Chapter 6: Many Fights, One Heart – #UprootTheSystem

October 2020 – October 2021: Forests, agriculture, banks, courts, and the political manifesto – all the way to a new theory of democracy

How is everything connected: forests, finance, and fuel?

There is a gentle breeze. A small group of younger as well as older activists are walking through the forest north of Stockholm. Here and there, a pinecone falls. Perhaps the trees want to play with them, I think to myself; also out of gratitude that someone cares about whether they survive, and about whether their relatives survive, the last real forests in the north of the country. The pinecones are stuffed into the bags which the group have brought with them. They are to play an important role at the next global strike in front of the Swedish parliament, the first really big international strike since the start of the pandemic.

Fridays activists across the world are swarming out in every direction to slow down climate change and mass extinction. They divide themselves into countless groups dedicated to all different projects. They are faced with many different political struggles: over the forests, over agriculture, soil, financial flows, court cases and climate goals; I wonder whether there are too many. And how exactly are they connected? How can we win them without getting bogged down? Maybe it is not enough just to try to stop emissions and keep fossil fuels in the ground. Maybe we have to rethink what defines democracy.

We all sit down on a fallen tree trunk and look around. To be precise, this is not a forest, just a small wood, close to the edge of the city. And the people sitting here know what a forest is. Many of them have specialised in forestry,

because this plays almost as big a role in the climate crisis as the fossil fuels which have to stay in the ground, especially in Sweden. The emissions created by non-sustainable forestry and the burning of "biomass" have been so significant in the last 30 years that one could say that Sweden has not actually reduced its overall emissions at all; a lot of them do not even appear in the statistics (Urisman Otto in Thunberg 2022). How can we then demand that the population of China, India or Nigeria reduce their emissions drastically? CO2 is released from the ground, but also from the burning of products such as paper and cardboard cups. Some say that it is to some extent absorbed by the trees as they grow back, but that takes decades. Time which these children and young people don't have; not if we soon reach tipping points.

In conversations with scientists from the agricultural universities, it soon becomes clearer to me: it is barely possible to understand anything about Swedish history, the emergence of banking, the power structure of the country or today's politics, including EU politics, if you don't know who owns the forests and what is being done with them (see Röstlund 2022). It isn't trolls or other fantastic creatures that shape the forests, and it's not their stories that accompany us on our outings, but very specific property relations, technologies, concepts of nature, and economic approaches. And I think: maybe our understanding of these connections could be something like a blueprint, a key to understanding much more about society and the necessary changes ahead of us?

But in these pandemic months, the activists are not the only ones going out into the open air. The global band of rebels also sets off in different directions, from Brazil to Finland. Careful work begins, sometimes also "pushed" by NGOs. They form new working groups, find each other online, form friendships – and they work together with specialist scientists. Many of these are connected with the Scientists For Future movement. In this way, behind the visible Friday strikes, a hidden structure emerges, unseen by the public, involving many different overlapping actions initiated by the global FFF network.

Some work together with their peers on the topic of forests and agriculture. Others get into stopping the fossil industry; and so on. They don't just collect knowledge about the deplorable situation, but also about what would be needed instead, in politics and on the ground: how regenerative agriculture and forestry could enable the woods and fields to flourish, as well as the people working in them, and what a sustainable financial system would look like.

Meanwhile, I try to keep an overview and excitedly follow the academic research into what might be called "regenerative life energy". This is the energy

of living, blossoming, fruitful socio-ecological systems – or whatever we want to call the complex socio-ecological context. Anyway, I think to myself in these months in my seminar rooms: at university, we teach too little about sustainable processes of exchange and synergy, including when it comes to humans' interactions with each other and with nature. These themes are missing from our teaching, despite all the ground-breaking research which has long become established in social psychology and physiology (see Fopp 2016; Raffoul 2023). And as so often happens, this work makes me aware that I have a limited European view of the topic and of the movement, which has become so diverse and broad, and which also takes account of research into forms of knowledge which have been passed down and dispersed for years (Solnit/Young Lutunatabua 2023).

The young activists are becoming familiar with struggles over property relations, with the conflicts of interests behind EU politics, but also with the worlds of lobbying and trade unions (on the problems of the fossil lobby, see Götze/Joeres 2020). For every topic, a website is created, coordinated globally, and a campaign is posted on https://www.fridaysforfuture.org.

The work continues rapidly, because decisions are approaching, in these very months, often at the European Parliament. What should be defined as "sustainable" energy – for instance, should that also include nuclear energy and gas, as planned in a worrying German-French "pact" (Rankin 2022)? Which climate goals is the continent setting for itself ("FitFor55"; Jakubowska 2021)? And in particular: the biggest budget allocation of the EU will be soon be defined for the next seven years in what is known as the CAP, the "Common Agricultural Policy". This decides how money is distributed for agriculture, which farmers it goes to, how the soil is cultivated, what should be planted. This not only decides the level of (methane) emissions, but also whether species diversity will suffer even more (on this problem in general: Chemnitz 2019; Westhoek et al. 2014).

What should we eat in the future? Animal proteins, which would mean accepting suffering and emissions, or plant proteins? How can we guarantee food security for everyone? How can we protect thousands of smaller farms and ensure a good environment for workers? Values are at stake, not only financial but existential; and also the whole Paris Agreement, the question of whether Europe is making a fair contribution, in global terms, to stopping emissions.

But when they return from their protest actions in Brussels in front of the EU Commission or the Parliament, often despairing over the decisions that have been made and even more strongly connected with each other, I am wor-

ried. Isn't there a danger that the movement will be splintered between too many projects? Isn't all of this NGO work? What has happened to the school strike, to the mass movement? Above all, however, a central question keeps coming up: isn't there a shared basis, a Gordian knot, a political and economic chess move which would mean that we could suddenly organise all areas sustainably? That we could win the many different fights by seeing them as one big fight?

As a motto for the imminent global strike in autumn 2021, the global youth movement has chosen #UprootTheSystem, after a long international process of discussion. For that reason, the Stockholmers are now combing the woods and collecting pinecones which they want to use to "write" the hashtag on the ground in front of Parliament. But what is "the system"? I email Scientists For Future. We have to meet in the coming weeks. We can't just watch the young people getting entangled in struggle after struggle.

But in order to see something that connects everything, we have to consider the details of the individual groups, so that we can analyse the different sectors and find a general pattern that transcends them. One of the other goals of my research is to reach a better understanding of democratic means – and of democracy itself. Because even if a deepening picture is emerging more and more over these years when it comes to political economy (the problematic interplay of capitalist markets with other forms of domination), and alternative political visions are being developed (by Hickel, Göpel, Schmelzer, Raworth; see the theory of the three pillars and two principles in the Appendix), there is still one big question: how is it possible that in so many areas the basic necessities of human life are being damaged or even destroyed, apparently on a legal and politically legitimate basis? What would a successful democracy be?

