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GREECE/POLAND/ALBANIA.

Political/Military/Economic/C.E./Communism.

Interrogation of Soterios ZANNES, a Deserter from a Special Greek  
Communist Penetration Group.

1. Personal Particulars.

Surname	:	ZANNES
Name	:	Soterios
Patronym	:	Konstantinos
Date of birth	:	1931
Religion	:	Christian Orthodox
Occupation	:	None
Unmarried.		
Education:	:	5th Public School.
Place of birth	:	LAKHANOKASTRON
Residence	:	1931 - summer 1945 -LAKHANOKASTRON 1945 - December 1947 - SALONIKA with his uncle Major Stephanos ZANNES. December 1947 - January 1948- LAKHANOKASTRON.

Military Service.

2. In January 1948 the deserter, with a fellow villager, Khristos KOTTES, aged 21, had been sent by the M.A.E. from LAKHANOKASTRON to VASILIKO to collect information concerning the bandits. En route they were met by three bandits who arrested them and took them to Kapetan YPSELANTES at VASILIKO. From there he was transferred to the MOURGANAS Camp where he was trained for 15 days in the handling of a rifle, etc. During his short stay the camp was visited by the (at the time) Captain Elephtherios THOMAS (GLATES LEPTHERES) from KATO MEROEES, Commander of a company at MOURGANA, who took the deserter and a further 4 who originated from the FOGONION area, on foot to FOGONION. LEPTHERES engaged the deserter as his batman and he looked after LEPTHERES' personal needs and the feeding of his mule,

He remained as his batman for 6 to 7 months while they were in the FOGONION area. He was later enrolled in the "Quarter Company" of Georgios PHEKAS at NEGRADES, which was part of the LEPTHERES Company. The deserter took part in various battles at PAPALAKKON, BOZOVO, ROUPSA, KOUTSOKRANON, LAKHANOKASTRON, VASILIKO, but these were mostly in the nature of local skirmishes.

3. During April 1949 he was promoted to the rank of sergeant and became a "group commander". During the middle of August, on the eve of the fall of GRAMMOS, the Company was gathered together and LEPTHERES read out an order from Colonel PETRIDES, instructing the Company to remain on the frontier as its morale was low. All the men of the Company, with the exception of a few "Quarter Company commanders" when questioned, asked to withdraw inside Albanian territory. To start with a group of approximately 12 men left, including the deserter, and withdrew from BOZOVO to ALBANIA. At the frontier they were disarmed by Albanian troops and guided to KHLONON, thence by night they went by M.T. accompanied by 4 Albanian soldiers via ARGYR/ROU (? ARGYROKASTRON or GJINOKASTER) to BOURELIOU Barracks.

BOURELIOU Barracks.

4. On arrival at the barracks they found approximately 1,500 bandits who had been disarmed. The deserter remained here for about a month (to the end of September 1949). During this month small groups who had been disarmed of 15 to 25 bandits arrived every day and at the end of September there were approximately 2,000 bandits including approximately 250 women.

5. Of these 2,000, the 1,500 the deserter had found at the camp when he arrived were mainly from large units which he does not know, but which were from the areas of GRAMMOS and VITSI and had entered ALBANIA in organized groups. Those that arrived later came from dispersed sections from the areas of EPIROS, ROUMELIS, THESSALY and MACEDONIA. The first inmates of the Camp had originally been at ELBASAN from where they were taken to BOURELIOU. The VIII Division had also been at ELBASAN, under MEMERTSIKAS from KATO MEROPE and Paulos ARVANITES. Also at ELBASAN was the Independent Brigade (LAKKAS SOULIOU) under PETRIDES, from ZITBES. These units were sent to HUNGARY at the beginning of September.

6. The deserter did not hear if there was another camp in ALBANIA but stated that before they arrived in ALBANIA, other sections (probably of the IX Division) had departed towards satellite countries through ALBANIA. He understood that personnel did not pass through YUGOSLAVIA.

7. The deserter stated that at SHKODRA there was a camp for political refugees of the families of the Andartes. They were working on Albanian railway lines and at the end of 1949 were sent on to satellite countries. The deserter did not know the number of refugees and he stated that in ALBANIA there were no camps of abducted Greek children. According to what he heard, such camps existed in BULGARIA, YUGOSLAVIA, and other satellite countries.

Morale Slogans.

8. The morale of the bandits at BOURELIOU was very low, from discussions that took place he heard that the defeat at GRAMMOS - VITSI was unexpected and that the main factor was the attitude of enmity of TITO against the bandits. It was also stated that TITO's army attacked the bandits from the rear, whilst at the same time American pilots with the Greek Army attacked the bandits. These reasons for the defeat were frequently broadcast by means of printed propaganda and made out the defeat to be as military and not political.

Organisation and Camp Conditions.

9. The organisation of the bandits at the Camp of BOURELIOU was as follows:-

Each brigade was composed of 3 battalions and each battalion of 3 companies. Each company was divided into 3 "Double Sections" (?) and each "Double Section" into 3 groups.

10. Higher military members of the bandits were:

GOUSIAS

VLANDAS

MAKES

VASILARAS

DALAS

LEPHTERES and others.

11. All those at the camp were unarmed with the exception of a guard of approximately 50 who were armed to guard the camp, and prevent escapes. In the camp the bandits were well fed and did not do any training or military exercises. In the morning they did some Swedish drill and were then free within the camp boundaries. There were no meetings or speeches and propaganda was confined to the daily Bulletin. They had organised football teams and were not allowed outside the camp, nor did they come into contact with the local Albanian population. From time to time they went by transport to get firewood from nearby forests where they met Albanian soldiers who greeted them with enthusiasm. At the camp they had a printing press and an unknown number of W/T transmitters, approximately 150 SKODA vehicles and 3 to 4 private cars. There was also plenty of food and clothing.

12. The deserter did not know of any visitors, officers or civilians, Albanians or Russians, neither departures from the camp of the higher bandit officers. All the bandits at the camp had arrived

in a miserable condition, dressed in rags and exhausted but on arrival they received good treatment, good beds with sheets, good food and plenty of clothing to replace their rags. The turn out of the bandits at the camp was far better than the Albanians.

PRISONERS.

13. At the same camp at DOURELIOU there was one battalion of Greek P.W. from the Greek Army, approximately 120 to 150 strong, who received the same rations as the bandits.

Visit of ZAKHARLADES.

14. Near the end of their stay there, they were visited by ZAKHARLADES, who at a meeting of all the bandits justified the defeat of the bandit army and told them that they would leave for friendly Popular Republics, where they would be accommodated for a short time, after which they would return to GREECE.

Departure from ALBANIA.

15. Towards the end of September 1949, and 2 days after the visit of ZAKHARLADES, they were all put on to a M.T. convoy by companies, battalions, etc., and started off by night for DURAZZO. They arrived at DURAZZO during the early morning where the Polish merchant ship, KOZOUSKO (KOCIUSKO?) was awaiting them, with a Polish crew aboard. After 2 hours the ship sailed (at sunrise). The senior members VLANDAS and GOUSLIAS did not board the ship but were said to be coming by air. Their cars were, however, loaded on board. Also on board, on a separate compartment, was the battalion of 150 P.Ws of the Greek army with their 5 or 6 officers, and amongst them Major SPANELES, who later collaborated in POLAND with the bandits and was promoted to Colonel.

16. The voyage was stormy and lasted 11 days. The bandits were glad to leave GREECE where they had suffered greatly during the bandit war.

When the ship touched at various European ports they had to stay in the holds under guard so that their presence on board was unknown. The ship entered GDYNIA about the middle of October, and while on board their military uniforms were exchanged for woollen civilian clothing, coats, hoods (?) and footwear. They disembarked during the night and immediately boarded a special train that was drawn up nearby and which took them to the town of KOUZELITS (?GOUZELITS) after a 24-hour trip during which no civilians boarded the train, in spite of the fact that stops were made for coaling, etc. The deserter saw nothing of the Greek P.Ws after disembarkation. They did not go to KOUZELITS.

