



GALABA PALIKRUSHEVA, PhD

1928-2009

Ms. Galaba Palikrusheva - Nazim, PhD died on the 26th of December 2009. The ones still living from the post-war generation and their grown-up children know more or less about Galaba Palikrusheva, depending on their interest regarding cultural politics and ethnology. However, the younger ones may not have heard about her, since our old habits of respecting the values that we have inherited from our elders have been lost, and new habits have still not been created, or are still not practiced. For a moment we turn the tide of the new habits in different direction and would like to say a word or two about a person and a life that is a typical example how society influences the formation of personality and how persons influence the construction of society.

Galaba Palikrusheva was born in 1928 in Vinica, where she finished her primary school. She finished high school in Shtip and Kochani. As many other young people from that time she was influenced by the new communist ideas for creation of a new society and especially a new and proud Macedonian state. Seen from today's perspective, after the liberation she held a high position in the elite society of that time, which carried the Macedonian fight. But she was obviously not prepared to accept a good social position based solely upon her participation in the fight. She decided to study. First she enrolled to study medicine, but left these studies when a separate study group of ethnology was formed in the frames of the History Department, at the newly formed Philosophical Faculty in Skopje. Still, she had to dedicate much of her time to socially useful tasks, which was a regular obligation for everyone of her status. Thus, she graduated ethnology in 1954. The same year she was appointed as director of the People's museum in Shtip. But this year (1953/4) was also one of the worst for Macedonian ethnology. There were strong social forces against ethnology, which obviously were instructed to cancel this study group at the Philosophical faculty and unfortunately succeeded in their intent. This negative move caused a situation where Macedonian society did not become a subject of investigation of ethnology as science. Only individuals from the first and the last two generations of graduated ethnologists, among which Ms. Galaba Palikrusheva, succeeded to give certain contribution regarding Macedonian ethnic and cultural identity in this sense.

In 1958 Galaba was appointed as a director of the Archeological Museum of Macedonia. During that time the Philosophical Faculty was divided into Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Philosophical faculty, and thus few ethnological subjects were transferred to the geography group that was formed at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

The wish of Galaba Palikrusheva to professionally deal with ethnology led her to the assistant's position at the ethnological department. She was appointed as Assistant of general and special ethnology at the Geographical Department of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Skopje. In 1965 she defended her PhD "Islamization of Torbesh and the formation of a Torbesh sub-group". Her mentor was Milenko S. Filipovic - a name that is highly respected in scientific circles that deal with ethnology, anthropogeography and social and cultural anthropology in general. Besides some controversial opinions in relation to the ethnic individuality of Bosniacs, Monte Negrians, Macedonians etc. this scientist has an excellent reputation due to his professionalism in the domain of ethnic culture where often he works contrary to his own political opinions on the ethnic and national identity of certain nations and ethnic groups.

During that period at this Faculty there were no conditions existing for development of ethnology. Thus, in 1967 Galaba Palikrusheva was elected as an expert assistant in the Department for the Ottoman period at the Institute of National History in Skopje. She continued to study following a course on this period and through a study stay in the archives in Istanbul.

In 1979 she was elected as a director of the Institute of Folklore "Marko Cepenkov" in Skopje, where she retired later on. During the periods when she managed such institutions as the Institute of Folklore in Skopje she was especially focused upon the creation of scientific cadres related to ethnology and folkloristics.

During the '70ties Galaba Palikrusheva has put much effort in persuading the state institutions dealing with science and education to solve the issue with ethnology. The action was led on a number of fronts - officially and privately. However, the general inertia of institutions and the responsible individuals have negative results. From today's perspective one can hardly believe it, but she did succeed to renew the studies of ethnology. The concrete step was the formation of the Sub-department of ethnology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in 1984/5. This act is a great success and a point when today's Macedonian ethnology and anthropology started to develop (i.e. the Institute of ethnology and anthropology). Galaba Palikrusheva has taught ethnology at this department for some time, and when the post-graduate studies have been formed, from 1999-2002 she taught the subject Theories of ethnology.

From these short biographical notes one can see that life of Galaba Palikrusheva is mixed with her social duties and her personal affinities of an independent ethnologist. From current perspective one can say that her social

contributions as active fighter in war and peace provided her the freedom of a researcher and scientist, if one takes into account the topics that she researched, dominated by the ones touching critical issues of religion, folk rituals and beliefs, ethnic processes in Western Macedonia, ethnic groups, the relation Christianity - Islam and its reflection upon life of ethnic groups and the Macedonian state. Highly educated and intelligent, Palikrusheva tried to function as scientist at the ex-Yugoslav level of scientific elites, that existed in those (communist) times, in spite of the scientists for daily use. Still, besides all protective mechanisms, her doctoral dissertation "Islamization of the Turks and the formation of the Torbesh sub-group" remained unpublished and thus those who need this research use it in a form of manuscript kept in the University library. I have not asked her this question while she was alive and now it is too late. I can only confirm that she was sorry about it since in one of our conversations she accepted the offered assistance to prepare the manuscript for publishing. From 2001 till today a couple of reasons postponed this issue.

During her lifetime Galaba Palikrusheva did not receive important state awards. Once, when a person wanted support by the Institute of Folklore to get such award, when asked what we should do she said smiling that such persons who like awards are doing everything needed by themselves. Since it was clear that Galaba would not fight for her own award, by the initiative of three of our colleagues ethnologists and folklorists in 1988 a proposal that Galaba Palikrusheva should receive the state award for science "11th of October" was submitted. This is at the same time the only important state award received by Galaba Palikrusheva for her scientific and social work.

Ms. Palikrusheva had a dynamic activity in a period of half a century, so it is not easy to name everything that was contained in a life full of action. This was not even the aim of this short note. The aim was to give respect to a person that was important for social and scientific life, but also for the family life and lives of other people. In this case my life. Always full of some unreachable folk wisdom, peace and stability, she offered different ways to solve critical situations, life obstacles, tragi-comic situations and other life's unexpected events. She was a loyal friend with all her heart. She was full of compliment for the valuable work of others. She always gave the needed assistance and advice.

On a personal level, I am sad to see how a part of my imagined group of persons with whom I communicate personally or through their works is falling apart. I have no time nor energy to create new life concepts, nor a will to fill in the empty spots, neither a wish to exchange the memories with other values. With each day the ones who meant something to me mean more. With each close person that dies a part of us is leaving too.

May she rest in peace.

Aneta Svetieva (Skopje, Macedonia)