

The commons: a brief life journey

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In 1969, the year of factory and students explosions in Italy, I was nine years old. I became teenager in the 1970s, a decade of intense mass movements of struggles and social creativity that involved youth, workers, women producing house occupations, social centres, free radios, experiences of self-organization in high schools, universities, factories, women collectives and self organised abortion clinics. I could not understand it all but struggle made *sense*, and even more so the feeling of freedom, dignity and autonomy that many of these struggles communicated to me, as a young and naïve boy striving for more than the bread and butter rationale I was accustomed to in my family: I also needed roses, music and a sense of adventure towards new horizons. After 1979 and the heavy handed repression following the anti-terrorist laws that crushed large sections of social movements, and after the seed of heroin was implanted into youth circles killing many and taking out of action many more, the party was finished. For me, it was as if in the moment you manage to get into the dance floor and begin to understand how to dance, the music stops, and the lights are turned off. The party was over, and it was transferred into other scenes: in front of tv, with the explosion of private channels in the hands of Berlusconi, into disco clubs, into the beginning of precarious lives in time of economic austerity and financial boom . . . into reading and discussion groups.

I began to read heavily almost everything, and to study like I had never done before. I was never a good student, I became one during my university years, reading political sciences in Milan. Marx and Marxism was of course my preferred subject then, the intricacies of what I later discovered was not its “economic” theory, the theory of crisis, of the falling rate of profit, of exploitation. Exploitation: I had a classic education here from friends who worked in factories soon to be restructured and exported to other countries. They were telling me their daily lives, at 2 am in front of a glass of wine, because they had the afternoon shift and could sleep in the morning. But the morning shift, they were telling me, was the heaviest. Getting up at 4am, travel to disorienting fog and chill cutting the bones. Clocking in at work and been bossed around all day by mainly communist party foremen who were in charge of detecting “terrorist behaviour” for an extra toilet break or for questioning the trade union main policy of “sacrifices” and “austerity” necessary to overcome the crisis. This is an old story, right? In any case, Marx’s central pages of his first volume of *Capital* came alive to me, not just a

theory, but as a powerful framework that captured life-experience of exploitation and struggle. But what also stroke me in the story of my factory workers friends, was how the factory changed in their powerful imaginative projections of different ways of work, convivial and horizontal, producing not pieces of armament under strict deadlines, but cheap solid fishing boats and bicycles and beautiful objects: if only, if only...the codified answers of the times did not made anymore sense...and so theory took over, overshadowing these powerful truths momentarily (only to publish in 1995 an article on abstract labour) and I begun to follow the intricate debate on Marxist theories of crisis with the help of other friends until I left Italy in 1987, after winning a scholarship to study for a PhD in economics at the University of Utah, where there was one of few radical departments.

And than, I got an overdose of economics, the science of our enslavement, the science that considers natural and obvious what instead it contributes to produce through its policy implications: isolated, atomised individuals with budget constraints, maximising their “utility” and giving a fuck about the rest of humanity starting from their neighbourhoods and ending with the planet. In the face of the horrors I was reading in the news, magazines and in history books, the study of mainstream economics made me sick, and the study of radical economics made me impatient and irritable. Possibly different assumptions, but the same quantitative methods, and all policy implications led to the same thing: the state would be the main agent for implementing alternatives: bread, roses and freedom would be a gift from the top, at most brought by struggles demanding such a gift. In my experiences, and the books I was reading, things were a bit different. Could have been a matter of “commodity fetishism”, the fact that social relations are relations among things when touched by capital and therefore that any economic theory whose policy implications are economic growth in a regime of exploitation and top town direction — whether in liberal/neoliberal or social democratic/socialist fashion — that aims at economic growth (read accumulation) is fetishistic, humanly disempowering, community destructive and alienating?

While thinking about commodity fetishism and alienation in 1989, I met Harry Cleaver, a Texan professor in the late forties who wrote one little book in 1979 called *Reading Capital Politically*. Its aim was to interpret politically the most controversial first chapter of Marx’s *Capital*, and providing an introduction with a thick critical review of all Marxist traditions that emphasised bottom up struggles as the source of radical transformation. He was in search of what he called “autonomist Marxism” with deep root in the history of Marxism up to the Italian workerist tradition of the 1960s and 1970s, the *wage for housework* international campaigns and the US and global struggles as framed by the *Zerowork* in the 1970s and the *Midnight Notes* in the 1980s collectives. Here was a large eclectic literature — a small part I was familiar with — that he was able to frame three crucial elements left generally

