

Fighting For Water: Resisting Privatization In Europe



Water is a fundamental human right, yet in recent years, we have seen a growing trend of water privatization attempts across Europe. This move towards profit-driven control over a basic necessity has sparked outrage among communities and activists who are fighting back to protect their access to clean, affordable water. In this article, we will explore the challenges posed by water privatization in Europe and the various resistance efforts taking place.

The Threat of Water Privatization

Water privatization refers to the transfer of water supply and management from the public sector to private companies. Proponents argue that this allows for greater efficiency and innovation, but opponents argue that it often comes at the expense of accessibility and affordability. When private corporations take control of water resources, their primary objective becomes profit, leading to skyrocketing prices and reduced services for vulnerable communities.



Fighting for Water: Resisting Privatization in

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In Europe, water privatization attempts have been met with significant opposition. Countries like Greece, Portugal, and France have witnessed large-scale protests and social movements demanding the protection of water as a common good. These movements argue that access to clean water is a basic human right and should not be subject to corporate interests.

Community Resistance

Communities across Europe have been at the forefront of the battle against water privatization. Grassroots organizations, activists, and concerned citizens have joined forces to protect their water resources. One such inspiring example is the

Barcelona-based movement called "Aigua és Vida" (Water is Life) which successfully prevented the privatization of the city's water supply in 2015. Their tireless organizing efforts and mobilization of public support sent a powerful message to the government and corporate entities that the people will not surrender their rights easily.



Similarly, in France, the water privatization project faced strong resistance from individuals and organizations. The Coalition Against Water Privatization (CAP) launched a national campaign highlighting the dangers of privatization. Through public demonstrations, petitions, and legal actions, CAP managed to bring attention to the potential negative consequences and ultimately succeeded in preventing further privatization attempts in several regions.

Legal and Political Challenges

While grassroots movements play a crucial role in raising awareness and mobilizing public support, legal and political strategies are also critical to combating water privatization. One such approach is the recognition of the human right to water at the legal level. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) "Water and Sanitation are a Human Right" collected over 1.9 million signatures from across Europe, urging the European Union to recognize water and sanitation as human rights and take measures to prevent privatization. These collective efforts can put pressure on policymakers to prioritize the preservation of public water resources.

Furthermore, political leadership is essential in safeguarding public control over water. For instance, the Portuguese government reversed the privatization of water services in Lisbon in response to public pressure and the rising costs faced by citizens. This shift in policy demonstrates the power of collective action in influencing decision-makers and bringing about positive change.

Looking Ahead



Water is a precious resource that is vital for human survival and should not be treated as a commodity. The ongoing resistance against water privatization in Europe highlights the determination of individuals and communities to protect their rights and preserve this essential element of life.

As we move forward, it is crucial to continue building strong networks and alliances to resist privatization attempts, engage in political advocacy, and promote sustainable water management practices. By raising awareness about the potential consequences of water privatization and actively participating in decision-making processes, we can ensure that future generations have equitable access to clean water.

Together, we can fight for water as a common good and safeguard this precious resource for the benefit of all.



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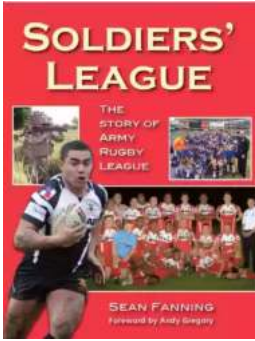
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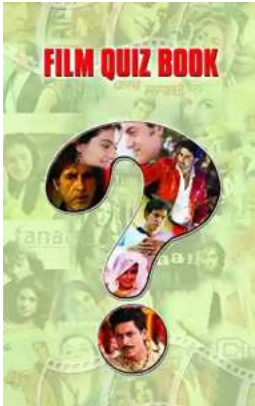
In the wake of the global financial crisis, water services have come under renewed neoliberal assault across Europe. At the same time, the struggle against water privatization has continued to pick up pace; from the re-municipalization of water in Grenoble in 2000, to the United Nations declaration of water as a human right in 2010.

In *Fighting for Water*, Andreas Bieler draws on years of extensive fieldwork to dissect the underlying dynamics of the struggle for public water in Europe. By analysing the successful referendum against water privatization in Italy, the European Citizens' Initiative on 'Water and Sanitation are a Human Right', the struggles against water privatization in Greece and water charges in Ireland, Bieler shows why water has been a fruitful arena for resistance against neoliberal restructuring.



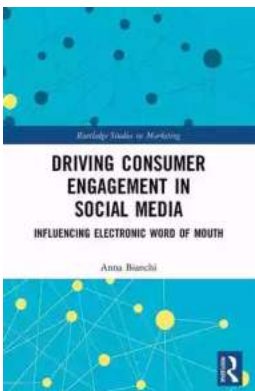
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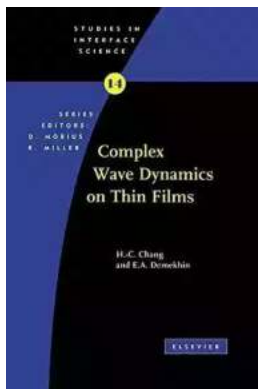
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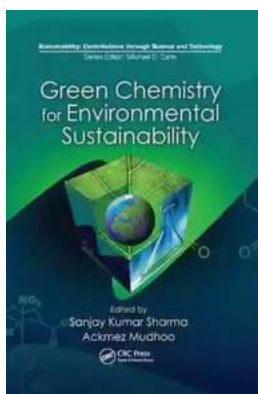
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