

agenda



agenda

6/11

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introduction

Three thematic sections of this edition deal with three important fields: economy, law and politics, and set the issues of environmental protection and sustainability as their context. In the first one, Igor Matutinović analyses how the current crisis manifests itself not only on the economic level, but also on the environmental and societal one, affecting issues of sustainable development, rather than just its quantitative aspect – growth. Zoltan Pogatsa analyses how the world-dominant type of capitalism spread to post-communist countries and what are the consequences of the crucial impact of neo-liberal policies. The second part of this comprehensive text will be published in the next edition of *agenda*.

We observe the legal issues of environmental protection in the European context. Lana Ofak writes about one part of the 'climate-energy package' of the European Union, related to geological storage of carbon dioxide, and presents the problems of its application and the related energy controversy. Lovel Petrović considers how the European Court of Human Rights protects the right to a healthy environment: he shows how the Court interprets the European Convention and the Aarhus Convention creatively in order to create the legal basis for such protection. This edition brings the first part of the text, dealing with legal norms, and the next edition will bring part two, on their application in the case law of the Court.

The third part is dedicated to political action of the greens, with three texts based on presentations at the international conference entitled 'EU 2014 – Prospects and Challenges for Green Parties and Movements in Central and Eastern Europe', organised by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Prague on 28 and 29 October 2011. These texts consider the problems of establishment and work of green parties, and the independent essay by Zoran Oštrić considers issues of societal mobilisation through the vantage point of recent examples of movements in Croatia.

And last but not least, the final part brings contributions by Miodrag Škundrić and Zoran Oštrić, presenting problems of environmental protection in specific aspects and surroundings: different types of industrial pollution in and around the town of Pančevo, Serbia, as well as waters and water flows in Croatia.

As of this issue, the English edition of *agenda* presents only a selection of content of the original version.

a conglomerate of social, economic and ecological crises

dr.sc. Igor Matutinović*

As politicians fear “ambitious political programmes”, consumers reduce their “green consumption”, and business cuts costs, new warnings by scientist indicating the unsustainability of the current development pattern go unnoticed in public discourse.

The world is pressed by problems piling up and interlinking, thus making it difficult to find individual, isolated solutions. Such problems include the growing population in the South, accompanied by growing poverty and malnutrition, the threat of climate change, loss of biodiversity, degradation of global eco-systems, loss of tropical rainforests, impending energy crisis, political instability and international terrorism as global phenomena. In addition to these fundamental long-term problems, there are the quasi-cyclical ones, such as recessions and debt crises. The problem of sustainability is thus always manifested in three mutually connected spheres: ecology, economy and society.

A quick yet incomplete insight into the complex links between economic, socio-political and ecological problems is provided by the example of the current economic and debt crisis of the developed countries of the West. Prior to the onset of the 2008 financial crisis, the price of oil reached almost 150 USD per barrel. In the developed countries, this high price of fuel stimulated a change in the patterns of conduct of the consumers, in terms of reducing their mileage, switching to energy-efficient cars and greater use of public transport in urban areas. Under the guise of the relatively high prices of oil from 2005 to 2008, which also led to higher prices of the other two key fossil fuels – natural gas and coal – renewable energy sources, primarily wind and sun, boomed. This boom was aided by the expectations of both the producers and the investors, that the leading economies of the world, also the leading producers of CO₂, world agree on the measures to reduce the emissions and offer a long-term renewable energy production incentives for producers and consumers.

With the onset of global recession in the summer of 2008, social actors' priorities changed overnight: the more aware consumers moved away from “green consumption” to the more acceptably priced products, irrespective of their environmental impact; companies focused on cutting costs to survive the crisis; politicians directed their attention towards bosting economic growth and employment, missing an opportunity to do it through “green recovery”, often mentioned at the onset of the crisis¹.

This focus on conventional economic recovery resulted, among other things, in the failure to reach any specific and binding agreement on measures to reduce CO₂ emissions in Copenhagen in December 2009. At the Cancun conference the following year, a political agreement was reached that the developed countries as well as the developing ones need to reduce their CO₂ emissions, and that the developed countries would assist the underdeveloped ones financially – but nothing more than that. At that, there was a constant fear that an ambitious climate policy could jeopardise economic growth².

While politicians fear “ambitious political programmes”, consumers reduce their “green consumption”, and the business world cuts costs, new warnings by the scientific community indicating the unsustainability of the current growth and development pattern go unnoticed in the public discourse. For example, a group of scientists³ analysed the conditions of stability that had allowed the humans to develop in terms of civilisation and population over the past 10,000 years. Thanks to its high reliance on fossil fuels and industrial agriculture, the current human activity threatens systemically its own stability. According to this study, mankind has already broken the boundaries of the nitrogen cycle, species disappearance and climate change, and it is close to breaking the boundaries of ocean acidity, phosphorus cycle, soil reassignment and global utilisation of fresh water. Tackling these complex problems with the time for its successful solutions running out at an unknown rate demands both the attention and the resources of a society. Moreover, the study confirms earlier ones that pointed to the same problems, such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment⁴ and others, demonstrating without any doubt that with recession or without it, the world is eroding the biophysical foundations of its own civilisation and its own survival.

crises sacrifice green programmes

However, politicians are far more focused on the problems of monetary nature, conceptually separate from biophysical problems of the real world, indicted by the above-cited studies. Following the initial sudden drop, the price of barrel grew gradually since 2009 and reached more than 100 USD per barrel in early 2011; this was caused primarily by global demand, but also by political instability in the Middle East. The growing of oil prices led to the growth of the price of energy in general, triggering a rise in transport and food prices, so that inflation grew all over the world. This led central banks in the EU and China to raise their interest rates and stop the monetary stimulation of economies, leading to a short-term negative impact on the overall economic recovery in the world.