out by traditional Marxism: the all pervasiveness of struggles vis capital and the dynamic relation between cycles of struggles and cycles of capital's accumulation; the importance of (especially women) unwage labour for capital (a heresy in terms of orthodox Marxism) and struggles of the unwaged; *and* the processes of self-valorization of community in struggles, the creation of "temporary autonomus zones" or more generally, the way I put it in my *The beginning of History* (2007) the creation of an *outside* to capital, a social sphere in which value practices and social relations are not dominated by capital's profit motive and its type of "measure" on social relations, but *other* measures and value practices. In other words, this literature was linking struggle for bread and butter with roses and freedom. I felt at home, still dancing with friends and comrades in a subway station of Milan to block the ticket machines as a protest for the hikes in transport fares.

However, the world around us was not really homely. Neoliberal globalization had proceeded incessantly during the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s if you were not into financial speculation, the future for humanity looked gloom. Especially after the fall of the Berlin's wall in 1989, the claustrophobic sense of "the end of history", which to many was translated into pure hedonism and self-gratification fuelled by capturing advertising and the construction of massive temples of consumerism on the ruins of social services for the reproduction of life and care. For many others was the beginning of precarity, dreams of enrichment through speculation, and simply destitution. I arrived in London then, in the midst of a privatisation wave, cut in social spending and related protests (having mostly the effect of slowing down the process of cuts and privatisation, not reverting it or thinking through alternatives). International campaigns were starting to be dominated by the question of Third World debt. The protests against the conservative government were still divided in distinct typologies and mode of organization, with the prevalence of top down unions, NGOs campaigns that begun slowly to focus on global issues of trade and debt, and marginal anarchist/squatters scene. And then in 1990, I was sent a *Midnight Notes* issues on *new enclosures*, a seminal collection were neoliberal globalisation affecting the North and the South was read through the lenses of "*new enclosures*" and the many struggles against them ("IMF riots" in the first place, but then struggles against "land grabs" — yes, there were then as well). Construction of dams along rivers, shrimps aquaculture and so on, all themes that became quite discussed few years later with the alter-globalization movement, and all of which implied community dispossessions, impoverishment, and diasporas. The global restructuring that begun in the late 1970s after the fall of Keynesian policies, the fancy world of global "flows", the fall of the industrial working class in the North, the temples of consumerisms and the incoming "information society" or "cognitive capitalism" and few years later even the world wide web, all were tainted with this "original sin" of *new enclosures* through which resources were

extracted and labour power was set free to enter the global factory for far cheaper wages and longer hours.

The term “enclosures” short handily refers to the XV-XVII century enclosure movement in England, which destroyed land commons and created the preconditions for the industrial revolution there. To this of course we may add all effect of imperial policies in Asia and the enclosure of the bodies of men and women captured in the West of Africas to become slaves working in the American lands taken from indigenous people who were in turn continuously threatened by genocide. The industrial revolution then, as the late XX century global restructuring, was made possible by *enclosures* or, to use the term Marx borrowed from Adam Smith, Original or Primitive accumulation. Primitive Accumulation is the precondition for capital’s accumulation, the creation of capital and labour power that has no other option but become a waged worker or be more depended on sources of income such as petty trade. The problem was that in mainstream Marxist interpretation, primitive accumulation happens only once, at the *beginning* of *capitalism*. After the dispossession of “pre-capitalist” communities and their integration into capitalist relations, then *capitalism* was supposed to happen, an all encompassing social system whose alternatives could be obtained only after *revolution* or step by step through social democratic means (from here a classical contraposition between revolutionaries and reformists). However, if we could say that “new enclosures” were at the basis of global capitalist restructuring, than they all got it wrong, and so I begun to work on a theoretical paper on the “continuous character” of primitive accumulation, finally published in 2001 on *The Commoner* (of which later) and in 2004 by the journal *Historical Materialism*, after several academic journals rejected it in the late 1990s. Here I made my case reinterpreting Marx’s writing and illustrating with examples from the North and the South how enclosures are always part of the driving engine of capital’s accumulation. In particular, I identified two objects of enclosures. First, those commons that have not been commodified yet, some virgin ground that capital’s accumulation that capital needs to enclose as a moment of its expansion. Second, those commons (even imperfect or distorted) that have been created by *past struggles*: a system of welfare, health and education; libraries, and even workers spaces of autorganization inside the capitalist factories. Thus, “enclosures” or primitive accumulation (whether actually practiced or as immanent threat by capital), could not be understood without the notion of “struggle” and of “commons”. While capital always try to enclose existing commons to expands the scale of accumulation, the working class (including the unwaged!) were always struggling *through* commons (a point I made clearly in my *Beginning of History*), i.e. through some form of sharing resources (time in the first place, but also all other resources that any social movement always require).

