

Mire Mladenovski

Assassination in Marseilles





K

To what extent the assassination solved the problem of Alexander's dictatorship?



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The assassination of King Alexander represents an important event in the history of Yugoslavia. It also represents the turning point in the political life of the country. The assassination was covered with a veil of secrecy and there are the different theories about who was behind the assassination. Therefore, at the same time represents a very sensitive and controversial topic. There is also the question of the justification of the assassination, as well as the goals that were expected to be achieved with it.



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Understanding the reasons for assassination of King Alexander I. How was it perceived by those involved and what were the expectations and results of the assassination.

1. The students will evaluate the causes of assassination of King Alexander.
 2. The students will analyze and compare the sources.
 3. They will identify the importance of the King assassination for the future developments in Yugoslavia.
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A critical understanding of the complex nature of the past and raising of awareness for critical thinking and multiperspective approach in addressing the historical events.

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STEP 1

Group work - Each group receives the same set of materials to create a timeline.

STEP 2

Group work – analysis of sources and discussion

STEP 3

Group work – writing a newspaper article

Option 1: watching the film about the assassination of King Alexander I.

Followed by brainstorming to the topic: Assassination – the teacher writes key comments from the brainstorming onto the board.

Option 2: Brainstorming to the topic: Assassination – the teacher writes key comments from the brainstorming onto the board.

The task is to write a newspaper article that contains all the comments written on the board.

RECOMMENDED VIDEO MATERIAL FOR STEP 3:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrruCOZwxKA>



90
minutes





Task 1

What was the main political events before and after the assassination of King Alexander I?

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- What were the main political events before and after the assassination of King Alexander I?
- What were the main events in Yugoslav political life before and after the assassination of Alexander I?
- The task is to, by comparing seven significant events related to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, to order them chronologically. Each event must contain the date, title, written document, and visual source that refer to it. It is a group work and each group has the same task. Thereafter, each group will present the results of its work in front of the others.
- Each group (there are 4 or 5) receives the same set of materials to create a timeline.

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C S S, C K	A S R	6 J	A A K I
1934	1929	1918	1928
			
<p>Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians was formed in 1918 by the merger of the provisional State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, formed from territories of the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire, with the formerly independent Kingdom of Serbia.</p>	<p>Croatian politician and the founder of the Croatian Peasant Party (CPP, Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka), Stjepan Radic, was shot in the parliament by a Serbian politician Punisa Racic.</p>	<p>King Alexander I was assassinated in Marseilles on 9 October 1934 along with the French Foreign Minister, Monsieur Louis Barthou, during a state visit to France.</p>	<p>There was a royal dictatorship established in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes by King Alexander. It started on January 6, 1929 when the king prorogued the parliament and assumed control of the state. The monarchy's name was changed to Yugoslavia.</p>

Task 2

What was the political situation in Yugoslavia before the assassination of King Alexander I?

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I.

The task is to analyze the political situation in Yugoslavia in 1930s from the point of view of the King, Ustasa movement and VMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation). In front of others each group explains different point of view. Followed by discussion!
Each group (there are 3) receives different set of documents.

Source 1

THE PROCLAMATION OF KING ALEXANDER, 6 JUNE 1929.

... The time has come when there cannot and must not be any mediators between the people and the King...
The work of parliament and our complete political life are getting more and more negative connotations, causing nothing but damage to the people and the state. All useful institutions in our country, their advance and development of the whole nation's life are thus endangered.
Such unhealthy political situation in the country damages not only the internal life but also the order and development of the foreign relations of our country, as well as strengthening of our reputation and credit abroad.
Parliamentarism, which remained political mean, as a tradition of my unforgotten father and my ideal, has become an obstacle for any fruitful work in the country due to the abuse by the blinded political passions. Pitiful conflicts and events in the National Assembly have raised doubts among the people to the usefulness of that institution. Agreements, even the most plain relations between the parties and people, became absolutely impossible.
Instead strengthening the spirit of national and state unity, the parliamentarism – as it is – encouraged spiritual and national divisions. It is my sacred duty to preserve the state and national unity by any means necessary. And I am determined to fulfil this duty to the end without hesitation.
Keeping the unity and state wholeness, that is the highest goal of my rule, and it must be the greatest law for me and everyone else. It is imposed on me by my responsibility before the Nation and history. It is imposed on me by my love for the homeland and a piety for countless precious victims who fell for that ideal.
To look for the cure to that evil in parliamentary changes of government or new elections would be losing the precious time in vain attempts, which have already taken a few years of our time. We have to seek new methods of work and make new paths...
Therefore I have decided to abolish the Constitution of the Kingdom of SHS of 28 June, 1921. All the state laws remain in power, until abolished by my Decree, as needed. New laws in the future will be brought in the same way. The National Assembly elected on 11 November 1927 is dissolved.

