

# *The Political Conditions in DF Macedonia (1944-45) and the Problem of the Unification of the Macedonian People*

---

Violeta AČKOSKA

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy  
Skopje, Macedonia

The period of 1944-45 is characterized by two major events that had a key role in resolving the Macedonian national question. This is the time from the creation of the first modern Macedonian state (2 August 1944) – the Democratic Federal Macedonia (DFM), which was part of the Yugoslav Federation – to the election of the first People’s Government of Macedonia (16 April 1945). This short time frame is filled with many events and occurrences during which the democratic foundation on which the creation of the Macedonian state started was gradually lost in the process of establishing the centralized Yugoslav federation and the one-party communist government. Yugoslavia experienced a complete internal and political transformation. The national bourgeoisies lost the economic power and the political control, and the resolution of the ardent national question was undertaken by the communists. Educated in the Comintern spirit they preferred internationalism and class struggle (where the class is imposed over the national) over national distinctiveness. The first conflict between the interests of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), which was fighting for internal changes and for keeping the pre-war borders of Yugoslavia, and the Macedonian cadres, who stood up for an integrated solution of the Macedonian national question in the Balkans, occurred along this basic ideological axis. The Politburo of KPJ’s Central Committee (CK KPJ) deemed that the Macedonians in the Macedonian territories annexed to Bulgaria and Greece should lead a revolutionary (class) struggle under the leadership of the local communist parties

and should act towards the democratization of these societies, i.e. seek a national rights status within these countries.

And so, the resolution of the Macedonian national question was reduced to a class question, one that should be resolved by the victory of socialism in Greece, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and instead of unification the Macedonian people were to acquire a status of a recognized nation (language, culture). It thus became clear that with regards to the Macedonian question KPJ accepted the existing status quo in the Balkans, offering part of the Macedonian people equality with the other nations in Yugoslavia.

While the final battles of World War II were fought on all fronts, on August the 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944, the day of Ilinden<sup>1</sup>, the First Session of ASNOM was held in the Monastery of St. Prohor Pchinski<sup>2</sup>, near Kumanovo, in the presence of elected delegates from the three parts of Macedonia. The acts adopted during this Session set the foundations of the modern Macedonian state – Democratic Federal Macedonia (DFM)<sup>3</sup> – on the territory of the so-cal-

<sup>1</sup> The day of Ilinden symbolically reflected the continuity of the Macedonian struggle for national liberation connecting it to the 1903 uprising. This continuity was also seen in the structure of the First Session of ASNOM which consisted of representatives of the three generations of the struggle for national liberation of the Macedonian people: “from the Ilinden and post-Ilinden period, from the interwar period and the fight against the hegemonies of Great Serbia, Great Bulgaria and Great Greece, and from the period of the national liberation and antifascist war”. (С. Фиданова, *Некои аспекти на прашањето за проширување на политичката основа на АСНОМ*, „АСНОМ, педесет години македонска држава“, МАНУ-ИНИ, Скопје 1995, 121).

<sup>2</sup> After the border demarcation between Serbia and Macedonia and the corrections of the northern border in the first post-war years this monastery ended up being situated on the territory of federal Serbia. On 21<sup>st</sup> November 1945, the Government of PRM adopted a Decree for determination of the number, the districts and the local people’s boards, thus altering the northern state territory of PRM. According to this Decree some towns and villages from the Kozjak massif were alienated, thereby placing the Monastery of St. Prohor Pchinski on the territory of PR Serbia. (ДАРМ, ф: Претседателство на Владата на НРМ, к-37, Претседништву владе Федеративне Народне Републике Југославије, Београд - Претседателство на Народната влада на Демократска федерална Македонија, Скопје, 12.9.1946)

<sup>3</sup> During the First Session of ASNOM a Presidium (Presidency) of ASNOM was elected led by Metodija Andonov – Chento (В. Ачкоска, *Местото и улогата на*

led Vardar Macedonia. Thus the World War II national goals of the Macedonian people, which thanks to the decisions of the Second Session of the AVNOJ (29 November 1943) for the first time in their recent history became a constituent people equal with the other peoples in Yugoslavia, were accomplished only partly. The Macedonian leadership led by the President of the Presidency of ASNOM, Metodija Andonov – Chento, accepted the decisions of AVNOJ and the Yugoslav solution for the Macedonian question as an important phase, which should lead to the realization of the final goal – unification of the Macedonian people, divided by the neighbouring Balkan countries after the Balkan Wars and World War I. For Chento, the realization of this final goal was to occur in several phases: 1) accepting the National Liberation Movement (NOB) as a nationwide struggle for freedom and democracy regardless of the leading subject; 2) a joint struggle of all political forces “that think well of the Macedonian people” for liberation from the occupiers, 3) accepting AVNOJ’s resolutions as a final act and a positive step in the Macedonian people’s national struggle for recognition as equal with the other South Slavic peoples, and 4) a struggle for unification of Macedonia<sup>4</sup>. Regarding the last phase, within the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia (DFY) DFM should have been the Piedmont of such unification<sup>5</sup>.