These interrelations begun to acquire more relevance the more the alter-globalisation movement was moving its first step and focusing on the

question of alternatives. For many of my comrades and me, the turning point began with the emergence on the global scene of the Zapatista's movement in January 1994, parallel to the implementation of NAFTA, the North America Free Trade Agreement. The Zapatista's were able to pierce through the clock on political sleepiness typical of the neoliberal "end of history" capturing the political imagination, and posing the question of "dignity" - now widely recognized by social movements as one of the key recomposing virtues of struggles. I participated in August 1995 to the first Encuentro for Humanity and against Neoliberalism, organized by the Zapatista's communities inside the military surrounded zapatistas autonomous zones. 4000 activists from around the world of diverse ideological persuasion (feminists, socialists, anarchists, trade unionist, and so on) were hosted by indigenous communities who built theatres, kitchens, sleeping *cabagnas*, toilets and auditoria in the middle of a jungle! And then, they put the 4000 of us in seminars along different themes, in which two masked zapatistas were present only to take notes and not saying anything while taking notes. They only asked us to put our heads together and to write a document for each table of work. This was an extraordinary task, given the ideological difference that still dominated so powerfully over the division within the movements. Yet, extraordinary and through many amusing situations, we were able to do it. The power of community in struggle and the commons they were able to build, their eagerness to open it up to the world without forgetting their struggle and who they were, their eagerness to learn from the world, while at the same time teaching to us the power of humility and dignity as sources of political organization hit me like a blow of fresh air, dissipating any doubt that "alternatives" to capital, the commons, were in our power to build, here and now, NOWhere, and not NOwhere as the detractors of utopic horizons would put it. One "no" many "yesses" was the slogan that the following edition of the Zapatista's *encuentro* took the following year in Spain, no to capital, its boundless drive to commodify and enclose in order to accumulate, and instead a world of a plurality of alternatives, something that I was beginning to understand as a plurality of commons.

I then participated in the alter-globalisation movements, in networks that attempted to bring together the movements not reached by the zapatistas, so I met Indian farmers trying to set a limit to global capital by shutting down, with Gandian methods, Macdonald's and Kentucky Fried Chickens outlets, and Indian communities organizers struggling against dams built along the Narmada Valley and taking away land, sources of fresh water, desecrating ancient cemeteries, and forcing people into shanty towns, the token of progress! Then in the UK the reclaim the street movement begun to see the streets as a commons and no longer as a public space administrated by the state. Days of action brought playgrounds, music, food in urban spaces, bringing color to the urban gray. Urban guerrilla gardens movements followed, with collective planting and carrots and cauliflowers in front of the house of parliament. The police later begun to "kettle", squeezing the space to

the point people could not move. In November 1999 the alter-globalisation movement exploded in Seattle becoming known also by the media. Indy-media networks were organised in several cities and countries while in 2001 the social forum movement began, bringing together a diversity of participants to discuss problems, organise in cities, bring together social movements across the world, and starting to develop a language, a pluralism and horizontality in operations because “another world is possible”. The commons in other words were springing up everywhere but very few were talking about them within the movements. It is in the context of the alter-globalisation movement that I set up *The Commoner* web journal with the help of a couple of friends who helped me to design it for web publication. My aim was to develop a perspective on the commons on the basis of a perspective that brings together an international network of friends that does not see commons as romantic constructions isolated from the field of power relations within society, but one that problematises commons development vis-à-vis capital and its enclosing powers. The commoner was especially fortunate to capture a trend that was developing in which social movements shifted from the general question of “alternatives” to the question of commons. People started to see commons everywhere as a way to frame the many alternatives social movements we counterpoising to capital’s neoliberalism. The impulse came from the Global South. For example, the struggles against water and electricity privatization (enclosures) in South Africa became acknowledged as a struggle for and through commons. In the township Orange farm for example, an area of 700000 people and 80% unemployment rate, women who set up a community garden that needed and electrical pump for the water, a recycling centre and nursery project and other activities could sustain themselves and provide a small income for their associates only by communalising electricity by illegally connecting and refusing to pay the higher electricity bills. This is the same for much of the population of the township that was reconnecting privatised water and electricity when I visited in 2004. One evening, while visiting few households, I noticed a woman who was putting a lock on the outside tap that she had reconnected. I asked her why she was closing access to the water to the neighbours, since she was not paying for it. She replied that she would give water to all who asked, but since she, like many others, were taking a risk by participating in a collective struggle, they would have to ask her. It was like calling into account the members of the community who for various reasons decided not to participate in the movement and yet needed “free” water, especially for emergencies like wedding, illness, funerals and so on. Much of the reason why the community was split was because in many households older generations members who had a historical loyalty to the ANC government also retained power to make decisions.

