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Review: Ultra Ecologicus: Les Nouveaux Croisés de l'Écologie [Ecology's New Crusaders]

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Lomazzi, M., *Ultra Ecologicus: Les Nouveaux Croisés de l'Écologie*. Paris: Flammarion, 2022. 352 pp. ISBN: 9782080256652, eBook, €19.90.

The title of *Ultra Ecologicus: Les Nouveaux Croisés de l'Écologie* is partially in Latin, but the text itself is fully in French. No English translation is available at this moment. These “new crusaders of ecology” studied here have various names, denominations, and identities. The author wanted to focus and distinguish these trends and ideologies with so many ongoing social movements related to ecologism and environmentalism in France and elsewhere. Why does that matter, and why do we need another book about these green activists? For at least two good reasons. First, even though they seem similar from the outside, these green movements are different one from the other in terms of membership, *raison d'être*, implications, and ways to act; while some are gentle and pacifist, others (but not all of them) can justify violence, deterioration of belongings, defiance, and even civil disobedience. This is where comes the second reason: these alternative groups do exist; their members and activists are usually seen as radical, uncontrolled, and sometimes as outlaws. By doing so, in extremist ways, they attract some public awareness. They can capture the mainstream media's attention, sometimes at the risk of an unwanted disqualification and delegitimization of the cause they are trying to advocate.

Marc Lomazzi provides a detailed mapping of these groups and political parties. His categorization of green activists is quite impressive (although he did not invent these names for movements): climate activists, ecofeminists, anti-techs, Zadists, neo-utopians, anti-growth, collapsologists, eco-survivalists, radical animalists, anti-speciesists, and a few more. Each trend listed here gets a dedicated chapter that provides a balance of facts but also criticism. We understand that some of these younger movements adopt older causes such as the anti-nuclear opponents (the equivalent of the “No Nukes” trend in 20th Century). Others have created their own tag name: for example, the Zadists are groups of French militants that aim to protect, defend, or occupy a terrain, forest, or natural sector that is targeted by promoters or

industries for industrial development; the acronym ZAD stands for “zone à défendre” (ZAD) or “Zone to Defend”.

However, some of these movements are not just epiphenomena, and should be taken seriously. In France, some of these activists have been elected as MPs or even as mayors in several small or medium-sized cities; the most popular political party is named “*Europe Écologie les Verts*” (thus the green colour on this book’s cover), using the ÉÉLV acronym. Since a few decades, they do represent a real, officialised, and even institutionalised political force in France. Therefore, these new crusaders of ecology are not always protesting in the streets: they are in some cases elected and working in city halls in France, and even at the European Parliament in Strasbourg and Brussels.

But what can an ecologist living outside Europe could learn from this rare book about the *Ultra Ecologicus*? Comparing all these social movements related to ecology can show a lot about organisation, mobilisation, legitimacy, social acceptance, and social change. While some of these movements have similar equivalents in the United States (for example the similitudes of some European campaigners with the Amish in New England), others have no equivalent anywhere else. But the transition between being an obscure and unorganised alternative movement versus an officially recognised party is like a turning point and sometimes an unexpected result; thus, it is the best way to institutionalise the ideas and projects related to ecologism in a democratic way. The utopia can become closer to a reality.

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