

Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in the Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949

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Such is the Slav Macedonian distrust of the Greek that even the KKE [Communist Party of Greece] is suspect.... KKE may be communist, but in the eyes of the Slav Macedonian it is primarily Greek. The development this summer of KKM [Communist Party of Macedonia] must offer a prospect of far greater appeal to the Slav-Macedonians in Greece than KKE can provide.[1]

The Macedonians of Aegean or Greek Macedonia made a significant, indeed a critical contribution to the communist side during the Civil War in Greece. They were mobilized for the struggle by their own movement, the National Liberation Front (Naroden Osloboditelen Front, or NOF), which was or sought the role of an autonomous ally and partner, even if a junior one, of the Communist Party of Greece, Kommounistiko Komma tis Elladas (KKE). The two looked like natural allies. They shared a common ideology, Marxism-Leninism, since the NOF was also a communist organization; they both rejected the status quo and wanted to replace it with a communist people's democracy, and, by the late autumn of 1946, they seemed to agree that this aim could probably be attained only through force of arms. In reality, however, the KKE and NOF were divided by deep-seated mutual distrust and animosity. For the former, the struggle was exclusively ideological and its aim was the seizure of power in Greece. For the latter-without in the least questioning its ideological commitment-it was primarily a national struggle, a battle for the national liberation of the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia.[2] These two perceptions of the struggle were not altogether contradictory, but the divergence in priorities exacerbated the already-existing mutual suspicions. The Greek communists saw in Macedonian nationalism

disloyalty to the Greek state; the Macedonians, in contrast, saw in the strong patriotism and nationalism of their Greek comrades a denial, indeed a betrayal, of their own national rights. Both assessments were correct, but these two incompatible allies were doomed to fight together; they had no alternative. The success of each depended on the other. The Macedonians could not even conceive of national liberation without the victory of the KKE, the only party in Greece that had recognized their existence and national identity. By the same token, the KKE could not realistically expect to win without direct or indirect support from their communist neighbors to the north, especially federal Yugoslavia; but aid from Yugoslavia, where the Macedonians had already won the status of a state within the federation, would hardly be forthcoming unless the Greek Communist Party could win the active support of the Macedonians in Greece.

The Macedonians bore the brunt of the war. They inhabited central and western Aegean Macedonia, the area bordering Yugoslavia and Albania, where the heaviest fighting, including the decisive battles, took place. Throughout the Civil War it served as a base for the political and military operations of the so-called democratic movement. The KKE and its military arm, the Democratic Army of Greece (Dimokratikos Stratos tis Elladas, or DSE), both maintained their headquarters there. It also embraced the so-called liberated territories, lands that came under the control of the DSE, formed its home front, and supplied or were compelled to supply most, if not all, the necessary provisions. As one participant and close observer put it: "[They] were turned into military workshops for the DSE, where everyone, young and old, male and female, served the needs of the DSE."[\[3\]](#)

Even more notable was the Macedonian contribution to the fighting strength of the Left. Throughout the struggle their participation in the ranks of the rebel army was very high, far out of proportion to their relatively low number in the total population of Greece at the time. Reliable statistics do not exist, but Macedonians seem to have constituted only around a twentieth of the total population of about seven million.[\[4\]](#) Their estimated representation in the DSE ranged from more than a quarter in April 1947 to more than two-thirds in mid-1949. Risto Kirjazovski maintains that they numbered 5,250 out of 20,000 in April 1947;[\[5\]](#) and Lieutenant Colonel Pando Vajnas claimed that in January 1948 there were about 11,000 Macedonian partisans in the DSE.[\[6\]](#)

According to C. M. Woodhouse, "they numbered 11,000 out of 25,000 in 1948, but 14,000 out of less than 20,000 by mid-1949."[\[7\]](#)

In the most critical theaters of military operations the Macedonians constituted an even higher percentage of the fighting strength.[\[8\]](#) Gianis Ioanidis, a member of the Politbureau (PB) of the KKE, reported as early as October 24, 1947, that they constituted three-quarters of the manpower of the command of central and western Macedonia.[\[9\]](#) Vajnas evaluated the contribution of the Macedonians as "first rate" and "unique."[\[10\]](#) Vasilis Bartziotas, a member of the Politbureau and the Political Commissar of the General Headquarters of the DSE, paid tribute to "this heroic people [who] gave everything ... it sacrificed its children, its property, its homes. Every household has a wounded or a dead [member]."[\[11\]](#)

It is therefore rather surprising that scholarly writings on the Civil War in Greece published during the last three decades in the West have hardly considered the NOF and the Macedonians.[\[12\]](#) In this study I will focus on the role of the Macedonians led by the NOF in what proved to be the bloodiest conflict in the history of modern Greece. Their motivations and aims shaped their relations with the KKE, the senior partner, and are therefore of critical importance in understanding the fortunes of the Left, Greek as well as Macedonian, during the Civil War.

I

The roots of the alliance between Greek communism and Macedonian nationalism went as far back as the immediate post-World War I years. The KKE, as well as its fraternal parties in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, had already been influenced by the Comintern in the early 1920s to appeal to the Macedonians and to manipulate Macedonian discontent to further the cause of revolution in Greece and in the Balkans generally. It was the only political party in Greece to recognize Macedonian national identity and to have a public policy on the Macedonian national question.[\[13\]](#) Against considerable opposition, the Third Extraordinary Congress of the KKE, meeting from November 26 to December 3, 1924, endorsed the Comintern line: support for a united Macedonian state in a future Balkan communist federation. This position was in basic accord with the demands of Macedonian activists and patriots, but it was extremely unpopular among the Greeks. The inauguration of the Popular Front line by the Comintern gave the Greek Communist Party the opportunity to replace it. Its Sixth Congress, in December 1935, adopted a new policy

supporting equality for all national minorities in Greece, including the Macedonian; this remained its official stand until early 1949.[14] From the limited perspective of the average Macedonian it was also most striking that the KKE was the only political organization in the country to raise a voice in their defense. This was true throughout the interwar period, but especially during the dictatorship of General Metaxas, which for them was an extremely harsh and repressive era.[15]

So long as the KKE remained a well-disciplined and active, yet relatively small opposition force, it was able to impose its rather theoretical Macedonian policy on its membership, both Greek and Macedonian, without being overly concerned about the views of the rest of society. The outbreak of World War II, the collapse of the old order; the occupation of the country, and the repartition of Macedonia by the Axis powers transformed the positions of the KKE and the Macedonians and the relationship between them. The KKE organized and led by far the most powerful resistance movement in the land, the National Liberation Front (Ethniko Apelefiherotiko Metopo, or EAM), and its military arm, the Greek Popular Liberation Army (Ellinikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos, or ELAS). While maintaining its commitment to social revolution, it also cultivated an image of determined defense of the traditional national interest of Greece. It succeeded in attracting a large noncommunist patriotic following and was intent on seizing power after the liberation of the country. [16]

In Macedonia, however, the KKE and EAM-ELAS faced stiff competition for the allegiance of the Macedonians. At the very outset of the war the KKE paid no particular attention to this. The Sixth and Seventh Plenums of its Central Committee (CC), held in June and September 1941, called on all citizens to join the struggle against the occupiers, but they did not mention the national minorities.[17] The resolutions of the Eighth Plenum, in January 1942, and the All-Greek Conference of the KKE, in December 1942, went a step further. They urged the Macedonians to join the Greeks in a common struggle with the Bulgarian and Serbian peoples against the fascists and for the victory of the USSR as well as for their own national and social liberation.[18] Large numbers of Macedonians joined the ranks of EAM-ELAS;[19] but after years of neglect, oppression, and repression, this predominantly peasant people felt alienated from the Greek state. It was difficult for them to show loyalty to it or to take at face value vague promises of equality in a future people's Greece. Many responded instead to the calls

of the Italian, German, and Bulgarian occupation authorities and of Vanko Mihailov's Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), who promised them liberation from Greek rule in the form of a "free," "autonomous" "independent" or "united" Macedonian state.[20] Their propaganda and coercion organizations appealed to the Macedonians' traditional and deeply ingrained distrust of the Greeks. They kept warning that "the partisans are Greek nationalists,"[21] that "The Andartes [partisans] are with the British and the British will bring back the king and an old GREECE (i.e. the GREECE of METAXAS). Therefore you must take arms against the Andartes." [22] They succeeded in arming many villages and recruited and armed paramilitary bands, the so-called *komiti* or *kontracheti* to fight on their side.[23]

By 1943, however, these rightist and largely foreign influences were overshadowed and thwarted by a much more powerful attraction and example: the Macedonian national liberation movement in Vardar or Yugoslav Macedonia, whose presence was also felt in Aegean Macedonia. Many, including loyal members of the KKE and followers of EAM-ELAS, were impressed by its apparent autonomy status within Tito's national liberation movement in Yugoslavia. Moreover, they were struck by its clearly Macedonian national character. It had its own general headquarters and a Macedonian partisan army officered by Macedonians; it used Macedonian as the language of command and a Macedonian flag as its symbol; it propagated openly the national liberation of all Macedonians and, in a more subdued fashion, Macedonian national unification.[24] This was in sharp contrast to the practice in Greece, where, as Captain P H. Evans, a station commander of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in western Aegean Macedonia in 1943-44, wrote, "ELAS.. . have always officered their Macedonian units with GREEKS and this has made a bad impression on the Slavophone Andartes in ELAS. It has made them feel, as the civilians also feel, that the millennium announced by EAM/ELAS, with the Slav-Macedonians enjoying equal privileges and full freedom, is just a sell out after all; GREECE will go on excluding them from state posts, from promotion in the army and so on" [25] Influenced by the Yugoslav example, Macedonian "leftists," to use Captain Evans's well-chosen term, began to demand a separate national liberation movement in Aegean Macedonia. This demand, as well as the recognition of their right to self-determination, constituted, as the Yugoslav practice showed, important means for drawing Macedonians into the communist-led resistance movements in the Balkans.[26] However, at a high-level

meeting of representatives of the central committees of the Albanian, Greek, and Yugoslav parties on June 20, 1943, the Greek delegate, Tilemachos Ververis, rejected all such proposals. He argued in effect that the mere raising of the Macedonian question in Greece would alienate Greeks from the KKE and EAM-ELAS.[27] Nonetheless, from then on and throughout the Civil War it became the KKE's difficult task to maintain and enhance its support among the Greeks while attempting to conciliate the Macedonians.[28] Since the two were so divided and their interests could not be easily reconciled, the Greek communist leadership chose to manipulate the Macedonian question to further its own party interests. Whenever the KKE needed the political and military support of the Macedonians, it paid lip service to their demands and made some half-hearted concessions to them without giving up control over them or their movement. When the KKE no longer felt in need of their support, it turned against them, canceled the concessions, and downplayed their demands and the Macedonian problem in Greece.[29]

In 1943, relations between EAM-ELAS and the smaller nationalist resistance organizations deteriorated dramatically. Armed clashes of ELAS with units of the National Republican Greek League (Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos, or EDES) in early autumn, during the so-called First Round of the Civil War, compelled the communists to court the Macedonians in order to draw them away from Bulgarian influence and into the ranks of ELAS. In September 1943 a Macedonian unit, "Lazo Trpovski," was organized within ELAS. The following month the KKE reluctantly sanctioned the formation of the Slav-Macedonian National Liberation Front (Slavjano-Makedonski Narodno Osloboditelen Front, or SNOF) and its military arm, the Slav-Macedonian National Liberation Army (Slavjano-Makedonska Narodno Osloboditelna Vojska, or SNOV), under the direct authority of EAM-ELAS.[30] For the more radical elements in the Macedonian leadership, those who were in closest contact with Vardar Macedonia, this was clearly only a first step. They wished to see SNOF-SNOV transformed into a truly Macedonian national liberation movement. They wanted it to be autonomous, perhaps even independent of EAM/ELAS, with its own organization, leadership, and command structure through-out Aegean Macedonia; such a movement, with a national liberation program based on their right to self-determination, would appeal to the overwhelming majority of Macedonians.[31] One of these radical leaders, Lazo Damovski (Oshenski), informed the leaders of the KKE that promises of full equality in a people's Greece in the future were no longer sufficient.

