

Araştırma Makalesi

Radical Atheism Towards The Orthodox Church In Montenegro, 1945–1960

Aleksandar Stamatovic* – Budimir Aleksic**

(ORCID: 0000-0002-3463-4779 – 0000-0002-9886-2623)

Makale Gönderim Tarihi

02.02.2023

Makale Kabul Tarihi

22.03.2023

Atıf Bilgisi/Reference Information

Chicago: Stamatovic, A.-Aleksic, B., “Radical Atheism Towards The Orthodox Church In Montenegro, 1945–1960”, *Vakanüvis-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8/1 (Mart 2023): 873-901.

APA: Stamatovic, A.-Aleksic, B. (2023). Radical Atheism Towards The Orthodox Church In Montenegro, 1945–1960. *Vakanüvis-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8 (1) , 873-901.

Abstract

The roots of radical atheism in Montenegro can be found at the beginning of the existence of the Yugoslav state in the interwar period. The Podgorica Assembly, which had the goal of formalising the unification of Montenegro with Serbia and other Yugoslav provinces, was held in November 1918. The Assembly proclaimed the decision to merge Montenegro with Serbia. Three members of parliament (MPs) came forward with radical atheistic requests at the Assembly, demanding that all the church’s property should be confiscated and handed over to the state. Some churches and monasteries were to be

* Prof. Dr., University of East Sarajevo, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History and Archeology in Pale, Bosnia and Herzegovina, aleksandar.stamatovic@ffuis.edu.ba. Prof. Dr., Doğu Saraybosna Üniversitesi, Felsefe Facultesi, Pale Tarih ve Arkeoloji Bölümü, Bosna-Hersek.

** Prof. Dr., Megatrend University, Faculty of Business Studies, Serbia, b.aleksic@t-com.me.

Prof. Dr., Megatrend Üniversitesi, İşletme Fakültesi, Sırbistan.

turned into public chapels for burials, and the others into schools and cultural institutions. During the interwar period, the Communist Party existed mostly illegally in Montenegro, and did not show any greater intent to impose radical atheism. During the Second World War, a strong revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party developed in Montenegro, as did also a counter-revolution. At that time the Communist Party and the partisan movement showed a strong degree of radical atheism, with elements of militant atheism, especially in the killing of a large number of church clergy (monks, priests and graduate theologians) during the war. However, the Communist Party did not implement radical atheism in the fields of ideology and the economy. It would do that only after the Second World War, when it assumed power over all spheres of social and public life. At that time, within the process of nationalisation and agrarian reform, significant material goods (buildings, land, forests and movable property) were taken away from the Orthodox Church in Montenegro. The same was done to the Catholic Church and the Islamic religious community. The process of radical atheism in an ideological sense took place parallel with this process. The intention of the Communist Party was to completely remove the church from social life, and implement atheism among the people, and practically turn them into believers of the new Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Keywords: Montenegro, atheism, church, Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral.

Karadağ'daki Ortodoks Kilisesi ile İlgili Olarak Radikal Ateizm 1945-1960

Öz

Radikal ateizmin kökleri Karadağ'da savaşlar arası dönemde Yugoslav devletinin varlığının başlangıcında bulunur. Podgorica Meclisi Karadağ'ın Sırbistan ve diğer Yugoslav eyaletleriyle birleşmesini resmileştirmek amacıyla Kasım 1918'de toplandı. Meclis, Karadağ'ın Sırbistan ile birleşmesi kararını verdi. Üç milletvekili, tüm kilise mallarına el komulması ve devlete teslim edilmesi yönünde radikal ateist taleplerle Meclis'te öne çıktı. Bazı kiliseler ve manastırlar halka açık mezar şapellerine, diğerleri ise okullara ve kültürel kurumlara dönüştürülecekti. İki dünya savaşı arasındaki dönemde Komünist Parti Karadağ'da çoğunlukla yasa dışı olarak varlığını sürdürdü ve radikal ateizmin niyetlerini daha büyük bir etki ile ortaya koymadı. İkinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında Karadağ'da Komünist Parti liderliğindeki güçlü bir devrimci hareket ve aynı zamanda bir karşı devrim gelişti. O zamanlarda Komünist Parti ve partizan hareketi militan ateizm unsurlarıyla birlikte yüksek derecede radikal ateizm gösterdi, özellikle çok sayıda Ortodoks din adamının (rahipler, keşişler,

mezun ilahiyatçılar) öldürülmesinde. Halbuki, Komünist Parti savaş sırasında radikal ateizmi ideoloji ve ekonomide uygulamadı. Bunu İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra toplumsal ve kamusal hayatın her alanında iktidara geldiğinde yapacaktır. Kamulaştırma ve tarım reformu sürecinde Karadağ'daki Ortodoks Kilesin'den çok sayıda maddi varlığa (binalar, arazi, ormanlar, taşınır mallar) el konuldu. Aynı şey Katolik Kilisesi ve İslam dini cemaatine de yapıldı. Bu süreçle birlikte ideolojik anlamda radikal ateizm süreci de yaşanmıştır. Komünist Parti kiliseyi toplumsal yaşamdan tamamen kovmayı, halka ateizmi dayatmayı ve yeni Marksist-Leninist ideolojiye gerçekten inandırmayı amaçlıyordu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Karadağ, ateizm, kilise, Karadağ Metropolü ve Littoral.

Introduction

The chronology of radical atheism in Montenegro can be followed after the end of the First World War.¹ The Great National Assembly of the Serbian people in Montenegro was held in Podgorica from 24 to 29 November 1918. The Assembly proclaimed the unification of Montenegro with Serbia and other Yugoslav provinces that had been under Austro-Hungarian authority before. This Assembly was of a multi-confessional and multiparty nature. It had one main goal: to merge the Serbian and Yugoslav peoples. According to the Constitution of the Principality of Montenegro from 1905, this Assembly was not legal. After the Assembly, during 1919, most of its members of parliament (MPs) went into the various parties that had been formed in Montenegro, not only by extreme-left communists but also by extreme-right Serbian monarchists.

On 29 November, at the fifth regular meeting of this Assembly, three MPs – Milan Terić, Miloš Jovanović and Miljko Bulajić – submitted a memorandum to the Assembly with 17 points for consideration. In these points, the MPs demanded that the church's property be confiscated and handed over to state ownership. They

¹ In 1918 Montenegro entered the Yugoslav state as a small, passive state, particularly without any industry. The ruling dynasty was Petrović-Njegoš, led by King Nikola who ruled almost as an absolutist. There was only one political party in Montenegro at that time. Political life was very primitive. There were no socialist and workers' groups which could be connected to the Second work international.

also asked that the relics of saints be buried, so that people would not remain under superstition any longer. The priests were to become state officials. Churches and monasteries would become only chapels for visiting the dead before burial. The possessions of the former King Nikola were also to be nationalised. Radical atheism was clearly recognised in point 13.²

All three members of parliament became communists later. Two of them – Jovanović and Bulajić – were at the congress of the Socialist Workers' Party (communists) held in April 1919 in Belgrade. According to these points, it was clear that the ideas of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia had already been brought to Montenegro at the end of the First World War.