This simple case begun to clarify for me several things about commons. In the first place, within different levels of the community (the movement, the neighborhood and inside households) the “commoning” involved was itself a

practice of negotiation and even struggle. Within each household for example (micro-commons themselves) there were conflict about the degree of participation in the movement, a conflict closely related to the question of power within the households. In neighbourhoods the commoning among members with different stakes in the social movements, the sharing resources and mutual aid within the community, was marked by divisions that interfered with normal mutual aid relations among neighbours and had to do with the participation in the social movements. In the second place, the issue of boundary: the woman locking up the tap for the night after having herself reclaimed it as part of the water movement, captured for me the question of the difference between commons and free access, something that in a more abstract sense and with no references to social movements also Elinor Ostrom raised. Commons are such because a community takes care of it, defines the rules of access and of relation with the external environment, and does so, because it is in this way that the commons themselves are preserved, sustained and reproduced. In this way, the commons are not “things” as commodities are, but social systems, comprising of communities, resources and practices — i.e. commoning.

The relation between commons and social movements became clearer to me few years later in 2010, when I travelled to Latin America and spent three months in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, which I have reported in the editor’s blog in *The Commoner*. I was propelled here into a civilization in which communities maintained a resilient ability to reproduce themselves and face capital’s power in spite of 500 years of genocide, repression and various atrocities. Not just indigenous communities in relentless struggles against petrol companies enclosures of forests, land and rivers, but also miner communities forming cooperatives to attend to their housing, health and education needs, neighbourhoods but also farmers and urban dwellers forming associations to attend their basic needs and more. But is the indigenous people that really stroke a chord. For example, I encountered Carlos Perez in Cuenca, South of Ecuador. He is a *dirigente* of the Junta de Agua of the area, the organisation for the community administration of Water. The Junta de Agua was involved in a long struggle to defend community water rights and succeeded in reverting a law threatening traditional communal rights on water. Carlos insists that people want administration autonomy with no external interference, where it is community assemblies and not some manager or bureaucrat who decides what to do with the water and how to do it. He also makes an economic case: “In community management”, he says, “each family pays \$2 a month for water in order to collect the fund necessary for the maintenance of the supply. In cities like Cuenca one pays \$10 a month. Why? Because of the highly paid bureaucracy. In the community instead, the president of the water committee does not earn anything. In Cuenca the managers get \$3000 a month”.

However the payoffs for the communities in keeping control power over their water commons, is not simply monetary. Water here is a commons not just in an ideal sense, a principled sense. The water-commons Carlos is talking about is one in which the community engage in *commoning* for its administration and utilisation. When I naively ask Carlos to help me to understand what is involved in “administering water” he explains to me that I needed to understand Mingas, the true source of autonomy and power of communities through the labour of maintenance of the infrastructure for example.

Minga is a quechua word used by various ethnical groups throughout the Andes and refer to unwaged community work, in which men, women and children all participate in pretty much convivial ways and generally ends up in big banquets. Children, women and man, young and old, all participate in the water Mingas which, as Carlos reminds me, “are also Mingas of ideas, of desires and imagination.” Hence, not only pipes are laid, stones are moved, metal is bent, food is shared by the entire community, but also through the administration of water people meet and discuss other important things besides water, other things of relevance to the community. “There is no hierarchy in Mingas” says Carlos, “children, women and man all participate in Mingas”. And the things that the managers of capitalist companies will not get, is that there is an other sense of measure going on in Mingas.

