, more than six decades later, we still have Macedonian people roaming the world, left there to be punished for the supposed “sins” they committed against Greece and the Greeks, our occupiers, during the “so-called” Greek Civil War... This information needs to come out and become public knowledge so that today we and future generations can know the truth and avoid making the same mistakes.

Stoian Kochov has invested his lifetime telling our story, the true story of what happened in Greek occupied Macedonia, as experienced by Macedonians who lived through it. As a DAG fighter and permanent refugee, Stoian has done his best to let us know, to inform us, of what happened to our people in Greece... and what happened was no accident, it was perpetrated against us to serve some “higher Great Power purpose”... But what happened to us was not an act of God, but an act of man and when man tries to wipe out an entire race of people for his own purposes, it is called “GENOCIDE”. Stoian has done his best to present us with the evidence we need to make up our own minds about the depths of our tragedy in Greece. Stoian, through the various books he has written, has presented us with the “other side” of history, the dark side, hidden from us for over half a century.

“In May 1945, like great messengers, the Macedonian organizations NOF and AFZH, had almost completely encompassed the entire Macedonian population,” said Suvogorski.

He stopped talking for a moment and looked over his shoulder at Petre Magdin, feeling like that door behind him had opened. Suvogorski then continued:

“Daily politics had invaded the people’s lives, so much so that the Macedonian people’s existence was linked exclusively to the CPG through NOF and AFZH, for which they would have given their lives...

Unfortunately everything was very blurry in those days and everything that was said and done, especially by the CPM/CPY and by the CPG, was done for political reasons that did not serve Macedonian interests in Greek occupied Macedonia.

The whole process was well-managed, strong and senseless propaganda initiated by the CPM/CPY and managed by NOF, telling the Macedonian people what they wanted to hear and then shaping their destiny, especially during a period when they were most vulnerable.

It is incredible how they were able to manipulate people to drop everything at home, join the partisan units and be ready to fight and give their lives for NOF and AFZH... To sacrifice themselves for something they hardly understood... propagated through slogans like: “All to arms and everything for victory and freedom!” that made no sense to most villagers. It takes a trusting people to commit to such a leap of faith!

This behaviour, unfortunately, was normal for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia from 1945 to August 1949, when we Macedonians were driven out of our homes and experienced genocide...” concluded Suvogorski.

Suvogorski then turned his attention to his audience and began to shout: “It was madness; I tell you... madness, madness! We did this! We were responsible for doing this to our own people... We were the ideological activists who got them involved...”

Suvogorski paused for a moment, composed himself and continued: “At the same time we were motivating our people to go out and fight, the Greek government undertook unprecedented acts of terrorism against us. It tormented and murdered the Macedonian people, basically the same people... the same villagers we were trying to motivate to fight. We wanted them to fight for the Macedonian cause and the Greeks punished them for feeling Macedonian. If the NOF activists could not convince them to fight, the Greek government did with its terror tactics. The Macedonian people, these villagers began to join the struggle en masse. For people who were completely unaware of politics, politics became a profession for these villagers... We then became the “fishermen of souls” hooking and reeling them in, making sacrifices out of them. We took away their spirits... These were people who were closely tied to the land... and we forced them into oblivion. Thousands of Macedonians left their large indigenous spirit behind and became endless wanderers... and it was our fault... because we listened to strangers and outsiders... without thinking for ourselves. We listened to the lies of the same people who invaded, occupied, partitioned and annexed our Macedonia and we believed them. Why? I don’t know why! Perhaps because they knew our weaknesses and used them against us...?”

Did we Macedonians, during this period of time, while we were heavily influenced by the CPM/CPY, not know who the Greeks were and what they had done to us in the past? Of course we did! Why then did we surrender to the CPG and allow it and the Greek government to take all those actions against us... that led to our genocide?

More specifically, why did NOF and AFZH, while still being under the influence of the CPM/CPY in 1945-1946, by their actions, slowly open the door to our persecution and genocidal activities, forcing our people to leave their homes and join DAG in order to sacrifice themselves for an unattainable cause? There is only one

answer to all these questions that actually makes sense; they did this to drive us out of our homeland... They did this because they wanted “a Macedonian without Macedonians”. And the only way to achieve this was to “get rid” of us in a nice and legal way...”

Suvogorski, looking red in the face, paused for a moment to take a deep breath and continued: “And now, 60 years later, our official historians think they know all the facts and have clear answers ...that the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia did what?”

Looking visibly upset, Suvogorski again paused for a moment to compose himself, and in a calm tone of voice said: “And what did Kolishevski say? Kolishevski said: ‘Now go down there... and listen to the CPG’...”

Suvogorski paused again. He was overcome with emotion. He looked around at everyone, one by one, and then calmly continued: “Kolishevski told us that ‘We are a part of a Democratic Federal Yugoslavia and everything that comes between us and some other state can be resolved but only through Marshal Tito’s government.’ Those were Kolishevski’s words. Tsvetko Uzunov spoke after Kolishevski.

Uzunov said: ‘It was the CPM/CPY who organized the plans for Aegean Macedonia’ but he did not tell us what their purpose was. He did not tell us why the CPM/CPY, led by Tito, wanted us Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia to take weapons in our hands and start a war in Greece?

NOF and AFZH were created in Skopje especially for that purpose... Not too long after that we received two bitter rivals: the CPG and the Greek government which steadfastly defended Greece’s sovereignty,” concluded Suvogorski.

Verbalism in place of historical analysis

Even though the book “P. S. G. in Aegean Macedonia (1945-1949)” has presented much historical information in an organized fashion, it has also opened many unsubstantiated historical events and has created many provocations. These unsubstantiated historical events need to be carefully opened and patiently, systematically and chronologically examined. This needs to be done in order to add credibility to our written history, to the history of the “Aegeans”. Otherwise our history will remain underrepresented and unexplained.

CHAPTER FIVE - Unprecedented (self)-manipulation of the Macedonians

The slogan: “Creating an independent Macedonian state within a Balkan demographic federation...” was printed in the DAG newspaper “Pros ti niki” (Towards victory) published on March 10, 1949.

In the four years of the civil war, the nature of the struggle changed several times. More precisely, the reason for these changes was to totally commit the Macedonian people to the war effort. The architects of the war used every means possible in order to mobilize the Macedonians en masse, including various slogans, political manipulations and making promises they could not possibly keep but which might motivate the people to join the war effort.

Suvogorski could no longer stand the silence. It felt like a fire was burning in the pit of his stomach. He adjusted his glasses on the top of his nose, sighed and said:

“We Macedonians were not a problem for our neighbours for centuries. There were no problems between them as well. There were no violent disturbances, no murders, nothing like the things that were mentioned in the NOF II Congress that took place on March 25 and 26, 1949. In fact things were going along smoothly in accordance with CPG Central Committee’s spirit of the 5th plenum when “self-determination” and the “creation of an independent Macedonian state” were acceptable to everyone.

Godfather Zahariadis’s main objective, during NOF’s II Congress, was to proclaim a general people’s uprising that would include the entire Macedonian population. He wanted total mobilization of the Macedonian people.

After NOF’s II Congress, the Macedonian people were placed in a position to revisit the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest.

At this point I want to say that there is still time and space for us to develop a long-term policy for our survival, for the survival of what is remaining of our small Macedonian existence. It is most

unfortunate that we lost our largest part to assimilation, destruction, eviction and genocide. We must no longer look to what the Macedonian state has done or can do, we must look to ourselves, what we as individuals have done and what more we can do to save our Macedonian existence.

KOEM was established on March 27, 1949. This took place after the NOF II Congress. Immediately after that the slogan for a free and independent Macedonia began to vanish and new slogans began to appear, the kind that would influence the “total mobilization of the Macedonian people”. With this came the depopulation of the Macedonian villages and their planned eviction towards the border zone,” concluded Suvogorski.

CHAPTER SIX - NOF and AFZH cadres sent to combat units

How much do we know about “NOF and AFZH’s” political strategy and what sent the Macedonian people through the dark scenario of history fighting for DAG? How much do we know about the national and political implications of NOF and AFZH being “enslaved” by the CPM/CPY and by the CPG? We are certain that at this point in this book everyone would want to know: “Who lured the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia to rise up” and what was Tito and the CPM/CPY’s political and ideological conception?

On October 3, 1948 all NOF and AFZH cadres were called to an active in the village Rudari in Prespa.

In his characteristic movement Zahariadis stood up straight, adjusted himself, and said:

“Should I speak or are you going to speak?!”

There was silence! Not one of the Macedonian cadres had enough courage to move, never mind speak...

After waiting a while, Zahariadis sharply and confidently said:

“The time has come even for me to go to the ranks of DAG!”

Everyone agreed. There was not a single person who disagreed. Unfortunately this meeting was not about sending Greek cadres to the ranks of DAG but only the Macedonian cadres belonging to NOF and AFZH, including its top leaders.

CPG General Secretary Zahariadis ordered all NOF and AFZH cadres to report to DAG General Headquarters to be recruited into DAG’s fighting ranks.

At that point the Macedonian cadres looked like chickens with their heads cut off but still squirming, precisely because they had lost their power and fell under strict CPG intelligence service control and soon afterwards were labeled “Tito’s agents”.

CHAPTER SEVEN – For the love of Macedonia

Someone in the back piped up and said: “And don’t let us forget about the chest-beating and arguments between the Macedonians who quarrel about ‘who loves Macedonia more and who wanted it united’. Or those who boasted how they were going to solve the Macedonian Question...”

Suvogorski bent down and picked up a bunch of papers. He then began to read. Written on the top of the first page was: “Personal notes from the history of the Macedonians in the Greek Civil War (1945-1949).” Suvogorski then looked at the pictures of Tito and Zahariadis and, with a sober look on his face, said: “What do you think... Who wanted to break us Macedonians?”

There was silence. Suvogorski continued: “With every passing day the situation in Greece became even scarier because the top NOF and AFZH leaders were now getting their orders directly from the CPG. They were used to getting their orders handed down to them by the CPY leadership. But they should not have been surprised because what was happening to them now had been pre-arranged by the CPY and CPG, when Tito and Zahariadis met in Belgrade on April 2, 1946, without the presence of any Macedonians, and decided that the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia would be led by NOF but managed by the CPY/CPM. Then, when the time was right, NOF’s program would be modified and NOF would be put under the CPG. NOF’s new program shall then read as follows: ‘NOF and AFZH will fight in alliance with the Greek people in order to save the Macedonian people from physical extermination...’ And this is what happened...”

I am telling you this so that you can understand it. When NOF was managed by the CPY we were fighting to re-unite our Macedonia... When NOF was passed on to the CPG we were fighting to ‘save ourselves...’ No explanation requested... No explanation given! NOF and AFZH were committed to their new task as much as they were committed to their old task... No questions asked! They did exactly what they were told! This tells me that it had been left up to Tito and Zahariadis to decide what would happen to the Macedonian

people in Greek occupied Macedonia and not to those Macedonians beating their chests! And we all know what happened!” concluded Suvogorski.

CHAPTER EIGHT – Yugoslavia closed its borders

Someone in the back, perhaps the same man, piped up again and said: “What a dramatic turnaround... Yugoslavia closed its borders and the Macedonian authorities in the Republic of Macedonia said nothing...”

Suvogorski again began to feel that burning sensation in the pit of his stomach. Thinking about what happened and what was done to the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia made him uneasy. He found it very difficult to speak without becoming emotional and upset. He took another gulp of water from his glass, rolled the papers that he was holding in his hands into a roll and, in a loud voice, continued:

“Well, Tito and Yugoslavia’s politics left the NOF and AFZH leaders with their eyes and mouths wide open in disbelief. Our Macedonian brothers and sisters in the Republic of Macedonia had abandoned us... This means that our Macedonian brothers in the Republic of Macedonia closed the border on the Macedonians fighters from the Greek occupied part of Macedonia. They closed the border on the same Macedonian fighters who had been mass mobilized into DAG units by NOF at the request of Lazo Kolishevski and Tsvetko Uzunov, who said they were needed for the revolution because they were exemplary revolutionaries...”

And what was their political message?

1. Kolishevski ordered the NOF and AFZH leadership to ‘listen and trust the Greek Communists!’
2. Tsvetko Uzunov-Abas gave the NOF leadership his guarantee that ‘behind them stood Yugoslavia’, just as they were marched out and surrendered to their new stepfathers Markos and Zahariadis. And what happened after that? NOF continued with business as usual, agitating and recruiting more Macedonians to fight in the Greek Civil War and to make more sacrifices... What happened to Uzunov’s guarantee when Yugoslavia closed its border on us? Where was Uzunov then? Did they forget that NOF and AFZH were created in Skopje to follow and fulfill CPM/CPY directives?

This dramatic reversal was one of the most difficult experiences for the Macedonian nation... It was madness... real madness! It happened to us Macedonians and it confirmed that the Republic of Macedonia was tightly controlled by the CPM/CPY and Tito was our stepfather in Yugoslavia..." concluded Suvogorski.

CHAPTER NINE - NOF and AFZH's historic end

The true “victory” in the Greek Civil War was exactly what happened between 1945 and 1949. The NOF and AFZH revolutionaries achieved a double zero and on top of that failed to stop the ordinary and innocent Macedonian villagers from leaving their homes and from crossing the border into oblivion... without being able to return. It seemed like NOF and AFZH managed to create a totalitarian regime in Greek occupied Macedonia, but what they created was only an empty national nucleus that collapsed.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

It is important at this time to reveal some of the information relating to our destiny and to Macedonia which I personally discussed with Pavle Rakovski, of the actions and events that took place during the Greek Civil war in the period from 1945 to 1949, which gave me the incentive to write this book.

1 The Greek press and the Greek writers in the camp of the political right called the Greek Civil War an “Anti-bandit struggle” and not a “Civil War”. This struggle, led by the Greek government and its forces, did not begin to be called a “Civil War” until much later, years after DAG (Democratic Army of Greece) was defeated.

2 Macedonia’s partition by the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest took place in the aftermath of the Second Balkan War during the Bucharest Peace Conference, which lasted from July 17 to July 28, 1913 (according to the old calendar). The 1913 Treaty of Bucharest was signed by Greece and Serbia, the victors of this war which received 89.89 percent of Macedonia’s territory, and Bulgaria the defeated, received only 10.11 percent.

During the Conference, behind Greece and Serbia stood France and Britain, while Bulgaria hoped to gain the support of Russia and Austria - Hungary. At least half of the negotiations were spent on whether the port of Kavala should go to Bulgaria, behind which stood Russia, or to Greece as advocated by France and Britain. Russia wanted to gain access to the Aegean Sea and was hoping to get it through Bulgaria.

3 Dr. Risto Kiriazovski’s book “Five vital years in Aegean Macedonia (1945-1949)” was posthumously published by the “Association of Refugee Children from Aegean Macedonia”. Risto Kiriazovski was born on January 6, 1927 and participated in DAG. Then in 1949, before the Greek Civil War ended, he fled to the People’s Republic of Macedonia. In 1981 he received his PhD as a historian under the theme: “The National Liberation Front (NOF) and other organizations in Aegean Macedonia 1945 -1949.” He retired in 1987 and died in 2002 in Skopje. For me, analyzing Kiriazovski’s last book was another reason for taking on this project.

4 The Yalta Conference lasted from February 4 to 11, 1945. It was attended by Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt in the presence of their foreign ministers.

5 The beginning of the “Macedonian Question” was dated by some Western diplomats to 1870 when Russia forced the Ottoman Empire to allow the establishment of the Exarchate Church, a separate Orthodox Church, to take control over parts of Macedonia, then a province of the Ottoman Empire. Later the Exarchate Church, after Bulgaria became a state, was taken over by Bulgaria. Others hold the opinion that the “Macedonian Question” dates to 1878, to when the Berlin Congress revised the San Stefano Treaty, which Russia imposed on the Ottomans after the Russian - Turkish war. With the Treaty of San Stefano, Bulgaria was to receive most of Macedonia. This created the Bulgarian national dream of expanding Bulgaria’s territory to include the entire part of the Republic of Macedonia, Vranie, Kostur Region, Lerin Region, the islands and a small part of the Aegean Sea west of Solun. The Berlin Congress, however, did not agree and at the same time Russia gave up on the Treaty of San Stefano. So the Berlin Congress gave Macedonia back to the Ottoman Empire. (See Documents “Britain and Macedonia”)

6 The ELAS fighters and members of this army were called “Andartes” by the Greeks. The original “Andartes” were anti-Macedonian Greek armed gangs that existed around the Ilinden Uprising period or before Macedonia was partitioned in 1913. They wreaked havoc and committed horrible crimes against the Macedonian population and against the Macedonian organization. Their aim was to spread Greek influence in Macedonia by the gun and knife.

