

# MULTICULTURALISM IN MONTENEGRO AND THE CITY OF ULCINJ

Jovan Nikolaidis

## 1. Introduction

Throughout the former Yugoslavia, the last decade has clearly exposed mistakes committed in the processes of regulating interethnic relations during the communist period. All that was done in respect to the issue of cultural plurality in the former Yugoslavia was expressed in the demagogical slogan “brotherhood and unity”—the ideological matrix of the totalitarian system. Concepts of tolerance and coexistence have been stunted by legacies of war, violence and fear. It is precisely due to these tragic circumstances that an imperative need to overcome the contemporary situation has emerged. Any thorough sociopolitical reform within the republics of the former Yugoslavia must be based on their multicultural character. When the previous state disappeared it left behind a region in desperate need of international intervention. A long and complex process has unfolded involving Euro-American intentions to help us in the process of development and our readiness to accept this help. Helpful contributions to the process have been made by certain democratic political groups, numerous NGOs and a number of intellectuals who, although at times are a bit disoriented, significantly assist the development of respect for diversity.

## 2. The Multiculturality of Montenegro

### 2.1. *Basic Data on Montenegro*

Where does Montenegro stand in relation to efforts aimed at peacemaking and the democratization of the states of the former Yugoslavia? Does European and American official confirmation that the democratization of Montenegro presents a positive example to its neighbors have political validity, or is it merely propaganda? Does Montenegro's willingness to accommodate the diversity of cultures, ethnic groups and religions present valid evidence of a resolute intention to democratize, or is it just a guise for a new ideology that is growing within volatile developments in this small country? Does Montenegro's leadership have the vision and strength to confront numerous internal problems and the challenges of undefined relations with neighboring states? Finally, is Montenegro capable of resisting the attempts of Milosevic's regime to obstruct the democratization process? Unfortunately, there is no clear answer to these questions. Therefore, this paper will only

try to present and analyze the multicultural and democratic character of contemporary Montenegro.

Montenegro is one of the oldest states in the Balkan region. It was the smallest and least developed republic within the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Today, Montenegro is a federal unit within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The majority population consists of Montenegrins (615,035 or 61.86%), a specific ethnic group of South Slavs. The other groups of Montenegro are Serbs (57,453 or 9.34%), Bosniak-Muslims (89,614 or 14.57%), Albanians (40,415 or 6.57%), Croats and others (the data originate from the 1991 census as published in the *Statistički Godišnjak Crne Gore* 1992).

In 1918, in accordance with decisions of the Podgorica Parliament, the statehood of Montenegro was transferred to the newly established state of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Kingdom of Montenegro was abolished and its king, Nikola Petrovic I, was removed from power. From that time until after the end of World War II, Montenegro was simply a region in Serbia. In 1945 the Communist authority gave it the status of a state once more, i.e., that of a federal unit within the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia where it had equal status as one of six member states until the fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. After the dissolution of the SFRY and in accordance with the 1992 Constitution of the new federal state, Montenegro's statehood was transferred into a federal configuration within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro. As to the relation of Montenegro to Serbia within the union, there is a multiplicity of political views, ranging from separatism to a total acceptance of unity. The eventual possibility of a new and different type of union has yet to be defined. There are many options and only the future will resolve the complex and uncertain relations between Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo. Will FRY survive? Will it survive with or without Kosovo? Is there a possibility for the future union of Montenegro and Serbia without Kosovo? Will Kosovo become an independent state? Will Montenegro, following historical and political precedents, also gain independence? Will Serbia, which is threatened by civil war, end up fragmented into regions (Vojvodina, Sandzak, Serbia proper)? And, finally, how do multicultural issues relate to these processes?

