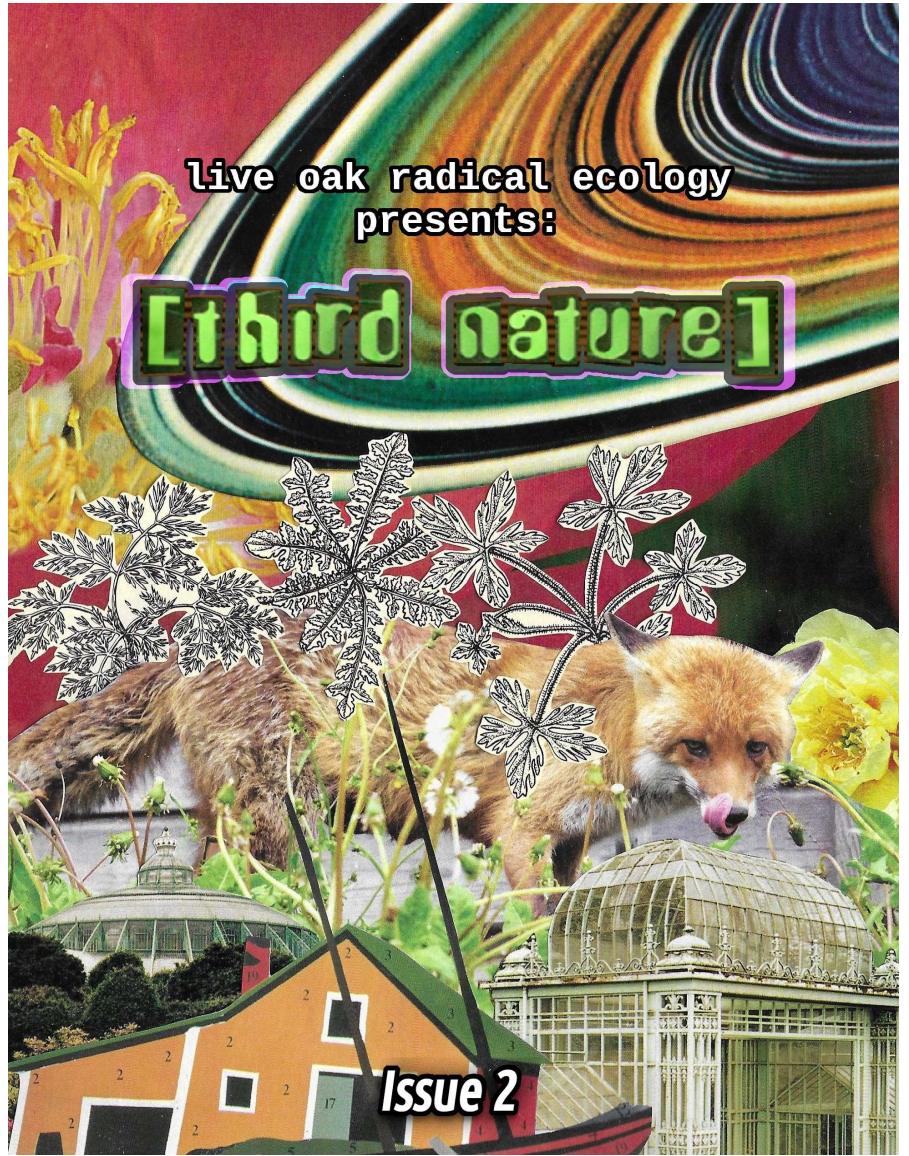


live oak radical ecology  
presents:

# [third nature]



Issue 2

## [third nature]

is brought to you by:

Jolly Roger (writing)  
Cybele (writing, editing, art, design)  
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Nik (design)  
Derek (writing)  
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Towelcat (art)  
Pearson (misc.)



**LIVE OAK**  
RADICAL ECOLOGY

[Issue 2 – Published February 2021]



# Food Not Bombs

TALLAHASSEE

JOIN US EVERY SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY

12 - 2pm

free  
clothing  
  
free  
hot  
meals  
  
free  
groceries



2/7 - 14 - 28

E. Peck Green  
Park, 229 W.  
Park Ave.,  
behind  
Leroy  
Collins  
Library

2/21

Carter-  
Howell-  
Strong Park,  
W. Georgia St.  
& Copeland St.

COMMUNITY FOOD SHARE



@fnb\_tally    fnb\_tally    fnb tally

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***"Unless we understand the language of the  
fauna and flora, we will neither  
understand ourselves nor become  
ecological socialists."***

-Abdullah Öcalan, *Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization*

\*Illustration by Emily McGuire

classes of humans above others to facilitate their exploitation, it similarly places humankind in a position "above" nature and enframes it as a collection of inert resources to be exploited without limit.

(3) The only pathway to a human society which is not inherently antagonistic towards nature is therefore through social revolution which dismantles the institutions of hierarchy – the state, patriarchy, inequality and beyond – alongside the creation of social institutions of and for the people, directly controlled by and accountable to the communities they serve. Only by organizing a liberatory confederation of radical, directly democratic municipalities in which political power is distributed equally can we reharmonize human society with the rest of the web of life.

For more information beyond this very brief summary, *Social Ecology* by Emily McGuire is a great and concise introductory pamphlet on the subject which can be found online for free:

<https://social-ecology.org/wp/2019/10/social-ecology-pamphlet-by-emily-mcguire/>

#### **What is the purpose of the [third nature] zine?**

We believe that the revolutionary project is an educational one, and see a need to spread awareness about the ecological issues we face, what we can do to combat them, how to develop community projects in the effort to build an ecological society, and recover lost wisdom about the natural world to reunite humankind with the ecosystems we are embedded in and dependent upon. We recognize that a lack of knowledge creates dependency on the power structures which aim to control and divide us, and that education is an integral part of the path towards our collective liberation.

