Clean Sweep of Ueno Hobos

Check This Morning—180 Arrests

During the predawn hours of the twenty-third, the Tokyo Ueno Police began to arrest those vagrants trying to avoid the cold of the approaching winter by camping in and around the underground passages of the Keisei Line, Ueno Railway Station, Ueno Park, Daito Ward, in the hopes of preventing further shootings by the long-sought criminal no. 109. A total of 180 persons were arrested in the underground passages and behind the Tokyo Institute of Culture, located within the Park precincts. They were arrested on the spot under the Law of Minor Offenses (infringement of the prohibition against loitering and vagrancy) and the Traffic Laws (acts prohibited on highways). All were taken to the Ueno Police Station, where they were photographed and fingerprinted. Four, who complained of being sick, were sent to the hospital via the Daito Welfare Office; nine were sent to a home for the aged. Those remaining were released after signing an agreement not to re-appear in vagrancy. An hour later there was every indication that almost all had returned to their former haunts.

MY CASE

This is the record of a box man.

I am beginning this account in a box. A cardboard box that reaches just to my hips when I put it on over my head. That is to say, at this juncture the box man is me. A box man, in his box, is recording the chronicle of a box man.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING A BOX

Materials:
- Empty box of corrugated cardboard
- Vinyl sheet (semi-transparent)
- Twenty inches square
- Rubber tape (water-resistant)
- About eight yards
- Wire—about two yards
- Small pointed knife (a tool)

(To have on hand, if necessary: three pieces of worn canvas and one pair of work boots in addition to regular work clothes for streetwear)

Any empty box a yard long by a yard wide and about four feet deep will do. However, in practice, one of the standard forms commonly called a "quarto" is desirable. Standard items are easy to find, and most commercial articles that use standard-sized boxes are generally of irregular shape — various types of foodstuffs precisely adaptable to the container — so that the construction is sturdier than others. The most important reason to use the standardized form is that it is hard to distinguish one box from another. As far as I know, most box men utilize this quarto box. For if the box has any striking features to it, its special anonymity will suffer.

Even the common variety of corrugated cardboard has recently been strengthened, and since it is semi-waterproof there is no need to select any special kind unless you are going through the rainy season. Ordinary cardboard has better ventilation and is lighter and easier to use. For those who wish to occupy one box over a period of time, regardless of the season, I recommend the Frog Box, especially good in wet weather. This box has a vinyl finish, and as the name suggests, it is exceedingly strong in water. When new it has a sheen as if
The processes of globalization that define the contemporary condition inform much of the content of this journal. Analyses of these processes focus on moments of crisis and war and also on the effects of globalization on the city. In a crisis, temporary projects, beyond fulfilling the need for immediate function, cut straight to the performative aspects of architecture. Essays that focus on temporary architecture and the city formulate models for understanding dynamic urban processes. In part, these models construct an understanding of architecture as a reflection of shifting urban dynamics. Altogether, Perspectives 34 views the contemporary as a fluid practice in which games, intuition, collective

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At the end of the 1930s the tone of the most astute chroniclers of the period trembled in warnings. They described the logical cataclysmic conclusions of their reports. Thereafter, the rise of menacing totalitarian regimes became insidiously linked with the image of the swelling size of manipulable, politically undifferentiated masses. So closely knitted were the conceptions of masses, mass media, and totalitarian regimes that every subsequent critique of any one of these phenomena implied the imminent existence of the others. This essay will propose a configuration of masses, mass media, and a regime (that many would call totalitarian) in Belgrade in the late 1950s, a condition in which masses take to the streets and historical processes and events become decipherable against the background of old Communist strategies of mass manipulation. Following the uprisings across Eastern Europe in 1989, the 1990s were for Belgrade an era of reconstructing a public sphere, of numerous demonstrations against the regime, and of historical trauma. The scenes of Belgrade’s mini-October (2000) have been recorded in various forms, and the American travelogue, turned into a popular political-satirical theatre, into a popular book, and into a popular lecture. The history of the images is the history of the societies and the particularly industrial orientation. The city was understood both as an apparatus for production and leisure and as a medium of mass communication. So involved as it was in the mass manipulation of messages, the city displayed symbolic meaning on its “speaking” facades and in the concrete and formal expressions of the parading masses. The social spectacles, as much as the layout of housing estates, functioned as part of a supergraphic that spelled “ideology.” They were both meant to speak of, and were predicted to engender, the logos of collectivity. Standing abstract and mute along the speedways from the city center, the prefabricated buildings waited for the right moment to cast their vote in life. Life was also taking root in these districts while the playground furniture deteriorated and the synthetic landscape mutated into a new wilderness. With time...

