

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

The scheduling of early party's elections in the biggest Serbian oppositional Democratic Party (DS) for the November 10th is good news for the members and supporters of this party. The fact that the question of the new leader of the party in the future is going to be solved at the elections means that the party is probably going to stay united, which is the wish of most members and supporters of the Democratic Party.

Until recently, the leading Democratic Party has held the meeting of the General Board, the first one since the general elections in May when the new Government of the Republic of Serbia was formed in which there are not any democrates (public name for the Democratic Party). The circumstances in which this meeting was held were dramatic for the Democratic Party because in the previous several months the party faced dramatic failure from the leading position. Not so long ago, at the beginning of May, the Democratic Party was the absolute ruler in Serbia. It held in its hands most of the mechanisms of the government from the president of the Republic, Prime Minister and most of the ministers in the Government, the government in Belgrade and in the rich and developed northern Serbian Province of Vojvodina, as well as in the big cities of Serbia , in more than 100 municipalities, most of the directors of the public institutions, it had its people on the head of the security services, of the Prosecution and of the police, and had the control over most of the media. In only a few months, all of that has broken down like a tower made of cards, and today the Democratic Party has only had certain government in Vojvodina and in barely ten bigger cities while in Belgrade and other bigger cities remains at the government due to the coalitions with the parties that are today part of the Government. Media are full of headlines about the affairs from the period of the government of the Democratic Party, the prosecution requires the interviews with the former ministers, and thousands of the officials of the Democratic Party are losing their jobs in public services and the governmental departments. That kind of situation would shake up every party in the world so that the quakes in the Democratic Party are not surprising. However, when the parties face such problems, by the way of overcoming the problems can be seen if these parties are great or not, meaning if they deserve to survive. That is why this crisis is a serious test for the Democratic Party.

Democratic Party is certainly great and historical party which has had a great influence on the political history of Serbia. It was founded at the beginning of the XX century and it played quite an important role in political life of the Kingdom of Serbia until the end of the First World War as well as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (mutual union of these nations lasted from 1919. until 1941.). After the Second World War during the time when the communist Yugoslavia existed (united state consisting of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro existed from 1945. until 1991.) this party was forbidden. The democrates showed up at the public scene after 44 years in December 1989. when the group of 13 intellectuals announced that it is renewing the work of the Democratic Party ,which practically marked the end of the one-party system in Serbia. The Democratic Party has immediately become the party that gathered the intellectual elite of the country and which anchorage were cities. For 22 years which

passed since the renewal of its work it was the party that has changed not only itself but Serbia as well, which was facing bright and dark moments, party which spent almost three years out of the Parliament due to boycott of the elections in 1997. but which also ran country almost independently for eight years in various governments where it had the majority (2000.- 2003. and 2007. – 2012.).

Democratic Party is the party which had the President of the Republic for eight years (from 2004. to 2012.) , party which has been governing the capital of Serbia Belgrade and the richest part of Serbia , the autonomy province of Vojvodina constantly for the last 12 years and which was on the head of the democratic opposition of Serbia that disrupted the government of then actual president of Serbia Slobodan Milošević in the year 2000. Democrats were the bearers of the idea of democratic changes, economic and political reforms and European integrations. Democratic Party was not only changing Serbia but itself as well because it is the only party that has had three different presidents during the last two decades. Glorious past surely is not the guarantee that the party is going to make right decisions in the future but the fact is that the democrates have known to change themselves and to find solutions from difficult situations. Is it going to be the case in this current situation, when the party is facing probably the greatest crisis since its foundation, will reveal the following two months.

After the meeting of the General Board of the Democratic Party it is quite clear that the democrates are going to decide at the party's meeting of the assembly that is going to be held on November 10th between the two candidates – current president Boris Tadić and current president deputy of the Democratic Party and the Mayor of Belgrade Dragan Djilas who is supported by Bojan Pajtić , the leader of the Vojvodina's democrates and the President of the Government of the Autonomy Province of Vojvodina. The voting at the assembly and at the General Board in which Tadić remained in minority confirm that the duo Djilas – Pajtić has got an advantage in the party's authorities in the future competitions for the president of the party. Does it mean that the assembly of the Democratic Party is going to be only a formality and that the democrates are going to change the president for the forth time? To answer this question we have to explain the strategy of one and the other side and it can be predicted after the meeting of the General Board of the Democratic Party.

