



Basel, May 2018

- Open letter -

to the government of the Canton of Basel-Stadt and the parties in the Grand Council

Not in our name, Basel!

By ousting the demonstrations against Syngenta from the city centre, Basel is actively protecting the harmful agrochemical industry. **In this open letter we express our indignation and urge the Basel government to shoulder its responsibility for the role played by Basel-based corporations in the world.** Basel lives at the expense of others and ignores the associated global exploitation and human rights violations. The Syngenta business model, which contributes to the over-exploitation of human, animal and natural resources worldwide, is a particularly good example of this imperial way of life.

The canton of Basel-Stadt decided to banish the broad-based "March against Monsanto and Syngenta" from the city centre. The March is supported by about 60 organizations and parties and mobilizes thousands of people each year (www.marchagainstsingenta.ch). This submissive decision is, however, just another classic example of a masterly achievement of profiteer Basel in the global system: the total marginalization of the global consequences of our corporations' business models and our way of life.

According to a UN report, 200,000 people die every year from pesticide poisoning – a number equal to the population of Basel. In addition, millions more suffer poisoning that is extremely harmful to their health. What is Basel's role? After all, the world's largest pesticide corporation has its headquarters here in Schwarzwaldallee. Syngenta's global market share is about 20%. **What is 20% of 200,000?** Since the Basel chemical industry long ago outsourced pesticide production to China, Brazil, India, etc., we can swim pleasantly in the clean Rhine. All the more pleasantly since the profits continue to flow into our city. Those who are poisoned usually live and die far away in the countries of the south. Meanwhile, the Basel government is getting Syngenta to sponsor its pavilion at Expo 2015 in Milan on the topic of 'Feeding the Planet' and the Municipal Gardens are having Syngenta sponsor their app 'iTour Basel'. The Basel government is thus an active part of Syngenta's greenwashing strategy. We refuse to accept the normalization of this imperial way of life! We refuse to accept the banishment of us, people and organizations that no longer tolerate these contradictions, from downtown Basel!

We make the following demands to the Government and the parties in the Grand Council:

- 1. All victims of Syngenta toxins must receive the necessary medical treatment.** The City of Basel provides a reparations fund of CHF 150 million for this purpose.



2. We are demanding the **funding of an agro-ecological institute at the University of Basel**, whose mission will be to research sustainable and solidarity-based agricultural models. Syngenta makes world agricultural policy from Basel. With a lot of money and a lot of influence, which it uses to promote harmful industrial agriculture. Basel must act against this, because alternatives do exist. Then Basel would be equipped for the next Expo!
3. **Basel must terminate all sponsorship arrangements and public-private partnerships with Syngenta. Furthermore, the current tax deal must be terminated immediately.** Syngenta's profits must be taxed at the ordinary tax rate.
4. **The Basler government should** officially and emphatically **support the corporate responsibility initiative in the referendum campaign.** And make available a **research fund** to investigate and publicize human rights violations by Basel-based corporations in the countries of the South.
5. **Demonstrations through the city centre must be approved at any time** and fundamental democratic rights be protected!

In times when climate disaster constitutes the greatest challenge to humanity, the agribusiness groups are strengthening their power and thus the model of fossil-fuel-based, dirty agriculture. Human rights and environmental protection inevitably fall by the wayside. We all know that things cannot go on like this. And we demand that our government should not keep actively helping to sweep these issues under the carpet. To allow a demonstration through the city centre would be the very minimum. Or rather it would be the implementation of a fundamental democratic right.

With best regards

The representatives of the core group of "March against Monsanto & Syngenta" and the signatories.

This open letter is being submitted as a petition to the Government and the Grand Council of Basel-Stadt.