

* **New writings and mediations in health**

"O veneno está na mesa"

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Synopsis

Brazil is the country in the world consumes more pesticides: 5.2 liters / year per capita. Many of these herbicides, fungicides and pesticides consume are prohibited in almost everyone at risk represent to public health. The danger is for the workers, who handle the poisons, and for citizens who consume the products agricultural. Only those who are the profits that make the transnational pesticides. The idea of the film is to show the public how we are feeding badly and dangerously, because of an agricultural model perverse, based on agribusiness.

Technical Specifications

Documentary **"O veneno está na mesa"**

Direction: Silvio Tandler

Year 2011 / Duração: 50 minutes/colored

Production Caliban / Support: EPSJV-Fiocruz

Available on the Internet em: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RVAgD44AGg>

The movie **"O veneno está na mesa"**, by Silvio Tandler, , incorporates a set of materials developed by the *Campanha Contra os Agrotóxicos e Pela Vida*, project released by more than 30 entities of Brazilian civil society, social movements, environmental entities, students, organizations related to the health area and groups of researchers. The documentary was produced by Caliban producer, which belongs to Tandler, with the support of Escola Politécnica de Saúde Joaquim Venâncio da Fundação Oswaldo Cruz.



(imagem/foto: scanner)

The issue of the use of pesticides in Brazil is complex and involves several aspects, above all, the agricultural policy implemented in Brazil in 1960. Brazil is already the third agricultural exporter in the world. Data from the World Trade Organization (WTO), published in 2010, shows that only the United States and European Union sell more food on the planet than Brazilian farmers and

cattle farmers. On the other hand, as the promotional material of *Campanha Contra os Agrotóxicos e Pela Vida*, Brazil is the first on the world ranking of pesticide consumption. In 2010, according to data from the National Union of industry of products for the Agricultural Defense, more than a million tones of poisons were used on Brazilian crops.

One of the purpose of *Campanha Contra os Agrotóxicos e Pela Vida* is having a debate with the population on the damage to the environment and to the health of workers, rural communities and consumers in the cities generated by abusive use of agrichemicals. This is also the greater purpose of "**O veneno está na mesa**". So is the image that illustrates the campaign poster - a monoplane spraying pesticide on a delicious dish of raw salad - the film tries to be didactic to present the complex theme. And the title could not be more explicit. With strong complaints, it is a documentary that causes impact, especially on consumers within cities.



(imagem/foto: avião/cartaz)

Tendler knows the complexity of the issue, which had its interest arisen two years ago, in a conversation with the journalist and Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, when he got to know that Brazil is the country that consumes more pesticides all around the world. So, in the debate held at Fiocruz Pernambuco, after the showing of the documentary, the filmmaker has revealed that he intends to make, in sequence, two more films on the theme. One to talk about the organic agriculture issue and the alternatives against agrichemicals, and the other one about nature and planet destruction because of the development model adopted in the world today.



(imagem/foto: eduardo galeano)

With the narration of the actors Dira Paes, Júlia Lemmertz and Caco Clocer, besides the actor and theater director Amir Haddad, Tendler wants, in this first moment, present a panel with the main issues related to the use of pesticides and genetically modified seeds in Brazil. For the filmmaker, "**O veneno está na mesa**" should be seen as a film denounce, or better saying, a "systemic denunciation", in the words of the director himself, against the directions of the model adopted in the Brazilian agriculture.

Tendler creates the screenplay of the documentary with the assistance of TV and radio broadcasted reports. The first one to be "summoned" is the radio. At the beginning of the film, after the interview with the writer Eduardo Galeano, appears the image of an old radio, made of wood, with the audio of the commentary from the journalist André Trigueiros on the sustainable world Program, from Radio CBN. On the presented part, the journalist talks about the powerful pesticide lobby in Brazil. This audio is the opening credit presentation of the documentary.

Later, the director presents the first of three reports from TV that are in the documentary. Broadcasted in Bom Brasil, from Rede Globo de Televisão and produced by Rede Globo Nordeste, the report is about a survey carried out in Central de Abastecimento by Agencia de Defesa Agropecuária. The study proves the pesticide contamination on fruits and vegetables produced in several states of the country and marketed in Central de Abastecimento. The report also presents the case of a farmer from Pernambuco who lost an eye due to an infection caused by the use of poison in the crop.



(imagem/foto: aplicação de agrotóxico em couve)

The other report, published by Jornal de Mato Grosso, from TV Bandeirantes, in Mato Grosso, is also on a research that proved the existence of pesticide residues in breast milk; The third report presented in the documentary was also published in Bom Dia Brasil and was created in Paraná. It is about the use of pesticides on wheat crops. One of the main issues raised by the report is that Brazilian products are at the risk of not being accepted in the world due to the excessive use of pesticides.

