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The 1990 Multiparty Elections in Serbia

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Our aim is to investigate the multiparty elections in Serbia in 1990 and to provide an answer to the crucial question of why Slobodan Milošević and his Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) won the elections. After a thorough analysis it has been established that the critical reasons for their absolute electoral parliamentary and presidential victory have been the following:

- 1) rural areas and small urban settlements voted for the SPS due to an informative blockade;
- 2) the elderly voted for the SPS;
- 3) with the exception of the Hungarians, all minorities voted for the SPS as a less nationalistic option than the SPO;
- 4) the largest minority, the Albanians (10%), boycotted the elections;
- 5) all Kosovo Serbs voted for the SPS; and
- 6) the whole electoral procedure was controlled by the SPS.

Key words: Serbia, elections, parliamentary system, Yugoslavia, Yugoslav crisis

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Večstrankarske volitve v Srbiji leta 1990

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V tem tekstu želimo predstaviti večstrankarske volitve v Srbiji leta 1990 in odgovoriti na naslednje ključno vprašanje: kako to, da je Slobodan Milošević s svojo stranko, Socialistično stranko Srbije (SSS), na teh volitvah zmagal? Analiza je pokazala, da so bili razlogi za njegovo absolutno zmago v parlamentu in v boju za predsedniško mesto naslednji:

- podeželska območja in majhni urbani kraji so volili za SSS zaradi informativne blokade
- za SSS so volili starejši volilci
- z izjemo madžarske so vse manjšine volile za SSS, ker je bila manj nacionalistično usmerjena kot stranka Srbsko gibanje obnove (SGO)
- največja manjšina, to so Albanci (10 %), so volitve bojkotirali
- za SSS so volili vsi kosovski Srbi
- SSS je kontrolirala ves volilni postopek

Ključne besede: Srbija, volitve, parlamentarni sistem, Jugoslavija, kriza

Nature of Political System in Serbia in Early 1990s

Many foreign political scientists argue that the political (and electoral) system in Serbia during the process of Yugoslavia's dissolution could be classified as »authoritarian«. This system is characterized by the limited political pluralism, aggressive populist rhetoric, concentration of power by the party leader and clique around him and their ability to manipulate the electorate.¹ Some researchers outline the continuity of such personal and unpredictable nature of single-man political power in Serbia during the whole twentieth century and ground this system to the traditional Balkan »pater familias« (father of the family) model of the ruling rural large family society (»zadruga«)². The tendencies to bring familial power of Slobodan Miloshevic's family over the state were transparent in Serbia's political system in the early 1990s. The leader of Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) S. Miloshevic and his wife Mirjana Markovic, the leader of Yugoslav United Left party, ultimately supervised the state political life, army, police and economy. Their kinship expanded to mass media contributing to the control and manipulation of the information channels and civil initiatives, which lost a great degree of independence and critical voice to the regime. In such a system the personal service to the party leader and relationships with his family guaranteed the success and prosperity³. As a result, Serbia failed to make the political leap from totalitarianism to pluralism and left behind the successful democratic transition in Eastern Europe⁴.

Serbia's state politics heavily relied on the nationalistic rhetoric that merged together political unity and national claims⁵. This theoretical Ernest Gellner's framework has had its practical interpretations by both SPS leadership, on the one hand, and some leaders of oppositional parties such as Serbian Radical Party lead by Vojislav Sheshelj and movements such as Serbian Revival Movement lead by Vuk Drashkovic, on the other. They claimed that ethnographic borders should be expanded to the national-state borders or other way around that the state should enlarge its borders in order to include both the territories settled by dispersed Serbs

¹ Linz, Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition*, p. 38.

² For more details about »pater familias« model and its political structure in Balkans see: Дворниковић, Карактерологија Југословена.

³ More about personal-party relationships and economic success in Serbia in the early 1990s see in Judah, *The Serbs*, pp. 259–278.

⁴ For more details see: Remet, *Social Currents*.

