



RECLAIM THE FIELDS

Bulletin * 7

English version

summer 2013

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Reclaim the Fields Bulletin

Why a RtF bulletin?

The bulletin is an inter-communication tool for the RTF constellation. It is usually published after each assembly: it contains feedback from the last assembly and a call out for the next (the assemblies are the only decision making moments within RTF). It is also a means for the stars of the constellation to share their news: present projects, share information about actions, spread call outs and publicize events to come. The bulletin is a way to exchange and circulate ideas: texts published in it reflect the diversity of the reflections and opinions that cross within RTF, and aim to feed reflections and debates from one and other. The texts involve only their authors responsibility, and don't look to represent any position for RTF.

Bulletin #7

In Can Piella a group was formed to compile bulletin 7. The idea rose to dedicate this issue to the central theme: "stars from the constellation" and appeal for articles about projects connected to the RtF network. Luckily we didn't get articles from all projects ;)

This bulletin starts with feedback of the last gathering in Can Piella. It is not all that could be said and for sure we miss some of the notes that were made. Any way it will give enough material for discussion. We hope to see you at the action camp this summer in Germany to share our thoughts, realize our plans and strengthen the fight against megalomaniac projects!

Please join the bulletin group!!

We need more people that want to commit themselves as part of a team! We need editors, translators, people that want to work on lay out and of course we like you to send articles, drawings, notes, invitations to actions etc.!

The bulletin is asking for texts from the stars ! Realize that it will be online and spread in many countries. Articles should be max. 2 A4's (times new roman, font size 10). You can write in the language you prefer. We'll be happy if you can send it in several languages if possible.

- Clara & Yo -

bulletin@lists.reclaimthefields.org

WHO WE ARE?

We are...

We are a group of peasants, landless and prospective peasants, as well as people who are taking back control over food production.

We understand “peasants” as people who produce food on a small scale, for themselves or for the community, possibly selling a part of it. This also includes agricultural workers.

We support and encourage people to stay on the land and go back to the countryside. We promote food sovereignty (as defined in the Nyéléni declaration) and peasant agriculture, particularly among young people and urban dwellers, as well as alternative ways of life. In Europe, the concept ‘food sovereignty’ is not very common and could be clarified with ideas such as ‘food autonomy’ and control over food systems by inclusive communities, not only nations or states. We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real-needs-oriented, small-scale production and initiatives. We are putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

In order to achieve this, we participate in local actions through activist groups and cooperate with existing initiatives. This is why we choose not to be a homogeneous group, but to open up to the diversity of actors fighting the capitalist food production model. We address the issues of access to land, collective farming, seed rights and seed exchange. We strengthen the impact of our work through cooperation with activists who focus on different tasks but who share the same vision.

Nevertheless, our openness has some limits. We are determined to take back control over our lives and refuse any form of authoritarianism and hierarchy. We respect nature and living beings, but will neither accept nor tolerate any form of discrimination, be it based on race, religion, gender, nationality, sexual



orientation or social status. We refuse and will actively oppose every form of exploitation of other people. With the same force and energy, we act with kindness and conviviality, making solidarity a concrete practice of our daily life.

We support the struggles and visions of la Via Campesina, and work to strengthen them in Europe. We wish to share the knowledge and the experience from years of struggle and peasant life and enrich it with the perspectives and strength of those of us who are not peasants, or not yet peasants. We all suffer the consequences of the same policies, and are all part of the same fight.

NEWS ABOUT TOOLS & WORKING GROUPS

Goals & Objectives	Functioning
<u>Bulletin wg</u> Main goal: contribute to inter-communication within RtF constellation. Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collect and send a summary of the notes made in last gathering to general email list • collect material (articles etc.) for the next bulletin (that will come out preferably a few weeks before a next camp/gathering), translate texts to English, edit and correct texts, do lay out and prepare a printable file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with and within bulletin group via own email list. • Every gathering a new working group forms to work on next bulletin (printed before next gathering) • printing and distribution is everyones responsibility • Bulletin group takes care of English version and tries to make also German, Castellano and French version: local groups can help with translating and making lay out for bulletins !!!
<u>Website wg</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To collect & archive information • To manage email list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people take care of technical management • The site's content is filled by everyone
<u>Local Groups wg</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups can claim to be part of RtF or not • Groups can create and use internal features to link up within the network 	As you wish: local autonomy
<u>Gathering</u> Meeting for internal organizational issues & debates	Once every 6 months, hosted by a different place
<u>European Camp</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RtF network & experience sharing • support local struggle/group/campaign • outreach to bigger public 	Communication about organization via "carrots" list
<u>Carrots</u> To insure connections between the gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the email list • Only with people that where part of a gathering or meeting before • No decisions are made by this group
<u>Farm Network wg</u> Training network	Communication via own email list

NEWS ABOUT TOOLS & WORKING GROUPS

Goals & Objectives	Functioning
<p><u>Land acces wg</u></p> <p>To inform on means to access land and support land access fights.</p>	<p>Communication via own email list</p>
<p><u>Seeds wg</u></p> <p>Main goal: generate didactic material with info on legal, political and practical content to create a big bang of awareness</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give tools for diffusion to local groups by the seeds bulletin • create an interactive web/place in Internet to share resources – linked with RtF website • generate a discussion within the network to position us within the political area 	<p>Communication with and within this working group via own email list</p>
<p><u>Propaganda wg</u> ↘</p> <p>This group was set up in ZAD as well, idea is to function as a temporary group for discussion during the meeting/gathering to start up some practical projects to improve distribution and exchange of knowledge/info and include more stars and people in the network that have similar ideals and put them in practice.</p>	<p>Temporary group set up at gatherings of RtF, everyone interested can join - step in and out.</p>
<p><u>Translation wg</u></p> <p>Goal: help translate bulletin and other RtF related info/articles</p> <p>objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open group, everyone that can help translating is very welcome!!! • Translate next bulletin in as many languages as possible 	<p>Communication with(in) this wg via own email list::</p> <p>traduction@reclaimthefields.net</p>

NEWS ABOUT TOOLS & WORKING GROUPS

Evaluation	Next steps/ proposals & needs
<p><u>Bulletin wg</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a very small group (1,5 person?) left to work on Bulletin #6, due to many evictions... Better is to have more people involved (from different stars/local groups) and a collective process and task division Bulletin #6 had a central theme & new front cover & new lay out style. Bulletin #6 just came out (EN & CAS) before the Gathering in Can Piella. A working group was formed at Can Piella to work on #7. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be nice again to make a multilingual version (of original texts) When you read this, we can say that it worked out to make bulletin #7!!!! :D We always need help!: people to form a new working group for next bulleting; send your articles/drawings/news/call out etc.; and translators!!!
<p><u>Website wg</u></p> <p>2 web sires running : rtf.ecobytes.net in creation but not finished, and reclaimthefields.org isn't actualized. Some tools are integrated in the site (wiki, forum)... but we don't know exactly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating more tools and info. Check with wg's what needs to be added
<p><u>Local Groups wg</u> (please, send notes !!!)</p>	<p>Start RtF Germany this summer ???</p>
<p><u>Gathering</u></p> <p>Last gathering was in Can Piella end of February 2013, we got little feedback and notes from workshops and meetings.</p>	<p>No plan made for a next gathering, need to decide this during this summers camp in Germany.</p>
<p><u>European Camp</u></p> <p>A group was formed at Can Piella to work on the organization of next action camp near Cologne.</p>	<p>Come to the climate & RtF camp, data & place (more info call out in this bulletin).</p>
<p><u>Carrots</u></p> <p>There was little communication and active people on the list (not much feedback) before the Can Piella gathering. Seemed hard to organize gatherings collectively using this list. Lately the list seems more used, as next camp is coming up and many people involved from different corners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still being used as main tool communication of organization action camp 2013 need to form a new group (during action camp this summer) to organize next meeting/gathering, they will be added to the carrot list! So we need motivated people!

NEWS ABOUT TOOLS & WORKING GROUPS

Evaluation	Next steps/ proposals & needs
<p><u>Farm Network wg</u></p> <p>Things that exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyer that needs to be distributed • A management group that needs more people • A group of farms that need to be extended • Principles that must be translated into various languages 	<p>In Can Piella 2 people had meeting on this wg. They are not part of the existing wg, but want to reactivate the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to get in contact with exmembers, and existing networks: in England (wwolfing) and Spain ("Erasmus entre colectivos"); • See if the wg can restart • Check the possibilities to start a farm network of whole Europe for agricultural formation/training) • Need for people!
<p><u>Land acces wg</u></p> <p>-</p>	<p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffusion of info on starts and projects, send call outs for upcoming events. • Look out for new places to start projects also during gatherings • keep connections, between starts & similar projects (internal & external) <p>"New" ideas/projects & needs :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • list of basic shared principals • f.e. support projects (support letters, materials, seeds etc.) • Need for resources (tools, seeds, money) • Need to find motivated people to work out the ideas
<p><u>Seeds wg</u></p> <p>There was no energy to continue the seeds leaflet, but some articles where written</p> <p>things done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up a list of possible future actions of seeds defend movement • texts about how to reproduce seeds (practical) • an introduction text on seeds: what is happening; and what can we do? • Draft for a text on legal situation concerning seeds in Europe • text: "Why is the seeds topic important'?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create also games: reach different groups (already started) • set up bibliography list of good resources/useful info • set up a list of questions/conclusions coming from the workshops done in Can Piella to positions ourselves in political context • Make a list/ map of seed producers • come with materials, a little library, seeds etc. to the gatherings • editing & translating articles made • needs for the leaflet: complete the article with legal info; visuals; edit & translate; print & distribute • Invitation to everyone to come with seeds and documents to RtF gatherings & camps!!!

NEWS ABOUT TOOLS & WORKING GROUPS

Evaluation	Next steps/ proposals & needs
<p><u>Propaganda wg</u></p> <p>Many projects that where started in ZAD, did start, but needed a bit more work (mentioned in next row).</p>	<p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add content on new website (under construction) • working on a RtF general flyer • make a "best of" Bulletin • create a mobile info-kiosk <p>"New" ideas/ projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up Europea diffusion contact list • set up a methodology for writing articles, sharing & distribution of info, how to organize a workshop etc. • Create a protocol: how to organize/coordinate a RtF gathering & action camp.. • at gaterhings/camps: incorporate new stars and "members" in the general email list
<p><u>Translation wg</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not enough translators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for an open collaborative space (online) to work together on European level • moderation of the list: need to have an automatic invitation email with explanation on how wg works. • Still possible to translate texts from Bulletin 6 into German & French (and other languages) • Translate articels for bulletin 7 (still possible to make more language versions!)

--INFOKIOSK--RTF--WHERE'RE WE GOING?

Objetivos del grupo de trabajo de Infokiosk:

- ✓ getting to know the dynamics of Infokiosk in RTF Europe
- ✓ create a space of collective editing of a fanzine for RtF
- ✓ crear un espacio de redacción colectiva de fanzines para RTF
- ✓ having a space of permanent storage for the fanzines on the Internet. The issues are agriculture and peasantry, autonomy, agricultural fights, environment, practical tools
- ✓ spread the fanzines during the meetings, in places where there are fights, during manifestations

Lo que vamos a hacer:

1. call for contacts and contributions concerning the infokiosk through the European list
2. creation of a storage space: on the RTF site, a ftp, or on infokiosk. net?

3. creation of a collective editing space: probably a crabbgrass or a wiki
4. creation of proper RTF fanzines: a couple of French speaking people are already motivated and is already starting. The more willing to join them, the better!
5. translation of the fanzines: if there is a demand from the European list, one will contact the translation group

Calendario:

- ✓ one meeting about every two months beginning of March: mail to the European list
- ✓ principios de marzo: mail a la lista europea
- ✓ March-April: launching and starting with the collective tools (spread-list, crabbgrass, storage space)
- ✓ May-June: editing the fanzines, meeting in France to talk about that, in Dorona probably
- ✓ August: finishing, illustration and translation of the fanzines for the camp in Cologne

FEEDBACK GATHERING



Introduction day

Presentation of individuals:

To get to know one another, we played a game with 20 questions, where players had to move around the plot of land depending on whether their answers were positive or negative.