#### **How can I get involved?**

If you're interested in learning more about our organization, getting involved in our local Tallahassee community projects, or would like to start an ecological project of your own, reach out to us on Twitter or Instagram at [@liveoakradeco](https://twitter.com/liveoakradeco), on our Facebook page, or shoot us an email at:

[liveoakradicalecology@protonmail.com](mailto:liveoakradicalecology@protonmail.com). We would love to hear from you!

## F.A.Q.

### What is Live Oak Radical Ecology?

Live Oak Radical Ecology (LORE) is a social ecology group founded in Tallahassee, FL working with the local community to create just and egalitarian responses to the social and ecological quandaries of our time. We understand that the road to our collective liberation and securing a habitable future for the Earth is fundamentally interwoven with our relationship with nature, and that the best way to work towards our freedom and the survival of our planet is not by waiting every four years to elect a politician, but through organizing mass social movements, participating in direct action, and developing mutual aid programs.

The three main pillars of our praxis are building food sovereignty through the advancement of urban agriculture, facilitating popular education around the politics of ecology, and engaging in local ecological stewardship through direct actions. We hope to play a role in the cultivation of a radical ecological counterculture to inspire people all over the world to join us in the prefiguration of the liberated society we're fighting to create.

### What is social ecology?

Social ecology is a revolutionary political theory primarily comprised of three related insights:

(1) Human beings and human society are not separate from nature; we are embedded in it and are just as much a part of the natural evolution of life as any other organisms.

(2) The destructive role humans have played in the relatively recent years of our species' history is therefore not a result of anything innately destructive about human beings, but of the hierarchical structure of our societies as they have developed historically over the past 6,000 years or so. It is the social relations of domination and exploitation within human society that lead to environmental destruction. In other words, it is not *humanity as such* that is at odds with the rest of the biosphere, but social hierarchy. As it places some

## (Re)Growing Communal Life: Preparing the Soil for Revolution

by Cybele

### Introduction

*“Nature is an elastic wall that multiplies the velocity of the stones we throw at it. Death doesn't bounce back in the same proportion, but rather enforced. There is a war between the system and nature. This confrontation can't take either nuances or cowardice. Either you are on the side of the system, or on that of nature. Either with death, or with Life.”*

– Subcomandante Insurgente Galeano

### Growing the Soil

There is a phrase popular in organic gardening: "Don't grow the plant, grow the soil."

Injecting raw unmediated chemicals – synthetic fertilizers – into soil to expedite the growth of crops is a ubiquitous practice in industrial agriculture. It is highly destructive, and leads to a continual degradation of the soil quality with every crop cycle. It aims to sidestep all the natural cycles which encourage healthy plant growth by treating agriculture as an engineering problem rather than a natural process driven by interlinking, interdependent communities of microbes, fungi, insects and more, which has the effect of maintaining a stable, healthy chemical balance for the soil for plants to prosper in season after season, year after year. To "grow the soil", we must be stewards of these cycles which maintain this balance, promoting the health of each component of the community of Lifeforms residing in the soil.

This fundamental principle in gardening is a microcosm of an ecological mindset, and is applicable to other spheres of Life as well. The soil for social revolution, too, must be cultivated. With impending ecological catastrophes looming over us all, with the condition of our collective psyches being drained by the present order of capitalist modernity, leaving so many of us wilted and unable to gather ourselves enough to fight back against our de-

filement, we need to examine the conditions that yield healthy, resilient communities prepared to stand up to the ravenous machine of global capital which threatens to bleach the soil of this planet beyond all hope of redemption – both literally and figuratively. An appropriate place to begin this examination is an analysis of *Communal Life*.

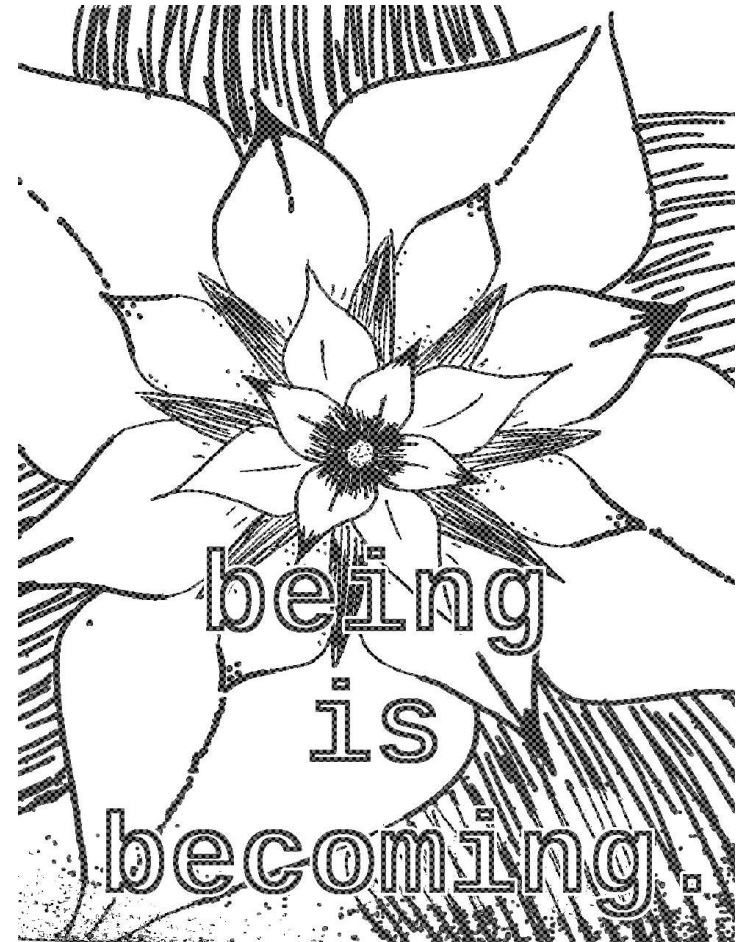
### **Our Blood / Impulse of Resistance**

Communal Life is central to what it means to be human. As Lifeforms, we seek other Life. As social animals, we seek community bonds. Not only does it instill in us a sense of purpose and unity, it is also necessary for our stability and survival. It is what *makes us human*.

