

Nikola Shaykov (1912-1996)

20 years ago, on October 26th left this world Nikola Shaykov - ended one more humble emigrant's life in Toronto. Like Solzhenitzin he memorized and later described for the future generations the frightful fratricidal blood orgy after the 1944 coup and communist dominance in his native Pirin Macedonia. He was one among many true sons of Macedonia who were punished and suffered for their loyalty to the Bulgarian national spirit.

Shaykov was one of the founding members of Holy Trinity church in Toronto, energetic defendant of its essence as church unbreakably and deeply connected to MPO - the Macedonian Patriotic Organization. For him, as for many others the struggle against the falsification of history by the communist propaganda in favor of foreign factors was important. As a man of the pen and a fiery speaker he was always alert and a vigilant keeper of the truth. He fought until his last breath against all influences, openly and covertly meant to undermine, weaken or substitute the Bulgarian character of the Macedonian revolutionary movement.

Nikola Shaykov gave his whole life to this struggle, to the faith in the common future of the Macedonian people, unfairly divided by a historical nonsense and trusted the goodness of Man – the ultimate creation of God.

All the troubles that this long-suffering son of Macedonia endured under the political repressions and cleansing rivaling St. Bartholomew's Eve, in prisons and labor camps, during his fight in the mountains and as refugee weren't enough to break his faith, to weaken his resistance forces. The memoir book he wrote "Turbulent Epoch 1841-1950", not large in volume is an impressive monument of the human ability for sharp observation and memorizing (without written notes!) events and players under darkest, inhuman conditions. The memoir (in hand-written format!) appeared in 1982. The description of facts, using precise numbers and data follows the chronology and drama of the war and the post-war period. "Turbulent Epoch" is a crushing historical condemnation of the leading forces and persons, name-by-name responsible for the bloody suppression of the Bulgarian national spirit in Macedonia. As a strictly personal testimony and from the distance of time and place, Shaykov denounces the demagoguery of the communists creating "heroes" out of the criminal "people's revengers".

"Bay Kolyo" was born in the village of Delchevo (district of Nevrokop) in the family of farmers, fled and resettled from Ziliahovo (today Nea Zihni, district of Seres, Northern Greece). His father, as an IMRO member, participated in the Ilinden Uprising. He formed his sons in the traditions of the revolutionary struggle. Since early age "Kolyo" and his older half-brother (on the maternal side) Ivan Nourkov are sworn as members of IMRO, Ivan later upgraded to "voevoda" (chieftain). Kolyo had a natural aspiration for education and pursuit of knowledge, so he managed to finish courses in administration and commerce and then worked in municipal administrations in his village and in Nevrokop. Under the "Zveno" regime (a military authoritarian coup 1934-1935) and during the subsequent ban and illegality of IMRO, the "cheti" tactics (armed subversive actions) of the organization in the enslaved regions of Greece and Yugoslavia continued. The two brothers take part in this difficult and dangerous movement, supported and helped across the borders by the population as a whole. The enemies of the Macedonian liberation movement are diverse and the struggle is led on many fronts, so the young fighters like Nikola early learn and adopt underground, clandestine methods and techniques.

In 1941 Bulgaria steps in charge of the administration of the liberated parts of Macedonia in Greece and Yugoslavia. The people of Macedonia is united again, undivided by borders. The joy is tremendous and the triumphant IMRO actively participates in the administrative and law-and-order functions in towns and villages. Nikola Shaykov is drawn by the military and works in the municipality of the same Ziliahovo, native village of his father.

