From Social Movement To Political Organisation:

THE CASE OF OTPOR

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ABSTRACT:
Key words: movement, organization, change, transformation

This paper explores the phenomenon of Otpor (Resistance) movement from Serbia that has played one of the crucial roles in overthrowing undemocratic regime of Slobodan Milosevic. It will focus on revealing some of the key elements of every movement such as organization, structure, mobilization and activism. Further, it will attempt to reveal changes and transformation of Otpor from social movement to political organization. At the end, the paper will explore influence of Otpor to similar movements and organizations worldwide arguing that it is not possible to simply "export" Serbian experience.

On the basis of the analysis, the authors conclude that social movement's necessarily have to transform when situation changes and this is affirmed in the case of Otpor that is in the focus of authors' field of interest.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social world and social reality are phenomena that are extremely complex and hard to capture, understand or explain and this represents objective difficulty for scholars whose job is to examine it. This difficulty leads to another one, maybe even more important – because of that complexity process of making any generalization seems to be quite impossible. Even though this statement may be seen as to radical, it is not our intention to claim that any analysis is due to fail. On the contrary, our strong standpoint is that only with further elaboration significant progress can be made.

However, we believe that only with examination of concrete cases one can establish certain connections with similar one's, which can in return reveal new insights that were not previously known.

Social movements have been in the focus of scholarly analysis for quite a time and never seem to be "out of fashion". This is due to the previously mentioned fact – their reality is so complicated that all the analysis made so far were not enough to explain and be applied to every single movement that comes into existence. Further, because social movements are very present in our world and represent important part of so-called social structure, it is quite necessary to always put them in the centre of attention. Previous, 20th century is best proof for this statement – it was indeed very reach with different movements that succeeded in changing the world we live in. And yet, there were no identical movements no matter that many of them fought for the same or similar cause. That this is true can be seen by examination of the movements that were raised against communism in the Eastern Europe. Many of them had same enemy and similar concepts, but they also had quite different paths.

As it was already stated, Otpor played important role in the fall of Milosevic's regime. However, there is no consensus about what was really Otpor and how important was its contribution in the above-mentioned process. On the contrary, this topic seems to be quite controversial one, especially having in mind that there are considerable differences in opinions regarding this issue. Otpor was always in the centre of attention of many political players because its future seemed intriguing and unclear.

Our attempt to reveal some of the key notions of Otpor seems to be quite important, since without determining its role no coherent picture about processes that had happened in Yugoslavia can be made. Next, this topic seems also very attractive because there is still no relevant or satisfying analysis about the significance or the impact of this movement and it is always a great challenge to examine topic that has not been severely analysed by other scholars in the recent past.

One of the key questions that will be asked and repeated here is what was really Otpor (student's movement, people's movement, political organization or something else) and how should we treat it. Six years after the fall of Milosevic, there is still no agreement on this, which adds additional challenge to the analysis. Previous regime treated Otpor as one of its greatest enemies, Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) tried to portray Otpor as their friend or simply decided to ignore its activities, while during the election campaign in 2003 all political parties acted against Otpor, thus admitting that this actor became a real political treat.

One of the things that makes story about Otpor even more interesting, but also extremely hard to grasp is that there is no consensus about it – some scholars argue that Otpor was a true populist movement that managed to unite energy of all people ready to defeat Milosevic's regime, while others claim that this image is fundamentally incorrect. In that manner, V. Ilic argues: *"Otpor was a political organization with a rather well-developed structure, a relatively secluded leadership, an invisible but efficient hierarchy, and internal informal censorship characteristic of organizations of this kind"*.[1] Others claim Otpor was a genuine social movement that has gone through transformation from student's to true populist movement. Those who follow this line of argument tend to develop image of Otpor in somewhat idealistic way.

This thesis will also try to solve another puzzle – what happens with the movement after it accomplishes its proclaimed goals.

At the end, analysis also touches the period when Otpor made a final transformation into a political party in November 2003, seeking its chances on extraordinary parliamentary elections. At that time, Serbia faced new challenges, political climate was far from being stable and different political actors, including Otpor, tried to open a window of opportunity in the field of so called "high politics".

The most important dilemma regarding social movements seems to be organized around the following question(s) – how long do movements live, when they stop being movements and start to converge (or deviate) into something else? Moreover, is this process inevitable and is some kind of transformation necessary. Further, perplexing question is whether movements should exist after the "victory" and when is the time to put one story in the history.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
a) The three dilemmas

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[1]Vladimir Ilic, Otpor – In or Beyond Politics, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade 2000.

There are several intriguing questions that are imposed immediately when thinking about social movements. First one can be formulated as follows - when does something start to be the movement, at what time and how is that specific feature to be separated of other, similar forms? Even though recent debates have significantly increased our knowledge, there is still great deal of confusion about this issue. Following in this line, it is also true that to define Otpor is not an easy task. Therefore, theoretical framework developed here should serve as one of the means for better understanding this interesting and complicated puzzle.

Second, there is a question about the motivation of people to engage in some sort of collective action and this is indeed necessary to explain and examine in order to understand any movement that emerges. In other words, *"how do ordinary people, caught up in the demands of everyday life, gain the degree of coordination and mutual awareness that they need to mount strategically effective protests against superior forces?"*[2] This is also important part in process of understanding why people decided to support Otpor or to get active in it.

Thirdly, there is maybe the most important question that is going to be opened here - what happens with social movements after they finish their primary task. The core question is "do movement organizations inevitably become more institutionalised as they age". [3] This clearly depends on many conditions, both internal and external, on the conditions in which movement emerged and worked, on the number and quality of its constituency and on the quality of relationships with other organizations in the political surrounding.

