

Some jokes, some attacks on journalists:

How historical revisionism is defended in Montenegro

Montenegro is facing the third wave of historical revisionism. After the first one in the 1990s and the second in the early 2000s, a new season has emerged – this time dominated by efforts to portray the war criminal Pavle Djurisić as an anti-fascist, denying his crimes and collaboration with fascist forces. The campaign is once again spearheaded by the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) and actively sustained by political figures and media outlets aligned with it.

During the 1990s, before and during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, historical revisionism began to take hold across the region, primarily focused on events from the Second World War and the socialist era of the SFRY. The second wave in Montenegro followed in 2003, when an attempt was made to erect a monument to Djurisić – ironically, on July 13, Montenegro's Statehood Day. That initiative was halted when the authorities banned the monument and ordered the demolition of its plinth. Even at that time, the Serbian Orthodox Church was deeply involved in the process.

The current revisionist campaign goes beyond presenting Djurisić merely as a hero, as it depicts him simultaneously as an innocent victim. Politicians and certain news portals have framed every reaction by the state, civil society, or individuals as an attack on the Church or on Serbs themselves. Through mockery about the “attack on the monument” or the “dead Djurisić,” they trivialize both the glorification of the Chetnik movement and the broader attempt to rewrite history.

How it all began: From Pavle's “heroism” to the heroic attack on journalists

The SPC launched its campaign to rehabilitate Pavle Djurisić in May, through Montenegro's then sole metropolitan, [Joanikije Micović, who on May 4](#) declared that “Pavle Djurisić was a great hero of invincible character.” Soon afterward, on May 17, the SPC appointed a second metropolitan for Montenegro, Metodije Ostojić, who took over leadership of the campaign from Joanikije. Under Metodije's direction, activities aimed at rehabilitating the Chetnik movement – especially Djurisić – intensified.

In June, Metodije described both Djurisić and Chetnik commander Draža Mihailović as anti-fascists and guerrilla fighters, claiming that “the first Dragoljub rose up against fascists and Nazis.”

Shortly after, [Metodije unveiled a monument to Djurisić and consecrated it](#) himself. When the Ministry of Culture ordered its removal, residents of Gornji Zaostro, together with Metodije, hid the monument inside the local church. Addressing the assembled crowd, Metodije delivered an inflammatory speech, warning the authorities: “We will place that monument to Duke Pavle in the church – let them come and demolish the church if they dare!”

“Those days are over. We are no longer afraid of force – we were not afraid before, and certainly not today. Their power cannot even bring order to the streets, yet they come to tear down monuments to the greatest Serbian knights from the hills. They are here to carry out someone’s orders. These are young people, dressed in expensive suits, who have seized high political and state positions and think they can do whatever they please,” he proclaimed.

Journalists covering the gathering [were then attacked](#). Photojournalist Stevo Vasiljevic had his equipment confiscated, while his colleague Boris Pejovic was threatened “with being killed barehanded.” According to media reports, Vijesti journalist Balsa Rudovic was subjected to psychological abuse.

Metodije later alleged that journalists from Pobjeda and Vijesti had attended without proper accreditation or press vests, claiming that they “stood out only because they carried cameras.” It remains unclear when the Church assumed the authority to issue press accreditations for events held in public spaces.

He further accused journalists of having “eaten and drunk with the tormented people” – a claim that [media representatives flatly denied](#).

Tortured attackers of the media

Following the attack on journalists, Danko Femic was arrested. The prosecution charged him with the criminal offense of coercion against Vijesti and Pobjeda photojournalists Boris Pejovic and Stevo Vasiljevic. Nevertheless, this accusation did not stop certain politicians and media portals from portraying Femic as the victim, rather than the assaulted journalists.

[Milivoje Brkovic, an official of United Montenegro](#), publicly expressed his support for Femic, claiming that his detention showed that “justice is being distributed according to DPS rules.”

Vladislav Dajkovic, President of Free Montenegro, [used the opportunity to promote his visit to Femic’s family on Facebook](#), stating that “he is being kept in prison to satisfy the wishes of anti-Serb circles in Montenegro.”

[The news portal IN4S](#) went a step further, criticizing the judiciary and asking rhetorically, “Who will judge the judges” who ordered Femic’s detention.

[When Femic was later released to defend himself while at liberty](#), he received a congratulatory message from Dajkovic that read: “Our brother Danko Femic has been released. Good luck, Serb.”

Jokes about a monument that keeps escaping but is actually hidden by the Church

After the [Basic State Prosecutor's Office in Berane](#) requested that the court order the confiscation of the monument to Pavle Djuriscic, the court refused several times, reportedly each time providing a different explanation. Following multiple refusals, on October 1, the extrajudicial panel overturned Judge Dubravka Popovic's decision and ordered the temporary confiscation of the Djuriscic memorial.

The police then acted in accordance with the panel's decision and went to the Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery, where they were met by abbot Trpceviski. When officers failed to find the statue in the monastery dormitory, Trpceviski contacted Metodije, Metropolitan of Budimlje-Niksic, who informed them that "there are rooms in the monastery for which only he has the key."

According to Vijesti, the prosecutor's office asked the court a week later to issue an order compelling Metropolitan Metodije to surrender the monument "located in the dormitory of the monastery." On October 10, the prosecution amended its proposal, specifying that the statue should be removed "from all premises and other facilities that are part of the Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery." However, on October 13, Judge Popovic again rejected the request. On that same day, the prosecution submitted a new request, and two days later, Popovic refused to order the confiscation of the monument for the fourth time. After the prosecution appealed the latest ruling, a fifth decision from the Berane court is now awaited.

