

Montenegrin politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia

Introduction

Montenegrin politics, unlike those of most of the other former Yugoslav republics, has been a story of continuity throughout the 1990s. In the absence of war, Montenegro has experienced few radical breaks. The most important break was arguably the fall-out of Milo Đukanović with Slobodan Milošević and Momir Bulatović in 1997, which ushered in a period of political re-orientation towards the west and a democratisation of political life through the disintegration of the dominant Democratic Party of Socialists (*Demokratska partija socijalista*, DPS). This turning-point, as this chapter will argue, was nevertheless embedded in a gradual process of continuous alienation between Montenegro and Serbia, beginning in 1991, and a reflection of the inner-Montenegrin divide over relations with Serbia which informed the political agenda of the 1990s.

An examination of political developments in Montenegro is not only relevant because Montenegro has been largely neglected in comparison to that of the other successor states of former Yugoslavia. That no war occurred in Montenegro, and that it remained as the only former Yugoslav republic in a joint state with Serbia, have made Montenegro an exception worth examining more closely. The politics of identity informed political discourse in a similar fashion to the other countries of former Yugoslavia, but the debates of identity and statehood pitted not majority against minority, but split the majority population in an unresolved debate over Montenegrin national identity and the state in which to live.

This chapter will trace chronologically the evolution of key political developments, beginning with the ‘anti-bureaucratic revolution’, which brought the Communist era to an end, and closing with the creation of the (temporary) union of ‘Serbia and Montenegro’ in 2002. This discussion is shaped by four threads:

- the relationship between the government of Montenegro on the one side and of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the other
- internal debates over Montenegrin identity and the relationship towards Serbia
- the process of democratisation in a political system which has, to date, not seen a change of government through elections
- the role Montenegro played in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, as well as the impact of the war in Kosovo.

From one one-party rule to another: the ‘anti-bureaucratic revolution’

Montenegro under Communist rule was, together with Bosnia and Macedonia, one of the less developed republics. Its small size, approximately one-third of the next largest republic, made Montenegro a particular case. Arguably, the Republic has been peripheral in post-war Yugoslavia and did not possess the same weight in inter-republican debates as, for example, did Croatia, Slovenia or Serbia. Caught in the ambiguities of Montenegrin identity, the Republic was both the ‘homeland’ of the Montenegrin people while, at the same time, a significant share of Montenegrins identified themselves as Serbs.¹ The nationalist revival of the late 1960s and early 1970s in Yugoslavia also affected Montenegro. In Montenegro,

however, it expressed itself rather as Serbian nationalism² than as a distinct Montenegrin nationalism. This would find its explicit expression only considerably later.

Table 1 – Shifting population of Montenegro

	1981		1991	
	No.	%	No.	%
Montenegrins	400 488	68.5	380 467	61.9
Muslims	78 080	13.4	89 614	14.6
Serbs	19 407	3.3	57 453	9.3
Albanians	37 735	6.5	40 415	6.6
Yugoslavs	31 243	5.3	26 159	4.3
Croats	6 904	1.2	6 244	1.0
Roma	1 471	0.3	3 282	0.5
Total	584 310		615 035	

Population Census (1981, 1991)³

Yugoslavia developed into a decentralised federation during the 1960s and 1970s, and Montenegro participated in the debates over the redistribution of resources within Yugoslavia together with the other lesser-developed republics which profited from the Federal Fund for the Development of the Under-developed Republics (FARDUK, 1964-1990).⁴ Montenegro's participation in these discussions and the:

Recurring struggle over the redistribution of income necessitated an articulation and defense of a specific Montenegrin interest which in turn regularly reinforced a sense of a specific Montenegrin identity.⁵

The response to the earthquake in 1979, which devastated parts of the Montenegrin coast, including Kotor and Budva, is a case in point. Montenegro was excluded from the inter-republican debates over compensation. The final aid package was considerably smaller than hoped for: Slovenia and Croatia had argued for more aid, while Serbia kept support to a minimum. Given that Serbia was deemed responsible for the lower than expected quantity of aid, it strengthened the more anti-Serb wing within the Montenegrin leadership.⁶

- 1 On the issue of Montenegrin identity, see Srđa Pavlović: 'Who are Montenegrins?' this volume.
- 2 Sabrina Petra Ramet: *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia. 1962-1991*, 2nd Ed. (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 116; Marko Andrijević: 'Politics in Montenegro', in Sabrina Petra Ramet and L.S. Adamovich (eds.): *Beyond Yugoslavia: Politics, Economics and Culture in a Shattered Community* (Boulder, Co.: Westview, 1995), p. 210.
- 3 Source: Federal Statistical Office. The number of Roma is almost certainly higher than official numbers indicate.
- 4 Ramet: *Nationalism and Federalism*, pp. 150-158.
- 5 John B. Allcock: 'Montenegro', in David Turnock and Francis W. Carter (eds.): *The States of Eastern Europe. South-Eastern Europe*, Vol. 2 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 185.
- 6 Ramet: *Nationalism and Federalism*, p. 160.

The most pressing problem of the Montenegrin leadership in the 1980s, however, had been the economic crisis of the Republic. The Republic, together with Kosovo and Macedonia, was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1987. At the time, it had only 40 000 workers, with 6 000 having lost their job during the economic crisis of the late 1980s.⁷ It was against this backdrop that the mass protests took place which eventually led Montenegro to join Serbia during the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The Communist era came to an end as part of the so-called 'anti-bureaucratic revolutions' which were instigated by the new strong man of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević. After taking power in Serbia in 1987/8 in an internal coup against his mentor, Ivan Stambolić, he sought to extend his influence to the two autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo, as well as Bosnia and Montenegro. Breaking with the previous rules of not conducting intra-party conflicts in public, Milošević used mass mobilisation in well-organised protests to put pressure on his opponents. This tool was not so much invented by Milošević as represented the instrumentalisation of extra-party grievances and dissatisfaction which could have led to protests, as occurred in the rest of central and eastern Europe in autumn 1989.

Mobilisation for the protests was facilitated by the regime's control of the media, as well as the whole apparatus of the Serbian party and authorities, including party members, reserve offices and secret services.⁸ Milovan Đilas assessed the protests accordingly:

Though there are aggressive groups in the Serbian movement, this is Communist nationalism and it is highly disciplined... We call them spontaneous. But it is partly organised spontaneity.⁹

After the protests – in conjunction with an internal party coup – had succeeded in replacing the political leadership of Vojvodina in summer 1988 with new pro-Milošević authorities, the demonstrations focused on Montenegro. Here, protests had taken place throughout Summer 1988 with several tens of thousands of participants. A few days after the fall of the Vojvodina leadership, the Montenegrin leadership drew on a massive police response to suppress the protests. The use of the police led to harsh attacks not only by the Serbian leadership,¹⁰ but also by Serbian intellectuals. The writer and leading nationalist intellectual Dobrica Ćosić, for example, wrote a letter of protest to the Montenegrin leadership in the name of the Committee for the Defence of the Freedom of Thought and Expression:¹¹

We appeal to your civic consciousness and political responsibility, to which you are bound by law and your oath of office, to do everything in order to establish democratic relations and the

7 Branka Magaš: *The Destruction of Yugoslavia, Tracking the Break-Up*, 1980-92 (Verso: London/New York, 1993), p. 170.

8 *Vreme* 10.2.1992; Laura Silber and Allan Little: *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin/BBC, 1995), p. 61.

9 Quoted from David Selbourne: *Death of the Dark Hero, Eastern Europe 1987-1990* (London, 1991), p. 109.

10 Veljko Vujačić: *Communism and Nationalism in Russia and Serbia*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Berkeley: University of California, 1995), p. 347.

11 The Committee originally protested against human rights violations in Yugoslavia but, in the climate of nationalist mobilisation, focused increasingly on the 'mistreatment' of Serbs. A number of its members were leading nationalist intellectuals, including Ćosić and Kosta Čavoški.

rule of law in your republic, that you prevent any limitation on free democratic and *patriotic* thought and aspirations, that you prevent violence against citizens who are not satisfied with the existing state of society and who are concerned about the future.¹² (author's emphasis)

The Montenegrin party leadership, however, rejected all criticism and won a vote of confidence in October 1988,¹³ although renewed protests on 11 and 12 January 1989 spelled the coming of the end; the leadership resigned and was replaced by a new elite loyal to Milošević.¹⁴

The 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' was driven by the nationalist mobilisation which took place in the late 1980s among Serbs.¹⁵ Without exploring in detail the reasons for the ideology behind this mobilisation, it should be mentioned that the movement emerged as a result of four factors:

- a. broad societal groups dissatisfied with the economic, social and political *status quo*
- b. nationalist intellectuals
- c. ethnic entrepreneurs in the League of Communists of Serbia
- d. an institutional system in late communist Yugoslavia which was conducive to the primacy of ethnicity.¹⁶

The concepts in the new Serbian nationalism were developed by Serbian intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s, gaining prominence with the publication of an (incomplete) memorandum of the Serbian Academic of Arts and Sciences (*Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti*, SANU). This memorandum, echoing existing concepts, suggested that Serbs were disadvantaged in Communist Yugoslavia. Focusing specifically on the supposed discrimination against Serbs in Kosovo, leading to their mass-emigration, the memorandum asserted that Serbs were also suffering in the other republics (and especially in Croatia).¹⁷ The memorandum introduced two ideas into the Yugoslav discourse which were to remain an important aspect of Serbian nationalism during the 1990s. Firstly, Yugoslavia as it existed was considered to be disadvantaging Serbs. Secondly, Serbs were portrayed as the victims of other Yugoslav nations. The ideas formulated in the memorandum and propagated by a significant number of Serbian intellectuals, both in opposition and in pro-regime circles and in key cultural institutions, fell on fertile ground as Kosovo had been on the public agenda in Serbia since the suppressed protests of Kosovo Albanians in 1981 de-

12 *CADDY Bulletin* 50 (1988).

13 *Tanjug* 1.11.1988.

14 The change first occurred in the Party; in March, the members of the Presidency changed, followed by a new parliament, whose members were not elected from multi-party elections, in June 1989. Bulatović and Đukanović rose to the top leadership of the League of Communists during this time, assuming the offices of President and Prime Minister after the 1990 elections. For a list of the new office holders, see Slobodan M. Dragović: *Crnogorski Ustavi. Organizacija i sastav organa vlasti – poslanci i ministri – (od 1946. do 1998)*, (Podgorica: Službeni List Republike Crne Gore, 1999), pp. 165-72. On the whole 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' in Montenegro, see Veseljko Koprivica and Branko Vojičić: *Prevrat '89* (Podgorica: LSCG, 1994).

15 Nationalist mobilisation took place simultaneously among Kosovo Albanians and was followed somewhat later in 1989/90 as regards Croats and Muslims/Bosniaks.

16 For more on this issue, see Florian Bieber: 'Serbischer Nationalismus vom Tod Titos zum Sturz Miloševićs', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Vienna: University of Vienna, 2001).

17 Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krestić: *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Answers to Criticisms* (Beograd: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1995).

manding that Kosovo be recognised as a republic within Yugoslavia. The media and Serbian politics focused on Serbian emigration from the province and accused Albanians of engaging in a deliberate and well-organised campaign against Kosovo Serbs. These unresolved grievances coincided with Serbian and Yugoslav party elites being unable to overcome the deepening economic crisis and political vacuum after the death of Tito in 1980.