In short, Communal Life is the web of formal and informal social bonds and relations of mutual aid which act as a wellspring for material stability, collective prosperity and a personal sense of purpose in Life. It is the natural inclination of humans and the foundation of our being. It is natural evolution's striving towards ever-elaborating complexity, creativity, autonomy and interdependence expressed in human association. It is the condition of indigenous societies and that of our ancestors of the Neolithic Era. It is the impulse that has driven the continuous lineage of resistance against hierarchy ever since its inception in gerontocracy and patriarchy many millennia ago. And it is the sacred fountain of hope and promise for our continued existence in a future worth living in, and fighting for. Central to it are democratic decision-making, a mutual sense of responsibility to ensure every community member's needs are met, and assertion of collective autonomy & community resilience in the face of adversity.

### **Synthetic Blood**

There is no more potent eviscerator of Communal Life than capitalist modernity: the hegemonic cultural climate of capitalism, founded on endless personal accumulation, mindless consumption and rugged individualism, it is its polar opposite. As opposed to -- indeed, in *opposition* to social bonds and communal responsibility, it erodes these ties and instills in society ever greater degrees of alienation, atomization, material insecurity, hopelessness



the IWW's strategy of radical industrial unionism.<sup>7</sup> To this end, she united the radical ecologists of Earth First! with the lumber workers in northern California to organize not only demonstrations against the lumber concerns, but also work stoppages, tree-spiking, and other acts of sabotage carried out by radicalized lumber workers in conjunction with the Earth First! activists.<sup>8</sup> Bari's organizing with the IWW Local 1 together with Earth First! was expressly meant to remedy the lack of class-conscious praxis in ecology, understanding that only through the direct intervention of radical labor can meaningful ecological gains be asserted against the ravaging claws of capital. Bari, like the BLF workers before her, recognized that ecological liberation and the liberation of the workers can only be achieved together, and that both are vital to the very survival of complex life on Earth as a whole.

Thus, it is clear that syndicalism is not just another footnote in the history of revolutionary action, nor is it confined to some bygone era of Victorian factories and farms unchanged from the days when Jethro Tull's seed drill first plowed their fields. Rather, syndicalism – specifically, green syndicalism – gives a clear window to a world where class-conscious workers embrace their place in and of this planet which is the only home humanity has ever known. Now is the time for action, as more than ever we are seeing not only an acceleration of ecological and climate disasters, but also an ever increasing stratification of the classes. As workers, we must organize here and now to save not only our own lives, but the lives of all those who will come after us, and of the myriad creatures we share this planet with. Together we can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old, for the Union makes us strong!

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<sup>7</sup> Judi Bari, "Timber Wars: Footloose Wobs Urgently Needed!," IWW.org, 1994, <https://archive.iww.org/history/library/Bari/TimberWars/>.

<sup>8</sup> Bari, "Timber Wars."

and meaninglessness, projecting an empty world of solipsistic cogs in an absurd and futile machine.

An ideology and system founded on limitless growth, greed, selfishness and ever-increasing economic stratification, capitalist modernity has been chipping away at this heart of society at breakneck pace for nearly two centuries. The result is the current state of our society, where love is anathema, principles of mutual aid are forgotten and supplanted by exclusively transactional relations, and our very notion of meaning in Life has been substituted for a vapid ideal of incessant empty consumerism through the false images and deceit of advertisement.

The organic lifeblood of society has gradually been replaced with a sort of synthetic blood, rendering us spiritually anemic and unable to understand ourselves or each other, much less organize against the perpetrators of this monumental scheme. If we desire to survive, to defend the essence of our humanity, to reclaim both collective material well-being and a personal sense of meaning and purpose, we must protect, nurture, embody and regrow Communal Life from the ground up in the face of forces which aim to defile it completely.

### **Digging Up Revolution**

With each passing day, the consequences of capitalism's ravaging of the Earth become increasingly palpable, and in our alienated, soulless, overworked society drained of meaning, direction, care and hope, it is apparent now more than ever that we are also in a battleground which mirrors and intertwines with the struggle for a materially just and ecologically harmonious society: a personal and spiritual struggle to re-establish the culture and mode of interpersonal relations of our ancestry in a new, regenerated form suitable for our own present-day contexts. Or, to use Abdullah Öcalan's terminology, we must not only revolutionize the *material culture* of our society; we must also revolutionize its *ideological culture* – not only its form, but its function.

This revolution is as necessary for our spiritual survival as it is for success in our material revolution -- as we prefigure the dual power structures of the society we're fighting to create, we must also prefigure the culture of this society, from its values to its customs, arts, aesthetic sensibilities, rituals, re-

relationships, roles and institutions. It is as much drawing from our past and learning from the indigenous peoples who have held onto this ancestral knowledge as it is boldly forging something radically new; a future founded on the rediscovery of our past.

It's true. The metaphysical topsoil of our society has become desertified. But we must not underestimate the land we are on. Deep down, beneath the arid and vacuous muck of capitalist modernity, lies our rich and elegant legacy: the Neolithic Era. Communal Life. Our assignment, then, is to dredge up and reestablish what hierarchical civilization has spent millennia trying to bury.