The serial, frozen messages about the prosperous life in the socialist countries grew suspect and oppressive, like the persistent skipping of a worn LPR. In most cities of Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991, the masses transformed into citizens, in the old, political sense of the word. They came out of political hiding, took risks, and participated in collective action. The city was the unit of the 1989 uprisings. In 1989, the citizens became visible in Eastern Europe; indeed, the city was articulated through the practice of its citizens, at least for a certain amount of time. A recent, revised formulation of the contemporary city argues that the existence and the perception of the city are functions of the thresholds of visibility of historical processes and the processes’ effect on matter. In this way, the city is understood not as producing visible phenomena, as if these were merely the luscrub, the sweat, or the messy excess of various productive processes, but as existing through and in the visible phenomena.

For the entire 1990s the citizens of Belgrade staged and resisted demonstrations against the Milosevic regime. Staying within the narrative of visibility, I propose that the ability of certain phenomena to communicate encouraged political action and the building of something like a public sphere, parallel to the existing one. The conditions within the housing districts in Belgrade and the displays and strategies of the protesting masses on the streets are the two instances in which the citizens of Belgrade were “visible” in the mid-1990s. The theme of visibility on its own indeed would be a definitive sign of nostalgia for a time when perceptibly simple and provided direct access to knowledge. In fact, we have repeatedly been told that visibility is a thing of the past. As if Guy Debord’s dictum on spectacle were not strong enough to force the status of the real, Jean Baudrillard’s simulacra—trumpees fool copies without originals—and the corresponding state of the image have definitively cast suspicion over every narrative of visibility. But if we see the Communist world as stepped in something like world. Since the masses did not have a particular political identity to motivate them, other than the “privileged” one assigned to them overnight, they needed to be organized for production—top down. The two most widely employed organizing methods were political education (various species of propaganda) and the erection of new mass-housing districts (either as part of new industrial complexes or as new appendages to old cities).

In the early 1950s, the erection of housing blocks spread from the Soviet Union throughout the Eastern bloc, along with numerous management strategies, industrial and military contracts, and ideology. With Khrushchev’s interest in resolving the housing shortage and with the development of prefab technologies, the production of housing was reaching a new level. Amid the frenzy of the new pragmatism and empiricism characteristic of the Khrushchev era, prefabricated housing was stripped of its socialist realism façades. The form and layout of the housing estates were developed so as to mediate between concerns of the scientific and the practical. The more prominent concern in charge of “enlightening” the masses. Thus housing estates were one of the key factors in the formation of the new societies and their particularly industrial orientation. The city was understood both as an apparatus for production and leisure and as a medium of mass communication. So involved as it was in the mass manipulation of messages, the city displayed symbolic meaning on its “speaking” facades and in the concrete and formal expressions of the parading masses. The social spectacles, as much as the layout of housing estates, functioned as part of a supergraphic that spelled “ideology.” They were both meant to speak of, and were predicted to engender, the logos of collectivity. Standing abstract and mute along the speedways from the city center, the prefabricated buildings waited for the right moment to cast their vote in life. Life was also taking root in these districts while the playground furniture deteriorated and the synthetic landscape mutated into a new wilderness. With time...
Lobotomy

As they diagnosed the rise of the masses in the 1900s and the commensurate qualitative and historical change, both Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer began an analysis of the surface-level expressions of their age. Working from the tableaux of everyday life, they examined concrete details steeped up by a less easily articulable historical stratum. The growing scale of the metropolis and the ever-smaller and more particular scale of rationalization fragmented and multipled the masses, or so goes a central narrative of modernism.14 As the masses became the subject of history, the surface of their daily lives was the most natural place to look.

The visible and articulable microcosm were the handiest and most obvious test case for Benjamin and Kracauer, whether we are speaking of the handmaiden toys that were about to disappear from the streets of Warsaw or about the synchronized movements of the ticker girls.15 Visibility granted some phenomena a descriptive eloquence about the logic of the age that produced them. Although this had been a familiar adage in art history for a while, in the work of Benjamin and Kracauer (and a number of their peers) we find the art-historical theme of the aesthetic expanding to encompass and to focus on a new constellation of concerns, now more appropriately named cultural or, better yet, mass-cultural.

