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EVENTS AND PEOPLE FROM THE NEWEST HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA IN THE PERSONAL FONDS OF THE STATE ARCHIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Abstract:

The democratization of societies in the communist countries in the late 1980s increased the number of documents of repressed persons acquired by the archives. The author of this article analyses the personal fonds of several people repressed by the communist regime in the Republic of Macedonia, kept by the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia.

Key words:

personal fonds, repression, one-party system, communist regime, Macedonian activists

Izvleček:

Dogodki in ljudi iz novejšje zgodovine

Republike Makedonije v luči osebnih fondov Državnega arhiva Republike Makedonije

Demokratizacija družb v komunističnih državah ob koncu 80. let prejšnjega stoletja je povečala število arhivskih fondov z dokumenti ljudi, ki jih je komunistični sistem zatiral. Avtorica v prispevku analizira osebne fonde več takšnih oseb v Republiki Makedoniji.

Ključne besede:

osebni fonde, zatiranje, enostrankarski sistem, komunistični režim, makedonski aktivisti

Hundreds of personal fonds, created in different periods, and which refer to people who played different roles in the Macedonian society, are held by the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia.

Most of these personal fonds refer to people who were part of the Macedonian revolutionary and liberation movement, intellectuals famous and recognized in their profession, national and cultural activists, some tradesmen and people of other occupations. Most of the personal fonds contain archival material, which refers to the work and activity of the persons during the 20th century. Besides personal documents, scientific articles and literary works, the personal fonds contain documents and information about the persons' families, correspondences with friends, colleagues and likeminded people, testimonies of events they were directly involved in, or events they witnessed.

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Some of these people were actively involved in the creation of Macedonian political and national organizations and cultural companies. Others participated in armed struggles for the liberation of Macedonia and the establishment of the Macedonian state. Some were promoters of the Macedonian national identity, language, history and culture and creators of the most important documents for the modern Macedonian state - Macedonia within the Yugoslav Federation in 1944. They used their knowledge and competence to participate in the organization of Macedonian economy, education, health, culture and other aspects of Macedonian society.

Many of these persons, however, even the most deserving for the establishment of the new "people's" authority in the Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (AANLM) Macedonia, even in the first years after the liberation became victims of the new Macedonian party authorities who conducted a strict centralistic state policy of the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Josip Broz Tito.

The fall of the one-party communist regime, the democratization of the society, the issues about the acquisition of police records by the archives, the issue concerning the realization of the lustration have raised a great deal of interest about those who were repressed during the former one-party system. Considering that 14.000 police records deposited at the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia are not available for use to the researchers because of law regulations, a great attention is put on personal fonds that contain documents and testimonies about the repressed persons in the mentioned period.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA IN WHICH THE PERSONAL FONDS OF THE REPRESSED PERSONS WERE CREATED

After the establishment of the modern Macedonian state on August 2, 1944, at the First Session of AANLM, the relations between Federal Macedonia and Federative Yugoslavia have not been clearly defined. A greater freedom in defining the political and economic independence of the Macedonian country was present during the work of AANLM and at its Presidium headed by Metodija Andonov Čento. Older Macedonian revolutionaries, national activists, patriots, and intellectuals who possessed years of experience in the ideological and national struggles of the Macedonian people were holders of those aspirations to resolve the Macedonian issue and establish the Macedonian state. *Metodi Andonov Čento* was one of those people. He was a part of democratic civil authorities in the period between the two World Wars, an uncompromising fighter against the Serbian assimilation in Macedonia, a promoter of the Macedonian national identity, arrested by the Serbian and Bulgarian occupation authorities, a Chairman of the Initiative Board for convening the AANLM, a President of AANLM and of the Presidium of AANLM, and the first Chairman of Democratic Federal Macedonia; *Vladimir Polezina (Polezinoski)*, Doctor of Jurisprudence at Sorbonne, France, a Secretary of the Presidium of AANLM, one of the creators of the documents adopted at the First Session of AANLM; *Pavel Satev*, Doctor of Jurisprudence in Brussels, Belgium, a publicist, a Macedonian national activist since the time of the Turkish rule in Macedonia, an anarchist, a national activist, a member of the authority of Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United) - IMRO (United) an antifascist, a member of the Presidium of AANLM and a Minister of Justice in the First People's Government of Macedonia; *Panko Brasnarov*, a Macedonian activist, a socialist, a member of Goce's IMRO, a one of the leaders of

IMRO (United), arrested in the time of the Yugoslavian Kingdom because of his Macedonian national activity, the oldest delegate at the First Session of AANLM, a Vice President of the Presidium and a Delegate of information; *Petre Piruze Majski*, an advocate, an organizer and a military commander of National Liberation Struggle - NLB in Western Macedonia, a member at the Headquarters of NLB of Macedonia, a delegate at the First Session of AANLM, a member of the Presidium of AANLM and the first Delegate (Minister) of Justice in the Macedonian country; *Venko Markoski*, etc.

