

# RECLAIM THE FIELDS



ENGLISH

# **PART 1: EUROPEAN WINTER ASSEMBLY**

8th-12th of January 2015  
in Sumac Center (Nottingham)



<b>Intro</b>	4
<b>Who we are</b>	5
<b>I. presentation of stars which were at the assembly</b>	7 - 10
<b>II. feedbacks from the organisational discussions and decisions taken</b>	
A. WHAT ABOUT RTF network ?	11 - 16
B. WORKING GROUPS	16 - 19
C THEMATIC GROUPS	19 - 22
D. LOCAL GROUPS	22 - 25
E. UK MEETING	26 - 28
F. NEXT CAMP: SUMMER 2015	28 - 33
G. NEXT EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY - WINTER 2016	33 - 35
<b>III. feedbacks from the debates</b>	
ACCESS TO LAND	36
URBAN & RURAL	36 - 39
REFORMISM AND RADICALISM IN THE FOOD SEVERITY /LAND ACCESS MOVEMENTS	40 - 43
<b>IV. EVALUATION &amp; FEEDBACK OF THE EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY</b>	44 - 50



## **PART 2 : ABOUT THE NEXT CAMP** RTF-antiprison camp in North Wales in summer 2015

**WHY, FOR WHOM AND HOW** 50 - 53  
do we organize and/or decide to organize a camp?

**THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ANTI-PRISON  
STRUGGLES AND RTF** 54 - 58

**ABOUT THE NORTH WALES PRISON PROJECT**  
and prison expansion in UK 59 - 61

## **PART 3 : CALL OUTS**

**Call of the keelbeek** 62 - 63  
Mega prison project in Haren (Brussels)

**Ground control – Action Camp** 64 - 65  
July 1-8 near Amsterdam

# INTRO

## **Bulletin 10.1 The POST WINTER ASSEMBLY 2015 - english edition**

In January 2015 some 50 people from all over Europe gathered in the terrific SUMAC Centre in Nottingham. The topic for discussion: a new year for the European constellation of people and projects determined to create alternatives to capitalism through co-operative, collective, autonomous, real-needs-oriented small scale food production initiatives.

This Bulletin contains the outline and minutes of meetings which took place during this gathering, alongside working group feedback and development, discussions and decisions about next assemblies and camps, and input on topical debates.

If you would like to join the bulletin team please feel very welcome!! We need more people that want to commit themselves as part of a team! We need editors, translators, people that want to work on lay out and of course we like you to send articles, drawings, notes, invitations to actions etc.!

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

"los bulletinos..."

[bulletin@lists.reclaimthefields.org](mailto:bulletin@lists.reclaimthefields.org)

# WHO WE ARE

We are a group of peasants, landless and prospective peasants, as well as people who are taking back control over food production. We understand "peasants" as people who produce food on a small scale, for themselves or for the community, possibly selling a part of it. This also includes agricultural workers.

We support and encourage people to stay on the land and go back to the countryside. We promote food sovereignty (as defined in the Nyéléni declaration) and peasant agriculture, particularly among young people and urban dwellers, as well as alternative ways of life.

In Europe, the concept 'food sovereignty' is not very common and could be clarified with ideas such as 'food autonomy' and control over food systems by inclusive communities, not only nations or states. We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real needs oriented, small scale production and initiatives. We are putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

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

Nevertheless, our openness has some limits. We are determined to take back control over our lives and refuse any form of authoritarianism and hierarchy. We respect nature and living beings,

but will neither accept nor tolerate any form of discrimination, be it based on race, religion, gender, nationality, sexual orientation or social status. We refuse and will actively oppose every form of exploitation of other people. With the same force and energy, we act with kindness and conviviality, making solidarity a concrete practice of our daily life.

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

Therefore, the second step we undertake is union work: this is seen through the militancy that we express in every debate in which our movement takes part or supports through our efforts. In this way we build networks of militant alliances with students, urban activists, farm workers, consumers, migrants. If young people do not defend themselves and if they don't work together, then no one will do it for them!

We are not the future, we are the present!

¡Alerta, alerta, alerta que camina, la juventud en lucha de la Vía  
Campesina!



European Winter Assembly

8th-12th of January 2015 in Sumac Center (Nottingham)

# I. PRESENTATION OF STARS

which were presented at the assembly

During the assembly, we had two evening sessions over which people presented projects they are part of or know.

## Can Piella Barcelona

A squatted farm which incited much more action in the area - was evicted

## Can Tonal Barcelona

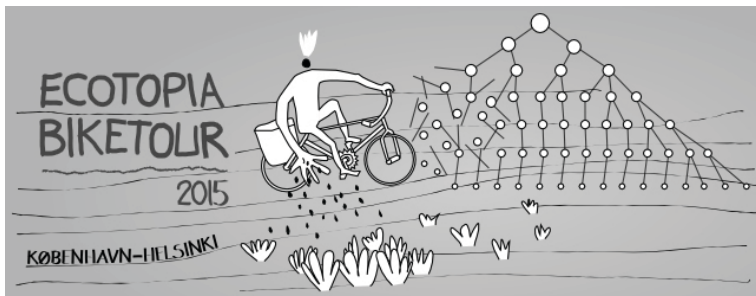
An intentional community of food growers attracting local membership - direct result of Can Piella.

## Yorkley Court Farm Gloucestershire, UK

Squatted 190 acre farm resulting from (and resulting in) strong ties with community through Wilderness Centre Action in Forest of Deen (under eviction attempts March 2015)

## Ecotopia Bike Tour

Anarchist bike tour following consensus decision making process and joining radical projects. Touring Europe in summer each year. Next year North-East.



## **Local Projects against Windmills Crete, Greece**

800 windmills planned to power mainland Europe opposed by local groups who are seeing their upland commons being given to power companies and their taxes being used for power which they will not benefit from.

Interest in international resistance networking now growing.

## **Grow Heathrow**

London

Squat opposed to airport expansion continues under threat of eviction (and new interest in airport expansion) into its fifth year with 20 members.

## **Community Food Growers Network**

London

Collective of people growing food in London fighting gentrification and working towards access to land together with a radical housing network.

## **Reclaim The Fields**

Scotland

A new group finding its feet but composed of climate activists and land activists.

## **ZAD**

**Notre Dame des Landes**

Occupation which won against an airport expansion with support from the local community now looking at expanding farming and seed saving in the community.

Very successful and now producing food free for the community and other activist movements (e.g. Calais Migrant Solidarity)





## **Ferme des bovillons**

### **Normandy**

(French language) Land occupation against road which has outlived the building's demolition order, however, it is still threatened with eviction. Has many wider community projects and solidarity actions around France with the ability to bring in lots of people when requested.

## **Integral Economy Approach**

### **Slovenia**

An academic project looking into sharing skills and resources between generations in a traditional hilly area. Matching aging farmers with young people who want access to land.

Focus on sharing food production knowledge, land and physical ability.

## **Solila Solidarity Agriculture Vienna, Austria**

Squatting farm land threatened with construction projects, which were evicted, lead to dealings with local authorities which resulted in secure land access. It appears the authorities are trying to calm a potentially troublesome group by granting access to land for free. They grow 45 varieties of potatoes and give this and other produce away for free.

## **GMO Actions**

### **Belgium**

Trespass actions and crop destruction resulted in serious repression in the courts and huge public sympathy.

In the end, the accused had so much public sympathy that their sentences were minimal and there was plenty of money for bail.

## **Harren on the 17th April**

17 hectares where there should be a prison built. People occupied, planted potatoes, then some decided it was nice and stayed after the harvest of potatoes. Now there are about 5/6 permanent squatters.

Support from the local community. There is already organization to resist an eviction from Brussels but the project seems to be going very well.

## **Land Workers Alliance**

**UK**

Group of people all producers, farmers, gardeners. UK T-shirts, lobbying in the form of position papers on the subject of food sovereignty to the department of agriculture etc.



## **Tagungshaus Wernsdorf**

A guesthouse and living project in Brandenburg (two houses and some wagons) Can host 60 people near Berlin.

Had been squatted for 24 years, should have been evicted in Jan 2015 but then signed a contract with the owner (Berlin city) in December '14. For 2015 Project to develop vegetable gardens.



## **II. feedbacks from the organisationnal discussions and decisions taken**

### **A. WHAT ABOUT RTF NETWORK ?**

Time was taken on the first day of the assembly to share the conclusions of what was discussed at the previous one. After this small groups discussed how it is going, the challenges that are faced, if they have new proposals, how do they want to work. Some proposals were then discussed more precisely during the week-end.

#### **1. Feedbacks from the former european assembly in Nikitsche in winter 2014:**

About 30 people gathered in Nikitsche in 2014. They took a lot of time to talk about the functioning of RTF. There was never really enough time at other gatherings to answer properly to these questions:

How are we working?

How are we structured?

How are the working groups working?

The group from the last meeting did a huge amount of work sending out questionnaires for the basis of the discussion.

**RTF Objectives : (as in bulletin8)**

#### **Learn and implement together**

System change - to focus on food production as basic need and means to change system

'Education' to reconnect people, nature & agriculture

"Liberate land" out of financial market e.g. through occupation to step out of existing structures to gain independence and autonomy

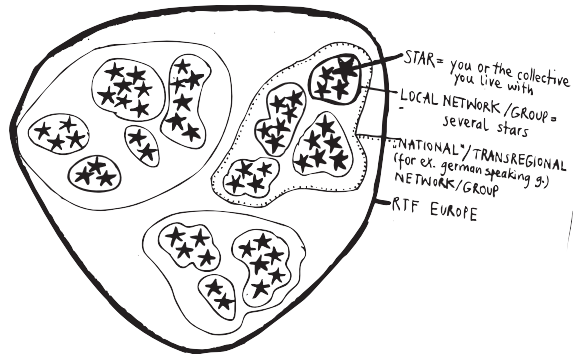
## Summary of decisions

One outcome of the Nikitsch meeting was that we do not want to reinvent RTF at every meeting. We have lost people that got bored of restructuring everything at every meeting. That's why we want to do quick summary and then concrete process to take further steps. To combine the 'what' with the 'how we are going to create this change'. Its not just about presenting an empty structure, it's about connecting it to reality.