Against such a backdrop, Milošević rose to power on the promise to protect Kosovo Serbs and to 'correct' the injustices of the Communist Yugoslav system. This national movement, deliberately mobilised in the media, had only amorphous goals. The most immediate goal was a re-centralisation of Yugoslavia and the overthrow of republican and provincial elites which were portrayed as anti-Serb.¹⁸ During the protests, the Montenegrin elite was likened to Vuk Branković, the mythological Serbian traitor at the Kosovo battle in 1389, while a personality cult surrounding Milošević described him as a 'saviour'.¹⁹

The protests in Montenegro, as elsewhere in Yugoslavia, did not rest on Serbian nationalist demands alone, but also incorporated dissatisfaction with the economic and social development of the country.²⁰ In 1987, Montenegro found itself in a severe economic crisis. Massive job cuts threatened the employment of many workers in large enterprises in the Republic.²¹ The protests of 8 October 1988 began as protests of workers demanding an improvement in their job situation. During the course of the demonstrations, Kosovo Serbs, who had been the backbone of the protests elsewhere in Yugoslavia that year, joined them. Branka Magaš has described how, in a matter of days, the demonstrations were transformed. In the beginning, the protestors demanded bread and work; by the end of the same day, the message of the protests had already been transformed, praising Milošević and branding the Montenegrin leadership as anti-Serb.²² The social unrest which was expressed here, as in the other Yugoslav republics and, a year later, elsewhere in eastern Europe, had found a safety valve. Disappointment over the lack of reform, bankrupt companies, inflation and job losses found their outlet through nationalism. The absence of significant reform-oriented figures in the party leadership rendered more difficult the emergence of an alternative to nationalist mobilisation. The party leadership of Montenegro, as had been the case in Vojvodina, Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo, could offer no convincing programme of reform to counter the nationalist protests. Thus, as one observer noted on a demonstration Belgrade – which could equally apply to Montenegro – that the protesters 'came as workers and went home as Serbs.'²³

18 Nebojša Popov: 'Le Populisme Serbe', *Les Temps Modernes* Vol. 49 No. 573 (1994), pp. 22-63; 'Le Populisme Serbe (suite)', *Les Temps Modernes* Vol. 49 No. 574 (1994), pp. 22-84.

19 Ivan Čolović: *Bordell der Krieger. Folklore, Krieg und Politik* (Osnabrück: Fibre, 1994), pp. 11-26, 140.

20 Jens Reuter: 'Inflation und sinkender Lebensstandard in Jugoslawien', *Südosteuropa* Vol. 38 No. 10 (1989), pp. 565-572.

21 In Montenegro in 1988, the average spending on food amounted to 55.1% of salary, whereas in Slovenia it was less than half this figure (26.9%). Wolfgang Oschlies: 'Jugoslawien 1988 – Eine kurze Bestandaufnahme', *Südosteuropa* Vol. 38 No. 1 (1989), p. 21.

22 Magaš: *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, pp. 170-171.

23 Jagoš Đuretić, quoted from Slavoljub Đukić: *Između slave i anateme. Politička biografija Slobodana Miloševića* (Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 1994), p. 106. Ivan Čolović describes this transformation on the basis of the slogans used by the demonstrators. Čolović: *Bordell der Krieger*, pp. 138-142.

The first elections and the road to war

In the course of 1990, elections were held in all the republics of Yugoslavia. As the federal state had, on all measures, ceased to function and no country-wide elections were scheduled, the conditions for these first multi-party elections varied greatly between the republics: whereas they were relatively free in Slovenia and Croatia, they were called only reluctantly in Montenegro and Serbia. In Montenegro, the elections were dominated by the League of Communists (*Savez Komuniste Crne Gore*, SK CG) which, in Montenegro, alone among the republics, did not bother to rename itself prior to the elections. It also did not adopt significant programme changes ahead of the elections, such as the endorsement of privatisation, as other successor parties to the League of Communists had done.²⁴

The Communist Party was able to secure an overwhelming victory unmatched elsewhere in former Yugoslavia, winning over 50 per cent of the votes and two-thirds of the seats in parliament. The runner-up was the Yugoslav-wide United Reform Forces, founded by Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković as a political alternative to the nationalist parties and the disintegrating League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The Marković alliance comprised several liberal and social democratic movements and parties, thus presenting the only liberal democratic alternative to the regime. The third strongest party, the People's Party (*Narodna Stranka*, NS) would undergo numerous programme changes in the 1990s but, in the first elections, represented an extreme Serb nationalist platform, advocating the unification of both republics as well as the creation of an expanded Serbian nation-state. As such, the party displayed some similarities with the Serbian Democratic Party in Croatia and in Bosnia, which sought to represent 'Serb' interests in these two republics. The Democratic Coalition (*Demokratska koalicija*, DK) comprised of an Albanian and a Muslim party, won approximately 10 per cent of the vote, an electoral success which was not repeated in subsequent elections when the parties of the different minorities ran separately.²⁵

Table 2 – First free elections in Montenegro, 9 December 1990²⁶

Party/ Coalition	Number of votes	Percentage	Members in Parliament	Percentage
SK CG	171 316	56.16	83	66.4
SRSJ CG	41 346	13.56	17	13.6
NS	39 107	12.82	13	10.4
DK	30 760	10.08	12	9.6
Others	11 354	3.80	–	–

The overwhelming victory of the League had three reasons: Firstly, the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' in the Republic had happened less than two years prior to the elections

24 Vladimir Goati: *Izbori u SRJ od 1990 do 1998: volja građana ili izborna manipulacija* (Beograd: CeSID, 1999), p. 36.

25 For more on this, see František Šístek and Bohdana Dimitrovová: 'National Minorities in Montenegro after the Break-up of Yugoslavia', this volume.

26 Source: Vladimir Goati: *Partije Srbije i Crne Gora u političkim borbama od 1990. do 2000.* (Bar: Conteco, 2000), p. 260.

and the Serbian nationalist movement in Montenegro, represented by the new leadership of SK CG, Momir Bulatović and Milo Đukanović, continued to be genuinely popular within the Republic, as was the case in Serbia in elections which took place at the same time. Secondly, the Communist system, despite being discredited, was still more popular than elsewhere.²⁷ Thirdly, the conditions for the elections were hardly free and fair; information about the political alternatives were limited and – where available – usually aimed at discrediting the opposition.²⁸

In the presidential elections, which took place simultaneously, Momir Bulatović won in the second round with 76.1% of the votes. In addition to the President, a four-member presidency was elected, comprising one member of the SK CG, two members of the United Reform Forces and one independent candidate. The presidency, which was later abolished, was powerless; the President himself yielded even less power than the Serbian President. The influence of Bulatović derived mostly from his leadership of the League of Communists and support (and pressure) from Serbia.²⁹

Despite the resounding victory of the SK CG, the low turnout (76%) and the high number of abstentions (24.3%) point to some dissatisfaction and/or suspicion in the population which did not translate into the electoral results.³⁰

The SK CG, which renamed itself the Democratic Party of Socialists³¹ after the elections, pursued a double strategy. On the one side, it collaborated closely with the Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička Partija Srbije*, SPS) and followed the general line of the Serbian President; on the other, it sought to preserve some degree of Montenegrin separateness, resisting the call for unification with Serbia which had been put forward forcefully by some intellectuals and parties in the early 1990s.³²

Soon after the first elections, Montenegro found itself intrinsically involved in the war in Croatia.³³ After Croatia had declared its independence in June 1991, the country slowly began sliding into war as a result of the escalating fighting between Serb paramilitaries, the Yugoslav army (*Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija*, JNA) and the nascent Croatian army. The aim of the JNA and the Serbian paramilitaries was to take control of parts of Croatia where Serbs lived (as minority or majority) and attach these to Serbia. The fighting thus first focused on Slavonia, Krajina, Lika and Kordun, far from the Montenegrin border. In this first phase of the war, Montenegro was only indirectly involved, as its soldiers continued to be recruited to the army.³⁴

27 See Lenard J. Cohen: *Broken Bonds. The Disintegration of Yugoslavia* (Boulder, Co: Westview, 1993), pp. 158-159.

28 Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, pp. 34-40.

29 *ibid.*, pp. 48.

30 *ibid.*, pp. 29, 32.

31 For a self-presentation of the Party, see www.dps.cg.yu.

32 Ramet: *Nationalism and Federalism*, p. 212; Allcock: 'Montenegro,' p. 186.

33 On this, see the statements of Nikola Samardžić, Montenegrin Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1991/2 as a witness during the Milošević trial at the ICTY. See ICTY: 'Transcripts Milošević, Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (IT-02-54)', The Hague, 8.10.2002, available at: www.un.org/icty/trans54/021008IT.htm.

34 Montenegrins were actually over-represented among army officers (6.2% compared to Montenegro's 2.5% share of the Yugoslav population). *Balkan War Report*, January 1993, p. 6.

Montenegro, officially, did not support the war enthusiastically and withdrew its reservists in October 1991 from Croatia.³⁵ At the same time, Montenegro also broke ranks with Serbia during one of the international efforts to end the war. An EC-sponsored peace conference for the former Yugoslavia in September-October 1991 in Geneva sought to secure the support of the former Yugoslav republics for the Carrington Plan. The plan, named after the main European Community negotiator for Yugoslavia, foresaw an à la carte Yugoslavia from which the Republics could choose their degree of sovereignty and their participation in joint Yugoslav institutions. Milošević opposed the plan as it would not reverse the declaration of independence of Croatia and allowed only for very limited central control of the new state. Contrary to expectations, Momir Bulatović supported the plan after receiving the backing of the Montenegrin parliament.³⁶ This policy shift came as a surprise and shock to Serbia, which had expected to receive Montenegro's support. The simultaneous demand of Bulatović to withdraw Montenegrin soldiers from the front in Croatia led to Borisav Jović, Serbian member of the Yugoslav presidency, exclaiming that '[t]his is nothing short of treason.'³⁷ The response of Milošević, reported by an EC diplomat during a coincidental meeting with the Serbian President in the toilet, was that, 'Bulatović will soon be dismissed of his functions...'³⁸ Under pressure from nationalist politicians in Montenegro (and Serbia) and under attack from the Serbian leadership as supported by the media, Bulatović eventually went back on his support.³⁹ In the subsequent negotiations, the Montenegrin and Serbian delegation insisted that old Yugoslavia would continue to exist for those willing to partake of it, rather than endorse the creation of a new state, thus undermining the plan for a new confederation.⁴⁰

The hesitation of the Montenegrin authorities stood in contrast to the enthusiastic participation of Montenegrin soldiers and reservists in the JNA campaign to conquer the Konavle region of Croatia. In October 1991, only a few Serbs lived in this area, which stretched north from the Montenegrin border, but the Yugoslav army conquered most of the Croatian coast between Neum, the Bosnian outlet to the Adriatic, and the Montenegrin border, while it also laid siege to Dubrovnik. The army quickly managed to take most of the smaller towns in the areas surrounding the old city, but the siege of Dubrovnik was a major political defeat for the Yugoslav/Serb forces as the senseless shelling of the city demonstrated the ruthlessness of the Serbian (and Montenegrin) leadership. In the area adjacent to the Montenegrin border, extending to Cavtat, a resort in the proximity of Dubrovnik, reservists who were largely Montenegrin engaged in a massive looting and pillaging campaign which left most villages in the area completely destroyed.⁴¹ The campaign was partly organised by the JNA in conjunction with officials in Montenegro who sought to gain personally from it.⁴²

35 Andrijevič: 'Politics in Montenegro', pp. 244-245.

36 *Vreme* 28.10.1991.

37 Borisav Jović: *Poslednji Dani SFRJ* (Kragujevac: Prizma, 1996), p. 402. Jović describes the whole episode in detail, pp. 399-407.

38 Henry Wynaendts: *L'Engrenage. Chronique Yougoslaves, Juillet 1991-Août 1992* (Paris: Denoël, 1993), p. 125. It is not without irony that it was Milošević's opponent Đukanović who would accomplish this six years later.

