

KENNETH MORRISON

MONTENEGRO

A MODERN HISTORY



I.B. TAURIS

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I.B. TAURIS
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For Helen and Hannah

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AVNOJ	<i>Antifašističko v(ij)eće narodnog oslobođenja jugoslavije</i> (Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia)
BAF	Balkan Air Force
BK TV	Serbian TV station owned by Boguljub Karić
CDT	Centre for Democratic Transition
CEDEM	Centre for Democracy and Human Rights
CEMI	Centre for Monitoring Elections
CFS	Montenegrin Federalist Party
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
CPY	Communist Party of Yugoslavia
DAM	Democratic Alliance in Montenegro
DANU	<i>Dukljanska akademija nauka i umjetnost</i> (Doclean Academy of Sciences and Arts)
DOS	Democratic Opposition of Serbia
DPMNE	<i>Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo</i> (Democratic Party for Macedonian National Union)
DPS	Democratic Party of Socialists
DSS	Democratic Serb Party
DUA	Democratic Union of Albanians
DŽB	coalition to ‘For a Better Life’
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
EC	European Community/European Commission
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GZP	<i>Grupa za promjene</i> (Group for Changes)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IN TV	privately-owned Montenegrin television company
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
JAT	Yugoslav Air Transport
JNA	<i>Jugoslovenska narodna armija</i> (Yugoslav People’s Army)
JUL	Yugoslav United Left
KAP	<i>Kombinat aluminijuma podgorica</i> (aluminium plant)
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

KPJ	<i>Komunistička partija jugoslavije</i> (Communist Party of Yugoslavia)
KSCS	Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes
LCM	League of Communists of Montenegro
LCY	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
LSCG	<i>Liberalni savez Crne Gore</i> (Liberal Alliance of Montenegro)
MANS	Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector
MBC	Montenegro Broadcasting Company
MBNU	Montenegrin Board for National Unification
MI	Military Intelligence
MINA	Independent Montenegrin News Agency
MOC	Montenegrin Orthodox Church
MUP	Ministry of the Interior
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
NS	People's Party
NSCG	People's Party of Montenegro
NSS	People's Socialist Party
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OZNA	<i>Organ zaštite naroda (armije)</i> (Yugoslav Secret Service)
PK	Communist Party of Montenegro
PR	public relations
PZP	<i>Pokret za promjene</i> (Movement for Changes)
RAF	Royal Air Force
RRC	Republican Referendum Commission
RTCG	<i>Radio televizija Crne Gore</i> (Radio Television Montenegro)
RTS	Radio Television Serbia
SAA	Stability and Association Agreement
SANU	<i>Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti</i> (Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences)
SCG	<i>Srbija i Crna Gora</i> (joint state of Serbia and Montenegro)
SDA	<i>Stranka demokratske akcije</i> (Party of Democratic Action)
SDB	<i>Služba državne bezbednosti</i> (State Security Service)
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SDS	Serbian Democratic Party
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SNJ	Party of National Equality
SNP	Socialist People's Party
SNS	<i>Srpska narodna stranka</i> (Serbian People's Party)
SOC	Serbian Orthodox Church

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SOE	Special Operations Executive
SPCG	<i>Socialistička partija Crne Gore</i> (Socialist Party of Montenegro)
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
SRS	Serbian Radical Party
SSO	Association of Socialist Youth
SSRN	Socialist Alliance of Working People
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
VRMO–DPMNE	Macedonian nationalist party

Acknowledgements

Montenegro is the most enigmatic of the former Yugoslav republics. The term 'Montenegro' (Black Mountain) always held a fascination for me, even before I was aware of its romantic history, the poetic works composed by Tennyson and Byron, the sweeping travelogues penned by Mary Edith Durham and Rebecca West, the anthropological studies of Christopher Boehm, or the works (both fiction and non-fiction) of Milovan Djilas. My own discovery has rather more modest roots, stemming back to seeing an article published in a 1977 edition of the *National Geographic* magazine (old copies a neighbour had deposited in our summer house while relocating in the late 1980s). The article, entitled 'Yugoslavia's Black Mountain', vividly depicted political, cultural and social life in Montenegro. Temporarily transfixed, the fascination was fleeting and only re-emerged a decade later while I was reading for an MA in Politics and International Relations at the University of Aberdeen. By then, Yugoslavia had collapsed, and armed conflict in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later Kosovo, had scarred the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The entire Balkan region seemed to be lurching from one crisis to another. But, while much had been written about the larger Yugoslav republics, there was very little on the tiny republic of Montenegro. As I trawled through the plethora of books and newspaper articles on the Yugoslav crisis, it quickly became clear that Montenegro's role in the process of disintegration was often limited to one or two paragraphs, even in the most detailed accounts. In an attempt to understand more clearly what had happened in Montenegro, I frantically scoured libraries for literature that would alleviate this nagging need. My endeavours led me to discover that both the city and university libraries had several short histories of Montenegro stacked away in their basements, some of which the public had not requested since before the Second World War. It was hardly an auspicious beginning, but it ignited an enthusiasm that would extend well beyond attempts simply to understand Montenegro's contemporary history. Although I had little reason to believe it then, it was the beginning of a passion that would serve to change the direction of my life, and one that has never dampened subsequently.

Montenegro is a small, multi-ethnic country in southeast Europe with a population of approximately 672,000. It shares international borders with Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. The largest ethnic group are Montenegrins, followed by Serbs, Bosniaks, Albanians, Muslims and smaller numbers of Croats and Roma. The predominant religion is Orthodox Christianity, followed by Islam and Catholicism. I visited the tiny

republic for the first time shortly after the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and I was immediately enchanted. Montenegro has it all; from the beautiful Kotor Bay to the Zeta plains to the awe-inspiring Durmitor Mountain, it is a diverse and stunning landscape that offers an abundance of wonderful treasures. That picturesque trip from Herceg-Novi to the capital Podgorica had a significant impact upon me; something I had not experienced in other countries of the Balkan region. Little did I know then that I my life had changed forever and that I would travel that road and enjoy Montenegro's beauty many more times. However beautiful Montenegro's inanimate treasures, it was the animate aspect of the country that interested me most – the people, their history, and the complexity of their politics. I could scarcely have imagined, when I tentatively began this project, the political changes that would take place over the subsequent years, or that I would be fortunate enough to witness them.

Montenegro became an independent state following a closely-contested referendum in May 2006. It had been independent before, recognized as such by the Congress of Berlin in 1878. A 40-year period of independence ended in 1918 when Montenegro was unified with Serbia following the Podgorica Assembly, before being incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (which became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929). Following the collapse of the Yugoslav state and the onset of war in 1941, a bitter civil war ensued, during which Montenegro was wracked with conflict. At the end of hostilities, it became a republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As that state collapsed in the early 1990s, Montenegro remained within the rump of Yugoslavia, known simply as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and then a looser federal structure dubbed simply Serbia and Montenegro. In May 2006, a bare majority of its citizens voted for independence. In short, Montenegro had passed through a series of transitions. This can be illustrated using a short, but effective, example. A person who was born in the Montenegro's town of Cetinje in 1908, who had lived and eventually died there in 2008, would have lived through several wars, witnessed huge social upheavals and lived in six different states without leaving his or her place of birth. Yet, that individual would still have been born and died in an independent Montenegro. That so many transitions can happen within one lifespan is testament to Montenegro's tumultuous modern history. It also helps to explain the historical ambiguities surrounding its identity and the (still ongoing) debates over nation and state in Montenegro.

What Montenegro lacks in scale it makes up in beauty and in the complexity of its history and politics. In trying to understand the dynamics of Montenegrin history, society, political culture and the contested character of its identity, I benefited from lengthy discussions with individuals across the academic, cultural and political spectrum. There are too many to mention, but

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Roberts, Jason Gold at Getty Images, Tim Judah and Dr Peter Palmer – all know Montenegro well and gave me great encouragement throughout. I am equally indebted to my many friends in both Montenegro and Serbia. The famed (and genuine) Montenegrin hospitality is extended to everyone – all visitors. It frequently involves the early-morning ingestion of varying quantities of *domaća rakija* (domestically distilled brandy) and ingesting excessive amounts of local produce. Research in Montenegro is not for those predisposed to refusing this kind of hospitality. For me it was never a problem, and I was lucky to meet many Montenegrins who treated me as a guest regardless of how much or how little they could afford. This book would not have existed had I never had the good fortune to meet Bojan Galić and his family (Snežana, Dalija, and in Sarajevo, Branko) or the Vičković and Sćepanović families (Bosa, Boba, Nena, Katarina and Uroš). They surpassed even the excesses of traditional Montenegrin hospitality and kindness. In Kotor, Dragan and Marijana Maslovar always made me welcome. In Podgorica, Tanja Stanišić and family, and Ivan and Susanna Vukčević were constant sources of knowledge. In Berane, thanks go to Bojana and Ana Živković and their family. In Belgrade, Uroš Todorović, Sonja Stojanović, Srdjan Stojanović and Miloš and Vanja Ković have provided great assistance. My greatest thanks, however, go to Ruud Peeten, without whom I would never have travelled through the Balkans as extensively or as inquisitively.

My greatest debt is to my family, my mother and father, Anita, Lawrie, Jamie and Aidan. They invested faith – not to mention finance – in my education and encouraged me to follow my instincts even if, at times, they must have regarded my passion for this subject mildly unhealthy. During the latter stages of my writing, I received huge encouragement from wonderful Helen Oliver, a remarkable person who never wavered in her support for this work, patiently bearing the sacrifices that had to be made for it to be realized. I consider myself exceptionally fortunate to have her and my daughter, Hannah, in my life. Thanks also to Cherrie and Brian, Dennis and Janet, and the London-based branch of the Morrison clan (Bertha, Wilma and Lynne). In 2006, a one-year teaching post at the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies allowed me to utilize the wealth of resources and expertise of staff and students there. As part of an academic exchange programme in 2007 I was then able to lecture to students at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Belgrade. In London I enjoyed the great fortune of being surrounded by remarkable individuals who have played a significant role in the completion of this work. Dr Dejan Karadaglić, Luka and Andrej Mihailović, Novak Gajić, Petar Popović, Dr Milan Nikolić, Dr Bojan Aleksov and Dr Nick Endacott were true sources of inspiration.

Writing this modern history of Montenegro was a rewarding, complex and, at times, frustrating task. Metaphorically speaking, the author is required to

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‘wear two hats’ or to ‘sit on two chairs’. The dilemma was thus: how does one write a text that would be consumable and enjoyable to the lay reader while of value to the academic community, policy-makers and regional experts? How does the author bridge the gap between scholarship and commercial viability? Will people in the region find it over-simplistic? Can one really do justice to modern history in such a short book? In attempting to juggle these elements, the final draft is a compromise in scale and content. This book could easily have been twice its final length.

I have attempted to depict this period in Montenegro’s history as accurately as possible by drawing on a range of primary and secondary sources, including interviews with participants in some of the events depicted in the text and many of which I personally witnessed. Some historians, however, would argue that the witness – being subject to the emotive force of events – cannot possess the objectivity garnered by the cold distance of the passing of time. With this in mind, I have endeavoured to avoid the pitfalls of becoming overtly emotionally involved, and felt a strange sense of distance, even during the celebrations that followed the independence referendum. While I genuinely felt pleased for those who achieved their dream to re-establish a fully sovereign and independent state, I also felt empathy with those who wished to retain a joint state of Serbia and Montenegro. I sought to retain a sense of detachment and balance throughout. By doing so, I hoped to avoid the narrow subjectivity characteristic of much of what has been written about Montenegro. I have tried to represent the views of all sides, to represent a balanced and honest historical overview and it is my sincere hope that I have achieved that objective. Any oversights or deficiencies are entirely my own.

Kenneth Morrison

Montenegro and the former Yugoslavia in 2006. (Maps reconstructed from Elizabeth Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain: A History of Montenegro*, Hurst & Company, London.)



Introduction: Nation, State and Identity

The history of Montenegro is exceptionally complex and deserves meticulous scholarly research. I obviously cannot do justice to a broad yet concise history in a single text, so have framed the book in a specific temporal context and do not claim that it is a concise history. Although the opening chapters provide a broad historical overview, the main focus of the book is the period between the recognition of Montenegro's independence following the Congress of Berlin in 1878 to the re-establishment of that independent status in 2006 (following a closely-fought referendum). I have made no attempt, for example, to discuss the differing scholarly approaches to the ethnogenesis of the Montenegrins, for they are covered in depth elsewhere.¹ Thematically I focus on Montenegro's role in broader Balkan and Yugoslav history and politics. More specifically, however, I focus on the internal dynamics of Montenegrin politics, Montenegro's relationship with Serbia, and the interplay between two competing national traditions among Montenegrins – *srpstvo* (Serb-ness) and *crnogorstvo* (Montenegrin-ness). The essence of the former is that it emphasizes the Serb character of the Montenegrins, that they are an integral part of the Serbian national corpus. The latter questions this approach and emphasizes the right of Montenegrins to define themselves as a unique nation, not simply as a branch of the Serb nation. The friction between proponents of these two approaches has, at times, led to conflict among Montenegrins. Since the late nineteenth century questions of statehood, nationhood and national identity have dominated Montenegrin politics, and conflicting perceptions of them have been at the heart of Montenegrin political life since its formal recognition as an independent state in 1878. As a consequence, in this book I focus primarily, though not exclusively, on the Orthodox population of Montenegro.

With questions of nationhood and statehood at the forefront, I analyse Montenegrin history from its establishment as an independent state in 1878 to the Montenegrin independence referendum of 2006. I place particular emphasis on events that have take place since 1989. The reason for this is

simple – the last 20 years of Montenegrin history have been fascinating and complex, yet there is little in-depth examination (particularly in English) of the dynamics of this period. Since 1989, Montenegro has witnessed the collapse of the Yugoslav state, the brutal wars that followed the collapse, two attempts to create a union of Serbia and Montenegro and, finally, the re-establishment of its status as a sovereign and independent state. Montenegro, unlike other Yugoslav republics, did not seek independence from Yugoslavia. Instead, it, along with Serbia, sought to preserve the existing Yugoslav federation. When it became clear that it was no longer possible to preserve the six-republic Yugoslavia, in 1992 Montenegro entered into a new federal state with Serbia – the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Unlike other Yugoslav states such as Croatia or Slovenia, Montenegro's secession from Yugoslavia could never be straightforward. The problem with national identification – whether Montenegrins were a separate nation or essentially Serbs – lay at the root of the Montenegrin elite's decision to remain within a federation with Serbia. But while there was consensus between ruling elites in Serbia and Montenegro between 1992 and 1997, the situation changed dramatically in 1997, when Montenegro's monolithic Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) split into pro- and contra- Milošević factions. This split then quickly developed into a Serb versus Montenegrin dynamic – a struggle between two competing nationalisms. Between 1997 and 2006, the issue of whether it would remain federated with Serbia or seek independence dominated Montenegrin politics.

While much has been written on other Yugoslav republics during this period, Montenegro (and the Montenegrin role in these processes) is often overlooked or reduced to one or two paragraphs. This, of course, cannot be said of the plethora of books by scholars in the Balkan region, but the lack of literature in English is striking. With this book I seek, if nothing else, to redress that imbalance. Although a modern history dealing with nation, state and identity, this book is also about how Montenegro's leaders have used these themes to create and destroy states, or simply to further their own political agendas. From King Nikola's attempts to forge a Serb state around the Piedmont of Cetinje to Milo Djukanović's drive for independence in the early 2000s, Montenegrin leaders have utilized the national question to attain their political objectives and to further their own personal interests. The role and actions of Montenegro's political elites is an additional theme of the book.

The Roots of the Ambiguity and Geographical Differentiations

The question of Montenegrin national identity has been at the heart of Montenegrin politics since the late nineteenth century. There has never been a clear consensus. To ask 'who exactly are the Montenegrins?' may seem a

rudimentary question, but what can be attributed to the terms ‘Montenegro’ and ‘Montenegrins’? Are Montenegrins a branch of the Serbian nation or do they form a distinct and separate nation?²² Are they, as J. F. Brown inferred, ‘Serbs, or a strikingly similar variant thereof?’²³ That most authors writing on Montenegro tend to define them as Serbs is the crux of the problem and has inhibited serious study of Montenegro and Montenegrins. The ambiguity inherent in Montenegrin identity has dictated that historians and social scientists have disagreed (and continue to disagree) on the matter. According to Jozo Tomašević, writing in the mid-1950s, the question of whether Montenegrins formed a separate nation or were part of the Serbian nation remained open in the minds of many social scientists.⁴ And, so it remains today, even in the light of Montenegro’s newly-won independence.

The process has evolved since Tomašević made his observation and, while a separate Montenegrin national identity has continued to develop, the problem remains acute.⁵ Why the ambiguity? Well, the answers can be found in the intertwined histories of Serbia and Montenegro and the shared experiences that forged their identities. The Serbs and Montenegrins are exceptionally close, and the casual observer would be hard pressed to identify significant differences between them. Indeed, both are, on a superficial level at least, effectively indistinguishable from one another, rendering it problematic to establish accurately the source of distinction between them.⁶ As Elizabeth Roberts noted in her extensive history of Montenegro, entitled *Realm of the Black Mountain*:

*Serbs and Montenegrins have much in common; in many respects their religious and cultural tradition is overlapping; they are the closest of peoples of the former Yugoslavia. And yet, other important aspects of the Montenegrin experience – history, geography and the persistence at least till very recently of a clan-based society with its own value system – have made Montenegrins different.*⁷

Indeed, while Serbs and Montenegrins have much in common, one should remember that Montenegro’s history (despite many shared experiences, memories and myths) is quite different from that of Serbia. Testament to this is the different historical experiences that different areas of Montenegro witnessed. Following the Ottoman incursions into the Balkans in the late fourteenth century, Montenegro was effectively cut off from Serbia. Thus, before the nineteenth century, Montenegro, at least *Stara Crnagora* (Old Montenegro), was a territory inhabited by embattled tribes loosely led by *vladike*s (bishops). This area represented what would become the embryo of the Montenegrin state. Here, the inhabitants developed characteristics that differentiated them from their Serbian kin to the north; as a consequence, they tended to see themselves as Montenegrins in national terms. As Ivo

Banac put it: ‘The native – intensely Montenegrin – tradition, which maintained the separate heritage of Dioclea/Zeta, permitted the Montenegrins to suffuse themselves in the genial warmth of self-being.’⁸ In the outlying areas (which were only incorporated into the Montenegrin state during the mid to late nineteenth century) Serb identity retained primacy. According to Banac, the populace of these areas was heavily influenced by ‘the Serbian tradition [which centred on] ... a system of mnemonic devices by which the church continually admonished the Montenegrins to remember the glories of the Nemanjić state’.⁹ As will become apparent, people living in Cetinje (in Old Montenegro) had quite different experiences from those living in Berane (in northern Montenegro). John Allcock noted that identification with a specific Montenegrin identity was (and is) concentrated in the core area around Cetinje, with those on the periphery identifying predominantly with Serbian, Albanian or even Croatian identities. The spatial picture of identity in Montenegro is, he argues:

*rather like taking a photograph in which one object is held in sharp focus in the foreground. Although one is aware of a half-focused context in which the object stands, that context remains rather undefined. ‘Montenegro proper’ in this respect shades off into its subsequent territorial accretions which have had a weaker identification with Montenegro than with Serbia.*¹⁰

Old Montenegro, a small area comprising four *nabija* (districts), was free from Ottoman incursions and in this space specific Montenegrin characteristics developed. In 1796 Old Montenegro was unified with the *Brda* (Mountains) and in these peripheral areas identification with Cetinje remained weak. The British anthropologist, Mary Edith Durham, in *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, noted that the inhabitants of Old Montenegro and the *Brda*, while integrated into a single political territory, possessed distinct characteristics. She defined Old Montenegro as the territory around Cetinje with additions on the Hercegovinian side, and the *Brda* as the mountain mass that bordered Albania. She recognized that the inhabitants of the two regions were quite different and that there was some ambiguity about where overall political authority lay.¹¹ Indeed, during the immediate period following the unification, establishment of effective state control in the *Brda* became a greater challenge to Cetinje than securing independence from Ottoman power.¹² Thus, the inhabitants of the *Brda* (and other areas subsequently conjoined to Montenegro during the territorial expansions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), entered an enlarged Montenegrin state as those who looked towards Belgrade and Serbia (as opposed to Cetinje and Montenegro) for spiritual and political leadership. For them, the unification of Serbia and Montenegro was uppermost.

With territorial expansions in 1820, 1878 and 1912 (when part of the contemporary Sandžak region became an integral part of Montenegro) the country more than doubled in size. Once a tiny enclave, Montenegro became a country with a large number of minorities. After 1912, Montenegrin territory contained not only a large number of people who supported Serb–Montenegrin unification and considered Belgrade their spiritual and political centre, but also a large body of semi-hostile Muslims, many of whom were Albanians.¹³ While those residing around Cetinje may rightly have considered themselves ‘Montenegrin’, the same cannot be said for those who lived in the Montenegrin Sandžak, the Brda, or the Montenegrin areas of Herzegovina (many of whom were Muslim or considered themselves Serbs). Thus, we can see a complex demographic pattern emerge within a small territory, confirming Allcock’s thesis that Montenegrin identity has a spatial character.

In contemporary Montenegro, these differentiations still exist. Northern Montenegro, for example, comprises what was traditionally known as the Brda, the Sandžak (Old Raška to the Serbs) and parts of Old Herzegovina. The Brda area is essentially populated by old Serb tribes (who retain a distinct Serb character), while the Montenegrin Sandžak and Old Herzegovina are more ethnically mixed, with significant Muslim populations.¹⁴ Many of Montenegro’s northern towns and villages contain largely Orthodox populations who, in terms of national self-identification, remain staunchly Serbian. Towns like Berane (known as Ivangrad between 1946 and 1992), a former industrial town on the Lim River, and Pljevlja, near the border with *Republika Srpska* (the Serb Republic within Bosnia & Herzegovina) remain strongholds of Serb identity. While there are historical reasons for these areas’ strong affiliation with Serbia, there are a number of factors pertaining to the conflict in neighbouring Bosnia & Herzegovina in the early 1990s to take into account. Montenegro’s northern municipalities became home to a number of Serb refugees who (given their experiences during the war) have a tendency to support proponents of Serb nationalism. Support for the continuation of political union between Serbia and Montenegro remains very strong here. The town of Andrijevica is a case in point. A small town with a small population, Andrijevica shares a border with Albania and is the heartland of the Upper Vasojevići tribe, which had historically been oriented towards Serbia. Following Montenegro’s declaration of independence from Serbia in 2006, the town’s Serb population called upon Belgrade to provide consular representation to the Serbs of Andrijevica.¹⁵

Situated on the Lim River, Berane was formerly a bustling industrial town in which the staunchly pro-Serb Lower Vasojevići tribe was predominant.¹⁶ Once considered one of the most developed industrial centres in Montenegro, its economic collapse in the late 1980s and the UN-imposed economic sanctions of the 1990s drastically affected it and, according to a recent OSCE

report, since then Berane has become 'a lost place'.¹⁷ Refugees from the 1999 war in Kosovo compounded the town's economic problems. Again, the refugees, who had been hardened by their experiences, were a contributory factor in the persistence of Serb nationalism and Serbian (as opposed to Montenegrin) identification there. Geographically, Berane only became part of Montenegro in 1878; its Orthodox population strongly identifies with Serbia and it has traditionally been a stronghold for Serb-oriented parties. The town was a hotbed of support for former Montenegrin president Momir Bulatović's 'Socialist People's Party' (SNP) following the DPS split in 1997 (see Chapter 9). Bulatović acknowledged Berane's strong association with Serbia stating that, 'they [the inhabitants of Berane] are closer to Serbia than Montenegro'.¹⁸ Relations between local authorities in Berane and the government in Podgorica have been strained since 1997. Local leaders argued that municipalities administered by Serb parties receive little in the way of aid from the Montenegrin government because Berane and other such northern municipalities were deemed 'hostile territories'.¹⁹

To the northwest of Berane is the town of Bijelo Polje, Montenegro's third largest city. Connected to Podgorica and Belgrade by the Bar–Belgrade railway line, it is northern Montenegro's business and administrative centre. The town, located within the Sandžak, was not nominally part of Montenegro until after the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. Its most significant historical monument is the Church of St Peter, which was built in the twelfth century (but turned into a mosque in the seventeenth, only to be restored to a place of Christian worship in 1912). Characteristic of a town with such a history, Bijelo Polje possesses a distinct Islamic character, which is absent in other Montenegrin Sandžak towns like Berane, Pljevlja or Andrijevica. Interethnic relations have been relatively stable in Bijelo Polje and this has been reflected in the voting patterns of the town's citizens, who have tended to vote for multiethnic as opposed to ethnically-based parties.

The town of Žabljak, on the lower slopes of Mount Durmitor (the highest peak in Montenegro), is in one of Montenegro's least populated municipalities. Limited economic opportunities and a harsh climate dictate that the municipality retains a relatively small population – only 4206 permanent residents.²⁰ The municipality is some distance from Montenegro's administrative and historical centres (Podgorica and Cetinje) and has traditionally maintained close links with Serbia. The small town of Mojkovac is nestled between Kolašin and Bijelo Polje.²¹ The area around the town is known as the northern gateway into Montenegro and its strategic location has dictated that the town has borne witness to many battles, primarily during the Balkan Wars in 1912 and later during the First World War when Montenegrin forces held back the Austro-Hungarian Army, thereby facilitating the withdrawal of the Serbian Army from Andrijevica to Podgorica and on to Skadar.²² The town

became part of Montenegrin territory only in 1912, and during that period and beyond it was settled by Orthodox Serbs and Montenegrins. Muslims, fearing reprisals for their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, departed. Again, Serb nationalist sentiment is strong here, yet interethnic relations have been historically stable.

The situation in Pljevlja (close to the Serbian border) has been different. The town boasts a rather grim recent history of tensions between Orthodox and Muslim inhabitants. Pljevlja and a number of surrounding villages witnessed Serb paramilitary activity during the early 1990s (see Chapter 7). Generally, the Orthodox population regards itself first and foremost as Serb and support for pro-Serb parties has traditionally been strong. Pljevlja was incorporated into Montenegro in 1912, being formerly part of the region of *Stara Hercegovina* (Old Herzegovina). The Serbs of Pljevlja share many cultural characteristics with Herzegovinans in Republika Srpska, particularly with Trebinje, Foča (Srbinje to Bosnian Serbs) and surrounding villages in the eastern Herzegovina area.

The municipality of Plav, close to the border with Kosovo and Albania, has three administrative centres – Plav, Murino and Gusinje. This area became part of Montenegrin territory in 1878, and its ethnic composition is distinctly different, with a much larger Muslim and Albanian population. Largely underdeveloped and in dire need of infrastructural improvement, the area around Plav (particularly the town of Murino) was damaged during the NATO bombings in 1999. Moreover, the area received an influx of refugees from Kosovo in 1998–99.²³ During this period and beyond, the Plav region felt many intercommunal strains as a consequence of the conflict in Kosovo. In all the aforementioned northern municipalities (with the exception of Plav and Bijelo Polje), the majority of inhabitants voted to retain the union of Serbia and Montenegro during the 2006 referendum.

The picture is very different in central Montenegro, in particular the core of Old Montenegro. By ‘central Montenegro’ we refer here not simply to Old Montenegro (Cetinje and its environs), but also to some of those areas formerly under Ottoman control, such as the contemporary capital, Podgorica and parts of Old Herzegovina, such as Montenegro’s second largest city Nikšić. Cetinje is the traditional seat of Old Montenegro and the nearby village of Njeguši was the birthplace of Petar II Petrović Njegoš. Cetinje was the capital of the independent state of Montenegro (1878–1918) and the seat of the Petrović dynasty. In 1918, when Montenegro was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Serbia essentially annexed Montenegro, the new authorities forbade the Montenegrin King, Nikola I Petrović (who had fled into exile in 1916), to return to Montenegro; all his property was confiscated. Being at the heart of the development of the Montenegrin state, the perception of Montenegrin

separateness has remained in Cetinje. While the town retains its rather rustic, underdeveloped feel, numerous former diplomatic residences and significant historical buildings such as King Nikola's museum, the national archive, Cetinje monastery and the Njegoš mausoleum on nearby Lovćen, are testament to the town's unique and complex history. Given its location as the seat of the Montenegrin ruling dynasty and the historic capital, Cetinje, the citizens generally possess a largely pro-Montenegrin and pro-independence orientation. It was the birthplace and headquarters of the pro-independence party, the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LSCG).

Nestling on the Zeta plain is Podgorica, Montenegro's modern capital, administrative centre and largest city. The then small town became part of Montenegro in 1878, having formerly been a Turkish garrison. Complete devastation (largely due to Allied bombing raids in 1944) during the Second World War has left little of the remnants of its past. Only the old Turkish bridge and 'Stara Varoš' area remain of old Podgorica. The city was called 'Titograd' (after Josip Broz Tito) from 1945 to 1992 when the name Podgorica was restored.²⁴ Podgorica is Montenegro's only large urban centre and increasingly looks like a genuinely European capital (though Yugoslavs mocked it as the ugliest capital in former Yugoslavia). It has grown significantly since the Second World War. A search for better economic opportunities in the 1960s and 1970s led to rapid urbanization with many rural Montenegrins gravitating towards the capital. Many new estates such as *Blok pet* (Block 5), *Blok šest* (Block 6) and Zabjelo were built to accommodate the incomers. The city represents Montenegro in microcosm with a mixed population of Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians (mainly in the Tuzi area) and Muslims. Reflecting this mix, the independence referendum was closely contested among the citizens of Podgorica.

Nikšić, Montenegro's second largest city, boasts the best beer in Montenegro – the excellent *Nikšićko pivo* – but it also enjoys the dubious (perhaps unfair) reputation of being a tough town. Misha Glenny famously referred to it as 'one of the most primitive and violent towns in [former] Yugoslavia'.²⁵ Nikšić is situated in Old Herzegovina and became part of the Montenegrin state in 1878. Fearing reprisals from an embittered Orthodox population, people began to leave the area, radically changing its demographics. Orthodox Montenegrins filled the vacuum, settling in the vacant homes of fleeing 'Turks'.²⁶ Given Nikšić's history, the town's citizens had a tradition of closeness with Serbia. The ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) now administers the municipality. Nikšić is the birthplace of the current prime minister Milo Đukanović, and the town was a key battleground between the warring factions of the old DPS during the 1997 split within the party (see Chapter 9). Again, Nikšić was closely contested during the 2006 referendum.

The differences are equally pronounced on the Montenegrin coast. Indeed, there is a stark distinction between some coastal regions and Montenegro's hinterland. The coastal areas, particularly *Boka Kotorska* (the Bay of Kotor), have had very different historical experiences from 'Old Montenegro' or the Brda area. In the Bay of Kotor, there are very strong remnants of the Austrian and Venetian periods (and their related cultural influences). Kotor only became part of Montenegro in 1945. The area has a significant Croat and Catholic population and many *Bokelji* (residents of Boka) use Italian words mixed with the Ijekavski dialect of the hinterland. The unique cultural hybrid of the bay area finds its manifestation during 'Bokeljska Noć' (The Night of the Bokalese). The costumes and practices project a genuine Mediterranean culture very different from the hinterland of Montenegro. Given its Catholic population, Serb extremists targeted the area in the early 1990s (see Chapter 6). During this period, a significant number of Croats left Boka, driven out by Serbian propaganda that labelled them 'Croatian fascists' (Ustashas) intent on undermining Montenegro's territorial integrity.²⁷ Many of these Croats have now returned and a Croatian consulate has been established in Kotor.

However, the tumultuous period during the breakup of the SFRY left a significant legacy on the Montenegrin coast. The influx of Serb refugees from Croatia and Bosnia (many of whom settled in the coastal towns of Herceg-Novi and Budva) altered the area's demographic structure²⁸ – not everybody welcomed these demographic shifts. Many of the residents of Boka felt threatened by the resurgence of Serbian nationalism in Montenegro during the late 1980s and the influx of (often embittered and volatile) Serb refugees from Bosnia did little to assuage their fears. These newcomers did not reflect the traditional multiethnic, multi-confessional character of the area.²⁹ A case in point is the town of Herceg-Novi (only a few kilometres from the Croatian border), which retains a distinctly Serbian flavour – largely due to the influx of Serbian refugees from Bosnia and Croatia. Many signs above shops and cafés are written in the Cyrillic script (as opposed to the Latin script which is predominant along most of the Montenegrin coast). Thus, most Montenegrins regard Herceg-Novi as a Serbian enclave on the Montenegrin coast. In a controversial article published in *Slobodna Bosna* (Free Bosnia) in January 2005, Montenegrin journalist, Andrej Nikolaidis, described Herceg-Novi as a town of 'Radovan Karadžić sympathizers and Slobodan Milošević supporters', much to the disdain of many of the town's residents, who voted overwhelmingly to retain the state union in May 2006.³⁰

The southern coastal areas experienced fewer demographic shifts than the region around the Bay of Kotor. The town of Bar, for example, escaped the worst excesses of nationalist sentiment in the early 1990s. Bar has a mixed population of Montenegrins, Serbs and Albanians, and contains the

impressive ruins of the Roman settlement of *Stari Bar* (Old Bar) and Montenegro's largest port. It is located at the foot of Mount Rumija – a place of pilgrimage for adherents to the Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim faiths. Controversially, in July 2005 the Serbian Orthodox Church placed a small tin church on the peak of Mount Rumija, which worsened interfaith relations. Further south, the town of Ulcinj has a uniquely Albanian flavour. It is home to a significant Albanian majority and the plethora of mosques is a testament to the town's Islamic character. Ulcinj did not become part of Montenegrin territory until 1880 – two years after the Congress of Berlin (the 'Ulcinj Question' remained open for a two-year period until it joined Montenegro). Support for independence from Serbia was strong in both Bar and Ulcinj.

Taking into account these geographical factors, we can see that Montenegro is a complex geographical, demographic, ethnic and cultural space. Historical factors have dictated that these areas entered the Montenegrin state at different times and identities and loyalties were developed prior to their incorporation into the Montenegrin state.

The Question of Identity in the Contemporary Context

Fundamentally, the study of the nation raises numerous theoretical, historical and empirical dilemmas. Strict categorization of the substance of a given nation is highly problematic, and in the Montenegrin case (given the blurring between Serb and Montenegrin identity) even more so. As Ičević notes, 'it is particularly [difficult] to find a reliable theoretical and methodological framework for defining the Montenegrin nation because of the contradictory attitudes to its existence, development and individuality.'³¹ Indeed, problems with clear definition are further compounded by an inextricably linked history (with Serbia), interrelated ruling dynasties, significant Montenegrin migration to Serbia, not to mention a large number of Montenegrins (until recently) seeing no contradiction in defining themselves as both Serb and Montenegrin. The root of the problem stems, according to Montenegrin political analyst, Milan Popović:

From at least two centuries of long-lasting and extremely contradictory state-building processes. Independent Montenegro or Montenegro as part of some greater state (Greater Serbia, Yugoslavia), these two–three state ideas have been the two–three principle and sometimes warring alternatives of modern Montenegrin history. Double identity imprinted on the mass consciousness of most Montenegrins has been a contradictory but logical result of these competing and confronting state ideas.³²

Such contradictory processes have led to the development of a phenomenon Srdjan Darmanović terms, a *national homo duplex*, a dual or double

identity consciousness.³³ Thus, the issues of nationhood and statehood have remained at the heart of Montenegrin politics throughout the twentieth century. Historical and political factors have dictated that Montenegrin identity possesses ambiguous characteristics that are open to interpretation. Previous census figures (from 1971 to 1991) indicate that the vast majority define themselves as Montenegrins, and the majority who defined themselves as such did so because they were citizens of the Montenegrin Socialist Republic (within the SFRY). This was misleading, however. These ‘Montenegrins’ were not a homogenous group. Many considered themselves Montenegrin and Yugoslav, or Montenegrin and Serb, or simply Montenegrin. Bound up within this large percentage of Montenegrins were individuals who had been brought up on the dialogue between Serb, Montenegrin and Yugoslav. But while in the past many Serbs in Montenegro would have simultaneously defined themselves as Montenegrins (and saw no contradiction in doing so), by 2003 the situation was quite different.

What has occurred to affect this change can be understood, not by seeking to understand a crystallizing process with regard to the identity of the Montenegrins but as a result of the shifting policies of Montenegro’s ruling elite *vis-à-vis* Serbia. While one should not completely disregard a longer-term process of consolidation of a specific Montenegrin identity, frequent changes of ideological legitimation by the ruling Montenegrin elite have been a key factor in that consolidation. Nevertheless, we can see a bifurcation between those who define themselves as Serbs and those who define themselves as ‘Montenegrin’. Census figures from 2003 indicated that the large group simply defined themselves as Montenegrins in the previous census of 1991 – Serb *or* Montenegrin, not Serb *and* Montenegrin (citizens were given no opportunity to define themselves as both). Increasingly, the term ‘Montenegrin’ no longer implies a wider Serbian identity.

Figure 1.1: Montenegrin Census Results 1971–1991

	1971	1981	1991
Serbian (percentage)	7.5	3.3	13.5
Montenegrin (percentage)	67.2	68.5	84.2

Source: *Stanovništvo 1971–1991 Godine Prema Narodnosti po opština*, Monstat, Podgorica, 2004.

We can, then, clearly see a radical departure from this trend in the 2003 census, and this new pattern is clearly demonstrated by these figures, according to which 40.5 per cent of Montenegro’s inhabitants define

themselves Montenegrin by nationality, while 30.3 per cent defined themselves as Serbs.³⁴

Figure 1.2: Results of Montenegrin Census 2003

Nationality	Number	Percentage of Population
Montenegrin	273.366	40.5
Serbian	201.892	30.3
Bosniak	63.272	9.4
Albanian	47.682	7.1
Muslim	28.714	4.3
Croat	7.062	1.1
Roma	2.875	0.4
Others	8.367	1.2
Did not declare	27.715	4.1
No data	10.532	1.6

Source: 'Rezultati popisa u Crnoj Gori', Monstat, December 2003.

Thus, in contemporary Montenegro (and particularly in the years preceding the independence referendum in May 2006), the politicization of the identity question (one inextricably linked with the independence project) dictated that individuals must broadly choose between two diametrically opposed camps possessing two competing perceptions of Montenegro and Montenegrins. But politics is at the heart of this change. Whether a member of any family defines themselves as Serb or Montenegrin depends upon social, cultural, economic, and (above all) political, circumstances.³⁵ More problematically, however, there are also a significant number within Montenegrin society who are either undecided or resent having to renounce aspects they regard as integral components of their identity. The increasing bifurcation was not simply something that existed in the abstract – it had very real manifestations in Montenegrin social life, even within the family unit. It was (and is) possible to meet one brother defining himself as Serb and the other as Montenegrin.³⁶ Yet, again, this was more indicative of a political stance of pro or contra independence. The situation now mirrors what has happened in the past – between supporters and opponents of unification in 1918 and between Partisan, Green and Chetnik in the 1940s. Intergenerational splits, interfamily splits – these divisions are a source of bewilderment for foreign observers and analysts, but they are neither novel nor indicative of a crystallizing process – they are driven primarily by politics, both now and in the past. Furthermore, it

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is a process that is constantly evolving. In the following analysis of Montenegro's modern history I aim to shed light on the complex processes that have shaped its history, its people and their political culture.

2

Empires, Entities and State-builders: A Brief Historical Overview

Although I recognize the usefulness of a detailed historical analysis that would facilitate a better understanding of contemporary events, a brief interpretation of Montenegrin history from the Roman period onward will have to suffice.¹ The history of the geographical region that is now called Montenegro can be traced back to 700 BC, although little is known about the Illyrian inhabitants of the area until the development of the Roman colonial outpost of *Dioclea* (Duklja) during the first century AD. This province remained under Roman control until AD 395, whereupon the Roman Empire was divided between Rome and Constantinople, which put the Balkan region on the faultline between two powerful forces. In the sixth century, large migrations of Slavs arrived in the Balkans and, according to British historian Francis Seymour Stephenson, Byzantine Emperor Heraclius encouraged them to migrate because he wished to 'erect a durable bulwark against any who should attempt to penetrate from the north-east'.² According to Montenegrin historian, Živko Andrijašević, 'One of the Slavic peoples settling on the Balkan Peninsula at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century were the Montenegrins'.³ Settling in the area of the former Roman colony, the Montenegrins, according to Andrijašević, became known as the 'Dukljani', and were recognized as separate from other Slavic groups:

*In his work De Administando Imperio, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905–59) refers to the Montenegrins as Docleans, explaining that their name derived from the fact that they had settled in areas around the Roman town of Doclea. As Constantine Porphyrogenitus did not supply any data about the ethnic origin of the Docleans, it may be assumed that he viewed them as a separate ethnic group, just like Serbs or Croats. ... Constantine Porphyrogenitus may not have known the real ethnic origin of the Docleans, but he obviously did not regard them as Serbs or Croats.*⁴

A number of Serbian, Serb-Montenegrin and Western authors, however, challenge Andrijašević's assertion that the Montenegrins were ethnically distinct from the Serbs. Fleming, for example, simply refers to the arriving Slavs as two groups, 'virtually identical in language and customs. The Antes, who have been plausibly identified as the Slavic ancestors of the modern Bulgarians, and the Sclaveni, who formed the Slavic substratum of most of the peoples of the former Yugoslavia'.⁵ By the Middle Ages, however, these Slav migrants had created a number of proto-states, one of which was Zeta (renamed from Duklja by the Byzantines). Essentially a vassal state of Byzantium, Zeta emerged as a power in its own right, even becoming a centre for resistance to Byzantium. Until his death in the early eleventh century, its leader, Jovan Vladimir, toiled to retain Zeta's independence. During the power struggle that followed his death, Vojislav emerged as the new ruler of Zeta. Territorial expansion and rebellion against the Byzantine Empire were constant features of his control. The Vojislavjevići – which Montenegrin historian Šerbo Rastoder refers to as the 'first Montenegrin dynasty' – began Zeta's quest for independence from Byzantine rule.⁶ Vojislav's successors, Mihailo and Bodin, sought to reconcile with Byzantium but with little tangible success. By 1077, Mihailo had successfully appealed to Rome for formal recognition of Zeta and the archbishopric of Bar was established. The Vojislavevići reigned supreme until Bodin's death in 1101; when their power began to wane in the late twelfth century, civil war and internal power struggles ensued. The Nemanjić dynasty took advantage of the political anarchy that followed the disintegration of the Vojislavljević power base. The rise of the Nemanjić dynasty ended the 173-year-long period of Zeta's independence, during which a state, Church and culture dominated by Western influence had been created.⁷

Montenegro was now under the control of the Nemanjić dynasty (1189–1360). Born in what is now Montenegro, Stefan Nemanja was the founder of the Serbian royal dynasty and began the Serbian tradition of building churches and monasteries. Zeta, however, enjoyed a unique status (a kind of sub-state within a state), best demonstrated by the predominance of Catholicism, although increasingly the Orthodox Church made inroads into this pre-existing religious composition. The youngest Nemanja son, however, made a significant impact on the ecclesiastical orientation of Zeta when, in 1219, Rastko (known in orthodoxy as St Sava), established the Serbian Orthodox Church and introduced the Orthodox rite, while simultaneously building churches and monasteries. This ensured that tangible evidence of the Serbian state remained throughout the period of Turkish rule and that the Nemanja dynasty maintained a degree of immortality. Stefan Nemanja's influence was such that he came to be known as the 'Holy Root' – his successors being dubbed 'saplings' or 'offsprings' of the holy root. The psychological effect

that the proliferation of myths and symbols had on the people of the Serbian kingdom (including Zeta) was significant. Many believed that the Nemanjas were the chosen rulers and they the chosen people. As Serbian historian, Miloš Blagojević, noted:

Thus, God had ordained that Nemanja's ancestors, he himself, and subsequently his heirs, should sovereignly rule the 'Serbian Lands'. They should take care of the 'flock' entrusted to them i.e. of the Serbian people, defend it and keep all evils away from it, as well as keep it together. All these [ideas] largely influenced the feeling of belonging to a common ethnic group – the Serbian nation.⁸

In 1331, with the accession to the throne of Dušan Silni (Dušan the Mighty), the Serbian state began a period of rapid expansion. By the 1340s, capitalizing on the weakness of the Byzantine Empire, Dušan's state comprised the territories of Macedonia, Albania, Epirus and Thessaly.⁹ The expansions brought only short-term gains. Following his death in 1355, the Serbian kingdom entered a period of uncertainty as the Ottoman Empire began its advance into Europe. His son, known as Uroš V, could do little to stem the threat from the south and gradually lost control of the peripheral territories, including Zeta. Chaos reigned in Zeta, where the Venetians and opposing nobles tested the Balšićs' emerging power. The Balšić dynasty emerged at a time of great crisis in the Balkans. In 1371, the Turks heavily defeated the Serbs at the battle on the Marica and the Macedonian lands subsequently fell to the Turkish forces. A cathartic battle then took place on 28 June 1389 at Kosovo Polje. The Serbian army led by Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović faced the might of the Turkish army under the command of Sultan Murat I. The legend of what followed has become fused into the Serbian, and by extension Montenegrin, national psyche. The Battle of Kosovo dictated the separation of Serbian and Zetan histories at this juncture. The Zetans were isolated but independent, largely due to a number of short-lived alliances that facilitated the retention of this independence.¹⁰ In the wake of the Battle of Kosovo, then, the Ottoman tide engulfed not only Serbia, but much of the Balkan Peninsula. Many Serbs fled their Turkish overlords, settling in the relative safety of Zeta's mountain bastions, scratching a meagre subsistence from the rocky and infertile land, and frequently engaging in armed conflict with Turkish soldiers, a state of living Boehm described as a 'refuge-warrior lifestyle'.¹¹

After the male line of the Balšićs became extinct in 1422, a short period of turmoil followed before the emergence of a new ruling dynasty. A tribal chieftain named Stefan Crnojević founded it during the collapse of the Serbian empire. Crucially (despite having less territory than either Zeta or Duklja), throughout the era of Crnojević rule Montenegro remained inde-

pendent, consolidating its previously fractured and inconsistent tradition of sovereignty. Stefan, whom Venice supported, was said to have fought more than fifty battles with the Turks, all of which ended with a Turkish retreat. His reputation on the battlefield was fearsome and his people named him the *Vojvoda* (Duke) of Zeta. Stefan's son Ivan succeeded him in 1465. Like his father, Ivan sought the protection of Venice, but almost immediately became unpopular with the Ottoman authorities for helping the Venetians resist the Turkish onslaught on Scutari. But their inability to rein in Montenegro's tribes hampered the Crnojević dynasty. These tribes were regarded as the primary military, political and moral collective that controlled its members, and thus the main source of power was with the tribal chiefs.¹² Their influence was hard to supersede. Leaders of individual tribes would often disregard the ruler's authority, choosing instead to act autonomously in the interests of the tribe alone. Attempts to bring them to heel often led to bloodshed, and the near impossible task of doing so became the bane of Montenegro's leaders for centuries. Nevertheless, the Crnojevićs stubbornly continued to resist the Turkish onslaught, but by 1482 this resistance was all but broken. Aware of the might of the Turkish armies, and understanding the geostrategic weakness of the then capital Žabljak, Ivan Crnojević deserted the town, establishing a new base in the shadow of Mount Lovćen. The town of Cetinje, which would become the Montenegrin capital until the early twentieth century, emerged. While Cetinje represented a safer strategic settlement, the Montenegrins were deprived of the fertile plains of Lake Scutari (Skadar) and were cut off from the coast. Surrounded by enemies and scratching a meagre subsistence from the barren and rocky environment, their destiny for almost four centuries was to wage incessant warfare against the Turks.¹³

The last Crnojević (Djurad) relinquished his home for Venice when the Porte in Constantinople discovered his collusion with Catholic countries (which he had been trying to persuade to unite in uprising against the Porte). In the light of these revelations, Djurad was given a choice – come to Constantinople to face the charges levelled against him or leave Montenegro immediately.¹⁴ He chose the latter. After Djurad Crnojević fled, Montenegro submitted to Ottoman pressure and was, according to Rastoder, 'adjoined to the countries of the Ottoman empire as a separate region under the Bey of Skadar and Sandžak, in whose name a *subaša* (sub-pasha) governed Montenegro'.¹⁵ Montenegro was formally incorporated into the Ottoman-dominated *Sanjakat* of Scutari in 1496. The structures of the Crnojević dynasty were abolished and dismantled, but Turkish authority was severely tested and resistance was significant from the outset.¹⁶ Montenegrin life became dominated by tribal cohabitation, which persevered until the introduction of theocracy and the subsequent rule of the Petrović dynasty. Thus, it was during this period that Montenegro's tribal structure consolidated, a system that was

to remain the fabric of society for centuries to come. Surrounded by enemies, Montenegro's position was precarious. According to Allcock, the Montenegro of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was, '[a] small landlocked proto-state ... sustained precariously in an area centred on Mount Lovćen and barely 40 kilometres across at its widest point – the size of a modest English county. This period was characterized by almost constant war with the Ottomans.'¹⁷

The Age of the Vladikas and the Unification of the Tribes

Wider political circumstances would dictate that Montenegrin tribes would have to unite if they were to avoid outright domination by the Turks. During the War of the Holy League, Montenegrins openly supported and collaborated with Venice's attempts to push back the borders of the Ottoman Empire. But this move proved counterproductive and foreshadowed a huge Ottoman invasion during which Cetinje was occupied and its monastery destroyed.¹⁸ These events also, however had a galvanizing effect. During the sixteenth century the *vladikas* (bishops) of the Cetinje Metropolitanate began to exercise greater authority in Montenegro. For the next three centuries, Montenegro became, in essence, a theocracy, with temporal and ecclesiastical authority vested in the *vladikas*.¹⁹ The *vladikas* were elected by the tribal *skupština* (assembly) and drawn from exemplary families within various tribes. From the fifteenth century onward, they represented the main focal point of resistance to the Turks. In 1697, with the election of Danilo I, the succession was restricted to within the Petrovići (the Petrović clan) and remained so until 1918 (with the exception of short periods of rule by the 'false Tsar' Šćepan Mali – Stephen the Small – and Arsenije Plamenac). As Orthodox bishops were forbidden to have children and could not provide heirs, the office was passed from uncle to nephew or great-nephew. The first of this lineage, Danilo I Petrović, began the process of state-building that his successors would further consolidate. He established Montenegro's first code of law (known as Danilo's code) and a court to arbitrate in legal matters.

Danilo, like his predecessors, would struggle to unite the tribes. Montenegro's social organization throughout this period was characterized by the predominance of the tribal system, one that had evolved and consolidated as Montenegrins, fearing occupation and forced subservience, began to inhabit the harsh, mountainous areas. Tomasevich, for example, noted that:

because of the forbidding landscape, the utter poverty in arable land and other resources, its isolation from the lines of communication and the currents of civilization, and the fact that the Turks, after the conquest, controlled the plains and the lines of inland communication, the social and economic life of the country developed thereafter along very primitive lines. In these [Montenegrin] areas, more

*than in any other South Slav area, the tribal forces reasserted themselves after the Turkish conquest.*²⁰

Tribes were largely formed in the mid- to late-fifteenth century and the initial decades of the sixteenth century, and they organized along territorial lines comprising self-governing communities within a geographical and economic framework.²¹ The central characteristic of Montenegrin socio-political organization was the *pleme* (tribe), a typical *pleme* composed of various *bratstvos* (clans). By extension, the Montenegrin clan was composed of all males who descended from the same male ancestor and all members of a clan shared the same surname.²² These clans were often relatively isolated from one another; Montenegro, as with much of the rest of the Balkan Peninsula, is mountainous, which made for problematic communications between populated enclaves, which fragmented and compartmentalized communities. This, and the lack of centralized authority, essentially dictated that tribal identification remained the primary source of identity. According to Boehm, 'In Montenegro, the relationships which normally identify the individual with the nation were almost wholly provided by the tribe.'²³

The renowned Serbian ethnographer, Jovan Cvijić, divided the tribes of Montenegro into two distinct groups: 'Old Montenegrin' tribes and the tribes of the *Brda* (Hills).²⁴ Concentrated in the northeast of the Zeta River and consisting predominantly of Serbian tribes who fled Ottoman occupation, the *Brda* tribes only became incorporated into Montenegro following the battles against the Turks at Martinići and Kruši in 1796. The Old Montenegrin tribes were organized into five (though this was later reduced to four) territorial units known as *nahija* (a term borrowed from Ottoman administrative terminology, used to refer to specific territories) – Katunska nahija, Lješanska nahija, Pješivci nahija (later incorporated into Katunska nahija), Rijeka nahija, and Crmnička nahija. Among these were a significant number of clans, which were often in conflict. The tribes were often 'in blood' with one another, with intertribal conflicts and lengthy blood feuds (*krvna osveta*) commonplace. In his boyhood memoirs *Besudna zemlja* (*Land without Justice*), Milovan Djilas succinctly described the character of the blood feud and the cycles of vengeance that subsequently resulted. Although written in the twentieth century, it powerfully articulates the essence of the psychology of the blood feud:

Vengeance – this is a breath of life one shares from the cradle with one's fellow clansmen, in both good fortune and bad, vengeance from eternity. Vengeance was the debt we paid for the love and sacrifice our forebears and fellow clansmen bore for us. It was the defence of our honour and good name, and the guarantee of our maidens. It was our pride before others; our blood was not water that anyone could spill. It was, moreover, our pastures and springs – more beautiful than anyone else's – our family

feasts and births. It was the glow in our eyes, the flame in our cheeks, the pounding in our temples, the word that turned to stone in our throats on our bearing that our blood had been shed. It was the sacred task transmitted in the hour of death to those who had just been conceived in our blood. It was centuries of manly pride and heroism, survival, a mother's milk and a sister's vow, bereaved parents and children in black, joy and songs turned into silence and wailing. It was all, all.²⁵

Mitigating the destructive blood feuds and uniting the tribes became the *vladike*'s core objective. Despite attempts to centralize authority – vested in a central government in Cetinje – their limitations were apparent. They experienced significant difficulties while attempting to collect taxes from the local *knezes* (tribal leaders) and seemed incapable of stemming the destructive cycle of *krvna osveta*.²⁶ While there was a certain level of cooperation between tribes, these alliances were frequently based on narrow self interest and had little to do with any sense of national cohesion, solidarity or national identity.²⁷ A weak central government did not easily usurp tribal authority and, while there was unity and cooperation of sorts, many of the tribes continued conflicts with those with whom they had a grievance. Thus the tradition of feuding continued in spite of the best efforts of the *vladike*.

Prior to the ascension to power of the first of the Petrović dynasty, Petar I Petrović, tribal divisions had hampered the implementation of any form of centralized authority. The effect was twofold. First, the lack of intertribal cohesion weakened Montenegro in its struggle with the Turks (creating the conditions for the Ottoman Army to launch attacks, as in 1785, when Mahmud Pasha Bušatlija ravaged Montenegro). Second, failed attempts to create a centralized system of authority dictated that Montenegro remained backward, tribal and parochial. Creating cohesion among the tribes was fraught with difficulty, and unity between them was often non-existent, but their constant struggles against the Ottoman Empire did, however, give them reason to unite. After all, they all had a common interest in the removal of Turkish authority from the region. Galvanizing this anti-Turkish sentiment would require significant effort, but it would bring great rewards. As a consequence the pillars of a nascent state would evolve and flourish.

Petar I Petrović would have marked success in bringing Montenegro's tribes together, furthering internal organization and raising Montenegro's profile internationally. In his *Poslanice* (Appeals) to the tribal leaders, he urged them to stop internal conflicts, end intertribal bloodshed and endeavour to work in harmony to defeat the Ottomans.²⁸ These appeals found manifestation in the form of the Assembly of Cetinje, held in 1787, where Petar successfully united the Old Montenegrin tribes against the Ottoman enemy. The consolidation of tribal unity brought tangible benefits. Montenegro gained territory and prestige by defeating the Ottoman army at Martinici–

Krusi (near Podgorica) in 1796. Following the battle, in 1796, the Brda became part of Montenegrin territory, bringing more tribes under the 'control' of the *Vladika*. Many of these tribes were settled on contested territory and, although as Christians they were frequently engaged in conflict with the Turks, their loyalties fluctuated, fighting with Old Montenegrin tribes when it suited them, but swiftly revolting if attempts were made by Cetinje to tax them. Identification with Serbia was strong in many of these areas largely due to the legacy of monastery building by the Serbian rulers Stefan and Vuk Nemanja during the zenith of the Serbian empire in the twelfth century. Eight large tribes populated the Brda region – Bjelopavlići, Piperi, Kući, Bratonožići, Donja (lower) Morača, Gornja (upper) Morača, Rovčani and Vasojevići.²⁹ Most of the Brda tribes were incorporated into Montenegro in 1796, with the Rovčani and the Donja Morača and Gornja Morača tribes being incorporated only after the defeat of the Turkish army at the Morača River in 1820. The Vasojevići were incorporated even later, in 1858.³⁰ The area was noted for producing two key leaders of the first and second Serbian revolutions of 1804 and 1813 – Petar Karadjordje-Petrović (Black George) from the Vasojevići clan and Miloš Obrenović from the Bratonožići clan.

Tomasevich noted that to consolidate the Montenegrin state effectively, its leaders had to impose 'a governmental framework over the tribal structures, and regular levying of taxes which proved to be a long and hard task requiring, occasionally, the use of the sword'.³¹ To incorporate the new tribes successfully and to impose authority throughout Montenegrin territory, greater centralization was essential. In the period immediately following the Montenegrin victories at Martinići-Kruši, Vladika Petar began to create a new form of state organization by introducing, in 1796, the first written law in Montenegro. But 1796 also marked the advent of Montenegro's close relationship with Russia. Following the battle, Russia chose unilaterally to recognize Montenegro as a *de facto* independent state.³² Thereafter, Petar I continued to consolidate the organs of a nascent state. This often required acts of violence as well as providing incentives. In 1821, Petar created his personal guard, known as the *Perjanik*. Drawn from the most influential tribes, they became the vanguard of his state-building project. Ruthless when required, they helped to pave the way for the consolidation of the state. Petar I Petrović died in 1830 at the age of 81. His legacy cannot be under estimated. Vladika Petar oversaw an important transitional period for Montenegro – military victories against the Turks, increasing levels of centralism and successes in attempting to unite the tribes under a single authority.

Peter II Petrović Njegoš

Petar I Petrović's successor, Petar II Petrović-Njegoš, was instrumental in further uniting the Montenegrin tribes, forging the structures of the state, and

setting in motion events that would lead to Montenegro's independence in 1878.³³ Born between 1811 and 1813 in the village of Njeguši in Montenegro, Njegoš (at birth Radivoje Tomov Petrović) hailed from the proud and militant Njeguši clan, one of the most active in the bastion of Old Montenegro. The tribes of the Katunska nahija were militant and fiercely independent. While many of the tribes resisted the Turks, many, acting out of naked self-interest, would return to the Turkish sway intermittently. Such deeds were unthinkable for the Katuni and, according to Djilas, were consumed by their mission to rid Montenegro of their Ottoman oppressors:

The Katuni nurtured a spiritual implacability toward the Turks. They did not clash with the Turks for solely transient causes – high taxes or acts of violence. They were a different, opposite world – another conception of the world and of life. In their craggy heights, bleached by sun and storm and bereft of everything that the body needs, ceaseless struggle with the Turks was not only a way of life, but a cult. They not only believed in the myths of their religion and nationality; they lived by them.³⁴

It was into this social context that Radivoje (Rade) Tomov Petrović was born. His destiny was not quite preordained, however, and, as Petar I Petrović's health deteriorated, he was not the first choice for the position of Vladika. Years before his death, his nephew, Mitar Stijepov, had been the original choice to succeed him, though he fell ill while studying in Russia and passed away in the unfamiliar cold climate. Then, in 1823, Djordje Savov Petrović was chosen to become Petar's successor and was dispatched, like Mitar, to receive an education in Russia. But Djordje, an ambitious and adventurous character, was unsuited to the religious path and, in 1829, a year before Petar's death, enrolled in military school. Rade stood next in line. Born into a leading family within the Katunska nahija (one that had produced many leaders spanning several generations in the tiny area of Old Montenegro), he quickly became acquainted with the power and authority vested in his tribe. Unlike most Montenegrins of the period, Rade, as a young man, received an education, albeit an unconventional one. He was tutored and nurtured by the self-educated and eccentric poet, Sima Milutinović Sarajlija, who gave him an education without any of the traditional, organized or approved methods of learning.³⁵ Irregular though it may have seemed, it somehow provided him with a sound preparation for the challenges that lay ahead.

On Petar I Petrović's death in 1830, Rade inherited his uncle's title as head of the church and state. Consecrated under the name of Peter II Petrović-Njegoš, he was to continue the reforms his uncle had set in motion, becoming in the process eminent as a statesman, reformer, warrior (despite an early military disaster) and poet.³⁶ But he faced opposition on two fronts – from the tribes and from the *guvernadur*. It shocked the tribal leaders that a 17-

year-old would become the Vladika and it took time for the tribal assembly to give its consent. Tension remained between Njegoš and Vuko Radonjić, Montenegro's governor, who regarded him as politically inexperienced and unfit to rule.³⁷ Seeking to take advantage of this perceived weakness, Radonjić, encouraged by the Austrians, began his (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to usurp power.³⁸ Njegoš, supported by the tribal chiefs, began to wrest control of the embryonic state, eventually abolishing the role of governor in 1832 and forcing Radonjić into exile. This bold move essentially facilitated the shift of power towards the Cetinje Metropolitanate and to Njegoš himself.

During the early years of his rule, and having defeated the main source of domestic opposition, Njegoš devoted a good deal of his energy to the second source of internal instability – the tribes. His predecessor had done much to unite the tribes in the face of Ottoman oppression, but had experienced difficulties in shaping a centralized, united intertribal political community, having only sown the seeds of an embryonic legal system. Building on these shaky foundations would prove to be a significant challenge. Continuing to insist on their continuing autonomy, the tribes initially resisted Njegoš's efforts to consolidate the legal code and to initialize a modern tax system, both of which would have further centralized the state. Thus, while these rapid developments in domestic political affairs may have reinforced his reputation as a reformer, they did not endear him to many tribal Montenegrins, whose strong sense of tradition, characterized by individual and tribal freedom, fundamentally contradicted the notion of a mandatory payment of taxes to a central authority in Cetinje.³⁹ Nonetheless, Njegoš continued with his often unpopular centralizing reforms, introducing a taxation system and basic law on individual and property rights that regulated the ordinary Montenegrin's relationship with the state.⁴⁰

It is not just for his achievements in state-building, political progress or uniting Montenegro's fractious tribes that Njegoš remains such a central figure in Montenegrin history. He is also well known for his literary endeavours, not only in contemporary Montenegrin society but throughout the historical and literary schools of Europe. In fact, it is for literature that he remains such a controversial figure. His *Gorski Vijećnik* (*The Mountain Wreath*) is possibly the most famous poetic work of South Slav literature.⁴¹ The epic poem draws on the events of Christmas Eve 1702 (although it is not known if these events actually took place) when, in an attempt to save Montenegro from Ottoman penetration, Montenegrin Muslims were offered the choice of 'baptism or death'. Those who chose not to accept Christianity were put to the sword. These events, known as the 'Montenegrin Vespers' were articulated powerfully in Njegoš's finest work. Indeed, one cannot over emphasize the significance of *The Mountain Wreath*. Any historian or analyst attempting to

understand the roots of contemporary social, cultural or political life in Montenegro would wise to read Njegoš's works. According to Djilas, '[Montenegrians] hardly knew the Bible; for them, the *Mountain Wreath* might have served as such a book.'⁴² It is the theme of the poem that divides opinion. Is it an epic poem about the struggle for freedom from oppression or a paean to the massacre of Muslims? There are numerous different interpretations and Njegoš's classic work has been subject to much scrutiny.⁴³

Outside the realm of poetic endeavour, Njegoš further promoted a Serb identity among the people by persuading Montenegrin tribes to adopt the *kapu* (cap) as a statement of solidarity with Serbia and abandon their traditional Turkish fezzes. The *kapu*'s black border represents mourning for the defeat at Kosovo, its red centre Serbian blood spilt, and its golden semi-circles the centuries of Turkish oppression.⁴⁴ Njegoš also awarded the Miloš Obilić⁴⁵ military decoration to Montenegrin soldiers who showed bravery on the battlefield and it became the highest military honour. Njegoš stopped wearing a *fez*, which carried Turkish overtones, and, encouraging others to follow suit, wore Serbian national costume. Njegoš died in 1851 at the age of only 39, but he had left a significant legacy. During the period of his rule, he fundamentally separated church from state and laid the foundations for an independent Montenegrin state.⁴⁶ Appropriately (and at his own request), he was buried upon his beloved Mount Lovćen.

Danilo Petrović-Njegoš: Absolutist Ruler and State-Builder

*One day a group of us were with Vladka Rade, who was sitting in his chair with his eyes shut and we thought he was sleeping. Doctor Radišić asked me 'Who will be the Vladikas heir?' I replied simply 'Danilo'. Branko said that he had never heard of the name before and the Vladika, without opening his eyes, said with a smile 'If his character stays the way it is now, the whole of Europe will hear about him.'*⁴⁷

Njegoš's chosen successor was his 25-year-old nephew Zeko Stankov, better known as Prince Danilo. His reign may have been short at only nine years, but his legacy was as significant as that of his predecessor. Although Njegoš sanctioned his accession to power, Zeko faced significant opposition in his ascendancy.⁴⁸ Having been in Vienna at the time of Njegoš's death, Zeko found upon his return to Cetinje that his uncle (and president of the senate), Pero Tomov, had installed himself inside the *Biljarda* and adopted the trappings of power. Njegoš's long period of ill health had dictated that power shifted towards the senate, the leading representatives of Montenegro's tribes; and they felt little inclined to cede power to the young Zeko. The latter, however, was not dissuaded and in the power struggle that ensued, he

demonstrated a strength and ruthlessness that would become all too familiar to Montenegrins over the next decade. He insisted that the tribal chiefs honour his uncle's wish that Danilo become Montenegro's next ruler. And indeed, his forceful will, the support of the Russian establishment, and his incessant harassment of the tribal leaders, led to him being formally recognized as Vladika. But not content with being simply an ecclesiastical ruler, Danilo sought to become Montenegro's first secular ruler.⁴⁹ In love with Darinka Kevekić, Danilo intended to marry. The role of Vladika would not allow for such an arrangement and, as a consequence, Danilo would have to seek endorsement for the shift towards secular rule. To do this, however, he would need both the support of the tribal chieftains and the approval of the Russian tsar. But while the tribal leaders and the Russians acquiesced to (rather than approved) the elevation of Danilo to the status of prince, the Turks, knowing that this development essentially ended Turkish claims to Montenegro, staunchly refused to recognize the new political reality.⁵⁰

In 1852 the Turks, refusing to recognize Montenegro's new status, began to meddle in Montenegrin affairs (offering the Piperi tribe special status if they accepted Turkish offers of *suzerainty*). In retaliation, Danilo attacked and seized control of Žabljak Crnojević (the original seat of the Crnojević dynasty on Lake Skadar). While this was merely a storm in a teacup in military terms, it gave the Turks a definitive pretext to attack Montenegro and the subsequent Turkish onslaught was considerable. Surrounded by enemy forces, the Montenegrin army did its best to hold the overwhelming Turkish force at bay. In the knowledge that Montenegrin forces would be unable to do so for long, Danilo turned to the Austrians (who were seeking opportunities to increase their influence in the Balkans) for assistance. Austria's subsequent intervention proved effective and the Turks sued for peace in 1853. Montenegro had been saved by Vienna.

The whole affair convinced Danilo that Montenegro – while unable to wage a victorious war against the Turks – could use its influence to effect change by destabilizing regions within the Ottoman Empire. As a consequence, Danilo began to support uprisings in Herzegovina, which, it was envisaged, would erode Ottoman control in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Here the Montenegrins sought to internationalize the 'Montenegrin Question' as a way of attaining their objectives. Danilo knew he could not defeat the Ottoman Empire, but he could create significant problems within its boundaries and destabilize relations between the Great Powers and the Ottomans. Herzegovina was fertile ground for instability, and it would cause problems not simply for the Ottomans but to the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Thus, greater forces now had an interest in solving Montenegro's territorial dispute with the Ottomans. The Herzegovinan uprising of 1857 (directed by the Montenegrins) represented a realization of Danilo's policy. Angered by

Montenegrin actions in Herzegovina, the Sublime Porte sent Husein-pasha, the commander of Ottoman forces in Herzegovina, to punish the Montenegrins. The armies met at Grahovo on 13 May and, despite its comparatively meagre resources, the Montenegrin army was victorious. Intensification of the conflict seemed inevitable before the involvement of the Great Powers, which convinced the Ottomans to consent to the establishment of a demarcation commission. Later that year the border between Montenegro and Turkey was officially established. This represented a significant step towards formal independence and a vindication of Danilo's aggressive policies.

This dogged determination was an early manifestation of Danilo's character; internal and external enemies would later experience at close quarters his authoritarian bent. Within Montenegro Danilo was ruthless in oppressing those he regarded as enemies. Any internal opposition was met with ruthless efficiency. Some tribes did not respond well to Danilo's centralizing measures. The shift of power towards authorities in Cetinje and away from local tribal leaders was opposed by those who felt their authority eroding. The Kuči tribe, which was under formal Ottoman rule but frequently in rebellion, was particularly well known throughout the region for its opposition to centralized rule. It not only rebelled strongly against the centralism of the Montenegrin state in the nineteenth century but was also in conflict with the Turks. In the mid-1850s the tribe was involved in two *pokarati* (rebellions) – *prva pokara* against the Turks, and *druga pokara* against Prince Danilo and Mirko Petrović.⁵¹ During the latter, Danilo sent Duke Mirko to bring the Kuči tribe to heel.

Danilo had cultivated an aggressive but clever strategy towards his international and domestic enemies, yet his downfall would come not from external aggression but from internal dissent. He was assassinated in Kotor while holidaying with his wife, Darinka. The assassin was Todor Kadić, an exiled Montenegrin from the aggrieved Bjelopavlić tribe. Paradoxically, Danilo had become the victim of a practice he had outlawed five years before his death in 1855. Danilo's assassination and death dictated that the line of succession fell to his only nephew, his brother Mirko's son, Nikola. Unlike Danilo, who had been forced to contend with forces who disapproved of his accession, Nikola faced no internal challenge and was to enjoy, at least in the early years of his rule, absolute power.

The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Montenegro

Danilo's manipulation of the 'Montenegrin Question' had brought rapid and tangible results. His tenacity had been rewarded with respect to the formal delineation of the border between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire, the raising of Montenegro's profile abroad, and the consolidation of the power of the state internally. Yet, increased international recognition, modernization and territorial expansion would prove a poisoned chalice. Prince Nikola I Petrović, who ascended the throne in 1860 (initially as *Gospodar* – Lord) at the tender age of 18, would find himself the ruler of a very different Montenegro (in terms of scale and ethnic composition) from the one his predecessors had envisaged. However, Nikola continued with the policies of state-building and territorial expansion that Danilo had so vociferously pursued.

Nikola's succession to the throne was to the exclusion of his father, Duke Mirko, whom Danilo's widow, Darinka, considered too much of a firebrand to be ruler of Montenegro, despite his reputation as an excellent guerrilla fighter and experienced diplomat. Thus, the succession fell to Nikola. Building upon Danilo's legacy, he would oversee the consolidation of the Montenegrin state and seek to expand its territory (by supporting uprisings in Herzegovina, for example).¹ Young, well-educated, but politically inexperienced, Nikola's early years as *Gospodar* were a baptism of fire. Early conflicts set the tone. Nikola (and his father) continued the tradition of supporting uprisings in Herzegovina despite the objections of the Great Powers.² Again, the Ottoman leaders despaired of the unruly Montenegrins, whose continuing support for the rebellions brought chaos to that corner of the empire. War with the Turks was the inevitable outcome of Montenegro's continuing support for the rebellions.³ In 1862, the Ottoman army, led by Omer-Pasha Latas, spared nothing in its attempts to bring the Montenegrins to heel and to restore order to Herzegovina. The ensuing attack led to a rapid and decisive defeat for the Montenegrins. So heavy was the defeat that the Great Powers had to intervene to stop Ottoman troops entering the Montenegrin capital, Cetinje.⁴ The Montenegrins would have to wait another decade to exact revenge for the humiliation, and again Herzegovina would be the

pretext. In 1876, after forging an alliance with Prince Milan of Serbia, Nikola declared war on Turkey, sending 11,000 troops to Herzegovina (numbers later bolstered by Hercegovinian volunteers bringing the total to around 15,000).⁵ This Montenegrin force (and the 120,000 strong force from Serbia) declared war on the Ottoman Empire in June, and significant battles took place within a month. Early successes were abundant for the Montenegrins. At Vučji Do on 28 July, the Ottoman army suffered a significant defeat at the hands of the tenacious Montenegrins and, in August 1876, the pattern was repeated at Fundina. These defeats forced the Turks to the negotiating table, but despite lengthy negotiations, hostilities resumed early the following year. This time, the renewed Ottoman assault was more effective, pushing the Montenegrins deep into their own territory. Only a Russian attack and breakthrough of the Ottoman defence lines on the Danube front saved the Montenegrins from inevitable defeat. Desperate to hold their defensive line on the Danube (which represented their strategic defence of Constantinople itself), Ottoman units withdrew from Montenegro to defend against the Russian onslaught. Constantinople's strategic decision facilitated Montenegrin gains. Nikšić, Bar and Ulcinj all fell into Montenegrin hands. And thus it stayed until the cessation of hostilities.

Under these unusual circumstances Montenegro made significant territorial gains, which gave it leverage in the negotiations with the Great Powers during the Congress of Berlin in 1878. That the territories Montenegro held after the end of the Montenegro–Turkish war would go to it was only the beginning of a significant new phase in Montenegro's history. The Congress of Berlin in 1878 confirmed that Montenegro would be compensated by the addition of new territories and be granted formal recognition as an independent state. Thus, the independence of Montenegro, forged through war and sacrifice, was acknowledged by the Great Powers, and even by countries that had been unwilling hitherto to do so formally (namely the Ottoman Empire). The 1877 Treaty of San Stefano awarded Montenegro a territory double its previous size (though this was later reduced at the Congress of Berlin in 1878), as well as access to the sea at Bar and Ulcinj. This expansion gave Montenegro vital entry to the Adriatic Sea, facilitating easier access to the free-market democracies of western Europe.⁶ Furthermore, as a result of the settlement at Berlin, Montenegro acquired the following cities: Nikšić, Spuz, Podgorica, Kolašin, Andrijevica, Žabljak, Bar, Plav and Gusinje.⁷ In the period immediately after its recognition, Montenegro continued its impressive expansion – doubling in size between 1878 and 1880 alone. As the Ottoman Empire's grip on the Balkans weakened, Montenegro exploited the emerging power vacuum. It expanded as significant military successes led to territorial gains and economic benefits (such as the acquisition of more fertile land).⁸

Liberation and independence had been realized, but these apparently

positive developments brought with them significant problems. Territorial expansion happened too rapidly, and, as Čagorović pointed out, 'too fast to enable adequate integration of the population of the new areas into the ethnic nucleus of Montenegro'.⁹ Thus, despite the euphoria surrounding this newly-recognized independence, there were significant drawbacks that would render their perceived improvement in fortunes self defeating. With all these territorial expansions, Montenegro, noted Ivo Banac, 'expanded into territories where the tradition of Montenegrin uniqueness and statehood did not obtain'.¹⁰ No longer was Montenegro confined to the *Brda* and Old Montenegro; the expanded territory contained many Serbian and Albanian tribes whose loyalties lay elsewhere. Montenegro was now large enough to be a viable state, yet the larger it became the more diluted the core, traditional 'Old Montenegrin' identity, became.

Ecclesiastically, Montenegro was no longer a mono-confessional (Orthodox) territory. Islamic and Catholic populations were now under the jurisdiction of the Montenegrin state and their numbers were significant. However, in this respect, assimilation was largely successful. Despite Montenegro's overwhelmingly mono-confessional character, these minorities' confessional rights were fully respected and inter-ecclesiastical relations improved (in fact remained excellent throughout Nikola's rule). The Muslim population was granted the right to have its own religious leader (the Montenegrin *mufti*), and Montenegro's Islamic community was founded in 1878.¹¹ Relations with Montenegro's Catholics were equally cordial. In 1886, Montenegro became the first Orthodox country to sign an accord with the Vatican, regulating the limits of the religious jurisdiction of the Bar archbishopric but confirming its privileges.¹² Outside the ecclesiastical arena, Nikola strengthened the trust of these new minorities by integrating them into the military, sometimes in positions of relative seniority. As a result of these efforts, the vast majority of Montenegro's minorities – free to practise their chosen religion and with a feeling of being genuinely integrated – became loyal citizens of King Nikola and Montenegro.

With such state-building successes behind him, Nikola sought to extend his power beyond the environs of Montenegro. Nurturing his dream of building the Serbian state around the 'Piedmont' of Cetinje, Nikola began to portray himself as the natural leader of the Serb nation. This approach symbiotically degraded the Montenegrin nation and state. According to Pavlović, Nikola's political pragmatism and his personal perception of himself as the leader of the Serb nation dictated that he simply:

brushed aside those facts that did not correspond to his political vision. He was aware that the concept of the historical continuity of the Montenegrin state did not fit comfortably into the mythologized all-inclusive grand narrative of a medieval Serbian

*empire and that it was in direct opposition to his political agenda and to his portrait of his dynasty as the rightful heir to the [Serbian] medieval throne.*¹³

Sentiment for the unification of Serb peoples (and pan-Slavism generally) was strong in Montenegro. Nikola (for whom dynastic interests remained the primary concern) attempted to benefit from this sentiment by utilizing his diplomatic ties with Russia to bolster his own regional influence and to present himself as the representative of the South Slavs. When circumstances merited, Nikola would seek to ride the pan-Slav chariot.¹⁴ In 1871, for example, Nikola founded Montenegro's first newspaper – *Crnogorac* (*The Montenegrin*), which adopted a profoundly pan-Slavic position.

While Russian support largely facilitated Montenegro's diplomatic leverage and disproportionate geopolitical strength, the emerging Serbian state was fast threatening Montenegrin hopes of becoming a stronger regional power. The emergence of a strong, large and independent Serbian state in the nineteenth century complicated the relationship between Montenegro and Russia, which had been based on the central idea of long-oppressed members of the Orthodox family supporting one another. Montenegro, in constant conflict with the Turks, could draw on Russian support. Under Ottoman rule, Montenegro had staked a claim as heir to the medieval Serbian kingdom and undisputed leader of the South Slav orbit, but as the Serbian state grew and consolidated, this claim began to diminish. With the Serbian state consolidating, the changing political dynamics in the Balkans distorted the premise upon which their relationship was built. Serbia was now Russia's main strategic partner in the Balkans. Thus, the re-emergence of a stronger Serbia represented a double-edged sword for Montenegro. It gave the tiny principality a powerful regional ally, but weakened its strategic importance.

Nikola's greatest hope for a reversal of the trend towards Serb hegemony within the South Slav orbit lay in exploiting the intensification of internal political feuds within Serbia. Conflicts between the Karadjordjević and Obrenović families presented Nikola with an opportunity to meddle in the internal politics of Serbia, and gave him a degree of latitude he may otherwise have had to do without. Attempting to seize on the instability in Serbia, Nikola sought to promote himself as the legitimate heir to the Serbian crown. It was a risky strategy: by consolidating a Serbian identity in Montenegro, he was attempting to shift the centre of Serb power toward Montenegro. But in so doing, he inadvertently undermined his own authority. Thus, while Nikola attempted to strengthen Montenegro's hand, he had simply provided proponents of union (on Belgrade's terms) with powerful arguments to support the essential Serb character of Montenegro and the Montenegrins.

For all Nikola's trumpeting of the Serb cause, and despite the apparent cordial relations between Serbia and Montenegro, any semblance of unity

between the two Serb states was dissipating. Relations between Nikola and Miloš Obrenović, who became King of Serbia in 1882 with Vienna's consent, became increasingly competitive and uneasy. Nikola's decision to marry his daughter, Zorka, to Miloš Obrenović's sworn enemy, Petar Karadjordjević, soured them permanently. But the move was a strategic one designed to allow Nikola a greater degree of influence in the Serbian orbit. As Banac notes:

*Nikola had his own score sheet. He wanted to be seen as the 'The First Serb', the protector of a kindred dynasty that, unlike the Obrenović's, rejected collusion with Austria-Hungary. He set up his new son-in-law with the stronghold and means for his operations, thereby garnering for himself and Montenegro the credit of Piedmont in Pan-Serbianism.*¹⁵

It was a strategy that was to prove counter productive. Although difficulties between Montenegro and Serbia were overcome by the subsequent rise to power of Petar Karadjordjević in 1903 as the King of Serbia, his ascendancy heralded the end of Montenegro's role as the bastion of the Serbian national ideal.¹⁶ As Karadjordjević consolidated his power within Serbia and established good external relations with Russia, Nikola's position became incrementally weaker, making the latter increasingly uneasy. Serbia's rapid ascendancy meant that it quickly replaced Montenegro as Russia's main strategic partner and chief agent in the Balkans, recognized by the Great Powers as the new Piedmont of the Balkans.¹⁷ The Petrović dynasty, having lost much of its previous political significance, was seen more and more as simply a branch of the Serbian royal family.¹⁸ Unwillingly dictated to by the shift in regional political dynamics, Nikola therefore focused less on pan-Serbism and more on consolidating his rule within Montenegro, where his leadership was increasingly being challenged.

In Montenegro, supporters of union with Serbia were becoming stronger, while in Serbia both the legitimate government and more clandestine forces were massing against Nikola. While Karadjordjević was doing his utmost to undermine the ruling Montenegrin dynasty, the Serbian underground organizations *Crna ruka* (Black Hand) and *Narodna obrana* (National Defence) began (though this was only one of their objectives) to work towards the unification of Serbia and Montenegro under a single Karadjordjević dynasty. Many Black Hand members were closely associated with the coup that brought an end to the rule of Obrenović and the organization's collective membership articulated a militant national programme that envisaged the 'unification of Serbdom'.¹⁹ According to Jelavich, the first article in their 'secret by-laws stated that the objective was to unify the territories of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Old Serbia and Macedonia, Croatia, Slavonia and Srem, Vojvodina, and the Dalmatian littoral'.²⁰

Despite Montenegro becoming an independent state following the Congress of Berlin in 1878, and its statehood consolidating a distinct Montenegrin identity, it did not, according to Banac, 'lessen the feeling that Montenegro was the bastion of the Serbs'.²¹ Accordingly, the intentions of the leadership in Belgrade did little to aid Nikola's efforts to cast himself as Montenegro's sole authority, let alone as leader of the pan-Serb movement. His authority in the pan-Serb sphere had been significantly undermined by his son-in-law, but his authority was also being incrementally eroded within Montenegro, primarily by the very ideas of pan-Serbism he had previously so vociferously supported.²² The factors that contributed to this diminishing were manifold. Many community or tribal leaders had become stronger economically through the influx of investment from Western states, particularly Italy, and they regarded Nikola's diktats as an impediment to their economic and political progression.²³ In addition, growing numbers of Montenegrins were returning home from working elsewhere on the European continent where they had experienced more democratic freedom. But perhaps more significantly for the future of Montenegro, many students who were born there had studied in Serbia and were now returning heavily influenced by the ideology of the Serbian national bourgeoisie (and thus for unification). To these idealistic young students Serbia, an emerging democratic European state, stood in stark contrast to the authoritarianism and parochialism of Nikola's court. Indeed, the Montenegrin monarchy's politics were far from progressive, and decisions were made by a small circle of people.²⁴ In Montenegro, a divide was emerging between 'mobilized' Montenegrins who began to look to Belgrade and Serbia, and Montenegrins who remained rooted in their villages and were still relatively removed from the processes of modernization; thus making assimilation into the wider Serbian national corpus less likely.

