

WHY LOCAL BECOMES GLOBAL?

Oppositional Democratic Party (DS) finally managed to outshine the governing Serbian Progressive Party , after the local elections in Zaječar. These elections are rather going to be remembered for the defeat of the democrates than the winning of the progressives over, until now untouchable, Zaječar's leader Boško Ničić. The result of local elections in Zaječar is not representative for Serbia, as well as were not those in Zemun and Kosjerić. However, after the sequence of early elections we can start speaking of a tendency in Serbian politics. And for the democrates it is very bad while for the progressives it is quite good.

The specificity of Zaječar is a local leader, Ničić, who did not owe its rating to the party, which list he was formally on, the United Regions of Serbia (URS), but he had the support of the followers of other parties. Thus , for example, Democratic Party in Zaječar last year, in the same day, on the same polls, won at the elections around 23 per cent, at the parliamentary elections around 18 per cent, and at local elections only around 8,5 per cent?! On the other hand, the United Regions of Serbia, which list Ničić was on, last year on local elections won almost 35 per cent, but at presidential and parliamentary elections only around 14 per cent of votes. The difference in votes in favour of parliamentary list in comparison to local lists had also the Libieral-Democratic Party and even Socialists Party of Serbia. It tells us that Ničić , at local elections, apart from votes of United Regions of Serbia, received votes of democrates, liberals and socialists. The only party which on all lists in Zaječar in May 2012. had almost identical result was Serbian Progressive Party. That is why just finished early local elections in Zaječar were the crash of two strong local leaders – Saša Mirković in front of Serbian Progressive Party and recent mayor Boško Ničić who, despite being the candidate of United Regions of Serbia, got the votes of other parties' followers. In such, referendum duel, other parties could not expect anything significant.

Zaječar's elections confirmed the tendency of increasing the rating of Serbian Progressive Party which gained trust of more than 39 per cent of voters compared to 25 per cent in May 2012. The results of local elections showed that the rating of this party has increased for more than 60 per cent in comparison to the previous year. Serbian Progressive Party has been governing for a year now and their rating is not decreasing but increasing. The progressives have , besides executing their programme, quite successfully taken what is best from the politics of other parties and now in practice they are efficiently applying things others were only talking about. Thus, for this party today also vote disappointed followers of the Democratic Party and it is the secret of their success. Still, besides the politics, what also differs Serbian Progressive Party from other parties is the fact that government has not put them asleep and every facing of the strength , even for the boards of local communities, they take quite seriously. The character of every organisation , and thus a political party also, is determined by the temper of its leader.

The president of the progressives Vučić has been dealing for the decades with party organisation and he is aware of the fact that the introduction to the electoral defeat is the moment when the leader of the governing party loses his contact with his membership and „neglects“ his political organisation. Vučić has transferred his mentality to his party and thus Serbian Progressive Party every elections understands as new assertion and accesses with more energy and wish than the opposition. The result of such a behaviour are winnings and the increase of the rating.

Change at the head of the Democratic Party has not brought new energy and politics to this party. Honestly speaking, democrates can claim that neither Zemun, nor Zaječar were the best of the municipalities when this party is concerned. However, only the comparison of the previous results of Democratic Party at local elections in Zemun and Zaječar with this year results shows scaring decrease of their rating.

Naturally, despite the fiasco in Zaječar, it is obvious that Democratic Party in Serbia is not below the census. Every party in its history has got weaker and better periods, but the strength of great parties lies in the fact that their organisation can refund the actual weaker rating. Democratic Party has in the previous couple of years completely neglected its organisation for which the most responsible person is its former leader Boris Tadić. He contemned his own party, he believed that he was above it and that it would not be necessary for him in his political career. That is how a „machine for winning the elections“, created by its former leader Zoran Djindjić at the end of the nineties and which carried the changes of the fifth of October, during the government of his successor was completely made rust. The price for that Tadić paid in May 2012. when he lost the elections exactly because of his party. Neither Tadić's successor did anything to change this situation. Immediately after he took over the party, he dismissed dozens of municipality's boards and thus additionally destabilized the organisation. The way it looks like shows the example of Zaječar in which Democratic Party in January this year dismissed the party board, and new local authorities have now at the elections been left under the census. To great parties, which have got strong organisation, this kind of fiasco can not happen whoever being their candidate because party activists, members and secured votes can provide enough votes for their party to remain the leading one. Democrates do not have that anymore and if they do not change something, at some future elections they will not be able to invite and animate all of their followers. To be even worse the misery of Democratic Party, they do not lack only the organisation but the politics as well. This party has not have politics for very long time now, because it turned out that what they were struggling for, while they were the government, is now being better and more efficiently applied by their political opponents. There is an impression that the Democratic Party can not find the way of dealing with the situation it is facing at the moment, that inner party war, that was only frozen by the bad compromise of Tadić and Djilas at the assembly of the party, has not been finished yet and that further separations of the party are possible.

