

**RULA -- A Macedonian Village**  
**and**  
**The Life Journey of Goche**

## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to all those Macedonian men and women who fought and continue fight for the dignity of the Macedonian people, its language, history and culture.

The book is also lovingly dedicated to my four amazing grandchildren:

George Mclsaac  
Kalina Fitzgerald  
Charles Mclsaac  
Atteo Fitzgerald

***You are the wind beneath Dedo's wings!***

## **PREFACE**

Rula was once a thriving and prosperous village. At its heyday, it could boast 700 inhabitants. At the time of writing, less than 10 persons remain. It is a mere shadow and shell of its former glory and beauty. One day, it might become totally uninhabited. By reading this manuscript, I hope the reader gets a sense of the beautiful memories and daunting challenges that we Ruleni faced.

I hope that by writing this manuscript, that my beloved village of Rula will never be forgotten. Although I hope this document is eventually read and enjoyed by many, I especially wanted leave this behind for my two wonderful daughters, son-in-laws and four beautiful grandchildren. It was important to me that they understand a little more about who I was and the joys and challenges I faced in my life. Writing this manuscript has been a labour of love. Obviously, I have focused a good deal of my writings on my own life experiences and those of my family. Those are the experiences I know best. However, each and every family in Rula would have their own fascinating stories to tell. This is my story, the story of Goche Nichov.

## **PART 1**

### **HISTORY OF THE LAND CALLED "MACEDONIA"**

#### **The Kingdom of Philip II and Alexander Macedon the Great**

The land called Macedonia, the homeland of the Macedonian people, is the land of the Kingdom of Philip II and Alexander Macedon (The Great). The Macedonian Kingdom under Alexander (2,350 years ago) created the Macedonian Empire by conquering a region the size of Australia. Alexander emerged from a somewhat backward Macedonian nation to claim much of Greece and the Near East and Asia as far as India as his own. Alexander Macedon has exercised a secure hold on the human imagination. The permanent result of his life was not the Empire which he won by hard fighting, but the development of the Greek civilization (Hellenization) which affected large parts of both the Eastern and the Western world. Greek culture and philosophy influenced societies and countries far from Greece. It is in this way that his influence has affected the history of mankind even down to our present era.

After Alexander's death (323 BC), his Generals divided his Empire up amongst themselves—Egypt to Ptolemies; Asia Minor and the old Persian Empire to Seleucids; and Macedon and Greece to Antipater. Each Kingdom, in turn, fell to Rome whose conquest of Cleopatra's Egypt in 30 B.C. is often taken as marking the end of his Empire and the Hellenistic Age. Intellectual vigour had passed from Athens to Alexandria where poets, philosophers and scientists vied with each other in upholding the traditions of Classical Greece.

Seleucus I Nicator, founder of the Seleucid Dynasty, received the province of Babylonia after Alexander's death. He founded the Dynasty in Babylon and starting in 312 B.C., Seleucus I Nicator extended his rule through Syria and Mesopotamia and eastwards into India. He brought Greek and Macedonian settlers into his realm and founded many cities. At one time, the Seleucids controlled most of the old Persian Empire but by 63 B.C. when the Dynasty ended, they had control only in Syria.

After Antipater, the rulers of Macedon, Antigonos and his son Demetrius, built a Navy to command the Aegean and dominate Macedon and Greece (316 B.C.). The Antigonid Dynasty ruled Macedon until 167 B.C.

In 223 B.C., Antiochus the Great of the Seleucids Dynasty together with Philip of Macedon, arranged a secret agreement to divide the child King Ptolemy's outlying Provinces between the two of them. Southern Syria and Cyprus were to go to Antiochus, and Cyrene and the Greek Aegean dependencies to Philip. When Philip attempted to lay hands on his share, he realized that he had unwittingly stirred up a hornet's nest. The Roman envoys appeared at his headquarters with a commanding order: "Hands off the States of Greece!" King Philip of Macedon, impressed by Hannibal's successes, entered into alliance with him in 210 B.C. against Rome. Their understanding was that in return, Hannibal should later help Philip to complete the reduction of Greece. However, the troops Philip promised to send never crossed the Atlantic. The alliance with Hannibal agitated Rome.

The Scipio (Africanus) at the height of his power in the Roman Republic was keenly interested not merely in the literature of Greece but also in its political institutions. He felt that a blow on Macedon would save Greece from extinction. Envoys from the threatened Greek States appeared before the Roman Senate for help against Macedon. In the second Macedonian War between Rome and Macedon, assisted at first by Athens, Rhodes and Pergamum (and joined eventually by the Aetolian and Achaean Leagues), the Romans beat back the Macedonian Army out of Thessaly. In the following year, they defeated it completely. Philip capitulated and agreed to pay a large indemnity and abandon all possessions outside of Macedon.

### **Macedonia as a Roman Province**

Upon Philip's death in 179 B.C., the throne of Macedon passed to his son Perseus, a notorious enemy of Rome. He at once began to build his Army and to draw some northern tribes into alliance in violation of the Treaty stipulations with Rome. In 172 B.C., Rome declared war on Macedon. The Roman General Aemilius Paullus, an ardent Hellenist, won a complete victory over the Macedonian Phalanx. Perseus was taken prisoner to Rome. Macedon was divided into four separate States and the Monarchy was abolished. In 149 B.C., an adventurer called Andronicus claimed himself to be the natural son of Perseus

and a claimant to the throne. With the help of the Thracian tribes, he annihilated a Roman detachment. In 148 B.C., Rome sent an expedition to stamp out the insurrection in Macedon. Macedon was now made into a Roman Province and garrisoned by Roman troops. Macedon which was located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia became little more than a transit zone for west-east Roman military and economic movements. The Macedonian population from this time onwards remained rural and under occupation except during the Macedonian Tsar Samoil's reign. They worked the land divided among free small holdings and on large estates owned by magnates (chiflik).

### **Macedonia as Part of the Roman Eastern Empire (The Byzantine Empire)**

In 326 A.D., the Roman Emperor Constantine decided to transfer the Imperial Capital from Italy to the shores of the Bosphorus in the new city of Constantinople. The de facto division of the Roman Empire into Western (Roman Holy/Germanic) and Eastern (Byzantine) became permanent. Christianity in both the Western and the Eastern Empires became a State religion. By emphasizing the Divine right of Emperors or Kings, the Church became an instrument which would strengthen the Rule of the Imperial Monarch. The Church now became the sovereign power in the State. Hence, this laid the foundations of a new form of society in which the authority of Kings and Princes was held to be derived not merely from God but from God's representative on Earth--the Pope in Rome and the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople. It was not until the separation of the Church and State in the Modern Era that the Church lost its direct influence on political events. In 610, Roman Eastern Emperor Heraclius reorganized the Orthodox Church and replaced the Latin with Greek as the official State Administrative, Military and Church liturgy language. The Imperial title of Augustus was replaced with Vasilios.

### **The Bulgars in the Macedonian Lands--Cyril and Methodius and the Establishment of the Ohrid Patriarchate**

During the 5<sup>th</sup> century, elements of the Huns migrated to the steppes of southern Russia and mixed with related Turkic tribes and Slavic ethnic groups to become the Bulgars. The Treaty of 681 with Byzantium granted the Bulgars territories south of the Danube and north of the Balkan mountains. The Danube Bulgars established the first Bulgarian Kingdom under their Khan, Asparukh. From their capital at Pliska, the Bulgar rulers controlled the Macedonian Slavic inhabitants of

their newly acquired lands. In 808, Krum emerged as the Bulgar ruler and after conducting all out warfare against the Byzantium for control of the Balkans, he expanded the Bulgar territories in the central and eastern Balkans including the Byzantine city of Sofia.

Krum's successor, Boris, consolidated Bulgaria's gains by pushing his borders westward into Croatian, Serb and Macedonian territories, many of which came under direct Bulgar control. Boris also established Ohrid as an important Bulgar administrative centre in Macedonia and he expanded his control over western Thrace in the south until an outlet was opened on the Aegean Sea. Boris initiated the conversion of his mixed Turkic and Slavic subjects to Orthodox Christianity (865). The conversion to Christianity resulted in the creation of a written form of the Slavic language--the Cyrillic Alphabet. Greek liturgical texts in Boris' Bulgaria were translated into Slavic using the new alphabet and the Bulgarian clergy were trained in Cyrillic.

Bulgarian military power forced Byzantium to recognize the Bulgarian Church's autonomy and a Patriarchate was established in Ohrid. It was still considered subordinate to the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople.

During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Michael III (842-867), Salonica had established itself as the religious centre of the Empire. The Macedonian brothers, Cyril and Methodius who were natives of Salonica, were destined to introduce Christianity to the Northeast Slavs (Kiev and Russia) and Northwest Slavs (Moravia) by establishing the Cyrillic alphabet. This alphabet was expressly devised for the writing of Slavic. After the unsuccessful Byzantine mission to spread the Orthodoxy to Great Moravia, Cyril and Methodius found refuge in Bulgaria following their expulsion by the Germans. The most famous students of the disciples Cyril and Methodius were Clement of Ohrid and Naum. Clement of Ohrid (886-893) was instrumental in founding the Ohrid Literary School and in the development of the first University in the Balkans. Naum, like Clement, was also an important contributor to the development of the Macedonian language and culture.

During Tsar Simeon's reign (893-927), Bulgaria encompassed virtually all of the Balkan Peninsula with the exception of Croatia, Salonica and the Thracian environs of Constantinople. Ethnic Bulgar numbers and pagan religious practices

declined over time and the Christian Slavic speakers dominated the society. Peasants constituted the majority of the population and the dualistic Christian Bogomil heresy began to grow. With the help of the rising State of Kiev and Russia, Byzantium was able to eventually crush the Bulgarians. The Ohrid Patriarchate was abolished and the Bulgarian State dismembered. Only the Macedonian regions of the Empire remained virtually independent and ruled by Tsar Samoil from Prespa's Island of Ahil

### **The Macedonian Kingdom of Tsar Samoil**

By 988, the Macedonian Tsar Samoil (976-1014) alone ruled over Macedonia. By 971, with help from the Bogomil heretics, he was able to expand his control over all of the Western and Eastern Bulgarian lands including Sofia. By 997, he controlled all of Macedonia (except Salonica), Moesia, Epirus, Thessaly, Western Thrace, Durres, and much of present-day Albania. The Serbian States of Zeta (Montenegro) and Raska were transformed into client vassals. Samoil had himself crowned Tsar in 997. He ruled from his capitals at Ohrid and Prespa's Island of Ahil. He controlled an enormous Empire stretching from the Adriatic to the Black Sea and from the Aegean Sea to the Danube River

After more than a decade of fighting with Samoil, Byzantine Emperor Basil (Vasil) II of the Macedonian Dynasty won a final victory in 1014 around the town Petrich. Although Samoil escaped, it is said that Basil ordered the captured enemy soldiers be blinded. Only one out of every hundred men was to be spared one eye so that he could lead the rest back to Samoil's camp. Such an inhumane act could only be attributed to the Greek Byzantine Orthodoxy. Greek Orthodoxy proved over time to be a religion that was extremely fanatical against any heretics. This included the Macedonian Bogomil heretics who fought alongside Tsar Samoil's Army.

### **The Latin Empire in Macedonia**

After the reign of Basil II, the Byzantine Empire was forced increasingly into the defensive by encroachment against it by its powerful enemies, especially the Muslim Seljuks Turks in Anatolia and the Normans in Italy. The Byzantines under Alexius sought help from the Pope in their fight against the Seljuks, thus sparking the Crusades. In the wake of the first Crusade in 1096, the new Crusader States in



Syria and Palestine soon ceased to recognize the sovereignty of the Byzantine Emperor.

In exchange for support against the Normans, the Maritime powers of Venice and Genoa were given very broad trading privileges by the Byzantium. In the long run, however, these trading privileges undermined the Byzantine economy as the State lost control of its revenues. The Byzantines foiled the attempted invasion of the Balkans by the Italian Normans in 1085 and suppressed the Bogomils in Macedonia (1086-91).

A succession of western crusading Armies marched through the Balkans on their way to Constantinople. Their intention was to sweep south through Anatolia and liberate the Holy Land from its Muslim Turkish masters. The Crusaders moved through the Serbian, Macedonian (via Ignatia) and the Bulgarian lands of the Empire cutting swaths of destruction and death as they travelled. The disruption resulted in the re-emergence of an independent Bulgarian State in 1185 (situated between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains) and the solidification of Serbia by Stefan Dushan. In 1196, Dushan proclaimed complete independence from Byzantium. By this time, however, the Empire had been reduced to a shell of small Provinces mainly comprised of its Balkan territories which included Macedonia.

Constantinople was captured and ransacked by the Latin Crusaders in 1204. Various Latin Crusader Kingdoms and Byzantine successor States then emerged on Byzantine soil. In Constantinople itself, the Crusaders chose a Latin Emperor and a Latin Patriarch. Baldwin, Count of Flanders, was crowned in Santa Sophia as the Latin Emperor. Latin Crusader leaders built feudal States after the European model in the Kingdom of Salonica, in the Duchies of Athens and Naxos, and in the principality of Achaea. Venice secured most of the Aegean's strategically located Islands and ports including Salonica. The White Tower in Salonica was built during the Venetian conquest.

Orthodox Christians residing in the Kingdoms of the Latin Crusaders were placed under the Catholic clergy. The Latin presence in the Balkans, however, was undermined after the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan Asen won the Battle of Adrianople in 1205 during which Emperor Baldwin was seized and killed. Kaloyan's son Ivan,

initiated a second Bulgarian State and in 1235 won recognition as an independent Bulgarian Patriarchate away from the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople.

In Nicaea, the Byzantine State was preserved after the fall of Constantinople. From Nicaea, the Byzantines sought to restore the Empire. In 1235, the Byzantines won territories in Thrace and Macedonia in victories over the Bulgars and in 1246 were able to reconquer Salonica from Venice with help from Genoa. The Byzantine Emperor Palaeologus allied himself together with Genoa which was Venice's powerful rival in the Mediterranean. He also allied himself with the Ottomans who were the emerging power of Asia. He succeeded in recapturing Constantinople in 1261. Palaeologus was increasingly dependent on the Ottomans and allowed them to "put feet into" the Balkans.

### **The Slav Serbs in Macedonia**

From the 12<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the South Slav Serbs were able to establish a large Kingdom in the western Balkan region. From his Macedonian capital of Skopje, Dushan had himself proclaimed Emperor in 1346. His Empire included the current Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Thessaly and Greece as far as the outskirts of the Latin Duchy of Athens. The reigning Dushan established an independent Serbian Patriarchate in his Empire. His death in 1355 was a catastrophe for the Orthodox Balkans since it removed the last force capable of withstanding the advance of the Ottoman Turks.

### **The Ottomans (Turks) in Macedonia.**

The Turkmen tribal group of the Ottomans who were based in northwestern Anatolia pushed steadily westward. The early Ottoman Sultans consolidated their power in Anatolia and began their conquest of the Balkans. Ottoman Sultan Murad (1360-89) realized that the Balkan Christian States, Serbia and Bulgaria had been weakened by decades of wars causing destruction to both sides. Their populations were burdened with rising semi-feudal oppression, economic disruptions and unstable living conditions. Murad captured Adrianople in 1365 from the Bulgars and transformed it into his European capital Edirne. The fall of Adrianople completed the encirclement of the Byzantine Empire which soon consisted of just Constantinople and its outlying districts.

A new standing professional Infantry force called “Janissaries” was formed to supplement the traditional Turkish tribal cavalry units. The new troops consisted first of enslaved War captives and later of child levies--children who were collected by law or by force by the Ottomans so that they could be raised to become highly indoctrinated future soldiers. These children were taken from the growing numbers of Balkan subject Christians. Murad conquered the Bulgarian lands south of the Balkan Mountains by 1372 and reduced its Turnovo Ruler, Tsar Ivan Shishman, to vassal status. In 1371, he destroyed a predominantly Macedonian force composed of regional troops from Serres and Prilep outside of Edirne, an act that led to the conquest of Macedonia. By 1386, Murad had taken the regions around Sofia and Nis and forced a weakened Serb Ruler, Prince Lazar into submission as his vassal.

Under Murad II (1421-51), a War with Venice resulted in the conquest of Salonica (1430) and most of the Aegean Islands. At the death of Murad II, little remained of the Byzantine Empire other than Constantinople itself. Serbia was finally subdued and incorporated (1458-58) and Albanian resistance under Skanderbeg broken (1463-79). The mighty Ottomans finally captured Constantinople in 1453. The city was renamed Istanbul, capital of the Islamic Ottoman Empire.

### **The Ottoman Millet System, The Greek Patriarch and the Rise of the Greek Nationalism**

Ottoman subjects were divided into “Millets”. The Ottoman Millet System was established by the Ottomans to administer the non-Muslim Christian population in the Empire. The word “Millet” means “Nation.” Based on the faith originating from the Old Testament the three largest “Millets” were the Muslim, the Greek Orthodox and the Jewish. For the Ottomans, nationhood meant religious affiliation so that Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian and Macedonian Christians for example, would all speak different languages and enjoy widely different cultural traditions but would still be part of the same “Millet for the Orthodox Christians”. The Western practice of referring to them all as “The Greeks” whether Greek or not, was not so absurd as it may appear now. As far as the Ottoman State was concerned, religion always took precedence over culture, language and race in defining one’s identity. Under this System the Greek Patriarch in Istanbul was given full authority over all Orthodox Christians within the Empire no matter their ethnicity. When the Millet System was devised, the Greek Patriarch was installed

as head of the Orthodox Millet, effectively placing its administration under Greek control.

In the Phanar Quarter in Istanbul, there lived wealthy Greek merchants and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate was eventually established there. These Phanariotes played an important economic and political role in the Ottoman Empire and dominated the international maritime movement. Most importantly, they controlled the Office of the Greek Patriarch. As Orthodox Christians represented the single most significant source of imperial tax revenues, the Phanariotes became influential in Ottoman affairs and thus supported the Greek national interests. From its inception, the "Orthodox Millet" System was dominated by the Greek speakers favoured by the Ottomans.

The first act of the Greek Patriarch was to place the Slavic-rites Orthodox Churches (which had up to now possessed their own autonomous Churches prior to the Ottoman conquest) into the hands of the Greek Patriarchate of Istanbul. The Ohrid Patriarchy was reduced to an autocephalous Archbishop headed predominantly by Greek prelates. The Church hierarchy was dominated by Greek speakers who officially supported Greek cultural activities with Church funds. Slavic speakers were dismissed to the lowest rungs of the hierarchy and maintained their cultural life from the limited funds available through grassroots popular support. So overwhelming was the Greek presence in the Orthodox Millet that a perceptual association generally linking the terms "Greek" and "Orthodox" as one and the same became common among the Ottoman authorities and the European travellers in the Balkans. In 1913, a Commission was assigned by the Great Powers to establish the adherence and loyalty to Serbia or to Greece concerning the disputed areas of occupied Macedonia. The questions to the locals by the Commission were based on an ethnicity basis. The naïve and illiterate Macedonians responded that they were "Greek Christians." Based on such answers by the local population, the Commission awarded the Lerin region to Greece although this Lerin region was occupied by the Serbian Army in 1913.

## **The Decline of the Ottoman Empire, the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Creation of the New Balkan States**

The Ottoman Empire was forced into the defensive in the Balkans through the victories of the Austrian Empire and pressure from Russia. Between 1774-1783, the Ottomans lost Crimea to Russia and Bukovina to Austria. Russia made further territorial gains and replaced the Ottoman Empire as the dominant power in the Black Sea region. In order to stop Russia from taking control of the Dardanelles and thereby threatening the British and French interests in the Mediterranean, France and Great Britain allied with the Ottomans against Russia in the Crimean War in 1853. Russia surrendered and the Black Sea was declared a neutral demilitarized zone which represented a major setback to Russian ambitions in the region. The Russian Black Sea fleet was now imprisoned behind the Straits with no right to pass through the Dardanelles Straits.

Patriotic nationalism in Greece increased at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Peloponnesus region rose up to liberate itself from Ottoman control. The Peloponnesus was almost completely retaken by the Turks. However, after the intervention of Russia, Great Britain and France that annihilated the Turkish fleet at Navarino, Greece was granted the status of an independent Kingdom. At first, this Kingdom consisted mainly of the Peloponnesus. The first King of the new Greek State was Otto of Bavaria who was crowned in 1832. Over time, the Greeks were able to significantly expand their territory through Wars against the disintegrated Ottoman Empire and during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.

Serbia became autonomous under the Treaty of Edirne in 1829 which ended the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29). At the end of the Crimean War (1856), new measures were enacted by the Ottomans to improve the lot of non-Muslim subjects so as to combat the spread of Western-style nationalism among them. One post-1856 reform targeted Millet reorganization. In 1860, wealthy Bulgarian merchants in Constantinople stated that the Bulgarians would no longer recognize the Greek Patriarch's authority and called for the creation of a separate Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Pressured by Russia, the Sultan recognized an independent Bulgarian Church in 1870. This was to become the Bulgarian Exarchate with jurisdiction over large tracts of Bulgaria, Thrace, and Macedonia. The Greek Patriarch and Bulgarian Exarchate under the revised Millet System had

the ability to acquire further territories and their Churches should two-thirds of the village inhabitants vote to join the Patriarch, the Exarchate or both.

In 1877, Russian forces invaded Ottoman Bulgaria. The Treaty of San Stefano (1878) created a large Bulgarian State including Macedonia with the port of Kavala but excluding the regions around Salonica. The Western European Powers, and Britain in particular, could not accept a settlement that handed Russia--through the new Slavic Bulgaria--virtual control of the crucial Dardanelles Straits. The Great Powers' concerns were addressed at the Congress in Berlin. San-Stefano's "Great Bulgaria" was sliced into "Bulgaria proper" mostly lying north of the Balkan Mountains, Eastern Rumelia with Plovdiv as its capital, and Western Thrace and Macedonia being returned to the Ottomans. Russian access to the Aegean Sea was cut off. The Ottomans were forced to hand Thessaly and Epirus to Greece (1881), Cyprus to Britain, and Russia acquired Bessarabia.

The Berlin Settlement radicalized Balkan nationalism and created deep seated dissatisfaction among all of the small Balkan States. All of the post-Berlin Balkan Nation-States shared a common national imperative: to satisfy their "rightful" national territorial ambitions and secure all or part of Macedonia within the context of the existing Great Power relationships.

In 1879, Sofia was designated Bulgaria's capital because of its proximity to Macedonia. In 1885, Rumelia (Plovdiv) proclaimed unity with Bulgaria. Serbia feared that nationalist momentum from the unification would carry the Bulgarians into Macedonia and so they declared War on Bulgaria. Failing to win lands by force from Bulgaria in 1885-86, the Serbs felt compelled to enter the fray for the possession of Macedonia. Serbian bands joined those of the Bulgarians and the Greeks in the ethnic fighting that plagued and terrorized Macedonia's natives.

In 1893, the Macedonians formed a Revolutionary Nationalist Organization of their own--the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO)--to oppose both the violence of the outsiders' nationalistic bands and the continued Ottoman control. The IMRO program called for "Macedonia for the Macedonians."

In 1903, IMRO sparked the unsuccessful anti-Ottoman Ilinden Uprising. Turkish reprisals, constant violence and terrorism committed by nationalistic bands which were supported by Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, caused the uprooting of thousands of Macedonians. Most of them fled to southern Bulgaria where they established a virtual State-within-a-State and became a militant force in Bulgarian politics. Many of these Macedonians emigrated to the New World.

In 1902, a Turkish Nationalist Movement called "The Young Turks" was established. In 1908, Officers of Turkish Units stationed in Macedonia led by Mustafa Kemal revolted in order to stall a Western Great Powers' plan to intervene in Macedonia and halt the continued unrest there. The jubilation of Westerners and non-Muslims in the Empire turned to anger and fear as it became apparent that The Young Turks were intent on preserving the old Empire as a Turkish Nation-State.

### **The Balkan Wars**

By 1912, all of the protagonists in the Macedonian struggle for Macedonia came to realize that the Ottoman presence had to be eliminated before any further nationalist solution could be achieved. In 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria hammered out a military treaty of mutual assistance with a secret Agreement dealing with the future fate of the Balkan regions still under Turkish control which included Macedonia. The bulk of Macedonia was to form an autonomous Province. Should the autonomous Province prove unworkable, the secret Agreement provided for its further division between Serbia and Bulgaria. A Greek-Bulgarian anti-Turk Military Alliance was also signed in which no territorial issues were defined since both States desired the Macedonian port of Salonica. At the urging of Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece formed The Balkan League and declared War on the Ottoman Empire. Soon they were able to capture almost all of its European territories and reduce the Ottoman Empire to its present Turkish territories.

There was little doubt that the War was fought in order to primarily decide Macedonia's fate. Geography forced the Bulgarians, the eastern most of the allies, to focus their efforts in the wrong direction against the main Turkish forces in Thrace. Serbia and Greece faced a mostly demoralized and weak enemy-- Turkish Units in the West plus the areas in and around Macedonia. Dissension

soon arose among the victorious Balkan allies over the disposition of conquered territories. Smelling national blood, the Romanians placed a bid in for southern Dobruja which had been in Bulgarian hands. In 1913, Serbia and Greece concluded an anti-Bulgarian alliance to defend their zones of occupation in Macedonia against possible Bulgarian encroachment. Bulgaria attacked Serb and Greek positions in Macedonia. Serbia, Greece, Romania and the Ottomans declared war on Bulgaria. The Bulgarians were placed in an undefended position and were easily defeated. The Treaty of Bucharest of August 1913 stated that Bulgaria was to cede territory to Romania; Macedonia was absorbed for the most part by Serbia and Greece; and Albania became independent. Greece which was within Britain's sphere of interest, retained Salonica and the southern portions of Macedonia thus giving Greece total access to the Aegean Sea. Serbia acquired the lion's share of the northern portion of Macedonia.

## **World War I**

World War I was an accident. Rampant nationalism and an international arms race made European politics potentially explosive at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Within a month of the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, the European world found itself embroiled in total War. Germany, Austro-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria were part of the "Central Powers," whereas Great Britain, France, Russia, United States, Serbia and Greece were part of the "Entente Powers".

In 1915, a combined Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian assault on Serbia crushed the Serbs and forced them to be evacuated by the Entente to Corfu. Bulgaria occupied Macedonia and pushed towards Salonica. Bulgaria was stopped by an Anglo-French force invited into Greece by Greek Minister Eleutherius Venizelos, who, with Entente backing, displaced Greece's pro-German King Constantine. An Entente front was established around Salonica where the reorganized Serbian Army was transferred. The front line in 1916 was pushed as far north as Bitola. Bulgaria's Army disintegrated and French and Serbian forces raced deep into the Balkan's interior.

The First World War was waged with all the resources then available. This War shifted worldwide power and "relationships" and redrew the map of Europe.



Great Britain and France were economically weakened by the War. The United States profited most from this War and replaced Britain as the dominant world power. They sought to bring peace to Europe based on the principle of the right to national self-determination. Germany was forced to cede its colonies and large parts of its Empire. The break-up of the multicultural Empires of Austro-Hungary and the Ottomans created unstable nation-States in Eastern and Central Europe with strong ethnic minorities. The Bolshevik's victory in Russia and the founding of the Soviet Union in 1922 influenced the internal development of the whole of Europe. The Soviet goal of a Communist world Revolution stirred up new right-wing fascist factions in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany.

The victorious Entente Powers drew the 20<sup>th</sup> century political map of the Balkans during the negotiations at Versailles. Russia was not present at Versailles since it was out of the War after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The winners in the negotiations were the Serbs, Romanians and Greeks. The losers were the Bulgarians and the Ottomans. A new Kingdom called "Yugoslavia" which encompassed Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Vojvodina, and Macedonia was created primarily to serve the interests of the Serbs.

Bulgaria's portion of western Thrace that had been previously won in the Balkan Wars was now given to Greece. The Bulgarian State was also burdened with some 250,000 refugees from Macedonia and Thrace as a result of the partition of Macedonia and Thrace in 1913. This overcrowding caused much political unrest. Significant portions of this refugee population were families of the Macedonian elites. This especially included Priests and Teachers who had been associated with the Exarchate and who were forced by the Greek State to abandon their villages. Nationalist agitation in Bulgaria increased to dangerously anarchistic levels. IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) stepped up terrorist raids into Yugoslavia and into Greek Macedonia as the result of the poor treatment of Macedonian Slavs in their Macedonian conquered lands. IMRO, however, was wracked by internal dissension among "annexationists," "autonomists" and newly-emerging IMRO Communists which caused a degeneration into an internal civil War within the Organization.

## **Greco-Turkish War**

In May 1919, Greece under Venizelos and with the encouragement of Britain and America, landed in Turkish western Anatolia and occupied Izmir. Subsequent to the complete defeat of Greece by Kemal's nationalist movement, Greece was forced by the Lausanne Treaty in 1923 to recognize the new Turkish State and accept an exchange of populations based on religion. The compulsory exchange of minorities involved some 1.3 million Christians expelled from Turkey and 480,000 Muslims removed from Greece. Greece's Macedonian territories were strengthened ethnically by the Greek-oriented newcomers. The Macedonian population in Aegean Macedonia had been a majority before this exchange but now became a minority.

## **Greeks in the Aegean Part of Macedonia**

The Macedonians in Greece were subjected to forced "Hellenization." By officially calling them "Slavophone Greeks," the Greek State justified the permanent eradication of any Slavic Macedonian family or village name or any Macedonian ethnocultural presence. This "Hellenization" ultimately culminated in General Metaxas' fascist military dictatorship (1936-41) which emphasized the "only Greek" language. Metaxas banned the Macedonian language and prosecuted locals for speaking it. In contrast to the Greek state calling the Macedonians in the conquered Aegean Macedonia "Slavophone Greeks," the Greek communists called them "Slavophone Macedonians" during the Greek Civil war 1947-1949.

## **The Italo-Greco War and the German Occupation of the Balkans**

During 1939-1940, socialist movements were aroused in the mainly agrarian economies of the Balkan States. To stop the spread of socialism, the reactionary Governments of the Balkan States became highly centralized and authoritarian and fell into the "fascist orbit of the Axis Powers." Balkan nationalists adopted fascist trappings--military dress, youthful uniformed paramilitary units and authoritarian songs. The Bulgaro-Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (EMPO) established contacts with the Italian Fascists and the German Nazis. By 1939, Hitler's Germany dominated the Balkan economies and when War erupted that year, its economic position translated into political influence. The Kings of

Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece were all ethnically German and/or held strong pro-German sympathies. Boris of Bulgaria drew closer to Nazi Germany in the hopes of gaining Macedonia.

Metaxas foresaw turbulent times on the horizon and accepted British and French guarantees of Greece's territorial integrity in return for his resistance of Italian aggression when Mussolini occupied Albania in 1939. In October of 1940, Mussolini decided to invade Greece from Albania. Britain rushed troops and planes to mainland Greece and ships to the Adriatic. Assisted by those reinforcements, the Greeks counterattacked into Albania. The invading forces of the Italians were soundly beaten and routed by the Greeks. To recoup the Italian defeat, Hitler prepared to intervene against Greece before turning on the Soviet Union. Bulgaria was forced to officially enter into the Axis Alliance in March of 1941. This Alliance included Germany and Italy and it permitted Hitler to amass German troops on Greece's northern border. The German attack on Greece was swift, overwhelming and conclusive. Hitler then turned his attention to Yugoslavia.

In 1941 when Hitler became master of the entire Balkan Peninsula, most of Macedonia went to Bulgaria including the Aegean port city of Kavala. The Italians acquired a slice of western Macedonia including parts of the Lerin region. The rest of Greece fell under direct German or Italian occupation and operated through a Greek "Puppet" Government in Athens. Germany dominated strategically important locations such as Athens and Salonica.

### **The Anti-Axis Resistance Movements in Greece and Yugoslavia**

The turn of Eastern Front's military tide against Hitler in 1943 sparked anti-Axis resistance movements throughout the Balkans which were mostly controlled by Communist Parties. The Anti-Axis Allies (Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States), were eager to assist those who inflicted the most damage to the enemy and gave support to these Communist partisan liberation movements. Relying on Soviet military support when the Axis resistance collapsed, the Communist partisans swiftly gained control of the political situation on the ground everywhere in the Balkans except Greece (where British intervention in 1944 prevented a Communist partisan takeover). Communist controlled Yugoslavia was to be a Federation of Serbian, Montenegrin, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnia-

Herzegovinian, and Macedonian Republics. Kosovo and Vojvodina were recognized as autonomous Serbian Provinces.

During World War II, the strongest anti-Axis guerrilla force in Greece was the Communist National Liberation Front (EAM) whose military organization, the National Popular Party of Liberation (ELAS), controlled most of Greece near the War's end. In Aegean Macedonia, ELAS had fought with the SNOF, the Macedonian Liberation Front which represented tens of thousands of Macedonians living in Greece. EAM, to counter the influence of the SNOF had permitted the publication of Macedonian newspapers and encouraged cultural autonomy for the Macedonians in Greece. EAM/ELAS recognized the anti-Communist Nationalist Government of Papandreou which was installed in Athens under British protection in October of 1944. In December 1944, a full blown conflict erupted in Athens between the Communist ELAS forces against the Nationalist/Royalist forces of the Papandreou Government. Only a British military intervention of 50,000 British Army personnel saved the Royalists from defeat.

It should be noted that in October 1944 Churchill had visited Stalin in an attempt to solve the Balkan problems. Churchill suggested and Stalin agreed for a 90% predominance for Stalin in Romania and for a 90% of the say in Greece for Churchill. The paradox was that the Communist Party in Romania at the time had only 1,000 members where in Greece the Communists controlled most part of the country. Again this proves the strategic importance of Greece and its Maritime location to British interests.

### **The Greek Civil War**

Bolstered by British support, the new ultra-nationalist rightist Government progressively drove EAM/ELAS partisans into Greece's north-central Macedonian mountains. Refusing to accept defeat, the EAM/ELAS Communists decided on Civil War. In October of 1946, ELAS had reformed itself into the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) under the leadership of Markos Vafiadis. The Communist Democratic Army commenced anti-Government operations from its northern mountain strongholds of Gramos and Vicho. In February 1948, when the power of the DAG was at its peak, Stalin was categorically against the Communist rebellion in Greece. In conversation with a member of Tito's politburo, Stalin stated: "The rebellion in Greece must be crushed. They have not the slightest chance of

winning. Do you really imagine that Britain and the United States--the strongest countries in the world—would tolerate any disruption to their communications artery in the Mediterranean?”

In March of 1947, Britain washed its hands of the deteriorating situation in the Civil War and handed it over to the United States. Rebel tactics changed from guerilla to front War. Due to Royalist air superiority and assistance from the Americans, the military tide turned against the Communists. The desperate Communists resorted to forced general conscription in the Macedonian regions under their control and evacuated children to Soviet-bloc States hoping to strengthen their position. Increased numbers of ethnic Macedonians in the ranks of the Greek Communist Democratic Army eroded popular Greek support for the partisans and heightened internal Greek-Macedonian tensions. In 1948, the Tito-Stalin split deprived the assistance of Tito which was vital to the Democratic Army and therefore, the Greek Communist movement was soon doomed to failure.

Stalin was convinced that the Greek Communists' cause was not worth a direct confrontation with the United States and he endorsed the idea of creating an independent Communist Macedonian State that would include Greek Macedonia. The Greek Communists decided against accepting Greece's dismemberment on the assumption that the Slavic Macedonians were no longer the majority in Aegean Macedonia. The modernized Greek army under General Papagos ultimately defeated the Communist forces in northwestern Greece and drove the remnants of the Democratic Army into Albania in 1949.

### **The Greek Police State**

During the period from 1949 to the end of the dictatorship of Papadopoulos in June of 1973, Greece followed the footsteps of the ultranationalist Metaxas dictatorship and became a Police State.

After the end of the Civil War, the new ultranationalist state had to deal with two fronts:

- a) how to suppress the Communist ideology spread among more than 60% of the population in Greece, and
- b) how to deal with the “Macedonian Question.”

On the first front, the State established secret files for each individual of political relevance in which file the individual was assigned a specific letter with a spectrum from “far right” to “far left.” This specific letter indicated the degree of nationalistic beliefs and the political behavior of the individual. The letter was based on political sympathies of the individual, on his/her family history in participating in resistance movements against the German occupation and during the Civil War, on the literature and newspapers read and on the people he/she socialized with. In addition to ideological sympathies, a special letter was also assigned to individuals considered having foreign sympathies such as empathy for the Slav Macedonians. Based on these secret files, the Police issued the notorious “Certificate of Social Beliefs”--a document testifying to political reliability that each citizen had to produce in order obtain a Civil Service employment, a driving licence, continued education of their children after Public School, opening up a business, getting a Passport, assignment to military positions during the temporary conscription in the Army, and for any other issues involving Local and State authorities. The admission to Colleges preparing Public School Teachers was prohibited for left-leaning individuals since these teachers would be dealing with children during their formative years. Children of left-leaning family homes were encouraged by the State to be interned at the Queen’s Frederika’s Children’s Camps mostly for the purpose of indoctrination. Terror and intimidation of left-leaning adults in the Concentration Camps (e.g. Macronissos) was used to force inmates to sign the “Responsible Declaration” stating repentance of their left political sympathies. The fear instilled in the population by these State terror and intimidation policies, especially in the Macedonian regions occupied previously by the partisans during the Civil War, was very deep. During elections, left-leaning individuals had to vote with an open ballot so election officials could take a good look at the ballot and make sure the voter was voting for the “right” candidate. Citizens also had to instantly change their conversation from Macedonian to Greek in the presence of a Policemen or a person of authority. Citizens also had to carefully guard what they said in conversations with known informants.

Concerning the “Macedonian Question,” the Greek State decided against applying the forceful approach used on citizens during Metaxas’ dictatorship. They instead adopted a long term strategy of “Hellenizing” the Macedonians in Greece. In exchange for Tito’s agreement to have no territorial aspirations on Greece,

Greece promised Yugoslavia's Tito that it would respect the Macedonian minority in Aegean Macedonia.

First, by grossly manipulating the Census in 1951 which was based on the "Mother tongue" spoken in the home, the Greek State was able to officially assure the West and the Greek population that the "Macedonian Question" in Greece was non-existent. The State claimed that this "Question" affected a most negligible portion of the population. Based on these rigged Census results, the Greek State established a policy of publicly denying the existence of a "Macedonian Question." In this way, the State could claim that there was absolutely no need for any Schools to teach the Macedonian language in Greece.

Internally, however, the Greek State knew the truth of the existence of this "Question" and the extent of the problem. This caused the Greek State to take drastic actions to achieve the "Hellenization" of the Macedonian people in Greece. They told the naïve Macedonians that they are ethnologically Greeks just who happen to speak a Slavic language. The ultimate aim of the Greek State was the total obliteration of the Macedonian language and the Macedonian conscience.

In order to further achieve their goals of "Hellenization," the Greek State established Kindergartens for children in the Macedonian villages. Children were only allowed to speak Greek in these Kindergartens. Severe punishment awaited those who disobeyed. In order to minimize the time the children spent in their homes with their Macedonian Grandmothers (Babas) speaking their native tongue, breakfasts was provided for the children on the Kindergarten property. By getting the children into the Kindergarten setting early and keeping them for the rest of the day under the strict supervision of a Greek Teacher, the State could ensure that the children would speak Greek all day long. The only time left for the children to converse in Macedonian with their families was later in the day during supper and bedtime. The hope was that the children would eventually transition to speaking just Greek to their families upon arriving home. In addition, parents were often frightened to speak Macedonian in the home in case these same Macedonian words were repeated during the Kindergarten day. The parents knew full well that speaking even one Macedonian word in the Kindergarten setting was strictly forbidden for their children. Slowly, the

conversation in the Macedonian homes for children and parents began to transition to the Greek language.