Službene novine Kraljevine SHS, 6. j u n i 1929.

Source 2

THE BALKANS ALLIANCE PACT, FEBRUARY 1934

Article 1

Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania and Turkey guarantee mutual safety of their Balkans borders.

Article 2

High contractual parties are obliged to agree about measures to be taken in case of situations that concern their interests, such as those defined in this agreement. The parties to the contract oblige not to take political actions against any other Balkans country not signatory to this agreement without prior mutual notification, and not to take any political obligation towards any other Balkans country without prior consent of other parties to the agreement.

Article 3

... The Agreement remains open to any Balkans country. Its accession shall be subject to favourable review by the Parties to the Agreement, and it will proceed as soon as other countries signatories notify their consent.

Službene novine, 1934, br. 145-XXXVIII.
http://www.rastko.rs/istorija/diplomatija/pbs_s.html (19.07.2013)

Ante Pavelić was a lawyer and prominent politician in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, known for his nationalistic beliefs, particularly about an independent Croatia. From 1927 until 1929 he was a member of the Yugoslav Parliament where he declared his beliefs about Croatian independence. During this time he called on Croats for armed revolt against Yugoslavia, and after King Alexander I declared his 6 January Dictatorship he escaped to Italy where he founded the Ustaša - Croatian Revolutionary Movement. At first it was a Croatian nationalist movement with the goal of creating an independent Greater Croatia by means of armed revolt. In October 1934 he planned the assassination of King Alexander I.



Ustasha's



Ante Pavelić

Source 4

CONSTITUTION OF CROATIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT

....Mission: Ustasha, croatian liberation movement has a task to use all means – including armed rebellion – to free Croatia from oppression, to become fully independent state on its complete national and historical area. When that goal is reached, the Ustasha movement shall use all means to defend the independence of Croatia and national specifics of Croats; it will fight to ensure that only Croat people rule in Croatian state, Croats to be complete masters of all real and spiritual goods in their country, justly ordered in the spirit of ustasha principles...

F. Čulinović, *Dokumenti o Jugoslaviji: Historijat od osnutka zajednicke drzave do danas*, 1968, page 299.

Source 5

PRINCIPLES OF USTASHA MOVEMENT, J 1933

The Croat people are entitled to their sovereign power in their own state of Croatia, to establish again the Independent State of Croatia on the whole national and historical area. This may be done by any means necessary, including the force of arms... The Croat people have sovereignty, thus Croats are the only ones who can rule and manage their state and national affairs. In Croatian state and national affairs in independent Croatia, decision-making power must not be given to anyone who does not have a Croat blood line for generations in the past, and no other nation should ever decide about the faith of Croats and Croatian state...

http://hr.wikisource.org/wiki/Načela_Hrvatskog_ustaškog_pokreta (19.07.2013)