On April 6, 1941, at the same time Germany invaded Yugoslavia and Greece, there was a new master in Greece called fascism. On September 27, 1941 the organization EAM (National Liberation Front) was established and called on the entire population in Greece to stand up and resist fascism. At the same time the CPG Central Committee, together with EAM, looked for ways to organize an army. Then on February 15, 1942 the first ELAS (Greek People’s Liberation army) units began to appear. The first ELAS detachment

in Kostur Region was formed on December 7, 1942 and consisted of 10 Macedonians, 7 Greeks and 2 Vlachs.

By mid 1943 ELAS had grown to around 70,000 fighters. On July 16, 1943 the ELAS leadership and Colonel Eddie Myers, Chief of the English Military Mission in Greece, signed an Agreement by which ELAS was placed under Middle East British Command. On February 12, 1945 the Varkiza Agreement was signed, by which the resistance movement leaders virtually handed power to the political right in Greece.

7 SNOF (Slavo-Macedonian People's Liberation Front) was created in October 1943 in the village Osnichani, Kostur Region, by Hristos Kalfas – Andreas, CPG District Committee Secretary for Western Macedonia, by Antonis Antonopoulos – Periklis, CPG District Secretary for Kostur Region, and by Thanasis Kartsounis, CPG District Committee Secretary for Kozhani Region. The purpose for creating SNOF was to liquidate the counter-bands in Greek occupied Macedonia, particularly those in Kostur Region. It was the CPG's belief that an all Macedonian organization such as SNOF would attract the counter-bandits into the ranks of SNOF and eventually ELAS. For a short time SNOF was allowed to recruit Macedonians but they were limited to one detachment which was to remain under ELAS command. SNOF and its military arm SNOB were disbanded on September 26, 1944 by the Caserta Agreement. On September 26, 1944 the Caserta Agreement was signed between the CPG, EAM and ELAS on one side and by the Greek government in exile led by Georgios Papandreou and by the British Headquarters for the Middle East on the other. This Agreement called for "getting rid" of SNOF and everything that was Macedonian.

This Agreement definitely sealed the fate of the political left and the Macedonian people in Greece, especially those Macedonians who put their trust in the CPG.

8 The Party newspaper "Laiki Foni", by announcing to the world through the famous Bekersdzhis interview, told the world that "Bulgarophone Greeks" lived in Greece. Then General Stefanos Sarafis, supreme commander of ELAS, in his famous book "O ELAS" (1946, 331) referred to the Macedonians as "Slavophone

Greeks”. And another thing that needs to be said: Greece, after the Balkan wars, with the Neuilly Convention signed with Bulgaria on November 27, 1919, and with the 1923 Lausanne (Switzerland) Peace Treaty signed with Turkey, and with the compulsory exchange of populations, changed the ethnic make-up in Macedonia to a point where the Macedonian people began to lose their ethnic-territorial status. Then, during World War II, Greece eliminated this issue when the ELAS, EAM and CPG leaderships signed the Lebanon Agreement on July 16, 1943, the Caserta Agreement on September 26, 1944 and the Varkiza Agreement on February 12, 1945 with the English Colonel Eddie Myers, so that the territory of Greece would remain as is.

As a matter of fact, the bi-weekly magazine “KOMEPE”, organ of the CPG Central Committee, issue number 16, published in August 1943, beautifully explained the ethnic-territorial status in Greece as follows: “There is no national confusion in Greek Macedonia... The Slavo-Macedonian and Turkish population was removed in accordance with the signed conventions and the Greek population was collected from all countries in the Balkans and from Asia Minor and brought to Greek Macedonia... This population became so much Greek that it resembled the Greek population in Greece proper!” (p. 331.)

9 Naum Peiov was born in 1919 in the village Gabresh, Kostur Region. He was a member of the CPG before the war (WW II). In 1939 he was arrested by the Greek police. He joined NOV in 1941. He was the Commander of the Macedonian Partisan Detachment “Lazo Trpovski”. He was a member of the SNOF District Committee for Kostur Region. In May 1944 Naum led the group of fighters who fled ELAS and crossed over to Vardar Macedonia. He was appointed Deputy Commander of the First Aegean Brigade. After the war he took on various high level political and state positions in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

10 Basically, two SNOF organizations were formed: SNOF for Kostur Region, established in October 1943, and SNOF for Lerin Region, established in November 1943 in the village Belkamen. As proposed by Tempo, SNOF was created by EAM for the purpose of fighting together with ELAS in order to dissolve the Kostur Region

and other counter-bands. SNOF was strictly controlled by the Greeks in EAM and ELAS. SNOF was created to represent the organizational needs of all the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia, and was not to operate independently but under EAM directives, which in turn were issued and supported by the CPG. We want to make it clear here that the CPG, in January 1944, also allowed the formation of the “Slavo-Macedonian People’s Liberation Army”, or SNOB, the military wing of SNOF, and placed it under direct EAM and ELAS command. Later the “Aegean Brigade” was created out of the SNOB composition which left ELAS and crossed the Yugoslav border and joined Tito’s army in Yugoslavia. Then, on April 23, 1945 in Skopje, at the initiative of the CPM/CPY, the Macedonian organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS were formed and dispatched to Greek occupied Macedonia.

11 Tsvetko Uzunov - Abas was responsible for the military police in the Republic of Macedonia. According to Uzunov, during a CPM Central Committee Plenum, held in the summer of 1945, the CPM proposed to take a frontal attack against the group of people who broke away from the Party and caused Factionalism. Included in this group were Chento, Venko Markovski, Apostolski, Kiro Gligorov, Lazar Sokolov, Petre Piruze and Blagoi Hadzhi Panzov, all assisted by Dimitar Vlahov.

12 My aim in my long research is to determine who instigated the Macedonian expulsion from Greek occupied Macedonia after Macedonia was invaded in 1912, occupied, partitioned and annexed by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1913. Who pushed the Macedonian people to leave their centuries-long civilization, traditional values and ethnic space? Who decided to attack and subdue the Macedonian people to a point of extinction?

13 On March 21, 1945, during its CPY Central Committee Politburo Session, the Yugoslav State Party leadership clarified its position for building socialism in Macedonia as referenced by Miha Marinko. Tito concluded the Session by emphasizing that: “Mihailoism in Macedonia has yet to be experienced because Mihailoism lives in the bourgeoisie and less among the peasantry. The party has popularized it. It should first, in concrete terms, be unveiled. Macedonia must hold on by its own strength. Chento should be

criticized in the Party and Vlahov must be called here. The fate of these people should be carefully decided... Macedonia has not yet given for this war and we must insist that it gives more, especially for rebuilding the country..." After that the CPM Central Committee Plenum was quickly selected. See paragraph on Tsvetko Uzunov - Abas.

14 Nikos Zahariadis was born on April 27, 1903 in Edirne (Adrianopolis), Eastern Thrace. His father was employed as a clerk, an expert, in the "Rezi" French tobacco trading company based in Istanbul. During 1911 and 1912 Nikos Zahariadis lived in Skopje, in the "Ibni Paiko" settlement, where his father worked as a representative of "Rezi". Zahariadis attended school in Skopje and in 1913 moved to Solun. In 1922 and 1923 he spent time in the Soviet Union as a marine worker, during which time he joined the Communist Party. In 1924, during the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece, Zahariadis's family was moved to Greece. In 1924 he attended the famous University of Communist Nations for Eastern Europe (KUTVE) in Moscow. Zahariadis was the leader of the Greek communist movement and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) from 1936 to 1956. Zahariadis persistently treated the CPG like it was his own cult and had great confidence in the absolute infallibility of the CPSU and Stalin. He later admitted that this was an expensive mistake for which the Greek Communist movement, the Greek and Macedonian people and he himself had to pay a hefty price. Zahariadis committed suicide in 1973 while in captivity in the city Sorgun, Siberia.

As a result of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the signing of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest on August 10, 1913, sanctioned by the Neuilly Peace Treaty signed on November 27, 1919, and the Sevres Peace Agreement signed on August 10, 1920, Macedonia was divided between Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania (which later received Dolna Prespa and Golo Brdo). Greece received 34,356 km² or 51% of the Macedonian ethnic and historical territory, Serbia received 25,713 km² or 39%, Bulgaria received 6,798 km² or 9.5%, and Albania received 0.5% of Macedonia's ethnic and historical territory.

15 See: A - Neuilly Peace Treaty.

16 See: B – Lausanne Peace Treaty.

17 In 1924 an agreement was made to create a VMRO (United) organization in all parts of occupied Macedonia with support from the left-wing political forces, primarily from the communist movement. In April or May 1924, a Declaration and a Manifesto were issued which, even today, have special interest. According to its program goals the “VMRO (United), as a truly revolutionary force, will struggle to free the torn up parts of Macedonia and unite them into a single complete autonomous (independent) political unit within its natural ethnographic and geographic borders”.

In March 1924 the 6th Balkan Communist Organization (BKO) Conference, recognized by the Comintern, formally accepted the Bulgarian proposal to create a “United and Independent Macedonia” within a “Balkan Federation”. In May 1924, during its 5th World Congress, the Comintern sanctioned the BKO decision. The CPY representatives, the likes of Pouliopoulos and Maximos, and the CPY representatives in these Conventions had no other choice but to accept these recommendations so that they would not be accused of being obstacles in the international communist movement. As a result of this, the CPY, during its June 1926 3rd Congress held in Vienna, accepted the Comintern decision for the creation of an “independent Macedonian state”. This view was then confirmed in October 1928 during the CPY’s 4th Congress.

18 On November 18, 1944 the “First Aegean Brigade” was formed in free Bitola, consisting of the fighters of the two battalions that had fled Greek occupied Macedonia. On December 28, 1944 the “First Aegean Brigade” was dispatched to the western part of the Republic of Macedonia, to Kichevo, Gostivar and Tetovo and tasked with eliminating Zhemo and Mefail’s Balist armed bands formed during the Italian and German occupation. On April 2, 1945, by strictly confidential special order number 236, issued by Marshal Tito himself, the “First Aegean Brigade” was dismantled.

19 An immigrant Macedonia was created in Canada, the United States and Australia, in the 20th century, after Macedonia was

partitioned in 1913 and up until the end of World War II. During the Greek Civil War (1945-1949) more than 20 thousand Macedonian people lost their lives and many more lost them across the prisons in Greece. A much larger number of Macedonians found themselves in Eastern European countries including the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, etc., creating yet another immigrant Macedonia, but in their hearts and souls the people always carried their true Macedonia, forever wishing to return home and unite with their families.

The Macedonian people who found themselves exiled in the Eastern European countries began to return to the Republic of Macedonia as soon as relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union improved. On their return, the first Macedonian institution that welcomed them was “Idrizovo” Prison in Skopje. It was in this prison that the fate of many was decided. Their return to their homeland depended of how well their family was “Yugoslav-oriented”, meaning to which “Macedonian faction” they belonged (were they supporters of Stalin or Tito? And God help them if they said they were supporters of Stalin!) But in the years that followed what they said did not matter... Most said they were returning to Macedonia because they were Macedonians... but what truly mattered and was very important is that they followed the rules as set out by UDBA.

20 Counter-bands: The first armed counter-band in Kostur Region was formed on March 5, 1943. After that counter-bands quickly appeared in 54 villages and the number of rebels grew to 9,850. They were armed villagers called upon to defend against the armed Greek nationalist gangs which were terrorizing the Macedonian population in the region. In 1943 the Greek nationalist gangs distributed a leaflet in Western Greek occupied Macedonia in which, among other things, they threatened the Macedonian population, especially the Macedonian counter-band rebels. October 20, 1943, the CPG formed SNOF (Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Front) for the purpose of destroying the counter-bands. In April 1944, after the counter-bands were destroyed, the CPG dissolved SNOF (and SNOV) and placed the Macedonian fighters in ELAS. A group of Macedonians serving in ELAS, in protest, separated themselves from ELAS, fled Greek occupied Macedonia, crossed

over the border into the Republic of Macedonia and joined Tito's partisan army.

21 General Markos Vafiadis was a tobacco worker. He joined the CPG in 1928. He became a member of the CPG Central Committee in 1942. At the same time he was appointed CPG Second Secretary of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Commissar of the Group of ELAS divisions in Greek occupied Macedonia. Vafiadis, during the Greek Civil War, was military commander of the partisan armed forces and president of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. In the September 15, 1948 CPG Central Committee Politburo Resolution, it was said that Markos Vafiadis, as Commissar of the Group of ELAS divisions in Macedonia, followed a chauvinistic policy towards the Slavo-Macedonian fighters. ("Neos Kosmos", August 1950, "Ten years of struggle", p. 470.)

22 On June 4, 1956, during a Presidency Session of the organization "Ilinden", a Macedonian organization established at Zahariadis's initiative, Colonel Pando Vaina, leader of the organization, presented a paper on Macedonian persecution by the CPG, in which, among other things, he said: "...In the period of DAG's history and after DAG was defeated, Zahariadis had carried out a policy of vilification and persecution of a good number of the Slavo-Macedonian cadres and popular fighters. It was easy for him to label the Slavo-Macedonian cadres and popular fighters with completely baseless accusations such as 'enemy agents' and so on. In 1948-1949 and later, many Slavo-Macedonians were arrested, and some liquidated, on the basis of these false accusations..." (Am, F-21/1600.)

23 On February 21, 1947 the British government informed the US government that on March 31, 1947, due to economic difficulties, it would stop helping Greece. The US government evaluated that if it did not take over responsibility from Britain to help Greece, it would face greater consequences in the future. So to avoid that from happening, US President Truman announced his so-called "Truman Doctrine", which granted Greece 300 million dollars in aid in order to protect the Athenian regime.

24 On February 12, 1943 in Varkiza, a resort located near Athens, the Varkiza Agreement was signed between the CPG and EAM resistance leadership on one side and by General Plastiras of the Greek government and British General Scoby on the other. By signing this Agreement EAM and the ELAS fighters, numbering around 70,000 at the time, as of July 16, 1943, were placed under the command of Colonel Eddie Myers of the English Middle East military mission. By this Agreement the political left effectively handed power to the political right. This, basically, was the end of ELAS.

25 The British government had engaged a sizable force in Greece. In Solun alone the British had concentrated a force of about 80 thousand soldiers and a large number of vehicles, tanks and cannons. At Seres Airport, located about 12 km from Solun, the British had concentrated about 200 British fighter planes and about 60 bombers.

26 Most of the literature used to compile the chronology of events has been obtained from materials found in official archives and records listed at the end of the book.

27 Shatorov, Metodija – Sharlo was born in Prilep in 1897 and died in Bulgaria in September 1944. Shatorov immigrated to Bulgaria at the end of World War I. In 1920 he joined the Communist Party of Bulgaria (CPB). In 1929 he immigrated to the Soviet Union. From the spring of 1940 to September 1941 he was secretary of the CPY Political Committee for Macedonia. He advocated for the establishment of a Macedonian state and for the unification of Macedonia, emphasizing the Macedonian National uniqueness. He was removed from office as Secretary at Tito's discretion and replaced by Kolarishevski by resolution of the dispute between the CPY - CPB - Comintern regarding the Political Committee's affiliation.

28 The revolt in Shtip and Skopje Fortress took place on Sunday morning January 7, 1945 during Orthodox Christmas. The 2nd Congress of the National Youth of Macedonia was held at the "Officer's Home" in Skopje Square. Hundreds of armed soldiers disembarked from the fortress, crossed over the Stone Bridge and

entered the “Officer’s Home”. They were carrying banners and shouting: “We don’t want to go to Srem, we want to go to Solun” and “No to Berlin, but to Solun”. OZNA, the military police, cracked down on them and began to arrest them. (See: “Focus”, May 2009, p. 24.)

