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Why “green politics” is not popular in Ukraine? Reasons of failure of the Party of Greens of Ukraine in the 2002 elections and afterwards

Dlaczego „zielona polityka” nie jest popularna na Ukrainie? Przyczyny niepowodzenia Partii Zielonych Ukrainy w wyborach w 2002 r. i późniejszych

The paper explores the reasons for the failure of the Party of Greens of Ukraine (the PZU) in the 2002 elections after its success in 1998 elections. The first part is devoted to the issue of ecological conditions in Ukraine and lists the biggest problems in this area. The activity of the PZU is then examined and followed by evaluation of its actual performance in the Parliament, in order to find out whether the activities of the PZU correspond with the ecological problems of the country. The second part compares the 1998 and 2002 PR election campaigns to find similarities and differences between them. Main attention is drawn to the PR campaign of 2002 and the factors which could help explain the failure of the PZU in the elections. It is concluded that the main reasons for the failure of the PZU in the 2002 elections are rooted in the discrediting performance of the party in the Parliament, which resulted in a loss of political credibility, and exacerbated by the outdated and flawed PR campaign of the party given the new realities of the 2002 elections. Moreover, it is stressed that the popularity of the PZU among voters has been low in each parliamentary election since 2002.

Keywords: Party of Greens of Ukraine, parliamentary elections, green politics, elections in Ukraine

W artykule dokonano analizy przyczyn niepowodzenia Partii Zielonych Ukrainy (PZU) w wyborach w 2002 r. po sukcesie wyborczym w 1998 r. W pierwszej części, dotyczącej warunków ekologicznych na Ukrainie, przedstawiono największe problemy w tym obszarze. Następnie

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omówiono działalność PZU, a także dokonano oceny faktycznych wyników aktywności tej partii w parlamencie pod kątem tego, czy wpisuje się ona w problemy ekologiczne kraju. W drugiej części opracowania porównano kampanie wyborcze PR z 1998 i 2002 r. w celu odkrycia podobieństw i różnic między nimi. Zwrócono uwagę na sposób prowadzenia kampanii PR z 2002 r. i czynniki, które mogłyby pomóc wyjaśnić porażkę PZU w wyborach. Stwierdzono, że niepowodzenie PZU w wyborach 2002 r. wynika przede wszystkim z dyskredytacji partii w parlamencie, skutkującej utratą politycznej wiarygodności, a pogłębionej przez przestawienie i niewłaściwą kampanię PR, biorąc pod uwagę realia wyborów w 2002 r. Odniesiono się także do tego, że poparcie PZU jest niskie w każdym wyborach parlamentarnych od 2002 r.

Słowa kluczowe: Partia Zielonych Ukrainy, wybory parlamentarne, zielona polityka, wybory na Ukrainie

I. Introduction

The Party of Greens of Ukraine (the PZU) was registered in 1991, far earlier than other “green” parties in Ukraine. It grew out of the Green World Association, an ally of the Rukh nationalist movement in the late Soviet era. It is contemporary Ukraine’s third-oldest political party, and its inaugural congress was held in September 1990, where it championed both “eco-socialism” and state independence. After Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, the PZU began a long slip into decline.

The PZU re-entered the Ukrainian political scene in the 1998 parliamentary elections, when it won 5.44% of the votes. At its peak, the PZU held 19 parliamentary seats and was one of the four center parties in the Parliament¹. In the 2002 parliamentary elections, it gained only 1.36% of all votes (with the electoral threshold being 4%) and, therefore, was not represented in the Parliament. Moreover, in all other parliamentary elections in Ukraine (2006, 2007, 2012, 2014, 2019), the PZU also did not succeed. Let us elaborate on this issue further.

The 2006 parliamentary elections (as well as subsequent 2007 pre-term parliamentary elections) in Ukraine were peculiar in the sense that they were the first elections to the Parliament in the history of an independent Ukraine to be held in a party-list proportional system in the nationwide constituency. What is equally important is the fact that “for the first time since 1994, the conduct of the elections was met with the approval of the OSCE”². The threshold for parties and blocs of political parties was only 3% of the number of voters participating in the election. This is a low threshold compared to 4% and 5% used during other elections. For example, in the previous parliamentary elections in 2002, the threshold was set at 4%. Moreover, for

¹ V. Fritz, *State-building: A Comparative Study of Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, and Russia*, Central European University Press, Budapest–New York, 2007, pp. 145, 353.

² N. Copsy, *The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections of 2006*, “Journal of Representative Democracy” 2006, Vol. 42, Issue 4, p. 301.

the first time, the results of the 2006 parliamentary elections were of particular importance for the development of the state. This is because of the Orange Revolution of 2004, which resulted in new amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine. Since 2006, a considerable number of powers of the Head of State have been transferred to the Parliament of Ukraine. The Parliament had the right to appoint the Prime Minister of Ukraine, as well as other members of the government, at the request of the Prime Minister of Ukraine. Subsequently, the PZU could have effectively influenced the formation and implementation of the state's environmental policies. Let us analyze the results of the PZU in the 2006 parliamentary elections.

