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# PEACE WITH THE EARTH

Translation by  
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Archive Books

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# INTRODUCTION

‘Peace *on* earth and a new and peaceful relationship *with* the earth are inseparable.’

The pamphlet *Peace with the Earth (Fred med jorden)* was published by the Swedish suffragettes and peace activists Elisabeth Tamm and Elin Wägner in 1940, just after the outbreak of the Second World War. Elisabeth Tamm (1880–1958) served as one of the first women in parliament and was an organic farmer. Elin Wägner (1882–1949) worked as a writer and activist on matters of women’s rights, peace, and ecology, and was a member of the Swedish Academy. The authors’ observations and proposals connect questions of agriculture to those of custody of land and habitats, where the ‘arrogant desire’ to own land must be overcome.

This English translation of this pamphlet enables a wider access to the informed and lively debate on ecology, agriculture and our relationship with the land, as it was raised by feminists, ecologists and peace activists in Scandinavia during the first half of the 20th century. The arguments gathered in *Peace with the Earth* are even more relevant today, as they bring depth to pressing issues regarding the collapse of ecosystems caused by over-intensive farming methods.

*Peace with the Earth* is part of a series of publications that investigate agricultural narratives and practices initiated by artist, writer and curator Åsa Sonjasdotter. The first book in the series, *Peace with the Earth – Tracing Agricultural Memory – Refiguring Practice*, was published by Archive Books in 2019.

## BACKGROUND

This publication goes back to the early 1920s. Those involved were members of a group of women who had come to realize that they, as politically aware citizens who cared for humankind, had something to say, something that could not be found in the political programme with which their party was wholly satisfied. In the beginning, these women thought it would suffice to merely re-organise the various items on the agenda by moving the items that the male authors had placed at the bottom – the population issue, for example – to the top. However, as they began to move them around, they found it necessary to add their own experiences and demands. Having begun, they became caught up in the work for many years to come. They divided some of the tasks among themselves according to each and everyone's particular interests and occupation/profession, but in the end they came to the conclusion that it is not possible to work on separate solutions to problems associated with peace, land distribution, healthcare, population or education. Each must be considered in relation to humankind's affinity with the earth, with life and the world around us. This involves a paradigm shift and all that it entails in terms of social change.

We had fought our way to consensus, so we had come to possess a deeper and more sincere trust in the intrinsic value of individual human beings and the general solidarity between them that we have embraced during every stage of our development. We now need to gather our experiences yet again, formulate a realistic political programme and integrate it within this holistic outlook.

In less abnormal circumstances we would not have published only a part of our work. We would have waited

until we were able to present something that resembled a comprehensive social agenda. As it stands, we must choose a section that was not the first to be completed – it can never be completed – but is at least ready to be printed.

We begin with land distribution, not only because it is fundamental – after all, a nation lives with its farmers and it dies with them. There is also a more personal and directly relevant reason. At an Association of Leftist Women meeting last year there was a strong impulse – it is impossible to say how many times the issue has been up for discussion – to bring the question of land use to the table and formulate a statement, essentially a basis for certain planned bills on the reformation of hereditary leasehold and land taxation legislation. A committee was formed, which Dr Julia von Sneidern agreed to chair. The ordinary members were Miss Jenny Johansson, Miss Elisabeth Tamm and Mrs Elin Wägner. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the two latter have had to take on the burden of authorship. Although from very different backgrounds, both are united in their understanding that peace on earth and a new, peaceful relationship with the earth are inseparable. Consequently, both ladies have combined their respective chief concerns in the present publication.

It is based on one of the co-authors' long and applied experience of traditional and modern agricultural practices and their effect on the land, livestock and, ultimately, humans. Her vast experience has allowed us to consider both the short-term and the long-term effects and compare them from the point-of-view of a Swedish landed estate. A quick comparison with the situation in other countries was then easily achieved.

We do not pretend to be fully in command of the research in the field. Our focus has been on the effects of theories that are, rightly or wrongly, based on experimental science. We have also looked at the effects of methods and calculations that have been borrowed from the realm of industrial

production and applied to agriculture.

This is where we are most critical. Nevertheless, we are convinced that it is when science is at the forefront – regardless of whether it has to do with making crops or humans more resilient and abundant – that the outcome must be consistent with, explain, come under review and add to the great wealth of experience that has been accumulated during our time on earth, instead of downright denying and rejecting it.

Our task has been overwhelming, and we are well aware of our failure to come up with a complete solution. But our efforts would not have been possible without the support of the Committee during the course of our work as well as the advice of some more or less officially co-opted members. Among them are: headmistresses Honorine Hermelin, Signe Johansson and Ingrid Osvald; doctors Ada Nilsson and Andrea Andreen; university reader Emilia Fogelklou and Mrs Flory Gate.

They can of course not vouch for every single statement in what follows, nor would they have expressed the fundamental tenets in any less stringent terms. The responsibility for the current wording lies with the author. We believe that both Miss Kerstin Hesselgren, chair of the Swedish Association of Leftist Women, and the co-opted members agree with us on one point: that we have broken through the hard shell of the prevailing social system, that is where the dowsing rod trembles, that is where we must reach the source, that is where reality, resurgence and life reside.

E. W.

## THE EARTH WAS NOT CREATED BY HUMAN HANDS

*but human hands have claimed the earth.*

Yet, the earth cannot be owned. If it is abused it suffers and ceases to give.

Each generation answers to past and future generations for as long as they farm the land. They hold in trust all the knowledge that their fathers and mothers before them have accumulated over many years. They have been given a legacy to look after, and they must not allow it to be violated through ruthless exploitation of natural resources.

Legend has it that there was a time when humans were more aware of being part of a greater whole. Even the most illiterate person can appreciate that plants and animals are the children of the earth, just like we are, and that humankind can only prosper by living in harmony with them. When these people fed and clothed themselves, built their dwellings and made tools from nature's supply, they deliberately avoided to disturb the natural balance or the forces within whose realm they existed.

If this was a childish way of life, disturbing the subtle equilibrium by thoughtlessly taking advantage of the opportunities offered by

modern science is an unfortunate choice.

Even the best educated people can learn from the way ancient humans dealt with the Creation. We need to acquire, or reacquire, a solid enough knowledge for us to work with nature instead of against it. Modern inventions must be assessed on the basis of how well they function in harmony with nature. Everything that kills her autonomy must go, or we will.

The authors of the present publication wholeheartedly subscribe to the prevalent historiography as they give men credit for the events that have contributed to humankind's domination over the earth, the oceans and the air. Once upon a time, their efforts required the blessing of religion; we even find it in the form of a divine command that came to play a major role in our culture. The decree that calls for mankind to conquer the earth and all the creatures that walk upon it no longer applies, because it has been done. Humans have usurped all that lives, grows and moves on the surface of the earth in accordance with the cosmic laws as well as the dormant forces that dwell in the bowels of the earth in the form of water or coal, oil or minerals. The earth is plundered and torn apart as they struggle amongst themselves to gain access to them.

Nature is now forced to retreat at an increas-

ingly rapid pace, her free processes have been restricted, the demand for her services to humankind are even greater.

The earth eventually began to revolt, but it was a silent, slow revolt, which humans did not heed for as long as there was yet more virgin land left to conquer. Because they had become divorced from the land, they could not understand the symptoms, they did not see the correlation between cause and effect. They despised the earth as much as they impressed themselves with their own powers in the belief that they could turn her into a blind and willing slave to their every command. In Sweden, we are not entirely unaware of the hardships other nations suffer as a result of the protesting earth, but we are exceptionally reluctant to recognize the symptoms when they appear at home.

This arrogant desire to own land has resulted in terrible fights between individuals and nations over the spoils. In order to allow for a free exchange of produce, each and every one must be prepared to subordinate themselves, which does not suit those who have become accustomed to dominating the earth. This is

the ultimate reason for the war that has struck the earth and humankind with military dictatorship and a claim to sole ownership. Humankind may well stay on the path that leads to death and destruction for all eternity, but the earth cannot contribute an endless supply of means for its own destruction through ruthless exploitation and warfare. This will be the bitter lesson of the war that is currently raging.

If we apply our way of thinking to land ownership, this is another area that will suffer. During the course of history, the claims of landowners – and of sovereign states – to the land has become increasingly absolute. In our opinion, this cannot go on, not even in principle. It has in fact, as a result of insolvency and invasion, already ceased to apply in many places.

It will not be possible to reconnect with the earth until the women are won over. *The earth needs the women and the women need the earth* is our motto in the section where we present our rationale for a New Order, as we perceive it, and how it can be achieved.

One section in this publication, in fact its principal message, has been dedicated to a proposal for the revision and extension of the

current hereditary leasehold legislation with the aim of facilitating the transfer of this at the same time ancient and modern form of *right of possession* from paper to the real world.