Such trends were not simply confined to Montenegro. Throughout central and eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century, antagonism between more democratically-inclined university students and graduates on one hand, and a closed ruling elite (who were determined to keep a hereditary grip on leading positions in state and society) on the other, were becoming increasingly commonplace.²⁵ Among Montenegrins who had experienced democratic reforms in Serbia or in Western Europe, assimilation into the wider Serbian corpus became widespread and rapid. Indeed, the rapidity of this assimilation forced Nikola to embark upon hasty democratic reforms, which led the proclamation of the new constitutional monarchy in October 1905.²⁶ The first parliamentary elections (and a period of some difficulty for Nikola) followed. Criticism of his despotism came from many circles, domestic and international, but it was the students (dubbed 'The Montenegrin University Youth' and led by Marko Daković and Jovan Djonović) who were Nikola's most fervent critics. These radical, Belgrade-educated, pro-Serb political activists

(influenced by the teachings of Serbian historian Jovan Skerlić, who was instrumental in the consolidation of Serbian national ideology) became a thorn in the side of Nikola and his supporters.²⁷ With the advent of limited democratic reforms, they developed from a student movement to a mainstream political party; their main objective was to agitate for union with Serbia. These opponents of Nikola's were mostly Montenegrins educated in Belgrade who thought that Serbia was bigger, more progressive and democratically more open. They adopted a critical stance and tone towards the court of King Nikola and argued for unification.²⁸

Colloquially termed *Klubaši* (club members), they formed a single political party called *Narodna stranka* (The People's Party).²⁹ It had two distinguishable strands – one committed to achieving its objectives through the use of the embryonic democratic system, the other through more radical, revolutionary methods.³⁰ The party would become central to the consolidation of the increasing division of political forces in Montenegro, between those in favour of maintaining Montenegrin sovereignty and those who wished for incorporation into a larger Serb state. A second party was also formed, which, as if in riposte to the Serb-dominated People's Party, was called *Prava narodna stranka* (The True People's Party). These *Pravaši* contained some pro-union elements (or certainly supporters of federalism), but wished to maintain Nikola's independent rule of Montenegro.³¹ Far from neutralizing the issue of unification and pacifying its supporters, the immediate years following the establishment of 'constitutional democracy' were characterized by more radicalization, polarization and increasingly intense internal political clashes.³² This pre-existing and significant degree of mutual animosity between the opposing groups was heightened during the 'Cetinje Bomb Affair' of 1907, an apparent attempt by the pro-Serb radicals to assassinate Prince Nikola. Convinced of Belgrade's complicity in the matter (the weapons used had been traced to a stock kept at a Serbian military store in Kragujevac in Serbia), Nikola severed relations with Serbia, and a series of trials were held to bring to account a group of conspirators whom Nikola believed were aiming to plant the seeds of insurrection. The sentences were severe but deemed necessary given that Serbian agents were involved in conspiring to damage the regime, and procure weapons for that very purpose.³³

Relations between Belgrade and Cetinje continued to worsen in the aftermath of the Cetinje bomb affair. The events had served to deplete official Montenegro's traditional perception of the Serbs as their 'brothers'. It was becoming increasingly apparent that the Montenegrin ambition to engineer primacy in the Serb world was becoming significantly weakened. As Ivo Banac notes, 'the Montenegrin spirit could no longer animate the air of conscious superiority – or at least not to the same degree.'³⁴ Aware that the Serbian government and its royal court were attempting to undermine him by

any means, Nikola became increasingly paranoid with regard to Serbian intentions. In addition to encouraging domestic opposition, Belgrade also began a smear campaign in the Serbian press with the express purpose of discrediting his legitimacy as the sole authority in Montenegro. Nikola turned to his Russian allies (who had attempted to mediate in Serbian–Montenegrin disputes following the Cetinje bomb affair).³⁵ Understanding that an increasingly powerful Serbia was gaining favour with Russia as the key power in the Balkans, Nikola wrote to the Russian diplomat Cirikov to highlight the nature of the campaign against himself and Montenegro:

*The aim of the abuse and ridicule is obvious: to blacken the good reputation of Montenegro ... to make it repulsive and unpopular in the eyes of all countries, and thus morally eradicate it from the community of civilized peoples, in anticipation of the day of its disappearance as an independent state.*³⁶

But Serbia's increasingly powerful role as the regional power in the Balkans, and Russia's recognition of this geopolitical reality, were at significant odds with the aims of the Montenegrin ruling elite. As Banac noted, the Serbian government and royal house was, 'dedicated moreover to clear expansionist aims that boded no good for Montenegro's dynastic security or even its separate identity. It could no longer be assumed that a Montenegrin was the best Serb, or even an acceptable Serb.'³⁷ Russia's rapidly changing perception of the political power map of the Balkans was more worrying. In the new reality, Russia could no longer be depended on to provide unquestioning support. Wider regional events, however, dictated that a Serbian–Montenegrin rapprochement was possible, albeit on a temporary basis. The course of regional power struggles periodically dictated that Montenegro and Serbia would become unified in common cause despite the emerging cracks in the relationship between the two states. But Nikola's harsh and relentless propaganda campaign against the *Klubaši* was also strengthening opposition to his authoritarianism, despite their pledge to cease activities against him in the face of the Austrian aggression. But while this was all well and good in theory, in practice the mutual distrust that existed between the opposing groups continued to consolidate, reaching a climax during what has become known as the Kolašin Conspiracy of 1909, an attempted coup led by a small group of young revolutionaries. From their base in Podgorica, they planned to foment an uprising that would topple Nikola's increasingly repressive government, and secure freedom for those still imprisoned over the Cetinje bomb affair.³⁸ Once again, the affair did nothing to improve Serbian–Montenegrin relations or mitigate the rising tension in Montenegro itself.

With internal relations increasingly fraught and Montenegro–Serbian relations severely damaged by Nikola's belief that Belgrade had supported the

Cetinje bomb affair and Kolašin conspiracy, wider regional events once again presented an opportunity to rebuild bridges – but again no less temporarily. Montenegro, despite internal conflicts of varying seriousness and the 1908 annexation crisis, had enjoyed a period of relative peace since its independence in 1878. It was to end in 1912 with the start of the first Balkan War. Montenegro joined an alliance with Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria against the Ottoman Turks; in the second Balkan War they joined Serbia in opposition to Bulgaria. Initially, there was cause to celebrate. Montenegro liberated much of the Sandžak, Metohija (including the towns of Djakovica and Peć) and gained the towns of Bijelo Polje, Mojkovac, Berane, and Pljevlja among others.³⁹ It also gained a common border with Serbia, a development that once again revitalized the debate over Serbian–Montenegrin unification. Montenegro, however, also lost a significant number of its troops (thought to be in the region of 3100 casualties) in a brazen attempt to occupy the town of Shköder (a successful venture until the Great Powers insisted on a Montenegrin withdrawal). After long and fruitless diplomatic initiatives by the Montenegrin government, little was achieved. An Austrian threat to intervene militarily on behalf of the Albanians forced the embittered Montenegrin army to retreat.

The loss of Shköder was a significant blow to the Montenegrin dynasty. Even during the second Balkan War (initiated by a Bulgarian attack on Serbia over the division of Macedonia), supporters of unification within Montenegro and without once again began to agitate for immediate unification with Serbia, arguing that the border between the two was unnecessary and if it was generally acknowledged that the two Serb states were indeed that, then preparations should begin for union. Montenegro's military power had been significantly eroded, and it was increasingly uncertain who in diplomatic circles it could trust. What is more, domestic opposition remained. Collectively, this state of affairs, according to Ivo Banac, 'left all the passes to Montenegro unguarded and open to Great Serbian penetration'.⁴⁰ In principle, such unification was agreeable to the majority of Montenegrins. It was, however, the manner in which unification (which took place later in 1918) was effected that was to prove problematic.

The First World War and the Royal flight into Exile

Having suffered significant losses in the two Balkan Wars, Montenegro was ill-prepared for conflict with the Austrian army. By late 1914, however, such a possibility had become a reality. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on *Vidovdan* (St Vitus's Day), 28 June 1914, sparked a crisis of immense proportions, one that would soon envelop the entire European continent. Montenegro, however, was caught in the immediate vortex. In the wake of the assassination, what became known as the 'July Crisis' unfolded. With Austria's pressure coming to bear upon Serbia in the

form of an ultimatum for war, the Montenegrin dynasty had little time to consider its options. Faced with war against one of the Great Powers, Serbia did all it could to placate the Austrians, but were shown little mercy. The Montenegrin leadership, observing the chaos, made its choice, coming to the defence of its Serbian brethren. As the Austrians declared war on Serbia, Montenegro declared its solidarity with Serbia (despite Austrian promises that Montenegro's neutrality might lead to possible territorial acquisitions like Shkoder, for example) and on 6 August King Nikola issued a decree of mobilization. The royal court in Cetinje (and the ill-equipped population) again prepared for war.

Militarily, from the outset of the war, the Serbian and Montenegrin command structure was streamlined, with Montenegrin troops being placed under the command of the Serbian army, led by Colonel Petar Pešić, and directed from headquarters in Belgrade.⁴¹ The two fought closely and effectively, despite the relative dearth of manpower and weapons. Initially, there was much to encourage the Serbs and Montenegrins – their forces were occupying parts of the Adriatic coast and making significant advances into the hinterland towards Sarajevo. But early successes belied the problems ahead. Bulgaria's entrance into the war (motivated by potential territorial gains in Macedonia, Greece and Romania) in the summer of 1915 dictated that the Serbian army now faced an onslaught from the east. With Bulgarian forces blocking the route to Salonika, the only option was a dangerous retreat through Albania (where, following the Balkan wars, the Albanians had little reason to welcome their presence).⁴²

On the Montenegrin front, the Austrian army, with its superior weaponry, began to make significant advances. By late 1915, however, the Montenegrin forces were forced to make their last stand at Mojkovac. While Serbian troops moved in a column towards the Albanian coast where allied transport awaited (to evacuate them to Corfu), the Montenegrins held their defensive line. A heavy Austrian attack on 5 January 1916 threatened to break the Montenegrins, but remarkably, during the following night, the Montenegrins struck back, forcing the Austrians to halt their penetration. With the Serbian army in flight, the Montenegrins, led by General Janko Vukotić, were increasingly pinned-down by overwhelming Austrian firepower.⁴³ The latter embarked on an offensive on 5 January, but over the course of the next three days they would find that their significant military superiority would bring them little reward.⁴⁴ Unable to preserve their defensive lines, the Montenegrin High Command began its withdrawal.

Faced with overwhelming Austrian military might, and unable to negotiate a mutually acceptable peace with the Austrians, the Montenegrins capitulated (the first time they had done so for 500 years). Panicking, the royal court in Cetinje sought a way out. Despite the unity demonstrated in the early months

of the war, tensions between Belgrade (at least the government in exile in Corfu) and Cetinje quickly emerged. Self-preservation was upmost to the Montenegrin royal family and rumours were abundant that its court might seek to sue for a separate peace with Austria. The Montenegrin king could justify such a move as an attempt to preserve the freedom of at least some Serb lands. All said, the matter worsened relations between King Nikola and the Serbian prime minister, Nikola Pašić – over a deal with the Austrians and, not least, over postwar unification.⁴⁵ Neither Cetinje nor the Serbian government was in a position to dictate terms. In Montenegro, positions hardened among the population. Among the ranks of the *Klubaši* the reputation of the Montenegrin court had sunk even further. They accused the royal dynasty of corruption and tales of outright corruption, narrow self-preservation and even collaboration spread like wildfire. The decision of Nikola's son, Danilo, to leave Montenegro (on the pretext that he was in poor health and in need of recuperation) did little to allay these doubts. According to Djilas, among this section of Montenegrin society, the royal dynasty had become completely discredited:

*The family was degenerated. And they were the shield of Montenegro, the heirs to the victories of the past! Even King Nikola had grown quite senile. Time and too long a spell of absolute government had transformed this once wise, patriotic, and benevolent ruler into a crotchety, short-sighted, capricious tyrant whom hardly anyone listened to any more. He had grown deaf.*⁴⁶

Despite conditions being ripe for change, Serbia was not in a position to undermine the Montenegrin court. Serbia was demoralized after a significant German–Austrian–Bulgarian offensive and, by late 1915, Serbian territory was occupied, its army decimated and in retreat across Albania, and its government heading into exile.⁴⁷ Montenegro's situation was not significantly better. The Montenegrin forces were now alone and faced with an army vastly superior in both numbers and weaponry. According to Mitrović:

*The Montenegrin soldier was hungry; he had insufficient ammunition; his artillery was incomparably weaker than the enemy's; and he was exhausted by fighting. He was now required to a 500 km front with barely 40,000 men. The Montenegrin King and government persistently sought troops, food, equipment and ammunition from the Allies but to no avail.*⁴⁸

Despite the overwhelming pressure, the Montenegrins fought bravely. But following a concentric attack by the Austrians in the wake of the Battle of Mojkovac, much of Old Montenegro was encircled. The situation on the Lovćen front was no better. Despite fighting bravely, the Austrians made

good progress towards the Montenegrin capital, establishing positions around Mount Lovćen, above Cetinje, having encroached into areas of Old Montenegro near the villages of Krstac and Njeguši (the birthplace of Petar I Petrović-Njegoš). Panic spread among the court that the fall of Cetinje was imminent. What remained of the Montenegrin army was dissolved as the court made preparations to flee. Austrian troops encircled Cetinje. The bulk of the royal family left Cetinje for the coast at Skadar via Rijeka Crnojevića on 9 January 1916. Nikola left soon after, having sought to allay the pervading fear of occupation among the denizens of Cetinje. Nikola pledged to return within days, a promise he would be unable to keep. After a few days at Skadar Lake, the king left for Italy. While many of his entourage fled with him, much of the Montenegrin armed force remained. Most of them, however, laid down their arms following the Austrian entry into Cetinje. While the Montenegrin army had capitulated, undefeated and without its king, numerous units remained, waging a guerrilla conflict against the Austrian occupiers until the end of the war.⁴⁹ Regardless of the passion he may still have engendered in many Montenegrins, the choice to flee sealed Nikola's fate and justified accusations by the Serbian government and supporters of unification that Nikola was interested only in saving his skin while ordinary Montenegrins suffered. From the moment of Nikola's departure to exile, the burden of the struggle passed from the Montenegrin state and dynasty to the people.⁵⁰

The burden was heavy. The subsequent Austrian occupation (brilliantly depicted in Milovan Djilas's novel *Montenegro*) represents the darkest chapter (to that point) in Montenegro's history as an independent state.⁵¹ From the outset, the Austrian army established a military administration. The administration was essentially controlled by the military general governorship, which was in turn directly subordinate to the Austro-Hungarian High Command.⁵² Conditions were harsh under occupation, and Montenegro – perhaps more than any other South Slav area – fared worst with regard to food supplies; death from starvation was not uncommon.⁵³ Concentration camps were established, thousands were interned and the remaining impoverished and undernourished people were expected to participate in public construction programmes. According to Rastoder, 'the famished and fatigued population, that was facing mass death due to shortages, diseases, and devastating epidemics, were employed on road and railroad construction all over Montenegro. People ate bark, boiled nettles, and other herbs looking for ways to survive.'⁵⁴ However, despite the obvious superiority of the occupying forces, the Montenegrins did not simply passively accept the occupation. Opposition to the brutality of Austrian rule came in the form of the *Komiti* – guerrilla units, fighting in the age-old tradition of their ancestors, sought to inflict damage on the Austrians whenever possible.⁵⁵ Operations such as attacks on enemy installations, patrols, soldiers and checkpoints brought

significant successes.⁵⁶ But these actions led to reprisals and summary executions by the Austrian forces, with more than 500 suspected *komiti* executed in Podgorica, Cetinje and Nikšić alone.⁵⁷ These casualties – soldiers and civilians – were losses the Montenegrins could ill afford. Simple survival became tougher and the villages became depopulated as villagers headed for towns in search of food. Deprived of the support of the peasantry, life became difficult for the guerrillas, who could no longer rely on the village as a source of food and weaponry. But, despite these difficult conditions, the activities continued to increase throughout the duration of the occupation.

In October 1918, after almost three years of occupation, the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed. The armed forces and administrators of the occupiers fled almost overnight. Fearing reprisals from the Montenegrins, they swiftly began their withdrawal, harassed constantly from their rearguard. Podgorica was liberated soon after, with the Montenegrins capturing an estimated 5000 Austrian troops.⁵⁸ In the ensuing chaos Montenegrin units were disarmed and formally disbanded, but the arrival of Allied troops filled the vacuum. With the end of the war and the arrival of troops from France, Britain, Italy, the United States and Serbia in October 1918, there was a modicum of optimism among King Nikola and his followers that he would be returned to Cetinje, and that the prewar state of affairs would be re-established. But the unravelling of events dictated otherwise, and foreign troops and foreign diplomacy did little to facilitate the return of the Petrović dynasty. On the contrary, unwittingly or otherwise, they allowed the Serbian authorities in Montenegro to proceed hastily with plans for unification of Serbia and Montenegro under the Karadjordjević dynasty. Among the Allies, Serbia's leadership had gained the respect of the respective governments. Symbiotically, however, they had grown increasingly suspicious of Nikola's motives, suspecting he may have conducted secret negotiations with the Austrians to save his position. Convincing them otherwise and attempting to ensure their return to Montenegro would prove an unenviable and unattainable objective.

The Assembly of Podgorica and the Christmas Uprising

The nature of the unification (or as some would argue, assimilation) of Montenegro and Serbia in 1918 remains a highly controversial source of debate.⁵⁹ As a process it (at least from a theoretical point of view) should have been less problematic than other national groups uniting in one state. The reasons are manifold: a majority (albeit slim) of the population approved of such a union, there existed few cultural differences between Serbs and Montenegrins, language was not an issue of contention, both 'nations' shared the same Eastern Orthodox religion and, to a significant extent, Serbs and Montenegrins shared common myths and symbols.⁶⁰ Yet, the manner in

which Montenegro was 'united' with or 'assimilated' into Serbia, and later the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, remains controversial because of the manner in which it was achieved. A central component of the contemporary Montenegrin nationalist argument, the Assembly of Podgorica, has been characterized as an instrument of forced assimilation. The perception that Montenegro entered into the KSCS in an irregular manner exists as part of contemporary historical and political discourse.⁶¹ Furthermore, it effectively discredited, among a section of Montenegrin society, the Serbian national idea and the perception of the Serbs as 'brothers'. These events provided the Montenegrin independence movement with its *other* and the consolidation of the Montenegrin idea – Montenegrins as a separate nation and Montenegro as a separate state – was facilitated by the methods Serbia used to ensure unification with Montenegro. The controversy surrounding what became known as the 'Assembly of Podgorica' and the wider union of Serbia and Montenegro breathed life into the Montenegrin national idea.

The belief that South Slavs represented one community of people who shared the same origins, language and cultural traditions essentially underpinned the Yugoslav idea. Within the ranks of those who propagated Yugoslavism there were differing perceptions of what kind of state Yugoslavia should be. The idea of creating a united South Slav state (Yugoslavia) began in the 1830s and can be defined in three clear stages, beginning with the Illyrian movement. The Illyrian movement took its name from the Balkan tribes that populated the region before the arrival of the Slavs in the sixth century. Its principal objectives were twofold: to stem the 'Magyarization' of Croatian identity and to unite Croatian lands (although the idea extended to all South Slavs). While this had significant appeal to Croats, it had less appeal to other South Slav people. Some 30 years later, the Croatian bishop, Strossmayer, advocated a more genuine Yugoslavism. Essentially, he revised Illyrianism by placing an emphasis on language and culture (he created the first Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1867). Again, the primary objective was the unification of Croat lands, yet the creation of a common South Slav state was of near equal importance.

Unification ideas in Serbia were different; perhaps Serbia had less need for Yugoslavia. Following the first Serbian uprising (led by Djordje Petrović-Karadjordjević in 1804) and the subsequent uprising (led by Miloš Obrenović in 1814), Serbia made significant strides towards autonomous status, formally recognized in 1830. Articulation of Serbia's vision for the future found its manifestation in Ilija Garašanin's *Načertanije*, a programme that envisioned a 'Greater Serbia' including Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia and portions of northern Albania. In the decades before its formal independence was recognized, Serbia became the genuine Piedmont of South Slav unity (drawing power away from Cetinje). By the time of its formal

recognition in 1878, it had a vision of its own – though the resurgent Serbian state weakened the concept of Yugoslavia, support for Yugoslavism nevertheless remained. Serbian social democrat Svetozar Marković promoted the idea of a Balkan confederation within which governments would enjoy significant autonomy. At the other end of the Serbian spectrum was the concept of a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia along the lines of the Serbian national and foreign policy outlined by Garašanin in his *Načertanije*. Towards the end of the First World War, Serbia made a claim to primacy in any new Yugoslav state, the justification being that it was the largest state and natural leader of the South Slav orbit. This dual approach to Yugoslavia meant that the Serbs not only became the key integrating factor but were also potentially the main disintegrating factor (although these tensions between national state and Yugoslav state were also present in Croatia).

Regardless of whether or not Yugoslavia would come to fruition, Serbian–Montenegrin unity was a matter of urgency. During the First World War the unification project of Serbia–Montenegro was characterized by a movement that wished to achieve this with the minimum of public debate. Serbia's unification with Montenegro became a matter of urgency. Otherwise, after the war, Montenegro and its dynasty would profit from Serbia's loss.⁶² Nikola Pašić made clear that 'the unification of Montenegro with Serbia must happen, whether there will be a Yugoslavia or not', while King Nikola, perhaps knowing that his dynasty was doomed, continued to argue that, 'there can be no mention of any unification. I cannot permit it. ... I say Serbdom shall not be unified, that is just an idea for hotheads.'⁶³ But with King Nikola and his court ensconced in Paris, the National Assembly elections went ahead. That the National Assembly was in Podgorica was no coincidence; quite the contrary, it was designed to shift power away from Cetinje, the heart of Old Montenegro and centre of Montenegrin identity. Instead, the assembly took place in a disused cigarette factory on the banks of the Ribnica River in Podgorica. For some time this project caused no alarm, but the arrival of the Serbian army, made up in part of Montenegrin volunteers (the majority of whom supported unification), in Montenegro in November 1918 brought a reaction of outrage.⁶⁴ Serbian soldiers were positioned close by to discourage any opposition from Montenegrins who may not agree with the outcome. Nevertheless, the 'Great National Assembly of Montenegro' ran for 11 days and at its conclusion, on 26 November, the delegates proclaimed that Montenegro would enter into union with the other Yugoslav lands. Delegates (many of whom were in favour of unconditional union and were acting upon the behest of Nikola Pašić) printed their list of candidates and their agenda on white paper, while supporters of Montenegrin independence printed theirs on green paper. The terms *Bijelaši–zelenashi* (White–Green) to define the Montenegrin divide were born. The Assembly of Podgorica declared:

- 1) *The deposition of King Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš and his dynasty.*
- 2) *The union of Montenegro with Serbia in one unified state under the Karadjordjević dynasty, and hence its entrance into the fatherland common to our people of the three names: Serb, Croat and Slovene.*
- 3) *The election of an Executive National Council composed of five Members who will have charge of affairs until the definite accomplishment of the union of Montenegro with Serbia.*
- 4) *The present Resolution of the Assembly will be brought to the cognizance of the ex-King of Montenegro, Nikola Petrović, of the Serbian Government, of the Entente Powers, and of all the neutral States.*⁶⁵

Not all Montenegrins approved of the decisions the assembly reached. Those who favoured unification with Serbia were satisfied with the outcome, but those who favoured continued independence and the continuation of the rule of the Petrović dynasty were not. The latter regarded the assembly's decisions as nothing less than an illegal proclamation, an annexation occasioned by corrupt delegates. Supporters of unification conversely argued that the Podgorica Assembly represented the will of the Montenegrins, that a long desired objective of the reunification of the two Serb states had been fulfilled. Indeed, matters appeared to have been brought to a conclusion when four days later, on 30 November, Montenegro joined Serbia to create the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Lederer notes that Serbia and Montenegro 'voluntarily relinquished their sovereignty to bring about Yugoslav union'.⁶⁶ Matters on the ground were, however less simplistic. Perceptions of Montenegro's future status divided Montenegrin society, even split families. In the north of Montenegro – the Brda – where there was significant resentment towards King Nikola's dynasty, unification was broadly welcomed, even celebrated. But in the heart of Old Montenegro – particularly the Katunski Nahia – the unification was widely perceived as a hostile assimilation.⁶⁷ Milovan Djilas, however, argues that many Montenegrins, even within Old Montenegro, were largely content with unification. It was primarily King Nikola's court and inner circle that so vehemently opposed it, not for the sake of maintaining the independent Montenegrin state and preserving Montenegrin national pride, but rather for self-serving reasons. Following the unification they sought to advance justifications and:

*to find more profound, supposedly national reasons, for justifying the retention of the Petrović dynasty and the Montenegrin state. Conceived by the camarilla, the thesis of Montenegrins as a separate nationality appeared and gained strength, after the unification with Serbia in 1918, as an expression of the dissatisfaction of the popular peasant masses with the new state of affairs.*⁶⁸

Operating in exile from Italy, the Montenegrin government sought to influence the Great Powers' decisions. This government in exile argued that the Podgorica assembly was unique in history, organized contrary to Montenegrin laws and the will of official Montenegro. An illegal act justified by the promotion of Serb–Montenegrin unity was not legal, they argued, and in their view the new parliament had no legitimacy.⁶⁹ The proclamations of the assembly (at least at this point) were not officially recognized by any of the Great Powers, but they were largely ignored, giving Serbia freedom to appropriate Montenegro.⁷⁰ Later, however, the British, French and American governments would be more explicit in their support of unification under the Karadjordjević dynasty, providing 'peacekeeping' troops to facilitate this objective. Only the Italians, with strategic interests in (and dynastic links with) Montenegro, opposed unification. Henceforth, Montenegro ceased to be an independent entity and became integrated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later to be renamed 'Yugoslavia'. Paradoxically, Montenegro became the only victorious nation at the cessation of hostilities in 1918 to lose its independence, an ally bereft of allies.

The idea of unification had not been anathema to most Montenegrins, but the manner of its implementation and perceived illegitimacy of the Podgorica assembly offended many. The rules for the 'Election of the People's Representatives to the Great People's Assembly' were finalized in Berane in northern Montenegro in late October. The time allocated for holding rallies – for either option – was limited to seven days, and in some cases (in Cetinje, for example) less.⁷¹ While even those in Old Montenegro were not opposed to a union with Serbia *per se*, they wanted the union implemented in a way befitting of the proud Montenegrin people. They wanted their dignity maintained, equality guaranteed and their identity preserved.⁷² However, as it became apparent that a status that recognized uniquely Montenegrin characteristics was unlikely to be bestowed on the Montenegrins, disillusionment with the state of affairs moved swiftly from vocal protest to armed uprising. Dissatisfied with the Podgorica assembly's decisions, the actions of the Serbian authority, the intimidating behaviour of pro-union paramilitary groups like the *Bjelaške* and the difficult socio-economic conditions, opponents of the unconditional unification of Montenegro with Serbia began preparations for an armed uprising.⁷³

The pro-union argument was simple and stark. The events had taken place in a period of foreign occupation when it had been impossible to unite the two Serb lands; now, with national liberation, it could be achieved. Serbs and Montenegrins are the same people and the same nation; by extension, they should have the same state and the same church. Furthermore, the Serbophile perception of King Nikola was that he fled to save his head and title, with little concern for ordinary Montenegrin citizens.⁷⁴ The pro-Petrović factions,

however, were less concerned about that; they worried about the theft of their identity; the Montenegrins had lost their church and state, the central components of national identity. With the Montenegrin nation relegated to a regional identity within the greater Serb orbit and bitter at the manner in which unification had been achieved, the Greens began to prepare for insurgency.⁷⁵ On Orthodox Christmas Day, January 1919, roughly coinciding, by accident or design, with the Montenegrin Vespers of Njegoš's *Mountain Wreath*, factions of pro-Petrovic Montenegrins, the *Zelenaši* (Greens) staged an armed uprising, besieging Cetinje and surrounding towns and villages. The uprising, dubbed 'the Christmas uprising', was led by Jovan Plamenac and Krsto Zrnov Popović and was initially relatively successful. Significant gains were made as the Greens began their campaign, which included targeting individuals considered guilty of crimes against Montenegro. According to Banac, the Greens, 'burned and rustled, killed leading Whites, including members of the Great National Assembly, and attacked public buildings'.⁷⁶ These early successes belied problems within the Green movement, which was plagued by internecine divisions between factions that backed full independence and those that merely wished to restore Montenegrin pride by achieving equal partnership within a federation with Serbia. As these became increasingly manifest the Green movement fragmented.⁷⁷

In February 1919, Captain R. H. Brodie, a member of the British Military Mission in Montenegro, recorded that the two groups were of unequal strength. The Whites, he argued, were gaining supremacy militarily and ideologically, while the Greens were being incrementally weakened by factionalism. In a letter to the War Office in London, he stated that, 'The latter are probably no more than 20 per cent of the population. Between these groups there is a fairly large party who are sub-divided into lukewarm supporters of the rival factions.' He added that 'since the insurrection, and contrary to what might have been expected, a number of these lukewarm supporters have become actively in favour of union with Serbia ... the result has been to strengthen the Serbian party'.⁷⁸ Conflict and worsening famine characterized the period immediately following the Christmas uprising. The Serbian authorities, desperate to stem the Green uprising, took harsh measures. According to Banac:

*The Serbian authorities armed White youth detachments and set them upon Green villages, even when no collusion with the Green outlaws, or komitas, was apparent. The Whites often did more looting and burning than pursuing. They stole livestock, destroyed beehives, burned houses, took hostages (often women and children), and sometimes executed prisoners without trial.*⁷⁹

Green factions responded by committing similar outrages, until the

situation resembled a state of war.⁸⁰ Dissatisfaction with the new political status, according to Djilas, was more widespread but poorly channelled; the majority of the population was discontented, but with no clear objectives.⁸¹ While the Greens became divided over how they should achieve their objectives, ordinary Montenegrins who opposed the new order could not articulate a clear opposition. According to Djilas, the opponents of unification were not united, but divided into two factions – supporters of King Nikola who yearned for an independent Montenegro, and those who did not oppose unification but were dissatisfied with the way it had been effected.⁸² The inability to create a unified opposition and articulate a common argument became one of the causal factors in the rapid decline of the *Zelenaši*. The course of international events also damaged their cause. During the Paris Peace Conference, which opened in January 1919, the Montenegrin issue was being ‘resolved’ in the absence of Montenegrin leaders. Montenegro was ‘the empty chair’, its exiled rulers painfully observing developments from a distance and their place filled by a Serbian delegation.

King Nikola remained in Paris, from where he began the process of attempting to influence events. Nikola and his closest ministers established a government in exile, which Jovan Plamenac would lead. The latter’s role was twofold – to form a Montenegrin government in exile and to create an armed army in exile (which could mount a military operation to retake Montenegrin territory should an appropriate opportunity arise). Based in Italy, the central aim of the government in exile was to spread anti-Serbian propaganda among the allies about Montenegro’s demands and the politics of Serbia, to maintain contact with its supporters in Montenegro, and to assess the viability of possible military action.⁸³ Throughout the duration of the Paris Conference, Plamenac was immersed in these tasks. He drafted letters to the leaders of Allied governments describing the crimes the Serbian troops (and by extension their government) were committing in Montenegro. The charges were severe: 14 ‘war crimes’ ranging from murder, rape and theft to the illegal use of the white flag.⁸⁴ In one such letter, addressed to US President Woodrow Wilson, Plamenac argued that:

*The Serbian Army has perpetrated one of the greatest crimes possible against public international law by invading Montenegro, an allied state, by installing its own authorities and proclaiming as sovereign of Montenegro its supreme commander, King Petar Karadjordjević. All this was carried out with the greatest oppression and terror.*⁸⁵

Despite Plamenac’s efforts and the growing evidence of atrocities against the civilian population, the Montenegrin government in exile was rapidly losing influence (in both Paris and Montenegro). In the former, they were not

directly represented, and in the latter their distance from domestic events meant they were poorly positioned to influence matters on the ground (regardless of how strong their support may have been). The postwar 'Montenegrin Question' was brought to a conclusion with the recognition of the new 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' at the Paris Peace Conference. With the European powers committed to unification (or annexation) between Montenegro and Serbia, the matter appeared to be at an end. Montenegro's only remaining hopes, the United States and Britain, followed soon after, severing diplomatic ties with the government in exile.⁸⁶

In the 1919 census the term 'Montenegrin' was absent. Montenegrins (and Macedonians) were defined as Serbs in the new Yugoslav census and incorporated into the Serbian national corpus. Many aspects of Montenegro's former status as an independent state were deconstructed. The new regime acquired the assets of the former ruling dynasty and foreign legations were officially closed. King Aleksandar established a decree that abolished the Montenegrin Orthodox Church (which was now incorporated into the Serbian Orthodox Church). All aspects of policy were now directed from and by Belgrade. Cetinje lapsed into decline. In Montenegro the struggle against unification continued, but resistance gradually petered out. The Green outlaws, desperate and now confined to the margins, increasingly lost the support of the people, even those who advocated the return of the Montenegrin dynasty. Their relationship with the peasantry, with which they enjoyed early support, petered out. As it did, the guerrillas became more desperate and more brutal. According to Djilas:

The guerrilla movement fell off rapidly, leaving behind bloody and foul traces, as though the guerrillas, who were dying heroically and sinking to lower depths of violence, themselves wished to besmirch what they had fought for. The causes for this decline were manifold. Suppressed by the authorities and tired of living under siege, the people forsook the guerrillas more and more. Embittered, the guerrillas in turn committed acts that separated them from the people; that one forest thickest of all in which they might have found refuge.⁸⁷

The Green cause, already damaged by the conduct of the few remaining guerrillas, was further damaged by the news from France that King Nikola I Petrović had died in exile. It was an inglorious conclusion to Montenegro's period of independence. The Montenegrin national question was 'solved' (at least for this political generation). The legacy of the Podgorica assembly, and the manner in which the Montenegrin dynasty had its power so uncereemoniously revoked, would remain and become the source of future antagonism between Serbia and Montenegro, and between Greens and Whites in Montenegro. These perceived injustices would provide the his-

torical justifications for future conflicts, most notably during the Yugoslav civil wars of 1941–45. The events of 1918 would be revived again almost a century later. Montenegrin nationalists would attempt to recast Nikola as a symbol of Montenegrin national independence in the lead up to the independence referendum in May 2006. His legacy, of course, is more complex than romantic nationalists would seek to portray. Nikola, while ruler of a sovereign and independent Montenegrin state, did much to ‘Serbianize’ Montenegro and draw Montenegro closer to the Serbian cultural orbit. As Montenegrin historian Srdja Pavlović notes, ‘King Nikola could hardly be interpreted as a representative of Montenegrin national, cultural and political identity.’⁸⁸

The Interwar Years in Montenegro

Montenegro possessed little power and had little influence in the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS). Power, concentrated in Belgrade, had shifted away from Cetinje. Cetinje, a small town of palaces and diplomatic residencies, was relegated to the status of provincial irrelevance. As Ivo Banac noted, Montenegro, by 1921:

*Numbered only slightly less than 200,000 people, living on some 3733 square miles, or 54 per square mile, the lowest population density in Yugoslavia. But this stone wilderness, whose forests, meadows, and wildlife had been ravaged to almost nothing over the centuries by hungry highland clans and their herds, could not sustain even that number. The only agriculture possible was limited to a few lowland karst fields, where a bit of maize grew alongside collards, chard and potatoes. Grapes and orchards worthy of the name could be found only in the nahije of Crmnica and Metohija, the latter having been won by Montenegro in 1912. There was no industry, few crafts, and little trade.*⁸⁹

Intense armed struggle within Montenegro, economic marginalization and the formation of new political parties characterized the early postwar period. The Greens channelled their support towards two sources – the Montenegrin Federalist Party (CFS) and the emergent Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY).⁹⁰ These two parties were natural homes for those who opposed the unification. Indeed, dissatisfaction was rife. According to Andrijašević and Rastoder, ‘political life in Montenegro between 1918 and 1941 was characterized by the formation of new political parties, severe parliamentary and non-parliamentary conflicts, numerous casualties of political confrontations, politicization of society, and rhetoric that ranged from despair to illusion.’⁹¹ The Podgorica assembly, the Christmas uprising and the loss of institutions and symbols of Montenegro’s statehood had collectively caused significant grievances. Aleksandar Karadjordjević’s decision to place the Montenegrin Church under the jurisdiction of the Serbian patriarch in Belgrade was a

further insult to Montenegrin pride. These disaffected citizens gravitated towards the CFS and KPJ. The CFS was the only political organization in Montenegro that did not have its headquarters in Belgrade.⁹² Its support base was not especially broad, but it advanced specific Montenegrin interests. However, its stance was viewed in Belgrade as 'a betrayal of the Serbian nation'.⁹³ The party's theoretician, Sekula Drljević, promoted ideas of a separate Montenegrin ethnicity (ideas that become more extreme throughout the 1930s), arguing that the Montenegrins were of Illyrian as opposed to Slavic descent and that the Serb and Montenegrin mentalities were so different as to be irreconcilable.⁹⁴

It was, however, the communist party that made inroads into Montenegrin political life. Andrijašević and Rastoder point out that Montenegrin communism was unusual in that 'the leading proponents of the communist idea ... were the intellectuals, students, and the high school youth, and only after them came the worker, peasants and other strata of society'.⁹⁵ Most importantly, the Montenegrin communists dropped their initial commitment to Yugoslav unitarianism, instead embracing Lenin's principle of self-determination. Thus, the Montenegrin communist party began its struggle for an 'independent Soviet Republic of Montenegro as part of the future Balkan Federation'.⁹⁶ Its commitment to recognizing Montenegrins as a separate nation attracted the support of many Greens and, in the 1920 elections, the CPY won 37.99 per cent of the popular vote. It was, however, outlawed in 1921 and was unable to continue its political activities through democratic channels.

Democracy was proving to be unworkable in Yugoslavia. The fundamental problem was that Serbia's leaders argued that as the nation had lost so much during the First World War, it should 'lead' the state. According to Pawlowitch, 'the [predominantly Serb government] acted as if Yugoslavia was just an extended Serbia that took in Croats and Slovenes as well'.⁹⁷ The Croats and Slovenes argued that Yugoslavia should be a confederation of sorts, with power decentralized to the republican capitals. Increasingly bitter arguments in the Yugoslav parliament between the Serbian Radicals and the Croat Peasant Party led to violence and, in June 1928, Puniša Račić, a Montenegrin delegate from Milan Stojadinović's government, shot (eventually killing) Croat Peasant Party leader, Stjepan Radić.⁹⁸ It was simply one in a series of grim incidents that led to King Aleksandar Karadjordjević's imposition of the '6 January dictatorship'. Intended to mitigate the intensifying political crisis, Aleksandar suspended the constitution, banned political parties and installed his own government. Many opposition politicians were arrested and imprisoned, serving to isolate Yugoslavia's non-Serbs further. In an attempt to create a genuine Yugoslav identity, all nationalist sentiment was crushed and 'Yugoslavism' aggressively imposed from above. In a Karadjordjević govern-

ment effort to stem the rising tide of Serb and Croat nationalism, Yugoslavia's internal borders were redrawn. Montenegro ceased to exist as a geographical term, its territory becoming instead largely incorporated into the *Zetska banovina*.⁹⁹

Political parties in Montenegro (particularly the Communist Party) were targeted and brutally repressed by Yugoslav government forces. By the mid-1930s, Yugoslavia was in turmoil. Following King Aleksander's assassination in Marseilles by a small group of *Ustaša* (a Croatian fascist organization that fled from Yugoslavia after the 6 January dictatorship to shelter in Hungary and Italy), matters improved slightly when Aleksandar's centralist policy was reversed. But Yugoslavia's gradual disintegration continued unabated. Montenegro's oppressive political climate and perceived economic neglect ensured that political instability was rife, and violent demonstrations led to a rapid deterioration in societal stability. Anti-regime demonstrations (motivated primarily by the arrests of Montenegrin communists and federalists) led to clashes in Crmnica, Belveder (near Cetinje), Podgorica, Berane and Danilovgrad. In the violence that accompanied these demonstrations, 11 people were killed and 40 injured.¹⁰⁰ The 1939 Cvetković–Maček agreement (known as the *Sporazum*), which eventually formalized the establishment of a largely independent Croatian province within Yugoslavia (a province that included Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and parts of Bosnia), marked yet another shift towards state collapse. The Montenegrin federalists supported the agreement, believing it would lead to greater independence for Montenegro, but a status such as that achieved by the Croats would fail to materialize for the Montenegrins. The political climate was fraught and divisions entrenched, but the political instability, which intensified throughout the mid to late 1930s, was merely a precursor to the brutal civil war that would be enacted on Montenegrin soil following the German and Italian invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia in April 1941. Internally, however, the battle lines had already been drawn.

The Second World War and the Forging of the Socialist Yugoslavia

With the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, Yugoslavia was in a precarious predicament. Its government, led by Dragiša Cvetković, attempted to remain neutral, hoping to maintain its distance from the fascist regimes in Italy and Germany. While the Yugoslav Prince Regent, Pavle, sought to consolidate Yugoslavia's neutral stance, the dynamics of the war dictated that, by 1940, retaining such a position had become increasingly difficult. The fundamental problem was one of geography. Yugoslavia was not only located dangerously close to the fascist powers, but was menacingly surrounded by their satellites. Despite previous efforts to placate its neighbours (such as the 'Pact of Eternal Friendship' with Bulgaria and the formation of the 'Yugoslav-Italian Friendship Society' with the Italians), Germany's determination to secure what (in the event of a failure to control Yugoslav territory and supply routes through it) would have represented their soft underbelly, rendered the Yugoslav government's position increasingly untenable.¹

With significant pressure emanating from Berlin becoming intolerable, the Yugoslav leadership buckled under the strain, submitting to German demands and eventually agreeing to sign the 'Tripartite Pact' with Germany on 25 March 1941. While the leadership acquiesced, many members of the Yugoslav military and of Yugoslav (particularly Serbian and Montenegrin) society were outraged. Many Serbs and Montenegrins saw the Germans as the old enemy from the First World War. The Yugoslav government's actions, therefore, were perceived as a sellout, and, what is more, one that was at odds with the will of the people. Two days later, in the early hours of 27 March, a small group of embittered Yugoslav Army officers (supported by British intelligence) executed a bloodless coup against the Cvetković government. They proclaimed the boy King Petar II to be Serbia's new monarch, dismissed the Council of Regency, and replaced the Cvetković government.² The citizens were solidly behind the coup and demonstrated their support on the streets of

cities throughout Yugoslavia (not only Belgrade, but also Cetinje, Podgorica, Split, Skopje, Kragujevac and others).³ The crowds on the streets chanted *bolje rat nego pakt* (better war than a pact) and their actions did not go unnoticed by the British government.

While a group of junior army officers planned and executed the coup, the spontaneous support and enthusiasm of many Yugoslav citizens made it possible. According to an SOE report from 1941, 'the [Yugoslav] people knew full well the cost of war, but were determined to suffer again that cost.'⁴ They were stretching Hitler's patience. So, threatening to 'destroy the Yugoslav state as it currently exists', Hitler ordered the German army to advance on Serbia.⁵ The subsequent invasion ('Operation Punishment') began on 6 April with a heavy aerial bombardment of Belgrade and airfields throughout the country. On the ground, Yugoslavia was attacked in a pincer movement with troops approaching simultaneously from Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Italy. The new Yugoslav government capitulated under intense pressure on 17 April. The royal government, headed by King Petar II, fled the country, eventually to establish a government in exile in London.

Following the capitulation of the army and the departure of the royal government, Yugoslavia was partitioned among Axis powers.⁶ As part of this collective Axis offensive, Montenegro was occupied by German forces from Bosnia & Herzegovina and Italian forces stationed in Albania (the 'Messina' division), although the former withdrew almost immediately. Italy's territorial ambitions on the eastern side of the Adriatic made Montenegro a natural focus of its attention.⁷ The Italians annexed the Bay of Kotor to Italy, occupied the majority of towns in the hinterland, but ceded the areas of Ulcinj, Plav, Gusinje and Rožaje to 'Greater Albania', an entity created and supported by the Italians and made up of the aforementioned areas in Montenegro, the majority of Kosovo and Metohija, parts of western Macedonia and Albania proper. Here, the Balists, the armed forces of the Albanian nationalist movement, were awarded control.

While the Italian interest in Montenegro was primarily strategic (the Bay of Kotor would serve as an Italian naval base), it would prove problematic and costly to occupy the hinterland. The occupation of Montenegro was an economic burden from the outset. Throughout the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, the Italian army frequently avoided incursions into Montenegro; the principle was simple: in rocky and barren Montenegro, a small army would be defeated and a large army would starve. It was a lesson the Italians learnt to their cost. Although they could generate limited food supplies from local sources, they had to import significant stocks of food (estimated to be between 1200 and 1500 metric tons monthly) from the motherland.⁸ It was a practical and logistical burden that would serve only to dilute even the most

basic efficacy of operations. However, these problems were simply a matter of practicality and could be overcome with good strategic and logistical planning. Convincing Montenegrins of the benefits of Italian occupation would prove much harder. To achieve this, the Italians attempted to emphasize the important dynastic links between Montenegro and Italy. After all, King Nikola I Petrović's daughter Elena was the wife of the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III.

Utilizing these dynastic 'justifications' the Italians sought support from the local population. They calculated that such sentiments would be well received in Old Montenegro, where the loss of Montenegrin statehood and the death in exile of King Nikola was bitterly lamented. Thus, the Italian strategy was to promise Montenegrins that their independence would be reinstated under the tutelage of Queen Elena.⁹ The possible re-establishment of Montenegrin independence (regardless of the far from ideal circumstances) appealed primarily to a small group of *Zelenaši* (Greens) – Montenegrin autonomists who advocated the re-establishment of an independent Montenegrin state. Upon the arrival of the Italians, they had established the 'Committee for the Liberation of Montenegro' forging friendly relations with the Italian civil commissioner in Montenegro, Count Stefano Mazzolini, and rapidly became the main local conduit for the Italians.

Despite the external appearance of unity, the autonomists were by no means a homogenous group. Two clear factions existed, one led by Krsto Popović, the other by Sekula Drljević. Politically, the two factions disagreed over the form the future Montenegrin state should take. Popović's faction was seeking the establishment of an independent Montenegro but left the possibility of joining a future Yugoslav federation open, dependent of course on the outcome of the war. The core of its support was concentrated in Old Montenegro and its affiliates included members of the Montenegrin Federalist Party and a significant number of *Gaetans* (members of the Montenegrin army who had been stationed in Italy following the civil conflict that began with the Christmas uprising in 1918).¹⁰ While initially supporting many Italian initiatives, Italy's decision to annex the Bay of Kotor and grant Montenegrin territory (including Ulcinj and Tuzi) to Albania came as a bitter disappointment. As a consequence, Krsto Popović's Greens would refuse to recognize the Italian proclamation of Montenegrin independence. Also advocating an independent Montenegro, Sekula Drljević's Montenegrin federalists had a slightly different, more obliging, approach. Drljević was no supporter of the Petrović dynasty and opposed Krsto Popović's aims and objectives. Willing to cooperate with the Italians to attain independence, Drljević's faction was keen to act as a partner to the occupying forces and join with them in defeating the communists and other domestic enemies. Drljević and his supporters rejected a reconstitution of Yugoslavia in any form.

The persuasive powers of Đrljević and his associates convinced the Italians that the establishment of an independent Montenegrin state (supported by the Italian government) would meet with little resistance.¹¹ Given that they knew their fellow Montenegrins well, it was a bad error of judgement. While it may have been well received in parts of Old Montenegro, the attempts to foster the notion of Montenegro being closely linked to Italy was received less positively elsewhere. Montenegro's complex and fractious political landscape would present the occupiers with significant difficulties. Even those Montenegrins who tacitly supported the Italians (in the hope of achieving their own political objectives) soon found reason to be dissatisfied.

Despite Italian promises, many Montenegrins knew that Italian-sponsored 'independence' would amount to no more than vassal status. Gradually, a sense of discomfort with Italian occupation grew into full-scale rebellion. The sentiment for rebellion and the personnel required to carry it out existed in Montenegro. The collapse of the Yugoslav Army (within which Montenegrins were well represented) meant that both men and munitions were available to bolster a potential uprising. To realize such an event, opposition to Italian occupation was harnessed from across Montenegro's political and ideological spectrum. Only later did ideological divisions prove counterproductive. The communist party was strong in Montenegro, but while many historians have credited the communists with starting the uprising, what became known as the '13 July uprisings' was a genuinely popular uprising – a people's uprising, motivated more by Montenegrin pride in freedom than by communist (or any other) ideology. That said, the communists played a significant part, even if many Montenegrins who participated did not share their vision.

Well before the events of 13 July, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) leadership recognized that Montenegro was fertile ground for starting armed operations against the occupying forces. The CPY Central Committee decided to send Milovan Djilas, a Montenegrin, to foment an armed struggle in Montenegro. In his memoirs of that period, Djilas noted how the party leader, Josip Broz 'Tito', while recognizing the potential for uprising, was 'afraid of Montenegrin narrowness and sectarianism'.¹² Having grown up near Berane in northern Montenegro, Djilas knew that embarking on such a mission risked reopening Montenegro's wounds, still raw from the events of the Christmas uprising of 1918 and the bitter civil war that had followed. Nevertheless, the young, ambitious and ideologically-committed communist arrived in Montenegro immediately prior to the proclamation of Italian-backed independence on 12 July 1941. According to his wartime memoirs, on arriving in Montenegro Djilas could immediately sense dissatisfaction with the Italian occupiers and their plans to create an 'independent' Montenegrin state. Even within the Greens, he noted that 'some of their more prominent adherents rejected all collaboration with the Italians and made common cause

with the Communists.’ At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Whites ‘grew passive or joined the communists as the strongest anti-occupation force.’¹³ In Djilas’s assessment, there was significant scope for a domestic uprising.

Gathering these disparate forces and channelling their collective resentment against Montenegro’s Italian occupiers and domestic collaborators, the communists sought to instigate the uprising. Momentum was building independently and, on 13 July, the day after the proclamation of the new ‘independent’ Montenegro, communists, armed villagers and a number of Yugoslav officers who opposed the Italian sponsored declaration of independence rebelled. The first of these attacks took place in Cetinje and its environs. However, what began as small-scale attacks on the occupying forces soon spread throughout Montenegro. The rebellion took on a life of its own and, just one week later, most of Montenegro (with the exception of the towns of Podgorica, Nikšić, Pljevlja and Cetinje) had been liberated.¹⁴ According to a 1941 British Special Operations Executive (SOE) report, between 13 July and 9 August the Montenegrin rebels had overrun and held Bijelo Polje, Kolašin, Berane, Andrijevica, Danilovgrad and Šavnik.¹⁵ The speed and efficiency of the uprising shocked the Italians and instilled further revolutionary fervour into the communists. But the uprising prompted the Italians to shift from their liberal approach adopted in the early days of occupation to one that was significantly firmer. They quickly dropped their plans for a Montenegrin regent and, in the last week of July, they unleashed a series of violent reprisals in Old Montenegro, where many of the ambushes against Italian soldiers took place.¹⁶ Martial law was declared, strict curfews imposed and the civilian population forced to surrender its firearms. These collective actions ensured that the uprising was quelled and, as the Italians reasserted control, unity among the rebels began to crack; internal factions began to quarrel.

A number of factions emerged from the ashes of the 13 July uprisings. By late 1941, the communists (changing their name from ‘communist guerrillas’ to ‘Partisans’) moved to the ‘second stage’ of their revolution. On Tito’s orders, Milovan Djilas was dismissed and replaced by Ivan Milutinović. The Partisans began to regain some territory lost following the Italian backlash, but a series of revenge attacks and executions marked their return. Fanatical Montenegrin communists proceeded to settle scores with perceived enemies of communism (collaborators, fifth columnists or ‘class enemies’). These actions discredited the communists in many Montenegrins’ eyes.¹⁷ Such revolutionary zeal would serve only to marginalize those who did not share their narrow ideological vision and would turn the Partisans into the main enemies, not only of the occupiers, but also of domicile troops and quisling regimes founded on a variety of ideologies.¹⁸ In the wake of the Partisan reprisals in the winter of 1941, many Montenegrin villagers turned to the

nationalist groups for some form of protection. The Partisan policy of 'leftist deviation' targeted supporters of the Chetnik movement, wealthy landowners and anyone thought likely to represent a potential fifth column. Subsequently known in postwar Titoist dogma as 'the Mistakes of the Left', these measures proved counterproductive. Burning villages, confiscating property and executing 'fifth-columnists' became commonplace.¹⁹ Such arbitrary 'justice' (characterized by events such as the slaughter at a site near Kolašin dubbed 'the Dog's Graveyard') served only to weaken the communists and bolster support for opposing nationalist groups – both Green and White.²⁰ According to a British War Office report from 1941, this expression of 'antipathy to Serb nationalism and their doctrinaire insistence on Communist dogma combined to make them odious in the eyes of the Montenegrins who glory in their Serb ancestry'.²¹ On 11 February 1942 the mood turned against them. Colonel Stanišić (one of the leaders of the 13 July uprising) proclaimed that the men of his Bjelopavlić tribe would revolt against the communists.²²

Thus, 13 July, which marked the start of the anti-fascist uprising (and the first people's uprising against occupation in Europe), had different connotations in Montenegro. There, despite the dogma of the Tito era, which lauded its 'anti-fascist' character, the uprising planted the seeds for civil war in Montenegro. Opposition to the occupation may have been solid in the summer of 1941, but the broad collective splintered into groups with radically different objectives and Montenegro's civil war within a war had begun. Domestic opposition to the communist-led Partisans came not only from the occupying forces and Montenegrin autonomists who sought an independent state of Montenegro, but also from the Serbian royalists (Chetniks) whose main objective was to reconstitute the Kingdom of Yugoslavia under a Serbian monarchy.²³ Led by former Yugoslav Army colonel, Draža Mihailović (who refused to accept the terms of the Yugoslav government's capitulation in May 1941), the movement established at Ravna Gora in Serbia quickly grew and consolidated throughout Yugoslavia. While it proliferated local rivalries often took precedence over wider objectives and it remained a disparate organization with no single clear objective. Broadly, however, the aim of the Chetnik movement was to create a *homogenous Serbia* – a concept that Chetnik ideologue Stevan Moljević crystallized.²⁴ The proposed territorial space would consist of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Macedonia, Sandžak, Vojvodina, Kosovo, Metohija and Croatia south of Karlovac, and would become the ethnically homogenous nation-state of the Serbs under the Serbian monarch.²⁵ With regard to the occupying forces, the Chetniks opted for a 'wait and see' policy. The rationale behind their strategy was simple; they would wait until overall conditions allowed them to seize power. While in preparation for such an eventuality, the Chetniks would concentrate on eliminating their domestic enemies, the Partisans.

The Chetnik movement continued to grow throughout 1941 until it was strong enough (with the help of Montenegrin autonomists and Italians) to force the Partisans out of Montenegro in 1942. In Montenegro, it tapped a deep vein of resistance to the communists. The Montenegrin Chetniks (broadly led by Major Djordje Lašić) drew their support predominantly from northern Montenegro and Montenegrin Herzegovina. Only the eastern Montenegrin Chetniks, led by Captain Pavle Djurišić²⁶ (who had fought alongside communists in Berane during the 13 July uprising) had direct contact with Draža Mihailović. Djurišić, who controlled Chetnik forces in Andrijevac, Berane, Kolašin, Bijelo Polje and Pljevlja, set about consolidating control over northern Montenegro. Following the ‘mistakes of the left’, the communists gained a bad reputation among the Orthodox people of northern Montenegro, who traditionally looked to Belgrade as their spiritual and political centre and generally defined themselves as Serbs. As Djilas noted, two key factors facilitated the Chetnik gains in northern Montenegro – the perceived brutality of the communists during the ‘red terror’ and the latter’s emphasis on Montenegrin (as opposed to Serb) nationality.²⁷

Indeed, the ‘mistakes of the left’ simply drove people who were anything but collaborators or kulaks into the hands of the Chetniks. Such developments did not go unnoticed by the occupying forces. Following the 13 July uprising, the Chetnik leadership correctly assessed that the communists were in the ascendancy, but brutal communist reprisals shifted perceptions. Aware of the burgeoning Chetnik animosity towards the communists, General A. Pirzio Biroli, the Italian military governor of Montenegro, offered a deal – the Italians would not encroach into Chetnik-held areas if the Chetniks would reciprocate. Thus began the Chetnik–Italian collaboration that would eventually lose legitimacy in the eyes of the people and the Allies. Meanwhile, the collaboration (aided by a number of Partisan military and political blunders such as the unsuccessful Partisan attempt to take the northern Montenegrin town of Pljevlja) brought the Chetniks significant successes.²⁸ Indeed, the Partisan attempt to take the town of Pljevlja in December 1941 was a fatal error. Pljevlja, a heavily fortified Italian garrison, was strategically vital to the Partisans and key to their efforts to control the Sandžak.²⁹ Estimates vary, but approximately 300 Partisans perished and 900 were injured during the attempt to take the town.

By early 1942 the Partisans were being incrementally squeezed out from Montenegro. The Chetniks were in the ascendancy, a fact clearly demonstrated by the decision by Draža Mihailović and the Chetnik High Command to move their headquarters to Gornje Lipovo, near Kolašin. Within months, the Partisans had all but fled Montenegro, leaving behind the areas they had previously liberated. Tito, concerned about Ivan Milutinović’s leadership, quickly reinstated Djilas and dispatched him back to Montenegro in 1942.

The need to retain control of at least a part of Montenegro was self-evident. As Roberts points out, 'not only was Montenegro a traditional bastion of Communist support, but its loss would rule out the prospect of the Partisans in Serbia receiving help by sea, as well as forfeiting large tracts of country best suited to guerrilla warfare.'³⁰ Despite orders from the Central Committee instructing Partisans to halt their arbitrary and unjustified killings, Djilas discovered that the Partisans' brutal campaign against perceived enemies and a series of 'hasty executions' had turned the peasantry against them, regardless of reassurances from the leadership that the mistakes of the past would not be repeated.³¹ Such promises did little to assuage the peasantry, many of whom had lost faith in the Partisans. The Chetniks, having profited from the fear of Partisan reprisals, continued to consolidate their control of Montenegro. Under the auspices of the occupying authorities, they (along with Montenegrin autonomists, police, army and militias) thereafter policed much of the country. Montenegrin auxiliary armed forces (comprising the aforementioned) numbered around 17,000.³² The Italians re-established control over Montenegro's main towns, while in the less-populated and rural north of the country, the Chetniks imposed their authority.

While they sought to assert control, the Chetniks repeated the mistakes the communists had made. Prison camps, show trials and indiscriminate killings characterized the period following the Partisan departure from Montenegro. Often a law unto themselves, regular and irregular Chetnik groups focused their energies not simply on the remaining communists, but on attacking Sandžak Muslims.³³ The horrific effects of this policy were particularly pronounced in the towns of Bijelo Polje (specifically in the villages of Donji Bihor and Korita), Pljevlja and the village of Bukovica, where many Muslims were massacred.³⁴ As a consequence, Montenegro's Muslims, who were equally suspicious of the Partisans and Chetniks, began to organize themselves into armed militias.³⁵ Unlike the Balists in the areas annexed to Albania, these militias were poorly organized and far more concerned about protecting their own areas than with ideology. Their formation was indicative of the fragmentation of resistance groups on Montenegrin territory.

The main body of the Partisan leadership, meanwhile, had established its temporary headquarters in Foča in eastern Bosnia. But it represented only a momentary respite. On 11 March 1942, a joint German-Italian operation (supported by local nationalist forces including Chetniks led by Pavle Djurišić and Bojo Stanišić, Montenegrin Greens led Krsto Popović, and Muslim militias) began with the express purpose of annihilating the Partisans. Fleeing the onslaught, Tito and the Partisan leadership headed in the direction of Montenegro, but circumstances there were also hardly favourable. Exposed, outnumbered and increasingly encircled, they settled first in the environs of Podgorica before proceeding to Nikšić, where they made only minor gains.

Calculating that an ambitious attack on Kolašin (a heavily fortified Chetnik stronghold) might bring dividends, the Partisan leaders began preparations for an ill-fated attack, one that Djilas later acknowledged had failed primarily because of doubts about its strategic benefits and low morale:

Our failure resulted largely from the doubts of our men about the wisdom of that battle. Everyone knew that the Italians and Chetniks were advancing on our flanks and to our rear – from Nikšić, Pljevlja and Foča. Even had we taken Kolašin, we would not have settled the Chetnik problem in Montenegro. In fact, the let-up in the uprising in Serbia was slowly making itself felt in Montenegro, Herzegovina and eastern Bosnia. The leadership was not yet reconciled to this fact or able to see it. The rank and file could see it because they had no strategic aims or ideological concepts.³⁶

That ambitious but ultimately unsuccessful attack of 16 May threw the Partisans into crisis. With the Italians and their collaborators bearing down on them, the only choice was retreat. Thus began ‘the long march’, which would take the Partisan leadership several hundred kilometres to western Bosnia. Capturing first the town of Livno, by November the Partisans had taken the larger western Bosnian town of Bihać, gaining support and replenishing their forces *en route*. In Bihać they created the political wing of the liberation movement, AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia). The adoption of the principle of self-determination for all Yugoslav nations struck a chord with many smaller Yugoslav nations, which had perceived the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to be overtly Serb-dominated.

By the end of 1942 the Partisans had made considerable gains. They had liberated several towns in Bosnia (including Prozor, Gornji Vakuf, Duvno, Mrkonjić Grad and Jajce), and asserted control over an area extending from the western approaches to the Neretva River to Karlovac in the north of Croatia.³⁷ This rapid expansion of Partisan-held territory added to German concerns; indeed, they had good reason to worry. Holistically, the war effort was faltering. Bugged down in Stalingrad, facing imminent defeat in North Africa, the Germans needed to ensure that the Yugoslav coast could not be used as a landing zone for an Allied invasion. It was in this context that the Germans launched *Operation Weiss* (known in Partisan terminology as ‘The Fourth Offensive’).³⁸ Put simply, the objective of the plan was to encircle the Partisans and crush further resistance to the occupation.

What happened subsequently has become part of the Partisan legend (or myth). Fleeing from advancing German and Italian forces, the Partisan column managed to cross the Neretva River (where the bridge had already been destroyed) and engage the Chetniks awaiting them on the other bank. Unprepared for the Partisan advance following the crossing of the Neretva, the Chetniks suffered a defeat from which they would never fully recover.

Chaotic leadership, poor planning, and a determined and desperate adversary combined to seal the Chetniks' fate.³⁹ The Partisans, following their breakthrough of Chetnik defences, headed back towards Montenegro.

The SOE and Operation Typical

The Allied interest in Yugoslavia was limited and played a relatively insignificant role in strategic thinking in the early days of the war (although the British took the lead role), with only occasional interest demonstrated during the Belgrade coup and 13 July uprising.⁴⁰ The complexity and fluidity of the situation on the ground made it difficult for foreign intelligence agencies to assess which armed group represented the most significant opposition to the occupying Axis forces. The British (and SOE) were almost completely in the dark about resistance within Yugoslavia. In the early years of the Yugoslav missions they recognized the Chetniks as the group most likely to oppose the Germans, yet they were relatively ignorant of the Partisan movement. It became a matter of some importance to the Allied war cause to provide assistance to the forces most effectively opposing Axis occupation. Seeking clarity, the British sent a number of missions to Montenegro. The first British mission, called 'Operation Bullseye', passed through Montenegro following the suppression of the 13 July uprising in 1941.⁴¹ Led by Captain D. T. 'Bill' Hudson, the aim of the mission was to establish the nature and status of resistance groups operating on Yugoslav territory. Their first contact after arrival in Montenegro was with the Partisans in the coastal town of Petrovac on the evening of 20 September. The British mission entered a difficult and dangerous operational context. Italian forces had reoccupied many of Montenegro's towns and cities following the events of 13 July. Nevertheless, Hudson reached the village of Radovce (17 kilometres from Podgorica) on 9 October from where he sent a telegram to London recommending that the British government offer assistance to what Hudson rather ambiguously described as 'Montenegrin National Freedom troops'.⁴²

Hudson's ambiguity reflected the opaque intelligence coming from the field. Assessing the real situation on the ground proved a significant challenge. While the British had taken the lead in establishing contact with both the Partisans and Chetniks, at this juncture they possessed little understanding of the dynamics between different Yugoslav resistance groups, rendering uniform and effective aid problematic. Thus, following their initial contact with communist fighters in Montenegro, the British mission rapidly moved on to make contact with Draža Mihailović at his headquarters in Ravna Gora, Serbia. Recognition as the sole legitimate resistance by the Yugoslav government in exile, which was based in London, led to the British government placing its support firmly behind Draža Mihailović, who favoured further communication with the communists. The British also sought to persuade the

Chetniks and Partisans to unite against the occupying forces – a strategy that (given the ferocity of the Yugoslav civil war) met with little success. At any rate, the intelligence that SOE operatives Hudson and S. W. Bailey gathered on Mihailović and the Chetniks was often conflicting and, according to Williams, ‘veered from the totally positive to the totally negative’.⁴³ Only when the British, through their intelligence networks on the ground, began to suspect that the Chetniks were not the most effective anti-Axis force in Yugoslavia did policy slowly change. Instead, the British opted to send SOE missions to the Partisans to evaluate who was the most effective resistance force on the ground. The intelligence gathered during these SOE missions would lead to a shift in policy towards the Partisans, who, while rejecting previous errors (leftist deviation), did not reject (despite shifting their ideas towards a struggle for national liberation from the occupiers) their fundamental goals of class revolution and communist control.⁴⁴

By 1943 significant shifts were becoming apparent in both internal and external dynamics. Much was determined by the growing distrust of the Chetnik movement and its leader, Draža Mihailović. By April, nine additional British missions with independent radio contact to Cairo were dispatched to join Mihailović.⁴⁵ But, once again, the information flooding back to SOE headquarters did little to dispel growing doubts over Mihailović’s commitment to the overarching Allied cause. Changing tack, the SOE decided to take the initiative elsewhere in occupied Yugoslavia, preparing the dispatch of military parties into areas outside Mihailović’s area of control, and to other Yugoslav resistance groups.⁴⁶ One such area outside Mihailović’s control was around Mount Durmitor in Montenegro, where a large group of Partisans had gathered following a remarkable escape over the Neretva River, where they had been pinned down by both German and Chetnik forces. The Partisans were fighting for their survival, but (unlike the Chetniks) they were taking German casualties – precisely what the Allied command wanted, despite the obvious ideological differences.

On 28 May 1943 the first of the SOE missions to the Partisans, a British one led by Colonel Fredrick William Deakin and Colonel Bill Stuart, arrived on Yugoslav territory with the express intention of establishing stronger relations with little-known Partisans. Similarly, the British mission would arrive at a time when the Partisan leaders were open to cooperation with the Allies. The mission, a joint SOE–MI (Special Operations Executive–Military Intelligence) initiative, was dubbed ‘Operation Typical’ – although it was anything but.⁴⁷ The mission arrived in Montenegro from Derna (a British-held North African base) to be met at a prearranged landing zone near the village of Negobudje close to Durmitor Mountain before meeting Tito in a tent near *Crno Jezero* (Black Lake). Stuart’s excellent grasp of Serbo-Croat helped ease initial tensions, and his message to Tito’s biographer, Vladimir

Dedijer, that his brother was alive and well in the United States, helped to forge the foundations for good personal relationships.⁴⁸ There was little scope for anything beyond basic pleasantries, for the situation around Durmitor was critical. The Partisans, concentrated primarily around the mountain, were almost completely encircled by German forces as part of an offensive known as *Operation Schwarz* (Operation Black), and were engaged in a life and death struggle. According to Djilas, the initial meeting was cordial, with Tito outlining clearly to the British mission the dangers of the current situation before mischievously adding that the British would have, 'the opportunity to convince yourself whether it is we or Draža Mihailović who is fighting the Germans and Italians'.⁴⁹ Such cordiality was hardly indicative of what was to come. As nightfall approached, the mission set out across Durmitor to become acquainted with the local situation. It was to be a baptism of fire for Deakin and Stuart. During the long trek, both witnessed first hand the intensity and brutality of the conflict being waged in Montenegro. In his wartime memoirs *The Embattled Mountain*, Deakin (by profession an Oxford historian) described his shock at the nature of the conflict:

*The theatre of desert war, with its touch of chivalry between regular armies, was now beyond the grasp of our imagination. ... In the space of days we had been buffeted, protected by an evaporating innocence, into an epic being fought out within a cauldron. There was no front and no quarter. We had been pulled into a closed and simple world. We had no past and the future would be counted out by minutes.*⁵⁰

That epic was the German offensive. Its objective was to destroy the Partisans and it had begun on 15 May, two weeks before the British mission arrived. The German command had assembled an impressive force of over 110,000 armed men, including German, Bulgarian and Italian units (Chetnik units did not take part because, for the most part, the Germans had disarmed them), and these forces, some trained specifically for mountainous warfare, were pitted against a Partisan force that numbered only approximately 18,000.⁵¹ The German push was relentless and, as the fighting intensified, the British mission took its first casualties. Within a fortnight of their arrival, on 9 June, Colonel Stuart was killed in a German air attack on the Partisan base. Deakin and Tito were wounded in the same attack.

The struggle for survival in a life and death situation consolidated trust between the Deakin-led mission and the Partisan leadership. Deakin, in particular, had the unusual opportunity to become well acquainted with the senior staff of the Partisans. While these experiences would give him an intimate knowledge of the Partisans' capabilities and objectives, the Partisan leadership had initially been deeply suspicious of the members of the British

mission, the more ideologically-driven seeing them as agents of British imperialism (not to mention Britain's previous support for the Partisans' Chetnik adversaries). The difficult early days of the mission – during which the British mission experienced the horrors of the battles on Durmitor – forged the foundations of mutual trust upon which later British missions could build. The results of this were tangible and British policy towards the resistance fighters in Yugoslavia began to change following the events of May–June 1943. Deakin's influence and the fact that Churchill was receiving messages (from Deakin and other SOE missions) implicating the Chetniks in collaboration with the Germans were behind the shift. Such messages continued to accumulate throughout the summer of 1943 (although a number of studies have suggested that the shift in policy was facilitated by communist sympathizers within the SOE headquarters in Cairo). Indeed, of the 20 SOE missions on the ground, the vast majority determined that it was the Partisans who were inflicting the most damage on the occupiers.⁵²

In July 1943 events in Italy changed the dynamics on the ground in Montenegro. Mussolini's fall from power led to the capitulation of Italy in September. The subsequent Italian withdrawal enabled the Partisans to seize large quantities of arms, equipment and other military supplies, which they used to bolster the growing Partisan force.⁵³ In the meantime, and with the worst of the fighting behind them, the Partisan leadership settled for a two-week period in August 1943 at Petrovo Polje before moving on to Jajce in Bosnia (from which they would establish a new 'free territory'). While there, Deakin and the Partisan liaison officer Vlatko Velebit established a close relationship. The bond between the two men (and by extension the British and the Partisans) would have a further impact on British attitudes to the Partisans, not to mention British policy towards them. However, Deakin was unaware that the Partisans too had collaborated with the Germans. In March 1943 Milovan Djilas (under the pseudonym Miloš Marković), Vlatko Velebit (under the pseudonym Vladimir Petrović) and Koca Popović (using his real name) had travelled to Zagreb to negotiate, mainly prisoner exchanges, with the Germans, a fact to which Deakin and the SOE remained oblivious.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the capitulation of Italy and subsequent Partisan gains raised hopes of an end to the war. The German forces (sent from Sandžak, Albania and Herzegovina) moved into Montenegrin territory to secure what were deemed to be key military and strategic positions (such as the Montenegrin coast). This, of course, would ensure that there could be no Allied landing on the Montenegrin coast, but due to a lack of personnel and their fixation on selected strategic sites, the Germans left significant swathes of Montenegrin territory in the hands of the Partisans. As a consequence, the Partisans had liberated approximately two-thirds of Montenegrin territory by October 1943.⁵⁵ Cetinje became the base for the 'Prinz Eugene' division, rated by the

SOE as 'the best that the enemy has in the Balkans ... formed of *Volksdeutsche* from Balkan minorities'.⁵⁶ The Germans' arrival also marked a turning point in the war. Their failure to destroy the Partisans during Operation Weiss and the subsequent Operation Schwarz, which took place in the winter of 1943 with the objective of disarming Chetnik forces in Montenegro, marked the end of the Chetnik ascendancy. Support for the Partisans increased throughout 1943, largely due to their commitment to the right to self-determination for Yugoslavia's nations. On 15 November 1943, at a congress in Kolašin, the communists proclaimed that Montenegro would be recognized as an equal federal unit within a new socialist federal Yugoslavia, a decision later ratified following the AVNOJ's assembly in Jajce in Bosnia.⁵⁷ The year 1943 was also significant in that it marked the entry of the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) into the Allied Balkan operations – which had theretofore been exclusively led by the British. What is more, the British sent their first representative to Tito, one Fitzroy Maclean.⁵⁸

The Balkan Air Force and the Dakota Landings

By 1944 the British were firmly engaged in providing logistical assistance to the Partisans. Many of these SOE missions were instrumental in helping the Partisans achieve military victories; in fact, what became known as the 'Dakota Landings' remains one of the most remarkable stories of the Second World War. The Balkan Air Force (BAF), which was formed in June 1944, facilitated the joint Allied–Partisan landings. Based in Bari in Italy, the BAF's role was to provide aerial support and allocate resources to resistance movements in Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania. Eventually, it would organize units to operate on Yugoslav soil, harassing the Germans as they retreated, but its first mission was to provide aerial and logistical support. The BAF comprised two specific branches, light bombers and special operations. Predominantly British, it also included several American, Italian, Greek and Polish units.⁵⁹ The BAF took over all the supply runs across the Adriatic, previously the responsibility of the Mediterranean Allied Air Force, and by July 1944 had flown over 2400 sorties, which included dropping supplies to the Partisans, bombing German communication routes and strategic targets (like German-held chrome and steel works) and airlifting the wounded to Bari.

By August 1944 the Partisans' second battalion was in retreat and being increasingly pinned down by German forces in the vicinity of Durmitor. With the number of dead, injured and incapacitated growing steadily (not to mention the burden imposed by bearing stretchers, estimated to incapacitate at least two, possibly four, fighting men or women), the Partisans were at risk of being overwhelmed by superior German battalions. The wounded became a burden, limiting the capacity of the Partisan fighters; their ability to defend themselves against the onslaught diminished with every casualty taken. Put

simply, the situation was critical. The Partisans could only become mobile again if the wounded were airlifted out. But while this was theoretically possible, it was in practice exceptionally ambitious and potentially hazardous.

The first problem was to find a space in which large enough craft could be accommodated. In the mountainous territory surrounding Durmitor, the chances of finding an appropriate piece of ground on which an airstrip could be constructed for that purpose was, to put it simply, slim. Arguing to their superiors at SOE headquarters in Bari that an airlift was the only option for saving the Partisan effort, two SOE officers who had been seconded from the RAF – Flight Lieutenant Thomas Mathias and Flight Lieutenant Philip Lawson – were dispatched to the Durmitor region on a reconnaissance mission to find a suitable piece of terrain upon which to construct an airfield on which Dakota aircraft could land. After several fruitless expeditions, and two days of marching, they found a spot near the village of Donja Brezna. Hardly ideal and only just large enough, the space would have to suffice. In Brezna and the surrounding villages, locals (mostly children, women and older men) were mobilized to clear the fields, destroy existing walls, fill in ditches and prepare the foundations for the airstrip.⁶⁰ In a broadcast given to the BBC in August 1944, Flight Lieutenant Philip Lawson described the scene:

The plan of making an airstrip in this particular zone where no strip had been made before was decided on as the only hope. I was sent ahead to reconnoitre for level ground. With me came a British Army Major, a Partisan engineer and some couriers. The ground wasn't exactly ideal. It was on a slight hill, with a wheat field, slit trenches and sheep folds across it. But we collected the inhabitants of five villages, and people came from miles around. They scythed down the green corn, removed fences and filled the trenches. They carried the hard white stones away in wooden buckets and on the evening of the second day of work the airfield was ready.⁶¹

With the work completed within 48 hours, the landings could begin. Guided by white parachute canopies laid out on the runway, British spitfires dropped message bags informing the beleaguered Partisans that British and American Dakotas would soon arrive to provide vital assistance to the wounded. To ensure that the objective of landing Dakotas could be achieved, it was imperative that the Partisans held their line of defence during the German assault. Failure to do so would mean that they would have to leave their wounded to an uncertain fate. Flight Lieutenant Mathias was one of the first Dakota pilots to land on the airstrip. He succinctly depicted the scene as he arrived at Donja Brezna:

The atmosphere at Lawson's airfield was the tensest I have ever known. Some of the wounded had been travelling for more than four months with little or no skilled

*attention. This, they knew, was their only chance. If the planes did not come they would be driven again to the hills, and with the Germans closing in, many would undoubtedly have been slaughtered.*⁶²

As German forces advanced, Dakotas (protected by Mustangs and Spitfires) landed in Donja Brezna. Time was of the essence. In a daring, chaotic and ambitious manoeuvre led by Wing Commander James Polson, more than 800 wounded were airlifted to Italy. Typhus was widespread among those airlifted, and many were suffering critical injuries. Releasing the burden of the injured and infirm liberated the stretcher bearers, who were now free to engage the German forces. Despite this, the Partisans were overwhelmed and forced to retreat and a few hours later the Germans occupied the village of Donja Brezna. The ambitious airlift succeeded only by a matter of minutes. It remains one of the most spectacular, yet little known, air stories of the war in Yugoslavia. The Dakota landings were the first in a series of joint SOE–Allied–Partisan actions that proved instrumental in changing the dynamics on the ground. The role of the Balkan Air Force, while celebrated in the context of the Dakota landings, has been the subject of considerable debate; while holistically effective, the Allied intervention brought some negative results. The Allied bombing of major towns and communication routes through which the German forces were retreating wrought significant damage on Nikšić, Bijelo Polje, Ulcinj, Pljevlja and Podgorica.⁶³

Following the Dakota landings and numerous other SOE operations, a Partisan offensive was launched that would force the German units from Montenegrin soil. The fighting in the summer months of 1944 was fierce. The German command in Berlin had only one objective left, to ensure that Montenegro did not fall to the communists, and in this they found a willing partner in the Chetniks. Between February and July 1944 the Chetniks carried out mass executions in the areas they still controlled, while in the northeast of Montenegro the notorious Albanian-dominated 21st SS Skenderberg division massacred more than 400 of the Orthodox population around Andrijevica.⁶⁴

The last occupying forces left Montenegro in early 1945 in a column heading northwest towards Slovenia. With the Germans was a Chetnik column led by Pavle Djurišić, who had severed relations with Draža Mihailović.⁶⁵ Ustasas later arrested and interned Djurišić in the Jasenovac, where he met his death. Remnants of the Green armed units also fled for Slovenia. Sekula Drljević was captured and killed in Judenburg in Austria. The victory of the communist-led Partisans (with significant aid from the Allies) was sealed between 1943 and 1945. The decisions reached by AVNOJ at both Jajce, and later at Kolašin, guaranteed Montenegro's status as a republic within which elements of its former sovereignty would be re-established – albeit within the framework of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The war had exacted a heavy price – physically, socially and psychologically. According to Montenegrin historian Radoje Pajović, at the end of four years of war around 14,000 Montenegrin Partisan fighters had died, as well as an equivalent number of Montenegrin Chetniks. In addition more than 21,000 private homes and public buildings, 321 school buildings, 15 industrial sites, and 80 per cent of the republic's bridges had been destroyed.⁶⁶ Rastoder estimates that the total demographic loss (taking into account natural population fluctuations) between 1941 and 1945 was in the region of 103,000.⁶⁷ Some of Montenegro's main population centres were almost completely destroyed; Podgorica was reduced to rubble. According to Milovan Djilas, 'Titograd [Podgorica] was so devastated by Allied bombings – they say there were over twenty – that it resembled an archaeological excavation ... [site]. The people of Podgorica had scattered to the villages or to the caves around the Morača river.'⁶⁸ The occupation had wrought terrible damage, not to mention widespread destruction. Yet, in the final analysis, more Yugoslavs lost their lives to fellow Yugoslavs than to the occupying Axis forces.

Montenegro in the New Yugoslavia

Given the key role of the Montenegrin Partisan brigades and the destruction of the republic's social and physical infrastructure in the fratricidal civil war in Montenegro, and in the wider Partisan struggle, Montenegrins were rewarded with recognition of a separate nation and the status of a republic within Yugoslavia.⁶⁹ Denouncing the greater Serbian hegemony, which they cited as the crucial factor in the failure of the first Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav communists endorsed a federation of six republics based on the principle of nationality under centralized party control. Montenegro would, in the new Yugoslavia, enjoy the status of a federal republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, giving it parity with Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia & Herzegovina. In territorial terms it acquired the Bay of Kotor, which had never been Montenegrin, and successfully reacquired the Montenegrin half of the Sandžak region, thereby maintaining a common border with Serbia.⁷⁰ Montenegrins were well represented in the Communist Party structure, some would say even over-represented. Both during and after the Second World War, a higher percentage of the population belonged to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia than in any other republic.⁷¹ Indeed, as Cohen points out, 'this was especially noticeable in the case of the Montenegrins, whose allotment of the leading political and military positions was several times greater than their percentage of the [Yugoslav] population.'⁷²

The Yugoslav communists' approach to the question of a separate Montenegrin identity was simply that Montenegrins are essentially Serbs but 'different Serbs from other Serbs'. Milovan Djilas advanced this argument in 1946 in an article entitled 'O Crnogorskom nacionalnom pitanju' (About the

Montenegrin National Question), in which he set out the CPY's justification for awarding Montenegro the status of republic within the SFRY. In it he advanced three arguments. First, as a small group in an economically weak territory, Montenegrins cannot survive on their own and must, to avoid poverty, be absorbed into a more substantial political unit – Serbia or (First) Yugoslavia. This approach, states Djilas, 'avoids the whole question of nationality and national rights' and is characteristic of the position of the leaders of the 'First Yugoslavia'.⁷³ Second, Montenegrins are Serbs and belong to the wider Serbian nation. They are not just an integral part of Serbdom, but the purest and best Serbs and Montenegro is the 'cradle of Serbdom'. According to this view, Montenegrins are a branch of the wider South Slav tribe of Serbs. Accepting the differences between Serbs and Montenegrins, Djilas states that, 'Montenegro and Serbia had different paths to statehood', albeit within the Serbian national corpus. Third, Montenegro needed to be given the status of a republic for political reasons, but, he added, 'God forbid [that would lead to] the recognition of a separate nation'.⁷⁴

Broadly then, there was no outright rejection of the idea that Montenegrins were Serbs, they were just 'different Serbs than other Serbs', and the recognition of a Montenegrin republic was a temporary political measure to 'pacify Montenegro'.⁷⁵ Montenegrins were encouraged to think of themselves as 'Montenegrin' in the sense of being citizens of that republic, but not to renounce their Serb roots. 'Even if benevolent', added Djilas, recognition of a separate Montenegrin nation was 'neither good nor correct'.⁷⁶ Recognition of a separate Montenegrin republic was a compromise intended to bridge the gap between Greens and Whites in Montenegro. A compromise it may have been, but the notion of a separate Montenegrin republic was contested from the outset. Containing only 2 per cent of Yugoslavia's population, many observers saw little sense in giving a republic to a 'nation' that was simply Serb by another name.⁷⁷ As Pavlowitch noted, the communist formula (as a way of bridging Montenegro's Green–White divide) was only partly successful. Nevertheless, in the 1948 census 426,000 of the republic's citizens defined themselves as Montenegrins.⁷⁸ A Montenegrin republic would, even if by default, aid the consolidation of a separate identity. However, the issue of a Montenegrin–Serb national identity was not the driving dynamic behind Montenegro's first great postwar political crisis. The Cominform crisis of 1948 would present the Yugoslavia communist leadership with its first internal and external crisis since the end of the Second World War.

