

Collection #
P 0093

**MACEDONIAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION PHOTOGRAPHS,
1931-1937**

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Processed by

Barbara Quigley
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 photograph folder; 1 OVC photograph folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1931–1937

PROVENANCE: Unknown

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 0000.1327

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In Indianapolis in the early twentieth century, Macedonian immigrants were part of a Balkan neighborhood also composed of Bulgarians, Serbians, Romanians, and Greeks on the near west side, just east of the White River and south of Military Park. The Macedonian and Bulgarian community had its start in the city in 1904. The majority of these people immigrated to the United States to escape political, cultural, and religious oppression.

At first, only men came. They later sent for their families or for mail brides. The men lived in communal dormitories and found work with the Kingan and Company meat packers, the railroad, the National Malleable Castings Company, or other factories and plants. Several hundred of these immigrants were packed into an area that occupied about half a square mile, where rents were exorbitant and the housing conditions were poor. By the late 1920s, many had moved out of this area, but newcomers continued to live and work there.

By 1913, there were several Macedonian and Bulgarian village brotherhoods and societies in Indianapolis. Many of these immigrants were passionately involved with the Macedonian Liberation Movement. The Union of Macedonian Political Organization (MPO) was founded in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on 1 October 1922. An Indianapolis chapter, known as the Damian Grueff chapter, was established the same year. The 1924 MPO convention established a permanent central office in Indianapolis, and Indiana became the center of MPO activities. The name was changed to Macedonian Patriotic Organization in 1952.

In May 1931, the theatrical group of the MPO of Indianapolis presented a five-act play titled *The Macedonian Bloody Wedding*, a tragedy based on the life of the oppressed Macedonian people. The play was performed as a benefit for those who suffered from a recent earthquake in Macedonia. The play was held at the Slovenian Hall at 904 North Holmes Avenue in the Haughville neighborhood. Evanka Tsenoff portrayed the lead role. The play was attended by visitors from Fort Wayne and Gary, and from Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio. The play was performed a week later in Cincinnati.

The eleventh annual convention of the MPO of the United States and Canada was held in Cleveland, Ohio, in early September 1932. Pandel G. Shaneff of Indianapolis, who served as president of the organization, gave the opening address. Three others from Indianapolis attended the convention that year as delegates: George Adjieff, Traian Nicoloff, and Sterio Nicoloff.

By 1933, there were eighty Macedonian/Bulgarian families and a hundred bachelors in Indianapolis operating restaurants, bakeries, barbershops, fisheries, shoe repair shops, tailor shops, billiard halls, farms, dry goods firms, a gas station, a large wholesale company, coffeehouses, and a printing press – the Macedonian Tribune Company. There were also several physicians and lawyers among this community.

In September 1937, the sixteenth annual MPO convention was held in Indianapolis. Some three thousand delegates and guests attended from the United States and Canada. The convention began with a parade from the public library to the English Theater on the northwest quadrant of the Circle. The principal speaker opening the convention at the theater was Captain Wilfrid Heighington of Toronto Canada, a member of the Ontario Parliament. Albert Stump, city officials, and Indianapolis Macedonian leader Dimitar Meditchkoff, also spoke. A banquet at the Claypool Hotel followed.

The convention aimed to garner support for a free and independent Macedonian government in the Balkan peninsula. It was reported that the MPO's position was that after signing peace treaties in 1919, conditions in Macedonia grew worse in spite of provisions of the treaties and of the League of Nations. The country, divided among Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria, was deprived of cultural and political rights according to convention spokesmen.

Sources:

"Convention Will Open." *The Indianapolis Star*, 3 September 1932, p. 7.

"Macedonians Here to Present Play." *The Indianapolis Star*, 14 May 1931, p. 15.

"Macedonian Van Arrives in City." *The Indianapolis Star*, 5 September 1937, p. 16.

"News of the Day as the Pictures Record It." *The Indianapolis Star*, 20 May 1931, p. 1.

Taylor, Robert M., Jr., and Connie A. McBirney, eds. *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 1996. Reference Room / Genealogy Corner Collection: F535 .A1 P46 1996

"Three Chosen Delegates To Attend Macedonian Political Body Convention in Cleveland." *The Indianapolis News*, 3 September 1932, p. 9.

"3,000 Expected at Balkan Parley: Macedonian Political Organization Convention to Open Here Sunday." *The Indianapolis News*, 4 September 1937, p. 7.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of three black-and-white photographs pertaining to the Macedonian Political Organization in the 1930s. Two were taken in Indianapolis – one showing the cast of a play presented by the local chapter of the MPO and the other of one of the MPO’s annual conventions. The other photo was taken in Cleveland, Ohio, of another of the MPO’s annual conventions.

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Cast of the play “Macedonian Bloody Wedding”: shows 25 people in costume (photo by Kirkpatrick of Indianapolis, 17 May 1931).

Eleventh Annual Convention of the Macedonian Political Organization – Cleveland, Ohio; September 4, 5, 6, 1932: shows large number of people with signs gathered outside a building (panoramic photo by Bachna Studio of Cleveland; appears to have been printed by IHS).

Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Macedonian Political Organization – Indianapolis; September 5, 6, 7, 1937: shows large number of men, women, and children seated at round tables for a banquet (photo by Kirkpatrick of Indianapolis).

CONTAINER

Photographs,
Folder 1

OVC Photographs,
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Photographs,
Folder 1