**STARS** are projects, collectives, struggles, individuals that organise in local networks. Someone added that often we are quite isolated from others, and we have the right to feel like a star on our own & be part of RTF, even if we don't have local networks...

### LOCAL NETWORKS

are meeting of stars in a specific region. One of the outcomes of the meeting in Nikitsch was that the focus should be in local networks. Because RTF



has a grassroots approach - wants to work form bottom up. These local networks have autonomy, they don't have to be called reclaim the fields. Depending on local context there are different targets. It isn't necessary to start new local networks, there may be some in existence already. The target is to be exchange and network-ing points for different projects to pass on knowledge, informa-tion, tools & share them to help each other in concrete struggles in a practical, theoretical & political context. And to support new projects., to do political action together. to promote RTF ideas in a local ., context, organise events & to take part in the European network, fundraising, organising gatherings & meetings etc.



**ON EUROPEAN LEVEL** meetings on this level, are not happening every 6 months anymore therefore we can spend more time on the local level. We've come to the conclusion that european gatherings are exceptionally necessary. There should be 3 kinds of gatherings on european level.

**ORGANISATIONAL MEETINGS** called **ASSEMBLIES** should take place once a year in Winter because there is the least work to do on the land. The aim of these meeting is to have a moment where working groups can meet, where we can work on our process, where new people can join & exchange between groups. Decisions (on european level) are only taken during assemblies.

**TOPIC BASED MEETINGS** - thematic - would happen whenever a local network or a star has energy to organise a topic. There are various different topics. E.g. agricultural techniques, anti-GM, seed politics, or the support of struggles

**CAMPS** In the last while they have been happening on bi-yearly basis in Summer. Invite a broader basis. Where one of the topics is to focus on enlarging RTF & supporting local struggles. Exchange of knowledge & skills. Make it broader & more accessible e.g. topics from clay ovens to critical whiteness. The last meeting was in Mannheim.

**WORKING GROUPS** which exist or try to exist : Propaganda, Website, Info-kiosk, Bulletin group, Translation group, Carrots working group (coordination in-between assemblies & camps), Finance group

**THEMATIC GROUPS** : Seeds, Farm network, Gender, Access to Land

## **2. HOW IS IT GOING FOR RTF FUNCTIONNING ?**

**After the "RTF's theoretical presentation", people split on different groups to answer to those questions, mostly by geographical areas.**

**What are the challenges?**

**What should be changed for it to work better?**

**What about new proposals ?**

**How is it working ?**

**What are the challenges ?**

**What needs to be improved ?**

**New proposals**

### **Group 1**

- Use RTF as way to learn about struggles and actions that need support in real time
- Maintain & improve communications to support simple aims.
- increase actions against agribusiness.
- organise groups of friends to visit somewhere.
- make some maps to make stars more visible, to make interactions easier in physical world.
- organise education days or weeks focused on what we can do to start squatting land : to share related infos and practical skills e.g like in action camps in UK.

### **Group 2**

Energy for RTF in the UK is weak at times in itself. Some groups feel that the RTF banner is too radical for them, maybe it will be too niche (good thing!).



- Strengthen weak links between Europe & UK, overcome the language and channel barrier ! ( people coming in UK bring excitement, inspiration and strength ! )
- Organise a themed gathering or a camp on how & why to occupy land.

### **Group 3**

Feels that UK don't have yet a real functioning group, just a few people.. there is now a momentum : stuff are happening in most regions of the UK, people have turned up for call outs for support.

- Inspired by strength of EU network.
- to have goal of reclaiming land is really big, maybe we need specific goals that can be achieved through analyzing pathways
- need for more thematic groups & coming together events
- funding for access to travel (difficulty in getting to mainland)
- Gatherings & workshops to share what is successful to actively work towards reclaiming land

### **Group 4** (Group of moving individual stars)

When we talk about the constellation, sometimes it appears that we're talking about existing land projects meeting up, and we miss all this nomadic part of RTF strength.

- How can links be created? It's not clear yet how that can work when someone wants to link up to RTF except on an informal basis. (e.g. from Spain)

Make visible the organic working of the network : how people who have no established projects can join the networks and the projects, how the fluid part between existing static projects take place.

Take more into account the nomadic stars on the RTF constellation

- have a working group about "nomadic stars"

## Group 5

(Most people in this group were really involved in RTF before)

- spread RTF ideas : a lot of people are interested in taking land for sustainable agriculture, but they are completely not linked, it's hard to find them.

- Make a meeting about RTF in Poland : come with materials, support & some people and talk about this.

## **B. ABOUT WORKING GROUPS**

**A time was dedicated to make a point on the working groups, what's going on, how to continue.**

Each working group was presented with a mime, that other's needed to guess which one it was...after that, a summary of what the working group does and what it means to be involved was given.

## **FINANCES**

Until last year, we didn't have too much money with RTF so there was no financial working group. There was money collection of a thousand euros to put into the first camp in Craviola, and given back for the second camp. The idea was that every camp would give back 4000 euros for the next camp. So there is 4000 euros that goes to the next organisation group. The financial group doesn't have anything to do with the use of those 4000 euros : it only transfers it from a camp organisation group to the next.

But last year a swedish cooking group made a donation for 2700 euros to RTF because they ended their activities. At the last assembly was decided that these money would be used for european constellation - to help organise assemblies, communication,





for website, to pay travel costs for networking. There is the idea to feed this account, to bring more money in by local groups or support actions...

Roles of the finance group : make account of this money on the crabgrass & give it to people that need it.

this group would be renewed every year, after transmission of all the knowledge ( ...codes,...and money...)

## **PROPAGANDA**

Makes instruments to help communication within Reclaim the Fields :

Mailing list. Webpage. Crabgrass (wiki hosted by rise up server). FTP Server. Calendar.

The idea is to have at every assembly a workshop related to this topic & how to use these tools.

During the workshop, we realised that regarding security it is very easily accessible to people outside of RtF (accessing groups, deleting information...) It should be made clear that all information which is online in crabgrass is readable. Advice : back everything up onto private computers !

## **WEBSITE**

There have regularly been proposals for the website but not they were never put into practice. So there was a new proposal to re-design the website : the person will contact the propaganda group to know what was already done, what's needed, how to continue

Proposal: tutorial on how to update the website

## **INFO-KIOSK**

The idea is to have a space to share leaflets/references/writings. Therefore it exists at another scale than RTF ( one of the caravans (nomadic star in France).

The info kiosk group works on the website once in a while, writes very little & meets occasionally. Through the use of RTF tools they started to reorganise & are now working with people outside of RTF.

## **TRANSLATION**

The translation group tries to gather people that do writing translations because a lot of translations in lots of languages are needed.

So far the group is mainly a mailing list on which quite a lot of people are subscribed but sometimes they aren't active. There are two administrators for these list, that would be very happy to have some help. (no need to speak a lot of languages, can just speak english to be administrator..)

this functioning is tricky & complicated for bulletin team : usually people link with bulletin team & everyone works on collaborative writing pads of rise up, without using the translation list.

The translation team isn't useful or relevant to translate just a short email (e.g. to send in several languages to the european list) : if you need translation, it's better use automatic online translation (- it encourages people to do better translation..) .

## **BULLETIN**

It's the visual communication tool of RTF. It is supposed to be published in-between every assembly & have inside notes/minutes from last assembly, program for next assembly, News from struggles/different countries, critical reflection texts.

We try to do it in four or more languages, and to publish every languages simultaneously. (but sometimes, you don't have exactly the same texts in each version because not all the translations are available.)

There is no writing team. The content depends on what is sent by whoever wants to write in the bulletin.

The bulletin team is there mostly to send emails to remind peo-



ple to send a text & then compile them to create some readable bulletin. Bulletin team collects minutes & feedback of assembly and summaries ( if it's needed) it to put it in the bulletin.

In general there is a team of 7/8 persons that is created for the next bulletin during the assembly.

There was the question of when to publish next bulletin : until now there were assemblies every six months, now there is one every year. If it means one bulletin per year, it'll be quite big and not that up to date.

=” There will be two bulletins until next assembly : one that comes directly after the meeting ( March/April) and one before the winter assembly .

## **CARROTS**

Jumping from one event to the next & making it possible that it happens.

Making sure that assemblies/camps happen.

Meet via Skype and mailing list. Not the same group everytime.

## **C. ABOUT THEMATIC GROUPS**

There was a presentation of the different existing ( or not) thematic groups, and then some of them had a short specific meeting during the assembly.

### **Access to Land**

Controversial group! It existed & then not existed, and seems to reappear again !

=” Project to collect info about situation to access to land by country and about different projects that already exist & how those projects access the land. The aim is to have databasa and to make it

accessible by country, with a search engine for (classified by legal structure, locality, rural/urban).

## **Seeds**

This group had a climax in Turino meeting in Italy, where a specific meeting on seeds took place in order to create education material, write zines, big seed swap, a few days before the european meeting. Some texts were written and put online, but the « complete kit » didn't take shape.

There are many things already existing on this issue so it appeared that it's not really relevant to have something done only by RTF. It's seems more interesting to have local working group on this issue with people around rather than virtual european-rtf group about seeds.

It was decided not to have seeds working group but to try to have time at every assembly/camp for people to speak about that & bring seeds along.

There is still an existing mailing list, to share infos and news.

## **Gender**

At the assembly in Turin, it was decided that it would be important to have this group. There were some workshops on questions of gender that were given the Zad assembly & in the summer camp in Manheim.