Social movements are social constructs; they emerge within society and as a product of grievances or problems present in one concrete society or part of it. Social movements are forms of collective action, quite distinct from other, more traditional ones such as classes, interest groups or associations of any kind. Even though there are various movements, they all posses some connecting features. Following Melluci's argument social movement can be defined as *"a form of collective action (a) based on solidarity, (b), carrying on a conflict, (c), breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs. These dimensions, which are entirely analytical, enable one to separate social movements from other collective phenomena, which are very often empirically associated with "movements" and "protest".* [4] This is only one of the useful definitions of social movements. However, there is more evidence that social movements are different from other forms of organizations. According to Kriesi, social movements are distinguished by the two main criteria *"1) they mobilize their constituency for collective action, and 2) they do so with a political goal, that is, to obtain some collective good (avoid collective ill) from authorities.*[5] Further, people

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[2] Sidney Tarrow, Struggle, Politics and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements and Cycles of Protest, Cornell University, 1991 p 15

[3] Sidney Tarrow, Struggle, Politics and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements and Cycles of Protest, Cornell University, 1991 p 19

[4] Alberto Melluci, The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements, Social Research, vol.52, No. 4 (Winter 1985), p 795, in Social Movements Reader

[5] Hanspeter Kriesi, The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context, in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (eds), Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Framing, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p 152

have their own goals and preferences and most of the time they are wiling to conform to the known institutions without questioning their legitimacy. However, there are times when people react and think that is necessary to act collectively. Thus, *"what distinguishes collective from individual action are not the goals sought, nor the personality, motivations, and thought processes of participants. It is the public, nonroutine dimension of collective action, its challenge and threat to established groups, and its potential for being an agent of social change"*.[6] Therefore, it can be concluded that social movements are social constructions based on presence of conflict, solidarity and proclaimed goals aimed at some kind of social change.

The second problem can be summarized by the term "mobilization". This concept enables us to understand why people join some movements, what makes them be active even in times when this implies high risks. According to scholarly literature – *"mobilization is a process of increasing the readiness to act collectively by building the loyalty of a constituency to an organization or to a group of leaders"*. [7] Even when mobilization is defined there is still question of how exactly does this process work and how social movements come to have followers and activists ready to participate in actions that are organized. The obvious dilemma is twofold - is it possible to reach any general rule that could be applied to all cases and could also explain every single feature of the mobilization phenomenon. Every single feature of this phenomenon was examined and yet many questions seem to be still open. One of those is certainly the question of why people support and get actively involved in some movements while they remain passive in the case of others. Or, how can their will to risk something be explained in scholarly terms, even when the "stake" is really high. In our opinion, we can list several possible reasons. First and certainly one of the most important is the issue of grievances. When there are severe grievances or what William Gamson calls an "injustice frame" there is possibility for action. This means that there has to be some issue that is of relevance for larger number of people and with which individuals can identify and perceive it as something threatening for them. However, seeing grievances and feeling them is not enough. It is one of the most important tasks for social movements to transform those injustices into concrete action. Therefore, social movements must not only identify injustice but also name some agent that is responsible for it and also they must provide some kind of alternative, solution for the existing problem. In other words, movements must be able to frame grievances in the manner that they can communicate with large number of individuals. This is only the first step. Next, there has to be organization within the movement that will provide possibility for successful collective action. However, here we have to put attention to another important aspect of mobilization process. Namely, there is rather big difference between being sympathizer and activist. Therefore, we have to make distinction between mobilizations aimed at different levels of participation. According to Klandemas, *"movement participation is the outcome of a process consisting of four different steps: being a sympathizer, being targeted by mobilization attempts, becoming motivated to participate, and actually participating"*.[8] Obviously, first step is to become sympathizer and this is the least

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[6] Anthony Oberschall, Social Movements, Ideologies, Interests and Identities, Transaction Publishers, London, 1993, p 1

[7] Gamson, William, The Strategy of Social Protest, Wadsworth, Belmont, 1990, p 15

[8] Klandermas, The Social Psychology of Protest, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, Mass, 1997, p 64

problematic for the analysis. One can be sympathizer of great many movements, he/she can identify with rather different goals, but it does not mean that this first step will be overcome. This is way successful movement has to be able to "target" those sympathizers convincing them that they will have benefits from actual participation. Movements than have to be able not only to attract individuals but also to give them enough reasons to become their active members. This is done by: *(a) "emphasizing the importance of the action goals; (b) making the link between an individual's participation and goal achievement more visible; and (c) providing selective incentives to participants".*[9] This means that movement organizers have to stress that every single individual is important and his or hers participation will contribute to the expected success. Moreover, in this way movements try to raise expectation that action will be successful only if enough people get involved. In other words, movement target individuals persuading them that they are exactly what is needed and that their help is crucial. Finally, the most difficult task is to come to the situation in which people will indeed decide to participate. Here, "*sustaining motivation so that people are motivated enough to overcome unforeseen barriers*"[10] is what is of greatest importance.

Finally, we arrive to the third dilemma; the one about what happens with movements after some period of time, in the first place after accomplishing proclaimed goals. According to Tarrow, *"until recently, it was almost axiomatically assumed that social movements follow a "career", one in which agitational or charismatic leaders are replaced by managers, bureaucratic structure emerges, and there is a general accommodation through goal adjustment, organizational maintenance, and oligarchization".*[11] However, different strands also appeared arguing that "*while there is often an association between growing institutionalisation and conservatism, there is no evidence that this is a necessary association*"[12] In this paper we support the claim of clear association and we stress that after a time movements do transform. There are numerous reasons for that and we will present only few of them: after some time (mainly after success) when some or all of the immediate demands were satisfied, people tend to retreat from collective action that they have pursued until then. Further, people become tired, exhausted by the risk and costs and feel that some of their goals have been accomplished. Therefore, they do not see need for the same kind of action any more. Social movements perceive that situation has changed and that it is time to turn around. Of course, what varies from movement to movement is the way in which this change will be done. There is no general rule and "*the pattern of institutionalisation of movements depends a great deal on the relation to the political environment*"[13] Our standpoint is that most of the movements have experienced either exceptional growth or change. They go through the process of reorganization, which is in my opinion unavoidable. This occurs because not only their situation changes,

