

## SERBIAN SECRET TERRORIST ORGANIZATION "BLACK HAND" AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR ALBANIANS 1903-1917



### History

**Keywords:** Colonel Apis, "Black Hand", "Načertanije - (the Draft)", Consequences for Albanians, Nikola Pashic.

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### Abstract

The political circumstances that were created in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, favored the Serbian state to increase the violence against Albanians, having the support of the political opinion of the time. The platform for the displacement of Albanians and for the creation of a Greater Serbia, which began with Garashanin's Draft (Načertanije) of (1844), which returned to the service of politics, scientific and cultural institutions by drafting detailed projects for ethnic cleansing of Albanian lands, where as a result secret terrorist organizations were created. The most notorious of these was the Black Hand (Dora e Zezë - Crna Ruka) organization, which was paramilitary and supported the idea of a Greater Serbia, created in 1911 by Major Dragutin T. Dimitrijevic Apis, who was involved in the overthrow of The Obrenovics' dynasty of 1903, a king who was influenced by Austro-Hungarian empire and Europe, this killing paved the way for the return of the Karagjorgjevic dynasty to the throne and for it to be taken over by the Russian-influenced wing and led by Nikola Pashic. Since the organization's program was the realization of a Greater Serbia, this program also included Albanian territories, as a result of which the Black Hand had formed a whole network of conspiracies against Albanian lands, it also had the Steering Committee in Pristina. This idea of national liberation and unification was the guiding principle of nineteenth-century (XIX) political elites, but Apis represented it in the purest and most brutal way, his organization did not last long. In 1917 Dimitrijevic was executed for conspiracy.

### 1. Establishment of the Serbian secret terrorist organization "Crna Ruka" ("Black Hand")

The first integral national ideologies of the Serbian people, which aimed at expanding them with chauvinist projects, were formed as a result of political achievements in the nineteenth (XIX) and early twentieth (XX) centuries.

Serbian secret projects for Greater Serbia date back from this time, the first attempt in this direction is made in Serbian nationalist ideals formulated politically and verbally by Dositei Obradovic, who was the forerunner of Serbian linguistics and literary renaissance. In 1783, he formulated his concept on the nation, which in the context of the ideas of Pan-Slavism was called the concept of the South Slavs,<sup>1</sup> but the real starting point will be marked by the linguistic reforms launched in 1848, when the Vuk Karaxhiq popular reform movement won over the Slavic-Serbian artificial language used by the clergy. Karaxhiq inspired the creation of an ethnolinguistic-oriented pan-Serbianism and modern nationalism, through the writing and creation of a Serbian dictionary, he is considered the founder of the reform of modern language and Serbian culture in general.<sup>2</sup> Karaxhiq will be followed by Ilija Garashanini, who with his program envisaged the

1 A. Chauprade, *Geopolitique: Costantes et changements dans l'histoire*, 3rd edition, Ellipses Marketing, Paris 2007, p.488.

2 Marko Bulatovic, *Ideologies and national identities*, Edited by John Lampe dhe Mark Mazower, The case of twentieth-century Southeastern Europe, Central European University Press, Budapest 2013, pp.254-276.

unification of all Serbs, relying extensively on the ideas of his predecessor. Where the latter laid the foundations of great Serbian politics with the secret program "Načertanije- the Draft" 1844,<sup>3</sup> which is considered the first national ideological program of modern Serbia and is undoubtedly the most perfect expression of the ideology of Serbo-Centrism.<sup>4</sup>

The centuries-old insane dreams of Greater Serbia have somehow found support in terrorism as well as clandestine action.<sup>5</sup> The spirit of ultra-nationalism sowed division between Albanians and Serbs, creating a divisive gap between them. As a result, official and semi-official Serbian terrorist organizations began to form, which were assisted by the secret service of the Ministry of Interior, the Intelligence Service, through the Foreign Ministry, the military intelligence service, Serb organizations inside and outside Serbia, which operated in the Balkans of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup>

The characteristic of these Serbian organizations is that they have historically acted in the direction of Kosovo, increased violence in the region and were paid and commanded by Serbia.<sup>7</sup> They also killed Albanian popular leaders who obstructed the realization of Serbia's goals.<sup>8</sup> These organizations constitute the paradigm of the war against the resilient and stubborn peoples against the dream of a Greater Serbia.<sup>9</sup>

It is worth emphasizing here that the Serbian secret terrorist organization "Black Hand" from which other sister organizations have taken orientations, its name is also associated with the two most sensational homicides before the start of World War I, that of King Aleksandar Obrenovic and Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

The assassination of the pro-Austrian king created an unstable political situation and introduced an insurgent element which caused trouble in neighboring Austro-Hungary.