Deforestation and the life of the forests

Many of the Swedish activists join the working group for the protection of the forests. Again and again, they travel to the area of Jokkmokk and visit the Sami activists who are the same age as them. The biggest problem: these forests are being cut down to a disproportionate extent, even the oldest, using damaging methods, and then often end up in factories manufacturing cardboard cups which are immediately burned (Röstlund 2022), instead of the forest being protected.

Above all, though, Sweden allows a technique which is banned in other countries and which could hardly be more brutal: clearcutting. Across a large expanse of land, everything is suddenly razed. All trees will then always be the same age; often they are planted artificially as monocultures of invasive species (Westberg 2021). A tree plantation emerges where the forest used to be; life is cut short. Through this, the soil also releases extra emissions. There are obvious similarities between the images of Sweden and of Brazil, where the rainforest is being razed faster than ever before (Spring/Kelly 2022). And this has political consequences far beyond Scandinavia: the Swedish and Finnish governments are doing everything they can to legitimise these methods both within the EU and indirectly worldwide (Lind/Sanddahl 2023).

The young people familiarise themselves with the material and ask self-critical questions: is this about thousands of jobs which would otherwise be lost, or is it about economic collapses which would endanger the welfare state? But that does not seem to be the case. Renewable energy, for example, also needs be developed further. Workers are in demand; regenerative, careful forestry is certainly possible; and all of this quite apart from the cost to the whole of society from the climate and biodiversity crisis.

But above all, we all think to ourselves, sitting on the tree trunk: what a contrast with what a forest can be, a home for many in northern Scandinavia, particularly the indigenous population, which has been treated so badly; and of course one of the most fascinating places, as the quintessence of life itself. That is what we keep hearing in talks by leading scientists, who explain how trees communicate with each other and help each other, and describe the interplay between older and younger trees. Yes, the tree trunk we are sitting on is rotten and disintegrating – but it still may be the most important part of the "ecosystem" in which we find ourselves, and not simply biomass to be burned. Very particular plants and animals nest in it and enable biodiversity and carbon storage (Wohlleben 2017).

What do we need instead, we ask: what kind of politics, what approach? We need to see the whole picture, across different times and different cycles, the scientists say, when the older activists who now call themselves People For Future sit down with them (on thinking in cycles, see von Redecker 2021). Forests and the soil are complex structures, and they are alive. Like us, the people who grew up in them or close to them – like the other species of ape. And it is this living forest that the young people want to protect.

We all try to see the power structures and patterns which connect this struggle for the forest with the struggle for other areas of life, for example

with agriculture, with the fossil industry and with the financial system. The journalist Lisa Röstlund (2022) has spent years collecting the knowledge that helps to see such power structures, which decide what will happen to the forest: knowledge about lobbies, the politicians and big landowners who work with them, including the church, for instance. However, she also shows how these people and their ways of thinking shape the universities as well as the influential research; and how reporting in many parts of the media is shaped by information from those who often have their own economic interests. Sociologically speaking, they represent – as the working group is realising ever more clearly – a "clique" of relatively few men who control this area of the economy and the ideology of a whole country. But this power structure is supported by a middle class: we hear about the fact that the biggest owner of forest land, Sveaskog, actually belongs to all citizens as a state company, but still allows harmful practices. The Lutheran church, too, which still counts millions of Swedes as its members, plays a dubious role – as internal criticism has also pointed out (Ringberg et al. 2022) – given that huge areas of forest belong to it but are not sufficiently protected.

One thing further amplifies the sense of powerlessness among the young people and among us scientists: barely any of the eight parties in parliament want to change anything about these structures. The Social Democratic Party, which seems to be stuck in the past, is involved in this project of deforestation, together with the Greens, who legitimise the use of the forest as biomass, and the centrist neoliberal forces. The basic premise: nature is primarily private property. And the right to ownership is defined as being able to dispose of nature at will, to dominate it, even when this cannot be justified in terms of society as a whole, either economically or ecologically. All this could change.

And in fact, something does happen in society over these months. Making the power structures visible and drawing attention to untruths in relation to scientific discoveries does have an effect. The established newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* writes about emissions in relation to the forests, and about what all of this means for the intensification of the climate crisis (Urisman Otto in Thunberg 2022). Together with Scientists for Future, the young people agree on what must be guaranteed by politicians: they have to protect the forests, ban invasive species and monocultures as well as aggressive clearance methods; they have to support workers and guarantee their livelihood as well as their retraining in regenerative methods. Quite similar principles apply to protecting the world' oceans, for which a different global group is fighting – headed by the Fridays

from Göteborg and Lysekil. They are also fighting for a new global agreement on biodiversity, which will be decided by the COP15 in Canada.

And still we ask ourselves: don't we need to see nature differently and define it differently in legal terms? I make notes for the approaching meeting with my colleagues. What are rights in the first place, in particular the right to own the forests and the soil, and to damage them? How are rights connected with the economy, politics, and democracy? Could we start there and find a bigger lever?

What becomes clear is that no analysis is possible without an understanding of intersectional power structures, meaning an understanding of how privileges and membership of specific groups (gender, ethnicity, class etc.) influence politics, the media and education. In more concrete terms, the question is therefore: how do we extend democracy so that this "substantial" dimension of power inequality can be dismantled and replaced with caring encounters at eye level; how can "formal" democratic processes such as elections and the functioning of institutions be reshaped in response to this?

And: can we ever ignore what we are or how we function? Can we ignore anthropology, a scientific picture of how we ourselves belong to nature; what it means to treat each other and nature in a caring way or a dominant way?

Humans as double creatures

All of this, too, is a subject of discussion for the activists in the woods. High up above the treetops, whose pinecones are being collected by the young people, birds are circling and flying over to Edsviken, the big lake in the north of Stockholm that borders directly on the forest, and opening up the space to the infinity of movement. We humans are such peculiar double creatures, I think then. On the one hand, we are so tied to the embodied perspective of our own position in the midst of the world, with our own specific experiences and our unique biographies, which shape our view – meaning that we can perceive the forest as an immeasurable gift, but also as threatening and uncanny. In that way, the centre of the world is always directly above us. The dome of the heavens, which we keep on shifting when we move, retains its central point above our heads, while touching the earth at the horizon.