[9] Klandermas, The Social Psychology of Protest, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, Mass, 1997, p 78
[10] Klandermas, The Social Psychology of Protest, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, Mass, 1997, p 87
[11] Sidney Tarrow, Struggle, Politics and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1991, p 77
[12] Zald and Ash, in Tarrow, Struggle, Politics and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1991, p 77
[13] Sidney Tarow, Struggle, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1991, p 20

but also because their responsibilities become different. In addition, political climate and relations with environment also tend to be altered. Political life is highly structured and to keep on living within such structure, movements must "suffer" reorganization and transformation of some kind. One thing is crucial for reorganization to be effective, *"it must reflect the heterogeneous milieu and the values, beliefs, and interests"*[14] present in concrete political environment. Of course, the process of reorganization is not an easy one; rather it depends on many conditions. When the time for transformation comes, different actors have different perspectives and expectations about what is to be done, attaching their own meanings about the current situation. Therefore, this process may be characterized as "*one of the coalition formation, trades, and promises through which each participant seeks to achieve the best possible outcome for himself or herself, recognizing that not everything is possible. The prototypic instrument is the construction of a party platform or a legislative logroll, but the process extends through the entire course of decision making, from the formulation of alternatives, to the gathering of information about them, the formal choice, and the implementation of the decision*"[15] To reorganize than means that certain rules and procedures must be followed, because this is the way in which many different organization operate. This implies that reorganization brings new forms of behaviour for one specific organization. When applied to movements, it means that they also go through the process of severe changes. They become more institutionalised and necessarily they are obliged to have more strict rules and organization then they did before this change. Those rules are seen as "*routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organizational forms, and technologies around which political activity is constructed*" At the same time they stand also for "*beliefs, paradigms, codes, cultures, and knowledge that surround, support, elaborate, and contradict those roles and routines.*"[16]

The authors of this article argue that movements need to transform in order to be able to compete with new situations, which are not identical with those that existed in time of movement formation. However, this process is often extremely difficult, especially when there is no consensus on what path should be taken. If agreement is not reached, movements collapse, which happened to Otpor.

3. THE BEGININGS OF OTPOR

The purpose of this chapter is to describe immediate conditions present in Serbian society, which "caused" formation of new movement that will play one of the most important roles in struggle against socialist regime.

a) Picture of the Serbian society

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia faced great many problems at the end of the decade – Federal President Slobodan Milosevic continued with his unchecked authoritarian rule over Serbia and few remaining federal institutions, including the Yugoslav Army. Kosovo, while nominally remained part of the FRY under provision

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[14] James F. March and Johan P. Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics, The Free Press, New York, 1989, p 77

[15] James F. March and Johan P. Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis Of Politics, The Free Press, New York, 1989, p 121

[16] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics, The Free Press, New York, 1989, p 22

of the UN, is in reality, a territory under international mandate in which Serbia cannot exercise any power whatsoever. The smaller member of the federation, the Republic of Montenegro, had taken steps towards the separation from the country. Economic situation was worse than ever – economy was in total collapse due to the many years under international sanctions, black market continued to flourish, and social breakdown was very near. After the NATO bombardment whole country seemed to have failed in the state of total apathy. Thus, Serbia remained the only part of the region where there has been no substantial changes. The end of the war brought with it the hope for the opposition parties that this was one defeat too many even for Milosevic. International community has also hoped that opposition parties, riding on the wave on popular discontent would finally remove Milosevic from power and create the conditions for change. However, opposition, even though nominally united in January 1999 seemed to be incapable of defeating Milosevic's regime. Once again, the opposition failed to optimize the situation even after a massive showing at an August rally in Belgrade and remained divided. Finally, by autumn 1999 the opposition attempted to organize protest but it was already too late and energy seemed to have been wasted once again. Therefore, having survived the first two vulnerable months after the war Milosevic seemed to have won again. He announced the campaign of rebuilding the country and remained in control of all the vital positions in the country. The picture of Serbian society was indeed black but even there are some opportunities for organized action against the regime were present. It is exactly this small scale of opportunities that young people that formed Otpor saw and decided to take advantage of and to stand against the regime.

Further, in summer 1998 Milosevic regime introduced new media and high education laws, which was highly repressive and curtailed the autonomy of Serbian universities. All in all, the conditions present in Serbian at that time were highly unfavorable for any kind of changes and it seemed as last bastion of communism is going to survive.

However, even under such difficult circumstances, small scale of opportunities was available and it is exactly what young people that formed Otpor took advantage of and decided to challenge the regime. As it is well known every generation is shaped by the society in which it has been raised and this in turn influences the way in which they will react and which value system will they adopt. Generations that grew up in repressive circumstances and overall blockade have faced with great many challenges, but most of all they were able to keep critical relations with their surrounding, which became base for their political engagement.

Otpor was formed in the autumn 1998 by small, as almost illegal group of students that had different vision of life in Serbia. They declared the clenched fist to be their symbol because it represented their will to go all the way to the final victory. The fist itself was conceived as the symbol of the individual initiative, that the time and energy of every single person should be invested to bring about the expected changes. Otpor was, thus, formed with an aim to offer the alternative.

When it was founded Otpor declared that its primary goal was to put an end to Slobodan Milosevic's rule, and the alternative that the movement offered was

summarized in the vision of normal, democratically shaped country. They formulated three primary demands:

- Free and fair general elections as soon as possible
- Abolishment of the law of the University and making new one which would guarantee freedom and autonomy to the University
- Abolishment of the law of the media and ending the repression over free media

The analysis of Otpor will be divided into two periods. First one will examine the "life" and the role of Otpor before democratic changes, while the second one will be focused on the events characterizing this movement after the fall of Milosevic.

4. OTPOR BEFORE THE 5TH OF OCTOBER

This chapter will cover several important features in life of every movement such as organization and the structure, motivations, recruitments and activism. Having formulated their primary goals and demands Otpor started to build its organization. In the beginning it was perceived as just another attempt of conscious students, which is beautiful and easy to like, but without any potential for actual changes. At this point, first puzzle has to be solved – was Otpor student's movement and how can we define student's movement in the first place. It seems that it is appropriate to argue that student movement is "*explicate in a political ideology, and moved by an emotional rebellion in which there is always present a disillusionment with and rejection of the values of the older generation; moreover, the members of a student movement have the conviction that their generation has a special historical mission to fulfill where the older generation, other elites, and other classes have failed.*"17 From this point of view, Otpor satisfied all the necessary conditions and it can be conclude that when formed it has been genuine student's movement. That this is not problematic has also been confirmed in the interviews conducted with members of Otpor who stated that movement began exactly in that way. Student movements always arise in time of sickness of the society and are to be seen as attempts of young intellectuals to actively engage in political life in order to make it better. Otpor was no exception from that rule and certainly not the first movement of that kind. However, not every student movement becomes successful as Otpor did and this is to be attributed to their experience and clear political strategy. Although Otpor started as genuine student's movement it soon became evident that people who decided to be active in it had different plans. Warned with previous experiences, Otpor activists were determined not to repeat mistakes from the past. Thus, they began with building their own organization using some of the experiences of other movements that have been fighting against oppression.