The relations between the federal unit Macedonia and the Federation were not completely regulated during the time when DFM was being liberated from foreign occupation (19 November 1944) and during the war operations on the territory of Yugoslavia, so the tendency for bigger political and economic independence in adoption of decisions in several social spheres of the young Macedonian state were realised through the operations of ASNOM and its Presidium. At the forefront of these tendencies were primarily those cadres of the Macedonian state and military-political leadership which were not completely adhering to party discipline, i.e. “the KPJ line”, non-party persons, as well as Macedonian activists who in the years before World War II fought for national liberation and unification of the Macedonian people in a larger federation.

---

*владите на Македонија 1945 - 1995*, Гласник на ИНИ, 39/1-2, Скопје, 1995, 15).

<sup>4</sup> Such goals are evident in Chento’s letter addressed to Jordan Chkatrov, inviting all political subjects in Macedonia to continue the struggle for unification (*Методија Андонов Ченто*, Документи, Скопје 2002, док. бр. 42, 115/116).

<sup>5</sup> *АСНОМ, документи*, I, 1, Скопје 1984, 177-179.

The demands of the Macedonian cadres for complete resolution of the Macedonian question even during and immediately after the antifascist NOB, as well as the actions towards a greater independence of the Macedonian state within the federation, were seen as “antiparty” moves, as “Macedonian autonomism and separatism”. In addition, individuals, groups and organizations bearing the sign of the former Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) appeared, demanding the creation of an independent, united Macedonia with a democratic order under the protectorate of the big western powers, primarily the USA. Because of the British interest in Greece the existence of such national and political goals of the Macedonians, inter alia, endangered the international position of Tito’s Yugoslavia. Regarding this matter, the Politburo of CK KPJ and Josip Broz – Tito were previously warned by events which expressed the autonomic tendencies of the Macedonians, vis-à-vis the general Yugoslav front. We will point out some of these instances:

1. During World War II, part of the Macedonian leaders of the antifascist NOB emphasized the slogan *Free Macedonia in the free Balkans*<sup>6</sup>. Kuzman Josifovski Pitu, the author of the Ilinden proclamations and other documents, where the direct relations with Yugoslavia were not mentioned, had a key role in this direction. The Politburo of CK KPJ realized that the Macedonians had their own agenda, different from the one of CK KPJ. Therefore, in February 1943, Svetozar Vukmanovikj – Tempo arrived in Macedonia with special instructions from the supreme commander (to correct the “line”). Opposing the Macedonian cadres and their expressed autonomism, Tempo imposed the slogan *Free Macedonia in a free Yugoslavia* as the only correct alternative<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> One of the most notable representatives of this platform, until the arrival of Svetozar Vukmanovikj – Tempo in Macedonia (February 1943), was Kuzman Josifovski – Pitu, who was tragically murdered by the Bulgarian police in February 1944 in Skopje. (B. Ačkoska, *Кузман Јосифовски – Питу во сеќавањата на Светозар Вукмановиќ – Темпо*, Зборник „Кузман Јосифовски – Питу, време – живот – дело“, Скопје 1996, 365-379).

<sup>7</sup> Among other things, in the directive letter he sent to CK KPM on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1943 Tempo emphasizes that KPJ is fighting against all separatist movements, and that in this regard it also considers the Macedonian movement. At the same time he indicated that the movement in Macedonia must be directed towards the common Yugoslav struggle, i.e. towards the unificati-

2. The opposition of the members of the People's Liberation Action Committee (ANOK) to the Manifest of the General Command of the National Liberation Army and the partisan divisions of Macedonia (NOV and POM), in which immediately before the Second Session of AVNOJ Macedonia was added to Yugoslavia, under the influence of Tempo of course, also meant that for the Macedonians the question of unification, within or outside Yugoslavia, was really important as a principle national goal<sup>8</sup>. Metodija Andonov – Chento and the group of Macedonian intellectuals in ANOK opposed the prematurely imposed and partial resolution of the Macedonian national question<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia (CK KPM) Strahil Gigo immediately took actions towards the popularization of “the line of KPJ”, i.e. that the struggle is for the “creation of a new, free people's Yugoslavia where the national liberty and equality of the Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian and Montenegrin people will fully be realized”<sup>10</sup>.

3. The Macedonian delegation, led by Metodija Andonov – Chento (together with Emanuel Chuchukov and Kiril Petrushev), that accompanied Svetozar Vukmanovikj – Tempo on the island of Vis at the National Committee for Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ), in June 1944, as representatives of the authorities of the struggle in Macedonia, posed the question of the liberation of the Macedonian people. With a deft diplomatic response, Josip Broz – Tito characterized the demand for unification as a permanent and inalienable right of the Macedonians, but stressed that taking into consideration the international situation it was not the time for it to be set in action<sup>11</sup>.

---

on with the other peoples of Yugoslavia (*АЧНОМ 1944-1964*, Зборник на документи, Скопје 1964, 54).

