

DEGROWTH!

Political School 2024

REDEFINING PROGRESS

Nature, Care, & the Working Class

POL
ICY
LAB

30.8.-1.9.2024

Lokve, Slovenia

"At what point do we escalate? When do we conclude that the time has come to also try something different? When do we start physically attacking the things that consume our planet and destroy them with our own hands? Is there a good reason we have waited this long?"

— Andreas Malm, How to Blow Up a Pipeline

Welcome to a New Frontier of Political Thought!

Welcome to an experiment in the making, a laboratory for rethinking the socially accepted truths and dogmas of the 21st century. This year we invite you to the second edition of the Degrowth Political School in Slovenia, entitled "Redefining Progress: Nature, Care & the Working Class", building on the foundations laid by our first edition, "The Limits to Growth".

Today we face global climate breakdown, rising authoritarianism and growing social inequality – symptoms of a world order in decay. The so-called "green transition" often serves as a smokescreen for corporate interests, repackaging environmental destruction in the language of progress. Meanwhile, the elite continue to thrive, fueling the crises that threaten our existence. The shifting dynamics of geopolitical dominance, marked by events such as the US elections and the rise of China, signal the twilight of old empires and the dawn of new ones, with ordinary people caught in the crossfire.

In this context, Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, has published a groundbreaking report, "Eradicating Poverty Beyond Growth". He argues that growth in wealthy nations has become "anti-economic," weakening our economies, ecosystems and commons. De Schutter calls for "development without growth," advocating a democratically planned

transition that serves people and the planet, not corporate profits. Timothée Parrique, a key voice in the degrowth movement, echoes this sentiment. What was once a controversial idea is now a rigorous field of study, with over 600 scientific studies and 380 policy instruments identified for a degrowth transition. The narrative of "green growth" is increasingly being exposed as an unrealistic utopia, while degrowth offers a viable path forward. The tide is turning, and the Degrowth Political School is at the forefront of this critical movement.

At the Degrowth Political School, we reject the obsession with GDP and profit maximization that has led us to the brink of ecological and social collapse. Instead, we strive to create new imaginaries that prioritize human well-being and ecological balance over the insatiable pursuit of growth. We envision a world where care work is recognized as the foundation of our society, where the economy serves people and the planet, and where solidarity, not competition, drives our actions.

We are here to build alliances, break new grounds, and challenge the powers that be. We are here to deconstruct the dominant discourses that have historically legitimized inequality and environmental degradation. We are here to plant the seeds of a future where nature, care and the working class are at the heart of our political and economic systems.

In these times of uncertainty, we must be the architects of the future we want to see.

Ajda Pistotnik
Director and Co-Founder
Policy Lab

REDEFINING PROGRESS

Nature, Care, & the Working Class

Theme A:

Solidarity & Class Consciousness in the Face of Climate Breakdown

In periods of crisis, such as the ongoing climate change, mainstream ideologues and politicians typically announce that ‘we are all in the same boat’, thus appealing to the common responsibility to ‘fix the problem’. However, simple empirical analysis shows that the underlying responsibilities, as well as conceivable crisis resolutions, are very much unevenly distributed across social classes, and between countries.

- The top 1% of the world’s population owns more than half of the world’s wealth.
- The wealthy also use much more resources and are principally responsible for climate change.
- The top 1% of the world’s population is responsible for 23% of total carbon emissions, which is two times as much as the bottom 50% of the world’s population.

Despite these striking inequalities, the established narratives of social progress and sustainability remain fixated on the notion of entrepreneurial ethics at the individual level and the notion of trickle-down benefits from growth at the societal level.

In light of the failing responses to the crisis, it is imperative to develop emancipatory narratives that can foster solidarity among the subaltern classes of exploited peoples and nature – the dispossessed living beings in the growth-oriented capitalist economy.

