

# Declaration and Expository Statement

Encouraged by the possibility of a lasting peace among the nations that people the troubled Balkan Peninsula, the Seventeenth Congress of the Macedonian Political Organizations, convened at Buffalo, New York, on September 4, 5, and 6, 1938, considers it its supreme and imperative duty to reveal to the enlightened public opinion of America, Europe, and elsewhere and also to those responsible for the world's destinies the true state of the tragic lot of the Macedonian people. After having established the fact that the unspeakable and atrocious cruelty to which the peace-loving Macedonian people are subjected by the governments of Greece and Jugoslavia constitutes a serious threat to the peace of the Balkans, the delegates and representatives of the Macedonian emigrants in North America and Australia, who are organized in the Macedonian Political Organizations, unanimously voted the following declaration and supplementary expository statement.

## Declaration

The Seventeenth Regular Congress of the Macedonian Political Organizations resolutely protests against the preposterous and criminal negligence displayed by the League of Nations towards the legitimate and perfectly just demand of the Macedonians for an impartial enforcement of the treaty for the protection of minorities within the boundaries of our own country. By virtue of this international agreement, the Yugoslav and Greek governments unhesitatingly consented to respect the national, political, and cultural rights of the Macedonian people; nevertheless, to this very day, they have flatly disregarded their promises. The League of Nations, which was entrusted to supervise the exact fulfillment of the treaty for the minorities, did not undertake one sincere step for the protection of the downtrodden national rights of our people. Hence, the Macedonians cannot feel the slightest compunction over the completely abused authority of the Geneva institution, upon which we had based so many sincere expectations for a peaceful solution of the controversial international problems.

The governments of Jugoslavia and Greece contemptuously thrust aside the treaty for the minorities. Instead, they conducted themselves with a fierce cruelty towards the Bulgarian element in Macedonia, which comprises the major portion of the ill-fated and harassed population. The Macedonian Bulgarians are deprived of the most fundamental human and cultural rights. They have been dispossessed of their churches. Their schools have been closed. Before 1912, in the Macedonian part now attached to Greece, there were 378 Bulgarian churches with 300 priests and 340 Bulgarian schools with 750 teachers and 19,000 pupils. In Macedonia under Serb domination, before 1912, there were 761 Bulgarian churches with six bishops and 833 priests and 641 schools with 1,013 teachers and 37,000 pupils. These cultural and religious institutions of the Macedonian Bulgarians were destroyed by the Serbian and Greek governments with a ruthless violence.

Since 1919, the regime which reigns in our mother country is a cruel mockery not only of the present civilization but also of the noble

efforts of all who zealously seek ways and means to establish lasting peace among the nations.

The Congress, with profound and immeasurable sorrow, recognizes the fact that the inflexible efforts of today's rulers of Macedonia—purposing the annihilation of its national countenance—find silent approbation among certain circles and statesmen of Europe. These statesmen, who intentionally or unintentionally close their eyes to the suffering of the Macedonian people, create grounds for new and more fearful cataclysms among the European nations.

Therefore, after pointing out the aforementioned, the Congress directs the following appeal to all societies and persons who will receive this declaration and the expository statement included herewith:

**In the name of justice and truth, support our just demand for the execution of an impartial international investigation in the three sections of our disjoined and enslaved motherland.**

The Congress confers upon the Central Committee of the Macedonian Political Organizations the right to expend the necessary funds for the realization of the above-said purpose. We shall immediately provide the necessary financial resources for an unbiased investigation, which is to determine the actual conditions existing in Macedonia since 1919, with the following reservations:

- a. Written permission must be secured from the governments of Jugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria for the admittance of the committee for the investigation into the three parts of our country, where it can effect a completely unhampered and equitable verification of all the Macedonian grievances against the present rulers; and,
- b. After the committee for the investigation has been constituted, its personnel must be comprised of persons of noted impartiality and established integrity.

Some individuals who intentionally ignore the just demands of our people—who are striving for the frustration of a cruel, slavish regime—assign great significance to the pact concluded on August 1, 1938, at Salonika, between the members of the Balkan Entente and the present Sofia government of Kiosseivanoff, who is sustained in power by means of a dictatorship which is despised and wholly abhorred by the populace. This recent agreement has been hailed by certain circles as a contribution towards the advancement of good-neighbor relations among the nations of the Balkan Peninsula. The glorified Jugoslav-Bulgarian pact of "perpetual" friendship, signed last year by the chiefs of the present governments of Sofia and Belgrade, was received with similar naive hopes. The Macedonians, who are ready to support vigorously every sincere effort towards a peaceful solution of the controversial Balkan problems, are not heartened in the least by the contents of the agreement concluded at Salonika. In it, we see no indication whatsoever of an improvement in the tragic lot of the Macedonians—but only a new and more insidious attempt to preserve the shameful status quo in the Balkan Peninsula.