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MASS GATHERINGS SEEN AS POLITICAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS: SOCIAL DRAMAS AND SPECTACLES *

In this work, ethnological research focuses on the daily events which move from ritual to spectacle and vice versa. Mass events in the Balkan region became social dramas and open air theatres of life, frequently with tragic consequence. My research into mass gatherings in Serbia over many years, particularly in Belgrade, have been directed to the ritual and the symbolic mechanism of interpreting political and cultural events. Numerous experiences, the recollections of all the participants, were included in the discourse on interpretation of this phenomenon.

Key words: mass gatherings, events, politics, culture, ritual, symbols, spectacles.

In the last decades of the 20th century ethnology at home was in direct confrontation with hyper-events. The tragic events in the Balkans were a mark of everyday life and thus entered ethnologyzoom. When the periodical rhythm of celebrations, holidays and ritual are disturbed by a “explosion of happenings” one enters a complex and contradictory field of interaction. Political meetings, protests, sports celebrations, musical happenings, religious processions, calendar celebrations and others, depart from the cyclic rhythm of annual holidays and become provocative occurrences which code history in creation. In theoretical and empirical discourse, mass gatherings present representative public action as ritualised alternative which differs from daily life, as such, in content and intensity. They are in fact ritual — events or events with ritual aspects which means repetitive, highly stylised form, affectiveness, expression and symbolicness¹. However, mass gatherings are, as events of themselves, important and different from that which actually exists, in which case they become irrepeatable cases in the linear code of creating history². Mass gatherings are self-representations and representations in relation to all others, before and after.

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¹ Eric W. Rothenbuhler, *Ritual Communication. From Everyday Conversation to Mediated Ceremony*, London 1998, 4.

² Edgar Moren establishes the relation system-event. Life appears in its organisation and events characteristics, between the establishment of systems of existence and accommodation to chance, uncertainty, risk. Edgar Moren. *Duh vremena/’esprit du temps II*, Beograd 1979, 69.

Mass gatherings as political and cultural events are social dramas which represent the basic unit of social “tensional eruption” or “units of aharmonic or disharmonic process arising in conflict situations”³. Social dramas of this type bring face to face the liminoid phase or genre of structured social origin and social antistructure. Mass gatherings are arenas, of specific circumstances in which metaphore and symbols occupy an important place. When the individual-mass enters into the symbolic field of the performance, mass events move to the level of spectacle. Audio-visual media — TV, internet and oral tradition — life stories establish a new aspect of communication as a two way reality. Ethnological questions of mass gathering mean following the course of the event — system and event — case, that is social activity from ritual to spectacle and vice versa. This research also involves certain methodological concepts: 1. zooming the moment as well as its pre and post phase from the aspect of continuity; 2. dismantling the models of social and cultural forms; 3. establishing the relations between individual needs, group interests and the notion of mass.

Large meetings belong to the sphere of spacial, temporal and symbolic significance. The location of the event, that is the open scene, dictates space behaviour as a specific form of public behaviour⁴. The behaviour in spacial events reflects and creates the cultural, political climate of the society. The time under investigation here is classified as a time of individual life cycles, annual/seasonal celebrations and rituals, linear in the code of event — cases, and evocative time in the field of retrospection. In this way the research interpretation involves several time layers.

Mass events in retrospect

During several years of investigation into public meetings, particularly in Belgrade as the main centre of political and cultural advertising, reproduction of events was seen to create a galloping history⁵. Interpretation was established by means of feed — back between live-the events, survive the events and interpret the events.

Mass meetings in Belgrade from the middle of the 20th century have been taking place in three spatial zones: closed areas — stadiums, halls; open space — streets and squares in the city centre with its important national institutions and buildings (Parliaments, National theatre, National museum etc.); and green areas in the suburb. All three zones have played their historic role in billing events. On the basis of insight into public events in the Belgrade areas, the typology of public gatherings means: periodic celebrations, commemorative ceremonies and provocative happenings.

