

The Nonsense of Global Warming

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August was one of the nastiest months I can remember: torrential rain; a hailstorm or two; cold, bitter winds; and mists. But we are accustomed to such weather in England. Lord Byron used to say that an English summer begins on July 31 and ends on Aug. 1. He called 1816 "the year without a summer." He spent it gazing across Lake Geneva, watching the storms, with 18-year-old Mary Shelley. The lightening flickering across the lake inspired her *Frankenstein*, the tale of the man-made monster galvanized into life by electricity.

This summer's atrocious weather tempted me to tease a Green whom I know. "Well, what about your weather theory now?" (One of the characteristics of Greens is that they know no history.) He replied: "Yes, this weather is unprecedented. England has never had such an August before. It's global warming, of course." That's the Greens' stock response to anything weather-related. Too much sun? "Global warming." Too little sun? "Global warming." Drought? "Global warming." Floods? "Global warming." Freezing cold? "Global warming."

I wish the great philosopher Sir Karl Popper were alive to denounce the unscientific nature of global warming. He was a student when Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity was first published and then successfully tested. Einstein said that for his theory to be valid it would have to pass three tests. "If," Einstein wrote to British scientist Sir Arthur Eddington, "it were proved that this effect does not exist in nature, then the whole theory would have to be abandoned."

To Popper, this was a true scientific approach. "What impressed me most," he wrote, "was Einstein's own clear statement that he would regard his theory as untenable if it should fail in certain tests." In contrast, Popper pointed out, there were pseudo-scientists, such as Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Marx claimed to be constructing a theory of scientific materialism based on scientific history and economic science. "Science" and "scientific" were words Marx used constantly.

Far from formulating his theory with a high degree of scientific content and encouraging empirical testing and refutation, Marx made it vague and general. When evidence turned up that appeared to refute his theory, the theory was modified to accommodate the new evidence. It's no wonder that when communist regimes applied Marxism it proved a costly failure.

Freud's theories were also nonspecific, and he, too, was willing to adjust them to take in new science. We now know that many of Freud's central ideas have no basis in biology. They were formulated before Mendel's Laws were widely known

and accepted and before the chromosomal theory of inheritance, the recognition of inborn metabolic errors, the existence of hormones and the mechanism of nervous impulse were known. As the scientist Sir Peter Medawar put it, Freud's psychoanalysis is akin to mesmerism and phrenology; it contains isolated nuggets of truth, but the general theory as a whole is false.

The idea that human beings have changed and are changing the basic climate system of the Earth through their industrial activities and burning of fossil fuels--the essence of the Greens' theory of global warming--has about as much basis in science as Marxism and Freudianism. Global warming, like Marxism, is a political theory of actions, demanding compliance with its rules.

Those who buy in to global warming wish to drastically curb human economic and industrial activities, regardless of the consequences for people, especially the poor. If the theory's conclusions are accepted and agreed upon, the destructive results will be felt most severely in those states that adhere to the rule of law and will observe restrictions most faithfully. The global warming activists' target is the U.S. If America is driven to accept crippling restraints on its economy it will rapidly become unable to shoulder its burdens as the world's sole superpower and ultimate defender of human freedoms. We shall all suffer, however, as progress falters and then ceases and living standards decline.

Out of Balance

When I'm driving to my country home in Somerset, I pass two examples of the damage Greens can cause when their views are accepted and applied. Thanks to heavy government subsidies, many farmers switched from growing food to biofuel crops--perhaps the most expensive form of energy ever devised. The result has been a world shortage of food, with near starvation in some places, and a rise in the cost of food for everyone. We're now getting wise to this ridiculous experiment; shares in biofuels have fallen, and farmers are switching back to their proper work. But the cost has been enormous.

The other thing I pass is a new windmill, spinning slowly around. Windmills were the great invention of the early Middle Ages--man harnessing nature and using it to replace muscle power. When I was a boy more than 70 years ago there were still a few windmills, but nobody doubted they were on their way out. The thought of going back to wind power would have seemed preposterous. Nevertheless, under pressure from Greens this has happened. Wind power is a grotesquely expensive and inefficient form of energy, and the new windmills are hideous things, ruining the landscape and making an infernal noise.

Marxism, Freudianism, global warming. These are proof--of which history offers so many examples--that people can be suckers on a grand scale. To their fanatical followers they are a substitute for religion. Global warming, in particular,

is a creed, a faith, a dogma that has little to do with science. If people are in need of religion, why don't they just turn to the genuine article?

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