Topics

- social inequality, both within and between nations
- The economy is based on human needs and within the limits of ecological sustainability

Theme B:

Climate Movement & the Working Class from Adversaries to Allies

The view that moving to a more sustainable economy may lead to a loss of decent-paying jobs is a barrier to the transition. However, is it true that the transition and well-paying jobs are incompatible?

Is there an inevitable choice between supporting jobs associated with societal and ecological damages and impoverishment of the working class?

The underlying impeding factors that make it difficult to synergise the struggle for decent employment with the struggle for nature protection will be deliberated upon, as will the analysis of how to build bridges between the climate movement and working classes.

Furthermore, the effectiveness and justification of different strategies of transformative action pursued by the climate movement, including non-violent protests, civil disobedience, and sabotage, will be discussed.

Topics:

Universal Job guarantee, lawfare, civil disobedience, building bridges between the two movements.

Theme C

The Invisible Economy and its Relationship to Nature, Care, & the Working Class

Although environmental services, care, and primary agricultural sectors are not typically highlighted amongst the sectors of the productive economy, they are essential sectors for the provisioning systems of basic needs. The contemporary period of economic stagnation coincides with the triple crisis of forces of social reproduction.

- We are faced with increasing impacts and damages from environmental disasters. As basic infrastructures and homes need to be rebuilt this takes a toll on the productive economic capacity.
- decades of austerity have depreciated the value of caring classes, including e.g. nurses, teachers, cooks, and cleaners. As a result, we see a shortage of care workers becoming one of the central emerging challenges in developed countries.
- The agricultural policies of the EU have depressed the earnings of small farmers, resulting in decreasing their livelihoods, and abandonment of agriculture and land concentration.

To date, the strategies employed to address the challenges facing these essential sectors have been largely oriented toward exploitation and extractivism, which may ultimately result in the gradual disintegration of these sectors.

- The costs associated with environmental damage are often borne by those who are most vulnerable, namely the victims of disasters.
- The working conditions of care workers are deteriorating due to increased working hours, the recruitment of workers from other countries, and the privatisation of public services.

- As the number of farmers declines, there is a concomitant increase in the reliance on imported food.

While the essential economic sectors are being downsized, other economic activities that David Graeber associates with “bullshit jobs” are proliferating. These are defined as jobs that are socially unnecessary or damaging. However, despite their lack of social purpose, bullshit jobs tend to be better remunerated than the jobs in the essential and invisible sectors of the economy. Indeed, the “value creation” in these sectors enables developed countries and wealthy classes to remunerate labour and resources extracted from other social classes and countries.

This year’s examination will focus on strategies for justly recognizing essential economic work and conceptualising alternative economic arrangements that prioritise the provisioning of human needs for all.

Topics:

Caring sectors, feminism, working class, value creation in contemporary capitalism, and rentier classes.

The concept note was prepared in cooperation with Policy Lab team and program board members Lea Kuhar, Alja Lobnik and Taj Zavodnik.

FRIDAY 30th August

5:00 PM REGISTRATION & HOTEL CHECK-IN

6.30 PM DINNER

8:30 PM OPENING PANEL:
“After the Fridays”: the Future of the Climate Movement

In his recent work “How to Blow up a Pipeline,” Andreas Malm argues that the climate movement has been too passive and overly reliant on non-violent, peaceful protests and legal avenues, which have not been effective in bringing about the necessary systemic changes to address the climate crisis. In the opening round-table, we will confront different perspectives on the successes and failures of the climate movement and its theory of change. We will deliberate on the prospects for successful change from below and explore yet unexplored options for action.