Between the two world wars, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) existed mostly illegally, sometimes trying to legalise itself with pretend names and to participate in some parliamentary elections, too. In the second half of the 1930s in the interwar period, the CPY, with its candidates, participated in an election in Montenegro under the United Opposition's list. But during this period, apart from its global ideological determination, the CPY did not appear with a programme of radical atheism.

During the Second World War, the CPY carried out a revolution at the same time. It had a certain number of priests in its ranks through the partisan movement fighting against the Nazi-fascist occupiers. The CPY liquidated a large number of priests under the excuse of conflicts with those collaborating with the occupiers and the counter-revolutionary movement. Radical atheism was certainly there in the background. In Montenegro, this radical atheism can be seen especially in the numbers of killed clergy (monks, priests, graduate theologians, church administrators and staff). During the Second World War, from 1941 to 1945, 107 members of the church clergy from Montenegro were killed by communists-partisans. The German and Italian occupiers killed 16. Croatian Ustashas killed six, and

² Archive of the Historical Institute of Montenegro, Archival Box 319, Notes of the Podgorica Assembly.

Albanian Ballists four. Chetniks killed one.³ In the data about the killed clergy those killed on the territory of Montenegro and those born there but killed somewhere else were included. Finally, the data also includes priests who were not born in Montenegro, but lived there and were killed there during the war. Members of the church clergy were killed by the German and Italian occupiers. Some of them were victims of repression, and others were members of the communist-partisan movement.

During the Second World War, the communist-partisan movement had neither an official position about atheism nor the policy of confiscating the church's property. Everything was left to the individual's right to be a believer or not. Separation of the church and state in all forms was insisted on. Partisans used the church infrastructure partially for their headquarters, army, hospitals, etc. Movable property, especially food and other things necessary for life, was taken away from the church under the banner of fighting against the occupiers and supplying the partisan army.

The CPY was aware that with radical atheism it would alienate the majority of Montenegrin society, which was mostly rural, traditional and loyal to the church. Therefore, the communist-partisan movement wanted to present itself as a tolerant movement for all three religious communities, a democratic and general alliance of people of all nations, religions and political beliefs (party-based, religious, atheistic, etc.) that were fighting against Nazism-fascism for freedom and a socio-economically liberal society. However, the movement's opponents understood this movement as being anti-church and

³ AMML, List of registered priests; AMML, Personal files of the priests (several books); Пакао или комунизам у Црној Гори [*Hell, or Communism in Montenegro*], I–VIII (1942/43); Урош Зоњић, 'Страдање српског свештенства 1941–1945' *Гласник српског историјско-културног друштва „Његош“* [*The Herald of the "Njegoš" Serbian Historical and Cultural Society*], 33 (1974), 64–71; Borivoje Karapandžić, *Jugoslovensko krvavo proljeće 1945, Titovi Katini i gulazi* [*The Yugoslav Bloody Spring of 1945, Titovi Katini i Gulazi*], Beograd: Mladost, 1990, 125–128; Саво Греговић, Пуцај, рат је завршен. Злим путем братоубилаштва. Словеначко крваво прољеће 1945. [*Shoot, the War Is Over. The Evil Path of Fratricide: The Slovenian Bloody Spring of 1945*], Будва: Удружење „Открићемо истину“, 2009, 17–21, 43–57, and 217–220.

irreligious due to its actions, which were, after all, atheistic and this served as propaganda for the counter-revolutionary forces, too.

After taking power at the end of the war and after the revolution, the CPY did not have to make any compromises and deviate from its original programme any more. The CPY had two main points in its programme regarding the church. The first was to carry out the atheisation of society and the second was the liquidation of religion. It continued carrying out the atheisation of society in all fields much easier and faster, especially with the economic destruction of the church. In all countries where communism won, the Russian model of atheism was implemented. This model was adopted in each of the countries according to the particular situation.

Economic weakening of the church by confiscation of its property

Therefore, during the Second World War, on 9 March 1945, only two days after its formation, the temporary government of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia proclaimed the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation.⁴ The overall legal concept was merely a way of confiscating the church's property. Soon, in April, a plan of instructions for applying the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation in particular situations was drawn up. According to the opinion of the federal minister in this government, Sreten Vukosavljević, this law was adopted in all the Yugoslav republics. He explained that each federal republic had accepted agrarian reform for itself, respecting the specifics of the agrarian and social conditions in all of them. The conflict with the Roman Catholic Church was the most dangerous for the communist regime, considering that the former had a great influence over some states which had won in the war. The communist regime wanted to present this conflict as a conflict between the federal republics and the religious communities in them. So, the influence of religious communities on their believers would be fragmented into different republics, and would therefore be smaller.⁵

⁴ Бранко Петрановић and Момчило Зечевић, *Историја Југославије 1918–1988 – збирка докумената [The History of Yugoslavia 1918–1988 – Collection of Documents]*, Београд: Рад, 1988, 456.

⁵ AY, FPRY/50, Archival box 89, unit of description 188.

Despite the difficult circumstances, on St Vitus' Day (28 June) the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) sent a request to the Religious Commission of the National Republic of Serbia to provide it with the draft law, so that the Synod could familiarise itself with it and give suggestions. The Commission did not do this, so the Synod obtained it using personal connections. According to it, five hectares of ordinary land and 20 hectares of arable land would be taken away from each parish and monastery. The same amount would be taken away from religious institutions of particular historical importance.⁶

On 14 August 1945, the Synod sent a petition to the Presidency of the Government of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia and the Presidency of the Provisional National Assembly, requesting that the church's property should not be included in this law. As members of the Synod, Metropolitan Josif and Bishops Nektarije and Benjamin requested a meeting with the President of the Provisional National Assembly, Dr. Ivan Ribar, and the President of Legislative Committee of the Assembly, Moša Pijada. At the meeting, they achieved some kind of compromise in the interest of the Serbian Orthodox Church whereby religious institutions would be allowed to retain 10 hectares of their total land area, and religious institutions of particular historical value would keep 30 hectares of arable land and 30 hectares of forest.⁷

During the meeting of the Legislative Committee in August, there were various views about agrarian reform related to the church. The bourgeois representatives in the Provisional National Assembly and the Government of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia wanted to allow the church to retain its property. In the second phase of the war and the revolution, the communists employed these representatives in the state authorities. Although they belonged to the communist authorities, they had no power to decide on anything. The communists needed them only to give the appearance to the United Kingdom, the USA and France of being a democratic society. There were a lot of bourgeois representatives who were passive during the war and did

⁶ Радмила Радић, *Вером против вере, Држава и верске заједнице у Србији 1945–1953. [Faith against Faith, The State and Religious Communities of Serbia 1945–1953]*, Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 1995, 148.