Collective “loyalty” swearing ceremonies in the Macedonian villages took place in public. These “loyalty” swearing ceremonies were attended by State Officials. The villagers taking part in these ceremonies would swear that from now on “they would stop speaking in the Macedonian language and only speak Greek.” This was another way that the Greeks tried to obliterate the Macedonian conscience in the Macedonian population. Local security agents would actively remind the villagers who had sworn their “loyalty” that they must now speak only in Greek. The Greek Police State applied these draconian and unjust measures during their 60 years of rule (1913-1973) in Aegean Macedonia. In this way, they finally succeeded in making these poor and illiterate peasants discover that they are truly “Greek.”

The Macedonian villagers in Greece were facing pressures on both the ideological and ethnic fronts. This untenable situation made many of them decide to uproot and emigrate towards the New World, especially Canada, Australia, and the Republic of Macedonia. Next to this goal of uprooting from the village was the reunification of immediate family members spread all over the world. Children and parents were spread all over the Communist world. Grandparents were stuck in the New World and not able to return to their villages due to the World War II. Family members were still left in Greece after the Civil War. The Macedonian partisans and their refugee children (now grown up and still living in the Communist countries) were not for the most part given the choice to return to their villages in Greece. The Greek State under the “socialist” Andreas Papandreou gave amnesty for the return to Greece of only the “Greek born” partisans. He prohibited the return to Greece of the Macedonian partisans. Not only were the Macedonian partisans not allowed to return back to their villages but the Greek State also stripped them of their citizenship and confiscated their properties in the villages. Wives left in Greece after the Civil War who decided to leave Greece and join their husbands in the Communist countries were allowed to emigrate only after they agreed to forfeit their Greek citizenship and their properties in the village.

Our robust Macedonian villages are now mostly deserted or filled with ethnically trusted newcomers from other parts of Greece. The Greek State built the



newcomers brand new homes and provided them with official property Deeds. This contrasts sharply with the refusal of the Greek State to provide Deeds of Ownership to the original (Macedonian) inhabitants.

The Greeks who were heavily indoctrinated by the State as to their 'Hellenic' history and in regards to their Byzantine "Church Orthodoxy," seem to forget that everyone should have the right to speak, educate themselves and sing in the language of their Mothers. Even the "Communist" Markos Vafiadis proved to be a Greek ultra nationalist. Vafiadis was very proud of his contribution to the genocide and elimination of the "Macedonian element" in Greece.

National borders are decided by the Big Powers according to their relevant power at the time and their own interests. As consequence, no national State is created on the basis of a "pure" nation. In every State, therefore, there will exist minorities of "not pure" population. Because of that, a truly civilized State should learn to respect and encourage the linguistic and cultural rights of their minorities. Greeks often boast that they were the true "Fathers of Democracy." Greek history, however, proves that Greece is far-removed from the ideals of true "democracy." Life for the Macedonians in Greece was never a "dream" and was for the most part, an unjustifiable "nightmare." The nightmare continues to this day!

## **PART 2**

### **UNDERSTANDING THE CRITICAL EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR LAND CALLED MACEDONIA**

#### **Athens as a Great Power, Impact of Athenian Intellect on the World and the Macedonians**

Unable to support their starving and growing population, the Greek city States resorted to colonization in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Greek colonies dotted the shores from the Black Sea and the Crimea to the Mediterranean Sea and Gibraltar. It was natural given the geography of Greece that shipbuilding should flourish. Athens became a Naval Power which in turn enabled it to colonize, achieve great advances in trade, and bring slaves from the distant colonies for labour. This all resulted in Athens becoming rich and powerful. Persons of intelligence and wealth poured in from every part of the known world. The Athenian democracy reached its high point under Pericles in 477 B.C. It was at this time that the Greek alphabet was available for writing. The Athenians had plenty of free time since slaves from the conquered lands and colonies were taking care of the heavy labour. This leisure time gave the free citizens of Athens plenty of time in which to philosophize, experiment, create art and write. During this ancient period, significant intellectual innovations took place in their scientific, humanistic and philosophical spheres. The real development of scientific thought began with the Athenians. It was they who transformed the scattered bits and pieces of knowledge inherited from their predecessors in Egypt and Mesopotamia and gave this knowledge real meaning.

This Athenian intellect of antiquity involved many spheres of knowledge. These spheres included the Philosophy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, tragedy in Aeschylus, Human Nature and Behaviour in Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, History in Herodotus and Thucydides, Science and Mathematics in Democritus, Archimedes and Pythagoras, and Medical knowledge in Hippocrates. This remarkable knowledge was preserved only due to the availability of the Greek alphabet. Alexander is credited for the spread of the Athenian knowledge to the East (the so-called "Hellenistic Period") and later to the Romans in the West. The existence of people and cultures is only known when recorded in written form. The Greek alphabet owes much to the Phoenicians who first

worked out an alphabet of their own by 1100 B.C. In turn, the Latin alphabet adapted in Western and Central Europe and later the Cyrillic alphabet adapted in Eastern Europe are both based on the Greek alphabet. Tribe languages in Spain, France, and Romania disappeared after the Roman conquest because they lacked written alphabets. Greek and Latin languages were a must for educating the children of privileged families in Europe. In this way, the children would be eventually equipped to take on the administration of the State or to take on high-ranking military and religious positions. The vast majority of the population remained illiterate up until time of the French Revolution in 1789, when for the first time the State provided Elementary schooling for the masses.

Instead of reinventing the wheel, the scientific world agreed to the use of ancient Greek terminologies in studies of Philosophy, Science and Medicine. Latin terminologies were used for State administration and law. For example, in Greek, “logy” means science, “nomos” means law, “autos” means self, “ecos” means house, “oligi” means few, “crato’ means hold, “ago” means lead, and “plutos” means wealth. An example of how this works is as follows:

**Zoo** (animal) **logy**; **Stoma** (mouth) **logy**; **Cardio** (heart) **logy**; **Eco** (house) **nomy**; **Astro** (star) **nomy**; **Auto** (self) **cracy** (keep); **Auto** (self) **mobile** (move in Latin); and **Pluto** (wealth) **cracy** (hold). Later when Christianity began, the Bible was written in Greek. It was one of the very few alphabets available at the time. Religious words also were based on the Greek language such as the prefix “**ev**” meaning “good” in “**eu** (good) **thanasia** (death)”; **ev** (good) **angelical** (angel); and **eu** (good) **logy** (word).

### **The Rise of Macedonia**

Macedonia, in the north of Greece and under Philip II in 359-336 B.C. became the leading power in the Balkans. Philip’s son, Alexander Macedon the Great rapidly conquered Greece and the Near East and Asia as far as India. Lacking a Macedonian alphabet to communicate with in writing, Alexander adopted the Greek language as the Lingua Franca in his Empire. This is similar to the way the English language is the Lingua Franca used around the globe today. Alexander did recognize the significant intellectual achievements of the Greeks as we can see from his letter to Aristotle. He says: “For my part, I assure you, I had rather excel

(or praise) others in the knowledge of what is excellent, than in the extent of my (own personal) power and dominion.”

Alexander was prevented from marching further towards India due to the mutiny of his troops wanting to return to Macedonia. Based on Plutarch’s The Age of Alexander, the mutineer Cleitus said to Alexander: “Is it not the blood of these Macedonians and their wounds which have made you so great that you disown your Father Philip and claim to be the son of Ammom.” Alexander “leaped to his feet when threatened by the mutineers and shouted out in the Macedonian tongue for his bodyguard for help and signalling that this was an extreme emergency. As a student of Aristotle, Alexander spoke fluent Greek as probably did most of his high-ranking Generals. It appears that the Macedonian people and the ordinary Macedonian soldiers only spoke the Slavic Macedonian language.

After Alexander’s death in 323 B.C., his Generals divided his Empire amongst themselves. Antipater ruled Macedonia, the Seleucids ruled Syria and the Ptolemies ruled Egypt. The last part of the Macedonian Empire to fall to the Romans was Cleopatra’s Egypt in 51 B.C. Cleopatra knew many world languages. According to Plutarch, “the Macedonian Kings of Egypt prior to Cleopatra had not even made an effort to learn their native language. Some actually gave up their Macedonian dialect”.

### **The Macedonian Slavic Language**

Maritime geopolitics to allow Russians to have access to the Mediterranean Sea through the Balkan Slavic lands was heavily disputed and opposed by the Western Powers.. This was especially true for the Macedonian port of Salonica. This dispute played a significant role in distorting the history as written by Western historians in relation to the following:

- a) the origin of the South Slavs. Some Western historians claim “they (the Balkan Slavs) migrated from **SOMEWHERE** from the Carpathian Mountains in the fourth century A.D., crossed the Danube and settled the Balkan region,” and that

b) these Western historians also claim that the ancient Macedonian language is **PROBABLY** similar to the Greek.

The purpose of the Crimean War between the British and French forces against Russia in 1853 was in order to stop the Russians from taking control of the Dardanelles. The reversal of the Treaty of San Stefano by the Western Powers, giving Bulgaria the whole of Macedonia was to prevent Russia having access to the Aegean Sea. The Western Powers allowed Greece (their protectorate), after the conclusion of the Balkan Wars in 1923, to receive the whole part of Macedonia bordering the Aegean Sea. This again once served to prevent Russia from having access to the Mediterranean Sea. The Western Powers clearly have a desire to push Russia out of the Mediterranean. It is to the Western Powers interest to distort the truth on the origin of the Macedonian people and their Slavic language .

The Italian linguist, Mario Alinei, in his report on “Interdisciplinary and Linguistic Evidence for Paleolithic Continuity of Indo-European, Uralic and Altaic Populations in Eurasia with an Excursus on Slavic Ethnogenesis” logically refutes the Western historians who were naturally predisposed to their country’s vested national interests. Alinei states:

- a) Slavic languages are part of the **MACEDONIC** branch of Indo-European languages with the Macedonian language both as **Ancient and Medieval**, and the Macedonian, Slovene, Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian languages being part of the **South modern** languages groups; the Czech, Slovak, Polish being part of the **Western modern** languages; and finally, the Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian languages being part of the **East of modern** Slavic languages.
- b) **Southern Slavic languages form the earlier core, while the two Northern branches of East and West are a later development.** Slavic languages have a unique, asymmetric area of distribution. While the Southern Slavic languages form a homogenous bloc sharing several common features, for Northern Slavic languages, it is necessary to distinguish between a Western branch and an Eastern one. Each of these two Northern branches share different features with the Southern Slavic.

c) **The truth is that the Slavs were in Macedonia from early times.** Alinei states that “the first mention of any peoples in writing depends on the “birthday of writing and **NOT** on the birthday of peoples.” **If there has been a migration of Slavic people, it must have proceeded from South to Northwards.**

d) There is a contradiction between the idea of medieval migration of Slavic people to the South from their alleged homeland in Middle Eastern Europe and the total disappearance of the presumed pre-existing languages (i.e. the Macedonian language during the time of Alexander). How can we accept such an idea from the early Middle Ages and for the highly civilized areas of South Eastern prehistoric Europe? **Writing is an entirely separate phenomenon from speaking.** A written language is connected to the forming of a highly developed stratified society with a dominant elite needing writing to exercise its full power.

For example, the Greek language and the writing in the Greek alphabet were used as official administrative tools in the Empires of Alexander and the Eastern Roman Empire.

### **The adoption of the Greek language as “Lingua Franca” during the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium)**

The adoption of the Greek language instead of Latin as the “Lingua Franca” by the Roman authorities in the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) in 610 gave Greeks complete control over the Slavic Orthodox Christians (Macedonians, Serbians, Bulgarians, Russians etc.). The term “Lingua Franca” means the primary administrative language adopted by the State as the only official language to be used over an empire in which several languages are spoken. The language of the official Church liturgy became also Greek instead of Latin and the Greeks took total control of the administration of the Church. In effect, they took total control of the Church hierarchy and the administration of the Ecumenical Orthodox Church. Later in the nineteenth century when the forces of nationalism arrived in the Balkans, the Orthodox Church in Constantinople controlled by the Greek Patriarch and the Greek Bishops became a tool of Greek nationalism against the Macedonian people.

## **The Slavic Cyrillic Alphabet, Greek Patriarchy and the Bulgarian Exarchate**

The Slavic Alphabet initiated by the Patriarch Photius I of Constantinople was developed in the 9<sup>th</sup> century at around 870 A.D. by the Macedonian Slavic Apostles Cyril and Methodius. Its purpose was to spread Christianity to the Slavs beyond the borders of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Bible was translated from Greek into Slavic and the liturgy of the Church in the Slavic lands including Macedonia was performed in Slavic up until the time when the Ottomans (under the Ottoman Millet System) gave the Greek Patriarchy full authority over the Christians in the Empire. Based on this authority, the Greek Patriarch prohibited the Slavic Bible and the Slavic Church liturgy and allowed only the use of the Greek Bible and the Greek Church liturgy. This eventually created a conflict much later within the Slavic populace and resulted in the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate which separated itself from the Greek Patriarchy. The revised Millet System in the Ottoman Empire now recognized the Bulgarian Exarchate as equal to the Greek Patriarchy and both the Greek and Bulgarian Patriarchs had the right to open and operate Churches and schools in the Macedonian villages and towns. The Churches under the Greek Patriarchy held their Church services in Greek whereas the Churches under the Bulgarian Exarchate started holding their services in the Macedonian language.

## **The Kote's Issue with the Greek Bishop Karavangelis of Kostur**

In 1900, the first guerilla detachments (kapetans) organized by the Autonomous Macedonian Movement (IMPO) under the leadership of Goche Delchev in the Kostur area consisted of mainly theft-oriented men. Their purpose was to kill bad Turkish landlords. Kote Kitsov's band with 22 men was responsible for killing both the Turkish landlord Kasem in Pisoderi and the father of Trajan, a Turkish Macedonian officer from Rula. For these killings Kote was sentenced by the Turkish authorities to death if found alive.

During 1903-1908, the Internal Macedonian Patriotic Organization (IMPO) created guerilla detachments consisting of ideologically-oriented persons. Such armed bands in our Korestia Region were formed by Tsakalarov from Smirdesh, Kote from Rula, and Mitre Vlaho from Konomlati. These bands all served the Macedonian Komitat. In the meantime, Kote became the paid "hired man" of the Kostur's Bishop Karavangelis. Kote's assignment from the Bishop was to begin

working for the extermination of the Macedonian leaders who were fighting the Turkish occupiers and who were also opposed to the influence of the Greek Patriarchal Church on the Macedonian villagers. Strongly suspecting Kote's collaboration with the Greek Bishop, the Regional Revolutionary Committee of Korestia decided on Kote's extermination. While in Konomlati and touring the Kostur region in 1902, Goche Delchev agreed with Revolutionary Committee of Korestia on Kote's extermination. However, Delchev still hoped that Kote would come to his senses. Delchev decided to take Kote for a two month period with him to the Vardar region. Delchev and Kote were in Konomlati. Delchev sent Kote to Rula to bid goodbye to his family. On the road from Konomlati to Rula, Kote probably suspected the decision made by the Revolutionary Committee for his execution. Arriving in Rula with Mitre Vlao (who had been assigned the responsibility of returning Kote to Delchev) Kote assembled his armed camaraderie in Rula. Kote told Mitre Vlao to go back and tell Delchev to "get lost." From this point on, Kote was openly opposed to the Revolutionary Macedonian Patriotic Organization.

In order to eliminate the influence of both the Greek Patriarchal Churches and the Greek Schools in the Macedonian villages, the Macedonian Patriotic Organization started to exterminate Priests and Teachers who were associated with the Greeks. The Patriarchal Priests and the Greek language teachers in the villages suspected grave danger when they heard that the Priests in Nered, Prokopana and other non-Exarchcan villages were being assassinated. They started fleeing to Kostur for safety. The Greek Bishop Karavangelis in Kostur was in a state of panic about possibly "losing Macedonia to the Bulgarians." The alarmed Bishop conceived the idea of using bribery and manipulation on a Macedonian Armed Band leader to convince him to become a Greek Armed Band leader. Kote from Rula was the best candidate as he was an easy target for manipulation. Kote was a fugitive hiding from the Turkish law, willing to accept a bribe and he was an excellent marksman with a rifle. He was an illiterate, money-driven father of three young children and desperate to avoid Turkish justice.

After many attempts, Bishop Karavangelis managed to arrange a midnight meeting with Kote in Turnavo, the village next to Rula. Karavangelis' arguments to Kote were:



- (a) You are ethnically Greek dating back to Alexander. The writings on the statues and coins from ancient times are in Greek. (Kote was ethnically Macedonian. The writings on the statues were obviously Greek since during the time of Alexander, there was no Slavic alphabet).
- (b) Your face looks Greek. (In reality, Macedonians are fair skinned like any other Slavs and don't have the generally darker complexions of the Greeks).
- (c) The Slavs came to enslave you. (In reality, the Slav Macedonians were always there. At times, they mixed with other South Slav people during the Bulgarian or Serbian expansions in Macedonia. There are no Greeks in Vardar or Pirin Macedonia today in the same way that there were never Greeks in Aegean Macedonia).
- (d) Bulgaria was not able to free itself let alone free Macedonia. (In reality, Russia freed Bulgaria. The Greek uprising for independence in Peloponnese was saved from defeat by the Turks because the Egyptian-Ottoman fleet coming to suppress the Greek Uprising was destroyed by the fleets of the Big Powers of Britain, France and Russia in Navarino).
- (e) Kote, do you really believe that the European diplomacy will ever allow Macedonia to be given to Bulgaria, especially the regions of Lerin and Kostur? Lerin and Kostur are only a two days walking distance from the borders with Greece whereas the Bulgarian border is only a seven days walking distance. (The Bishop was perfectly right. The Western countries, especially Britain, would never want Russia, a Slavic nation, to have access to the Mediterranean Sea through a larger Slavic Bulgaria absorbing the Macedonian lands. The misfortunes of the Macedonian people served the geopolitical interests of both Britain and Greece. Both States have shown over time, a clearly unjustified fear of the Slavic people).
- (f) "From now on, you will be with us to serve the Greek Komitat and I will send your children to study in Greece."

The agreement between the Bishop and Kote was that Kote and his Armed Band would protect the Patriarchate villages in his district in exchange for the Bishop's guaranteeing Kote his life by preventing Kote's capture by the Turks. The

Bishop's ability to guarantee Kote's life (a fugitive from the Turkish law) proves that the Greek Patriarchal Church in Istanbul had significant influence on the Ottoman State.

To ensure Kote's commitment to the Greek cause, the Bishop persuaded Kote to transfer his children from the Bulgarian School in Kostur and into the hands of Pavlo Melas in Athens. It was also agreed that Kote's children would study in Greece and after their graduation, would be enrolled in the Greek Military Academy. In this way, they would eventually become Officers of the Greek Army. The Bishop immediately sent Kote the monthly ten "liras" for himself and two additional "liras" for his boys. In the end, however, the Bishop betrayed Kote to the Ottoman authorities when Kote rejected the Bishop's order to exterminate Mitre Vlaho. Based on the information the Bishop gave to the Turks as to Kote's whereabouts, the Turks were able to capture Kote as he slept in his home in Rula. Kote was eventually condemned to death and was executed in Bitola.

In 1904, Pavlo Melas was guided by Kote in Rula. Melas wrote to his wife upon visiting the Patriarchal School in Rula: "Although some children knew how to write in Greek, no children in the School knew to speak Greek." By 1907, the Greek State in Athens stopped considering Rula as a safe and friendly village. After Kote's death, Rula joined again the cause of the Autonomous Macedonian Movement (IMPO).

Kote Kitsov's three sons, although educated in the Greek Schools were clearly able to communicate in the Macedonian language. One son, Sotir fought in the Greco-Italian War as an Army Artillery General. After the German occupation of Greece ended in 1944, he fell into disgrace due to his collaboration with the Greek puppet government in Athens that had been installed by the Germans. Sotir was living in Athens and kept regular contact with Stoian Petrou, his compatriot from Rula. Another son, Risto was the sole Notary in Lerin and since he had good connections with State officials, he was able to help many compatriots from Rula in solving their property issues. Risto helped Naso Nichev obtain a permit to work on his Uncle Mile's land which had been confiscated by the State. Kote's third son served for some time as the Mayor of Lerin.

## **The Berlin Congress – 1878**

In 1877, Russia fired up by pan-Slavism and it suspecting the beginning of Ottoman decay declared War on the Ottoman Empire. The peace attained at San Stefano between Russia and the Ottomans gave Russia (primarily through a vast new Bulgarian State), strategic domination over the Balkans and on the Aegean coast. The new Bulgarian State included all of Macedonia except the region around Salonica. Britain and Austria-Hungary forced a revision of the San Stefano Treaty at the Congress in Berlin. The Treaty resulting from the Berlin Congress in 1878 reduced the San Stefano Bulgaria from being one huge entity to a principality having the land just north of the Balkan Mountains. An Eastern Rumelia Province with Plovdiv as its capital was established South of the Balkan Mountains. This Province was supposedly an integral part of the Ottoman Empire but in fact the Russian occupying force maintained control over Rumelia. The third portion of the San Stefano Bulgaria, Macedonia, was returned to the Ottoman Empire.

In 1885, the citizens of Plovdiv seized control of the city to proclaim the unification between Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia. The British supported this unification between Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia which had the result of diminished Russian influence in Eastern Rumelia. The ultimate goal of the Slavic Bulgaria, however, was not only to succeed with the unification of North and South Bulgaria but to eventually integrate Macedonia into Bulgaria. For this purpose the new Bulgarian State had chosen Sofia as its capital for purely strategic reasons. Sofia's geographic position close to the western border underscored Bulgaria's claim on Macedonia.

Serbia argued that this unification would give Bulgaria an important strategic edge in the impending struggle for Macedonia and thus Serbia declared war on the Slav "brothers" of Bulgaria. Within days, the Serbs were in retreat. Serbia was saved by Austro-Hungary who insisted that Bulgaria withdraw its forces back across the Serbian-Bulgarian border into Bulgaria.

The lessons for the Balkan States of Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia drawn from the Serbo-Bulgarian War was that each should focus their energies into creating a strong military and to forge an exclusive and aggressive national

identity. The centre of this new focus had the ultimate end goal of eventually conquering Macedonia and the soul of its people.

The Congress of Berlin left Macedonia in the sorriest state of all. Turkish soldiers and Bashi-bozouks (Muslim undisciplined paramilitary) streamed into western and northern Macedonia to flee the expansion of Serbia. Whole villages were plundered and were torched. As a consequence, the ranks of the “Cheti” swelled. These “Cheti” were small, armed Macedonian fighting units who rose up against the Turks. By October 1878, the Macedonian Rebel Committee “**Edinstvo**” (Unity) was planning an uprising in the Kresna district of the Pirin region and began to gather men and weapons. The introductory statement of the Macedonian Rebel Committee was as follows: “It is well known to all of us that this ill-fated country of ours, Macedonia, owing to the egoistic aims of the Great Powers, was again left to Turkey at the Congress of Berlin.... With the blood we shed all over the Macedonian fields and forests, we serve freedom, as the Macedonian Army of Alexander of Macedon once did. Our slogan is “Freedom or Death (Smrt ili Sloboda).” Also, a Macedonian nursery rhyme written around 1890 states: “Oh Macedonia, oh dear Mother/ Oh sacred suffering land/ Oh Mother / such pain and unhappiness/ Have you borne/ We are your children, Mother/ Weak , without strength/ But we know you gave birth to us/ As heroes.” The revolt spread quickly and at its height, the “Cheti” had liberated 59 communities, home to 32,000 Macedonians. The Ottoman troops and irregulars eventually crushed the movement and embarked on their tortuous mop-up operations.

To escape the Turkish yoke after Macedonia was returned to the Ottoman Empire, many Macedonians fled as refugees into Bulgaria. By early 1880, the refugees from Macedonia had begun to organize themselves into a significant pressure group in Bulgaria. Their central demand was an overall revision of the Treaty of Berlin with regard to the Macedonian Question. Although Bulgaria, was eager to eventually incorporate Macedonia, it was too weak to contemplate War with Turkey especially if did not have Russian support. Bulgaria preferred to extend their influence into Macedonia using gradual methods. This was chiefly accomplished through the Exarchate Church and the establishment of Bulgarian Schools.

In 1895, the Macedonian refugees in Sofia formed the pro-Bulgarian “Supremacist Committee” which vowed to achieve the liberation of Macedonia from the Turks and absorb Macedonia into Bulgaria. This latter goal placed this Committee at odds with Damian Gruev’s IMRO Party (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization). In 1893, Damian Gruev along with other Macedonian students in Salonica, founded the Macedonian Central Revolutionary Committee (Makedonski Tsentralen Revolutsioneren Komitet) which settled on the IMRO (VMRO) name in 1905. This IMRO Party, also known as the VMRO (Vnetreshna Makedonska Revolutsionerna Organizatsia) while expecting all manner of aid from Bulgaria, sought to create an autonomous, self-governing Macedonia that would remain independent of Bulgaria. The IMRO itself later split when the famous “Cheta” leader, Jane Sandanski from Pirin, formed a breakaway faction committed to the principles of agrarian socialism. All three movements were committed to an armed struggle inside Macedonia. At various times, the struggle for Macedonia ended in pitting Macedonians against Macedonians on many levels. There were the Macedonians for Macedonia, the Macedonians for Bulgaria, the Macedonians for Greece, the Macedonians for Serbia and finally, the Muslim Macedonians for the Ottomans.

In the meantime, the Governments of all three independent States of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia were committed to schemes of territorial expansion in Macedonia. These three States all desired to dominate the strategic territory of the southern Balkans.

Commenting on the geography of Macedonia, Chancellor Bismarck of the newly unified Germany (the “honest broker” of the 1878 Berlin Congress), conceded that Macedonia held a vital strategic location. He observed that “those who control the valley of the River Vardar are the Masters of the Balkans.” Macedonia is the crossroads of the Balkan Peninsula. To travel from Central Europe to the Aegean Port of Salonica or from the Adriatic Sea to Istanbul, traders must first pass through Macedonia.

Greece was too weak at the end of the 19th century to combat the influence of the IMRO in Macedonia. Also, Greece was unable to respond when the Ottoman Empire allowed the Bulgarian Exarchate to establish three Dioceses in Debar, Bitola, and Strumitsa. In the not too distant future, the Greek Patriarchists and the Bulgarian Exarchates would do battle for the souls of the Macedonian villages.

If these Macedonian towns and villages turned to the Exarchate, it would be a victory for Bulgaria. If they retained their allegiance to the Patriarchate, it was a victory for Greece.

The IMRO leadership hoped to raise the consciousness of the peasant masses until a mass uprising be formed. The Macedonian vilayets (administrative regions under the Ottoman Empire) could then be transformed into an autonomous Macedonia. Two institutions held the key to a village's identity--the Church and the School. Soon after the start of its propaganda offensive, the IMRO ran into hostility from adherents of the Greek Orthodox Church as well as from the Hellenized Vlachs.

The EMRO (External Macedonian Revolutionary Organization), operating from inside Bulgaria, preferred confrontations with the Ottomans as a means of provoking Turkish retaliation against the Macedonians in Macedonia. This thereby ensured that the Macedonian Question remained high on the agenda of the Great Powers. Eventually, the EMRO believed that the Bulgarian Military could justify its intervention into Macedonia and this would eventually lead to the incorporation of Macedonia into a Greater Bulgaria.

In 1897, a group of fifteen bandits disguised as Ottoman Soldiers slipped into Macedonia from Bulgaria under the cover of darkness. Upon reaching the village of Vinitza, they robbed the local Turkish noble, killing him and his Macedonian servant in the process. This murdered Macedonian however happened to be a member of the IMRO. When the Turkish Governor learned of this incident, he ordered a "sweep" of the entire Skopje region. Through this sweep, thousands of guns and illegal funds owned by the IMRO were discovered. Hundreds of IMRO members and suspected sympathizers were taken in for questioning during which their bodies were "hung upside down and suffocated with the smoke of burning rye." After the Vinitza affair, Goche Delchev ordered the IMRO to harass the Ottoman authorities. Violence became rampant in Macedonia. The execution of Patriarchal priests, teachers, traitors and spies became a good part of the 'Cheta's' work. At the same time, their attacks on Ottoman soldiers continued. Many adherents to the Patriarchate resisted the enforced conversion of villages to the Exarchate. As the IMRO grew in strength, so did the cooperation between the Greek Patriarchists and the Turks. Macedonian villagers in 1903 were divided into three political camps fighting each other for different causes. These three

divisions continue right up to our present day. The ones loyal to the Greek Patriarch in Istanbul and with the backing of Greece's Government and military were fighting for a Greek Macedonia. The ones loyal to the External Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (EMRO) created in 1890 and with the backing of Bulgaria's Government and military were fighting for a Bulgarian Macedonia. The last camp to which the majority of Macedonians belonged was the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) created in 1893 as a Revolutionary Nationalist Organization to oppose both the violence of the outsiders' nationalist Bands and continued Ottoman control. IMRO 's program was "Macedonia for the Macedonians" and despite periodic dominance within its leadership by pro-Bulgarian elements within the Organization, it signaled the emergence of a new, strictly Macedonian nationalist movement. In 1902, the EMRO (not the IMRO), felt the time was ripe for a mass uprising in Macedonia.

### **The Ilinden Uprising , The Young Turks Revolution and the division of Macedonia after the Balkan wars 1912-1913**

In August 1902, Colonel Anastasas Iankoff was the Chief Agent of the EMRO outside Bulgaria. In his home village of Zagoritsani, Iankoff announced that a general uprising against the Ottomans was to be proclaimed. It was believed that this uprising was necessary in order to prepare the ground for a full-scale intervention by the Bulgarian Army and that this intervention would be backed by Russian Generals. As Iankoff began stirring up Western Macedonia, hundreds of EMRO guerrillas infiltrated a large swath of Serres country. Iankoff made a provocative move of calling the people to arms. EMRO's aim was to destroy all the autonomy of the IMRO from the Bulgarian influence once and for all. The Ottoman authorities expected an attempted uprising and had been readily strengthening their defensive capability in Macedonia. The leadership of the IMRO was alarmed. The IMRO leadership knew nothing of these plans and were entirely unprepared. Events outside their control threatened to undermine their strategy of educating the masses before striking for autonomy. Goche Delchev and Jane Sandanski who were both much more acquainted with the conditions inside Macedonia than the EMRO leadership, believed an uprising would be suicidal and premature.

The EMRO leadership in eastern Macedonia proclaimed a general uprising in the Gorna Dzhumaya region on September 23, 1902. Within days, the Turkish Army

re-established control and drove most of the guerillas back across the border into Bulgaria. The Turkish authorities then started to hunt down the leadership of the IMRO, even though these men had done everything in their power to prevent the rebellion. Those who did not escape to Bulgaria in time were arrested or killed. Both the IMRO and EMRO leaderships were almost obliterated and, after years of watching the Macedonian "Chetas" intimidate Patriarchal villages, the Greek "andartes" swept through western Macedonia forcing the reconversion of Exarchate communities to the Patriarchate. This Greek backlash was orchestrated by the gun-toting Bishop of Kostur, Karavangelis. The Bishop considered Bulgarian influence in the region to be the greatest threat to Greek national interests. He advocated close friendship and cooperation between the Greeks and Turks of Macedonia. Like Karavangelis, the Government in Istanbul also considered the Bulgarian insurgency the most threatening. As the IMRO's influence faded and almost died, Karavangelis began to receive more money, weapons and men from the Greek Kingdom. This renewed Greek activity and the retreat of Bulgarian aspirations hastened a change in Serbian policy. Serbia had long given up hope that its ideal of a federal solution to the Macedonian Question might be realized. Serbia would now be fighting for territorial influence not just against the Greeks and Bulgarians, but also against the Turks and Albanians.

In 1906, small conspiracies arose inside the Ottoman Empire. The Salonica conspiracy funded by Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), a young officer from Salonica, became most effective. Most of the Officers in the conspiracy had spent time in the struggle against IMRO and had been impressed by the discipline of the Macedonian guerrillas. They also admired the mobility and dedication of the insurgent bands. The target of the Turkish conspirators was the centre of power in Istanbul. They appealed for cooperation from the Macedonian guerrilla networks.

The Young Turk revolution in 1908 was a blow against the despotism of the Sultan. In its early stage, its leaders explicitly rejected the path of Turkish nationalism. Jane Sandanski, IMRO's greatest guerilla from Pirin, believing that the revolution would end the discrimination and injustice in Macedonia, led his band into Salonica and symbolically handed his weapons over to the Young Turk leadership. Within a short time, the Young Turk Movement began drifting towards Turkish nationalism as it refused the privileges sought by the Christians. Revolutionary idealism turned into a regime whose brutality surpassed that of the



Sultan. The oppression against non-Muslims (including the Macedonians) had now acquired a fresher and more sinister vigour. The measure of freedom that each nationality had once enjoyed was now being ruthlessly crushed by a Turkish chauvinism that had been unknown until now. In response, the guerillas in Macedonia took to the hills once more.

The military establishments of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire had taken their first steps along the road that ended with the First and Second Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. Sofia, Athens and Belgrade were no longer prepared to bow to the strategic requirements of the Great Powers although they were unlikely to act without some sign of Russian approval. They now understood that if they could agree with one another with regards to military cooperation, then they could expel Turkey from Europe whether the Great Powers wanted this or not. The Great Powers were unwilling to make War and had done everything they could to localize the hostilities in the Balkans. They discovered the obvious truth that the richest countries had the most to lose through War. Also, the apathetic atmosphere in Istanbul in 1912 suggested that there was little interest and enthusiasm for War. The lack of popular support for further Wars in Istanbul was a heavy blow to an already demoralized Turkish Army.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest signed in August 1913, Macedonian was divided. Large parts of Macedonia become southern Serbia. Aegean Macedonia become part of Greece. Bulgaria was forced to surrender almost everything its citizens had been fighting for except the Pirin region of Macedonia. Once again, the Macedonian peasants were the unwilling martyrs. The Serbs and the Greeks had begun the enforced Serbianization and Hellenization of the parts of Macedonia they now controlled. Suppression of the Macedonian identity began again in earnest.

The Macedonian people finally sought some justice at the end of the Second World War in 1945 when Communism arrived in the Balkans. "Southern Serbia" became the Republic of Macedonia as part of the federal Yugoslavia. The Macedonian Pirin Region (Pirinska Makedonia) in Bulgaria was proclaimed as an autonomous Macedonian Region. The Greek Communist Party recognized the Macedonians as Slavs and gave them the right to establish an autonomous Macedonian Region within Greece if they could win the Greek Civil War in 1947-

1949. Unfortunately, Bulgaria eventually took back the autonomy of the Macedonians in Pirin. As for Greece, the loss by the Greek Communists in the Civil War ended all hopes for Macedonian autonomy in Greece. A Police State was introduced in Greece immediately after the end of the Civil War. Intimidation, torture, discrimination and the suppression of Macedonian identity and culture was rampant during this unfortunate time.

In conclusion, the Macedonian Ilinden Uprising in 1903 that was forced by the Verhovisti (members of the EMRO) was premature in timing. This Uprising went against the recommendations of Goche Delchev (leader of the IMRO) who felt they were not yet ready for such military action. Delchev at the young age of thirty-two years old was shot and killed on May 4, 1903 in a skirmish with the Turkish Police near the village of Banitsa near Seres. According to the "New York Times" newspaper dated May 26, 1903, Delchev's presence in the village of Banitsa was betrayed to the Turks by a Greek spy. The tragedy for the Macedonian people was not only the suppression by the Turkish authorities of the Macedonian Uprising but the elimination of the Macedonian leadership that was desperately needed for making future inroads in the Balkans. The Greek State Agents greatly facilitated the tragic elimination of the Macedonian leaders by collaborating with the Turkish authorities. It was easy for the Greek authorities to get information about the whereabouts of the Macedonians leaders from the Patriarchal Priests and Teachers in our villages.

Historical conquerors of Macedonia--Turks, Greeks and others--all applied tyrannical methods to subdue the will and culture of the Macedonian people in order to claim Macedonia for themselves. A British journalist touring the Macedonian interior in 1906 noted that "**fear** in Macedonia is more than an emotion. It is a physical disease, the malady of the country, the ailment that comes from tyranny... **fear** is the dominant, the ever-present motive." Over the centuries, the Macedonians had been pressured to accept deceit. They had been intimidated into accepting false narratives as true ones. Tragically, some Macedonians have been duped and brainwashed into believing they are not truly Macedonian by identity. Sadly, they identify themselves as Greeks, Bulgarians or Serbians. Centuries of conquest and political pressure have undoubtedly transformed the fabric of the Macedonian identity and the Macedonian soul. Thankfully, the majority of Macedonians worldwide are still deeply proud of their roots, their rich culture, heritage and identity.

## **The Children's Exodus from the Partisans' Occupied Regions of Greece**

During the Communist Youth Congress held in Belgrade on March 4, 1948 and based on the proposal by the Greek Communist Youth representative, the following decision was made: All representatives from the Communist People's Democracies in Eastern Europe agree that children aged 3 to 15 years old from the partisan controlled regions of Greece, with the **VOLUNTARY APPROVAL** of their parents, be taken to the Socialist States of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Poland for care and education. The decision was based on humanitarian reasons so that the children could escape the dangers of War and avoid enemy bombardments. The villages affected were almost all Macedonian with also some villages from the Epirus and Evro regions. This large scale undertaking by all European Communist countries, however, could not be possible without the approval of Joseph Stalin and his Secretary Georgy Malenkov (who was of Macedonian descent).

Parents from Rula and surrounding villages brought the children to specific locations in Prespa and Zhelevo. After a heartbreaking separation from their precious children, the parents returned to their home villages. The children were then assigned to "Mothers." These "Mothers" were young War widows who were assigned the responsibility of taking care of 10-15 children from their home villages. These "Mothers" took their assigned children on foot towards the border with Yugoslavia in the villages of Dolno Dupeni and Lubojno. It was from here that trucks took the children to Bitola where the Yugoslav Red Cross took over. Leaving Bitola by train, the children were sent to their designated destinations in the Socialist Republics. Almost all the children from the village of Rula ended up in Romania. Consequently, these children were placed in the Romanian towns of Vatsa de Jos, Arad, Sinaia, Oradea and Tulgesh. The accommodations provided included luxury Hotels in Sinaia; a Roman Catholic Training College for Priests in Oradea; and an Austro-Hungarian Military Barracks in Tulgesh. All these accommodations were available due to the Communist takeover in Romania in 1944 which nationalized all "bourgeois" establishments.

As adults, we Ruleni owe much to the Romanian State and the Romanian people. They accommodated us in the most luxurious lodgings and educated us in our Macedonian language while at the same time teaching us the Greek, Romanian

and Russian languages. They gave us an excellent education in both academic and vocational studies. They took complete care of us at a time when the Romanian people had difficulty making ends meet after the World War II. The Romanians eventually facilitated our reunions with family members spread around the globe.