He wrote of the Macedonians of Greece:

Do they or don't they have the right, . . . in accordance with the eight points of the Atlantic Charter on the self-determination of nations, to demand, together with the other two parts under Serbia and Bulgaria, to establish their own Slavmacedonian people's republic?!

The Slavmacedonians justly ask: Why do they not permit us to develop fully our national culture and to realize our national ideals ...?! We are not Greeks, but a Slav-macedonian nation, with different ideals. How could we remain in Greece, content solely with equality? How could this be reconciled with the basic principles on the self-determination of nations?[32]

In fact, even the SNOF-SNOV this modest Macedonian version and satellite of EAM-ELAS that the party conceded to recognize, won immediate acceptance and widespread support among the Macedonians. Paradoxically, though, it was this very success that sealed its fate. The KKE wanted an obedient and subservient, token Macedonian instrument to draw the Macedonians into the fold of EAM-ELAS and thus away from the various "free" and "autonomous" Macedonian bands supported by the Bulgarians and Germans.[33] It was not willing to tolerate, let alone accept as a partner, an authentic Macedonian national liberation movement on the Left that enjoyed a popular mass following and thus an independent power base. Consequently, from the very outset, while the movement was still in its organizational stage, the party leadership severely curtailed its independence, restricting and hindering its activities. And in the end, after existing for only six months, SNOF-SNOV was suppressed in April-May 1944.[34] Some of its leaders were arrested, but a group of eighty partisans, led by Naum Pejov, fled across the border and joined the Macedonian army in Vardar Macedonia.[35]

In the summer the KKE was forced once again to conciliate the Macedonians. The problem was solved temporarily with the help of the Macedonian leadership in Yugoslavia when the KKE promised to permit the formation of separate Macedonian units within ELAS.[36] However, only two battalions were allowed to form, the Voden (Edesa) in June and the Kostur-Lerin (Kastoria-Florina) in August.[37] Their activities were tightly controlled and their numerical strength was purposely restricted. As the commanders of the latter complained to the headquarters of the National Liberation Army of Macedonia: "they [the leadership of EAM-

ELAS] are determined to prevent by all possible means the rise of a Macedonian partisan movement in Greece. They want to keep dispersed throughout the various units of ELAS both those already in ELAS and the new [recruits] who want to join the Macedonian detachments?[38] Or, as the secretary of the Macedonian bureau of the party confessed cynically: two Macedonian bands would be formed "so that the Slav Macedonians are not deceived by an eventual plot by the Bulgarians?[39]

Relations between the two sides remained tense and reached crisis proportions by October, when, faced with the prospect of liquidation, the two Macedonian battalions revolted and crossed into Vardar Macedonia.[40] The flight of the two battalions, which included the best-known Macedonian "leftists,"[41] represented an open break between the communist-led resistance and the Macedonians in Greece. There is no doubt that the rebels enjoyed mass support. As Giorgis Milonas, a district leader of the KKE in Kastoria (Kostur) reported to the regional leadership for Macedonia: "The population is reserved, fear retaliatory measures from FLAS; they look toward Yugoslavia and the vast majority sympathizes with the separatist movement?"[42] The KKE denounced the rebellious Macedonian leaders as traitors, komitajis, kontrachetniks, instruments of the Gestapo and the "Intelligence Service?"[43] The Macedonian leaders in turn accused the KKE and EAM-ELAS of great Greek chauvinism and opportunism for denying the Macedonians equality and the right to self-determination.[44] In a lengthy letter to the Central Committee of EAM and the General Headquarters of ELAS, the leaders of the Kostur-Lerin battalion insisted that there could be no further cooperation between them unless the Greek Communist Party corrected its policy on the Macedonian question and met the Macedonian demands: separate Macedonian units, a separate Macedonian national front represented in the Central Committee of EAM, Macedonian institutions of local self-government, freedom to conduct their own propaganda and education even on subjects such as Macedonian self-determination and unification. Until then, "the Macedonian national fighters will not subordinate themselves to the dictatorship and discipline of EAM-ELAS; [they] will carry on an independent policy and struggle for national justice?"[45] This split, which also had a chilling effect on KKE-CPY (Communist Party of Yugoslavia) relations, occurred at a most inopportune moment for EAM-ELAS: on the eve of the so-called Second Round in the Civil War in Greece. The defeat of the Greek Left in the Battle of Athens and its

acceptance of the Varkiza Agreement, on February 12, 1945, only served to widen the rift even further Both the Macedonian leaders in Greece and the victorious communists in Yugoslavia considered the accord a shameful capitulation.[46]

II

The flight of the two battalions, which included the most seasoned and well-known Macedonian communist leaders in Aegean Macedonia, did not represent a rejection of the Greek political Left. It was rather an attempt on their part to force the KKE and EAM-ELAS to accept the Macedonians as equals and to respect their national rights. As the leaders of the Lerin-Kostur battalion explained:

We did not leave, as you accuse us, to become servants of fascism . . . , because we are enemies of the people. . . , because we harbor treacherous intentions; we left precisely because we are fighters, Macedonian fighters, precisely because we want to fight against fascism . . . , to win recognition for the fundamental principles of the allied struggle, the national rights of our people and to become free. . . . We fight against the Germans here . . . ; we want to return there, to our lands, to fight shoulder to shoulder with you, to help you in your struggle... in unity and brotherhood. However, to establish unity and [for us] to accept the policy and central leadership of EAM and ELAS we have set forth our... demands as conditions.... We are certain that EAM-ELAS will respond correctly.[47]

In the meantime they began to organize on the free territory of Vardar Macedonia. In November, in Bitola, the two battalions and other armed Macedonians escaping from Greece were organized in a brigade. It became known as the First Aegean Brigade and comprised four battalions with a reported strength of four to five thousand men.[48] It took part in the final operations of the war on the territory of Vardar Macedonia and was disbanded on April 2, 1945. During the Civil War many, if not most, of these seasoned fighters returned to Greece and fought in the ranks of the DSE.[49] At the same time, in early November; their delegates met in Bitola and, according to Naum Pejov, one of the participants, "selected a political body of 29 members headed by a commission of 10 members?"[50] The larger body was the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Macedonia under Greece

(Privremen Revolucioneren Komitet na Makedonija pod Grcija);^[51] the smaller was the Temporary Political Commission of Macedonia under Greece (Vremena Politicka Komisija na Makedonija pod Grcija).^[52] But both Pejov and Kirjazovski refer to them simply as the Political Commission.^[53] The Political Commission's declared aim was to lead the struggle of the Aegean Macedonians for national self-determination, "guaranteed to us by the Atlantic Charter"^[54] "We acquired that right with [our] three years struggle. We have won our right."^[55] For that purpose it sought to resolve the conflict with the KKE and EAM-ELAS and to establish local organizations in Aegean Macedonia.^[56] After the signing of the Varkiza Peace Agreement, which also signaled the beginning of the so-called white terror against the Left and particularly against the Macedonians, the Political Commission realized the need for greater organizational unity. They met on April 23, 1945, and founded the NOF as a single united organization of all Macedonians in Greece.^[57]

The founders of the NOF, all of whom were leading activists of the wartime SNOF conceived it as a direct successor of the latter, as an independent, communist-led, national liberation movement of the Macedonians in Greece.^[58] It appealed not only to the Macedonians who had sided with EAM-ELAS during the war; in addition, and more important, it wished to draw into its fold all those Macedonians, the so-called autonomists, who had been armed by the occupation authorities.^[59] The NOF sought and in a relatively short time largely succeeded in establishing a vast organizational network that reached all Macedonian populated areas.^[60] In a report on the Edesa [Voden] region, dated May 27, 1945, Pavle Rakovski claimed: "In those localities where NOF was organized almost the entire Macedonian population embraced it. In many areas the KKE exists only formally."^[61] A few months later this state of affairs was confirmed by Atanasios Tzogas, an activist of the KKE in western Macedonia, when he complained: "Today our Party is not welcomed in many Slav Macedonian villages: and that in the name of Marxism?!"^[62]

The primary aim of the NOF, as was the case with the SNOF, remained self-determination and thus national liberation. For the leaders of the NOF, who were dazzled by the successes of the communists in Yugoslavia and applauded the establishment of a People's Republic of Macedonia (PRM) in the federation, national self-determination and liberation could only mean unification with free Macedonia in

Yugoslavia. As L. Damovski, its leading ideologist, declared in June 1945: "The desire of Aegean Macedonia is Unification with Free Macedonia in accordance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the declarations of Stalin-Roosevelt-Churchill... The Greek people have nothing to lose from such Unification.... The common struggle of the Macedonians and the Greeks will help open the way for the unification of the Macedonians with free Macedonia; for the Greeks [it] will win democracy, throw over the foreign yoke, and pave the way for people's rule in Greece."[\[63\]](#) Macedonian political prisoners in the "Edi-Kule" jail in Salonica expressed such hopes in their New Year's greetings to I.Dimovski-Goce: "may 1946 bring about the unification of the entire Macedonia within the framework of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia."[\[64\]](#)

The defeat of the Greek Left in the Battle of Athens and its capitulation in Varkiza, which Macedonian communist leaders blamed on the incorrect policies and tactics of the KKE, represented a defeat for the national aspirations of the Macedonians in Greece as well. In the conditions of post-Varkiza Greece and the Balkans in general, the NOF had to play down, or set aside until the victory of the Greek Left, its maximal aim, national self-determination and unification, which was anathema to Greeks across the political spectrum. Instead it focused on its minimal aim: safeguarding the survival of the Macedonians in Greece, for which there was understanding and support, at least officially, within the communist-led Left.[\[65\]](#) As the lead article in the official organ of the NOF declared on February 20, 1946: "Only a successful united struggle of the anti-fascist forces in Greece will bring freedom to the Greek working people and national rights to the Macedonians, Albanians and the other minorities in Greece?"[\[66\]](#) This minimal program remained its declared policy until its Second Congress in March 1949-that is, virtually until the end of the Civil War.

The terror campaign unleashed after Varkiza by the Greek Right against the entire Left was directed with special vehemence against the Macedonians. In addition to the ideological "treachery" of supporting EAM-ELAS, they were attacked for committing the ultimate "sin" of not being, or rather not considering themselves, Greeks. They were condemned as Bulgars, komitajis, collaborators, autonomists, Sudetens of the Balkans, and so forth, and threatened with extermination.[\[67\]](#) And they paid a heavy price: armed attacks on their villages; murders, arrests, trials, jail, and exile; confiscation of property and movable equipment;

burning of homes or entire villages; economic blockades of villages; forcible expulsions; discriminatory use of taxes and UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) aid; restrictions on freedom of movement, and so on.[68] "Under such conditions," wrote Solon Grigoriadis, a functionary of the KKE and ELAS, in *Rizospastis*, in early January 1946, "a mass exodus of Macedonians will begin. Entire villages escape into the mountains or seek refuge in Yugoslavia. I have seen Slav villages from which 90% of the men have run away; from others 60%-70% of the villagers have run away, and in some there is not a single inhabitant left!"[69]

As the sole, though illegal, Macedonian organization in Greece, the NOF mobilized the Macedonians in self-defense. Through its underground network it tracked the movement of rightist bands and advised villagers to abandon their homes for the safety of the hills; helped activists to move into cities or cross the border to safety; secured legal aid and expertise for those arrested; organized petitions, protests, demonstrations, and strikes. It did not exclude armed resistance; but, at least throughout 1945, its leaders did not encourage the formation of armed bands, partly because of a lack of arms but also in deference to the KKE, which opposed such measures. In early 1946 the position of the KKE began to change and the NOF again promoted the speedy formation of armed groups for self-defense. By August there were about five hundred and by September about seven hundred partisans of the NOF operating in the mountains of central and western Aegean Macedonia. [70]

However, the leaders of the NOF were fully conscious of their isolation in Greece and repeatedly called for collaboration with the Greek Left. But a basis for cooperation did not exist; the conclusion of the Varkiza Agreement had exacerbated the split that already existed between them. As I pointed out above, the Macedonian leaders denounced the agreement as capitulation, convinced that the communists could seize power only through armed struggle. The KKE, however, endorsed the accord and as a legal party embraced political struggle to win power in Greece. The two positions were not compatible and precluded any meaningful cooperation against the Right.[71] Hence, in the year and a half following Varkiza, the KKE and EAM, while protesting the terror campaign directed at the Macedonian population, also rejected the NOF, denouncing it as "an autonomist" and "fascist" organization led by the "Intelligence Service"[72] and equating it with the Bulgarian-sponsored autonomist movement of the Second World War.[73] They characterized

its followers as "a rebellious" group,[74] "a dangerous and anarchist element,"[75] threatened them with expulsion from the party, and, after its victory, with greater sufferings "than they are now experiencing in the hands of the reaction." [76] They called on all Macedonians "to close their ears and not to listen to suspicious persons, . . . the feeble minded and cowardly who present themselves as armed defenders of the Slav Macedonian people, [but] are [in fact] destroyers of the unity of the people." [77] Or, as Tanas Korovesov, an NOF leader from Ianitsa (Enidze Vardar), wrote, "The KKE fights openly against our movement and wants to destroy it. Their fight against us is even more determined than their fight against the reaction... It appears that the KKE has no intention of fighting the reaction with us." [78]

III

The attitude of the KKE toward the NOF and, indeed, the struggle for power in Greece in general did not change as long as its leadership remained convinced that they could achieve a political victory. The first indication of the possible reorientation of the party line came at the end of December 1945.