Presentation of collectives:

Questions were suggested and groups were given 10 minutes to prepare their presentation.

ZAD

A collective based on the ZAD near Nantes in France from the Red and Black Collective (Les Rouges et Noirs). This farming collective was formed just after the evictions on the ZAD. There are nine members present. Their objective is to farm land originally used for animal pastures. They do so in protest against an airport due to be built there. The plot of land they are occupying belongs to VINCI the building company behind the airport. They are also occupying the land to produce food and feed the struggle (the inhabitants of the ZAD). zad.nadir.org

Platform for Food Sovereignty in Valencia

They include 50 consumer groups and many producers. The platform is not in any struggle against anything, but rather for one thing: food sovereignty. They follow the Nyeleni declaration. They have five main activities: an annual camp for producers, consumers and associations to meet. They have a general meeting on the 17th April. They carry out campaigns throughout the year (against GM crops, new laws and legislation). They go to farmers' markets with ecological produce. They have an annual gathering for Food Sovereignty in Spain.

The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Catalunya

One person presents a similar project: The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Catalunya. Producers, consumers and associations work to promote food sovereignty in Catalunya. There are other networks for Food Sovereignty in every region of Spain. He also presents Can Masdeu. This project is a community and social centre - a project of projects. It is based in a squatted valley in an occupied monastery and has been there for 11 years. 20 people live there. It is not far from Can Piella on the mountain range overlooking Barcelona and the sea. There are essentially 3 social projects there: a social centre, community allotments (80 in total), an environmental food growing project. They try to create links between urban and rural struggles.

Can Piella

This land has been occupied for 3 and a half years. There are currently 11 people living there. Some families have allotments on the land. They hold an open public meeting where those involved in the project can meet (around 30 people currently). They are based on the outskirts of the city and are surrounded by buildings and infrastructure of capitalist production. They struggle against the growth of the city and promote rural activities. Their objective is to show this rural alternative to city folk. Their activities are producing bread, beer, vegetables and preserves for economic independence. They hold workshops, skillshares, spread information, organise DIY events and weekend events for protecting nature. They participate in a seed swap network for Catalunya and Spain to preserve species in danger of extinction. Their house is currently under threat from speculation. They have an eviction order so the house is in a difficult state. Activities have come to a halt and they are focused on resistance. www.canpiella.cat

Laciana Collective

They are based in the Leon valley in Asturias. They are resisting the creation of open-cast coal mines there. They began after a camp in the summer of 2011. They have been going for a year and a half. There are 10 to 15 people in their collective. One part is based in the valley, and the other part spreads information around the country. Their objectives are to struggle against open-cast coal mining, as well as creating networks with other groups involved in environmental struggle. They want to support the people living in the valley against the mines (pollution, small businesses affected, mafia). They will remain in the valley. A year ago, as they needed to be there, the idea to grow their own food was raised (this is an activity they are pursuing). Their activities are divided between learning to live on the land and creating visibility for the current situation, as well as investigating the effect on the water in the valley for the presence of heavy metals. Another less visible activity is to support those in struggle on the ground, who have been there for 20 years and are burnt out. This is an important current day struggle as they have obtained permission for production and could take over the entire valley.

SoliLa!, Vienna

Solila! stands for "Solidarisch Landwirtschaften" [Solidarity farms/agriculture] and is a collective that emerged from the land occupation of 2012 in Vienna. Solila! is a group of landless peasants and those who want to be(come) this, and

others who want to acquire control over food production.
<http://solila.blogspot.eu>

ausgeCO2hlt

Presentation of the ausgeCO2hlt campaign near Cologne. There are 50 initiatives throughout Germany. They oppose an open cast coal mine. They have been active for three years against coal mining. They have created a platform against coal mining to close them for good. The mine which is currently extracting coal is the second biggest in Europe and emits the most CO2 in Europe. We all know the consequences of this. Their main activity is to spread the word about what is happening. They organised a camp in an abandoned village, where inhabitants were ordered to leave. They do direct action against the mining here and throughout Germany. There is also a forest occupation. They were evicted a year ago, but have returned recently to occupy it. The motives of this group are the same as ausgeCO2hlt as well as protecting ancient woodland. It is a strategic point of defense as well as a meeting place for activists from throughout Europe. It is place to meet local farmers and neighbours. www.ausgeco2hlt.de

Toma la tierra

A member of the Toma La Tierra project. The project has existed for a year and a half. There are 6 people in the collective as well as others who lend a hand. They have no physical base and their members are spread across Spain. They work on the Net and the Radio. They make a monthly radio program which is popular on the radio and broadcast on 16-20 pirate radio stations across Spain. They discuss struggles to protect the land. They work to create tools for those involved in this struggle and other ecologists in Spain. They organise radio, web content, social networks, audio and video reports and counter-information. They want to help co-ordinate struggles, bringing groups together and raising environmental awareness. They oppose many things as we might be able to imagine, and believe in struggle against the capitalist system and the creation of alternatives.
tomalatierra.org

Alcoi

The project is based in Valencia. In Alcoi there is a social centre, pirate radio and freeschool. There are three food producing groups (fresh food and non perishables). The speaker would like to expand on 2 of these projects. Periferies is an NGO for cooperative development. They help people fight for their rights in the South where issues like environmental awareness and food sovereignty are important. It is an ambitious project which aims to create an alternative to the system inside of the system. They are for

more things than they are against, but they are tired of waiting for the government to act. They use co-operatives to organise: free education, health, food sovereignty through consumer groups. They have mad links with the CIC (Cooperative for Interests of Catalunya / Cooperativa Integral de Catalunya) and intend to do something similar in Valencia.

Occupied Village, Navarre

One person presented his village which has been occupied for 30 years. The valley contains 8 occupied villages which are linked to each other. 50 live in the village and 110 in the valley. It is based in the Pyrenees (the Navarra area). It is a living project. The villages emptied in the 60s and were reoccupied in the 80s, some just in the last three or four years. They are difficult to reach. They try to use abandoned land which belongs to the state. They rebuild houses and make use of them. There are 11 houses in the village at the moment. There are communal spaces. They are working on resolving conflicts within their collective at the moment.

Peasant's collective, Ardèche

One peasant from Ardèche has come from a collective of 14 people. They try to collectivise all aspects of their lives (living spaces, cars, money, occasional temper tantrums..). They produce vegetables, bread, apples, chestnuts, goat's cheese and sell it to raise money for activism. They try to work with local peasants and neighbours in the valley. The peasant here is currently changing project and buying a farm in the Alps with a group of friends to do the same thing there. They prefer to be for things rather than against them.

FLEO, Avignon

A peasant presents the FLEO movement (Fabulous Laboratory of Experimentation and Occupation) which is an occupation movement in an abandoned area of land destined to become a motorway. A new collective (Gang Graine) have occupied a house a week ago and will soon occupy other plots to make gardens, potatoes, apples, pears and grapes. They are near Avignon with 6 permanent residents and another 6 who come and go. They are against the motorway and the logic behind it - the destruction of farmland, etc. They are also in favour of many things: creating collective living spaces, free economy, non-oppressive spaces, horizontal organisation.
<http://leopart.noblogs.org>

Portugal Community

A peasant presents their small project based in Porto with 10 people. They have a windmill which they intend to rebuild. They have a lot of land which is occupied with the

FEEDBACK GATHERING



consent of the owner. They follow an anarchist model of organisation. They are part of a food co-operative and produce food as well. They are experimenting with fermentation, beer-making, bread, and hydraulic energy. Their project has existed for three years and welcomes visitors and new participants.

Separation into local groups

We began by separating into local groups for 30 minutes. There were 3: French-speaking, German-speaking and the Spanish peninsula. Once the meeting time was over the calendar was filled, while various dates were picked out and the actions due to take place explained.

The French-speaking group presented different dates for actions in the ZAD and in Avignon. BenJ spoke about a festival against electronic chipping of animals, which is organised by the Caracoles de Suc collective. The reoccupation demo on the ZAD was spoken about, as well as the occupation demo in Avignon.

The Spanish peninsula group decided to be a spokesperson for Reclaim the Fields and introduce it on a local level. No mailing list was created. They will keep coming to European Reclaim the Fields gatherings. They will not create a local Reclaim the Fields group as other networks already exist. Guillem explained about the week of action against GM crops and for food sovereignty. This will happen in the middle of April and is a week of autonomous actions. A land occupation in Tarragona in Spring was spoken about, but it still has no fixed date.

The Austrian group spoke of a land occupation on the 17th April in Vienna. They invite us to join them.

Feedback from Working groups

A brief resume of workshops took place onsite but normally each working group will send Minutes to be published in the Bulletin. For this reason, in this resume there are some explanations about what each group is.

The Seeds group

This group works with traditional strains of seed as a means and an end to fighting for food sovereignty, rather than folklore. They introduced the current situation. The working group decided yesterday to write a text to outline the position which Reclaim the Fields takes on this issue. The afternoon workshop focused on this, and they will try to submit an article for the bulletin.

The Infokiosk group

This group organises an Infoshop for Reclaim the Fields Europe. The idea is to test whether there is enough energy to create an Infoshop: write, store, print and distribute material. The response is that yes, there is enough energy in the French-speaking group. It may well be the same for the rest of Europe. People who are interested should make themselves known to the group. More work will take place in France, to create a workspace and continue to distribute texts.

The Gender group

Opinions were shared about what words like gender, sexism and feminism meant to participants. Some life experiences were also shared. A whole host of proposals were made to avoid such situations which can be put into practice immediately. The group reached many interesting conclusions but chose to share two in particular with the group: Sexism is something that happens on the inside as much as on the outside – or rather, it happens as much between each other as in wider society. Also, when we think about struggle related to gender, this refers not just to the relationships between men and women, but also femininity and masculinity.

The Esperanto group

A brief history of Esperanto was given. They did some quick exercises which showed how easy it was to learn and how useful it could be for movements like Reclaim the Fields. Some thought it might be an idea to write a text for the bulletin, or even translate or write articles in Esperanto to get people speaking it.

Workshop on “Compatibility of projects struggling for food sovereignty with projects struggling to defend the land”

This was more of a debate with three focal points: The first two are mentioned above, the third was something ever-present in collective projects – relationships and personal concerns, which was ultimately what was most spoken about even if it wasn't mentioned in the title. Experiences and tools were shared for dealing with this issue.

Land Occupations

On Thursday afternoon, two debates took place on land occupations.

The first debate was to discuss different experiences of occupations, with the theme of "What circumstances or conditions have led to successful occupations?" The idea was for feedback to focus on five topics to be discussed in small groups based on personal experiences. The topics were:

1. What strategies were used with the media?
2. What distribution networks were used and how did they open up to the outside world?
3. What strategies were used for resistance?
4. How useful is a collective?
5. What legal strategies were used?

Only one experience was discussed: Can Piella

Regarding the media, mainly alternative media has been used. Mass media has also been used, although its use was not well thought through. Clarity is important for dealing with the mass media.

The experience which they have had with networking information has been that they have failed to reach the general public. In order to reach a wider public, they decided to hold an event on the ground for local people to become involved, through events and public meetings. They also created a welcome space with communal gardens and experimental farming.

As for resistance, they decided to build up resistance and networks to support it, as well as some infrastructure.

In terms of a 'collective', they hold an open public meeting to increase participation.

Legal options have included attempts to rent the land or even buy it by raising some money. However, for the moment they prefer to squat the land, although occupying private land is not the same as land owned by the state.

Conclusions

After splitting off into small groups, the following conclusions emerged:

1. It is important to send the correct message to the public – our message should be well put across but not diluted. It is important to relate the issues to more global issues. We should remain positive and propose new ideas.
2. There is the risk of failing to reach a wider public. There is also the risk of losing our radical edge. It is important

to allow popular local support. But when we want to open up the struggle, how should we achieve this? Or what do we do when we do open up the struggle but fail to get any support?

