

MURDER BY MALARIA

The Malthusian War Against DDT

by Marjorie Mazel Hecht

The Excellent Powder: DDT's Political and Scientific History

Donald Roberts and Richard Tren (with Roger Bate and Jennifer Zambone)
Indianapolis, Ind.: DogEar Publishing, 2010
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(available at <http://www.theexcellentspowder.org/>)

The Excellent Powder is a myth-destroying book that needs to be widely read, and to be put in every library, especially school libraries, as a reference work. In fact, this political and scientific history of DDT should be required reading in environmental science courses, to make sure that new green recruits know the extent of the death toll that will result from the continuing hysteria against DDT.

Readers of *21st Century* will be familiar with much of the history that authors Roberts and Tren cover in the book's 432 pages and 800 footnotes. But there is much that will be new, even to longtime supporters of the use of DDT for malaria control. Here I will review just a few of the highlights:

The most surprising myth is the persistent assumption that DDT works so effectively because it kills mosquitoes; even the World Health Organization continues in this belief. The reality is that yes, DDT kills mosquitoes on contact, if the insects rest on a sprayed surface for a sufficient time. But the effectiveness of DDT, as documented in studies from around the world since the 1940s, is based on its characteristic as a *spatial repellent and irritant*. Mosquitoes will avoid a house whose inside walls have been sprayed with DDT, and even those mosquitoes that venture inside a sprayed house, will be irritated by the spray and leave the area.

This characteristic of DDT, which au-

thor Roberts himself documented in field studies on malaria prevention in South America starting in the 1970s, is what makes DDT uniquely effective. No other pesticide acts as a spatial repellent (and no other pesticide continues to work for six to twelve months after one light application). But from the start, as Roberts and Tren document, this quality of DDT as a repellent has been misunderstood and ignored.

The result of this misunderstanding continues to be catastrophic for malaria control. Traditional malaria control assumed, based on a mathematical model, that DDT worked to stop the transmis-

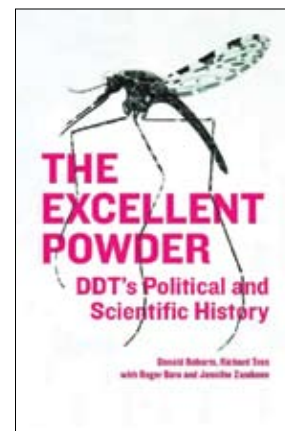


A. Otiato/USAID/Angola

A child suffering from cerebral malaria in an Angolan hospital. Today, one child in Africa dies of malaria every 30 seconds.

sion of malaria by killing mosquitoes, thus preventing female mosquitoes from transmitting the malaria parasite by biting humans.

So, when DDT-resistant mosquitoes began to appear after the widespread use of DDT in agriculture, it was assumed that DDT would no longer be effective for malaria control, because it would no longer kill mosquitoes. Malaria programs, including those of WHO, then stopped the use of DDT, based on pre-



sumed mosquito resistance (and in addition to the mounting anti-pesticide campaign). Roberts and Tren provide voluminous documentation on all aspects of this issue.

This transmission question is key: If the incidence of malaria is decreased by house spraying, there will be fewer humans with the parasite to transmit to biting mosquitoes. Thus, when houses are sprayed, the incidence of malaria dramatically and rapidly declines. If there are no human carriers of malaria, then mosquitoes cannot transmit the disease, as human beings are the only species that hosts the malaria parasite.

Global Malaria Eradication

Given the spectacular success of DDT during World War II in stopping the spread of insect-borne killer diseases like typhus and malaria, it was assumed after the war that DDT would be able to eradicate malaria worldwide. By 1952, DDT use had eradicated malaria and other insect-borne diseases in the United States. (Note that these diseases had been killers in the northern states, as well as in the South.)

Other countries also began to use DDT successfully, and the World Health Assembly directed the World Health Organization to begin a global malaria eradication program in 1955, primarily using DDT for house-spraying. The program was remarkably successful, as Roberts and Tren document. But before the program could complete the job of freeing the world from malaria, the ugly hand of Malthusianism intervened to sabotage



U.S. Army

During World War II, DDT was routinely sprayed in barracks and dusted onto soldiers and civilians to stop the spread of insect-borne diseases. After the war, DDT spraying continued to protect populations.



