

## Population control lobby banned DDT to kill more people

by Marjorie Mazel Hecht

The story of how the insecticide DDT was banned 20 years ago and the consequences of that ban are a lesson in what environmentalism really means—how policies made on the basis of scare stories instead of scientific evidence kill people. Most people don't know the real DDT story, so effective was the multimillion-dollar propaganda campaign the environmentalists waged to shape public perception that DDT, along with all other pesticides, was bad for wildlife, plant life, and human life.

The May 21 Washington press conference reported here, marking the 20th anniversary of the DDT ban, documents the millions of lives lost as a result of the environmentalists' victory in banning DDT. The press conference was sponsored by Conference-14, a coalition concerned with fighting environmental extremism. The scientists who participated in the press conference are all veterans of the war against the environmentalists' false charges concerning pesticides. They document here, as they have over the past three decades, that DDT does not have the harmful effects alleged by the scare-mongers: It does not cause cancer in humans, it does not cause birds' eggshells to thin, and it is not long-lasting in the soil or in ocean water.

This was the first time that these scientists were able to present the real story of DDT to so many national journalists. Among the 35 people in the audience were several Washington columnists and representatives of think tanks, two wire services, two newspaper chains, and three industry-oriented publications, plus Monitor radio news, C-Span, and a local cable TV program.

### A lifesaver

DDT, which came into use during World War II, in a very short time had saved more lives and prevented more diseases than any man-made chemical in history. Millions of troops and civilians, in particular refugees, were saved from typhus because one DDT dusting killed the body lice that spread that dread disease. Malaria, today one of the world's leading killer diseases, was nearly eradicated in many countries in the 1960s as a result of DDT spraying that controlled the mosquitoes that spread the disease. In addition, DDT use in agriculture promoted



*Unicef teams dusting youngsters with DDT in the remote village of Caycay, Peru, in 1952. The program was highly successful in wiping out typhus in the area. Today, such diseases are on the rise again, and this region of Peru has become a stomping ground of the Shining Path terrorists.*

gains in crop production directly, by controlling insect pests, and indirectly, by freeing farm workers from malaria.

How did the ban of such a beneficial substance occur? The story goes back to 1962, when biologist Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, a diatribe against pesticides and DDT in particular. Carson wove facts and falsehoods together to portray a world that would soon be devoid of birds, bees, and wildlife in general because of indiscriminate pesticide use. Within the next few years, groups like the Environmental Defense Fund, the Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club used Carson's propaganda to recruit members and raise money—lots of money.

By 1971, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) had forced the Environmental Protection Agency to hold hearings on DDT. There were seven months of hearings and 9,000 pages of testimony, at the end of which the EPA hearing examiner, Edmund Sweeney, ruled that on the basis of the scientific evidence, DDT should *not* be banned.

Two months later, EPA administrator William Ruckelshaus banned DDT. He admitted that he was doing so for political reasons, and that he had not read any of the transcript of the hearings.

If Ruckelshaus had read the DDT hearing transcript, he would have seen that the testimony presented by the witnesses for the group he personally supported, the EDF, was shoddy and, in some cases, deliberately false. For example, Dr. George Woodwell, testified about a 1967 article in *Science* magazine, coauthored with the EDF's chief scientist, in which he reported very high residues of DDT in a Long Island

salt marsh. It turned out, under oath, that he had sampled the salt marsh in the very place where the Mosquito Commission spray truck emptied out! When asked if he ever published a retraction, he stated, "I never felt that this was necessary."

DDT was the "mother" of all the environmental hoaxes to follow, from saving the lousewort, to the ozone hole. The pattern is the same: A catastrophic scenario is put forward, the media promote it, and the campaign fills the coffers of those who invented it. No matter how wild the scenario, once it is repeated often enough, people come to accept it as fact.

Like the environmental hoaxes that shaped the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the underlying motive is population control. Alexander King, the malthusian who heads the Club of Rome, stated this bluntly in an interview that appeared in the 1990 book *The Discipline of Curiosity*. King, who was a British chemist in wartime England, describes his role in using DDT with troops and the "enormous numbers of lives" it saved. Then he says: "My own doubts came when DDT was introduced for civilian use. In Guyana, within two years it had almost eliminated malaria, but at the same time the birth rate had doubled. So my chief quarrel with DDT in hindsight is that it has greatly added to the population problem."

Entomologist Gordon Edwards (see speech, below) calculated that the environmentalists' ban on DDT and other pesticides kill 100 million people per year.

The science and technology exist to prevent such genocide, if the political will can be mobilized to make policies based on saving the humans, who are, after all, the only creative resource on this planet.