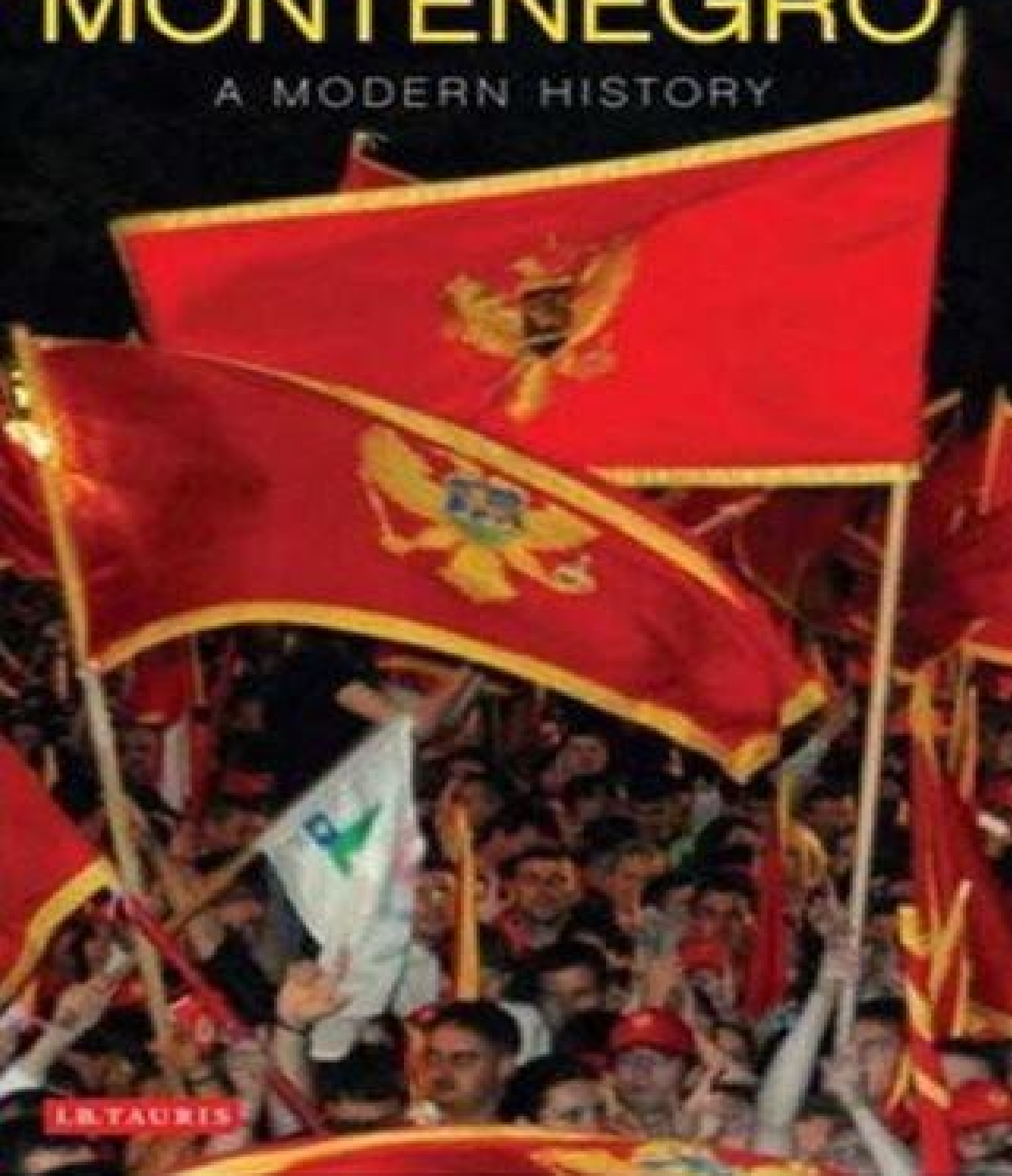


KENNETH MORRISON

MONTENEGRO

A MODERN HISTORY



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MONTENEGRO

Kenneth Morrison is a lecturer in Nationalism and Ethnic Politics at Birkbeck College (University of London) and an Honorary Research Associate at the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES). He obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Stirling and taught Balkan and Yugoslav History and Politics at both SSEES and the University of Aberdeen.