17. After leaving the train Greek bandits, political fugitives, abducted persons, guided them in groups to the suburbs (MOLITSOU Street) where they encamped in 4 to 5 new storeys (blocks?) that were vacant and where they found beds and bedding. Near to this suburb was located the STALIN suburb where the fugitives and/or bandits who had arrived earlier lived.

18. There the deserter met about 2,000 bandits, abducted personnel or fugitives, and continually smaller groups of 50 to 100 persons came or went. Those who arrived came from various other countries or were from hospitals and had recovered and were going for military training or to other satellite states where their families lived, or vice versa.

Apart from this the deserter noted no large movements, except that early in July 1950 about 600 middle aged men and women arrived from BULGARIA, having come by rail through Central EUROPE.

#### Organisation at KOUZELITS.

19. After the desert's group had been installed in houses, it was divided into a K.O.V. of 30 members; Party and non-Party; over which presided one responsible "KOVARCH" (K.O.V. leader) and member of K.K.E., who took charge of and distributed to the members the cigarettes and daily news Bulletins (the "AGONISTES"). The Party members in each K.O.V. were few, from 2 to 10. Each evening the K.O.V. "responsible" gathered all the members and read out extracts from the History of the Communist Party of DIMITROV, LENIN and others, 4 to 5 KOVARCHS (K.O.V. leaders) came under 1 "responsible" who were under the orders of the President of the Greek Community of KOUZELITS. For the first two months the president was Major NONTAS from GREVENITIOU, but he resigned and the post was taken over by an aged Macedonian, not known to the deserter. Their K.K.E. responsible in the camp was Brigadier MAKES.

20. They remained unemployed for a fortnight, during which period two meetings were held in two large adjoining clubs at which VLANDAS and MAKES spoke. They stressed to the bandits and fugitives that they would have to work hard for the reconstruction of the Polish Popular Republic, destroyed by the war, and that helping POLAND was similar to helping GREECE herself.

During this period they were fed at two communal kitchens where the food was served by Greek waitresses in one and Polish waitresses in the other. Those entitled entered with food coupons and got a breakfast of plain coffee with fresh butter or sausage. For lunch and supper they had potatoes, beans, etc., or paste foods (macaroni etc), and once a week there was frozen meat without any fruit or sweets. The food provided was sufficient in quantity but of poor quality and badly prepared.

#### Hospitals.

21. 50 kms from the camp there was the 250th Hospital, to which, during the operations, all the wounded were brought by air via ALBANIA, BULGARIA, etc. There were 2,500 of them and they were treated by Russian doctors. Of the patients about 300 suffered from war nerves (called by the bandits "polenitites") and incurable diseases. All were considered hors de combat and were badly wounded. Those who were released from hospital were not given work but ate at the communal food centres.

The deserter knew of no other hospital that was functioning; he did not visit this one, and therefore has no details. He had been told that all the nurses were Polish.

Religious Facilities.

22. There was no Greek priest or other clergyman and no services took place. At times they visited Polish churches and the deserter had been twice. The Polish people were very religious and were uncomfortable because their church was held in contempt, if not actually persecuted by the Popular Republic.

Morale at the camp. Relations with civilians.

23. The morale of the inmates of the camp had improved in the first few days on account of the good living conditions and the rest after the hardships of their operations. However, after the speeches of VLANDAS and MAKES, who advised hard work and discipline, many rumours were heard of complaints about the fighters and the victims of bandit war. They were, however, well fed and housed and had organised football matches with Polish teams, as also theatrical performances with small Greek children.

24. On the whole the Polish people received them unenthusiastically and during conversations urged them not to fight and work for the communist party as they themselves were displeased with their regime. Relations with Polish women were allowed but they were forbidden to marry.

Children's Camp.

25. In the KOUZELITS area there were 3 childrens camps. Approximately 500 children lived in each. Visits were allowed with the permission of the President of the KOUZELITS Community. All mothers who had children at the camps were allowed to visit them once a week for 2 hours. The children were distributed amongst the sections of the camps according to age. Children aged between 2 and 5 lived together - the older children attended a public school functioning in the camps.

LEPHTERES, whom the deserter met twice, when he visited the camps, taught at the public schools.

Compulsory work at the SOVKHOZ.

26. About 3 to 10 kilometres from KOUZELITS there were State Agricultural experimental Farms (SOVKHOZ), of 1,000 to 2,000 acres each. There were about 40 of them altogether including the BOBOROVA or LESINA, where the deserter worked; the BITZIKHOUSL whence 3 bandits recently escaped to GERMANY; the GLAZOVO, and others. In each of them 30 to 50 Greeks and as many Polish technicians (tractor drivers, etc). worked. To start with at the end of October 1949, they sent to the SOVKHOZ those selected by the K.O.V. responsables, the Party and the President of the Community, men and women between the ages of 17 and 20, 26 and 70, as well as those of 20 to 26 who had not been selected for military service.

27. A Pole and a Greek were in charge of the work at the SOVKHOZ, and the Greek at the deserter's was named TRAIKOS, from AGIOS GERMANOS/PRESPA, MACEDONIA. At the head of the HITZIKHOUSI(?) (BITZIKHOUSI)? SOVKHOZ there was Gregorios VYRON from MACEDONIA. The majority of Greeks acting as heads of SOVKHOZ were Macedonians, on account of the similarity of their language to Polish. All the workmen ate and slept in the buildings of the SOVKHOZ where food was similar to that in the food centres. The work included cultivation of grain (wheat, rye, potatoes, sugar beet?) and one two or three SOVKHOZ there were herds of cows and horses. The deserter does not know the quantities produced but that the crops were gathered in stores and all handed over to the Polish authorities.

#### Method of Work.

28. The DOBOROVA SOVKHOZ had 3 tractors for ploughing, reaping machines, 2 threshing machines, 1 machine for potato planting. Work went on twelve hours a day, Sundays included, from 6 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. The work was heavy and they were told that the normal working day was 8 hours, and that the overtime was for the reconstruction of the state. The workers received 350 Zloti a day which they used to supplement their diet.

#### Compulsory work in factories.

29. A number of Greek women were employed in the BOGATINIA weaving factory, 60 kms. from KOUZELITS, and a small number of specialised bandits or fugitives (40 to 50) worked at the LIOUMBA Foundries.

#### Youth.

30. An E.P.O.N. organisation was formed in the camp in which all youths between 15 and 22 years of age were enrolled. Its leader was APOSTOLES (surname unknown). It had its own offices with a staff of 3 or 4.

At each K.O.V. in the camp, and in the SOVKHOZ K.O.V. there was a youth organisation, with a responsible in charge. In the deserter's E.P.O.N. organisations the "responsible" was Khristos TSOLES, 2nd. Lieutenant from PARAMYTHIAS. Infrequent meetings were held with propaganda speeches to urge them to more work.

#### Military Training.

31. At the end of October 1949 a fortnight after their arrival in the camp, the selection of men aged between 20 and 26 who were healthy began, for military training. Only a few were not selected and those who were chosen were sent to a destination unknown to the deserter, for training, and the rest to the SOVKHOZ for work. Further selections were also made later but the deserter cannot specify the number of those chosen because the whole operation was kept very secret. No communication was allowed with those selected and undertraining. (The others mainly communicated with bandits, or fugitives or Greek children of other countries from SERBIA(?), BULGARIA, RUMANIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY and Eastern GERMANY).

It was not until the spring of 1950 that the deserter got some information on those being trained when Petros KARANIKAS from LYKORRAKHES/KONITSA and Elias VLAKHOS from DOLOU/ROGONIOU, returned from training to the camp because of illness, that he learned that those selected were being trained in forests in the handling of various arms and specialities, i.e. in artillery, tanks, driving, etc. There was a school for second lieutenants and a school for air pilots and the instructors were all Russian officers, as was the equipment - tanks, transport and aircraft. Further details are unknown to the deserter but he deduced that the VIII Division and the PETRIDES Brigade, total strength of 1,000 men, who were in HUNGARY and were not in touch with them were in a similar situation, i.e. lived in SOVKHOZ and were trained in a similar manner. There were no organised military units and he does not know where and which military schools functioned, nor did any important foreign personalities visit the camp.