It seemed perfectly logical for the revolutionary leaders to hijack surface appearances for messages they wanted to sound out to their new proletarian masses. Just as surely as we can expect the logic of allegory to emerge in response to every new crisis of representation, the adoption of symbolic, didactic representational techniques seems to be couched with most immediately postrevolutionary moments. So, the strategy of the maniacs of mass enlightenment itself was not surprising, but the fact that it lasted for eight decades—clashing after and re-presenting the goals of the prior revolutionary project—was. Just as surely as the logic of allegory had a long-lasting life, so too the metaphor that undergirded the allegorical was the perception that between “the masses and the most Eastern European from Stalins to (New York: Free Press, 1992).

See, for example, Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle (New York: Zone Books, 2005), and the video simulation, in “An Unrevolutionary Discussion,” of the revolution in the East from 1989. The simulation’s chorus is: “Do you want to see the second revolution?” and the audience is: “I want to see the revolution.”

Kracauer found these aesthetic expressions, “reflexive, ‘important,’ and powerful partly because of their cultural originality, which meant that they were thoroughly and unashamedly self-estranged. Their messages were not part of a propagandist play; they were not used as tools to get people to think, but to think.”

Kracauer divided into two main categories the desire to influence or to “mediate” the masses. First, the desire to influence the masses, and second, the desire to mediate the masses. The first type of influence was more active, and the second type of influence was more passive.

The concept of “lobotomy,” of frontal lobes severed from the rest of the nervous system, is a nearly perfect description of the relation between urban life in Eastern Europe and its representations in (local) media for almost half a century. The mediatic city participated in a systematic disregard for factual reality from the very beginning. At first the plagues and then the billboards were there to inspire another “reality.” Later this false bravado was simultaneity treated as a mere index of reality, without any irony about its actual simulacral logic. Any attempt to produce a negative term, something like a reversed lobotomy or anti-lobotomy, inevitably contains the contradiction inherent in the process itself. Thus an attempt to reverse the media strategies of the Communist would not be a simple recuperation of a lost connection between life and its representations (or a simple reflection of the logic of the pro-Communist public sphere), but could perhaps be a new one—a new strategy of representing and deconstructing that would still contain the memory of the initial schisms of dissociation.

In the documentary I’m So...So..., the Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Wielicki spoke of the woman as a role of producer in the context of socialist Poland. He understood his role as emphatically as the conditioned need to bring into discourse aspects of life that were invisibly not represented in the officially promoted art and media of the socialist world: “Our descriptive tools had been used for propaganda purposes... Outside Poland, you don’t know what it means to live without representation.”13 In most of Eastern Europe living without representation meant that no real public forum existed in which one could discuss the circumstances of everyday life; it meant that people drifted in and out of a collective pretense about the very importance of the issue. The masses did not have to be anything more than a conditioned audience for the closest circle of their confidents.17

The failure of the dominant socialist and Marxist tradition to see and to theorize the distinction between the state apparatuses of representation, on the one hand, and the public arenas of citizen discourse and association, on the other, was characterized by a theory of the public sphere, Nancy Fraser, as a historically momentous and ultimately tragic problem.20 And momentous it was: for almost half a century the fickle and paranoid governments of all Eastern European countries held a monopoly over media and the zones in which a public sphere would have otherwise developed organically.21

Sooner or later in most Eastern bloc cities, the infrastructures put in place to support and disseminate ideology served (with some important modifications) to bring down the Communist regimes. Where the parading masses of the socialist spectacles marched many times before, the protesting masses gathered in 1989 and at the beginning of the 1990s.21 By then dissident activity had taken root all over Eastern Europe, and a new public sphere began to develop in the shadow of official slogans.22 In fact, two types of modifications of the old infrastructures had an important role in constituting the new public sphere: the mobilization of the streets by the protesting masses and several decades of inhabitation of the housing estates, each representing a historically new articulation of the “surface expressions” of the Communist era. Within the context of the Communist megalopolis, this new articulation was an anti-labyrinth of sorts.

Permanent and temporary structures

Like every other city in the Eastern bloc, Belgrade after World War II began constructing its housing, ensconced by Tito and built by “the people.” Today more than half its built territory is carpeted with socialist housing developments. A small jewel of propaganda, a book from 1961 presents the development of New Belgrade (the first and now the largest centrally planned part of Belgrade), beginning in the years immediately after World War II with the drafting of a general plan in 1950.22 At that time the publication was produced, about 30,000 people were living in the first experimental housing blocks, and the plans anticipated 100,000 inhabitants by 1965. A perfect diagram of the Communist propaganda of its period, the book moves smoothly from planning to images of happy workers and volunteers on the construction sites to images of children and contented inhabitants.

