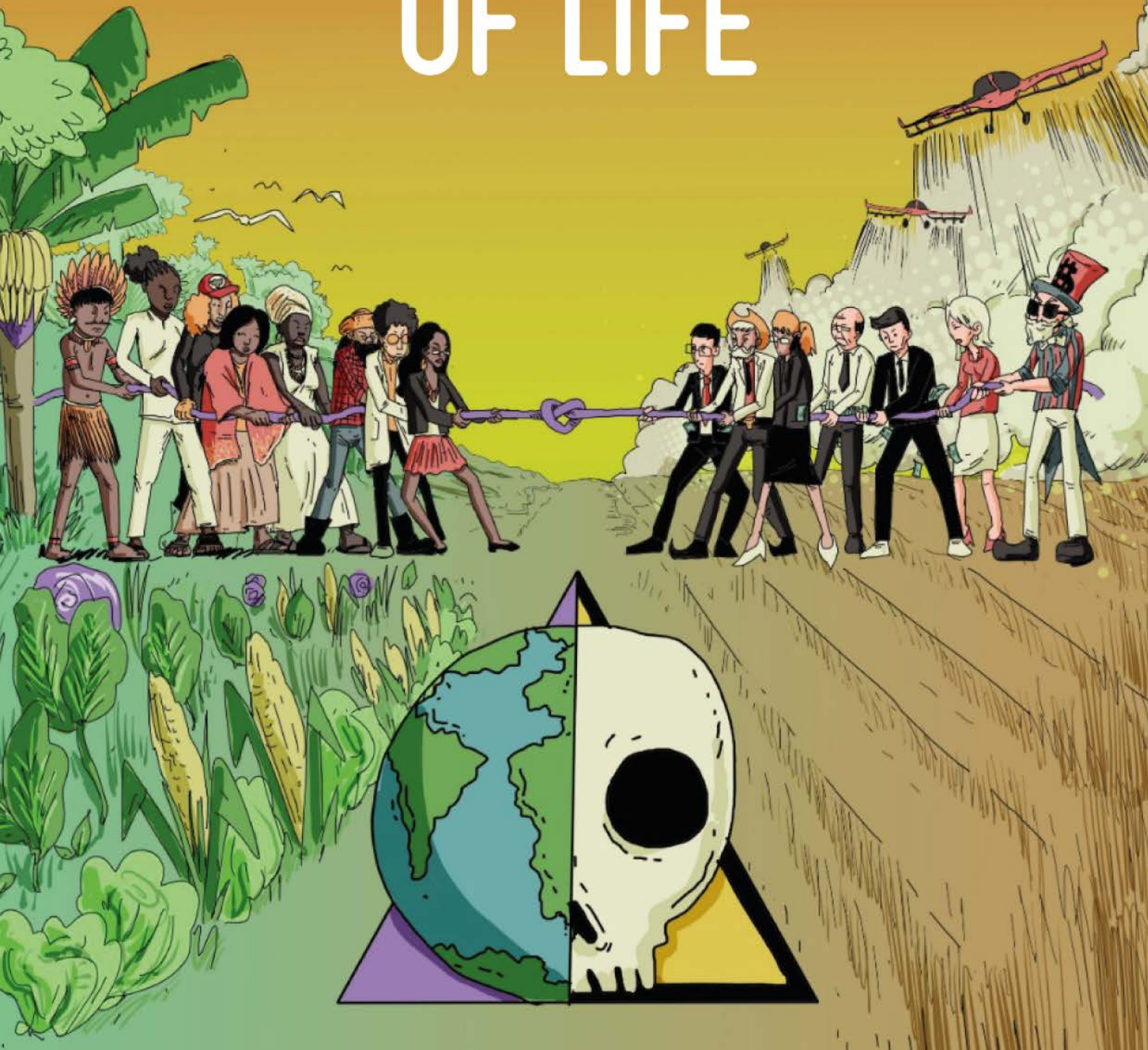


A DOSSIER  
~~AGAINST THE POISON PACKAGE~~  
AND IN DEFENSE  
OF LIFE



## **Organizers:**

Karen Friedrich

Murilo Mendonça Oliveira de Souza

Juliana Acosta Santorum

Amanda Vieira Leão

Naila Saskia Melo Andrade

Fernando Ferreira Carneiro

## **Organized by:**

ABRASCO, ABA – Agroecology and Permanent Campaign against Pesticides and for Life

## **Supported by:**

Instituto Ibirapitanga, Fiocruz and Heinrich Böll Foundation

## **In partnership with:**

National Agroecology Alliance (ANA)

## **Editors:**

ABRASCO, Expressão Popular, HUCITEC, Rede Unida

## **Visual design:**

Webert da Cruz

## **Illustrations:**

Oberon Blenner

## **English translation:**

Mauro Figueiredo

## **English proofreading:**

Dermeval de Sena Aires Jr.