## 2.2. *Reforms for the Improvement of Ethnic Equality*

During the last two years, Montenegro has found alternative solutions and hope for the stabilization of multicultural democracy. After the parliamentary and presidential elections (held in the first half of 1998) there was visible improvement in relations between different nationalities and religions in Montenegro. Even before the elections all parliamentary parties, including a Muslim party and two Albanian parties, signed a memorandum of cooperation. The coalition *Da živimo bolje* (To Live Better), consisting of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS)—the strongest party in Montenegro—the People's Party and the Social Democratic party, won the elections. The president of DPS, Milo Djukanovic, became the president of Montenegro. In addition to expressing his commitment to democratization and the good of Montenegro, Mr. Djukanovic emphasized that he wanted to be a president of all citizens. It is noteworthy that he gained minority votes, especially from Bosniak-Muslims and Albanians.

Additional improvements have also been achieved in the fields of administrative reform, the constitution, the restructuring of specific services and the development of the local government. In the city of Ulcinj, where Albanians are the majority population, two national Albanian parties, the Democratic Union of Albanians in Montenegro and the Democratic Union of Albanians, have won local elections. Bosniak-Muslim, Albanian and Croatian representatives participate significantly in the government of Montenegro. Members of the Albanian population have been appointed to the governmental positions of Minority Rights Minister, Deputy to the Minority Rights Minister, Deputy Minister of Education and Deputy of the Secretary of Information. The Minister of Internal Affairs simplified procedures in order to hire a significant number of Albanians to posts within the police force (previously almost totally without Albanians), such as patrolmen, traffic policemen, investigators, special services officers, etc. In the city of Ulcinj the post of Chief of the Internal Affairs Ministry is filled by an Albanian. Bosniak-Muslims have also been appointed to governmental posts such as Minister of Trade, Minister of Transportation and Communication and Vice President of the Parliament.

The ethnic structure within other governing bodies in Montenegro is satisfactory, especially considering the previous situation where there was a ruling oligarchy consisting almost entirely of members of one ethnic group. However, reforms have only begun. The escalation of violence in neighboring states has had harsh ramifications, which have put additional pressure on minorities, giving further reasons why additional efforts in affirming minority rights and human rights in general should be expected. In addition to other reforms, significant changes in the fields of education and culture should be expected. This entails a revision of school curricula as well as the promotion of democratic principles of cultural openness. We believe that Montenegro will soon develop from a stage of promising proto-democratic transition into a functioning democracy. Montenegro needs to develop as a multinational, multid denominational and multicultural state with a strong civil society. The people who inhabit it belong to different ethnic groups, and all of them should consider this state as their own homeland. There is a noticeable trend in viewing a state as such, and we should do everything to entirely realize this and make it a rule rather than exception. Contemporary developments in interethnic relations in Montenegro are geared toward this goal. Despite the many obstacles, prejudices and ill-willed individuals and groups inspired by dark visions and desires of exclusivity, the process of healing has begun and the therapy needs to be completed.

### 2.3. *The Good Practice and Tradition*

Montenegro has a long and positive tradition of relations between diverse ethnic and religious groups. It is particularly interesting to observe and analyze relations between Montenegrins and Albanians, their emotional and cultural and societal similarity, the comparability of their tribal traditions and their historical ties. Marko Miljanov Popovic, the famous hero and duke of the nineteenth century, collected many positive examples of Albanian-Montenegrin relations. The members of the Montenegrin clan, *Kučići*, despite taking up radical Serbian nationalism in recent years, have a tale in their tradition about their common ancestry with the Malisorian (Albanian) tribe of Kastrati and their mutually

entangled destinies that span centuries.<sup>1</sup> Miljanov's records contain a variety of valuable examples of tolerance between Slovenes and Illyrians. Though he always used "Serbian" to refer to Serbs and Montenegrins because he considered Serbia and Montenegro to be the same, Miljanov wrote in *The Tribe of Kuči in Folk Stories and Songs* the following lines: "That people [Albanians] has such love for the tribe of Kuči, that I would not believe it had I not seen it with my own eyes."