⁵ Gellner, *Nations et nationalisme*, p. 13.

and lands that historically belonged to the »national« state⁶. By combining these two ethnic and historic rights, Serbian nationalists (like many others in their own national cases) required creation of United Serbia from Krayina region in Croatia (according to ethnic rights) to Kosovo in Serbia (according to historic rights). In this way both political blocks in position and opposition gained popularity among Serbian citizens, but lost political and financial support from the western democracies. Nationalistic rhetoric by oppositional Serbian Radical Party and Serbian Revival Movement was even more radical than S. Miloshevic's political discourse and thus discredited any other oppositional units such as Democratic Party, Serbian Liberal Party and other political forces that called for democratic transition in Serbia. Western European countries and USA maintained distant to the events in March 1991 and did not provide any support to democratic parties which succeeded to organize mass demonstration against S. Miloshevic's growing political regime, but failed to defeat it.

By developing discourse of »national mobilization« and patriotism to fight for national interests, Miloshevic succeeded to gain political power in 1987–1989 and maintain it for the whole decade from 1990 to 2000⁷. As the chapter below will suggest Miloshevic effectively manipulated certain »democratic« mechanisms of pluralistic political-electoral system in Serbia and at the same time established his own absolute power by gaining major support from Serbian population. The oppositional political forces experienced a very difficult task to contest Miloshevic's iconic image and obtain support for political-social reform and civic society values in Serbia. Thus, nationalistic rhetoric was explored by oppositional parties as well to appeal to the electorate and win support.

Multi-Party System: Limited Development of Democracy

In 1990 Yugoslavia followed the model of political transition from one-party regime to multi-party democratic system which was similar to the other Central and Eastern European countries. For the first time after the Second World War both presidential and parliamentary elections were organized in democratic way when newly established political parties and politicians could participate in the elections. The adopted *Law on Political Organizations* (July 19th, 1990) allowed setting up various political associations. In Serbia many political forces demanded to draft new democratic constitution and develop open democratic society. Political agenda of majority political organizations openly rejected communist and socialist regime and supported human rights, democracy and market economy. However, the results of the parliamentary and presidential elections in other republics of Yugoslavia made the negative impact on democratic forces in Serbia and to certain extent re-inforced the position of the former Communist Party. During the period from May

⁶ Sotirović, *Emigration, Refugees*, pp. 94–95.

⁷ Thomas, *The Politics of Serbia*, p. 7.

till November 1990, elections were held in four Republics of Yugoslavia, namely, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. By applying nationalistic rhetoric newly elected parliaments and presidents of these four republics expressed their claims for independent ethnic states and separation from Yugoslavia. Rhetoric of ethnic nationalism became developed into the driving force for success in the multi-party system to gain and maintain political power.

In Serbia the elections were scheduled in December when the broad spectrum of the most influential political forces from former Communist party to democratic bloc and even new Royalist bloc could participate. By observing the electorate behavior of nationalistic parties in other four republics of Yugoslavia, Serbia's former Communist Party (i.e., League of Communists of Serbia), renamed to Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and led by Slobodan Miloshevic, mobilized financial and information resources and adopted aggressive nationalistic rhetoric in electoral campaign. SPS addressed the danger of growing nationalism in other Yugoslav republics and positioned itself as the savior of Serbian national interests.⁸ Being the successor of the Communist Party, SPS appropriated all rights and material wealth, political infrastructure and organizational networks of the former Communist Party. Though significant number of the membership was lost, SPS had mostly professional cadre in comparison to other parties.

Maintaining the political power, SPS succeeded to adopt the legal acts to help their party in winning the parliamentary and presidential elections in December. The law on *plurality (majoritarian) voting system* allowed any party to participate in the elections but *de facto* restricted them in getting majority of seats in the parliament. Oppositely to the *proportional representation system* that provides the close match between the percentages of votes and seats, the *plurality voting system* advantaged the party which collected the single majority votes by allowing this party to obtain the absolute majority of seats in the parliament. As a result, on December 9th elections SPS got the majority seats in the parliament.

The oppositional parties in Serbia, however, left behind of SPS in terms of political and organizational infrastructure. Regardless on these weaknesses, two main oppositional organizations, namely Democratic Party (Demokratska stranka – DS)