⁷ АУ, FPRY/50, Archival box 4, unit of description 11; Радић, *Ibid*, 148–149.

not join the counter-revolutionary movement. A representative example of them was the pre-war bourgeois politician, and one of the leaders of the Democratic Party, Dr. Milan Grol, who returned to Yugoslavia from London at the end of the war. He had managed to flee from the Germans in 1941. He was deputy prime minister of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. He believed that the church's property should be treated in the same way as the property of other citizens.

The Minister of Justice in the Government of the People's Republic of Montenegro, Jefto Pavić, was also one of these pre-war bourgeois politicians. He believed that the state had to give compensation to the church for its confiscated property if the state used it for the purpose of supporting social institutions. But, on the other hand, a group of pre-war bourgeois politicians from Montenegro, who were MPs in the Provisional National Assembly of Yugoslavia, opposed this proposal. They were: Jovan Ćetković, Miloš Rašović and Marko Vujačić. The classical communists Veljko Zeković and Pero Krstajić joined them. On 22 August, this group sent a proposal to the Legislative Committee asking that it leave only 15 hectares of arable land and 15 hectares of forest to religious institutions of particular historical importance.⁸

After many consultations and various opinions, the Assembly of Yugoslavia adopted the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation on 23 August. Its essence related to the third article in the law which was related to confiscating property from the church. The first point of Article 8 provided for confiscation of more than 10 hectares (of fields, gardens, vineyards, meadows and forests) from the church and over 30 hectares of arable land and 30 hectares of forest from institutions of particular historical importance.⁹

Obviously this law was unclear in terms of the land categorisation, so it could be understood arbitrarily. Its essence was to transfer competencies from the state to the republics, so they could process this under their own laws. This soon came to pass when, on 29 August,

⁸ AY, The Fund of the Institution for Agrarian Reform and Colonisation of Socialist Society (97), Archival box 1, unit of description 3.

⁹ 'Аграрна реформа и колонизација', *Службени лист Демократске Федеративне Југославије* [*The Official Gazette of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia*], No. 64 (28 Aug. 1945), 1–3.

the Agrarian Council of 14 members was formed to implement the law. On 19 September, the Agrarian Council sent instructions to the ministries of agriculture for the adoption of the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation within each of the federal republics. On 8 February 1946, the Council was transformed into the Commission for Agrarian Reform and Colonisation within the Government of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, but without competence for the federal republics on the above issues.¹⁰

In Montenegro, the agrarian reform on the confiscation of church property began on 29 November 1945 when the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation was adopted. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry headed up the agrarian reform, and the National Agricultural Commission was in charge of carrying out this work throughout the republic. Regulations and instructions for the work of the Commission were issued by the ministry. At that time, the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation was enacted by the presidency of the Montenegrin National Assembly.¹¹

Then, on 23 January 1946, the prime minister of Montenegro issued a decree on the implementation of the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation. It created a district agricultural commission of five members that worked in each of the district councils, and found information on whom the land should be taken away from or to whom it should be given. In the next phase, a meeting of agrarian stakeholders was held and managed by the Commission, which also announced the decisions. The owner of the property, or an authorised representative of the same, was also invited to the meeting. The absence of the owner of the property did not delay the execution of the law. The interpretation of the law was entrusted to the Republic Agrarian Court. This Court, in relation to the District Agricultural Commission and its decisions, was a second-degree body, and there was no right to appeal against its decisions. The president of the National Agrarian Court was the president of the District Court in

¹⁰ AY, FPRY/ 50, Archival box 89, unit of description 188.

¹¹ Чедомир Перовић and Невенка Илић, *Рад Скупштине Црне Горе 1945–1950 – збирка докумената [Work of the Assembly of Montenegro 1945–1950 – Collection of Documents]*, Титоград: Скупштина СР Црне Горе, 1986, 65–79.

Cetinje, Nikola Krivokapić. The judges were: the head of the Personnel Department of the Presidency of the Government of the National Republic of Montenegro, Milovan Ćulafić, and the president of the Commission for War Damages, Đuro Čagorović.¹²

The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Montenegro, Jovan Ćetković, gave the instruction for the implementation of the Law and the Decree on Agrarian Reform and Internal Colonisation of Montenegro. Afterwards, on 18 February 1946, it acceded to the determination regarding which religious buildings and institutions were recognised as having historical importance and how much land would be left for them. Church endowments were to be completely confiscated.¹³

According to the adopted instructions, on 26 February 1946 the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the National Republic of Montenegro addressed the Religious Commission, to answer the question of which monasteries in Montenegro were of particular historical value. The secretary of the Commission, Đorđija Kalezić, replied the same day. They were the following monasteries: Cetinje, Piva, Ostrog and Morača Monasteries. Piva Monastery had been built in 1586. Morača Monastery had been built by one of the members of the Serbian medieval Nemanjić dynasty in 1252. Ostrog Monastery had been built by Metropolitan Vasilije in 1662, who was later proclaimed a saint, and the monastery was the largest sanctuary in Montenegro. Over the centuries, these monasteries had been destroyed several times by the Ottomans, and then rebuilt. Besides their religious value, they also had historical value, because important historical events had taken place in and around them.

However, it was stated that all monasteries in Montenegro were of historical importance. Kalezić also added Holy Trinity Monastery near Pljevlja to this list. It is not known when it had been built, but it had

¹² NAM, LAC, Archival box 7, through the document; 'Одлука о оснивању Земаљског аграрног суда на Цетињу', *Службени лист Народне Републике Црне Горе [The Official Gazette of the National Republic of Montenegro]*, No. 5 (13 Mar. 1946), 1–2; 'На Цетињу је образован аграрни суд за Црну Гору', *Побједа*, No. 11 (17 Mar. 1946), 3.

¹³ NAM, LAC, Archival box 7, through the document.

existed before the Ottoman occupation. Perhaps it had been built by someone from the Nemanjić dynasty.¹⁴ Kalezić probably added this monastery for political reasons. The Pljevlja region belonged to the new liberated territories which had become part of Montenegro in the First Balkan War in 1912/13. Kalezić had actually been a priest, but he had been before the Second World War. During the war and revolution he belonged to the communist-partisan movement. At the end of the war and during the years after it, he was the secretary (president) of the Religious Commission, which deprived the Montenegrin metropolitan of its jurisdiction and was practically a secretariat for religious relations.