Source 6

MEMORANDUM OF AUGUST KOSUTIC AND JURAJ KRNJEVIC TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

... The absolutistic regime of the Serbian King has been introduced on the whole state territory of Croatia, denying the primary rights to Croat people, which are normally guaranteed to any nation. Thus, it is forbidden to use the name of Croat people, recognized in international agreement as an international factor, for Croats have neither renounced their name nor their existence in the community of nations. The Croatian coat of arms and Croatian flag have been banned. Croatian cultural and scientific societies have been banned and dissolved. Croatian language was pushed out of schools and public services. History in school textbooks has been forged and deleted. There is an attempt to stop the cultural advance of Croats, to estrange the Croat generations, to finally estrange the overall Croat written literature. Croatian religion is being neglected, graves are being desecrated (e.g. in Zagreb, on 1 November 1929). The Croatian lands were arbitrarily chopped in pieces and subjected to Serbian domination. Historical state names, such as Croatia and Bosnia, were forbidden. New taxes and other public duties have been arbitrarily introduced, which are forcefully collected and spent without control, mostly in Serbia. With the aid of unlimited absolutistic force, they are trying to remove the Croatian people's parliamentary representation, though this representation was elected – despite all persecutions – under the leadership of Stjepan Radić, in all elections thus far (28 November 1920, 18 March 1923, 8 February 1925, and 11 October 1927). Regardless of the soul of Croat people and its clearly expressed will, there is an attempt to replace the representation with functionaries, appointed by the absolutistic king of Serbia.

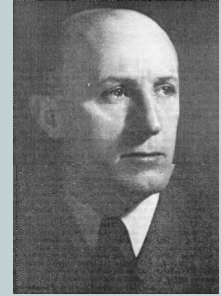
F. Čulinović, *Dokumenti o Jugoslaviji: Historijat od osnutka zajednicke drzave do danas*, 1968, page 299-300.

VMRO is a Macedonian organization established in 1893. Its basic idea was getting Macedonian independence within Ottoman Empire, as a transitional phase towards the independence Macedonian state. Over the time, it split into two factions: VMRO (united) and VMRO (leadership driven).



Komiti - military units of VMRO

While VMRO (united) strived for creating of Macedonian state as a state of Macedons, VMRO (leadership driven) led by Vanco Mihajlov, advocated creation of independent state of Macedonia as a second Bulgarian state, i.e. state of Bulgarian people. This led to large quarrels between the two organizations of the same name. The dispute was accompanied with numerous killings and assassinations.



Ivan ()

Source 7

I completely understand why Macedonians earlier talked about autonomy. At that time the whole of Macedonia was under Ottoman rule; it may, therefore, exist across graicite Turkish state, in autonomous mode. However, by 1912, could only be claimed independence. Was placed under the authority of the three different modes, in three separate states, partitioned as a kind of small Polonia (Poland). In such her position, she would dispose its entire territory, nor with its sea coast, nor with their trade routes. Would not have carried any name in three parts - one place would be Northern Greece, etc. - South Serbia, etc. ... Towards indicated here ideas Macedonian movement adheres more than half a century. They support all liberation circles abroad. We think the idea of an independent Macedonia and Balkan reconciliation should be more acceptable today, when so persistently considering the need for peace and unity in Europe.

М . . . Б . . . И М . . . С Л с, 1950

Source 8

What is all about?

It seems that in the heart of Europe, barely 48 hrs by train from Lion station in Paris, there is an organization stronger than the state in which it operates. That organization possesses its country, its newspapers, its police and courts. It collects taxes, receives money from abroad, condemns to death according to its own moral values. This horrifying organization sovereignly governs over a part of the country, while the official government leads neither internal nor external politics that is not in compliance with the positions of this organization. That forced Yugoslavia to place barb-wire along its borders, and to put its railway and bridges under the constant guarding, as if in a war. These and such things is what is being done by Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – VMRO.

Алберт Лондр, Комитации, Тероризмот на Балканот, Скопје, Култура, 1996

Source 9

Collaboration with the Ustasha movement

In April 1929 Macedonian National Committee controlled by Mihaylov and Croatian representatives signed the Declaration on cooperation and the creation of the Independent State of Croatia and Independent Macedonia, as the second Bulgarian state. On 9 Oct. 1934, the King of Yugoslavia, Alexander I Karadjordjevic was assassinated by joint action of the Croatian and Macedonian forces. Bulgaria's government, headed by Kimon Georgiev, decided to dissolve IMRO at the end of 1934, after which, under the leadership of Mihailov, it continued to act abroad, connected with Nazi and pro-Fascist forces of Germany, Italy, Hungary and Croatia, who worked until the end of World War II.