The question of *population density* must also be included in this view on land ownership. In the long term, it will benefit humankind to resist turning the entire globe into agrarian land and exploit it. The Earth must be allowed to keep large land areas where it can be left in peace. The Earth must be granted a certain amount of freedom for life to exist in all its diversity: water, rock and soil, flora and fauna. If this statement is true, it will follow that humankind must stay within the boundaries of those areas that are suitable for agriculture; and here too, we need to proceed with caution.

One of the many reasons for the dramatic population increase in the last hundred years must surely be that the close connection between a family and their potato patch was no longer perfectly clear as an entire segment of the population, which had previously lived off the land, was separated from it through the process of industrialization. When this connection is again made, people will start to look at things differently.

Against the prevailing principles, mechanization, specialization and speed, we have chosen

to proclaim a set of ideals we believe will be relevant in tomorrow's world:

*Self-sufficiency – Diversity – Patience.*

## AGRICULTURAL LAND, FOREST AND WATER MANAGEMENT

*Agriculture and forestry* are part of the great natural cycle. A good outcome is dependent on the coming together of an infinite number of forces of which humankind is only in control of the most conspicuous. When humans acquire better tools and invent new methods, they should always make certain that their inventions do not interfere with any unmeasurable, unweighable and unpurchaseable forces or upset their function. The inventions and methods that could form part of this great collaboration are a blessing, the ones that interfere with it will sooner or later prove to cause immeasurable damage.

A farm should be a dynamic and varied unit, which in turn forms part of a greater whole – forgetting this would be fatal. The representatives of the various branches of agriculture and forestry have been too one-sided in their pursuit of their specialities without ensuring that they have not damaged or encroached on the interests of the others. As a result, forests and marshlands have been drained to the limit in order to sustain the forest industry, but to the

detriment of water management and thereby the entire cycle.

Because it has failed to take a holistic approach, humankind has not paid enough attention to the role of water in the great cycle.

They forget that water was a powerful, regulating, transformative factor on earth many eons before humans discovered its power-, light- and heat-generating properties. One cannot remove water from the important task it performs on and below the ground in order to satisfy one's own agricultural needs. Water shortages during droughts and spring floods may be the result of a reduction in or depletion of the regulating water table due to tree felling and drainage. Nature is especially admonishing after a cold winter when the ground frost runs deep. Snow melting proceeds more rapidly in areas where the forest has been felled. Because forests, marshes and fields have been drained, the water runs off at a rapid pace, resulting in flooding. By the time the ground has thawed, so it may absorb the water, it is gone. Drought and water shortages may soon follow, in the spring, when soil and water are meant to work together in the fields.

Do not misinterpret this to mean that we believe that all forms of drainage are a bad thing. Because humans make an impact on nature by

cultivating the land, they need to replace the water that runs off by natural means with the help of a system that is as similar to the natural process as possible, and they have found the solution to be properly managed pipe drainage. Those who use water to generate energy for flour mills, saw mills, electric lighting, automatic milking etc. risk a situation where there is either an over-abundance or a shortage of water. This leads to the unnatural method of using lakes as water reservoirs. That is to say they are filled or emptied according to need. Alternatively, hydropower has to be replaced by costly fuels that are almost impossible to come by these days.

Since complaints about water shortages are practically a regular feature in Sweden, we cannot only resort to blaming the weather – we have to examine ourselves. Water shortages are due not only to the above-mentioned interference with nature's water management system, but also to the fact that the water table is often used to supply industry and densely populated urban conglomerations, resulting in an elevated water tax.

*In many European countries we note a destruction of forests, monoculture and interference with the natural water system. Examples include the following:*

In 1936, the Council of Agriculture in England noted that agricultural productivity had fallen since 1914 and that areas where agriculture was booming in the mid-1800s are now covered in heather and ferns.

In Germany too, some areas risk turning into steppe. You may wonder why farmers from the previously fertile and now highly industrialised western Germany are being moved to Poland. Because the natural course of the River Oder has been adapted to shipping, the water table has dropped, and large areas have become barren (Pfeiffer, *Die Fruchtbarkeit der Erde*). However, so-called experimental farms for biodynamic agriculture have been established in Germany. We can only hope that these experiments, which are conducted with great care and respect for the life of plants, will be successful enough for them to be applied in other areas.

The felling of entire forests in mountainous regions have resulted in a major loss of humus in Germany. The same goes for Italy where forests have been laid to waste since the Middle Ages. According to the director of the royal Italian forest commission, one of the most recent reasons for the devastation of Appenine forests has been the population increase and the conversion of hillsides into arable land. The forest has had to give way to pastures and the

old meadows have been laid under the plough. The hillsides have thereby lost the natural vegetation that protected and bound the soil. As a result, landslides have laid waste to the hillsides and the plains at their foot have turned into marshland.

In a report addressed to the government of the USSR, the directors of the Caucasian meteorological station have communicated the imminent danger of falling water levels in the Caspian Sea. The reason they give is the destruction of forests around the sources of the Volga and other rivers that discharge into the Caspian Sea. The area of this lake has now shrunk to the size of Germany before the war, and there is a risk of it being turned into a salt desert.

We find that the European methods have been equally unsuccessful in *other parts of the world*. Forests and undergrowth are laid to waste in Africa, the water table is dropping, rivers only carry water during the rainy season and people are forced to abandon the land that can no longer feed them. What the natives did not achieve through 'random slash-and-burn', the Europeans have achieved through systematic clearing and farming: nature is now under a strain that is so severe that it can no longer recreate that which has been taken from it, and

this will lead to desertification. General Smuts has said that the problem of trying to avoid these perils in South Africa overshadow all political problems.

In North America (the United States and Canada) forest devastation, soil depletion, monoculture, the extinction of animal species and the mechanization of agriculture are well known, and we need not spend any more time discussing them here. As early as in 1937, President Roosevelt summed up the situation before Congress:

*Nature has given recurrent and poignant warnings through dust storms, floods and droughts that we must act while there is yet time if we would preserve for ourselves and our posterity the natural sources of a virile national life.*

*Experience has taught us that the prudent husbandry of our national estate requires far-sighted management. Floods, droughts and dust storms are in a very real sense manifestations of nature's refusal to tolerate continued abuse of her bounties.\**

Americans have learned what repairing the damage they have done to their continent

\* "The President Recommends Legislation for National Planning and Development of Natural Resources Through Seven Regional Authorities. June 3, 1937". *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, University of Michigan Digital Library. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppotpus/4926313.1937.001/330?page=root;size=100;view=pdf>, p. 252 (retrieved September 8, 2019).

entails, so they will be able to tell you that the work, if it is at all successful, will cost vast amounts of money and take hundreds of years. Add to this the widespread opinion – which was as good as unanimous before the war – that the United States must do everything in its power to keep the peace. Peace is essential to allow for the allocation of time and resources so that mistakes and offences can be remedied. According to a head of department at the Imperial Bureau of Soil Science – which publishes shocking figures over the devastation of North America, – Australia is following suit.

*Where is Sweden heading?*

Attempts to industrialize agriculture and set up a production system that can be expanded, reorganized, closed down or started according to the current economic climate is bound to fail. It turns out that during a recession, farms that continue to be diversified are less dependent on import restrictions and sudden blockages than farms that have become specialised and run like a factory.

Slaughtering a team of work horses and replacing them with tractors is done in no time, the same goes for exterminating sheep and

resorting to imported wool. Those who farm according to the rise and fall of the market – for example by slaughtering their herds of cows in order to specialize in the breeding of pigs because they are more profitable during times of prosperity – will hardly have had time to make the switch before a change in the economic climate renders pig breeding unprofitable, possibly because too many farmers have come up with the same idea. And when circumstances dictate, and the demand for horses, sheep and livestock becomes urgent, you will discover that what has been lost cannot be as easily won back as when you are told to reopen a closed-down factory. The problems are legion, and it takes time to raise a herd with the same quality and pedigree as before.

The cycle of crop rotation can easily be broken when state subsidies render wheat farming more lucrative, whereas repairing the damage that will thereby be done to the earth is more difficult.

Crop rotation is essential as different plants absorb some nutriments from the soil and add others.

Moreover, you could kill off a cottage industry that ensured the quality of certain hard cheeses, but the production cannot be transferred to a modern dairy, nor is it possible to restore the

original product even if you wanted to, since the bacterial culture that produced the excellent flavour has died.

The use of cutting machines and one-sided fertilisers can kill humus-producing earthworms, but humans will never succeed in turning subsoil into topsoil or replicate the earthworm's toil.

