

TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE & BEYOND

*Infrastructures,
tools and tactics
for agroecological
struggles and their
allies*



by Common Ecologies

This collectively made book is a compendium of tactics and tools for agroecological transition, gleaned from different struggles at the forefront of socio-ecological change in Europe. It presents 13 broad tactical approaches and 5 legal-organizational models for transformation and justice in the world of agriculture and beyond, as well as plenty of tools. Knowing that within and beyond agriculture there are ecological, feminist and anti-racist struggles, this book documents how fighting for agroecology also means pushing for land and labour rights, for commons and cooperativism, community and territorial power, climate justice, translocal and transversal solidarity, and direct democracy - and against the privatizing, extractive and ecocidal model of agroindustry. The struggles and infrastructures we portray here link, broaden and embolden agroecology, by showing powerful connections and strategic horizons. They show that another agriculture is possible, extending justice and care from the countryside into the city. This book is not an exhaustive compendium but a starting point for inspiration, based in a long term process of learning, coursework and co-creation of the Common Ecologies Earthcare strand. This work is growing and ongoing.



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INTRODUCTION

Building Agroecological Struggles and Beyond

We wrote this book with many hands, heads and hearts. Sometimes like an octopus with 3 communicating brains, an earthworm with 5 beating hearts, a web of roots talking across the forest floor as we felt the ground tremble. Typing, thinking and reaching across different corners of Europe and beyond. Many conversations, much co-research and alliance-building went into these pages. What you're about to read is born from a long process of liaising and thinking, with all the initiatives featured in this book - who we thank for their support and powerful work. A labour of mutual inspiration and breathing together, we hope to draw you in, dear reader. Make these pages yours, they are full of invaluable lessons and stories, for all kinds of people and movements.

This book draws on the Earthcare Fieldcast, and the 'Tools & Tactics for Agroecological Transition' online course for collectives, which we organised in spring 2023 as the Common Ecologies Earthcare strand. This book aggregates the tools, tactics and stories of initiatives from all over Europe that work to transform agriculture, fight toxic and exploitative agro-industry, and build socio-ecologically just ways of farming. It focuses on the alliances and powers we must build to transform not just agriculture, but also everything else.

On this journey we learned a lot together. We worked hard to distil those lessons into this book, a compendium that outlines some key forms of struggle, and models of organisation, for transforming agriculture and beyond. Our co-research could and will keep on going, because the wealth and depth of tactics and practices is huge. This book offers a plateau, from which you can see some pretty amazing things. It offers a view on the interconnectedness of different kinds of struggle - community, territorial, organising, networked, legal, institutional, etc - across the key dimensions of land, labour, knowledges and infrastructures. We hope you find these pages as useful and moving as we do.

Why agroecology?

The vision of agroecology we pursue here is deeply inspired by the explicitly political approach to agroecology found in the Global South: where changing how we deal with land is always connected to struggles around ownership, where sustainable peasant livelihoods are always connected to justice for landless peasants, and land is never just a matter of measuring out plots but is most of all a living pluriverse made of soil. 'Tierra' means both land and soil, in latin languages, and those two dimensions must not come apart.

We want to explore, discuss and strengthen this broader and more political notion of agroecology, learning from the struggles that happen across different territories in Europe, where we are based. Many of these struggles don't explicitly speak of themselves as agroecological,



but share the broader political vision of agriculture transforming livelihoods, access to land and our mode of socio-ecological reproduction, in alliance with other movements. They are part of the push to develop tactics and tools that are valuable within the broader strategic horizon of socio-ecological, agroecological transition, and the struggle against agroindustry that needs to go with this. They develop sensitivities, common notions and forms of co-inhabiting that nourish the agriculture, economies and (trans)local ties we need. And they foster imaginaries, of other worlds that are possible here and now, of forms of resistance that's fertile.

Aside from offering practical and tactical inspiration, this book is also an ode to these imaginaries, so necessary for building common futures. It seeks to celebrate many vital, lively and deeply transformative struggles. This is why we crafted a large and dense image alongside the book, together with illustrator Amanda Priebe, to celebrate the creativity and connectedness of agroecological struggles and their allies. This image shows some of the shared territories we can build across the city and countryside, affirming our joint strength and resourcefulness. It has been printed as a poster, which we invite you to get or self-print via *Common Ecologies*: put it up on your barn wall, your community garden noticeboard, your cooperative kitchen tiles, your flatshare toilet door, your occupation's tent, your office wall, your social centre staircase or simply your bedroom - to channel beautiful empowering dreams. Images, just like stories, nourish the imagination.

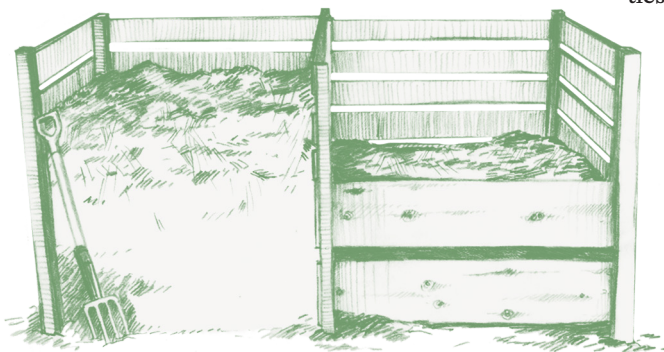
This isn't a specialist book - in fact it requires no prior knowledge about agroecology or agriculture whatsoever. It's an open toolkit for anyone who wonders how the hell we can get out of our dependency on cheap food, produced in ecocidal ways under exploitative conditions. How can we create a just food system, defend or reconstruct rural forms of life? How can agricultural work be organised in just and ecologically careful ways? How can we build solidarities and understanding between urban and rural people? How can we fight against ecological devastation, for living soils, vibrant communities, good lives in common?

Accompanying, documenting, imagining: what these pages do, and what to do with these pages

This book is an indefinite outline of important lines and angles of creation and attack, It's a book that should inspire and provide ideas and references, without any pretence to completeness or closure. As we circulate the book in the movements that populate it - and beyond - we hope people will help us continue to improve and update its lessons. We're not professing to be experts or have any ultimate solutions, nor do we want to offer simple recipes, knowing everything depends on situation, context and capacities. We're writing this to offer

differently textured stories, hacks, examples, tactics, inspirations. The tools and tactics we

present here differ greatly amongst themselves, and we insist that *all* of them are important, valuable, and meaningful in the fight against socio-ecological destruction. While all of these have been developed in specific conditions and contexts, and may neither be directly replicable or scalable, they nonetheless provide important inspiration.



What can it mean to build community, transform institutions, blockade and resist agro-capitalist infrastructures, to fight within the belly of the agroindustrial beast, to produce alternative forms of organisation and farming, to invent legal tactics, to fight to transform work, to link struggles and build translocal alliances...? How do people do this, in different contexts? Pick what

suits you best, what stories resonate most, what tools and tactics may be most useful to you where you are or want to go.

The introduction and conclusion to this book offer concrete ideas and methods for mapping out your situation and context. They are meant to help us all think about what may be most needed where we are and what we in our singular (individual or collective) body and positions can do. We thus wrap this toolkit in a little analysis of why we need struggles that transform agriculture, and why they need to be a key part and ally not just to ecological movements but also to climate justice, anti-racism, labour struggles, feminism, anti-speciesism and so on. And why they need to be both transversal and translocal. We see no contradiction between the situated and translocal, rather we hope to articulate those dimensions, not least to provide imaginaries that run counter to toxic capitalist globalisation. Agroecology needn't be insular, and internationalism needn't be industrial.

Our starting point here is Europe, where agri-transition is a tough job but all the more necessary, involving a lot of reckoning with racist, colonial and ecocidal pasts and presents. Inspired by the peasant struggles of La Via Campesina and other movements that work to undo the damage of capitalist extractivism, we salute all the powerful alliances that are currently being built across those terrains and the fights for climate justice, against extractivism, against ecocide, against landgrabs, against genocide, against financialization.

What makes these struggles powerful, and what makes agroecology compelling, is that it's not just a struggle *against* but very much also a struggle *for* that's at stake here. *For* earthcare, community supported systems, grassroots food webs, translocal and global solidarity, commons, situated knowledges and alterontologies, joyful coexistence and smart ass struggles that build desirable, liveable worlds. This is a book for people and groups seeking ideas, accounts, examples that can make them take a big breath and gain energy and desires for radical change.

Agroecology needs struggle, struggles need a transformative horizon

We talk about agroecology not because it's the only frame through which we understand the struggles at hand, but because it's something we believe there's lots to learn from right now. Agroecology is one of the most radical proposals for transformation we have at hand: addressing our crisis of socio-ecological reproduction at its root, to do with our metabolism. This is not just for farmers, peasants or food producers, it's - at the very least - for all those of us who eat stuff and care about our environments. And so this book, as a compendium of tactics and stories, is also something that can matter for anybody, from the most remote rural shed to the densest of urban skyscrapers. In fact, building that link between urban and rural struggles and transformation is one of the key things we learn about with the tools and tactics here.

Agroecology is radical because it connects us to memories, practices, stories and territories: concrete things to connect with, realities and materialities. Radical: rooted. Agroecology is not science fiction, nor wishful thinking about another way to connect the human with more than human. It does not come from nowhere, from books or policy proposals, it's part of our common history and origins. It's to do with where we all come from and will go back and forward to, the terrain we inhabit and forget at our peril. The earth. The soil. The struggles we write about here are for inspiration to anyone wanting to recuperate both interdependence and autonomy at the same time, who want to shape agroecology as an open practice and struggle.

Agroecology is a pathway toward answering fundamental questions like: *How do we reproduce ourselves not just in, but in partnership with the web of life? How do we work together with water cycles, soils, plants, fungi, animals, and other*

critters, to co-create habitats in sync with planetary ecosystems? Reproducing ourselves agroecologically means making *food* (for all people) and *livelihoods* (for peasants and farm workers) that are not poisoning or exhausting water, soil nutrients and biodiversity, or destroying human communities, labour, and reproductive autonomy, or memory.

Agroecology means creating diversity of life rather than monocultural deserts, in relation to ecosystems and more-than-human life as much as with human cultures and pluriversal forms of life. In short, it's a way of creating human habitat that isn't destructive or parasitic of more-than-human life but based in mutualism: a world we can live in. All of us, long term.

For us humans, this comes down to livelihoods and forms of life. For people to be able to build solid livelihoods through agroecology, five elements are needed: 1) land and water, 2) labour, 3) social distribution systems, 4) ecological collaborators, and 5) knowledge for how these can be assembled.

Most people making agri-ecological livelihoods - we call them peasants - struggle with those five conditions for socio-ecological farming. And a great many of them they struggle together, knowing that it takes joint efforts, voices and power to create real and structural possibilities for livelihoods. Peasant farmers feed the world, and they also still produce the majority of our food in Europe¹. But more and more peasant farmers are forced to give up or revert to industrial agriculture, forced to compete with price-dumping extractivist agribusiness. The struggle over the kind of farming we want is on, and it's ultimately a question of life or death, not just for farmers but for everyone, because the agroindustry destroys the very bases of life on earth (see the entry on Ecocide below).

Agroecology will only create broad transformation if it exists as more than utopian oases in the desert, and more than best practices we powerlessly beg for institutions and companies to adopt. This is why we focus this book on *struggles*, on the collective efforts it takes to make transformation real, up against the forces of capitalist extraction, accumulation, destruction and subsumption.

Agroecological transformation requires struggles at least five different fronts:

1. Establishing access to land and water for more than the privileged few.
2. Establishing just and non-alienated labour relations in agriculture.
3. Building short chains of food and resource distribution outside profit-making and competitive races to the bottom.
4. Caring for/with and defending ecosystems and the non-human collaborators of agroecology.
5. Sharing knowledge and know-how of how to do agroecology.

All these are inherently antagonistic practices. Their success will undermine the power of capitalist-entrepreneurial farming, and strengthen agroecology at the same time. In these struggles, we all have to get behind the peasants and land workers doing the work of reproducing us, understanding this is the struggle of everyone who wishes to eat well, in good company and community, in interdependent autonomy and solidarity, in an environment that's cared for. And so corresponding to the points above:

¹ As the European Coordination of La Via Campesina puts it in their document on 13 Facts about Farming in Europe: 'Holding only 30 to 50% of the total arable land, small farmers feed the people of Europe. Small farms are significantly more productive per unit of land. Eurostat data show that large farms (as defined by Eurostat) only produce 11% of total agricultural output.' https://viacampesina.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/EN_10_Facts-about-peasant-agriculture-in-Europe.pdf

1. **Land and water**
The struggle for access to land and water is a struggle against the tendency for agricultural land to be grabbed² and monopolised by capitalist farmers, oligarchs and financial institutions, and against the tendency for the land to be filled with concrete by real estate developers and short-sighted public institutions. Establishing access to land and water for more than the privileged few.
2. **Labour**
The struggle for just and non-alienated labour in agriculture is a way to undermine those destructive and racist farming practices that only stay in business by exploiting people.
3. **Distribution**
The struggle to build cooperative food and resource distribution channels is an attack on capitalist supermarkets, food futures markets, and climate destructive logistics of importing food from faraway places where the sun is stronger, and labour and environmental regulations weaker.
4. **Ecology**
The struggle to defend ecosystems is a way to undermine consumers and politicians' support for food production that is only 'cheap' and 'profitable' by growing in soil shaped by toxins and fossil-based fertilisers. Caring for/with and defending ecosystems and the non-human collaborators of agroecology.
5. **Knowledge**
The struggle to share and common knowledge is a struggle against the privatisation of scientific knowledge and technologies, and the devaluation of traditional knowledge and know-how in the name of 'progress' or modernity.

Because these are *struggles*, they all need to be organised, have tactics, and develop strategies. This book focuses on tactics - part of larger movements and strategies of communisation³, commoning, local and direct governance, anti-capitalism, de-financialisation, decolonization, feminism, ecosocial and climate justice - within a broader strategic horizon we may call earthcare⁴ or socio-ecological reproduction⁵.

What do we mean by tactics?

*Make local struggles into national priorities
We must all become their investment risk
Supply the struggles that break the chains
Protect and reclaim the biodiverse commons
Defend and enable non-extractivist forms of life*

Tactics are an essential component of collective action, but not the only one. Without tactics, we may develop common notions and experiences, perhaps

² Look into the Farmlandgrabs Platform for analysis and coverage of global farmlandgrabs <https://www.farmlandgrab.org/>

³ See this dossier on Communization and Land by Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie (2023) https://konzeptwerk-neue-oekonomie.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Dossier_Bodenpolitik_KNOE2023.pdf

⁴ See 'Towards a Radical Politics of Earthcare' by Manuela Zechner (2022) <https://berlinergazette.de/commoning-vulnerability-towards-a-radical-politics-of-earth-care/>

⁵ See Video 'Channelling the Forces of Reproduction' with Stefania Barca, from our Common Ecologies Course (2022) https://youtu.be/s_iSZ7t3Nvk?si=qeWvmRYoE-HZaYvNj

even dreams and aims, and we may do many things together - have meetings, plant a community garden, or throw a street party. We may even be organised together, and develop policy proposals and schemes for reform. Tactics come in when we go from building worlds and bases of action, to actively fighting opponents or defending ourselves.

We need and use tactics when we want to express our demands politically, defend our common practices against people who want to shut them down, or realize our common aims within conflictual social relations. Tactics come in when we know we have opponents and adversaries⁶. That's why we know the word from games and sports, from social struggles and politics, and from warfare. In the case of agroecological transition, tactics make the difference between experiments with alternative ways of living and producing, however important, and the actual fight against land hoarding, exploitation, ecocide, competition, privatisation, carelessness. Today, the corporate and financial grab of land, soil, water, space, infrastructure and care is intensifying - we need more tactics.

The aim of this book is to circulate tactics between people involved in (or looking to be involved in) struggles for access to land, labour rights, ecological production, just livelihoods, and knowledge commons. We are interested in how all these can contribute to a radical transformation of how we produce and consume food in the web of life. Each entry here learns from groups, initiatives, and movements that have made some headway in that direction, in relation to their own realities, challenges and situated practices, using their own words and principles. We've drafted entries to allow for a short overview of tactics and relevant struggles, summarising a lot but offering pathways to further listening/reading/watching.

The worlds of agrarian, rural and urban-rural struggles and solidarities are characterised by very different histories and geographies. Many tactics that work well among landless workers or small-holding peasants in the South, may work very differently or not at all in the North - at a European or Global level. Many work in singular ways in specific places and context and historical moments - so far from being recipes, they are inspirations that require a feeling for what may work where, when and how, what could be exciting and needed. And while the capitalist food system is increasingly globalised, it is also divided into different zones of labour, and environmental regulation, property regimes, protectionism and subsidies.