Through their activities, these extraordinary Macedonians succeeded in gaining the trust of most of the Macedonian people who accepted them as honest and uncompromising fighters in achieving the national and state-building ideas and aspirations. They belonged to the so-called "pro-Macedonian" wing that was in confrontation with the "pro-Yugoslav" wing operated by the President of the First national government Lazar Kolisevski, who fully accepted the imposed party-state centralism of the leadership of Communist Party of Yugoslavia-CPY headed by Josip Broz Tito.

In 1945, Metodija Andonov Čento, Lazar Sokolov, Mihailo Apostolski, Venko Markovski, Petre Piruze Majski, Dimitar Vlahov, Emanuel Cuckov, Pavel Satev, Krsto Germov Sakir, Vladimir Polezina and Kiro Gligorov¹ were pointed as members of the "pro-Macedonian" wing and tagged as separatists. As the power and the attacks by the "pro-Yugoslav" group, operated by Lazar Kolisevski, increased, the list of those proclaimed to be Macedonian "autonomists", "separatist", "enemies" of Tito's Yugoslavia, "national enemies" and etc. expanded. They were criticized by Tito for their "wrong" policy and therefore removed from the leading positions in Macedonia and punished. The state security service, at that time known as OZNA (Organization for the protection of the people), and the Department of Public Safety (UDB) used all measures and means in order to obtain data and deliver reports to the party authority about these persons. Police records with various data and vilifications collected by the closest relatives, friends and colleagues from work, were kept about Macedonians, Albanians, Turks and members of other nationalities that expressed different political opinion, ideas and views contrary to the official policy of the only party in domination Communist Party of Yugoslavia-Union of Communists of Yugoslavia.

The authority organized frequent purges and trials of Macedonian people charged with autonomist deviation. Many of the former IMRO (United) government officials, were purged from their positions then isolated, arrested, imprisoned or executed on various (in many cases fabricated) charges including: pro-Bulgarian leanings, demands for greater or complete independence of Yugoslav Macedonia, forming of conspiratorial political groups or organizations, demands for greater democracy, etc. People as Panko Brashnarov,² Pavel Shatev,³ Petre Piruze Majski,⁴

¹ Dr. Violeta Ackoska. *Lekcii od istorijata na sovremenata makedonska drzava (1944-1991)*. Skopje 2011. str. 73.

² Nikifor Smilevski. *Borec za sloboda - zrtva na slobodata*. Collection: *Panko Brashnarov Zivot i delo (1883 -1951) Titov Veles*. December 1991. str. 113-124.
Although old and very ill, Brashnarov was arrested June 30, 1951 and imprisoned in Goli Otok labor camp where he died July 13, the same year.

³ Pavel Shatev was accused of being a follower of the Resolution of the Cominform. In June 1949, without a trial, he was isolated in a house in Bitola. He died from starvation and cold under "house arrest" in 1952.

⁴ Todor Chepreganov. "Separatizmot i avtonomizmot" na Petar Piruze Majski. *Petre Piruze Majski. Vreme, zivot, delo (1907-1980)*. Articles from the scientific conference in Ohrid, 18-19 June, 1993. Skopje 1997. str. 165-173; *Dimche Adzimitreski. Petre Piruze Majski i golotochkata drama...* str. 308-308.
Petre Piruze Majski was accused of being a follower of the Resolution of the Cominform. Without a trial he was sent to Goli Otok from 1950 to 1954.

Vlado Polezina⁵ and many others were quickly ousted from the new government, and some of them assassinated.