# INTRODUCTION

For many years now, and in the name of an alleged simplification and of the fallacy of producing “safer food”, the rural caucus has been working together at the Brazilian National Congress to dismantle the still fragile national regulatory apparatus of the country by undermining measures aimed at protecting health and the environment in the proceedings on registration and control of pesticide use.

In 2018, a drastic step was taken with the approval of a substitutive draft to Bill 6,299/2002. Submitted to analysis by a special Congress committee, the Bill deals with changes in the regulatory framework on agrochemicals. It has been altered a few times throughout the process and received a growing number of attached bills.

With such changes, the expression “Poison Package” came into existence to give an accurate dimension to a set of measures that aim at the same goal: releasing even more poison into our soil, air, water and food. The special committee consisted mainly of congressional representatives of the rural caucus, who used to report in their rendering of accounts to the TSE – The Superior

Electoral Court – great sums in campaign money received from the agribusiness, when such funding was allowed by the electoral legislation.

On the other hand, research institutions, scientific societies, health and environmental technical bodies and the organized civil society are standing up against the poison package, including the platform #ChegaDeAgrotóxicos [“Stop Pesticides”], which has collected over 1,700 signatures in support of a ban. The debate reached the United Nations, which issued a warning against the dangers of the package-proposal.

To give visibility and support to this debate, which should involve the entire Brazilian society, the Brazilian Association of Collective Health (ABRASCO) and the Brazilian Agroecology Association (ABA Agroecologia) produced in 2018 a Technical and Scientific Dossier against Draft Bill 6,299/2002 – the Poison Package – and in favor of Draft Bill 6,670/2016, which, on its turn, sets up the National Pesticide Reduction Policy (PNARA). To attain these aims, twenty-five public Technical Opinions against the Poison Package were brought together, and an integrated analysis of their arguments was produced. The only public technical opinion supporting the Poison Package, though with reservations, was also analyzed. The table below lists the analyzed opinion notes.

|                |                                |  |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>AGAINST</b> | Public Scientific Institutions | FIOCRUZ – Oswaldo Cruz Foundation                          |
|                |                                | INCA – National Cancer Institute                           |
|                | Scientific Societies           | ABA – Brazilian Agroecology Association                    |
|                |                                | SBEM – Brazilian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism   |
|                |                                | SBMFC – Brazilian Society of Family and Community Medicine |
|                |                                | SBPC – Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science    |

|                                 |  |   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>AGAINST</b>                  | Technical Bodies   | ADAB – Bahia State Agency for Agricultural and Livestock Promotion  |
|                                 |  | ANVISA – Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency   |
|                                 |  | DSAST/MS – The Health Ministry’s Environmental and Workplace Surveillance Secretariat   |
|                                 |  | IBAMA – Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources  |
|                                 | Representative Bodies of the State and Local Administration under the National Health System | Joint Opinion Notes issued by the National Council of State Health Secretaries (CONASS) and the National Council of Municipal Health Secretaries (CONASEMS) |
|                                 | Institutions of the Judiciary System   | DPU – Federal Public Defender’s Office  |
|                                 |  | MPF – Federal Public Prosecutions Office  |
| MPT – Labor Prosecutor’s Office |  |   |
| <b>AGAINST</b>                  | Social Control Institutions  | CNDH – National Human Rights Council  |
|                                 |  | CNS – National Health Council   |
|                                 |  | CONSEA – National Food and Nutritional Security Council   |
|                                 |  | FBCA – Bahia State Forum against Pesticides   |
|                                 |  | FECEAGRO/RN – Rio Grande do Norte State Forum against the Impacts of Pesticides on Workers’ Health, the Environment and Society                             |
|                                 |  | National Forum against the Impacts of Pesticides and Genetically Modified Crops   |
|                                 |  | MPCON – National Association of Public Prosecutions Offices for Consumer Defense  |
| <b>AGAINST</b>                  | Civil Society Organizations  | Platform #ChegaDeAgrotóxicos  |
|                                 |  | Recommendations issued by Human Rights Watch – “Você não quer mais respirar veneno” [“You no longer want to breathe poison”]                                |
|                                 |  | SNVS – Workers of the National Health Surveillance System   |
|                                 | Other Institutions   | UN – The United Nations Organization  |
| <b>IN FAVOR</b>                 | Technical Bodies   | EMBRAPA – Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation   |