On 2 May, 1946, the secretary of the religious commission declared that all the mentioned monasteries were of particular historical importance. According to federal law, 30 hectares of arable land and 30 hectares of forest were left to each of the monasteries.¹⁵ Afterwards, on 5 July Savina Monastery in Herceg Novi, on the Adriatic coast, was also added to this categorisation.¹⁶ This was probably done for political reasons. The Bay of Kotor and Herceg Novi had never been a part of Montenegro before 1918. They had been under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. After the First World War, this area was added to the Yugoslav state as an administrative unit. At the end of 1944, it became part of the Republic of Montenegro. The monastery did not have more than 10 hectares of land, so its property was not taken away.

Formally, nothing was taken away from the main monastery of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral. According to data from 1931, it had about 425 hectares of arable land and forest.¹⁷ Several hundred documents are preserved in the Archives of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral in Cetinje for the period between 1945 and 1955. These documents show a large

¹⁴ NAM, AFNR, Archival box 2, through the document.

¹⁵ Ibid, Archival box 7, through the document.

¹⁶ NAM, LAC, Archival box 6, document No. 236.

¹⁷ AMML, The Fund of Acts of the Metropolitanate, folder 2 for 1931, documents Nos. 76 and 77.

number of confiscations of church property. The administration of this monastery asked the government to stop this illegal confiscation.

The Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, Joanikije Lipovac, retreated with counter-revolutionary forces to Slovenia, but he was killed in the middle of 1945. His death caused total confusion in the Metropolitanate. The Synod gave the title of deputy archbishop to Archpriest Nikola Marković, who was the president of the Church Court in Cetinje. On 21 June 1946, Marković asked the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade to initiate a procedure in the Federal Commission for Agrarian Reform and Colonisation to designate all the monasteries in Montenegro as having historical importance. According to this, the decision that only six monasteries were of historical importance was to be changed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the People's Republic of Montenegro. Without any conferring between them, the opinions of Kalezić and Marković coincided. On 27 July, the Secretary of the Federal Commission, Vančo Burzevski, informed the Patriarchal Committee that the Commission was not responsible for this categorisation. The Committee should take the matter up with the ministry in Montenegro. However, Marković's further contact with this ministry came to nothing.¹⁸

A meeting of the District of Nikšić was held on 27 March 1946 in the hall of the House of Culture in Nikšić. The main subject was agrarian reform of three monasteries and one church in Nikšić, (Ostrog, St. Luke's in Župa near Nikšić, Bijela near Šavnik, and the cathedral in Nikšić). The authorised representative of Ostrog Monastery was Archimandrite Leontije Mitrović. He insisted that Ostrog Monastery had great historical importance but this did not help. Meetings like this were choreographed ahead of time by the communist party. They represented a combination of creating an atmosphere of accusations, disparagement, and perhaps even covert lynching. About 140 people were present. One of them, Petar Backović, accused the management of the monastery of renting the land out to peasants on adverse terms, and accused the monks of

¹⁸ AY, The Fund of the Institution for Agrarian Reform and Colonisation of Socialist Society (97), Archival box 10, unit of description 66; NAM, LAC, Archival boxes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, through the document.

being workshy and exploitative. According to him, it would be easier to support one saint than one monk. Stefan Kustudić was more extreme. He believed that it was enough to leave two to three hectares of land to the monastery. It could support itself from the contributions of pilgrims who came to visit the relics of St. Vasilije of Ostrog, so it did not need the land at all. After many complaints by the monastery administration, Ostrog's land was not confiscated more than was regulated by the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation of the National Republic of Montenegro.¹⁹

A similar meeting, related to taking land away from Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery near Berane, was held on 31 March. This monastery had been built by a member of the Nemanjić dynasty in 1213. The head of the monastery, Melhisedek Đurović, also, like Mitrović, tried to explain to the participants of the meeting the historical importance of the monastery. However, they refused to listen to him. They wanted to take the land away from the monastery because this land had been cultivated by the peasants for years. There were also accusations that this was land where counter-revolutionary forces had taken an oath against the partisans. One of those interested in the land, Vojo Popović, accused the monastery's millers of being smugglers during the war and of incorrectly measuring wheat for the partisans, and also accusing the monastery administration of selling the monastery's forest to the Italian occupiers. The present priest, Radisav Babović, also claimed that the monastery had no greater historical importance except that, during the Montenegrin state that existed until 1918, the leaders of Vasojević had come there to eat well. According to him, the monastery could not be a place for those who wanted to live at the expense of others.²⁰

It was the same situation almost everywhere in the country. There were about 150 people at one meeting which was held on 21 July in Piva Monastery. They did not care much that the monastery had been declared an institution of historical importance by the Commission on 2 July. One of them, Gale Vuković, claimed that there was no evidence

¹⁹ NAM, LAC, Archival box 5, documents Nos. 184–188; 'Аграрна расправа о манастирским посједима Среза никшићког', *Побједа*, 15 (15 Apr. 1946), 3.

²⁰ NAM, LAC, Archival box 3, documents Nos. 274–275.

that the monastery had any historical importance. Savo Žarković also claimed the same. Thus, these participants decided to leave only 10 hectares to the monastery. But the district agricultural commission took more than 10 hectares away from Piva Monastery. In October the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Montenegro annulled this decision. It accepted the evidence that the monastery had historical value.²¹

In many cases, the district agricultural commissions interpreted the law wrongly and wanted to take as much land as possible away from the church. The Commission for the District of Bar on the Adriatic coast took all the land away from four monasteries in that region on 13 May 1946. Various legal phrases were used as justification. On 23 May the steward of the monastery, Filaret Koprivica, filed a complaint to the National Agrarian Court with his arguments (that the Commission for the District of Bar had interpreted the law wrongly). He believed that this situation had been caused by the war and that the same thing could happen to other monasteries in this area. That turned out to be true, because the Commission also confiscated land from other monasteries in this area: Reževići, Praskvica and Duljevo. However, the court annulled the decisions of the Commission on 17 July, because these monasteries had the status of legal entities.²² The district commission in Podgorica proclaimed three churches and one monastery as endowments, which according to the law meant the complete confiscation of their land. The Agrarian Court, however, annulled these decisions on 30 August and excluded their possessions from the agrarian reform.²³ The property of the Circle of Serbian Sisters, a women's organisation under the care and patronage of the church, was completely confiscated. It consisted of two houses and a plot of land about 143 square metres in size in Herceg Novi.²⁴

Serbian Patriarch Dr. Gavriilo Dožić was a great supporter of the Yugoslav *coup d'état* which took place on 27 March 1941. The coup overthrew the Cvetković-Maček government which, only two days

²¹ NAM, LAC, Archival box 5, documents Nos. 312 and 394.

