

CRISIS OF TORTILLA, CRISIS OF THE MODEL

1. The price of tortillas, and the people's hunger.

- Tortilla: Basic food of mexicanas. Main food of 18 million people in severe malnutrition and 12 million in moderate malnutrition. Basic source of energy, fiber, proteins.
- Price of tortilla, dec. 06: 6.00 pesos kilo; jan 20th 07: 8.50 pesos kilo
- Increasing of minimum wage jan.07: 3.9%; increase of tortilla: 41.6%
- Since NAFTA, tortilla price has soared 738%.
- In 1994, with a minimum daily wage in Mexico: 32 pounds of tortillas; in 2007, barely, 10 pounds.

2. The causes alleged...and the not alleged.

- The causes alleged by mexican government: high international corn prices due to increasing demand of livestock industry and increasing amount of american corn for ethanol industry.
- But, in Mexico, corn has increased its price also because is an oligo-controlled market: Cargill, most of the grain and the importation process; Maseca (Gruma-AD), the 85% of the corn flour market.
- SAGARPA and the Secretary of Economics authorised those corporations the deviation of more than a million and a half white corn tons to export and to sell to the mexican livestock industry: VIZ, Bachoco, masón, etc.
- The increasing price of diesel, gas, electricity decreed by Calderon at the very beginning of his term..

3. The structural policies.

- But, since 1982, with Structural Adjustment Package, mexican successive governments give up their capacities to design and implement a coherent set of agroalimentary policies.
- Till 1982: combination of support policies, intervention in the market, acquisition of a strategic grain reserve, official incentives, tariffs, etc.
- But from 1982, on, autodestruction of all the institutions, tools and policies to manage food sovereignty:
- End of support prices.
- Shut down of Conasupo in 1998.

- Dramatic increase of grain importations since NAFTA.
- The “rationale” why produce corn in Mexico if we can buy it cheaper in the United States?

4. The official subsidies to the rich ones.

- These policies have driven to the concentration of market and subsidies in very few corporations.
- Disappearing of programs to support the marketing enterprises of campesino and small and mid-scale producers.
- Switch in the tortilla industry: from nixtamal made tortillas to corn flour tortillas: 50% of the total production. 70% of this industry, controlled by Maseca.

5. The international context:

- End of the global agrifood phase?
- End of the cycle: low international prices, hydrocarbons energy, big agrifood and oil industries domination?
- Biofuels vs. Food? The same dominant actors?
- Or a new cycle yet to rebuild: food sovereignty, sustainability, energy diversification, conviviality, community based alternatives to energy and food?

6- The proposals of Mexican campesino organizations:

National Corn Agreement to increase sustainability production and productivity of corn and good quality tortillas.

Emergency program to increase immediately the national corn production: subsidies, support price, investments in extension, technology, credits, native seeds,

Effective program of actions against concentration and oligopolies in the corn-tortilla productive chain.

Special program to modernize tortilla industry.

Renegotiation of NAFTA to eliminate the total openness to corn and beans importations in 2008.

Strategic plan to build national food sovereignty.