39 Velizor Brajović: 'Hard Lines in Montenegro', *Yugofax*, 31.10.1991, p. 3; *Vreme* 4.11.1991.

40 Silber and Little: *The Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 213-216.

Despite the ferocious campaign of the JNA in Konavle, the only serious point of contention for Montenegro with Croatia was the narrow Prevlaka peninsula. Prevlaka officially belonged to Croatia, but its strategic position, overlooking the entrance to the Boka Kotorska – the Bay of Kotor – meant that control of the peninsula would allow for control over entrance into the bay, including the only remaining naval base of the Yugoslav army.⁴³ In October 1992, a year after the beginning of the campaign, Yugoslav President Dobrica Ćosić and Croat President Franjo Tuđman reached an agreement on the withdrawal of JNA troops from the areas surrounding Dubrovnik and the demilitarisation of Prevlaka under UN-supervision – until late 2002.⁴⁴

The advent of war also further polarised divisions within Montenegro over Montenegrin identity and relations with Serbia. During the ‘anti-bureaucratic revolution’, the old authorities were branded as ‘anti-Serbian’ and ‘treacherous’. This discourse persisted throughout the early 1990s, when the war in Croatia and Bosnia created a sharp contrast between the supporters of Serb nationalism, who mostly supported the war in its early stage, and the supporters of Montenegrin nationalism, who opposed it. In these confrontations, the Serbian Orthodox Church played a particularly pronounced role due to the extreme nationalism of Amfilohije Radović, the Montenegrin archbishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁴⁵

Debates during autumn 1991 over the future of Montenegro exemplified the lines of confrontation within the Republics politics. On the one side stood the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (*Liberalni savez Crne Gore*, LSCG),⁴⁶ which advocated Montenegrin independence and which accused its opponents of being:

41 *ibid.*, pp. 201-204; Nikola Samaržić remarked during the Milošević trial that the campaign in Croatia, ‘...was an unjust war against Croatia, a war in which Montenegro disgraced itself by putting itself in the service of the Yugoslav army and Slobodan Milošević, and this shame will remain with us for perhaps another 100 years. Nothing more shameful has been done in Montenegro in its history for many hundreds of years’, ICTY: ‘Transcripts Milošević, The Hague, 8.10.2002, p. 1191, available at www.un.org/icty/transe54/021008IT.htm. Similarly Đukanović apologised in 2000 for the role played by Montenegro: ‘I wish to request forgiveness from the citizens of the Republic of Croatia for all the suffering and material losses inflicted during these tragic events by Montenegrins in the ranks of the Yugoslav Army.’ ‘Montenegro Asking Forgiveness From Croatia,’ *New York Times* 25.6.2000.

42 Seki Radonjić: ‘Four Million Marks – for the ‘Liberator’’, *AIM* 31.5.1994.

43 *Vreme* 12.10.1992.

44 Velizar Brajović: ‘Peace in Prevlaka: So Why War in Dubrovnik?’ *Balkan War Report* October 1992, p. 2. UN observers remain on the peninsula in 2002. Earlier attempts at a settlement between Montenegro and Croatia have failed because of obstruction by the Yugoslav authorities. An agreement signed in December 2002 ended the UN presence and foresaw the transformation of Prevlaka into a tourist resort. *Beta*, 11.12.2002.

45 *Vreme* 4.11.1991. See, for example: *Jagnje božije i zvijer iz bezdana. Filosofija rata* (Cetinje: Svetigora, 1996). This volume contains contributions by Radovan Karadžić, scholars and a number of clerics, especially from Montenegro. It seeks primarily to justify the Serbian war in Bosnia and provide for a general ‘philosophical’ opposition to the anti-war literature published in Yugoslavia. See Stjepan Gredelj: ‘Klerikalizam, etnofiletizam, antiekumenizam i (ne)tolerancija’, *Sociologija* Vol. 41 No. 2 (April-June 1999), pp. 157-158.

46 For a self-presentation of the Party, see www.lscg.crnagora.com/index.htm.

Against the separation of Montenegro from the Yugoslav chaos and madness. They are the ones pushing us into the state whose very existence, framework and ethnic make-up are uncertain.⁴⁷

The Alliance, founded in Cetinje – the historical capital of Montenegro – which also became the party's stronghold, appealed to a separate Montenegrin identity and drew on the historical legacy of independent Montenegro. Unlike most other independence/nationalist movements, however, it neither advocated the use of force, nor did it express hostility towards minorities. A strong theme in the rhetoric of the Alliance has been its critique of Serbian nationalism, the participation of Montenegro in the war in Croatia and the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁴⁸ In consequence, the party supported the re-establishment of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church in 1993 (see below) as a means of reaffirming the autonomy of Montenegro. Otherwise, its programme emphasised liberal economic and social policies which stood, however, in the background of the political debates during the 1990s.⁴⁹

The People's Party stood at the other end of the political spectrum, advocating close ties between Serbia and Montenegro, including at times even a merger of the two Republics. The Party, founded by Novak Kilibarda, accused Bulatović over his acceptance of the Carrington Plan and maintained close links with the Serbian Democratic Party (Srpska demokratska Stranka, SDS) in Croatia and Bosnia; later on it also established close links with the Democratic Party of Serbia (*Demokratska stranka Srbije*, DSS). The Party supported some of the policies of the Milošević regime originally, but its anti-communist stance led it to keep a distance both from the DPS in Montenegro and from Milošević. Especially in conjunction with the Serbian opposition in 1992/3 in DEPOS, which criticised the regime for its policies in Bosnia, the NS also managed to distance itself from its early pledge of full support of the war. Throughout the 1990s, the People's Party moved away from the extreme Serbian nationalism which it had originally endorsed. It did, however, remain a party which appealed to a constituency who considered themselves to be Serbs and which continuously emphasised the Serbian identity of Montenegro.⁵⁰

The DPS sought to occupy a somewhat middle ground in Montenegrin politics. Mostly aligning itself with Milošević (albeit with some hesitation), it nevertheless sought to safeguard the separateness of Montenegro while, at the same time, vehemently opposed the Liberal Alliance's claims for secession.⁵¹

The internal debates over the future of Montenegrin relations with Serbia remained unresolved throughout the 1990s, a situation recalled at regular intervals in the light of the conflicts with the regime in Belgrade.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at war with Bosnia and itself

The establishment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992 failed to bring the debate over Montenegro's status to a close. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was a quick and somewhat surprising creation of the Montenegrin and Serbian political elites who met in the Montenegrin mountain resort of Žabljak in April 1992. Discussions had taken place on the

47 Party President Slavko Perović, quoted from *Vreme* 30.12.1991.

48 'Programme of the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro', *Yugoslav Survey*, No. 1 (1993), pp. 98-100.

49 See Janusz Bugajski: *Political Parties of Eastern Europe* (Amronk, NY/London: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp. 503-506.

50 *ibid.*, pp. 506-507.

51 *Vreme* 30.12.1991.

creation of a third Yugoslavia throughout early 1992, but the creation of FRY was unexpected.⁵² During earlier debates, two options were most prominent: on the one side stood the option of creating a looser union with Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia; at the other extreme was the creation of a union of ‘Serbian states’, which would have included the Serbian Republic in Krajina (*Republika Srpske Krajine*, RSK) and in Bosnia (*Republika Srpska*, RS).⁵³ Both options failed, for a variety of reasons, but Montenegro remained committed to a joint state with Serbia, as Momir Bulatović had declared in January 1992.⁵⁴ A referendum in Montenegro, which took place on 1 March 1992, confirmed Montenegro’s commitment;⁵⁵ some 95.4 per cent of the electorate supported the question asked in the referendum: ‘Would you want a sovereign Montenegro to stay in the association with other Yugoslav republics who wish the same?’ The success of the referendum was somewhat diminished by the relatively low turnout of 66.04 per cent, partly resulting from the call for a boycott by some opposition parties and by the Albanian and Muslim communities.⁵⁶

The new Yugoslav Constitution was passed by the ‘remnants of the remnants’⁵⁷ of the Federal Chamber of the Assembly of Socialist Yugoslavia on 27 April 1992. The term of the deputies had already expired one year earlier, not to mention that they were ‘elected’ in 1986, well before the first free elections in 1990. Only the deputies from Montenegro and Serbia participated – a mere 73 people were present (from a total of 100 deputies from Serbia and Montenegro), out of, altogether, 220 deputies previously elected to the parliament. Legally, the gathering did not reach the necessary quorum to constitute a session of the old Yugoslav parliament.⁵⁸ The decision to create the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by deputies whose term expired and who had not been freely elected was meant to suggest continuity to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ). These flaws at the birth were indicative, however, of the weak foundations on which the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia rested.⁵⁹

52 On the debates and conflicts between Montenegro and Serbia surrounding the establishment of FRY, see Esad Kočan: ‘Montenegro and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’, *AIM* 28.3.1996.

53 *Neue Züricher Zeitung* 13.2.1992; *Neue Züricher Zeitung* 6.1.1992.

54 *Politika* 11.1.1992.

55 It should be noted, however, that, by that time, the term ‘Yugoslavia’ had already ceased to be a meaningful concept. On the run up to the referendum, see *Vreme* 27.1.1992.

56 Slobodanka Kovačević and Putnik Dajić: *Hronologija Jugoslovenske Krize, 1942-1993* (Beograd: Institut za Evropske Studije, 1994), p. 52. In communes with a strong minority population, such as Ulcinj and Rožaje, only 17.54% and 10.85% of eligible voters participated. See the website of the electoral commission at: www.izbori.cg.yu/retropektiva/re92.htm.

57 Slobodan Antičić: ‘Yugoslav Federalism: Functioning of the Federal and Republican Parliaments’, in Vladimir Goati (ed.): *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) 1990-1996* (Berlin: Sigma, 1998), p. 53.

58 Monika Beckman-Petey: *Der jugoslawische Föderalismus* (Munich: Südost-Institut, Oldenbourg, 1990), pp. 142-143.

59 For a detailed analysis of the structural and legal problems of FRY, see Dejan Guzina: ‘Nationalism in the Context of an Illiberal Multinational State: The Case of Serbia’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ottawa: Carleton University, 2000), pp. 180-192; Florian Bieber: ‘Delayed Transition and the Multiple Legitimacy Crisis of Post-1992 Yugoslavia’, in Dimitris Keridis (ed.): *New Approaches to Balkan Studies* (Dulles, VA: Brassey, 2002); see also, from a nationalist perspective, Kosta Čavoški: *Half a Century of Distorted Constitutionality in Yugoslavia* (Beograd: Centre for Serbian Studies, 1997), p. 36.

Subsequently, the first elections to the Chamber of Citizens⁶⁰ of the Federal Assembly in May 1992 were boycotted by all the opposition parties in Serbia and Montenegro. The only three major parties which participated and which won mandates were the governing DPS, the Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska radikalna stranka*, SRS), which ran for the first time in elections in Serbia and Montenegro with the implicit support of the governing parties, and the League of Communists–Party for Yugoslavia (*Savez komunista–pokret za Jugoslaviju*, SK-PJ), a neo-communist movement, closely associated with the army and Milošević's wife, Mirjana Marković.⁶¹ The boycott led to a similarly low turnout as in Serbia, with only 56.7 per cent of eligible voters participating.⁶² Protests by the opposition and an overall weak position of the authorities in both republics, especially in Serbia, forced new elections for the Federal Parliament in December 1992. These coincided in both republics with early presidential and parliamentary elections.

Soon after the creation of the new federal state, relations between Serbia and Montenegro were already deteriorating.⁶³ During the run-up to the December 1992 election, a serious fall-out – the most serious next to the final break in 1997/8 – occurred between the Democratic Party of Socialists and the Socialist Party of Serbia. As a response to Bulatović's initial support for the Carrington Plan in October 1992, and due to his wavering support for the Serbian war effort in Bosnia, the Socialist Party supported Brankov Kostić, his main contender during the Montenegrin presidential elections. At the same time, the DPS had supported the reformist Yugoslav government headed by Milan Panić,⁶⁴ preventing its fall in the run-up to the elections by not supporting a motion of no confidence. Subsequently, Bulatović and his Party even supported the candidacy of Panić against Milošević for the Serbian presidency.