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A Modern History

KENNETH MORRISON

For Helen and Hannah

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AVNOJ

Antifašističko v(ij)eće narodnog oslobođenja jugoslavije (Anti-

Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia)

BAF

Balkan Air Force

BK TV

Serbian TV station owned by Boguljub Karić

CDT

Centre for Democratic Transition

CEDEM

Centre for Democracy and Human Rights

CEMI

Centre for Monitoring Elections

CFS

Montenegrin Federalist Party

CFSP

Common Foreign and Security Policy

CMI

Chr. Michelsen Institute

CPY

Communist Party of Yugoslavia

DAM Democratic

Alliance in Montenegro

DANU

Dukljanska akademija nauka i umjetnost (Doclean Academy

of Sciences and Arts)

DOS

Democratic Opposition of Serbia

DPMNE

Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo

(Democratic Party for Macedonian National Union

DPS Democratic

Party of Socialists

DSS

Democratic Serb Party

DUA

Democratic Union of Albanians

DŽB

coalition to 'For a Better Life'

FRY

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

EC

European Community/European Commission

EIU

Economist Intelligence Unit

EU European

Union

FCO

FRY

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

FYROM

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

GZP

Grupa za promjene (Group for Changes)

IMF

International Monetary Fund

IN TV

privately-owned Montenegrin television company

IWPR

Institute for War and Peace Reporting

JAT

Yugoslav Air Transport

JNA

Jugoslovenska narodna armija (Yugoslav People's Army)

JUL

Yugoslav United Left

KAP

Kombinat aluminijuma podgorica (aluminium plant)

KLA

Kosovo Liberation Army

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

KPJ

Komunistička partija jugoslavije (Communist Party of Yugoslavia)

KSCS

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes

LCM

League of Communists of Montenegro

LCY

League of Communists of Yugoslavia

LSCG

Liberalni savez Crne Gore (Liberal Alliance of Montenegro)

MANS

Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector

MBC

Montenegro Broadcasting Company

MBNU

Montenegrin Board for National Unification

MI Military

Intelligence

MINA

Independent Montenegrin News Agency

MOC

Montenegrin Orthodox Church

MUP

Ministry of the Interior

NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO non-governmental

organization

NS People's

Party

NSCG

People's Party of Montenegro

NSS

People's Socialist Party

ODIHR

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OSCE

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OSS

Office of Strategic Services

OZNA

Organ zaštite naroda (armije) (Yugoslav Secret Service)

PK

Communist Party of Montenegro

PR public

relations

PZP

Pokret za promjene (Movement for Changes)

RAF

Royal Air Force

RRC

Republican Referendum Commission

RTCG

Radio televizija Crne Gore (Radio Television Montenegro)

RTS

Radio Television Serbia

SAA

Stability and Association Agreement

SANU

Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti (Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences)

SCG

Srbija i Crna Gora (joint state of Serbia and Montenegro)

SDA

Stranka demokratske akcije (Party of Democratic Action)

SDB

Služba državne bezbednosti (State Security Service)

SDP

Social Democratic Party

SDS

Serbian Democratic Party

SFRY

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

SNJ

Party of National Equality

SNP

Socialist People's Party

SNS

Srpska narodna stranka (Serbian People's Party)

SOC

Serbian Orthodox Church

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SOE

Special Operations Executive

SPCG

Socialistička partija Crne Gore (Socialist Party of

Montenegro)

SPS

Socialist Party of Serbia

SRS

Serbian Radical Party

SSO

Association of Socialist Youth

SSRN

Socialist Alliance of Working People

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO United

Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization

UNSC

United Nations Security Council

US

United States of America

VRMO–DPMNE

Macedonian nationalist party

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Acknowledgements

Montenegro is the most enigmatic of the former Yugoslav republics. The term ‘Montenegro’ (Black Mountain) always held a fascination for me, even

before I was aware of its romantic history, the poetic works composed by

Tennyson and Byron, the sweeping travelogues penned by Mary Edith

Durham and Rebecca West, the anthropological studies of Christopher

Boehm, or the works (both fiction and non-fiction) of Milovan Djilas. My

own discovery has rather more modest roots, stemming back to seeing an

article published in a 1977 edition of the *National Geographic* magazine (old copies a neighbour had deposited in our summer house while relocating in

the late 1980s). The article, entitled ‘Yugoslavia’s Black Mountain’, vividly

depicted political, cultural and social life in Montenegro. Temporarily trans-

fixed, the fascination was fleeting and only re-emerged a decade later while I

was reading for an MA in Politics and International Relations at the Univer-

sity of Aberdeen. By then, Yugoslavia had collapsed, and armed conflict in

Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later Kosovo, had scarred the territory

of the former Yugoslavia. The entire Balkan region seemed to be lurching from one crisis to another. But, while much had been written about the larger Yugoslav republics, there was very little on the tiny republic of Montenegro. As I trawled through the plethora of books and newspaper articles on the Yugoslav crisis, it quickly became clear that Montenegro's role in the process of disintegration was often limited to one or two paragraphs, even in the most detailed accounts. In an attempt to understand more clearly what had happened in Montenegro, I frantically scoured libraries for literature that would alleviate this nagging need. My endeavours led me to discover that both the city and university libraries had several short histories of Montenegro stacked away in their basements, some of which the public had not requested since before the Second World War. It was hardly an auspicious beginning, but it ignited an enthusiasm that would extend well beyond attempts simply to understand Montenegro's contemporary history. Although I had little reason to believe it then, it was the beginning of a passion that would serve to change the direction of my life, and one that has never dampened subsequently.