### **The Continued Monitoring of Political and Social Activities by the Greek State of our Macedonian Villagers now Living in Toronto and its Effects**

Goche was fully settled in Toronto. Although he held a Canadian Passport, he decided to apply for a Euro Passport. In contacting the Greek Consulate in Toronto about this Passport, the Secretary of the Consulate immediately sent a message to the local authorities in "Kristalopigi" (where Rula belonged to administratively). The Secretary requested the issuance of Goche's Birth Certificate since it was required for the issuance of a Euro Passport. Goche was told that this Passport could not be issued because the first Birth Certificate which arrived at the Greek Consulate here in Toronto did not indicate his marriage status. Another second attempt to get his Birth Certificate from here in Toronto also failed. Goche was told that the stamp of this second Birth Certificate was not clear enough. Goche then travelled personally to Rula in 2013 and had a third Birth Certificate issued by the officials in Kristalopigi. Goche took this third Birth Certificate to the Police Station in Lerin for the issuance of a Euro Passport. Goche was again told that this Certificate could not be accepted for Passport purposes because it was a "Type C" Birth Certificate (with no explanation given as to what "Type C" really meant). The whole process clearly showed him that the "sweet democratic face" shown to the world by the Greek Government is still a farce. The rights of Greek citizens are still deeply affected by what is written in their secret Police files. Even though so many Greek citizens left that country decades ago, their political and social behaviour in their new homelands is still being constantly monitored. To give a clear example of this social monitoring, I will give you an example from our Annual Rula Picnic held in Krasno Selo near Whitby, Ontario. During the 1990's, we sent out invitations to all the families from Breznitza living here in Toronto. Sending out these invitations proved very successful. Our Picnic was attended by over 100 persons from Breznitza. The following Summer, we sent out invitations again to the same families. To our shock, only 3 persons from Breznitza showed up the second year. My wife Linda asked her first cousin here in Toronto if she knew what happened. Her cousin

told Linda that those from Breznitza who had attended the Rula Picnic the Summer previous had gotten knocks on their front door with “friendly” warnings. They were warned that these Ruleni considered themselves “Macedonian” and that socializing with such persons was not acceptable to the Greek Government. Also, many of these persons from Breznitza had close relatives still living in Greece. They were warned that by attending Rula’s Picnics or Dances, these people were putting the pensions of their aged parents and family members back in Greece at risk. It was out of fear and caution that our invitees from Breznitza did not show up for the second Picnic. How tragic that the long arm of Greek “democracy” even reaches into Canada!

### **What is Communism?--Common vs. Private Ownership**

Communism comes from the word “common” (shared). The pristine beach could be “common,” shared by everybody to enjoy or it could be “private” and shared by only one or a select few. Access to Hospitals, Schools, roads, and parks are available to everyone if owned by the State. When they are held in private hands, their access is subject to ownership or the ability to pay. Important questions arise. Does the Government enact laws for the benefit of everyone or for the benefit of the privileged? Should wealthy corporations be able to fund political campaigns in the hope that candidates, once elected, will enact laws favourable these very same corporations?

In a Communist State, the means of production--factories, land estates, buildings, and other major enterprises--are totally nationalized. Citizens have the right to work but choosing not to work is subject to questioning by the authorities. There are no private Hospitals or Schools in the Communist system. For the technologically backward Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin and for Mao’s China, the Communist system was vital at the time. It facilitated access to education for all so that the rapid industrialization which was so vital could begin. These countries hoped to catch up to the technologically and economically advanced Western countries. At the time, these Western countries were flush with cash stemming from their colonization of foreign lands worldwide.

One problem with the Communist State is this: Innovation, driven by personal profit motives, is choked by lack of competition. There is no competition between individuals and/or corporations since all means of production are owned

by the State. The incentive to work hard in the hopes of accumulating personal wealth is severely dampened. Another disincentive in the Communist system was that your next of kin could not inherit anything more than your family home and a small parcel of land upon your death. Inheritance is a very strong motivator leading to innovation and the associated accumulation of monetary wealth.

A socially democratic political system as adopted in Canada, Australia and Europe seems to combine the best of the “common” and “private” ownership models. Vital services such as Hospitals and Schools are kept “common” so everyone can have access to them. The means of production if not strategically important to the state, such as factories for commercial goods are often kept in “private” hands. Corporations are allowed to offer publicly-traded stocks on Stock Exchanges. Investors can purchase shares of ownership in these corporations. Furthermore, in these socially democratic countries, the inheritance of a deceased’s assets is guaranteed to those who are designated benefactors of the deceased.

Rapid progress in science and its related technological advances have caused manufacturers to employ extensive automation in the production of their goods. This automation and the quick advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies could eventually lead to mass unemployment. To avoid such a dire economic scenario, some progressive states such as Finland, Switzerland and Canada have started or are contemplating the idea of implementing a base sum of money to be given monthly to all their adult citizens. These Government payments will be made regardless of whether the citizens of that nation are employed or not. Time will tell going forward!

### **SOME IDEAS AND FACTS IN MY WRITINGS ARE OWED TO THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS**

THE BALKANS 1804-2012 by Misha Glenny: THE BALKANS by Dennis P. Hupchik & Harold E. Cox: I APAGOREVMENI GLOSSA by Tassos Kostopoulos:

THE BALKANS by Mark Mazower: APOMNIMONEVMATA, GRAFIKES MARTIRIES TOU Germanou Karavangeli: ELLINIKOS ANTIMAKEDONIKOS AGONAS by Dimitri Lithoksou: I PERIOHI FLORINAS (LERIN) by Dimitri Lithoksou:

PROGONSTVO SHTO TRAE by Sokrat Panovski and Ilia Lafazanovski:

MACEDONIA an illustrated History by Chris Stefou

CHILDREN OF THE GREEK CIVIL WAR by Loring Danforth & R. Van Boeschoten

## PART 3

### RULA--A MACEDONIAN VILLAGE

#### **The People of Rula**

Rula is located on the road connecting the cities of Lerin and Kostur. The road was enlarged and paved with gravel by the French military during the First World War. Many young men from Rula were employed in crushing the stones to gravel. Today, the road is paved with asphalt. To reach Lerin by foot, it takes eight hours. You first pass the Macedonian villages of Turnavo, Oshchima and Zhelevo up to the peak at Bigla and through the Vlah village Pisoderi down to Lerin. To reach Kostur by foot, it takes five hours. You must first pass the Macedonian village of Gabresh, travel up the mountains to the village of Aposkep and then go down to Kostur. On the left side going to Lerin in proximity to Oschima is a road leading to King Samoil's Prespa. On the right side going to Kostur is a road which leads through the Macedonian villages of Breznitsa and Smirdesh further on to Albania. On the left side going to Kostur in proximity to the village Gabresh, there is a road going to the Korestia region which includes the Macedonian villages Drenoveni, Tsernovishta, Posdivishta, Zerverni, Kolomnati and Statitsa. Parallel to the road passing Rula flows the river Bistritsa. On both sides of the river, there is a narrow strip of flat land suitable for agriculture and for pasture. This strip of land is surrounded on both sides by treed mountains accessible by cart and are most suitable for agriculture and for pasture. The village is situated at a high elevation and provides amazing views of the surrounding areas. Connected to the main road is also a side road passing through the village from "Gorni Most" to "Stred Selo" and down to "Dolni Most." This road is suitable for transport by cart or motor vehicle.

In 1886, Rula was recorded as a Christian Slavic Macedonian Exarchate village with one Church and two Inns along the road. Exarchate is the Church of the Bulgarian State and it means that in matters of the Church, the villagers adhere to the teachings of the Bulgarian Patriarch in Sofia while still using the Macedonian language as their Church liturgy. This compares to the Greek Patriarch in Istanbul which adopted the Greek language as the Church liturgy in the Patriarchal

Churches of our villages. Exarchate Schools in the village meant that the Schools taught students in the Macedonian language but were funded by the Bulgarian State and they conformed to the Bulgarian national interests. On the other hand, Patriarchal Schools in the village meant that the Schools taught students in the Greek language and were funded by the Greek State and they conformed to the Greek national interests.

In 1902, Rula had 70-90 families with approximately 600 Exarchate Macedonians living there. Patriarchal Greek liturgy that was used in the village Church was changed to Exarchate Macedonian liturgy in 1870. One Patriarchal Greek School and one Exarchate Macedonian School existed in Rula. The Exarchate School had one teacher and 45 students. The decision by the parents in the village to send their kids to either the Greek or Bulgarian-Macedonian Schools during the Ottoman rule was somewhat naïve. The children were taught how to read and write free of charge but this “schooling” had a profound historical impact on Macedonia and its people. The main purpose of the ultranationalist and expansionist States of Greece and Bulgaria was not to be “charitable” by educating the children in the Macedonian villages. Their end goal was to indoctrinate these children and groom them to fight for their respective political causes. The hope was that these children could eventually be used in the fight to reclaim Macedonian land from the Ottomans for a larger Greece or a larger Bulgaria but not for an independent Macedonia. Even today in countries like Canada where Greek, Bulgaro-Macedonian and Macedonian Churches are allowed to function, we can still feel the impact of the indoctrination of the Greek and Bulgarian-Macedonian Schools in Rula. For instance, Stato Kozaroff from Rula was devoted to the Bulgarian-Macedonian cause as member of the Bulgarian-Macedonian Church St. George. Another villager, Spiro Nastos was devoted to the Greek cause as a member of the St. Demetrious Greek Church. My Father Naso was devoted to the Macedonian cause as a member of the St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Church.

Historian Dimitry Lithodoxou claims that prior to 1903 in the Lerin region, there were 74,940 inhabitants of which 67.3% were Macedonians, 15.7% were Turks, 9% were Albanians and the rest Vlachs, Gypsies and Jews. Everyone whose Mother tongue was Macedonian was also Christian except in the village Zerveni where the Macedonian population was converted to Islam. Of these Christian Macedonians, 39,350 were Exarchate and 11,100 Patriarchal. There were no



Greeks to be seen in the Lerin region up to when 1.3 million Christian “Greeks” expelled from Turkey moved into our Macedonian lands in 1923. This exchange of population based on religious affiliation stemmed from the Lausanne Treaty between Turkey and Greece after the Greco-Turkish War in 1919. According to this Treaty, the Muslim Macedonian population from Zerveni was forced to leave the village in mass and settle in the Cappadocian region of Turkey. Between 1903-1915, all persons from Rula emigrating to United States (such as Sotir Filoff, Vasil Grozdanoff and Kale Stoyanoff) declared themselves to the USA authorities as being ethnically Macedonian upon arrival at Ellis Island.

In 1927, the village of Rula was renamed by the new Greek State (our “Greek Godfather”) first as “Katochori” and later as “Kottas.” Kote Kitsov was a paid “tool” of the Greek Bishop of Kostur Karavangelis. The Bishop’s goal was to use Kote as a hit man to exterminate the Macedonian leaders who fought both for Macedonian autonomy from the Turks and against the Greek indoctrination of the Macedonian people through their Patriarchal Churches and Schools. The same Bishop Karavangelis after realizing that Kote was not of any further use to him, informed the Turks of Kote’s whereabouts. In June 1904, this led to the capture of Kote while he was sleeping in his house in Rula. It was easy for the Bishop to get the information as to Kote’s whereabouts from the Patriarchal Teachers and Priests in our villages. They were also provided information from agents who had been funded by the Greek State.

In 1904, guided by Kote, Pavlos Melas inspected the Patriarchal School in Rula which had 23 male students. He also gave each woman in Rula one Lira as a bribe. He wrote to his wife in Athens later that “all children here know how to write and read Greek but almost none of these children know how to speak Greek.” In 1932, there were 120 “foreign” Macedonian speaking families in Rula all with deep beliefs about their Slavic identity.

Slavic surnames of families in Rula that existed before the Greek annexation of Aegean Macedonia in 1913 were lost for the most part. The nationalistic Greek State always had as its purpose to suppress the identity of all minorities including the Macedonians after conquering Aegean Macedonia. The Mosques in which Muslims worshipped were destroyed. Exarchate Churches in the villages were destroyed, abandoned or restructured. The Jewish Cemetery in Salonica was flattened. The architectural structure of the Macedonian Churches was changed

to mimic the Greek ones. The forced change of our Macedonian family names from Slavic to Greek sounding names was an extremely damaging blow to our Macedonian identity. Another step in the bid to eradicate the Macedonian identity came when Macedonian village names were changed from Slavic names to Greek sounding ones. During the turbulent years from 1913 to 1950, Greek or Slavic names were assigned to families in Rula depending on the years the Greek State or the Macedonian partisans had the control and power over the village. During the German occupation of Greece (1941-1944) and during the Civil War in Greece (1947-1949), the names on record were Slavic. Macedonian Slavic surnames end in "ov" such as in "Kote Kitsov" and "Sotir Rachkov," or in "off" such in Stato Kozaroff," or in "ev" such as "Naso Nichev," "Petre Janakev" or in "vski" such as "Ziso Vasilevski." The names of a group of related families end with "Tsi" as in "Aldupovtsi," "Ilichevtsi," and "Burdjunganovtsi." Almost all first names of men and women in Rula contain two syllables. For example, some men's names are So-tir, Lam-bro, Va-sil, Stav-ro, Do-ne, Trai-ko, and Si-mo. Some female names are Ka-ta, Zo-ia, Stoj-na, Ol-ga, and Sev-da. Few female names are three syllables such as Sta-me-na, Ri-sta-na or Ve-li-ka. The women's first names always end with the letter "a." Their surnames are the same as the Father's or husband's surnames but with the letter "a" added at the end for male surnames ending in "ov" or "ev" or the letter 'a' replacing the letter "i" in male surnames ending with "ski." For example "Trokov-a," "Janakev-a," Sarevsk-i becomes Sarevsk-a." When referring to a wife in relation to her husband's first name, the use of the suffix "itsa" was added to the husband's first name. For example: "Done-itsa" the wife of Done, and "Naso-itsa" the wife of Naso.

There is a clear distinction in Rula between the pronunciation of words containing more than three syllables when compared to our neighbour, Breznitsa. In Rula, the accent is placed on the third syllable from the end of the word whereas in Breznitsa, the accent is placed on the second syllable. For example, the word for "donkey" in Rula is pronounced as "**Ma**-ga-re" whereas in Breznitsa, it is pronounced "Ma-**ga**-re." In Rula, we say "**Pla**-ni-na" (mountain ) versus in Breznitsa, it is pronounced "Pla-**ni**-na." My Father-in-law Methody, who was born in the village of Labanitsa, always laughed when he compared the pronunciation of the word "chicken" in these two villages. In Rula, we say, "**Ko**-ko-shka." In Breznitsa, they say, "Ko-**ko**-shka." In the village of Labanitsa, the word pronunciations were very similar to those in Breznitsa. In Rula, our word pronunciations were very similar to Zhelevo, Turnavo and Oschima.

Families and children who were uprooted to the Communist Bloc countries during the Civil Wars and who have now decided to settle permanently in countries other than Greece have for the most part reclaimed their original Slavic names. The ones emigrating to other countries from Greece have for the most part kept the names assigned to them by the Greek State. People who emigrated to Canada, Australia or America sometimes changed their first names to English sounding names. For example, "Goche" to "George" and "Lena" to "Helen."

The Macedonian language is the Mother and root of all the other Slavic languages. The Macedonian brothers Cyril and Methodius created the "Cyrillic Alphabet" in 842 A.D. in which the Slavic languages could be written. The sounds "Sh," "Ch" and "Zh" are prevalent in the Macedonian language. For example, "mush" = **man**, "cherga" = **carpet**, zhito = **harvest of grain**, "chush chovec" = **foreign person**, "Zhivko" = **man's name**. These sounds do not exist in the Greek language. One other characteristic of the Macedonian language is the creation of the "Actor-Noun" from the "Acting-Verb" by using the suffixes "ach" or "ar" and eliminating the last letter of the acting verb. Examples for "ach" as in "kov-i" = **nail** as compared to "kov-ach" = **the person who nails**; "svir-i" = **play music** compared to "svir-ach" = **the music player**; and "vod-i" = **lead** compared to "vod-ach" = **leader**. Examples for "ar" as in "tzid-i" = **build** as compared to "tzid-ar" = **builder**. Furthermore the suffix "ar" is also used for the creation of the person taking care of animals such in "bishk-i" = **pigs** as compared to "bishk-ar" = **person taking care of the pigs**; "ovts-i" = **sheep** as compared to "ovts-ar" = **shepherd**; and "govenda" = **group of cows and oxen** as compared to "govend-ar" = **person who takes care of the cows and oxen**.

Birth records were never kept or they were lost during the War years. Children from Rula in Romania were assigned birthdates according to their height and these assigned dates became their official birthdates in their passports and other important personal documents. Goche (nickname "Momata") who was actually born in Rula on January 26, 1941 has his date of birth in all his official documents listed as November 8, 1941. Similar arbitrary decisions are found in property ownership records. With the excuse that no property deeds existed to prove ownership, the Greek State confiscated homes, barns and fields that had belonged to Macedonian families for centuries. The families which had been

uprooted from Greece to the Communist States after the Civil War not only lost their Greek citizenship but also their properties in Rula through confiscation.

### **Agricultural Work and Traditions in Rula**

Life in Rula was by nature communal and somewhat medieval. Tools were often quite rudimentary. Oxen were used to pull a cart or to plough the fields. The villagers went out to work in the fields or pasture and tend to their sheep, cows, goats and pigs. The fields were often small, unfenced and scattered all over the agricultural area in Rula. Each family had to be self-sufficient. All houses had two floors. Some homes were very large with fenced-in front yards. In each house, there was a wood chimney (**odjak**) for cooking and heating, a wooden box (**ambar**) used for the storage of grains and flour, a loom (**razboi**) for weaving cloth, blankets or rugs, a wooden bowl for mixing dough for bread, and a cold room to store the potatoes and the barrels full of cheese and salted cabbage (**turshia**).

There were also unique and specialized structures around the house. These specialized structures were built to house the chickens (**kokosharnik**); the domestic animals (**aur**); and a special shed to hold the sheep and/or goats if they were not kept in the barn (**plemna**). There was a kennel for the sheep dogs and a small wooden structure to house the family pig (**kochina**). In addition to the house, each family had a barn for storing the hay or the sheep and/or goats. In front of each barn, there was an unfenced yard (**goomno**) where the hay was dried and where the wheat would be ground by the oxen. The oxen were tied to a post (**stajar**) and as they walked in a circle, their hoofs caused the separation of the kernels from the wheat. There was no electricity in the village before 1970 so hanging kerosene lamps were used for light inside the houses. Hand-held lamps (**kandila**) were used for light at night. Clothes were washed in the river by the women of the village. Large ceramic containers (**stomni**) were used to storing drinking water and for personal washing.

In each house, there was a donkey for transportation, a cow to provide milk and a calf to sell. Chickens were kept for meat and eggs. Two oxen were needed (**tsegvar**) in order to harness the plough and in order to bring back the harvested hay by cart (**kola**) to the barn. Each home had a wood-fired oven (**furna**) in which

to bake bread or in which to roast the Easter lamb. Families with enough hay usually maintained sheep and/or goats. These families were able to make and store significant amounts of the “**belo sirenie**” (cheese) from the sheep and/or goats’ milk. Sheep and goats not only provided the milk necessary to make cheese, they also provided meat to eat, wool to make clothes and blankets, and leather to sell. Each family would have a small garden in which to grow peppers (**piperki**) and onions (**kromit**). Staple crops were wheat, rye, oats, barley, beans and corn. To grind the corn or the beans, villagers used the “**chukalok**” (a long strong stick) to beat the corn or the beans.

Everyone in the village was involved in the communal duties of repairing roads and digging ditches for irrigation. They also took turns in taking the animals to pasture to graze. The pastures were communal. The days allotted for pasture duty depended on the number of animals owned by the household. Cows, oxen, sheep and goats were assembled each morning in a communal spot in the village. The cows and oxen would comprise one group while the sheep and goats would comprise another group. These groups would be taken to pasture by the villagers assigned the duty for that particular day. When finished grazing, the animals would be brought back to the communal spot in the village. From that point on, the animals knew how to return to their owner’s house without any human direction or guidance. Once arriving at their respective houses, the animals would dutifully wait outside the house until someone from the family opened up the doors for them.

Around Springtime each year, each family would buy a small piglet. Naso, my Father, clearly remembers Steve Stavro (the Toronto grocery magnate) as a child guiding his family’s piglets on the road together with his Father while travelling from Gabresh to Rula. They both stayed in Rula for a few days until their piglets were sold.

(As a side note, Steve Stavro went from these humble beginnings to controlling 5% of all the grocery business in Canada. Canadian University students studied his rise in business. He became a well-known figure on the Canadian business scene. In fact, there is an extensive writeup on his rise to wealth and power in a book called The Canadian Establishment).

Before piglets were fully grown, they were sent to pasture for a limited time during the day under the watch of a young person (**bishkar**) paid for his services. The services of the “bishkar” were often paid for with an allotment of grain by the families owning the piglets. The family would feed and take care of this piglet during the year. Fully grown pigs were kept in the “**kochina**” during the Fall months and would be slaughtered right before Christmas. The more the lard the pig would give, the happier the household would be. The lard from the slaughtered pig was stored in containers together with boiled pieces of the pork meat. This lard/meat mixture would be used in cooking throughout the year.

There were wonderful traditions in Rula that everyone could participate in. On January 1<sup>st</sup> every year, the village celebrated “Colenda” (**Babo daimi Kolache**). On this day, children would “steal” all kinds of firewood in order to build the “**Ukalo**” (high pile of wood to be lit at night) in “**Sred Selo**” (the center of the village). The fire was lit at night and would burn until morning. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1966, I remember my brother Paul, just five years old at the time (his face as red as a pepper) approaching the fire. His goal was to carefully grab a piece of charcoal. By putting the charcoal on the cement and spitting on it, the children would then use a “**palitsa**” (a heavy wooden hammer) to hit the charcoal. Much to the delight of the children, the charcoal would then explode with a loud bang.

The 1<sup>st</sup> day of January was also the day when every family made a large “**vialnic**.” A “vialnic” is a coiled pita. A coin was hidden inside this “vialnic.” The family would all gather for a special dinner and the “vialnic” would be cut into individual pieces. Usually, a younger member of the family would turn his/her back to the family and begin calling out the names of each family member at random. It would usually be the Baba (Grandmother) of the home who would distribute these slices of vialnic to the family members as their names were called. Whoever in the family got the slice of vialnic with the coin hidden in it was assured of good fortune for the upcoming year.

Another annual village tradition was held on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The 6<sup>th</sup> of January was called “**Voditsi**.” Young men would jump into the river to retrieve the large cross thrown into it by the village Priest. Petre Janakev’s Vasile was the lucky young man to retrieve the cross in 1964. I retrieved it in 1965 after competing with Vasile’s brother Traiko. The young man who retrieved the cross would be blessed with good fortune for the upcoming year. January 7<sup>th</sup> was called “**Sveti Jovan**.” When Rula was a thriving and populated village, two families were assigned to

host this celebration—one serving “**Gorna Mala**” (the upper neighbourhood of Rula) and the other serving “**Dolna Mala**” (the lower neighbourhood of Rula). Village families would take turns in hosting these celebrations. In later years when the population of Rula became sparse, one family could manage to host the entire village by themselves. The assigned hosts would provide food and entertainment at their home for their guests. Our family’s turn to host this celebration was in 1960. In 1961, it was the turn of Spiroitsa Trokova. In 1962, the celebration was hosted at the home of Risto Bitskov.

Celebrating “Saints’ Name Days” (**Imen Den**) was also very important in our Macedonian villages. Every family celebrated a specific name or Saint’s Day. We called this giving glory “(or “slava”) to the Saint. These Saint’s Days were considered of much greater importance than birthdays. Every household in Rula who had a male family member with a first name corresponding to a Saint’s Name would host an open house for fellow villagers. It was not uncommon that people from neighbouring villages would also attend these Name Days. Usually a group of male adults, after attending Church, would visit all homes in the village who were celebrating that Saint’s Name Day. Guests were traditionally served drinks and appetizers. The “Goche Name Day” (**Giorgiev Den**) is celebrated on April 23 unless this date falls during Lent or Holy Week. If so, the Name Day is then celebrated on the day following Easter.

At Easter, one of the traditions I remember most clearly is the cracking of boiled eggs. Each family would dye eggs the colour of red. Red signifies blood and life. Each family member would pick an egg from a basket of eggs. We would then try to crack the eggs of fellow family members with our egg. If our egg was cracked, we had to relinquish it to the person who cracked our egg. Eventually, one family member would reign supreme and have collected the most eggs. It was not uncommon that villagers would meet in the street and exchange eggs that could then be cracked. The persons who cracked the most eggs was considered victorious and blessed with good luck.

In Rula, there were an unending number of traditions surrounding marriage. For instance, men and women baptized as babies in the same baptismal water were considered brothers and sisters and could not marry. Also, girls were prohibited from marrying boys closer than fourth cousins. Boys were not allowed to marry girls closer than fifth cousins. Two brothers could not marry two sisters.

For a Detailed Description of the Marriage Customs and Traditions in Rula, see “APPENDIX “A.”

### YEARS OF “PECHALBA”

(Site **Pechalbari si Doidoa Samo Moito Libe ne se Vрати**—translated means “All the Young Men who Left for Work Abroad have Returned except my Love Has Not Returned)

Emigration to the New World for “Pechalba” was very common in Rula during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This emigration had happened even at the time of the Ottoman Empire. Young farmers who were physically strong were needed for physical labour abroad. Their hard labour helped to build the infrastructure in the countries of the New World. The “Pechalba” involved leaving the village temporarily in order to find employment in America, Australia or Canada. These “pechalbari” worked on the construction of roads, the building of bridges or in the mines.

My paternal grandfather, Moisia was one of these “pechalbari.” After earning wages in the New World, he returned to Rula and used some of his earnings to build a house, a barn and to purchase a few parcels of agricultural land in Rula. From America, he brought an apparatus for taking photographs. Moisa opened a Coffee Shop adjacent to his house. It was customary that Greek Policemen would stand nearby Coffee Shops in order to hear if the local people conversed in the prohibited Macedonian language. One of these Policemen, upon hearing “**abre Popo bre Mitre**” from one of the locals playing cards in the shop, immediately rushed into the Coffee Shop and threatened Moisia with a heavy fine for non-compliance. Moisia was barely able to communicate with the Policeman in Greek and asked his young son Naso to help him explain. Moisia told Naso to show to the Policeman the sign on the wall which clearly stated that conversation in the local Macedonian language was strictly prohibited. Eventually, the Coffee Shop was closed and the space rented to Sirbe Trokov who used it as a Tailor Shop. Moisia’s photographic apparatus was never found by our family. The only items we found were negatives of family pictures and group photos of fellow villagers.

Some of Moisia’s friends recommended that he use the surplus money he had earned abroad to invest in real estate in Lerin. He was not comfortable with that



idea and instead put his money into the Bank with the hope of earning interest. Unfortunately, Moisia lost all of his Bank savings upon the collapse of the Greek State after the German invasion of 1941.

Moisia, as well as many “pechalbari’ from Rula, worked in Detroit, Chicago and Sydney, Australia. During the building of the famous Sydney Bridge, Moisia worked alongside other villagers from Rula. It is said that Moisia was never laid off from a job. He worked at a slow and leisurely pace and was somewhat unproductive. His village coworkers worked at a brisker pace and needed to take breaks. The bosses who often monitored the workers at a distance mistakenly used the frequency of the workers’ rest breaks as an indicator of their productivity and not their actual work output.

My Mentor Stoian Petrou (my Mother’s Uncle) had come to Canada but eventually decided to return to Greece due to Canada’s harsh climate. Instead of returning to Rula, however, he decided to settle in Athens. He and his brother Naum opened a factory in Athens manufacturing a variety of hats, an accessory which was in big demand at the time. The hat business made them both wealthy. Stoian’s first wife from Rula preferred to remain in Rula and not move to Athens. They mutually agreed to separate. Eventually, Stoian remarried. Both Stoian and his wonderful second wife, Anastasia, were eager to help any villager from Rula. They especially provided help to those Ruleni considered “undesirables” by the Greek State when these villagers passed through Athens in their attempts to emigrate to the countries of the New World.

Some villagers, especially those closely associated with the Bulgarian Exarchate prior to the Greeks coming to our lands, decided to remain permanently in the countries of the New World. Moisia’s sisters Stefana (and husband Traiko) and Petra (and husband Kiril) decided respectively to remain in Detroit, Michigan and Acton, Ohio. None of them ever saw Rula again. Kote, from the Nastou family also decided to remain in America. Kote’s Father was the Priest in Rula after the time when the village converted to the Bulgarian Church from the Greek Patriarchy. Stato Kozarff, a member of the EMPO in the Americas (Macedonian Patriotic Organization fighting for a Bulgarian Macedonia), also decided to never return to Rula. He instead lived out his life in the small enclave called Macedonian village or “Krasno Selo” (Beautiful Village) near the city of Whitby, Ontario, Canada.

When the Second World War started in 1939, many “pechalbari” from Rula were stranded in the New World countries. Due to the war, they were not able to return back to the village. My mother Tinka’s Father, Traiko Ramov, was stuck in Sydney, Australia. My paternal Baba Mara’s brother, Blazhe Trianov, was stuck in Melbourne, Australia. Both of them were eventually able to buy agricultural farms close to major cities in Australia. Over the years, Sydney and Melbourne expanded and the land where these farms were situated became very valuable. Nicho, son of Petre and Olga Dimitrievski and friend of mine from Braila, Romania, bought a ten acre plot of land on the outskirts of Melbourne. The urban sprawl of Melbourne eventually reached his farmland making it most valuable. This caused Nicho to declare jokingly to me in 2004 when I was invited to his farm that: “I was the poorest of the Ruleni but I am now one of the richest. My farmland is now worth ten million dollars!”

### **The Political Situation in Rula During the Years 1941-1948**

On October 28, 1940, Mussolini’s Italian Army declared war on Greece after conquering Albania. This came after the Greek dictator, Metaxas, refused Mussolini’s demand for free passage of Italian troops through Greece to neutral Turkey. Assisted by British reinforcements, the Greeks counterattacked into Albania and the Italians barely managed to stop the Greek advance. Due to the proximity with the Albanian border, the Macedonians from our villages were the first to be dispatched to the front. Rula had its share of casualties.

On April 6, 1941, the German Army marched into Greece. The Greek Government capitulated and the Macedonian soldiers from the Albanian front, disarmed by the Germans, returned home. The Italians were now in charge of our villages. In Vardar Macedonia, the Bulgarians were in charge. The border with Yugoslavia disappeared since the Germans were in power and controlled both regions. The Germans kept military detachments in strategic locations such as on the bridge crossing our River Bistritsa from Rula to Breznitsa. They also routinely patrolled the road from Breznitsa to Zhelevo to ensure that the roads were in good condition for transportation and that the communication lines remained open.

The speaking of the Macedonian language in our villages was not a concern to the Germans or Italians as long as no security threats were present. In Vardar Macedonia, however, the Bulgarians attempted to suppress the Macedonian

identity by using dictatorial methods of assimilation similar to those used by the Greek State. Bulgarian oppression of the Macedonians in Vardar resulted in the creation of the Macedonian Vardar partisan movement under General Tempo in cooperation with Tito's partisans. To escape persecution by the Bulgarian Army, one section of the Macedonian Vardar partisans crossed the border with Greece and ended up in the village Besfina (which is just above Rula). The news that Macedonian partisans had entered our villages spread like wildfire. Villagers came forward and freely spoke their native Macedonian language. They sang their traditional songs, set up Macedonian Schools and began to teach Macedonian history. They created the Organization NOF (Macedonian People's Liberation Front). Many villagers from Rula voluntarily joined the "Goche Brigade" which crossed the border to Yugoslavia in order to fight along with the partisans from Vardar against the German and Bulgarian occupiers. At the same time, the politically left-leaning Greek guerrilla force EAM (National Liberation Front) which included Macedonian fighters took arms in the mountains in order to fight against the Germans.

Naso, a young shepherd who knew the mountains well, was now married to Tinka. He volunteered to help the Resistance against the German occupation (1941-1944). Naso's duty was to be a messenger of confidential documents and to serve as guide to partisans through the mountains. On his return to Rula from a mission guiding a group of partisans through the mountains, he was captured by the German patrol stationed on the bridge connecting Rula and Breznitsa. While the Germans set about to investigate Naso, he was held for observation as a vicious German shepherd dog kept guard over him. Luckily, Naso was freed after one of the German soldiers recognized Naso as the villager who had brought them food by mule. The food had been collected from the villagers of Rula for the German soldiers. This was a stroke of extreme good luck for Naso because he was probably in danger of being executed. Villagers were required to make food "donations" to the German soldiers when requested. The Germans had asked for food from Ruleni as the mountain peak at Bigla was closed due to snow. This had left the German patrol stationed near the bridge between Rula and Breznitsa with no food supplies.

Another amazing stroke of luck for Naso came when he was acting as a messenger for the partisans. He was stopped by a German patrol on his way from Rula to Zhelevo. Naso had a confidential letter in his coat jacket that he was supposed to

deliver to his fellow partisans. The Germans on horses stopped Naso at rifle point and they had their attack dogs at the ready. The Germans asked Naso if he was a "Bandit." Naso replied loudly, "No Bandit!" Luckily, he had the presence of mind to give the German soldiers the Nazi salute and yell "Heil, Hitler!" The Germans decided not to investigate further probably assuming his feeble mindedness and let him go. Naso always told us that if the Germans had ever found the message hidden in his jacket, he would have certainly been executed on the spot.

### **End of the German Occupation and the Start of the Greek Civil War (1944-1947)**

After the intervention in Athens by the British Army in 1944, the Communist ELAS (National Popular Party of Liberation) was forced to disarm. The Police who supported the Metaxas Regime was reinstated by the Greek Government installed by the British in Athens. The freedom to speak in your Mother tongue, which was enjoyed by the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia during the German occupation, now came to an abrupt end. Intimidation, torture and banishment into remote and uninhabitable Greek islands like Macronissos was the norm for the Greek State. The State undertook to silence any leftist-oriented Macedonian speaking person.

Uncle Mito, Tinka's brother was studying Chemistry at the University of Athens. Mito was persuaded by his Uncle Stoian in Athens to go to Australia and join his Father Traiko. This would prevent Mito from being conscripted into the Army during the very uncertain political times in Greece from 1944-1947.

Bolstered by British support, the ultra-right Monarchist Government which was installed in Athens progressively pushed the Communist EAM/ELAS partisans into Greece's north-central and Macedonian mountains. The EAM/ELAS Communists, refusing to accept defeat, decided on Civil War.

### **The Greek Civil War, 1946-1949**

The Communist Democratic Army commenced anti-Government military operations from its northern mountain strongholds. They inflicted a string of defeats on Government forces. Britain washed its hands of the deteriorating situation and handed it over to the United States in March of 1947. President Truman, determined to combat Communism's spread, dispatched military and

economic aid to the Greek Government. The desperate Communists resorted to forced general conscription in the Macedonian regions under their control and they decided to evacuate children to Soviet Bloc States. The Macedonians, called “Slavo-Macedonians” by the Greek Communists, joined the partisan movement with the hope of the recognition of their Macedonian language and culture as promised by the Greek Communists. The Communist forces were defeated in late Summer of 1949. The remnants of the Communist Democratic Army fled into Albania.

Due to its strategic location of the village, Rula became one of the centres used by the Communist leadership in making battle decisions. In Rula, every adult man and woman (250 in number from a total population of 700) were conscripted. Thirteen of them were appointed as Officers in the Democratic Army. Seven of these Officers heroically lost their lives. Altogether, 32 partisans lost their lives in battle. Six women lost their lives during bombardments while treating wounded partisans.

Naso, a conscripted partisan, got wounded in the battle for the city Negush (Nausa) and got sent for medical treatment to the Bulgarian town Berkovica just north of Sofia. In the meantime, the war in Greece ended. After his medical treatment in Berkovica was over, Naso was moved to the city Braila, Romania together with other partisans who came from the eastern region of Greece called Evros. Tinka, together with her in-laws, Moisia and Mara and Tinka’s three and five year old daughters, Lena and Sofa, remained in Rula. Jana Tsavellova, Tinka’s sister also remained in Rula with her young son, Traiko. Jana’s husband, Pane Tsavellovski, an Officer in the Democratic Army, sadly lost his young life in the battle for Lerin. Jana’s daughter, Mara Tsavellova ended up in Romania as part of the evacuation of children in 1948. Conversely, Aunt Stamena, Naso’s only sister, took her two toddler daughters Fila and Anna on foot through the mountains and ended up in Communist Albania. Together with other refugees from Rula, she travelled from Albania by boat and ended up in Communist Poland. Her husband, Vane Janakevski, ended up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, a Soviet Union Republic. Her other children Mahi, Pavle and Kosta had already been evacuated to Communist Romania in 1948.

Now came the time in Rula when villagers had to “zipper their mouths” and “mind their own business!” Rula, as with most of the surrounding Macedonian villages,

was classified as a “Restricted Zone.” This Restricted Zone was supervised by the Greek Army where travel in and out of the Zone needed special documents or special permits issued by the local Police. Army patrols were established in the mountain peak at Bigla, the conjunction of the Lerin-Kostur Road with the road going to Prespa, and in the village of Gabresh.

Farming life in Rula continued uninterrupted. Most of the remaining inhabitants in Rula were women left with young children to take care of. These women were either war widows or their partisan husbands were still refugees in the Communist countries. The names of some of these women are: My Mother Tinka Ramova with daughters Lena and Sofa; Kota ilievska from Alichevtsi with son Vasil and daughter Tinka; Jana Tzavellova from Aldupovtsi with son Traiko; Velica “Klotsa” with son Vasil; Fila Trokova with daughter Gena; Fila Karabakova with son Lefter; Dola Ristovska with daughter Lena, Tsila Bitskova with daughter Lika; Lena Karafilovska with daughter Fila; Olga Dimitrievska with son Simo; Ristana with daughter Mira; and Kata with daughters Sevda and Mara.

All these young women undertook the men’s jobs of ploughing the fields and mowing them with a scythe. Their young sons soon grew to be men. The few young men remaining, some with their wives as refugees in the Communist countries, found that their labour was very much in demand. Not only did Rula need men’s labour but so did the neighbouring villages of Breznitza and Turnavo.

After 1954, Mothers or relatives of evacuated children began to request their return to Greece through the Red Cross. Approval was subject to the Greek State’s approval of the applicants as “desirables.” Later when the Greek Consulate opened in Bucharest, some were able to return to Greece with valid passports. Some of the returnees from Romania were Velica’s Pando and Naso; Doneitsa’s Lambro and Naso; Petre Janakev’s Vasil and Traiko; Moisia’s Naso and Goche; Fila Karabakova’s Lena and Krista; Jana Tsavellova’s Mara; Pope Pavle Ramov’s Lena and Stoina; Vane Markou’s siblings Kosta, Tsena and Rina; and Pando (Shupelka). Most returnees soon adjusted to the agricultural life of Rula. Because they had returned from a Communist country, the Greek State was often eager to use them “under the threat of a gun” to speak on the radio or in front of conscripted soldiers and explain how despicable the life under Communism was. Vashile from Rula was classified as an “undesirable” and was assigned the army position of “soldier with a mule.” When Vashile was forced to speak to fellow

soldiers, he was slapped in the face by an Army officer for exaggerating to the point of total absurdity the plight of the evacuated children in Romania.

The vast majority of children and adults who returned to Rula from Communist countries all eventually ended up emigrating to countries like Australia and Canada. This was true also for those children and adults who had never left Rula. Young women from Rula who did not have sponsors were facilitated in their emigration to Australia by the Australian Consulate in Salonica. The only person of significance remaining in Rula is Pope Pavle's Lika who is assigned as the Caretaker of the Kottas' Museum..

During this period of the Police State and of the military supervision and control in Greece, Vane Markov acted as the tyrant in our village. He was an Officer in the Democratic Army during the Civil War. His Father, Pavle was Greek by ethnicity and served as a Police Officer in Breznitsa. Upon Pavle's marriage to Ristana from Rula, he settled in our village. After the Civil War in 1951, Vane Markov and Traiko Tzavella were the witnesses in the Magistrate's Court in Kostur and accused (in absentia) 63 partisans from Rula of high treason. One of these accused partisans was Naso. He and the other partisans were accused of fighting for the seizure of Greek lands for Macedonia. The unanswered question remains: Was Vane Markov really a "tool" of the Greek State, or after the conclusion of the Civil War was he put under the threat of a gun in order to accuse his fellow compatriots of treason? My guess is that his own life was probably held in the balance. However, in spite of his seemingly tyrannical attitude towards the villagers in Rula, probably to prove his commitment to the Greek authorities, he also ensured that no one from Rula was harmed by the Greek State during this difficult period. Vane Markov is also credited for helping many Ruleni who were considered "undesirables" by the Greek State to emigrate. It is also true that the Greek State was very happy to see Macedonian people leaving Greece especially from the villages bordering the Republic of Macedonia.