ZAKHARIADES visit.

32. In early June 1950 ZAKHARIADES visited the camp and spoke to the inmates, both of the camp and SOVKHOZ, at the two clubs. He asked for increased output and discipline and condemned those who neglected their duties and advised devotion to GREECE, of which they must always think and whether they soon would return.

General VLANDAS toured within the camp and the deserter was of the opinion that he had toured the satellite states.

33. Before the visit of ZAKHARIADES, a booklet was circulated in the camp containing the decisions of the 7th Plenum of K.K.E. during which it had been decided to begin the political struggle in GREECE. It was mentioned that conditions in GREECE were ripe, that strikes followed one another and the time had come for members to be sent to GREECE for the organisation of the struggle.

Call for Volunteers.

34. Early in July the Daily Bulletin AGONISTES included a call for volunteers who were to present themselves to the Party offices to go and continue the struggle in GREECE. The deserter appeared about the 10th July before the "responsible" of the K.K.E., MAKES, who asked the deserter if he desired to go to GREECE to fight. When the latter replied in the affirmative MAKES made a note of his particulars and told him to present himself again at the same office on the 14th July. The deserter had discussed his activities with no one else.

35. On the 14th. July, 16 persons presented themselves to MAKES (he does not know if more asked to participate and were excluded). Amongst these 16 there were Thomas THOMOS from BRAZE/KONITSA, aged 23, an Andarte since 1946, and Panagiotis PHILEN from KATO MEROFES, aged 19, a sergeant major, who both worked in the same SOVKHOZ as the deserter. For the first time they informed one another of their aims and he heard later that they had become fed up with the hard work and planned to make a change but they did not dare make their designs known, because, as the deserter admits, he had a

plan for escaping from his group when he got to GREECE, in order to escape the hardships he was undergoing.

36. Apart from the above mentioned he also met the following at MAKES' offices:-

- a) Major Thomas LEPIHTERES. from KATO MEROPES, member of K.K.E. aged 28.
- b) Captain Georgios LIRAS. from FOVLA, PHILLATON, agriculturist, member of the A.K.E. member of K.K.E. aged 28.
- c). W/T operator Georgios PIOTOPOULOS. (from KHRYSSES/  
MACEDONIA. (NESTORION, aged 28.
- d) 1st. Lieutenant Vasileios PHILIPPOU, from AEDONOKHORION/  
Aged 34. FOGONIOU.

The following 9 were at the beginning unknown to the deserter, and he got to know them later:-

- a) Captain PHILIOUKAS, aged 35, member of K.K.E.
- b) 1st. Lieutenant LAZOS (f.n.u.) refugee from ASIA  
Minor, member of A.K.E., aged 38  
to 40.
- c) Kostas LIONTES, a Macedonian, aged 28.
- d) 2nd Lieutenant Demetrios ZOEN, from RODOTOIE, member  
of the K.K.E., aged 28.
- e). 2nd Lieutenant Konstantinos KALSTAN, from ZELOVA/  
IOANNINA, aged 26.
- f) Captain DEMADES, aged 35.
- g) Andarte Phanes KARAGIANNES, member of K.K.E. aged 35.
- h) TSANGAS (f.n.u.) from IOANNINA area, member of the  
A.K.E., aged 45.
- i) Andarte PANTELES (f.n.u.) a Macedonian aged 30.

37. When the above mentioned appeared before MAKES they had with them all their personal possessions. They were ordered to leave them and to board a train for WARSAW, where VLANDAS would instruct them in detail regarding their mission. They were instructed to tell no one of their mission. They stayed the day at the camp, while LEPIHTERES, who was their leader, procured the tickets for the trip. In the evening they boarded a passenger train, which arrived at WARSAW in the morning of the following day (the 15th) at sunrise.

A Greek liaison official aged 22 unknown to the

deserter took charge of them and took them in three luxurious cars to a new 4-storey building on the central square of the town. The run from the station lasted approximately half an hour, travelling through the ruined town.

38. They were taken to the 4th floor, which was empty except for 20 beds and bedding in the rooms, and a small desk and a few chairs. There was no telephone. They were received by a Polish 1st. Lieutenant who gave them money for their expenses and issued them with the articles they later brought with them to GREECE.

#### VLANDAS' Training Periods.

39. Two hours after their arrival at the building they were visited by VLANDAS who, for 16 continuous days up to the 30th. July gave them instructions for 1 or 2 hours every day, in the morning or afternoon. At midday and in the evening they all went together to eat at a nearby restaurant but they were forbidden by their leader VASILARAS to write to friends and were forced to speak Polish in order not to betray themselves to foreign representatives (ENGLAND, AMERICA, etc).

When they went out it was in groups of 3 or 4 persons. Their leader VASILARAS (as well as LEPATHERES, who was killed) had many private talks with VLANDAS.

#### W/T Operators.

40. The W/T operators were the following:-

- a) Colonel VASILARAS. (f.n.u.) from GREVENETIOU, member of the K.K.E., aged 27.
- b) Major Thanases NONTAS from GREVENETIOU, member of K.K.E., aged 45.
- c) Major Vasileios KARAGIANNES, aged 28, former baker at IOANNA, at the beginning member of K.K.E., at present under trial and excluded from K.K.E. list.
- d) Captain THANASES, K.K.E. member, aged 26 to 27.

The above-mentioned arrived in WARSAW on the same day (15th July 1950) around midday, and were accommodated in the same building. He does not know whence they came.

#### Instructions of VLANDAS.

41. To the 20-member group thus formed in WARSAW, VLANDAS gave detailed instructions and orders for their future activity in GREECE. On the 15th July 1950 he greeted them and asked how they had fared during the period at the camp. He announced that their leader would be VASILARAS, whom they must obey.

42. On the following days he gave their instructions on action. To begin with he analysed the situation in GREECE, which he described as being miserable, with the working people forced to go on

strike so as to gain their livelihood. He said that the morale of the Army was very low and that those in it wanted to go home but the authorities would not release them. The villagers were without houses, food, clothing and farming equipment, and the government supplies none of these articles.

43. He went on to say that the Greek Government at the time faced internal crises and quarrels, and that its policy was a policy of terrorism, beatings, imprisonments and exile to the MAKRONESES camps, which had never been abolished. In spite of all these difficulties the Communist Party in GREECE continued to struggle, but lacked orientation and organisation. However, now conditions were ripe for new political activity, and therefore, the Party had decided at its 7th Plenum to send back members - which you are,. It will be your task to undertake the organisation of the Party and the re-formation of cells in all the villages of EPIROS. The cells would be composed of 3 trustworthy persons known to any of the group of 20 being sent to GREECE, each one of which must know the other persons who were members of the cell.

General Instructions.

44. VLANDAS advised them to have blind obedience to VASILARAS, who would enter GREECE through ALBANIA, and who would begin a programme of action on the following general lines.

Their attitude to the people must be the exact opposite of the attitude of the bandits during the years 1946 - 1948 when MARKOS slaughtered, burned, looted and terrorized the population, on the instructions of TITO; and therefore the bandits and their movement became hated by the people.

45. Now a higher policy must be shown towards the people, from whom they must not take even one pin without satisfactory payment. No terrorism was to be carried out except towards any bandits who had deserted from the movement and become workers of the Fascists. Such persons if they met then were to be captured and killed.

46. With regard to the attitude of the group towards possible betrayers of their movements, VLANDAS advised that any traitors who repeatedly did so and were heavily involved should be executed. On the other hand if a simple-minded villager gave away the group, he should not be executed, but should be approached and advised not to do so again. At this point LEHITERES expressed his opinion that persons that betrayed their movements in any way should all be executed. However, VLANDAS refuted this and the others agreed.

