

Stop the eviction of autonomous spaces

This article asks Mr. Claudio Fernández Alejandro Montero (Judge of the Court of First Instance No. 3 Cerdanyola) for the withdrawal of the interim eviction order issued against Can Piella and its associated members who were connected with the conservation, preservation and effective use of the rural-urban spaces of Can Piella.



On October 4, Can Piella received a precautionary evacuation notice that would be executed on Sunday October 14. Before I go any further on the matter that this eviction notice is unfair and unjust and illegitimate, and therefore it should be withdrawn, I take a brief respite to detail why I claim so.

What is Can Piella? Can Piella is a large estate and a farm house which laid barren, unused, ignored for ten years or more, located in the vicinity of the town of La Langosta vallesana in Barcelona, Spain. Probably no one would refute that land is a resource can be used for food production and for many other social needs. The Association for the Preservation of Can Piella replenished this ruinous land,



renovated the farmhouse which was in shambles after a fire, and engaged the local people to grow their own food in a sustainable and feasible manner.

You might now question, what does food growing or squatted community gardens exactly give to the community or people? Gardens help people feed themselves and foster healthier physical and social environment, it's a place where women and children carry out many activities besides growing their own food, it gives autonomy and self-confidence to people

besides the knowledge on how they can connect their everyday with the environment, it acts as sanctuaries and releases stress, reduces dangers of mis-use of unused open spaces, it creates community solidarity and support, and most importantly it connects the individual self or the personal with nature (or other public spaces). Now you might ask, why grow or who gardens - those deprived from social, economic, political benefits, those who care if the environment and spaces are wasted at such times of crisis or even those who want to eat and stay healthy and want to stay connected with nature. And, there is absolutely no doubt that such positive, innovative and environment/people-friendly initiatives connect the individual food grower with nature, empowers them and carves their identity and rekindles a feeling of belongingness besides producing enormous capacity for collective empowerment. Then I argue such initiatives produce an alternative for social change that lead to "a more altruistic, sustainable, ecological and solidarity with a clear restatement of consumption and where relations of domination are small imperfections" (rough translation of Can Piella food grower).

What exactly went on in Can Piella after it was squatted? Can Piella orchards grew seasonal vegetables; hens and chicks were raised for food and organic manure; the farm house which was in a dilapidated state, when Can Piella was squatted, was renovated and now has a pantry with a capacity to make artisanal bread and beer from oats. One of the upcoming initiatives were to grow medicinal plants and introduce bees and rabbits, and extend the production of cheese. Also more than fifty trees were planted. Can Piella largely focused on the production of food that could be consumed and exchanged for



other food. Therefore the goal was not only to diversify food production and acquire maximum autonomy in food production and to follow a varied and balanced production of food. Self-sufficiency was the key in all these activities. For most food growers, food was an important benefit but such community growing space was also vital as it helped the users to socialize and boosted their confidence as they experimented with the lands and crops and all this made them feel a part of the land (and nature). Considering the hike in renewable energies, Can Piella organizers re-used, recycled and re-created capacities to use waste and solar

energy. The water used to irrigate the farm was obtained from a well built by the Can Piella growers. The waste from the garden and the kitchen was used to feed the poultry and animal waste was mixed with vegetative matter to produce a rich fertilizer to enrich the cultivable lands.

In the recent years there has been a remarkable shift in food production with the increase in the purchase of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, heavy farm machineries which not only debase the quality of the soil but largely impacts the health and economic conditions of food growers and consumers. Today we are parasites to the faulty information and the neoliberal knowledge produced by the popular media on food growing which compels us to accept capital-intensive farming method – this altogether leads an unmistakable trend towards corporate dominance in agriculture. Countering this trend, Can Piella people appreciated the essence of organic and sustainable farming and sufficiently acknowledged these aforementioned politics of food production. It was a pedagogical knowledge space where a series of lectures were delivered on farming, on making effective use of un-used soil, on ways to replenish soil, on crops and soils, and on ways to organically produce food.

The benefits were so many that they are difficult to quantify or comprehend and hence I am trying to make a persuasive argument in favor of Can Piella and against the eviction of this space because people have 'right to their spaces' and 'right to nature'. Nothing that was carried out by food growers in Can Piella was illegal and such initiatives should be supported by the state instead of threatening the people of eviction and detaching them from their lands. The state needs to identify that small gardens and such autonomous spaces create sustainable ways of living, give an identity to the producers in the bottom and protect our environment against the corporate profit making exploitative initiatives.



(Pictures are taken from:

http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dcan%2Bpiella,%2Bbarcelona%26hl%3Den%26biw%3D1280%26bih%3D905%26prmd%3Dimvns&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=ca&twu=1&u=http://ca.squat.net/tag/can-piella/&usg=ALKJrhgfBmW0jY6SEq5e6t9h-nrtAh-14A)