²² NAM, LAC, Archival box 5, documents Nos. 412 and 473.

²³ NAM, The Fund of the LAC, Archival box 7, documents Nos. 103 and 211.

²⁴ NAM, The Fund of the LAC, Archival box 6, documents Nos. 241–248.

previously, had signed the Tripartite Pact in Vienna. In its place a new government was installed, headed by General Milan Simović. The invasion of Yugoslavia by Germany and Italy began on 6 April. The invasion ended when an armistice was signed on 17 April 1941, based on the unconditional surrender of the Yugoslav Army. The patriarch fled the bombardment of Belgrade and came to Ostrog Monastery in Montenegro. He stayed there for a short time after the capitulation. A special detachment of the Hintze Gestapo arrested him and sent him to Belgrade. He was held in prison for a while, and then under house arrest in Rakovica Monastery near Belgrade. Soviet troops, together with partisans, started actions throughout Belgrade when they entered Serbia, and the patriarch and Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović was sent to the infamous Nazi-fascist camp of Dachau on 14 September 1944. The patriarch remained there until the end of the war and was finally liberated by the US Army.

After the war, the patriarch established communication with the new communist authorities, and after more than two years of negotiations, having stayed in many European destinations under the justification of receiving medical treatment, he returned to Yugoslavia on 16 November 1946. On 6 December, accompanied by Metropolitan Josif of Skopje and Bishop Nektarios of Zvornik and Tuzla, he was received in an official visit by the President of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. Three days later Tito returned the visit to the Patriarchate building in Belgrade. After the patriarch's return to the country, the situation in the Serbian Orthodox Church was normalised. The communist authorities formed the Association of Orthodox Priests that they alleged was formed on a class basis, but was a kind of parachurch organisation under their control. On 15 June 1945 the communist authorities also founded this association in Nikšić, Montenegro. It did not acknowledge the authority of the Synod in Belgrade.

Therefore, there was completely anarchy in the church. The communist regime had carried out total atheisation in all spheres of life. The theological seminary in Cetinje had been the first high school in Montenegro and it had been founded in 1869. Both priests and teachers had graduated there. Although Montenegro was completely

free from German occupation at the end of 1944, the theological seminary did not start working again. The closing of the seminary was a way to reduce the size of the church clergy. During the war the communists had killed a large number of priests and this was also a way to reduce the number of church clergy. In the school system which was organised by the new communist authorities, religious education was taught poorly, with a high degree of improvisation in the lessons. At the end of 1945, intensive preparations for adopting a federal and republic constitution began not only in Yugoslavia, but also in Montenegro. According to the constitution, the church was separate from the state, and the state did not have the obligation to teach religious education in schools. The number of students attending those lessons was getting smaller and smaller. Finally, on 23 March 1946, the Minister of Education in the Government of the National Republic of Montenegro, Niko Pavić, issued a letter to school headteachers in which he explicitly demanded that religious education be abolished.²⁵

Although Vicar Bishop Arsenije Bradvarević was elected as the new Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral in July 1947 by the Synod and Patriarch Dožić returned to the country at the beginning of December, the position of the church in Montenegro had not yet improved. The atheisation of society with its unscrupulous forms could be felt everywhere. The church and the clergy were belittled and insulted at every step.

The violence of the communist regime against the Orthodox clergy – faking a legal state

The aggressive and violent acts against the church were presented to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Titograd,²⁶ when by priest Jovan

²⁵ NAM, The Fund of Ministry of Education of the National Republic of Montenegro, Archival box 5, documents Nos. 3824–3826, through the document.

²⁶ On the fifth anniversary of the uprising of the Montenegrin people against the Nazi-fascist occupier, on 13 July 1946 Josip Broz Tito visited this republic. On the main square in Podgorica, in front of 10, 000 people, he gave a speech. Before him a communist functionary from Montenegro, Milovan Đilas, gave a speech too. He suggested on his own initiative to rename Podgorica after Tito to Titograd. The people accepted this without voting. From then until 1992 Podgorica was called Titograd, but after 1992 it got its old name of Podgorica back.

Kažić addressed the body on 4 July 1949. He was the archbishop of the clergy in Titograd. Kažić stated that some people were being insulting towards the church in the Archdiocese of Titograd and obstructing its work that was guaranteed by the Constitution from 1946. As Kažić said, if all cases of obstruction, belittlement and attacks were mentioned, it would take too long, “but for the sake of illustration, we will list some of them”.

Kažić pointed out that an old archpriest, Jovan Dragović, had died in the village of Mahala, in Zeta, near Titograd. He and five other priests had gone to his house for the funeral service on the night of 27/28 January 1947. While they were reading the Gospel over the coffin of the deceased, at 7:30pm they were taken to the police station in the nearby town of Golubovci. They were detained there “under various and contradictory excuses” until 2:30am when they were forcibly taken in three groups in three different directions from the police station, each accompanied by one police officer. Only 200 metres from the police station, they were attacked by a group of people at the same time, “And we were beaten until this gang realised that we were almost dead (...) from these beatings and severe consequences, under the most severe physical and mental pain, we each lay alone for between 10 and 40 days.”

According to Kažić’s words, this case was properly reported to the Prosecutor’s Office, which questioned the injured priests who were still in bed. Two days later, the case was taken over by the Montenegrin State Security Administration (UDB)²⁷ in Cetinje, which also questioned the priests about the circumstances of the event. Kažić said that this group of priests talked to the federal and republic bodies several times, and the Metropolitanate did the same, demanding that the offenders be found and punished by the law. However, until they wrote this petition, according to their sources, no one was either arrested or punished.

²⁷ The UDB was a police intelligence service specialising in fighting against political dissidents. It was formed on the model of the Soviet NKVD-KGB, a police twin of Romania’s SECURITATII, Albania’s SIGURIMIT, East Germany’s STATSSICHERHEIT, Poland’s URZAD BEZPIECZENSTWA, etc.

Shortly after this event, another violent event happened. A group of young people broke into the house of priest Boško Vukčević in the village of Podstrana, by the larger village of Barutana near Titograd, at night. After they beat him, they covered his hands with embers from the fire, so that “this unfortunate priest went for three whole months with his hands burned and bandaged. No one was punished for this event either. Kažić also mentioned the case of priest Marko Maraš from Zeta, who was with him in a group of priests who had been beaten. He was openly provoked twice during 1949. The first time was on 1 April. On the way to a village near Titograd, he was stopped by a local office worker Marko Karadaglić who searched him and threatened him, although he was not officially authorised to do so. The second time was on 28 June in the neighbouring village. While the priest was walking, he was stopped by one police officer and two civilians who were driving a car. One of the civilians threatened the priest with a gun, identified Maraš, and then told him rudely: “If I catch you somewhere else on this territory, it’s all over for you.”