*Even if you forced citizens to work without interruption from the cradle to the grave, their efforts could never replace the unpaid workforce that nature has offered us in the form of the little voluntary workers on whom the earth's growing power depends.*

It is now generally accepted that a too elevated level of industrialization brings about enormous changes in human living conditions. Working life, civic life, health and ideas change at a pace that humans cannot endure without suffering some degree of damage, despite a preparedness to adapt and the highest possible standard of living.

*However, the problems that afflict the countryside are to be remedied by imposing ideas and methods on farming that are already considered backward by liberal-minded experts who deal with the problems of industry.*

The researchers, the universities and the agricultural organisations that have wholeheartedly put themselves at the service of industrialization make every effort to tempt farmers into trying and surpassing nature, thereby violating its laws and limitations. It has been suggested, without a shred of evidence, that the transition from hoe farming to mechanized farming is determined by fate. That is to say that from the moment the first hoe broke through the soil to prepare it for sowing, humans were doomed to keep going until they had achieved the ultimate consequences of scientific agriculture.

This is the kind of arguments that are used to determine that the automatic rifle is the inevitable consequence of the stone axe and the wolf spear, and the paratrooper of the parish constable. However, if farmers allow themselves to be persuaded by this argument and believe that they by working along these lines can move forward and become even more successful, they are as mistaken as the commanders and the generals. Nature still reigns supreme.

We have chosen a couple of minor, but prominent, examples from present-day agricultural practices in order to explain the kind of losses that occur if you discard all the accumulated practical experience at the arrival of a new invention. Since farmers have now started to

listen to and trust the weather forecast, they have lost the ability to read the signs in nature that tell them what the weather will be like. They do not look to the sky and the clouds, they do not listen to the rain bird, they do not notice the leaves on the trees turn with the arrival of a low pressure that heralds rain. Should the meteorologists be ordered to cancel their forecasts as a military defence measure, each and every one who trusted them implicitly will be completely lost.

When the wireless in the autumn announced the most suitable times for harvesting fruit, a great many people failed to use common sense or look at a thermometer. Instead, they left the apples on the trees during the cold weather until the day that had been determined by the experts.

*Humans have become increasingly impatient, but nature follows her own rhythm. They need time to carry out all the work they have to do.*

The earth's production rate is steadily increasing through the use of artificial fertilizers. However, as it turns out, it is not possible in the long run to replace natural fertilizers with artificial fertilizers or to reduce their use too much in relation

to artificial fertilizers. Furthermore, no fertilizer can give back to the soil all the nutrients or the energy that have been removed as a result of over-abundant harvests. The generation of nutrients in the soil is a process that requires more than the addition of a certain amount of chemicals, and many compounds that are created through bacterial processes are equally important.

This is where the health of the earth, plant life and humans come together to form a greater whole. When animals and plants are fed one-sided, incomplete and artificial food, they cannot generate the elements that the human organism in turn requires.

Plants strive to build up a balanced structure.

If too much fertilizer is added, it has to absorb more of the soil's own nutrients. When the earth has been impoverished in this way, it can, over a limited period, produce satisfactory and attractive harvests of a quality that often commands a high price.

Farmers cannot even be confident that they will enjoy an unlimited number of years of such abundance. In fact, overfertilized soils become depleted more rapidly. In the end, the soil is exhausted, that is to say it falls victim to malnutrition and cannot be forced to perform, no matter how much fertilizer is added. It will then

need many years of rest and care in order to return to health and yet again play its self-regulating role in the natural crop rotation cycle.

## PLANT AND CATTLE BREEDING

Now that we are approaching this topic, we first need to explain what it involves. By 'breeding' we normally mean the process of selecting and accentuating specific qualities that are considered profitable at the cost of others. Modern crops, just like modern humans, must become specialised in order to serve certain ends determined by business and industry.

The various branches of the *food industry* – bakeries, distilleries, breweries, sugar works – enlist the services of experimental scientists who breed and select the plant qualities that best suit the manufacturing process. The food industry is not interested in the fact that rapid growth and high quality are incompatible. When it uses the word 'quality' it often distorts its meaning. For example, in an advertisement for 'supreme quality white flour' the words communicate that the most important elements have been removed from the flour; or when it is claimed that the addition of certain volume-enhancing chemicals in the flour produces better bread.

What you gain in one area is easily lost in an-

other. If you have succeeded in developing a new cereal grain with large ears, the seeds may turn out to be smaller and lighter. The ancient Swedish wheat that up until only a few years ago was cultivated as far north as northern Bergslagen yielded much less than modern wheats, but it never failed to the same extent as the autumn harvest in 1940.

One-sided modification of certain qualities may cause degeneration of varieties and greater susceptibility to disease against which a costly and time-consuming resistance needs to be built up, for example by treating the seeds and crops with various types of pesticides (impregnation and spraying).

Due to the *mechanical industry's* demand for ever increasing sales, even the most unwilling stony soil needs to be adapted to mechanical farming through levelling and by merging many small fields into larger units. Presumably, only a very small percentage of the arable land in Sweden still have stones in the fields to prevent wind erosion. Cereal grains must be adapted to modern combine harvesters. 'Self-binding rye' is not, as the layman might suppose, a type of rye that binds itself. It is a variety that is suitable for self-binding machinery.

The *artificial fertilizer industry* also has an interest in breeding plants that can absorb large

quantities of artificial fertilizer and become, as it were, 'good nitrogen spenders'. This new terminology can tell us a great deal about changes in the way we have perceived nature since wine harvests and flax scutching were associated with sacrifices and prayers of forgiveness for the suffering the grapes and the flax were forced to endure in the wine press and scutcher.

Just like the overfertilization of plants, the *overfeeding of animals* is a ruthless form of exploitation that ends in exhaustion. Cattle that are bred and overfed in order to produce as much butterfat as possible have to pay in the form of ill health and a shorter life span. Their capacity for reproduction – this applies to both cows and bulls – is reduced from one generation to the next. They will soon go the way of double-flowered roses and large seedless oranges.

*The story of our cattle breeding system is the story of rapid success and increasing doubt.*

One example of this practice is the cross-breeding of Sweden's most common cattle breeds: Swedish Red Pied and Swedish Ayreshire. Typical of the former, which was developed from an older indigenous breed, was its larger size and productivity as well as its profitability. The latter is smaller and was therefore easier to feed, it was more thoroughbred, and its milk

had a higher fat content.

These two were cross-bred in accordance with a decision made by the Breeders Association dated January 1, 1928, *into one single breed*: the Swedish Red-and-White.

The experts were convinced that they by cross-breeding the two breeds would produce one single breed that combined the best of both. The first generation was successful, and it was hoped that the result would improve even further with successive generations. This was not the case, and now, twelve years later, it is evident that only the first cross-breeding was successful and that the positive results were not permanent. Experts have suggested that the process should be reversed in order to produce two pure races that can be cross-bred. However, this problem cannot be solved even if the Breeders Association decision is revoked and the two original breeds are again cross-bred.

Some of the problems that are afflicting our livestock breeders have arisen because of a desire to enhance each individual animal to be the bearer of those characteristics that are most profitable to humans. The fact that different characteristics in different parts of the country would be the better choice has not been given enough consideration. It would be just as wrong to move cattle from the lowlands of southern

Sweden to the north as it would be to move the northern hornless cows to the south.

During the process of building up the exterior shape of cattle according to aesthetic and what was considered practical lines, it seems as if, at first, not enough attention was paid to the important fact that calving is impeded in cows that have been bred with a level hip, which is considered as attractive as the wasp-like waist in women in the 1880s. The people who endeavoured to outwit nature, and who designed hips with the delivery of a foetus in mind, have ended up with animals that suffer complicated deliveries. The production of milk is a sexual function, and increased milk production results in the weakening of other sexual functions. These pretty cows in their well-appointed concentration camps can no longer give birth at regular intervals.

Other problems – susceptibility to disease, for example – occur because the owners, still with their eye on the profit, deprive their animals of sunlight and fresh air, and restrain their movements, which is unnatural to them. Furthermore, the feed they are given in a manger or in the pasture, is unbalanced. If you study animals that have not yet been thoroughly bred to the extent that they have lost their instinct for what their bodies require, you will

see how they, on pastureland with varied vegetation, are drawn to leaves and grasses that contain the nutrients that are lacking in the feed they are given.

*Experience will force our farmers to accept that you cannot ask too much of either the animals or the earth. That which is biologically right will be that which is most profitable in the end.*

Since time immemorial, the continuous advancement of plants and animals has not defied nature – it has been slow and patient. It is from this practice that modern breeding methods have evolved. The results cannot be properly considered until they have been tested empirically over a long period of time, during which permanent and valuable features are distinguished from those that are only temporary. When practiced by enthusiasts that are over-eager and who do not possess sufficient knowledge of either old or new methods, the result amounts to a rape of nature that pays no consideration to its laws.

