

MEMORIES OF IVAN STOYANOV RACHEV - recorded
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The Beginning – Labor - 1939

His Majesty Labour gives birth to all the goods of mankind and not only them. How I met, got to know, and how we interacted with it.

I remember that our first meeting happened too early and it was rather risky and comical. It happened in the spring of 1939. My uncle Ivan, the youngest of my Dad's four brothers, after whom I was named (he also had a twin-sister Ivanka) sent me to the village fountain about 30 yards from our yard to pour his water canteen, saying he was going to go plow the field with his buffalos. I was very happy to run to the fountain with the white aluminum watering can. However, the fountain was built to be ergonomically sized to be comfortable for the elderly and animals. Water gushed from a metal pipe about a metre high and fell into a long two-metre trough, from which the animals also drank. I was too short, under the age of four, and the mission proved almost impossible - to pour and carry water to Uncle. This made me very sad. I began to think about how to accomplish the task, and although I felt like crying, I understood that crying, which has often helped me achieve my goals, would not do. I found that the board that stood on the trough to place the bowls on while filling with water could help. I was given the opportunity to make my first rationalization - to climb onto the board and from there water could now be poured into the can. Although it was difficult, I climbed onto the board, which turned out to be quite slippery. While I was pouring water with the confidence of a victor stepping on the board, the neighborhood turkey did not like my victory pose. His attack followed a moment later. As a result of the unequal battle, I found myself up to my neck in the trough of cold water with a 10 - 15 kilogram huge and

aggressive beast on top of me - the turkey. Nearby to the epic battle was our neighbour Raina - the turkey was hers - and she came to my rescue, pulling me out of the water. I laugh now at what happened, but then I was probably crying.

The lessons learned from the incident

1. There are lessons to be learned from every experience besides the useful or not-so-useful results.

2. Let's do what we can.

3. To be prepared for the job at hand.

4. Work can be dangerous and even deadly.

The conclusions were possible after many, many years of varied work, professional knowledge and experience.

This is how I remember the beginning and I had no idea how much more hard work and adventures lay ahead.

WHY I DID NOT BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY WHEN MANY WANTED TO

Several events that happened to the State and our people stopped me. I will mention them because they proved to be fateful for Bulgaria, for all Bulgarians and not only. The so-called "People's Power" - the Bulgarian Communist Party and the People's Front, turned out later to be a total communist dictatorship of illiterate, unenlightened in the affairs of state, scoundrels.

The first misdeed

An all-out terror has begun. To begin with, a violent crackdown on Religion as an institution and its representatives began. Spiritual officials were subjected to

humiliation, harassment and physical elimination. The believing ordinary citizen irrespective of creed and age was very seriously hurt and confused morally, mentally, culturally, intellectually and domestically. There were many who could not survive it and died soon after. My family, including myself, had a very difficult time of it. Grandfather Alexa, my mother's father passed away. He was very strongly religious. He prayed all his life, he never davened on Wednesdays and Fridays. He did all the long fasts. He kept the 10 commandments without fail. Mobilized with his horse during the Turkish war - 1912, he refused to get a rifle because his God would not allow him to kill. He was assigned a cart to carry shells, food and corpses of the dead.

The second misdeed

All the wealthy and rich people were declared "enemies of the people" and a crackdown began - concentration camps, murdered without trial or conviction... All their property and businesses were taken away. Plants, factories, workshops, shops, pubs, crafts, etc. were "nationalized". Much of what was taken was effectively destroyed.

Our family was very badly affected. My father's pub was taken along with the goods and inventory. Dad had negotiated the purchase of a local carpenter's workshop for the manufacture of packing cases and kegs for one million leva at that time. However, the deal was not completed. In 1947 the so-called "nationalization" took place. The bank did not allow Dad to withdraw the money to make the purchase. The "nationalization" was announced the next day. This huge heist seized all the money in the banks and in circulation, "exchanging" it for 1%, 0.5% and 0% depending on the exchange of holdings. My father's many years of labor in money and property was plundered. He also practiced the craft of barbering. He was not allowed to practice it either.

The third misdeed

In 1958 it was the time for the mountain and semi-mountainous settlements to cooperate. This process of so-called "collectivisation" - the formation of collective farms and farms in the rural areas had already been completed after the nationalisation.

The village of Borushtitsa and the neighbouring settlements - Banzareto, Chiflika and Cheresha were to form a collective farming union in the spring of 1958. About 1730 acres of land were forcibly taken from the people, together with working cattle - oxen, buffaloes, horses, cows and with the corresponding inventory. The land was taken ploughed, sown and prepared for harvest. An abundant harvest of grain and fruit was born, which was then taken to storehouses. The same was almost entirely wasted and eaten by rodents afterwards. The working cattle were sold off or abused by certain local "ruling" hoodlums.

Our family, like all our fellow villagers, suffered a major blow. The two pairs of young oxen were taken along with the cart and stock. The cows also were gone - 3 in number, leaving us with 5-6 sheep and 2 goats. In order to force my father to be the first to "enroll" in the collective farming union and to become vice-chairman, the party leadership had taken good care. I was already a student at the Forestry Institute. I was summoned by the "party comrades" to persuade my father to join the collective farming union, and was told that if I failed to do so, I would be dismissed from the university. Apparently the matter was a foregone conclusion.