Addressing a plenum of the regional party organization in Salonica on December 28, Nikos Zachariadis, its General Secretary, drew a sharp distinction between what he called the autonomist movement and the NOF. He condemned the former as fascist and imperialist and its followers, the autonomists, as agents of foreign, anti-Balkan interests, "enemies not only of the Greek people, but also of Slav Macedonians." In contrast, he recognized the NOF as "an anti-fascist organization of Slav Macedonians" and, in the name of all Greek democrats, endorsed its call "to all toilers, all inhabitants of the region [Edesa], to fight united for people's freedom, equality, equal citizenship, for a general amnesty, etc. We will march together with them in the struggle for bread, for freedom, for a neo-Greek people's democracy." [79] Since the right-wing autonomist movement had already been virtually suppressed and no longer posed a threat, Zachariadis's speech could be seen as a rejection of the NOF's maximal aim and endorsement of its minimal aim. Early in the new year; similar sentiments were echoed by Leonidas Stringos, member of the Politbureau (PB) and secretary of the regional bureau of the KKE for Macedonia and Thrace, who also called for the reestablishment of the unity of the Greeks and Macedonians, which, according to him, had been disrupted by the Varkiza Agreement. [80] The conciliation of the NOF intensified after February 12, 1946, when

the Second Plenum of the Central Committee (CC) of the KKE decided to begin preparations for a possible armed struggle.[81]

These overtures prepared the ground for a formal rapprochement between the KKE and the NOF. The first official contacts between them took place in April 1946.[82] The actual discussions on unification, which proved difficult, protracted, and acrimonious, commenced in May 1946 and concluded on November 21, 1946, with the final unification agreement between the KKE and the NOF. The first meeting took place in May, in Salonica. The KKE was represented by Zachariadis, General Markos, the commander of the DSE, and Stringos; the NOF was represented by Mitrovski. In a report written about six months later; on September 13, 1946, Mitrovski claimed that they had reached complete agreement. "We did not leave a single issue unresolved or in the dark:"[83]

As far as I know, this agreement was never formally renounced or; for that matter; publicly endorsed by Zachariadis. However; in the talks on its implementation, held during the summer between representatives of the NOF and district and regional party leaders in Macedonia, the Greeks repudiated the two most critical demands of the Macedonians: Macedonian military detachments and the co-option of NOF cadres. Instead, they insisted on forming a single, integrated army and on leaving the selection of leadership cadres, both political and military, to the KKE.[84] The talks remained deadlocked; by early autumn 1946 the communists pondered the use of force against the NOF and the NOF for its part, threatened to respond with force. As Keramitciev told Stratos Kentros: "If you attempt to impose [upon us] your views by military means, we will defend ours by military means as well. As a representative of the NOF I declare that we will consider as enemy action every measure that aims at the dissolution of the Macedonian units and the NOF [and] we will take steps against it." [85] In a lengthy evaluation of the talks, Mitrovski blamed the regional leadership of the KKE for the difficulties. He accused them of showing a total disrespect toward the NOF trying to replace its leadership apparatus with their own people, and seeking "not the strengthening but rather the undermining of the NOF; and, possibly, its de facto dissolution in the future as in the case of the old SNOF." [86] On the other hand, Keramitciev, who was personally involved in these discussions, questioned the honesty and sincerity of the top leaders of the KKE, including Zachariadis.[87]

The details of what followed are not entirely clear. It appears, however; that the KKE turned to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) for assistance to break the impasse. G. Ioanidis held talks in Belgrade with Ivan Karaivanov, and they reached an agreement in principle on October 14, 1946. Mitrovski and General Markos settled the remaining outstanding issues and concluded the final unification agreement between the KKE and the NOF.[88] Among its main provisions were the following: the Macedonian party organizations in Aegean Macedonia would be absorbed by the KKE; the organization NOF including the Macedonian women's front (AFZ), would come under the control and leadership of the KKE; the NOF, however; would retain its own Central Leadership (CL), which, among others, would include Mitrovski and Keramitciev and would be responsible to the regional committee of the KKE for Macedonia and Thrace. In addition, Mitrovski would be co-opted into its bureau and Urdov, another member of the NOF's leadership, into its plenum. The regional committee was then to appoint other Macedonian cadres to party functions. The NOMS would be absorbed by the United Pan-Hellenic Organization of Youth (Eniea Panelladiki Organosi Neon, or EPON); Mincho Fotev, its leader; would join the regional committee for Macedonia and Thrace; the partisan army would have full organizational, political, and operational unity; separate Macedonian units would not be formed; and Urdov would join the headquarters of the DSE for Macedonia and Thrace. Finally, all political and military appointments and promotions would be made by the KKB on the basis of merit.[89]

The accord was a compromise; it did not satisfy fully either the KKE or the NOF. Under pressure, probably from the Yugoslav Communist Party, the NOF had to abandon its demand for separate Macedonian units in the DSE and to leave appointments and promotions in the hands of the KKE.[90] However; the KKE was compelled to make some concessions as well. It wanted to decapitate the NOF, to do away with its Central Leadership, and to bring the district and local organizations, as token instruments for the mobilization of the Macedonians, under direct party control. In the end, it had to accept the right of the NOF to retain its own Central Leadership, which meant its de facto recognition as the highest organ of the Macedonians in Greece.[91] As I already suggested, the two sides did not conclude the agreement because they trusted each other but, rather; because they needed and depended on each other for the realization of their respective and not entirely compatible ends—namely, seizure of power for the KKE and national liberation for the

NOF. Although the NOF was no longer voicing it openly, the KKE suspected that its real aim remained self-determination leading to the unification of Aegean Macedonia, or at least of those areas inhabited predominantly by Macedonians, with the People's Republic of Macedonia (PRM). On the one hand, therefore, the KKE distrusted the leadership of the NOF. On the other hand, past practical experience had taught the leaders of the NOF to question the KKE's Macedonian program and, above all, the sincerity of its leadership.[92] On the basis of the available evidence it is difficult to determine exactly how each side hoped to tackle the challenge posed by the other after the common struggle. However, it would appear that the NOF leaders placed their hopes in the support of Yugoslavia, while the KKE hoped to neutralize the NOF as a factor in future relations with Yugoslavia.[93] Thus, control of the organizational apparatus of the NOF and particularly of its Central Leadership, became of vital importance to the Greek Communist Party.

IV

In public and propaganda pronouncements the KKE and the NOF stressed the cooperation, brotherhood, and unity of the Greeks and Macedonians in their common struggle.[94] In reality, however, the conclusion of the unification accord did little, if anything, to bridge the gap that divided them. Only half a year later Atanasios Tzogas, secretary of the district committee of the KKE in Kastoria, warned Todoros Evtimiadis, his counterpart in Florina, that "those friends"-or really "traitors"-who are autonomists in orientation" comprise a dangerous antiparty element and could create many problems and do damage "to us if we are not vigilant." "They are playing before our own eyes a double, suspicious, conniving game. Make sure that you limit their influence in the army so that they will not corrupt the good young men." [95] Such feelings were not uncommon within the KKE and DSE, and the Macedonians were aware of them. In a report to the Central Leadership of the NOF Mitrovski maintained that cooperation would be difficult in practice due to "the chauvinism of some Greek comrades who have been appointed by the party to lead the Macedonian provinces. .. [and] who suffer from a chronic suspicion of Macedonian cadres and leaders." This was clearly reflected "in the systematic exclusion of Macedonians from responsible and decision-making positions:' He singled out for special criticism Panos Kapetanios, the representative of the headquarters of the DSE in central Macedonia, Statis (Janis Koriofilis), the commander of

the DSE on Mt. Paikos (Pajak), and Tzogas. He called for the removal of such leaders from responsible positions in the Macedonian populated areas; otherwise the party would not win the unqualified support of the NOF and the Macedonians.[96] Lazo Poplazarov, secretary of the district NOF organization in Edesa, complained that Greek cadres showed no appreciation or respect for the Macedonians and this was affecting their fighting morale.[97] Vangel Shamardanov, a commissar of a battalion on Mt. Paikos, voiced similar sentiments and warned: "After two years of struggle. .. and under the leadership of the NOF the Macedonians have matured ideologically and nationally and view the situation differently.... They demand that their cadres be promoted in the DSE; they want to see Slav Macedonians in the leadership and this is not occurring today to the extent that it should be. .. Chauvinism exists within the Greek element in its relation to our people:." He pointed out that flagrant discrimination was directed particularly at Macedonians belonging to the NOF and those who maintained contacts with Yugoslav Macedonia.[98]

The unsettled state of KKE-NOF relations was a major issue discussed at a party meeting that included leaders of the NOF and was held on October 24, 1947, at the headquarters of the DSE for western and central Macedonia. Both representatives of the Politbureau, Stringos and Toanidis, praised the mass participation of the Macedonians in the struggle and condemned all attempts to belittle their significant contribution. And, in a rather condescending manner; Stringos added: "We have to raise more cadres from among them. They are a bit backward; [we] must help them." [99] However; they as well as the other KKE speakers ignored the NOF in their remarks. Speaking on behalf of the NOF Keramitciev reminded the gathering that 85 percent of the Macedonians sided with "the democratic movement"-that is, actually supported the Left-and he credited his organization with this success. Then he leveled a series of charges at the KKE: supporting the Grkomani, as the Macedonians derisively called the Greekophile or assimilated Macedonians; harboring within its ranks anti-NOF elements; discriminating against Macedonians in general and NOF cadres and activists in particular; neglecting the NOF in the administration of the liberated territories, which were inhabited mostly by Macedonians; ignoring the contribution and heroism of the Macedonians and the NOF in party and DSE propaganda; and, most important, failing to appoint a single Macedonian to the headquarters of Vich (Vitsi), Kajmackalan, and Paikos, an area that contributed more than six thousand Macedonian

partisans. [100] In a private meeting in the evening, which also included Stringos and Generals Markos and Petris, Ioanidis warned Mitrovski, Keramitciev, and Vera Nikolova in no uncertain terms of their duties and obligations: "The NOF is not solely yours. First and foremost you have to be communists and only afterward patriots. That is the way you must approach the question of the Grkomani.... You must remember that you are members of the KKE. [He repeated this three times.] Only the KKE is here. No one else." [101] In his report on the meeting, written a week later on October 31, Keramitciev drew the attention of the NOF leaders to the anti-NOF attitudes of leading Greek cadres. He warned that they aimed to destroy the influence of the NOF and the attraction-political, national, cultural-of the People's Republic of Macedonia and Tito's Yugoslavia among the Macedonians by bringing them under the direct authority of the EAM. They sought to achieve this by resorting to "divide et impera" playing some leaders of the NOF against others and favoring Macedonians who had never joined the NOF, had not worked for it, or had remained loyal all along only to the KKE. Only such Macedonians, he concluded, enjoyed the confidence and trust of the KKE and were appointed and promoted to higher positions. [102]