Until the beginning of the last decade, the citizens of Montenegro did not consider intermarriage between Montenegrins and Melusians (Albanians) to be out of the ordinary. The members of the Albanian *Čestani* tribe (Catholics from the regions around Lake Skadar, Krajina, Mozura and western villages in the area of Ulcinj and Bar) have a long history of intermarriage with Montenegrins. To a lesser degree this is also the case for the Malisors tribe (a rather large group of Albanian Catholics). Though such pairings are not as customary as for the *Čestani* clan, they are solid marriages that oblige friendship between Montenegrins and Albanians. Marriages between Muslims and Orthodox are no rarity in Montenegro and are accompanied by the strengthening of family ties and friendship. After 1992 this trend subsided as interethnic divisions grew, mostly due to the rise of Serbian nationalism. It is worth mentioning that the rise of Serbian nationalism—in the context of which particular Montenegrin clans were described as "old Serbian tribes" and national tolerance was presented as a betrayal of "national interests"—has, for the most part, been quelled.

An example shows how the culture of tolerance can contribute to overcoming religious conflicts: in the small village of Spiche, in the area of Sutomor, there was a small church with two altars; one Catholic and the other Orthodox. Orthodox clergy from Cetinje recently removed the Catholic altar without offering an explanation. The autocephalous Church of Montenegro, which was recognized only recently, used all of its resources to reverse the action and called upon the tradition of tolerance and respect for all religions in Montenegro.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The term "tribe" has a rather specific meaning in Montenegro. It denotes a community of territory and kinship that has often functioned independently through history, sometimes in confrontation with state authorities, and frequently at war with other tribes of Montenegro. The tribal division of society lost its significance only after World War II when state authorities systematically moved people from rural areas into cities where they mixed with members of other communities and lost strong ties to their area of origin and its folklore. The contemporary notion of tribes is nothing more than a part of folklore. Nevertheless, the Socialist People's Party (*Socijalistička Narodna Partija-SNP*) led by Momir Bulatovic has tried to use the idea of tribes in order to homogenize the part of population that prefers Montenegro remain part of Yugoslavia under any circumstance. Last year the party traveled through villages of Montenegro where it organized so-called "tribal assemblies," where village residents voted in open fields by raising their hands for Montenegro to stay within Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, this manner of expressing of political agenda was not productive and speaks of the populist and extremely retrograde bent of SNP—a party whose policy has the same basis as the one from which Slobodan Milosevic works to exercise upon Montenegro.

<sup>2</sup> During the writing of this text, on January 18, 2000, the Orthodox Church of Montenegro was officially registered in the Ministry of Justice of Montenegro. This legalized it and gave it a status equal to that of other faiths in Montenegro, including the Serbian Orthodox Church. This

In the towns of Bijelo Polje, Plav, Gusinje, Berane, Bar and Ulcinj, where the majority population is Muslim (Albanians and Bosniaks), civic life has been cultivated to the greatest possible extent, despite extremely adverse circumstances. These towns, together with Catholic enclaves on the Montenegrin coast, have traditionally been the most civic areas of Montenegro. Throughout history, these regions developed crafts and trade, constructed public buildings and places of worship for three faiths and created an atmosphere of vibrant culture of which Montenegro is proud even today. Unfortunately, in the hinterland, people fought and died in wars, tribal conflict abounded and a romantic myth of Montenegrin highlanders as the “Spartans of Serbia” developed. During the past decades and centuries, Serbs, Bosniak-Muslims, Albanians and Croats lived in tolerance, but “the decade of plague” (coined by writer Mirko Kovac) infected these areas with Serbian nationalism.

#### 2.4. *The History of Good Relations between Albanians and Montenegrins*

The continuity of positive relations between Albanians and Montenegrins in Montenegro is based on the heritage of their tribal organizations. Historical evidence of this can be found in the Albanian *Canon of Leka Dukadjini* (*Kanuni i Lekes* in Albanian) and the Montenegrin *Epistle of Petar Petrovic I*. The authorship of the *Canon* has been attributed to Leka Dukadjini III (1410-1481) and has been in use for several centuries. Hence, it is a part of Albanian common law. The norms of the *Canon* are based upon experiences of patriarchal life that was typical for some Balkan peoples. The fundamental features of this type of relation have survived in Montenegrin-Albanian relations. This is part of the reason why even today among these groups there remains the frequent use of terms such as “tribe,” *nahije* (district in Turkish), “brotherhood” and “family” (patriarchal: clan).