- Judith Pape, ICTA-UAB (Barcelona)
 - Oxana Lopatina, University of Ferrara
 - Jean Matthieu Thévenot, European Coordination Via Campesina (Brussel)
- Modrator: Ajda Pistotnik, Policy Lab (Ljubljana)



SATURDAY 31th August

8:00 AM BREAKFAST

9:00 AM WELCOME & INTRO WHO IS WHO

9:30 AM MORNING KEYNOTE LECTURE #1
The Degrowth Path: From a Rebellious Critique to a Conceivable Alternative for Equitable Emancipation & Safeguarding of Nature

Aljoša Slameršak, Policy Lab & ICTA-UAB (Ljubljana/Barcelona)

10:30 AM BREAK

10:45 AM MORNING KEYNOTE LECTURE #2
Making the Degrowth Narrative Work for Transformational Forces such as the Climate Movement & Labor Unions

Alexandra Koves, Corvinus University of Budapest & Economics for Rebels, podcast series (Budapest)

11:45 AM COFFEE BREAK WITH SNACKS

12:30 PM PANEL SESSION
“Wellbeing Economy in the Socialist Yugoslavia”: Successes and Failures

In this round-table, we would like to revisit the period of socialism in Yugoslavia and analyse if its legacy can inspire the next wave of progressive socio-ecological politics. The Yugoslav development model was unique among socialist economies. Rejecting both the Soviet model of central planning and liberal capitalism, Yugoslavia pursued a socialist model based on worker self-management and a regulated market economy. From the 1970s to the 1980s, Yugoslavia was arguably one of the leading countries in improving the material well-being of its citizens. However, by the beginning of the 1980s, Yugoslavia entered a prolonged economic crisis, halting progressive improvements. This led to a progressively deepening rift between the common sense of the popular classes and the socialist establishment. Also, the pursuit for development resulted in the deterioration of ecosystems and major pollution in and surrounding the country’s industrial



centers. In this panel, we will deliberate on whether and how the Yugoslav experience contributes to the development of progressive politics.

- Lea Kuhar, Södertorn University (Sweden) & Faculty of Arts (Ljubljana)
- Mladen Domazet, Institute of Philosophy & Institute for Political Ecology (Zagreb)
- Boriša Mraović, Crvena – Association for culture and art (Sarajevo)
- Luka Strika, Jednostavno rečeno/Simply Put (Belgrade)

Moderator: Sašo Furlan, Policy Consultant (Ljubljana)

2:00 PM LUNCH

3:45 PM GROUP PHOTO

4:00 PM PARALLEL SESSIONS: DISCUSSION GROUPS – PART ONE

A –Solidarity & Class Consciousness in the Face of Climate Breakdown

Striking inequalities underpin multiple socio-economic and ecological crises. The data shows that the richest 1% of the world's population owns more than half of the world's wealth and captures more than 20% of GDP. The richest 1% is also responsible for 23% of current greenhouse gas emissions and consumes more than 15% of global energy generated.

Yet, social inequality is only ranked 8th among EU citizens' concerns according to the latest EUROBAROMETER poll. Why are hegemonic common-senses neglecting the threat of inequality and fixating on concerns related to immigration, taxes, security, and war (all ranking above inequality)?

In this working group, we aim to give visibility to social inequalities and deliberate on emancipatory narratives for promoting solidarity and class consciousness. We would like you to consider the necessary elements of such a narrative and the possible challenges they may face against the current beliefs that make sense of the world for most people.

- Amelia Kraigher, Publishing house /*cf. (Ljubljana)
- Marina Gumzi, Film production Nosorogi (Ljubljana/Berlin)
- Miloš Kovačević, Faculty of Philosophy (Belgrade)
- Marton Czirfusz, Periféria Policy and Research Center (Budapest)

Group Facilitator: Matic Primc, Organisation for a Participatory Society (Maribor)

B – Climate Movement & the Working Class from Adversaries to Allies

Climate movement and workers' unions tend to have different priorities in their struggles. The lack of common objectives and at times confrontation between the movement and the unions makes it at times seem that they represent two adverse actors in the fight for their respective progressive cause.

What are the underlying causes of the split between the two, and what should each actor learn from the other to converge in their political positions and course of action?

Finally, we will try to identify different leverage points for transformative action, exploited by both actors, and deliberate on the effectiveness of different strategies of transformative action: strike, non-violent protest, civil disobedience, and sabotage.