Cook your tactics in a rich sauce of community, organising, and strategy

To use any tactic you need to be or get organised with others⁷. To get organised or organise others for your cause is often treated in instrumental and goal orientated ways. And yes it is a matter of developing common commitments to a fight for common aims. But organising is also about carefully mapping your context, be it mostly local or translocal⁸. It also requires building relations and trust, and exploring the common issues and aims with your relations. Good organising requires you to be present and listening, to practise conviviality, care, and solidarity.

To think about what it means to organise around agroecological transformation on a (mostly) local scale, we warmly recommend that you read the local agroecological facilitation manual *Towards Agroecological Futures*, which we have translated and published on our website (see links below).

6 ...and we know we do. Lobbies that push EU institutions to make policy for large industrial farms, supermarkets who push prices to increase profits while underpaying producers, agri-industry lobbies and corporations who will do anything to sell their poison and technology to control modes of farming, grab land and buy politicians.

7 See the [Spadework Podcast](#) on organising in times of climate and social crisis

8 See our postscript in this book, as well as <https://roarmag.org/magazine/building-power-crisis-social-reproduction/>

And to learn from organising practices in the labour, housing, and climate movements, as many of the collectives and struggles presented here do.

Most readers of this book will already be organised in various ways, and have strategies that help them decide when, how and who to organise, and what tactics to use when. All these strategies are quite different, and we don't think it's likely (or perhaps even possible) that we can all come to agree on a strategy. Fortunately, it is also not necessary. Rather than arrive at a grand strategy, we need to think about not just how our strategies can succeed, but how they can prepare the ground for other strategies to succeed.

How can the fight to stop agricultural pollution bring more people to buy agroecological produce, and how the fight to access land for agroecological production help the fight against toxic land use? How can the struggles of workers exploited in industrial agriculture raise wages there, and narrow the gap between the cost of agroecological and conventional produce? How, within the heterogeneous geographies and politics of the rural, can we foster connection, synergy, symbiosis, confluence?

In socio-ecologically transformative agriculture, organising is local and territorial, but also pays close attention to global and translocal flows of produce, finance, and people, and to allies elsewhere, from the nearest city to agroecological peasants and ecological fighters far away. It builds movements that are not merely social, but more-than-social, attentive to what happens to land and ecologies - huge movements, like La Via Campesina, which represents an estimated 200 million farmers around the world! When those join up with urban movements, ecological movements, feminist and anti-racist movements, labour struggles, and so on - then we're building power! Enjoy this book and see you in the streets!



RESOURCES

all downloadable via commonecologies.net

[Tools and Tactics for Agroecological Transition](#)

Online course for collectives and public event series, organised by Common Ecologies, spring 2023

[Building Agroecological Struggles: the Poster](#)

made by Amanda Priebe with Common Ecologies Earthcare Strand

Youtube video playlist

[Tools and Tactics for Agroecological Transition](#) course 2023

Youtube video playlist

[Channeling the Forces of Reproduction](#) course 2022

[Towards Agroecological Futures: How to Facilitate Local Agroecological Transitions](#)

Booklet by Daniel López Garcia and Guillem Tendero Acín, with a foreword by Common Ecologies. Translated by Maggie Schmitt, published in 2023 by Common Ecologies

[From Farm-Work to Care-Work: Towards a Feminist and Anti-Racist Syndicalism](#) Booklet by Pastora Filigrana. Translated by Maggie Schmitt, published in 2022 by Common Ecologies

The [Earthcare Fieldcast](#)

produced by Manuela Zechner and Bue Rübner Hansen

**Transforming Agriculture and Beyond:
Celebrating Lively Landscapes of
Collective Care and Resistance**



**Transforming Agriculture and Beyond:
celebrating lively landscapes of collective care and resistance**

Across many movements and places, there is dense work underway to grow the farming and food that we need through care, experimentation, resistance and solidarity. Look at this terrain of entwined struggles for lively futures, against extractive and exploitative agri-industries, for territories full of beauty and collective care. We - the Common Ecologies - are inspired by the many tools and tactics we share, and the communities we build.

This illustration is a patchwork of images from different processes, places and stories in Europe, that we learned from in our own work. It is a collage of images, text and video that we have collected and shared with you. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all the work that is happening. Beyond that we edited together from this process. In the booklet, you can read about all you see here - different tactics and initiatives, why and how our struggles are connected across rural and urban movements, human and more-than-human, and the different ways we are working together. Scan the QR codes to hear farmers, activists, gardeners and others tell their stories in different episodes of the *Barbaric Fieldfare*. Find the booklet, course materials and videos, as well as the full of this poster and more podcasts, for download at <http://commonecologies.org>

More info:
booklet: <http://commonecologies.org/texts/transforming-agriculture-book/>
course materials and videos: <http://commonecologies.org/videos/>
videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3k8k8k8k8k>



TOOLS & TACTICS

Germany

PUBLIC LAND LEASE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

How the peasant farmer's association ABL pushes municipalities to lease their land based on socio-ecological criteria

Territorial Power

Urban Struggles & Municipalism

Institutions

Privatization & Financialization

Land

Climate

Seeds

This campaigning tactic works to claim public land for fair common use, pushing municipalities to adopt a catalogue of land use criteria for the common good - to demand that their public land be used for fair, sustainable and non-toxic agriculture only.

This tactic is used by the **German Farmworkers association (ABL)** - member of La Via Campesina) to push for municipalities to only lease their land based on socioecological criteria, in the interest of the common good rather than based on peak price. They are fighting for a cultural landscape rich in species and structures, for diverse agricultural land use instead of concentrating land in the hands of the few (who can pay most). This vision for regional implementation of rural agriculture is underpinned by the idea that social and ecological factors in agriculture can't be separated from scientific factors or agricultural work. Social justice for farmers and care for animals and soils go together with climate justice and building lively local economies and communities in this vision.

What's the problem?

75% of the world's land area has degraded by erosion, salinization, overexploitation or dry-

ing out, globally an area of 4.18 million square km is lost every year due to soil degradation. Land and soil are a key matter for environmental as well as social justice. Currently in Germany, more or less 10% of the soil is publicly owned by local authority districts, the municipalities. Municipalities are key actors in the fight for agroecological justice - just as they are when it comes to housing and other sectors. In 2019 in Berlin, housing movements built a massive campaign for the expropriation of huge corporate landlords, and won a referendum with this demand.

Similar claims need to be made on the countryside, forcing rural municipalities to adopt socio-ecological criteria and limit corporate claims on land and livelihoods. We need not only a right to the city, but also a right to the rural - and that means reclaiming land via clear criteria for land use.

The ABL started their campaign in 2019, with a series of protests, a petition and a day of action in 2022, where their catalogue of criteria for commons-based land lease was handed to municipalities across Germany. This is no wild dream: many different municipalities have already adopted socio-ecological criteria for public land lease, and public pressure

TOOLS & TACTICS: LAND

can make the list grow. This is a fight for transparency and justice that also makes visible just how unsustainably agricultural land use currently is: starting with public land, we can push for a broader debate and reconfiguration of land use via institutional policies that act on behalf of the common good.

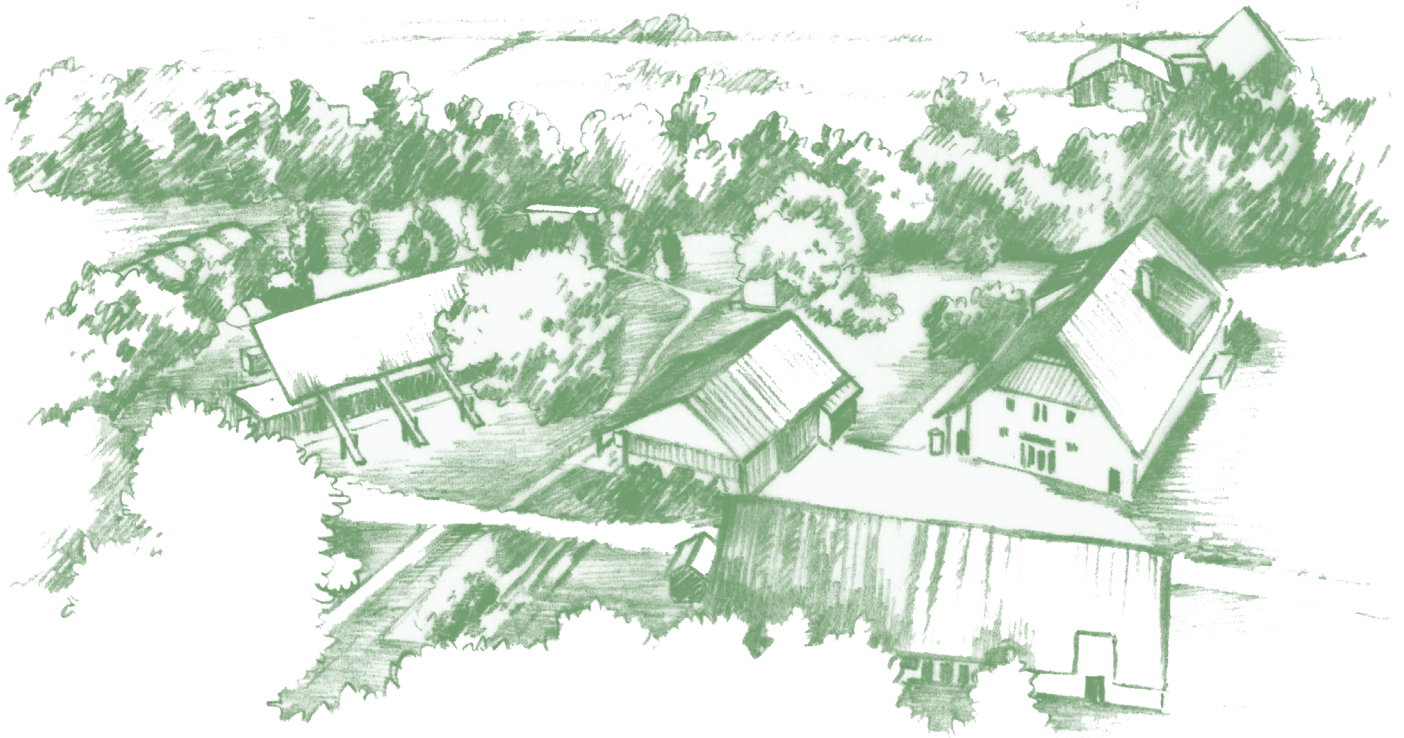
According to their catalogue, key criteria for exclusion from the use of public land should be: no agriculture that disrespects democracy and human rights, doesn't meet minimum social standards, uses GMOs, is run by Holdings, or uses intensive animal farming. Key positive criteria for public land lease are to do with farm size, ecological methods, climate resilience, fruit and vegetable production, animal welfare, sustainable feed production, prioritizing regional actors and new farmers, direct marketing and solidarity based agriculture, fair working conditions, fostering resilient ties between the urban and rural, education/training and the commons-based production of energy.

RESOURCES

ABL (GERMAN)
<https://www.abl-ev.de/start>

ABL Gemeinwohlverpachtung Dossier (GERMAN)
https://www.abl-ev.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Abl_ev/Publikationen/2022_Abl_Gemeinwohlverpachtung.pdf

Podcast
'Fighting for Access to Land' with ABL (ENGLISH)
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcarefield-cast/access-to-land>



Germany

COLLECTIV- ISING FARM OWNERSHIP

*How the Ackersyndikat
builds common farm own-
ership networks in alli-
ance with housing move-
ments*

This tactic builds a syndicated legal model for collective farm ownership, growing a network of self-managed and self-owned farms that support one another. This model is based on the model of the German Mietshäusersyndikat, an anti-capitalist alliance of housing coops. It ensures that farms and their land are collectively owned, removed from the market and can't be speculated with. It builds key infrastructures of the commons and of social movements, fostering radical models of co-farming and co-living, linking city and countryside.

What's the problem?

Peasant farms are dwindling in number. In Germany they went from over a million in 1971 to just under 300.000 farms in 2012, with the same dynamic repeating across Europe. This is due to fierce competition by the agroindustry and its lobbies, as well as due to generational shifts whereby few young people can project a life in the countryside and in farming. Farmers looking to hand their farms to younger generations in respectful and non-alienated ways, whether it's along family lines or otherwise, struggle to find people to pass their farms on to. At the same time, agricultural land is increasingly bought up by

financial actors and the agroindustry, who let farm buildings go into disuse. Rural areas are depleted of life and meaningful economic activity, due to the industrialization and peripheralization of the countryside that intensive capitalist agriculture as well as capitalist extraction and warehousing bring. Meanwhile in the cities, rents rise and labour precarity grows, leading to a cocktail of stress, insecurity and hardship that pushes many into urban peripheries and satellite towns - or in some cases to think about moving to the countryside altogether. This tactic addresses all the above problems at once, building respectful forms of generational handover, non-speculative forms of collective ownership, and forms of fluidity between urban and rural movements and forms of life.

What kinds of alliance are built here?

The legal-organisational tactic at stake here, of fostering collective farm ownership, is gleaned from the German housing movement, and developed in collaboration with it. It extends the legal-financial model of the Mietshäusersyndikat towards the rural and agricultural, via the **Ackersyndikat** - a growing network to collectively buy and run farms for ecosocial justice, in Germany. It es-

Commons &
CooperativismUrban Struggles
& MunicipalismTransversal
Solidarity

Legal Models

Privatization &
Financialization

Livelihoods

Direct
Democracy

Land

establishes a solidarity network of farms, testing and fostering practices of handover and collective management, and reclaims land for small scale and agroecological farming in the process. It builds alliances across housing movements, people looking to move to the countryside to do farming, and farmers looking to hand over their land and property in a meaningful way.

What sort of ownership model is promoted?

The core tactic here consists in removing real estate and land from the market and speculation, bringing them into collective ownership via associations that form a syndicate which co-governs them. Assets (buildings, land) within this syndicate can only be sold with agreement by all of its members, and are thus de facto impossible to speculate with. The crux of the model is that it's self-replicating. It usually goes like this: a group of people forms an association in order to buy a specific property and/or piece of land, working over some years to finance this via three key component parts: money loaned from a bank, public subsidies, and direct loans from the wider community (the proportionality of these parts differs with each project). Direct loans are obtained via campaigns that encourage people to park some money (between 500-50.000€ more or less) in a project, investing in its property as a safe asset and choosing their own interest rate (usually between 0.5 and 2 %), with the possibility to take their money back out anytime. Importantly, this doesn't give those direct investors a say in the project, which remains autonomous. Then once the property comes to be inhabited, through the rent payments of those living there, loans are slowly paid off and eventually surplus is channelled towards the creation of new projects. The German *Mietshäusersyndikat* has already financed more than 184 townhouses in this way, and there are spin-off networks in other countries doing the same. The *Ackersyndikat* takes this into the countryside.

How does this model build power?

This legal-financial model builds organisational, network and infrastructural-institutional power by providing an alternative form of financing, ownership and management of land and buildings. It creates territorial and eco-social reproductive power by securing land and farms for agroecological and local-regional agriculture. It builds associative power across the city and countryside, linking urban social movements with rural ones and providing ways out of the city for people wanting to do farming. It provides access to land and infrastructure. It also builds trans-generational power by allowing for the passing on of farms based on principles of coop-

eration, respect and care, in a context where many farmers are forced to sell their land, animals and homes. Last but not least, it builds transversal social power by linking people who don't usually relate to one another: farmers of different generations, urban activists and new peasantries.

The *Mietshäusersyndikat* shows that building large scale anticapitalist structures is possible, building power to resist the speculative and toxic dynamics of neoliberal markets. This is a slow but steady process, as the number of properties under this kind of management and control grows in different countries. There is a real need for affordable housing and farmland, and this model provides a viable alternative to having to pay expensive rents or become dependent on bank loans entirely. Its financial model builds community and a sense of shared responsibility and involvement (everyone, even if they just put in 500€, is a key part of making this possible).

What forms of intelligence are built?

This tactic spans legal, administrative, organisational and relational forms of intelligence, as it requires communities to become highly knowledgeable and capable in self-management and self-governance. Often, sociocratic models of internal cooperative governance are used, and (farm)houses become powerful collective and transgenerational spaces of collaboration and solidarity. These undo some of the alienation of living alone and under the rule of capitalist rent, as well as isolation in the countryside. Such spaces are sites of encounter and exchange not just of those who live or work there, but also of broader communities, as they often host events and encounters, offering an infrastructure at the service of wider local communities.