### **Dancing Around Death**

All around us are consumerism's traps, virtual will-o'-wisp which aim to seduce us into backsliding into comforting delusions and idle diversions which render us more like inert minerals than Lifeforms with agency, or things that might question and challenge power structures. We must dance around these pitfalls of consumerism engineered to distract us from the path of Life, so that we don't slide down the path of Lifelessness and become its passive, uncritical co-perpetrators.

The tension between capitalist modernity and Communal Life is irreconcilable. Every action we perform and every choice we make is an affirmation and contribution to either one or the other, from the way we pass our time to the food we eat to the things we seek to the means of acquiring the items we need. As Zapatista Subcomandante Galeano says, "Either you are on the side of the system, or on that of nature. Either with death, or with Life."

So, how do we side with Life in capitalism's war on nature and, by extension, Communal Life? We must ask ourselves this question in every decision we make, however seemingly minute or grand, if we truly desire to cultivate a radical ecological counterculture of the ecological society we're building. It is an open-ended question with a plurality of valid answers in different material and social contexts, but here, we will explore it in some broader strokes and also discuss some specific examples and implementa-

motivated by environmental concerns. The Green Bans coincided with the restructuring of the Builder Labourers Federation (BLF) construction workers' trade union, wherein union workers removed their old, corrupt union bosses and implemented radically democratic and egalitarian policies which ensured the BLF was a union of, by, and for the workers.<sup>5</sup> While never explicitly syndicalist, the ways in which the workers of the BLF seized and restructured their union, and then proceeded to demonstrate their power free of interference by the state, capitalists, or corrupt union bosses mirrors the core of syndicalist theory and praxis. The first Green Ban was in protection of the Kelly's Bush scrubland in the Sydney suburbs, with the New South Wales BLF workers striking to prevent the encroachment of housing developments into the unexploited countryside. The militancy of the Green Ban set it apart from earlier BLF strikes prior to their restructuring: where before the union bosses had always come to the table early and eagerly, the workers now demanded nothing less than the complete shutdown of any further development into the bushland. When the developer attempted to restart the project with scab labor and strikebreakers, all BLF union workers across Sydney walked off the job in a city-wide strike that threatened to expand into the whole of New South Wales as the BLF represented every unionized construction worker in the territory. After this, the BLF conducted fifty-four more Green Ban strikes in just three years, including a work stoppage on the Googong Dam in Canberra to ensure protection for the local riverine ecosystem, preventing the Sydney Royal Botanic Garden from being converted into a parking lot for the Sydney Opera House, and multiple strikes to prevent gentrification and ensure the re-greening of low-income historic neighborhoods in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Wollongong, and others.<sup>6</sup>

Another historic green-syndicalist victory was the organizing work of Judi Bari in northern California to prevent the free-cutting of old-growth redwood forests. Judi was a prominent organizer in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the 1990s who based much of her ecological organizing on

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<sup>5</sup> Steve Morse, "The Australian Green Bans: When Construction Workers Went on Strike for the Environment," LaborNotes, July 28, 2020, <https://www.labornotes.org/2020/07/australian-green-bans-when-construction-workers-went-strike-environment>.

<sup>6</sup> Morse, "The Australian Green Bans."



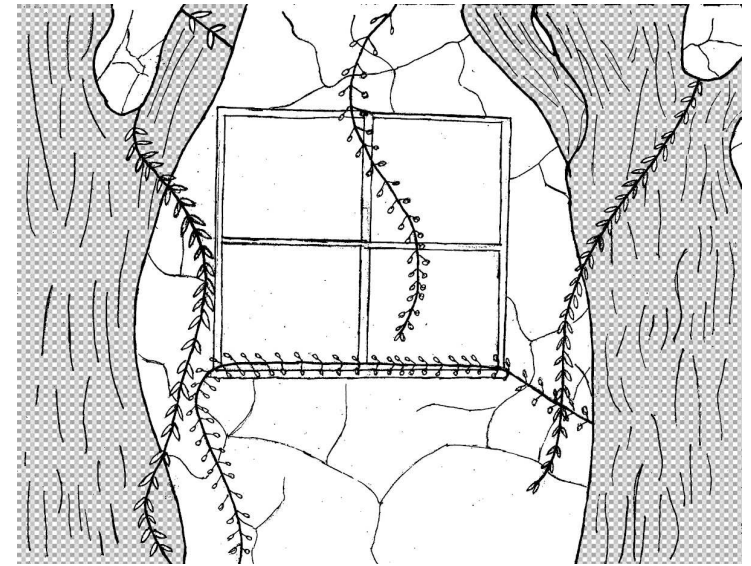
in organic cooperation and organization by their members, and are tooled to respond immediately to the material conditions of their own specific contexts.<sup>4</sup> While this is of course an extremely reductive explanation, it delineates the main concepts of radical unionism and localized autonomy which define syndicalism as an ideology and mode of praxis. Thus, while Syndicalism has its history rooted in historic heavy industry, it is also immediately applicable not only to agriculture and ecology, but to society entire.

It is this focus on radical, immediate change which establishes the point of unity between syndicalism and ecology. Both understand merely reforming and restraining capitalism to be a half-measure, both for the health of our planet and the liberation of the people. Instead, they both call for revolutionary action to force change within the lifetimes of the revolutionaries, if only to ensure that there will be a habitable Earth for future generations to live in. To this end, radical ecology and syndicalism call for the abolition of capital in its entirety, recognizing that no true liberation can occur until capitalism is supplanted by a just economic system which works for everybody. However, syndicalist theory has often failed to go far enough in its understanding of ecological stewardship in favor of focusing solely on the workers' struggle and their relationship to their labor. While this can be somewhat attributed to the historical context of early syndicalism, it is still a major oversight that has become increasingly dubious as climate change and ecological disasters continue to accelerate at unprecedented rates in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Likewise, most theory surrounding radical ecology has either underplayed or disregarded entirely the role of labor within an ecological context, save for observing it as another negative relation due to capitalism, with no acknowledgment that radical industrial unionism can not only be a viable way of achieving ecological and societal revolutionary goals in the present time, but has already demonstrated its ability to do so in the past.

