



COME BACK

After the overall elections in Serbia the celebration is organized by the party which is the third according to the number of the votes while the first two parties feel as defeated. And trully, the parties which have won the largest number of the votes – the oppositional Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) which was supported by 24. 01 per cent of the voters as well as the runner-up , the leading Democratic Party (DS), whose coalition was supported by 22.07 per cent of the voters feel as beaten. Why is it the case that in Serbia today is better to have less than 15 per cent of the votes and not 22 or 24 per cent of the votes? The answer to that question is the best to give Ivica Dačić , the leader of the socialists , who proudly announced at the electoral night that „ it is not known who is going to be the President but it is known who is going to be the new Prime Minister“ and whose supporters were the only to celebrate after the elections.

What is the secret of the socialists' success? The fact that their leader Ivica Dačić in the previous mandate was the only minister that was positively marked in the Government of Serbia gave them the tough foundation for the campaign. Dačić realised that the citizens of Serbia are not satisfied with the work of the government which deputy he was. That is the reason why he decided to promote himself through the work at the police, the struggle against the organised criminal and the corruption while the other ministers were eager to open new investments or to be seen and photographed in Brussels. He has managed, due to the fact that he was the first Minister of Police since the renewal of the parliamentary democracy in Serbia in 1990. who did not finish his mandate as the former politician with negative marks from the public for his work. Dačić finished the mandate of the Minister of Police with higher popularity than when he started it. If the Minister is popular, that the citizens also like the police which has as the institution only in the time of Dačić's mandate become one of the institutions in which the citizens have most confidence. The opponents of the leader of the Socialists Party (SPS) tell that it was not difficult for him to be the successful Minister in the Government which was very unpopular and impersonal, meaning that he did not almost have the competition. It is partially true, but it is not his fault. His good work at the Ministry of Police was the good foundation for his electoral success but it was not enough. Being aware that his „deeds „ speak at his favour, enabling him to be in a position where he does not need to convince the voters and give pre-electoral promises like others did – he last started the campaign. And when he entered the campaign he did not offer anything to the voters. And trully, Dačić is the only politician who did not promise foreign investments, bridges and roads or new working places. Aware that in his behalf speaks his image as a minister, he has chosen the slogan – clear, tough, determing ! By this slogan he did not promise anything (the two strongest parties offered „ better life „ and „ the changes „) but he has offered exactly what most of the voters expect out of politicians.

The leader of the socialists offers his success to the fact that he was quite good positioned at the presidential elections that were scheduled after the beginning of the electoral campaign when the President Boris Tadić resigned. It was not easy, because the presidential elections has had since the moment of their scheduling two favourites (the President Tadić and the oppositional leader Nikolić) so that the other candidates were forced to find the way to be noticed at all by the voters. Dačić was aware that there are at least half of them who coming out to vote that are not satisfied



neither with Nikolić nor Tadić. That is why his presidential campaign consisted of the simultaneous attacks on both of the candidates accusing them of the trials to create the two-party system in Serbia. It was a good message for those voters who did not want to support either of the favourites at the presidential elections.

Dačić has spent the least money of all big parties for the campaign. It is the proof that money is not the crucial, even though it is important, for the success at the elections. He did not have expensive advisers from abroad, his videos were not directed but created of the parts of his speeches.

With the moderate media campaign he was not boring to the voters like some other candidates and parties that were so much present that they were almost jumping out of the refrigerators. Dačić managed to find the right measure and he owes part of his success to that fact.

