

the moral victor of these elections. The presidential elections were nevertheless invalidated because of low turnout (under 50 percent). Lilic's main handicap is that he was too closely associated with Milosevic and completely dependent on him. In addition, Lilic lacks any charisma. This is a serious handicap for a candidate who runs the presidential campaign that requires communication skills in mass rallies.

It is not within the scope of this paper to provide an in-depth analysis of the electoral preferences of the Serbian voters. The fact is that two charismatic leaders, Milosevic and Seselj, who have guided Serbian nationalism in the past ten years, remain the two most powerful and appealing politicians in Serbia. Milosevic, who toned down his virulent nationalism after signing the Dayton agreements, has conceded the terrain of demagogic populism to Seselj, who has promptly filled the void on the national and regional level, in *Republika Srpska*. One Serbian voter offered a simple and at the same time troubling explanation of her vote for Seselj: "Before, everybody voted for Milosevic — so I voted for Milosevic. Now, everybody votes for Seselj — so I vote for Seselj, too."⁶

Many foreign observers considered that the elections were unfair, but all were satisfied to learn that Seselj had not become the Serbian president. The U.S. envoy to Bosnia, Robert Gelbard, described Seselj as "a fascist we couldn't do business with."⁷ Therefore, the international community, mainly Western governments, did not make much fuss over the outcome of the presidential elections. They did not send a commission to investigate electoral fraud, as they had done in the aftermath of the municipal elections of November 1996, when the coalition *Zajedno* won the elections, but was denied a victory, by Milosevic.

6. *New Statesman*, [London], Steve Crawshaw, "The reign of bitter apathy", November 7, 1997, p. 26.

7. *The Globe and Mail*, [Toronto], Tom Walker, "Serb Extremist thwarted by Election Law, to Western relief", October 7, 1997, p. A-11.