Whether presented in this agglomerate publication or in more specialized architectural journals, the initial plans and models were never publicly elaborated in discussions about the idiom in which the new socialist part of the city would be built. Emphasis was placed on the functioning of the new thoroughfares, new municipal districts, and recreational areas. The abstract modernist face and proportions of the housing slabs and high-rises, regularly sprinkled on the flat green modernist garden, were a given.27 Trying hard to be convincing about the positive outcome of this experiment in socializing, resulting from the massive plans for modernization of construction and of living, the New Belgrade book swings in mood from faithfulness to the exaggerated primacy of a tired method actor. It did not even take a decade for the architects and urbanists of Eastern Europe to realize that they had been trapped between the desires and programs they had inherited from the Athens Charter (an important product of a different social system) and the Soviet urbanism (more wittingly than unwittingly building the Communist utopia), on one side, and the impossibility of their task, on the other. Their instant cities repeatedly failed to be instantly lively.

The mechanical production of history was the production of a pattern, nowhere more obvious than in the new housing districts.23 As early as the 1960s, numerous surveys of the quality of life in the blocks rated their proximity to jobs, their integration with adjacent housing districts, and their aesthetic appeal.29

The vague and all-encompassing adjective “inhumane” became the code word used to specify the aesthetic of the blocks, which kept rising from the construction sites surrounding the city center in all directions.24 Early reports on everyone’s welfare in the housing districts were forced and constructed, if not wide-eyed and naive. But in terms of sheer numbers, the housing “achievements” throughout the Eastern bloc are hard to dismiss. The housing developments stand as the most important features of the cities in the new post-Communist Eastern bloc, in a sense constituting an urban condition that is specific to the geopolitical history of the Eastern bloc but that is at the same time a type of general condition: the Eastern European common (or generic).30

Often characterized as obscene or brutal, and once in a while as possessing a discreet charm, these housing developments, in a variety of architectural expressions, play an important role in the development of a post-Communist subject and post-Communist public sphere.30 In Belgrade these large abstract housing structures, as much a part of the infrastructure as the roads they fed off, were eventually appropriated by life. It took several decades and several economic and social system for them to accumulate enough complexity to become something more than gigantic dormitories. Fifty years after the founding districts were built, wherever the units included a system of open balconies one can find a wide variety of solutions for enclosing them. These enclosures are as if always built in the idiom of temporary structures, with the materials and tectonic logics of shantytowns. Once personalized, the balconies become storage spaces, or bedroom extensions, or dining rooms; 2 or 3 square meters of space outlined with aluminum frames and glass, cardboard walls and plaster, or weathered iron bars and some material never designed to serve as infill.

These "temporary" expressions of individuality and of socioeconomic circumstances displayed on the facade of the prefab concrete bar buildings and apartment
The critical aspect of the temporal here is the recognition of a temporary structure where there was never meant to be one. The accumulation of these structures is more than simply symbolic: it indexes a systemic failure. Unlike the temporary world of the protest, with its special occupation of both the space and the time of a city, temporary structures are formed in the more or less abstract facades are not a product of the immediate crisis. They are not simply a chorus of complaints, although their criticality is proportionate to the proliferation and to the persistence of the phenomenon. After watching them grow “for twenty years, one learns to recognize figures in their heterogeneity. Perhaps most important, their individual, unrelenting origin in the everyday is hard to contradict by an official explanation.

Real time and time out

During the winter nights of the 1996–1997 protest in Belgrade, the windows and balconies in various housing districts were repeatedly mobilized for political displays of no confidence to the regime. Taking any and all noisiestaking devices—from pots and whistles to stereo systems—to the windows, the inhabitants of the housing districts and citizens in other parts of Belgrade called their collective noisemaking “the drowning of a.”

This phenomenon took place during the official news hour, replacing the state broadcast with desperate, dissonant, and beautiful noise for the length of the program.

When it started in November 1996, the students’ and citizens’ protest was the fourth in a series of more formalized demonstrations against the Milosevic regime. “Protest” was the widely accepted term for the mass demonstrations and the series of activities that constituted a general display of popular dissatisfaction with the situation. At moments, the protest approached the familiar “riot” form, but in general it maintained a consistent level of softness. The protests that preceded the winter of 1996–1997—the first in 1991, a citizens’ protest prompting by far the most violent reaction from the regime, and the student protests of 1991 and 1992—all occupied specific locations in the city. Although these protests were strategically placed, their scope was easily contained, in terms of both geography and organizational reach.