47. If at any time the group was forced to remain in country offering no cover and there was danger of discovery, if they were near a village, they could go to any suitable house to hide, and on arrival there should arrest one or two members of the family and hold them in the hiding place (cellar, attic, haystack, etc). under threats that all members of the family would be killed in the

event of betrayal, or of not informing the group in time to guard itself from enemy forces. When the danger passed or night fell the group could come out of hiding, and should leave the family and those members held as hostages without harming them.

48. Upon entering a village they should approach a trust-worthy old-time member, and demand detailed information regarding persons and the situation in general. They should then proceed with the formation of a cell, and if there were any who had signed acts of renunciation, they should be isolated and avoided. If they were informed that one-time nationalists seemed to be displeased with the regime in GREECE, they were to approach them and attempt to bring them over to their side, and possibly they might turn out better than signatories of acts of renunciation who had repented.

49. If they happened to meet signatories of acts of renunciation who had been obliged to sign under terrorism and unbearable suffering and who wanted to return to the ranks of the Communist Party, he should first make a "counter statement" in a public place, confirming that his beliefs were unaltered and that he was forced to make the "statement".

The group should go around to the organised villages and continuously give instructions, to guide the activity of their organisations.

50. VLANDAS told them that the obligations of the cell members in each organised village of EPIROS (the region of the groups' operations) would be as follows:-

- a) The three members of each cell, not known to each other must suitably urge their fellow villagers to form unions and continuously demand building materials from the Government for the reconstruction of their destroyed villages: means of cultivation, machinery, seed, loans, pensions for the victims of the war, indemnities for the damages they suffered during the bandit war, etc.
- b) If the Government supplied them they (the Group?) should take charge of them.
- c) If the Government did not supply them continuous protests and confusion should be created to show up the political and governmental incompetence.
- d) Apart from this the cell members must engage in the active collection of all kinds of information, particular on
  - i) The military situation: morale of the army, classes serving under arms, total strength formations, organisation, training, H.Qs and identities of Units, defence works, stores, airfields, road networks.

- ii) The Industrial Situation. factories and other works being built, electric lighting and hydro-electric works, etc.
- iii) The General Situation: The beliefs and activities of the civilians.

Connection of Cells.

51. In addition the group should set up a connection between 2 cells in 2 villages so that contact could be maintained by the groups with one member of each cell without raising suspicion. In addition it would be possible to transmit written or verbal instructions or information from one cell to the other. This liaison official might possibly have to know 2 persons, one from each cell, and the member of the group that chose him for liaison. The cell members that the liaison official came in contact with should be the most militant, and should not know each other.

52. All this organisation aimed at the security of all the personnel in case of betrayal and arrest of any one person. VLANDAS emphasised the situation when persons who had been brought into the organisation desired to relinquish their posts, on account of dangers or betrayal, and to leave for neighbouring states. In such cases the group should see that the individuals in question were arrested, maltreated, and imprisoned instead of leaving their posts. They should be advised to continue the struggle wherever they might be (prison, camp, etc).

Activity in the Towns.

53. If necessary additional members of the group might have to operate in the towns, in addition to those 4 detailed for such work; VASILARAS, NONTAS, Vasillios KARAGIANNES and THANASES received special training (Location of school and duration of training unknown to deserter). These members knew how to handle a W/T transmitter and were supplied with civilian clothing: they should, therefore, bear the following in mind:-

- a). They should aim at the formation of nuclei of trustworthy members in the various organisations and works unions, professional unions, clerks corporations, etc.
- b) They should aim at the organisation of illegal machinery for printing and circulating illegal leaflets and communist slogans.
- c) That strikes, protests, work-stoppages and struggles for wages increase should be provoked through the unions and confusion thus brought about.

Reformation of the A.K.E.

54. Continuing his instructions VLANDAS developed briefly the usefulness of A.K.E. to the group, and the following old A.K.E. men had been instructed to re-organise A.K.E.-

Once reorganised A.K.E. would be under the orders of K.K.E.

- a) Georges LYRAS. from POVLAS/PHILLIATON, age 28, an agriculturist.

Tall, dark, slightly bald, he served as a reservist 2nd Lt. in the war against ITALY in 1940 -1941. At present captain of the bandits and probably fought in their ranks at GRAMMOS. He would probably be put at the head of the members of A.K.E. group as being an old A.K.E. member and a K.K.E. member.

b) TSANKAS. (f.n.u.) from IOANNINA area, aged 45, former farmer, Short, dark, bald, has a scar from a perforated wound on one of his forearms and he served under the orders of KARAPANOS in the ZAGORION area during the years 1948 - 1949 without any rank. An old A.K.E. member, he had been exiled to MAKRONESOS in the past: not a member of K.K.E.

c) ZAZOS (f.n.u.) refugee (from ASIA MINOR), Tall, fair, aged 28-30 1st Lt. he fought in the bandit ranks, member of A.K.E. (further details not known to deserter).

#### Method of Movement.

55. VLANDAS went on to develop their manner of movement and choice of hiding places, routes and camouflage. The group should move always by night, using lonely routes. They should move at a distance from one another, with scouts ahead. During the day they should encamp in forests, bushes and similar hiding places which must be entirely isolated from men and animals. All articles that could give rise to suspicion must be dilligently buried under the ground and in general all trace of the passing of the group must be wiped out,. In addition the group must avoid any clash with armed persons, and must not be seen by undesirable or unknown persons.

#### Questions.

56. DURING the lessons, which were carried out in one of the dormitories of the building, VLANDAS put questions to the members of the group and asked them if they had understood the suggested means of operation. Many questions were put to the junior members and the less experienced. No noteworthy discussions of the instructions took place. They were asked if they agreed, and according to what the deserter recalls, very few had any queries.

#### Murders, Sabotage, Arms, End of Course.

57. VLANDAS made no mention to the group about dumps of arms: the arming of followers: dumps of food-stuffs: sabotage or the murder of outstanding nationalist personalities. At the end of the training VLANDAS wished them success, and told them that others would follow them.

#### Setting Off.5 .

58. In the afternoon of the 30th July 1950, they boarded a closed motor lorry which was followed by another closed motor lorry loaded with approximately 7 cases of materials, and left the building in WARSAW where they had been for 16 days. Followed by a Polish Captain they went in the direction of GDYNIA, travelling all night they arrived at GDYNIA on the afternoon of the 31st July 1950. They immediately boarded-a cargo ship of unknown name under Polish flag. The materials were loaded by cranes.

#### Sea Trip GDYNIA - DURAZZO.

Sea Trip GDYNIA - DURAZZO.

59. A few hours later the boat sailed. They all wore civilian clothing and slept in the holds on camp beds. The ship carried a large quantity of tarred telegraph poles (2 holds and the deck were full) destined for EGYPT, according to the Polish crew. It also carried 2 railway engines of Russian origin, in pieces, destined for ALBANIA. (They had a staff on them).

60. On the 1st. August 1950 when they were clear of GDYNIA, VASILARAS called all the members and told them that he had to search them, and that they must not misunderstand him. During the search he took away from them all articles that betrayed their origin, such as identity cards, photos, notes, Polish articles, correspondence, etc. VASILARAS himself was searched by LEFHTERES in the presence of all the others. All the collected articles were done away with by VASILARAS in some manner unknown to source.

Up to GIBRALTAR no precautionary measures were taken, no discussions were carried out amongst themselves.

61. When the ship was passing GIBRALTAR they again raised the Polish flag (which they had previously lowered) at the peak of the main mast. Lower down they flew another flag with 2 horizontal colours, yellow and blue, each covering one half of the flag, and further down a third flag which had a large white cross over all the flag, upon a blue background. During the passing of GIBRALTAR all the members were ordered to descend to the hold where they slept, and to hide behind a small quantity of cargo (full sacks of unknown content).

The ship did not touch at any port and the voyage lasted 11 days and nights. The members of the group did not eat well during the trip as they were all seasick.

Security Brief by VASILARAS.