After World War II mass spectacles took place according to clearly established scenarios in stadiums and on the boulevards (rallies, military parades, receptions for statesmen). They were devices of communist unity, cults and charisma. From the sixties and seventies onward mass gatherings, parallel with celebration and ceremony models, enter a phase of rock sub-culture happenings and sports spectacles. The public scene in Belgrade expressed itself, in directed social-realistic ceremonies of the populist

³ Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society* London 1974, 37.

⁴ Vesna Vučinić, *Prostorno ponašanje u Dubrovniku /Spatial Behaviour in Dubrovnik*. Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd 1999, 17.

⁵ This work is a synthesis of investigation presented at the European Social Science History Conference, The Hague, 27 February — 2 March 2002.

unanimous voice and charisma, but also with the mass ecstasy of popular culture. Woodstock syndrome inspired thousands of young people to express publicly, their spirit liberated from social repression and party manipulation, to the accompaniment of foreign and domestic bands. The transference of messages from the large rock happenings in the west, dedicated to peace and opposing the consumer society, opened the door for rock happenings in Belgrade (concert of Hajdučka Cesma in Kosutnjak, concerts in the Hippodrome and others) which became a new ritual challenge of relaxation as the antithesis of directed and manipulated mass ceremonies in honour of communism and president Josip Broz. In the seventies and eighties they represented an open zone of communication and flow of ideas in the ex-Yugoslavia region, when the musical spectacles created a *communitas* mood among young people. Great musical spectacles in popular subculture styles, particularly in the larger cities of former Yugoslavia Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Ljubljana became a moving scene which gathered thousands of travelling fans.

Towards the end of the eighties, social reality becomes ambivalent and antagonistic. What was it that moved people in Belgrade and all over Yugoslavia to mass meetings? Internal political dissension, political misuse of national consciousness and economic crisis resulted in intolerance, hatred, war, existential dissatisfaction international sanctions, tragedies and the disaster of exile and banishment. For this reason the populist euphoria of celebration, hatred and dissatisfaction poured out into the street. Casual and periodic celebrations took the place of provocative happenings: sports competitions became the venue for nationalistic and war cries; musical spectacles entered the service of political campaigns, holiday celebrations became a means of demonstrating institutional power. From the end of the eighties, mass meetings used slogans in form, content and aims: 1. as a means of propaganda for the power and regime of Slobodan Milošević, which set in motion a new aspect of national populism, 2. as a means of ante regime struggle and the promotion of new leadership, 3. as citizens ante war meetings without violence but instead messages of peace, justice and freedom for all, 4. as a means of maintaining the rhythm of calendar holidays that is national institutions.

Directed meetings organised by Slobodan Milošević's party were the beginning of an era of mass gatherings titled "people happened" which served actual state politics (Ušće plateau 1988.). These were programmed mass gatherings, when participation was organised at the work places, when specially prepared and reproduced banners were carried, the beginning and end of each meeting was precisely appointed and the public and the speakers were directed. These were meetings whose exalted symbolism initiated an endemic campaign of Serbian revival and revitalising of the Kosovo myth – sacrifice and heroism. From then on an entire "army" of meeting participants was prepared which, depending on the need of the Serbian oligarchy, was always waiting to form the masses: at the time of pre-election campaigns, contra-meetings against the opposition, to support patriotic feeling against NATO bombs and protecting bridges in 1999; at a time when the countries prosperity was simulated right up to the last, the so called "national guard" was protecting the former president Slobodan Milošević from arrest.

At the beginning of the nineties revolutionary awareness, citizen insubordination, revolt against all regime power created a new aspect of mass street behaviour, an open and provocative scene. The zero zone of activity was: Republic sq. – the area between the National Theatre and the National Museum, Vasina street, as far as Student's sq.; the main business centres Terazije, Knez Mihailova, Kolarčeva and the street Srpskih Vladara as far as Slavija sq. The next area includes Bulevar revolucije, Pionirski Park and Nikola