The KKE could not disband the NOF as it did the SNOF in 1944; it needed a Macedonian organization to hold and to continue to mobilize Macedonians for the struggle. However; it did want to transform the NOF into an obedient, token instrument by replacing its Macedonian national leadership with Macedonians who were first and foremost disciplined and loyal members of the KKE.[103] It took the first major step in that direction during the First Congress of the NOF, which met on January 13, 1948, in Vambel (Moskohori), a picturesque Macedonian village in the vicinity of the Albanian frontier. It was attended by five hundred delegates, including a powerful representation of the KKE and DSE. It celebrated the decisive contribution of the Macedonians, led by the NOF, to the struggle and praised the unbreakable unity and brotherhood of the Greek and Macedonian peoples. Most important, it called on the NOF and the Macedonians to make even greater sacrifices. Although this was not stated, the KKE and DSE could no longer rely on any aid, in material or manpower; from areas under the control of the Athens government. They had become almost totally dependent on the relatively small, mainly Macedonian populated areas they held in central and western Macedonia.[104]

The festive atmosphere, however; was noticeably absent behind the scenes where Ioanidis, the head of the KKE delegation, demanded changes in the leadership of the NOF. In the name of the party he dictated and coerced the Central Council of the NOF to accept new members. They included Stavros Kochopoulos, Tashos Goshopoulos-Maki, and Mihalis Malios, Macedonian loyalists of the KKE, who until then had refused to join the NOF; indeed, they had worked against it. Furthermore, against strong opposition Ioanidis forced the council to place them on its Executive Committee and to drop from it-for insubordination to the KKE-two veterans of the NOF, Vangel Ajanovski-Oche and Lambro Colakov. Among the top leaders of the NOF only Mitrovski, the highest-ranking member of the party, defended Ioanidis's interventions.[105] Mitrovski's stand cannot be adequately explained on the basis of the available evidence, but it did complete a growing estrangement between him and the other top leaders of the NOF headed by Keramitciev. They had long considered him an able and clever person but also an arrogant, vain, opportunistic, ambitious careerist-in short, "a Machiavellian." [106]

In any event, the divided leadership opened the door to further interventions and manipulations of the NOF by the KKE. Indeed, the KKE used this quarrel as a convenient pretext to impose its will on the organization. The dispute was now taken to the Politbureau of the party and was considered at a meeting in the headquarters of the DSE on February 20-21, 1948, where Mitrovski and Vera Nikolova, the leader of the Macedonian women's organization (AFZ), hurled criticisms at each other; Nikolova accused the former of being selfish, ambitious, and distrustful of the other veteran leaders and of monopolizing the leadership. Mitrovski denounced Nikolova and his other opponents and accused them of harboring antiparty views and forming an antiparty faction. General Markos and Vasilis Bartziotas, the Political Commissar of the General Headquarters of the DSE, listened, made some sarcastic observations, and proposed a meeting of the NOF cadres to clear up the situation.[107] That meeting, which brought together the entire Executive Committee of the NOF and some other Macedonian cadres and was chaired by Bartziotas, took place on March 27, 1948. Bartziotas listened once again to insults being exchanged by Mitrovski, on the one hand, and his opponents, led by Keramitciev, on the other. Then, like a schoolmaster scolding misbehaving pupils, Bartziotas told them that in order to resolve the leadership problem in the NOF they must all behave like communists. Only the party could judge who was right and who was

wrong and the party would do so at the appropriate time. For the time being, he asked each of them to submit to the party (meaning himself) within five days a written statement of their individual views on their party colleagues. "The Party must know all the problems. The Party is the greatest judge." [108] He then called for the formation of a party cell in the leadership of the NOF Mitrovski proposed Kochopoulos as its leader, and his opponents proposed Keramitciev. Bartziotas endorsed the former and Kochopoulos became the secretary of the party cell.[109] The following month, April 1948, the KKE administered another crippling blow to the veteran leadership of the NOF. it ordered the mobilization of its entire professional corps from top to bottom, with the exception of Mitrovski, Kochopoulos, and Keramitciev, who were members of the reorganized secretariat of the Central Council. The explanation offered—that those mobilized were needed in the DSE—was not convincing; by mobilizing the one hundred to one hundred fifty leading NOF activists, the very individuals who had done so much for the mass participation of the Macedonians in the struggle, the KKE could hardly alleviate the complex manpower shortages of the DSE. In any case, the army did not even utilize their expertise properly, since in most instances they were assigned to inferior and meaningless positions and tasks.[110] However, it did achieve a long-standing aim: the elimination with one stroke of the veteran and, from the KKE's point of view, nationalist and unreliable, leadership of the NOF[111]

Under attack by the KKE and fearing for the future of the Macedonian liberation movement in Greece, in April 1948 a number of the best-known leaders of the NOF appealed to the Central Committee (CC) of the Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY) for help. Their letter was a strong indictment of the KKE for failing to fulfill the terms of the unification agreement. They complained that although there were thirteen thousand Macedonians in the DSE, more than one-third of the entire fighting force at the time, the Macedonians were not treated as equals and suffered discrimination everywhere. They had no representatives in the higher organs of the party or the army, the Provisional Democratic Government, the people's militia, or the administration of the liberated territories, and they had inadequate or merely token representation on the lower levels. Furthermore, although these grievances had been brought repeatedly to the attention of the KKE, nothing was being done and "the chronic disease continues to be tolerated" "We as a political organization actually do not participate in the resolution of these problems; and our proposals and views are not taken into account." By resorting to the

tactic of "divide and rule" by favoring a few Macedonians who all along had opposed the NOF, and by supporting Mitrovski, who, according to them, was motivated solely by his own personal ambitions and was universally distrusted by NOF cadres, the KKE had exacerbated the situation. The net result was a growing demoralization among the Macedonians and a weakening of their unity with the Greek people, which could not but harm the common struggle. In order to reverse the deteriorating situation, they demanded fair and equal treatment for the Macedonians in the democratic movement and its institutions; the termination of the tactics of "divide et impera" and favoritism; and the dismissal of "Comrade Paskal [Mitrovski], [who is] harmful to the whole organization and a stumbling block to the improvement of relations between us and the Greeks."[\[112\]](#)

It is not known whether or how the Yugoslavs responded to the letter. It seems clear; however; that the CPY, which in the autumn of 1946 pressured the NOF to compromise and conclude the unification accord, was in no position to intervene and help the NOF in the spring of 1948. Its historic dispute with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had already come into the open. It is possible, as Elisabeth Barker has indicated, that Belgrade's maximal Macedonian policy sought the unification of the Aegean part of Macedonia with the People's Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia.[\[113\]](#) But there is no evidence to suggest that Tito was at any time ready to risk the stability and security of his regime for the sake of Macedonian unification. In 1948, and particularly after its expulsion from the Cominform on June 28, 1948, isolated and threatened, Tito's Yugoslavia was preoccupied with its own survival. Macedonian unification was not a priority; the NOF and the Macedonians in Greece were left to their own devices. Although the KKE did not publicly declare its support for the Cominform Resolution immediately, it was clear from the outset that it would side with Stalin.[\[114\]](#) The Macedonian question became an integral part of the Cominform anti-Yugoslav campaign. The CPY's isolation and expected capitulation provided Zachariadis with a welcome opportunity to free the KKE from Tito's shadow and tutelage and finally bring the NOF and Macedonian nationalism in Greece under its unquestioned control.

The groundwork was laid by the Politbureau of the KKE, which met on July 10 and supposedly evaluated the work done by the NOF since its First Congress. At the time more than fourteen thousand Macedonians were fighting in the ranks of the DSE and the Macedonian villages were

providing most, if not all, the support for the critical battles on Grammos. After listening to a report by Mitrovski, the only representative of the NOF present, the meeting adopted a resolution criticizing the NOF and its leadership and, indirectly, the Macedonian contribution to the struggle.^[115] It condemned the leadership of the NOF for allegedly failing to fulfill the tasks set by the First Congress: recruitment, material assistance, transportation, and information for the DSE; popularization of the policies of the DSE and the people's administration; political, ideological, and organizational mobilization of the masses. It placed the blame for this situation on what it described as the unprincipled, factional, personal struggle for the leadership of the Macedonian people between Keramitciev and Mitrovski, which in turn split the NOF's leadership into two antagonistic groups.^[116] Consequently, the Politbureau called on the Central Council of the NOF to remove "the unreformable factionists" from the leadership and "to lead the NOF along the correct path indicated by the general line of the KKE and the decisions of the First Congress of the NOF."^[117] A month later, on August 8, the resolution was forced on the First Plenum of the Central Council of the NOF. It met in the village Bukovo (Oksia) in the Prespa region and was attended by thirty-two members and five candidates. As was usual by then, it was dominated by the presence of Ioanidis and Porfirogenis, the representatives of the party, who restricted the debate to the resolution of July 10. The tone of the meeting was set by the two main speakers, Mitrovski and Keramitciev. The former defended the KKE and sought to prove that his opponents in the NOF "pursued a nationalist policy ... ; their eyes were turned toward Skopje, and not toward Athens." The latter defended the NOF, accused the KKE of ignoring it, and pointed to the systemic slander and discrimination against its cadres on all levels. The other participants split into three groups: nineteen supported Keramitciev, six assumed a neutral stance, and six sided with Mitrovski. Then it was the turn of the KKE representatives. Without even touching on the issues raised in the discussion, Porfirogenis denounced Keramitciev and his allies. Ioanidis raised the principle of democratic centralism and demanded obedience and party discipline: "those who are turning toward Skopje are traitors; those who look to Athens are the true fighters." he declared. Then he read the resolution of July 10 and asked pointedly: "Who agrees with the Resolution of the CC of the KKE?" Four agreed, while "the others bowed their heads without uttering a word."^[118] The KKE also chose two new leaders for the NOF: Kochopulos became its chairman and Vangel Kojchev its secretary. No vote was taken and the meeting, which

lasted for about eight hours, came to a sudden end.[\[119\]](#) The KKE had triumphed. The NOF was now decapitated and, isolated from the influence of the People's Republic of Macedonia and Yugoslavia, under the KKE's total control.

