

ČLANCI

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THE MAKING OF „BLACK HAND“ RECONSIDERED

ABSTRACT: *This study assesses the effects of Serbian „Macedonian Struggle“ over the making of the secret society, popularly known as „Black Hand.“ Building on the existent literature, by using memoires, court records and sources from diplomatic correspondence, the articles traces a decade of metamorphosis of secret society of officers from the 1903 May coup until the end of Balkan wars 1913, emphasizing the previously neglected Macedonian aspect, deemed here crucial for understanding the functioning of the society and its relation to the Serbian state.*

KEYWORDS: Black Hand, IMRO, terrorism, World War I, Committee of Union and Progress

Ujedinjenje ili smrt (Unification or Death) was a secret society whose alleged commitment to the Sarajevo assassination often made it the major topic of discussion among the historians researching outbreak of the First World War, particularly the ones emphasizing the Serbian share of responsibility. Popularly known as the „Black Hand,“ the society is usually considered as a conspiratorial group made up of Serbian army officers gathered around Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis. According to the widespread but simplified view, the society was formed with the aim of uniting all regions inhabited by the Serbs with the Serbian Kingdom. One reads that its bellicose approach to the national question was incompatible with the prudent foreign policy of Nikola Pašić, and made it inevitable for the „Black Hand“ to pursue its goals clandestinely, independent from the government of his Radical Party. Another popular view holds that the society dedicated itself principally to the anti-Habsburg struggles as a revolutionary substitute for the *Narodna odbrana* (National Defense) that had lost its original militant nature after the Bosnian Crisis in 1909, becoming no more than a cultural philanthropic organization.

Such views are failing to account for a fact that the peak of „Black Hand’s“ activity came immediately before and during the Balkan wars,

which were followed by its diminished cohesion and weakening of influence of the officer group of Dimitrijević-Apis after the Priority crisis in 1914. By tracing the trajectories of the political operations of the Apis group, this article elucidates the importance of the Macedonian factor, and assesses the extent to which the Serbian government played a role in the foundation of the Black Hand.

The May coup officers – the backbone of the „Black Hand“

The traditional historiography asserts that the „Black Hand“ was founded on 22 May 1911,¹ but its core group were the participants in the palace coup of 10–11 June 1903, customarily referred to as „the May coup.“ At the turn of the twentieth century, a serious political crisis was well under way inside Serbia. The crisis was expressed through a collision between the young king, Aleksandar Obrenović, and his opponents detested his growing inclination to a despotic rule, with various discontents converging over his personal affairs – a marriage with a woman of ill reputation.² In 1901, a conspiracy circle was founded with the aim to remove the queen. A dozen of senior officers organized the main conspiratorial board, and began to induce their colleagues to form local cells. The main figures were Colonel Alexandar Mašin (brother of the queen's first husband), General Jovan Atanacković, Colonel Leonid Solarević and Lieutenant Colonels Petar Mišić and Damnjan Popović. By the day of regicide, the conspirator had gathered as many as 200 pledges of commitment.³ The overwhelming majority came from the rank of lower officers, who eventually carried out military operation during the coup. Among the young officers, the most active were Lieutenants Antonije Antić and Dragutin Dimitrijević - Apis.⁴

As this process shows, the plot was at first conceived by the senior officers, and the young officers were recruited only after the master plan had been drawn up. David Mackenzie, however, asserts Apis played the role as de facto commander of the rebel officers during the coup, and continued to be seen as their leader after the coup.⁵ His assertion is exaggerated, if

¹ By the Julian calendar the date was 9 May. In this paper, the author uses dates based on the Gregorian calendar.

² Michael Boro Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia 1804–1918*, (NY & London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), II, 480.

³ Vasa Kazimirović, *Crna ruka: ličnosti i događaji u Srbiji od prevrata 1903. do Solunskog procesa 1917. godine*, (Beograd: Prizma, 1997), 70–78.

⁴ Slobodan Bjelica, „Organizacija ‘Ujedinjenje ili smrt!’“, *Kulturna politika*, 2–3, (2005), 51.

⁵ David Mackenzie, *Apis, the Congenial Conspirator: The Life of Colonel Dragutin T. Dimitrijević Apis*, (Boulder: Columbia University Press, 1989).

not misleading, as Apis was only one of the participants at the night of operation. Although he was the one of two officers who were wounded during the coup, his role in regicide was of secondary importance. He did not hold any commanding position. It was Aleksandar Mašin that elaborated the plan of attack and took the role of the leader among the insurgents. After the coup, the new regime was controlled by the senior plotters, not by Apis and his young friends.⁶ It is true that Apis had since been popular among the young plotters and regarded as their leader by some outside observers, but it was due to his personal charm or charisma, not the role in the May Coup. The reason why Apis and his friends could exert a certain extent of influence over the Serbian politics, acting as semi-independent actor for more than ten years before the First World War, was an unintended consequence of the British pressure in 1906 forcing most of the senior plotters to retire. After their withdrawal, their positions and power was, to a certain degree, taken over by the young plotters, enabling Apis and his friends to form a special interest group both within the Army. It is in this context that the young plotters could pursue their political goals sometimes beyond the control of civilian authorities, but not always with success.⁷

The main motive that drove the young officers to carry out the coup in the first place was the anxiety about the damage the king's focus on the internal affairs might inflict on the Serbian foreign policy. As Čedomir Popović, a leading „Black Hand“ member later recollected: „The main reason why the young officers entered into a plot of 29 May in 1903 was that the wider layers of citizens, especially the circles of officers had been anxious about the total lack of works for the national issues. It had been felt that the last king of Obrenović family too much immersed himself into internal political struggles with the purpose to strengthen his dynasty, and entirely neglected the national action.“⁸ In the same vein, Apis testified at the Salonika court, „that Serbian idea and Serbian mission had been wholly abandoned [by the previous Obrenović rulers].“⁹

After the coup, the sentiment even grew larger, and the young officer-plotters considered themselves as the main guardian of the country's sovereignty and the proponents of the sacred mission of national unification.¹⁰ It led them to develop close ties with other nationalist groups. In

⁶ V. Kazimirović, *Crna ruka*, 106.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 240–251.

⁸ Čedomir Popović, „Organizacija „Ujedinjenje ili smrt“ („Crna ruka“), *Nova Evropa*, (11 June 1927), 397.