When you act according to the laws of nature you must reject the greatest profits and avoid the risk of major losses.

## THE MECHANISATION OF FARMS AND FARMERS

The relentless mechanization of *farming* can be nothing but a risky affair for the farmer. Agricultural machinery is not durable, and it requires a great deal of maintenance and repair. Vital spare parts come at a high cost, a cost that is not included in the buyer's budget, but in the seller's calculations. New models are constantly put on the market with the promise of major improvements compared to previous versions. Seduced by the possibilities that open up, a buyer may not consider that the debt will one day have to be paid or fails to take into account that new machines often require further investments or cause unforeseen problems.

A farmer who has got as far as to purchase a combine harvester as a replacement for manual labour must thresh the harvest on their own. Agronomists expect a great deal from the very latest in combine harvesters that are able to cut the stem right beneath the ear. But if the farmer does not own a straw press and is unable to employ workers to transport the hay to the farm where it can be ricked, the only solution is to burn it in the field. The first-year pasture that was mixed in with the crop will then be lost.

Abandoning this traditional method for the sake of buying a combine harvester would do serious harm. This method will generate profit after a year, and it has the advantage of the crop protecting the newly sown grass. Unless you repeat the sowing, you have to resort to the perennial pastures between enclosures or resort to cattle-free farming and artificial fertilisers. The heavy machinery that threshes in the field also causes damage to the previous year's pastureland during harvesting.

The threshing of wet grain with modern harvesters requires a building where the grain is dried instead of in the field or in barns.

During periods when the feeding of the population demands most of agriculture, mechanized farming will fail sooner than traditional farming despite the imagined advantages of labour-saving machinery.

A sudden shortage of fuel and spare parts has immediate effects, and a machine operator who was once the only expert on a farm is harder to replace than a farmhand when he is drafted for military service.

Machines make *human labour and all-round expertise* redundant. It is often said that the

depopulation of the countryside was a result of the mechanization of agriculture, which is true to some extent, but the opposite can also be argued: mechanization is the main reason, people are drawn to cities and move away from the countryside.

The employers' associations have dealt with the farmers' demands for better living conditions in a number of ways. Not only have they mechanized agriculture in order to reduce labour costs, they have tried to reduce the cost of manpower by only employing what they refer to as 'prime workers', which means that the same evaluation, employment and payroll methods that are used in factories are applied to agriculture, with catastrophic results.

Yet again, the most unexpected results have been achieved by means of a decision made by an official body. The natural division of labour between the generations has been abandoned. Nowadays, people of a certain age are made redundant prematurely, often those with the greatest experience that used to instruct and train the younger generation. This is because they are only appreciated for their physical strength.

Children and young people are not employed until they are considered 'prime workers', so they receive no practical experience or physical

training. This is called 'labour-saving measures'.

These new methods cause workers to despise the work they do, as they are told that the rich and highly skilled vocational training that has taken them so long to master is considered redundant.

*The agricultural workers' terms of employment* too are rendered more insecure with the advent of industrial machinery. It uproots them and cuts them loose from the land that has tied them, often to the same farm, for generations. One-sided, rationalized farms without complementary skills will soon only have use for seasonal labour. In America, this development has given rise to an itinerant tribe of workers that will accept farm work even under the most appalling conditions.

Everything that has been said above about the results of mechanization not only applies to agricultural workers, but everyone who works on the land. Independent farmers cannot afford to pay for labour all year. And during the growing season they are almost impossible to find for all the money in the world. The farmer is exhausted from having to deal with these insurmountable difficulties. A general rootlessness spreads.

*The industrialization of farming has therefore resulted in the waging of an insidious war against*

*the growing power of the earth as well as the wellbeing of all animals and humans.*

## THE EARTH NEEDS THE WOMEN

*Women come to the fore* during periods when humans live in harmony with the earth. They fulfil their maternal duty: to always protect and care for, clothe and feed, the family they have brought into the world.

Human development has undergone a cultural phase – which some so-called primitive peoples have not entirely left – during which the women prepare dwellings, make household goods, raise tents and cover them in materials of their own making, collect edible plants and medicinal herbs or prepare the earth for them, sow and harvest, break in and look after the first livestock. Although women are revered as representatives of Sacred Mother Earth, new generations maintain their respectful and childlike ties to them for as long as they live, and sometimes beyond. By virtue of their central position as givers and keepers of life, they become builders of society and custodians of order and tradition.

During those long periods when women carried out these tasks as a matter of course, they constantly made new discoveries, and they conducted experiments that were handed

down to other women and eventually led to improvements. Every scientist knows that only persistent research can prepare the path for the moment of discovery – they should know what it once meant to women to be at the epicentre of the great laboratory of nature. They must understand that should they lose the opportunity to experiment as women have done, their passion for discovery would die and their results would be less important.

The knowledge and expertise that women have had such a great share in collecting formed the basis on which agriculture and craftsmanship rested and grew organically from. Modern technology would not have taken place without the patient and important groundwork that was done in previous eras. However, it has not prevented the same technology from deeply despising and discrediting all forms of ancient knowledge with the aim of replacing it completely.

This has affected all of humankind, especially women.

One modest way of looking at this preparatory work is to compare it to the situation our modern, complex civilization has brought about. Primitive farming, shrouded in mysterious rites, appears absurd compared to the exceptional results of scientific farming; the production

rate of the spindle and the spinning wheel is infinitely small compared to modern spinning machinery; a comparison between the first automobile and the latest model exacerbates the devastating superiority of technology. When you look at it from this point-of-view, you can but feel sorry for those unfortunate people who did not know any better and who suffered so greatly.

People who know their history and have a greater sense of proportion understand the vast importance of the early inventions, and they admire the intelligence and skill of those who created them, but they ignore or undervalue the contribution of women in this preparatory work. These aspects, the simpler as well as the more subtle, are thus equally devoted to making women believe that the only real value they have contributed to mankind for as long as they have walked the earth is human material.

There is no lack of historical records that can help you assess the position of women in the Archaic or Early Modern age, or among farmers and primitive peoples in other parts of the world.

The chroniclers of ancient Greece and Rome as well as colonisers, merchants and missionaries during the era of exploration, old school ethnologists, even letter-writing tourists in

our own time, have a great deal to say about societies that are very different from what we are used to, where men rule and control the means of production. Such aberrations are usually treated as mere curiosities by those who communicate them, or as backwardness or primitiveness; readers and listeners often take them for lies. On the other hand, the important and significant work that women contribute to the livelihood of mankind is interpreted as slavery while the relative leisure of men becomes an emblem of domination.

This interpretation of women's place in ancient and foreign cultures has had a major influence on the general opinion also within our own culture (the Western World). Because they were led astray by their peers, men were able to instil, with complete conviction, in women the idea that they always and everywhere on earth have been weak, less important and subjugated. As a result, the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon women's movement based their arguments on the male interpretation of history. The first opportunity women had to rise to the level of being fully human and equal to men was when they gained access to the knowledge, education and professions that – they believed – were previously reserved for men. However, they in fact sanctioned a

civilization that was in the process of removing women from the work that had required and promoted versatility, physical strength and the sharing of skill sets. Since we were no longer dazzled by the profits gained through progress, it became clear to us what we were about to lose. The sphere of activity and the importance of the home were in a state of decline. It meant that the position and the confidence that women on account of their level of skill had retained, also in patriarchal societies, was shaken, even though both church and state had branded them as a lower form of humanity. It is a miracle that so many women have survived this trauma more or less unscathed. It is only fair to admit that new forms of knowledge and alternative professions have had a role in this.

In the fullness of time, however, a new, unbiased and diligent school of research will prevail, one that has abandoned the prejudiced view that maintains that our modern Western society is superior and normative for all and necessary for our future on earth. This school of thought can appreciate the role of women in earlier and foreign cultures. If, in the past, ethnographical research prepared women for their surrender to the mechanical age, this new body of research may serve as a useful resource to them as they withdraw from it.

We have above attempted to describe and assess the rapid transformation process that has now developed into an entirely mechanistic outlook. This development has not succeeded in proclaiming complete victory until women let go of their traditional tasks. Similarly, a state cannot become totalitarian until every home, formerly a force to be reckoned with, is completely broken. This is another significant stage of the planning effort.

The realisation that more and more of that which they produced and prepared through hard manual labour now could be made faster and with less effort by machines must have been twice as hard for women to accept. Disappointment, lowered self-esteem and decreased ambition go hand in hand with a sense of relief and an inclination to give in. The notion that machine-made products were better and cheaper was accepted in an initial sense of shock and delight. The value of the skilled hand diminished drastically followed by that of its owner.

Women should have had more reason to be wary of the effects of the triumph of the machines than male workers, had they dared to have an opinion about something that had been created by men. Because, with the advent of machines and the demand for their use,

women experienced a tension between gainful employment and home chores that did not exist before. It disturbed the balance and the strength of the way family and home, social work and professional life, had been intimately associated.

