

## **Communication in Nonviolent Action in Social Changes in Serbia**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of any action, as well as nonviolent action, are changes. Changes are the only constant category in the nature and society. In order to implement constructive changes, it is necessary to know how to manage them. This paper analyzing changes thru the communication in nonviolent action. As a practical example, here is the analysis of the contribution of nonviolent actions, practiced by Civic Movement Resistance (Otpor), in an attempt to show the role that nonviolent action could play in the social and political changes. Civic movement Otpor is discussed as a new type of social movement, who took a part, in a highly pragmatic and in a creative way, in reform of social and political life in Serbia.

**Keywords:** nonviolent communication, social changes, reform of social life, political life.

## 1. Introductory remarks

Civilization realizes its development through changes that occur over time. Sometimes sudden and radical, sometimes slow, the changes, regardless of their content and manner, always influence the social structure. Volume and depth by which process of social dynamics spreads over social structure determines their historical significance. Character of changes displays itself through political, social and economic phenomena. In political sense, during the process of social changes, forces in power give way to others, which often ends in changing form of government. Dynamics results may be the changes in legislative system, changes in family relations or associating not related to profession. As for economy, newly established trends may have their reflection in property relations or production structure changes. All these changes, from their aspect, retroactively influence social stratification through new distribution of wealth, authority and social influence disposal. Adequately to new political reality and economic configuration, there are changes in social consciousness, too. Feedback of these activities and relations leads to the appearance of new forms of cultural expression, which form cultural identity and behaviour of an individual. Changes in the context of belief form new values, which anticipate establishing of a new moral system. In that way, process of social transformation becomes complete, by which content of social life obtains a "new quality".

The goal of this paper is analysis of changes through communication in a nonviolent action and finding and thinking of adequate practical examples of communication through nonviolent actions.

Subject of the paper is illustration and critical analysis of communication through concrete nonviolent actions and in the purpose of overcoming social and political conflicts.

The tasks, which we have set in order to achieve the goal of the paper, are:

- Analysis of recent literature in the field of change management and communicology, with a special stress on communication in nonviolent action;
- Analysis of nonviolent actions of the civic movement Otpor! (Resistance! in English) in overcoming social and political conflicts in Serbia.

### 1.1 National movement "Otpor!"

National movement Otpor, as a social movement of a new type (Social movements are the form of collective action aimed at social change. Their basic features are membership informality and public action. Social movements enlighten future possibilities, and they are means for its accomplishment, partially. Unlike spontaneous mass actions, such as uprising or rebellion, movements have particular level of intended action because of the acknowledged social goal. Its action does not come from decisions and leadership inciting, but from the attitudes and tendencies of membership, which usually act within a broad and loose organizational framework. Tendency for change is the main criteria, which differs them from interest groups. Existence of movement is a symptom of dissatisfaction with social order.

Among the movement researchers, the differentiation of old and new social movements is usual, considering level of society in which they act on the action goals as well. Old social movements act within the framework of industrial society, and there dominate the issues of growth and distribution, safety and rights. New movements appear within the framework of post-industrial society, which does not depend so much on the industrial production, because it is based on information and communication (information society, networked society)), was one of the appearances that have marked the political scene of Serbia in the very end of the last decade of twentieth century. The movement exists from 1998 as Students movement, as a kind of spontaneous response of the students from the University of Belgrade on the repressive University Law, Law on Public Information, as well as on bad economic situation in the country. Until the middle of 2000, National movement Otpor has grown into a large, well-organized and disciplined social movement of a new type. The complete significance of the role, which the National

movement Otpor had in the social – political events, which led to changes in 2000, would be possible to evaluate in a completely balanced way, if all reliable testimonies necessary would be available. However, based on available records as well, it is possible to analyse the role of the National movement Otpor in democratic changes in Serbia through some segments of movement action. In six years in which it existed (disappears from political scene in September 2004), National movement Otpor has passed the amazing developmental way, from the margins of political scene to, it could be said, a global political-media star, or “major Serbian export article” as it is oftenly stated. The idea of a non-violent resistance has even been entered to one of the first program's documents, Otpor Manifesto:

*“Ideas, namely, have the characteristic of living longer than their originators, until the last of their proponents is free to move and act. Thousands of the conscious are imposible to imprison or kill. In the place of each arrested or maltreated member of Otpor, there was always a fifty new ones, and if it comes to the liquidation of the individuals, which were wrongly identified as leaders by the regime, each one that is killed will become the symbol of strenght for thousands of new conscious ones”* (Naumovic, 2006).

