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The Monsanto Tribunal

Because industrial agriculture is endangering farmers, citizens, the ecosystems and our future

Industrial agriculture has developed rapidly in so called developed countries in the wake of Second World War in an attempt to avoid famines and restore food sovereignty in the countries most affected by this conflict.



But it is now achieving the contrary of this goal by starving the soils, killing the bees, polluting water and air with toxic contaminants, accelerating biodiversity loss, and massively contributing to global warming. What was aimed at saving people is now quickly becoming destructive, both for the ecosystems and human beings. It is high time for a massive shift in agriculture policies, but achieving this shift is a difficult task. One of the reason is the tremendous influence of a handful of multinational companies which have been the major actors of these changes. The most famous of these companies is Monsanto, known for having developed and widely commercialised some of the most dangerous contaminants in the world, such as PCBs, 2,4,5 T (component of the defoliant Agent Orange), the herbicide Lasso and most recently, the herbicide RoundUp (whose main ingredient is glyphosate). The Monsanto tribunal, which will be held from 14 to 16 October in The Hague, along with the People's Assembly, aims at examining the means by which Monsanto was able to release these products without ever facing any consequences. According to juridical advisor prof. Olivier de Schutter, the International Monsanto Tribunal is staged to provide a forum for victims to voice their concerns, and to allow a legal assessment of these claims. This should encourage legal action at country level, helping victims to take action to seek reparation for the damage they have been inflicted. It should also encourage governments to take more seriously their duty to protect human rights threatened by the activities of Monsanto. The Tribunal will assess the conduct of Monsanto as regards the crime of ecocide, but will also examine whether international criminal laws should include ecocide. For the most part, the Monsanto Tribunal will base itself on existing international human rights

law. It is, in a way, a new form of activism, which seeks to connect the legal community with social movements, in the hope that this alliance will allow to combat impunity more effectively. Parallel to the hearings of the Monsanto Tribunal there will also be a People's Assembly. There, visitors from all over the world will discuss strategies to counter the problems caused by industrial agriculture. Debates will be held on the topics of seeds, pesticides, GMOs, holding corporations accountable and agroecology. In between there will be room for short documentaries, a live webstream from the Tribunal, theatre, information stalls and more. The Greens/EFA in the European parliament are supporting this initiative and will send representatives. If you are sharing these concerns, you can register for the events here, give them your endorsement here, and/or support them financially by donating here.

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