*The Epistle of Petar Petrovic I* is neither a letter nor an official record regarding servants. In contemporary language, we might describe it as a kind of “authoritative recommendation.” The material of its text was collected, partially edited and then published in 1935 by Dushan Vuksan who came up with the title of the collection. Written by a man who was close to his servants and their problems, the *Epistles* deal with a diverse variety of areas, for example, requests issued to the general population, requests for assistance and problems in conflict resolution and invitations to war.

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development speaks about efforts of the authorities of Montenegro to promote tolerance of cultural diversity. It is worth mentioning that during the last decade the Montenegrin Orthodox Church has shown a high level of tolerance and a readiness to cooperate with other religious communities. Nevertheless, relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church can be expected to remain burdened by problems and tensions. Apart from the general obstacle that the Serbian Orthodox Church does not recognize the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, there is a property dispute regarding church buildings, land and administrative buildings that were annexed by the Serbian Orthodox Church. It is questionable whether Montenegrin authorities will be able to confront this problem without entering into conflict about other issues such as the Ecumenical Patriarchate (the Montenegrin Church was autocephalous until 1920 when it was abolished by the decree of the regent Alexander, the first ruler of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians).

In the context of our topic, it is noteworthy that both documents contain specific requests and suggestions, addressed to their own people, promoting peaceful coexistence with neighboring tribes and religious groups. *The Canon of Leka Dukadjini* and the *Epistle of Petar Petrovic I* of Cetinje still, today, exemplify a foundation of positive relations between the two ethnic groups. These relations have peacefully endured decades of potentially conflictual situations until the present-day due to the preservation of interethnic tolerance and respect.

According to the *Epistle* and the *Canon*, it was shameful to insult the neighbor of different religion or nation. The tribal codex prohibited such conduct, and in many cases even sanctioned offenders within the tribe. The members of Montenegrin tribes used to visit Albanian neighbors during holy days and Albanians did the same. It was common practice for them to help each other in large undertakings. They made pacts not to attack each other and to respect each other's property. They even fought together in battles against the Turks.

The relations of godfathers and marriage witnesses between Montenegrins and Albanians are the most frequent ways for strengthening friendship. These relations are seen as "holy duties" and as the highest honor by both peoples, usually leading to obligations for other family and tribe members. The practice of "blood brotherhood" was also quite common. A single man from Montenegrin family would strengthen his position by taking an Albanian friend for a blood brother.

## 2.5. Contemporary Cultural Diversity

Nevertheless, such rudimentary forms of interethnic relation, of which there has been no shortage between Montenegrins and Albanians, present outdated modes of coexistence due to modernization and the development of civic life, with its accompanying increase in education and political participation. In the past several years an especially severe mark was left on the process of modernizing traditional modes of coexistence due to the Yugoslav conflict. Suddenly, the idyllic canon of Montenegrin courage and Albanian honesty was transformed into an instrument for the reexamination of all current relations. Suspicion has shadowed the legends of love and mutual respect; new civic relations cannot be formed without the conflicting interests of religion, nation and race. Montenegrins and Albanians in Montenegro are not concerned with supporting each other's interests. Nevertheless, questions have been raised about the reconceptualization and redefinition of all issues concerning national identity, religion, territory, balance of power, the consideration of interests, etc. It is my opinion that the new Montenegrin government has a clear understanding of the new set of problems and most of the Albanian population is also aware of the undefined situation. Both sides know that improvement has been achieved, but that many problems are yet to be defined and resolved. The State of Montenegro has yet to open its Pandora's Box of blurred constitutional categories on minorities. It must change and improve legislative regulations and establish European standards on citizenship, human rights, private property and national symbols. The Albanian population and its political parties have to reconsider their requests for an exclusive national state. Requests for special status and cultural autonomy in cases where absolutely legitimate arrangements

already exist are turned into the tools of division and lead to a vision of Montenegro that frames exclusively “Montenegrin” and “Albanian” parts.