Yet, it isn't currently a group : it's just to say that it is a very important topic in the RTF process, and to support the idea to do workshops about it ( ideally at each assembly?)

## **Awareness**

Awareness group is not so present at assemblies. Maybe because of the topic?

## **Farm Network**

A farm network starts in french speaking networks and Woolf-



ing in the UK already exist to support people to learn skills with farms that share values of struggle.. They listed several farms that wanted to participate in this network - woofing periods - for people really wanting to learn without going through the traditional farming school system ( to learn dynamics on agriculture, fighting dynamics, collective living etc.)

=> proposal to put on agenda for next meeting to have a time to exchange between these two networks , to speak about how to expand it to other countries ( needs people involved on these network to be present at the assembly... )

## **Nomads Group (new !)**

There was a discussions about who are the nomads, what is the context. A first draft of a statement was written :

"Inside and outside of RTF there's lots of nomadic people – including some of us – traveling in a variety of ways. Often, the connection between travelers and land rights isn't made and for this reason settled and nomadic people aren't connected as well as they could be. The newly established RTF nomads working group aims to help bridge this gap in a mutually beneficial way. We have identified problems with existing systems connecting farms with travelers which we would like to overcome by honest and deep exchanges of knowledges, matching skills and needs as well as resources. We aim to do this in a variety of ways including a website, a digital message board, publications and encounters."

They talked about making wwolfing more open/accessible (also in other countries).

There was also the idea of a farms network that can be resource for nomadic people ( to know different radical projects) as well as resource for projects asking support when they need it : to see it more as an exchange of skills ( away from woofing idea of having farmers with all the knowledge and travelers with no knowledge going there to get it). By looking at already existing networks &

what they facilitate for people, it appeared that what is needed is not existing yet..

=” proposal to have a tool with little administration, where people can show their projects & nomads can show their skills ( question of sharing information about projects that are legally sensitive?).  
contact address : nomad@lists.reclaimthefields.org

## **D. LOCAL GROUPS**

### **1. Local groups presentations :**

Each groups gathered and discussed what is happening, what are their plans, what are their needs, what can they offer and other topics they wanted to explore. Here is a summary of the feedback they shared to the whole group.

#### **Vienna/Austria**

The local network is not really active although there are lots of other related networks : community supported agriculture network, food sovereignty movement etc. There are strong connections between some stars.

#### **Catalunya**

There is a new network called 'nee rural' which has a collective field where people from different projects work together

#### **Slovenia/Maribor**

A non-government organisation for rural development and holistic solutions tries to connect old farmers with people who want to grow food



## Poland

Different projects and groups are not really connected. It would be good to organise a meeting and invite people from elsewhere in Europe to help inspire more interactions in Poland.

One of the main discussion point was how to support people from Poland with the creation of a network there.

## French speaking group

- a french farming network exists now : Fourches et Champ Libres,

- A local group in Brittany organised meetings and discussions.

- There is a quite active mailing list : facilitates making links between all of these initiatives, call-out for actions, workshops, demo....

- There were several mobilisations related to the electronic chipping of animals. ( France is now taking away european funding from breeders that don't want to chip 'their' animals.)

- Several caravans are underway, that were linked to reclaim the fields network, and travel from place to place to support struggles/farms

- in **Belgium** there used to be quite a dynamic RTF network. The question is now to see if this can be reinvigorated to make a network again to link up different struggles : the Field Liberation Movement that focuses on GM, and recent occupation against a future prisont. There will be a meeting about this in January.

Projects :

- RTF project in Calais : seems to have interested people from France and UK to think about it

- Thematic meeting is planned about "Autonomous farms everywhere : How to recuperate conventional farms & install more autonomous places?" ( Ideas/learnings will be shared from this to wider network.)

- 2015 Climate Summit in Paris ? : Nothing has been discussed yet

within RTF network on this topic.

- 17th April actions maybe in project in Belgium?

## **South of England**

Most of the people already knew each other. They presented what they do : the different projects people are involved, and the infrastructure organisation.

The projects quoted were : the Yorkley court community farm, the Workers coop in Glastonbury/Street, the Blue Finger Alliance, Grow Heathrow, OrganicLea, the Food Sovereignty UK gathering, the Land workers alliance ( take part to la via campesina). People also participates or organizes mobile workshops, Food hub, softwares, travels, RTF gatherings...

## **Plans for the future**

- Action against prison expansion
- Green Tech - open source technology - Farm Hack
- Help with gathering for how to do a land occupation " skill share
- Help with defending blue finger (Bristol)
- 5th Birthday of Grow Heathrow, airport expansion plans this year, CSA in Forest of Dean : how to interact with the local community, Education event in Cardiff
- Radical Herbalism Gathering - stronger RTF presence, link food & medicine
- Brandalism - subvertising to do with food issues
- to be part of actions - international solidarity : against MIPIN (world's largest property fair in Cannes. European Action Coalition on Right to Housing in the City), Action camp on farm land against tracking
- in August : Earth First Gathering
- in October : Food Sovereignty gathering





## Proposals

- Improve wwolfing website <http://wwolfing.wordpress.com> (woofing with teeth...)
- Improve communication : improve website, UK carrots group functioning, having someone to coordinate info
- have a finance group organised at the UK-scale that can fund-raise to support people to go to Europe/participate in events

## North England & Scotland

In Scotland there are land based housing coops that are struggling to maintain long term numbers.

in Leeds, glasshouses owned by the University are supposed to be knocked down and sell for development : there is the project to occupy this for growing space.

### Proposals

- to have Spring RTF gathering on this place, which is close to a forest garden project.
- to take a bigger part of EU working groups, to make more links.



# E. UK MEETING

UK people continued this discussion about local groups with a further detailed brainstorm about a UK meeting.

The aim of the meeting was to talk about UK RTF : what's good about having a UK network and what it brings to the stars / EU constellation?

## **a) Feedback from the local groups meeting**

South group stated they needed more infrastructure - e.g. website to organise

Scottish group discussed thoughts about asking other groups to join RTF - but there was a feeling that people were wary of too many networks, anyway people will come if we do cool shit.

Therefore people don't necessarily wait for a solid infrastructure but a loose information thing.

South group discussed doing an action camp about how to take land and the infrastructure needed - this could be something that could feed into possible main camp.

A network means not everyone has to do things but to distribute the weight.

To the question what is the value of the UK network? It comes with the idea of connection, information, diffusion (for call outs for help (e.g. evictions)), ways in for new people, radicalise existing. But people were not so keen to discuss the value of the network as it's taken for granted – and the discussion moved on to how to have a network.



## **b) Projects : Action Camp / Training Camp**

### **'how to take a land squat' and 'infrastructure project'**

Discussion of a 'how to take a land squat' and 'infrastructure project' arose from scotland camp as people wanted to get involved in this stuff but didn't have skills or tools. - e.g how to make burners, shelters, electricity, water etc. How we can meet the basic needs.

This action camp « how to take a land » could ideally take place after Farm Hack ( April (18th / 19th)) which could feed in, but before Wales camp ( that could be the first practical test of skills that people would learn in this action camp)

Someone proposed to coordinate it.

## **c) RTF UK organisation**

What is need for this to happen? leads to a discussion on what is needed in terms of organisation as RTF UK :

- needs to be open about how things are organised so people can get involved : things have been organised in the past through meetings and the list, specific events have been organised using phones a lot,

- a UK carrots list was set up in the past but wasn't used much - but feeling that this could be used more and not to over-use the main UK list

- Content for website - anyone who wants to have stuff on the website please send an email to UK list with the subject line: For the website

- There was the proposal for there to have London, Scotland and South West meetings to feedback into the UK group. Because local groups in RTF Europe are the main focus - and its from local groups that bigger things happen, there is the wish to focus on this as well but it will be left up to each local group to do this. ( There is possibly not a lot of energy to set up regional stuff

but rather focus on making our events really good. )

Funding: There might be left over funds from this assembly for travel and this could be used by RTF UK to facilitate stuff happening. ( £2000). This was approved by the european assembly.

Roles: People took roles for

- the infrastructure/action camp organisation,
- the farm hack
- communication tools : crabgrass/ mailing list/website
- funding
- propaganda

## **F. NEXT CAMP : SUMMER CAMP 2015**

As an introduction to this discussion, we reminded ourselves how and why camp usually works :

- It takes place usually in the summer... a longer time than winter assembly, up to two weeks
- It's usually a time to be active during the camp - being involved in a preexisting project or solidarity with a struggle
- The aim is to mix local people and incoming groups – process of synthesis, alchemy, inclusion of different groups ( what can be a challenge to include all participants due to diversity) : it requires real understanding of the local context/struggle/past actions/, and understanding should be given to local residents: e.g. consideration when deciding on action (exclusion through activist-centricity)
- time for skill sharing / info & discussions



# 1. Proposal in Chalkidiki, Northern Greece—against a gold mine

This was a proposal made during the European assembly in 2014 : people had the mission to meet greek people and estimate the relevancy of this proposal.

The conclusion of this group is that the current context in Greece wouldn't allow a camp to occur there : there are no RtF members in Greece currently, nobody in RtF speaks Greece fluently.

In the local struggles the activists are very busy and there are not enough links already established.

But this group is motivated to make links in Greece to RtF : the new proposal is to make a RtF info tour in Greece to start to disseminate info between Greek struggles and RtF : introduction to network, struggles, present how Greek and RtF struggles could integrate, with a second focus to receive information and input from local struggles and create an info bulletin with this.

They already have good contacts and addresses.

3-4 people are motivated to go, sometime towards the end of october.

=> There will be a callout over the email list for people to join

It would need around 1000 euro : on the principle, the assembly decides to give 1000 euro to the Greece info give/gather tour if they need it. (= if other ways to find this money don't work ( funding, support events ...))