In his long address, priest Kažić spoke about the latest incident, which had taken place on 2 July, two days earlier. During the liturgy in the Church of St. George in Titograd, an adolescent, the son of a certain Đorđe Popović, had hit a priest with a slingshot through the window of the church. Kažić and the priest who were conducting the liturgy expelled the adolescent from the churchyard. The latter responded by throwing stones at them angrily. In Kažić’s address, there were more elements of the radical atheisation of society, which he used as examples: a group of people and some peasants had obstructed the priest from praying over a deceased, even though this was the wish of his family and the clear wish of the deceased expressed during his lifetime. They did this by trying to stop the priest coming to the funeral or the graveyard. During the liturgy they were interrupted by disparaging comments, insults and belittling.

Kažić also presented a very difficult situation in the churches in the Titograd area, especially in the villages. A large number of liturgical vestments and books were torn by unknown people. Icons and church utensils for services were broken, too. Locust poison, lime, cement and tools were stored in some churches. He singled out one church, the

Church of St. George in Titograd, as a representative example. Practically all its property had been taken away for the needs of the state, and no one had ever consulted the church administration about it or paid for the confiscated property at all. There were a large number of cases where students from city schools broke the windows of the church and the tiles on the roof, so that when it rained, water poured over valuable old frescoes. Liturgies were often hindered. Young people used the absence of the priest to ring the church bells when they saw fit.

Kažić also wrote: “Graffiti and drawings were made on the church walls which were rarely seen even in a pornographic context, and this became a regular occurrence.” Crosses in graveyards were often broken, and the most disgraceful actions took place there. The irony of the situation was that the state had set up a sign which said that the object was under the protection of the law, but that sign had been broken and replaced several times.²⁸ Probably in connection with this speech, Kažić sent a letter on 2 August to priest Marko Maraš who had been stopped and harassed twice, asking him to urgently send a short and precise statement about who had obstructed his movements throughout his parish in Zeta, near Titograd, and when this had happened.²⁹

The level of atheisation of Montenegrin society can be seen through another event. On 9 May 1950, Serbian Patriarch Gavrilo Dožić died in Belgrade. A memorial service on the fortieth day after the patriarch’s death was held on 18 June in the Church of St. George in Titograd. The church assembly in Titograd printed 50 posters for the fortieth day after his death. These posters were to be delivered through the town in order to inform people about the memorial service in the church. The posters cost 276 dinars, and were printed in the printing company “Obod” in Cetinje. These posters were delivered by a Muslim, Sadik Seratlić, who was paid about 200 dinars for this.³⁰ At that time, in Titograd 70 per cent of the population was Orthodox. Most of the rest were Muslims, with only a small proportion of

²⁸ The Archive of the Archdiocese of Titograd, folder for 1949, document No. 312.

²⁹ *Ibid*, folder for 1949, document No. 370.

³⁰ *Ibid*, folder for 1950, document No. 257.

Catholics. The fact that a Muslim delivered the posters demonstrated the difficult situation of the Orthodox people, in that not one of them was willing to do anything for the church, even for money, because they were afraid of repression.

Trial against the clergy and the persecution of Metropolitan Arsenije Bradvarević

The culmination of radical atheism in Montenegro came with two trials. In the period between June and August 1953, four priests – Luka Vujaš, Luka Poček, Marko Kusovac and Mihailo Gazivoda – who worked in the administration of the Metropolitanate in Cetinje, were arrested. At that time the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral was Arsenije Bradvarević. Their apartments were searched by the UDB. The trial was held in Cetinje on 26–27 January 1954. They were accused of the following activities:

- Their statements that Yugoslavia was an autocracy and that Tito was an autocrat.
- Hope that the USSR with its allies would attack Yugoslavia through Bulgaria and Albania and overthrow Tito.
- Hope that the war in Korea would spread to the Balkans and overthrow the communist regime.
- That the metropolitan had celebrated the victory of Dwight Eisenhower in the US presidential election, along with the four priests, hoping that Eisenhower would start the collapse of communism.
- Listening to radio stations from Paris, London, etc. and hoping for regime change in Yugoslavia.
- A memorandum which Metropolitan Bradvarević sent to the Montenegrin communist leader, Blažo Jovanović, emphasising that the church in Montenegro was being persecuted and robbed, even though its confession of faith was guaranteed by law.
- Commenting that Tito was not a Croat from the village of Kumrovec, but a person with a false identity, most probably a Polish marshal, or a dance teacher from Warsaw.

- Commenting that Patriarch Dožić did not die a natural death, but was poisoned by the communist regime. This regime appointed Vikentije Prodanov as the new patriarch even though Metropolitan Bradvarević received the most votes at the Council of Bishops.

At this trial, the priests were sentenced to the following prison terms: Luka Vujaš – four years; Luka Poček – two years; Marko Kusovac – one year and six months; Mihailo Gazivoda – one year and three months. The time spent in the remand prison was also included in the prison sentence.

During the trial, three of the priests – Luka Poček, Marko Kusovac, and Mihailo Gazivoda – accused Metropolitan Bradvarević of being the only person responsible for these activities who had a great influence on their opinions. The prosecution carried out an investigation in April 1954 to verify this. In June, Metropolitan Bradvarević was indicted and sentenced to pre-trial detention. He was not originally from Montenegro, he was from Banat, near Bela Crkva. In 1918, he had been a MP of the Great National Assembly of the Serbian people in Novi Sad, which declared the separation of Vojvodina from Hungary, and its unification with Serbia. Bradvarević was appointed vicar bishop in 1940. During the Second World War, he did not cooperate with the Nazi-fascist occupiers and counter-revolutionary forces. He was 71 years old when he was arrested.

Bradvarević was accused of the same crimes as the four priests and marked as the ring-leader. After the war, before coming to Montenegro, he was a bishop in Croatia, where, in the liturgies he held, he accused the Croatian Ustashas of crimes against the Serbian people. Because of that he was also accused of stirring up national hatred. Radio Bucharest reported that he was the leader of the clergy in Yugoslavia that was resisting Tito. The newspaper *Bjечuk* also published this news. It was the newspaper of the Association of Orthodox Priests in Serbia. Bradvarević believed that this newspaper was under the influence of the communist regime. The priests persuaded the metropolitan to deny this news report, but he refused, saying that the press in Yugoslavia was not free and his denials would not be published.