And at the same time, we are the ones who can adopt a "view from nowhere", as the philosopher Thomas Nagel (1989) has said – an abstract, distanced view which is outlined by maps. We can extend the weather to the climate, we can develop technologies and altogether make the world calcula-

ble. Or at least try. This perspective discovers that trees take CO2 from the air through photosynthesis and transform it into carbon, into "tree", and at the same time through this produce oxygen for us animals and humans. It can take account of geometry, physics, and mathematics. It can trace experience back to the firing of neurons in the brain, and analyse the life of trees in terms of ecosystem tasks and cycles of metabolism.

But there is also a third part of this, I often say in my lectures at the university, pointing to the Gestalt research of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961); a third element for which we in our culture barely have a language, something we often overlook, but which is perhaps the most central of all; the dialectic dismantling of this opposition between the subjectivity of our embodied experience and the objectivity of technology, between the individual and the whole: namely connecting ourselves with the imagination and with empathy, with a shared spirit, a shared idea of being humane (Fopp 2016). Not because trees begin to walk, as in Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, but because we are tied to the vulnerability of embodied "being in the world", and can therefore transcend it, not as something that calculates, but as something that connects us.

I awake from these dreams and find myself back in the forest.

Back in the forest – "blah blah blah"

They all stand up and go on collecting pinecones. Some of them will travel to Italy. In fact, it is a preliminary meeting for the climate conference in Glasgow in November. What could be the most important message, now, in a late phase of the pandemic, with a view to the climate conference?

Everyone is talking about "There is no Planet B" and "Build Back Better": the idea that the gigantic investments which are being made by governments worldwide to get the economy going after the "standstill" should make societies more sustainable. They are still trying out the text, playing with all the phrases these politicians are constantly coming up with while doing nothing. Emissions are still rising. Most of the money which is supposed to be leading us out of the pandemic is still going to fossil products and to the banks that make them possible – to the outrage of the young activists (Kottasová et al. 2020). Greta will say in Milan: Blah blah blah! That is all blah blah blah.

Now, they sit together and eat carrots. Carrots have become important to the movement; they are a favourite food. The short poem which probably comes from Henrik Ibsen, "Little Carrot", has become a kind of motto; it is a hymn

for the small ones who live in the shadow of the big ones. "Baby carrot: small. Ugly. Lives in the shadow of the carrot. Baby carrot." I admire the young activists for creating these moments of amusement amid the fight against time and against emissions. Because they have no planet B – even if Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos are going into space for the first time, releasing enormous emissions and dreaming of colonising Mars.

Here they sit, gathered in the woods to the north of Stockholm, doing everything they can to preserve a planet worth living on for everyone. For passers-by, they just look like ordinary walkers who are taking a short break in the woods and nibbling their carrots.

Agriculture – the EU's CAP ("Common Agricultural Policy")

From every country in Europe, the young FFF activists travel again and again to Strasbourg and Brussels and protest in front of the EU institutions. The Nordic governments should not be able to enforce their destructive forestry policies in the EU. If only many more would join, as People For Future, I think to myself. If there were thousands of us, especially older ones, we could change politics.

They gather in front of the EU parliament, together with their friends who are confronting the decisions made on agriculture, the "Common Agricultural Policy" (CAP).

For this group, it all begins with a warning tweet from Harriet Bradley, a specialist in agricultural policy. It is passed around the movement, and panic erupts. The danger to which the tweet is pointing: the EU will soon be proposing a policy for the next seven years, a crucial time, and this policy is still far too preferential towards large-scale enterprises. The policy will make the quality of the soil worse, cause huge emissions and animal suffering, and damage biodiversity (Pe'er et al. 2020). In these months, more and more reports are coming in of entire species going extinct – birds are affected, and insects in particular. And with them, the basis of agriculture. The "Living Planet Report 2020" talks of 60 % of all mammals, fish and reptiles having been wiped out since 1970. Bees are especially under threat.

After school, the group begins its almost daily work. They are sometimes joined by Leipzig researcher Guy Pe'er from Scientists For Future. He helps the young people in Zoom meetings. Which power structures are represented, and which interests are at stake? Soon, they understand better which of the lobbying groups prefer the biggest companies, so that many smaller farms are disap-

pearing, in Sweden too; and the problematic role played by umbrella organisations, whose power games hardly take account of the climate and biodiversity crises (CorporateEurope 2021). And where are the trade unions? Climate and environmental protection and a secure future are some of the most important topics of the workers' movement, but the unions do not seem to be taking action (Bell 2020).

And once again the overarching questions: how can we anchor care for nature and other people in legal and economic terms on a deeper level? Because a similar pattern emerges which could already be seen in relation to the forests (for this pattern and a sustainable agriculture, see Pelluchon 2019). Many actors who are preserving the status quo are supported by a relatively small clique, dominated by men who combine lobbying, politics, private interests and research guided by economic profit, and who use the formal infrastructure of democracy to damage its substance, the "content" of democracy, meaning the provision of a sustainable basis for life for everyone, and encounters without domination.

And once again: why does the population not react? Isn't this about their future and about ensuring that the soil is not destroyed? But the young people are pretty much on their own. There are also very few European media that actually receive attention (euractiv.com is one of the only examples), and in national media the topic is not discussed enough. Understanding these power struggles would actually be more important, and more interesting, we say to ourselves, than any primetime series on TV.

That kicks off a discussion within the climate movement. Should the young activists talk about "stopping" EU agricultural policy or just about "changing" it? Should they be making policy proposals at all? The Swedes are sceptical. Isn't FFF a grassroots movement rather than a lobbying group or an NGO? In May 2020, more than ten European Fridays For Future groups publish a joint statement for a change in policy and thus for a different use of the 58 billion euros which are invested in agriculture annually by the EU (www.fridaysforfuture.org/change-the-cap). 3600 scientists protest at the same time (Pe'er et al. 2020) and support their demands, including the rapid replacement of animal with plant "products", and the replacement of an agriculture characterised by monocultures and pesticides with a regenerative approach. We need a transformation, they say, so broad that we can hardly keep track of every aspect of it, reshaping the way in which we interact with animals, the soil and nutrition (on the cultural background, see Foer 2019). But the most important aspect for them is that they stand behind the workers, regardless of whether they are cur-

rently working sustainably. The transformation has to be socially just, they say. And the protest has an effect: through the actions of the FFF activists, EU parliamentarians begin to rethink their position – and to change it. In particular, the social democratic block breaks apart and many of the MEPs endorse the arguments of the young activists and the scientists. But there are too few of them. In the end, the lobbying groups of the biggest companies and the associations with the most capital win out.