⁹ David MacKenzie, *The „Black Hand,” on trial: Salonika, 1917*, (East European monographs, Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1995), 322.

¹⁰ Dušan Bataković, „Storm over Serbia: The Rivalry between Civilian and Military Authorities (1911–1914)”, *Balkanica*, 44 (2013), 315.

early May 1903, a group of students of „Velika Škola [the precursor of Belgrade university]” founded a cultural educational club, „*Slovenski jug* (Slavic south),“ in Belgrade. The club happened to be a main advocate for unification of all South Slavs based on liberal, but ill-defined, principle of Yugoslav fraternity.¹¹ The founders had a close contact with the members of Belgrade based freemason lodge, *Pobratimstvo*, and its prominent member, Milorad Gođevac (a sanitary doctor of Belgrade municipal government). The statute of the society was written up by Ljuba Jovanović-Čupa (one of the founders of „Black Hand“), and a participant of the May coup, Milan Vasić was also enrolled. The society had strong connections with major figures of Serbian politics, especially from Independent Radical Party (Ljubomir Davidović, Jaša Prodanović and Ljubomir Stojanović, as well as with figures like Živan Živanović (politician, Liberal Party, brother-in-law of Apis). Several important May coup officers, such as General Jovan Atanacković, Major Peter Pešić, Lieutenant Živojin Rafailović and Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis, had intimate ties with the society, too.¹²

One of the main concerns of Serbian nationalists at that time was the pervasion of Bulgarian influence over the Ottoman Macedonia. In 1895, Bulgarian guerillas organized by the Sofia based „*Vrhoven makedonski komitet* (Supreme Macedonian committee)“ entered into the Ottoman territory. Albeit totally abortive, the incursion and ensuing alleged persecution of Christian population succeeded in attracting the Western sympathy to the Bulgarian national cause.¹³ The next year, another group of Bulgarian nationalists was formed in the Ottoman Macedonia. The organization, subsequently known as *Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization* (IMRO), rapidly grew into a formidable force, making use of guerrilla tactics. Due to the activities of IMRO, the situation in Macedonia was constantly deteriorating. The more the turmoil prevailed, the more the international attention inclined to be sympathetic to the Bulgarian cause.¹⁴ These events much alarmed the Serbian nationalists who also had envisaged territorial expansion at the cost of the Ottomans.¹⁵

¹¹ Milorad Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije, 1790–1918*, vol. 2, (Beograd: Prosveta, 1989), 535–536.

¹² Jaroslav Valerijanović Višnjakov, „Makedonski pokret i prevrat u Srbiji 29. maja 1903”, *Tokovi istorije*, Časopis Instituta za noviju istoriju Srbije, 3 (2010), 19–20.

¹³ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia, 1870–1913*, (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003), 104–106.

¹⁴ Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Revolutionary Movement, 1893–1903*, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1988), 97–98.

¹⁵ J. Višnjakov, „Makedonski pokret,” 13.

The beginning of the Serbian *četa* activities

In face of growing threat of the IMRO, Serbian teachers in the Skopje and Bitola districts tried to counteract it by organizing their own militia as early as 1900. They eventually created small bands – *četa*,¹⁶ but they were no match to the Bulgarians mainly due to the limited resources and manpower. The official Serbian policy was not in favor of armed struggle at the moment.¹⁷ Another initiative came from Belgrade. Milorad Gođevac launched an idea to organize Serbian guerillas to counterpoise the Bulgarians. Making use of his close ties with former Macedonian Bulgarian activists who had taken shelter in Belgrade, he sat up a small guerilla band of five fighters in the summer 1901. Provided with equipment and weapons, the band was sent into the Ottoman territory, but promptly neutralized by the IMRO.¹⁸

The events following the May coup of 1903 drastically changed the course of Serbian *četa* activities. Jovan Atanacković, one of the main plotters was sympathetic to the act of Gođevac. The outbreak of *Ilinden-Preobrazhenie* Uprising in the late summer 1903 further precipitated the Serbian nationalists' concern, as the abortive uprising turned out to be a successful propaganda for the Bulgarian presence in the region. The Western media started a self-styled civilizing mission, and requested the protection for enslaved Christians in the European Turkey.¹⁹ As a result, the two Great Powers that had vested interest in the region, Russia and Austria-Hungary, were forced to formulate a new reform plan, at least ostensibly, in favor of the Christian population. As their Mürzsteg Reform Plan envisaged that some form of political autonomy was to be accorded to the ethnic groups that constituted the majority, it necessitated the Serbs to display their presence in Macedonia.²⁰ The growing anxiety of Belgrade political

¹⁶ *Četa* is originally a Turkish (*çete*) designating an armed bandit band. *Četnik* is its member. In the contemporary sources (Turkish, Bulgarian, and Serbian), the term *četnik* and *komita*, *komitađija*, *komitaci* are all synonyms. It is after the WWI that *četnik* became a Serbian national symbol, and *komita* became the fixed nickname of IMRO fighters. For the convenience, the author calls Serbian fighters as *četniks*, and Bulgarians *komitas*.

¹⁷ They were Jovan Dovezenski, Jovan Babunski, Rade Radivojević, Dušan Vardarski, Lazar Kujundžić-Klempa and Dokim Mihailović-Debarac. Among them stood out Jovan Babunski. He was to become the most successful captain of the Serbian *četnik* action. Biljana Vučetić, „Srpska revolucionarna organizacija u Osmanskom carstvu na početku XX veka“, *Istorijski časopis*, 53, (2006), 368.

¹⁸ Hristo Siljanov, *Osvoboditelnite borbi na Makedonija*, vol. 2, (Sofia: Dŭrzhavna pečatnitsa, 1948), 276–277.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 281.

