

PRESENTATION

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While you might think that our indian farmers are safe in their freedom I want to mention that precisely the same laws and policies that destroyed the ground on which the small peasants in Italy stand those same processes are being initiated in India and our struggle and fight is one same freedom.

There are three processes through which the freedom of farmers are threatened: the first is the seed thret, the turning of seeds into an industrial products and through that into intellectual property of five cooperations in the world, through genetic ingeneering and patents.

In Europe some of these freedoms got eroded and people didn't notice, but when in India they tried to impose registration and patenting of seeds so that state would give permission to the farmer on wether he could use a seed in cultivation, we started a very big gandhian movement and we called it the seed satyagraha, like the salt satyagraha.

You rememeber that the British decided to monopolize salt and Gandhi walked to the beach and said we need that for our survival: nature gives it for free, we will make our salt, we will not allow saltmaking to be turned into a crime. And we took inspiration from that and said: nature gives us our biodiversity, our ancestors evolved these varieties, we know what it could feed, we will not allow that seed saving and seed exchange to be turned into a crime.

Gandhi also has said that it's only to the extent that we subject our-

selves to unjust laws that unjust laws can rule. So the Manifesto that has been prepared here is the determination to not be ruled by unjust laws. And I do want to say that through the international commission on the future of food we have created the seed manifesto and the Tuscan Region has put in practice these rules of the freedom of the farmer to have their own varieties and this freedom is there.

The second method, through which the small farmer is being either uprooted or unnecessarily overregulated, it is the very false issue of safety.

All the threats to our food safety come from industrial processes, they come from the chemicals that are put into food, the pesticides that are used to grow food, the chemicals that are used to process foods and from the condition in which the animals are kept. And of course a lot of food has been created through factory farming, where hundreds of chickens are kept in one place, and innumerable cows together in an ideal situation for spreading disease. Diseases like mad cow, avian flu were created by industrial systems, but these falsify safety laws don't touch industrial systems and do two things. First impose industrial standards on the small farmer to prevent the small farmer from being free and therefore being alive. And the second thing they do is actually destroy the small farmers using these standards on small farming and I want to give two examples of this.

In 1998 the soya industry in the the United States wanted to control the edible oil market in all the world, but then already most of the soya cultivated in the United States was genetically engineered soya.

In India we have wonderful oils: we don't have olive oil but we have our mustard oil, we have sesame oil, we have coconut oil, and each regional cuisine with the local plants decides what the oil will be; so in Kerala it's coconut, in North India it's mustard. The soya lobby manipulated our situation and they got the indian oil banned because they were made not industrially but processed artisanally in cold pressed mills in the villages, with one animal and one man processing maybe a hundred kilograms a day. It's the purest of oils right made in front of your eyes. You take your oil seed, you take your ground nut, your coconut, and you get your oil,

the miller keeps the oil cake: it's a zero money economy and your eyes are there to guarantee safety anyway: you don't have to have police because the person who lives with you in the village is not going to be the one who spoils your oil. But they managed to get this banned and then I started a satyagraha, a civil disobedience, I called the chief minister of Delhi and said: you have banned our oil and the villagers have started a march and said: we can't eat the food cooked in soya, our children can't eat it, they are going to bed hungry, do something. So we marched in the streets of Delhi, we dumped the soya on the streets, we are going to make the purest mustard oil, we are going to brake your ban. And I want you to receive the first pot. He lost his job but the mustard oil was safe. The law is still there on paper but it can not anymore be used to threaten people to stop cultivating and processing mustard.

The other case was on TV every day: the crazy situation of the avian flu. The flu started from the factory farms, but every few months you saw men in moon suits descending on villages, grabbing the chicken and slaughtering them. Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, India, because Asia is the last reserve of chicken that grow free. And the big industry is using the spread of the avian flu that they have spread, instead of shutting down the factory farms, they are using the flu to shut down the free range chicken and the free range farms.

Talking about the chicken I'm just remembering a discussion we had with a young german friend; he was talkin to me and we went to realize that the small farmers of a country like India are like the free range chicken and we know how to pick up our worms, what to eat, we know how to live without capital, we know how to live without a cage. And the small farmer of Europe is like a factory chicken wich is made to believe that a cage is the only place to be. But now we have to combine the movements for us as free range chicken from being pushed into the chicken batteries and you people who have been caged, to come out into the free range: so our meeting place is the door of the chicken battery where you refuse to stay and we refuse to enter, so that we can jointly defend our freedom.