3. Practical and theoretical strategies: We should remain inclusive (allow ownership of the struggle). In the ZAD, for example, allowing a wider public to engage with the reoccupation was an efficient strategy. Diversity of tactics is also important. There is always a risk of burnout: how can we deal with this?
4. More people and more skills means more power. Communication is a major problem, and necessary for parties to get along. The focus of the group is very important (to help and understand one another). Conflicts are not necessarily a problem if they create change and re-education. A few ideas on this issue are to work on redefining philosophical and political perspectives to be more inclusive. It is important to work on emotions to build up trust. Conflict should not be played down. Non violent communication should be practised. Collective learning is essential
5. If multinational corporations are involved, nationalism should still be avoided. Renting or buying land should be avoided when possible to avoid playing into capitalist logic.

Different perspectives on occupying land

The second debate focused on a text published in Issue 6 of the Reclaim the Fields bulletin which proposed different perspectives on occupying land and offensives. The debate took place in one large group in a fairly fluid and productive way. The following conclusions were reached:

- ✓ Occupations such as the SAT and MST are not relevant as they deal with different contexts – social, media and lack a critique of the industrial model of farming.
- ✓ Can we manage land of between 60 and 400 hectares with our current methods of organisation? Do we have enough time?
- ✓ How many people would be needed? Tools and time commitment?
- ✓ The history and farming context must always be taken into account.
- ✓ The text fails to take into account the full social impact of this kind of occupation (creating desertification and adapting to our lifestyles).
- ✓ The following conditions which might be necessary for this kind of occupation were discussed: Opening up to the mass media. Having strong legal knowledge. Having the resources to work such big plots of land. Having a strong collective. Doing a lot of networking.
- ✓ It is important to make contact with unions and have popular support. This is a way to avoid major opposition from landlords.
- ✓ We could experiment in the ZAD as there is an

FEEDBACK GATHERING



occupation of 250 hectares. We could draw some conclusions.

- ✓ Failing to reach a wider audience is not necessarily related to being far from the city.
- ✓ Intensive production as proposed by the text degrades the local ecosystem and renders it less resilient. Although the text does not suggest it, complementary farming techniques could be employed.
- ✓ We should be very clear about who we are carrying out this kind of action against.
- ✓ If we carry out this kind of action against companies who are using the PAC, would it create enough media attention to criticise the PAC system?
- ✓ Some other alternatives might be possible.
- ✓ A point regarding women keeping quiet in the media team is rejected and seen as sexist

Ending of the meeting. Money and the situation in Can Piella

Conclusions were reached using a game with circles which took place in breaktime

Rhythm: The response was very varied, with some people right in the midst of it and some more on the outside. It was quite stressful, and it's not efficient to be stressed. This problem was related to rhythm, which was influenced by the responsibilities of certain individuals towards matters such as always finishing on time.

Working groups: Many people in the middle. No opinions were gathered.

Organisation and infrastructure: Many people in the middle. Some complained that the two issues should be separate. Some felt it was a little cold, with a lack of separate spaces for parties, eating and working.

Relations between people: Many people in the middle. There was not enough time to get to know people. However there was still the party to come and the action in the morning.

Translation and facilitation: Some complained the two issues should be separate. Translation was much appreciated but took a lot of time to prepare. Facilitation was not always ideal, but this was related to logistical and time issues.

Food: Everybody was pretty happy about this.

If other people had remarks to make, they were invited to leave them in a comments box which could be discussed later. These comments included the following: some felt it a pity that the gathering was all organised by one person. L was responsible for the program, discussions and methodology behind the gathering. He often felt frustrated, alone, tired, pissed off and said sorry if he sometimes lost his temper. He admits he made a mistake taking on responsibility for the gathering on his own, although at the time he was keen to do so. He felt it had been well organised and that things had come along well. However, the fact that there was a possible eviction due and that none of the 'Carrots' were able to arrive before the gathering were weak points which he had noticed and which could have been made a difference.

Money:

It is important to remember that no fixed prices were given for anything except alcohol. The food and office team collected 165 euros more than they spent. With 85 euros left over from the ZAD, this brought the total to 250 euros.

Can Piella:

Can Piella thanked us for coming. They said they were glad we came although the situation was not always easy. Logistics were sometimes difficult and under prepared, although in the end everything turned out okay. We spoke about the action for tomorrow. An abandoned plot of land would be dug up and lettuces and potatoes would be planted there. People from the village were keen to start a shared allotment there and this would give them a kickstart.



CROAR

LINKS

This text tries to relate the travel of 5 people from the RTF-french who went to Somonte in December last year. This text aims to give a short feedback on what we experienced there and on the links we created, because we were not able to make this feedback during the last RTF-meeting at Can Piella. I find it important to keep a written record since this trip took place because CROAR (Collective of Rural Occupation and Agitation in Network, now called Rizoma) invited RtF to come at a meeting they organised there to get to know each others. This invitation was discussed by around twenty people at last year's summer meeting on the ZAD and their conclusions were to accept the invitation, organize the trip and present RtF during the meeting, in addition to create links.

I will begin by giving a bit of a context: Somonte is a rural occupation existing since March 2012. There are various buildings and 400 hectares of farming land. People there are farmworkers who entered the "finca" (farm). First in a symbolic fashion, with a demonstration of around 500 people, from which some 30 decided to stay.

Today, Somonte is still holding and the squatters are building their agro-ecological project. Organic farming, growing organic cereals, preservation of hedging with local trees and bushes, plantation of organic olive and fruit trees, all this among other crops and jobs as, for exemple, an irrigation system. All this working in an idea of food sustainability, of respect for the land and in an interesting working and agricultural struggle.

They need help to keep their project going. Personally, I try to keep in touch and to pass on they calls for help when needed. I think RtF can bring some inputs to this kind of projects... this has to be thought about collectively. But do not hesitate to visit their website¹, to contact them and help them as you can; to visit them if you can. They now know RtF and the link is created.

On one side, Rizoma² is an old network, as it was an old project to get to organize the squats and the agricultural collectives, but it is also young because this project started over 4 years ago. It is more a network of collectives and of life than of individuals. They try to organize themselves to see how they can help each others, work together and share skills. But also to try to look for a common politic base with the aim to "agitate" the countryside.

For the moment, they try to ameliorate communication in their collectives and bring more people in the countryside in addition to see what they can do together.

The link is created and also got stronger because, during the meeting in Can Piella, there were various collectives who were at Rizoma to participate. I think that RtF can bring them something and that Rizoma also can bring something to the constellation. We can do some stuff together as, for example, the farm network that they have begun to build and/or to join forces on the global agricultural issues (PAC, OGM, etc.), land destruction and regional development (shale gas, THT, coal mining, TAV). So it could be interesting to continue to go to their meetings (next one is at the end of June) and to invite them at the next camp and further RtF meetings.

In conclusion, I want to get back to the affective side of the trip. During our stay in Somonte we experienced a lot of nice moments, especially once the stress of the RtF presentation (which happily took place on the first day) passed. Of course, as it was a self managed meeting, we participated to daily tasks in addition to the workshops (active listening, ...), the activities (magic show, music, ...), and gave a hand to the inhabitants of Somonte (to harvest pepper, plant trees, ...) In the end, it was an interesting insight to get to know new networks around farming and lifestyles and to share skills, experiences, enthusiasm and a lot more. I think it is important link that could can get stronger in the future. We should keep them informed on coming camps and gatherings of RtF.

Shortly, I got the opportunity to meet a lot of people and to undestand better the reality of the collectives and agricultural squats in the South of the Pyreneans. But also to make new friends and contacts, in addition to all the great moments and conversations and have a lot of fun. Thanks to CROAR for the invitation and espacially to the person who established the link.

- L -



1. www.somonte.net

2. <http://colectivosrurales.wordpress.com>

The seeds of traditional varieties:



IT'S NOT ABOUT FOLKLORE, IT'S ABOUT RESISTANCE!

This text was written by four members of the group working on seeds within the RTF constellation. Its starting points were the thoughts and ideas that came out of a workshop in Can Piella. This article is a will to take a political position and to give food for thoughts within RTF regarding the current situation of seeds policies.

Since the beginning of agriculture 10 000 years ago, rural societies have collectively managed agricultural biodiversity, reproducing their own seeds and distributing them, passing them around through exchanges. However, starting from the 1920' in Europe particularly, the techno-industrial patterns applied to agriculture started implementing a privatization and a control over those resources. They did so through the creation of a legal system based on national catalogues where the seeds had to be registered.

After a while, even those who primarily believed in this system realized that the genetic erosion thus created had reached a threatening level. So threatening in fact that it presented considerable risks regarding both food safety and capitalism's sustainable development. Therefore, starting from the 1970', thousands of gene banks were set up with extremely expensive infrastructures, in order to preserve samples of the plants' genetic resources.

On the other side, a movement demanding free access to the seeds of traditional varieties was recently reinforced, raising interests in the civil society. This was made possible thanks to small groups aware of the problems caused by the loss of seeds varieties and of the supremacy of the agro-industrial patterns. They thus organized locally to take back control of biodiversity.

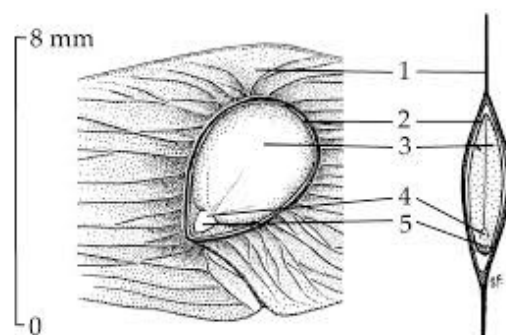
The industrial and governmental powers responded to these initiatives by trying to place them under their control and supervision, so as to marginalize the free use of certain varieties. New decrees setting up "alternative catalogues" emerged. Those limit drastically the autonomy: restrictions on quantities, interdiction to sell to professional farmers, obligation of sanitary controls, etc. The peasants have been strongly encouraged to register their varieties in those

catalogues. This system does not promote at all the development of small-scaled autonomous peasantry. It promotes the control over those resources so as to put them only in the hands of those willing to live and produce according to rules imposed on them by the capitalist system.

During the workshop and after a brief presentation of the context, the discussions and thoughts leant towards three main questions: can we autonomously manage biodiversity? What needs do we have? How to satisfy those needs?

Regarding the first matter, numerous doubts were expressed. We wondered to the point to which we could self manage biodiversity. What came out in the end was that the autonomous form was somehow limited for too few groups are willing or are able to dedicate time to it. The idea in the group was that if only we were able to be self-sufficient on our own farms, we could then go beyond in the matter.

In order to go in deeper and more general political matter, we had to switch to the second question. At this stage, the main ideas were that we didn't want self sufficiency or the conservation of biodiversity as such. We wish to promote a global change in society through the concrete experience of autonomy. In that case, it seems strategically interesting to be focusing on concrete food self-sufficiency for it allows us to cover our most basic needs. To achieve that goal we have to collectively take back the power in our own hands as well as giving to the struggles against privatization of biodiversity equal importance with those for land or water.



Agreeing on the central goal, we followed to the third question so as to come back to the actual issue of seeds. Basically, we need that more and more people can get access to traditional varieties of seeds to cultivate and reproduce them autonomously, without depending on the agribusiness. For that to happen, we need a greater involvement of the actors of small peasantry in the process of managing and distributing their own seeds. Regarding this matter, we looked into the existing alternatives and were able to distinguish two main types:

The first one is based on the possibility to influence the configuration of the laws. Indeed, many peasants can be afraid to cultivate "illegal" plants, and this restrains the increase of the number of cultivated varieties. This way implies putting pressure on politics and institutions for the rules to change. This way is the one chosen by many organizations that fight for, among other things, the recognition of the peasant's right to use their own seeds. But this lobby requires believing that those who authorize today the privatization of natural resources by capitalist companies will tomorrow give the peasants the means of a real autonomy.

Facing a freedom-destructing system, the second way is to encourage the people who cultivate the land to enter the resistance, to not expect from the government an encouragement or an authorization to start self-organizing the seeds. This solution implicates risks; the Kokopelli association in France for example has been sued several times. We nevertheless are confident that it can have a greater impact. This strategy can be implemented by different concrete actions: most importantly, the free culture and reproduction of those varieties, but also their distribution (itinerant seed banks, exchange markets, illegal selling, etc.), as well as peer to peer exchanges of knowledge.