The Cominform Crisis

Once the hostilities ceased, Montenegro began to reawaken from the nightmare of conflict. With many different factions operating there during the war, it was imperative that Tito's *Bratsvo i Jedinstvo* (Brotherhood and Unity) policy

was ruthlessly applied in Montenegro and throughout Yugoslavia. Numerous show trials were held to deal with 'internal enemies' (members of political parties, religious groups and other collaborators) and those liable to oppose communist rule. For those who escaped such a fate, influence in the new order was gained by demonstrating loyalty to Tito and a zealous enthusiasm for the party and communist system. In Montenegro, the Communist Party was strong. Indeed, such was the Montenegrins' zeal for the new Yugoslavia that they renamed their capital, Podgorica, Titograd in honour of Tito (each republic had a town named after him, but Titograd was the only republican capital named in his honour). Montenegro's role in the 'anti-fascist struggle' ensured that it would benefit significantly from the new system. As I mentioned above, it acquired the Bay of Kotor and reacquired the Montenegrin half of the Sandžak region.⁷⁹ Montenegrins were also disproportionately represented in the Communist Party;⁸⁰ and they were especially prevalent in the Yugoslav Army. With postwar regeneration and investment becoming tangible, Montenegro benefited more than any other republic from the socialist federal structure. It received a disproportionate amount of funds for industrial development in the 1947 five-year plan and, beyond that, continued to collect equally disproportionate funds following the establishment of the 'General Investment Fund' in 1953.⁸¹

In Montenegro, Tito seemed to enjoy great popularity. Local stories tell of him and the Montenegrin Partisan hero Milovan Djilas visiting Podgorica soon after the end of the war and being received with great enthusiasm and wild applause. Tito's entourage soon realized, however, that the crowd was directing its enthusiasm primarily towards Djilas and, allegedly seeing the displeasure on Tito's face, Djilas immediately suggested that, in the light of the crowd's adoration of the Yugoslav leader, the capital Podgorica should be renamed Titograd. It was, noted Fleming, a brilliant piece of political improvisation on Djilas's part – and indeed it would have been had it been true. Djilas refuted this version of events, claiming that there had been different views about the name changes, but that he had been against changing names of towns and cities in honour of any individual.⁸² However much the Montenegrins loved Tito, many also greatly admired the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin. Montenegro's relationship with Tito was about to be severely tested.

Problems emerged when Tito's relationship with Stalin deteriorated in 1947. Once in power the Yugoslav communists were eager to demonstrate their loyalty to Moscow by generally adhering to its directives but, as John Lampe pointed out, the Yugoslav leadership differed from that of other Eastern European states largely because 'Tito's regime assumed power in 1945 with a cadre drawn from the Partisan struggle on home ground. Soviet presence was minimal.'⁸³ This meant that the leaders in Yugoslavia were less connected with their contemporaries in Moscow, both physically and ideol-

ogically. The Yugoslav leaders, while wishing to remain in step with the Soviet Union and other 'progressive communist nations', had liberated their country largely without Russian military assistance, which was instrumental in the development of an increasingly independent Yugoslav agenda. Thus, states Lampe, 'of all the postwar Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia's was the only one capable of falling out with the Soviet Union.'⁸⁴ By 1948 the Yugoslav leadership's determination to chart an independent course led (particularly in the realm of foreign affairs) to its realization.

The arguments between Tito and Stalin were largely over the Yugoslav authorities' refusal to fall into line with Soviet demands for Yugoslav-supplied raw materials for the Soviet Union's industrial programme. Yugoslavia had begun its own heavy industrialization – an economic strategy that was at odds with the Soviet plan.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Tito's growing international stature became problematic. Soviet leaders were furious when Tito signed a customs agreement with Bulgarian leader Georgi Dimitrov in August 1947 without obtaining prior permission from the Soviet authorities. Relations deteriorated to the point of no return when, without Stalin's approval, Yugoslavia entered into negotiations (later known as the Bled agreement) that envisaged a possible 'federation' of states including Yugoslavia, Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Albania and Czechoslovakia.⁸⁶ These developments led Stalin to summon Tito and Dimitrov to Moscow for discussions. Dimitrov agreed to go, but Tito instead sent Milovan Djilas and Edward Kardelj. The discussions that took place in Moscow are vividly depicted in Djilas's book *Conversations with Stalin*. Stalin attempted to rein in the Yugoslavs by imposing his vision on them. It was to be the last meeting between Stalin and leading Yugoslav communists.⁸⁷

The Tito–Stalin split sent shockwaves throughout Yugoslavia; and overnight the Soviet Union and Stalin became enemies of the Yugoslav regime. Support for Stalin had been strong in Yugoslavia, especially in Montenegro, which had enjoyed close relations with Moscow.⁸⁸ Many had viewed Stalin as a hero and were confused by the split. Montenegro, after all, had looked to Russia as a protector and friend and this tradition continued after the Second World War when Stalin and Russia were frequently praised in the official Yugoslav communist rhetoric. However, when the Tito–Stalin split occurred, the dynamics immediately changed. Russia and Stalin, once objects of worship, had now become the enemy. This rapid and fluid state of affairs confused a bewildered public. One day they were expected to love Russia, the next they must not venture to mention it in any form other than in denunciation. Individuals were asked whether they supported Tito or Stalin without knowing the dynamics of the ideological split. People who chose to voice their support for the Soviets were immediately arrested. The fact that the Montenegrin party seemed to be hesitant to report on the actual

conditions on the ground fuelled the perception that a significant number of Montenegrin communists could not be trusted.⁸⁹

During the tumultuous period following the 1948 split, thousands of individuals were arrested and imprisoned in Montenegro.⁹⁰ The ideological split ran deep, even among families, and individuals were arrested for even showing an interest in anything Russian.⁹¹ But why was support for Stalin so strong in Montenegro? The answer has ideological roots. Although the tiny republic of Montenegro was far from the highly industrial societies that Marx refers to in *The Communist Manifesto*, support for the communist movement was strong (as it had been in the interwar years). As Banac has pointed out many Montenegrins began to recast their identity in Marxist national terms:

*Montenegro, backward and impoverished, was hardly ideal terrain for the urban ideology of Marx and Lenin. Nevertheless, this land became one of Yugoslavia's reddest areas. The hegemonic policies of interwar Belgrade governments, which abolished all vestiges of pre-1914 Montenegrin statehood and independence, dampened the people's pro-Serbian sentiments. More and more Montenegrins started to think of themselves as a separate nation.*⁹²

To compound this, there were historical reasons (peculiar to Yugoslavia's smallest republic) that dictated a high level of identification with Russia and the Soviet Union. The Montenegrins, despite their imbedded parochialism, came to regard themselves as akin to 'internationalists', not just Yugoslav communists but part of the wider international network of communist organizations. Montenegrins were proud of their historical connections to Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and the same zeal for all things Russian was still very much in vogue.⁹³ The cult of Russia ran deep in Montenegro, dating from Vladika Vasilije's first trips there in the 1750s; at the end of his second trip to Moscow Vasilije stated that 'Montenegrins recognize nobody except God and the great All-Russian ruler,' a level of identification that continued, albeit to a lesser extent, into the twentieth century.⁹⁴ Thus, when Tito's Yugoslavia was 'excommunicated' (the term is commonly used though hardly appropriate in communist terminology) from the Cominform, a number of Montenegrins who did not wish to oppose the Kremlin chose to side with the Soviets.⁹⁵ The decision was not one to be taken lightly. Individuals faced having to make a stark choice between two powerful forces – both of which had an overwhelming influence on the Montenegrin consciousness. As Banac explains:

The break with Stalin caused immense moral and psychological dilemmas among the patriarchal and Russophile Serbs and Montenegrins, especially in the war ravaged Dinaric mountain chain. In renouncing Stalin, these peasant (or ex-peasant)

*Communists would be repudiating a part of themselves, turning their backs not only on their own inspiration but also on their relatives and kinsmen who battled and died with Stalin's name on their lips. Many could not bring themselves to take this step.*⁹⁶

Although Cominformist support had no clear geographical demarcations, there was a significant amount of enthusiasm for it in Montenegro.⁹⁷ A tradition of 'pan-Slavic brotherhood' with their fellow Slavs, the Russians, and unchanging dogmatism played a part in the measure of support Stalin enjoyed in Montenegro.⁹⁸ What is more, Cominformism in Montenegro was not simply confined to a tiny number of dissenters – pro-Stalinist Montenegrins accounted for a significant minority of the Montenegrin population. Thus, despite being Yugoslavia's smallest and least densely populated republic, it is estimated that Montenegro contained proportionally the largest number of Cominformists – around four times the overall average in Yugoslavia.⁹⁹ Thus, the Communist Party of Montenegro was divided on the issue, with many high-profile members endorsing Stalin's resolution. According to Rastoder, 'out of nine PK [Communist Party of Montenegro] members, four supported Stalin, while in the realm of the Montenegrin military and diplomatic representatives, a significant number were ideologically more loyal to Stalin than to Tito.'¹⁰⁰

Tito was quick to act. The Yugoslav Secret Service (OZNA)¹⁰¹ put considerable pressure on individuals believed to be supporting Stalin and some Montenegrin leaders took drastic measures. In the northern Montenegrin town of Bijelo Polje, a group led by Ilija Bulatović known as the Bureau of Bijelo Polje County Committee rebelled and took to the hills around the town.¹⁰² They were escaping a brutal purge against those deemed disloyal, a campaign that took on grotesque forms. Those deemed to be *ibeovci* (Cominformist informers) were arrested and dispatched to camps throughout Yugoslavia, the most notorious being *Goli Otok* (Barren Island). Montenegrins were well represented among the Stalinists. Of the total number of those arrested in Montenegro, 2067 faced punishment, with regular courts administering justice in 34 cases, the military in 457 cases, and 1567 sent to camps. Out of the 18 Bijelo Polje rebels led by Ilija Bulatović, 12 were eliminated during the period of purges.¹⁰³

The events had a significant psychological impact on the Montenegrins, but after the purges the republic remained relatively quiet. There were, however, periodic problems and the Croatian Spring of the early 1970s was one such time. The 'national question', which Tito claimed to have solved in the 1960s, re-emerged. The Yugoslav communist functionary, Vladimir Bakarić, warned in 1965 that, despite claims to the contrary, the national question could soon again become Yugoslavia's 'question number one'.¹⁰⁴ Six years later the SFRY faced its most significant political crisis since its

inception, and it was the national question that was predominant. The main focus of the crisis was in Croatia where a liberal movement *Maspok* campaigned for greater liberalization of the economy and greater decentralization of power towards the republics. Montenegrins, however, did not demonstrate dissent. Many were content with the republic's position within the SFRY. Montenegro remained, as Roberts notes, 'an outpost of Titoist orthodoxy' within which Montenegrins were 'heavily represented on the Executive Committee of the Yugoslav League of communists, which in 1963 had four Montenegrins, as compared with five Serbs, five Croats but only three Slovenes and three Macedonians'.¹⁰⁵ Generally, identity issues were neutralized by the overarching ideological uniformity of Yugoslav communism, and according to Pavlović:

*Expressions of Montenegrin identity per se were viewed as the manifestation of retrograde ideology and, in spite of the rhetoric of brotherhood and unity it was generally assumed that Montenegrins and Serbs were one nation. The absence of voices arguing in favour of Montenegrin national and cultural distinctiveness on the public scene could be taken as proof of the general consensus on this issue.*¹⁰⁶

However, Montenegro's republican status aided the consolidation of a distinct Montenegrin identity. This was largely due to the economic consolidation; indeed, a significant increase in economic efficiency was recorded between 1961 and 1970.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the ambitious Bar to Belgrade railroad was completed in 1976 and Montenegro's internal infrastructure was developed. Furthermore, revenue from tourism was increasing steadily throughout the 1970s. Even the student demonstrations in Belgrade in 1968 had little impact on Montenegro (at the time).

While there were no significant manifestations of unrest in Montenegro, there was antagonism over the Njegoš mausoleum that adorned the peak of Mount Lovćen near Cetinje. Although the idea of erecting a monument was first broached in the 1950s, it took many years to materialize.¹⁰⁸ The building of a new monument would be highly controversial because it would mean the destruction of the existing chapel, a rebuild of the original chapel destroyed by the Austro-Hungarian forces in 1916, and rebuilt by King Aleksander Karadjordjević in 1925. It was unclear exactly why the Montenegrin authorities wished to destroy the chapel, essentially commissioned and built by Njegoš, and the issue, according to Wachtel, was to become a minor *cause célèbre*.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, it would reopen divisions between supporters of the idea that Montenegrins were a separate nation and those who viewed them as Serbs. According to Fleming, this move was no more than an 'anti-Serb' attack, on both ordinary Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church: 'Anti-Serb separatists thought they had scored a major victory when the chapel was

razed to the ground (illegally, since the chapel had always been church property) and replaced in 1974 with an ugly neo-pagan edifice filled with Masonic symbolism.¹¹⁰ The issue then, though divisive, was largely kept out of the public realm. The ongoing conflict over the mausoleum ('resolved' in 1974 with the completion of the Ivan Mestrovic building) demonstrated that tensions between the two blocs remained and that these were manifested in the cultural orbit. Montenegrins who regarded themselves as Serbs complained that Njegoš's literature had been recast by Montenegrin cultural and historical revisionists. According to Vlahović, Montenegrin publishers 'simply erased his verses in which Serbs were mentioned'.¹¹¹ This was represented as a broader campaign by Montenegrin Serbs to assert Montenegro's Serbian identity. According to Pavlović, 'Serbian nationalist forces gained prominence for a short period of time by publicly denouncing communist ideology and advocating the ideas of the Chetnik movement'.¹¹²

Beyond the borders of the Montenegrin republic, events throughout Yugoslavia suggested that the centralized state was facing a challenge from individuals and groups who sought greater levels of decentralization. As Rastoder points out, events in the late 1960s and early 1970s such as the 'Road Affair' in Slovenia, the Croatian Spring and the emergence of the 'Serb Liberals' were but foretastes of the phenomena generated by the contradictions within the decentralized state above which the centralized party stood as its personification. But the constitutional amendments of 1974, which gave Yugoslavia's republics greater autonomy, dampened nationalist sentiment, particularly manifest during the Croatian Spring of 1971.

This became particularly prominent after the adoption of the 1974 constitution when Yugoslav statism was transposed to the republics and provinces and the party was 'federalized' or turned into an ideological basis for various particularisms.¹¹³ Thus, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia went from being a unified structure (which was the key integrating factor) to a coalition of republican parties.¹¹⁴ With the constitutional revision of 1974, Yugoslavia became increasingly decentralized with more and more power concentrated at the republican level. Tito was made 'President for life' but the society continued to evolve despite him. As a result of the constitutional changes, Montenegro acquired a stronger political and cultural infrastructure. These factors, Allcock argues, were crucial in consolidating a greater sense of a distinct (and increasingly independent) Montenegrin entity. 'At a less elevated but pragmatically equally important level, the structure of government and Party organization created and sponsored the advancement of a stratum of officials who owed their position to the existence of a republic called Montenegro – and to their ability to identify themselves as Crnogorci (Montenegrins)'.¹¹⁵

Not only were political interests, by definition, narrower (primarily at the republican level), but Montenegro also began to build upon particularisms. The University of Montenegro was established in 1974, followed by the creation of the Montenegrin Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1976, and a solely Montenegrin media. As Ramet points out, 'the institutional prerequisites for the development of an articulate Montenegrin culture and identity were long in coming', but they were, by the mid-1970s, nonetheless established.¹¹⁶ The republic remained the smallest and least developed republic in the SFRY, although it did benefit considerably from federal funds (one of the sources of dissatisfaction within the federation). The cyclical struggle over the redistribution of these federal funds dictated that the Montenegrins had to articulate and defend a specific Montenegrin interest, which by extension reinforced a specific Montenegrin identity.¹¹⁷ Beloff argues that these interests helped to strengthen the feeling of Montenegrin national separateness: 'The sense of [Montenegrin] separateness was consolidated by the vested interests of the local political and administrative apparatus, which soon became Montenegro's only growth industry.'¹¹⁸

By 1979 Montenegro was again the beneficiary of significant levels of federal funding following the earthquakes that destroyed the ancient towns of Budva and Kotor. The republic was still recovering from the damage wrought during the 1979 earthquake when Josip Broz Tito died in May 1980. Throughout Yugoslavia citizens mourned the death of the man who had delivered 35 years of peace and stability. Thus, by the early 1980s both the long period of Tito's rule and the relative economic stability in both Yugoslavia and Montenegro was as good as over. Being one of the poorest of Yugoslavia's republics, the economy was always a key issue in Montenegro and any adverse economic circumstances affecting the SFRY were likely to have a significant impact on tiny Montenegro. Although a US-led consortium known as 'The Friends of Yugoslavia' assisted in the creation of a debt restructuring programme to ease immediate problems, by the mid-1980s the economic crisis had begun to bite.¹¹⁹ The detrimental effects would be manifested in political destabilization and social dislocation in Montenegro.

Yugoslav Disintegration and the 'Montenegrin Renaissance'

Josip Broz Tito (the 'big heart of Yugoslavia') died on 4 May 1980. While the vast majority of Yugoslavs lamented his death, he left behind a dubious legacy. While the constitutional changes had ensured peace throughout his twilight years, they would create insurmountable problems in the years following his death. Tito had not groomed a natural successor. The only obvious successor had been the Slovene theoretician, Edvard Kardelj. His political orientation was almost identical to Tito's, but his long, complex and practically incomprehensible speeches on Communist Party dialectics made him appear colourless by comparison. But he died a year before Tito did in February 1979, leaving no obvious successor. Tito gambled that the party – not one individual – would maintain the momentum in his wake.¹ The challenges the party faced from nationalist dissenters in the 1960s and 1970s continued, but were met with significant verve. Nationalist dissent was crushed in all the Yugoslav republics, but particularly in those of a mixed ethnic composition. A group of communists was arrested in Montenegro in 1974, for example, on the charge of attempting to establish a rival Communist Party with stronger links to Moscow.² The repressive measures taken against dissenters concerned foreign diplomats who wondered what the future held for post-Tito Yugoslavia. One year before his death, the 1979 oil crisis heralded the decline of the state Tito had helped create. In 1975, five years before Tito's death, the Belgrade correspondent on the *New York Times*, Malcolm W. Browne, predicted that harder times were ahead. While the lid was kept upon nationalist dissent, significant economic problems would soon be the source of social unrest:

*What does concern Yugoslavs is a 32 per cent inflation rate, rising unemployment, and the prospect of much worse to come. As conditions worsen in Western Europe, some half a million Yugoslav migrant workers normally employed in the West are returning home along with their wives and children. Their return means more mouths to feed and hands to employ. ... Some already contend that the party and government are not doing enough to insulate the public from economic hardship.*³

Tito's death in 1980 preceded the onset of a serious economic crisis. The broader economic downturn throughout Yugoslavia would be felt hardest in the poorer republics. Montenegro, as the smallest and one of the poorest, had benefited at both the republic and federal level from the Yugoslav federal structure and from the federal subsidies programme. Being home to less than 5 per cent of the population of Yugoslavia and producing a mere 2 per cent of the state's gross domestic product, the republic enjoyed an influence disproportionate with its size and economic clout. While contributing little of economic significance, Montenegro carried one-eighth of the political muscle of the Yugoslav federation.⁴ Given that Montenegrins played a central role in the war of 'national liberation' and that Montenegro was the location for the 13 July uprisings in 1941, it was perhaps fitting that it should be over-represented at the highest levels of the Yugoslav federal government, as well as in the military and administrative structures.⁵ While Serbs and Montenegrins were traditionally over-represented in the military, by the mid-1980s they made up more than half the total membership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (even though they constituted less than 40 per cent of the total Yugoslav population).⁶ This systemic peculiarity ensured that Montenegro's small population benefited from excellent employment opportunities (particularly within the state), and the republic from significant federal subsidies (through which economic consolidation and infrastructural development were facilitated). Montenegrins benefited from being part of Yugoslavia. They played a significant role in establishing the SFRY, felt that it was their state, and – on the whole – favoured being part of it.

The system the Montenegrins helped to construct was increasingly being perceived as rotten, particularly by Croats and Slovenes. Put simply, Yugoslav socialism was collapsing because it could no longer meet the population's existing and growing economic demands. The rapidly accelerating downward trend ensured that the ruling communists lost their legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens. Federal subsidies (with a veneer of progress and development) belied the real economic problems that were a direct legacy of doctrinaire and chaotic socialist economic planning. The preconditions for economic collapse were in place when the development funds, many of which were used to cover losses, simply dried up. By the time of Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia was already in the midst of a serious economic crisis, with the economy labouring under a growing trade deficit, a significant balance of payments deficit, and a burgeoning foreign debt (which had reached almost \$15 billion by early 1980).⁷ Three years later, after years of relying heavily on foreign aid, Yugoslavia's economic problems become glaringly apparent. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), fearing economic collapse, finally demanded a reckoning in an attempt to consolidate the country's spiralling debt.⁸ Montenegro, as one of Yugoslavia's poorest republics, felt the pinch sooner

than most, falling deeply into economic crisis which – by 1987 – had forced the communist leadership to declare the republic bankrupt.

Yugoslavia's economic stagnation throughout the 1980s undermined the legitimacy of the Yugoslav communists and the Titoist system. In a climate of grim economic forecasts and political failure to address increasingly difficult economic (and by extension social) problems, popular discontent soon spread, particularly in the form of low-level protest and small-scale industrial strikes. Following a decision by the Montenegrin communist leadership to close down 'unviable' enterprises (in the hope of redeeming the more profitable sectors) the uncertainty quickly turned to instability. This development increased the sense of urgency and was the first step towards the evolution from low level protest to a popular anti-regime movement.⁹

The seeds of Montenegro's economic problems lay in doctrinal socialist economic planning that decreed that industrial centres should be established in underdeveloped areas. Admirable in theory but unviable in practice, enterprises were often located in areas with almost nothing (except labour) to facilitate successful business practice or generate sustainable operational profits. Worse still, the most unsustainable and least profitable enterprises happened to be the republic's largest employers. The Boris Kidrić iron works in Montenegro's second largest city, Nikšić, was a case in point. With a complete absence of raw materials in Nikšić, these had to be imported from elsewhere and the transportation costs borne before any processing could even begin. This dubious (and ultimately unsustainable) economic experiment rendered the plant a perpetual drain on Montenegro's tiny economy. While operational anomalies lay at the heart of the failing Boris Kidrić enterprise, external problems were eroding the operational capacities and profitability of other large Montenegrin enterprises. The Radoje Dakić construction machinery plant in Titograd, for example, had previously been a competitive and profitable business, but by the mid-1980s was also falling on hard times. By then, the construction industry was depressed, not simply in Montenegro but throughout Yugoslavia. Large contracts secured by the Radoje Dakić plant in the 1970s were not being renewed – this was primarily driven by external factors. For example, one of the plant's main sources of business had been the Iraqi government, which in the mid-1970s had placed huge contracts with the Montenegrin firm. But when the Iraqis became bogged down in the war with Iran, Saddam Hussein's government defaulted on their payments. In time it would become clear that they simply could not honour their debt to the company. It was estimated that the postponement of payments led to a \$13 million deficit for Radoje Dakić, a loss it could not absorb.¹⁰

This increasingly grim economic climate called for the ruling authorities to adopt drastic economic measures. To bring stabilization (although it proved to do everything but), the Montenegrin authorities elected to close what they

regarded as unviable enterprises while simultaneously concentrating what little resources they had on supporting so-called 'viable' businesses. This bold attempt to revitalize the economy did little to halt the downward spiral and was even less effective in assuaging the resentment of the disgruntled workers from the larger enterprises who had been made redundant. Thousands found themselves unemployed and thrown into difficult financial and personal circumstances. The growing sense of disenfranchisement and anger led to a worsening social crisis. In early 1988, the League of Communists of Montenegro (LCM) acknowledged that the social and economic situation in the republic was bleak and issued unambiguous warnings to the public to prepare for what was bluntly described as 'harder times'.¹¹ Hard times were indeed ahead. By mid-1988, it was estimated that Montenegro's share of the overall Yugoslav debt of 17 million dollars stood at one million dollars – more than the tiny republic's gross annual revenue.¹² By then more than 20 per cent of Montenegrins were living below the poverty line and were in receipt of social welfare benefits, a commitment the authorities could barely meet. A toxic blend of harsh social conditions, unemployment and increasing poverty grew into distinct disdain for the republican government. Montenegrin President Veselin Djuranović acknowledged that 'the people are becoming impatient with the long, drawn-out economic crisis'.¹³ Unprepared for and unaccustomed to economic instability after years of generous subsidies, the ruling elite tried – but failed – to minimize the impact of such dramatic changes in personal economic situations. Such failures would inevitably lead to a sense of social dislocation among the Montenegrin public.¹⁴ By mid-1988, social peace had, in effect, ended. Change was inevitable, but what form that change would take remained unclear.

Montenegro's situation cannot be viewed in isolation. The Yugoslavia federation was creaking under the strain of the economic crisis, which affected every republic. Dissatisfaction with the federal system's inelasticity soon led to a rise in nationalist sentiment throughout the republics. Nowhere was this truer than in Serbia. Having risen to power in Serbia following an internal party coup within the Serbian League of Communists in 1987, Slobodan Milošević would seek to impose his vision of the future Yugoslav state upon other republics. Using the issue of the oppression of Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo as his pretext, Milošević sought to reconcentrate power in Belgrade. His efforts to centralize the state would eventually lead to the collapse of the Yugoslav federation, but Milošević's first target was Kosovo. The Kosovo issue had become increasingly explosive among Serbs throughout Yugoslavia, particularly within Serb nationalist intellectual circles. In the years prior to Milošević's now notorious trip to Kosovo (when he told Serb demonstrators that 'nobody should dare to beat you'), Kosovo had re-emerged as the most potentially

explosive political issue since Tito's death. Demonstrations by Albanian students in 1981 (originally motivated by living standards at Prishtina University) quickly degenerated into rioting. The demonstrations took on a more nationalist character, with Albanian nationalists (allegedly) shouting slogans such as 'Kosovo – Republic!'

The riots led to a harsh police crackdown and numerous deaths, which shook Yugoslavia. In the years following the 1981 riots, Serbian nationalist sentiment increased, particularly among intellectuals in Belgrade. The Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) had begun, as early as 1969, to collect information about the exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo, yet it was not until the mid-1980s that the 'culture war' was fully underway, with the publication of nationalist-oriented novels such as Dimitrije Bogdanović's *Knjige o Kosovu* (Book about Kosovo).¹⁵ The underlying theme of this and other novels published in the same period was uniform – Albanians were trying to make Kosovo an ethnically pure territory. Such sentiments were not simply restricted to the semi-obscure genre of Serbian nationalist literature. In May 1985, a case involving Djordje Martinović, a Serb farmer from Kosovo, caught the public imagination and brought the Kosovo issue into the mainstream. Martinović had arrived at his local hospital with a broken bottle inserted into his anus following a degrading sexual assault. For this, he blamed two masked Albanians (they had done so, apparently, because they wanted ultimately to force him from his land). While Albanian leaders in Kosovo rejected Martinović's story as ludicrous (they suggested that Martinović, a closet homosexual, had inflicted the injury on himself while seeking some form of self-gratification). The Serbian media, however, pounced on the story as a clear example of a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing by Kosovo Albanians. The story was covered widely by the Belgrade weekly *NIN*. According to Malcolm:

*[T]he Belgrade press continued its campaign, and enough publicity was generated to ensure that the case was debated twice in the Yugoslav federal assembly in July 1985 and again in February 1986. Later in 1986 the NIN journalist who had led the campaign on the issue published a 485-page book entitled *Slučaj Martinović* ('the Martinović Case'). The fact that the print-run of this book was 50,000 copies gives some idea of the fever-pitch Serbian public opinion had now reached.¹⁶*

Throughout 1985–86, the issue of Kosovo continued to feature in the Serbian media. In Kosovo, Serbs and Montenegrins led by Kosta Bulatović (a Montenegrin) began to organize. Bulatović had run into trouble with the Yugoslav authorities in mid-1985 when he organized a petition to draw the government's attention to the plight of Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins.¹⁷ His arrest, intended to stem the rising tide of nationalism, only made matters

worse and Bulatović became a *cause célèbre* in Serb nationalist circles. A year later, in 1986, the Kosovo issue moved into the mainstream. Extracts from an unpublished manuscript from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) would be published in the Serbian press. Dubbed the *Memorandum*, its core argument was that Serbia (and by extension Serbs) had been a victim of Tito's federal Yugoslavia, a subject that was taboo during the Tito era. More specifically, an unsubstantiated number of Serbian academics sought to highlight what they claimed was the unjust and endangered position of Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo (described as the spiritual home of the Serbs) since the end of the Second World War. Furthermore, they claimed that the 1974 Yugoslav constitution, which gave greater autonomy to the republics (including revoking Serbian administration of Montenegro), and to the two autonomous regions within Serbia (Kosovo and Vojvodina), was a communist plot to weaken the Serb nation. Strictly taboo ten years earlier, such a polemic represented not only an attack on communist policy in Kosovo but a damning indictment of communist policy towards the Serb nation holistically. When excerpts from the memorandum were published on 24 September 1986 in the Serbian daily *Večernje Novosti* (Evening News), the shock among moderate Yugoslavs was palpable.

Much of the political character was drawn from the ponderings of nationalist intellectuals in SANU, but the raw data on migration came from a study conducted in 1985–86 by SANU entitled 'The Migration of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo and Metohija'. It emphasized the plight of Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo, specifically highlighting the unpleasant interethnic disputes between Serbs and Montenegrins on one side and Albanians on the other. However, both the memorandum and the study of migratory patterns made the case that Serbs and Montenegrins were victims of an Albanian policy of forced migration. These powerful messages found an increasingly receptive audience among disenfranchised Montenegrins. Yet the figures tell a slightly different story. Since 1948 Montenegrins had never represented more than 4 per cent of the province's population – as high as 3.9 per cent in 1948, for example, dropping as low as 1.7 per cent in 1981, a significant decrease, but one that is dictated by myriad factors.¹⁸ Those Montenegrins primarily settled in the region of Peć, for example, left not because of a system of forced migration (although one should not completely discount that) but rather through lack of economic opportunities. As Lampe points out, 'the interethnic murder and rape so often stressed in the Serbian media remained minimal, below the country's average in official figures.'¹⁹

Yet the question of Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo, regardless of the facts, was used as a mobilizing issue. Milošević's use of the Kosovo Serbs masked a wider agenda. The real objective was to overturn the 1974 constitution, which, it was argued, was detrimental to the Serbian national

interest. Seeking to eradicate the slightly chaotic and unworkable system of 'collective presidency' left behind by Tito, Milošević's strategy was to attempt to control the votes of four of Yugoslavia's eight federal presidency votes.²⁰ To facilitate this, he required a change of leadership in Kosovo and Vojvodina, and a pliable leadership in Titograd (Podgorica). The three-pronged assault began with the overthrow of the communist authorities in the autonomous province of Vojvodina. Here, the province's authorities were forced out by mass demonstrations and intimidation from Belgrade. The protests began in July 1988 when a group of 500 Serbs and Montenegrins arrived in Novi Sad, the capital of Vojvodina, to make citizens aware of their plight in Serbia's southern province. Demonstrations in towns and cities throughout Vojvodina in the late summer of 1988 eventually led to the overthrow of the province's leadership. It was a demonstration of how the volatile cocktail of street politics and committee-room caballing could be used to great effect. Thus, the so-called 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' (which took place on the eve of the fall of the Berlin Wall) was not the first instance of political pluralism in central and eastern Europe, but rather the first glimpse of life under Milošević. After Vojvodina, Montenegro would be the next target.²¹

The Anti-bureaucratic Revolution and the fall of the Montenegrin Communists

The wider process of mobilization of the Serbs in Yugoslavia had a significant impact on the direction of internal Montenegrin politics. Tensions, buried for decades, re-emerged. Montenegro's status as a republic within the SFRY had essentially cooled tensions between Montenegro's two political poles – the pro-unionist *Bjelaši* (the Whites) and pro-independence *Zelenaši* (the Greens), and many in Montenegro were broadly committed to the concept of Yugoslavism. Not only had Tito's Yugoslavia been a political system that had awarded Montenegro equal status with other South Slav republics, the tiny republic had, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, benefited from the SFRY structure. According to Rastoder:

Throughout the postwar period, the Montenegrin communist leadership was less nationally-oriented than any other (our nationality is communist – internationalist), being the last to found a national party (1948); they were the most ardent protagonists of the class struggle (class above nation); they lagged behind others in the setting up of national institutions. They represented an ideal surrogate of the Yugoslav nationality recognized in their equidistance from the 'Montenegrin' and the 'Serb' nationalities, or for their imperative search for symmetry in the emergence of nationalisms.²²

The ruling communist authorities in Montenegro traditionally sought to

chart a course between the Green–White divide, a strategy Montenegrin poet and writer Jevrem Brković described as ‘an undefined dual politics without a national programme’.²³ However, by the late 1980s continuing to maintain a perfect symmetry would prove problematic. The resurgence of the Serbian national question throughout Yugoslavia would dictate that Montenegrins would again be mired in internal struggles over national identity. Ramet notes that during this period, ‘Serbs revived the long latent and previously taboo claim that Montenegrins were actually Serbs, and many Montenegrins responded warmly (though such a claim had been taboo as long as Tito was in power)’.²⁴ Indeed, by 1988, the issue of Montenegrin identity was resurgent. The notion that Montenegrins were Serbs once again became *de rigueur* in Serbian intellectual circles. Articles emanating from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences advanced the argument that the Montenegrins were a branch of the wider Serbian nation. The ‘Montenegrin nation’ it was argued had emerged simply because the Yugoslav communists wished to ‘tear Montenegro from its Serbian roots’. Vujadin Rudić, in his article ‘The Ethnic Structure of the Population of Montenegro’ argued that:

*Various methods were used in order to divide the Serbs: economic, cultural, linguistic, territorial, and, in particular, religious, ideological and chauvinistic. That is how the separate peoples such as Montenegrins, Muslims, Macedonians and Yugoslavs emerged from the Serbian ethnic entity. ... It should be noted that there are differences between the Serbs in Montenegro and those in Serbia, but they are insufficient to determine them as separate peoples. The Montenegrins are the mainstay of the Serbian ethnic being and Montenegro as a state has been its guardian throughout the centuries.*²⁵

In the mid to late 1980s, this argument was a rhetorical cornerstone of Serbian cultural and intellectual elites with regard to Montenegro. Indeed, throughout that period, Serbian cultural events to ‘raise (Serb) ethnic and cultural awareness’ were held throughout Montenegro. Simultaneously, the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro began to enhance its public (not to mention political) profile.²⁶ Among the controversial issues that Serbian nationalist intellectuals and church leaders raised, was that of the Serbian ethnic identity of Montenegrins and the importance of Montenegro to the Serb ethnic and cultural corpus (Montenegro as the *Serbian Sparta*). This soon transmitted beyond the sphere of the cultural and ecclesiastical.

It was indicative of the struggles to come. Indeed, by early 1988, conditions were ripe for Slobodan Milošević and his supporters in Montenegro to seize power from the ruling communists. Montenegro’s demoralized leadership, already facing significant problems, was ill-equipped to deal with the rising nationalist sentiment emanating from Belgrade and looked increasingly

vulnerable to the Milošević-backed travelling band of nationalist agitators.²⁷ The Kosovo Serbs channelled popular discontent towards overthrowing the republic's ruling communist elite, but while the early protests were predominantly economic in character, subsequent protests very quickly assumed a nationalist character, creating a revolutionary climate.²⁸ Yet the protestors did not form a monolithic group; they were large group that encompassed all social strata.²⁹ The demonstrations, ostensibly organized by Kosovo Serbs, had their patron in Belgrade. Bolstered by their successful overthrow of the communist leadership in Vojvodina, the Kosovo Serbs focused their energies on doing likewise in Montenegro. Kosta Bulatović, Miroslav Soljević and their followers viewed Yugoslavia's smallest republic as the 'Serbian Sparta' – an integral part of Serbian territory. They began by organizing 'meetings of truth' in Titograd on 20 August, followed by further meetings in Nikšić, Andrijevica, Cetinje and Kolašin. Slogans at these meetings were in keeping with those displayed during the protests in Vojvodina – from 'Death to the enemies of Yugoslavia' to 'Montenegro – Serbian Sparta' and so forth. Banners like 'Leadership of Montenegro, the people have declared themselves, and you?' were a portent of the events that followed.³⁰

Seeking to harness the popular discontent, the Kosovo Serbs took their 'meetings' onto the streets. On 7 October, they began to descend on the capital, Titograd. There, workers from Radoje Dakić and other failed or failing enterprises were joined by supporters of the Kosovo Serbs (despite warnings in the Radoje Dakić newspaper *Informator* that the protests represented 'an energetic denial of the Montenegrin nation' and should be boycotted).³¹ An estimated 7000 employees of the Boris Kidrić steel plant in Nikšić had been due to arrive in the capital, significantly bolstering the number of protestors. Fearing the security implications of such a large gathering in the capital, the authorities ordered the blockade of the protestors coming from Nikšić. The Montenegrin police, using batons and tear gas, violently dispersed the protestors at Žuta Greda on the road between Nikšić and Titograd causing numerous injuries.³² As news of the incident at Žuta Greda reached the protestors gathered outside the parliament in Titograd, the atmosphere darkened. Appealing for calm, the Montenegrin communist leaders attempted to pacify the crowd, but they were no longer appealing to a mass motivated simply by the economic crisis. The character of the protests had evolved into something akin to a nationalist rebellion with symbols of Serb nationalism being utilized to mobilize support. As Žanić points out, the protests were 'transformed smoothly – and for the ordinary participants quite imperceptibly – into an ethnic and nationalist revolution, when the demand for social justice, that is correction of injustice inflicted on the proletariat, whichever people they belonged to, gave way to the demand for ethnic justice'.³³ Rhetoric, symbolism and chants were demonstrative of this change. The representation of Slobodan

Milošević as a latter-day saviour of Serbs proliferated. As Magaš points out, this transformation could be clearly seen by the gradual emergence of demagogic slogans and banners emblazoned with messages in support of Milošević:

There were slogans such as: 'We want to work and earn our living!' 'We demand bread!'; 'We have had enough of waiting!'; 'Long live the LCY League of Communists, Yugoslavia. By the evening, however, nationalist slogans became more frequent, which included: 'Long live the Serbian leadership!'; 'You have betrayed Slobodan Milošević – you have betrayed Serbdom!'; 'Who says Serbia is small' 'Slobodan, we are your soldiers – we shall kill or we shall die!'; and 'Slobodan, you Serb son, when will you come to Cetinje?!'³⁴

When the Montenegrin authorities again attempted to address the crowds, they were jeered and booed by a crowd demanding their resignation.³⁵ The theme of the jeering that accompanied their appeals implied that it was not simply their incompetence in economic affairs that was being held to account, but their 'anti-Serb' policy.³⁶ The nationalistic character and militancy of the crowd instilled panic in the republican leadership. The following morning, fearing that protestors would storm the parliament building, the authorities instructed police to disperse the crowd outside parliament. Let loose on the demonstrators, police used batons and tear gas to disperse the crowd.³⁷ A storming of the parliament had been averted, but the actions of the police and Montenegrin authorities were to prove counterproductive.³⁸ The subsequent scandal, fanned by the Milošević-controlled press in Serbia, severely undermined the leadership's moral authority, making it appear at best out of touch with the needs of the people and at worst oppressive, while simultaneously portraying the protestors' objectives and actions as noble.

With little reason to be optimistic, the Montenegrin leadership could at least draw solace from the rhetorical support extended by leaders in some other Yugoslav republics. The Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian communist parties all stood firm in support of the Montenegrin republican authorities, which from the distant viewpoint of Ljubljana, Zagreb and Sarajevo, appeared to be every bit as much on the brink of submission as the leadership of the Vojvodina had been some months earlier.³⁹ Even more encouraging was the rhetoric of the Yugoslav federal leadership, which (controversially) condemned the demonstrators' actions and condoned the use of force against them – an unprecedented event in postwar Yugoslavia.⁴⁰ Conversely, the demonstrators were extended support from influential figures within the Serbian nationalist elite. The Serbian writer Dobrica Ćosić (later to be president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and Montenegrin poet Matija Bećković offered explicit support to the demonstrators while denouncing the actions of the authorities. Ćosić appealed to the Montenegrin

leaders to 'prevent violence against citizens who are not satisfied with the existing state of society'.⁴¹ He espoused nationalist messages lauding the Serbian character of the Montenegrins stating, 'Montenegrinism is the most Serbian part of the Serbian nation, and when it was torn from its roots, the whole Serbian diaspora began to fragment and spiritually weaken.'⁴² Matija Bećković (the Montenegrin Serb poet) announced that the anti-bureaucratic revolutions and solidarity with wider Serb cause represented 'the rehabilitation of Montenegro ... and a return to its authentic roots and origins'.⁴³

The republican leadership's sanction of violence against the demonstrators was ultimately detrimental to its cause; while they may have acted legally, the chasm between legality and legitimacy was widening. The intensity of Kosovo Serb-led street protests, blended with Milošević's committee-room caballing and media pressure, increasingly undermined and demoralized Montenegro's republican leadership.⁴⁴ Marko Orlandić, the Montenegrin president of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, went to Kosovo on 20 October only to be greeted with hostility by the protestors there. 'It was completely clear,' he said, 'that preparations for the "scenario of my fall" had been prepared in advance.'⁴⁵ It was also clear that the same nationalist sentiments would be employed again in Montenegro during future protests. Indeed, this toxic blend was having an effect. Following the Žuta Greda incident and the protests in Titograd, an immediate vote of confidence was called in the Montenegrin parliament, which despite attainment, contained certain stipulations. The minister of interior and three other ministers were called upon by demonstrators (and by official Belgrade) to resign, a demand that would destabilize and eventually lead to the resignation of the entire government.⁴⁶ An interim administration governed the troubled republic for a two-month period before it eventually acquiesced to the demands of the protestors, their sponsors in Belgrade, and the political factions within the Communist Party who supported them.

While many workers, students and young rank-and-file communists had been angry at the leadership's failure to introduce economic reforms and halt the growing economic crisis, they nevertheless defined their actions 'in the name of democracy'.⁴⁷ They were to be disappointed. In January 1989, a younger elite firmly under the political influence and patronage of Slobodan Milošević replaced the interim leadership.⁴⁸ This change, lauded in the state controlled media as 'the Montenegrin Renaissance', may initially have been perceived as progressive, but while the new leadership (the average age of which was 40) rhetorically pledged its commitment to democracy, it promised little in the way of solutions to Montenegro's most pressing problems.⁴⁹ The new 'young, handsome and intelligent' Montenegrin leadership was led by the troika of Momir Bulatović, Svetozar Marović and Milo Djukanović (with Bulatović the *primus inter pares*) under the slogan *Mi znamo kako!* (We know

how!).⁵⁰ All were youthful and politically inexperienced, and given the logistical support provided by external forces during the anti-regime protests, they were pliable and loyal to Belgrade and Milošević.⁵¹ Thus the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' brought to power a generation of politicians who had mentors outside the republic.⁵²

The anti-bureaucratic revolutions, according to Pavlović, turned out to be anything but revolutionary in a positive sense. These events did not, he argues, 'create a better environment for political and economic development; on the contrary, they championed nationalistic values and a return to roots'.⁵³ That the rhetoric of Serbian nationalism was utilized as a method of attaining power, the new leadership rejected. The accusation that the Serbian ruling elite (backed by the secret services) had engineered the change of government in Montenegro was dismissed by Milo Djukanović, who later claimed, 'at that time we had no real contact with Mr Milošević. Our contact began sometime later as a consequence of our work with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia'.⁵⁴ This version of events was challenged by Montenegrin writer and poet, Jevrem Brković, who in September 1989 claimed that Serbian intelligence was logistically supporting the nascent elite.⁵⁵

In the final analysis, however, what may have appeared as a 'happening of the people' with a revolutionary character achieved by channelling the forces of mass mobilization and the will of the people, was simply an internal coup within the Montenegrin League of Communists, backed by Belgrade. The change of personnel, argues Darmanović, did not represent a *revolution*, as in the case of other Eastern European states, but secession from within, utilizing popular revolt as a means of achieving the objective of leadership change.

That this was, sociologically speaking, a fight within the elite is supported by the fact that all the leaders of the protest movement were members or officials of the League of Communists of Montenegro and Yugoslavia, or of the so-called socio-political organizations, SSRN and SSO.⁵⁶ Moreover, after the overthrow was accomplished a new political party was not created; instead the leaders of the January movement simply took over the main offices within the League of Communists of Montenegro.⁵⁷

Given the protestors' differing objectives, subsequent conflicts emerged within the new leadership. There were two specific strands – those who were more traditionally doctrinaire (such as Momir Bulatović and Milo Djukanović) and those who were influenced by the democratic ideas of the Youth Movement in Slovenia (such as Srdjan Darmanović, Ljubisa Stanković and Miodrag Vlahović). Both factions had supported the workers' demonstrations and had supported the change of leadership, but the democratic bloc was more fixated on economic reform and multi-party pluralism than on supporting a wider Serbian nationalist agenda. The internal struggle ended

with the purging of the reformist forces within the League of Communists.⁵⁸ The commitment to rapid democratic reform within the conservative branch of the league was, according to Pavičević, limited:

At their last (tenth special) congress, held in April 1989, the Montenegrin communists discussed among other topics, the issue of political pluralism – the need for and the possibility of introducing a multi-party system – the prevailing conclusion was that ‘more parties do not mean more democracy’. This could be interpreted to mean that democracy could be exercised without a multi-party system.⁵⁹

Such stasis suited the doctrinaire, conservative, and broadly pro-Serbian forces in Montenegro. They could maintain power within one monolithic party while stemming the growth of political alternatives.⁶⁰ The disintegration of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1990, the wider downfall of communist rule in Eastern Europe two months before, and the activities of the Democratic Alternative (formed in 1989) put increasing pressure on the ruling authorities to establish political pluralism.⁶¹ Subsequently, on 3 October 1990, the Montenegrin parliament passed a new law to legalize multi-party elections, leading to a proliferation of small parties within the republic.⁶² All were formed in the immediate period following the introduction of the multi-party system and, by the end of 1990, there were twenty registered political parties, three registered political associations and one political ‘movement’ in Montenegro.⁶³

In the multi-party elections that took place throughout Yugoslavia, the LCM (which unlike other parties throughout Yugoslavia retained its name) won by a landslide. In a republic where the public was deferential to, or at least unfamiliar with challenging, its leaders, it won an overwhelming victory, taking 83 of the 125 seats in parliament. Domestically, the victory ensured that the LCM could further consolidate its power base in the developing democratic environment. In the wider sense, Milošević was ensured a loyal and pliable Montenegrin leadership. In keeping with the rhetoric of democratic transition, the Montenegrin League of Communists officially changed its name to the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) in June 1991.⁶⁴ This largely symbolic and rather superficial change was simply a matter of semantics – the nature and structure of the LCM remained largely intact. The core membership of the DPS comprised a broad stratum of Montenegrin society – bureaucrats, security services personnel, company directors and Yugoslav Army veterans. Although many within the party were uncomfortable with the rising tide of Serb nationalism in Montenegro, they were exceptionally tolerant towards them. The vast majority possessed a significant personal stake in preserving Yugoslavia and limiting Montenegrin autonomy.⁶⁵

Montenegro’s Serb nationalist movement broadly shared this objective

(though views within Yugoslavia differed somewhat on the level of Montenegro's autonomy). While sharing similar objectives, they were separated only by their level of militancy. The most 'moderate' were *Narodne Stranke Crne Gore* (People's Party of Montenegro or NS), led by Novak Kilibarda, a professor of Serbian literature. The party supported a broadly Serbian nationalist agenda, even advocating that Montenegrins and Serbs were ultimately one nation. Their early rhetoric (particularly around the time of the Dubrovnik campaign of 1991) was xenophobic and extreme, and their leaders frequently warned of the dangers posed by Montenegro's 'internal enemies' (Muslims, Croats and Albanians). But some Serb nationalists within the party deemed their leader, Kilibarda, too consensual. *Narodna Demokratska Stranka* (People's Democratic Party) was thus formed by former members of the NSCG who pursued a more radical nationalist line. But their rhetoric seemed mild when compared with that of the Montenegrin branch of *Srpska Radikalna Stranka* (Serbian Radical Party), led by Branko Kostić, and the Belgrade-based 'movement' *Pokret za Autonomni Pristup Crne Gore u Srbiju* (The Movement for Montenegro's Autonomous Accession to Serbia). Collectively, these pro-Serb parties represented a significant force in Montenegrin politics. Their actions, and those of the ruling party, would lead Montenegro into darker times.

6

The 'War for Peace' and the Hague Conference

The 'anti-bureaucratic revolutions' and the so-called 'Montenegrin renaissance' in effect achieved little in the way of the economic progress, democratic consolidation and stability its leaders had promised. In the post-election period, Montenegrin politics was characterized primarily by deepening divisions, divided, according to Brajović, into winners and losers, 'enemies [of the ruling party] were branded as "allies of the defeated politics", "anti-Serbs" and so forth.'¹ Far from making progress on democratic transition, Montenegro shifted from one form of closed society (communist) to another (nationalistic).² However, given the palpable sense of economic insecurity, worsened by the rapid disintegration of the Yugoslav federal structure, it is perhaps not surprising that such a shift occurred. The increasing fear of armed conflict increased on a daily basis and, under such circumstances, it is equally unsurprising that Montenegro chose to remain tied to the bosom of 'Mother Serbia'. Fear of personal security and the uncertain status of Montenegro in an unstable Yugoslavia (increased by the daily rhetoric in the state daily *Pobjeda*) were major factors. These entirely legitimate fears, helped along by the ethnic entrepreneurship of the Serbian media, persuaded most Montenegrins that their republic needed Yugoslavia in some form or other. The Montenegrin leadership argued that the Montenegrin people would be best served by choosing to remain within rump Yugoslavia's interests. By late 1991, however, it had become clear that the republican leaderships in Podgorica and Belgrade were the only ones that wished to do so.

The 'reformist' branch of the Montenegrin communists, now renamed the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), remained the party of power, closely linked to Milošević's SPS (Socialist Party of Serbia). In the year following the 1990 elections, its monopolistic role in Montenegrin political life was reminiscent of its 'conservative' Communist Party predecessors. The blurring of the lines between state and party remained, with the state assets shifting ownership. As Vukotić points out, 'the state's main assets [were] gradually put in the direct service of the ruling party.'³ For the DPS elite, economic and business interests predominated. Something of an empty box, ideologically-

speaking, the party leadership utilized Serbian nationalist rhetoric only when required and when it was deemed to be in its interest. This was a party more concerned with the preservation of vested interests than opposed to nationalist ideology. It adopted its stance to the Montenegrin national question, according to Čegarović, largely because it obtained support from the numerous state-owned enterprises, the huge bureaucracy and a lot of army officers and pensioned-off army personnel. 'Because of the limited room for manoeuvring and the presence of the Serb-controlled federal army and aggressively pro-Serbian groups, it [was] forced to bend towards Belgrade.'⁴

The DPS claimed to represent the moderate centre ground between Montenegro's two political poles – the Serb nationalism of the NS and the independent rhetoric of the LSCG and SDP. However, events throughout the Yugoslav federation, and in particular in the neighbouring republic of Croatia, ensured that the Serb nationalist parties (and those so inclined within the DPS) became increasingly ascendant. Following multi-party elections in Croatia, which brought Franjo Tudjman (and some powerful and radical émigrés from the Croatian diaspora) to power, the status of the Krajina Serbs in Croatia's *Krajina* became increasingly problematic.

The Croatian Serbs, already suspicious of Croatia's newly-elected nationalist government, were close to rebellion following the announcement of Croatia's new constitution (which relegated Serbs to the status of a minority). This new constitution and the moves by the Croat government to replace Serbs – deemed to be over-represented in key cultural, administrative and economic positions – created paranoia among the Croatian Serbs. The re-emergence of Croatian national heraldry and symbolism (perceived by Serbs to be indicative of a resurgent Croat fascism) only added to existing fears. Power within the Krajina Serbs shifted away from the moderate Jovan Rašković towards the more militant Milan Babić, a former dentist and Mayor of Knin. The Krajina Serbs (with the full acquiesce of Belgrade) established a 'Serb National Council', paving the way for a referendum (prohibited by Croat authorities) on Serb autonomy. In December 1990, the Krajina Serbs established the 'Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina', and three months later declared the region's separation from Croatia. A full-scale rebellion soon turned into a full-scale war. As conflict between Croatian police and Serb militia intensified around Knin and eastern Slavonia during the summer of 1991, Serb nationalists in Montenegro warned that a resurgent Croatian 'fascism' (backed by the 'Fourth Reich' – the newly united German republic) was increasingly endangering the Montenegrin public.

Serb nationalists accepted that Yugoslavia was finished and preparations were already underway for what would be borne from the ashes of the Yugoslav state. Montenegro was central to Serb nationalist aims. The Croatian government's decision to shut off the Adria oil pipeline feeding

Serbia in September 1991 meant that Montenegro became even more strategically important to Serbia.⁵ These actions and the rapidly worsening crisis throughout Yugoslavia served to homogenize Montenegrin public opinion in favour of defending 'Yugoslavia' and 'Serbdom'. Serb nationalist parties, capitalizing on these fears, became increasingly ascendant throughout 1991. Their warlike rhetoric and warnings of the dire consequences for Montenegro had a significant impact on public opinion throughout the course of the summer and autumn of that year.

On 20 September 1991, Montenegrin president, Momir Bulatović, announced (with no apparent sense of irony) that Montenegro was officially the 'first ecological state in the world'.⁶ A matter of days after the proclamation, Montenegro's troops would cross Montenegro's border with Croatia to, in the president's words, 'legitimately defend the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia'.⁷ Montenegro's involvement in the war in Croatia, where its troops directly participated (and the subsequent conflict in Bosnia & Herzegovina where a number of Montenegrin citizens would directly participate), would serve only to ensure worldwide condemnation and a long period of international isolation compounded by the imposition of United Nations sanctions. The Dubrovnik campaign remains one of the most regrettable chapters in Montenegro's history; television pictures of Montenegrin soldiers shelling the ancient (UNESCO protected) city of Dubrovnik significantly damaged Montenegro's international reputation and went a long way towards damaging the wider Serbian and 'Yugoslav' cause. The sight of Montenegrin reservists 'sweeping the terrain' and laying waste to much of the Konavle region, which rests between Dubrovnik in Croatia and the Montenegrin border, shocked not only the wider public but regional experts, many of whom had eagerly consumed the works of Rebecca West and Mary Edith Durham, in which the Montenegrins were portrayed as heroic, brave and just. The operations in Konavle and Dubrovnik were quite out of keeping with this romantic image.

While Western governments and the international media were roundly condemning Montenegrin military actions in the Konavle region, within Montenegro itself the conflict was primarily perceived as a defence of Yugoslavia (not, as the Western press argued, a campaign to establish the borders of a 'Greater Serbia'). As then foreign minister Nikola Samardžić noted, many Montenegrins considered any potential conflict to be not 'Montenegro's war but rather the federal army's war'.⁸ A Montenegrin war or otherwise, the Yugoslav People's Army's (JNA) frequently-articulated pretexts – used to justify its previous interventions in Croatia – sounded hollow in the context of Dubrovnik. There was no Serb (or Montenegrin) minority there and the area, which had been demilitarized in 1971, possessed no army barracks.⁹ The Serbian and Yugoslav authorities, however, were determined to incorporate

Montenegro into the conflict in Croatia, thus giving the impression that military operations were not simply unilateral 'Serbian' but wider 'Yugoslav' actions.¹⁰ With the Croats already in retreat in Eastern Slavonia, a strong second front, 'to ease the pressure on units in the north' (as the Montenegrin SRS leader and then federal president Branko Kostić claimed) would put the already beleaguered Croats under intolerable pressure. A thrust from Montenegrin units on Croatia's southern border would, it was argued, quicken Croatia's capitulation.

Problematically, however, there was no imminent (or tangible) threat to Montenegro's territorial integrity from the Croat population of the Konavle or Dubrovnik regions. Given the lack of definitive pretext for attacking this part of Croatia, justification for an attack would need to be carefully engineered. With this objective uppermost, the Montenegrin leadership set about constructing a climate of fear and mass hysteria among the public. It was a risky strategy with uncertain implications. At the outset of the attempts to manufacture a justification for an attack on Croatia from Montenegrin territory, Misha Glenny observed that the Montenegrin president, Momir Bulatović, was more than aware of the unpredictable character of Montenegro's social psychology 'once it had been aroused from its usual state of catatonic indolence'.¹¹ Resurrecting old ghosts may prove difficult and fraught with danger, but the Montenegrin government could always rely on its counterparts in Croatia to assist it. Numerous ill-advised statements made by Franjo Tuđman (with regard to Croatian aspirations to the Bay of Kotor in Montenegro) did much to help what may otherwise have been a lost cause.

These blunders and the rhetoric of Montenegrin politicians warning of 'Ustasha formations amassing at the border' (although manipulated and exaggerated) proved effective. Historical revisionism was commonplace. To placate sceptics and justify an attack on Dubrovnik, 'ideas' were advanced via the media utilizing historical and linguistic arguments, the central claim of which was that Dubrovnik had historically been an independent state (known as Ragusa) and as such was not a part of Croatia. This, Judah noted, was an attempt to 'turn the clock back to pre-Napoleonic days and declare it an "independent" city state once more'.¹² Indeed, even the president of NS, Novak Kilibarda, later claimed that the historical status of Dubrovnik, 'offered a lot of material for the worst kind of propaganda'.¹³

In the days leading up to the Montenegrin attack on the Konavle region, the prime minister of Montenegro, Milo Djukanović, made a number of statements intended to whip up anti-Croatian sentiment in Montenegro; these claimed that the time had come to 'draw the demarcation lines *vis-à-vis* the Croats once and for all', and that the current border had been designed by 'semi-skilled Bolshevik cartographers'.¹⁴ In a somewhat bizarre statement that reverberated around the omnipresent *šah* (chess) clubs of Montenegro,

Djukanović announced that he would never play chess again because of the Croatian chequer-board flag, the *šabornica*. Chess had become an unpatriotic activity in an increasingly paranoid atmosphere. More seriously, the increasing paranoia was fuelled by the daily diet of nationalist propaganda that filled the pages of Montenegro's only daily newspaper. The Montenegrin government used the state-owned and controlled *Pobjeda* as its ideological battering ram. Here were laid out the justifications for an attack on the Konavle region.¹⁵ Indeed, it was in Svetozar Marović's column in the daily that the Orwellian term *Rat za mir* (War for Peace) first appeared.¹⁶ This classic piece of 'doublespeak' implied that to defeat evil, Montenegrins must first perpetrate evil. On the eve of the Dubrovnik campaign, for example, Marović assured the Montenegrin public that:

*The conflict could not be avoided. The Fascists had the Jews and the Ustasas had the Serbs. We believed that history would never repeat itself, but life and historic tragedy are repeated. It is impossible to secure peace in any other way but with force ... it is sometimes necessary to control evil through greater force.*¹⁷

The pages of *Pobjeda* were filled with nationalist messages such as 'Prevlaka je naša!' (Prevlaka is ours!) and more general anti-Croat propaganda – including stark warnings of genocidal Ustasas amassing at the Debeli Brijeg border between Montenegro and Croatia preparing for a ground invasion of Montenegro.¹⁸ The issue of Prevlaka was key, being a vital strategic question for the Yugoslav Army. The army controlled the naval base there, but if Croatia were to break away the Prevlaka side of the bay would be in Croat hands, making any Yugoslav naval operations there vulnerable to attack.¹⁹ The fishing industry, so important to Montenegro's coastal economy, could also be detrimentally affected, with Croatia making claims of extended territorial waters.²⁰ Furthermore, *Boka Kotorska* (the Bay of Kotor) was deemed to be under threat. The perception that Croat nationalists coveted the bay was widely believed among the Montenegrin public.²¹ The area comprised a small Croat population (particularly around the town of Tivat), which had formed some cultural associations such as *Bokaljska Mornarica* (Boka Mariner's Association), but its links to Zagreb were seen as dangerous, and pressure was put on the association to separate from its Zagreb branch. Worse was to follow for the Croats of Boka. These unfortunate families became the target of attacks in the state media, a situation worsened by numerous Montenegrin parliamentarians.²² During Montenegrin parliamentary sessions in September 1991, delegates raged that their enemies (specifically Croatia and Germany) were attempting to 'drown Montenegro in the shallow waters of history' and that 'Greater Germanic forces aided by Croatian fascism are mounting a final attack on Yugoslavia'.²³ Ranko Jovović of the Serbian People's Party went as

far as to ask rhetorically, 'why should we think we can live in a confederation with people who decorate themselves with the [amputated] fingers of our children?'²⁴

While elements in Montenegro were preparing for a war that would be waged to further Serb interests regionally, the war was sold to the public as a defensive and noble necessity. Framed primarily as a defence of Yugoslavia against Croat separatism, led by domestic fascists, backed by external forces (in short, the 'Fourth Reich' – the reunified Germany), the public largely perceived the approaching conflict as one with a defensive character.²⁵ Montenegrins saw themselves not as aggressors but as defenders of Montenegro and Yugoslavia, even liberators who would free the people of the Dubrovnik region from the imposition of fascist rule. This perception, which Montenegro's government nurtured, ensured that a significant number of Montenegrins eagerly volunteered to carry out their patriotic duty. Preparations for mobilization took place between July and August 1991 and the Montenegrin government issued a mobilization call on 16 September 1991. Some joined simply as *dobrovoljaci* (volunteers), believing that going to war was something every Montenegrin had to do sooner or later. Others, however, had to be encouraged.²⁶ Those who objected to the war were placed under immense strain and, according to one conscript (who was mobilized in September 1991), 'the pressure was so strong that you could not safely state any opposition to the war, let alone refuse to be mobilized'.²⁷ That such pressures were imposed on Montenegro's conscripts is clearly demonstrated by the rhetoric of the Montenegrin leadership. In an interview for the Montenegrin daily *Pobjeda* in 1991, for example, Milo Djukanović explicitly warned that those reluctant to serve in the army should be subject to a law that would involve harsh punishment for deserters, more than simply 'firing them from their jobs'.²⁸

Many did mobilize voluntarily. The mobilization of Montenegrin irregulars who, initially ill-disciplined, were placed within the framework of the JNA's second operational unit largely facilitated the attack on Dubrovnik. Their motivations were quite different. Fundamentally, for many senior staff in the JNA, the collapse of the Yugoslav state would dictate not just that they would lose the privileges to which they had become accustomed, but that the ideological principles in which they had been schooled in Tito's Yugoslavia would be rendered defeated. With approximately 70,000 career officers in the army (around 70 per cent of whom were Serbs or Montenegrins), there were both material and ideological underpinnings for their actions.²⁹ As Gow noted, the JNA's 'own legitimacy and survival depended on Yugoslavia continuing to exist'.³⁰ Many were genuinely committed to defending Yugoslavia, and were not fighting for Serb nationalist objectives.

What was hidden from both soldiers and the public was the overarching

agenda of the Dubrovnik operation. Branko Kostić, later to become the *de facto* Yugoslav president, revealed the real agenda: 'We did not', he stated, 'need 30,000 men there, but there were reasons why such a massive operation was undertaken.'³¹ Its aim was not only to take over Dubrovnik but also to control territory all the way to the Neretva river.³² However, Radan Nikolić of the Association of Montenegrin War Veterans would later claim that he and his fellow soldiers were unaware of any plan to annex Dubrovnik. 'Not a single [Montenegrin] soldier', he argued, 'was aware of plans to conquer Dubrovnik and annex it to Montenegro, or Serbia rather', adding that such a plan 'would have been the goal of a madman!'³³

Nevertheless, throughout October and November, the Montenegrin units rampaged through the Konavle region, attacking Dubrovnik from two directions – from the hinterland around Trebinje in Bosnia & Herzegovina, and from the coastal road through Herceg-Novi.³⁴ Upon their incursion into Croatian territory they met almost no resistance (contrary to the rhetoric of Montenegrin leadership and the media, who had claimed that thousands of fanatical *Ustašas* were amassing on Montenegro's border with Croatia). The headlines in the daily *Pobjeda* (such as *Crnogorci idu naprijed – Montenegriins go forward*) implored the soldiers to uphold Montenegro's honour.³⁵ Doing what they believed to be just that, the Montenegrin reservists and the JNA marched through the prosperous region, looting and burning village after village, eventually occupying the tiny port of Cavtat (allegedly an 'Ustaša stronghold').³⁶ Indeed, looting (seen as a legitimate fortune of war by the reservists) was widespread, with consumer goods lifted from Croat houses finding their way to the markets of Titograd and Nikšić.³⁷

Two weeks later, in late October, the Montenegrin forces and the JNA began their assault on Dubrovnik. It was ill-considered, and the worst choice the JNA could have made to press its military advantage on the Dalmatian coast.³⁸ Not only did it have almost no military rationale, it was shown around the world to a shocked public. The tens of thousands of western European tourists who had holidayed in what Byron had dubbed 'the pearl of the Adriatic' simply could not believe such mindless destruction. Denials that the old town of Dubrovnik was attacked were issued regularly by the Serbian leadership, with claims being made that Croats had set alight rubber tyres within the walls of the old town to give the impression that the UNESCO protected area had been shelled. When SFRY president Borisav Jović was quizzed on the issue of Dubrovnik by the acting US secretary of state, he responded:

I said that Dubrovnik had not been shelled and that this was a case of completely unfounded propaganda, except in the case where two shells were fired by mistake. L. Eaglebuger agreed that there had been strong propaganda, pointing out that the

*mayor of Dubrovnik visited Washington and showed pictures depicting the damage to the city. I repeated the Old City had not been damaged and that it was untrue that Dubrovnik had been attacked. Everything that happened in connection with that has been pure propaganda.*³⁹

Whatever the actual course of events on the ground, it was a public relations disaster for the Montenegrins, who had not grasped that such actions were fundamentally detrimental to their cause, whether it be to preserve Yugoslavia in some form or to create a Greater Serbia. The Montenegrin leaders, who had gained power on the wings of the Serbian nationalist forces during the 'anti-bureaucratic revolutions', sought to distance themselves. While harnessing pro-Serbian sentiment as an instrument for attaining power, they became increasingly burdened by it. They were further burdened by inexperience and a political debt to their Serbian mentors. However, the pro-Serbian sentiment was very strong within the ruling DPS, not to mention the traditionally pro-Serbian parties. Both the DPS and NS had roundly rejected a proposal by the Democratic Coalition of Montenegro to vote on affirming Montenegro's neutrality and sovereignty.⁴⁰

However, when even the ill-informed among the Montenegrin population realized that involvement in the 'war for peace' was counterproductive to Montenegrin interests, President Momir Bulatović and Milo Djukanović (despite their previously hawkish rhetoric) sought to distance themselves from parliamentary members who continued to support the war. Bulatović, who was seen as 'being responsible for enforcing the Serbian line within Montenegrin politics', began to reassess his position;⁴¹ he claimed that the chaos wrought by the attack on Dubrovnik and the unfavourable position in which Montenegro found itself in the international context led him and others within the DPS to readjust their position. It was, he argued, 'our belief that the military could do nothing, that the war in Croatia was senseless, because the advantage of the Yugoslav Army was annulled by the enormous pressure of the international community', noting further that '10 per cent of our population were mobilized for war. I was under immense pressure.'⁴² Likewise, in the Montenegrin parliament Milo Djukanović, acknowledging his own role in fermenting a war psychosis, simultaneously drew a clear demarcation between himself and those who still advocated war: '50 dead and hundreds wounded! All of us have to take responsibility for that, including us in the parliament building. First of all, responsibility lies with those who are still calling for war from their warm houses and offices.'⁴³ Thus, a significant split emerged within the Montenegrin Assembly between those who continued to call for war and those who argued that Montenegro should seek a way out of the debacle.

The internal political fallout would continue, but internationally Monte-

negrin complicity in the war in Croatia (especially in the historic Adriatic town of Dubrovnik, a UNESCO heritage site) and Bosnia-Herzegovina blackened Montenegro's international reputation. Žarko Rakčević, the leader of the SDP, pointed the finger of blame at those who had called for war, stating, they had 'led Montenegro to the beggar's stick'.⁴⁴ To compound the damage to Montenegro's international reputation, the conflict was also having a hugely detrimental effect on interethnic relations within the republic. With many of the Catholic minority in the Boka region choosing to flee, the 'blood count' changed significantly. The outgoing Croats were replaced by Serbs from the Croatian Krajina and later Bosnia & Herzegovina. These bidirectional population movements significantly altered the characteristics and social dynamics of the coastal area.⁴⁵ All said, the damage done to Montenegro's international reputation, not to mention its internal political stability, was significant.

Even today, the circumstances surrounding the Dubrovnik operation and responsibility for that debacle remain controversial in Montenegro. Most citizens have disabused themselves of the notion that the attack on Dubrovnik was necessary to defend Montenegro. However, a number of Montenegrin political elites remain in denial and have not faced their culpability for the damage wrought on the Dubrovnik area and the damage incurred to Montenegro's international reputation, fundamentally because a number of those calling for war in 1991 are still in senior positions within the present-day ruling structures. In 2004, the Podgorica-based independent production company *Obala* produced a two-hour documentary for Montenegrin state television titled *Rat za mir* (War for Peace). The film cleverly cuts footage of Montenegrin politicians arguing the case for war in the Montenegrin assembly; the rhetoric was repeated almost *verbatim* by Montenegrin soldiers on the Dubrovnik front, making a clear link between the rhetoric and actions of the Montenegrin elites, the transmission of those messages through state-controlled media (RTCG and *Pobjeda*), and the crimes committed by Montenegrin reservists around Dubrovnik. The film features interviews with many of the main protagonists, all of whom are quick to dismiss any responsibility. Svetozar Marović, who coined the term 'War for Peace' and used *Pobjeda* as the instrument for constructing a war psychosis among Montenegrin citizens, described the events of the period as 'a great historical misunderstanding'.⁴⁶ Despite protests by Koča Pavlović, the director of the film (and current Montenegrin parliamentarian), it has thus far never been shown on Montenegrin television.

Bulatović Wavers: The Hague Dissension

Seeking a way out of the crisis, Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović took a significant political gamble, one that would not endear him to his political

mentors in Belgrade, Serb nationalists in Montenegro, or many people in his own party. As the conflict in Croatia intensified, the European Community organized a peace conference on Yugoslavia chaired by Lord Carrington, the former British defence secretary who had served in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet. The Carrington plan envisaged a loose association of independent states that would have the status of subjects under international law.⁴⁷ It was a last-gasp attempt to halt the downward spiral. The position the Montenegrin leadership would adopt seemed clear. Uniformity with the Serbian line (which was to reject the Carrington peace plan) was expected. The delegates expected no deviation from this stance. However, during a session in the Montenegrin parliament on 17 October 1991, just prior to the Carrington plan conference in The Hague, parliament gave Bulatović the authority to take the decision himself, although he acknowledged the debate 'was very difficult', making any decision fraught with danger. He described the scene in the Montenegrin Assembly that evening:

In the Montenegrin parliament the president sits very near the floor and you can see every movement, every shade of feeling on the faces of the people who were criticizing or praising you. I knew that I had to fly to The Hague at 6 in the morning, the session was continuing well into the night and I was wondering why I had to listen to all these arguments, because I had spent hours considering every possible element of that plan and then you must sit and hear people accusing you of being a traitor, of being an amateur diplomat, but that's what you had to do. You had to listen to all these speeches and I think that the best way was to take all the responsibility on myself and to say what Montenegro really wanted.⁴⁸

Electing, controversially, to accept, Bulatović shocked the conference with his announcement that Montenegro would agree to the stipulations laid out in the plan. Bulatović had opted for independence. He signed the draft document of the Carrington plan, which would facilitate the legal dissolution of Yugoslavia into six independent successor states – Serbia would have no state to be in federation with; Yugoslavia would cease to exist.⁴⁹ In his memoirs, SFRY President Borisav Jović noted that Montenegro's position was made clear to him on 18 October, one day prior to The Hague conference:

In Branko Kostić's office, before he left for Titograd to attend the session of the Montenegrin Assembly to take up the same question, suddenly and without hesitation tells me that, 'Montenegro will support Lord Carrington's proposal!' I look at him in disbelief, as if he is fooling around. I tell him to stop joking. Very seriously, he repeats what he has just said. I told him that that would be a highly treacherous knife in the back of Serbia and its leadership.⁵⁰

The decision convulsed the Serbian leadership. Given the intertwined and complex relationship between ruling elites in Serbia and Montenegro, the leadership in Belgrade did not expect such dissension from tiny Montenegro, which, according to Borisav Jović, 'provoked much perplexity and shocked even the Europeans'.⁵¹ Jović, however, sensed that the issue was contested within the Montenegrin leadership, providing Serbia with an opportunity to exploit divisions within the Montenegrin Assembly. While Bulatović was in favour of accepting Carrington's proposals, others including Branko Kostić were less so.⁵² Despite the obvious pressures, Bulatović remained firm, arguing that acceptance of the Carrington plan would make it possible for Montenegro to secure its own interests, secure the interests of the others and put an end to the war.⁵³ The scales may have been tipped by the offer of a generous European Community aid package worth several million dollars.⁵⁴ According to Jović, when asked whether the Croats, Austrians, or Italians had offered Montenegro financial incentives, Bulatović responded:

*We have nothing to hide. They told us that we stand to gain personally, that our party [the DPS] would be treated as a democratic one, and that we would receive Prevlaka by peaceful means, and that Montenegro will not be subjected to a blockade if such a thing is imposed on Serbia.*⁵⁵

The Italian proposal was of significant interest to the Montenegrin leadership, which demonstrated initial enthusiasm. According to the then Italian foreign minister, Gianni De-Michelis, Bulatović was open to possible initiatives and 'considered Italy as Montenegro's way into Europe'.⁵⁶ Furthermore, De-Michelis claimed that Bulatović told him that he wanted to chart an independent course from Belgrade and those Montenegrin politicians who were 'tied to Belgrade by ideology and politics'.⁵⁷ In the minds of many Serbs in Montenegro (not to mention the leadership in Belgrade), this was tantamount to treason. Bulatović expected a tough reception on his return to Titograd, where he would attempt to persuade the Montenegrin Assembly and the wider public of the benefits of the plan.⁵⁸ The Serbian leadership monitored the reaction in the assembly closely. As SFRY President Borisav Jović noted, it was not too late for 'the Montenegrin Assembly or the people of Montenegro to overturn the position of Bulatović'.⁵⁹ According to Bulatović, however, while there existed some strong reservations (particularly among delegates from the Serbian strongholds of Berane and Andrijevica in northern Montenegro), most of the DPS political activists throughout all the republic's municipalities acknowledged the benefits of his decision.⁶⁰ And indeed, during assembly sessions on the 24–25 October, Bulatović's decision was essentially ratified. But if the president believed that this represented the end of the matter, he miscalculated.⁶¹ In the week between acceptance in

principle and ratification, opinion in Montenegro appeared to turn sharply against him. The split within the Montenegrin leadership to which Borisav Jović had previously alluded began to manifest itself clearly.⁶² The Peoples Party of Montenegro (NS) called for an emergency session of the Montenegrin Assembly to discuss Bulatović's decision. Indeed, during the subsequent 'emergency session', reactions to Bulatović having signed the draft document were overwhelmingly negative. He was accused of treachery by delegates within the assembly and demonstrations by pro-Serb parties and their supporters took place outside the assembly in Titograd. The republic was gripped by tension and, as Bulatović later acknowledged, the tensions between delegates in the Montenegrin parliament were near breaking point:

*The debate was very hard because there are two opposition blocs in Montenegro – one is pronouncedly pro-Serbian and the other is predominantly anti-Serbian and the latter includes the political forces of the Albanians, and the Muslims, and the Montenegrins who believe that we have nothing in common with Serbia. We were in the situation, our party [The DPS], to be attacked by the pro-Serb bloc as traitors of the Serb cause, and to be supported by those who attacked us until a day before for being pro-Serb. There was total confusion and then I thought that this major rift would have major consequences for peace and stability in Montenegro.*⁶³

Bulatović's deputy, Milo Djukanović (who also saw the signing of The Hague document as Montenegro's exit strategy) stated during the parliamentary session: 'It is nonsense to ask if this plan would guarantee us peace. No one could guarantee that, but the only certainty we now have is that of war.'⁶⁴ Momir Bulatović went one step further, arguing that 'if servility and acceptance of everything coming from Belgrade is the criteria for good governance in Montenegro, then this nation doesn't need a government, elections, or political parties.'⁶⁵ The pro-Serbian bloc proceeded to put Bulatović, already labelled by Milošević and the Serbian media as a 'traitor', under immense pressure. In the same parliamentary sessions, a series of speakers, including Branko Kostić, the vice-president of the SFRY, denounced the actions of the Montenegrin leadership, arguing that The Hague document would not guarantee an end to the war. Others went further. Members of the pro-Serb NS argued that Bulatović was guilty of treason, alluding to previous Montenegrin leaders and their commitment to Serbdom. In parliament one of their members condemned Bulatović, claiming that 'The signature of our president brought down one of the two pillars of Serbhood. It brought down the one that grew out of a tradition cherished by St Petar Cetinski, Njegoš, and King Nikola.'⁶⁶

Pressure was brought to bear on Bulatović, not just from the delegates in the Montenegrin parliament, but from Belgrade. Efforts were made in Serbia

to get Bulatović to recognize the error of his ways. To facilitate a reversal of his earlier decision, Bulatović was 'invited' to Belgrade to attend meetings with Slobodan Milošević and Borisav Jović. These meetings were held with the sole objective of forcing him to reverse his decision, and were, in Bulatović's words, 'very explosive'.⁶⁷ According to Borisav Jović, relations between the Serbian and Montenegrin leaders were exceptionally strained, and there was, among the former, 'no longer any tolerance [of Bulatović], to say nothing of confidence'.⁶⁸ Given Bulatović's attempts at dissension from the Belgrade line, Milošević sought to circumvent potential difficulties arising from perceived Montenegrin treason. He inserted a clause in the plan that would allow the republics that wished to remain in a federation to do so. Montenegro's acceptance of the Carrington plan dictated that Serbia would not have another republic with which to remain federated – it would be a fatal blow to Milošević's plans. Borisav Jović, who described Montenegro's dissension as the worst crisis (up to that point) of Milošević's leadership, stated that 'Montenegro had to climb down'.⁶⁹ After the first meeting in Belgrade, the Montenegrin leadership returned to Titograd for consultations. On their return to the Serbian capital, Bulatović (and Djukanović) agreed to the amendment. Yugoslavia could continue to exist if two or more republics wished to remain federated, and they agreed to hold a referendum on the issue. Both Djukanović and Bulatović were put under immense pressure to accept.⁷⁰ Slobodan Milošević had constructed a new text with amendments that the Montenegrin leadership was to sign. Jović noted at the time that:

The essence of it is that those who want to leave Yugoslavia can do so, but that those who want to remain in Yugoslavia can also do so. Thus the break-up is not compulsory. Momir and Slobodan went back and forth all day long, no longer about content, but rather about the procedure. Sloba wants Momir to present this in The Hague, while Momir wants Sloba to do it, and for him to agree to a conference. In the end, Sloba 'convinced' him. Bulatović finally accepted it and promised to forward it [to The Hague].⁷¹

With no clear consensus within Montenegro itself, Bulatović and Djukanović had little choice but to submit. Any dissensions were met with the application of economic and political pressure from Serbia (including blockades or rises in electricity prices). Serbia could make life very difficult for Montenegro, and thus such acts of defiance on the part of the Montenegrin leadership were futile without international support.⁷² The debates over the Carrington plan had demonstrated that the Montenegrin leadership, while attempting to chart an independent course, was not strong enough alone to oppose the government of Slobodan Milošević in Serbia. According to Little and Sibling the Montenegrin president had been 'brow-beaten into submission

by a Serb bandwagon that certainly would have cost Bulatović his job had he continued to resist'.⁷³ Bulatović would later claim that his change of direction 'really was far from a policy of appeasement'.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, on 30 October 1991, Serbia and Montenegro proposed an amendment to the Carrington plan that would allow states that did not wish to secede from Yugoslavia to establish a successor state.⁷⁵ A referendum on the establishment of the FRY, which claimed legitimate continuity of the SFRY, would take place in Montenegro (but not Serbia) the following March. Under these chaotic circumstances, the establishment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was no less controversial than its predecessors of either 1918 or 1945.

With the failure of the Carrington plan, Yugoslavia continued to fragment violently. Three Yugoslav republics had applied for international recognition – Slovenia, Macedonia and Croatia, but only two of them (Slovenia and Macedonia) met the conditions laid down by the Badinter Commission of January 1992. Germany, however, which had recognized Slovenia and Croatia's independence on 23 December 1991, bludgeoned the EC into formal recognition of the latter, while Greece simultaneously vetoed Macedonia's application on the basis that the name 'Macedonia' implied territorial aspirations in northern Greece.⁷⁶ Slovenia and Croatia were the first two republics to be granted independence by the EC in January 1992. The United States was more cautious, choosing to adopt a 'wait and see' policy at this stage. James Baker's assertion in July 1991 that the US authorities 'don't have a dog in that fight' was a clear indication that the USA viewed Yugoslavia as essentially a European problem. It too, however, bowed to the inevitable and, in the spring of 1992, recognized the independence of Croatia. By April that year, war had broken out in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Simultaneously, in Montenegro and Serbia, preparations were underway to constitute a new Yugoslavia – the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

The FRY Referendum and Internal Opposition

In April 1992, as war raged in neighbouring Bosnia & Herzegovina, the republics of Serbia and Montenegro formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) following the adoption by Belgrade and Podgorica of a new constitution. Given the state of crisis pervading the former Yugoslav space (as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia moved to seek recognition as independent states), Serbia and Montenegro jointly established the FRY. Opposition parties in both republics opposed the new state's inception and within months their respective ruling elites began to argue about the distribution of power within the new federation. The FRY, borne from the ashes of the former six-member Yugoslav federation, contained approximately 44 per cent of the population and around 40 per cent of the territory of the former SFRY.¹ The arrangements for constituting the new state were chaotic and less than democratic. Plans for the construction of the FRY were made public only two months before its realization. Hoping that brisk constitutional amendments would facilitate the consolidation of a continuing 'Yugoslavia' (a strategy that ultimately proved unsuccessful), constitutional experts took only five days to construct the new constitutional arrangement. Ominously, only one party oversaw the design of the new constitution – Milošević's SPS played the key role, the DPS's role was minimal.² The new constitution was forged during a series of meetings between the ruling elites of Serbia and Montenegro – the public remained largely in the dark.³ Not even the opposition (of either republic) was consulted about the make-up of the new state.⁴ This lack of transparency may have facilitated a quick fix to Serbia and Montenegro's constitutional crisis, but the character of its inception simply created the conditions for the gestation of dissatisfaction within Montenegro.