a.) Organization and structure of Otpor

As it was previously said, when formed Otpor was student's movement. It was founded by a small group of students of Belgrade University who have been active in the previous demonstrations and protest and were also not satisfied with the situation in the society. Their motive for organizing was rather clear – country was in collapse,

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17 Lewis S. Feuer, The Conflict of generations: The character and significance of student movements. Basic Books Inc, New York/London, 1969, p11

pressures from everywhere were present and opposition was not force that was able to change anything. Thus, once more, young intellectuals with different vision of life and yet unburdened with political careers and egos decided that it is them who have to change things. In the beginning Otpor was perceived as just another student's attempt but dispossessed of any actual influence on the political reality of the country. This notion is due to the fact that all other student attempts failed because they were too elitist orientated or were easy to manipulate with. Exactly because of this neither regime nor opposition paid much attention to its emergence. By the time regime had realized importance, strength, impact and meaning of Otpor it was too late to stop it. The movement was already well organized, with precise goals and strategy and it was uncontrollable. Moreover, they did not lack help from inside or outside – including tutoring and financial aid that are necessary precondition for any movement to succeed. All of this implies well-developed organizational and structural basis that were present in Otpor.

One of the first things that have to be said before taking deeper look in movement's organization is to reveal how it framed its work. They have insisted on the notion that Otpor is an idea and ideas are impossible to suppress, control or stop. Thus, messages that they have spread were communicable and easy to attach to – to resist means to take responsibility for one's own life and future. Moreover, members of Otpor decided to give personal example of how it looks like to oppose regime. This decision contributed to the fact that Otpor activists were often arrested, beaten up or subject to all kinds of oppression. With its simple but rather effective and easy to understand messages Otpor gained popularity among average citizens who were fed up by Milosevic's regime but also deeply disappointed with Serbian opposition.

After making the first steps, Otpor continued with its development insisting on civil disobedience and preaching the idea of non-violent resistance. Certainly, this was not their invention for those strategies were known for very long period and have their routs in M.L.King's teaching. Civil resistance can *"be a crucial weapon in the hands of those campaigning for civil rights, social and economic justice and democratic changes"*[18,] and Otpor members decided that it would be one of the ways of their struggle. They have rightly perceived that to be successful does not imply to invent completely new strategies and tactics but to cleverly use available one's adjusting it to one's own circumstances. Thus, from that point of view Otpor was truly prosperous and this is where the difference between Otpor and other movements both in Serbia and elsewhere needs to be drawn.

As time passed, Otpor went through its first transformation – it became more than just spontaneous student's movement. At its first congress, held in the Belgrade Youth Center in February 1999, at the same time as the ruling Socialist Party held its fourth congress, Otpor became populist, all-inclusive movement. If one takes that "social movements are large-scale, collective efforts to bring about changes that bear on *the lives of many"*[19] Otpor certainly can be put in the family of social movements. At that particular moment when they made transformation, they announced an alliance with

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[18] Michael Randle, Civil Resistance, p 207

[19] Anthony Oberschall, Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities, Transition Publishers, New Brunswick, 1993, p 2

democratic parties, non-governmental organizations, independent media and individuals. They broadened its membership to include well-known public figures that wanted to support them. They were significantly less elitist and willing to accept anybody who wanted to defeat Milosevic. Thus, the spectrum of their supporters was indeed wide – they mobilized from everywhere on the social scale including radicals, right and left wing orientated population, feminists, nationalists, workers, peasants, intellectuals, students, monarchists, republicans etc. Of course, to have such different people as supporters can be very dangerous and cannot last for long period of time. Otpor activist stated they were aware of this fact, but later on were not successful to overcome differences. After achieving primary goal(s), every movement has to face revision of its goals and its membership and supporters. Otpor has gone trough another transformation, after the democratic changes and through the final one in 2003.

At the beginning of 2000 Otpor started to be serious movement and this can be seen in the way they developed organization. Due to their understanding that nothing can be achieved by partial victories they started establishing their own organization and structure. However, it must be noticed here that their organization was not the usual one and this seemed to especially irritate the regime. Otpor seemed to have no leader or vertical organization and because of that it was difficult to point a finger at one individual. The movement was particularly hard to restrain because it had no distinct leaders or formal members whom police could arrest. The movement activist claimed that they have invisible structure, which is changing all the time so infiltrating would be prevented. They also claimed to have strong methods for protection – never to repeat the same action twice and never to use same person for different actions. Clearly, for final success in the struggle with oppressive regime all the mentioned measures of precautions were necessary because this was not open war but rather game of sophistry, which was to last for a long period. Also, they did not manifest any signs of internal divisions or disintegration characteristic for earlier student movements. It was held together mainly by *"its determination to oust the key person in the previous regime who was seen as a dictator and to change the system."*[20] Dusan Bjelic, sociologist at the University of Southern Maine conclude *"every movement has a head and a tail; there is a certain organizational structure in a movement. Otpor is more of a collective performance. They have invented a political art that has real political consequences."*

The authors of this article claim that it would be misleading to state that Otpor did not have a structure or leadership. For, *"if one puts a social movement under a microscope, one discerns a much looser structure than in a formal organization."*[21] It can be argued that social movements do indeed start with rather small groups that are only loosely linked, but eventually, affected by different circumstances, come to develop minimal formal structure. Further, the fact that *"no person can be identified as the leader does not mean that no leadership functions are carried on. Leaders are the managers of the social movement organization's incentive systems that guarantee*

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[20] Vladimir Ilic, Otpor: In or Beyond Politics, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 2001, p 9

[21] Anthony Oberschall, Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, 1993, p 25

the influx of resources, and leaders have the authority to make binding decisions on the allocation of resources. Social movements organizations differ in the extent to which the membership is involved in decision making."[22] In that sense, it is fair to argue that Otpor had leaders, personified in small group of those who had a power to decide on the most important things. Moreover, it is quite obvious now that Otpor had well-developed organization and this is one of the illusions about this movement that need to be broken. Namely, in order to be able to mobilize large part of population, members of Otpor spread picture of their movement that was not corresponding with the real situation. While their supporters and sympathizers believed that Otpor is not well organized and that its decisions and actions were decided on ad hoc basis, picture is essentially different. In reality, this movement was well organized.