WHO

In 2006, the World Health Organization reversed its 30-year ban on DDT and permitted its use for indoor house spraying (known as IRS for indoor residual spraying). Under pressure, three years later, the WHO has backed the phase-out of DDT by 2020 or earlier.

the goal of eradication and the use of DDT and pesticides in general. By 1969, the word “eradication” was eradicated, replaced by the term “malaria control.”

The success of DDT and the sabotage are both discussed in detail in *The Excellent Powder*. In particular, the authors present new records that document the Malthusian takeover of malaria control and international policy in general. That population control became a policy aim is not just an assertion; it is rigorously documented.

‘Population Control’ Prevails

DDT’s effect on malaria, one of the top killer diseases worldwide, was to spur population growth. When parents stopped dying young, when babies could grow up to maturity, populations grew and began to prosper. This set off alarms among the Malthusians, who began a far-reaching population control offensive, which included funding for “environmentalism” and “family planning,” at the same time removing funds from malaria eradication.

(The U.S. side of this story is told in the excerpts from *The Excellent Powder*, which appear on p. 38 of this issue.)

Sir Julian Huxley, the first director of the United Nations Education, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and a founder of

the World Wildlife Foundation, is a key player in this murder campaign. Roberts and Tren document some of this, but there is more to the story. Huxley was a prominent member of the British Eugenics Society, serving as its vice president and then president, but after Hitler gave eugenics a bad name, Huxley adopted “environmentalism” as a more palatable banner under which to carry out the culling of mankind.

Huxley wrote: “Even though ... any

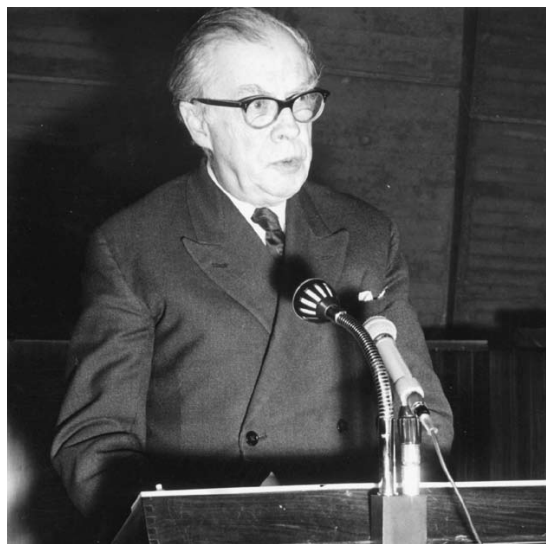
radical eugenic policy will be for many years politically and psychologically impossible, it will be important for UNESCO to see that the eugenic problem is examined with the greatest care, and that the public mind is informed of the issues at stake so that much that now is unthinkable may at least become thinkable.”

Roberts and Tren note that Huxley founded the World Wildlife Fund “because of his concern that growth of human populations in Africa was endangering African wildlife.”

Left out of this part of the story is the role of today’s most rabid Malthusian, Prince Philip, and his now deceased fellow royal, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, in promoting WWF environmentalism to stop population growth. These Malthusians founded the World Wildlife Fund to raise money for the expansion of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The IUCN, in turn, had been set up in 1948 for the purpose of reducing world population, especially in the developing sector, and, in the name of “conservation,” securing a hold on the world’s raw materials.

Decentralization

Starting in the 1960s, UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) and other United Nations programs, along with the U.S. Agency for International Develop-



The eugenicist Sir Julian Huxley, a founder of the World Wildlife Fund and of UNESCO, preferred preserving wildlife to saving human lives. Here, Huxley addresses a UNESCO meeting in 1965.



Paul E. Alers/NASA

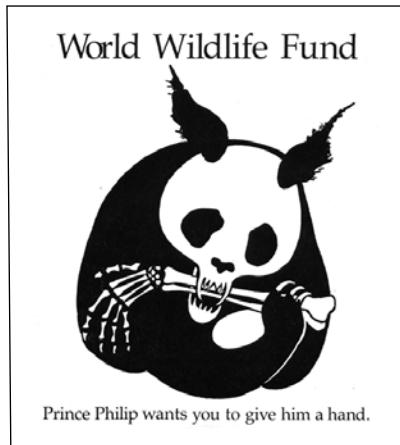
Prince Philip wants to reduce the world population to 2 billion and has often stated his desire to be reincarnated as an AIDS virus to help the depopulation process.

ment (USAID), rapidly switched from funding disease control to funding family planning, as Roberts and Tren document. UNICEF and USAID pulled completely out of funding the malaria eradication program. Instead, these agencies decided that malaria control should be decentralized and run through local community health programs, which also were to carry out family planning.