The manifesto for the freedom of the small farmer that has been discussed here and laughed today is so important for farmers around the

world and I would like to turn this into a global discussion so that like we have prepared the manifesto on the future of food and the future of seed, we will prepare a manifesto on the future of the small farmer as a declaration of our freedom, the declaration of our independence.

This has become a scientific imperative, it has become an imperative for getting food to people, and has become an imperative to protect the planet.

The small farmer's freedom is not like the corporate freedom. The corporations take their freedom to pollute, to poison, to destroy. When the small farmers take freedom they are taking freedom to feed the world, and this will become increasingly important in the next few years.

The same industry that ten years ago tried to force us to drink, eat and cook with their soya oil, genetically modified soya oil, today they find it more profitable, because of subsidies, to take that oil to run cars.

This whole new rush to make industrial biofuels out of foods, this has doubled the food prizes, my calculation are that there isn't enough land in the world to provide a substitution for the fossil fuels that are needed to run an industrial system. There will be no food for people if it's doubled in one year the price. You have had the rising price of pasta, Mexico of tortillas, we have the rising price of chapati and rice, because food prices have gone beyond the reach of 60% of humanity.

The one thing no government can control are people who get angry because of the rising price of food. We are going to see huge instability and small farmers and local chains, local supply, direct marketing is into this context the only future security: if we don't build that there is no food security.

That's why the small farmer must have freedom so that the rest of society can be free of hunger.

That's the reason why we have to fiercely defend the small farmers and their freedom because the crisis the planet is facing includes a climate catastrophe and chaos.

By the research that I have done for the new manifesto on the future of food in a time of climate change, about 25% of the green gas emissions that are changing the climate come from the way we produce and distrib-

ute food. If we do ecological, small, local farming we can get rid of 25% emission overnight. In this, those who have worked with the land, those who have worked with the soil, those who understand the ecology of agriculture processes will find in the small farms and ecological farming a solution. Unfortunately many of our friends from our movements who sit in offices, work on paper, create the campaigns, suddenly are panicking with climate change. But it will be the movement for the small farmers who will be the leader in defining authentic ecological issues. The last generation of the environmental movements is obsolete for our time, with their ideas of wilderness they can not deliver, they can just make the situation worst. So the small farmer movement is the only real, authentic ecological movement in offering solutions to the very big problems we face.

The third reason I mention for which we need this renaissance of agriculture centered on the small farmer is a scientific imperative. I'm a scientist and I think it is abusive to treat chemical farming the same as organic farming, and industrial agrobusiness of Cargill the same as a small farmer.

The actions are different, the processes are different, and as a consequence the products are different. The one thing science teaches us is to be able to differentiate between different things. It's not science when different things are put into the same box and treated as one. Chemically contaminated food, food that has travelled by thousand miles with a huge amount of carbonoxide emission, can not be treated the same as food grown with love and care and distributed face to face as the relationship of a community. They are very different in their status and they are very different in their quality and we need to give the respect to the good food, we need to have a way to avoid the bad food.

I am sure that the entire attack on good farming, and good farming must necessarily be based on the small farmer, comes from three sources one is the industrial paradigm, the industrial way of looking at the world, seeing the world as a machine, the mechanistic view, the second comes from the fact there has been overtime a cultural bias against those who produce food as the lesser work, and I think we have reached a moment in human evolution that this work has to be treated as the most important, the highest form of living and serving the earth and people and this is a cultural is-

sue. And the third comes from pure greed of corporations that manipulate the rules, manipulate the laws and very very consciously are twisting the system in order to establish the monopoly. And we have to deal with all three, we have to deal with the industrial paradigm, mechanistic paradigm, we have to deal with the cultural bias against the rural areas.

If I could die after we brought the peasants back into the center of economic thinking and back into the center of social respect, I would have lived a full life.

And of course the corporations we have to deal with them, their lies, their distortions.

And as we sit in this very beautiful room, of the Specola Museum, called Galileo's Tribune, I asked what the sentence «Provando e riprovando» means: «try and try again». Lets not forget: when the rules that messed up, destroyed the land, destroyed the soil, collaps we need the farmer again, we must build our farms again, again and again. History is empires getting greedy who distroyed the land, distroyed the agrarian economy and that was the base of their collaps. But again after that the soil recovers and the agrarian society recovers. So try and try again: it has been done before we have to keep doing it, but we are in an unique moment of history.