### 3. Cultural Diversity of Ulcinj

#### 3.1. *The Demographic and Social Landscape of Ulcinj*

We shall explain the above questions and problems using the example of political, economic and cultural development in the Montenegrin municipality of Ulcinj during the past decade. Though this presents a provisional picture, it is still one that shows that Ulcinj can become an oasis of thorough, well-defined, European multiculturalism. The town is already a testing ground for future democratic reforms and serves as a solid base for the democratic modeling of complex relations between different nationalities in Montenegro.

Ulcinj, situated on the Strait of Otranto, is the southern-most coastal city in Montenegro. Some ten kilometers of fertile soil separates it from the Albanian border, which is officially marked by the Bojana River. The municipality has some 30,000 citizens, 80% of which are Albanian, of whom 80% are Muslim and 20% are Catholic. Montenegrins make up 15% of the population and the rest consists of Bosniak-Muslims, Serbs, Roma and Greeks.

Until the beginning of the Yugoslav conflict, Ulcinj was a popular center for tourism, an important agricultural area of Montenegro and a town of fisherman and sailors. The last decade had an devastating effect on Ulcinj, bringing catastrophe to its economy.

What was not destroyed in Ulcinj, despite the many attempts to harm it, was good interethnic coexistence and extraordinary religious tolerance. Tolerance is a characteristic Ulcinj has always been known for. The people of Ulcinj cannot recall there ever having been a conflict with national or regional causes. To the present-day, traditional customs carry on during shopping days, holidays, celebrations or funerals.

Ulcinj is a genuinely tolerant town, whose citizens are hard-working and modest. In Ulcinj proverbs such as these can frequently be heard: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” “If family is far away, neighbors are near,” and “What comes around goes around.” A local writer of Albanian origin says to the citizens of Ulcinj: “I am not an island in the sea, but a coast of the sea. I can be reached no matter if one walks or swims.” Ulcinj has avoided various situations which could have led to interethnic conflict and, today, remains a unique multicultural community of Montenegro. This achievement has required patience and wisdom, and its people have plenty of both. Nevertheless, it is not always easy to preserve what was once obtained.

#### 3.2. *Albanian Political Parties in Montenegro and Ulcinj*

On September 9, 1990, in Tuzi, a small, mostly Albanian settlement not far from Podgorica, a historic event for Albanians in Montenegro took place: the first Albanian political organization, the Democratic Union in Montenegro was founded. Like other nationalities in the country shaken by the deep crisis in interethnic relations and perceiving a variety

of threats to their nation, the Albanians resorted to a standard option—they established an exclusive political party. However, from the very beginning, its founders emphasized their intention not to increase tensions and their desire to establish good relations and cooperation with other political parties. The headquarters of the party was based in Ulcinj. The Democratic Union in Montenegro, organizationally similar to the Democratic Union of Ibrahim Rugova in Kosovo, entered the parliamentary life of Montenegro, and by January 1991 had already won, by a great majority, local elections in Ulcinj.

Prior to the establishment of the Democratic Union, the Albanians with political skills were already distributed among three parties: the Democratic Party of Socialists, which was, at that time merely an arm of the Milosevic's regime; the Liberal Union of Montenegro, which supports an independent Montenegro and attracts many Albanians and Bosniak-Muslims with its platform; and the Social Democratic Party that supported Montenegro's SFRY heritage as defined by the program of the last federal prime minister, Ante Markovic.

The Democratic Union's exclusively national orientation was the most appropriate reaction to the period. A significant portion of the non-Albanian population in Montenegro, already poisoned with nationalism and exclusionary attitudes, did not hide its hostility towards Albanians as well as Muslims in general. Vojislav Seselj, leader of the extreme, nationalist Serbian Radical Party, roamed through Montenegro with his paramilitary units, "the White Eagles," and did not hesitate to threaten citizens. The White Eagles went through Ulcinj twice and surrounding villages, providing Serbs and Montenegrins with weapons. The peaceful citizens of Ulcinj were mortified. Albanians hoped to find protection through the Democratic Union and joined it en masse. Shortly thereafter, the Montenegrin authorities started provocations on the Croatian border. Rumors spread that robberies were being committed by uncontrollable volunteers and the Yugoslav Army in the Croatian region of Konavle. The bombing of Dubrovnik commenced a short time later. The war was at the front door.