At the same time, the debt crises in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain struck the European Union with all its might, leading to a new threat of global collapse of the financial system. The debt crisis brought the focus to budget deficits, which had grown during state interventions following the recession, and political demands appeared to prioritise fiscal austerity as opposed to stimulated economic growth. Some of the first to suffer were state incentives to solar energy producers in certain EU countries, such as the UK, Italy and Germany. Justified fear appeared in the US that the incentives of 2011 would never appear in the same form and scope⁵. This does not mean that politicians are focused on cutting key budget items – these incentives are rather insignificant in the overall fiscal context. Incentives for wind and solar energy producers (including households with privileged “feed-in” tariffs) were among the first to suffer these blows, since they were probably of the least importance in the minds of the decision-makers.

² de Boer, Yvo 2010. Copenhagen shows we need caution in Cancun. *Nature* Vol 468: 477.

³ Rockström, J., W. Steffen, K. Noone, A. Persson, F. S. Chapin, III, E. Lambin, T. M. Lenton, M. Scheffer, C. Folke, H. Schellnhuber, B. Nykvist, C. A. De Wit, T. Hughes, S. van der Leeuw, H. Rodhe, S. Sörlin, P.K. Snyder, R. Costanza, U. Svedin, M. Falkenmark, L. Karlberg, R. W. Corell, V. J. Fabry, J. Hansen, B. Walker, D. Liverman, K. Richardson, P. Crutzen, and J. Foley. 2009. Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity. *Ecology and Society* 14(2): 32. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art32/>

⁴ Schaffer, M., Carpenter, S., Foley, J., Folke, C. and Walker, B. 2001. Catastrophic Shifts in Ecosystems. *Nature* 413:591-596. For Millennium Ecosystem Assessment see also: <http://www.maweb.org/en/index.aspx>

⁵ CNN Money 2010. Wind energy, solar power face cloudy future. http://money.cnn.com/2010/11/18/news/economy/renewable_energy_tax_credit/index.htm

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¹ Matutinović, Igor. 2009. New Green Deal - A turn towards “green” economy? *Agenda* - magazine of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung for South-Eastern Europe, no 2/2009. It should be noted that despite this fact, the the US increased the total renewable energy production incentives in 2010 as compared to 2007. Source: US Energy Information Administration, 2011. Direct Federal Financial Interventions and Subsidies in Energy in Fiscal Year 2010. <http://www.eia.gov/analysis/requests/subsidy/>
Matutinović, Igor. 2009. Državni intervencionizam u doba krize: kako do održive ravnoteže ekonomskih i ekoloških zahtjeva? Heinrich Böll Foundation, Zagreb <http://www.boell.hr/web/19.html>

At that, they lost sight of the context of those decisions, ignoring numerous studies indicating that the oil production was reaching the so-called Hubbert peak⁶ and that a similar process was happening in coal extraction, believed until recently to provide stock for several centuries⁷. Promises of CO₂ reduction in energy consumption were also forgotten. Seen in a wider context, this reduction in state incentives for wind and solar energy production is significant in the sense that it illustrates most directly how seriously the climate change related problems and a reduction in fossil fuel dependency are treated. Not to create the wrong impression that this was a radically "green" view of reality, the recently published International Energy Agency's 2011 report indicates that if green energy production is not intensified by 2017, it will be impossible to satisfy the energy demand and to maintain the rise of global temperature at the rate of 2°C⁸.

Among the first to suffer were state incentives for solar and wind energy production. This does not mean that politicians focused on reducing major budget items – such incentives were almost insignificant in the overall fiscal context. They were among the first to be hit, since in the minds of the decision-makers, they were at the bottom of the list of priorities.



Leading international press carried this message in very clear terms, and the ball is now in the court of political thinking and action⁹. In the meantime, the world solar panel industry faced a crisis caused by the disproportion between production capacities, which had grown over the past few years, and the demand, which was considerably lower than expected¹⁰.

This considerable loss of demand can be assigned to the absence of the anticipated climate policy and consequently the absence of new investments and incentives for the solar industry, clearly not to be expected following the unsuccessful event in Copenhagen.

To make matters worse, the financial crisis that started at Wall Street revealed certain pathological deviations in the Anglo-American variety of capitalism, related to professional ethics, social responsibility and distribution of revenues¹¹. First, the public was rightly irritated by unjustifiably high income and bonuses taken by investment bankers and stockbrokers, paid even as the state intervened to save banks from their own bad business. This income, entirely disproportionate to the actual work and results, is not necessarily the intrinsic result of capitalism as such, but rather the result of: (1) consistent US policy of the past twenty years, clearly favouring the richest layers of society, and (2) the relatively new phenomenon of power of professional management in income distribution (de facto detrimental to capital operation and capital owners).

In principle, the problem of inequality in income distribution has been successfully resolved in Scandinavian countries, whereas in the US the richest capital owners such as Warren Buffet and Bill Gates continue to support the democrats' proposal to increase taxation rates for the richest. At the same time, in the EU, Germany is trying to win political support for the introduction of the so-called Tobin tax for futures trading, as it would introduce greater stability into the system and collect at the same time considerable amounts for the state budget, to be spent for socially useful purposes – such as solar and wind energy production and investment in upgrading electricity transmission infrastructure. These are all problems with well-known solutions and a small amount of good will would allow for their implementation within the capitalist system.

However, protests raise the question of social acceptability of capitalism, at the time when unemployment rates in most of the developed countries remain high and recovery seems unstable. Financial hardship brought by recession left a visible mark in the political minds of European population: according to a recent EBRD study, market economy is supported by less than 50% of the population in 21 out of 28 countries in transition, and similar results came out of Italy, France and Germany¹². If democratic systems fail to respond timely and successfully to the challenges of a more fair distribution of revenues and faster economic recovery, the situation could be used by – and this did happen in Germany and Italy during the 1930's Great Depression – populist right-wing movements that could take the Western civilisation towards a new and far more difficult crisis¹³.

In such a tense and unstable political atmosphere, long term problems related to climate change, broken nitrogen boundaries and loss of biodiversity, pale not only in the eyes of politics, but also in the eyes of the general public. And here we return to the beginning – the three spheres: ecology, economy and society – and their systemic links do not allow partial approaches to solutions, with every short-term deterioration of conditions in the societal and the economic sphere diminish our political readiness to deal with ecological problems, whose effects reflect on a wider time-scale and do not necessarily affect the current generation of decision-makers. Perhaps this ability of our species to deal with complex global problems of our time is best reflected in the recent article by a Nature contributor, who noted that "it is clear that at the onset of the 21st century, mankind is much better in managing violent conflicts than in managing the planet. Whatever the case may be, the budget of the US Ministry of Defence is 100 times greater than the budget of the National Science Endowment"¹⁴. Do we need to say anything else...?

