

THE EXECUTION

A NONFICTION STORY

ABOUT THE DEATH OF A FATHER OF THREE CHILDREN OF 7, 17 AND 19, A
WIDOW OF 38 AND AN OLD MOTHER WHO HANGED HERSELF TO PUT AN END
TO HER LIFE

VIOLATIONS OF THE 1947 CONSTITUTION OF BULGARIA,
ARTICLES 71 AND 82.

THE FOLLOWING REGULATIONS WERE INFRINGED:

The Criminal Act, articles 1, 4, 18, 35, 106 and 217

The Property Act: Articles 1, 8 and 46

The National Procedure Code: Articles 32-E, 63, 92, 119, 123, 125, 132, 142, 144, 150, 152
and 154

INTRODUCTION

In my biography book I have tried to describe everything I have been through, all my sufferings and grief.

My memories of a little child are related with the poverty in which we lived. Our family of ten had three rooms, that is why we had to rent a lodging. Later, in 1940, we bought a house constructed before the Liberation¹; it had one room and an anteroom. At about the same time we also got a cow that I pastured in the ditches along the road, around my father, a lineman, and his colleagues. There we met the Germans travelling to Ruse in World War Two. In the summer of 1944, we built a new house. As soon as the construction was finished, father was mobilised and was sent to Macedonia. He returned on 08 September 1944. Later, we built a cattle-shed. After I finished my primary education, I wanted to study in the high school for boys in Ruse, but I was not admitted as I had been refused a certificate that I had to get from the Fatherland Front². Therefore, I had to become a craftsman.

¹ Bulgaria was liberated from the Ottoman rule in 1878 (translator's note).

² A Bulgarian political coalition of left-winged antifascist parties established in World War Two, dominated by the Bulgarian Workers' Party (translator's note).

A dark event in 1951 left a deep trace in my life. Its consequences marked my family with inconsolable pain and grief. An incident with my roommate Petko Ignatov Shopov turned into a prelude to my father's preposterous end. One autumn evening, Petko and I went to our village. There he was attacked by a man, who was visibly drunk. He grabbed my friend by the throat trying to strangle him, and then he hit his head with a gun. Falling on the ground, the gun touched my leg but I could not see the place where it fell because of the dark. The assailant Boris Georgiev Dokov immediately ran away. Petko was streaming with blood and crying with pain. I took him home to bandage his wounds. Dad cleaned his wound, bandaged it and told us to go to Ruse immediately and have his wound sewn up. After we started to the town, my father went to the scene of incident, found the gun and took it to the local station of the Ministry of Interior. The crime – severe battery, injury of lasting consequences and unauthorised holding of a weapon – would inflict a sentence of 15 years' incarceration. At that time, a man could get 15 years even only for authority abuse.

At the time of the incident, District Prosecutor of Ruse was Milan Baltazhiev, who was relative of the perpetrator. Baltazhiev decided to make sure that the witnesses of the crime were eliminated, and planned a way to do away with my father.

Meanwhile, dad was dismissed from the Regional Road Office by the director Ivan Yanakiev, who was born in the same village as Baltazhiev – the village of Pirgovo. However, the dismissal impeded his idea to dispatch my father. The District Prosecutor ordered that my father was reinstated on the same job. Public Prosecutor Baltazhiev contacted people indebted to him on account of services he had made and promised them a considerable amount of money to perform the criminal plan. The money was provided by Todor Naydenov from the village of Trastenik. He was a merchant and had business with Germany before 9 September 1944³: he exported cereals, grapes and other foodstuff, owned about a dozen dairy farms, he had the first truck in the village – an Opel, and was Member of Parliament in 1928. After the communists took control over the country, he was sent to a work camp in the village of Nozharevo. After the land was expropriated by the cooperative farms, he was sent to another work camp wherefrom he was released by the District Prosecutor Milan Baltazhiev against a significant sum of money. Believing that Naydenov was indebted to him, in the process of preparation of my father's murder Baltazhiev sent to him a fellow-villager of his with a note requesting from him a substantial amount of money. The murder scenario was planned by M. Baltazhiev, who was meanwhile promoted to a position in the Supreme Prosecution Office.

