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## **THE MYTH OF “GREATER SERBIA HEGEMONISM” IN MONTENEGRIN ANTI-SERB PROPAGANDA NARRATIVES**

### **Abstract**

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*The paper analyzes the continuity of the Montenegrin separatists' anti-Serb propaganda from the beginning of the 1990s to the present time. The analysis shows that the former regime of Montenegrin separatists (defeated in the elections of August 30, 2020) justified its activities aimed at breaking up the joint state of Serbia and Montenegro, renaming the Serbian language to “Montenegrin” and trying to eliminate the Serbian Orthodox Church from the territory of Montenegro – with the propaganda slogan about the fight against the non-existent “Greater Serbian hegemonism” and “Unitarianism”. In the interpretations of the Montenegrin ideologues and propagandists, the natural duties and natural rights of the Orthodox population of Montenegro to defend their national (Serbian) name, Church, their native (Serbian) language and the Cyrillic alphabet, were declared as “treason” and “serving a foreigner”, the foreigner always being Serbia, while Croatia and Albania were declared “historical friends” and “natural allies”. The framing of those propaganda matrices serves the purpose of obtaining legitimacy for the aforementioned political actions, under the guise of crushing the “Greater Serbian hegemonism”.*

**Keywords:** *Greater Serbia hegemonism, “Greater Serbia” propaganda, Montenegro, Montenegrin separatism, demonization, stigmatization.*

## I

The focus of our interest is the propaganda pattern of the Montenegrin separatists about the so-called “Greater Serbia hegemony” that has been used for some forty years now by the Dukla-Montenegrin policy to spread anti-Serb hatred among the Montenegrin and South Slavic public. Accusations against the Serbian people, accompanied by open animosity and prejudice, have been persistent from the 1970s, throughout the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s and the conflicts that accompanied the break-up of the second Yugoslavia, until today. Presently, Montenegrin ideologues and politicians from the ranks of the former regime of Montenegrin separatists (defeated in the parliamentary elections of August 30, 2020) deny the right of the political representatives of the Serbian people in Montenegro to participate in the executive power, accusing them of being exponents of Serbia and its “Greater Serbia policy”.

The stereotype about Serbia as the age-old enemy of Montenegro has its roots in the period between the two world wars, when Sekula Drljević and Savić Marković Štedimlija – the founders of the Montenegrin separatist movement who would become prominent officials of the Ustasha organization during the Second World War – published their texts in the Zagreb pro-Ustasha press. In those texts, Drljević and Štedimlija labelled Serbia and the Serbian people as a prime threat to all neighboring nations and countries, above all Montenegro, which has been the subject of “Greater Serbia pretensions and aspirations” for centuries, as they claimed. When it comes to Serbs and Serbia, the Montenegrin separatist thought limits itself to the scope of their ideas. The journalistic work of these two Montenegrin Ustashes (declared war criminals by the National Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and their Helpers) is a kind of universal encyclopedia of the Dukla-Montenegrin thought also on all other issues of politics, history, racial values, ethnogenesis of Montenegrins, etc. The ideologues of Dukljanism and Montenegrin separatism only exploit Drljević’s and Štedimlija’s ideological and “scientific” property, and repeat their anti-Serb theses, whose essence is reflected in the view that in the twenty-three-year period of the existence of the multinational Kingdom of

Yugoslavia, the “pro-Greater Serbian” and “unitarian-centralist” policy of the Belgrade regime encumbered inter-ethnic relations, and that this regime is directly responsible for the allegedly difficult position of non-Serbs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Aleksić 2022, 13 –18). It can therefore be said that Drljević and Štedimlija are the authors of the anti-Serbian propaganda program of the Montenegrin separatists based on the myths of “Greater Serbia” and “Greater Serbian hegemony”, a program that will be taken over by the anti-Serbian and separatist wing of the Montenegrin communists after the Second World War.

## II

The myth of “Greater Serbian hegemonism” and of the danger to Montenegro from “Greater Serbia” came into frequent use in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This coincides with the awakening and rise of Croatian nationalism (Maspok), when Croatian and Montenegrin separatists became closer within the Communist League. Under the auspices of the then leader of the Montenegrin communists, Veljko Milatović (1921-2004), an officer and executor of OZNA and UDBA and a supporter of Maspok, an organized campaign was launched to falsify the history of Montenegro and interpret its past in the spirit of Drljević and Štedimlija’s Ustasha doctrine, all with the aim of spreading Serbophobia and suppressing Serbian identity. The entire action was marked by the fight against “Greater Serbian hegemonism” which, according to the narrative of Montenegrin separatists, has for centuries prevented the “national emancipation of Montenegrins”. Thus, in his polemic with the prominent Serbian literary historian Pavle Zorić, one of the Montenegrin ideologues of the time, literary critic Milorad Stojović, disputing Zorić’s scientific views on Montenegrin literature as an integral part of Serbian literature, developed a thesis about the “hegemonic ideology of the Greater Serbia bourgeoisie” that, “left the scars that Montenegro, and not only Montenegro, today has on its face” (Stojović 1969, 9). As Stojović emphasized in his pogrom text, it is an ideology “programmed in 1844 by Ilija Garašanin in his famous ‘Načertanije’, which his followers Nikola Pašić, Nikolaj Velimirović, Dragiša Vasić and others attempted to put into practice ” (9).

Historian Dr. Jovan Bojović, former director of the Historical Institute of Montenegro, speaks very well and sublimely about the support of the Montenegrin communist leadership to the protagonists of anti-Serbism

and separatism: “Since the 1970s, the systematic de-nationalization of the Serbian people has been carried out in Montenegro. The Montenegrin language and the existence of the 1000-year-old Montenegrin state were highlighted, histories of the Montenegrin people were written, etc., ridiculous questions such as the question of the autocephaly of the Montenegrin church were raised, old monuments were demolished – (the church of St. Peter on Lovćen where Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš was buried, and a new one was built – Meštrović’s, which deviates from the Orthodox conception and the time in which Njegoš lived). Montenegrin separatists were supported by the communist leadership in Yugoslavia. They were also backed by separatists from the former Yugoslav republics and provinces, as well as by separatist national minorities in Yugoslavia. Montenegrin separatists were also assisted by some circles from the West, primarily by the Catholic Church” (Bojović 1993, 234).

The support by some high circles of the Roman Catholic Church to the Montenegrin separatists and their influence on the events in Montenegro at that time, as dr. Jovan Bojović points out, is best evidenced by the letter of the special papal envoy – Monsignor Francisco Palovineti dated 28 December 1969, addressed to the Bishop of Montenegro and the Littoral, Danilo Dajković. In that letter, this Roman Catholic Church dignitary offers wholehearted help “in the struggle to establish the true faith of Christ in Montenegro and to become independent as a newborn of the Holy Father the Pope”, adding that the current people in the territory of Montenegro “no longer has anything in common with the former people oriented by the Greater Serbian ideology”, and therefore, as the Pope’s emissary emphasizes, the Pope is willing “to help this people wholeheartedly and to restore them to their proper faith in Christ and to invest large amounts of money into that cause” (Aleksić 2002, 202). Evidently, this dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church based his proselytizing activity in Montenegro on the exploitation of the myth of “Greater Serbia ideology” which, as he claimed, contaminated the Montenegrins and from which the papal church should save them.

Dr. Đordije Vuković, professor at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, born in Danilovgrad, also points to the cahooting of the Montenegrin communist leadership with the ideologues of Montenegrin separatism (who enjoyed wholehearted support of the influential political-intellectual circles in Croatia, that provided them not only with financial aid, but also with scientific titles – thus, Vojislav Nikčević, Danilo Radojević and Radoslav Rotković received their doctorates in Zagreb): “The

deplorable Montenegrin leadership at the time (Milatović, Đuranović) encouraged intolerance towards Serbia, supporting literary losers and publicists and forgers preoccupied with anachronistic ideas about ethnogenesis and nonsense of every kind" (Vuković, 1987, 55).