In the 2006 parliamentary elections, the PZU did not pass the electoral threshold, gaining as little as 0.54% of the total votes recorded. Other environmentalist political parties competed in these elections alongside PZU, but also received a small number of votes, and thus were not represented in the Parliament. These environmentalist political parties included the Socio-Ecological Party “Union. Chernobyl. Ukraine”, which gained 0.09% of the votes, the Ukrainian party “Green Planet” with 0.38% of votes, the “Party of ecological rescue EKO + 25” with 0.47% votes³. A large number of environmentalist political parties in these elections can be explained by the relatively recent success of the PZU in the 1998 parliamentary elections followed by the loss of popularity amongst the public, and subsequently, a poor showing in 2002 parliamentary elections. Therefore, other political parties emerged to entice the “green” votes, which were once being cast for the PZU.

However, none of the environmentalist political parties, which ran during the 2006 elections, were represented in the Parliament. We calculated their cumulative result in this election, and it turned out to be 1.48% of the total votes. Subsequently, the environmentalist political parties had no chance of overcoming the electoral threshold of 3% even if they were united. It is evident that the environmental issues of the PZU or any of the new three political parties did not receive strong voter support in those elections. This tendency can also be observed in the next parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

The pre-term parliamentary elections 2007 were also held in a party-list proportional system in the nationwide constituency, with the electoral threshold set at 3%. The PZU did not pass the electoral threshold, collecting only 0.40% of the total votes recorded. In addition, the All-Ukrainian Political Party “Ecology and Social Protection” also competed in those elections together with the “Social-Christian Party” as part of the “Christian Bloc”. However, this political party bloc received only 0.10% of the total votes⁴. Moreover, it is not possible to clearly establish the share of vot-

³ Official site of Central Election Commission of Ukraine, <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/protokol_cvk_2006.pdf>, “Election of People’s Deputies of Ukraine on March 26, 2006. Protocol of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine”, 23 February 2020.

⁴ Official site of Central Election Commission of Ukraine, <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/protokol_cvk_2007.pdf>, “Extraordinary elections of People’s Deputies of Ukraine on September 30, 2007. Protocol of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine”, 23 February 2020.

ers who favored environmental issues. As Nathaniel Copsey puts it, overall “political instability and a series of short-lived governments had bedeviled Ukraine since the Orange Revolution of 2004, and the elections of 2007 were not expected to lead to a significant shake-up in Ukrainian politics”⁵.

In the 2012 parliamentary elections, the PZU received 0.34% of the total votes in the multi-mandate constituency, which prevented the party from having a representation in the Parliament. In addition, other environmentalist political parties also competed in the elections: the Ukrainian party “Green Planet”, which also received 0.34% of votes, and political party “The Greens”, with 0.25% of votes⁶. Thus, although the votes of environmental voters were split between the three similar parties in the elections, the cumulative total of votes for all three was still as low as 0.93% (less than 1% of voters), which would not allow them to be represented in the Parliament even if these three political parties were united.

In the 2014 pre-term parliamentary elections of Ukraine, conducted after the Euromaidan and the signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, the PZU received only 0.25% of the votes in the multi-mandate constituency, and therefore, was not represented in the Parliament. In addition, another party — the Ukrainian “Green Planet” received 0.23%⁷ of the votes, therefore “pulling” votes away from the PZU. However, in total, these two environmentalist political parties received 0.48% of the votes, which was still not enough to be represented in the Parliament. We believe that after the events of 2013–2014, between the annexation by the Russian Federation of the Ukrainian Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the armed conflict in the east of Ukraine, the signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, environmental issues have become not as important to voters as national and socio-economic security issues.

In the 2019 pre-term parliamentary elections of Ukraine, the PZU in the multi-mandate constituency received 0.66% of the votes, taking thirteenth place out of the 22 political parties that participated in the elections⁸. With such a low result, it did not pass the electoral threshold of 5% (five political parties in total did), which prevented it from being represented in the Parliament.

In Table 1, we present the results of the PZU and other environmentalist political parties in all parliamentary elections we have analyzed.

⁵ N. Copsey, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

⁶ Official site of Central Election Commission of Ukraine, <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/zbvo_2012.pdf>, “The election of the People’s Deputies of Ukraine on October 28, 2012. Protocol of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine”, 24 February 2020.

⁷ Official site of Central Election Commission of Ukraine, <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/protokol_bmvo_ndu_26102014.pdf>, “The extraordinary election of the People’s Deputies of Ukraine on October 26, 2014. Protocol of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine”, 24 February 2020.

⁸ Official site of Central Election Commission of Ukraine, <<https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vnd2019/wp300pt001f01=919.html>>, “Extraordinary elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine July 21, 2019”, 24 February 2020.