## GREEK CIVIL WAR 1946-1949 -Partisans from RULA fighting the "Monarhofascist" Greek Army -1

Surname	First Name	Father's Name	Final Destination	Surname	First Name	Father's Name	Final Destination
Atanasov	Georgi	Naum	LOST in Gramos	Karafilovska	Lena	Petre	
Atanasova	Velica	Naum		Karafilovska	Dota	Trajko	Macedonia
Atanasova	Sevda	Georgi	LOST in Lerin	Karafilovski	Vasil	Stojche	OFFICER-LOST in Nestram
Atanasova	Petra	Georgi		Karafilovski	Kosta	Trajko	Tashkent
Bitskov	Kirsto	Mladen	LOST in Gramos	Keshinov	Pando		
Bitskov	Done	Mladen	OFFICER-LOST in Kamenik	Keshinov	Ziso	Pando	
Bitskov	Slave	Mitre	Bulgaria	Keshinova	Flora	Vasil	Rula-Toronto
Bitskov	Mitre	Slave		Kircheva	Velica	Ilo	
Bitskov	Naso	Mitre	LOST in Gramos	Kostov	Trajko	Vasil	
Bitskov	Kote	Mitre	Rula-Sydney	Kostov	Pando	Vasil	
Bitskov	Stefo	Kote	Rula-Toronto	Kostov	Trajan	Ilo	LOST in Luntser
Bitskov	Risto	Stavro	LOST in Siniatchko	Kostova	Mitra	Vasil	LOST in Lerin
Bitskova	Rina	Mladen		Kostova	Ristana	Ziso	
Bitskova	Tinka	Gele	Macedonia	Kozarov	Pando	Lazo	
Bitskova	Dina	Georgi	Bulgaria	Kozarova	Leftera	Vicho	
Bitskova	Tsila	Mitre		Lazarevska	Velica	Mitre	
Bitskova	Dana	Petre	Rula-Toronto	Lazarevska	Stoja	Ziso	
Bitskova	Sofa	Tanas		Lazarevska	Tsila		Macedonia
Bitskova	Mara		LOST in Rula	Lazarevska	Kata	Done	Rula
Dimitrievska	Olga	Ilo	Rula-Melbourne	Lazarevski	Simo	Vasil	
Dimitrievski	Petre	Nitcho	Braila-Skopje	Lazarevski	Vane	Simo	Rula-Toronto
Dimitrievski	Done	Spase	LOST in Lak	Lazarevski	Done	Chakre	
Dinevska	Zoja	Andrea	Romania	Lazarevski	Done	Stace	Macedonia
Dinevska	Leftera	Stavro	LOST in Rula	Lazarevski	Mitre	Done	
Dinevska	Stojna	Kole		Lazarevski	Mito		OFFICER-Partial Invalid
Dinevski	Sandro	Andrea	Romania	Manevski	Mitre	Ziso	Rula
Dinevski	Jane	Kole	LOST in Lerin	Manevski	Sevda	Trpo	
Dinevski	Lazo	Trajko		Markov	Vane	Pavle	OFFICER-Rula
Filipova	Tomaia	Gligor	Melbourne	Markov	Jane	Trajko	Macedonia
Filipova	Grozda	Mitre		Markov	Naso	Jane	
Gapkov	Ilo	Georgi		Markova	Mitra	Pavle	
Gapkova	Tsveta	Mite		Markova	Christina	Jane	
Georgievska	Kata	Todor		Markova	Zoja	Naso	LOST in Rula
Georgievska	Visha	Stefo		Markovski	Kole	Trajko	Bulgaria
Georgievska	Rina	Naum		Markovski	Tasa	Stojche	
Georgievska	Vasil	Naum		Mishev	Georgi	Vasil	Macedonia
Grozdanov	Pando	Vasil	Macedonia	Mishev	Sofa	Pavle	Macedonia
Grozdanova	Stoja	Dinko	Rula-Macedonia	Mishev	Krsto	Vasil	
Hatseli	Jani	Gligor		Mishev	Lazo	Krsto	LOST in Gramos
Hatseli	Vasilka	Gergo		Mishev	Fana	Krsto	
Hristou	Sofa	Done		Mishev	Fila	Tsilo	Macedonia
Hristou	Kole		Romania	Mishev	Tase	Krsto	Macedonia
Hristou	Mara		Romania	Mishev	Nake	Vasil	Rula-Toronto
Hristou	Trajko	Trpo		Mishev	Mara	Risto	Rula-Toronto
Hristou	Sofa			Nakev	Nake	Trajko	LOST in Sveta Nedela
Hristovska	Ristana	Sotir		Nastevska	Trajka		
Hristovska	Fana	Gergo		Nastevski	Petre	Milo	
Hristovska	Lena	Lazo		Nastevski	Pando	Krsto	
Hristovski	Risto	Todor		Nastevski	Lazo		OFFICER
Hristovski	Andrea	Gergo		Nichev	Mile	Velo	Romania
Ilievska	Kota	Blashe	Rula-Melbourne	Nichev	Sofa	Kole	Romania
Ilievska	Vasilka	Ziso		Nichev	Trajko	Mile	LOST in Siniachko
Ilievski	Kole	Gamo		Nichev	Stojna	mile	Romania-Solun
Ilievski	Naso	Ilo	Tashkent-Melbourne	Nichev	Naso	Moise	Braila-Rula-Toronto
Ilievski	Mitre	Ilo		Nichev	Tinka	Trajko	Rula-Toronto
Janakiev	Risto	Lazo		Nolev	Trajko	Jote	Poland
Janakievska	Latsa	Ziso		Nolev	Sotir	Trajko	
Janakievska	Stamena	Moise	Poland-Skopje	Nolev	Done	Trajko	Tashkent
Janakievska	Trajko	Lazo	Partial Invalid	Nolev	Naso	Nole	
Janakievska	Vane	Velo	Partial Invalid-Skopje	Noleva	Fila	Vasil	
Joanou	Mitre	Naso	Bulgaria	Noleva	Dina	Trajko	
Joanou	Krsto	Mitre	Partial Invalid	Noleva	Olga		
Joanou	Velica	Kole	Bulgaria	Noleva	Vita		
Kambourova	Stefana		Toronto	Papakarafilov	Karafil	Sotir	Poland-Sydney
Karabakov	Velo	Vicho	OFFICER-LOST in Klefti	Papakarafilov	Lena	Tasho	
Karabakova	Fila	Lambro	Rula-Melbourne	Papakarafilov	Vasil	Karafil	Macedonia-Toronto



GREEK CIVIL WAR 1946-1949 -Partisans from RULA fighting the " Monarhofascist" Greek Army-2							
Surname	First Name	Father's Name	Final Destination	Surname	First Name	Father's Name	Final Destination
Papakarafilov	Sotir	Karafil	Poland-Sydney	Steriovski	Risto	Florin	Rula-Toronto
Papakarafilov	Loza	Kote		Tasev	Illa	Trajko	OFFICER-Partial Invalid
Papakarafilov	Jagna	Simo		Taseva	Sofa	Naso	
Papakarafilov	Lambro	Ilo	Bulgaria	Taseva	Fana	Pando	LOST in Gramos
Papakarafilov	Kala		Bulgaria	Taseva	Velika	Dinko	
Papakarafilov	Vasil	Lambro		Tasis	Ikias		OFFICER-Partial Invalid
Papakarafilov	Done	Lambro		Todorovski	Vane		OFFICER-Partial Invalid
Papakarafilov	Gela	Lambro		Todorovski	Kosta		OFFICER-Partial Invalid
Petkov	Risto	Petre	Poland	Todrovski	Kosta		LOST in Kolokutriata
Petkov	Georgi	Risto		Todrovski	Fana		OFFICER-Partial Invalid
Postolovski	Georgi		LOST in Prespa	Todrovski	Pane		
Prespakov	Ilo		Poland	Triandafilov	Trpo	File	
Prespakov	Spiro	Ilo	LOST in Gramos	Triandafilov	Petre	Kole	Rula-Toronto
Prespakov	Stavro	Ilo		Triandafilov	Pando	Petre	
Rachkov	Lazo	Nestor		Triandafilov	Vasil	Krsto	
Rachkov	Mitre	Georgi		Triandafilov	Sotir	Vasil	
Rachkov	Sotir	Vane	Rula	Triandafilov	Lekso	Gele	OFFICER-LOST in Lerin
Rachkova	Zifka	Gele	Bulgaria	Triandafilov	Naso	Gele	LOST in Golino Kamenic
Rachkova	Kala	Risto		Triandafilov	Mitre	Lekso	
Rachkova	Zoja	Nole	Rula	Triandafilov	Ilo	Krsto	Bulgaria
Rachkova	Dala	Georgi		Triandafilov	Naso	Mitre	
Rachkova	Mitra	Stojan		Triandafilov	Petre	Krsto	
Rachkova	Stojna	Risto		Triandafilova	Fana	Trpo	
Ramov	Popo Pavle		Rula	Triandafilova	Velika	Blashe	
Ramov	Simo	Pavle	Partial Invalid-Macedonia	Triandafilova	File	Blashe	
Ramov	Vane	Pavle	LOST in Klefti	Triandafilova	Petra	Mitre	
Ramova	Sofa	Trpo	Rula	Triandafilova	Lena	Tole	
Ristova	Olga		LOST in Rula	Triandafilova	Ristana	Vasil	Tashkent
Ristovska	Lazarka	Mladen		Triandafilova	Stojna	Vasil	Romania
Ristovska	Despa	Ilo		Triandafilova	Dana	Stojan	
Ristovska	Lena	Ilo		Triandafilova	Mara	Tole	
Ristovska	Alexandra	Lazo		Triandafilova	Grka		Rula
Ristovska	Dola	Sotir		Triandafilova	Latsa	Petre	
Ristovska	Sevda	Vasil		Trokovska	Tsana	Naso	Rula
Ristovska	Milka	Vasil		Trokovska	Velika	Kote	LOST in Rula
Ristovska	Flora	Vasil		Trokovska	Kata	Tasho	Macedonia
Ristovska	Rina	Iazo		Trokovska	Fila	Trajko	Rula-Macedonia
Ristovski	Veso	Ilo		Trokovska	Jana	Naum	
Ristovski	Nikola	Ilo	Macedonia	Trokovska	Vasilka	Pando	
Ristovski	Risto-Brnako	Ilo	OFFICER-Partial Invalid	Trokovski	Kote	Naso	Macedonia
Ristovski	Stavro	Veso	LOST in Gramos	Trokovski	Spiro	Naso	Macedonia
Ristovski	Lazo	Georgi		Trokovski	Illa	Naso	OFFICER-Partial Invalid
Ristovski	Vane	Lazo		Trokovski	Srbe	Naso	Rula-Toronto
Ristovski	Vasil	Todor		Trokovski	Risto	Kote	Macedonia
Ristovski	Spiro	Jane		Tzavelov	Naso	Fote	LOST in Malimadi
Ristovski	Risto-Misho	Jane	OFFICER-LOST in Kopanc	Tzavelov	Pane	Naso	OFFICER-LOST in Lerin
Ristovski	Done	Jane	Partial Invalid	Tzavelov	Stojan	Mitre	LOST in Vicho
Sarevska	Slavka	Nole		Tzavelov	Vasil	Mitre	
Sarevska	Mara	Kole	LOST in Rula	Tzavelov	Kole	Mitre	
Sarevska	Jordana	Ilo		Tzavelov	Trajko	Stavro	
Sarevska	Stefana	Done		Tzavelov	Kochaki	Trajko	Rula-Sydney
Sarevska	Evtalia	Done		Tzavelova	Jana	Trajko	Rula
Sarevski	Naum	Kosta	Macedonia	Tzavelova	Lazaritsa		
Sarevski	Naso	Naum	LOST in Malimadi	Tzavelova	Olga	Gele	
Sarevski	Petre	Naum	Partial Invalid	Tzavelova	Elena		
Sarevski	Pando	Naum	OFFICER-LOST in Lerin	Tzavelova	Kata	Stavro	
Sarevski	Vasil	Naum	Partiy Invalid	Tzavelova	Kata	Stavro	
Stavrovski	Vasil		OFFICER-Partially Invalid	Tzavelova	Evterpi	Trajko	
Steriovska	Ristana	gele		Tzavelova	Sofa	Trajko	
Steriovska	Jana	Trpo	Rula-Toronto	Tzavelova	Lena		LOST in Rula
Steriovska	Stato	Todor	Bulgaria	Tzavelova	Trajanka	Trendo	
Steriovska	Done	Stato	Partial Invalid	Vasiliou	Lambro	Ilo	
				Vasiliou	Stefana	Ilo	
				Vasiliou	Vasilka	Stavro	

RULA RESIDENTS PARTICIPATING IN WARS OR DEALING WITH THE GREEK POLICE STATE (1936-1950)							
Rula Residents lost During the Macedonian Ilinden Uprising-1903		Rula Partisans Crossing Yugoslav Border to help Macedonian Fighters against Germans in 1944		THE COURT of KASTORIA #496, Dated June 30,1951 Based on Witnesses Traiko Tzavela and Vane Markou condemns the Partisans from Rula for Treason as fighting for an Authonomous Macedonia. The Court Orders the Greek Authorities to capture and immediately imprison them.			
Alichevski	Sava	Bitskov	Done (Mladen)				
Alichevski	Pavle	Dimitrovski	Petre ( Nicho)	Antoniou	Jane	Lazarou	Tsila
Gamovski	Stojan	Dinovski	Lazo (Trajko)	Athanasiou	Pando	Lazarou	Sotir
Keshinovski	Stojan	Filevski	Krume (Sotir)	Athanasiou	Sevda	Markou	Ristana
Keshinovski	Trajan	Ilievski	Kosta ( Ilo)	Bitse	Ristana	Misiou	Nake
Lazarovski	Done	Ivanovski	Done ( Ilo)	Bitse	Risto	Nitsou	Naso
Papakarafilov	Vasil	Janakiev	Vane ( Velo)	Bitse	Tinka	Nolios	Done
Rachkov	Nestor	Karafilovski	Vasil (Stoiche)	Dimitriou	Petre	Papakarafilis	Eleonora
Tsavelovski	Gheorghi	Kozarov	Pando (Lazo)	Dinopoulou	Fana	Papakarafilis	Trian
Tsavelovski	Stavre	Papakarafilov	Flore (Risto)	Dinoupulos	Alex	Papakarafilis	Vasil
Rula Residents lost in the Greco-Turkish War-1919-1924		Prespakov	Spiro (Ilo)	Dinoupulos	Zoi	Papakarafilis	Lambro
Bitskov	Pavle	Ristovski	Nikola (Ilo)	Georgiou	Veronikan	Ratskou	Mitra
Dimitrovski	Nicho	Ristovski	Risto (Ilo)	Georgiou	Rina	Ratskou	Zoja
Dinevski	Trajko	Ristovski	Risto (Jane)	Giannaki	Kiriakoula	Sarros	Georgi
Filevski	Vane	Ristovski	Spiro (Jane)	Giorina	Pashalini	Sarros	Petre
Nastevski	Pando	Hristovski	Trajko (Gergo)	Hatsoulis	Jane	Sarros	Vasil
Petkov	Gheorghi	Sarevski	Gheorghi (Mitre)	Hristou	Done	Sarrou	Evthalia
Petkov	Risto	Sarevski	Petre (Naum)	Hristou	Kole	Sarrou	Naum
Rula Residents lost (L) or wounded (W) in the Greco-Italian War 1939-1940		Tasev	Ilo (Trajko)	Hristou	Kosta	Tase	Sofa
Keshinov	Trajko-W	Tasev	Stavro (Tole)	Hristou	Risto	Trainos	Todor
Kirchevski	Kirche-L	Trajanovski	Mlade (Blazhe)	Ilia	Kole	Trainos	Ziso
Kostov	Trajan-W	Trokovski	Ilo (Naso)	Ilia	Kosta	Trainou	Evdoxia
Sarevski	Naso-W	Tzavelov	Vasil (Mito)	Ilia	Tsila	Triandafilou	Ristana
Stavrevski	Kole-W	Rula Residents taking part in Anti German Resistance ELAS 1942-45		Ilia	Vasiliki	Triandafilou	Petre
Todorov	Risto-W	Bitskov	Kirsto	Ioanou	Mitre	Trianos	Kosta
Trandafilovski	Done-L	Filev	Trpo	Ioanou	Paskalini	Trianos	Lazo
Youth Rula Residents Members of EPON-1942		Filipov	Krume	Karafilis	Lena	Trianos	Petre
Bitskov	Done	Grozdanov	Pando	Karafilis	Vasil	Trianou	Triandafilis
Dimitrovski	Petre	Ilievski	Kosta	Kosta	Dimitran	Trianou	Paskalini
Ioani	Done	Janakiev	Vane	Kosta	Florika	Trokas	Kote
Kostov	Trajko	Karafilov	Flore	Kottas	Vane	Trokas	Spiro
Lazarevski	Mito	Karafilovski	Vasil	Lazarou	Done	Tsavela	Anna
Nichovski	Tanas	Keshinov	Trajko	Lazarou	Spiro		
Rachkov	Mito	Lazarevski	Done	Rula Residents tortured in the Lerin prison-1947		Rula Residents of the Partizan detachment in Vicho (ELAS) 1942	
Ristovski	Risto	Ramov Pop	Pavle	Trokovski	Ilo	Kostov	Trajko
Ristovski	Misho	Ristovski	Nikola	Trokovski	Spiro	Lazarevski	Sotir
Ristovski	Trajko	Ristovski	Spiro	Karabakov	Velo	Malkovski	Gheorghi
Sarevski	Pando	Sarevski	Kole	Lazarevski	Done	Manevski	Gheorghi
Todorovski	Vane	Sarevski	Petre	Tasev	Ilia	Todorov	Kosta
Tzavelovski	Pane	Tasev	Ilia	Jovanovski	Mitre	Todorovski	Vane
		Triandafilov	Naso	Janakievski	Risto	Trajanovski	Lazo
		Trokovski	Ilia	Rula Residents Punished for speaking Macedonian during Metaxas Dictatorship 1936-1941		Triandafilovski	Goche
		Rula Youth mobilized for war		Grozdanov	Pando	Triandafilovski	Petre
		Bitskovski	Sotir	Kota	Risto		
		Gheorghiou	Pando	Ristovski	Ilo		
		Filevski	Sotir	Ristovski	Nole		
		Hristovski	Andrea	Sarev	Lazo		
		Ilievski	Dimitar	Tashov	Lazo		
		Lazarov	Spiro	Todorov	Risto		
		Miliovski	Pando	Trokovski	Tanas		
		Stergiovski	Sotir				
		Vasilevski	Tase				

## CHILDREN IN ROMANIA FROM RULA PER RECORD OF PARTISANS' AUTHORITIES OF THE DEMOCRATIC ARMY

Bitskovska	Grozda	Janakievska	Mahi	Nichov	Kole	Tasevski	Tole
Athanasovska	Petra	Janakievski	Goche	Nichova	Stojna	Tasevski	Vasil
Athanasovski	Pavle	Janakievski	Ilo	Nolevska	Lena	Tasevski	Ziso
Athanasovski	Risto	Janakievski	Kosta	Nolevski	Pavle	Trajanovska	Sandra
Bitskovska	Alexandra	Janakievski	Pavle	Nolevski	Vangel	Trajanovski	Sotir
Bitskovska	Dana	Jovanov	Lame	Popvasilev	Pando	Trandafilov	Joti
Bitskovska	Tinka	Jovanova	Fana	Prespakova	Lefka	Trandafilov	Pando
Bitskovski	Risto	Jovanova	Sofa	Prespakova	Tipi	Trandafilova	Fila
Bitskovski	Sotir	Kamburovski	Vangel	Prespakova	Velika	Trandafilova	Lena
Bitskovska	Fruta	Karabakova	Lena	Rachkov	Done	Triandafilov	Lambro
Bitskovski	Sotir	Karafilovska	Krista	Rachkov	Leko	Triandafilov	Naso
Bitskovska	Gena	Karafilovska	Lena	Rachkov	Risto	Triandafilov	Pane
Bitskovska	Lena	Karafilovska	Polixena	Rachkov	Taki	Triandafilov	Traiko
Bitskovska	Mahi	Karafilovski	Done	Rachkov	Tome	Triandafilov	Vangel
Bitskovska	Sevda	Karafilovski	Jane	Rachkov	Vasil	Triandafilov	Vasil
Bitskovska	Tasa	Karafilovski	Petse	Rachkov	Vasil	Triandafilova	Stoina
Bitskovski	Goche	Karafilovski	Risto	Rachkova	Fila	Trokov	Risto
Bitskovski	Kristo	Kirchev	Pavle	Rachkovski	Nestor	Trokov	Done
Bitskovski	Pavle	Kirchev	Vasil	Ramova	Lena	Trokov	Pavle
Bitskovski	Traiko	Kostovski	Goche	Ramova	Mara	Trokov	Pandora
Dimitriovska	Fila	Kostovski	Lambro	Ramova	Ristana	Tzavela	Anastasia
Dimitriovski	Nicho	Kostovski	Mitre	Ramova	Stoina	Tzavela	Leko
Dinevski	Kole	Lazarovska	Gira	Ristovski	Mitre	Tzavela	Mara
Dinevski	Vane	Lazarovska	Sevda	Ristovska	Anastasia	Tzavela	Mersa
Georgievski	Naso	Lazarovski	Jane	Ristovska	Mara	Tzavela	Pando
Hanseli	Lena	Lazarovski	Pando	Ristovski	Vane	Tzavela	Sevda
Hanseli	Vangel	Lazarovski	Spiro	Ristovska	Anastasia	Tzavela	Zoia
Hristova	Tasa	Manevski	Done	Ristovski	Pando	Tzavelov	Stavre
Hristovska	Gena	Markovski	Kosta	Ristovski	Risto	Vasilev	Goche
Hristovski	Naso	Markovska	Lena	Ristovski	Georgi	Vasilev	Tace
Hristovski	Sotir	Markovski	Ilo	Ristovski	Risto	Vasilev	Ziso
Hristovska	Gona	Markovski	Mito	Ristovski	Vasil		
Hristovski	Mitre	Markou	Kosta	Ristovska	Evdokia	RULA "MAJKI" to Children	
Hristovski	Vane	Markou	Polixena	Ristovska	Olga	Bitskovska	Loza
Hristovska	Christina	Markou	Risto	Ristovski	Kosta	Janakieva	Kala
Hristovska	Eftimia	Markou	Sevastia	Sarova	Sofa	Joanova	Sofa
Hristovska	Lena	Mishovska	Lena	Sarovska	Anastasia	Karafilova	Gellia
Hristovski	Jani	Mishovska	Zoja	Sarovska	Leftera	Lazarovska	Kata
Hristovski	Risto	Mishovski	Lambro	Sarovska	P	Mishovska	Fana
Ilievski	Traiko	Mishovski	Naso	Sarovska	Vangelia	Noleva	Konstandina
Janakiev	Fote	Mishovski	Pando	Stergiovska	Lena	Petrovska	Stojna
Janakiev	Stavre	Mishovski	Tase	Stergiovski	Goche	Rachkova	Rina
Janakieva	Fana	Nastovska	Trajanika	Stergiovski	Pavle	Ristovska	Despa
Janakievska	Fila	Nastovski	Risto	Tasev	Kosta	Tajanovska	Alexandra
Janakievska	Lena	Nichov	Goche	Tasevski	Jane	Trandafilova	Eftihia

## DESTINATION OF CHILDREN REMAINING IN RULA AFTER THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR IN GREECE-1949

<b>RULA</b>	<b>MELBOURNE</b>	<b>TORONTO</b>
Risto Hristou (Chakre)	Vasil Ilievski (Naso/Kota)	Tala (Fote/Olga)
Naso (Fote/Olga)	Tinka Ilievska (Naso-Kota)	Sofa (Fote/Olga)
Mara Tsavela -(Kole/Kata)	Lefter Karabakov (Velo/Fila)	Panagiota (Fote/Olga)
Sofa Dinopoulos (Lazo/Stoina)	Lena Christou ( Dola)	Vasil (Jane/Flora)
Done Dinopoulos (Lazo/Stoina)	Gena Trokova (Spiro/Fila)	Sofa (Jane/Flora)
Tinka Christou (Mitre Nolev)		Sevda (Jane Flora)
Vangel Triandafilou (Naso/Mara)	<b>SYDNEY</b>	Sevda Tsavela (Kole/Kata)
Lika Ramou (Pope Pavle/ Sofa)	Ilo (Gapkol)	Tsila Triandafilou (Naso)
Sotir Kotsakis (Pope Kosta)	Fila Vasilevska (Karafil/Lena)	Fana Triandafilou (Naso/Mara)
Grozda Kotsaki(Pope Kosta)	Niko (Kote Bitskov)	Lena Nicheva (Naso/Tinka)
Lazo (Slavka)	Kata (Mudoi)	Sofa Nicheva (Naso/Tinka)
Olga (Slavka)	Leftera Christou (Naso Nolev)	Melpa (Petre/Dana)
Mlade Rachkov (Sotir/Zoja)	Tale Tsavela (Pane/Jana)	Vasil Stergiou (Risto/ Jana)
Mite Tsavela (Tsilo Stavrov)	Risto Bitse	Naso (Vigli) (Spiro/Jana)
Pope Vasil (Velika)	Mira (Ristana)	Jana Bitse (Stefo/Dana)
Vane Christou (Vesel)		Tsila Bitse (Stefo/Dana)
<b>FRANCE</b>	<b>RUSSIA</b>	Vangel Kessinis (Ziso/Flora)
Lena Trokova (Fote/Kata)	Mitra (Petre/Dana)	Thomal Kessinis (Ziso/Flora)
		Lika Bitse

Macedonian Language Teachers from Rula			Number of Children in Romania Per Village		
Apostolova	Stoina		Macedonian Name		Greek Imposed Name
Foteva	Victoria				
Ivanovska	Sofa				
Janovska	Kala		Drenoveni	8	Kranionas
Jianakevska	Sofa		Nivitsi	10	Psarades
Mishovska	Fana		Aposkep	12	Aposkepos
Nakevska	Ristana		Nevoleni	14	Skopia
Nolevska	Dina		Kolomladi	22	Makrohori
Rachkovska	Rina		Visheni	22	Vissinia
Ramov	Vane		Blatsa	28	Oksia
Ristovska	Despa		Zelevo	32	Antartikon
Trajanova	Ristana		Novoseleni	33	
Trajanova	Alexandra		Zupanishta	34	
Trokovska	Alexandra		Kosinets	37	
Vasilevski	Vasil		Neret	38	Polipotamon
			Oshtima	39	Trigono
			Kalevishta	40	
			Medovo	40	Milionas
			Trnaa	40	Prasino
			Lobanitsa	41	
			Rabi	41	Lemos
			Olishta	42	
			Pozarsko	44	
			Slimnitsa	44	
			Sarakinovo	48	
			Rosilovo	49	
			Strkovo	49	Plati
			Kondorobi	50	
			Stensko	50	
			German	52	Agios Germanos
			Rodevo	52	
			Krchishta	54	
			Breshteni	60	
			Rudary	64	Kalitheia
			Orovnik	66	Monastiriou
			Statitsa	75	Melas
			Ezerets	76	
			Shestevo	84	
			Posdivishta	86	Halara
			Tresino	90	
			Vimbel	94	Moshohori
			Chuka	97	
			Zagorichani	101	Vasiliada
			Ppli	103	Levkonas
			Breznitsa	119	Vatohori
			Dmbeni	126	
			Bapchor	140	
			Smirdesh	147	Kristalopigi
			RULA	171	Kottas
<b>Students of Fotia Stefovskaa-the Macedonian Language Teacher in Oradea-1952-1954</b>					
Atanasovski	Pavle	High School-Craiova			
Dinevski	Leko	Skopje-Engineer			
Dinevski	Done	Skopje-Engineer			
Dinevski	Vane	Greece-High School			
Georgiev	Tanas	Greece-Fine Arts			
Hristova Olga	Olga	Skopje-Chemistry			
Janakieva	Mahi	Skopje-Profesor			
Lazarovski	Jane	Skopje-High School			
Manov	Done	Sydney-Inventor			
Mishov	Pando	Toronto-Pharmacy			
Mishova	Lena	Toronto-High School			
Mishovski	Naso	Skopje-Engineer			
Nastovska	Tala	Toronto-Lawer			
Nichev	Goche	Toronto-Physics			
Ramova	Lena	Toronto-High School			
Ristova	Olga	Skopje-Profesor			
Ristovska	Mara	Romania-Engineer			
Ristovska	Gena	Skopje-Engineer			
Ristovska	Tasa	Romania-Professor			
Ristovski	Pando	Skopje-Engineer			
Ristovski	Sotir	Skopje-Engineer			
Tasevski	jane	Skopje-Engineer			
Tasevski	Tsile	Skopje-Engineer			
Tasevski	Tole	Skopje-Engineer			
Trendafilovska	Fila	Greece-High School			
Trokov	Done	Toronto-High School			
Trokovska	Pandora	Skopje-Dental			
Tsavella	Mara	Toronto-High School			
Vasilevski	Ziso	Toronto-Engineer			



JOURNEY OF A TYPICAL FAMILY FROM RULA- THE FAMILY OF VELO NICHEV					
1	2	3	4	5	6
VELO-Nichev	MOISE-Mara Rula, Detroit- Sydney,Rula	STAMENA-Vane Janakevski Rula, Poland, Russia, Skopje  NASO-Tinka Ramova Rula, Bulgaria, Romania, Rula, Toronto	MAHI-Stefo Markovski PAVLE-Gala KOSTA-Gala Rula, Romania, Russia, Skopje FILA ANA-Dragi Zlatanovski Rula, Poland, Russia, Skopje  GOCHE-Linda Evanoff Rula, Romania, Rula, Toronto LENA-Stavro Jordanou Rula, Toronto SOFA-Tommy Litsas Rula, Toronto  PAVLE-Magda Rula, Toronto	Lena,Alexandar, Eli Lena, Marina, Tania Olga, Irina, Tsveta  Jane, Ljube  CHRISTINA-Ryan McIsaac KATERINA-Oliver Fitzgerald STEFANA-Mike Haftar  STEVE-Tiziana KATHY-Tom Dimoff TOM-Carolynn ALEX, NICOLE	GEORGE, CHARLIE KALINA, ATTEO VICTORIA, ALEXANDRA  KATELYN, SOHPIE, MARA, LEO CHRISTOPHER-THOMAS, ZOE JENNIFER, AMY, JULIE, AMANDA
	MILE-Rula, Romania	TRAJKO, STOINA, KOLE			
	STEFANA-Trajko Rula, Detroit	ROSE-Done-Temelkov  ZIFKA-Paul GRACE-Steve  OLGA-	PATSY-Dewitt White Detroit CHRISTINA-Larry LINDA-Mark JOHN-Nancy Paul, Joanne , Kevin Steve, Kathleen, William, Carol, Cindy, Judy. Peter, Mark, Sherise	HEATHER-Chip HILARY-Larry	ASHLEY, CARSON
	PETRA-Rula,Acton	CARL, EVA, SOPHIA			
	SOFA-Rula	NASO Triandafilou Rula/Toronto,Rula  OLGA-Fote Rula, Toronto  FILA, LEXO, NAKE,TINKA	LAZO-Mara VINGEL- Magda FANA-Gheorgi  TALA-Steve SOFA-Niko= OLGA, DINA, TOM PANAGIOTA-Chris	MARIA	

JOURNEY OF A TYPICAL FAMILY FROM RULA- THE FAMILY OF KIRE PETROV					
1	2	3	4	5	6
KIRE Petrov	STOJAN-Anastasia Rula,Canada-Athens	ALIKI Hadjigeorgiou	CHRISTINA		
	NUNE-Irini Rula, Athens	RISTO			
	PANDO-Sofa Rula, Toronto	CHRISTA-Stavro Belkos SOTIR-Diana TSILA-Sirbe Trokov	JOHN, DAVID LENA, TINKA		
	SOFA-Trajko Ramov Rula,Sydney	NASO-Tinka Ramova Rula, Bulgaria, Romania, Rula, Toronto  JANA-Pane Tzavelov Rula, Sydney  MITO-Athina-Rula Sydney	GOCHE-Linda Evanoff Rula, Romania, Rula, Toronto LENA-Stavro Jordanou Rula, Toronto SOFA-Tommy Litsas Rula, Toronto  PAVLE-Magda Rula, Toronto  MARA-Zifko Mangovski TRAJKO-Mara  CHRIS, PHILIP, SOPHIE	CHRISTINA-Ryan McIsaac KATERINA-Oliver Fitzgerald STEFANA-Mike Haftar  STEVE-Tiziana KATHY-Tom Dimoff TOM-Carolynn ALEX, NICOLE  SUZIE-Edwardo Alzamora ANA, PETER	GEORGE, CHARLIE KALINA, ATTEO VICTORIA, ALEXANDRA  KATELYN, SOHPIE, MARA, LEO CHRISTOPHER-THOMAS, ZOE JENNIFER, AMY, JULIE, AMANDA  JUSTIN, EVAN, AIYANA
	ZOIA-Nake Detroit	ANA			

JOURNEY OF A TYPICAL FAMILY FROM RULA- THE FAMILY OF FILE FILIPOV					
1	2	3	4	5	6
FILE Filipov Filevtsi Tzavela Stoglanou	SOTIR- -Dinka Tsafarova	DONE-Grozda	SOTIR Stoglanou-Dina Rula, Toronto  STOINA	ALEX, TONY, JIMMY PHILIP-Denise MARY-Roy Franzolini	PATRICK, RYAN ERIC-Jessica IAN- Melissa MICHAEL-Stephanie
		RISTANA-Risto Todorov Macedonia	KALA-Mito Rachkov KALA-Vane Markou Rula MITRE, VANE, KOSTA, GONA Skopje	DONE STAVRO, LENA	
		DOLA HRISTOVA Rula	VANE TASA-Romania LENA-John-Melbourne		
		KRUME Philipov- Thomai Hantsella Melbourne	TASE VELIKA		
	TRPO- Despa Vasilevska	SOFA- -Pope Pavle Ramov Rula	RISTANA-Kole Dinevski Rula,Romania, Rula MARA-Jani Koufalambros Athens SIMO Skopje  VANE, LIKA Rula LENA-Denny Goutzamanis Toronto STOINA-Done Mangou Toronto	ALEX  ADRIANA, MIMI  VANE, PAVLE  JOHN, MICHAEL  SOPHIE, CHRISTINE	
		YANA-Risto Stergiou Rula,Toronto	VASIL-Ianoula Rula,Toronto PAVLE-Rosa Rula,Romania, Toronto FLORA-Morfi Zahristou Greece FILA-Ilo Angelopoulos Toronto	DINA, TANIA  JOHN, GEORGE  ARISTIDIS,HELEN	
		SEVDA-Lazo Manoff Sydney	DONE- Lena Sydney ANTULA, LENA, GEORGE		
		KARAFIL Vasilevski-Lena	VASIL-Dina-Skopje, Toronto TASE-Meni-Poland, Skopje, Hamilton ZISO-Lucy-Romania, Skopje, Hamilton GHEORGH-Lena- Romania,Toronto SOTIR-Desda-Sydney FILA-Risto Bitskov-Sydney	BILIANA LENA, PHILIP JULIANA, VANE	

JOURNEY OF A TYPICAL FAMILY FROM RULA- THE FAMILY OF MITRE TRIANDAFILOV					
1	2	3	4	5	6
MITRE-Yordana Triandafilov		GROZDA-Done Filipov	SOTIR Stoglanou-Dina Rula, Toronto  STOINA	ALEX, TONY, JIMMY PHILIP-Denise MARY-Roy Franzolini	PATRICK, RYAN ERIC-Jessica IAN- Melissa MICHAEL-Stephanie
		SPIRO Toronto	EVA-Giamos		
		NASO-Tinka Temovska Rula	PANDO, LENA, TSILA Toronto		
		GEORGE-Latsa Rachkova	GENA Romania		

JOURNEY OF A TYPICAL FAMILY FROM RULA- THE FAMILY OF KIRSTO TRIANDAFILOV				
1	2	3	4	5
KIRSTO- Trandafilov	PETRE-Lena Rula	VASIL-Mahi Romania, Rula, Toronto TRAIKO-Maria Romania, Rula, Toronto	MARIA, LENA, JANAKI  LENA-Sam Marchelo PETRE-Rholyn AFRODITE-Sasho Bozonovski	MATTHEW, STEVEN NATHAN, LUKE
	TSILO (VASIL)-Lena Rula	SOTIR- Macedonia, Rula, Ausralia STOINA VANGEL	RISTO, SOFA,	
	ZOIA-Trendo Negochani	DONE,PETRE, PAVLE, SIMO		
	DONE-Eli Rula	LAMBRO-Livia Romania, Rula, Toronto  NASO-Athina Romania, Rula, Toronto	ELI-Virgil LORI-George  ELI TANIA VICKY	
	ILO-Dafina Drenoveni	SPIRO, SEVDA, KUZO, DONE		

JOURNEY OF A TYPICAL FAMILY FROM RULA- THE FAMILY OF NASO SRBINOV				
1	2	3	4	5
NASO Srbinov	GHEORGHI France			
	SPIRO- Fila	PANDORA- Sotir Romania, Skopje	STEFO, TINKA	
		PAVLE Romania, France	PHILIP, CAROLINE	
		DONE Romania, Skopje, Toronto	STOINA-Jimmy Dimovski ROSA-Steve Mangos LINDA- Danny Brown MARA-Patrick James	LOLA, MAX VELIKA, TAEA, NATALIA GEORGE, DANIELA, ANTHONY NATASHA, OLIVIA, TAYLOR
		GHENNA- Vasil Ilievski Rula, Melbourne	DINA-Heath Fitzgerald NATASHA-John ARTHUR-Christy	ORIANA, TALIA JOHN, DANIELA, BIANCA ZACHARY, HARRISON, XAVIER
	SIRBE-Tsila Rula, Toronto	LENA-Tony TINKA-Louie		
	KOTE- Kata Rula, Skopje	LENA		
	ILO Rula, Skopje			
TSANA Rula				



Similarity between the Macedonian and the Russian Languages

<u>Russian</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>English</u>
Babushka	Grandmother	pismo	letter
Beloe	White	pivo	beer
Berite	Do take some	po ulitse	along the street
Bez	Without	pokazite	show me
bilo	(it) was	ponedelnik	Monday
Brat	brother	posvonite	ring/ telephone
chas	hour	povtori	repeat
chetire	four	priatno	pleasant
chto	what kind of	prinesou	bring
da	yes	prostite	excuse me
daite	give (me)	prosto	simply
daleko	far	rabotaet	works
dedushka	grandfather	razboudit	to wake
den	day	riba	fish
desiat	ten	samo-letom	by plane
deviat	nine	sestra	sister
do	as far as	sin	son
dobrii	good/kind	skazite	tell me
dom	house/building	skolko	how much
druzba	friendship	slushaou	I'm listening
dva	two	sok	juice
gde	where	sreda	Wednesday
govorite	speak	sto	hundred
grushi	pears	subota	Saturday
ili	either	tochno vremia	exact time
imia	first name	togda	then
izvinite	excuse me	tolko	only
jabloki	apples	toze	too
k nam	to us	tri	three
kak	how	ulitsa	street
kakoi	what kind of	utro	morning
kogda	when	vas	you
malenkii	small	vashe	yours
milosti prosim	welcome	vchera	yesterday
mir	peace	vecher	evening
moi	my	vkusno	tasty
mouz	husband	voda	water
mozno	it's possible	vpit	to drink
na	on/to	vremia	time
nalevo	to the left	vtornik	Tuesday
napravo	to the right	za	for
nasha	our	za nas	to us
ne	not	zaniat	trade
nedaleko	not far	zapishou	write down
ochen priatno	pleased to meet you	zdrovie	health
okrivaetsia	opens	zemle	earth
on	he	zena	wife
ona	she	zenat	married (of man)
ovoshhti	vegetables	zivete	live
piat	five	znaete	you know

Αντώνης Ανδριανός	Τραϊνός Λαδίσκος	Αχιλλεύς Δουκιάδης
Ναύπλος Οσολύδης	Ναύπλος Τσιγγιός	Μαχάνης "
Γεώργιος Β. Κουρδανδής	Τσιγγιός Παπαρούλης	Κωστάς Μανδρινός
Δρόσος Τραϊνός	Μουζιάς "	Γιάννης Μάτσο
Ναύπλος Τραϊνός	Καίης "	Δρόσος Λαδίσκος
Κινζιάς Τραϊνός	Γιάννης Κερίτης	Δρόσος Μανδρινός
Σωτήρης "	Καίης "	Χρήστος Στάσος
Μαχάνης "	Ασάκης Νίκας	Τσιγγιός Γαβιζός
Χρήστος Τσιγγιός	Αρμένιος Λαππός	Αρμένιος Λαγιάρης
Δρόσος Νάσος	Ναύπλος "	Αρμένιος Νάσος
Τραϊνός Γαβιζός	Αδαμάκης Τσιγγιός	Γιάννης Τσιγγιός
Χρήστος Κερίτης	Ναύπλος Ουζιάς	Γιάννης Τριανταφύλλος
Τραϊνός Νάσος	Νάσος Παύλος	Αρμένιος Γιάννης
Γεώργιος Τσιγγιός	Μαχάνης "	Δρόσος Τσιγγιός
Αρμένιος Κερίτης	Νάσος Τάσος	Μουζιάς Τραϊνός
Κυριάκος Κερίτης	Σωτήρης Τριανταφύλλος	Βασίλης Χρήστος
Βασίλης Νεφελίτης	Βασίλης "	Γιάννης Μάτσο
Ευθύμιος Οσολύδης	Αρμένιος Τριανταφύλλος	Αρμένιος Χρήστος
Νάσος Νάσος	Νάσος Λαππός	Καίης Μάτσο
Κινζιάς "	Βασίλης Τσιγγιός	Καίης Λυδίας
Κυριάκος Κερίτης	Ναύπλος "	Τραϊνός Νάσος
Γεώργιος Χαλκιάς	Καίης Τσιγγιός	Νάσος Χ. Τσιγγιός
Καίης Λαδίσκος	Καίης Τσιγγιός	Καίης Κωστάς
Καίης Λαδίσκος	Καίης Τσιγγιός	Καίης "
Χρήστος Τριανταφύλλος	Βασίλης Μανδρινός	Τσιγγιός Τσιγγιός
Οσολύδης Λυδίας	Μαχάνης Μανδρινός	Ασάκης "
Τσιγγιός Οσολύδης	Αρμένιος "	Κινζιάς Λαδίσκος

THE ABOVE LIST INCLUDES THE NAME OF ALL THE ADULT MALE VILLAGERS IN RULA IN THE 1920'S. LISTS LIKE THESE WERE USED TO RECORD THE NUMBER OF DAYS THESE MEN WORKED ON COMMUNAL PROJECTS THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE VILLAGE. FOR INSTANCE, DIGGING DITCHES, BUILDING OR MAINTAINING BRIDGES, FENCES, ETC. THE MEN LISTED HERE ARE THE GRANDFATHERS AND GREAT GRANDFATHERS OF THE CURRENT RULENI.