The favourite of the Serbian Socialists, Branko Kostić, had been previously the Montenegrin member of the last Yugoslav Presidency and he was a member of the Democratic Party of Socialists. At the same time, he ran as a candidate of the Association of Warriors from the 1991/92 war (*Udruženja ratnika 1991/2*), advocating a considerably more radical pro-Serbian line and active support for the Serbian side in the Bosnian war.⁶⁵

In October 1992, the government passed a new constitution, reflecting the growing distance from the Serbian regime. Unlike the Serbian Constitution, it contains no nationalist references, lists a number of minority rights (Art. 67-76) and institutes a president with limited powers (Art. 86-90).⁶⁶ This switch towards moderation was criticised by the oppo-

60 In the bicameral parliament, the other chamber (the Chamber of Nations) is elected by the respective republican parliaments.

61 In 1994, this Party merged with other similar splinter parties to form JUL. JUL gained considerable influence with the Serbian and Yugoslav authorities by being part of a coalition with SPS, although its public support remained low in Serbia and Montenegro. As it ran mostly alone in Montenegro, its low level of support was visible: it gained 1 668 votes in the 1996 elections and 345 in 1998. See Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, p. 187, 206.

62 *ibid.*, pp. 59-64

63 Velizar Brajović: 'Divorce Proceedings', *Yugofax*, 29.6.1992, p. 7.

64 The support for Panić was surprising, as DPS had originally insisted that the Prime Minister's position should be filled by a Montenegrin as the Presidency had been filled by Dobrica Ćosić, a Serb. *Vreme* 22.6.1992.

65 Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, pp. 180-181.

66 Constitution of Montenegro, 12.10.1992.

sition as insincere. The President of the Social Democratic Party (*Socijaldemokratska partija*, SDP),⁶⁷ Žarko Rakčević, commenting on DPS policy, remarked that ‘the ruling party is acting as if we were for the war option a year ago, not them.’⁶⁸

In the first round of the presidential elections, Novak Kilibarda, candidate of the People’s Party, gathered 9.03 per cent of the vote, while Slavko Perović achieved the best result ever for the Liberal Alliance by obtaining 18.33 per cent. Both were clearly beaten by the two DPS candidates, Momir Bulatović (42.83%) and Branko Kostić (23.74%), confirming not only the internal divisions of the party, but also its absolute dominance of Montenegrin politics. In the second round of the elections, the Socialdemocrats and the Liberal Alliance supported Bulatović in light of the nationalist rhetoric of Kostić. Hence, Bulatović was able to win a resounding victory by gathering 63.29 percent of the vote in the second round. The victory of Bulatović confirmed the limits of the influences of the Serbian regime on Montenegrin politics.⁶⁹

Table 3 – Result of the Parliamentary elections, 20 December 1992⁷⁰

Party	Number of votes	Percentage	Members in Parliament	Percentage
DPS	125 578	43.78	46	54.0
NS	37 532	13.08	14	16.5
LSCG	35 564	12.40	13	45.3
SRS	22 265	7.76	8	9.4
SP CG	12 994	4.53	4	4.7
Others	52 906	18.40	–	–

In the parliamentary elections, taking place simultaneously, the DPS managed to defend its dominance but failed to gain an absolute majority as it had in the 1990 elections. The electoral victory was, nevertheless, considerable, considering that in no-other post-communist country had the successor to the Communist Party managed to continue to govern with such a strong majority. As Vladimir Goati points out, not even in Serbia did the SPS manage to garner similar support.⁷¹ In part, the success of the DPS was based on strong-arm tactics against the opposition parties, especially the Liberal Alliance.⁷² The Liberal

67 For a self-presentation of the Party, see www.sdp.cg.yu.

68 *Vreme* 19.10.1992. The Socialdemocrats pursued a similar line to the LSCG without the same emphasis on independence.

69 Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, pp. 180-184.

70 Source: *ibid.*, pp.299-300. The results for the Federal elections held the same day were largely similar, with the only notable exception being that the SRS fared better in the federal elections, gaining 11.5% of the vote, nearly equal to that of the NS and SP CG. The Liberal Alliance boycotted the federal elections; thus, most votes went to the SP instead who pursued largely similar policies, *ibid.*, p. 292.

71 *ibid.*, pp. 179.

72 Velizar Brajović: ‘Rolling Logs Used to Suppress Opposition Politicians’, *Balkan War Report* November/December 1992, 18-19.

Alliance and the People's Party were equal in strength to each other, compared to the 1990 elections, but the main new party was the Serbian Radical Party, which had already gathered nearly eight per cent of the vote in the May federal elections. Its extreme Serbian nationalist position towards minorities and support for the war in Bosnia (including through its own paramilitary units) was, at the time, supported by the Serbian authorities who relied on the Radicals for support in the Serbian and federal parliaments.⁷³

The disenchantment of the DPS with the Socialist Party in Serbia became visible when the DPS decided to form a grand coalition with the Socialdemocrats, the People's Party and the Liberal Alliance. This represented an attempt to stabilise itself after the protracted worsening of relations with the authorities in Belgrade, and given the threat posed by the Serbian Radical Party and the paramilitaries who were active in Montenegro, especially in the northern areas where lived both the Bosniak-Muslim minority and a large number of supporters of Serb nationalism.⁷⁴ The moderation of the authorities was partly connected to the dire economic situation in Montenegro after the imposition of sanctions,⁷⁵ which affected Montenegro arguably more than they did Serbia, and the genuine unpopularity of the war in Bosnia, which affected Montenegro strongly as a result of the influx of Serbian (but also Bosniak) refugees from Herzegovina.⁷⁶ The rift between Montenegro and Serbia lasted nearly two years – from late 1991, following the failed Montenegrin support for the Carrington Plan and the refusal to send soldiers to fight in Croatia, until mid-1993. During this period, some of the techniques employed by the Milošević regime following the complete break in relations between the two republics in 1998 were tried for the first time. In response to a rapprochement with Albania, for example, the Serbian authorities stopped some trucks crossing the Montenegrin-Serbian border. The temporary embargo on Montenegro was justified by a ban on the export of goods from Serbia, which were deemed 'strategic' during times of crisis. In fact, the blockade created serious shortages in basic products in Montenegro, with the aim of putting the leadership under pressure.⁷⁷

Similarly, the Serbian authorities accused minorities in Montenegro of supporting secessionism, while the minorities themselves were under pressure from Serbian extreme nationalist organisations, especially in the Sandžak region.⁷⁸

The worsening of relations between the DPS and SPS was only temporary and was overcome with a change in policy by the Socialist Party. For similar reasons as the DPS more than one year earlier in Montenegro, the Milošević regime in Serbia distanced itself from its former proxies in Bosnia and subsequently adopted a 'peace policy', advocating termination

73 *Vreme* 28.12.1992.

74 *Vreme* 28.6.1993.

75 The absence of tourists and the suspension of naval trade took especial toll. The decision of the federal authorities to introduce visas for all countries who themselves required one worsened Serb-Montenegrin relations as it prevented even the small trickle of visitors that visited Montenegro. *Vreme* 26.4.1993; *Vreme* 29.11.1993.

76 A darker chapter in Montenegrin politics during this period was the extradition of Muslim refugees from Bosnia to the authorities in Republika Srpska. A number of these refugees were subsequently killed or used in exchange for imprisoned Serbs. See *Vreme* 11.4.1994.

77 *Vreme* 13.9.1993.

78 Velizar Brajović: 'Belgrade Disciplines its Former Ally', *Balkan War Report* August/September 1993, p. 25.

of the war in Bosnia. Under the slogan '*Mir nema alternativu*' (Peace has no alternative), SPS ended its alliance with the Radical Party and endorsed the Vance-Owen peace plan. The Party emphasised the need for economic improvement and moderate reforms,⁷⁹ leading up to the reforms of the head of the central bank, Dragoslav Avramović, which put an end to Yugoslav hyperinflation in early 1994.⁸⁰

In Montenegro, the sanctions, as well as the pyramid schemes which had been set up with the implicit consent of the Yugoslav authorities during the period of hyperinflation, led to the emergence of a new elite of *nouveaux riches*, closely tied to the ruling party and to organised crime.⁸¹ Prominent here was the 'banker' Jezdimir Vasiljević, who operated one of the banks which promised two-digit monthly earnings on foreign currency holdings, who gained strong influence in Montenegro in 1992/93, allowing him to rent the luxury hotel resort Sveti Stefan.⁸² After the collapse of the schemes in March 1993, and the flight of Vasiljević into exile, his influence ended.

Reminiscent of later confrontations within the ruling Party of Democratic Socialists, the followers of President Momir Bulatović (including the current head of the Socialist People's Party Predrag Bulatović) accused the Prime Minister of enriching himself. At the time, unlike in 1997, the president defended Đukanović as:

... A man who I want to honour because he and his government, in a typical, almost magical, way, did everything possible to ease the huge difficulties and prevent much greater poverty which has been imposed by historic developments, the sanctions of the international community and the evil times we live in. The support I gave him, not just as President, but first of all as a man who thinks in a similar way and above all as a friend, was certainly not enough to ease the huge burden he carried.⁸³

The reasons for the policy shift in the case of Montenegro and Serbia were similar – the effects of the sanctions and economic decline, as well as the declining popularity of the regime – the only difference was the one-year time-lag between the two republics. Similar to the SPS in Serbia, Bulatović actively supported the Vance-Owen plan, but shied away from confronting nationalism in the country or the Party's role in the conflict. The call for a peaceful end to the war was thus not matched by change in the underlying assumptions which had allowed it to take place. This development nevertheless facilitated a *rapprochement* between the two ruling parties. Within Montenegro, the Liberal Alliance and the So-

79 Zoran Đ. Slavujević: 'The Issues: Dimensions of Electoral Confrontations', in Vladimir Goati (ed.): *Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) 1990-1996* (Berlin: Sigma, 1998), pp. 101-102.

80 In January 1994, inflation reached the monthly rate of 313 563 558%, i.e. 2% per hour or 62% per day. On hyperinflation and the regime's responsibility, see Mladen Dinkić: *Ekonomija destrukcije* (Beograd: Stubovi Kulture, 2000). In late 1993, Đukanović even went as far as justifying hyper-inflation: 'We have chosen inflation on purpose. We are printing money in order to provide for bare survival.' Dragan Đurić: 'How to Survive', *AIM*, 20.12.1993.

81 *Vreme* 14.12.1994.

82 Dinkić: *Ekonomija destrukcije*, pp. 167-171.

83 *Vreme* 12.9.1994.

cialdemocrats criticised the DPS for its inadequate transformation, marking the end of the Montenegrin 'grand coalition'.⁸⁴

The brief coalition episode illustrated the difference in the tools employed by the regimes in Montenegro and Serbia. SPS also formed coalitions, especially after the 1993 elections with New Democracy, a moderate pro-western party, but it demonstrated less willingness to co-operate with the larger opposition parties.⁸⁵

In addition to the *rapprochement* of the policies of the ruling parties of Montenegro and Serbia, pressure from the dominant partner in the new Yugoslav federation played an important role in pushing President Bulatović and the Democratic Party of Socialists towards closer alliance with Serbia. Serbia sought to obstruct any *rapprochement* between Montenegro and its neighbours, Croatia and Albania, or western countries (especially Italy). The pressure was exemplified by the expansion of the Yugoslav army presence in the Republic and the abolition of the separate Montenegrin Ministry of Defence, as well as by talk of merger between SPS and DPS, albeit that this was rejected by the DPS.⁸⁶

In between the end of the crisis between the two parties in 1993/4 and the conflict between Đukanović and Milošević in 1997, relations between the governments of the two republics were generally cordial. At the same time, Montenegro maintained a distinct approach and continued to criticise varying aspects of Serbia's dominance in the Federation,⁸⁷ begging a journalist from the independent newspaper *Naša Borba* to ask: 'Are the regimes in Serbia and Montenegro identical twins or just "simple ones", which differ also in their character?'⁸⁸

Juxtaposed to the ongoing variations in the relationship between the governments in Belgrade and Podgorica, the intra-Montenegrin dispute over relations with Serbia and Serbian identity remained potent. With the re-establishment of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church (MOC) in 1993, the debate gained an additional dimension. The Montenegrin church had been merged into the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1920 after Montenegro was absorbed into Yugoslavia. In Communist Yugoslavia, the Macedonian Orthodox Church split from the Serbian Orthodox Church (with the encouragement of the Communist leadership), but this did not take place in Montenegro. In the early 1990s, however, the representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) in Montenegro had become some of the most virulent advocates of Serbian nationalism while, at the same time, a movement emerged for the re-establishment of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. In October 1993, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church was re-established with Bishop Antonije Abramović at its helm.⁸⁹ The church did not gain significant acceptance by the authorities, nor did it gain a noteworthy share of followers, but it did pose a challenge to the Serbian Orthodox

84 *Vreme* 10.5.1993; *Vreme* 20.9.1993.