My father put a lot of effort into the newly formed collective farming union in harvesting and preparing for the following year. At the end of the reporting period, BGN 0.50 per working day was credited, and most of the days worked were not actually counted. In this situation, my father was forced to leave the collective farming union in order to be able to provide me with the promised support for my

studies in Sofia. This became very difficult by some acts which are not newsworthy in this case, but the consequences from his decision were very insidious and cruel.

My father was declared an "enemy of the nation", a saboteur of the collective farming union, and the case of the "Hungarian student events" was used to purge the universities of "unreliable" students - such as myself - sons of "enemies of the nation". A letter was sent by the Party to the university to have me removed. It was good that after a conversation with the rector of the Forestry Institute, Professor Asen Biolchev, he came to his senses and did not carry out their recommendation.

The result of the so-called "collectivisation" is nowadays a total catastrophe. The land has become abandoned and wild. In order to save it from becoming spoiled and thorny, I reforested about 500 acres of the 1730 acres of the village of Borushtitsa. At present, apart from the private yards, not a single acre of other land is cultivated.

Cattle ranching has been eliminated. In Borushtitsa before what happened there were 6-7000 sheep, 2000 goats, 150 pairs of pack animals of oxen, buffaloes, horses and thousands of different domestic animals. After 50 years, at present there are no other animals in the village except a few hens. Of the local population, only about 60 people remained from the former 1,150 people (as of 2010). There is no school, no jobs, no industry, no handicrafts, gone are the five pubs, the sweet shop, the butchers, the barbers, the collieries, the grocery, the bakery, the tailors, the knitters, the shoemakers, etc. No child has been born for decades.

When I finished school at the local junior high we had 114 children by 1952. The village was deserted and dying. About 30 cottages were built, many homes closed. The residents of Banzareto moved out every last person.

The Fourth Misdeed

The lands and forests were left without the people who managed and enjoyed them. The family and household structure was destroyed irreparably and probably forever. The latter is unforgivable! It has led to the depopulation of many thousands of villages and entire regions, especially in the mountainous and semi-mountainous remote and inaccessible villages.

This is yet another and probably not the last misdeed of the government, including the permanent presence of the 100-year-old party. This is a party that is a murderer of the Bulgarian state and of the Bulgarians. What it has failed to do on various occasions and by various means with repression, mass murder without trial or conviction for 100 years and more is about to be done by famine, crime, emigration, mortality, serfdom and feudalism through concessions.

Every hour we decrease by eight people!

HOLIDAYS IN BORUSTITSA

ARAHANGEL'S DAY - 08.11.2013 - family celebration with a lamb soup - St. Arahangel Michael's Day

Orthodoxy has defined and named it after him not by chance, and in my opinion very rightly, and at an appropriate time of the season and even the date. I won't give the reasons for this opinion here - they will probably be the same as those of my readers. It is a day for taking account of a passing successful year, or of a period, or even of a life. This day of celebration is a sacred, fateful, defining end and beginning for me and my family. We have celebrated it for half a century without interruption. My mother Tsanka (Stefana) assigned it to me for good luck and health on religious and prophetic grounds. Arachangel Michael has indeed been protecting me, helping me, giving me luck, strength and success in everything I do for fifty years now, except for one thing which I will not write about now, not because it is my personal failure, but because it is not its time and place. And maybe if I ask my Guardian Angel a lot for it, He will hear me and help me, as He has done countless times. By a national custom from ancient times, this Bulgarian nation, which has suffered and is genial, knows how to work smartly and devotedly and to celebrate richly, ritually,

cleanly and meaningfully. There is hardly a nation in the world with so many feasts, each more lavish and meaningful, joyful and ritually substantial. The dining table is always seasonally, fully, richly and beautifully decorated. On this feast it is appropriately and carefully arranged, decorated with flowers and attended by both food and drink and my beloved and respected people.

1. Invariably, a traditional lamb soup is made of a sacrificial animal - a lamb, a young calf or a sheep. It consists of well-cooked meat cut into bite-sized pieces with the bones in pure spring water without any seasoning except salt. Boil over a slow fire for about four hours, constantly removing the scum. Do not add water while boiling, but do not overcook either.

2. Ritual bread - candle bread is smoked with frankincense. If possible, it is consecrated in a church or a priest is called to officiate at home.

3. Boiled wheat, lightly sweetened and with walnut kernels.

4. Salad or appetizer - seasonal.

5. Alcoholic drinks - Bulgarian rakia, wine.

6. Non-alcoholic drinks - to taste.

7. Appetizers - specialties, cheese, etc.

8. Conversations, music, dancing.

In addition to family members, our friends also attend. The meal lasts 5 - 6 hours and sometimes more.

On this feast, coincidentally or not, fateful events also happened. For example meeting people important to our family. On this day we used to meet our future in-laws, their families and friends. On this day were the engagements of both our daughters. For this reason, the celebration of Archangel's Day carried over to our children as their anniversary. Until now, we have always celebrated it together with Stefcheto, Tatiana and our in-laws. This year there will be some absentees due to their deaths and due to employment. Sister-in-law Vaska and brother-in-law Nedyalko passed away.