The centrally managed malaria eradication program ceased to exist by the early 1970s. As Roberts and Tren report, the former chief of epidemiology in the World Health Organization's malaria division, Dr. Mohyeddin A. Farid, said that the period from 1969 to 1980 was one of "de-eradication and anarchy"—and a surge in malaria incidence. Farid also noted the irony that the high child mortality of disease-ridden nations would work against any birth control program, as parents would want to have more children to make up for those killed by disease.

The decades from 1980 to 2000, Farid stated, were characterized by malaria cover-ups and resignation. Epidemic statistics were covered up, and drug distribution and treatment became the main weapons used against malaria. As Farid noted, this approach ignored the problem of drug resistance that would develop in the malaria parasite.

A look at the graph in the accompanying figure dramatically shows how ma-



laria incidence soars as house-spraying declines.

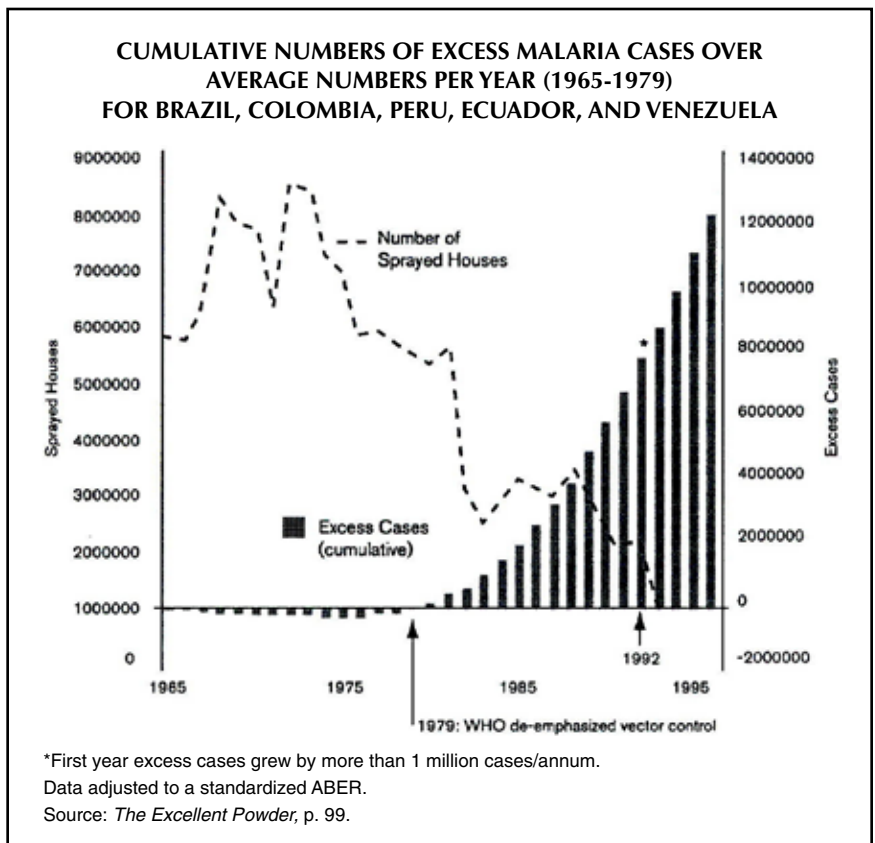
Roberts and Tren provide a good picture and many references for the demonization of DDT internationally and the building pressure on the World Health Organization against DDT and house spraying, culminating in 1997 in the decision by the World Health Assembly (which makes policy for the WHO) to re-



Sander Lamme

Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands (1911-2004), co-founded the World Wildlife Fund and was its first president. Bernhard had to resign from the Nazi Party in order to marry Princess Juliana, who later became Queen of the Netherlands.

duce reliance on insecticides and instead promote "integrated pest management" and alternative methods of disease vector control. What this amounted to is more





WHO/National Library of Medicine

Vector control worked as part of a centralized malaria eradication plan that included house spraying. Here, scientists conduct mosquito larvae counts in Togo.

malaria. As the authors explain, vector control (killing mosquitoes) isn't the same as disease control, which "is designed to limit disease transmission by breaking vector-human contact and preventing biting."