The Dossier also proposes key arguments that justify the approval of the Bill of the National Pesticide Reduction Policy (PNARA), which was also analyzed by a special committee at the Brazilian House of Representatives in 2018. On that occasion, the favorable report issued by the committee's rapporteur was approved. This achievement resulted from a strong social mobilization for public investments so that technical alternatives to pesticides were disseminated and/or implemented, thus contributing to the promotion of an agricultural production model that can simultaneously meet the food production needs in terms of quantity, quality and diversity, and promote collective health and environmental protection.

More than two years after the approval of the Poison Package and of the National Pesticide Reduction Policy (PNARA) at their respective special committees, these two antagonistic bills have not yet been analyzed by the plenary of the House of Representatives. Thus, ABRASCO and ABA Agroecology, in partnership with the Permanent Campaign against Pesticides and for Life, undertook the present work of reviewing and updating the Dossier. We seek not only to present a documental record of the entire process, but also, and mainly, to provide technical and scientific support to advocacy efforts in the federal, state and municipal Legislative contexts, which involve Congress members and, especially, popular movements and civil society organizations fighting for human and environmental health, and for democracy itself.

Here, we aim to contribute by providing a more just and sustainable model of society, and by fostering science-based debates that seek to promote life and are not held captive to the interests of international market and its local agents.