Pašić sq. between the federal, republic and city parliaments and finally Takovska St. where the state controlled TV station is located. Tašmajdan park and St. Mark's church were also arenas of activity. Between these sites there is a criss-cross of smaller streets, which provide communication with the main scenes of activity. In short this is a densely populated area where we find the vital institutions of power, the main traffic arteries and business centres, in fact everything constituting the nucleus of life and communication. The impulsive stage of street life became, as Victor Turner says, a social drama – crisis and catharsis, constructiveness and destructive antistructure⁶. Seen from this point of view, mass meetings are the relevant social result of reflection, the creation of a political climate and an existential necessity for citizens. The centre of Belgrade, that is its spatial behaviour, has acquired a rebellious appearance. After fifty years the city streets take on a riotous appearance and ambivalent iconography: tear gas, tanks, police cordons and black Maria's... in a peace creating atmosphere: Belgrade is the world, rock'n roll and urban image; orthodox and mythic decor — iconography of kings, army commanders, national heroes, folklore with carnival elements, street trumpeters, drummer performances and fire works. These are: tragic demonstrations by opposition and students against Milošević's politics in 1991, in 1992 protest by the opposition, the "Vidovdanski sabor" (Vidovdan convention) and at the same time a protest by students, then antiwar manifestations relating to the war in Croatia and Bosnia in 1991, 1992, 1993, strikes and protest by unions in particular educational, health, city transport etc. In 1996/97 there are citizen's protests, against election irregularities "stolen election", which were held daily during the three winter months. These events have been registered as, creative citizen emancipation and resistance. Citizen insubordination spread and increased, to numerous city squares, in streets, buildings, courtyards and parks. Resistance by the masses became home resistance and vice versa. Equipment for demonstrations was brought from home (whistles, pots and baby rattles) while badges, banners, leaflets and proclamations were brought back. Not only that, there were creative workshops of witty revolution. Finally in 1998 and 1999 mass meetings become not only a means of planned marketing, but also of the risky political action movement "OTPOR" (Resistance) and the united opposition campaigns (DOS). The chronicle of political gatherings reaches its culmination in the events of the 5th October 2000, when some million citizens brought the agony of years of regime rule to an end. This was not to be the end of street protests, which now moved round the city, but were smaller in size and of less intensity.

Behind this type of mass gathering, there remains the unpredictable intrigue of the situation. For example, meetings held simultaneously by the sympathisers of Slobodan Milošević and protesting citizens on the 24th November '96 (Terazije and Republic sq.) finished in conflict between the opposed demonstrators. Then there was tension resulting from the accidental or intentional coincidence of two mass events: the football match Yugoslavia and Croatia 18th August '99 and a meeting of the united opposition. The next example is two events held on the 1st May 2000: the cultural manifestation Collective wedding marriage for the new millennium organised by an institution close to the government and 50m away a protest meeting by the Association of Free and Independent Unions: a scarcely avoided incident. On 24th September, a crowd gathered on Terazije to celebrate the opposition's victory in the elections and the new president Vojislav Koštunica, while 50m further down the road, stars entertainers were engaged to cheer on their sympathisers, Milošević's party SPS-JUL etc.

⁶ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Antistructure*. Cornell Paperback 1982.

At the same time as the provocative events in the city centre, cultural and sports manifestations were organised. From a marketing point of view these celebrations were channelled from the centres of political power of the city administration, Republic ministries, powerful individuals and media. The interested sphere of political formation modified the cultural form towards renewing tradition and invention of tradition.⁷ Every year in the spring and summer months, the city and republic administrations together with many sponsors, organise the “Belgrade marathon” and “Bicycle race”. Domestic and foreign sports-men run with the citizens along the city street, in an Olympic spirit. During the country’s period of crisis and isolation, these manifestations were distinguished as the trans-cultural product of an open city. After a break of fifty years, the ritual celebration by the Orthodox Church of the holiday Spasovdan (Saviour’s Day) was renewed. On this occasion a long procession moves through the Belgrade streets following the church service “litija”. Only in the last five years, New Year celebrations (in this region combined with the Orthodox New Year) have become an attractive street festival. However like the majority of celebrations they are also part of the party political packet, financially and organisationally. The centre of Belgrade has been an attractive place for mass gathering, during the past decade, with victory celebrations after football matches and receptions for the sporting victors. These ludicrous manifestations are the Dionysian force and violence in national and patriotic enthusiasm. Finally concerts and performances with a specific political message but guided by the creative principles of spectacle (Bob Geldof concert, a Spanish theatre group etc.). These are all different discourses of the same reality, which indicate the antipodes of political formation and cultural form. All the mass meetings mentioned above took place during the last fourteen years, along the 2 km which is Belgrade’s city centre, so it is inevitable that they represent controversial situation zones. After the period when provocation events were dominant, a period of rhythmic seasonal change followed, particularly summer celebrations (festivals, concerts) all over Serbia as well as Belgrade.