<sup>8</sup> The Manifest of the General Command of NOV and POM, signed by the Commander of the General Command, Mihajlo Apostolski, had the character of a program, i.e. it determined the future course of NOB in the Vardar part of Macedonia that was connected only to Yugoslavia. The Manifest, according to Apostolski, was actually an authorization for the delegates to decide the status of the Macedonian people at the Second Session of AVNOJ. (М. Апостолски, *Одлуките на АВНОЈ реализација на целите на вековната борба на македонскиот народ*, „Историја“, 1984/XX, 1, 75)

<sup>9</sup> К. Глигоров, *Македонија е сè што имаме*, Скопје, 2002, 51-55.

<sup>10</sup> Архив на ИНИ, ин.бр.301/1943.

<sup>11</sup> Б. Петрановиќ, *Балканска федерација 1943-1948*, Београд 1991, 112.

4. The behaviour of Chento and part of the members of the Presidium of ASNOM with regards to imposing party cadres by KPJ within the Presidium upset the Yugoslav cadres, who through imposing cadre solutions from Belgrade, i.e. Serbia, wanted to establish control over and influence the work of the Macedonian state leadership. Not having confidence in part of the leading Macedonian cadres the Politburo of CK KPJ used to impose cadres who were born in Serbia or had been pro-Yugoslav or pro-Serbian communists for many years. Such were Lazar Kolishevski, Vidoe Smilevski Bato, Strahil Gigov, Ljupco Arsov etc., i.e. a group of communists that consistently and without objection would always implement the directives of the federal centre (the so called “pro-Yugoslav stream”). A particularly fierce struggle between the Macedonian cadres (the so called “pro-Macedonian stream”) and “the pro-Yugoslav” ones occurred during the imposition of Vidoe Smilevski Bato within the Presidium<sup>12</sup>.

5. The Commander of the General Command of NOV and POM, Mihajlo Apostolski, demanded that the foreign British and American missions leave DFM upon its definitive liberation (19 November 1944), as they were warning about the present tendencies for unification among the Macedonians. The missions’ representatives informed Josip Broz – Tito, who was infuriated that the Macedonian army and state cadres were behaving in such a manner without his permission. Actually, Tito’s anger was due to the

---

<sup>12</sup> Even during the negotiations of the Initiative Board (IO) for the convocation of ASNOM regarding the composition of the Presidium, Strahil Gigov proposed that Vidoe Smilevski – Bato should be a part of it, as a “great” and “proven” communist. Chento immediately opposed this proposal, stating that a man not born in Macedonia can not be in the highest leadership of the Macedonian state. Chento openly said to Gigov that if Smilevski is such a great communist then they should let him become a member of CK KPM, as nobody here knew him. Chento’s position was supported by Lazar Sokolov, Mihajlo Apostolski, Vladimir Polezhinoski, Kiro Gligorov and others. Svetozar Vukmanovikj - Tempo also got directly involved in the dispute, with an arrogant attitude towards Chento, demanding to know “how someone like Bato is not accepted in the Presidium”. The same night a party commission was formed to examine the nationalistic excesses of the IO members. The next day the hearing of Vidoe Smilevski – Bato took place, who still didn’t speak the Macedonian language. (К. Глигоров, *Ibid*, 58-59)

fact that he did not have an appropriate influence in this part of AVNOJ's Yugoslavia.

6. The rebellion of the Macedonian soldiers in January 1945 against going to the Srem front, with the demand to go to Thessaloniki instead and help the antifascist struggle of the Macedonians in the Aegean part of Macedonia, particularly upset the Yugoslav military-political leadership, which took urgent measures to subdue it. As a consequence of this rebellion, citizens of Veles and Kumanovo were executed without court decisions under the direct order of the federal Department for the Protection of the People (OZNA) and its chief Jefto Shahikj<sup>13</sup>.

The recognition of the Macedonian national distinctiveness and the state-right's movement of the Macedonians within DFY upset several political groups and individuals in the Balkans, who were fearful of the demands for a complete resolution of the Macedonian question. The Greek and the Bulgarian communists, who during the antifascist struggle accepted the historical reality of the presence of a Macedonian nation, still by any means possible wanted to maintain the territorial status quo of their countries. On the other hand, the right bloc politicians, especially the Greek ultra right politicians, set before themselves a task for a complete elimination of the so called "Slavo-Macedonians" or "Greeks-Slavophonic"<sup>14</sup>. The old Serbian

---

<sup>13</sup> V. Achkoska, *The red terror as a taboo subject in the Macedonian historiography and the executions in January 1945*, Communism – to the international tribunal, Vilnius 2009, 414-422; В. Ачкоска, *Методолошки пристап кон елаборирање на велешкиот случај од 15 јануари 1945 година*, Сп. „Велес“, Друштво за наука и уметност Велес, год. IX, бр.10, 38-59.