Roberts and Tren also point out that malaria is mainly a disease of the rural poor, and to apply integrated pest management, for example, by manipulating the aquatic habits of mosquito breeding over large areas, would cost more and be environmentally destructive, as opposed to house spraying with minute quantities of insecticide.

As the incidence of malaria and malaria deaths climbed over the past two decades, the health establishment adopted another nice-sounding but weak anti-malaria method to champion: insecticide-treated bed nets.¹ This was the method of choice of the Roll Back Malaria program, initiated in 1998 by the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and other donors. At that time, the

1. Bednets as a method of disease-control are largely ineffective unless combined with DDT house-spraying. The reason is that nets require user compliance, whereas once house walls are sprayed, it will deter mosquitoes for several months, no user compliance required.

World Health Organization estimated that there were between 300 and 500 million cases of malaria every year, and between 1 and 2 million deaths. Eleven years (and many millions of Roll Back Malaria dollars) later, those



John Haskew/IFRC/WHO

Roll Back Malaria has championed the bednet, a good thing to use, but bednets are not able to bring down malaria incidence without house spraying.

figures were still the same.

In contrast, as Roberts and Tren point out, the earlier malaria eradication program was a resounding success in lowering disease and death rates in countries where it was practiced.

By 2006, the malaria situation was so dire, that the new head of the World Health Organization's Global Malaria Program, Dr. Arata Kochi, announced to the world the obvious. Present methods of malaria control weren't working, and the World Health Organization would roll back its 30-year virtual ban on DDT and bring back DDT for house spraying as an effective weapon against malaria. This policy change met with a storm of criticism from the environmentalist movement, and even within the World Health Organization. The anti-pesticide lobby then successfully lobbied to have the WHO adopt a goal of phasing out DDT entirely by 2020, without the present exception for public health emergencies.

It should be noted that there is not now, and never has been, a crash program to develop an effective alternative to DDT for house spraying. The anti-DDT lobby has not supported this kind of an effort, just vague talk about alternatives. The current alternative pesticides are not spatial repellents, require more frequent application, are



USDA APHIS Pest Survey Detection and Exclusion Laboratory

DDT spraying was widely used in the United States to control destructive pests like the gypsy moth and the beetle that caused Dutch elm disease.

more highly toxic to insects, and cost more.

Birds and Bias

Chief among the other DDT myths knocked out by *The Excellent Powder* is that DDT use killed off U.S. birds, especially that American icon, the bald eagle. No literate person can avoid seeing this myth pop up almost daily in the local and national press, usually in the form of “the ___ bird population is now on the rise since the days of DDT use wiped them out.”

Roberts and Tren document the falsity of this popular myth at length. Briefly, the facts show that eagles, peregrine falcons, and others had precipitously declined in numbers (because of hunting and land development) long before the introduction of DDT in the post-war years.

As for robins, the tear-jerking subject of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, There were some robin deaths when DDT was sprayed directly on birds. Carson bewailed the robin deaths on the University of Michigan East Lansing campus, which used DDT in an effort to save the large elm trees from Dutch elm disease, a de-

structive fungus spread by the elm bark beetle. The tree protection effort did initially kill a few sprayed robins. But aside from these initially killed birds, the remaining DDT did not harm the robin populations on the campus—or nationally. In fact, robins had a population boom in the years of DDT use, not the extinction Carson’s book implied.

Allegedly disappearing birds, espe-



American robins were increasing in number, at the same time that Rachel Carson pronounced robins to be on the verge of extinction.

cially raptors, were a main focus of the anti-DDT campaign, beginning in the late 1960s, leading to the U.S. ban on DDT in 1972. Roberts and Tren show how this campaign was based on lies.

The Myth of Human Harm

Another major myth that Roberts and Tren overturn is that DDT harms human beings. In fact, not one single death or illness can be attributed to DDT in all the years of its spraying and manufacturing. In more than 65 years of research on DDT, the anti-DDT scientists have continued to turn out studies claiming that DDT promotes premature births, retards baby development, make babies become obese as adults, effeminizes male babies, and causes all types of cancer. (Note that these are my characterizations of studies; Roberts and Tren criticize such studies in scientific terms. They carefully note the criteria that must be met in any epidemiological study, chiefly that of cause and effect.)²

The researchers tendentiously promoting the alleged harm of DDT go so far as to unashamedly claim that the risk of using DDT outweighs any harm from malaria; this, while one child in Africa dies every 30 seconds from malaria! Their scare stories continue to circulate in African countries, to stir up opposition to government programs that use DDT in house spraying.