What are the challenges?

For one, group dynamics! Conflicts in small projects can be a challenge, as this model requires hard and long term work, often under considerable pressure. Moreover, you need a lot of knowledge, administrative skills and time to set up or run such a project, which means that there is a certain self-selection of people with the right kinds of skills and knowledges, often from specific educational backgrounds. At the same time, agriculture also requires very hard and constant work. Also, it can be difficult to repay the cost of the land based on the small economic gains that social and ecological agriculture brings. Other challenges include the lesser security of rural assets and land in terms of their market value, sometimes making it harder to secure direct credits from the community.

RESOURCES

Podcast (ENGLISH)
 'Fighting for Access to Land' with *Ackersyndikat*
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcarefeedcast/access-to-land>

Ackersyndikat (GERMAN)
<https://ackersyndikat.org/>

Mietshäusersyndikat (ENGLISH/GERMAN)
<https://www.syndikat.org/en/>

Germany, Italy, France

LAND OCCUPATIONS

*How Mondeggi Commons,
Ackerbleibt and the ZAD
Notre Dame des Landes
fight to protect and col-
lectively use farmland*

This disruptive and inhabitational tactic attacks private land property and disrupts the privatization of public lands. Land occupations require movements to build territorial and relational power within the wider community, and can create a flash-point as well as confluences of wider struggles.

What's the problem?

More and more land is being privatised and more and more soil is being sealed globally, while little land is available for commoning and eco-social agriculture. Expanding agroecology always also implies struggles for land (see the Introduction above).

In 2014, activists occupied a large municipally owned, but abandoned agricultural estate south of Florence in Italy, turning it into the **Mondeggi Commons**. The municipality of Florence had wanted to privatise the Mondeggi estate. Instead, thanks to collective action, it was opened to the people of the surrounding villages, who gained access to olive trees and land for vegetable gardens, as well as to urban activists from Florence who came to support the project or host their own gatherings. Since then, the 200 hectare land occu-

pation, with its scattered houses and barns, has been a working commons, defended and cared for by the neighbours and the people who moved into the abandoned buildings. Commons means it's neither privately or publicly run, but managed by a community. The Mondeggi commons runs on principles of self-government, agroecology and solidarity, and offers an important meeting point between urban and rural movements. Surviving multiple eviction threats, the commoners are now recognized as legitimate users of Mondeggi by the Florence municipality, which is directing EU funds towards the restoration of Mondeggi buildings and ready to open a participative public consultation on the future of the property (for more on Mondeggi, see the links and infobox just below, as well as the entry on Peasant Markets).

In 2019, in the German state of Hessen, the **Ackerbleibt** ('the field will stay') campaign occupied a large tract of land to keep it from being sold and sealed. The 80 hectares were owned by the federal state of Hessen and they wanted to create a logistics-center, which would have also entailed massive highway developments. First, the process was resisted by a citizens initiative, which was later joined by activists and some politicians of the area.

Community

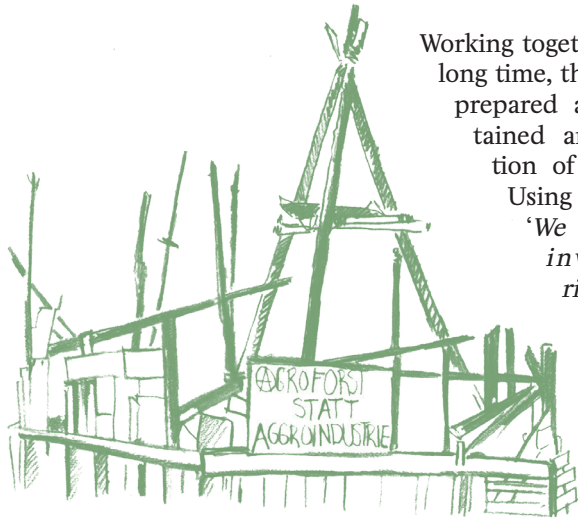
Commons &
CooperativismTerritorial
PowerUrban Struggles
& Municipalism

Ecocide

Privatization &
FinancializationDirect
Democracy

Land

Climate



Working together over a long time, these actors prepared and maintained an occupation of the land. Using the slogan 'We are the investment risk', they greatly increased the difficulty and costs of the construction process.

This wasn't a mere blockade, but also an affirmation of a different relation to the land and one another. People started growing vegetables on the occupied land, and distributed them to inhabitants of the village. Thanks to these efforts, the land was saved for agricultural use - through the combined efforts of the occupation, and the local political party that sprang out of the citizens' initiative. The occupation blocked the land and as such created a time-space for the new party, *Miteinander für Neu Eichenberg*, to emerge and build confluence (they subsequently received more than 30% of votes). The power of *Ackerbleibt* now inspires people elsewhere: near Wolfsburg, where Volkswagen wants to build a new factory, the 'Stop Trinity' campaign soon also started a new land occupation to stop the construction of the factory.

A third and very acclaimed example of land occupations in Europe is the *zone à défendre* ('zone to be defended', or **ZAD**) in Notre-Dame-des-Landes in France, spanning 1650 hectares. This huge and mostly agricultural area was destined to become an airport, until land was occupied by an alliance of farmers and activists in 2007. First, farmers who were being evicted to make way for the mega-project began squatting a farm within the area. Since then the ZAD has expanded across the whole area that was to be 'developed', and has resisted multiple attempts by the French state to evict it with the support of activists from all over. The new inhabitants set up autonomous structures such as a communal bakery and animal husbandry, working and experimenting with different forms of common and agroecological farming and food production. After surviving major eviction attempts in 2012 and 2018, French president Emmanuel Macron was forced, in January 2018, to shelve plans for an airport in the area. Since then, the ZAD has been engaged in a process of legalisation.

What alliances are at play here?

Mondeggi Commons, *Ackerbleibt* and the ZAD of Notre-Dame-des-Landes show the force of land occupations when they happen through the initiative of or in concert with the people who inhabit the area. In all cases, land was going to be used or built on in ways many locals disagreed with, and once it was occupied, the land itself - or produce from it - was shared between activists and locals. Alliances between farmers, neighbours and activists from local or distant places are what make these occupations strong and resilient.

How does this tactic build social power?

By physically blocking the sale or use of land, farmland occupations are a powerful tactic against privatisation and ecocidal land use. Land occupations significantly raise the symbolic and material costs of privatisation and development. By becoming sites for different forms of earthcare, inhabitation, and sociality, land occupations also increase people's willingness and capacity to defend land. They build territorial power that can be extended to other struggles in the area. In Latin America, where land is less expensive and more often abandoned by landowners, land occupations constitute an extremely successful model of reappropriation of land for landless rural workers (MSTs), and the development of liberatory communities, cooperatives, and small and medium scale agro-ecological production.

What kinds of collective intelligence arise in farmland occupations?

In order to realise successful land occupations, a number of tools are necessary: local issue identification and campaigning, including organising people in the community and building coalitions between different actors like farmers, urban activists, red-green local politicians, and inhabitants of nearby towns and villages. In the process, a number of knowledges and intelligences must develop, from analyses of the financial and political interests and legal aspects of the situation, to a collective capacity to imagine and practise other ways of inhabiting the land. Militant self-defence tactics must be learned to defend the land from eviction when necessary, and skills to campaign in local, regional, and maybe national media will grow. Furthermore and perhaps first of all, such struggles must develop forms of collective decision making and delegation that enhance rather than corrode people's commitment to the struggle; here endless meetings and informal and formal hierarchies are equal risks to be navigated.

RESOURCES

- Podcast
'Between Squatting and Civic Use' with Mondeggi Commons (ENGLISH)
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcarefieldcast/from-squatting-to-civic-land-use-mondeggi-commons>
- Podcast
'Fighting for Access to Land' on Ackerbleibt (ENGLISH)
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcarefieldcast/access-to-land>
- Ackerbleibt (GERMAN)
<https://greifswa.uber.space/grav-admin/de>
- ZAD (MULTILINGUAL)
<https://zad.nadlr.org/>
- Mondeggi (ITALIAN)
<https://mondeggi.bene.comune.noblogs.org/>

(RIGHTS OF) CIVIC USE

In Italy, a Civic Use Declaration is a legal tool that enables grassroots organisations to create or protect a common good. By creating a document stating the self-government strategy that the commoners practice, and then having it recognised by authorities (due to the principle of subsidiarity), a land occupation, for example, could be recognised as socially useful. In the Italian constitution this figure exists and has been used creatively by citizens across the country. In practice, this means drafting a Civic Use Declaration (which is first of all a tool for generating community) and then struggling and negotiating both politically and within the law, navigating between different legal frameworks (municipal or regional laws on beni comuni for example, sometimes one needs to create a formal association). Being recognized by authorities is a struggle that requires creativity and specific knowledges. The diffused community of 'Mondeggi Bene comune, fattoria senza padroni' located in the province of Florence formulated their declaration of civic use over the course of several years, a document legitimising their existence, their agroecological vision for the territory, and the vindication of the common good. The document is now pending recognition by the municipal authority. It is composed of different sections that lay out the legal framework of the declaration, the constitution of the community (commoners), what a common good is, what the modalities of self-government & decision making are, as well as the duties and rights of participation, the economic and financial ways to sustain the common good. Other countries have similar instruments, such as the community land trusts used in North America, Europe and beyond.

Spaces and Cities Toolkit on Civic Use (ENGLISH)

<https://www.spacesandcities-toolkit.com/tools/declaration-of-urban-civic-and-collective-use>

Mondeggi Declaration of Civic Use (ITALIAN)

<https://mondeggibenecomune.noblogs.org/files/2017/07/Dichiarazione-di-Gestione-Civica.pdf>

COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are non-profit legal entities that own, develop and look after land and assets. They are a tool for place-based communities to hold land in common, while facilitating the use of that land for socio-ecological purposes like affordable housing, community gardens, farming, energy production, and other community goods. CLTs are for the benefit of the community, non-profit, open for locals to join and controlled by their members. They balance the needs of the community with the needs of individuals who use the land and its infrastructure, providing a common legal and organisational frame. As noted by the authors of *The Community Land Trust: A New Model for Land Tenure in America* (1972): 'The ideas behind the community land trust...have historic roots' in the indigenous Americas, in pre-colonial Africa, and in ancient Chinese economic systems. So the task at hand is about restoring the land trust concept, rather than initiating or inventing it - a task that's increasingly taken up by communities in different countries, as they face the privatisation and financialization of food, housing, energy and other vital aspects of life. There are many inspiring networks of community owned land and assets, such as Cooperation Jackson in the US, Ciudad Futura in Argentina or indeed the Mietshäusersyndikat in Germany.

Spain

SOCIAL SYNDICALISM AGAINST AGRIBUSINESS

How Jornaleras De Huelva En Lucha and others organise at the heart of capitalist agriculture

Transversal
SolidarityTranslocal
SolidarityMigration &
Anti-Racism

Feminism

Labour
Organizing

This tactic is based on seasonal agricultural worker's organising and fighting for their rights, unveiling the exploitative conditions for labour in industrial agriculture as well as opposing the toxic and destructive practices of intensive agriculture.

There is a growing movement of social syndicalisms in industrial agriculture. Groups like the **Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha** and **Mujeres24** in Spain, or **Codestras** in France, bring together local and migrant workers exploited within the toxic system of corporate agriculture, to demand fair pay and labour rights, as well as to challenge the toxic effects of chemical agriculture on workers and consumers bodies, and the role of industrial agriculture in depleting water resources. Their social syndicalism is feminist and anti-racist, recognizing it's often migrants and women at the forefront of the exploiting labours that feed our societies.

What's the problem?

Workers on big agricultural production sites are often subcontracted, informally hired, or hired from a distance in order to be sent back to their countries at the end of the season. In some sectors, vulnerable women from abroad

are preferably hired by big companies, as they are easy to exploit, with the excuse that they have the finer hands to pick berries for instance. Migrant workers are kept far from local communities, housed in remote shacks, cut off from local populations, and often hired without proper rights and within exploitative conditions that run contrary to the law. Meanwhile, local and national myths of foreign workers stealing local jobs are put in circulation by the right wing media friends of agribusiness. Agri-workers social syndicalisms work to overcome the division of local and migrant workers, building a common struggle against exploitation and rendering the key role seasonal workers play in food systems visible. They know that agriculture can only be meaningfully transformed if workers in the industrial system are part of the change. Developing visions for transformation and challenging corporate power are part of the same challenge, so agroecological movements and agri-workers need to struggle side by side.

Since 2020, the **Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha** are organising to make their working conditions visible, build alliances with other movements, and build visions of transformative agriculture. The Jornaleras inform each

Water

other about their rights, support each other in legal claims against their bosses, provide mutual aid and care, and are very active in outreach and visibility work both locally and internationally. Since the outset, they built strong alliances with feminist movements, labour movements and agroecological movements, in Spain and beyond, shaping common demands and supporting each other's work. They are active in the fight against the ecocidal nature of industrial farming, which in Spain is very much a fight for water, as aquifers are running dry due to the agroindustries excessive use of water in times of climate crisis.

What kinds of power does this build?

Agricultural social syndicalisms build organisational power by becoming proto-unions, in the face of traditional unions that don't represent them and often treat them without the due respect. They build relational and caring power through mutual support and campaigning, as well as networking power as they liaise with other movements and inhabit feminist and climate protests. The power of systemic agricultural disruption lies in their hands, as essential workers who feed populations. Through their outreach and press work, they build considerable discursive power, becoming an undeniable presence in policy discussions in the agricultural sector. Giving each other information about rights and pathways to access, they knoww that 'knowledge is a weapon'. The organising knowledges they build are not only deeply feminist and anti-racist, but also fly in the face of different internal and external attempts to divide the movement.

RESOURCES

Podcast

'Antiracist and Feminist Social Syndicalism' with Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha (ENGLISH)
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcarefield-cast/jornaleras-en-lucha-antiracist-feminist-social-syndicalism>

Video

'Feminist and Anti-Racist Social Syndicalisms between Care and Farm Work' from Common Ecologies course (ENGLISH)
<https://youtu.be/d0iitX86evY>

Video

'Social Syndicalisms in Agriculture, a dialogue between Jornaleras en Lucha, Sezonieri and Widerstand am Tellerrand campaigns', from Common Ecologies course (ENGLISH)
<https://youtu.be/q3wGwFHdAus>

Mujeres 24H (SPANISH)

<https://www.facebook.com/mujeres24horas>

Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha (SPANISH)

<https://jornalerasenlucha.org/>

Codetras (FRENCH)

<http://www.codetras.org/>



UK

GRASSROOTS UNION BUILDING IN AGROECOLOGY

How A New Union Struggles For Decent Working Conditions In Peasant And Community-Supported Farming

Livelihoods

Education
& EnquiryKnowledge
Sharing

This tactic is based on workers' organizing to build power, to address inequalities and precarity within the agroecological sector and to bring the social side of agroecological farming more into focus.

What's the problem?

There is growing awareness that even though agroecological farms are ecologically sustainable, they often aren't economically sustainable for farmers and workers. Such farms face great difficulties in making a labour-intensive, small-scale holding economically viable within the current structures. Moreover there is an ethos of self-exploitation for the greater good that is often passed on from the employer to the worker in agroecological farms, which makes it difficult to address precarity and working conditions. Differently to organising for social syndicalism against agribusiness, there isn't any big company to organise against in those cases. This tactic requires us to face a complex and broad socioeconomic and value system, and the ways in which we are ourselves embedded and entangled within those systems, in order to push for change.

Solidarity Across Land Trades (SALT) set out to address this starting from the situation

in the UK. Inspired by a research report on work experiences of BPOC growers, a group of land workers in the UK came together with the desire to provide a national, unified body to represent workers and their rights in agroecology and beyond. Through coming together at different farming events and talking about workers' rights, they realised the need for spaces where non-management level employees could speak amongst themselves. They decided to organise an open meeting on the topic of working conditions, and from there a coordinating group started to emerge that has been meeting on a weekly basis and organising ever since. First, they mostly organised workshops at agroecological events and focussed on consciousness-raising. These were all about sharing struggles, building solidarity and getting people to understand their rights. This way, they have slowly been moving their personal, private and difficult experiences into a more political round. And to start thinking about: What can we do to change these things?

The group in the UK decided to call themselves Solidarity Across Land Trades, and decided to unionise. First of all, learning to unionise is collaborative work, about learning together and figuring out how to collectively

facilitate and organise complex discussions. SALT learnt from other grassroots organisers who have experience with diverse and informal work sectors. Bit by bit, they started to also build solidarity with people in the conventional farming sector and started to work towards connecting with migrant workers, aiming to learn and exchange.

