

# *The devil's earnings*

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## **The devil's earnings**

2020 was a very difficult year, with serious losses for almost everyone when it comes to health, social, political and economic terms, except, of course for the industrial and commercial/for-profit pharmaceutical consortiums that made huge profits from the COVID-19 pandemic.

An article published this Sunday in the Mexican newspaper La Jornada disclosed that the main firms in that sector increased their value, that is, their capital, by the extraordinary figure of 90 billion dollars in the stock markets.

This information was released by the scientific data analysis company Airfinity, which links these profits to the possibilities of manufacturing a safe vaccine against the new coronavirus.

What is interesting, or rather disturbing, is the fact that the investment made by governments with public money -- that is, with the taxes paid by the people -- played a key role in this business.

Indeed, the data shows that several countries contributed no less than 8.6 billion dollars to the research, and another 1.9 billion dollars were given by private foundations and other organizations.

On the other hand, the pharmaceutical companies put on the table only 4.4 billion dollars, less than half of all investment, and still will keep one hundred percent of the revenues.

Moreover, the non-governmental organization Doctors without Borders denounced that the private pharmaceutical companies had all the time, free access to the information and research on the pandemic carried out in public laboratories and universities, however they are not obliged to share their profits.

La Jornada newspaper has described it as a typical case of private enrichment thanks to public funds, but which does not come out of nowhere. For decades, the neoliberal doctrine has induced governments to reduce spending on public health, not only on hospitals and other care centers, but also on the development of scientific knowledge and practice, leaving them in the hands of the private sector.

At the time the COVID-19 emerged, this whole operation scheme was dismantled, both in the great powers and in small dependent countries, except for those like Cuba, which were cautious not to overlook this important aspect of life.

We can say, then, that every dollar that enters the coffers of the giant pharmaceutical corporations is touched by the hand of the devil, because it entails the pain, suffering, crying and life of millions of people.

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