While there are multiple instances of syndicalist organizing toward radical ecological ends, here we will examine the Green Bans of Australia in the 1970s and the organizing work of Judi Bari in northern California in the 1980s. The Green Bans were a series of strike actions by Australian union workers which were most prominent in the 1970s, the majority of which were

tions, to set our sights on the elusive horizon of utopia and align ourselves with Life in this decisive struggle.

In Part One, to be released in the next issue of [third nature], we will begin our exploration of some of the potential elements and characteristics of this project by discussing the moral heart of Communal Life: *Radical Care*.



<sup>4</sup> Emma Goldman, "Syndicalism: The Modern Threat to Capitalism," 1913, 3-4, 4-7.



## A Glowing Dream

### Considerations on Green Syndicalism and Radical Ecology

by Jolly Roger

*We have a glowing dream, of how fair the World will seem.*

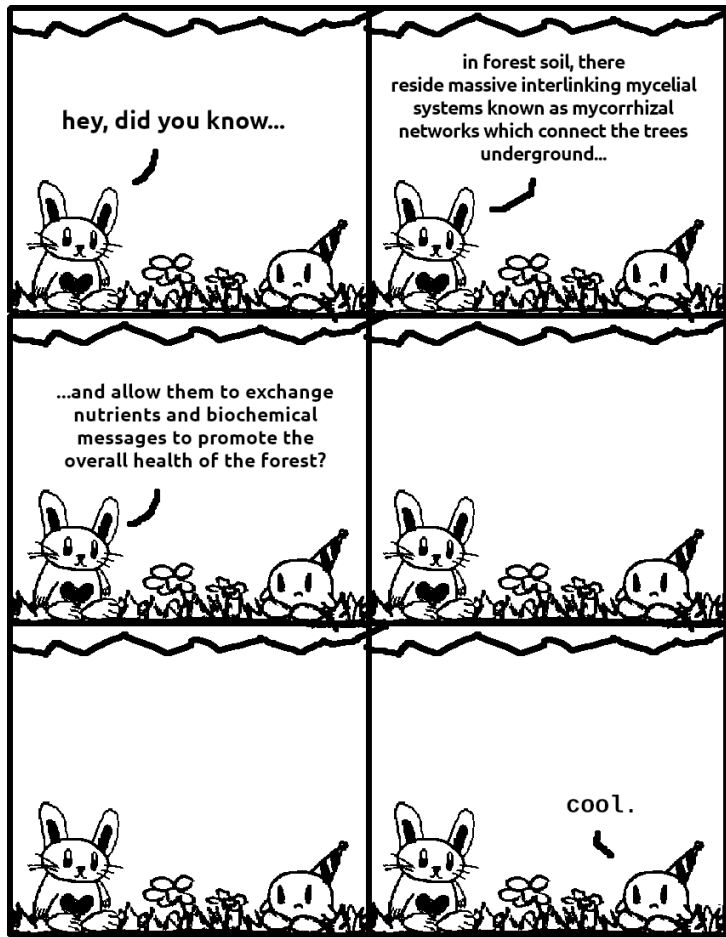
Green syndicalism, the intersection of radical ecology and radical industrial unionism, has had a profound impact through the praxis carried out by its adherents, though it has nonetheless received but little recognition, even among other radical leftist ecologists.<sup>2</sup> This is likely due to the relative obscurity of syndicalism following the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the growth of new forms of radical ecology, such as Communalism, which almost entirely ignores the role of labor organizing in matters of ecology.<sup>3</sup> However while modern industry under capitalism is alienating and destructive to both the workers and the Earth, green syndicalism reconciles labor organizing with radical ecology to create avenues for achieving revolutionary goals in the here and now, both towards the preservation of the Earth and the liberation of its peoples.

To begin, it would be appropriate to lay out what syndicalism entails in its ideology and praxis before moving on to demonstrate how it has and can continue to be an effective means of ecological action and liberation of people from the conditions of capitalism. Syndicalism, in its most basic form, is the organization of the working class via radical industrial unionism with the aim of eventually opening the window for a revolutionary turn towards worker control and ownership of the means of production, while building dual power in the meantime. These unions are not restricted merely to single trades or workplaces, but instead encompass all members of society who engage in the struggle for workers' liberation; but, in contrast to a vanguard party or some other form of so-called "unified front", these unions are based

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<sup>2</sup> x344543, "The Prospects for Revolutionary Green Union-Led Transformation," IWW Environmental Unionism Caucus, <https://ecology.iww.org/node/3802>.

<sup>3</sup> Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Cheshire Books, 1982, 33-35. Murray Bookchin, "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought," New York, February 1965, 8-12.



## Strange Fruit Pt. II: Revolutionary Tomatoes in Quincy, FL

by Kevin

The growing of tomatoes and other food crops in the Florida Panhandle does not have to be a deadly venture. Despite the efforts of a smattering of small local farms, the industry still dictates that most of our produce be raised from the dead, so to speak. But tomatoes do not require the exploited labor, dangerous chemical applications, or climate disaster seen in Part I of this essay in order to grow. Only the hegemonic demon of capitalism would require such a blood sacrifice. A tomato plant simply needs water, light, and a little love to flourish. A revolutionary tomato needs to be planted into an Earth that is radically alive, brimming with microbes and nutrients. That's where the context of love comes in, and that is where we need you.