Table 1. Results of the PZU and other environmentalist political parties in the parliamentary elections in Ukraine from 1998 to 2019, indicated in percentages

Parliamentary election year	Environmentalist political parties, titles	% of voters “for”
1998 parliamentary elections	PZU	5.44
2002 parliamentary elections	PZU	1.36
2006 parliamentary elections	PZU	0.54
	Socio-Ecological Party “Union. Chernobyl. Ukraine”	0.09
	“The Party of ecological rescue EKO + 25”	0.47
	Ukrainian party “Green Planet”	0.38
2007 pre-term parliamentary elections	PZU	0.40
	All-Ukrainian Political Party “Ecology and Social Protection” within the “Christian Bloc” together the “Social-Christian Party”	0.10
2012 parliamentary elections	PZU	0.34
	Ukrainian party “Green Planet”	0.34
	Political party “The Greens”	0.25
2014 pre-term parliamentary elections	PZU	0.25
	Ukrainian party “Green Planet”	0.23
Pre-term parliamentary elections 2019	PZU	0.66

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of data of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, <<https://www.cvk.gov.ua>>. Accessed on 7 December 2019.

Thus, after its initial success in the 1998 elections, the PZU was never again elected to the Parliament of Ukraine. Moreover, its popularity among voters has remained low for almost 20 years. However, we are most interested in the PZU’s loss of popularity among voters and the fact that the party was not elected to the Parliament in the 2002 parliamentary elections after its success in the 1998 parliamentary elections with 5.44% of the votes. This fact leaves an interesting field for a closer look and examination.

II. Methodology and literature review

This paper will try to analyze the reasons for failure of the Party of Greens of Ukraine in the 2002 elections after its success in the 1998 elections. The argument will be brought to the table, that the PZU’s discrediting work in the Parliament and, after that, an old and irrelevant PR campaign were the main causes of its failure in the 2002 elections. The research will include a case study explanatory analysis. The primary data for this topic is found in the laws of Ukraine concerning environmental issues, as well as the program and statute of the PZU. The secondary data from the areas of “green” politics, “green” parties and their electoral success will be used as well.

The paper consists of two main parts. The first part is devoted to the ecological situation in Ukraine, pointing out the main issues in this area. Activity of the PZU is then examined at a theoretical level, as well as from the perspective of its actual performance in the Parliament, to find out whether the party effectively deals with environmental issues of the country. The second part compares the 1998 and 2002 PR election campaigns to find similarities and differences between them. We mainly focus on the party's PR campaign of 2002 and the factors which could be important to explain the failure of the PZU in the elections. Finally, conclusions are drawn and explanations are given.

Much has been said in the literature about the reasons for popularity of the Green parties — or the lack thereof — and their underwhelming electoral success.

As it is argued in the literature, a high degree of environmental consciousness and electoral success of Green parties do not usually go hand in hand. This can be demonstrated on the example of a number of European countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, where there are no successful Green parties, but the public does have a high environmental awareness — as opposed to Belgium and France, where environmental consciousness is lower but Green parties enjoy a degree of success.

However, as it is stated in the literature, other factors typically play an even bigger role in the success or failure of the Greens in elections. For instance, according to Chris Rootes, “a highly developed and widespread awareness of the environmental issues, national or global, is no guarantee of the development of a successful Green party, and neither is a decentralized political system operating under conditions of proportional representation⁹”. According to him, the explanation lies in the state of political competition and the actual performance of the Green party.

III. Ecological problems of Ukraine and the PZU activity

In this section, environmental problems of Ukraine will be introduced, and then the position of the Party of Greens of Ukraine on these problems, as expressed in its statute, program, and its activity in the Parliament, will be examined. This will be done in order to see how specifically Ukraine-oriented the PZU is in solving these issues.

It should be pointed out that Ukraine is a highly polluted country with many environmental problems. Most of them are considered a result of the former communist rule. Industrialization in the Soviet Ukraine, under the Stalinist regime, was implemented quickly with little regard for the natural environment. Many polluting plants were built in the territory of Ukraine, especially in its Eastern region. A cascade of hydroelectric power plants was built on the Dnipro, the main river of Ukraine, which led to many ecological problems within the river itself and its basin. Many of them remain important issues and will be discussed further in the paper. As industrialization under socialism

⁹ Ch. Rootes, *Environmental consciousness, institutional structures and political competition in the formation and development of Green parties*, [in:] *The Green challenge: the development of Green parties in Europe*, eds. D. Richardson and Ch. Rootes, Routledge, London 1995, p. 241.

took place mostly in the territory of Eastern Ukraine and the Ural Mountains in Russia, "Ukraine overall is one of the most severely environmentally disturbed regions of the entire former Soviet Union, especially in Donets'k-Dnieper economic region"¹⁰. Moreover, as it is stated by Craig ZumBrunnen: "Ukraine also contains some of the world's most disturbed and polluted air, water, and land resources"¹¹.