Much has been done in the last decades to integrate industry with wider society in order to ease this tension. But the problem appears to remain. We have noticed a great deal of ambiguity when it comes to how women should live their lives, which in itself is a great waste of energy. The *both one and the other*, home as well as work, that women used to take for granted, during, after or outside of marriage, is, in our contemporary society, a problem that comes to the fore when we talk about marriage. It is ultimately a question of marriage or no marriage, children or no children. Against *both one and the other*, we can pit *either or*, proposed by fiancées, company directors, our children or our own conscience.

Enough time has passed for us to have seen not only how women go from education to professional life to work in the home, but also the way beliefs and opinions of different generations diverge, since the younger generation never wants to share the fate of the older. Before this crisis you could clearly

discern a budding tendency in young wives to shoulder their responsibilities and dedicate their time to home and children. They had become tired of the dual, conflicting goals that either demanded that they divide their time between two interests and two professions – both of which should preferably be performed to perfection – or forced them into a situation in which they could only lament having wasted many years on their own education.

The current situation, which requires the services of women in the war effort, has put a stop to this tendency, but chances are that it will be broken as soon as a new generation has discovered that the home in the industrialised world rarely requires the all-consuming commitment it used to.

Agriculture is the most recent area to be affected by this conflict of interests. But it is even more serious in this case, as it differs in some respects from the way cities and industrial communities are affected. The tension between home and work in the industrialised countryside is also more difficult to overcome. It has been found that when the traditional tasks of women were mechanised, many of the women who continued to carry out their work in factories ended up, for example, in the textile industry, and, as a result, they were forced to

move with their families to an industrial town. It is an example that women in the countryside cannot follow when it comes to the traditional tasks that have been taken over by the food industry. You cannot load a farm on a railway carriage and move it somewhere else. The women cannot remain on the farm and continue with their chores at the same time as they work in the food industry. Centralisation has resulted in long distances between home and work, and the mechanized central dairies, butchers and bakeries only have room for a small number of machine operators.

As a result of the industrialization of food production, a great many women are now at the labour market's disposal. These women move to industrial towns or major cities, and as they do so much of the labour that is still needed on the farm disappears. Since the industry is happy to employ women for easily learned, low-skill work, uneducated girls are more easily absorbed by the industry than the corresponding categories of young sons.

Moreover, businesses and professions that cater for services that are related to housework offer many opportunities for girls to quickly find employment in the city. As a result, the male workforce, which is less adaptable for work in the city, is increasingly taking over women's

jobs on the farm or the operation of machinery that replaces them.

Yet, overwork, hard toil and boredom exists among the few women that are left in the countryside. This has been used to motivate the fact that women gradually have become exempt from outdoor work such as minding the cows and processing farm produce. There is no doubt some real concern in the combination of motives that drive progress, especially when the aim is to make housework less of a burden. But those who drive – or follow, whichever it may be – the development towards an industrialised agriculture without humans, must, if they are thinking in the long term, also be keen to disassociate the women in order to secure the remaining work opportunities for men.

In the beginning of the 1930s, the head of the ILO in Geneva established that since a significant number of workers will be losing their jobs in agriculture due to the prevailing economic recession, the first to go will have to be the sixty million women farm workers in the world. This is how the situation is perceived by those who are monitoring the international labour market from a central position. The women enter the labour market when the men are at war or engaged in relief work, but they are pushed out again during a recession when there are fewer

job opportunities. No one has contemplated the fact that women, who have traditionally remained at home, tied to the soil, are being turned into a tribe of general workers. And yet, the risk is real because the holistic way of life has been removed from the equation. How can a new culture take root and replace the one that has been dissolved?

*The land needs the women.* This topical slogan simply communicates that the earth needs the women for as long as the men are on active duty. If developments after the war continue along the same lines as before the war, it would mean, among other things, that women workers will be demobilized from their newly won work opportunities because men and machines will be ready to replace them. Could this even be contemplated?

In 1914, the rush of civilization made a sharp turn and attacked its own creation in order to crush it. As if that was not enough, it annihilated the living beings it had never created. Reconstruction began in 1918 according to the very principles that had proved to be incompatible with human coexistence on earth. Domination of the earth and the mechanization of life was still the rationale behind all ideologies, without exception.

The idea of a common, fundamental principle

at a time of great antagonism among people of all cultures does not exclude a degree of subtlety in its application. In a society that recognizes each individual's right in relation to the state, you at least have a case for understanding the earth's right against mankind.

The same story as in 1914 was repeated in September 1939, to be precise. This is considered the moment when the most devastating death machinery marched resolutely towards victory. Over what? For what? Nobody knows. But as we look to the future, our thoughts refuse to envisage a state of mind among the survivors that supports the continuation of the mechanistic era. No conqueror, no ruthless destroyer of life and values can march ahead without being motivated by the idea of building something that is better than that which has been destroyed. The men who pioneered the industrial era were confident about this. Consequently, they preserved nothing of the old.

If willpower, hope and trust still remain after the deep humiliations and bitter suffering our arrogant civilization currently endures, they will need to be transformed into new ideals; ideals that already germinate and shoot forth clandestinely.

Those who established these principles, and those who follow them, must now make a

complete turn in order to regain their respect for life. When they are again able to perceive the precursor of the human creation in a growing organism, there will again be a place for women.

*The land needs the women* is more than just a short-lived slogan. It is a true and valid statement that defines women, those who work on the land and those who have left. But mending a broken link is not easy.

The situation in the spring of 1940 has clearly shown the risks of going over to entirely male or mechanized farming. You cannot, even if you wanted to, rapidly build up a major domestic oil industry as soon as the country is cut off or, when reserve labour has to be called in, a competent female contingent of agricultural workers.

There is no doubt that the reserve labour that is now stepping in and taking over men's jobs is determined to be 'prime workers'. But in nine cases out of ten, that will probably mean that they can operate modern agricultural machinery. If these female novices are to take agriculture out of the industrialised era, they will need to understand that it requires a great deal more than just knowing how to operate machinery, something infinitely richer, more enjoyable and much harder.

Before a woman's touch can do itself justice in terms of the care of crops and cattle, it has to be understood that these are living beings and not machines. The skills and the temperament that have been lost must be regained, the knowledge has to re-enter the bloodstream and fingers, and all this will take time. The same goes for getting fit. There is no doubt that this auxiliary labour is tasked with yet again turning the work in fields and barn into a respectable occupation. If a female student from Lund and a daughter of the manor from Sörmland can spread manure, then a peasant girl can do it too.

*Maintenance of the byre* is one of the most important and difficult branches of farming. It was the domain of older women, they looked after the livestock, they processed the farm produce for use in the household or brought it to market. The care of animals is as suitable for women as the care of children, once they have recovered their compassion for the living and their tenderness towards every living thing and those who are helpless. Just like humans, animals do not want to be treated like machines, that experiment has been tried before, so it is common knowledge. But they show their gratitude for the respect, compassion and care they receive by doing well.

Nor is it easy to get women to collaborate

within the community the way they used to do. Collaboration developed and broadened in scope over the centuries. It used to follow the seasonal rhythm, which dictated when farm work and feast days took place. This cycle was broken with the advent of industrialization. A farmer was to be the master of his own farm and of his woman, who worked for and with him. Later, women were excluded from new forms of collaboration, and they became individualists of the worst kind. In this respect too, these evil times can pick the scab of habit and prejudice, make way for new forms of collaboration and breathe life into old ones where they have become almost extinct.

This is not the kind of optimistic argument you would normally use to round off a narrative. It refers to the restored importance of quality.

In the beginning, the textile industry, especially in England, was closely associated with its predecessor craftsmanship, also in terms of quality. The use of substandard materials and substitutes took off during a period of raw material shortages and poverty in some industrialised countries during and after the 1914–1918 war. As it turned out, machines could make magic with inferior materials in a way that the hand could never do. It also became clear that only the rapid

turnover of cheap consumer goods could give the increasingly expensive and complicated machines the occupation they needed to pay their way. At the same time, less and less was manufactured by hand. We have now arrived at a point when people begin to shun cheap, inferior goods; some women in the textile industry complain about having to work with second-rate materials. They pinch your coat, for which you have paid good money, explaining that it is made from rubbish. When customers of manufactured goods begin to reject all forms of inferior quality, handmade products will once again be competitive.

If you add quality, that is to say durability and beauty, to the profit and loss calculation, the situation for handmade textiles and other products would be less desperate. Homespun loses its nostalgic aura, handiwork is no more associated with leisure, luxury and bad taste.