"Among the victims during the process of establishment of the centralism, the disrespect of the legal state and the establishment of the domineering authority of J.B.Tito, with the severity of the consequences for the fragile Macedonian democracy, the political disqualification and the arresting of Metodi Andonov Čento have an undisputed leading position."⁶

THE PERSONAL FONDS OF THE REPRESSED LAZAR SOKOLOV, VENKO MARKOVSKI AND VIKTOR AČIMOVIĆ AS TESTIMONIES OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME REPRESSION

The personal fonds of Lazar Sokolov, Venko Markovski and Viktor Ačimović, which are a subject of historical and archival observation, have some common characteristics:

- the archival material in the fonds was created during the 20th century refers mainly to a same time period;
- the archival material is a result of the activity of these Macedonian intellectuals who played an important role in the social, political and cultural life of the Macedonian people.
- there are testimonies of these people activities for the affirmation of the Macedonian national identity and the characteristic economic, political and cultural interests of the Macedonian people in the Yugoslav Kingdom and the Yugoslav federation;
- the documents in the fonds originate from people who were repressed by the one party communist regime mostly because of their active role in the affirmation and defense of Macedonian national interests in the Yugoslav federation, critiques of the centralist party impositions of economic and political measures which were contrary to the Macedonian interests and because of their principled stand regarding the Macedonian question;
- all these people were politically discredited, slandered, arrested, tried, and sentenced to prison in the prison camps throughout Yugoslavia.

Many of the repressed persons or their families could not venture to deliver the personal documents, manuscripts and other materials to the State Archive or other scientific and cultural institutions because they were afraid of the state security services.

⁵ Vladimir Polezinoski (1913-1980) was born in Kichevo. He was accused of being a follower of the Resolution of the Cominform. Without a trial, he was sent to Goli Otok from 1951 to 1954.

⁶ Dr. Violeta Ackoska, *Lekcii... str. 80-81*; Mr. Dukadin Kamsikoski, *Od patot do vistinata i rehabilitacijata na Metodija Andonov Čento, ČENTO-covek, revolucioner, drzavnik, Collection of articles from the Roundtable meeting in Prilep. 26. 11. 1991. Prilep 1993. Str. 129-134.*

Metodi Andonov Čento (1902-1957), was born in Prilep. After the disagreement with the policy of new Yugoslavia and after being repressed by the authorities, Čento resigned. In 1946, he went back to Prilep, but was arrested yet again and sentenced to twelve years in prison for having worked to achieve a "completely independent Macedonia".

Čento died on July 24, 1957, in his hometown Prilep, after sickness from the torture in prison. Metodija Andonov-Čento was rehabilitated in 1991 with a decision of the Supreme Court of Macedonia in which it annulled the verdict against Čento from 1946.

Dr. Lazar Sokolov⁷ is one of the intellectuals and renowned economic experts who experienced the repressive measures of the communist regime just a few years after the constitution of the AANLM Macedonia. Sokolov belongs to the generation of Macedonian intellectuals and national activists who even during the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia demanded a solution of the Macedonian question through the recognition of the Macedonian national identity and the reconstitution of Yugoslavia on a federative principle with Macedonia as a separate federal unit. Sokolov was one of the founders of the Macedonian people's movement (MANAPO) which was part of the Macedonian national movement and the national front in the period from 1936 to 1939. Lazar Sokolov participated in the national liberation struggle in Macedonia, he was a member of the Initiative Committee for the convocation of AANLM, a member of AANLM, a member of the Presidium of AANLM and a Minister of Economy, a member of Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia - AANLY, Deputy-Minister of Trade in the National Committee for the liberation of Yugoslavia etc. In 1945, he was elected a member of the Provisional Parliament of Yugoslavia. Lazar Sokolov worked and acted in compliance with his beliefs and ideas for a greater independency of Macedonia within the Yugoslav Federation while he was on high state positions. He was openly critical of some wrong moves in the economic policy and he pledged for bigger democracy in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which did not suit the centralist leadership of the Party. Because of his firm stands he was proclaimed "an autonomist and separatist" and a public enemy. He was followed and then arrested in August 1949. In July 1950, he was sentenced to four years community service and sent to Goli Otok, where he stayed until 1954.

Lazar Sokolov's family delivered his personal documents to the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia in 2009. Along with these documents, they also handed over a copy of his police record, which was given to his daughter by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2001. The above-mentioned document and his police record comprise the fond Lazar Sokolov,⁸ which consists of three archival boxes. Besides copies of his police record and a number of personal documents about his education and professional training, the fond contains correspondence with his colleagues and friends from the country and abroad, reports of his elections in scientific titles, handwritten statements about his activity in the students cultural-educational association "Vardar" in Zagreb and in MANAPO, manuscripts from a research project about the intelligence in Macedonia between the two World Wars, manuscripts, elaborates and scientific articles in the field of Economy. There is a significant number of photographs, all dated, hic testify of his student years, his activity in MANAPO, as well as of other people and events from the later period.