## 2. Proposition "ZAD Brussel"

against a prison

People were very enthusiastic but there is now a strong eviction threat and there is the feeling that it is too soon and that Belgium needs a local RtF revitalization before a camp

Aseeds: they organise an agricultural action camp together with

climate games in Amsterdam about 1st July ( see the presentation further) =” Invitation to RtF to join organization. Only 2 people are ready and have time to join this.

Proposition to make a link with the events taking place in Amsterdam even if RTF is not part of the organization. Proposition to contribute in form of texts and as individual, the message will be spread within RTF.

### **3. Proposition in North Wales against prison expansion/fracking**

There is a new prison building project in North Wales. It's the first prison of many within larger project as result of lobby group ( for e.g. Liverpool and Manchester 'officials' ) to close small prisons (new capacity : 2000 prisoners). So there is a Anti-mega prison camp project for this summer, and the proposal is that RTF joins this camp.

- The Anti-mega prison camp could be located near Rixon ( 1 hour away from Manchester, 4 miles from england border.) The prison site is already under construction, so the idea is to use an other place as a base and be able to do action on the construction site.

It could take place around july, no specific idea about the length

- Local context: Local community have been resisting this project for 5 years : they were using the legal process. They feel a bit desperate. The area is not historically politicized. they should support an action, but transparency about the actions would be necessary.

Several organized groups are already on it around UK. And some people in RTF have close links with them.



It's also an area where research for fracking is on going : there has already been protection camps mainly run by local people - it could be possible to link anti-fracking and anti-prison movement in addition of the existing involved group

There are agriculture relating social group around : Community-Supported Agriculture and shared garden. Industries and army are the main employers on the area.

- Questions about this new proposal
  - Where is the link between this fight and RTF ?
- Communities are having projects imposed on them, their land is used in a way they did not chose.
- Grow food instead of build prison
- People in prison does not have land as minorities/poor people are overrepresented in jail
- Building this prison is like building a tiny village for which everything will be imported
- It will be a new customer for major food companies
- Focus on integrating what RtF do with local struggles; highest priority at the moment.
  - What the aims of the camp will be ?
- to support the local community in their struggle
- to take action
- to raise awareness of the struggle on a local and national level
- to invite people who are not already in our networks – to be open and easy to join, and to make it understandable to people that are not already involved.

## Conclusion

Following these first session of discussions about camp, it turned out many things are already happening. Local networks are busy on fights, camps, tours and other education projects. Organizing a big camp will be tricky. We prefer to take part in existing ini-



tiatives and call for participation instead of doing a camp badly because of a lack of energy available.

A general consensus emerged with the idea to support this Anti Mega Prison Camp with RTF networks : quite a few (6-7 people) from the UK are keen to organise it along with input from people who have organised camps previously. The scottish group will have a meeting to see how much they can input ( presence and equipment).

=” Interested people can email [uk@reclaimthefields.org](mailto:uk@reclaimthefields.org) to connect with the group organising the camp.

### **Next steps**

- Write a text explaining the link between struggle of RtF and anti prison complex (see further in the bulletin)
- Go there, meet people and find ways and tools to interact with local communities : first ask how people want to be supported - how we can be most useful. We need to be aware of local peoples needs. (In Romania people met organisations that were based there, which was a good strategy)
- Get EU network involved : e.g. non UK based RtFers could help with content.
- Start to translate any texts into Welsh as soon as possible

### **Ideas & things to keep in mind**

- Be clear about the setting of the camp – the nature and safety of the space so people know what to expect : it’s important to think about how to be inclusive of children and their associated adults (possibility of asking land owners if they will offer a space)
- Think about accessibility, language, privilege, transparency
- Importance of making distinct times of action and workshops during the camp, not mixing everything up. Also distinctions between different types of content, given that it will bringing a number of different themes.
- Invite people to come a few days before the camp starts to set up





infrastructure ( invite people and use infrastructure that will be made during the training camp about « how to squat a land » and infrastructure, that'll take place before )

- Anticipate to have the following team : awareness group/cooking team/out of action emotional support/legal team/medical team

- Prepare the transition from local working group to larger group coming to help the first days : it's important to be clear about needs and transmissions of informations.

- Go now and grow food there, so it 'll be harvestable for the gathering.

- Organise a camp based on smaller camps community based ?

- Suggestion to have in the first days of camp or before, presentations for local groups (for example slots specifically inviting local people, with presentations of other struggles.)

- Make time during camp to present the local struggle and background to explain to people that come.

## F. NEXT EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY - WINTER 2016

We started by exploring what an assembly is in small group. Each of them was facilitated by someone who was part of the preparation team of this assembly.

Everyone has a chance to ask questions on how it works and make some propositions.

### To prepare an assembly

The preparation and running of an assembly are based on the work of 2 groups, which appears to be efficient and to be continued in this format.

**I: Logistic group** : food, accommodation, finance (founding, dona-

tions, grant...) - it's better if this group is local or at least, not far from the venue. Good for finance group to meet in person.

**2: Content group** : prepare the content of assembly, plans the working group, workshops, thematics debate. The purpose of the assembly is mainly for organisation of RTF network : inputs are asked by mail before the assembly, it's good also if the local network can suggest themes for thematics debate. The content worked by internet, it would be nice to have face to face ( money is available to make this happen)

## **Proposals for next winter assembly**

- this time there was the constat of a lack of time to mingle : idea to have more than 4 days for the meeting, but then less people will be able to come ( proposition to send timetable out early so that people can choose which days they come to.)

- it's nice to have physical work at the end of the assembly to create other sort of memories

can be prepared to get discount for food or accommodation (work in the field, chopping wood...). It could also be in the middle of the event, so it could break up the thinking and the practical.

- it's nice to have separate spaces e.g. working, talking/discussing, sleeping, partying. Nice to have something in place for conflict resolution e.g. welcome group.

- take care of facilitation : At Nikitsch meeting there was a lack of facilitators (except the one which prepared the assembly) : So find a better system to include new people to facilitate can help with this.

## **Ideas for possible places proposed in small groups**

- In central France for a plan B. people who make this proposition are not sure if they still will be there but will know in the next month. Quite a small space.

- Poland. Don't think that there would be enough people to organise it, and the current space (squat in Krakov) is quite small.



- near Berlin. Really nice place for doing an event, but difficulties in having enough people to organise something. Space is outside the city.

- Ideas for possible places, but need to ask people in these places: a place in Italy (abandoned, occupied mill) : in Switzerland (glass house), in France (water mill), in Asturias (a community that is under threat of eviction) and in Scotland (a farm)

## **Proposals about how to choose a location**

There was no concrete proposals for the next assembly but enough information to form some action points to follow up for the next place.

People need to check with those in each country and feed back to the logistics group about the possibility to host the next assembly.

Two people ( as part of the logistic group) are in charge off gathering informations on ideas for places. They will communicate on carrots email list and \*find a space by the end of April\*.

When the place will be chosen, people for the logistic will be needed on this place.

It was suggested to narrow down the list of ideas to a small number. Not in the UK, Austria or Germany as RTF has visited these places very recently. It would be nice to limit the place to places with people connected to or interested in RTF, but also to go somewhere from where we don't have enough news, to support and learn from them ( for this assembly, UK has been chosen because of that).

So the list was reduced to:

Central France / Slovenia / Copenhagen / Italy / Asturias /Switzerland / outside Berlin(in germany, but space fits perfectly for a meeting)

## **Content**

A content group of 5 people was formed at this assembly and will work by the carrotlist.

# III. FEEDBACKS FROM THE DEBATES

**During the assembly, we took the time to have some debates, that people had prepared.**

## Access to land

We shared information about the situation of access to land in different countries and contexts we know :

- Austria : Mostly medium sized farms, small farmers are struggling so selling/renting to larger farmers. General theme of concentration, less in the mountains than elsewhere. Land is expensive and often foreign owned around the cities.
- England : There is a high concentration of landownership compared to elsewhere, this is predominantly owned by the aristocracy and upper classes or big corporations. Little land comes up for sale.
- Scotland : Land is extremely concentrated with average farm size of 100ha. Crofting is a pattern of small-scale land use in the north and west. Foreign ownership is common.
- Belgium : In the mountains are many small family farms. In the low lands farms are larger and more commercial

It was realised there were big gaps in knowledge and that there was a desire for better information to inform the discussion.

Then, we spoke about strategies for accessing land

- \* Squatting. This is often a strategy to get political change and raise the profile of land issues. in the UK, squatting land is good for protest but the insecurity does not lend itself to establishing a highly productive farm.
- \* Publicly owned land. E.g. urban farming collective in Vienna.
- \* Growing in back gardens
- \* Talking to landowners, including farmers.
- \* Community land trusts (geographic community)
- \* Land trust such as Terre de Liens in France, Biodynamic land trust in England



- \* Community farms
- \* Intentional communities, cooperative ownership. Such as Lammas in Wales, Hockerton in England.
- \* Workers cooperative raising money to buy land
- \* Shared allotments into collective growing spaces
- \* Local authority agreements
- \* Community asset transfer (in England, not sure elsewhere)

A working group was started to begin to collect information on this subject for the next bulletin

## urban and rural division

There was a presentation circle of the participants to this discussion : some live in the city and grow some garden (squatted or not), some grew up in the countryside and live now in a city, some do the opposite...

Several questions were asked to begin the discussion :

- how do we understand rural and urban ?

The value, the advantages, the prejudices, the inconvenient, what about the countryside culture we don't like ? (rightwing, patriarchy...)