Apart from the progressives, relative winner of the series of local elections are the socialist of the Prime Minister Ivica Dačić. Socialist Party of Serbia records constant and stable increase of support of 60 per cent becoming the second party according to the support of the voters in Serbia.

Dačić successfully uses the fact that he is on the head of the government which has got relatively high rating, that he leads the negotiations about Kosovo quite well, and he promotes himself as a leader who is going to start the opening negotiations about joining Serbia to the European Union. This way, socialists are taking over the European politics from the Democratic Party and attack former voters of this party. When Socialist Party of Serbia crossover their successful politics with quite strong party organisation, that survived many temptations, it is obvious why the support has been increasing. If the tendency of increasing of the socialists and decreasing of the democrates should continue – Socialist Party of Serbia could become a dominant political party of the left wing in Serbia.

The decrease of the rating of the Democratic Party has not brought larger number of votes to the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The support of LDP stabilised thus there is not necessary asking the question if the liberals are above the electoral census. Liberals can be joyed by the fact that at local elections in Zaječar, for the first time since their foundation, got more votes than Democratic Party. The thing that can concern them is the fact that their winning over the Democratic Party is not the consequence of the increase of their rating but the disaster of the democrates. Thus, for more serious break through in the electorate, and first of all for the attack on the former voters of the Democratic Party, this party needs wider coalition in which would also have to enter some former leaders of the democrates. It is the reason why the talking about a coalition of Liberal Democratic Party and parties close to them which head would be the former leader of the democrates Boris Tadić sounds logical, if it is true.

Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) at elections in Zaječar and Zemun came out in coalition with nationalistic movement Dveri. Simple total of votes of Democratic Party of Serbia and Dveri at previous elections as well as programme closeness of these parties should be winning combination for them. Still, it is not the case. Democratic Party of Serbia at the elections in 2012. in Zemun with Dveri took less votes than this party won in 2009. in coalition with New Serbia (NS). In both municipalities, Zaječar and Zemun, Democratic Party of Serbia in coalition with Dveri, won significantly less votes than the total of individual results of these parties was when they came out individually. At first sight, it is rather odd that Democratic Party of Serbia in the moment of solving the problem of Kosovo and when the country is coming closer to the European Union, as the only parliamentary political party that is opposing to the Brussels agreement between Belgrade and Priština and which is against the entering of Serbia to the European Union, does not receive stronger support? It is even more interesting that the support Democratic Party of Serbia and Dveri have is in total significantly smaller than the number of citizens being against the agreements with Brussels and Priština. The answer to this question lies in the fact that citizens , even if they agree with the attitudes of Democratic Party of Serbia, in its leader , former Prime Minister and President Vojislav Koštunica, do not see the person capable of solving any problems. The problem with Dveri is of different kind. They do not have a respectable leader so that their potential voters do not have anyone to trust.

The next standoff of the parties is going to happen in autumn, in the Belgrade municipality of Voždovac, which is more representative than Zemun and Zaječar. At the previous elections, which were held in 2009., in this municipality Serbian Progressive Party and Democratic Party were almost equal with 29.8 compared to 29.6 per cent while Democratic Party of Serbia and Socialists Party of Serbia gained 12 and 10 per cent respectively and the one more that crossed the census were radicals with over 6 per cent and Liberal Democratic Party with over 5 per cent of the votes. At that moment such results at local elections were proportionally equal to the strength of the parties at the republic level. That is why the elections in Voždovac are going to be monitored with special attention. They are going to give the answer to the question whether the tendency of changes that was seen in Zemun and Zaječar is going to continue and how the political scene in Serbia is going to be changed? The thing that can already be quite obvious to Serbian political leaders is that the citizens, after the decades lost, do not trust in promises and deceits any more. They are simply interested in the question if the politician is the „part of the problem“ or the part of the solution“. That is how they really vote. That, pragmatic view on politics is the best thing that could happen to Serbia no matter who symbolizes a solution and who symbolizes a problem.