First of all, they made branches all over the country and had coordinated actions. Every branch was autonomous and free to decide on its actions as long as it served for the same cause. Of course, general politics was created in the central office in Belgrade, but branches were autonomous to plan their own actions in the way they thought was most appropriate for their own surrounding. It is to be seen from the fact that division of labor was present and roles were also well known. Otpor functioned on the basis of offices. Namely, every town where Otpor was strong had several departments – including department for marketing, finance, press and volunteers. According to Otpor members the only two centralized activities were international relationships and international fund rising. Moreover, Otpor also had a governing body made of well-known public figures that coordinated their activities.

Next, it is obvious now that one of the greatest accomplishments of this movement were made on the international plan. What did Serbian public before not know and what is still one of the most debated questions about Otpor are exactly those international connections that they managed to establish. Namely, while building its network in the country, Otpor also started to make networks abroad. They have rightly perceived that without substantial help from outside (including training and financial aid) it is not possible to make any serious challenge for the regime. Therefore, they have taken the same path as some other movements from Eastern Europe, which had done their job much earlier. Thus, Otpor developed links with foreign non-governmental and governmental organizations, which provided them with all the necessary help. While it is understandable that Otpor activist denied presence of any links with government of Western Europe and USA in the period before democratic changes, it is completely unclear why they did not "confess their sin" after the 5th of October. There is no dilemma about few things: in time of Milosevic's rule and especially after NATO bombing campaign, country went through the phase of "hatred" towards the mentioned countries. Therefore, it is clear why people from this movement decided not to go public with information's about established contacts. Instead, they claimed that it was Serbian diaspora from all over the world that financially helped them. Not only that, they emphasized Greek government to be their closest ally.[23] This fact is also quite logical and is to be seen in the light of few facts –

[22] Bert Klandermas, The Social Psychology of Protest, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, Mass, 1997, p 133
[23] Information taken from Vladimir Ilic, Otpor: In or Beyond Politics, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 2001

Serbian population have always thought of Greeks as of their friends and Greek government was perceived as amongst rare one's willing to provide help for the country. During those difficult days Otpor denied its connections with foreign partners, especially with USA, towards which local population felt strong animosity. It was the only safe way for the movement because Milosevic regime tried with every available tool to characterize activists as foreign hirelings and traitors. Therefore, for the sake of their own security and for the reasons of success, information's about Otpor's financing and donations were well-kept secret. However, it is not clear why they kept on keeping this secret until it became issue of public debate and lead to aggressive campaign against Otpor. Not only that, by keeping a mystery on how movement found money, Otpor activists gave strong evidence to those who claimed Otpor was lead by foreigners and their interests. Until recently, members of this movement refused to admit the sources of their income as well as they denied other forms of help that they have received in the past (trainings about civil resistance).

 Finally, this turned against them. Namely, the story about donations became theme number one on the local political agenda. Moreover, issue of financing always represented taboo and because of this average citizen did not have a clue that almost all organizations in country are financed (partially) from abroad. Next, Otpor always insisted on transparency in the field of politics and urged political parties to reveal their sources of income. Thus, in the light of all mentioned things, it seems that Otpor simply did not make wise political decision and has been punished for that.

b.) Motivations and recruitment

This section deals with the questions of who joined and supported movement and what reasons made actual engagement possible.

It can be argued that Otpor recruited from everywhere on the social scale. Its ideas and actions were indeed communicable and easy to identify with. As it was previously said, in the beginning activist and members of the movement were primarily students but after a while Otpor started to grow and to recruit supporters from elsewhere. What started as a small group grew to the number of over thirty thousands supporters and activists in September 2000. The idea of resistance was perceived as personal and motivating to each member and any other person who is prepared to invest a certain amount of his or her time and energy into Serbia's future. The idea of resistance could be successful, they claimed, only if it was accepted as a personal task and mission. Each person was equally important and thus target for possible mobilization. They argued that the only measure of an individual success within the organization is one's personal effort to spread the resistance concept, one's support and devotion.

For being able to mobilize, Otpor had to satisfy few necessary preconditions. As it is know in the theory, movements have to posses' mobilization potential. The concept of mobilization potential "*refers to the group of people who are prepared in a general way to engage in action campaigns of a given movement to attain the goals pursued by that movement.*"[24] Therefore, the first step is to be sympathetic with the movement's goals because people cannot identify with goals that are distinct to their

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[24] Hanspeter Kriesi, Support and Mobilization Potential for New Social Movements: Concepts, Operationalizations and Illustrations from the Netherlands, in M. Daiani, Studying Collective Action, Sage Publications, London 1992, p 24

own understanding of situation. Next, very important is to create a sense of belonging and groupness. Further, as Kriesi explained, informal networks play significant role in the process of mobilization. Similarly, mobilization can be defined as a *"process of increasing the readiness to act collectively by building the loyalty of a constituency to an organization* or to a group of leaders."[25]

Further, to be able to mobilize depends on the way in which movement frame its work. For these purposes movements are obliged to frame goals and messages that will be easy to understand and will affect large part of population. The best way to do that is to persuade people that there are shared grievances in the whole society and to name those who are "guilty" for that. Therefore, movement must have good message that will contain "*a diagnosis (an indication of the causes of discontent and the agents responsible for it), a prognosis (and indication of what must be done), and a rationale (who must do the job, arguments to convince the individual that action must be take, self-justification, and a description of the future of the movement)*.[26] Thus, it can be concluded that movement must recognize grievances present in the society and transform those grievances into frames that will produce a "we" feeling among different individuals.

In the previous sentences we have summarized which conditions are mandatory for any movement to be able to recruit supporters. It seems that this lesson Otpor learned very well. They noticed main grievances in the country and successfully framed them. Therefore, movement was perceived as powerful force that is capable to seriously challenge the regime.