Between May 28 and 29, 1903, officers and conspirators which assassinated King Aleksandar Obrenovic and Queen Draga, extended their rule in Belgrade shortly after the king's liquidation, and under coup they brought Petar Karagjorgjevic to power, who would be their slave for the rest of his life.<sup>10</sup> The author Velagič wrote that with the overthrow of Obrenovic's dynasty, the Karagjorgjevic Russophile dynasty,<sup>11</sup> came to power, and that the assassination paved the way for the return of the Karagjorgjevic dynasty to the throne, so power was taken over by the wing influenced by Russia and led by Nikola Pashic.<sup>12</sup>

3 Fetnete Ramosaj, *Against Forgetfulness, Serbian Genocide in Kosova 1998-1999*, Printing Press, Prishtinë 2017, p.7

4 Mirko Grmek, Marc Gjidara and Neven Šimac, *Ethnic Cleansing: Historical Documents on a Serbian Ideology*, Second Edition, 55 Publishing House, Tirana 2010, p.63.

5 MrikoGremek, Marc Gjidara and Neven Šimac, *Ethnic Cleansing, Historical Documents on a Serbian Ideology*, Publishing House "55" 2012, p.101-102

6 Faton Mehmetaj, *The criminal activity of the Serbian "Black Hand" in the Albanian lands*, "Anatema" Prishtina, 2004, p.45

7 Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Kosovo-A Short History of a Balkan Territory*, Prishtina 2014, p.137

8 Fatmira Musaj, Isa Boletini, the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Albania, Institute of History, Tirana 2004, p.29

9 MrikoGremek, Marc Gjidara and Neven Šimac, *Ethnic Cleansing, Historical Documents on a Serbian Ideology*, Publishing House "55" 2012, pp.101-102

10 F. Mehmetaj, *The criminal activity of the Serbian... "Black Hand"* f, p.41.

11 Adnan Velagič, *Historija Monarhističke Jugoslavije (1918-1941)*, Mostar, 2015. f. 53

‡Nikola Pashic, president of the Radical Party, Chairman of the Government of Serbia 1891-1892, Diplomatic Representative of Serbia in Russia-Petrograd 1893-1894.

With the fall of the Obrenovic dynasty, Serbia's reputation suffered irreparable damage, and the whole of Europe perceived it as an instigating country. King Edward VII expressed his concern, especially since a group of officers in a European country brutally massacred their king and queen,<sup>13</sup> as a result of which, in revolt over the act, the Government of Great Britain severed diplomatic relations with Serbia, Austro-Hungary also imposed sanctions on pro-Russian Serbia. The doors of all European royal courts remained closed to the new king.

However, without a doubt, of great importance was the fact that the overthrow brought the army into politics through the front door. Immediately after Obrenovic's execution, the conspirators were the main political factor, and clearly intended to remain so. Under strong foreign pressure, the conspirators left the army in 1906.<sup>14</sup> However, the links between these Pan-Slavic societies and the Serbian authorities were complex and never fully revealed.<sup>15</sup>

However, the retirement of some of the conspirators involved in the May coup eventually led to the conspiracy being divided into two factions: the conspirators who remained behind the dynasty and those who opposed it,<sup>16</sup> the first being close to the court and the government, the second dissatisfied.<sup>17</sup> The division began in 1906 and then disbanded into the army, the disgruntled group in 1911 formed a secret organization, which was a government within the government, but not official,<sup>18</sup> his invisible government was the Black Hand (Crna Ruka-Dora e Zezë) or Unification or Death ("Ujedinjenje ili Smrt"),<sup>19</sup> which began to be popularly called "Black Hand" in public, after its symbol, a hand with a developed flag, which was presented on the stamp of the organization with a skull and transverse shafts, a dagger, a bomb, and a bottle of poison.<sup>20</sup>