In the last two years, the summer months have been filled with big musical spectacles — concerts and festivals. Festivals of modern music and ethno sound are held in the areas already mentioned not only in Belgrade but also in other areas. After decades of daily political rituals and events, the production of cultural spectacle has a chance to open borders and attract the masses, especially the young. Various cultural forms now become the signs of cultural needs, while, the main centres of power are the bureaucratic machines providing music as wares. Mass gatherings become more and more a question of finance and manager prestige in creating the event. In this sense the biggest musical events with their compliment industrial apparatus were: the concert of the pop singer Zdravko Čolić (2001) in the Marakana stadium which attracted 60,000 spectators, EXIT Noise summer festival in Novi Sad attracted thousands of techno and rock lovers with the participation of many bands from abroad, then the trumpet festival, Sabor trubaca in Guca, which each summer for several decades has been attracting thousands of lovers of ethno sound to a fair-carnival atmosphere.

⁷ “Invention of tradition” is used in the sense of a number of activities in a ritual or symbolic period, guided in accordance with evident or disguised, accepted rules, aiming at instilling certain values and norms of behaviour by means of repetition which implies continuity with the past. Eric Hobsbawm, *Izmišljanje tradicije / The invention of tradition*, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd 2002, 6.

The use of signs and symbols

When we speak of meetings, sporting events and concerts this automatically includes the signs and symbolic of the message as a relevant means of expression in political and cultural advertising: appearance, behaviour, sound, musical style, parole, jargon. The meta-language of the masses in times of crisis is expressed in political conflict and cultural contrast. The reflection of ideological antagonism in nationalist and planetary, orthodox and atheistic, communist and monarchist, citizen-democratic cosmopolitan created its own type of meta-language of mass gatherings. Political labelling, through the popular culture styles, established a sharp line of contradiction and animosity.

In the conflict of mass gathering, the language of symbols intensified the ideological, nationalistic antagonism. They contained all the elements of aversion, intolerance and offensiveness. Using verbal symbols in their cries /paroles: red band! – associated with the communists; murders, wreckers – associated with armed formations; traitors – the slogan of the nationalist and patriotic paradigm against foreign as alien and inimical (militant nationalists against pacifists); fascists – the lowest level of inhuman, destructive; communists and chetnics – antipodes of ideologically opposed sides from the past, from the Second World War; chetnics and ustashi are the names of militant formations in the Second World War, which are now connotations of nationalist hatred between Serbs and Croatians. The language of conflict also includes the rhetoric of insult whose semantic message in local slang was, heroes, gravediggers, cowards, sheep... The level of symbolism in the interpretation of events labelled the public meetings as either positive or negative masses. A positive mass meeting was called the nation (populous) and negative hooligans, vandals (usually in regime terminology) which pointed clearly to the polarisation we/they Serbs and non-Serbs. To the language of conflict is added, the language of homogeneity which describes the citizens' gatherings as directed towards national entity. The introductions to the speeches of some political leaders are drawn from the rhetoric of Serbia's past giving a retrograde image: Brother Serbs, may God help brother heroes, with the general reply, may God help us/ In 1991 the parole all, all, all, with the thumb and first two fingers joined at the tips (orthodox sign when crossing themselves at prayer), Serbia has arisen. Finally, urban slang has provided its own contribution to the creation of unity of language – emancipation: The use of witty paroles and many symbolic actions (throwing eggs at the incriminated institutions of government, carnival masking and mocking the government). These were inventive activities directed towards offering creative resistance.