- Mariona Bonfills, Research and Degrowth International & Intersindical CSC (Barcelona)
- Mojca Žarek, Trade Union Youth Plus, (Ljubljana)
- Eva Matjaž, ZASUK – the Trade Union for Creativity and Culture, & Poligon (Ljubljana)
- Taj Zavodnik, Focus/Rdeča pesa/Klas (Ljubljana)

Group Facilitator:

Noémie Cadiou, International Degrowth Network (Paris)

C – The Invisible Economy and its Relationship to Nature, Care, & the Working Class

Although environmental services, care, and primary agriculture are not typically highlighted among the sectors of the productive economy, they are essential sectors for meeting basic needs. As these sectors shrink, other economic activities are emerging, many of which have been described by David Graeber as “bullshit jobs.” These are defined as jobs that are socially unnecessary or harmful. Despite their lack of social purpose, bullshit jobs tend to pay more than jobs in the essential and invisible sectors of the economy. The group will focus on strategies for the just recognition of essential economic work and the conceptualization of alternative economic arrangements that prioritize the provision of human needs for all. What is the role of migrant

workers in this context? Consider that valuing nature means accounting for the damage of pollution, not just the profits from extractive activities – how would that change economic incentives – what would be produced?

- Valeria Graziano, Institute for Applied Theatre Studies, Justus-Liebig University (Giessen)
- Alja Lobnik, Maska (Ljubljana)
- Ana Marinšek, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Ljubljana)
- Arne Kušej, Policy Lab (Ljubljana)
- Blaž Kosovel, Policy Lab, Magistrala & Razpotja (Ljubljana/Nova Gorica)

Group Facilitator:

Carmen Dupont, Strategic Campaigner and Mobilizer (Rome)

5:45 PM CONVIVIAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Cultural Walk Around the Village: Exploring Landscapes and Legacies with Petra Kolenc, ZRC SAZU & LO-KO (Nova Gorica/Lokve)
- E-bike Through the Forest Paths towards the WW2 Partisan Memorial with Blaž Kosovel, Policy Lab, Magistrala & Razpotja (Ljubljana/Nova Gorica)
- Discover Honey & Collect Forest Herbs with Martina Gorjan Sulič, Winkler Guesthouse (Lokve)

7:30 PM **Thought Provokers: Recaps & Reflections of the Day**

The Thought Provokers will go beyond summaries by offering critical reflections on the ideas and discussions that took place. They will draw connections between sessions, highlight emerging patterns, and provoke deeper reflection by challenging assumptions or presenting alternative viewpoints. This reflection is intended to stimulate further reflection and dialogue among participants.

- Diana Filimon, MediaGen, Forum Apulum & DCN Global (Bucharest)
- Tea Šentjunc, Investigative Journalist, Pop TV (Ljubljana)
- Zarja Muršič, Science Communicator (Ljubljana)

8:30 PM DINNER & PARTY

SUNDAY 1st September

8:00 AM BREAKFAST & CHECK-OUT

9:30 AM PARALLEL SESSIONS: WORKING DISCUSSIONS – PART TWO see more info about WDs under Saturday

11:00 PM CLOSING PANEL

People Green New Deal without Growth

Behind every fascism, there is a failed revolution (Walter Benjamin).

In this round-table, we would like to deliberate on the rising flames of fascist politics and explore whether and how the “post-growth movement” can help in building a firewall against fascism. Surging support for reactionary political forces reveals the failure of the “progressive forces” to offer a convincing political program in contemporary times. After the 2008 financial crisis, the left greatly failed to increase popular support to become the dominant political force. In periods and countries where the left has governed, the pursued reforms have in the best of cases succeeded in alleviating the worst of impacts from the neoliberal turn, and in the worst of cases continued to dismantle of the welfare state’s solidarity mechanisms, diminishing the value of labor, supporting private enterprise against public services, and conceding to the demands of the fossil fuel industry.