The man who inspired the organization was the journalist Ljubomir S. Jovanović Čupa<sup>21</sup>, who was the editor of the Slavic South (Slovenski jug) newspaper. In addition to him, who used his connections to promote Serbian unification and then the Yugoslav unification, Bogdan Radenković<sup>22</sup> a Serb of Kosovo origin, and the main organizer of the Serbian political action in both Kosovo and Macedonia, that played an important role. When the Serbian government rejected his request for the resumption of guerrilla activities in Old Serbia, Radenkovic, with his

13 Independent, Historical Notes: Brutal murder in Serbia: 1903, Dejan Djokic, Tuesday 29 June 1999

14 Olga Popović-Obradović, The parliamentary system in Serbia 1903-1914, Published by Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Translated by Branka Magaš, Printed by Zagorac, Belgrade 2013, p.21

15 Alan Cassels, Ideology and international relations in the modern world, Psychology Press 1996, pp.121-122

16 Miodrag Simić, S narodom "Politika" (1904-1915), Naučna knj. 1989, p.158

17 Dragoslav Srećević; Slavko Gavrilović; Sima M. Ćirković, Istorija srpskog naroda:knj. Od Berlinskog kongresa do Ujedinjenja 1878-1918 (2v.). Srpska književna zadruga, 1983, p.199

18 Edith Durham, Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle, Tirana, 2001, p.270

19 Black Hand Over Europe, by Henri Pozzi, Publisher: Reprint of the 1935 edition, Published by Croatian Information Centre, Zagreb 1994, f.64,

20 Vasa Kazimirović, Crna ruka: ličnosti i događaji u Srbiji od prevrata 1903. do Solunskog procesa 1917. godine, Prizma, 1997, p. 389

\*Ljubomir S. Jovanović Čupa, was a well-known public figure, student leader in the March 1903 demonstrations and initiator of the patriotic newspaper "Slovenian". He was considered the ideologue of the organization, he wrote his constitution and other documents. While studying in Brussels, he became acquainted with the teachings of secret European revolutionary societies, especially Carbonari, and accepted many of their ideas.

\*Radenkovic, a high school professor in Skopje, was one of the leaders of the Chetnik action in the "classic Serbian south", and since 1908 the president of the Serbian Democratic League, a Serb political organization in the Ottoman Empire. Dissatisfied with official Serbia's stance on the position of Serbs in Turkey, he contacted some of the officers - "young conspirators" with whom he collaborated during the Chetnik operation. He suggested that they set up a secret organization (following the example of VMRO) that would lead a revolutionary action in the Serb-dominated Serbian provinces. The officers he first contacted were former Chetniks Velimir Vemic and Vojin Tankosić.

many connections, turned to military officers. Together with Lj. S. Jovanović and several other officers, Radenković drew up a plan for the creation of a new organization. This organization was officially established on May 22, 1911 under the name "Unification or Death".

In addition to Jovanović and Radenković, the founding document was signed by five officers, including the undisputed leader of the young conspirators, Major Dragutin T. Dimitrijević Apis,<sup>23</sup> one of the main conspirators of the May 1903 coup, who was the heir to this conclusion, which ended the Obrenovic dynasty, and experienced the power of conspirators in the country's political life, with catastrophic consequences, which as Pashic's main supporter immediately after the assassination, began to rise rapidly in the Serbian military hierarchy and reached the rank of colonel in the Central Army Headquarters of Serbia, as a result, the power of the conspirators increased in the courts, parliament, and various governments in the early twentieth (XX) century<sup>24</sup>.

This organization also had its statute and program, which were designed by Ljubomir Jovanović Čupa in the model of the Italian secret society Carbonari of the XIX century, similar German societies and by the ideas of Russian nihilists, so he was the ideologue of the organization and writer of the Constitution and its Rules of Procedure.<sup>25</sup> Based on the Constitution of the organization, it can be clearly seen that this is a conspiratorial organization, strictly disciplined and hierarchically organized. The basic proclaimed ideas and goals of this secret organization were "the unification of the Serbs" and the fight for their interests. This is best evidenced by Article 2, which clearly states that the organization is secret, despite the fact that it was contrary to the applicable law of the state. The High Central Administration was the highest authority in this organization, the number of members was not limited, except for members from the Kingdom of Serbia, there was an authorized delegate of organizations of all Serbian provinces: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, old Serbia and Macedonia, Croatia, Slavonia and Srem, Vojvodina, Primorje, where each member was tasked with recruiting new members, and that he guaranteed with his life what he presents to the organization. The plot, in addition to special procedures in communication, it ensured that members of the organization were known by numbers, where only management knew them by name.<sup>26</sup> As well as, anyone who joined the organization once could not leave it.

