Save the climate!
Support small farmers!
Smash big agribusiness corporations!

For the third year in a row, hunger increased globally in 2019.¹ In January 2020, the United Nations warned of the greatest famine of all times in southern Africa.² Every ninth person on Earth goes hungry. Usually, that person lives in the countryside and in the global South—in other words, where most of our food is produced. At the same time, agribusiness is booming. Larger and larger profits are made with ever-new poisons on the fields, more and more short-term methods of cultivation, which leave more and more soil infertile and eroded behind.³ More and more tropical forests are cut down and plowed up in order to exploit the area agriculturally.⁴ This vicious circle, which causes the extinction of many species⁵, anthropogenic climate change⁶, and hunger, is due solely to the profit system.

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² 45 million people in southern Africa are threatened by an insecure food situation. This is more than ever before, the World Food Program WFP in Rome stated. Women and children in the 16 states of the Southern African Development Community in particular are affected, they said. The UN agency listed repeated droughts, floods, and economic defects as the causes. Cf. Tagesschau Newsletter of 16 Jan. 2020
³ 23% of the land surface of the planet is considered ecologically degraded, and can no longer be used. Cf. Schwägerl, Christian in Spiegel Wissenschaft. 6 May 2019.
⁴ Between 1980 and 2000, 100 million hectares of tropical rain forest were cut down and another 32 million hectares from 2010 to 2015 alone. Cf. Schwägerl, Christian in Spiegel Wissenschaft. 6 May 2019.
⁵ The anthropogenic warming of the Earth alone might drive about five percent of all species to extinction if the threshold of a rise in global mean annual temperature by two percent is exceeded, it is claimed. In that case, in all probability, 99% of coral reefs would die off. The report gives the effects of agriculture as the most important factor in this mass extinction. The loss of pollinating insects in turn threatens food production valued at $235 to $577 billion per year. Cf. Report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) of May 2019.
⁶ In recent decades, the concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere have increased from about 280 parts per million to more than 400 ppm, and the global mean annual temperature by more than one degree Celsius. A further increase in the warming of our planet by 1.5°C, for example, might cause the Greenland ice cap to melt, making the sea level rise by seven metres, according to climatologists.
⁷ Since 1970, at least 17% of the Amazon rain forest has been destroyed by logging/farming corporations. A loss of 20 to 40 percent could push the entire rain forest into an unstable state, so that it would be threatened increasingly by drought and fire, with dramatic effects on the entire world climate. Cf. https://climatennetwork.net/amazon-rainforest-double-jeopardy/
⁸ The thawing of permafrost soil could release larger and larger quantities of stored methane, a greenhouse gas that has a thirty times stronger effect than carbon dioxide for centuries. Cf. Dirk Pohlmann & Jens Wernicke (eds.) Die Ökokatastrophe.
Capitalism offers no solution!

“We cannot save the world by playing according to the rules of the game. The rules must change, everything must change, now.”
- Greta Thunberg

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund claimed to be able to combat hunger and climate change with neoliberal policies, but hunger is growing, and all the UN goals have been missed. They claimed to be able to estimate the costs of environmental destruction by means of emissions trading, but all they did was create a trade in indulgences that allows big corporations to greenwash themselves. The claimed that the liberalization of food markets could offer “food security”, but instead it promotes land theft, production for export, and global supply chains. Small farmers are forced off the land, monopolies seize control of their products from the countries of the South, and the global transport routes intensify climate change.

Since 1996, organizations of small farmers and farm workers have therefore been demanding “food sovereignty”. That means land reform, family farming, and local supplies, protection of the rights of farmers and the genetic intactness of their seed stock.

This demand for food sovereignty is a rejection of free trade, of the policies of the World Bank, and the activities of transnational corporations. For our energy consumption must sink globally, transport routes must become shorter, and millions of landless people need a perspective. The solution is small-scale farming, which is more labor-intensive, but also more sustainable, healthier, and more resistant to climate fluctuations. Food sovereignty of the peoples of the South means an end to hunger and an effective brake on anthropogenic climate change. The only thing preventing this solution is the profit interests of a small “elite” of big-business owners.

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9 Via Campesina, the Brazilian movement of landless peasants MST, MIJARC (International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth) and various human-rights organizations call for food sovereignty. A prominent supporter of this demand is the Indian activist and Ethecon Blue Planet Award holder Vandana Shiva. Venezuela, Nepal and Senegal have incorporated the concept of food sovereignty into their constitutions.

10 As early as 2009, Ethecon endorsed the demands of small farmers for food sovereignty, and condemned the murderous neocolonialism that is trivialized as “free trade”. Today, references to the struggles of the landless and small farmers in the global South can be found at labor and climate protests everywhere.
Multinationals’ lands in the farmers’ hands!

“We have to assail the owners of the corporations personally, just as they did to the victims of their crimes.”

- Blue Planet Awardee Rachna Dhingra

The profits of the agribusiness corporations must be nationalized, and their land holdings must be redistributed. Harmful, short-term-minded methods of cultivation and patents on seeds belong on the garbage heap of history. And last not least: the owners of the agribusiness corporations must be liable with their private assets, and be held to account. The conversion of a profit-oriented society to one of solidarity will be expensive. Fortunately, the wealth of a few hundred billionaires will be more than enough.

The owners of the major corporations have profited so long from the misery of the majority of humanity that today, the planet stands at the brink of world war, and environmental and social catastrophe, and threatens to become uninhabitable. Starting with the criminal gentlemen of the raw-materials and agribusiness corporations, who rob the poorest people of their vital resources, this ruthless “elite” must be deprived of power and expropriated. They include the major shareholders and managers of GLENCORE, COCA COLA, NESTLÉ, DOW DUPONT and MONSANTO/BAYER, who have been scorned by Ethecon with its Dead Planet Award, but also the investors in DEUTSCHE BANK, BLACKROCK etc. Their property should form the basis for a mode of production based on solidarity.

The Advisory Board and Executive Committee of Ethecon are finding hope in the increasing number of strikes in 2019, the upwind for the labor unions, the struggles of landless peasants and indigenous groups, the mood of enthusiasm of young people in the climate movement, and the growing mutual support of these struggles, and declare with confidence: the world of the criminal corporations is coming to an end.

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ethecon – Stiftung Ethik & Ökonomie considers the “adherence to ethical, environmental, social, and human-rights principles in the organization and implementation of economic projects, and the strengthening of democratic and self-determined structures in the
economic process” to be urgently necessary. Instead of providing trillions to profit-oriented business, the system must be changed. Give up the primacy of profit, and adopt the primacy of solidarity!

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ethecon
Stiftung Ethik & Ökonomie

Address of the Advisory Board and the Executive Committee:
Schweidnitzer Str. 41
40231 Düsseldorf
info@ethecon.org
Phone: +49-211-2611210
(Executive Secretary Axel Köhler-Schnura)
www.ethecon.org