29 In early February 1945 Paskal Mitrevski, Secretary of the Political Commissariat for the Macedonians in Greece, following a decision made by the CPM Central Committee, was sent to Belgrade to attend the “quarterly political party school”, organized by the CPY Central Committee. (See: “Paskal Mitrevski and his time 1912–1978”, 1992.)

30 The great revolutionary Georgi Dimitrov was head of the Comintern and Bulgaria. Georgi Dimitrov, whose name is found in all world encyclopedias, comes from a Macedonian family. He was head of the Communist International in Moscow and in the postwar became head of the Bulgarian state.

31 In December 1944 the British provoked an armed conflict with ELAS units in Athens. On February 12, 1945 the Varkiza Agreement was signed, under which the political left capitulated to the political right and opened the way for liquidating all ELAS units throughout Greece, even though only some of the units in Athens, mainly ELAS reserves, were defeated by the British and by the domestic reactionary forces.

The Cold War: Many historians dealing with recent European and world history have concluded that the meeting of the “Big Three”, held from July 17 to August 5, 1945 in Selienskof Palace in Potsdam near Berlin, basically led nowhere and opened the way to the so-called “Cold War”. Since then the allies fighting against the anti-Hitler coalition, Britain (Winston Churchill), the USA (Harry Truman) and the Soviet Union (Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin), managed to beat down German fascism but stopped loving each other, opening the historic stage for the Cold War and dropping the Iron Curtain on Europe. The term “Iron Curtain” was coined by Winston Churchill in Potsdam with which he marked the division of Europe into spheres of influence.

32 The Soviet Union's policy towards the "Macedonian Question" was a function of global politics and strategy in general, like it was towards Greece in particular. Stalin treated the "Macedonian Question" in the same manner that the English, Americans and Greeks treated the Macedonians in Greece, he used it as cover for his politics that he implemented in countries that fell under his influence after World War II. During the Second World War the communist parties in the various countries, including in Macedonia, were firmly divided and respected the Great Power declarative principles for not altering pre-war borders. It should be known that the Comintern was dissolved under Stalin's initiative. The Comintern formally recognized the right of independence of each Communist Party and supported the thesis that each state should have its own party. One State one Party! When Stalin, together with the Great Power leaders, divided the Balkans into spheres of influence, in October 1944, the Balkan borders remained intact. This should have been ringing bells for everyone who saw salvation in Russia. This was the first blow to our spiritual desire to re-unite our Macedonia and, as a Macedonian nation, we were left on our own and without a strategy for our spiritual survival in our ethnic space in the Balkans.

33 The leading Macedonian activists who were convicted of treasonous crimes by the CPG were accepted by the CPM/CPY. A Political Commission for Aegean Macedonia was constituted in October 1944 with public support from the CPM/CPY. Then the First Macedonian Aegean Brigade was created in November 1944. Later, in April 1945, the popular political organization "People's Liberation Front" (NOF), the "Anti-Fascist Women's organization" (AFZH) and the "Youth Organization" (NOMS) were formed from the same group of people convicted by the CPG.

34 See point # 29. ("Paskal Mitrevski and his time 1912 – 1978" by T. Mamurovski, 1992.)

35 Karaivanov was Tito's special intelligence agent. He was also an agent of the Soviet NKVD and an instructor in the Comintern. In his book entitled "Tito and the secret of the Century", the Macedonian edition "TOPER", Skopje 2009, p. 240, Pero Simich wrote: "Also elected during the CPY Central Committee 5th Congress was the

extremist Ivan Karaivanov Shpiner. Three years earlier this Bulgarian extremist, who did not receive the position he was expecting from the communist government in Sofia, turned to Tito in order to achieve his ambitions in Yugoslavia. From the train station in Belgrade he went directly into Tito's residence in Dedinie where Walter asked him: 'Have you proof that our Party (CPY) is loyal to the revolution and to the Comintern?'

'Even more than is needed!' replied Karaivanov.

...Tito gave Karaivanov - Shpiner a villa in Dedinie, took him into his Central Committee and helped him become an MP in the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia. He declared him 'a hero of the Socialist works' among the leaders of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and addressed him with the words 'you are a revolutionary whose homeland is the world'...

36 Markos Vafiadis's immediate associates and instructors were Giuza Radovich, Obrad Trninich, Misho Vrbitsa, Velimir Dotsnich, Svetislav Stoianovich and Petar Lutsich, all KOS agents from Serbia. (See: KOS and UDBA – Secret Service actions and documents.)

37 – See point # 22

38 According to the CPG, implementation of the "Truman Doctrine" meant Greek subordination to American interests. The CPG believed that Greece, under American leadership, would serve as a bridgehead against the Balkan people's republics and against the Soviet Union. The Greek-American Agreement, which allowed the implementation of the "Truman Doctrine", was signed on June 20, 1947. The Agreement provided for the strengthening of terror through the application of "mass arrests", many of which took place on June 9 and 10, 1947.

39 In the spring of 1947, NOF scored many major political and organizational points by increasing the personnel involved in the ranks of NOF, AFZH and NOMS to 16,349. More than 16 thousand Macedonian men and women fought in the DAG regular units. The so-called "free territory" was created mainly in the all-Macedonian

territory of Greek occupied Macedonia, where everything was converted to workshops and where young and old, men and women worked for DAG's needs.

40 A Memorial service was held in Shtip for 150 young Macedonian people who were forcibly taken from sovereign Yugoslavia and sent to sovereign Greece, in the arms of death in the Greek Civil War, just because they were born in Greek occupied Macedonia. On May 29, 1994 the newspaper "Nova Makedonija" published an article in which it openly identified those who did this; who showed them the way to freedom in Gramos where these young people left their bones... It was Sindrofos Mitchos who saw himself as a politician, revolutionary and recruiter. He said: "...I came to Skopje for four months and managed to send hundreds of fighters to fight in DAG's ranks..."

41 There is a bust in Kostur of General James A. Van Fleet, head of the US military mission in Greece. He did a lot to end the Greek Civil War and for the Greek government army to succeed.

42 According to an UNSCOB report from August 1949 (A/935, p. 16), which gave a more accurate and acceptable figure than other reports, "about 25,000 'Greek' children left Greece in a short period in 1948 and relocated in the territories of Greece's northern neighbours..." In January 1950 a representative from the Greek Red Cross reported that: "The cumulative number of Greek children who received asylum in the countries north of Greece, as per the January 1950 figure, had reached 28,296." At the same time he gave an overview and analysis of the aggregate number of children and to which countries they were sent. According to this report 2,000 children were sent to Albania, 2,600 children were sent to Bulgaria, 3,000 children were sent to Hungary, 3,000 children were sent to Poland, 3,801 children were sent to Romania, 2,235 children were sent to Czechoslovakia and 11,600 children were sent to Yugoslavia. (UNSCOB report A/1307, 1950, p. 23.) In a book about the upbringing of the children, Thanasis Mitsopoulos, said: "There were more than 25,000 children..." (See: 1979, p.15, also see Vasilis Bardzhiotas's comments where he said that "we moved 25,000 children and the government in Athens increased that number to 28,000".)

43 In my opinion the CPG did keep the promise that it made to “return” the children back to Greece but it only returned those children who were “Greeks by genus”. More than a half a century later, the only lamentations we hear are those of the Macedonian parents whose children have become “wanderers of the world”. Why didn’t the CPG show similar concerns for the Macedonian children and help them return? Why has the CPG forgotten the thousands of mothers and fathers who fought for the CPG’s interests and left their bones in Gramos?!

44 DAG’s partisan newspaper “Eksormisi”, published every fifteen days, was edited and printed in Gramos.

45 On June 16, 1949, the AFZH Macedonian women’s Executive Board for Greek occupied Macedonia adopted a resolution to activate the Macedonian women to defend the Vicho front line.

46 Slavo-Macedonians?! Did we Macedonians, under the will of the CPG, accept to call ourselves “Slavo-Macedonians”? How and why did we agree to slap ourselves with such a “tribal attribute” that compromised our true identity as Macedonians. Was this “tribal attribute” concocted by the Greek communists intentionally to bring us harm during the Greek Civil War (1945-1949)? And did we agree to accept it and even be proud of it?

The question is: Was the first person of NOF, which historiography tells us accepted the idea that NOF was a military and political factor, completely ignorant of what he was doing? It cannot be because this same first person was also in the formation of SNOF in Kostur Region in October 20, 1943. He was also leader of NOF in Skopje in April 23, 1945 and knew very well that the letter “S” in “Slavo” did not mean “glory”.

After Macedonia’s invasion, occupation and partition (1913-1919) and after the ethnic changes that took place from 1920 to 1940, Greek society (state), more or less, developed explicit rules and modalities for political intervention in order to deal with the cultural diversity and plurality of the ethnic identity changes that occurred in the two major groups in Greek occupied Macedonia:

1. The real Macedonians, and
2. The false national members who were deposited in Macedonia from Asia Minor and other places.

The attitude and aim of the Greek government, throughout that period of time, had been to destroy the Macedonian identity by all possible means. And it was not by coincidence that Greek occupied Macedonia was renamed “Northern Greece”.

Greeks knew very well that by renaming the Macedonians to “Slavo-Macedonians” and by giving them a tribal attribute, to associate them with the “Slavs”, could easily allow the Greeks to label the Macedonians as “newcomers” to the region and then the Greeks could rob them of their Macedonian heritage. There was already a corresponding historic period during which there was a great Slav migration southward and it was alleged that the “Slavs” migrated to Macedonia during the 6th century AD. The Greeks immediately jumped at the idea that the Macedonians were “Slavs” and newcomers to the Balkan regions and had nothing to do with the Ancient Macedonians. So the Greek goal was to “inform” the world that Ancient Macedonia was not the birthplace of these Slavs. Even today this “lie” and Greek propaganda is being promoted worldwide, not only by the Greeks but also by some of the world’s media.

For over a century now, being misrepresented by this Greek lie propagated around the world has caused great suffering for the Macedonian people. In addition to being tormented by the Greeks and called “Bulgarians”, “Old Bulgarians”, “Slavs”, “Greeks”, “Serbians”, “Old Serbians”, “Skopjans”, “Gypsies”, and so on, all at the same time, the Macedonian people have also experienced an identity crisis of their own. There are Macedonians to this day who see themselves as Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians, Albanians, Muslims, Slav Macedonians, indigenous Macedonians with Ancient Macedonian roots, and so on. For more information on this subject see my (Stoian Kochov’s) book: “Ideological activism over the Macedonians in Greece”, published by “Matitsa Makedonska”, Skopje, 2000.

47 See report by the United Nations Special Commission to the Balkans submitted to the General Assembly, located in the official records: Third Meeting Annex. 8 (A /574), June 30, 1948, p. 18 and 29.

48 Inquiry Commission report to the Security Council concerning the alleged incidents at the Greek border: “Before we release our findings, the Inquiry Commission feels that it would be useful to briefly recap the situation along Greece’s northern border. Our findings are directed at improving and rectifying the situation. First, the Greek government has leveled accusations that its three northern neighbours are helping the partisans in Greece to wage the war. Second, the situation in Greece today is abnormal, which is largely a legacy of the past. The cause for this can be found in the tragic Greek experience during the war, its occupation by the Italians, Germans and Bulgarians in a guerrilla war that was conducted during the occupation. This was a time of political turmoil and economic difficulties caused by the war.

The next thing we need to mention is that a large number of the above-mentioned countries refuse to accept their final borders, the way they are defined today. Some of the complaints are quite legitimate and have been raised to the United Nations or to other international bodies, but raising these issues undoubtedly exacerbates the already dangerous situation.

Furthermore, with regards to the ‘Macedonian Question’, those requests have been submitted to the United Nations. Information given out to the press by individual governments or by government authorities must be controlled by those governments. Utilization of the ‘Macedonian Question’ in this regard, in the Commission’s opinion, poses a threat to the peace in the Balkans and will only further contribute to the existing tensions and suspicions and will increase ‘nationalist passions’ which will lead to increased military intervention.

Another thing that needs mentioning is the presence in Greece, on one hand, and in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania, on the other, of the large number of political refugees from the various territories who have participated in political struggles but have been driven out

during and after the war. Some of these refugees are located near the borders of the country from which they were driven out. Others, during their exile, are being used in political and military activities and many of them “have hopes” that the violent situation will end so that they can return to their homes under conditions of their choice. Other refugees are victims of the panic being spread and, if given free choice, would gladly return to their homes. However, under the current conditions that exist today, quite clearly a serious situation, a contributing factor to the problem, people cannot return to their homes.

Finally, although the Inquiry Commission witnessed some of the violence and level of propaganda used by some of the protagonists in their relations with each other during its stay in the four countries, much of it was not investigated. This kind of propaganda is used to stir up passions, which already are rather fueled... The Commission is suggesting that the Security Council make it clear to the Greek government that it is prepared, if that government requires it, to make itself available and to find all necessary funds to implement this.

The Inquiry Commission provided the following suggestions:

A. The Inquiry Commission proposes to the Security Council that it inform the Greek government, on one hand, and the Albanian, Bulgarian and Yugoslavian governments, on the other, that they must do everything in their power to establish normal neighbourly relations and refrain from all direct or indirect actions... The Commission believes that, in the sphere of its investigation, no further support should be provided for the armed bands created in the territory of one state crossing the territory of another. Despite requests made by the affected state, all possible measures must be taken in its territory to deprive those bands of all kinds of assistance or protection. The Security Council must treat this as a threat to peace in the sense of the United Nations Charter.

B. In order to provide effective machinery for regulating and controlling common borders, the Commission proposes to the Security Council that it inform the governments concerned to conclude new conventions following the example of the 1931

Greek-Bulgarian Convention, taking into account the needs of the existing situation. (The so-called 1931 Greco-Bulgarian Convention was about exchanging populations. In other words, the Commission was offering the exchange of minorities.)

C. The Commission recommends the establishment of a special body to assist with the restoration of normal conditions along the borders between Greece on the one hand, and between Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on the other. This should establish good neighbourly relations.”

49. The Soviet Union delegation objected to the Inquiry Commission’s presented proposals:

“1. The above proposals have not in any way arisen from facts and documents gathered by the Inquiry Commission during its investigation of the situation in Northern Greece and its northern borders. The proposals are based on unsubstantiated Greek government assumptions that Greece’s northern neighbours are assisting the guerrillas.

2. The proposals accept the possible existence of border incidents, conflicts and even acts of aggression in the future in the relations between Greece on the one hand and Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania on the other, even though the Commission has no grounds for providing a proposal of this nature.

3. The proposals envisage measures relating not only to Greece but also to Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania even though, based on the documents available to the Commission, it is quite obvious that the tense situation exists in Greece and that local disturbances do not occur only in the north but in the whole country. And so the tense situation and riots in Greece are due to internal reasons.

4. Establishing a permanent Border Commission or body that would constitute the Security Council, in the manner envisaged by the proposals, as well as the conclusion of conventions and agreements between Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania, in huge measure, constitutes an infringement on the sovereign rights of these countries in deciding their mutual relations.”

50. The Polish delegation also objected to the Inquiry Commission's presented proposals:

“1. The measures presented are completely ineffective because they take into account only the symptoms and not the causes of the problems that exist in northern Greece and along its northern border. The fact that these proposed measures are ineffective can easily jeopardize the prestige of the United Nations.

2. Some of the measures proposed do not seem to take into account the fact that there are no diplomatic relations between Greece, on the one hand, and Bulgaria and Albania on the other.

3. With regard to the proposal made under B, which suggests the establishment of a permanent control body, this measure seems unsuitable for the following reasons:

(a) Such a controlling body would endanger the sovereign rights of Greece as well as of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.

(b) It will be a measure of coercion with regard to Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. This measure can, in no way, be justified by the results obtained by the Commission's investigation. Therefore, rather than improving on the existing difficulties, this could lead to opposite results.”

51 See point 49.

52 See point 50.

53 “Repatriation of the Greek children.” First Joint Report by the International Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva, October 5, 1949, p. 2.

54 On March 23, 1949 the CPG created KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia) and said that the Macedonian people represented a “bright spot” in history. Then KOEM, in a resolution, declared that: “The CPY created the national - democratic bloc and that it has surrendered the people of

Yugoslavia, including the Macedonians, into the hands of imperialism...”, Our history (mainstream history of the Aegean) said: “The resolution adopted by the KOEM leadership used all NOF and AFZH organizations as well as all Macedonian DAG fighters as a means of implementing a hysterical campaign against Yugoslavia and its leadership.” Then, on June 16, 1949, the AFZH Executive Board called on all Macedonians to go to the Vicho defense front line.