Thus, the main ecological problems of Ukraine can be identified. Generally, the most frequently mentioned Ukrainian ecological problems are inadequate supplies of potable water, air and water pollution, deforestation, and radiation contamination in the northeast, a legacy of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant disaster from 1986. However, many other problems should be added to this list. Firstly, the accident at the Chernobyl power plant had a severe negative impact on people and the environment in all of Ukraine, not just the surrounding region. Secondly, land resource conditions should be identified, too. The issue of waste management problem is recently increasing in importance as well, but resolutions are implemented mostly at the local level, with the state leaving municipal authorities to solve this problem by themselves. One consequence of this was the Lviv fire in 2016–2017, when the flames tore through a landfill outside the city, and other landfills began refusing the city's waste¹².

The short overview of the most severe problems is presented below.

The atmospheric pollution and low air quality are one of the most pressing environmental problems of Ukraine and are mainly caused by heavy industry. Again, the most industrially developed region of Ukraine is the Donets'k-Dnieper region, the industrial region of Ukraine. The air pollution is not as severe in other parts of the country.

Ecologists also stress out that Ukraine's water quality is not far behind the quality of its air. Moreover, this issue is considered to be more important, as each citizen is directly impacted by such problems as inadequate supplies of potable water, or low water quality. Outbreaks of cholera were recorded in some cities of southern Ukraine as late as in the 1990s (in Mykolayiv, for example). The problems are, mainly, with fresh water supply and use. Ukraine uses its fresh waters intensively, especially considering its quite limited water resources. Such factors as heavy industrial development and high population density have resulted in very serious water pollution in all of Ukraine. In addition, according to Nina Hagemann *et al.*, outdated administrative structures as well as economic and political situation constrain effective water governance and result in low water quality in Ukraine¹³.

¹⁰ C. ZumBrunnen, "Environmental conditions" in *The Ukrainian economy. Achievements, problems, challenges*, [in:] *The Ukrainian economy: achievements, problems, challenges*, ed. I. Koropecykyj, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1992, p. 315.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 312.

¹² D. Peleschuk, *Trash talk: how beautiful, progressive Lviv became overrun with rubbish*, "The Guardian", 24 April 2017, <<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/apr/24/trash-talk-lviv-rubbish-crisis-ukraine>>. Accessed on 27 November 2019.

¹³ N. Hagemann, F. Blumensaat, F. Tavares Wahren, J. Trumper, C. Burmeister, R. Moynihan, N. Scheifhacker, *The long road to improving the water quality of the Western Bug River (Ukraine) – A multi-scale analysis*, "Journal of Hydrology" 2014, Vol. 519, p. 2438.

In addition, there are surface-water shortages in certain parts of the country.

Furthermore, according to C. ZumBrunnen, “Although the Dnieper, Ukraine’s major drainage system, is the tenth-longest river in the Soviet Union and eleventh in terms of the area of its drainage basin, rising non-returned or consumptive water use within the basin is creating water-supply problems for many of the cities, industries, and agricultural facilities within the Dnieper basin”¹⁴.

The causes of water pollution present in Ukraine are manifold and include, among others, biological, chemical, and physical pollution. Again, the most water-polluted region is the Donets’k-Dnieper region, with south and west economic regions being less polluted. Still, while scholars Nikolai Nazarov, Hadrian F. Cook, and Graham Woodgate agree that the Dnipro river basin is one of the most serious ecological problems in Ukraine, they also add the Polissya region to the list of the most ecologically problematic regions of Ukraine¹⁵.

One cannot talk about water pollution in Ukraine without mentioning marine and coastal pollution problems, even though they are less apparent for an average citizen. In fact, “the magnitude of the water pollution problems of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea coasts is so severe that they are called ‘regional ecological problems’”¹⁶. From the 1970s, the Sea of Azov has had contamination issues stemming mainly from industrial and municipal wastewater contamination. Hydrogen sulfide is the most widespread and serious pollution problem of the Black Sea — in fact, 90% of the Black Sea is affected by this toxic compound. Ferrous metallurgy and chemical plants, along with municipal wastes, represent primary pollution sources for the Black Sea. Overall, the coastal pollution in the Black Sea substantially exceeds safe levels. Many of the pollutants create severe coastal pollution problems¹⁷. Scholars N. Nazarov, H. F. Cook, and G. Woodgate also point out that the most serious problems in Ukraine are found in cities and areas near the Black and Azov Seas¹⁸.

Land resources conditions and such problems as soil erosion, soil contamination, and disrupted lands should also be mentioned. In this scope, Ukraine is mainly affected by soil erosion, as most of its territory consists of rolling lands covered with easily erodible loess. Southern and southeastern parts have serious issues with wind erosion, while in western parts water erosion is the greatest concern. Soil contamination in Ukraine results from an excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides, and the presence of water- and wind-transported pollutants from industry, especially from contaminated ground at industrial cities. Due to the mining of several types of minerals, ores, and coal, Ukraine has relatively large amounts of disturbed lands¹⁹.