There are many ways to show love to a tomato plant, and we must start at the seed. As humans have long interfered with the tomato's evolution, we have a responsibility to take care of the lineage. Hybridization and GMO technology offer novel, yet limited, short-term advantages to growing crops in a world whose climate is rapidly changing. These technologies rely heavily on the deadly industrial methods that are currently threatening the ecosystems our communities rely on for survival. The commodification of seed genetics, or intellectual property applied to seeds, is a threat to the long-term survival of diverse and adaptive seed genetics needed for a changing climate. As is par for the course for capitalism, these are major setbacks for a very short-sighted initial gain. But enough of that bullshit.

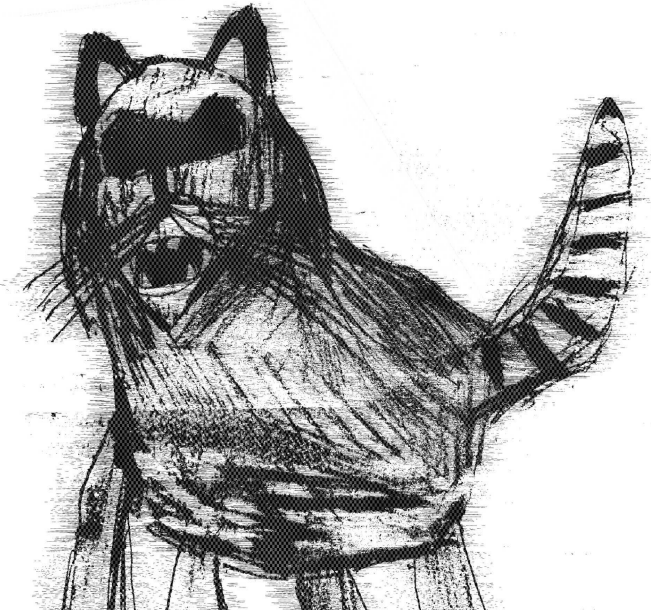
There is also hope. Freely distributing and modifying genetics through cooperative selective breeding projects is our best shot at getting the most revolutionary tomatoes into the most hands. It is also how we are going to feed each other when capitalism leaves us abandoned. In the belly of the bureaucratic empire, the Open Source Seed Initiative is leading the way on this endeavor. In marginalized and indigenous communities, these breeding efforts have started to emerge from the underground and into the mainstream, adapting traditional and heirloom crop varieties to a rapidly changing world. These communities have long known that tomatoes don't need fossil fuels or

poison sprayed on them in order to grow. In the world of plant breeding “technology”, those who are connected to cultures and cycles of life are best suited to survive with a good meal on the table at the end of each day, all without resorting to methods that are extractive and exploitative.

Every summer, there is a small festival in the Florida Panhandle to celebrate the tomato harvest known as the Tomato Festival. It is a mostly petite-bourgeois affair where small business owners can market and advocate for local agriculture. Money passes hands, yet the scent of revolutionary tomatoes is nowhere to be found there. However, local organizations that fight for tomato pickers’ rights, like the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, have long sniffed the simultaneously sweet and savory scent of the revolutionary tomato. The Zapatista growers in Chiapas have never forgotten that scent. No matter where on the planet your tomato plant takes root, the conditions required for the revolutionary tomato are the same. They must be born in resistance: against imperialist and capitalist systems of death, against a culture of nihilism, against sanitized hands that are virgin to the soil that brings us life. So perhaps more importantly, a revolutionary tomato must be born out of revolutionary love, a love for the living that is best represented through a shared meal. Imagine that next year’s Tomato Festival be a grassroots block party with celebrations on every street corner, honoring our shared (agri)culture.

And so I long for a better tomorrow and a better tomato. A revolutionary tomato grown in soil that sequesters carbon. A revolutionary tomato grown from open-source, open-pollinated seeds that are maintained by a cooperative network of breeders. A revolutionary tomato grown and picked by a worker whose needs are met and who is accepted as an integral part of the society. A revolutionary tomato with maximum genetic diversity, in order to adapt to a changing planet. A revolutionary tomato thrown in the face of a fascist, while the thrower enjoys their milkshake in peace. A revolutionary tomato receiving ample applications of worm-casting based compost tea. A revolutionary tomato grown by indigenous farmers and fervent revolutionaries, in order to feed marginalized communities long abandoned by capital. A revolutionary tomato eaten on a long table and enjoyed by a diverse crowd. A revolutionary tomato that is shared.

