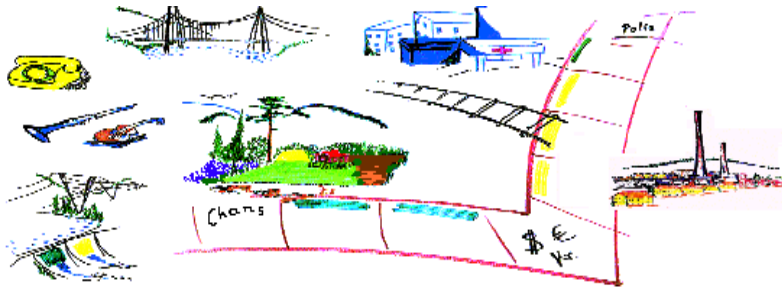
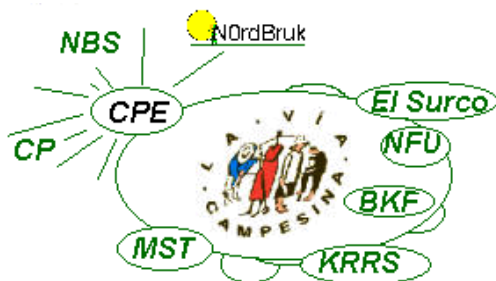


Global solidarity or global game?



For the past 15 years Sweden has been urgent to take political decisions, as well nationally as globally, which have placed agriculture, fishing, and other nature cultures and natural resources as if they were stakes on a monopoly game board.

Services, transports and the public sector will soon be at stake in this game, if they already aren't so.



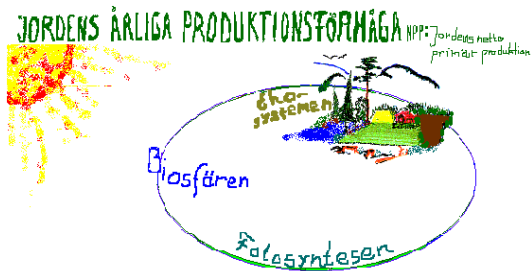
Some ten years ago, small farmers and landless peasants founded Via Campesina – today a global movement with millions of supporters. At that time the tendencies were evident that agrarian and marine industries and other green natural resources were heading into the world trade system. A huge game, where natural agriculture is regarded as an industry with products no different than any others.

The silence from the farmers' unions in Sweden upset many Swedish farmers, who instead became members of the Norwegian Society for Small Farmers and Peasants (NBS). Doing so, the Swedish farmers could join all the other natural farmers all over Europe thanks to the umbrella organization CPE, and globally, they could associate to Via Campesina. This is how our Swedish branch, NOrdBruk, could be founded.

(For further information: www.nordbruk.org If you haven't got a computer, ask your neighbour or call us.)

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For a peasant like me, living out of mountain cows and lumbering, it is easy to recognize what the Chilean fisherman is talking about, when he tells me that the Norwegian fishing industry is grabbing hold of concessions of fishing waters. The fisherman understands me when I am talking about the forest. In his ears it's the same kind of robber mentality as in Chile. In Sweden yuppies and big scale wood industries take control over forests and production.



It is a positive and remarkable experience at every meeting to feel a direct and personal response and recognition.

The fellowship is natural, as every one of us from his side of the globe is working for the same thing – to provide people with food in a continuous way of maintaining the earth’s annual resources. In other words, we are the link between man and his surrounding ecological system.

But the fellowship is also built on protest. For the first time in world history, all natural agriculture sectors are globally hit by common game rules dictated by the WTO (World Trade Organization). The globalisation causes close-downs of farms and other natural agriculture and the consequence is a migration to the cities and a depopulation of the countryside. Moreover, people in the South suffer from poverty and distress.

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Sweden was among the first countries to globalize the agriculture in 1990...