¹⁴ C. ZumBrunnen, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

¹⁵ N. Nazarov, H. F. Cook, G. Woodgate, *Environmental issues in the post-communist Ukraine*, “Journal of Environmental Management” 2001, Vol. 63, Issue 1, p. 76.

¹⁶ C. ZumBrunnen, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ N. Nazarov, H. F. Cook, G. Woodgate, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁹ C. ZumBrunnen, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

Lately one of the most visible problems of Ukraine has been the deforestation of the country, especially in the Carpathian Mountains. The public pays close attention to this problem, as for the last couple of years this region has been suffering from severe floods, which occur each spring. Inappropriate use of the forests by businesses, which export the wood, is considered the main reason for the deforestation of Western Ukraine.

Finally, the 1986 accident at Chernobyl's Nuclear Power Plant, and its impact on people and the environment are among the main long-term problems and costs that Ukraine has to deal with. Extensive areas have been affected by the Chernobyl disaster: "Chernobyl contaminated 15% arable land in 1986"²⁰. As C. ZumBrunnen puts it, "from a human health and safety perspective, land, water, food chains, and their products may well remain seriously contaminated and uninhabitable for decades"²¹. One of the major concerns has been the radioactive contamination of water resources, especially in the string of Dnieper reservations. The continuing impact on residents in the area of Chernobyl, those involved in the cleanup actions, but also all the citizens of Ukraine is visible to this day. Moreover, the full range of consequences of the accident is still unknown, and will definitely surface in the future. For example, occurrences of childhood leukemia in parts of Ukraine are reported, twice to four times the norm. "Given the incubation time for radiation-linked diseases, especially carcinomas, it may be well in to the next century before the final toll of Chernobyl can be known"²².

Thus, a conclusion can be made from the above-mentioned ecological problems of Ukraine. Undoubtedly, Ukraine has many serious ecological problems in need of a solution. Specifically, these kinds of ecological problems are unlikely to be present to such an extent in any other country of the European region, except probably Russia and partly Belarus. Therefore, it is only natural to assume that environmental and green organizations should be very important in Ukraine. Just as naturally many, if not all of these major ecological problems should theoretically be considered by the Party of Greens of Ukraine. To put it differently, in the hope to find an imprint of the ecological problems of Ukraine we will look at the program, statute, and the practical activity of the PZU in the Ukrainian Parliament in 1998–2002.

IV. Activity of the PZU in the Parliament (1998–2002)

Starting from the program and the statute of the PZU, the main concept of the Ukrainian party is the sustainable development of the country. Protection of the environment, putting the rights and needs of an individual before the needs of the state, gender equality, peace and a good standard of living for all citizens in safe and environmentally friendly conditions are the main concepts outlined in the examined doc-

²⁰ M. Dyczok, *Ukraine: movement without change, change without movement*, Harwood Academic Publishers, Amsterdam 2000, p. 43.

²¹ C. ZumBrunnen, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 335.

uments. Its advantages include certainly the generally progressive ideas, which are in accordance with European environmental concepts. The big disadvantage, in the authors' opinion, is that the program of the single influential green party in Ukraine at the time does not refer particularly to the main specific problems of Ukraine in the area of ecology. After all, most European countries do not face environmental issues as severe as Ukraine's, and no single country in particular. A considerable disconnection in the theoretical concepts of the PZU may be observed, as the party does not fully consider Ukrainian ecological problems, but rather limits itself to copying European standards. However, Ukraine still has a long way to go to reach these standards, while specific domestic ecological issues remain yet to be resolved.

The performance of the party in the Parliament between 1998 and 2002 is non-satisfactory as well. According to official data, in the elections to the Parliament in 1998 he PZU gained 1,444,264 votes of the electorate and, thus, 5.4% of the total votes. According to all sources, the PZU was in the alliance with the pro-president Kuchma parties in the Parliament. However, it tried not to display this fact publicly and rather preferred to stay between the opposition and the ruling parties. In our opinion, this brought about a set of negative impacts for the party. One is that the party cannot remain disengaged from active parliamentary work while in Parliament, if it wants to have a strong position in the next elections. Otherwise, the public will either forget that the party exists or will be dissatisfied with its poor performance. Thus, the PZU's chances to win re-elections decreased significantly. Another important consideration is that the political situation in the country at that time did not allow for such passivity. One should not forget that the background of that Parliament was a deep crisis between the opposition and the ruling elite caused by the political scandal around the President, the murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze, withdrawal of Victor Yushenko's Cabinet of Ministers, and various other reasons. This situation caused major political forces to divide between the opposition forces and the pro-presidential incumbents. The rhetoric of that time could be described as "us vs them", and each political force tried to have its own position on the issue and to make it public. Surprisingly, the Party of Greens of Ukraine remained silent in a situation, in which it was impossible to be silent. Instead, it tried to maintain a balance between all these forces. There are multiple explanations for this. For example, one could argue that the PZU did not want to get involved in politics as such, and rather saw its role in the Parliament as a group responsible for solving ecological problems, so it was a right choice of the party. However, we would argue that one cannot take part in politics and stay at the sidelines at the same time. Moreover, we would try to show that the party made this choice, as in the short term it was possibly the best course of action. However, as it will be shown further, this kind of politics led to negative long-term results, particularly to the failure in the 2002 elections. In order to ascertain whether or not the party tried to avoid politics in order to focus solely on ecology, let us analyze the performance of the party in terms of environmental issues.