V

However, this turned out to be no more than a Pyrrhic victory. As I already indicated, the Mitrovski-Keramitciev rift was not solely or even primarily "an unprincipled personal struggle." It symbolized the fundamental and irreconcilable division between the KKE and the NOF on the Macedonian question, which was, at the same time, a struggle for the minds and hearts of the Macedonians. Most veteran NOF leaders had participated in the armed struggle since the very beginning of World War II. Their names were well known in their native regions. They voiced the grievances and aspirations of the villagers and pointed a way out of their collective misery in a free Macedonia. In short, they were native sons, *nashi* (ours), and were accepted. They had won the trust and confidence of their people, a simple peasant population that was traditionally distrustful of all outsiders, particularly Greeks.[\[120\]](#) They had done more than anyone else to draw the Macedonians away from the embrace of the occupation authorities and to the side of EAM-ELAS and to mobilize, organize, and inspire them for the KKE and the DSE. In fact, they constituted the link-or, to use a Leninist term, the *smychka*-between the Macedonian peasants and the Greek Left. By removing, isolating, and silencing them, the KKE was in effect cutting off this link and undermining the support it had hitherto enjoyed in the NOF and among the Macedonians in general.[\[121\]](#)

After the First Plenum of the NOF, Mitrovski and other Macedonian loyalists of the party cited virtually the same Macedonian grievances and "incorrect attitudes of the KKE as those repeatedly voiced in the past by the "discredited" NOF veterans in an attempt to draw the attention of the Greek leaders to the disillusionment, declining morale, and mounting desertions and flight into the Macedonian Republic. As Giorgi Petrichevski, an NOF activist in the Edesa region, wrote to Bartziotas: "Distrust is growing among the people and is reflected in the widespread rumor and conviction [that] they [the Greek communists] have deceived us again." [\[122\]](#) In order to stop and reverse this alarming trend, at a time when the most acute problem faced by the DSE was finding new reserves, Zachariadis decided to take personal charge of the entire

Macedonian problem. He initiated a series of moves carefully calculated to placate the Macedonians. In a high-level meeting with ranking Macedonians from the NOF, DSE, and KKE on October 4-5, 1948, he acknowledged that the suspended leaders of the NOF were not solely to blame for its "abnormal" internal situation. He pointed an accusing finger at Stringos and Porfirogenis, who directed the KKE's Macedonian policy but had "proved incapable in their handling of the Macedonian question." He even admitted that the leadership of the party bore some of the responsibility: it was harmful that the Macedonians were not represented in the Provisional Democratic Government, the headquarters of the DSE, and the Directorate for National Minorities. He promised to correct these injustices and, indeed, to form Macedonian units in the DSE. In another paradoxical move, Zachariadis dispatched the suspended veteran NOF leaders Dimovski-Goce, Keramitciev, and Ajanovski-Oce to recruit and organize units from among the large Aegean emigration in the People's Republic of Macedonia; Poplazarov was sent on a similar mission in Albania.[123] Two months later, in December 1948, in a letter published in *Dimokratikos Stratos*, the organ of the headquarters of the DSE, he ordered the elimination of discriminatory practices against Macedonians in the army. More important still, he indicated that the party's stand on the Macedonian question would change.[124] The new line-which replaced the slogan calling for "equality of the Macedonian minority within the Greek state" and was approved by the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE on January 30-31, 1949-endorsed the right of the Macedonians to self-determination and statehood.[125] Three days later; the Second Plenum of the NOF, which was observed and addressed personally by Zachariadis, resolved to call a congress of the NOF during March to proclaim officially the new platform on the Macedonian question: it would call for "unification of Macedonia into a single, independent, equal Macedonian state in a people's democratic federation of Balkan peoples." It also decided to expand the membership of the secretariat to five by reappointing Mitrovski and adding Pavle Rakovski.[126]

The Second Congress of the NOF, which was totally controlled by the KKE, met on March 25-26, 1949, in the village Levkonas (Popli), in the Prespa region.[127] In an atmosphere that was noticeably less festive than that of the First Congress a year earlier; it declared itself the "organizer of victory" and called for the fighting unity of the Macedonians as well as of the Macedonian and the Greek people, and organizational and ideological unity within the NOF. It condemned all

manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism and denounced as traitors both the leaders of the NOF, who rejected the dictates of the KKE, and Tito's Yugoslavia.[128] Most important, the congress proclaimed the right of the Macedonians to national self-determination-their right to determine their own government and social order.[129]

Immediately after the Congress, the KKE rushed to implement many of the promises that Zachariadis had made since the First Plenum of the NOF in August 1948. On March 27, 1949, 167 Macedonian communists met and in the presence of Zachariadis decided to form the Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia (Komunisticka organizacija na Egejska Makedonija, or KOEM). It was to become "the organizer and leader of the NOF"; but as "separate and independent party organizational and political unit [it] belonged to the KKE:"[130] The first conference of the KOEM was held on August 2, 1949, the anniversary of the Macedonian Ilinden uprising of 1903, but it did not survive much beyond that: its active existence came to an end shortly thereafter with the final defeat of the DSE in the second half of August 1949. [131] On April 1, the Executive Committee of the NOF chose its new leader; on the initiative of Zachariadis, Mitrovski again became its president. [132] It also decided to reestablish the NOMS as a separate Macedonian youth organization and this was done officially on May 6.[133] Two days later, with the reorganization of the Provisional Democratic Government, Mitrovski was also appointed minister and V. Kojchev, another member of the Executive Committee, was made a member of the reorganized Military Council of the DSE.[134] However, separate Macedonian units and a Macedonian division were not established.

The KKE inaugurated its new course of action on the Macedonian question gradually, after the expulsion of the CPY from the Cominform. Moreover; it was predicated on the clear recognition that Macedonian nationalism in Greece was a force to be reckoned with and to be harnessed. Taken at face value, the new course, especially the right to self-determination and the creation of a united Macedonia, mirrored the ideals and dreams not only of the SNOF and the NOF but also of Macedonian patriots and nationalists since the very birth of Macedonianism in the 1860s. In the context of the time, however, it was obvious that the KKE was motivated by expediency. The Greek Communist Party initiated the new program exclusively for purposes of short-term propaganda and tactical gains and as an integral part of the

Cominform campaign against Tito's Yugoslavia. As Bartziotas explained at the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee on October 9, 1949, by which time the KKE had no further use for it and was anxious to discard it, "Today the situation has changed and it is necessary for us to reexamine that policy again. Stalin teaches us that the national question should be subordinated to the more general interests of the revolution and [the policy on the national question] should change whenever it is required by wider interests of the party. We must do that now. We have to return to the slogan for national equality which was put forth by the Sixth Congress of the KKE [1935]." [135] The KKE had the following major aims: to deprive Tito and Yugoslavia of the initiative on the Macedonian question, which they had gained and enjoyed since 1943 when they promised the Macedonians equality and the status of a nation in the Yugoslav federation; to turn the Macedonians in all three parts of Macedonia, including the People's Republic of Macedonia, against Tito and the Yugoslav resolution of the Macedonian question; [136] to discredit the old guard of the NOF, who were pro-Yugoslav and considered the Macedonian Republic as "the Piedmont" of Macedonian unification, and force them back into the fold of the KKE; and, finally, to mobilize even greater numbers of Macedonians for the struggle. [137] In short, the KKE's new position called on the Macedonians to turn against and, indeed, destroy "the Piedmont" of Macedonian unification in return for a dubious promise of a united Macedonia in an even more uncertain future Balkan communist federation.

As an instrument in the Cominform's anti-Yugoslav campaign, the KKE's new course of action failed. Macedonians in Yugoslavia did not rise against Tito, and Yugoslavia survived the propaganda onslaught and all other pressure tactics engineered by Moscow. On the basis of the available evidence, which is far from complete, it would seem that it also failed to appease the Aegean Macedonians. It did not induce the old guard of the NOF, many of whom were in Yugoslav Macedonia, to return, nor did it convince Aegean refugees and deserters there to volunteer for service in the DSE. [138] At home the KKE's new Macedonian policy undoubtedly had a disturbing effect on the morale of the Greeks in the rebel army without enhancing that of the Macedonians. It only served to create new divisions and to heighten the already-existing demoralization and confusion. While passing through Skopje in April 1949, Rakovski and Nikolova had a late-night meeting with some of their former comrades in the leadership of the NOF. Rakovski told them, "The situation down there [in Greece] is not good; relations

between the NOF cadres and the Greeks as well as between the old and the new cadres of the NOF are not good." At the same gathering Nikolova confided to Ajanovski-Oce that everyone was frightened that "the KKE has again embarked on its policy of dividing the cadres of the NOF She said that there were three factions in the NOF-one adhering to Paskal [Mitrovski], one to Rakovski, and one to Kojchev-and that the KKE is again preparing something against the NOF"[139] Nonetheless, the Macedonians, who comprised well over half of the fighting strength of the DSE in mid-1949, fought to the end. But it seems that they really had no other option; the final battles on Mounts Vich and Grammos represented a fight for survival.[140] Desertion and flight into Yugoslav Macedonia was by then very risky and difficult; the DSE had sealed this only possible escape route long before Tito closed it from the other side. They were condemned to make a last stand in a doomed struggle.

There is no doubt that the Macedonians led by the NOF played an important role in the civil strife in Greece. Any serious attempt to understand that struggle, and especially the fortunes of the Left, both its early successes and its final defeat, cannot ignore them or their irreconcilable differences with the KKE. This is not to suggest that there were no other major factors. There were, for example, the failure of the communists to win wider support, especially in the urban centers; the Truman Doctrine; and the American intervention. However, the Macedonian question was of critical importance throughout. Without the KKE-NOF unification accord in November 1946, the KKE would hardly have been in a position to resort to an armed struggle. In addition, the irreconcilable differences with the national and pro-Yugoslav leadership of the NOF pushed the KKE in 1948 into Stalin's embrace against Tito, its sole major patron. Zachariadis turned the Macedonian question into an instrument of the Cominform's anti-Yugoslav campaign because he was convinced, as was Stalin, that Tito would be toppled from power. And with Yugoslavia humbled and under Soviet control, he would enjoy a free hand to deal with the NOF and the Macedonians in Greece. It is difficult otherwise to explain the KKE's new anti-Yugoslav course on the Macedonian question and its suddenly bold and, indeed, aggressive behavior toward the CPY after Yugoslavia's condemnation and expulsion from the Cominform. The new course amounted to no more than token and meaningless immediate concessions and a promise of an illusory and anti-Yugoslav long-term solution of the Macedonian question. It did very little to bridge the long-standing deep gulf of suspicion, distrust, and conflicting aims that divided the incompatible

allies, Greek communists and Macedonian nationalists.[141] In any event, Tito was not overthrown and the KKE's new course backfired; by the time it was officially approved, in early spring 1949, the incompatible allies were for all practical purposes already defeated.[142]

NOTES

1. Public Record Office (London), CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791. Broad (Caserta) to Cab-inet, October 15, 1945, Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), Salonica Bureau. "The Macedonian Autonomy Movement in North-West Greece: Its Setting and Recent History." p. 49. (All British documents cited are found in the Public Record Office [hereafter P.R.O.].) This long report (101 pages) contains some factual inaccuracies, but considering the time and the circumstances in which it was written it provides a most valuable and perceptive assessment of the Macedonian question in Greece. By KKM the authors of the report actually meant the NOF (the Macedonian National Liberation Front).

2. "Their [Slav-Macedonians'] relations with KKE are by no means clear: The bulk of them were interested primarily in autonomism rather than communism as such. Although they always tended to assume that the nationalist state [greater Macedonia] would also be communist, this did not necessarily reconcile the respective policies of the Slav-Macedonians and the KKE. KKE was still suspected by many Slav-Macedonians of having Greek nationalist leanings. Ibid., p.25. See also Stojan Kiselinovski, *Egejskiot del na Makedonija, 1913-1939* (Skopje, 1990), pp.135-36.

3. Naum Pejov, *Makedoncite i gragjanskata vojna vo Grcija* (Skopje, 1968), p.167.

4. Ibid., p. 170 and n. 7, pp.205-6; and Komisija za publikovanje na arhivska gragja, *Egejska Makedonija vo NOB: Dokumenti za uchestvoto no Makedonskiot narod od egejskiot del no Makedonija vo gragjanskata vojna vo Grcija (1944-49)*, 6 vols. (Skopje, 1971-83), 5, no. 108, p.200. (Hereafter cited as *EM*.) These volumes constitute the most valuable source on the participation of the Macedonians in the

Civil War. They contain important documents from the archives of both the KKE and NOF.

5. Risto Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front i drugite organizacii na Makedoncite od Egejska Makedonija, 1945-1949* (Skopje, 1985), p.176.

6. Risto Kirjazovski, ed., *KPG i makedonskoto nacionamo prashanje, 1918-1974* (Skopje, 1982), no.188, p.431. (Hereafter cited as *KPG*.) A valuable collection of KKE documents on the Macedonian question; some were published previously in *EM*.

7. C. M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* (London, 1976), p.262.

8. *EM*, 4, no.105, p.358.

9. *KPG*, no.181, p.418.

10. *Ibid.*, no. 188, p. 433.

11. *Ibid.*, no.197, pp.445-46; also in *EM*, 6, no.63, p.129.

