



NEW NATIONAL - LIBERATION
STRUGGLE IN VARDAR MACEDONIA
1944 - 1991

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The work is dedicated to the Bulgarians living in Vardar Macedonia after 1944. Within the boundaries of Serbo-communist Yugoslavia, they are treated as “Macedonians” with a fabricated history and language. The intellectuals in Vardar Macedonia resist against the return of the Great Serbian chauvinism, and oppose against the persecution of Bulgarian nationality by repressions, prisons, detention camps etc.

The work offers a lot of information and is addressed to experts, politicians, diplomats and a wide circle of readers.

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INTRODUCTION

The events, that have been taking place in Vardar Macedonia since 1944, where the pan-Serbian communists put out of the law the Bulgarian nationality, language and history, out of the law as well as the aspirations of the local intelligentsia to defend them even at the cost of the life, are an extremely important scientific and political problem.

The main aim of this study is to take a fleeting look at those tragic events, which are of fatal importance to several generations of Bulgarians, left on their own for several decades (since 1944), to defend the Bulgarian name and language, the Bulgarian history and national-cultural identity of Macedonia, and to a certain extent the whole Bulgarian spirit.

The dramatic pages, dedicated to the heroism and self-sacrifice of the intelligentsia in Macedonia, standing, after 1944, in the lead of the fight against the pan-Serbian communist oppression of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia, must become public knowledge not only to the Bulgarian but also to the international public consciousness.

The research study is based completely on original sources. Predominantly, the documental notes of the most notorious participants in the new struggle have been used. Facts from the press, concerning the mentioned events, as well as the published abroad and at home documental memoires have also been used.

The present study (which is part of a bigger investigation) is a colourless reflaction of the victims given and the tragedy, lived through by the Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia under the Serbocommunist regime during the period examined.

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After the new return of the pan-Serbian chauvinists to Vardar Macedonia, in October and November of 1944, in spite of having status of a "federal unit" in the newly created Yugoslav federation, the region, again becomes a valley of tears, blood and death.

In order to force the Bulgarian population to resign to the externally imposed pan-Serbian communist decision about Vardar Macedonia, the new authorities, headed by Svetozar Voukmanovitch-Tempo, Lazar Koulishevski, Alexander Rankovitch and others, undertake mass repressions and assassinations of the eminent and open-minded patriots in Macedonia, proclaiming them for "pan-Bulgarian chauvinists", "fascists", "Michailovists", "IMRO-ists" etc., *въвкъсхж шрен до* all "mortal sins", for which the pan-Serbian chauvinists and their servants in Macedonia persecute and murder.

Only in 1945 and 1946, with or without any sentence there have been executed or have dissappeared without trace more than 4700 Bulgarians. There are mass murders in Prilep, Bitolya, Veles, Koumanovo, Shtip, the villages around Malashevtsi, Kavadartsi and in other places. At the same time, more than 15 000 are arrested, accused as "collaborators to the Bulgarian occupator", of "insulting the Macedonian honour" and working against the unity of new Yugoslavia. They are, in fact, thousands of Macedonian patriots, who openly confront the return of Vardar Macedonia, no matter the form, to Serbian Yugoslavia. They do not accept the Macedonian name to be confronted with the Bulgarian essence of Macedonia, nor to cultivate hatred and detestation to Bulgaria, as a principal criterion of "Macedonian" patriotism.

THE SOLDIERS' MUTINY

The first serious resistance against the return of Vardar Macedonia to Yugoslavia, is the armed mutiny of the "Macedonian army" in Scopie in December 1944. Receiving an order to dislocate to the "Srem's front" in Serbia, several thousand soldiers and officers from all regions of Vardar Macedonia, most of

them just demissioned from the Bulgarian army, organise an armed mutiny. On December 16, 1944, they head for the Headquarters of the National Liberation Struggle (NLS), located in the Officers House in Scopie, with the slogans: " *We don't want Srem! We want Salonica*", " *We don't want the new Yugoslavia! We want a free and independent Macedonia*". These slogans frighten to death the High Command in Scopie. Seeing a "sea" of armed soldiers surrounding the Officers' House and hearing them, Sv. Voukmanovitch-Tempo declares to the officers around him, most of them Serbs that, these are "Bugarashi", "IMRO-ists", "Vantchomichailovists", "fascists". They have to be stopped, and their leaders shot. Such instruction Tempo receives from Belgrade, too. All local soldiers and officers, who disobey the Supreme Command of NLS and voice the slogan for "independent Macedonia" are to be immediately shot, the order of the Supreme Comand of the Yugoslavian Army in Belgrade states. Tempo, then, sends the Shtip-born General Michail Apostolski, who, "most politely", invites all officers disagreeing with the order of the Headquarters for translocation for Srem, to gather in the Hall of the Officers' House and discuss together the situation, while the soldiers are to return to the barracks.

The officers leading the mutiny accept the invitation, with no thought of possible treason.

All, after entering the Officers' House, are disarmed in a most violent way and with hands bound are taken to the cellars. There, Tempo in person, carries out the short interrogation and the executions with the words: "Hotchesh Solun, eve ti ga!" (you want Salonica, here it is). In this way, on December 16, 1944, for several hours only, according to still not fully verified information, about 70 officers, young Macedonian patriots, are killed who have the consciousness to fight not only for the liberation of Macedonia from the German fascists, but also not to permit its new enslavement by Serbia and Greece. Almost thousand soldiers, understanding that something is happening to their commanders, head once again for the center of Scopie. They, however, are met by Serbian partizans and tchetniks, who commence violent machine-gun fire on them. Several dozens of them fall dead, others are wounded and die without any help having been of-

ferred. About 900 are disarmed, arrested and imprisoned in the old Turkish fortress "Kaleto". Left and "forgotten" there for more than a month without food, water, covers etc., almost all of them die from cold and hunger in the dark dungeons.

This historical event, of great historical and national importance in the newest history of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, is still to be examined and evaluated in the future. The evidence, which appears now on it, the stories of witnesses, including those of Gen. Apostolski given to scientific researchers in Scopie, are categorical that this mutiny is a deed of the officers and soldiers, members or supporters to IMRO's ideas, who as Macedonian patriots are the first to show resistance and become victims of the struggle against the return of the Serbian yoke in Macedonia, this time done by YKP under the mask of Macedonism.

THE FIRST POLITICAL TRIALS

Together with the mass murders without trial and sentences in the end of 1944 and all throughout 1945, the Serbo-communist authorities organize legal processes against the leading Bulgarian intelligentsia.

Among the first accused are: Dimitar Giuselev, doctor of philosophy from Doiran; Eng. Dimitar Tchkatrov from Prilep; Eng. Spiro Kitintchev from Scopie; Dr. Konstantin Robev of Bitolya; Dr. V. Svetiev of Bitolya; Dr. Vl. Toudjarovski of Liuboino village, Prespa; Eng. Hr. Svetiev of Bitolya; Dr. Ass. Tatartchev of Resen; V. Hadjikimov of Shtip; Dr P. Burdarov of Prilep; St. Stefanov, lawyer from Kratovo; Il. Kotsarev, lawyer from Ohrid; Eng. V. Spantchev of Debar region; Rosa Koizeklieva, schoolmistress from Shtip; N. Pavlov, lawyer from Tetovo; Dr. Bl. Pantchev of Scopie; Dr. P. Hitrov of Veles; Al. Kostov, lawyer from Bitolya; Hr. Rizov, merchant from Bitolya and thousands of their coactivists and followers from the whole Vardar Macedonia, all eminent activists of IMRO and the Macedonian Youth Secret Revolutionary Organisation (MYSRO). Besides being in the lead of the fight against the Serbian yoke, in the years

of the liberation 1941-1944, they head the Bulgarian national-cultural activity in Macedonia. With their trials and sentencing, as V. Hadjichimov writes in his memoirs, the Serbocommunist authorities, put on the bench of the accused the Bulgarian history, the Bulgarian national consciousness, culture and language in Macedonia. In the Serbian courts until 1941, the fighters for liberation of Macedonia are tried by the Law for persecution and destruction of the bandits or the Law for Defence of the State. Now, to the "Macedonian court" people are brought under the "Law for the Macedonian honour". Every one who considers himself Bulgarian or thinks of the history, language and the nationality of the Slavonic population in Macedonia as Bulgarian, automatically is attacked by the strict prosecution paragraphs of this anti-Bulgarian law with the accusation that he works against "the people and the state", that he is an enemy to "new Yugoslavia", to the brotherhood and unity of the "Yugoslavian people" and so on.

The persecuted by the Serbocommunist authorities Bulgarians, are tried, as in the royal courts, until 1941 - because they are Bulgarians, and they want to separate Vardar Macedonia from Yugoslavia in order to create an independent Macedonia or join it to Bulgaria etc. For these accusations D. Giuselev, D. Tchkatrov and 200 other comrades, are sentenced during the Students Trial in Scopie, in 1927, to 15-20 years of strict regime imprisonment by the Serbian enslavers.

On the trials, organized against the above-mentioned and other eminent intellectuals, they are accused of meeting the entry of the Bulgarian army in Macedonia (in April 1941); that together with their followers have worked for the revival and the victory of the Bulgarian national cause in Macedonia, thus acting against their "own people".

