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Africa

The ravages of agribusiness in Africa

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The results of the Green Revolution in Africa are negative for the agricultural world and for the environment. On the other hand, they have encouraged the establishment of multinationals on the continent.

It has been twenty years since Bill Gates, through his foundation, launched his Green Revolution for Africa under the acronym Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). According to him, it was a question of modernizing African agriculture, fighting famine and improving the standard of living of farmers.

Productivist ideology

The basic idea is simple: to fight hunger, agricultural productivity should be increased. Famines, on the other hand, are primarily caused by wars, which disrupt agricultural activity, or by an unequal distribution of available foodstuffs.

AGRA advocated intensive agriculture based on monocultures, the purchase of modified seeds that were supposed to withstand climatic hazards, and the massive use of chemical inputs.

The studies carried out all come to the same conclusion: the objectives set are far from being achieved. Soils have been degraded, rural families have become impoverished due to yields much lower than expected, making it impossible to buy new seeds and fertilizers. At the same time, local food crops such as millet and sorghum — drought-resistant and nutritious — have declined.

As the Bishop of Durban pointed out of the AGRA supporters: “They claim to be the saviours of the hungry and the poor, but they have failed miserably because of their model of industrialization, which degrades the soil, destroys biodiversity and destroys biodiversity. and privileges corporate profit over people. It is immoral, immoral and unjust.”

Stifling other options

Thanks to his financial power, Bill Gates has also prevented many African states from taking an alternative path: that of agroecology. Contrary to the widely held idea of the agri-food industries, agroecology is not a regression to the agriculture of the past. On the contrary, it combines the knowledge of the agricultural world with modern scientific knowledge.

This type of agriculture respects the environment and offers a guarantee of food sovereignty to the populations. It also promotes seed improvement through progressive selection traded in informal markets. It is probably this aspect — the autonomy of producers and the non-dependence on the industrial market — that most disturbs the capitalist ecosystem of world agriculture.

AGRA commissioned an evaluation study conducted by the consulting firm Mathematica. In line with the other analyses, this confirmed the weakness of the results obtained. But it points to the positive development of the African market by genetically modified seeds, artificial inputs and pesticides produced by Western multinationals. But

perhaps this was the real objective of this green revolution.

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Translated by *International Viewpoint* from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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