



Petr Pavlinek and John Pickles

Environmental | Transitions

Transformation
and Ecological
Defence in
Central and
Eastern Europe

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Environmental Transitions

Environmental Transitions is a detailed and comprehensive account of the environmental changes in Central and Eastern Europe, both under state socialism and during the transition to capitalism. The change in politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s allowed an opportunity for a rapid environmental clean up in an area once considered one of the most environmentally devastated regions on earth. The book illustrates how transformations after 1989 have brought major environmental improvements, as well as new environmental problems. It shows how environmental policy, economic change and popular support for environmental movements have specific and changing geographies associated with them.

Environmental Transitions addresses a large number of topics, including a historico-geographical analysis of environmental change, health impacts of environmental degradation, the role of environmental issues during the anti-communist revolutions, legislative reform and the effects of transition on environmental quality after 1989.

Environmental Transitions contains detailed case studies from the region, which illustrate the complexity of environmental issues and their intimate relationship with political and economic realities. It gives theoretically informed ideas for understanding environmental change in the context of the political economy of state socialism and post-communist transformations, drawing on a wide body of literature from West, Central and Eastern Europe.

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Environmental Transitions

Transformation and ecological defence in
Central and Eastern Europe

Petr Pavlínek and John Pickles



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For Adam and Leon

May they always temper desire with compassion
and ambition with justice.

May they live to see a cleaner and better world.

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Preface

In the early 1990s, while at the University of Kentucky, we each began our formal engagement with the study of the political economy of social and environmental change in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). One of us was a “young” (but aging) socialist from a working-class background and region of the North of England, steeped in the traditions and oppositions of Cold War geopolitics, grown politically and intellectually through the study of and engagement with the black consciousness and anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa, who completed doctoral and post-doctoral studies in the USA under Reagan and Bush. The other of us was a still young anti-communist from a working-class background and region of Eastern Bohemia in Czechoslovakia, forcibly steeped in the bureaucracies and ideological training of state socialist Mittel-Europa, grown of age politically in the Velvet Revolution in Prague, and steeled in Anglo-American traditions of political economy and regional development in America under Clinton and Gingrich.

The transformations wrought by the events of 1989 were viewed by each of us vicariously as scholars working in critical geographical studies at the University of Kentucky and directly in various research sites in Central and Eastern Europe during that time. At each point we have been suspicious of the rhetoric of “transition” (and the triumphalism and neo-imperialism the term connotes). Instead, we have been drawn to alternative readings and renderings of the multiple processes of transformation that the term “transition” hides. At each turn we have tried to ask how actually existing actors have struggled to comprehend and build particular environmental practices and futures. In this endeavor we have each benefitted from exchanges with many colleagues.

Colleagues at the University of Kentucky have provided a supportive environment for critical studies and have contributed directly and indirectly to our thinking in many ways. Among them are Keiron Bailey, Dwight Billings, Martin Bosman, Stan Brunn, Larry Burmeister, Barbara Cellarius, Carl Dahlman, Michael Dorn, Oliver Froehling, John Paul Jones, Mark Klar, Jennifer Kopf, Tom Leinbach, Peter Little, Eugene McCann, Matt McCourt, Patrick Mooney, Wolfgang Natter, Mohameden Ould-Mey, Jeff Popke, Karl Raitz, Herb Reid, Susan Roberts, Rich Schein, Chad Staddon, Karen Tice, Dick Ulack, and Ernest Yanarella.

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Adrian Smith has been a good friend and colleague in our efforts to come to grips with the political economy of post-communist transformations. Bob Begg and Mieke Meurs have been wonderful companions and colleagues over these years, and we draw heavily on their work on agrarian transformation and environmental change in Bulgaria in these pages. Mieke Meurs and Michael Watts provided a wonderful opportunity to learn from the parallel struggles to understand environmental change in post-communist societies in discussions in Cuba with Piers Blaikie, Judy Carney, Carmen Deare, Margaret Fitzsimmons, Joshua Muldavin, Mark Selden, Ivan Szelenyi, and many other colleagues from Cuba, Hungary, Bulgaria, China, and Russia.