RULA AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES



FROM THE MID 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY UNTIL THE MID 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, MACEDONIA AS WELL AS ALL THE BALKAN LANDS WERE COMPLETELY IN THE HANDS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE. THE MODERN BALKAN STATES WERE CREATED AS FOLLOWS: GREECE (WITHOUT THESSALY AT THE TIME) WAS CREATED IN 1821. BULGARIA AND ROMANIA WERE CREATED IN 1861. SERBIA WAS CREATED IN 1877. FOLLOWING THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR OF 1877-78, THE SAN STEFANO TREATY GAVE BULGARIA MOST OF MACEDONIA (FROM THE TURKS). THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN IN 1878 REVERSED THE SAN STEFANO TREATY AND RETURNED MACEDONIA BACK TO THE TURKS. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN GREECE, BULGARIA AND SERBIA DURING THE BALKAN WARS AGAINST THE TURKS (1912-13) WAS TO CONQUER MACEDONIAN LANDS FOR THEMSELVES. AFTER THEY SUCCESSFULLY EXPELLED THE TURKS FROM MACEDONIAN LANDS, THESE THREE ALLIES BEGAN TO FIGHT AMONGST EACH OTHER FOR CONTROL OF THE CONQUERED LANDS. BULGARIA WAS COMPLETELY DEFEATED IN THIS BATTLE. THIS RESULTED IN THE SHADED AREAS ABOVE BEING CLAIMED BY BOTH GREECE AND SERBIA. ULTIMATELY, THE TREATY OF BUCHAREST DECLARED THAT MACEDONIA WAS TO BE DIVIDED AS PER THE MAP ABOVE. VARDAR MACEDONIA (40%) WENT TO SERBIA. AEGEAN MACEDONIA (50%) WENT TO GREECE. PIRIN MACEDONIA (9%) WENT TO BULGARIA. FINALLY, 1% OF MACEDONIA WENT TO ALBANIA (MALA PRESIPA).



**RULA—DOLNA MALA**



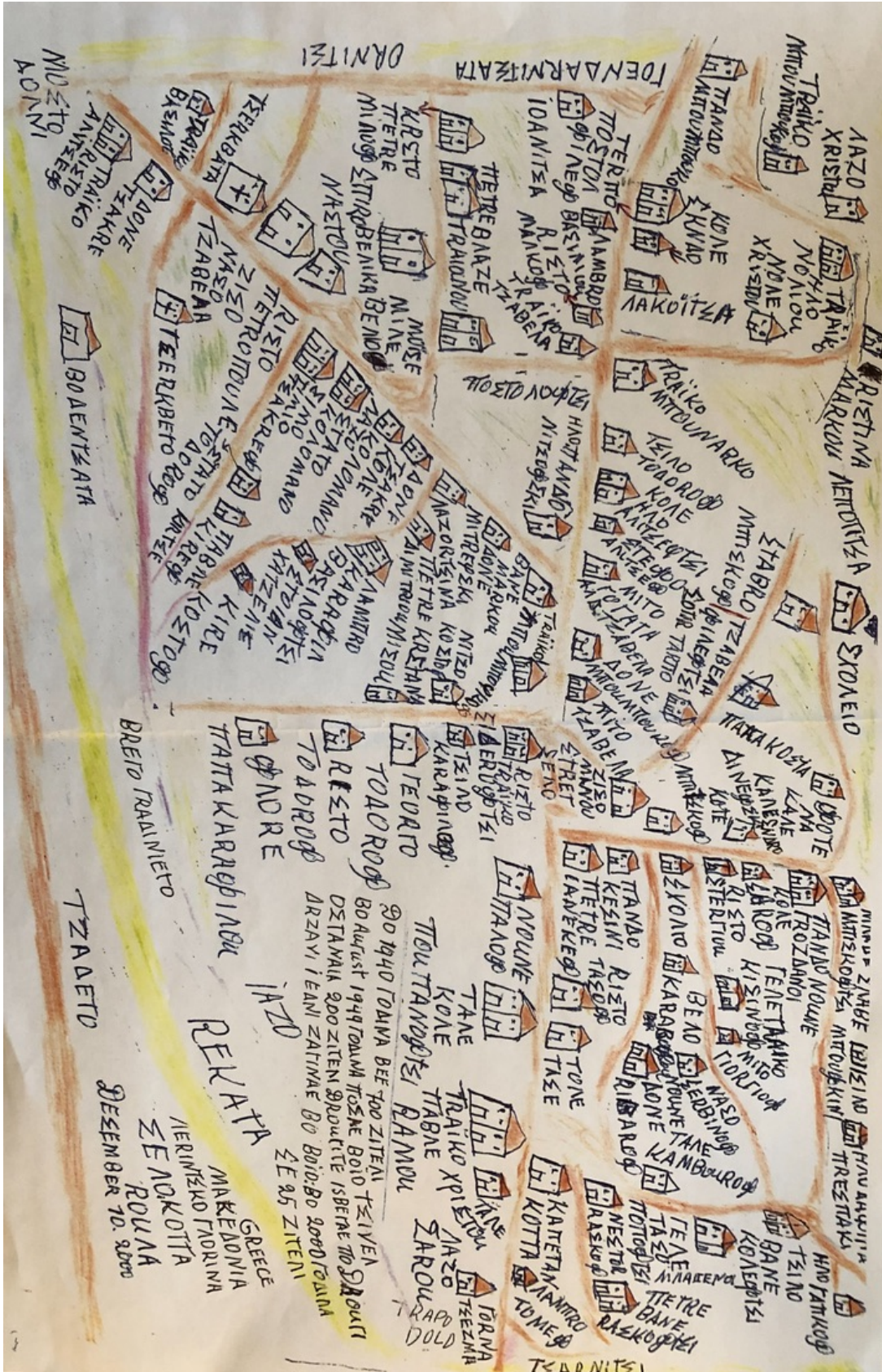
**ANOTHER VIEW OF RULA**



**RULA—CENTRE OF VILLAGE**



**RULA—GORNA MALA**



MAP OF RULA INDICATING THE HOMES OF VILLAGERS IN 1940—HAND DRAWN BY NASO





**PHOTO OF RULA TAKEN FROM ROADSIDE  
A DONKEY STANDING IN FRONT OF CROPS**



**CHURCH IN RULA WITH BELL TOWER DONATED BY STOIAN PETROU**



**KOTE KITSOV'S HOUSE**



**PHOTO TAKEN IN RULA (JANUARY 2021)**



**VIEW OF RULA FROM "LEPOTITSA"**



**ROAD TO THE RULA'S VILLAGE CENTRE (SRED SELO) FROM DOLNI MOST**



**THE FRONT YARD OF MOISIA'S HOUSE (2003)**



**SADLY, NATURE HAS TAKEN OVER HIS ABANDONED HOUSE**



**POPE PAVLE RAMOV'S HOUSE (JANUARY 2021)**



**PHOTO OF THE ALDUPOVTSI FAMILY HOME (JANUARY 2021)**



**PHOTO OF THE OLD SCHOOL IN RULA TAKEN IN THE 1930'S BY MOISIA**



**PHOTO TAKEN AT A PICNIC OF THE TORONTO RULENI IN THE 1990'S**



**CHILDREN FROM RULA IN SINAIA, ROMANIA (1950)**



**CHILDREN IN RULA WHO HAD NOT BEEN EVACUATED TO A SOVIET BLOC COUNTRY**



**ANOTHER PHOTO OF CHILDREN REMAINING IN RULA**



**GOCHE AND HIS RELATIVES IN ROMANIA**





**NASO AND PETRE DIMITREVSKI IN ROMANIA WITH THEIR RELATIVES**



**HELEN, SOPHIE, LIKA AND FRIENDS**



**GOCHE AND FRIENDS WITH YOUNG PAUL**



**GOCHE WITH ZISO KESSINIS, LIKA AND HER MOTHER, SOPHIE**



**PHOTO OF RULA'S POPE AND HIS FAMILY TAKEN IN THE 1930'S**



**PHOTO OF A FAMILY IN RULA TAKEN IN THE 1930'S**



**POPE PAVLE TOGETHER WITH HIS FAMILY, TINKA AND OTHERS**



**GOCHE WITH RULENI IN THE 1960'S**



**PECHALBARI FROM RULA IN THE 1930'S (LOCATION UNKNOWN)**



**PHOTO TAKEN IN RULA OF LEKO, VASIL, GOCHE, NASO & VASILE (2003)**



**CLASS OF STUDENTS WHO REMAINED IN RULA WITH THEIR TEACHER, GAVRE (1960'S)**



**YOUNG PEOPLE FROM BREZNITSA REPATRIATED FROM ROMANIA (LATE 1950'S)**



**RULENI AT PICNIC IN TORONTO (1980'S)**



**RULENI AT ANNUAL PICNIC HELD AT KRASNO SELO NEAR WHITBY, ONTARIO (1970'S)  
STATO KOZAROFF (SECOND FROM RIGHT) AND NASO (FAR RIGHT)**



**RULENI IN TORONTO WITH DONE FROM SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA AS OUR SPECIAL GUEST (1970'S)**



**GOCHE WIH ARM AROUND HIS DEAR FRIEND, GIORGI BALKOS FROM ZHELEVO  
TINKA, NASO AND PAUL IN FRONT ROW**





**GOCHE WITH RULENI (1980)**



**NASO, HIS SHEPHERDING PARTNER PETRE AND BABA MOISITSA**



**DEDO MOISIA, NASO, TETA CHRISTA AND LIKA**



**PAINTING DEPICTING THE HARVESTING OF HAY IN OUR VILLAGES  
BY LAMBRO TOMEV FROM ZHELEVO DONE IN THE 1970'S**



**PAUL WITH OTHER RULENI MILKING SHEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS**



**PAINTING DEPICTING HOW THE WOMEN IN OUR VILLAGES LAUNDERED THEIR CLOTHES  
BY LAMBRO TOMEV (1970'S)**



**STOIAN PETROU, HIS WIFE ANASTASIA AND BROTHER, NUNE (STANDING BY BACK WINDOW)  
AT THEIR HAT FACTORY IN ATHENS (1930'S)**



**PAINING DEPICTING HOW WHEAT WAS HARVESTED IN OUR VILLAGES  
BY LAMBRO TOMEV (1970'S)**



**DEPICTION OF A SHEPHERD WITH HIS DOG  
BY LAMBRO TOMEV (1970'S)**



**DEPICTION OF WOMAN CARRYING SPRING WATER WITH HER "STOMNA" (JUG)  
BY LAMBRO TOMEV (1970'S)**



**OLDER PEOPLE DANCING IN THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE (STRED SELO)  
DEDO MOISIA (FAR RIGHT)**



**YOUNG GIRLS DANCING IN RULA'S STRED SELO  
SOPHIE (MIDDLE DANCER)**



**FOTE, GOCHE, BLAJE, NASO AND LEKO IN RULA (1960'S)**



**TRAJKO "PUPLETO" WITH VELIKA'S VASIL & NANE IN KONOMLATI (1960'S)**



**PANDO, VASIL, GOCHE AND JANE PLAYING IN RULA (1960'S)**



**GOCHE WITH LAMBRO KOZAROFF FROM OSCHIMA AND HIS BAND (1960'S)**





**GOCHE AND BLAJE LEADING "CHAKRE" RISTOS' WEDDING IN RULA (1960'S)  
GOCHE (BEHIND FLAG BEARER)**



**HELEN LEADING THE YOUNG GIRLS OF RULA IN A DANCE (1950'S)**



**PANDO AND GOCHE IN FRONT OF THE WATER FOUNTAIN (CHESMA) OF RULA'S DOLNA MALA (1960'S)**



**TINKA AND NASO DANCING IN RULA WITH THE SOPHIE'S FUTURE IN-LAWS FROM STATITSA TO CELEBRATE SOPHIE'S ENGAGEMENT**



**POPE VASIL TOGETHER WITH GOCHE'S NIECE KATHY DIMOFF IN FRONT OF HIS RESTAURANT "ROZA VILLA" IN ZHELEVO**



**TRAIKO TRIANDAFILLOV FROM RULA LEADING THE PUSCHENO HORO**



**DOLA, TRAIKO TRIANTAFILLOV WITH CHILDREN AND HIS FATHER PETRE IN RULA**



**RULENI IN TORONTO GATHERED TO CELEBRATE THE VISIT OF SIMO RAMOV FROM MACEDONIA**



**TYPICAL DRESS OF YOUNG MACEDONIAN WOMEN FROM THE LERIN REGION VILLAGES. THIS BEAUTIFUL PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN BY A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER**

## CONCLUSION and LIFE IN TORONTO TODAY

The Macedonian “soul” left Rula many years ago. A good part of this “soul” disappeared in 1948 when Rula was emptied of the young children (Begalci). The Red Cross had aided in evacuating these children to get them to safety in the Communist countries. The Macedonian “soul” left Rula forever in 1949 when Rulski partisans and their families fled to avoid danger. Their future at the hands of the Greek Police State was certainly quite uncertain. The Police State in Greece had been financed by the Truman’s Marshal Plan and supported by America’s tanks and airplanes.

After the Macedonian “soul” left Rula, the village was slowly deserted. In its heyday, Rula had a population of over 700 villagers. In 2020, there are less than 20 people left in Rula. Most of the homes have now fallen into disrepair and are uninhabitable. Roofs have caved in and large trees have sprung up from the centre of these homes. The same is evident in many of the other Macedonian villages in the region. Methody’s village of Labanitsa currently has no homes standing. It is just a maze of broken rock and stones. A passerby would never know that this was once a thriving and vibrant village. The Church in Labanitsa is the only structure still standing. The Churches in the villages are usually the last to collapse since they are built more solidly than regular homes.

Uprooted from Rula, many of our village families settled in Toronto. Many who came to Canada for “pechalba” never returned to Rula. Some families and names are: the Gapkovtsi, Mano Vasiloff, Fote Nichoff and Stato Kozaroff. Others, mostly soldiers serving the Greek Government during the Civil War or partisan deserters, came directly to Toronto immediately at the conclusion of the War. Some names are: Spiro Nastos, Risto Stergiou, Lambro Vasiliou, and Stefo Bitse. Still others were sponsored by their sons or daughters. Some managed to emigrate to Canada through marriage or through sponsorship by other relatives. Usually the first to arrive in Canada would then eventually sponsor other family members from Greece and from all over Eastern Europe. As a consequence of the Civil War in Greece, around 50-60 families from Rula ended up living in Toronto permanently.

A Society was established by the Ruleni here in Toronto. The first name of this organization “**Sveta Bogorodica**” (the Patron Saint of Rula). The name of this

Society was later changed to “The Benevolent Society of Rula-Kotta.” One of the main driving forces of this Society was Sotir Filevski and his family. The Ruleni here in Toronto owe Sotir a big debt of gratitude for the efforts he put into organizing our Annual Picnics and Dances. For our Dances, we would often join together with the villages of Besfina and Turnavo. One particularly successful Dance was held at the La Rotonda Ballroom here in Toronto. Rula and Turnavo jointly hosted this wonderful Dance where over 800 people attended. There were so many people dancing “horos” at one time, that I clearly remember the floor of the Ballroom shaking up and down wildly. Our Rula-Kotta Society also held Annual Picnics with live Macedonian music held in the Park of “Krasno Selo” (Macedonian Village) near Whitby, Ontario donated by Stato Kozaroff.

Every August 3, Macedonians celebrate the “Ilinden Uprising.” Ilinden commemorates the Macedonian revolt in August of 1903 organized by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) against the Ottoman Empire. During this time, a short-lived Krusevo Republic was proclaimed. The United Macedonians Organization in Toronto still hold an Annual Picnic on the outskirts of Toronto celebrating Ilinden. When I first came to Canada, over 15,000 Macedonians from all over North America would attend these Picnics. A helicopter would fly in the lucky young lady chosen as “Miss Macedonia” for that year. We would watch clips of this Picnic on our CBC evening news. At that time, newscasters would inform viewers that this Macedonian Picnic was the largest ethnic Picnic held in all of North America.

The refugee children from the Civil War in Greece who had emigrated to Toronto from the Communist countries formed the Begalci Organization (Detsata Begalci). This Organization brought together those who had been evacuated from Greece during the Civil War. Every year, this Organization would hold lovely Dinner-Dances with live entertainment in very large halls in order to accommodate the large number of attendees. This Organization also formed a political and humanitarian mandate for the protection of and support of the Macedonian Political Party “Vino Zito” in Greece. To date, the Begalci Organization has also organized four reunions for the “Detsata Begalci” worldwide. The first such reunion was held in Skopje, Macedonia. These reunions were attended by refugee children from all over the world including Canada, Australia, America and Europe.

Finally, the United Macedonian Diaspora Organization (UMD) held a huge Macedonian Parade in Toronto to celebrate the Independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991 and also a huge gathering at Toronto's Sky Dome to raise funds for medicine to be sent to Macedonia during the War with the Albanian minority in Macedonia.

The new generation of Macedonians in Toronto have plenty of opportunities for higher education. Our community has produced many Lawyers, Doctors, Teachers, Engineers, Accountants and Financial Experts. A Macedonian Student Organization at the Universities (AMSUT) has been formed here in Toronto. There are many traditional Macedonian Dance groups which perform at the five Macedonian Churches in Toronto and the surrounding regions. In this way, we can celebrate our beautiful and rich Macedonian culture and keep it alive. Macedonians are a vibrant community in Toronto and they are part of the rich cultural tapestry that makes Canada such an extraordinary place to call home.



## PART 4

### **THE JOURNEY OF GOCHE NICHOV/NICHEV (GEORGE NITSOU)**

**Please Note:**

**The political situation in the village of Rula during 1941-1948 deeply affected the destiny of both the children and the parents. My life experiences and those of my parents closely mirror those of countless families from Rula. What my family experienced is in many ways very similar to what was experienced by the villagers from numerous other Macedonian villages.**

My life journey is typical of any child born in Rula between 1938-1948. In this biography of mine, the name "Naso" is the name of my Father Naso Nichov/Nitchev (Nitsou). The name "Tinka" is my Mother's name, Tinka Ramova (Nitsou). The name "Stoian" is my mentor, Stoian Petrou, brother of my Mother's Mother.

I am the son of Naso (son of Moisia) and Tinka (daughter of Trajko). In 1938, Naso at the age of 17, wanted to emigrate to Australia where his Uncle Blaje, his mother's brother, had settled. Unfortunately for Naso, his parents, Moisia and Mara wanted him to marry and settle in Rula. Naso indicated to them that the only woman he would agree to marry was Tinka. However, Tinka and her Mother would first have to agree to the marriage. Tinka was considered a "prize catch" as a future wife by many better-suited bachelors. Naso was sure that Tinka would decline his offer to marry him and he would then be free to pursue his emigration plans to Australia. The matchmakers set off to Tinka's house with an offer of marriage and made a strong case for Naso. They not only persuaded Tinka to agree to the marriage, but her Mother Sofa, was apparently very happy with this prospective match. The matchmakers had told them that Naso was of good character and would be a good husband. They thought he would be a good "domakin" (man around the house) as they had seen him "sweeping the front yard of his home." Naso was only 18 years old at the time and Tinka was 16. They were married shortly thereafter. Naso would often tease Tinka that he never expected her to accept his marriage proposal. He only asked for her hand in marriage because he thought she was "unreachable." He thought that as soon

as she refused his proposal, he could then happily proceed with his emigration plans to Australia. He was totally shocked by her acceptance of his marriage proposal since Tinka was being courted by boys from families with much better financial standing than his own. Naso and Tinka had a long and happy marriage and at the time of Tinka's death in August of 2011, they had been married for 72 years

### **Naso and Goche in Romania**

After his medical treatment in Berkovica, Bulgaria, Naso ended up in Braila, Romania. Upon arrival in Braila, Naso was assigned as an apprentice in a factory called the "Progresul." Naso worked as a carpenter in this factory and used a lathe to make wooden models used in smelting works. The section where he was apprenticing together with other Greek partisans from Evro, Greece was called "Modelarie." This section happened to be run by a very qualified Foreman with Monarchist inclinations. At that time, having Monarchist inclinations while also being accused of not properly training your workers, could result your being declared an "enemy" of the State with dire consequences. The Greeks from Evro complained to the Communist management at the factory about their Foreman for not providing them with proper trade training. At the meeting called to decide the fate of this Foreman, Naso was the only one of the apprentices who defended the Foreman. Naso explained to the factory management that the Foreman should not be blamed since he and the other apprentices were uneducated men with only agricultural backgrounds not easily capable of learning skilled jobs quickly. The Foreman was exonerated and he immediately moved to fire the complainers from his section. The only apprentice he retained was Naso. The Foreman eventually become Naso's mentor and insisted that Naso not leave Romania without a Certificate of Employment issued by the factory. This Certificate proved very valuable to Naso when he applied to the Canadian Embassy for emigration to Canada. Naso applied to emigrate to Canada not as a farmer but as a skilled carpenter.

### **Goche in Rula 1941-1948—Birth to 7 Years Old**

As a child, I vaguely remember the "wars" between the children from Dolna Mala in Rula against the children from Gorna Mala. There were also "wars" between the children from Rula against the children from Breznitsa held around the bridge

located at the halfway point between the two villages. I also remember collecting fragments of wool that would be left on the needles of the iron fences by the passing sheep. It was with my friend, Vangel (the “Geleitsa”) that I would collect this wool. Finally, I remember working with our mule to carry the “**snopie**” (harvested grains) to our barn in Rula from the fields where my parents “**shniee**” (harvested the grain with scythes). My paternal Grandmother Mara would wait for me at the barn so I could unload the “snopie” from the mule and return to the fields to pick up another load.

### **Goche in Vatsa de Jos and Arad Romania--1948-1951, Age 7-10 Years Old**

By train from Bitola, the children from the Macedonian villages V’mbel, Bapchor, Zagoricheni and Rula arrived on April 1948 at the mountain resort **Vatsa de Jos**, Romania. The children were accommodated in the town’s Sanatorium. Here, the children were disinfected from “**voshki**” (lice) and provided with new clothes. At the end of the Summer of 1948, the children were moved from Vatsa de Jos to **Arad**, a Transylvanian city with beautiful architecture situated on the banks of the River Muresh. We were accommodated in a white building previously used as a School for Military Cadets. The building was situated in the centre of the city and was perfectly suited for children. The stay in **Arad** was transient and after few months of stay there, all older children were moved to the village **Tulgesh** while the youngest ones were moved to the town of **Sinaia**.

### **Goche in Sinaia, Romania- 1951-1952--Grades 3 and 4, Age 11-12 Years Old**

The small city of Sinaia is the most desirable mountainous recreational place in Romania. It has one of the best Ski Resorts in Europe. In close proximity to the city and located in the mountains is situated the Winter Palace of the Romanian Kings. This Palace was first inhabited by the Germanic King Carol and ended with King Mikhail (who is now a private citizen). After the collapse of Communist Romania, Mikhail took back the ownership of the palace and the Palace currently operates as a revenue earning tourist destination. The luxurious hotels “Palas,” “Karaiman” and the “Casino” situated in Sinaia were used to house the children after being nationalized (expropriated) by the Romanian Communist State. The majority of the children in this compound were from Rula, Zagoricheni and the Prespa villages. I still remember Stalin’s picture hanging proudly in the lobby of the Hotel Palas where I was staying.

Aside from our School studies in Romania, children enjoyed many outdoor activities and excursions. From Sinaia by train, we went on a two-week holiday to the Summer Resort **Eforia South** on the Black Sea. This was my first experience swimming in salt water. Close to **Eforia South** is Lake Techirghiol. This Lake is so salty that you could virtually lie on top of the water without sinking. Ziso Vasiliev, my future “Koom” (Godfather at my wedding), was treated as a child with the mud from this Lake which was especially recommended for rheumatism.

When I visited Sinaia in 2013, I was amazed at the close proximity of the buildings to one another. When I used to walk by them as a young boy, everything seemed so large and spread out. The Hotel Palas is now open for business to people who can afford to stay there. The large picture of Stalin has been removed from the lobby and is now long forgotten.

### **Goche in Oradea, Romania--1952-1953--Grades 5 and 6, Age 13 years Old**

Oradea is a much bigger city than Sinaia. It is part of Transylvania with the River “Chrishul Repede” running through it. Oradea is in close proximity to the Felix Bathing Resort. The city had a large Hungarian speaking population left over from the time when Transylvania was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In Oradea, we were accommodated in a building previously used as a Catholic Theological School (Seminary) situated next to the Catholic Basilica (Church) in Oradea. In addition to being taught all our School subjects in the Romanian language, the Macedonian children were also taught Greek, Russian and their native Macedonian language with its associated Cyrillic writing. There were thirteen teachers teaching the Macedonian language and six teachers teaching the Greek language. Only Macedonian children were taught both the Macedonian and the Greek languages. Due to fact that the vast majority of the children living in the compound were Macedonian, the Greek children learned to speak Macedonian from us.

As a good student, I was privileged to be designated a “Pioneer.” The “Pioneers” was a Communist Children’s Organization.



**GOCHE'S PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS—DEDO MOISIA NICHEV AND BABA MARA**



**GOCHE'S MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS—DEDO TRAJKO RAMOV AND BABA SOPHA**



**BABA SOPHA WITH DAUGHTERS TINKA, ANNA, HER SON-IN-LAWS NASO AND PANE  
AND HER GRANDCHILDREN GOCHE, MARA AND LENA**



**DEDO MOISIA'S FAMILY, HIS SISTER AND THEIR GRANDCHILDREN  
(FANA, VANGEL, LENA, GOCHE AND SOPHIE)**



**UNCLE STOIAN PETROU (LEFT SIDE OF FRONT ROW) WITH HIS FATHER (CENTRE FRONT) AND  
STOIAN'S WIFE, ANASTASIA  
BACK ROW IS STOIAN'S BROTHERS, PANDO AND NUNE**



**GOCHE WITH NASO'S SISTER STAMENA AND HUSBAND VANE IN SKOPJE (1973)**



**NASO'S FIRST COUSIN, ROSE TEMELKO, SON JOHN AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, NANCY (2019)  
ROSE IS THE DAUGHTER OF MOISIA'S SISTER, STEFANA**



**NASO'S FIRST COUSINS GRACE BURKE AND ROSE TEMELKO AT THE WEDDING OF HILARY  
WHITE, ROSE'S GRANDDAUGHTER (DETROIT 2019)**





**DEDO MOISIA'S BROTHER, MILE IN ROMANIA**



**NASO'S AUNT MITRA (SECOND FROM THE RIGHT). MITRA WAS BABA MOISITSA'S SISTER (AUSTRALIA)**



**BABA MARA'S BROTHER BLAJE IN AUSTRALIA (FAR RIGHT)  
BLAJE IS THE FATHER OF MLADE, KOTA, FANA, GIRO AND SANDRA**



**GOCHE'S MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS, TRAJKO AND SOPHA RAMOV (BOTH FAR RIGHT)  
TINKA'S BROTHER MITO AND WIFE ATHINA (CENTRE) (AUSTRALIA)**



**POPE PAVLE RAMOV, HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER LIKA, HIS NIECES TINKA, ANNA & THEIR FAMILIES  
POPE PAVLE IS THE BROTHER OF GOCHE'S MATERNAL GRANDFATHER, TRAJKO RAMOV**



**MOISIA'S FAMILY AND RELATIVES, INCLUDING DIANA PETROU FROM CANADA**



**NASO, TINKA, GOCHE, SOPHIE AND PAVLE**



**NASO, TINKA AND PAVLE WITH THEIR SHEEP IN FRONT OF MOISIA'S HOUSE**



**PANDO PETROU, WIFE SOPHA, SON SOTIR AND WIFE DIANA PETROU  
PANDO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING HELEN TO CANADA AND THIS EVENTUALLY  
OPENED THE DOOR FOR THE REST OF NASO'S FAMILY TO COME TO CANADA**



**STOIAN PETROU, WIFE ANASTASIA HOLDING DAUGHTER LIKA  
GOCHE'S UNCLE MITO RAMOV IN ATHENS (BACK ROW, SECOND FROM LEFT)**



**STOIAN PETROU, WIFE ANASTASIA, DAUGHTER LIKA, DIANA AND SOTIR PETROU  
IN FRONT OF STOIAN'S HOUSE IN PENDELIS, ATHENS, GREECE**



**GOCHE AT RULA'S PICNIC TOGETHER WITH AUNT CHRISTA AND HUSBAND STEVE BELKOS  
JOHN PETROU IS THE YOUNG BOY IN THIS 1970 PHOTO**



**NASO, TINKA AND FAMILY (1990'S)**



**THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF OUR FAMILIES TAKEN AT GOCHE & LINDA'S HOUSE ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 2017**



**GOCHE WITH FIRST COUSINS MAKHI, PAVLE AND KOSTA (SKOPJE 2013)**



**GOCHE WITH FIRST COUSINS FILA, ANNA AND KOSTA (SKOPJE 2013)**





**BLAJE TOGETHER WITH HIS WIFE (FAR LEFT) AND THEIR CHILDREN  
HIS MOTHER (SEATED) & HIS SISTER MOISITSA (CENTRE BACK) WITH NASO (TO HER RIGHT)  
BLAJE'S SISTER MITRA (FAR RIGHT) WITH HER CHILDREN**



**BABA MOISITSA AND FRIENDS**



**GEORGE AND LINDA IN SKOPJE (2003) WITH FIRST COUSINS PAVLE AND ANNA AND HER TWO SONS. ANNA AND HER TWO SONS ARE MEDICAL DOCTORS**



**UNCLE MITO RAMOV (TINKA'S BROTHER) IN SYDNEY AUSTRALIA WITH HIS FAMILY, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**



**GOCHE WITH DAUGHTER KATERINA IN SYDNEY AUSTRALIA (2004) WITH UNCLE MITO RAMOV, WIFE TINKA AND THEIR SON PHILIP. ALSO PICTURED IS MLADE TRIANOV (NASO'S FIRST COUSIN) FROM OOLONG, AUSTRALIA WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER**



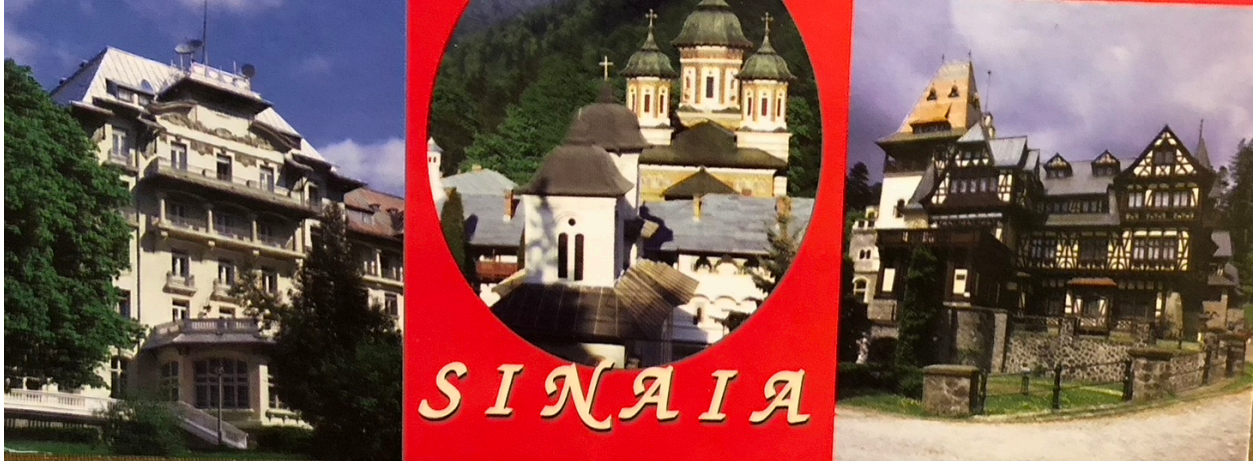
**GOCHE WITH DAUGHTER KATERINA IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA (2004) WITH OUR HOST, GIRO TRIANOV (NASO'S FIRST COUSIN). GIRO WAS GOCHE'S PROTECTOR IN ORADEA, ROMANIA FROM THOSE WHO BULLIED GOCHE AS A YOUNG CHILD**



**GOCHE WITH NASO IN ORADEA, ROMANIA 1952**



**GOCHE IN SINAIA, ROMANIA (FAR RIGHT) WITH FIRST COUSINS MAKHI, PAVLE AND KOSTA (1951)**



**POSTCARD OF SINAIA DEPICTING THE HOTELS WHERE WE REFUGEE WERE HOUSED (1950-51)  
THE CENTER OF THIS PHOTO DEPICTS THE WINTER PALACE OF THE ROMANIAN KINGS**



**GOCHE IN BRAILA, ROMANIA ON HIS FRIEND'S BOAT ON THE DANUBE RIVER (1955)**



**GOCHE IN BRAILA, ROMANIA WITH HIS FRIEND FROM EVROS, GREECE (1956)**



**GOCHE WITH MACEDONIAN FRIENDS IN CRAIOVA, ROMANIA (1957)**



**GOCHE IN TSOTILI, GREECE WITH FELLOW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (1959)**



**GOCHE WITH FELLOW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TSOTILI, GREECE (1959)**



**GOCHE AS A STUDENT IN THE ROYAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL ON THE ISLAND OF LEROS, GREECE  
(1960)**



**GOCHE IN THE MUSICAL BAND OF THE TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN LEROS, GREECE (1960)  
GOCHE (FIRST ROW, FAR RIGHT)**





**GOCHE WITH FELLOW STUDENTS IN LEROS, GREECE (1960)**



**GOCHE WITH THE SCHOOL BAND, LEROS, GREECE**



**GOCHE WITH BAND IN LEROS DURING A PARADE**



**GOCHE CELEBRATING EASTER WITH FELLOW STUDENTS IN LEROS  
STUDENTS WERE CRACKING EASTER EGGS FOR GOOD LUCK**



**GOCHE IN LEROS WITH FELLOW STUDENTS WHO HAD ALSO REPATRIATED TO GREECE FROM SOVIET BLOC COUNTRIES**



**GOCHE WITH THE SCHOOL BAND IN LEROS  
GOCHE (FIRST ROW, FAR RIGHT) (1960-61)**



**GOCHE AS STUDENT IN ARISTOTLEIAN UNIVERSITY, SALONICA, GREECE**



**GOCHE WITH FRIEND IN FRONT OF THE FACULTY OF PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICS, SALONICA, GREECE (1964)**



**GOCHE & HIS DEAR FRIENDS, VASILIS NESTORAS (FAR LEFT) AND VANGELIS INDOS (MIDDLE)  
THEY WERE ALL HOUSED IN THE UNIVERSITY CHARITABLE STUDENT RESIDENCE**



**GOCHE AND FELLOW PHYSICS STUDENT ON UNIVERSITY TRIP THROUGH EUROPE  
PICTURE TAKEN IN FRONT OF A DAM PROTECTING THE LOWLANDS OF HOLLAND**



**GOCHE WITH FELLOW PHYSICS STUDENTS AT INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA**



**GOCHE IN CORINTH MILITARY CAMP WITH HIS DEAR FRIEND AND FELLOW PHYSICS STUDENT, STELIOS KATIKARIDIS (FAR LEFT) (1967)**



**GOCHE (LAST ROW, FAR LEFT) AS A MEMBER OF THE ARMY BAND DURING HIS MILITARY SERVICE IN DIDYMOTEICHO, GREECE (1969)**



**GOCHE (SECOND FROM LEFT) PLAYING THE EUPHONIUM IN MILITARY BAND (1969)**



**GOCHE AND LINDA WEDDING DAY, JUNE 30, 1973 TORONTO**



**GOCHE AND LINDA 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, JUNE 30, 1998**





**DAUGHTERS CHRISTINA AND KATHERINE (AGES 3 & 5)**



**CHRISTINA AND KATHERINE (AGES 5 & 7)  
CHRISTINA'S 7<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**



**DAUGHTERS CHRISTINA AND KATHERINE ON CHRISTINA'S WEDDING DAY, MAY 19, 2013**



**KATHERINE'S WEDDING TO OLIVER FITZGERALD ON APRIL 2, 2011 (LOS ANGELES)**



**CHRISTINA'S WEDDING TO RYAN MCISAAC ON MAY 19, 2013 (TORONTO)**



**GOCHE AND LINDA'S TREASURES**  
**TOP ROW: GEORGE PAUL MCISAAC AND KALINA RUBY FITZGERALD**  
**BOTTOM ROW: CHARLES HARVEY MCISAAC AND ATTEO LEIGH FITZGERALD**



**GEORGE AND CHARLES MCISAAC ON LEFT SIDE (TORONTO)  
ATTEO AND KALINA FITZGERALD ON RIGHT SIDE (AUSTRALIA)  
PHOTOS TAKEN IN 2020**

Pioneers were allowed to wear a special red necktie. This red necktie practice is still common today in North Korea. I was also chosen to hold the Communist red flag in front of the columns of children during parades held annually in Oradea on August 23.