⁶ For an overview of sources and details see: Matutinović, I. 2009. Oil and the Political Economy of Energy. *Energy Policy* 37, 4251–4258.

⁷ Tadeusz W. Patzek and Gregory D. Croft. A global coal production forecast with multi-Hubbert cycle analysis. *Energy* 35 (2010) 3109-3122.

Heinberg, R. And Friedley, D. The end of cheap coal. *Nature*, 2010, November, Vol. 468: 367-369

⁸ IEA 2011. World Energy Outlook: Executive Summary. http://www.iea.org/weo/docs/weo2011/executive_summary.pdf

⁹ Energy watchdog warns on climate risk. *Financial Times*, Nov 9, 2011.

¹⁰ The total annual solar panel production capacity is estimated at 30GW, and the demand at just 18GW. Not all is negative though: unfavourable market conditions have forced producers to reduce their prices, reaching the level (approx. 3\$/w) that may, according to some estimates, lead to an exponential growth in demand.

Source: Falling prices risk putting solar producers in the shade. *Financial Times*, Nov 9, 2011.

¹¹ To be totally honest, investors are not blameless in the burst of the financial balloon – large and small, private and public, who bought derivatives whose nature they did not understand, and whose nominal interest rate was attractive enough to prevent any questions as to "how the money would actually be earned".

¹² EBRD 2011. Life in Transition: After the crisis. www.ebrd.com/downloads/research/surveys/LITS2e_web.pdf

¹³ Let us recall that following numerous painful socio-economic experiments of the early 20th century, there is today no viable alternative to capitalism. However, there are different forms of capitalism and an empirically founded understanding that it is a flexible system capable of additional reforms if needed.

¹⁴ Editorials 2011. Spoils of war. *Nature* Vol. 476:371.

eastern europe after communism and neoliberalism (1)

Zoltan Pogátsa*

It almost immediately became obvious that these countries would opt for the Western alternative of capitalism rather than any third way or mixed economy solutions. It took somewhat longer to emerge that it would be the most neoliberal version of the capitalist system that would prevail. The readily available Anglo-Saxon books portrayed the logic of capitalism as being universal, regardless of time and place.

The fall of the Soviet Bloc was a historical milestone in the history of humankind. It brought a seeming end to a cycle of ideology that started with Karl Marx and Socialism, itself an element of the wider process of European Enlightenment.

But the fall of communism also had a much more immediate effect as well. It ended the ideological rivalry of the Cold War with the apparent victory of Western capitalism. As far as theory is concerned, the collapse of the Soviet system seemingly vindicated the so-called Austrian School economists von Mises and Hayek, who had claimed that it was an unviable system. In practice it left neoliberal capitalism as the only economic system left standing, without alternatives. (In this simple but generally accepted reading both capitalism and communism were assumed to be homogeneous systems.) Western capitalism in this crucial period was led by neoliberal leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. They were seen on television and on the front pages of newspapers across the world almost like war generals accepting capitulation from Mikhail Gorbachev. As a consequence, symbolically the fall of the Eastern Bloc gave a great boost to the victorious wave of neoliberal hegemony.

The disappearance of the alternative had deep repercussions all over the world. First and foremost, as many observers have emphasized, it eliminated the pressure on the developed capitalist states to seek the support of their lower classes through the financing of the welfare states. Without the need to win them over from opting for a rival system, the way was now open to dismantle this civilisational achievement. Secondly, the failure of the Communist version of the left also brought with it a crisis of Social Democracy. No matter how great the differences really were, the ideological wave that swept over the West convinced voters that it was now permanently proven that the state was inefficient when it tried to play a role in the economy – in any economy, whatever form, whatever culture.

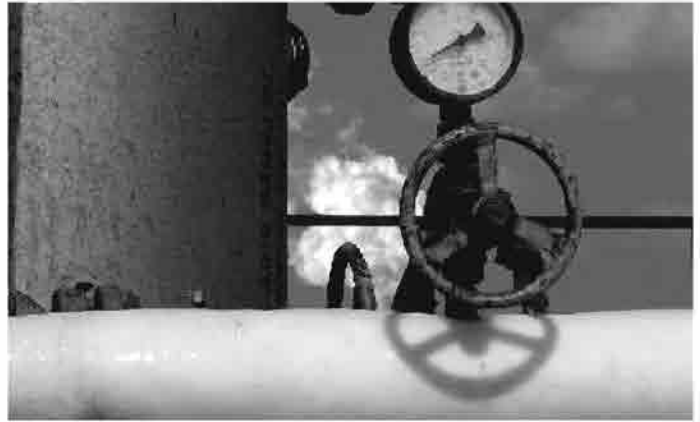
It is also extremely important to understand what happened in the former Second World (the former Socialist Bloc, inbetween the developed, capitalist First World, and the underdeveloped Third World, now called "emerging markets") after the end of the Cold War. It almost immediately became obvious that these countries would opt for the Western alternative of capitalism rather than any third way or mixed economy solutions, which had been proposed by figures such as Gorbachev, soon no more than an overthrown ex-politician. It took somewhat longer to emerge that it would be the most neoliberal version of the capitalist system that would prevail. It is important to emphasise that in the Soviet Bloc¹ domestic actors, even the most educated ones, had very little understanding between the different



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¹ Former Yugoslav republics such as Slovenia and Croatia were different in this respect from the former Eastern Bloc, and will be discussed separately.