55 As a result of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the signing of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest on August 10, 1913, sanctioned by the Neuilly Peace Treaty signed on November 27, 1919 and the Sevres Peace Agreement signed on August 10, 1920, Macedonia was divided between Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania (which later received Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo). Greece received 34,356 km² or 51% of the Macedonian ethnic and historical territory, Serbia received 25,713 km² or 39%, Bulgaria received 6,798 km² or 9.5% and Albania received 0.5% of Macedonia’s ethnic and historical territory. (Also see point 14.)

56 The CPG Central Committee Politburo accepted the June 30, 1948 Information Bureau Resolution during its July 28 and 29, 1948 4th Plenum.

57 I vividly remember this incident and each time I thought of it in these past 64 years it gave me bitter grief. When our unit was mining certain selected sectors in Vicho and Bela Voda, we were temporarily stationed in the village of Bukovik. One day I saw a large number of half-naked and hungry old people locked up behind a fence. They were the parents of the young men and women who were forcibly mobilized into DAG’s units. The camp was located in an area between the villages Besfina and Bukovik.

58 According to Vladimir Dedier, one of Tito’s diplomats and intelligence agents, Brigadier Fitzroy McLean was at the time a top intelligence agent in Britain and in Europe! McLean was a personal friend of Churchill and, as his achievements have shown, he was the first to learn about the secret pact between Hitler and Stalin, and to discover German General Rommel’s plans to invade North Africa. McLean was ordered to organize contacts and allied support with

Tito's partisans. He came to Yugoslavia in 1943 by parachuting from an airplane together with his radio telegrapher Bill Dickens, looking to make contact with the partisans. McLean was a diplomat in Moscow and had experience and knowledge of communist ideology and action. Tito especially appreciated and respected McLean. After the war he considered him a friend and gave him a house on Korchula Island. Fitzroy McLean regularly visited the house almost until his death in March 1996.

59 On April 23, 1945 NOF (National Liberation Front) for the Macedonians in Greece was formed in Skopje by the CPM Central Committee. At the same time AFZH and NOMS were formed. Then, after the formation to the so-called "Brotherhood and Unity" between NOF and the CPG and after NOF was put under CPG command, NOF acted against CPY/CPM directives up until DAG was liquidated. After that NOF's leadership was sent to Siberia and exiled in the Siberian internment camps.

60 Holocaust: Victims that are burned in rituals or victims suffering in a fire (this term is especially used to describe the suffering of Jews in the fascist crematoria).

61 Evangelos Kofos studied at the University of Georgetown in the USA and graduated as a specialist on the "Macedonian Question". Kofos is an ideologue of Greek policy towards Macedonia in terms of the name. During the key years when our Macedonian destiny was decided, especially during the time when the Republic of Macedonia was seeking recognition and admission into the United Nations, until the end of 1995, he was Chief of Staff of the Greek Foreign Ministry, a position created to manage the so-called "name dispute". Kofos spent over 50 years working on the "Macedonian Question", up until 1991 and beyond so that he could close the "Macedonian Question" once and for all. He was the ideologue and architect who, in the essence of Greek politics, defined the "name dispute".

Kofos has published several books through the Institute for Balkan Studies in Solun. One of those books is entitled "Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia", Solun: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1964.

62 The Neuilly Peace Agreement: As a country that was defeated in the First World War, Bulgaria signed a peace deal by which it lost a lot of territory. By this Agreement Bulgaria lost Dobridzha to Romania, Thrace was given to Greece, Strumitsa, Dimitrovgrad (then called Tsaribrod) and Bosilegrad were given to Serbia. The Bulgarian Army recorded 8,750 dead soldiers and officers and 152 thousand wounded. On the civilian side Bulgaria suffered 275 thousand casualties.

63 OZNA and UDBA (Department for the Protection of People - Directorate for State Security), KOS (YNA counter-intelligence sector) and SID (Information and Documentation services for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia).

64 Ivan Karaivanov, an agent of the Soviet NKVD and Comintern instructor, was one of Tito's special intelligence agents. Karaivanov was also an immediate associate and instructor working for General Markos Vafiadis and so were Giuza Radovich, Obrad Trninich, Milo Vrbitsa, Velimir Dotsnich, Svetislav Stoianovich and Petar Lutsch, all of them Serbian KOS agents. Slobodan Markovich's job was to illegally transport General Vafiadis back and forth from Greek occupied Macedonia to Belgrade. (See: KOS and UDBA – Secret Service actions and documents.)

65 Aleksandar Rankovich, nicknamed Marko, was born on November 28, 1909 near Obrenovats, Serbia. He was the creator of KOS and UDBA and responsible for many Macedonian deaths and suffering.

66 A few days before the New Year in 1945 the 2nd ASNOM sitting was held in Skopje, designated as extraordinary, which the great Josip Broz Tito did not attend but sent the Slovenian Edward Kardeli – Bevtz in his place. Enchanted by the greatness of his guest, Kolishevski humbly listened to him speak, even though Kardeli had nothing good to say. Towards the end of the conversation Kardeli said to Kolishevski: "The day is nearing when everyone will have to pay for what they have done. There are five major bills that the Macedonians will have to pay: The Macedonians were the last to enter the war; the Macedonians fared the best during

the occupation; the Macedonians experienced the least destruction; the Macedonians had the least casualties; and, finally, the Macedonians did not participate in the liberation of Yugoslavia.”

Frantic, Kolishevski asked Kardeli what to do. Kardeli then coolly said: “The first three items can be remedied. That is why OZNA must immediately start arresting and killing people, and at the same time you should send a large military force to the Srem front.”

Darko Janevski on “Focus” asked: “Do we know everything about the castle revolt that took place in January 1949?”

67 Germanos Karavangelis was born in 1866 in the village Stipsi on Lesbos Island. He successfully completed his education at the University of Munich. His wish was to become a professor of theology but, in 1900, he was recruited by the Greek government and appointed Bishop of the Kostur Diocese. In a short time after his arrival, Karavangelis managed to create a network of priests, teachers and others in all the Kostur villages through bribes with gold coins. In his memoirs Karavangelis owned up to all his actions in detail and to the cruelest methods he and Pavlos Melas used to “Hellenize” Macedonia. Karavangelis was also a sponsor of the Greek anti-Macedonian armed counter-bands that emerged around 1901. Pavlos Melas was their chief organizer.

68 The Pan-Hellenic Liberation Organization (PAO) consisted of former Greek police chiefs, former Greek police officers, former Greek Army officers and various other nationalist and anti-popular elements. PAO was organized in collaboration with the occupying military authorities and on many occasions its agents infiltrated the ranks of ELAS with aims at liquidating staunch ELAS fighters and particularly communists. Included among the PAO agents who infiltrated ELAS were Kirtsidakis, Zisis and Mandaropoulos. These three were caught, convicted and physically liquidated in late April 1943.

69 See point 22.

Part III

CHAPTER ONE – The culprits of the conflict

And who were they who chose this destiny for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia during the Second World War and during the Greek the Civil War?

Suvogorski pulled out a book entitled “Facts about CPG Manipulations and Hypocrisies”.

The people responsible for the manipulations and hypocrisies were none other than Markos Vafiadis, President of the Interim Democratic Government of Greece, and Nikos Zahariadis, General Secretary of the CPG.

This means that we now know who the principle actors who planned our destiny in Greek occupied Macedonia during the Greek Civil War were ... in other words we know who planned the silent genocide suffered by the Macedonian people.

And who for us Macedonians was Markos Vafiadis?

He was a tobacco worker, an Asia Minor colonist and a settler planted in Greek occupied Macedonia in the 1920s. The Greeks say he was a “Greek by birth” but in actual fact he was a Turk by birth who came to Macedonia in 1924. After the Greek Civil War, he returned to Greece. At Athens airport he was greeted as the Chief of Staff of the rebel armed forces of Greece who fought against the Greek government during the Greek Civil War, and was embraced with a hearty embrace. A journalist from the daily “Epikera” asked him a question about the meaning of the armed struggle to which Markos replied: “The idea was to drive the Slavo-Macedonians to the north and out of Greece so that Macedonia will remain Greek.” See “Nova Makedonija”, February 25, 1992. This is why Vafiadis fought in the Greek Civil War as a communist, and we sacrificed ourselves because we believed the Communists would resolve the “Macedonian Question” in our favour.

Why Paskal Mitrevski was appointed Minister in the interim democratic government. Tito agrees with Markos that Zahariadis’s policy change during the 5th Plenum to allow for an “independent

Macedonia” had aims at attracting more Macedonians to massively participate in the ranks of DAG. Zahariadis appointed Paskal Minister to move him away from being a military and political leader in the Macedonian organizations because it was alleged that Paskal was obedient to Tito and Yugoslavia, after Tito’s break with Stalin.

Part IV

DOSSIER - For the hero of the novel “Wanderers”

Dobrin Suvogorski Gotse (Pavle Rakovski – Gotse), son of Mara and Miaile Rakovski, was born on May 23, 1913 in the village Dolno Kleshchina, Lerin Region.

N: Act. AO-238 (Taished camp O-41)

N: Act. Br. K19-126/2 (Skopje “Resenska” 6/1-4) SRM

Pavle Rakovski died on February 10, 1990, in Skopje

Legacy under no.1881/81 sl.IV.905 p.52, INI. What Rakovski said about all his comrades, and how they responded to him, is captured in the novel “wanderers”, an irony of life that the reader, we hope, will understand.

DOCUMENT NO. A-176

Socialist Republic of Macedonia
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

TO PAVLE RAKOVSKI

Ul. “Resenka” No. 6/1-4, Skopje

In response to your complaint, sent to MA Gligorie Gogovski president of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia Executive Council, please find attached a response from the Republic’s Committee for Labour, Health and Social Policy number 5935 from 5.10, 1989.

Chief of Cabinet
Dusan Stoianov

SUVOGORSKI'S LAST LECTURE

The last lecture Suvogorski gave about the Greek Civil War years (1945-1949), for us Macedonians, particularly the last years of the war, was about ideology turning to terror after which a new champion, the CPG, rose to the task of ruling over us.

Suvogorski put the manuscript down on the battered table, adjusted himself and began to browse through the yellowed notes while explaining the historical events in which he had participated while he was a member of NOF, when it was a newly formed Macedonian organization. As he spoke, now that he had so much more experience, he quickly realized that the CPG had always had secret intentions to exterminate the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia. He said: “The collective and individual trauma is still an open wound in the Macedonian people. The Macedonian people were not only removed from their homes, from their lands and from their old country, but they were also made to feel guilty of wrongdoing. Every Macedonian person should be asking: ‘How can a people who themselves sacrificed 20,000 souls and suffered genocide, be guilty of wrongdoing!?’ ...”

Suvogorski stood there in silence as if waiting for a response from us, his frightened looking audience, sitting on the creaky iron beds. I noticed he opened another book. This one was by Hannah Arendt. She was born in 1906 in Germany. The title of the book was “Sources of totalitarianism”. Suvogorski continued:

“By abandoning the Bolshevik ideology, the CPG turned into a model of terror as a new form of governance in Greek occupied Macedonia.

The Macedonian organizations NOF and AFZH, now under CPG dictates, as marked by their ideological content and propaganda slogans, became the agitators and enforcers working for the CPG. Now the CPG, as a master with its propaganda and lies, did the same

thing that, until yesterday, the CPY was doing to these same Macedonian organizations.

Or more precisely, after the Second World War, the CPY and the CPG pushed Macedonia farther and farther away from its real essence. Perhaps initially those two had other motives later began to spread fear and terror on our people, and out of this violence some of our people became evil, cruel and vicious, and some remained good.

For us Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia, thick strings were being pulled from the outside and we endured four years of lies and twisted pictures of our Macedonian desire to have a united Macedonia.

This is how the de-Macedonia-nization of Greek occupied Macedonia began and was carried out, as a continuous process, by the communist parties. The Macedonian people found themselves divided and supporters of the CPG or the CPM/CPY which, until yesterday, offered us a 'United Macedonia'. Now the entire action is carried out by the CPG and run by none other than CPG Secretary General Nikos Zahariadis.

The change took place in the same way that Stalin changed the Russian one-party dictatorship to a totalitarian regime. The revolutionary communist parties worldwide became totalitarian movements by abandoning their inner-party democracies and transforming their national communist parties into branches of the Comintern led by Moscow. Now Zahariadis is following the same model.

During the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum, Zahariadis personally tossed the ideological hook in the water and officially said: 'There is much to be admired in the heroism and self-sacrifices of the Slavo-Macedonians...'

But in reality life for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia was quite different. The promises made to us by the CPG and CPY and their actions taken towards the Macedonian organization NOF and AFZH, including toward me (Rakovski) has

made us lose touch with the real world and with the reality of our situation. We literally became Zahariadis's lackeys and we continued to sing the same song. Zahariadis, on the other hand, continued to lie to us and make plans for our future while expelling our children and exiling them all over the world, as part of our planned genocide.”

Suvogorski continued: “Let us now move forward and look at all the CPG and CPY ideological ‘praises’ and lies:

1) There was a statement in the Resolution made by the CPG Central Committee during its 5th Plenum, at the end of January 1949, which said: ‘The Slavo-Macedonian people in northern Greece have given everything to the struggle and are fighting with admirable heroism and self-sacrifice. There should be no doubt that, as a result of the people’s revolution and DAG’s victory, the Slavo-Macedonian nation will realize its full national goals as it sees fit because of the blood it is spilling today...’ (TO KKE AII TO 1931-1942, σ .155. Or: ΔΕΜΟΚΡΑΤΗΚΟΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ, no. 2/1949.)

2) Something similar in terminology was expressed in a speech given at the CPG 3rd Extraordinary Congress in December 1924! (TO KKE, official documents, item 1. 1924, PLE 1964, p. 515.) Three days after the January 30, 31, 1949 CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum, during the NOF Central Council 2nd Plenum, held on February 3, 4, 1949, Zahariadis, who then personally led NOF’s operations, proposed to adopt an ‘already made’ resolution by having the delegates raise their hands. Among the other things mentioned in this Resolution was the call for a NOF Congress. During the NOF 2nd Plenum Zahariadis decided to convene the NOF 2nd Congress in March 1949... It was during this (NOF 2nd) Congress that the new NOF programming principles were proclaimed. It was during this Congress that Zahariadis instigated the idea, an innate aspiration of our people, for the unification of all the Macedonian people in one independent state within a people’s democratic Balkan federation! (See: ‘Nepokoren’, February 15, 1949.)

This was the ideological trap!? That was the reality in which the Macedonian people found themselves in Greek occupied Macedonia. While our people were being persecuted, abused and

terrorized to no end, and being driven out of their homes, Zahariadis and the CPG leaders were proposing “self-determination” for us.

This should make it clear to everyone who the biggest manipulators and scam artists of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia were, who started to scam us as early as the start of the Second World War and continued to scam us throughout the Greek Civil War.

Unfortunately it was not until the end of the Greek Civil War that we Macedonians, guided through this violence by NOF, AFZH, the CPG and the CPY/CPM, finally realized that we were experiencing a national human catastrophe and that we found ourselves drifting all over the world because we were not ‘Greeks by genus’...”

Suvogorski paused, looked around, and in a raised voice said: “I repeat. This is what the CPG did to us!

It is a fact that during the Greek Civil War the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia experienced genocide!

What do you call an act of giving 28,000 children a one way ticket out of our homeland with no chance of ever returning? You call it tragedy, genocide! Well, this is exactly what we experienced during the Greek Civil War! And as the great Russian writer Dostoevsky wrote: ‘All the ideals in the world are not worth the tears of a single child!’ But it was more than that for us! As it happened these children were forever driven out of their ancestral homes and fatherland... With the so-called ‘Παιδομαζωμα’, a violent act of collecting children, ages 2 to 14, both the Greek queen and the Communists, under the motive ‘save the children’, took our children away. This was an attack on human dignity which gravely wounded the Macedonian nation.

See – “Η αληθεια για τα παιδια της Ελλαδας, ΕΒΠ, 1952”

The CPG was well aware that genocide was taking place!