85 Some discussions between the SPS and the Democratic Party did, however, take place in 1993/4.

86 Velizar Brajović: 'The Last Days of Montenegro?', *Balkan War Report* February 1994, p. 17; Velizar Brajović: 'The Iron Embrace of Belgrade', *War Report*, July/August 1995, p. 12-13.

87 The issues of contention ranged from the Serbian take-over of JAT to a different approach on privatisation and the structure of the federal state. See *Vreme* 23.4.1996.

88 *Naša Borba* 1-2.7.1995.

89 See the self-presentation of the Church at: www.moc-cpc.org. For a presentation of the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, see www.mitropolija.cg.yu.

Church.⁹⁰ This arose mostly from the situation that two separate orthodox churches rarely operate on the same territory. Thus, any recognition of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church would simultaneously mean the end of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. Furthermore, as the Montenegrin Orthodox Church laid claim to the properties of the SOC, which it had acquired in 1920 through the abolition of the Montenegrin church, the co-existence of the two churches was difficult, if not inconceivable.⁹¹ As a result, relations between the churches and their followers have been tense, with clashes erupting frequently at parallel celebrations of Christmas.⁹²

Of the political parties, the Liberal Alliance endorsed the re-establishment of the MOC and the SDP called for the church's recognition during the 1990s, whereas the People's Party and the pro-Serb wing of DPS (after 1998, the SNP) opposed recognition and supported the claims to exclusivity of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Even after adopting a pro-independence course, the Democratic Party of Socialists kept its distance from the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.⁹³ From 1999, the government began carefully to adopt the middle ground. In January 2000, the authorities allowed for the recognition of the church as one of the country's religious communities. The position of the government regarding the takeover by the Montenegrin Orthodox Church of churches controlled by the Serbian Orthodox Church has been more ambivalent. The Minister of Religion has condemned such incidents but these were often helped or, at least, not hindered by the Montenegrin police.⁹⁴

During this period, the People's Party moderated its position regarding Serbian nationalism, as exemplified by the following statement of Novak Kilibarda, the Party's President:

The People's Party is constantly accused of being a Party which supports the idea of a Greater Serbia and wishes to incorporate Montenegro into Serbia. However, we have proved that we are the most serious guardians of both the federal state and of Montenegro's statehood. Montenegro has to be equal in every respect with Serbia.⁹⁵

Dayton and beyond

The end of the war in Bosnia had a profound impact on Montenegro and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On the one side, the Milošević regime presented itself as a successful peacemaker and succeeded in ending the sanctions. On the other, the peace effectively worked in the hands of the opposition – both within Serbia and in Montenegro.

The rapid improvement of relations between FRY and the west in late 1995 and early 1996 was taken by the Montenegrin government of Milo Đukanović as an opportunity to build closer economic and political ties with western countries while loosening the federa-

90 Velizar Brajović: 'Church Wars', *Balkan War Report*, December 1993, p. 10.

91 Veseljko Koprivica: 'Bloodshed Threatening', *AIM* 23.12.2002.

92 Gordana Borović: 'A Concert with the Patriarch and a General', *AIM* 15.1.2001; Draško Duranović: 'Yule-Logs of Discord', *AIM* 7.1.2002.

93 *Beta* 8.1.1998.

94 *Free B92* 25.12.2000.

95 Interview with Kilibarda, *Vreme* 22.2.1993. The NS did, however, maintain its approach of seeking to rehabilitate the *Četnik* movement in Montenegro and calling for 'reconciliation' between Partizans and *Četnici*. Duško Vuković: 'Widening of the Breach in the History of the Victors', *AIM* 7.7.1994.

tion with Serbia. This approach, to be pursued more vigorously in 1997, solicited considerable criticism on behalf of the Serbian authorities and, especially, the more conservative wing of the regime around the Yugoslav Left (*Jugoslovenska Levica*, JUL) and Milošević's wife, Mirjana Marković.⁹⁶

In Montenegrin domestic politics, the end of the war in Bosnia did not pass without having an impact on the political scene. Mirroring the changes among the Serbian opposition parties, the People's Party tuned down its Serbian nationalist rhetoric and welcomed the peace agreement in Bosnia. The Party, however, remained staunchly opposed to Montenegrin independence as advocated by the other two major opposition parties, the Social Democratic Party – which took a gradualist approach, giving greater importance to political and economic reform – and the Liberal Alliance.⁹⁷ This moderation made way for the establishment of the coalition *Narodna sloga* (People's Unity) between the Liberal Alliance and the People's Party ahead of the parliamentary elections in November 1996. As indicated by the coalition's name, it sought to overcome (or postpone) the fundamental dispute between 'Greens' and 'Whites', i.e. supporters of Montenegrin identity and proponents of Montenegro's Serbdom, in order to oust DPS from power. The coalition was joined, however, neither by the Social Democratic Party nor by the parties of the national minorities, preventing the establishment of one united opposition block.⁹⁸ The dominance of the DPS, furthermore, allowed it to change the electoral rules in its own favour, as it had done in previous elections, and to conduct a lavish election campaign, beating the opposition in terms of money spent by a margin of 10:1.⁹⁹

Table 4 – Results of the Parliamentary elections, 3 November 1996¹⁰⁰

Party/Coalition	Number of votes	Percentage	Members in Parliament	Percentage
DPS	150 237	51.2	45	63.4
<i>Narodna Sloga</i>	74 963	25.6	19	25.6
SDA	10 167	3.5	3	3.5
DS CG	5 289	1.8	2	2.8
DUA	3 849	1.3	2	2.8
Others	48 698	16.6	–	–

96 Velizar Brajović: 'Moving West', *War Report* November/December 1995, p. 15.

97 Esad Kočan: 'How Dayton Affected Montenegro', *AIM* 28.11.1995.

98 Draško Đuranović: 'Unlikely Allies in Podgorica', *War Report* September 1995, p. 14; Draško Đuranović: 'Bargaining to the Last Breath', *AIM* 5.10.1995; Draško Đuranović: 'The Almost United Front', *War Report* October 1996, p. 31.

99 Esad Kočan: 'Joint Opposition List-The Only Weapon Against DPS Absolutism', *AIM* 29.6.1996; Draško Đuranović: 'In the Shadow of Big Brother', *AIM* 2.11.1996.

100 Source: Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, pp. 301. The results of the federal elections held the same day gave the DPS a similarly strong lead and, while the LSCG boycotted the elections, both the NS and the SDP together gained more votes than *Narodna Sloga* at the republican level (32.11% vs. 25.6%), *ibid.* p. 293.

The results of the elections were, therefore, a resounding defeat of the opposition, with the DPS gaining votes compared to earlier elections and defending its majority in parliament. The NS-LSCG coalition actually gathered less support than the two parties had gained individually in 1992, while the SDP failed to enter parliament altogether.¹⁰¹ The elections confirmed the overwhelming predominance of DPS, which continued to receive relatively stable support. With the exception of the weakening of the Serbian nationalist SRS, the results of the elections throughout the first half of the 1990s expressed relatively stable support for all the different political parties.

The National Unity coalition alleged electoral fraud in Montenegro, but the lack of clear evidence failed to create mass mobilisation, in contrast to Serbia where the opposition coalition *Zajedno* succeeded in mobilising month-long street protests after the local elections, also taking place in November 1996, were forged in favour of the ruling coalition. The Serbian protests had a profound impact on the Montenegrin political scene and facilitated the confrontation between Bulatović and Đukanović. During the early phases of the protests, the Montenegrin authorities prevented any detailed reporting and sought to suppress protests in Montenegro itself by *Narodna sloga*, which was seeking to emulate the Serbian demonstrations.¹⁰² With the continuation and the sheer size of the protests in Serbia, the Democratic Party of Socialists changed its policy and allowed the state media to report openly from the Serbian demonstrations, including re-broadcasts of CNN.¹⁰³ In an apparent endorsement of the protesters claim, Svetozar Marović, Speaker of the Parliament, stated:

It all costs us tremendously, it conflicts FRY with the world again, postpones the return of our country into international institutions and prevents prospects of the revival of our economy and the creation of conditions for the normal life of our citizens. Nobody has the right to do that. Not even the President of Serbia has the right to do that, but especially his wife with the phantom organisation which has initiated so many problems in Serbia.¹⁰⁴

Bulatović and Đukanović both called for the recognition of the election results, but the attacks on SPS and JUL, initiated by Marović and Đukanović, marked a departure from previous disputes in which the Montenegrin DPS elite had refrained from openly attacking the Serbian regime. As one journalist reported in January 1997, the break between Đukanović and Bulatović over the protests became increasingly apparent:

Marović's and Đukanović's criticism of the authorities in Serbia (read: Milošević) is radical. Bulatović's criticism sounds as if forced out and calculated to preserve the political mentor from Tolstoy Street [the residence of Milošević in Belgrade].¹⁰⁵

101 *ibid.*, pp. 185-187; Željko Ivanović: 'Cleaning House', *AIM* 6.11.1996.

102 Arguably, only the failure of the Montenegrin protests permitted the regime to allow media to report more openly about the demonstrations in Serbia. Esad Kočan: 'Echo in the Valley of Tears', *AIM* 1.12.1996.

103 Draško Đuranović: 'Washing Hands', *AIM* 11.12.1996.

104 Darko Šuković: 'Trio at the Turning-Point', *AIM* 20.1.1997.

105 *ibid.*

The break with Serbia: democratisation without 'regime change'

Early on in the dispute within the Democratic Party of Socialists, the lines of division had already become apparent between Momir Bulatović on the one side and Svetozar Marović and Milo Đukanović on the other, but the final split of the DPS would constitute a year-long process.

In an interview with the Belgrade weekly *Vreme*, Đukanović accused Milošević of having become a 'man with obsolete political beliefs'.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, he did not advocate any greater sovereignty for Montenegro, nor did he support the Serbian opposition coalition *Zajedno* explicitly:

In the battle for power in Serbia, we did not support anyone, neither personally, nor as a political party.¹⁰⁷

This interview was the immediate cause of confrontation between Milošević and Đukanović. During a meeting of the DPS main board in March 1997, Bulatović sided with Milošević and demanded the dismissal of government members who had supported a position similar to Đukanović. The Party's board mostly supported Bulatović, leading to Đukanović's resignation as Vice-President of DPS.¹⁰⁸ The Prime Minister, however, refused to dismiss the Minister of Culture, the Deputy Prime Minister and the head of state security as had been demanded; the only gesture was the dismissal of the head of the Montenegrin trade representation in Washington and the publication of a conciliatory statement. The confrontation in its early stages seemed to put Bulatović, as head of the Party and President of the Republic, in a stronger position, but the outcome was far from a foregone conclusion.¹⁰⁹

The increasingly public nature of the dispute also involved non-party actors, with student organisations and intellectuals taking sides in the protracted conflict.¹¹⁰ By April, the original support for Bulatović had shrunk, with all three Vice-Presidents of the Party opposing him. Following the failure to depose Đukanović from office, the Bulatović wing of the party made conciliatory gestures towards the Prime Minister, supporting his position as Vice-President of DPS in the attempt to prevent him or Marović from running against Bulatović in the 1997 presidential election.¹¹¹

The conflict soon re-erupted as Đukanović and Marović opposed Milošević's attempt to increase the competences of the federal presidency ahead of his attempt to switch to this post from the Serbian presidency, which he could no longer occupy after two terms of office. The Đukanović faction within DPS was able to block changes to the federal constitution, but it failed to prevent the election of Milošević to the Yugoslav presidency: at a meeting of the DPS board, 51 voted in favour of Milošević's candidacy with 41 against. In a rushed process, Milošević was subsequently elected by the Yugoslav parliament, with the votes of the DPS deputies, to succeed Zoran Lilić.¹¹²

106 *Vreme* 22.2.1997.