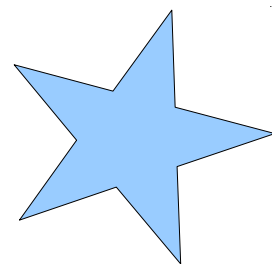
We wish here to highlight the fact we don't see those two ways as opposite, but rather as complementary. Because we live in an imperfect and complex world, we often have to juggle within our struggles with different strategies, and types of actions for we never know what will actually be efficient in the end. ..So far, it is clear that the self-organized movements haven't been strong enough to restrain or stop the catalogue-based conservation system. However it seemed important to us to insist on the importance of autonomy and rejection of the institutions in this movement, for they are ideal objectives that integrate perfectly in what could be an "RTF philosophy".

Furthermore, we are concerned that, with the registration system in "alternative catalogues", the capitalist system is just trying to claim and integrate the salvation of traditional varieties so as to make it compatible to its principles. Certain organizations for the defense of biodiversity have started to register their varieties and to collaborate with the institutions. This leads us to reaffirm that we will not be satisfied by a few varieties authorized for folklore revival, as nostalgic icons of the past. We don't want to transform our fields in museums of a lost biodiversity. We want to use these "free" varieties as a step towards autonomy, and as a tool of resistance to the existing system.

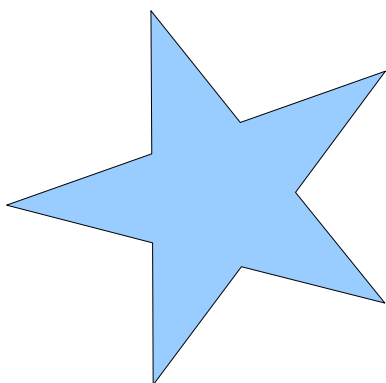
-Seeds working group of RtF-



WWW.RECLAIMTHEFIELDS.ORG



Central theme: *News from the Stars*



ORGANIZED PILLAGE IN GREEK LANDS

Chalkidiki : Eldorado Gold's return

In northern Greece, only a few kilometers away from Thessaloniki the country's second biggest city, state and police work once again hand in hand in order to offer on platter the country's resources to capitalism. It's again the story of a "big project" that is only good for the politicians' egos and some already very wealthy pockets, and certainly not for the ancient forest in place. Open-air gold mines that reek of arsenic and cyanide, but also with the distinct smell of, among others, Rosia Montana an TAV, have already started to wreck the region. The fight has begun between the opponents and the political powers. The state's dogs have been let out, and here even more often than elsewhere, they can't seem to stop biting.

The mining resources of the splendid region stuck between mountains and sea have been estimated at 20 billion Euros. The company Hellas Gold has been given the rights over the subsoil. It is a branch of the Canadian company Eldorado Gold whose stinking and bloody name can be found in many similar cases all over the world, including in Rosia Montana in Romania. They will in theory be able to see their dreams come true: extracting 3100 tons of stone per hour, digging kilometers of underground galleries until under sea level, but most importantly exploiting the region by extracting non-stop gold, lead, zinc, copper and silver. All of this under the satisfied eye of the politicians and of the state that will not get a dime in the operation. The mining laws thus organize the looting in Greece: no taxes are enforced on the mining companies and on their activities on the territory. What a paradise...

This project is not new, the mining potential of the region has been known since ancient times. Mines that had been violently contested in the 1990' were nevertheless working ever since, and until the beginning of the 2000'. The company that was then in charge deserted, abandoning on the fields the mines and its workers. Hellas Gold is precipitately created to take over, buy the mines and come up with an even more extravagant project. This project is blocked by local resistances and by legal and administrative procedures, until the "economic crisis" kicks in, bringing with it the Troïka that miraculously has approved the project of in June 2011. The project is thus validated and officially considered eco-friendly, thanks to a great number of absurd "ecological compensation measures". Indeed, how can we compensate the destruction of immense forests that we literally take away the ground from? At this point, it is probably useful to mention that the company expects

to find between 0.3g and 0.8g of gold in each ton of stone. Gold that will only be used for speculation in stock markets so as to enrich capitalism. The people, we, don't need gold to survive, we need biodiversity! This project has so many things in common with other deadly initiatives elsewhere in Europe: environmental disaster, financial advantages for a very few and nothing for local populations, corruption, and long term destruction of a region's biodiversity. And more than anything resistance and repression.

Facing this imposed project and the numerous concerns it brings along (contamination of groundwater, toxic dust, forest destruction, etc.), many locals entered resistance. The demonstrations and the attempts to occupy the land are frequent, and they systematically face an escalating violent repression. Several dozens of opponents have been detained in inhuman and illegal conditions, many of them underwent torture. On February 17, 2013 a group of about 50 people entered a construction site, and set on fire all of the machines and constructions in place.

The response from the authorities was fast. The following day, 30 people were taken from their homes and arrested. In the next days, dozens of people were arrested and the police almost systematically forced them to give their DNA. Ever since, many comrades were again arrested and charged, some are already in prison and will remain there until their trial, in several months. Those are only a few examples of the vast repressive machine set up in the region to bring down and terrorize a whole population.

This project is the one of a Europe that can't seem to stop its liberalization and that with the help of the Troïka, is now pushing Greece ahead, towards the precipice. Greece was turned into a laboratory of extreme privatization, of a state only reduced to some kingly and repressive roles and of a liberalization that only knows how to sell, buy and sell again, endlessly. Everything is reduced to figures, no global vision is presented, nothing matters anymore but a so called debt and its collection. However, in a country so close to implode, resistance is, in Chalkidiki and everywhere, fertile!

This articles aims at being only a brief overview of the situation in the region, it wasn't meant to be exhaustive. If you wish to read further, you can look at some of the following sources: the last edition of **Z [FR]**, the information website **okeanews.fr [FR]**, and the blog **nouvelleshorslesmurs.wordpress.com**

"LE FLEO" S'INSTALLE À AVIGNON

The "FLEO"

At the current time of writing, it is only 6 months since the first meeting took place between a few people from Reclaim the Fields France, some locals from Avignon opposed to the LEO² and people from a local farming and living community. At that time, only one person was interested in occupying the land and farming it, as well as another hopeful who was for the moment undecided. Six months later we are almost two dozen occupying the land and many more farming the land. The dynamic of resistance and struggle has begun, as well as the building of a long term base for exploring autonomy in our everyday lives, in terms of food, energy and other basic resources.

ZAD³

It would be a lie to pretend that our strategy has not been influenced by the movement created on the ZAD, before and since the reoccupation on the 17th November 2012. Not so much because of its title (Zone to Defend), but more for what it represents today. It is a place where people explore new ways of relating, sharing and getting to know each other. It is an experiment in collective and individual autonomy, a place to exchange knowledge and experiences. Solidarity was born at first from a collective desire to create an alternative to the current system, and reinforced in the face of repression from the French state. This is a reality very different from anything we had formerly experienced, except in some special moments on our own or in groups.

On the other hand, we also had the idea of reclaiming abandoned or expropriated land to produce our own food, as a form of resistance, to defend the land from being destroyed and at the same time feed that resistance with quality foods.

1. The Fabulous Laboratory of Experiments and Occupations. 'Fléau' in French (the "au" is pronounced "o") also means a plague or the handle for a tool – an axe, a spade, etc.

2. LEO is the name for the motorway which is due to be built, connecting the A7 to Marseille with the A9 to Barcelona. This motorway is due to be built in 4 parts. The second will destroy the City's Green Belt – the last remaining farmland in Avignon. In the long term I will become a ring road for the whole city, surrounded by industrial zones, shopping centres and housing.

3. The ZAD is a struggle against an airport in Notre-Dames des Landes and the world it represents. In French, the letters stand for Zone To Defend. However, today these letters stand for much more, and within France there are now many ZAD's being created.

The fact that members of Reclaim the Fields were involved in this plan was hardly an accident. We already had some experiences of such actions from previous occupations such as 'Le Sabot' on the the ZAD before the evictions. There are a number of other countryside projects we have also participated in since the evictions, such as the 'Jardin des Maraichers' (the Horticulturists Garden) in Dijon amongst other land occupations which have formed a key strategy: they allow us to reclaim land and tools for producing our own food. For this reason, it made sense to participate in this particular struggle, not so much because of the place or the motorway which is due to be built, but because the farming potential is under threat. We thought of the possibilities of this land in terms of food production and our desire to create a peasant collective or various collectives in this place. We were keen to make a long term commitment to this struggle and others if possible, to resist and create new utopias, as well as working towards a possible radical transformation of wider society.

The demo, the occupation and the camp

Bearing this in mind, we felt that we could not hide or lie about our plans, that we would have to be open about our radical intentions. We would have to explain quite clearly why we wanted to occupy this land: what we want to build, what we want to do and create, our desires and the reality of how things are, as well as why we oppose the LEO, not just because it is a state project which will destroy farmland, but because of everything a motorway represents - a motorway, an airport, a high-speed rail link, amongst other things. We oppose consumer society and living in the fast lane. We oppose a society where cities grow according to economic principles and compete against one another, constantly striving to sell themselves as more attractive short-term investment opportunities while repressing or oppressing any unwanted elements within.

However, given Avignon's somewhat lacklustre activist culture, it became clear that we would require a strong level of support from local residents and many people on the land. For this reason, we decided to organise a demonstration, followed by an occupation and camp filled with discussion, activities and the possibility of staying on the land afterwards to live there. We would also occupy land to begin growing various crops.

Our chosen strategy was to work towards organising this camp, to develop a clear explanation of why we are doing this, when and how. We also wanted to create a movement capable of defending farmland under threat through occupation, in a creative and experimental manner.

However, in order to reach this point, various steps needed to be taken, and we were not always in agreement as to how this could be done.



First occupation: ups and downs

On the land there was already an abandoned house which belonged to the State. Locals opposed to the LEO had already visited the house a few times and thought it was a good place for a collective to base itself. It was decided. The group which would occupy the house had already grown since the last meeting. They now numbered 8 permanent residents as well as others who would come and go regularly or who lived in Avignon.

The group of people who moved into this house intended to build a collective life together. At the same time it should be an important space for organising the camp. There was also a house just next door which could be an organising point for the struggle in the near future. Still, it has proved difficult for this group of individuals, none of whom knew each other beforehand and each with their own rhythms, to listen to and understand one another, to find time to organise together and to build a strong collective.

As for the plants themselves, they are happily growing and we continue to plant more in a nearby place. A few days after the camp, we continued to prepare land (we were

unable to do this with the gathered masses during the camp due to weather conditions). We chose a space of some two thousand square metres of a plot measures six thousand in total. The land was leant to us by a local peasant who lost his land to the motorway project. She is not planning on using the land for growing until next year. When the moment to begin growing arrives, three thousand plants are ready to be planted and in two days they have filled the space entirely. During those two days there was no time to stop day or night in order to finish before the rains came. The work in total took two long weeks. So many hopes and fears were invested in it. It's an area of land just next to the future worksite – in fact the motorway would cut straight through it, and many people come by to say hello and give us a wave, to stop and chat and offer their support. In fact, a number of land owners have come by to offer other places for growing – many are already being affected by the motorway.

At the time of writing I can't say precisely what will happen with the Garden Collective. As with the Living Collective, we have hardly had time to get to know each other, largely due to the organisation of the camp. But each of us has done what they can to move things forward and we are equipped to do some good work. I also think this garden could play an important role in the new dynamics of the struggle since the camp. It has been a great way to build links with the neighbours, is a space to come together and get closer to the city of Avignon, as well as ensuring that those who want to resist and live on site can count on having their own autonomy in terms of food – almost 20 different vegetables as well as a herb garden. I think the garden will continue to play an important role in this struggle.

What we have learnt from this experience is that it is well worthwhile doing things little by little, and would have been better to wait until the camp before going ahead. It makes sense to make good contacts with local farmers and preparing plants for planting. We could have saved a lot of energy this way and a fair few headaches too!