62. The day before they arrived at DURAZZO, VASILARAS gathered all the members together and said: "In one day we will arrive in ALBANIA. There we must be very careful and we must not betray our Greek origin. To do this we must not speak at all. From DURAZZO we will go by vehicles to TIRANA, where we will probably meet known persons (Greeks or Albanians) and we must not give them a chance to ask us from whence we come and where we are going. We must also be polite to our Albanian countries and make no demands should we not be looked after very well there."

during  
According to the deserter/the trip no discussions took place on the operations of the group. Its members had various discussions, regarding the trip and other matters. They engaged in card games, chess, draughts, etc. VASILARAS, NONTAS, THANASES, KARAGIANNES and LEFHTERES often separated from the group and had whispered conversations of which the deserter did not hear anything. They also had many maps which they consulted at times. At no time did any member tell another anything regarding mode of activity, persons, villages, etc.

Arrival at DURAZZO.

64. On the 11th or 12th August they disembarked at DURAZZO, around midnight. A Russian passenger ship, white in colour

had anchored there and it was disembarking young men and women, members of the Communist Youth of ALBANIA, who were singing and cheering for STALIN and HODJA. There were about 1,500 returning from a holiday trip. There was another ship also anchored at the far end of the port, of which the deserter heard nothing.

Departure for TIRANA.

65. On the quayside 2 Albanian motor lorries awaited them (covered SKODAS) with Albanian drivers in civilian clothing and 2 policemen. The police boarded the ship and saluted the members of the group with a handshake. The group immediately boarded one of the lorries, and accompanied by 1 of the police left for TIRANA, where they arrived in 1½ hours. The lorry was entirely covered.

Stay at TIRANA.

66. At TIRANA they were accommodated at the end of the town, on the 2nd floor of a 3-storey building, where they were received about 2, a.m. by a Lt. Colonel of the TIRANA Security named KOTSAS (or possibly PAPADOPOULOS) GEORGES, probably from PEPELES/NORTHERN EPIRUS, who had studied at a Gymnasium at FOGONIANES. With him there was an Albanian soldier and a Greek civilian driver. Georges KOTSAS (or PAPALOPOULOS) and the driver greeted all the members in Greek, and asked them about their trip. After they left the Albanian soldier remained behind and issued each member of the group with 3 blankets. They slept on the floor.

67. During the 8 days while they were there the apartment remained completely closed, and the window panes were all semi-transparent so that no one could look in or out. They were confined to the house for 8 days and the Albanian soldier and the Greek driver (GEORGES) brought them food and cigarettes, etc.

68. Two days after their arrival at TIRANA, VASILARAS went out during the morning with GEORGES who visited them every day, and they both returned in the evening. The deserter did not find out where they went nor what they did.

69. Two days later VASILARAS and the W/T operator Georgios PHOTOPOULOS, went out with Lt. Col. GEORGES at midday and returned 2 or 3 hours later. The deserter asked PHOTOPOULOS where they had been and he replied "Didn't we say you were not to ask questions and not to be curious regarding these matters". However, later on he told him that they had gone and tested the W/T set (probably, the deserter says, type 694, which they took charge of in ALBANIA).

70. 2 days before they left TIRANA, VASILARAS and LEHHTERES put on new civilian suits that they had brought packaged from POLAND, new shoes, etc. and went out with Lt. Col. GEORGES in the evening. The deserter was asleep when they returned and did not notice the time.

71. In TIRANA the group had no other contacts. During his daily visits Lt. Col. GEORGES sat down on the floor with them for a few hours, and talked about the situation in ALBANIA, praising the regime of HODJA and its success on the reconstruction of factories, mills, railway lines, mines, etc. the standard of living etc.

Albanians had a popular republic for 10 years they would still be the same, shoeless and poor. GEORGES answered that they were permanently lazy people (The deserter surmises that LYRAS had some connection with GEORGES, and for that reason was friendly with him).

72. During other discussions GEORGES mentioned Greek groups that entered Greek territory to collect information. The Greeks failed to capture them as they were there for so short a time. He also mentioned a group of parachutists originating from ITALY, supplied with W/T transmitters, which were captured and forced for one month to transmit signals and information on the instructions of the Albanian authorities to the BALLISTS in ITALY. However, they were betrayed and the communications were broken off, without any definite gain except some air drops of food, etc. (Source cannot define the date and exactly what group was concerned).

74. During their 8 day stay VASILARAS, NONTAS, KARAGIANNES, THANASES, LEFHTERES and Lt. Col. GEORGES twice held private talks lasting for 2 hours, of which the deserter knows nothing. During these talks they did not use maps or W/T. There was no telephone in the house, which the deserter characterises as being a yiafka. On two occasions LYRAS instructed the group in the use of the compass, orientation, etc. All the members had wrist watches, mark DOXA, 15 jewel movement, and a compass of German origin, size and shape approximately that of a box of matches. The compass had a black outside case, made of some paste (composition) and slid open like a box of matches. On the inside it had a small mirror. They hung their compasses on a cord around their necks, and kept them inside their clothing, in a pocket. Their wrist watches and compasses were supplied to them in POLAND by the Polish Captain that took care of their wants.

Preparations for departure from TIRANA,

75. On the day prior to their departure from TIRANA 2 Albanians and 2 members of their group brought to their building the equipment they had brought with them from POLAND. The cases were opened and they took out the foodstuffs and 20 German ruck-sacks (small ones) which they exchanged for large Albanian ruck-sacks: immediately. The foodstuffs were distributed amongst them and placed in the Albanian ruck-sacks, of which everyone had one.

Foodstuffs per person,

76. a). 5 kilos chocolate bearing no makers name, in a small case.
- b) 5 kilos powdered milk, bearing no makers name, in a small case.
- c) 5 kilos of sugar, bearing no makers name, in a small case.
- d) (To those that smoked) 500 cigarettes, bearing no make, in 5 boxes.
- e) 40 pieces of hard biscuit (in size similar to a small package of Greek cigarettes, rectangular in shape).
- f) 1 box containing 15 pills each box, each pill equivalent to  $\frac{1}{2}$  an oke of water (water purifying tablets?).

...../

### Weapons.

77. On the same day they replaced 16 personal automatics (S.M.Gs) of Russian origin, having 72 shot circular magazines, with 12 STEYER automatics (S.M.Gs) with 32 shot magazines and 4 BERETTA automatics (S.M.Gs) of Italian make with 42 shot magazines. When members of the group asked why the Russian arms (which had a long range of 500 metres and also held more rounds) were exchanged for the above mentioned, VASILARAS said that in GREECE there are no rounds for Russian automatics (S.M.Gs) for them to re-equip themselves. On the other hand it would be easy for them to find STEN gun bullets, which were similar to the STEYER and BERETTA calibres.

### Departure from TIRANA.

78. On the 20th August 1950 they boarded a completely covered lorry taking with them their ruck-sacks with the foodstuffs. They were preceded by Lt. Col. GEORGES in his private car and VASILARAS and LEFHTHERES. They arrived at a thick forest of tall trees outside ARGYROKASTRON (GJINOKASTER) on the morning of the 21st August. This forest was approximately 20 kms. distant from ARGYROKASTRON (GJINOKASTER), in the direction of TEPELENI. They could not see their surroundings on account of the density of the forest. After  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour another covered lorry arrived, carrying the cases of military material. The drivers of both lorries were the ones that had brought them from DURAZZO. The cases were unloaded and opened in the presence of GEORGES and the drivers, and they distributed the arms and clothing. Up to this point they had all been dressed in civilian clothing.

### Distribution of Clothing.

79. Each one received the following:-

- 1 khaki winter military uniform,
- 2 sets of underwear (2 shorts, khaki, short length and 2 cotton vests)
- 2 semi-military shirts which were supplied by the Albanians.
- 1 pair of ALPINI boots (Polish) plus a pair of rubber goloshes to muffle footsteps and to hide footprints (to be worn over the boots).
- 1 khaki raincoat
- 2 pairs of thick, woollen socks (white in colour)
- 1 khaki woollen (forage?) cap
- Shaving tackle (safety razor and blades marked TAMBOUL ARAZA MANTE IN OUNGARI BUDAPEST).