versions of the capitalist system. No bourgeois economics books had been available during the communist period, and the ones which were imported later were readily available Anglo-Saxon books that portrayed the logic of capitalism as being universal, regardless of time and place. Naturally, former dissidents were most hungry for works that criticised the planned economy. No wonder that the works of the Austrian school were highly popular, much more so than any alternatives describing the German Sozialmarktwirtschaft, the Scandinavian welfare state, French dirigisme, or the Korean development state. Even on the international stage, the latter were much less processed intellectually, and mostly accessible only in German, Swedish, French or Korean. These states were also much less active than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts in promoting their alternative models in the former Eastern Bloc. Very few Eastern citizens had had firsthand experience of capitalism as an everyday system, thus practical knowledge, urgently needed in their collapsed economies, came to them mostly from foreign advisors. It is no wonder, for instance, that the man who was later in charge of privatising the Russian economy, Anatoly Chubais, claimed to have had two decisive influences on his thinking in political economyⁱ. One was Hayek, whose works had been smuggled into the Saint Petersburg economics institute where he had worked as a junior researcher. The other one was the Hungarian professor János Kornai of Harvard, a widely read critic of the state socialist system, whom Chubais met in Budapest when the Soviet authorities denied him a scholarship to Sweden and decided to send him instead to a 'friendly socialist state'. It is also well known that the Universities of Chicago and Harvard sent prominent pro-market academics to advise the Polish and Russian leadership, of whom Jeffrey Sachs is only the most well known and most often mentioned.



The outcome of the scheme was the direct opposite of what the privatisers expected. Since the vouchers were transferable, they were quickly offered for sale all around Russia. Citizens were only too eager to get rid of them on the open market in exchange for some cash. As a consequence they were quickly hoarded by the 'entrepreneurial' few who had already figured out by then how to concentrate gigantic amounts of capital through taking advantage of the ambiguous social relations of economic and political transition. In contrast to popular belief, these people hardly ever came from the top layers of the Communist Party (most in the party leadership were too old anyway). What connected these future oligarchs at the beginning of the nineties was more a lack of moral scruples and connections to institutions of the state. The latter was important as in a society where corporate entities had been absent and accumulation of private wealth prohibited, the state provided the only source of capital for primary investmentⁱⁱⁱ. It was from city councils, the Komsomol, the Party, or state run firms that one could extract enough starting capital through creative and semi legal ways in order to take part in hoarding up privatisation vouchers in newly created funds.

Vouchers were distributed to each and every adult citizen, who were expected to be shocked into becoming entrepreneurs through challenging them with the choice of having to invest their coupons. This was a neoliberal fantasy. Since the vouchers were transferable, citizens were only too eager to get rid of them on the open market in exchange for some cash. As a consequence, they were quickly hoarded by the 'entrepreneurial' few—the future 'oligarchs'.

The first wave of auction based privatisation produced the rather small group of billionaires who emerged as owners of Russian industry. The Kremlin was surprised to find that these private individuals had so much wealth that they could exert substantial political control. As a consequence they came to be called 'oligarchs' in common parlance. The end of Yeltsin's first term passed without the totality of Russian economy having been privatised. There were still substantial treasures left, especially in the oil and raw materials sectors. Yeltsin, however, was frail and highly unpopular. Tens of thousands of public servants had not been paid for more than a year, and not surprisingly the Communists looked to make a comeback in the upcoming elections. Yeltsin strongly preferred not even running in the elections.

Chubais was only in his mid thirties when he was put in charge of privatisation in Yegor Gaidar's government under President Boris Yeltsin. As David Hoffmann documentsⁱⁱ, Chubais had already spent a lot of time contemplating how the world's largest economy in terms of territory could possibly be privatised. It was a daunting task. In addition, the 'democrats', supported by the West, were under time pressure. They had the task of privatising the Russian economy as soon as possible in order to eject the so-called 'red barons' from the leadership of large industrial conglomerates. This was the only way of preventing the return of the Communists, who were bound to regain their popularity as the opposition to Yeltsin in the Duma. With the old communist industrial managers in charge and firms unprivatised, preventing a return to Communism was a matter of political urgency in Moscow. Only once the majority of the economy was privatised would it be practically impossible to turn back the hands of time.

To avoid a disaster, an emergency meeting was called by Yeltsin's daughter, Tatyana. At the meeting the oligarchs promised to lend the Kremlin enough money^{iv} to pay the public servants and to finance Yeltsin's campaign. This money would then be repaid to them after the elections. Were the Kremlin unable to repay the loan – and basically everyone present strongly suspected this would be the case – they accepted as collateral the oil and nickel firms that were about to be privatised. Helped by Western governments and media, as well as the oligarchs, Yeltsin bounced back and eventually won the elections. The oligarchs, as expected, ended up being owners of an even larger pool of wealth than what they had secured themselves during the first round of privatisation at the beginning of the nineties.

The method chosen by Chubais and his team was coupon based privatisation through popular auctions. They envisaged an outcome similar to Margaret Thatcher's idea of popular capitalism, whereby a very large number of citizens would become owners. Vouchers were distributed to each and every adult citizen, who were expected to be shocked into becoming entrepreneurs through challenging them with the choice of having to invest their coupons. This was a neoliberal fantasy about people following their instincts and common sense, acting like rational economic beings and thereby constituting a market. In reality Russians were unprepared for this new era. For generations they had been warned about shares, earnings from investments, corporations and capitalism in general. Given the notorious lack of transparency, making an informed choice about putting money into former socialist firms was a challenge even beyond the capacities of the most experienced Western investment funds, not to speak of inexperienced and untrained Russians who were just taking the first timid breath of free air after a century of terror.

Within a few years, Russia had gone from being the world's communist superpower to a highly polarised 'capitalist' economy where little more than a dozen oligarchs owned the entire economy, whereas two hundred million others remained desperately poor. The world's most ambitious privatisation programme led to what is most likely to have been the greatest robbery in history. As Joseph Stiglitz pointed out, the lack of sequencing in an institutional transformation and providing time for gradual learning lead to an unequal social structure that surpasses many Third World countries.

(the second part will be published in the next issue)

ⁱ (Hoffmann, 2003, pp. 78-100)

ⁱⁱ (Hoffmann, 2003)

ⁱⁱⁱ (Solnick, 1998)

^{iv} (Freeland, 2000) (Hoffmann, 2003)

the greens and political action

the Green Party in the Czech Republic: where they are now

Ondřej Císař *

Similarly to other post-Communist countries, there is no available social base of post-materialistically oriented voters, whom the Party could rely on in parliamentary elections. The Greens were supported by right-of-centre oriented voters not identifying primarily with the Greens, but searching for culturally liberal, non-socialist, and pro-European political party.