In the following year, in December 1992, again by a great majority, the Democratic Union won the local elections in Ulcinj. The Democratic Union governed the city in a peaceful and tolerant manner, investing significant effort into minimizing the increasingly frequent appearances of interethnic intolerance. It tried to reduce tensions through directly communicating with the population and visited military barracks and headquarters to appeal for the protection of property and human lives. This period was marked by an exodus of young Albanians who sought asylum throughout Europe. Armed Serbian volunteers on their way to Dubrovnik gathered in the city of Ulcinj. Bursts of machine-gun fire delivered by drunk soldiers disturbed its citizens throughout the nights. Nevertheless, no major offenses transpired. The town kept silent and endured.

In 1996 the Democratic Union again won office in Ulcinj, but this time in coalition with the Liberal Union of Montenegro. It was a time of relaxation in interethnic relations. The political life of Montenegro during the period was rather rich and dramatic. The Democratic Union remained exclusively oriented toward Albanian issues, its leadership infected by ambitions for a greater Albanian state. Blinded by bits and pieces of local governance, party leadership lost its orientation and committed a mistake typical of nationally oriented parties in the Balkans; instead of staying focused on local politics, they became overly involved with national policy. They disregarded the dynamics of community services, and their actions in the field of culture were frequently colored by national-

socialist agendas. Furthermore, they did not make good on their promises. Contact with international organizations and various governments are commonly dramatized by the nationalist propaganda. The party's fieldwork is now directed toward persuading electoral constituents not to abandon them. Campaigning is conducted demagogically, resorting to ploys on tribal commitment, unrealistic assessments and fallacious perspectives.

Parallel to this situation, conditions in Kosovo were worsening, Serbian pressure was growing and Albanian politicians in Montenegro already had exclusionist ideas regarding their population in the near future. Economic and political chaos in Albania was culminating into anarchy. On the basis of these circumstances, the Democratic Union changed its formerly positive mission, which was geared toward the renewal and organization of the Albanian population in Montenegro. It now advocates an inflexible scheme to create a greater Albania. As a consequence of such policies, the party split in two and a new party, the Democratic Union of Albanians, was formed. This Democratic Union's platform is based upon three principles: the development of civic life, respect for knowledge and increased communication with non-Albanian organizations. Unfortunately, the Democratic Union of Albanians has remained an exclusively Albanian party; however, its appearance was a positive step in the Albanian political sphere in Montenegro due to the fact that, among other things, it created political competition. In 1996 the Democratic Union of Albanians was on Ulcinj's electoral ballot, but failed to become the ruling party. However, it succeeded in the elections held in May 1998. Today, the party governs Ulcinj in coalition with the Democratic Union of Montenegro.

### 3.3. *The Party's Mini-Oligarchy in Ulcinj*

The City Council of Ulcinj consists of the Democratic Union in Montenegro (11 representatives), the Democratic Union of Albanians (9 representatives), the Democratic Party of Socialists (8 representatives) and the Socialist People's Party (4 representatives). All parties in the council cultivate honest and civilized relations with each other. The activities of the council are conducted in both languages. The two Albanian parties govern in coalition. The effectiveness of the governance is hindered by the municipality's bureaucracy and the fact that party interests take precedence over those of the city and its citizens. The outcome of this is that many positive areas of coexistence and tolerance threaten to become their opposite. The following are examples of this:

1. During the agony of Albanian refugees from Kosovo (spring and summer 1999), Montenegro, and especially the city of Ulcinj, showed a humanitarian face. At the beginning of the summer some 100,000 refugees found safety in Montenegro. The city of Ulcinj took in 60,000 of them. Although the city was overwhelmed with hungry and frightened people, no major incidents happened. The citizens of Ulcinj received the refugees with patience and sympathy. Serbs and Montenegrins as well as Albanian citizens provided significant help. The hearty spirit of the citizens of Ulcinj made taking care of most of the refugees easier.

