

Seeds in resistance!



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Seeds have a special place in the struggle for food sovereignty. These small grains are the basis for the future. They shape, at each life cycle, what kinds of food people eat, how it is grown, and who grows it. But seeds are also a vessel that carries the past, the accumulated vision, knowledge and practices of farming communities worldwide that over thousands of years created the basis of all that sustains us today.

Our Seeds, Our Future

La Vía Campesina

This comic is based on the animation *Semillas en Resistencia* produced in 2017 by the Latin American Seeds Collective

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It all started with a seed.

When the first woman decided to save the seed of some wild berry and plant it closer to home.



That seed changed the world.



Agriculture started over 10,000 years ago, from a seed. That seed became thousands of seeds, which diversified, were shared, traveled around the world, and ultimately became the basis of our food supply.

Seeds gave birth to communities, foods, cultures and traditions. In this way, **seeds became a people's heritage in the service of humanity.**



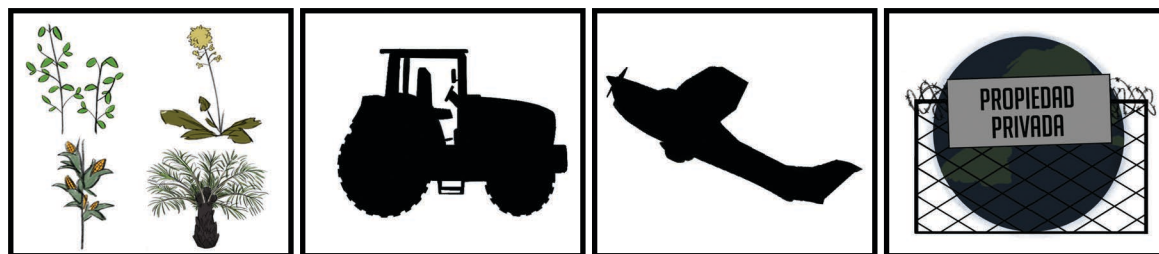
But...

In the mid-twentieth century, new intellectual property rights over seeds started to cause problems. The United States took the first step by promoting the development of industrial agriculture. It transferred control over agriculture to a handful of corporations.



That was the genesis of one of the biggest and gravest problems of our day: the **“Green Revolution”**.

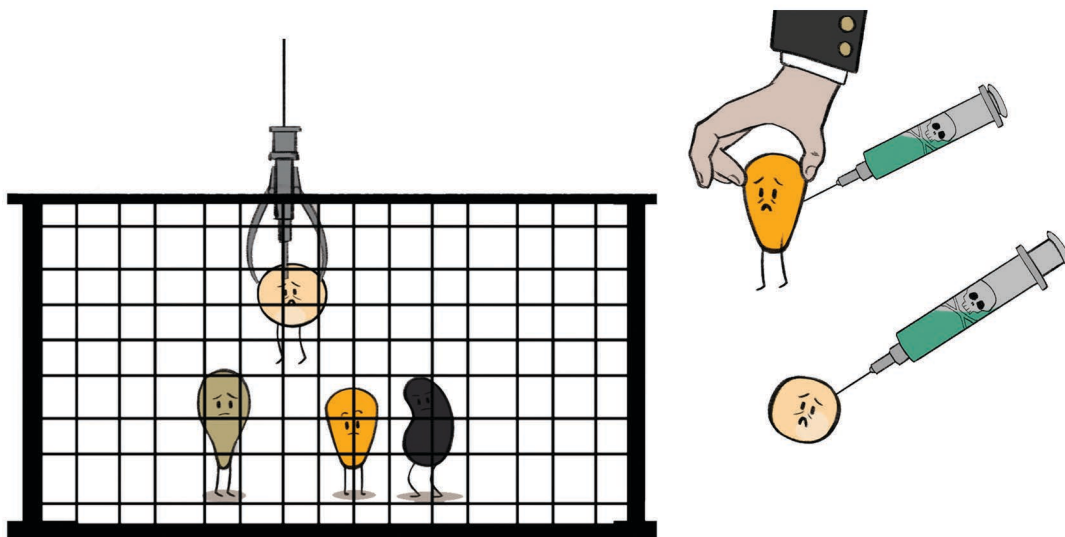
They imposed a model of industrialized agriculture based on **monocultures**, the use of **heavy machinery**, the intensive application of **agrochemicals**, and the **concentration of land**.



Heritage seeds fell into the grip of these corporations, who rejected them as unproductive. Instead they offered “improved” seeds. Varieties were made uniform and peasants were dissuaded from using their seeds. The result was that **the 20th century saw the loss of ¾ of the seed diversity that had taken 10,000 years to create.**