The camp: a dangerous gamble which came off well

When we first thought of a camp, our aims were to bring more people here to strengthen the struggle and create a collective living space, as well as creating space for occupiers, activists and locals to meet. However, we knew that this kind of occupation action – creating a camp for a few days with a DIY ethic for living together, was not going necessarily attract many local people. So we decided that we would not hide our radical intentions. The poster which called for a demonstration and a camp showed the full radical nature of our plans, without hiding in any way what we were going to do and what we would like to do – to make a callout to occupy the land.

"LE FLEO" S'INSTALLE À AVIGNON



Still, we often worried that we would be alone, that noone would be interested in coming here to join the struggle, let alone live here. On the other hand, we were also worried about frightening our neighbours and local people.

In the end, this gamble came off well. Few turned out for the demonstration – barely 300, although the rain hardly helped! But even the day beforehand, there were already 150 people building up the campsite. The potato field was planted, the new arrivals settled in and the first meeting of 200 people went very well indeed, just like the concert which celebrated our first victory.

We had fulfilled our first aim. People came from Montpellier, Grenoble, Lyon, Marseille and other cities and places from a 400 kilometre radius around Avignon. Locals came, but mainly those who ere already engaged beforehand, as well as people from nearby villages. But above all, some people came to stay, come from time to time and participate in building and resisting. In fact, more people participated in the camp than in the demonstration – some 500 people in total. Some came later on, some just for a day or two, and neighbours came by to show their support and solidarity. So in the end links were created with the neighbourhood – fulfilling the second main aim. Surprisingly, the radical discourse we used didn't frighten anyone away. Some may have or may not have shared it. But the methods we used and what we proposed attracted people, created solidarity and kept alive that special flame which was lit by the ZAD in Notre-Dame-des-Landes.

In conclusion the camp was a very positive experience. People stayed on to live here, people come by to help do things, including meetings after the camp and work on the Leopart house⁴, where new people from Marseille, Montpellier, Lyon and Gap have decided to live. As for our relations with our neighbours, they have never been better. It's interesting how many people came for the demonstration and the camp. We can draw some conclusions about effective ways of mobilising. This only goes to show the importance of occupation as an effective means of resisting and creating in these kind of situations.

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4 The Leopart house is an occupied house due to be destroyed to make way for the motorway. It is next to the first occupied house and at the time of writing is being rebuilt as a fire destroyed the inside. Leopart is a play on words, that means 'Leopard' the animal as well as 'LEO get lost!'

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Other points

Without a doubt, the existence of the ZAD was instrumental in the success of this gathering, as well as the existence of Reclaim The Fields – a network capable of mobilising people. The network continues to attract the curiosity of more and more people – this constellation with no central organisation, the opportunities it represents. The yearly gathering of the French-speaking part of the network happened during the camp and opened up new perspectives for the constellation.

In France, in years of social movements which ended in victory or burnout we have never felt our expectations of social change so fulfilled. The possibilities opened up by these kind of actions, in terms of creating utopias and resistance to the world which they want to force upon us, creating such a myriad of real alternatives to the capitalist system. We shouldn't forget that at times it is very difficult and time-consuming, there are hard times, but they also bring joy and moments which we have never experienced elsewhere before.

The 'FLEO' in Avignon is and isn't a continuation of the ZAD in Notre-Dame-des-Landes. But we should not forget other places where interesting things are also happening - 'liberated', collective and libertarian spaces, places where struggle and resistance at their height.

However, we should remember that these places are precarious. The struggle continues and that struggle consumes a lot of energy and time. In Avignon, we are lucky in being able to count on the support of various stable living and farming collectives, collectives which own or rent the land they live on. We receive support in terms of people coming with lots of energy to do things, materials, food, but also places to run away to for a few days – to rest,

5 The Leopart house is an occupied house due to be destroyed to make way for the motorway. It is next to the first occupied house and at the time of writing is being rebuilt as a fire destroyed the inside. Leopart is a play on words, that means 'Leopard' the animal as well as 'LEO get lost!'

relax and breathe a little more freely. It's an ongoing task to find out how to attract enough living and farming collectives to support us with knowledge and experience in this kind of struggle.



Conclusion

We began thinking about this movement only 6 months ago. Now things have begun to get going... we have new perspectives on life and resistance on land under threat of destruction – at first from the motorway, and then from greedy developers from the City.

Today, without a shadow of a doubt and without being at all egocentric we can say that the strategies we proposed, chose and worked on collectively have born fruit. At no point have we put aside our radical discourse regarding our aims and desires. Just as you might expect from our name, this movement is about experimenting with utopia and making dreams come true. Another small piece of land has been liberated by its new inhabitants from the logic of Capitalism, in full knowledge of the fact that it surrounds us still... for the moment at least.

*Nous avons fini de rêver notre vie,
pour commencer à vivre nos rêves.*

TOMA LA TIERRA:

Counter-information for the Defense of the Earth.



Spain is a country riddled with speculation, irresponsible industrialization and corruption on a local and national level. How many local struggles are silenced or marginalised by political or economic interests? This is something we will never know. In the Summer of 2011, there was a camp against open- cast coal mining in the Laciana valley, Leon. During this camp, a group of 100 people met from different parts of the country and agreed upon the need to build networks between different ecological struggles within Spain.

A couple of months later, a group of those who participated in this meeting began to imagine a project – 'Toma la Tierra'. It would be an autonomous project with a horizontal, DIY ethos which could provide tools to the various collectives working around the country. It could also act as spokesperson and offer a way of connecting struggles and raising awareness of environmental issues in a country which in many ways lacks a culture of caring for Nature. Tools for organising, distributing information and raising awareness. Organising and creating networks are fundamental to strengthening our struggles. Distributing information in cities, which are central points of consumerism and exploitation of the countryside, encourages environmental awareness and activism in social and environmental struggles. For this reason, Toma la Tierra proposes the following tools for organising, distributing information and raising awareness:

✓ **Radio Toma la Tierra:** this program is broadcast daily through various pirate and community radios throughout the country (as well as on tomalatierra.org), and encompasses news, discussions, action reports and interviews related to environmental struggles.

✓ **Toma la Tierra website:** a work in progress which aspires to become a centre for counter-information and discussion, a media library for issues and struggles and a place for mapping land which is under threat.

✓ **Video reports:** a new means of covering actions and spreading information about struggles more easily.

✓ **omalatierra@googlegroups.com mailing list, Facebook group, Twitter and N-1:** these **online groups** bring together hundreds across the country to exchange information and opinions on a daily basis. They also provide a base for organising initiatives and actions.

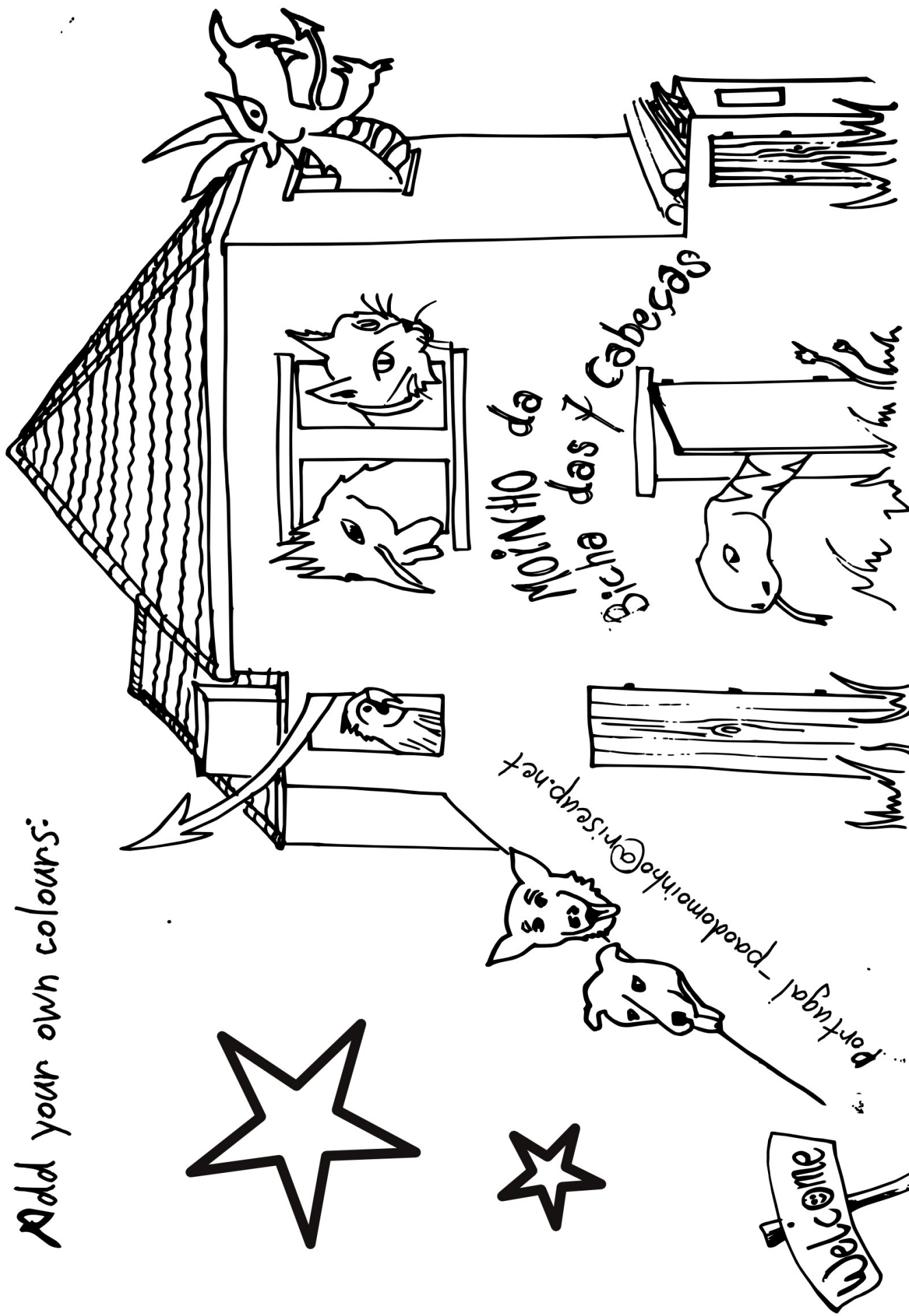
✓ **Regional gatherings:** these have so far taken place in Aragon, Cordoba, Madrid and Navarra. They offer an opportunity to strengthen local networks and facilitate mutual aid between collectives in the same area, as well as bringing issues to nearby cities.

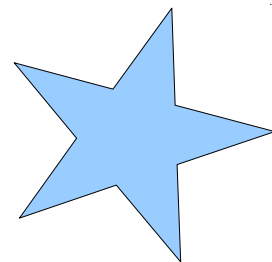
✓ **Toma la Tierra tour:** during the project's first year some of us went on a tour which introduced us in a more direct manner to various struggles. We were able to offer them support, making radio and video reports, presenting our project, organising actions and initiatives and putting them in contact with related struggles.

✓ **Networking with existing groups:** Finally, we also established links with the entire counter- information and distribution network which already exists within the borders of Spain and beyond, collaborating with other media hubs and helping to make our resistance go viral – a constellation of stars growing ever brighter and more numerous.