These parades celebrated the day Romania became a Communist State. In Oradea, I learned to play chess, enjoy tobogganing and fell in love with gymnastics, especially the bars. My main competitor in chess was Tole Tasevski from Rula who eventually became a Geologist in the Republic of Macedonia. In Oradea, I was chosen to be a member of a Dance Group (six boys and six girls) that entertained the public in the then called Pushkin Theatre. We were taught Hungarian chardashes in addition to Romanian folklore dances. My main bully was Vangel Kamburovski from Rula. He became a car mechanic and became a friend of mine here in Toronto. My protector was Giro Traianovski, Naso's first cousin and neighbor in Rula. He was an excellent volleyball player at the time. In 2013 when my daughter, Katerina and I visited Melbourne, Australia, Giro graciously hosted us.

As was the case in Sinaia, in addition to the regular schooling, children enjoyed many outdoor activities and excursions. From Oradea, we travelled by train for a two-week holiday to the **Predeal** Winter Resort. This Resort was situated north of Sinaia in the Carpathian Mountains. We also took a one-day trip to **Satu Mare** where we saw a placid lake situated on top of the mountain. I also vividly remember the excitement we children in the Camp experienced while listening to the megaphones broadcasting the winning games of the Communist Hungary soccer team of "Pushkash" during the World Cup Soccer Championship held in Switzerland in 1954. Their victories over the West German team during the qualifications and over the Uruguayan team in the semifinals led the Hungarian Golden Team to the Final Championship game against the West German team. The West German team finally prevailed with a 3-2 win.

In 1953, our **Dedo** (Grandfather) Stalin died. It seemed that the Communist Internationalist movement died with him. Instead, Communist Nationalism took root and culminated in Communist party leaders like Nicolai Ceausescu of Romania and Todor Zhivkov of Bulgaria taking power. Minorities in the Communist countries during the time of Stalin enjoyed complete linguistic and cultural freedoms. These freedoms gradually eroded. The loss of these freedoms

was also experienced by the Hungarian minority in Romania and the Macedonian and Turkish minorities in Bulgaria. In our modern times, “nationalism” has overridden ideology or religion. The nationalistic ruling class of the majority often seeks the extinction or suppression of minorities.

It was in 1953 that Naso arrived in Oradea to visit me after his vacation in the Carpathian Mountains. It was customary in the first years of the Communist rule in Romania that factory workers regardless of whether they were “blue collar or white collar,” were sent on vacation to exclusive Resorts at the expense of their factory. Arriving at the children’s compound in Oradea, Naso met me and took me out for the day. He treated me to lunch and then took me to a photographer to have our picture taken. I also clearly remember him giving me a fountain pen (stilo) to remember him by. I felt so sad when I somehow lost this pen a short time later on the road returning home from the Movie Cinema with the other children.

### **Goche in Tulghesh-1954--Grade 7--14 Years Old**

Like Rula, Tulghesh is a small village situated within a narrow stretch between mountain ranges. At the time, Tulghesh was part of the “Magyar” (Hungarian) region in Romania. It is situated between the towns of Gheorgheni and Piatra Neamt. The children’s compound had many buildings and it was originally built as a military barrack during the time when the Romanian region of Transylvania was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In addition to the buildings designated as sleeping quarters, there were School buildings, a Hospital, a Theatre and a Cafeteria. This compound is now used as a Sanatorium for the mentally ill.

My stay in in Tulghesh was of one year duration. In addition to my regular studies in the School, I learned how to read musical notes and to play the mandolin thanks to the Music Teacher who ran the “Music Circle” in the children’s compound. In this compound, there were different kinds of “Circles.” One such “Circle” was designated for those wanting to learn how to build a replica aircraft. My first cousin, Mara Tzavellova, joined the “Ballet Circle.” Mara and I took part in stage performances organized to entertain the children. Occasional trips by truck transport or on foot were organized for the children. In the vicinity west of Tulghesh is the village Borsec. On our trip by foot to this village, we experienced the taste of the natural mineral water coming from the underground springs. This

Borsec mineral water is now bottled and distributed worldwide. On another trip by truck to the city Bacau, I remember the excitement of the children on our truck when we bypassed another truck full of children.

This was the final year of my elementary education. Exams were organized for all children completing Grade Seven. The marks each child received were the basis for determining if the child continued in the academic stream through to High School or took the trades path of apprenticeship in a Vocational School. The Vocational Trade Schools were for the most part associated with State factories. I was sent to attend the Men's High School in Braila and live with my Father Naso. My friend Done Trokov was sent to the Men's High School in Oradea. My cousin, Mara Tzavellova upon her Elementary School graduation was sent to attend the Women's High School in Oradea. Done and Mara were housed in the corresponding men's or women's student residences.

Upon completion of Elementary School, effort was made by the Red Cross to reunite children with their parents, if those parents were still living in any of the Eastern European Communist countries after the Greek Civil War. I ended up in Braila, Romania living with my Father, Naso. My first cousins, Mahi, Pavle and Kosta were sent from Romania to join their parents, Vane and Stamena in Tashkent, Uzbekistan which at the time was part of the Soviet Union. Their sisters Fila and Anna with their Mother Stamena had previously been sent to Tashkent from Poland in order to reunite with Vane. Around 1970, the entire family of Vane and Stamena emigrated to the Republic of Macedonia once their sons and daughters graduated from the Universities they had attended in the Soviet Union. In Macedonia, Anna worked as a Medical Doctor. Mahi worked as a Professor of the Russian language at the University of Skopje. Fila graduated as a Civil Engineer and worked on the construction of buildings in Macedonia. For some years, she worked as an Engineer in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Kosta had a specialty in Agronomy and Pavle worked in Gostivar as an Elementary School Teacher.

It was customary during Summertime months to have an exchange of Macedonian and Greek children living in the Tulgesh compound with Korean children living in the children's compound in Tirgovishte, Romania. Similar to the evacuation of children from Greece in order to avoid the consequences of War, was the evacuation of children from Korea during the Korean Civil War. In the Summer of 1954 as part of the children's exchange, I was sent to Tirgoviste and



stayed in the Camp where the Korean children were being housed. I befriended a very nice Korean boy, but the next day when I began looking for him, I was unable to recognize him in the large crowd of Oriental faces.

During my stay in Tirgoviste, the Red Cross took me to Bucharest where my Father Naso was expecting me. In 1954, children or adults living in the Communist Bloc countries were allowed to return to Greece through the Red Cross only if their living parents or spouses in Greece requested their return. The advantage for an adult like Naso of returning to Rula through the auspices of the Red Cross was that the Greek State had the obligation to treat the returning adult as if he/she was given amnesty. However, any request made for the return to Greece of a family member was subject to approval by the Greek State. It appears that the Red Cross acted on Tinka's request for Goche and Nasos's return to Rula. Our attempt to return to Rula in 1954 was rejected. We were never told the reasons for this rejection. Actually, I wanted to stay in Romania and finish my High School studies before returning to Greece. As for my Father, he blamed his rejection on the Greek State not wanting him back in the country. Upon this rejection, Naso returned to Braila and I went back to Tirgoviste. Velica's Naso (Nane) was able to return to Rula through the Red Cross. At the end of the Summer of 1954, with a Greek lady assigned to take care of me during the trip, I left Tulgesh towards Braila to live with my Father.

### **Goche in Braila, Romania--Grades 8 to 10--15-17 years Old**

Braila is a major commercial city on the Danube River. It is the last port on the Danube River that the large ships from the Black Sea can enter. The city had a large number of very successful Greek businesses mostly owned by Vlachs. These Vlachs are referred to as "Macedonians" in Romania. The language of the Vlachs is of Latin origin and very close to the Romanian language. Braila has a spectacular Greek Church which is probably the largest Orthodox Church in the city. When I arrived in Braila, the Red Army was still stationed in Romania and had a military base there. It is said that many rich Greeks in Braila committed suicide by jumping into the Danube River after the Romanian Communist State which had been installed by the Soviets confiscated their properties.

A sizable number of Greek refugees had settled in Braila. Most of the partisan refugees who ended up in Braila were from the Evros's North Eastern region of

Greece. Initially there were only four Macedonian partisans in Braila. In addition to Naso, there was Petre Dimitrievski from Rula and other two from the Macedonian village of "Nivitsi." Later, Done Lazarevski from Rula and his wife arrived from Poland to join their daughters Kata and Gira. Finally, Naso's Goche; Petre's Nicho and Fila; Done's Pando, Jane and Sevda; and for a very short time Spiro Nastovski's Mitre arrived in Braila. They all arrived after graduating from the Elementary School in Tulgesh. Mitre Nastovski was a neighbour of mine in Rula. Before he left for Canada, Mitre gave me all his unwanted clothes which he had received from the Romanian Red Cross.

The High School I attended was called Nicolae Balcescu. He was a famous Romanian revolutionary in 1848. My class here was the last one which consisted of only male students. After that, all classes had a mixture of males and females. I was a good student in all subjects except French. French was the foreign language which had been assigned to my School. Every High School in Braila was assigned one foreign language on top of the compulsory Russian language courses. All other subjects were taught in the Romanian language.

Dances were organized in the segregated as "Boys' Only" and "Girls' Only" Schools so that boys and girls could meet and become acquainted. The main purpose of these Dances however was to promote knowledge of international literature. At one of these dances organized by the "Girls' Only" School, any boy entering the Dance Hall would have a pin attached to his shirt or jacket. Each pin would have a ribbon on it indicating the name of a well-known male character from literature. When the dance started, the boy was prohibited from dancing with any girl for the first three dances unless he was able to first find the girl having the pinned ribbon with the female name connected in literature with the name on his ribbon. In my case, I was given the name of "Evgeni Onegin," the Russian poet Pushkin's hero. I first had to find a girl wearing the ribbon with the name "Tatiana" on it before I could start dancing.

At the time, Braila resembled an Ottoman-era town more than it did a modern one. I lived with Naso and his cohabitant Georgieta. My life with them was peaceful and Georgieta took good care of me. Originally, the place we lived at was on **Strada Rosiorilor**. This was part of a compound consisting of mainly sleeping quarters. This rental establishment was probably confiscated by the State from the original owners in order to provide shelter to those in need.

There was only one outside Turkish-style toilet and one outside water faucet available for all the sleeping units. A Turkish-style toilet has no resemblance to our modern-day toilets. This toilet is just a hole in the ground with no seating provided.

We later moved to an Elementary School compound on **Strada Stefan cel Mare** with sleeping quarters for the caretakers. Georgieta had gotten a job as a caretaker at the School. We used the School's Turkish-style toilets and the School's drinking water facilities. Cooking was done in a way similar to modern day camp cooking by using a special gas for cooking fuel. Clothes washing and drying was done outside. In order to take a weekly shower, I had to walk to the factory and bring a clean change of clothes for Naso and myself. During those times, the factories were integral to the workers' lives. The factories not only provided their workers and their families with shower facilities but also wholesome food in their cafeterias, free holidays to Summer or Winter Resorts, and free tickets to Theatres performing classical shows. This all followed the doctrine that Communism is the dictatorship of the working proletariat and the system exists for the workers' benefit.

As Georgieta was a caretaker and had the keys to the School Library, I was able to gain access to a variety of books including books on history and literature. Georgieta's brother, a professional boxer, introduced me as a possible trainee to his boxing coach. After a few sessions when the time came for my nose to be broken, a must for every professional boxer, I immediately quit.

In 2003, my Father Naso, brother Paul and my wife Linda visited Braila on our tour of the Balkans. We spent an entire day searching for addresses listing "Georgieta Smeu" in the Telephone Directory. We wanted to find her and give her a gift of money but we had no luck. There were many listings for the name "Georgieta Smeu" in the phone book but none were for our "Georgieta." During the Summer of 2003, both my daughters Christina and Katherine who were young women at the time, were travelling independently in Europe with their girlfriends. Linda and I met up with Christina in Ohrid, Macedonia and we met up with Katherine in Athens, Greece.

One Summer, I worked with Pando Lazarevski in the agricultural fields owned by the Progresul factory irrigating their fields and gathering ripened tomatoes.

Another Summer, I worked on drain projects by excavating and throwing the earth onto the ground above with a shovel. Another Summer, I worked on a road project related to the building of a new cellulose factory near Braila. My job was to fill and push small wagons of road gravel on the rails.

During the years in Braila, I often had to wait in line for hours to buy bread and other food staples. Food staples were subsidized but under strict rationing imposed by the Romanian Communist State. Rationing of food staples was the necessary result of the rapid industrialization of Romania undertaken by the State. Their goal was not only job creation but to assure the country's future self-sufficiency. The only available means Romania had to pay for the machinery imported from the industrialized Western countries was through the sale of agricultural produce. Shortage of agricultural produce resulted in the rationing of food and in people's dissatisfaction with the Communist system. This is similar to the situation when parents impose austerity on their family members. Their end goal is often to save up enough for the children's tuition or in order to repay the family's mortgages and debts. Impatient children, however, might insist on enjoying that new dress or new car now and not be on board with the family's austerity plan. Some of these young people might accept low-paid employment in order to satisfy their immediate material cravings. By doing this, they might end up neglecting the very education and studies that are critical for their brighter and more secure economic futures. Economists will agree that better futures for families or countries often demand the sacrifices of today.

I continued to correspond with some of my close friends long after leaving Romania. One of these good friends from School was the Romanian Petre Gheorghe who later graduated Law School and worked as a Lawyer in the city of Suceava. Another friend was a neighbour with whom I would walk to School with. He was one of the many "Lipovens" living in Braila. These Lipovens were mostly fisherman who had been expelled by Katherine the Great of Russia. She expelled them because they refused to join the Russian Army based on their religious beliefs. The Lipovens were so religious that if they came across one of their Priests in their travels, they would take a very deep bow to show their utter respect. Another friend of mine was a Greek boy who played the accordion. Also, there was a young Romanian boy who kept homing pigeons at his house. I remember his great delight in the fact that they knew how to return to his home after their flights.

The Greek refugees in Braila were given access to a recreational building on a street that was then called **Strada Karl Marx**. This building was to be used for the cultural activities of the refugees. The building had a stage, a dance floor, and tables on which to play cards and dominos. It was in this building that I learned to play the game of dominos. More importantly, however, this is where I learned to read the daily Greek newspaper "Avgi." This newspaper was published in Greece and distributed in Braila. The Greek language used in this leftist newspaper was written in the simpler "Dimotiki" language which was easily understood by ordinary Greek citizens. This compared to the more sophisticated language used in the right-wing newspapers published in Greece for the privileged and educated Greeks. (My familiarity with this leftist newspaper later brought me serious trouble when I eventually returned to Greece).

As I knew how to play the mandolin, I joined the entertainment group organized by the Greek refugees in this building. As part of this group, I participated in entertaining the Red Army soldiers stationed in Braila at the time. Our group also entertained the Greek refugees located in other Romanian towns such as Moineshti and Craiova. Our group was transported to these towns by truck.

When the Communists with the support of the Red Army took over Romania, the State was short of qualified employees to run the State and the State economy. Business people, Doctors, Engineers and all those associated with the prior fascist Government of General Antonescu fled Romania upon the arrival of the Red Army. In order to replenish the newly Communist State with qualified persons, Romania was forced to shorten the years of education required to graduate from High Schools and Universities. High School graduation could be accomplished by just completing Grade 10. Schools which offered Programs in higher education fast-tracked their Programs. One of the Schools offering accelerated learning were the "Facultatele Muchitoriaske."

Braila and the city Ruse of Bulgaria were "Sister Cities." Boats from Ruse would travel through the Danube to Braila in order to celebrate this "Sisterhood." On one occasion, I met a group of Bulgarian sailors and although it was not always easy to understand everything they were saying, I realized that the Bulgarian and Macedonian languages were quite similar. I later found out the reason for the similarity of our languages. The people living north of the Balkan Mountains in

Bulgaria are for the most part Tatars (Mongols) in origin who occupied this part of Bulgaria centuries ago. These called Bulgars eventually conquered the Slavic lands south of the Balkan mountains and the lands of Macedonia. They adapted the Slavic language and gave the name "Bulgaria" to the occupied lands. Russians when speaking of the Tatars living in Crimea call these people "Bulgars." It appears that people who live south of the Balkan mountains including the capital Sofia are Macedonian by origin. After all, the city of "Plovdiv" in Bulgaria was called "Philipoli" and the statue of Philip of Macedon still stands in Plovdiv. However, this statue has now been removed from a place of prominence to a place of lesser prominence.

As mentioned earlier, Naso made an attempt in 1954 to leave Romania and return to Greece through the auspices of the Red Cross. However, his wish to rejoin his family in Greece was unsuccessful. Naso thought he could try other avenues to leave Romania. He thought he might be able to emigrate to Australia where Tinka's Father Traiko and brother, Mito lived. Tinka's Mother, Sofa had just recently emigrated from Greece to Australia. It was probably due to financial constraints that Tinka's family in Australia were not able to sponsor Naso nor myself.

Naso's second choice for emigration was to settle in the Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia. Before beginning any serious preparations for his move to Macedonia, Naso consulted with one senior member of the Greek Communist Party in Braila. This official warned Naso that if he moved to Macedonia he should be prepared to never see his family in Rula again. He also told Naso that a Greek Embassy had just opened in Bucharest. He advised Naso to go to this Embassy and apply for the Greek passports needed to return to Rula. He was successful in obtaining the passports for himself and for me. In 1958, Naso and Goche took the plunge and left Romania for an uncertain and dangerous future in Greece.

### **Goche and Naso Return to Rula--1958**

My Father and I travelled by train from Braila to Bucharest, from Bucharest through Belgrade and finally arrived in Salonica Greece. On this train, there were many other adults and children. Many of them were from the village Breznita. One of these travellers included my good acquaintance, Georgi Vrazinovski.

In Salonica, all of us were given accommodation for two weeks in a multi-bedroom house. The purpose of keeping us in Salonica at the Greek State's expense was to give the Greek/American Security Agents time to interrogate us. We had to explain our whereabouts for the past several years. The Security Agents also wanted any other important information related to our lives behind the "Iron Curtain" in Romania. After our interrogation, the Agents inspected my wooden suitcase that Naso had made for me in his factory in Braila and they confiscated the few books I owned. Naso's interrogation was much more intense. He was lucky that the Agent who interrogated him was familiar with Braila. When the Agent asked Naso for a "marashest," (a Romanian cigarette), Naso complied. Upon opening Naso's Police file, the Agent gave Naso a friendly warning that life in Greece would be incredibly difficult for him and that Naso should make any and every effort to leave Greece.

We eventually arrived in Rula by bus. As eleven years had passed since I had set foot in Rula, I could not recognize my Mother Tinka from other ladies waiting at the bus stop. After we arrived, it seemed like the whole village came to visit us at our house. Tinka was rushing around in search of freshly laid eggs so that she could trade these for "Rakia" (liquor) from the "Kafe" to serve the curious guests. In a later private discussion with one of Tinka's relatives (Pope Pavle's wife Sofa), I was warned that I should "zipper up my mouth." A few days after our arrival, Tinka warned me that the farm chores in Rula never end. For this reason, she equipped me with "**pintsi**" (shoes made from pigskin). The pigskin on these shoes was so thin that after a short walk, holes had already developed on the soles.

In order that I could learn the trade of a shepherd, my paternal Grandfather Moisia took me with him to the mountains towards the village "Besfina" where the sheep were grazing. My family also wanted me to learn how to tend the cows. Tinka took me to the mountains to teach me about cattle grazing. In Rula, each family would have a turn tending to the village's cattle. On one occasion, I remember that some pesky flies were torturing a whole group of cows and oxen. The animals ran wildly into the woods and totally disappeared. The purpose of their flight was to save themselves from the pesky insects. On another occasion, a certain cow was in heat and was sent by mistake to graze with the other cows and oxen. The oxen suddenly started running furiously towards her with no regard to damaging the crops in their path.

I soon learned how to manage two oxen in the harness as they ploughed the fields. I also learned how use the oxen to carry the hay or crops by cart. When one of our oxen had been bitten by a snake, I had to couple one ox together with a cow in the harness in order to plough the field.

During my first Summer in Rula, I was lucky to be hired as a labourer by Traiko Kessinov from Rula who was living in Lerin. My duties were to accept shipments of firewood, record the weight of the shipments and load the trucks with firewood. The firewood came from the mountains of Breznitsa and was chopped by axe by the men from the village of Belkamen. The location of this job was on the road from Rula to Gabresh and in close proximity to the bridge connecting Rula and Breznitsa. Traiche Tzavella, my first cousin, was very generous in allowing me to use his bicycle to ride to work. With the money I made here, I was able to buy my sister Helen a brand new dress.

In Rula, the villagers always spoke Macedonian amongst themselves as long as a Policemen, Teacher or a Greek Priest were not present. Every Sunday, Vashile Triantafillov would play beautiful Macedonian songs for us on his record player. I remember that one of these songs was the "Done Donke." Girls sitting on the saddles of their donkeys going through "**Germatsiri**," the uphill mountain path to collect dry wood (**suvarki**) from the forest could be heard from far away singing beautiful Macedonian songs. They sang songs such as "**Gledai me Gledai, Verno Libe, Utre ke Odam Gore vo Planina**" (Look at me, look at me, my true love as tomorrow I will be leaving with the partisans to the mountains).

On our return from Romania, Naso and I were considered persons with no status. The Greek State confiscated the citizenship of all adults and children who left Greece at the conclusion of the Civil War. For six months and up until our citizenship was reinstated, we needed a Police Permit to be able to travel beyond Rula. The area between the village "Gabresh" going to "Kostur" and the village "Pisoderi" going to Lerin was a restricted zone. Military patrols were established on the road in both of these two villages with purpose of monitoring and restricting local travel. The Greek State issued special white travel cards to the locals in order that the State could monitor the in-and-out travel of this borderland with the Macedonian Yugoslav Republic. Persons from outside this



restricted zone needed a special Permit from the Police in Lerin or Kostur in order to be able to enter this restricted area.

After the reinstatement of our citizenship and during my stay in Athens, Naso was handcuffed by the Police and taken from the field in which he was working. He was immediately taken to Lerin and put under detention. After only spending one day in Lerin, he was transferred to a prison in the city Kozeni waiting for his turn to be court martialed. The authorities accused him of being a draft dodger as he had never reported for military service. Based on the Witness Depositions of Vane Markov and Traiko Tzavellov from Rula, Naso was also being sentenced for extreme treason (in absentia) by the Court in Kostur for fighting with those who wanted to take Macedonian land away from the Greek State. Naso's defense against both of these very serious charges was based on the testimony of other villagers from Rula. Concerning the charge of draft dodging from the Army, these witnesses declared that during the time that Naso's age group for military service was called in 1947, Rula was under the rule of the Communist partisans. The Police stations in the area surrounding Rula, in the villages Breznitsa, Zelevo and German, had all been evacuated in 1947. Naso was never made aware by the Police, a customary practice, that he should report for Army duty. As for the charge concerning extreme treason, Vane Markov and Traiko Tzavella (who had been used as witnesses by the Court in Kostur in 1951), now retracted their original accusations against Naso. After six months of serving time in prison, Naso was acquitted of the court martial. Naso returned to Rula to tend to his sheep. It is worthy to note that that the time Naso's age group were to report to the Army was actually in 1944. The young men of Naso's age class were never called in 1944 due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of them were politically left leaning. Naso and his peers were called in 1947 when Rula had already become controlled by the Communists and the State Police abandoned such villages and moved onto the cities.

### **Goche in "Tsotili" High School--1958**

Thanks to Tinka's Uncle Stoian in Athens, I was sent at his expense to stay in the High School student residence in the small town "Tsotili" in the Kozani region of Greece. It was here that I was able to attend the local High School. Tinka's brother, Mito had also graduated from this High School in the 1940's. My purpose in attending this High School was to improve my Greek language skills

and become familiar with the Greek vocabulary and terminologies in the High School subjects. This would enable me to take the final High School graduation exams. In order for students to continue attending these Schools, all students were required to bring back letters from their village Priests verifying that they had attended Church services in the village during the Easter vacation. This proved that the strong link or “brotherhood” between the Greek nationalistic School and the Greek nationalistic Church was molded in stone and was never to be broken.

During my stay in the student residence, I naively purchased, read and stored copies of the leftist newspaper “Avgi’ (Dawn) in my suitcase. This was the newspaper I had become familiar with in my time in Braila. In 1958 when I was in the student residence, the Leftist party EDA (which “Avgi” represented), became the Opposition Party in the Greek Parliament. Many of the politically-left students living in this student residence were vocally joyous that the EDA (United Democratic Left) Party was gaining political momentum. Alarmed at this turn of events, the State started to tighten the screws on the Left. It was probably at this time that I fell under Police surveillance in Tsotili. This resulted in the School Administration eventually being forced by the Police to expel me from the School. The daughter of the School Principal who was herself a teacher at this School approached me one day warning me to get rid of any “leftist” publications or publications written in Cyrillic that I might have in my possession. I had arranged to give these publications to a friend of mine living outside the residence. Before I was able to do that however, the Residence Administration announced at the end of our Cafeteria lunch period one day that “Room Number 8” remain in place. The Administration came to my Room (Room 8) with the pretext of looking for contraband cigarettes. The Administration went directly to my suitcase, opened it and immediately confiscated the publications found there. They then transferred me into another room shared with two married students wanting to become Priests. To become a Priest in Greece, you needed to finish at least two years of High School. In the meantime, the School Administration sent an urgent telegram to Rula with a very terse message telling my parents to “Come and pick up your son!” The next day and before my parents arrived to pick me up, all students were called into an Assembly. In front of all these students, I was formally expelled from the School. My fellow students were warned that expulsion could be their fate too if they were ever found with undesirable publications on their person. My expulsion meant I was prohibited from writing final exams in any

High School in the Macedonian region of Greece. My parents had been terrified upon receiving this urgent but brief telegram from the School. They feared I might have been injured or even killed. There was no explanation provided in the telegram as why they should come immediately to pick me up. They borrowed money for the trip from Tina's sister, Jana and through hitchhiking, eventually arrived in Tsotili. As soon as Tinka saw me standing and looking healthy, she felt great relief and did not care why they had been called to "pick me up." It was with this great sense of relief that Naso and Tinka took me back to Rula.

### **Goche in The Royal Technical School of Leros--1959-1960--19 years old**

Shortly after my expulsion from the School in Tsotili, a Policemen came to our house in Rula and asked me if I would like to go to the island Leros to "study". Having no real future in Rula, I agreed to go. In the meantime, my sister Helen was sponsored to emigrate to Canada by Stavro Belkos from Breznitsa and his wife Christa, Tinka's cousin from Rula. Helen was only 16 years old when she emigrated to Canada.

Leros is one of the 12 islands including Rhodes and situated in close proximity to Asia Minor of Turkey. These islands were part of Italy before 1948. The Italians made Leros a naval military base and built big structures on it in order to accommodate their sailors. Inside the mountains, they built an electrical power facility. This naval base was used by the Greek State after the conclusion of the Greek Civil War in order to ideologically reshape and "cleanse the minds" of the young partisans. It was also used to "reshape the minds" of the young children returning to Greece from the Soviet Bloc countries. Ordinary village children from across Greece were also sent here in case they needed to be cleared of any "impure" political leanings but mostly to learn a trade suitable for village life.

Together with me in Leros were many Macedonian children from the Lerin and Kostur regions who had also returned from Romania, Poland, Hungary and other Communist countries. We were each assigned to a class with an instructor who offered us very basic training in a specific trade. The skills that were being taught were well suited to future village life. Some skills that we were taught were tailoring, shoemaking and basic electrical training. One of my classmates was Lazo Ognenis from the village of Nered who had returned from Poland. My friend Lazo and I were assigned to the Electrical Technician training class. In addition to

the trade classes, there were mandatory seminars for all students on the Christian Orthodoxy and teachings on morality issues. Church attendance on Sundays was mandatory. Life in Leros was generally peaceful in a somewhat semi-military environment. The daily clothes we wore throughout the week were made from the same fabric used to make food storage sacks. The only day we dressed in better clothes was for Sunday Church services. Food that was served to the students was reasonably good although it was often not enough to satisfy the appetites of healthy young men. Every Sunday afternoon, we were allowed to leave the School compound and travel to the city. At another location in Leros, there was a Girls' School. I'm sure that this School had the same purpose of "reshaping minds" while providing training in "technical skills" to young women.

In Leros, we had a very strong volleyball team and I was a member of this team. My fellow teammates were mostly other Macedonian students who had returned to Greece from Communist countries. We often played competitive games against the local High School team. Also In the compound at Leros was a musical class under the instruction of a qualified musician from the Greek Island of Levkade. This class was separate from the other trades classes. I joined the musical class and learned how to play the trumpet. I must have excelled at the trumpet because after a very short time, I was given a supervisory position over the class when the instructor was absent. We musicians had access to all kinds of military band instruments and access to Army and Navy military uniforms. Musicians were allotted extra portions of bread and marmalade. Because of the enticement of being given additional bread portions, I was able to persuade many of my fellow Macedonian students to join the music classes. Since I had learned how to read and write musical notes back in Tulgesh, I was assigned the responsibility of teaching my fellow students how to read notes and how to play their assigned instruments. Our Band played in the Island's Easter Parade commemorating Christ's crucifixion and in other Greek National Days parades. I was also assigned to lead the Band to Church every Sunday. As we played, columns of students followed behind us as we marched to Church. There was one definite advantage that Band members had. We were allowed to stay outside the Church and protect our instruments from theft. This meant that we were thankfully excused from the mandatory three-hour Church service.

On a personal note, the Administration of the compound hired a tutor for myself and two other Greek students. The other two students being tutored with me

were from the Epirus region of Greece. Both these boys were already High School graduates--one an expatriate from Poland and the other from Tashkent. Our tutor, a High School Teacher himself on the Island, taught us Religion, the Ancient Greek Language and Ancient Greek History (Thucydides). The only subjects the three of us were lacking as High School graduates from Communist countries were Religion, Ancient Greek Language, History and Latin. It appears that the Greek State decided to provide special funding for High School graduates who returned from the "Iron Curtain" to enable them to continue their studies through the Universities in Greece. One reason could be that the Greek State wanted to appear friendly to educated refugees wanting to expatriate. They probably wanted these "educated brains" to remain in Greece rather than emigrating to the Republic of Macedonia or elsewhere.

In the 1960's, Greece embarked on a building spree. In Athens, no inch of land was spared for the building of residential apartment blocks. Because of this, there was an acute need for Engineers especially those trained in construction. Civil Engineers were the most sought after by young women for marriage. My friend, Vasil Hadjis from the village of Chernovishte, graduated as an Electrical Engineer from a University in Budapest. As soon as he returned to Greece, he was immediately hired by the Electrical Power Company DEI. Vasil could barely speak Greek but he rose to be one of their top Electrical Engineers. When he worked in Salonica, he invited me to his apartment. On one of the walls of his apartment hung a large picture of Goche Delchev. From his record player, he played me some traditional Macedonian music. Vasil was the Electrical Engineer who was in charge of the installation of electrical power in our villages and in the Prespa region.

In the meantime, Stoian managed to get a letter from the Ministry of Education in Athens authorizing me to take my final High School graduation exams in Leros. I was successful in passing these exams. Before leaving Leros, the Director of the compound asked me if I wanted to study Hotel Management in Rhodes. In addition to running many compounds similar to the one in Leros, the Royal Care or Queen Frederica's Foundation (Vasiliki Pronia) also owned many Hotels all over Greece. I turned down his offer as I was now in possession of a High School Graduation Diploma. Since I had received top marks in Mathematics and Physics, I decided to pursue the career of Construction Engineer or a possible career in Physics.

## **Goche Preparing for University Exams in Athens--1961, 20 Years Old**

After a year of required stay in Leros, most students returned to their home villages. On the way by boat to Athens, I overheard officials who were assigned to accompany us say: "We tried everything to change the minds of these boys but they did not change." For the most part, the efforts of the Greek Police State to "re-educate" and "cleanse the minds" of children returning from the Communist States with pro-Slavic and Communist leanings failed.

Together with a few other students, I decided to settle in Athens. Understandably, we had very little spending money. We first needed time to orient ourselves to the city of Athens. We slept in a house with only beds on a first-come first-served basis. This house probably belonged to some charity organization. Some of my fellow students from Leros waited in front of a building in the Omonia Square in the hopes that they would be hired by the construction contractors for work. Instead of waiting for a job as the others did, I decided to knock at the door of the Royal Care Headquarters in Athens. After many attempts, I was finally granted permission to sleep and eat in their Camp. The Camp was located in the Athens suburb called Agii Anargiry. The purpose of this Camp was to provide a three-month stay for youth. The Camp's goal was to provide recreational activities for students and gave the Camp a chance to indoctrinate them.

Next to this Royal Care Camp was also a private Recreational Camp for the Athenian children on a pay-as-you-go basis. I got to know the Caretaker of this particular Camp by playing chess with him. Through him, I met a girl named Alexandra, daughter of a filmmaker. Her Father had been expelled from Egypt by Naser. Naser expelled many Greek families in Egypt in the name of Arabic nationalism. This young lady was my first encounter with women. This relationship was occasional and lasted only until I left Athens. Years later in August 1963, Alexandra was a member of an artistic group performing in Lerin. She took a taxi and ended up in the Prespa villages looking for me. She was asking there if anyone knew of a trumpet player who was probably a University student. Somebody told her that such a young man lived in Rula. She took the taxi to Rula and ended up at my house in front of my Baba Mara. Unaware that

she was coming to Rula, I had gone fishing that day with Velica's son, Vasil. She returned immediately back to Lerin and I never heard from her again. Maybe Alexandra was discouraged when she saw the state of misery and poverty in my home village, Rula. Tanas Konstantinidis, a friend of mine from the village of Pipli actually married a girl whose family had been expelled from Egypt by Naser. Tanas who expatriated from Poland was with me in Leros. He settled in Athens and attended the Fine Arts School there and eventually became a painter. Rula produced two artists. The first was Naso, son of Nune Palov. Naso graduated from The Fine Arts School in Bucharest and eventually returned to Greece. He was an expert in painting religious icons. The second was Vasil, son of Traiko Keshinov, who became a sculptor. Vasil married a young French girl and settled in Paris, France.

Having secured my basic needs of accommodation and food at The Agii Anargiry Camp in Athens, I concentrated my energy in preparing for University exams. One of my main goals was to improve my Greek vocabulary and to learn the terminologies associated with Physics and Mathematics. Competition for entry in the Polytechnical School in Athens was stiff as only one in ten applicants was successful. At the University of Salonica, the success rate of applicants was only one in six for Physics and Mathematics. I applied in person for the writing of exams at the Polytechnical School in Athens. I gave my application to the University of Salonica to a man I did not know but this man was on route to Salonica. Both Universities had the same subject requirements for their entrance exams. The six subjects included the three areas of Mathematics, Algebra, Trigonometry and Geometry, Physics, Chemistry and Essay Writing Skills. The difference between the two Universities was that the Polytechnical School required that their exams essays be written in the "Clean" Greek language (Katharevousa). The University of Salonica allowed the exam essays to be written in the language of the masses called "Dimotiki." Actually, this "Dimotiki" language is now the official State language of Greece. At the University of Athens, the exam essay we were required to answer was: "Discuss the Contribution of the Church in the Preservation of the Greek Nation." At the University of Salonica, the exam essay question was: "Who is Happier, the Civilized or the Primitive Man?" The exams for the Polytechnical School in Athens were held from September 7-13, 1961 and the exams for the Aristotelian University in Salonica were held from September 11-16, 1961. I eventually found out that I failed the exams in Athens but that I passed the exams in Salonica.

After finishing the writing of the exams in both Athens and Salonica, I returned to Rula and waited for my results. During my time in Athens, my brother Paul was born in Rula, 20 years my junior. While in Rula, Stoian was the one that gave me the good news. Stoian sent a telegram to me on January 12, 1962. He told me that I was required to register at the University of Salonica. My name appeared on the list of students published in the newspapers who had passed the Physics exams in Salonica. While waiting for the morning bus from Breznitsa to Lerin, Tinka's Uncle Pope Pavle came to say goodbye and wish me well in my studies. On January 29, 1962, I paid my tuition fees and registered as student in the Physics Department of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at the Aristotelian University in Salonica..

### **Goche in Salonica during the “Aristotelian University” Years--1962-1967, Age 21-26**

Arriving by train in Salonica, I found women waiting in the Station offering arriving students rooms or apartments to rent. I did move into one place for a short while and later moved in with Georgi Balkos at his place. Georgi Balkos was from the village of Zelevo and was a student in the Faculty of Medicine in Salonica. With some financial help from Stoian, I managed to complete my first year of studies and I returned to Rula for the Summer.

On February 11, 1962, Russian Yuri Gagarin, the first astronaut to travel in space visited Greece. This created much excitement amongst the University students. As for our subject lectures, attendance was not mandatory. The only required attendance was during the laboratories related to the Physics and the Chemistry courses. There were usually five subjects to be completed in each University year. Students only needed a passing grade for each of the five yearly subjects in order to proceed to the next year. Initial exams for the year were held in the month of May. Students who failed a certain subject or subjects were allowed a second rewrite of this exam in October. Failing even one of your five mandatory subjects in May or the rewrite in October meant that those students would lose that entire year of University. Due to the flexibility offered regarding the attendance of University lectures, I usually spent the two weeks over Christmas, Easter Break, and the Summer months in Rula. Since I was a student enrolled in an institution



of higher learning, I was able to postpone my mandatory service in the Greek Army.

I experienced financial difficulties as a student in Salonica especially in the first two years of study when tuition fees were in place. I was told that if I could get a letter from Rula certifying that I was a person with no financial means, I might have a chance of being accepted to stay in a building designed to house poor students. Before my departure for Salonica for my second year of studies in 1963, Ziso Kessinov, after helping him win the Mayorship of Rula, gave me such a letter. At the same time, I got the name and the office address in Salonica of a Greek lady from Volos who used to work as a Supervisor in the Youth Centre in Breznitsa. The mandate of these Youth Centres (Spiti Pediou) in our Macedonian villages, aside from teaching students some trade skills, was to cultivate Greek patriotism and strong religious beliefs in young adults.

In order to save money, I always delayed my departure from Rula back to Salonica. I would only return to Salonica when my attendance in the laboratories was mandatory. Upon leaving Rula for my second year of University studies, I took a thin portable mattress with me. Arriving in Salonica on January 10, 1963, I knocked at the door of the Social Assistance Centre in Salonica. This kind lady from Volos let me sleep in the Social Assistance Centre's offices at night using my roll-up mattress. I would hide my mattress in one of the closets at this Centre during the business hours. After fifteen days of sleeping at the Social Assistance Centre, the University authorities approved my move to the Student House on Arianou 5, Salonica. There were two secretaries working in the Social Assistance Centre. One of the secretaries probably took pity on my severe financial destitution and gave me a Mandolin as a gift. This Mandolin proved to be very socially useful to me. I was invited to play at many student parties. Also, I would play the mandolin at night singing songs (cantades) on behalf of my male friends to their girlfriends.

The Student House accommodated around forty students of whom three were fellow students in the Physics Program. There were five beds in a room and a Reading Room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. In addition to being given this accommodation, the University Assistance Office also provided us with one daily food coupon that we could use for either a free lunch or supper. We would use our meal coupons and dine with students who were able to pay for their meals. Basic cooking facilities were available at our Student House when coupons were not available.