They immediately changed clothing and dressed in military uniform. They left their civilian clothing on the ground when they departed.

### Distribution of arms.

80. The sharpshooters Thomas THOMOS and PANTELES did not take automatics (S.M.Gs) but each took a BREN gun with 300 rounds each. LAZOS and Konstantinos KALTSAS received a MAUSER (rifle?) with 150 rounds each. The remaining 16 each received automatics (S.M.Gs) (STEYER and BERETTA) with 300 rounds of STEN gun ammunition apiece. All the members also received a German WALTHER pistol each (P.38) of 9 shot capacity and 1 magazine (spare?). STEN gun ammunition also fitted these pistols.

The 4 W/T operators, LEPITERES and LYRAS received German binoculars (total 5 pairs of binoculars).

Each person received 2 MILLS (type)? Serbian hand-grenades.

The 4 W/T operators carried a suitcase-W/T (espionage type) and PHOTOPOULOS was responsible for the other W/T (the 694) which the rest of the group (14) carried in turns. (This set was contained in 3 haversacks). The 4 W/T operators also received 4 complete sets of civilian clothing (with civilian shirts, ties, and shoes). Two of the 4 suits were blue in colour with stripes, one was brown with stripes, and the last one was grey with stripes.

#### Stay in Forest at ARGYROKASTRON (GJIMONASTER)

81. They remained in the forest up to the evening of 24th August 1950. With them there were Lt. Col. GEORGES, his driver and one lorry with its driver. The other lorry departed. For food they were brought fruit and cheese. During their stay there Lt. Col. GEORGES and the 4 W/T operators and LEPITERES talked continuously alone. The deserter did not hear any part of their conversation, and did not notice if they were using maps. No one left and no one visited their "camp" in the forest.

#### Departure from the Forest.

82. On the evening of the 24th August 1950, dressed in military uniforms, and carrying all their arms and personal goods, they boarded the closed lorry and proceeded by Lt. Col. GEORGES in his private (together with VASILARAS and LEPITERES, they went in the direction of NEBERTSIKA, where they arrived around 1 a.m. They left the vehicles and their drivers at the foot of the mountain and the whole group of 20 with their arms and equipment, and Lt. Col. GEORGES, marched towards the top of the mountain for 6 hours, and on the morning of the 25th August 1950 they arrived at a location 3 kms higher up, outside a village of the name (NEBERTSIKA) approximately 4 kms from the Greek frontier (below the peak of the mountain). There they were met by an Albanian soldier and a W/O 2 with foodstuffs (bread, fruit and cheese). They encamped in a pine-covered ravine. During the march VASILARAS and GEORGES preceded and LEPITERES came last so that no one was left behind or went to sleep on the way. Protests were heard from amongst the group about the weight of their loads, and some of them mentioned jettisoning the foodstuffs as the going was uphill (a considerable incline) and they were very tired.

#### Stay on the Mountain NEBERTSIKA

83. They stayed at the pine covered ravine at a place named PSELOTERA up to the evening of the 26th August. They met no other person. They were very tired when they arrived and slept to mid-day of the following day.

#### TSANGAS Episode

84. In the meantime a misunderstanding had arisen between TSANGAS and VASILARAS, that nearly became a quarrel. This took place because TSANGAS had been of the opinion (as VIANDAS had led him to believe from POLAND) that he was a member of K.K.E., whilst VASILARAS (the deserter does not know how the discussion first started), informed him that he was not a member of K.K.E. Because the quarrel threatened to become serious, VASILARAS immediately called a conference of all members, Lt. Col. GEORGES, the Albanian W/O 2 and the soldier also being present. During this conference VASILARAS spoke first, stating that TSANGAS expressed complaints for his non-entry into K.K.E. up to now, in spite of the fact that he had been fighting in the K.K.E. ranks for 10 years. He went on

to say that the time was not suitable for quarrels and that altogether they must help towards the success of their mission and anybody who in future created such an episode would undergo heavy responsibility. In continuation, LEPIHTER S and LYRAS spoke and took VASILARAS' side on the matter, adding that all veteran fighters of the K.K.E. must, with their disciplined behaviour, guide and instruct those younger than they, and that TSINGAS was in the wrong.

TSINGAS spoke in conclusion and made a self-criticism admitting that he had made a mistake, and that he would not repeat it, and that he would await the successful conclusion of their mission, for the matter to be arranged. In the afternoon the 4 W/T operators, LEPIHTERES and GEORGES had further conversations together, of which the deserter did not hear anything.

#### Reconnaissance of Frontiers.

85. On the following day, 26th August, GEORGES, VASILARAS, and LEPIHTERES left for the peak of the mountain, from whence they returned about 5 p.m. VASILARAS and LEPIHTERES had borrowed Albanian greatcoats and forage caps from the 2 Albanians there, and they carried with them automatics (S.M.Gs), binoculars and maps. When they returned VASILARAS gathered the group together and spoke to them as follows:

"We went to the frontier today for a reconnaissance of the ground, military camps, etc. To-night we will enter GREECE from the 11th frontier marker. We must make every effort not to fall into any ambush and should such an event occur, nobody must lose contact and get lost. I (VASILARAS) will give the signal for battle or for withdrawal".

"If anybody should get injured we will try our best to take him with us, but should he be seriously wounded he will undoubtedly be executed. This will be the case if even I get wounded, for the mission must not be betrayed. Should anyone be captured he must not betray anything regarding the mission however much torture he undergoes".

#### Start of Entry into GREECE

86. At about 7 p.m. on the same day, 26th August, the Group of 20 left in the order previously mentioned. Lt. Col GEORGES, the two Albanian soldiers and the W/O 2 accompanied them. They went towards No. 11 frontier marker. When they arrived there at about 8 p.m. they said goodbye to the 3 Albanians and the group entered GREECE.

#### Formation

87. On entry they changed formation and two scouts, Panagiotis PHILES and Demetrios ZOES, were sent ahead. They were followed by the other members at distances of 10 - 15 metres from each other. Last of all came LEPIHTERES. The scouts had received instructions from VASILARAS to avoid areas where flocks were grazing or where sheep or dogs were heard. They were passing over untrodden areas and they passed around two flocks. They passed about 500 metres west of PALAIOKASTROU - NEHERTSIICAS, where Greek troops were stationed, and from thence they passed between ANO (Upper) and KATO (Lower) HEROTES, and arrived at about 4 am. in the morning of the 27th August in the area of AGIOS IOANNES where they halted in a forest, at a distance of 150 - 200 metres south of AGIOS IOANNES.

#### Halt at AGIOS IOANNES

88. All that day (27th August) they remained in the forest.

At 7 a.m. and at 7 p.m. PHOTOPOULOS made contact with G.H.Q. (according to what the deserter heard) for 1½ hours each contact, with the 694 type W/T transmitter, using morse. The Deserter was also on wireless duty for a period. They slept and cleaned their arms, by order of VASILARIS, and when night fell, being very tired they decided to stay where they were for the night. They placed 3 sentries of whom one guarded the arms. He was successively relieved by the sic, i.e. 4 W/T operators, LEPTERES and LYRAS. The other 2 sentries were placed 15 metres further off and were relieved every hour by the rest of the group (14).

89. On the following day (28th August) they placed around the group, 3 look outs, relieved every hour. On the 27th August PHOTOPOULOS had both morning and evening radio contact (7 a.m. and 7 p.m.). During these 2 days they ate what food they had with them (milk, biscuits, chocolate, etc). Before setting off VASILARIS called them together and announced that they would continue their march which would be smoother than the previous one. He advised them, however, not to speak on route and to march quietly keeping their appointed positions. He also told them that should anyone be cut off from the main body as a result of an ambush, they would all meet again at the present spot (the hiding place at AGIOS IOANNES).