107 *ibid.*

108 Nebojša Redžić: 'Đukanović Did Not Say His Last Word', *AIM* 27.3.1997.

109 *Vreme* 29.3.1997; *Vreme* 5.4.1997.

110 *Vreme* 12.4.1997

111 *Vreme* 17.5.1997.

112 Robert Thomas: *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s* (London: Hurst, 1999), pp. 336-9.

The decisive election campaign for the Montenegrin presidency began shortly thereafter, with Đukanović emerging as the DPS candidate. Bulatović called a separate party congress in Kolašin with supporters mostly from northern Montenegro.¹¹³ Subsequently, the two rival wings of DPS separately nominated Bulatović and Đukanović for the election. The outcome of the October 1997 elections, unlike the previous presidential (and parliamentary) elections, was entirely open. The Đukanović wing of the DPS controlled 16 municipalities, while Bulatović controlled only five, although he could also rely on the support of Serbia. Bulatović essentially advocated maintaining the *status quo* and warned of any move towards secession. Đukanović, on the other hand, presented an electoral platform of economic and political reforms, as well as closer ties with the west. He therefore received support both from Serbian opposition parties and from Montenegrin opposition and minority parties, who did not put forward their own candidates. Đukanović did not advocate Montenegrin independence during the campaign but instead called for the establishment of a functional institutional framework with Serbia and a higher degree of autonomous decision-making in Montenegro.¹¹⁴

In the first round, Bulatović gained slightly more votes than Đukanović, only to be defeated by a margin of approximately 5 000 votes – 50.79 per cent to 49.2 per cent – in the second round.¹¹⁵ Bulatović accused Đukanović of electoral fraud, as he was able to control the state media and the institutions carrying out the elections.¹¹⁶ The international observation mission of the OSCE, however, generally found that the ‘final results reflect the will of the voters.’¹¹⁷ During the transition of the presidency from Bulatović to Đukanović, demonstrations organised by the Bulatović faction of the DPS became violent and a major confrontation was only narrowly avoided. Directly aimed at preventing Đukanović from taking office, the incidents sought to destabilise the transition and were the closest Montenegro has come to an armed clash in recent years.¹¹⁸ The unwillingness to recognise Đukanović as President and the readiness of the supporters of Bulatović to start violent protests put an end to any possibility of reconciliation between the two wings of the DPS.

As Vladimir Goati points out, for the second time in Montenegrin presidential elections the candidate supported by the SPS and the Belgrade authorities was defeated in Montenegro. Whereas Bulatović was the candidate representing Montenegrin political autonomy in 1992 against Branko Kostić, Đukanović took his place in 1997.¹¹⁹

The split between Đukanović and Bulatović also put an end to the unprecedented dominance DPS had enjoyed in Montenegro during the first half of the 1990s. In March 1998, the Bulatović wing of the DPS renamed itself, thus abandoning its claim to the whole Party, naming itself the Socialist People’s Party (*Socijalistička narodna partija*, SNP).¹²⁰

113 *Vreme* 9.8.1997; *Vreme* 26.7.1997.

114 See, for example, his interview in *Vreme* 27.10.1997.

115 Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, pp. 187-200.

116 *Vreme* 1.11.1997; *Vreme* 25.10.1997.

117 OSCE/ODHIR: *Republic of Montenegro. Presidential Election 5th and 18th October 1997. Final Report*, 1997, p. 5

118 *Vreme* 24.1.1998.

119 Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, p. 182.

120 For the self-presentation of the Party, see www.snp.cg.yu.

In parliament, the DPS had lost 17 of its 45 seats, forcing it into a coalition with the People's Party and the two Albanian parties. This coalition accelerated the pluralisation of the political scene in Montenegro and resulted in new elections on the insistence of the former opposition parties.

Prior to the elections, the DPS formed a coalition, *Da živimo bolje* (For a better life), with the Social Democratic Party and the People's Party. The five-point programme of the coalition argued in favour of: (a) international links in the economy; (b) privatisation and economic reform; (c) rule of law; (d) democratisation; and (e) social justice and security. The Liberal Alliance supported a similar agenda but, as it placed greater emphasis on the Republic's independence and considered the DPS to be discredited, it did not join the pre-election coalition. The campaign of the SNP was mostly directed against the DPS-led coalition and emphasised the need to protect the union with Serbia.¹²¹

Considering that the elections in May 1998 were, thematically, an extension of the 1997 presidential elections, the reformist spectrum of Montenegrin politics gained considerable strength. *Da živimo bolje* gained nearly one-half of the votes whereas the SNP gained only slightly more than one-third. One of the losers of the elections was the Liberal Alliance, which saw its support drop as DPS took over elements of its programme and as the harsh confrontation between SNP and DPS squeezed the smaller parties. Similarly, the support for minority parties declined as minorities overwhelmingly supported *Da živimo bolje*.¹²²

Table 5 – Results of the Parliamentary elections, 31 May 1998¹²³

Party/Coalition	Number of votes	Percentage	Members in Parliament	Percentage
<i>Da æivimo bolje</i> (DPS, NS, SDP)	170 080	49.5	42	53.8
SNP	123 957	36.1	29	37.2
LSCG	21 612	6.3	5	6.4
DS	5 425	1.5	1	1.2
DUA	3 529	1.0	1	1.2

The Montenegrin elections confirmed the dominance of the Ðukanović wing of the DPS, but Momir Bulatović was elected Prime Minister of Yugoslavia the same

121 Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, pp. 202-203.

122 *ibid.*, pp. 204-206. The two main Albanian parties only entered parliament through a special electoral regulation which reserved five seats in predominantly Albanian municipalities, freeing them effectively from the threshold and assured them one seat each with only one per cent of the vote. This regulation has been criticised by the OSCE election observers but was maintained in subsequent elections (reduced to three seats in the October 2002 elections). OSCE/ODIHR: *Republic of Montenegro (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). Parliamentary Elections, 31 May 1998, 1998*, pp. 5-6.

123 Source: Goati: *Izbori u SRJ*, pp. 303.

month by the Socialist Party and JUL, as well as six DPS deputies who had joined the SNP, ignoring that their mandates had been revoked by the Montenegrin parliament.¹²⁴

Between the inauguration of Đukanović as President and the fall of Milošević two and a half years later, in October 2000, tensions between Serbia and Montenegro steadily increased. In the light of the escalating conflict in Kosovo and the participation of the Serbian Radical Party in the Serbian government in early 1998, the Serbian authorities adopted an increasingly belligerent tone, using the considerable army presence in the Republic to put pressure on the Montenegrin authorities. Simultaneously, the Đukanović government adopted an increasingly independence-minded policy, leading eventually to the outright call for Montenegro's secession from Serbia. Montenegro effectively ended most economic ties with Serbia, including the adoption of the German Mark in 1999 as a parallel currency – and, in 2000, as an exclusive one (before switching to the Euro from 2002). In 1999, Montenegro also unilaterally abolished visa requirements for foreign nationals.¹²⁵ All these steps were met by the Serbian and Yugoslav authorities with the greater isolation of Montenegro from the Serbian market, including the establishment of checkpoints at the border between the two republics – thus, in fact, re-affirming the separation of Montenegro.

The escalation of the war in neighbouring Kosovo proved to be a serious challenge to Montenegro. With the first threat of NATO air strikes against Serbia in October 1998, the repression of the Milošević regime against the independent media and the political opposition increased, raising fears of a more forceful intervention in Montenegro. With the beginning of the NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia and the mass expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo, Montenegro became directly affected by the conflict. The NATO bombings themselves affected Montenegro only marginally, being aimed at sites of the Yugoslav army, but the fighting in Kosovo affected Montenegro directly through a considerable inflow of refugees, adding to the number of refugees which had moved to Montenegro during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. In the summer and autumn of 1998, some 50 000 Albanians fled to Montenegro, although some of these returned following the 'ceasefire' negotiated between Richard Holbrooke and Milošević in October 1998. By the end of the Kosovo war in June 1999, some 80 000 Albanian refugees had fled to Montenegro, amounting to over 10 per cent of the population of the Republic. Most refugees were accommodated privately with Albanian families, but the sheer number involved placed an economic burden on Montenegro and, similar to Macedonia, affected the balance between the nations living in Montenegro.¹²⁶ Despite heightened tensions between the government and the Liberal Alliance on one side, and the army and the Socialist People's Party on the other, no conflict erupted since the feared crackdown on Montenegro for its independent policy did not take place.¹²⁷

At the end of the war and the effective 'loss' of Kosovo for the Yugoslav government, it was evident that the effect of the conflict was three-fold. Firstly, the international isolation of Milošević, coupled with the indictment against him by the ICTY tribunal at The Hague,

124 *ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

125 See Beáta Huszka's chapter on 'The Dispute over Montenegrin Independence', this volume.

126 *Monitor* 28.5.1999.

127 Srđan Darmanović: 'Montenegro Survives the War', *East European Constitutional Review* Vol. 8 No. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 66-67.

indicated – unlike five years earlier during the war in Bosnia – that there was no return to international respectability for the Milošević regime. The split between Montenegro's pro-western policies and Serbia was thus not reparable as long as the Serbian regime remained in place. The loss of the war for Serbia, and the relatively unscathed state in which Montenegro emerged from the conflict, seemed to confirm Đukanović's policies. Secondly, the Kosovo war increased support in Montenegro for independence and strengthened the resolve of the Montenegrin government to pursue this option. For the first time, a narrow majority supported Montenegrin independence in opinion polls, whereas the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia declined considerably in popularity.¹²⁸ Thirdly, Western countries, for the first time since the disintegration of Yugoslavia, sought actively to support political alternatives to Milošević within FRY, extending both financial and logistical aid to the regime's opponents in Serbia itself and helping the Đukanović government. The Montenegrin authorities had already received western aid before the Kosovo war, but this increased substantially at its end. In 2000 alone, the United States and the European Union gave Montenegro direct aid amounting to over \$90m.¹²⁹

Within Montenegro, the war further deepened the divide between the pro-Milošević SNP and the governing coalition on account of the increasing threats by the Serbian authorities against the Montenegrin government. In this climate, the Liberal Alliance withdrew its support for the *Da živimo bolje* coalition in the local councils of Podgorica and Herceg Novi in the attempt to benefit from the increased pro-independence sentiment in early local elections. These, held in June 2000, turned into a national competition between the opponents and the supporters of Montenegrin independence. The coalition *Za Jugoslaviju*, consisting of the SNP, JUL, the Serbian People's Party, the Serbian Radical Party and some other minor parties ran against the DPS-SDP coalition. The result of the election was inconclusive, as the DPS-SDP increased their share of the vote in Podgorica, allowing them to govern without the Liberal Alliance, whereas in Herceg Novi the SNP-led coalition won two seats, allowing it to govern in the town. Local issues, such as the lack of popularity of the DPS candidate in Herceg Novi, certainly shaped the outcome, but the results indicated a country-wide stalemate between the two groupings. In Herceg Novi, the large number of Bosnian and Croatian Serbs who had acquired Yugoslav citizenship also helped facilitate the victory of the SNP coalition. The main loser in the elections was the Liberal Alliance, which was punished by the voters for having triggered them.¹³⁰

It was not until the fall of the Milošević regime following the electoral victory of the Serbian opposition in the federal presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 September 2000 that the deadlock in Montenegro was broken and a political re-alignment occurred. Internal conflicts over the future status of Montenegro in Yugoslavia were juxtaposed with conflicting views on Milošević and the Serbian regime. This led, for example, to the participation of the People's Party in a DPS government despite its support for the continuation of Yugoslavia, which would have placed it closer to the SNP. Contrary to the expectations (and the hopes) of many observers, the fall of Milošević thus resulted in the dispute on indepen-

128 Zoran Radulović: 'Nobody believes in the Federation' *AIM* 24.9.1999.

129 Anne Swardson: 'Montenegro Seen As Beacon of Hope', *Washington Post* 24.5.2000, p. A25.

130 OSCE/ODIHR: *Montenegro. Early Municipal Elections (Podgorica and Herceg Novi), 11 June 2000. Final Report*, Warsaw, 18.8.2000.

dence gaining in importance.¹³¹ At the same time, however, the supporters of Montenegrin independence lost in Milošević one key reason for pursuing separation from Yugoslavia.