On the trial, organised in Scopie on May 28 until June 2 1945, the three most notorious leaders of MYSRO and eminent political figures in Macedonia of the 1941-1944 period - D. Giouselev, D. Tchkatrov and Spiro Kitintchev are accused by the Serbo-communist court that they have accepted the "occupation" as fulfillment "of a centennial dream of the Macedonians to unite with Mother Bulgaria". As well as, that as ideologists and

leaders of the intelligentsia, during the period 1941 - 1944, have taught the people of Macedonia in Bulgarian national spirit. All three of them accept the accusations, declaring that during their whole life they, in full consciousness and readiness for self-sacrifice, have fought for the defence of the Bulgarian population from the Serbian assimilation and the liberation of Macedonia from Serbian domination. For this struggle, they have spent 10 years in the gloomy Serbian prisons and death-camps in Royal Yugoslavia. For the "Macedonian" judges, however, they are only "enemies to the people" and "traitors" to Macedonia.

The accused defend themselves with more than dignity. D. Giouselev openly states: "Who are you, to judge me for my activity. I served my people, and who do you serve?" D. Tchkatrov says, that he feels "soiled, being tried by "Macedonians", who have already sentenced him as a fighter for the liberation of Macedonia from Serbian slavery." Almost in identical way, his comrades react. In front of the "Macedonian" judges, they defend not only themselves, but the struggles of IMRO and MYSRO and the Bulgarian nature of Macedonia for centuries on. The court sentences all three of them to death. D. Giouselev and D. Tchkatrov are shot, while S. Kitintchev dies in the prison as result of tortures.

Such sentences are pronounced and executed over hundreds of Bulgarians in 1945-1946, not only in Scopie, but in all towns of Vardar Macedonia as well. Only in Scopie, 18 trials with 226 accused are carried out, of which 22 are sentenced to death. Amongst them are: Dimitar Todorov of Veles, Emil Michailov of Shtip, Metodi Trendafilov of Scopie, Dimitar Katlanov of Scopie, Angel Dimkov of Scopie, Iliya Nedkov of Shtip, Dr. Panayot Hitrov of Veles, Pantche Delev of Veles, Vassil Hadjikimov of Shtip, Traiko Popov of v. Rashtak in the Scopie region, Traiko Tchundev of v. Podless in the Veles region.

To long tears of imprisonment are sentenced thousands of Bulgarians. Amongst them: Dimitar Voinitsaliev, Kosta Hrisimov, Dr. Dimitar Zlatarev, Dr. Iliya Tchulev, Eng. Kiril Petsakov, Stefan Kouzmanov, Krastio Ivanovski, Petar Zdraveev, Boris Gradishki, Nicola Popov, Radko Gradishki, Evtim Gashev, Milka Tsve-tanova, Ana Kostova, Stoilko Davidov, Traiko Iovtchev, Nicola

Vetrov, Dimitar Panov, Bruno Kotev, Tome Issailov, father Gogov, Yordan Dimitrov. Dimitar Davidov, Boris Peev, Nicola Pavlov, Miho Mihailov, Vasse Poupkov, Atse Traitchev, Todor Krainitchanets, Grigor Tchoulev, Alekso Stoimenov and thousands of their comrades.

In Shtip, in a series of trials, according to the newspapers: "New Macedonia" in the 1945 issues of February 11, March 10, May 31st; "Politica" of October 16th 1945; "Borba" of May 10th 1946 as well as others, 7 Bulgarians are taken to court and sentenced to death while another 32 are sentenced to long-term imprisonment under the law of the "national honour". Among them are: Iliya Hadjislankov, Vassil Pouzderliev, Dobre Ivanov, Anton Kovatchev, Mane Ivanov, Tode Angelov, Stoyan Andreev - all of them from Shtip; Blagoi Tsipoushev of Radovich; Georgi Zafirov, Vlado Madjarov, Iliya Yougov and Georgi Tcholakov of Gevgeli; Angel Evtimov, Emanouil Peshev, Trifon Evtimov of Vinitza in the Kotchansko region; Pavle Marinov, Pantcho Arsov, Sande Manev, Yordan Teodosiev of Kotchani and many others.

Out of the tried in Prilep in 1945, 28 people, according to the newspapers "New Macedonia" of April 28th 1945 and "Borba" of October 6th 1945, 10 are sentenced to death. Among them are: Petar Spassov, Dimitar Naydenov, Dr Petar Ivanov, Alexander Hadjizdravev and Hristo Surtchev - all from Prilep; Ivan Tsakov, Iliya Angelov, Petar Stoyanov and Petar Petrov of Dren (Prilep's region); as well as Georgi Trompev, Haralampi Boutlev, Kiril Kouzmanov, Boris Popov and others - all of them Bulgarian intellectuals, former members or followers of IMRO and MYSRO.

In Veles, according to "New Macedonia" of April 30th and June 2nd 1945 and "Borba" of June 12th 1945, sentenced to death are: Georgi Dimitrov, Nako Georgiev, Blazho Boikovski, Yanko Shopov, Hristo Danailov, Pantcho Stavrev, Bozhin Rizov, Milan Atanasov, Georgi Ivanov and Trifon Lazov; to long-term imprisonment are sentenced: Liuben Brutchkov, Todor Gorgov, Blagoi Tchouschkov, Lazar Kitsev, Angel Dimov, Blagoi Varnaliev and others.

In Bitolya, according to "Politica" of May 24th 1945, in a single trial, 9 Bulgarians were sentenced to death. Among them are: Michail Michailov, Voidan Bimbilov, Georgi Moskov, Boris

Todorov, Alexander Dalov and others. To long-term imprisonment, according to "Borba" of July 1st, 1945, are sentenced Hristo Rizov, Dr. Konstantin Robev, Toma Gigov, Nikola Kolarov, Tsvetan Damev, Dr. Assen Tatartchev, Dr. Vlado Toudjarovski, Tsane Kostov and others.

In Ohrid, Iliya Kotsarev, Savo Kotsarev, Stoitcho Tashev, Nikola Argirov, Naum Jossifov, Toma Gaidadjiev, Lioubtcho Kotsarev and many others are sentenced to 10-15 years of solitary confinement.

Arrests, trials, sentences to death or long-term imprisonment of the most notorious Bulgarians are done in the other small towns of Vardar Macedonia. In Gevgeli, more than 35 people are tried, in Stroumitsa - more than 60, in Berovo and Deltchevo - more than 100, in Kotchani - 48 and so on. At all trials, all of them are accused of being "pan-Bulgarians", "Michailovists", "IMRO-ists", "fascists" and enemies to "new Yugoslavia".

THE TRIAL AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT "ILINDEN 1903"

Its founders and first leaders are Kosta Hrisimov-Smilets, school teacher in the village of Starchishte, Seres region, Dr. Iliya Tchoulev of Kavadarci and Dr. Dimitar Zlatarov of Ohrid. The Democratic Front establishes its organisations in Scpie, Bitolya, Veles, Ohrid and Kavadarci.

In the spirit of the programmes of the national liberation movements in Macedonia till 1941, the organisation accepts as its aim to defend with all means the Bulgarian name, language and history, rejected and persecuted by the new Macedono-Serbomanian authorities. Second, in secret statements to inform the international public opinion of the new barbarism, done to the Bulgarians in Vardar and Aegian Macedonia, the statute of the organisation reads.

In September 1945, the leadership of the Democratic Front "Ilinden 1903", sends an extensive statement to the governments of USSR, USA, England and France. It states that, after the Sec-

ond World War, with the death of millions and liberty to many people, the question of Macedonia has not received its long expected and just resolution. The Bulgarians in Macedonia, as in the time of the Turkish regime and later under the Serbian and Greek domination, are again submitted to persecutions, assimilation and destruction. The prisons, the statement continues, are full with Bulgarians. There is not a place where murder has not been done, while in Veles, Koumanovo and many other places, mass murders in the most beastly manner happen. *"The tortures in the prisons are medieval"*.

The statement is an appeal to the governments of the Great Powers to support the right of the population in Macedonia for self-identification under international control. Thus, it will be given the chance to decide its own fate. "Without free Macedonia, the statement ends, there can be no peace on the Balkans". The statement is signed by Kosta Hrisimov, Dr. Iliya Tchoulev, Dr. Dimitar Zlatarev, Eng. Stefan Kouzmanov and Kosta Dinev- lawyer.

In October 1945, the authorities find and arrest the activists having signed the statement. In some of them, a list of unknown members of the organisation is found, who are also arrested. In spite of the incredible violence and cruelties inflicted on the arrested, the authorities did not find out any further details on the network and the activities of the organisation. According to "Politica" of March 30-th 1946, 11 leaders of the Democratic Front "Ilinden 1903" are brought in front of the Supreme Court in Skopje. They are accused under the law for "insult" of the "Macedonian honour", sending illegally a statement to the Great Powers, in which the Yugoslavian authorities are misrepresented. Finally, the prosecutor, Nikola Vrazhelski accuses them, that they have aspired for the creation of a terroristic organisation in Vardar Macedonia, as a copy of IMRO. In spite of the dignified defence of the leaders of the organisation, who stress that they are not terrorist, but are fighting with legal and educational means for the defence of Bulgarian nationality and independent Macedonia, the Supreme Court sentences all of them to long-term, solitary confinement for a period of 5 to 20 years. Among the convicted are: Kosta Hrisimov, Dr. Dimitar Zlatarski, Dr. Iliya Tchoulev, Petar

Dinev, Kosta Dinev, Stefan Kousmanov, Petar Tashulev, Kiril Petsakov, Serafim Lazarov, Atanas Anev, Luka Seculov and Metodii Svetiev. In Bitolya, Veles, Kavadarci, Gevgeli, Strumitsa and other places of Vardar Macedonia are arrested, tried and sentenced several hundred people, members of the Democratic Front "Ilinden 1903". After the trials, the organisation unites with the local structures of IMRO and in the following years they act together.