Others have contributed along the way: Eva D m t r, Dagmar Dzůrová, Jim Friedberg, Jaroslav Halaš, Paweł Ka mierzcyk, Greg Knight, Boian Koulov, Naděžda Kučerová, Harmon Maher, Krassimira Paskaleva, Philip Shapira, Irena Vohralíková, Alžběta Rádlová, Jerome Simpson, Marietta Staneva, Andrew Tickle, Brent Yarnal, and Zde ka Zdobnická. We also want to thank to Stanislav Štýs for his permission to reprint four of his photographs, originally published in S.Štýs and L.Helešicová, *Proměny měsíční krajiny* (Changes of moon landscape) (1992), by Bílý Slon, Prague.

Chapters [Four](#) and [Five](#) are based on parts of Pavlínek (1997) and were thoroughly revised and updated for this book. [Chapter Nine](#) draws on Mikhova and Pickles (1994a, 1994b) and Pickles and Mikhova (1998). Parts of Chapters [Ten](#) and [Three](#) draw on work we have recently published in *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* and *Kosmas*. The authors would like to thank Didi Mikhova for her willingness to allow us to adapt this work to our present needs, and Bob Begg, Christo Ganey, Michael Kennedy, Bob Lloyd, Mieke Meurs, Caedmon Staddon, and Stefan Velev for helpful comments on earlier drafts of the original papers.

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Our greatest debts are to our families, especially to our wives Gabriela and Lynn and children Adam and Leon. They have been patient and understanding at every point as we have been drawn away to far off places and to our respective offices to research, write, edit, and rework this book. Our debts are great and we look forward to repaying them with interest in the years ahead.

Petr Pavlínek
John Pickles

Abbreviations

AISA	polling agency (Czech Republic)
BANU	Bulgarian Agricultural National Union
BCE	Business Central Europe
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
BOD5	Biological Oxygen Demand
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
CAD	computer aided design
Cd	cadmium
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEP	Committee for Environmental Protection (Poland and Albania)
ČEZ	<i>České energetické závody</i> (Czech Energy Works)
Cl-	chloride anions
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
COCOM	Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPE	centrally planned economy
CSO	Central Statistical Office (Bulgaria)
ČSSR	<i>Československá socialistická republika</i> (Czechoslovak Socialist Republic)
ČSÚ	<i>Český statistický úřad</i> (Czech Statistical Office)
CURS	Changing Urban and Regional Systems program
C _x H _y	hydrocarbons
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community

ECU	European Currency Unit
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EMEP	European Monitoring and Evaluation Program
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency; Environment Protection Act (Romania)
EU	European Union
ESCBR	Economic and Social Council of the Basin Region
FCE	Federal Committee for the Environment (Czech Republic)
FDI	foreign direct investment
FGR	Federal German Republic
FSU	former Soviet Union
FYR	former Yugoslav Republic
GAO	Governmental Accounting Office
GDP	gross domestic product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GIS	geographical information systems
GNP	gross national product
GP	Green Party (Bulgaria)
GUS	<i>Główny Urz d Statystyczny</i> (Central Statistical Office, Poland)
ha	hectare
HEI	Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (Bulgaria)
HN	<i>Hospodářské noviny</i> , Czech daily economic newspaper
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPM	integrated pest management
IQ	intelligence quotient
Kčs	<i>Koruna Československá</i> (Czechoslovak crown)
KDC	Kralovodvorská Cement Works
kg	kilogram
km	kilometer
LIK	Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Sustainable Development
LN	<i>Lidové noviny</i> , Czech daily newspaper
MCC	Most Coal Company (Czech Republic)
MERP	Ministry of Environment and Regional Policy (Hungary)
MF Dnes	<i>Mladá fronta Dnes</i> , Czech daily newspaper
mg/km	milligrams per kilometer
MoE	Ministry of the Environment
MOS	Ministry of Environment (Bulgaria)