After several months, the situation in Kosovo calmed down and the refugees began to return home. To reward citizens of Montenegro for their solidarity, the

international community provided significant aid to the Red Cross of Montenegro. Part of the support was passed on to the local government in Ulcinj. A list of those who provided shelter for refugees was made and they were reimbursed for their efforts. However, the rest of the financial support disappeared due to fraud. Local politicians, instead of using the money for the common good, channeled it to their own families and friends. Thus, an opportunity was missed to use that money effectively in areas that would have benefited from it, e.g., for the completion of the construction of the Cultural Center, the improvement of local infrastructure, the modernization of the Health Center, the clean-up of the city and its surroundings and the repair of the sewage system.

2. During the war in Kosovo, the U.S. humanitarian organization, American Refugee Center, had an office based in Ulcinj. It decided to finance a clean-up of the whole municipality area. Aware that local authorities had spent resources irresponsibly, the organization conducted the clean-up on its own terms, involving students from local schools and employing seasonal workers. Gradually, the city and the municipality were completely cleaned. However, because of a lack of local community services, the city was again covered in trash within a week.
3. The ART Club is an association of Albanian intellectuals established with the purpose of supporting and promoting Albanian culture and science. It is an exclusively Albanian association. However, since its policy is to be professionally active in culture and science and to reject the political and nationalist goals of the municipal government, it came into conflict with the Democratic Union in Montenegro. Consequently, a campaign was launched against the members of the ART Club. The significance of their positive activities was minimized. They were denied access to budgetary funds that had been set aside for cultural activities in the municipality. The ART Club, in possession of rather insufficient facilities, was denied the right to organize promotions and seminars in the Cultural Center, which is run by the Democratic Union in Montenegro.

#### 4. Conclusion

The multicultural character of Montenegro has withstood the worst possible challenges to which it was exposed during the past decade. Montenegro is one of only few multinational societies of the former Yugoslavia where tensions between different nations have not culminated to the point of open conflict. We are hopeful that the coexistence of Albanians and Montenegrins in Montenegro has a future that will be characterized by cultural diversity and democracy. There are three basic reasons for such optimism:

1. A tradition of mutual respect and tolerance that characterizes relations between Albanians and Montenegrins;
2. The proven capability of both of these nations to resist temptations to relate to each other with animosity during the war;
3. The reformist orientation of the current government of Montenegro.

The existence of nationally exclusive parties in an ethnically heterogeneous state is understandable and justifiable, but they can turn into a potential threat if they become closed and if normal democratic communication with their constituents and other political groups is cut off. Elements of this unhealthy trend can be seen in contemporary Ulcinj. It is necessary for these parties to reject projects that promote ambitions for greater nation-states. Such concepts have been seen as reactionary among Ulcinj's Albanians themselves.

What deserves attention is the fact that there is an increasing number of Albanians that understand how wrong this strategy of Albanian parties is. Ulcinj Albanians are increasingly joining the Democratic Party of Socialists and the Social Democratic Party, which is clear evidence of their civic-mindedness. With the reduction of political tensions, the traditional features of Ulcinj's civic coexistence have returned. These entail work ethics and the acceptance of peaceful and tolerant civic options in interethnic relations. It is also possible that nationalist parties, while losing influence, will be forced to reduce their unrealistic ambitions and exercise political influence with a more democratic content. Albanians need political organizations that will work for their rights in education, culture and information. All citizens of Ulcinj need a government that supports the activities of civil society and provides public services that are in the common interest of the city and its citizens, regardless of national affiliations. In the process of such a transformation, Albanian parties need to have a permanent and honest partner in the government of Montenegro, in its ministries, in the governing coalition and in other units of the political and economic sphere.