What kind of twisted morality grips such researchers to persist in attacking

2. Don Roberts has an excellent summary of how to evaluate a scientific study, in an article that appeared in *Outlooks on Pest Management*, February 2010, “Impact of Anti-DDT Campaigns on Malaria Control.” As he demonstrates there, “those who campaign against DDT have failed to show, through replicated and confirmatory studies, that a specific type of public health harm from DDT was:

- Consistent with current biological or theoretical knowledge of the type of harm and its known risk factors,
- More common with higher DDT exposure and less common with lower exposure,
- Less common prior to DDT exposure and appeared or increased in frequency with onset of DDT exposure, and
- More common with DDT exposure and less common once DDT use was stopped.”

As he points out, years of broad and heavy DDT usage were not accompanied by reports of disease or birth defects in the medical and statistical records for that time. “The lack of proof that DDT caused harm to human health back in those days of intense exposures goes far in explaining why, to this day, there is no evidence human health has been improved in any way by stopping public health use of DDT” (p. 5).

DDT, and to blatantly lie about it? There are many such lies exposed in *The Excellent Powder*. Dr. George Woodwell, for example, published an article in *Science* magazine claiming that he had measured 13 pounds per acre of DDT residues in marsh sediment. Yet, under oath, Woodwell admitted that he had knowingly measured the DDT levels at the site where the DDT spray trucks washed down, although he neglected to report this fact. The actual measurement, he acknowledged would be 1 pound per acre. Neither he, nor *Science* magazine published a retraction.

Woodwell, it should be noted, is a close friend and collaborator of Paul Ehrlich, and if anything is a more radical Malthusian, who views human beings as a disease on the planet.

Woodwell knowingly promoted lies about DDT. Other scientists and science writers seem to be more blindly led to their research conclusions by the popular myth that DDT is dangerous. Some claim that they oppose DDT because it is bad for animals, but would permit its limited use for house spraying.

Charles Wurster, a founding member of the Environmental Defense Fund and a leader in the fight to ban DDT, recently told me that he and EDF never intended any population control. "We were just concerned with protecting wildlife." Baloney, I say, after reading the documentation presented by Roberts and Tren. At least Wurster's good friend Paul Ehrlich, is truthful enough to say in print that DDT needed to be banned as a "death rate solution" for human beings.

Roberts and Tren discuss in depth the biased anti-population views of the anti-DDT scientists and science writers and editors. I would go a step further and call some of the anti-DDT scientists genocidal maniacs.

The Ideological Parasite

Harm from DDT is a defining cultural myth of the 20th Century, as *The Excellent Powder* amply documents. It functions as a mental parasite, seemingly unable to be controlled by rational argument and scientific evidence. How did a postwar world, in which millions had just lost their lives, give birth to

a new generation that views overpopulation as a problem? The answer is complex, and only partially covered by Roberts and Tren.

From the top, population control is a project of the oligarchical elite, typified by Britain's Prince Philip, whose intention is to keep the masses dumb, and thus manipulable. They and their willing servants, like Paul Ehrlich, intend to reduce world population to 2 billion, eliminating the other 4.7 billion.

This is not hyperbole; these Malthusians openly discuss their aim. Lord Bertrand Russell, for example, candidly called for culling the population by war, disease, and famine. In his *Prospects of Industrial Civilization*, Russell wrote in 1923: "[T]he white population of the world will soon cease to increase. The Asiatic races will be longer, and the Negroes still longer, before their birth rate falls sufficiently to make their numbers stable without help of war and pestilence. . . . Until that happens, the benefits aimed at by socialism can only be partially realized, and the less prolific races will have to defend themselves against the more prolific by methods which are disgusting even if they are necessary."

In his 1951 *Impact of Science Upon*

Society, Russell wrote about the goal of population reduction that "War . . . has hitherto been disappointing in this respect . . . but perhaps bacteriological war may prove more effective. If a Black Death could spread throughout the world once in every generation, survivors could procreate freely without making the world too full. . . . The state of affairs might be somewhat unpleasant, but what of it? Really high-minded people are indifferent to happiness, especially other peoples' . . ."

(For those who stubbornly refuse to believe this of the lauded peacenik philosopher Russell, these and similar pronouncements are all on the record, as are the hateful views of Prince Philip.)