²⁰ Steven W. Sowards, *Austria's Policy of Macedonian Reform*, (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1989), 27–30, 74–75.

elites over the eventual loss of territory that they deemed as a part of historical Serbia led them to full support for the Serbian *četas*.²¹

Principal figure was again doctor Gođevac. After the initial failure of 1901, this time Gođevac took more prudent measures. Making use of his freemason network, he secured financial support from Luka Čelović, a wealthy merchant. Another freemason, Vasa Jovanović, an attorney of Macedonian origin, embarked on recruiting of several Macedonian *komitas* for the Serbian cause. These three original members persuaded Jovan Atanacković (then the minister of the army) to assume the chair of the Central Committee of „Serbian četnik action“, founded in the late summer 1903.²² The creation of Central Committee made it much easier to coordinate the activities of Serbian nationalists in Macedonia.²³ Not only the committee provided them with money, weapon, and tacit support from the Serbian diplomatic authorities. It also dispatched the young officers that had participated in the May coupe 1903 in support of their activities.²⁴

The armament and smuggling of *četas* was the work of Živojin Rafajlović. Rafajlović, a border officer, had already taken the lead of founding his own committee in Vranje by the mid summer of 1903 and attached it to Belgrade's organization as its „executive committee“²⁵ There is a dispute

²¹ Wayne S. Vucinich, *Serbia between East and West: The Events of 1903–1908*, (Stanford: Stanford University Publications, 1954), 120.

²² The date of foundation is not clear. Vladimir Ilić infers it after 15 August 1903, the date of retirement of Atanacković; Vladimir Ilić, *Srpska četnička akcija 1903–1912*, (Beograd: Ecolobri, 2006), 21; It seems to be well taken. If so, the several intrusions of Serbian bands into the Ottoman territory in July and August, asserted by Silyanov, were independent works of Vranja committee; H. Silyanov, *Osvoboditeljine borbi*, 279. As Silyanov put it, the enterprises were organized by Živojin (Žika) Rafajlović, an army officer, who set up a committee in Vranja during the summer. The Vranja committee later merged into the Belgrade committee, and became its executive branch; V. Ilić, *Srpska četnička...*, 25.

²³ After 1904, the Serbian bands mounted on their activities. According to the Ottoman assessment, inside the Serbian movement, there were two different groups. One preferred the initiative from Belgrade, the other behaved as an independent movement, but at the same time, expected financial aid from sympathizers in Belgrade as well as diplomatic help from the Serbian consulate in Skopje: Gül Tokay, *Makedonya Sorunu: Jön Türk İhtilalinin Kökenleri (1903–1908)*, (İstanbul: AFA yayın, 1995), 64.

²⁴ B. Vučetić, „Srpska revolucionarna...“ 361; As for the activities of the politicized officers, the Russian charge d'affaire wrote, “A part of officer corps seeks more active policy. They were headed by General Atanacković and Captain Rafajlović, whom we can call as Serbian “[Boris] Sarafov.” They were followed by students. Recent activities of officers can be seen in several insignificant guerilla bands. Students recently held a joint congress of Serbian and Bulgarian youth in Sofia, where they approved a joint program of revolutionary activities.” (Source: АВПРИ, ф. Политархив, д. 2869, л. 31–32. Cited by J. Višnjakov, “Makedonski pokret,” 20.

²⁵ Stevan Simić, *Komitsko četovanje u Staroj Srbiji i Makedoniji 1903–1912*, (Beograd: Hrišćanska misao, 2012), 55. Ljubomir Jovanović-Čupa and Ljubomir Nešić, as a dele-

whether Rafajlović was the initiator of Serbian *četa*. Rafajlović claimed it was he that had sent the first *četa* led by Arsom Gavrilović. Vasil Trbić retorts it, asserting the first *četa* was formed by himself.²⁶ The archival documents, as seen below, support Rafajlović's claim. Namely, by late August 1903, Mihailo Ristić, the Serbian consul of Skopje noticed that a few Serbian *četaks* had been active inside the Ottoman territory. They were recruited, equipped and salaried by Gođevac, and sent across the border by Rafajlović. The commanders of bands were Serbian officers, which was well known among the locals and even the Turkish consul in Niš was aware of the details. Alarmed by the development, Ristić met Rafajlović in person in Vranje, and warned him of „thoughtless actions.“ Rafajlović confessed he had sent two bands so far, and vindicated himself, saying that Prime Minister Avakumović approved the act and the foreign minister, too.²⁷ There were reasons to doubt this. On 17 September, Stojan Protić, the interior minister, referred to the foreign minister for the report of the magistrate of Vranje that Živojin Rafajlović was sending *četniks* into Turkey. The next day, the foreign minister announced the magistrate to notify Rafajlović to stop sending *četaks*, and to transfer them into the Serbian inland.²⁸ As these stories imply, Gođevac-Rafajlović's *četa* operation was not overtly sanctioned as a national policy for that moment. On 25 May 1904, Ristić still denounced the Rafajlović's *četaks* of „adventurous act that amounts to nothing but a betrayal“ after reporting a skirmish between a *četa* and the Ottoman army that had claimed a death toll of 24 *četniks*, 1 police and 3 soldiers.²⁹

However, the discord between the diplomatic agencies and *četniks* dissolved soon afterwards. On 20 June 1904, Nikola Pašić, then a foreign minister, sent a circular to the Serbian consulates in the Ottoman territory, and urged them to take up fierce fight against the Bulgarian *komitas*.³⁰

gation of „Slovenski Jug,“ made a three-day visit in Sofia 13–15 March 1905. They met Damjan Grujev and talked with him for four hours. The Serbian side proposed cooperation between the two organizations within the framework of free and autonomous Macedonia. Grujev declined the offer on the ground that any form of collaboration had to be carried out under the leadership of VMRO. It had to be a sole authority in Macedonia, and any action outside of its initiative was regarded as an enemy. The Serbs, then, asked him why VMRO had killed so many Serbs in Macedonia. Grujev's answer was that they were killed as they acted against the Organization. He underscored, “If it fits into its interest, the Organization doesn't hesitate to employ every possible measures.” *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knjiga 6, vol. 1, sec. 3/1, priredio Dušan Lukač, urednik Vaso Čubrilović, (Beograd: SANU, 1981), 519–520.

²⁶ B. Vučetić, „Srpska revolucionarna“, 361–362; S. Simić, *Komitsko četovanje*, 90.

²⁷ *Dokumenti*, vol. 1, sec. 1, 427–428.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, supplement 1, 134–135.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, sec. 2, 364.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, sec. 2, 444.