Greens had one ministerial seat, which was naturally the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources (Sergiy Kunikin). In addition, the party had one seat in the parlia-

mentary committees. Yuri Samoylenko was the head of the Committee of ecological policy, natural resources, and liquidation of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Let us point out that these are important positions, directly linked with the activity of the PZU. The question arises how well the Greens used their position to solve ecological problems of the country. We argue that the PZU did not effectively use this chance to ensure better protection for the environment. It stems from our analysis of the laws voted for by the Greens that unfortunately not many of them were directly related to the environment. In the span of four years, only about 20 laws on the environment and its protection were passed with the direct help of the PZU. Such result of the party's work in the Parliament may not be seen as sufficient, and may be viewed as inadequate involvement of the party in green policy while in the Parliament. An illustration is the fact that the first head of the party Yuri Scherbak heavily criticized the "prime" lawmaking activity of his former colleagues.

Although not very successful in terms of environmental issues, the PZU was rather successful in lobbying in the party's own economic interests. The rent-seeking activities of this party were a well-covered topic in the media, which connected this fact with the silent loyalty of the Greens to the pro-presidential forces. The best known result of this activity is the party's cession of control to Vasily Khmel'nizkiy (one of the vice presidents of the party), who is colloquially known as the "monster" of Ukrainian metallurgical "Zaporizhstal" plant. That plant is one of the main pollutants of Dnieper-Donetsk region in Ukraine and is a significant factor in the highly problematic environmental situation in this region. Furthermore, in early 2000 there was a scandal when four of the PZU deputies were accused of participating in illegal activity. However, the scandal abated, and the main figures of the PZU were able to cover it up.

To conclude, as it was previously illustrated, Ukraine has many serious ecological problems that need to be resolved. When the Party of Greens of Ukraine made it to the Parliament in 1998, there were high expectations that it would be engaged in this kind of pro-environmental activity. However, the party did not stress those problems in its program, did not demonstrate a special interest in environmental issues, and was not productive in lobbying for those issues. Moreover, it acted as a supporter of the pro-presidential forces, gaining individual economic advantages and being hardly visible in the parliamentary activities and political life of the country. This was very dangerous for the party in the political climate of that time, with a division between political forces into the opposition and ruling forces. Truly, this kind of behavior contributed seriously to the tarnished image of the PZU in the eyes of the public and was one of the major causes of its failure in the 2002 elections. As Ch. Rootes noted, "because green politics is, after all, politics, the outcomes of the complex processes of political competition will depend in no small part on the actions and reactions of Greens themselves"²³.

²³ Ch. Rootes, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

V. PR campaign of the PZU and their failure in the 2002 elections

After looking at the performance of the Party of Greens in Ukraine in the Parliament there is a need to look at their election campaign in 2002 in order to see how their performance contributed to their failure in the elections. In addition, other factors that could have influenced the results of the 2002 elections and their PR campaign are going to be closely studied here. We will start by examining the PR campaign of the Greens in the 2002 elections in the context of their previous PR campaign in 1998, to reveal possible reasons of the PZU's failure in 2002, and comparing both campaigns.

In 1998, the Party of Greens of Ukraine was a newcomer on the political scene. This allowed the party to base its campaign on the fact that PZU was not involved in politics; therefore, it is “clean”, unlike other parties. The PZU avoided any political slogans or images, concentrating only on the deep social and environmental aspects. They were also very different from other parties, which at that time focused on two specific directions of the election campaign: political commercials in TV and the cultural entertainment actions of the famous Ukrainian music groups throughout the country. It was practically the first Ukrainian party which based its electoral campaign not on traditional images, but rather on the avoidance of any political images, and the heavy use of Western political marketing techniques.

As it is stated by Ferdinand Müller-Rommel, traditionally “the bulk of green party support comes from students and other groups outside the labor force”²⁴. Indeed, the PZU based its actions on the hope to gain the support from the youth electorate and from undecided, apolitical voters. Truly, “a green vote is often portrayed as a protest vote”²⁵. The PZU proved these assumptions true, as the majority of its voters were “traditional” ones for the Greens: young generation, middle class, highly educated, mostly urban people.