The initiation ceremony for the new members was modeled mainly on Masonic initiation rites.<sup>27</sup> The room where the oath was taken was in the dark. In the middle of the room there was a table covered with a black cloth. There was a cross, a knife and a revolver on the table. The room was lit only by a small wax candle, the whole ritual is reminiscent of the ritual of uniting secret societies like the Freemasons.<sup>28</sup>

23 David MacKenzie, Apis. The Congenial Conspirator. The Life of Colonel Dragutin T. Dimitrijević Apis, Boulder: Columbia University Press, 1989, pp.60–65.

24 Wayne S. Vucinich, Serbia Between East and West. The Events of 1903-1908 (in English). [SJ]: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2006, p.104

25 Slobodan Bjelica, Organizacija Ujedinjenje ili smrt, Kultura polisa, broj 2-3/2005, p. 59.

26 Radovan M. Drašković, Pretorijanske težnje u Srbiji: Apis i „Crna ruka“, Žagor, Beograd, 2006, p. 112-113.

27 David MacKenzie, The 'Black Hand' and its Statutes, East European Quarterly, vol. XXV, no. 2 ( June 1991), pp. 179–206.

The oath provided by the constitution was followed by the following words:

“I do hereby swear by the Sun which shines upon me, by the Earth which feedeth me, by God, by the blood of my forefathers, by my honor and by my life, that from this moment onward and until my death, I shall faithfully serve the task of this organization and that I shall at all times be prepared to bear for it any sacrifice. I further swear by God, by my honor and by my life, that I shall unconditionally carry into effect all its orders and commands. I further swear by my God, by my honor and by my life, that I shall keep within myself all the secrets of this organization and carry them with me into my grave. May God and my friends in this organization be my judges if at any time I should wittingly fail or break this oath”.<sup>29</sup>

It is worth noting that the organization was funded by a weekly membership fee for its members, and if necessary, could obtain money by force.<sup>30</sup> The organization was also illegally funded by the Officers' Cooperative, which, when discovered, had turned into a scandal and a public conflict between black and radical officers.

The most important in this organization was the cultural part and the paramilitary part which within a few years managed to create over 200 branches and started a newspaper called "Pijemont".<sup>31</sup>

This newspaper had financial support from Prince Regent Alexander, who was a pioneer of the idea of the Black Hand, which aimed at pan-Serb unification, which has been positively accepted by the Serb population abroad.<sup>32</sup> Through the newspaper, this organization published its program, with the essential idea that: "the national selfishness of the state comes before and above all else." In conclusion, Piemonte stated that there were two goals which were not debatable, and these were the preparation of the youth and the preparation of the army.<sup>33</sup>

The organization's initial program focused on foreign policy, where it began to operate and spread in secret (it is believed that it had the most members before the Balkan wars - about two thousand), but the press and government soon learned of it, where the Black Hand began to be popularly called Black Hand, although it was equipped to attract a wider circle of young patriots, intellectuals and even some members of parliament, the Black Hand remained a military organization composed mainly of elderly officers, which favored revolutionaries over cultural action regardless of the consequences. Colonel Apis strengthened the Black Hand by recruiting young people infected with tuberculosis, the disease was so widespread and so debilitating that Apis was able to call upon the mourners with the idea that their only real chance to leave their

29 Radovan M. Drašković, *Pretorijanske težnje u Srbiji: Apis i „Crna ruka”*, Žagor, Beograd, 2006, p.124-129

30 Radovan M. Drašković, *Pretorijanske težnje u Srbiji: Apis i „Crna ruka”*, Žagor, Beograd, 2006, p.120-124.

31 Alan Cassels, *Ideology and international relations in the modern world*, Psychology Press 1996, pp.121-122

32 Barbara Jelavich, *What the Habsburg Government Kneš about the Black Hand*. In: *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 22, 1991, p. 131–150, JELAVICH, Barbara – JELAVICH, Charles: *The establishment of the Balkan national states, 1804-1920*. University of Washington Press, 1986, p. 259-260.

