

In support of Shiva's critique of the Green Revolution

Social media is alive with folks' thoughts on [Michael Specter's recent New Yorker piece](#). As the controversy fades, I worry that people will be left with three ideas.

1. Vandana Shiva is unreliable therefore all critiques of GMOs are too.
2. Farmer suicides aren't about GMOs so we can stop worrying about them.
3. The Green Revolution is worth repeating, because what we need to feed the world is yet another boost in food production.

All three of these ideas ought to be banished from your mind.

1. Specter's ad hominem isn't a substitute for good argument.
2. Farmer suicides are a serious problem, in India and elsewhere, and have much to do with farmer debt. If you're interested, *Stuffed and Starved* has a whole chapter on how suicides from the U.S. to the UK to India are linked, and have much to do with the modern food system. Louis Proyect's piece at Counterpunch makes the argument about debt nicely. Specter himself has dismissed Proyect as "[perfect for Marxists flattering frauds](#)" (though it could also be that he's dismissing Mark Bittman's tweet about Proyect, thus inverting the designation of Marxist and fraud. Twitter is an engine of ambiguity).

Claim number 3 is the most pernicious. In order to be able to think that the Green Revolution worked, much has been forgotten. Serious analysis of the Green Revolution needs far more space and time than either social media, or indeed, *The New Yorker* can contain. I put together a preliminary 63 page academic piece last year. Assuming you don't have time to muddle through that, the post below is a short guide about how to think about the Green Revolution. It's a detective story, but one for which clues are available in the public domain. The main trick: to see a question when others see a conclusion. In other words, to be curious.

Read the full, original article: [How to be curious about the Green Revolution](#)