At the manifest level, the political conflict is based on two conflicting political systems, regime and anti-regime. This conflict indicates different concepts of social and cultural realities like national-folklore, Ethan-new-bourgeois and urban. National-folklore concepts at regime and some opposition meetings contained elements of retardation: Signs from Serbian mythological past and glorification of history, the anthem "God of Justice", the song "March on the Drina", icons of Serbian saints, pictures of Karadjordje and leaders of the Serbian uprising in the 19th century etc. Folklore and citizen concepts of identification prestige frequently suggested pseudo elements so-called citizen and so-called folkloric. The fashion and music style

turbo-folk dominated at the pre-election meetings of SPS-JUL (regime parties) while the youth subculture rock-techno was more obvious at opposition gatherings. Manifestation creators frequently referred to tradition, which they converted to ritual and ritual discovery: at political manifestations, the speaker was frequently awaited by young girls in national costumes offering bread, and trumpeters... On the other hand, the urban conception of mass events was something that is recognisable the world over but presented in an authentic fashion: let's catch the rhythm so that they will catch the fog noise is in fashion, disco of the blue cordon to the sound of the world-wide rock hit, Lennon's song Give peace a chance, the use of whistles and drums: or the action I'm thinking means I'm not watching TV, to the sound of drumming on saucepans during TV news time. The messages within me and towards others opened up possibilities of liberation from traditional, nationalist barriers in the direction of authentic globalisation. Belgrade is the world, a fist is the sign of resistance, carrying a student's identification – index, carrying party flags, and even flags of other states, firms (USA, UK, Brazil, Ferrari).

Actual social differentiation drew along with it areas of cultural labelling whose full acclaim and promotion was in the mass spectacles. This differentiation is particularly noticeable among the young population during the nineties when the cultural styles polarised to turbo-folk, turbo-dance and rock'n roll culture. Mixed variations of folklore music with elements of pop sound were mainly promoted on private TV programmes like Pink and among circles of a newly composed elite. At the level of the centre of power, it could be connected with the political structure of the regime in power. Exactly at the time of economic crisis and war, production of turbo-folk / dance music manifested its power of gathering fans at concerts in halls and stadiums in the framework of political regime campaigns or with their financial support. This type of musical production favoured messages of prosperity, plenty and progress creating an illusion and type of urban folklore with elements of warrior chic. Contrary to this, rock'n roll in the urban bourgeois image shaped an anti-establishment style against the regime with an anti war message. At the students demonstration one frequently heard songs derived from rock anthology, such as Lemon's song Give Peace a Chance or songs from the musical Hair. Domestic rock bands based their rebellious texts on contemporary sound techno, punk, Reggae sound, creating an authentic and recognisable rhythm of resistance. Mass political gatherings accompanied by musical happenings create their own style of repertoire which became a recognisable sign of events, whether it was the celebration of a sports victory or a political campaign or protest in question. Igra rokenrol cela Jugoslavija or Djurdjevdan are songs which usually represented the peak of catharsis in the ritual zone of events.

Symbolic communication and ritual behaviour created its own mass life (private – public – private) giving a different appearance to city space as well as a more dynamic and dramatic scene of happenings.

Double communicative reality towards virtuality

The flow of communication concerning public events appeared in a double communicative reality: participants in the experience, verbal interpretation and virtual experience – media and Internet.