3 . . . , ВМРО 1924 - 1934, С . . . , 1997

1. E
2. E
3. P

U !
VMRO !

!

Task 3

“Who killed” the King Alexander I?

W ! - “Who killed” King Alexander I?

We begin with watching a short film about the assassination or brain storming about assassination of King Alexander I. Each group gets a certain role of journalists reporting about assassination of King Alexander I. The Article should contain predictions of the consequences that may follow after the assassination (war, democracy, new dictatorship...).

Possible roles are the following (teacher can independently choose the roles):

- A journalist who writes for international newspapers (eg. France, Germany...)
- A journalist who writes for a newspaper from Serbia.
- A journalist who writes for a newspaper in Croatia.

After completing the tasks we read articles and make comments on their contents, finding similarities and differences, and the reasons for it.

Each group (there are 3) receives the same set of documents.

Source 10

...King Alexander I was assassinated in Marseilles 9 October 1934 along with the French Foreign Minister Monsieur Louis Barthou during a state visit to France. King Alexander had travelled to France with the aim to strengthen the defensive alliance against Nazi Germany. The King's death deeply moved the whole of Yugoslavia, and hundreds of thousands of people paid their last respects all along the funeral route through the country to the royal crypt in Oplenac. King Alexander I was buried in the Mausoleum of the Church of St. George built by King Peter I. In recognition of his greatest accomplishments the National Parliament and the Senate of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia proclaimed him King Alexander I The Unifier.

Official Website of The Serbian Royal Family, http://www.royalfamily.org/index.php?43,en_hm-king-alexander-i-of-yugoslavia (19.07.2013)

Source 11

H M

9 O

1934, by Simon Misirlic, correspondent of “L' Illustrasion”:

"Marseilles glittered in general joy, decorated in flags, three color flags of the same colors – blue, white and red. If horizontal, they represent Yugoslav flag, if vertical, it is a French three-color. The flags decorated not only the city streets, but also the suburbs. It was a joyful day, typically in Mediterranean mood, everyone were happy. Restaurants along the main Marseilles street, the Canabier avenue, and adjacent streets, were filled by loud and cheerful mass of people. Along the whole planned King's route, from Old port to the Monument to Thessaloniki front soldiers, terraces and windows were filled with people, women and children.

Francusei novine "Ilustrasiona", 9. 10. 1934.

Source 12

Hrvoje Matković points (Vlado Chernozemski) as Macedonian.

Pavelic put Eugen Dido Kvaternik as the main leader of the group of assassins. Assassins were prepared in Janka Pusta in Hungary, hence they arrived to France with forged passports of Austria and Switzerland. In Switzerland they joined Dido Kvaternik who was accompanied by a Macedonian member of IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization), called “Vlado the driver”. Anyway, IMRO maintained good relations with the Ustasha organization for a common goal - the destruction of Yugoslavia. Therefore (IMRO b.n) kept sending its members as instructors for guerilla actions. And “Vlado the driver” was one of them. According to Hrvoje Matkovic, History of the Independent State of Croatia.

Povijest Jugoslavije : 1918-1991 : hrvatski pogled, 1998. Naklada Pavi i

Source 13

Heroes and Killers

Croats were not experienced in plotting activities. Therefore they welcomed the assistance of their Macedonian brothers, who already lived and fought nearly half a century in an atmosphere of terror and plots. When Ante Pavelic visited Bulgaria in 1929, he went to Macedonia to meet with Ivan Mihailov. Both leaders greeted each other warmly. Then they sat down to work out the details for a joint war against King Alexander. Pavelic asked Macedonian ruler to borrow Ustashi from elite terrorists and conspirators. One of those Mihailov sent was the future assassin of King Alexander; namely, Vladimir (Vlado) Georgiev Chernozemski. He was one of the favorite assassins of Ivan Mihailov, since he successfully carried out a number of tasks. On July 15, 1932, Mihailov hugged Chernozemski at their final parting. 'Now go to our brothers, Croats' he said. 'The fight is the same, only the front is different. The enemy is the same. "'