12. Elisabeth Barker's brief chapter in a short survey of the Macedonian question since the 1890s, which appeared in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, still remains the only attempt to explain their role in the struggle (Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* [1950; reprint, Westport, Conn., 1980], pp.109-29). More recent writers refer to Barker but lack her desire to understand the essence of the Macedonians' involvement. Evangelos Kofos, in a frequently cited work that was published in English in Greece, presents an extreme Greek nationalist point of view. He cannot bring himself to call them what they called themselves, Macedonians, or even Slav Macedonians, as some Greek writers have called them. He denies the existence of a separate Macedonian consciousness and identity and refers to them as Slavophones, Slav-speaking Greeks, or "Slav Macedonians," while he calls the Macedonians across the border to the north Yugoslav and Bulgarian Macedonians, respectively. He dismisses the Macedonians who sided with the communists as "an alien conscious minority"; for him the NOF was "an essentially Yugoslav inspired organization," a blind or mindless instrument not only of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) but also of the KKE and, at times, of the Communist

Party of Bulgaria (Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* [Thessaloniki, 1964]). The works by Dominique Eudes, *The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949* (New York, 1972); Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War 1944-1949* (London, 1966); Woodhouse; Peter 3. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1989); and Haris Vlavianos, *Greece, 1941-1949: From Resistance to Civil War: The Strategy of the Greek Communist Party* (London, 1992) on the whole conveniently avoid the subject. They touch briefly and in a rather speculative manner on the international aspects of the Macedonian problem-or, more precisely, on the Macedonian question as a factor in the relations among the communist parties in the Balkans. Elisabeth Barker, John O. Iatrides, and Joze Pirjevec mention the Macedonians and NOF in passing in their contributions in Lars Baerentzen, John O. Iatrides, and Ole L. Smith, eds., *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War 1945-1949* (Copenhagen, 1987). Otherwise this work, as well as two other collections, John O. Iatrides, ed., *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (Hanover, N.H., 1981); and Marion Sarafis, ed., *Greece: From Resistance to Civil War* (Nottingham, 1980), ignore the Macedonians and the NOF altogether.

13. See Andrew Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia: A British Officer's Report, 1944;" *Slavonic and East European Review* (London) 69, no.2 (April 1991):286, "The British Foreign Office and Macedonian National Identity, 1918-1941;" *Slavic Review* (U.S.A.) 53, no.2 (Summer 1994): 376, and "Macedonism and Macedonian Nationalism on the Left," in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, ed. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven, Conn., 1995), pp. 238-39.

14. On the KKE and its attitudes to the Macedonian national question during the interwar years, see the documents in *KPG*, esp. nos. 3-6, pp.8-24, and nos. 54-56, pp. 159-67. See also Stojan Kiselinovski, *KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prashanje, 1918-1940* (Skopje, 1985); Eleltherios Stavridis, *Ta Paraskinia tou KKE: apo tis Idriseos tou mehri tou Simmoritopolemou* (Athens, 1953); Kofos, chap. 4, pp.66-94; Dimitrios G. Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Communist Party of Greece* (London, 1965), pp.54-73, 90-97

15. Josif Popovski, ed., *Makedonskoto prasanje na stranicite ad "Rizospostis" megju dvete vojni* (Skopje, 1982), pp.5-11; Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia," pp.286-87.

16. See John C. Loulis, *The Greek Communist Party, 1940-1944: Politics, Tactics, Organization* (London, 1982); Vlavianos; William H. McNeill, *The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath* (Philadelphia, 1947). For the literature in the Greek language, which is extensive, see the bibliographies in Loulis and Vlavianos.

17. Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), pp.53-54.

18. *KPG* (n. 6 above), nos. 57 and 58, pp.167-68.

19. According to official KKE information six thousand Macedonians served in the regular ELAS units and twenty thousand in its reserves. *Ibid.*, n. 310, p.328; *EM* (n. 4 above), 3, no.53, p.123.

20. The activities of the Axis-supported bands in Aegean Macedonia during the Second World War have not been adequately investigated. However, see the "Report on the Free Macedonia Movement in Area Florina, 1944," by Captain P. H. Evans, an agent and station commander of the Special Operations Executive in western Aegean Macedonia in 1943-44, in Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia" (Evans's report is given verbatim on pp.291-309). See also McNeill; Hristo Andonovski, *Makedoncite pod Grcija vo borbata protiv fashizmot* (Skopje, 1968), pp.91-III, 175-77; Vangel Ajanovski-Oce, *Egejski buri* (Skopje, 1975), pp.102-7, 122-28; Kofos, pp. 100-110.

21. *EM*, 2, no. 182, p.345. "As far as the Greek people is concerned, the Slav-Macedonian is disinclined to believe that this overlord race could ever be his friend. Even if friendly overtures were made he would regard them suspiciously, to see what lay behind. He sees himself being gradually edged out of his remaining possessions, and he resents it" (P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, p.49).

22. Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia," p.299.

23. *Ibid.*, p.302; *EM*, 2, no.182, pp.344-45. See also P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, pp.28-31, 34.

24. On the influence of the Macedonian national liberation movement in Yugoslavia on the Macedonians in Greece, see *EM*, 1, no. 112, pp.126-27, Macedonian Bureau of the KKE (Kondurelis) to Uzunovski, May24, 1944, and no.118, pp. 135-39, Hara-lambidis-Athanatos to Macedonian Bureau of the KKE, June 2, 1944; *KPG*, no. 73, pp. 199-200,

Andonopoulos to Macedonian Bureau of the KKE, May 30, 1944. See also National Archives (Washington, D.C.), RG 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 812, no. 868.00/4-1249, Cannon (Belgrade) to Secretary of State, April 12, 1949, App. A, pp. 19-20,23, App. B, pp.3-5, 11-13, 16-17 (all State Department documents cited here-after are found in the National Archives); and McNeill, pp. 217-21.

25. Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia" (n. 13 above), p.305.

26. On the aims of Macedonian nationalism during the Second World War, see the informative and illuminating discussions by Kiril Miljovski, "Motivite na revolucijata 1941-1944 godina vo Makedonija," *Istorija* (Skopje) 10, no.1 (1974): 19 ff.; and by Cvetko Uzunovski, "Vostanieto vo Makedonija," *Istorija* 10, no.2 (1974): 103 ff. On Aegean Macedonia, see also Andonovski.

27. For the conclusions and decisions of the meeting, see KPG, no.60, pp.171-72, and no.62, pp. 175~76. See also Svetozar Vukinanovic' [Tempo], *The Struggle for the Balkans*(London, 1990), pp.67-74.

28. See, e.g., the circular of the Macedonian Bureau of the KKE in KPG (n. 6 above), no.68, pp.18789, May 23, 1944.

29. Kiselinovski, *Egejskiot del na Makedonia* (n. 2 above), pp.129-33; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), p.53. See also P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, pp.55-56; and National Archives, RG 59, Dec, File 1945-49, Box 6804, 868.00/3-1149, Office Memorandum, March 11, 1949.

30. *EM* (n. 4 above), 2, no.182, pp.345-46, Lazarevski to Central Leadership (CL) of NOF, November 6, 1945; 6, no.152, pp.312-13, Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce to Central Committee (CC) of the KKE, June 2, 1949. On the "Lazo Trpovski" unit, see also Andonovski (n. 20 above), pp.85-86. On SNOF-SNOV, see Andonovski, chap. 5; Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia," pp.305-7, and n. 54, pp.306-7; Barker, *Macedonia* (n. 12 above), pp.109-12, 116, and *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War* (London, 1976), pp.195-203; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, pp.57-58, and *Makedonski nacionalni institucii va egejskiot del na Makedonija (1941-1961)*(Skopje, 1987), pp.21-33, 67-85; and P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, p.17. In actual fact two organizations were formed, the

SNOF in the region of Kastoria (Kostur) in October 1943 and the SOF in Florina (Lerin) in November. The aim was to establish one organization, an SNOF for the entire Macedonian population in Aegean Macedonia, with its own central leadership. A general conference was to decide its program, tactical questions, aims, and relations with EAM-ELAS. The KKE rejected these demands. See Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, p.58.

31. As Naum Pejov wrote to Giorgis Gianulis, commander of an ELAS unit on Vich (Vitsi): "we are struggling for people's power and the right of nations to self-determination" *EM*, 1, no.166, p. 133, May 31, 1944.

32. *Ibid.*, no.8, p.18, January 24, 1944; also in vol.2, no.6, pp. 15-22, March 12, 1945. See also vol.1, no.3, pp.7-8, and no.6, pp.10-11.

33. *Ibid.*, vol.2, no.6, p.19, Damovski to Politbureau (PB) of the KKE, March 12, 1945; vol.6, no.152, pp. 312-13, Dimovski-Goce and Keramitciev to CC of the KKE, June 2, 1949. See also National Archives, RG 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 4003, no. 760H.68/12-1845, MacVeagh (Athens) to Secretary of State, December 18, 1945, Enclosure 1; and PRO., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, pp. 32-34.

34. *EM*, 1, no.68, pp.227-29, Headquarters of Kostur-Lerin Battalion to CC of EAM and Headquarters of ELAS, October 1944, and no.182, p.250. See also Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia," pp.395-97; Andonovski, pp.156-64.

35. *EM*, 1, no.113, p.129, Pejov to Georgievski-Dejan, May 26, 1944; and vol.6, no. 152, p.312, Dimovski-Goce and Keramit6iev, June 2, 1949.

36. *Ibid.*, 2, no. 182, p.346, Lazarevski to CL of NOF November 6, 1945.

37. On the enthusiastic response of the Macedonians, see KPG, no, 88, pp.223-24; no.89, p.225; and no.93, p.233.

38. *EM*, 1, no.150, p. 196, Command of Battalion "Goce" to Headquarters of National Liberation Army of Macedonia, September 19, 1944; see also no.151, pp.198-99; and no.190, pp.270-71; Andonovski, pp.177-82; P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, pp.34-37.

39. *EM*, 2, no.6, p.20, Damovski to PB of the KKE, March 12, 1945.
40. *KPG* (a. 6 above), no.105, pp.248-SO, Zonatos to Dimovski-Goce, October 6, 1944, and n. 66; and no.108, p.254, Kondurelis to Stringos, October 8, 1944. See also nos. 116 and 117, pp.268-69; Andonovski (n. 20 above), pp.190-202; National Archives, RU 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 4003, no. 76011.68/12-1 845, MacVeagh (Athens) to Secretary of State, December 18, 1945, Enclosure 1, pp.2-3; PR.O., CAB 87/ 79, XC/AI 61791, pp. 34-42; and PRO., P0 371/43649, Leeper (Athens) to Foreign Office, December 11, 194.
41. M. Keramitciev, I. Dimovski-Goce, P. Mitrovski, V. Ajanovski-Oce, L. Poplazarov, P Rakovski, D. Urdov, etc.
42. *KPG*, no. 141, p. 32t, December 3, 1944.
43. See *EM* (n. 4 above), 1, no.172, p. 234, and 2, no.6, p.20; and *KPG*, no. 108, p. 254
44. *EM*, 1, no.168, pp. 225-27, and 2, no.6, pp.15-22. See also the indictment of the KKE and FAM-ELAS policies on the Macedonian question by Renos Mihaleas, a political commissar in ELAS: *EM*, 1, no.182, pp. 246-55, no. 191, pp. 27 1-79, and 2, no. 5, pp. 11-15. According to the 515, ELAS wanted to disband the Macedonian battalions because "with the German withdrawal from Greece in full swing the object for which the Slav-Macedonian units were formed had been achieved. As 'anti-fascists' became Greeks once more there came the realization that henceforth armed Slav-Macedonian units would be more trouble than they were worth" (PR.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, p. 41).
45. *EM*, 1, no.168, pp. 229-30, October 1944.
46. See Pejov (n. 3 above), pp.18-19, 22-23; Andonovski, pp. 210-1 5; Ajanovski-Oce (n. 20 above), pp.146-55; and Svetozar Vukmanovic'-Tempo, *How and Why the People's Liberation Struggle of Greece Met with Defeat* (1950; reprint, London, 1985); Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (a. 5 above), pp.67-74.
47. *EM*, 1, no.168, pp.230-31, Command of the Kostur-Lerin Battalion to CC of EAM and Headquarters of ELAS, October 1944.