<sup>14</sup> The ethnic cleansing of the Macedonians in the Aegean part of Macedonia began immediately after the Balkan Wars and World War I (1912/13 and 1914/18). According to the Bucharest Peace Agreement, Greece got 51% of the Macedonian ethnic and historical territory or a total 34 356 km<sup>2</sup>. As a consequence of the wars some 50,000 Macedonians emigrated from Aegean Macedonia. According to the Greek-Turkish Agreement from 1923, 640,000 Greeks from Turkey were settled on the same territory, and 40,000 Islamized Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia moved out together with the Turks. In the period from 1923 to 1928 around 43,000 Macedonians moved out from Aegean Macedonia into the neighbouring countries. During World War II and the Greek Civil War, even though they were on the antifascist side, the Macedonians experienced the strongest exodus. By moving more than 120,000 Macedonians out of Greece

politicians got remarkably upset by this, as they could not accept the loss of the so called South Serbia<sup>15</sup>. The international factor was not willing to completely resolve the Macedonian national question either. For example, diplomats from Great Britain made strong efforts to prevent the integrative processes of the Macedonian people and subdue their will for creation of an independent and sovereign state. The British diplomacy considered the territorial changes in the Balkans in favour of one united Macedonian state to go against its strategic interests in the region. During this period, the British diplomacy saw the existence of Macedonia only within Yugoslavia. The existence of Macedonia in those frames was considered a guarantee that Britain will be able to control “the Macedonian syndrome” that threatened the Greek interests<sup>16</sup>.

After the definitive liberation of DFM in World War II and in line with the decisions of the Supreme Commander of NOV and POJ, Josip Broz – Tito, the Macedonian units within NOV and POJ joined the fight for liberation of Kosovo and later took part in the final operations for the definitive liberation of Yugoslavia, after pushing through the Srem front and going further north to Zagreb and Maribor<sup>17</sup>.

---

the plan of the Greek right politicians from December 1944 to eliminate, deport and forcefully drive out the so called Greeks-Slavophones, was accomplished. (Т. Симовски, *Етничките промени во Егејска Македонија во XX век*, „Етничките промени во Егејска Македонија во XX“, Скопје 2002, 35-75).

<sup>15</sup> At the Session that took place on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1944, the Presidium of ASNOM considered and publicly denied the expressed negative positions regarding the Macedonian distinctiveness, which were expressed during the summer of 1944 by Ivan Shubashikj and Sava Kosanovikj, members of the emigrant Yugoslav government in London (*Президиум на АСНОМ, Записници*, Скопје 1994, Записник бр. 1, 18-21).

<sup>16</sup> See: *Велика Британија и Македонија 1945-1948*, зборник на документи, редакција и коментар Т. Чепреганов, Скопје, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1945, the Supreme Commander gave an order for transferring the XV Macedonian National Liberation Striking Corps to the Srem front, under the slogan “To Berlin”. This corps entered the First Army of NOVJ. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1945 the decision of the Mandatory for national defence of DFJ was declared, whereby NOVJ takes the name Yugoslav Army (JA), and the VSh changed its the name to Command of JA. The losses to the XV Macedonian National Liberation Striking Corps on the



This is a specific period of transfer from a life in war to a life in peace, a period of recent liberation from the occupying armies and a time when the Macedonians should have renounced their tendencies for reunification in the name of the Yugoslav brotherhood and unity, and participation in the liberation of the rest of Yugoslavia. As part of this plan the incorporation of the Macedonian army in the Yugoslav one was strengthened, and there was submission of the military and state organization to the party organization.

The fact that the Macedonian units should go towards Srem, as we have mentioned, caused rebellions in certain units of the Macedonian Army, which demanded they should go south to support the liberation fight of the Macedonian people in the Aegean part of Macedonia. Among the more significant rebellions were the rebellion of the Macedonian soldiers in Skopje (the so called "Events at the Skopje fortress") and the rebellion in Shtip, both in January 1945<sup>18</sup>. They were immediately characterized as adverse actions against the brotherhood and unity of the Yugoslav peoples and against the Yugoslav community, imposed by other powers etc. It is evident that this characterization and the insinuation of foreign provocations and involvement are not real at all, as the protests of the soldiers clearly expressed the position that one of the major goals of the struggle of the Macedonian people is the integral resolution of the Macedonian question. A day before the first trial of the rebel soldiers<sup>19</sup>, on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1945, Dimitar Vlahov stated that the unification is an unquestionable right of the Macedonian people, recognized by the Ally powers<sup>20</sup>.

---

Srem front, which was broken on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1945, were: 1,674 dead, 3,400 wounded and 378 disappeared fighters and superiors (*Македонски историски речник*, Скопје 2000, 437).

<sup>18</sup> The events at the Skopje fortress (7 January 1945), the rebellion of the soldiers in Shtip (14 January 1945), the tragic stoning of three young soldiers in the Shtip barracks (November 1945) and other similar events are part of the struggle of the hard communist pro-Yugoslav stream with "the enemies" of KPJ and Yugoslavia, with those who demanded "to Thessaloniki". (ДАРМ, ф: ЦК СКМ, ЦК КПМ - Организационо-инструктивно одделение, к-4, Извештај на инструкторот Вера Ацева од Штипскиот и Струмичкиот округ, 12.11.1945).

<sup>19</sup> *Настаните на Скопското кале на 7 јануари 1945 година*, Документи, Скопје 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Д. Влахов, *Македонскиот народ има право на свое соединување*, „Нова Македонија“, 20.1.1945, 2.