#### Start

90. At about 8 p.m. on the 28th August the group set off from the AGIOS IOANNES with scouts leading (the scouts were LEPTERES - on account of his knowledge of the ground - and ZOES). The group followed in the usual formation, the machine runners, THOMAS and PANTELES in the middle. The deserter did not see who marched in the rear. They marched at slow speed and passed the height of DOURGA Point No. 40 (P 796-865), between LAKHANOKASTRON and AGIOS KOSMAS and arrived at about 4 a.m. on the 29th August in a wood (P 825-868), near AGIOS PARASKEVES, where they halted for the whole day.

#### Halt at AGIA PARASKEVE

91. At about 7 a.m. on the 29th August PHOTOPOULOS with the type 694 W/T transmitter again established contact, and they slept until mid-day when the 4 W/T operators and LEPTERES held private conversations during which maps were used. The Deserter who was nearby heard LEPTERES say "We will not have time to reach ZAGORIA tonight, we must make an intermediate halt". VASILARIS in a loud voice answered "Look at the map to see where there are woods. There are none anywhere".

92. On the same day, 29th August, some of them queried as to what was to happen when they ran out of food. Vasilios KARAGIANNES answered "We have with us 3 oke of gold". It was only then that the deserter learnt that they had gold sovereigns, which KARAGIANNES, LEPTERES, VASILARIS and, he presumes, two others of the 5 leaders carried between them. He also stated that on one occasion when LEPTERES was arranging his haversack he saw in it a small bag with gold sovereigns, the quantity of which he cannot estimate.

#### Start from AGIA PARASKEVE

93. Before they started VASILARIS gathered the group together and said as follows: "Tonight we will pass through dangerous areas, such as the public road, and for this reason we must be very careful. In case of ambush I, VASILARIS, will tell you what to do. Should anyone lose contact with the main body we will all meet again at the starting place (hiding place of AGIA PARASKEVE)".

94. At about 7 p.m. on the 29th August they left AGIA

PARASKEVE without making their evening W/T contact, because they had to march through a wooded area. The group was in the usual formation with THOMAS and ZOSIS as scouts and LEPTERES in the rear. They marched quickly, passing east of ROUZLES, going towards the south where they passed point 807 between ANO (Upper) RAVENIA and MAUROVOUNION. Continuing they crossed the main road after passing near the KLEINI KALLITHEAS (8780) and around 4.30 a.m. on the 30th August they came to a ravine east of KILYVION-TSERVAT (BLAPHOROPOU 884-783) where they were to spend the day.

#### Thoughts of the deserter regarding his desertion

95. From the time he was in POLAND engaged on heavy work, the deserter had been considering how he could get to GREECE to live quietly far from the bandits. When he heard that 3 bandits had escaped from the BITZIKHOUI-SOVKHOZ his intention grew stronger. He heard from certain Poles of the miserable situation under the regime of the Popular Republic and they advised him not to work hard for the Party. He then decided to find a chance to escape.

96. The request for volunteers to go to GREECE previously mentioned, was an important chance for him. He duly enrolled and eventually arrived in ALBANIA. Up to TIRANA he had never considered murdering anybody. On the voyage he was continuously tortured by thoughts of how he would succeed in escaping and what fate was held in store for him by the Greek authorities, seeing that his elder brother had been an inmate of BULGES camp where he was trained as a printer (sic). Later he had been at GRANIOS and returned to ALBANIA where he was court martialled for an unknown reason and was found not guilty although his fate was unknown.

97. The deserter's father, Konstantinos, aged 56, was an inmate of BULGES, and was working as a carpenter in CZECHOSLOVAKIA, the deserter having corresponded with him from POLAND. During the stay of the group in the forest at ARGYROKASTRON he considered for the first time murdering one of the group to prove his opinions. He chose LEPTERES because he knew him well and knew that he was a criminal for whom a reward of Drs. 20 million had been offered. He knew this from the Greek newspapers when he was in the POGONIOU area with LEPTERES. Of the rest of the group he also knew that a reward of Drs 6 million had been offered for MANTELES. The deserter had no enmity towards LEPTERES, but in view of the crimes he (LEPTERES) had committed, he had characterised him as a criminal type.

#### Murder of LEPTERES

98. About 4.50 a.m. on the 30th August when they commenced climbing up the side of the ravine the deserter was climbing slowly, a few metres in front of LEPTERES. He shortened his pace so that the group could draw ahead and because LEPTERES had approached to a distance of 5 metres, he sat down and surreptitiously loaded his automatic (S. .G.) (BERETTA) ostensibly tying his bootlaces.

99. LEPTERES had now caught up with him and he told source: "March so that we can catch up with the others". The deserter answered: "One moment whilst I tie my bootlace". In the meantime LEPTERES sat down for a few seconds and then stood up again and proceeded. LEPTERES had not gone on for more than 2 or 3 paces when the deserter shot him in the back, emptying the magazine.

100. The deserter immediately dashed away, and after a few paces threw away his haversack but retained the S.L.G. He had covered (running) about 200-300 metres towards KILYVIA, when the group opened fire on him. Two or three bursts of a STEYER gun were fired and he was threatened (presumably by VASILARIS) that he would not get away wherever he went. The deserter continued running for about half an

hour and at 5 in the morning of the 30th August he arrived at KARAKI where he gave himself up to the Greek Army.

Personal Particulars of Military Members of the Group

- a) Colonel VASILARAS (alias) from GREVENETIOU, aged about 26/27, medium size, dark, thin, graduate of gymnasium, member of K.K.E. and leader of the mission. The deserter first met him at POGONION in August 1949, as Commander of a bandit battalion under Brigadier PETRIDES. He again met him at BOURELE, and since then did not meet him again until WARSAW.
- b) Major Vasilios KARAGIANNIS. Age about 27/30 tall, corpulent, had a black moustache, was member of K.K.E. and was expelled for reasons unknown to the deserter, and was at the time a member on probation. He served under BANTEKON. He (source) met him at BOURELE and met him again at WARSAW. He was previously a baker at IOANNINA.
- c) Major Thanases NOMIAS, from GREVENETIOU, Age 45, short, dark, elementary school education. Source first met him at SIOZELITS where for two months NOMIAS was president of the community (November - December 1949). Since then he disappeared and source saw him again in WARSAW.
- d) Captain THYFASIS from MACEDONIA. age 26/27, dark, short, fat. He met him in WARSAW for the first time.

These individuals had been trained as W/T operators at some unknown school for an unknown period. They spoke Russian and carried with the Greek-Russian dictionaries. It should be noted that VASILARAS and KARAGIANNIS, whom the deserter knew, had not previously known or spoken any Russian. These four were to operate within the town of IOANNINA, according to their own account.

- e) Major Thomas LEPTERES from KATO HERONES, age 28, school teacher, member of K.K.E. and second in command of the mission. He operated from early 1948, when the deserter met him, in the POGONIOU area, up to the fall of GRIMOS. A criminal type. He killed his mother's brother and a captured soldier.
- f) Captain PHILIOUKIS from MACEDONIA, age 38, member of K.K.E. medium size, fat, blond, slightly bald. The deserter did not know him previously and met him for the first time at the K.K.E. office at KOUZELITS, and as he (PHILIOUKIS) himself mentioned, he had fought at VITSI.
- g) Captain DEMIDES from MACEDONIA, age 35, member of K.K.E., tall, dark, he has a scar on one cheek.
- h) Lt. Vasilios PHELLEPOU, from AEDONOMHORIOU - VASILIKON, age 34, 3rd class gymnasium education, member K.K.E., tall, dark, having 3-4 gold teeth in upper jaw. Deserter met him at BOURELE. Was in ALBANIA from 1945 and did not participate in the fighting.
- i) 2nd Lt. Demetrios ZOES from RODOTOPI/IOANNINA, age 28, tall, fat fair, elementary school education, was political commissar at KARAFANON, not member of K.K.E.
- j) Andarte Georgios PHOTOPoulos from KHRYSSES/NESTORIOU, MACEDONIA, age 28, member of K.K.E., short, dark, black eyes, elementary school education, was W/T operator in the LEPTERES company, he (source) did not hear of him having committed any crimes and he did not participate in the fighting as he was a W/T operator.