1.) The erasure of children’s names and their replacement with numbers etched on bronze plates was one indication. The

Macedonian children were given bronze pendants to wear around their necks with a number on them that was to replace their names. The pendant, the size of a large coin, had a number etched on one side and General Markos's face on the other.

A child said: 'I am number 521 and when the Romanians call me I have to say the words 'Cinch sute douzech shi uno'.

Imagine that!?! Macedonian children, in the heart of Europe, represented by numbers instead of names?

Is there nothing left of Macedonian-ism!?

2.) In whose spirit were the Macedonian children educated?

This is what one child remembers according to Mihalis Raptis, author of the book 'The joyful in sorrow':

'We the children in all the children's homes (Tulgesh, Sinaia, Oradea, Roman, and Kluz) in Romania listened carefully to Apostoli Spiliu's broadcasts of stories told by all my comrades in a crystal clear voice. At the end of each broadcast we all erupt in a strange ritual yelling:

'Long live DAG!'

'Long live Markos!'

'The enemy will never set foot on Gramos and Vicho!'

Someone would then call out:

'To whom does Markos belong?!'

Then in unison we would all yell:

'Markos is ours!'

Someone would then call out again:

'To whom do we belong?!'

Then in unison we would again all yell even louder:

'TO MARKOS!!!'

After Markos Vafiadis was removed from his position as top commander of DAG General Headquarters by CPG General Secretary Nikos Zahariadis and replaced with Zahariadis himself, we again excitedly and with the same fanaticism did our ritual

yelling of Zahariadis's name... it was our daily prayer. The Party and Party members for us children became our obsession to which we attributed magical and supernatural powers. I remember we did not differentiate the Party from the Party leadership. It was an unseen power, very strong and invisible. The leadership was wise with its own mechanisms... for us, the Party and, in many ways, the Politburo were gods... with Nikos Zahariadis as the chief god...

After DAG was liquidated... it became all about our people! (He was thinking of the Greek people.)

Things changed... the name of our fatherland changed... From then on we still listened carefully but it was not the 'Voice of free Greece' that we listened to. It was now 'the Voice of freedom'.

3.) Recruitment of Macedonian children without military training from the people's republics for the Vicho and Gramos war fronts.

In its futile effort to find a solution to DAG's reserve problem, the CPG leadership decided to widen its recruitment scope and look at the evacuated children, the same children it sent away to be saved, as a pool of candidates for recruitment. Namely, in April - May 1949, DAG General Headquarters and the Interim Democratic Government of Greece decided to recruit new fighters from among the evacuated children who had been sent to the Eastern European countries. For this purpose, appropriate orders and directives were issued to special emissaries who were then sent to these countries. A wide recruitment program was conducted with propaganda and heavy pressure on the children who were selected not by age but by height, resulting in the recruitment of children ages 12 to 14 years old and even younger.

This proves that NOF and AFZH were so servile to the CPG that they not only kept silent on the matter, but some of their members participated in committing this evil crime.

Similarly, with NOF and AFZH leading us, and without knowing the harsh realities of international politics, all Macedonians were also led down the blind alley of oblivion. The strong do what they want and the weak do what they must...

This means, and as our research has shown, that we Macedonians were pushed into a trap en masse while we seemingly believed that we were being taken on the ‘Road to Freedom’. Neither our Macedonian leaders nor we knew where we were going, so we all put our trust in our enemies to lead us to the ‘road of freedom’ but instead they led us to the ‘road of persecution and great migration!’ As a result, we forever lost our ancestral homes and lands.

This means that we blindly and obediently followed the CPG, assisted by the CPY, to our own genocide believing that we were being led to freedom. Without question, we believed their ideological lies and the fraud perpetrated against us, against the entire Macedonian nation in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Why did this happen to us Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia?!

For that I will have to turn to Kiriazovski’s new book, to the one published by the office of the refugee children entitled ‘Five vital years in Aegean Macedonia (1945-1949)’ and not to his books published by the ‘Institute of National History’.”

Suvogorski paused for a moment while looking for the book, found it, flipped through the pages and then said: “Everything that Kiriazovski tried to conceal in the past is revealed in this book. Here it says, ‘on April 23, 1945, the organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS were founded in Skopje under the initiative of the CPY/CPM leaderships.’

In fact, this means that work had been done to expand NOF, AFZH and NOMS’s activities from Vardar Macedonia to Aegean Macedonia. The NOF, AFZH and NOMS top leadership, in almost its entirety, consisted of the demobilized soldiers from the First Aegean Macedonian Brigade.

NOF’s assignments were prepared by instructors appointed by the CPM Central Committee. The first instructor was the Slovenian Miha Marinko. After that Nikola Minchev and Dimitar

Dimitrievski-Pekar from Vardar Macedonia were appointed. I (Pavle Rakovski) was appointed from Greek occupied Macedonia.

NOF's program goals and objectives were communicated to us by Tsvetko Uzunvski – Abas, CPM Central Committee Organizational Secretary and Interior Minister of the People's Republic of Macedonia. Abas, among other things, said to us:

‘Yugoslavia has become the hub of the revolution in the Balkans. The ‘Macedonian Question’ has become a Yugoslav question. That is why the CPY is forming Party organizations and massive NOF, NOMS and AFZH organizations in Aegean Macedonia. The task of these organizations is to provide the Macedonian people and the Macedonian movement a Yugoslav orientation and to put the Macedonian people under the CPY leadership. The Macedonian people from Aegean Macedonia will accomplish all their goals within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.’ See: AM Archive of Macedonia, F-20/276, F-20/196.

With NOF's establishment, in the five war years from 1945 to 1949, the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia found themselves caught between promises of a ‘United Macedonia’, what they longed for, to endless persecution resulting in the loss of their ancestral homes.

Today each one of us should be asking: ‘Did NOF and AFZH know what they were doing and in which direction were they taking us!?’

What were the Macedonian people thinking? Were they so drunk on hype that they could not see where they were going? And because of that they are now individually and collectively traumatized and carrying an open wound that refuses to heal!

Unfortunately our mainstream history, regarding the ‘Aegean’ Macedonians, has yet to explain the ‘political messages’ in the mass mobilization of Macedonian women to fight at the front, the evacuation of the 28,000 Macedonian children ages 2 to 14 and so on. None of these things, which are actually part of ‘the Macedonian genocide in Greece’, are made clear.

There is no mention or explanation of why there was an ‘AFZH’, a Macedonian women’s organization and no similar organization for the Greek women. One thing is clear about this, the architects of this war were only interested in the Macedonian women. It is clear that one of the objectives of the policymakers of this war was to turn the traditional, old Macedonian family into a ‘political family’. This way it would be easier to manipulate the Macedonian people and remove them from their Macedonian homes, with the ultimate goal of destroying the Macedonian family.

The question is:

1. These Macedonian organizations and their fronts were established to fight against whom?
2. Who was on the other side of the front lines?
3. What was the purpose of this struggle?

Was all this done under Tsvetko Uzunovski – Abas’s directive, in other words under Tito and Kulishevski’s directive?

Meaning, the guilt is on us for the conflict we experienced after the establishment of NOF and the other Macedonian organizations. It was NOF which allegedly led the Macedonians along the ‘Road to Freedom’. It was NOF who agitated us and spread the foreign propaganda among us... cashing in on our naked patriotism.

Our weak points, as our research has shown, was our patriotism, which was well exploited by the CPY and CPG to get us blindly involved in a complex situation that was beyond our awareness, in which we ended up being the victims of our own making.

This development began back in 1944 and 1945 when a small group of elite intellectuals, who later comprised NOF, in place of properly planning our future, allowed themselves to be manipulated by Yugoslavia and surrendered our destiny to the Greeks, resulting in our genocide and being exiled from our ancestral homes and lands. An unforgiving mistake has been made showing how unprepared and unaware we were during this historic moment in time. Knowing how ignorant, misinformed and unprepared we were certain type of Greeks and Yugoslavs took advantage of us by dangling in front of

us the one thing we all cared most about; ‘our Macedonia to be freed and reunited!’ They used our patriotism to make us do their bidding... And after we fell into their grip, we did not have the strength or the common sense to escape...

The Macedonian story from April 1945 to October 1946 and how and why we were left in the shade.

After white terror was introduced and escalated in Greek occupied Macedonia, the Macedonian organizations NOF and AFZH were there to pick up the pieces as early as 1945. While the Greeks were murdering and persecuting Macedonians, NOF was there to help them survive. Macedonian villagers were persecuted and murdered by the Greek government because they had Macedonian national feelings. And because NOF and AFZH were there to help them, these people flocked to them in an attempt to save themselves. And that is how the Macedonian peasant got hooked. These organizations, as it turned out, unbeknownst to them, were nothing more than fishermen of human souls. They were all ideological activists who forced the Macedonian people, looking for salvation, into a net of doom and then left them to wander the world. They all lost their place of birth and ancestral homes only because they wanted to save themselves by putting their trust on NOF, unbeknownst to them that NOF was the road that would lead them to oblivion... unbeknownst to them that NOF was a puppet of the CPG and the CPY whose aims were to strip Greek occupied Macedonia of its Macedonians... unbeknownst to them that the Great Powers had already sealed their fate.

Did we Macedonians, at this point in time, being unknowingly led by the CPY/CPM, incite the Greek government to take legal action against us which eventually led to genocidal intervention, just because we wanted to protect ourselves? Just because we picked up guns in our hands?! Think about that!

While being sent to Greek occupied Macedonia by the CPY/CPM and told they were sent there to “organize” the Macedonian people for a conflict, NOF and AFZH operatives in 1945 and 1946, still led by the CPY/CPM, unbeknownst to them, were actually there, forced by their actions, to slowly open the door to persecution and

genocidal activities. As expected the Macedonian people flocked to NOF and AFZH, led by a foreign government (CPY/CPM), and picked up guns to protect themselves. As expected the Greek government, to protect its own integrity, fought back. This is how this whole mess was started and this is how we ended up being driven out from our ancestral homes and lands. Of course the entire act was perpetrated and we did exactly what they expected us to do and fell into their trap.

The architects and strategists of this genocidal act did not want us to know what really happened and preferred to keep the truth hidden, and they managed to hide it for a long time, for over half a century, but now it is slowly coming out. According to our most recent historiography it is becoming evident that: ‘The Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia were organized and pushed to ‘take the mountains’ by the CPY/CPM...’ but we still have no official answers as to why the CPY/CPM, led by Tito, did this. What was the purpose for doing this? Why did the NOF Macedonian leadership push so many Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia to take up arms and run to the mountains even before the official start of the Greek Civil War?

At this point we need to point out that, with NOF and AFZH’s establishment in Skopje by the CPY/CPM, we Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia received two bitter rivals: the CPG on one hand and the new Greek government on the other, which steadfastly defended Greece’s sovereignty.

So, from what we have gathered, instead of providing us with a historical analysis of events, up until now our mainstream history has given us verbalism. In other words, the hopes that the CPY/CPM, Tito, Kolarishevski and Tsvetko Uzunov – Abas awakened in us turned out to be false hopes.

The big question here is ‘why would our top CPM leadership cover up crimes committed against us, especially against their own comrades such as Chento and Vlahov?’ Why were they anathematized as autonomists and separatists? Chento, Vlahov and many others were real fighters who wanted to resolve the ‘Macedonian Question’ in favour of the Macedonian people? And

why has the top CPM leadership now turned its attention to the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia and urged them to struggle for a 'United Macedonia'? Why create a Macedonian movement in Greece and ask the Macedonian people to fight under CPY leadership? Why tell the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia that all their desires would be fulfilled only within Yugoslavia and if Greek occupied Macedonia joined Yugoslavia? These questions need to be answered...

Is it not a sin to push your own Macedonian people to war, to fight for someone else's interests? Is it not a crime for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia to have to experience genocide and to forever lose their homes and ancestral hearth? Yes, it is a sin and yes it is a crime of historical dimension! The CPY (Tito) and the CPM (Kolishevski and Uzunov) are responsible for this because it was they that created NOF, AFZH, NOMS, dispatched them to Greek occupied Macedonia and then pushed the Macedonian population to join these organizations en masse to fight against the Greeks, which ultimately led to the annihilation of the Macedonian family, especially when they engaged the Macedonian women through AFZH and removed all the Macedonian children, thus ending traditional family life in that part of Macedonia. All this was a planned conspiracy to get rid of the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia and the CPY/CPM was a part of it.

What were the NOF and AFZH leaderships thinking when they were asked to 'convince' their own people to rise up and fight to unite the Macedonian people? Did they think it was possible under the circumstances? Did they think that Yugoslavia, a supporter of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest which divided Macedonia, was now in favour of uniting it? Did anyone bother to find out what the Great Powers, who sectioned the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, thought about this 'United Macedonia' they were proposing? And if this was not the responsibility of NOF and AFZH to verify that this was even possible, then whose responsibility was it?

There is also something illogical about all this! Why would Tito and Kolishevski create NOF, AFZH and NOMS out of the same Macedonians who fled the Greek conflict in the first place, and who were part of the Aegean Brigade in Yugoslavia, knowing that the

Greeks would not accept them and would label them ‘autonomist’? And as it turned out the Greeks did label these organizations ‘autonomist’ and their top leaders ‘Tito’s agents’.

So, the question is: ‘Knowing all this, why did we Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia, for centuries now, persist in pursuing our freedom and independence as Macedonians at any cost, instead of accepting a comfortable life and future in the reality we were in?’

I believe the answer to that question is: ‘Because we are Macedonians and nothing more! We have our own language, customs, culture and history...’

You see, the strategists and architects of this war knew that very well. The Greeks in the past tried everything to eradicate us. The Greek authorities undertook the harshest measures possible to denationalize and assimilate us, to eradicate our national identity in our own homeland... but it was not working. So they needed to try something different... they needed to drive us out... legally! But how?! Get us to pick up guns... and the Greek government was going to do the rest... nice and legal!

But that still does not answer the question why our people, Macedonians, such as Koliševski and Uzunov, got involved in this? Why did Uzunov lie to us? Was this a conspiracy? Perpetrated by whom and for what purpose?

Well, if the truth be told, there were conspiracies perpetrated against the people in all the communist countries, so it should be no surprise that it was perpetrated here too. Initially, all NOF and AFZH plans were prepared in great secrecy and the planners literally sought to involve every Macedonian, man, woman and child, en masse. They were looking for total mobilization. They wanted every single Macedonian to breathe, act and think on the orders of the ideological activists. The plan was to be secret because it involved intentional activities which were illegal.

NOF and AFZH organizing Macedonian networks in Greek occupied Macedonia fit well with Greek authority and Western Power future plans. They were all secretly stirring up problems to

prepare for a future war. NOF and AFZH were created on April 23, 1945 and the Greek Civil War did not officially start until March 31, 1946. This gave all sides plenty of time to stir up trouble.

Before the Greek Civil War started, NOF and AFZH played certain role as dictated by the CPY led by Tito. After the war started NOF and AFZH were passed on to the CPG, led by Zahariadis, and their role changed.

But, as it turned out, it took over 60 years for us to discover these ideological injustices and concealed, ominous alien concepts. So now we can confirm that this was the starting point, the secret strategy, for the mass mobilizations conducted by these Macedonian political organizations created by the CPY/CPM in Yugoslavia with Tito's blessing..."

Suvogorski paused for a moment and looked around, seeming like he was looking for a reaction. No one spoke so he continued:

"So, they say they created NOF and the other Macedonian organizations on April 23, 1945 and tasked their leaders to organize the Macedonian people to participate in a struggle to unify Aegean Macedonia with Vardar Macedonia, meaning with Yugoslavia.

It would have made a lot of sense if some Macedonians were to ask some critical questions, which had not been opened or responded to in our history. Questions like: 'How was this even possible without Great Power involvement, especially at a time when the Great Powers were widely divided; especially at a time when Macedonia was polarized and the iron curtain, an international border, ran through it?' Unfortunately these questions were not asked or answered because our historians were either not interested or were not allowed to ask such questions. Then we have people like Kiriazovski writing our history, I mean the 'history of us Aegeans'. You know that Kiriazovski deserted from DAG's ranks and yet, it would appear, he was given a voice and the right to write about us...