On occasion, we would make a large pot of bean soup for everyone with the dried beans I had brought with me from Rula.

My social life in Salonica was initially connected with students from the city Trikala. My connection with them was through a guitar player named George Lukas from Trikala. I later connected with a student group from the city of Volos through the “chitarra” player and singer, Vasilis Nestoras. Vasilis was also a resident in our subsidized Student House and he was studying the Science of Forestry. Students from the Lerin region were nowhere to be seen except two very good friends--one was Stelios Katikaridis from Ovchareni and the other was Sterios Savidis from Armenoro. They were both Physics students and both of Middle East background (Pontii).

Participants in the student social groups were not only students from specific regions of Greece but also included their boyfriends or girlfriends. All social activities including parties, excursions and outings were all within this social group. Relationships at this time between young men and women were transient in nature. We would care for each other during illness or during the severe disappointment of failing grades. My involvement with female students was mostly short, except for two. My first relationship was with an attractive young woman who was not a fellow University student. My parents warned me that my prime responsibility was to stay on the road leading to graduation and not to waste time with romantic relationships. My second relationship was with a young lady enrolled in the Philosophy Program at the University. My parents, although polite, were also not approving of this relationship. Actually, as a young leftist and Macedonian man from Rula with no financial means, I really did not have a bright future to look forward to in Greece. The reality was that I did not have room for a serious romantic relationship at the time. The Father of the young woman in this second relationship was a Civil servant who had connections with high-ranking military officers. His connections at a time when the Army had absolute control of the Greek State, probably explained my appointment by the Ministry of Education as a High School Teacher in Trikala.

I was always interested in history and politics and I never missed reading any daily leftist or right-wing newspapers. During my years at the University in Salonica, I was a member of the Physics Department’s Student Council and a member of the Youth Wing of the leftist Greek Party EDA (Democratic Left). University students

were fighting for the abolition of the student fees under the slogan: “Money for education and not for Sophia.” Sophia was the future wife of King Carlos of Spain. In Athens in January 1965, the International Students Congress of Western countries was held. I participated in this Congress as a representative of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics Student Council. One thing I clearly remember hearing at this Congress is: “If you want to know what the American delegation wants, listen to what the Canadian delegation is saying.” Similar Youth Congresses were held by students in the Communist Bloc countries. Actually, it was during the 1948 Youth Communist Congress in Belgrade that the decision was made for the evacuation of children from Greece to the Communist countries.

My mentor, Uncle Stoian in Athens warned me to stay out of political syndicalism and concentrate on my University studies. When I travelled to Paris in July of 1967 as part of the Physics students’ European trip, I read that the Centre Union Party in Greece lost the majority in Parliament due to member defections. I foresaw the political troubles awaiting Greece and decided to totally abstain from syndicalism and political activism upon my return.

On November 3, 1963 after 20 years of enduring a Police State, the Greek people voted into office the leftist Centre Union Party led by Georgious Papandreou. The first thing the new leftist Government did was to abolish the University tuition fees. This gave a significant financial break to the students. In these Parliamentary elections in 1963, Rula voted 174 for Centre Union, 105 for ERE (Centre Right) and 22 for EDA. Before the Parliamentary elections, the two political parties, Centre Union and EDA, agreed to cooperate by supporting the strongest candidate in the riding regardless of his/her party affiliation. The left-leaning students which comprised the majority in the Universities supported this cooperation by attending mass political gatherings. The students travelled in groups by bus to villages in order to try to break the fear of voting “left” instilled in the villagers by the Police State. The Police State was alarmed at the possibility of losing the election and adopted acts of extreme intimidation. This all culminated in the assassination of the Olympic Gold Medalist and Medical University Professor Gregoris Lambrakis on May 27, 1963. On the day he was assassinated, I was present on the third floor of the Workers Union Building in Salonica. This building was packed with people waiting to hear Lambrakis speak. Originally, the gathering was planned to be held in a roomy Theatre but the owner of the Theatre refused to allow the gathering to happen due to pressure

from the local Police. After seeing a notice posted about the change of location for the Lambrakis event, I immediately went to the new location. It was here that I found an overwhelming Police presence. Also within the crowds waiting outside were agitators and “goons” who had been paid by the Police to disrupt our event. We students assembled in a room on the top floor of this building waiting for Lambrakis to arrive. When he finally arrived, he had blood on the side of his face. Apparently one of the paid “goons” had hit him in the face as he crossed the street towards our Lecture Hall. Once he completed his passionate speech to us, he descended the stairs of the Lecture Hall. As he was crossing the street, another paid “goon” hit him with great force over his head. Lambrakis collapsed on the street and was taken to Hospital. He died shortly thereafter of a severe brain injury. A clear depiction of the events of this assassination were explained in the movie “Z” starring Yves Montand and Irini Pappas. The film “Z” won best international film at the Academy Awards in 1970. In the same year, it also won the Jury Prize for best film at the Cannes Film Festival and the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Film. The film was named “Z” because in the Greek language it means “He Lives!” Although Lambrakis had been brutally assassinated, his beliefs calling for peace and political sanity throughout Greece lived on after his assassination.

On April 23, 1967, conservative officers led by Colonel Georgious Papadopoulos organized a military coup and set up a dictatorial regime in Greece. A counter-coup was attempted by King Constantine II in December of 1967 but failed. The Greek Monarchy was abolished. Arrests, deportations, torture and enforcement of the new regime’s orders followed. The existing mayor in Rula was deemed not to conform to the beliefs of the new regime and was arbitrarily removed and replaced by the regime’s man. Kote Bitse was replaced by Mitre Nolev in Rula. This same fate was met by the Mayors in other villages who were not considered “friendly” to the new regime.

On July 3, 1965, I left on a chartered bus for Western Europe with a group of fellow Physics students. We slept in Belgrade, Serbia and in Ljubljana, Slovenia before arriving in Munich, Germany. In Munich, I visited the Science Museum there and I went to see the Nazi Dachau Concentration Camp. We slept in Strasbourg, Germany. The next day on our travels to Amsterdam, Netherlands we visited the Philips Electronics factory. I was amazed that entire streets in Amsterdam were set aside for the exclusive use of bikers. Our student group also

took a trip to the Atlantic Ocean and witnessed crews working on maintaining the 130 km long dam build to protect the lowlands of the Netherlands. The feeling in the Netherlands was that “God created the Earth and the Dutch people created the Netherlands.” On our way to the dam, I noticed many canals, pastures full of cattle, beautiful windmills and lush greenery. On our next stop in Brussels, Belgium, we visited a nuclear power plant. We went to a night club where the music written by Mikis Theodorakis for the film “Zorba the Greek” was fashionable and played everywhere.

Our next stop was in Paris, France. Paris was stunning with its wide boulevards full of people day and night. In Paris, I visited the Louvre Museum, the Eifel Tower, and the Palace of Versailles which had been the French King’s Palace. I also went to see Velica’s son Pando and Lambro Tomev’s son Jane which had been sponsored for work in France by Done Trokov’s Uncle. They were both working at a lumber factory located in close proximity to Paris. Jane gave me a toy car for his son Vasil in Rula. Our bus driver refused to take the toy car so I had to send it by train to Salonica. From Paris, we went to Zurich, Switzerland, a place reserved for the wealthy. From there, we travelled to Innsbruck, Austria where we saw the facilities used during the Olympic Ski Competitions. From Innsbruck through Graz, Austria and Zagreb, Croatia, we arrived in Belgrade, Serbia where we slept. From Belgrade towards Salonica, we stopped in Skopje, Macedonia where the destruction of the 1963 earthquake was still clearly visible.

### **Goche in Rula During the Aristotelian University Years--1962-1967**

My Summers in Rula involved a blend of studying and helping my family with chores like storing hay in the barn. There was a never-ending list of farm tasks that needed to be done. At night time, under the glow of a kerosene lamp, I spent my time reading literary classics such as Hugo’s Les Misérables. Playing cards (bourlot) in the Coffee House of Vane Markov (Kantzeto) was a pastime for village men. Baking lamb in the wood-fired ovens on Easter and slaughtering the pig before Christmas to provide “salo” (pork lard) for cooking were yearly chores for every family.

## **My Experience With the Musical Bands in Rula—1963-1967**

After returning to Rula from Athens and before leaving for Salonica, I bought a trumpet from Golano, a band leader in Zhelevo. When in Rula during my University years, I played with the Rulski musical bands of Blaje Bitskov and Velika's Vasil (our future Pope) and occasionally with Lambro's band from "Oschima." These bands played at all kinds of festivities ranging from weddings and dances to festivals of Church Saints. Blaje was a truly exceptional clarinet player. He had tragically lost his vision as a young child playing with ammunition. Blaje's "turf" was mostly in Rula, Breznitsa and Zhelevo. Vasil's "turf" was in Rula and Posdivishta, while Lambro's was mainly in the Prespa villages.

Some of the weddings I remember playing my trumpet at with the musical bands were: Kole Zaspali's daughter from Breznitsa marrying Tassos Korovesis from Smirdesh; "Chichis" daughter Arti from Canada marrying Mitsos Fatsis, both from Breznitsa ; and Meropi Zaspali from Breznitsa marrying Gheorgi Elefteriou from Smirdesh. Kole Zaspali, was the owner and driver of a bus coming daily from Breznitsa. His bus would pass through Rula and travel towards the city of Lerin. "Chichi" was the owner and operator of the watermill in Breznitsa serving Breznitsa and Rula. I befriended "Chichi" when I was hired to weigh and load firewood on the road from Rula to Gabresh. The spot where I worked was close to "Chichi"'s mill. Georgi Elefteriou's life journey was almost identical to mine. He emigrated from Romania, was enrolled in a Royal Camp in Salonica. Like me, he also graduated from the Physics and Mathematics Program at the University of Salonica. The year he graduated from the University was the same year I was admitted into the Program. The main difference between Georgi and myself was that he (as the son of a Priest) joined the politically "right wing" student organizations at the University whereas I joined the "left wing" student organizations. Gheorgi embarked on a wonderful career teaching High School students in "Ardea," Edessa. He later became Principal of The Lerin Learning Academy which prepared students to become Elementary School Teachers.

I clearly remember the New Year's Eve Dances held in the Public School of the neighbouring village of Breznitsa. The Dances were full of young, fresh faces recently expatriated from Romania. In a short number of years, however, most of these young men and women emigrated to Canada or Australia with some

moving to other towns in Greece. Breznitsa, like many other Macedonian villages, were eventually destined to become “ghost villages.”

### **The People of Rula--Visitors, Family , Marriages**

Family and close relatives who had emigrated to Canada returned to Rula for visits. In 1961, my sister Helen and her husband Stavro Jordanou from the village of “Negochani” arrived in Rula from Canada. In the same year, my parents, together with my infant brother Paul, travelled to Athens for medical examination by Canadian Doctors. This medical examination was all part of the Canadian Government’s requirement of prospective emigrees.

On July 20, 1962, Christa Petrou, my Mother’s first cousin arrived in Rula for a visit from Canada with her in-laws from Breznitsa. I remember Christa giving presents to everyone. My Aunt Christa, my sister Sophie, my first cousin Traiche and Pope Pavle’s daughter Lika, went for a day’s outing in the mountain area of the “**Sama Buka**” (Solitary Birch) and “**Rachikovio Izvor**” (Rachkov Water Spring).

On May 23, 1963 in Rula, Velica’s (Klotsa) Vasil married Sevda Kotsaki. In July of 1964, Tinka’s cousin Sotir Petrou and his wife Diana, from Canada visited Rula. On September 1, 1964, my first cousin, Mara Tzavella arrived in Rula from Romania. On August 4, 1965, my sister Sophie left Rula for Canada. On October 21, 1965 Sophie was engaged in Toronto to marry Tom Litsas from the village” Statitsa.” She married him on June 5, 1966. They eventually had theirs three beautiful children, Kathy, Steve, and Tom. When Tom passed away on December 29, 2019, they had been blessed with 10 grandchildren.

On November 17, 1965, Velica’ s Vasil and wife Sevda left for Canada. On September 8, 1966, Stoian, the man who gave me great moral and financial support in Greece, arrived in Rula. He had travelled from Athens to Rula with his wife Anastasia and their daughter Aliko. On June 19, 1967, my Baba Moisitsa got sick with asthma and congestion in her lungs. Sadly, on September 25, 1967, when I was in Salonica Baba Moisitsa died.

On September 10, 1967, Stavro “Pachata” (Tasses) arrived in Rula with his car from Canada. One day, Stavro drove me and Blaje from Rula to Kostur. In Kostur at his expense, we had a wonderful time at a local tavern with good food and music. My parents were very upset with me. They refused to give me money for

my trip the next day to Salonica because I had not told them the day prior that I was going to Kostur with Stavro. I had to borrow some money from Blaje for my trip.

On October 15, 1967, while working on my final University assignment required for graduation, I developed a terrible cough. This cough lasted for many months and even during the first months of my Army service. In July of 1969 during the time of my Army service in the Evros region of Greece, many shepherds from Rula including my Father ended up sick in Hospital in Lerin. They contracted a virus carried by their sheep. Thankfully, Naso and the others eventually recovered. During this same month of July, my sister Helen and her husband Stavro travelled for a second time to Rula as part of a Church group visiting Europe. Serving in Kilkis during this time, I was lucky to win a 10-day leave from the Army in a lottery held in the barracks. During this ten-day leave, I accompanied Helen and Stavro in their trip from Rula to Negochani and Volos. When we finally reached Athens, they took a flight to Germany to meet up with their Church group.

On December 4, 1967, I applied to the Ministry of Education to be appointed as a High School Physics Teacher. On January 23, 1968, I left Rula to report for my mandatory Army service. I arrived at the military camp in Corinth.

### **Goche Serving in the Army Barracks in Corinth--January-April 1968**

The Corinth Camp was the first destination for all conscripted soldiers having either High School or Post-Secondary education. From the soldiers at this Camp, Cadet Officers were selected to serve their two-year military assignment. During this initial three months of Army service, our "political affiliations" would be carefully scrutinized before the possible assignment as Cadet Officer for the remainder of our service. If our political affiliations were not considered desirable, we would serve out our military service as ordinary soldiers. We were eligible for sentinel duty after learning how to shoot a rifle. Watching the list of soldiers assigned for sentinel duty, I realized that I and other young men who had graduated from University but were left-leaning politically were never put on these sentinel lists. Although I was initially pleased that I would not have to serve on night-time sentinel duty, I soon realized that the Army seemed not to trust "left-leaning" young men with rifles in their hands out in the wilderness. This truth eventually became even more apparent to me when soldiers serving as



sentinels were promoted to be Cadet Officers while we “others” were assigned to be sappers (dirt shovelers) in the Artillery Division.

During the first two months of Army service, no soldier was allowed to leave the Camp. When the gates of the Camp opened for visitors, my Uncle Stoian, his wife Anastasia and daughter Aliko travelled from Athens to visit me. On this day, I began to fully realize just how confining and restrictive the life of a soldier was.

### **Goche in the Army Barracks in Thivai--March 1968**

In close proximity to the city Thivai was the Artillery Training Centre. Each cannon had one Sergeant in charge and five to seven soldiers assisting the Sergeant. The number of soldiers assigned to a cannon depended on the cannon's size. My assigned duty as a soldier was to make sure (through the use of a shovel) that the legs of the cannon were sitting firmly on the ground.

### **Goche in the Army Barracks in Alexandroupolis--April-July 1968**

The city Alexandroupolis is situated on the Aegean Sea and very close to Turkey . The Artillery Camp was located north of the city towards the mountains. I was a far distance from Athens now. For the first time ever, I was assigned to serve as a sentinel. The Officer of the Unit responsible for the “ideological training” of soldiers asked me to lecture my fellow soldiers on the evils of the Communist system and to describe the deplorable life led by people living behind the “Iron Curtain” countries. Upon my refusal to do so, I was punished. As punishment, I was ordered to dig and refill holes in the ground in the oppressive heat of the midday sun. During this punishment, I was under the Supervision of a Sergeant who was sitting the whole time under the shade. My fellow soldiers were taking their daily afternoon naps while I was digging.

Almost all the committed “leftist” soldiers, most of them University graduates, served as sappers (dirt shovelers). We sappers were considered as “undesirables” and “disposable.” This is probably why we were sent for a month to the Army Engineering Unit situated in the city and taught the dangerous task of laying and clearing mines. We were not allowed to stay in one Army Unit for more than three months at a time. It appears that the Army did not want the “leftist” soldiers forging any deep friendships or having time to make any “nefarious”

plans. After three months service in this Camp, the time came for me to be moved to another Artillery Camp.

### **Goche in the Army Barracks in Kilkis--July-September 1968**

I was transferred to a Heavy Artillery Unit situated in close proximity to the city Kilkis. During my time here, there were national elections in Greece voting on a new Constitution. A Sergeant in this Unit asked me how I thought the Greek people would vote. I replied: "How do you expect them to vote when you have a gun pointed at their heads?" At a later date when I gained access to my secret Police file, this exact statement (word for word) made to this Army Sergeant was clearly noted there. At the same time that I was serving in the Kilkis Artillery Unit, Kota Ilievska's Vasil from Rula was serving as Nurse in the Medical Army Unit situated in the city. During a two week break, soldiers of many Army Units were sent to swim and camp in Chalkidiki. It was there that I met Sotir Rachkov's Vladimir, another soldier from Rula. Since he knew the cooks at the Camp in Chalkidiki, Vladimir made sure that the cooks there gave me overly generous portions of food.

### **Goche in the Army Barracks in Orestias--October 1968 to February 1969**

Our Artillery Camp was situated to the north in proximity to the River Evros (Maritsa), the Turkish city Edirne and the Bulgarian city Svilengrad. To the south, is the Greek city of Orestias. The River Evros (Maritsa) separates Greece and Turkey. Upon arrival at this Unit, I was immediately assigned to play the French Horn (Trumpet) that would serve as a signal to the soldiers. The soldier that had been regularly assigned to this task had gone for training in the city of Dhidhimotikhon where the Musical Army Unit and my Army Division headquarters were situated. Upon his return to the Unit, this Trumpet playing soldier informed me that the Musical Unit in Dhidhimotikhon was looking for soldiers who could play music. On the first day the soldiers were allowed to leave the Artillery Camp, I took the train from Orestias to Dhidhimotikhon. My purpose was to speak to the Officer in charge of the Musical Unit. Finding me skilled enough to play in his Band, he immediately got me permission from the General of our Army Division for my transfer to his Musical Unit. Upon learning of this transfer (and realizing that he could now not use me for his anti-Iron Curtain propaganda), the Officer in charge of the "ideological training" of soldiers in the

Camp warned me that “By accepting this move (to the Musical Unit), you are doomed!” As I was fully aware that any negative reports of my behaviour from an Officer in the Camp would be passed onto the Police at the conclusion of my Army service, I immediately went to speak to my Detachment Officer about this serious warning. My Detachment Officer’s reaction was “F... that Officer!” He strongly encouraged me to ignore this warning and proceed as planned with my transfer to the Musical Unit.

### **Goche in the Army Musical Unit and in the Barracks in Dhidhimotikhon---March 1969-January 1970**

Arriving in Dhidhimotikhon, I was told that there was no need for a Trumpet player. The Officer in charge of the Musical Unit assigned me to play an instrument in the same class as a Trombone called “Euphonium. (In Greek, “Ev” means **good** and “phoni” means **pleasant sound**). Since I was University educated, he assigned me to perform the secretarial duties of the Unit. All career musicians were low-ranking Musical Officers in the Army who climbed the ranks based on the quality of their musical performance and not based on their formal education. The Musical Unit with its instruments (including the Office and the sleeping quarters for the few non-career soldiers) was accommodated in a separate structure which was part of the Basilica Church in Dhidhimotikhon. Most of the members of the Army Band were career Army musicians living in the city. Only myself and four other soldiers slept in the separate structure of the Church. I remained in the Musical Unit of the Army in Dhidhiotikhon for the remainder of my military service.

The duties of our Army Band included playing during the raising of the flag on Sunday. We played music for Officers’ Dances and during the Church processions at Easter. There were also annual Parades on March 25 commemorating the liberation of Greece from Turkey and a Parade on October 28 commemorating the Greco-Italian War. Occasionally, we played to welcome visiting high-ranking Government and Military officials. One such visit was when Minister Patakos visited the region of Dhidhimotikhon. During the Summer months, we travelled by military truck to entertain locals living in the villages bordering Bulgaria. The locals living in these border villages were called Pomaki. The Pomaki are Muslims although they speak the Bulgarian language.

Opposite to our Music Unit, there was a Restaurant which served the affordable “tavche gravche” (bean stew). Unfortunately, however, this Restaurant was on the Army’s “blacklist.” These “blacklisted” establishments were owned by “left leaning” owners and soldiers were prohibited from doing business there. This was yet another way that the Greek Police State could economically subdue its left-leaning citizens

During my time at this Camp, I befriended the Music Unit Officer by tutoring his two young sons in Mathematics. This Officer also enjoyed playing backgammon with me. I also tutored the daughter of one of my career music colleague’s relatives in Mathematics. This young lady’s Father owned a Tailor Shop and as compensation for my Math tutoring made me an elegant suit.

On my final day of Army service and before leaving for Rula, I informed my Musical Unit Officer that I was characterized as “left-leaning” by the Greek Police. He replied: “If I had been aware of this fact prior to you coming to us, you would have never been allowed to step foot into the Music Unit. However, now that we are familiar with you, I will allow you to write a report on my behalf indicating your ideological behaviour during your service in my Unit.” I wrote up a report indicating my good behaviour and character during my service in his Unit and he signed it. A copy of this report would eventually reach the Police and be put into my Police file. I am assuming that this report eventually helped the Police give me clearance for State employment and ultimately aided in my acquisition of a passport.

Before bidding me goodbye, my fellow Music Band career colleagues gave me a gift of money for my trip back home. They knew full well that I had never received any money from anybody during my Army service in the Unit.

During my two years of service in the Army and for many years afterwards, Greece was under the yoke of the military dictatorship of Georgious Papadopoulos. Securing a Government job or being able to acquire a passport to leave Greece was largely influenced by the assessment of one’s ideological behaviour and character during military service. In each Army Unit I served in, the Commanding Officer of the Unit was required to assess in writing his opinion of our “ideological behaviour.”

In my official Police file, the following was written about me:

- (a) In 1948, he was handed over by his Mother to the Communists and was transferred to a country behind the “Iron Curtain” where he studied in different Schools.
- (b) In Tsotili, he was expelled from the High School after two months because he was reading the Communist newspaper “Avgi.”
- (c) He keeps a diary written in the Cyrillic alphabet and considers Communist Romania as his benefactor.
- (d) During his studies at the University, he declared Communist sympathies, associates with students with Communist leanings and reads Communist newspapers.
- (e) During the Greek Parliamentary elections, he declared support for Communist candidates.
- (f) His Father is implicated for anti-State actions that he took during the German occupation and after the liberation of Greece from the Communist gangs.
- (g) He has kept a reserved and low profile after emigrating back to Greece.
- (h) During his Army days in Kilkis, he was questioned by an Army Sergeant on how the Greek people would vote on the constitution and he answered, “If you use force on the people.....” He associates with soldiers with the same political leanings as himself. He needs to be followed.
- (i) The report from the Army Camp in Orestias says that he is indoctrinated in Marxist thought. He did not participate in anti-national activities here. However, he needs to be followed.

I always wonder why the Greek Police State felt the need to follow me. I had never committed a criminal act. In Capitalist States, the military and the Police are paid to protect the private property rights of the rich. In a Communist State, the military and the Police are paid to protect the nationalized means of production to which everyone has a stake. In a Capitalist State, those who declare a desire to share the wealth of the rich more equitably are classified as Communists. They are often considered enemies of the State and therefore must be followed. Conversely in the Communist State, any person who wants to reclaim his private properties confiscated by the State is considered an enemy of that State and must be followed. It all comes down to the philosophical issue and question of “**I, the King** versus **We the Proletariat.**” Do you allow private beaches or do you have beaches shared by all? Do you protect personal interests or

protect community interests? That is a question that each of us must answer for ourselves.

### **Goche in Rula in Pursuit of a Passport and his Stay in Athens--February 1970-June 1970**

In 1967 and after completing my military service, I applied to the Ministry of Education seeking a job appointment as High School Teacher in Physics and Mathematics. I also concentrated my efforts in obtaining a Greek passport. The standard practice in the Greek State is to delay or refuse the issuance of a passport to persons characterized as "leftist." This was one more "weapon" that the State could use to ideologically subdue the activities of the leftist citizens. The general population understood that hardened leftists would have a difficult time dealing with emigration and employment issues. I had to make countless trips to meet with high ranking Police Officers to discuss my predicament in obtaining a passport. After four long months of "back and forth" between myself and the Police, I was approved for a passport. I am sure that this approval was probably based on the reference letter verifying my good behavior signed by the Officer of the Musical Unit. As soon as I received my passport, I immediately left Rula for my trip to Canada. My parents were the only ones who knew about this trip. I first travelled to Athens in order to get a Tourist Visa from the Canadian Embassy. While I waited for this Tourist Visa, I slept at a local rooming house. It was there that I saw a newspaper advertisement offering jobs for the Math tutoring of students. By tutoring, I was able to make a small amount of spending money. During my short time stay in Athens, Tinka's first cousin, Mara Koufalambros took care of laundering my clothes. Finally, I left Greece on June 30, 1970 with the hopes of permanently settling in Canada.

### **Goche in Toronto---June 30, 1970 to Present Day**

Upon arriving in Toronto, I was picked up at the Airport by my sister Helen's husband, Stavro Jordanou. Helen had no idea that I was arriving in Toronto. She was fully expecting my parents and my brother Paul to be the ones arriving. Stoian in Greece gave my Uncle Sotir Petrou here in Toronto the details of the plane's arrival.

On my next day in Toronto, my cousin Lazo Triantafillov came to visit me and he kindly took me to register for English language courses offered at COSTI. This was a building owned by the Italian Government. In the 1970's when I arrived, it was used as a School for teaching English to newcomers. Currently, this building houses the Italian Consulate here in Toronto. I applied to The Faculty of Education in Toronto so I could train to be a High School Physics/Mathematics Teacher. The Faculty fully recognized my Physics Degree and gave me admission into their Faculty subject to my passing an English language proficiency test. My hopes of entering the teaching profession were not realistic since I had virtually no knowledge of the English language. In the meantime, I applied for Landed Immigrant Status. Sirbe Trokov's daughter Helen helped me make this application. My Landed Immigrant Status in Canada was granted to me in January of 1971. I had only been in Toronto for six months at the time. Also during this time, my Father who was still in Greece, informed me that I had been appointed as a High School Teacher in the city of Trikala, Greece. I never bothered to respond to this Greek teaching appointment.

Soon after arriving in Toronto, I met my old friend Georgi Balkos from Zhelevo. He had quit his medical studies in Salonica to avoid service in the Army and he had settled here in Toronto. Georgi and his friend Vasil Fatsis from Breznitsa were both being paid to translate Greek movies into English. Both these men introduced me to the Greek community here in Toronto. They assisted me in getting a job teaching the Greek language to children of Greek parents living in the Wilson and Jane neighbourhoods of Toronto. Georgi Balkos was trying to enroll in the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. He introduced me to a Scottish lady who was the Manager in the Admissions Office of the Faculty of Medicine. She hired me as a Timetable Analyst responsible for producing computerized schedules for Professors and the timetables for medical students. The Admissions Associate Dean of the Faculty of Medicine (who was a Jewish man from Salonica, Greece) was very satisfied with my job performance. He kindly let me work in the Office up until the noon hour and then allowed me to attend English language classes in a nearby Public School in the afternoons.

The 1970's were the years when Toronto was booming. Toronto was on a fast track expanding in any and all directions. A lot of property development happened in the area going north beyond Eglinton Avenue. Eglinton had pretty well been the edge of the city limits until that time. There was an abundance of

job openings in sectors like construction, restaurants, teaching, nursing and in the finance and insurance sectors. The year 1970 was the year that the Canadian dollar had a strong purchasing power. This boom required new immigrants to fill the available jobs. In return, Canada took steps to facilitate this mass immigration by creating more English Language and Trade Schools.

I was beginning to settle into my life in Canada, but I had come to realize that the deep struggle of the Greek community in Toronto against the Junta in Greece continued. One night Stavro Belkos (from Breznitsa and husband of Tinka's first cousin Christa) took me to an undisclosed house of a Greek lawyer where Andreas Papandreou, his wife and a number of well-known persons from the Greek community in Toronto were present. It appears that the purpose of this meeting was to raise funds from the Greek community in order to establish a Student Radio Station in the Polytechnical School in Athens. Soon after the meeting I learned that the students occupied the Polytechnical School and through their Radio Station, they called on Athenians to stand against the dictatorship of Junta leader, Georgios Papadopoulos. In November of 1973, Papadopoulos was alarmed at seeing masses of Athenians marching towards the Polytechnical School in protest against his leadership. Papadopoulos ordered the Army tanks to smash the gates of the University. Twenty-four students died in this melee. The sacrifices of the those who died from this military action led to the eventual collapse of the dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in Greece when the Andreas Papandreou's Socialist Party came to power in 1974.

On another night, Stavro Belkos took me to a Dance organized by the Greek students of the University of Toronto. The Dance was held at Ontario Place overlooking Lake Ontario. The date was February 11, 1972. Stavro's purpose in taking me to the Dance was to introduce me to eligible and unmarried young women. Stavro knew a couple sitting at one of the tables and decided that we should sit with them. Little did I know, but my future wife, Linda was sitting at the same table with her brother, John. My English was quite poor at the time. I asked Linda to dance but we could barely understand each other—me with little English and she with broken Macedonian. I did understand that she was a High School Teacher and had a job in a small town 100 miles away from Toronto called Brighton. I gave her my home phone number and asked her to call me when she would next be in Toronto. I did not understand that Linda returned to Toronto every weekend. She finally worked up the courage the following Saturday and



telephoned me at my sister's house. Linda had never dated and her Father was very strict. There was only one telephone in her house and it sat in the front hallway. In order that she could phone me privately, she walked for 30 minutes to her best friend's house and used the friend's home phone. Eight short weekends after our first date, we were engaged to be married. Our marriage took place on June 30, 1973.

Linda and I attended many cultural and ethnic events together. One very memorable concert we attended in 1970's was when Mikis Theodorakis gave a highly patriotic and anti-Junta concert at Massey Hall in Toronto. We both clearly remember the report written about this concert the very next day in The Toronto Star newspaper. The reporter said that the crowd was so "fired up" at the Theodorakis' concert, that if Theodorakis had commanded them to march through the streets of Toronto in protest of the Greek Junta, they would have done so with absolutely no hesitation.

Before my parents and brother Paul were able to finally emigrate to Canada in 1972, my sister Helen and her husband Stavro bought their own house. I lived with them for almost three years up until my marriage. In 1980, Stavro and Helen were blessed with the arrival of their daughter, Stephanie. Sadly, Helen passed unexpectedly away on January 5, 2004. Stavro has two grandchildren.

The first job my Father was able to find was as a dishwasher at a Restaurant in the Yorkdale Shopping Centre. One day, the Restaurant happened to be very busy resulting in a shortage of clean dishes. The female Manager went to the basement where the dishes were being washed to complain loudly about the shortage of clean dishes. Naso was fed up with the unrelenting pace required with the dishwashing here. After the Manager finished yelling at the staff, Naso took the apron off his neck and hung it around the Manager's neck. He quit the dishwashing job that very day and never again returned to work in a Restaurant. This experience left him quite frustrated and he began contemplating whether he should return to Rula or not. I suggested to him that he begin the six months of English language training provided by the Canadian Government instead. The Canadian Government actually paid students to enrol in such courses. He persuaded my Mother, Tinka to take these courses with him. He and Tinka now received a good amount of money weekly by attending these English language courses. Once they completed the Program, they were both able to communicate

in basic English. While taking this course, Naso befriended a Portugese student who just happened to know the Production Manager at the Primo Macaroni factory here in Toronto. I took Naso to the factory and the Manager offered him a job tending to barrels as they filled with pasta coming off the production line. Shortly thereafter, Naso was also able to procure a job for my Mother at this same factory. Naso eventually got his driver's license and bought a car. In the early 1980's, he was able to afford a brand new four-bedroom backsplitted in a new subdivision near both my sisters. Naso was very grateful to Canada for the opportunities it had given him and his family. He often claimed that that he would be most willing to pick up a rifle and defend Canada. He said he would never defend Greece because of all the economic and political hardships he and his family endured there. My brother Paul was only nine years old when he arrived in Canada. He was a superb student in Mathematics. Paul successfully graduated from Actuarial studies and currently holds a very high-level job in the insurance industry. Paul married his wife Magda in 2008 and were blessed with two wonderful children, Alex and Nicole.

After our marriage in June of 1973, my wife Linda and I rented a one-bedroom apartment in the Guildwood Village area. Linda was teaching in Bowmanville at the time. She had to wake up at 5:30 a.m. every morning to take the GO trains and buses to Bowmanville. Occasionally, she would drive to work. As for myself, I always worked in downtown Toronto and I would take buses and subways to get to work.

In the Summer of 1975, we had saved enough money to buy our first home in the McCowan and Sheppard Avenue. We lived in that house from 1975-1981. In 1980, our beautiful daughter Christina came into our lives. She was only one year old when we moved to our second home in August of 1981. In 1982, our other beautiful daughter Katherine came into our lives. From 1981 to the present date, we are still living at this second home near Victoria Park and Van Horne. Our daughter, Christina married Ryan McIsaac and has two beautiful sons, George and Charles. Katherine married Oliver Fitzgerald. They have two lovely children, Kalina and Atteo. After living for 15 years in Los Angeles, Katherine, Oliver and children moved to Melbourne, Australia in June, 2020.

Due to his weak English language skills at the time, Goche realized that he could not become a High School teacher in Ontario. He thought about what careers

would make sense for him going forward. The idea of a career in Accounting came up as a possibility. He then began to undertake the arduous task of studying Accounting, a subject far removed from his studies of University Physics and Mathematics. Goche's English language skills were very limited when he first began his Accounting studies. With the first few course textbooks, he had to keep a Greek dictionary close by for translation. His goal was to graduate with an accredited Accounting designation. After his first job as a Timetable Analyst in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, he moved to the Controller's Office at the University of Toronto. He had successfully completed some of his Accounting courses and was hired there as a Senior Accounting Clerk. After five years of intense study, he finally finished the Accounting Program and received his professional designation. He then worked at the Provincial Ministry of Government Services as Budget Analyst for eight years. His final job was as an Auditor at Revenue Canada—our Federal Tax Agency. George has since been given a lifetime membership as a CPA (Certified Professional Accountant).

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF MY WIFE LINDA'S FAMILY**

Linda's Father, Methody Evanoff, came to Canada as a young man in 1930 right in the midst of the Great Depression. He was born in the village Labanitsa which borders Albania and is not too far from Rula. His father was a Macedonian Teacher in our local villages. He was forced by the new Greek conquerors to take his family and escape to Bulgaria in 1913. Many Macedonian intellectuals felt they had no other option at the time but to escape from Greece. In fact, Methody would tell us that his Father was once a "colleague" of Goche Delchev—Macedonia's most famous patriotic leader. Methody's family settled in the city of Varna, Bulgaria. Sadly, Methody's own Father died of tuberculosis when Methody was only nine years old. Upon his Father's death, Methody was left as the "man of the house" and was expected to support his widowed Mother and his younger sister Vasilka. Methody would take any job he could to earn money to support his Mother and sister. He would haul large carcasses of meat on his back, work in the freezing cold kitchens of Restaurants washing dishes, and accept any other menial jobs he could find.

At the age of 22, Methody decided to take the road of the "pechalba" and seek out a better financial future in Canada. Methody had no idea about the depths of the Great Depression and what hardships would await him here in Canada. He would often have to go up to three days without eating. Methody would drink water on those days so that he could at least have "something" in his stomach. He said that he and his friends would go down to Sunnyside Beach in Toronto and pick discarded chicken bones out of the garbage cans. They would use these bones to make soup. He would recall how he and two of his young friends begged for handouts. A very kind young woman gave them the kingly sum of 25 cents. They could not get over their good fortune and they proceeded to buy the biggest big bag of rice they could with this 25 cents. The three of them happily lived on a diet of plain boiled rice for the next several days. Methody had no money, no real education, and knew no English. He and his fellow "pechalbari" encountered a lot of anger by unemployed, Depression Era Canadians. He would remember having tomatoes thrown at them and remembered hearing shouts of: "Go back to where you came from, you foreigners!" Jobs were scarce at the time and immigrants were not looked upon too kindly. Methody desperately wanted to leave Canada and return to Bulgaria. That was not an option since he didn't have the money for a return passage. Scarcity of work during the Great

Depression and his resulting extreme poverty led him to join the leftist movement in Canada. This movement became very strong in Canada and the U.S. after the Depression. Methody was still a member of this movement in the 1940's and 50's. This was very risky business at the time because it was the time of the McCarthy Anti-Communist era all over North America.

In the 1930's, Methody would work on tobacco farms picking leaves. His pay was a paltry \$3 for the entire week. Workers had six-day work weeks and did daily shifts of 12 hours. One time, he was hired to lay wooden tracks on the railroad lines. Toronto was hiring men to shovel snow from sidewalks and roads. This was how snow was removed in the 1930's. The advent of large snow removal machines had not yet happened. The only requirement for being hired as a snow shoveller was that each man owned a shovel. Methody went to the Hardware Store and spent his last \$3 on a snow shovel. He lined up waiting to be hired for snow removal but just as he got to the front of the line, the man in charge of hiring announced that they did not need any more shovelers. Now, what was he to do? He had a brand new shovel that was no longer needed and his last \$3 had been spent. Luckily, the owner of the Hardware Store kindly allowed him to return the shovel and get his \$3 back. Eventually, Methody was hired by a Macedonian family in Windsor to work in their Restaurant. He slowly learned the Restaurant trade and saved up enough money enter the Restaurant business. In his first five Restaurants, he had business partners. With each of these Restaurants, he and his partners went bankrupt. He bought his final Restaurant in the late 1950's. It was called the Sip and Bite at 418 Parliament Street in Toronto. This Restaurant was lucrative and finally, Methody became financially secure. His Accountant at the time advised him to invest his excess cash in rental houses. At one time, Methody owned 15 homes with only \$3,000 of outstanding mortgages. Since Bank interest climbed to 18%, he decided to sell most of these properties and not have the headache of dealing with tenants. (When he passed away in 2007 at the age of 99, he had only two properties left).

There is one very important thing to know about Methody. He had been orphaned at the age of nine and was unable to stay in School beyond Grade 3. However, Methody was a voracious reader of philosophy and history. Although he lacked formal education, he was very knowledgeable and was truly a self-educated man. Linda and her brother, John always agreed that even though they

had both graduated from University, they would never have read more books than their Father Methody.

Linda's Mother, Tina Mandzhukov (Manchukis), came to Canada in 1947 from Breznitsa (which is just a six kilometre distance from Rula). Tina was sponsored to emigrate here by her older sister, Slava. If Tina had not come to Canada when she did, she would have been conscripted just two short weeks later to fight with the partisans during the Civil War in Greece. Luckily, she arrived safely in Toronto. As a young girl, Tina experienced first-hand, the attempts by the Greek State to "Hellenize" the children. Tina's Teacher overheard her speaking Macedonian in class and made her kneel in front of the class for three long hours on a pile of twigs placed on the floor. This painful punishment was to serve as an example to the other children of the fate awaiting them if they dared to speak the Macedonian language in class. Her brother, Ilo, also suffered a severe and unjustified punishment. The Teacher overheard Ilo say just one word in Macedonian. Shockingly, the Teacher hit Ilo so hard on the side of the head, that Ilo's ear began to bleed profusely.