### **ABA Agroecology Chairmanship**

Romier da Paixão Sousa, 2018 -2019

Islandia Bezerra da Costa, 2020 - 2021



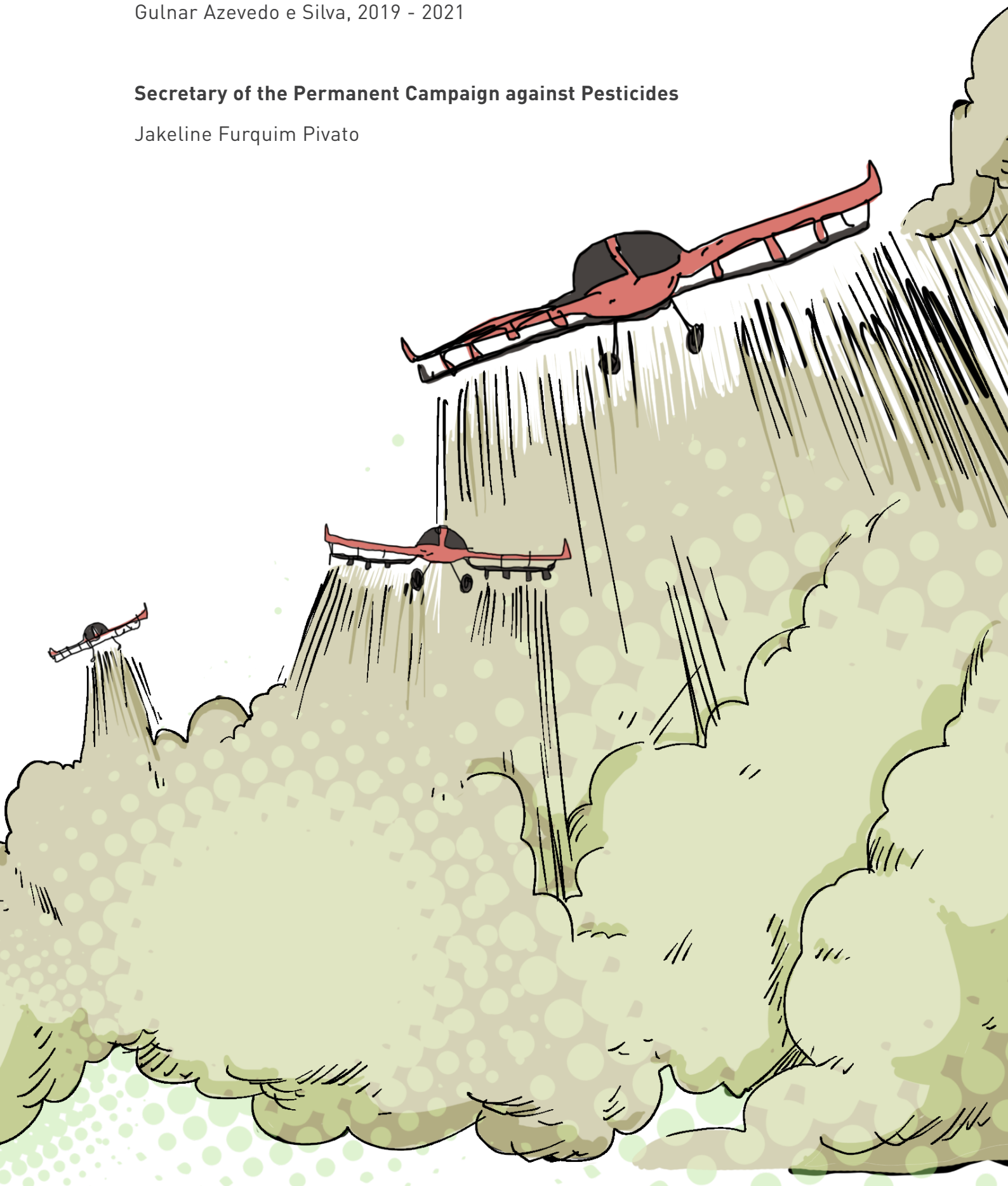
## **ABRASCO Chairmanship**

Gastão Wagner de Souza Campos, 2015 - 2018

Gulnar Azevedo e Silva, 2019 - 2021

## **Secretary of the Permanent Campaign against Pesticides**

Jakeline Furquim Pivato



The document is divided into two parts. Its first part is entitled: "An analysis of the scientific and technical foundations of the public opinion notes against the Poison Package" and comprises five texts that present: i) a brief socio-political background to the emergence of Bill 6,299/2002; ii) a timeline with the main events of the creation and proceedings of the Poison Package and, alternatively, of Bill 6,670/2016 (establishing the National Pesticide Reduction Policy - PNARA - and other provisions), in addition to a comparative framework of both Bills; iii) analyses and technical notices issued by the organizations, institutions and councils that took a stand against Bill 6,299/2002; iv) it also encourages reflection on some issues regarding public investments for the use of pesticides and v) points to an increase in the number of registrations of pesticides up to 2020, the high toxicity levels of such products, and their threat to the food and nutritional security of affected populations, especially the most vulnerable groups, such as local producers and rural area dwellers.

The second part of the dossier is entitled "Pathways to reducing the use of agrochemicals in Brazil" and brings together three texts that shed light on experiments linked to



the construction and consolidation of healthier and more sustainable agri-food systems. These texts present details on the historical emergence of agroecology, and on the creation and enforcement of state and municipal laws that contribute to its local development. They also encourage reflection on the importance of extending to the territories concerned the public debate on the several forms of food production in rural areas and in the city. These forms are seen not only as an alternative path to work and income, but also to access to and quality of the consumed food, thus strengthening the convergence between agroecology and the health of the populations involved. The texts also systematize the experiences that foster agroecology and restrict pesticide use with maps on the new regulatory and institutional frameworks of states and municipalities. This second part of the dossier concludes with a text on some issues and key arguments, followed by a critical and explanatory analysis of the facts regarding the construction of agroecology: the role of agroecological and organic production in feeding many populations; agroecology as a strategy for promoting life and health; the policy on the bio-based inputs necessary to agroecological production; and the process of constructing agroecological knowledge.

The Dossier counts on the financial support of the Project "Strategic Agenda for Action - Research on Health and Pesticides", which main objective is the production and publication of texts focused on the ongoing deregulation of pesticides in Brazil, with an emphasis on the draft bills above (the Poison Package and the PNARA). It also performs an impact analysis of the fast-paced deregulation of pesticides. This project is linked to ABRASCO and funded by the Ibirapitanga Institute, which has supported initiatives aimed at the production and systematization of knowledge in key issues of the debate on the impacts of pesticide use, as well as other initiatives and themes linked to food – from a wider perspective, by means of agri-food systems based on agroecology.

**FROM**



**DENUNCIATION TO**

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

**A CRY FOR LIFE**



Brazil is on the verge of an abyss. Unfair labor and social security reforms have been pushing the country off the edge into free fall; in addition to the closing down of working groups, committees and councils such as the National Council for Food and Nutritional Security - CONSEA; the underfunding of state schools – from primary schools to undergraduate and graduate education institutions –; the underfunding of scientific institutions and of the Unified Health System; and the stimulus to the reprimarization of the economy through excessive funding and fiscal benefits for agricultural and mineral commodities that degrade nature and cause the death of workers, traditional peoples and communities.