33 Hengel, Guido, *We, of tomorrow: a history of the young Bosnian student networks*. [Groningen]: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen 2017, p.176

NBS - Pijemont, 21/08/1911.

mark which would be to change Serbian history by killing Serbia's enemies. He had a persuasive manner and a personal magnetism that attracted other fanatics to him; two of his admirers described him as a "real man" and "a kind of magician".<sup>34</sup> So he began training guerrillas and saboteurs, committing political assassinations.<sup>35</sup>

### 3. "Black Hand" its consequences for Albanians and its fall

The preparation of the generations "to take revenge on Kosovo" and to achieve the "Serbian voting idea", subjecting all needs and interests to these goals, sacrificing people and rejecting any other possibility such as betrayal, strengthened in objective order the role of the army. He did not usurp the role of other factors: the king, political parties, intellectuals and people, but nationalism, as a common value for all, achieved its distilled form in the army. The Radicals faced army circles over government primacy, while the opposition was willing to cooperate with them to gain power.<sup>36</sup> To achieve its expansionist goals in the direction of Bosnia, Albania and Macedonia, the Serbian government of that time was not satisfied with its legal bodies alone. The first attempts are made immediately after the Radical Party took power. Over time, Chetnik activity in Kosovo and Macedonia (which were under the Ottoman Empire) were intensified and legalized, and continued to be openly supported by the Serbian government.

Since the program of the organization was the realization of a Greater Serbia, this program also included the Albanian territories, as a result of which, the Black Hand had formed a whole network of conspiracy against the Albanian lands. The experiences of this organization and other Chetnik gangs in crimes against Albanians have been exploited throughout the twentieth (XX) century. The atrocities and crimes committed by these extremist Serbian terrorist organizations and the Serbian army and gendarmerie are best evidenced by the terrifying documented evidence of Leo Freundlich, made public in Vienna at the time they were committed (1912-1913), entitled "Albanian Golgotha".<sup>37</sup> The Black Hand had carried out numerous massacres, burnings and looting against Albanian civilians in Kosovo, while the Serbian army advanced in 1912-13.<sup>38</sup>

Humanist Edith Durham also writes about these crimes committed by the Black Hand in Kosovo, referring to the reports of the Carnegie Commission, which states that in 1913-14, after the annexation of Kosovo and other Albanian territories by Serbia in 1912, the massacres were planned and carried out by the Black Hand Society.<sup>39</sup> Mit'hat Frashëri had also reacted to the Serbian massacres and of this organization in 1921, according to him, Serbia had massacred over

34 Lavender Cassels, *The Archduke and the Assassin*, Scarborough House, Briarcliff, New York, 1984, p. 229.

35 Agim Vuniqi, art. Shteti pa kufij, *Gazeta "Kosova Sot"*, 7 janar 2010 Prishtinë, p.12

36 Olga Popović-Obradović, *The parliamentary system in Serbia 1903-1914*, Published by Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Translated by Branka Magaš, Printed by Zagorac, Belgrade 2013, p.23

37 Famulltarët shqiptarë në raportin e tyre drejtuar Lidhjes së Kombeve në vitin 1930 për krimet e pushtetit serb ndaj shqiptarëve, i zënë në gojë shpesh krimet e organizatave çetnike si "Narodna odbrana" dhe "Bella ruka" s ikrah i shkëputur i "Cërnarukës" (La situation de la minorité albanaise en Yougoslavie. Memoire présenté à la Société des Nations par Don Bisaku, Don Etienne Kurti et Don Louis Gashi), Genève, le 5 mai 1930). Hivzi Islami, *Demographic studies, 100 years of Kosovo demographic development*, Second revised edition, Kosova Academy of Sciences and Arts, Prishtinë 2008, p.274

38 Micheal Clodfelter, *Warefare and Armed Conflicts: A statistical Encyclopedia of casualty and other figures, 1492-2015*, 4th ed. McFarland 2017, p.341

39 Edith Durham, *Brenga e Ballkanit dhe vepra të tjera për Shqipërinë dhe shqiptarët*, Tiranë: Naum Veqilharxhi, ribotim, 1998, p.400

