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زبانهای اروپایی

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## Vegan capitalism, food multinationals and BlackRock



Sources: CTXT [Image: Meat industry. JUAN SOTO]

*After seducing the population with the supposed wonders of the vegan diet, meat production transnationals and large investment funds landed in the food industry that are presented as substitutes*

Until not so long ago, six or seven decades ago, the majority diet of the rural population was austere, balanced and subject to the possibilities of their territories. In parallel to developmentalism and the concentration of the population in cities, from study centers, universities and prestigious journals – in coordination with the food industry – the

message of the need to improve eating patterns was spread, increasing the consumption of proteins, especially those of animal origin. By dint of much publicity and propaganda, think of the case of *fastfood*, the message permeated culturally and settled in the imaginary as the pattern to follow. To satisfy this "created" demand, the food industry capable of producing a lot of milk, meat and its derivatives at cheap prices was justified, thanked and exalted, without contemplating or worrying about their excessive externalities. Food and traditional agriculture were despised and ridiculed, affecting bodies and territories. From buying and cooking fresh food, it went to ultra-processed reheated in the microwave and the industry clearly won. Something as intimate as our food has ended up being delegated to a few mega-companies controlled by investment funds.

Knowing what has happened, and now that vegan food trends are reaching important quotas, can it be that history is repeating itself? Is it a culturally induced success? And, if so, are they new actors or the usual ones?

If we break down the vegan market we find companies like Cargill, Nestlé or Danone and investment funds like BlackRock or Breakthrough Energy Ventures

Although it may seem contradictory, the main transnational companies of industrial meat production are those behind the foods that, based on vegetables or proteins grown in laboratories, are presented as substitutes for meat, fish, eggs and milk. In the report *Proteins and Policies* of the entity [Ipes-Food](#) or in the pages of the scientific platform [ALEPH2020](#) you can find a lot of information about this reality. For example, the company Vivera, well known in Germany, Holland and the United Kingdom for its more than one hundred references such as vegan salmon or vegan chicken kebab, belongs to the Brazilian JBS, the world's largest producer of poultry and beef and number two in pork production. In the JBS portfolio we also discovered that it is the majority shareholder of the Spanish BioTech Foods, dedicated to the cultured meat sector. In the United States, two of the nation's leading meat companies, Tyson Foods and Smithfield, have created their own divisions to produce their plant-based nuggets and sausages to compete with the two industry leaders, Impossible Foods (associated with Burger King) and Beyond Meat. In Spain we find the same phenomenon. The largest integrator in the country, leader in chicken and pig macrofarms, Vall Companys, launched in 2019 the Zyrcular Foods business project to make meat substitutes from peas, wheat or soybeans from far away,

from which we can already find products in different supermarkets with their white label. And their expansion will continue if they are granted the 134 million euros presented to the Next Generation recovery funds to address new challenges in this field.

Si seguimos desmenuzando el mercado vegano, acabamos encontrando a más empresas multinacionales que desde hace décadas controlan la alimentación mundial, como Cargill, Nestlé, Danone, etc. Además, también encontramos fondos de inversión como BlackRock, el mayor del mundo (apoyando a Tyson o JBS entre otras), o Breakthrough Energy Ventures presidido por Bill Gates (participando activamente en Impossible Foods y Beyond Meat).

Lo cierto es que reducir la solución de todos nuestros males a retirar de nuestras dietas la proteína animal no solo es un relato reduccionista, también es incorrecto

El aterrizaje de las multinacionales alimentarias en este “segmento” no podía hacerse sin la seguridad de haber seducido previamente a la población. Como siempre han hecho empresas tan competitivas entre ellas, no tienen ningún problema para encontrar lugares comunes, como la plataforma [EAT](#), gracias a la cual –con “la ciencia” amaestrada y los inversionistas mencionados– se encargan de transmitir y cabildear a favor de estos nuevos patrones alimentarios. Repitiendo cual mantras las maravillas de esta dieta vegana para frenar la crisis climática y garantizar la salud eterna, han conseguido imponer un relato que ha calado en la población y en las administraciones. Y lo cierto es que reducir la solución de todos nuestros males a retirar de nuestras dietas la proteína animal no solo es un relato reduccionista, también es incorrecto. ¿Por qué no abordan las diferencias en los modelos productivos de proteína animal, sabiendo como se sabe de la importancia de los herbívoros en el ciclo de los nutrientes, el aprovechamiento que hacen de alimentos que no compiten con la población humana, su papel de fertilizadores de la tierra, etc.? ¿Ignoran que una alimentación a base de proteínas de guisantes, soja, maíz o trigo es replicar el mismo modelo de monocultivos responsables de los problemas que dicen quieren solucionar? ¿Por qué no se reconoce la dependencia del petróleo para tanto procesamiento, viajes y plásticos que visten a estos pseudoalimentos?

Did we believe that veganism was a success of the awareness work of some NGOs? Meat or vegan, the food capitalism of always distances us from the sovereignty that urgently

needs to be recovered and that can only be established by adapting our diet to the cycles of the abundance of the land that peasants, shepherds and shepherds of our corresponding territories know how to manage: in their orchards and in their farms. Simplicity is beautiful.

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Source: <https://ctxt.es/es/20220801/Firmas/40511/#.Yuv5cXn0sAc.twitter>

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