All reports presented are framed with an image of a TV set, that following the example of the radio, is also an old model.

According to Tendler, the strategy for the use of material in the media had as objective to legitimize the words of the movie with the texts and directions of the media, already legitimated.

The concept of text used here is the expanded concept, that correlates it with any form of human expression, and assumes that "texts are made (...) of senses that pre-exist, and that are combined by us to meet a given situation, to be read in certain times by people that have specific characteristics in specific contents" (ARAÚJO, 2003). On the other hand, we understand speech as a set of texts articulated in a practice, the discursive practice. The speech in matter is the one produced by discursive community (ARAÚJO, 2004) composed by the participant entities of the campaign against pesticides. Texts are an important part of the construction of senses, and it is in this movement that the symbolic battle for power is carried out.

In fact, we know that mass media fulfill today a fundamental part in the formation of the idea that the population have about the world and social relations. We can say that media have today, in our society, the largest share of symbolic power - the power to be seen and believed - according to Bourdieu (1989). For the media, it has a large share of responsibility in the configuration of the imaginary and social practices, in addition to the role of scheduling the issues that society must consider relevant for public debate.

In an article that analyzes media communication and Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS), Oliveira (2000) states that the media has today a privileged place of public visibility and legitimacy of the active forces in the society. As a political actor, media engages and challenges several social fields, understanding social field as a space of definition of legitimacy levels, according to area of responsibility, which imposes language acts, speeches and practices.

The strategy of using the articles published by the media would be used to contextualize them, as for Tendler speeches produced by the media are not contextualized and superficial and do not establish cause and effect relations. The material presented from media ends up "putting to get the r" the testimonies, 17 in total, all from proposing entities of the film (except the writer and journalist Eduardo Galeano, whose testimony opens and closes the documentary).

In fact, the documentary presents and wants to contextualize several issues, for example, how the agrochemical industrial model applied in crops makes an access to pesticides reaching the dinner table of Brazilians not only in fruits and vegetables, but on pizza, bread and noodles that are produced with genetically modified wheat also treated with pesticides; or that "organic is for the rich and poor people eats pesticides" - one of vignettes of the documentary - is that Brazilian agricultural policy is a policy of incentives to pesticides (which exempt them from taxes) and that subsidizes the agribusiness (rural credit is conditioned to the compulsory use of pesticides); or even as the Green Revolution as the arguments of a producer and farmer from São Paulo, presented at the beginning of the narrative, has managed to "destroy, delete, forget the whole inheritance of traditional agriculture, all the knowledge accumulated during the course of its ten thousand years and created a whole new business".



(imagem/foto: máquina de aplicação de agrotóxico)

The Green Revolution is an expression, created in the 1960s, referring to a broad program which had as purpose increasing agricultural production through research in seeds, intensive use of chemicals in the soil and use of machines in the field. The program, funded by the American group Rockefeller, had as its main argument the increase in food production for a world free from hunger.

An argument still hegemonic, as it is possible to notice in the speech of the senator Katia Abreu, from PSD of Tocantins, in the public hearing to discuss the mechanisms for the control of pesticides in the country. In one of the excerpts presented in the documentary, the senator defends the use of pesticides to increase the productivity of food – no more for a world free from hunger, but so that they can get cheaper at the table of the Brazilians.

The expansion and strengthening of multinational companies producers of pesticides and genetically modified seeds, during the Green Revolution, occurred with the support of strong communication strategies, especially in countries such as Brazil. These strategies addressed not only to the population in general, but especially to rural workers, important bonds in the food production chain. The marks are visible in several practices, starting with the language in which the poison turns to be a panacea against plagues and diseases or even agrochemical and herbicide is the best synonym of pesticide.

O veneno está na mesa is a material of *Campanha Contra os Agrotóxicos e Pela Vida*, therefore it is not marketed, being available on the internet to be downloaded and copied. On the day of the debate at Fiocruz, Tandler has revealed that the film had already more than 100 thousand views.

A good start for a project that, among its five goals listed, one refers to "building a awareness process in society about the threat represented by pesticides (...)" and another to "show to the society the need to change the current agricultural model that produces poisoned food ". To engage such tasks, there must have the contribution of two areas: education and communication.

In communication there is a long and arduous road ahead, especially to oppose a speech built over the last few decades by Green Revolution and by multinational companies of agrochemicals and genetically modified seeds.

And that other materials with the same quality of the documentary **O veneno está na mesa** are produced. Especially materials targeted not only to the general public, final consumer, but to all the sectors involved in agricultural production in Brazil.

Conflict of Interests

Authors have declared they have no conflict of interests.

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