### III

The escalation of Montenegrin separatism and anti-Serbian chauvinism occurred in the early 1990s, after the establishment of a multi-party system and parliamentary democracy, when political parties that incorporated the key ideological determinants of Montenegrin separatism into their program were formed: the creation of an "independent" Montenegro within AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) borders; constructing the "Montenegrin language" and eliminating the Cyrillic alphabet from state institutions and from the minds of the public; constitution of the "Montenegrin autocephalous church" as a means of uniting Montenegrins; imposing the idea of the reconstruction of national identity in Montenegro. They included the Liberal Union of Montenegro, the Social Democratic Party and the Montenegrin (Con)Federalist Movement, parties with an eminently pro-Croatian orientation, whose policy and ideology were taken over in 1997 by Milo Đukanović's Democratic Party of Socialists. As a prerequisite for the implementation of their program, these political organizations emphasized the crushing of "Greater Serbia hegemonism", whose main pillar was the Serbian Orthodox Church, but also other important institutions of the Serbian people – such as the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Matica Srpska and the Writers' Association of Serbia, as Montenegrin separatists pointed out.

The beginning of Yugoslavia's break-up in 1991 would have a decisive effect on the strengthening of the myth about Greater Serbian hegemonic aspirations. It attributed to inherent traits of violence and irrational aggressiveness to the Serbian people. Champions of the anti-Serbian propaganda were the leaders of the Montenegrin Federalist Movement (who would become the "academics" of Dukla in 1999) who portrayed Serbs as a genocidal nation and as an evil that must be stopped. The first publication of this party (1990) was entitled "*Montenegrin people and the Serbian policy of genocide against them*", and contained hate-filled anti-Serb rants. In another collection published by this extreme anti-Serb party, publicist Lale Brković published the text "Serbian

genocide of the Montenegrin people from Načertanije to the Memorandum”, in which he accused all Serbian political elites of attempts, over the last two hundred years, to genocidally wipe out everything that is Montenegrin: “For almost two centuries now, Serbian rulers have been trying to bury the Montenegrin name with the same methods” (Brković 1991, 165). Officials of the Liberal Union of Montenegro also insisted on “Serbian expansionism”. Thus, in the journal “Liberal, the newsletter of the Liberal Union of Montenegro, publicist Milorad Popović, from Cetinje, expounded a thesis that “the leadership of a relatively small country, such as Serbia, threatens almost all neighboring nations with expansionist intentions” (Popović 1990, 7–8).

The informal leader and ideologue of the Montenegrin separatists of that time, poet and publicist Jevrem Brković, claimed that the underlying cause of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia was an attempt to create a Greater Serbia, and that “two Milošević vassals” in Montenegro served that policy – Momir Bulatović and Milo Đukanović. Calling these two former leaders of the Montenegrin regime “putschists”, Brković argued that they “rule Montenegro and Serbianize it, for the sake of the Memorandum and Slobodan Milošević” (Brković, 1992, 87). This extreme Montenegrin nationalist and Serbophobe particularly targeted Montenegrin reserve officers who participated in operations in the Dubrovnik region in 1991, as part of the reserve units of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA), during the armed rebellion of the Croatian paramilitary units. In his book “Dirty War” (co-financed by Tudman’s Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Croatia), Brković adopted the Croatian narrative about the nature of the armed conflicts in that area, claiming that “Montenegrins are invading, burning and looting the tame area of Konavle - for Milošević and Greater Serbia” (Brković 1992, 87). Brković’s later separatist historiography and journalism is based on these views, treating the Yugoslav People’s Army as an instrument of “Greater Serbia hegemony”. In the same spirit, Šerbo Rastoder and Novak Adžić in their book “Modern History of Montenegro 1988-2017”, elaborate a thesis about the offensive strategic military operation of the JNA in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, as they claimed, was aimed at creating, “Greater Serbia, with the key role of the JNA, to be named Yugoslavia”, (Rastoder, Adžić 2020, 522).