Why has not the left come up with empowering visions for transformative and equitable approaches to addressing the social and climate crisis? Could the vision that Max Ajl calls the “People’s green new deal without growth” offer an escape route out of irrelevance for the left, and succeed in Defeating the siren calls of the fascists?

- Sophie Bloemen, Commons Network (Amsterdam)
- Dragan Nikčević, the Left/Levica (Ljubljana)
- Nikola Zdunić, Možemo!/Zagreb je naš (Zagreb)

Moderator: Ajda Pistotnik, Policy Lab (Ljubljana)

12:30 PM LUNCH

WHO IS WHO

ORGANIZING TEAM

Ajda Pistotnik is the co-founder and director of Policy Lab and a co-organiser of Slovenia's first Degrowth Political School in 2022. She is currently involved in the Horizon Europe project GreenPaths: a knowledge platform of resources in the field of green and just transitions. Ajda has explored Doughnut Economics as a model for the EU's economy beyond GDP and initiated Slovenia's degrowth community through book translations, journal editing, and event co-organisation, including the 2016 International Degrowth Conference in Budapest. She has moderated debates and presented policy research on financial justice and the debt economy at various policy forums including the G20 in Hamburg, UNCTAD in Nairobi (Kenya) and the IMF Annual Meetings in Lima (Peru).

Aljoša Slameršak, PhD, is a co-founder and consultant of the Policy Lab. He brings a wealth of expertise from his research career. His doctoral research 'The end of energy abundance: Embracing biophysical limits to a low-carbon energy transition', focused on environmental science and technology, degrowth and the low-carbon energy transition. This gives him a unique perspective on the challenges we face. Aljoša has published in prestigious journals such as Nature Energy, Nature Communications and The Lancet Planetary Health. His work highlights the critical need to transition to lower energy use from low-carbon sources and to address inequalities between the global North and South.

Blaž Kosovel (1981, PhD in Cultural Studies) is a researcher, cultural worker, tourist guide, editor of the magazine Razpotja, and project manager of the "Ab Initio - Urban Utopia" (as part of Nova Gorica European Capital of Culture 2025), which aims to create a digital archive of Nova Gorica and to showcase other European new towns. His research interests include intellectual and social history, as well as cultural and urban geography. His book, "Why the US Has Never Had a Department of Culture", is an account of the crucial role of institutional culture in the European nations-building processes and its absence in the American context. He was a Fulbright Scholar at CUNY in 2013. His latest publication is the foreword to the Slovenian translation of David Graeber's "Bullshit Jobs".

Arne Kušej is researcher at Policy Lab, a member of the Institute for Labour Studies, and a student of early modern philosophy and science, currently writing his PhD thesis on the social history of empiricism at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana.

PROGRAM BOARD MEMBERS

Lea Kuhar is a postdoctoral researcher at Södertörn University in Stockholm and a research associate at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Alja Lobnik has established herself in recent years as a writer and critic in the field of performance art. She has worked for Radio Študent, Kriterij, Amfiteatr and others. She was president of the Association of Theatre Critics and Theatrolologists of Slovenia and is a member of the board of the Asociacija. She has participated in performance projects as a dramaturge or co-author. She was co-editor of the magazine Maska and the web portal Neodvisni - teritorij sodobnih scenskih umetnosti (Independent - the territory of contemporary performing arts) (2019-2012), and in 2021 she became the artistic and managing director of Maska.

Taj Zavodnik, environmental and spatial sociologist, works for the environmental organisation Focus, where he focuses, among other things, on the social aspects of the green transition. In recent years, he has been involved in a number of environmental and labour struggles, and is active in the media collective Rdeča Pesa (Red Beetroot) and the ecosocialist initiative Klas.