Media construction of public events

Mass political meetings “people happened”, cultural – historical jubilees which were organised by the party in power at the beginning of the nineties, fall into the circle of instrumentalised and uniformed media events and censorship. The programme concepts of the dominating media, for TV and radio, moved in two directions: Politics at the top simulated national unity, prosperity of the country, favoured collective calamity, xenophobia and above all the charisma of its leader. The other direction moved towards alienation from reality by way of the media concepts “ease of living and production of entertainment”. Towards the end of the nineties, as media events and with the assistance of turbo-folk entertainment scenography meetings, gave more and more support to a national-patriotic style (broadcasting the political campaigns of SPS–JUL, broadcasting concerts on bridges during the NATO bombing etc.). Non-state and independent media who reported opposition meetings and manifestations in their organisations, were frequently out of favour with the party in power, which understandably meant a ban on broadcasting, limitation of transmission diffusion and interruption of programmes. Independent media were often proclaimed “traitorous media” in the pay of foreign powers. The unequal media parallelism meant complete inclusion that is exclusion of one or other realities: one information from the regime media and another from the independent media for a politically polarised public. Even the cultural models or styles were a mirror of this polarised reality (turbo folk dance culture and rock culture).

Oral construction of mass events : experience and evocation

It can be said that mass gathering as a life experience and representative event influenced the expansion of oral communication as a specific media and mediator. When media is blocked, destroyed or manipulated, bare oral reality remains known only to its actors. Oral communication is based on experience, interpretation, and evocation: from news to narration. In such conditions each individual was a manager in talk communication. Acts of creating and transmitting information were real workshops of thought and activity. Thus hyper-happenings, in practise, showed that oral communication also has significant diffusion potential in perceptive and interactive discourse. Directed and media invented public events, organised by the regime, meant an already formed basis of oral communication. Participant experience, together with media experience, provided an unflinching picture and message of guaranteed truth. After the events, during the phase of private rituals of rallied friends, neighbours, relatives and like-minded people, the experience and media pictures entered the field of interpretation which was a further oral guarantee of positive effect and the justifiability of the meetings that had taken place. So experience which flows into narration did not differ greatly from the official news presentations. What happens to oral construction of events when it enters the zone situation-risk-incident? Then combinations of available means of oral communication appear on the scene. Halo effect made it possible to deliver tens of messages at minute intervals which entered the operative chain of transfer (crossed radius model). Participants at meetings with risk had a tactic of delivering news, worked out in detail, which gave a particular dynamic to oral

communication: from short messages, ciphers, descriptions and impressions to complete reporting in narrative form. In the post-ritual phase the accumulated and contradictory experience of the oral auditorium enters the narrative code of crossed reconstruction and interpretation, which builds numerous episodes and stories. This is the threshold of creating short stories that always remains on the margin or repressed by the normative of the history of society. My investigation of the life story of participants of the huge mass gatherings indicates that it is impossible to form an accurate picture and not to damage at least some truth known only to its actors. To what extent is history prepared to accept parallel and sometimes conflicting memories?

Mass events in cyber-space

It is known that computer communication exceeds the limits of geographical borders and that it has created its own cyber-space.⁸ Internet development in Serbia coincides with the dramatic events in the nineties at the time of ex — Yugoslavia's disintegration. In 1995 Internet moved experimentally in the direction of the first provider network (EUnet. yu: shema 5).⁹ At the beginning it was used for electronic mail and surfing through foreign, mainly USA web sites. In was also active in a certain number of discussion forums and chat lines, which among other things served to stir up the language of hatred and intolerance. On the other hand, domestic content was mainly of commercial character (web presentations and computer games). Media made Internet its medium with the first web sites presented by daily newspapers. Very quickly Internet became an oasis of cyber-communication for civil resistance and almost the only space for free media expression: petitions, news banned by the official state media, caricatures, news from foreign media etc. At the time of NATO bombing the mechanism of public information worked under the war regime. Internet was then an important, if not the only, source of information from the outside world. Communication was particularly intensive between users at home and their fellow countrymen abroad who could supply information on the reactions of the world at large. During 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, internal political struggles come into focus again, repression of independent media and public speech reach their culmination. Internet again takes first place, this time on two levels: 1. private communication, establishing a branched community network of like-minded people — on the one hand sympathisers of civil resistance and on the other those who supported the regime. 2. public propaganda and info. service. Virtual reality was also polarised. Keen political struggle was expressed in exceptional web presentations directed towards visitors as potential voters. Public gatherings, meetings, speeches and all the accompanying activities of the campaign were transmitted by way of Internet. There was the marketing of the party in power presenting news and transmitting directly the SPS-JUL campaign and folk-entertainment concerts. On the other side there was massive visiting to the DOS site, that is the opposition parties and their campaign, to OTPOR, G17, and the daily paper Danas the weekly Vreme etc. Repression became evident also on Internet through interference with direct transmissions of meetings or hucker intervention and fall of the Internet system.