## IV

The political shift of the ruling elite, embodied in the ruling party (Democratic Party of Socialists) in 1997, further strengthened the anti-Serb narrative about “Greater Serbia hegemony”. It was during that year, 1997, that the Democratic Party of Socialists (now with Milo Đukanović at its helm) took over the program of Montenegrin separatist parties (Liberal Union of Montenegro, Social Democratic Party and Montenegrin (con)federalist movement), but also their propaganda story about the Greater Serbia hegemony and Greater Serbia. Since then and until the defeat of the ethnocratic regime of Montenegrin separatists in the parliamentary elections on August 30, 2020, the following clichés were used almost daily in the Dukla-Montenegrin anti-Serbian propaganda: “Greater Serbia hegemony”, “Greater Serbia”, “Serbian imperial state project”, “Greater Serbia idea”, “Belgrade hegemony”, “Greater Serbia bourgeoisie”, and the like.

Among all of the separatist structures: political parties, non-governmental organizations, print and electronic media, cultural institutions – there was a general agreement to break up the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to accuse the Serbs and Serbia, with the “argument” that they have “hegemonic pretensions” towards Montenegro and that they are a threat to the “Montenegro democratic project”. Resolutely embarking on the path of separatism and breaking up the joint state of Serbia and Montenegro, Milo Đukanović secured the support for this undertaking in the Western power centers, which he often visited at that time. Thus, during his stay in Washington, on February 5, 2001, he spoke at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), at a gathering concerning the future of Montenegro, where he said at a press conference that for hundreds of years, there were, “unresolved problems are simmering” between Montenegro and Serbia and that an independent Montenegro will “finally bury the idea of Greater Serbia” (Raković 2019, 226 – 227). The same Milo Đukanović who only twelve years earlier, in the Belgrade newspaper Interview (November 10, 1989), strongly argued a thesis about the Serbophobia of the Croatian and Slovenian republican leaders, and declared their “fear of Serbia and Greater Serbia hegemonism” as malicious and senseless.

In those days Đukanović, a young and pro-Serbian Montenegrin communist, wholeheartedly supported the adoption of constitutional amendments to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Serbia,

which would, as he said, “finally give SR Serbia the same status as other (con)federal states in Yugoslavia” (Gavrilović 1989, 8). He also pointed to the unequal treatment of the Serbian cultural, spiritual and historical heritage in Tito’s Yugoslavia, stressing in the same interview that: “Everything that was Serbian, from a song to a symbol from the national tradition, bore the sign of possible Greater Serbian nationalism. All other nations could have national heroes, national songs, national histories, national cultures, but it was somehow politically inadvisable for the Serbs to have that, because of the alleged specter of hegemony” (Gavrilović 1989, 8). Noting the fact that in the second Yugoslavia, “for a long time, even historically speaking, an irrational Serbophobia has been present” (Gavrilović 1989, 7), Đukanović praised the leadership of the Republic of Serbia of that time, with Slobodan Milošević at its helm, who, as he put it “initiated a more pronounced revival of national tradition, culture and history, which is automatically interpreted in the western and northwestern republics as an aggression of the Greater Serbia hegemony. That more pronounced national feeling in the Serbian people, in my opinion, is a completely natural reaction to decades of suppression of national attributes” (Gavrilović, 1989, 8).

This politician, who in 1989 so convincingly and argumentatively exposed the propaganda story of Croatian and Slovenian separatists about Greater Serbian hegemony and the danger of Greater Serbia, only a few years later fully accepted their anti-Serbian narrative, which he continues to exploit to this day. Thus, during his official visit as President of Montenegro to the Republic of Croatia in September 2021 (immediately after the Cetinje events surrounding the enthronement of Bishop Joanikije), he told journalists that the phrase “Serbian world” is a euphemism for “Greater Serbia” and that the Serbian Orthodox Church (which he has been calling the “Church of Serbia” in recent years) “the striking arm of Greater Serbian nationalism and denial of the Montenegrin nation” (Ikonić 2021, 15).

