

*Sources and Authorities*

# Dissidents Against Dogma

by Alexander Cockburn

**W**e should never be more vigilant than at the moment a new dogma is being installed. The clique endorsing what is now dignified as "the mainstream theory" of global warming stretches all the way from radical greens through Al Gore to George W. Bush, who signed on at the end of May. The left has been swept along, entranced by the allure of weather as revolutionary agent, naïvely conceiving of global warming as a crisis that will force radical social changes on capitalism by the weight of the global emergency. Amid the collapse of genuinely radical politics, they have seen it as the alarm clock prompting a new Great New Spiritual Awakening.

Alas for their illusions. Capitalism is ingesting global warming as happily as a python swallowing a piglet. The press, which thrives on fearmongering, promotes the nonexistent threat as vigorously as it did the imminence of Soviet attack during the cold war, in concert with the arms industry. There's money to be made, and so, as Talleyrand said, "Enrich yourselves!" I just bought two roundtrip British Airways ticket to Spain from Seattle and a BA online passenger advisory promptly instructed me that the CO2 "offset" cost would be \$7.90 on each ticket, which I might care to contribute to Climate Care. It won't be long before utility bills will carry similar, albeit mandatory and much larger charges. Here's a forewarning of what is soon going to happen, courtesy of Samuel Brittan in the *Financial Times*, under the menacing title, "Towards a true price for energy":

"An enhanced [climate change levy] could be the basis for a genuine shadow price for energy, which could become the basis for energy policy and replace the mind-boggling variety of specific schemes now in place. But for this to happen the consumer exemptions would have to go, and the levy first increased and then raised each year by more than inflation. An approach along these lines would be a contribution to an international effort to reduce dependence on imported and polluting fuels; but it would also benefit any particular country taking this route. And if Opec made disapproving noises we would know that we were really on to something."

Back in the 1970s, as the oil companies engineered a leap in prices, the left correctly identified and stigmatized the the conspiracy. Some thirty five years, here's the entire progressive sector swallowing, with religious fervor, a far more potent concoction of nonsense to buttress a program which will savagely penalize the poor, the third world and the environment.

The marquee slogan in the new cold war on global warming is that the scientific consensus is virtually unanimous. This is utterly false. The overwhelming majority of climate *computer modelers*, the beneficiaries of the \$2 billion-a-year global warming grant industry, certainly believe in it but not necessarily most real climate scientists-people qualified in atmospheric physics, climatology and meteorology.

Geologists are particularly skeptical. Peter Sciaky, a retired geologist, writes to me thus:

"A geologist has a much longer perspective. There are several salient points about our earth that the greenhouse theorists overlook (or are not aware). The first of these is that the planet has never been this cool. There is abundant fossil evidence to support this--from plants of the monocot order (such as palm trees) in the rocks of Cretaceous Age in Greenland and warm water fossil in sedimentary rocks of the far north. This is hardly the first warming period in the earth's history. The present global warming is hardly unique. It is arriving pretty much "on schedule." One thing, for sure, is that the environmental community has always spurned any input from geologists (many of whom are employed by the petroleum industry). No environmental conference, such as Kyoto, has ever invited a geologist, a paleontologist, a paleoclimatologist. It would seem beneficial for any scientific investigatory to include such scientific disciplines.

"Among all my liberal and leftist friends (and I am certainly one of those), I know not a one who does not accept that global warming is an event caused by mankind. I do not know one geologist who believes that global warming is *not* taking place. I do not know a single geologist who believes that it is a man-made phenomenon.

"There are hundreds of reasons--political, pragmatic and economic, health and environmental--for cleaning up our environment, for conservation of energy, for developing alternate fuels, cleaning up our nuclear program, etc. Global warming is not one of them."