On the reason for the appearance of National movement Otpor, there were lot speculations in the public. It has been said that the true reason for appearance of the movement was linked to the attempt to build the comprehensive, coordinated anti-regime front in Serbia, within the framework of which a special role should be assigned to student activists, which have already had the experiences in previous activities against theregime during the protests in 1992 and 1996-97. American administration is oftenly referred to as the prompter of such a comprehensive anti-regime front, but also as a protege of non-parliamentary non-violent track of struggle agaist the regime. The dilema whether it can be spoken on the creation of National movement Otpor as a completely self-created and self-conscious process or it was about a planned and successful transfer of already tested patterns, or, which is the most probable, a sort of mixture of local and foreign idea and models, remains open.

## **2. Characteristics and features of mass communication in Serbia in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

During the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the time of big political changes, media were not just “impersonal techniques of mediation”, but also a part of complex social structures, institutionalized communication centres within which they are possible only. They appeared and existed as a set of technical and technological social conditions with a very determined teleology: realization of specific social relation, which is called mass communication. (Miletic, 2001)

### **Direct and indirect censorship**

Based on the functioning mode of mass media in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can conclude, without any exaggeration that falsehood has certainly ruled in Serbian media space i.e. mass communication. Until 1998, when the new Law on Public Information has been adopted, the Serbian citizens could very rarely hear, read or see an authentic picture linked to the ongoings on the political scene. Election campaigns could be seen as a compertition in “inventiveness” of the participants in the elections i.e. who will place more falsehood on its opponents. Some daily and Sunday newspaper that survived on the market, were based on the “production of events”, which is significant because those events corresponded to the interests of political subjects. (Miletic, 2001)

Not a sigle form of indirect censorship had such an influence on meda content in the observed period, as it was the case with self-censorship in redactions. That arises because of psychological and social factors. Namely, it has come to sef-censorship, which is not the expression of self-responsibility that comes from socially necessary limitations of the freedom of information because of the worry for the field of freedom of each individual in society, but it represents the imposed irresponsability and negation of socially possible freedom of an individual. Hence, self-censorship is not a choice; it is an imposed and inevitable necessity in the societies in which a consensus on the content of the freedom of information has not been reached i.e. its significance for social development. (Miletic, 2001)

Each attempt to rephrase this relation in accordance with the standard apprehension of the freedom of information: social reality, responsible reduction of reality, message as a mirror and interpretation of reality, mass audience regarded as a heterogeneous group, mostly was not successful enough in those ten years. (Miletic, 2001)

Despite very complex field of the freedom of information in Serbia and internal causes of such a narrowed freedom, its biggest endangering, through a completely established censorship, was done during 1999 by the activity of external factors of compulsion.

Equality in mass communication

Freedom of information in a modern society does not depend on relative autonomy of communication centres and professional communicators in the distribution of messages through mass media i.e. on the existence of direct and indirect censorship only, but it is broadly defined by equality of citizens and communication centres in mass communication as well.

Among the owners and controllers of media in Serbia, there were mostly no professional communicators, but only the people and political organizations that controlled the channels of ownership transition in Serbia.

There was a conflict between republic and federal laws that regulate the equality in mass communication in Serbia. The biggest conflict between republic and federal state on frequency assignment broke out after the first competition of the Serbian Government for frequency assignment in 1992 and it lasted until 1995, when the director was deposed and the technical director of RTS came to his place. (Miletic, 2001)

### **3. Strategy of the struggle of the National movement Otpor by non-violent methods**

The first activities of the National movement Otpor were linked to the struggle against abolishing the autonomy of the Universities in Serbia. Unorthodox method of communication was writing the graffiti, slogans and drawing the symbol of a fist, by which the National movement Otpor presented itself in public. In the centre of Belgrade, on the nights between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1998, the first actions were performed, too. (Popovic, 2007)

Communication with the target audience

Non-violent struggle (action) of the National movement Otpor, as a communicational model, is based on two main levers – a) *on representing the enemy in such a bad light, so that it becomes almost impossible for someone to support him*, and b) *on representing themselves (the movement) in such a positive light that it becomes hard not to join*.

For the sake of achieving mobilization of the public, the movement had to comply with all four elements of target communication in its communication: recognition of target audience, meaning and importance of the message that is sent, the carrier of the message and a mechanism for feedback collecting.