REESTABLISHMENT OF IMRO IN VARDAR MACEDONIA

The repressions and murders, the unprecedented persecution of everything Bulgarian, provoke strong reaction among the population of Vardar Macedonia. An organised resistance against the new authorities arises. Among the multiple secret organisations, having appeared after December 1944, fighting against the new Serbo-communist occupation in defence of the Bulgarian spirit and for independent Macedonia, the main, IMRO is the biggest, the most influential and acting on the territory of whole Macedonia. It is reestablished in 1945 and continues the fight for fulfilment of its aims.

In October 1945, upon the initiative of Dr. Vassil Ivanov of Strumitsa, Dr. Kosta Trentchev of Tsarevo selo and Dr. Kosta Terziev of Koukoush, after long preliminary preparations, a secret meeting takes place in Skopje, of more than 30 notorious Bulgarians of all parts of Vardar Macedonia. They discuss the situation of the Bulgarian population, treated by the new communist authorities of Yugoslavia as an out-law.

After they conclude that the people of Macedonia was cheated by YKP, and has fallen again under pan-Serbian slavery, the participants in the discussions decide to proclaim this meeting as the Ninth (reestablishing) Congress, which gives the beginning to a new struggle of IMRO. A temporary statute of the organisation is prepared by Dr. V. Ivanov and voted by the Congress. In accordance with the new conditions the main postulations in it are: 1. IMRO considers the return of Vardar Macedonia

to Yugoslavia as illegal, as it is done by force and treason, without democratic referendum of the people. 2. IMRO will fight for official acceptance of the Bulgarian nationality and the reopening of the Bulgarian schools and churches, closed or forbidden without reason upon Belgrade's orders in the end of 1944. 3. IMRO will fight with all possible means., mainly legal, Vardar Macedonia, as previewed in a special paragraph of the Constitution of YFR, to leave legally Yugoslavia, in accordance with its national and cultural interests, different from those of the other republics of the federation. 4. IMRO will insist in front of the governments of the Great Powers to support its demands for a just settlement of the Macedonian question at the Paris Peace Conference, with the creation of "Free and Independent Macedonia", under the patronage of the Great Powers or the UN. 5. Members of IMRO can be all honest Macedonian patriots, irrespective of their political beliefs, who in the past, as well as now, have fought and are fighting against the Serbian slavery for free Macedonia

According to this temporary statute, Vardar Macedonia is divided into three organisational regions: Bitoliya, Scopie and Shtip. Central leadership is elected, consisting of 13 members. Besides the three doctors, the central leadership include: Metodi Popov of Boudinartsi, Blagoi Gashteev of Vladimirovo, Nikola Ivanov of Roussinovo, Georgi Gotsev of Pantcharevo, Kiril Sievski of Robovo, all of them from the Shtip organisational region; Assen Temov of Shtip, Toma Davkov of Gorni Balvan (Shtip region), Dimitar Peev and Boris Tcharktchiev of Radovish and Milan Traikov of Scopie.

All the members in the reestablishment congress wre given Regional N1 of IMRO, which contains the ideas and aims in the name of which the organisation will fight. Those, who have these instructions, are obliged to start immediately the formation of a secret organisational network of IMRO in their regions. According to the document, the groups in the villages should consist of three members, while in the towns - of five, all independent of one another, who will contact the Central Committee of IMRO through the local, district and regional leaderships.

The statute and aims of the new struggle, as well as the organisational structure follow the ideas and concepts the al-

ready existing documents of IMRO and MYSRO, considering the new realities in Vardar Macedonia. The more so, that Dr. V. Ivanov and Dr. K. Trentchev, as activists of the Macedonian Students Union in Vienna, Leipzig and Paris, in the period between the world wars, are very well acquainted with these documents and the aims of the struggle of IMRO.

The organisation quickly finds its followers and by June-July 1946, when the first crack downs take place, it counts more than 10 000 organised members. Since the end of 1945 and throughout 1946, activists of IMRO actively disseminate among the population type-written materials and leaflets, denouncing the crimes committed by the pan-Serbian communists against the Bulgarians in Macedonia.

A statement-Memorandum, written by the leaders of IMRO, is sent in April and May to the governments of the Great Powers. It describes in details the history of the Macedonian question since its appearance in 1878, the struggles and victims given by the Bulgarian population for its liberation from Turkish and afterwards from Serbian and Greek slavery. Special attention is paid to the massacres, murders and terror committed by the new pan-Serbian authorities after their return to Macedonia in November 1944. That's why, on behalf of the population of Vardar Macedonia, the memorandum requests the governments of the Great Powers and their ambassadors at the Paris Peace Conference support the right for self-determination of the population of Macedonia under international patronage, in order to certify that, it has never had, nor has at present anything in common, in historical, national and political plan with the Royal or Tito's Yugoslavia. It is fighting for a "free and independent Macedonia".

This memorandum, signed by 7 members of the leadership of IMRO - Dr. Vassil Georgiev, Dr. Kosta Terziev, Dr. Kosta Trentchev, Dimitar Peev, Georgi Kotsev, Kiril Siveski and the priest Nikola Popov, is dispatched to the representatives of the Great Powers in Paris in **several** different ways. Through his brother, Pando Ivanov, minister at the time, Dr. V. Ivanov sends the memorandum to the Prime-minister of Vardar Macedonia, Metodi Andonov-Tchento. He reads it and not only approves the statement, but declares that, the memorandum presents

the complete truth and the horrifying things done by L. Koulishevski, Sv. Voukmanovitch-Tempo and Al. Rankovitch, against the will of the government in Macedonia which must be brought to the attention of the international public opinion.

The appearance of the memorandum in the European capitals brought the break-through in IMRO. The treason, according to Dr. V. Ivanov's notes, came from the outside. After the letter was handed over in Paris to the Yugoslavian delegation, those who have signed it are subjected to surveillance. Little by little, the authorities identify the leading people and the main centers of IMRO's activity.

In the beginning of May, 1946, the Prime-minister Metodi Andonov-Tchento understands, that the activity of IMRO is discovered and warns its leaders to destroy everything, that could compromise them during their arrest. He advises them to defend themselves as a legal and tolerant opposition, which, by peaceful means, defends its national and political ideas. Events develop very fast and in May and June the authorities arrest more than 3000 members of IMRO in Vardar Macedonia, together with the leaders. The Prime-minister sends immediately Pavel Shatev to Sofia to meet representatives of the Bulgarian government and to explain to them, that in Vardar Macedonia no socialism is built, but the pan-Serbian chauvinists with the help of their faithful servant, L. Koulishevski, persecute Bulgarians, change the names of living and dead Bulgarians, manipulate the people of Macedonia against their brothers in Bulgaria etc. P. Shatev inform the secretary of CC of BWP(c) Traitcho Kostov, with the request Bulgaria to intercede and stop the Serbian vandalism over the Bulgarians in Macedonia.

On the next day after his return from Sofia, in his office in the Ministry of Justice, there comes the internal minister of Yugoslavia who arrests and sends him to jail.

Then, the Prime-minister M.Andonov-Tchento, himself, decides to go to Paris and propagate an appeal, and request the Great Powers to send an inquiry commission, to certify on the spot, that innocent Bulgarians are murdered and repressed in Macedonia as well as to support the right for self-determination, leaving the Yugoslav federation and establishing an independent

state under international guarantees. While preparing his departure, however, on July 14th 1946, he is arrested, and after four months of long investigations, becomes the first Prime-minister to be sentenced to 14 years of solitary confinement. And all this, because he does not want to be responsible for the accusation of his countrymen, that consciously or not, has cooperated with the Serbs to return again to Macedonia and persecute and destroy the Bulgarian population like before 1941. Exactly for this reason, he supports the programme of IMRO and afterwards with dignity serves 9 full years of imprisonment, together with all other convicted IMRO-ists.

What is the fate of the arrested members of IMRO? After long investigations, accompanied by physical and psychic inquiries, hundreds of them die unable to withstand the cruel tortures, some of them during the investigation itself. For the leaders of IMRO, a special trial is prepared, where they are to be denounced as "traitors", "Bulgarian agents" and to be sentenced to death. The Memorandum case, however, achieves such publicity in the European press, that the Great Powers - USSR, USA, England and France send in January 1947 a delegation, which is to check in place what is happening in Macedonia. Arriving in Belgrade, however, the delegation of the international powers is stopped, being told, that it can not visit Macedonia, and that its demand to meet the arrested leaders of IMRO is an interference with the internal affairs of Yugoslavia. The representatives of the Great Powers declare that they will not leave until they meet the people of IMRO, who have sent them the memorandum.

For 10 days, the Yugoslavian authorities do not want to hear of such a thing, Rankovitch, Tempo and Koulishevski at the most. Then the delegates, through their embassies and missions, direct their demand to Tito personally. Forced to accept the request, the authorities in Belgrade inform the delegation of the Great Powers on their conditions: 1. - instead with all of the leaders of IMRO (13) they will meet only with three; 2. - the meeting will take place in Belgrade and not in Scopie; 3. - the conversation will be in Serbian; 4. the foreign delegates can not talk directly with the prisoners.