Take Warsaw-based Professor Zbigniew Jaworowski, famous for his critiques of ice-core data. He's devastating on the IPCC rallying cry that CO<sub>2</sub> is higher now than it has ever been over the past 650,000 years. In his 1997 paper in the Spring *21st Century Science and Technology*, he demolishes this proposition. In particular, he's very good on pointing out the enormous inaccuracies in the ice-core data and the ease with which a CO<sub>2</sub> reading from any given year is contaminated by the CO<sub>2</sub> from entirely different eras. He also points out that from 1985 on there's been some highly suspect editing of the CO<sub>2</sub> data, presumably to reinforce the case for the "unprecedented levels" of modern CO<sub>2</sub>. In fact, in numerous papers prior to 1985, there were plenty of instances of CO<sub>2</sub> levels much higher than current CO<sub>2</sub> measurements, some even six times higher. He also points out that it is highly unscientific to merge ice-core temperature measurements with modern temperature measurements.

Or take Dr. Habibullo Abdussamatov, of St. Petersburg's Pulkovo Astronomical Observatory. He says we're on a warming trend but that humans have little to do with it, the agent being a longtime change in the sun's heat. He predicts solar irradiance will fall within the next few years mainly based on the well documented sunspot cycle, and therefore we may well face the beginning of an ice age very shortly, as early as 2012. The Russian scientific establishment is giving him a green light to use the nation's space station to measure global cooling.

Now read Dr. Jeffrey Glassman, applied physicist and engineer, retired from California's academic and corporate sectors, who provides an elegant demonstration of how the absorption and release of CO<sub>2</sub> from the enormous carbon reservoir in the earth's oceans controls atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations. This absorption and release is very much a function of the earth's temperature and Glassman shows how the increase in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> is the consequence of temperature, not the cause.

Move to that bane of the fearmongers, Dr. Patrick Michaels, on sabbatical from the University of Virginia, now at the Cato Institute, who has presented in papers and

recently, in his book *Meltdown*, demolitions of almost every nightmare scenario invented by the greenhousers, particularly regarding hurricanes, tornadoes, sea rise, disappearing ice caps, drought and floods. A qualified climatologist, he analyses the data invoked to buttress each of these scenarios and shows the actual climate history not only fails to support the claims but also that in the majority of cases the opposite is true. Hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts and floods and other weather extremes are currently decreasing, contrary to Hansen, Mann and the other sensationalists. Michaels is particularly good on the ludicrous claims regarding catastrophic sea rise as well as the by now universally trumpeted melting icecaps and supposed impending disappearance of the Greenland ice sheet. Michaels is sometimes slammed as a hired gun for the fossil fuel industry, but I haven't seen any significant dents or quantitative ripostes to his meticulous scientific critiques.

Then there's Christopher Landsea. A research meteorologist at the Atlantic Oceanic and Meteorological Laboratory of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, he described to Lawrence Solomon (author of a very interesting series on "The Deniers" in Canada's *National Post* in February of this year) how the IPCC utterly misrepresented his work to concoct a scare scenario about warming and increased incidence of hurricanes and cyclones.

There are many others. The geologist Bruno Wiskel of the University of Alberta, was once a passionate adherent to the theory of anthropogenic global warming. He even started to build a "Kyoto house" in honor of the UN sanctioned Kyoto Protocol which was signed in 1997. These days he's changed his views entirely and indeed has written a book, "The Emperor's New Climate: Debunking the Myth of Global Warming." Wiskel says global warming has gone "from a science to a religion" and noted that research money is being funneled into promoting climate alarmism instead of funding areas he considers more worthy.

The astrophysicist Dr. Nir Shaviv, one of Israel's scientists, also abandoned his belief that manmade emissions were driving climate change. "Like many others, I was personally sure that CO<sub>2</sub> is the bad culprit in the story of global warming. But after carefully digging into the evidence, I realized that things are far more complicated than the story sold to us by many climate scientists or the stories regurgitated by the media. Shaviv is quoted as saying in the the Canadian National Post series. "Solar activity can explain a large part of the 20th-century global warming" . Shaviv believes that even a doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere by 2100 "will not dramatically increase the global temperature."