However, no profit and loss calculation can bring about a turn, not even in these times of economic austerity and shortages, unless they are supported by a desire for something other than the mass-produced goods that have so mysteriously begun to appear. Homespun, home-woven sheets, suit fabrics and cotton dresses yet again become something that home weavers and those who wear their produce

can be proud of.

Itinerant salesmen sell machine-made goods as home-woven. One would prefer a tablecloth that is a hundred years old to a machine-made tablecloth bought yesterday. These days, age adds no value to a suit, dress or sock, it is considered shameful and a sign of poverty. The industry has supported and promoted constant fluctuations in fashion in the name of profit, even when producers have to work hard in order to come up with something that trumps last year's collection. Contrary to this tendency, women's institutes have attempted to introduce a classic range in their efforts to raise the status of the housewife. But a great deal of work will need to be done before they are able to improve the quality of a garment and ensure that the garment and the person who wears it can make a statement.

It is remarkable how little influence female customers have had on industrial production, and the extent to which they have been deceived. You would have thought that it was primarily female customers – who have re-discovered their creativity and can recognize quality in their role as competitors – who could exert some influence over the style and quality of a product.

Society is now so heavily industrialised, so

dependent on keeping the wheels turning, that even those who are not directly dependent on them must fear every woman in possession of a pair of hands and a spinning wheel. During an austerity meeting in the early days of the embargo, one speaker blamed the so-called daughters of luxury who, with or without an income of their own, consumed two pairs of silk stockings a week. One newspaper replied that they should not be blamed since society is dependent on these daughters of luxury, that is to say these spendthrift, thoughtless consumers of industrial goods. This point-of-view is of course already somewhat dated, but in a society that after the earthquake continues to live as before, it is likely to come back into favour. If women desire change, they can start by knitting socks for the family, not just for soldiers, and generally divide their taste for parsimony between the duty to make do without and the duty to produce. Only a total raw material shortage could force these hard-working hands to lay down their work.

Now that we have come this far, we will return to the earth from whence these raw materials originate, or not, if sheep breeding and flax cultivation have been discontinued.

*The food industry is an area in which the importance of quality is supported by scientific evidence. As soon as this point of view is widely accepted, cottage industries will benefit over strictly rationalized, large production centres.*

Scientists discovered that the quality of food is something internal, ephemeral and delicate at a time when they began to wonder why humans became weakened by the intake of abundant, but lifeless, food.

However, it is not enough for cereals and vegetables to have grown on healthy, well prepared soil or for milk, butter and meat to come from healthy animals, that is to say animals that are reared as naturally as possible. Nor is it enough for housewives to have learned to prepare the food they buy as sensibly and carefully as possible – even farmers' wives buy most of the food for the family these days. There is an important intermediary. It begins as soon as the crop is harvested, the spinach picked or the cow milked or slaughtered, and it goes on until the moment when the produce changes owners over the shop counter in the village store or in the city. Something of life itself must remain in the products that sustain us. Some important elements do not tolerate the oxygen in the air, long transports or industrial treatment, nor the sterilization methods

that are necessary due to lengthy transports and storage. In our modern, densely populated society, efficient storage is necessary, but that is not a blessing in and of itself. Non-pasteurised milk and flour milled in small quantities in family-run mills are far better than the refined, sterilized products made by the food industry. Can it really be good housekeeping to destroy every possibility for the countryside to produce excellent quality food only because you aspire to a perfectly streamlined, large-scale food industry? The more people realise the value of quality, the easier it will be to find a market for quality foodstuffs, even at a higher price. Those who can afford to pay for quality may not be the most useful, but why should we deprive the few, who on account of backwardness and poverty are still eating a balanced diet, this opportunity when the opportunity exists?

This way of looking at it dismisses all the calculations that have been made in order to render the big collection points and mechanized processing plants profitable. Everything points in the direction of returning to small production units within the processing industry, and this presents an opportunity for women. These small units do not necessarily have to be in the form of individual homes in the countryside.

There is currently a movement, supported by

propaganda, in favour of revitalizing collaboration between women within their village communities and smallholdings. It will not be easy, but maybe this idea would be more attractive if they, like men, were able to come together and share such labour-saving tools and machines that do not damage laundry, milk, flour or slaughtered pigs and thereby find employment within small co-operative processing units.

The idea that money equals economy is beginning to take hold in the countryside together with other ideas that originate in the city or within the manufacturing industry. It does not mean it is necessarily immune to criticism, on the contrary, but you cannot deny its allure. That is why it is important to determine how a cottage industry, or smaller units, compare to centralized processing plants in financial terms. According to some experts they compare well, and when you see the efforts that are made to exterminate them by force this is what you could be led to believe. Producers who hand over their produce to monopolies – centralized dairies, for example – have always paid a lower price than on the open market for the processed goods. This policy has now been regulated even further by the issue of butter coupons also for farmers with just four

or five milking cows, in which case the cottage industry is doomed. You can recognize the methods by which handicraft was exterminated. It goes very much against the developments we recommend. But on the other hand, the system is so complex and expensive that we have to presume it can only be perceived as one desperate measure among many. We have to admit that the sugar tax encourages home-baking and jam-making.

Compared to women in the countryside, women in cities are less able to survive functional poverty. We would like to believe that city dwellers who live in exile in the countryside understand this, and that they take advantage of all the knowledge they can bring back to their suburbs and city centres – provided there will still be any left. Indeed, let us go as far as to believe that they can stimulate their sisters in the countryside by talking to them and try new ideas for collaboration, even teaching them old and forgotten skills through new discoveries.

*Women are needed on the farms.*

This would be easier if women were able to collaborate on processing produce for household consumption and formed teams large enough to make labour-saving tools viable. It is important to know how to choose

lucrative, non-invasive, affordable tools and not simply take it for granted that the latest and most expensive invention is the best. But you do not only need tools, you need older women who are patient with small children and the sick – you need their expertise.

*If we by rationalization mean collaboration, better working conditions and making work easier by introducing simpler habits and less processed food, it suits our model perfectly. We only fear progress when it has become reckless.*

*The women need the land.*

This statement is as true and important as claiming that the land needs the women.

Working on the land makes them healthy and teaches them to think for themselves.

Experience has shown that women who suffer from a lack of physical exercise and fresh air fall victim to illness and disease more often than others. This applies both to women doing sedentary work in factories, offices or schools, and housewives whose working day can be long and exhausting, but labour-saving devices reduce physical movement to a minimum. A farmer's wife who on her own performs monotonous, thankless tasks in grim conditions without

being part of the work on the farm as a whole can be added to that category.

Nature itself has proved that women are made for physical, diverse tasks that are as often as possible carried out outdoors. Childbirth is easier for women who live this way and so is making their way into the world unharmed for her children.

Life on earth must be organized in such a way that it is possible for women to live their lives without constantly encountering obstacles on account of their biological functions. The childish trick of explaining signs of maladjustment and backwardness in women as a result of them being naturally disadvantaged compared to men has been discredited, primarily as a serious offense against the Creator, but not before it has caused severe damage among the women in their attempts to adapt to the modern world. This is not a sign of inferiority, but rather a way of reacting with great sensitivity to a mechanized way of life, which has now proven to be unsustainable in every way, or failing to reconcile it with the wellbeing of body and soul, or to be in the possession of the kind of skills that have to be learned all over again or abandoned altogether.

For as long as contact with the old wisdom has lasted, people everywhere have understood

the importance of healthy, happy women. The Indian law man Manu – who nevertheless contributed to a decline in the status of women during the Sutra period – said that ‘where women are grieving the family soon perishes, but where they thrive it blossoms’. He has also said that ‘a house that has been cursed by women because they are not honoured there, fall down as if struck by magic’.

These days we do not need superstitious explanations for why a building collapses. We could perhaps express the essence of these aphorisms thus, ‘That which is unfavourable to woman is detrimental to society as a whole,’ and ‘Men’s and women’s interests cannot fundamentally and in the long term be separated’.

This is one of those universal truths that everyone accepts, and no one respects. It took a population crisis for our politicians to consider the problem of whether the way they dealt with progress was in the interest of women or not. It would be equally important to all of humanity if women again were able to consider what they have learned from various practical tasks that have taught them to respect nature, connect with it, handle physical objects and thereby knowing them.

For every area of knowledge and expertise

they are forced to abandon under the influence of industry and modern development, yet another skill is being laid fallow. Women have fallen for many stupid arguments, none more stupid than believing that thinking is all about acquiring knowledge through books or teaching such knowledge through books, even though this too is thinking, or it can be. Women have, on the whole, been very clever when it comes to acquiring theoretical skills when their mental efforts are based on or are complemented with direct, practical first-hand experience of the lives of objects and humans.