M. Đukanović’s narrative about the Serbian Orthodox Church, as the main champion of the policy of “Greater Serbian hegemonism” was particularly intensive during the campaign for the adoption of the infamous, anti-constitutional and discriminatory Law on Freedom of Religion in 2018 and 2019. His fierceness toward this institution is perhaps best illustrated by his statement to Radio-Television of Montenegro on October 19, 2018: “Obviously, the problem of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its leaders is that anyone who is not like them, a blind follower of



the interests of Russian imperialism, Greater Serbian nationalism and, I would say, aggressive ‘Svetosavlje’, promoted by the Serbian Orthodox Church, is declared a traitor. A traitor of what? A traitor of their interests? Yes, that’s me”(Raković 2019, 152 –153).

Milo Đukanović adopted the thesis about the “aggressive Svetosavlje” from S. M. Štedimlija, who published the largest number of texts dedicated to the figure and activities of Saint Sava in the Ustasha war press, specifically in the newspapers “Spremnost” (whose sub-heading read: “Thought and Will of Ustasha Croatia”), and “Glas pravoslavja” (newsletter of the so-called “Croatian Orthodox Church” founded by the Ustasha regime). In those texts, Štedimlija attempted to dethrone Saint Sava as a saint, and to diminish his ecclesiastical and holy character and thus – for this Montenegrin Ustasha – Svetosavlje is only one form of Serbian nationalism, and a “political ideology that excludes all others” (Štedimlija 1944, 10). Štedimlija’s incorrect and malicious interpretations, as well as groundless claims and conclusions about Saint Sava and Svetosavlje, have been continually repeated by his followers – Montenegrin separatists. Jevrem Brković stood out in particular in terms of publicly insulting and disparaging the greatest Serbian saint and educator, accusing the Serbian Orthodox Church of “aggression against Croatia”, so, in a 1992 interview to the “Glas koncila” (official newspaper of the “Church in Croatia”) he said that Svetosavlje is “a state religion with marked militancy, which is now manifested in the war against Croatia” (Brković 1992, 6). It is obvious, therefore, that in referring to the Serbian Orthodox Church and “aggressive Svetosavlje”, Milo Đukanović only follows the views of his ideological role models – S. M. Štedimlija and Jevrem Brković.

M. Đukanović justified his political intentions – to confiscate the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church and eliminate it from Montenegro, and to assimilate and Montenegrinize the Serbian people in Montenegro, by adopting the Law on Freedom of Religion and Belief, with the well-known, and most frequently cited propaganda slogan among all Serbian enemies about the fight against the creation of the alleged “Greater Serbia” and “Greater Serbian hegemonism” based on the “Svetosavlje doctrine”.

## V

Immediately after the forcible take-over of leadership of the Democratic Party of Socialists from Momir Bulatović (1997), along with the ideology of Montenegrin separatism promoted by the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro in 1990, M. Đukanović hired a whole team of quasi-scientists who attempted to justify his political turn, that is, the radical distancing from Serbia and the Serbian identity of Montenegrins. He formed the Duklja Academy of Sciences and Arts, a quasi-scientific institution tasked with supporting the project of identity engineering with ostensibly scientific argumentation. He appointed Jevrem Brković, then a leading anti-Serbian propagandist to head the “academy” (which is nothing more than the Podgorica branch of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts), who was engaged during his exile in Croatia (1991–1995) in the Propaganda Department of the Croatian Army in the Ministry of Defense, which co-published his book *Dirty War* (1992). Accusing Serbia of “hegemonic pretensions”, Dukla’s “academics” simultaneously built a racist theory about the Serbs that can easily stand alongside Hitler’s theory about Jews.

