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European Languages

زبانهای اروپائی

NOVEMBER 15, 2018

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16.11.2018

Spraying Poisons, Chasing Ghosts



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Agribusiness power

The twentieth first century continues the toxic business as usual of the twentieth century. Agribusiness, part of the military-industrial-complex, is king. The new weapon is spraying the world with mostly badly tested chemical poisons. And the strategy is the control of the natural world and societies.

Few people know exactly what these chemical poisons do. Occasionally, they do kill insects and weeds. But they do much more, mostly harm. Scientists have revealed certain facts about those invisible effects. But agribusiness nullifies the significance of that knowledge. It does that by buying agricultural universities, the media and influencing politicians. Agribusiness guards its secrets, including how it has been controlling the politics of the world.

The power of knowledge

Despite the passive acceptance of poisons by mostly urban populations, resistance continues. An example of that resistance is a documentary about the effects of massive sprayings in the past several decades. This courageous film, *Sprayed* by Craig Leon (Future History Films, 2018), shows the power of telling a story well — and telling the truth.

The documentary moves from Miami Beach, Florida, to Brazil to Vietnam. The idea is to have people speak about being sprayed and scientists giving their opinions about the effects of the sprays.

After all, the [Zika scare of 2016](#) during the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, muddied the waters. This was another agribusiness and media broadcast to the world: that malformed babies in Brazil were a result of the nasty *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus. Second, blame the women of the slums for giving birth to those kids with tiny brains. Blame the nasty Zika mosquitoes. Pesticides had nothing to do with that tragedy.

Craig Leon's documentary demolishes this agribusiness mythology.

What sprayed people think

We see and hear a person in Miami Beach saying: “Well... they're spraying again so I am just trying to shut it down and we're going to the federal courts to try to do that. In August 2016, neurotoxic chemicals banned in Europe were first sprayed over Miami residents to kill Zika mosquitoes... many people were upset, including myself and have addressed the city of Miami Beach previously regarding the spraying of Naled onto our community.”

Another Miami resident says: “I'm growing herbs that I'm thinking are organic, and they just sprayed Naled all over them.”

Naled is a nerve poison related to chemical warfare agents.

Spray planes “bombed” Miami Beach residents with the neurotoxic insecticide naled 2 to 3 times a day: “We only walked at night... I could see a thick layer of dust, smoke everywhere.” The helicopters flew about 100 feet over homes. The spraying lasted for five

hours in the morning. The chemical coming down felt “like a little light rain.” The immediate effect was a “pounding headache you could not get rid of.”

Poisoning Brazil

In Brazil, the emphasis is in the decades-long impoverished Northeast, especially the state of Pernambuco. This is where the Zika virus hit hard, with tiny brain-babies blamed on mosquitoes stinging pregnant women. Pernambuco is also the first state in the only country in the world where the government added pyriproxyfen in the drinking water. This was done at a time Pernambuco had been experiencing drought for six years.

Gilsomar Santos, distraught father of a baby girl born with microcephaly in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, said: “The Department of Health... give us some product to dump into our water tanks.”

Microcephaly describes infants born with tiny brains.

The “product” was pyriproxyfen. This is an “insect growth regulator” and teratogen causing monstrous wounds to the developing insect. It makes it impossible for the young mosquito to become an adult. It may affect humans in similar monstrous fashion.

Yet, in all of Brazil, no more than 12 to 15 percent of babies affected by microcephaly were linked to mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus.

A frustrated Brazilian says: “If you’re in the position that you’re desperate to do, you just grab the pesticides and you just spray [them].” Another asked why Colombia has had no deformed babies from the Zika virus.

Paolo Paes de Andrade, professor of genetics at the Federal University of Pernambuco, says Brazilian scientists are fiddling with the DNA of mosquitoes, creating genetically engineered mosquitoes. Brazil released them in 2014.

Immediately thereafter, microcephaly appeared in Brazil.

According to Germana Soares A. Nascimento, president and founder of the Association of Mothers of Angels, Brazil has been experimenting with the malformed babies. Brazilian scientists extract from the “medulla through the spine of the babies” a “liquid transparent like water.” But parents are complaining they have been kept in the dark: “They never gave us the results whether it was Zika or not,” said Germana Soares.

The legacy of Agent Orange in Vietnam

Spraying poisons has had deleterious effects in Vietnam. In the Vietnam War, 1962-1973, America drenched Vietnam with “cocktails of neurotoxic chemicals (codename: Agent Orange).” The strategy was to kill forests and the growing of rice.

A Vietnamese physician named Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuong says he delivered the first deformed babies in 1965, an experience that broke his heart. He says: “I was very shocked... I could not sleep, could not eat, I could not work. I thought about the reasons why we have so many suffering [people] and I realized that oh, maybe, the increase of birth defects may be linked to the spraying mission.”

That spraying mission made Vietnam a museum of spraying monsters. Birth defects have been appearing in Vietnam for three generations.

Is this what we want to see in the rest of the world?

However, in 2018, Vietnam is reluctant to advertise its war fate with chemicals. Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuong says Vietnamese scientists working for the chemical industry, the courts, and the government of Vietnam deny that the chemicals America sprayed in Vietnam caused deformities in human beings.

Chasing ghosts

Anthony Samsel, an independent toxicologist from New Hampshire, summed up the dramatic crisis of the Zika virus enmeshed with the spraying of pesticides all over the environment for decades:

“We know that [pesticide] chemicals cause mutagenesis. It’s what we should be looking at. But we’re not. We’re not looking to the chemical industry or to any of these materials. Instead, we’re looking at viruses. I think we’re chasing ghosts.”

All this uncertainty about the risks of pesticides, risks of viruses, and harm resulting from misguided and immoral environmental regulatory and agricultural policies are scaring people. Some people, in fact, are frightened so much they question the continuation of civilization. They ask: Is it a good idea to have children?

During the spraying campaign over Miami Beach a resident asks:

“How safe is it to bring kids, to bring life into this world, when there’s this kind of straight out poisoning happening, and we’re not even told to take any precautions.”

Watch the documentary *Sprayed* by Craig Leon. It is enlightening, timely, and extremely important. It asks the scientific and ethical questions that bring out the danger of spraying pesticides all over the world for so long.