This created a tense atmosphere and unease, followed by massive imprisonments and alert, and in certain cities whole groups of citizens were executed without court verdicts. Such executions without court verdicts included the mass murder of 53 citizens in Veles, and 48 to 54 in Kumanovo, although the exact number of the executed is not determined even today<sup>21</sup>. The location of the mass grave of the tragically murdered was kept a secret for almost four decades by a finished investigation and court proceedings, and some of the circumstances are still unclear<sup>22</sup>. Without a court verdict and no established guilt, these people were executed in the cruelest manner<sup>23</sup>.

The citizens of many Macedonian cities who were executed without a public trial and with no sufficient proofs were considered to be police agents who participated in many break-ins, murders of soldiers and other activists, organizers of counter-troops and counter-soldiers who committed mass atrocities and murders in the villages, and counter-soldiers and policemen who went after the partisans, committed murders and other atrocities and robberies in the villages<sup>24</sup>. The dilemma whether these executions without trials represent an act of a rising system or an extreme voluntary excess of certain individuals remains to this day. However, if such voluntarism was allowed within the system, then it should be given an appropriate evaluation regarding the functioning of the same system.

---

<sup>21</sup> В. Ачкоска, Н. Жежов, *Репресијата и репресираните во најновата македонска историја*, Скопје 2006, 159-168.

<sup>22</sup> The location where the execution of the people from Veles took place was discovered after the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, after 1991, while the location of the mass grave in Kumanovo is still unknown.

<sup>23</sup> The murder was committed on the night of 15<sup>th</sup> January, and it is covered up by later antedated and police rigged verdicts allegedly reached by the Military Council of the military area of Veles, which were dated on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1945, and the enforceable verdict of the Superior Military Court within the Command of NOV and POJ dated 18<sup>th</sup> January. One such decision of “the people’s military court commanded by the area of Veles”, probably sent as circular was dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 1945.

<sup>24</sup> The counter-soldiers were parapolice formations of the Bulgarian occupier authority. They had a salary in the amount of 3,000 levs and peasants who did not own land were usually employed in such divisions.

In such constellation, the Macedonian party leading establishment in 1945 in some way had to court Belgrade, to pay the entrance for such “brotherhood-unity”. If the Serbian eliminated their “counterrevolution” represented by Drazha Mihajlovikj and his supporters, if the same happened in Croatia with the “Ustahas”, and in Slovenia with the “Domobranci”, then in Macedonia as well “people’s enemies” had to be invented, “counterrevolution and counterrevolutionaries” created and convicted, so that it can be said that we have also destroyed the counterrevolution and the supporters of Vancho Mihajlov (the so called “Vanchovisti”) who wanted to destroy Yugoslavia and separate Macedonia from it<sup>25</sup>.

We must point out that the execution of the citizens in Veles was an extreme, voluntary excess of individuals. But, although it is not a direct act of the state, it still appertains within the context of creation of a general climate of fear of repression<sup>26</sup>. The president of the Presidium of ASNOM, Metodija Andonov – Chento, was informed about the shootings by the relatives of the victims who came to complain to him the next day. Similarly, the Representative for Internal Affairs, Kiril Petrushev, was informed about the shootings in Veles and Kumanovo by other sources, without being consulted or informed in advance<sup>27</sup>. The prisoners were in OZNA’s jurisdiction, which was under a direct control of the federal OZNA within the National Committee of DFY. In addition, the OZNA of the Republic coordinated the operations with the party, and not the state authority. The people, according to the information of Petrushev, “were taken outside the cities after midnight and shot somewhere”. He was also informed that this was done with the knowledge of the party’s CK. After Chento demanded an explanation from the political secretary of CK KPM, Lazar Kolishevski, the latter

---

<sup>25</sup> In the process of eliminating the opposition of communism and the Yugoslav centralism in NRM labelling it as vanchomihajlovism (a synonym of hostility towards AVNOJ’s Yugoslavia), pro-Bulgarian agency, a right ideological orientation etc, was characteristic. In fact, there was quite an insignificant number of the Vancho Mihajlov’s platform in Macedonia fighting for autonomy of Macedonia and annexation to Bulgaria. Actually, when by the order of the Germans Vancho Mihajlov came to DFM in September 1944 he could barely gather 200-300 supporters in the entire country. Therefore, he immediately left Macedonia.

<sup>28</sup> И. АНДОНОВ-ЧЕНТО, *Мојот татко - Методија Андонов-Ченто*, Скопје 1999, 279-280.

apologized for not informing him, but that “it is, how to say”, justified Koliševski, “under the order of Kardelj” (after the Second Session of AS-NOM, 28 December 1944). Kardelj was supposedly surprised by the small number of victims in Macedonia compared to the other parts of Yugoslavia, so “for confirming the picture created before the allies all prisoners should be shot by OZNA quietly”. Koliševski was surprised by Chento’s disagreement, because “the party agrees that all people’s enemies should be executed”<sup>28</sup>.

Executions were also planned in other towns during the course of the next few evenings. Chento was very upset by the position of Koliševski, explaining to him that “one thing is to be trialled, another thing is to be convicted, and a third thing is to be shot if their appeals were not approved by a supreme authority. But, to shoot someone without a verdict, for the only purpose of providing more victims, is also a crime”. Koliševski consoled him with the words “regarding the verdicts, they will be written”<sup>29</sup>. And so it was – the verdicts were written, but posthumously.