The current situation includes other trends and pushes the country into an unprecedented humanitarian and sanitary crisis – among the worst worldwide. One of the features of the necropolitics implemented by the current administration in Brazil is a fake news infodemic that publicizes unsafe and inefficient ways of preventing COVID-19, coupled with a herd of digital activists who threaten democracy, harass scientists, health and educational professionals, social movements, and traditional peoples and communities while practicing misogyny, racism and fascism.

This narrative is corroborated by recent reports from communities from north to south of Brazil, according to whom pesticides have been intentionally sprayed from airplanes on inhabited areas. Such practice could be characterized as chemical warfare aimed at destroying agroecological experiences and families who fight for their right to land and for the right to grow their own food.

Fortunately, however, there is another side to this reality, which prevents the country from plunging into the abyss. Thanks to the Brazilian scientists committed to preserving

the lives of the most vulnerable populations; thanks to many health and education professionals, environmental and sanitary officers; thanks to members of the Judiciary who are watchful of legal guarantees; to journalists committed to the truth; to civil society organizations, family farmers, and a myriad of other workers who, though essential, do their jobs without minimum protection against infections; who have to use crowded public transport and end up sent to also crowded intensive care units, without any rights, without vaccines, without health and without food.

Those fighting for poison-free food and for the right to land – although they had not imagined the current situation – had already warned about the importance of re-evaluating the mainstream agricultural model, and pointed to the need to eat healthy food, which, by itself, prevents chronic diseases, in addition to being free of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and GMOs associated with the formation of neoplasms, neurological diseases, hormonal dysfunctions and compromised immune functions. They have also been showing the importance of promoting access to land by thousands of families via robust and permanent public policies. This is not only to ensure a greater availability and diversity of food, but also to contribute to securing decent livelihoods for populations in rural areas, and to making urban areas less crowded.

Unfortunately, the problem of pesticides and all its interrelations with the COVID-19 pandemic can still be aggravated. The Poison Package (Draft Bill 6,299/2002) would certainly plunge us into an unprecedented social, ecological and sanitary abyss. That would mean more poison and toxicity, the consequences of which would be even more concealed by the dismantling of health and social control systems.

This book brings together and analyzes in a single set the solid technical and scientific consensus based on twenty-six recommendations issued by scientific societies, technical bodies, state and municipal health system management bodies, judiciary bodies, social control bodies, civil society organizations and the UN Special Rapporteurs against the Poison Package, which the ruralist caucus and the Bolsonaro government want to be approved by the National Congress.

The Poison Package aims to dismantle the current regulatory framework on pesticides in Brazil, which, albeit with limitations, deals with health, environment and agriculture within a perspective that cherishes the safeguards of each area. The Poison Package will leave to the Ministry of Agriculture - which is historically more porous to the interests of pesticide industries - the key decisions regarding the registration of such poisons in Brazil.

Yet, in a dialectical move, this Dossier presents policies for the future. The National Pesticide Reduction Policy (PNARA), which is also waiting to be evaluated by the Plenary of the House of Representatives, is the exact opposite of the Poison Package.

Whereas the Poison Package will, in the name of modernity and an alleged progress, increase the contamination of ecosystems and people, the PNARA shows clear pathways to fostering another model of agriculture via public policies that respect biodiversity and do not threaten the lives of thousands of traditional workers, peoples and communities. Based on solid scientific evidence, the Dossier analyzes and demystifies the criticism that agroecology is not capable of feeding the population with efficiency and safety.

Along with many initiatives, responses and resistance movements by the Brazilian Association of Collective Health, the National Agroecology Alliance, the Brazilian Association of Agroecology, the Permanent Campaign against Pesticides and for Life, and other entities and movements, the Dossier seeks to guarantee fundamental rights, as well as the only possible path to survival: the production of poison-free food. Once again, it is a cry against silence by mustering scientific, technical and political data, together with a call to action. As poet Pedro Terra puts it: "Is a dream worth a life? I do not know. But I learned from the scarce life I've spent: death does not dream". We need to cry out: for poison-free agriculture, with social justice and the ability to generate health.



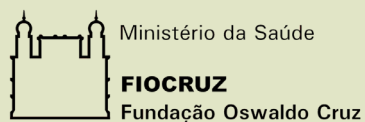


An Initiative by:



Supported by:

# IBIRAPITANGA



In partnership with:

