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## Green Awakening: Slovak Environmental Movement in the 1980s

My current research is in the field of late 20th century environmental history. Heavy pollution, lack of democracy in decision-making processes and increased access to information led to the growth of grassroots activism that generated new social structures in most countries of East- Central Europe. In the late 1980s, a “green wave” swept across Europe as environmental movements gained considerable momentum. In Slovakia, the local environmental movement as well as various alternative public spheres (unofficial art groups, amateur theatre troupes, alternative music scene etc.) defied negative social norms and acted as catalysts for citizen empowerment in late socialist milieu. Environmentalists' role in challenging power structures, and their demands of openness and increased public participation in decision-making were instrumental in stimulating discussion and pushing the boundaries of the repressive state apparatus.

In my recently defended dissertation thesis, my focus was on the history of the Slovak environmental movement in the period between 1969 – 1989. I conceptualised the local environmental movement as a community as well as a collaborative circle, which provided its members with a space for intellectual collaboration and a shared sense of purpose in the sphere of environmental activism. I explored the various strategies environmental activists used to promote their goals while creating a specific space of quasi-independence under the auspices of an official state nature protection association. This existence in an in-between space between official and unofficial structures challenges conventional notions of oppositionality and offers valuable insights into the complexity and diversity of social reality in Czechoslovakia. I explored the nature of dialogue between official state structures and environmental activists, as well as all kinds of alliances the environmental actors forged with alternative public spheres.

The aim of this paper is to present the results of my research and discuss future research possibilities within this topic. I especially want to focus on the

transnational dimension – contextualising the local environmental movement within a broader Central European framework is essential for achieving a more comprehensive understanding of its development and impact. To trace these transnational influences, it is crucial to examine various communication networks that existed between environmental groups in East-Central Europe. These contacts were significant in the process of creating networks of trust, as well as disseminating information about various forms of protest and activism in the respective countries of the Eastern bloc.

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