There are great many reasons that can be determinative for person to support one movement. People who joined Otpor also had quite distinct motives. Some said it was "hatred of the regime, that was crucial, others stressed "the need to get things going" or they mentioned "the idea that together young people can bring about the democratization of the Serbia". There were also those who wanted to "join friends who are already in Otpor" while others gave more specific reasons such as situation at certain faculties.[27] The older supporters stressed the fact that their generations had several chances to change situation but were not capable of doing it, so the time came to listen to younger that were obviously more efficient. Just for the sake of describing how Otpor recruited support we cite the words of Nevenka Todorovic, pensioner whose entire family joined Otpor: "this was such a fresh breath of air…they are clean, innocent of all the past, and they are voicing loudly whatever we think in silence".[28]

One other thing has to be examined here that is also extremely important for movement's capability to frame its actions and this is the way in which movement create their relationships with media. Namely, movement has to be in the center of media attention all the time, it needs to "use" media for spreading information's about planed and realized actions. Without that, no movement can hope to be successful.

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[25] Anthony Gamson, The Strategy of Social Protest, Wardsworth, Belmont, 1990, p 15

[26] J.Wilson in B. Klandermas, The Social Psychology of Protest, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, Mass, 1997, p 49

[27] Vladimir Ilic, Otpor: In or Beyond Politics, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 2001, p 42

[28] Nick Thorpe, The Guardian, Belgrade, April 7,

Otpor activists knew how to use media and especially Internet for recruiting new supporters and informing not only domestic but also foreign population. They attracted media attention by organizing symbolic actions in order to show the situation in the country. Also, they used media for immediate announcements of arrests so they would be able to organize quick response.

c.) Activism

Next important feature that shapes life of every movement is activism, or the way in which it realizes its goals. Without this, movement cannot accomplish anything and cannot mobilize. Thus, actions are one of the means for potential mobilization.

From the very foundation Otpor organized many different actions all over the country. These actions varied from the signing petitions, distributing leaflets, organizing rallies and workshops, making performances in the streets or organizing concerts. Every action was planed and had its message. If regime did something (as in the case of the campaign of rebuilding the country) Otpor stroke back and organized actions that made regime look ridiculous. Actions were mostly provocative and they were made to mobilize people to involve themselves in the fight. Sometimes their activities could be defined as performances, which had a lot of features of the theatre or carnival. In other occasions they were more aggressive and challenged the system. Basic intention was to influence and pressure people's political conciseness and to make them aware of the need to finally change the socialist regime.

The most serious action that Otpor have had and that deserves to be explained in more details was one that was made for the purposes of motivating people to vote. General elections were set for September 24th and Otpor held a wide campaign by the name "He is finished". They called citizens to go out and vote and tried to persuade them that his/her voice was crucial. Activist went all over the country spreading just one message: "The 24th September is not only the election day – but also a very important day in our history. It is YOU who are defeating Milosevic on that day! Make sure that you vote, and that your family and friends vote too – and He's finished!"[29] They gave a formula that had seemed so simple – MASSIVE TURNOUT + BALLOT'S CONTROL = VICTORY. For the first time, peaceful change through elections seemed to be possible and people found easy to identify with this concept.

It can be argued that Otpor's greatest accomplishment is that it succeeded to persuade people to take part to the elections. Having in mind that before this, society was in the state of total apathy and fear, this was indeed difficult task. By giving the personal example, by being first to stand up and fight, even if it meant to be arrested or beaten up, Otpor activists showed that it is possible to challenge the system and finally to defeat it. Their politics was politics of civil disobedience that implied peaceful means for struggle. Therefore, they always repeated that what Serbia needs are fair general elections, which will put an end to more than ten years of Milosevic's rule.

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[29] Taken from the Otpor's leaflets, September 2000

In accordance with the situation, Otpor's analytical center set the following framework of its activity through organized three campaigns:[30]

- Campaign for activating the third sector (nongovernmental sector)
- Campaign for going to the polls
- "He Is Finished" campaign

The first campaign was made to activate so called third sector (NGO's) and it was perceived as important because of its possibility to include great number of people in election campaign. Second campaign's goal was to persuade as many people as possible to go to the polls in order to increase opposition's chances for success and to decrease effect of manipulation on elections. Finally, the aim o the third campaign was based on a strong anti-Milosevic message that did not, at any moment, leave a possibility for hesitation or possible compromise with the regime. All three campaigns were directed towards increasing the number of people who will actually go to the polls. However, they did not target same population. One campaign was directed to city population (especially to first time voters), second to population from so-called "medium towns" (up to 60,000 voters) and third one was aimed at country population.

By taking closer attention to Otpor's activities, it can be concluded that the movement organized rather serious campaigns that were done in somewhat professional way. Of course, to be able to do that they needed some kind of training and this represents the second criticism that is heard against Otpor in nowadays. Namely, in the time when Otpor struggled against the oppressive regime, no one from the so-called democratic block did not dare to question Otpor's action. Otpor's activists were seen as "heroes", politically uncorrupted but smart and determined young people who finally took things into their hands. To reveal anything against them in those days meant to "kill" last hope for many people who needed to identify with something, some new idea in order to defeat Milosevic after so many years. Therefore, picture of Otpor was somewhat idealized because there was no open criticism towards the movement. This of course does not mean to decrease impact and the role of Otpor in defeating oppressive regime for this impact was indeed strong if not crucial. However, certain things have to be said, meaning that kind of demystification needs to be done.

Namely, in past few years two main questions about Otpor were raised. First one regarding donations and funding was previously mentioned and answered. And the second one is exactly about training and originality of Otpor's campaigns. Namely, there has been substantial criticism towards this movement. Different media reveled that Otpor did not invent actions and campaigns but that this movement "borrowed" some of the already known and used strategies. Further, they stated that activists of the movement went through the process of severe training and education in the camps organized by US government. According to this approach, the most important seminar was held in March 2000 in Budapest where activist learned how to challenge the system, how to shape their actions, how to overcome the fear, how to answer police questions when arrested etc.[31] Again, Otpor members seem to made same mistake as

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[30] Data taken from the Otpor's Report On: Get Out To Vote Campaign, Serbia 2000 – "It's Time"
[31] Milirad Ivanovic, Blicnews, Belgrade, February 2002

in the case of funding. Namely, they made politically unwise decision when they refused to talk about trainings and denied that this information's were true. However, this situation did not last long and very soon they "admitted" that they gained help from outside. Otpor members, after a certain period of time, stated that democratic changes would have happened anyway but without American help it would have been more difficult. Further, it is true that Otpor did not invent civil disobedience or most of the actions that took place in Serbia. It can be argued that there is nothing new under the sun when this issue is in stake. Again, what distinguishes one movement from another is its capability to learn those lections and adjust them to their own political situation. Without any doubt, Otpor was successful in this work.