Insisting on such conditions, the authorities hope that the delegates of the Great Powers will give up their mission. However, they agree the meeting to take place even under these conditions.

For a whole week, the authorities in Scopie, prepare the three doctors, telling them of a meeting with some European "journalists", who were supposedly making a general enquiry on the conditions of the political prisoners on the Balkans. From the way, they were told how to behave and what to say, as Dr. Ivanov writes in his notes, it became clear to them that this was not going to be only a "journalistic" enquiry, but something more serious, concerning the essence of the struggles of IMRO in Macedonia at the time. The little that the doctors manage to say to each other, before they are taken away in a frosty January morning, from the prison of Idrizovo and driven to the Scopie airport, is that, no matter whom they meet, they have to behave with dignity and defend uncompromisingly the ideas of IMRO and the stand taken in memorandum for the Great Powers concerning the resolution on the Macedonian question at the forthcoming conference in Paris.

In Belgrade, they are taken directly to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The three doctors are with bound hands at the back, but here they are additionally tied to the chairs. From the conversation of the guards, they learn that they will meet foreign diplomats. The three leaders of IMRO want to be left alone, at least for five minutes for consultation on their positions. Al. Rankovitch warns them not to forget where they are and that there is no other position except full repentance, no matter whom they meet.

Dr. Ivanov answers that, even if they wanted, they could not forget where they are, as only in a police as his double tied, blue from inquisitions human skeletons like them can be seen.

"All IMRO-ists and Bugarashi in Yugoslavia will turn to skeletons" answers back Rankovitch. Then Dr. Terziev, turns to him and says that, they do not know why they are here and that if they were to meet foreigners, they would like to be informed what is going on. And if this is made up, in order to submit them to other physical and moral tortures, they do not understand why they should have travelled that far.

A representative of the Foreign Ministry in Belgrade explains that as a reply to their memorandum on the situation in Yugoslavia and especially in Macedonia, foreign representatives have arrived in Belgrade, wanting to hear personally from them, whether they still support what they wrote in the statement. If it comes to this meeting, he advised them, they were not to speak that they were Bulgarians and were fighting for independent Macedonia. This was an idea of the "Bulgarian fascists" of the Ivan Michailov type, and would worsen further their situation.

Now the three leaders fully understand two things: that the representatives of the Great Powers have received their memorandum and, therefore, want to meet with them; and second, to learn what exactly the Yugoslavian authorities want to hide from the foreigners.

At the meeting with the envoys of the Great Powers, the three doctors are first addressed by the French representative. On behalf of his colleagues, he declares that the commissioners of the Great Powers in the Paris Peace Talks are very well acquainted with their personal fate and the fate of their followers. He tells them, they are sent by their governments to meet them and understand what is the cause of their contradictions with the new authorities.

The interpreter of UDB (department of state security), however, translates that the French representative has condemned the three doctors for their "fascist" and separatist activity concerning Macedonia. Dr. Ivanov, who knows French, points out, that the representative of France has not said what she had translated, and with such a translation, he and his comrades will refuse conversation with the representatives of the Great Powers.

The French diplomat understands what has happened, and violating the requirements of the authorities, turns directly to Dr. Ivanov, stating that he will ask him and his friends several questions and if they answer honestly, everything will finish quickly and without complications.

" Your excellency-answers Dr. Ivanov- You are preparing the postwar peace, while we in Macedonia are still at war. The fact that you are here, confirms my words. The memorandum

sent by us to your governments is absolutely truthful - we would sign, even now, under every word in it. As the authorities doubt it, we demand an international enquiry, chosen by you, which is to check on the spot every fact presented by us for persecutions, repressions and murders of thousands of innocent Bulgarians in Macedonia."

What actually, do you want from the Great Powers, asks the French diplomat. Our memorandum, explains Dr. Ivanov, depicted in detail our problems and our demands. But, I will answer you, even here. For several decades Macedonia has been three times forcefully partitioned and enslaved by its neighbours on the provisions of international dictates: Berlin 1878, Bucarest - 1913, and Neuilly - 1919. Europe and the world know the tragedy of the Bulgarians in Macedonia and on the Balkans. What we need is self-determination of the population of Macedonia under international control, not to repeat the present bloody history. At this moment, L. Koulishevski, violently reacts, stating that "the Macedonian people" has "selfdetermined" itself already, through the "national-liberation fights" and "the brotherhood and unity" with the other Yugoslav peoples. Dr. Ivanov answers, that this is pure demagogy, as the people of Macedonia has not had such a possibility. This is supported by the fact, that the delegates from Macedonia, headed by M. Andonov-Tchento, consciously and fighting, have forced in the new constitution of Yugoslavia the "clause" for self-determination and separation from the Federation, if this is in the interest of any of the republics. Now, after having been convinced, that Macedonia has no historical, ethnical, economical and other cultural interest common with Yugoslavia's Federation, they demand, through referendum, approved by the Great Powers, to leave the present Federation and to become an independent state under international guarantees. This will be a just historical deed, not only for the welfare of Macedonia, but also for the peace on the Balkans, Europe and the world. This is the programme and the demand of IMRO to the Paris Peace Conference, concludes Dr. Ivanov.

Tempo reacts against Dr. Ivanov's statement, accusing them of being "pronounced Bulgarian chauvinists", "Michailovists", "fascists" etc. declaring that their idea of "inde-

pendent Macedonia" is "fascist" and unrealizable, because Bulgaria has long ago given up the idea and has admitted that there are no Bulgarians in Macedonia. In his opinion Pirin Macedonia is to join Yugoslavia in the nearest future.

Dr. Ivanov opposes him. The struggle of IMRO is popular and supported by the whole population of Macedonia for centuries, before anyone has heard the word "fascist", and as far as Pirin Macedonia's joining to Yugoslavia is concerned, he did remember there was a case of Vardar Macedonia joining Bulgaria, but there has never been the opposite.

At that moment, the Russian representative, Vladimir Velitski, turns to Dr. Trentchev, who has kept silent till that moment, asking him whether he wants to say anything as the meeting was at its end. Dr. Trentchev says that, from what he has heard and seen, he has not noticed anything hopeful. His comrades have stated the aims of IMRO's struggle, which he unreservedly supports. He underlines that for the representatives of the Great Powers it should be clear that, if democratic conditions existed in Macedonia, they would have defended their ideas by legitimate means, something they are striving for.

Till now, the Russian representative says, every thing is clear, but what would they do in the future? As far as my personal opinion is concerned, Dr. Trentchev states, we are not expected to give up or denounce our ideas. We have been brought up with these ideas, we live with them and we are fighting for them. The situation, however, at present is such that only the Great Powers, in Paris, can decide whether to present Macedonia with liberty and independence or to leave it in its present situation. Inside Macedonia, itself, it is necessary to free thousands of innocent people arrested and a modus vivendi to be found between the authorities and IMRO. In this case, their excellencies could intermeditate, concludes Dr. Trentchev.

After this unexpected statement of Dr. Trentchev, the authorities present, announce that this is demagogy and tactical step, aimed at misleading the representatives of the Great Powers on the nature of IMRO, by presenting it as a constructive public force.

At this place, the representatives of the Great Powers express their gratitude for the meeting, having it understood that it is over.

The behaviour of the three doctors, defending the programme of IMRO in front of the representatives of the Great Powers, infuriates the highest ranking Yugoslavian communist functionaries. After the meeting, the leaders of IMRO are thrown in horse wagons and in terrible cold travel two days from Belgrade to Scopie, without any food.

This is the end of an extremely important historical moment of the newest history of the struggles of IMRO for the liberation of Macedonia. This is maybe a unique case in the history of the national-liberative movements of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, when representatives of the Great Powers officially meet arrested leaders of IMRO, and all this in a moment when the organisation and its ideas are rejected and persecuted in all the Balkan countries.

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The historical science will, still in the time to come, evaluate the national value of this event in the newest history of the Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia, after 1945 till now.

According the documental notes of Dr. V. Ivanov, after the end of the meeting, the three doctors manage to exchange opinions on the statements made by them. All three agree, that in spite of the unpreparedness for such a meeting, they have succeeded to present and defend their struggle and the ideas of IMRO for the solution of the Macedonian question.

A serious discussion, however, starts on Dr. Trentchev's statement. His two comrades accuse him even of "capitulationism", due to his words, that as though the activity of IMRO is the reason for the mass outrages over the Bulgarians in Macedonia in 1945-1946. His appeal for the the foreign ambassadors to "intermediate" for reconciliation between the authorities and IMRO is judged as weakness. Furthermore, they voice doubts of a prearranged with the authorities statement.

To all these remarks, Dr. Trentchev answers, that what he said is not different from that of his friends and that only in his concluding words he said some more “diplomatic” words, so that the foreign diplomats do not remain with the impressions that the leaders of IMRO are people, with whom tolerant conversation is not possible. About the appeal for intermediation for a reconciliation with the authorities, Dr. Trentchev answers, that he wanted to present IMRO as a party, relying on the Great Powers.

The meeting of the three doctors, in the positions of leaders of IMRO with the representatives of the Great Powers as well as their behaviour, is a topic for discussions and comments not only among the arrested activists of IMRO, but also among all members of the organisation, still free in the territory of Vardar Macedonia and outside the country.

Under the influence of the activity of IMRO, many organisations with the name and ideas of IMRO appear in Vardar Macedonia, acting independently for the liberation of Vardar Macedonia in the different regions since 1944 until now a days.