Son-in-law Sunny /Alexander/ performed on stage based on his plays. Daughter Stefka has a performance at her puppet theatre today and tomorrow. It is entirely their family creation and is a novelty in the industry not only for Bulgaria. There have been theatres with a revolving stage all over the world, however, to have the auditorium revolve with the audience, and the script stand in a circle and appear before the visitors - children and adults, I am not aware of anywhere in the world. Innovative! Bravo!

THIRD MARCH - national holiday - 03.03.2014

Signing of the Treaty of San Stefano, which documented the victory of the Russian army and the Bulgarian militia over our five-century-old enslaver - Turkey. Without the help of the Russian people this would not have happened. The April Uprising showed that with this balance of forces and capabilities, despite our numerous attempts with bands, uprisings and preparations of Levski and followers, despite the support of some great countries and prominent personalities, the liberation from the centuries-old enslaver would not have happened. Only a military victory over a Turkish state many times stronger than ours could have removed this anachronism and genocide of the Bulgarian people in Europe. Quite often the thesis that "freedom was given to us" is thrown around on various occasions and writings. Absolutely not! I do not accept! Such a claim is baseless!

Why do I think so?

I don't think I am a sufficiently qualified analyst for all the aspects by which an evaluation of a world event can and should be made. I will focus on stories, details and processes, some of which are not so popular or even unknown to many of us, but in my opinion can give a clearer picture of the epic, the tragic, the heroic and the

sacrificial. I will tell in my own way about the things I have seen, experienced or felt in coming into contact with the facts and circumstances.

Coincidentally, with my forestry profession, I have worked quite a lot since 1964 until today in the area of the "theatre of war" of this sacred and fateful for us and Europe war - 1877-78. I am trying to describe some things to be known and remembered mostly by my relatives and friends. I do it at their insistence, which they ask me for during our meetings and conversations.

Local contribution to the Liberation

- Before the war
- During the war
- After the war

In the area of my home village of Borushtitsa and the neighbouring villages and neighbourhoods around the Hainboaz and Trevnenski passes, there are actions and events worth describing as national memory, artefacts, place names and historical writing represent them. The two passes mentioned above, which are located close to each other and are in the lower part of the middle Stara Planina Mountain, were active and year-round during the war, and this circumstance predetermines their particular importance. From time immemorial, in this region there have been active Haiduk bands, led by famous and not so famous leaders - Valchan, Zhelyu and others. At the lower end of Balabushka ravine and Osenkov ruzh there are the remains of the haiduk mill, which is located near the cave "Miliva" in Milevi rocks. It served as a refuge and hiding place for the haiduk troops. According to my father's stories, the cave was entered by climbing the Javor's Stem - a twin to enter the small cave. Diggers had entered the cave, and I learned by hearsay that the militia had seized from them a copper pot and chain used for cooking over the hearth, a pyrusty, utensils, and perhaps other things. Dad told me something else about the haiduk

troops. There had been a wedding in the Banzareto neighborhood, which in my childhood numbered 20 houses and a hundred inhabitants. In haiduk times, that is, before the Liberation, the haiduks attended the wedding. In this rather old village there were very good musicians on folk instruments, who performed very specific different songs and dances than those in the village of Borushtitsa. So the haiduks were with their commander and after they had eaten, drunk and made merry at the wedding, the commander decided to make the bride a present and sent a trooper on horseback to bring the present. After about an hour he returned from the Beli buk area, which is near Miliva, and brought a string of gold pendari. There is a large meadow - a pasture - near the area of Banzareto about a kilometer north of the village. There, in this meadow, a skirmish took place between the haiduks and a Turkish unit in which a trooper was killed. He was buried here and since then the area has been named "The Grave". The warlord, however, doubted the treachery of one of his most trusted troopers, who was a Turk, and as such he used him for reconnaissance, communications and other special missions. Alongside these special missions, this Turk also visited the warlord's family. The commander suspected that the Turk was having an affair with his wife. Rumor has it that for this reason he killed the Turk when fighting the Turkish troops.

LEGEND OR TRUTH ABOUT THE NAME OF "THE SLAUGHTERED KADANI" SITE

As I have already said, the two winter passes Trevnenski and Haineto /Hainboaz/ were used all year round and were therefore under constant guard. The first guards in Turkish times were called "verduns" and were hired and paid by the Turkish authorities. The Verduns were hired from the local population and were armed at first with spears. During the long period of slavery, haidutism gradually emerged. Some of these Verdunites joined the Haiduts and began raiding Turkish caravans passing through the passes with goods and valuables. Robberies of the Turkish treasury, which carried the taxes collected from the northern provinces to Constantinople, increased. After several successive robberies of the treasury at the Hainet Pass, the Porte was forced to take measures. It began to purge the passes of the Haiduts. Their dwellings, the people who had supplied them with food and shelter, were sought. The many villages and neighborhoods were the object of their action. The location of the village of Borushstitsa and the neighborhoods of Banzareto and Chiflika /Darzhaven/ were attacked by the Turkish asker. What exactly happened we can only assume. Known from the story of living witnesses and victims is the fact that three of the more prominent Bulgarians, one from Chiflika and two from Borushtitsa, were interrogated and tortured to tell who was feeding and hiding the Haiduts. Probably they did not get the information they wanted because of ignorance or hardness and sympathy with the Haiduts, so the Turks were not satisfied. They decided to punish the cruelly tortured Bulgarians by throwing them alive into the nearby steep cave "The Holes". My father, as a former innkeeper, used to listen to old people's stories and mention their names to me, which I don't remember. I only

remember that one of the victims from the Chiflika area was from the Choban family.