In order to gain as many votes as possible, he flirted with the nationalism. A few months before the elections he sharpened his rhetorics concerning Kosovo as well as the international community. Thus he used the opportunity because the two leading parties were tied up with their hands concerning the question of Kosovo. Namely, the leading Democratic Party took over on itself all the responsibility in front of the citizens for the agreements which it had made concerning Kosovo and which were the terms for Serbia to gain the status for the European Union (EU) membership. That is why the democrates (the public name for the Democratic Party) did not even put the accent on Kosovo being careful if it was possible not to mention it in the campaign at all. The oppositional progressives (public name for the Serbian Progressive Party) wanting to present themselves to the European Union as the party which abandoned hard nationalistic attitudes had to take care about every word in which they mentioned Kosovo. That fact was used by Dačić who was speaking about Kosovo the things that people wanted to hear. Namely, the citizens of Serbia support the normalising of the relations with Kosovo when we speak about the ordinary questions for everyday life of the citizens on Kosovo but they also have the impression that the world is unfair to Serbia when we speak of the status of Kosovo. That is exactly what Dačić felt and that is why we can hear his suggestions for the division of Kosovo and sharp rhetoric concerning this question. When we speak about the international community Dačić was more careful but he did not miss the chance to stress that he does not listen to the orders from Washington or Brussels or Moscow. Does it mean that Dačić would lead different politics towards Kosovo or the international community than it was the case with the government whose Deputy Prime Minister he was? Certainly he would not, but we must agree that he brilliantly flirted with the feelings of the people concerning Kosovo.

Dačić's opponents will say that in his campaign he used the resources of the Ministry of Interior meaning that it was not often clear when he addresses as the presidential candidate and the leader of the party and when as the Minister of Police. The special objections there are on the messages from the meetings „ that he will arrest „ or on the arrest of the group of Albanians on the south of Serbia accused of the war crimes at the time of the electoral silence. The objections were partially justified but Dačić did not use it not more not less than the other members of the Government. He was just more effective.



It is interesting that the socialists, apart from police, did not almost use other resources in which they had Ministers in previous Government for their promotional campaign. The fact that they did not mention the department of education in the campaign can be understood since the situation in this department is such that SPS can be satisfied that it did not have any losses out of it. Still, it is odd that the socialists did not even tried to promote themselves through the infrastructure headed by the deputy president of their party, Milutin Mrkonjić. In this department were built miles of the high ways in the period of the previous government , were built new bridges and ring roads...in the campaign many roads were „ opened „ but that is why their minister Mrkonjić was in the campaign more with the candidate of the Democratic Party Boris Tadić than with his own leader of the party? Either willingly or by the decision of Mrkonjić the complete infrastructure were given to the leading democrates for the electoral promotion. Opposed to these two departments, the fact that the socialists led the energetics in the previous government was used in the campaign. The energy in the world has long ago become the political mean, and in Serbia it is more than that – it symbolises the connection with the Russian Federation. Russians and Serbs have got the same Slavic origin and have been connected through the centuries, so the Russian Federation and its President Putin are very popular in Serbia.

Serbia is energetically connected with Russia building with it the South Flow gas line and the national Serbian Oil Company „ Oil Company of Serbia „ was bought by the russian energy giant Gasprom. This Russian company is the sponsor of the most popular Serbian football team „ Red Star „ in which the important role belong to the representatives from the Socialists Party of Serbia. In Serbia it is very popular for the politicians to be in a connection with Russia by the voters, and the socialists' voters (the public name for the Socialists Party of Serbia) are especially close to Russia. That is why the Socialists Party of Serbia together with the Police mostly made profit out of energy that enabled Dačić to play on „the Russian card“ as well at the elections. Thus in the middle of the campaign he opened together with the Russian Minister for Emergency Situations Sergey Shoygu Serbian-Russian Center for dealing in emergency situations. Even though this center is not the military base many on the west consider it as Russian answer to the american military base Bonstil on Kosovo. In any case, energy and Russia contributed a lot to the SPS at these elections. In favour of this speaks the fact that the socialists at the elections won in all places where there are energy systems or capacities!

The Socialists Party of Serbia owes its great success at the elections to the party organisations. This party was founded 22 years ago when the former Komunist Party transformed into the Socialists Party which led the country for 45 years. Because of that, the Socialists Party of Serbia inherited the party infrastructure ,hundreds of thousands of members and the organisation. During the first ten years of the government in the parliamentary democracy this organisation has only been adjusted to the democratic elections and multiparty system. When the Socialists Party of Serbia lost the government in the year 2000. the party was abandoned by many members and representatives. Still, the party infrastructure was saved and it saved the party several times at the elections after the year 2000. to stay over the census. Now when those leading the party managed by good campaign to create the terms for the successful elections the party organisation of the SPS has done its work through the secure votes and strong outdoor campaign in which they had direct contact with large number of the voters. In that case the success was inevitable.