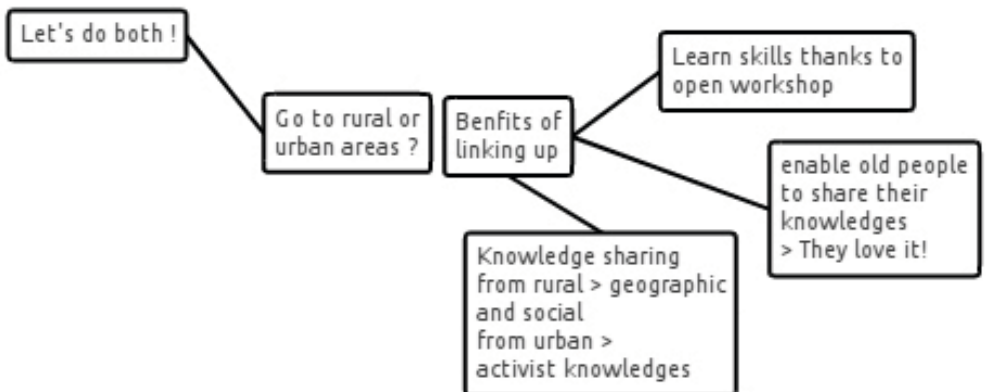
- how do we link urban and rural ?

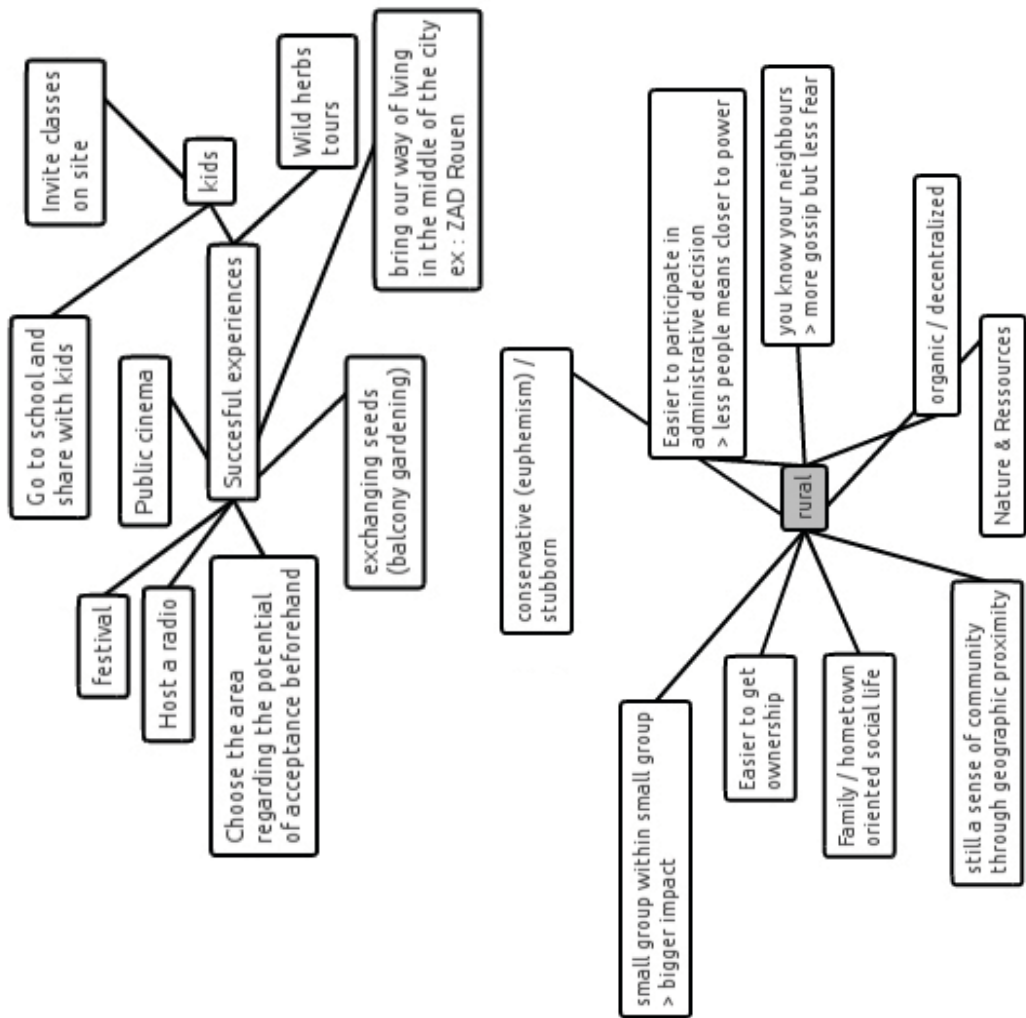
What are the benefit to link up ?

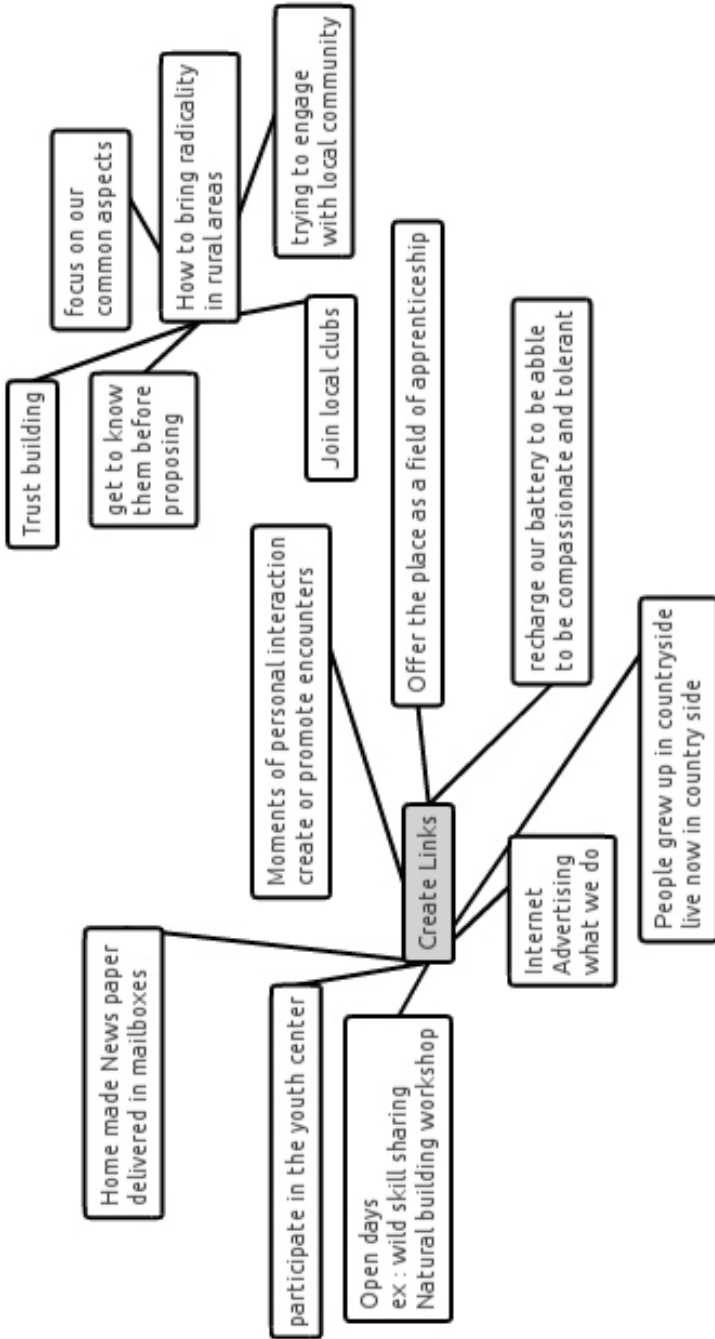
- should we bring people to cities or countryside ?

how to fit radical movement in rurality ?

what successful experiences do we know ?







## **Contribution from Can Tonal project to the debate "reformism and radicalism in the food sovereignty/ land access movements"**

From here in Can Tonal, we wanted to participate with this short text to the debate by exposing some ideas that we believe to be important on the matter. Since we've had very little time to write it, its text is not entirely consensual among us and is maybe not as well written as we would have wished it to be. However, we'd rather send it as it is and see if it can contribute to the debate and the collective reflections.

### **Connecting partial and global struggles:**

We don't think that it is possible to have neither food sovereignty nor a fair access to land without a global change of system.

A change of system would imply on the one hand the creation of new and horizontal forms of organization in all the spheres of life, and on the other hand the destruction of the current hierarchical institutions that cumulate power (the state, the IMF, the Church, market economy, etc.).

We also believe to be equally fundamental encouraging and developing values that would make this major paradigm shift possible (cooperation, love, mutual support, etc.). Along side of this goes the destruction of the dominating values of our current society such as patriarchy, competition, selfishness, racism, etc.

We don't think it is possible to imagine horizontal forms of organization without those values to support them. Furthermore, we believe that one thing encourages the other : changing our values, we are able to organize better and vice versa.

In order to implement such a major change, we believe it is fundamental to connect with each other the different struggles fighting for a global system change. We don't think it is possible





to set such a transformation if we all go our own way and we blind ourselves of the different problems of all different spheres of life for there are so closely intertwined.

In that sense, we think it is important in a medium term perspective to create meeting points for different groups with similar bases and interests, to keep on creating both formal and informal organization and common visions of a new society. In order to achieve our goal we think it is essential to be part of a greater entity that will bring the new world to life.

### **Taking back the commons**

Most of the great ideas have existed for a while and the commons are no exceptions. We think that reclaiming the concept of commons can be one of the best ways to think the new world. It is a well known reality that before, their used to be community owned fields, meadows, woods as well as production means such as mills. The people owned them and managed them at a communal level through assemblies.

We want to use again this concept and thus implementing a third way, alternative to the two we already know. Indeed, so far there are the private way that revolves around private benefices, and the public or state way where the benefice goes to the state and the structure is managed by state hierarchical organizations. The third would thus be the commons way where the people themselves handle its own resources with no intermediaries whatsoever.