GUEST SPEAKERS & PARTICIPANTS

Sophie Bloemen is a political economist and co-founder and director of Commons Network, a collaborative think tank for new economy and just transition. As a social advocate in policy, she has worked extensively at the European level and with international institutions, as well as on the national and the local level. Currently she is working on projects and proposals around community economies, democratic digital infrastructures, post growth and the role of governments.

Mariona Bonsfills Clotet is based in Barcelona and has an interdisciplinary background that spans economics, international relations and political studies. In the past, Mariona has conducted research at the University of Oxford on the ecological politics of the Kurdish Liberation Movement, and on the use of ecological violence against socialist resistance movements, more broadly. At present, she is active in Research & Degrowth International, where she works as a project coordinator. A long-standing trade unionist, she is a member of the Catalan class-based union Intersindical CSC, where she runs a political education unit on degrowth, ecology and class. Mariona also participates in the union's strategy planning, where she advocates for an approach to unions as social movements.

Noémie Cadiou (she/her) has been in the degrowth movement since 2020 when she joined the editorial team of the collected volume Degrowth & Strategy. She is a founding member of the International Degrowth Network and a recent new member of the degrowth.info collective. When she's not busy supporting the infrastructure and organisation of the IDN or collaborating on the degrowth.info blog, she dreams of a degrowth world where music, art and bikepacking holidays define a new norm.

Borut Cigale is currently employed as a project leader and international cooperation officer at the National Youth Council of Slovenia, working in fields of youth participation, advocacy, and topics related to sustainable development. Spending most of his office hours trying to get youth representatives a seat at the decision-makers table. Librarian by education and side-hustling as an event producer at music and movie festivals, and graphic design.

Márton Czirfusz is co-founder of Periféria Policy and Research Center, an independent research organisation based in Budapest that envisions a world where people have access to social and spatial justice through decent housing and working conditions. Márton holds an MSc and PhD in Geography from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and has worked in interdisciplinary social science environments for most of his career. His recent work has focused on labour issues in Hungary, including working conditions in the booming electric car battery industry, the increasing labour inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of housing as social reproduction in socio-spatial labour inequalities.

Mladen Domazet, PhD, is a philosopher-physicist and researcher at Institute for Political Ecology, and Institute of Philosophy in Zagreb, Croatia. He was a member of the Organizing Team of 2016 and 2023 International Degrowth Conferences in Budapest and Zagreb. His research focuses on degrowth-compatible common senses and social attitudes among contemporary populations, with special focus on the European semiperiphery, and modernity's cultural instruments that contributed to the hegemony of economic growth.

Carmen Dupont is an organiser with over one decade of experience campaigning on the rights of people on the move across Europe. She spent several years in Lesvos supporting grassroots efforts led by local and refugee activists. From 2020 until 2023 she was part of the Facilitation Group of FundAction, an activist-led participatory grantmaking fund. Over the last years she has shifted her focus to the inner dimension of social and ecological change - because while we are busy trying to change the system, the system has already changed us. Carmen is currently setting up a space, rooted in retreat, for activists to explore patterns instilled by the dominant system and to slow down, re-source and re-connect.

Diana Filimon is president of Forum Apulum, an organization focusing on getting young people to be informed and civically engaged. One of the organizations main projects reaches over 3 million young Romanians every month by bringing them the news. At an international level, Diana has coordinated several projects across the world and is part of the DCN Global team.

Sašo Furlan holds an MA in Political Science and a PhD in Philosophy from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana. He currently works as an independent political consultant.

Valeria Graziano is a cultural theorist and organizer. Over the years, she has contributed to a number of militant research initiatives across social movements and the cultural sector, grounding her practice in institutional analysis and popular pedagogy. Central themes in her research are precarity and the refusal of work, the convivial reorganization of social reproduction and the possibility of political pleasure. Her book "Pirate Care: Acts Against the Criminalization of Solidarity", co-authored with Marcell Mars and Tomislav Medak, will be published by Pluto Press in 2025.

