

Serbia brought the tire industry to Zrenjanin and Indjija (one Chinese, the other Japanese). In Zrenjanin, by issuing permits to an investor without an environmental impact study, it violated its own environmental regulations. About more than one hundred million euros of subsidies and arable land of A category, which she gave to investors, on another occasion. When you ask the president about RTB Bor and Smederevo Ironworks, what was the interest of the Chinese to buy them, he says that they do not understand environment, but that their government banned them from working in China due to air pollution, so they came to us, and what does he care - their job, their thing. Belgrade's largest water source, Makisko polje, is to be turned into Karic's Tesla city, to pollute Belgrade's water. At 143 kilometers from Belgrade, near Loznica, a lithium mine is planned, Rio Tinto will be a producer, it will pollute the country, the Jadar and the Drina, and Prime Minister Brnabic talks about "positioning" Serbia.

Are the citizens ready to keep quiet about all this? Or is there an "environmental revolt" happening in Serbia, which Aleksandar Jovanovic Ćuta from the "Let's Defend the Rivers of Stara Planina" Movement is talking about? Is it possible for all these movements, greens and leftists, informal Facebook groups, initiatives, battles and guards to agree and create a common political platform? Does the opposition recognize the ecological catastrophe that is happening in Serbia as a par excellence political issue, but also as an important topic for serious changes? Have drinking water, clean air and arable land in Serbia become more important than Kosovo, joining NATO, friendship with China and Russia, European integration?

Not all interlocutors of "Vreme" share Ćuta's enthusiasm. Marinika Tepić, vice president of the Party of Freedom and Justice, and Dr. Jovo Bakic, a sociologist and a member of the Radical Left, are more inclined to believe that people will neither hear nor see what is happening until "a bear plays in front of their door." Even then, Bakic is convinced: "Here, in Zrenjanin, a bear came to their gate, people have not had usable water for 20 years - and nothing, they did not take a rifle to kill the bear. Then they hear that the government gave a lot of money to the Chinese for that factory of tires, and again nothing (75 million euros subsidy plus 95 hectares of land.) We have, therefore, a situation where the poor, and 50 percent of people have a salary below 300 euros (not to mention pensions), pay taxes, and the government gives from that tax helping rich companies poison the earth and the air. Well, that's not normal! A man of preserved common sense would take some of the tools he has and go to deal with the people who did it to him! "

Marinika Tepić is wrong that the issue of environmental protection is seen as the activism of young Gorani: let's save the park, protect the bush... However, as she says, it is a question

of general security: there is nothing more important than water, land, air, that is Life. Lately, the government has realized that it is attractive to mention it, due to Chapter 27 of the pre-accession negotiations with the EU, but apart from changing the parameters for the classification of air quality, the government does not show interest in other activities. When he talks about the negligence, arrogance and arrogance of this government, Tepic does not think that someone in an SS uniform will enter your house and put a yellow ribbon, but he will come, he will like your field, your plum, your ore, your oil on the property, where they will stab the pump and destroy your property.

This was approximately the case when the company Zijin Mining Group took over the majority ownership in the Mining and Smelting Basin Bor in 2018. The fact that the mornings in Bor are such that neither the sun nor the sky can be seen from the clouds of smoke, is just one of the problems that the citizens of Bor and the inhabitants of the surrounding villages have. The arrival of the Chinese company not only drastically increased the air pollution, houses in the surrounding villages cracked, wells dried up, and the locals are convinced that it happened due to underground blasting and the construction of a new mine.

Marinika Tepic talks about the fate of Bor, recalling the agreement and contract with the Chinese:

“There is an interstate agreement with the Chinese that protects them like polar bears. I saw the Strategic Partnership Agreement for RTB Bor. From page 5 or 6, there are a series of crimes one after the other, ie the state’s consent to something it should not do, whether it’s labor or environmental issues. The contract that Aleksandar Antic signed is full of crimes, but they have that umbrella agreement between Serbia and China, interstate, and you can’t really do anything to them. “I’m sorry, it was ratified by the parliament. There is no signature on it, just as there is Antic’s signature on the direct contract. Such agreements are in the range of laws.”

Pulmonologist Dr. Dejan Zujovic, with his Movement “For All My People”, recently on the political scene, is a little angry with opposition parties that generally do not recognize environment as a topic that could be a link between parties, movements, initiatives, but also individuals in uniting into one opposition bloc. Which is because of old misunderstandings, which is because the parties formed in the traditional sense look at ecology as well as culture: it should be there, as a spice, but without exaggeration. Zujovic plans to go to the polls in Kosjeric, saying that he is there almost every weekend and that he has not seen his colleagues from the opposition yet. “The moment for unification was Rakita, when the Movement ‘Let’s Defend the Rivers of Stara Planina’ had a great action of rescuing the

Rakita River from the pipeline. It is not enough for the vice president (Marinika Tepic) to come from the party and say: "We were there, we took part in it." No. You did not take part in the defense of Rakita without fifty, one hundred, five hundred of your members.

.Opposition misses great opportunities. Probably due to the nature of my job, I have recognized the vulnerability of society to both the crown and the pollution of the environment we live in. there was talk of polluted air and people became aware of it, "says Zujovic.

That people are interested and environmentally aware is the experience of the Initiative "Let's not drown Belgrade". That pluralism of movements, initiatives, informal groups that deal with this issue speaks for itself, says Dobrica Veselinovic from the NDB Initiative in an interview for "Vreme". "Behind all these organizations is actually an understanding and cooperation. For ten years now, we have been working with various civic movements and initiatives, from Vojvodina to Rakita," he added. The problem, however, arises before the elections. There is not enough maturity and readiness to act as a united front. "We have cases where local organizations have managed to enter local parliaments as independent initiatives. There is a desire to deviate from traditional political actors, because they have betrayed the interests of citizens many times, so far no one has done anything different from their predecessors. Citizens who want to organize themselves say that both the DS and the SNS, and the SPS before them, did everything the same, they worked systematically to destroy the environment, and they don't believe them, "Veselinovic explains.

Citizens' distrust of political parties and politicians who were already in power is a commonplace, conceived in the early 1990s, which Bakic recalls when he says that neither now, nor then, it was not clear who the opposition was, because trade is below "Today's authoritarian leader has his trump cards in the so-called opposition for each subsequent election. It could be Sagic, as he was in the previous elections, and Stamatovic, too. In this opposition, it is not known who will when do business with Vucic. " Bakic, full of distrust towards the representatives of the current opposition, especially those who were in power, insists that the most important thing is to clarify who the opposition is here and who did what while he was in power. He reminds of the Law on Executors, which was passed in 2011, before Vucic's rule, as well as that Rio Tinto has been conducting lithium research in Serbia since 2004: "And who was in power then, who are the people from the academic world who worked projects for Rio Tinto, how much were they paid and how much is their responsibility? There is a lot of hypocrisy and some forces will certainly unite around it. and the water they drink, and the other when the political instrumentalization of a topic starts. It is worrying that the citizens are not protesting enough ", says Bakic.



## Environmental catastrophes in Serbia and consequences

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