The first anti-Milosevic protest in Belgrade, in 1991, developed from a reaction to the government’s total control of media. Its anti-media premise was its most clearly articulated aspect. The lessons from this protest (both the protest of citizens, which was violently crushed by the regime, and the student protests, whose focus was the regime’s use of media) were assimilated into the next round of uprisings. It was not enough merely to express dissatisfaction with the state of things in order to be taken seriously by the regime or by the world community. Thus the media issue took on a performative dimension in the 1996–1997 protest, not only because media were the content of the messages but also because their subversion defined the scope and temporal tactics of the protest. From the outset the 1996–1997 protest adopted a strategy of self-restraint, not unlike the nonconfrontational stand of the Velvet Revolution and concurrence concept of a parallel public sphere articulated by Czech dissidents. By shifting the terrain of its fight with the regime from a head-on violent encounter toward the sphere of spectacle—to what it most admiring critic of spectacle, Ous Ousbon, defined as the zone of the radical opposition of reality and its representation—the protests distanced the affective relationship between the regime’s violence and its denial of violence. The public sphere was fixed in its form at least as it was argued by Habermas, a representational space, whether it involved the representation of the prince’s sovereign power, or the representation of the will of the people, or its regression into a mob and reliable public opinion. Insofar as the public sphere involves representation, it involves spectacle as well. In the recent history of extraordinary events in Belgrade, the 1996–97 protest holds perhaps the most important place. It lasted for four months, a significantly long time given that most similar events before it never took more than twelve days to complete (as an exception to that matter).

Spectacle’s being the façade for that anti-media aspect, its improvisative, its sustainable mobile show and its length made it stand in terms of provoking tactics, but the production of a block discourse, parallel to the regime’s media, made it important. Thus the three most significant aspects of the 1996–1997 protest, the spectacle manifested in the particular human relations experienced during the four months it lasted, its relation to time, and its representational aspect.

The difference in the way the protest’s organizers and participants understood as constituting a public together, as sharing the same historical, economic, and political experiences.

There is a set of unusually long bar buildings in New Belgrade (Block 28) fenestrated with characteristically shaped windows, as windows, in the form of television buildings. The equation of a facade to the facade, or more precisely to the windowed buildings that protude from it like so many television sets, is only partly a result of the simple mimetic relationship between them. Since there was never any mystery about the raffled modularity of the prefab units, the building was clear—outused, understood as vehicles of the organization of fun, and the material emblem of Communist society—it is not their initial silence that is surprising, but rather their eventual eloquence. According to Reinhold Martin’s analysis in Perspectives 32, “like television, and with television, the curtain wall unfolded the apparent closure of...”
directly involved the city in an extended exposé on “living within truth.”44 The rebellion was inspired by the state’s attempt to fix the outcome of municipal government elections throughout Yugoslavia. Several official attempts at recounting the votes, at repealing the process, unquestionably revealed this effort to hijack the elections. In dissident parlance, “living within truth” has a deep and binding meaning, which, among other things, encompasses an awareness about a government willing to steal votes. The notion of truth here is of a different kind. This is defined in opposition to a diagnosis of a society living within a lie, of an automatism spread throughout the ordinary people, whose acts maintain the appearance of the Communist system, despite their knowing it is all a hollow facade, a slogan, 45 The moment that the legal truth, the most practical meaning of truth, seemed to be under attack, people claimed their streets simultaneously in several Serbian cities. On November 21, 1969, the first day of the protest in Belgrade, no one anticipated spending the entire winter on the streets. As protesters began “vandalising” the organs of government-controlled information—the radio and TV stations and the daily-news headquarters—the regime found ways to block the few independent radio stations from the airwaves. Once Radio B 92 began transmitting static into their homes, protesters simply walked to the station.46

The news was now “broadcast” from the radio station’s windows directly onto the streets, as well as live on the Web.47

The four-month-long protest’s spatial tactics have to be understood in conjunction with its spectacular nature. The protest itself was a disembodied system of day-to-day life in Serbia was the motor of the protest, a generator that sustained it for as long as it lasted. Various Serbian writers have seen the protesting tactics of the Belgrade 1969–1997 winter as carnivallc, and not without reason.48 Whether we speak of large parading puppets, thrown eggs, deafening citywide noise, performances in front of a police cordon, the “decriminalisation” of parliament, or waiting outside during the red crossing lights and occupying the street on mass during the green, every concrete micro-event of the protest was a spectacular subversion of power.