Here we can get a sense of an important "ingredient" for understanding democracy: evidently, purely formal democratic processes can be pushed through against social justice and thus against the "content" of democracy. That must change. And the organisation of the economy, with the financial sector at its core, seems to play the most important role in that.

The financial system

At the weekly global Zoom meetings of the FFF movement during the whole of the pandemic time, there are often a hundred young people from across the world taking part, so that together with their banners they don't all fit onto a single Zoom screen. The richer northern countries are in the process of getting vaccinated, while the countries of the Global South are barely receiving medicine.

Meanwhile, one insight becomes clearer to many of us during those months: one of the most influential factors in our relationship with each other and with nature is the way in which the economy is organised, in terms of its problematic centre, the finance sector, the banks, which make enormous profits in Sweden year after year, including and especially by trading in fossil fuels. In Sweden and worldwide, the rich get richer, partly because of this trading. There has not been such inequality since the global financial crisis one hundred years ago, according to the most important economic journalist in the country (Cervenka 2022).

Complementary to events in other sectors (forest, fossil industry, agriculture etc.), this is the factor which shapes everything, the core of a market organised along capitalist lines, obeying rules that could also be changed (see Raworth 2018; Göpel 2016). Thus, in this area too, a global FFF working group emerges which dedicates itself, together with academics, to precisely this financial system.

There are protest actions such as the one against the Standard Chartered Bank, which also sponsors FC Liverpool. They are often led by young people in the countries most affected by the crisis. They also try to show that it is not enough to follow the tendency of the big NGOs such as 350 and Climate Action Network, and just to ask the banks to "divest", meaning not to invest in fossil fuels, as most financial institutes have continued to do with billions of investment every year; just like pensions funds and universities.

No, say the young people, the financial system also has to become sustainable and really – in terms of content – democratic. And they receive support from many scientists who have joined together in Sweden to form the not-for-profit association Researchers' Desk (www.researchersdesk.se), a kind of Scientists For Future, initiated by Toya Westberg and some of her colleagues.

Some of these scientists point out the actual nature of our form of economy and draw attention to the fact that not all markets are capitalist, or have to be capitalist. Terms such as "investment" and "profit" are used misleadingly, when what is meant is returns on capital. Such insights could help to see the extent to which a relationship of domination is built into our society, between those who own capital and those who work in the companies that make these profits possible. Here the potential for change begins to emerge, leading in the direction of a just democracy, they say. Some researchers give a lecture for the young people on the structure of corporations, particularly banks, and their problematic legal definition, which basically forces them to pay attention to profit primarily and to exploit nature and humans – and they explain how we could replace them with more democratic forms of organisation and definitions of business goals, for instance in a postcapitalist economy (see the lectures on researchersdesk.se; see also Raworth 2018).

The Stockholmers join with specialists from "Fair Funding" and analyse the different banks in the city. The biggest look particularly bad when it comes to sustainability. However, some are based on a new model, and get by far the best ratings from the activists. So it really would be possible, we gradually begin to see, to organise the core of the economy through political regulations in order to reduce the incentive to destroy nature; and so that those who do have capital at their disposal no longer get richer without personal risk at the cost of the workers. In such a society, people would be able to meet each other on an equal footing, and power would be distributed. At the same time, one of the main motors behind these business models would disappear, since they automatically demand exponential growth (Schmelzer et al. 2022). There are numerous alternative models of common ownership, cooperation, or other approaches

(see the chapter on the economy and Davos). They could – and if we don't want to exacerbate the climate and biodiversity crises, they must – become the legal norm through democratic regulations, according to researchers.

This could counteract the wrongs of the undemocratic situation we are currently in, in which owners of capital become ever richer without doing anything to earn their wealth. Countries such as Sweden have no tax on wealth or on inheritance (Cervenka 2022), which leads – along with the mechanisms whereby cultural capital is inherited in the education sector – to a situation in which power in society is pre-structured in a modern form of feudalism, unequal and unjust.

And once again the question: how do we formulate the basic problem, if formal democratic processes allow the wrong power structures to be defended – against the "substance" of democracy? Here, too, this is about a few huge actors controlled by a small sector of society mainly dominated by men, who are working with the same ideology as non-regenerative forestry and agriculture, and who are working together with the key powers behind the fossil industry.

The ideology of these actors still continues to dominate the economics training offered by universities (this has been criticised by the international university movement "Rethinking Economics", which argues that there has been a "dogmatic" distortion of scientific thinking: https://www.rethinkeconomics.org). And the broad masses of the population, including most of my colleagues at Stockholm University, may view these events sceptically, but do not speak up – as if there were no way of changing it or no alternatives. A further important insight is that the central banks could redefine their task and their structure and bring about sustainable transformation democratically (see Vogl 2021).

Is all of that actually legal, the activists ask themselves, and continue to collect pinecones. How can formal democratic regulations such as the definition of property law enable rich people to enrich themselves further by destroying what is needed for life?

This is about structural problems, it seems to me, which cannot be reduced to psychological phenomena such as greed. Similarly, it is not so much sociological categories such as "strata of society" that are relevant here, but rather political economic categories such as "class": it is not about what people want psychologically, or which part of society people belong to, but about the extent to which we reproduce the structures giving people more power at the expense

of others. Structurally, the current definition of democracy seems to be undermining the actual preservation of democracy.

Legislation and legal cases

That is why another global group is working on the role of courts and the law. Can they stop this destruction of life through the courts; can they redefine the connections between property, freedom, and consideration for future generations?

Some of the Mynttorget group on the tree trunk are also reading up on this subject and starting court cases against their states and against the EU, because they are not responding to the climate crisis as a crisis. They are helped by specialists from Scientists For Future. But what can they base their cases on? On the declaration of the rights of the child? "You would have to point to concrete cases in which people have already been harmed now by the wrong policies," say some law professors at Stockholm University. Others refer to the right of children to grow up without existential angst. In the wake of the Dutch Urgenda suit, the young activists found projects such as "Aurora" in Sweden (supported by more than 1600 researchers), which prosecute the state. In Switzerland, it's the women of the "Klimaseniorinnen" ("Climate Seniors") who go to court (www.klimaseniorinnen.ch).

For many of them, it is also not possible to understand why the main owners and the upper management of the most important actors in the fossil society (banks which invest in fossil production; fossil corporations; forestry and agriculture which damage soil and forests etc.) are not taken to court more often, as a farmer in Peru did with RWE, the German energy corporation, because climate change was destroying the environment where he lived (Marusczyk 2017).

They are well aware that their production methods and profits have lethal consequences. Why should we accept that? The fabric of integrity, which we all share, is damaged by them, we could say.

