

Green Hands Dipped In Blood: The DDT Genocide

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1. The Worst Crime of the 20th Century

"Which kills more: ideology or religion?"¹ asks author Andrew Kenney in the title of what is certainly one of the more startling pieces I've read in some time.

For Kenney, however, it's not the meat of that question that's really up for debate, and it's not his answer to the meat of it that's startling; after all, a summary finger count shows that the man who favors the religious wars has his work cut out to match the math of the fascist and communist regimes that have dropped the metaphorical guillotine since the French Revolution.

What makes Kenney's article startling is not that the self-professed atheist necessarily concludes that the reds (communists) and the browns (fascists) have contributed much more heartily to history's flow of blood than any religion, but that, of the three available ideological colors, it is the extremists of the green standard whose hands are perhaps guiltiest for the last century's outpouring of crimson.

According to Kenney over 50,000,000 people died in the 20th century because of the gratuitous recklessness of eco-extremists; this estimate is actually quite conservative in comparison to junkscience.com's claim that over 80,000,000 have dropped at the hands of the tree-huggers.

"In purely numerical terms," says Kenney about the alleged murderous scheme, "it was the worst crime of the 20th century."

But *what* was the worst crime?

"The banning of DDT," says Kenney.

Of course this could be comfortably put to rest as the ranting of just another, competing ideological nut were it not that Kenney is in very, very good company.

A New York Times article of January of this year, titled *It's Time to Spray DDT* proclaimed what long ago became the obvious, that "the evidence is overwhelming: DDT saves lives."² The American Council on Science and Health printed an article in 2002 entitled *The DDT ban turns 30 – millions dead of malaria because of ban, more deaths likely.*³ In 2003 Front Page Magazine ran an article entitled *Rachel Carsons' Ecological Genocide*, similarly concerned with the

DDT ban, and employing that loaded word “genocide”.⁴ And in his popular novel, *State of Fear*, Michael Crichton also espoused this view, describing the DDT ban as “arguably the greatest tragedy of the 20th century.” He continues, “since the ban, two million people a year have died unnecessarily from malaria, mostly children. The ban has caused more than fifty million needless deaths. Banning DDT killed more people than Hitler.”⁵

2. The Tragic History Of DDT and Silent Spring

The history of DDT is a tragic one. The chemical, the proper name of which is dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, was first isolated in the late 19th century. No practical use was found for it, however, until Paul Herman Muller determined in 1939 that it made for an effective insecticide.

Used extensively during WWII and afterwards, the remarkably cheap and easy-to-process pesticide is widely credited with the complete eradication of the scourge of malaria from the Western world. The white powder, once dusted on the walls of a house or on the human body, works by killing malaria and typhus carrying vectors such as mosquitoes or lice.

According to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia DDT performed the feat of reducing the worldwide malaria mortality rate from a hefty 192 per 100,000 to a low of 7 per 100,000. Paul Muller was awarded the Nobel Prize for physiology and medicine in 1948 for his lifesaving work with DDT.

With Muller’s miracle-pesticide in widespread use the movement towards a malaria-free earth was progressing swimmingly until Rachel Carson erupted hysterically onto the international scene. She alleged in her deeply influential 1962 book *Silent Spring* that DDT caused cancer and was aiding the rapid extinction of raptors such as bald eagles by thinning their egg shells. Environmentalists everywhere took up the cause and soon achieved the first great and unifying victory of the modern environmental movement—the worldwide banning of DDT.

And that would be perfectly all right, perhaps, if any of Carson’s allegations were true.

3. Rachel Carson’s Allegations Disproved

But in 2004 a study in the *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons* concludes “Public pressure [to ban DDT] was generated by one popular book and sustained by faulty or fraudulent research. Widely believed claims of carcinogenicity, toxicity to birds, anti-androgenic properties, and prolonged environmental persistence are false or grossly exaggerated. The worldwide affect of the U.S. ban has been millions of preventable deaths.”⁶ In fact, it is difficult to choose which of the countless studies that have vindicated DDT over the years I should cite.

One study saw volunteers consume 35mg of raw DDT daily for a period of two years with no short or long-term ill effects.⁷ One anti-DDT-ban scientist began his every lecture on the subject by ingesting a teaspoon of DDT powder.⁸ Of the workers who applied thousands of tons of DDT without any protection, none have shown an increased risk of cancer or any other illness. Even the alleged thinning of the eggshells of raptors that environmentalists now tout as a last and desperate reason for continuing the archaic ban has been proven false.