Although the stakes were somberly high, the protesters’ hopes and techniques were suspended between the sincerely and zeal of May 1968 in Paris and the somewhat insidious politics of carnival. The students and citizens of Serbia were laughing at the regime and, at times, at themselves and their absurd lives. Situated between recent Eastern European protests and organic carnivals, between the world media and the masses themselves, this protest was played out both by the current status of politics and media in the world and by the flickering confidence of its participants. It was simultaneously buffeting future defacements and it definitively marking a moment of crisis, temporarily suspending (and thus opposing and exposing) the regime’s pretense of immutability.

Protest is by definition a representational form.49 Every “action,” as the protesters called their daily activities, arose in direct response to a comment made on the news, thus linking, in a chain of iron reflection, the government media and the citizens’ and students’ response. The rigid, predictable official media, with their old rhetoric, were ridiculed on a daily basis. Their most graceful attempts at “airbrushing away” the importance of the protest proved to be those that completely ignored the daily events. Whereas the archival capacity of television-news cameras had produced terror before, when the identification of protesters could be enough to keep them off the streets, the use of cameras by the protesters was now making the protest public. Yearning to see their effect on media, people recorded foreign news (from Canal +, Rai Uno, CNN) and circulated the VHS tapes. Their appearance on TV screens around the world was taken as proof that they were involved in an event of historical importance.

Day by day, the four months of the Belgrade protests added up to a more unified and more self-conscious movement. The students gathered every day at the same time, equipped with whistles, placards, humor, and energy, picking their route in response to the government actions and statements in the media the day before. At three o’clock the working citizens gathered as well, sometimes joining the students, other times performing their own simultaneous protest march. There was no exact or premeditated plan for the daily “walks” of the student and citizen protesters. Perhaps having absorbed the intelligence of protests in the early 1990s, the protesting crowd moved from one symbolic political location to another. As the media route was established (including a walk past the official radio and TV stations and a cheering visit to the headquarters of radio B92), the protesting crowd moved on to “cover” Belgrade with its presence. Passing through small neighborhoods with winding narrow streets sometimes took hours.

On December 24, a pro-Milošević counterprotest was scheduled to take place in the heart of the territory claimed by the citizens and students. Each of the regime’s supporters arrived with the same picture of Milošević and with a series of slogans that unmistakably invoked Cold War attitudes. Knowing that if they lost their cool in this situation they would most certainly be defeated and the protest would be over, the student and citizen protesters avoided conflict at all cost. There were three crowds on the square that day: those who protested in order to save their legal political rights and their dignity as citizens; those who were sent to protest against the first group; and the regime’s militia, eager to make order out of chaos. It was a terrifying moment for those whose bodies constituted the protesting crowds. After the counter-meeting the government saw “walks,” not for the sake of violence but for the sake of traffic management. A police cordon was installed, blocking the passage of protesters and producing an opportunity for a singular response. It had to be imagined another government movement that could have more effectively placed its own power on display. Subjected to the scrutiny of protesters, the armed forces once again found themselves suddenly involved in an unexpected battle.

1 Twaalik – the long bar buildings of Black 28 – face a major highway from which they read as a flicker animation. Based on M. Glogovia’s 1966 urban plan and I. Amazorov’s architectural abiotic, Black 28 was realized between 1988 and 1972. These facades were managed to maintain a certain: Heaviness. Partly due to this the workers which unattached “television set” Gunnies gave way to deeper balconies, individual “improvements” on this building read as vibrant and intriguing additions.

44. The concept of “living within truth” and “living within a lie” are explored in depth in Ionescu’s “Power of the Faint.” To explain the concept of living within a lie, and thus also the possibility of living within truth, one must juxtapose the fascist or the Marxist shopkeeper who goes along with the regime’s expectations to place a petty slogan on his window, thus furthering the regime’s magic while everyone involved knows that the ideological meaning of the slogan provides only an excuse of stability and that by placing the slogan on his window the shopkeeper participates in the pretense that no one is pretending. Marxists certainly are quite rational given the situation, hence pretense turns out to be the pervasive mood of living.

45. The Belgrade protesters referred to their activity as “walks,” surely because they were constantly in motion but also because the regime reported about the protest in terse terms: “a handful of walkers gathered, etc.” Even the title of a collection of essays published immediately after the protest reflects the importance of walking: see Bora Jovanović, Walking on the Spot: Civil Protest in Serbia, November 7, 1990–March 20, 1997 (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1997).