At the just finished elections the Socialists Party of Serbia behaved as the truly left wing party for the first time since it was founded in 1990. Namely, the first ten years of their presence, while this party and its first leader Slobodan Milošević were surely leading the country the party was only formally left wing. The flirting with the nationalism, the civil war in former Yugoslavia, the problems country was facing turned this party into the personal service of one man – current president Slobodan Milošević. After the democratic changes in 2000. the Socialists Party of Serbia struggled to survive and maintain at the political scene of Serbia. That is why that party started to behave as real left wing party in the previous several years, exactly since 2008., when started the process of accepting this party in the Socialist International. At these elections they returned among other party symbols the red five-pointed. Flirting with the socialist past was not only influenced by the ideology but also with practical reasons. Most of the citizens in Serbia remembers with nostalgia the times when they lived in socialism. Dačić successfully used this nostalgia for the gaining of votes. However, it is not all in it. Socialists Party of Serbia is the only left wing party in Serbia which really takes care of the tradition of anti-fascist struggle and the left wing movement. Thus this party, for example, was the only one political organisation in Serbia that celebrated the 9th of May – the Day of victory over the fascism or today known as the Day of Europe. Unfortunately, in Serbia it was not celebrated by anyone – even not the State, and Serbia is one of the inheritants of the former Yugoslavia which was the member of the anti-Hitler coalition. There is an impression that Serbia is ashamed of its anti-fascist past and the Socialists Party of Serbia is the only party that reminds the citizens of Serbia that it is not the case.

Is Dačić going to be capable of capitalizing his success? It depends on many things but the most important is to realize that all the votes his party gained at the elections do not belong only to him but that there are voices of dissatisfied with the government as well as with the opposition. Of course, when we talk about the capitalizing of success, Dačić is going to turn the electoral success into the part in the future government most easily, meaning into the places of Ministers. The electoral results are thus that the government without the Socialists Party of Serbia is almost impossible. For Dačić, however, is going to be greater problem to save the votes he gained in the future mandate, as well as to gain new ones. It is going to depend on the politics he is going to lead. It is going to be quite important for the future progress of his party, that in the new government it become recognisable for their social politics, cooperation with the Unions, energy politics, environmental protection and the health care policy. The successful maintaining of these programmes is the guarantee that the Socialists Party of Serbia in the following period is going to deal with these topics in front of the voters. That is why the choosing of the departments in the new government is the most important thing for the socialists because they have to start immediately with the campaign for the elections that are going to be held in 2016.

The Socialists Party of Serbia is today the new party, with new leader and new programme concerning the SPS founded in 1990. During the nineties in the last century the party was a personal service of the current President of Serbia Slobodan Milošević and served him to maintain the politics as much as possible. Milošević's fall from the government and his leaving to the Hague at the trial in front of the International Tribunal for war crimes almost destroyed the party. The new era of the party starts with the choice of Ivica Dačić for the president of the party. This young politician who was at the time of Milošević the spokesman of the party has changed the



party in a short time. From the retrograde political party that was against the democratic changes, European integrations, and that cooperated strongly with the nationalistic and right wing parties Dačić has changed this party into the one that supports the European integrations of Serbia, that is in front of the membership in Socialists International, and which has become a modern party of the left wing. That is why there was not any doubt that Dačić will decide after these elections to support the leader of the democrates Boris Tadić and not the candidate of the right wing Tomislav Nikolić who is still ideologically closer to many of his voters. Simply, Dačić has invested too much in new politics of SPS since 2008. when he decided by his own decision to Serbia continue its way of European integrations to enter the insecure adventure such as a coalition with the leader of the opposition Nikolić. His support to Tadić in the second round of the presidential elections is thus logical consequence of his new politics.

After these elections, Dačić has become the inevitable leader of the party that has got the power, strength and the authority to change the party completely. Is he going to succeed in it depends only on him. If he uses the following four year period for further reforms in the party together with the smart choice of the departments in new government with which help he would promote the policy of the SPS – this party is going to endanger two currently leading political organisations in the country and at the presidential elections in 2017. he could be the favourite.