Image of Otpor as organization which was successfully resisting undemocratic regime and responded to repression by campaigns which seriously threatened to bring down Milosevic's rule, was rapidly spread outside of Serbia, thanks to foreign media which were not under control of Serbian regime and developed international contacts. The fact is that story about Otpor influenced more or less on creating similar organizations and movements in countries that were still under rule of undemocratic regimes, like some of ex-Soviet countries like Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus and in surrounding countries as well. One of the examples is Albanian organization "Mjaft", which web site mentions that their struggle for democratization for Albania was inspired by Otpor and its activities.

Here we come to the one of questions that has not demystified yet: Otpor involvement in creation of similar organization in other countries. The fact is that Otpor as organization have never had intention to involve in process of democratization outside of Serbia. Examples of Otpor members who took part in some seminars and trainings like participants; speakers or trainers were more likely to be individual engagement and the way of sharing their personal experiences and contributions to bringing down dictatorship.

Objectively, Otpor as an example of successfully organized group was more used as an inspiration than it had concrete role in forming similar movements. Wish to be like Otpor was especially raised after 5th of October and changes in Serbia. Thus, during the demonstrations against regime in Georgia, on the streets of Tbilisi, there were flags with Otpor fist, even more it could be seen message "He is finished" in Serbian language. Without doubt, Otpor had significant impact on similar movements in other countries, but it was not an "exported product" like it was called by some critics and there was no intention to spread idea of Otpor on that way outside of Serbia.

Exactly because its success, it is not clear why did Otpor's members make the two mentioned mistakes. All the same reasons that were emphasized previously (fear of reaction of regime and population who was strongly against American influence) can be applied for this second case. Again, movement organizers did not make politically clever decision and because of this many of their supporters were indeed disappointed. Of course, some could have been disappointed even if members earlier and personally revealed all of these things, but it was a chance that they had to take if they wanted to carry on with their work for this would prove that they are first to act responsibly and politically wise. Reasons for this kind of behavior can be different – it

may be fear from public reaction and loss of support, or it can be that they behaved relaxed, or maybe they were simply not trained for how to behave after the changes.

5. HOW REGIME FOUGHT OTPOR

This chapter will briefly examine the way in which Milosevic regime perceived Otpor. It is known that challengers must be able to question the system and to try to mobilize as may people as possible. On the other hand, the existing system must be able to answer those challenges.

Milosevic and his allies were always "afraid" of students and their actions but somehow they were able to control and eventually defeat them. At the beginning regime saw no real potential or danger in new student attempt but this situation did not last for long. After regime had realized that Otpor differ in comparison with previous movements and is well organized, with their strength and influence rapidly growing, regime decided to strike back. This was an open war in which regime did not choose tools for suppressing the movement. The system did everything possible to frighten those who were active or supported the movement wanting to stop their spreading and growing of their popularity. Almost every action was ended by the police intervention. Police "interviewed" large number of activists, asking them many questions – who is the leader of the movement, who is funding Otpor, where do they get trained etc. [32] Police used different procedures against activists – arrests and/or detentions, the carrying out of informative conversations, picture taking and fingerprinting, the opening of criminal records, beating up and other kinds of repression. There was a price to be paid for being an activist - "nearly half of the activists has been detained at some timer or other, and most of them had serious problems in school or in the family."[33] However, the most serious and aggressive actions against movements activists were taken in town called Pozarevac (the birth place of Milosevic and his wife and socialist's strong base) when three men were severely beaten by Milosevic's son and his gang because they publicly supported Otpor and were active in this movement. After this incident repression towards the movement became even more brutal and open. The same man who was beaten was charged for attempted manslaughter and spent two months in prison. Regime and media under its control accused Otpor activists of being traitors paid by NATO; they were portrayed as CIA agents and even fascists. At the end, regime called them terrorists and decided to finally defeat Otpor and make it fade away.

Next, ruling coalition drafted a law against terrorism that left members of any organization unregistered with the state vulnerable to sweeping acts of repression, including life imprisonment. Otpor was denied recognition by the authorities and so it was undoubtedly the main target of this new law. The repression was on the top and regime thought that fear from the consequences will be so big that it will be enough to stop widening the support for the movement. On the contrast, this tactic did not work and it only mobilized and motivated people (including those who were passive until than) to even more support Otpor and its goals and actions.

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[32] Taken from the Report made by Humanitarian Law Found, Belgrade, 2001

[33] Vladimir Ilic, Otpor: In or Beyond Politics, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 2001, p42

The most obvious example of police brutality and misuse of authority happened when policemen, armed to the teeth, broke into the head office of "It's time" campaign in Belgrade, only 15 days before the elections. They have arrested 25 activists who were held many hours at a police station and interrogated both by the police and state security. Finally, the number of arrested persons until October 2000 went up to the number of 1.559.[34] This number clearly witnesses how regime behaved towards this movement. However, this is not what one can hear from the officials of previous regime. They did not admit that they have ever suppressed or held any repressive actions towards Otpor and they are still not wiling to state that. According to Dejan Backovic, from Socialist Party, regime never used violence against Otpor. He even argued that they did not pay any attention towards this movement and that this was their greatest mistake. Further, even though there are records about that, Backovic denied that any Otpor member was arrested and he claimed that if there was beating it was not ordered by regime. Thus, his argument was that regime did not have any opinion about the movement whatsoever. Similar claim was heard from Aleksandar Vucic (Radical Party) who stated that beatings and brutality was order by socialists and that his party, even if it was coalition partner, had nothing to do with it.