What's their process?

In order to unionise against the prevalence of burnout, exhaustion, badly paid and unpaid work, working without a contract, long hours, precarious self-employment, poor living conditions, isolation and discrimination, they have pulled together a list of needs to present to different unions they are interested in joining or working with. They're running a workers' enquiry to better understand the complexity of work situations in the agroecological sector, and are building their membership this way. And they're working to make the issue of work within agroecology more prominent in public discourse, co-writing articles and building social media presence.

What kinds of power does this build?

SALT is building caring power as they create spaces for mutual support and learning, sharing vulnerability and needs as well as addressing ambivalence and contradictions. They are also building organisational power in order to address workers' rights in agroecology, and to strengthen their discursive power within the agroecological movement. By addressing precarious working conditions in the sector, they mobilise for farmworkers' justice and support workers in speaking out about inequalities, moving their desires for change into a collective realm.

RESOURCES

SALT (ENGLISH)

<https://saltunion.wordpress.com/>

Report

'Navigating Dreams and Precarity'

by Youth Articulation of European Coordination of La Via Campesina (ENGLISH)

<https://www.eurovia.org/publications/our-youth-articulation-publishes-study-on-working-and-learning-conditions-of-young-agricultural-workers/>

Report

'Rootz Into Food Growing'

by Land in Our Names (ENGLISH)

<https://landinournames.community/projects/rootz-into-food-growing>



Austria

BUILDING TRADE UNION SUPPORT

*How Sezonieri gets
labour organisations to
pay attention to migrant
agricultural workers*

Translocal
SolidarityMigration &
Anti-Racism

Institutions

Labour
Organizing

Many people are working inside trade unions in order to open them up to organising precarious and itinerant agricultural workers, and to adopt socio-ecological justice approaches. Such institutional work is part of a wider horizon of anti-racist and ecological unionism. When it comes to agriculture, the rights of migrant, seasonal, and un(der)documented landworkers are key. These make up most of the workforce in contemporary agriculture, yet are often not represented by unions. The work of the Sezonieri campaign in Austria sets out to change that.

The **Sezonieri campaign** in Austria fights to have un(der)documented seasonal migrant agricultural workers represented and supported by the big unions. The collective running this campaign is a group of activists, who were inspired by two moments. On the one hand, by a protest of seasonal harvest workers at a large farm in Tyrol in 2013, that revealed terrible working conditions in the agricultural sector. And on the other hand, by the **UN-DOK campaign** that was building pathways into large unions, in order to pressure for the establishment of an advice service for undocumented workers. So Sezonieri was founded in 2014, to get unions to represent migrant

agricultural workers like the ones who had risen up.

Since they started, they have built a network and successfully convinced a large manufacturing, agriculture and mining trade union to have them organise seasonal and mostly migrant farm workers, many of whom work in irregular conditions. These workers, many of them from Romania, often work with no contract, pay that's lower than the legally binding minimum, are given improper accommodation, and so on (see also the entry on Social Syndicalisms in Agriculture, above). Apart from their successful, but often tense involvement with the large union, Sezonieri have contacts within the Austrian Trade Union Council and National Chamber of Labour, alongside organisations working for migrant rights and global solidarity. With the help of these entities, they have created a service to legally advise and represent seasonal farm workers in labour disputes.

And with funding by these institutions, the Sezonieri campaign offers advice and produces info materials in many languages that give workers information about their rights, as well as offering free German language classes for farm workers as a way of talking about

labour rights and experiences, amongst other things. The collective goes out to the fields to distribute info materials to workers, often talking to workers against the will of farm owners, and pursues different forms of campaigning (public relations work, collaboration with research institutions, etc) as a form of anti-racism and radical care.

How are they building alliances?

Sezonieri is a small but very feisty and successful example of working at the interface between institutions, large trade unions, smaller organisations, and the tradition of social syndicalism that takes matters into its own hands. They are well tied into social movements for peasant and migrant rights, challenging unions from within. Sezonieri creates connections through which alliances can be built. It also creates spaces for migrant workers' experiences to be heard and valorized, which in some cases inspires institutional and practical changes within those unions.

What kinds of power does this build?

Organising to address the lack of union representation for migrant farm workers, Sezonieri produces bargaining power, collective representational power, networks of care and mutual support. It also builds the capacity to translate not just between languages, between worker's situations and the law, and between syndicalist approaches and large unions, but also between seasonal workers' struggles and peasant, agroecological and migrant care workers movements.

RESOURCES

Podcast

'Feminist Organizing across Migrant and Agricultural Care Work' with Sezonieri (ENGLISH)
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcare-fieldcast/episode-3-feminist-organizing-across-migrant-agricultural-and-care-work-12>

Video

'Social Syndicalisms is Agriculture, a dialogue between Jornaleras en Lucha, Sezonieri and Widerstand am Tellerrand campaigns' from Common Ecologies course (ENGLISH)
<https://youtu.be/q3wGwFHdAus>

Sezonieri (ENGLISH)

https://www.sezonieri.at/en/startseite_en/

UNDOK (GERMAN)

<https://undok.at/>

Video

'Gute Arbeit für alle in Krisenzeiten' by the Nyeleni Forum Austria, 2021 (DE/ENG/RO/HU/BOS/HRV/SRB/UA/BG/ALB)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5lmeU-kYB0g>

France, Spain

FARM-WORK AS PATHWAY TO REGULARIZATION & ANTI-RACIST AGRICULTURAL INITIATIVES

*How Association A4 and
La Bolina foster labour
market access and sup-
port diverse livelihoods*

This tactic aligns eco-social farming with anti-racism and mutual support, creating networks and organisations that enable people without papers (and thus work permits) to find decent work in transformative agriculture (and not just industrial agriculture, where the exploitation of undocumented workers is rife). The key here is for agroecology to build livelihoods for all, centering on those who de facto do much of industrial farmwork in Europe, starting from their knowledges and transformative projects.

What's the problem?

The Agro-food industry is based on the exploitation of cheap labour. It draws labour from the most vulnerable subjects in the globalised food chain: unregularized migrant workers. Industrial agriculture thrives on human rights violations, sustained by racist, sexist, classist and ableist forms of violence - this is why farm workers get organised in many ways (see entries on Social Syndicalism and Building Union Support above). But this exploitation is not the only one: in fact, agroecological projects too often struggle (and sometimes fail) to reflect the values of justice, equity and care in the working condi-

tions they create (see the entry on Grassroots Union Building in Agroecology above).

This is a structural problem, not a moral one. The contradictions it creates bear upon agroecological projects in heavy ways, and it is important to remember that overcoming them is not merely a matter of goodwill but of allied struggles across agroecology, industrial farmwork and consumer groups. There are two core problems agroecological projects face in this respect. One is of a legal-administrative nature: how to overcome restrictive labour market access and barriers to regularisation of migrant workers? The other problem is of an economic nature. Whilst agro-industry is heavily subsidised in the EU and beyond, local peasant farming is disincentivized by state regulation. Due to insufficient income and funding many farmers struggle to pay decent salaries, offer solid work contracts, respect worker's shifts and enable worker's liberties, facilitating locally sustainable forms of work and life and the creation of equitable and solidarious communities.

It is a collective challenge to fairly involve people from divergent backgrounds and migratory trajectories in a competitive market economy, complying with the minimum labour and living standards. Agroecological

Community
Commons &
Cooperativism

Transversal
Solidarity

Translocal
Solidarity

Migration &
Anti-Racism

Economies
& Markets

Livelihoods

Direct
Democracy

initiatives can tackle this structural challenge by facilitating solid work contracts in their legally constituted organisations (i.e. associations, cooperatives), or by participating in workarounds that allow for undocumented people to work for them under fair conditions. Crucially, this means having people in precarious and undocumented situations design agroecological projects themselves. This way, agri-coops can offer more just forms of seasonal work that provide a real alternative to toxic and exploitative agro-industry jobs. Below we briefly outline how Association A4 in France and La Bolina in Spain approach these two interlinked problems and engage respective tactics.

Association A4 started more or less at the time of the 2019 Covid pandemic, out of conversations between friends who had migrated to France from Africa and were working as seasonal workforce in big farms. They wanted to build ways of escaping the industry's exploitative conditions while creating inroads for undocumented migrants to find jobs with more solidarious agricultural and artisanal projects. So they set out to build a network where undocumented people could find decent work, define their own minimum working conditions and foster mutual support between vulnerable workers and precarious farmers. They insist that this also entails valorizing previous agricultural knowledges many migrants bring, particularly when it comes to farming in dry conditions in the South, and climate crisis. As A4 puts it, many of 'those who cross the sea, they know the soil'. Migrant farmers are experts in their own right. And there are also many who come from abroad and would like to get involved in farming from scratch, acquire this expertise, so A4 also provides training opportunities for people wanting to learn about farming and get relevant diplomas.

The name A4 stands for Association d'Accueil en Agriculture et Artisanat - *association for the hosting of agriculture and crafts activities* - and works to create conditions for concrete farming work, a valorization of migrant agricultural knowledges, and a network of solidarity and mutual care where workers can co-define the terms of their engagement. Initially, this means building trust and conditions with small scale farmers so they will employ undocumented farmhands and take the risk this can entail (in industrial agriculture, undocumented work is used all the time and many workarounds exist).

It however also means working to find legal loopholes and formulas that can allow for workers to be regularised - just like in many countries, in France you can't work if you

have no papers and you can't get papers if you don't work. So legal formulas for regularisation, for proving one's work even if it was undocumented, are key, and respective laws do exist and have existed in many countries whenever the state has sought to regularise some of its workforce. For it's no secret to the state that undocumented workers are doing the farming that feeds their population - it's a rather pleasant arrangement for states to informally grant their farming industry cheap labour this way.

In 2023, A4 took over a farm with different infrastructures (greenhouse, fields, ...) in Brittany, to start running their own project of self-employment and build a social-political space for decolonial agroecology.

La Bolina engages a similar tactic and trajectory, through the setting up of a farming coop. It started in 2016 as a project that centered the needs of racialized unregularized migrant workers in the south of Spain, testing different forms of organisation and business model that could work for people in their situation as well as for their comrades with a legal right to work. La Bolina implemented 'life project' exercises to identify in what ways a solidarity based farming model could be useful and interesting to young non-european farmers (mostly from subsaharian Africa), to build the lives they desired.

Following this, la Bolina became a multifaceted organisation (legally an association), set up to sustain the life project of 4 European workers and up to 8 of non-European workers, acting as direct employer and sponsor to their residence permits, as support network and collective space of farming and social and cultural engagement. La Bolina tries to socialise the complex challenges and contradictions of welcoming, regularisation and self-determination that come with the migrant experiences. This means minding power imbalances, thinking intersectionally and critically, and struggling for ways to be financially and organizationally solid and stable in order to ease different administrative procedures. La Bolina tries to stay attentive to, and valorize, the emotional and relational efforts this implies on behalf of everyone involved, and to cultivate care.

What knowledges and labours does anti-racist agricultural diversity require?

Legal-administrative mutual aid, mutual care and socio-emotional support, socialising the process of Visa applications, facilitating access to work placement schemes that open pathways to regularisation, co-developing cultural projects for the valorization and in-

tegration of geographically distinct knowledges of farming into agroecological practices, building mobilities, translation: all those are part of the important practice of fostering labour market access and anti-racist agricultural diversity.

The broader horizon?

This is a two-layered struggle, to do with fighting for better living and wage conditions than in the conventional agriculture sector, as well as with reckoning with some of the racial and economic bias of much European agroecology and working to learn from those who come as farmers from the Southern and Eastern European peripheries (and beyond), and create spaces for their work and voices as farmers in Europe. In numbers, migrants are actually the farmers that sustain mass European agriculture, and they can do so in solidarity and synergy with peasant and agroecological practices.

RESOURCES

Podcast
with Association A4 'Valorising Migrant Work and Knowledges' (ENGLISH)
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcare-fieldcast/valorizing-migrant-agricultural-work-and-knowledges-association-a4-in-france>

Video
'Beyond the Capitalist Food System: Cooperatives, Commons Economies and Agroecology Schools' with La Bolina (ENGLISH)
<https://youtu.be/AF1ZlQaH0mQ>

Podcast
Investigation into migrant labour exploitation in agriculture (FRENCH)
<https://www.blast-info.fr/podcasts/travailleurs-detaches-les-dessous-dune-exploitation-fMsR00U-TK2vxYM-aitI2g>

Association A4 (FRENCH/ENGLISH)
<https://a4asso.org/en/accueil-english/>

La Bolina (SPANISH)
<https://labolina.org/que-hacemos/migrantes-y-refugiadxs/>



Spain, Italy

CLAIMING SPACE FOR PEASANT MARKETS AND FOOD CIRCULATION

*The autonomous markets
and food webs of Genuino
Clandestino, La Bolina
and Unitary Agroecological
Cooperatives*

Community
Commons &
Cooperativism
Territorial
Power
Urban Struggles
& Municipalism
Transversal
Solidarity

Economies
& Markets
Livelihoods

This tactic entails the creation and maintenance of self-organised and self-regulated places for direct purchase, exchange and distribution of local, seasonal, artisanal agroecological production, as well as non-agrarian goods - by means that sometimes defy given rules and regulations. Its main objective is to affirm the right of communities to define the way they produce, supply, distribute and consume food.

What's the problem?

In our contemporary cities, it is the globalised food market that supplies most of what we eat. The logics of this global market are indifferent to localities, seasonalities and particular gastronomic practices, as they are based on profit and intermediated via large corporate actors (industrial farms, logistics businesses, warehouses, supermarkets, food brands, advertisement). *Food from nowhere, without seasons, all year round* is one of the main problems of our current food system, as in order to satisfy our current de-localized and a-temporal diets, thousands of food miles need to be covered, tons of greenhouse gas emissions emitted, supermarketization ensues, as does an invisibilisation of the vital interdependencies that link the countryside

and city - and with it, and invisibilisation of peasant and agroecological food production.

For smallholder agriculture and agroecological producers it is very difficult to find a way to autonomously put their work and products in the market. Business models and their legal forms and standards are tailor-made for the agro-industry. Therefore, as a means for re-claiming the right to peasant, agroecological, smallholder and other socio-ecologically sustainable ways of food production, it is vital for such farmers to have spaces with a public interface, and be visible as legitimate food producers. This is fundamental for the reproduction of the agroecology movement and its livelihoods.

So what can be done?

Creating spaces for food exchange in current urbanised societies requires a fair amount of logistical, infrastructural and operational capacities. Transformative agroecological projects often go against the grain or under the radar of dominant institutions that sanction what can and can't circulate in the market, and in what forms. Socio-ecologically sustainable farming often needs to create its own spaces, its own markets, and its own

circuits in order for farmer's produce to be channelled towards the very communities in which they are embedded. This can take the form of community supported agriculture schemes, like La Bolina used (see entry above), or unitary/integral agroecology cooperatives like Hortigas in Granada or La acequia in Córdoba, following the model of the collective BAH! Madrid (see infobox below). An inspiring large scale example of this is the Genuino Clandestino network in Italy, presented below.

In Italy, for more than a decade now, the **Genuino Clandestino network** has been campaigning for - and legitimising the creation of - peasant markets for those small-holder producers who are unfairly tagged by institutions as 'illegal'. Reacting to such illegalizing discourse, these markets reject the ways in which official food standards are tailored to the agro-industry, insisting that peasant food production must not let itself be curtailed by such biased standards. In order to guarantee the quality of the food that is in their *clandestine peasant markets*, Genuino Clandestino uses Participatory Guarantee Systems (see infobox below), where all stakeholders involved actively participate in the assessment of the type of food they want in their circuits.

Since 2010, peasant markets associated with Genuino Clandestino have sprouted like mushrooms across Italy, claiming squares, parks and public spaces in the cities for their markets for a few hours a week. In Florence for instance, the Mondeggi Commons (see entry on Land Occupations above) was one of the actors that made the peasant market Jerome Laronze in Florence possible. In southern Spain, La Bolina runs a community supported agriculture box scheme, delivering vegetable and artisanal food products from the Lecrin Valley in the weekly pop-up direct purchase markets in the capital city of Granada. In contrast, the unitary agroecological cooperatives in Spain propose to overcome the consumer/producer division by collectively organising the production, distribution and consumption of seasonal, locally and ethically produced vegetables.