Херои и убијци, Стојан Христов, 1936

Source 14

In his memoirs Ivan Mihailov noted that he and Vlado Chernozemski met in 1922 and that his real name was Velichko Georgiev Kerin. "Vlado was a very quiet man and extremely efficient. He hated his friends who drank. Did not like women. Loved the solitude and read a lot. He knew to perfection the history of Vasil Levski and Hristo Botev (Bulgarian revolutionaries). He was a nationalist."

Македонија. Швајцарија на Балканот, Иван Михајлов, Сент Луис, 1950

Source 15

October 9, 1934 in Istanbul, Turkey, in the home of the Bulgarian Metropolitan Andrey Velicki, after lunch we went to the terrace to drink afternoon coffee. Around 16 pm, Mihailov looked at the clock and said: "At this moment something happened that would be fatal for humanity! Launched new counting the years. The new calendar begin, calendar of ... World War III!"

Петър Ялов, Пътуване из дневниците на митрополит Андрей, глава на задграничната Българска православна църква, Ню Юрк, 1937-1972, Марскилският атентат с участието на Ванчо Михайлов и ВМРО 9 октомври 1934, София, 2002, 19.

Source 16

In honor of King Alexander, Letter by Nikola Tesla to the Editor of "New York Times"

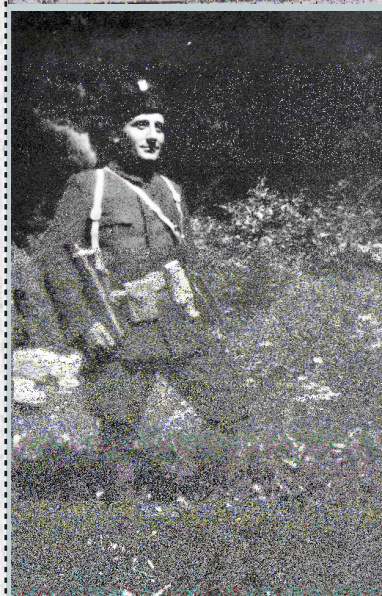
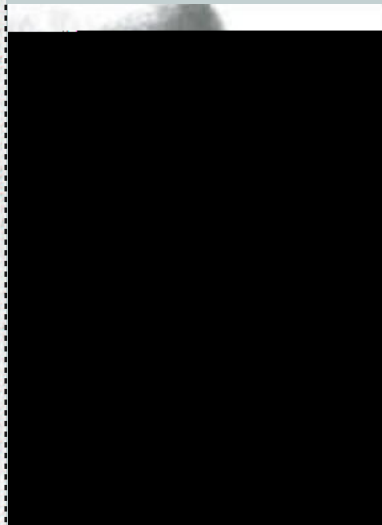
Enough has been said about Yugoslavia and its peoples. However, many Americans have the wrong idea about it because agitators and political enemies spread rumors about Yugoslavia and its inhabitants, who belong to different nations, each actively hated tyrannical power to hold them together against their will. The truth is that all Yugoslavs - Serbs, Slavonian, Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Dalmatians, Montenegrins, Croats and Slovenes belong to the same race, speak the same language and share a common national ideals and traditions.

After the First World War, King Alexander has provided the political unity of the country and created a rich and powerful country. Slavs are greeted with enthusiasm, but it took time to people to adjust to new circumstances. I was born in Croatia. Croats and Slovenes were never in a position to fight for their independence. Serbs were the ones who were the most fought-won freedom and the price paid with the Serbian blood. All truthful Croats and Slovenes that they remember with gratitude. Also, they are aware that the Serbs have the greatest ability and experience in warfare, and that are best and most willing to send their forces in times of crisis for the country.