The search for efficiency is not the absolute value. For Carlos “efficiency”, when turned into the supreme measure of common action, is a dirty word, because it excludes everything else, i.e. life, justice, solidarity, reciprocity and earth. To dig a hole and put up a pole could be a heavy work if only few people have to do it so as to minimise cost and maximise productivity. But if the entire community is involved, you do not feel it (although the “efficiency” obtained in this case is quite low): “in the Minga you do not feel the work because everything is cheerfulness and distraction and in the end it is participation.” In the Minga, as you are sharing, you are also living together”

Across the Andes I find evidence of the continuous use of Mingas and other forms of reciprocal labour in many spheres of life: the building of storages, community centres, roads, schools, gardens, water pipelines and so on. While Mingas are a form of “communal labour”, set in motion by a call of different natures by a legitimate institution — an association, a movement, a community etc — what in the Andes is called *ajnji* is a form of *reciprocal labour* that is the waiving of the social fabric of a community (or *Ayullo* in the Andes) through circuits of reciprocity, and it is based on principles of often implicit and not announced or bargained equality matching between individuals or community: today you do this for me and tomorrow you’ll do this for you: a kind of circular “gift economy” as discussed by Mauss. In the literature, reciprocal labour is also called exchange labour, cooperative labour or rotating labour. It consists of an interchange of labour among individuals or groups (such as households), a very ancient form especially rooted in

agricultural societies, but also evident in networks of friends in modern urban centres. Here one person or nucleus first is helped by the labour of the rest of the group while producing together with them. After this, another person/nucleus turn will come and so on. In each case however, conviviality generally characterises the labour process.

Along the same lines, in Cochabamba (Bolivia) I have encountered a plurality of water associations that participated in 2000 in the “water wars” movement that for four months of mass struggles managed to revert the water privatisation laws and to provoke the fall of the government and the change in the country’s constitution, which acknowledged the role of “communal” economy. I realised that the movement was not provoked simply by an *ideal* force against privatization, but by the fact that the new laws were trying to enclose water commons that were in existence for few decades, a practice that was necessary both for urban and rural communities, since public water did not reach their areas and private water was expensive and provided in unsafe storages. Communities therefore organised themselves to fetch waters (by digging local wells or fetching water from the mountains with 10 km long pipes they built), stored in community built cisterns, and distributed through a network of pipes they themselves built, maintained and administrated. The water privatization law meant to put a multinational water meter on their pipes! The 2000 “water wars” therefore, was a true “commons movement” against enclosures.

The indigenous cultures and the practices of commons that I have encountered have been able to recover their dignity and history and give value to what the colonisers have despised and de-valorised. But then, I could not avoid thinking that in the global North we also had “Mingas” in our not so distant history, and we still have them although we do not call it this way. In Italy we have social centers, many of which organize community labour for socially useful activities. There are associations of different natures that do the same, as there are many “call” to protest. There are community parks reclaimed from the asphalt of parking lot, like in the case in the popular neighbourhood in Exarchia in Athens, about hundred meters away from where in December 2008, Alexis Grigoropoulos, a 15 years old boy was killed by a flying bullet shot by the police during a demonstration at the beginning of the crisis. Here on Navarinu street, there was a parking lot cutting a grey and empty space in the urban environment. It belonged to the powerful professional organisation of engineers, the Technical Chamber, which was just starting to enquire with the council about the possibility to build another building on the area, after the council, for 15 years, foregone the possibility to turn the area into a public park. On 7th of March 2009 the local community decided to take things in their own hands, and do some *commoning* (commons are always the product of pluralities that take things in their own hands). It started as a symbolic act of space reclaiming of the urban guerrilla type – in which people plant trees and vegetables in places where you would expect

tarmac and then go home after having made the point. And indeed they went home, but the next day they returned, and returned and returned. In the first few weeks, about 1000 people got involved, with about 500 people a day who were frenetically tearing tarmac out, planting trees, building low walls with the stones taken from beneath the tarmac, creating children playground with swings and wood structures, and setting up benches. Teams of designers made of young architects, artists, engineers, folk musicians, freaks and housewives drew with white chalk where the tarmac had to be removed, and team of removers, made by the designers themselves plus others who joined the collective effort in the days ahead, removed the tarmac not always according to "design" specifications. "The end result is a hybrid combination of design and work", told me a young woman, who I found at the site. The impression is that when intellectual conception and manual operationalisation are not rigidly separated, the moment of designing also occurs at the moment of manual work which is not only the doing, but also the great pleasure in removing the tarmac and finding hearth beneath. Many people took many initiatives: some painted the walls with tribal drawings, someone else decided that the park could also turn into an open air cinema, hence set up a screen on the wall, theatre performance were organised, music played, a kiosk with leaflets on migrant rights and other political literature was set up under a large plastic rain cover. "People were just turning up with initiatives and ideas".