In the forthcoming struggle Tadić does not have any choice. His demand that all members of the party vote for the president of the party has been announced not because he believes in that kind of elections but because he believes that at such elections he will have more chances to remain the president of the party. What is the difference between direct elections and delegate elections for the president? The Democratic Party currently registrates around 190 thousand of members out of which is estimated that around 90 thousand members pay the fee. In active parliamentary life actively takes part five to seven thousand members who are the officials in the party, some kind of party oligarchy. These are the officials from the local level to the republic level of the government, aldermen and delegates, directors of the companies, members of the executive and monitoring boards in the state institutions and the employees in the state and local administration as well as in the public companies. They constitute party authorities and among them are chosen delegates at the delegation meeting. Tadić is quite familiar with the fact that party oligarchy lives out of the government and thus always supports the candidate who can take the party to the

government or to make it keep the government. At this moment in the party prevails the belief that Dragan Djilas is the one who can bring the party back to the government. That is why the support that Dragan Djilas has got enlarges daily. Tadić knows that at the delegational meeting, if something dramatic does not happen, he does not have any chances. In addition, the party oligarchy brought Tadić at the position of the president in December 2003. after it had estimated that then currently officer in charge of the president and the Prime Minister of Serbia Zoran Živković can not keep the party at the top. Tadić himself, either consciously or not, contributes to the increase of Djilas' support claiming that „ Djilas has got an arrangement with Aleksandar Vučić (officer in charge of the president of the leading Serbian Progressive Party SNS and the actual Deputy Prime Minister of the Serbian Government) to form quite quickly the coalition of Serbian Progressive Party SNS and the Democratic Party DS“. It is exactly what the party oligarchy wants to hear – that someone is going to bring them back to the government again. Since he does not have any offers for the officials in the party, Tadić addresses the membership of the Democratic Party because he believes that they are going to have more understanding for his fatalistic politics since they do not have any interests. That is why he, in his introductory speech in front of the General Board, claims that for the officials it is going to be „ difficult „ if he becomes re-elected, he actually sends a message to the members that he is going to be their „ God's lash“ against the functioners they do not like. The problem with this message is that it is too late for it and that it is almost impossible. First, Tadić had the opportunity in the previous eight years of total government of Democratic Party to include the members into the presidential and deputy presidential party elections but he did not do that. He remembered the members now when he lost the support in party's structure. Second, organising the elections where almost 200 thousand people would vote in the position of sharp polarisation on two sides is almost impossible and Tadić knows that. It was the reason why his initiative was certain to fail and the impression is that its purpose was only buying the time.

Apart from buying the time, his speech at the General Board of the Democratic Party reveals us the traces of Tadić's future campaign. He is going to accuse Djilas of giving the party into the hands of tycoons (pejorative expression at Balkans for rich people who gained their wealth in the period of transition from socialism to kapitalism) as well as that he has got a deal with governing Serbian Progressive Party about the coalition after taking over the government in the Democratic Party. In his attacks towards Djilas, Tadić claims that his deputy has made an agreement with the leader of the United Regions of Serbia and the Minister of Finance Mladjan Dinkić. Tadić counts on the fact that Dinkić is very unpopular in the Democratic Party so that every connection with Djilas brings a lot of harm to his deputy.

Besides, Tadić has already several times in public, as well as at the meetings of the party boards, spoken that he considered Djilas and Pajtić „incapable of strategic thinking about the future of the party“. That is why the base of the campaign of current president of the party is going to be accepting the candidacy not because of himself but to save the party from the destruction since it is going to be overtaken by the „irresponsible“ people. This campaign overwhelmingly resembles of the campaign of then current president of the party and today actual president of the Political Council of the Democratic Party Dragoljub Mićunović in autumn 1993. when he struggled for the position of the president against Zoran Djindjić. Then, Djindjić as the president of the Executive Board of the party demanded from Mićunović to resign from the position of the president of the