⁸ The homogenization of Serbian opinion by Slobodan Miloshevic has begun on April 24th, 1987 when he as the Chairman of the League of Communists of Serbia visited Kosovo Serbs at Kosovo Polje (at the outskirts of Prishtina) – a mythical place for the Serbs where they lost state-national independence to the Ottomans on June 28th, 1389 [Самарџић, Косово и Метохија, pp. 39–40]. After listening grievances of the rallied local Serbs upon long-time discrimination and torture by ethnic Albanians he was the first Serbian official after 1945 to promise them state's protection, respect of their human and national rights and equal status within the multiethnic province of Kosovo. His speech at Kosovo Polje was used by TV Belgrade to start creating his charismatic personal cult which had to be proven by mass meetings (»happenings of the people«) in biggest Serbia's towns from 1987 to 1989 culminating with one million gathered Serbs at pan-national meeting on 600 anniversary of the Kosovo battle on June 28th, 1989 at Gazimestan. Both Serbian Orthodox Church and Milošević expressed readiness to fight, according to Miloshevic, for protection of human rights as it was done 600 years earlier when on Kosovo Polje Serbian Prince Lazar was defending Christian Europe from Muslim infidels [Milošević, Kosovo i sloga].

lead by Prof. Dragoljub Micunovic, and the royalist Serbian Revival Movement (Srpski pokret obnove – SPO) led by at that time charismatic populist leader – the writer Vuk Drashkovic, had the potential staff and supporters to participate in the political life of Serbia.

Democratic Party (DS) was formed by Belgrade intellectuals (many of them former political dissidents who protested against the last Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 according to which Serbia was divided into three territorial-political units (Vojvodina, Kosovo and the rest of Serbia). The precursor of DS was the Committee for Human Protection illegally worked in Titoist Yugoslavia in 1970s and 1980s as in fact the only opposition organization to totalitarian regime run by Josip Broz Tito. On November 11th, 1989 a group of 13 intellectuals publicly proclaimed organizational establishment of DS that became the first opposition party in Serbia. The most distinguished signatories of the act that created DS have been later its leaders: Dr. Dragoljub Micunovic, Dr. Kosta Chavoshki, Dr. Vojislav Koshtunica and Dr. Zoran Djindjic. In the early 1990 the party was united to the assembly of many small parties and liberal movements. Even the leadership was composed of the board council, where several leaders in consensus made the decisions⁹. The main focus of party program was concentrated on clear program of economic and political reforms rather than nationalism and exclusive Serbian national traditions. Political agenda of the Democratic Party was based on traditional European liberalism of civic society. They saw the future Yugoslavia as democratic federation composed by all of the nations who by their own will expressed common state and democratic political system. Regardless very sharp critics of communism, the party had unclear national program and weak populist leadership contrary to SPO.

The other influential oppositional party, namely, Serbian Revival Movement (SPO), focused primarily its political program on solving Serbian national question according to the dominant framework of German Romanticism from the 19th century that claimed the model of one nation – one state¹⁰. The leader of the party, the writer Vuk Drashkovic, previously was affiliated to the nationalistic Serbian National Defense organization (Srpska narodna obnova – SNO) and proposed to form the special Serbian paramilitary forces and fight for »Greater Serbia« in order to protect all the territories settled by Serbs. This first of all addressed Serbs in Kosovo allowing questioning large-scale autonomy of Kosovo within Serbia and even proposing to cancel such its status. The new Drashkovic's party – SPO – based its program on promises to introduce democracy and rule of law in Serbia, revival of genuine cultural traditions of the Serbs and restoration of powerful influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church as it used to have in the pre-WWII times. Due to these populist ideas the movement rapidly got huge mass popularity and expected to win the upcoming parliamentary elections and maybe presidential ones as well. For this purpose, SPO organized extensive electoral campaign by organizing the oppositional meetings across and outside Serbia. Economic issues were secondary

⁹ Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize*, p. 124.

¹⁰ For more information see: Sotirović, *Lingvistički model*.

than political, however, clearly expressed suggesting the tendencies to develop market economy, private possession over the tools of production and private business initiatives. Oppositely to the other big political organizations, SPO had a very specific strategy in its political-national program, notably, to restore the monarchy by crowning the Yugoslav Prince Alexander II Karadjordjevic who has been the legal successor of pre-war Yugoslav royal dynasty of Serbian origin. Before the December elections SPO had about 700.000 supporters and 500 offices in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.

The other political organizations were significantly smaller, without broad social and strong financial support existing on the margin of political life.

The Elections of 1990

The independent public opinion research on possible results of elections suggested that in September 1990 the most popular were three parties and their leaders. The highest numbers of votes could expect Miloshevic's SPS (26%), the other two most supported were Dragoljub Micunovic's DS (13%) and Drashkovic's SPO (11%). However, almost half of electorate (45%) did not have a clear opinion which political force to favor. In following months the electoral support to SPS increased due to its position in power, control of media allowing minimizing time for opponents on TV and radio for electoral campaign and successful Yugoslav army operations against Croatian governmental forces. S. Miloshevic's popularity grew up and left behind SPO and DS parties and their leadership.