Upon his request, the cabinet sanctioned a total of 200,000 dinars of extraordinary budget, earmarked for the „defense of national interest in Macedonia.“³¹ The defense ministry sent a total of 265 rifles and other ammunitions from the army's depot in Pirot to the magistrate of Vranje on 4 October. It sent additional 1,000 rifles for the supply of „our people in the Salonika, Bitola and Kosovo provinces“ on 13 November, and another 1,000 to Vranje upon the demand of Pašić on 20 January 1905.³² All these facts attest to the fact that the Serbian *četa* operation now took a form of full-fledged national struggle. Under the direction of the head of consulate section of foreign ministry, the Serbian consulates of Priština, Skopje and Bitola were turned into the *de fact* headquarters of the guerrilla operations. They served as intelligent centers, military depot, and asylum for the fighters.

On 9 July 1905, however, Belgrade reached at the agreement of custom union with Sofia, which made the overt support of *četniks'* fighting against *komitas* politically risky. Serbian diplomats discussed the hitherto terrorist sponsoring policy on 23 July 1905. At the meeting, Svetislav Simić (Serbian diplomatic representative in Sofia) remarked: „The Macedonian question has already gone beyond the clerical and educational phase. It is a purely political question now. We should face up to the fact. It is necessary, accordingly, to formulate a new strategy. There is no reason that we can't do what the Bulgarians has hitherto done.“ As the effective counter act against the Bulgarian revolutionaries, he insisted, Serbia had to continue the financial and military support for the Serbian population in the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, however, he asserted the work had to be carried out clandestinely. The best way was to „make use of the trustworthy civil agents through which the government could exercise full control over the activities.“ The proposal was unanimously accepted by the conference. In this way, the government continued to lend support to the *četnik* action.³³

Many May coup officers took part in the movement. Vojin Popović (Vojvoda Vuk) entered into Macedonia as a *četa* commander in 1905, then, became a chief of mountain staff in 1907–1908. Mihailo Ristić-Uča was a chief of the mountain staff in 1905, a secretary of central committee in 1906, and a *vojvoda* in 1907. Alimpije Marjanović-Ovčepoljski was a chief of mountain staff in 1907–1908. Aleksandar Blagojević-Kočanski was a chief of mountain staff in 1907, and a member of executing committee in 1908. Velimir Vemić took part in battles as a *vojvoda*. Ljubomir Vulović served as a member of executive committee in 1906–1908.³⁴

³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, supplement 1, 167–168.

³² *Ibid.*, 181–182, 201, 248–249.

³³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, sec. 1, 41, 172.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, supplement 1–3, vol. 3, supplement.

Among these officers, Ilija Jovanović-Pčinski played the key roles in the early stage of organization of Serbian *četa* combat structure. Entering in Macedonia, he noticed the unruly conducts of local *vojvodas*. „In all the villages we have organized, those near the border, the Serbian bands impose tribute, just like Bulgarians, on the population. Due to this practice, the people are suffering much, and resentful to their brethren... I can say with confidence that the levy is imposed only for the sake of extravagance of guerrillas... The *vojvodas* are using the sum for their personal needs.“³⁵ As a measure to curb them, Jovanović proposed to set up a mountain staff, and put the operations of Serbian *čet*as under its control.³⁶ The proposal was accepted and the mountain staff was established on 23 April 1905.³⁷ As the chief of mountain staff, Jovanović successfully coordinated the operations of Serbian *čet*as during the summer, and consolidated their strength in Kosovo and upper stream of the Vardar. Shortly afterward, Jovanović had to retreat into interior due to bad health, but he supervised the guerrilla activities as the head of executive committee in Vranje until the end of the year. Subsequently, his position was succeeded by Ljubomir Vulović, another coup officer.³⁸

No less important was the role of Vojislav Tankosić. Together with Žika Živković, he went to the Skopje region disguised as a merchant in the fall of 1903. They were sent by the Belgrade Committee, and smuggled the weapons that had purchased with the money of *Kolo srpskih sestara* [Circle of Serbian sisters]. Along with this operation, they made reconnaissance of the people and geography, and had opened secret channels for smuggling arms and ammunition running through Vranje – Skopje – Prilep – Bitola – Poreč by January 1904.³⁹ Subsequently, he widely participated in military actions in the spring of 1905, and showed inherent skill in the guerilla warfare. He also played important roles in recruiting young officers for the guerilla activities.⁴⁰ Tankosić came back from this secret front in the late summer, but kept close tie with the executive committee in Vranje, playing the role of recruiter and trainer of volunteers.⁴¹ After finishing his courses in the higher military academy, Tankosić returned to the Macedonia battlefield as a chief of mountain staff.⁴²

³⁵ The report dated on 16–18 March 1905. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, supplement 1, 285–286.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 287.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 371–372.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 675, 677.

³⁹ V. Kazimirović, *Crna ruka*, 354; *Dokumenti*, vol. 2, supplement, 1, 145.

⁴⁰ V. Ilić, *Srpska čenička*, 49.

⁴¹ *Dokumenti*, vol. 2, supplement, 1, 345, 523, 580–581.

⁴² Milorad Belić, *Komitski vojvoda Vojislav Tankosić*, (Valjevo: Međuopštinski istorijski arhiv, 2005), 24–25.

During his office in the mountain staff, Tankosić made a big scandal. In the night, 21 May 1908, Serbian mob led by Tankosić unleashed an assault on a Bulgarian village, Stracin. The attack claimed a toll of 4 death and 8 wounded. A total of 10 houses were demolished and other 10 were partly destroyed by fire. The Serbian consul in Skopje remarked: „He *again* took part in this kind of works. [Italic is added]”⁴³ The Austria-Hungary consul of Skopje felt serious concern,⁴⁴ and the Bulgarian government was much alarmed, as the village was attacked for the third time within a year.⁴⁵ The central committee in Belgrade strongly warned the executive committee in Vranje never to let it happen again. Tankosić’s band, however, burned another Bulgarian village, Gradec. The two consecutive freebooting perturbed not only Austro-Hungarian but Russian consul, too. Both of them openly condemned the Serbian government. Faced with strong reprimand of two Great Powers, Nikola Pašić became much concerned about the development. He even personally instructed the Skopje consulate to bring back Tankosić to Belgrade. Tankosić, however, was neither disciplined nor extradited. He was just transferred to the Kumanovo district’s mountain staff.⁴⁶ After the Young Turk revolution 1908, the Serbian četnik action could not continue any longer. By the time, the career as a *četnik* commander made Vojslav Tankosić the first rank expert in guerilla warfare in the Serbian Army. Therefore, when the Bosnian crisis broke out on 6 October, Tankosić again went into reserve and was appointed as the commander of volunteers coming from Austria-Hungary. For this mission, he went to Čuprija in early December, and opened a training camp for guerrilla fighters that operated by the end of March 1909.⁴⁷ Roughly two years later, Tankosić joined a secret organization, known as „Black Hand.“

Macedonian factor in the making of „Black Hand“

The founding process of „Black Hand“ is far from clear, even though the most of the authors describe more or less the same story. First of all, the date of foundation is uncertain. Some of the researchers prefer to think it 22 May 1911,⁴⁸ others claims the date was 22 March.⁴⁹ The for-

⁴³ *Dokumenti*, vol. 3, supplement, 169.