Now let us proceed and have a close look at the PR campaign of the 2002 elections. Except the absence of cultural events across Ukraine, the tactic of the PZU remained the same. Moreover, it focused heavily on television commercials, avoiding other mass media channels, which it deemed to be not as influential. It started the “visible” campaign on television, according to all the rules, far ahead of the elections, and was one of the first parties to start advertising. In terms of ideology, the commercials were the same as four years earlier, apolitical and stressing environmental problems, portraying a very depressing gray society in contrast to images of the green environment and, thus, happy people. It also was one of the major sponsors of the reality show “Survivor”. This show started in the Ukrainian television in 2002, lasted through the electoral campaign, and was very popular among citizens. The party also sponsored some other environmental programs on Ukrainian television. Thus, in the

²⁴ F. Müller-Rommel, *New politics in Western Europe: the rise and success of green parties and alternative list*, Westview Press, Boulder 1989, p. 204.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 235.

electoral campaign of 2002 the party used basically the same PR campaign as the one which led to its victory in the 1998 elections.

Two major mistakes of the PZU must be pointed here, which contributed heavily to their loss in the 2002 elections. First, it was a mistake to use the same technique the second time around. Not only because the party appeared to have nothing more to say ad there was no element of surprise the electorate reacted to in 1998, but also mainly because the PZU was not a "clean" party anymore. The party was present in the Parliament, so it was not correct to stress its apolitical approach in these elections, especially because this time there was a big clash between the opposition and the ruling parties and therefore the whole electoral campaign was very political in nature. Moreover, there was also a division of the society and the voters according to political forces. The authors state, therefore, that this position of PZU contributed to its failure in the 2002 elections. Second, the evident spending of a large amount of its financial resources on television advertisement and sponsorship confirmed the voters' beliefs that the PZU was mainly involved in rent-seeking activities, and cared neither about the people nor about the environment. Thus, mistakes in the PR campaign combined with the image contributed heavily to the perception of the party's activity in the Parliament by the voters, and subsequently resulted in failure in the 2002 elections.

However, there are other factors that could have contributed to this failure. An important one is the role played by "political institutions in opening or foreclosing opportunities for the development of Green parties"²⁶. Here, the type of an electoral system plays an important role. It is widely acknowledged in the literature that the possibility of the Greens to be elected to the Parliament is much higher with a proportional presentation system than with a majoritarian one²⁷. Indeed, the majoritarian system is considered one of the reasons why the PZU did not participate in the 1994 elections. The leaders of the PZU usually stress that they support the proportional electoral system. It is understandable not only from the accepted point of view that it is much better for the Greens, but also, according to our observations, because the PZU does not have evident leaders, well-known names — only the brand of the party. Therefore, it is indeed difficult for it to compete in the majoritarian system, as it usually relies on the party list. The 1998 elections opened the possibility for the PZU to run, because the new electoral law was passed: the Parliament was to be elected in a half-majoritarian, half-proportional system. The PZU mainly gained its seats according to the party list during the 1998 parliamentary elections.

Another obstacle for the Green party to be elected, which is typical for other minor parties, is the election threshold level: "the lower the institutional thresholds of representation, the higher the chances that green parties will be formed"²⁸. The thresh-

²⁶ Ch. Rootes, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

²⁷ D. Richardson, *The Green challenge. Philosophical, programmatic and electoral considerations*, [in:] *The Green challenge: the development of Green parties in Europe*, eds. D. Richardson and Ch. Rootes, Routledge, London 1995, p. 13.

²⁸ F. Müller-Rommel, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

old in Ukraine was 4% at that time, and the Greens were able to pass it in the 1998. Now, it should be emphasized that there were no changes in electoral law during the 2002 elections, so the failure of the Greens in those elections cannot be substantiated by the changes in the institutional environment.

Another factor to consider is the outflow of the electorate to other competing parties. Just as four years earlier, there was no other green party on the election list, so the Greens did not have an ideological competitor. Even though six new green parties were registered at the beginning of the 21st century in Ukraine, only one of them tried to participate in the 2002 elections and was not able to do so.

However, we need to consider some other, non-green parties as partly competitors. For example, the newcomers “Women for the Future”, “New generation of Ukraine”, and “Team of Winter Generation” ran practically the same PR campaigns as the PZU. Practically, they perceive their electorate as almost the same as the one of the PZU, and more specifically, they target the youth. There is no exact data on the matter, but we assume that these parties could have taken over some part of the Greens’ electorate. For instance, “Women for the future” received 2.2% of the votes in the elections, “Team of winter generation” – 2.1%, and “New generation of Ukraine” – 0.8%. Taken together, this is 5.11% of votes, which is almost the same as the PZU received in the 1998 elections. (5.44% as opposed to 1.36% in 2002) Considering the apolitical position of those newcomers, their youth orientation, and Western-style PR campaigns, we conclude that they took away a part of the PZU electorate. Although there was almost nothing about ecology in the programs of the main parties, both as regards the opposition and the ruling party, the middle-class intelligentsia electorate of the PZU could have supported them this time. 2.55% voted for “Others” – we assume this is because of the dissatisfaction of the devoted Green voters with the PZU’s activity, and the lack of any other Green alternative. Thus, with no direct Green competitor in the elections, we conclude that some other parties took away some of the PZU electorate, presumably the voters disappointed with the party’s performance.