party claiming that party needed new energy, different way of thinking and work and more efficient managing. He explained his attentions to the members in the letter named „ Why I Want to Become The President of the Democratic Party“. Mićunović with his followers was buying the time by using all procedural possibilities and also claimed that Djindjić had an agreement with Slobodan Milošević (then president of Serbia and leader of the governing Socialists Party of Serbia SPS) as well as that he had an intention of giving the party to tycoons. In the struggle that lasted for almost four months one of Mićunović allies was then secretary of the General Board of the Democratic Party. After four months of exhausting struggle Mićunović resigned and left the Democratic Party. Boris Tadić also resigned but remained the member of the party and after a few years returned at the position of the representative in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. Today, nineteen years later, Tadić is using similar tactics of buying the time as Mićunović did earlier. There is no other explanation for Tadić's decision to schedule the electoral meeting for the November 10th (he has got that right according to the constitution of the Democratic Party) despite the fact that most of the members of the General Board , of the Presidential Board and large number of municipal boards demand October 14th? So, in the next two months, Tadić is going to present himself not as the victim of Djilas and Pajtić but „ evil rich tycoons“ who want to destroy the Democratic Party and the government which wants this way to eliminate the only opposition from the political life. Djilas and Pajtić are only pawns in that strategy executing others' orders because according to Tadić's words „they do not know how to think strategically and on long terms“. Similar to Mićunović in 1993. he is going to fight already lost battle which can not bring the triumph to him but can do a lot of harm to the party. He is going to spend time and hope to only wonder that can help him – a quarrel between Djilas and Pajtić. Because if that wonder does not happen Tadić has already lost his battle for the president of the party at the General Board and the Presidential Board Meetings where he was left in minority. Djilas and Pajtić are going to have different strategy. At this moment for them it is most important the grouping of the delegates of the Assembly in the municipal boards. Namely, according to the constitution of the Democratic Party when the meeting of the Assembly is scheduled the party defines the quotes according to which is defined how many delegates are going to have municipal boards at the Meeting of the Party. The number of the delegates for each municipal board can be defined by the number of members of the party but also by the success at the elections. It can be expected that Tadić is going to be against the idea that the number of the delegates is determined by the number of members of the party because almost 40 per cent of the Democratic Party members are from Belgrade which together with Vojvodina forms the majority. It is also not suitable for the actual president of the Democratic Party that for the determining of number of delegates should be taken a success of the party at recently held parliamentary elections because Belgrade and Vojvodina got the best results. It is suitable for Djilas and Pajtić if the criteria should be the results of local elections so that it can be expected that Tadić is going to demand that the base for the grouping of delegates should be the results of the presidential elections. About this question is going to emerge new revoting between two currents in the Democratic Party during the upcoming weeks.

Tadić's problem in the forthcoming campaign is going to be the fact that he lost the elections and Djilas and Pajtić in their areas , Belgrade and Vojvodina, won the elections. If we judge according to the meeting of the General Board, Tadić is going to claim that he did his work properly and that