- k) Sergeant Major Panagiotos PHILES from KATO (Lower) MEROVES, age 19, not member of K.K.E., medium size, had participated in the operations at HOURGANAS and served later under LEHTERES, who promoted him to sergeant major.
- l) Andarte Theophanos KARAGIANES, age 35, brother of (b) above, member of K.K.E., tall, dark, served as andarte at KARAPANON.
- m) 2nd Lt. Konstantinos KALPSAS from ZELOVAS/IOANNINA, elementary school education, age 26, tall, fair, blue eyes, served as andarte at GRAMOS
- n) Andarte Thomas THOMAS from BRIAZED/KONITSA, age 23, fat, tall, red hair, uneducated, served as sharp shooter under LEHTERES for 3-4 months, was also at KARAPANON.
- o) Andarte Konstantinos LIONTES from MACEDONIA, age 28, tall, served in the artillery at VITSI.
- p) Andarte PANTELES from MACEDONIA, age 30, medium size, fair cropped hair, served at HOURGANAN.

#### General Information

1. The Resorter states that the 600 men who left for KOUZELITS from BULGARIA two months prior to his departure thence, were bandits and abducted persons ranging from 18 - 60 years. He visited them where they lived in 3 - 4 apartment houses, and was interested in finding out anything regarding Epirotes. However, they could tell him nothing because they were all refugees from ASIA MINOR. They informed him that no others remained in BULGARIA except a certain number of Greek children.

#### 2. Bandit and Children's Camps in Satellite Countries

##### a) Bandit Camps.

There are camps with bandit fugitives and abducted persons in:

- I CZECHOSLOVAKIA
- II HUNGARY/BUDAPEST
- III RUMANIA
- IV YUGOSLAVIA/BULICES

as well as POLAND.

He does not know the number of inmates at each camp or whether military schools function in them, in these countries. The little information he has originates from the correspondence he had with these countries. From meetings, he had heard that in all the satellite countries there were at the most 10,000 - 15,000 fighting bandits. He does not know whether there are any in ALBANIA.

##### b) Childrens Camps, outside POLAND

- I GERMANY
- II BULGARIA

- III YUGOSLAVI / JIKES
- IV RUMANIA
- V HUNGARY
- VI CZECHOSLOVAKIA

His information about these originates from the correspondence held by their parents.

3. Morale of the Mission

The deserter states that the morale of the members was good and they were confident of success. He considered that following the murder of LEHTERES the group would return after a certain number of days via GRAMOS or PHILLATON, to ALBANIA. Alternatively, each would operate in the area he operated in the past or where he came from and where he knew persons and places well.

4. KOREA

Referring to the war in KOREA he heard that the northern forces were carrying out a victorious struggle and that the moment has approached when they will push the Americans into the sea. They were not asked to volunteer for KOREA. He heard that SOURLAS and other fascists are requesting volunteers in the interests of the southern forces. Regarding EITO, they were told that he collaborates with GREECE and the Western powers.

5. N.O.F.

At KOUZELITS there was a N.O.F. organisation of Slavo-Macedonians, number unknown, who spoke their own language and held separate meetings. From conversations, he heard that these must fight harder than the others because the fascist regime of GREECE had destroyed them and did not allow them to speak their own language.

6. The Albanian Lt. Col. GEORGES from TIRANA, who accompanied the bandit group up to the frontier was, according to the deserter, arrested by KOCE-KOKE prior to his (KOKE) break with HODJA. He had been imprisoned but was re-installed after the execution of KOCE-KOKE. He does not know his surname. Similarly he (GEORGES) had stated that he had been a schoolmate of LEHTERES in the gymnasium at POGONIANES. Presumably this was the reason his meeting with LEHTERES was so cordial. His meeting with Georgios LYRAS was also similar. His particulars: medium size, rather fat, dark, with black curly hair.

The persons who carried out the interrogation were Photios BREGIANNES and Demosthenes DOUKAS.

Appendix.

Known Particulars of VASILARAS Band.

Official Greek Army Records.

1. Theodorikos Vasileios VASILARAS  
from GREVENETIOU. Student of the RIZARIOUS religious School. He was amongst the first to join the E.L.A.S., promoted to Captain. After the dissolution of the E.L.A.S. he went to ALBANIA. He returned with the 84 under NEMERTSIKAS in November 1946. He participated in the dissolution of the Company at GREVENETIOU. From GRAMMOS he went to MOURGANAN as Commander of the 1st. Battalion (in December 1948). Until the dissolution of the MOURGANAN formation he was under the orders of ARVANITES (Konstantinos KOLEGLANNEJ). He was injured at MOURGANAN and went to a hospital in ALBANIA. With the second breaking-up of PETRITES at SOULE (June 1949) he was Commander of one of the two Battalions, and was promoted to Lieut. Colonel. He did not participate at GRAMMOS. He knows the areas of POGONIOU - SOULIOU - MOURGANAN and ZAGORIOU very well. He also knows the TZOUMERKON area well; he fought there in August 1948.
2. Nikolaou DEMETRIOS-NONTAS.  
From GREVENETIOU, Son of the professor of music MARGARITE NIKOLAOU. Aged 26. Gymnasium student. He joined the E.P.O.N. and fought as a 2nd Lieut. He went to ALBANIA. He returned together with others and participated in all the battles especially at GRAMOS. He was promoted to Major. An excellent fighter, a fanatic. He served in various Brigades and went to VITSI. He knows all the areas.
3. Brothers KARAGIANNES. They are 2 brothers. They, like NONTAS, were also in the E.P.O.N. They were always together with NEMERTSIKAS whose personal friends they are. They have a bakery shop in IOANNINA. They were in the E.L.A.S. and later in the Communist Bandits. They mainly operated in the ZAGORIOU area.
4. Elephtherios GLATES or THOMAS, son of KONSTANTINOS.  
Originates from KATO (LOWER) MEROPE-POGONIOU. During the occupation he was in the E.L.A.S. After VARKIZA (the agreement) he joined the Communist Bandits, where he operated as a Bandit-leader. He entered ALBANIA in 1949. He was mainly active as commander of a group of saboteurs at POGONI.
5. Panagiotes Georgios PHILIOS.  
Originates from (LOWER) KATO MEROPE. He joined the Communist Bandits in 1948. He operated in the saboteur group at POGONIOU and in 1949 entered ALBANIA with LEFHTERES. He is a dynamic

...../

Communist-Bandit.

6. Konstantinos Theodoros KALTSAS

Originates from VOUNOPLAFIAS. During the occupation served in the E.L.A.S. After VARKIZA he followed the first bandit formations that appeared from ALBANIA in 1947 and in 1949 he returned to ALBANIA with the VASILARAS group. He has been proclaimed as a bandit.

7. Demetrios ZOES

Originates from RODOTOPTOU, IOANNINA. In 1947 joined the Communist-Bandits, where he operated up to 1949 when he entered ALBANIA.

8. Thomas Alexion THOMOS.

Originates from DYTRATOU (?) KONITSA. An old member of the E.P.O.N., was recruited in 1947 by the Communist-Bandits and served continuously in the ZAGORIOU and GRAMIOS formations.

9. Soterios ZANNES. (the deserter).

10. Georgios LYRAS.

Originates from AGION PANTON-PHILLATON. He is an important member of the Communist-Bandits, with noteworthy activity at THESPROTIAN and SOULI. Was used as Albanian agent upon (for?) GREECE. A case-file is pending of his, in which he is charged with high treason.

11. Vasillios Petros PHILIPPOU.

An old Communist-Bandit from AEDONOKHORTON-KONITSA. Old agent of the Albanians during 1945-1947, in areas of KONITSA and POGONIOU.