Marina Gumzi is the director of NOSOROGI, a research and production studio based in Ljubljana, where she alternates between the roles of producer and screenwriter. Her scripts often explore the ambiguous border between the natural and the supernatural, delving into the realms of memory, dreams and imagination. Films she has produced and/or co-written have screened and won awards at international festivals, cinemas and art spaces around the world. As a freelance researcher, she has worked on projects focusing on sustainability in audiovisual media, participatory creative practices and implicit bias in film production support mechanisms.

Miloš Kovačević is a philosopher, researcher at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, and co-founder of the Platform for Theory and Practice of Commons – Zajedničko. For five years, he has been hosting the radio show Commonification and interviewing over 70 left-wing scholars and activists. He developed a doughnut economic model for four cities in Serbia and annotated bibliography/library about commons. He is publishing on various topics, including non-standard employment, universal basic income/ services, and commoning. His most recent contribution in the field of green politics is “What Happens When Artists Discover Commons: A Conversation with Irena Ristić” published in From Praxis to Policy: Environmental Shift through Art and Culture.

Alexandra Köves is an ecological economist, associate professor at the Corvinus University of Budapest and director of the Ecological Economics Research Centre at the Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies. She is Vice-President of the European Society of Ecological Economics and a member of the Degrowth Support Group. She teaches courses on decision sciences, ecological economics and degrowth. Her research focuses partly on decisions influencing sustainability transitions and partly on sustainability scenarios using participatory research techniques. She is trying to introduce degrowth to students and a wider audience by running two podcast series: a Hungarian language one called “Green Equality” and an English language one called “Economics for Rebels”.

Luka Knežević Strika (Belgrade, 1983) is a photographer, visual artist and cultural worker. He contributes to various, mostly self-organized collective practices in the fields of art, spaces and activism. From 2021 he is a cofounder of an artistic research collective “Jednostavno rečeno” (Simply put) exploring the industrial heritage of Yugoslavia. From 2015 to 2019 he served as a member of the steering committee of the Association

Independent culture scene of Serbia (chairman 2017–2019). From 2014–2018 he was actively contributing to the citizens movement “Don’t Let Belgrade D(r)own” opposing the violent and illegal urban devastation of Belgrade riverbanks done through the Belgrade Waterfront project.

Mala Kline is a choreographer, writer and senior teacher of Sapphire® work with dreams and imagination. Her extensive artistic and theoretical oeuvre is based on the Sapphire® dreaming techniques. She uses Sapphire® in coaching and mentoring artists, researchers, entrepreneurs and other creatives to facilitate personal transformation and visionary creativity always in response to the particular needs of individuals or groups in specific situation and context. She has received most of the awards in Slovenia for her work. She holds a PhD in philosophy and an MA in theatre. She is the author of Capfico: Writings from the Belly of the Whale and Theatres of Potentiality: between ethics and politics. She is the founder and director of ELIAS institute. www.elias2069.com www.malakline.com

Amelia Kraigher (1974), a recognised editor. In 1998–2003 she worked as a journalist and editor for culture and humanities at Radio Študent, Ljubljana; she has been working as a freelance theatre critic for 15 years, organising and participating in several meetings, workshops and symposia in Europe and Asia. She has received scholarships for research in the field of drama (2011) and as an outstanding editor (2024). She is an active member of IATC-AICT. In 2011–2017 she worked as editor-in-chief of Maska, Performing Arts Journal and Maska Institute Publishing Programme. Since 2017 she has been the editor-in-chief of the academic publishing house Založba /*cf. in Ljubljana. She was awarded the Vladimir Kralj Prize for editorial work (2018) and the first-ever Neda Pagon Prize for editorial achievements (2023).

Oxana Lopatina is a degrowth researcher and activist, and is currently finishing her PhD in environmental sustainability and wellbeing at the University of Ferrara. Informed by the degrowth, decolonial and Indigenous perspectives, her research focuses on the worldview and practice changes needed for a just and sustainable systemic transformation. As an activist, Oxana has also been involved in a range of educational and arts projects for system change.