Venko Markovski⁹ is a Macedonian national and cultural activist, a poet and literary critic who began his national, political and cultural activity in the mid-thirties of the 20th Century in Skopje and continued in Sofia. He is one of the founders and active members of the Macedonian Literary Circle in Sofia (1938 - 1941), where a group of Macedonian students and poets wrote literary and poetic

⁷ *Lazar Sokolov (1914-1984) was born in Kumanovo. He graduated at the Economic Commercial School in 1937 in Zagreb, and after the liberation, he defended his doctoral dissertation in the field of economy in Zagreb. He was one of the Macedonian and Yugoslav experts on economic issues. He worked at the Economic institute as a scientific advisor.*

⁸ *His family delivered the archival material to the State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia.*

⁹ *Venko (Venamijan) Markovski (1915-1988) was born in Skopje. He finished his secondary education in Skopje and graduated Slavic philology at the University St. Kliment Ohridski in Sofia. He died in Sofia in 1988.*

works in Macedonian language and with a national and social subject¹⁰. Venko Markovski was a national activist with a communist and antifascist orientation. During World War II, in 1941 he was in prison in Bulgaria. In 1943, he joined the National-liberation Army in Macedonia. He was elected a member of the Headquarters of NOV¹¹ of Macedonia, a delegate at the first session of AANLM and a member of the Presidium of AANLM a delegate of AANL, a member of the Commission for the codification of the Macedonian literary language, a delegate of the National Assembly of FNRJ¹² and a member of the Yugoslav Writer's Association. In the first years of the establishment of the state, he was treated as the best poet in the Macedonian cultural policy and was accepted Yugoslav literary circles. Venko was used in the agitation and propaganda of the new society and the politics of brotherhood and unity. His name became part of the world bibliographic encyclopedia and his works were published in Belgrade. However, after 1946 he confronted with some of Macedonian state and party leaders. His status in the significantly society changes after the adoption of the Resolution of the Cominform. The polemics between Venko and some Macedonian poets and literary critics who considered his works to be old fashioned and out-of-date.¹³ In 1955, Venko published his work *Sovremeni paradoksi*, where he criticized the state and party leaders for betraying the socialist idea. As a result, he was arrested and sentenced to five years community service on Golgi Took. He stayed in the prison camp until 1961.¹⁴ He stayed in Skopje until 1965 when he left for Bulgaria. The Bulgarian state authorities accepted him and treated him as one of the best poets in Bulgarian literature.

The fond Venko Markovski contains 21 archival boxes. The fond is arranged, processed, and available for use.¹⁵ The fond contains various archival materials, which is a testimony of the personal life of a public figure lifted at the highest level by the one-party communist regime and then brutally discarded, thrown to the bottom and sent to prison camp.¹⁶ His family was also traumatized.

Viktor Ačimović¹⁷ belongs to the generation of the progressive Macedonians who began their social, political and publishing activity before the Second World War. He started his work as a reporter in 1937 in Tetovo and in 1938-1939, he worked in Maribor, Slovenia. Because of his progressive ideas, he was being imprisoned in the prison camps in Bileca and Medjumurje, Ivanjica. During the Second World War he was a correspondent for the secret services of USSR. He participated in the NOV in 1944. As a photo reporter and journalist, Ačimović left behind a rich collection of

¹⁰ *Macedonian Literary Circle. Sofia. 1938-1941. Documents, selection, translation, editorship and notes Dr. Vasil Tocinovski. AM-MM. Skopje 1995.*

¹¹ *National Liberation War.*

¹² *Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia.*

¹³ *Venko Markovski., Glamji i poroi. Selection and Preface Aleksandar Aleksiev. Makedonska kniga. Skopje 1992; Venko Markovski published the first two verse collections Narodni bigori and Oginot in Macedonian language in 1938 in Sofia.*

¹⁴ *Violeta Ackoska and Nikola Zezov. Represijata i represiranite vo najnovata makedonska istorija. Skopje 2005. Str. 248.*

¹⁵ *The State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia. Fond: Venko Markovski. No. 01. 1052. archival units 681. The fond contains documents about his life, his national, social and cultural activity. There is a considerable amount of material referring to the life and work of his son Mile Markovski and the other members of his family, as well as many books - gifts from other authors to Venko and his son Mile. Containing this kind of material the fond Venko Markovski can be regarded both as a personal and as family fond.*

¹⁶ *Venko Markovski. Goli Otok - ostrov na smrtta (Gnevnik vo Pisma). Skopje. 2009.*

¹⁷ *Viktor Ačimović (1915-1987) was born in Tetovo. He went to school in Tetovo and Krizevci, Croatia. He lived and worked in Tetovo, Maribor and Skopje. His wife Milena Godina was from Maribor, which is why he occasionally stayed there.*

photographs of the final fights for the liberation of Macedonia in 1944, and of events and people related to the establishment of the Macedonian state. In the first years after the liberation, he confronted with some state and party functionaries, so he was forced to work as a freelance journalist and artist, a reporter for newspapers and magazines in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana.

