

In Brazil, most of the good land is controlled by American companies like United Fruit, Standard Fruit, W. P. Grace Co. and Bank of America. These companies grow non-food cash crops, like coffee, in a country which should be one of the richest food producers in the world and instead is one of the poorest. They grow their crops on huge jungle plantations, on sensitive but fertile tropical soils. George Borgstrom, in his book *The Hungry Planet*, tells what happens to this farmland in a section called "Coffee on the March" (p. 329):

The almost predatory exploitations by the coffee planters have ruined a considerable portion of Brazil's soil. In many areas, these abandoned coffee lands are so ruined that they can hardly ever be restored to crop production Therefore, the coffee plantations have always been on the march, grabbing new land and leaving behind eroded or impoverished soils This march of the coffee plantations over the wide expanses of Brazil has been likened to a devastating giant wave In some of these early coffee regions the abandoned soil is so crisscrossed by ravines and gullies that it almost resembles a lunar landscape.

Should Brazil be called "Brazil the Overpopulated"? Or should it be called "Brazil the Raped"? It is no coincidence that American corporations dominate the economy of many of the world's poorest and hungriest countries.

Peru, Brazil—the list could go on and on. It could include South Africa, where black men are paid slave wages to build Ford cars.

Or Liberia, whose rubber plantations yield Firestone average net profits three times as great as the entire Liberian national revenue.

And the list would have to include Vietnam.

9

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER : VIETNAM AND AMERICA'S "ECOLOGY PROBLEM"

Lyndon B. Johnson, a now retired American politician, once said that "the best guide to what we do abroad is what we do at home."

One of the things we have been doing at home is spraying farms, lawns, highway medians and vacant lots with herbicides (weed-killers). Something called 2,3,5-T is the most common one used; it has been sprayed on over 5% of the U.S. Unfortunately it does a lot more than kill weeds.

2,3,5-T was being used near Globe, Arizona in 1965, and some of it drifted over populated areas. Shortly thereafter, one farmer reported

that 60% of his goats were born dead or deformed, and his chickens stopped laying. Then trees started to die. Children got sick. And finally women in the area began to have miscarriages; and many had their reproductive organs removed.

Possibly 30% of South Vietnam has now been sprayed with 2,3,5-T *thirteen times more concentrated* than that permitted in America.

The Army says that it "only" wants to defoliate the trees. But it sprays 2,3,5-T directly on "unfriendly" villages. Unfriendly villages are

those in which *any* of the people are sympathetic to the Viet Cong. This includes almost all the villages in South Vietnam.

The American government and American corporations are running the Vietnam war. The corporations build the war machine that the government directs. And polluting Vietnam is one of their basic tactics. They attack the people and destroy the ecology of their country.

The poisons they have sprayed to kill trees and destroy crops stay in the soil. Much of this soil is permanently destroyed. In many places, after