The significant result of S. Miloshevic's party's growing popularity was the total control of informational channels, such as national Radio and TV of Serbia and daily newspaper »Politika«. The events of June 13th 1990 showed that the ruling SPS rejected any dialogue with opposition and practically manipulated the oppositional democratic forces to win the votes of the electorate. On June 13th, 1990 some oppositional democratic forces united under the Associated Opposition of Serbia called for public protest against SPS control over national media. More than 70,000 people of peaceful demonstration were dispersed. Later in autumn the same Associate Opposition of Serbia again organized mass protests in Belgrade demanding fair conditions for each political force in electoral campaign including 90 days of the campaign, two hours of television time per day during the election campaign and the round-table talks. Though the opposition demanded to make the agreement with the leadership and ruling forces of SPS, these demands were not taken into consideration by SPS who continued their informational control over electorate campaign.¹¹ Nevertheless the government of Serbia granted few minor concessions to the opposition allowing the latter for access to the television during the electoral campaign and simplifying the registration for the candidates of president elections according to the *Law on Election* issued on September 28th,

¹¹ Tanjug.

1990. However, SPS did everything to stop public appearance of opposition on TV. The scheduled round-table talks among position and opposition broke down due to SPS leadership's political ambitions. For the SPS leaders the round-table discussions became the political platform to spread their virtues and achievements rather than real exchange of opinions. As Vojislav Koshtunica (DS) argued, most East European countries provided fair conditions for all parties to address the voters and present the party's agenda; but in Serbia a few concessions rather than real negotiations and discussions were preferred¹².

Absence of the united oppositional block before the elections also contributed to the victory of SPS in the parliamentary and presidential elections. By debating the law on elections that introduced »majoritarian« system, the opposition disagreed on whether to boycott the elections as non-fair for oppositional parties or participate and win though small but important voices in the parliament. Vuk Drashkovic and his SPO strongly argued that the united boycott of the elections would discredit the legitimacy of the new »democratic« post-elections regime. Meanwhile, Zoran Djindjic, one of the leading figures at DS, argued that the opposition should take the opportunity in the election campaign in order to record the illegal actions of the ruling SPS and inform the nation of them¹³. Due to significant Djindjic's political influence DS decided to participate in the December 9th elections regardless the resistance of majority DS leaders. The oppositional SPO party publicly declared their strong position to boycott the elections, but had to change their tactics and join the elections in the last minute. SPO leadership had finally realized the plans of DS and other democratic forces to involve SPO in the elections, on the one hand, and the possible future of SPO to be marginal in state policies, on the other. Though SPO faced the problems of limited time and resources, their electoral campaign was based on optimistic views that Serbian citizens will not support SPS as the former Communist Party. Relying on the experience of Eastern and Central Europe SPO and its leadership believed that socialism will be swept out as a historically failed ideology and policy in this region as well. However, they did not properly evaluate the seriousness of SPS campaign, their control of media and strong organizational infrastructure.

The elections for the National Assembly (Narodna skupština) on December 9th, 1990 did not bring unexpected results. Majority of the voters (46%) gave their support to SPS. Due to the electoral system, that was structured by SPS (and finally recognized by opposition with believe that such system will bring final electoral victory exactly to them but not to SPS), the party won 194 seats (77,6%) in the parliament out of 250. SPO with 15,8% got only 19 seats (7,6%), the Democratic Alliance of Vojvodina's Hungarians (Demokratski savez vojvodjanskih Madjara – DSVM), benefiting from the territorial concentration of their supporters, gained 7 seats (3,2%) with 2,6% of the votes, DS 7 seats (obtained 7,6% of votes). The rest of 13 political organizations, elected to the Parliament, won between 1 and 2 seats¹⁴.

¹² Andrejević, Radio Free Europe.

¹³ Bujošević, East European Reporter.

¹⁴ Od izbornih rituala, p. 284; Thomas, The Politics of Serbia, p. 74.