We will support these claims with a couple of examples. The “creator” of the “Montenegrin language and orthography”, Dr. Vojislav Nikčević, elaborating the thesis about Serbs as an inferior race, among other things, wrote the following: “One gets the impression that hatred is their irresistible psychological need, a necessary treatment for their inferiority complexes” (Nikčević 1998, 45). Contrary to historical facts, and consistent with the theses put forward by Ustasha theorists Ante Starčević, Josip Franko, Milo Budak, Fr. Dominik Mandić and others, V. Nikčević writes that the Serbs “led cruel and bloody wars of invasion” against all their neighbors (45).

He further repeats Štedimlija’s story that Zeta was once a Roman Catholic country that Saint Sava “converted into Orthodoxy”, saying that Stefan Nemanja “is the spiritual father, the founder of the former military and current linguistic invasion policy which is devotedly served in Montenegro” continuously pursued in the new century from Ilija Garašanin’s Načertanije (1844) until our time” (45). In the same spirit of racism, Dr. Radoslav Rotković, also an “academic” from Dukla, talks about the “Greater Serbian imperial policy” and continues: “For a long time, the Serbs were someone else’s serfs, so now they are trying to make others their serfs” (Rotković 1998, 8). Just as Hitler saw Jews as the cause

of all evils in history and in the world, Đukanović’s “academics” and Montenegrin ideologues see the universal spirit of negativity in Serbs, who, in their view, pursued an “imperial invasion policy” throughout the course of history.

Over the last thirty years, Montenegrin separatist newspapers have published tens of thousands of texts, as well as statements by the highest-ranking Montenegrin officials, in which Serbs were described as centuries-old enemies of Montenegrins and as occupiers of Montenegro. The dominant propaganda narrative was that about “Greater Serbia”, which was supposed to characterize an entire nation as hegemonic (invaders), in the spirit of the aforementioned claims of the “academics” from Duklja. This narrative is sublimated by the views of Đukanović’s leading legal “expert”, during the campaign for the secession of Montenegro from Serbia – Mijat Šuković, who wrote that Serbia was pursuing a great-power invasionist and assimilationist policy towards Montenegro since the beginning of the 19th century. “The facts unequivocally show”, as Šuković noted, “that the Serbian political, state and cultural has since then continuously and especially intensively in the periods from the mid-1860s to mid-1870s and in the first two decades of the 20th century, organized and cruelly acted to liquidates the state of Montenegro and incorporate the Montenegrin people to the Serbian nation, to secure Serbia’s access to the Adriatic Sea, subordinating the rights and legitimate interests of Montenegro as a state and the Montenegrin people to its own plans. The aggressive and expansionist Serbian nationalism was continuously used to that end” (Šuković 2006, 94–95). This former communist politician and Montenegrin ideologue, after siding with the Montenegrin separatists in 1997 (he previously strongly advocated for the preservation and strengthening of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), constantly warned of the danger of “Greater Serbia”, which, according to him, has loomed over Montenegro for centuries. In the same vein, he also interpreted the work and decisions of the 1918 Podgorica Assembly, emphasizing that “the motives and objectives of establishing the Podgorica Assembly and passing its Decision are the creation of Greater Serbia” (Šuković 2011, 100).

In Podgorica’s daily newspaper “Pobjeda”, which up until the 2020 democratic changes was the voice of the Montenegrin separatist regime, and after that the main media ‘punching force’ of anti-Serbian separatist structures, the adjective “Greater Serbian” is mentioned several times every day in a number of variations; Belgrade and Serbia are blamed

for all the troubles in Montenegro, both past and present, and Serbs are portrayed as a “destructive” and “disruptive” factor in the Balkans. In the “Pobjeda”, as well as in all other media controlled by Serbophobic Montenegrin separatists, the Serbian Orthodox Church is treated as the “striking arm of Greater Serbian nationalism”, as Milo Đukanović put it, accepting the Ustasha narrative. Its role, according to a “Pobjeda” columnist “is to preserve the products of the Great Serbian project that is being carried out in Montenegro” (Kern 2020, 9). The former advisor to Milo Đukanović and Ranko Krivokapić (former President of the Parliament of Montenegro), General Blagoje Grahovac emphasized that “Serbian clerical fascism” is present in Montenegro which “has its generic form in Serbian nationalism, even chauvinism”, and that the “Serbian Orthodox Church is the primary culprit because it has been acting politically” (Krgović 2022, 11).