80,000 Albanians through the Black Hand since 1913.<sup>40</sup> Serbian documents also prove that the Serbian terrorist organization Black Hand, intensively dealt with the organization of squads (groups) to enter the Vilayet of Kosovo,<sup>41</sup> which had a political background, because they supplied the Serbian element with weapons and sowed turmoil among the Albanian population, which it was often obligatory to clash with them. Albanian villages near the border have always had problems with these squads, and there have been numerous events where Albanians have clashed with Serb squads entering Kosovo for diversionary operations. The entry of these squads is found in the report of the Austro-Hungarian Deputy Consul in Mitrovica, Pözel, who from Mitrovica reported to Vienna “on a Serbian gang that had crossed the border near Podujeva, which had waged a fierce war against the Albanians of the villages around. The fighting had lasted eight hours. 7-10 Albanians were killed during the fighting. It was also reported for another Serbian gang, which was seen in StariKolashina”.<sup>42</sup> The report clearly shows the escalation of the actions of Serbian gangs in Albanian territory.

This organization also had the Steering Committee in Prishtina as well as the bodies that provided the daily links between their government and other circles. The committee included 12 officers, including a colonel, two lieutenant colonels and two majors, who were former members of Serbian terrorist organizations. For their work on assassinations, assimilation, they received hefty salaries from the Serbian government in Belgrade.<sup>43</sup> The Serbian state, through the organization, had also created funds, which it distributed through the Serbian consulate in Prishtina, which through its members, distributed these funds to people who paralyzed the work of the Albanian National Movement.<sup>44</sup>

Serbian officers, members of Serbian terrorist organizations, which consisted of the same dough, stated that the most effective way to pacify Albanians is their total extermination.<sup>45</sup>

In the effort of their chauvinist aspirations, the Albanian people were harmed the most.

However, the actions of this organization towards Bosnia, which was under Austro-Hungarian occupation, could not be carried out openly as if against the lands under the Ottoman Empire. They demanded camouflage and prudence. The Black Hand, led by Colonel Apis who coordinated the activity in accordance with the official Serbian policy and within it on June 28, 1914 organizes the famous Assassination of Sarajevo which destabilized Europe and led to the outbreak of the First World War, in which lives of millions of people were lost, which also changed the geography of Europe, especially that of the Balkans. Although "Belgrade and its protectors, Russia and France" tried to call the assassination an act undertaken by exalted Serbian

40 Hakif Bajrami, Si e riokupoi Serbia Kosovën më 1918, Vjetar, nr. XXXVII-XXXVIII, Prishtinë, 2007, p.229

41 Zekaria Cana, Kryengritja Shqiptare e vitit 1912 në dokumentet serbe, Prishtinë 2008, p.59, Legata e Mbretërisë së serbisë-Athinë, Millovan Millovanoviq-Beograd, 16/29.I

42 Shqipëria në dokumentet austro-hungareze 1912, vëll. II, përgatitur nga Ferit Duka, Dritan Egro, Sokol Gjermëni, Tiranë: Botimet Albanologjike, 2012, p.84, AIH, Vj. 22-16-1649, Raporti i zëvendës konsullit të Mitrovicës, Pozel, dërguar Vjenës, me të cilin njofton lidhur me përleshjet midis çetave shqiptareserbe në vilajetin e Kosovës, Mitrovicë, 11 prill 1912.

43 AQSH F-261, 1941, dos-92, p.6 (Cit. sipas F.Mehmetaj, Veprimtaria kriminale e “Dorës së Zezë” serbe...pp.67-68)

44 Faton Mehmetaj, Veprimtaria kriminale e “Dorës së Zezë” serbe në trojet shqiptare, “Anatema” Prishtinë, 2004, p.69

45 AIH - Arkivi i Shkupit. T-10, Kosta Novakoviq, p.12 (Cit. sipas F.Mehmetaj, Veprimtaria kriminale e “Dorës së Zezë” serbe...p.62)

nationalist groups, all traces were in the direction that the assassination was organized by the "Black Hand" and that the Serbian government was aware of this.<sup>46</sup>