In the summer of the following year, their heirs and relatives decided to take revenge. A few people went to the village of Gyusovo /now Izvorovo/ during the harvest, when the men were at work in the fields. The village was mainly inhabited by Turks. They took 30 women and girls out of the houses, tied them together with ropes, as the Turks used to tie Bulgarians together to take them to exile. They lead them to the Balkan through the area of "Ushite", "Kupena" and the village of Seltse and reach the foot of Mount Panagyurya. On its northern side there is a saddle and a meadow around which there are centuries-old beech trees. Here they take a cruel revenge - all the women are mercilessly slaughtered and robbed. Against one Bulgarian killed, 10 women are killed. From then on this place is called "Slaughtered Kadani".

Of the truth of the incidents described, I have not the slightest doubt.

Evidence:

1. My father around 1950 had to enter the cave "The Holes" because his hunting dog Kemal, chasing a rabbit, fell there. They took a rope and a winch from the railway station and let him take the dog out. It was with many risks and difficulties, but thanks to a miner's carbide lamp he managed to get the dog out. He saw the bones of the people put there by the Turks.

2. The winter of 1954 was very hard. There was no coal for the trains and industry. The mine timber props ran out and fortification material had to be cut urgently from the forests. My father and I ended up on the Slaughtered Kadani to cut down mining props and sledge them to Borushtitsa station. It paid very well. The snow was cleared up to there and the logging started. At my father's request, I returned from Sofia, where I was studying, and we started mining props. We worked with a jig - a hand saw. To haul the saw comfortably I cleared the snow to

kneel down. On one clearing the snow of the slush, I dug out a bone. Dad guessed it was from the hand of one of the slain women. He then told me in detail when and how the drama happened at that place.

3. One of my neighbours shared with me and showed me a small gold coin with a hole - apparently from the decoration of a woman. He had found it in this meadow.

I think that the incidents and events already described are enough to get an idea of the struggles our ancestors fought and the sufferings endured before the Liberation.

- LIBERATION - THE WAR

- Since the preparations and the beginning of the war are quite well institutionally and historically popular I do not consider it necessary to comment. The same is largely true of the first phase of the war - 1877. Since the participation of the local population due to the territory of the military theatre is here, from the Himiglian, Shipka, Trevna Pass and Hainet (Hain boaz), on which territory is also the village of Borushchitsa and the surrounding villages, neighbourhoods and towns.

- Most of my life from childhood, school years, to my secondary education and my entire professional working life has passed from the Tvarditsa Balkan to the Leshnitsa River basin. Figuratively speaking from Chumerna peak in the east to Botev peak in the west. For half a century of forestry practice from 1964 to today 03.03.2014, holding almost all forestry positions up to the director of forestry, I covered with work assignments almost all this territory on the southern slopes of the Central Balkan Mountains. In order to make it clearer how thoroughly, comprehensively, in detail and in the field I have got to know this territory, I will give a few statistics.

- - Logging - forestry station Byala Palanka, forestry station Muglitzh, forestry station Kazanlak on 100 000 decares

- - Afforestation on the same territory - 20 000 decares

- - Construction of new forest roads - 460 kilometres

- - Tracing, designing, construction of light rope lines of the "Vissen" type - 15 pieces

- - Operation and maintenance of 20 kilometres of 'Vissen' ropeways and 21 winches.

- Construction of new bridges, culverts and tractor roads - hundreds of construction kilometres.

- Abandoning animal traction and mechanizing logging 100% in 1972.

- Fulfilled national indicators for 11 complex brigades - felling, hauling, loading and transport of timber with appropriate technical equipment and optimal technology.

Throughout this territory, alongside my direct work, I came across artefacts, fortifications, traces of warfare, stories, monuments, excavations and so on. All this was very emotional, impressive and inquisitive for me. What I have seen, found or participated in, reflected and analysed, I take the liberty to reflect in these lines. I shall concentrate on the most decisive and epic part of the war - the months of December 1877 and January 1878.

The winter during this period was very snowy and cold. The Turkish military command, in view of this meteorological situation, assumed that hostilities would be suspended and prepared to hibernate until winter passed. Military experts agree that the Balkan Mountains, with their snowy and difficult passes even under snowless conditions, will not permit the Russian army stationed in northern Bulgaria to undertake a crossing of the Balkan. This is a fatal mistake of the Turkish command, a short-sighted and wrong strategic and tactical decision! The Russian command on this occasion, unlike on many other occasions, made the most correct military decision from every point of view, taking into account correctly the situation in which it found itself strategically, tactically, terrain-wise, materially and emotionally - mentally. With the available forces and resources about 50,000 bayonets of live force, about 100 guns including 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 volunteer companies and 2 - 3 thousand helpers, guides, scouts from the local population in fighting the snow blizzards and drifts set off in the two-meter snow on the narrow and steep high mountain trails.