A further FFF group is fighting to ensure that gas is not defined as sustainable by the EU. A sixth is focusing on mining economy and is fighting together with the Sami in the north of Scandinavia around Gállok against a new mine which is planned in the heart of reindeer country. A seventh is putting up resistance to problematic technologies such as "solar geoengineering". An eighth is forming a group together with climate activists in the trade unions. And of

course, there is a huge working group worldwide to stop the fossil industry. Much of this is presented on the global Fridays For Future website. A huge, endlessly varied world of working projects has emerged, which everyone can join.

And still, I ask myself: what kind of structures are required by this struggle? How do law, politics, finance, the economy, and politics hang together? And what role is played by science? Why does hardly anyone listen to the researchers the young people are working together with? Why do task force experts have more effect when it comes to the corona pandemic than they do in relation to the climate crisis?

The Scientists For Future meet

The meeting with the European Scientists For Future finally begins. Around 40 researchers meet once a month for a quarter of a year. "There is a worry, not just among some of the young people," I say as an introduction to the discussions, "that we are losing too many of these struggles and trying to do too much at once. They are happy to work together with us researchers, but they are also getting burnt out." Most of the scientists agree. "And above all: in this kind of NGO-like work, they can't really express the grief and anger which they carry within them, when they see how bureaucratically the clearcutting of forests and the slaughter of millions of animals are being justified and continued." Agreement again. "Is this form of activism appropriate? Is there not a way, instead of only fighting the different heads of this hydra, to cut a single Gordian knot? Which scientific analysis can we offer on that?"

Over the next weeks, we keep on meeting, and set about dealing with the question of how we can approach the different struggles as part of one fight. Gradually, a picture becomes ever clearer to me, and a theory emerges which may not be shared by everyone, but which still seems to open up a new way to understand our difficult situation; and with that, possible ways out. There are three levels which seem apparent to me in these discussions. Few people have a problem with the first level. It consists of concrete policy proposals (investment in regenerative agricultural methods, bans on forest clearance, etc.); the second is the level of the economic, societal system (see Göpel, Hickel, Raworth etc.). But there is still a third level which I often find is missing from the discussion: the philosophy and worldview behind the definition of democracy.

Substantial and formal democracy – a new approach

I propose that we need a new understanding of the democratic framework of our shared life. And in that context, a fundamental distinction can play a central role.

If we want to change the situation, wouldn't it be helpful to distinguish between a "substantial" and a "formal" aspect of democracy, and to understand the relationship between the two – in politics and in the movements?

This distinction is not identical to the difference – defined in specialist literature – between "procedural" and "substantive" aspects of democracy (see e.g. Pansardi 2016; Jacobs/Shapiro 2013). "Substantive", in that context, relates more to the participation and influence of the population beyond elections, and thus still to aspects of democracy as a form of a collective decision-making process, not as content (for an affirmative and critical description of deliberative and participatory democracy, see Pelluchon 2019). And the common distinction between "input" and "throughput" also doesn't seem to do justice to the problem. This is not about process and result as aspects legitimising democratic decisions (see Schmidt 2013).

Substantial democracy means thinking about democracy in terms of the quality of relations and structures, as most people probably do intuitively. It corresponds to the demand or idea that all people can meet on an equal footing, free and of equal value, beyond personal and structural relationships of domination (and submission), and beyond the exploitation of nature and other humans; not forcing people to give up their connection with themselves, others and nature, but creating social spaces in which such contact becomes possible (see the chapter on education for a detailed description). It also entails that we all pay attention to ensuring that everyone has enough resources – or that they receive them unconditionally – in order to live a dignified life, and to be able to engage in political decisions, without overstepping the planetary limits, including for future generations. (In this sense, it has nothing to do with the imagination of a "people's will" in right-wing populism and the critique of formal democracy which is based on this idea.)

It is this substantial aspect which seems to be ignored in all these fights. Democracy is often only defined formally, with the focus not on the quality of relationships, but on the individual or the collective and the processes and rights affecting them; for example, the right to take part in elections or to own property (a classic text is Dahl 2015). There seems to be something wrong about the way we look at the relationship between these two sides.

Governments elected on a formally democratic basis pass laws which neglect the substantial idea of democracy, which destroy habitats, forests and soil, and exploit workers or avoid guaranteeing democracy in the workplace; they are limited by national borders, preferring parts of their own population at the expense of people in other parts of the world and thus making it impossible for people to interact and participate in a democratic way on an equal footing. This legitimises relationships of domination, and thus the opposite of substantial democracy.

Domination and care

This approach throws new light on a basic problem which has also been tackled by the New York philosopher Nancy Fraser (2022).

Late capitalism is not just an economic system, she says, but a societal system, which leads problematically to a limited view of democracy as an aspect of a pre-defined, small political sphere, artificially separated from the sphere of the economy. That is why so many people today have the feeling that they have no voice when it comes to the big questions of our time. Aren't the answers basically already predefined by this societal system?

It only seems to work because it exploits three areas: nature, which is seen as a "free resource" and as a place to leave "waste"; the riches of the people in the Global South which have been exploited throughout colonial history and through the current trade in raw materials, for instance; and the "reproductive work" which is often carried out unpaid by women, including childrearing and other care work. Only because these three forms of domination are ignored – that is, because we do not meet each other as equals – can this form of society exist. In my terms: the substantial aspects of democracy, the non-exploitative approach and the caring encounter on an equal footing including the distribution of power – all of those slide out of reach.

The outline of a solution

During the conversations with my colleagues, a problem comes up. A few of them say: you're mixing up two completely different aspects, apples and oranges; that is, the quality of relationships on the one hand, and structural aspects on the other. How can you make such a strange transition from a discus-

sion of "encounters on an equal footing", from social interactions and how they are experienced, to political structures and economic systems?

But to me this seems to be the crucial point: we should be combining social psychology and structures in a new way, anchoring both in what I would call the "logic" of social and political relations: the logic of domination or of substantial democracy. With parallels to the work of such disparate thinkers as Hegel, Merleau-Ponty and von Redecker, this approach is about tracing a societal logic and making the phenomena of domination visible, not only in concrete relationships with one another, but also as solidified structures.

The basic phenomenon of domination can be studied on a small scale in terms of interpersonal (racist, antifeminist, heteronormative etc.) experience, on a medium scale in relation to nature, the river, a specific forest, or animals, and on a large scale in terms of political and economic structures. These structures, as well as our relationship to nature, must be imbued with the logic of substantial democracy.