TRASH KING



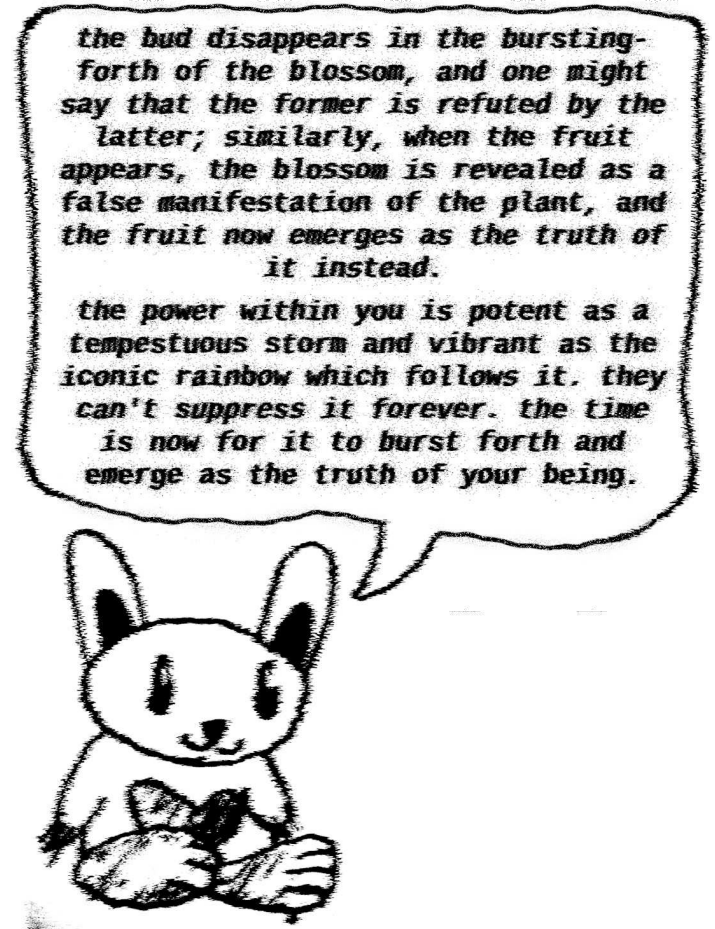
**Ingredients:**

- Clay
- Finely sifted compost (no big sticks or rocks)
- Seeds
- Water

**Instructions:**

1. Mix the clay with water until it's soft enough to mold, but not too watery to sculpt with.
2. Next, take a pinch of clay and add some compost. There's no exact ratio for making seed bombs; the specific amounts will change depending on the type of clay and compost. Try a 1:1 wet clay to compost mix to start. Add more compost if it's too wet, and more clay if it's too dry and won't keep its form. Find the right ratio of wet clay and compost so that you can form a small well-mixed solid ball, with seeds in the center. You can also flatten the balls a bit to stop them from rolling away after being thrown.
3. After forming the balls, lay them out to dry for a couple days. Spread them out in a single layer so that they'll dry faster.
4. The seed bombs are now ready for action. Throw them in vacant lots, the side of the road, overgrown lawns, or any random patches of soil that you pass by.

With a little help from some ancient technology, we can re-green the cities and provide a supportive environment for local wildlife!



## Food Deserts

by Derek

Located on 3111 Roberts Ave. in Tallahassee is a trailer park known as the Meadows. Driving past it, it's easily noticed how a large green fence acts as a veil that blocks a majority of the trailer park from public view. The entrance gives way to where the supervisor of the property resides, along with a couple of trailers off in the distance. Passing the veil, one will further notice how the trailers are arranged in single-file rows. Some are single-wides, some are double-wides. Some are in good condition, while others have seen better days. Most of the property feels void of human contact. This is a common fixture even in more affluent suburban neighborhoods within post-9/11 America. But besides the point, it feels mundane, and with its wide-open unused spaces, desolate. Those who live there occupy a surveilled space that is monitored from the time one enters until they leave.

The closest grocer is a mile away, past the recently built FSU health facility. When one pulls in, they'll notice how rough and decrepit the parking lot is, and witness the faded cigarette and beer advertisements are plastered all over the windows of the building. A stranger may feel that the business is on the verge of closing, since it looks like it hasn't been updated in years. But they would be mistaken. This is the closest area where nearby people can buy food, a pack of cigarettes, a six-pack of beer, and maybe a lottery ticket or two.

This is clearly a convenience store. And in true convenience store fashion, the products that are sold are up-charged. Like most convenience stores there are fridges full of beer, and drinks that are high in sugar content – soda, energy drinks, sports drinks. Food is offered, but most of it is highly processed (Kraft Macaroni & Cheese, Hamburger Helper), high in sodium (mainly canned goods), or wheat-based products like pasta. There are also meat options available, primarily frozen chicken wings and livers, and of course, plenty of junk food: candy, sweets, and potato chips. This store is the only source of food within a two-mile radius, making this area a suburban food desert. One may read this and say, "Well, there's still food, so what's the problem? How is it a food desert?" The problem, here, is that this is the *only*

## Seed Bombs, a.k.a. Seed Balls, a.k.a. Seed Dumplings, a.k.a. Green Grenades

by Victor

Seed bombs are clay balls filled with compost and seeds. They're used by guerrilla gardeners to quickly sow seeds in places that are inhospitable or difficult to plant in via traditional methods. Putting the seeds in clay balls protects them from being eaten and makes it easier to throw them a long distance, while the compost provides nutrition for the sprouts until they can establish themselves in the surrounding soil.

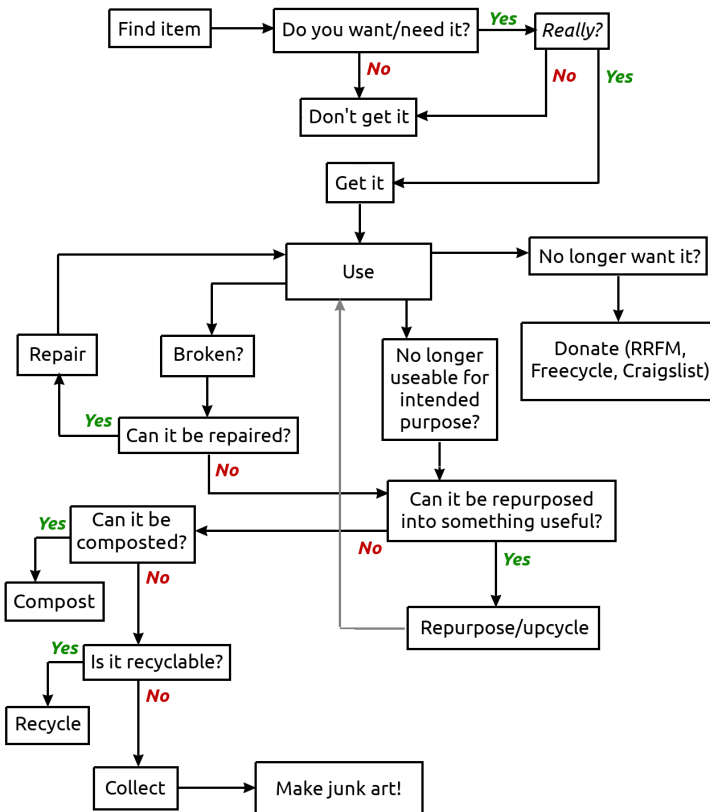
Seed bombs are an ancient technology used by cultures all around the world, but they were more recently rediscovered by natural farmer Masanobu Fukuoka, author of *The One-Straw Revolution* and *Sowing Seeds in the Desert*. They were later appropriated by guerrilla gardeners starting in the 70s to spread beauty and greenery in a world of urban waste and decay. Seed bombs have even been dropped from planes as part of widespread reforestation efforts.