Here are some questions of my own:

1. It is still unclear to me how the CPM Central Committee leadership could be convinced that it was even possible to unite Aegean Macedonia with Vardar Macedonia, right after World War II, after the Great Powers had already decided the borders? Were they totally blind and blindly acted on Tito's orders?!
2. Were the 'selected' members and leaders of NOF and AFZH true leaders of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, or were they just puppets in the hands of the mysterious men of power under Tito's personal command?
3. Was it even possible for new arrangements to take place in Greek occupied Macedonia with the seduction of the Macedonian people, a people who had naïve beliefs about a democracy they had never before experienced?!
4. Why has our Macedonian national history not taken up these issues and provided us with appropriate answers. Why has it concealed and allowed these conspiracies to go unchallenged? These are serious issues, especially the crimes perpetrated against our people who suffered immensely!

Now, if I may, I would like to lead you through a number of barriers (external, internal, military, political and state) which not only did not allow us to achieve our objectives, as set out for us by the CPY/CPM/CPG, but encouraged open conflict between us Macedonians and the Greeks, which eventually led to the loss of our native hearth..."

Suvogorski paused for a moment, looked around, tapped his finger on the book he was holding in his hand and said:

"This book here... Kiriazovski's latest history book... opened a lot of questions... But our history, the history of the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia, is always a long and tortuous process. Any person who has the skill to analyze our history will quickly realize that the Greek Civil War was not a revolution and a continuation of the Ilinden Uprising, because we Macedonians were not guided by our own two fundamental pillars (political and military) during this war. The facts speak for themselves.

NOF and AFZH were never independent of the CPY/CPM/CPG and were never allowed to operate independently, so how can anyone say that they were military and political decision makers and factors in the Greek Civil War?

It is truly unfair to not have clearly distinguished the differences between what was said and what was done and by that I mean what really happened during NOF and AFZH's developmental stages when they were managed by the CPY of Yugoslavia and by the CPG of Greece.

The facts show that, after the violent mass mobilizations in Greek occupied Macedonia, about 16 to 20 thousand Macedonians were recruited into DAG's units, which represented more than 60% of the total number of active fighters in the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG). It should also be known that about 12 to 14 thousand Macedonians served all throughout Greece, beyond the ethnic part of Greek occupied Macedonia. These fighters had no contact with NOF or AFZH. On top of that, all these fighters were not allowed to speak Macedonian, sing Macedonian songs, or join any Macedonian organization. Worse than that was that they were forced to change their Macedonian names and to use Greek names. They were told that this was done because, supposedly, the Greeks south of Olympus did not know that a distinct Macedonian nation, with its own identity and language, existed north of Olympus and if they found out it might frighten and anger them.

This was another way of weakening the Macedonian identity and hoping that in time it would disappear. Another way of weakening us was by forcing Macedonian people to commit to becoming 'ideological' citizens, to sacrifice their Macedonian patriotism in favour of internationalism. Some Macedonians were convinced and many others were not. This unfortunately created a rift between us, a typical Macedonian national syndrome which was easily exploited by our enemies.

But all this still does not explain the mysterious ways and the black policy of evil that the strategists used to get us to join this hellish

war en masse, especially the Macedonian women, which brought us closer to our eradication?

Even though they were the recruiters, to this day NOF and AFZH have no record of the names of all the fighters who fought in the war. Was this by chance or by neglect? Or intentionally done... we don't know!

This is why every person who suffered as a result of this war, and I believe this includes all of us, should be asking this author (Kiriazovski) and others: 'Was this war a revolution or a fraud perpetrated against the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia?' What kind of 'Macedonian Question' are they talking about after the Second World War, when everything was already settled? Whose 'high policies' was NOF and AFZH implementing in Greek occupied Macedonia...?! Were we or were we not fighting for foreign interests in this war? Were we aiding in the preparation and execution of our own genocide or not? Historians need to make this determination in accordance with the facts!

Questions like these are the main reason why I decided to investigate these issues and events. There are many other questions that need to be asked and answered, which up to now have been intentionally shaded and dodged by several authors who were of the same rank in the Greek Civil War and have been made official Macedonian historiographers. These questions are the basis of the most delicate things that took place. They need to be answered in order to explain this phenomenon.

But I don't want to stop here. I want to ask all the questions, even those which have no hope of being answered. I would like to know why we were made to suffer this defeat, which should be an important and useful lesson to learn.

I don't defend anyone because I am not a lawyer or a court. I don't criticize anyone but I do ask real questions. I want to know the truth. I have done extensive research to get to the root of this evil, that is, I want to put authenticity back into our national history, especially in the history about us Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia. I want to know who lured us, the Macedonian people in Greek

occupied Macedonia, to this ideological scaffold?! When everything is gone, everything is lost; our voice, our humanity and our ability to hope that some day we will be able to return to our homeland.

The people who led us had no political strategy and no ability to look further than the next day. They convinced the Macedonian people to join them and then took them down a blind alley. We all traveled blind having faith in a strange and foreign ideology to lead us to our salvation. They took our people, especially our innocent Macedonian villagers who trusted them, only because they were Macedonians and placed them under 'barbed wire'. The innocent Macedonian villager was coaxed to join a regime whose motto was: 'No Macedonian was allowed to go against the revolution's principles in the Macedonian villages in Greek occupied Macedonia where NOF and AFZH operated, if they did then they would be dishonest patriots!' In this kind of climate and super ideological situation the Macedonian people lost their purpose. The consequences for the survival of the Macedonian people were disastrous. The Macedonian family was destroyed; the men became members of NOF, the women of AFZH and the youth of NOMS. With that the family was robbed of both its patriarchic and matriarchic status. Everyone was maximally engaged in agitating for a future that was created through NOF and AFZH by someone else's directives; first by the CPY and then by the CPG."

Suvogorski paused for a moment, looked up, looked around and said: "And where is the evidence for all this? I would now like to present you with some evidence of the absence of our awareness which actually led our people to the situation, which turned them into eternal victims. By following the directives issued by Tito, Tempo and Kulishevski we, like cowards, were brought before Zahariadis and Markos and tricked into becoming their servants, completely unaware of what we were doing. We were lied to and, in a hurry, lured towards a promised 'future'... that allowed us to forget our present and our past. We were going to make history... exciting history!

And what are we doing now... and all those decades since the day we were promised all those things? We are immigrants living in fear... living in fear so that we won't offend those who inflicted this

evil against us. We believed them then... when they led us to do all those things that had us evicted from our ancestral homes... and we believed them, now they tell us that it was 'our fault' for being evicted from our homes! They led us to fight and bleed to death in the Greek Civil War, which became a 'cancer' for us, and then they blamed us for not winning against that dreaded Anglo-American fascism... Do you still believe that we knew what we were doing? Do you still believe that we, single-handedly, were going to eradicate Anglo-American fascism...?

How many more years were we prepared to fight for these 'false' promises before we realized we were being duped? How many more Macedonians were we prepared to lose before we realized that we could not do the impossible? And still, to this day, we believe we fought in a revolution and our success was tied with winning the Greek Civil War. We still believe that everything would have been milk and honey for us had we just won the Greek Civil War!

Were we doing this because we simply felt heroic? Or was there an underlying cause for all this? Could it be that we were simply 'afraid' to say 'no' to those who pushed us into it?

Unfortunately, that was our psychology of everyday life. We lived in chaos both as individuals and as a Macedonian collective. We let others lead us and they led us to our self-destruction. This is exactly what happens when you allow others, especially your former enemies now pretending to be your friends, to lead you while you have your eyes shut.

But despite this cruel outcome, we still don't know if Tito's 'crude kindness' was truly meant to be our Macedonian tragedy?

We took the bait and then suffered alone and in fear... that's what we remember... But now, 70 years later, the truth is starting to come out... Undoubtedly it is shocking for all of us, making us question the motives of those who we thought were our friends and saviours. Why?! Why would Tito and Kolishevski do this to us? Why would they want to uproot us from our ancestral homes and send us adrift to wander the world forever? The more I think about this the more I

feel I need an answer... We need to re-examine every event in our history and search for the truth...

‘When the truth begins to move, nothing can stop it.’ Emile Zola (1840-1902)

I can’t help myself but ask the question: ‘Why would the Macedonian members of the CPM agree to follow Tito’s plan on the issue of ‘Macedonia’s unification’ when they knew very well that Tito had no intention of unifying Macedonia, even if he could?’

During the Second World War, not only did he advocate but, on several occasions, Tito publicly spoke about retention of the pre-war borders in order to preserve the Versailles Yugoslavia. Tito himself did not want border changes in the Balkans so why would the Macedonians in the CPM think differently? As you can see there is something ‘not right’ with this!

There is also the breakaway of the large group of Macedonian fighters and activists from Kostur and Lerin Regions in May 1944, who seceded from ELAS and who were engaged in Tito’s army. These people were not only allowed to flee but were lured by Tito’s people, which proved to be extremely harmful to the Macedonian struggle at the most critical time of the war. Tito knew very well that these people opened up the conflict in Greek occupied Macedonia and then fled to Yugoslavia while the conflict back home remained unresolved. If they did not know what they were doing, Tito certainly did! Why didn’t he right the wrongs right there and then? Why was he party to their escape and to their abandonment of their families and homes when they were most needed?

There is no doubt that these Macedonian fighters were patriots and had demonstrated their national commitment by being prepared to give their lives for their cause and it is naturally understandable that political mistakes can be made, even at the highest level. But one has to wonder what is going on when these same mistakes are repeated. One has to wonder, is it simple ignorance, stupidity, political miscalculations...? It would seem that no matter what the Macedonians said and did they simply could not succeed... Not only that, things always seemed to go in favour of the Greeks. Why?

Does anyone think that this was done by chance? No! Things were going sideways for the Macedonians because that is what the Western powers demanded... Tito was in on it because he was in charge of this entire operation on the Yugoslav side. Let me put it another way, this could not have been done without Tito's cooperation.

Let me ask you this: 'What was Tito's diplomatic game for the future of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, just after the Second World War, at the beginning of 1945?' He had none! Why then did he aid in creating more than 20,000 victims out of them and initiating the communist myth of uniting Macedonia? What were Tito's ambitions in aiding the so-called 'Aegeans' to self destruct? Was this part of the CPY/CPM and Tito's ambitions to control the Balkans?! Or was it something else, and more sinister?

During the Second World War Tito did his best to encourage the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia to struggle to realize their aspirations within the Greek state. But after the Varkiza Agreement was signed, on February 12, 1945, he had a radical change of attitude.

The new CPY/CPM position became evident when the slogan 'Why Srem and not Solun' was first coined. Let me tell you how it happened.

It was Christmas day by the old calendar when the rebellions in Skopje Fortress and in Shtip were started on Sunday morning January 7, 1945. At the same time the National Youth of Macedonia was hosting its 2nd Congress at the officer's home in Skopje Square. Hundreds of armed officers and soldiers disembarked from the Skopje Fortress, crossed over the Stone Bridge and stormed the officer's home. They carried banners and shouted slogans such as 'We don't want to go to Srem, we want to go to Solun' and 'No to Berlin and yes to Solun'. Without delay the military police began to arrest these officers and soldiers. (See Focus, p, 24, May 2009.)

Analyzing this problem and knowing what the situation in Greece was like, my view on the slogan 'No to Berlin and yes to Solun' meant that this was the final showdown with fascism and with the

occupation. Simply put, the Macedonians wanted to free Greek occupied Macedonia for themselves. Unfortunately if they did go to Solun they would have faced a large British force which would have been disastrous for them. It meant that the Macedonians would have to go to war with the British troops already stationed in Solun. Churchill wanted his troops to be there to secure Greece, that is why even ELAS was not allowed to go there before the British troops had secured Solun.

Knowing that Britain was in Greek occupied Macedonia and that there was no way that it would have agreed to 'let go' of Greek occupied Macedonia to be united with the Republic of Macedonia, why then did Tito, two months later, allow the creation of NOF, AFZH and NOMS? Why did he agree to send these organizations to Greek occupied Macedonia to prepare the Macedonian people to start a new struggle to unite Greek occupied Macedonia with the Republic of Macedonia? Can anyone see anything wrong with this picture?

So, if this was not manipulation then what is? It was not just pure manipulation; it was the beginning of the end for us Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Now we have sufficient facts that allow us to reveal our past. If these facts are sacred then let us now, at the beginning, say that the five-year Greek Civil War period was no Macedonian revolution... Outside of the fact that it was a perpetrated war, it was an 'anti-Macedonian war' which lacked everything that was Macedonian... It had no Macedonian elements, no Macedonian symbols and no Macedonian flags. And the fact that NOF was a National Liberation Front with no indication that it was a 'Macedonian National Liberation Front' speaks volumes... Why not MNOF as in 'Macedonian National Liberation Front'?! Every liberation organization has its 'national' origins; otherwise whose liberation organization is it? And on top of that we have our historians, the likes of Kiriazovski, who not only say that the Greek Civil War was a 'Macedonian Revolution' but give tribute to it as if it was 'a continuation of the 1903 Macedonian Ilinden Uprising'. He says it was a 'continuation of the struggle for survival and for political and national equality and freedom...' (215, 216)

Did the Greek Civil War have any elements that can be called a 'Macedonian Revolution?' Or did we, over the last 70 years, delude ourselves and our new generations into believing that it did? As far as I know, as a participant in this war, through all the cruelty that I have been through, the only Macedonian mark I have seen was the 20,000 Macedonian men and women who gave their lives for what they believed in. That was the only Macedonian thing I have seen. I would have liked to have seen one Macedonian national symbol that belonged to our people and that was our sacred flag, but that too was absent from this struggle.

We did not even have a flag! It is well known that a flag embodies the spirit of society and is very important for the allegiance not only of our soldiers but of our entire population. It is a connection between the people and their country that nourishes them. In ancient times during a war the ruler stood underneath the flag, which connected him to his army and to the protectors of his people and kingdom. During peace time the flag stood next to the throne, carefully guarded by the king's soldiers.

This reminds me of the 'victory parade' in Moscow in 1945 on Red Square when the Germans brought in their flags and, under beating drums, threw them under the Kremlin walls.

Around 1950, just a little after DAG was liquidated, I remembered Greece was still refusing to recognize the Greek Civil War and insisted on calling our fighters 'bandits'. We were in the USSR when I realized that there was something not right about us Macedonians. What kind of revolutionaries were we leaving our country like a bunch of war refugees? It seemed to me we were more like victims of a war than fighters in a war who were capable of controlling their own destiny. But that was that. Then, my worst fears were again confirmed when I returned to the Republic of Macedonia and found out that all the Macedonian fighters who fought in the ranks of DAG had to go through UDBA trials in Idrizovo prison and then were sent to shelters. What kind of revolutionary would be treated in this manner? Meanwhile all NOF and AFZH officials were met with state honours, placed in

comfortable apartments and given jobs in government offices. There and then I realized that there was something ‘not right’ about this!

But then I ask you: ‘Why is our mainstream history, I mean the history of the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia, treating our struggle like it was a revolution while we the fighters who fought in it are treated like criminals?’ I don’t know why, do you? And why do we not have the courage to face the truth; that we were manipulated in a conspiracy to get rid of us from Greece!

We hid from the truth for over six decades. Now we have left it to a future generation of historians to search for it. Why? I believe because those who participated in the conflict refuse to see it for what it was... genocide! Time has to pass, for their sake, so that we can, once and for all, understand the Macedonian tragedy and exactly what happened to us during that war (1945-1949) and what is happening to us today with our name and identity. Maybe there are forces out there that want all of these activities to remain a secret... the secret of the century...

And another thing: We still have not accepted the fact or understood the Greek fascist and genocidal actions and policies in the century-long war they have waged against us to drive us out from our homeland in Greek occupied Macedonia. To this day we have failed to comprehend the meaning of our mass expulsion from our homes and lands, especially in the years 1945 to 1949. It was a Macedonian tragedy of biblical proportions which as a nation we have not yet understood or processed...

The Greek Civil War was a perpetrated and destructive war. It was meant to create hatred, greed, ambition and hurt feelings... negative forces to frighten us and drive us apart... To make us fight one another... It was also an ideological war with aims at destroying the Macedonian family... And as Giovanni Manzini said: ‘The family is the homeland of the heart...’

The Greeks and their patrons expelled and destroyed thousands of Macedonian families, and in some regions they destroyed a large part of our Macedonian centuries-old culture, language and everything that was Macedonian. It was a violent destruction full of

blood and tears... and that is all that today remains in the minds of the survivors... It was a time of universal deceit...