While the Green Party entered the Chamber of Deputies and subsequently the right-wing coalition government in 2006, it did not manage to repeat its success in the next 2010 elections. In 2006 it was for the first time that the Green Party managed independently to have its deputies and even ministers. However, the success was short-lived. Why? And is there any future for the Green Party in the Czech Republic anyway?

political field

Similarly to other post-Communist countries, there is no available social base of post-materialistically oriented voters, whom the Party could rely on in parliamentary elections. (It is much more successful on the local level, where the partisanship does not play such a big role, though.) The Green success of 2006 was due to the "newness" of the Party on the political market. Specifically, two main factors worked together for the Green success. First, although it existed since the beginning of the 1990s, there was an internal reform within the Party in the period preceding the elections. Activists from green social movement organizations and NGOs took over the virtually defunct party in 2002. After internal fights, this reform brought to the party leadership new and publicly attractive people, most notably the party leader – by now gone Martin Bursík.

Second, there is a tradition in Czech politics of searching for the so-called "liberal middle" embodied in each election by a newly established (or reformed) party project. In 2006 it was the green time. The Greens were supported by right-of-centre oriented voters not identifying primarily with the Greens, but searching for culturally liberal, non-socialist, and pro-European political party. If the biggest right-wing party, the Civic Democratic Party (CDP), presented such a program, they would have voted for it. Economically, the Green voters were compatible with CDP's program; however, they did not endorse its social conservatism, Euro-realism, and the history of non-transparency and financial scandals. In 2006 the Greens formed the only real alternative for them – the new liberal project not facing any competition in the same segment of voters.¹

This changed in 2010 when new party projects (PublicAffairs – PA and TOP 09) competed with the Greens in the same social segment. Moreover, since the party participated (largely not very successfully) in the government, it lost its appeal of a "new hope" it played at in 2006. In 2010 it was PA and TOP 09 which managed to present themselves as the agents of change and political reform. Indeed, most of those (especially young) voters who did vote for the Greens in 2006, but did not in 2010, voted for one of these new parties. And it is clear that the advantageous situation of 2006 will not be repeated for the Greens in the next elections either.

The Greens have already demonstrated their ability to communicate with various political forces, they have indeed presented a new communication style and need to capitalize on that. In other words, they have to demonstrate that the form – an open style of policy making – determines the policy content, without losing their own political agenda.

organizational disconnection

In general, the Party lacks a "regional" dimension within the country (with some notable exceptions). To put it bluntly, the Party has a rather elitist profile, it is rooted in urban centres in terms of voter support and its publicly known "faces" come from the elite intellectual and political circles. Moreover, similarly to not having a clear support base, the party lacks institutional embeddedness in a broader green movement. Given the fact that the abovementioned party reform was due to the takeover of the party by activists from environmental NGOs, this might sound paradoxical. However, similarly to other post-Communist countries, the Czech political culture is not open to politically-oriented activism of any kind. A particular interpretation – developed in the first transition years – of the Communist legacy as forced political activism was translated into the "fear of activism" in late post-Communist settings. Therefore, natural allies of the Greens, progressive NGOs and civic initiatives, often prefer to see themselves not only as non-partisan, but even non-political. Although a new generation of political activists seems to be emerging, the established NGOs are still afraid of compromising their "expert" agenda by accepting their orientation towards politics. As a result, the Party presently suffering from the lack of resources cannot draw on potentially available organizational, personal and cultural resources accumulated within NGOs and civic initiatives.

However, the lack of resources coming from the state and other external agencies motivated the present party leadership to actively recruit individual contributors. The strategy was largely successful and the party is now building a network of small amount individual supporters, an important step towards not only getting resources, but also embedding the party in broader social networks, which can be used for mobilization in the future.

green future?

Currently, the party strives to present a "new style" of politics; it claims to be different from the model of client networks surrounding almost all other parties. In order to eventually be successful, it needs to build on this even more. However, framing is particularly important in this respect, as the very language of anti-corruption is becoming discredited in the country by the established parties. The Greens have already demonstrated their ability to communicate with various political forces, they have indeed presented a new communication style and need to capitalize on that. In other words, they have to demonstrate that the form – an open style of policy making – determines the policy content; this is exactly where the desired "new politics" component actually comes in. At the same time, this is not to say that the Party loses its own political agenda.

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¹Petr Jehlička, Tomáš Kostecký, and Daniel Kunštát, Czech Green politics after two decades: the May 2010 general elections, Environmental Politics 2011(3): 418-425.



Ondřej Liška

Related to that is the imperative to firmly criticize neoliberal policies currently introduced by the present right-wing coalition government (formed by the CDP, TOP 09, PA). There is no way the Green Party can hope for right-wing voters to again support it in the next elections. However, it can hope for votes from the middle class likely to be affected by the global economic crisis and presently implemented neoliberal policies. It is probable that a stratum of people who are educated, often in public sector jobs, and aspiring to become part of the middle class, will not be able to fulfil its dreams under the current conditions.

These are not necessarily protest voters, who fluctuate from party to party, these are rather young middle class dropouts who normally share liberal values and aspirations, while unable to live up to them under the condition of restrictive economic policies. According to what we know, they are growing in numbers not only in Western Europe, but also in post-Communist countries: "Young people are the main victims of the economic crisis. Currently, 20.4% of Europeans in the 15 to 24 age group who seek work remain without jobs. That is a third more than in 2008. At the same time, this rate is a European average, which masks major disparities between countries: 42% of young people are without jobs in Spain, 30% in the Baltic States, Greece and Slovakia, and 20% in Poland, Hungary, Italy and Sweden²..." These are young people with old problems; and this is where the Greens need to focus on. The Green Party will have to credibly frame the current situation in terms of its program, in order to address this coming generation not facing open opportunities, as the first post-Communist generations did, but struggling with the consequences of the crisis. If it is faster than the protest "parties for the dissatisfied", it is likely to find resonance with the young generation.