According to Pero Ivanoski – Tikvar, who confirms the statement of Koliševski, at the time an OZNA squad was formed for the purpose of execution of prisoners in other towns throughout Macedonia. In the meantime, a telegram by Aleksandar Rankovikj arrived (probably after the intervention of Chento to Josip Broz), which approximately said “to prevent the illegal murders of prisoners in Macedonia”<sup>30</sup>.

The events in DFM which took place in January 1945 and happened with a direct participation of the relation CK KPM – federal OZNA created an even greater discontent among part of the Macedonian national cadres. In the internal political plan, the conflict between the Macedonian autonomism and the Yugoslav centralism personified in the CK KPJ’s delegate

<sup>28</sup> As Chento thought, “the prisoners, if they were guilty they would have been convicted by the people’s court and they would have been shot. But even Lazo Koliševski knew that all these people were not that guilty so as to be shot. This fact was also known by Edvard Kardelj. Some of the prisoners supported our struggle, but were imprisoned because they got into conflict with someone from the party for some things...” (И. Андонов-Ченто, *Ibid*, 281).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 280-281.

<sup>30</sup> Р. Бунтески-Бунте, *Методија Андонов-Ченто, македонски народен трибун*, Скопје 2002, 300.

Svetozar Vukmanovikj – Tempo and his supporters at the highest positions of KMP led by Lazar Kolishevski was becoming clearer. The doubt in the Macedonian cadres and in the members of the Presidium of ASNOM who opposed some central-party decisions is evident in the party-imposed creation of the Operational Body of the Presidium of ASNOM (22 January 1945) for “deciding current – everyday things”<sup>31</sup>. This actually meant a silent overtake of the Presidium’s executive power, as the Presidium’s Vice-president and CK KPM’s Secretary Lazar Kolishevski was named to lead the Operational Body. That led to a submission of the state structure to the party structure, where the entire socio-political life was under the control of the party’s communist authority, which ruled in “the name” of the people.

The creation of the Operational Body within the Presidium of ASNOM was a precedent and the beginning of the radical change towards a complete integration of DF Macedonia in AVNOJ’s Yugoslavia. This showed that the federal authorities do not trust the Macedonian cadres and that Macedonia will be among the first to be put under the scrutiny of the centralistic-unitarist policy of Josip Broz. Therefore, they diligently followed the activities, operations and positions of the pro-Macedonian or “autonomistic” stream.

Miha Marinko was sent to Macedonia and, although not familiar with the actual conditions, during the CK KPJ’s Politburo meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1945<sup>32</sup>, whose purpose was to discuss “the building of socialism” in Macedonia, he submitted a confident report on the unfavourable conditions in Macedonia. He reported that there is a “tension between the young communists and the old liquidators” in Macedonia, “Chento does not have a

---

<sup>31</sup> Such body was neither prescribed in the resolutions nor in the other documents from ASNOM, and it was not founded within NKOJ. “Its formation deviated from the ASNOM’s decision, according to which the Presidium as a whole should perform the executive power. Such deviation, for which of course there were political reasons, created a certain precedent”. (H. Велјановски, *Историското значење на Првото заседание на АСНОМ*, „Историја“, Скопје, 1994/XXX, бр. 1-2, 17)

<sup>32</sup> Apart from the officer Miha Marinko, the following were also present on the meeting: Josip Broz – Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Aleksandar Rankovikj, Milovan Gijlas, Svetozar Vukmanovikj – Tempo, Sreten Zhujovikj – Crni, Moshа Pijade, Andrija Hebrang, Vladimir Bakarikj, Krsto Popivoda and Alesh Bebler.

great influence. CK is quite weak. Lazo is politically the strongest, good for the party, but stubborn”, Dimitar Vlahov “...does not work, he is quiet during the CK meetings. He has shown that he has his own agenda regarding several issues. During the meeting in Bulgaria he said that the Macedonian emigrants should return to Macedonia”. In later discussion, Gjilas proposed for Vlahov to be withdrawn from CK, and thought that Chento should be punished by the party and even be expelled from it. E. Kardelj indicated that “the bourgeoisie” in Macedonia is not compromised and it “is trying to get to the top – a goal which is supported by the Bulgarians... Vlahov is more dangerous than Chento, who is an alien element and will be eliminated from the Party at the end, but it is still early”. It was claimed that Chento and “some Presidium members” were representing the interests of the “small Macedonian bourgeoisie”. Those same people were accused of working “on their own” within the Presidium (i.e. without consulting the Party leadership, which was even worse), and Tempo emphasized that Chento has a “sectarian position” for the people of the Macedonian CK. At the end of the discussion, which was more precisely a trial of a part of the “inadequate” Macedonian cadres, Josip Broz concluded the meeting determining that the “mihajlovism” in Macedonia has not subsided and was allegedly alive in the bourgeoisies and even in the peasantry, and the Party popularized it<sup>33</sup>. Demanding for measures to be undertaken against the mentioned Macedonian cadres, Tito thought that the clean-up in Macedonia should be done with their “own forces”. “Chento has to be grated within the Party”, emphasized Tito. “Vlahov should be called here. The issue of those people has to be resolved carefully... Macedonia still hasn’t given anything for this war and we’ll have to come closer to give more for the war and the reconstruction of the country...”<sup>34</sup>. That is why Vlahov was promptly called to Belgrade, where he was treated extremely improperly<sup>35</sup>.