With the deepening of the crisis in Greece we hear of occupied self-managed hospitals and factories, "potato" networks reconnecting countryside and urban canterers to bypass large distributors and cheapen the price of food, empty theatres turned into community centres and so on. This is a movement still not sufficient in degree to counter the devastating social effects of the crisis, yet a commons movement. And in the last few years, this is a movement that has taken many forms. The "occupy movement" in the USA, the indignatos in Spain, the struggle in Tahiri square in Egypt, and in Gezi park in Istanbul, an entire population drawn to defend the only remaining park threatened by demolition to build yet another shopping center. All these struggles, in spite of their specificity, turned a movement into a camp, a site that needed to be reproduced, where a movement turns into a community that needs to reproduce itself through self-organization, through commons. Here food, shelter, protection, medical aid, education, care and so on but also forms of collective self expression through arts, music, words, actions, doing: and commoning becoming the living force that sustain all these activities and needs, and "explosion" of "middle class" values through commons that is a prerequisite for the development of commons themselves. Struggle through commons are also now increasingly visible form of struggle and thus facilitating our awareness that all struggles, in a way or in another, to a degree, are forms of commoning.

In these days, my point of observation of these and more recent movements, is not so much London, where I still work and where too little is happening in relation to the size and the degree of its population to global capital. It is instead a small village in the Apennines in the province of Modena in which community and commoning exist to a larger extent than any city I have lived in, at least as a proportion to the size of the population. Here neighbours are not alien to one another, community and associations run some services like the Ambulance — without which the time to reach the nearest hospital would be doubled if not tripled — or organise regular festivals to reactivate relations with the village diasporas returning home for the festivities. One of the things that hit me in this village after having spent a lifetime in cities, is that even funerals are not simple matters of the families of the deceased but of large chunks of the communities often hanging around the house of the relatives and filling the local church. Even the accompanying of the coffin to the cemetery for the burial does not seem only a matter of the deceased and their relatives. As soon as people enter the gates of the cemetery, they spread to visit their deceased relatives and friends, checking their tombs, kissing their pictures, before crowding around the coffin to be buried. It is as if a funeral is an opportunity for a festival where the living and the dead of many generations are all in it together, and memories are collectively reactivated. Through this type of commoning, the community is also reproduced. The thought goes to the villages threatened by enclosures in many countries of the South where one of the many reasons of opposition is the removal of cemeteries and sacred spots by development agencies, to build dams, factories, plantations and so on.

From this observation point, where there are more commons than movements, what to say about their relations? Here movement is clearly not only the occasional revolt against the local authorities, the assembly to keep the school open, or the withdrawal of participations into public events. Movement here is first of all a deepening of awareness of the relation between the territory and the rest of the world, global crisis and local unemployment, consumeristic dreams of the youth and of life of sharing, oil dependent farming and global warming, and of solidarity and convivial relation with north African, Indian and Eastern European migrants who have come to work in building, agriculture and in the homes of the elderly. This is a movement that is promoted by daily work of few activists who see themselves as part of the community and with ingenuity, practical projects and participation in the community life seek to *move* something. It is about a shift in the boundaries of commoning, in the contamination of communities, in the quantitative and qualitative evolution of commons themselves to reappropriate the conditions of social reproduction for all, especially now, in the midst of a triple environmental, social and ecological crisis.

My mother is from this land, she migrated to the city after the war when she was sixteen. My grandfather was a farmer, and up to 60 years ago, i.e.

before he migrated to the city, he routinely participated in harvests and construction work together with others farmers in his community, there were *mingas* all the times here as well. After a nazist and fascist massacre that killed 136 civilian in march 1944, the remaining villagers pulled together in solidarity with the families of the victims. The history and memory of solidarity and mutual aid is everywhere. It is crucial to recover this history, not because we want to go back to the past, but because we want to move forward. Recovering our history also implies that we make visible and valorise, what is generally invisible and irrelevant because we see it with the eyes of the coloniser in us, that *homo economicus* that only speaks through efficiency measures and competitive relations to the other. We need to reclaim the “indigenous in us”! Every locality large or small has a memory and a current practice of an outside of capital that must made visible, nurtured, sustained and develop. Commons are everywhere, and only on the basis of their boundaries’ expansion, evolution, and, ultimately, struggle vis-à-vis capital, that “another world is possible”, since it is immanent to this.

Indicative readings

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