

THE LAND QUESTION / DIE BODENFRAGE

in Context



Oktober 30 - 31, 2025

Auditorium, Grimm-Zentrum, HU Berlin Geschwister-Scholl-Str. 1-3, 10117 Berlin

Call for Abstracts

The Land Question / Die Bodenfrage

Grimm Zentrum, Humboldt University Berlin | October 30–31, 2025

Keynotes: Omar Dahbour (CUNY Graduate Center), Isabel Feichtner (Universität Würzburg)

Five hundred years since the German Peasants War, the land question has returned with force. Amid rising land prices, resurgent farmer protests, conflicts over ecological transformation, and deepening struggles over housing, agriculture, and energy, land has reemerged as a central object of political and theoretical debate. This conference invites critical engagement with the structures, histories, and contradictions of agrarian land ownership and land use in contemporary capitalist societies. Land remains at once a condition of life and a site of accumulation; it is essential to any project of democratic transformation and yet persistently enclosed, commodified and financialized. This conference asks what it would mean to *socialize* land today, that is, to democratize land ownership and reorient land-use to fulfill social needs and ecological demands. Can land be reclaimed as a collective good? On what grounds—political, moral, ecological—can the socialization of land be justified? And what historical, legal, and ideological obstacles stand in its way?

We welcome contributions that analyze the land question from political, social, theoretical, legal and historical perspectives. What are the theoretical and practical challenges of socializing land under conditions of financialization and ecological crisis? What lessons can be drawn from past and present experiments with land

reform, common ownership, or public planning—particularly in Germany, where the socialization of land has a long and contested history? We are especially interested in work that addresses the following topics:

- Political Economy of Land: the land market, ground rent, logistics and financialisation.
- Epistemologies of Land: land as territory, property, power, nature, infrastructure, social relations.
- Histories of Land Reform, Collectivization, Agricultural Policy, Planning.
- Visions of Sustainable, Democratic Socialization of Land and Agriculture.
- Land-Use Conflicts in the Social-Ecological Transition
- Contemporary Class Dynamics of Farmers, Landlords, Tenants, Peasants, and Agricultural workers

Please submit abstracts by June 1 to **clara.weinmann.1@hu-berlin.de** (max. 300 words). The conference will take place at the Grimm Zentrum, Humboldt University Berlin. This conference is organized by Rabea Berfelde and Jacob Blumenfeld as part of the research project *Socialization in Theory and Practice: Democratizing Access to Land and Energy*, based at the Centre for Social Critique, Humboldt University Berlin. This project is funded by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung.

Keynote Speakers

Omar Dahbour is Professor of Philosophy at Hunter College and Graduate School, City University of New York, and author of *Illusion of the Peoples* (2003), *Self-Determination without Nationalism* (2013), and other writings on global ethics, environmental philosophy, and critical theory. His most recent book is *Ecosovereignty: A Political Principle for the Environmental Crisis* (2025).

Isabel Feichtner is Professor of Public Law and International Economic Law at the University of Würzburg. From 2023 to 2024, she led the research program “Reclaiming Common Wealth: Towards a Law and Political Economy of Land Commons” at The New Institute in Hamburg. Her most recent books are *Bodenschätze: Über Verwertung und Vergesellschaftung* (2025) and, as co-editor, *Stadt – Land – Boden: Verbindende Bodenpolitik zwischen Stadt und Land* (2025).