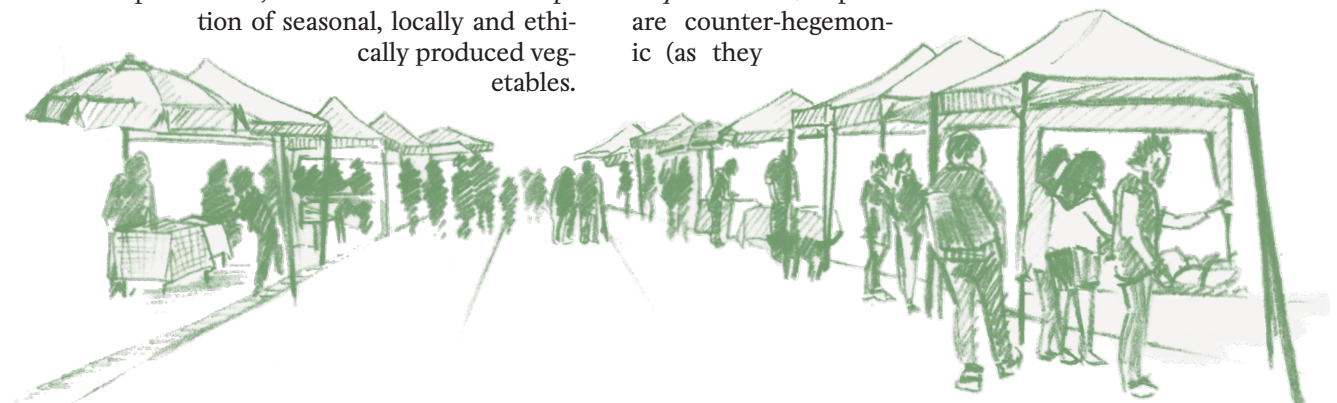
What kinds of intelligences are fostered in the creation of markets and food circuits?

Claiming spaces for food circulation requires and produces multiple forms of social intelligence. Creating and maintaining spaces for social interaction, exchange and expression requires a collective and sustained process based on trust. Relational intelligence is key, allowing collectivities to balance cohesiveness with inclusiveness in ways that hold multiple realities together in a common space. Legal knowledge is important for navigating around city regulations and food commercialization laws. Organisational intelligences are key too, as setting up markets and circuits of distribution and commercialization are fundamentally logistical activities that require a capacity to organise activities and resources over a span of time. And of course this tactic thrives on local knowledge and connections, it's only possible where strong networks exist.

What kinds of power does this build?

Firstly it builds economic power, by diversifying the economy, creating an alternative economy based on more than transactional values. Secondly, it builds relational power by enabling sociability, strengthening bonds based on trust, meeting with other experiences/collectives/producers in a shared space that is maintained together, and disseminating information and mobilising people as it used to be the function of markets before. It supports building alliances for a common good. It also builds associative and organisational power, as know-hows and infrastructure capacities go into setting up a market, advertising it and sustaining it - in constant negotiation and interaction with the neighbourhoods in which markets are located.

At a broader level, Genuino Clandestino builds discursive power, instantiating and presenting other ways of purchasing, using public spaces and supplying food, in ways that in European contexts are counter-hegemonic (as they



go against the supremacy of supermarkets, and specialised shops). Importantly, the territorial power that is built by alternative food networks strengthens both the rural and urban realities of the bioregion. It renders the realities that exist in the countryside visible, bringing the countryside to the city, fosters a common space of encounter for producers and consumers in interdependency, and opens a decommodified and de-fetishised food space, contrasting striated urban spaces. Finally, the mobilizational power of such markets means that when needed, they can call their 'consumers' (constituencies) to action, to help legitimise their presence and ways of food circulation.

What challenges do such markets face?

Yet there are many challenges for the creation of autonomous markets. They are perceived as niche markets, they are subject to police harassment, they are not very cost-efficient if one takes the effort involved in setting them up into account, and sometimes they don't generate sufficient monetary turnover, rendering them unable to assure sufficient income for producers.

RESOURCES

Video

'Beyond the Capitalist Food System: Cooperatives, Commons Economies and Agroecology Schools' with La Bolina (ENGLISH)

<https://youtu.be/AE1ZlQaH0mQ>

Genuino Clandestino (ITALIAN)

<https://genuinoclandestino.it>

La Bolina (SPANISH)

<https://labolina.org/>

Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta (BAH) (SPANISH)

<http://bah.ourproject.org>

PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS

These are open-ended, participatory and inclusive ways of assessing and assuring the food quality that circulates in a specific food network. These systems of guarantee thrive on the active participation and distribution of risks and power among the different stakeholders that make up alternative food networks. In other words: both consumers and producers have an active role in maintaining such networks. Giving full authority to the food community and not to the third-party certification entities, participatory guarantee systems are then a way to self-regulate and define the characteristics that are desired by a food community. They are based on the willingness of the parties involved, as well as on trust, social interactions and on the exchange of knowledge and practices. Emphasis is placed on the processes through which the food network creates shared visions of a desired agro-food system. Participatory Guarantee Systems have been part of the organic movement since the 70's and 80's and at the turn of the millennium, they gained popularity and proved to be effective methods to embed food networks in their concrete communities. Many alternative food networks and short food supply chains operate with this system instead of (or in complementarity with) market-based third-party certifications.

UNITARY AGROECOLOGICAL COOPERATIVES

Unitary agroecological cooperatives (Cooperativas Unitarias Agroecológicas) is a model for self-organising the production, distribution and consumption of seasonal and local food, while being socio-ecologically responsible. This kind of cooperative is prevalent in Spain. They run weekly distribution points in urban spaces, bridging rural-urban divides. Unitary Agroecological Cooperatives are made up of three interdependent components: 1. A rural-working group in charge of facilitating agricultural labour in the orchard, who receive a wage compensation assigned through the assembly; 2. Consumer groups that distribute the produce who contribute both with a fixed monthly fee for veggie boxes they receive and through cooperative work in the orchards or elsewhere; 3. Commissions and working groups that take care of dissemination, internal and external education, administration and finance, the organisation of events, and the creation of collective identity and cohesion. Unitary Agroecological Cooperatives are governed via assemblies that use consensus decision making. They prioritise collective responsibility and action, as well as proactive communication and self-representation - the coop Hortigas in Granada (ES) for instance publishes their 'Diarios de la Huerta' as well as a radio programme, where they update on their orchard status, recipes, affects and other current affairs.

Spain, Austria

CAMPAIGNING FOR POPULAR REFERENDUM

The popular legal struggle against ecocide by ILP/Plataforma Mar Menor and against corporate farmlandgrab by Initiative Ludesch

This tactic consists in the use of the popular referendum - in whichever of its legal and territorial forms (see infobox below) - in order to protect a specific territory from ecocide. This can mean campaigning against farmland being built on and thus being permanently destroyed, or it can also mean campaigning against the effects of industrial agriculture on protected territories. The established formula of campaigning to establish protected zones, as we know it from environmentalist movements, is used here in relation to agriculture, both to push for agroecological use and to push against agri-industry. In this tactic, legal-procedural referendum work is inextricably linked (and indeed only ever made feasible by) grassroots campaigning, building protest and public opinion for political pressure.

What's the problem?

The sealing of soils and the destruction of ecosystems are interlinked problems, to do with the corporate hegemony in farming and its ways of depleting soils and water. Two inspiring examples of legal struggle against this are the campaigns for popular referendum of the Mar Menor in southern Spain, and of Initiative Ludesch in western Austria. They

both ran referenda that were prompted by local discontent, at the level of a region (Mar Menor) and village (Ludesch), and used referenda to make the issue a matter of national debate. They both demanded the protection of an area from ecosystem destruction, and the prioritizing of agroecological use in their given territory. These referenda take place in a context of agroindustrial pollution and ecocide - in the Mar Menor lagoon, 85% of marina fauna died at once in 2019, from suffocation due to industrial agricultural runoffs, after a similar event in 2016 (see entry on Ecocide below). They also take place in a context of large-scale sealing of soils - currently in Austria, an average of 13 hectares of living soil are permanently destroyed by construction every day. Where capital-driven ecocide destroys soil and water (after all, those two are always linked), referenda can be a powerful means of opposition. In this entry we emphasise how social mobilization, legal and institutional battles, and the weaponizing of knowledge for social-ecological change go hand in hand when it comes to building territorial grassroots power.

The **Mar Menor campaign** built powerful momentum through huge protest, petitions and local organising work, in order to push

Community

Territorial Power

Urban Struggles & Municipalism

Legal Models

Institutions

Ecocide

Privatization & Financialization

Direct Democracy

Water



for this lagoon to be recognized as legal entity, by way of a rights of nature approach. They built a popular legislative initiative - a specific referendum-like process in Spain - that gathered over half a million signatures, to force the Spanish Congress to vote on protecting the lagoon by making it a juridical person. Building strong mobilizing power and strong public opinion helped the campaign also affirm decision making power, as they pushed for the vote and proposed formulations for the law that would grant the lagoon its own inviolable rights as juridical entity. Their campaign showed the strong link between environmental degradation and industrial agriculture, as runoffs from heavily fertilized fields and pesticides caused various mass die-offs of marine animals in the lagoon. Beyond raising consciousness, the Mar Menor referendum also has real implications for industrial agriculture in the region, as it will force farmers to adopt less ecocidal practices and pushes for agroecology both on the land surrounding Mar Menor and in the fishery in the lagoon. The lagoon has an ID card now, a bureau and a monitoring committee.

Initiative Ludesch in western Austria (Vorarlberg) started from a battle against a corporate giant, as soft drink corporations Red Bull and Rauch wanted to expand its production facilities in this village onto an adjacent area of valuable farmland. Local resistance formed and soon began to organise for a local referendum (Volksabstimmung) on whether this farmland (owned by different farmers) should be sold off or not. Akin to the 'investment risk' that the Ackerbleibt Occupation in Germany formed when they occupied a piece of farmland (see entry on

'Land Occupations' above), the locals of Initiative Ludesch organized actions and protests that disincentivized the sale and sealing of this piece of land and soil. The local referendum added significant legitimacy to this, especially as (contrary to the rest of Austria) the regional law in Vorarlberg has it that citizen-driven referenda have binding legal consequences. 56,1% of Ludesch inhabitants voted against the expansion of production facilities on local land. When the Austrian constitutional court declared the vote null, the campaign ramped up and went onto a second level of popular legislative initiative, to have people in Vorarlberg vote on the importance of direct democracy and legality of such votes as theirs, which caused much attention and debate as well as ongoing legal battles. The initiative Ludesch and other activists stand up for a correction of the national law for local referenda, and are part of a regional push for truly sustainable agriculture and economic development.

What kinds of power can popular referenda campaigns build?

Campaigns such as those of Mar Menor or Ludesch build mobilizational, associative and discursive power by demanding legal change via democratic tools. They start from local-regional actors and organizational ecosystems, building power from the bottom up and challenging both corporate and state power. They give locals a voice against large supranational corporations and lay claim to juridical processes, building legitimacy in order to push for legality. This often involves fighting for more democratic rights and processes, and as such incides powerfully with institutional power. Referenda are good tools for building multidisciplinary power.

What knowledges are at play, and cultivated?

This tactic requires specific forms of legal, political, scientific-ecological and campaigning knowledge, as well as local knowledge, and as such an alliance between actors across those fields. A solid mapping and understanding of one's terrain, and its actors, is a key starting point. Referenda campaigns need lawyers and people who understand political decision making, ideally also some allies from within political institutions. In the fight against ecocide, scientists are invaluable allies who can document, do studies and lend legitimacy. Last but not at all least, this tactic also requires people with some experience of running incremental campaigns, organising effective and engaging protests, and building

towards popular legislative initiatives. Some of those skills and knowledges are acquired in the process, others need specialists. Despite some people acting as more recognized specialists, it's important to also value local knowledge as specialist knowledge, and avoid hierarchies. The articulation of local knowledges and scientific expertise is a process where *everybody* is a learner.

What are the challenges and limitations?

Challenges and limitations in such campaigns are often to do with finding allies and building pressure at different political and legislative levels, against the power of agri-corporate lobbies that have their fingers deep in the pockets of the state. Many false friends and neutralising forces appear at these levels, and with them comes the temptation to get sucked into legal or political matters at the expense of building grassroots power and radical demands. When movements are invited as interlocutors, or asked to propose detailed policy, they are often coopted into trying to do the job of governments and legislators, as a way of taking off their radical edge. Another challenge concerns the implementation and follow-up phase of popular referenda, where grassroots movements and local communities must remain engaged in surveying and transforming agricultural and economic practice, keep their claim on their territories.

RESOURCES

Video

'Beyond Agri-Ecocide: Campaigning, Legal Tactics and Co-Research' (ENGLISH)
<https://youtu.be/qmLpUijtqgM>

ILP Mar Menor (SPANISH)
<https://ilpmarmenor.org/>

Pacto por el Mar Menor (SPANISH)
<https://pactoporelmarmenor.blogspot.com/>

Initiative Ludesch (GERMAN)
<https://www.initiativeludesch.at/>

POPULAR REFERENDA

Popular referenda serve as legal tools that grassroots campaigns and organisations can employ to create or protect commons and ecosystems. Considering the influence of the agroindustry and the neoliberal politicians and lawyers that work for it, popular referenda can build the legitimacy to push for legal change that otherwise would be impossible. They enable direct decision making on contentious matters, holding authorities and corporations accountable. Popular referenda can be powerful tools to stop the privatisation of public and common goods - such as the referendum that stopped the privatisation of water in Italy in 2011, or the 2005 Swiss moratorium on GMO seeds and plants, or the Popular Legislative Initiative of the PAH housing movement in Spain that started in 2010 and keeps creating waves. Popular referenda can operate at different levels - supranational, national, or municipal - and can yield binding or nonbinding results but must always build on local power. A key element in these legal strategies is robust mobilisation, generating popular pressure to drive institutional change. Mobilisation and active presence in the streets, social networks and the media is needed. Local stakeholders directly affected by issues like landgrabs, agri-ecocide, development, or privatisation play a leading role in advocating for referenda. From the beginning, scientific and citizen documentation processes are useful for evidence and argumentation. After a referendum, regardless of its result, there also needs to be enough organised social power to ensure continuity of care and follow-up to the process. No referendum result is eternal and the agroindustry will always try to overturn the will of the people in favour of its profit, which is why this tactic is not to be seen as a once-and-for-all solution but as embedded within struggles.

Italy, Spain, International

DOCUMENTING AND FIGHTING AGRI-ECOCIDE

*Community Forensics And
Co-Research Against Toxic
Agriculture as practiced
by Collectivo Epidemia,
Interprt and Plataforma
por el Mar Menor*

Translocal
SolidarityInstitutions
EcocideEducation
& EnquiryKnowledge
Sharing

This bunch of tactics is about using co-research in the fight against ecocide: finding ways of forensically documenting ongoing ecocide by means of photography, mapping, sample analysis, gathering testimonies and such; and using co-research as way of collectively staying with the trouble of ecocide in a specific location, to document and analyze and organize and spread the word.

What is the problem?

Ecocide is the deadly destruction of ecosystems - by mining, deforestation, geoengineering, and multiple forms of poisoning and polluting. It occurs where purely economic interests are put before the sustainability of life and care for habitats. Many people know about the toxic effects of mining, drilling for fossil fuels, chemical production and other industries. What's often less clear is that agriculture is also a major driver of ecocide. To be specific, it's industrial, intensive, and monocrop agriculture that is toxic, because it's highly dependent on chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and insecticides, and produces high levels of toxic waste. Excess nitrogen from fertilizers and manure is one of the main causes of water pollution in Europe.

Pesticide use is a major reason for the decline of insect populations as well as other species. Industrial agriculture, which claims to be feeding people, is undermining the very conditions of life on earth through the extinction of pollinators, poisoning of water and bodies. Agriculture is a major driver for the plunge in biodiversity, poisoning of water and soils, and destruction of forest habitats.

Agroindustrial profits are dependent on the exploitation and poisoning of ecosystems, animals and people. The agroindustry does not care for feeding people if it isn't with big profit margins, going to big corporations. This bitter fact is why the agroindustry has long pushed notions that it feeds the world (factually wrong, as peasant farming is still the dominant mode of farming in the world, and even in Europe, see Introduction) or that we need the chemicals and forms of production of industrial agriculture to feed future populations (also wrong, as agroecological farming has way higher yields than agroindustrial production). And the agroindustry is forever trying to greenwash its image. Their propaganda works: many of us in Europe take agroindustrial landscapes to be the norm, and think of rural monocultures as examples of natural beauty. Knowing how to read rural

Water

landscapes is a key skill that agroecology, and agroecological co-research and campaigning, can return to populations alienated from the food they eat and the ways in which that food is produced.