The intra-Montenegrin re-alignment was matched by a change in alliances between Serbia and Montenegro. After the break between DPS and SPS, the Serbian opposition developed increasing contacts with Đukanović and, in particular, the Democratic Party (*Demokratska Stranka*, DS) of Zoran Đinđić sought closer co-operation with the DPS after the worsening of the repression in Serbia.¹³² The DS did not support the DPS policy of Montenegrin independence, but the links strengthened after Đinđić fled to Montenegro during the Kosovo war in fear of repression by the Belgrade authorities.¹³³

Changes to the Yugoslav Constitution and the setting of Yugoslav presidential and parliamentary elections for July 2000 nevertheless led to a worsening in relations between the Serbian opposition and the Montenegrin government.¹³⁴ The Serbian opposition saw the elections as an opportunity to change the regime but Đukanović rejected participation on the grounds that this would have legitimised the constitutional changes which drastically reduced the powers of Montenegro. Earlier, Đukanović had been considered as a possible candidate of a joint Yugoslav opposition. With his Party's decision to boycott the elections, as well as the choice of the nationalist Vojislav Koštica as the presidential candidate for the Serbian opposition, Đukanović fell out of favour with the Serbian opposition.

Despite the electoral success of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (*Demokratska opozicija Srbije*, DOS), the coalition did not gain enough seats in the federal Parliament to govern alone. It was thus forced to enter a coalition with the SNP which, together with the Serbian People's Party (*Srpska narodna stranka*, SNS),¹³⁵ took all the Montenegrin seats in a record low turnout of 28.2 per cent.¹³⁶ Prior to the elections, there had been contacts between DOS and SNP in the attempt to isolate SPS.¹³⁷ The coalition between SNP and DOS ushered in partial reforms within the Socialist People's Party. The 'Belgrade wing' of the Party surrounding Momir Bulatović¹³⁸ was pushed out and a more moderate wing under the leadership of Predrag Bulatović¹³⁹ took over. The Party maintained its conservative-nationalist profile and continued to support firm union with Serbia, but at the same

131 *Monitor* 8.9.2000.

132 Thomas: *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s*, p. 380.

133 Dejan Anastasijević: *Out of Time. Drašković, Đinđić and the Serbian Opposition against Milošević* (Prague/London: Institute for War and Peace Reporting/Central Europe Review, 2000), p. 143.

134 *Blic* 6.7.2000; *Vreme* 15.7.2000; *Vreme* 22.7.2000. An analysis of the constitutional amendments can be found in International Crisis Group: *Current Legal Status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Serbia and Montenegro*, 19.9.2000.

135 The SNS split off from the NS as the latter sought a more accommodating policy towards Đukanović. Subsequently, the Serbian People's Party has been pursuing a strict Serbian nationalist line, including occasional verbal attacks on minorities. For a self-presentation of the Party, see: www.sns.cg.yu.

136 Vladimir Goati: *Elections in FRY. From 1990 to 1998. Addendum: Elections 2000* (Beograd: CeSID, 2001), pp. 240-241.

137 *Monitor* 25.8.2000.

138 Bulatović subsequently founded the People's Socialist Party (*Narodna socijalistička stranka*, NSS) which has been a marginal party, gaining merely 2.9% of the vote in the 2001 elections.

139 Not related to Momir Bulatović.

time ended (belatedly) its support for Milošević. In the course of the post-Milošević political re-alignment in Montenegro, the People's Party¹⁴⁰ left the Đukanović coalition in early 2001 after the coalition's espousal of the independence cause. Alongside the SNS, it sided instead with the SNP.

Subsequent to the fall of Milošević, Montenegrin politics has thus seen the formation of three main groupings. Firstly, there is the Democratic Party of Socialists and the Social Democratic Party, both supporting independence, the former more hesitantly than the latter. Secondly, the alliance of SNP, NS and SNS represents the main supporters of Yugoslavia. This coalition has continuously accused the government of corruption and enrichment. Thirdly, the Liberal Alliance stands alone as a party. It supports the pro-independence policy of the government but remains deeply sceptical of the Democratic Party of Socialists and the slow pace of reforms and of steps towards independence, on which issue the Liberals have repeatedly called for the holding of a referendum.

The departure of the People's Party from the governing coalition led to early elections in April 2001, the third set since 1992. The electoral campaign centred on the future of relations with Serbia after Milošević and on the accusations of corruption against the government.¹⁴¹

The election results indicate the extremely polarised political scene in Montenegro, with the pro-independence parties gaining only a slight advantage over the pro-Yugoslav bloc. Failing to win an outright majority, the DPS-SDP coalition formed a minority government with the support of the Liberal Alliance.

Table 6 – Results of the Parliamentary elections, 22 April 2001¹⁴²

Party/Coalition	Number of votes	Percentage	Members in Parliament	Percentage
<i>Pobjeda je Crna Gora</i> (DPS, SDP)	153 946	42.0	36	46.7
<i>Zajedno za Jugoslaviju</i> (SNP, NS, SNS)	148 513	40.6	33	42.9
LSCG	28 746	7.9	6	7.8
DUA	4 232	1.2	1	1.3
DS	3 570	1.0	1	1.3

The DPS-led government after the 2001 elections thus lacked the necessary decisive stability in negotiations over the future status of Montenegro. Both the Social Democrats and the Liberal Alliance argued for a referendum to be held in 2001. The DPS supported

140 The NS also dismissed its President, Novak Kilibarda, who had been close to Đukanović. He had been the representative of the Montenegrin Trade Mission in Bosnia. His subsequent National Unity Party (*Narodna sloga*) gathered only 0.1% of the vote in the 2001 elections.

141 International Crisis Group: *Montenegro: Time to Decide. Pre-election Briefing*, Podgorica/Brussels, 18.4.2001.

142 OSCE/ODIHR: *Republic of Montenegro. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Parliamentary Election, 22 April 2001*, Warsaw, 12.6.2001, p. 17.

this in public but the narrow margin of support for independence in opinion polls, and the protracted debates with the opposition over the technicalities of such a referendum, delayed the calling of one. During the debates on the future shape of relations between Serbia and Montenegro, the coalition *Zajedno za Jugoslaviju* formulated a joint platform with the governing parties in Serbia, making the negotiations effectively both internal and bilateral at one and the same time.

By autumn 2001, the negotiations process appeared to be moving towards a referendum in Montenegro as the result of several rounds of failed negotiations. With the forceful intervention of the European Union during winter 2001/2, however, the fortunes changed in favour of a joint state for which a variety of plans circulated throughout February and March 2002. Finally, on 14 March 2002, the Montenegrin, Serbian and Yugoslav governments signed an Agreement on transforming Yugoslavia into a Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Montenegro obliged itself not to carry out a referendum for at least three years, but the structure of the Union was largely left open to later negotiations.¹⁴³

Neither the Liberal Alliance nor the Social Democratic Party supported the Agreement and both complained of not having been involved in the negotiations. Shortly after the signing of the Agreement, the minority government of Filip Vujanović lost the support of the Liberal Alliance and, at the same time, the ministers of the Social Democratic Party, including the minister of foreign affairs, Branko Lukovac, resigned.¹⁴⁴ The Agreement itself nevertheless managed to muster sufficient support as the DPS and the pro-Yugoslav parties voted in favour.¹⁴⁵

The resulting governmental crisis was accentuated by the inability of the leading parties to form a new coalition. After the local elections in Montenegro in May, the Liberal Alliance formed coalitions at the local level with *Zajedno za Jugoslaviju* in the attempt to oust the DPS from power in a number of communities. This local co-operation was then transferred to the caretaker Parliament, which was confronted with a narrow alliance between LSCG and the pro-Yugoslav parties. This alliance, formed despite the large differences in virtually every political aspect, was established with the sole aim of ousting the DPS from power. During spring and summer 2002, the alliance was able to change a number of laws on the media and elections, taking *de facto* control of the state media which had earlier been influenced by the Democratic Party of Socialists.¹⁴⁶

The October 2002 elections brought a degree of clarification and certainty into the Montenegrin political scene subsequent to the signing of the Belgrade Agreement. The DPS managed to increase its share of the vote to a level approaching that of the 1998 election results, when its partner included, in addition to the Social Democrats, the People's Party which had since joined the pro-Yugoslav bloc.

143 On this issue, see the chapter by Wim van Meurs on 'The Belgrade Agreement: Robust Mediation between Serbia and Montenegro', this volume.

144 Darko Šuković: 'New Round of Imbroglío', AIM 21.4.2002.

145 *MNToday* 10.4.2002.

146 The new media regulations had to be amended after protests from the media (including a news announcer who walked off air during the main news programme) and from international organisations that these allowed excessive government control over the media. Bojica Bošković: 'Political Crisis Ended?', *Balkan Reconstruction Report* 16.9.2002.

Table 7 – Results of the Parliamentary elections, 20 October 2002¹⁴⁷

Party/Coalition	Percentage	Members in Parliament	Percentage
<i>Demokratska lista za evropsku Crnu Goru</i> (DPS, SDP)	47.7	39	52.0
<i>Zajedno za promene</i> (SNP, NS, SNS)	37.8	30	40.0
LSCG	5.7	4	5.3
<i>Patriotska koalicija za Jugoslaviju</i> (SRS, NSS, JUL)	2.7	–	
<i>Demokratska koalicija – albanci zajedno</i> (DUA, DS)	2.5	2	2.7

In addition to an effectively small degree of general change, the 2002 Montenegrin elections signalled the support of the majority of voters for a careful path towards greater autonomy: the Liberal Alliance lost much of its support, mostly due to its curious alliance with the pro-Yugoslav SNP, NS and SNS. As a continuation of earlier themes, the elections were largely fought over the issue of future relations with Serbia. Concerns over corruption played a prominent role in the campaign, but failed to translate into votes for the opposition.¹⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the elections and in preparation for the (failed) presidential elections in December 2002, Đukanović surprisingly switched his presidential office with the position of prime minister. Filip Vujanović, the former prime minister, was to replace him as president. The presidential elections on 22 December 2002, however, failed due to low turnout, after the Coalition “Together for Change” and the Liberal Alliance called for a boycott and now major opposition party put up candidates.¹⁴⁹ Despite the overwhelming victory of Filip Vujanović with approximately 84 % of the vote, the DPS appeared considerably less victorious than in October 2002 and the polarization of the party system gained ground.¹⁵⁰

Conclusions

In examining the Montenegrin political scene in recent years, major differences with political life in the other Yugoslav successor republics can be detected. Despite significant political shifts and phases of considerable instability, political alignments have remained surprisingly stable throughout the 1990s. The pro-Serbian bloc, represented by Branko Kostić in 1992, Momir Bulatović in 1997/8 and by the SNP-led coalition since 2000, has consistently gathered between one-third and just less than one-half of the votes. The political parties and

147 Source: www.cesid.org.yu; www.cemi.cg.yu.

148 See Cemi: *Monitoring medija na izborima 2002*, Podgorica, October 2002, available at www.cemi.cg.yu.

149 Similar to the Serbian presidential elections, Montenegrin presidential elections require a turnout of 50 % to be valid. This caused presidential elections in Serbia to fail once in 1997 and twice in 2002.

