

"WE DO NOT KEEP YOU IN SUSPENSE" - POLITICAL PREELECTION POSTER IN SERBIA, 1190 -

SUMMARY

Enormous and rapid changes that have recently swept over Eastern Europe, together with the internal transformations initiated by the overall crisis, had inevitably opened up some space for processes of democratization in Yugoslavia as well, the first post-war free elections being one of their early manifestations. Serbia was among the last of the Yugoslav republics to legalize political pluralism and multiparty system and organize elections for the office of the President of the Republic and parliament representatives, that is only in December 1990.

The aim of the paper was to briefly describe the atmosphere in which the crucial transformation from the authoritarian to democratic political system was beginning to evolve. It effected not only formal political actions of both the ruling party (socialist, formally communist) and the opposition, but also the everyday behaviour of ordinary people, their train of thoughts and attitudes to sympathizers of either parties. All these reflected the tensions and conflicts typical for pre-democratic transitional phases occurring after a long period of authoritarian government. Emphasis is placed on election campaign (mass media, meetings etc.) and especially on political posters, as part of political marketing, that represented a novel phenomenon, in the street of Belgrade.

Although there appeared a large number of political parties (50), as far as Belgrade is concerned, the scene was dominated by the strongest and the largest ones: Socialist Party of Serbia, Serbian Revival Movement, Democratic Party, and to much lesser degree several others of both pro-Serbian and pro-Yugoslav orientations. Posters and other propagandistic materials are classified into respective categories, and their verbal and pictorial messages that express their ideas and values in symbolic forms are analyzed. Finally, attention is paid to their destiny once in the street, namely to how the public (or its particular segments) used to posters to express their own political attitudes and feelings or criticism of a particular party by adding symbols and words, often changing their original meaning. This was also the time for the reappearance of political mural messages.

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)