Prior to the formation of the new state – and in an attempt to give the impression to supporters of Montenegrin sovereignty that Montenegro's position was not submissive – Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović proposed a framework for the state-legal status of Montenegro within the proposed FRY. In Montenegrin Assembly sessions between 16 and 22

January 1992, he persistently argued that within a new federal arrangement 'there is a minimum under which Montenegro cannot go'.⁵ The Montenegrin leadership, while hardly seeking wide-ranging autonomy, would be ill-advised to appear weak to its public, and in response to internal pressures within the republic, Bulatović sought to protect Montenegro's position *vis-à-vis* Serbia.⁶ The objective was to reach a compromise that would pacify supporters of either Montenegrin tradition – a deeply problematic stratagem. Despite the Montenegrin leadership's generally pro-Serbian orientation, the opposition would be likely to regard any actions deemed to be 'selling-out' Montenegro's sovereignty as a betrayal of the republic's interests.⁷ Faced with this dilemma, Bulatović attempted to chart a difficult course – the *ni lanci, ni pasoši* (no chains, no passport) thesis, a compromise between virtual subordination by Serbia and outright independence. In so doing, Bulatović hoped to satisfy the majority of Montenegrins. Initially, he insisted on a con-federal model that envisaged the common state possessing a single market, single currency, unitary monetary policy, a common foreign policy that would permit separate consular representations, and a joint defence system that would allow a degree of autonomy.⁸ But his allies in Belgrade did not share his vision of a near independent Montenegro within a loose federation. The subsequent negotiations on Montenegro's position within the FRY proved difficult enough to be dubbed Bulatović's *Drugi Hag* (Second Hague). Faced with pressure from Milošević and pro-Serb forces in Montenegro, his formula met with little success.⁹ The proposed principle of parity that Bulatović advocated was incrementally eroded in the aftermath of subsequent meetings between Bulatović and Milošević.¹⁰ The Serbian political elite was not, after all, traditionally receptive to the idea of the equal status of Montenegro within the federation.¹¹ Given its influence over the ruling elite in Montenegro, its position ultimately, and predictably, prevailed.

A referendum, to be held on 1 March 1992, would pave the way for the establishment of the FRY, and was managed by the Montenegrin leadership without too many problems emerging.¹² The question on the referendum ballot paper was slightly confusing: in fact it was rather skewed in favour of a yes vote: '*Do you agree that Montenegro, as a sovereign republic, should continue to exist in the joint country of Yugoslavia, on a completely equal basis with other republics who wish to do so?*'¹³ The Montenegrin ruling elite, wishing to facilitate the rapid acceptance of the new state adapted the 'Law on Referendum', limiting public debate to a period of only seven days.¹⁴ The Montenegrin opposition did its best to highlight the undemocratic character of the referendum, staging demonstrations in Montenegrin towns and cities and attempting to persuade voters that there were alternatives to a close federation with Serbia. Crucially, the referendum took place in a context of homogenization of the Montenegrin press, which, alongside the elites that engineered its creation,

proliferated and reiterated the argument that the FRY represented the continuity of the SFRY and that a vote for the FRY was a vote for those who were protecting Yugoslavia from the nationalists who wished to destroy it. Throughout Montenegro, the ruling DPS rallied the people to their banner of 'Yugoslavia without alternative', while simultaneously limiting the scope for public debate, disrupting the activities of the opposition and implicitly threatening individuals with the potential loss of their livelihoods.¹⁵

Given the context, the result was unsurprising, with an overwhelming number of Montenegrins voted to preserve union with Serbia.¹⁶ Some 95.7 per cent of those who voted chose to remain in federation with Serbia (voters also elected to approve the reinstatement of 'Podgorica' as opposed to 'Titograd' as the name of the capital city). The state newspaper *Poljeda* declared the result a 'triumph for unity'.¹⁷ However, the relatively low turnout of 66 per cent brought the legitimacy of the referendum into question.¹⁸ Such a low turnout can be explained by the non-participation of the opposition parties. The LSCG denounced the referendum, referring to the process as 'nothing but a fraud intended to confuse voters'.¹⁹ Muslim and Albanian parties, all of which boycotted the referendum, echoed these sentiments. Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović, ignoring this fact, heralded the significance of the result, stating that 'With this referendum we wished to enable the continuation of the centuries-old aspiration of Montenegro to be a bastion of Serbdom and Yugoslavism'.²⁰ Indeed, the formation of the new state was broadly accepted, particularly among the large portion of the Montenegrin population that defined itself primarily as Serb.²¹ Thus, in this sense (and despite its irregular construction, heavily weighted question and boycotts) the creation of the FRY was not perceived as having been imposed on the majority of the citizens of Montenegro. Many approved of, voted in favour of, and celebrated the establishment of the new state.²²

That said, with participation in the referendum estimated at 66 per cent, only about 280,000 Montenegrins (less than half the population of the republic and a tiny fraction of the total 11 million citizens of the FRY) had voted in favour of its establishment.²³ That a referendum on establishment of the new state was not held in Serbia only consolidated the perception among Montenegrins who had boycotted the referendum that the new federation was simply a framework for incorporating Montenegro into a 'Greater Serbian' space.²⁴ Despite irregularities, confusion and a tangible level of dissatisfaction with the establishment of the FRY, the DPS, the state media and the Montenegrin president painted a positive picture. Momir Bulatović frequently appeared on the local media reiterating his message that the referendum result had overwhelmingly endorsed the new state.²⁵ Despite the public trumpeting the FRY, dissatisfaction was also rapidly emerging among the elite. Having taken place in a less than ideal political climate, Montenegrin

government officials and many within the opposition disagreed with a number of features about the creation of the FRY.²⁶ According to Thomas, 'the opposition would refer to the new constitution scornfully as the 'Žabljak Constitution' after the mountain resort in Montenegro where the socialist *nomenklatura* had met to create the new state.²⁷ Its core argument was that the FRY was an unequal construction that would simply become dysfunctional. Indeed, the FRY proved to be dysfunctional from the outset. Its main problem was structural in that it was made up of two federal units of disproportionate size, population and economic interests. Within such a structure, the smaller unit would be exposed. Such a situation prompted even those within the ruling DPS, such as the then Montenegrin foreign minister Miodrag Lekić, to argue that within the FRY structure Montenegrin interests were insufficiently protected.²⁸ That there were doubts within a small faction of the ruling elite was demonstrative of emerging problems. To compound any doubts, the FRY was only a few days old when the UN imposed a series of rigorous economic sanctions, plunging Montenegro into economic crisis.²⁹ The strategy of the political elite in both Serbia and Montenegro was, according to Woodward:

To wait out the sanctions, to demand subsidies, or to make huge profits by running the embargo. The vast network of criminals, go-betweens, and bribed officials that sprang up to circumvent the embargo actually gained an interest in keeping the sanctions in place. The consequence was a substantial redistribution of wealth that did not favour those who would oppose the war. The reaction of the political elite was to believe, as they had done in 1986–90, that the primary issue was a matter of persuasion; once the world had learned the truth of their case, the sanctions would be lifted.³⁰

This depressing situation simply bred competition between elites in Serbia and Montenegro over the distribution of the booty earned from these illegal activities (in particular the profits from cigarette smuggling). While these arguments were primarily about the distribution of profits, they quickly assumed a political dynamic. During the first federal elections of the newly promulgated state, for example, there was a lengthy conflict over the composition of the federal government, and it was another four months before the Montenegrin Radoje Kontić could be officially sworn in.³¹ Although the Montenegrin leadership was brought to heel by Serbian hegemony (such an unequal arrangement prompted the pro-independence Montenegrin weekly *Monitor* to describe the new Montenegro mockingly as 'Srbogora'), it caused resentment between ruling elites in Serbia and Montenegro. The position of Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović was particularly problematic. He had little choice but to accept this state of affairs imposed on him by Belgrade.³²

While outright secession was some way off, significant cracks in the relationship between Serbia and Montenegro were becoming gradually manifest. Still angered by Bulatović's earlier dissensions (and his request that a special session of the Montenegrin Assembly should be called to discuss the possibility of another referendum), the ruling Serbian party, the SDS, threw its support behind the presidential bid of the hardline Serb nationalist, Branko Kostić (the SRS candidate). Milošević was angered by the support that DPS delegates in the Federal Assembly extended to Yugoslav prime minister Milan Panić, which implied that the Montenegrin party opposed Milošević's policy. Regardless, the DPS again triumphed in the parliamentary elections held in December 1992, winning 45 of the Assembly's 85 seats. In the simultaneous presidential elections Bulatović ran against Branko Kostić, Slavko Perović, and Novak Kilibarda among others. Despite the DPS being in coalition with the SPS at the federal level, the latter supported Kostić's candidacy over Bulatović's. What is more, Kostić also enjoyed the support of the Serbian bloc. During the election campaign Bulatović sought to continue to strike a balance between Montenegro's political poles, arguing in favour of Montenegrin autonomy and equality with Serbia within the FRY framework. Kostić, for his part, took the mantle of 'Great Serb', aligning himself directly and unswervingly with Slobodan Milošević and the policy of the SPS.³³

Despite winning almost twice as many votes as Kostić, Bulatović failed to garner the required 50 per cent of the popular vote. With a runoff required, Bulatović again won significantly more votes than Kostić, this time winning by a significant percentage. The Montenegrin public had chosen to vote for the consensual candidate who favoured autonomy versus the candidate who favoured a harder-line Serbian nationalist policy. It was indicative of things to come. Milo Djukanović, again re-elected as prime minister, selected a multi-party government, cooperating with the LSCG, SDP, and NS. This strategic move isolated the more radical Serb parties and was indicative of his future orientation (or at least his ability to build coalitions). Momir Bulatović would be Montenegrin president for the next five years, presiding over an increasing crisis between Serbia and Montenegro (though it would take another four years for this sentiment to manifest itself politically in an intra elite context with the DPS split of 1997).³⁴ As Goati points out, the next time Bulatović would run for president the context would have changed dramatically. And, with the tectonic shift in Montenegrin politics in 1997, by the next presidential elections Bulatović would be inhabiting territory that Branko Kostić had comfortably occupied.³⁵

The Montenegrin Opposition

Prior to the announcement of the referendum in February 1992, the opposition in Montenegro began to organize rallies to protest against the creation

of the new state and to highlight what it argued was Montenegro's subservient role in it. Pro-independence Montenegrins from different spheres (journalists, writers, intellectuals and ordinary citizens) engaged in anti-war civil resistance. It was ostensibly a heterogeneous grouping gathered around the LSCG (*Liberalni Savez Crne Gore* or Liberal Alliance of Montenegro) party, which had its headquarters in Montenegro's historical capital Cetinje. Led by the former public prosecutor Slavko Perović,³⁶ the LSCG's explicit aim was to establish an independent, multicultural Montenegrin state based on 'European values'. Among the LSCG membership were people who had been shocked at the direction of Montenegrin politics since the so-called 'anti-bureaucratic revolution'. According to Stanka Vučinić, an LSCG deputy in the Montenegrin Assembly, engagement in Montenegrin politics was, for many liberals, a matter of conscience and conviction:

My engagement in politics at that time was a matter of personal conviction, i.e. I felt it necessary to defend my own dignity from the dregs which erupted from the darkest layers of the society. I couldn't be a passive or mute spectator when everything around me was falling down, in every sense of that word, when having been deleted by them, when you were not who you were but what they wanted you to be by forging history, offending your ancestors, killing the future. Thus, following my own reflex of defence of the upcoming despair, I found myself next to other Montenegrin patriots from many different spheres: journalists, writers, intellectuals. This broad anti-war civil resistance was given a special strength by the Liberal party.³⁷

The liberals' main target was the ruling DPS, which, they argued, was cooperating with Slobodan Milošević in the debasement of Montenegro, the assimilation of Montenegrins into the Serbian national corpus, and the mobilization of Montenegro into a war that was not theirs. As a consequence of their rhetoric and actions, they were frequently the target of the state-controlled media, which characterized them as the enemy within; a fifth column of agents of the West, of Croatia and of the Vatican, and intent on destroying Serbdom. The LSCG was constantly dubbed the *de facto* leader of this anti-Serb, pro-Croat movement. Although the strongest of the parties advocating a sovereign and independent Montenegro, the LSCG could not incorporate all Montenegro's democratically-inclined factions; afterwards, under the umbrella of the Social Democratic Party of Reformers (formed later in 1992), a number of smaller broadly pro-independence parties opposed centralization and aggressive Serb nationalism. The Independent Communists of Bar formed in May 1990 enjoyed relative electoral success, winning the local elections in the Bar municipality in 1990. Among its members were a number of high-profile communists, such as Marko Orlandić, who had vocally opposed the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' in 1988–89. Another small

but active party was the *Socijaldemokratska Partija* (Social Democratic Party or SDP) formed in 1990. Its founder members Dragiša Burzan and Žarko Rakčević recognized the noble aims of the LSCG, but maintained that its party programme was too narrow.

*Žarko Rakčević and I knew that the LSCG would not grow beyond 10 per cent of the electorate. There were other areas that we had to explore. For example, their story was honour, truth, and speaking out against the ruling authorities. I couldn't agree their programme in its entirety, and many others also took this stance. In addition there was the problem of Slavko Perović, who had become the unchallengeable leader of that party. For these reasons, we agreed to create a party with a social democratic profile.*³⁸

Similarly, the Socialist Party of Montenegro (*Socialistička Partija Crne Gore*), led by Srdjan Darmanović, was essentially pro-independence but disagreed with what it saw as the demagogic rhetoric of the LSCG leadership. Montenegro's minority parties joined these collective forces. Understandably, Montenegro's Albanian and Muslim communities feared Serb hegemony within the new state construction. They considered the way in which the FRY was created and the subsequent referendum to be illegitimate and ultimately non-binding.³⁹ The largest Muslim party was the *Stranka Demokratska Akcije* (Party for Democratic Action or SDA), which the Montenegrin Muslim Harun Hadžić led and it sought to articulate the needs of Montenegro's Muslim minority (which was largely concentrated in northern Montenegro). After the 1992 referendum Hadžić made himself unpopular with Montenegro's Serb community by declaring that 'if Montenegro is to be annexed to Serbia, then we Muslims shall be forced to search for autonomy.'⁴⁰ Such statements, and the SDA's close connections with its counterparts in the Serbian Sandžak (led by Suljeman Ugljanin) and Bosnia (led by Alija Izetbegović) made some Montenegrin Muslims withdraw from the SDA on the grounds that it was too militant. They formed the Party of National Equality (*Stranka Narodne Jednakosti*). Their rhetoric was less extreme, but their aims were similar to those of the SDA, and they sought to highlight what they argued was the tenuous position of Muslims in Montenegrin society. Montenegro's Albanians also formed political parties, the most important being the Democratic Alliance of Montenegro (*Demokratski Savez Crne Gore* or DAM), led by Mehmet Bardhi and Ljeka Ljuljudjuraj.

While Serb nationalists would label these parties 'secessionist', Montenegro's ethnic minority parties would play a key role in the united opposition. Collectively, Montenegrins, Albanians, Muslims and those inclined to democratic values were still a relatively weak political force, but significantly stronger than the sum of their parts. Ideologically, they all believed that the

wars in Former Yugoslavia were exclusively Serbian affairs, which was an unpopular position to adopt in the context of the times.⁴¹ Being labelled 'traitors', the opposition operated in difficult circumstances, with its members frequently harassed, intimidated and subjected to violence. Exchanges between Montenegro's opposition and the ruling party (and Serb nationalist parties) were bitter. The issue of Dubrovnik was an important early battleground. Montenegro's two main opposition parties, the SDP and LSCG, led the opposition to Montenegro's participation in the Dubrovnik campaign and against the establishment of the FRY. During rallies in Cetinje and Titograd in February 1992, opposition to the war and increasing dissatisfaction with the *status quo* became manifest. The crowd listened to speeches expressing opposition to the military engagement in Croatia (the objectives of which had never been fully revealed to the Montenegrin public) and to the establishment of the FRY. Many were denizens of Cetinje, but tens of cars from Titograd, two buses from Nikšić and one train from Bar carrying an estimated 500 people joined them.⁴² Slavko Perović, the leader of the LSCG, addressed the rally declaring that 'a state that is built on the destruction of Vukovar and the devastation of Dubrovnik cannot be a happy state.'⁴³ Never one to shirk controversy, Perović placed himself at odds with supporters of Serbian nationalism by saying that the war was 'a Serbian war' and that his LSCG advocated neither military force nor the persecution of minorities.⁴⁴ The crowd received the message warmly, but such bold pronouncements represented a risky gambit. Following the rallies, LSCG leaders and party members were frequently harassed in public; the state-controlled media accused many of them of being anti-Serb or Ustashas.⁴⁵ The ruling authorities waged a relentless campaign against them and even targeted party leaders.⁴⁶

Perović was a particular target. The ruling elite viewed his public denunciation of Montenegro's role in the Dubrovnik campaign, as well as his plea to the citizens of the town to 'forgive Montenegro', as treasonable.⁴⁷ SDP leaders were also victimized for making similar denunciations about the war.⁴⁸ Perović knew how it felt to be a target of media slurs and physical threats: 'All of us had a bounty on our heads. Anyone could approach us on the street and kill us, and such an act would have been approved by many people.'⁴⁹ In the cultural sphere, people who opposed the war or the establishment of the FRY were similarly persecuted, which led to a number of opposition intellectuals and writers such as Jevrem Brković and Milorad Popović leaving Montenegro.⁵⁰ Overall, the opposition (dubbed the *Udružena Opozicija* or United Opposition) represented an estimated 7–10 per cent of the population, so was a relatively insignificant political force,⁵¹ but the election results of the period reflected their strength. The issue of statehood and the cleavage between pro- and anti-independence stances were – at least in relative terms – of limited political significance during this period. Parties that advocated an independent

Montenegro had little parliamentary power compared with those (such as the DPS) that backed the 'central' position.⁵²

The Establishment of Alternatives in the Cultural Sphere

Broadly, then, the opposition was too small to challenge the structure of power in Montenegro. A broad pro-Serb consensus (which included supporters of Yugoslavia in some form or other) predominated in Montenegrin politics and, at that time at least, there was a general consensus between the SPS in Serbia and the DPS in Montenegro. As Leslie Holmes has pointed out, small parties in post-communist states tend to have smaller memberships, limited finances and are, in electoral terms, ill-equipped to challenge the authority of larger parties that have inherited the power structures of former communist parties.⁵³ The DPS monopoly on the power structure in Montenegro (which included controlling the secret police and media) made it difficult for the opposition to oppose it effectively. There was little in the way of free media, the only daily newspaper being the state-owned *Pobjeda*, established in 1948 as the instrument of the Montenegrin Communist Party, but since 1990 the mouthpiece for whoever is in control. With a view to counterbalancing the pervasive influence of the sole state daily, a group of 500 intellectuals and journalists formed 'the Civic Forum of Montenegro'. Initially, they had no outlet for their writing,⁵⁴ but later that year the sporadically published *Krug* (Circle) emerged. Less than a year later a weekly publication called *Monitor* appeared, offering an alternative to the uniform diet of pro-DPS misinformation, the daily diet of the state mouthpiece *Pobjeda*. The magazine was not well received by the pro-Serb sections of society or the Montenegrin authorities. According to Miodrag Perović (the founder of both the independent weekly *Monitor* and later the daily *Vijesti*):

*We wanted to start a weekly that would appeal to the democratic part of Montenegrin society. We knew that this would not be a financially viable undertaking and there was no one who would fund a daily newspaper. So we decided to become a weekly. We started in October 1990 with the first issue, representing the first free media in Montenegro. Our editorial policy was essentially anti-war, restoration of the European identity of Montenegro, and the equal position of Montenegro among South Slav nations. But the regime met us with great hostility. I personally was treated as a spy for the West and part of an 'anti-Serbian coalition'. But nonetheless, we believed that such independent media were essential in Montenegro*⁵⁵

The editorial members of staff were subjected to significant hostility. According to Dragiša Burzan, one of a number of individuals instrumental in the early publication of *Monitor*:

It was horrible, almost unimaginable.⁵⁶ We paid [for] the first couple of issues from our own pocket, and received occasional funding from private donations. It [Monitor] was anti-war, it was anti-craziness, and often offered a diametrically opposed opinion from that which one could expect in Pobjeda. The regime did not like it. When the war started it was very anti-war and those who supported the war were vehemently opposed to our new publication.⁵⁷

Despite its operational difficulties, *Monitor* did provide a means through which like-minded people could publish articles for the public to read. Poorly funded and often amateur in its presentation, the magazine was nonetheless a benchmark for the Montenegrin opposition. Its establishment was the first in a number of developments that would bolster the strength of this section of Montenegrin society. Simultaneously, a number of writers' associations were formed that also reflected a pro-independence persuasion. The Montenegrin PEN Centre, the Montenegrin Association of Independent Writers, and the Montenegrin Association of Professional Journalists were all formed in the early 1990s. While much of the work of these organizations was to focus on human rights and democratic reforms, others in the Montenegrin opposition had a more nationalist agenda. Many of those who established the cultural associations had previously been members of the Writers Association of Montenegro, which had become dominated by pro-Serbian members.

As Serbian nationalism became the dominant discourse, a number of Montenegrin nationalist writers left the organization, most notably the association's former president, Jevrem Brković.⁵⁸ In early 1990, the Montenegrin 'dissidents' announced that they were establishing their own writers association – the Montenegrin PEN Centre and, in 1993, *Crnogorska Matica* (*Montenegrin Matica*) was established.⁵⁹ Members of this organization, which was committed to preserving the cultural and historical identity of Montenegrins,⁶⁰ also had political objectives – to promote the idea of a separate Montenegrin state and nation. Despite the personal dangers, many members of these organizations openly supported the re-establishment of an independent Montenegrin state.⁶¹ The aims and objectives were broadly to nourish the cultural identity of Montenegro. Politically, however, members publicly declared that the strategy was employed because the ruling DPS had failed to defend these interests and were ensuring that Montenegro was playing a subservient role in the FRY.⁶² The secretary general of the organization, Marko Špadijer, claimed that it was established because of this situation:

Matica was needed in Montenegro because we considered ourselves to have our own country yet we had no such cultural organization. The official government in Montenegro threw their lot in with Serbia completely. Also there had been a suggestion that

*the Montenegrin Academy of Arts and Sciences would be merged into the Serbian Academy. So we formed Montenegrin Matica as a resistance to that.*⁶³

Matica Crnogorska set up a journal called *Matica* and helped publish literature specifically on the 'Montenegrin option', which at the time had no other outlet.⁶⁴ A year later, in 1994, the Montenegrin PEN Centre published its *Declaration on the Endangerment of Montenegrin Culture, People and State*, the central claim of which was to highlight what it argued was the attempted assimilation and destruction of all aspects of Montenegrin cultural identity:

*It is the right and the duty of the Montenegrin PEN Centre to point out, in Montenegro and internationally, the Great Serbian chauvinism and hegemony aiming to abolish and assimilate the Montenegrin nation, its history and culture. The situation has been aggravated by the fact that the Montenegrin authorities, because of their short-sighted interests, have been supporting such tendencies and processes, seriously endangering the thousand-year-old state, culture and national identity of the Montenegrins.*⁶⁵

The declaration pulled no punches, comparing Serbia's policy towards Montenegro with the German *Anschluss* (annexation) of Austria in 1938, criticizing the 'medieval dogmas' of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and broadly arguing that Montenegrins were being forcibly assimilated by Serbs.⁶⁶ In short, however, its purpose was to make the case for Montenegrin independence. Often the language utilized was akin to nationalist dogma, but the declaration's emphasis on democracy, human rights and the renunciation of violence meant that its powerful message was well received in the West.

One of the most controversial arguments advanced within the declaration, and by Matica generally, was that the Montenegrin language was unique. They argued that it was not simply a variant of Serbian but a separate language. In Article 5 of the declaration, it is stated that, 'the Constitution, among other things, declares Serbian as the language of the Montenegrins, in spite of the fact that the Montenegrin language has its own history and confirmation in literature.'⁶⁷ That the Montenegrin language is described in the constitution as Serbian of the *ijekavian* dialect, they argued, was just one of many examples of the marginalization of Montenegrin identity. Central to this argument was the claim that the Montenegrin language, despite forming the basis for the Serb, Croat, Bosniak and Montenegrin languages, had been largely destroyed by Belgrade and Zagreb, which had imposed the term 'Serbo-Croatian'. According to Ičević, 'Montenegrins speak and write their own language. To deny that Montenegrins are a nation because they speak Serbian is a false argument. ... Every nation has the right to call its own language what it wants, and Montenegrins have the right to call their language Montenegrin.'⁶⁸

Linguists in the region tend to agree that there are only marginal differences between Serbian and Montenegrin, and indeed Bosnian and Croatian. Serbo-Croatian, as the predominant language in Yugoslavia, was standardized through the instrument of the Novi Sad Agreement of 1954.⁶⁹ It remained the standard language of the SFRY until the early 1990s. By then each ethnic group began to insist on its own language, and thus from Serbo-Croatian came Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian. However, Montenegrin was still formally a variant of the Serbian language. By 1993, a number of Montenegrin intellectuals were claiming that Montenegrin was a separate language and should be recognized as such. The central aspect to this claim was the Montenegrin language required the use of three extra sounds (and thus characters), and therefore the Montenegrin alphabet is comprised of 33 characters, as opposed to the 30 used in the Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian alphabets.⁷⁰ Furthermore, they argued, Montenegrins had accepted the 'Serbian state ideology of the 1990s', which denied equal rights to all Yugoslav nations, adding that, 'Each of the nations [of the former Yugoslavia] rightfully named their languages by their national names. It was only the 1992 Montenegrin Constitution that formalized that the language of the Montenegrins was Serbian.'⁷¹ The language issue would rumble on throughout the 1990s and beyond as one of the key battlegrounds upon which the struggle for the ownership of Montenegrin identity was fought.

Montenegrin-Serb relations within the FRY were becoming increasingly strained. The birth of the new state was deeply problematic – the UN did not recognize it, economic sanctions were hampering its development, and interethnic relations within the FRY were tense. All said, the period between 1992 and 1993 was critical, for this was when anti-Serb sentiments were welling up in Montenegro. As well as the burgeoning opposition and the establishment of Montenegrin cultural organizations, the ruling Montenegrin authorities were offended by their 'subservient' role within the FRY. The Serbian leadership put pressure on Montenegro to abolish its defence and foreign ministries,⁷² and in the summer of 1993 Montenegro was punished for its increasingly independent stance when Serbia began what was in effect a trade war that served to cut supplies to the southern republic.⁷³ The strain could be felt even within the armed forces – Montenegrin army units were antagonized by the new ceremonial uniform of the army of the FRY, which was based specifically on the Serb, as opposed to the Montenegrin, tradition.⁷⁴

The Marginalization of Sandžak Muslims from Montenegrin Political Life

The Montenegrin opposition consisted not only of those who defined themselves first and foremost as Montenegrins, but also of Montenegrin Muslims (who were concentrated in the Sandžak region) and Albanians (primarily in the area of Tuzi near Podgorica and in Ulcinj on the southern

Montenegrin coast). While the self-styled Montenegrins may have felt persecuted, Montenegro's Muslim minority became the target of increasing physical aggression during the early 1990s. In April 1991, the pro-Serb People's Party issued a stark warning that Muslims (and Croats and Albanians) were arming themselves for the struggle ahead, during which, it was alleged, they would seek to secede from Montenegro.⁷⁵ Although the Montenegrin authorities dismissed such statements, they were indicative of the mindset of Serb parties in Montenegro. By 1992, the events in Bosnia-Herzegovina were having a significant impact on Montenegro and, although the tiny republic managed to avoid war, relations between communities became increasingly strained.

The Serb-Muslim dynamic in the Sandžak region was particularly problematic; long periods of peace and sporadic bursts of intercommunal strife characterized relations between Montenegro's Christians and Muslims throughout the twentieth century. The Sandžak had been at the heart of the Serbian medieval dynasty and at that time was referred to as *Raška*.⁷⁶ Following the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 and the collapse of the Serbian empire, the area fell under the control of the Ottoman Turks and, under their jurisdiction, became an important Balkan trading route. The term *Sandžak* (known primarily as the Sandžak of Novi Pazar) only came into widespread use during the late nineteenth century when Ottoman authority over the Balkans began to recede. Under the Treaty of Berlin, signed in 1878, control of Bosnia and the Sandžak was awarded to the Austro-Hungarian authorities, although the remaining Ottomans were in fact administering it. Whether Austrian or Turk, they were undermining the Serbian nationalists' primary objectives, which were to unify all Serbs in one state and consolidate the Serbian state as the strongest regional power. When the dual monarchy annexed the Turkish provinces in Bosnia in 1908, Serb nationalists expected some recompense; it was not forthcoming. Instead, to soften the blow to the Ottomans for the loss of Bosnia, the Austrians renounced their claim to Sandžak. Thus, the Ottomans regained control through their acceptance of the Austrian annexation of Bosnia. In 1908, complete control of the Sandžak reverted to the Ottoman administrators, albeit very briefly.

Four years later, during the First Balkan War in 1912, Serbian and Montenegrin forces occupied the Sandžak and drove the remaining Ottomans from the area. This facilitated a common border between the two 'Serb states' (formalized in the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913). In the early years of the new state local Muslims were frequently the victims of reprisals by Serb and Montenegrin soldiers and irregulars. Indeed, in 1912, when Montenegrin forces entered what is now Montenegrin Sandžak, they allegedly murdered civilians and forcibly baptized 12,000 Muslims.⁷⁷ Only after the authorities in Cetinje intervened were most of the baptized Muslims returned to Islam.⁷⁸

From 1913 the region was again referred to as Raška.⁷⁹ Emigration of the Muslim population quickened and, according to Andrijašević and Rastoder, 16,750 Muslims left Montenegro through the port of Bar for Turkey between April and June 1914.⁸⁰ Many empty properties left behind were resettled by Montenegrin migrants to the area. Muslim–Christian relations remained tense throughout the First World War. Following the end of hostilities, the Sandžak became incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS, later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). According to Milovan Djilas, in the early years of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Montenegrin Muslims murdered Boško Bošković, the leader and last chieftain of the Polje clan. This incident led to an outbreak of civil unrest in the Sandžak. Montenegrins, bent on revenge, marched on Muslim villages.⁸¹ As Djilas put it: ‘The destruction of Moslem settlements and massacring of Moslems assumed such proportions and arms that the army had to be sent to intervene; the police authorities were passive and unreliable. The incident turned into a small-scale religious war, but one in which only one side were killed.’⁸²

During the Second World War, the area was again wracked with conflict. Three armed groups – the Partisans, Chetniks and Muslim ‘militia’ – operated in the Sandžak, engaging in fierce internecine conflict. By 1943 the multi-ethnic Partisans had begun to take control of the area, and in the same year Tito’s Anti-Fascist Council for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) declared Sandžak an autonomous region. But in 1945 the Sandžak was not awarded the status of a republic – indeed even a limited form of autonomy failed to materialize. The Sandžak was awarded no special status under the Yugoslav, Serbian or Montenegrin constitutions and was again formally divided between Serbia and Montenegro, albeit within the framework of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The ethnic dynamics of the Sandžak continually changed throughout the mid to late twentieth century, with the ethnic composition constantly shifting from the 1930s onwards. The division of the area and the often repressive measures that Tito’s security chief Aleksandar Ranković (with Tito’s acquiescence) imposed on Sandžak Muslims, led to a process of steady migration – many left for Turkey; indeed, areas of contemporary Istanbul are peppered with migrants from the Sandžak. The KSCS government, in cooperation with the Turkish authorities in Ankara, facilitated the emigration, which continued until after the establishment of the SFRY; the last of these agreements was signed in 1954.⁸³ When Yugoslavia became a key member in the ‘Non-Aligned Movement’ (coupled with Ranković losing his job) the status of Muslims improved. The communist authorities became keen to project an impression of tolerance to their Muslims. They also, by formalizing the concept of a Muslim nation, sought to end the Serb and Croat claim to ownership of Yugoslavia’s Muslims. In the 1971 Yugoslav census, Muslims

were defined as one of the Yugoslav nations, though the concept remained rather unclear until the outbreak of war in Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1992 served to crystallize Muslim identity.⁸⁴

Relations stabilized and remained stable during the period of Tito's rule, but the region remained underdeveloped. In 1968 Tito recognized Yugoslavia's Muslims as a nation and awarded them cultural and political rights they had not previously enjoyed. Following the break-up of the SFRY and establishment of the FRY, the Muslims lost the status that Tito had awarded to them as a constituent nation. The period immediate after the collapse of the SFRY heralded a new era of uncertainty for Montenegro's Muslims. However, as opposed to Serbia, Montenegro's Muslims were well integrated and many were card-carrying members of multiethnic political parties. When the national rights enjoyed under the old regime ceased to apply, the status of Muslims changed radically and they began to feel increasingly insecure. Sandžak Muslims held a referendum between 25 and 27 October 1991 with a view to gaining greater autonomy, or even independence. These actions intensified tensions between Serbs and Montenegrins and their Muslim neighbours. By April 1992, their status had been reduced to that of a mere minority in the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia without any of the codified rights they had enjoyed under the previous regime. The Montenegrin constitution does, however, reserve 'special rights' for minorities, including the right to display national symbols, education in their mother tongue and contact with their homeland.⁸⁵ As war broke out in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, there was a rapid deterioration of relations between the Montenegrin Sandžak's Orthodox and Muslim communities.⁸⁶ In the short term the new situation focused Muslim minds on their immediate security concerns; in the medium term it would also focus their minds on their identity.

Contemporary Sandžak straddles the border between Serbia and Montenegro, so is divided between the two republics. There are six Sandžak municipalities in Montenegro – Bijelo, Polje, Berane, Plav, Pljevlja, and Rožaje. The Muslim communities in Montenegro are concentrated predominantly in these municipalities. Traditionally, although the region has been part of Serbian or Montenegrin territory since 1912, there have been strong ties between Muslims in the Sandžak and Muslims in Bosnia & Herzegovina. By 1990, as Yugoslavia was entering the final phase of its agony, many Muslims in Sandžak were drawing upon this well established tradition. As Serbian nationalism became the dominant discourse in Montenegro, many Muslims found the freedoms they had previously enjoyed being incrementally eroded. Increasingly defined by Serbian nationalists as renegades and a potential fifth column that threatened the security of Serbia and Montenegro, many Muslims, threatened by this upsurge of aggressive Serbian nationalism and marginalized within Montenegrin society, looked towards Bosnia as their

spiritual homeland. Serb nationalists took this as a threat to the territorial integrity of 'rump' Yugoslavia. Their nationalist discourse on the Muslim population was twofold: first, the Muslims of the region were 'an invented nation' or simply 'Islamized Serbs', and second they posed an internal threat to Serbia and Montenegro (despite the fact that large numbers of Muslims in Montenegro failed to support the referendum). Much of this discourse bordered on the paranoid. Vujadin Rudić of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) wrote, for example, that:

The Islamized Serbian population create political instability which is utterly expressed in the times of wars and disturbed relations among the states and nations in this region. ... It is important to emphasize that the separation of the two Serbian states: Serbia and Montenegro has been planned for a long period of time.⁸⁷

Paranoid perhaps, but Serbia could ill afford to lose control of the Sandžak. The area was of vital strategic importance – it linked Serbian territory with Montenegro and allowed Serbia to access the coastline. Therefore, it was imperative that the Muslims in the Sandžak were kept in check. Both the Serbian and Montenegrin authorities regarded any attempt to secede from Serbia or Montenegro as a contravention of the Helsinki Accords, and any attempt to gain autonomy would most likely be met with force. Announcements by Muslim leaders in the Sandžak that they may seek autonomy or even independence led to the consolidation of the idea that the Muslims of the Sandžak were a dangerous and potentially destabilizing force.⁸⁸

Fear led many Muslims to conclude that their security could not be guaranteed. Many lost their jobs and almost all faced discrimination, a situation that led to approximately 60,000 Muslims fleeing for the safety of Turkey, Macedonia or Western Europe.⁸⁹ Those who remained endured further discrimination. Anti-Muslim rhetoric began to creep into the Serbian and Montenegrin press, with Muslims being labelled as 'secessionists', 'terrorists', 'fundamentalists' and 'extremists'. The Muslim communities reacted by establishing political parties to represent their interests. Two Sandžak branches of Alija Izetbegović's Bosnian SDA were established (one in Serbia and one in Montenegro). Two individuals who were to play a key role in political developments in the region – Sulejman Ugljanin and Rasim Ljajić – founded the Serbian branch of the Sandžak SDA. Ugljanin associated closely with a right-wing nationalist Islamic faction within the Bosnian SDA, which espoused a radical Bosniak nationalism, while Ljajić sought to negotiate the status of Sandžak through participation in rump Yugoslavia's political institutions.⁹⁰ The Montenegrin branch of the SDA was headed by the moderate Harun Hadžić. The rhetoric of the SDA leaders in both Serbia and Monte-

negro was uniform – that Muslims in the Sandžak felt threatened by the Serbs, and as a nation they had a right to seek autonomy (as Serbs had done in Croatia),⁹¹ but some Muslims saw this approach as too radical. As a counterbalance to the SDA, the Party of National Equality (SNJ) concurred that the position of Muslims was threatened within the Yugoslav federation, but their rhetoric was less militant.

For Serbs, this represented a dangerous ‘Islamicization’ of the Sandžak, creating a convenient pretext for Serbian nationalists to wax lyrical about the Muslims’ real objective – to create a ‘Green Corridor’ from Bosnia to the Middle East. A large number of Serbs and some Montenegrins saw the Bosnian SDA’s leader Alija Izetbegović as an Islamic fundamentalist (largely because of his *Islamic Declaration*)⁹² who supported, at best, the special status, and at worst the separation of Sandžak from Serbia and Montenegro. Some of these views were justified. Izetbegović’s often ambiguous statements left a good deal of space for manipulation by Serbian nationalists. Other statements were more explicit. In 1990, perhaps unwisely, he called for Sandžak to be granted autonomy as part of the SDA declaration.⁹³

In October 1991, the Muslim National Council of the Sandžak (made up of the SDA, the Muslim Bosnian Organization, the Renaissance Society, the Mehamed Association, local branches of the Reform Forces, and the Association of Sandžak writers) declared that it would hold a referendum on greater political and cultural autonomy.⁹⁴ This, according to Andrijasevich, was an attempt to ‘counterbalance the Bosnian Serbs’ declarations of autonomy and in the hope of deterring Belgrade from annexing the Serbian autonomous regions in Bosnia & Herzegovina’.⁹⁵ The citizens of the region were asked whether they were in favour of ‘full political and territorial autonomy’ and the ‘right to [integration with] other sovereign republics’ (Bosnia & Herzegovina).⁹⁶ The Serbian and Montenegrin authorities both deemed the referendum illegitimate and it generated considerable hostility, particularly in Serbia. As authorities in Belgrade took actions intended to disrupt the ballot, the Montenegrin authorities arrested several of the organizers and harassed members of their families.⁹⁷ However, Muslims in Montenegrin Sandžak did not participate in or support the referendum to nearly the same extent as their compatriots across the border in Serbian Sandžak. This can be explained by a history of stable relations (at least in comparison with the Serbian Sandžak) between the Orthodox and Muslim communities in the Montenegrin municipalities.⁹⁸ But the context changed with the increasing likelihood of armed conflict in Bosnia. What had traditionally been good relations became more and more strained as inter-communal relations worsened throughout Serbian Sandžak and Bosnia.

While there was a hostile climate towards Montenegro’s Muslims (or Bošniaks), relations between the Muslim and Slav communities never

degenerated into widespread violence. DPS spokesmen told Muslims in Rožaje and other Muslim-dominated parts of Montenegro that they had nothing to fear within the newly constituted FRY.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the border area between the FRY and Bosnia & Herzegovina was beset with incursions of paramilitary units – abductions and murders increased.¹⁰⁰ In 1992 and 1993, Yugoslav Army units, in conjunction with renegade Montenegrin police and Serbian paramilitaries, began to cleanse Muslim villages close to Montenegro's border with Bosnia. The aim was essentially to ensure that the area was cleared of any potentially hostile Muslims who would aid their brethren across the border.¹⁰¹ The main danger to Muslim citizens living close to the border came from Serbian paramilitaries who would 'stop over' in Montenegro via towns like Foča (or Srbinje to Serb nationalists) in eastern Herzegovina. As paramilitary activities proliferated in the region, Muslims faced discrimination, physical attacks and hostilities, and numerous Sandžak Muslims lost their jobs, especially police and army officers, teachers and government employees.¹⁰² With a growing sense that their (Montenegrin) government was doing little to assist them, distrust between the Muslim community and the Montenegrin authorities grew into mutual hostility. In 1992, at the height of the Bosnian conflict and Serbian ethnic cleansing in nearby eastern Bosnia, incidents of increasingly violent proportions increased.

In the predominantly Serb town of Pljevlja in northern Montenegro relations between the Orthodox community (Serbs and Montenegrins) and the Muslim community worsened, heralding an unprecedented wave of inter-communal violence.¹⁰³ Pljevlja, close to the border with Bosnia and with a 30 per cent Muslim population, became the scene of violence and intimidation directed at the Muslim community and carried out by Serbian paramilitary groups.¹⁰⁴ These actions were carried out in conjunction with local extremists led by *Vojvoda*¹⁰⁵ Milika Ćeko Dačević, a Serbian Radical Party activist and later to be a member of the Yugoslav Federal Assembly.¹⁰⁶ Dačević claimed that the violence had been 'perpetrated by Muslims who wanted to avoid paying taxes'.¹⁰⁷ According to the Humanitarian Law Center, however, it was Dačević's men who harassed the Muslim community of the town, subjecting them to random acts of violence.¹⁰⁸ Despite the Montenegrin authorities' best attempts to play down the crisis and deny the existence of paramilitary groups in the town, the situation was considered serious enough for the then president of Yugoslavia, Dobrica Ćosić, and the Montenegrin president, Momir Bulatović, to visit on 7 August to find a resolution to the worsening situation.¹⁰⁹ Upon viewing the situation for himself Bulatović was forced to admit that paramilitaries were indeed operating in the vicinity of Pljevlja, a suggestion he had previously rejected.¹¹⁰ During their meeting with local police and community leaders, Hakija Ajanović, president of Pljevlja's Islamic community, appealed to the Montenegrin president to stop Serb para-

militaries from Bosnia crossing into Montenegro by tightening border controls, adding that fear and tensions were increasing in the Muslim community and could lead to further violence.¹¹¹

Ćosić and Bulatović left promising that the Yugoslav Army and Montenegrin ministry of internal affairs would attempt to disarm the paramilitaries and patrol the area, but wanted local Muslims to guarantee not to continue to seek autonomy. As Andrijević pointed out, such was the tension in Pljevlja at the time that 'during their talks with the two presidents no Muslim leader had ventured to request autonomy'.¹¹² Despite the assurances of Ćosić and Bulatović, the security of Muslims in the Pljevlja municipality remained uncertain. Muslims inhabited a number of villages close to Pljevlja, on the border between Montenegro and Bosnia, and Bukovica¹¹³ (the scene of Chetnik massacres of Muslims in the early 1940s) experienced several days of terror. In July 1992 the physical intimidation of Muslims in Bukovica and surrounding villages began and, according to Jakup Durgut, a journalist from the Belgrade daily *Blic* reporting at the time from Pljevlja, 'searches, beatings, abuse, murders were everyday events, [carried out by] extremist inhabitants, members of the Army of Yugoslavia and the police of Montenegro'.¹¹⁴ According to Helsinki Watch, around 800 Muslims were banished, kidnapped or murdered in the village.¹¹⁵ Although Yugoslav military reinforcements were sent to Bukovica to calm the situation, their presence (according to local residents) simply aggravated tensions.¹¹⁶

These episodes demonstrated that the Montenegrin authorities were unable to control the paramilitary groups and Serb irregulars. Their inability to guarantee the Muslims' security made it look as if the Montenegrin authorities were tolerating Serbian extremism. As a consequence, many of the cleansed of Bukovica and its surrounding villages never returned. The Montenegrin public, many of whom would have been outraged, were kept in the dark about events in the Pljevlja municipality. Neither state television nor the daily newspaper *Pobjeda* covered the events and it was not until February 1993, when the Belgrade daily *Borba* reported that 'There are practically no Muslims left in the Bukovica', that the Montenegrin public was informed.¹¹⁷ As the conflict in Bosnia & Herzegovina intensified, the situation for Montenegro's Muslims remained problematic. Furthermore, anti-Muslim sentiment was not limited to the Pljevlja municipality or to the areas bordering eastern Bosnia.¹¹⁸ In July 1992 the leader of the Montenegrin branch of the SDA, Harun Hadžić, had called on Momir Bulatović to introduce measures that would guarantee the security of Montenegrin Muslims who had been victims of terrorist attacks by Serbian paramilitaries, not just in Pljevlja but in Bijelo Polje, Berane and Podgorica.¹¹⁹

That same month, the Montenegrin authorities, in collusion with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić (the two enjoyed cordial relations at the time),

rounded up and deported Bosnian Muslims who had fled the war to Montenegro.¹²⁰ Some of these individuals had been given official refugee status and three of those arrested were subsequently murdered by Bosnian Serb forces.¹²¹ Momir Bulatović at first maintained that at the time he knew nothing about the abductions and deportations, but later acknowledged that the incident had been a mistake.¹²² In the course of 1992, Montenegro's ministry of internal affairs forcibly deported refugees from Bosnia & Herzegovina to Bosnia. Almost a hundred young men who did not wish to go to war were arrested and delivered to Radovan Karadžić's combatants.¹²³

Occasional incidents continued throughout late 1992 and early 1993.¹²⁴ There were a number of attacks against Muslims in Montenegro's second largest city, Nikšić, and in June 1993 the town's mosque was destroyed.¹²⁵ According to *Vreme* magazine, Mirko Jović (leader of the nationalist party Serbian National Renewal) attempted to incite residents of Nikšić to cleanse the city of Muslims, warning 'a persecution of the Serbian population is being prepared in the southern Yugoslav republic [Montenegro], worse than the one that has been carried out in recent years in the former republics.'¹²⁶ While such a dark scenario was avoided, limited attacks on the Muslim community continued.¹²⁷ The most high profile crime against Muslims in Montenegro took place later that year at Štrpci train station on the Bar to Belgrade railway line. Bosnian Serb paramilitaries operating on Montenegrin territory kidnapped and executed Muslims (and one Croat citizen) travelling on 'train 671'. Again, information was slow to filter down to the general public. In fact, the first mention of the incident was when the then police minister said during a session of the Montenegrin parliament that, 'There are indications that a group of people from Bukovica has disappeared,' although he made no mention of the hundreds who had already fled or been murdered.¹²⁸

In the Montenegrin Sandžak, the Montenegrin authorities weighed in against the increasingly brutal human rights abuses, which were often carried out by paramilitary groups outside their control, by putting intense pressure on the Muslim SDA party. In August 1993, the SDA released a document, which was headed 'The Memorandum on the Establishment of a Special Status for Sandžak', to a limited number of individuals.¹²⁹ Though not intended for public consumption, word of its content soon leaked out. It envisaged the Sandžak becoming a largely autonomous region with local authorities controlling police, taxes, the legislature and education – in short, many of the core functions of the state. Not all Sandžak Muslims, however, supported the proposal. The SDA enjoyed high levels of support in Plav and Rožaje, for example, but it was less popular in other Montenegrin Sandžak municipalities. As Rastoder put it, 'the memorandum on Sandžak's special status represented an act of the political will of one party [SDA] based on its obsession with nation and state.'¹³⁰ But the damage had been done and the

authorities in Podgorica took measures to pre-empt a feared (or imagined) rebellion by Sandžak Muslims.

In January 1994, in an operation dubbed 'Operation Lim' by Montenegrin police, 26 members of the SDA were arrested without formal charge.¹³¹ Referred to in the press as the 'Bijelo Polje Group', their crime was allegedly to plot a forceful secession of Sandžak from the FRY.¹³² The subsequent judicial process was highly suspect, with the accused presumed guilty before the trial. According to a Humanitarian Law Center report from March 1994:

*Most of the accused in this case have already been referred to more than once on Serbian and Montenegrin state television as 'separatists caught with weapons intended for a violent assault on the territory of FR Yugoslavia'. These reports have made public many of the details from police and court investigation files. According to a number of independent sources, however, the police found no weapons in the homes of several of the accused.*¹³³

Nevertheless, one year later, after a series of controversies including a hunger strike by the accused, a Bijelo Polje court sentenced 21 members of the Montenegrin branch of the SDA to a total of 87 years of imprisonment.¹³⁴ The Montenegrin courts filed a series of similar charges in the municipality of Plav. In November of the same year, Montenegrin police arrested 19 Muslims for allegedly attempting to procure arms.¹³⁵ Those imprisoned in the Bijelo Polje trial included Harun Hadžić, the leader of the Montenegrin branch of the SDA and a member of the Montenegrin parliament. Montenegrin journalist Esad Kočan sardonically pointed out that the trials, based on a very limited haul of weapons, were of an overtly political character and that 'when any festival is celebrated in Podgorica, more shots are fired from weapons of different calibres, in front of the police themselves, than SDA leaders could, at this pace, have collected in a hundred years.'¹³⁶ The convicted were later – in 1996 – given an amnesty by President Momir Bulatović.¹³⁷

The legacy of the arrests and trials was a breakdown of trust between the communities. The Montenegrin authorities, particularly the Serbian nationalist bloc within the DPS and pro-Serbian parties, had essentially failed to protect fellow Montenegrin citizens on the grounds that they were Muslims. For the initial years of the FRY, Muslims in Montenegro suffered the excesses of Serbian nationalism in Montenegro, while their community leaders were marginalized and persecuted. In the not too distant future, Montenegrin politicians would again be wooing them with promises of civil society and equal rights, but there remained a distinct mistrust of the Momir Bulatović government. It would be difficult to re-establish trust between Muslim and Serb-Montenegrin communities, and the former remained concerned about their level of security. According to Popović, the fear felt by Montenegro's

Muslims was entirely legitimate. 'In the event of security problems in Montenegro,' he states, 'they would likely be the first victims of aggression. The Montenegrin authorities had demonstrated in the 1990s that it had no capacity or will to defend their rights.'¹³⁸

Later attempts to arrest members of the Serbian Radical Party active in Montenegro and to raise charges against Milika Čeko Dačević (the leader of the Pljevlja 'pogroms') did little to appease the concerns of Montenegro's Muslim communities.¹³⁹ The insecurity the Montenegrin Muslims felt served to focus their attentions on their identity. A debate between Muslims identifying themselves as 'Montenegrin Muslims' (*Muslimani*), or Muslims from Montenegro, and 'Bosniaks' who (though citizens of Montenegro) look to Bosnia as their mother country, was largely fought in the academic sphere, but it was not merely a question of semantics.¹⁴⁰ Like Orthodox Montenegrins, their status had not been clearly defined until the second half of the twentieth century when, under communist rule in the SFRY, their separate ethnic identity was officially recognized.¹⁴¹ Debates on the name issue continued throughout the 1990s. There were a number of reasons for this, but according to Sišteš and Dimitrova, by the 1990s Muslims generally considered that 'a designation based purely on traditional religion was not ... fitting in a modern society since many ... members of the Muslim nation can, at the same time, be atheist or religiously indifferent.'¹⁴² A more accurate definition, some insisted, was required. The debates were largely fought between Muslim groups in the Sandžak where there was a different perception of national identity than that held by Muslims from central or Old Montenegro, who perceived the Sandžak Muslims as akin to country cousins. The crux of the problem was *how* should Montenegro's Muslims define themselves given the problems with the term *Muslimani*? Montenegro's Muslims were divided between those who defined themselves as *Bosniak* and those who continued to define themselves as *Muslimani*.¹⁴³

Despite the ongoing debates, by 1997 the political landscape had changed in Montenegro with the DPS split. Instead of being marginalized in the post-split era, the Muslim and Albanian communities assumed crucial political importance for Milo Đukanović. As part of a broader programme of electoral reform, he offered the minority communities an olive branch in the form of representation in the Montenegrin parliament in accordance with the proportion of their electoral support.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, many Muslims and Albanians would not only join the coalition but also be incorporated into the political elite and post-1997 security structures.¹⁴⁵ The strategy appeared to be effective. Despite calls by some Sandžak politicians, such as Sulejman Ugljanin, for the Bosniak population to boycott the Montenegrin elections, Montenegro's Muslim Bosniak community chose to become engaged in the political process. In the 1997 parliamentary elections, Muslims in the Sandžak

overwhelmingly backed Djukanović's DPS, undermining the influence of the Montenegrin SDA and bringing Montenegro's Muslims (or Bosniaks) back into the political mainstream. Their loyalty was awarded with inclusion in the Montenegrin ruling structures.

Montenegro's Albanian Community

Relations with Montenegro's Albanians were conducted in a less hostile, but equally problematic, atmosphere. Ethnic Albanians comprised, according to the 1991 census, 7.1 per cent of the population and were concentrated in areas bordering Albania proper – Rožaje, Plav, within the Tuzi area of the Podgorica municipality, and the southernmost municipality of Ulcinj. The majority of Albanians residing in Montenegro are Muslim, with a small percentage adhering to the Catholic faith.¹⁴⁶ Many of Montenegro's Albanian regions were incorporated into the then independent Montenegrin state following the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and again, albeit more contentiously, after the London Conference of 1912.¹⁴⁷ During the Second World War, some Montenegrin Albanians sought to carve out predominantly Albanian parts of Montenegro and incorporate them into Albania proper. In Montenegro there were two specific groups – the volunteer brigades in the areas of Plav, Gusinje and Rožaje (established essentially to guard the border of Montenegro and Albania) and the Balists, whose central objective was to establish a 'Greater Albania', which would incorporate the predominantly Albanian areas of Montenegro, Kosovo and Metohija and western Macedonia into this larger Albanian territorial unit.¹⁴⁸ Some divisions of the latter, such as the SS Skanderberg Unit, committed atrocities on Montenegrin territory between 1943 and 1945.

During the period of the SFRY, Albanians were defined as a 'nationality' but not a 'constituent nation'. That said, their status was generally good, despite Serb distrust of their motives. The rise of Serb nationalism in the 1980s worried Albanians in Kosovo, southern Serbia and Montenegro. The Serbian Radical Party claimed that Albanian radical activists were working towards separating Albanian-majority districts from Montenegro and unifying them with Serbia. Wider Serb–Albanian antagonisms had little impact on relations between the two groups in Montenegro itself, where the Albanian minority was better integrated than, for example, in Serbia. In the 1990s, while often criticizing the Montenegrin authorities for the 'exodus of Albanians' and a 'misguided policy towards Kosovo', leaders of Albanians in Montenegro neither challenged the existence of the Montenegrin state nor expressed explicit demands for secession.¹⁴⁹ Unlike in Serbia, the Albanian minority has benefited from specific arrangements that acknowledged the 'special' status of the Albanians – ensuring the participation of Albanian deputies in the Montenegrin parliament.¹⁵⁰

In 1990, before this clarification, there were no such guarantees. Recognizing the problems that minorities faced in Montenegro, the Albanian minority established the first solely Albanian party, the Democratic League of Montenegro (*Demokratski Savez Crne Gore*). With the Bosniak-Muslim SDA and the Party of Equality (SNJ) they united under the banner of the Democratic Coalition to contest the 1990 multi-party elections – the last time they would do so as a united force.¹⁵¹ Formed in the predominantly Albanian coastal town of Ulcinj, the party was led by Mehmet Bardhi (president) and Ljeka Ljuljudjuray (vice-president). The Democratic League was established as the main ethnic Albanian party, remaining so until the Democratic Union of Albanians (DUA) was formed five years later. In 1992, the party encouraged its supporters to boycott the 1 March referendum, while the party did likewise in the May 1992 federal elections. According to Nikolaidis:

The Democratic Union's exclusive national orientation was [therefore] the most appropriate reaction to the period. A significant number of the non-Albanian population in Montenegro, already poisoned with nationalism and exclusionary attitudes, did not hide its hostility towards Albanians as well as Muslims in general. Vojislav Šešelj,¹⁵² leader of the extreme nationalist Serbian Radical Party, roamed through Montenegro with his paramilitary units, 'the White Eagles', and did not hesitate to threaten citizens. The White Eagles went through Ulcinj, surrounding villages twice, and providing Serbs and Montenegrins with weapons. The peaceful citizens of Ulcinj were mortified. Albanians hoped to find protection through the Democratic Union and joined it en masse.¹⁵³

The party also played a key role in the umbrella organization known as the Democratic Forum of Albanians (essentially the Democratic League and small political organizations). In September 1992 the organization's leadership presented a document called the *Memorandum on a Special Status of Albanians in Montenegro*. It claimed that the Albanian minority in Montenegro was being almost completely ignored and that Albanians faced discrimination in all areas of public life, in particular the economic and cultural spheres, not to mention being denied the use of their mother tongue in state institutions and wider public life. The document received a negative response. Serbian parties (such as NS and the Serbian Radicals) and pro-Serbian members of the DPS suspected that the memorandum represented the embryonic stage of future secessionism. The LSCG, for its part, made efforts to highlight the possible future implications of the continuing tendency to isolate Albanians from the Montenegrin political scene.¹⁵⁴

Despite receiving so much public attention, the memorandum was set aside when the Albanian parties failed to win seats in the 1994 parliamentary elections. The issue was revived later in the same year when the Albanian

minority again complained of being excluded from many aspects of public life and almost all central institutions and local administrations. The Democratic Forum of Albanians thought that a form of autonomy should again be sought. This would, they argued 'be beneficial to the ethnic and civic equality and [would] be a sound basis for the precise defining of relations in Montenegro – between Albanians, Muslims and Montenegrins'.¹⁵⁵ This quest for 'special status' was deferred in 1994, only to be raised again in 1996 when Albanian leaders reiterated their claim that the government in Montenegro was continuing to discriminate against ethnic Albanians. The secretary of the Democratic League of Albanians in Montenegro, Muhamet Nikaj, argued that of the 87 million dinars spent by the republican directorate of public works, none was invested in Albanian areas, contributing to a 'ghettoization' of Albanians in Montenegro.¹⁵⁶ The DUA claimed to recognize the territorial integrity of Montenegro and stated its willingness to respect the Montenegrin state, while simultaneously adding that the Montenegrin government should clearly define its internal character and recognize the Albanians as constituent peoples. However, when the dynamics in Montenegrin politics changed with the DPS split, the Albanian parties began to play a more important role in the 1997 presidential elections and the subsequent parliamentary ones. It is estimated that the majority of Albanians favour multiethnic parties over ethnic ones.¹⁵⁷

The Ecclesiastical Battleground

In June 1993, the LSCG and other pro-independence groups organized a large demonstration in Cetinje. LSCG leader Slavko Perović, and Milika Pavlović, the leader of the recently-formed 'Movement against Fascism', were among the speakers who argued that Montenegro should separate from Serbia. Some argued that the Montenegrin Orthodox Church must be recognized as autocephalous. While the interplay between political forces carried on, the ruling authorities continued to chart a course between Montenegro's two political poles, the conflict between two national ideas – *srpstvo* and *crnogorstvo*. The struggle was fought on a number of fronts and by 1993 it had moved into the ecclesiastical sphere. It was, in essence, a political struggle by proxy and it brought to the fore religious organizations that had previously played a marginal role in Montenegrin political life. The *Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva* (Serbian Orthodox Church or SOC) remained the sole orthodox body in Montenegro since Aleksander Karadjordjević had unified the Serbian and Montenegrin orthodox churches in 1920, a development many Montenegrins perceived as a theft of their church and, by extension, of their identity. The *Crnogorska Pravoslavna Crkva* (Montenegrin Orthodox Church or MOC) had existed as an autonomous entity (although its autocephalous status is contested) until it was absorbed or conjoined to the SOC in 1920. As a consequence of this historical ambiguity, the question of the Montenegrin Church's autocephalous status remained open. These debates existed only as an abstraction for most ordinary Montenegrins. As Ičević points out, traditionally 'Montenegrins are not religious in a normal sense of the word. They do not go to church or act in a religious manner. Even Montenegrin bishops and priests were not fervent churchgoers.'¹ The eminent nineteenth-century Russian ethnographer Pavel Rovinski noted that, 'no matter how much a Montenegrin loves his church he does not like to attend the service.'² For Montenegrins who primarily defined themselves as Serbs, Orthodox Christianity had become a pillar of their identity in the post-SFRY age. The SOC played a key role in consolidating the Serbian character of Montenegro during the late 1980s and beyond. Many within the Montenegrin opposition viewed them, and in particular their patriarch Amfilohije Radović, as agents of what they claimed was a 'Greater Serbian

project'. Typical of their rhetoric was the accusation that Amfilohije was an agitator intent on ensuring ecclesiastical control over Montenegro's churches. The leader of the LSCG, Slavko Perović, argued that:

The Serbian Orthodox Church has been present in Montenegro since 1920, working on the assimilation of the Montenegrins, that is, on transferring their national being into the Serbian ethnic corps. With the disintegration of the Yugoslav community, with the arrival of Risto Radović to the throne of the holy Montenegrin metropolitan bishops, there was an attempt to vulgarize this process to the extent that, for instance, now you cannot baptize a child in any Montenegrin church if you declare him as a Montenegrin, and Risto Radović tells the Montenegrins from the holy throne of the metropolitan St Peter of Cetinje that the Montenegrins are a Comintern – Vatican – Bolshevik race, therefore, an invention.³

To redress the imbalance, pro-independence Montenegrins argued that the MOC (which they believed had had its autonomy revoked illegally in 1920) should be re-established. As early as 1990, messages such as 'Long live the Montenegrin Autocephalous Church' began to appear in Cetinje.⁴ Soon, these pro-independence Montenegrins would begin to rebuild the MOC. Such a move, they hoped, would help to consolidate a sense of separate Montenegrin national identity.⁵ Given the political foundations of the re-establishment, it was clear that this was a development driven by political rather than ecclesiastical motivations. The Montenegrin case, however controversial, was hardly unique. As Michael Radu noted, Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe have been no strangers to controversy, being 'openly and actively involved in national politics and intimately and historically connected with the region's dominant post-communist ideology – nationalism.'⁶ Key to this religious/political symbiosis is the structural organization of Orthodox churches, which make it possible that a 'national' church with specific national characteristics can develop. Furthermore, there is no centralized structure within eastern orthodoxy (unlike the Roman Catholic Church), and as a consequence the churches frequently develop distinct local or national characteristics. Consequently, the Orthodox Church frequently (and most notably in the post-communist era) becomes symbiotically connected to nationalist movements, a sort of symbol of the national being.

In Montenegro, the church served as a point of reference for expressing national identity and attitudes towards the state. The SOC was a significant factor in retaining the Serb character of Montenegro and, in so doing, marginalized Montenegrins who defined themselves in national terms. Likewise, the MOC made little secret of its wish for autocephalous status (not to mention political independence). It was representative of the political and social divisions that permeated Montenegrin society. The MOC was

established specifically to oppose the authority of the SOC in Montenegro, and while at the heart of its rhetoric was the issue of its autocephalous status, as an organization it was primarily a political construction with objectives that were consistent with those of Montenegrin nationalists. Indeed, the issue of a separate Montenegrin church had been at the heart of the Liberal Alliance's programme since the party's inception in 1990. The Social Democratic Party and pro-independence intellectuals also supported its programme. According to Miodrag Perović, 'I was asked, as the editor of *Monitor*, to support the Montenegrin Orthodox Church and I supported it. We were hardly alone. The Liberals and Social Democrats also supported it.'⁷ Thus, the project had significant backing from pro-independence parties and individuals. By June 1990 the LSCG had organized a conference in Cetinje with a view to addressing different opinions on the subject.⁸ Demands increased throughout the next year and, on 6 January 1991, an 'All-Montenegrin National Synod' was held during which a restoration of an autocephalous Montenegrin church was requested.⁹ The statement of the synod delivered after the assembly declared that:

*It is an indisputable fact that the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, for several bloody centuries, was the headquarters of Montenegrin statehood and spirituality, and it is unreasonable and culturally untenable that today, when the Montenegrin people have again won their own national state, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church is subordinate to another state's church.*¹⁰

The synod reiterated this message throughout the next two years, and for those who endorsed Montenegrin nationhood, the institution of the church provided an underpinning for the reconstituting of national identity. Thus, by early 1993 the pro-independence LSCG, which opened the debate about the MOC in 1990, had officially recorded its support for the re-establishment of the MOC as a step towards its ultimate objective of an independent Montenegrin state.¹¹ However, the LSCG president, Slavko Perović, argued that his party was not an instrumental factor in the re-establishment of the church, stating that, 'the Liberal Alliance had nothing to do with the project except on the basis that it supports human rights.'¹² However, former LSCG deputy Stanka Vucinić acknowledged later that the party had indeed played an instrumental role in the establishment of the MOC:

The democratic forces in Montenegro, a number of its independent intellectuals and public workers, along with the political leadership of the LSCG, initiated the re-establishment of the autocephalous Montenegrin Orthodox Church. This led to, despite the threats of the police and pro-Serbian paramilitary forces, the passing of a resolution on the traditional Montenegrin Assembly on re-establishment of the

*Montenegrin Church. This act represented the beginning of the spiritual revival of the orthodox Montenegrins, with the intention of being the spiritual pillar for the renewal of the Montenegrin state, which would be achieved only in 2006. The LSCG played a crucial role in establishing the Montenegrin Orthodox Church because we within the leadership of the LSCG knew that there would be no political and national existence of Montenegro or the Montenegrin people without a free and independent Montenegrin Orthodox Church.*¹³

In August 1993, the immediate period before the official re-establishment of the Montenegrin church, US–Yugoslav journalist Duško Doder noted that there were, ‘distinct rumblings of discontent in Montenegro’ adding that, ‘when the Serb patriarch arrived here to consecrate a new church last week, he was greeted with whistles and boos of demonstrators shouting “This is not Serbia. We want a separate church.” Such heresy would have been unthinkable a year earlier.’¹⁴ Establishing parallel writer associations and cultural organizations was one thing, but re-establishing a church that had not existed since 1920 was daring and provocative. In Orthodox tradition autocephaly is universally acknowledged as the mark of legitimate nationhood, and thus it represented a declaration of intent and a clear challenge to the status and authority of the SOC in Montenegro.¹⁵ Nevertheless, soon after, in October 1993, the MOC would indeed be re-established.¹⁶ An estimated 15,000 people gathered in the main square in Cetinje to celebrate it.¹⁷

This reformation of the MOC was dismissed as a criminal and illegitimate act by the Serbian Orthodox Church, which made appeals to other Orthodox churches not to recognize this ‘non-existent and so-called autocephalic Montenegrin Orthodox Church’.¹⁸ The SOC claimed primarily that the MOC was a political creation, ‘formed only to oppose and put pressure on the SOC and the Montenegrin Academy of Arts and Sciences, two institutions that Montenegrin separatists did not control’.¹⁹ Furthermore, it argued that only a church that is formally recognized as autocephalous can appoint its own synod, leaders and monks. Thus, the Montenegrin Church was not a *real* church. Uncertain of the implications of the emerging ecclesiastical crisis, the ruling Montenegrin authorities were initially quick to rebuff the re-establishment of the MOC. Momir Bulatović and Svetozar Marović gave their support to the SOC, which, according to Slavko Perović, demonstrated very clearly ‘that these people [are] working for the project of accomplishing Greater Serbia in Montenegro!’²⁰ The DPS distanced itself. Milan Gajović, a member of the main board of the DPS, avoided any direct comment but drew attention to the political character of the Orthodox Church generally:

In its history, as now, the church and religious community were less oriented towards perfecting the paths leading to God and the perfection of divine and human

*love. They, essentially, were more in the service of a given state or states, a given nation, or even individuals, and on that basis they were primarily oriented towards the manipulative recruitment of people in order to achieve specific political goals.*²¹

Thus, the ruling Montenegrin authorities, all too aware of the importance (not to mention political clout) of the SOC in Montenegro, remained largely hostile towards the MOC and its activities throughout the early years of its existence. According to Momir Bulatović, the Montenegrin authorities at that time simply referred to the MOC as the church led by a 'false priest'.²² While rhetorically opposing its restoration, the MOC would serve as a useful mobilizing tool for pro-independence elites in political struggles to come.

The Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro

Since 1920, the Serbian Orthodox Church has been the sole Orthodox body in Montenegro, with its main administrative centre in the Cetinje monastery, an impressive structure originally built by Ivan Crnojević in 1484. The influence of the Serbian Church, and in particular that of its spiritual (and some would argue, political) leader, Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović, cannot be underestimated. It has played an active role in the creation, consolidation and proliferation of collective (Serbian) myths, not just in Montenegro but throughout 'Serbian' lands.²³ The concept of *Svetosavlje* (Saint-Savaism) was key here; essentially a blend of church, state and nation that is particular to the SOC, this core characteristic represents a blend of orthodoxy and nationalism. In Montenegro, the SOC is the main carrier of Serbian identity, and children baptized in Montenegro are baptized into the SOC.²⁴ To consolidate a collective national (Serbian) identity and sense of shared history, community and destiny, the Serbian Church has embellished myriad symbols and myths. 'Myths', stated Montenegrin Serb poet, Matija Bećković, 'are our religion'.²⁵ Central to these collective myths are those of a common origin and continuity throughout history and a deep veneration of St Sava, and the medieval Serbian Nemanjić dynasty, who were the founders of the Serbian empire and the first to be intrinsically linked with the Serbian Orthodox Church. The links between the state and church remained strong throughout the duration of the Nemanjić dynasty and far beyond, demonstrated by the 'political' characteristics of Serbian saints. According to Anzulović, 'besides the saints it shares with other Orthodox churches, the Serbian church celebrates fifty-nine national saints. Twenty-six of them were rulers or members of the ruling families, predominantly from the Nemanjić dynasty'.²⁶

These are the saints the SOC celebrates in Montenegro. Furthermore, the territory that is now Montenegro had been an integral part of the Nemanjić kingdom, and thus the Montenegrins are nothing if not Serbs. In Monte-

negro, as in Serbia or eastern Herzegovina, the best known and thus most potent of the Serbian myths is the legend of Kosovo and the fall of the Serbian kingdom. The period of Dušan the Mighty's Serbian empire is often perceived as Serbia's finest hour and the Battle of Kosovo, which followed Dušan's death, its darkest hour. Montenegro (or Zeta) comes into its own after the defeat of 1389. According to the Serbian version of events, many fighters from Kosovo fled the wrath of the advancing Ottoman army, settled in Montenegro and continued their resistance, keeping the flame of Serbian independence alight. However, the SOC, at this juncture, had no influence over events in Montenegro and the tiny territory developed its own peculiarities – in particular the role of the *Vladika*. However, when Serbia and Montenegro were reunited in 1918 the Serbian Orthodox Church agitated for a union of all South Slav Orthodox Churches, with Belgrade chosen as the location of the patriarchate. After all, they argued, Serbs and Montenegrins were branches of the same nation; they had united politically and should thus unite under the umbrella of a unified church.

Given the contested nature of the Podgorica Assembly in 1918, one would imagine that there was some opposition to the unification of the two churches. Not so, says the SOC. Despite the existence of political disputes over the nature of the postwar union with Serbia, there was no such dissension within the Orthodox clergy; Montenegrin bishops, they argue, voted unanimously on the declaration that 'the independent Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro unites with the autocephalous Orthodox Church in the Kingdom of Serbia'.²⁷ Indeed, according to the information service of the Serbian Orthodox Church, an autocephalous Montenegrin church has never existed:

*Historical science is familiar with the fact that, from 1766, that is, from the abolition of the Patriarchate of Peć, to 1920, the Montenegrin Metropolitanate was an autonomous church community. As such it would not have survived and continued to exist without an obvious, immediate and direct help of the Serbian Metropolitanate in Karlovci and the Russian Orthodox Church. The Montenegrin Metropolitanate, needless to say, never formally asked anyone for and therefore never received a formal document – 'tomos' which is required when a particular Church wants to become autocephalous. It is also very well known that such a document could only be issued by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople.*²⁸

Thus, the main thrust of the argument is that the Montenegrin Church has never existed as an autocephalous institution and that the SOC is the sole legitimate Orthodox Church in Montenegro. The leaders of the Montenegrin Church consistently accuse the SOC of denying Montenegrins a separate

nation. Conversely, the Serbian Church leaders argue that ‘we are all Serbs and it is thus natural that we should have only one church.’²⁹ A visit to either of the churches confirms this polarization.

The Serbian Church locates the Montenegrins’ Serbian ethnic origins – the ‘real’ soul of the Montenegrin people – in the Nemanjić dynasty, St Sava and Kosovo. This belief is reflected in the rhetoric of the current Metropolitan of the SOC in Montenegro, Amfilohije Radović. Greatly respected by his clergy and berated by his critics, he is a controversial but fascinating figure and one of the most prominent ones to articulate the belief (which a number of Montenegrins share) that his forefathers – Serbs – fled the yoke of Islam to Montenegro where the Serbian nation could be restored after the Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389, and that Montenegrins are essentially the Serbian bulwark – ‘best and purest of Serbs’:

*During the Turkish attacks all the Serbs, peasants and nobles, gathered in these mountains to try to preserve their faith. And it was here that a spark of freedom for the Serbs emerged. If we’re talking about ethnic identity, in Montenegro it’s well known and there’s plenty of evidence that from ancient times Serbs have lived here – in fact from the time of the Slavic immigration to the Balkans. This was a Serbian state and has been since the Middle Ages.*³⁰

Amfilohije Radović is a Montenegrin (from the village of Bare in the Morača region) but defines himself as a Serb. His illustrious career began with a period of study at St Sava’s Seminary. He then went to the theological faculty of Belgrade University, where he later taught. After a spell as Bishop of Banat in the 1980s, he was elected as the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral in 1990, a period of significant turmoil in Montenegro and throughout Yugoslavia. Guests at his inauguration included NS leader Novak Kilibarda (whose party strongly supported Amfilohije throughout), Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, and the poet Matija Bećković.³¹

Amfilohije soon demonstrated that he was as political as he was spiritual. During the wars in Croatia and Bosnia he became notorious for supporting the Serbian nationalist cause, frequently visiting Bosnia to offer his support to Serb troops. Within Montenegro, he controversially invited Serbian paramilitary leader Željko Ražnjatović (Arkan) and his paramilitary group ‘the Tigers’ to the Cetinje monastery on two occasions – on St Peter’s Day in 1991 and during Orthodox Christmas 1992.³² On the first of these occasions, Arkan and his troops entered Cetinje monastery fully armed, while on the second, he addressed those gathered outside declaring that ‘Skadar would be Montenegrin again’.³³ Meanwhile, Amfilohije remained a staunch supporter of the Serbian nationalist cause, frequently visiting Pale (in Bosnia) and imploring Serb soldiers there to continue the good fight.

Initially a supporter of Slobodan Milošević, Amfilohije turned against him when Belgrade broke away from Pale in 1994. From then on, Amfilohije openly criticized Slobodan Milošević's policies. He was equally vocal in his condemnation of the Montenegrin government. In August 1995 Amfilohije addressed the Montenegrin Assembly and demanded that the government reverse its support for the sanctions imposed on Pale by Belgrade (and Podgorica).³⁴ This opposition to Milošević dictated that Amfilohije initially found common ground with Milo Djukanović (who received blessings from him before his inauguration as president in January 1998), although this understanding was to be short lived.

Amfilohije boosted the profile of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. According to the official information of the Metropolitanate of the SOC, he oversaw the flourishing of the Montenegrin branch of the Serbian Church, increasing the number of priests, monks, nuns and the faithful 'from only 10 active monasteries and parish churches with about 20 monks and nuns in 1991 to more than 30 active monasteries with more than 160 monks by 2002'.³⁵ He also became a key contributor to the debates on Montenegrin identity, nationhood and statehood, and even the *de facto* leader of the unionist cause. His views on Montenegrin nationhood are simple – he regards the Montenegrin nation as an invention, a creation of Montenegrin 'separatism' driven by external interests. The MOC he regards simply as 'Titoists' who remain intent on attacking the SOC.

His pronouncement that all Montenegrins are Serbs may have offended those who defined themselves as Montenegrins nationally, but it ensured that Amfilohije remained a hugely popular figure among Montenegro's Serbs. According to CEDEM polls conducted between September 2003 and August 2004, he is one of the most trusted figures in Montenegrin public life.³⁶ He is, however, a divisive character. While enjoying popularity among Serbs in Montenegro, others such as pro-independence political parties, independent (or less independent) intellectuals, and the Montenegrin Church consistently portray him as a war criminal and a dangerous fundamentalist intent on provoking conflict among Montenegrins.³⁷ As a public figure, he has polarized public opinion, evoking either high praise or fierce criticism.³⁸

Facing such a powerful adversary, the Montenegrin Church put a considerable amount of energy and quite a few resources into revealing, to anyone who would listen, the dark side of his character. The MOC's anti-Amfilohije enterprise included endorsing a book written by Vešeljko Koprivica entitled *Amfilohijeva sabrana ne-djela* (The Misdeeds of Amfilohije) in which Radović is portrayed as a committed Serbian nationalist who stoked the flames of conflict during the Yugoslav wars of succession.³⁹ Koprivica is not alone. Other pro-independence politicians and intellectuals have denounced Amfilohije's role in Montenegrin social (and political life). Slavko

Perović described him as ‘exclusively an instrument of the militant greater Serbian politics in Montenegro’,⁴⁰ and, according to Miodrag Perović, the editor of the pro-independence weekly *Monitor*, he ‘agitated for war, took part in it, and after its conclusion continues to fight for the ideas that led to war.’ Furthermore, he adds:

He played gusle to cheer the soldiers on the Dubrovnik theatre of war, while they shelled the ancient city; he lived in the mountains around Sarajevo, while they showered it with death and destruction; he invited Arkan and his friends to point their guns from the Cetinje monastery windows against people demonstrating against the war and the abuse of religion. After the war he continued to erase signs of cultural coexistence – e.g. churches with two altars – from the soil of Montenegro, and spread hatred throughout the land.⁴¹

Thus, Amfilohije was loved by his followers but berated by his opponents. Metropolitan Mihailo Dedeić was a less imposing figure, yet the argument between the two churches was personified by these two men. Both were controversial, both frequently exchanged personal slurs and, as ‘representatives’ of the increasingly separate Serb and Montenegrin national factions, both were highly politicized.⁴²

The Montenegrin Orthodox Church

The links of the Serbian Orthodox Church with Serbian nationalism marginalized members of Montenegro’s Orthodox population who did not agree with Amfilohije’s sentiments or necessarily define themselves as Serbs. The re-establishment of the Montenegrin Church in 1993 sought to redress this imbalance, an act the Serbian Church perceived as controversial, provocative, ultimately illegal and primarily political (the Serbian Church noted the involvement of the pro-independence party, the LSCG). Pro-independence Montenegrins re-established the autocephalous Montenegrin Church in the hope that it would facilitate the unification of all Montenegrins through the worship of specifically Montenegrin saints and cults – a vital stage in consolidating and reinforcing Montenegrin national identity.⁴³ This, they hoped, would aid the medium-term objective of establishing an independent Montenegrin state, with the church acting as the central pillar of the nation.⁴⁴ According to Cross and Komnenich, the rhetorics of the MOC and SOC were mutually exclusive:

The Montenegrin Church argues that St Vladimir, a Catholic, was king and founder of the state of Duklja, and that the Montenegrins converted from Catholicism to Orthodoxy after the occupation by the Serbian ‘despot’ Stevan Nemanja in 1186. The Montenegrin church leadership claims therefore that

*conversion to Orthodoxy should not be 'misinterpreted' to suggest that the Montenegrins are Serbs.*⁴⁵

In addition to the rhetoric of separatism,⁴⁶ MOC officials claimed that their institution had existed as an independent entity since 1603, which both the Holy Russian Synod and the Patriarchy of Constantinople had recognized in 1766.⁴⁷ A number of historians support this claim. Živko Andrijašević, for example, argues that the Montenegrin Church (Cetinje Metropolitane) was a Metropolitanate of the Peć patriarchate until the fifteenth century when it became independent.⁴⁸ However, the issue of Montenegrin autocephaly was not new; the matter had periodically re-emerged, usually disappearing as quickly as it had appeared. During the communist era, when Montenegro was given republican status, the Serbian patriarchate became increasingly anxious about a regime-driven schism, especially since the communists were encouraging ecclesiastical separatism and promoting it strongly during the early post-Second World War years.⁴⁹ The Macedonian Church had been awarded autocephalous status, but the Montenegrin church had not.⁵⁰ The communists recognized Montenegrin separateness but simultaneously acknowledged the dualistic character of their identity – their overarching 'Serb-ness'. This rather blurred definition suited the SOC, which continued to pursue the argument that, despite Montenegro's status as a republic within the SFRY, Montenegrins were, in essence, Serbs. The Serbian Church often argued that attempts to attack the unity and integrity of the church were led by 'the government's encouragement of separatist priests in Montenegro'.⁵¹ However, in 1970, the then Serbian Patriarch, a German, left little doubt how the SOC perceived the national orientation of the Montenegrins stating that they were simply Serbs by another name.⁵²

Pro-independence Montenegrins often cited the case of the Macedonian Church as a justification for Montenegrin autocephaly. Macedonian 'national' identity was, after all, even more contested and tenuous than the Montenegrin one.⁵³ Although Yugoslav communists had recognized the Macedonian Church since 1967, the SOC (or for that matter any other Orthodox Church) had not. In fact the Serbian Church, though accepting that churches and monasteries built since 1967 were not under its jurisdiction but under that of the Macedonian Church, continued to hold with its line. In Macedonia, as in Montenegro, many people regarded a separate Orthodox Church as the key to their nationhood.⁵⁴ The Montenegrin Orthodox Church frequently compared itself with the Orthodox Church of Macedonia, claiming that it too should be recognized as an independent entity.⁵⁵

The SOC was, however, well established in Montenegro. It had a sound institutional structure, the support of the Patriarchate of Moscow and of Constantinople (Istanbul), and its base in the Cetinje monastery gave it the air

of an ancient, established and legitimate institution. The headquarters of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, however, are less than a mile away on the outskirts of Cetinje in rather less impressive surroundings, best described as a domestic dwelling on three floors. The ground floor is where liturgies take place, while the upper floors serve as the administrative centre of the church. The only features setting it apart from the equally drab houses surrounding it are a large bell and a Montenegrin flag. The interior, which is more ornate, is decorated with all the iconography of a traditional Orthodox Church (but adorned with flags depicting the gold Montenegrin cross and paintings of Montenegrin saints). Metropolitan Mihailo, the head of the Church who resides there, sees it as a temporary residence until such times as the MOC can move officially into the Cetinje monastery.⁵⁶

From this modest base, Mihailo agitated for Montenegrin autocephaly, happily telling anyone who would listen that his cause was just. He is the second Metropolitan of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. From its reinception in 1993, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church was led by the Archimandrite Antonije Abramović, who returned from Canada where he had been the Metropolitan of the Toronto branch of the American Orthodox Church.⁵⁷ Like his eventual successor, Abramović was a controversial figure and rumours abounded about the strength (or lack of) of his moral fibre. During the 1950s he had spent time in Kosovo with the current Serbian Patriarch Pavle, followed by a spell as the Abbot of Savina in Herceg-Novi. However, by 1964 the Serbian Orthodox Church had asked him to leave because of his alleged homosexual activity.⁵⁸ Furthermore, and more crucially, there was a question mark over whether or not Abramović had ever been consecrated as a priest. According to Theodosius, the Archbishop of Washington, Orthodox Church of All America and Canada, in correspondence with Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople:

On October 28, 1993, His Holiness, Patriarch Pavle informed us that a retired cleric (Archimandrite Anthony Abramovich) was falsely representing himself as an auxiliary (Vicar) bishop of Edmonton (Canada) of the Orthodox Church in America. He has (as we have been officially informed) become involved in and supporting the uncanonical and unchristian action of causing schism and division in the Holy Serbian Orthodox Church. On October 29, 1993, we faxed a response in which we affirmed that Archimandrite Anthony Abramovich was never consecrated by us or, to my knowledge, by any other canonical Orthodox Church.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, by 1993 Abramović had returned to Montenegro where he was appointed Metropolitan of the newly re-established MOC.⁶⁰ A base was established in the ancient capital of Cetinje, also the headquarters of the Serbian Church's bishopric of Montenegro. He remained at the helm for

almost four years until his death in 1996. He was succeeded by the equally controversial Mihailo Dedeić in January 1997. The Serbian Orthodox Church was (and is) unrelenting in its criticism of both Abramović and Dedeić. According to it, as a student Mihailo was viewed with suspicion by his fellow Orthodox priests who doubted his commitment to Orthodoxy.⁶¹ Alleged unclerical behaviour on Dedeić's part led to the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople defrocking, excommunicating and anathematizing him.⁶² The official line in the Serbian Orthodox Church is that Dedeić is a defrocked priest leading a clergy 'comprised of former Communist party hacks, atheists, separatists, and Albanians with a political, not spiritual, agenda'.⁶³ Claims that the MOC is simply a quasi-political organization with specific political objectives were roundly rejected by Mihailo, who argued:

I am aware of these accusations regarding our objectives. The Serbian Orthodox Church claim that we here are a political organization – they recognize or acknowledge nothing; they say that Montenegro is Serbia and that the Montenegrin Church is the Serbian Church. I cannot say that this is the most spiritual church, but there are believers here, and this serves as a Christian Church, an Orthodox Church. No one here has a political objective, only spiritual.⁶⁴

Mihailo saw the integration of the Montenegrin Church into the wider Serbian Church in 1920 as a theft of Montenegro's identity, an imposition of Serb identity on Montenegro and an occupation of the MOC's sacred buildings.⁶⁵ He saw the SOC's role in Montenegro as occupiers who imposed themselves on the Montenegrin nation after the MOC had been forcibly dissolved against both the constitution and canon law.⁶⁶ The incorporation of the Montenegrin Church in 1920 was therefore, a 'traumatic loss' for a tiny nation already reeling from the contested nature of newly-established political union. According to Metropolitan Mihailo, 'with the extradition of King Nikola in 1918, Montenegro as a kingdom and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church as an institution were erased from the map of Europe; there was no voluntary unification of the Serbian and Montenegrin Orthodox Churches. There was only "unification by force"'.⁶⁷ The perception that the Montenegrins were robbed of their Church and other aspects of their identity is central to the Montenegrin Church's rhetoric. Denial of recognition of an autocephalous Montenegrin Church, it is argued, simultaneously implies a denial of the existence of the Montenegrin nation.