At the trial in Cetinje between 27 and 29 July 1954, the metropolitan was found guilty on all the counts of his indictment, and was sentenced to prison for 11 years and six months.³¹ The metropolitan served his sentence in the Central Prison of Montenegro in Kotor until 1958. He wrote to Tito twice, explaining that he had been unjustly convicted. Since he was over 70 years old and suffered from asthma, he was released to some kind of house arrest in Ozren Monastery in Bosnia, then moved to the prison hospital in Belgrade and finally to the Monastery of the Presentation of the Lord in Belgrade. He was released in 1960, although there was no official documentation about his release. The communist authorities did not let him return to Montenegro and take up the metropolitan's duties. The same year he was elected bishop of Buda. He never reached his eparchy because it was in Hungary and the situation there was bad because of poor Yugoslav–Hungarian relations and the communist regime. He died on 10 December 1963 and was buried in the Monastery of the Presentation of the Lord in Belgrade, where he had spent most of his life.³²

When the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, Arsenije Bradvarević, was sent to prison, the situation in the metropolitanate became even worse. The new metropolitan had not been chosen by the assembly, and the communist regime rigorously controlled anyone who was a possible new candidate. In addition, the situation in the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral was the worst of all the dioceses of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Radical atheism was widespread in all spheres of everyday life. On paper and declaratively, the regime never deprived the people of their religious rights, nor did

³¹ NAM, The Fund of the District Court – Cetinje, Deeds against the People and State, Archival box 7, cover 1, 1953/54, through the document.

³² AY, The Fund of Federal Commission for Religious Affairs (144), Archival box 10, unit of description 163; Archival box 18, unit of description 233; Archival box 20, unit for description 256; Archival box 24, unit of description 144; 'Проглас', *Службени лист Српске Православне Цркве* [*Herald, The Official Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*], No. 6 (June 1960), 187; 'Митрополит будимски Арсеније', *Службени лист Српске Православне Цркве* [*Herald, The Official Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*], No. 1 (Jan. 1964), 27–29.

it prevent the church from carrying out its business. However, in reality, it was completely different story.

Radical atheism does not give up

There is one more example. On 8 May 1958, the hieromonk of Morača Monastery, Kirilo Raičević, wrote a letter directly to the magistrate in Kolašin. It could not be determined whether it was a misdemeanour report or just a letter indicating the state of events. In any case, Raičević pointed out that, a few days before, at the request of the faithful, he had opened up a monastery. After that, it had filled with visitors. Some came to see the interior, and others to perform religious duties.

However, a local government officer of the Agricultural Cooperative in the Morača Monastery, Đorđije Bakić, soon appeared at the monastery and ultimately demanded Raičević blow out the candles, and empty and shut up the monastery. The officer even entered the area of altar, which according to church rules he had no right to do, and he started arguing with Raičević, swearing at and belittling him. Raičević warned the provocateur that the Serbian Orthodox Church held services in public, that it was autocephalous and had its own constitution which regulated its relations with the state, and therefore the officer had no right to prevent, ban and belittle a gathering of the faithful. It was not clear from this report how the conflict was solved, but Raičević asked the authority to punish the provocateur severely. If it was not done, Raičević said that he would inform the Synod and Patriarch Vikentije Prodanov about the event. They would also inform the authorities. Finally, he asked the magistrate to inform him what measures had been taken. There was no information from the available sources on what was done about this case.³³

From an unsigned document from 1958, in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Titograd, one can see a list of people who celebrated their family patron saint's day in Titograd. It was obvious that only data about Titograd and the closest suburbs was processed. Three saint's days were celebrated by only 15 people: St. George (6 May)

³³ The Archive of the Archdiocese of Titograd, folder for 1958, document No. 421.

was celebrated by six people, the Conception of St. John (6 October) by eight, and St. Sergius and Bacchus (20 October) by only one.³⁴ According to this information, one can see how radical atheism was becoming more dominant in all spheres of life. By the rules of the Serbian Orthodox Church, each family had its patron saint's day. (In Montenegro, Orthodox Christian families celebrate an important holiday – *slava* – in honour of their patron saint, who is believed to be their protector and provider of welfare.) Every Orthodox family had celebrated its patron saint's day up until 1945. But according to the data from 1958, in Titograd, which was the capital and biggest city of Montenegro, out of its roughly 25,000 inhabitants only 15 families celebrated their patron saint's day. The situation was such because of the great influence of radical atheism in Montenegro.

According to a report which was sent from Montenegro to the Federal Commission for Religious Affairs in Belgrade, in November 1958 the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral had 27 monasteries, 640 churches, 43 priests, 11 monks and 27 retired priests, and 14 ex-priests in the civil service.³⁵ The District of Pljevlja, which was part of the Republic of Montenegro but belonged to the Metropolitanate of Dabar in Bosnia, was not included in this report. The drastic relationship between the statistics and the influence of atheism was shown by comparison with data from 1930. At that time, there had been 182 priests, 11 retired priests and 43 monks on the territory of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, also not counting the District of Pljevlja. One of the monks was a metropolitan and another a bishop.³⁶

The communist regime fixes the election of the Metropolitan of Montenegro

Metropolitan Arsenije Bradvarević was released from prison at the beginning of January 1960. After that he wrote to the Synod several times to let him work for the administration of the Metropolitanate of

³⁴ Ibid, document No. 562.

³⁵ AY, The Fund of Federal Commission for Religious Affairs (144), Archival box 18, unit of description 171.

³⁶ AMML, The Fund of the Acts of the Metropolitanate, folder 2 for 1930, documents Nos. 173–179.

Montenegro and the Littoral, but the communist authorities never allowed it. At that time, the new Serbian patriarch after the death of Patriarch Vikentije Prodanov in 1958 was German Đorić. After many negotiations with the state authorities, especially those in Montenegro, Arsenije was officially relieved of his duties as metropolitan at the meeting of the Central Council of Bishops in June 1960, and was ordained instead as bishop of Budimlja.³⁷

Negotiations between the Synod and the communist regime about a suitable person for the metropolitan in Montenegro were long and difficult. In July 1961, Tomo Dajković was finally ordained as the new Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral. He was from Montenegro. In the early 1930s he was a parish priest in Montenegro, and after that a priest in the administration in Macedonia. He spent the Second World War in Belgrade, but after the war he was again a priest-administrator in Macedonia, and later the manager of the Patriarchal Court in Belgrade. He retired in 1953, but he still stayed in the Patriarchate. He graduated from theological seminary in 1950.³⁸

It was clear this was a bad compromise between the Synod and the communist regime because an insignificant priest had been ordained as metropolitan. He was a widowed priest, who had received the position of monk and the name Danilo just before his ordination as metropolitan. He remained metropolitan until the end of 1990, when the first multiparty elections formally took place in Montenegro and the communist era ended. Then he retired for the second time in his ninety-fifth year.³⁹ During his time, the position of the church in Montenegro did not improve. Moreover, the pre-war old clergy, who had remained after various persecutions during the Second World War, had been dying out during the past decades, and there was almost no one new to replace them. The last 10 years of Dajković's ministry as metropolitan looked more like agony: an old man with a very small number of priests, who had to deal with a totally atheistic

³⁷ AY, The Fund of Federal Commission for Religious Affairs (144), Archival box 53, unit of description 443; Archival box 54, unit of description 444.