⁴⁴ *Avstriski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod*, vol. 2, redakcija, prevod i komentar Dančo Zografski, (Skopje: Arhiv na Makedonija, 1981), 122–124.

⁴⁵ Svetlozar Eldurov, *Srùbskata vùorùzhena propaganda v Makedoniya 1901–1912*, (Sofia: Sv. Georgi Pebedonosec, 1993), 122, 130.

⁴⁶ *Dokumenti*, 3, supplement, 182, 185, 189, 195.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁴⁸ D. MacKenzie, *The „Black Hand“*, 35; S. Bjelica, „Organizacija ‘Ujedinjenje ili smrt!’”, 52; D. Bataković, „Storm over Serbia”, 324.

mer is based on the organization's statute presented to the Salonika court in 1917. It seems more plausible that the later date, suggested in memoir of Čedomir Popović written in 1927, marked the entry of three new members in the central committee rather than the founding date. The diary of Velimir Vemić, one of the most important sources that describe the process of foundation, testifies it was on 23 September, but it grossly contradicts with the other sources.⁵⁰ Owing to this uncertainty, the way of description of the founding process of the „Black Hand“ slightly varies, reflecting the main perspective of each author. Thus, those who are sympathetic to the patriotic cause of Sarajevo assassins tend to rely on the Vemić's diary and hence underscore the impact of the Annexation crisis.⁵¹

According to Vemić, the initial idea of new national organization came into to his mind as early as September 1908 when he disclosed the plan to Jovan Cvijić. As Cvijić declined the proposal, the initial plan was abandoned. After the annexation of Bosnia, Vemić was convinced that an organization stronger than the *Narodna odbrana* was necessary, and proposed a new plan to Ljubomir Jovanović-Čupa on 11 April 1909, but to no avail. There is no mention in his diary that he agreed with Tankosić and Bogdan Radenković to draft a statute of new organization.⁵² If this story is true, one should have concluded that the main propagator of „Black Hand“ was Vemić. The researchers, however, are unanimous that the initiator was Radenković.⁵³ Even Vemić wrote in his diary as follows: “With Šilja [Tankosić] and Bogdan [Radenković] I met at „Kasina“ [a Belgrade café] and agreed to form a club with revolutionary aims. We will gather that part of the Macedonian group that favors active work... It was agreed that Bogdan would work out the statutes“.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Slavko Mićanović, *Sarajevski atentat*, (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1965), 74; Drago Ljubibratić, *Gavrilo Princip*, (Beograd: Nolit, 1959), 170; V. Kazimirović, *Crna ruka*, 339.

⁵⁰ As this confusion implies, the available sources are either dubious or ambiguous. The testimonies of the Salonika trial was a product of political struggle between Apis and the prince Alexander. See: D. MacKenzie, The “Black Hand”. The authenticity of Vemić's diary has not completely established. The diary was not the original but rewritten by someone, most probably Vemić himself, sometime between 1915 and 1917. Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), footnote 15, 500.

⁵¹ According to Dedijer, the “Black Hand” was “a direct product of the climate of despair provoked in Belgrade by the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina”. V. Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, 371; Ljubibratić and Bataković emphasizes the frustration caused by the disarmament of *Narodna odbrana*, D. Ljubibratić, *Gavrilo Princip*, 170; D. Bataković, “Storm over Serbia”, 324–325.

⁵² V. Kazimirović, *Crna ruka*, 342–344.

⁵³ Kazimirović concludes “the initiative for the creation of Black Hand came from Bogdan Radenković.” Kazimirović, *Crna ruka*, 341; Likewise, Bataković confirms “Radenković devised a plan for the creation of a new organization”; D. Bataković, “The storm over Serbia”, 324.

⁵⁴ Quoted by David MacKenzi; D. MacKenzie, *The “Black Hand”*, 36.

Bogdan Radenković was born in a village near Kosovska Mitrovica in 1875. After learning theology in Prizren, he went to Istanbul and got higher education as a priest. Returning to the Balkans, he once worked as a teacher in the Serbian high school in Skopje. Then, he became a secretary of the bishop of Skopje. When the Serbian *četnik* action started in 1904, he became the chair of Skopje district committee. After the Young Turk Revolution, he was elected as the president of Serbian Democratic League (SDL), a Serb nationalist political party in the Ottoman Empire, whose structure was based on the committee network of the *četnik* action.⁵⁵ Along with this official career, Radenković worked as an agent of Serbian consulate in Skopje. The Serbian government granted him the increase in monthly bonus by 50 dinars from November 1905.⁵⁶ It attests to that he had been a Serbian operative long before the date and much after. What is uncertain is the two following points: Why would Radenković think it necessary to form a private organization independent from the government? When did he reach at the conclusion?

Another principal source, Popović's memoir, describes the context of Radenković's proposal as follows. After the Young Turk Revolution, the Serbian government abandoned all the military activities in Macedonia, thus the „Bulgarian organization“ was gaining ground at the cost of Serbs. It alarmed the Serb „revolutionaries“ much and urged them to take more radical measures. Those who worried the most were the participants in the Macedonian struggle. They eventually became resolute to look for an alternative to the governmental support. In the meantime, the Macedonian Serbs were divided into the moderates who supported the Young Turks, and the radicals that insisted to resume the fight against the Turks. Bogdan Radenković was the head of the latter group. His group decided to renew the *četnik* action at a conference in Skopje towards the end of 1910. After the congress, Radenković came to Belgrade to look for the governmental support. However, his endeavor turned out to be fruitless. Now, Radenković realized there was no other option other than to make it as a private initiative – to create a secret organization independent from the government. He disclosed the plan to his old friends (Tankosić, Jovanović and Vemić), and they agreed.⁵⁷

The two sources concur that the Radenković's plan of a new organization or „club“ was first supported by „the Macedonian group that favors active work,“ i. e. the former *četnik* officers. Radenković's aspiration was to revitalize the Serbian *četnik* movement by recreating an organization same

⁵⁵ V. Kazimirović, *Crna ruka*, 344.