It also means that the Green party needs to broaden its scope and connect its post-materialistic agenda with social-economic issues; environmental politics with industrial, energy and labor politics; in other words, it needs to follow the European path of searching for a Green New Deal for the post-crisis world³. Although this sounds as a largely commonsensical suggestion, there are important voices within the Party trying to get it back on the ecologist track only. However, given the global situation and following the famous dictum, even more pertinent today than ever before, one may conclude with "It's the green economy, stupid!"

how to be green in Slovenia

Tea Šentjirc*

Elites are way better off than in previous system, but the large majority lives much worse than ever before. The middle class was practically destroyed; there are masses of highly educated, but jobless young people. People that would essentially vote for a green party, now see priorities in other fields.

Slovenia has in the past months found itself in a political crisis that will result in early elections on 4th of December. Unable to implement the reforms it pushed for, combined with several scandals, ailing economy and worsening social situation centre-left government hit rock bottom in popular support. However, socio-economic situation created such a disillusionment and resentment toward politics in general, that the loosening of support on the governmental parties side did not reflect in significant gaining of support for opposition parties as one would expect.

That said it's obvious that there was huge political space left empty and waiting for somebody to fill it. All the parliamentary parties were searching for a solution or better for a political messiah that would reconstitute the political awareness that would be able to generate the popular support and appeal to wide uninterested masses and mobilize them to go to the polls. And, as elites tend to do, they have no intention to let anybody new, independent of them, to really enter the political arena. They're ill, but they're basically only after a blood transfusion, just enough to survive, but not a real cure that could potentially kill them but eradicate the disease.



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² Wawrzyniec Smoczyński, Youthful members of the full-time precariat, Presseurop 15 September 2011; <http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/953511-youthful-members-full-time-precariat>

³ The Green New Deal Group; <http://www.greennewdealgroup.org/>

Because there was a big political field empty, we witnessed creation of two parties, formed in literally last minutes, one on the left part and the other on the right part of political spectrum. But they were created simply by reshuffling of the "teams". Both of them are doing really good in the latest pre-election opinion polls. Which can be partly attributed to a lot of media space allotted to them, because of high profile leaders."

And where does that leave green options in Slovenia? In Slovenia today we have several political parties that have the word green or ecological in their name. But there is only one party that has been recognized by the EGP as a "complete" green party and that is SMS-Zeleni. That is also the party that has by far the best ratings and election results among all green and eco parties and is a full member of EGP. So when I talk about the greens in Slovenia I talk about SMS-zeleni and not for example Zeleni Slovenije that also exists.

Currently SMS-Zeleni is not a parliamentary party, but does have 2 mayors and 46 local councillors. Their overall support has been in recent years stabilized around 2 percent of electorate. However that is not even close to what the party would want or what its potential is. Their policies cover the whole spectrum of a contemporary political agenda, ranging from environmental, social, educational, health, human rights policies to economic, industrial and energy policies. Their strongest point is youth and youth-oriented social policies and the greening of the economy, based on the idea that youth should be the focal point in order to have stable, balanced, sustainable and prosperous future where the rule of law, human rights, equal participation of all and respect for differences are fully implemented in everyday life. That goes of course hand in hand with the necessity to transform the economy into a sustainable one and into one that will be able to respond to ever-changing demographics of contemporary European nations.

That is rather different from older, more traditional green parties in Europe, that were formed on the basis of strong environmental policies or by merging of several interest groups, advocating strong antidiscriminatory or antiwar policies, coming together. In historical perspective (if we can talk about historical when we're talking about 20 years) that is not at all surprising.

In order to grow, a party needs to be visible. To be visible means to be on television. In order to make it to prime time news a party needs to be either a major player, either something completely new or extremely different, even bizarre maybe.

Slovenia has a strong and rather unusual tradition in the field of green politics. Zeleni Slovenije managed to get 9 percent on the first parliamentary elections in 1990 and got 5 seats in the parliament. But that was their biggest triumph, they lost support and after two terms they were unable to maintain the necessary result to stay in the parliament. Nor were they able to ideologically consolidate all the factions. One faction after another left and created their own party with different ideological positions, but none was ever again able to mobilize any significant support in the electorate. Hence many green and eco parties in Slovenia. As for the individuals, some turned into civil servants in the field of ecology, others returned to the academic waters. And that left a big political field empty, vacant.

That's where SMS comes in. SMS, or SMS-Zeleni as it is called now, was formed in 2000 and immediately succeeded in entering the parliament. Consisting of then young new politicians it was able to quickly respond to developments in the modern European political arena and add the environmental and other green policies to their own agenda. Unfortunately in 2004 they did not succeed in staying in parliament. In 2006 they became a member of EGP, but they were unable to repeat their electoral success of 2000.

In spite of that they have continued to develop their policies, to build their network and to attract new members. They have even managed to attract

some media attention with noticeable actions like anti-NATO protests, free child care initiative, fight against the dissolution of anti-corruption commission, anti-nuclear stance and so forth. Obviously Slovenia is still in NATO, but they have managed to achieve free kindergartens for the second and third child, the anti-corruption commission is still here and working hard, and the awareness of the problems with nuclear power is better and better.

SMS-Zeleni is essentially a centre-left party. But instead of left or right they prefer to use the word forward, into the future and away from the decades long ideological fights that contaminate Slovenian political space even today. They interact mostly with middle-age population, trying hard to reach the very uninterested young people, ecologically aware population, older people that are concerned about the youth as well as economic, social, ethnical or any other minorities.

As for their agenda, currently youth policy is still on top, protection of the social state, promotion of renewable sources of energy, fight against the nuclear power plant and against coal based thermo plant in Šoštanj, as well as for sustainable economy and green jobs.

The main challenges for SMS-Zeleni is of course getting back into the decision making process, where they would be able to push for implementation of green policies. On that way however there is a problem of media exposure, getting the alternative green policies through to the people as well as forming a straight, solid political identity that would attract more voters and activist.