I have often wondered what will, what stoicism, and what inhuman effort it took to get the cannon, ammunition, kitchen, and food through that narrow and steep trail. I have passed General Skobelev's road with 18,000 men and 24 guns. There are places where they went down the Chemiglin trail, which is not only steep and narrow. It literally squeezes between cliffs and jumps several metres sheer! In a biting cold wind and two meters of snow up to 1300 m. above the sea!

When General Skobelev's front detachment, exhausted to the utmost, reaches the Uzana locality, just behind the Ispolin peak (1350 m.), a few minutes' rest and breakfast are given, and in order to reunite with the troops left behind in the trek, several dozen soldiers with rifles are left here as if frozen. I cannot describe my feelings as I sat on the "Carrot Chair" for rest and reflection! Tears, reflections, gratitude, guilt and responsibility!

There is no memorial plaque, monument or simple concrete metal stake here that years ago marked the path of Skobelev's army. We planted then 200 000 birches on the path in memory of the 200 000 Russian soldiers who died.

Walking down the Himigliya Trail is even more difficult, heroic and epic! The nearby foothill village of Himiglii (Yasenovo) was inhabited mainly by Turkish people. This circumstance was not sufficiently appreciated and studied by the Russian command. Along the trail local Turkish princes set up ambushes on trees and rocks by single riflemen. They shelled the moving Russian troops. I found this out from stories from residents of the village of Yasenovo and from graves I discovered when I was designing and building a forest truck road there, but adjacent to the trail so it would remain authentic. I made the road to the area of Kez alan (Maiden Square) about 2 kilometers.

But dear reader, the scariest thing I experienced is yet to be heard. The main part of my workers, as the head of the

forestry-technical section (GTU) Leshnitsa and Ravna Gora, were from the village of Yassenovo and Sheinovo for ten years. A little to the north of the centre of the village of Yassenovo is a strong fountain. Above it and around it was the command post - the headquarters of the army, the first units of General Skobelev's detachment. This happened around 26-27 December. Most of the personnel were quartered in the houses of the local population, mainly Turkish. A few dozen meters from the fountain there was a fruit tree, according to the memories of locals - a large well-lined pear tree. Several local Turks climbed into its low branches, armed with cool weapons - yatagans and knives. During the night, probably on the 26th or 27th, two local Turks speaking Bulgarian began to execute their evil plan. They began at night, under cover of darkness, to go round the houses where the tired soldiers were quartered, and, with the message that they were summoned to headquarters, led them thither. Leading them out from under the pear tree they are ambushed from above and ambushed by those leading from below, whereupon they are silently killed. The corpses of the victims were at first dropped into nearby deep wells in the yards. Despite the depth of the wells, they managed to fill three wells with corpses, and according to one of the local Bulgarians, they were 12 to 15 metres deep. In spite of the fact that the wells were already filled, the slaughter continued, with the corpses being carried into a nearby Turkish courtyard. There a group grave was dug about 50 cm deep. And there the corpses were lined up side by side - 28 corpses, I counted them myself. After the Liberation a Bulgarian from Northern Bulgaria from the Gabrovo villages moved to Yassenovo and bought the yard with the house of the Turk. By coincidence, I was close to Bonnyo, a builder, and his wife Mara, a cook in the local canteen. Their brother-in-law was the driver of the carriage I used to take my workers. They were all very honest, conscientious and hardworking people. They were also very hospitable and I

often visited them. When their brother-in-law earned money and decided to build a house, Bonnyo gave him part of the yard for that purpose. They began construction and as is well known, you start with the foundation. And, oh horror! At 30 - 40 cm. The corpses began to be discovered. I attended part of the exhumation. Carcass after carcass was discovered, 28 in total. You could see by the skulls that these were young, tall, elite warriors. Their teeth healthy and perfectly aligned, their clothes well preserved not rotten. In the pocket of one of the overcoats I found a leather pouch with some metal pennies and a very well preserved photo of his little daughter. I cried then and I cry now!

The bones and belongings were collected and placed in the monument - ossuary in the square in the village of Yassenovo.

The military strategy of the Russian command, part of which was the operation for the battle of Shipka-Sheinovo, was classic for that time.

The Shipka Pass was guarded by General Radetsky. Here the troops were deployed frontally - 11 000 bayonets and 54 guns. The Turkish winter camp was located to the south of the settlement. On the three Thracian burial mounds are located the command posts. The fortifications, trenches, ditches, dots, etc., cover the field territory between the villages of Sheinovo, Shipka and Himiglyi (Yasenovo). The facilities are well arranged for long-term winter habitation. The plan of the general staff of the Russian command was that 30,000 men with 103 guns should be simultaneously attacked from the west by General Skobelev with 16,000 men. From the east by General Svyatopolk Mirsky with 18,000 men and 24 guns and General Radetsky on the front with 11,000 men and 54 guns.

In spite of its numerical superiority in manpower, the Russian army should, according to the theory of military science, outnumber the enemy at least twice by long-

lasting fortifications and provision with everything necessary for a lasting defence. Considering the severe winter crossing of the Balkan, the losses suffered from the snow, the cold, the exhaustion, the ambushes, and the problem of food supply, the operation undertaken was regarded by the enemy and his foreign military advisers as utterly doomed to failure and absolutely improbable. As is already known from history, however, it was carried out surprisingly quickly and with great success.