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

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MONTENEGRO

republic for the first time shortly after the NATO bombing of the Federal

Republic of Yugoslavia and I was immediately enchanted. Montenegro has it

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

Montenegro became an independent state following a closely-contested referendum in May 2006. It had been independent before, recognized as such by the Congress of Berlin in 1878. A 40-year period of independence ended in 1918 when Montenegro was unified with Serbia following the Podgorica Assembly, before being incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (which became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929). Following the collapse of the Yugoslav state and the onset of war in 1941, a bitter civil war ensued, during which Montenegro was wracked with conflict. At the end of hostilities, it became a republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As that state collapsed in the early 1990s, Montenegro remained within the rump of Yugoslavia, known simply as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and then a looser federal structure dubbed simply Serbia and

Montenegro. In May 2006, a bare majority of its citizens voted for independence. In short, Montenegro had passed through a series of transitions. This can be illustrated using a short, but effective, example. A person who was born in the Montenegro's town of Cetinje in 1908, who had lived and eventually died there in 2008, would have lived through several wars, witnessed huge social upheavals and lived in six different states without leaving his or her place of birth. Yet, that individual would still have been born and died in an independent Montenegro. That so many transitions can happen within one lifespan is testament to Montenegro's tumultuous modern history. It also helps to explain the historical ambiguities surrounding its identity and the (still ongoing) debates over nation and state in Montenegro.

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

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Roberts, Jason Gold at Getty Images, Tim Judah and Dr Peter Palmer – all know Montenegro well and gave me great encouragement throughout. I am equally indebted to my many friends in both Montenegro and Serbia. The famed (and genuine) Montenegrin hospitality is extended to everyone – all visitors. It frequently involves the early-morning ingestion of varying quantities of *domaća rakija* (domestically distilled brandy) and ingesting excessive amounts of local produce. Research in Montenegro is not for those predisposed to refusing this kind of hospitality. For me it was never a problem, and I was lucky to meet many Montenegrins who treated me as a guest regardless of how much or how little they could afford. This book would not have existed had I never had the good fortune to meet Bojan Galić and his family (Snežana, Dalija, and in Sarajevo, Branko) or the Vičković and Sćepanović families (Bosa, Boba, Nena, Katarina and Uroš). They surpassed even the excesses of traditional Montenegrin hospitality and kindness. In

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

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

I have attempted to depict this period in Montenegro’s history as accurately as possible by drawing on a range of primary and secondary sources, including interviews with participants in some of the events depicted in the text and many of which I personally witnessed. Some historians, however, would argue that the witness – being subject to the emotive force of events – cannot possess the objectivity garnered by the cold distance of the passing of time. With this in mind, I have endeavoured to avoid the pitfalls of becoming overtly emotionally involved, and felt a strange sense of distance, even during the celebrations that followed the independence referendum. While I genuinely felt pleased for those who achieved their dream to re-establish a fully sovereign and independent state, I also felt empathy with those who wished to retain a joint state of Serbia and Montenegro. I sought

to retain a sense of detachment and balance throughout. By doing so, I hoped to avoid the narrow subjectivity characteristic of much of what has been written about Montenegro. I have tried to represent the views of all sides, to represent a balanced and honest historical overview and it is my sincere hope that I have achieved that objective. Any oversights or deficiencies are entirely my own.

Kenneth Morrison

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

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1

Introduction:

Nation, State and Identity

The history of Montenegro is exceptionally complex and deserves meticulous scholarly research. I obviously cannot do justice to a broad yet concise history in a single text, so have framed the book in a specific temporal context and do not claim that it is a concise history. Although the opening chapters provide a broad historical overview, the main focus of the book is

the period between the recognition of Montenegro's independence follow-

ing the Congress of Berlin in 1878 to the re-establishment of that

independent status in 2006 (following a closely-fought referendum). I have

made no attempt, for example, to discuss the differing scholarly approaches

to the ethnogenesis of the Montenegrins, for they are covered in depth

elsewhere.¹ Thematically I focus on Montenegro's role in broader Balkan

and Yugoslav history and politics. More specifically, however, I focus on

the internal dynamics of Montenegrin politics, Montenegro's relationship

with Serbia, and the interplay between two competing national traditions

among Montenegrins – *srpstvo* (Serb-ness) and *crnogorstvo* (Montenegrin-ness). The essence of the former is that it emphasizes the Serb character of

the Montenegrins, that they are an integral part of the Serbian national

corpus. The latter questions this approach and emphasizes the right of

Montenegrins to define themselves as a unique nation, not simply as a

branch of the Serb nation. The friction between proponents of these two

approaches has, at times, led to conflict among Montenegrins. Since the late

nineteenth century questions of statehood, nationhood and national identity

have dominated Montenegrin politics, and conflicting perceptions of them

have been at the heart of Montenegrin political life since its formal

recognition as an independent state in 1878. As a consequence, in this book

I focus primarily, though not exclusively, on the Orthodox population of

Montenegro.

With questions of nationhood and statehood at the forefront, I analyse

Montenegrin history from its establishment as an independent state in 1878

to the Montenegrin independence referendum of 2006. I place particular

emphasis on events that have taken place since 1989. The reason for this is

MONTENEGRO

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

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