46. From: Jovanović, Walking on the Spot.

47. For questions about the role of photography to those about the aesthetic value of the street performance, a whole series of essays in Walking on the Spot deal with the spectatorial and carnivals of the 1990–1997 winter. More recently a special issue of Reporter, subtitled “Serbia on the Screen,” published in April 2000, recapitulating the past decade of Milošević’s rule and photography as it dealt with the centennial nature of the 1990–1997 protest as a genre. In the meantime, the paper Reporter, subtitled “The Voice of Clinging: Sad, Tenderness Against the Terror of Fear, Hate, and Violence,” published a number of articles on the 1990–1997 protest that proposed interpretations of the carnivallc, humorous, and sometimes horrific aspects of this event and its political importance. See in particular: Reporter, July 31, 1998.

48. Protest is always addressed to someone: it is a manifestation of an attitude. It can be understood as an representational form not only a carnivall that provokes violent reactions in the regime, but also as a representational form in which it works on realities and on Derrida’s psychiatricault and philosophical work. Protest is a medium of analysis of the human relations experienced during the conflict, and of the understanding of its social and political consequences. See Mijail Bakul, Boklau and its World (Boston: Indiana University Press, 1981) and Problems of Derridavics of Praxis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

49. As the Czech students* threat, and eventually failed, and as the Belgrade protests learned by trial and error, even expressions of disagreement with the regime were, in most instances, ineffective, despite generalized self-criticism of their triumph. Thus an important characteristic of the revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe and of the Belgrade 1990–1997 protest wave their softness, their nonviolence.
bodies of the line were mutely witnessing the degradation of their own power and of the power they represented. A costumed ball of uniformed protesters combated the official seriousness of the cordon: mirrors were placed in front of them, girls offered their kisses, and performances were held in the street space contained by the cordon. The confrontation of the rigid on one side and the mobile, soft, and amorphous on the other was made apparent.

“The ideological-totalitarian class in power is the power of a world turned on its head: the stronger the class, the more powerful it proclaims that it does not exist, and its strength serves first and foremost to assert its nonexistence.” Perhaps no other statement better captures what exactly became visible during the Belgrade protest than this aphoristic line from Derrida. Although there was little actual discourse on how the protest would contribute to the production of a (even embryonic) public sphere, the scenarios proposed by the Czech dissidents applied. Their own strategy—parallel pols, marked the moment when the rift between reality and its spectaculized representation by the Communist regime threatened to grow unbearably large. There was a frozen image of the public sphere on one side, and parallel to it, the dissidents thought, a vibrant, busy, participatory public forum could rise.

The Belgrade protests never referred to the concept of parallel pols, but the four months on the streets amounted to a crash course in constructing a public sphere. The production of a parallel public during the Belgrade protest was twofold. It involved a phenomenal aspect of belonging to a massive intelligence made up of human bodies. Elisa Canetti famously said in his work on crowds: “All demands for justice and all theories of equality ultimately derive their energy from the actual experience of equality familiar to anyone who has been part of a crowd.” On the other hand, in order to turn the city into an arena for sustained discussion, the protesting public relied on symbolic communication, on methods properly understood as discursive. They say that people took all kinds of flags to the streets, from Formula One flags, to soccer team flags, to U.S. flags. The flags on their signs addressed Milošević, but also the foreign media, the police, and the masses themselves. They said that at least one of these boards spelled “I Love Ivana.” Of its utterance, of strictly personal content, was instrumentalized—through its publicity as a possible general symbol of protest. The protest’s slogans, the words yelled out in chorus, and the “actions” were all carriers of fragile, temporary, and constantly shifting meaning. When shared in public, their transformational agility strikingly exposed the rigid fortress of the regime’s ideological language.

**Process and event: temporal strategies of the visible**

The expressions of life in the housing blocks and the protesting masses participated in the production and mediation of knowledge just as zealously as did their original state-representation counterparts (housing estates and parades). The anti-subpoena was performed through a reversal of the temporal logic of the regime’s representational strategies. The temporal pattern of things surfacing into visibility and the reassuring schedule of parades and Spartakads—whose yearly repetition was accumulating into an unshakable image of reality—were superseded by a different type of mass gathering, a singular event: an uprising, a protest. With time, the static, synchronic totality of housing estates transformed into many fragmented, changing, and accumulative stories. Its symbolic totality dispersed both spatially and temporally.