Let's see what's going on with the eastern, left bypass column on General Mirsky's Trevno Pass. The Trevna Pass on the southern slopes of the mountain and its two passes from Krastets area, although lower in elevation, are also difficult, especially in winter. Along this part of the mountain around the town of Tryavna, the village of Plachkovtsi and the locality of Stanchov Khan there are a large number of villages and huts with a very tough and combative Bulgarian population. General Mirsky's detachment was joined by many men armed with tools for cutting and clearing the snow, and many harnessed cattle for hauling the cannon, supplies and food. About 2,000 Bulgarians helped with scouting, road clearing and food supply. The western passage is chosen to move along, which although more difficult will bring the army further west and into a strategically more favourable position for attack. The road from Krastets goes to Markov Tok Peak, the White Stone locality, the Pizditsa locality, the Slaughtered Kadani locality, the village of Seltse, Kupena Peak, the Buchvishta locality above Muglzh and the village of Gyusovo, the town of Kazanlak and Sheinovo. Apart from the fact that the eastern detachment, thanks to the help of the local population, did not suffer any material losses or loss of manpower, it anticipated by two days the appearance of the western detachment in the locality of Buchvishta, descending to the village of Himiglii.

General Mirsky's surprise by appearing not where he was expected by the Turkish troops at the Hain Boaz Pass

created great alarm in the Turkish command. A redeployment of part of the Turkish troops was forced, in which an unprepared position for defence was taken, giving General Skobelev's western detachment little but precious time to assemble and organise for an assault. Although it is known that part of the rearguard had to enter the fight immediately after coming down from the mountain, General Svetoslav Mirsky helped the exhausted western detachment very much. The passivity due to the exhaustion of Skobelev's detachment led the commander of the Turkish troops, Veysel Pasha, to think that the Russian actions from the west were only a show. He therefore directed his main forces to the eastern sector. The situation of General Mirsky's troops became critical and he requested help from General Radetzky. At this time General Skobelev also goes on the offensive. General Radetzky's Bulgarians and Russians march to the front and with a mighty "hooray" they managed to break the Turkish defensive line and capture the village of Sheinovo. The Russian cavalry seizes Sheynovo from the south, joins General Mirsky's troops and closes the enemy's retreat. The Turks are pressed on all sides and their situation becomes deadlocked.

At 3 p.m. on January 9, white flags were waving over the Turkish fortified camp. Veysel Pasha's forces capitulated. By the evening all the units surrender - artillery stationed in the Balkan. Captured are 30,000 men and 103 guns, 6 battle flags and much ammunition and food.

This great victory of Russians and Bulgarians at Shipka, Sheinovo and the victory of General Gurko in Sofia actually decided the success of the war over Turkey and the treaty of surrender of Turkey in San Stefano was a matter of time.

This is the place to remark, in reply to some analysts of this war, that "freedom was given to us by Russia." Yes, if it had not been for this war, the Bulgarian state would hardly have been reborn. However, this war would not

have had any chance of success if it had not been for the multilateral help of the Bulgarian population and its rebel troops. Neither the success at Mount Shipka in the August summer fighting with Suleiman Pasha, nor General Tottleben's victory at Plevna, nor the winter victory at Shipka and Sheinovo would have happened. And also the numerous smaller local successful battles in the liberation of many villages and towns, in which many volunteers and rebel troops took part.

The war would hardly have happened if not for the heroic events and the tragic fate of the participants in the April Uprising. Many years before it Vasil Levski and the committees founded and organized by him and his followers were at the beginning of the Liberation!

Along my official activities in the forests I have repeatedly visited the places of the "military theatre" around the locality of Borovete, Peak Stoletov, Peak Bulgarka, Peak Kupena, the locality of Ushite, the locality of Buchvishta, the village of Seltse, the localities of Pizditsa and White Stone, the peak Markov Tok, Krastets and others. At all these places there are still traces of positions, trenches for the guns and units. There are shells, cartridge cases and military accessories, ammunition, knives, etc. The Turks, in order to open the panorama for warfare, burned the centuries-old forests around Shipka and Varovita.

The consequences of this burning were disastrous for the forests and especially for the land in the field. Soil erosion in the mountains and floods inundated and submerged vast fertile lands. Many yards have been devastated, houses demolished, vineyards and roses buried, crops and pastures destroyed annually. If you visit the forest museum in Shipka you can see how the natural environment looked like from Gurkovo to Karlovo.

The government was forced by eminent public figures and foresters to invite the French forester Felix Vozheli. For a few years he laid the scientific foundations for the beginning of saving the Rose Valley.

FOR THE FOREST - thoughts

It is music, whispers, beauty, shelter, food, water, air, climate, pharmacy and healer. It has spirit, soul, song, life, history, and also messages for us, the living inhabitants. It is a builder, it repairs our mistakes and damage - it is everything!

The forest has called to eternal life many poems and songs of our great poets and writers and folklore - genius at its best! Much more could be said in praise and undeniable truth about the majesty and power of the forest.