Autocephaly, Ownership and Log Burning

The bitter public exchanges between Amfilohije and Dedeić often belied the issues at the heart of the matter, the autocephaly question and the equally serious debates over ownership of Montenegro's religious buildings and

related property. The MOC began to lay claim to a number of churches being administered by the Serbian Church, among them the ancient Cetinje monastery. By the late 1990s, despite protests from the SOC, the MOC had gained possession by plebiscites held among parishioners of 26 temples the SOC had previously administered. A number of more controversial actions were also undertaken. In December 2000, for example, supporters of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church attempted to take possession of the Vlaška temple in Donji Kraj, Cetinje, a church with much historical significance.⁶⁸ The reason for this action was to stop the SOC renovating the church and eliminating evidence of its 'Montenegrin' origins.

In protest against the 'appropriation' of the church, a priest from the SOC, Radomir Nikčević, barricaded himself in the temple and embarked on a hunger strike. The parishioners of the Vlaška church were largely locals from Cetinje who supported the re-establishment of the Montenegrin Church (and a pro-independence agenda generally).⁶⁹ Leading the local parishioners was Božidar Bogdanović, known as 'the General', who later, during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, led a similar band of citizens who stopped the Yugoslav Army entering Cetinje during the conflict. When Bogdanović's irregulars and local police refused to surrender their checkpoint a tense standoff ensued, thus demonstrating the tension that existed between the pro-union and pro-independence factions in Montenegro.⁷⁰ His subsequent arrest by the Yugoslav Army provoked a threat of armed rebellion by the people of Cetinje. Bogdanović became the vanguard of the Montenegrin independence movement in Cetinje. In an interview with the BBC in 2000 he stated, leaving no room for ambiguity, that 'We are absolutely ready to die for our country because Montenegro is one distinct and individual country and it belongs to us Montenegrins – we'll defend it to the end.'⁷¹

The combination of conflicts over ownership and autocephaly, mixed with the overarching tensions between followers of the respective churches, led to problems during church festivals and on religious holidays. This found its most pronounced manifestation during the 'Burning of the Yule Log' ritual festival performed on Orthodox Christmas Eve all over Serb lands; the most controversial of these took place in Cetinje with symbols of Serbian and Montenegrin nationalism – songs, flags, and icons – intensifying an already emotive conflict.⁷² Both churches held separate ceremonies, each burning its own yule log within several hundred metres of each other – supporters of the SOC outside the Cetinje monastery and supporters of the MOC in nearby King Niklola's Square. The first of these parallel events took place in 1991⁷³ and the manifestations were primarily of a political character. Supporting either Church became a matter not only of faith in God but of faith in the nation. The SOC protested vehemently that the Montenegrin autocephalists had hijacked a 'Serbian tradition'. In a letter to the Archbishop of Constan-

tinople, Serbian Patriarch Pavle appealed to all Orthodox churches not to recognize the 'schismatic' and illegal MOC: 'Despite the fact that he was forbidden to celebrate, this cleric celebrated "Liturgy" on the Eve of Christmas at the city square in Cetinje, with another defrocked and from the Church excommunicated cleric, Mr Cvijić. Some hundreds of Montenegrin autocephalists proclaimed Dedeić as "head" of the non-existent "Autocephalous Montenegrin Church"'.⁷⁴ Throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s 'religious' meetings became akin to political rallies frequently marred by low-intensity violence. According to Želidrag Nikčević of the Serbian People's Party of Montenegro, Serbs in Montenegro despised the MOC's misappropriation of a Serbian tradition; they are, he argues, 'not a church in the truest sense of the word. They have support on only one day of the year when they gather for the burning of the yule log. Basically they have few liturgies and little genuine support outside political support'.⁷⁵

While supporters of the SOC carried banners and flags bearing Serbian Church iconography, as well as pictures of Slobodan Milošević and of the Karadjordjević dynasty, the faithful of the Montenegrin Church bore symbols of the old Montenegrin state and dynastic emblems from the Petrović dynasty. The rival groups used traditional means to intimidate each other – singing nationalist songs, fist-fighting and pistol shooting, albeit only in the air.⁷⁶ The Christmas Eve celebrations in Cetinje dangerously bipolarized ordinary Montenegrin society. Cetinje became the focus of conflict between supporters of rival churches, a microcosm of the overarching but still largely marginalized divisions in Montenegro.⁷⁷ Incidents were not confined to Cetinje. In Berane, in the north of Montenegro, traditionally a Serbian stronghold, a number of violent incidents took place. According to the SOC, supporters of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church attacked 30 of its members during the *Badnjak*⁷⁸ festival in the northern Montenegrin town.⁷⁹ In Nikšić it was alleged that Serbian paramilitaries intimidated a Montenegrin priest and physically abused a number of his parishioners.⁸⁰ Six months later, followers of the Serbian Orthodox Church were forbidden to hold ceremonies in the village of Njeguši in the heartland of *Stara Crnagora* (Old Montenegro).

As the church conflict began to escalate into a *de facto* nationalist struggle, the Montenegrin authorities sought to defuse tensions between the churches. Milo Djukanović courted controversy by sending, for the first time, Easter greetings to the MOC as well as the SOC, providing the latter with a pretext to accuse him of promoting separatism.⁸¹ Problematically, the church issue divided Djukanović's government and his party, the DPS.⁸² Accordingly, Svetozar Marović, the then speaker of the Montenegrin parliament, condemned the Montenegrin Church for supporting the seizure of two churches on an island in Lake Scutari, but Djukanović frequently hinted at support for the Montenegrin Church's quest for autocephalous status.

The Collapse of the Monolith: The DPS Split

While those supporting Montenegrin independence could agitate for the establishment of an independent state, establish parallel institutions and ecclesiastical bodies, they were not in power and thus not in possession of the machinery of the state that would be required to realize their ultimate objective. For this to be achieved, the ruling authorities would have to support such a project, and in the immediate period following the establishment of the FRY looked highly unlikely to do so. The raw material that would create the basis for such a project now existed, but little could be achieved while the DPS remained a unified party. A split within the ruling party did not appear to be in the interest of the party's core elite. As the vice president of the SDP, Dragiša Burzan, noted, 'the DPS in the early 1990s was a monolithic party of power. No one really believed that the party – regardless of whatever internal tensions may exist – would ever split. It simply was not in the interests of party members.'¹ Yet, by 1997, the party's internal tensions were becoming increasingly manifest. The subsequent conflicts among party elites throughout the early months of 1997 would lead to the split within Montenegro's dominant party. More importantly, it would mark a watershed in Montenegrin political life, recalibrating the character of Montenegrin politics and bringing to the surface deep societal divisions. As Slobodan Vučetić has pointed out, this was a *very* significant event for Montenegro:

As the period from 1992 to 1997 was essentially marked by an agreement between the two ruling parties on Serbian and Montenegro (SPS and DPS) on the functioning of the federation, so was the period between 1997 until October 2000 marked by serious political conflicts. The first was an internal Montenegrin conflict in which the focus was the relationship between the DPS and the SNP. The second was the anti-Milošević one, which dealt not only with the conceptual issues of reform but also with defending the increasingly endangered equal state position of Montenegro in the Federation.²

Following the split, the DPS separated into two factions – pro- and anti-

Milošević. Initially, the conflict was framed within this context. However, it would gradually evolve into a conflict with a pro-union–pro-independence dynamic. As Darmanović noted, Montenegrin politics would henceforth be dominated, not by ‘the left–right axis, liberalism–conservatism, increase of profits–social security’, but by the ‘*the problem of statehood*, i.e. the independentism–integralism axis’.³ This served to intensify political divisions within Montenegro, while simultaneously worsening relations with Serbia. While there were obvious dangers in adopting an anti-Milošević stance, there emerged, for those elites allied to Milo Djukanović, significant opportunities. As a vital front in US policy that sought to erode Milošević’s authority from the peripheries of the Yugoslav state (particularly Montenegro and Kosovo), the tiny republic would receive significant levels of aid, which would be used to construct, not simply a bulwark against the Serbian leadership, but the institutional foundations of an independent state. The divisions created were such that Montenegro came close to civil war on two occasions between 1997 and 2000. War was avoided and by the time of Slobodan Milošević’s downfall in October 2000, Montenegrin elites from within the ruling structures had already begun their project of attaining independence.

Internal Party Conflicts

The mid-1990s saw the Montenegrin leadership incrementally disassociate itself from the policies of Slobodan Milošević and his party (the SPS). There was no consensus within the DPS on whether it was in Montenegro’s interests to remain so closely bound to such policies. This lack of consensus was the pretext for a lively intra-party debate on the future orientation of the party. Lack of consensus soon grew into an internal party crisis that would eventually split the ruling party. It would be a significant watershed. Despite problems at inception, Momir Bulatović claimed in a 1993 interview for the Yugoslav news agency *Tanjug* that, despite all the obvious problems experienced by the FRY in the first year and a half of its existence, the future of the federation was positive:

*Quite naturally, this federation is going through many trials and tribulations – we are being severely punished and shunned by the international community, and a war is raging in our neighbourhood which we cannot afford to ignore. On the other hand, we are coping with the great difficulties accompanying the construction of a democratic society, a democratic federation that will take into consideration the specific and realistic interests of two economically and geographically different, while historically and ethnically close, republics such as Serbia and Montenegro. Nevertheless, I believe that the FRY is a state that has bright prospects for the development of democracy; it is a state worth fighting for and I believe that the majority of citizens of Montenegro and Serbia share this view.*⁴

Three and a half years later, the context had changed dramatically. Little in the way of 'bright prospects' had materialized. It was the source of increasing dissatisfaction with the FRY – founded on the belief that Montenegro, due to the imposition of UN sanctions, was being punished for the crimes of the larger FRY republic.⁵ Bulatović was finding it increasingly difficult to argue that the FRY possessed what he described as 'bright prospects for the development of democracy', or that the federation was preserving the best interests of Montenegrins. Montenegro's subservient role in the federation was summed up by the then Yugoslav President Dobrica Ćosić's statement that, 'there is no such thing as Yugoslav foreign policy, there is only Serbian policy, which has usurped federal policy'. Such a policy, he noted, may lead to Montenegro 'trying to emancipate itself'.⁶ However, despite the increasing dissatisfaction, Montenegro's ruling DPS had settled into a period of unchallenged dominance. The party's leaders tended to fend off suggestions that separation from Serbia might bring significant benefits – most specifically the lifting of economic sanctions. Accusations that some in the party were closet separatists were fobbed off. Montenegrin prime minister Milo Djukanović sought to dampen the increasing sentiment for separation stating: 'I definitely do not believe the talk about how immediately after Montenegro secedes it will get its just reward – the lifting of sanctions against our republic – because right now there is not a single reason to believe such a promise, which, indeed, no one has made.'⁷

This was not enough to satisfy the Serb parties in Montenegro, which increasingly viewed Milo Djukanović as the most likely person to harbour 'separatist tendencies'. The Serbian Radical Party remained the most radical Serb nationalist party in Montenegro throughout the early 1990s, its rhetoric becoming increasingly problematic for Montenegro's ruling authorities, in particular for Prime Minister Milo Djukanović. During a Serbian Radical Party press conference in Montenegro, its leader, Acem Višnjić declared that prime minister Milo Djukanović was a criminal who had 'no equal anywhere on the planet, or anywhere on the planets of the solar system!'⁸ To compound this, relations with Serbia were also deteriorating. On 30 January 1997, Zoran Lilić, the then president of the FRY visited Podgorica in an attempt to improve the rapidly deteriorating relations between the federation's two republics. A small number of the key Montenegrin elite had shifted towards an anti-Milošević stance in the wake of the Serbian elections of November 1996 (in which Milošević had been accused of electoral fraud). Such a development further destabilized increasingly strained relations between the FRY's two members, and increased intra-DPS relations (something Lilić alluded to). Lilić was sent to Podgorica to calm tensions and iron out difficulties, but upon arrival found that the mood in Montenegro had darkened. As he recounts:

I was chosen, as a neutral in this affair, to lead the delegation to Podgorica. But Djukanović's people organized demonstrations against us from the moment we landed at Podgorica. Crowds lined the route, throwing tomatoes and things at us. So that was when we [the Serb regime] started supporting Bulatović. Frankly, it was a mistake to get mixed up in Montenegrin politics. We should never have taken sides there. As a result we now had no control over Montenegro except through the army.⁹

Lilić's experience was simply a portent of things to come in Montenegro. The tensions between the two republics were mirrored in the intra-elite debates within the DPS, and increasingly, cracks were emerging in Montenegro's ruling DPS between those who continued to support the Serbian regime and those who wanted to put distance between the two republics. While President Bulatović remained supportive of the federation and towards Slobodan Milošević, his prime minister was becoming increasingly disillusioned. Milo Djukanović, whose relationship with Milošević had been deteriorating since the beginning of 1994, was of the opinion that the Serbian election fraud represented 'the last straw'.¹⁰ Rumblings of discontent had been manifest for some time. While on a visit to the United States (the Pentagon) in November 1995, it was alleged that Djukanović and Marović had offered the port of Bar for logistical services of the peacekeeping forces in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Such a move was opposed by Milošević, Serb parties and the pro-Serb faction within the DPS. At a news conference called upon their return, Milinko Gazdić, the vice chairman of the Serbian Radical Party accused Djukanović and Marović of making preparations for Montenegro's (US-backed) secession, adding that his party knew this to be true on the basis of reports that were already in their possession.¹¹ Djukanović had indeed met with US President Bill Clinton in early summer 1996, and critics were quick to suggest that the two men had discussed the possibility of Montenegrin secession, among other things – even the possibility that the Montenegrins would donate funds for Clinton's 1996 presidential campaign.¹² Whatever, the substance of the discussions, it was clear that some within the Montenegrin leadership were moving closer to the USA, and doing so without broad party consensus. The shift in Djukanović's rhetoric could clearly be seen prior to the DPS split. In a speech to the Montenegrin Assembly in July 1996, for example, Montenegrin prime minister, Milo Djukanović, hinted at his new course, emphasizing the importance of establishing better relations with its regional neighbours and with the international community (and hinting that by being party of the FRY, Montenegro was blackened by association):

We wish to come closer to Europe in all aspects, and we wish to become an institutional part of the united and developed Europe as soon as possible. Another foreign policy priority is our relations with the US. ... Unfortunately due to our long

*absence from US political and public life, a bad impression still prevails about Montenegro as a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, although we have changed that impression to some extent through intensive diplomatic activity. We wish to further improve that image, respecting the fact that the leading role of the United States of America will bring a far more rapid change in the stand of the international community towards Montenegro, and we hope also towards the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.*¹³

This rhetoric represented a none too subtle hint at Montenegro's future direction – that it sought to move closer to the EU and US, and implying it would do so within or without Serbia or in or out of the FRY structure. It was a message warmly received by the US, which saw Djukanović as an important factor in weakening Slobodan Milošević from the peripheral territories of the FRY. A Montenegro that opposed Milošević would be a useful tool for US regional objectives. The US strategy was threefold – to attempt to unite and bolster the Serbian opposition within Serbia itself, to offer support to Ibrahim Rugova in Kosovo and to encourage the Montenegrins to look beyond the FRY structure. The new US ambassador to the FRY, Robert Gelbard, made this clear upon his arrival, noting later that:

*We began to try to work to test the Serbian opposition and to see what kind of people they really were. At the same time, of course, on a slightly different track, but related, we wanted also to begin to talk with Djukanović, who was on the verge of becoming President of Montenegro and at that time was still the Prime Minister.*¹⁴

Implicit or explicit, the US demonstrated support for Djukanović and, by extension, a Djukanović-led split within Montenegro's ruling DPS. The Montenegrin prime minister could be sure that he would receive more than rhetorical support from the US in the event of such an outcome. The catharsis, however, did not come until mid-1997.¹⁵ As we have previously seen, the period from 1992 to 1997 was, according to Vučetić, 'marked by an agreement between the two ruling parties in Montenegro (the DPS) and Serbia (the SPS) on the functioning of the federation.'¹⁶ By March 1997, the agreement was null and void. If consensus was the order of the day during this period, it was in stark contrast to the period from 1997 to 2000, a three-year period that would be marked by serious political conflicts and dangerous brinkmanship. Initially, these conflicts were internal (within the DPS), only slowly developing an external characteristic (between pro- and anti-Milošević forces), before evolving into an open struggle between the two predominant national ideologies in Montenegro – that of the previously dominant Serbian nationalist idea and the 'Montenegrin alternative'. But this was not simply a matter restricted to elites in Serbia and Montenegro. The DPS split would pit

Milošević, Bulatović and Serb nationalists against Djukanović, Montenegrin nationalists, the US and the EU.¹⁷

Aristotle famously remarked that oligarchic governments were essentially unstable because they protected and advanced the interests of the wealthy few. He also acknowledged that such a system inevitably led to competition among the members of the ruling elite, generating conflicts within the small and closed elite.¹⁸ The DPS, the party that had emerged from the Montenegrin League of Communists, was a classic post-communist party controlled by a small ruling elite, with a significant power structure – in essence a party that changed its name yet retained the structure (as was the case with many eastern European communist parties) of the Montenegrin Communist Party (KPCG).¹⁹ As a large homogenous party of power, its members comprised a wide ideological spectrum (from nationalists to ex-communists) and pro-union and pro-independence factions (or at least those that would later gravitate towards either option). In the interest of the preservation of political dominance and economic benefits, the party charted a course between these two poles. The DPS leaders (many of whom were instrumental players in the anti-bureaucratic revolution in Montenegro in 1989) had maintained a firm grip on power in a manner that mirrored their predecessors in the Communist Party.²⁰ A core characteristic of the DPS was their reluctance to allow the emergence of political alternatives that could challenge their power base; they frequently attacked both the pro-Serbian parties and the parties that supported a sovereign Montenegro. However, while the autocratic character of the ruling Montenegrin party may, in many ways, have mirrored that of the communists, the ideological pulse within the DPS was quite different. Srdjan Darmanović argued that since the party acquired power in 1989 it was strictly a ‘party of power’ within which there was little ideological focus. The DPS was, he states:

a composite party of intertwining group and personal interests and heterogeneous political currents, not infrequently opposing each other. The existence of divergent interests and political currents had been mostly kept under the carpet, both because they had never generated such internal political differences as to threaten the functioning of the party, and because everyone was aware of the ultimate common interest binding them together: the preservation of absolute power.²¹

Emerging tensions dictated that by 1997 the preservation of consensus was no longer viable. Intra-party debates regarding Montenegro’s status within the FRY in the early months of that year demonstrated that difficult times were ahead for this monolithic party. At this stage, however, it was not clear that the worsening crisis within the leadership of the DPS would serve to change the dynamics of Montenegrin politics or, by extension, shape

Montenegro's wider societal relations. The conflict within the DPS began as an argument among ruling elites, but it hastened the process (which had been manifested at the grass roots and among non-ruling elites) that would bring the issue of Montenegrin state and nation to the fore. It would, however, be misleading to portray the DPS split as one with a nationalist dynamic (the romantic stereotype that a courageous group of elites led by Milo Djukanović bravely defended Montenegrin interests against an aggressive Serbia). It was, in essence, a conflict about interests; political, economic and personal; by definition, a conflict between elites dictated to by elite interests. Only gradually did these conflicts require the mobilization of popular support, and only then did it transpose into a *de facto* nationalist struggle. In times of heightened political and societal crisis, defence of 'the nation appears as the ultimate guarantee'.²² Thus, both pro-Serbian and pro-Montenegrin factions of the DPS would utilize Serbian and Montenegrin nationalism in the post-split era to revitalize and consolidate support for their objectives. But by doing so they would reopen Montenegro's deep divisions.

However, many members of the DPS were not necessarily predisposed towards any particular national ideology. The party leadership (Momir Bulatović as president, Milo Djukanović as prime minister), at least since The Hague debacle in 1991 and the FRY constitutional arguments in 1992, had been content to remain a loyal and compliant junior partner of Slobodan Milošević's Serbia; thus, they posed little in the way of problems for his regional power ambitions.²³ There were moments when this cosy arrangement was mildly disturbed, but relations between Bulatović and Milošević remained stable (if unequal). Since Bulatović's controversial dissension over the Carrington plan, and his attempts at advancing a 'confederal' model for the FRY, he had essentially remained a staunch Milošević loyalist.²⁴ Years later, in his memoirs titled *Pravila Čutanja*, Bulatović gave an insight into the personal dynamics between himself and the president of Serbia, also offering us an insight into the complex relationship between Montenegro and Serbia: 'Of course there were many things about which we had a difference of opinion and action,' he stated, 'not even with my brother do I agree on everything – yet it never occurs to me to deny that we are linked by destiny.'²⁵ Such loyalty eventually became a burden for Bulatović. Milošević's authoritarianism had finally provoked not only opposition protests in Serbia but also deep dissatisfaction and division in Montenegro.²⁶ What had such policies brought Montenegro? Yugoslavia had been divided, the FRY represented nothing more than a 'façade federation', the plan for a Greater Serbia had 'gone with the wind'. In the light of these stark facts, individuals and groups who were initially enthusiastic supporters of Milošević's policies began to distance themselves.

Nevertheless, the post-Dayton era heralded a new phase in Montenegrin

politics. The agreement that brought the war in Bosnia & Herzegovina to an end received a rather muted reaction in Montenegro. The celebrations that greeted Slobodan Milošević on his return to Belgrade from Dayton were not matched when Bulatović returned to Podgorica. Tellingly, neither the Veterans Association of the Second World War nor the Association of 1991 Warriors issued statements congratulating Momir Bulatović on his achievements in helping bring the Bosnian war to an end.²⁷ Unsurprisingly, the Serbian Radicals denounced Dayton as a ‘capitulation’, but the leader of *Narodna Stranka* (People’s Party), Novak Kilibarda, blamed the Montenegrin authorities, stating his hope that ‘Dayton meant the collapse, and I hope, the end of political adventurism without foundation produced by neo-Communist parties in Serbia and Montenegro.’²⁸ The pro-independence parties that claimed to be persecuted throughout the 1990s became increasingly emboldened and sought to capitalize. The leader of the LSCG, Slavko Perović, occupying the moral high ground, stated: ‘I feel complete satisfaction, because I and my party have persistently, for almost six years, risking unprecedented persecution, pointed out the inevitable collapse of projects of ethnic cleansing, and we were peace-makers even at a time when almost everyone else advocated war and pursued a war-mongering policy.’²⁹

The Social Democratic Party also criticized the ruling DPS, and perhaps more boldly, the practicalities of remaining in the FRY. It was indicative of the shift in Montenegrin attitudes that such statements were frequent, public and widespread. Denouncement of Serbia and its role in the Bosnian war had been essentially buried because of the wider Serb cause; on the whole, Montenegrins had supported this cause. But such attitudes began to change in the weeks and months following the Dayton Agreement. The leader of the SDP, Žarko Rakčević, warned of the possible negative impact upon Montenegro post-Dayton, arguing that Milošević may attempt to increase control over Montenegro now that Bosnia was lost. Equally, he argued, this presented opportunities:

*Along with the process of increasing unitarism, I am sure resistance and state-building awareness will gain strength in Montenegro. Our republic has no future in this community. ... Conflicts within the ‘modern federation’ have so far been in the shadow of the ‘struggle for the sacred Serb cause’ and ‘unjust sanctions’. Now these two balloons have exploded and the bare relations between Serbia and Montenegro have come out to the surface. I believe that this will help Montenegrins realize that the basic interests of Montenegro is Montenegro.*³⁰

The Montenegrin political scene now entered a period of postwar ‘normalization’ and recalibration. The threat to the dominant DPS came from two sources – from the newly revitalized Montenegrin opposition that

urged a shift in orientation in the post-Dayton era, and from Milošević in Belgrade who announced, in December 1995, his interest in becoming the new federal president. The opposition's early optimism faded. Growing international recognition of the FRY as a legitimate state and Western assessments that Milošević was the man who had delivered peace at Dayton had a contradictory effect. They could still argue that while Milošević was in power there was a possibility of greater centralization of the FRY, but this rhetoric was neutralized by growing acceptance of the FRY and the new era of peace. The prospect of Milošević becoming president of the FRY was not one favoured by the ruling Montenegrin authorities – despite their rhetorical support. With Zoran Lilić (the then president of the FRY) at the helm, the authorities in both Serbia and Montenegro enjoyed control over their own spheres of interest. Milošević as president would be a different proposition altogether. Unlike Lilić, he favoured greater centralization of the FRY – a development that would weaken the positions of both Bulatović and Djukanović, and Montenegro's status within the federation.

Nevertheless, despite the rapid change in circumstances, the DPS promoted a united front with little suggestion of redefining its programme. The context may have changed but interests remained the same. The distribution of power, influence and 'booty' derived from the party's monopoly over state power had been beneficial to many within the party elite; as long as there was a relative balance and the party was in charge of its own affairs, the stasis could be maintained and economic interests of members preserved.³¹ While this may have been the solvent that held the party together, it also contained the seeds of its destruction. According to Darmanović, the DPS (during the mid-1990s) was vulnerable primarily because of its monopolistic character. Cracks soon emerged, and the strain of monolithic and oligarchic government (in the absence of a unifying factor such as the wars in Croatia and Bosnia) proved to be weak. This, and the emergence of two separate sources of power, which Bulatović and Djukanović increasingly personified, only bred further intra-elite competition within the DPS. As Darmanović notes:

Collective management, without clear leadership, is not easy to organize and maintain even in the most democratic of systems, let alone in a regime of absolute and virtually uncontrolled power, as the DPS's rule in Montenegro was all the way up until 1997. In the conditions of such (absolute) rule, power, might and lucrative gains accruing from these accumulate in the hands of the few. On this basis rivalry among leaders and clans develops, and conflicts over appointments arise, because each clan wants to have its own people in key positions.³²

Intra-elite competition had always been an aspect of the party's internal dynamics, but overarching interests kept it in check. A case in point was the

1996 elections. As the elections (scheduled for November) approached, it was essential to limit these intra-elite disagreements and demonstrate to the electorate that the ruling party was a united front. And indeed, the first post-Dayton elections brought little overall change. The DPS – with a significantly larger campaigning budget than the other parties – ran a glitzy, seductive, but sometimes bizarre campaign under the rather self-assured slogan ‘With Certainty – ’96 Elections’. To compound the glitz, the party wheeled out the glamour: well-known personalities were produced like the former Red Star Belgrade and AC Milan footballer Dejan Savičević, and the German super model Claudia Schiffer (who had agreed to a promotional trip to Montenegro and had unwittingly walked into the electioneering). Their presence aimed to demonstrate to a bemused electorate the solid credentials and universal appeal of the party.³³ Genuine opposition came from the LSCG and NS, which had entered the race as a ‘Coalition of National Harmony’, a construction intended to be a mechanism for uniting Serbs and Montenegrins. These slightly uncomfortable bedfellows ran an energetic but considerably less glamorous campaign. Their main objective seemed to be to educate the electorate about institutionalized corruption within the DPS. While the coalition was a bizarre precursor for the emergence of Serb–Montenegrin divisions, the leader of the People’s Party, Novak Kilibarda, sought to emphasize the historic coming together of the LSCG and NS, stating, ‘For the first time, two authentic political parties in Montenegro, which have been opposed to each other ever since 1916, have united for the sake of the joint interest of the people of Montenegro.’³⁴ Despite the rhetoric and veneer of unity between these two diametrically opposed parties, this essentially anti-DPS coalition was at best suspect and at worst a bizarre union of the two parties that characterized the polarized nature of Montenegrin politics.

The election results awarded the DPS a greater majority than it had expected, but the collective joy within the party was to last less than two months. Despite the superficial united front, intra-party relations were becoming increasingly strained. While an open conflict had thus far been avoided, the deterioration of intra-party relations had become obvious, even to those in Montenegro’s opposition parties. Some delegates in the Montenegrin Assembly had sensed discord within the DPS as early as 1995. The vice-president of the SDP, Dragiša Burzan, expected to be denounced by pro-Serb parties and the DPS when he presented a scathing report into the role of the Montenegrin authorities during the Štrpci incident in 1993. According to Burzan, a significant minority of the DPS seemed to agree with his findings, which he had not anticipated. ‘It was clear to me,’ he said, ‘that something was amiss within the leadership of that party, but at that time we did not know whether it would be transient or permanent.’³⁵ While the party members strived to maintain at least a visage of unity, the possibility of

transcending party differences depreciated with the growing political crisis in Serbia. Following elections in Serbia in late 1996, the opposition parties had accused Slobodan Milošević of electoral fraud.³⁶ On this occasion, the Serbian opposition was in no mood to accept such fraud without a showdown. As the crisis escalated, some Montenegrin leaders looked on with interest. Initially cautious, they issued ambiguous statements declaring themselves in favour of recognizing the will of the electorate in Serbia.

The controversy in Serbia was simply a precursor to the DPS crisis. The party was internally convulsing; clear splits were emerging within the top level of its leadership. The three key actors within the DPS – President Momir Bulatović, Prime Minister Milo Djukanović, and Vice-President Svetozar Marović – were increasingly divided, with the former increasingly isolated. In the immediate period following the Serbian elections, it would become clear that there was a fundamental conflict of perceptions about how official Montenegro should react to the events in Serbia. While Bulatović threw his support behind Milošević, Djukanović and Marović saw an opportunity to exploit Milošević's weakness. For Milo Djukanović, this was a matter of both personality and politics. His relationship with Slobodan Milošević had been strained since late 1993, and he had been excluded from Milošević's close circle as a consequence. Indeed, as Djukanović noted:

I hardly had any communication with Milošević since the beginning of '94. I don't remember that we had one conversation in the meantime, and because of a disagreement that we had at the end of '93 in regard to carrying out an anti-inflation programme in Yugoslavia, Mr Milošević cut off all communication with other politicians in Montenegro except Mr Bulatović (Momir).³⁷

Furthermore, his previous sparring with Milošević's wife, Mira Marković, had increasingly made him *persona non grata* with the Milošević family.³⁸ Initial exchanges had taken place in late 1995.³⁹ Djukanović had criticized Mira Marković's JUL party, referring to it as a party 'devoted to an ideologically retrograde and abstract society', a remark that elicited a sharp response from Marković, who in retort accused Djukanović of being 'a concealed smuggler employed as a prominent politician'.⁴⁰ Thus, while the personal pretext had been established years earlier, the events in Serbia provided a political pretext for a demonstration of dissent. According to Djukanović, the issue of whether or not to continue to support Milošević was frequently raised at DPS leadership meetings. A small faction, led by Djukanović, calculated that the time had come to oppose Milošević publicly:

The party leadership met very often and it is logical that this subject was always brought up. Mr Marović, Mrs Pejanović-Djurišić and I decided that we should

*publicly support the demonstrators in Belgrade, or rather to express the disagreement of the DPS with Milošević's intentions to falsify the local elections.*⁴¹

The fuse was lit by Djukanović's implicit support for the *Zajedno* (Together) coalition-led anti-Milošević protests taking place throughout Serbia in the wake of the alleged electoral fraud. As Momir Bulatović observed in the wake of the protests, both Milo Djukanović and Svetozar Marović saw the *Zajedno* protests as the beginning of the end for Milošević and sought to take advantage of his perceived weakness.⁴² While Djukanović's early statements may only have implied support for the protestors, there was little ambiguity in his very public pronouncements that Milošević was a spent force. As the *Zajedno* protests in Belgrade and other Serbian cities were shaking the foundations of the Milošević regime, Djukanović selected his moment, publicly declaring his opposition to Milošević, and leaving little space for ambiguity or misinterpretation. Utilizing the widely read Belgrade political weekly *Vreme* (Time)⁴³ as the forum for his calculated but risky invective against the Serbian president, Djukanović boldly asserted that:

*It would be completely wrong politically for Slobodan Milošević to remain in any place in the political life of Yugoslavia. ... Milošević is a man of obsolete political ideas, lacking the ability to form a strategic vision of the problems this country is facing, surrounded by unsuitable individuals who are following the time-tested method of many authoritarian regimes.*⁴⁴

The Belgrade authorities wasted little time in striking back. Milošević accused Djukanović of 'being in the service of interests of those who wish nothing good for Serbia and Yugoslavia'.⁴⁵ An orchestrated campaign by media loyal to Belgrade began to proliferate accusations of Djukanović's involvement in illegal activities, in particular his involvement in lucrative cigarette smuggling and his links with the Italian mafia. Milošević sought to portray Djukanović as an individual without morals – an opportunist. At this sensitive juncture, Svetozar Marović entered the fray. During an interview for Radio Budva, he made his position on events in Serbia clear, stating that the alleged electoral fraud 'costs us all tremendously, it conflicts the FRY with the world again, postpones return of our country into international institutions, prevents prospects for the revival of our economy and the creation of conditions for the normal lives of our citizens'.⁴⁶ Not content with highlighting the economic consequences of the Serbian crisis, Marović then went on to attack the Miloševićs personally, by stating, 'Not even the president of Serbia has the right to do that, but especially not his wife, with the phantom organization (JUL) which initiated many problems in Serbia'.⁴⁷ Djukanović then sent a letter of support to the students in

Belgrade who were the bulwark of the anti-Milošević protests. He thus willingly entered into an irreversible conflict with Milošević. Momir Bulatović chose not to follow the same path of conflict, suspecting that Milošević would overcome the crisis, as he had done in the past. Thus, the post-election crisis in Serbia had caused an open conflict within the top echelons of the DPS leadership.

Close friends since their days in the communist youth organizations, Djukanović and Bulatović had risen through the ranks together, had enjoyed a warm friendship and had remained united during the difficult years of the Croatian and Bosnian wars. In short, they had much in common and there was little in the early 1990s to suggest that a bitter struggle lay ahead. Both enjoyed relative independence over their specific spheres of interest and, according to Thomas, 'both used their political position to carve out influential and lucrative niches for themselves in Montenegro's patronage-based and corruption-ridden economic system.'⁴⁸ However, while Bulatović was taking part in international peace conferences, Djukanović was running the Montenegrin economy, facilitating the payment of state pensions and attempting to limit the ravages of the economic sanctions that had been imposed on the country. Bulatović often acknowledged this achievement, referring to his prime minister as a 'magician'.⁴⁹ His opponents criticized his methods and accused him of being involved in shady and illegal activities – feeding the population while simultaneously enriching himself. From the perspective of his opponents, this was not simply an attempt by Djukanović to help Montenegrins survive sanctions, but a way of increasing his personal power, which could be harnessed at the crucial time.

Djukanović, acutely aware of the growing dissatisfaction with the Milošević regime among a broader section of the Montenegrin electorate, could see a clear advantage in exploiting this dissatisfaction. But his decision to oppose Milošević split his party and destroyed his personal relationship with Bulatović. The split was to be prolonged and bitter. As Djukanović noted, 'Many people opposed our stance, and I remember our greatest opponent was Mr Momir Bulatović. I think that this event definitively initiated (awoke) the discord that already existed between the two of us.'⁵⁰

The Intensification of Inter-Elite Conflict

Djukanović's controversial comments convulsed the ruling DPS. Publicly, however, the party retained a façade of unity despite the internal pressure caused by the widening political gulf. Milo Djukanović was quick to emphasize that although there may have been conflict with Milošević, there was no significant schism within the DPS itself.⁵¹ He went as far as to claim that 'the President of the Republic Mr Bulatović, Mr Marović, the President of the

Parliament and I are in full agreement on all of the most important strategic issues.⁵² Despite the rhetoric of unity, the split was becoming increasingly manifest. Opposition politicians and activists also watched with interest. For many in the Montenegrin opposition, a split within the DPS meant a recalibration of the Montenegrin political scene – and, more importantly, an opportunity. Miodrag Perović claims that the pro-independence Montenegrin opposition nurtured the potential for splitting the DPS whenever possible:

*We had our objectives. We wanted to produce a division within the ruling party. They were ex-communists and were always a party primarily of interests, and we knew very well that some of their members would support the project of an independent Montenegro in order to preserve their interests. So our objective was to split the party into two factions. The Liberals, the Social Democrats, and those within Monitor were seeking this.*⁵³

By March 1997, it appeared that the party was on the verge of an open and public split. Djukanović continued to court controversy, referring, for example, to the FRY as a ‘so-called’ federation, framing these comments within wider observations about the perilous state of the Montenegrin economy and the risks that continued political stagnation carried. The economic crisis was seen as a rationale and thus a justification for opposing Milošević. Djukanović told a meeting of the main board of the DPS in early March 1997 that ‘in case Montenegro does not soon, and as urgently as possible, integrate in the international flow of goods and capital, the Government will no longer be in a position to secure social peace.’⁵⁴

March was indeed a crucial month. Intra-party relations had become so strained that on 24 March, during the first DPS main board meeting since Djukanović publicly denounced Milošević, a vote was called among board members to decipher the future direction of the party.⁵⁵ This meeting, ostensibly arranged to discuss matters pertaining to wider political, economic and social issues in Montenegro and the FRY, instead became an intra-party debate on the implications of Djukanović’s invective towards Milošević.⁵⁶ The majority of members of the main board of the DPS were unconvinced of the wisdom of generating an open confrontation with Milošević and Belgrade.⁵⁷ As a result, a number of Djukanović’s DPS colleagues lambasted him for comments he made in *Vreme* and during a recent visit to Washington. Opposed by the majority, Djukanović stated his case, reiterating the need for the Montenegrin government to distance itself from Milošević.⁵⁸ Bulatović (who later confessed that Milošević had instructed him to ‘remove’ Djukanović) decided that the time was ripe for a showdown. The main board dismissed Djukanović’s arguments and roundly attacked him for his actions. As Djukanović observed:

That meeting had obviously been prepared very thoroughly and for quite a while. I did not even suspect this. This meeting took place after I returned from America and it was a direct result of certain estimates made in Belgrade after my visit to America. ... During my trip to America, in the Washington Times and then in Večerne Novosti (Evening News), I was accused of writing a letter to two American congressmen asking for their support for Montenegrin independence.⁵⁹

After lengthy discussion and argument, the main board voted. Bulatović's pro-Milošević stance was convincingly confirmed. 60 voted in favour, 7 voted against and 22 delegates abstained.⁶⁰ This was an overwhelming endorsement and suggested a consolidation of Bulatović's strength within the DPS (and the continuation of the party's pro-Belgrade position). Djukanovic, however, argued that the debate was conducted in such a way that it skewed the final result of the vote – delegates constructing the notion that Momir was for Yugoslavia while Djukanović was against Yugoslavia.⁶¹

Mr Bulatović chaired it [the session] in a completely biased way. He often retorted and cut off those who thought differently than he did. I remember that he did not allow Mr Marović, vice president of DPS, to speak. However, the final farce of the session was the voting because Mr Bulatović manipulated the situation in such a way that he turned this voting into not voting between his conception and my conception, but into voting for or against Yugoslavia.⁶²

The other vice-president of the DPS, Milica Pejanović-Djurišić, also noted that during the meeting Bulatović was obstructive and keen to present the intra-party schism as a conceptual argument over the fundamental structure of the Yugoslav state.⁶³ Nevertheless, his strategy seemed successful. Despite drawing encouragement from the symbolic support he received, Djukanović resigned as vice-president of the party. It thus appeared that a conclusion to the party's crisis had been reached and the matter had been brought to an end. At the conclusion of the session, Momir Bulatović announced to the waiting press that the party remained committed to maintaining the status quo in Montenegro's direction, stating: 'There is no alternative way, no alternative programme or solution.' Finally he reiterated, 'a referendum (on independence) is out of the question. We are continuing along the path we have embarked upon.'⁶⁴

However, the seemingly convincing endorsement of Bulatović's policy was more superficial than it initially appeared. Among those seven who voted for Djukanović and the 22 abstentions were some of the most powerful individuals in Montenegrin politics. Crucially, Vukašin Maras, the chief of the SDB (state security), who had strong links with Belgrade, and Svetozar Marović, president of the parliament, had both backed Djukanović. Both men

would play a key role in convincing the wavering DPS members that Montenegro's best interests lay in distancing themselves from Milošević's regime in Belgrade.⁶⁵ Over the following months, an intense (largely hidden) internal party power struggle ensued. Initially, the Djukanović faction suffered significant setbacks; Bulatović had overwhelmingly won his vote on the question of the DPS's Yugoslav platform, had gained a foothold on control of the secret services, and oversaw the DPS's confirmation of Milošević's proposal to amend the FRY's constitution (Articles 97 and 98), which would eradicate the requirement that the Yugoslav Federal Assembly approve the election of federal president.⁶⁶ However, building a powerful coalition of individuals with important establishment interests, Djukanović wrested control of the party and the SDB.⁶⁷ According to Srdja Pavlović, he 'managed to break down most of those who had voted against him and his party colleagues, and used various other pressure tactics to secure the majority vote'.⁶⁸ By the crucial DPS meeting on 11 July, the dynamics had shifted in favour of Djukanović.

The catharsis was reached at the DPS main board's second meeting on 11 July 1997, during which the party would confirm its sole candidate (only one could be confirmed) for nomination for the presidency. Controversy dogged the meeting from the outset; Bulatović and his supporters walked out of it because their demand for journalists to be present throughout the proceedings had not been met. Their departure left the remaining 62 members of the main board (just short of the required two-thirds majority) in the chamber to continue with the business at hand.⁶⁹ It was the last time the DPS main board would meet as a single unit. Party members could no longer publicly present a convincing show of unity so characteristic of the DPS throughout the early to mid-1990s. At the close of the session, the remaining members of the main board motioned that Momir Bulatović be removed from his position as president of the party and replaced by Milica Pejanović-Djurišić. In the final analysis, Djukanović's faction subsequently gained control of the party structure, the security services and secret police (both under the umbrella of the Ministry of Interior). With the arrival of the 'new management', a significant number of personnel within these agencies calculated it might be beneficial to seek employment elsewhere. However, large numbers were marginalized and left the service in the wake of the DPS split.⁷⁰

The first major issue post-split was the presidential elections. Djukanović was confirmed as the DPS candidate, though both Djukanović and Bulatović ran. Hinting at their future course, Djukanović's wing of the DPS drafted an *Agreement on Minimum Principles for the Development of Democratic Infrastructure in Montenegro*. The agreement, signed on 1 September 1997, had two primary functions – to guarantee transparent, free and fair elections in the future, and to establish the formation of an anti-Milošević, anti-Bulatović 'political alliance'.⁷¹ Bulatović meanwhile initiated and organized a parallel DPS

conference, largely consisting of party members from his heartland in northern Montenegro.⁷² Thus, although Djukanović was the official candidate, Bulatović supporters within the DPS simultaneously nominated Momir as their chosen one to contest the elections. Of the 21 municipalities in Montenegro, the Djukanović wing controlled 16, while Bulatović and his bloc, although he could rely on additional rhetorical and logistical support from Serbia, controlled only five municipalities.⁷³ The campaign was about personality as much as political orientation. Bulatović sought to portray himself as an 'ordinary guy' who would appeal to middle and lower-ranking members of the DPS and the older generations.⁷⁴ He utilized the rhetoric of his communist past and defined himself in direct opposition to Milo Djukanović whom Bulatović's supporters portrayed as a scheming capitalist whose main objective was to separate Montenegrins from their 'brothers' in Serbia.⁷⁵ Djukanović meanwhile sought to portray himself as a modern, progressive, European-style reformer. This image, despite the obvious contradictions, was nurtured by Western governments. Djukanović assiduously cultivated a 'Westernizing' and 'reformist' image, but the real substance of this was not investigated too closely by its international backers as long as Milošević remained in power in Serbia.⁷⁶ Thus, presenting two quite different approaches, styles and ideological platforms, their support bifurcated into two natural groups – Bulatović's supporters were largely older, less educated voters from the north of Montenegro or the republic's rural areas, while Djukanović garnered most of his support from younger, urban, educated Montenegrins.⁷⁷ While portrayed as a struggle between two fundamental positions – advocates of a conservative, orthodox and anti-European politics versus advocates of a more pro-European, progressive and democratic politics – the division between the pro-European and traditionalist positions manifested itself, not only as a conflict between 'value systems' but between the advocates of preserving the FRY and those advocating Montenegrin independence.⁷⁸

As the cleavage in Montenegrin society increased, a geographical split emerged. There were natural demarcations of a sort in Montenegro. Traditionally, the Orthodox population of the north saw itself first and foremost as Serb, while those in the areas of *Stara Crnagora* (Old Montenegro) regarded themselves predominantly as Montenegrins; the heartland of Bulatović's support was thus in the towns and villages in the north.⁷⁹ One such bedrock was the town of Berane. Situated on the Lim River, Berane (known from 1946 to 1992 as Ivankograd) was formerly a busy industrial town but had fallen on hard times. Part of the Sandžak region that straddles the border between Serbia and Montenegro, and situated in the region of the lower Vasojević tribe, its Orthodox inhabitants were traditionally staunchly Serbian. Once considered one of the most developed

industrial centres in Montenegro, the town had been drastically affected by the economic collapse in the late 1980s and the sanctions of the 1990s. The devastated economy left a cloud of depression hanging over the town. The dissatisfaction was palpable, and it was this that Bulatović sought to harness. He knew he could count on the majority of the Serb population there.⁸⁰ Andrijević was another case in point. A natural source of support for Bulatović, Andrijević was the heartland of the Vasojević tribe (upper and lower Vasojević). It had historically had close links with Serbia. Mary Edith Durham noted in 1920 that, 'it was a stronghold of the *Klubaši* (pro-Serb Montenegrins) which worked in connection with Belgrade for King Nikola's overthrow.'⁸¹ In contemporary Montenegro the picture was little different, the electorate of the area had traditionally supported pro-Serbian parties and was more oriented towards Belgrade than Podgorica. The majority in the municipalities of Mojkovac, Kolašin and Pljevlja shared these sentiments. Situated close to the Serbian border, the Orthodox population in Pljevlja regarded itself as Serb.⁸²

While the north of Montenegro was clearly Bulatović country, the picture was different in the central and coastal areas of Montenegro. Here, in the areas of 'Old Montenegro', the coast, and the Bay of Kotor, people were less inclined (and less emotionally attached) to Serbia. Nowhere was this more so than in Montenegro's historical capital, Cetinje. The town had once been the seat of the Montenegrin ruling dynasty and from 1878 to 1918 had been the capital of the independent Montenegrin kingdom. Given their long period of political autonomy, the inhabitants of Old Montenegro regarded themselves as Montenegrins first. Indeed, in Cetinje and its immediate environs, the inhabitants retain a strong sense of their uniquely Montenegrin identity. In his historical novel *Montenegro* Milovan Djilas described the specific sense of pride in being Montenegrin the inhabitants of this region possessed. It rested, he claimed, 'on the belief that their locality had been the creative force behind everything – state, dynasty, the Montenegrin idea'.⁸³ In the contemporary period, Old Montenegro became the centre of anti-Milošević activity in Montenegro. The largest party in Cetinje was the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LSCG), formed in Cetinje prior to the 1990 elections. Supporters of neither Djukanović nor Bulatović, the party leadership of the LSCG, had vociferously opposed the policies of the DPS throughout the early 1990s. However, following the DPS split, some within the LSCG were keen to support Djukanović, believing that he may be able to deliver the LSCG's core objective – independence. As LSCG deputy, Stanka Vučinić, recalls, many within the party were initially enthusiastic:

The stepping forward of this faction of the DPS gave hope to the supporters of the LSCG that the project of Montenegrin independence had bigger chances than ever

before. This forceful quake within the DPS affected the LSCG deeply – which is understandable given that many supporters of the LSCG, despite everything, recognized in Djukanović the strength that could help achieve the dream of many liberals – independence of Montenegro.⁸⁴

The majority of Liberals cautiously backed Djukanović (although they would later be in conflict with him) for the purposes of undermining Bulatović. While the situation in Cetinje was relatively clear (there was almost no support for Momir Bulatović), the situation in Montenegro's two biggest cities – Nikšić and Podgorica – was less clear. These key centres were mixed between supporters of Bulatović and Djukanović, and the outcome of the vote was more difficult to predict. A matter primarily of interests, the presidential elections took on the characteristics of a Serb–Montenegrin conflict (although Djukanović was careful not to emphasize a commitment to *independence*).⁸⁵ In any event, the result of the two-horse race (the other candidates were largely symbolic) turned out to be exceptionally close. In the first round Bulatović was victorious, winning by a narrow margin of only 2200 votes with a 67 per cent turnout.⁸⁶ It was not a decisive enough margin to declare a clear victory.

With a second round of voting required, the Djukanović camp made huge efforts to overturn the small margin, organizing an energetic house-to-house campaign that would, it hoped, facilitate a significant enough swing. It proved to be an excellent strategy. Djukanović reversed the first-round results, crucially winning the Nikšić municipality (the largest in Montenegro) and improving his share of the vote in other municipalities. The overall winners in each municipality remained as in the first vote, with Djukanović winning majorities in Kotor, Ulcinj, Plav, Cetinje, Bar, Rozaje and Tivat, while Bulatović retained the traditionally conservative and pro-Serb oriented municipalities of Berane, Pljevlja and Bjelo Polje.⁸⁷ Momir Bulatović won the municipality of Herceg-Novi – the only coastal municipality to be won by him. The final margin of victory was narrow with Milo Djukanović gaining 5884 votes more than Momir Bulatović.

Sensing impending defeat, the Bulatović camp immediately cried foul. Bulatović claimed that there were irregularities during the election process, citing intimidation of members of the electoral commission. While the OSCE denied these accusations, claiming that the final results of the elections accurately reflected the will of the electorate, Bulatović continued to claim foul play.⁸⁸ Most controversially, Bulatović claimed that the US had helped to engineer the vote and that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, had already known the result before the electoral commission had declared it.⁸⁹ He claimed that:

The chairman of the electoral commission, the Judge Marko Dakić (who in my mind was a fair person and an excellent lawyer) asked me to see him amongst the audience. He was on the verge of physical and mental breakdown and visibly under huge pressure as a consequence of continuous lack of sleep. He explained in a rather confused manner what was happening ... that they were under intolerable pressure to announce the result. He was mentioning threats that had been directed at him and that he had a fear both for his family and himself. All in all it was clear that he had to announce that Milo [Djukanović] was the victor.⁹⁰

As Bulatović continued to protest, the pro-Djukanović bloc began to celebrate; the Montenegrin weekly *Monitor* stated that the morning after the elections was *Jutro Crnogorske nade* (the morning of Montenegrin hope). Despite what seemed an irreversible result, the Bulatović faction continued to contest the legitimacy of the result.⁹¹ It appealed to its supporters to protest against the alleged fraud, telling its followers that the results must not be recognized at any cost.⁹² Minor protests by Bulatović's supporters took place in front of the Montenegrin parliament on 22 October and, almost simultaneously, Milošević tightened the noose around Montenegro, closing the FRY's common border with Albania and imposing a *de facto* blockade on the border between Serbia and Montenegro.⁹³ Despite the economic impact on all citizens of Montenegro, Bulatović argued that the Serbian blockade served to mitigate the 'illegal activities' of Djukanović's DPS. He told a gathering of his supporters in Nikšić that 'the Montenegrin government advocates the opening of the border towards Albania and Croatia only in order to make smuggling easier, in other words, in order easily to bring narcotics and arms into the country.'⁹⁴ Rhetoric soon translated into action. As the presidential inauguration approached, Bulatović rallied his supporters for demonstrations in the capital Podgorica. He boasted that he would bring 100,000 protestors onto the streets of the capital. Djukanović, for his part, played down the threat Bulatović's supporters represented, characterizing them rather bluntly as 'illiterate peasants who could not adjust themselves to the realities of the modern world'.⁹⁵ Regardless of Djukanović's dismissal, a march of Bulatović's supporters on the Montenegrin Assembly would pose a threat to Montenegro's stability, and as the transfer of the presidential office approached, Montenegro's leaders braced themselves for an escalation of the crisis.⁹⁶

Bulatović and his supporters organized the protests in advance of their arrival in Podgorica. It was 'a return to the politics of the streets' – the method used during the so-called 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' to overthrow the Montenegrin communists in 1988–89.⁹⁷ Three days before the protests, Bulatović told the main board of his faction of the DPS that 'On Monday 12 January at five minutes to twelve, in front of the Montenegrin parliament we will begin the "Great People's Meeting" against the illegal Montenegrin

government.⁹⁸ As instructed, protestors began to gather at the specified time, and would remain rooted in front of the Montenegrin Assembly for three days. Planned to coincide with Djukanović's presidential inauguration due to take place on 14 January in Cetinje, the crowd carried banners emblazoned with messages such as 'Yugoslavia is our Destiny', 'Police! You are our sons!', 'Overthrow the government, defend our honour!' alongside banners denouncing Milo Djukanović as a 'Turk' and Svetozar Marović as a 'thief'.⁹⁹

Initially, the protests were good humoured and peaceful. A large protest outside Radio Television Montenegro passed without incident.¹⁰⁰ However, on the evening of 14 January, a 'peaceful walk' organized by Bulatović and his ally, the ex-People's Party deputy Božidar Bojović, descended into violence. When the crowd reached the Montenegrin Assembly, Bulatović addressed it, claiming that the authorities had refused to accept talks on the settlement of electoral fraud and that 'they do not want to come to us, so we shall go to meet them in peace and dignity. Let them see how many of us there are and what we want.'¹⁰¹ As the protesters moved from the assembly to the government building (500 metres away), tensions rose dramatically. An attempt to storm the government building was halted by police, who used tear gas to quell the increasingly violent demonstration.¹⁰² During the disturbances shots were fired by both police and demonstrators, and explosive devices were thrown at the police.¹⁰³ Several prominent government ministers were trapped inside the building. As Djukanović noted, the atmosphere inside the government building grew increasingly tense, with those ensconced inside fearing the worst:

*these peaceful demonstrations in front of this building here (the presidency) moved over to the Montenegrin government building and grew into what we had expected – a brutal act of violence, with the intention of storming into the government building, and considering that most of the demonstrators were armed, I am absolutely sure that this would have been a bloody showdown where most of us within the building would have been killed.*¹⁰⁴

The police intervention had ensured that a bloody showdown was averted and in the cold light of morning both sides blamed each other for the chaos. Bulatović, increasingly on the defensive, described events as 'a brutal police intervention against the citizens who were protesting because of the theft of the elections'.¹⁰⁵ He was also disappointed with the lack of support given by the Yugoslav Army, which he had hoped would intervene in the event of police action against the demonstrators.¹⁰⁶ Thus, far from achieving their objective, the demonstrations turned out to be counterproductive for Bulatović. Almost immediately, the international community condemned his actions. Robert Gelbard, the US special envoy to the Balkans, blamed

Milošević for encouraging the demonstrations and described Bulatović's role in organizing them as 'absolutely outrageous'.¹⁰⁷ The 'Great People's Meeting' had turned out to be a catastrophic miscalculation.

With the support of the international community secure, the Djukanović faction of the DPS consolidated its position of strength in the immediate weeks and months. The opposition was shaken by its failure to overthrow the government, support for Bulatović was receding, and the pro-Serbian political bloc was in turmoil. Seizing the opportunity presented by the spirit of the times, Djukanović made preparations for the parliamentary elections.¹⁰⁸ First, his faction wanted to ensure that it retained the DPS brand. As the ruling party in Montenegro since 1990, the party name carried weight. Retaining the name would imply both continuity and legitimacy – critical in such a period of flux. The public may see the faction that could retain the original party name of DPS as the legitimate successor to the previously monolithic version of the party. Both factions coveted the DPS brand, but Montenegro's High Court ruled that Bulatović's DPS must give up its claim on the party name. As a result, on 21 March 1998, the pro-Serbian faction led by Momir Bulatović and members of the powerful and influential 'Podgorica Lobby' (former high-profile DPS members who for years had been critical of Djukanović), reformed as the Socialist Peoples Party (SNP).¹⁰⁹ The new party relied heavily on supporters from towns in the north of Montenegro and rural areas. The support was composed largely of individuals from a lower social and educational stratum, so provided fertile ground for the dissemination of pro-Serb, anti-Western rhetoric.¹¹⁰ Its agenda remained firmly grounded in the concept of *srpstvo*, Serbian–Montenegrin unity and consolidation of Serbian identity in Montenegro, utilizing rhetoric intended to appeal to those in favour of 'Yugoslavia bez alternative' (Yugoslavia without an Alternative); terminology such as 'brotherhood', 'fatherland' and of course 'Yugoslavia' was the order of the day. Furthermore, despite the new DPS's non-committal stance on Montenegro's legal status, Bulatović's party aimed to persuade voters to recognize what it perceived to be the separatist and anti-Yugoslav character of Djukanović's DPS. Problematically, while enjoying the support of much of the Serb population in the north, the SNP offered nothing to Montenegro's other ethnic groups. By pitching its appeal to Serb-oriented Montenegrins the SNP marginalized voters to whom the idea of *srpstvo* was not attractive. Indeed, given their experiences in the early 1990s, few of Montenegro's minorities shared the same emotional attachment to Serbdom and Milošević's form of Yugoslavism.

The 'new' DPS adopted a more cautious, if ambiguous, platform. Initially, Djukanović remained cautious of aligning himself with pro-independence parties – whose agendas (particularly the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro's) were too radical. Instead, he maintained close links with Zoran Djindjić's

Democratic Party in Serbia, and sought an alliance with university professor and leader of the (traditionally) pro-Serb People's Party (NS) of Montenegro, Novak Kilibarda. Although this gave Djukanović's DPS an aura of being a pan-Yugoslav party, it created a division within the NS itself; many high profile members of the party refused to work with the 'separatist' Milo Djukanović.¹¹¹ At this stage, at least, there was little suggestion of the DPS following an openly pro-independence platform. While distancing the DPS from the Milošević regime in Belgrade, Djukanović simultaneously acknowledged Montenegro's commitment to Montenegro's role within Yugoslavia. The DPS adopted the slogan *'Nikad sami, uvijek svoj'* (Never alone, always its own), and it typified the ambiguous party platform of the time – a blend of progressive pro-Western rhetoric, free market reform and the consolidation of human rights – all within the framework of continued union with Serbia from whom they were progressively becoming more isolated.¹¹²

Although he had clearly severed relations with Milošević and was defined as a separatist by the SNP and some within NS, Djukanović was, at this stage at least, careful not to express explicit aspirations for Montenegrin independence.¹¹³ Since expressing such sentiments would represent an overtly risky gambit with unknown consequences, the Djukanović faction continued to support the existing FRY structures fully, while simultaneously emphasizing its inability to cooperate with Milošević. By opposing the Serbian strongman, the DPS found support in Montenegro's minorities, a factor that would prove instrumental in tipping the balance in his favour. Given their negative experience in the early 1990s, many of these minorities deeply distrusted Bulatović and his pro-Belgrade allies. In addition, they viewed the FRY as a 'Greater Serbian' and Milošević-led construction within which their rights were insufficiently protected.

In 1997, then, Montenegrin politics went through a period of significant flux and the dynamics changed irreversibly. The net effect of the turbulent year was that the political landscape had become dangerously fragmented, with two opposing blocs emerging from the ruins of the old DPS. The results of the parliamentary elections held in May 1998 indicated a polarization of the Montenegrin party political scene. Prior to the elections, the DPS entered into a coalition with the SDP and Novak Kilibarda's NS.¹¹⁴ Forming a coalition with the DPS proved to be a strain on NS intra-party dynamics. Kilibarda's willingness to join Djukanović's coalition was the cause of a schism within the party. For those who opposed the coalition, the argument was simple – they remained deeply suspicious of Djukanović's motives and long-term objectives. As a consequence, a breakaway faction within the party refused to cooperate on the basis of Djukanović's perceived 'separatist' tendencies.¹¹⁵ The SDP leadership (for different reasons) faced similar dilemmas with the upper echelons of the party divided over entry into a coalition with the

DPS.¹¹⁶ As a pro-independence and anti-war party, its leaders had suffered persecution from the ruling authorities, and many within their party structure were equally sceptical. The leader of the LSCG, Slavko Perović, refused to cooperate with Djukanović, although a number of LSCG supporters and pro-independence media chose to do so. Graffiti that appeared on a building in Podgorica summed up the sentiments of the latter – *Slavko, ivinite, ali posao je posao* (Slavko, apologies, but business is business). In any event, for those who chose to join the coalition, intra-party disputes were smoothed out and the DPS–SDP–NS coalition (led symbolically by Djukanović) was established. Dubbed *Da Živimo Bolje* (For Better Living) it was frequently referred to (most especially in the pro-Serbian daily *Dan*) as *Boljevici* (for those who live better). In the subsequent elections, the DŽB coalition won by a significant margin.

The margin of victory demonstrated significant approval of its platform and further demonstrated the viability of the independence option. Collectively, the DŽB coalition and the pro-independence LSCG took 60 per cent of the votes cast, while Momir Bulatović's Socialist People's Party took just over one-third. The DŽB coalition won 42 of the 72 seats in parliament, while the SNP took 29.¹¹⁷ Fundamentally, the SNP had suffered the consequences of negative campaigning, central to which was the targeting of Muslims, Albanians, Croats and pro-independence Montenegrins. The tried and tested tactic of polarizing the electorate and casting the contest as a battle between essentially good and downright evil (portraying his supporters as loyal patriots and Djukanović's as separatists and traitors) had backfired. Seeking to highlight the 'democratic' character of the victory and setting the tone for the period ahead, Djukanović hailed the DŽB triumph as 'our penultimate victory; our final victory will be scored when democracy wins throughout Yugoslavia.'¹¹⁸

While Bulatović's humiliation on the domestic political scene was complete, he remained an important figure in Montenegrin politics, largely due to his patron in Belgrade. Soon after the elections, Bulatović was approved (by Milošević) as the new prime minister of the FRY. The nature of this appointment was not without controversy. Bulatović took over the position from fellow Montenegrin, Radoje Kontić, who claimed that his cabinet had been forcibly removed from its posts. The Montenegrin authorities were quick to respond. In a letter to Momir Bulatović, Milica Pejanović-Djurišić outlined the Montenegrin government DPS stance on Bulatović's appointment, stating 'We do not accept you [Bulatović] as prime minister designate and we see your appointment to such an important position as another attack on the constitutional order and equitable position of Montenegro in Yugoslavia.'¹¹⁹ Shifting his role to that of FRY prime minister, Momir Bulatović was then replaced as SNP leader by his namesake (but no relation) Predrag Bulatović. As the former vice-president of the SNP, Predrag Bulatović was a member of

the moderate wing of the party and was more inclined towards dialogue with Djukanović and participation within the legal boundaries of political life within the republic. While Momir Bulatović raged against the Podgorica authorities, denouncing them as 'unelected' and 'imposed from abroad', Predrag Bulatović called for dialogue between the SNP and DPS.

Regardless of these sentiments, however, relations between the two blocs would continue to degenerate as problems mounted for the new Montenegrin government in the immediate period following the May elections. Montenegro was facing intensified pressure from Serbia; and the crisis in Kosovo, which could have serious implications for internal security, was worsening by the day. Thus, Milo Djukanović's early term in the office of Montenegrin president was dominated by the spectre of war in Kosovo – a crisis that could envelope Montenegro. But the Montenegrin government had chosen its friends well. Djukanović's apparent commitment to social and economic reform, opposition to Milošević, and rhetoric of democratic reform, was a useful counterweight to Milošević. Western governments were quick to offer rhetorical and financial support. Bill Clinton's special envoy to the Balkans, Robert Gelbard, encouraging others to follow Djukanović's lead, stated that 'what is happening in Montenegro is an example of what should be happening in other places in the FRY,' adding that, 'we hope that the Montenegrin reformist and democratic efforts will not end on the territory of Montenegro, but that they will be the predominant policy throughout the entire Yugoslav political territory.'¹²⁰

Rhetorical support was simply one facet of Western aid to Montenegro. Logistical and economic aid would also be bestowed on the Montenegrin government, and the provision of aid was not negligible. A small Balkan republic with a population of approximately 670,000 people, Montenegro was the beneficiary of significant levels of Western aid – per capita second only to Israel during the early years of Djukanović's presidency. With the central objective being to weaken Slobodan Milošević's regime in Serbia, Western governments were keen to bolster Djukanović's image as a Western-oriented democratic reformer. In reality, promised democratic reforms were at best slow and at worst non-existent and, while the Montenegrin authorities were quick to promote their democratic and reformist character, real results (beyond the rhetoric) were far from tangible.¹²¹ That 'triviality' could be overlooked provided the Montenegrin authorities continued to undermine the Serbian regime, but it represented a dangerous gambit. Within Montenegro, the schism between pro- and anti-Milošević forces was becoming increasingly manifest, and relations between the Yugoslav republics – and by extension Montenegrin internal forces – worsened dramatically when the Montenegrin authorities announced that they would not participate alongside Serbia in its conflict with the international community over Kosovo, and moved to

declare their neutrality.¹²² It was merely one of a number of processes initiated by the authorities in Podgorica that would serve to create distance between themselves and Serbia and consolidate Montenegro's burgeoning independent status. According to Djurić, the Montenegrin government opted for a form of what he describes as 'functional sovereignty' – a strategy that would 'secure economic independence which would, subsequently, produce political effects that would practically lead to state independence.'¹²³ Indeed, the strategy achieved its initial objective. A number of measures were implemented that would consolidate autonomy in select fields. First, the Montenegrin authorities achieved independence in the monetary sphere by adopting the Deutschmark as their formal currency (in 1999), and second they consolidated their control over the spheres of customs and foreign trade.¹²⁴

As the cleavage between ruling Montenegrin and Serbian elites increased, so too did the perception that a war in Kosovo would not be Montenegro's war. Young Montenegrin conscripts developed an expectation that they would not be sent to fight in 'Serbia's war'. The SDP (part of the new governing coalition) was the first party to suggest that the Montenegrin government should draw a clear demarcation between itself and Milošević's Kosovo policy by refusing to allow Montenegrins called up by the Yugoslav Army to participate in the Kosovo campaign. The party's new and youthful leader, Ranko Krivokapić, left no room for ambiguity when – a year before the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia – he stated that 'the entire youth must be the concern of political Montenegro. As it has always been, Montenegro is an inexhaustible reserve for the regime where new recruits are concerned; they will be used as cannon fodder.'¹²⁵ That the Montenegrin leadership would so firmly reject sending its recruits to Kosovo was demonstrative of the increasing level of antagonism that now existed between the Montenegrin and Serbian governments and a clear signal to Belgrade that they could no longer (as they had done in 1991) count on Montenegro's support for their military adventures.

The Kosovo Crisis and the Intensification of Internal Divisions

While attempts were being made to distance Montenegro from the crisis in Kosovo, Montenegro, by accident or design, was incrementally being drawn in. By late summer 1998, refugees were already streaming over the border from Kosovo to Montenegro, with the majority concentrated in the municipality of Plav in northern Montenegro (a municipality sharing a border with Kosovo and Albania). The residents of the town of Plav and the surrounding villages were hardly in a position to offer the required aid and support to the refugees. The municipality was one of the poorest in Montenegro and the endemic under-funding and the hosting of refugees from previous conflicts (in Croatia and Bosnia) had taken a heavy toll on the already strained social and economic infrastructure. Montenegrin deputy prime minister, Dragiša Burzan, lamenting the worsening crisis, argued that Montenegro's social fabric could be severely damaged and that the country was in a situation in which 11.6 per cent of the population were refugees – an unbearable limit.¹ The residents of Plav responded tremendously, accommodating many refugees in family homes.

As the crisis threatened to escalate into war, the Montenegrin authorities sought to distance themselves from the approaching maelstrom, declaring themselves 'neutral' and advocating dialogue with Albanians from Kosovo in conjunction with the European Union. Continued military actions by Serb forces and retaliations by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were driving Serbia (and the FRY) into possible military conflict with NATO, which had warned Milošević to halt military activity in Kosovo. As the rhetoric sharpened and the crisis escalated, the Montenegrin authorities became acutely aware that, despite their self-proclaimed neutrality, Montenegro as an integral part of the FRY and the home to strategic military sites would be targeted as part of any NATO bombing campaign. During a Supreme Defence Council meeting held on 4 October 1998, clear rifts emerged between the Serbian and Montenegrin leadership. The latter expressed

concern over developments while the former was quick to brush off any threat from NATO. According to Milo Djukanović, Milošević suspected NATO's threats were hollow, that it was a 'paper tiger':

Milošević looked upon this warning of the international community to bomb FRY with disbelief and I think he had already defined a strategy of how to continue to strain relations with the international community. He poorly judged the indecisiveness of the international community. He thought that with his firmness, he would show the weakness of the international community in regard to FRY, but he would never have toyed with or risked anything if he hadn't made another calculation. This other calculation was that if it did come to war with NATO, it would be an opportunity to mobilize all patriotic forces in Serbia [and Montenegro]; it would be an opportunity for a homogenization on an ethnic basis and to strengthen his already weakened position.²

The subsequent NATO bombing of Yugoslavia had significantly less impact in Montenegro than in Serbia, but from the start of the 78-day bombing campaign the internal situation in Montenegro steadily worsened, with patriotic forces loyal to Milošević mobilizing within the republic. NATO, however, clearly wished to spare Montenegro the suffering it was to heap upon Serbia and the targeting of Montenegrin territory was, according to Darmanović, 'secondary and selective'.³ While the NATO bombs were aimed at Yugoslav Army positions within Montenegro (Golubovci airport and JNA barracks at Danilovgrad, for example), it did not dampen a level of solidarity felt by many Montenegrins towards Serbia and Yugoslavia as a whole. This was a dangerous situation for Djukanović.⁴ British Defence Minister George Robertson, acknowledging the problems Djukanović faced in Montenegro, stated that:

President Djukanović was clearly not very keen on being bombed in the same way as we were bombing Belgrade and parts of Kosovo, and you can see why. He was not in sympathy with Milošević at all, but it was necessary to take out some of the air defence capabilities of Yugoslavia that were based in Montenegro.⁵

The bombing, however limited, and the continuing flow of refugees, which came to around 80,000 (over 10 per cent of Montenegro's total population), put a considerable strain on the economy and threatened to destabilize the delicate ethnic and social balance.⁶ On 2 April 1999, Djukanović met religious leaders in Montenegro, appealing to them to help calm the increasing tensions. A joint statement released in the wake of the meeting implored all people of different faiths to remain united, stating that 'the preservation of civic peace and ethnic and religious tolerance in Montenegro and Yugoslavia

is today the most important obligation of all our citizens.⁷ Simultaneously, Djukanović implored NATO to take seriously the threat that targeting Montenegrin territory was having on his government's ability to contain a worsening situation, warning that 'every bomb that fell on Montenegro undermined their (and NATO's) legitimacy'.⁸ Aware of the increasing instability, Djukanović and Filip Vujanović appealed to the special envoy of the European Union, Wolfgang Petrisch, who visited Montenegro to assess the humanitarian, social and economic situation, to help halt the NATO bombing and renew the negotiating process in Kosovo.⁹ Indeed, the problem of Montenegro threatened to cause a split within the NATO leadership. On one hand, Wesley Clark, NATO's commanding general, wanted to increase targeting what many deemed to be civilian infrastructures in Serbia and he also wanted to bomb targets in Montenegro. He was supported by the NATO secretary general, Javier Solana. According to the latter:

General Clark wanted to bomb Montenegro as well. Because he thought, in fact he knew, that there was a supply route to Milošević through Montenegro. At the same time, however, Montenegro was not part of Milošević's coalition. So we had problems with that in political terms. ... So what we finally decided to do was just to bomb Montenegro airport so that aeroplanes couldn't land there.¹⁰

On the other hand, French President, Jacques Chirac, argued that such an offensive strategy would be counterproductive to NATO's objectives, weakening the Montenegrin government and playing straight into Milošević's hands. Chirac urged Clark not to inflict further damage on Djukanović, who 'by and large represented some kind of opposition to Milošević'.¹¹ However, following telephone conversations between Chirac, Milo Djukanović, and US President Bill Clinton, it was decided that the NATO strategy of targeting Montenegro was indeed contrary to the interests of both NATO and the ruling Montenegrin authorities.¹² Targeting Montenegro had only served to intensify internal political and social tensions. This was ominously manifested by a tense standoff – most notably in Podgorica – between the federal Yugoslav Army and the Seventh Battalion (formally a unit of the Yugoslav Army, although constituted primarily of SNP members) on one side and the Montenegrin police and special forces on the other. To compound the tension in the capital, a number of parallel military or quasi-military structures were operating throughout Montenegrin territory.

As well as the federal Yugoslav Army a number of other groups emerged – the Seventh Battalion, a Milošević creation consisting mainly of local 'troublemakers and SNP party members', the Lovćen Guard, a group located in Cetinje and self-proclaimed 'defenders of Montenegrin statehood'. Because Montenegro did not possess its own army, Djukanović strengthened the

Montenegrin police force to 20,000 (although estimates vary between 20,000 and 30,000) loyal policeman. The new force consisted of individuals who had left the federal army, party loyalists and a number of Muslims and Albanians who supported Djukanović in the wake of the DPS split, while it was purged of those deemed to be inappropriate or unreliable.¹³ According to the OSCE estimate, the police force became increasingly militarized until it evolved into a virtual armed force.¹⁴ According to Dragiša Burzan, the deputy prime minister of Montenegro, they were 'ready for anything. We had 24.000 police and we estimated that the Yugoslav Army and Seventh Battalion had around 17,000. It would have been very bloody.'¹⁵ Montenegro was on the brink. Not only was the nascent Montenegrin force prepared for armed conflict, but individuals on both sides also began to equip themselves for a potentially bleak scenario.¹⁶ Thus, SNP and pro-Serb party members, generally excluded from joining the police, took matters into their own hands – many joined the Seventh Battalion.¹⁷ Montenegro was awash with armed men with an axe to grind.

Influencing public opinion meant controlling the media. *Radio Televizija Crna Gora* (Radio Television Montenegro – RTCG) was under the control of Djukanović loyalists. The danger for the authorities in Belgrade was clear – Djukanović's message that this was a war waged specifically *against Milošević* and not against the people of Serbia and Montenegro might become conventional wisdom in Montenegro. It became imperative for the Serbian authorities, therefore, to place the media under the control of the Yugoslav Army. Djukanović stated that this took place during the early stages of the conflict:

I remember how, in that period, the General Staff of Yugoslavia made attempts through Colonel Mićović to take control over the national TV and radio stations. This person was activated only to take control over the media in Serbia and Montenegro and had already been an Information Minister in the Serbian government. He came to Montenegro and had talks with many of my associates, trying to convince them of the need to censor TV because of the state of war. I later met with him and told him that this would not be allowed and was not possible, and that we did not recognize this state of war and we could see what Belgrade wanted through this state of war, and that he had to return to Belgrade. After that we found out about a military plan prepared by the Yugoslav Army to take over the Montenegrin National TV building, but they abandoned this idea because they realized we were ready to defend democratic institutions in Montenegro and that we were ready for a direct confrontation with the Yugoslav Army if they tried this.¹⁸

During the NATO bombing, the Yugoslav Army and Seventh Battalion constantly attempted to provoke the local authorities; and these provocations

were not simply over key strategic sites or restricted to plans to take over Montenegrin state television. There were a number of scenarios in which a single shot would have facilitated chaos. In the areas of Debeli Brijeg on the Montenegrin–Croatian border and in Cetinje (where the Yugoslav Army blocked the road between the town and the coast), the Yugoslav Army added to the sense of crisis by erecting roadblocks and restricting movement. Such moves were sufficient for the denizens of Cetinje to feel themselves under siege.¹⁹ Within hours, protestors gathered outside the municipality building demonstrating against the roadblocks and the attempts by the Yugoslav Army to enter the town. As they attempted to do so, a tense standoff developed between the Yugoslav Army and local Cetinje militia led by Božidar Bogdanović.²⁰ The standoff that ensued demonstrated the determination of the Cetinje militia. Interviewed for the BBC in 2000, Bogdanović, known as ‘the General’, claimed that:

They [The Yugoslav Army] tried to kill us. They failed then and will again. I happened to become personally involved in the incident with my own men. The army attacked us early in the morning and we responded as necessary. In the end myself and two other officers tried to find a compromise, so as to prevent bloodshed but they tricked us and arrested me and those two decent men.²¹

The capture of the three almost turned into an armed rebellion by the militia, the police and ordinary citizens of Cetinje. Although a peaceful resolution was found – the Yugoslav Army halted its attempts to enter Cetinje – the incident was indicative of the growing tensions throughout Montenegro. Tension was palpable in the capital. Fears of a military coup were intensifying in Podgorica, fuelled by statements emanating from Belgrade. Serbian deputy prime minister and leader of the Radical Party, Vojislav Šešelj, warned that any attempt by the Montenegrin authorities to seek independence would ‘end in blood’.²² Milošević sent equally unambiguous signals. The moderate Yugoslav Army general, Martinović (a Montenegrin) was replaced by the more hawkish Milorad Obradović (another Montenegrin but supporter of Milošević). Responding to speculation that a Milošević backed coup was imminent, Djukanović claimed that, ‘neither open nor a creeping coup is taking place in Montenegro’, adding, ‘if something like that did happen, it would be the most tragic and violent conflict so far in the former Yugoslavia’.²³ Later, the leader of the Socialist People’s Party of Montenegro, Predrag Bulatović claimed that his party supporters, backed by the Yugoslav Army could have overthrown the Djukanović regime, but opted not to because of their commitment to non-violence. According to Bulatović:

If we had believed in guns and violence we could have removed Djukanović from

*power; 60,000 Montenegrins were in Yugoslav Army uniforms at that time. Djukanović did not have any real power then. He was hiding out in a bunker and scared out of his wits. He had no control over Montenegro.*²⁴

To preserve stability during these testing times, Djukanović made broad appeals intended to bridge the ever-widening divisions within Montenegrin society. He utilized the rhetoric of pan-Serbian and Yugoslav sentiment while urging people to recognize the negative impact of Milošević's policy. While tensions ran high, a military coup was not attempted. Problems intensified in the north of Montenegro as Albanian refugees (many of whom had returned to Kosovo) were replaced by Serb and Montenegrin refugees fleeing reprisals from angry Albanian returnees. Many northern Montenegrin towns (in particular Andrijevica, Rožaje and Berane) were placed under significant pressure. In Rožaje, there were a number of incursions from Serb paramilitaries. A Montenegrin delegation, including Foreign Minister Dragiša Burzan and Prime Minister Filip Vujanović, were sent to attempt to calm tensions but found the situation extremely edgy.²⁵ Fortunately, Serbia's capitulation after 78 days of bombing dictated that Montenegro, against the odds, survived the war. A combination of mutual fear and Milošević's hesitance, created a balance that facilitated the maintenance of peace.²⁶

Montenegro, although relatively unscathed, remained part of the FRY. The question now was how should Montenegro redefine its status *vis-à-vis* its larger partner within the FRY? In the wake of the NATO bombing, the Montenegrin government drew up its plan to redefine the FRY as a confederation of two equal states (similar to that proposed by the pro-independence SDP in January 1999), which would have separate monetary systems, separate foreign ministries and, perhaps most significantly, separate defence capabilities.²⁷ Controversial from its inception, there were essentially three opposing perceptions of how best to redefine the FRY, and the population was (almost equally) divided between those favouring a sovereign and independent Montenegro, those favouring a looser confederal arrangement between Montenegro and Serbia, and those who wanted to preserve the union with Serbia in accordance with the Žabljak constitution of 1992.²⁸ As expected, the proposals received a frosty response from Belgrade. Vojislav Šešelj, who had claimed in the 1980s that Montenegro was an 'invented nation' immediately rejected the proposal, damning it as 'nonsense'.²⁹ Milošević, in his infinite wisdom, dispatched a representative from the Serbian Radical Party to negotiate the issue of redefinition. Unsurprisingly, talks quickly broke down, and the Montenegrin authorities, convinced that Serbia was refusing to take the proposals seriously, began preparing the ground for even greater independence – inside or outside the federation.³⁰

The revision of Montenegrin citizenship laws proposed by the ruling

authorities further damaged already strained relations between Belgrade and Podgorica. The citizenship laws, as laid down in the 1992 constitution (but revised in 1996), dictated that Yugoslav citizenship was predominant over republican citizenship. The authorities in Podgorica moved to revoke the power held by the interior ministry in Serbia, introducing a new law that essentially awarded Montenegrin citizenship to those who were born in Montenegro (although it would be extended to those who had lived in Montenegro for ten years). The new law placed the status of refugees (many of whom were Serbs from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo) in some doubt. For those Montenegrin who primarily defined themselves as Serbs, the revision of the law was perceived as a direct attack on the Serb nation in Montenegro.

Despite the actions of the army under his control, Slobodan Milošević stated in his New Year address of 2000 (his last), that the Montenegrins were free to choose their own future, within the federation or outside it, stating that 'the best solution for Montenegro is the one which suits the Montenegrin people. If Montenegrin people think that life outside Yugoslavia would be better for them, then they are entitled to choose that life.'³¹ Such statements did little to alleviate concern in Podgorica about possible future action by the Belgrade regime.³² Although conciliatory statements were coming from official Belgrade, simultaneous attempts were being made to organize opposition to the Montenegrin authorities. Both the army and civilians played their role. Incidents involving the Yugoslav Army were utilized to put pressure on the Montenegrin government. On the night of 8 December 1999, the Yugoslav Army, responding to an announcement by the Montenegrin authorities, had declared the civilian part of Golubovci airport near Podgorica 'government property' and seized control of it. It was later returned to normal function. In early 2000, the army again intimidated the authorities by deploying its personnel on strategic sites – border crossings, airports, access roads to the coast – across Montenegro.

Non-military personnel were also going through a mobilization process of a kind. Supporters of the SNP, largely concentrated in the northern municipalities, were embittered by the conflict with the Montenegrin authorities, and were treated as 'hostiles' by official Podgorica. Very little, if any, of the international aid found its way into the municipalities administered by the SNP and mayors in these areas were quick to accuse the Montenegrin government of punishing people who voted for them.³³ In an interview for the Belgrade daily *Blic*, former head of the Yugoslav Army Momčilo Perišić announced that paramilitary units had been formed with the express purpose of 'disciplining Montenegro'.³⁴ According to the former general, the new paramilitary units were under the influence of Montenegrins who adhered to the ideology of the SNP and were created 'to be the fuse in the conflict with the MUP [interior ministry] of Montenegro'.³⁵ Popular support was mobilized

through the re-establishment of 'people's assemblies'. In Montenegrin society, the *pleme* (tribe) is historically fixed in the collective memory, and was channelled as a form of political divergence over the issues of state, nation and identity, adding a socio-cultural dimension to existing political dimensions.³⁶ The objective of the Milošević–Bulatović forces was to revive traditional tribal loyalties as a method of harnessing dissatisfaction among pro-Belgrade Montenegrins. The aim was to create a powerful counterforce that could be used to topple the Djukanović government. The tribal affiliations reflected (broadly) the divide within contemporary Montenegrin politics.