After the war, guided by the new local “revolutionary” authorities, in collaboration with the Greek and Tito’s communists whole Macedonia is a theater of persecution, repressions and liquidation of members, helpers and sympathizers of the Macedonian liberation movement. Nikola is arrested and put before the “People’s Tribunal” in Nevrokop. After a speedy death sentence starts his tragic odyssey through the prison system awaiting execution, enduring tortures and humiliation. During a labor assignment outdoors he manages to flee. Man-hunt and dangerous escape in the mountain follows, but helped by locals and family Nikola reunites with his brother Ivan. Shot by the persecutors Ivan dies before the eyes of Nikola. He and his friend Atanas Ikonov (“Nachkata”) flee to Greece where new troubles and clash with the authorities await them. Only in 1948, after active involvement by the American military administration, Nikola, together with a large group is destined to a camp in Italy. From there after two more years he was accepted as refugee in Canada.

“...A commission came to us in the camp to inquire about our political views and convictions. We, from Macedonia, declared that we stand for free and independent Macedonia. Thanks to the American representative (an ethnic Croatian) we received this help. Otherwise no one would have been able to leave Greece alive.”

“Turbulent Epoch”

So starts the Canadian period of Shaykov’s emigration. He left a spotless, unblemished reputation, lived a modest, sober, disciplined life. He worked tirelessly in the church. Every spare minute he spent writing, sharing political views with people, tape recording memories, speeches, traditional folk songs, patriotic verses. He helped everyone in the parish to learn more about history and the truth about the struggle of the Macedonians. He took good care of us, the newcomers from Bulgaria to feel welcome in the parish and to consider Holy Trinity a comfortable spiritual home.

For him Bulgaria was the long-suffering sacred Mother, the freedom and unification of Macedonia – his ideal. He left this world six years after the fall of communism in Bulgaria, still didn’t see his death sentence repealed. He languished without seeing his native land, his wife, son and grandchildren. Now his ashes rest in his village, a suburb of the city Gotze Delchev.

The entire generation of the militant emigration does not live any more. Still, thanks to the patriotic legacy of the first priests and to the leading personalities of our parish, it is impossible for ideas of hostility to the Bulgarian national idea to penetrate into our church community until the present day. This spirit is our thoroughly kept testament which fully harmonizes with the rules of diversity, tolerance and mutual respect of the contemporary Canadian society. Nikola Shaykov is one of the bright characters from the recent past of Holy Trinity Macedono-Bulgarian church. May he rest in peace!

Vassil Popvassilev

How I See the Future of Macedonia?

The future of Macedonia depends on Bulgaria, how Bulgaria will defend the young Macedonian state, if it will take care of it like a true mother or will be an evil step-mother.

In the present moment every Bulgarian, no matter where in the world, must work for the defense of Macedonia and help the Macedonian state to remain free and independent, because the times require this.

In the past IMRO was called “separatist organization”, that wanted to establish a Macedonian state separate from Bulgaria. IMRO never refused its Bulgarian ethnicity and language. Just the opposite is true: IMRO created a political separatism, only for the purpose of keeping its Bulgarian character, language, culture, customs and traditions, to save them from turkization and later from serbization and Greek conversions.

June 29, 1994

Nikola Shaykov

A Proposal to Nominate an “Academician” from Skopje for a Nobel Prize

Sitting in front of the TV set I watched an emission from TV Skopje* bringing a lecture by the President of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences Blashe Ristovski. Being a legendary Academician, I thought, you can always learn something from him. And in fact I heard peculiar things coming from his mouth! The Academician suggests a start of a campaign against...Gotze Delchev, Dame Gruev, Giorche Petrov! Why? “It is a precise fact, that all revolutionaries – leaders of IMRO and the Ilinden Uprising declared their Bulgarian nationality. Thus they inflicted heavy damage to the Macedonian history. That is why a campaign against them must start.”

I haven't heard a more flagrant historical non-sense. The Macedonists from Skopje want to put these giants of the Macedonian history on trial before the “Makedonskata Akademija na Umetnostite” in order to make them confess guilt for damages to the Macedonian propaganda with regards of the new “Macedonian” nation.

We consider that in view of this proposed campaign, the title “Academician” accorded to Ristovski is insufficient. We propose him to be nominated as a candidate for Nobel Prize.

Nikola Shaykov

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