From the mission of Felix Vozheli after 1905 to the so-called democratic and economic changes, forestry developed gradually, sometimes badly, sometimes more vigorously and well. Legislation, science, practice and structure were adapted to the lifestyle of the population, the economy and other local and natural conditions. It came to a million hectares of reforestation per year. On large areas of bare, eroded and unproductive land - former agricultural and forest areas. In addition to the increase in forest area, qualitative growth was also achieved. Through an arsenal of anti-erosion and hydro-remediation capital investments, erosion from floods and landslide processes was finally eliminated. Illegal logging and grazing in forests was reduced to a minimal level and practically without economic importance. Non-native and more productive and higher quality tree species have been introduced and successfully acclimatized. Technical progress - the introduction of new and highly productive machinery - chainsaws, tractors, loader cranes, rope lines, bulldozers, reinforced concrete panel bridges and culverts, new trucks and repaired old haul roads. Technology and organization of labor made it less heavy and more productive.

- With these schematic descriptions of the more important things typical of the profession and the

forestry sector as a whole, I wanted to say what the forest, foresters and our society and state have been deprived of.

- I am writing these letters in advance of our professional celebration, Forest Week, which is traditionally the first week of April.
- Before I express, as you anticipate, dear reader, my immense disappointment at the "development" of the fortunes of the sector, I will cheer you up a little. What else I wish you knew.
 1. We have been logging according to scientific and practical rules (regulations and laws).
 2. We only used the increment of forests about 15 million cubic meters dense.
 3. We protected the undergrowth and the trees of the future.
 4. We fully utilized all the quality timber cut here in our factories and by our craftsmen.
 5. We exported only processed wood.
 6. In order to preserve forests and supply the necessary raw material of wood, we were not only sourcing but also importing wood from the USSR.
 7. We did not cut in parks and near populated areas, water areas, landscape areas, resort, historical and special forests.
- Example: The forests around Buzludzha and Stoletov Peak, the Tulovo, Dabovo and other areas.
 - The forest above the town of Shipka in Tserov Dol, created by Professor Vozheli of Auglazka fir in 1905. Here there are stems over 120 cm. high and a volume of over 12 dense cubic meters.
 - Next to Banzareto near the territory of the Muglzh Forestry Department 91 there are beech stems over 500 years old and with a chest circumference of 6.80 m.
 - In Tulovo area there are a large number of oak stems 800 - 1000 years old and more.

- The age of an oak tree is estimated at more than 1300 years.
- The age is accurately determined with a special drill, by means of which undisturbed wood is removed, a sample of the radius of the tree is taken at the base and the annual rings are counted.

TOPONOMY - NAME - names of places in the vicinity of the village of Borushtitsa

Place names originate from land tenure, land formations, functional significance, historical facts, events, etc.

In order not to forget them, which happened after the great changes in economics, management, social, global and other spheres, we will try to list and label them on a cardboard sheet. There will surely be missed localities for obvious reasons.

Is this necessary - yes, I think so, and why...

- Because it will facilitate and assist in the ownership of the land by the heirs;
- From a historical, geographical and touristic point of view;
- From patriotic and patriotic motives;
- Because I am not aware of any institution or other individual that has dared to do so.

LIST OF LOCALITIES

B Bitata fir, Mt. Bulgarka, Babata, the Bachvarian ratlina, the Bozhikova ratlina, the Bichkia, the Bilyuvoto, the Buvolarniata

V Vlachishtata, Vlachishtki dol, Valchov kamak, Valcharnika, Varnitsite

G Guglasha, Garbella, Gornaka, Mt. Gruka, Gergiuvoto, Grobba, Govedarnika, Gančov trap, Gramaito, Gramadski dol, Gubrakia, Gabara, Gavankite

D Dalgata rallyna, Durlov trap, Damyanovy livadi, Dulyata, Darzhaven, Dupkite, Duscarskoto, Druma, Drenaka, Dreniov rut, Dreniov dol

E Eliuv chukar, Elovska river, Elata

Z Zlata urva, Zlata path, Zlatyovitsa, Zhiznite

I Ivankova trail, Ivančov rut, Ivančov dol, Iron Bridge

K Kanchov trap, Kuriata, Klani kadani, Kupaka, Kupena, Kladaka, Kuritoto, Krusta, Krustets, Kalayanka, Kyumurenata transhera

L Livadata, Livadski dol, Loma, Lukite, Livadkite, Lumchinite, Leshtaka, Livadi selski, Lokvata malka, Lokvata goliama

M Miliva, Minata, Mandrata, Mazalaka, Momin gustak, Milinite, Madzharovi livadi, Markov stol (current), Malkiya pripek

N Nikolchin trap

O Ortashkoto, Osenkov rut, Oseno, Ostrikata, Ortashkata livada, Opani gus, Ornitsata

P Petrovskoto, Pregradata, Padinite, Pizditsa, Plocheto, Pryaslupa, Pryakopa, Polianata, Pozharyaka, Prokara, Punchovskoto, Preshtipa, Mt. Panagyura, Purkovoto, Pamuka, Golyam Pripek, Malak Pripek, Pryakopski dol

R Rachovy Meadows, Ralev Trap, Ruta,

S Svinarski rut, Studenia Kladenec, Stramnata urva, Sidyankov priaslup, Struzhnyata, Sinilnika, Sechka, Samota house

T Tisov Rut, Toplata Dupka, Tityunya, Tipchinata, Turgata, Tisovski dol, Trevist Prohod Druma, Tankata ratlina, Topianka, Topli dol, Tsarska mogila, Tserovitia well