With these ideas as a point of departure, I suggest that we might be able to understand better the desperate fights over individual political spheres – and why these fights are not enough. We might then be able to get a sense of the common features of forestry, agriculture, the financial sector and energy policy, which make it so difficult to push through policies that would correspond to the Paris Agreement and would therefore be democratically justified.

Often it is big companies that focus on economic growth through overexploitation of nature and workers. Regardless of whether these companies are private or state run, they are part of a market organised along capitalist lines; often run by men who belong to cliques with good connections to lobbying, the financial sector and political parties, and to the academic landscape. And all of this is justified in the name of democracy – understood in a narrow, formal sense.

How can these structures be changed through the idea of substantial democracy? A new framework could provide the sustainable guidelines within which all kinds of production should take place, so that enough is produced for everyone without going beyond the limits of the planet or destroying forests and soil. In this way, a kind of basis for a Marshall Plan could be created: with a strictly minimal CO_2 budget, an immediate moratorium on new fossil projects as well as the dismantling of existing ones; and the joint unconditional provision of renewable energy as well as the basic services which are necessary worldwide for a dignified life. This would enable freedom – understood

democratically – meaning the scope we can make full use of without harming the lives of others (see the appendix for more specific policies).

This solution, the anchoring of a new political crisis framework including a plan for transformation, is therefore based on the concept of a substantial democracy. But the understanding of substantial democracy is not set in stone. It has to be discovered again and again and defined through formally democratic processes. This is a complex, fascinating interplay between substance and form, which continually redefines what it means to encounter one another without domination, as equal and free.

The spheres of law, family, education, economy, and politics might appear to be separate, constituting independent systems and defining what sociology calls modern, "differentiated" societies (Giddens 2021). This apparent separation is seemingly based on the urge for and the enabling of freedom. However, this system actually is much more bound together, and enables property relations, which support also a logic of domination. Von Redecker (2020) calls it "Sachherrschaft", an objectifying relation of domination. We can deal with animals and forests almost as we wish – restricted only by very limited legislation that always comes "after the fact", too late. In this respect, these sectors are not separate at all. The economy and private property (including forests, agriculture), the legal system, education and politics are all connected. They spell out and enforce this idea of freedom as licence to own and ability to use, often even if it is a destructive form of abuse. Whereby the real aim of it all, the protection of people, is turned into the opposite: the protection of those practices that do not adhere to the aims of substantial democracy.

The knowledge of how to build such substantial democratic, regenerative relationships with each other and with nature, on the other hand, is lacking in most of our society; we scientists agree on that. It is lacking at the university; it is – to a large extent – lacking in the education system that underlies agriculture, forestry, economics and so on (see the chapter on education for an alternative model). In this way, we have to lose all these battles.

In these months, we talk a lot with the indigenous people in Sweden, but also in other parts of the world, we understand better where our history has led us. What we need, some of the scientists suggest who come to see us in Mynttorget, are new Lockes and Jeffersons who would redefine freedom and integrity with dignity and human rights, now informed by indigenous thinking, eco-feminism and so on, thinkers who care for the environment and undo structures of domination. In short, we need an understanding of substantial democracy that permeates the definition of formal democracy. Not only in the

form of constitutions that correct imbalances, but already in the definition of security, integrity and freedom.

That would be a possible definition of sustainability: when the formal aspects of democracy mirror the substance; and vice versa. It is then not a matter of undermining the modern distinction between ethics, economy, politics, and law; but of dialectically suspending it, preserving it, but transcending it into the dimension that connects them: precisely the preservation of the individual space of integrity and the common fabric of integrity. We could say: the space of integrity – unlike rights – cannot be granted or taken away from someone as an idea. It is there and can be violated. And we as a society have to come up with structures and concepts to protect it. Therefore, we should rethink rights. Rights in this sense are then not arbitrarily assigned laws as objective rights and entitlements as subjective ones, but more the result of a work of "making visible" what is already there, given to us as spaces of integrity.

But because incorporating substantial democracy represents a challenge to power relations and existing economic interests, such a framework and plan will never be implemented purely through formal processes such as elections, as the previous years have taught all of the activists. That is why we need our grassroots movements, the uprising of the "people". If we protest in the streets, we ought to do so under the banner of this new framework and the demand for substantial democracy, not only individual policies in specific sectors, and not only general slogans.

So we could shift the concept of this democratic encounter to centre stage, in universities, education, law, the economy and politics, which would then go well beyond the party political. But formal democracy, too, can be changed in this way: for instance, by introducing a chamber in parliaments which would take the form of permanent citizens' assemblies, advised by scientists, and taking account of future generations and young people. Or by adapting national constitutions or the UN charter (see the chapter about the first global strike).

The basic phenomenon

In my presentation to the Scientists For Future, I come back to the basic phenomenon, the exploration of what it means to be in contact and in exchange with one another – or domination, oppression, cutting ourselves off out of fear, out of compulsion; becoming passive, too. This central phenomenon seems to connect very different branches of science. When we understand

that, we might hopefully be able to understand better how to be in the world in a sustainable way, what regenerative forestry, agriculture or finance is; and what creates the "armour" protecting the lobbying cliques (see Fopp 2016). Sustainability, in this approach, is not only the distribution of resources over several decades (Brundtland 1987), but also a particular relationship to the world, right now.

At Stockholm University, in our teacher training course, we set out to explore this "logic of domination – or being humane" by playing with the habitus of authoritarian characters when we write plays about them; about the grey men in *Momo* (by Michael Ende), and others. There are understandable mechanisms behind this position, this behaviour, this ideology. The violence does not become any better when we understand it. But a certain distance becomes possible for a few moments, including within the university landscape. We know that such "armour" on an individual level can often only be removed against resistance and at a societal level through movements which stand up and name oppressive behaviour as what it is and try to create the opposite: humanity which sees through domination and does not ignore it, does not just condemn it in moral terms, but looks at its impulses and transforms them into something better.

Ronia, the Robber's Daughter

And we try to approach this dimension of substantial democracy even in the theatre rooms. This time we are working with the book *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, by Astrid Lindgren (2018). The children of the warring bands of robbers, Ronia and Birk, who like each other, have run off into the woods and are sitting leaning against a tree trunk on the imaginary forest floor. I have divided the students into pairs. They have been banished from the castles of their fathers, who want to continue waging war against their neighbours. And now they are surviving in the forest. Improvise: what have you experienced outdoors today? How are your thoughts going back to the castle, to your parents, who are quarrelling? What do you want, what do you need?