6. OTPOR AFTER THE 5TH OF OCTOBER

The aim of this chapter is to analyze what became of Otpor after the changes that had happened in the October 2000. But, before proceeding with examination of movement, we will concrete on revealing the role of Otpor in mentioned changes. As already stressed Otpor was one of forces that initiated the end of Milosevich regime. Thus, next step is to try to determine their real influence and impact. The overall impression is that Otpor played one of the central roles in October events. However, opinions about this differ – some argued that Otpor was only one of actors that were important. Some claim that Otpor did a good job in connecting opposition and nongovernmental sector and in motivating people to go to elections, but it was not the most important player. Members of former regime also admitted that Otpor's main achievement lies in the fact that it managed to convince people that time for peaceful change has come. Even Otpor's activists had similar opinion. Many Otpor members state that the movements' merit was significant but that it could not succeed without having help from elsewhere. The most radical view claims that changes can be attributed only and exclusively to Otpor. In our opinion this picture is misleading and it is fair to argue that Otpor's role was crucial but to state that movement did everything by itself means to overestimate their real impact.

Having answered this intriguing question we will now concentrate on the way in which Otpor continued its existence after the end of Milosevic's rule.

a.) Movement's development after the changes

When socialist regime was defeated and after the elections for the republican Assembly (December 2000) were finished Otpor faced new, the most serious dilemma. Namely, before the 5th of October, Otpor was movement against the rule of Slobodan Milosevic and it was perceived as idea, as connecting factor for all of those who wanted better future for Serbia. Therefore, supporters and activists of Otpor were

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[34] Data taken from the Otpor's report on Get Out and Vote Campaign, 2001

from everywhere including different political parties. Now, when their "enemy" has stepped down from the stage, question appeared about movement's future. Right after the elections, Otpor held its second congress, which was severely criticized even from the part of members. It was clear that in front of the movement was period of serious redesigning and reconstruction. However, first obstacle was that different people had different images and ideas about what is to be done in future and few main streams were set apart. One proposed solution was to make an end to the story about Otpor – it finished what it was founded for and should go to history. However, according to research made by V. Ilic only minority of activists thought that Otpor had played its role and should be abolished.[35] Second proposition was to transform Otpor into non-governmental organization that will deal with cultural and educational reforms. There was also trend, which favored reorganization into exclusively student's organization. Further, some argued that Otpor should become political party.

Now, what do movements do when faced with such problems and how to solve them? This is exactly the situation in which Otpor found itself after changes when plurality of possible outcomes became a problem. It would be logical to expect that movement such as Otpor would follow certain procedure and also allow for different opinions to be heard. Although majority of Otpor members claim that everybody was able to actively engage in process of decision making about the movement's future, it does not appear quite so. This impression was made after interviewing different Otpor activists including those who left it and those who were driven out from the movement. Namely, Branko Ilic, one of the most exposed activists, decided to leave the movement. Although he said that he simply quite Otpor because he was outvoted and his vision was not widely recognized, he was not able to clearly explain who was that authority to decide on future of the movement. It is clear than that within the movement several strands were competing and it was the matter of strength and political wisdom that would prevail. Other high-ranking member offered somewhat different explanation arguing that decision was made after consulting all the local branches. Namely, movement had its "national network" that was composed of 19 regions. Every region had its representative and they were those who decided (after consultations with their local members) that Otpor should continue with its existence. However, it is still not completely clear how did they chose among many offered solutions. We believe that it is possible to argue that Otpor had ideological kernel whose voice was dominant from the very beginning and who manage to impose their vision of future role of Otpor. Thus, some kind of leadership existed even before changes and it was affirmed with this act.

b.) Otpor from inside and outside

Next step in analysis is to see how is Otpor perceived from inside and outside – what do people within it see Otpor today and is this image same for those who are not members of it. There is a wide agreement among different actors that Otpor seized to be a movement after 2000, but several controversies are present here. On one hand, there are opinions that Otpor had all the characteristics of political organization and this is opinion of majority of political parties. Socialist Party, Radical Party and even

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[35] Vladimir Ilic, Otpor: In or Beyond Politics, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade 20001, p 45

some parties from the democratic block claim that Otpor was clear example of political organization that was competing for the political power. As evidence they argue that Otpor had its representatives in boards of some institutions and was active in everyday political life of the country. Others, which can be characterized as Otpor closest allies (G17+) during the fight against Milosevic argued that Otpor is non-governmental organization that has political goals and aims. There are also opinions that Otpor was pressure and lobby group.

It is interesting though, to see what members of Otpor had to say about this. It is astonishing that majority of Otpor members had different opinion regarding this issue. According to one stream, Otpor was non-governmental organization and one of the strongest pressure groups in the society, with the additional goal of controlling government. Others expressed different views, stating that Otpor went through the phase of reorganization and transformation and that this was a rather painful process. This part of Otpor membership was aware that organization cannot continue to be movement as it was before, but at the same time did not have clear picture of what needs to be changed. Before 2003, majority of Otpor members allowed for the possibility that Otpor will transform into political party under certain conditions but claimed that even than Otpor would not be similar to any existing party in Serbia.

Those who were openly against Otpor, argued that it was political organization with intention to compete for power and it will remain active for as long as those who finance it (US government) have interest for its existence.

c.) Otpor as a political party

However, Otpor was going in the direction of becoming political party. Structure of organization became more formal. There were formed Main Board, consisted of representatives of branch offices and Executive Board elected by Main Board. For the first time, members got formal membership cards. During this transformation, very number of activists who were members of other political parties were silently excluded from Otpor.

By the end of 2002, internal questionnaire was conducted in which the crucial question was „Should Otpor become a political party?" 80 percent of members answered positive. Also, the most of members were stood behind social-democratic option. Process of transformation was finished by registration of Otpor as political party at the end of the August 2003.

Considering that elections for Serbian Parliament was announced for 23rd of December, by the decision of Executive Board, Otpor entered the election race. Result was devastating: Otpor as political party got support of 1.76 percent of voters, which was not enough for entering the Parliament, because of 5 percent census. Reasons for this failure were numerous: unclear and inarticulate vision of Otpor as political party, short period for creation of new image, campaign without clear and strong political message, absence of political leader that voters could be identified with, competition with previous political allies etc.

General resignation, apathy because of election failure and bad financial situation resulted in huge members decreasing. Looking for an alternative, Otpor started negotiations with Democratic Party (DP). Poor election result led to weak negotiation position, so without a lot of pomp, in September 2004 leaders of Otpor announced integration into Democratic Party. Membership partly accepted this decision – small number joined DP, the others went to some other parties or came back to NGO sector, but the biggest number of ex-activists stopped to be politically active.