U Urvata, Usoinata, Uleya, Balabushka usoika

C Chukite, Chukara, Chukata, Cherkovishte (the cross), Mt. Cherish, Chereshki dol, Chereshka reka, village of Cheresha, Chuflika, Chuflishko dere, Cherkovishteto

NAMESAKE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE VILLAGE OF BORUSHTITSA AFTER THE LIBERATION FROM THE TURKS UNTIL TODAY

1. A - Angel, Anachko, Anton, Anka, Ana, Andrea, Anachka

2. B - Boris, Bonyo, Boncho, Belcho, Bona, Bonka, Blagoy

3. V - Vasil, Velin, Valkan, Vangel, Velichko, Velika, Velko, Valentin, Veska
4. G - Georgi, Gancho, Gergi, Gana, Gencho, Ganyu, Gatyu
5. D - Doncho, Dimiu, Dimitar, Dimitrina, Dona, Dimo
6. E - Encho, Enyo, Elena, Emil
7. Z - Zlatyo, Zlata, Zhelyo, Zhivko, Zhelyazko
8. I - Ivan, Ilia, Ivanka, Ivo
9. Y - Yovcho, Yova, Yanko, Yana
10. K - Kolyo, Kancho, Kanyo, Karyo, Koino, Kera, Kuna, Koina, Kina
11. L - Lalu, Liliana, Lata
12. M - Manyo, Marin, Mincho, Minka, Milka, Manka, Malcho
13. N - Nikola, Nikifor, Nikolai
14. P - Peter, Panayot, Petko, Penyo, Pena, Petrana, Pencho
15. R - Racho, Rada, Rayna, Ruyu, Rusa, Rusi
16. S - Stoyan, Stoyu, Stoyna, Stancho, Stoyana, Stoyka, Stanka, Stoyno
17. T - Tanyo, Totyu, Trifon, Tanyu, Tota, Tinka, Tana, Topuz(ov)
18. U - Uzun(ov)
19. H - Hristo, Hristina, Huba
20. Ts - Tsanyu, Tsana, Tsetsa, Tsana

- LOCALITIES AND EVENTS
- What the names of the places around Borushtitsa whisper to us
-
- 1. Elov Chukar, Elovska River, Elata, Bitata fir, Tisov Rut, Tisovski dol
- There are no fir or yew trees in the localities listed and no deposits of them are remembered. Why. The answer to this question, in my opinion, can be only one. Once there were these tree species on these localities, so our ancestors named them so. This answer I am sure is correct. However, this answer asks another more important question whose answer is much more difficult - why are they not there now.
 - - When, what and how many people lived in these places
 - - What kind of livelihood did they have
 - - What nationality they had
 - - What number of people they had
 - - Why they had so much farmland - fields, meadows, woods, etc., 10,000 decares in all
- I will try to give some answers to some of these questions. I am not sure how convincing I will be on all the questions, other unasked questions will probably come up.
- - When people lived here? As a forester, I am familiar with sources that have claims and artifacts that the Stara Planina 1000+ years ago at this elevation was dominated by coniferous tree species such as fir, yew and spruce (black pine). If this statement is true, then we can say with certainty that the areas in question were named at most 1000 years ago. I have two more facts to support this claim.
 - To the west of the Elovska River in the Pizditsa locality near the "Bor" Mine (abandoned) in the

Spring locality even now there are single fir and yew trees. I have personally found them to be present in the areas mentioned.

- The second fact is an artifact. In the locality of Chervenishki dol, more precisely at the beginning of "Malyuva meadow", when they were capturing the spring to supply water for the Borushtitsa railway station, I happened to be there with the cows I was grazing. The workers who were digging to make the water intake, dug out part of the trunk of a coniferous fir tree, very thick and preserved unrotted, because it had been standing for a long time, thousands of years probably in the waters of the spring.

- In the Red Wells area, the forestry company made a forest nursery on private property, including our family's. When preparing its soil, parts of coniferous cham wood (snags) were removed from the fir stems.

- In conclusion, we can say with certainty that the sites already mentioned have their names rightly from over 1000 years ago. But how many 1000 years ago remains an open question.

- To the question of what people named the localities. The names are Bulgarian, which would mean that they were named by Bulgarians.

- How many people inhabited these lands - cultivated 5-6 thousand acres and as much forests and pastures. And it takes hundreds of people to cultivate and service them with technology from a thousand years ago or more. The local settlers from before the last crusade, when Stara Zagora (Boruigrad) was devastated, are said to have been 4-5 families. These 4-5 families were landed and settled on the banks of the "Matsina River" (Borushtitska) by the kings of the Tarnovo Kingdom (Asenevtsi) to raise the cavalry of the kingdom. The huts and hamlets around the village of Konarskoto to the north and

east bred horses as work animals, which were mobilized when needed by the kingdom.

Note - During the Liberation, at the end of December, for the winter storming of the Shipka Pass, General Svetopolk Mirsky passed from the east along the western Trevnenski Pass with 2,000 soldiers and about 2,000 local villagers to clear the deep snow for the army and artillery to pass. The latter gives some idea of the people who lived in the area and their possible economic involvement in the life of the region.

I have some doubts about the answers I have given from the names of a few other localities - Mandrata, Madjarova Meadow, Grka and Pizdica. I have no knowledge of the Chiflika mahalla - why it bears that name and if there was a chiflik who it belonged to in the Turkish period and before.