

A large number of protests in Serbia in previous years have been unsuccessful. No clear goals, no demands, no concrete actions. Ecological protests used to be like that, but there are examples in which activism, struggle and not giving up on goals have brought concrete results. We only remember the many years of struggle over the construction of a mini-hydroelectric power plant in that small village (Rakita) near Babusnica. I really am not a person who knows the advantages and disadvantages of hydroelectric power plants (listen to environmental activists about it), nor do I deal with it, but last year's event "pulling the river out of the pipe" when activists came and "liberated the river" with the help of mechanization and is the victory of all environmental fighters along with the inhabitants of this village. For me, who watched it all from the sidelines, that is essential activism - taking a macola if necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens. And these protests led to victories. This is very important in the perception of any engagement of citizens on the street.

Unfortunately, a large part of environmental activism is focused on the so-called. "Extinguishing a fire", ie reacting to current problems and trying to prevent certain things. This speaks volumes about how important this topic is, but also how much we as a society should be more aware of. There are not enough environmental activists, and all of us, the rest of us, could ask ourselves what will happen when environmental problems knock on our door, although many have already knocked. These great fighters can be called (I will use the coin of Nikola Markovic from Južni vesti) "guardians of the state from power". And they need support in that.

### **Is environment politics?**

It's all politics. Those who run away from it just don't understand how things work. Politics is how you will enroll your child in kindergarten, politics is also how you will be organized garbage disposal, politics is also how much you will have a salary, politics is how much you will pay for fuel, cigarettes or toilet paper, politics is how you will distribute cheese or the brandy you make on your small farm in a hamlet. So is politics in what kind of living environment you live in. Environmental policy is one of the sectoral public policies that is extremely important for the life of citizens. Such as economic, social, fiscal, transport policy or education policy. The state of the environment depends on how someone creates policies and how they conduct environmental policy, and policies are created by politicians (not to mention what has become a paradigm in the NGO sector: decision makers). Of course, the demands of the protest are also political. Because it can't be otherwise. Read my colleague Avakumović about how politics has become a dirty word and how politics is (self) censored.

The absence of dialogue or any public debate in society has led to this becoming undesirable in public discourse, to immediately distancing oneself from it, probably because it is forbidden to discuss not only politics and politicians, but also policies (decisions and rules that affect the lives of all of us). When all this changes one day, we will have to put policy discussions as the essence of activism and participation in public life.

### **Has environment become a topic because we are rich?**

This is a very interesting thesis presented by Ana Brnabić, which may have a foundation, but only if you have fallen from space to Serbia and see general propaganda about GDP and hear that there is some ecological protest somewhere. When individuals provide themselves materially, then they start thinking about post-materialist values such as ecology, and the Prime Minister claims that, but it is difficult to support that on the example of Serbia with facts such as a high standard of living, especially not with more people thinking about how to buy hybrid cars, how to move from cities to the suburbs for more enjoyment in the fresh air and the absence of noise. Moreover, these people have figured out how to bypass the mandatory (since the middle of the year) DP filter on diesel vehicles, there has never been a greater demand for apartments in urban areas, and the few houses that exist in Belgrade are less likely to survive and that there will be no multi-storey buildings in their places in order to satisfy the demand of people to live in big cities because of work and a slightly better standard. Ecology is important to citizens here, not because they have come to a position of thinking about post-materialist values, but because their river is being destroyed, because black dust from the ironworks in Smederevo makes sediments in their apartments, because we have a lot of dirty technologies in Eastern Serbia. that ecological catastrophes are announced in Loznica (read and hear about all this from people who understand that), because we started to see the air even though we all remember the first grade of primary school where we were taught not to see the air. That is why environmental issues have become important – because we have many hotspots, not because we are rich, so we have extra time and turn to post-materialist values.

I just hope we get a lot of awareness protect yourself in time (I also mean myself) and raise your voice against the destruction of the environment. And I hope even more that we will get into a situation where we deal with ecology at a higher level, and not at the level of survival of citizens in eco hotspots.

Source: talas.rs