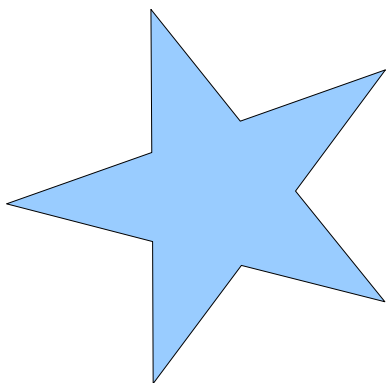


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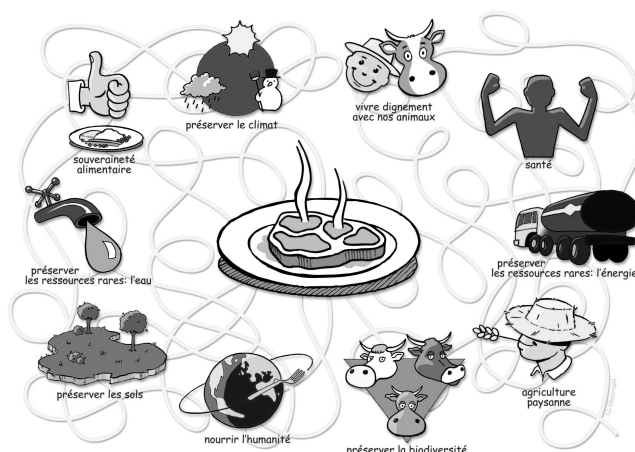


Articles from the milky way



THE STRING GAME

Decolonizing our imaginary to start a transformation



Which links are there between the nearest supermarket, land grabbing, global warming, world trade, the work of a Kenyan farmer and a zucchini that you just peeled? How to provide public lighting on the interrelationships between these elements, their consequences and levers? How to promote an understanding of the globalized society, develop critical thinking and impel concrete actions? How to leave the linear view of modern science to achieve an epistemological revolution? The String Game is intended to help answer those questions.

Designed by a Belgian network, the String Game is a participatory game that allows addressing in a fun and creative way a complex issue: the food system. It is, indeed, a tool for modeling a complex system - the consumerist society and its impacts - intended to promote understanding the relationships between elements that make up this system as well as creating a personal ethical position: in what am I concerned, responsible of this situation, and what can I change?

Dynamic, flexible, adaptable, this tool can be used with children as well as adults by education professionals, leaders, teachers ... Different versions have been developed from the game allowing to deepen some themes: seeds, debt, the "Françafrique", permaculture, planned obsolescence... It was translated into several languages (Spanish, Portuguese and English) and adapted to different contexts (Europe, Latin America).

The game's objectives are to:

- ✓ raise awareness of the impacts of our food model on the environment, the socio-economic sphere and human health.

- ✓ Reinforce the capacity to build links between local and global themes, between challenges at "North" and "South", between consumption and its environmental and social impacts.
- ✓ Incite the construction of a global thought, complex and critical.
- ✓ Encourage the building of a "critical look" about the model of consumerist society.
- ✓ Open prospects of alternate actions to the current model, both individual and collective.
- ✓ Encourage the development of a school project, an association, a consumer or citizen group, etc..

The String Game is based on **the systemic approach**, an approach that helps to open up reality by showing, for example, that *the whole is more than the sum of its parts*. This kind of approach seeks to start a profound transformation: the mechanisms of our thoughts, which follows us since childhood in linearity, individualism, alienation, and leads us, for example, to fatalism, to passivity against a tedious complexity. So we need to decolonize our imaginary to start writing another History, without seeking to reduce the world's complexity but acting at all levels to transform it deeply.

This educational tool will be hosted at the next RTF camp in Germany in order to allow participants to animate the game by themselves.

POPULAR POWER AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

Attempt to clarify !

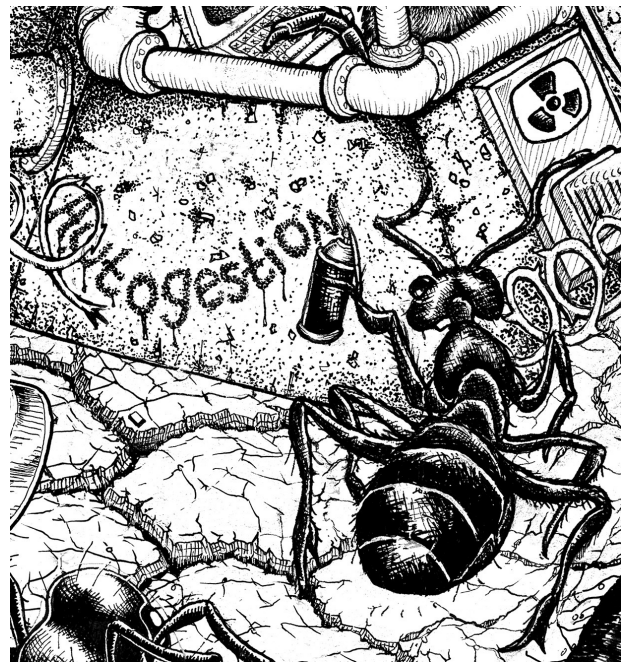
The concept of social participation fell into fashion and is present in the discourses on the most diverse topics of today's society: politics, business, science...

It is easy to demonstrate the weakness of the concept of participation and its ideological manipulation. Participation is, for example, one of the common characteristics of authoritarian strategies: "Call the lower classes to a 'broad participatory process' and then exercise on the 'participative people' the tutelary and manipulative control projects" (Brandão, 1984, p.250). The idea of participation is no longer an adjective. It becomes substantive since it is set to the name of the policy project implemented in popular communities, which 1) serves to amplify a popular presence in programs which, assuring social sector services (health, education...), reproduce the dominant political services that preserve the social order established through social control mechanisms of popular groups and movements; 2) serves, step by step, to the production, reproduction and reinforcement of a class power, of a progressively autonomous power of self-control and participation organized in political spaces which determine the social life.

The popular power is the power that comes from lower classes – from both individual and collectivity – and which is constructed by the people for the people. The power belongs to all and must be exercised by all, since "everyone is born to shine and the more stars in the night sky, the more it is illuminated." (Peloso, 2009; p69).

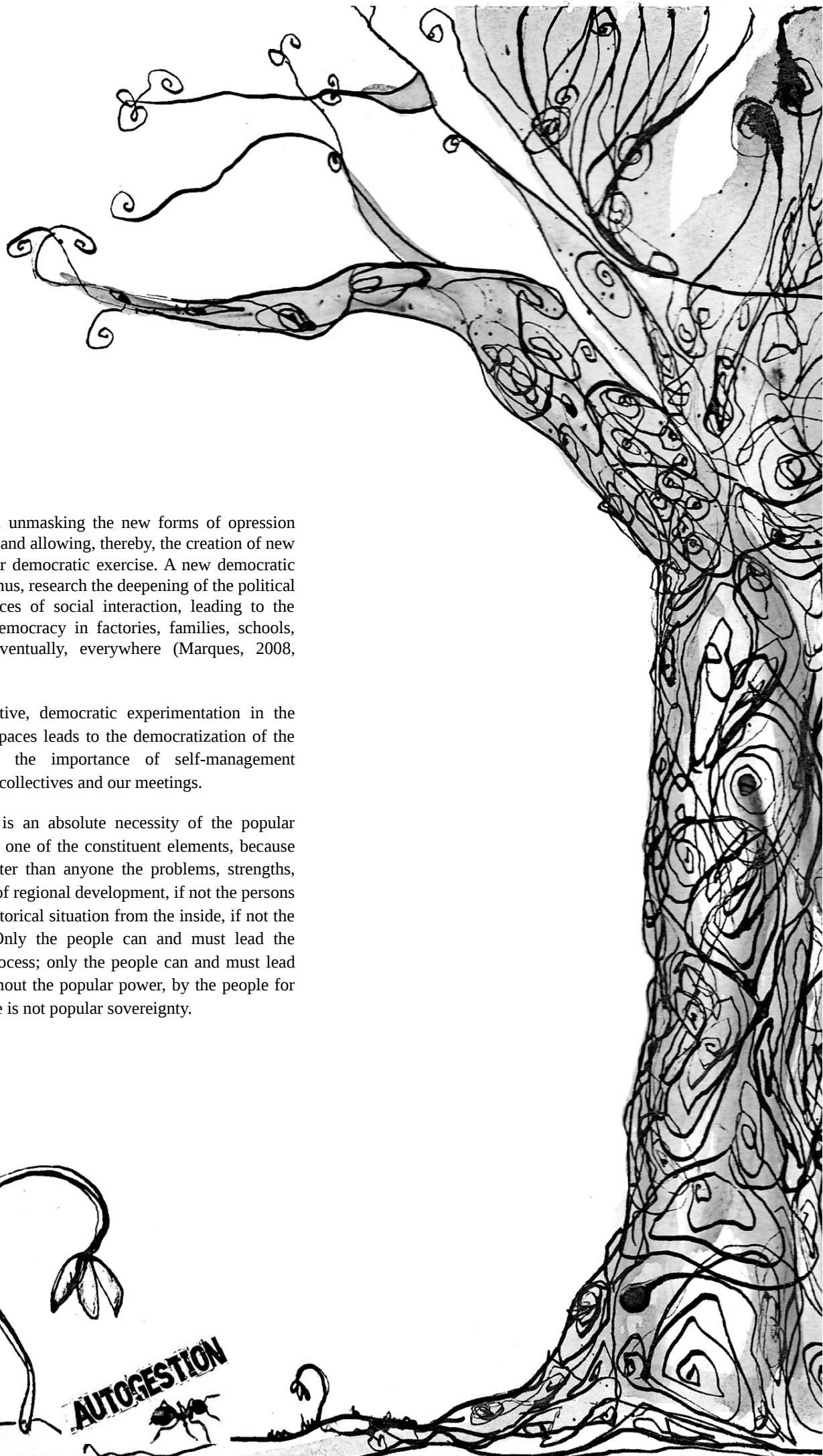
In this sense, the social participation that does not create popular power is useless, because it is unable to influence the History of a society towards the transformation of oppressive dominant systems and, finally, it maintains individuals in a fragmented and powerless state. In fact, the representation of participation refers to a position on the conceptions of society, citizenship, ethics and justice, as well as public education and Popular Movements, inequality and social exclusion (Sawaia, 2002). To continue: participation must be materialized in collective processes of self-management and self-analysis, in the construction of a democratic project for emancipation.

The creation of a new imaginary is an inescapable premise. It determines us to construct our own ideological and methodological scenery and our own identity, in order to unite the diversity of the individuals and groups in a common culture of peasant struggles, to (re)construct a life dignity, to serve as a foundation for political formation and therefore finally, to generate processes of self-management and self-analysis.



This self-management, beyond being based on a common vision, is linked to the issue of "autonomy of all workers involved in a specific productive organization. In such an organization, all workers have the same rights in the participation and collective decision-making processes" (Lins ; Melo Neto, 2010; p.7). This democratic autonomy, accompanied by a process of formation of political consciousness, is involved in the human emancipation. In other terms, self-management, constructed across autonomy, democracy and political consciousness bring us closer to the emancipation of being, closer to freedom. The same freedom that Mikhail Bakunin considers as "the unique environment in which to flourish and grow in intelligence, dignity and human happiness; [...] the unique freedom which is truly worthy of its name, the freedom that consists of the full development of all material, intellectual and moral powers that are found in a state of latent faculties of each; the freedom that does not recognize other restrictions except those established by the laws of our own nature."

In agreement with authors such as Boaventura de Souza Santos (2001) or Miguel Benasayag (2004), we consider that the essence of emancipation resides in its process, not in its result. There is no emancipation in itself, but emancipatory relations, and the unique freedom that does not fall into the contradiction of necessity (for Spinoza, freedom is the intelligence of necessity) is the participation in a "liberating process." According to Santos, social emancipation is reinvented in the beginning of the century, notably through a redefinition of democracy, which must organize a global repolitization of



social practices, unmasking the new forms of oppression and domination and allowing, thereby, the creation of new opportunities for democratic exercise. A new democratic theory should, thus, research the deepening of the political field in all spaces of social interaction, leading to the deepening of democracy in factories, families, schools, universities... eventually, everywhere (Marques, 2008, p.72).

In this perspective, democratic experimentation in the various social spaces leads to the democratization of the society. Hence the importance of self-management practices in our collectives and our meetings.

Popular power is an absolute necessity of the popular sovereignty and one of the constituent elements, because who knows better than anyone the problems, strengths, and challenges of regional development, if not the persons who live the historical situation from the inside, if not the people itself. Only the people can and must lead the development process; only the people can and must lead the people. Without the popular power, by the people for the people, there is not popular sovereignty.