150 See James Palmer: ‘Montenegro poll invalid after just 46% turn out to vote,’ *The Independent* 23.12.2002; www.cesid.org.yu.

candidates running for an autonomous, yet not necessarily independent, Montenegro usually gather 40-50 per cent of the vote while outright independence parties and groupings succeed in gathering around one-tenth of the vote. The radical Serb nationalist position of the Yugoslav bloc subsided throughout the 1990s while the parties in favour of greater Montenegrin sovereignty inched towards outright independence, but the overall stability of the Montenegrin scene has been particularly noteworthy.

Within this political system, the dominance of the Democratic Party of Socialists has been remarkable. The DPS is the only party in former Yugoslavia, and across all of the Balkans for that matter, which has managed to maintain power throughout the transition period. The Party has undergone several transformations, first during the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' and again after the break with Milošević, but it has remained structurally similar throughout. Due to its uninterrupted rule, it furthermore remains closely intertwined with the administration. This particularity begs the question as to whether Montenegro can be considered to be a fully-fledged democracy, considering that a change in government is one of its defining criteria. We can consider Montenegro as a classic case of a hybrid regime in the post-Communist era: not yet qualifying as a liberal democracy, it nevertheless does not constitute an authoritarian system. Generally, we can distinguish the period between 1990 and 1997 from the subsequent period. In 1990-1997, regular elections were held, which may have lacked some criteria in judging them as free and fair but which, nevertheless, allowed for meaningful competition. It was the control of resources and the media which maintained the dominance of the DPS. According to Larry Diamond's recent conceptualisation of hybrid regimes, Montenegro during this period would have qualified as a competitive authoritarian system, wherein elections took place but the dominance of one party was secured through the manipulation of the electoral process and via other institutional and extra-institutional means. The split of the DPS in 1997/8 marked a transformation to a system oscillating between an 'ambiguous' regime¹⁵¹ and an electoral democracy. Here, the fairness of elections is more respected and the instruments of control over the democratic process diminished.¹⁵²

In addition to these considerations on the political system, two explanations of the underlying divisions in the political spectrum on the issue of independence need to be examined: the historical and geographical divide of Montenegro; and the role of the tribe (*pleme*).

Firstly, common discourse on the division between pro-Serb and pro-independence supporters has identified a divide between the north and the south of the country, or between 'old Montenegro' and the territories which became part of Montenegro only during the course of the 20th century. This divide is further reinforced by the differences in economic development and geographical location. The coastal regions have been economically better off, largely as a result of tourism, than the northern areas which are relatively remote. Additionally, the proximity to Serbia has, naturally, led to more intense contacts than elsewhere in Montenegro.

This explanation remains relevant, but the division over Montenegrin independence is much less geographically concentrated than is usually perceived. As the results of the local elections in 2002 highlight (see Table 8), pro-independence parties have generally been

151 The ambiguousness in the case of Montenegro derives from two features: (a) the system still had not seen a change of government; and (b) the regime was in transition and, since 1997/8, no stable or permanent regime has emerged.

152 Larry Diamond: 'Thinking about Hybrid Regimes', *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 13 No. 2 (April 2002), pp. 21-36.

strong on the coast and in the historical heartland of Montenegro (Cetinje), whereas pro-Yugoslav parties gained most local authorities in northern Montenegro, but the margin of victory is, in a number of cases, narrow.

Table 8 – Results of the local elections, 15 May 2002¹⁵³

	Pro-independence Votes	Pro-Yugoslav Votes
Coast & Old Montenegro		
Bar	55.8	33.7
Budva	49.8	46.2
Cetinje	88.4	9.0
Herceg-Novi (2000)	48.8	49.7
Kotor	53.8	42.8
Tivat	55.4	38.3
Ulcinj	26.1	12.2
Central Montenegro		
Danilovgrad	52.8	42.2
Nikšić	43.8	52.9
Podgorica (2000)	57.2	34.9
Northern Montenegro		
Andrijevica	31.8	66.7
Berane	47.0	49.9
Bijelo Polje	57.3	38.6
Kolašin	41.4	54.8
Mojkovac	45.8	51.2
Plav	53.5	20.1
Pljevlja	39.3	58.3
Plužine	25.3	67.1
Rožaje	69.1	5.0
Šavnik	46.2	52.7
Žabljak	41.2	57.9

The historical divide, although indicative, has been offset by two factors. Firstly, as most minorities have generally supported the DPS and other pro-independence parties, this has reduced support for pro-Yugoslav forces in the Sandžak region where Bosniaks and Albanians live. Secondly, the large number of Serbian refugees from Croatia and Bosnia (Herceg-Novi), or Serbs from Serbia (Budva), living in some of the coastal cities has diminished the support for pro-independence parties. Irrespective of these two trends, the results of the 2002

local elections, along with other results, indicate that the division over the status of Montenegro runs across the country and across its cities and towns.

Similarly to the historical divide, the role of tribal affiliations has been often been considered worthy as an explanation for political divisions in Montenegro. Affiliation with tribes, i.e. groups of extended relatives, has persisted longer in Montenegro than in other parts of south-eastern Europe, largely due to its geographical specificities. By the 1950s, however, the central government had marginalised the tribes as a threat to the authority of the state, especially in such a semi-totalitarian system as was Communist Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁴ Karl Kaser has pointed out that the clan-structures in south-eastern Europe have been replaced in the post-communist era with clientelistic networks. These have some structural similarities but they do not constitute continuity with the earlier tribal system.¹⁵⁵

In the 1990s, the tribal origins of political figures did not play a significant role in securing political allegiances among the electoral constituencies.¹⁵⁶ In as far as tribal affiliations still mattered in some parts of Montenegro, they had become largely de-politicised. Since 1999, the Socialist People's Party has attempted to mobilise traditional tribal affiliations against the Montenegrin government. In a number of tribal meetings, organised by the SNP and the Serbian Orthodox Church, the assembled participants have expressed their support for union with Serbia and have threatened the use of force in case the government took steps to secede from Yugoslavia:

By seceding from Serbia, Montenegro would not just trample on its ancestral guiding thoughts, deny its pledges, humiliate the dead and desecrate holy relicts, but it would also threaten itself and its survival.¹⁵⁷

Despite these people's assemblies not being well attended, the threat of the use of force, coupled with the high degree of private ownership of weapons, presented a threat in the period of political uncertainty between the end of the Kosovo war and the fall of

153 The figures include DPS, SDP and LSCG on the side of the pro-independence parties and SNP, SNS, NS, NSS & SRS as the pro-Yugoslav parties. Smaller parties and ethnic minority parties, which made significant gains only in Ulcinj, Rožaje and Plav, have been excluded. This essential division has not been reflected in the subsequent local governments, as the extremist coalition of SRS and NSS has been excluded from local power, whereas the SNP, NS and SNS have formed coalitions with LSCG in a number of areas. Note that the elections results for Podgorica and Herceg-Novi are for the local elections held on 11.6.2000. Sources: Centar za Slobodne Izbore i Demokratiju: *Oko izbora 8: Izveštaj sa lokalnih izbora za odbornika 19 skupština opština Crne Gore (15. maja 2000. godine)*, Belgrade, May 2002; OSCE/ODIHR: *Montenegro. Early Municipal Elections (Podgorica and Herceg Novi)*, 11 June 2000. *Final Report*, Warsaw, 18.8.2000.

154 Christopher Boehm: *Montenegrin Social Organisation and Values: Political Ethnography of a Refugee Area Tribal Adaptation* (New York: AMS Press, 1983).

155 Karl Kaser: *Freundschaft und Feindschaft auf dem Balkan* (Klagenfurt: Wieser, 2001), pp. 88-89.

156 Steven C. Calhoun, in an article on tribes in Montenegro today, examines tribal affiliations in contemporary Montenegro (from the angle of US military policy), while over-stating the importance of tribal membership in the political choices of their members. See Steven C. Calhoun: 'Montenegro's Tribal Legacy,' *Military Review* (July-August 2000), pp. 32-40.

157 SRNA 26.11.2001.

Milošević.¹⁵⁸ The well-known Montenegrin university professor Milan Popović comments that these tribal gatherings are a:

Grotesque mixture of pre-modern historical forms (tribal gatherings) and quiet modern political contents (party political life).¹⁵⁹

Altogether, the attempts to revitalise the tribes for political ends has been only partly successful; the SNP has continued to draw participants to these folkloristic gatherings, but they have failed to develop them into mass movements which would underline the Party's political agenda.¹⁶⁰

Montenegrin politics has, throughout the past decade, differed in one more aspect from the other post-Yugoslav states: despite the high number of minorities, amounting to at least one-quarter of its population, political discourse along ethno-nationalist lines has been considerably less significant than elsewhere. Furthermore, minority parties have been considerably less successful in gathering the near-exclusive support enjoyed by their counterparts elsewhere in former Yugoslavia. Instead, minorities have voted for, and have been represented in, a number of mainstream parties, especially the DPS, SDP and LSCG.¹⁶¹ Among the leading parties, nationalism has played a role in the political discourse, especially in the early 1990s, but, after 1993, attacks on minorities have been rare and the main targets of Serbian nationalist parties have been the pro-independence parties rather than minorities.¹⁶² The intra-Montenegrin dispute over identity and relations with Serbia have together overshadowed the ethnification of politics common to other post-Yugoslav states.

The different dynamics of minority-majority relations in Montenegro is indicative of the curious role of national identity and nationalism in Montenegro. Excluding minorities, there are in fact two nationalisms among the majority populations: Serbian and Montenegrin nationalism. The former was particularly virulent in the early 1990s, but the latter grew steadily throughout the decade. Montenegrin nationalism has been exceptional, as its proponents (foremost the Liberal Alliance) have linked it explicitly with tolerance and inter-ethnic co-existence. Even the traditional myth-making linked the pre-Yugoslav independent state with a policy of tolerance towards minorities. At the same time, Montenegrin nationalism is still not clearly delimited and has not become a broad mass movement, as have other nationalisms in former Yugoslavia. Possessing nevertheless a considerable history, it is still very much a national identity in the making, the success of which will both determine and be determined by the eventual status of Montenegro.

158 Zoran Radulović: 'People's Assemblies' In Montenegro', *AIM* 12.9.1999.

159 As Milan Popović points out, these meetings 'almost exclusively consisted of the members of the SNP... The author of this article [Popović], for example, is a member of the Kuči tribe but he has never been invited to and allowed to participate in the gatherings of this newly-established SNP-Kučič community.' Milan Popović: *Montenegrin Mirror. Polity in Turmoil* (1991-2001) (Podgorica: Nansen Dialogue Centre, 2002), p. 22.

160 Jean-Arnault Dérens: 'Im Banne der Vergangenheit', *Die Wochenzeitung* 30.5.2002.

161 See the chapter by František Šístek and Bohdana Dimitrovová: 'National Minorities in Montenegro after the Break-up of Yugoslavia', this volume.

162 There have been some exceptions. Especially in 2001, pro-Yugoslav parties have attacked minorities either for supposed terrorist activities or for deciding the future status of Montenegro. See Florian Bieber: 'The Instrumentalisation of Minorities in the Montenegrin Dispute over Independence,' *ECMI Brief* 8 (March 2002).