Ana Marinšek is a member of Levica (Left), the socialist parliamentary party from Slovenia. She has been active in the fields of social work, social welfare, family policy and feminism. She is responsible for several

successful pieces of legislation, including improved provisions for single-parent families seeking child support, improvements in the field of social work, and a more equitable division of parental leave between mothers and fathers. Since 2022, she has been an advisor in the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, responsible for social and family policy.

Eva Matjaž is an independent researcher, psychologist, sociologist and social worker, unioniser, communication strategist. Research focus: working conditions of workers in cultural and creative sectors, gentrification, touristification, degrowth, ...

Boriša Mraović: Comrade. Sarajevan. Undisciplined researcher. Writer. Editor. Collaborator. Father of the son. Has a dog. Of the last generation. One star open water diver.

Zarja Muršič is a freelance science communicator and journalist working with Slovenian and international media. I cover topics ranging from biology and environmental sciences to human behaviour and technology. I am interested in the social impacts of science and technology. I am an ambassador of citizen science for Slovenia.

Dragan Nikčević is a member of Levica (Left), the socialist parliamentary party from Slovenia. He has been the organisation's chief communications officer for many years and has been involved in numerous election and other campaigns. This job description fits well with a sociologist's interest in the class, identity and social group divisions that underpin every political development (including the growing prominence of green politics in recent years).

Judith Pape is a climate justice activist from Germany who is doing a PhD as part of the REAL project at UAB in Barcelona. In her PhD she studies contentious tactics of the European climate justice movement and the dynamic interactions with the state.

Matic Primc is a Slovenian activist, organizer and president of Organizacija za participatorno družbo (Organization for participatory society). He is part of the municipalist assembly movement Inicijativa Mestni Zbor (Initiative for city-wide assembly) working on direct democracy as well as environmental issues. He is also an editor at ZNetwork.org. He is an advocate for and expert in participatory budgeting,

which he has been promoting since 2013. Matic has also worked with cooperatives, striving to democratize their internal processes.

Teja Šentjerc: Asking questions, re-examining, curious, idealistic. Currently paying rent as a full time journalist. Searching for ways to present big, important issues in interesting, non-pretentious ways. Hoping to use media as a medium between knowledge and everyday life. Firm believer in KISS (Keep it short and simple). Not giving up on humanity and society.

Jean Thevenot is a young farmer in the Basque Country who produces organic seedlings and vegetables. He is a member of the French farmers' union Confédération Paysanne, a member organisation of the international peasant movement La Via Campesina. He is able to speak on public policies to promote small-scale agriculture and the market regulations needed to achieve this goal. He also works on climate and biodiversity issues, fighting against false solutions and promoting proposals that could actually support farmers in a coherent agro-ecological transition towards food sovereignty. Finally, he is involved in youth articulation, defending tools and policies that help young people to engage in agriculture, as a key element of a healthy and sustainable food system!

Nikola Zdunić is a member of the Možemo party and currently serves as a city representative and president of one of the 17 city district councils. As a student, he was active in the organization of Zagreb's queer marches. In 2015, he joined the green-left organization Grupa 22 as a volunteer, and later as an associate at the Institute for Political Ecology, where he became more familiar with degrowth. As a member of the Right to the City organization, he also dealt with issues of city public spaces and researched various models of affordable and ecological housing.

Mojca Žerak, president of the Trade Union Mladi plus/Youth plus, began her activist journey in 2013, when she joined the student association Iskra. There she was first introduced to student and higher education policy, later on also feminism, all through the marxist theoretical perspective. In 2020 she was employed by the Trade Union Mladi plus, where they mainly deal with the precariousness at the labor market, and other youth policies. She was elected as the president of the trade union in November 2023. She is 32 years old, comes from Rogaška Slatina, and has a bachelors' degree in media and communication studies.