## VI

Accusing Serbia and the Serbs of hegemony, the Montenegrin separatist media have, over the last thirty years, exploited an old propaganda cliché with the aim of turning public opinion in Montenegro more easily against Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church – the most important and popular institution in Montenegro. With incredible persistence and systematically, from one anti-Serbian media to another and from day to day, stories about “Greater Serbia” were spun in many variations, all aiming to declare Serbia an “occupier” and age-old enemy of Montenegro, and to convince Montenegrins that they are the victims of a “thousand-year Greater Serbian imperialist policy”.

The old Austro-Hungarian propaganda catchphrase about “Greater Serbia” was used between the two world wars by the Vatican, the Croatian Ustasha and the communists headed by the Comintern, and it was resurrected in the early 1990s, in the wake of the breakup of Yugoslavia, by Slovenian, Croatian and Albanian separatists. Montenegrin separatists did their utmost to align themselves with their Serbophobic role models from the region in their anti-Serbian propaganda. The essence of the political and propaganda intentions of all the aforementioned exploiters of the myth of “Greater Serbia” is to demonize any idea of Serbian integration, that is, of Serbian cultural, spiritual, national and state unity.

These legitimate aspirations of the Serbian people for liberation and unification – as noted by the top expert on the origins and meaning

of the propaganda term “Greater Serbia”, academician Čedomir Popov – have interfered “on the one hand, with the imperial interests of the great powers, and on the other, into greater state ambitions and demands of some neighboring nations, even the closest ones” (Popov 2008, 9), and therefore faced “their fiercest resistance, justified by the fight against the Greater Serbian, hegemonic and invasive goals” (9). Thus, the aspirations of the Serbian people in Montenegro to preserve their identity interfere with the plans of the Montenegrin separatists to construct a new cultural paradigm, so they are regarded as a “Greater Serbian danger” that threatens the “thousand-year-old Montenegrin statehood” and the “native Montenegrin nation”.

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## МИФ О «ВЕЛИКОМ СЕРБСКОМ ГЕГЕМОНИЗМЕ» В ЧЕРНОГОРСКИХ АНТИСЕРБСКИХ ПРОПАГАНДОВСКИХ НАРРАТИВАХ

### Аннотация

*В статье анализируется преемственность анти-сербской пропаганды черногорских сепаратистов с начала 1990-х годов до настоящего времени. Анализ показывает, что бывший режим черногорских сепаратистов (потерпевший поражение на выборах 30 августа 2020 г.) оправдывал свою деятельность, направленную на распад совместного государства Сербия и Черногория, переименование сербского языка в «черногорский» и попытку ликвидации сербского языка. Они попробовали удалить Православную церковь с территории Черногории – с пропагандистским лозунгом о борьбе с несуществующим «Великим сербским гегемонизмом» и «Унитаризмом». В трактовках черногорских идеологов и пропагандистов «передательством» и «служением иностранцу» были объявлены естественные обязанности и естественные права православного населения Черногории защищать свое национальное (сербское) имя, Церковь, родной (сербский) язык и кириллицу, причем иностранцем всегда была Сербия, а Хорватия и Албания были объявлены «историческими друзьями» и «естественными союзниками». Создание этих пропагандистских матриц служит цели получения легитимности вышеупомянутых политических действий под предлогом подавления «Великого сербского гегемонизма».*

**Ключевые слова:** гегемонизм Великой Сербии, пропаганда «Великой Сербии», Черногория, черногорский сепаратизм, демонизация, стигматизация.