All of them improvise simultaneously in every corner of the room, as is typical of drama education (see McAvoy 2022). No one is watching. It basically never happens that someone has nothing to say, quite the opposite, many of them want to stay in this fictional scene and in their roles, in the forest in the evening, and talk about those who make their lives difficult and how to get out

of this situation. We all become present in the room, and at the same time absent – we disappear into shared imagination. But this is connected with nature, with our embodied selves, with our individual experiences, biographies, needs; in the play it is connected with hunger, with fear of the parents' generation, which clings to destructive behaviour and does not see nature; the fascination with the forest. We try to understand how we can forgive, look after each other, find our way out of the dark, surrounded by magic beings, trolls, and stories. Fear, for moments at least, becomes a natural part of the everyday, something that can be handled.

Here it is only a game. But reality looks very different for all the young people with whom the activists are in daily contact, and whose forests are being cut down. Many of them who are protecting the forests are brutally killed, in Brazil, for instance (McGrath 2022). This also becomes clear to the young people in their communication with their indigenous peers, who work together with them and chat with them online. Through deforestation, the focus on biomass production, and especially through global warming, their home is being radically changed. Its existence is increasingly under threat (on the global dimension, see Abate/Kronk 2013).

Does drama education and improvisation even achieve anything, I ask myself then. Is this just an incredibly privileged activity, here in a protected space for a middle class in the rich north? But we are discovering something fundamental. A reason for the destruction of the environment and logic behind agriculture is precisely the phenomenon of armour, of hardening, the development of authoritarian characters by patterns of muscle tensions, with their economic and philosophical ideologies, which so many hang on to across the world. And condemning this in a pure moral sense is not our only option; we can play with all these dominating impulses, getting into a realm beyond oppression and justice: of "being humane" (see the chapter on education).

In the end, the quarrelling robbers are reconciled with their children. In Lindgren's book, it is the children who have to take the first step, so that the older generation understand that their war is becoming a war against the young. The students are not much older than the Mynttorget group. Many understand the perspective of the children and young people. Slowly, they say goodbye to the imaginary world and go out into the real one.

The decisions of the German Constitutional Court and the EU: setbacks and progress

And it's moving on, after all – the real world. In the middle of the discussions in the Scientists For Future Zoom call, the sustainability researcher Felix Ekardt storms in (for his concept of sustainability, see Ekardt 2019). "Celebrate, we have to celebrate," he says, bringing the news that the German Constitutional Court has announced a trailblazing ruling, which is even discussed in the global media (Eddy 2021). The German government is ordered to make its climate policy stricter. This means that a charge is being upheld which Felix himself helped on its way years ago, and which was partly formulated by him.

Above all, he says, this is about the notion of freedom, and about the concept of intergenerationality. That is what is trailblazing. For the first time, the legally binding understanding of freedom has been clearly linked to the freedom of future generations, and through this, it is connected with the way in which we deal with the climate crisis (Calliess 2023).

At this time, some global activists begin to feel more hopeful in general. In another historic court case, the oil concern Shell is forced to take responsibility for the emissions caused by the use of products, meaning the burning of oil (Boffey 2021). The responsibility of business models is redefined and extended into the area known as "Scope 3": not only in relation to CO2 and the global warming caused by a business in its production process, or its suppliers, but also in relation to the gases released when the products are used, meaning the burning of petrol and so on. This is met with enormous relief. Could it mean that the courts can stop the fossil industry?

But the clouds only disappear for a few weeks. Then a new, even bigger storm begins to brew, with decisions coming in one after another which many people have been working towards for months or years. In the EU's taxonomy, gas and nuclear energy are classed as sustainable, against every scientific judgement of the situation (Hodgson 2022). Shell simply shifts its headquarters away from the Netherlands and avoids the court ruling; oil projects continue to be expanded worldwide. The head of sustainability at the British bank HSBC, symbolically for the financial sector, makes a similar speech to Malpass of the World Bank, in which he rejects the idea of paying attention to the climate crisis and calls on the financial sector to focus only on the next five years (Civillini 2023). The fossil industries make enormous profits, and the states invest the overwhelming majority of tax income in the fossil society, not in renewable energies. Even the oldest forests in Sweden are cut down, just like

the rainforest, at record speed. The Swedish government continues to insist that the EU should relax its regulations on this. And the agricultural policy for the next seven years is softened slightly in the EU parliament, but still benefits the big non-sustainable companies which are exacerbating the climate crisis and the extinction of species (Boffey 2021/2). No real shift away from animal-based diets or at least from factory farming towards regenerative agriculture is in sight, which would be needed to obey the Paris Agreement.

In these months in 2021 and 2022, the fossil society fights back. And it hits those hardest who have done nothing to deserve it. But only slightly later, the historic international treaties arrive for the protection of the oceans and – at COP15 – biodiversity (UNEP 2022). The tireless activism of thousands of people worldwide has had an effect, especially because it has brought together different levels: university research and street activism, leadership by the most affected people worldwide and solidarity from tens of thousands of young people; work on clear transnational legal proposals (Greenfield 2023) and countless protest actions on the ground.

And finally, young climate strike activists such as Adélaïde Charlier are sitting in the European Parliament and presenting a "Beyond Growth" plan, together with hundreds of researchers (Evroux et al. 2023). Their joint project has clear contours: the demand for growth has to be given up as a goal and replaced by the "doughnut" approach (Raworth 2018). Basic services (not only education and health, but also transport, energy and accommodation) could be provided to all citizens unconditionally; production in workplaces has to be restructured democratically and organised in such a way that it does not rely on wearing out products and a circular economy becomes possible. Care work should be at the centre of the economy, as an aspect which can bring equality closer. In relation to the Global South, Europe should not only forgive national debt, but change its economic approach to prevent exploitative practices and structures. All of this would have been unthinkable only a few years ago, at the time when Greta made her speech in the same location. These ideas would have been rejected as extremist.

But the political parties are still not standing up for these ideas themselves; even left-wing and green parties are not doing so, at least not in most European countries. Nevertheless, in these hours, in these formally democratic spaces, the substance of democracy is being spelled out by an intergenerational movement which cannot be stopped.

People For Future and the "Theory of Change"

During these months, the older activists around the Mynttorget group put part of this program into practice, as People For Future. They organise themselves weekly, even daily, into a movement which is to be easily accessible to all (older than 28 years), but which should both stand up for systemic changes and push them forward, while not neglecting the struggle for the individual policy areas. In this way, the movement tries to tie together three levels: concrete policies to protect the forests and stop greenhouse gases; making a new political framework clear, which should be introduced globally and nationally in the form of CO_2 budgets and a moratorium on all new fossil infrastructure, with the help of a sustainable economic approach inspired by the doughnut economy and similar ideas; and the philosophical and legal changes in approach when it comes to democracy, so that the substance of encounters on an equal footing beyond domination is not damaged by the formal aspects but instead redefines and realigns those aspects.