Since the united efforts of King Alexander, of Yugoslavia was attacked by political enemies who have done all that is destroyed, sowing the seeds of discord and spreading malicious rumors ...

Никола Тесла, Њујорк, 19. октобар 1934.

Source 17



Known under different names:

- Vlado Chernozemski
- Vlado "the driver"
- Velichko Dimitrov Kerin
- Vlado Georgiev

C

Vlado Černozemski in uniform of Ustasa

Source 18

ALEXANDER ASSASSIN A NOTORIOUS TERRORIST Slew a Number who opposed Macedonian Independence

Vienna - (AP) - The Yugoslav legation here have revealed the real name of King Alexander's assassin was not Petrus Kalemén but Vlada Georgeff Tschernoemskz, a notorious Macedonian terrorist and former body guard of Ivan Mihailoff, Macedonian revolutionary leader now in exile.

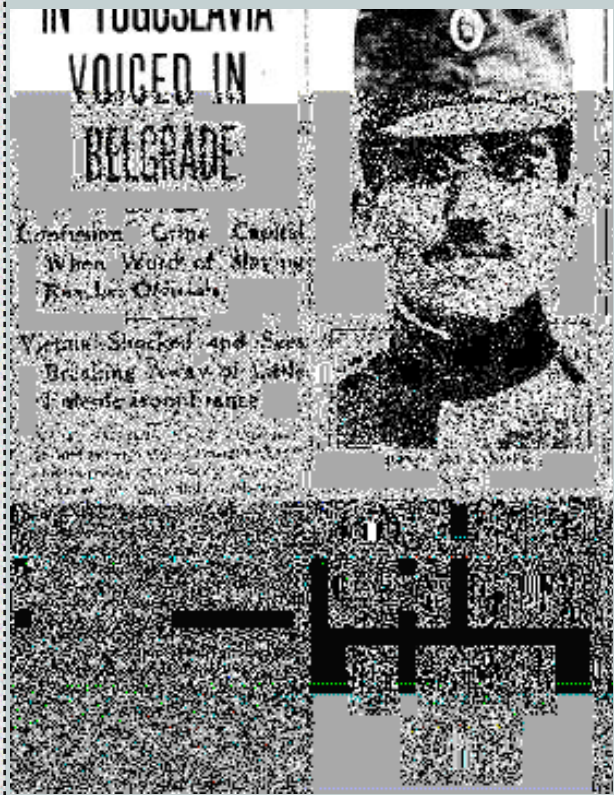
Legation officials said the Macedonian had been using the name Kalemén as an alias. They declared he assassinated number of those who opposed Macedonian independence.

He was said to have killed Hadji Inov, Bulgarian Agrarian leader in 1921...

...In 1932, according to the Bulgarians, Tschernoemskz was engaged as a courier of secret messages from Macedonian revolutionaries and Croat Emigration terrorists. He had recently acted as an instructor in a camp in Hungary, where, according to Yugoslavs, Croats were trained in the use of bombs and rifles.

He was born in Kamenitza, in southern Bulgaria. The identification, it was said, was made by means of photographs obtained from the French police by two former Yugoslav Macedonians now living on their native soil, with whom Tschernoemskz had formerly associated.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/10962918>



Source 19

T V J P

Sofia, 19 October (by telephone)

For who knows what reasons, regarding the Marseille murderer, Vlado Georgiev Cernozemski, various versions are being released here. One of them was the news about apparent leaving of Vlado the driver from VMRO after 1932. The second one was he was even killed by VMRO in 1932. Now it is clear that those misinformation was released on purpose, to cover his trace after 1932. Namely, he was simply released to be an instructor in Janka Pusti.

As everybody knows, in April 1929, in Sofia, the representatives of terrorists from Janka Pusta, signed a contract with the National committee headed by Dr Stanisev. According to that contract, their common front was designed. Their contract was publicized in the form of a Declaration with signatures of both sides. The same desire, methods and goals of both groups was pointed out several times in the press and at rallies.

Politika, 19 October 1932



Source 20

A B
The title of daily newspapers "Winnipeg free Press", Canada