Murderers of Archduke Gavrilo Princip and Nedelko Cabranovic were apprehended and questioned by police, who eventually gave the names of other conspirators, who were all members of the secret Serbian terrorist organization Black Hand operating in Bosnia called "Mlada Bosna" (New Bosnia) founded by the Serbian Army. This was acknowledged by the Appellate Court itself in the 1917 Thessaloniki Trial.<sup>47</sup>

After the occupation of Serbia by Austro-Hungary, the Serbian government and army withdrew and settled on the Greek island of Crete. Although Western allies blamed Serbia for initiating the war, its government did not admit guilt until 1917 and did not worry about the development of political-military events in Europe. It was only after the Russian Army's defeat on the Eastern Front and the start of the Russian civil war in 1917 between the Bolsheviks and Tsarist government forces that Serbian diplomacy began to worry about Serbia's position in the development circumstances of the World War I Europe and after it.<sup>48</sup> As a result, Nikola Pashic and Regent Aleksandar Karagjorgjevic decided that the Black Hand should be destroyed as it was a threat to their exile regime, as well as an obstacle to a possible special peace with Austria-Hungary and a threat for civilian rule in post-war Serbia.

Following the developments in Russia, Pashic saw that his main power or ally was fading and felt the danger posed to Serbia in the international arena. For this he acted quickly with the judgment of the Supreme Military Court, on June 26, 1917, known as the "Thessaloniki Case", the officers of the black hand were also accused of attempting to assassinate the regent prince, where Dragutin Dimitrijevic- "APIS" and two other Black Hand soldiers were sentenced to death by firing squad.<sup>49</sup>

For many years, the organization Black Hand had ceased its activities, but during the Second World War, in order to exterminate the Albanians, it was reactivated again together with the organization Narodna Odbrana, which began by compiling monthly analysis of what should be done to Albanians.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

If we continuously analyze the numerous efforts and actions of the Serbian state in the realization of the political platform of Garashanin designed in Načertanije (the Draft), we conclude that this great Serbian program caused many horrors and tragedies to the Albanians. Its influence on the policy of the Serbian authorities on the Albanian issue, based on the Serbian expansionist

46 Ismet Azizi, Shteti i sotem serb produkt i një akti kriminal, Gazeta online: Kosoava për Sanxhakun, NËNTOR 11, 2018  
<http://kosovapersanxhakun.org/?p=6680&lang=sq>

47 Fetnete Ramosaj, Against Forgetfulness, Serbian Genocide in Kosova 1998-1999, Printing Press, Prishtinë 2017, p. 119

48 IsmetAzizi, Shteti i sotem serb produkt i një akti kriminal, Gazeta online: Kosoava për Sanxhakun, NËNTOR 11, 2018  
<http://kosovapersanxhakun.org/?p=6680&lang=sq>

49 Georges Castellan, Histori e Ballkanit, Prishtinë: ID-Print, 1997, p. 505

50 Hakif Bajrami, Politika panslaviste serbe në luftë për shfarosjen e shqiptarëve 1836-1999, Vjetar, nr. XXXXI-XXXII, Prishtinë 2004, p.305



policy towards the Albanians at all stages of time, we conclude that it had a permanent impact on the inspiration of the Serbian authorities for the displacement and expulsion of the Albanian population and the colonization and occupation of their autochthonous lands, it inspired Serbian intellectuals with its spirit.

As a result, many official and semi-official terrorist organizations were formed, which operated in the direction of Kosovo, organizations that were paid for and commanded by the Serbian state. The most notorious of these organizations was the Black Hand, which in terms of ideas and goals, we can conclude that it was terrorist and criminal, which was formed in 1903, by Major Dragutin T. Dimitrijević Apis, who was one of the main conspirators of the coup d'état of May 1903, which put an end to the Obrenovic dynasty and the cause of the Sarajevo massacre, which led to a world-wide war in which millions of people lost their lives, changed the Europe's geography, especially that of the Balkans. The bloody coup, in which the king was assassinated together with his family and members of the government, is a stain that can never be erased from the history of any nation, not even from the history of the Serbs.

The experiences of this organization and other Chetnik gangs in crimes against Albanians have been exploited throughout the twentieth century (XX). We can conclude that the organization Black Hand served as an underground group which implemented government policies, such as espionage, for which the government could then deny responsibility.

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