4. The DDT Ban Put In Perspective

Allow me to provide some perspective. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a division of the World Health Organization (WHO), DDT is classified as *Group 2B* carcinogenicity; that is, there is an admitted *insufficient evidence* of carcinogenicity.⁹ On the other hand, a report issued but a few weeks ago by the IARC classified combined estrogen-progestogen oral contraceptives, the most widely prescribed contraceptive on the market, as *Group 1* carcinogenicity.¹⁰

The oral contraceptives, which the WHO claims over 100 million women worldwide regularly ingest, are by this classification defined as *definitely* carcinogenic. And yet, DDT, by now proven innocent as a babe after decades of scrutiny, the harmless miracle-chemical the purpose of which is to prevent the excruciating death of millions, is strictly regulated with a worldwide ban, while the proven carcinogenic, cancer-causing contraceptive, used to prevent the creation of human life, is handed out like candy.

But here's the real kicker. According to the WHO there is some evidence that besides causing substantially increased risks of breast, liver, and cervical cancer, combined oral contraceptives may cause a decrease in the risk of endometrial and ovarian cancer. The WHO therefore justifies downplaying the immediate risk to hundreds of millions of women worldwide because "it is possible that the overall net public health outcome may be beneficial."

Curiously, however, the WHO's analysis of DDT grants the pesticide no such benevolent handicap. DDT has saved millions of lives, and the ban, based upon long disproved claims of carcinogenicity, is perpetuating the annual death of millions. Talk about a beneficial "overall net public health outcome"! But of course, maybe after another forty years of testing and research it will be found that DDT powder once caused someone to sneeze to death.

Adding insult to injury, over the past five years numerous powerful international bodies have sought to make the DDT ban even stricter.

Currently it is possible for tropical nations most ravaged by malaria to apply for exceptions to the DDT ban, which exceptions undergo review every three years by the WHO. This provision is of little use to most third world nations, since there is a global stigma attached to DDT, and many charitable bodies will not fund relief efforts unless it is agreed that DDT will not be used. Besides that, the cost

of DDT has increased substantially. But in 2000, a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) convention in Johannesburg flaunted science and common sense and sought to choke that final loophole of grace and make the DDT ban total; ultimately they failed in their bid, due to the ardent pleas of malaria experts and the third world countries most affected by malaria. In addition the Stockholm Convention, Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund have all clamoured since the year 2000 for the total banning of DDT.

5. Why Does the DDT Ban Continue?

But if it is so patently illogical and scientifically apocryphal, why is it that the ban continues unabated?

The answer to that riddle is likely beyond even the powers of Oedipus to discover in full, and is certainly beyond the limited scope of this article. It probably has a lot to do with what Charles Wurter, the chief scientist for the Environmental Defense Fund said in October 1969: "If the environmentalists win on DDT, they will achieve a level of authority they have never had before. In a sense, much more is at stake than DDT."¹¹ It seems more than safe at this point to call that statement prophetic. For the green extremists to admit defeat now would be to renege in large part the authority won by the victory they achieved in the DDT war.

Perhaps this malaria holocaust is, in large part, allowed to continue because the millions who needlessly die by the disease do so outside of the scope of the roving eye of the West. DDT long ago made malaria a tropical and not a Western phenomenon, and thus the millions of third world malarial deaths have no visible faces to excite Western sympathies or funding.

However, more fundamental than that, it appears, is the singular and sinister nature of modern environmentalism as an ideology. Professing a creed that is eminently respectful of life of such, it often happens that adherents of the green ideology come out with things that don't jive. The scientist mentioned earlier, J. Gordon Edwards, who regularly consumed raw DDT powder before speaking about it, once called Rachel Carson's philosophy a "lack of concern for human lives." He continued, "She could vividly describe the death of a bird...but nowhere in the book does she even think to describe the death of a human by an insect-borne disease."¹²

And Carson, as one of the mothers of environmentalism, has left that sordid legacy behind her.