The results of the elections to the National Assembly had shown twofold phenomenon. Firstly, a number of smaller parties and independent units did gain representatives in the National Assembly. Secondly, the gained voices of the oppositional parties were too small to compose a strong opposition. The elections to the National Assembly demonstrated the limits of democracy in Serbia when previous party system attributes were modified to introduce democratic elections and continue to control and maintain the real power by the same ruling (former Communist, currently SPS) party.

Similar tendencies of limited democracy were functioning in the presidential electoral campaign. The Serbian constitution (September 28th, 1990) introduced the system of presidential republic in Serbia that was used by S. Miloshevic in his electoral campaign as the main advantage against his opponent-candidates and which finally gave him opportunity to stay in power for the next decade. Having a wide scope of prerogatives of political power the presidency became in fact the crucial political institution. During two months of electoral campaign the presidential power was sophisticatedly wrapped into nationalistic clothes by mass-media. American sociologist Eric D. Gordy calls political system in Serbia in the 1990s as *nationalist authoritarianism* taking primarily into consideration a strong presidential position which was surviving in power due to nationalistic rhetoric.¹⁵ There were two reasons for the strong presidential element in the constitution that was adopted exactly on the first day of the electoral campaign and thus became a part of it: 1) to provide advanced position of SPS candidate to the post of Serbia's president in comparison with opposition candidates; and 2) Miloshevic believed that his future election as president was already assured and that therefore he needed to safeguard his position against control by the parliament which might be dominated by united opposition bloc.¹⁶ The new constitution of Serbia was promulgated on September 28th, and on the same day multi-party elections were announced for the December 9th, 1990.¹⁷

For the post of Serbia's President a competition was between 32 candidates. The most chances to win had SPS leader Slobodan Miloshevic, SPO leader Vuk Draskovic and Belgrade University professor Ivan Djuric. During the presidential electoral campaign, the SPS candidate – an actual Serbia's president, Slobodan

¹⁵ Gordy, *The Culture and nationalism*, pp. 8–9.

¹⁶ The constitution was adopted by the national referendum held on July 1–2nd, 1990 under the strong ruling party propaganda in favor of »national interests« and »united Serbia« tasks which had to be defended by the new constitution. Whoever was in opposition to the proposed constitution was labeled as a »national traitor« by Miloshevic's controlled state's informative service. However, the people believed that referendum upon a new constitution was in fact plebiscite about Kosovo – to whom this province belonged: to Serbs or Albanians [Čavoški, *Lex Milošević*, p. 134]. In fact, the voters put aside the danger for democracy of a constitution drawn up by the one-party assembly and the SPS government gained 97% approval for its right to formulate the constitution prior to elections, ignoring the call by democratic opposition to boycott the referendum. The result of the referendum demonstrated the continuing ability of SPS to control the process of transition in the form of »transition without transition«.

¹⁷ The first great success of strong presidential position within the political system in Serbia has been visible by the December 1990's presidential elections results.

Miloshevic, had the most chances to win mainly due to privileged position in state media and combined rhetoric of modest nationalism and necessary reforms of social and economic life in Serbia. The tactics of avoiding rhetorics of aggressive nationalism on the public scene retained him popularity from the years 1987–1989. Formally advocating the values of civic society and propagating Serbia as the motherland of all of her citizens Miloshevic skilfully targeted his campaign towards ethnic minorities in Serbia.

The presidential electoral campaign of Vuk Drashkovic was mainly shaped within the framework of radical ethnic patriotic nationalism for the purpose of national mobilization for defence of Serbian interests in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.¹⁸ His democratic nationalism combined with a call to change illegitimate Miloshevic's power structure in Serbia succeeded to mobilize a huge number of ethnic Serbs before the elections, but on the other hand, it showed the failure to cooperate effectively with other ethnic communities.

The third most prominent presidential candidate, Ivan Djuric, was a scientist, Byzantologist, professor at Belgrade University, humanist and one of the most critical democratic speakers against either Miloshevic's or Drashkovic's nationalistic policies, but not having any experience in the politics. He was a candidate of pro-western Serbia's Reformists – a political association fighting for democratic Serbia as a member of European Community/Union. Differently to Miloshevic and Drashkovic, Djuric enjoyed a great respect by majority of western governments and diplomats. However, on the other hand he had a lesser chances to obtain a mass support by the electorate, necessary to win presidential elections, as he totally rejected nationalism from his electoral program.