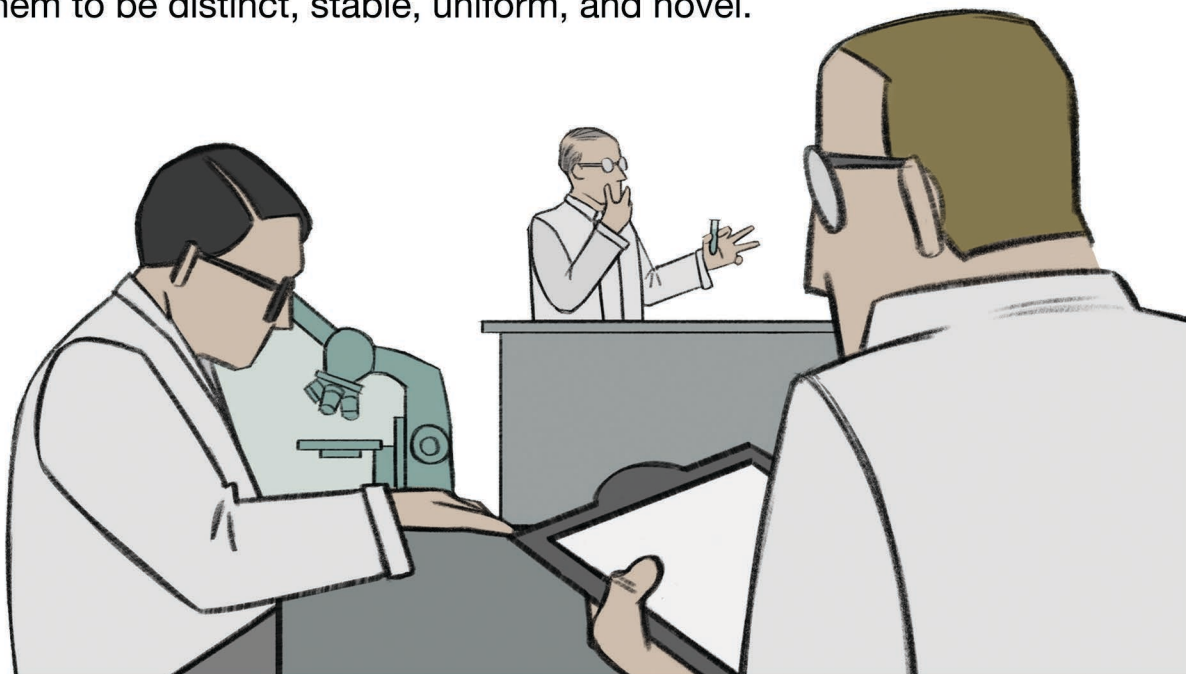
Certain seeds were genetically modified to make them resistant to herbicides or toxic to insects. It was the first of the **most dangerous biological experiments** that human beings have ever attempted.



Seeds were allowed to be monopolized by corporations holding new intellectual property rights, such as patents and plant breeder's rights. This is carried out by forcing countries to use the UPOV standards.



These regulations allow the alleged plant “breeders” in their research centers to **take control over the seeds** as long as they can claim them to be distinct, stable, uniform, and novel.



There are also new certification standards that give seed companies control over the seed system. These standards say that the only seeds that are legal and allowed to circulate are certified and registered seeds, even if they aren't the best or healthiest varieties.



And native seeds are attacked. Farmers who save, share, give, sell, or trade them are criminalised.



An ever-smaller group of companies has taken control over seeds. Today, **only three corporations control over 50% of the world's commercial crop seeds.**



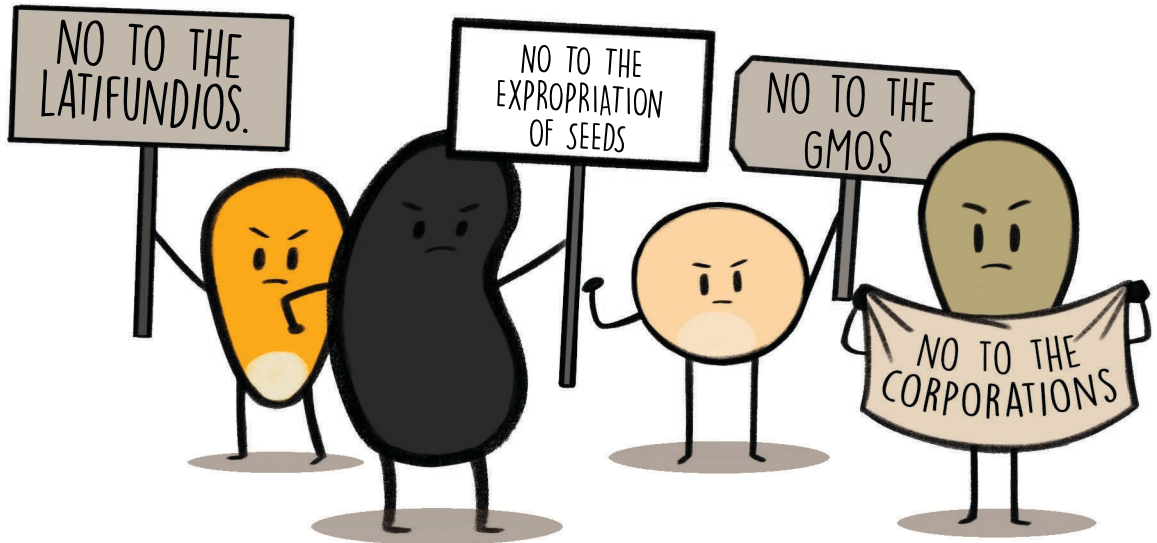
However... Peasant seeds continue to travel around the world. Today, they have become seeds of resistance that are saying **NO** to a model of agriculture that wants to destroy the livelihood of peasant communities.



The seeds resist with every peasant who continues to plant them to feed their families, their organisation, their people. **They resist when they are traded at seed fairs, public markets, and peasant gatherings.** They resist when they defy and fight against illegitimate laws.



Peasant seeds resist whenever peasant organisations say no to the GMOs, no to the corporations, no to the latifundios.



They resist whenever peasants regain their land, and they are seeds of hope for a better life.
They resist when they are part of the struggle for food sovereignty, indeed central to that struggle.



And when they continue to feed the peoples of the world!

Other resources to continue learning:

Sitio Web Biodiversidad en América Latina y el Caribe:
www.biodiversidadla.org

Revista Biodiversidad, sustento y culturas:
www.grain.org/biodiversidad

Seeds: Commons or corporate property?
<https://vimeo.com/240217030>

Seeds in resistance
<https://vimeo.com/232364093>

Key Documents: Agroecology and Seeds, La Via Campesina
<https://viacampesina.org/en/our-seeds-our-future/>

Seeds in resistance

Commons or corporate property?