The tendency of the People's movement Otpor was to incite the personal needs of an individual and to suggest specific ways of satisfying those needs with the messages addressed to the public. Thus, the message had to be made and transferred in this way, which will best attract the attention of the destination i.e. the target audience to which it is addressed. In addition, when preparing the message, the attention was paid to the message's language correspondence to the common experience of the sender and receiver i.e. National movement Otpor and the public to which it is addressed by the message. The content, as a very important domain of the message, had to correspond to the interest of public. In addition, the attention was paid to the time and place of communicating a message, as well as to the correlation of message with formulation of the mission of movement.

Quality of the targeted communication of the National movement Otpor we can also find in the precise orientation to four target audiences:

*Membership and supporters* – The phenomenon of mobilization of the membership in social movements is one of the subjects of many scientific papers. The importance of the influence of culture on mobilization of population is the view in which mobilizational action of the National movement Otpor also fits. The influence of culture is reflected in modelling the values, beliefs,

attitudes and ideologies, which affect the ways in which different actors will identify themselves with the goals of the movement and their decision to join the struggle for realization of those goals. When it comes to mobilization of population, a distinction between so-called “ideological support”, which consists of the sympathizers and the actual participations in the actions of the movement, should be made. Sympathy represents the weakest of all known participation forms, since the existence of sympathy to the goals of the movement does not mean inevitably the willingness to take active participation in acting itself, as well. However, the feeling of sympathy should not be neglected; it is the first step in mobilization chain. When it comes to membership, we are talking about a high level of identification with the goals of the movement. However, this does not necessarily mean a direct engagement in the actions organized and conducted by the resistance, either. What is called a secure mobilizational potential, makes a membership that regularly participates in the actions of the movement and which is always ready to participate in new actions.

The most famous campaigns by which the National movement Otpor influenced the activists, membership and sympathizers were “Širi se” (It is spreading), “Otpor iz komšiluka” (Resistance from neighbourhood) and “Ti si nam potreban” (We need you), and, of course, an evident mark that you belong belong to the group, identification by badges, T-shirts and clenched fist greeting. In the campaign “Širi se”, on the mobilization of people was influenced by huge posters, which were not seen until then in the modern history of campaign in Serbia. Central motive of the posters was a clenched fist-symbol of the movement, and only in one corner, there was written the campaign slogan “Širi se”. The goal of this campaign was to cover as larger territory of the country by posters, from the towns to the smallest villages, in order to demonstrate that the number of members of the National movement Otpor is constantly growing.

*Wider population* – this communication segment referred to a wider range of public. It referred to all from those who are doubtful, to members and sympathizers of opposing organizations and to student organizations and those social groups that had a similar system of values as the National movement Otpor. The subject of communication with wider public was based on the basic premise on which all non-violent activities of the movement were based: represent the enemy in such a bad light that it becomes almost impossible for anyone to support him and represent you (Otpor) in such a positive light that it becomes very difficult not to join the movement. The National movement Otpor tended to animate the public through various public actions in order to raise the interest of as bigger number of individuals, including those that supported the regime.

The idea of the action “Otporne mame” (Resistance moms), as a very directed communication turned primarily towards the mothers, and all the women, was to demonstrate that a big number of movement’s activists have parents that support their children. The idea was based on that an ancient sense of motherhood and maternal instinct, strong enough that an adult woman, whose child did not necessarily have to be the member of National movement Otpor, sympathizes with the other mothers and protects every child. The women, participants of such actions, “Otporne mame” were known throughout the whole country, and their contribution to non-violent struggle was impressive.

Music and street performances were an indispensable part of the campaigns through which Otpor communicated with wider population. Due to the appearance of trash and kitsch subculture of turbofolk, which was supported and placed by pro-regime media, National movement Otpor organized rock concerts, street performances and cultural events as a counterweight, as something that is happening on the streets, in which people participate, in which people win in such moments, at least on the street

The presence of celebrities (actors, professors, singers) to these events was of a priceless importance to the National movement in raising the idea and propagating the movement. It is known that ordinary people tend to identify with their idols, and as certain celebrities were actively included in some of the campaigns of the movement, the messages they sent by their presence sometimes were enough for the number of supporters of the idea to increase. After these events, it was becoming more and more difficult for the regime of the time to present and place to people the information on the National movement Otpor as a terrorist and fascist movement.

*Potential allies* – a part of target communication of the National movement Otpor was aimed at the pressure on the Serbian opposition, still separated at the time, to unite around a single

presidential candidate. Tendency of actions organized by the movement was to participate actively in the action of wider coalition, which was able to reach compromises and keep the community up to the realization of the goal

As one of the striking examples of the action of supporting the uniting of opposition was a mass march Novi Sad – Belgrade under the slogan “March for Democracy” in the April 2000 in which participated more than 1000 activists of the movement. After 83 km of walk, the activists from Novi Sad arrived at the meeting held in Belgrade, where the leaders of oppositional parties announced the unification in the struggle against the regime.