It has to be to the benefit of humankind as a whole that women can use the full extent of their faculties, physical as well as spiritual. The energy and the passions they are prevented from tapping into in accordance with their personality (in our society much is laid fallow), will result in illness or cause minor or major disruption in greater or smaller circles.

When women have come to understand that it is possible for them to be more fit, more intelligent and have a more cheerful temperament, bring up better children and work better, the excesses of the industrial era must indeed fall. All that has been falsely stated or claimed in order to misleadingly impress will have to be withdrawn and kept at bay. Some products

will still be mass produced by machines, some will be made by hand and others should not be produced at all. There will be a lot of space for us all in this previously crowded world.

*Education for women* in practical farm work is the order of the day. It involves great opportunities, but also great danger. The dangers can be avoided, and the opportunities can be exploited if we look more closely at the type of education that is on offer. The era of respect for authority and mindless acceptance must surely be over. Alongside all the official proclamations, and the readiness to follow them, a new voice and a new mindset can be discerned, especially among the young. It appears that examination of facts, making choices, evaluation and new ideas are coming to the fore. We would like to see a greater synthesis of the experiences and skills of the older generation, going back to a time when people were self-sufficient, as well as the education, energy and ambition of the younger generation.

‘A good education’ covers a wide spectrum. It can mean state-funded vocational training that ensures entry to certain workplaces. To us, a good education should offer the student

a future in line with the criteria we have cited above.

Knowledge must not be removed through teaching; it is a wish we fear is made at the last moment. Today, mothers have little time, inclination or adequate skills for passing on knowledge. Therefore, children enter school with little previous learning. This is why the education that began at home so early that the children were unaware of it is no longer as important as it used to be.

Child labour has earned a bad name as a result of the abuse of children in factories, especially during the early industrial era. The acquisition of knowledge through books has been given precedence over the vocational training that used to be offered by parents or a master craftsman. When children brought up in the countryside are shown a plough and a red cottage in a school primer and are simply required to describe what they see in front of them, it is a waste of time and money. The early learning of manipulations and chores as well as participation in everything that took place on the farm gave children invaluable basic skills, and so did their teachers, who would later take them under their wing – as long as these persons did not consider it to be their duty to eradicate all the skills that are learned at home.

According to one of our associate members *all education must aim towards making every home a production centre*. That is the most salient statement we make in this publication. It would be appropriate to sit back and contemplate the new traditions and ideas that would have to come to the fore before this wish was granted; all the powerful forces that would have to be quashed, all the prejudices that would have to be overcome, all the crushed ambitions that would have to be restored; all the forgotten knowledge that would have to be revived. Re-educating the family should be the goal of the educational system, that is to say preparing young people for the building of vibrant, rich, independent and diverse homes where the cooperation between man and wife or parents and children is characterised by a constant giving and taking of services.

For the sake of clarity, we want to make clear that the above-mentioned statement does not mean that all food processing should take place in the home. The ongoing official report has, as far as we understand, adopted a two-pronged approach. Since farms have been assessed and since all superfluous hard work has been eliminated without the introduction of unnecessary machinery, it will become easier to process produce for household consumption

while the rationalised food industry will serve our industrial communities and major cities.

Anyone who contemplates this division between home and industry is likely to understand that there will always exist a tension between different methods of production and either one of them gaining precedence over the other. The food industry is huge and powerful. It is also a force to be reckoned with in terms of competition and propaganda. So far, and despite all the work that has been done to improve housewives' skills, it has ploughed through the small production units as when a new road cuts an old road into smaller stretches of road. The old road falls into disuse and risks becoming overgrown, while the straight, wide road on which lorries are speeding towards the major processing plants is the only one that is considered worth maintaining.

In the preceding pages, we have attempted to argue in favour of our opinion: that transition to smaller food processing units would currently be both right and feasible.

So much is changing, destroyed and recreated these days that you have to believe that anything that appears to be impossible is in fact possible.

*Women have so far refused to believe that the world could ever change in the horrific ways that it is changing at the moment. But they must assume some responsibility for this state of affairs. If they had done their duty before it was too late, they could have made sure that this devastation had affected the tools of destruction instead of being performed by them. So, time is of the essence. We may feel unable to change events, we may feel dispirited because we are, yet again, forgotten by those who in the midst of a bloody war are making plans for a new world. It is a poor excuse. If no one wants us to contribute to the rebuilding of the world, we can, through the power of solidarity, the weight of our arguments and the authority of that which we believe is right, assume the right to contribute, to the best of our ability, our intelligence and our vision for the future.*

## LAND OCCUPANCY

Land occupancy has taken many forms throughout the ages, from collective occupancy within farming communities to private ownership. In order to get more out of the land and combating nature, humans settled first in smaller then in larger groups. As time went by, boundaries between estates and national borders were drawn up. Land occupancy took different forms in different countries: leasehold, affordable housing, a combination of the two, etc. This was partly due to the fact that landowners had access to more land than they were able to farm and partly in order to satisfy a need to farm the land among those who could not afford to purchase it. There is no doubt that the forms of ownership that have so far been practiced place greater demands on the skills of the farmer, their sense of responsibility and their understanding of the common good than it does on private owners. It is, for example, always preferable for tenant farmers to extract as great a profit as possible from the land and spend as little as possible on soil improvement and maintenance. This point-of-view relates to leaseholds in general, not to individual tenants.

It is important to understand that according

to common law, land is not for individual people to own, farm, sell or buy as they see fit.

*Modern rights of possession are in the form of individual ownership with certain restrictions, for example as stipulated in legislation that regulates forestry, expropriation and neglect. In the event of war or danger of war, all ownership is abolished, including ownership of land and real estate. The new legislation on the right of disposition is even more stringent, and when applied type of occupancy is no longer relevant.*

However, while private ownership is favoured, it is intentionally or unintentionally undermined by the state. Ownership of encumbered land – this applies to a considerable percentage of Sweden – is of course illusory. The land is only the property of an occupant for as long as they can pay off the mortgage and the lender does not ask for his money back. The state encourages this form of money lending through the innumerable loans it grants for the purchase of land, for construction, for the repair of buildings, loans on growing forests, drainage, inventories etc. When landowners can no longer afford to pay interest on their loans, they have to get another mortgage. Ownership becomes the right to take out a loan. But it was never the earth's intention to give up its yield so we can pay interest on the money we borrow.

This development has thus quietly led to private ownership soon becoming all but a theoretical concept. It generates a need for a new type of land ownership that replaces this undermined, private ownership and all the registration documents that have lost their former importance. Instead of *limited land ownership*, land should be *put at the user's disposal* together with the *freedoms* necessary for the farmer to make a profit.

In 1926, a Social Democratic government presented a bill on the 'grant of enjoyment of certain types of land for hereditary leasehold,' which was ratified by parliament. It was a modern form of the hereditary rights that were inscribed in the law-rolls of the Swedish provinces. This form of tenant right had all the advantages of ownership and tenancy and none of the disadvantages. Hereditary leasehold gives those who do not have the means to buy land the right to *farm and occupy the land indefinitely, including the right to leave it to their children in their will.*

According to the Hereditary Lease Act of 1926, 'crown land may be made available for the establishment of agricultural properties against an annual tariff, including hereditary and realizable occupation rights for an unlimited period'. The annual tariff is calculated on the

basis of farm produce (for example a certain amount of butter, wheat and rye), but it is paid out in cash according to the going rate. At the moment the tariff is fixed for a period of twenty years, which may sound excessive, but it is fair since it is determined in relation to the market price on agricultural produce.

Forest ownership is not included in the hereditary leasehold, but firewood and fuel are monitored by the Forestry Commission if forested land is included. Permits for the use of existing forest over and above the requirements of the property can be granted for a limited period against a fee. These regulations could be improved and extended.

Since the land belongs to the nation it can of course not be mortgaged. *That is the crucial point as it means that land speculation is not possible.* It cannot be right for farmers to speculate in land, as they do now, that is to say assets on which every citizen depends, and it means that the State will ultimately have to intervene. But at the same time, this is the main reason why most farmers hold on to their land. Even the most indebted farmer never ceases to look forward to the day when the value of their land will increase, even during a war, which is when they intend to make an undeserved profit and be free of all their prob-

lems. This form of speculation, the unmitigated hunger for profit, is earth's worst enemy.

The current hereditary leasehold legislation has been blamed for being too complicated. And it does, without doubt, include too many and too obscure sections. Moreover, the tenant is under the jurisdiction of more than one state authority:

- 1 *The National Forest Enterprise*, which parcels out property and divides the land.
- 2 *The County Administrative Board*, which accepts tenants, signs contracts and administers change of tenants.
- 3 *Egnahemsnämnden* for owner-occupied affordable homes, which grants mortgages for buildings.
- 4 *The Forest Agencies*, which are appointed by the King, the county councils and the agricultural societies, and which supervise and inspect forests in their care, when applicable.