⁸ Stiven Džouns, *Virtuelna kultura/Virtual Culture*, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd 2001, 7.

⁹ EUnet. yu developed from the domestic company MR Systems and European Internet company EUnet.

However, statistics show that during the active anti-regime and election campaign during '99 and 2000 there was great interest in the Internet — immersive environment. Internet transmission of meetings to support Pact for the stability of Serbia was the most visited web emissions. According to information from the web site Free Serbia which realised this emission in the early hours of the meeting it was followed by more than 30,000 visitors. The independent radio stations in Serbia rebroadcast the meeting. Following the fall of the regime and calming of the political struggle, Internet communication returned to its usual course. In the sphere of public communication cultural events take priority. The rich content of cultural manifestations is to be found on sites of modern design: theatre festival (BITEF), film festival FEST, rock festival EXIT, cultural-folklore manifestation (Gathering of trumpeters in Guča).

The cumulateness and content of mass gathering influenced and modified cultural communication: from orally transmitted experience and interpretation of events (particularly mobile telephones) intermingled with media presentations to internet-cyber experience of mass and spectacle. Now it is clear that oral communication and internet played the role of free zone of communication mixed with the model exchange of information-messages between the communicator and recipient, unlike the media which was directed to the manipulated and controlled zone of communication.

The ethnological scene focuses on a double experience of reality and this includes the area of spectacle. Spectacle is a medium thanks to which social drama is transposed to a system of symbolic messages in practice. This again produces events in an iconic world of pictures which are compatible. Those who did not participate in the mass gathering now become the recipients, who with the help of pictures and sound (audio-visual), again experience the experienced, but exactly as the producers of the spectacle create and direct. Thus meetings, demonstrations, celebrations of sports events, concerts and other manifestations on the level of spectacle, became sublimates of their practice and this implicitly includes:

- * Massive gathering — spectacle lead by means of messages/pictures to recognition/awareness of the large number of people occupying a particular space. This is the basic condition for entry to the world of spectacle.
- * Massive gathering — spectacle throws light on those aspects of events which are not known to all participants. In this way the spectacle assures that everybody is convinced that he has experienced that which he has not seen.
- * Massive gathering — spectacle allows each recipient, whether he is a participant or not, to play a public role. The eye of the spectacle zooms and creates episodes in which the anonymous becomes public. From here the heroes of the spectacle originate.
- * Massive gathering — spectacle are also aesthetic acts which stimulate emotion in the direction of illusion by way of ones own senses and manipulative techniques.
- * Massive gathering — spectacle condenses events in a chronological order of word and picture.
- * Massive gathering — spectacle is presented and reported as reality.

Translation: A. Vasić

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МАСОВНА ОКУПЉАЊА КАО ПОЛИТИЧКИ И КУЛТУРНИ ДОГАЂАЈИ: ДРУШТВЕНЕ ДРАМЕ И СПЕКТАКЛИ

У овом раду етнолошка анализа је фокусирана на свакодневицу масовних окупљања који имају свој пут од ритуала до спектакла и *vice versa*. Масовни догађаји – политички митинзи, протести, спортске утакмице и славља, културне манифестације, на балканским просторима у периоду 1990. до 2002. године постали су друштвена драма и театар живота са често трагичним последицама. Моја истраживања масовних скупова у Србији, посебно у Београду, усмерена су на ритуални и симболички механизам читања политички и културних догађаја. Многобројна искуства, сећања актера, медији, ушли су у дискурс интерпретације овог феномена која подразумева ситуациони и евокативни сектор. Интензитет и обимност масовних скупова показали су њихову улогу у рефлектовању и креирању друштвене стварности, свакодневног живота и историје.