³ The date on which the Soviet Army occupied Bulgaria

The man who was sent on the errand to Todor Naydenov was the murderer Stoyan Petkov Barbukov. He told the other members of the cooperative that he would go to the neighbouring village of Trastenik by bicycle to buy some medicine for his mother-in-law.

Todor Naydenov was my father's cousin. His mother – aunt Yana – was one of our kin. Many years later, in one of our conversations I asked him: “Uncle Tosh, did you know what was the purpose for which the money you gave would be used?” “For your father's murder”, and he burst in tears, repeatedly made the blessing sign and said: “I did not know why they needed it. How could I pay my cousin's murder with that money! I just had a lot of money and had no idea why he wanted it. I gave it as otherwise he would have sent me to a work camp, and it was real hell there, it was possible that I never came back alive.”

The other people involved in the murder were the two brothers Veliko and Niko Baharov and their brother-in-law Tsoni Baharov from the village of Pirgovo. Another man, Boris T. Kulchev from the village of Trastenik, who was relative of Baltazhiev and Dokov, also had a role in the murder. In turn, he was also indebted to the public prosecutor. In 1951, B. Kulchev attracted a group of around 50 people and incited them against the cooperative farms. Later, he informed Baltazhiev on them. He collaborated with the public prosecutor's office and was a witness against Ivan Garbatov, a relative of ours, whose mother was Todor Naydenov's sister. Ivan had an early release from the army because he had been admitted to a university and had to start classes. He came back to the village on 07 September. On the next day he was arrested and taken to the court for writing slogans against the cooperative farms. His sentence was 15 years in prison. Four years later, he was killed in the Kyustendil prison. At around the same time two boys disappeared without a trace; their parents had been hesitant about their membership in the cooperative farm. One of the boys was a school student in Ruse. The other one – the elder one – had a family. After no traces whatsoever were found, his wife went back to her father's village of Bozhichen.

So, the crime had been prepared. My father was killed eighteen months after he took the gun to the authorities. There were no more witnesses who could ever say a word about the blow on Petko Shopov's head and the unauthorised holding of the gun. Boris Dokov, Baltazhiev's relative, was rescued from prison.

My father's murderers did not receive fair sentences. At around the age of 50, the murderer Stoyan Barbukov had an awful death: he went to the cooperative field to steal maize. On the way back, he fell under the hooves of his horse.

Years of agony started for our family. We were three kids deprived of our father's support: my sister Mariyka was 7, Stanka was 17 and I, Simeon, was 19. My mother became a widow at 38 and had valvular heart disease. My grandmother Marinka put an end to her life at the age of 65, exactly one year after my father's death, because of the intolerable poverty. Life was very difficult in the villages in that time. People worked in the cooperative farms for 20 stotinki⁴ per day. No rent was paid for the fields. My grandmother's monthly pension was 3 levs altogether, and there was nothing like social welfare then

At the age of 19, I replaced my father as a head of the family. Therefore, my conscription army service was postponed by three years. When I was taken to the army, I was older than everyone else; I was the same age as the company commander, and that was the reason for a lot of insult. The other soldiers of my muster called me "the old man", "older", and so on, and that made me feel really miserable. I had an early dismissal. I served 22 months and 10 days. I learned later that in my case it was not compulsory to serve.

In my life, I have worked as a tailor for about 10 years; I was in charge of the procurement and sales department of the Repair Department of the National Council of the Defence Assistance Voluntary Organisation. Later, I was discharged because I was not a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party. The man who discharged me was first captain Veselin Tsvetkov, chief of the Marine Training Department of the National Council of the Defence Assistance Organisation, a former chief of the navy reconnaissance. Even after the changes I was never a member of any political party. I am a supporter of some democratic parties, but parties as such are not much to my taste, and I detest going to meetings.

After my dismissal, I worked in Lenin Farming and Industry Corporation in the village of Ivanovo for 4 years.

After 10 November 1989⁵, Decree No. 56 was enforced and I became owner of the second single owner's company in town – Raztsvet. I worked in Raztsvet Grocery, 1 Tsar Osvoboditel Street, opposite the Hali Supermarket.

In my youth, I lived in basements, attics, workshops, sometimes I slept under bridges. I was prosecuted, dismissed, persecuted. Now I am already 70, I have 3 shops and I have opened ten jobs.

The author

⁴ 1/100 of the lev, the national currency (translator's note)

⁵ The date on which democratic changes in Bulgaria started