MW	megawatts
MZ	Ministry of Health (Bulgaria)
MŽP	<i>Ministerstvo Životního prostředí</i> (Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBBCM	North Bohemian Brown Coal Mines
nd	no date
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIMH	Institute of Hydrology and Meteorology (Bulgaria)
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NPK	nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium
NSI	National Statistical Institute (Bulgaria)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OMRI	Open Media Research Institute
ONV	<i>Okresní národní výbor</i> (District Authority Office—Czech Republic)
OOČSÚ	<i>Okresní oddělení Českého statistického úřadu</i> (District Division of the Czech Statistical Office)
OOSÚ	<i>Okresní oddělení státního statistického úřadu</i> (District Division of the State Statistical Office, Czechoslovakia)
OSS	<i>Okresní statistická správa</i> (District Statistical Office, Czech Republic)
PAC	Pesticides Advisory Committee
PAV	Public Against Violence
Pb	lead
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
PHARE	<i>Pologne-Hongrie Assistance à la Reconstruction Economique</i> (Poland-Hungary Assistance for Economic Reconstruction)
RDA	Romanian Democratic Action
REC	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
REM	Romanian Ecological Movement
REP	Romanian Ecological Party
RFE	Radio Free Europe
RIOS	Regional Environmental Inspectorates (Bulgaria)
SCE	Slovak Commission for the Environment
SEF	State Environmental Fund
SGTB	<i>Statisticheski Godishnik na Tsarstvo Bulgaria</i> (Statistical Yearbook of Bulgaria)

SHD	<i>Severočeské hnědohelné doly</i> (North Bohemian Brown Coal Mines)
SMoE	Slovak Ministry of Environment
SO _x	sulfur oxides
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SO ₄ ²⁻	sulfate
ŠÚSR	<i>Štatistický Úrad Slovenskej Republiky</i> (Slovak Statistical Office)
t/km ²	tonnes per square kilometer
TV	television
UDF	Union of Democratic Forces (Bulgaria)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT	Value Added Tax
VÚVA	<i>Výzkumný ústav výstavby a architektury</i> (Research Institute of Construction and Architecture, Czech Republic)
Zn	zinc
μg/m ³	micrograms per cubic meter
μg/dl	micrograms per deciliter

Part I

Introduction

1

The political economy of environmental transitions

The environment is man's first right. Without a safe environment, man cannot exist to claim other rights, be they political, social, or economic.

(Ken Saro-Wiwa 1996)

Humanity's historical responsibility is an interpretive task, "naming" both the potential of the new nature (now synonymous with nature's "redemption") and the failure of history to realize it.

(Buck-Morrss 1990:240)

In Milcho Manchevski's 1995 film *Before the Rain* a London-based photo-journalist returns home to his Macedonian village to discover a political and social environment wracked with hatred, violence, and suspicion, pitting friend against friend, neighbor against neighbor, and family against family. The universalist goals of a federal Yugoslavia and the control functions of the party state have, in this transition, given way to localisms of violence based on ethnicity and religion. In returning to the village of his birth, the photo-journalist finds a strange land re-configured along ethnic lines, in which the home of his former school-friend is now "alien" territory for a Slav, the boundaries of which are demarcated by old friends now sentinels under the sign of "the border." The land, state, and the mind of the inhabitants are being re-territorialized as prior commitments and networks are re-worked, new actors emerge, and new powers are exercised.

Throughout the film the landscape, sky, and weather play as a backdrop for the naturalized identities of ethnic, gendered, and nationalized actors. The clouds before the rain, the dry parched fields, and the rocky promontories are projected as the ominous and overarching context within which human destinies are determined. Nature here stands resolute against the contingent and socially constructed borderlands: the journalist is torn from his new European world and thrust back into the environment of actually existing transition on the ground. Here pre-existing ethnic and gender divisions have hardened and, like the dry ground, seem to be cracking apart as hope of relief withers. In this situation he is forced to act, to take sides, and, as a result, is eventually killed crossing a field; a symbolic space for the highly territorialized networks of permission and sanction

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