Here at the Can Tonal project we have just bought an estate, field, and constructable space. We think it is fundamental to take life and all its aspects back in our own hands, alongside with the people surrounding us. With this goal in mind, we are trying to design a long term process to communize the land, in order to impulse horizontal mechanisms of participation in the managing of spaces. The idea here is first to collectivize the space between

people that are interested, and then later on, if some entity is created in the village with the strength and ability to handle it properly, communize it. We are aware of the difficulties of such a process, but we are convinced that in the long term it can bloom, and one day and give very interesting flowers.

### **Legalism and radicalism**

It is very clear to us that law and justice don't go together, that the current legal system makes them both institutions that most of the times don't share the interest of the people.

However, we believe that we should use the law the way it suits us best, not falling in the trap set for us by the system. In the same logic, we wish to reject any kind of dogmatism, we don't believe that the level of radicalism of a project depends on the legal terms of property that it uses (squatting, cession, acquisition, etc.). By radicalism we mean here the ability to really going back to the root problems of society.

For instance, when we started the project, we really insisted on the fact that it was very strategic that to have a space for a long period of time in order to be able to create a strong network with the surrounding villages. For this reason, we decided to buy the land, even though we believe private property to be one of the biggest injustice of our time that is used by the powerful to maintain and secure their privileges.

Another example that seems relevant to us is one of a comrade in Ecuador who is starting a community project where they decided to create a company to legalize the project because the Ecuadorian state had starting a persecution of alternative cooperatives.

Regarding subsidies, we wanted to stress that not only do we think it is important that when received, they don't define our struggles. We should be very clear that they are only temporary, and that if you accept the crumbs that the system gives us, it need to be in the sole objective of fighting against the said system and for a new world.



We also wanted to make something clear about confiscations because we believe it is important that we stop blinding ourselves on this. If we really want to impulse a radical change in our society, we will need massive resources to obtain lands, means of production, etc. So, if we succeed in taking away resources from dominating entities such as multinationals or big landowners, we actually manage to kill two cops with one stone: creating the new world as well as taking away the resources that the power uses to expand. This of course only if those resources are used to feed the struggle and not some kind of hedonism.



# IV. EVALUATION & FEEDBACK OF THE EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY

## I. Impressions

We made a poster to make a silent conversation about the evaluation of the assembly happen on it. It was then read in the whole group and a bit discussed.

Following is what was written on the poster ( titles were proposed).

### Translation BLA

Wonderful translation team !

Great infrastructure which improve the quality of the meetings.

Big up to you ! You are legends ! This is amazing !

N.B. : it is not an interpretation collective who came, it is people who volunteer from RTF.



### Food

Yummy !

I want to eat organic veggies and grow it.

Thanks a lot to <http://veggies.co.uk/> even if we usually like to control what we want to eat.

More raw food.

Would have liked to be more involved in the process.

5 or 6 people where involved each days and that was quite good.

No animals died to feed this gathering.



## Space

Many opportunities for people with different needs.

Nice space to relax even if it was a bit cold sometimes.



## Outside of the city

It would have been nice to be in the middle of the field or wood, it was quiet strange to be in a city but still nice - clarification from the organizing team: it was unclear what the weather was going to be, we were worried about snow and cold so we chose the building option.

Need a place to go away from meeting.

A bit small and claustrophobic but it was nice.

Would be nice to have a sleeping away from all the action.

A sleeping by gender would have been great.

They were option for people who have specific needs, maybe it was not clear enough there were houses offered.

## Communal life

Sometimes I want to sleep, escape and have a quiet time.

Relaxing mood, chill atmosphere.

People were really open and friendly.

More stupid games !

Really like the community.

Still have a lot of work about gender deconstruction - I would like to do a specific feedback about it.

Still work about individual behavior in a collective about alcohol.

How do we keep a safe space during party time (awareness team should be drunk too ?).

Not that much time to socialize everyone was great to meet anyway.

I was not feeling well sometimes, may be I did not know enough people.

An awareness Mailing List exist it would be great people prepare something beforehand, more Effective than the awareness group that came up.

Many opposing opinions, how to create space to talk about it when we don't feel well ?

### Pre-assembly communication and information

Very good call out and pre-info, may be a little scary : it sounded a bit intense.

Thanks for preparing so many good informations.

Lots of people who signed up in advance, thanks !

Where is Germany : we did not even have an email !

Very good !

### Content and agenda

Really brilliant to have fun social network introductions stuff at the start to make it easy instead of very formal ways.

Presentation of stars were really inspiring.

More time and more important space for the presentations of stars

Too much content ?

Stars should be the opening of the gathering so we know where we are from and what we are up to.

Would be great to have practical work in between or may be a division between afternoons and mornings.

### Local networks

Really great to hear what's going on.

Discussions bring a lot.

Presentation of stars is a crucial moment may be encourage people to make it even more better.



## Functioning of the networks

Presentation of RTF could be : the text who are in the bulletin and mails would have been sufficient to my opinion, just a question and answer session could have been enough.

Good to see everyone here, we are doing something right :)

## Working groups

Maybe a new perception of these aspects :

Sometimes WG were non existent, the name WG create this image of a number of people doing something.

If the reality is that there is no people, we could change our perception and use our language differently (an other name than WG) to fit better the reality.

It has been suggested that the WG could be seen more as workshops. Still people came in and wanted to keep on doing something so there is something to think about.

Much more progress in WG than in general meeting, should have more time for that.

More encouragement to form new working groups would have been great.

Streamline this, more straightforward.

We need to question weather we are creating a rigid structure and if we meet the need of the gatherings.

## Thematic debate

Options for more deep discussions.

That was a good one !

May be more clarification on the aim of it.

May be take an hour to gather thematics.

## Camp & Assembly

Sometimes it feel hard to step in.

At the end it is just a few people present here who will be doing it. There are more RTF folks and it is too bad that it is a small group amongst the one here who will take on the preparation.

I wonder if there are others who could help.

More info beforehand would be great, a proposition for camp and assembly



should be presented at the beginning of the assembly to have time to think about it.

I feel weird with the decision making, it was too quick even if people expressed doubts.

## **Facilitation**

The tasks were very well shared.

Thanks to all facilitation people.

Thank you so much to all of those who take on, even if they don't always has the knowledges.

Thanks for having make it easy to participate in the facilitation process.

It would be nice if facilitation is more shared among the group and not only within the organizing team.

Share more and encourage people to make the meetings and not only consume it.

I was not sure if there was a need for more help, I realized it was needed on the 3rd day

The facilitation meeting was also the planing of the next day

It was a lot of work

Next time everyone happy to have a meeting could have a meeting at the beginning

## **Missing**

Practical work.

The topic of gender is missing.

Colonial languages dominated, try to prepare it with through applications.

A bit more time in big assembly to discuss together like answer the questions which small groups raised (eg : how to strengthen the link EU-UK, Paris 2015).

Some male were taking a lot of space by talking very much.

More focus on the topic of seeds and seeds politics.

## **Minutes**

Try to get people to write minutes in different languages.

Try to prepare a proposal for next time.





## Miscellaneous

'Base group' can not really work on this kind of meeting and we don't really insist on it so it was good.

Thanks for the good atmosphere.

Thanks for inclusive atmosphere.

Thanks to all who organize it.

We keep on discussing the opposing opinions a bit and discussions also happened during lunch :

- one with the organizers of this meeting and the ones for the next assembly
- one with the awareness group to see how we can overcome the issues, what can be provide for the new organization team.

We conclude by wondering in the room and pick up someone to :

- say one thing we enjoy about this person.
- share what we are going to bring home.

## 2. Finance of the assembly

In donation box from Nottingham RtF meeting there were 95 pound and 65 euro, 60 € have been taken to pay for the printing

Donations were made to riseup ( who support a big part of our communication tools)

BLA: received donation too...and were happy with what they got as not too much damage to equipment.

Veggies Food: a lot was donated but not enough for covering the price RtF agreed with Veggies, the remainder of the money will be completed by Lush funding ( as foreseen).

## II. ABOUT THE NEXT CAMP

### Why, for whom and how do we organize and/or decide to organize a camp ?

This text is a personal follow up to the last RTF European assembly in Austria where some people pointed out some lack of reflections in the preparation and the organization of the 2013 camp in Germany.

Short presentation of the author of this text: I joined RTF after the meeting in Cravirola and I got involved quite a lot in the network. Currently I follow the process only at a local scale. This text is a last contribution that I wrote after taking a few steps back from something very important to me and on which I had taken a commitment. As always, you're free to do whatever you want with it.

#### The camp's strategy

The camp offers a space for meetings and experimentations of collective work and organization. It can be a support for actions, for meeting local communities or other groups, it is also a space to experiment assemblies, discussions or workshops on a variety of subjects.

The camp can either be linked to a struggle (against coal mines in Germany or gold mines in Romania) or to a collective or a farm able to offer a space for the gathering (collective farms in France or Hungary).

The camp as a group of local people but also of people preparing and attending the camp must explain the local struggles and fights. They must communicate so that everyone know where they are and why the camp is taking place there.



This point was tackled in a pamphlet of action analysis that was used as an analysis tool in Romania. Indeed this particular camp was an occasion for RTF to reflect more deeply on the different means of action of each struggle (media, sabotage, etc.).

In a camp or an action there are always a primary goal, a secondary goal and a general idea about the proceedings of the action and of its repercussions (media, etc.)

There is an alchemy to create, and that is the difficult part. Indeed we need to understand together the local context where we stand, all the while accepting and dealing with our different sensitivities and political habits, so that we can build together the actions that we want. In other words, it's tricky not to end up being just a pawn moving around on a pre-defined program including only one type of action that was not collectively prepared. For example, instead of being just another participant in workshop on non-violent resistance to the police, it would be good to have global meetings where we would take the time to listen to one-another, to hear what other participants in the struggle have to say and what their opinions are. Keeping in mind of course to leave space for informal encounters, collective life of the camp and workshops proposed by the participants.