Several years before the actual Gatt-agreement was ratified and the WTO was founded. “The deregulation will make the association to the EU easier”, the Swedish Minister of Commerce, Mats Hellström said in Farmers Weekly the same year.

Since then, Sweden has lost almost half of its self-support and agricultural production, if we include the increasing amount of imported fodder-soy.



At seminars and internal meetings all over the world – in corridors and during meals – we natural farmers discuss, among other things, the game of soy and milk.

When soy is exported from Brazil to Sweden for further transport as a surplus of milk to India, the family agriculture is wiped out in all three countries.

In Brazil the peasants lose their living when multinational companies use their power to produce soy for exportation.

In Sweden the family agriculture is driven out of business by the more and more industrialized production of milk and the lowering prices.

New cow races, highly producing due to their ability to convert soy, wipe out e.g. my mountain cows who find their only food in the grass produced at home.

With the help from export subventions dairy industries as ARLA/MDFoods can export milk powder and dump the prices in for instance India. Recently-started small-scale dairy

cooperatives and agricultures are wiped out in the state of Karnataka because of prices below the costs of production.

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Locally and globally we are hit in a similar way as a consequence of the instructions from the global organisations and the economic blocs. Urbanisation and big-scale solutions permeate our whole society. The industrialisation of agriculture and forestry and the depopulation of the countryside are urged by laws of competition, currency-policies and –speculations, and cut-downs in the public sector. The problems within trade are significant, but the consequences are not visible until you realize the meaning of free speculation on natural resources and on patent on life with, among other things, gene manipulated organisms, GMO's. Two of the most important trade-related directives.

An outsourced industry can be rebuilt, even if it is difficult. The question is, how do you rebuild new forests, fields and water-falls – nature resources we have set free into the speculation market?

“A land without nature resources is poor. A land which has sold out its nature resources is just as poor”, Staffan Westerlund wrote in “EU and the Power of the Environment”. He is one of two academics who at that time saw through Sweden's eager to realize the investment directives of the EU in 1992 and at the same time the so called MAI-agreement of the OECD.

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When Via Campesina and NOrdBruk participate in World Social Forum and different meetings in Stockholm, Gothenburg or other places in Europe or all over the world we are arguing for Sovereignty of Food, one of our alternatives – Each country's right to produce its own basic food”.

“Protectionism”, our enemies shout and go on.
“Yes”, we answer. “Protection”.

A protection for food security, nature, animals and human beings as well in the South as in the North.

The global household will only manage transport and trade without too much environmental destruction and waste of energy, if we give priority to local and regional markets and protect ourselves from the global market's dumping of prices. Small-scale markets give opportunities to support the people and to distribute resources in accordance with UN human rights.

Swedish agriculture – global agriculture – needs protection from Swedish politicians when they replace own production by imported raw materials from poor countries. It is not farmers nor fishermen in the South who are exporting – it is multinational companies representing rich western countries, that are exporting.

All land is needed to take care of the annual productive capacity of the earth – especially tomorrow.

For Sovereignty of Food it is necessary that agriculture, food, natural resources and genetic resources are disengaged from the WTO. Natural resources and the corner-stones of life need protection and management of durability for generations to come.

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MÄNSKLIGA RÄTTIGHETER (CFW)



Human rights TM

The Swedish sale of e.g. railways and the privatisations in the public sector and the earlier globalisation of agriculture is merely two sides of the same coin.

The business concept of the WTO about privatizing welfare and water distribution is in the negotiation table – now also a EU-fundamental proposition of globalisation. Empty phrases will be delivered about peace with prefixes like “free-“ as in “free trade.” In reality, the oppositions will increase. The south of Sweden against the north of Sweden. Southern Globe against Northern Globe.

The farmers of Campesina demand an agenda where global solidarity and food sovereignty are given priority, if in the framework of the values of the United Nations, we would be delighted!

☪ Torgny Östling tel 0693 302 37



Member of **CPE** och **Via Campesina**