And as the English journalist and writer George Orwell said: ‘In our age there is no such thing as avoiding politics. All issues are political, and politics itself is a set of lies, evasions, antics, hatred and schizophrenia’ ...”

Suvogorski paused for a moment and with a serious look on his face, looked around, giving the impression that he was about to say something very important. He then tapped his finger on the pile of books and papers on the table and continued:

“Here, this pile of documents is witness to our mystery. There are many piles of documents like these in many secret archives worldwide, compiled by people who have authentically followed the genocidal processes committed against the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia. Just because we don’t know about them does not mean that they don’t exist. On a diplomatic level the world has been secretly watching the Macedonian people for many centuries and has written about them, including about what has been done to them in Greece. Today the ringleader in this drama, to drive the Macedonian people out of their homeland in Greek occupied Macedonia, cannot be any other than the Greeks themselves, who today rule Greek occupied Macedonia. It was their personal choice to employ genocidal goals against the Macedonian people. Our conclusions about this are drawn not only from our own observations but also from several aspects based on source and check materials. The plot of who directed the strategy for the genocide against the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, after WW II, has been revealed with facts and arguments.

The Greek Civil War ended with 20,000 Macedonian casualties and mass persecutions that continue to this day, and yet the ‘Macedonian Question’ in Greece has not been decided, leaving us to remain hostages of the past... Greece must believe that, if left alone, this problem will be forgotten and will disappear forever on its own... But I don’t think so.

After the Greek Civil War ended we, the Macedonian participants of the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), have been treated like a confused generation, especially after we returned to the Republic of Macedonia and when all the ordinary soldiers had to pass through the sieve of the military police (OZNA), while the NOF and AFZH leaders were greeted with honour like war heroes. The rest of us, I mean the DAG fighters, as confused as we were seen to be, were left alone, for time to slowly, slowly erode us. We represented a frightened generation with no credibility to talk about its past and about the historic events it lived through... We were the guilty party... the guilty fighters who 'failed' to win the Greek Civil War. This is how we stand to this day...

When Tito decided to abandon the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia, by passing them to Zahariadis, they received a new lesson from Kolarishevski who said:

'Now you will go down there (to Greek occupied Macedonia). Your leader in the struggle will be the CPG. The CPG's line is the correct line... Place your confidence in the CPG. Fight with all available means against chauvinism, separatism and local trends.'

The leaders of the Macedonian organizations NOF and AFZH were now made to stand before their new master, the CPG with Zahariadis at the helm, with eyes looking down. This is how the Macedonian people, who until yesterday were told they were fighting for a 'United Macedonia', would continue to fight in order to defend the battles they had lost.

Now let me put this into perspective... The Macedonian organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS, which until yesterday were telling the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia that they were fighting to 'create a united Macedonia', were now telling them that they were fighting to 'install socialism in Greece'.

And what happened? Why were the essential aspirations of the Macedonian people not realized, even after we lost more than 20 thousand Macedonians? Who is to blame for this, for the inability to deliver as promised? More precisely, what kind of interests did the Greek Civil War serve for the Macedonian people?!

After Tito sold us out to Zahariadis, General Markos Vafiadis began to massively mobilize Macedonian fighters from the so-called 'free territory'. He practically emptied the Macedonian villages of all able bodies and threw them at the front... The result was a disaster for the villages which lost most of their population as war casualties. Markos Vafiadis emptied the Macedonian villages of their population and felt like a master while doing it...

After Tito abandoned the NOF and AFZH Macedonian leaders, they became the greatest propagators of illusion 'assuring' the Macedonian people that they 'needed' to fight in order to achieve their freedom, which pushed them further and further into the abyss of oblivion and turned them into victims of their own making.

No doubt, in no time NOF and AFZH became General Markos's servants and delivered to him whatever he wanted, especially the souls he desired to sacrifice for the 'cause'. But the consequence of such a massive mobilization, which led to such an unfortunate situation, made many ask: 'How was it even possible for so many people to die from one Macedonian village alone?'

There were villages which lost more than half of their population during the war and by the time the war was over more than 90% of the population was gone! How was that even possible! Yet it was true!

This is the kind of future we planted for ourselves, the kind that plucked us from our centuries-old hearth and tossed us out into the four winds... The kind of freedom we blindly sought only damaged our Macedonian nucleus... and led us to our genocide. It was an evil imposed on us... which we have yet to recognize and reconcile... What we also have to 'reconcile' with is 'how and why' is Macedonia's true history still hiding in the shade?

Oh, the tragedy of it all! What happened to us from the moment Tito surrendered us and turned us into Zahariadis's slaves until August 1949 when the Greek Civil War ended under the CPG's leadership? How many wrong turns did we take?

Also, why have we forgotten about the ethnic composition of Greek occupied Macedonia? Why have we forgotten about the 660,000 Christian Turks from Asia Minor and other places who were deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia since 1913? What was supposed to happen to them while we were seeking to unite our Macedonia? Do you think they would have stood silent and inactive while we were trying to get back what was ours? Don't you think they would have violently objected to what we were about to do?

Zahariadis and Markos were Christian Turks. They led the Greek Civil War! They led us on our quest to gain our independence! To gain our independence from whom?! From them?! And not once did we ever question their motives? Why would they help us gain our independence from them?! So that we could drive them out of our and now their Macedonia?! Or were we planning to keep them there among us? Or, perhaps we never thought about it and blindly went on doing our business... being told what to do! We blindly followed their lead and in the end they kicked us out... And they are now the masters in possession of our heritage while we roam the world as permanent refugees and wanderers... This all was done nice and legal, from right under us but, for some reason, we failed to see the tragedy of it:

A / The Neuilly Convention was signed on November 27, 1919 by Greece and Bulgaria. By this Convention, until 1925, Greece forcibly expelled 86,571 Macedonians from their homes and sent them to Bulgaria.

B / Then there was the Lausanne Peace Treaty, signed in 1923, that called for compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey. The Turkish-Greek War (1919-1922) was Greece's last historical, but ambitious, attempt to impose itself on other countries in order to realize its 'Greater Greece' policy and a Greece populated by pure Greeks. By this Treaty Greece forcibly expelled 354,000 Macedonian Muslims from Greek occupied Macedonia and in their place brought 660,000 Christian Turkish colonists and settlers from Asia Minor.

If inheritance is identity then these Christian Turkish Asia Minor colonists and settlers could build their identity out of our indigenous

centuries-old Macedonian heritage?! By calling us, the indigenous people in Greek occupied Macedonia, 'Slavo-Macedonians' the communists in Greece left the door open for these 'Christian Turkish' colonists and settlers to become the 'Macedonians' and inheritors of our heritage. And behold today, half a century later, they say THEY are the Macedonians!

Today they say they are the modern Greeks, descendants of the Ancient Greeks and Ancient Macedonians as well as descendants of the Spartans, Thracians, and Byzantines... and so on... and proud of it! But at the same time the modern Macedonians cannot have their own identity. But from our own experience and from published statistics we know that in our part of Macedonia these people are neither Greeks nor descendants of the ancient Greeks, they are Turks, Armenians, Vlachs, Albanians and of course Macedonians.

Greece is lying to the world and to itself if it thinks that the people living there are pure Greeks, descendants of the ancient Greeks. But regardless of the lies, Greece is adamant about one thing; getting rid of us, the indigenous Macedonians. Irrespective of the contradictions of what kind of people live in Greece and how Greece likes to define them, it appears there is no room for Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia. The Greek experiment defies logic and yet here it is disregarding the needs of its people and transplanting fictional needs into them as it defines their mythical identities.

The question is: 'Why the hatred for the real Macedonians?'

Greece has demonstrated a fierce strategy in its quest to create a new nation and believes it has to use extreme measures to keep it together but has found the Macedonian people, a separate ethnic group well aware of its own history and existence, very difficult to tame. Even if it could, Greece believes that Macedonians cannot be trusted and will never be loyal to the Greek state. So instead of trying to incorporate them into the Greek core, it has endeavoured to find legal ways of 'getting rid' of the Macedonians by any means possible. Here are some of the means Greece has used in the past to 'get rid' of the Macedonians and everything that is Macedonian:

a) Forcing the Macedonian population to permanently leave its homeland by expulsions.

b) Renaming all people's personal and place names from Macedonian to Greek. This was exclusively done in Greek occupied Macedonia by legal means ('Efimeris tis Kiverniseos' no. 332, November 21, 1926). Let me put it this way; there is no one in the civilized world that has the right to rename people or places in existence. Only the people themselves have that right, the right to call themselves, their lands, their territory, their objects, their language and so on, what they choose. The Macedonian people had those personal and place names for many generations and for many centuries. Only Greece in all of Europe has changed the Macedonian people's names... and without consequences.

We are talking here about changing the entire Macedonian topography which has been the soul of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia for many centuries. This was a very cruel and crude strategy and threw the Macedonian people into oblivion, not only with their cultural identity but disconnected them from their historic past. They suddenly became a people living in an alien world without connections to their familiar lands, disconnected from their past. Overnight they found themselves speaking Greek, an alien language and living in villages and towns whose names they did not recognize and with people whose alien names they did not know. The entire Macedonian civilization that took centuries to shape had been literally erased overnight. At the same time they were prohibited from speaking Macedonian and from using their Macedonian names.

c) Then there was the Metaxas dictatorship which came into power on August 4, 1936 when General Ioannis Metaxas declared Greece a dictatorship. This regime especially opposed the Macedonian identity and severely punished the Macedonian people for speaking the Macedonian language, the only language they knew. Many Macedonians ended up in the cruelest prisons in the Greek island camps for being Macedonian.”

Suvogorski paused for a moment and looked around. There was silence... They all waited for him to speak so that they would hear what he had to say next. He continued:

“Does anyone here not see the irony that the all mighty Macedonian organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS, by some fate, had become servile to the very people who have been trying to ‘get rid’ of us for some time now? By some ironic fate these organizations became Zahariadis’s slaves who did his bidding to ‘get rid’ of us from our homeland. Many Macedonians trusted NOF, AFZH and NOMS and that is why they were prepared to follow them to hell, if necessary... Unfortunately they all made a huge mistake and we all paid a huge price for it. In addition to the 20,000 Macedonians we lost in the battle fields, the Greeks ‘ethnically cleansed’ most of our Macedonian population from our homeland and sent it packing, with no hope of ever returning...

You can clearly see what happened here, right? Tito created these organizations... these ‘liberation’ organizations and sent them to Greece. He then put them under the command of the Greek communists. He did this by lying to them and telling them that there was a ‘radical’ change in the Greek attitude towards the Macedonians and that the Greek communists were actually now working for our interests and that we should do what they say. And we did exactly that!

In no time at all NOF and AFZH became General Markos’s servants doing exactly what he ordered, seemingly without thinking of the consequences. Marko’s first order of business was to mobilize every single able-bodied Macedonian man and woman, especially from the so-called free territories, and send them to the front to be killed for ‘the cause’ which by this time had evolved into ‘installing socialism in Greece’, an impossible feat at the time. Is it any wonder so many people were killed from every single Macedonian village? We Macedonians in DAG had to now fight for ‘democratic values’ but on the orders of our new masters who never once used democratic methods, especially towards us Macedonians. Every villager and every civilian was constantly under the gun of brutal threats and dictatorial methods, and yet here we were expected to die for ‘democracy’. The recruitment process unfortunately did not end

with the able bodies, soon afterwards they began to massively recruit older men and women, decades past their prime, and they too were sent to die for a democratic and socialist Greece.

What is the truth? What happened to the Macedonians who were lured by NOF and AFZH to fight for a 'United Macedonia'? Did the CPG 'recognize' any of their commitments? Did it agree to any of this with NOF and AFZH who until yesterday manipulated us and later became the CPG's servants? Now NOF and AFZH were preaching to us that we were fighting for 'brotherhood and unity' together with the Greeks! What happened to our fighting for a 'United Macedonia' and for our political identity? Did we all just contract amnesia or were our organizations suffering from chronic lack of principles? They convinced us to fight and die for a 'principle', for a 'fundamental truth', a starting point for building a foundation of a system... So, what happened? We went from fighting for uniting our Macedonia to fighting and dying for what... for a shifting political ideology that was impossible to implement? Did any of our leaders even know what we were fighting for now?

If we look back at the agreements made between Tito and Zahariadis we will discover that, under the new program orders issued to NOF and AFZH, we were fighting to save ourselves. This is what the program order said: 'NOF and AFZH will fight in alliance with the Greek people in order to save the Macedonian people from physical extermination...'

In other words 'fight for our lives!' So, what happened in between 'uniting our Macedonia' and 'fighting for our lives?' Where is the explanation? Did we (NOF and AFZH) make this decision or did 'others' (Tito and Zahariadis), our enemies, make it for us?"

Suvogorski suddenly stopped talking. He again looked around at his audience and, with a stern look on his face, said:

"You can all see what this looks like. How we and the world were manipulated to look like we the Macedonians were the villains in this war? Right?! They told us we were fighting to 'unite our Macedonia' and we accepted to fight to 'unite our Macedonia'. The only reason they said that, after we ran to the mountains and picked

up guns to protect ourselves from the Greek terror unleashed on us, was so that they could convince the Greek public and the rest of the world that we were fighting to 'break off' a chunk from Greece and give it to Yugoslavia. We were made to look like 'bandits' stealing land from Greece and giving it to Yugoslavia. So now that this was in the open and everyone was convinced that we were the 'bad guys' trying to break up Greece, the Greek government was left with no other choice but to fight back to protect its integrity. Why do you think the Greek government invited the UN Inquiry Commission to investigate? It was not done for our benefit. It was done to prove to the world that the fighters in Greece were 'outsiders', bandits sent to Greece from the outside, from Yugoslavia, to break it up! We picked up guns to protect ourselves... we fought for 'uniting our Macedonia' which we believed was a noble cause! But how was this interpreted by the outside world? To them it sounded and looked like we were 'breaking away a chunk from Greece and giving it to Yugoslavia' and we were now going to pay for our indiscretions with our lives. This was the final act of the fraud perpetrated against us by Tito, Zahariadis and their patrons...

We were convinced we were fighting to 'unite our Macedonia' the rest of the world was convinced we were 'breaking up Greece' and that made it legal for the Greek government to declare war on us... to 'get rid' of us from our own homeland under the guise that we were 'bandits' and outsiders... And there you have it... And this is exactly what happened to us! Why would Greece now take us back when it convinced the world that we were not Greeks but outsiders, brought into Greece from the outside to cause trouble for it...?

Our patriotism and our long desire for freedom as Macedonians were used against us... We fell for it and we paid the ultimate price... we lost the one thing we love the most... our homeland!

There was every indication in every act that 'our cause' was never supported by the CPY or by the CPG but we chose to ignore those indications!

Even when we picked up guns and joined DAG we were made to swear an oath, and what was that oath? 'I son of the Greek people

and fighter of the Democratic Army of Greece will fight to defend the integrity, security and frontiers of our motherland, Greece...'

Where is the part about fighting to 'unite Macedonia' or fighting for anything Macedonian for that matter? And here we are swearing to fight for 'our motherland Greece'!

And then out of nowhere, through the great ideological system, they told us that we were fighting for 'Brotherhood and Unity' with the Greek people. We accepted that task too without question. They offered us 'false hope' and we took it without looking back and asking 'what happened with uniting our Macedonia' or looking forward to see where this 'human right' and quest for 'equality' was going to take us...

Then, paradoxically and en masse we all marched to join DAG and fight for Tito and for Zahariadis. But when there were no 'human rights' to be seen anywhere and the value of Macedonian life became worthless, when our families were torn apart, we were given the boot out of our homeland and we became lifelong wanderers of the world. It was the price we had to pay for being Macedonians.

The very humanity in us, our divine desire to live as free Macedonians, a desire we shared for many centuries, unfortunately, we must admit, was what destroyed us... what caused the Greeks and their patrons to drive us out from our grandfather's hearth... only because we could not be trusted to be loyal Greeks...

Both Tito and Zahariadis were well aware that they took us down a blind alley... They were both well aware that the war they involved us in could not be won... We could neither 'unite our Macedonia' nor 'bring socialism to Greece'. Yet they both chose to lead us through this catastrophe... One needs to not only ask why but also what was the true role of NOF, AFZH, or NOMS in all this?