After the adoption of the Resolution of the Cominform, Ačimović tried to leave the country illegally and go to Hungary, but he was caught by the Yugoslav border authorities, arrested and sentenced to 4 years in prison. He served the punishment in the prisons in Bitola and Idrizovo. He got out of prison in 1952 and went to live in Maribor with his family until 1960. He occasionally worked in the Maribor library. He returned to Macedonia in 1960 and lived there until his death in 1987. He worked as a freelance artist and TV reporter. At that time, he was completely dedicated to the cinematography and photography. Ačimović filmed 50 non-commercial films that made him famous in the country and abroad and he was awarded for some of his films.

Ačimović was a passionate collector of different kind of documents, manuscripts, books etc. In fact, he was a kind of an archivist himself. He had left a considerable amount of archival and documentary material, books, a rich collection of photographs and films. According to his will, this cultural creativity is kept in three institutions. The books were given to the Metropolitan's residence in Bitola. Part of the written materials and films are kept in 200 boxes in the Cinematheque of Macedonia¹⁸. Only part of that cultural heritage as a personal fond *Viktor Ačimović* is kept at the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia. The fond contains 30 boxes.¹⁹ Considering that he had a long working and creative life, the fond contains materials that are a witness to rich social, political, cultural and artistic activities of the person, and for other persons and events from the Republic of Macedonia and from the Yugoslav Federation.

The archival fonds of those who were repressed and were victims of the one-party communist regime should be given a priority in the arrangement and processing and thus became available to the public and the researchers. This should be one of the priority tasks for the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia.

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¹⁸ [Http://www.maccinema.com/e_index.asp](http://www.maccinema.com/e_index.asp).

¹⁹ The fonds is being processed under the number 1300.

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POVZETEK

DOGODKI IN LJUDJE IZ NOVEJŠE ZGODOVINE REPUBLIKE MAKEDONIJE V LUČI OSEBNIH FONDOV DRŽAVNEGA ARHIVA REPUBLIKE MAKEDONIJE

Večina osebnih fondov se nanaša na osebe, ki so bile del makedonskega revolucionarnega in osvobodilnega gibanja, znane intelektualce, narodne in kulturne aktiviste, trgovce in ljudi drugih poklicev. Veliko teh oseb, tudi tistih najzaslužnejših za ustanovitev nove »ljudske« oblasti v Antifašističnem svetu narodne osvoboditve Makedonije, je že v prvih letih postalo žrtev makedonskih partijskih oblasti, ki so izvajale strogo centralistično državno politiko vodstva Komunistične partije Jugoslavije in Josipa Broza Tita. Med njimi so bili Lazar Sokolov, Venko Markovski in Viktor Ačimović. Njihovi fondi so predmet zgodovinskih in arhivskih raziskav.

Osebni fondi Lazarja Sokolova, Venka Markovskega in Viktorja Ačimovića imajo nekaj skupnih značilnosti: arhivsko gradivo je rezultat dejavnosti makedonskih intelektualcev, ki so imeli pomembno vlogo v družbenem, političnem in kulturnem življenju makedonskega prebivalstva; ohranjeni so dokumenti, ki pričajo o dejavnosti teh ljudi za utrditev makedonske narodne identitete ter ekonomskih, političnih in kulturnih interesov Makedoncev v jugoslovanski kraljevini in federaciji; dokumenti v fondih izvirajo od ljudi, ki jih je enostrankarski komunistični režim zatiral predvsem zaradi njihove aktivne vloge pri utrjevanju in obrambi makedonskih narodnih interesov v jugoslovanski federaciji, kritiki centralistične stranke, ki je vsiljevala gospodarske in politične ukrepe, ki so bili v nasprotju z makedonskimi interesi, ter zaradi njihovih načelnih stališč glede makedonskega vprašanja. Vsi ti ljudje so bili politično diskreditirani, obrekovani, aretirani in obsojeni na zaporno kazen v zaporih po vsej Jugoslaviji.

Arhivski fondi oseb, ki so bile zatirane in žrtve enostrankarskega komunističnega režima, bi morali imeti prednost pri urejanju in obdelavi. Tako bi bili dostopni javnosti in raziskovalcem.