The specific type of temporality of the two strategies of mass communication—reanimation of street and facade surfaces—could be described by Michel Foucault’s distinction between two types of formulations in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, one of his most intensely programmatic texts. In a section on the original and the regular he formulated the rules of two modalities of discourse, both constituting the history of ideas but each with an entirely different temporal strategy. In other words, Foucault believed that we could distinguish highly valued, rare, and creative formulations from formulations that are ordinary, everyday, and in a way not responsible for themselves. Whereas the first category of phenomena characteristically produces ruptures, the second group is involved in sedimentation, a slow accumulation of the past.

Even if it is possible to understand a protest or an uprising as an event that repeats in history with more or less similar formal characteristics, we have to think of it primarily as a rupture, as a time-out, by definition. Even if it does not displace the current system, it disrupts the everyday function of a city. Life in the housing districts of Eastern Europe falls within Foucault’s definition of the everyday, not premeditated by those who participate in it and not meant to signify something from the outset. Although neither the event of protest nor the housing stock could be said to properly constitute a discourse on its own, I argue that they can both be “read” as what Siegfried Kracauer called “surface expressions of an era.” Insofar as they both ultimately contribute to the possibility of a new articulation of a public sphere, there is a provisional link between the two temporal modalities of indexing historical processes: one is a slow and accumulative process that almost writes itself onto the facades of housing blocks, through the sedimentation of evidence of life; the other an event that literally places the masses on the historical stage.

**Flares and flickers**

The “noise” about the protest managed to circulate around the world. Some things changed in Serbia, but most things stayed the same for a while or, in many cases, got worse. The opposition got its victory back through a legal concession that Milošević called a victory; a face of the people: a face of the people, a legal victory that refused to admit the victory of the opposition and instead represented a compromise on everyone’s part. The opposition was not yet mature enough to handle its victory, and before long the participants themselves saw the 1996–1997 protest in a lyrical light. But
their extraordinary experience was not worthless. It was the first formal formulation of demands for democracy and as such the largest step made toward the possibility of a parallel discourse. If it were not for the 1996–1997 protest, the protest in October 2000 would never have been possible. The city's design for containing the masses enabled the crowd to produce physical pressure. But if we believe that every instance of exposing the real conditions of life in the Communist system made protesting possible, then the housing blocks that surround the center, representing life "as it is" to their inhabitants, are at least as important as the squares on which the masses gathered. In a certain way, both protesting and housing produce a sense of belonging to an intelligence larger than any single unit, a sense of citizenship, without which it would be impossible to act politically.

A year after the Hungarian uprising of 1956, Helnath Aradni spoke of the flaming light of that revolution as an expression of freedom, specifically the freedom that resides in the human capacity for action. It was already obvious to Aradni that not every subsequent light would shine as bright as 1956; in fact, she admitted that even 1956 flamed and flickered. The unsteadiness of the Hungarian light for freedom, however, did not diminish its importance. A protest fails only if it goes unnoticed and unacknowledged. But if in some way it seems through the mechanisms of rigid and soft subversion and enters the consciousness of a city and a people, then it has succeeded. Action in the sense that Aradni meant it, political action, requires an effort, even a risk, and can be conceived only within a particular historical context. The uprising of 1956 in Hungary and of 1987 in Poland, the Prague Spring of 1968, the Solidarity outbursts in 1980, the events of 1989, and the Belgrade process (starting in 1981 and culminating in 2000) encouraged a fundamental reconsideration of the political. The dissidents repeatedly claimed the insignificance of any particular political orientation and of institutionalized politics in general and concentrated on human dignity, the practice of freedom, and consensus as the most political concerns of all. The antagonists they practiced and advocated was revolutionary, a type of oppositional attitude, without a formal political program, but rather with an ethical program, and with methods for creating a public sphere parallel to the governmental organs for distribution and control of information.

In Belgrade in the late 1990s the cultural marginality of the expressions of life in the housing blocks and the lack of a coherent discourse about the protest (at the time of the events) ensured that these phenomena maintained an unmediated relationship to the conditions from which they emerged. The images produced by everyday life, simply left to themselves, and the more willful articulations of mass resistance reordered the logic of the regime's representational strategies, ensuring that the surface of appearances in the late 1990s would have a significant political function. Once it was possible to see the logic of localidized representation on the massive scale of Milošević's media, one could begin deciphering the era and, eventually, everyone's participation in it.
Kobo Abe was born in Tokyo in 1924 and grew up in Manchuria. He received a medical degree from Kyushu University in 1950, but began his career as a novelist and playwright instead. His works include the novels "The Woman in the Dunes" (1956), "The Plague Manual" (1961), and "The Rehabilitation" (1973). His work has been translated into many languages and has received numerous awards.

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