In order to grow, a party needs to be visible. To be visible means to be on television. Unfortunately in Slovenia that is still the case. In order to make it to prime time news a party needs to be either a major player, either something completely new or extremely different, even bizarre maybe. And there's the catch, SMS-Zeleni is not a major player, is not new and because it wants to offer real alternative and gain respect of the electorate it does not want to be bizarre. In addition, major parties are intelligent enough, so they do not respond to provocation or appeals by smaller parties, just to ensure they do not involve themselves into a big fight that would make it big news and therefore open the media space to these smaller parties.

So, how to by-pass these existing circumstances:

- One option is extensive advertising. Agencies that trade in media space can get you news time if you advertise a lot in that media. But, that is ridiculously expensive and considering very limited resources small parties have, it is basically not an option
- Second option is extensive print advertising and jumbo posters all around the country. But again, that costs way too much
- The third option is creation of its own media. Using wisely social media, FB, Twitter, create your own YouTube channel etc. But this takes a lot of creativity, as well as quite some manpower, which is again limited. And in order to work, to reach big enough electorate it needs to be interesting and again at least unusual. And it needs to be prepared and running way in advance. It cannot work if it is applied in the final stages.
- There is also the fourth option, which I think in Slovenia, it just hasn't been explored enough yet. And that is door-to-door campaigning. In Slovenia, people are not used to it, parties will send their programmes and manifestos and things like that to mailboxes, but they don't come knocking. And considering the rather up-tight society Slovenia is, I would expect a lot of slammed doors in your nose at the beginning. However it might be worthwhile to try.
- And there's one other possibility: news worthy guests from abroad. In case of Slovenia people from other green parties that would attract sufficient media attention are probably just a few: Danny Cohn Bendit, Cem Ozdemir, Joschka Fisher and that's pretty much that.

So that leads us to what to say, to the content. Because the reality is, you first need to secure media access and then really use it well. Just a good programme will not secure you media access. So once you get the opportunity, you need to take maximum advantage of it. Meaning, one has to be very assertive, very clear, understandable and different enough so that people will remember her or him.

Slovenia is a post-transitional country that after initial economic success is now trapped in a mix of hard-line neoliberal economy, weakening state, assumed corruption scandals and just plain public theft. Statistics are still rather favourable compared to other countries in the region, but the fact is that the numbers do not reflect everyday reality of the people. Elites are

way better off than in previous system, but the large majority lives much worse than ever before. The middle class was practically destroyed; there are masses of highly educated, but jobless young people. Poverty is threatening children, young people, and older citizens. Even people that don't do so badly are becoming completely disillusioned by politics. And that is bad news for SMS-Zeleni. Because people that would essentially vote for a green party, now see priorities in other fields.

And there's a real catch²² for SMS-Zeleni. They can count on a very limited media space, so they need to choose their topics and fights very wisely. They would get praise or approval for putting forward traditional green topics, but right now, it would not get them into parliament.

On the other hand, when they get a chance to talk and they talk about social issues and economy, they don't really strengthen the green brand, which is essential for their future success and for their claim over the green brand.

And then there's a question of new politics. They do represent new type of politics that does not accept traditional divisions on left and right, but is future-oriented. They do not have scandals or damaging affairs, but that's in a way harming them, as they are not interesting to media, because they don't take part in traditional political fights but want to represent a calm, rational, solution oriented politics. And there's no drama in it, therefore no media exposure.

So when it comes to question about success, we have to ask ourselves, what success means. Building a coherent green party of the future or getting into parliament. Because in order to get into parliament now, at least SMS-Zeleni would have to sacrifice certain green principles, play at least a bit dirty and gamble with their integrity.

It would be way too arrogant to claim that SMS-Zeleni have the magic stick that can save Slovenia from all the hardships or even that they would be able to run or even co-form the government, but they definitely have the ideas and the know how which would contribute to improving the situation. Things need to change and it will be inevitable for ruling political class to recognize that real political plurality is of vital importance for maintaining social stability in the country. Covering their ears and eyes (hear no evil, see no evil principle) and waiting for a storm to pass, is not the answer. Dialogue, opening the political space to political and social innovation, to new political actors is what society needs.



party trouble: political organisation of the greens in Croatia

Srđan Dvornik *

In Croatia, the electorate generally follows the client-based pattern: political parties are expected to deliver the same thing as the government: security and services that resolve everyday problems.

One glance at the register of political parties in Croatia says it all. Select them by the name that contains 'green' and there are eight. There were nine a few years ago. Even if this reduction were to be treated as significant, it would be wrong to see it as an indication of a trend: some have disappeared, but others have emerged. Moreover, 'green' are also some of those which do not contain the word in their name.** All in all, far too many for a country of 4.2 million inhabitants, even if its voter register indicates as many as 4.5 million – more so since nearly one half of the registered green parties actually stand at elections.

Although this situation has existed for many years, this colourful pile has not engendered a single influential, successful or leading green party. Since the first attempts to establish green parties happened some twenty years ago, the fact that no viable green option has appeared in the political arena is no coincidence, but rather a symptom. Any analysis or explanation of this phenomenon presents difficulties similar to those encountered in the actual establishment of this political option itself. Green parties have been so marginal that however long and sufficient the time has been, no comprehensive research has ever been conducted to gather facts systematically and analyse the factors that determine this absence of inclination of the Croatian society to lean towards an option that actually changed the political landscape in quite a few countries.

constituency or clients?

In Croatia, the electorate generally follows the client-based pattern: political parties are expected to deliver the same thing as the government: security and services that resolve everyday problems. The whole wide spectrum of social stratification, from the poorest to the rich employer 'capitalists', is dominated by dependence on political power structures (though not really functionally structured), which spills over into economic power as well. Although there are considerable differences in wealth, there is no autonomous economic or social power opposed to the political one. Employers (hence the quotation marks on the word capitalist), and in particular the trade unions, are incapable of acting as strong and autonomous interest groups, that would – be it through legal instruments of political organisation and democratic impact, be it through any other avenues of influence – 'push' the interests of their societal bases through the system of political decision-making.