Explaining the struggle taking place around the camp is also important in order to understanding the context of the place and of the neighbours (which are not necessarily either victims or collaborators), to explain who might be a neutral support or rather hostile to the activists for instance. That said, it would be interesting to let people create the contact with the locals the way they think is best. Indeed, an actual victory is never made of a very radical action led by three isolated people. A real victory implies taking the time to get to know local people, and to listen to them.

Thinking the camp in a political way means thinking about the

image given by the camp, not only to the media, but also to other people around, and to people already active in the struggle.

The action will be even more radical if, apart from us ( us meaning : young white middle class activists) are locals, old people, "normal" people, children, people from other struggles and if they take pleasure in the fight, if it really speaks to them. Here is for a short introduction, I hope it was both understandable and not too bitter.

The camp requires a lot of energy and understanding . However, it remains a pleasant moment if it's well thought of, and well prepared. That said, we need to remain humble, the camp only lasts two weeks, the question is therefore: what can we bring to the locals on such a short stay: hope, pride in the resistance, and a joy to their image, so that they can fully participate in it.

Here is a short list of questions to ask ourselves for the preparation of future camps

**Why do we go there to have a camp?**

**What's happening there?**

**Since when?**

**Who are our allies?**

**How is the struggle perceived at a local scale, and by whom?**

**How are our allies perceived and by whom?**

**Can we think of other approachable groups?**

**What types of actions were tried before we arrived?**

**How did they work?**

**What do local people think?**

**What is the position of the police/the company/the administration?**

**What is the main goal of the camp?**



**What are the secondary(ies) goal(s) ?**

**What are really the local ally forces?**

**Who could come and help out? (comrades and friends working on this types of subjects)**

**How to invite them?**

**What do we want to be more numerous?**

**How do we communicate before and during the camp?**

**What information did local people get before the camp?**

**How do they perceive the camp?**

**What is special about this camp?**

**How can we communicate all of these elements to the people arriving on the camp?**

**How are we going to take the time to reach a consensus regarding the rules of daily life on the camp? (maybe not decide everything in big groups?)**

**Are we at least a bit sure that the camp fits the context and the understanding of the locals? (in other words how do we make sure that we don't just organize a camp disconnected from the local context just for our pleasure, that ends up being counter productive and rather useful to our enemies) what does local people mean?**

**What are the limits of the definitions?**

If we think about actions to be organized during the camp, or if we organize actions before that, we can get some ideas and inspiration from the pamphlet "s'aider a analyser la situation"

Paul

# The Connections between Anti-Prison Struggles and Reclaim the Fields

At this year's Reclaim the Fields European Assembly it was decided that we would hold an RTF camp in North Wales, in solidarity with local campaigns against a "mega-prison" project, which is currently underway. At first glance, it might not be obvious as to why Reclaim the Fields, which is struggling for access to land and control over our food systems, would choose to support prison struggles. In this text, however, we hope to show that there are some important and strong links between these issues, ones which we will hope to explore further during the camp itself.

## THE PRISION : A CAPITALIST INDUSTRY LIKE ANY OTHER

### **Profit Accumulation by Any Means**

In many parts of the world now, prisons mean big business. In the UK some prisons are run by a number of dubious companies including Serco and G4S. In France, it's the same multinational, Vinci, that build highways, nuclear power plants, prisons and try to build an airport in Notre Dame des Landes.

The company who has the contract to build the Wrexham Mega-Prison is an Australian corporation, Lend Lease, who's activities are surrounded by controversy. The fact that they have previously evicted 1200 homes in Heygate, London, in order to build luxury flats and tried to build a housing development in "the largest intact area of the biodiverse and endangered plant community" in Australia clearly shows they don't give a damn about anything but their profit margin. Any claims they make about providing for the local community is nothing but propaganda and lies!



In being private companies their prime motive for existing is to make a profit and therefore any claim of having the public interest at heart can of course be false (not that it's necessarily true for state run prisons). In the search for profit, private prisons have no incentive to reduce prison populations and in fact would like to see their "market" grow - the more people locked up the more money they make! As well as this, the incentive to make profit means that corners are cut and conditions get worse, in order to save costs.

Prisoners are also used in many cases as cheap or even free labor for companies. Thus, prisons are becoming forced labor camps, not only making a profit from incarceration, but exploiting the labor of prisoners whilst they have their freedom taken from them.

It's not only the prisoners who are being used to make a profit either. In the US prisons have been built in remote areas, which means that family members and other visitors need to travel a long distance to visit loved ones in prison. Once there they are forced to stay in hotel and shopping complexes near by, which is expensive. Thus, visiting prisoners is only possible for those who can afford it and then they are used to generate further profit.

### **prisons and crisis**

As capitalism periodically enters phases of economic crisis, mega projects are often used as a way to soak up excess capital and to stimulate the economy again, often with the help of government investment. This is one of the arguments put forward for projects such as the airports in Notre Dame-des-Landes or Heathrow, as well as dams, high speed rail, TAV and also prisons. It is argued that building such projects creates jobs, but these are often short term jobs in construction and the rest are often insecure and what David Graeber calls "bullshit jobs". Their arguments for such projects ultimately ring false and instead what really happens is

they destroy our land, pollute our environment and repress us when we fight back, all in the name of short term growth and further extraction of wealth from the bottom to the top.

Further, in times of crisis more people end up in jails. This can be due to increasing unemployment and people needing to find non-legal ways to meet their needs. Yet, in this latest round of crisis there is a more complex situation due to the globalized nature of the economy, which has a close tie to issues around food. Around 2007-8 there was a food price crisis, which was characterized by volatile price changes and speculation by international investors looking to make a profit from the situation. The result for poor segments of the population in much of the global south was that they were unable to afford food, leading to hunger or food riots. As well as this, speculation also lead to an intensification of land grabbing, which is just the latest phase in the long and bloody story of the enclosures. Those unable to meet their needs may have been forced to turn to supposed crime (most of the time, "crime to the property" ) to allow them to eat, or they may have sought to migrate to countries in the global north in search of employment. In either case, however, there is always the possibility of prison as an outcome, as countries within fortress Europe continue to marginalize and detain undocumented migrants.

## **SINCE THE ENCLOSURES : THEIR FENCES, THEIR WALLS - OUR STRUGGLES !**

In the long run, prisons can be seen as a natural extension of the process of enclosure. Prior to the enclosures, land was held and managed in common, meaning that it was possible for anyone was able to gain access to the land in order to meet their needs of shelter, sustenance and so on, both on an individual and a collective basis. To be clear, this was no golden age and many of todays problems have roots in attitudes of times gone by - for example current sexism under patriarchy has a direct links to





religious norms and the burning of the witches. Yet, through the building of "their" fences, in the name of "private property", this dislocated peoples from the land, rendered them dependent on wage labor in capitalist enterprises in order to meet their needs. The enclosures ensured that there was a pool of cheap labor to be used within the new capitalist industries. At the same time, in UK, the the Enclosures Acts coincided with new laws brought in to criminalize the landless. Effectively this meant that the enclosures meant that people no longer had access to land and if they didn't like it - they could go to jail! Our struggles have been linked from the start!

Fast forward a couple of hundred years to our present situation. The concentration of land into fewer and fewer hands has continued unchecked, meaning that in Britain approximately 70% of the land is owned by less than 1% of the population. This means for the majority of the population, they are separated from the basic means of production and dependent on the capitalist economy. Yet, we know that their capitalist economy is in crisis and when their economy is unable to provide for the whole population, by necessity or by wanting to escape this economical rules people are forced to turn to "illegal" means to meet their needs. Criminalization of the landless continues.

On the other hand, prison inmates are the most extreme example of landless people. When people are forced into prison. they lack any sense of self-determination. They are separated from their means of production and have no chance to access land until the State decides to release them, at which point they will be socially stigmatized and will often find it hard to gain employment.

Above all, this struggle comes down to a simple question: who decides what land is used for and for whom? Do we let fertile lands continue to be fenced off, privatized and used to make a profit at any cost? Do we allow those with insa-

tiable appetites for money to convert all life, love, friendship and wildness into things to be sold in order to make the numbers in their bank balances keep on growing? Even at the cost of locking people up, away from their friends, loved ones and denying them any sense of autonomy.

Or alternatively, should we collectively decide what to do with our lands? Taking into account collective needs for food sovereignty and the needs of the non-human community too. Ours has always been a struggle for life - and their prisons cannot hold back our dreams!

Reclaim The Fields includes reflexion about access to land and food in a global analyses in term of struggles against capitalism, and any forms of dominations, and wants to participate to build self-organization, it seems to us that interesting links can be made with the anti-prison movement:

As anti-capitalists, it is important to see the lengths to which capitalists will go to accumulate profit, as well as to see the links between the loss of access to land and the loss of individual autonomy that is imposed by the prison industry.

In Wrexham, in Haren (near Bruxelles, where a mega prison is planned too, and where some people struggle and occupy the land where the prison is supposed to be built) and everywhere it's needed, et's join RTF issues and struggles against prison, ask ourselves about repression, and bring reflexions on the social organization we dream of!



# ABOUT THE NORTH WALES PRISON PROJECT

At the European Assembly in January 2015, a proposal was submitted to host a camp in solidarity with resistance to a new prison project in North Wales. This prison, that now has planning permission, will cage more than 2100 people at one time and become the second biggest prison in Europe.

The area is subject to multiple unwanted developments, including fracking. The local anti-fracking camp, the Borrass and Holt Community Protection Camp, are also opposed to the prison and would welcome a joint anti-fracking/anti-prison camp, that could create a space of opposition to these imposed developments and show that another world is possible.