³⁸ AMML, The Fund of Metropolitan Danilo Dajković, folder 1, The Origin of Danilo, Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral.

³⁹ AMML, The Fund of Metropolitan Acts, Archival box 1986, document No. 341.

society, leading the church. After 1990, when Doctor of Theology Amfilohije Radović was ordained as metropolitan, the church's position improved significantly.

Conclusion

The genesis of radical atheism in Montenegro can be observed in the narrower and broader contexts. Until the end of its existence in 1918, Montenegro was the poorest, most passive and, culturally and educationally, the most backward country in Europe. Marxist ideas, and their influence on the workers' movement were symbolic in Montenegro because it was an agrarian country with primitive agriculture. However, the achievements of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia were felt in it on the occasion of the Podgorica Assembly, which at the end of November 1918 declared its unification with Serbia and other Yugoslav provinces. Thus, three deputies of this Assembly came forward with a thoroughly atheistic document.

After unification in 1920, in the interwar period the ideas of communism in Montenegro failed in spite of the strong rise of the communist movement in the first parliamentary elections. In the period up to the Second World War, they became stronger again, and were also active during the war, when a revolution took place in parallel with the fight against the Nazi-fascist occupiers. However, regardless of that, in Montenegro the ideas of communism did not have an atheistic character, they were only related to the fight for the national identity of Montenegrins outside of the Serbian nation, as well as to class and social issues. During the Second World War, a large degree of neutralisation of the clergy by the communist movement can be noticed. The explanation for this neutralisation is mainly that they were collaborators with the Nazi-fascist occupiers and the counter-revolutionary movement. During the war, the communist movement in Montenegro and Yugoslavia presented itself through the partisan movement as an alliance of all classes, religions, nations and educational strata, fighting against the Nazi-fascist occupiers for the liberation of the country, a better tomorrow and a fairer society than the pre-war one. According to this, religious rights and the work of religious communities depended on the free choice of every individual, whether someone was an atheist or a believer.

Overall, the communist society functioned in the decades after the Second World War with the same platitudinous explanations. The constitution and laws related to religion guaranteed this freedom, but this was only on paper. The lifestyle and functioning of the society on the other hand was completely different. Post-war Yugoslav society mostly held to Marxist and atheistic ideology. Thus, it was in itself atheistic and anti-church. It was clear that the communist society was continuing to completely implement the concept of atheism after the war. This was reflected in the total marginalisation of the church in public life and the implementation of the atheisation of the people. The communists intended to destroy the Orthodox Church economically. Besides the economic aspect, one ideological factor was very important, which would be achieved by various models: by closing down the theological seminary, intimidating the clergy, and presenting the church as something backward and retrograde, young people were pulled in the direction of the Marxist understanding of the world and atheism.

Of all the Yugoslav republics, the process of atheisation and the fight against religion had the largest impact in Montenegro. It was the most systematic and most radical example of this. Besides the classical evidence of history shown in this paper, answers to this phenomenon must also be provided by psychology, sociology and other sciences. Sources contain data stating that Montenegro's communist leaders were announcing early in the 1970s that church life in the republic had almost died out, and a large degree of atheisation of the people had been achieved, so churches and monasteries were reduced to the level of, and understood almost only as, cultural and historical monuments for tourists.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Archive of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, Serbia (AY), The Fund of the Government Presidency Federal National Republic of Yugoslavia (50), Archival box (ab) 89/45; The Fund of the Institution for Agrarian Reform and Colonisation of Social Society (97), Archival box 1/45, Archival boxes 10/46; The Fund of

Commission for Religious Affairs (144), Archival box 10/58, Archival box 18/59, Archival box 24/60, Archival box 53/60, Archival box 54/60, by document description units (ud).

Archive of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, Cetinje, Montenegro (AMML), Priests Register list of Personal Files of the Priests (several books); The Fund of the Acts of the Metropolitanate, folder 2 for 1931 (ff), folder 2 for 1932; The Fund of Metropolitan Danilo Dajković (MDD), folder (f) 1, The Origin of Danilo, Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral; Archival box 1986, document No....

Archive of the Historical Institute of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro, Archival box 319, Notes of Podgorica Assembly.

National Archives of Montenegro, Cetinje, Montenegro (NAM), The Fund of the National Agrarian Court (LAC), Archival boxes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/46; The Fund of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the National Republic of Montenegro (AFNRM), Archival box 2/46, Archival box 7/46; The Fund of the Ministry of Education of the National Republic of Montenegro (MENRM), Archival box 5/46; The Fund of the District Court, Cetinje (DCC), Deeds against the People and State, Archival box 7, cover 1/53/54.

The Archive of the Archdiocese of Titograd, Podgorica, Montenegro, folder for 1949 and 1958.

Books and Articles

'Agrarna rasprava o manastirskim posjedima Sreza nikšičkog', *Pobjeda*, 1945, No. 15, 15 April, 3.

'Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija', *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Republike Jugoslavije*, 1945, No. 64, 28 August, 1–3.

Греговић, Стево, *Пуцај, рат је завршен. Злим путем братоубилаштва: словеначко крваво прољеће 1945*, Будва: Удружење „Открићемо истину“, 2009.

'Mitropolit budimski Arsenije', *Službeni list Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, 1964, No.1, 27–29.

Karapandžić, Borivoje, *Jugoslovensko krvavo proljeće 1945, Titovi Katini i gulazi*, Beograd: Mladost, 1990.

'Na Cetinju obrazovan agrarni sud za Crnu Goru', *Pobjeda*, 1946, No. 11, 17 March, 3.

'Odluka o osnivanju Zemaljskog agrarnog suda za Crnu Goru', *Službeni list Narodne Republike Crne Gore*, 1946, No. 11, 17 March, 1–2.

Перовић Чедомир, Илић Невенка, *Рад Скупштине Црне Горе 1945–1950 – збирка докумената*, Титоград: Скупштина СР Црне Горе, 1986.

Петрановић, Бранко and Зечевић, Момчило, *Историја Југославије 1918–1988 – збирка докумената*, Београд: Рад, 1988.

'Proglas', *Službeni list Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, 1960, No. 6, June, 27–29.

Радић, Радмила, *Вером против вере, Држава и верске заједнице у Србији 1945–1953*. Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 1995.

Зоњић, Урош, 'Страдање српског свештенства 1941–1945', *Гласник Српског културно-историјског друштва „Његош“*, No. 33 (1974), 64–71.