⁵⁶ *Dokumenti*, vol. 1, sec. 3/2, 601.

⁵⁷ Č. Popović, „Organizacija Ujedinjenje ili smrt“, 402–404.

as the IMRO.⁵⁸ Their concern, therefore, focused on Macedonia and Kosovo, not Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁹

For the first question, the answer seems simple at first sight. Both Popović and Vemić agreed that Radenković conceived such idea, because his proposal had been declined by the government. Probably based on these sources, Dušan Bataković concludes: “When the Serbian government rejected his demand for the renewal of guerrilla activities in Old Serbia, Radenković... turned to military officers.”⁶⁰ The second question is not as easy. According to Popović’s memoir, the date when Radenković conceived the idea must have been between the end of 1910 and early March 1911. Radenković testified at the Salonika trial that it was early 1911.⁶¹ According to Vemić, the date was 21 February 1910. Generally speaking, diaries are more trustworthy than memoirs, but the Vemić’s diary has several shortcomings. Let us dwell on these questions.

As for the plan of renewal *četnik* action, the Serbian diplomatic documents testify the following development. Toward the end of 1910, Radenković, together with Jovan Ćirković (the chair of Bitola committee of SDL) started secret talks with the Ottoman ambassador of Serbia, Hilmi Paşa, and a leading CUP member, İsmail Talat Bey in Istanbul and Belgrade. They talked over the possible conditions for the Serb-Turkish cooperation.⁶² For this purpose, the foreign ministry paid them a sum of 89.3 dinars of „the expenditure for a greeting of Turkish friend [i. e. İsmail Talat Bey]” on 17 January 1911.⁶³ The receipt bears out that Radenković’s mission was carried out under the auspice of the Serbian government.

At the end of December 1910, Radenković sent the foreign ministry the plan to resume guerrilla actions in Macedonia, in which he wrote: „First of all please realize the necessity to organize pure Serbian bands composed

⁵⁸ Popović testified: “The new enterprise had to be done, principally, on the model of Bulgarians”. Č. Popović, „Organizacija Ujedinjenje ili smrt”, 403; Vemić corroborates it by the following testimonies. “Radenković proposed that these activities be organized as they were in Bulgaria because the results of their national activities far exceeded ours.” Quoted by MacKenzie, *The “Black Hand”*, 133.

⁵⁹ Apis later testified at the Selanik trial: “After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation of Serbs in Old Serbia and Macedonia became desperate.” He reiterated the same story to Colonel Dunjić at his interrogation. “In 1911 I noticed that the fortunes of our former organization in Macedonia had begun to fade and collapse and that Serbdom in those regions had fallen into a desperate plight. We decided to form... an organization to save Serbdom in Macedonia and Old Serbia and work for unification of Serbdom”. D. MacKenzie, *The “Black Hand”*, 263, 341–342.

⁶⁰ D. Bataković, “Storm over Serbia”, 324.

⁶¹ D. MacKenzie, *The “Black Hand”*, 157.

⁶² *Ibid.*, vol. 4, sec. 3/1, footnote 4, 196.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 197.

of local population under the control of the *Serbian organization* in Turkey. We are ready to make guerrilla actions, if Bulgarians intimidate us anywhere-else. [Italic is added]” It came as a result of negotiation with the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) delegate, İsmail Talat Bey. Radenković requested the following points to the Turkish side: The CUP will address the religious and educational questions in favor of the Serbs, the situation of the places evacuated by the refugees will be unchanged, the number of Serbian delegates will be increased both in national and provincial assemblies, and the opening of a Kosovo branch of Serbian organization will be permitted. As for the guerrilla activities, Radenković requested the following points: The CUP will assure immunity to those who would fight in the *četas*, the return of the confiscated documents of the Serbian organization, the free hand of actions in the Serbian side, and the support or connivance to the Serbian guerrillas by the local government.⁶⁴

Radenković’s requests were subsequently accepted by the CUP. İsmail Talat Bey, at a meeting in Salonika on 20 February 1911, confirmed Radenković that the Turkish side wouldn’t ask anything but cooperation with Serbs to fight against the Bulgarian threat. In the meantime, Galip Bey, the chief inspector of public security, arrived at Salonika, and the three had a prolonged talk during which they exchanged ideas on the general situation of the Ottoman Empire on 25 February. As for the guerrilla actions, the Turks guaranteed the immunity to Serb *četniks*, as well as the opening of smuggling channels for arms and fighters. Five days later, Radenković and David Dimitrijević (the chair of SDL Kosovo branch) met the governor Halil Bey at his office in Skopje. Talat and Galip were also there. The Turkish side reiterated their good will to accept the Serbian demands. The Serbs requested, among other things, to evacuate the army units from the zone of operation of the Serbian guerrillas, the dismissal of officials that were hostile to the Serbs, the amnesty for the Serbs arrested at the time of disarmament, the permission to carry arms for the Serbian notables, and that in „the dispute that may rise between Serbs and Bulgarians, the authorities will always side with the Serbs.“ Furthermore, the Turkish side agreed on the dispatch of Serbian bands to Kosovo at the moment that the governor deemed it appropriate. Upon this agreement, Radenković recommended the Serbian government to start the preparation for the guerrilla warfare.⁶⁵

Seen in this light, the Radenković’s motive to resume *četnik* action was the anxiety about the IMRO’s threat, not against the Turkish tyranny. Since the summer of 1910, the IMRO started a renewed offensive and it

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 197–198.