Therefore, the relationship between the society and the state, and thus a *fortiori* political parties too, is not dominated by rational representation of socio-economic interests. Peasants and pensioners are exceptions of sorts, the former due to their traditional attachment to one party (Croatian Peasants' Party), and the latter due to the success of seeing all their organisations come together at one point and support the Croatian Pensioners' Party. However, the former have inevitably been disappointed, since 'their' party has played all kinds of games, determined by the interests of the leadership rather than the peasant 'base'. As for the pensioners, the

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**Their titles do not help a benevolent voter to decide. There are: Green Alternative – Consumers' Party, Green List, Green Party, Green Party – Green Alternative, Croatia's Greens, Greens of Istria, Greens Together and Croatian Green Party. There used to be Democratic Green Alliance, Greens – Party of the New Age, The Green Left, Green Democrats, etc. Their seats are in Rijeka, Zagreb, Pula and Osijek. When listing parties with no 'green' in the name, but advocating similar values, Youth Action is a worthy example.

initial success of their party led to a multiplication of parties with similar names purporting to represent the same constituency, and thus reducing their political influence, already limited by the fact that it was a *de facto* one-issue-movement cum party, capable of achieving anything only when linked to a ruling coalition.

Since the political elite determines, directly or indirectly, the societal life outside the 'political sphere' as such – best seen in the fact that even the rare strikes and social unrests seldom focus their protests on employers, and instead aim their demands at the government, i.e. the 'state' – parties are successful if they appear *powerful*. They have to have realistic chances of winning power (or taking a considerable share of it) in order to be selected by the voters as the recipients of their hopes and expectations. The relatively weaker ones – as it happens in Croatia at the moment – get their chance only after the dominant party or group (HDZ in this case) has let down the expectations and hopes to such an extent that the frustrated clients simply must opt for the alternative. This happened in early 2000 and again now, in late 2011, but it remains to be seen if the alternative group will change the dominant political pattern.



This vicious circle, best expressed in the Serbian 1990's joke ('you win first, then I'll vote for you'), excludes all the small players, particularly those that neither have the money to 'make themselves visible' and at least potentially influential (as HNS once was), nor can be populist enough to exploit the discontent of the society. The ever present item on the greens' agenda – concern for the environment at least, but also concern for human life and its quality – fare much worse on the scale of problems that society is preoccupied with, compared with the top-of-the-agenda issues such as fear of poverty and unemployment and concern with economic prosperity. Within the well-known parameters, Croatian society is dominated by materialist values. Even if there are some other, non-materialist concerns, they are certainly not the ones we call 'post-materialist', but rather a totally different type of symbolism, related to nationalism and collective identity.

the changed meaning of 'green'

Given all this, one should be fair to the actors in these failed, sometimes absurd attempts to create green parties and accept that in this part of the world, the attribute 'green' has a meaning totally different from the one it had when the then new social movements in Western and Northern Europe were creating their 'political wings'. In the wake of the 'great denial' of the effects of capitalism during its peak in the late 1960's – consumer society, exhaustion of natural resources and systemic environmental pollution, proliferation of nuclear armament and nuclear technology, uncontrolled exploitation of 'the third world', gender inequality and non-recognition of minorities, a constant threat of war... – the notion of 'green' concentrated in it all the resistance. 'Green' became a powerful symbol of an alternative to the economic, political and cultural formation based on exploitation – of nature, man, and culture...

To be honest, the alternative did suffer serious upheavals and contusions as it collided with the realistic, practical politics and the compromises necessary to do something within the given constellation of forces. But, as

far as the local marginal 'green politics' actors are concerned, all these problems seem like a luxury they would happily venture into, if only they could reach it. While the greens in the developed West worried about how to translate the existing social mobilisation, discontent and alternatives into politics, the local marginal figures worry only about the (non-existent) mobilisation. 'Green' as a symbol acts only literally, as a symbol of the environment, of preservation of 'natural resources', or at best of 'sustainable development'. That is why in the minds of the public, a tiny odd green party – if observed at all – ends up in the same category as environmental associations. At that, the latter seem more successful, since they bring together those who are actually focused on the environment, and not on all they have to do as parties. On the other hand, this non-party character – the absence of struggle for power (however insignificant their odds may be in the first place) – gives the associations greater credibility.

Marginal green proto-parties are faced with a situation where – the way they are at the moment – cannot succeed on either side: they cannot work on environmental protection better than civic associations, and they cannot compete effectively with established political parties.

As far as conclusions can be drawn with no research – from direct contacts with different actors over the past ten years – those who have ventured into creating such parties have themselves been largely motivated by environmental protection and the related problems, but decided for some reason to articulate their action by means of a political party. Such reasons may vary from an awareness of the need for political promotion of environmental concerns to an opportunistic motive to occupy the still available 'green' position in the political spectrum. In any case, they are now in a situation where they cannot succeed on either side - they cannot work on environmental protection better than the associations, and they cannot be effective competition to other parties. The associations do not need them as their political representatives, since many associations do not want to be near any 'politics', and several of them, publicly influential themselves, know how to present their own issues and demands to the political public. Only recently it seems that a more ambitious approach has started to emerge – an attempt to participate directly in the political decision-making with such demands.

an alternative to the alternative

For this ambition to be realised, i.e. for the establishment of parties that would present a real alternative to the existing political supply, a mere 'strengthening' of existing initiatives, achieved through greater numbers, fundraising and collection of other resources, and 'capacity building' for organisation and public action, is insufficient. It is necessary to promote a totally new 'narrative', i.e. an interpretation of the existing situation that would present all the values to be achieved as the real answers to the burning societal problems, here and now, with a well-constructed demonstration that such answers can be 'translated' into feasible practical and practicable solutions.

Values of life, freedom and human dignity correlated to the environment are probably the most universal values ever, i.e. not a matter of arbitrary choice. Problems presented as opposition between those values and the actual state of affairs are not a mere choice of things the activists would like to 'deal with', but the real vital problems of the society and thus also the 'material' for a worthy alternative political programme. That is why it is necessary to master the *entirety* of societal problems, in terms of both ideas and programmes, including not only the evident ones – economic, ecological and social – but also political and cultural ones, manifested primarily as authoritarianism, collectivism and exclusivism. This interpretation is a challenge both for theoretical or empirical analysis, and for developing solutions that would not just 'hold water', but also become the most attractive object of political choice, at least for some segments of society.

