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How The Other Half Dies



Synopsis

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Book Information

Paperback

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Customer Reviews

Much like other reviewers I read Susan George's book more than 20 years ago when I was an undergraduate part-time arts student. Her basic premise can be summarised- food is grown for profit, not to feed people. She details how the overpopulation myth is used by western governments to create the impression that food shortages and famine are a result of having too many mouths to feed, and insufficient agricultural resources to feed them. She goes on to explain how Agribusiness operates: Local elites are financed by the likes of the World Bank, not to grow food to feed local populations. Rather they are granted loans that will, in the opinion of the World Bank be repayable and increase a country's GNP. Which, in economic terms indicates the Bank's correct loan policy: loan repaid with interest, and GNP increased. Susan George, however, points out the negative effects of placing the economic capacity to control agricultural produce in the hands of a few local elites. The ramifications being a shift from producing food to feed people, whose ancestor's may have worked their native land for thousands of years, providing food, clothing and housing for themselves. These lands, in most cases have fertile soil and, in good times produce abundant crops. However, when flood, drought, or crop failure for any reason occurs, the poor farmers have little choice but to accept the offer of the local elites and sell their land to avoid starvation. They then have little choice, but to relocate to the already overcrowded cities in an attempt to find work. And so, cities have growing slums, poverty, crime, disease and all the other maladies overcrowding and poverty creates. The elites of course do not utilize the land to increase food production, which could provide food for the local population.

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