Because of this and the lack of information about the hereditary leasehold system, few take advantage of it. But this situation can easily change.

In a bill addressed to parliament in 1939, Mr Lindhagen suggested the institution of a government body that would oversee hereditary leaseholds – rather similar to the site-leasehold institutions found in our cities. These would handle all agreements between the state and individual hereditary leaseholders. The bill was supported in writing by the Association of Leftist Women and Social Democratic Women in Sweden, but no action was taken.

The land that can currently be made available for hereditary leaseholds includes existing Crown property. An overhaul of the legislation would primarily introduce the right, but not the obligation, for the state to purchase such farms – which has been proposed in Denmark – that are sold at executive auction at a price equal to the highest bid. These farms should then be made available as hereditary leaseholds. *If the hereditary leasehold authority considers a leaseholder fit to farm the land, the leaseholder should have priority to enter into a hereditary leasehold agreement at their former property.*

Landowners should have the right to offer their land to the state for it to be converted into hereditary leaseholds.

The financing of the Crown's acquisition of land for hereditary leaseholds would weigh too heavily on the state. When you purchase land

at executive auction, for example, the price does not necessarily have to be paid in cash. Instead of investing their money in land, mortgage holders may lend money to the state (for example by investing in government bonds). The state would then deduct the interest from the rent, the sum may not exceed the amount due. The unhealthy and for agriculture detrimental state backing and money lending would become obsolete.

One of the statutory authorities that the current legislation places on government bodies, which says that the leaseholder may redeem the property (Section 33 in the Hereditary Leasehold Act), should be removed.

Hereditary leasehold is an ancient law in a new guise, and as its advantages over the current system become better known – information about it should be the responsibility of a hereditary leasehold body – and as site-leaseholds are coming to the fore in cities and towns, resulting in an increase in leaseholds, the day when more land owners become heritage leaseholders will come. The heritage leasehold would regulate the value of land and prevent crises resulting from economic recession and unemployment.

*A necessary and peaceful transformation of society would then be possible.*

*Land occupancy is a global issue.* The solution along the lines that have been outlined above would reduce the risk of war as people gain access to their rightful portion of the earth and its produce. But people also need to fully understand that they over and above this have no rights that intrude on the destitution of others, or *any* right whatsoever to exert violence, not towards the earth, not towards individual persons and not towards other peoples.

Colonialism, customs barriers and economic warfare between nations are caused by the notion that it is possible to own land and that this land can be exploited by the capitalist system or to further empower the state.

If you want to remove these aspects, as well as war and speculation in war in the future, a system needs to be put in place that releases land from the dual ownership of sovereign national states and individuals. At a time when the world is being torn apart at its very core, a new world must be built from the bottom up, or go from smaller units to larger units.

The principle on which heritage leaseholds rest should, in applicable parts, be transferred from smaller to larger units.

Each individual and all peoples that do not support the notion of unification through

conquest – are looking forward to a time when it will again be possible to attempt a voluntary union between peoples. If citizens all over the world become heritage leaseholders, a new League of Nations would, in principle, become the equivalent of the heritage leasehold institution we mentioned above. It would coordinate the interests of the heritage leaseholders and protect their rights as well as ensure that they carried out their assigned duties towards the collective.

This League of Nations would organize the exchange of goods between peoples so that everyone would be able to benefit from all the gifts the land has to offer in the various climate zones. However, the far-reaching specialization of commodities and industrial production between nations and continents goes against the principle of greatest possible diversity within each unit. The vulnerability and the harm this specialization causes has already been clearly proven, and it cannot be allowed to continue, yet there is now talk of increasing it even further! By understanding the importance of a natural and diverse flora and fauna, by having gained experience of the way the soil needs crop rotation, just like humans need variation in their employment and increased self-sufficiency on small farms, a too strict specialization would

fall on its own principles.

The League of Nations was established in 1920 after four years of devastating warfare, and there was hope for a lasting peace. But the sovereign states that came together to form the League of Nations were all part of and a result of the rule and conquer system.

The major powers within the League competed for key positions for the domination of the earth and the natural resources that were crucial in their endeavour to defend or take power. Even if this organization had been more efficient in solving disputes, it could not have prevented another catastrophic war, since the nations were not prepared to abandon a system that inevitably leads to war.

In order for it to do its job, a new League of Nations must be a confederation of peoples who pledge to never again plunder, abuse or exploit the Earth, their common home.

## LAND TAXATION

A fairer taxation system is essential for the development of agriculture. The present income tax system is not for the good of either the state or the farmer. There are many loopholes for those who wish to circumvent regulations, and for the honest, law-abiding farmer it is almost impossible to follow the law in a system that is so detailed that a taxpayer has to weigh every single apple when filling in their tax return. It means that the state loses revenue and its expenditure increases due to the vast sums that are paid out for the control of honest and dishonest people alike – and control of the latter is hardly possible.

(The tax return system may well be afflicted with similar problems in other areas too, with the possible exception of salaried employees.)

It would also be more appropriate and economically viable for the state if the enormous effort spent on filling in tax forms was no longer necessary. A taxation system that encourages and does not punish production the way it does today would be preferable, as current regulations allow taxpayers to deduct their debt at the same time as the rateable value of their property increases after improvements have been made.

The greater the debt, the lower the tax. And yet, even the state encourages people to borrow money and get into debt. Add to that the fact that low maintenance reduces the rateable value of property, thereby reducing the tax. The system does not allow you to deduct the cost of ground improvements (e.g. essential drainage) nor of construction, except in the form of state loans that add to the detrimental debt. The taxable income should be based on what the land can be expected to produce, not on what it has produced according to the balance sheet. This calculation should be based on good and nature-friendly, long-term land use, not on temporary and through artificial means achieved over-production, which is damaging both to the earth and to the nation as a whole. Just as it is considered possible to calculate a fair property value by dividing the land into three categories, I, II and III, according to the quality of the land, it should be possible to measure the income earned from the land in groups I, II and III (and, possibly, 0) for different years as determined by experts employed by the county administrative boards each year in relation to the annual average. This should be stipulated on an annual basis since farmers cannot control, but are dependent on, the weather. Taxable income from the land should therefore, just like property tax,

also be paid as a percentage of the rateable value. The taxable income becomes an adjustable basic tax based on the effective yield. A well-run farm is thereby entitled to its rightful profit. But should a farm not achieve the expected average, society as a whole should not have to suffer. It has to be said that a new owner should pay tax on the value to which the former owner has raised or lowered the standard of the farm. At the time of sale, the owner will either earn a higher or a lower sum depending on whether the farm has increased in value or not.

When talking about taxation in general, it is important to understand that taxation should benefit a community as a whole, that is to say all the individuals that belong to one unit and contribute to the cost of their common utilities. In democratic states, such as Sweden, the administration of tax revenue is carried out by 'elected representatives of the citizens of Sweden' and trusted authorities that are put in place to serve the citizens, not to be their masters. To levy and spend tax revenue is associated with a moral responsibility in all nations, it can be honoured or abused, but it is a responsibility that in all administrative bodies is intended for *promoting development*.

*Attempting to adapt to our modern lifestyle and at the same time respect the earth and its creative forces makes you realise that the most evident and robust things are not compatible with such considerations. If you have previously asked yourself: What excesses must we stake out in order to continue on our developmental path, we now ask: How much will we get to keep?*

*How much will we get to keep? That is also what a Europe in retreat is asking as agricultural land and human lives are left in ruins.*

*We cannot from any cosmic point of view cool our fervour and our compassion with those who have taken up arms to fight for life and freedom or those who have surrendered. Nor can we erase the differences in motivation, opinions and methods among the combatants in the ongoing war that has come so close even to us.*

*We still search for an answer to what is happening and why it is happening. The bulletins do not tell us what, and the books in various colours that are issued by governments cannot tell us why. Behind these unanswered questions lies another, it goes like this: Are we experiencing our final engagement with the practices that are driving the earth, nature and humans to their ultimate consequences?*

*It was hoped that the phase-out of this culture would have been more rational. This hope was dashed. All that remains is the hope that the arms*

*will be laid down while the earth still has enough uninjured skin left to survive and heal its wounds, and that the survivors will come to understand that they, who are driven by the same urge, must come together and make peace with the earth.*

Translator's note: In Swedish 'land', 'soil' and 'earth' as well as planet Earth are all expressed by a single word — jord. The Swedish title, Fred med jorden, is therefore highly ambiguous, which is of course the authors' intention. We have chosen to use 'earth', with a lower-case 'e', to denote the planet, the land and the soil in combination or in isolation, except where the authors clearly mean 'land' or 'soil'.

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'Peace *on* earth and a new and peaceful  
relationship *with* the earth are inseparable.'  
Tamm/Wägner