In the north the tribes were resurrected, with 'gatherings' arranged in the tribal areas of the Kuči (noteworthy for their rebellions against Prince Danilo in 1855 and 1866), Rovci, Vasojevići, Uskoci, Drobjanaci, Morača and Zeta. Although the meetings (at which lots of alcohol was often consumed and patriotic songs were played and narrated by *guslari*) seemed to be spontaneous, they were well organized and had an overtly political character.³⁷ There is little doubt that the meetings were initiated and instrumentalized by the SNP and the Serbian Orthodox Church, both of which implored the tribes to rebel against Montenegro's 'separatist' authorities. For those in the Bulatović bloc, the tribal assemblies were a customary non-governmental association that served their core political interests.³⁸ Given the political nature of the assemblies, therefore, not every member of the tribe attended – only those of a pro-Serbian persuasion. Indeed, one of the most telling characteristics of their second arrival in Montenegro was their one-party membership.³⁹

This parallel structure was not dissimilar to the 'people's assemblies' that Croatian and Bosnian Serbs organized in the months prior to the outbreak of war in those former Yugoslav republics. In Montenegro, the tribes opposed the authorities' moves towards greater autonomy from Serbia. There were various targets for their invective – the ruling DPS, Montenegrin separatists and Montenegro's minority Muslim and Albanian population. Members of the Kuči tribe made statements warning the latter not to meddle in what they regarded as their affairs: 'We shall not allow the decisive role in decision making about our state to be given to those against whom our ancestors have fought for freedom for centuries.'⁴⁰ To 'separatists' their warnings were stark. The Rovci clan (near Kolašin) sent word that, 'the call for sovereign Montenegro is the same as a call to arms.'⁴¹ This clan was proud of its links to Serbia; members proudly declared that there had never been 'a Rovci man converting to Islam or Catholicism, or declaring himself a Montenegrin!'⁴² The clan's leader, Nikola Minić argued that the Serbian identity of the Rovci was under threat: 'That is the reason we [the Rovci] are rebelling. We want to live in one state and belong to one [Serbian] nation. They are now trying to divide us ethnically into Serbs and Montenegrins. Montenegro is just a postal address! We are all Serbs, all one nation!'⁴³ While the resurrection of the tribes

seemed to observers to represent a bizarre throwback to medieval customs, leaders in Montenegro recognized their potential significance as a destabilizing force. Novak Kilibarda warned that 'civil war around here begins with the singing of patriotic songs accompanied by playing the gusle,' while Svetozar Marović acknowledged that appeals to tribal support could potentially 'mobilize thousands and thousands of people'.⁴⁴ The government was quick to denounce, although not dismiss, the politicization of the tribes, stating that their re-emergence represented pre-civic social formations utilized by Serbian nationalists to subvert the democratic process.

The International Community and State and Nation-Building in Montenegro

The long-term status of Montenegro remained unclear. The international community sent ambiguous messages to the Montenegrin leadership; it encouraged dissent against Milošević and offered assistance in consolidating internal security, while simultaneously putting pressure on Djukanović not to make any moves towards independence. Problematically, this temporary and ambiguous situation was not in the interests of internal Montenegrin stability. There was growing sentiment for Montenegrin independence, with Djukanović acknowledging that 'the genie could not be put back in the bottle'.⁴⁵ While the Montenegrin Serbs organized their tribal assemblies, the Montenegrin authorities began to construct a basic state framework, building all the organs of an independent state. Since the DPS split in 1997, Milo Djukanović has established a significant power base with consolidated vested interests. Many of those who supported him in 1997 were handsomely rewarded for doing so. A number of high-profile individuals played a key role in consolidating Djukanović's power in the difficult days following the December 1997 elections and they landed important government posts. Vukašin Maraš became minister of interior, Milica Pejanović-Djurišić president of the managing board of Montenegro Telecom, Filip Vujanović prime minister, while another close ally, Mihailo Banjević, became director of Montenegro's largest enterprise, the KAP aluminium plant in Podgorica.⁴⁶ With a significant and loyal domestic power base assured, Djukanović and the DPS began to build the institutions of an independent state and in so doing aided the construction of a clearer, less ambiguous, Montenegrin identity. In Djukanović's Montenegro, political patronage was the order of the day, determining most, if not all, key economic positions, a situation that is reflected throughout the economy, with directors of state funds invariably individuals with a political background. Furthermore, the same basic pattern was repeated at local level, where mayors and other key DPS figures were frequently directors of smaller local firms. In essence, then, the DPS's reach was far and wide.

With the local power base consolidated, the Montenegrin authorities in

Podgorica began to build the institutions of an independent state. This would give Montenegro a greater capacity to assert a stronger line with Belgrade, but would, fundamentally, be in the interests of the ruling elite. Critics were sceptical of the utilization of the 'Montenegrin cause', claiming it was simply masking what was in essence an economic power struggle between Serbian and Montenegrin elites. As Aleksander Fatić noted:

*Individual political and economic interests seem to be the key to the analysis of present-day Montenegrin political life. Where elite interests once dictated an alliance with Serbia in order to survive, a loyalty to the Montenegrin cause is the imperative now, although it is not at all clear what the cause is, whether it is the same all the time or whether it shifts with the changes in the political fortunes of certain key political actors in the republic.*⁴⁷

Primarily, it was of crucial importance to have independence in the economic sphere. To raise levels of foreign investment and to attract more tourists, the Montenegrin authorities dropped visa requirements. Furthermore, in an attempt to minimize the influence of the Central Bank of Yugoslavia over its economic affairs, they introduced the German Deutschmark as a parallel currency. In the meantime, a trade war erupted between Montenegro and Serbia. Further asserting its independence from Belgrade, the Montenegrin government quickly established a foreign service, which the charismatic Branko Lukovac headed. Having previously been Yugoslav ambassador to Tanzania during the era of Julius Nyerere – among other high-profile positions – his impressive CV made him a perfect candidate for the post of Montenegro's first effective foreign minister since 1918.⁴⁸ He chose to re-enter the realm of international relations when Djukanović asked him to head the embryonic foreign service. According to Lukovac:

*Djukanović's government invited me to rejoin them in early 1998. That was a time when Milošević had rejected the legitimacy of the democratically elected government in Montenegro. He rejected my appointment as Foreign Minister, but finally I came to Montenegro during the NATO campaign where I set up our network (in Slovenia) which established contact with the international community. All the borders were sealed in Montenegro, so we acted from Ljubljana.*⁴⁹

Lukovac returned and established a foreign service in Montenegro and, before officially becoming the foreign minister in January 2000, he worked during the NATO bombing from Slovenia to establish a wide range of international contacts and to raise the profile of Montenegro.⁵⁰ In June 2000 he attended a session of the UN Security Council as a guest of the Slovene delegation, during which he asserted that the FRY no longer had any right to

represent Montenegro or its interests.⁵¹ Thus, with Lukovac's determined lobbying and the establishment of 'missions', which (despite the lack of international sovereignty) opened up in London, Rome, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Berlin, helped to raise the republic's international profile. Having raised Montenegro's profile, work still needed to be done on the domestic front. Establishing Montenegrin security forces loyal to Djukanović was perhaps the most significant step towards securing (at least a significant level of) autonomy for Montenegro. In Montenegro, the Seventh Battalion, loyal to Milošević, and a Montenegrin police force, loyal to Djukanović, patrolled the cities and villages every day in a mutually suspicious, tense and semi-hostile mood.⁵² Djukanović accused the Yugoslav Army of aggression and added that the SNP was arming pro-Serb Montenegrins in northern Montenegro. 'We know,' he asserted, that 'SNP activists check volunteers for their party loyalty so that they can have party troops who are not trained to defend the state but to overthrow democracy in Montenegro.'⁵³ Despite the existence of a 20,000 strong police force loyal to Djukanović, action was taken to build a more powerful and better equipped elite force – a Montenegrin national army in all but name. The authorities in Podgorica were careful not to use the term 'army', but the SNP leadership and its supporters (largely pro-Serb Montenegrins) objected to it on the grounds that it had been formed not simply for defensive purposes. Predrag Bulatović, argued that:

That 'police force' is not a classic police force. Aside from ordinary guns they have heavy weapons and armoured personnel carriers. As a result of this many people are starting to believe that they must arm themselves in order to protect their families. So Djukanović by building up this 'police force' is increasing political tension locally and making people arm themselves with weapons.⁵⁴

This symbiotic 'arms race' heightened tensions within Montenegro, making the summer and autumn of 2000 a dangerous period peppered with potentially explosive incidents. A boat carrying Montenegrin police, for example, was attacked by the Yugoslav Army on Lake Skadar (although the army later claimed it did not realize that the boat belonged to the Montenegrin police, but that actions of this nature were necessary in the fight against smuggling).⁵⁵ This did little to alleviate growing fears that the situation was spiralling dangerously out of control.

The hardening divisions within Montenegro were clearly demonstrated during the municipal elections in Podgorica and Herceg-Novi in June 2000, forced upon the electorate by the Liberal Alliance's withdrawal from the *Da Živimo Bolje* coalition. Although claiming that it was because agreements between the three coalition partners had not been kept, it was widely believed that the LSCG (which held the balance of power in both municipalities) was

wanting to capitalize on what it thought was a change in the public mood towards independence.⁵⁶ It proved to be a risky and ultimately unsuccessful ploy. As the elections approached all signs were present of a cynical and negative campaign, which in fact turned into a national competition between supporters of independence and supporters of the FRY.⁵⁷ Allegations of corruption were the order of the day, with both the SNP and LSCG accusing the government of misusing international aid, but notwithstanding the usual slurs the campaigning appeared to be relatively free and fair, at least until a little over a week before polling day when events took a disturbing turn. Although seemingly unrelated to the local elections, Milo Djukanović's security adviser, Goran Žugić, was gunned down outside his home in Podgorica, spreading fear that further political violence was unavoidable.⁵⁸ The deputy chairman of the Assembly of Montenegro, Rifat Rastoder, stated that 'since this abominable act happened on the eve of the local elections and at the height of the crisis in the relations between Montenegro and Serbia, I'm afraid this is a direct desperate attempt ... to introduce a state of emergency in Montenegro.'⁵⁹ Montenegrin president, Milo Djukanović, went further by making a statement that directly implicated Milošević's regime while highlighting the anti-European character of the Serbian government. 'Nothing,' he resolved, 'will discourage us and [make us] waver in our intent to continue with the policy that will lead Montenegro as a stable, democratic and open community on the road of peace to join the company of developed European states and nations.'⁶⁰ A few days later things got worse for the ruling authorities. On 6 June, with less than a week to go before the elections, Slobodan Milošević and the FRY government introduced a series of amendments to the FRY constitution designed to curtail Montenegrin representation in federal bodies. Most controversially, the FRY president would now be elected directly rather than by the federal parliament, opening up the possibility of Milošević remaining in place despite objections from Montenegrin deputies. Furthermore, the amendments undermined the power of the Montenegrin deputies in the Federal Assembly. Montenegro was essentially frozen out of the FRY.

In the event, the election results, which confirmed the divided nature of Montenegrin society and highlighted the regional differences between specific areas of the republic, brought few surprises. While Podgorica celebrated the comfortable win by the *Da Živimo Bolje* coalition, with people waving Montenegrin flags and chanting the name of Milo Djukanović, celebrations in Herceg-Novi were quite different. There, the 'Yugoslavia Coalition – Momir Bulatović', largely supporters of Slobodan Milošević and of the idea of Montenegrins as Serbs, were victorious. The results were catastrophic for the LSCG, which, believing it could profit from such a move, had initially forced the elections.

Between these local elections and the federal elections, scheduled for 24 September 2000, tensions ebbed and flowed. Milo Djukanović courted controversy throughout the year, in particular when he sent Easter greetings to the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. His acknowledgement of Montenegro's role in the attack on Dubrovnik and his apology to the Croats during a visit to Zagreb were not well received in Belgrade. A number of Belgrade media and Serbian politicians (most notably Vojislav Sešelj and his deputy in SRS, Tomislav Nikolić) denounced his actions.⁶¹ Undaunted, Djukanović announced that the ruling Montenegrin coalition would not be participating in the federal elections. Despite appeals by the Serbian opposition and the US to participate (Madeleine Albright flew to Rome to appeal to Djukanović), the ruling coalition argued that the FRY was illegitimate. Miodrag Vuković of the DPS claimed that 'for democratic Montenegro, the federal elections don't exist.'⁶² According to Cohen, Djukanović calculated that a boycott was in the best interests of the Montenegrin government. It was, however, a double-edged strategy:

Despite the application of strong international pressure on the Montenegrin authorities to participate in the election. Djukanović's DPS and other parties in the ruling Montenegrin coalition, decided to boycott the September 2000 vote. Djukanović realized that he was undermining the Serbian opposition's chances of unseating Milošević ... but he also knew that Montenegro would continue to enjoy Western support, potential military protection and even an eventual bid for independence, should Milošević be re-elected.⁶³

Despite the ruling Montenegrin authorities' denouncements, the federal elections would go ahead.⁶⁴ Momir Bulatović, a Yugoslav federal president and former Montenegrin president, appealed to his supporters to vote. Their spirited triumphalism, manifested in Bulatović's conviction that there would be a mass turnout, was to prove misplaced. Milo Djukanović's call for the population of Montenegro to ignore the elections was, to a significant extent, heeded. Perhaps most surprisingly, the denizens of the traditionally Serbian towns of Berane, Bijelo Polje and Herceg-Novi stayed away.⁶⁵

Events in the region took a dramatic turn in late 2000. The elections, scheduled for 24 September, produced what appeared to be a convincing victory for the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), led symbolically by Vojislav Koštunica. Milošević, in characteristic style, attempted to engineer the vote in his favour. DOS leaders and representatives of the international community implored Milošević to retire gracefully, a request that met with little success. On 5 October, however, mass rallies in Belgrade forced him to relinquish power. The protests (later referred to as 'the October Revolution') heralded the end of the Milošević regime and the beginning of a new era in

Serbian politics. The Montenegrin president, Milo Djukanović, made a statement declaring that, 'democratic Montenegro, like the whole democratic world, supports new, liberated Serbia. I believe that with the victory of democratic politics in Belgrade, a chance is created for the establishment of new and healthy relations between Montenegro and Serbia.'⁶⁶ Notwithstanding the rhetoric, Djukanović knew that the dynamics of the region had changed overnight. Serbia would, being the largest state in the region, once again become the focus of the international community to the detriment of Montenegro. Despite the collective relief and easing of tensions, there was an understanding that Montenegro's strategic significance had been reduced. More crucially, it removed a key component of the DPS's justification for control over all spheres of society – the threat from Belgrade (and the political capital that could be attained from that fear) had diminished. Post-October 2000, Montenegrin leaders knew that if they were to continue along the road of independence, they could no longer rely on the unquestioning support of the USA and EU.

Independence or Union? The Path to the 2006 Referendum

By the time Slobodan Milošević's regime fell on 5 October 2000, Montenegro had already assumed many of the powers once possessed by the Yugoslav federal government. But this quasi-independent status was not a permanent solution to the crisis of the state. While the ruling Montenegrin authorities had taken over the majority of the functions of the federal state (leaving the federal army and air traffic control the only remnants of the FRY), their quasi-independent state still remained, formally at least, a partner within the Yugoslav federation. In short, Montenegro had attained much of the infrastructure of an independent state, operated as an independent entity, yet formally and legally it remained a republic within the FRY. Milo Djukanović asserted that Montenegro by that time, 'practically functioned as an independent state'. It possessed, he argued, 'almost all functions of an independent state; it had independent foreign policies, independent security policies, independent monetary policies, independent customs and foreign trade, with the exception of a joint army'.¹ According to the International Crisis Group's analysis of the legal status of Montenegro, published in September 2000:

*Montenegro cannot be said to possess complete sovereignty as it has not declared independence, been recognized by any states, nor established accredited diplomatic missions in other states. The ability of Montenegro to possess sovereignty is further limited by the continued presence of the Yugoslav Army on its territory. The internal political situation within Montenegro also leaves it uncertain as to whether a significant majority of the population would support a declaration of independence.*²

While an independent-minded Montenegro was an essential factor in the international community's attempts to undermine Slobodan Milošević's regime, a small Balkan republic seeking independence in the post-Milošević era was, frankly, an inconvenience. It was expected that Montenegro's leadership would continue to be pliant, but it was unclear how its elites would react to the change of regime in Belgrade – and by extension their perception of

their relationship with Serbia and the Yugoslav federation. There had been a twisted logic in the Montenegrin leadership's relationship with Milošević – put simply, the more undemocratic and repressive the leadership in Belgrade, the better for the leadership in Podgorica. Under such circumstances, Montenegro could continue to benefit from Western aid and an undemocratic leadership in Belgrade would serve to reinforce the image (often undeserved) of the Montenegrin leadership as democrats and Montenegro as the beacon of democracy in the Western Balkans. Thus, it came as little surprise that, despite his democratic credentials (these are the days before Koštunica fell out of favour with the US and EU), official Podgorica remained cautious of Vojislav Koštunica's motives. There existed some suspicion of Koštunica in Montenegro. A number of Montenegrin academics, while acknowledging the obvious stabilizing benefits of Milošević's fall, argued that the new leadership in Serbia may not be as benign as many Western diplomats believed it to be. According to Milan Popović, for example, Koštunica was perceived as 'much more of a nationalist than a democrat, and, unlike Slobodan Milošević, perceived as an instrumentalist nationalist'.³

Some within Montenegro's ruling elite adopted a wait and see, non-committal policy as regards further steps towards independence. The battle lines between those who advocated independence and those who wished to preserve the federation had already been drawn. Even the Montenegrin government procrastinated. Svetozar Marović, a key ally of Djukanović during the 1997 crisis, declared that 'this was not the best time for the Yugoslav cause' while simultaneously acknowledging that he believed it had a future.⁴ Minor ambiguities aside, it soon became clear that the issue of statehood would not disappear from the agenda. Despite the clear relief expressed in Podgorica following Milošević's fall, it became painfully obvious that Vojislav Koštunica was not an overwhelmingly popular figure in Montenegro. During his first visit to Podgorica on 17 October 2000, it was clear that Koštunica and Djukanović's visions of the future of the Yugoslav federation were incompatible. According to the Montenegrin president:

It seemed to me that it was best that instead of one non-functional country, under which two totally old Balkans states functioned separately – Serbia and Montenegro – to establish an alliance of two independent and internationally recognized states, where each one would work on organizing its own 'interior', but through an alliance, it would more rationally carry out certain joint business and synchronize its path to European integration. That is how my position became clearly defined as well as the position of my associates, in regard to the relations of Serbia and Montenegro. I explained this to Mr Koštunica at our first meeting in October 2000 after he took power from Milošević. I must say that Mr Koštunica took this with great reservation.⁵

Thus, despite favourable circumstances, basic relations between the two republics remained frosty. Montenegrin foreign minister, Branko Lukovac, argued that Montenegro's position *vis-à-vis* the FRY remained unchanged, pointing out that much of the Montenegrin electorate had not participated in the federal elections. 'Vojislav Koštunica,' he argued, 'will not have legitimacy in Montenegro, he will have only the legitimacy of Serbia where the majority of voters voted for him.'⁶ This stance was essentially confirmed by Djukanović who, according to Slobodan Samardžić, an adviser to Koštunica, was obstructive from the outset. Samardžić said that 'Djukanović told him [Koštunica] clearly that it was not his purpose to rebuild the FRY, that his purpose was secession. It was obvious that it was not Milošević that was the reason for this stance; it was simply his own political project.'⁷

What was clear, however, was that Koštunica (a constitutional lawyer and former Belgrade university lecturer) was perceived as a man with whom the international community could do business. It also became clear that the Montenegrin authorities could no longer rely on the unwavering support of the US and EU, as they had done during the latter years of Milošević's rule. While the events in Serbia had dictated a contextual change, the situation in Montenegro (which had been nurtured by the EU and US) could not easily be neutralized, let alone reversed. Short-term objectives (the downfall of Milošević) had primacy over the medium-term implications. In this sense, the international community had overseen a dangerous experiment in Montenegro. Nurturing separatist tendencies had helped to undermine Milošević's position within the FRY, but had simultaneously opened the possibility of creating secessionist sentiment in Montenegro, which might lead to the creation of a new independent state in an unstable region. With no clear strategy for dealing with such a consequence, the US and EU simply hoped that this would not lead to Montenegrin attempts to seek independence. The damage had, however, been done. The legacy of the period between 1997 and 2000 was that it left an electorate deeply divided over the future of Montenegro and the FRY and the ruling Montenegrin elite fixated on independence. The US made clear that it expected Djukanović to fall into line with its wishes for a continued union of Serbia and Montenegro in the wake of Milošević's fall. On a visit to Podgorica in October 2000, President Bill Clinton's special adviser James O' Brien made the US view clear – the US expected to see 'serious talks on the future of the community of Serbia and Montenegro'.⁸ It was a clear sign to official Podgorica that it would be inadvisable to act in haste without first reaching agreement with the new Serbian authorities. Independence was not a desirable outcome for the United States or the European Union, and thus if the Montenegrin government were to continue to seek it, they could not rely on their unswerving support.

Despite these external pressures, the ruling Montenegrin elite remained

fixated on independence. It had, after all, been instrumental in turning public opinion in favour of such an option.⁹ The democratic changes that had taken place in Serbia could not change the dynamics of Montenegrin politics.¹⁰ Inconveniently, the ruling Montenegrin elite no longer had the sceptre of Milošević to justify its political objectives. A new strategy had to be adopted and, accordingly, the DPS-led government shifted its rhetoric away from an anti-Milošević stance (which had been the pillar of its legitimacy for three years) towards a pro-independence stance. At its party congress in 2001, the DPS modified its previously ambiguous programme to reflect its new commitment to independence. While the DPS leadership had once pointed to the *need* for independence because the Yugoslav regime was undemocratic and Milošević posed a military threat, it now began to emphasize Montenegro's *right* to independence.¹¹ While explicitly shifting official DPS policy towards independence, Djukanović moved to consolidate the monopoly enjoyed by those close to him, strengthening the powerful economic elite and the interlinked nexus of connections between economic and political spheres.¹² Given the increased control of state assets in the hands of Djukanović and his close allies, the international community grew progressively more sceptical about the possible independence of Montenegro, fearing that a new independent state in the region, controlled by a small elite, would be undesirable. Thus, significant pressure was brought to bear on Djukanović to cease the newly-declared quest for independence. The first major internal obstacle was to create a coalition government following the 2001 parliamentary elections. This would prove particularly difficult and would lead to the DPS–SDP coalition coming into conflict with the LSCG.

Having won a less than convincing victory at the April elections, the DPS–SDP sought an additional coalition partner in the LSCG, but its leaders were seeking major concessions from their prospective coalition partners. The Liberals insisted on a number of key posts being awarded to their members – including those of minister of police (normally occupied by a Djukanović loyalist), minister of justice and state prosecutor.¹³ Furthermore, they insisted on swift action towards scheduling an independence referendum. Regardless of their 'anti-Milošević capital' and reputation for being untainted by the events of the 1990s, such demands from a party that had only won six seats in the elections seemed rather ostentatious. A new and stable DPS–SDP–LSCG coalition could not be built on such foundations; though a bold attempt to capitalize on perceived DPS weaknesses, the adoption of such a strategy would prove to be catastrophic for the LSCG.

Regardless of the LSCG's non-participation in (they only promised to provide support for) the new governing coalition, Serbian and Montenegrin elites eventually agreed to solve the FRY's constitutional crisis by scheduling a referendum in Montenegro.¹⁴ For the ruling authorities in Podgorica (the

would-be standard bearers of Montenegrin independence) one factor was problematic. The Liberals (LSCG) and their charismatic and popular leader Slavko Perović stood in the way of the ruling structure's claim to being the genuine independence option in Montenegro. While a useful ally in 1997, they were now an inconvenient nuisance. Slavko Perović had made it clear that they would never again enter a coalition with the DPS, despite the fact that they could never organize a strong enough coalition to deliver independence. With this bold assertion, Slavko Perović also isolated pro-independence voters who believed that backing the DPS was the only way in which independence could be achieved. Many in the LSCG leadership had been opponents of the regime in the early 1990s and had developed useful anti-war, anti-Milošević credentials. Some clung defiantly to the idea that the party should continue to go it alone. Others disagreed.

During the period immediately following the fall of Slobodan Milošević in Serbia, the DPS refocused its invective on the LSCG considerably more than on all the political parties from the so-called 'Serbian bloc' in Montenegro. Its objective was simple – to destroy the Liberals, dismantle the cult of Perović and adopt much of the substance of the LSCG platform. In what became an extremely bitter struggle, Djukanović (with the assistance of many pro-independence intellectuals) would emerge as the only true leader of the movement for independence.¹⁵ Stanka Vučinić of the LSCG recalls the DPS strategy of the period:

The DPS adopted the crucial and essential parts of the LSCG platform. They did not want the liberals as the authentic representatives of Montenegrin independence. Among other things, the Liberals were the living witnesses of DPS politics, not to mention the victims of their ten-year long repression. They didn't need the Liberals because they now had the same platform.¹⁶

The Serbian bloc watched from the sidelines, aware that its position was secure. The DPS needed a 'bogeyman' in the Serbian bloc to perpetuate the fear (justified or not in the post-Milošević era) of interference from Belgrade. An external enemy (Belgrade) and a potential internal fifth column (Montenegrin Serbs), it was argued, mortally threatened Montenegrin independence. This, of course, was a misnomer. The LSCG, its leadership, and its occupation of the moral high ground, was a more palpable threat to the DPS. Because a weakened LSCG would allow the ruling elite to manoeuvre itself into the position of sole interpreter of the independence option, it became a matter of urgency to undermine and 'eliminate' the LSCG.

The attacks on the LSCG would come not simply from the DPS but also from its previous supporters in the media. The editorial staff (and editorial line) of the two independent publications, *Monitor* and *Vijesti*, and many

previously anti-regime intellectuals shifted their loyalties to Djukanović. Many of them had vociferously opposed the DPS before 1997, so were cautious about being too fulsome in their support for the new standard bearer of the independence project. Also, there were and still are some within this group who were pro-independence but anti-regime. However, the majority chose to get behind Djukanović as the most likely individual (with the DPS apparatus at his disposal) to be able to attain Montenegro's independence.¹⁷ According to Pavlović, 'prominent Montenegrin intellectuals such as the co-editor and co-owner of the independent weekly *Monitor*, Miodrag Perović, argued for the need to support the government and Milo Djukanović despite their shortcomings'.¹⁸ Indeed, the influential weekly *Monitor* published a series of highly derogatory articles attacking the LSCG in general and Slavko Perović's reputation in particular. Miodrag Perović's editorial entitled *Pad* (Fall) in the 25 May edition attacked LSCG leaders for their role in breaking any possibility of a DPS–SDP–LSCG coalition. The influential weekly's editorial policy seemed to shift in favour of Djukanović and the DPS, but these were pragmatic intellectuals who supported the individual most likely to achieve independence on the grounds of 'independence first, democracy second'.¹⁹ Once independence had been achieved, they could then build the kind of Montenegro they desired. As Milo Djukanović and the DPS were the most likely to deliver independence, they would throw their weight behind them. In doing so they created a Djukanović cult that would be impossible to dismantle in the post-referendum context.

With the slow collapse of the LSCG and some help from the media, Djukanović became the only person capable of delivering Montenegrin independence. As Pavlović noted, the local political and intellectual élite 'created an atmosphere where the idea of the country's independence was closely connected to (and often equated with) the political fate of its current prime minister'.²⁰ Despite the rhetoric of the DPS leadership, the hopes of pro-independence Montenegrins for an immediate referendum were dashed by the signing of the Belgrade Agreement by the Serbian and Montenegrin political leadership (not to mention the active role played by the EU and Javier Solana) in March 2002. It would, however, mark not a constructive beginning of a new state, but rather a new stage in the independence project and the further building of an independent state.

Belgrade Agreement and formation of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro

International pressure on Podgorica had intensified by early 2002. The European Union, always sceptical about Montenegrin independence in the post-Milošević era, played a key role in the formation of the joint state of Serbia and Montenegro (*Srbija i Crna Gora* or SCG). The EU had three main concerns. First, the political and social climate in Montenegro, with an almost

equally divided population, was not a terribly promising foundation for an independent state.²¹ Second, Montenegrin independence might encourage other territories, such as Republika Srpska, to seek independence. And finally, the EU was concerned about possible implications within Serbia. Would the loss of Montenegro (and almost certainly Kosovo) deal a tough psychological blow to Serbia and its new and shaky democratic coalition? EU Security Chief Javier Solana tried hard to persuade Djukanović to retreat from his pro-independence stance. Montenegro, which was still relying on Western aid, had little option but to present itself as a progressive democracy and friend of the West, leaving Djukanović with limited scope for manoeuvre. Djukanović eventually caved in to Western pressure and signed the Belgrade Agreement on 14 March 2002, much to the dismay of pro-independence Montenegrins.

Problematically, given that the formation of the new joint state was initiated and implemented by political elites in Serbia, Montenegro and the EU and not a democratic referendum, many people in Montenegro regarded the creation of the SCG²² as an elite-driven imposition that did not reflect the will of the people. In seeking to negate that impression, the Montenegrin leadership lauded the new state as a victory, emphasizing that Montenegro had, for the first time in almost a century, been recognized by its own state name, albeit within the new federation. This, they hinted, was a symbolic first step towards outright independence.²³ Approval came from parties such as the NS and SNP, which welcomed the union as a consolidation of Serb–Montenegrin unity and a rejection of Djukanović's separatist policy. While they were satisfied with the outcome, news of the agreement was not well received by Montenegrins who advocated independence. A number of ministers resigned from the Montenegrin Assembly. The leader of the LSCG, Miodrag Živković, raged that the behaviour of Djukanović represented 'one of the biggest cases of treason in European history'.²⁴ Živković was hardly the lone voice crying in the wilderness. According to Branko Lukovac, the then foreign minister of Montenegro, many supporters of independence believed that the signing of the Belgrade Agreement lost them their opportunity to hold a referendum:

*As Foreign Minister of Montenegro, I completely disagreed with the signing of the Belgrade Agreement. I genuinely felt it was a mistake for Montenegro. It was my conviction then that we should not waste time in attempting to meet our objectives. The Belgrade Agreement did just that, so I resigned.*²⁵

Pro-independence intellectuals joined Živković and Lukovac in their condemnation of Djukanović. In an open letter to Javier Solana, 100 Montenegrin intellectuals wrote to the EU security chief to protest at the EU's policy towards Montenegro, which they argued, deprived the republic of 'the right of

existence and self-determination that is guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations, and by both international covenants on human rights, as well as to respect her historical rights that were confirmed by Badinter's Commission and Lord Carrington's Peace Conference in 1991'.²⁶

Despite the anger generated by the signing of the agreement, Djukanović had secured a number of concessions from the EU and Serbian government that would essentially ensure that the state union could never develop into a functioning state entity. The structure of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro could best be described as 'minimalist' – in effect it consisted of an indirectly elected Council of Ministers with only five members chaired by a president and with very little power. Added to that was a joint parliament with 126 delegates (91 from Serbia and 35 from Montenegro) who were, in fact, from the republican parliaments of Serbia and Montenegro respectively. The agreement contained some positive discrimination in favour of Montenegro in the union's institutions, consisting of a unicameral parliament, a Council of Ministers (foreign affairs, defence, international economic relations, internal economic relations, human rights and minority rights) and a court with little jurisdictional competence.²⁷ Most significantly, however, was the concession forced and eventually secured by Djukanović that allowed for the scheduling of a referendum after three years. This dictated that (a) the state union could never function to its full capacity, and (b) that the statehood issue remained at the core of Montenegrin politics. Such a loose arrangement amounted to a union with a specified expiry date.²⁸ Furthermore, given its temporary nature, the Belgrade Agreement led to an increase in claims and counterclaims over the question of statehood. As such, it exacerbated the identity issue within the republic, with supporters of the common state increasingly identifying themselves as Serbs, and the proponents of independence as Montenegrins.²⁹ The newly elected president of the state union and a close ally of Djukanović, Svetozar Marović, would later give a clear indication that the signing of the Belgrade Agreement did not exclude a future referendum on Montenegrin independence when he declared that, 'I was born in Montenegro and feel like a Montenegrin. I see the future in Montenegro's right to independently choose its own path'.³⁰

The reaction to the creation of the SCG was hardly one of joy in Serbia either. Some members of the Serbian government quite correctly questioned whether, with 12 times the population of Montenegro, Serbia's best interests were served in a union in which Montenegro had equal representation in the decision-making procedures and distribution of key posts.³¹ Some members of the Serbian delegation in the negotiations suspected that the Montenegrin leaders might have signed the agreement under duress. They had a different agenda and, playing for time, might simply have used the Belgrade Agreement to defer a referendum.³² The statehood question continued to supersede every other in Montenegrin politics and a three-year period began in which

supporters of independence and supporters of union positioned themselves for what appeared to be the inevitable independence referendum. As Lukić succinctly pointed out, Montenegrin elites were unlikely to surrender aspects of independence that they had gained since 1997:

*The Montenegrin elite, which today governs the country, began to realize after 1997 that the federal state cannot be built upon the temporary consensus of political elites, as was the case in 1992. When in 1997–98 the consensus was definitely lost, the Montenegrin government and president had found themselves in an extremely vulnerable position of being at the mercy of Milošević and the federal army. Now the Montenegrin political elites have an adamant desire to build a nation-state, which they consider the most effective instrument for protecting the established political order in Montenegro.*³³

Milo Djukanović's worsening international profile stalled any potential referendum. Pressures from Rome and Zagreb were to add to those from the EU and US – and these were not confined to refuting Montenegrin claims for independence. In early 2002, the Croatian newspaper *Nacional* published a number of articles accusing Djukanović of direct involvement in trafficking cigarettes, a charge the president flatly denied. Almost simultaneously, a former Italian finance minister, Ottavio del Turco, publicly accused Djukanović of having close links to organized crime, of being the lynchpin in the illegal mechanisms that controlled cigarette smuggling in the Balkans, and of having provided a safe haven for Italian criminals in the Montenegrin town of Bar. By July, the public prosecutor in the Italian port city of Bari, Guiseppe Scelsi, had started investigative proceedings against the Montenegrin president. The charge was that Djukanović (in concert with the Italian Mafia and cigarette manufacturers R. J. Reynolds and Philip Morris) smuggled large amounts of untaxed cigarettes into the EU from the port of Bar in Montenegro – generating huge profits for all the participants.³⁴ Djukanović, it was alleged, had profited greatly from this venture. According to Glenny, 'two Montenegrin companies, both controlled by Djukanović and the secret service, levied £20 on each case transited through the country' – rendering this trade one with a high profit margin.³⁵ Djukanović claimed that the profits were not channelled into private hands, but used to subsidize the state's running costs during the period of UN-imposed sanctions – a matter of patriotic duty, so to speak. The Italians prosecutors were unsympathetic to the claim that the smuggling was carried out for altruistic reasons and continued to pursue their case. The matter was not only damaging to Milo Djukanović, but also to the entire project of independence. In response to the political and legal pressure emanating from Italy, the veteran diplomat, Branko Lukovac was sent to Rome to smooth relations:

I was asked to go to Rome because the most terrible pressure against the Montenegrin independence project (and against Djukanović) came from Italy. So I went there and immediately I started recognizing that people just realized that this was a new song and that with the signing of the Belgrade Agreement the issue was finished.³⁶

It was a setback for the independence project, but internally things were smoothed over. In July 2002, a Montenegrin parliamentary commission was set up to investigate the charge, but while its findings confirmed the existence of organized crime in Montenegro, it rejected claims that Djukanović was personally involved. Nevertheless, however much the scandal may have shaken the DPS leadership, Djukanović retained his grip on domestic political power.

Identity, Nation, State: Symbols of Division

The period during which the state union was ‘functioning’ was one of intense activity in Montenegro. Powerful advocates of the independence option were enjoying an increasing momentum as it became clear that the Belgrade Agreement was not going to be a major obstacle to the eventual scheduling of a referendum. According to SDP leader Ranko Krivokapić, people within the DPS–SDP ruling coalition regarded the Belgrade Agreement as an opportunity to strengthen the project for achieving an independent Montenegro. That objective would remain paramount regardless:

We never left the project of independence. Djukanović told us after the signing of the Belgrade Agreement that we should continue to work towards the scheduling of a referendum. He had gained a significant concession within the agreement which gave us the right to hold a referendum after three years, and thus we continued to work to consolidate the structure of the state and to prepare the state for independence.³⁷

The first major stumbling block was the 2003 census. Given the politicization of the identity question, the results of the census would be indicative (though by no means a definitive indicator) of the potential support for independence. However, with the census data gathered in such a highly politicized context, how accurate could it be? Significant shifts were expected since the last Yugoslav census conducted in 1991. In that census, 62 per cent of Montenegrin citizens defined themselves as ‘Montenegrins’, while 9 per cent defined themselves as ‘Serbs’, but those figures belie the dualistic character of Montenegrin identity at that time. Some saw no contradiction in defining themselves as both Montenegrin and Serb; and defining themselves as one did not imply a rejection of the other. By 2003, however, it had become clear that political choice and perception of national identity were closely intertwined.³⁸ In the 2003 census, 40.5 per cent defined themselves as

'Montenegrin', while 30.3 per cent defined themselves as 'Serbs'. The schism within Montenegrin politics dictated individual choice, and a series of events had taken place that forced people to identify themselves as Serb *or* Montenegrin. According to Batt:

The deepening of this division can be seen in the way that the previously overlapping Serbian/Montenegrin identities are disaggregating into clearly polarized political alternatives. Those in favour of independence are now redefining Montenegrin identity as a separate national identity, while Montenegrin supporters of the federation with Serbia increasingly insist on their Serbian identity. The preliminary results of the 2003 census ominously confirmed this.³⁹

The census results did indeed show an increasing bifurcation based primarily along political lines (but manifested as a national division). In this climate, the Montenegrins begin more forcefully to define themselves as Montenegrins, the Serbs as Serbs and the 'possible converts' in the middle ground are encouraged to make a choice between one or other of these national groups, even although their profile may fit neither. Ethnic Serb leaders claimed that the census figures did not represent the true picture because state employees (and by extension their families) were put under immense pressure to define themselves as Montenegrins.⁴⁰ The census figures indicated that Montenegrin society was fundamentally divided over the issue of its own national identity, yet the figures were skewed by the political context within which the census took place and could hardly be taken as wholly reliable.

Following the census results, the Montenegrin authorities continued to reconstruct the aesthetic and symbolic elements of the Montenegrin nation. State symbols such as flags, anthems and coats of arms represent the state to the citizens. In an international arena, such as the UN, international sporting events and diplomatic interactions are the more commonly accepted national symbols. Either way, their purpose is to create a sense of belonging among a country's citizens, but finding Montenegrin national symbols that were acceptable to everyone proved deeply problematic. The flag, the coat of arms, the national anthem and the Montenegrin language, not to mention the deep split between pro-union and pro-independence opinion, were all contentious and hotly debated. In early 2004, in a step towards crystallizing a more exclusive Montenegrin identity, the Montenegrin Assembly (which at that point the pro-union parties were boycotting) passed a separate law on Montenegrin national symbols. Parliamentary speaker Ranko Krivokapić stated, 'For the first time in our history we have all three symbols of a nation.'⁴¹ Indeed, according to Krivokapić, this was done because 'we needed to demonstrate that we were decisive in our action towards independence.'⁴²

First to change were the state flags, emblems and symbolic days. Given

that flags and anthems are markers of the nation, the Montenegrin authorities sought to distinguish clearly between what was and what was not *Montenegrin*. Until 1910 Montenegro used two flags – a white cross on a red background known as *alaj-bajrak* (rather like the Maltese Cross) and a red flag with the symbol of the Petrović dynasty. However, in 1910 a new flag was introduced that was red, blue and white – essentially the same as the Serbian flag but with a lighter shade of blue (although Montenegrins still used the *alaj-bajrak* regardless of their pro-union/pro-independence sentiments). The *crvena, plavetna i bjela* (red, blue and white) flag gave a distinct symbolic impression that Serbia and Montenegro were joined at the hip. This symbol, despite protestations by pro-unionists was amended in 2004, replaced by the red flag with gold borders – essentially the old flag of the Petrović dynasty.⁴³ Similarly, the national holiday of 13 July (recognized primarily as the date of the start of the people's uprising against occupying forces in 1941) was transformed into the 'national day' in which Montenegro was recognized as the twenty-seventh independent state in the world in 1878. But most controversial was the change of national anthem. The national anthem (which in the past had been *Onamo, onamo* – 'There, Over There' – which contains references to 'Serb' lands and mythology⁴⁴ – and 'Hey Slavs') was replaced with the more Montenegrin 'Oh Bright May Dawn' (*Oj svijetlo majska zoro*), which emphasizes *majka naša Crna Gora* (our mother Montenegro). Originally written in the late nineteenth century the Montenegrin federalist leader, Sekula Drljević, rearranged it in 1944 to celebrate the establishment of the Italian-backed Montenegrin puppet regime that temporarily controlled Montenegro in 1941. Given its alleged 'fascist' connotations, many pro-unionists and members of Montenegro's Serb community were deeply offended. As Djurković explained, the anthem was 'written and published in 1944 by Sekula Drljević, a fascist war criminal and close ally of the Ustasha regime in World War II. Understandably, members of the Serbian and pro-Serbian parties in Montenegro reject such symbols.'⁴⁵

As an important cultural criterion of nationhood, language was also crucial. Since the mid-1990s Montenegrin cultural organizations like *Matica* had been lobbying to get Montenegrin recognized as the republic's 'mother tongue'.⁴⁶ This fed the paranoia of the ethnic Serb community that aspects of its identity were being eroded. In March 2004, the Montenegrin education council proposed changing the official language of the republic from *Serbian* to *Maternji jezik* (mother tongue). The proposal caused outrage among ethnic Serbs, who saw it as an attempt by the Montenegrin government to marginalize aspects of Serbian identity. Budimir Dubak of the People's Party (NS) claimed that the move represented a 'culmination of fanaticism' on the part of pro-independence forces. Jevrem Brković, president of the Dukljan Academy of Arts and Sciences, responded by hailing attempts to change the name of the

language as a 'transitional phase to the establishment of the Montenegrin language in the constitution of the republic'.⁴⁷

A viable and sustainable nation needs a suitable past and believable future; a 'golden age' had to be rediscovered to provide continuity between generations.⁴⁸ Montenegrin nationalists found their inspiration in the independent Montenegrin state (1878–1918). New national symbols, all drawn from King Nikola's era, were adopted throughout Montenegro, with King Nikola himself recast as a 'true Montenegrin'. The uncomfortable truth was that King Nikola (with his own interests uppermost in his mind) had defined himself as a Serb and sought to unify all Serbs with Cetinje at their centre; only when that became unachievable did he seek to preserve the Montenegrin state and nation. To celebrate King Nikola as a 'real' Montenegrin, as a symbol for the renewal of the independent Montenegrin state, was to distort history. It is noteworthy that the new monument to King Nikola stands on the same spot that housed the Podgorica Assembly in 1918. Nevertheless, there was a widespread revival of Montenegrin symbols (flags and monuments) from the King Nikola period, the Montenegrin *zastava* (flag) of the pre-1918 period was adopted and the names of a number of streets in Podgorica were changed. 'Nemanjina Street'⁴⁹ (during the 1990s) became 'Sveti Petar Cetinski Boulevard', a clear shift in emphasis from a Serbian to a Montenegrin role model. Indeed, many squares, streets and other public spaces named after Serb dynasties like Nemačić or Karadjordjević were changed to reflect a more Montenegrin character such as Balšići, Crnojevići or Petrovići.

Aesthetic changes were abundant. Between 2000 and 2006 Montenegro's capital Podgorica (once reputed to be the grimmest capital in Yugoslavia) was given a physical overhaul and made to look more European, hence more progressive. Its most significant symbol of 'progress', the 'Millennium Bridge', spans the Morača River and is an impressive futuristic structure. Though cynics mockingly referred to it as the 'Milo-ennium Bridge' when it was officially opened amid much pomp in 2005, it consolidated a perception of progress, a sense that life had improved since establishing a higher degree of autonomy from Serbia. It implied an even better future for Montenegro if independence could be achieved. As Stanka Vučinić of the Liberal Party pointed out, this had a significant effect on public perceptions:

*In the period before the referendum, it seemed that Montenegro had become a great building site, especially Podgorica. Many projects concerning important infrastructure were carried out, many residential buildings and monuments were constructed. All this served to encourage self-confidence in Montenegrin citizens. It proved that Montenegro can go independently side by side with other European countries. It, in part, influenced the consolidation of Montenegrin identity prior to the referendum.*⁵⁰

The nation and state building process was divisive; its symbols may have inspired many Montenegrins, but they isolated the pro-unionists. Ranko Krivokapić, author of the 2004 Law on Symbols, was quick to stress that the law and the changes that had taken place since it had been passed, was in no way a manifestation of Montenegrin nationalism, but rather a collection of symbols that would appeal to a civic Montenegro. 'No one wants to establish a Dukljan identity,' he argued. 'The Montenegrin nation will be a civic nation based on the concepts and principles of the civic state – identification with the state as opposed to the nation.'⁵¹ Indeed, while these symbols of Montenegrinism were becoming omnipotent, the Montenegrin authorities were simultaneously expressing the 'civic' character of Montenegro – a multiethnic and civic state that treated all its citizens equally. It was a message that pro-union parties regarded as pure propaganda.

Symbolism and aesthetics aside, the media, journalists and intellectuals played a key role in constructing a sense of progress and regeneration. The media in Montenegro were by no means monolithic (unlike in 1991) and, as in most divided societies, political factions were represented by their own newspapers. In Montenegro, where two newspapers interpret the same story from completely different angles, one's political orientation determines one's choice of newspaper. Four daily publications – *Vijesti*, *Pobjeda*, *Republika* and *Dan* – dominated the Montenegrin print media. Of these, the former supported the pro-independence government and the latter the pro-union opposition. *Pobjeda*, founded in October 1944 during the latter stages of the Second World War, was the oldest. State owned until 2004, it went through a lengthy privatization process from September that year, but retained its pro-government orientation, never wavering from that stance. The other daily newspapers were privately owned. Journalists from the Montenegrin weekly *Monitor* created *Vijesti* and adopted a pro-independence (but not always pro-Djukanović) position. Since 2000, its editors have thrown their weight behind Djukanović and the DPS as the man and party most likely to deliver independence. *Dan*, essentially a pro-Serbian nationalist publication that spoke to Montenegrins who considered themselves Serbs, had begun to launch personal attacks on Milo Djukanović, often writing sensationalist stories that linked members of Montenegro's ruling elite to organized crime. When an unknown assailant shot the paper's editor, Duško Jovanović, outside the editorial office in the Preko-Morača district of Podgorica on 27 May 2004, the editorial staff at *Dan* claimed that Montenegro's ruling elite had been behind his murder. Djukanović's response was to accuse the paper of being little more than a mouthpiece for the military counterintelligence.⁵² *Republika* (known until 2004 as *Publika*), a newspaper the Millennium Company established in 2001, was virulently pro-independence. Critics alleged that it was owned and run by individuals close to the ruling elite and had connections

with the Montenegrin secret police. True or not, the paper regularly printed documents received from the intelligence services. This led to several diplomatic incidents, most notably when it accused Charles Crawford, the UK ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro, of 'criminal misadventure'. Financially supported by ruling elites with vested interests in Montenegrin independence, despite its low circulation, *Republika* was available everywhere in Montenegro, which is another indication that it was being heavily subsidized.

There were also a number of weekly and bi-weekly publications. The most important of these was *Monitor*, which adopted a similar stance to *Vijesti* – broadly in support of independence but not uncritical of the ruling structures. There existed other publications with much lower circulations like *Crnogorska Književni List* (*Montenegrin Literary Paper*) owned by the poet and president of the Dukljan Academy of Arts and Sciences Jevrem Brković. An interesting characteristic of this period was the rehabilitation of Montenegrin nationalists like Jevrem Brković and Milorad Popović, who were both marginalized and forced to flee Montenegro in 1991. Brković, for example, was *persona non grata* in the early 1990s, but in the years immediately prior to the referendum was almost certainly receiving funding from the state. He regularly appeared on state television, enjoyed a high public profile and even had a table permanently reserved for him at the exclusive Hotel Crna Gora in the centre of Podgorica.⁵³ Brković edits *Crnogorska Književni List* and Milorad Popović *ARS*; both emphasize the uniqueness of Montenegrinism, though *ARS* is of a higher quality. Jevrem Brković's *Montenegrin Literary Paper* was uncritical of the ruling authorities and explicit in its support for the independence project and the Djukanović government. As Srdja Pavlović noted, intellectuals in Montenegro played a key role in consolidating and proliferating the myth of the independence project. Montenegrin media and cultural organizations such as Matica were instrumental in establishing this dubious interrelationship that tied the fate of the independence project to the political fate of the prime minister.⁵⁴

Some of the content of these publications was rather unpleasant. While most focused on the political and economic arguments for and against independence, two Montenegrin publications – the pro-independence daily *Republika* and the *Montenegrin Literary Paper* (edited by Jevrem Brković), contained articles that were distinctly anti-Serbian (and anti-state union). In June 2005, the former published an article in which Serbs were described as 'dogs' and 'very nasty people'.⁵⁵ The latter, meanwhile, argued that Serbs had an obsession with weapons and war, stating that, 'Serbia has two souls – both in uniform: the army and the gendarmie'.⁵⁶ In the same edition, Mirko Zečević, argued that:

The current common state of Serbia and Montenegro is the worst possible choice in

*which we are not living a better, more dignified and safer life. But not only that this common state benefits the unhindered process of assimilation, where the will of the Montenegrin people to decide about their own future is being raped.*⁵⁷

However, these kinds of sentiments were toned down in mainstream newspapers like *Pobjeda* or *Vijesti*; indeed, some were thought too critical of the ruling structures. It was clear that if independence was going to be achieved the media had to be brought into line, and only a relatively uniform and inherently positive representation of the arguments for independence could assure the success of the project. On 19 April 2005, the pro-union NS held a press conference in Podgorica at which they presented a document they claimed had been composed by the minister of interior of the government of Montenegro. Entitled 'Analysis of the media landscape of Montenegro in the year in which decisive steps towards state independence are to be taken', the document mapped out how to create 'media logistics' that would aid the promotion of positive arguments for independence. The (anonymous) author of the document noted that 'realization of the project of independence is commencing with weak media logistics.' The author's recommendations were broadly that the government's media and information bureaux should be better organized, that attempts should be made to influence Radio Television Montenegro, that the mainstream newspapers should be persuaded to adopt a more pro-government line, and that financial support should be provided to pro-government media in the north of Montenegro (where opposition to the ruling authorities was acute).⁵⁸

The leaking of the document, essentially calling for an engineered uniformity of the media, caused significant ripples. The Montenegrin minister of foreign affairs, Miodrag Vlahović, confirmed the authenticity of the document but claimed it had not come from within the government. Opposition parties responded immediately, the Liberals referring to the analysis as scandalous, and the Serbian People's Party stating that the document was racist and had been written in 'Gestapo style'.⁵⁹

It is hard to measure what effect all this had on ordinary Montenegrins. Clearly, efforts were made to create uniformity within the media and to use and reconstruct selected symbols as a way of mobilizing popular support – highlighting symbols of specific Montenegrin identity and shedding some aspects of Serbian identity (particularly symbols of Serbian nationalism), for example. While the process was partly effective, it alienated Montenegrin citizens who defined themselves primarily as Serbs. Indeed, it led many to feel they were being forced to make a choice that contradicted how they had always defined themselves (in largely dualistic terms). Radojka Vukčević, professor of American literature at the University of Montenegro, for example, argued that while she had little interest in politics she could 'no

longer stand by and watch what the Montenegrin government were doing'.⁶⁰ Her argument was that Montenegrin intellectual and political elites were attempting to deconstruct Serbian aspects of Montenegrin identity:

*I was brought up on the dialogue between two identities. My grandfather would always tell me that we were Serbs and that these (Montenegrin) lands were Serb lands. My father, however, would tell me that we were Yugoslavs and Montenegrins. So, given this state of affairs, I would always describe myself as Montenegrin with Serbian roots, and for many Montenegrins this would apply. There used to be little contradiction in defining yourself as Serb and Montenegrin. Now, however, a new Montenegrin identity has been created for strictly political purposes. Many of us felt insulted by this deconstruction of dual identity by elites who were doing so for their own political purposes.*⁶¹

According to Vukčević, Montenegrins who saw no contradiction in defining themselves both as Serb and Montenegrin felt threatened by the deconstruction of their dualistic identity and homogenization of a narrower Montenegrin identity. This, they argued, had little to do with real issues of identity and was everything to do with the political objectives of the ruling Montenegrin elites. In addition, they were concerned about the prevalence of specific Montenegrin national symbols over 'shared' symbols, and how symbols of Serb identity had been marginalized. This, argued Vukčević, was happening not as an organic process but as an instrumental process dictated by pro-independence political and intellectual elites:

*The rhetoric of many politicians in Montenegro shifted towards independence and a narrow 'Montenegrinism'. A new name for the Montenegrin nation was promoted – the Dukljani. It was the emergence of this Dukljan identity, constructed primarily for political purposes, that caused so much concern because it attempted to exclude our Serbian origins. All of us felt insulted by this. I myself do not want to have my identity deconstructed from above by political elites because of someone else's political choice and because there is a need on behalf of a number of individuals.*⁶²

A bidirectional process of sorts was taking place. Attempts by the Montenegrin authorities to consolidate a sense of belonging to the Montenegrin nation conversely strengthened Serbian identity among a significant minority of Montenegro's population. According to people in the Serbian People's Party of Montenegro (SNS), the authorities in Podgorica were trying to purge Montenegrin identity of its Serb elements, while marginalizing those who held that Montenegrins were essentially Serbs. According to SNS member and historian Budimir Aleksić, since the split within the DPS and Djukanović's subsequent decision to seek independence, there had been a

complete shift in the way politicians, the media and intellectuals dealt with Montenegrin identity.⁶³ While Serb–Montenegrin unity may have been the order of the day in 1991, such sentiments were now discouraged. But it was not simply symbolism or identity that worried the Montenegrin Serbs. Increasingly, they argued, their jobs were under threat and they received none of the economic benefits that pro-independence (particularly DPS) supporters enjoyed. The economic differences between northern and central-coastal Montenegro are obvious even to the most uninformed tourist. Many in the Serb communities in northern Montenegro claimed that the disparity was political. Resentment over the north being excluded from the economic regeneration taking place in other parts of the republic continued to increase. On the micro-level, it also caused friction between neighbours because, it was argued, DPS supporters in northern Montenegro were rewarded for their party loyalty. A clear economic divergence became visible between pro- and anti-independence supporters. This could, according to SNS member, Želidrag Nikčević, easily be seen in towns and villages across Montenegro:

*In my village in Montenegro you can see clearly two families living in close proximity. One supports the DPS and they possess everything they need – a tractor, a new fence, repairs to their home; the other family live in what can best be described as a shack. In contemporary Montenegro it is clear to see who supports the government and define themselves Montenegrin, and those who define themselves Serb. There is a significant economic benefit to be had from being a ‘Montenegrin’.*⁶⁴

Therefore, it was argued, individuals who supported the ruling authorities benefited economically. The municipalities the opposition (pro-Serbian) parties administered were starved of central government funding (much of which was spent revamping Podgorica). Opposition politicians cited the northern Montenegrin town of Berane (administered at that time by the SNS) as a case in point. According to Radojica Živković, the deputy mayor of Berane and a member of the SNS party, the government discriminated against the Serbian municipalities economically.⁶⁵ The Serbs of Montenegro focused their fears primarily on their economic isolation and what they perceived as the deconstruction of their identity. This, they argued, consisted of everything from explicit exclusion from the political and economic processes to the erosion of aspects of Serbian identity from above.

Pre-Referendum Politics and the Referendum Process

As a referendum on independence became increasingly likely, Serbs in Montenegro (aided by high-profile pro-union Montenegrins living in Serbia) established a movement that brought all pro-union Montenegrin forces together. The ‘Movement for the Joint European State Union of Serbia and

Montenegro' (*Pokret za zajedničku evropsku državu Srbiju i Crnu Goru*) was formed. Largely directed from Belgrade, it comprised Montenegrins living in Serbia (the majority of whom supported preservation of the union), pro-Serb political parties and their members in Montenegro, and a number of diaspora groups. Leading pro-union politicians such as Dragan Soć and Predrag Popović of the People's Party (NS), Ranko Kadić from the Democratic Serb Party (DSS), and Andrija Mandić and Goran Danilović from the Serbian People's Party of Montenegro (SNS) were immediately active. Significantly, the Socialist People's Party of Montenegro (SNP), led by Predrag Bulatović, chose not to join the movement.⁶⁶ However, despite the non-involvement of the increasingly moderate SNP, the movement was not simply a tool of Serbian nationalists (as it was often portrayed in some Montenegrin media), but rather a mix of committed nationalists and moderates.

Its membership reflected this, comprising moderates such as professor of American literature Radojka Vukčević, who tended to use the language of conciliation, and those of a less moderate, more nationalist orientation such as Andrija Mandić of the SNS.⁶⁷ Influential Montenegrins now residing in Serbia joined the domestic Montenegrin Serbs. The poet Matija Bećković, the writer Ljubomir Tadić (father of the Serbian president, Boris Tadić), the historian Slavenko Terzić (from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences), and the Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Amfilohije Radović, all became members. Their objective was to agitate for the preservation of the union and to emphasize the brotherhood between Serbs and Montenegrins, while issuing stark warnings (a tried and tested technique) against the dangers of separation.

The movement's core arguments were that the political elites of Milo Djukanović's 'undemocratic' regime wanted to separate Montenegro from Serbia to consolidate their own economic interests, which they had acquired during the years following the DPS split. Furthermore, they argued, the Montenegrin government was trying both to deny voting rights to Montenegrins residing in Serbia and to get rid of aspects of Serbian identity in Montenegro. According to the International Crisis Group, opposition to union was not the only binding factor. Djukanović's eight years in power had left many of them out in the cold and a number were 'anxious to have a chance to come to power and share in the distribution of wealth that is taking place under the current privatization drive'.⁶⁸ Thus, the movement's members had a wide range of interests, and not entirely driven by a Serbian nationalist agenda. Economic issues were also at the heart of their campaign, including tax, corporate registration, property ownership rights, citizenship, pensions and health care. A constant message throughout their campaign was that Djukanović and the political elite close to him were creating an independent state for the sole purpose of consolidating their narrow economic interests. In

this, they could find an ally in the leader of *Grupa za promjene* (Group for Changes or GZP), Nebojša Medojević. While being pro-independence (as the best way to ensure future reforms), Medojević had argued for years that the ruling Montenegrin elite had usurped the independence project to maintain control over politics and business.⁶⁹ It was a message loudly received by those who felt marginalized by the ruling authorities.

While much of the movement's rhetoric was grounded in economic and social considerations, its more radical elements utilized more nationalistic language. They highlighted the autocracy of the Montenegrin regime, the character of its 'anti-Serb' politics, and the dangers that independence would invariably bring. The overarching theme remained the need for Serbia and Montenegro to remain together for 'historical, cultural and economic reasons'.⁷⁰ During a meeting of the organization at the Maine monastery in the coastal resort of Budva in November 2004, described in the Montenegrin weekly *Monitor* as a meeting of 'the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Serbian Orthodox Church, and domestic activists who are against Montenegro', Montenegrins from both republics spoke in favour of preserving the union and, in the event of an independent Montenegro, working towards ensuring parity within the Montenegrin state – if 30 per cent of Montenegro was Serb, then Serbs should enjoy that level of representation in state bodies.⁷¹ Given its status as a pillar of Serb identity, the Serbian Orthodox Church played a central role. Amfilohije Radović, the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, while highly respected within the Orthodox clergy in Serbia and beyond was derided (and feared) by pro-independence Montenegrins. His firebrand speeches warned of the dangers of civil conflict in Montenegro 'if brother was pitted against brother'.⁷²

The Serbian Orthodox Church (in collusion with the Army of Serbia and Montenegro) acted as Serb parties were attempting to reach a consensus on strategy regarding the referendum. To compound its openly political role, the SOC explicitly and symbolically expressed its opposition to Montenegrin independence and, occasionally, its actions matched its rhetoric.⁷³ The controversy over the 'Rumija incident' was a case in point. Mount Rumija, near the port of Bar in southern Montenegro, is a place of pilgrimage and worship for three religious communities – Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim. Every August, pilgrims from these religions climb to the peak of the mountain to remember St Vladimir, who died 50 years prior to the division between Rome and Constantinople in 1054. The cult of Vladimir is kept alive by all religious communities, and he remains a genuine symbol of inter-ecclesiastical cooperation. However, as I mentioned earlier, in June 2005, when a small metal orthodox church was placed on top of the peak of Mount Rumija without the consent of the Montenegrin authorities, it was immediately taken as a signal from the SOC that Montenegro was Serb territory and a direct provocation to

other religious communities in Montenegro. Ethnic Albanian leader, Mehmet Bardhi, said that the act constituted 'the biggest provocation against Albanians in the past fifty years' and, according to Marko Špadijer of the *Montenegrin Matica*, it threatened to damage relations between ethnic groups in Montenegro.⁷⁴ The SOC's actions, he argued:

*Create a significant problem with Muslims and Catholics because they will rightly say that it (Rumija) belongs to us all. That type of political and religious provocation will cause nothing but trouble. Of course, they want to test the government also – to test their capabilities in dealing with such a situation. They are also arguing that Muslims and Albanians are the de-stabilising factor in Montenegro, claiming that there is a threat to an independent Montenegro from Greater Albania.*⁷⁵

That they had offended the Albanian community was nothing novel for the Serbian Church or for Serbian politicians in Montenegro. Since the DPS split in 1997, pro-Serb politicians had warned of the grave dangers that an independent Montenegro could face. Warnings of the threat of a 'Greater Albania' were not uncommon, even abundant.⁷⁶ For example, Montenegrin Albanians may try to carve out areas of Montenegro in an attempt to adjoin them to Albania as part of a wider 'Greater Albanian' programme that would envisage parts of western Macedonia, Montenegro and all of Kosovo being attached to Albania. It has been a key strategy of the Serbian bloc in Montenegro to play on fears of Albanian separatism, which would infect and perhaps eventually destroy an independent Montenegro; only through continued unity with Serbia, they argued, could such a dark prospect be avoided. Not for the first time during the pre-referendum period, their strategy proved counterproductive. While it may have galvanized the pro-union diehards and Serb nationalists, it simultaneously delivered the minority vote to the pro-independence movement, which would frequently argue that the pro-Serb or pro-union bloc essentially comprised Milošević supporters who harboured grudges against Albanians and Muslims.

At the same time the 'Movement for a Sovereign and Independent Montenegro' (*pokret za samostalnu i nezavisnu Crnu Goru*) was formed. Led by the charismatic Branko Lukovac, the movement's objective was to 'gather together all of the pro-independence forces under one umbrella – a situation that has never existed since the prevalence of the Milošević policy'.⁷⁷ This fusion of quite diverse groups would, argued Lukovac, produce a convincing majority in favour of independence.⁷⁸ Something of a homogenization of pro-independence forces, the movement sought to create a consensus and to generate maximum support for Djukanović's attempts to deliver independence. But its confident rhetoric belied problems under the surface. The movement represented, for many within the Liberal Party, a pact with the

devil.⁷⁹ Many committed pro-independence forces within the Liberals were staunchly anti-DPS and anti-Djukanović, but, like the pro-independence intellectuals and media, would go along with them if they could achieve their core objective – independence. The logic was simple, if risky – use the undemocratic DPS–Djukanović power structure to gain independence first, and then consolidate democracy in the future. Although a future as an independent state was by no means guaranteed, meanwhile it was not too difficult for Lukovac to harness these relatively disparate and diverse forces. They had one clear advantage in that they appeared less defensive than the ‘Movement for Preservation’. Their rhetoric has an air of renewal and positivity about it, and they quickly gained the advantage.

At this stage, at least, it was unclear whether the pro-Serbian political parties in Montenegro would participate in a referendum (boycott was the strategy adopted by Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia in the early 1990s), although the *de facto* leader of the pro-union bloc, Predrag Bulatović (while hoping to stall the process), stated in December 2005 that if the EU oversaw the process then he and his partners would participate.⁸⁰ Bulatović’s public pronouncements and simultaneous stalling matched the attitude of the EU, which was aware that Montenegro’s right to hold a referendum was enshrined in the Belgrade Agreement. It publicly affirmed this right but sought to persuade Serbia and Montenegro to implement the agreement by encouraging them to strengthen the state union institutions. On 10 November 2005, the EU Commission sent a ‘non-paper’ to the Montenegrin government warning it that failure to reach a consensus on the referendum with the opposition would have ‘severe and negative consequences for Montenegro’s future aspirations for European integration’, and that if Montenegro chooses to leave the state union it ‘shall not inherit the right to an international legal personality ... this will also affect the continuing SAA [Stability and Association Agreement] process for Serbia and Montenegro.’⁸¹

Paradoxically, the EU found itself defending what was essentially a continuation of Slobodan Milošević’s construction (the FRY). This irony was not lost on pro-independence groups in Montenegro, many of which regarded the state union as an EU construction imposed by EU security chief, Javier Solana, in collusion with Belgrade. This perception of cooperation between Brussels and Belgrade was further consolidated when EU Commissioner Oli Rehn received Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica in Brussels. In an effort to derail a referendum, Koštunica handed Rehn a list of 264,000 Montenegrins living in Serbia who, he argued, should be given the right to vote in any upcoming referendum. Despite never officially responding to the list, the role of the EU, and particularly that of Javier Solana (disliked for the pressure he brought to bear on Montenegro prior to the signing of the Belgrade Agreement) was widely criticized among pro-independence

Montenegrins. Among satirists *Solania* became the common term employed to name the joint state.⁸² Interviewed in December 2005, Branko Lukovac, the chairman of the Movement for an Independent European Montenegro, argued that pro-independence Montenegrins saw the EU's role in the imposition of the state union as negative, but not without reason:

*There were two reasons why the Belgrade Agreement was so vociferously imposed by the international community. One was that they argued that there would be a domino effect in the region inspired by Montenegro. This, I would argue, has not proven to be the case – the situation in Kosovo has not worsened as a result of our actions. There are no stability risks. They want to avoid the referendum and they always lobby for the preservation of the state union citing the potential for destabilization as a justification. Furthermore, they wish to prescribe standards for the referendum that we cannot achieve – for example, if we cannot accept Serbians to come to vote in the referendum, then they may insist upon a two-thirds majority.*⁸³

The international community feared that the possible loss of Montenegro, and perhaps Kosovo, in a relatively short period would serve only to radicalize Serbian internal politics. With a shaky democratic coalition and the spectre of the *Srpska Radikalna Stranka* (Serbian Radical Party) formerly led by Vojislav Šešelj and now led by Tomislav Nikolić as the largest single party in the Serbian parliament, Serbian politics was by no means making the progress the international community had hoped it would after Milošević's fall in October 2000.⁸⁴ According to Branko Lukovac:

*I met in Belgrade a number of ambassadors of big European countries that claimed Montenegro was a headache for them. 'What will happen in Serbia?' they would ask. 'In addition to Kosovo and the Hague we now have the problem of Montenegro. Perhaps democracy will collapse in Serbia and you Montenegrins will be the guilty party.'*⁸⁵

But this often irrational fear of destabilization in Serbia, and its possible impacts on Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo, dictated that the international community's position towards Montenegrin independence bordered on the hostile. To clarify the imposition of standards with regard to the referendum, however, the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe tasked the Venice Commission with providing expert recommendations on the referendum process, which by December 2005, they had done.⁸⁶ The referendum would go ahead six months later, in May 2006.

Montenegro Decides: The 2006 Independence Referendum

Because they treat volatile territorial conflicts, sovereignty and citizenship as zero-sum games, referendums carry a considerable risk; their very arbitrariness can inflame and polarize existing conflicts.¹ It was clear that, given the political polarizations and divided nature of Montenegrin society generally, the potential existed for Montenegro's internal political squabbles to break into a violent conflict. To counter such a possibility, the EU played arbiter throughout the referendum process. It worked tirelessly to construct a set of conditions that would be acceptable to all the key political actors. The EU's role would be crucial in reaching a consensus on the rules regarding the referendum, which the Montenegrin government and opposition had been unable to do. The EU played a crucial role. Threatening to boycott any unilaterally declared referendum, the leader of the SNP,² Predrag Bulatović, stated that he would only participate in a referendum that the EU approved and monitored.³ While the Montenegrin government indicated that it might press ahead regardless of the actions of the opposition, it was clear that only EU supervision could prevent the instability that a unilaterally declared referendum would invariably cause. Given the bitter internal disputes within the republic, the EU had little choice but to play a central role in reaching a basic consensus between Montenegro's polarized political elites before the referendum, and continue to do so throughout the referendum process.

This unenviable task was awarded to Miroslav Lajčák who, in late 2005, was appointed as Javier Solana's 'special envoy' to Montenegro.⁴ A fellow Slovak, František Lipka, was chosen to chair the Republican Referendum Committee, the body that would play the role of arbiter in disputes throughout the referendum process. While both men were well versed in the idiosyncrasies of Balkan politics, reaching an agreement on the structure of the referendum proved problematic, impeded from the outset by fundamental disagreements about what level of majority would legitimize the outcome of the referendum. By February 2006 it had been agreed that for the Monte-

negrin referendum to be deemed legitimate the rules would be as follows: 55 per cent of the valid votes must be cast in favour of either a 'yes' or 'no' option and at least 50 per cent plus one of the Montenegrin electoral body (all registered voters) must participate. Thus, on 1 March 2006, the Montenegrin government adopted a new 'Law on the Referendum on State Legal Status' that would regulate the establishment of referendum administration bodies, the financing of campaign expenses, the conduct of the campaign, its coverage by the media, and the rights of observer groups.⁵ Furthermore, the law on the referendum also finalized the referendum question itself, which was formulated as '*Do you want the Republic of Montenegro to be an independent state with full international and legal personality?*' Last, enshrined in the law was a three-year moratorium on a possible future referendum on the same issue.

The campaign began in earnest with Montenegro's pro-union and pro-independence blocs finalizing their internal structures, though much of the jostling, positioning and bargaining had taken place prior to the official announcement of the referendum itself.⁶ The composition of the blocs would remain consistent throughout the referendum campaign. The referendum campaign began in early May, with both blocs holding rallies in towns, cities and villages throughout Montenegro, climaxing with the staging of two large rallies in the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica, on the eve of the referendum.

'Da! Po! Yes!' – The Pro-Independence Campaign

The excellently planned and delivered pro-independence campaign was effective and aesthetically seductive. Not unfamiliar with this territory – the DPS mastered the art of professional political marketing during the late 1990s – the pro-independence campaign proved to be a credible (and ultimately successful) endeavour in both form and content. The imagery and symbolism was reminiscent of LSCG rallies in the early 1990s, with a significant amount of government-funded glitz added for good measure. Even the 'L' sign (made with the thumb and forefinger) of the LSCG became the symbol of the pro-independence rallies (DPS supporters displayed this sign without any apparent sense of irony). Appropriately given the objective, the first of the rallies was held in the historical capital of Cetinje. As expected, the pro-independence bloc utilized emotive rhetoric intended to appeal to the romantic inclinations of the Montenegro-centric residents of the historical capital. The rhetoric of the speakers was pre-prepared to appeal to the pre-existing self-perception of Montenegrins as a brave, honourable and independent people. Contemporary Montenegrins, the speakers argued, were presented with a unique historical mission – to correct the injustices endured by their forefathers who had to bear the loss of Montenegrin independence in 1918. What their forefathers had sorrowfully lost they could regain. The era of the independent Montenegrin state (1878–1918) was recast as a 'golden

age' and contemporary supporters of Montenegrin independence were recast as descendants of the heroes and martyrs who had created then lost (due to Serbian aggression) the independent Montenegrin state. This rather romanticized and selective reworking of history, blended with contemporary arguments, proved to be effective. It was the first and most emotive of the justifications for independence, if somewhat abstract and constructed. On a more contemporary political level, however, pro-independence leaders advanced a number of key arguments that could convince even the sceptics. First, the leaders of the pro-independence bloc claimed (while acknowledging the unbreakable cultural and historical links with Serbia) that Montenegrin interests could not be best served by playing what pro-independence leaders claimed was a subservient role within an unequal and unworkable state union. Second, they argued that continued union with Serbia (a country weighed down with the baggage of the Milošević era) was impeding Montenegro's accession to European Union membership. Third, it was argued, an independent Montenegro would be a better foundation upon which to consolidate regional stability and civil society, and finally that the republic could harness better its economic potential if it were fully in control of its interests.⁷ These appeals resonated among those who had witnessed the worst excesses of Serb nationalism in Montenegro.

Montenegro's Muslim and Albanian minorities were among those who had been at the receiving end of this ideology. Predictably, the pro-independence campaign was notable for its inclusion of minorities as an integral part of the campaign. Unlike the pro-union bloc, which aimed its campaign almost completely at ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins, emphasis was placed on the participation of minorities. Since 1997, such an inclusive policy towards minorities had served the ruling authorities well and, as a consequence, the pro-independence bloc enjoyed a lot of support in the municipalities where there were many citizens who defined themselves as Muslim, Bosniak or Albanian (the municipalities of Plav, Rožaje and the majority Albanian municipality of Ulcinj being foremost among these). A clear manifestation of the policy of incorporating minorities could be seen in the pro-independence print and electronic media campaigning. The literature for the pro-independence campaign specifically utilized both the Albanian and the Serbian (Latin *and* Cyrillic) language, awarding the campaign an air of inclusion and reinforcing its argument that *its* Montenegro would be a state for all Montenegrin citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religious affiliation. In predominantly Orthodox or Muslim areas, for example, 'Da' (Serbian/Montenegrin for 'Yes') posters were omnipotent, while in predominantly Albanian areas posters adorned with 'Po' (Albanian for 'Yes') were ever-present. It proved to be a masterstroke.

The campaign did not, however, have an auspicious start. While 'European

standards' and 'faster European integration' were cornerstones of the pro-independence campaign rhetoric, the bloc ran into early problems with the EU. Comments made by leading members of the pro-independence bloc (who travelled the world to woo the diaspora vote, which would, in the final analysis, be critical) that despite a 55 per cent requirement for independence, a 51 per cent vote would essentially mean independence. EU envoy Miroslav Lajčák berated the pro-independence bloc for its comments, stating that 'there is a distinct lack of seriousness with politicians going around the world saying that as far as they are concerned 51 per cent would be taken as a signal that the state union no longer exists.'⁸ Shaken by the EU *démarche*, further controversy followed in the shape of the 'Zeta film', which allegedly depicted DPS activists bribing voters in the Podgorica suburb of Golubovci. The film showed two DPS activists attempting to bribe one Mašan Bošković to vote for independence by offering to pay his long-overdue electricity bill of €1580.⁹ Seemingly insignificant (and hardly unique in Montenegrin politics) the film generated a significant scandal. The pages of the Montenegrin press were filled with claim and counterclaim, denying or confirming the film's authenticity. The pro-independence press such as *Pobjeda* argued that the film was a falsification concocted by an individual 'code-named Sparrow Hawk', who was reputedly close to the Serbian intelligence services.¹⁰ Conversely, the pro-union daily *Dan* reported that the film depicted 'nothing but the truth', confirmation that the Montenegrin government was engaged in the illegal purchase of votes.¹¹ Naturally, the pro-independence bloc responded to the film with accusations of foul play. Its leader, Milo Djukanović, stated that the film was an attempt to sabotage the referendum and that the whole affair 'must have its epilogue in court'.¹² Similarly, Branko Lukovac, who headed the Movement for an Independent European Montenegro, described the events depicted in the film as a 'method of psychological war' waged against the Montenegrin government.¹³

As referendum day approached, however, the pro-independence bloc had more immediate practical issues to contend with than the scandals that crammed the pages of the Montenegrin press. Potentially critical to the success of the campaign was the ability to persuade minority leaders and other influential individuals to join the campaign.¹⁴ Two in particular were deemed essential – Mehmet Bardhi, chairman of the Albanian Democratic Alliance of Montenegro, and Slavko Perović, the former leader of the defunct LSCG. The latter in particular remained a hugely influential player. As the leader of the LSCG, Perović represented the voice of the anti-war generation of the early 1990s and, though a financial scandal had prematurely ended his political career (and the party he created), a significant number of Montenegrins held him in high regard. The LSCG had been the genuine party of Montenegrin independence until the DPS adopted many aspects of its platform in the early

2000s and, for many, Perović remained *the* spiritual leader of the movement for an 'independent, European oriented Montenegro' (a phrase so casually utilized now by his former adversaries). But Perović, however much he may have wanted an independent Montenegro, vehemently opposed Milo Djukanović's government and chose not to engage in the referendum campaign.¹⁵ Branko Lukovac, who led the Movement for an Independent European Montenegro, told the daily *Republika* that regardless of who participated, he expected Bardhi and Perović's supporters to vote for independence.¹⁶ There was a pressing need to have Perović on board, for he was crucial to attracting the votes of the pro-independence but anti-Djukanović Liberals. Indeed, the prime minister, alluding to Perović's non-participation, urged the crowd gathered in Cetinje to vote for the independence option regardless of personalities, emphasizing that 'it was not the time to be stubborn in a Montenegrin way.'¹⁷

Throughout the referendum campaign, particularly during the final rallies, rumours were abundant that Perović would appear on stage with Djukanović, Marović, Vujanović and others. Principled to the end, Slavko Perović remained disengaged and his fêted appearance at the pro-independence rallies failed to materialize. It was a mark of his integrity that he maintained his stance when emotions were running high and there was a growing expectation that he would lend his support to the campaign. In Perović's absence, however, numerous high profile figures (including the grandson of King Nikola I Petrović) were willing to give their rhetorical support at the final pro-independence rally in Podgorica on the evening of 18 May.¹⁸ The rally, which was held on *Trg Republike* (Republic Square) in the city centre, drew around 40,000 citizens and was impressive. Many in the crowd wore red T-shirts emblazoned with 'Da' (Yes) and waved the red and gold Montenegrin flag (again reminiscent of the LSCG rallies of the 1990s). While the rally may have given the impression that the referendum result was a foregone conclusion, the pro-independence bloc continued to garner every last vote. This was achieved by powerful nationalist rhetoric and aesthetic presentation, but also by a level of coercion. Consistently, opponents argued that there was a more cynical way of persuading people to vote for independence. The pro-independence bloc played the emotional card, recalling the 'glorious' romanticized days of Montenegrin independence, the Serbian 'occupation' of Montenegro in 1918 and other such historical arguments. Pro-independence elites attempted to forge a direct link between the great Montenegrins of the past and the contemporary 'mission' to reinstate independence.¹⁹ While this overtly-romanticized rhetoric may have been sufficient to garner a number of votes, it would not in itself guarantee a positive result. Hidden and more cynical methods were utilized behind the scenes – generally taking the form of low-level pressure and coercion. Considerable pressure was put on

individuals working for the state (including policemen, teachers and other state employees) to vote in the right way.²⁰ Indeed, when questioned by journalists on alleged coercion of citizens, the DPS chief whip, Miodrag Vuković, told journalists that within such a context the application of pressure was normal because one ‘cannot work for the state and vote against it’.²¹

‘Reči Ne!’ – The Pro-Union Campaign

The pro-union campaign was more austere, but surprisingly positive in many aspects. The unionists engaged the Belgrade PR agency *Incognito* to direct their campaign and, while their rhetoric was at times reminiscent of the nationalist discourses of the early 1990s, the campaign was generally positive and aimed, surprisingly, at a younger audience (not considered the cornerstone of pro-union sentiment).²² The rhetoric of Serb–Montenegrin unity underpinned the pro-union arguments – Serbia and Montenegro in political union were a stronger economy together than the sum of their parts; there were strong cultural bonds between the republics of Serbia and Montenegro; and Serbs and Montenegrins possessed strong and unbreakable ethnic bonds (some continued to argue that Serbs and Montenegrins were one nation).²³ While the pro-union forces rightly acknowledged the importance of the youth vote and benefited from it, they marginalized the minority vote, directing their campaign primarily at the Serb and Montenegrin (namely Orthodox) communities. Although they tried to attract Muslim votes by bringing the ‘Bosniak bloc’, a small coalition of Bosniak non-governmental organizations (among them the influential leader of the Montenegrin SDA, Harun Hadžić) on board,²⁴ it was a strategy that was flawed from the outset. Many Montenegrin Muslims and Bosniaks still had raw memories of the early 1990s, when they were rhetorically victimized by Serb parties and physically intimidated by Serb paramilitaries. Montenegro’s minorities, despite these efforts, continued overwhelmingly to support the pro-independence bloc.

Unsurprisingly, the pro-union bloc drew most of its support from the northern Montenegrin municipalities of Šavnik, Berane, Kolašin, Pljevlja and Andrijevica, and thus its campaign was aimed primarily at the Orthodox population of northern Montenegro, the majority of whom tended to define themselves as Serbs. This narrow focus, on the whole, defined its campaign, and while it won support among Serbs and Serb-oriented Montenegrins, it held little attraction for Muslim-Bosniak or Albanian voters. These oversights were glaring from the outset of the pro-union campaign and mistakes were aplenty. First, the pro-union campaign leaflets and television advertisements were written in Cyrillic (generally used by Serbs), as opposed to the Latin script (generally used by Montenegro’s minorities and ethnic Montenegrins), and this gave the impression that the pro-union bloc was simply the old Serb nationalists repackaged by Belgrade PR agents. By extension, while Predrag

Bulatović tried to recast himself as a moderate figure committed to the democratic path, the baggage of his nationalist past remained. However, his attempts to be moderate did not apply to other leaders in the bloc.²⁵ The pro-union bloc brought together all the parties that supported union – SNP, SNS, NS and DSS. The commonality was their Serb identity, but in reality this was a heterogeneous and rather disorganized bloc of competing interests and varying commitment to the Serb cause. Since the marginalization of Zoran Žižić from the SNP, that party had adopted a more moderate and less nationalistic rhetoric, but while many people regarded Bulatović as a man of words, SNS leaders Andrija Mandić and Goran Danilović were considered men of action, more inclined towards a Serb nationalist agenda.²⁶

With such internal differentiations and potential for internal fragmentation, it was wiser to focus on the idiosyncrasies of the pro-independence leaders. Thus, much of the pro-union campaigning focused on the corrupt character of Montenegro's ruling authorities, placing particular emphasis on Milo Djukanović's alleged links with organized crime and playing on fears that he and his associates would turn Montenegro into a 'private state', within which his opponents would be economically and politically marginalized. Such blunt and direct allegations gave the impression of negative campaigning, but old rhetoric emphasizing national stereotypes occasionally rose to the surface. In a further counterproductive move, the pro-union bloc reverted to type by appealing to anti-Albanian sentiments among Serbs. Marginalizing an already unsupportive Albanian community, pro-union leaders warned of the danger of a 'Greater Albania', based on the thesis that an independent Montenegro would be a weak state potentially vulnerable to incursions or insurrections by Albanian extremists (after all, it was argued, these extremists had begun an insurgency in Macedonia in 2001). But their argument was essentially that politically and economically the Montenegrin state could only survive and function properly in union with Serbia – without it Montenegro would be vulnerable. Furthermore, the pro-union politicians and press emphasized the increasing insecurity of ethnic Serbs in Montenegro.²⁷ Fear of potential instability remained a central aspect of their campaign, but often these messages would emanate from Belgrade as opposed to Podgorica.

Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica added to Serb uncertainty by ambiguously but threateningly stating that 'the creation of new borders would not cause good things to happen.'²⁸ Serbian Radical Party leader Tomislav Nikolić's statements were also controversial. On 12 May his party released a statement saying that its members would support an autonomous Serbian statelet in Montenegro in the event of Montenegrin independence.²⁹ The Serbian Patriarch Pavle was less sensational, emphasizing the cultural and historical links between Serbia and Montenegro and what he argued was the 'vital need' to retain the union of Serbia and Montenegro.³⁰

These statements coming from Belgrade often played into the hands of the pro-independence bloc. To its credit, the moderate wing within the pro-union bloc, wishing to give the impression that it had shed its nationalist past, shied away from association with radical nationalist politics. Recognizing the dangers of such an association, the pro-union bloc kept the Serbian Radicals, for example, at a distance. Efforts to purge the negative symbols of Serb nationalism were evident throughout the referendum campaign. Unlike previous election campaigns, symbols of Serbian nationalism, flags adorned with the four Ss, posters of Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, and songs such as 'Get Ready Chetniks' were largely absent, although a small number of individuals were photographed at the pro-union rally in Herceg-Novi wearing Radovan Karadžić T-shirts (an image given disproportionate coverage in the front pages of the pro-independence media).³¹ The pro-union bloc had, rightly, calculated that it was not in its best interests to instrumentalize the symbols of a tainted nationalist idea, and on the whole supporters of the pro-union bloc detracted from displaying such symbols.³² The many speeches given at pro-union rallies were testament to this. Their leaders' rhetoric, although at times a throwback to the paranoia of the early 1990s, was focused less on nationalism and more on the tangible benefits to be drawn from retaining the union with Serbia. Economic, cultural and historical reasons were most frequently cited and, while the majority of the pro-union campaigning focused substantially on these justifications, personal attacks against Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanović were common throughout. Many of those gathered for the pro-union rallies would chant *Milo – lopove!* (Milo is a thief!), and much of the invective was directed at the prime minister and the alleged 'criminal nature' of his regime.

The pro-union rallies were, as expected, well received in areas that were predominantly Serb – the municipalities of Berane, Herceg-Novi and Pljevlja in particular – but less well received in other areas. Predrag Bulatović, the leader of the pro-union bloc, was heckled in Rožaje (a predominantly Muslim municipality), for example. The largest of the rallies took place in Nikšić on 15 May and on Republic Square in the centre of Podgorica on 16 May. Events in Montenegro's second largest city passed without trouble, with Bulatović promising to defeat the 'Djukanović regime', which, he argued, was suffering 'the last jerks' of its lifespan. The following evening in Podgorica the rhetoric was much the same, but what was surprising was the large number of young participants – in contrast with the stereotype of supporters of union being older, rural and less educated – vocally supporting continued union. Again, the speakers focused their invective on Milo Djukanović while pro-union supporters chanted *Milo – lopove!* (Milo the thief) were mixed with *Milo – gotov je!* (Milo is finished).³³ The numbers in attendance varied according to which newspaper one read, although the likely figure was around 20,000. The

Democratic Serb Party leader, Ranko Kadić, claimed 50,000 were in attendance, while the pro-independence media claimed only 16,000 were on the square and in surrounding streets. Whatever the numbers, the pro-union rally in Podgorica was a pale shadow of the pro-independence rally in the same location two days later. While major incidents were avoided, clashes between pro-independence supporters and pro-union supporters and the firing of shots outside Podgorica's football stadium were reported in the following day's newspapers.³⁴

Immediately after the Podgorica rally, Bulatović participated in the last of the televised 'duels' between himself and Milo Djukanović. The context seemed favourable for Bulatović – the mediator and presenter was Olja Bečković, the daughter of the hugely influential Serbian poet (and a vociferous member of the pro-union campaign), Matija Bečković.³⁵ The atmosphere before the debate was uncompromisingly bitter – the two participants did not shake hands either before or after. The theme of the debate was predictably antagonistic, with Bulatović accusing Djukanović of being involved in criminal activities, attempting to create a 'private state' and being anti-Serbian.³⁶ 'A private state,' Bulatović stated, 'means that you control everything in it, from the police, to the courts, and most importantly, the money.'³⁷ Regardless of it being a valid argument, this offensive strategy backfired. While Bulatović appeared aggressive and confrontational, Djukanović (in a manner to which he has become accustomed) fended off the accusations with dignity and professionalism.

The final pro-union rally took place not in Montenegro but in Serbia. Here the tone was quite different. Held in the Sava Centre in Belgrade, the air was thick with the rhetoric of Serbian nationalism. The majority of the key players in the pro-union bloc attended the rally, as did Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica and high-profile members of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Here, freed from the restrictions imposed in Montenegro, the language was less cautious than it had been during the campaign there. While continuing their attacks on Djukanović and his supporters, speakers in the Sava Centre went much further, raising the old sceptre of Greater Serb ideology; claims that the Montenegrin nation was a 'communist fiction' and that Montenegro was 'Serbian ethnic space' sat uncomfortably alongside more practical economic arguments.

The media, of course, were the key factor in shaping public opinion and coverage of the referendum dominated Montenegrin television. Electronic media were highly influential, while Montenegro's print media were only moderately so.³⁸ Since individuals close to the ruling and pro-independence DPS controlled Montenegro's state-owned television *Radio Televizija Crna Gora* (RTCG), it was favourably disposed to independence. Between its usual programming, RTCG peppered the schedules with patriotic songs and

historical documentaries oriented towards the Montenegrin view of history.³⁹ During the campaign, RTCG broadcasted debates between pro-independence and pro-union politicians, which were widely viewed across Montenegro. It was not difficult for the (largely pro-independence) Montenegrin media to present a generally negative image of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro. To an extent, the EU and Serbian government carried out that task quite efficiently. Events with no direct connection to the independence referendum may have had an impact (though how much cannot be measured) on popular opinion. The EU played into the hands of the pro-independence movement by suspending accession talks with the joint-state of Serbia and Montenegro over the failure to arrest Ratko Mladić (the wartime leader of the Bosnian Serb Army thought to be hiding in SCG). Simultaneously, events within Serbia benefited the pro-independence bloc in Montenegro. Two events were important in shaping public opinion. First, the widely televised funeral of Slobodan Milošević demonstrated that some Serbs were still weighed down with the ideological baggage of that era; and second the actions of the Serbian government, which forcibly closed down the BK television channel (owned by Boguljub Karić) in Belgrade, also gave the distinct impression that the Serbian government remained authoritarian and far from ready for democratic reform.⁴⁰

In Montenegro, the issue of statehood and the referendum dominated all the print and electronic media. Prior to the campaign, all the main media outlets in Montenegro signed a 'code of conduct' committing them to act in accordance with the principles set down in the declaration. While the television stations loosely adhered to the principle of objectivity, there were a number of occasions when this was clearly breached. RTCG1, while covering the arguments of both sides widely, gave almost three times as much airtime to pro-independence views and arguments than it did to pro-union arguments.⁴¹ Other electronic media did likewise – some (IN TV, MBC and TV Montena) clearly gave a disproportionate amount of airtime to pro-independence views, while others (Elmag, Radio Television Serbia, and Pink TV) did so in favour of pro-union arguments.⁴² In short, the television coverage was not entirely representative and did not maintain the promised level of objectivity throughout.

Similar bias was displayed in the newspapers. The state-funded dailies *Pobjeda* and *Republika* were generally biased towards pro-independence views, while the Montenegrin daily *Dan* and the Serbian *Večernje Novosti* were pro-union. Reflecting the worst of the pro-union rhetoric, a number of Belgrade-based newspapers printed stories about Croat and Albanian plans to encourage Montenegrin independence with the intention of carving up the territory in the future.⁴³ This was all within the boundaries of the code of conduct, but the boundaries were increasingly breached as the referendum

approached. The 'independent' daily, *Vijesti*, while still offering relatively balanced coverage of the views of both blocs, broke from its otherwise independent line by engaging in a campaign in favour of the pro-independence bloc. While it may sound insignificant, the paper gave a free cap (red with the Montenegrin coat of arms) to readers on 15 May – it was sold out by 7 a.m. Likewise, on the first morning of the referendum silence⁴⁴ on 20 May, *Vijesti* published a large front cover photograph of the previous evening's pro-independence rally.⁴⁵ On both days of the media blackout the pro-union newspaper *Dan* published stories about the government applying pressure to voters. On both days these stories featured photographs of individuals wearing 'Ne' (No) T-shirts. Technically irregularities, the OSCE officials stated, with no apparent sense of irony, that although the print media 'showed clear bias to [either] one of the referendum options', their campaign coverage was 'free and fair'.⁴⁶

In accordance with the media 'code of conduct' all coverage of the referendum was suspended until after it was over. This came into effect immediately after the pro-independence rally in Podgorica on 18 May. The 'referendum silence' dictated that television and press coverage of the referendum dealt with 'technical' issues only. With scope for influencing voters, attention shifted towards methods of *soft* influence. In a leaked analysis of what was happening in the Montenegrin media, the authors asserted: 'It seems that none, very few or almost nobody in the administration or media comprehends that successes in sports and culture are the best way to affirm a state.'⁴⁷ Lessons had, however, been learnt. With Serbia and Montenegro no longer competing in the Eurovision Song Contest, attention shifted towards the women's handball European final between Budućnost of Podgorica and Cer of Hungary.⁴⁸ Being broadcast live on the eve of the referendum, the game presented a unique opportunity to harness the national euphoria that sporting events invariably generate. It had been cleverly orchestrated in advance, so there were only Montenegrin flags in the Morača Sports Centre that evening (state union symbols were entirely absent). In any event, Budućnost won the match and triumphantly carried off the European championship.⁴⁹ As the team prepared to lift its trophy, each team member (and quite a few spectators) adorned a red T-shirt (the colour associated with Montenegrin independence) with 'Da' (yes) emblazoned across the front. Even the least cynical observers were quick to note the direct link between the success of the handball team and the political project of independence. Cynical but effective, it was a clear breach of the media code, though how powerful or indeed how effective a message it was cannot be measured. While the media (in principle if not in practice) were bound by the blackout, it seemed that the Montenegrin authorities were not. The citizens of Podgorica could witness on a daily basis a classic piece of communist propaganda, which

somehow escaped the media blackout. On Podgorica's town hall in the city's main square was emblazoned the confident statement *Pobjediće Crna Gora 100%* (Montenegro will win [for sure] 100%) until the end of the campaign.

Both sides tried to woo the diaspora vote.⁵⁰ Pro-independence and pro-union blocs organized events for the Montenegrin diaspora in the United States, Britain and Australia.⁵¹ With Montenegrin society equally divided over the statehood issue, the diaspora (some as far afield as Australia and the US, others from Europe) became a key component in securing victory. While many Montenegrins living in Serbia had no right to vote in the referendum – disqualified because they had voted in elections in Serbia – Montenegrins from all over the world returned to cast their historic vote.⁵² Many from far-flung corners of the globe returned to their homeland, claiming it was their historical duty to participate in the process that would 'reinstate Montenegro's right to statehood taken from it in 1918'.⁵³ Certainly, while spending large amounts of money to facilitate their return, the Montenegrin authorities were attempting to screen returning nationals so that they could filter those who were 'reliable' (would vote for independence) from those who were not. Both blocs invested effort and finance in attempting to bring Montenegrins back to their republic to vote. A week before the referendum, Montenegro Airlines announced that it was cancelling all flights from Belgrade – the planes would instead be used to bring pro-independence members of the diaspora back to the republic (free of charge). This was helped by the opening on 14 May of the new and larger Podgorica airport. Under the banner *Crnogorski Aerodrom: Evropski Standard* (Montenegrin Airport: European Standard) this new airport could easily deal with significant transit in a way the old airport could not. Montenegrins, primarily from the UK, mainland Europe, the USA and Australia, arrived at the impressive new airport – although it seemed the majority (covered in or carrying the Montenegrin flag) were supporters of independence.⁵⁴ The pro-independence daily *Republika* estimated that approximately 6000 Montenegrins came from the United States to cast their votes.⁵⁵ In the predominantly Muslim municipalities of Plav and Rožaje many arrived from other parts of Europe to cast their vote. At least two busloads of emigrants were thought to have arrived from northern Montenegrin towns in the early evening of Saturday 20 May.⁵⁶

In Serbia, those who could vote had their travel to Montenegro organized and financed by the Serbian government and the Movement for the Preservation of the State Union. From 15 to 23 May, Serbian Railways offered free return trips to eligible Montenegrin voters residing in Serbia, and as a response to the cancellation of Montenegrin Airlines flights from Belgrade, the Serbian state air carrier JAT (Yugoslav Air Transport) introduced additional flights from Belgrade to Podgorica on 20 and 21 May.⁵⁷ Free travel by either bus or train for Montenegrin students studying in Belgrade and

other towns and cities in Serbia was also organized.⁵⁸ These students represented a particularly interesting dynamic. Belgrade-educated students had formed the backbone of the anti-regime *Klubaši* in the early twentieth century. Almost a century later, the descendants of these Belgrade-educated students were returning to Montenegro with a sense of historical mission. Towns in the north, such as Berane and Pljevlja, were bustling with returnees in the days approaching the referendum. In the final analysis, approximately 21,000 citizens residing abroad (not including those from Serbia) returned to Montenegro in the days immediately preceding the referendum.⁵⁹ This represented approximately 4 per cent of the total electoral body of 484,718.⁶⁰

On the domestic front too great efforts were made to secure every vote. Pro-union and pro-independence activists were engaged in an intense struggle for every last vote. There were a number of accusations of blackmail, threats and general pressure being applied to individuals known to be supporting the union option. State employees and employees in enterprises close to either bloc were put under considerable pressure. Efforts (particularly from the pro-independence bloc) were made to distribute flags and banners that were then hung from the balconies of party activists and supporters. While union flags were predominant in the northern municipalities they were almost entirely absent from the capital Podgorica, which by the eve of the referendum was adorned in the Montenegrin flag.

'Dan za Istoriju' – 21 May Referendum

On referendum day, turnout was high (86 per cent). At a number of polling stations there were queues for several hours. Despite a few minor irregularities – OSCE observers reported suspicious activities that may have indicated vote-buying in the pro-independence bloc in Pljevlja and Berane – and some issues with unsealed ballot boxes, the day passed with few difficulties.⁶¹ All predictive polls suggested a tight result, 50–56 per cent in favour of independence. Furthermore, with opinion polls thought to be biased in favour of one side or the other, Montenegrin citizens joked ironically that the *kladionice* (betting shops) were the best source of an accurate prediction.⁶² The European Union had imposed a formula that contained two conditions: 50 per cent plus one voter would have to participate and 55 per cent of those who voted had to cast their votes in favour of independence. With the possibility of the referendum result being between 50 and 55 per cent came the probability of both sides perceiving such a result as a victory. What came to be called 'the grey zone' represented an ambiguity, and could lead to a stalemate. This would have been the worst possible outcome, as both sides would have seen it as a victory and the stalemate within the state union would likely have continued. The statehood question would remain predominant and Montenegrin political life would remain fixated on future

status. Furthermore, there was a danger that supporters of both sides would take to the streets claiming victory in the event of such a result.

Polling stations closed at 9 p.m., and results were expected relatively soon thereafter. An air of tension developed across Montenegrin towns and cities. In Podgorica, the air was thick with anticipation when the non-governmental organization CEMI announced the first set of preliminary results only half an hour after the polls closed.⁶³ It was a rash move. The (very) preliminary results brought pro-independence supporters out onto the streets letting off fireworks and firing guns into the air. The tentative celebrations belied an air of uncertainty that hung over the capital. As pro-independence supporters began to pour onto the streets, the leader of the pro-union bloc, Predrag Bulatović appeared on television appealing for calm and imploring supporters of the union not to be intimidated by the unofficial results, calling upon 'all citizens of Montenegro to maintain peace and demonstrate tolerance and patience', adding that 'the result of the referendum is not final until political parties on both sides accept it.'⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the celebrations continued unabated and, as the night wore on, it became clear that the pro-independence bloc had triumphed, albeit by a tiny margin. While the mood was celebratory in Podgorica, elsewhere there was tension. In Berane there were a number of incidents in which shots were fired as supporters of the pro-independence option celebrated in the DPS offices. SNP supporters gathered outside their own offices singing nationalist songs and defacing the Montenegrin flag. Ominously, electricity was cut off in a section of the town.⁶⁵ Tensions had receded enough by around 5 a.m. for Milo Djukanović to address the crowd that had amassed outside the government building in the city centre. There he officially declared victory and, controversially, congratulated Serbia on its own independence.⁶⁶ The following morning František Lipka, the chair of the Republican Referendum Commission, announced the first official, but preliminary results – 55.5 per cent in favour of independence, 44.5 per cent in favour of continued union, with the turnout estimated at 86.3 per cent. The grey zone had been avoided by only 0.5 per cent.⁶⁷

The final results demonstrated that the geographic divide still continued in Montenegro, with the strongest pro-union support coming from the municipalities of Andrijevica, Berane, Herceg-Noví and Kolašin. As expected, most of the support for an independent Montenegro came from the municipalities of Cetinje, Bijelo Polje, Tivat, Budva, Bar and Podgorica (although only in Bar and Cetinje were the majorities over 65 per cent). Fundamentally, the strongest support for independence came from the predominantly Muslim municipalities of Plav and Rožaje (91 and 91.3 per cent respectively) and from the predominantly Albanian municipality of Ulcinj.⁶⁸ Unionists used these figures to argue that, in fact, most of the Orthodox population of Montenegro had voted in favour of preserving the state union, and that

Montenegrin independence was essentially delivered by members of the diaspora and minorities.

On 22 May, celebrations were held in the historical capital of Cetinje. Milo Djukanović and Ranko Krivokapić addressed the crowds, appealing to the opposition to recognize the result of the referendum. Simultaneously, in a statement that served only to marginalize Serbs in Montenegro further, Djukanović hinted that the Montenegrin language would be formally constituted as the official language of Montenegro and that the status of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church would be reviewed, although he was careful to point out that, 'it is not up to the state to dispute or proclaim autocephalous status.'⁶⁹ While the pro-independence bloc continued to celebrate, the pro-unionists cried foul. The four leaders of the bloc for state union asked for the preliminary results of the referendum to be checked and all ballot papers in all voting stations recounted. In Serbia the reaction was relatively muted. The leader of the Serbian Radicals, Tomislav Nikolić, openly warned of what he argued were the negative consequences of Montenegrin independence:

*Unfortunately, the tragedy I have been warning about has happened, Serbia has become independent because Montenegro is leaving the state union. ... It is a dangerous, painful move for the Serbian people on the whole, for the citizens of our state. You will see, not much time will pass before real consequences of this come to light.*⁷⁰

By 27 May the Republican Referendum Commission had announced the official result as 55.53 per cent in favour of independence, and 44.47 per cent in favour of continued union with Serbia, based on the total turnout of 86.49 per cent.⁷¹ The pro-union bloc continued to argue that there were significant irregularities with voting procedures on the day of the referendum. Leader of the NS, Predrag Popović, stated that his party and the pro-union bloc collectively would not recognize the result of the referendum until its request of a recount in all polling stations was met.⁷² Serbian president, Boris Tadić (whose father was a key member of the pro-union bloc), arrived in Podgorica on 23 May; his announcement that he accepted 'the majority decision by the people of Montenegro' further undermined the unionists' claim that irregularities were rife and would be challenged.⁷³ Tadić's father, Ljubomir, was not, however singing from the same hymn sheet. The Belgrade branch of the Movement for a Joint State of Serbia and Montenegro collectively refused to recognize the referendum result. Ljubomir Tadić stated that, 'We do not accept the result, not because Montenegrins living in Serbia did not have the right to vote, but because those who did have this right had their votes stolen.'⁷⁴

The international community reacted with resigned acceptance. Clearly the EU, by imposing a 55 per cent threshold on Montenegrin independence had hoped to preserve the state union. Its main concern, of course, was the radicalization of Serbian politics in the event of Serbia's potential loss of both Montenegro and Kosovo in such a short period. It also worried about the Montenegrin model being used by other potential breakaway groups in other European states (Basques or Catalans in Spain or Abkhazians or South Ossetians in Georgia, for example). This apprehension was not without justification – the presence of an unofficial Basque delegation was a personal matter of concern for Javier Solana, who had to deny that Montenegro had any similarities with the Spanish regions of Catalonia and the Basque Country.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the first delegation to arrive in Montenegro to congratulate the pro-independence faction was a Bosnian Serb delegation from Republika Srpska (still an integral part of Bosnia & Herzegovina), although the EU swiftly denied that the Montenegrin case set a precedent. These events notwithstanding, the Montenegrin government declared formal independence on 3 June 2006. While pro-independence parties announced the official birth of the new state, the opposition parties were conspicuous by their absence, choosing to boycott the proclamation. There was no representation from either Belgrade or the international community. Serbia officially acknowledged its own independent status on 6 June in a parliamentary session best described as low-key.⁷⁶ It marked the end of the joint state of Serbia and Montenegro and ushered in a new era of independence for both republics.

Postscript: Montenegro in the Post-Referendum Era

The official results of the Republican Referendum Commission (RRC) a week after the referendum confirmed Montenegro's independence. Some 15 years after the Badinter Commission, the Carrington peace plan and the violent disintegration of the SFRY, Montenegro had become formally independent. Its independence represented the final act (barring resolution of Kosovo's status) of the dissolution of the SFRY. All six of Yugoslavia's republics were now independent states. In the Montenegrin case, argues Pavlović, the independence referendum represented the final destination of the Montenegrin leadership on its road from Greater Serbian to Montenegrin nationalism.¹ With tangible success, Montenegro's independence was largely delivered by many of the same political elites who had helped to engineer the 'War for Peace' in 1991 and the FRY referendum in 1992, and had persecuted the anti-war movement. The irony of this was not lost on the anti-war, pro-independence stalwarts of the early 1990s. While they, on the whole, celebrated Montenegro's independence (even if it had been delivered by Djukanović and the DPS) with the majority of the republic's citizens, a large minority was left disappointed and disaffected. Independence would not – in the short term – solve many of the problems they had railed against for well nigh two decades. What is more, a significant percentage of the Montenegrin population had voted in favour of retaining the state union of Serbia and Montenegro. The 55.5 per cent in favour hardly represented a resounding victory. The referendum had highlighted old divisions and the threat of internal conflict was ever present. That such divisions were so entrenched at the birth of the new state hardly represented an auspicious start.

The first year since the declaration of independence has seen many positive changes that seemed unlikely on the morning following the referendum. If there was a feeling on the night of the referendum that a potential crisis was just around the corner (and tensions were running high), such sentiments soon faded. The post-referendum instability, many analysts feared, even predicted, simply did not materialize. Instead, with the exception of a deadlock over a number of articles in the new constitution, relative normality has

characterized Montenegro's post-referendum politics. The huge influx of foreign money has done much to give the impression (even to those who opposed independence) that progress is being made regardless of political partisanship. Montenegro's economic development in the first year of its independence has been impressive; relations with its neighbours have stabilized, if not hugely improved; and the country has moved closer to EU and NATO membership (though the latter is less popular with ordinary Montenegrins)² – progress indeed. Nevertheless, one should not ignore the very real problems that remain. Given the legacy of a traumatic period of post-communist transition, a divided society and a bitter referendum process, Montenegro retains a number of residual problems that may prove difficult to resolve in the near future.

First, a substantial minority of its citizens did not celebrate the new state; the Serbs of Montenegro remain dissatisfied and continue to look to Belgrade (as opposed to Podgorica) for leadership. Montenegro remains a deeply divided society and it will be imperative – if a stable society is indeed to be consolidated – that Serbs feel included in the post-independence political structure (and the processes of economic development). As Croatian political analyst Andrea Fehlmann pointed out, 'it is the true responsibility of the government to integrate those that were against the referendum ... a truly responsible government should be able to do that.'³ Failure to integrate the Serbs will consolidate their pre-existing view that the new, independent Montenegro is not *their* state, but one controlled by a small group of political and economic elites who use Montenegrin nationalism as their ideological vehicle.

Currently, Montenegro's Serbs feel culturally threatened and at an economic disadvantage. They do not, they argue, belong to the small (largely pro-independence) elite that controls the flow of (and access to) opportunities that generate wealth. Graffiti adorning the walls of Montenegrin towns and cities declaring that '45 per cent of Montenegrins are not for sale' is testament to this view.⁴ Economic differentiations between north and south are likely to become more pronounced because those in the north are marginalized from the economic development and profits that are generated by foreign investment.⁵ There is a danger that northern municipalities (like Pljevlja, Berane and Andrijevica) will become increasingly isolated from Podgorica and the coast, where most investment is concentrated. Such economic differentiation could easily be exploited as an ethnic issue. Ranko Krivokapić's pledge to treat all citizens of Montenegro as if they *had* voted for independence was a positive (if only rhetorical) step in the right direction. Some members of the Serb community in northern Montenegro are disinclined to believe the rhetoric of politicians like Ranko Krivokapić (who is seen as one of the architects of the independence project). Investment in the north would dispel the perception

that the new Montenegro is the playground of the 'winners' of the referendum. It would also stop the Serb parties' claim that the government is 'anti-Serb'.

The general dissatisfaction among Montenegro's Serbs was demonstrated by the support channelled towards the Serb List during the September 2006 elections. The 'Serb List' (a coalition of the Serb People's Party, the Democratic Party of Serb Unity, the Party of Serb Radicals, the People's Socialist Party, and the Serb People's Council) claims to represent the interests of Serbs in Montenegro. Its electoral success has been to the detriment of the more moderate SNP–NS–DSS coalition, which is an indication of the continuing division. The Serb List, and in particular the SNS, has moved away from arguing that Serbs and Montenegrins are one ethnic group and has instead defined its fundamental goal as 'the protection of the constitutionality and full affirmation of the identity and freedom of the Serb people in the Republic of Montenegro'.⁶ It is a message that resonates with many Serbs in Montenegro who tend to see the Montenegrin authorities' treatment of them as framed within a national paradigm – in other words, they are disadvantaged because they are Serbs. The Serb List has advanced its agenda and several issues predominate.⁷

The first of these is that Serbs in Montenegro want to be recognized constitutionally as distinct but not as a 'national minority'. Second, they want proportional representation in state and local governing bodies in accordance with the census results (for example, 30.5 per cent of state employees should be Serbs). Third, they want the right to use specific Serb national symbols. Finally, the constitution should recognize the Serb language and the Cyrillic alphabet as an official script. The Montenegrin government's insistence on declaring Montenegrin the official language of the republic has offended many members of the Serb community, who argue that differences between the Serb and Montenegrin languages are more political than linguistic. To compound these difficulties, the small matter of Kosovo (which declared independence in February 2008) will also likely create problems. The Montenegrin authorities will have to tread carefully over the issue of recognizing Kosovo. It is, however, hard to make the case that the Montenegrin authorities have an 'anti-Serb agenda', as Serb parties often claim. The ruling authorities are fairly ruthless in their dealings with all opposition parties, regardless of their ethnic and religious orientation, and this can often be interpreted as an ethnic issue. Given that more than half the opposition parties are comprised of Serbs, leaders of the Serb parties tend to recast the ruling authorities as anti-Serb.

This perception of the government as anti-Serb was always present during the protracted and laborious debates that took place on the Montenegrin constitution and at which issues such as the status of the Montenegrin

Orthodox Church and the Montenegrin language took precedence.⁸ Serb parties were not the only ones to express their dissatisfaction; even factions within groups that supported independence have broken away since the May 2006 referendum. As we saw in Chapter 7, the relationship between Montenegro's Muslim-Bosniak community and the Orthodox community has been problematic from time to time. Following the turbulent early 1990s, many of Montenegro's Muslims and Bosniaks shunned ethnically-based parties in favour of supporting Djukanović's DPS after the 1997 split. Many supported independence and were seeking to reap political benefits commensurate with the level of their support (independence, it was argued, would not have been gained without their support). The postponement of proposed minority rights legislation, which would definitely have strengthened the minorities' position, caused Montenegrin Muslims-Bosniaks to protest vehemently. Many have subsequently shifted their support to political parties based on the ethnic principle.⁹ It remains to be seen if they will continue to divert their support away from the ruling DPS–SDP coalition towards specifically Muslim-Bosniak parties. My view, however, is that the Muslim-Bosniak community sees the Montenegrin state as its home and is unlikely to move any further towards ethnically-based parties.

Outside the narrow realm of small groups of extremists, the Albanian community in Montenegro similarly views Montenegro as its state. However, Albanian political and cultural elites in Montenegro have repeatedly asked for more autonomy in certain spheres. The first of these is in education. Currently, school textbooks are printed in Serbian, and university education is offered only in Serbian.¹⁰ Albanians have long insisted that denying them university education in their mother tongue has hindered their national development. The second issue is that the Tuzi area (which is predominantly Albanian) should be awarded the status of a separate municipality. Presently, Tuzi remains an integral part of the municipality of Podgorica. In June 2006, just a month after the referendum, representatives of the Albanian Civic Initiative NGO met US senators and congressmen to discuss their case for a change in Tuzi's status.¹¹ Albanian leaders have also sought permission to use Albanian national symbols more liberally (on the Tuzi council building for example).¹²

Traditionally good relations between Montenegro's Albanians and the ruling authorities became strained in the wake of the arrest of several members of an alleged Albanian terrorist cell in Malesija (near Podgorica). Prior to the September 2006 elections (during 'Operation Eagle's Flight'), Montenegrin police arrested individuals alleged to be members of a terrorist group who planned to attack (and begin an armed insurrection against) the Montenegrin state. Charges were pressed against 17 people suspected of 'criminal acts, terrorism, and illegal possession of arms and explosive materials' and, according to the Montenegrin police, large amounts of fire-

arms, explosive devices and ammunition were confiscated.¹³ Critics argued that the Montenegrin government had used the affair to influence the electorate prior to the elections, a claim the ruling authorities rejected. While Albanian leaders like Fehrat Dinosha (an alleged target) sought to emphasize that 'Operation Eagle's Flight' was not an action aimed at Albanians, the subsequent fallout damaged relations between the government and the Albanian community.¹⁴ In the September elections, Albanian voters shifted away from the DPS–SDP coalition and from Albanian parties like Dinosha's Democratic Union of Albanians in favour of ethnic Albanian parties such as the Albanian Alternative and the Democratic Party of Albanians. Dinosha's party was defeated in both the predominantly Albanian areas of Tuzi and Ulcinj. As in Montenegro's Bosniak-Muslim community, it represented a shift away from mainstream multiethnic parties towards mono-ethnic parties, although again this may be simply a temporary shift, a normal part of a post-referendum recalibration of the political scene.

Second, outside the realm of party politics, the broad pro-independence front has fragmented. Some in the pre-referendum pro-independence bloc have shifted their positions significantly. Pro-independence intellectuals and the media played a key role in the victory of the pro-independence bloc. While many of these individuals supported Djukanović following the DPS split in 1997, in subsequent elections and during the referendum a number have reverted to their original anti-Djukanović stance. Many had opposed him vehemently during the early 1990s, but following the DPS split in 1997 Djukanović and his party garnered the services of a number of anti-war and pro-independence intellectuals, journalists and university professors (who in 1997 viewed Djukanović as the lesser of two evils) to enhance Montenegro's democratic image. Many, encouraged by promises of Montenegrin independence, agreed to support his government, sensing that he could deliver their ambition of independence. On the principle of 'independence first, democracy second', they threw their weight behind him, hoping that he and the ruling authorities would deliver what they knew they could never achieve without the machinery of the DPS. The role of the intellectuals and journalists was to validate the path to independence, to provide theoretical justifications for the government's actions, and to give the general impression that the DPS and Milo Djukanović were the only possible carriers of the Montenegrin independence project. Many profited from working in the service of the government. Careers were built upon support for the government and many who opposed Djukanovic in the early 1990s used the anti-war moral capital they had accumulated during that period and traded it for secure positions within the state system – acquiring directorships of state companies, high-profile roles in government ministries and the university sector, or greater exposure on the cultural scene.

In the wake of independence, however, the ruling authorities delivered only what was necessary. As the dust settled following the independence celebrations, it became clear that the ruling Montenegrin authorities would not pursue the agenda of the pro-independence intelligentsia. Democratic transition would follow the model the ruling elite favoured. This was quickly realized by many who had supported Djukanović since 1997. As a consequence, the editorial policy of *Monitor*, and to an extent *Vijesti* (which supported Djukanović), has changed. Miodrag Perović, the editor of *Monitor* stated in an interview one year after the referendum that:

*From my point of view, Mr Djukanović and the DPS have become the main obstacle to democratic development in Montenegro. Mr Djukanović stands in the way of such a development. He, or at least his party, wants to control every aspect of public life. Monitor is now against him, not because we do not like him or acknowledge his achievements, but because we are fighting for a free society in Montenegro.*¹⁵

Articles criticizing Djukanović became commonplace and bitter exchanges between editorial staff and government officials became more frequent. In September 2007, three masked men assaulted Željko Ivanović, the editor of *Vijesti*, as he was leaving a party held in the Ribnica café in Podgorica to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the launch of the newspaper. Almost immediately, Ivanović publicly blamed Milo Djukanović for arranging the attack on him. In the period immediately before the assault on Ivanović, both publications were very critical of Djukanović, particularly when he was awarded an 'International League of Humanists' peace prize, and over the public disclosure of private financial transactions, which *Vijesti* journalists interpreted as a clear case of money laundering.¹⁶ Djukanović immediately threatened to sue for libel.

Outside the media, a number of staunchly pro-independence intellectuals who had supported the government also fell from grace. Jevrem Brković, the founder of the Dukljan Academy of Science and Arts (DANU), is a case in point. Forced into exile in 1991, Brković returned to Montenegro in the late 1990s and placed himself firmly in the service of the government. Fully rehabilitated, he began to appear regularly (with increasing frequency in the run up to the referendum) on Montenegrin television and radio, and in the newspapers. But once independence had been achieved, his brand of Montenegrin nationalism was no longer useful. In November 2006, Brković was assaulted (and his bodyguard killed) in Podgorica, following the launch of his latest book *Ljubavnik Duklje* (The Lover of Duklja). Allegedly, through the use of pseudonyms, Brković alluded to the involvement of several high-ranking officials with a number of people belonging to Montenegro's elite criminal

fraternity (although links with the government have never been proven). For this, he claims, 'they' tried to kill him.

In Chapter 8 I addressed the part played by the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. At the forefront of the struggle over nation and state, the MOC failed to meet its objectives. Given its powerful symbolic role in the 1990s and early 2000s, when Montenegrin independence was declared, its clergy and followers expected to receive official recognition as the sole Orthodox body in Montenegro.¹⁷ This, however, has failed to materialize and the MOC continues its struggle. Conflicts (including clashes on *Badnjak*) between the MOC and SOC have continued in the post-referendum period. In April 2007, members of the MOC, led by Metropolitan Mihailo Dedeić, attempted to enter Cetinje monastery (which they claim is rightfully the property of their church). They were prevented from doing so by the Montenegrin police.¹⁸ In the final analysis, the demands of the MOC have not been met. Following independence, the church has remained a rather marginalized NGO, wielding very little political influence in the new political climate. Thus far, the adoption of the MOC's demands (with regard to a revised law on churches) has not been forthcoming, nor is it likely to in the near future.

Third, a turbo-capitalist culture exists from which only a small elite will benefit. The most dramatic development in Montenegro's first year as a newly-independent state has been the speed of economic development. In July 2007, the *Observer* published an article describing Montenegro as 'Europe's New Golden Coast'. Certainly, there is substance in the claim that it (and in particular its coastal areas) will become increasingly developed and increasingly wealthy. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), Montenegro's export market is growing and further economic growth is supported by significant expansions in construction, tourism and services.¹⁹ Furthermore, foreign nationals (who have long forgotten the dark days of the 1990s) flock to buy property on the Montenegrin coast – the British and Irish buy around the Bay of Kotor, and Russians around the Budva Riviera.²⁰ Canadian businessman Peter Munk has plans to build an exclusive marina in Tivat called *Porto Montenegro* – a development that would attract the 'elite tourist'. 'Stars' such as Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Schumacher have all (allegedly) invested in property on the coast, and Montenegro's international profile has been raised by its 'appearance' in the James Bond film *Casino Royale* (or non-appearance – it was not actually filmed in Montenegro). The Rolling Stones' concert on Jaz beach near Budva in July 2007 also helped raise Montenegro's profile as an international music and concert venue. In short, much economic progress has been made in the year since independence. The economy has grown beyond all expectations, foreign investment has increased significantly, and there are signs of development (albeit ugly development) everywhere along the coast.

This of course is all well and good, but such rapid economic progress can conceal significant, if hidden, problems. According to Vanja Calović of the Montenegrin NGO, MANS, there is a darker side to Montenegro's post-referendum economic boom. She claims that identity (and in particular the issues of the Montenegrin church, language and national symbolism) are used as a smokescreen to mask an opaque process of privatization, organized crime, and corruption:

The main problems in Montenegro are organized crime and corruption. These issues of ethnicity and identity are frequently used to cover real problems, as they have been in the past 17 years since the introduction of multi-party elections. However, following the referendum we thought the government would no longer be able to hide behind these issues. Instead they would have to address social issues, dirty privatization, economic issues, corruption and organized crime. But still they are talking about whether we are Serbs or Montenegrins, about the Montenegrin language, the Montenegrin church and so forth. This situation is excellent for the government because it means that they do not address the most important problems and are, by extension, not responsible for their real decisions. They just become the 'winners' who gave us an independent Montenegro.²¹

There is, at least within Montenegro's embattled NGO sector, concern over the process of privatization. One of the most controversial issues was the sale of the state-owned aluminium company, KAP. The plant was bought by Russian metals magnate, Oleg Deripaska. He now owns both the KAP plant in Podgorica and the bauxite mine in Nikšić (around 80 per cent of Montenegro's total exports), and has sought to purchase a large electricity plant in Pljevlja. If he achieves the latter, he will control around half of Montenegro's national economy.²² How long will it take for economic influence to be translated into political influence? It is not just Russian magnates who are investing in Montenegro, and indeed it is not Russian capital *per se* that is a source of concern, but the nature of that capital. One need not look too far to understand the concerns ordinary Montenegrins harbour. The coastal town of Budva, for example, is awash with Russian money and young, brash Russian Mafiosi who pay outrageously high prices for apartments or land. A number of elaborate – and at times bizarre – constructions (such as the so-called 'Russian Village' above Sveti Stefan) have been erected on the coastal area around Budva (some of which had no planning permission in place before construction began).

Given the level of investment, Montenegro values its relationship with Russia. The links are historical and strong, not to mention mutually beneficial. The value the Montenegrin authorities place on their relationship with Russia was demonstrated by the appointment of Milan Roćen (a close associate of

Milo Djukanović) as ambassador to Moscow (he has subsequently become Montenegro's foreign minister). As a consequence, the Russian dynamic cannot be ignored, either as an economic or a political factor. Western concerns over Montenegro's increasingly strong links with Russia were perhaps best highlighted by the visit to Podgorica in September 2006 of Donald Rumsfeld, the then US defence secretary, during which he implored the Montenegrin government to proceed with its plans for brisk Euro–Atlantic integration.

Finally, there is the issue of the internal structure of Montenegrin politics. The economic boom has served to strengthen the ruling authorities in Podgorica (and the ruling party, the DPS). According to a CEDEM poll conducted in June 2007, the DPS seems to have consolidated its position as Montenegro's strongest political party.²³ In Milo Djukanović (who returned once again as prime minister in 2007), the DPS has the most pragmatic, single-minded and determined politician of his generation, not simply in Montenegro but throughout southeast Europe. He remains the only high-profile Balkan politician to survive the last 15 years. He led the country to independence without war – a huge achievement and testament to his remarkable political skill, personal courage and ruthlessness. He possesses qualities that are admired in Montenegrin society and for all the aforementioned reasons he remains a popular figure in Montenegro. But, however much one may admire Djukanović's political abilities, he presides over a regime that is made up of a tight-knit clan of only his closest political (and business) allies who collectively control many aspects of Montenegrin society. This small group possesses significant political and economic power. The system of government, however democratic it may seem on the surface, is based on patronism and clientism. The DPS is a state party with significant control over many aspects of Montenegrin society (including the ability to influence voters employed by the state). Under these conditions, there seems little possibility of a change of government in Montenegro in the near future. Political change may be hard to effect in Montenegro, fundamentally because in such a small society, the control of the state and its institutions awards the DPS with a significant advantage over rivals who wish to attain power. Montenegro's political and economic elites (with the DPS as an instrument of their political power) have consolidated their power with the attainment of independent status. The danger of this situation, argues Pavlović, is quite clear:

With the absence of any kind of control mechanism the desire of the ruling elite in Montenegro to preserve and maintain power could easily lead to the creating of an authoritarian model of governing. Warning signs are already visible. The guarding and enlarging of personal financial empires inevitably produces an oligarchy, whose primary interests are personal. The process of privatisation in Montenegro clearly shows the primacy of personal over national financial interests.²⁴

With little or no possibility of a major recalibration of political power in Montenegro (and with the DPS firmly holding onto power), Montenegro holds the unenviable record of being the only state in southeast Europe since the collapse of communism in Europe with an uninterrupted ex-communist government (with many of the same individuals in power since 1989).²⁵ During the communist period, the party *was* the state and comprised individuals who would join, not simply for ideological reasons, but to advance their personal career and increase access to associated privileges. Essentially, the basic features of the old system have been retained, and the same clientist structure remains intact in contemporary Montenegro. Some foreign delegations and NGOs represented in Podgorica recognize this and seek to raise the issue whenever possible. Others (the vast majority) choose not to highlight it. Montenegro, with all its natural beauty and tourist attractions, is, after all, not a bad place to sit out an untroubled four-year posting. One organization that belongs in the former category is the Michelson Institute. In its 2007 report on corruption in Montenegro, the authors argued that ‘the distinction between the ruling party and the state remains unclear, state and ruling party interests remain conflated, and the incentives for joining or supporting a party remain unchanged.’²⁶ Furthermore, with an economy that is essentially a tight web of political patronage and cross-ownership, strong vested interests in preserving the status quo remain. The government (since the DPS split in 1997) depended on this stratum for its political (and in some cases financial) support – thus it is hindered by these connections and may not have the necessary authority to push for genuine reform.²⁷ In the final analysis, elite interests and internal dynamics will always predominate over ‘EU standards’.

The European Commission (EC) Report on Montenegro’s EU accession attempts, published in November 2006, stated that the Montenegrin authorities had much to achieve in the realms of crime, corruption and judicial reform.²⁸ Similarly, the NGO ‘Freedom House’ issued a report in July 2007 stating that the Montenegrin government had failed either to consolidate civil liberties and democratic practices or effectively to combat organized crime, and was slow to tackle corruption. It also argued that the ruling authorities had excessive influence over Montenegro’s state television (RTCG).²⁹ It remains to be seen how committed the Montenegrin authorities will be to implementing genuine ‘European standards’ such as police reform, increasing transparency in economic transactions in the privatization process, and overcoming the weaknesses of institutions.³⁰ The good news for the Montenegrin authorities is that the EU is rather desperate to find a good news story in the Balkans. Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia (including Kosovo), and Albania still face real challenges before EU accession becomes a possibility. The picture in Montenegro appears (and in some ways is) comparatively positive. Yet, in holding Montenegro up as an example to

the region, the EU and several foreign embassies have been willing to overlook some of the more 'idiosyncratic' characteristics of Montenegro's reform process.

If there is to be a challenge to 17 years of DPS rule, it is not clear from where it will emerge. The most likely source is Nebojša Medojević, the leader of the new political party *Pokret za Promjene* (Movement for Changes), who has long been mooted as a possible challenger to Milo Djukanović. Well educated, articulate and energetic, Medojević is the rising star in Montenegrin politics. His party fared well in the September 2006 elections winning an impressive (at least for a new party) 11 per cent of the popular vote, but it remains to be seen if he can make advances on that figure. His undoubted ability and cerebral style may be insufficient to attract a mass appeal. What is more, significant political change in Montenegro would require the creation of a broad coalition of different opposition parties with diverse interests and objectives. How such a coalition would fare in government remains unclear, and the scale of that challenge should not be underestimated. The issue of Kosovo (if the Montenegrin government opted to recognize its independence) would radicalize some members of Serb parties and render a coalition near impossible. The parliamentary elections, scheduled for September 2009, should provide answers to some of these questions.

Many challenges lie ahead, but the problems discussed here in this final chapter are, of course, not untypical of any transitional society and Montenegro, for all its problems, is not unique. The challenges the newly-independent country now faces are simply the latest in a series of incredible tests that the Montenegrins (and I refer to all Montenegrin citizens regardless of how they may define themselves in national terms) have faced – with exceptional courage and bravery – throughout their history. Montenegro may be small but its people are courageous. Regardless of the challenges that lie ahead, Montenegro will inevitably join the European community of nations and (possibly) NATO. The people of Montenegro (be they Montenegrin, Serb, Muslim, Bosnaik, Croat, Albanian or Roma) deserve a bright future, free from the conflicts that have so frequently been played out on Montenegrin soil. As someone who has observed Montenegrin life, politics and culture closely over the past decade, I believe that given its assets and potential for development as a tourist hotspot, Montenegro's future is potentially more promising than that of its neighbours. I sincerely hope that a bright future can be realized, both for Montenegro and the wider southeast European region.

Notes

1. See, for example, Radoslav Rotković, *Odakle su došli preci Crnogoraca*, Montedit, Podgorica, 2002, Radoslav Rotković, 'O Crnogorskom narodnu bice Crnogoraca', *Elementa Montenegrina*, Vol. 1, 1990, and Slobodan Tomović, *Komentar Gorkog vijenca*, Univerzitetska riječ & Partisanska kniga, Nikšić and Belgrade, 1986.
2. According to Serb nationalists, the wider 'Serbian nation' comprises the Serbs of Serbia proper, Serbs in Bosnia & Herzegovina, in Montenegro, and in Croatia. Serbian nationalists also lay claim to large swathes of Macedonia claiming that the Macedonians are in fact (southern) Serbs.
3. J. F. Brown, *Nationalism, Democracy and Security in the Balkans*, RAND Research Study, Dartmouth Press, 1992.
4. Jovo Tomašević, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia*, Stanford University Press, California, 1955, p. 126n.
5. According to Ivan Urbačić, Yugoslavia's nations matured at different times in history and can be divided into two distinct groups – *old* being Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and *new* being Montenegrins, Macedonians and Muslims. See Ivan Urbačić, 'The Yugoslav 'nationalist crisis' and the Slovenes in the perspective of the end of nations', *Novi Revija*, No. 57, 1987, pp. 30–56.
6. Sharyl Cross and Pauline Komnenich, 'Ethnonational identity, security and the implosion of Yugoslavia: the case of Montenegro and the relationship with Serbia', in *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 33, No. 1, March 2005.
7. Elizabeth Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, Hurst & Company, London, 2007, p. 37.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
9. Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, Stanford University Press, Ithica, p. 274.
10. John Allcock, 'Montenegro', in Bogdan Szajkowski (ed.) *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*, Russia and the Successor States, Longman, London, 1994, p. 188.
11. Mary Edith Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1928, p. 34.
12. Allcock, 'Montenegro', p. 176.
13. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 275.
14. According to Nikola Minić, the leader of the Rovci clan (an important Brda tribe) the tribes of the Brda chose of their own free will to become part of Montenegro. See BBC, *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, transmitted 5 August, 2000.
15. Mina News Agency, Podgorica, 26 June, 2006.
16. Following the Montenegrin independence referendum, the Vasojevići Association released a statement requesting autonomy from the government in Podgorica. Their central claim was that they had become the most underdeveloped community in Montenegro. Furthermore, they requested Serbian consular representation in Andrijevac. Mina News Agency, Podgorica, 26 June, 2006.
17. OSCE, *Report on the 21 Municipalities in Montenegro*, p. 15.
18. Momir Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, Alfa Kniga, Belgrade, 2004, p. 82.
19. International Crisis Group, *Montenegro's Socialist People's Party: A Loyal Opposition?* ICG Balkans Report, No. 92, Podgorica, 28 April 2000.
20. Monstat (Republički zavod za statistiku) Republika Crna Gora. *Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2003: Prvi Rezultati po opštinama, naseljima i mjesnim zajednicama*, Podgorica, December 2003, p. 26.

21. The wider municipality of Mojkovac is home to the magnificent Tara canyon (the world's second largest), which is a significant asset. Problematically, among Mojkovac's other assets were a (now decommissioned) mine and metal processing factory. While this guaranteed economic stability during the communist era, the legacy left behind is that Mojkovac is the most ecologically damaged municipality in Montenegro. A lake in the centre of town, for example, is polluted by various heavy metals. Given its location next to the Tara River, this has potentially serious implications for surrounding countries (the outlet for the Tara River is the Black Sea). Locals allege that there are disproportionately high rates of cancer and leukaemia in Mojkovac.
22. The opening part of Milovan Djilas's novel *Montenegro* takes place during the Battle of Mojkovac on 6 and 7 January 1916.
23. OSCE, *Report on the 21 Municipalities in Montenegro*, p. 35.
24. The municipality of Podgorica is very diverse. Uniquely, there is a district in Podgorica called 'Zabjelo' – it retains such a strong individual identity that its proud denizens refer to it as 'The Independent Republic of Zabjelo' (this is intended to be tongue-in-cheek). 'We have taken Balkanization to its logical conclusion!' a resident told me in 2004. The Podgorica municipality also comprises the predominantly Albanian area of Tuzi.
25. Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, Penguin Books, London, 1993, p. 132. Many of the volunteers in the Montenegrin campaign in Croatia, including the bombardment of Dubrovnik, came from Nikšić. The town is also notorious for its local mafia, known as 'The Kvartaši'. Ivan Colović points out that in the mid-1990s 'there had been an exceptionally large number of murders and suicides' in the town. See Ivan Colović, *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia*, Hurst & Company, London, 2001, p. 166.
26. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, p. 49.
27. František Šišteš and Bodhana Dimitrova, 'National minorities after the break-up of Yugoslavia', in Florian Bieber (ed.) *Montenegro in Transition: Problems of Identity and Statehood*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2003, p. 174.
28. Florian Bieber, 'Montenegrin politics since the Dissolution of Yugoslavia', in Florian Bieber (ed.), *Montenegro in Transition: Problems of Identity and Statehood*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2002, p. 40.
29. Šišteš and Dimitrova, 'National Minorities after the break-up of Yugoslavia', p. 175.
30. Andrej Nikolaidis, 'Zašto Bosanci i Hercegovci trebaju zaobilaziti Herceg-Novi', *Slobodna Bosna*, 20 January 2005.
31. Dušan Ičević, *Crnogorska Nacija*, Evropa Press, Belgrade, 1998, p. 217.
32. Milan Popović, *Montenegrin Mirror: Polity in Turmoil*, 2002, p. 16. The concept of divided identity is not unique to the Montenegrin case. The situation in Moldova is similar (though by no means a mirror) to the Montenegrin case. In Moldova the Orthodox population is divided between those who define themselves as Moldovans and wish for an independent Moldova and those who define themselves as Moldovan-Romanians and see their natural home as a 'Greater Romania'. See Richard Dryzek and Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communist Democratization*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p. 158.
33. Srdjan Darmanović, 'Montenegro: Destiny of a Satellite State', *East European Reporter*, No. 27, March–April 1992, p. 27.
34. See *Vijesti*, 19 December, 2003.
35. OSCE, *Police Reform in Montenegro 2001–2005: Assessment and Recommendations*, April 2006, p. 22.
36. Although this may seem bizarre, the author met many families that were divided. For example, one brother may define himself as Montenegrin and support the

DPS, the other may define himself as a Serb and support the SNP. This, of course, confirms the essential political, as opposed to ethnic, character of the Serb-Montenegrin bifurcation.

Chapter 2

1. Two newly-published histories of Montenegro span almost two millennia. See Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, and Živko Andrijašević and Šerbo Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro: From Ancient Times to 2003*, CIGG, Podgorica, 2006. In Serbian (or Montenegrin), see Pavel Rovinski's excellent four-volume edition, *Crna Gora u prošlosti i sadašnjosti: geografija, istorija, etnografija, arheologija, savremenost*, Izdavački centar, Cetinje, 1993. See also Jagoš Jovanović, *Istorija Crne Gore*, CID, Podgorica, 2001.
2. Francis Seymour Stephenson, *A History of Montenegro*, Harold & Son, London, 1916, p. 13.
3. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*.
4. Ibid.
5. Thomas Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, Chronicles Press, Rockford, Illinois, 2002.
6. Šerbo Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', in Florian Beiber (ed.) *Montenegro in Transition: Problems of Identity and Statehood*, Nomos Velagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2002, p. 108.
7. Ibid., p. 109.
8. Miloš Blagojević, 'On the National Identity of Serbs in the Middle Ages', in Radovan Samardžić and Milan Duškov (eds) *Serbs in European Civilisation*, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade, 1993, p. 29.
9. Branimir Anzulović, *Heavenly Serbia*, New York University Press, New York, 1999, p. 36.
10. Christopher Boehm, *Montenegrin Social Organization and Values: Political Ethnography of a Refugee Area Tribal Adaptation*, AMS Press, New York, 1983, p. 9.
11. Christopher Boehm, *Blood Revenge: The Enactment and Management of Conflict in Montenegro and Other Tribal Societies*, Pennsylvania University Press, Philadelphia 1986, p. 43.
12. Jovanović, *Istorija Crne Gore*, p. 65.
13. In addition to forging a Christian enclave in the midst of an Islamic empire, the Crnojević dynasty also established the Orthodox monastery in Cetinje. The Crnojevićs are also responsible for the Montenegrin claim of unusual primacy in the cultural development of the Balkans, establishing the first printing press in the region in 1493.
14. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 111.
15. Ibid.
16. Živko Andrijašević, *Kratka istorija Crne Gore 1496–1918*, Conteco, Bar, 2000, p. 11.
17. Allcock, 'Montenegro', p. 173.
18. Gligor Stanojević and Milan Vašić, *Istorija Crne Gore*, (Kniga treća), Redakcija za istoriju Crne Gore, Titograd, 1975, p. 220.
19. John D. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle: Montenegro and Austria-Hungary 1908–1914*, Purdue University Press, West Lafayette, Indiana, p. 6.
20. Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia*, p. 127.
21. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 113.
22. Boehm, *Blood Revenge*, p. 43.
23. Christopher Boehm, *Montenegrin Social Organization and Values*, p. 63.
24. See Jovan Cvijić, *Balkansko poluostrvo I južnoslovenske zemlje*, Zagreb, 1922.

25. Milovan Djilas, *Land without Justice*, Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, New York, 1958, p. 107. See also Milovan Djilas, *Besudna Zemlja*, Narodna kniga, Belgrade, 2005, p. 127.
26. Boehm, *Blood Revenge*, p. 43.
27. Srdja Pavlović, 'Who are the Montenegrins: Statehood, Identity and Civic Society', in F. Bieber (ed.) *Montenegro in Transition: Problems of Identity and Statehood*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2003, p. 85.
28. Petar I Petrović, 'Poslanica Crnogorcima i Brdjanima' in Radovan Radonjić (ed.) *Antologija znamenitih govora*, CID, Podgorica, 1999, p. 190. See also, Petar Popović, *Crna Gora u doba Petra I i Petra II*, Srpska književna zadruga, Kniga 316, Belgrade, 1951.
29. Many of the leading figures from the age of the Serbian revolution were from the Brda tribes. According to Banac, 'Karadjordje stemmed from the Vasojević clans, Vuk Karadžić from the Drobnjaci, Protopresbyter Mateja Nenadović, Pop Luka Lazarević, and Stanoje Glavaš from the Banjani, and Stojan Cupić from the Pivljani.' See Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 275.
30. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 12.
31. Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia*, p. 127.
32. Vladan Gorgević, *Crna Gora i Rusija*, Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, Belgrade, 1914, pp. 7–8. See also, Nevil Forbes, Arnold J. Toynbee, D. Mitrany and D. G. Hogarth, *The Balkans: A History of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Rumania and Turkey*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1915, p. 110.
33. For a detailed analysis of Montenegrin life under Njegoš's rule in the English language see, Zdenko Zlatar, *Njegoš's Montenegro: Epic Poetry, Blood Feud and Warfare in a Tribal Zone*, East European Monographs, Boulder, Columbia University Press, New York, 2005.
34. Milovan Djilas, *Njegoš*, Rupert Hart Davis Publishing, London, 1963, p. 76. See also Popović, *Crna Gora u doba Petra I i Petra II*, p. 131; and Vido Latković, *Petar Petrović Njegoš*, Nolit, Belgrade, 1963, pp. 39–48.
35. Popović, *Crna Gora u doba Petra I i Petra II*, p. 131.
36. Njegoš published three principal works of literature. His most famous was the *Gorski vijenac* (*The Mountain Wreath* translated by James W. Wiles with an introduction by Vladeta Popovic, Allen & Unwin, London, 1971). He composed *Luča Mikrokosma* (*The Ray of the Microcosm*) and *Lažni car Šćepan Mali* (*The False Czar Stephen the Little*) and produced some lesser known works in his youth. He wrote four books of poetry and prose, *Glas Kamenštaka* (*The Voice of the Mountaineers*), *Lijek Jaroski Turski* (*The Cure for Turkish Fury*), *Svobodijada* (*The Song of Freedom*), and *Ogledalo Srpsko* (*The Serbian Mirror*).
37. Popović, *Crna Gora u doba Petra I i Petra II*, p. 132.
38. Andrijašević, *Kratka istorija Crne Gore 1496–1918*, p. 78.
39. See Djilas, *Njegoš*, p. 66.
40. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, pp. 184–5.
41. *Gorski vijenac* is a fictional tale set in the late seventeenth century, a fact that is not always apparent. The 'Jubilee Edition' of *Gorski vijenac*, for example, published by the Obod Printing Press in Cetinje refers to the events depicted in the poem as a 'historical happening towards the close of the seventeenth century' lending a heavy emphasis on the 'factual' content of the poem. The central story (although the poem incorporates much else) is the dilemma faced by the main character Bishop Danilo. He develops the belief that the freedom of Montenegro, and its position as the last bastion of Christianity is at mortal risk from the creeping proliferation of Islamic life and culture, manifesting itself as a slow but steady conversion of many of its inhabitants from Christianity to the Islamic faith. The spread of Islam among

the Montenegrin tribes had become a more serious danger than Turkish military incursions. Danilo believed that if Christianity were destroyed, national customs would disappear with it, heralding the death of a Montenegrin culture based on Orthodoxy. The crux of the poem, though threaded with a plethora of themes, is that the Montenegrins who 'have taken the Turks faith' must be given a stark choice 'baptism or death'. Only then could Montenegro be saved. See Petar II Petrović Njegoš, *Gorski vijenac*, Jubilee Edition, Obod, Cetinje, 1997.

42. Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, p. 130.
43. *Gorski vijenac* has been interpreted and reinterpreted to fit the ideology of Serbian nationalists, Montenegrin nationalists (although frequent references to his Serbian identity are problematic) and even the Yugoslav communists. But perhaps the most interesting manifestation of this was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia's attempt to create a 'Red' Njegoš. As Wachtel notes: 'If Njegoš was to be rehabilitated in the [new] Communist context, he would clearly have to be freed from the weight of his previous interpretive history as well as his unsavoury posthumous associations, all of which required a certain amount of interpretive legerdemain.' See Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia*, Stanford University Press, California, 1998, p. 142.
44. See Zorica Mrvaljević, *Crnogorska narodna nošnja*, Obod, Cetinje, 1999, p. 12.
45. Miloš Obilić was alleged to have murdered Sultan Murad and has subsequently become a celebrated figure in Serbian romantic poetry. Njegoš makes reference to Obilić in the *Mountain Wreath*, glorifying the murder as an act of national liberation. The cult of Obilić has inspired generations of Serb and Montenegrin fighters and was pan-Serbian in substance. According to Djilas, Njegoš had initially wished to inaugurate a medal that was to be named after the eighteenth-century Montenegrin warrior Nikac of Rovin, who, like Obilić, had killed the pasha. Njegoš, however, opted to utilize Obilić as Nikac, who was a clan hero and not a 'national' hero of Serbian mythical purity. Thus, Montenegrin heroism was always connected with the Kosovo myth.
46. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 120.
47. Lazar Tomanović, *Vladika Rade at the End of his Life*, Zetski Glasnik, Cetinje, 1934, quoted in Marco Houston, *Nikola and Milena: King and Queen of the Black Mountain*, Leppi Publications, London, 2003, p. 57.
48. Jovanović, *Istorija Crne Gore*, pp. 188–9.
49. Momčilo Šaletić, *Ubiće knjaza*, Matica Crnogorska, Cetinje and Podgorica, 2004, pp. 24–5.
50. Alex Devine, *Montenegro in History, Politics and War*, Fisher & Unwin, London, 1918, p. 30.
51. See Šaletić, *Ubiće knjaza*, pp. 42–70. Indeed, such is the level of tribal consciousness among the Kući in contemporary Montenegro that when the Podgorica authorities proposed to erect a statue of Duke Mirko in the town centre, the Kući opposed it strongly (author interview with Milan Popović, 14 July 2003).

Chapter 3

1. For an in-depth account of the Hercegovinian uprising in 1882, including sections discussing Montenegro's role in the crisis, see Hamdija Kapidžić, *Hercegovinački ustanak 1882: godine*, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1973.
2. Srdja Pavlović, *Balkan Anschluss: The Annexation of Montenegro and the Creation of the Common South Slav State*, Purdue University Press, West Lafayette, Indiana, 2008, p. 40.
3. Branko Pavičević, *Crna Gora u ratu 1862 godine*, Istorijски institute u Beogradu, Belgrade, 1963.

4. Pavlović, *Balkan Anschluss*, p. 40.
5. Devine, *Montenegro in History, Politics and War*, p. 39.
6. Novak Ražnatović, *Crna Gora i Berlinske Kongres*, Istroijski institute CP Crne Gore u Titogradu, Cetinje, 1979, pp. 16–23.
7. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 123.
8. Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia*, p. 128.
9. Nebojša Čagorović, 'Montenegrin Identity: past present and future', *The Journal of Area Studies*, No. 3, 1993, p. 132.
10. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 275.
11. Šerbo Rastoder, 'Vjerska politika kralja Nikole 1878–1912', *CANU*, No. 21, 1998, pp. 575–97.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 576.
13. Pavlović, *Balkan Anschluss*, p. 53.
14. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, p. 13.
15. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 277.
16. Petar Karadjordjević became King of Serbia in 1903 following the assassination of Milan Obrenović during a military coup.
17. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, p. 18.
18. For a concise analysis of the shifts in Montenegrin diplomacy, see Radoslav M. Raspopović, *Diplomatija Crne Gore 1711–1918*, The Historical Institute of Montenegro, Podgorica, 1996.
19. Charles Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms*, Ohio State University Press, Columbia, 1990, p. 21.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 44.
22. See Dragoljub Živojinović, *Crna Gora u borbi za opstanak 1914–1922*, Vojna Kniga, Belgrade, 1996.
23. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, p. 17.
24. Marko Špadijer and Stanko Roganović, *Diplomatska poslanstva u kraljevini Crnoj Gori*, Nacionalna Zajednica Crnogoraca Hrvatske, Crnogorska Matice, Zagreb, 2004, p. 41.
25. See Miroslav Hroch, 'From National Movement to Fully Formed Nation: The Nation Building Process in Europe', *New Left Review*, vol. 198, 1993, p. 11.
26. See Mijat Šuković, *Novorjekovna država Crna Gora*, Nacionalna zajednica Crnogoraca Hrvatske, Zagreb, 2006.
27. Čolović, *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia*, p. 98.
28. Špadijer and Roganović, *Diplomatska poslanstva u kraljevini Crnoj Gori*, p. 41.
29. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, p. 18.
30. In 1909 in Belgrade, a group of Montenegrin youths organized a secret society with the express aim of assassinating anyone in Montenegro working against the goals of the People's Party. Only Montenegrins resident in Belgrade could become members and their commitment and radicalism can be demonstrated by their formation of a suicide pact that stated that members (if apprehended) had to commit suicide to maintain the integrity and the secrecy of the wider group. See Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1967, pp. 291–2. See also Nikola Škerović, *Crna Gora na osvjetku XX vijeka*, Belgrade. 1964, pp. 486–7.
31. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, p. 29 See also Dimitrije Dimo Vujović, *Crnogorski federelisti 1919–1929*, Kniga 2, Titograd, 1981.
32. Škerović, *Crna Gora na osvjetku XX vijeka*, pp. 486–7.
33. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 279 For an in-depth analysis of the events surrounding the Cetinje bomb affair and its aftermath, see Škerović, *Crna Gora na osvjetku XX vijeka*, pp. 467–537.

34. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 279.
35. Špadijer and Roganović, *Diplomska poslanstva u kraljevini Crnoj Gori*, p. 41.
36. Letter to Russian diplomat Ćirikov from King Nikola I Petrović, cited in Špadijer and Roganović, *Diplomska poslanstva u kraljevini Crnoj Gori*, p. 41.
37. Ibid., p. 279.
38. For an in-depth analysis of the events surrounding the Kolašin Conspiracy (in English) see Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, pp. 51–5.
39. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 126.
40. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 280.
41. Srdja Pavlović, 'The Podgorica Assembly in 1918: Notes on the Yugoslav Historiography (1919–1970) about the Unification of Serbia and Montenegro', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol. XLI, No.2, June 1999, pp. 159–60.
42. This retreat through Albania became known as 'The Serbian Golgotha'. For an excellent and detailed account of these events, see Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War*.
43. Gavro Perazić, *Nestanak crnogorske države u Prvom svetskom ratu*, Vojnoistorijski Institut, Belgrade, 1988, p. 43. See also Novica Rakočević, *Crna Gora u prvom svetskom ratu 1914–1918*, Istorijski institut u Titogradu, Cetinje, 1969, p. 127.
44. Nikola P. Škerović, *Crna Gora za vrijeme prvog svjetskog rata*, Titograd, 1963, p. 119.
45. Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, p. 114.
46. Milovan Djilas, *Montenegro*, Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich, London, 1963, pp. 8–9.
47. Stevan K. Pavlowitch, 'Serbia, Montenegro and Yugoslavia', in Dejan Djokić (ed.) *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea*, Hurst & Company, London, 2003, p. 60. See also, Jovanović, *Istorija Crne Gore*, pp. 336–8.
48. Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War*, p. 155. See also, Rakočević, *Crna Gora u prvom svetskom ratu 1914–1918*, pp. 154–5.
49. Pavlović, 'The Podgorica Assembly in 1918', pp. 160.
50. Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War*, p. 158.
51. See Milovan Djilas, *Wartime*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1977.
52. Perazić, *Nestanak crnogorske države u prvom svetskom ratu*, pp. 158.
53. Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia*, p. 228.
54. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 150.
55. For a more detailed analysis of the Montenegrin komitas, see Mile Kordić and Mijajlo Ašanin, *Komitski Pokret u Crnoj Gori 1916–1918*, Nova Kniga, Belgrade, 1985.
56. Kordić and Ašanin, *Komitski pokret u Crnoj Gori 1916–1918*, pp. 194–6.
57. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 151.
58. Ibid., p. 153.
59. For an excellent analysis of the academic debates over the subject of the Podgorica Assembly, see Pavlović, 'The Podgorica Assembly in 1918', pp. 157–76.
60. For an in-depth analysis of these shared characteristics and the events leading up to the unification of Serbia and Montenegro see, Vujović, *Ujedinjenje Crne Gore i Srbije*.
61. See, for example, Šerbo Rastoder, *Skrivana strana istorije: Crnogorska buna i odmetnički pokret 1918–1929*, Cetinje–Podgorica, 2005.
62. Mark Thompson, *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia*, Hutchinson Radius, London, 1992, p. 159.
63. Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War*, p. 284.
64. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 284.
65. Facsimile of the 'Resolution of the Serb People of Montenegro passed at the Sitting in Podgorica, November 26 1918', in M. Radović and I. Vukotić, *The Question of Montenegro*, Paris 1919, p. 41. For a pro-unionist version of these events, see Goran Kuković and Dragan Racković, *Velika narodna skupština Srpskoj narodna u Crnoj Gori–Podgorica 1918 godine*, Srpski Kulturni Centar, Berane, 2006.

66. Ivo J. Lederer, *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference*, Yale University Press, Newhaven, 1963, p. 45.
67. Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, p. 125.
68. Djilas, *Njegoš*, p. 421.
69. See Perazić, *Nestanak crnogorske države u prvom Svetskom ratu*, pp. 153–77.
70. Author's interview with Šerbo Rastoder, Podgorica, 9 April 2004.
71. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, pp. 158–9.
72. Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, p. 134. These are Djilas's depictions of his boyhood in northern Montenegro and are a useful resource. For a similar depiction of the Montenegro of the period see, Louis Andrew Vucinich, *God and the Villagers: A Story of Montenegro*, Buffalo, New York, 1974.
73. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 130.
74. Thompson, *A Paper House*, p. 159.
75. For an exceptionally detailed account of the events of the Christmas uprising (in four volumes) see Rastoder, *Skrivana strana istorije: Crnogorska buna I odmetnički pokret 1918–1929*.
76. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 286.
77. According to Ivo Banac the Green movement splintered between those who were in favour of a militant approach and those who were not. This fundamental division damaged the effectiveness of their uprising. See Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, pp. 286–7.
78. Charles Furlong Collection, Montenegro: Reports by British Officers, Box Number 3.
79. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 286.
80. Ibid., p. 286. See also Vujović, *Ujedinjenje Crne Gore i Srbije*.
81. Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, pp. 92–3.
82. Ibid., pp. 92–3.
83. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 130.
84. Charles Wellington Furlong Collection, Letter to President Woodrow Wilson from Jovan Plamenac, 24 January 1919, Box No.3.
85. Ibid.
86. A collection of documents relating to France's role in the annexation of Montenegro to Serbia are available in *Uloga Francuske u Nasilnoj Aneksiji Crne Gore*, Conteco, Bar, 2000. Further documents pertaining to the role of the French government can be found in *Le Role de la France dans L'annexion Montenegro*, Rome, 1921.
87. Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, p. 189.
88. Author's correspondence with Srdja Pavlović, June 2005.
89. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, pp. 270–1.
90. Vujović, *Crnogorski federalisti 1919–1929*, p. 55. See also, Šerbo Rastoder, *Politički stranke u Crnoj Gori 1918–1929*, Conteco, Bar, 2000.
91. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 191.
92. Rastoder, *Politički Stranke u Crnoj Gori 1918–1929*, p. 533.
93. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 199.
94. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 290.
95. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 199.
96. Ibid., p. 199.
97. Pavlowitch, 'Serbia, Montenegro and Yugoslavia', p. 63.
98. Puniša Račić had been accused and sentenced to death *in absentia* in 1909 by the Montenegrin courts for his role in the attempt to assassinate King Nikola I Petrović in Kolašin in 1907. See Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 279n.

99. The introduction of the banovina regions was controversial, but the objective was to detract from the mentality of narrow nationalism and encourage individuals to identify with a centralized Yugoslav state.
100. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 207.

Chapter 4

1. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 209.
2. Milan Deroc, *British Special Operations Explored: Yugoslavia in Turmoil 1941–1943 and the British Response*, East European Monographs, Boulder, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, p. 2.
3. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 209. See also, M. Kapandžić, *Gradjanski rat u Srbiji*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1958.
4. British Special Operations Executive, Report Drawn up by Lieutenant Glenn on his Relations with Yugoslavs, 17 November 1941, HS5/938.
5. John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a Country*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 201.
6. Yugoslavia was partitioned thus: Germany occupied northern Slovenia. Italy occupied the majority of Montenegro, much of the Croatian coastline and islands and some of the Croatian hinterland (central Dalmatia, Konavle). The Italian-sponsored 'Greater Albania' acquired Metohija, the majority of Kosovo and some areas of Montenegro, the Sandžak and western Macedonia. Hungary was 'awarded' areas in Serbia (Baranja and Backa). The Bulgarians acquired most of Macedonia, Pirot (Serbia), and a portion of Kosovo.
7. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 346.
8. Jozo Tomašević, *The Chetniks: War and Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941–1945*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1975, pp. 138–9.
9. The original Italian plan had been to reconstitute an independent Montenegro with Prince Mihailo Petrović, the grandson of the late King Nikola, on the throne. However, he refused the offer of the throne throwing the Italian plan into chaos.
10. Krsto Popović is still celebrated as a national hero in many parts of Old Montenegro. His portrait adorns the walls of many bars and restaurants (and doubtless private homes) in Cetinje. For a biographical account of Krsto Popović and an account of the events surrounding both the Christmas uprising and the Second World War, see Veljko Sjekloća, *Krsto Popović: U Istorijskoj Gradji i Literatura*. Obod Printing Press, Cetinje, 2001.
11. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 214.
12. Djilas, *Wartime*, pp. 18–19.
13. Ibid., pp. 18–19.
14. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 212.
15. British Special Operations Executive, 'Some Notes on the Yugoslav Revolt', 22 June 1942, HS5/938.
16. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 352.
17. Ibid., p. 214.
18. Ibid., p. 213.
19. Ivo Banac, *With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*, Cornell University Press, Ithica, 1988, p. 82.
20. On Orthodox Christmas Day 1942, a group of fanatical partisans executed prominent townspeople who were deemed to be collaborators. The bodies (together with the corpse of a tortured dog) were dumped near the town of Kolašin at a site that became known as the 'The Dog's Graveyard'. See Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 361, and Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, pp. 136–7.

NOTES

21. General Staff, British War Office, Director of Military Intelligence, M.I. 3b, 27 April 1943, Most Secret, 'A Short History of the Revolt in Yugoslavia'; PRO Archives, document FO 371/33469, pp. 7–8.
22. Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Hillier's New Disorder: The Second World War in Yugoslavia*, Hurst & Company, London, 2008, p. 105.
23. Excellent analyses of the Chetnik movement can be found in the English language. See, for example, Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, and Lucien Karchmar, *Dražža Mihailović and the Rise of the Chetnik Movement, 1941–1942*, Vol. 2, Garland Publishing, New York, 1987.
24. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 214–15.
25. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 215.
26. Amid substantial controversy, a statue of Djurišić was scheduled to be erected in the northern Montenegrin town of Berane (formerly Ivangrad) in 2007. For an excellent analysis of Djurišić's role in the Chetnik movement, see Radoje Pajović, *Parle Djurišić*, CID, Podgorica, 2005.
27. Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 149.
28. Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, p. 143. See also Radoje Pajović, *Kontrarevolucija u Crnoj Gori: cetnicki i federalistički pokret 1941–1945*, Obod, Cetinje, 1977, p. 34.
29. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 363.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 366.
31. A communication from the Central Committee to the Montenegrins appealed for them to, 'continue their struggle against the hated Italian occupiers and their fifth-columnist forces'. See *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici SFRJ 1941–1945*, Yugoovenski pregled, Belgrade, 1988, pp. 134–9. See also Djilas, *Wartime*, pp. 147–50.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
33. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 214–15.
34. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 135.
35. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 217.
36. Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 171.
37. Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, p. 232.
38. These events became part of partisan mythology and were celebrated in the Veljko Bulajić film *Bitka na Neretvi* (The Battle of Neretva) which included Hollywood actors such as Yul Brynner and Orson Welles.
39. Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, pp. 250–2.
40. Heather Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, Hurst & Company, London, 2003, p. 243.
41. Deroc, *British Special Operations Explored*, p. 2.
42. Mark Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940–1943*, East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, New York, 1980, pp. 70–1.
43. Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, p. 245.
44. Banac, *With Stalin Against Tito*, p. 82.
45. Thomas Kirkwood Ford, Jr. 'Pawns and Pawnbrokers: OSS and Yugoslav Resistance During the Second World War', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, May 1980, p. 87.
46. F. W. Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1971, p. 180.
47. 'The other members of 'Operation Typical' were Corporal Walter Wroughton, Sergeant John Campbell and Sergeant 'Rose', a Palestinian Jew called Peterz Rosenberg. See Walter Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941–1945*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1967, p. 117, and Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, p. 139.

48. Dedijer said of Stuart's news, 'That was the first time I had heard about my brother, Stevan, since 1939. I was overjoyed.' See Vladimir Dedijer, *The War Diaries of Vladimir Dedijer, Volume 2, November 28 1942 to September 10th 1943*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1990, p. 273.
49. Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 253.
50. Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, pp. 13–14.
51. Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 259.
52. A number of studies published since the Second World War have suggested that the switch toward supporting the partisans was down primarily to a communist plot within the SOE led by James Klugmann. See Nora Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy* Victor Gollanz, London, 1985; Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1990; and David Martin, *The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1990.
53. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, p. 146.
54. The meetings in Zagreb were, of course, omitted from partisan historiography throughout the Tito era. However, in the 1970s Roberts, in *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies* wrote of the event, and Milovan Djilas would later recount the event in his *Wartime*. The Yugoslav government filed a formal protest to the USA following the publication of Roberts's book in 1973, although Roberts remained steadfast and critical of the partisan account of events during the Yugoslav wars, asserting that, 'nothing in the Balkans is ever black or white – there are only shades of grey'. See Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, pp. 3, 108, and Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 234.
55. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 223.
56. British Special Operations Executive, A Note on the Morale of German Forces in Question, Draft, Appx 'J', 20 March 1944, HS5/922.
57. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 135.
58. Before the war Maclean served in the British diplomatic service and had been stationed in Moscow. When war broke out in 1939 he tried to leave the British Foreign Office to enlist in the army, but was told it would not be possible to leave the FCO. Maclean sought to circumvent this ruling, discovering that by enlisting as a candidate for parliament he could simultaneously leave his posting. Almost as soon as leaving the Foreign Office, Maclean joined the Cameron Highlanders. See Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1949.
59. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, pp. 229–30.
60. Author's interview with Flt Lt Philip Lawson, Balkan Air Force 1944–45, Saxmundham, Suffolk, June 2008.
61. Transcript of BBC broadcast on the evacuation of the partisans, August 1944, p. 3.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
63. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 225.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
65. Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, p. 453.
66. Radoje Pajović, *Crna Gora Krož Istoriju*, Obod, Cetinje, 2005, p. 36.
67. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 226.
68. Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 445.
69. Despite its tiny population Montenegro provided 17 per cent of the officers for the partisan army. See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes 1914–1991: the short twentieth century, 1914–1991*, Abacus, London, 1995, p. 170.
70. During the Second World War the idea of creating a Sandžak federal unit had been advanced.
71. Thompson, *A Paper House*, p. 162.

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72. Leonard J. Cohen, *The Socialist Pyramid: Elites and Power in Yugoslavia*, Tri-Service Press, London, 1984, p. 129.
73. Milovan Djilas, 'O Crnogorskom nacionalnom pitanju', *Članci 1941–1946*, Kultura, Belgrade, 1947. p. 3.
74. Ibid., p. 4.
75. Ibid., p. 4.
76. Ibid., p. 5.
77. Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy*, p. 191.
78. Pavlowitch, 'Serbia, Montenegro and Yugoslavia', p. 60.
79. During the Second World War the idea of creating a Sandžak federal unit had been advanced.
80. Thompson, *A Paper House*, p. 162.
81. Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1968, p. 180.
82. Momcilo Cemović, *Djilasi Odgovori*, Svetlostkomerc, Belgrade, 1997, p. 95. Thanks go to Aleksa Djilas for our discussion of these and other issues.
83. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 245.
84. Ibid.
85. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 403.
86. Richard J. Crampton, *The Balkans since the Second World War*, Longman Press, London, 2002, p. 30.
87. See Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1962.
88. For a short but succinct analysis of the ideological underpinnings and justifications of the Soviet–Yugoslav split, see Dejan Jović, 'Yugoslavism and Yugoslav Communism', in Dejan Djokić (ed) *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea*, Hurst & Company, London, 2003, pp. 157–81.
89. See Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 138. See also, Aleksandar Rankovic, *Izabrani govori i članci*, Belgrade, Kultura, 1951, pp. 8–9.
90. Banac, *With Stalin Against Tito*, p. 112. There is some dispute about the numbers of those implicated. Banac argues that around 2600 were arrested and imprisoned, but Mark Thompson thinks it was probably closer to the 5000 mark – meaning 1.32 per cent of the population was implicated.
91. The 1948 split is the contextual setting for Emir Kustirica's excellent analysis of the period: *Otac na Službednom putu* (When my Father was away on Business), although set in Sarjevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina.
92. Banac, *With Stalin Against Tito*, p. 164.
93. Doško Duder, *The Yugoslavs*, p. 75.
94. Thompson, *A Paper House*, p. 156.
95. According to Paul Shoup, 'In Montenegro, the ratio of party members to expulsions was six to one, while in Bosnia & Herzegovina it was twenty-three to one; in Croatia, twenty to one; and in Macedonia, thirty-one to one.' See Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 138n.
96. Banac, *With Stalin Against Tito*, p. 151.
97. Mark Thompson argues that more than one-fifth of all Cominformists arrested in Yugoslavia were from Montenegro.
98. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 137 See also, Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 138.
99. Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 164.
100. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 237.
101. There is a saying in Yugoslavia that refers to the omnipotence of the Yugoslav secret services: *Ozna sve Dozna* (OZNA knows everything).
102. Ibid., p. 237.

103. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 237.
104. Dennis Russinow, 'Nationalities Policy and the National Question', in Pedro Ramet (ed.) *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, Westview Press, Colorado, 1985, p. 131.
105. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 423. See also Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 269.
106. Srdja Pavlović, 'Literature, Social Poetics and Identity Construction in Montenegro', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Fall 2003, p. 139.
107. Rastoder, 'A Short Review of the History of Montenegro', p. 137.
108. Andrew Wachtel, 'How to use a Classic: Petar Petrović Njegoš in the 20th Century', in John Lampe and Mark Mazower (eds) *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth Century Southeastern Europe*, Central European University Press, Budapest, 2003, p. 143–4.
109. Ibid., *How to use a Classic*, p. 143–4.
110. Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, p. 158. Fleming's book is simply one of many that suggest that the destruction of the monument had a clear political objective – to dilute the Montenegrins' Serbian identity. See also Batric Jovanović, *Raspljivanje Crnogoraca*, Sprska Skolska Kniga, Belgrade, 2003.
111. Petar Vlahović, 'The Serbian Origins of the Montenegrins', in Dušanka Hadži-Jovacić (ed.) *The Serbian Question in the Balkans, Geographical and Historical Aspects*, Faculty of Geography, University of Belgrade, 1995, p. 172.
112. Pavlović, 'Literature, Social Poetics and Identity Construction in Montenegro', p. 140.
113. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 254.
114. Ibid., p. 254.
115. Allcock, 'Montenegro', p. 184.
116. Pedro Ramet (ed.), *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1963–1983*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984, p. 67
117. Ibid., p. 67.
118. Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy*, p. 191.
119. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 245.

Chapter 5

1. *New York Times*, 16 February, 1975, p. 17.
2. Ibid., p. 17.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. According to Nebojša Čagorović, Montenegrins had always been comfortable in Tito's Yugoslavia primarily because they could rely on federal funds. After all, he claims, 'laziness and the right to someone else's support have always been considered natural rights in Montenegro.' See Čagorović, 'Montenegrin Identity: past present and future', p. 133.
5. See Cohen, *The Socialist Pyramid*.
6. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 344.
7. Viktor Meier, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise*, Routledge, London, 1999, p. 10.
8. John Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, Hurst & Company, London, 2000, p. 424.
9. Branka Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Verso Press, London, 1993, p. 170.
10. Ibid., p. 170.
11. RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe, November 22, 1991, p. 12.
12. RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe, 21 December 1990, p. 29.
13. *Krug*, 22 September 1990, p. 6.
14. Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, p. 170.

15. Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, Macmillan, London, 1988, p. 338.
16. Ibid., p. 338.
17. Ibid., p. 339.
18. Ruža Petrović and Marina Blagojević, *Seobe Srba i Crnogoraca sa Kosova i iz Metohije*, Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, Demografski Zbornik, Belgrade, 1988.
19. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 339.
20. Tito formulated a system of 'collective presidency' for Yugoslavia in the post-Tito era. It was intended that there was to be no one successor to Tito, instead a rotation system was implemented giving each republic a yearly term of president.
21. Emil Kerenji, 'Vojvodina since 1988', in Sabrina P. Ramet and Vjeran Pavlaković, *Serbia since 1989*, University of Washington, Seattle, 2005, p. 351.
22. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 259.
23. *AS*, September 1989, p. 6.
24. Sabrina Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, Westview Press, Colorado, 1999, p. 36.
25. Vujadin Rudić, 'The Ethnic Structure of the Population of Montenegro', in 'Dušanka Hadži-Jovčić (ed.). *The Serbian Question in the Balkans*, Department of Geography, University of Belgrade, 1995, p. 245.
26. Author's interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 31 October 2006.
27. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 432.
28. Ibid., p. 4.
29. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 261.
30. Vešeljko Koprovica and Branko Vojičić, *Predvrat '89*, Liberalni Savez Crne Gore, Podgorica, 1994, p. 42.
31. Informator (Radoje Dakić), Oktobar 1988, Titograd, Broj. 239, p. 1.
32. This event was mythologized through both the Serbian media and use of the *gusle*, the traditional musical instrument played by the Serbs (although its usage is not limited to Serbian cultural and ethnic space). The Montenegrin gusle player, Vojo Radusinovic, and the poet Žarko Šobić composed a piece called *Sumrak bogova kod Žute grede* (Twilight of the Gods at Žuta Greda). According to Žanić, 'the pro-Milošević media assigned the event almost mythic dimensions, turning it into a propaganda tool in preparation of a new, violent attempt to take power in Podgorica, which succeeded in January 1989. See Ivo Žanić, *Flag on the Mountain: A Political Anthropology of War in Bosnia and Croatia*, Saqi Books, London, 2007, pp. 93–4.
33. See Žanić, *Flag on the Mountain*, p. 101.
34. Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, p. 171.
35. Ibid., p. 171.
36. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 261.
37. Koprovica and Vojičić, *Predvrat '89*, p. 200.
38. *Krug*, 22 September 1990, p. 6.
39. Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, p. 171.
40. Ibid., p. 171.
41. Koprovica and Vojičić, *Predvrat '89*, p. 200.
42. Dobrica Ćosić, 'Uspostavljanje istorskog uma', in *Književne novine*, No. 779–80, 1–15 July 1989, p. 3. Montenegro being 'torn from its roots' is a reference to the decision of the KPJ to award Montenegro the status of a republic in the SFRY, therefore, dividing it from Serbia.
43. *NIN*, Belgrade, 9 July 1989, p. 3.
44. Thompson, *A Paper House*, p. 163.
45. Marko Orlandić, *O jednom vremenu i njegovim ljudima*, Podgorica, 2007, p. 157.
46. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 4.

47. RFE Report on Eastern Europe, 22 November 1991, p. 27. In the same report, Andrejevich notes that the change of leadership was perceived in some circles to represent a revival of the Montenegrin national movement of the late 1960s.
48. Nebojša Čagorović refers to this event as the 'January coup d'état'. See Nebojša Čagorović, 'Montenegrin Identity: past present and future', pp. 129–36.
49. Ibid., p. 27.
50. Koprovica and Vojičić, *Predrat '89*, p. 341. See also Srdjan Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', in Dragica Vujadinović et al., *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia*, CEDET, Belgrade, 2003, p. 156.
51. So loyal was Momir Bulatović that he became mocked in some circles. He was referred to as 'Milošević's coatpeg' or 'the waiter'. This aside, it was absolutely necessary for Milošević to have a pliable leadership in Montenegro – this 'reliable' Montenegrin regime would ensure that the Milošević bloc held four of the eight votes in 'collective head of state'.
52. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 261.
53. Author's correspondence with Srdja Pavlović, June, 2005.
54. Interview with Milo Djukanović, Radio Slobodna Evropa. 2004.
55. Momir Bulatović argued that the university was not used as a recruiting ground for political cadres that would support the AB revolutions. See Momir Bulatović, *Univerzitet neće biti rezervat Politike*, NIN, Belgrade, January 1989, p. 7.
56. The organization of SSRN (Socialist Alliance of Working People) were, according to Darmanović, 'the broadest or so-called 'front' organization which in the ramified and complicated institutional scheme of Yugoslav self-managing socialism was supposed to act as the locus where the most diverse interests – provided they were not contrary to the socialist character of society and state – were brought together'. The SSO (the Association of Socialist Youth) were 'the youth organization bureaucratized to a large extent and serving as a political cadre reservoir for the League of Communists'. See Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 154.
57. Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 153.
58. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 4.
59. Veselin Pavičević, 'The Electoral System in Montenegro', in Dragica Vujadinović et al., *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia*, CEDET, Belgrade, 2003, p. 225.
60. According to Andrejevich, 'Opposition parties persistently complained that the LCM's strict control over the media and the police prevented them from running effective campaigns.' See Milan Andrejevich, 'Montenegro Follows its own Course, RFE Report on Eastern Europe, 22 November 1991, p. 27.
61. Pavičević, 'The Electoral System in Montenegro', p. 225.
62. Andrejevich, 'Montenegro Follows its own Course, p. 27.
63. Vladimir Goati, 'Party Systems in Serbia and Montenegro', *CEDET Annual Report*, 2000, p. 169.
64. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 263.
65. Janus Bugajski, *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe*, M. E. Sharpe, London, 1995, pp. 172–3.

Chapter 6

1. *Vreme News Agency Digest*, 4 November 1991.
2. Milan Popović, *Crnogorska Alternativa, Vjести*, Podgorica, 2000, p. 12–13.

3. Veselin Vukotić, 'The Economic Situation and Economic Reforms in Montenegro', in Nicholas Whyte (ed.) *The Future of Montenegro: Proceedings of an Expert Meeting*, Centre For European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2001, p. 45.
4. Čagarović, 'Montenegrin Identity: past present and future', pp. 133–4.
5. Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1995, p. 265.
6. AIM Press, 16 October 1996.
7. Ibid.
8. *Večernje Novosti*, 21 October 1991.
9. Allan Little and Laura Sibling, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Penguin Books, London, 1995, p. 182.
10. Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 131–2.
11. Ibid., pp. 131–2.
12. Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 62.
13. Interview with Novak Kilibarda, in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, Podgorica 2004.
14. *Razgovori Vranicki-Djukanović in Pobjeda*, No. 9253, 5 September 1991, p. 5, quoted in Srđja Pavlović, 'Reckoning: The Siege of Dubrovnik and the Consequences of the "War for Peace"', *Spaces of Identity*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2005.
15. According to Tomović, 'Pobjeda and state television, the long-time political partners of the political establishment, became, even in the changed social circumstances – the so-called transition – an extended arm of the regime. Unaccustomed to free, critical opinion, public debate and truth, they were to become perfect instruments of political will in the critical period of Yugoslav disintegration.' See Sonja Tomović, 'Hate Speech in the Media: Visible Relaxation of Ethnic Tension', *Media Online*, 27 June 2005.
16. Pavlović, 'Reckoning: The Siege of Dubrovnik'.
17. *Pobjeda*, 18 September 1991.
18. Živko Andrijašević, *Nacrt za ideologiju jedne vlasti*, Conteco, Bar, 1999, p. 95.
19. James Gow, *The Serbian Project and its Adversaries*, Hurst & Company, London, 2003, p. 64.
20. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, p. 269.
21. Author's interview with Don Branko Sbutega, 17 July 2005.
22. Andrijašević, *Nacrt za ideologiju jedne vlasti*, p. 95.
23. Speech by M. Cimibaljević in the Montenegrin Parliament, in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, Podgorica, 2004.
24. *Večernje Novosti*, 19 October 1991, p. 3.
25. 'There exists a historical pretext here. Montenegro, despite its 'neutrality, generally stood with Serbia in times of difficulty'. According to Andrijević, 'in the past Montenegro had repeatedly disregarded its neutral status to assist Serbia when the latter has been threatened by outside forces'. See RFE Report on Eastern Europe, 22 November 1991, p. 31.
26. Borisav Jović noted that the mobilization rates varied significantly. 'Serbian and Vojvodina reservists have offered major resistance to call-up,' but he acknowledged that 'the Montenegrins and Herzegovinans are excellent'. See Borisav Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, Politika, Belgrade, 1995, p. 226.
27. Author's interview with Igor Lakić, Podgorica, 31 July, 2005.
28. Interview with Milo Djukanović in *Pobjeda*, No. 9266, Podgorica, 18 September 1991. *Pobjeda* also published the names of 'deserters'. However, as the Dubrovnik campaign continued, the JNA stopped releasing figures for Montenegrin desertions as they were too high and publishing them was deemed bad for

- morale. See Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, Hurst & Co, London, 1996, p. 213.
29. Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 134.
 30. Gow, *The Serbian Project and its Adversaries*, p. 53.
 31. According to Borisav Jović, Branko Kostić supported a full mobilization with a view to establishing 'final success'. See Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 224.
 32. Interview with Branko Kostić in *Rat za mir*, 2004. See also Helsinki odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiju, *Rat za mir*, Biblioteka Svedočanstva, br.24.
 33. Interview with Radan Nikolić in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, Podgorica 2004.
 34. Trebinje in eastern Herzegovina also became the scene of intercommunal strife at the beginning of the war in Bosnia. Both the Croat and Muslim populations of Trebinje left during the summer of 1992. The mosque in the centre of the town was destroyed during this period. In 2001, during a ceremony to open the rebuilt mosque, European Union representatives and Muslim leaders were trapped by rioting Serbs protesting against the rebuilding. The mosque in Trebinje, although officially open, lies unused.
 35. Andrijašević, *Nacrt za ideologiju jedne vlasti*, p. 302.
 36. *Pobjeda*, 2 October, 1991, p. 2. See also Helsinki odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiju, *Rat za mir*, Biblioteka svedočanstva, Belgrade, 2002/2006, p. 628.
 37. Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 133.
 38. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, p. 372.
 39. Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 246.
 40. RFE Report on Eastern Europe, 22 November 1991, p. 31.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
 42. Interview with Momir Bulatović, 7 October 1994, 'Death of Yugoslavia Archive', Roll 75E, U-BIT, No. 124, p. 9.
 43. Speech by Milo Djukanović in the Montenegrin Parliament, in *Rat za mir*, Obala Productions, Podgorica, 2004. Dir. Koca Pavlović. This also represented an attack on General Kadijević and Branko Kostić who continued to call for a wider mobilization.
 44. *Pobjeda*, 16 December 1992, p. 4.
 45. AIM Press, 23 January 1994.
 46. Interview with Svetozar Marović, in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, Podgorica, 2004.
 47. Interview with Lord Carrington, 4 January 1995, 'Death of Yugoslavia Archive', Roll 73E, U-BIT, No.121.
 48. Interview with Momir Bulatović, 7 October 1994, 'Death of Yugoslavia Archive', Roll 75E, U-BIT, No.124.
 49. Slobodan Vucetić, 'Serbia and Montenegro: From Federation to Confederation', in Dragica Vujadinović et al *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia – Vol. 1 – Institutional Framework*, Cedet, Belgrade, 2003, p. 73.
 50. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
 51. Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 229.
 52. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
 53. Little and Sibling, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, p. 194.
 54. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
 55. Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 233.
 56. Interview with Gianni De-Michelis, 17 June 1994, 'The Death of Yugoslavia Archive', 3/34.
 57. Interview with Gianni De-Michelis, 17 June 1994, 'The Death of Yugoslavia Archive', 3/34.

58. Momir Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, Alfa Press, Belgrade, 2005, p. 83.
59. Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 233.
60. Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, p. 82.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
62. See Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 229.
63. Interview with Momir Bulatović, 7 October 1994, 'Death of Yugoslavia Archive', Roll 75E, U-BIT, No.124.
64. Statement by Milo Djukanović in the Montenegrin Parliament, December 1991, in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, Podgorica 2004.
65. Statement by President Momir Bulatović in the Montenegrin Parliament, December 1991, in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, Podgorica 2004.
66. Statement by Milo Cvorović in the Montenegrin Parliament, December 1991, in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, Podgorica 2004.
67. Interview with Momir Bulatović, 7 October 1994, 'Death of Yugoslavia Archive', Roll 75E, U-BIT, No. 124.
68. Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 230.
69. Interview with Borisav Jović in *The Death of Yugoslavia*, BBC Television, Producer Angus McQueen.
70. Interview with Borisav Jović, 1994, 'Death of Yugoslavia Archive', 3/37.
71. Jović, *Posljedni Dani SFRJ*, p. 233.
72. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, p. 265.
73. Little and Sibling, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, p. 196.
74. Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, p. 83.
75. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 12.
76. Little and Sibling, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, p. 201.

Chapter 7

1. Vučetić, 'Serbia and Montenegro: From Federation to Confederation', p. 73.
2. Leonard J. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom: The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 2001, p. 163.
3. After the Montenegrin leadership's initial proposal in January 1992, the content of its proposal was remodelled following a meeting between the Serbian delegation (Slobodan Milošević, Borisav Jović, Radoman Božović and Aleksandar Bakočević) and the Montenegrin delegation (Branko Kostić, Momir Bulatović, and Milo Djukanović) in Podgorica on 5 February 1992. See Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, pp. 92–3.
4. Robert Thomas, *Serbia under Milošević*, Hurst & Company, London, 2002, p. 120.
5. *Monitor*, 15 February 1992.
6. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 3, No.1, 7 January 1994.
7. RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe, 22 November 1991, p. 26.
8. Bosnia Report, October–December 2000, No. 19/20.
9. At this point in time, Momir Bulatović was not considered to be particularly pro-Serbian and against Montenegrin sovereignty. On both occasions (The Hague conference debate and the FRY debate) Bulatović advanced formulas that were not necessarily in keeping with the wishes of either Milošević or pro-Milošević forces in Montenegro. This occasion in the Podgorica Skupština, however, was Bulatović's last attempt to pursue an agenda truly independent of Serbia.
10. Bosnia Report, October–December 2000, No. 19/20.
11. Vučetić, 'Serbia and Montenegro: From Federation to Confederation', p. 74.
12. No referendum was held in Serbia regarding the formation of the FRY.
13. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 443.

14. *AIM Press*, 11 March 2002.
15. The monopoly that the ruling DPS possessed (and to an extent still possesses) in Montenegrin state enterprises is significant. During the 1990s, being a loyal DPS member offered a level of employment security.
16. The FRY was the only two member federation in the world, and was an unusual construction from the outset. It comprised of two disproportionate sized, economically powerful and populated republics – a very unequal construction.
17. *Pobjeda*, 3 March 1992, p. 2.
18. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom*, p. 163.
19. *AIM Press*, 10 March 1999.
20. *AIM Press*, 28 March 1996.
21. Author's interview with Srdja Pavlović, 21 June 2005.
22. *Ibid.*, 21 June 2005.
23. Bosnia Report, October–December 2000, No. 19/20.
24. *Monitor*, 23 December 1994, p. 22.
25. *AIM Press*, 10 March 1999.
26. Allcock, 'Montenegro', p. 187.
27. Thomas, *Serbia under Milosevic*, p. 120.
28. *Monitor*, 31 December 1993, pp. 10–11. See also Nina Caspersen, 'Elite Interests in the Serbian–Montenegrin Conflict', *Southeast European Politics*, November 2003, Vol. IV, Nos 2–3, pp. 104–21.
29. Arguing that the sanctions were unfairly imposed on Montenegro, Momir Bulatović used this slightly bizarre metaphor to describe how he perceived the situation in Yugoslavia and Montenegro's role in it: 'Three people got into a fight next door, and then the police came and took away my car parked in my street, as if that would settle the situation in the neighbouring house.' Interview with Momir Bulatović, 7 October 1994, 'Death of Yugoslavia Archive', Roll 75E, U-BIT, No. 124.
30. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, p. 294.
31. Allcock, 'Montenegro', p. 187.
32. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 3, No. 1, 7 January 1994, p. 131.
33. Vladimir Goati, *Elections in the FRY from 1990 to 1998*, CESID, Belgrade, 2000, p. 147.
34. *Monitor*, 12 April 1992, p. 6.
35. Goati, *Elections in the FRY from 1990 to 1998*, p. 148.
36. Slavko Perović was born in Cetinje. He studied in Titograd (Podgorica), Belgrade and Croatia and was active in the League of Communists in Montenegro and Ante Marković's Alliance of Reform Forces (during the 1990 elections) before he became a founder-member of the LSCG in 1990.
37. Author's interview with Stanka Vučinić, (by correspondence), June 2007.
38. Author's interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006.
39. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom*, p. 163.
40. *Monitor*, 12 February 1992, p. 6.
41. Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804–1999*, Granta Books, London, 2000, p. 655.
42. *Monitor*, 12 February 1992, p. 6.
43. Obala Production Company, *Rat za mir*, Podgorica, 2004.
44. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 10.
45. Interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 31 October 2007. See also Šeki Radončić, *Crna Kutija: Policijska tortura u Crnoj Gori 1992–1996*, Monitor, Podgorica, 1996, pp. 39–40.
46. Obala Production Company, *Rat za mir*, 2004. See also Helsinki odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiju, *Dubrovnik: Rat za mir*, Zogorac, Belgrade, 2006.
47. *Monitor*, 4 November 1994, p. 13.

48. Interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 31 October 2007.
49. Interview with Slavko Perović in *Rat za mir*, Obala Production Company, 2004.
50. The dissident writer and poet Jevrem Brković and current president of the Montenegrin Association of Independent Writers, Milorad Popović fled Montenegro in 1991. See *Monitor*, 23 December 1994, p. 20. Jevrem Brković's *Dnevni* (Vol. 2), covers his period in exile. See Jevrem Brković, *Dnevni*, DANU, Podgorica, 2007.
51. Author's interview with Milka Tadić, Podgorica, Montenegro, August 2005.
52. Goati, 'Party Systems in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 176.
53. Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction*, Polity Press, London, 1997, pp. 144–6.
54. Ana Dević, 'Anti-War Initiatives and the Un-making of Civic Identities in the Former Yugoslav Republics', *The Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 10, No. 2, June 1997, p. 2.
55. Author's interview with Miodrag Perović, Podgorica, Montenegro, 17 June 2007. According to Miodrag Perović, it was initially impossible to publish *Monitor* in Montenegro. The first nine copies were published in Sarajevo in Bosnia & Herzegovina (approximately 20,000 copies) and then later in Croatia.
56. Both Miodrag Perović and Dragiša Burzan claim that the premises of *Monitor* were attacked with grenades in early 1991. Both cited *Monitor*'s stance that the shelling of Dubrovnik was a 'crime' as the reason for the attack. However, Perović claims that the assault worked to their advantage, noting that, 'we became known across the region because of that event, and it generated very good publicity for us. As a consequence, foreign diplomats began to include us in their agenda when they came to Montenegro. This worked as a kind of protection for us.' Authors interviews with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006, and Miodrag Perović, Podgorica, Montenegro, 17 June 2006.
57. Author's interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006.
58. Jevrem Brković (among others) was forced to leave Montenegro in 1991 for his 'Green' persuasion and criticism of the Montenegrin authorities for their role in the Dubrovnik campaign. Facing arrest and trial on charges of 'inciting religious and ethnic hatred', he fled to Croatia where he continued to agitate against what he saw as 'Greater Serbian chauvinism'. Brković personified the changing dynamics in Montenegrin politics. He was fully rehabilitated into Montenegrin public life and was seen and heard frequently on the Montenegrin media, particularly around the 2006 independence referendum.
59. Montenegrin Matica (Matica translates as 'Queen Bee') was a latecomer of sorts. Since the late nineteenth century a number of other Matica's had been formed – Matica Srpska in Serbia, Matica Hrvatska in Croatia. Glenny notes that periods of increased nationalist activity in Croatia in the late 1960s 'imbued the Matica Hrvatska with a new sense of mission'. See Glenny, *The Balkans 1804–1999*, p. 590. General secretary of Matica Crnogorska, Marko Špadijer, admitted that, 'This was something that happened very late in Montenegro!! The existence of such organizations are abundant among Slav peoples – the were usually formed during the Austro-Hungarian period and on their territory – for example Matica Srpska, Matica Hrvatska, Matica Polska etc. The idea is to preserve the culture and cultural heritage among the people. Matica in Montenegro was needed because we considered ourselves to have our own country yet we had no such cultural organization.' Author's interview with Marko Špadijer, Cetinje, 12 August 2005.
60. Matica is the main intellectual body in Montenegro – it currently has around 500 members. The Montenegrin PEN Centre, a branch of Matica, is a writers' association attempting to create resistance to what it perceives as the dominant

- Serbian nationalist discourse in Montenegro. It has around 150 members, mostly journalists, writers, academics and artists.
61. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 266.
62. The programme of Montenegrin Matica, p. 8.
63. Author's interview with Marko Špadijer, general secretary of Montenegrin Matica, Cetinje, Montenegro, 12 August 2005.
64. *Monitor*, 7 October 1994, p. 37.
65. Montenegrin PEN Centre, *Resolution on the Endangerment of Montenegrin Culture, People and State*, p. 1. See the electronic version at <http://www.montenegro.org/endanger.html>.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
68. Dušan Icević, *Crnogorska nacija*, Evropa Press, Belgrade, 1998, p. 220.
69. Transitions Online, 16 April 2003, @<http://www.tol.cz/look/CER/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublicationArticle=9309>.
70. Matica Crnogorska, 'Crnogorski kao maternji jezik', *Godišnjak 1999/2003*, 17 February 2003, p. 136.
71. Statement by Matica Crnogorska, 'Crnogorski kao maternji jezik', p. 135.
72. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 3, No. 1, 7 January 1994, p. 131.
73. *Ibid.*
74. Duško Doder, 'Anti-Belgrade Shift Seen Among Montenegrins', *The European*, 19–22 August 1993, p. 7.
75. Bugajski, *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe*, p. 190.
76. Serbs still generally refer to the Sandžak as Raška.
77. International Crisis Group, 'Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten', *Europe Report*, No. 162, 8 April 2005, p. 4.
78. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 142.
79. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 47, 27 November 1992, p. 26.
80. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 142.
81. Džilas, *Land Without Justice*, p. 207.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
83. Safeta Biševac, 'Bosniaks in Sandžak and Interethnic Tolerance in Novi Pazar', in *Managing Multiethnic Communities in the Countries of the Former Yugoslavia*, LGI/OSI, Budapest, 2000, p. 387.
84. Milan Andrejevich, 'Sandžak: A Perspective on Serb–Muslim Relations', in in Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (eds) *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, Hurst & Company, London, 1997, p. 187.
85. Biševac, 'Bosniaks in Sandžak and Inter-ethnic Tolerance in Novi Pazar', p. 389.
86. For a detailed analysis of the situation in the Sandžak during the 1990s and beyond, see Kenneth Morrison, 'Political and Religious Divisions in the Sandžak', UK Defence Academy, Advanced Research and Assessment Group, Paper 8–13, London, April 2008.
87. Rudić, 'The Ethnic Structure of the Population in Montenegro', p. 244.
88. See RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 47, 27 November 1992.
89. Bodhana Dimitrova, 'Bosniak or Muslim? Dilemma of one Nation with two Names', *Southeast European Politics*, Vol. II, No. 2, October 2001, p. 98.
90. International Crisis Group, 'Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten', p. 9.
91. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 47, 27 November 1992, p. 27. See also Internacionalni univerzitet u Novom Pazarum, *Sandžak juče, danas i sutra*, Grafokarton, Prijepolje, 2005.
92. Alija Izetbegović remains an enigma of sorts. There exists a spectrum of differing perceptions regarding his genuine political direction – ranging from genuine

- democrat of an Islamic persuasion to a dangerous fundamentalist. During the immediate post Second World War crackdown on religious and nationalist groups, Izetbegovic was imprisoned for his involvement with an organization called *Mladi Muslimani* (the Young Muslims) and later in 1983 he was arrested and imprisoned for conspiring against the Yugoslav state. He wrote two particularly contentious texts – *The Islamic Declaration* (1973) and *Islam Between East and West* (1984). Serb nationalists usually point to the former as proof that Izetbegovic was bent on creating an Islamic state in Bosnia, and by extension a wider Islamic community of Bosnia and Sandžak. See Little and Sibley, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 207–8.
93. Alija Izetbegović, *Inescapable Questions: Autobiographical Notes*, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 2003, p. 521.
 94. For a more detailed analysis of this period in both Serbia and Montenegro, see Morrison, 'Political and Religious Divisions in the Sandžak'.
 95. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
 96. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
 97. Andrejevich, 'Sandžak: A Perspective on Serb–Muslim Relations', p. 176.
 98. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No.47, 27 November 1992, p. 29.
 99. *Pobjeda*, 15 February 1992, p. 3.
 100. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 265.
 101. International Crisis Group, 'Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten', p. 10. This idea of cleansing a 30-kilometre 'buffer zone' along Serbia and Montenegro's border with Bosnia was supported by Serbian politicians such as Vojislav Šešelj.
 102. Dimitrova, 'Bosniak or Muslim?', p. 98. The town had been the sight of a bitter battle between Partisans and Chetniks in 1942, a battle won by the latter. See Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 116.
 103. Andrejevich, 'Sandžak: A Perspective on Serb–Muslim Relations', p. 187.
 104. Although many of the worst acts of intimidation were carried out by Serbian and Montenegrin paramilitary groups, most specifically the elite unit 'The White Eagles', there were also Muslim 'Green Berets' operating in the town.
 105. Vojvoda is a 'military commander' in the Serbian tradition.
 106. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, *Montenegro: Human Rights Practices, 1993*, p. 10.
 107. *Nova Makedonija*, 9 August 1992. See also RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 47, 27 November 1992, p. 33.
 108. Members of 'Čeko's Men' were later arrested and charged with terrorism. Although convicted, Dačević's sentence was suspended and he left Pljevlja soon after to take up a seat in the Yugoslav Federal Assembly. Paradoxically, he is now a member of the ruling DPS in Montenegro. See Humanitarian Law Center, *Spotlight on Human Rights Violations in Times of Armed Conflict*, SlovoGraf, Belgrade, 1995, p. 21.
 109. See Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, p. 89.
 110. Andrejevich, 'Sandžak: A Perspective on Serb–Muslim Relations', p. 188.
 111. Vreme News Digest Agency, No.45, August 1992.
 112. Andrejevich, 'Sandžak: A Perspective on Serb–Muslim Relations', p. 188.
 113. Bukovica encompasses a number of mountain villages including Kovačevići, Borošići, Planjska, Bunguri, Ravni, Klakorina, Stražice, Cejrence, Rosulje among other smaller settlements. It accounts for almost a third of the population of the Pljevlja municipality. See Humanitarian Law Center, *Spotlight on Human Rights Violations in Times of Armed Conflict*, p. 22.
 114. *AIM Press*, 11 November 2001.
 115. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, *Montenegro: Human Rights Practices, 1993*, p. 10.
 116. Biševac, 'Bosniaks in Sandžak and Inter-ethnic Tolerance in Novi Pazar', p. 391.

117. *AIM Press*, 11 November 2001.
118. Although calm today, Pljevlja retains a level of potential for interethnic disturbances. The actions of local police demonstrate this existing but hidden tension. In March 2004, after the Albanian rioting in Kosovo and the burning of two mosques in Belgrade, the police force in Pljevlja was reinforced to protect the *Husein-paša* mosque in the centre of the town. Some months later, the police allowed Bosnian Muslims to pass through the town in large buses (heavy traffic is normally forbidden in the centre of town) to worship at the mosque. See OSCE, *Police Perceptions of Community Policing in the Republic of Montenegro: A Survey*, August 2004.
119. Andrejevich, 'Sandžak: A Perspective on Serb–Muslim Relations', p. 188.
120. See Radončić, *Crna Kutija: Plićijska tortura u Crnoj Gori 1992–1996*. Also see Radončić's film, *Karneval*, which includes personal testimonies of the survivors. Director Alena Drljevića, Media Center, Sarajevo, 2005.
121. Šištek and Dimitrova, 'National Minorities after the break-up of Yugoslavia', p. 164.
122. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, p. 265. The authors further note that Bulatović's claim that the incident had been a mistake 'does not sound very convincing given the ambience and atmosphere orchestrated from the political power centres of the time'. See *ibid.*, p. 265.
123. *AIM Press*, 24 June 1995.
124. For an in-depth analysis of the human rights abuses carried out by the Montenegrin police during this period, see Radončić, *Crna Kutija: Plićijska tortura u Crnoj Gori 1992–1996*.
125. *Vreme*, 7 June, 1993, p. 29.
126. *Ibid.* p. 29.
127. *Monitor*, 7 May 1993, p. 23.
128. *Ibid.*
129. 'Napomene uz memorandum o ospostavljanju specianog statusa za Sandžak', reprinted in Goran Bašić, *Polažaj Bošnjaka u Sandžaku*, Belgrade, 2002, pp. 139–56.
130. *Vreme*, 23 August 1993, p. 6.
131. Radončić, *Crna Kutija: Plićijska tortura u Crnoj Gori 1992–1996*, pp. 44–5.
132. *Monitor*, 11 November 1994; *AIM Press*, 9 July 1994.
133. Humanitarian Law Center, *Spotlight on Human Rights Violations in Times of Armed Conflict*, p. 112–13.
134. *AIM Press*, 15 January 1995.
135. *AIM Press*, 17 March 1995.
136. *AIM Press*, 9 December 1995.
137. The heavy sentences were not limited to the Muslims of northern Montenegro. In the pro-independence heartland, Cetinje – during a visit by Bulatović on the occasion of the 180th anniversary of the birth of Petar II Petrović Njegoš – the president was verbally assaulted by a group of youths, who showered him with offensive names such as 'traitor', 'murderer', 'thief' and 'betrayer of Montenegro'; furthermore, his car was kicked and spat upon and 16 youths were charged with 'slandering the President' and sentences ranged from two years in prison to suspended sentences. See *Monitor*, 14 September 1994, p. 12.
138. Author's interview with Milan Popović, Podgorica, 17 January 2004.
139. *Vreme*, 14 June 1993, p. 18.
140. See Rastoder, 'Muslimani/Bošnjacki, kako vam je ime?' pp. 27–38.
141. Šištek and Dimitrova, 'National Minorities after the break-up of Yugoslavia', p. 167.
142. *Ibid.*, pp. 167–168.
143. See Rastoder, 'Muslimani/Bošnjacki, kako vam je ime?', pp. 27–38.

NOTES

144. Thomas, *Serbia under Milošević*, p. 380.
145. Željko Djević and Duško Bakrač, 'Police Reform in the Republic of Montenegro', in Marina Caparini and Merenin Otwin (eds) *Transforming Police in Central and Eastern Europe: Process and Progress*, Lit Verlag, Munster, 2004, pp. 250–1.
146. Šištek and Dimitrova, 'National Minorities after the break-up of Yugoslavia', p. 169.
147. The Albanian population of this region became part of the Montenegrin state after having been denied the opportunity of a referendum.
148. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, pp. 217–18.
149. Goati, *Elections in the FRY from 1990 to 1998*, p. 67.
150. Šištek and Dimitrova, 'National Minorities after the break-up of Yugoslavia', p. 170.
151. Ibid.
152. Vojislav Šešelj was the leader of the Serbian Radical Party, as well as leading his own paramilitary unit. He had a remarkable early career, being Yugoslavia's youngest ever Ph.D. at the age of just 23. However, he was arrested by communist authorities and charged with counterrevolutionary activities because of the content of an unpublished manuscript advocating the development a multi-party system in Yugoslavia found in his office. The manuscript also suggested that both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro were 'invented' nations and should be abolished. During his 22-month period of incarceration his political views became radicalized, and upon his release he became involved in nationalist politics, eventually forming the Serbian Chetnik Movement in 1990. See Judah, *The Serbs*.
153. Jovan Nikolaidis, 'Multiculturalism in Montenegro and the City of Ulcinj', in Nenad Dimitrijević (ed.) *Managing Multiethnic Local Communities in Countries of Former Yugoslavia*, OSI, Budapest, 2001, p. 454.
154. *AIM Press*, 27 September 1994.
155. *AIM Press*, 27 September 1994.
156. Tirana TVSH Television Network, translated and published in FBIS–EEU–96–025, 6 February 1996, p. 67.
157. For example, during the 2001 election campaign around two-thirds of Montenegro's Albanians voted for the SDP/DPS coalition, with only one-third voting for ethnic Albanian parties.

Chapter 8

1. Ičević, *Crnogorska nacija*, p. 223.
2. Pavel Rovinski, *Etnografija Crne Gore*, Vol. 1, CID, Podgorica, 1998, pp. 282–3.
3. *Rijeka Novi List* (Saturday Supplement), 4 December 1993, p. 9.
4. Žeković, *Crnogorska brestomatija*, p. 233.
5. *Monitor*, 3 December 1993, p. 9.
6. Michael Radu, 'The Burden of Eastern Orthodoxy', *Orbis*, No. 42, Vol. 2, Spring 1998, p. 283.
7. Author's interview with Miodrag Perović, *Podgorica*, 17 June 2007.
8. *NIN*, Belgrade, 20 August 1993, p. 20.
9. *NIN*, Belgrade, 20 August 1993, p. 21.
10. Statement by the All-Montenegrin National Synod, in *NIN*, Belgrade, 20 August 1993, p. 21. In the statement the 'national state' refers to the republic of Montenegro within the SFRY structure.
11. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 10. See also *NIN*, Belgrade, 20 August 1993, pp. 22–4.
12. *Rijeka Novi List* (Saturday Supplement), 4 December 1993, p. 9.

13. Author's interview with Stanka Vucinić, LSCG (by correspondence), June 2007.
14. Doder, 'Anti-Belgrade Shifts Seen Among Montenegrins', p. 7.
15. George Schopflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, Hurst & Company, London, 1997, p. 359.
16. The MOC was not an official ecclesiastical body. It was registered as a non-governmental organization and simply called the *Vjerska Zajednica Crnogoraca istočnopravoslavne vjeroispovesti* (The Religious Community of Montenegrins of the Eastern Orthodox Confession).
17. *Rijeka Novi List* (Saturday Supplement), 4 December 1993, p. 8.
18. Letter from Patriarche Pavle, Serbian Orthodox Church, to Archbishop Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, 30 November 1993, published in Budimir Aleksić and Slavko Krstajić, *Trgovci dušama*, Bovart, Nikšić, 2003, p. 36.
19. Author's interview with Aleksander Raković, Belgrade, 15 December 2005.
20. *Rijeka Novi List* (Saturday Supplement), 4 December 1993, p. 9.
21. *NIN*, Belgrade, August 1993, p. 23.
22. Bulatović, *Pravila Cutanja*, p. 267.
23. There are numerous historical analyses of the Serbian Orthodox Church. A few are worthy of mention here. For a broad history see, Djoko Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, Munich, 1972. For an official representation see, Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva, *Istorija 1219–1969*, Belgrade, 1969. For a twentieth-century history, see Srpska Pravoslavna Crkve, *1920–1970*, Belgrade, 1971.
24. *Rijeka Novi List* (Saturday Supplement), 4 December 1993, p. 8.
25. Matija Bečković, *Reče mi jedan čovek*, Prosveta, Belgrade, 1970, p. 166.
26. Anzulović, *Heavenly Serbia*, p. 24.
27. Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, p. 117.
28. The Official Information Service of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro and the Littoral, www.mitropolija.cg.yu/aktuelno/saopstenja/e010101.html
29. See Srpska Pravoslavna Crkve, *Pravoslavje u Crnoj Gori*, Svetigora, Cetinje, 2006.
30. BBC documentary, *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, 5 August 2000.
31. Šerbo Rastoder, 'Religion and Politics: The Montenegrin Perspective', in Vujadinović et al., *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Vol. II, Civil Society and Political Culture*, CEDET, Belgrade, 2005, p. 119.
32. When questioned about the presence of Arkan's armed paramilitaries and whether this was intended to be a provocation to the people of Cetinje, he responded with two questions. 'Who ever saw a Montenegrin come to Cetinje unarmed?' and 'Who could possibly disarm a Montenegrin?' See the Serbian Orthodox Church's 'Interview of the Day', www.mitropolija.cg.yu/aktuelno/saopstenja/e_b92_000226.html. 29 June 2005. For the alleged war-mongering role of the Serbian Orthodox Church during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, see Milorad Tomanić, *Srpska crkva u ratu*, Medijska knjižara Krug, Belgrade, 2001.
33. Rastoder, 'Religion and Politics: The Montenegrin Perspective', p. 124.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
35. Information Centre of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, www.mitropolija.cg.yu/aktuelno/saopstenja/cv-amfilohije.html
36. CEDEM, Newsletter No. 11, July–September 2004.
37. Transcript of BBC documentary *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, directed by Phil Rees, broadcast 5 August 2000.
38. *Monitor* journalist Milka Tadić described Amfilohije's 'religious war' in Montenegro as 'an outrageous and dangerous endeavour'. Author's interview with Milka Tadić, Podgorica, 6 August 2005.
39. See Vešeljko Koprovica, *Amfilohijeva sabrana ne-djela*, Podgorica, 1999.
40. *Rijeka Novi List* (Saturday Supplement), 4 December 1993, p. 9.

41. Miodrag Perović, *The Status of Montenegro is a Democratic Issue*, Bosnian Institute http://www.bosnia.org.uk/news/news_body.cfm?newsid=1983. 25 October 2004.
42. Personal slurs were commonplace. In an interview for the BBC in 2000 Amfilohije Radović referred to Mihailo Dedeić as 'that man Dedeić, who isn't even recognized by anyone in the Orthodox faith'. Dedeić retorted with the statement, 'It's obvious from Amfilohije's behaviour that he needs to be examined by a psychologist. Every day that becomes more and more obvious.' See transcript of BBC documentary *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, 5 August 2000.
43. Cross and Komnenich, 'Ethnonational Identity and the Implosion of Yugoslavia', p. 18.
44. Vjekoslav Perica also observes that the Macedonian Orthodox Church attempted to carve out this role for themselves. He states, 'In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian Orthodox Church became the pillar of the tiny, barely viable nation.' See Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 174.
45. Cross and Komnenich, 'Ethnonational Identity and the Implosion of Yugoslavia', p. 18.
46. Mihailo's speeches have often been often littered with quasi-political statements such as 'Montenegro is close to redemption and the Montenegrins are close to salvation (independence).' The author attended one such event in September 2004.
47. Author's interview with Metropolitan Mihailo, Cetinje, 11 September 2004. See also Novak Adžić, *Kratka istorija Crnogorske Pravoslavne crkve*, Cetinje, 2000.
48. Živko Andrijašević, 'Cetinjski Mitropoliti Prema Peckim Patrijarsima', *Matica*, Nos 22/23, Year 6, Summer 2005. See also Novak Adžić, *Crnogorska crkva je bila autokefalna*, Cetinje, 1994.
49. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, p. 109.
50. Schopflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, p. 329. Schopflin also points out that by supporting the autocephalous status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church the communists cooperated with the forces of nationalism in Macedonia.
51. *Monitor*, 3 December 1993, p. 9.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
53. See Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians*, Hurst & Company, London, 2000.
54. As in Montenegro (where the LSCG supported the restitution of the Montenegrin Church), the Macedonian Orthodox Church enjoyed significant political support. The nationalist Macedonian party (VRMO-DPMNE) proposed the Macedonian Metropolitan Mihail, the Bishop of Skopje, as President of the Macedonian state. See Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, p. 182.
55. The Macedonian Orthodox Church engaged in a struggle for autocephaly from the Serbian Orthodox Church in the 1990s. For an excellent overview of this situation see Perica, *Balkan Idols*, p. 174.
56. Author's interview with Metropolitan Mihailo, Cetinje, 11 September 2004.
57. *Monitor*, 3 December 1993, p. 10.
58. Despite many respondents claiming this to be the case, there is no substantial proof that Abramović was ever a practising homosexual.
59. Letter to Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, Istanbul, from Archbishop Theodosius, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, in Aleksić and Krstajić, *Trgovci dušama*, p. 36.
60. Žeković, *Crnogorska brestomatija*, pp. 101–2.
61. According to Fleming, Dedeić had been thought by his peers to be a probable agent planted into the Serbian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, their suspicions regarding his commitment toward Orthodoxy were 'justified' by his divorce from his wife. See Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, p. 169.

62. Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, p. 169. See also, Aleksić and Krstajić, *Trgovci dušama*, p. 36.
63. Fleming, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, p. 169.
64. Author's interview with Metropolitan Mihailo, Cetinje, 11 September 2004.
65. Ibid.
66. *Monitor*, 3 December 1993, p. 10.
67. Author's interview with Metropolitan Mihailo, Cetinje, 11 September 2004.
68. The Vlačka Church in Cetinje is famous primarily for its perimeter fence, which is made from 1500 Turkish guns captured by Montenegrins during the late nineteenth century. The Montenegrin Orthodox Church and Serbian Orthodox Church would both wish to claim the church and its heritage. In an interview in Cetinje, 7 August 2005, Marko Špadijer claimed that: 'If we go by the legal route it must be the property of the citizens of Cetinje. So there is a possibility that the citizens can make a legal claim upon it.'
69. The Serbian Orthodox Church regard these 'parishioners' as 'supporters' 'just as football fans call themselves'. See www.mitropolija.cg.yu/aktuelno/saopštenja/e010101.html.
70. *Monitor*, 4 June 1999, p. 11–13.
71. BBC documentary, *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, 5 August 2000.
72. Christmas battles hold a particular fascination for Montenegrins. The cleansing of the Muslims described in Petar II Petrović Njegoš was alleged to have taken place on Christmas Eve, as was the beginning of the 'Greens' struggle against Serbia and 'White' pro-Serb Montenegrin forces in 1919.
73. Rastoder, 'Religion and Politics: The Montenegrin Perspective', p. 120.
74. Letter to Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, Istanbul, from Serbian Patriarch Pavle, 16 January 1997, published in Aleksić and Krstajić, *Trgovci dušama*, p. 73.
75. Author's interview with Željdrag Nikčević, Belgrade, 15 December 2005.
76. Perica, *Balkan Idols*, p. 175.
77. The conflict also took on a more personal character. According to Milka Tadić from the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Metropolitan Mihailo was attacked in Cetinje by a Serbian priest. Furthermore, there were counterattacks by supporters of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church on Serbian clergy. See IWPR Report, No. 97, November 1999.
78. Badnjak is the traditional Christmas Eve celebration that takes place on Orthodox Christmas Eve (6 January). Traditionally, a yule log is burnt in a prominent place (normally the main square or street) in the village, town or city.
79. IWPR Balkans Report No. 309, 17 January 2002.
80. US State Department, Human Rights Report for 2000: Yugoslavia, p. 9.
81. International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Local Elections: Testing the National Temperature', *ICG Balkans Report*, 26 May 2000, p. 11.
82. Ibid., p. 12.

Chapter 9

1. Author's interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006.
2. Vučetić, 'Serbia and Montenegro: From Federation to Confederation', p. 78.
3. Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 162.
4. Interview with Momir Bulatović Tanjug Domestic Service, Belgrade, 18 November 1993. Translated in FBIS Eastern Europe Report, FBIS-EEU-93-225, pp. 48–9.
5. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol.3, No.1, January 1994, p. 132.
6. *Vreme*, 14 June 1993, p. 17.

7. *Vreme*, 14 June 1993, p. 17.
8. *Vreme*, 12 September 1994, p. 14.
9. Interview with Zoran Lilić, President of the FRY, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, No. 1/24.
10. Interview with Milo Djukanovic, prime minister of Montenegro, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, No. 1/12b, p. 1.
11. *Naša Borba*, 9 November, 1995, p. 4.
12. *Pobjeda*, 13 July 1996, p. 3.
13. *Pobjeda*, 13 July 1996, p. 2.
14. Interview with Robert Gelbard, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, Cat no. 5/5, p. 1. See also Madelaine Albright, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir*, Macmillan Press, London, 2003, p. 380.
15. For a daily account of the events that led to the DPS split, see Ljubiša Mitrović and Aleksander Eraković (eds) *Sto dana koji su promijenili Crnu Goru*, Daily Press, *Vijesti*, Podgorica, 1997.
16. Vučetić, 'Serbia and Montenegro: From Federation to Confederation', p. 79.
17. Marko Orlandić, *Crnogorsko Porstanje*, Montcarton, Podgorica, 2005, p. 15.
18. Geriant Williams, *Political Theory in Retrospect*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 34.
19. Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction*, p. 145.
20. Correspondence with Srdja Pavlović, June 21, 2005.
21. Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 159.
22. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, p. 25.
23. Caspersen, 'Elite Interests and the Serbian–Montenegrin Conflict', p. 106.
24. Momir Bulatović's loyalty toward Milošević earned him the rather unenviable nicknames of 'the waiter', or alternatively 'the coatpeg'.
25. Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, p. 249. Furthermore, in an interview with the Bosnian weekly *Dani* Bulatović spoke of his and Milošević's intertwined destinies. 'Our ten years of cooperation have given me enormous pleasure. We resolved problems every day. Everyone believes that I am an obedient servant of Slobodan Milošević. That is my fate; I am but his good assistant.' See *Dani*, Belgrade, 10 September 2000.
26. Popović, *Montenegrin Mirror*, p. 13.
27. *AIM Press*, 4 December, 1995.
28. *AIM Press*, 4 December, 1995.
29. *AIM Press*, 4 December, 1995. Six months later an LSCG party statement was even more scathing in its treatment of Momir Bulatović, declaring that he 'no longer has any influence on political events regarding Montenegro'. See BETA, Belgrade, 14 August 1996.
30. *AIM Press*, 4 December, 1995.
31. Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 159.
32. *Monitor*, 6 March 1998, p. 6.
33. *AIM Press*, 2 November 1996.
34. *AIM Press*, 2 November 1996.
35. Author's interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006.
36. The 'Winter of Discontent in Serbia' followed the election of 1996 in which Milošević was accused of electoral fraud. The subsequent protests that followed, known as the 'Zajedno' ('Together') protests led to a significant destabilization of the Milosevic regime.
37. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, No. 1/12b, p. 1.

38. An ongoing feud, played out through the media, had strained relations between Milošević and the Montenegrin prime minister. Mira Marković had alleged that Djukanović was enriching himself and his associates by indulging in shadowy economic activities during UN sanctions. See Cohen *Serpent in the Bosom*, p. 330.
39. According to Nebojša Medojević (leader of the PZP), the arguments between the Miloševićs and Djukanović were not confined to political differences. Arguments began when Milošević attempted to recalibrate the distribution of profits from cigarette smuggling – neither side could agree on the distribution of profits and these arguments were key to the political split that followed. BBC World Service, 5 May 2008.
40. *AIM Press*, 4 October, 1995.
41. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in ‘The Fall of Milošević’ archive, No. 1/12b, p. 1.
42. Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, p. 247.
43. At the time of the publication of Djukanović’s interview, *Vreme* was an opposition weekly newspaper in Serbia.
44. *Vreme*, 19 February 1997.
45. *AIM Press*, 5 March 1997.
46. *AIM Press*, 5 March 1997.
47. *AIM Press*, 20 January, 1997.
48. Thomas, *Serbia under Milosević*, p. 380.
49. Djukanović ensured that the elderly citizens of Montenegro were paid pensions but used some of the ‘sanctions busting’ methods to ensure this. He is alleged to be a major player in the smuggling of oil across Lake Skadar from Albania. See Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 188.
50. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in ‘The Fall of Milošević’ archive, No. 1/12b, p. 2.
51. *Pobjeda*, 22 February 1997, p. 4.
52. *AIM Press*, 5 March 1997.
53. Author’s interview with Miodrag Perović, Podgorica, 17 June 2007.
54. *AIM Press*, 5 March 1997.
55. The main board of the DPS had 99 members. See Mitrović and Eraković, *Sto dana koji su promijenili Crnu Goru*, pp. 21–2.
56. Mitrović and Eraković, *Sto dana koji su promijenili Crnu Goru*, pp. 21–2.
57. *Monitor*, 16 May 1997, p. 8.
58. *Monitor*, 16 May 1997, p. 8.
59. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in ‘The Fall of Milošević’ archive, No. 1/12b, p. 2.
60. Dragoljub Vuković, *Od Slavljenskog vatrometa do pepela jedinstva*, p. 15.
61. *Nedelja Telegraf*, 23 April, 1997, p. 12.
62. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in ‘The Fall of Milošević’ archive, No. 1/12b, p. 2.
63. *Vreme News Digest Agency*, No.301, 12 July 1997, p. 3.
64. *AIM Press*, 17 March 1997.
65. European Stability Initiative, *Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma*, p. 4.
66. The proposal for constitutional change was controversial – it essentially revoked the ability of the Federal Assembly to decide on who would be federal president. The federal president was to be elected by the people in direct elections.
67. *Monitor*, 16 May 1997, pp. 10–11.
68. Author’s interview with Srdja Pavlović, 21 June 2005.
69. *AIM Press*, 17 March 1997.

70. Djević and Bakrač, 'Police Reform in the Republic of Montenegro', pp. 250–1.
71. Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 161.
72. *Monitor*, 8 August 1997, pp. 10–11.
73. Bieber, 'Montenegrin Politics since the Dissolution of Yugoslavia', p. 31.
74. While it is hardly a solid framework for analysis, there is a perception, particularly among pro-independence Montenegrins, that Bulatović was 'less of a Montenegrin' than Djukanović. Momir Bulatović was the son of a Yugoslav Army officer. He was born in Montenegro but soon after settled in Zadar in Croatia. Having spent many years living outside Montenegro, Bulatović returned there in 1975 to study economics at the University of Montenegro. Conversely, Milo Djukanović had lived only in Nikšić in Montenegro before enrolling at the faculty of economics in 1981 and had a greater sense of 'who' the Montenegrins were.
75. Thomas, *Serbia under Milošević*, p. 379.
76. Judy Batt, *The Question of Serbia*, Chaillot Paper No. 81, August 2005.
77. Thomas, *Serbia under Milošević*, p. 379.
78. Goati, 'Party Systems in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 175.
79. Following the DPS split there were officially a higher number of satellite dishes in northern Montenegro (and in pro-Serbian areas generally) because the Serbs in the north perceive RTCG (Radio Televizija Crne Gore) as an organ of Djukanović's DPS, thus many purchase dishes that facilitate the viewing of Serbian television.
80. Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, p. 82.
81. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, p. 46.
82. Author's interview with Slavenko Terzić, Belgrade, 22 December 2005.
83. Džilas, *Montenegro*, p. 14.
84. Author's interview with Stanka Vučinić, LSCG, 21 June 2007.
85. The Montenegrin print media reflected this split. In 1997, the Montenegrin press flourished. In September of that year, the daily newspaper *Vijesti* was established. It was independent and favourable toward Djukanović, whose party, the DPS, already controlled Montenegro's state daily *Pobjeda*. The pro-Serb Montenegrins responded by establishing the pro-Serbian newspaper *Dan*, which became a mouthpiece of Milošević's policy in Montenegro.
86. International Crisis Group. *Montenegro's Socialist People's Party*, p. 3.
87. *AIM Press*, 23 October 1997.
88. OSCE/ODHIR: 'Republic of Montenegro: Presidential Election 5 and 18 October 1997, Final Report', 1997, p. 5.
89. Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*, p. 271.
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Monitor*, 24 October 1997 p. 12.
92. *AIM Press*, 19 November 1997.
93. *Monitor*, 24 October 1997, p. 12.
94. *AIM Press*, 18 December, 1997.
95. Thomas, *Serbia under Milošević*, p. 385.
96. Darmanović, 'The Peculiarities of Transition in Serbia and Montenegro', p. 161.
97. *Monitor*, 16 January 1998, p. 6.
98. *Monitor*, 23 January 1998, p. 9.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
100. Coverage of protests on RTCG, 12 January 1998.
101. BBC Monitoring Service, Tanjug News Agency, Belgrade, 18.54 GMT, 14 January 1998.
102. *AIM Press*, Monday 19 January 1998.
103. According to a report in *Monitor* the protestors were armed with 79 pistols (one of which was unlicensed), two cases of dynamite, and a number of other explosive devices. See *Monitor*, 23 January 1998, pp. 10–11.

104. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, No. 1/12b, p4.
105. Bulatović, *Pravila Čutanja*.
106. The Yugoslav Army chief of staff at that time was General Momčilo Perišić. He was known to have opposed Milošević's increasingly aggressive posture on Kosovo and it was rumoured that he had good relations with Milo Djukanović. According to Gow, additional rumours included a claim that Perišić 'might be helping to engineer a *coup d'état* in Belgrade to install Djukanović in Milošević's place.' See Gow, *The Serbian Project and its Adversaries*, p. 73.
107. BBC Monitoring Service, Tanjug News Agency, Belgrade, 01.00 GMT, 15 January 1998.
108. *AIM Press*, 15 February 1998.
109. International Crisis Group, *Montenegro's Socialist People's Party*, p. 3.
110. *AIM Press*, 10 October 1997.
111. Thomas, *Serbia under Milosević*, p. 380.
112. International Crisis Group, *Montenegro's Socialist People's Party*, p. 7.
113. Beata Huszka, 'The Dispute over Montenegrin Independence', in Florian Bieber (ed.) *Transition: Problems of Identity and Statehood*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2003, p. 46.
114. Novak Kilibarda had traditionally been perceived as a supporter of Serbian nationalism. He was professor of Serbian literature at the University of Montenegro and a novelist.
115. Thomas, *Serbia under Milosević*, p. 380.
116. Author's interviews with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006; and Ranko Krivokapić, Podgorica, June 2007.
117. Goati, *Elections in the FRY from 1990 to 1998*, p. 303.
118. *AIM Press*, 8 June 1998.
119. *AIM Press*, 30 June 1998.
120. *AIM Press*, 30 March 1998.
121. European Stability Initiative, *Montenegro: Rhetoric and Reform – A Case Study of Institution Building in Montenegro 1998–2001*, Brussels, 2001, p. 12.
122. Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 23.
123. Dragan Djurić, *The Economic Development of Montenegro*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2003, p. 152.
124. *Ibid*.
125. *AIM Press*, 4 March 1998.

Chapter 10

1. *AIM Press*, 23 September 1998.
2. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in 'The Fall of Milosević' archive, No.1/12b, p. 13.
3. Srdjan Darmanović, 'Montenegro Survives the War', *The East European Constitutional Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1999.
4. Djukanović's situation was made even more precarious by his refusal to sit on the Supreme Military Council of the FRY during the Kosovo conflict, boycotting primarily any involvement with federal president Momir Bulatović. Thus Djukanović distanced himself in institutional terms.
5. Interview with George Robertson on *The Fall of Milošević (Part Two)*, Dir-Angus MacQueen, BBC Television, May 2001.
6. Bieber, 'Montenegrin Politics since the Dissolution of Yugoslavia', p. 33.
7. *Vijesti*, 2 April, 1999.

NOTES

8. Interview with Milo Djukanović, 'The Fall of Milošević' (*Part Two*), Dir-Angus MacQueen, BBC Television, May 2001.
9. *Vijesti*, 30 April, 1999.
10. Interview with Javier Solana, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, Roll 842, p. 11.
11. Interview with Jacques Chirac, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, Roll 828–829, p. 12.
12. A rather protracted argument took place between Chirac and Clinton regarding the NATO actions in Montenegro. Chirac claims that when he raised the issue of Montenegro with Bill Clinton, the US president had claimed that Djukanović had agreed to the bombing. Sceptical of this, Chirac telephoned Djukanović to confirm Clinton's assessment. According to the French president, 'I tried to get hold of Djukanović which was very difficult because the telephone lines were very bad, but I got hold of him on his cell phone and had a conversation with him, which was not an easy one technically speaking. But what I got from this conversation was that he was entirely against any kind of bombing of Montenegro and he confirmed that bombing Montenegro would be playing into Milošević's hands. I then reported back to Bill Clinton and the matter was left at that.' See interview with Jacques Chirac, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, Roll 828–829, p. 12, and interview with Bill Clinton, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, Roll 443, p. 5.
13. OSCE, *Police Reform in Montenegro 2001–2005*, p. 28.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Author's interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006.
16. SDP leader Ranko Krivokapić stated that even government ministers were arming themselves during this period. Author's interview with Ranko Krivokapić, Podgorica, Montenegro, 17 June 2007.
17. ICG Balkans Report, No. 92, April 2000. In his influential report Richard Monk argued that the number of militarized police was closer to 10,000. See Richard Monk, *A Study of Policing in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, OSCE, Vienna, 2001, p. 34. However, Belgrade analyst Miloš Vasić argues that the number may have been as high as 30,000 armed men. See *Vreme*, Belgrade, 30 March 2006.
18. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, No. 1/12b, p. 19.
19. *AIM Press*, 29 May 1999.
20. *Monitor*, 4 June 1999, p. 11.
21. Transcript of interview with Bobo Bogdanović in *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, BBC correspondent, broadcast, 5 August 2000.
22. IWPR Balkans Crisis Report, No.88, 29 October 1999.
23. *Vijesti*, 17 April, 1999, p. 2.
24. Interview with Predrag Bulatović, in *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, BBC correspondent, broadcast, 5 August 2000.
25. Author's interview with Dragiša Burzan, London, 30 March 2006.
26. Author's interview with Ranko Krivokapić, Podgorica, Montenegro, 17 June 2007.
27. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, p. 348.
28. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom*, p. 333.
29. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, p. 348.
30. Vučetić, 'Serbia and Montenegro: From Federation to Confederation', p. 80.
31. *AIM Press*, 25 January 2000.
32. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom*, p. 335.
33. International Crisis Group. *Montenegro's Socialist People's Party*, p. 16–17.
34. *AIM Press*, 24 November 1999.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Author's interview with Milan Popović, Podgorica, Montenegro, 14 April 2004.
37. *Monitor*, 18 June 2000, p. 6.

38. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom*, p. 337.
39. Popović, *Montenegrin Mirror*, p. 22.
40. *AIM Press*, 7 September 1999.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Statement by unidentified member of the Rovci clan, in *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, BBC broadcast, 5 August 2000. This argument is contradicted by Milovan Djilas in his book, *Land without Justice*. According to Djilas, during the Montenegrin civil war, which followed the First World War, the Rovčani were 'the supporters of King Nikola and Montenegrin independence.' See Djilas, *Land without Justice*, pp. 96–7.
43. Statement by Nikola Minić, leader of the Rovci clan, in *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, BBC broadcast, 5 August 2000.
44. *AIM Press*, 7 September 1999.
45. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, BBC broadcast, 5 August 2000.
46. European Stability Initiative, *Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma*, 2000, p. 4.
47. Aleksander Fatić, 'The Montenegrin Transition: A Test Case', in *The South East Europe Review*, Vol. 1, April 1998, p. 34.
48. The position of Montenegrin foreign minister had existed since the inception of the FRY. But this authority of this post had been gradually eroded.
49. Author's interview with Branko Lukovac, former foreign minister of Montenegro and chairman of the Movement for an Independent Montenegro, Podgorica, 21 December 2005.
50. *Ibid.*
51. European Stability Initiative, *Autonomy, Dependency, Security*, p. 20.
52. Popović, *Montenegrin Mirror*, p. 11.
53. *Guardian*, 24 April 2000, p. 18.
54. Transcript of interview with Predrag Bulatović, in *The Final Battle of Yugoslavia*, BBC correspondent, broadcast, 5 August 2000.
55. International Crisis Group, 'Current Legal Status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and of Serbia and Montenegro', *ICG Balkans Report*, No. 101, Brussels, 19 September 2000, p. 32.
56. International Crisis Group, *Montenegro's Local Elections*, p. 1.
57. Bieber, 'Montenegrin Politics since the Dissolution of Yugoslavia', p. 34.
58. Žugić's assassination was one of a number of (ostensibly political) assassinations that took place in Podgorica in early to mid-2000. Glenny, however, argues that these assassinations were linked to gang warfare (known as *the Bloody Spring*) fought over the cigarette trade in Serbia and Montenegro. See Misha Glenny, *McMafia: Crime Without Frontiers*, The Bodley Head, London, 2008, p. 35.
59. *AIM Press*, 2 June, 2000.
60. *AIM Press*, 2 June, 2000.
61. *Monitor*, 7 July 2000, p. 8.
62. *AIM Press*, 4 August, 2000.
63. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom*, p. 363.
64. Due to the non-participation of the ruling Montenegrin parties, DOS had to seek other coalition partners in Montenegro. The fact that SNS and SNP forged a coalition with DOS further alienated Djukanović and further accelerated the crisis within the FRY.
65. *AIM Press*, 29 September, 2000.
66. Statement by Milo Djukanović, Montena-Fax, Podgorica, 5 October, 2000.

Chapter 11

1. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, No.1/12b, p. 39.
2. International Crisis Group, 'Current Legal Status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and of Serbia and Montenegro', p. 35.
3. Author's interview with Milan Popović, Podgorica, 17 April 2004.
4. *AIM Press*, 11 October 2000.
5. Interview with Milo Djukanović, in 'The Fall of Milošević' archive, No.1/12b, p. 39.
6. *AIM Press*, 11 October 2000.
7. Author's interview with Slobodan Samardžić, Belgrade, 12 December 2007.
8. *AIM Press*, 18 October 2000.
9. CEDEM polls conducted in the immediate period following Milošević's fall suggested a slim – but consistent – majority-supported Montenegrin independence. See CEDEM Newsletter, January 2001, No.1.
10. Huszka, 'The Dispute over Montenegrin Independence', p. 14.
11. Caspersen, 'Elite Interests and the Serbian–Montenegrin Conflict', pp. 104–21.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
13. *Monitor*, 18 May, 2001, p. 8.
14. Huszka, 'The Dispute over Montenegrin Independence', p. 14.
15. Koča Pavlović, 'Montenegrin Independence: Media Discourse', Paper presented at the Tenth Annual World Conference of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, New York, 14–16 April 2005, p. 15.
16. Author's interview with Stanka Vučinić, LSCG (by correspondence), June 2007.
17. Author's interview with Miodrag Perović, 17 June 2007.
18. Srdja Pavlović, 'Building Civil Society in Montenegro: Autocracy in the Making', unpublished document, Podgorica, May 2005, p. 9. There were some notable exceptions. Both Srdja Pavlović and Milan Popović, to name but two, retained their previous stances throughout this period.
19. Author's interview with Miodrag Perović, Podgorica, 17 June 2007. According to Branko Banjević, the president of Montenegrin Matica, Djukanović would often visit the offices of Matica in the centre of Podgorica to discuss events with their members. Author's interview with Branko Banjević, Podgorica, 2 August 2005.
20. Pavlović, 'Building Civil Society in Montenegro: Autocracy in the Making', p. 9.
21. Batt, *The Question of Serbia*.
22. Živko Andrijašević and Šerbo Rastoder, *Istorija Crne Gore*, CICG, Podgorica, 2006, p. 271.
23. *Vijesti*, 7 March 2002, p. 2.
24. Zoran Živković, *Godina konačnog raspleta*, Milenijum, Niš, 2006, p. 2.
25. Author's interview with Branko Lukovac, Podgorica, 21 December 2005.
26. 'Letter of Protest Addressed to Western Democracies by Montenegrin Intellectuals', <http://www.montenet.org/2003/repotpis.html>.
27. *Vijesti*, Podgorica, 7 March 2002, p. 2.
28. Andrijašević and Rastoder, *Istorije Crne Gore*, p. 271.
29. CEDEM, *Montenegrin Public Opinion in 2002*, CEDEM, Podgorica, 2002, pp. 9–10.
30. Institute for War and Peace Reporting. *Serbia and Montenegro: An Unhappy Marriage*, IWPR, Balkan Report No. 493, 22 April 2004.
31. Batt, *The Question of Serbia*.
32. Author's interview with Slobodan Samardžić, Belgrade, 12 December 2007.
33. Reneo Lukić, 'From Yugoslavia to the Union of Serbia and Montenegro', in Sabrina Ramet and Vjeran Pavlaković (eds) *Serbia since 1989: Politics and Society under Milošević*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2005, p. 88.

34. According to Misha Glenny, 'in 2004, Philip Morris struck a deal with the EU releasing the company from any liability. It also agreed to work with the EU against Mafia penetration of the tobacco trade. R. J. Reynolds denied any complicity.' See Glenny, *McMafia*, p. 36.
35. Glenny, *McMafia*, pp. 36–7.
36. Author's interview with Brank Lukovac, Podgorica, Montenegro, 21 December 2005.
37. Author's interview with Ranko Krivokapić, Podgorica, Montenegro, 17 June 2007.
38. Florian Bieber, 'The Instrumentalization of Minorities in the Montenegrin Dispute over Independence', *ECMI Brief 8*, March 2002 available at www.ecmi.de/doc/download/brief_8.pdf, p. 2.
39. Batt, *The Question of Serbia*.
40. In almost all of the interviews carried out within the ethnic Serbian community, the respondents frequently cited that census figures were corrupted because of the role played by the state and the police. State employees, many argued, were faced with a choice – define yourself as a Montenegrin in the census or face the possibility of losing your job. See also *Dan*, 26 March 2006, p. 3.
41. BBC News, 13 July 2004.
42. Author's interview with Ranko Krivokapić, Podgorica, 17 June 2007.
43. The debates over the flag in particular rolled on for months. The Serbians proposed a darker blue for the state union flag than the Montenegrins wanted. Eventually a compromise was reached with a shade of blue known as C300.
44. This was an unofficial anthem but was popular among those Montenegrins who defined themselves as Serbs. The song calls for the reconquering of Prizren in Kosovo, the ancient capital of the Serbian medieval empire and a symbol of Serbhood.
45. Miša Djurković, *Montenegro: Headed For New Divisions*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Balkans Series, 07/11, March 2007, p. 6.
46. See Matica Crnogorska, 'Crnogorski kao maternji jezik', p. 134–6.
47. Agence France Press, 27 March 2004.
48. Anthony Smith, 'The "Golden Age" and national renewal', in Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (eds) *Myths and Nationhood*, Hurst & Company, London, 1997, pp. 36–7.
49. Only half of the road now named 'Sveti Petar Cetinski Boulevard' was called 'Stefan Nemanja Ulica'. Nemanjina Obala used to be part of a long boulevard through the centre of Podgorica stretching from the bridge on the Ribnica River to the large bridge on the Moraca (called Blaža Jovanovica). Leninjov Bulevar used to be part of the boulevard that stretched from the bridge to the housing estate known as 'Blok Pet' (Block Five). The entire boulevard is now named 'Svetog Petar Cetinskog'. Old communist Yugoslav street names were also changed. For example, 'Moše Pijade Street' (Yugoslav communist of Jewish origin, and close associate of Tito) was changed to the 'Bulevar Ivana Crnojevića' (after Ivan Crnojevic of the Crnojevići dynasty), 'Djura Salaja Street' (one of the founders of the Yugoslav Communist Party) was renamed 'Ivana Milutinovića'. Three short roads – 'Brace Zlatićana', 'Ilije Milacića' and 'Petra Matovića' were renamed 'Kralja Nikole' street (after Montenegro's last king).
50. Author's interview with Stanka Vučinić, LSCG, June 2007.
51. Author's interview with Ranko Krivokapić, Podgorica, 17 June 2007.
52. *Vijesti*, 17 June 2004.
53. See Pavlović, 'Building Civil Society in Montenegro: Autocracy in the Making', p. 10

54. Ibid.
55. See *Republika*, Podgorica, 20 June, 2005.
56. *Crnogorska Književni List*, 15 June, 2005.
57. Ibid.
58. Facsimile of document entitled, 'Analysis of the media landscape of Montenegro in the year in which decisive steps towards state independence are to be taken'.
59. SEEMO, *Southeast European Media Handbook 2005/06*, SEEMO–IPI, Vienna, 2006, p. 498.
60. Author's interview with Radojka Vukčević, Podgorica, 19 December 2005.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Author's interview with Željdrag Nikčević, Belgrade, 21 December 2005.
65. Author's interview with Radojica Živković, Berane, 19 May 2006.
66. The leader of the SNP, Predrag Bulatović, recognized that the party's interests could be damaged by close association with more nationalistic parties, which, he argued, exploited the SNP. The party leadership split, with the more nationalistic Zoran Žižić leaving the party.
67. Despite Andrija Mandić being perceived as a relatively radical Serbian nationalist by pro-independence forces, he remains the most trusted politician among Montenegro's ethnic Serbs. See CEDEM Public Opinion Poll; CEDEM Newsletter, No. 16, January–April 2006.
68. International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Independence Drive', *Crisis Group Report*, No. 169, 7 December 2005.
69. Svetozar Jovićević and Nebojša Medojević founded the GZP in 2003. Originally, a 'group of experts' similar to GI7 Plus in Serbia, they became a serious political force. The GZP leadership split in 2006 when Jovićević and a number of other members left the organization after its leaders failed to agree on whether or not to call their supporters to vote for independence. The GZP became a political party called the PZP (*Pokret za Promjene* or Movement for Changes) following the referendum in 2006.
70. Author's interview with Lilijana Kadić, Podgorica, 18 December 2005.
71. *Monitor*, 12 November 2004, p. 3.
72. Most notable was Amfilohije Radović's speech at the funeral of Serbian President Zoran Djindjić in March 2003. In his speech he implied that Djindjić had brought his assassination upon himself.
73. See International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Independence Drive', p. 17.
74. RFE/RL Report, 5 August 2005, p. 6.
75. Author's interview with Marko Špadijer, Cetinje, 7 August 2005.
76. *AIM Press*, 17 May 2001. For an analysis of the Greater Albanian question see Paulin Kola, *The Search for Greater Albania*, Hurst & Company, London, 2003.
77. Author's interview with Branko Lukovac, Podgorica, 21 December 2005.
78. Ibid.
79. Following a corruption scandal, the LSCG was disbanded on 24 March 2005. Many of its members joined the newly formed 'Liberal Party' led by Miodrag Živković.
80. *Vijesti*, 1 December 2005, p. 2.
81. EC Troika non-paper of 10 November 2005, in International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Independence Drive'.
82. For example see Čedomir Lješević's *Solanijada: Ili jos jedan genocid nad Crnom Gorom*, NJP, Podgorica, 2005.
83. Author's interview with Branko Lukovac, 21 December 2005.

84. Prior to the independence referendum in Montenegro, the leader of the Serbian Radicals, Tomislav Nikolić, turned up in the Serb dominated coastal resort of Herceg-Novi, claiming that he was 'on holiday' and was not engaged in pre-referendum politics.
85. Author's interview with Branko Lukovac, Podgorica, 21 December 2005.
86. International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Independence Drive'.

Chapter 12

1. Sumantra Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention*, Hurst & Company, London, 2002, p. 51.
2. The Socialist People's Party of Montenegro was formed in 1997 by Momir Bulatović (no relation to the current leader), Predrag Bulatović and his supporters following the split within Montenegro's ruling DPS. It was the largest party in the pro-union bloc.
3. International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Referendum', *Crisis Group Europe Briefing*, No. 42, 30 May 2006.
4. Miroslav Lajčák would later take over from Stephan Schwarz-Schilling as the high representative for Bosnia in Herzegovina in early 2007.
5. OSCE/ODIHR Referendum Observation Mission 2006, Republic of Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro), Interim Report (28 March to 20 April 2006).
6. The campaigns to agitate for or against independence had been operational since the signing of the Belgrade Agreement in 2002. Much was invested by either side to woo the diaspora vote in the USA, Australia and throughout Europe.
7. Author's interview with Branko Lukovac, 21 December 2005. An article written by Montenegrin Supreme Court Judge Cedomir Bogičević, titled 'Common State: economic burden and political taxation', published in *Pobjeda* was typical of a plethora of economic arguments against the state union. See *Pobjeda*, 11 May 2006, p. 4.
8. MINA news agency, Podgorica, 23 March 2006.
9. *Vijesti*, 24 March 2006, p. 3.
10. *Pobjeda*, 24 March 2006, p. 6.
11. *Dan*, 24 March 2006, p. 1.
12. Interview with Milo Djukanović on RTVGG, 26 March 2006.
13. *Republika*, 27 March 2006, p. 2.
14. Aside from politicians, significant effort was invested into attracting Montenegro's most high-profile sportsmen and entertainers. Among the sportsmen who supported the pro-independence campaign publicly were the former Red Star Belgrade and AC Milan player Dejan Savićević and former Fiorentina and Real Madrid striker, Predrag Mijatović.
15. Slavko Perović's now famous speech in Cetinje in February 1992 was often quoted during the campaign. His participation was thought to be crucial to attracting hard-core liberals who were pro-independence but anti-regime.
16. *Republika*, 27 March 2006, p. 2.
17. *Vijesti*, 29 April 2006, p. 3.
18. *Vijesti*, 15 May 2006, p. 7.
19. According to John Breuilly, such messages have clear aims. The heroes of the past, he argues, 'are joined by ties of blood and language to the men of the present. That link is a sort of guarantee that men of the present can rise to the challenges as their ancestors once did. See John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1983, p. 347.
20. Foreign journalists covering events commented to the author prior to the referendum that, given the omnipotent Montenegrin flag, the outcome was

- inevitable. The Montenegrin government provided enough funds to manufacture flags to give to DPS activists in Podgorica and other Montenegrin towns. The prevalence of the Montenegrin flag was more a testament to the organizational efforts of the pro-independence bloc than a demonstration of pro-independence sentiment in Podgorica.
21. *Dan*, 17 May 2006, p. 2.
 22. Traditionally in Montenegro, younger voters tended to be attracted to pro-independence parties. However, the campaign was aimed at youths who were partially disenfranchised from economic opportunities because they were the sons or daughters of pro-union families.
 23. Author's interview with Lilijana Kadić, Podgorica, 22 December 2005.
 24. The appearance of Harun Hadžić at pro-union rallies clearly characterizes the complexity of Montenegrin politics. Hadžić had been imprisoned in 1994 by members of the same political option to which he now gave his support. He (along with others in the leadership of the Montenegrin branch of the SDA) was accused of plotting against the state by preparing an insurrection in Montenegro with the objective of creating an independent Sandžak. He was later pardoned by the then President Momir Bulatović.
 25. From the start Predrag Bulatović pledged to run his campaign without using the language of 'hatred and nationalistic divisions', to 'enable citizens peaceful and tolerant voting for either option'. See *Dan*, 28 April 2006. When a crowd of pro-independence supporters booed him in Rožaje, Bulatović responded by blowing kisses and smiling at Djukanović supporters. 'With smiles and kisses Montenegro should go forward,' he stated. See *Vijesti*, Podgorica, 13 May 2006, p. 6.
 26. The Serb Peoples Party of Montenegro is the most nationalist Serb party and is perceived to be ideologically close to the Serbian Radical Party. Often its rhetoric is abundant with accusations of prejudice against ethnic Serbs in Montenegro and the mortal dangers that would be faced by them in the event of independence.
 27. A catalogue of attacks and threats against pro-union supporters were reported in pro-union daily *Dan* in the weeks preceding the referendum. See *Dan*, 13–19 May 2006.
 28. *Dan*, Podgorica, 12 May, 2006.
 29. Statement by the Serbian Radical Party, Radio B92, 12 May 2006.
 30. *Dan*, Podgorica, 12 May, 2006.
 31. The Four Ss (or Cs in Cyrillic) stand for *Samo Sloga Srbina Spašava – Only Unity Can Save the Serbs*.
 32. During the large pro-union rally in Podgorica on 16 May, traditional symbols of Serbdom were largely absent. The author witnessed the bearing of only one large flag adorned with the 'four Ss'. The state union flag was the predominant symbol of the pro-union bloc.
 33. There is a resonance here with the main slogan of the anti-Milošević protests in October 2000.
 34. See *Vijesti*, 17 May 2006, p. 2.
 35. As in the case of Boris and Ljubomir Tadić, the political views of Matija Bećković and his daughter Olja do not always correspond.
 36. Bulatović's accusation about the creation of a private state was a constant variable throughout the pro-union bloc's campaign. It is not without foundation. A small circle of individuals and families owns and controls much of Montenegro's capital. Many political elites within the pro-union bloc are disenfranchised from the processes of privatization and the subsequent profits generated as a consequence.
 37. Djukanović–Bulatović debate on RTCG, transmitted on 16 May 2006.
 38. Until 1997 there was only one newspaper in Montenegro, the state-owned daily *Pobjeda*, but its circulation has now dropped significantly. Older generations in

- Montenegro remained loyal to the newspaper largely because of the large obituaries section at the back of the paper.
39. The content of RTCG's programming may well have been inconsequential to many pro-union supporters anyway. In the predominantly Serb areas in the north of Montenegro there is a much higher ratio of satellite dishes enabling access to Serbian television.
 40. See International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Referendum'. Although the owner of BK television, Bogoljub Karić was a close associate of Milošević and widely perceived as corrupt, Montenegrin television frequently reported this case framed as an authoritarian action of the Serbian government. Furthermore, it was not uncommon to hear ordinary Montenegrins say that Serbia (and in particular the Mladić issue) was an impediment to Montenegro's accession to the EU. According to one pro-independence voter, 'We have to look to the future; we cannot stay with people who think war criminals are heroes.' BBC television news, 21 May 2006.
 41. OSCE press release, *International Referendum Observation Mission: Referendum on State Status, Republic of Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro)*, 22 May 2006.
 42. IN TV is known to belong to Milo Djukanović's brother, Aleksandar (known to locals as 'Aco') Djukanović.
 43. International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Referendum', p. 4.
 44. In all elections in Montenegro, and in much of continental Europe, there is a ban on canvassing for 24 (or even 48) hours prior to the opening of polling stations, which remains in place until voting has ended.
 45. See *Vijesti*, 20 May 2006, p. 1.
 46. OSCE press release, International Referendum Observation Mission, 22 May 2006.
 47. Montenegrin Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *An Analysis of the Media Scene in Montenegro in the year when Decisive Steps Toward State Independence are to be Made*, Podgorica, 15 February 2005.
 48. Huge controversy surrounded Serbia and Montenegro's entry to the Eurovision Song Contest. The Montenegrin band 'No Name' won the contest to represent the country in the preliminary round in Belgrade, but did so only after Montenegrin judges voted overwhelmingly for it. Given the political climate, it was decided that neither 'No Name' nor its rival, 'The Flamingos', should perform. It was suspected that the No Name band would make a political statement during its performance, and therefore Serbia and Montenegro were not represented.
 49. *Pobjeda*, 22 May 2006.
 50. See Milan Vukčević, *Crnogorska dijaspora*, Centar za iseljenike Crne Gore, Grafotisak, Podgorica, 2006.
 51. During the referendum process the author met members of the diaspora who had travelled from Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Luxembourg, France, the United States and Canada.
 52. It was deemed that those Montenegrins residing in Serbia who had previously voted in elections there could not do so in both republics.
 53. Many of the returnees had fled Montenegro in the early 1990s because of what they described as 'pressure' from the ruling authorities. Many were former members of the LSCG. Author's interviews with members of the Montenegrin diaspora, Podgorica airport, 20 May 2005. See also *Monitor*, 26 May 2006, p. 4.
 54. *Monitor*, 26 May 2006, p. 4.
 55. See *Republika*, 22 May 2006, p. 2.
 56. *Vijesti*, 23 May 2006, p. 1.
 57. *FoNet*, Belgrade, 16 May 2006.
 58. Author's interview with Belgrade students of Montenegrin descent in Bijelo Polje, Berane and Andrijevica, 19 May 2006.

59. *Vijesti*, Podgorica, 2006, p. 1.
60. The Republican Referendum Commission (RRC) confirmed that this figure the exact amount of eligible voters. See Mina News Agency, Podgorica, 12 May, 2006.
61. OSCE press release. 'International Referendum Observation Mission: Referendum on State Status, Republic of Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro)', 22 May 2006.
62. The *kladionice* (bookmakers) in Montenegro did not take bets on the referendum but they did in Serbia.
63. CEMI used initial reports from polling stations throughout Montenegro carefully selected to represent the overall electorate as closely as possible. The Montenegrin NGO CDT (Centre for Democratic Transition), perhaps having seen the chaos caused by the preliminary results given by CEMI, chose a more cautious approach. Its spokesperson, Milica Kovačević, stated that, 'We are of the opinion that the referendum commission should be allowed to complete its work and count all ballot papers. The projections show a very tight result. The CDT does not want to contribute to confusion.' Statement by CDT, RTCG, transmitted 21 May 2006.
64. Statement by Predrag Bulatović on RTCG, transmitted on Radio Televizija Crne Gore, 21 May 2006.
65. MINA news agency, Podgorica, 21 May 2006.
66. Speech by Milo Djukanović on RTCG, transmitted on Radio Televizija Crne Gore, 22 May 2006.
67. Statement by František Lipka of the Republican Referendum Commission, RTCG transmitted on Radio Televizija Crne Gore, 22 May 2006.
68. See *Vijesti*, 25 May 2006, p. 5.
69. *Pobjeda*, 23 May 2006, p. 3.
70. *FoNet*, Belgrade, 22 May 2006.
71. International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Referendum', p. 12.
72. MINA news agency, Podgorica, 23 May 2006.
73. Beta News Agency, Belgrade, 23 May 2006.
74. Radio Montenegro, Podgorica, 23 May 2006.
75. International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Referendum'.
76. In the Serbian parliamentary session in which independence was declared, neither Boris Tadić, the president of Serbia, nor Vojislav Koštunica, the prime minister of Serbia, were present.

Chapter 13

1. Pavlović, 'Montenegrin Independence', p. 15.
2. See CEDEM, *Public Opinion in Montenegro*, June 2007 @http://www.cedem.cg.yu/opolls/images/CEDEM_June07.pdf.
3. BBC News, 24 May 2006.
4. Graffiti of this nature began to appear in towns and cities across Montenegro only days after the referendum. The author witnessed this in Kotor, Herceg-Novi and Podgorica. More disturbingly, in the Stara Varoš area of Podgorica (the old Turkish district), graffiti glorifying Serbian atrocities and the facilitators of them appeared. On one wall was daubed. 'Ratko Mlađić loves you in his own special way'.
5. See International Crisis Group, 'Montenegro's Referendum'.
6. Party Programme of the People's Party of Montenegro (SNS), December 2006, p. 3.
7. For a more complex overview of the Serb perception of their status in Montenegro, see Želidrag Nikčević, *Prava Srba u Crnoj Gori*, Focus, Belgrade, 2006.
8. See Author's comments on BBC World Service, 'Europe Today', http://www.bbc.co.uk/world_service/programmes/europe_today/index.shtml

9. Djurković, *Montenegro: Headed for New Divisions*, p. 7.
10. To an extent the Albanian community in Montenegro's arguments about education mirror similar debates in FRY Macedonia during the 1990s. In the western Macedonian town of Tetovo, the Albanian community called for the establishment of an Albanian-speaking university. This led to violent clashes between demonstrators and Macedonian police. See Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?*
11. *Vijesti*, 28 June 2006, p. 3.
12. *Dan*, 4 October 2006, p. 4.
13. Mina News Agency, 11 September 2006.
14. *Republika*, 12 September 2006, p. 24.
15. Author's interview with Miodrag Perović, Podgorica, 19 June 2007.
16. Milo Djukanović is alleged to have raised a loan of €1.4 million at an unidentified bank in London. The purpose of this was to purchase shares in the First Bank of Montenegro (owned by his brother Aco Djukanović. The problem lies in those shares being used as a guarantee for the loan, even although they were not in his possession at the precise moment of acquiring the loan. One month later, the value of the shares of the First Bank of Montenegro had doubled.
17. Author's interview with Metropolitan Mihailo, Cetinje, 11 September 2004.
18. RTS Report, Belgrade, 18 April 2007.
19. Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Montenegro*, July 2007, pp. 9–10.
20. *Observer*, 15 July 2007, p. 33.
21. Author's interview with Vanja Calović, Podgorica, June 2007. See also Vanja Calović and Deletić Milena, *Pravo Da Znam*, MANS, Podgorica, 2006.
22. *Observer*, 15 July 2007, p. 33.
23. See CEDEM, *Public Opinion in Montenegro*, p. 2.
24. Pavlović, 'Building Civil Society in Montenegro: Autocracy in the Making', p. 12.
25. Djurković, *Montenegro: Headed for New Divisions*, p. 5.
26. CMI Report, *Corruption in Montenegro 2007: Overview over Main Problems and Status of Reforms*, CHR Michelsen Institute, Bergen, September 2007, p. 12.
27. European Stability Initiative, *Sovereignty, Europe and the Future of Serbia and Montenegro*, Brussels, 2001, www.esiweb.org
28. See European Commission, *Montenegro: 2006 Progress Report*, Brussels, pp. 7–8.
29. *South-East European Times*, 25 June 2007.
30. Author's correspondence with Nebojša Medojević, executive director of the Group for Changes, 8 June 2006.

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