A special influence, due to its historical charisma and ideas, IMRO has over the young generation and mostly over the students and high-school pupils. There is not a single school or university in Vardar Macedonia, where there has not been IMRO youth organisation, discovered by the Serbocomunist authorities. This is the biggest present and expression of gratitude to those fearless Bulgarian patriots, who in 1945, reestablish the activity of IMRO against the pan-Serbian slavery in Macedonia, an idea and struggle for several generations since 1945 until today.

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The reestablishment and the activity of IMRO after 1944 are aimed at the new Serbian occupation, during which the cause of the Macedonian Bulgarians was rejected and persecuted even in Patriotic Front’s Bulgaria, when the idea of “Macedonian nation” was implemented with sword and fire not only in Vardar and Aegian Macedonia, but also in Bulgaria. This is not

only heroism, but sense for historical premonition and responsibility of the intelligentsia in Macedonia to its.

The readiness shown for selfsacrifice in the name of the struggle for official acceptance of the Bulgarian nationality in Macedonia, the categorical demand in the memorandum of IMRO to the Paris Peace Conferene and the UN, for peaceful separation of Vardar Macedonia from the Yugoslavian Federation and the announcement, following a referendum in Macedonia as an "independent state", under the protection of the UN and the Great Powers is a great action of the Macedonian Bulgarians and mainly the intelligentsia in Macedonia. The course and the development of the historical events and processes on the Balkans, as well as those connected with the general development of the Macedonian question in the decades that followed, proved the correctness of the historical views, based in the ideas and programmes of IMRO since 1945, relating to the future resolution of the Macedonian question, based on the historical thruth, outside the Yugoslavian federation, which is particularly important nowadays.

THE LEGAL TRIAL AGAINST THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP OF IMRO

Since 25th until 30th of March 1947, in Scopie legal trial is held against the central leadership of IMRO. The attorney Blagoi Popov[ski] of Prilep, state prosecutor of the trial, reads for two days the indictment against 13 leading activists of IMRO.

For the truths sake, it should be mentioned, that among the series of absurd, fabricated accusations, published in the newspaper "New Macedonia", the indictment mentions many truthful things on the activity and aims of IMRO for the period 1945-1946. The implicit mixing of actual facts and gross political lies and slanders, leads the indictement to absurd statements. Leaving aside the fabrications and slanders, the main aims for which the accused are fighting, and deserve for them the most severe punishment are:

- separation of PR Macedonia from FPR Yugoslavia and creation of an independent state, which is to include the other parts of the region, under the protection of England and America.

- agitation by the activists of IMRO so that the Anglo-Americans support the idea for separation from Yugoslavia and its independence.

- the preparation and sending of the memorandum by the leaders of IMRO to the Great Powers, with an appeal at the Paris Peace Conference the Macedonian question to be justly resolved by giving the right to self-determination, separation from Yugoslavia and creation of an independent Macedonia.

- except the illegal activity, the aim of IMRO to participate in the elections for a constituent meeting in 1946, as a legal party with a separate political platform, including the question for the official acceptance of the Bulgarian nationality in Macedonia, as well as its independent participation in the elections as an opponent to the "communist peoples front".

To all true truthful or false accusations, the prosecutor blamed the activists of IMRO of connections with the Greek monarcho-fascist authorities and with the pan-Serbian chauvinists of Milan Grol, of having contacts with the opposition in Bulgaria - Nikola Petkov and Kosta Loultchev, and in the first place that they have been in contact with Ivan Michailov. All this showed in a most definite way the destructive character of IMRO toward Yugoslavia.

For five days the accused, without right to personal lawyers, having only public defence, answer both the general accusations of the indictment and the accusations of the investigation and the prosecutor on personal "criminal" offences, connected or not with IMRO's activity. The first of the accused to speak in defence of IMRO is Dr. Ivanov. He declares that on behalf of his comrades, energetically protests against the, presented in the indictment act, monstrous inventions, vulgar lies and slanders against them. In this way, the authorities attempt to present them as "criminals", "terrorists", "murderers", "foreign agents" and so on, in order to justify themselves in front of the people of Macedonia and the world for the monstrous repressions and the pre-decided death sentences. In this tendentious and illegal creation

called indictment act, Dr. Ivanov sees a well developed by UDB plan for moral, political and physical destruction, not only of the accused, but also an attempt at total discreditation, rejection and persecution of IMRO as idea, struggle and historical heritage of Macedonia. The last is very dangerous, as it aims at changing the wholesome national history of the Macedonian Bulgarians.

Further on, Dr. Ivanov protests against the fact, that according to the indictment act, he and his comrades, activists of IMRO, are "agents" of the English and American imperialism, the Greek monarchofascists, the pan-Serbian chauvinists of Milan Grol and so on. This is not only untrue, but is insulting every Macedonian patriot, bearing in mind that IMRO has been fighting for decades against the pan-Serbian and pan-Greek chauvinists. IMRO, underlines further Dr. Ivanov, while following the traditions of the historical struggles, has appeared in 1945 as a unique phenomenon, a counteraction to the new Serbian slavery over Macedonia under the veil of the Macedonism. The men who re-established the IMRO are local people with high morale and sense of responsibility, with respect to the cause of Macedonia. All have good education and knowledge on the national affairs and have prestige in the society. In spite of the cruel inquisitions they have been submitted to, there had been no traitor between them. With their conduct they have won the respect and sympathies of fighting Macedonia.

In the reply to the statement, that IMRO, both in the past and at present has shown itself as a "varchovist" organisation, defending the pan-Bulgarian interests in Macedonia, Dr. Ivanov states that, in the different periods of its history, IMRO has had different enemies and aims. Since 1893 till 1941 it is fighting against the Turkish, Greek and Serbian slavery. Since 1945, as he points out, IMRO has its own idea and programme, in accordance with the situation in Vardar Macedonia, after the end of World War II. In the memorandum sent to the UN and the Great Powers, quoted in the indictment act, IMRO has stated clearly and exactly what its aims and ideas are. They have been definitely stated to the representatives of the Great Powers in Belgrade. The indictment act, however, does not mention on at all this meeting.

From the bench of the accused, we appeal energetically to the Great Powers and the UN to fulfill the demands of IMRO, which are the following: 1. The right of national and political self-determination of the people of Macedonia to be accepted and guaranteed under international control. 2. The Paris Peace Conference to accept the right of Vardar Macedonia in a peaceful way to leave the Yugoslavian federation. 3. Macedonia to be pronounced an independent nation with international guarantees.

These are our ideas and demands today, says Dr. Ivanov, ending that, for these ideas the best sons and daughters of Macedonia are fighting and giving their lives. The tried IMRO-ists not only in Scopie, but also in the whole of Vardar Macedonia, according to him, will defend, until the end, their right struggle, and with dignity will meet the punishments, prepared for them by the servants of Belgrade.

The defence speech of Dr. Ivanov produces a violent reaction in the legal tribunal. There is not a qualification which has not been used against him - "fascist", "michailovist", "pan-Bulgarian", "traitor" and so on. The prosecutor attacks him, by stating that he and his friend, Dr. Trentchev are old "Bulgarian agents", and even as students have carried out orders of Iv. Michailov in Vienna, Paris and in other places in Europe, and now are obeying his commands. It is at his initiative, that they have created the IMRO, in order to continue the old fight against Tito's Yugoslavia.

Dr. Ivanov answers that he has never denied his membership, as student in Vienna in the Macedonian Students Union in Europe. He has never met Iv. Michailov, and after 1944 is the last time this could have happened. The coincidence of the ideas and struggles of IMRO in the past and now, he stresses, is inevitable, as both before and now, Yugoslavia is the biggest enemy to Macedonia. His speech is interrupted, the word taken away, and punished by the prosecutor to solitary confinement for "unprecedented audacity".

In similar way Dr. Kosta Trentchev defends his ideas. He also refutes the indictment act stating, that it is built in a partisan style. The court, according to him, is not interested in the truth at all, but has one aim only - to accuse IMRO and its lead-

ers of monstrous crimes, by declaring IMRO as “fascists” and “terrorist”, and its members - sentenced as “bandits” and “murderers”. Just as it had been done to IMRO and the Macedonian revolutionaries, in Turkish time till 1912, and afterwards by the royal Serbian enslavers until 1941.

To the accusation of the prosecutor-attorney, that IMRO has always been in service to Bulgaria, Dr. Trentchev answers: in an independent Macedonia, for which IMRO is fighting, and for which they are put to trial today, there will be no persecution of any nationality, least of all the Bulgarian. More over, the people in Macedonia do not make such difference between the notions “Bulgarian” and “Macedonian”, the way the authorities of Yugoslavia consciously implement with precise political aims. It should not be forgotten, that till 1941, Macedonia was proclaimed as “South Banovina” and its population for “southern Serbs”. It is well known to the world, what were the consequences for those that dared call themselves Bulgarians. There is no difference between the policy of Belgrade till 1941 and nowadays concerning the assimilation and destruction of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, concludes Dr. Trentchev. The murders of thousands of Bulgarians, only for the period 1945-1946, prove this. As a national protest against this barbarianship, the accused have restored the IMRO, which has the aim to fight for national self-determination and independent Macedonia under international guarantees, as an alternative to the, imposed from outside, Yugoslavian federation.

At this moment, the attorney takes away the word from Dr. Trentchev. And not only this. The notes and film materials of several foreign journalists, present at the trial, are confiscated by the UDB-agents, before they leave the court room.

