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RELATIONSHIP OF THE SPONTANEITY AND ORGANIZATION IN SOCIAL PROTESTS: THE CASE OF 2014 BOSNIA PROTESTS

Political parties and trade unions dominate political and social struggles. However, they are centralized and hierarchical organizations. In mass social protests participants tend to establish new forms of struggle which would free them from the dominance of the organizations' elites. It is quite possible that those social protests are not organized and led by any particular organization and that there is no organized leadership of the protests. Moreover, when social protests begin, the issues of leadership, the action plan and the program of demands arise. The dilemma is whether the strategy and the program of the social protests could be drafted by spontaneously gathered participants and their ad hoc established action organs or firmly established and experienced organizations and their leaders are needed. Namely, the question is whether and what kind of balance between spontaneity and organization is necessary.

The 2014 Bosnian social protests could serve as a good case study. They erupted spontaneously, without previous plan and preparations. There was no any organized leadership or group which decided that the protests would begin and be led in a particular direction. Even when the protests began and the plenums, as a form of direct democratic action, emerged the protesters didn't understand the necessity of creation of any kind of organization and development of the program of concrete demands. Spontaneity came to its peak and the plenums with their working groups were the only "organization" which were trying to some extent to draft any kind of demands. Not just political parties' activists but also other activist groups were rejected as possible leaders of the movement.

This kind of spontaneity led to development of the elementary forms of radical direct democracy but it also showed its considerable inefficiency. The movement was not able to formulate its demands because it didn't have firm political basis nor it was able to achieve it because it was very heterogeneous, and politically and ideologically unprepared for the social struggle. Hundreds of different demands were raised and there was no one who could formulate the programmatic basis of the protests. When the protest began, there was no readiness to form the organizational forms of the movement. The first reason for the absence of this readiness was the absence of understanding of the importance of the organization and the fear of any kind of leadership. Another reason was the absence of any organization which could impose itself as a leading force of the protest.

A degree of spontaneity is necessary because it enables the direct action of participants, improves direct democracy and reduces the strength of the elites. However, pure spontaneity can't decisively contribute to efficient social struggle and it has to be combined with the existence of efficient organization – political or other. In a huge movement based on the spontaneity the organization could serve as a guiding force while at the same time the direct democratic orientation of the movement could serve as an obstacle for the creation of new elite.

Key words: Spontaneity; Organization; Direct democracy; Social protests.