48. Kirjazovski, *Makedonski nacionalni institucii* (n. 30 above), pp.88-90; Barker, *Macedonia* (n. 12 above), n. 5, pp.110-11.
49. Kirjazovski, *Makedonski nacionalni institucii*, pp.85-86; Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia" (n. 13 above), p.304 and n. 50.
50. Pejov, p. 110.
51. It issued a declaration on November 4, 1944; *EM*, 1, no.187, p.266.
52. It issued a declaration on November 12, 1944; *ibid.*, no.189, p.269. The identities of the two bodies are not entirely clear here.
53. Its members were G. Atanasov, M. Keramitchiev, P Mttrovski, T. Nikolov, N. Pejov, L. Poplazarov, C. Turundzov, P Rakovski, D. Urdov, N.Supurkov, Pejov, n. 4, p.204; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*. p. 103. See also PR.O., P0 371/48181, Maclean (Belgrade) to Sargent, February 1,1945; and PRO., P0371148184, Stevenson (Belgrade) to Bevin, August 14, 1945, Enclosure, App. B2.
54. *EM* (n. 4 above), 1, no.187, p.266; italics in the original.
55. *Ibid.*, no.189, p.269; italics in the original.
56. Pejov (n. 3 above), p.132; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n.5 above), pp.103-4; Ajanovski-Oche (n. 20 above), pp.155-67.
57. They also chose its Central Leadership (Glavno Rakovodstvo), which included Paskal Mitrovski, Secretary, and Mihailo Keramitchiev, Dzodzo Urdov, Atanas Koro-vesov, Pavle Rakovski, and Minco Fotev, and formed under its direction two affiliated bodies, the Anti-Fascist Women's Front, Anti-Fashisticki Front na Zenite (AFZ), and the National Liberation Youth Union, Narodno Osloboditelen Mladinski Sojuz (NOMS). Pejov, p.132; Kirjazovski, *Makedonski nacionalni institucii* pp.101-62, and *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, pp.106 ff.; see also Barker, *Macedonia*, pp. 118 ff.; Kofos (n. 12 above), pp. 170 ff.
58. *EM*, 5, no.9, p.19, Keramitchiev, Report to the First Congress of NOF, January 13, 1948; Pejov; p. 132.

59. Ajanovski-Oche, pp. 167-79; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, pp. 109-16; Pejov, pp.134-40.

60. In his speech to the first plenary meeting (Aktiv) of NOE on May 20, 1947, Keramitciev reported a membership of 6,331 in NOF, 5,509 in NOMS, and 4,509 in AFZ; that there were 220 organized villages; and that NOF "has influence and enjoys authority among 85% of the Macedonians." *EM*, 4, no.30, pp.162, 170. Already in December 1944 Captain Evans wrote that **'if a plebiscite were freely and fairly held, it is more likely than not that a free MACEDONIA would result.'** P.R.O., FO371143649, in Rossos, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia" (n. 13 above), p.308.

61. *EM*, 2, no.25, p.55.

62. *Ibid.*, no.151, p.306; also in *KPG* (n. 6 above), no.147, p.331.

63. *EM*, 2, no.60, pp. 110-11; italics in the original.

64. *Ibid.*, 3, no.1, p.3; see also 2, no.191, p.362. As the SIS report pointed out, "For the Slav-Macedonian in Greece the outlook does not appear bright. Meanwhile external propaganda paints him a rosy picture of life in an Autonomous Macedonia.... In his ill-informed state and resentful and bitter mood small wonder if the Slav-Macedonian is inclined to look north for his salvation." P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, p.50.

65. *EM* (n. 4 above) 6, no.152, p.313, Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce to CC of the KKE, June 2, 1949. In a letter to the local organizations in the Edesa region, Ajanovski-Oche, the regional secretary; wrote on November 18, 1945: "We will demand something more than equality. We will seek self-determination . . . ; we will develop the idea for our national unification" *EM*, 2, no.191, p.362.

66. *Ibid.*, vol.3, no.53, p.126. Another lead article on March 15, 1946, rejected the accusations of "autonomism" leveled at the NOF by both the Greek Right and the Left. However, it defended the right of the Macedonians to national unification: "The Macedonian people in Aegean Macedonia with full justice seek to unite with their mother-land (*matica*), with their Piedmont, Vardar Macedonia. We won that right with arms in hand. We fought together with the Greek people in the

ranks of ELAS against the despised occupier and thus we also fought for our national freedom" (no.80, p.190).

67. See Pejov (n. 3 above), pp.111-30; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), pp.77-93; McNeill (n. 16 above), pp. 158-81,219-21; Heinz Richter, *British intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War; February 1945 to August 1946* (London, 1985), p.151.

68. See the works cited in n. 67. However, see esp. the report of Keramitciev presented to the First Aktiv of NOF on May 20, 1947, giving detailed data and statistical evidence for the period from February 1945 to May 1947. *EM*, 4, no.30, pp.153-57; on the situation in the various regions see 2, nos. 13-19, 24, 31, 33, 36-37, 40, 44, and 53; on the Edesa region, between April 1945 and August 1947, see vol.4, no.61, pp. 250~51. See also National Archives, RG 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 6784, no.868.00/11-746, Vidnay (Salonica) to Secretary of State, November 7, 1946; P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, pp. 20-21,49-50; and PRO., FO371148184.

69. *KPG*, no.150, p.341.

70. By November 1946 when the KKE-NOF unification agreement was concluded there were 1,200 Macedonian partisans. *EM*, 6, no. 152, p.314, Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce to CC of the KKE, June 2, 1949; see also Pejov, pp.135-39; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, pp.134-44.

71. *EM*, 2, no.69, pp.121-23, Keramitciev, Report to Central Leadership (CL) of NOF, July 2, 1945; Pejov; pp.133, 141-43, 146. Atanas Mitrovski, an NOF activist in the Kastoria area, wrote in September 1945: "This is unbelievable: two parties that share the same aims to develop such hatred as some members of the KKE exhibit to-ward members of the NOF" (*EM*, 2, no.161, p.311).

72. *EM*, 2, no. 116, pp.222-23 Tanas Korovesov to CL of NOF, August 7, 1945; see also nos. 150 and 153, pp.291 and 298-300.

73. *KPG* (n. 6 above), no 146, pp.328-29, Proclamation of the Voden Committee of the KKE, August 9, 1945. On September 7, the regional representation of the NOF in Edesa reported: "The KKE and EAM are aiding the reaction by their open struggle and denunciations against our

organization NOF declaring that the organization NOF is komitaji (komitska), Bulgarofascist (Bugarofasistska)-kontracetnik (kontacetnicka)." *EM*, 2, no.143, pp.269-70. See also National Archives, RG 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 4003, no. 760H.68/12-1845, MacVeagh (Athens) to the Secretary of State, December 18,1945, Enclosure 1.

74. *EM*, 2, no.91, p.172.

75. *KPG*, no.144, p.325.

76. *EM* (n. 4 above), no. 116, p.222; also, no.115, p.215.

77. *KPG*, no.144, p.325, Proclamation of the Voden Committee of the KKE, June 28, 1945.

78. *EM*, 2, no.116, pp.222-23, Korovesov to CL of NOF, August 7, 1945. As the SIS report pointed out, 'At the moment then, the Slav-Macedonians see themselves back again under pre-war conditions. Even the one political improvement from their point of view, the strengthened position of KKE, has failed them" (P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/AI 61791, p.49).

79. *EM*, 2, no.234, pp.452-53; also in *KPG*, no.149, pp.336-39.

80. *KPG*, no. 151, p.347. On NOF's reaction to KKE's changing attitude see *EM*, 3, no.29, p.68, Political Report of Central Leadership (CL), January 23, 1946; and no. 77, pp.180-81, Report of CL, March 7,1946.

81. Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), p.152. On the Second Plenum see also Vasilis Bartziotas, *O Agonas tou Dimokratiku Stratu Elladas* (Athens, 1982), pp.27-30; Ole L. Smith, "The Problems of the Second Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE, 1946;" *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 12 (Summer 1985): 43-62; Richter (n. 67 above), pp.482-95.

82. Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, p.156; see also Stavrakis (n. 12 above), p. 109 and n. 167.

83. *EM*, 3, no.171, pp.380-83, Mitrovski, Report, September 13, 1946.

84. Ibid., pp.378-83; and *KPG* (n. 6 above), no.168, pp.397-400, Kentros to Saperas, October 14, 1946. See also *EM*, 3, no.162, pp.361-63; no.164, p.366; no.168, p.373.

85. *KPG*, no.168, p.400.

86. *EM* (n. 4 above), 3, no.171, p.381. Indeed, in order to silence the NOF once and for all, Kentros proposed to remove its best-known leaders, "to place them under our control so that we can contain them; otherwise we will always face the same situation." *KPG*, no.168, p.399

87. *EM*, 3, no.180, p.398, Keramitciev, Report to CL of NOF September 27, 1946.

88. Pejov (n. 3 above), p.148; Kiselinovski, *Egejskiot del na Makedonija* (n. 2 above), p.136 and n. 345; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, p.164. For an incomplete and not entirely clear account of the Markos-Mitrovski talks, see Mitrovski's report, *EM*, 4, no.28, pp.132-40, April 19, 1947.

89. I have not been able to gain access to a complete version or text of the accord. For extensive but at times differing summaries of the provisions of the accord, see *EM*, 6, no.152, pp.313-14, and n. 135, Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce to CC of the KKE, June 2, 1949; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, pp. 165-66; Kiselinovski, *Egejskiot del na Makedonija*, p.136, n. 345.

90. See the works cited in n. 88.

91. *EM*, 4, no.28, p.137, Mitrovski, Report, April 19, 1947.

92. Ibid., p.136. See also Pejov, pp. 147-50; Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), pp.166-68.

93. On the basis of the available evidence it is not possible to determine what promises, if any, Tito made to each side. It is conceivable, however, that he made none; thus, in a typically "Titoist" fashion, he preserved his freedom to decide his moves in the appropriate time in the future.

94. See, e.g., *EM*. 3, no.189, pp.418-20; no.195, pp.430-32; no.200, p.443; and vol.4, no.6, pp.32-34; no.29, p.144; and *KPG* (n. 6 above), no.171, pp.403-4, no. 177, p. 414.

95. *KPG*, no.178, pp.414-15, May 30, 1947; see also no.172, p.405; and no.174, p.409.

96. *EM* (n. 4 above), 4, no.28, pp.136-40, Mitrovski, Report, April 19,1947.

97. *Ibid.*, no.95, p.329, Poplazarov, Report, October 15, 1947.

98. *Ibid.*, no.51, p.223, Samardanov, Report, July 30, 1947.

99. *Ibid.*, no.105, p.355, Keramitciev, Report, October31, 1947.

100. *Ibid.*, pp.356-57

101. *Ibid.*, p.358

102. *Ibid.*, pp.349, 359

103. Pejov (n.3 above), p.156

104. Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), pp.209-10.

105. *EM*, 5, no.111, pp.205-6, Vangel Kojchev, Report, May 1, 1948.

106. For a characterization of Mitrovski, see *ibid.*, vol.3, no.139, pp.313-19, Rakovski, Report, June21, 1946; see also vol, 2, no.182, pp. 345-47, Lazarevski to Central Leadership of NOF, November 6,1945. It is not clear whether Mitrovski sided with the KKE because he belatedly embraced its line on the Macedonian question or because he wanted to enhance his political standing. Mitrovski, an attorney by profession, was among the best educated of the NOF leaders. Like the others, he became active in the KKE before World War II, but unlike most of them, he did not join the resistance movement until June 1943. He played a rather ambivalent role in the SNOF and was not one of the most trusted NOF leaders in Skopje or Belgrade. See *ibid.*, pp.345-47. All of the above weakened his position within the NOF and probably made him more dependent on the KKE.

107. *EM* (n. 4 above), 5, no.70, pp.125-28, Nikolova, Report, March 2, 1948.

108. *Ibid.*, no.91, pp.161-62, Nikolova, Report, March 28, 1948.

109. *Ibid.*, p.163. See also no.133, p.229, Mitrovski to Politbureau (PB) of the KKE, May 10,1948.

110. On the mobilization and the controversies that it provoked within the leadership of the NOF, see *ibid.*, no.94, pp.171-75; no.97, pp.182-83; no.100, pp.187-88; see also no.118, pp.213-14, Keramitciev, Report, May 4, 1948; and no.119, pp.217-18, Nikolova, Report, May 8, 1948.