Very interesting and courageous defence speech is made by Dr. K. Terziev. He arrives in the court room in bad physical condition. His stomach is torn by the beatings, while, at the same time, the authorities forbid any medical aid to be provided to him. They hope, that in this condition, he will give up his defence speech. Dr. Terziev, however, arrives in court and makes a big defence statement on the ideas of IMRO and Macedonia's cause. Concerning the indictment act, he states that, the things

said on IMRO as an organisation, as well as for the accused, is result of base falsifications and slanders. Further on, he stresses his solidarity with his comrades in their defence of the reestablishment and activity of IMRO since 1945. *"PR Macedonia is free in new Yugoslavia"* retorts the prosecutor. Dr Terziev answers that Macedonia is not free, and this results in the struggle there. As one of the main accused in the trial against IMRO, he states that he wants to declare in the court what for IMRO's aims date since 1945, and that its leaders are not "bandits" and "fascists", as the indictment act depicts them, but they are revolutionaries and popular figures, who do not accept the liberation as the return of Macedonia to Yugoslavia. He mentions several arguments. The decision, Vardar Macedonia to enter the Yugoslavian Federation, is not a decision and wish of the Macedonian people, as it is said. On the contrary, it is imposed by the Great Powers and the pan-Serbian chauvinists in YKP, in total rejection of the centennial struggles, victims and desires of Macedonia for freedom. What about the thousands of murders of innocent people, why are the prisons and camps full of honest Macedonian patriots? Concerning the "national-liberation struggle", mentioned over and over again, Dr. Terziev points out, that he knows this struggle very well and can say that it was not struggle of the people of Macedonia, that this struggle is imposed from outside, by Serbia, by YKP, with pan-Serbian conquerors aims. This best proved by the return of the Serbian colonists, these incredible maranders, murderers of the population, who after 1945, just as in royal Yugoslavia, have the privileges of "national fighters" and have again taken the most fertile land, confiscated from the most honoured Bulgarian patriots, fighters for the freedom of Macedonia. Similar is the enforcement of the Serbian alphabet and the Serbisation of the language, elimination of the Macedonian alphabet and language, announced to be Bulgarian, although spoken for centuries in the schools and churches of Macedonia. No matter the form Yugoslavia may transform itself into, says Dr. Terziev, with its pan-Serbian aproach, it cannot give Macedonia that cultural, national and spiritual freedom, IMRO is fighting for decades. Macedonia can fulfill its national strife only as free and independent state, under international guarantees.

The attorney attacks Dr. Terziev, calling him an old traitor to Macedonia, being first "Bulgarian agent", then becoming Serbian and a reward Belgrade promoted him to the position of a deputy-head of a department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr. Terziev answers, that as a member of the federalist organisation between the two wars he went to Belgrade and there found work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is precisely in this Ministry, that he had the possibility to acquaint himself with the Serbian conquerors' plans in Macedonia, which after 1944, masked by the Macedonism have involved not only the Vardar but also the other parts of Macedonia, exceeding the expansionism of the pan-Serbian bourgeoisie and dynasty before 1941. Dr. Terziev wanted to disclose these plans in the court in detail to show the ideas and struggles of IMRO for self-determination and independence. At this moment the prosecutor takes his word away.

With extreme fury, the prosecutor-attorney and the judges attack the teacher Dimitar Peev. They insist that he tells upon whose initiative exactly, he has written the memorandum to the Great Powers for the separation of Vardar Macedonia from Yugoslavia. D. Peev explains that the memorandum is an act of the leadership of the IMRO and part of its programme. IMRO wanted the world to learn the truth on the situation in Macedonia since 1944. Therefore, it was not necessary for IMRO to wait for initiative from outside. Besides, continues D. Peev, with its memorandum, IMRO gives an idea to the Great Powers how to solve the Macedonian question at the peace conference in Paris. But why is your memorandum identical with the one sent by I. Michailov to other places?, asks the attorney. Our fight is mainly national, answers D. Peev. It is impossible distinguish strictly between the historical grounds of the past and present ideas and demands of IMRO. But this is pure pan-Bulgarism and betrayal to Macedonia, jumps again the prosecutor. D. Peev says that, ever since its creation, IMRO has fought for the liberty of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, no matter how people understand or call it. His statement is also interrupted by the attorney, his word taken away.

The attorney cross examines also Georgi Gotsev. During his first detention, he succeeds to escape and for two months he

is searched for by the authorities. He is accused of entering in contact, during that time, with the Bulgarian authorities and on coming back continues the underground work of his arrested comrades, being entrusted with the liason between IMRO and officers of the Bulgarian intelligence service. G. Gotsev answers, that having in mind the present official policy of Bulgaria to Macedonia, contacts between the Bulgarian authorities and IMRO in Vardar Macedonia are impossible to be established. If the organisation had such contacts, its leaders would not have ended in jail, says Gotsev. During the whole time of his "underground" activity, he was in Vardar Macedonia and upon his return in his birthplace, was he arrested. To the direct question of the prosecutor, from where did he get a procuration as a leader of IMRO, with which he not only hid himself, but also organized several meetings with members and followers of IMRO in Berovo, Tsarevo selo, Vinitsa, Kotchani, Shtip, Veles, Scopie and others, Gotsev answers that he has received this procuration in 1945 from Dr. Trentchev. All the leaders of IMRO had such documents, but after their arrest, he was the only one to move along the "password" of the organisation.

G. Gotsev declares, that the instructions he had given were not new, but concerned only the programmes and aims of IMRO - to continue with peaceful and legal means the fight for the creation of independent Macedonia, guaranteed by the Great Powers and the UN. The attorney interrupts him and wants to know whether the "appeal" in the Shtip-Maleshev region against the return of the colonists, done on G. Gotsev's initiative is also part of the "legal" activity of IMRO. G. Gotsev answers, that this is an activity of IMRO, and that the reaction in his region, being the strongest, is something natural. The return of the colonists, declares Gotsev, is the return of the old Serbian slavery. In Shtip and Maleshev this slavery left black veils in every house. Therefore, there the whole population signed categorically the request to stop the return of the Serbian colonists.

The attorney changes the tone for a moment, expressing the wonder and even the regret that "such a young man" has fallen in the trap of a "criminal" organisation, having put himself in service of the enemies of "new Yugoslavia". G. Gotsev answers,

that as far as youth is concerned, Gotse Deltchev and Dame Gruev were 20 years old, when they created and lead the IMRO. On statement of the attorney, that IMRO is a "criminal" organisation, he states that it is presented as such only by the enemies of Macedonia. The attorney insists that he and his IMRO have nothing to do with the IMRO of Gotse and Dame. G. Gotsev answers, that in his family there have been fighters for the liberation of Macedonia for almost a century, and his father Yane Gotsev was member of IMRO and close friend of Gotse Deltchev, having participated in the Ilinden uprising, for which he had been thrown in the Turkish prisons. Later, as member of IMRO, he had been persecuted and arrested by the Serbian authorities in royal Yugoslavia. There is a continuity in the struggle between the generations. It will continue with the coming generations, until the ideal for freedom of Macedonia becomes reality. The attorney's nerves gave away and after an almost ten hours of interrogations, with insults and qualifications of the sort of "michailovist, fascist, pan-Bulgarist" and others, takes away his word.

Then comes Blagoi Gashteev's turn. Besides being member of the central leadership, at his arrest and during the search in his home, UDB finds arms, left from the Bulgarian army. To the question of the prosecutor, what did they need the arms for, Bl. Gashteev answers, that IMRO was hoping that there would come the day, when these arms will be necessary for the defence of independent Macedonia.

In similar way, the cause of IMRO is defended by the teacher Kiril Siveski, Metodi Popov, Assen Temov, Boris Tcharaktchiev, Toma Davkov and the priest Nikola Popov. All accused defend courageously IMRO's deeds and their fight in the name of the Bulgarian spirit and independent Macedonia.

Based upon the investigation procedures against IMRO in 1946-1947, the indictment act against the wholesome activity of the organisation since 1945 and the five-day interrogations of the leaders of IMRO in the Skopje Regional Court, the prosecutor Popovski asks for death penalty of all accused. The Court, however, pronounces the following sentences:

1. Dr. Konstantin Hristov Terziev - death by shooting and confiscation of his property.

2. Dr. Vassil Andonov Ivanov - death by shooting and confiscation of his property.

3. Dr. Kosta Nikolov Trentchev - death by shooting and confiscation of his property.

4. Metodi Popov - death by shooting and confiscation of his property.

5. Blagoi Gashteev - death by shooting and confiscation of his property.

6. Priest Nikola Popov - death by shooting and confiscation of his property.

7. Assen Temov - death by shooting and confiscation of his property.

8. Toma Davkov, landowner - 20 years solitary confinement.

9. Kiril Evtimov Siveski, teacher - 15 years solitary confinement.

10. Georgi Gotsev, landowner - 12 years solitary confinement.

11. Dimitar Peev, land surveyor - 10 years solitary confinement.

12. Boris Tcharaktchiev, clerk - 15 years solitary confinement.

13. Milan Traikov, clerk - 8 years imprisonment.

The Supreme court in Belgrade, under the pressure from the UN and the Great Powers, cancels the death sentences of the leaders of IMRO. Only that of Dr. Konstantin Terziev remain. He is executed on April 15th 1947, near the prison of Idrizovo.