Finally, the results of the presidential elections in Serbia showed more or less expected outcomes of the pre-electoral campaigns: the most votes won Slobodan Miloshevic (63%) followed by Vuk Drashkovic (only 16,4%).¹⁹ The only other candidate who succeeded to obtain a significant proportion of the votes was Ivan Djuric (5,52% or more than 300.000 votes)²⁰.

Why SPS won?

The reasons for SPS triumph can be located in a number of structural and institutional advantages that they enjoyed over the opposition parties. The SPS had inherited from the Communist Party of Serbia (a real name the League of Communists of Serbia – LCS), largely intact, a structure of branches and membership extending across the whole country. After the *Law of Political Organizations* passed on July 19th, 1990 SPS succeeded to retain the biggest number of former 400,000 LCS members. The SPS presence in the factories by establishing its own

¹⁸ About the radical nationalism in Serbia in 1990s see: Cohen, *The Politics of Despair. About the ideology of Serbian nationalism* see: Шешел, *Идеологија српског национализма*.

¹⁹ *Od izbornih rituala*, p. 278.

²⁰ Thomas, *The Politics of Serbia*, 74.

»workplaces« served as an expression of the party's dominance of economic as well as political life. The opposition parties, by contrast, had to create their new party local and national network from the beginning and over short period of time. As a result, by the time polling took place on December 9th, 1990, many of the opposition parties had organizational party structure developed only in a few specific locations – mainly big urban settlements. The opposition parties also faced severe financial problems which seriously inhibited their capacity to effectively conduct their election campaign. The SPS also enjoyed further logistical superiority over the opposition through their total monopoly of power in local and central governments, in the run up to and during the election campaign.

The greatest institutional advantage held by the SPS, however, was their almost total control over the electronic media. The opposition had, prior to the election campaign, won concessions regarding access to the media but the presentation of the party programs was within uniform length and did not distinguish between those with negligible support and those, such as SPO and DS, who had a substantial following. By contrast, support for SPS permeated the entire news output of the RTS, the main Serbia's TV network covering the whole country. The broadcasting range of neutral and more balanced TV networks, like Belgrade Studio B, however, did not reach beyond the greater Belgrade area leaving huge parts of the inner Serbia's hinterland, and particularly the rural areas, depended on the state-controlled media. Finally, during the election campaign even the Yugoslav People's Army was prepared to defend SPS staying in power. That was announced by top army's officials' statements (like of General Veljko Kadijevic) in a form to warn Serbia's voters of the danger that civil war might break out should the opposition be victorious.

The tone of Miloshevic's and SPS electoral campaign contributed greatly to their electoral victory in 1990 followed by an establishment of the post-electoral one-party dominated National Assembly and state's authoritarian one-man leadership (like in Tudjman's HDZ Croatia). The SPS campaign put emphasis on »positive« values of Serbia and Serbian citizens such as economic development and prosperity based on domestic natural and human resources. Surprisingly, at the heyday of the campaign the nationalism, which brought Miloshevic to power in 1987, by contrast, played a distinctly subsidiary role; absolutely contrary to SPO campaign. That was the main reason why SPS succeeded to win majority of the Serbia's minority votes including even and some small number from Albanian electorate (while overwhelming majority of Kosovo Albanian electorate boycotted the elections). Miloshevic opted not for insulting opposition leaders but rather for ignoring them on the public scene what left to the electorate an impression of opposition as politically irrelevant part of the society. Oppositely to him, radical and fiery nationalistic rhetoric of Vuk Draskovic and SPO alienated many non-ethnic Serbs and majority of aged electorate for whom SPO leader was more like rock and roll singer or the Chetnik²¹ propagator (with long hair and beard) rather than a serious

²¹ The Chetniks have been Serbian nationalistic guerilla fighters established in 1904. During the WWII they fought against the Germans, Communists and armed forces of Indepen-

politician. The clashes by SPO supporters and local Serbia's Muslims in Rashka region after nationalistic speeches by SPO leaders were sophisticatedly used by Miloshevic's propaganda machinery. However, probably the critical reason why opposition did not gain stronger electoral support among ethnic Serbs was the fact that its leadership openly propagated pro-western orientation of Serbia's political post-totalitarian course at the moment when the European Community led by traditional Serbian enemy – (united) Germany advocated and supported dissolution of Yugoslavia without living place for united Serbian state. In addition, propagating a liquidation of »Albanian independent state of Kosovo within Serbia« by SPS gave them a great popularity as real defenders of Serbian national pride.