111. See documents cited in n. 110; see also no.114, p.209, Nikolova, Report, May 1, 1948; and no.122, p.230, Mitrovski to PB of the KKE, May 10, 1948.

112. The letter was signed by Keramitciev, Nikolova, Rakovski, Ajanovski-Oce, and Dimovski-Goce. In a note they explained that "it would have been signed by almost all cadres of the NOF"; that was not done because "this matter is extremely delicate" (*ibid.*, no. 108, pp. 199-203, April1948).

113. Elisabeth Barker, "The Yugoslavs and the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949" in Baerentzen, Iatrides, and Smith, eds. (n. 12 above), p.302.

114. See, e.g., the report of Giorgi Manchov: *EM*, 5, no.146, pp.272-73, July 15, 1948. The Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee (CC) of the KKE convened on July 28; "the plenum decided to support the Cominform Resolution but not to circulate this decision publicly for fear of straining relations with the Yugoslavs" (Stavrakis [n. 12 above], p.173).

115. The Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee, which met at the end of the month (July 28-29), seems to have attempted to appease the Macedonians. It stressed "the extraordinary contribution of the Slav Macedonian people for the common cause of liberation. The participation of the Slav Macedonians in the liberation struggle is nationwide and total" (*EM*, 5, no.155, p.288, Plenum Resolution, July 29, 1948).

116. As I already pointed out, there was much more to the Keramitciev-Mitrovski struggle than "unprincipled" and "personal" rivalry. It centered on two fundamental issues: (1) whether the KKE fulfilled the terms of the unification agreement with the NOF (see Mitrovski's reports in *ibid.*, no.121, pp.224-26; no.122, pp.228-34; no.131, pp.244-47); and (2) whether the final aim of the Macedonian liberation movement should be "full equality within the Greek state" (KKE); or "the right to self-determination" leading to Macedonian unification (most of the founders of SNOF-NOF). See Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), p.223. For obvious reasons, the second issue, an extremely sensitive one, was not discussed openly by either side.

117. *EM* (n. 4 above), no.144, pp.266-68, Resolution of the PB of the KKE, July 10, 1948; also in *KPG* (n. 6 above), no.168, pp.425-26.

118. Almost a year later Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce explained their conduct in a letter to the Central Committee (CC) of the KKE. They argued that they did not oppose the resolution actively solely because it was forced on the NOF "in the most critical moments for the DSE, during the battles on Grammos; any opposition would have had as its consequence not only the break up [of the unity] of the NOF, the Macedonian people, and the Macedonian partisans; it also would have destroyed the DSE's defense of Grammos and that would have made it impossible to transform Vich into a second front; thus the monarchofascists would have captured it" (*EM*, 6, no.152, p.322, June 2, 1949).

119. *Ibid.*, vol.5, no.166, pp. 305-11, Dimovski-Goce and Ajanovski-Oce, Report on the First Plenum, August 10, 1948. For the Resolution of the First Plenum see no.164, pp.302-4, August 8, 1948. See also Pejov (n. 3 above), pp.159-60.

120. "Nevertheless, this background of the Slav-Macedonian mind must be held constantly in view - that fundamentally he will always feel himself a part of the national entity, however nebulous it may be, that he calls 'Macedonia" (P.R.O., CAB 87/79, XC/ A1 61791, p.57).

121. See, e.g., the report by Ajanovski-Oce, *EM*, 5, no.178, pp.327-34, September 25, 1948.

122. Ibid., no.201, p.376, December 16, 1948; see also no.185, pp.345-47, Mitrovski to Zachariadis, November 3, 1948; and no.196, pp.365-70, Velaki to Bartziotas, November 26, 1948.

123. Ibid., vol.6, no.152, pp.321-24, Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce to CC of the KKE, June 2, 1949. See also Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, pp.253-57.

124. *KPG* no.189, pp.435-36, and n. 423, p.435.

125. *EM*, 6, no, 15, pp.44-45, Resolution of the Fifth Plenum, January 31, 1949; also in *KPG*, no.191, p.438. The Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE had also resolved to appoint a Macedonian minister in the Provisional Democratic Government and a representative in the Military Council of the DSE; to establish a separate party organization of the Macedonians in Greece; and to form Macedonian units and a division in the DSE. Armed with these decisions a KKE-NOF delegation traveled to Skopje. Its main aim was to compel the authorities in Yugoslav Macedonia to close the border to deserters from the DSE, and to repatriate to Greece, if necessary by force, Aegean refugees and émigré's, including suspended former leaders of the NOF. The talks did not produce any agreement or result. They only revealed the unbridgeable gap that divided the pro-Cominform KKE and the CPY and its (the CPY's) allies, the national leaders of the NOF. On the meetings with the leaders of the Macedonian Republic (L. Kolisevski and C. Uzunovski), see the partial text of Porfirogenis's report, *EM* 6, no.23, pp.58-59 and no. 44-47; see also Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, pp. 280ff. On the talks with the suspended leaders of the NOF, see the detailed account by Keramitciev, Dimovski-Goce, and Ajanovski-Oce, *EM*, 6, no.26, pp.68-77, February 10, 1949. The DSE hoped to recruit five thousand Aegean Macedonians in Yugoslavia, which would have represented 50 percent of the planned recruitment for 1949. Ibid., no.26, p.76.

126. *EM*, 6, no. 19, pp.53-54, Report of the Executive Committee of the Central Council of NOF on the Second Plenum of NOF, February 3, 1949. For an excerpt of Zachariadis's speech to the plenum, see no. 20, pp.54-55. See also National Archives, RU 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 812, no.868.00/3-2349, Rankin (Athens) to Secretary of State, March 23, 1949; and P.R.O., FO371/78396, Crosthwaite (Athens) to FO, March 3, 1949.

127. Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), pp.286-87.

128. *EM* (n. 4 above), 6, no.75, pp.155-57, Declaration; and no.76, pp.158-68, Resolution of the Second Congress of NOF, March 26, 1949.

129. *Ibid.*, no.75, pp.155-57. This formulation differed from that approved by the Second Plenum of the NOF. The latter provoked a strong reaction in Greece, the West, and Yugoslavia. At home the KKE came under attack even from traditional allies on the Left. This forced the Zachariadis leadership to modify its new slogan or formula on the Macedonian question. See *EM*, 6, no.53, p. 118, March 7, 1949; and no.55, p.121, March 9, 1949. See also National Archives, RU 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 812, no. 868.00/3-2349, Rankin (Athens) to Secretary of State, March 23,1949, pp.4-6, and no.868.0014-1249, Cannon (Belgrade) to Secretary of State, April 12, 1949, App. A, p.58; and P.R.O., FO37 1/78399, Foreign Office Research Department, "The Greek Communist Party and Macedonia," May 19, 1949. It is not clear whether the KKE's new course on the Macedonian question originated at home, in Sofia, Moscow, or elsewhere. It is interesting to note, however, that on September 8, 1949, in a letter informing Stalin of the final defeat in the struggle, the KKE also felt obliged to inform him that "in the new situation our Party will have to return to the slogan [calling] for the equality of the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia" (*EM*, 6, no.206, p.434, PB of the CC of the KKE to the CC of the CPSU (b), for Comrade Stalin, September 8, 1949).

130. *EM*, 6, no.81, p.176, M. Maliov (Malios), Speech to the founding meeting of KOEM, March 27, 1949; see also no 80, p.172. In his speech Zachariadis declared, "You, Macedonian Communists, must look beyond the national liberation aims of the NOF. The aims that the NOF is fighting for will be attained. You will achieve your freedom. But what kind of society are we going to create? A bourgeois one? No. We will establish a people's republican socialist society. Consequently, we should not limit ourselves to the national strivings of the NOF" (*ibid.*, no.82, p.177).

131. On the First Conference of KOEM see *EM*, 6, nos. 183-86, pp.384-404.

132. See *ibid.*, no.88, pp.184-85.

133. *Ibid.*, no.89, p.185; and nos. 117-19, pp.247-50.

134. *Ibid.*, no.91, pp.188-92; and no.92, pp.192-93.

135. *Ibid.*, no.213, p.451, Bartziotas, Report, October 9, 1949; italics in the original. See also the exchange of telegrams between the Central Committee (CC) of the CPY and the CC of the KKE in early March 1949: no.44, pp. 105-6, no.49, p. 112, no.51, p.115; a letter from the CC of the CPY to the CC of the KKE, April 6, 1949: no.94, pp.197-202; and the long letter from Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce to the CC of the KKE, June 2, 1949: no.152, pp.311-31. A State Department officer wrote: "Since then [the Second Plenum of the NOF] the KKE seems to have foundered over the Macedonian issue because of its fear of alienating all Greek citizens of the non-Communist democratic left and center while it continued in its attempts to mislead the Slavo-Macedonians" (National Archives, RG 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 6804, no.868.00/ 3-1149, Office Memorandum, Howard to Jernegan, Barter, Cromie, March 11, 1949).

136. See n. 135. See also RG 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 812, no. 868.00/4-1249, Cannon, (Belgrade) to Secretary of State, April 12, 1949, pp.6, 12-13 and App. B, pp. 3-5, 11-13, 16-17; P.R.O., FO371178396, Mason (Sofia) to Foreign Office, March 14, 1949; and P.R.O., FO371/7833, Peake (Belgrade) to Bevin, June 29, 1949.

137. *EM*, 6, nos. 94, 152, 213. Compare *EM*, 6, esp. no.87, pp.183-84, an open letter from Keramitciev, Dimovski-Goce, Ajanovski-Oce to the leaders of the NOF of Aegean Macedonia, March 1949; and no.56, pp.121-22. In his report to the Sixth Plenum Bartziotas also explained that the new course was devised in order to "counter the destructive actions of the Titoist clique and its agents and to draw even more the Slav Macedonian people into the armed struggle-until victory" (no.213, pp.450-51).

138. See the long letter of the suspended leaders of the NOF, Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce, to the CC of the KKE, June 2, 1949, *EM* (n. 4 above), 6, no.152, pp. 311-31. See also National Archives, RG 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 812, no.868.00/4-1249, Cannon (Belgrade) to Secretary of State, April 12, 1949, pp.15-17 and App. B, p.21; and RR.O., FO371/7833, Peake (Belgrade) to Bevin, June 29, 1949.

139. *EM*, 6, no.112, pp.229-34, Ajanovski-Oce, Report on the meeting, April 1949. The meeting took place in the night of April 13-14; it was also attended by Keramitciev, Dimovski-Goce, and Vangelova.

140. Interviews with well over one hundred veterans of DSE in Salonica, Prague, Skopje, and Toronto. See also O'Ballance (n. 12 above), pp.179-202; Woodhouse (n. 7 above), pp.258-89.

141. See the letter from Keramitciev and Dimovski-Goce to the CC of the KKE, *EM*, 6, no. 152, pp.311-31, June 2, 1949.

142. After the capitulation of the DSE, the KKE condemned the Macedonian organizations NOF, AFZ, NOMS, and even KOEM as agencies of Tito's Yugoslavia, close collaborators with the "monarcho-fascists" and "imperialists," and blamed them for the defeat. On October 3, 1949, eleven Macedonian leaders, members of the KKE, including Mitrovski, were arrested as Tito's agents in Bureli, Albania. The Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE, held in Bureli, October 9, 1949, ordered the Politbureau to take the necessary steps for the dissolution of the Macedonian organizations. Although they had already ceased to function, the official decision to dissolve them was not taken until February 1951 in Poland. They were finally dissolved in April 1952. Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front* (n. 5 above), pp.311, 330; Pejov (n. 3 above), pp.159-60; and *EM*, 6, no.213, pp.450-51, Bartziotas, Report to the Sixth Plenum, October 9, 1949; and no.217 and n. 185, pp.458-59. After another Sixth Plenum, which met in March 1956 and dismissed Zachariadis and his close collaborators as part of the de-Stalinization drive, the KKE reversed its stand on the Macedonian organizations of the Civil War period. In May 1956 it officially rehabilitated them, declared them once again to be national liberationist movements, and credited them with the mass participation of the Macedonians in the struggle. Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot front*, p.331.

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