The fate of the convicts is different. The term of the sentences is gradually decreased and most of the leaders of IMRO serve 10-12 years of hard labour imprisonment in Idrizovo, near Scopie, as well as in other prisons in former Yugoslavia. In 1957-1958 the prisoners still alive are freed. Three of them - Dimitar Peev of Stroumitsa, Kiril Siveski of Robevo, Berovo region, and Toma Davkov of Gorni Balvan, Shtip region, die in the prison of Idrizovo.

Of the 13 reestablishers, leaders and sentenced heroes of IMRO in only 1998 three are alive. Georgi Gotsev, who due to the persecution by the Serbocommunist authorities after his re-

lease from the prison, escaped with his whole family to Bulgaria, lives today in Blagoevgrad; Blagoi Gashteev lives in Stroumitsa and Boris Tcharaktchiev - in Scopie.

This is the course of the trial against the central leadership of IMRO in Scopie. Not less dramatic is the fate of other thousands of arrested members and followers of IMRO, tried in other towns of Vardar Macedoia - Scopie, Veles, Shtip, Bitolya, Prilep, Kitchevo, Ohrid, Kavardartsi, Stroumitsa, Radovish, Kotchani, Deltchevo, Berovo and others.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND TRIALS

The above mentioned processes has just passed, when the authorities discover another big organisation of IMRO. It is created in April 1947 by the former teacher Angel Mishev of Skatchentsi, Veles region. He restores the activity of IMRO in the regions of Veles, Scopie, Kroushevo and Bitolya. In the Broushanska Mountain in the region of Tikveshko, A. Mishev forms an underground headquarters of IMRO and connects all groups of the organisation in these regions by a couriers network.

Using flying leaflets, the organisation calls on the population to show resistance to the Serbocommunist authorities, who persecute and suffocate even the most basic rights of the Bulgarians. This is the reason for the leadership of the organisation to arm some of the groups and form military units (tchetas) of IMRO. Angel Mishev contacts the Macedonian Patriotic Organisation (MPO) in USA, from where he receives the newspaper "Macedonian Tribune" and other printed materials. Through them, the organisation persuades the population, that an active resistance to the Serbocommunist authorities will lead to the creation of an independent Macedonia, protected by England and America.

In the beginning of 1947, the organisation is broken up. Hundreds of its members are arrested and after cruel investigations and inquisitions are sentenced to long terms of hard labour. According to the newspaper "Politica" of May 14th, 1948, the trial

against the leadership of the organisation has lasted three days - from May 11th to 14th. They were accused of treason, terrorism, attempt of separating Vardar Macedonia from Yugoslavia. For these accusations, the Scpie Regional Court issues the following sentences: Angel Mishev - death penalty, Stefko Gelev of Broushani, Tikveshko region - death, Zjivko Iliev of Manastirets, Tikvesko - death, Pando Atanassov of Skatchantsi, Veles - 20 years imprisonment, Ferdo Jovkov of Kavadartsi - 20 years, Temelko Neshkov of Belo pole, Prilep - 12 years, Dontcho Popandov of Vatosh, Tikvesh - 15 years and others.

The cruel sentences and the public executions and the murders without sentences of eminent Bulgarians do not result in fear and resignation, on the contrary - they lead to even bigger hatred toward the Serbocommunists.

Parralel with Angel Mishev's IMRO, in Bitolya acts IMRO headed by Metodi Kolarov. It is formed in the end of 1945, and is discovered in January 1947. There is a two day trial held in Bitolya (29-30th April) against the leadership of IMRO in the Bitolya region. Its members, all from the town, are accused of the creation of a terrorist organisation, fighting for the separation of Vardar Macedonia from Yugoslavia, and formation of an independent Macedonia headed by Ivan Michailov. The Court accuses them of insult of the "Macedonian honour", as the accused stated that the Macedonians were Bulgarians.

For these accusations the Regional Court in Bitolya pronounces the heaviest sentences:

1. Metodi Nikolov Kolarov, as creator of IMRO in Bitolya and principal ideologist is sentenced to death and confiscation of his property.
2. Slave Todorov Petrov - 12 years hard labour.
3. Blagoi Velev Natchevski - 15 years hard labour.
4. Jontche Mishkov Kouzmanov - 20 years hard labour.
5. Vangel Spassov Georgiev - 6 years hard labour.
6. Lazar Atanassov Bozhinov - 8 years hard labour.
7. Novitsa Georgiev Milanov - 7 years hard labour.
8. Alexander Tashkov Lozanov - 11 years hard labour.
9. Nikola Metodiev Kolarov - 15 years hard labour.
10. Petar Paritchev Dinev - 11 years hard labour.
11. Atanas Michailov - 10 years hard labour;
- Dimitar Papakotch - 11 years hard labour.

The sentenced leaders of IMRO in Bitolya and the region, almost all of them intellectuals, deny the accusation that they were terrorists, as for the three years of the organisation's existence, not a single terrorist act has been done. They defend their opinion, that Vardar Macedonia is forcefully and with treachery united again to Yugoslavia, which the people of Macedonia will never accept, as it has not forgotten the Serbian slavery, are the words of Metodi Kolarov in answer to the indictment act. As far as the accusation of insult to the "Macedonian honour" is concerned, since the accused think of themselves as Bulgarians, it is yet another absurd, as the population of Macedonia is Bulgarian by nationality.

Legal trials of this type and accusations as insult to the "Macedonian honour", independent Macedonia and etc. in this period (1947-1950) are held in all towns of Vardar Macedonia.

The terror and violence were exerted in Bitolya region against Vassil Nastev and Dimitar Petkov-Tzapari; in Prespa region: Naum Geshtakov, Dimitar Bossilkov, Krustyo Konanov, Joshe Bossilkov, Krustyo Karanfilov, Sotir Eftimov, Jkim Ivanov, Kiril Ivanov, Spiro Iliev, Lambo Bossilkov, Toshko Korovsky, Dane Popovsky, Ilia Hristov; in Demir Hissar region - Levko Djambasov, Stoimir Robevsky.

Alongside with the organisations of IMRO, headed by influential intellectuals and open minded Bulgarians, participants in the struggle for the liberation of Macedonia from Serbian slavery in 1941 and the pan-Serbian macedonism after 1944, the struggle of the youth in Vardar Macedonia of it extreme importance.

Accordind to the newspaper "Borba", since August 21 st 1946 in the High School in Shtip, headed by Pantcho Hadjis-milev, a students' organisation of IMRO is formed. The leaders of the youth organisation have the aim to fight in defence of the Bulgarian nationaliy, submitted to persecution, and for the creation of independent Macedonia. They spread their network among the students of Veles and Stroumitsa. In talks and by distribution of printed materials, they explain their aims. In the beginning of March 1946, the Serbomanian authorities reveal the organisation and arrest 12 students from Shtip's High School. At the trial, held on June 12th till 19th in Shtip, the students are ac-

cused of creating a youth Michailovist terrorist organisation, carrying out intensive oral and written propaganda against "peoples power", "Macedonian honour" and "the brotherhood and unity" of the Yugoslavian peoples, as well as for the separation of Vardar Macedonia from Yugoslavia, intending to proclaim it for independent under the protection of America. The students do not deny the indictment, declaring that their fight is continuation of IMRO's fight for liberation of Macedonia from Serbian slavery. In spite of their minority, the court pronounces heavy sentences. Pantcho Hadjismilev is sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment, Naum Koizeklev - to 7 years, Boris Davkov - to 6 years, Dimitar Iliev - to 5 years, Vassil Evtimov - to 4 years of strict imprisonment regime and hard labour.

In May 1946, the authorities discover another students organisation of IMRO in the High School of Stroumitsa, arresting 25 people, headed by Metodi Kalkashliev. After several months of investigations in Shtip's prison, on August 31st 1946, they are brought to court.

The indictment act, according to "Politica" of September 2nd, 1946, reads that in its overall activity, the organisation has worked against the new order in Macedonia. In the printed leaflets and in other materials it has denied the Macedonian nation. Its members, during the investigations, have declared that the population in Macedonia is Bulgarian by nationality. Furthermore, the organisation was built on the principles of Vantche Michailov's IMRO of "threes" and "fives" and has intended to use armed terror. For this aim, it has armed its members. For these accusations 22 students, aged between 16 and 19 years, have been sentenced from 1 to 10 years solitary confinement. The group consists of: Metodi Kalkashliev, Kosta Hadjimishiev, Liuben Toptchev, Mirtcho Petsev, Borislav Belev, Nikola Apostolov, Ivan Andonov and others.

An IMRO students organisation similar to the one in Stroumitsa, is discovered by the authorities in the High School of Veles. In April 1947, the Court in Veles sentences, on accusation for activity against the imposed from outside Serbocommunist slavery in Vardar Macedonia, the creators of the organisation Blagoi Djaikov, Kroum Tchouschkov, Todor Loukarov,

Pantcho Velez, Miltcho Angelov and Kiril Simeonov to solitary confinement for a term from 3 to 7 years.

In June 1947, in the High School in Ohrid, an IMRO organisation is discovered. On August 27 and 28 th, its leadership is brought to trial. According to "Politica" of August 30th 1947, the indictment act read that the accused have acted from totally pan-Bulgarian and Michailovists' positions against "new Yugoslavia". In response, the accused students declare in front of the jury, that they have formed IMRO, with the aim - fighting against the return of the Serbs and the serbization of Macedonia. The Court pronounces the following sentences: Savo Kotsarev - 8 years imprisonment, Klime Evrov - 8 years, Tashko Stoyanov - 10 years, Kiril Mayov - 8 years, Kroum Miladinov - 5 years, Petar Mostrov - 5 years, Nikola Georgiev - 6 years. More than 20 pupils receive suspended sentences and are freed.