*International community* – Bombing of Serbia in 1999, the international community has played the “supporter” role of the regime of the time. Since each population responds by homogenization to the external pressure, an apparent homogenization about the state apparatus occurred in this case, too. However, some international non-governmental organizations, which advocate for democratization and realization of human rights, as well as some foreign media, were an appropriate audience for transferring the messages of the National movement Otpor. Communication with international public, through foreign media, has contributed to sending a picture of the National movement Otpor as “kids who have crushed the dictator” to the world.

### 3.1. Tactics and methods

The choice of tactics and methods in communication, which the National movement Otpor was consistently carrying out, was based on “winning” the political space. In the conditions of civil non-freedoms, especially the state control of mass media, this communication strategy was based on: communication through symbol, low risk actions and big media strength, actions of concern and propaganda. (Popovic : 2007)

#### Symbol communication

Most generally, the symbol is something that can stand in the place of something else and that it recognizably represents it in that case. For its symbol, the National movement Otpor chose a fist. The author of the symbol, as it is stated, was a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade and the activist of movement, Nenad Petrović Duda. The fist itself is the symbol of individual's initiative, the investment of time and energy of each individual in realization of changes. The fist is a symbol of personal courage; it symbolizes solidarity, unity and victory. (Bjelovuk , 2001)

The fist as a symbol of the National movement Otpor became world famous.

Symbol communication in the campaign of the National movement Otpor “Pesnica je pozdrav” (Fist is a Greeting) had the aim to inspire ordinary people, to arise courage and make a yet more positive picture of Otpor. As a part of this campaign, celebrities were photographed with a raised fist. On the posters glued on the streets, you could see the actors Nikola Đuričko, Nebojša Glogovac, actress Mirjana Karanović, and even Santa Claus. During the performance of the play “Cabaret Balkan” in Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade, the actor Vojislav Brajović whispers his lines: “wanted something to tell you...” and instead of a bow, he stands straight, unties the belt around hospital coat and the audience recognizes the symbol of a clenched fist on his T-shirt, above which it is written “OTPOR!” (RESISTANCE), and below is the inscription DO POBEDE! (UNTIL VICTORY !). The actors bow to the audience that is applauding, and Brajović raises his hand with clenched fist in the air. The rest of the actors on the scene also raise their fists above their heads. Everyone in the hall knew that it was a part of an announced action by which celebrities publicly expressed their disagreement with political situation in the country.

#### Actions of low risk and high media power

Within a quite narrowed political and media space, the National movement Otpor communicated with the public through performing non-violent actions that were designed to cause as greater media attention, while the participants and other activists as well as the people who gathered remain as little as possible exposed to the repression of regime.

An example of such action was “Torta za predsednika” (Cake for the President), a street performance. National movement Otpor performed in August 1999 a street performance entitled “Torta za predsednika”. The activists have, by this action, in a very symbolic way, “celebrated” the birthday of the President Slobodan Milosevic. The performance was held in the front of the

Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. The cake for the President of the time was made of styrofoam and cut into nine „pieces” (Montenegro, Vojvodina, Baranja, Serbian Republic, Kosovo, Krajina, Sandzak, Slavonia i Serbia), which represented parts of the territories which, as they stated then, the President sold. After lighting the candles, organizers of the “celebration” have sung the birthday song. Then, the “guests”, who were sending birthday greetings to the celebrator, interchanged. One of many greetings was “We wish him to live at least a little like us”.

Action dilemma (actions of concern)

Dilemma of action brings the opponent to a situation in which each reaction of his will result in negative outcome for him. In the actions of concern, the strategists of non-violent struggle try to frame their actions in such a way that, in any case, an opponent ends as a loser and the non-violent movement as a winner.

One of the most famous, very imaginative and it could be said even frivolous action dilemma of National movement Otpor, was the action “Dinar za smenu” (Dinar for a change). The action was organized on the street in the busy area of Belgrade. There was a metal barrel placed, which had a picture of the President Slobodan Milosevic on it, and next to the barrel, there was a baseball bat. “If you have a dinar, drop it in for him. If you do not have a dinar because of him, hit with the bat as hard as you can,” said on the barrel. After some time, a number of people, firstly the activists and than the passers-by have supported this action, hitting the barrel with the bat. Performing the actions has certainly led the police into dilemma, whether to react or not. Dilemma of the police, as the organizers of action presented it, was that if they do not react, the people will keep on hitting the picture of the President, and if they do react, it will look like as they are “arresting” the barrel.

Mass branding of Serbia by piece propaganda material

If the principle that propaganda is a specific type of communication is accepted, then it can be divided into active and passive propaganda. Active propaganda can be regarded as the type of communication that includes methods and techniques of the direct calls to action, while, on the other hand, passive propaganda is represented by special social and sociological mechanisms: educational system, moral and status values of a community, general rules and adopted behavior codes.

National movement Otpor used propaganda in its communication, and most frequently active propaganda was used, always calling to some kind of action. A simple message and symbol of fist on black and white surface seemed a very powerful weapon and it was more than acceptable means for influencing the attitudes and emotions of the people in Serbia. Only six months from the appearance of the first propaganda materials, a number of people was already familiar with the existence of the National movement Otpor and had a particular attitude, either negative or positive.

Graffiti, as a new form of “political marketing”, was not used in Serbia since the World War II. They were relaunched by the National movement Otpor, and due to the simplicity of performance and their duration, graffiti became even stronger means of propaganda than posters. National movement Otpor used a graffiti (fist drawn with spray) as a dialogue, first of all with governments, but other authorities. In the achievements of non-violent struggle, graffiti were not drawn so much for popularizing some idea, but to annoy the opponent. At the same time, graffiti are means of expression to someone who has no possibilities to express his opinion in a different way. On the other hand, graffiti are also the form of communication with fellow citizens of a similar sensibility, supporters and oftenly they represent an indirect message to the dedicated ones. Common to all graffiti is that there is not much text on them, and sometimes a graffiti is only a symbol that itself represents a message (fist-symbol of the movement Otpor, represents an answer). The advantage of graffiti is in what is referred to as their omnipresence. In contrast to the posters, for which it is known that someone had to print them and that they come from someone’s “headquarters”, graffiti refer to self-initiative, therefore, on spontaneity.

Furthermore, when it comes to communication through propaganda material, the National movement Otpor probably had the biggest number of printed propaganda material during its acting. Poster as means of communication appears in our country in the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although it appeared much earlier in different forms (announcement, order, commercial). Use value of posters could have its justification when there were not so many literate citizens, who

will also, apart from themselves, inform their environment on the content. Since the purpose of the posters was to inform, draw attention, warn, encourage, direct and educate, a poster as a means of communication gets full effectiveness of its existence in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Today, the poster as one of the basic designers products, even in the era of digital media and Internet power, has remained unsurpassed as a means of communication. Campaign of the National movement Otpor entitled “Otpor! – Jer volim Srbiju” (Resistance!-Because I Love Serbia), was a campaign with a largest number of printed posters. The main goal of this campaign was reversing the effects of the regime propaganda, which, at the time, represented National movement Otpor as a group of traitors, foreign mercenaries, and even fascists. On this occasion, a sort of a war with posters and slogans between clashed political options was started. The regime responded to the poster “Otpor! – jer volim Srbiju” of the National movement Otpor with a few of its own posters on which there were various slogans that referred to the treasonable character of the movement. The most striking regime slogan on the posters from that period was “Prodajem, jer volim da izdajem” (I sell because I Love to Betray), with the graphical solution of a fist that squeezes a bunch of dollars. A rough estimation is that Otpor was, during its short revolution life, an absolute recorder in the production of the propaganda material pieces in Serbia – over 3 million of pieces in different campaigns.

### **3.2. Public actions of national movement Otpor**

Public non-violent actions and performances organized by Otpor appeared to be a very efficient way for the non-violent movement to present its goals and messages to the wider public. Individual public actions performed attracted the attention of media, which has certainly opened the space towards presenting (practically free of charge) and spreading the message.

Public actions of Otpor were planned through “studio format of a public event”. Detailed planning of the events implied the high level of flexibility (sudden meteorological changes, opponent’s activities...) because of which it is necessary to update the plan itself on regular basis. The preparation for the performance of public actions was divided by days. Planning a public action of the National movement Otpor, conducted through studio format of the plan of a public event contained the following:

- From 10 to 15 days before public event, creative team was electing a topic related to the mission itself. In this period, the action with a sound name related to the message, was devised. The choice of time and place of event was also made, the budget was created and printed material was prepared.
- From 7 to 3 days before the public event performance, meetings with activists, action participants were held and the specific tasks as well as responsibility were assigned. A scenario of events was detailly elaborated in this stage and the possible tricky situations were analysed. Promotional and printed material slowly announced the event.
- 48 hours before the public event, the necessary legal steps were undertaken, such as, for example the reporting of a public assembly. The participants were contacted and the confirmation of the time and place of the action was following. The information for the media, releases for the press were prepared or even, which rarely happened, the press conferences were held.
- 24 hours before the event, the last revision of material and schedule was done and the media were invited to cover the event.

On the day of the public event, participants gathered at the base and together, additionally motivated, went to the place of event and realized public action. After the event, press clipping was made and the event effectiveness evaluation was made. (Vukosavljevic, 2000)

The most famous public actions

In the end of 1998, the National movement Otpor starts with the first campaigns. The campaign “Grizi sistem, živi Otpor” (Bite the System, Live the Resistance) was one of the first (if not the first) campaigns. Communication through a printed leaflet was the basis of this campaign. Graphical solution of a fist in black was on one side of the leaflet, while on the other side there was a text: “Otpor is the answer, it will not be any other possibility, it will be late when someone

of yours dies of hunger, when they start to kill on the streets, when all the lights go off and the last spring is poisoned, it will be late, this is not a system, this is an illness. Bite the system, live the resistance!". This leaflet was published on the cover of Daily Telegraph, and the editorship was sued and sentenced to a monetary fine. The leaflet was distributed throughout the whole country. The campaign entitled "Mi ne šetamo, mi marširamo" (We do not walk, we march) included three public assemblies, two protest meetings and one concert, by which the three years from the beginning of the student protest were marked. The goal of this campaign was, as it is stated, to demonstrate that the mistakes made at that time are realized, but also to draw the attention to how the students protests held in 96/97 were necessary. Slogan of this action was clear enough by itself. It instructed that it is not enough only to walk, but the decisiveness and willingness to struggle with nonviolent means has to be demonstrated. Activists of the National movement Otpor, participants of the campaign wore badges on which it was written "Leader of the Otpor", which, at the same time, promoted one of the basic principles of the movement, and it was that the National movement Otpor was a movement without a leader. The leaflets and posters were used in this campaign.

In the beginning of 2000, all the activities of the National movement Otpor in the following period were marked by the campaign "Ovo je ta godina" (This is the Year). The goal and message of this this campaign was to announce the year 2000, the year of the unstoppable crushing of the regime of the time.

The first street action within this campaign was realized at the Orthodox New Year's Eve (13.01.2000.), organized by the activists of the National movement Otpor in the Republic Square in Belgrade. The prizes for „najotpornijeg" (the most resistable) citizen, reporter, professor, actor, as well as for the most resistable media, faculties and other institutions were awarded on that occasion. Ten minutes after midnight, the celebration was interrupted and the organizers showed a shocking list of regime victims' names on the video projector. While the names interchanged on the video projector, a voice was heard from the sound system, which was saying: "Serbia has no reason for celebration. We are going home now. Our departure from this place will be a message for Serbia, a sign that we should put a finger to our forehead, because this year life has to win finally. That there are no more victims".

In that way, the National movement Otpor promoted its message that the 2000 is "the year" in which "life has to win finally", while the uncertainty of the process is explained by the charge that ruling political order is literally fatal ("responsible for our 10 years of being hungry and desperate, for our country being smaller and smaller each year, for their attempt to take away even our future from us...").

The central part of the campaign entitled "Ko izda – pizda!" (The One Who Betrays – Cunt!) in February 2000, was the first congress of the National movement Otpor in the House of Youth in Belgrade. Almost all the leaders of opposition and NGOs attended the meeting, as well as the activists of the movement from all over Serbia. At the end of the congress, a message was sent: "Ko izda pizda!" The message referred to the opposition leaders in the first place, and the message meant that it would not be forgiven to anyone who acts against widely united front against the regime out of the selfish and irrational reasons. Leaflets and posters were mostly used in the campaign, but for this occasion of holding the congress, large banners from cloth were made, as well as the video materials that were issued on the congress.

During May and June 2000, the National movement Otpor organizes a campaign entitled "Ovo je lice Srbije" (This is the Face of Serbia). The campaign was created because of the strong repression against the activists of the movement, after the murder of the President of Executive Council of Vojvodina and the official of SPS (Serbian Socialist Party), Bosko Perosević (13 May 2000.) for which the regime accused the activists of the National movement Otpor. In that period, the regime starts to speak openly on the National movement Otpor as a terrorist organization. The campaign "Ovo je lice Srbije", aimed at neutralizing the appearance of fear in that part of the population, which started to doubt under the pressure. Combining the repression and propaganda, the regime was trying to create the atmosphere of fear in which the ordinary citizens are even afraid of talking about the topics for which there exists a possibility to be interpreted as anti-regime. With a climate of fear created in this way, the regime was able to control the need for social changes more easily and to reduce the potential inflow of the new activists and members of

the movement. By this campaign, the National movement Otpor wanted to disable the regime in its campaign of cutting the base off and recruiting new activists of the movement. The willingness of the regime to use force represented the strongest marketing trump card of the National movement Otpor. The recorded cases of extremely brutal beating ups of the activists in Pozarevac and Vladicin Han, were the most distinct and exposed examples of the practice that was “bitting the system” on daily basis and stressed the victimization motive of the movement as one of the crucial motive.

President of the time, Slobodan Milosevic, under a growing pressure of international and domestic public, scheduled the early elections at all the levels for 24. September, and he candidated for presidency at the federal level.

In this period, the National movement Otpor plans and implements its most significant and most famous action – two parallel, quite different but coordinated and complementary electioneering. The campaign “Vreme je” (It is the Time) is realized in cooperation with youth organizations and NGOs. The main message of the campaign – “Vreme je!” – was graphically illustrated by the picture of a watch whose hands show that it is “five to twelve”, that something of a crucial significance has to be done at the political level. It was the first consistent “Get-out-the-vote” campaign in Serbia. The aim of this “positive campaign” was to draw attention and move the young people, especially those who should vote for the first time, and to include them in the voting process (“Izađi na crtu” – Get out to Vote), in order to additionally reduce the chances of the regime in the elections. The idea of a positive mobilization is stressed by the use of bright colours in all the materials that were related to the campaign. During the campaign “Vreme je” in the towns throughout Serbia, a tour of rock groups was organized, there were free rock concerts of domestic bands (Sunshine, Darkwood Dub, Ivana & Negative, Kanda, Kodža i Nebojša, Jarboli, Eyesburn, Goblini) under the same slogan “ROCK’N’ROLL ZA IZBORE: IZAĐI NA CRTU” (ROCK’N’ROLL FOR THE ELECTIONS: GET OUT TO VOTE). In addition, within the campaign “Vreme je” whose primary goal was to encourage the young to go to the elections, another action entitled “Karavan poznatih” (Caravan of the Celebrities) was taking place. The idea of this action was that the famous actors, singers and other celebrities explain to the citizens, in a direct conversation, the importance of the election and need for as much young people to participate in them.

Although the National movement Otpor made all its organizational resources available for the positive motivation campaign “Vreme je”, it was held aside in public. The movement was officially identified with the parallel “black campaign”, which was led under an aggressive slogan “Gotov je!” (He is Finished!). The goal of this campaign was to impose the winner atmosphere to the disappointed and apathetic opposition voters, as well as to crush the belief in the invincibility of the authoritarian leader among the regime members. Effective and cruel combination of the messages and graphical solutions, as well as the previously inconceivable amount and type of the materials, has much contributed to spreading of the belief that the regime of Slobodan Milosevic has indeed no chances for success any more.

Only the sticker with the slogan “Gotov je!” was printed in about two million copies and many of them were glued directly over Milosevic’s posters, turning them into extremely effective counter-posters. The campaign had the exact end as all its participants and free media announced it in advance. Hence, it had a consistent and true message.

On 24 September 2000, the long-awaited early elections were held. DOS (Democratic Opposition of Serbia), according to the preliminary results of its election observers and election monitoring organization, has declared the victory of its candidate for presidency Vojislav Kostunica. After the regime’s attempt to bring into question already declared victory of oppositional candidate in the first round of presidential elections, numerous actions of civil disobedience and boycott followed, and even the threat of a general strike. The most significant was certainly the strike of the miners in surface coalmine Kolubara, to which almost all business sectors in Serbia were joining. The strikes, which represented a blow to the regime both on the ideological and operative-economic plan, were performed with the aim of making the regime accept the election victory declared by the opposition. On 5 October 2000, hundreds of thousands demonstrators from all over Serbia, come to Belgrade, where they nonviolently took over the Federal Parliament building and state

television. Under growing internal and international pressure, some persons, including the crucial system institutions (army, special police forces), began to deny their support to Milošević.

Domestic public, institutions and organizations as well as European leaders call Miloševića to recognize the election results and to withdraw. Slobodan Milošević recognizes the defeat in the announcement broadcasted on television on 6 October 2000. For 23 December 2000, the republic elections were also scheduled, and they were seen as an opportunity to finish the regime replacement initiated with presidential, federal, parliamentary and local elections.

During November and December 2000, the National movement Otpor organized a black and participated in the white campaign. The white, positive campaign was conducted under the slogan "Upotrebi ga" (Use it), it was obvious that it referred to brain and it was suggested that only its absence could lead to voting for "the old regime" in the elections. Another one, secondary slogan of the white campaign was "Nema opuštanja" (No Relaxing), and it was intended to prevent the expected relaxing of the opposition electorate after the victory on 5 October. The black campaign took place under the slogan "Overi!" (Stamp It!). The expression "Overi" was used in Serbian criminal circles and it referred to firing the security bullets in the head of an already dead victim of the ordered murder. The symbolism of the slogans was unambiguous. The political death of Slobodan Milošević's regime should be "stamped" at the December elections.

The victory of the opposition coalition DOS in the December elections ended the political reversal started with the electoral revolution on 5 October. Burdensome and time-consuming work of building democratic institutions and order in Serbia could begin. At the Second Congress, which was the most crucial assembly in the history of the movement, held on 4 February 2001 in Belgrade, more and more alienated movement leadership decided to ultimately introduce the new "evolutionary" and "architectural" strategy of the Otpor, adapted to the new conditions that have appeared after the "5<sup>th</sup> October Revolution" in Serbia, to the gathered delegates from all over the country. The decision that a fist as Otpor's symbol should go to history was announced.

After a period of more and more expressive crisis, in the end of August 2003, the administrative elite of the Otpor announced that the movement would be transformed into a political party. The basis of the snap electoral programme was "the initiative for strengthening state institutions that guarantee freedom, justice and equality". Desperately bad election results in the republic elections in the end of December (about 60,000 of the votes!) have "surpassed" and the otherwise very unfavorable forecasts. Poorly devised and performed political adventure and election fiasco spent the last remains of Otpor's reputation. Political party, which was not meant to be, committed a "quiet political suicide" in the next year, by merging into the structures of Democratic Party primarily.

## Acknowledgement

The starting point of this paper was an analysis of the changes through communication in nonviolent action and finding and devising of the adequate practical examples, in order to deal with nonviolent action from the starting idea of dealing with communication by studying the literature from that sphere of public life. Although nonviolent action locally follows from the theory of communication, it represents to itself almost inexhaustible field for further analytical work.

Socio-political changes that have occurred in the last 15 years in Eastern Europe are often denoted by the experts and analysts as the transition from authoritarian or totalitarian regimes to liberal-democratically regulated societies. In Serbia, as one of the aggravating circumstances of the transition from one to another form of social organization, there was certainly a thirteen-year period of authoritarian government of one party, which has led to the collapse of material and social capital of the country and a drastic downfall of life standard.

On the National movement Otpor, it was spoken as of a movement of a new type, which had a role in changing social and political life in Serbia in a pragmatic and, at the same time, a very imaginative way. Opinions and analysis of the nature and significance of Otpor organization as a social movement are inseparable from a wider political framework whose part the National

movement Otpor undoubtedly was. Here, it is primarily referred to the “5 October Revolution” as well as the wider political scenario of crushing the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

Nonviolent struggle of Otpor, as documented in this paper, was much more complex and various than a violent one. It was led with psychological, social, economic and weapons to which the population, but a number of individuals from institutions of the state and societies, turned to. The struggle was led by means, which are only recently considered new forms of communication, and those are protests, strikes, non-cooperation, boycott, disloyalty and other activities (mentioned in the paper), whose characteristics were not the actions of crushing but the transfer of ideas, beliefs and convictions. Communication in nonviolent action, hence, implies a higher quality of the social integration of the individuals (citizens), as well as the awareness that the time of the armed revolutions (for mere assumption of power) is, hopefully, behind us – and that is shown in this paper by the analysis of Otpor's actions, Otpor's success. The essence is the communication.

Central part in understanding the theory of nonviolent struggle is the idea that the ruler's power depends on the consent of population. Nonviolence advocates the undermining of the ruler's power through a devised ending of cooperation and denying the support. Actions of the National movement Otpor, as the basic stand, had an influence on wide social population, as well as the international community, in order to weaken the pillars of regime power. That the messages were transmitted to population, to which they were meant for, through targeted communication was shown by the analysis of nonviolent actions and campaigns organized and performed by Otpor. The National movement Otpor had a role in the change of public opinion, and it especially influenced the opinion and the attitudes of young population, which had no formed political attitude yet. In addition, they in which the young people are addressed by Otpor through music, art, street performances and such, has contributed to creating the picture, with a number of the young, not only of a heroic and idealistic movement, but also a movement that is fun, full of spirit and characteristic of modernism tendencies of European and ino population.

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