he fought against organised criminal, that he finished the cooperation with the Hague tribunal, that he worked on the regional cooperation. However, these arguments will not bring any advantage to Tadić in the struggle inside the party. Djilas and Pajtić as well can affirm that they did they work properly and quite well. And unlike Tadić, they earned the trust of the voters. Whether someone from the Democratic Party did his job properly on his state position is not an argument for the party campaign because it is assumed to be so, and it is not quite polite boasting about that. Finally, the judgement who did properly his work on the state position was given by the citizens. Unlike Tadić, who is always going to appear in public in the following period, public debate is not suitable for Djilas and Pajtić. It can be expected that Tadić's tactics are going to be attacks first of all on Dragan Djilas but on the other representatives of Belgrade Democratic Party. He did it at his first public announcement after the defeat at the General Board of the Democratic Party. Pajtić is going to be saved from the attacks, at least for some time, because Tadić is going to keep trying as long as there is hope to gain his support. When Tadić starts attacking him in public, it is going to be a sign that Tadić himself does not believe any more that Pajtić can step on to his side. Tadić's appearance at the meeting of the General Board revealed that his intentions are accusing first of all Djilas but also other party representatives of betrayal. These accusations fit in Tadić's strategy in which he represents himself to the members of the party but also to the representatives as a victim betrayed by his closest „sickly ambitious“ associates. This Tadić's tactics is double-edged sword because exactly these members of the party he is addressing to do not prefer public argues and revealing dirty laundry of the party in public. Tadić needs public in the forthcoming struggle but too much appearance in public can also be harmful. If we take into consideration the behaviour at the meeting of the General Board, Djilas and Pajtić are going to try not to attack Tadić either in public or among the party authorities. There lies their chance. They have majority and their aim is to quietly, without much fuss, bring party to the electoral meeting. They are going to invite Tadić to do the discussion with them inside the party authorities. Their aim is to present their conflict with Tadić in public as programming and not personal. If they manage in that, their chances for winning are greater. Tadić's challengers in the party, Djilas and Pajtić, have managed to ensure the support of Ružica Djindjić, the widow of the president of Democratic Party and the Government of Serbia that was killed in assassination on March 12th 2003. Zoran Djindjić. Djindjić left indelible trace in the existence of the Democratic Party. Ružica is the member of the Presidence Board and the General Board and has got quite important influence in the party. That is the reason why her support at the beginning of the campaign means their great triumph and Tadić's defeat. Tadić knows best how important the support of the family of Zoran Djindjić is because ha was always inviting Ružica Djindjić at the difficult moments for the party or when the party was leading important electoral campaigns. Djilas and Pajtić will have to come out in front of the party with the programme of party reforms and the recommendation of new politics that party will provide in the opposition. There is no doubt that Tadić is going to offer his programme as he announced at the General Board. The position of Pajtić and Djilas is still going to be better because despite the high positions they have now in the party they have never run it. Tadić will anyway have to, after presenting his programme of reforms, answer the question why he did not maintain these reforms during his eight years long constant leadership in the party. The answer to that question Tadić tried to give in his speech at the General Board of the Democratic Party when he admitted that he did not devote himself enough to the party because he „did not have two lives“. Still, the question is whether this explanation is going to be enough to

the members of the party? The impression is that Djilas and Pajtić are more persuasive in recommending reforms in the party because they have not been leaders before. That is why they have more chances concerning this question than Tadić whose explanations why he did not reform the party earlier, honestly speaking, are not illogical but sound as a bit late wisdom.

When we are speaking about party reforms, Tadić is going to accuse Djilas and Pajtić of intending to confederalize the party. This objection is aimed at the members of the Democratic Party who want the integrity and unity of their political organisation. However, the chances are minimal that Tadić is going to maintain any significant effect by this objection. That fact is that he himself while leading the party enabled its not confederation but feudalisation, in which all parts were functioning separately, were leading separate campaigns at the elections and were a competition to each other. The trend of decentralisation of the party has been lasting since 2004. And Tadić who was the president at that time can hardly avoid „responsibility“ if the trend has been negative for the party.

In the struggle that follows there are going to be unwillingly involved parties of the leading coalition Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Socialists Party of Serbia (SPS) and United Regions of Serbia (URS). Tadić is going to accuse Djilas and Pajtić of carrying out changes in the party under the dictation of these parties as well as that they have the agreements with some of the parties (especially with the Serbian Progressive Party and Aleksandar Vučić) to form a coalition sooner or later. That is Tadić's greatest problem. In order to manage to succeed in his tactics it is necessary for Tadić to convince the voters that the government in Serbia today is formed out of „ evil and regressive regime which is destroying everything that democrates did, which brings the country backwards, and which is making us argue with the world. That is why Tadić, immediately after forming the government, started talking, although through the statement of the former deputy president of the Democratic Party Jelena Trivan, about „ red-black“ coalition. This tactics is wrong because it is based on the wrong facts. It is certain that the oppositional party such as Democratic Party is going to have a lot of objections on the work of the government but whatever is the opinion about the actual government – it is not the one as Tadić wants to present it. However he himself is also guilty about the situation because he was the one to sign the historical reconciliation between the Democratic Party and the Socialists Party of Serbia as the president of the Democratic Party as well as that he also legalised in the political life of Serbia Serbian Progressive Party after its leaving the ultra-nationalistic Serbian Radical Party. Despite the fact that most of the members of the Democratic Party do not like Dinkić, it is the fact that he was in the coalition with Dinkić's party. So, Tadić can not present the actual government as the government that was ran by Slobodan Milošević in the nineties of the XX century. If it is so, why Democratic Party, sooner or later, does not form a coalition with some of the parties from the actual government? And better and more direct answer to that question can give Djilas and Pajtić and that is exactly why they have bigger support in the party. Thus Tadić by attacking them of the agreement with Vučić is actually making them a favour.