Striking on Fridays remains the central focus for those who have the privilege to be able to do so. Many do not go to their workplaces, or at least take what they call an "emergency break". And they make this form of non-cooperation visible online. The conviction behind this: a new framework can only be established if a mass movement stands up for it and if for example hundreds of thousands gather on Fridays in solidarity with the young people and interrupt "business as usual".

A website is created for the People For Future, along with a Swedish manifesto. Andrea, Lena, Cilla, Christine, Jörg, Johan, Niclas, Jeannette, Jonas, Ann-Lis, Peter, Caroline, Eva, Anders, Shahin, Karin, Alexandre, Fabia, Valérie and many more invest their time in community work. The biggest project this year: demanding this new political framework, also with the help of a kind of scientifically supported Climate Task Force. A few go through the European models which already include similar practices, talk to those responsible, weigh the upsides and drawbacks of bringing science into politics, and sketch out a model which they then demand from the government in an open letter in the newspaper ETC (Herrera et al. 2021).

The pinecones and the global strike

Finally, the time has come. The global double strike in September and October 2021 is approaching, for which the young people have collected pinecones in the woods. The group prepares itself in the rooms of the Karolinska Institute, the medical university in Stockholm. The stage has to be organised, the march has to be planned and the speakers have to be chosen, as usual. Soon they will set off into the city and plaster it with posters.

On the Friday itself, they get up early – along with hundreds of thousands worldwide in different time zones – and distribute the pinecones on the ground in front of parliament: #UprootTheSystem is written there. Forest, agriculture, the fossil society and finance should be thought of in conjunction. If we want to stop emissions, we must see the full picture, they say, across the whole world.

When they then march through the city to the Vasapark, at around noon, accompanied by thousands of Stockholmers, the visitors from the MAPA countries which are most affected by the crises walk at the front: activists from the Philippines, Mexico, Argentina, Kenya, and so on. They are visiting their peers so that they can travel on together to the COP meeting in Glasgow. Their stories and their voices should be heard most clearly, the young activists say.

On the stage in Vasaparken, no more than a hundred metres away from the flat in which Astrid Lindgren came up with stories such as *Ronia, the Rob-*

ber's Daughter, not only the climate strike activists make speeches, but also the young activists from Black Lives Matter and from the Sami youth organisation Saminuorra. The young people are united in a generation of solidarity, with a transnational and intersectional focus, demanding truly fair sustainability. They stay for a long time in the park and enjoy the sunlight, which catches on the autumn leaves. Several thousand adults are here to support them, and to stand up as People For Future.

The manifesto

But still, there is hardly any reaction from politicians. Nothing but silence from Prime Minister Löfven and the Green Minister for the Environment Lövin – which is no different from their reaction to the huge marches before the pandemic.

And so the young people worry that these individual fights over the forest, over agriculture, over emissions and the financial sector will simply fizzle out. "Shouldn't we write down what is needed right now in terms of concrete policies, so that it is clear to everyone how far away we are from all that, but that it could also be changed?" they ask themselves in the autumn of 2021. "The next elections are coming up in one year. The parties are not really reacting to the things that make this a crisis. We can show everyone what would be a plan to make a good life possible for everyone." And for the first time since the founding of FFF in Sweden, the young people begin the project of a concrete "manifesto". What does their strike demand to uphold the Paris Agreement actually mean? They now want both: they don't want to lose sight of concrete changes to their world, the forest, the fields – and they still want to draw the focus to the big picture.

The big three topics are clear. The first is to take the crisis seriously as a crisis, which means drastically reducing emissions through CO2 budgets and making a plan for concrete measures to protect the forest and for regenerative agriculture (banning invasive species, moving away from monocultures and aggressive forest clearance, and so on), as well as globally putting a stop to all new fossil infrastructure and building a renewable infrastructure in its place. Secondly, all of that should happen on a socially and globally just basis; in terms of paying "fair shares", forgiving debt and paying reparations to the Global South, and in terms of the perspective on the rights of the indigenous population; and with the focus on the workers and the most vulnerable peo-

ple in society. Thirdly, through this, democracy should be strengthened, young people should be involved in political decisions, and so should science; intergenerational justice should be ensured; media and education (school and university) should include a deeper knowledge of the crises and should be radically reformed, and participative democracy should be expanded.

At a press conference in Stockholm, Alde, Andreas, Agnes and Linna present the ideas which could give them a future; as well as to their peers in the whole of Sweden: to Claudia, Denise, Idun, Matilda, Karla, Falk, Eva, Valérie, Fabia, Erik, Sophia, Almut, Anton, Isabelle, Ell, Tindra, Chris, Taylor, Eira, Greta, Douglas, Janka, Simon, Samuel, Esmeralda, Nils, Raquel, Angus, Vega, Nora, Linnéa, Ebba, Elliot, Lilly, Lisa, Astrid, Hanna, Ozzy, Noëmi, Hjalmar, Sofia, Aron, Emmy, Maya, Leo, Judith, Ella, Filippa, Alex, Lydia, Alice, Hanna, Mina, Edit, Eira, Rocky, Minna, Melda, Astrid, and so many more. The text is published on the website of Fridays For Future Sverige (2022) and forms the background of the strike placards for the elections. It is aimed both at the rulers and – above all – at the whole population.

In this way, the unity of the struggles becomes visible. But in order to change politics, a mobilisation of the masses using disruptive methods – such as the non-cooperation and strikes on Fridays – seems to be needed. It is not enough to fight the many individual battles – and they can be fought by NGOs as well. Now, it is about expanding the movement as a disruptive grassroots movement. And how this is done should mirror the intended target of the political transformation: to establishing substantial democratic relations, and treating each other as equal and free, in a network which is open for everyone to join.

News that the Thwaites Glacier shows cracks and fissures shocks the world (Vidal 2021). The layer of ice in front of the glacier is melting away from underneath, affected by warmer ocean waters. When this plug breaks away, there is nothing holding back the glacier ice itself. The Antarctic ice is melting so rapidly that researchers are saying it may already be too late to avoid a catastrophic rise in sea levels.

The German Constitutional Court upholds the climate lawsuit and obliges the government to change its policies so that everyone's freedom is guaranteed, including the freedom of future generations.

In a landmark case, a court in the Hague orders Royal Dutch Shell to cut its global carbon emissions by 45 percent by the end of 2030 (Boffey 26.5.2021). Some months later, Shell moves its headquarters to London.

The EU defines both gas and nuclear energy as sustainable transition energies in the taxonomy (Rankin 2022).