CRETE AGAINST RENEWABLE ENERGIES AT INDUSTRIAL SCALE

It is springtime in Crete, but on the six mountain chains of the island, there are wind and photovoltaic parks that flourish, to the great satisfaction of the European energetic giants. The logic is similar to the one of gold mines, no need to remake a drawing. Since the placement of Greece under the Troika tutelage, there are all these natural resources and agricultural terrains that have been sold unconditionally to international investors.

Crete's natural patrimony, which notably comprises a unique fauna and flora (more than 200 endemic plants, numerous raptor species, etc...), had already suffered the consequences of thoughtless development and mass tourism. Concreting part of the North coast, road network, quarries, open dumps and landfills ... The implementation projects of units of renewable energy production on an industrial scale may well give it a blow.

The plans are pharaonic: in total, the installations, mainly wind and photovoltaic, could produce 6500MW of energy, while the needs of the island during the high of the touristic season do not exceed 750MW! This energy is, thus, destined to be exported and sold by big European companies. A network of undersea and underground cables should accompany the implementation of these installations. An important step in this plan of rampage is announced in June 2012 through licensing (through procedures to accelerate investments, known as "Fast Track" that bypass all the usual legal steps) for three renewable energy production on an industrial scale projects, aiming at a 2150MW production. These include the installation of 800 wind turbines on 69 peaks, and a photovoltaic park on 180 hectares on the East of the island.

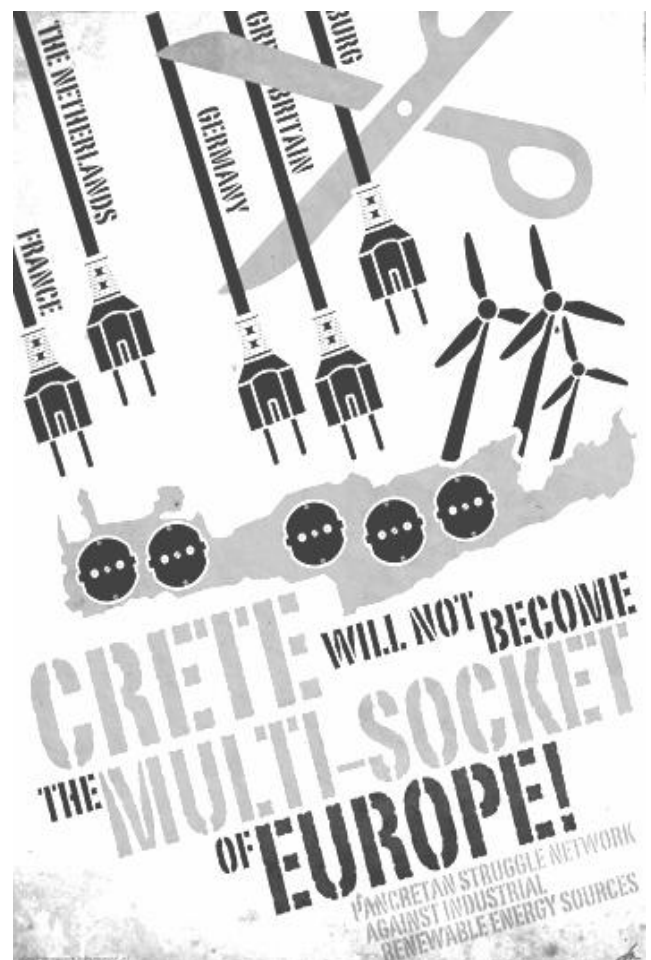
For the investors, the place is ideal: favorable climatic conditions, cheap land, more than tense economic situation in which vague promises of employment are enough to divide the population.

Besides the impact on the local landscapes and biotops, there is also the agricultural sector that is threatened by these projects. The consequences on the freatic water, the circulation of the water and more directly on the availability of agricultural land would be dramatical. Where solar pannels and wind mills would be planted, vines and olive trees would be torn out, pastures or cultivable land would be suppressed. When the level of food autonomy of the island is at its lowest, these installations would definitely compromise the potential of agricultural production.

Facing this situation, the inhabitants attempt to react. At the end of 2011, the pancreaten network against renewable energy production on industrial scale was created. It gathres today more than 100 organizations and numerous persons across the island. Even if its membres

are diverse, the struggle does not stop at saving the landscaping, it is an occasion of fundamental positioning toward issues such as energetic and food autonomy on the scale of the Cretan territory and is integrated in the global struggle against memorandum politics. For the moment, the action passes through legal means: information, manifestation, petition, recourse at the State Council regarding granted permits. In its second public statement, clearly offensive, the network declares itself determined not to stop there. Thus, to continue...

For more information or to bring your contribution: <https://sites.google.com/site/pancretannetagainstindustrse>



INTERNATIONAL DEGROWTH-CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN LEIPZIG IN 2014

The fourth international Degrowth-Conference in September 2014 follows the last conferences in Paris, Barcelona and Venice. Besides science, activism and art will play an important role in the communication of degrowth-concepts and discourses at the Conference.

The application for the conference with the title „Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity “was submitted by “Netzwerk Wachstumschwende”, a german degrowth/post-growth-network. Partners are the University of Leipzig, the Helmholtz-Centre, the german research team “Postwachstumsgesellschaften” (postgrowth-societies) of the University of Jena and the think tank “Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie”.

The organization team consists of around 20-30 people, who make decisions by consensus and try to reflect on and diminish any form of discrimination.

For a few years now, a public discussion about the importance of growth has been ongoing. “Degrowth” aims at an absolute decrease of production and consumption with the aim of a good life for all humans, sufficiency, freedom, ecological sustainability and social equity. In Germany, the debate takes place mainly under the label of “Postgrowth-Economy” (Paech 2010) and “Postgrowth-Society”(Seidl and Zahrt 2010). In that sense, “Wachstumschwende” means not so much a goal to achieve but a transformation project. The main topics of the conference will be “Organizing society” (emancipatory politics/ autonomy; commons; institutions/ democracy), “Socio-ecological economy” ((re)productivity; commons; human-nature relations/ society-nature relations) and “Living conviviality” (buen vivir; creative commons; knowledge & technology).

Initiatives who are active in strengthening and discussing these aspects are invited to collaborate at the conference or at the run up events under the label “Path to Degrowth”, which will start in November 2013.

Contact: practice@degrowth.de



DEGROWTH

***Because you can't
shop your way to
sustainability.***

CALL OUT!

AUSGECO2HLT + RECLAIM THE FIELDS

ACTION CAMPS 23 AUGUST - 6 SEPTEMBER 2013

Reclaim the Fields and AusgeCO2hlt invite you to an action camp in Rhineland, close to Cologne (Germany), from 23.8. until 6.9. 2013. For three days we will take collective direct action against the open cast mining in Rhineland. Furthermore there will be a program including different practical and theoretical workshops, discussions and a lot more.

On the background of the struggles in Rhineland we want to facilitate an exchange of dissident knowledge and action. We invite to 14 days of networking, collective learning and discussion as well as practical activities to exchange knowledge and skills and to resist in the Rhineland. Apart from the three days of action there will be a lot of space for Workshops and getting to know each other to create new links. The Camp is a participatory process and waits for **your contribution!** We are looking forward to your ideas, contents and skills to create a program together.

You are artists, activists, peasants, urban gardeners, are living on a collective farm or are active in political campaigns or groups? You want to share you experiences, pass and broaden your knowledge? Then you are welcome to do this in the course of workshops, discussions, practical work or in other ways. We look forward to alternative ideas on topics like collective and solidarity form of living and working beyond capitalism and structures of exploitation. Everything that strengthens our diverse daily and organized resistance is welcome.

Contact us at [program\[at\]reclaimthefields.org](mailto:program[at]reclaimthefields.org)

Some potential themes for workshops to inspire you:

foodsovereignty // right wing politics in eco movement // animal rights/animal Liberation // self-supply/-sufficiency // self-organisation // access to land // connecting urban and rural struggles // urban supply of rural collectives (Community Supported Agriculture, Non-Commercial Agriculture) // permaculture // Private Properties – Commons // History and development of Agriculture: Agriculture and Capitalism (Green Revolution) // land liberation through purchase of land (different means of access to land: squatting, buying, etc) // how to organise struggles, „how to do resistance“/share and learn forms of resistance // energy // botany/knowledge of herbs and plants

What is Ausgeco2hlt?

Our Campaign sees itself as an open platform where different groups and individuals can network with each other, educate themselves and take collective action. Our aim is to organize a broad protest movement against RWE¹ and for the immediate shut down of the open cast mines in the Rhineland coal fields.

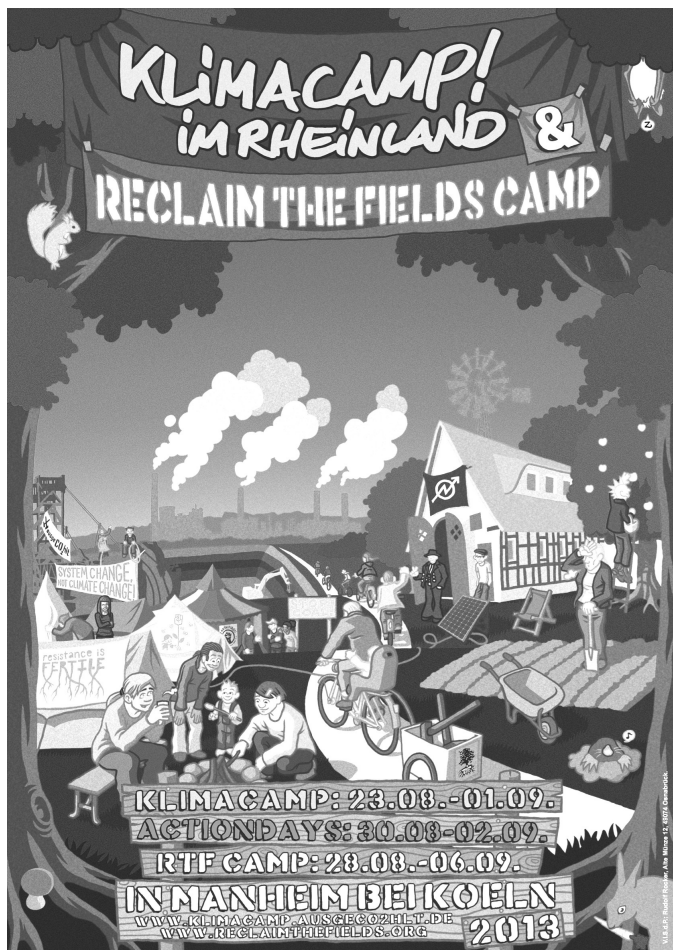
We see the protest against brown coal as part of a global climate movement against Coal-energy, the exploitation of shale gas, Carbon-dioxide storage, etc. and stand in solidarity with energy struggles against fossil-nuclear capitalism.

We are convinced that in order to facilitate a true energy transformation, monopolised power structures have to be questioned and we have to change the rules of the game of the concurrent economy, built upon limitless growth and consumption of resources. Thus we support initiatives for self-determined ways of living as an alternative to superfluous consumption. At the same time we demand a collectivization of energy companies and a decentralized energy supply with renewable energies.

And Reclaim the Fields?

Reclaim the Fields is a europe-wide constellation of peasants, landless and prospective peasants, as well as people who are taking back control over food production. We support and encourage people to stay on the land and go back to the countryside. We promote food sovereignty (as defined in the Nyéléni declaration) and peasant agriculture, as well as alternative ways of life. We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real-needs-oriented, small-scale production and initiatives. We are putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

1. RWE is Germany's second biggest energy supply concern, that keeps on using coal as the main energy and has compared to other european companies a very low share of regenerative energies in the mix of energies. RWE is being criticized of doing greenwashing with "climate campaigns" whilst through open cast mining a lot of nature and towns are being destroyed, as well as lowering the groundwater.



Seeds

The "Reclaim the seeds" working group invites people to come with self-produced seeds and any document they think would be nice to share. With the practice of seed swaps we want to reflect about the subject of seeds collectively.