What can be done, and how?

Documenting agri-ecocide and other forms of agricultural harm is crucial in transforming agriculture, and it shows us yet again how human lives and animal, plant, bacterial, fungal and other lives are connected. Where there is ecocide, there is illness and death for all forms of life. And ecocide is almost everywhere at this stage, in varying intensities. To reveal and document ecocide requires not only that we know harm, but also that we know what constitutes ecosystem health and how non-harmful food production is possible. To do all this, we can draw on scientific ecology, soil science, community science, agroecology, permaculture, and community knowledge about changes in local landscapes, biotopes, land use, and agricultural practices. Documenting agri-ecocide often means documenting human as much as non-human health, and ecocide is strongly connected to harm against humans: poisoning of ground water, waterways, and soils, exploitation, and landgrabs, sometimes taking the form of genocide.

Providing evidence and documentation of agri-ecocide can greatly help social mobilisation, legal and institutional battles against ecological harm. Weaponizing and socialising knowledge and awareness for social-ecological change can take many forms, from campaigns against pollution to national campaigns to recognize ecocide as a crime or inscribe the rights of nature constitutionally. At the same time, the documentation of the harm of industrial agriculture to human and non-human health strengthens community, political, and consumer support for agroecology.

Let's begin by mentioning the forensic approach that co-research agencies like **Interprt** and **Forensic Architecture** are pursuing. Those are constituted by people with different research knowledges - architecture, forensics, geography, geology, social history, and so forth - getting together to support local fights against the destruction of ecosystem and human communities. Interprt lends their skills to struggles and causes as diverse as those of the people affected by the toxic radiation of atomic tests on the Muroroa atoll or the communities fighting deforestation in the Amazon and being assassinated for their resistance. They are part of the struggle to make Ecocide a fifth international crime.

Documentation is a key tool in this work of supporting the fight against ecocide, extinction and genocide, ranging from analyzing satellite images of landuse, taking photos to other forms of recording, interviewing people, taking samples of soil and water, observing and counting bodies of different species, mapping shifts in the territory and investigating crime scenes. Where there is ecocide, there is a crime scene: there might not be a bullet, but there is a source and mechanism of destruction and toxicity, there are usually institutional and market actors operating behind the scenes, as well as middlemen and different attempts at cooption; there's traces of erasure and illegality, of secret operations and of course there is victims with bodies, accounts, traces of violence on their bodies.

All this can be documented in a myriad ways, depending on the situation and skills of the people involved - but it's crucial to recognize that this documentation doesn't necessarily need specialist skills and that in fact, non-specialist first documentation of ecocide can make the decisive difference if it reaches a court or mass media. In courts and public opinion, perpetrators, be they individuals, companies or governments, can be held to account. But making actors materially accountable or getting things into courts or media often requires other forms of struggle as well (e.g land occupations, protests, etc. - see for instance the entries on Land Occupation and Popular Referenda above).

The role of casual observers of situations that look problematic, particularly in remote places, can be key for the successful proving of ecocide. It may take no more than a photo, or regular photos, of a site in your locality, getting in touch with others affected by the problem (be it a 'development' project, farming, a mine) and liaising with a campaigning group or critical local councillors. When it comes to farming, it can be meaningful to have an eye on fertiliser use, soil or water and to talk to farmworkers, to understand the practices and problems and build solidarity with workers having to operate under toxic conditions, as well as with locals who have their environment destroyed. Paying attention to health - and its opposite, illness and suffering - is of course key here.

The co-research collective **Epidemia** in Italy uses a slightly different approach for fighting agri-ecocide, drawing on situated militant investigation. They're a group of researchers (many of them doing PhDs) who got together to observe the epidemic of *Xylella Fastidiosa* in southern Italy - a bacteria that affects olive trees and has killed millions of trees in the region of Apulia, having been imported

on a coffee plant in 2008. This epidemic was perhaps not unavoidable, as it is a symptom of how olives are grown in massive plantations under conditions of global warming. The health and resistance of the olive trees is vastly compromised by soil deterioration, desertification, and the salinisation of surface waters, as monocultural landscapes facilitate the easy spread of the bacteria.

Colectivo Epidemia arose to develop critical socio-ecological research on this epidemic, while providing a space of care and collective thinking to counter widespread precarity, depoliticization and individualization among researchers. Since it was founded, the collective has grown to provide mutual support for researchers documenting ecocide in different places, allowing them to exchange knowledges, information and strategies when it comes to the useful activation of research and data in struggles and campaigns.

Another example of a tactic for co-research against ecocide can be found in the multi-disciplinary campaign against ecocide in the **Mar Menor** (see entry on Popular Referenda above), where lawyers, biologists, environmentalists, environmental scientists, agronomists, agroecologists and economists, as well as community initiatives, local residents and different campaigning platforms have allied to push for the recognition of criminal ecocide in the lagoon, and formulated demands towards the Mar Menor being recognised as legal person. The role of research - specialised and non-specialist - can not be overstated here: documenting destruction and crime, building legal strategies and forms of evidence for courts, the proposing of agroecological alternatives, and collective campaigning that grows out of the local communities and workers affected by toxic agriculture, documenting their narratives and systematically gathering evidence. Beyond pushing against the toxic runoffs from agroindustry, the Mar Menor campaign has focussed on developing and proposing agroecological alternatives for the region.

How does this build power?

This conundrum of tactics builds knowledge power, first of all, as the basis upon which injustice can be documented and fought. But social power is as key an aspect of it: we are not talking about expert committees here, who deliver reports to courts without ever talking to those affected. On the contrary, the fight against ecocide, in agriculture and elsewhere, can only build socio-ecological justice if it draws on the experiences and desires of those affected by toxicity and destruction, and supports their territorial claims and

forms of life. This is particularly key with indigenous peoples, who are often the frontline defenders against ecocide and those most brutally affected by it, but it also applies to peasants and other communities. Legal power is not the only end of these struggles, but it is an important dimension they build towards, pushing definitions of ecocide as crime and building legal tactics that can be useful to cases worldwide. This form of institutional power matters as it deters companies from the worst practices and becomes part of their 'investment risk', costing them much money if their criminal activity is proven.

Challenges to these tactics are to do with the limits of legal frames in different countries, with the difficulty of access to specialised techniques of documenting and measuring and analysing, and the need to build solid social power to carry community evidence and claims to court. This is why it's very important that scientists ally with communities and workers in fighting ecocide. Networks for citizen science are part of overcoming this challenge, as is the general push for scientists to join the fight for socio-ecological justice on the ground where bad things are happening, in alliance with those affected.

RESOURCES

Video
 'Beyond Agri-Ecocide: Campaigning, Legal Tactics and Co-Research' (ENGLISH)
<https://youtu.be/qmLpUijtqgM>

Interprt (ENGLISH)
<http://interprrt.org/>

Forensic Architecture (ENGLISH)
<https://forensic-architecture.org/>

ILP Mar Menor (ENGLISH)
<https://ilpmarmenor.org/>

Colletivo Epidemia (ITALIAN/ENGLISH)
<http://www.collettivoepidemia.org/en/>

Pacto por el Mar Menor (SPANISH)
<https://pactoporelmarmenor.blogspot.com/>

CAMPAIGNING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE

There are specific intricacies that come with campaigning for institutional or legal change. Those are often to do with tensions between different levels of the state, judiciary and politics, and require a careful and strategic approach. Where do we aim our demands at, and with what allies? For instance, hopes for EU intervention can often be disappointing (the Plataforma por el Mar Menor had three different visits by a delegation of the EU parliament that didn't do much to help their cause) even if EU delegations can give visibility and prompt important debate. The (national or plurinational) state level often affords the most visible debate and tangible democratic claims on a larger territory, and forces central governments to take a stance. For instance, signatures for the Mar Menor legislative initiative were gathered all across Spain, making this a state-wide issue, and as such pressured Congress to vote in favour of the proposal. But the state level can also feel abstract. Regional actors, then, are central to land and agriculture transformations, but often invested by lobbies and resistant to change as well as lacking legislative tools. The municipal level is key as it affords closeness with local representatives, lends itself to building more social synergy and popular pressure, and makes proposals based on local knowledge. Municipalism, transition towns and campaigns for eco-social forms of municipal land lease (see for instance entry on Popular Referenda above) have been very successful at the local level and built strong associative power. Whatever specific levels of governance we aim at, it's important to find solid ways of building territorial power, as those will be what carries the social force and momentum of our campaigning through time, and in space.

Poland, Italy, Spain

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE COMMONS

*How Agroecology schools
Agro Perma Lab, Scho-
la Campesina and Campo
Adentro build peasant
knowledge power*

Translocal
Solidarity

Livelihoods

Education
& EnquiryKnowledge
Sharing

This tactic is about getting and sharing knowledge that is both practical and political, focused on local needs and farmers' knowledge, and building towards shared movement strategies.

What is the problem?

The political nature of food encompasses many aspects: soil cultivation, earthcare work, distribution, farmers' and workers' livelihoods, land rights - but also collective strategizing and political organising. Knowledge on all of those, and on how they are interrelated, is scarce. That's where agroecology schools start their struggles for transforming the food system.

Agroecology schools are strategic spaces for social movements. As 'schools without walls', they are self-organised outside of formal education. They enable learning based on local needs and realities and aim at creating collective reflection for political education and empowerment. They also facilitate farmer-to-farmer training and dialogue between diverse knowledges, for example between farmers, researchers and policy makers. At their centre, agroecology schools are also about relationships and personal care for

each other. Their training can take place on farms or in communities, and ranges from pop-up workshops to long-run programs. Underlying all such education is an approach that bridges technical, political, theoretical and practical aspects of agroecology, always respecting the current challenges faced by participants and the kind of knowledge needed to address them in order to enable entire communities for social transformations.

Some schools are founded from the countryside and peasant movements, others emerge out of an alliance between urban and peasant movements. Below we present three examples that relate to the rural and urban in different ways, in Europe - knowing there are many many more.

Agro Perma Lab in Poland is a women-led organisation, working for food system transformation through a synergy of permaculture and agroecology. Together with Eastern European and Central Asian communities of farmers, they work to develop a network of agroecology schools in the region. They build on knowledge development through La Via Campesina in Europe and Central Asia. Agro Perma Lab runs agroecology dialogue series, region-to-region sharing of successful

Seeds

practices, and works to realise the principles of the Nyéléni action plan (see link below). They exchange with women-led organisations about regional initiatives, initiate or run agroecology training for their network and spread knowledge about the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP, link below). Agro Perma Lab also tries to strengthen their local communities, building agroecology movement in the countryside and realising projects that connect women from rural areas with activists from cities. They enable and support agroecology initiatives and events organised by those communities from different regions of Poland.

Through its central commitment to the Nyéléni declaration, Agroperma Lab is closely connected to the work of La Via Campesina and other organisations working on peasant models of agriculture, contributing to building a movement for food sovereignty and food system transformation. They are a part of the European Agroecology Knowledge Exchange Network (EAKEN), an initiative that brings together over 30 initiatives working on peasant-to-peasant knowledge exchange in Europe. Agroperma Lab also advocates for the UN declaration of the rights of peasants.

Schola Campesina in Italy is an agroecology school that facilitates the sharing of knowledge amongst agroecology organisations worldwide. Beyond knowledge sharing activities, Schola Campesina is involved in international policy processes on food and agriculture (FAO, Committee on World Food Security, UNDROP..) and develops training activities aimed at enhancing the voice of small-scale food producers, in global governance processes to advance struggles for Human Rights, Agroecology and Food Sovereignty. They

w o r k

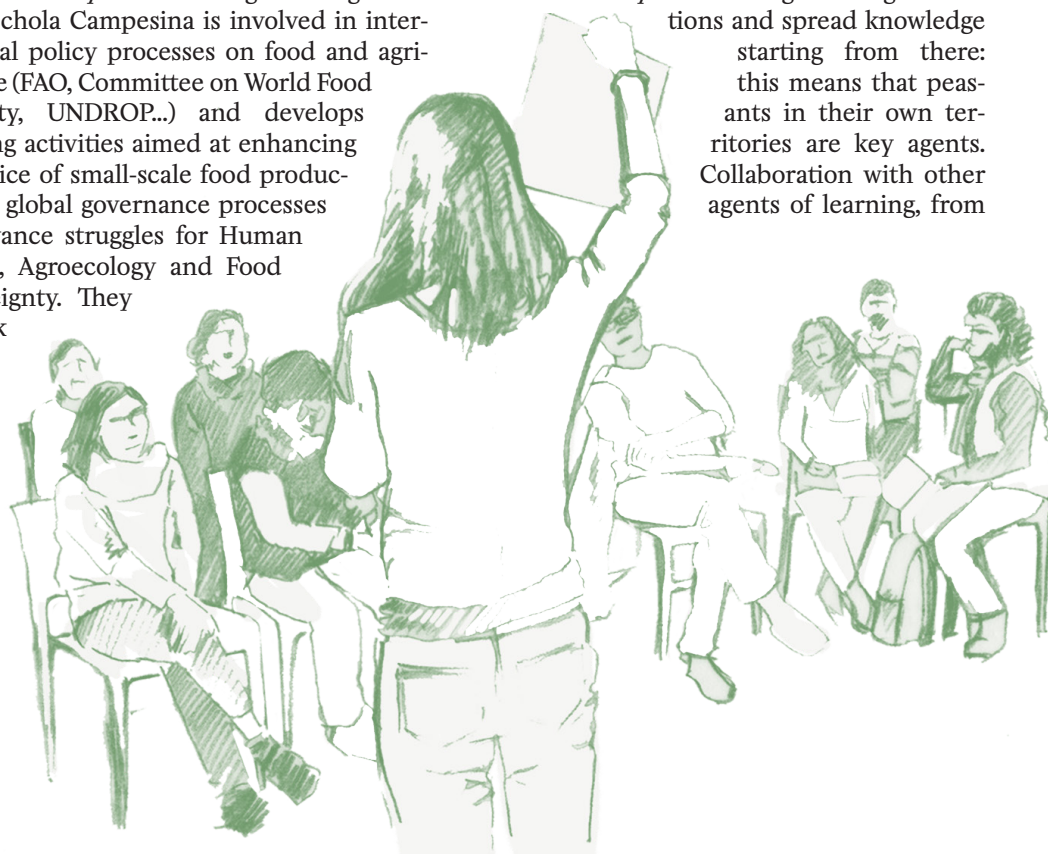
with small-scale farmers and allies, and are based in the Biodistrict delle Via Amerina e delle Forre, Viterbo province.

Campo Adentro / Inland, based in different locations in Spain, is a multifaceted agroecological platform for collaborations. Since 2009, they facilitate learning and practice by experimenting with the connections between arts, agriculture and different territories. Through their Shepherd's School, set up in 2004, they provide training for young city-dwellers interested in pastoralism. They also graze their flock in a park in the city of Madrid seasonally, make cheese, have a radio station and a publishing house. Another part of their educational work is the post-graduate Inland Academy on Cultural Strategies for the Rural. Currently they are restoring an abandoned village as a laboratory project for the exchange between art and the applied sciences about agroecology, peasant knowledge, culture and rural development.

How are alliances built in agroecology schools?

There are many networks and framework that build the common base of agroecology schools, from the Nyeleni declaration and work of La Via Campesina to more policy oriented frameworks and encounters. Local alliances are however also key to those schools, as they are always situated within a specific territory and working to change conditions and spread knowledge

starting from there: this means that peasants in their own territories are key agents. Collaboration with other agents of learning, from



the arts to science, and from women's movements to urban activists, are also key for making those schools dynamic spaces of radical and place-based pedagogies.

How does this challenge the status quo?

Agroecology schools put farmers and food producers at the centre and provide adapted knowledge for a specific place, rather than knowledge that seeks to adapt a place. Led by grassroots values and respect for indigenous and local traditions, they give voice to those who know the realities of farming, the climate crisis and changes in local markets. As inherently political education, a food system perspective puts an emphasis on collectives and organisations, but first and foremost also on farmers's autonomy. Enabling horizontal knowledge is key to challenging dominant knowledge transfer in agriculture and beyond.

What knowledges are built?

Agroecology schools build valuable knowledges that consider practical skills and political training inseparable. Through horizontal learning, they also build relational knowledges and are important for centering farmers' knowledge. Knowledges are built on a bioregional model and therefore place-specific, whilst being conscious of their place in the wider movement for social transformation.