Earth First! Founder Dave Foreman's beliefs typify that legacy. "Ours is an ecological perspective," he said in his book *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, launching into a description worthy of Wordsworth, "that views Earth as a community and recognizes such apparent enemies as 'disease' (e.g. malaria) and 'pests' (e.g., mosquitoes) not as manifestations of evil to be overcome but rather as vital and necessary components of a complex and vibrant biosphere."¹³

Unless, I presume, Mr. David Foreman happened to be the one convulsing to death.

The environmentalist movement long ago distanced itself from whatever token respect it once professed for human life and has come out instead in cooling support of panda life. This would be cute were it not murderous.

Apparently, however, some eco-extremists are coming to recognize the deficiencies of their own ideology. Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus in their controversial essay *The Death of Environmentalism* allege that "Environmental groups have spent the last 40 years defining themselves against conservative values like cost-benefit accounting, smaller government, fewer regulations, and free trade, without ever articulating a coherent morality we can call our own. Most of the intellectuals who staff environmental groups are so repelled by the right's values that we have assiduously avoided examining our own in a serious way."¹⁴

If we are to believe these remarks of Shellenberger and Nordhaus (and I certainly do), then environmentalists have initiated and stubbornly sustained a genocidal ban on DDT, because they are "repelled" by the morality of the "right". And like rebellious teens they would rather react and continue to react against an established order than to consider the destruction they are leaving in their wake.

6. DDT and Population Control

But that is certainly not yet the end of the story. One of the most revealing quotations related to the issue at hand is another by Charles Wurster, who was reported to have said in 1971, after it was pointed out to him by a reporter that the widespread usage of the pesticide DDT saved lives: "So what? People are the main cause of our problems. We have too many of them. We need to get rid of some of them..."

Some members of the left have alleged that this quote by Wurster is false, fabricated by a disgruntled former employee of Wurster's. And that may be so though it has hardly been proven; but either way, that statement remains in essence the clearest, bluntest expression of a theory and an attitude that has flourished ever since Thomas Malthus published his infamous work "An Essay on the Principle of Population"; individuals as diverse as Nietzsche, Hitler and Margaret Sanger have all expressed it in one form or another.

Francis Galton, the influential British eugenicist, elucidated these ideas in a more 'academic' fashion in his book *Memories of My Life*, saying:

[Eugenics] first object is to check the birth rate of the Unfit, instead of allowing them to come into being, though doomed in large numbers to perish prematurely. The second object is the improvement of the race by furthering the productivity of the Fit by early marriages and healthful

rearing of their children. Natural Selection rests upon excessive production and wholesale destruction; *eugenics on bringing no more individuals into the world than can be properly cared for; and those only of the best stock.*¹⁵

It is no coincidence that population control and environmentalism have always been inextricably entwined in the grand scheme of liberal ideology. Both are founded upon an pernicious belief that man is little more than a pollutant, a scum to be prevented from interfering any more than necessary with the purity of the natural biosphere. As such it is especially difficult to believe that the fact that malaria is yet another of the scourges unleashed upon the poor and sick of the third world that goes unchecked by the Western world is merely a coincidence.

The DDT ban, ostensibly supported by false and archaic claims of carcinogenicity, makes no sense unless the goals of environmentalist/over-population activists are taken into account. As one environmentalist commentator put it: "What I said is that the mosquitos [sic] and malaria in question acted as a natural population control. After the introduction of DDT into some areas of Africa, the population increased so much that people began starving. Population control sounds a lot better to me than starvation and the environmental destruction caused by overpopulation."¹⁶

Junkscience.com claims that "In the 1960s, World Health Organization authorities believed there was no alternative to the overpopulation problem but to assure that up to 40 percent of the children in poor nations would die of malaria. As an official of the Agency for International Development stated, 'Rather dead than alive and riotously reproducing'."

In short, it is much easier for the West to kill off the poor, or allow them to die at the hand of "natural" diseases, than to determine how to feed them. And that is quite true, for the mouth of a corpse doesn't cry out to be fed. But is it right? No; a thousand times no.

The "green eco-imperialist legacy of death" mentioned above junkscience.com's infamous malaria clock,¹⁷ which calculates over 89,000,000 malaria-ravished corpses since DDT was banned, is exactly right. But now it is time for that genocidal legacy to come to an end; it is time that environmentalists threw off their adolescent petulance, admitted their grievous wrong, learned to respect the lives of all no matter their race, creed or economic status, and again permitted Third World countries what they deserve—easy access to the desperately needed, life-saving malaria-fighting pesticide DDT.

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