Reporting on these procedural twists, the news portal Borba wrote ironically that "[the police informed the court in Berane that Pavle Djuriscic had escaped from them.](#)" The same outlet [published another article](#) titled: "Are they guarding the Djuriscic monument so it doesn't escape again? The police have been monitoring the situation in Djurdjevi Stupovi for seven days; Metropolitan Metodije summoned for questioning once more?"

As usual, the president of the Democratic People's Party (DNP), Milan Knezevic, followed the events with [his own attempt at humor](#), remarking that "while they are chasing the monument to Pavle Djuriscic and trying to settle scores with the Serbian Orthodox Church – pursuing bishops and priests across Montenegro – this shameful plaque (in Morinj) remains in place."

Adding to this "stand-up comedy" narrative about a war criminal, [Vesna Bratic, an official of United Montenegro](#), stated that "while they are chasing the dead Djuriscic, every corruption affair, right up to the latest one, has been certified by the courts as legal business," and called upon God "to come to His senses, because they are chasing a statue."

The news portal IN4S joined in as well, using artificial intelligence to create an image depicting [a meeting between Pavle Djuriscic and the Mayor of Niksic, Marko Kovacevic](#), in which Djuriscic purportedly requests asylum in Niksic.

Whoever says that Djuriscic was a collaborator of the fascists is a “fool”, an “Ustasha”, a “criminal”, an “anti-Serb”...

Following a well-established pattern, portals close to the Serbian Orthodox Church continue to target and label anyone who speaks out against the revision of history and the whitewashing of a known fascist collaborator's biography.

Thus, IN4S [accuses Prime Minister Milojko Spajic](#) of “insulting a third of his own people” by saying that the monument to Djuriscic is a “village issue,” adding that the problem lies in the fact that it concerns a “Serbian hero.”

The news portal Borba addressed SDP President Ivan Vujovic with the words that he “plays dumb when it comes to the ‘butcher’ Celic, but can’t stop talking about Djuriscic and the SOC,” while IN4S [accused](#) President Jakov Milatovic of continuing the “DPS matrix against Serbs” for his statement that “Pavle Djuriscic is not a hero and never will be.”

When the “anti-Serb” label is not applied, those calling for the removal of the monument are instead linked to alleged criminal circles.

For instance, [signatories of a civil society statement](#) reviewing institutional actions and demanding the confiscation of the monument were described as “fans of Aco Mijajlovic,” who has been accused of organized crime. At the same time, [Vijesti was accused](#) of “inciting hatred against Serbs” for supposedly downplaying the case of Jusuf Celic, whose bust had been removed for collaboration with fascists.

The revisionist campaign elevated to the level of state institutions

All of this demonstrates that the campaign of historical revisionism is not likely to subside anytime soon. What is particularly alarming is that the Church's narrative, once confined to sermons and online portals, has begun seeping into state institutions.

Most recently, [the Speaker of the Parliament, Andrija Mandic](#), paid tribute to fallen Chetniks in Krnovo, claiming that they were “over 300 beardless, mostly underage young men of our nation who were brutally executed in a terrible war crime.” In fact, [historical records clearly show that Krnovo was the site of an armed conflict between partisans and fighters allied with fascist and Nazi occupiers](#).

As historian Filip Kuzman explains, the Battle of Krnovo took place on August 25, 1944, as part of the German “Ribecal” operation – better known as the “Durmitor Operation” – in which large Axis forces were deployed against the partisans: the 7th SS Division Prinz Eugen, the 13th SS Division Handzar, the 369th Legionary Division, the 1st Mountain Division, the 363rd Regiment of the 181st Division, the Bendel Battle Group, the Krempler Legion, the Bulgarian 24th Division, parts of the 5th Police Regiment, the 1st and 11th Ustasha Brigades, and the 8th and 9th Domobran Brigades, together with strong Chetnik formations from Montenegro and eastern Bosnia. “In other words,” Kuzman explains, “the Chetniks fought side by side with the Ustashas, Domobrans, Handzar units, Bulgarian fascists – all under German command.”

“The Chetniks under Pavle Djuriscic directly cooperated with the Germans, attacking positions of the 7th Montenegrin Youth Brigade ‘Budo Tomovic,’ attempting to seize Krnovo and prevent the evacuation of wounded partisans from Piva. After several days of fighting, the partisans managed to hold their ground and ensure the evacuation of about 800 wounded to Italy. The so-called ‘Iron Regiment’ suffered heavy losses and broke apart in panic. The 7th Brigade counterattacked, encircled the unit, and, according to most sources, around 350 Chetniks were killed. They were not executed, as the president of the Parliament of Montenegro claims – they were killed in combat. This was not a massacre, but rather the defeat of an elite Chetnik unit fighting alongside the Nazis,” Kuzman emphasized.

The event itself was organized by the SPC, led by Metropolitan Metodije, who, despite overwhelming historical evidence, claimed that “in Montenegro there were thousands and thousands of members of that movement (Yugoslav Army in the Homeland), and ‘only two Montenegrin partisan brigades.’”



This article was produced with the support of the SMART Balkans – Civil Society for Shared Society in the Western Balkans regional project, implemented by the Center for the Promotion of Civil Society (CPCS), the Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), and the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), and financially supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway.

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