

DDT Ban Is a Weapon Of Mass Destruction

by Marjorie Mazel Hecht

Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, has called on “the President of the United States to take necessary measures to overturn the banning of DDT. . . . We can not kill people for the sake of condoning a fraud—as we should have learned from the Enron case.”

The 1972 American ban on DDT is responsible for the needless deaths since then of 60 million people, of malaria; hundreds of millions more, mostly children, have suffered needlessly from this debilitating disease. Of the 300-500 million new cases of malaria each year, 200-300 million are children, and malaria now kills one child every 30 seconds. Africa has 90% of the reported cases of malaria; 40% of the world’s population, inhabitants of tropical countries, are threatened by the increasing incidence what is called “the queen of diseases” because of its killing powers.

Malaria is a preventable mosquito-borne disease. DDT, which came into use during World War II, saved the lives of millions of soldiers and refugees from louse-borne typhus, and was on the way to wiping out malaria in the three decades after the war. DDT spraying dramatically reduced the incidence and death rates of malaria. Moreover, agricultural production, for example, increased as much as 40% where malaria control protected farmers.

Before DDT, India had more than 100 million cases of malaria and 2.5 million deaths per year. After the government began a spraying program, the number of cases dropped to fewer than 100,000, deaths to less than 1,000. Sri Lanka had 2.8 million cases of malaria and more than 12,500 deaths in 1946. In 1963, after a large-scale DDT spraying campaign, the number of cases fell to 17, with only 1 death. But five years after spraying was stopped, in 1969, the number of deaths had climbed to 113, and the cases to 500,000. The incidence of malaria and its death rates have kept climbing. In South Africa, the malaria incidence increased by 1,000% in the late 1990s.

The Malthusian Response

DDT was banned solely for Malthusian reasons of depopulation, 30 years after its World War II introduction and its spectacular success in saving lives. The reason was stated bluntly by Alexander King, co-founder of the Malthusian Club of Rome, who wrote in a biographical essay in 1990, “My chief quarrel with DDT in hindsight is that it has greatly added to the population problem.” King was concerned that DDT had cut death rates in the developing sector.

The director of the Sierra Club, Michael McCloskey, was equally frank, stating in 1971: “The Sierra Club wants a ban on pesticides, even in countries where DDT has kept malaria under control. . . . By using DDT, we reduce mortality rates in underdeveloped countries without the consideration of how to support the increase in populations.”

Contrary to the myths promoted by environmentalist groups and the press, DDT does not cause cancer in human beings, does not cause birds’ eggshells to thin, and is not long-lasting in the soil or ocean water. In all the years of DDT usage, there were no human deaths caused by DDT use; none of the estimated 130,000 spray men during the years of DDT use ever got sick from it.

Rachel Carson’s popular 1962 book *Silent Spring*, which was used to ban DDT, was a fraud, selecting and falsifying data, as entomologist Dr. J. Gordon Edwards documented in his analysis of the original scientific studies that Carson cited (see *21st Century Science & Technology*, Summer 1992).

At the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientific hearings under Hearing Examiner Edmund Sweeney in 1972, every major scientific organization in the world supported DDT use. After seven months and 9,000 pages of testimony. Sweeney ruled that DDT should *not* be banned, based on the scientific evidence. “DDT is not carcinogenic, mutagenic, or teratogenic to man [and] these uses of DDT do not have a deleterious effect on fish, birds, wildlife, or estuarine organisms,” Sweeney concluded.

But without reading the testimony or attending the hearings, EPA Administrator William Ruckelshaus overruled his hearing officer and banned DDT. He later admitted that he made the decision for “political” reasons. “Science, along with economics, has a role to play . . . [but] the ultimate decision remains political,” Ruckelshaus said. The State Department then made U.S. aid contingent on countries not using any pesticide that was banned in the United States. The U.S. Agency for International Development discontinued its support for DDT-spraying programs, increasing funding for birth control instead.

The campaign against DDT was the “mother” of many environmental hoaxes that followed. In economic terms, this environmentalist claptrap is costing society billions of dollars in increased health-care costs, loss of human resources, and totally unnecessary regulatory measures. The United States, for example, will spend trillions of dollars to clean the dirt in areas around former nuclear power production sites, up to nearly edible standards—all because of the lie that radiation is harmful at *any* levels. Extensive research and experience shows that radiation at low levels is beneficial, and even necessary, to human health. (Radiation only becomes dangerous above a certain threshold.)

How much more beneficial to the health of U.S. citizens it would be, to invest these trillions into building new economic infrastructure, transportation, upgrading water, sewerage, and power systems, and reinstating an aggressive public-health system.