Eligible Macedonian girls were scarce in Toronto in the 1940's and there were many available Macedonian bachelors in the city. It was apparently "big news" for these bachelors when a young eligible woman arrived from the Old Country. A friend of Methody's heard about a young female that had just arrived from Breznitsa. This friend was able to get the phone number of Tina's sister, Slava. He ran over and gave Slava's phone number to Methody. At the time, Methody was a partner in a Restaurant at Dupont and Shaw Streets. Methody phoned Slava and arranged to go over for coffee in order to meet Tina. Every night for two weeks, Methody would dutifully go over for coffee and spend time with Tina. At the end of two weeks, he asked Tina to step outside onto the front verandah so he could speak to her privately. According to Methody, his marriage proposal to Tina went like this: "I like you. I think you like me. Let's get married." She accepted his marriage proposal immediately. In those days, young Macedonian couples were not allowed to date until they had been officially engaged. Finally, Methody and Tina began to date. They were married on December 21, 1947. Methody still did not have much money at the time of his marriage and he stayed up all night preparing much of the food that would be served to the wedding guests the next day. John Manchukis, an Uncle of Tina's warned her that Methody was not financially stable and may not be a "good catch." Tina's reply to

her Uncle always filled Methody's heart with great pride. She told her Uncle: "Whatever money Methody has, it will be more than enough for me." They were blessed with two children—John born in 1948 and Linda born in 1949. Very sadly, Tina became sick with stomach cancer in 1970 and passed away at the young age of 50. She was very happy in her married life with Methody and with her two children. However, it seems that she could not clear her head and heart of the unspeakable war atrocities she had witnessed in Greece. Her only brother Ilo, a partisan, was killed in battle at the tender age of 19. Quite coincidentally, Naso had been fighting together with this group of young partisans from Breznitza. Naso told us that it was the boys from Breznitza's turn to go to the front of the line of fire and this is where Ilo was gunned down. He was only 19 years old at the time. His body was never found and his own Mother had an emotional breakdown because of this. My Mother-in-law, Tinka, knew Ilo's Mother and said that she would wander the streets in a daze asking: "Has anyone seen my son?" A Greek partisan found a letter from Tina on Ilo's body. Tucked into this letter was a picture of Tina's baby son, John. This partisan sent a picture of infant John to Tina here in Toronto. The soldier claimed that if Tina would only send him some money, he would give her important information concerning her brother Ilo. It was at that point that Tina knew her brother had been killed. She seemed to suffer increased Post-Traumatic Stress after the death of her brother. She did not reply to this partisan looking for money, and shortly thereafter, she received a very cruel letter from him accusing her of not being willing to pay money for important information about her brother, Ilo. Methody, John and Linda felt that it was maybe all the stress from the Civil War that contributed to her tragically getting cancer and dying at such a young age.



**THE VILLAGE BREZNITZA WHICH IS ONLY 6 KM SOUTH OF RULA**

**(PLEASE NOTE: WE COULD NOT INCLUDE ANY PICTURES OF LINDA'S FATHER'S VILLAGE LABANITSA IN KOSTURSKO AS IT IS NOW TOTALLY ABANDONED AND NO PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE. LABANITSA IS ABOUT 30 KM SOUTHWEST OF RULA**



**SCHOOL CHILDREN IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL IN BREZNITZA (1933)  
LINDA IS NOT SURE WHETHER HER MOTHER TINA IS IN THIS PICTURE OR NOT  
HER MOTHER WOULD HAVE BEEN 13 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME**





**MANDZHUKOV (MANCHUKIS) FAMILY HOME IN BREZNITSA (1980)  
THIS IS THE HOME OF LINDA'S MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS (SOTIR & STOJANKA)  
WHEN GOCHE & LINDA VISITED BREZNITZA IN 2003, THIS HOME WAS NO LONGER STANDING**



**PHOTO OF THE FRONT ENTRANCE OF THIS HOME TAKEN BY LINDA (1980)**



**LINDA'S PATERNAL GRANDFATHER IVAN ANASTSOV. HE DIED IN HIS MID 30'S. HE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED BY THE TURKS IN THE MOST INFAMOUS TURKISH PRISON "GENDICULE" AND CONTRACTED TUBERCULOSIS WHILE IMPRISONED. HE HAD BEEN A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER AND HAD BEEN A "COLLEAGUE" OF GOCHE DELCHEV**



**LINDA'S PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER, KARSTANA  
LINDA ONLY MET HER TWICE IN HER LIFE, ONCE IN 1968 AND AGAIN WHEN VISITING VARNA BULGARIA ON HER HONEYMOON IN 1973. KARSTANA DIED AT THE AGE OF 86**



**METHODY AS A YOUNG MAN IN CANADA (1930'S)**

**HE WAS BORN IN 1908 IN THE VILLAGE OF LABANITSA. METHODY WAS BORN PREMATURELY AT SEVEN MONTHS. HIS MOTHER KEPT HIM ALIVE BY HEATING A "KARAMIDA" (A CLAY CURVED ROOF TILE THAT WAS FILLED WITH HAY). THIS SERVED AS METHODY'S INCUBATOR. HE WAS LUCKY TO SURVIVE AS IT WAS NOT COMMON THAT PREMATURE BABIES COULD BE SAVED IN 1908. IN 1918 AND AT THE AGE OF 10, HE CONTRACTED THE SPANISH FLU AND THANKFULLY RECOVERED. SOME OF HIS FRIENDS WERE NOT SO LUCKY. IN THE 1930'S, HE LIVED THROUGH THE RAVAGES AND EXTREME POVERTY OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN CANADA. WITH TIME AND GREAT EFFORT, HE WAS EVENTUALLY ABLE TO PROSPER. METHODY MARRIED FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE AGE OF 39. HE WAS IN GOOD HEALTH UNTIL HIS EARLY 90'S. HE DIED AT THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 99.**



**THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN BY METHODY OF HIS MOTHER KARSTANA AND HIS SISTER VASILKA  
IN VARNA, BULGARIA (1962)**

**THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME METHODY HAD SEEN EITHER OF THEM IN 32 LONG YEARS.  
VASILKA WAS HIS ONLY SISTER AND NEVER MARRIED  
METHODY'S YOUNGEST SISTER, DANA, DIED AT THE TENDER AGE OF 3**



**LINDA'S MATERNAL GRANDFATHER SOTIR (LEFT)  
SOTIR WAS A STONEMASON**



**LINDA'S MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER STOJANKA (SEATED) WITH HER DAUGHTER LENA (FAR LEFT) & DAUGHTER TINA (FAR RIGHT). THE YOUNG BOY IS HER SON ILO WHO WAS KILLED AS PARTISAN AT 19 YEARS OLD. ILO WAS NEVER FOUND AND HIS MOTHER STOJANKA WAS NEVER EMOTIONALLY STABLE AFTER THAT LOSS. SADLY, LENA DIED AT THE AGE OF 50 IN ROMANIA FROM CANCER. TRAGICALLY FOR METHODY, JOHN AND LINDA, TINA DIED ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1970 IN TORONTO AT THE AGE OF 50 OF CANCER**



**LINDA'S PARENTS--METHODY & TINA ON THEIR WEDDING DAY IN TORONTO (DEC. 21, 1947)**



**METHODY AND TINA WITH CHILDREN JOHN AND LINDA (1950)**



**LINDA AND JOHN EVANOFF AT FIRST COUSIN ELSIE'S WEDDING (1950'S)**



**JOHN AND HIS FAMILY—(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) DAUGHTERS TINA & NATALIE, WIFE MARJIE,**

## **APPENDIX "A"**

### **THE WEDDING RITUALS IN RULA**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This Appendix will clearly explain the rituals and customs associated with Macedonian marriages in the village of Rula. My wife Linda, was enrolled in an Anthropology Course at the University of Toronto in the Spring of 1985. This was part of a major assignment she completed for the course. Linda was grateful to my Mother Tinka for this wealth of information. Tinka kindly spent three hours explaining the marriage customs in Rula in great detail to Linda. As the reader will note, there are many customs that were mandatory in the village before, during and after the marriage of a young couple. If these customs were not followed carefully, the families feared that this non adherence would bring misfortune to the young couple. In fact, Linda was amazed by the myriad of rituals required for the marriage ceremony. Tinka told her that there were also detailed rituals associated with all of life's milestones in the village—births, baptisms, weddings, and deaths. Linda said that one could easily do a PhD thesis on the rituals and superstitions related to the milestone life events in Rula and the surrounding Macedonian villages.

### **PRE-NUPTIAL RITUALS IN RULA**

#### **Marriageable Age**

Marriageable age was from 15 years of age and older for girls, and from 17 years of age and older for boys. At these ages, both males and females would probably have passed through puberty and be capable of having children. Since young people did not have to put off marriage for things like education or career planning, marriages occurred early in life. Girls over the age of 20 and boys over the age of 25 were considered "old" for marriage. There would be much family pressure placed on them to marry before this time.



## **Dating**

Dating was strictly forbidden between couples who were not engaged. If they did have meetings, they would have to be discreet. Otherwise, villagers would start to gossip about them.

## **Engagement**

If a boy's family desired that he marry a certain girl, the family would send a matchmaker ("stroyneek") to the girl's home to ask the girl's parents for permission. As the matchmaker entered their home, he or she would kindle the fire and say: "Just as this fire has power, may their future union be a powerful one." Tinka said that it was not only the parents who had to agree to the marriage proposal but the prospective bride would have to agree. After this meeting, the matchmaker would return to the boy's home and tell his family whether the proposal had been accepted or not. (From this point on, the boy will be referred to as the "groom" and the girl will be referred to as the "bride.")

If the proposal was accepted, the groom's family would return, together with the matchmaker to the bride's home. They would exchange gifts at this time. Gifts would consist of an exchange of towels and a headscarf ("shamia") for the girl. This would symbolize that each family had given its word of honour that the wedding would take place. This was called the giving of the "word" ("lawf").

Even if the couple in question had privately agreed to marry one another, they still had to go through the ritual of sending a matchmaker to ask for approval and to exchange gifts. However, most of the time, the parents would arrange the marriage. Children rarely objected since it was assumed that parents would only arrange suitable unions for their children. In the village, qualities like beauty and personality were often overlooked. A girl was considered a good marriage prospect if she was physically strong and healthy. In this way, she would be able to help the groom's family with their farming chores. A boy was considered a good match if his family was reasonably well off. If his family was very poor, the girl's parents might worry about his family's ability to take care of their daughter. In addition, the social reputation of each family was considered extremely important. Villagers believed that things like mental illness, mental feebleness and criminal natures were passed down "genetically" from one generation to the

other. Although they had never heard of DNA, they felt there was something “bad” in the blood that carried these undesirable character traits from generation to generation. It is for this reason that past family history would be strongly considered at the time of the marriage proposal. Young couples that had fallen in love still needed their parents’ blessings. If the parents did not give their blessing to the marriage, the young couple had no recourse but to “elope” and run away from the village. Elopement was rarely heard of because there was probably nowhere to go to. The couple would usually only have public School education up to Grade 6 and no real skills to sell if they went to a large city. Since Macedonian villages were almost always arranged on an extended family structure, it would be unlikely that another village would take them in.

No engagement ring was given to the bride by her fiancé. Subsequent meetings between the two families would be to discuss the value of the dowry. In the village of Rula, a prospective groom had to offer his bride a dowry. With the giving of this dowry, it symbolized that he had “purchased her” from her family and that she was his property. The only dowry expected from the bride was an empty chest, some clothes for herself, a specially decorated apron and a few small gifts for the groom and his family. The two families would exchange shoes and socks as gifts at a subsequent engagement party. It was traditionally expected that one pair of shoes be presented to the matchmaker as thanks for his/her part in the engagement. Once the dowries had been agreed upon, a wedding date would be set.

### **The Engagement Party**

The families of the bride and groom would host separate engagement parties. Each family would invite their own relatives into their home. The matchmaker would be sent from the groom’s home (together with a group of young girls and boys) to go to the bride’s house to pick up presents for him and his family. The presents would be wrapped in one large white cloth (to represent the purity of their union) together with perhaps 30-40 pairs of hand knit socks tucked inside. On top of this pile of socks, there would be a pair of socks set aside for the groom. Gold coins and other forms of currency would be sewed onto his socks. On the very top of this parcel, there would be placed two pieces of dry basil. Dried basil is extensively used in the Macedonian marriage rituals because it symbolizes “fertility.” Planted basil reproduces very rapidly and by incorporating basil into

the wedding rituals, families expressed their hopes that the young couple's union would bring forth children.

The matchmaker would carry this parcel of gifts on his/her head while returning to the groom's home. The groom's family would open the parcel and distribute the socks to their guests. The groom's socks were then placed in a large sieve. In Macedonian, a sieve is called a "seeto." "Seeto" has a double meaning. It can mean "sieve, but it can also mean "full." By using a sieve, the family was trying to symbolize their hope that the couple's married life together would be "seeto" or "full." Villagers who wished to congratulate the groom on his engagement would come by his house to put money into the sieve. Macedonians call this tradition "giving to the socks." It was not unusual that members of neighbouring villages also came by to put money into the sieve. The sieve full of money would later be presented to the bride as a gift.

### **Dating after Engagement**

The couple were allowed to date, but the bride was not allowed into her fiancé's home. She was not considered a part of his family until after the actual marriage ceremony had taken place. Until this point, she would be considered a member of her own family. While the couple dated, however, the groom was allowed to enter the bride's home.

### **Shower**

The groom invited guests to go to his fiancée's home to bring her presents. This was called "na vidia" or "to see the bride." Every guest would bring presents to her at this time. Presents in the village were modest. They consisted of aprons, handkerchiefs, plates, etc. The future bride was expected to kiss the hands of all guests as they arrived and to thank them for their gifts.

### **Choice of Wedding Day**

Weddings would only be held in the Winter. Rula was a rural village and villagers were kept busy in the Spring, Summer and Fall with their farming chores. Winter was the only time when free time was available. Tinka was born in this village and did not leave it until she was 46 years old. She could not recall even one wedding

being held at any time other than Winter. Weddings were not allowed on any day but Sunday. Sunday was considered the most Holy Day of the week and by being married on this day, the union would be heavenly blessed. Also, weddings were strictly forbidden during the six weeks of Lent before Easter.

### **Monday before the Wedding Day**

The future “Mothers-in-law” (“svakias”) would get together to make donut-sized “ring breads.” They would dip dried basil into the water that went into the bread dough to ensure the couple’s fertility. These ring breads were used as invitations to the wedding. The bread’s circular ring shape was to symbolize the eternity of the couple’s union.

### **Wednesday before the Wedding Day**

This is the day when guests would be invited to the wedding. The Mothers-in-law would divide up the guest list. One would invite one half of the guests while the other would invite the other half. The Mothers-in-law would fill a small sack with ring breads. In this sack, they would also place one bottle of homemade liquor (“rakia”). One ring bread would be presented to each family invited. The adult members of the invited family would be required to take a sip from the bottle of “rakia.” This would be a sign that these invited guests accepted their wedding invitation and that they truly wished the engaged couple much luck in their marriage. Drinks of “rakia” would be taken right from the bottle. Glasses were not used on this occasion.

### **Thursday before the Wedding Day**

Both families would begin baking the many loaves of bread that would be needed for the wedding.

### **Friday Before the Wedding Day**

Many of the girls invited to the wedding would gather at the bride’s house and help with the baking of the bread. The special “fresh bread” (“presna pogacha”) was baked on this day. This “pogacha” was especially reserved for the in-laws. A big braided ring bread (“kolak”) was made in order to “invite” the groom to his

wedding. Before baking this bread, it was decorated with candies. The candies were to ensure that the couple's union would be "sweet."

Bread baking would also be taking place at the groom's house. The closest female relative of the groom would be allowed to make the bread for the Church. Also, a special braided ring bread was made for the wedding dinner. On top of this bread, several candies would be inserted. Each candy would symbolize an important guest that would be attending the wedding. One coin would be hidden inside this bread. It was believed that the person finding this coin would be the bearer of good fortune. While baking this particular loaf of bread, there were special ritual songs that had to be sung. The songs would express hopes for the best wishes for the young couple. If the groom entered the room where the bread was being made, the women would smear his face with white flour. This was to symbolize their hope that he would live a long life and become an old man with white hair. Further, all the village School children would visit the groom's house after their School day had finished. They would traditionally be fed boiled beans and freshly baked bread. The children were invited to this happy event in the hopes that the fortune of suitable marriages would also bless their lives.

Since the entire village of 500 people would be invited to the wedding, much bread was needed. A family was required to even invite guests with whom they might have been feuding. If they did not invite these guests to the wedding, then this was a signal to that family that the feud would never be resolved. To purposely not invite another villager on the occasion of a wedding was considered to be quite a social offense. There would be great pressure on the family to invite all villagers and not leave anyone uninvited. In this way, weddings worked as a mechanism that would help maintain social harmony amongst the villagers.

### **Saturday Before the Wedding Day**

Members of the bride's home would send the special ring bread to the groom's house to "invite" him to the wedding. He in turn, would have a special ring bread sent to the bride to "invite" her to the wedding. This would symbolize their mutual desire to marry. This invitation had to be sent before sundown. If it was delivered after dark, it was feared that the couple might suffer misfortune in their lives.

After the breads had been delivered, the groom's family would send a messenger ("kolupchia") to invite the band to play at the wedding. Music was necessary to ensure that the event be as happy as possible. Villagers hired live bands since each village only had a few radios. In Tinka's day, record players were virtually unheard of. Each village had its own band. If the village band was reserved for the day, the family would go to a neighbouring village to hire a band. Before inviting the band to the wedding, the groom's messenger would have donned an apron with large pockets. In these pockets, he would have placed two bottles of homemade liquor ("rakia"). He would also carry a small wooden container of homemade wine. He would allow each band member a drink of the "rakia" or wine before they would return to the groom's house.

Once the messenger and the band had returned to the groom's house, the dancing would begin. Macedonians traditionally dance hand-in-hand in a line formation. The line formation moves in a counter-clockwise direction. It is considered an honour to dance at the head of the line dance. The matchmaker was allowed to lead this first dance. This was to symbolize the family's respect and thanks for the matchmaker's part in the marriage. As the matchmaker danced, he/she would hold the sieve with the money on top of his/her head while dancing. The matchmaker would lead the other dancers around in a circle three full times. The three full circles made by the dancers symbolized the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost). This circular dance also symbolized the eternity of the couple's union. Once the matchmaker had circled three full times, a member of the groom's family would take the sieve and money away for safekeeping. The groom would lead the next dance, then his Father, his Mother, his Grandfather, and his Grandmother. After they finished leading their dances, the other close family members would be given a turn. These dances would happen in the courtyard in front of the groom's home.

A specially assigned messenger sent from the family of the bride would gather up the groom's family so they could all proceed to the bride's home. The band would lead the way, playing music as they go. Upon arriving at the bride's home, the groom's family would formally "invite" the bride and her family to the wedding. They would now all begin dancing in the courtyard of the bride's home. The bride would be allowed to lead the first dance, then her parents, her Grandparents, and then her other close family members. All guests would be offered drinks and refreshments at this time.

After a short while, the groom, his family and the band would leave the bride's home. They would return to the groom's home for dinner. A messenger would go and invite the village Priest to join the groom's family for dinner. It was considered good luck to have the Priest's holy presence during this dinner. The Priest would give his blessings to the couple's forthcoming union during dinner. In addition to the Priest, all villagers who were invited to the wedding would come to the groom's home for dinner this evening. Dinner guests would be served cauldrons full of boiled meat (usually beef or lamb), boiled cabbage, etc. Often, one head of cattle and one whole lamb would be slaughtered for this feast. Guests would be served wine from the family stock of homemade wine and homemade "rakia." Homemade wine was stored in large barrels. Dancing would continue on for several hours.

**Note:** For Macedonian weddings, it is traditional to invite a married couple to serve as the Godfather (Coom) and the Godmother (Cooma) for the ceremony. This couple will serve an important role in the wedding ceremony and will usually baptize any children the marriage produces. In addition to the Godparents, it is customary to have a Best Man ("Pobratim") and Best Woman ("Pobratimitsa") at the wedding.

### **SUNDAY—THE WEDDING DAY**

On the morning of the wedding, the band would go to the homes of the Godparents and the Best Man and Woman and "beg" them to attend the wedding. The band would play some music in order to entice them to attend the wedding. It was customary that the band's first invitation be rejected. The band was told that they must play better music if they wished the wedding invitation to be accepted. After two or three rejected offers, the band's invitation would be accepted. The Godparents, Best Man and Woman would put a sprig of dried basil under their armpits as they proceeded to the groom's house. Again, the basil symbolized their hope that the marriage would be a fertile one. In fact, all wedding guests were required to arrive at the wedding with dried basil tucked under their armpits.

The bride, her family, and all invited wedding guests would await the arrival of the groom, his family and the band. All guests would offer her some dried basil as they entered her home. While the bride and her family and guests waited at her home for the groom, the Godparents, Best Man and Best Woman joined the groom's family and closest relatives for a midday lunch at his home. After this lunch was finished, it was customary to shave the groom. It is not only the Macedonians who have the custom of shaving the groom prior to the wedding ceremony. This shaving of the groom is considered a "rite of separation." By discarding his whiskers, it symbolizes that he is throwing away something connected with his bachelorhood. In Rula, the groom would sit in the courtyard of his house as his closest family members watched him being shaved. They would sit around him in a circle formation. The family would send two children to get water from the well and heat it. The Godfather and Best Man and Woman would take turns in shaving the groom. The groom's Father would have a large homemade ring bread on his lap and top of this he would have placed a glass of wine. This symbolized his hope that his son's life would be full and plentiful. As the groom was being shaved, the band would play. The girls would sing "Zeto se Breechee" (the groom is being shaved). Once the shaving ceremony was finished, the groom was excused to get dressed. Once he was dressed, the remaining family members would get dressed. The groom's Mother would be the last to dress. The groom's Father would sit down again and place the bread with the wine glass on top of his lap. The other family members would drop money into the wine glass as they passed by. They would shake the Father's hand and congratulate him on the wedding of his son. The dropping of money into the wine glass symbolized the family's and guests' hopes that the marriage would be prosperous.

Before leaving his house, the groom's Mother would place a large ring bread into a shoulder bag and fill the bag with basil. She would present this bread to the bride's family upon arrival at their home. The band would lead the bridal party as they proceeded to the bride's house. Behind them would follow the Godfather who would be holding a flag up high as he walked. An apple would be stuck onto the top of the flag pole. The Godmother would walk beside him. Behind them would be the groom. He would be flanked on both sides by the Best Man and the Best Woman. The other family members would follow behind them.



At the bride's house, all gates to the front yard and the front door would be shut tight. As the groom's family entered the courtyard, they would see an egg tied to a stick dangling from the front door. The egg would have been boiled and peeled. It would have been threaded with a needle and string and attached to a stick. Before the groom could claim his bride, he or members of his family had to knock down the egg and stick. They would throw sticks and small rocks at the egg in an attempt to knock it down. Once the egg fell, there would be a resounding cheer. The falling of the egg would symbolize that the groom and his family had earned a claim on the bride. They had "conquered the egg" and could claim the bride as theirs. After the egg had fallen, the doors of the bride's home would be opened wide. The bride's entire family would greet the groom and his family. The bride was not allowed to greet the groom and his family as yet. She would be waiting in hiding in a side room of the house which would be full of young women and girls.

**Note:** During Tinka's time (in the 1940's and earlier), village brides would not be wearing the white wedding dress that has become customary in the Macedonian weddings of today. Tinka said that in the 1960's in Greece, some village brides opted for white wedding dresses and veils, but prior to that, brides would only wear their traditional Macedonian garments for their weddings.

The bride had to hold a handkerchief in her right hand during this time. As the groom entered her home, she would be instructed to try and get a peek at him from the room in which she was hiding. Villagers felt that by doing this, she would not fear him during their married life. The in-laws and close relatives would be seated in the living room area during this time. They would be offered drinks as they waited. The groom and the Godfather and Best Man would wait in a separate room. Only these three would be served "Maznik" (a very rich buttery pastry). This was considered a very special treat and it was served only to them to symbolize their key role in the day's festivities.

Once all guests had been seated, the bride was led out of her room into the living room by a small boy. She had to keep her eyes lowered and was not allowed to speak. A female relative would take over and lead the bride to her future Father-in-law. With head bowed, she would kiss his hand. He would then place a gold wedding ring onto the ring finger of her right hand. This is the only wedding ring she would wear as a married woman as the groom would not give her a ring. The giving of this ring symbolized that the Father-in-law accepted her into his home as

a new family member. The bride would then be led to her future Mother-in-law who would place a gold necklace around the bride's neck. This symbolized her acceptance of the bride as a member of the family. The bride would then kiss her hand. The bride would then be led from guest to guest to kiss all hands. All this time, she kept her head bowed and did not say a word. This gesture was to show her "embarrassment" in front of those gathered as she was this day to be transformed from a girl to a woman. As she would go from person to person kissing hands, the guests would sing humorous and happy songs about her upcoming marriage. Each guest would place a coin in the bride's hand. This was to symbolize their hope that her marriage would be as durable as the metal that went into the manufacture of the coin and that her life would be prosperous. During this time, male and female guests would sit at separate tables. These villagers felt that men would have more to talk about with other men and likewise for the women.

After greeting all the guests, the bride was taken back to her waiting room. While she had been gone, a small girl would have been left in the bride's room to make certain that no one could enter and steal the bride's gifts to the groom's family. Soon after the bride returned to her room, the Best Man would enter and bring her the shoes she would wear at the wedding. He would offer to put them on her feet three times. Each time as he would put them on the floor in the proper position, the bride would bend over and turn them around in the opposite direction. After the third refusal, she would finally agree. She would slip on the shoes and kiss his hand. The Best Woman would enter and would put the bridal veil on the bride's head. Even in this "primitive" village, the bridal veil was a custom as far as anyone could remember. Once the Godmother had put the veil onto the bride's head, she would make the sign of the holy cross with her hands. The making of this sign symbolized the Godmother's hope that the union would be a holy one. She would kiss the bride and congratulate her. During this time, a female relative would attach the bride's handkerchief onto the bride's wedding ring with some string. The handkerchief would be sewn on so that it would not fall off during the day's festivities. Tinka did not know the meaning of attaching the handkerchief to the ring but she said that this tradition was a must.

The Best Man would leave the bride's room and return to the groom. He would place a flower onto the Groom's lapel. After the flower was put on, the Godfather would make the sign of the cross with his hands. The groom would

have bought his own wedding ring and it was at this moment that he would place it onto the ring finger of his right hand.

The entire bridal party and guests would prepare to leave for the Church. Before leaving, the groom would make the sign of the holy cross in front of his future Father-in-law. The groom would kiss the Father-in-law's hand and kiss the braided bread he was holding. This was a gesture to symbolize his thanks to his Father-in-law for giving him his daughter's hand in marriage. The groom would also thank the Bride's Mother at this time and kiss her. Since the Mother and Father of the bride were **not** allowed to go to the Church to witness the wedding ceremony, the groom had to thank them now. By not attending the wedding ceremony, the bride's family was showing that they had truly given their daughter over to the groom's family. The bride would also make the sign of the cross and kiss the hands of both her parents. She would also kiss the bread her Father was holding. This moment was usually the most emotional moment of the entire wedding day. The young bride was leaving her parents and she would never truly be a member of their home ever again. The bride would place a shirt and a pair of socks on her Father's shoulder as a gift. She would give her Mother a gift of a shirt and place it over her shoulder. The bride would also present the Godfather and Best Man with gifts of shirts in this same manner.

A white horse would be brought to the front of the house. The colour "white" would symbolize the purity of the couple's union. The bride would tie a long scarf around the neck of the horse to symbolically thank him for his part in the wedding. The horse would be required to carry her dowry. On one side of the horse, an empty chest would be tied and on the other, a sack of clothes and gifts would be tied. The bridal party and guests would be led to the Church by the horse. Following behind the horse would be the band, followed by the Godfather holding the flag. The Godmother would walk next to the Godfather. The band would play the entire way to the Church. Behind the Godparents would be the groom, flanked on both sides by the Best Man and Best Woman. Behind them would be the bride, flanked on both sides by either sisters or close female relatives. The groom was led in front of the bride to symbolize his role as leader in the marriage. Following closely behind the bride and groom would be two women. Their task would be to immediately step into the tracks of both the bride and groom. This was done in the hope that any evil spirits following the couple to the Church would be warded off. By stepping into the couple's tracks, the tracks

would be distorted and this would make it difficult for evil spirits to follow them. In addition, the bridal party was only allowed to take paths with right-hand turns to the Church. Taking any kind of left turn on the way to the Church was believed to bring bad luck to the bride and groom.

At the halfway point to the Church in Rula, the bridal party would come to a small ravine filled with water. They would all stand by the water's side. A young boy (brother or relative of the bride or groom) would hook his fingers tightly together and dip his hands into the water three times. Each time, the bride would take a drink of water from the boy's hands. The hooking together of the boy's hands symbolized the unity of the forthcoming marriage. The three drinks of water symbolized the Holy Trinity. Up to this point, the bride was flanked by members of her family. For the remainder of the trip to the Church, she would be flanked by the groom's family. This symbolized that she was breaking away from her family and joining his.

Once the bridal party arrived at the front of the Church, the horse was turned around and led to the groom's home to drop off the bride's chest. Even though the horse was only at the Church momentarily, his brief presence was to assure that the bride's dowry was blessed.

In front of the Church in Rula, there was a brick fence where three young children (usually relatives) would be waiting for the bridal party. The children would be comprised of two boys and one girl. This was to symbolize the hope that the young bride would give birth to more males than females. The bride would present each child with one pair of socks, money and candies. These gifts would be presented to one of the boys first. This would symbolize her wish also that her first born was a male. The villagers had a preference for males. Males were expected to take care of their parents after they grew up. Their wives and children would live with his parents. A girl was only considered a member of her parents' family until she married. After marriage, she would leave her parents and reside with her husband and become a part of his family. Over the course of a lifetime, therefore, a son was more "practically and economically useful" to the family than a daughter.

The bridal party and guests entered the fenced area of the Church. One guest would break off a twig of the large tree to be found there and would hand it to

the groom. The groom would gently tap his bride three times on the shoulder. These three taps would symbolize that his bride would be eternally obedient to him. The groom would then toss the twig away. The guests would then join hands and form a circle around the bride and groom. One close family member would be holding a jug of wine and a ring bread. This circle formation of guests would make three full rotations around the bride and groom. The circular rotations were to symbolize the eternity of their union and symbolize the Holy Trinity. The wine and bread would symbolize a life full of prosperity. A small rug would be placed down in front of the Church. The Groom's Father would pick the bride up and place her down onto the rug. This was to symbolize his offering of the bride to the Church for marriage to his son. At this point, the bride would present her Father-in-law with a pair of socks.

Before entering the Church, the groom would lift up the bride's veil. The Best Man would then lead the couple to the altar. Only the very closest relatives would enter the Church. During the wedding service, the others would dance as the band played. The Best Man would present the Priest with a loaf of bread which had been specially baked for the Church service. This bread would have been topped off by a few sprigs of dried basil. A bottle of wine would also have been given to the Priest. These offerings symbolized the Godfather's wish that the young couple have a life of prosperity and fertility.

The Godfather would take the right hand of the bride and place it onto the groom's hand. The Godfather would wrap both the couple's hands loosely with a handkerchief or cloth to symbolize their union as one. He would remove both the bride's and groom's rings from their fingers. The Godfather would interchange the rings on their fingers three times. Again, this would symbolize the Holy Trinity and the merging of these two individuals into one through the ceremony of marriage. One large blue cloth would be placed around the shoulders of the bride and groom. The cloth symbolized that the couple were being united in marriage. The colour of blue was chosen to express their hopes to God that their first baby be a male. During this time, the Godfather would be given two golden crowns by the Priest and he would place them onto the couple's heads. As he held both crowns, he would interchange them three times. This ritual again showed that the couple was merging as one. The three interchanges also represented the Holy Trinity. During the marriage service, the Priest would give the couple each a bite of the same piece of bread and a drink from the same glass of wine. This would

symbolize their union as one. The Priest would then offer the Godparents, Best Man and Best Woman a bite of this same bread and a drink of this same wine. This would symbolize their important role in the couple's union. After the ceremony was completed, the Priest would throw a handful of uncooked rice over the heads of the young couple. Rice symbolized fertility. The couple would then sign the marriage register. The family members would be called up to the altar to kiss and congratulate the couple.

The bride, groom and their guests would exit the Church. The bride would stop at the doorway. She would turn her back to those assembled outside the Church and throw rice, candies and coins over her head towards them. The bride was symbolically showering her guests with her hopes that their lives would be prosperous, sweet, and fertile. The small children would usually scramble to gather up the money and candies.

**Note:** If there was another wedding scheduled for the Church the same day, that bridal party would wait out of sight and usually hide behind a tree. Tinka said that villagers felt it was very bad luck for one bridal couple to cast eyes upon another. She couldn't really explain why they felt it was bad luck.

The entire wedding party would go to an open area in the middle of the village called "Stret Selo." Here, the dancing would begin. The Godfather would be allowed to lead the first line dance ("horo"). As he danced, he would place the flag into the ground. The groom would lead the next dance, then the bride, the Godmother, the Best Man and the Best Woman. Then the other close relatives would all be given a turn at dancing.

After her dance, the bride would be accompanied by the Best Woman in greeting all guests. As the bride greeted them, she would be expected to kiss their hands. While this greeting of guests was taking place, the Godmother would hold a copper jug, basin and towel in her hands. Although a bit of water would have been used to rinse out the jug, the jug would be virtually dry and clean. By putting money into the jug, guests symbolized their hopes that the young couple's lives would be filled with prosperity. The dancing would go on here until sunset. The Godfather would take the flag to the groom's home and would place it outside. The flag would remain there for one week. The flag was used as a form

of social announcement. Anyone passing by would realize that a marriage had taken place at this home within the last week.

As soon as the dancing stopped, the groom would take his new bride to his house together with the bridal party. When they reached the doorway of the house, the groom would put a small load of firewood under his new wife's arm. She would be required to enter his house with her right foot. If she entered with her left foot, it was feared that bad luck would befall the marriage. The bride would then light a fire in the fireplace. As she was doing this, the groom would gently press her head to the wall of the fireplace. This symbolized his hope that she would stay with him in this house and never leave him.

The groom's Mother would sit on a small stool in the kitchen. In her hands would be a ball of raw wool and a small jug of water at her feet. The bride and other close female relatives would encircle her and sing songs to her about her future grandchildren. The wool would one day be spun into yarn that would be used to make her grandchildren's clothes. One of the singers would knock the jug of water over. The women would tease the groom's Mother that the prospect of grandchildren made her so happy that she lost control and urinated on the floor.

After a short while, the band would go from house to house inviting the guests for supper. The groom's guests would dine at his home, and the bride's guests would dine at her home. When guests arrived for dinner, they would bring a wedding present for the young couple. As Rula was a very poor village, presents would be modest. A typical gift would be a lamp, one small plate or a pan, etc. If the gift was a pan or dish, the guest would have to put a little uncooked rice in it. It was considered bad luck to give an empty plate or pan since this might make the marriage infertile.

Each family was required to bring one loaf of bread to the wedding feast. This was to express their hopes for the prosperity of the newlyweds. The Godfather would have to bring a roast chicken, a plain loaf of bread and a fancy ring bread to this dinner. He would present these to the groom before the dinner began. All guests would then sit down to eat. The Godparents, Best Man and Woman would be offered the best and biggest helpings of food. This was to thank them for their special role in the day's activities. The other guests understood this and would have no hard feelings about this. The Godfather would place his roast chicken,

together with two loaves of bread in front of him. The newlyweds would stand together before him and bow three times and kiss his hands. This was a gesture of their respect and gratitude to him for becoming their Godfather. He would hand the couple the ring bread and tell them to break the bread in two. The bride would hold one end and the groom the other. Whichever one broke off the biggest piece of bread was supposed to be the “boss of the family” from that day forward. In reality, even though the bride might break off the largest piece of bread, everyone knew that the groom would be the head and leader of the family.

Shortly after dinner, the bride and groom would be expected to consummate the marriage. This would be done while the guests waited. A clean white sheet would have been placed on top of the groom’s bed. The bride’s sack of clothes that had been brought from her home earlier in the day would have been spilled out all over the floor. Hidden in the clothes would be candies and small amounts of money for the Godfather. He would call the bride to the groom’s bedroom and tell her to pick up her clothes. Guests fully understand that this situation was a setup. The bride would act innocent and go along with this ruse. As soon as she entered the groom’s bedroom, the Godfather would leave. The groom would be waiting for her. They would have intercourse for the first time as the others waited downstairs. When the couple re-emerged from the bedroom, the groom’s Mother would go in and check if the sheet was stained with blood. She could then happily announce to her guests that the new bride was indeed a virgin.

**Note:** Tinka told me that a girl’s virginity was very highly prized in the village. She remembered hearing of a wedding in Rula where a bride did not prove to be a virgin. As punishment the day after the wedding, the villagers put her on a donkey and paraded her around the village in shame. This was supposed to be a warning to the other unwed girls in Rula to guard their chastity. Even if a young girl was raped against her will, she was considered “spoiled merchandise.” During the War times, families often arranged for their daughters to be married quite young. In this way, they could minimize the social risks and consequences if soldiers raped them.

Once the bride’s virginity had been proven, the guests would hang a ring of dried red peppers around the head of the groom’s Mother. This was to serve as congratulations that her daughter-in-law was truly a virgin. The groom’s family



would then boil some homemade liquor (“rakia”) and then place a metal poker into the fire until it turned red hot. The poker would be held over the liquor and sugar crystals would be poured onto the poker. As the sugar crystals hit the poker, they would instantly burn. As they fell into the liquor as burnt sugar, the colour of the liquor would change from clear to pale yellow. A few of the groom’s relatives would take this hot liquor and one piece of the bride’s clothing to her parents’ home. These would be presented to them to congratulate them on their daughter’s virginity. The bride’s family and their dinner guests would return to the groom’s home.. The entire wedding party and guests would drink and dance all night long. Most would not leave until the early morning. Since there was no Dance Hall in Rula, all dancing took place outside. Village Winters were not usually severe, and therefore, weather rarely created a problem.

## **POST NUPTIALS**

### **Monday After Wedding Day**

The groom’s family would invite close relatives and friends to their home for a luncheon. The bride’s family would do likewise. Each family attending these luncheons would be expected to bring a roasted or boiled chicken with them.

After lunch, a young boy and girl would lead the bride to the river. The children would carry an empty jug with them and would lead the bride’s path to the river by pulling on the handkerchief she was holding. The young boy would put a coin on top of the bride’s foot. The bride would then kick the money off her foot and into the water. The boy would then retrieve the money. It was important that a young boy put the coin on the bride’s foot and not a girl. This again symbolized her wish that the couple’s first child be a male. The bride would then fill the jug with water and sprinkle water from this jug all the way home. The belief was that the sprinkling of this water would fill the path to the groom’s home with good fortune.

### **Saturday after Wedding Day**

The Best Man and Best Woman invited the newlyweds and their families for dinner. The newlyweds would also be invited to sleep the night. This symbolized

that the Best Man and Woman were now considered by the couple as part of their own family. There would usually be a strong bond formed between a married couple and their Best Man, Best Woman and Godparents. This bond would last a lifetime. Although the newlyweds had been invited to stay the entire night, they would probably rise and leave before daybreak.

### **The Final Post Nuptial**

On a Sunday (usually a few weeks after the wedding), the bride's Mother would invite her daughter, her new husband and his family for dinner. In Macedonian, this invitation is called "Na Pirviche" (for the first time). After this dinner had taken place, the groom's parents would invite the bride's family for dinner. At each of the above dinners, there had to be an "odd" number of guests in attendance. It was prohibited to invite an "even" number of guests. The "odd" number symbolized that the two newlyweds would eventually turn into three through the birth of a child. If one invited an "even" number of guests, it was feared that the marriage would be infertile.