The following can be concluded from the cited contents of the CK KPJ Politburo’s meeting: 1) the Macedonian cadres were ignored and humili-

<sup>33</sup> Actually the issue was the diffusion of VMRO’s ideas for united Macedonia with democratic governance. The supporters of this idea were cruelly repressed under the alleged conviction as “vanchomihajlovists”, fascists, imperialistic agents etc. Only within several year after the war ended about 7,330 young people were accused for their VMRO’s ideas.

<sup>34</sup> Д. Кљакиќ, *Времето на Колишевски*, Скопје 1994, 299-300.

<sup>35</sup> П. Трајков, *Национализмот на скопските ръководители*, София, 1949, 36-37.

liated; 2) humiliation of the entire NOB of the Macedonian people and their extreme efforts for reconstruction of the country; 3) the federation will be strictly centralized with a rigid directive centre; 4) this directive centre will be the Politburo of CK KPJ; 5) the Yugoslav revolution undertook the Stalinist methods, thus eliminating those who think differently by ideological and political disqualifications; 6) the demands of the Macedonian cadres for a united Macedonia and for democracy were characterized as “mihajlovism” and “bourgeoisie” influence, which means that Tito was never seriously preoccupied with the Macedonian question; and 7) a reliance on “reliable” comrades, such as Koliševski and those chosen by him, was demanded.

Informed of CK KPJ Politburo’s meeting from 21<sup>st</sup> March 1945, where no representative of the Macedonian communists was present and during which a series of attacks and disqualifications of the Macedonian cadres were committed, under the instructions of Aleksandar Rankovikj, Lazar Koliševski immediately began disqualifying certain members of the Presidium of ASNOM. In his inaugural speech as President of the Government, among other things, he pointed out that apart from the evident successes “...The Presidium of ASNOM had serious weaknesses from a political character. I think that I’m not wrong if I say that some individuals in the first Presidium of ASNOM expressed certain separatist tendencies, and thus, consciously or not, put their national feelings above and to the detriment of the brotherhood and unity among the people in Yugoslavia. Those people were seemingly willing to resolve everything from a ‘Macedonian point of view’, at the same time forgetting that we are part of the democratic federative Yugoslavia. On some issues they even tried to introduce a certain dose of distrust towards the AVNOJ’s National Committee, as it allegedly was willing to cheat us, the Macedonians, for this or that issue. We are an integral part of the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia and all the things that stand between us and some other country may only be solved through the government of Marshal Tito”<sup>36</sup>.

With such public attacks over some members of the Presidium, which was the highest state body, it was already clear that: 1) the authority in Macedonia is concentrating in the hands of one man, i.e. the CK KPM’s

---

<sup>36</sup> Л. Колишевски, *Основната опасност за братството и единството на нашите народи е сепаратизмот*, „Аспекти на македонското национално прашање“, Скопје 1962, 25.

Secretary; 2) that he, without objection, and under the principle of the established monolithism in the operations of the KP will execute the directives of the central bodies, i.e. the CK KPJ's Politburo; 3) that this will politically disqualify all those who act or think independently and do not execute without objection the agenda of the party (CK KPJ's Politburo); 4) that the authority of the party is imposed over the state authority, thereby opening a margin for abuses "in the name of the Party". At first, a suitable formula implemented by the new authority for the first disqualifications of the current nominated structures was to characterize the anti-party elements as "autonomists" and "separatists".

In the economic area, the reconstruction of the country and the economic life were initiated by the struggle to provide food for the population and the army. In order to establish a complete control over production and distribution (and thereby also strengthen its monopoly over the political authority), the party undertook radical changes of property relations, which took place through several phases. The confiscation of private property first began by labelling people as enemies of the regime, the so called "class enemies" (peasants and city bourgeoisie), war profiteers – "war rich people" etc. Apart from the confiscations, certain executions of part of the mentioned categories of citizens were also carried out through numerous legal processes, or without them, not under any legal offence, but by free evaluation of their social harmfulness which was voluntarily given by some of the Party's or OZNA's cadres. In addition, about 95% of the property in Macedonia was confiscated by penal legislative even before the implementation of the legislative nationalization (December 1946).

Although the process of a more solid bond of DFM with the central bodies of the federation began earlier, nevertheless the era of party ruling of "the proletarian cadres" with strong pro-Yugoslav orientation began with the election of the first People's Government of Macedonia (16 April 1945)<sup>37</sup> during the Third Session of ASNOM<sup>38</sup>. These cadres considered the

<sup>37</sup> *Првата Народна влада на Македонија, 1945- 1985*, Скопје 1985, Записник бр. 12, 16.4.1945, 43-44; В. Ачкоска, *Местото и улогата на Владите на Македонија 1945 - 1995*, „Гласник на ИНИ“, 39/1-2, Скопје, 1995, 15-31.