In the forthcoming turmoils that expect the Democratic Party, the factors from abroad should not be neglected. The influential western countries and the United States of America want the Democratic Party to stay united without any interfering about who is going to be the president of the party. Still, it is quite clear that at this moment, because of the support they have in the base of

the party, Djilas and Pajtić seem to give more trust that they could stabilize the party and provide peaceful transition.

Djilas and Pajtić have got another great advantage over Tadić. They are always in the position, together or separately, to form new parties. Tadić does not have that capacity and if he would do that after defeat his trial would have the same effect as the one when Dragan Mićunović after defeat in the party left the Democratic Party and founded Democratic Centre in 1994. That new party was that much „successful“ that after some time it went back to the Democratic Party. The representatives and members of the party does not like separation of the party and since they know that Tadić can hardly form new and successful party, they will also take this fact into consideration while voting.

Media in Serbia announce two-month dirty electoral campaign in the Democratic Party. Still, it does not have necessarily to be so, even it is more realistic that campaign is going to be led inside the party. The decision of the General Board that elections in the party are going to be held according to the delegate principle reduces chances of media usage in the electoral campaign. If it had been voted the principle of direct choice then the candidates would have been obliged to address the delegates through the media. In the delegation system, at the election at the Meeting of the Assembly are going to vote several thousand of delegates and every candidate for the president of the party is going to have the ability to communicate with every delegate by using the party channels. Whether the campaign is going to be led through the media or not depends exclusively on Boris Tadić. Respectively, on Boris Tadić's responsibility towards the Democratic Party.

At the end, everything is coming to the gaining of the delegates' trust, lobbying inside the party, and preparations for the Meeting of the Assembly of the party. It is difficult to say which side is more experienced in inner party struggle that is to come. In front of Djilas and Pajtić is a difficult task to bring into order relations among people. Out of their agreement is going to depend the way of functioning of the party in the future if they win at the party meeting of the assembly. Also, all Tadić's hopes are going to be focused towards their not making an agreement because if the two of them, Djilas and Pajtić start functioning properly, Tadić's chances for the winning are minimal. Beside their mutual agreement, Djilas and Pajtić are also looking forward to negotiating with the regional party leaders about the future positions in the party. If they win in the party it is realistic to expect that the new order is going to be arranged, meaning that some new party regional leaders will get more significant functions. As things are now positioned, duo Djilas – Pajtić is going to be the winning side and everyone are going to come to them and ask for their own positions in the new party. The two of them have got a difficult task ahead to satisfy the ambitions of many party functioners. As it is always the case when we are talking about the elections the basic argument of the functioners is going to be the number of votes they have. Djilas and Pajtić as well as Tadić will have to make some painful cuts. There are going to survive some local functioners that do not deserve it because by their haughtiness and their inability they brought the party in their municipalities to the situation of losing the elections, just because they have votes at the Meeting of the Assembly. If Tadić had withdrawn peacefully and enabled silent transition, he would have enabled his successors to choose their associates independently. It would be the same way as he brought at the most important positions in the party people he trusted when he became the



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President of the party since the electoral meeting of the Assembly was just a formality then. Thus, he is going to leave to his successors the burden of compromises and make them their work more difficult. Without doubt the next two months are critical for the future of the Democratic Party. The elections and everything that is happening around it do not have necessarily to be bad for the Democratic Party. They can be the opportunity for the party to choose a new way. The most important for that is the responsibility of the main participants towards the party and that the interest of the organisation they want to lead should be put above the individual interests. If they manage that, the Democratic Party is going to continue playing an important role on the political scene of Serbia.