Most things that needed to be asked have been asked!" concluded Suvogorski and then looked around and raised his right index finger up, pointing towards the sky, and said:

“The NOF, AFZH and NOMS leaderships believed and trusted Kolishevski and the other Macedonian leaders in the CPM. They had no reason not to. They helped the Macedonian people in Yugoslavia to create the People’s Republic of Macedonia, which gave them credibility! And if Kolishevski, one of those ‘trusted’ Macedonian leaders, told them to ‘start taking orders from Zahariadis’ what would have been their reason not to trust him? We were played, my friends... we were well played...!” and with those words, Suvogorski concluded his last lecture.

Suvogorski then stood up and said: “This is my last lecture. But it feels to me like we will remain in the fog about our past for many more years to come... The war and Siberia may have taught me many things... but still I don’t know so many more things... All I want to do now is go back home just to light a candle at the graves of my ancestors...” There was pain in Suvogorski’s face as he bent forward to pick up the scattered pages of his lecture notes. Even after giving so many lectures he still was unable to reveal all the traces that gave him so much pain.

UNDENIABLE FACTS

We, the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, were faced with a five year conflict that was imported to us and brought us nothing but tragedy and pain.

Fact 1

On May 5, 1949 F. MacLean met with Tito in Belgrade. Directed by the British government, MacLean asked Tito to guarantee the British a decisive Yugoslav reversal towards DAG in exchange for economic aid from the Western countries. Tito confessed to MacLean that Yugoslavia had helped DAG in the past but stressed that the situation had now changed. Still he could not refuse giving asylum to refugees from Greece, now that they could not return to their formations. Tito committed that in the future no Greek refugee would be allowed to re-enter the ranks of DAG and would not assist the partisans. Tito then asked MacLean not to disclose this obligation to anyone except to the Americans. F. MacLean, at the time, was head of the British military mission in NOV and POJ Headquarters.

Fact 2

On June 20, 1949 a meeting was held in a cave between the villages Orovo and Nivitsi in Prespa Region in a place called "Africa". The meeting was opened by CPG General Secretary Nikos Zahariadis who, among other things, confirmed the following: "NOF is an organization of 'agents' who prevented the realization of the CPG line and thus inflicted damage and inconvenience on the democratic movement in the country. These agents still have roots in OZNA, in the Yugoslav army and in Kolishevski. All these agents are in the Yugoslav service and still provide written reports and consistently perform covert actions..."

Fact 3

In the fifties, the Greek communists were trying to change both the Macedonian alphabet and the Macedonian language. These initiatives were organized in Poland by representatives from

Tashkent. The initiative to accept the Bulgarian alphabet was organized by the new "Ilinden" organization.

Fact 4

According to a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report dated January 25, 1953, Copy no. 59. Approved for release in 2003/10/15 CIA-RDP79T00975A001000200001-7

The Greeks expressed interest in transferring the Macedonian Slavic minority to Yugoslavia. Among other things the report said:

"XXXXXXXX has asked the United States for assistance in sounding out Yugoslavia on the possibility of transferring 50,000 'Macedonians' from northern Greece to Yugoslavia. He explains these people assisted the Communists during the Greek Civil War and would be a serious problem in case of another war. They also form the basis for claims on the part of Yugoslav Macedonia to portions of Greek Macedonia.

Greece, however, does not wish to approach Tito directly since such a demarche could give him an excuse for again claiming minority rights for the Macedonians in Greece.

COMMENT: The transfer of this group would assist the Greek Government in solving its difficult minority problem. It would remove one of the primary impediments to closer Greek-Yugoslav cooperation, since Yugoslav support of a 'free Macedonia' has in the past been one of the major irritants in relations between the two countries.

Nevertheless, the problem is complicated by the fact the Greek Macedonians are not a homogenous group either nationally or ideologically. Further more, Yugoslav leaders still hope for the eventual integration of Macedonia, and hence would be adverse to loosing their future claims to northern Greece."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stoian Kochov was born in 1930 in the village Turie, Lerin Region. He was an active participant in DAG during Greek Civil War (1946-1949). He lived and was educated in the USSR from 1950 to 1957. He returned to the Republic of Macedonia in 1957.

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TESTIMONIALS

Who was this man who started out as a poor village boy and became a Macedonian revolutionary? Who were those people who destroyed their lives?

This is a story told by Urania, Pavle Rakovski's wife:

“We escaped from Greece because we fought in the Greek Civil War and then we “rotted” in the prisons in Siberia and Kazakhstan accused of being “Titoists”. We then came home to Skopje to only be accused of being “Stalinists” and “nationalists”. This was done to us because some people, for personal interests, with help from UDBA, did not want us to be what we dreamed to be, Macedonians. This is the life story of Pavle Rakovski and his family. He was one of the Macedonian leaders in the Greek Civil War in Voden Region. He never got to see Macedonia become independent or to find out why he was falsely accused of being a “Russian spy”. Now his case is before the lustration commission which, through the publication of the names who contributed to this lie, Rakovski will hopefully posthumously be cleared of wrong doing.” said Urania.

Urania Rakovska is now an 85-year-old woman who lives in her own house in Chair, Skopje. She welcomed us into her home with a full file folder in her hand. Inside the folder was a huge pile of papers, official notes from UDBA, KOS and other services. There is no need for anyone to tell us everything about what there is in these pages to get the idea of what the system did to this unfortunate family in the past 50 years.

“This is what they did to us. They turned our entire lives into paper...” said Urania as she opened the file folder and then began to cry. She too experienced what Pavle experienced and so did their son and daughter. According to the information in the file, Urania too was “handled” in the same ideological manner as Pavle by the various services. And their son and daughter have always carried the label “children of Pavle and Urania”. There were no jobs available to them anywhere. The daughter left for Canada. Even their friends suffered because of this.

“This file even contains the names of people who came to our house. The various services have labeled these people ‘collaborators’ and have recommended to their officials and colleagues to have them investigated. One day we invited our neighbours to our home for coffee. These people were originally from Buf, a village near the village where Pavle comes from. There is no one from Pavle’s village that lives near by. And here are their names in the file... just because they came our home to visit...” said Urania.

Rakovski’s file is an example of the solid evidence available to us today of what was happening to thousands of citizens just because they had different opinions from those of the political establishment, especially about the idea of an autonomous Macedonia. Much of this was done for the support of the establishment and for personal gains. The Rakovski family has not given up in seeking justice for what was done to them; for their torment, for turning their lives upside down and for their “house arrest”. The moment the law was passed allowing access to the files of the former regime in 2001, Urania immediately contacted the Ministry of Interior and asked to see Pavle Rakovski’s file. The initial response was “no” because there was no such file. But Urania persisted.

“I could not accept their answer. It was wrong. We have been tormented for a long time, and surely there was a file. I could not accept that there was no record of our torment. It had to be that they did not want to give us the file, because of some people... I submitted a new request, individually for Pavle Rakovski and individually for me. They agreed that there was a file for Pavle but not for me. Then we received a box full of papers...” said the old woman.

From a partisan in Voden to a Titoist in Alma-Ata

Pavle Rakovski was born in the village Kleshtina, near Lerin. He grew up in the city Lerin, where he finished Greek high school and wanted to become a teacher. After World War II started he joined the partisans and organized the Macedonian resistance movement in Voden Region. His partisan nickname was Goche. In 1944 he wanted to establish a Macedonian battalion, but his idea was soon discovered and he had to quickly flee to the Vardar (Republic of)

Macedonia. Rakovski returned to Greek occupied Macedonia during the Greek Civil War. When the Greek authorities found out that he was back, they ordered his execution. In 1949 he was arrested in Albania but somehow was transported on a prisoner ship to some unknown destination. He eventually ended up in solitary confinement in Moscow. He was in solitary confinement for 2.5 years. The Greek authorities informed Urania that he was dead, and deported her to Poland.

“For 2.5 years the Russian authorities were telling Pavle that his friends were saying that he was a ‘Titoist’ and because of that he was sentenced to prison in Siberia where he had to carry bags of stones. They held him there in the years 1955, 1956. After Stalin’s death his sentence was reduced and he was transferred to house arrest with limited movement in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. I was in Poland at the time but the moment I found out he was alive I went there to see him. I stayed with him until my visa expired. After that the Russians refused to let me leave. Both Pavle and I were not allowed to leave...” said Urania.

A few years later Pavle sent a letter to Khrushchev and informed him that he was not guilty of the crime he was charged, and so on March 1, 1960, he, Urania and their two children, receive visas to go to Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

“We were delighted that at last, we would be going to Macedonia. It was our dream. But somehow the train stopped much earlier than we expected. Two non-uniformed officers boarded our train and took us with them. We were in Belgrade at the time. Pavle recognized the city and said to the officers ‘this is Belgrade; we are going to Skopje... we are going home’. But they kept us there for several days, incarcerated in a police station in Panchevo, together with our children. They constantly questioned us especially of what we thought of the Yugoslav regime and about ‘which’ Macedonia we were talking about. We wanted them to let us go so we could reach Skopje... that was our destination...” said Urania.

Suspected of being “Stalinists” the Rakovski’s, after their arrival in Skopje, were held for months in the “Bristol” hotel under restricted

movement. Later they were relocated in an apartment in Kisela Voda.

“And then began an even greater horror for us. People came to see us, friends of Pavle’s, from Greek occupied Macedonia and from the partisans who were now officials working for the regime. Pavle however, never gave up on his ideals that Macedonia needs a better and thus different system... That is why there was no hope for him being accepted or given a job... he constantly had problems. One time he was beaten up for his beliefs... by strangers. We reported the incident to the police, but no one wanted to not listen to us. Instead, they took us for questioning... We left Greece because the Greeks tormented us... We then rotted in prison in Siberia because someone labeled us ‘Titoists’. Now that we came back home to Skopje they labeled us ‘Stalinists and nationalists.’” said Urania in tears.

According to its volume, Rakovski’s file, codenamed “Returnee”, was one of the most comprehensive of all records. It was divided into a few volumes with the last being “anarcho-liberalism”. The document had more than 3,000 pages and contained daily information from the moment Rakovski set foot on Macedonian soil until his death in 1988. The thousands of pages say that he was not just an “ordinary character” as hinted by some of his comrades from Greek occupied Macedonia, and afterwards by associates from the authorities and officials of the former system. If he was just an “ordinary character” then why did the services invest so much of their resources on him? Rakovski was a prominent leader, spoke his mind and had personal contact with Lazar Kolarovski. He knew too much. After that he and Kolarovski went their separate ways, especially on their ideological beliefs. Rakovski wanted an “independent Macedonia”, and Kolarovski, following Tito’s regime was not so keen towards “Macedonian national interests”. The names of the major contributors to the information in Rakovski’s file, given to Urania, were blacked out, some names appeared multiple times. By careful examination of the file’s contents, Urania and her children were able to identify dozens of informers. Among them were the 11 people, who together with Pavle, were dispatched from Greece via Albania to Siberia. Among them was also a former director of the publishing house, now dead, two former officials

from the judiciary system whose grandchildren are now part of the “struggle for human rights” as prominent members of civil society, and other recognizable names from public life.

“We found it hard to believe that some of our friends were spying on us. We found the names of our first neighbours in the file as well as the names of many close relatives. Almost all of them were our friends... lots and lots of them. Some of them we suspected the moment they entered our home because they were anxious to associate with us even though we rejected them...” said Urania.

After Urania received the file, she gave it to one of their close friends to publish it, along with several other pieces on Rakovski. He posthumously published four books, including Rakovski’s autobiography but nothing about his file. By exploiting the new Law on lustration, Urania appealed to the Commission for Verification to publish the names of the informers in Rakovski’s file, keeping in mind that some of them were prominent officials in the former regime.

“I wanted those names to be published. Those who made our lives miserable need to be exposed, not concealed by black ink...” said Urania.

Rakovski was unable to get a job all his life except the one time when he was briefly employed at a school in Kisela Voda in the 1970s, but it did not last long. After that he was never employed again because no one would give him a job. Occasionally he wrote and posted articles, mainly on the Greek Civil War and on the “Macedonian Question” concerning Greek occupied Macedonia. But even his articles were heavily censored and controlled.

A large part of his file contained numerous reports of his “associates” talking about his articles. The informers often provided their own opinions of whether the article was too “critical” of the system and whether it should be published or not. For example, a report given by an “associate” on October 29, 1983, about one of Rakovski’s articles, said: “While Rakovski’s text about the fighting in Aegean Macedonia has received a positive opinion from the editor, my recommendation would be to not publish it because

Rakovski wants to get his undeserved political pardon”. Rakovski’s article was a description of Yugoslav-Greek agreements inciting the Macedonian people to sacrifice themselves for the interests of the neighbouring countries.

The Rakovski family has sent some of these documents to the Lustration Commission. Surprisingly Urania’s documents were immediately received by the Commission, but what is even more surprising is the answer she received. In fact, two months ago, on July 5th she received a letter from the Commission stating that “the state authorities have notified the Commission that they do not have any data, papers or letters that pertain to Rakovski.”

“That upset us. We were very disappointed. Where are the original documents? How can we have a copy stamped by the Ministry of the Interior with official markings from Belgrade to Skopje obtained in 2001, and for the Ministry itself to have no such file? Where did the file go?” said the old woman.

BOOK REVIEWS

First book review

With a keen sense of selectivity about certain events, people and processes, Stoian Kochov, author of the novel “Wanderers”, openly and boldly speaks of the ideals and illusions of our Macedonian fighters, who were led by other governments and by foreign commanders during the Greek Civil War. The pages of this exciting book on display show the supremacy of a Macedonian over a Macedonian, and in that context it culminates with national waste.

Pavle Rakovski’s personality is embodied in the name Dobrin Suvogorski who is the central character in the book. His life story is reflected faithfully, starting with his youthful ideals expressed in the whirlwind of war, to his experiences of trauma in the dungeons in Russia, but also in his homeland “free” Macedonia. Together with his family, he went through many trials and tribulations, waiting for death with the goal of being rehabilitated by the government. Ironically his rehabilitation, especially from his “faithful” comrades and friends, did arrive but after he died.

The book “Wanderers” is a moving story about love and enthusiasm towards the holy ideals about our fatherland and ancestral home.

Rade Silian.

Second book review

The novel “Wanderers” is a remarkable blend of historical events and personal destinies, a blend that the respected author and virtuoso, Stoian Kochov, succeeded in putting together in a style of his own. Stoian Kochov is one of the few chroniclers and interpreters of events that took place in Greek occupied Macedonia during the Greek Civil War and the consequences that followed. It is a virtue to emphasize that Kochov is a hero of our time because he, through the written word, has repeatedly defied oblivion and false testimony. I am writing this, given the fact that when many were silent, Kochov and his works were the vanguard in revealing the truth, no matter what form it took.

His characters and events, through which these characters pass, simultaneously are raw and realistic. The author, with his ability to travel through history, in a style that characterizes him and is constantly present in his works, allows us to go back in time and space and face the perils of the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia.

In this place there are false advocates pretending to struggle for the fundamental rights of the Macedonian people, as well as those hidden advocates who have been promoting compromises. There were only few people who saw the danger of compromising and the result of this scenario. History has taught us that any compromise which requires the participation of the Macedonian people is as insatiable beast that drinks Macedonian blood. We need to learn the truth about this, about our past and what better place than to study the works of this honourable man, Stoian Kochov. Whenever the Macedonian people wanted to be equal with others, to be on our own, the Macedonian people became victims and were never allowed to be in peace. They were always robbed of their glory and of dignity, alive or dead.

When it comes to Stoin Kochov's work, there is no compromise as is the case with the novel "Wanderers", a remarkable piece of work. It has no compromises because the author is bravely facing our past burdens and is translating them for us.

Only a few people have done this but it is done for the many, known and unknown, for those unnamed and for those who call each other comrades. And for the fighters who were friends and then suddenly became comrade investigators, comrades who doubted their more recent comrades. The main objective of this book is to contribute to the transmission of truth from generation to generation, to constitute a roadmap for current and future generations to move into the future, for those people who will carry the covenant with them and not forget the past.

With much respect,
Professor Dr. Teon Dzhenko
December 15, 2016

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