<sup>38</sup> The Third Session of ASNOM, which throughout the literature and the documents is also known as the Second Extraordinary Session, opened on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1945. This Session included several important points: 1) separation of the legislative and executive power; 2) election of the first People's Go-



statements and demands for a greater independence of Macedonia in relation to the federal responsibilities or the other options for a resolution of the Macedonian national question different from the one already realized with the decisions of AVNOJ as “hostile”. A fierce struggle began within the party against “the anti-party” group, which was labelled as “autonomist” and “separatist”, as well as against all citizens that did not accept communism as the only viable political option.

### Bibliography:

- И. АНДОНОВ-ЧЕНТО, *Мојот татко – Методија Андонов-Ченто*, Скопје 1999, Архив на ИНИ, ин.бр. 301/1943.
- АСНОМ, документи*, I, 1, Скопје 1984.
- АСНОМ 1944-1964*, Зборник на документи, Скопје 1964.
- М. АПОСТОЛСКИ, *Одлуките на АВНОЈ реализација на целите на вековната борба на македонскиот народ*, „Историја“, 1984/XX, 1.
- В. АЧКОСКА, *Местото и улогата на владите на Македонија 1945 – 1995*, Гласник на ИНИ, 39/1-2, Скопје, 1995.
- Методија Андонов Ченто*, Документи, ДАРМ, Скопје 2002.
- В. АЧКОСКА, *Кузман Јосифовски – Питу во секавањата на Светозар Вукмановиќ – Темпо*, Зборник „Кузман Јосифовски – Питу, време-живот-дело“, Скопје 1996.
- V. ACHKOSKA, The red terror as a taboo subject in the Macedonian historiography and the executions in January 1945, Communism – to the international tribunal, Vilnius 2009.
- В. АЧКОСКА, *Методолошки пристап кон елаборирање на велешкиот случај од 15 јануари 1945 година*, Сп. „Велес“, Друштво за наука и уметност Велес, год. IX, бр.10.
- В. АЧКОСКА, *Местото и улогата на Владите на Македонија 1945 - 1995*, „Гласник на ИНИ“, 39/1-2, Скопје, 1995

---

vernment of Macedonia, 3) transformation of ASNOM into the National Parliament of the Federative Macedonia and 4) adoption of several legislative decisions. (*Вчера се откри ванредното заседание на АСНОМ*, “Нова Македонија”, год. II/88, 15.4.1945).

- В. АЧКОСКА, Н. ЖЕЖОВ, Репресијата и репресираните во најновата македонска историја, Скопје 2006.
- Р. БУНТЕСКИ-БУНТЕ, Методија Андонов-Ченто, македонски народен трибун, Скопје 2002, 300.
- Велика Британија и Македонија 1945-1948*, зборник на документи, редакција и коментар Т. ЧЕПРЕГАНОВ, Скопје, 1996.
- Н. ВЕЛЈАНОВСКИ, *Историското значење на Првото заседание на АСНОМ*, „Историја“, Скопје, 1994/XXX, бр. 1-2.
- Д. ВЛАХОВ, *Македонскиот народ има право на свое соединување*, „Нова Македонија“, 20.1.1945.
- К. ГЛИГОРОВ, *Македонија е сè што имаме*, Скопје, 2002.
- Државен архив на Република Македонија, ф: Претседателство на Владата на НРМ, к-37, Претседништву владе Федеративне Народне Републике Југославије, Београд – Претседателство на Народната влада на Демократска федерална Македонија, Скопје, 12.9.1946.
- Државен архив на Република Македонија, ф: ЦК СКМ, ЦК КПМ – Организационо-инструктивно одделение, к-4, Извештај на инструкторот Вера Ацева од Штипскиот и Струмичкиот округ, 12.11.1945.
- Д. КЉАКИЌ, *Времето на Колишевски*, Скопје 1994.
- Л. КОЛИШЕВСКИ, *Аспекти на македонското национално прашање*, Скопје 1962.
- Македонски историски речник*, Скопје 2000.
- Методија Андонов Ченто*, Документи, Скопје 2002, (док. бр. 42, 115/116)
- Настани на Скопското кале на 7 јануари 1945 година*, Документи, Скопје 1997.
- Б. ПЕТРАНОВИЌ, *Балканска федерација 1943-1948*, Београд 1991.
- Првата Народна влада на Македонија, 1945- 1985*, Скопје 1985.
- Президиум на АСНОМ, Записници, ИНИ*, Скопје 1994.
- Т. СИМОВСКИ, *Етничките промени во Егејска Македонија во XX век, во: „Етничките промени во Егејска Македонија во XX“*; Скопје 2002.
- П. ТРАЈКОВ, *Национализмот на скопските ръководители*, София, 1949.
- С. ФИДАНОВА, *Некои аспекти на прашањето за проширување на политичката основа на АСНОМ*, „АСНОМ, педесет години македонска држава“, МАНУ-ИНИ, Скопје 1995.