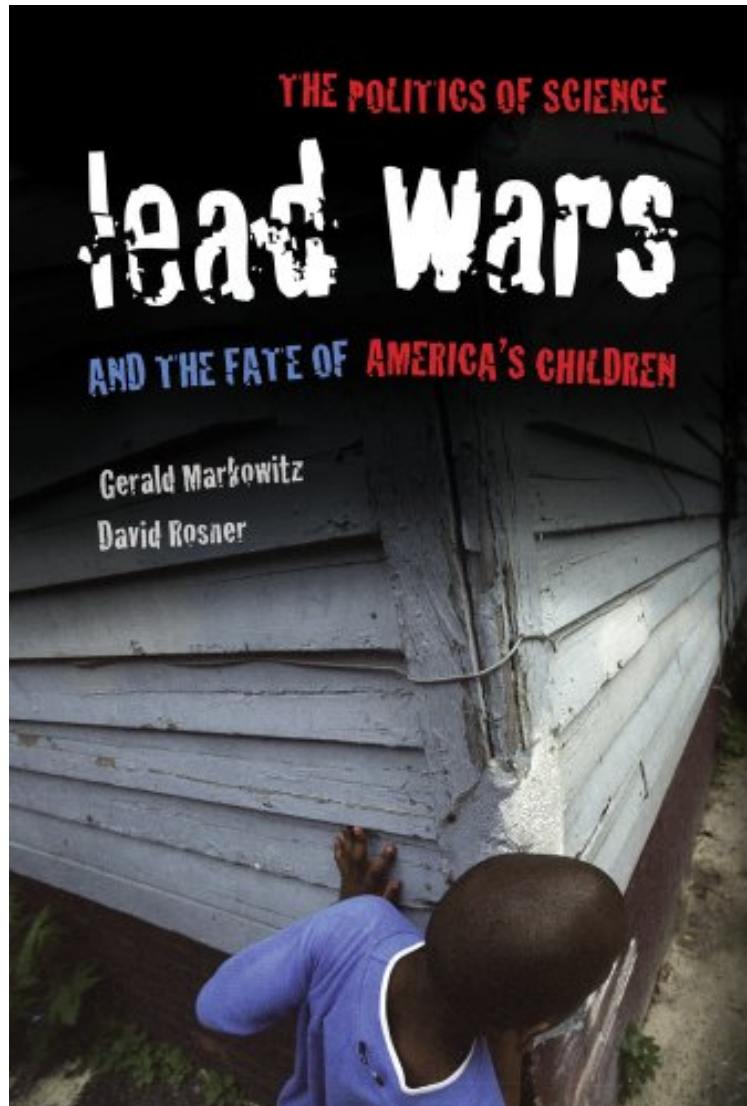


(Ebook pdf) Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children (California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public)

Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children (California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public)

Gerald Markowitz, David Rosner
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Gerald Markowitz, David Rosner : Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children (California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children (California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public):

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Excellent bookBy Nick LeesI am a Professor in Environmental

Management and found the material in this book to be very informative and thought provoking. My intent is to use the background and facts presented here in a case study on the politics of toxic substances in my class on the Interactions of Hazardous Materials. My industrial background included first hand experience with the Formaldehyde question back when the EPA and OSHA were considering significant regulatory changes after the initial valid rat study. I was employed by the industrial sector at the time and we were very intent on showing the true science behind the question, yet we still had the best interests of industry on the table at all times. I can readily see how the authors have honestly treated this dangerous exposure to the adverse health effects of very small amounts of lead in our environment. The actions on the part of the industrial sector here are deplorable and go beyond the effort to put the true science of the issue before the public and the health agency regulators.

Professor Nicholas W. Lees⁵ of 5 people found the following review helpful. Lead poisoning--a national disgrace

By David J. Wilson

Back in the late 60's I was heavily involved in a program that attacked the problem of lead paint in Rochester, NY; this was a collaborative effort of the Rochester Committee for Scientific Information and the Urban League of Rochester. Ever since, I've been interested in the environmental lead problem. Markowitz and Rosner's *Lead Wars* provides an exceptionally well documented history of lead poisoning from its earliest times right up to the present, as, unfortunately, lead poisoning is still with us. Even low levels of lead ingestion have been shown to result in decreased IQ, hyperactivity, poor performance in school, and increased violence and crime rate. A major advance in reducing lead intoxication was the mandatory removal of tetraethyl lead from gasoline. The work of Clair Patterson and others had demonstrated that the use of tetraethyl lead had resulted in massive increases in environmental lead levels globally. The work of Herbert Needleman, Ellen Silberman and others had demonstrated that blood lead levels far below those producing acute symptoms (stomach cramps, convulsions, coma, death) caused neurological damage resulting in the symptoms mentioned above. So, despite major efforts on the part of industry to smear and discredit the researchers and to manufacture doubt, tetraethyl lead was banned. The correlation between the ban and large decreases in blood lead levels was spectacular.

Lead-containing paint has been a tougher problem. Banned years ago for many uses despite industry's vigorous protest, lead paint still occurs in slum housing, where paint chips and lead-containing dust provide a source of the poison for young children. Complete remediation bears a price tag that slum landlords are unwilling (and possibly unable) to pay. So these children pay heavily, in terms of lowered IQ, lost opportunities, and crime. Society as a whole also pays heavily as it carries the burden of these damaged kids, all too often in prison. It is a depressing thought that a nation that could put a man on the moon, that could fight wars of choice half-way around the world, appears to be unwilling to tackle the environmental lead problem effectively.

A tragic footnote to the scientific and medical work on lead poisoning is a case tried by the Maryland Court of Appeals that considered whether or not researchers at Johns Hopkins University had engaged in unethical research on a group of black children--that these children were submitted to risks without their or their parents being adequately informed. The long and bitter hassle ultimately wound up providing needed and more stringent guidance to medical researchers and better protection for the kids who were subjects, but also besmirched the reputation of the Kennedy Krieger Institute, a leader in research on lead poisoning in children.

Lead Wars is a superb job of public health reporting and of historical writing. Markowitz and Rosner are to be complimented on producing a book that is history at its best.

⁸ of 8 people found the following review helpful. A "must read" for parents of young children and those in the public health field.

By monopygy

This is a well-written, easy to read, accurate account of how lead became so pervasive in the environment in general and in housing in particular. The book documents the struggles the City of Baltimore and Johns Hopkins University made to eliminate lead poisoning as a threat to the public health. The book also outlines how the same political and economic pressures apply to other substances, such as bisphenol A. The book contains extensive references to support the statements.

In this incisive examination of lead poisoning during the past half century, Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner focus on one of the most contentious and bitter battles in the history of public health. *Lead Wars* details how the nature of the epidemic has changed and highlights the dilemmas public health agencies face today in terms of prevention strategies and chronic illness linked to low levels of toxic exposure. The authors use the opinion by Maryland's Court of Appeals which considered whether researchers at Johns Hopkins University's prestigious Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI) engaged in unethical research on 108 African-American children as a springboard to ask fundamental questions about the practice and future of public health. *Lead Wars* chronicles the obstacles faced by public health workers in the conservative, pro-business, anti-regulatory climate that took off in the Reagan years and that stymied efforts to eliminate lead from the environments and the bodies of American children.

In *Lead Wars*, CUNY's Gerald Markowitz and Columbia University's David Rosner convincingly show that the Baltimore toddler study emerged from a century of policymaking in which the US government, faced at times with a choice between protecting children from lead poisoning and protecting the businesses that produced and marketed lead paint, almost invariably chose the latter.