In the years 1947 - 1950, in almost all high schools and towns of Vardar Macedonia an IMRO called "Pravda" (justice) is formed. It is created in December 1947 in Ressen by the students Zhivko Stavrev, Dimitar Popov, Pande Evtimov, Nikola (Niko) Kotlyarov, Ilija Hristov, Sotir Veljanov, Dane Popov, Stefka Sotirova and Yontche Lazarov. Afterwards, it spreads to Scopie, infiltrating mainly the medical high school. The leaders of the organisation are Mirko Georgiev, Nikola Kazankov, Pande Peshev, Kotcho Nikov, Dimitar Dimitrov and others. In Shtip, the organisation is headed by Georgi Dotsev, Doushko Stamenov, Ilya Hristov and Alexander Rountev. In Prilep by - Grigor Krastev, Kostadin Smitchkov, Blagoi Rampov, Blagoi Mamrev, Koycho Smitchkov. In Bitolya by - Liuben Tchokrevski, Dane Popov, Ivan Proev, in Gevgeli - Kostadin Kalenikov, Josko Jossifov and so on.

The organisation has an aim, similar to MYSRO in the years before 1941, to attract as members the main mass of students in Vardar Macedonia, to fight against the return of the Serbs and for independent Macedonia outside Yugoslavia. On March 27 th 1950, in the bulding of the railway station in Veles, a meeting of the representatives of the students' organisations of several towns is held. A status is accepted and a declaration was sent on bealf of IMRO "Pravda" to the UN, insisting Macedonia to

be accepted as a separate state. The declaration falls in the hands of the authorities, with arrests following, first in Shtip and then in Scopie, Bitolya, Prilep, Ressen and other places. During the trials held in August 1950, tens of leaders and members of IMRO "Pravda" are sentenced to terms from 2 to 10 years solitary confinement, on the accusations that they have created an illegal terrorist organisation and by means of armed struggle want to separate Vardar Macedonia from Yugoslavia and pronounce it independent, headed by Ivan Michailov.

A lot of the students are not discovered and continue the activity of the organisation, spreading it to the university circles. In 1951, the authorities discover a students' organisation of IMRO in the Medical and Philosophical Faculties in Scopie. According to its status, its aim is to fight with all means against the Serbo-communists, for independent Macedonia, separated from Yugoslavia, in the spirit of IMRO from before 1941. Instead of arrests and a trial, on August 13th 1951, the authorities in Stroumitsa execute the leaders of the organisation, the university students - Mirtcho Petsev, Stefan Toptchev, Borislav Belev, Georgi Kostourkov, and Georgi Yaramov, announcing that they had wanted to escape to Greece.

In the years that followed, the authorities discover organisations of IMRO with the same Bulgarian national ideology in: Ohrid - 1953; Bitolya - 1956, 1973; Scopie - 1952, 1953, 1957, 1961, 1970 and 1985; Kroushevo - 1959, 1964; Shtip - 1954, 1960, 1971; Veles - 1957, 1963, 1972, and others. The more important legal trials organized are against the poet Venko Markovski (1950), the students' trial in Scopie (1961), the trial against Todor and Pliska Manasiev in 1970 in Shtip, the 1972 trial against the writer Pande Eftimov, against Dimitar Yaranov (1983), the 1985 trial in Scopie against Angel Mitrev-the Hero and Angel Krainitchanets - all of them ending with pronounced sentences for long term imprisonment.

The last anti-Bulgarian legal trial of the Serbocommunist authorities of Vardar Macedonia was organised in 1991 in Veles, against Georgi Kalaouzarov, Kroum Tchouschkov, Gotse Tchouschkov and others. They were accused of setting on fire the Yugoslavian flag, attempting an attack on the Officers House of

the Serbian army in Veles and warning the Yugoslavian army to leave Macedonia.

The resistance of the whole population reaches its culmination in 1991, when it forces the Serbocommunist authorities to hold the wanted for years referendum on the future of Vardar Macedonia. It is held on September 8th 1991. Its results are in complete coincidence with the demands of the activists of IMRO and the youth organisations, of the thousands of persecuted, repressed and imprisoned intellectuals. More than 97% of the population support the immediate separation of Vardar Macedonia from the Yugoslav Federation and the creation of an independent Republic of Macedonia. Thus, an important part of the programme of the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia in the period after the world wars was fulfilled.

With its brave resistance to the Serbian occupational authorities, in the period 1991-1992, the Macedonian patriots did not permit, the mobilised in the Serbian army youth to be transferred against the Croatian army, in the fighting for free and independent Croatia. Those who were sent by the Serbian command to the Croatian front, were sent back to Macedonia by a "secret committee" of heroic mothers.

At first glance, the Serbian military and civil authorities leave Macedonia in 1992 "voluntarily and without victims". In fact however the hundred-thousands Serbian army forced to leave, pillages arms and other materials worth more than one billion dollars, which belong to the people of Macedonia.

Additionally, the military and civil authorities, through their supporters in Scopie, overthrew in 1992 the democratically elected government of VMRO-DPMNE, headed by Prof. N. Klioussev, putting its own people, supporters of Belgrade and UDB's activists, in leading positions in R. Macedonia. The murder of the Minister of Internal Affairs, Yordan Mialkov, and tens of other intellectuals, supporters of VMRO-DPMNE, is their deed. According to local politicians and intellectuals, the Serbian agents there, even today are the biggest obstacle for the democratisation of the society in R. Macedonia, as well as for the not too good relations between Scopie and Sofia. Besides, they do not permit the local scientists and patriots to say the truth of the

past, the national roots, fights, language and consciousness to the population of Macedonia, as well as about the most notorious revival figures, revolutionaries, apostles and other eminent Bulgarians, who fought and gave their lives for the freedom of Macedonia. Not one of them has been rehabilitated in civil or political way.

Without the solution of these basic problems, there could not exist a really free and democratic Republic of Macedonia.

.....

The reestablishment and activity of IMRO in 1945 and the additional number of national liberation organisations, acting against the new Serbian occupation, the rejection and persecution of the Bulgarian nationality, when the idea of "Macedonian nation" is enforced with fire and sword, not only in Vardar Macedonia, but also by the Patriotic Front government in Bulgaria, is not only heroism, but also an exceptional feeling for historical and national responsibility of the intelligentsia and the young people in Macedonia in the name of the Bulgarian nationality. The self-sacrifice shown, for the sake of preservation of the Bulgarian nationality in Macedonia, the categorical demands in the memorandums of IMRO, of the Democratic Front "Ilinden1903", the position of the Prime-Minister Metodi Andonov-Tchento to the Paris Peace Conference, the multiple demands of the students' organisations of IMRO to the Great Powers and the UN for settlement of the Macedonian question outside the borders of Yugoslavia, is a great historical deed of the Macedonian Bulgarians in the period 1944 - 1999.

The period after 1944 is the third, the longest and most complicated stage in the development of the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia. For the time since 1944 till 1980, according to Vassil Hadjikitov of Shtip, one of the principal activists of the resistance against the theory of the "Macedonian nation", who spent 10 years in the prison of Idrizovo, more than 700 legal trials have been held in Vardar Mace-

donia against intellectuals, young people and open minded Bulgarians, ending with hundreds of death sentences. During the same period, there have been killed or are missing without any trace 23 000 people and more than 120 000 have passed through the prisons and camps of Tito's Yugoslavia. More than 180 000 have been chased away to Bulgaria and throughout the world.

Just as the liberation struggle against the Turks, the Serbian and Greek royal slavery between the two world wars, the fight against the Serbian communist oppression in Vardar Macedonia, has its apostles, ideologists, organizers and leaders. Amongst them, we should mention the first ideologists, creators and activists of the new IMRO after 1945 - Dr. Vassil Ivanov, Dr. Konstantin Trentchev, Dr. Kosta Terziev, Angel Dimov, Metodi Andonov-Tchento, Dimitar Giuzelev, Spiro Kitintchev, Dimitar Tchkatrov, Venko Markovski, Pavel Shatev, Todor Manasiev, Georgi Gotsev, Traiko Popov, Kosta Hrisimov, Georgi Yaramov, Georgi Kostourkov, Stefan Toptchev, Branko Dimtchev, Pande Evtimov, Kiril Siveski, Savo Kotsarev, Dr. K. Robev, Dr. T. Gitchev, Dr. Tsipoushev, Yordan Mialkov and many other unmentioned activists and leaders of the new national-liberation struggle in Vardar Macedonia in the period 1941 - 1991.

With their self-sacrifice in the fight for preservation of the Bulgarian nation and the liberation of Vardar Macedonia from the Serbo-communist slavery, these people wrote the new history of the Bulgarians in Macedonia and now give living example to the intellectuals and politicians in Sofia and Scopie, as well as to the international scientific and political thought how to settle the question of Macedonia in our days.

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ABBREVIATIONS

IMRO -	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation
JFR -	Jugoslavian Federative Republic
MYCRO -	Macedonian Youth Secret Revolutionary Organisation
BWP(k) -	Bulgarian Worker's Party
UDB -	Department of State Security
UN -	United Nation
JKP -	Yugoslavian Communist Party
NLS -	National Liberation Struggle

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