Finally, beyond the fact that SPS controlled all key features of the political life during the election period it has to be also mentioned that their ideological message found an appropriate soil to be absorbed by big part of conservative section of Serbian society. The SPS had been able to revise their image presenting themselves as following a policy of reform, but without the systematic change (using the slogan »Sa nama nema neizvesnosti/There will be no uncertainty for you if we won«), and therefore disruptive upheaval, advocated by the opposition. The SPS was also able to combine its ideological formula with the promise of actual material gain (for instance, living standard like in Sweden). Rural population was attracted by SPS policy of the restitution of land confiscated from the peasantry after the WWII (in 1946 and 1953). In general, the Socialist voters have been mainly those whose degree of poverty within the socialist system was such that they feared any radical change (advocated by the opposition) would rob them of what little they had. This support group included not only Serbia's significant rural population, but also workers from heavy industry factories on the suburban parts of the large towns (like Rakovica in Belgrade), low-level officials from the civil service, and old age pensioners. It is more clear if we know that Serbia's working classes were the product of the processes of mass urbanization and industrialization under socialism who largely continued to give their support to the successor of the political party which was their progenitor. The results of electoral policies in Serbia in 1990 showed not only a town/country side division, but also a strong regional differentiation. Support to SPS was particularly strong in the poverty stricken areas of the south-east (Nish, Leskovac, Vranje) and was much weaker in more affluent north. The opposition parties were also, in contrast to SPS, strongest in northern and western Serbia. For higher educated and materially better situated population the prospect of change was more likely to be a source of hope than fear. At the time of Serbia's first multi-party elections, however, this group remained a minority within the country's electorate.

dent State of Croatia taking revenge against Croatian and Bosnian Muslim civilians for their atrocities against the Serbs within the territory of Independent State of Croatia (which included Croatia, parts of Serbia and the whole portion of Bosnia and Herzegovina). Yugoslav Titoist historiography presented the Chetniks deliberately wrongly as the pro-Fascist collaborators in order to discredit them in the eyes of the common people as they have been the main political opponents to Tito's partisans for taking political power in Yugoslavia after the war. See more in: Николић, Историја равногорског покрета.

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POVZETEK

Večstrankarske volitve v Srbiji leta 1990

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Članek analizira naravo in volilne rezultate volilne politike v Srbiji ob začetku nasilnega razpada Jugoslavije in v obdobju prvih večstrankarskih volitev leta 1990. Pod drobnogled smo vzeli tako predsedniške kot parlamentarne volitve. Za razliko od ostalih srednjeevropskih in vzhodnoevropskih držav na začetku devetdesetih let 20. stoletja v Srbiji ni potekala politična preobrazba iz sistema totalitarnih enopartijskih volitev v model demokratičnih večstrankarskih svobodnih volitev. »Tranzicija brez tranzicije« se je glasila formula, s katero je vladajoča stranka označevala politično življenje v Srbiji med obdobjem razpada Jugoslavije. V politiki so sicer sprejeli nekatere od formalnih značilnosti demokracije, vendar pa kake stabilne institucionalizirane podpore tega sistema ni bilo. Da bi diskreditirala demokratične vrednote, je vladajoča Socialistična stranka Srbije (SSS), ki jo je vodil Slobodan Milošević, vsilila svoja pravila in vzpostavila nadzor nad predsedniškimi in parlamentarnimi volitvami. Rezultat je bil ta, da je zavladal avtoritarni politični sistem, ki je koristil prejšnji vladajoči nomenklaturi in ni zastopal večine srbskega prebivalstva. Končna odločitev vodij opozicijskih strank, da bodo aktivno sodelovali v volitvah, je celotnemu političnemu sistemu dala takorekoč zakonito in moralno verifikacijo. Glede na izhodiščni položaj vseh sodelujočih in na politično ozračje v celotni tedanji Jugoslaviji rezultati tih volitev ne presenečajo. Povedano z drugimi besedami so se volitve v Srbiji (in v Črni gori) odvijale v času, ko so ostale jugoslovanske republike že izvolile svoja nacionalna vodstva. Prav tako ni skrivnost, da je bila izvolitev Miloševića in njegove SSS decembra 1990 v veliki meri odgovor na zmago Franja Tuđmana in njegove Hrvatske demokratske skupnosti (HDZ) na Hrvaškem maja istega leta.