To conclude, the electoral campaign of the Greens in 2002 was outdated. It has not been adapted to the new political reality or the new role of the PZU, and only confirmed the beliefs of the voters about the discrediting activity of the party while in the Parliament. This, in turn, led the voters to turn to other parties even though there were no green competitors in the elections. Thus, another main reason for the failure of the PZU in the 2002 elections is their own wrongly chosen PR campaign, which was heavily influenced by their performance in the Parliament.

VI. Conclusions

The Greens in the former socialist countries are usually not considered very popular and their electoral success is very rare. In this context, the success of the Party of Greens of Ukraine in the elections of 1998 seemed very promising, especially con-

sidering serious ecological problems of Ukraine, as presented in the paper. Moreover, political observers did not expect a failure of this magnitude in the 2002 elections. Immediately afterwards, the main reason of the party's failure was perceived as the Ukrainian society's unreadiness to prioritize ecological problems over other problems of the country. This factor is certainly not to be overlooked, as it was as relevant then as in the elections of 2019. However, as it is outlined in the literature and as the authors argue other factors usually play an even bigger role in the success or failure of the Greens in the elections. For instance, Ch. Rootes points to the fact that “as highly developed and widespread awareness of the environmental issues, national or global, is no guarantee of the development of a successful Green party, neither is a decentralized political system operating under conditions of proportional representation”²⁹. According to him, the explanation lies in the state of political competition and the actual performance of the Green party. The vicissitude of the Ukrainian Green party is an example of a situation, in which institutional arrangements and competitors are not the main reasons of electoral failure.

In this paper, the question was answered why green politics is not popular in Ukraine. We mainly focused on the PZU's PR campaign of 2002 and the factors which were essential to explain the failure of the PZU in the elections.

In the end, the authors made conclusions referring to the aims of the article and outlined the reasons of PZU's failure in the 2002 elections and afterwards.

The main reasons of the PZU failure in the 2002 elections, according to the authors, can be summarized as:

1. The PZU's non-satisfactory and discrediting performance in the Parliament:
 - According to most observers, the law-making activity of the PZU in the Parliament regarding the environment and its conservation is considered to be poor. The PZU was heavily criticized for it not only in the media, but also by green NGOs and other green activists.
 - Rent-seeking activity of the PZU while in the Parliament, including gaining ownership of some polluting but very profitable plants in Eastern Ukraine. Those issues were covered in the media and therefore visible to the voters.
 - The Party of Greens of Ukraine affiliation with the pro-presidential Kuchma forces in the Parliament, coupled with the attempts to preserve an apolitical stance in the midst of a big clash between the opposition and pro-presidential forces in the Parliament of 1998–2002.
2. The PR campaign of the PZU in the 2002 elections:
 - Old PR campaign from the 1998 elections which was not anymore relevant in 2002, because it continued to stress out the apolitical and “clean” nature of the party when it was not apolitical anymore.
 - Again, a Western style of the PR campaign — a very expensive one — with TV advertisements running for eight months, coupled with sponsorship of

²⁹ Ch. Rootes, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

reality and other shows on national TV channels. This fact only confirmed the rent-seeking activity of the PZU for the average voter instead of the party's involvement in the environment protection and other program activities.

- The voters' outflow to other parties, especially to the newcomers, because of the dissatisfaction with the PZU, even though the PZU did not have real green competitors at the time (in comparison to the following elections).

It is important to point out that the 2002 elections in Ukraine were considered democratic and fair by the Western observers. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that out of six parties and political blocks that won the 2002 elections four were opposition parties. Therefore, there was no election fraud. Another factor that can influence the results of the elections is the electoral system. We do not consider it as an obstacle to the PZU because, as previously stipulated, there was no change in electoral law. In particular, with half of the proportional representation to the Parliament and the threshold of 4% the PZU was able to make it to the Parliament in 1998. Also, we do not consider the popularity of green ideas in Ukraine as a factor to influence the 2002 elections. In accordance with the argumentation outlined in the literature and elaborated upon, high environmental consciousness and the electoral success of green parties are usually different matters to consider.

Therefore, our hypothesis is proven that the PZU's discrediting work in the Parliament and later its old and irrelevant PR campaign were the main causes of its failure in the 2002 elections, whereas institutional arrangements and competitors were not the main reasons of the PZU's electoral failure.

To summarize, the main reasons of the PZU failure in the 2002 elections are rooted in the discrediting performance of the party in the Parliament, resulting in a loss of political credibility, and afterward the outdated and flawed PR campaign of the party given the new reality of the 2002 elections.

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