⁶⁵ The date of issue of the document was 10 March 1911, *Ibid.*, 483–488.

was gaining momentum in the following months.⁶⁶ His anxiety was shared by the Serbian diplomatic agencies. For instance, the *gérand* of Bitola consulate, Marko Cemović, reported the serious situation in the Prilep district on 20 January 1911: „A various sources point to it that the Bulgarians has began to actively organize their guerrilla bands... They are more than likely to start fighting against us.“⁶⁷ The Serbian consul in Bitola, Ljubomir Mihailović, even proposed the ministry of foreign affairs, that, facing the growing threat of the Bulgarians, it was urgent to take steps to organize the Serb villages „in the same way as we did in 1905 and 1906.“ He also disclosed the initial measures had already taken, and „all the works would be in accordance with the negotiation that had done shortly before by Ćirković and Radenković in Salonika.“⁶⁸ The proposal was approved by the government, and Mihailović reported „the arms smuggling are ready“ on 17 April. According to this report, he had made detailed arrangement with his colleague in Skopje, Jovan Jovanović, on how to distribute weapons among the population.⁶⁹

As far as the diplomatic documents testify, the Radenković's plan to resume the *četnik* action was fully approved and supported by the government. What merits attention is the fact that the plan was not a unilateral enterprise of Serbs, but a bilateral one with the Turks. It is true that some fractions of CUP were really willing to embrace the idea. On 3 January, for instance, the CUP officers of Bitola branch offered the local SDL members to organize „a very strong Turkish-Serbian bands in the Prilep district“ and to donate a total of 60 rifles for this purpose.⁷⁰ They paid an official visit to the Serbian committee on 2 February, and reiterated the proposal and promised instant delivery of 40 rifles as a sign of good will.⁷¹

The plan was not a whim of CUP local members but the one that was approved by one of the highest ranking officials of the committee, İsmail Enver Bey. Enver set out for a journey in the Balkans on 27 March „pour étudier les mesures nécessaires contre les bandes bulgares qui se montrent maintenant.“⁷² He arrived at Selanik on 14 April, and met Ćirković. At the meeting Enver assured Ćirković that the arms smuggling

⁶⁶ *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnoto dvizhenie na makedonskite i trakiyskite Bŭlgari, 1878–1944*, vol. 3, (Sofia: Makedonski nauchni institute, 1997), 251–256.

⁶⁷ *Dokumenti.*, vol. 4, sec. 3/1, 199.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 505.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 742–744.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 199–201.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁷² Şükrü Haniogŭlu, *Kendi Mektuplarında Enver Paşa*, (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1989), 35–36.

was possible even from Serbia.⁷³ According to the Serbian sources, Enver subsequently was to meet Radenković in Skopje on 18 April, but the meeting was not materialized. Enver discussed at length with the governor and military commander over „les différentes mesures à prendre contre l'invasion des bandes bulgares.“⁷⁴ The next day, he got a letter from the interior minister confirming his former proposals were accepted. In the evening, he took part in a hot discussion of the CUP committee meeting that lasted till 3:00 in the morning.⁷⁵ Due to this, Enver's departure to Bitola was delayed by 25 April. There he took part in again „une longue conférence avec les membres du comité de Monastir. La situation est satisfaisante contrairement à tous les bruits répandus, et le résultat de notre discussion a apporté un bon résultat.“⁷⁶ What was at stake during these lengthy and heated meetings is unknown, but the cooperation with the Serbs was more than likely one of the main themes.

The CUP did not give unanimous support to the adventurous enterprise of Enver. Eyüp Sabri, then the major source of information for the Serbian consulate in Salonika, warned that the huge scale arms smuggling of Serbs had caused deep displeasure among the local members. The delay in response to the proposed rifle delivery was another source of suspicion.⁷⁷ The Serbs, in turn, did not fully trust the CUP. By the middle of April, the Serbian diplomats had already become skeptical of the Turkish proposal, and about to come to the conclusion that the CUP would not cooperate with the Serbs in the guerrilla actions.⁷⁸ The final rupture came in early May. During his stay in Skopje, Enver met Serbian leaders and remarked that he would never tolerate any guerrilla activities under any conditions. The reason, he insisted, was that Europeans would see guerrilla actions as a sign of misadministration of the CUP.⁷⁹ This announcement put an end to the Radenković's plan.

In the light of this development, the widely accepted view on the foundation of „Black Hand“ seems to be seriously challenged. As Radenković was closely cooperating with the Serbian government during March, there was no need to organize a secret club. The date of 22 May as the start

⁷³ *Dokumenti*, vol. 4, sec. 3/2, 744; In his letter of the same date, Enver wrote: „J'ai installé ici à Salonique une contre-propagande... Et j'ai pris encore d'autres mesures. J'ai décidé prendre l'offensive contre nos ennemis qui viennent au delà de la frontière.“ Hanioglu, *Kendi Mektuplarında*, 36.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 43–44.

⁷⁷ *Dokumenti*, vol. 4, sec. 3/1, 310.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, sec. 3/2, 757.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 841–842.

of Black Hand is still possible in theory, but there are contradicting facts, as another leading founder, Vojislav Tankosić, was working as an agent of foreign ministry during these days.⁸⁰

Early May 1911, Vojislav Tankosić came to Ćuprija with about ten guerrillas. The local magistrate was alarmed by their unruliness, and expressed concern about eventual disorder.⁸¹ The chief of consulate section of foreign ministry, Jovan Marković, appeased the magistrate, saying: „I have come to the conclusion that it was the most convenient to have those whom we had used hitherto for the guerrilla duties gathered in a place and put them under my control inside our territory.“ Tankosić confirmed this in his letter to the foreign minister. He asserted „our external organization“ would resume the guerrilla activities in the near future. For this purpose, he rallied about 30 fighters under his command. The defense minister had already sent him a total of 1000 rifles and 200,000 bullets. „As far as my assessment on the situation in Turkey concerns, it would be inevitable and necessary to resume and fortify our external organization as soon as possible, and in the same way as was in 1908.“ The foreign minister granted Tankosić a sum of 800 dinars for this purpose on 30 May 1911.⁸² Tankosić received the same kind of money on 16 June (1800 dinars), 10 July (1000 dinars), 9 August (1400), 26 August (750). On 22 July, Tankosić recruited additional 16 volunteers in Belgrade. These records testify that the Serbian foreign ministry expected renewed guerrilla warfare to counteract the Bulgarians and financed Tankosić for the purpose.⁸³ As a letter from the foreign minister to the defense minister testifies, Tankosić was employed by the former from 17 April to 17 December, and his tenure was subsequently prolonged.⁸⁴ Therefore, just like Radenković, Tankosić, alleged cofounder of the „Black Hand,“ was working as a government agent during the entire period of supposed foundation of the society, including the 23 September, the latest possible date given by Vemić’s diary.