You can put any kind of seeds you'd like in them, but native wildflower seeds are commonly used, as they're great for local pollinators and birds. You can make different seed bombs with mixtures specifically for birds, bees, or butterflies. You can even make seed bombs with mixtures of medicinal plants or vegetable seeds. Getting even more elaborate, you can research pioneer species that help break down tough soil, absorb toxins, or increase fertility and use them to help nature recover an area.

**Definitely avoid using non-native invasive species** which could grow out of control and threaten the local biodiversity. If you're using a premixed packet, check each species to make sure that they're not invasive.

Seed bombs are easy to make. Just follow this simple recipe:

## Reduce. Reuse. Repair. Repurpose. Recycle.



*\*It is preferable to recycle paper than compost it to decrease demand on trees*

source of food in the neighborhood, and the food that is offered is unhealthy, processed, far from fresh and lacking in nutrition; hardly capable of providing a healthy diet for a whole community.

A common characteristic of living in suburban and rural areas is distance from essentials. Rent is cheap, but the disparity is more than accounted for by how much money must be spent on transportation. This isn't necessarily a problem for people with reliable vehicles who can afford the cost of gas, but for those who are barely scraping by due to the lack of opportunity for good work, this is not a viable option. Another common characteristic is the lack of public transportation. A simple trip to the grocery store can mean lost hours at work since it could turn into an all-day affair. Not to mention, there are obviously issues with transporting a month's worth of groceries on foot, and so, the local convenience store, fast food, and delivery (which incurs even higher costs) become the only options.

Those who live in poverty often develop chronic illnesses like diabetes and hypertension. Although many white people certainly suffer from poverty in the United States, poverty tends to be concentrated within Black and non-white Latinx communities. Because these populations are more likely to experience poverty, they will often have no choice but to consume products from convenience stores and fast-food restaurants, resulting in lifelong chronic illnesses like diabetes and hypertension. Even older Black women are more likely to develop breast cancer than white women, and the type of food that is available to poor women of color may play a part in this. Not to mention that these communities often have no health facilities for miles, and if they do, they are usually ill-equipped, understaffed, and burdened with a high number of patients<sup>1</sup>.

Housing laws and contracts often segregate the poor from the rich and white people from people of color, which concentrates the flow of capital into white communities, making food deserts less common for them. Well-off people can eat better and live longer lives. Poor people who live under capitalism, especially poor people of color, are not afforded the same privilege. Without good and affordable healthcare, chronic illnesses go unaddressed and are left to worsen. Additionally, women live under a system that limits their

<sup>1</sup> FSU built a health facility near the Meadows. But they will continue to see a rise in chronic illnesses if there are a lack of adequate and affordable food sources.

access to reproductive healthcare, further disadvantaging women of color. So food deserts, then, are a product of interlocking systems of oppression along the lines of racism, capitalism, ethnocentrism, and patriarchy.

So how can the problem of food deserts be addressed? There are two solutions that come to mind. One is simple and efficient, while the other requires more time and dedicated community building. The obvious, efficient solution is to build a grocery store in food deserts. While that's all well-and-good in the short term, most grocery stores are corporate entities controlled by white people. Since whiteness controls the flow of capital (ensuring that white people control the mode of production), this runs the risk of disrupting indigenous communities (the communities that are already there), and over time, raising rent prices which they cannot afford and squeezing them out of their own community. This is normally how gentrification happens.

The communal solution involves the creation of community gardens and farmers' markets. Community gardens foster communal development and solidarity as people labor for one another by gardening together, making them less isolated and alienated. Indigenous community members are then able to control both the means and mode of food production and distribution in their neighborhood. A farmers' market that is made up of goods produced by the community could further advance food sovereignty while simultaneously acting as a site of resistance against the underhandedly white supremacist (contributing to an economic and cultural environment which favors white people at the expense of people of color) and patriarchal (disadvantaging women by limiting their access to healthy choices for their bodies) systems of oppression which threaten these communities.

Food sovereignty – the communal control of the production and distribution of food – is central to the fight against these entrenched systems of oppression, which largely go unnoticed by those who are unaffected. Against an exploitative economic system which leaves impoverished communities on the wayside in an environment which limits their ability to live healthful lives, the development of community gardens, farmers' markets and mutual aid networks show promise as a community-driven effort to extricate themselves from their cruelly disadvantaged conditions and flourish socially and culturally to their fullest extent.

Everybody has the right to nutritious food, not just the wealthy. And in a system which cares not for those in poverty – especially impoverished people of color – we clearly cannot depend on the state or capital (the institutions which created this predicament in the first place) to ensure that this right is guaranteed to all. It's up to us, the community members, to pick up a shovel, plant some seeds, and make sure *everyone* has a healthy meal on their plate.