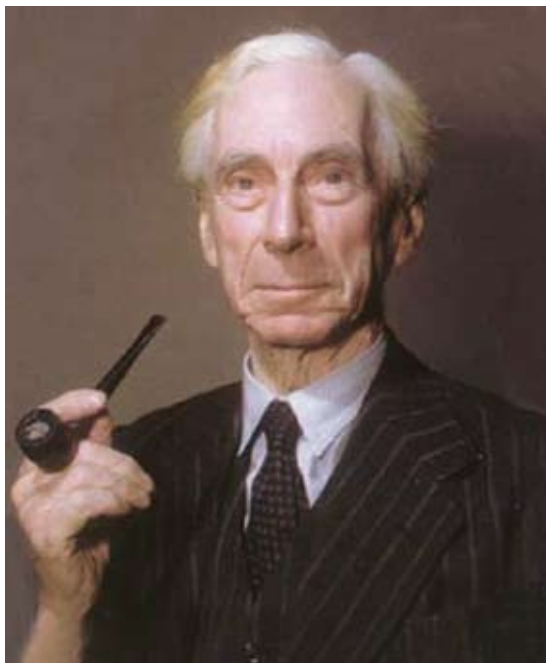
Name the Enemy!

If I have one criticism of this excellent book, it is that Roberts and Tren don't go far enough in naming the enemy: the British Empire and its financial oligarchy. That is what we are fighting against in the case of DDT suppression, and in the persisting colonial mentality that stifles development in general. Historically, and at present, the Empire views mankind as mere cattle to be herded and culled where necessary. Environmentalism and its Malthusian scientific promoters serve this Empire.

The battle for DDT, for continuing its use for house-spraying, has to be fought in this context, against this real enemy.

In the historical record, over millennia, advanced science and technology have been the measure of progress, liberating men and women from heavy labor, so that they were free to use their minds. Advanced science and technology were also the means for keeping the environment clean, as increased energy flux densities produced better quality and cleaner power. As Roosevelt's Tennessee Valley Authority showed, man's management of nature can give us a beautiful world.

The Excellent Powder provides excellent information for us to win this fight. It deserves to be read, to be placed in libraries and in school curricula, and to be a bible in the war against murder by malaria.



Lord Bertrand Russell advocated war, famine, and disease as "disgusting" but "necessary" methods to keep population down.

The Excellent Powder: DDT's Political and Scientific History

by Donald Roberts, medical entomologist, and
Richard Tren, economist and director of Africa Fighting Malaria

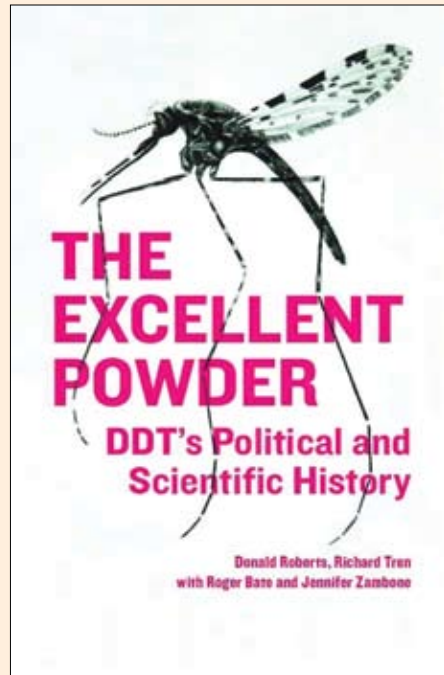
The real story of DDT:

- How it works to stop the spread of malaria, and why other methods don't work as well
 - How the facts show that DDT did not kill off bird populations
 - How there is no human harm from house-spraying with DDT
 - Who wants to stop DDT use, and why
- And much more

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Reviews

“Truly excellent ... debunks many of the unfounded beliefs about DDT that persist in spite of broad underlying evidence”

—Veronique de Rugy, nationalreviewonline

“I’ve followed the DDT debate for over a decade, and this book should be an argument ender.”

—Nick Schulz, The American

“The Excellent Powder ... will provide insight into how science can be destroyed by politics. Highly recommended.”

—Michael Shaw, Contributing Columnist, HealthNewsDigest.com

“... a myth-destroying book that needs to be widely read, and to be put in every library....”

—Marjorie Mazel Hecht, Managing Editor, 21st Century Science & Technology

“Donald Roberts and Richard Tren do more than merely defend the banned and much-maligned insecticide.... [T]hey boldly call the widespread withdrawal of DDT a public health disaster.”

—Barbara Hollingsworth, Local Opinion Editor, San Francisco Examiner