Article about Prison Expansion in the UK & More details about the mega prison

The United Kingdom is facing an unprecedented expansion of the prison system, justified by appeals to 'public safety' and the supposed economic benefits for 'local communities'. In response, a new campaign network has been launched called Community Action on Prison Expansion (CAPE). CAPE aims to counter expansion plans and stem the growth of the prison-industrial complex.

In the UK, several expansion initiatives are being implemented, often with little national press attention nor indeed much push-back from social movements. In Wrexham, North Wales, on one of Europe's largest industrial estates, the continent's second biggest prison is set to be built, with the stated aim of warehousing more than 2,100 prisoners.

In Oxfordshire, there are plans to expand Campsfield Immigration Detention Centre. In Leicestershire, the government is set to build its first 'Secure College', a rebranded prison that will lock up 320 children aged between twelve and seventeen. Successful lob-

bying has halted plans to build a large women's prison in Scotland but the overall picture points to plans for more decentralised state 'solutions' across the country.

The infamous Feltham Young Offenders Institute in west London is to be torn down which, for many, will be a source of celebration. It is to be replaced, however, with the capital's first 'mega prison'. Meanwhile, other prisons sitting on prime land with rising property values will be sold to the highest bidder. The government have already undertaken feasibility studies and commissioned an architect to design a prison that would hold more than 2,000 people.

Right wing think tanks have been lobbying hard for "prison reform". Policy Exchange produced a report called 'Future Prisons', which outlines a national plan for closing down and selling off several older, state-run prisons, in favour of creating new "mega prisons" across the country. In partnership with international construction firm, Carillion, Policy Exchange's proposals would see ten 'hub' prisons (with 2,500-3,000 people in each) replace 30 aging institutions, installing the latest in biometric security systems and surveillance technologies. So far, David Cameron seems to be following their recommendations, with the prison in Wrexham being the government's pilot initiative.

The move toward "Titan" prisons in the UK was first put forward by the Labour government in 2008 with Justice Minister Jack Straw and Prime Minister Gordon Brown intending to push ahead with the construction of three new prisons, each holding 2,500 prisoners.

The plans met with great opposition, even from that government's Chief Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owers. In April 2009, Jack Straw conceded defeat and abandoned the plans with Tory MP (and the coalition's Attorney General until last year) Dominic Grieve asking, 'has he run out of money or has he run out of spin?'. At the time Cameron was also critical of Titan prisons, stating how on previous visits to prisons of this type he was 'profoundly depressed by [their] size and impersonality'. Yet now they are very much back on the agenda with planning permission being granted in January 2014 for the Category C adult male prison in North Wales.



In February 2015, the Prisons Minister announced that the Wrexham prison will be operated by Her Majesty's Prison Service. The prison, it is claimed, will generate £23 million per year in local economic benefits. This initiative has found enthusiastic support from local press and academics, who hope the super prison can offset the hundreds of jobs lost as a result of closures in manufacturing. These new prison enterprises are being strategically proposed in areas where there is little organised resistance and acute economic deprivation, a pattern that follows the US model.

In California, for example, a state where industrialised agriculture has decimated rural communities, prisons are being sold as bywords for economic development. The emergence of the 'prison town' is a product of whole areas in America now meeting their economic needs through investment in incarceration. This model is now being adapted for the UK – the 'economic benefits' of incarceration was a celebrated feature of the "Investing in Britain's Future" manifesto of the Coalition government.

CAPE reject both moral and economic arguments for incarceration. The expansion of the prison-industrial complex has been shown by Angela Davis and others to be both a locus of private enrichment and a strategy of state control – not a strategy for public safety. This double movement demands suitable forms of resistance. We cannot simply rely on local actors lobbying the council with petitions. Resistance to prison expansion will go hand in hand with social movements that are prepared to confront capital and the state.

By The Empty Cages Collective  
FURTHER RESOURCES

For recent articles about these issues written by the Empty Cages Collective see:  
Resisting Prison Expansion - <http://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=13773>  
Prison Abolition - <http://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=13767>  
The Prison Industrial Complex - [theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=13778](http://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=13778)

For further resources & reading about the prison industrial complex visit:  
<http://www.prisonabolition.org/why-abolition/resources/>

# CALL OF THE KEELBEEK

We, inhabitants and friends of the Keelbeek, an 18ha big terrain of preserved nature at Haren (Brussels), call for your help and support !

The Keelbeek is endangered, in a very short time, by a building project for a mega-prison which will hold 1200 inmates. The biggest one in Belgium. The procedure for the construction of the mega-prison is progressing rapidly.

The claim to list the Keelbeek, introduced by the inhabitants and organizations for the protection of nature, was rejected by the Brussels Region on October 2nd 2014. The building is planned to start in spring of 2015 and the opening of the prison would take place in 2017. The prison is supposed to be built by the group of enterprises CAFASSO, under the direction of the 'Régie des Bâtiments' and for the Federal Public Service of Justice.

Building a new prison, burying soil, on which food can be grown, under solid concrete : these are choices of society that demand debates. These debates are dreaded and fled by the investors of this mega-prison (businesses, public services and MPs of every party) who are driven by financial gain. They wish to accelerate its construction and push this anachronistic decision through by force. Let's dare open these public and parliamentary debates on carceral politics, on the management of public finances through public-private partnerships, on the future of agriculture and food sovereignty in Brussels, on the denial of democracy.

We, inhabitants and friends of the Keelbeek, settled on the grounds since August 2014, inspired after the collective planting of organic potatoes on April 17th ,

,inhabitants of the village of Haren, attached to this unique and vital space of nature in the middle of a disproportionate accumulation of infrastructures,

, inhabitants of Brussels, concerned about the biodiversity in our Region and about its viable character, worried about the fragility of our industrial food system, in the face of an accumulation of crises in the near future

,at the side of the animals and plants living in these grounds, together, we call upon the inhabitants of this country, upon the lively forces who don't want to resignate before the decline of the world. We call upon you to join us, to meet on the grounds, to act together against its irrevocable destruction, to act together to continue creating and maintaining the conditions that are favourable to life, on these grounds and elsewhere.

No to the covering in concrete of the soil, whichever it is !

No to the construction of the new prisons !

The dominant model is falling apart before our eyes. Let's not wait any longer. Let's bring together our creative powers to create a future that is enviable to all. Let's unite ! We are angry, with a rage that's nourished by a visceral sadness before the destruction and the imprisonment of the living.

We don't feel powerless, we are not scared. We support life and we are supported by it.

We are not alone and we are not ready to abandon.

We call upon all of you to come to Haren, to discover the site of the Keelbeek, to enjoy this piece of nature, to make it known and to participate in the numerous activities that take place. To occupy the grounds, to live there, to work the earth and protect it.

**Let's make it teeming with life in whatever possible way !  
United we are strong. Long live the free Keelbeek !**



Signed : inhabitants and friends of the Keelbeek  
Brussels, Haren, 4th Octobre 2014



# GROUND CONTROL ACTION CAMP, JULY 1-8 NEAR AMSTERDAM

Be ready in the beginning of July for an agriculture and climate action camp near Amsterdam!

The second edition of the Climate Games will be happening on July 4th in the same area, with the aim of playing around some of the major polluters in Amsterdam's port.

An action camp is a great place to learn about new topics, campaign strategies and forms of actions. As a participant in an action camp, you also get to make friends with a bunch of nice people. Above all, this first week of July will be the time to prepare and carry out an action.

In the past...

In 2011 and 2012, ASEED organised two agriculture action camps in Flevoland and in Den Bosch. Both were quite successful and people often ask us when the next camp will take place. Several climate camps have also been organised in the past, for example in Antwerp, and only two years ago a climate and agriculture camp has taken place just across the border with Germany. Finally, last year, a lignite mine has been successfully blockaded with the help of a number of people from the Netherlands and the first edition of the Climate Games has been organised by the Wij Stoppen Steenkool movement.

This day of action mobilized more than an hundred people! However, the coal plant is still spitting its mix of CO<sub>2</sub> and other harmful fumes in the port of Amsterdam, which remains the largest coal throughput in Europe. Therefore the Climate Games are back for a second and bigger edition on July 4th of this year!

The camp will be a step in the preparation process.

Climate and Agriculture? Why combining climate and agricul-



ture as the themes of the camp? It is pretty obvious that climate change is one the major crisis of our time, but it seems that people tend to forget about it. Let's put this question back on the agenda! We will focus both on the consequences of our current production and consumption patterns, and on promoting a radically alternative society that takes environment and communities into account. In addition, a climate and agriculture action camp makes sense in this year of mass mobilization for the upcoming UN climate summit in Paris in December.



## **GROUND CONTROL** agriculture and climate action camp

1 - 8 July 2015 near Amsterdam



[www.groundcontrolcamp.net](http://www.groundcontrolcamp.net)

Our current agriculture system is one of the world's largest sources of greenhouse gases emission, especially meat production and deforestation. Industrial agriculture is addicted to fossil fuels and soil erosion and depletion increase the effects of climate change. In order to fulfill one of our most basic need in the long term, food production must become sustainable. The action camp will help the participants to focus on this goal and to make local, sustainable food production more widespread.

Back to work!

Would you like to contribute to building a successful camp? Please join the team ! We would appreciate help from different people, in all kinds of fields. Everyone can give a hand with fundraising, communication, setting up logistics on the spot, building a nice programme, etc.

Let us know if you'd like to help : [actioncamp2015@aseed.net](mailto:actioncamp2015@aseed.net)

**Notes:**

**Notes:**

Reclaim the Fields is a constellation of people and collective projects willing to go back to the land and reassume the control over food production. We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real needs oriented small scale production and initiatives, putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

[www.reclaimthefields.org](http://www.reclaimthefields.org)

**RECLAIM THE  
FIELDS**