RESOURCES

Video

'Beyond the Capitalist Food System: Cooperatives, Commons Economies and Agroecology Schools' with La Bolina (ENGLISH)

<https://youtu.be/AE1ZlQaH0mQ>

Agro Perma Lab (ENGLISH)

<https://agropermalab.org/en/>

Schola Campesina (ENGLISH)

<https://www.scholacampesina.org/>

Campo Adentro/ Inland (ENGLISH)

<https://inland.org/>

Nyeleni declaration (ENGLISH)

<https://www.eurovia.org/publications/51763/>

UNDROP declaration (ENGLISH)

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1650694>

France

BLOCKADING AGRI-CAPITALIST INFRASTRUCTURE

The struggle against industrial mega-reservoirs, the privatization of water and other ecological infrastructure by Soulevements de la Terre

Territorial Power

Transversal Solidarity

Ecocide

Privatization & Financialization

Blockading agri-capitalist infrastructure is an important tactic in the fight for agro-ecological justice. It means putting bodies and their extensions (materials, tools, machines, constructions) at the frontlines of ecological and social destruction, resisting clearing, construction, mining, etc. This is about linking the struggle of local communities with translocal networks of solidarity and the creation of national and international issues out of local problems.

What's the problem?

Soils, water, communities, commons and ecosystems need to be protected from agri-capitalist destruction and construction, to safeguard our common worlds. Agroecology is part of the fight against agri-capitalist projects and infrastructures if it takes transformation seriously - as earthcare defender Chico Mendes said, 'environmentalism without class struggle is just gardening', and the same goes for growing food. Resistance to the destruction of the living earth, its commons and biodiversity is vital, and it's a matter of defending the diversity of human as well as more than human life. So agroecology also means fighting back, fiercely: for instance by mass resistance to large infrastructural

projects, using organising, direct action and creative protest to blockade, occupy and disrupt. From mega-farms to mega-water-basins, resistance to agri-capitalist development is fundamental and fertile, and a labour of alliances.

A few more words on the problem, as it is grave. Industrial agriculture and agri-capitalist infrastructure kill soil and create water scarcity. Sealed soil can not breathe and thus organic life in it ceases, making it impossible to recuperate for healthy and fertile growing of food. Sealed soils can not store water, leading rain to run off into sewers rather than into the earth, causing groundwater levels to sink and thus increasing the risk of drought. Industrial agriculture compacts soil via the use of heavy machinery, reducing its vitality, but it also strips soils of their nutrients by monocropping, as well as decimating soil life via the use of pesticides and fertilisers that kill the organisms that make for lively and fertile soil. It takes up to 1000 years for 1cm of topsoil to form. We don't have time for agri-modernist nonsense.

Water is another key ingredient for the growing of food, and industrial agriculture threatens its supply as well as quality. For one, in-

Climate

Water

dustrial agriculture poisons water via runoffs from animal farming and via the use of fertilizers and pesticides (see entries on Ecocide and Popular Referenda above). Agro-industry also consumes huge quantities of water (70-80% of available freshwater in countries like Spain), in ways that agroecological farming doesn't. Agri-capitalism relies on heavily ploughed soils that dry out easily, on crops that require more water than local rainfall can provide, and on irrigation systems that drain underground aquifers. In southern Spain, the aquifers of the Doñana national park are running dry due to heavy water use of industrial strawberry farming (those same plantations where the Jornaleras de Huelva fight for labour rights and sustainable farming practices, see entry on Social Syndicalism above). Villages are running out of water whilst mass berry production sucks aquifers dry. In France, also in a context of increasing droughts, the government supports the construction of huge open air water storage basins that privatise water for use in industrial agriculture.

In the face of this situation, farmers, local communities and social movements are stepping up their resistance. The war for water has begun in France for instance, with the struggle at Sainte Soline - spearheaded by the **Soulevements de la Terre** movement - the perhaps most well known recent example of blockade and violent repression. Open-air basins of up to 18 hectares in size are meant to pump and store water from underground water reservoirs, to be used for irrigation: they destroy agricultural land, dry up watersheds and reduce river flows, destroy biodiversity and effectively privatise water for intensive agriculture. This involves a high percentage of wastage due to evaporation, risks of pollution, and an effective drying out of territories. It involves the shifting of water from being a commons, lodged in natural underground pools that naturally nourish local life, to being a good stocked for industrial use in wasteful and fenced-in storage basins. The French 'megabassines' are to be built mostly with public money, but planned and owned by a large for-profit coop for the benefit of agroindustry. This extractive and capitalist model of agriculture is at the same time cause and profiteer of water scarcity, as it uses irrigation excessively and triggers some of the



very water shortages the megabassins claim to resolve.

People - local farmers, inhabitants and associations in alliance with regional and national movements and organisations - have been protesting against the construction of megabassines for a while. In Sainte Soline, where large protests erupted in 2022, resistance and campaigning against a local mega-reservoir had been ongoing for some years. Their struggle came to head as 30,000 people occupied the farmlands where the basin was to be built, only to be faced with heavily militarized police that came at their peaceful protest with extreme violence. Two people were left in a coma, many with injuries and lasting damages to their bodies, as ambulances were instructed by police not to rush to help people. Agroindustry has powerful lobbies and its interests are well lodged within states, who will defend their capitalist model by any means, against its own citizens. Life and lives do not count against profit, for those who defend this model - but when thousands rise up against death-bound agriculture, and resistance reaches broad levels of visibility and support, we are also winning.

Making local struggles a matter of national and international priority is one of the slogans and things we can learn about here. There has been a national and international outpouring of attention and solidarity with Soulevements de la Terre, when they were to be criminalised by the government, and the construction of megabassines is no longer something that goes unnoticed. Moreover, this movement is a powerful example for how struggles can produce analysis, and counter-hegemonic discourse, with a level of clarity and precision unmatched by other analysts. Soulevements de la Terre call for 'Ecology without Transition' in the face of the vast infrastructural and privatising violence that transition often implies. Their struggle against the Megabassines is creating many ripples in the water - popular protests and debates have surely contributed to the fact that 15 megabassine permissions were withdrawn in Poitiers in October 2023, due to them being judged insufficiently adapted to the effects of climate change.

What is the role of alliance building here?

This kind of struggle often combines local and translocal resistance, and as we see with Soulèvements de la Terre, it can bring together farmers, local organisations and communities with broader climate, peasant, labour and social justice movements, including farm-workers unions. The Soulèvements have built powerful alliances at local, regional, national and international levels. Such alliance-building builds strong social and discursive bases to counter the ongoing criminalization of movements, placing legitimacy above legality. These kinds of tactics pose a risk to the status quo not just because they build social power, but also because they undermines the neoliberal discourse of progress and transition.

What action, organizing and campaigning tactics come into play?

Struggles against capitalist infrastructure combine direct action (occupation, blockade, disruption) with alliance building and campaigning, to blockade infrastructure that sucks the life out of our worlds and bodies. Those tactics are very clear on the alliances that must be built: the environment and labour are not two different issues, nor are food and climate two separate issues, nor indeed local life and planetary life. It's those kinds of ties that build common ecologies of struggle and imagination, which is where other modes of living, working and relating also inevitably spring from.

RESOURCES

Les Soulèvements de la Terre

(MULTILINGUAL)

<https://lessoulevementsdelaterre.org/es-es>

Short English article on Saint Soline

<https://viacampesina.org/en/france-peasant-struggle-to-preserve-and-share-the-water-will-always-be-legitimate/>

Romania

BUILDING COMMUNITY SEED HOUSES TO RESIST CORPORATIZATION

Feminism

Privatization &
Financialization

*How Eco Ruralis resists
the privatization of
seeds and builds peasant
commons*

Knowledge
Sharing

Seed banks are important infrastructures in the struggle against the corporatization of agriculture, in a context where mega-corporations increasingly try to own agriculture and nature. Peer-to-peer seed banks foster organic seed variety and farmer resilience to set up alternative infrastructures for exchanging, archiving and developing seeds. The community seed house of Ecoruralis moreover strengthens peasant feminism.

What's the problem?

Transnational corporations like Bayer, Syngenta, BASF, DuPont and others drive the copyrighting of seeds for profit, making it difficult for farmers to preserve and cultivate local and non-industrialised varieties, often driving farmers into dependency on chemicals and engineered seeds that lead many peasants down a debt spiral. Seed corporations are destroying living agriculture and reducing biodiversity as they dominate markets. The struggle against their copyrighting of seeds, and promotion of GMO seeds, is a vital element of agroecology. It's a key part of building food sovereignty, driven by communities and people in the common interest of all, as opposed to food security driven by cor-

porate calculus and control.

Eco Ruralis in Romania is an organisation that works very actively to protect and diversify seeds, and increase peasant autonomy. Its struggle is set in a context where land grabs and the corporatization and financialization of agriculture are advancing at a fast pace, at the European periphery which produces much food for export to the EU as well as Asia and beyond. Eco Ruralis set up many initiatives and infrastructures at the community level: their seed house, peasant-to-peasant knowledge exchanges, local production and distribution networks for instance. The role of women is key in this endeavour, as Eco Ruralis works to fortify rural feminism, bringing the popular peasant feminisms of La Via Campesina to Europe and specifically its post-socialist peripheries.

Soon after they were started by peasants from different regions in Romania, Eco Ruralis set up a seed house that was initially based out of a university, to fortify the channels of conserving and distributing small-scale, family farmers' seeds. It is now organising decentralised seed distribution via different regional community seed houses, the guardians and coordinators of which are peasant women.

Seeds

TOOLS & TACTICS: INFRASTRUCTURE

They coordinate the distribution of traditional seeds to peasants across the country, produce knowledge and materials about seed sovereignty and peasant struggle and culture, organise events and knowledge exchanges.

What kinds of knowledges and power are built through peer-to-peer seed houses?

Infrastructures like the seed houses of Eco Rurales work to build autonomy of knowledge and of the means of food production, of which seeds are a very crucial part. Seeds encapsulate decades and centuries of peasant knowledge and culture, passing varieties of plants through generations and thus embodying a kind of heritage that's material as well as cultural and spiritual. Grassroots seed houses honour this knowledge, strengthen and defend it, in struggles that go against the grain of laws and regulations that favour corporate seeds and farming - and are, for this reason, sometimes also a bit clandestine (see entry on Peasant Markets above).

In building networks and infrastructures for exchange, preservation and cross-fertilization, such seed houses cultivate the spirits of resistance and rebelliousness we need to build our struggles against capitalist dystopia. Deep memory and generational processes are as much part of this as translocal solidarity and trans-species connection and care.

RESOURCES

Podcast
with Eco Rurales (ENGLISH)
<https://soundcloud.com/earthcarefield-cast/episode-2-peasant-farmers-organisation-and-land-in-romania-Eco-Rurales>

Eco Rurales (ROMANIAN)
<https://www.EcoRurales.ro>

La Via Campesina (ENGLISH/SPANISH/
FRENCH)
<https://viacampesina.org/>

video
Popular Peasant Feminisms of La Via
Campesina, from Common Ecologies Course
(ENGLISH)
<https://youtu.be/BbNvplRdAJc>



Spain, France, Germany

COMMUNITY GARDENING TO RESIST URBAN DEVELOPMENT

How commons gardens resist enclosure to build community and solidarity

This is about creating and/or defending community agricultural space in urban built environments, for local production of food, the generation of spaces of encounter and solidarity, against development and speculation.

What's the problem?

Living urban soils are few and they're being eaten fast by the voracious real estate projects of speculators. Those same actors and projects contribute to rising rents, eroding the right to affordable housing as well as public space, using housing as a means to make profits. Urban enclosures proliferate in this context, taking precious space that humans and other animals and species need for healthy conviviality. The dominance of cars in cities does the rest, eating up as well as polluting a lot of open space. All of this seals soils and leads to urban heating, as well as to alienation and commercialization in urban space.

Against this, urban commons gardening and its community of human and more than human solidarity cools down the city, creates meeting places and creates knowledge commons by at least mutual gardening teaching. We're particularly interested in urban gar-

dens that function in open, accessible, commons-like ways, against the logic of enclosed, privatising urban gardens where everyone has their own raised bed and there's little common project. In commons gardening, there are no absolute fences, no strict rules of who can and can't be a part, no private little islands of gardening - instead there is often a rotation of crops and plots, common planning of cultivation and harvests, where knowledge is constantly exchanged and celebrations and encounters organised horizontally, tools and seeds are shared, strangers welcomed, new spaces claimed.

Those kinds of gardens sometimes take space in illegal but legitimate ways to defend neighbourhoods from development - squatting - or they use land on agreement with municipal or other authorities. There are many different models, and many of us writing this guidebook are involved in those mentioned below, hence this entry presents a selection of a few examples we are close to and inspired by.

The **Ágora Juan Andrés Benítez** in Barcelona is an open site on Aurora street in the neighbourhood of Raval, reclaimed in memory of Juan Andrés Benítez, who used to live there and lost his life as a victim of police brutality-

Community
Commons &
Cooperativism

Urban Struggles
& Municipalism

Transversal
Solidarity

Privatization &
Financialization

Education
& Enquiry

Knowledge
Sharing

Direct
Democracy

Land

Climate

ty there. The fever of real estate and tourist speculation led to an attempt to build another luxury hotel here, a business unrelated to the needs of the neighbourhood. That's why on October 5, 2014 the space was occupied. It's a self-managed space, which works through a weekly assembly, and a place of encounter where neighbours can satisfy social and recreational needs. It's also a space for mutual support where activities can be developed that reinforce the rejection of the alienation and repression to which the predatory capitalist system intends to subject us. This space belongs to everyone: we have to take care of it and improve it. It is not a place for speculation and there is no room for machismo or any kind of violence or discrimination.

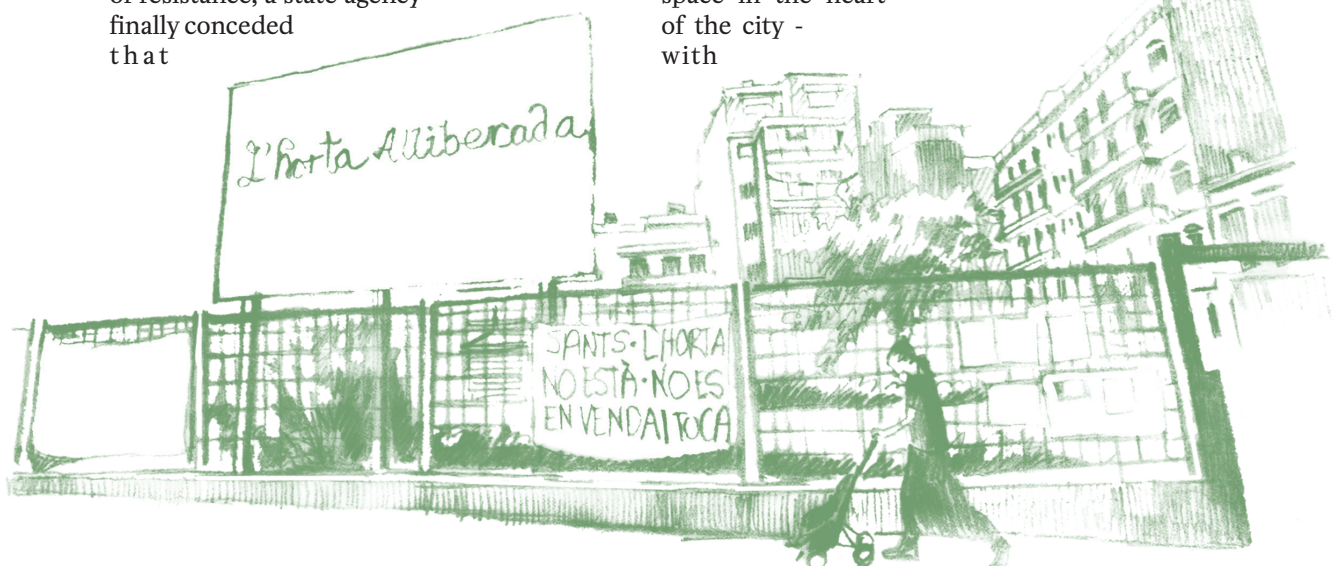
The **Jardins Ouvriers (workers gardens)** in Aubervilliers near Paris have been around since the beginning of the 20th century, providing a space for workers who often came from rural areas in France or beyond, to give continuity to their agricultural roots and practices, and to build community. In 2020, as Aubervilliers land became ever more sought after for development projects associated to the 2024 Olympics, the gardeners were notified that 12 of their plots were to be claimed for the construction of a pool's sunbathing area and train station. Talking to neighbours, urban planners and architects, it became clear that this taking of space was not at all inevitably necessary, and so gardeners and local allies went on to resist the construction. The JAD - Jardins a Defendre (gardens to be defended) - was born. In 2022, a festive 4 month-long occupation of the plots that were about to be destroyed took place, several court appeals were placed by the association of gardeners, and local resistance was strengthened through the building of alliances. Later that year, a court declared the Olympic sunbathing area illegal, but it was too late to save 4000m2 of gardens that had already been destroyed. In 2023, after 3 years of resistance, a state agency finally conceded that

the station construction could be done using much less land and only 1 plot was to be definitively destroyed. Local resistance succeeded in defending the gardens: an example that resonates and inspires, across the newly formed network of working class and community gardens... and beyond.