A Camp welcoming Children

The Camp is meant to be a children friendly space, where children and their affinity persons have a space and are included in actions, the program and other camp activities. We are aware that political actions and camps often contain obstacles for parents and affinity person of children and thus exclude them. Taking into account the real needs of children and affinity persons we want to create a space for everyone. Please feel welcome to come to the camp and participate! We would be happy if you would get in touch with us beforehand in order to talk about an adequate arrangement.

No space for Racism or Sexism – Not at the Camp nor anywhere else

The camp explicitly takes a stand against Sexism and Racism as well as other forms of domination on the basis of hierarchical social categories, the camp positions itself determinant against sexist and racist acts.

Costs of the Camp

We try to organize the camp as low-cost as possible but are dependent on your solidarity contributions. Please get in touch with us if you want to come but the travel is too expensive for you. We want to make it possible for everybody to come and share travel costs in a collective manner, but can not guarantee anything.

Visa

If you need a Visa to get to the camp and want to be supported in that case, get in touch with us via: [camp2013\[at\]reclaimthefields.org](mailto:camp2013[at]reclaimthefields.org)

Information and contact

More, up to date, information about the program, how to get to the camp, food, camping, etc. can be found at: www.reclaimthefield.org/camp/2013

Through the mailadress:

[camp2013\[at\]reclaimthefields.org](mailto:camp2013[at]reclaimthefields.org)

You can reach us with questions about the camp. For workshops please write to:

[program\[at\]reclaimthefields.org](mailto:program[at]reclaimthefields.org).

For more information about RtF and Ausgeco2hlt visit: reclaimthefields.org and ausgeco2hlt.de

Register for the camp at:

reclaimthefields.org/registration

The more people register the easier it is for us to plan! Feel free to forward this call to individuals or groups you know and come to the camp!

Resistance is fertile!

- Your Camp-Organisation -



HOW IS LIGNITE-MINING CONNECTED TO RECLAIM THE FIELDS?

Climate Camp, Actions Days, RtF –Camp 2013

How is lignite-mining connected to Reclaim the Fields?

In 2013 the European Reclaim the Fields Camp will take place together with the Climate Camp in the Rhineland, Germany. The aim of this text is to show how the causes and effects of climate change and the destruction and expropriation of land all around the world are interconnected, which is why the struggles of both Climate and RtF-Camp are interconnected, and thus why the two camps are held simultaneously.

Some facts about lignite-mining in the Rhineland

In order to mine the lignite, the Energy Utility Company RWE is digging giant craters in the Rhineland, turning landscapes into moonscapes. Today the open-cast coal mine Hambach is Europe's largest with a depth of 400m and stretching over an area of 84km². This hole could swallow the city-centre of Paris. It is planned to be nearly doubled in size in the future.

Apart from the destruction of forests and whole villages, there is a loss of agricultural land, which we will focus on below. Within one year 100 million tons of lignite are being mined in the Rhineland coal fields, 90 million tons of which are converted into electricity and 10 million are processed into briquettes. These processes release huge quantities of fine particle matter, some of this being radioactive. The particle matter emissions of the open-cast mines are greater than those of the whole German car traffic. These emissions are one of the main causes for the increased occurrence of cancer, dementia and vascular diseases in the Rhineland. In Germany approximately 3100 people die every year from the effects of coal fired power plants. This figure does not include the effects of open-cast mining¹.

The coal-fired power plants in the Rhineland are the biggest emitters of CO₂ in Europe. For each ton of coal converted into electricity, one ton of CO₂ is released into the air.

A small example in order to underscore the magnitude of these emissions: A beech tree binds 12.5 kg of CO₂ in the course of a year, and significantly less during the first years of growth. This means that to compensate one ton of CO₂ yearly, 80 beech trees would need to be planted. Instead, the last remainders of the Hambach Forest are destroyed to make way for the mine. This ancient forest once used to be as big as 4500ha, and it still is one of Europe's biggest natural forests, housing rare animals such as the Bechstein's bat. On top of all this, coal mining is promoted by both regional and national political levels in Germany even though it is emphasized that the cheap coal does not need subsidies, in contrast to the expensive renewable energies. For example, RWE does not need to pay taxes on the extracted raw materials, they only pay a reduced water withdrawal fee and the national and regional households pay most of the reallocation-costs for the A4 motorway. Moreover, RWE is only marginally involved with the follow-up costs.

All of this shows that profits are privatized whereas external costs lie with the public. In the end, coal is only cheap for RWE.



Impactos de la extracción de lignito en la Agricultura

Until the end of 2010, in the Rhineland a total area of 30.877,2 ha land was utilized for open-cast lignite mining. 21.529,5 ha of this was "re-cultivated", of which 11.374,6 ha are meant for agricultural use. However, an area of cultivable land has been lost that could have supplied food for 80.000 people. This can be explained by the effects of intensive land use, which can create permanent damages. More loss of land is expected until the projected end of mining activities in 2040. These losses have a number of reasons apart from the direct digging activities:

¹http://www.greenpeace.de/themen/energie/nachrichten/artikel/3100_tod_esfaelle_durch_deutschlands_schaedlichste_kohlekraftwerke-1/

In the Rhineland many areas consists of the highly fertile loess-soil. It is estimated that around 80 percent of the global corn and grain production is carried out on loess soil. Loess soil is easy to work with light machinery, but is compacted through the use of heavy agricultural machinery, which alone can lead to its permanent destruction. During the beginning of the re-naturation, 30% of the area was permanently damaged through wrong deposition and mixing of humus layers. Peasants have complained that they can not grow as diverse and do not have harvest the same yields on these new fields which in turn leads to am more intensive usage of fertilizers. Organic farming becomes impossible for the next decades. The spiral of environmental destruction runs its course.

Further impacts are:

✗ RWE designates agricultural land as “nature compensation areas” as nature conservation areas, such as the Hambacher Forst, are destroyed in the mining process. Therefore, even fewer area can be used as farmland. As a consequence, a competition between agriculture and nature preservation results.

✗ The ground water is pumped from 500m below ground so that the mines do not run full of water. A consequence of this is that rain water drains faster, soil dries more quickly and natural wet areas have to be watered artificially. These effects are felt as far as the Netherlands and Belgium at 50km distance.

✗ Yields decrease because of the clouding due to emissions by power plants. (The sugar content of sugar beets decreases in affected areas)

✗ The demand for land is extremely high and through the increased competition the prices for land increase. In the Rhineland one hectare land costs 80.000 €, which equals a price of 8€ per square meter, whereas usually in Germany a square meter of cultivated land is sold at a square meter price of 2-3 €. RWE, on the contrary, bought the Hambach Forest at a price of 50 Pfennig (roughly 25 eurocent) a square meter. RWE also keeps all gains from timber sales. Small-scale farms, as everywhere around the world, can not compete with this kind of capitalist competition machinery and have to abandon their farms.

Growing resistance

Small farms² cannot survive within this capitalist competition system and have to give up financially. The regional destruction of land as described above has to be seen in context with the global scarcity of land and the increasing degradation of soil caused by industrial farming and the impacts of global warming (key term Peak Soil). The food that cannot be grown in the Rhineland any longer has to be imported! This has contributes to the increasing global competition for farmland and exploding amounts of conflicts about land (“landgrabbing”). If you want to know more about this issue, read the background paper about this: <http://www.reclaimthefields.org/background>

These examples show that the exploitation of coal is not only extremely damaging to the local environment and the climate, but that it causes a further decline of food production – in the face of nearly a billion people suffering from hunger worldwide. As a consequence of global warming we have to expect a dramatic loss of crop yields due to droughts, floodings and other extreme weather events. We have to expect that conflicts about the resources land and fertile soil will aggravate. We have to find ways of generating energy and farming food that do not destroy our livelihoods or ecosystems. And we have to create a fair, equal access to our remaining resources.

Let’s create an alternative to capitalism by cooperative, collective, independent, small-scale productions based on people’s needs. Let’s connect local actions with global, political struggles and movements!

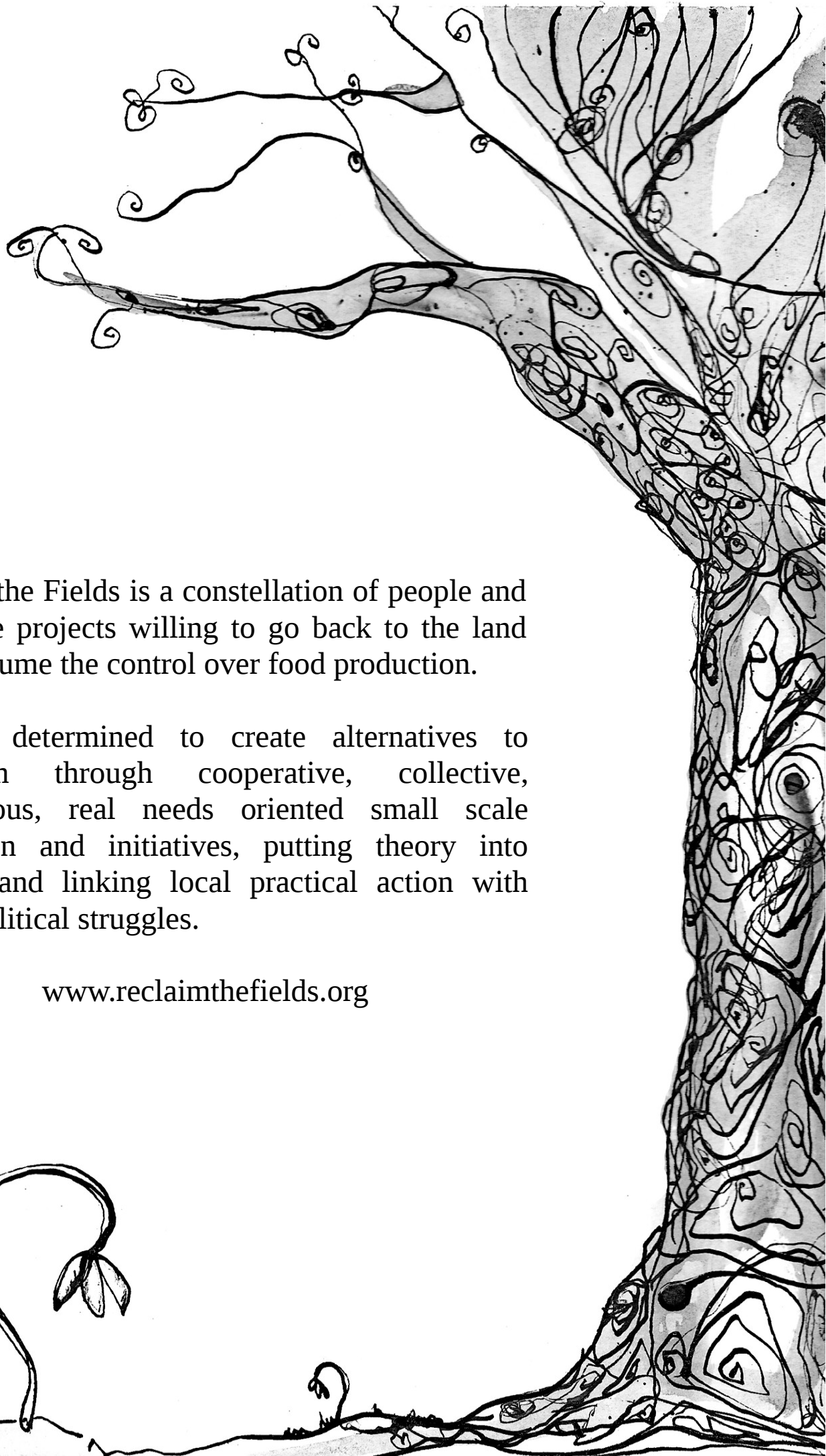
This is how we can fight against global injustice.

Resistance is fertile!



RECLAIM THE FIELDS

² We do not want to romanticize small scale farms nor equate them with peasants, as most small-scale farms act on capitalist principles as well. The authors acknowledge and refer, in their positive use of the words peasants, to the definition at www.reclaimthefields.org.



Reclaim the Fields is a constellation of people and collective projects willing to go back to the land and reassume the control over food production.

We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real needs oriented small scale production and initiatives, putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

www.reclaimthefields.org