⁸⁰ Radenković confirmed the central role of Tankosić at the Salonika trial. “Working on our national activities in Old Serbia and Macedonia, I became acquainted with Major Vojislav Tankosić. Feeling that work on national matters was insufficiently active in Old Serbia and Macedonia and wishing to organize this work better and gather more people to work on that and to interest our public opinion for those matters, Major Tankosić and I discussed how to organize a society that would work on that... and involve more people in our national cause”. D. MacKenzie, *The “Black Hand”*, 155.

⁸¹ *Dokumenti*, vol. 4, sec. 3–2, 855.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 855–857.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, sec. 3/2, 1055, 1235. vol. 4, sec. 4/1, 310–312, 497–498, 611.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, sec. 4/2, 1379.

Conclusion

How can we interpret the facts recorded in the diplomatic documents? One of the possible answers is that the „Black Hand“ was nonexistent, i. e. a fantasy flamed up by the Prince Alexander to remove his political rival – Dimitrijević-Apis at the Salonika trial. There are, however, a number of records attesting to its existence. So, alternative explanation is that the „Black Hand“ was either a product of Serbian foreign ministry with the purpose of conducting false flag operation in Kosovo and Macedonia, or a voluntary club created by Radenković and Tankosić to resume the *četnik* actions under the full support of the government. Either way, the established theory which considers the „Black Hand“ as an independent political body with its own will and agenda is quite implausible.

Other existing records and testimonies corroborate our reasoning. At the Salonika court, Radenković explained his intention to create the „Black Hand“: „I believed it necessary to form a society resembling the Macedonian organization in Bulgaria [IMRO] with... at least 200,000 members.“⁸⁵ The imitation of IMRO affected so deeply that they adopted the same symbol – a death's head with crossbones, knife, bomb, and poison. Radenković elucidated the reason that „in Macedonia the Bulgarian organization [IMRO] exerted great influence precisely because of this mystery.“⁸⁶ There is no doubt that Radenković's intention, surely Tankosić's too, was to create „our external organization“ modeled after the IMRO in Kosovo and Macedonia.

As a matter of fact, however, the „Black Hand“ hardly exceeded the limit of officer corps, and its membership mainly remained restricted within the May coup conspirators and *četnik* fighters. Radenković also explained why the „Black Hand“ remained so small – replied: „Upon entering the organization I did not foresee that the Balkan wars would come so soon.“⁸⁷ Therefore, after the Second Balkan War, it „ceased to operate as far as I was concerned... Once Macedonia was liberated, for me personally the society ceased to exist.“⁸⁸ Velimir Vemić corroborates this testimony. According to this witness, he together with five central committee members (Radenković, Apis, Tankosić, Colonel Milovanović and Radoje Lazić) decided to halt the organization's activities late in 1913.⁸⁹ Čedomir Popović testifies the

⁸⁵ D. MacKenzie, *The "Black Hand"*, 157.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

same story in his memoir. ⁹⁰ In the light of all of these considerations, it is more than likely that the „Black Hand“ was created by Radenković and Tankosić under the mandate of the Serbian government with the purpose to be a mass organization supporting the renewed Serbian *četnik* operations, but failed to fulfill its initial aim due to the unexpectedly early outbreak of the Balkan Wars, and as a natural consequence of Serbian annexation of Kosovo and the Vardar Macedonia, it ceased to exist.

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⁹⁰ Čedomir Popović, „Sarajevski atentat i organizacija Ujedinjenje ili smrt,” *Nova Evropa*, 25, (1932), 399–400.

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Tetsuya Sahara

NOVO VIĐENJE NASTANKA „CRNE RUKE“

Rezime

Članak se bavi uticajem „makedonskog pitanja“ na nastanak tajnog udruženja u Srbiji, poznatog pod imenom „Crna ruka“. Prati se decenija metamorfoze tajnog udruživanja oficira, od Majskog prevrata 1903. do kraja Balkanskih ratova 1913, i naglašava se važnost makedonskog faktora, ključnog za razumevanja funkcionisanja društva, kao i njegovog odnosa spram srpske države. Posle neuspešnog Ilindenskog ustanka koji je organi-

zovala VMRO, mladi oficiri koji su u Beogradu učestvovali u Majskom prevratu uzeli su učešća u sukobima u Makedoniji uz tajnu, ali značajnu pomoć srpskih vlasti. Posle kratkog predaha izazvanog Mladoturskom revolucijom, isti oficiri su nastavili takve aktivnosti uglavnom suprotstavljajući se VMRO do kraja 1910. Srpska diplomatska prepiska pokazuje da je ključna karika u nastanku „Crne ruke“ bio neuspeh organizovanja jedinstvenog otomansko-srpskog fronta protiv VMRO. Takođe, pokazuje se da je udruženje „Crna ruka“, poznato i pod imenom „Ujedinjenje ili smrt“, bilo daleko više zavisno od državne podrške nego što se iz dosadašnje literature može sagledati.

KLJUČNE REČI: Crna ruka, VMRO, terorizam, Prvi svetski rat, Komitet jedinstva i progresa

NOUVELLES APPROCHES SUR LA FONDATION DE „LA MAIN NOIRE“

Résumé

Cette étude traite de l'influence de la "Question macédonienne" sur la fondation en Serbie de la société secrète connue sous le nom „La Main noire“. Elle retrace la décennie de métamorphoses d'une société secrète d'officiers serbes, du coup d'Etat de mai 1903 à la fin des Guerres balkaniques en 1913. Elle met l'accent sur le facteur macédonien jusqu'ici négligé mais essentiel pour comprendre les objectifs et le fonctionnement de la société ainsi que ses rapports avec l'Etat serbe. Après l'échec de l'insurrection d'Ilinden organisée par l'ORIM, les jeunes officiers serbes qui avaient participé au coup d'Etat de mai à Belgrade, s'engagèrent dans la lutte en Macédoine avec le soutien secret, mais substantiel du gouvernement serbe. Vers la fin de 1910, après une courte trêve due à la révolution jeune turque, ces officiers reprirent leurs activités en s'opposant principalement à l'ORIM. De cette étude, il ressort que la société „La Main noire“, connue aussi sous le nom „L'Unification ou la mort“, était beaucoup plus dépendante de l'aide de l'Etat que la littérature historique ne le suggérait jusqu'à maintenant.

MOTS CLÉS: Main noire, ORIM, terrorisme, Première Guerre mondiale, Comité Union et Progrès