La **Vall de Can Masdeu** at the edge of Barcelona, similar to Mondeggi, is a place of interconnections - between city and forest, humans and nature, past and future - and a Mediterranean point of reference in the search for solutions to the climate crisis. An empty leper's hospital with a nunnery and gardens, Can Masdeu was squatted during the winter of 2001, at a time when the city of Barcelona was evicting lots of squatted spaces. It set out to weave autonomous community spaces removed from mercantile logic, through a network of projects coordinated by a multitudinous assembly of the valley. Together this open and changing group of people, many of whom also came from beyond Spain, innovate and recover knowledge

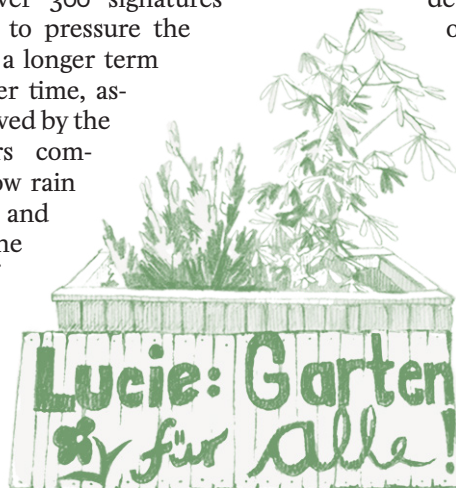
and practices to live well within the biophysical limits of the valley and the planet. The Can Masdeu project is part of popular resistance to urban sprawl, recovering community use and traditional agroforestry uses in the valley and a place for other projects to flourish.

The **Hort Okupat de Ca La Trava** in Barcelona is an act of resistance and response to the gentrification of the city, specially of the Gracia neighbourhood. Ca La Trava was a squat in the place where the garden is now. Ca La Trava returned to action, this time in the form of a garden, ready to resist among the asphalt of the grey and capitalist city. It is a space for the neighbourhood and its community, cooperative and self-managed in a horizontal and assembly-based way. In Ca La Trava, everyone is welcome to join and grow a green and liberated space in the heart of the city - with



the intention that it will once again be a trench from which to resist the onslaught of speculators, and to wage war against all those who are destroying this neighbourhood.

Ab geht die Lucie e.V. in Bremen is a right to the city project that was initiated by neighbours to open up a garden for all on sealed, unused and highly priced land. Through collective efforts, it was possible to negotiate with the district council and conclude a 10-year lease, after a citizens' application with over 300 signatures was submitted to pressure the city for a such a longer term agreement. Over time, asphalt was removed by the local gardeners community, and now rain can percolate and things grow. The community of gardeners regularly meets and discusses different needs in the garden concerning plants, animals, waste, water, rent, displacement and the development of the neighbourhood. Together with the indoor space of the KlimaWerkstadt, it is a meeting place for resisting multiple violences of the capitalist system and for sharing knowledge on activism. It's also a place for being with human and more than human community in times of gentrification and extinction.



The **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project 'Rote Beete'** in Taucha close to the city of Leipzig overcomes the separation of the rural and the urban, by bringing activists situated in the city to care for the crops and land of their CSA, via a system of harvesting shares. They actively work to share agroecological as well as organisational knowledge with different self-organised groups, with other CSAs as well as in their own community. In their local context, this also means to resist fascist social tendencies and capitalist development, engaging with different neighbourhood dynamics via protest, petitions and other forms of resistance.

How are alliances built in community gardens?

The territory of a garden conditions the openness and limitations for different alliances, defined by its location in the city or the suburb, in a working or middle class neighbourhood, on an open field or in a ref-

ugee camp. Community gardens can be important meeting points for locals from different walks of life, building conversations and solidarity mediated by seeds, soil, vegetables, assemblies and celebrations. Little gatherings and festivities are a key element to sociability and alliance-building in community gardens, as are workshops and workdays, and outreach to different community and activist groups. The more people can feel part of a garden, have a stake in it and develop care for it, the stronger its chances of resisting development. For not even gardens with open-ended lease agreements from municipal or other agencies can be safe from landgrabs, as many examples here and elsewhere show.

How can urban community gardening challenge the status quo?

Radical urban community gardens tackle relational, inhabitational and institutional power, providing spaces for grassroots alliances, exchange, and learning. Their openness is often unparalleled in the city, where space is striated and privatised, and access generally controlled. Neither public nor private, commons gardens promote a different model of management and ownership, to do with care, use and engagement. They also provide a different model of food production, even if their yields are often small due to the limited area they have access to: the fact that people come into contact with what it means to grow food, and to do this together and in solidarity, creates important dynamics of consciousness and resilience. Community gardens break with urban architectures of individualization, car-centrism, supermarketization and concrete, and remind us that other worlds are possible, even in the city.

What knowledges can be built through community gardens?

Community Gardens build knowledges through building a community, literally. They challenge people of different backgrounds to get organised together, develop practices and rhythms of inhabitation and relation, and to relate to their territories in common. Intergenerational exchange is often a part of that possible this, as is openness to different cultural and religious backgrounds, forms of gender and family, living situations and languages. Community gardening allows people to overcome the division between manual labour and cognitive work, an experience that's often rare in the city and can be quite transformative.

Ab geht die Lucie e.V. (GERMAN)
<http://www.lucie-bremen.de/>

Rote Beete (GERMAN)
<http://rotebeete.org/>

Hort de Ca La Trava (CATALAN)
<https://infhort.tumblr.com/tagged/historia>

Jardins Ouvriers Aubervilliers (FRENCH)
<https://www.jardinsaubervilliers.fr/>

Agora Juan Andrés Benítez (SPANISH)
<https://agorajuanandres.wordpress.com/>

Can Masdeu (CATALAN)
<https://canmasdeu.net/ca/nuestra-historia/>

RESOURCES

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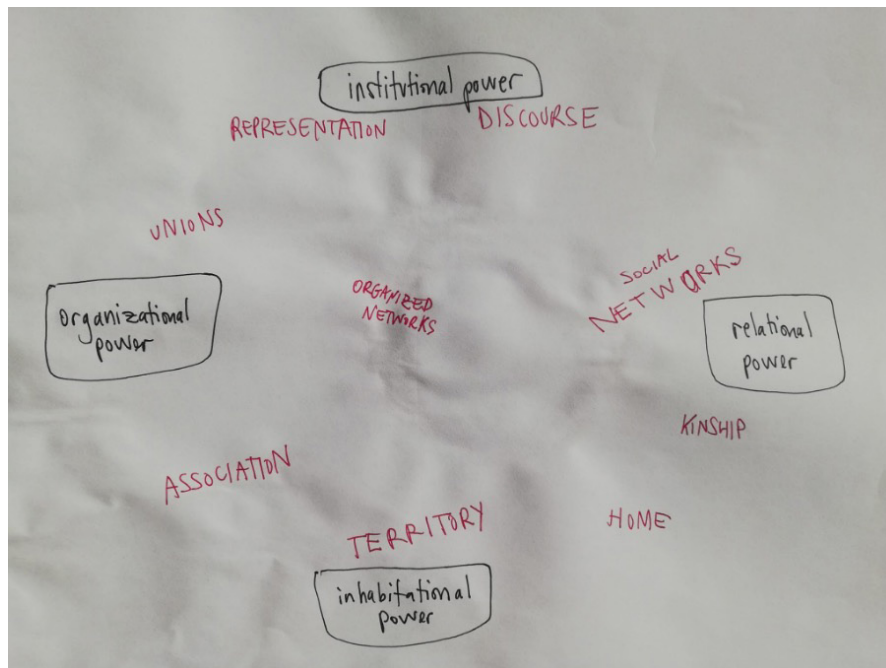
Mapping More-Than-Social Movement Ecologies

How we understand and visualise ways of building social power

This book has many stories and examples of people building transformatory power.

Alongside these stories and tactics, we'd like to share a mapping tool with you, which allows us to look at all this in a broader context of movement ecologies. We've found this mapping tool useful for thinking about how our struggles relate to one another, for discussing broader states and strategies of our common movements⁹. This question of how different struggles relate, which bases they cover and tactics they employ in relation to one another, is very key to us, as we know no single struggle or tactic can achieve everything.

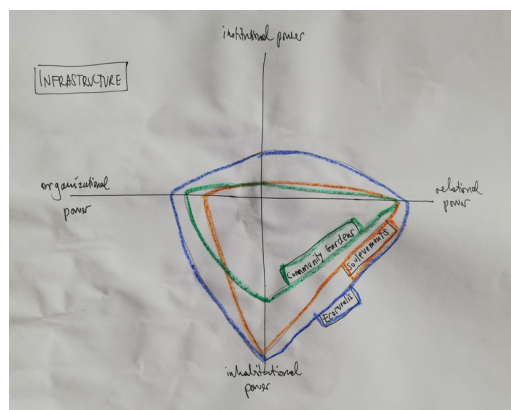
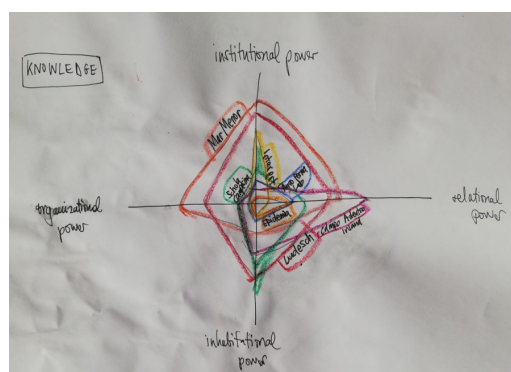
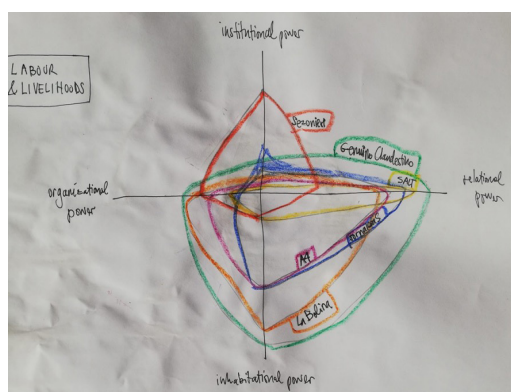
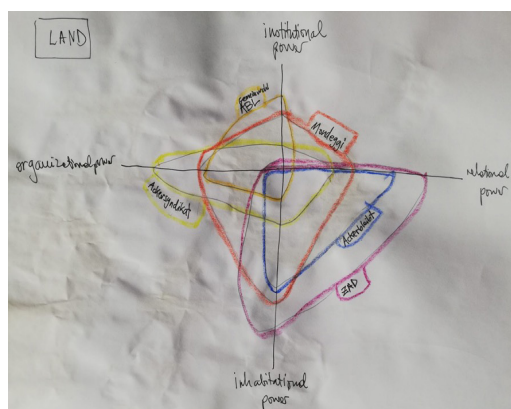
In order to make other worlds of reproducing life possible, we need to build power across different dimensions: through different ways of inhabitation, association, organisation, institutions, knowledges and discourses, subjectivities, circulation and community. We need to get away from silly debates about where the central contradiction of our time lies, from a competition between strategies (and the fights, splits and animosities this brings). What we need is complex, diverse, rich and allied social movement ecologies, with people building power across different spheres, aiming for synergies, making up for each others' inevitable limitations, appreciating each other and having respectful debates. We represent those spheres as follows, in our own terms:



The tactics we've chosen to present in this book all have one thing in common: They are driven by the radicality of socio-ecological and agri-cultural transformation, it's down-to-earth-ness, but they don't see agroecological struggle as somehow privileged, primary or unique amongst other struggles. It's one part in a larger puzzle. And agroecology means a lot of things, a lot of ways of engaging with power-building: from the relational and subjective dimensions to tactics that are inhabitational and territorial, to the organised and associational dimensions and all the way to tactics to do with representation and institutions.

⁹ Since we developed it in 2015, this framework has been used in many analyses and workshops. It was developed by Bue Rübner Hansen and Manuela Zechner in the context of the crises of 2008-2011, thinking within a social reproduction perspective, and first published with Roar Magazine: <https://roarmag.org/magazine/building-power-crisis-social-reproduction/>

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Here are some drawings of where the tactics we featured here may be seen to sit, roughly, in our diagram of power.

Note that we plotted these struggles into the diagram in an approximate way: the whole point of this diagram is not to create neat or true representations, but debate and thinking about how we build power, and where our strengths lie as movements. Every person has their own view of where exactly a specific initiative sits on this diagram, at a given point in time, so these representations are neither fixed nor authoritative. We invite you to make a blank diagram and map in your own struggles, tactics and strategies, maybe together with others, to discuss and reflect: where do we think things sit? Are we happy with that? Where is our strength, where are our blind spots, what's missing, how can we build power in concert with others, to push for broad change?

When we look at how we sit in relation to others, to our allies and enemies, and analyse what we and others do well in this ecology of building power, we shift into strategic perspectives. This mapping offers a way to look towards that, and we invite you to map your own movement ecology with this tool, as a way of pinning down or articulating your own tactics. Such a movement ecology includes more than just human life and actors, so it's worth the try to also map how we exchange, build communities, co-inhabit, associate, and organise ourselves with other life forms around us, how our institutions, ideas, and subjectivities are shaped by and reshape geo-biological forces.

Mapping the tactics we present in this book, we've been interested in a range of those that cover the entire spectrum (land-labour-distribution-ecology-knowledge). The question is never to privilege one of the spheres, there always needs to be an alliance across all the dimensions of social power - that tries to build power across those¹⁰.

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We can take the state out of this diagram, imagine institutions and representation without the state - the production of discourse can mean legitimacy rather than legality pure and simple, the production of institutions can mean institutions of the commons rather than the state. We like to imagine worlds where our strategic analysis takes the state into account, but our alternative world building works to build institutions, discourses and subjects beyond the state. Imagining institutions beyond the violence of state and capitalist markets is a vital task.

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We've been interested in tactics that feature:

- campaigning, which acts upon the discursive sphere of power
- organising, which reach into the organisational sphere of power
- producing and reproducing, through commons infrastructures, connecting the relational and organisational spheres via the inhabitational dimension
- care and mutual aid, that start from the moment of individual alienation or separation to build access to work and common projects
- action, that work from relational-inhabitational moments of direct action and occupation to put cogs in the wheels of industrial agriculture
- legal hacks and referenda, that build organisation towards discursive-representational-legislative power

And so, going beyond this diagram, the kinds of power we've mapped out across those tactics are: *organisational / relational / institutional / legal / economic / networked / territorial / caring / crossspecies / reproductive / Infrastructural / cultural / associative / mobilizational / disruptive / operational / decision making / knowledge / discursive / information*. We've admired and learned from the ways in which different struggles build those powers. We hope this power mapping tool can help contribute towards strategic mappings of ways of building power.

Other tools we've found tremendously useful are Local Agroecological Facilitation (or dynamization, as they say in Spain - see links in the introduction), Countermapping, Organizing, and of course - in our particular case here - the co-creation of a poster-image that visualises the connections between struggles and offers pathways into their stories, tactics and analyses. If you haven't seen the beautiful poster that goes with this book yet, make sure you see and download it at <http://commonecologies.net> - put it up in your barn, flatshare, office, social centre, workshop, bedroom!

We hope you found this book useful. It seems to us that in this toolbox, in these struggles, there is a genuine way forward. A way of struggles mutually amplifying one another, listening, learning. A way of going at the mechanics of capitalist hellscape from different angles and with different tools, moves and tricks, with mutual understanding. Ways of developing an analysis that's embodied and sharp, cultivating affects and intelligences that run deep and fierce. It's this lively and powerful ecology of movements and learning that matters to us, beyond terms like agroecology or transformation, and we find there's a lot to learn from these examples for all kinds of situations and movements. Let's keep building this toolbox, through experimentation, struggle and practice, through reflection and care and analysis, tactically and strategically, together with love and rage.

Yours,
Common Ecologies