One of the best essays on greenhouse myth-making from a left perspective comes from Denis Rancourt, an environmental science researcher and professor of physics at the University of Ottawa. I recommend his February 2007 essay "Global Warming: Truth or Dare?" on his website, *Activist Teacher*, which has also featured fine work by David Noble on the greenhouse lobby. Rancourt is a good scientist and also a political radical and the conflation is extremely stimulating though --alas--very rare:

"The planet will continue to change, adapt and evolve, with or without us The atmosphere will continue to change as it always has under the influence of life and of geology. We can't control these things. We can barely perceive them correctly. But we can take control of how we treat each other. The best we can do for the environment and for the planet is to learn not to let undemocratic power structures run our lives. The best we can do is to reject exploitation and domination and to embrace cooperation and solidarity. The best we can do is to not trust subservient scientists and to become active agents for change beyond head-in-the-sand personal lifestyle choices.

"We need to get political, beyond corporate-controlled shadow governments and co-opted political parties. We need to take charge more than we need to recycle. Global warming is strictly an imaginary problem of the First World middleclass. Nobody else cares about global warming. Exploited factory workers in the Third World don't care about global warming. Depleted uranium genetically mutilated children in Iraq don't care about global warming. Devastated aboriginal populations the world over also can't relate to global warming, except maybe as representing the only solidarity that we might volunteer."

The Achilles' heel of the computer models (which form the cornerstone of CO2 fearmongering), is their failure to deal with water. As vapor, it's a more important greenhouse gas than CO2 by a factor of twenty, yet models have proven incapable of dealing with it. The global water cycle is complicated, with at least as much unknown as is known. Water starts by evaporating from oceans, rivers, lakes and moist ground, enters the atmosphere as water vapor, condenses into clouds and precipitates as rain or snow. Each transition from one form of water to another is influenced by temperature and each water form has an enormous impact on global heat processes. Clouds have a huge, inaccurately quantified cooling effect: they reflect heat received from the sun, though how much is unknown. Water on the Earth's surface has different effects on retaining the sun's heat, depending on whether the water is liquid and dark, as are the oceans, which are highly absorbent; or ice, which is reflective; or snow, which is even more reflective than ice. Such water cycle factors cause huge swings in the Earth's heat balance; they interact with global temperatures in ways that are beyond the ability of computer climate models to predict.

The first global warming modelers simply threw up their hands at the complexity of the water problem and essentially left out the atmospheric water cycle. Over time a few features of the cycle were patched into the models, all based on unproven guesses at the effect of increased ocean evaporation on clouds, the effect of clouds on reflecting the sun's energy and the effect of cloud warming on rainfall and snow. All of these "band aid" equations are hopelessly inadequate to repair the computer models' inability to describe the water cycle's role in temperature.

Besides the inability to deal with water, the other huge embarrassment facing the modelers is the well-researched and well-established fact published in many papers that temperature changes first and CO2 levels change 600 to 1,000 years later. Any rational person would immediately conclude that CO2 could not possibly cause temperature if the rise in CO2 comes centuries after the rise in temperature. The computer modelers as usual have an involuted response: They say the temperature increase is initiated by the "relatively weak" effect of increasing heat from the sun during the rising phase of the Milankovich cycle (Milankovich's meticulously calculated cycles on rising and falling heat input from the sun are universally accepted by astrophysicists). That effect initiates the warming of the oceans, which - just as Dr. Martin Hertzberg says - releases lots of CO2. According to the modelers the released CO2 is the real culprit because it amplifies the "relatively weak" effect of the sun, turning minor warming into a really serious matter.

This is a cleverly concocted gloss which would be a wonderful argument for demonstrating that once warming starts, CO2 will make it worse and worse until all life on earth dies. Unfortunately for the climate modelers the history of the earth's many temperature and CO2 swings tells us that it obviously does not get worse and worse. After any given warming phase begins, thousands of years later the cyclical Milankovitch decrease in the sun's heat kicks in. The warming stops, reverses and an ice age ensues.

Where the modelers' clever gloss founders is on explaining how the "relatively weak" decrease in the sun's heat makes all that extra CO<sub>2</sub> disappear. Obviously the "bad" CO<sub>2</sub> must disappear due to some "feedback" that the modelers haven't thought of yet, i.e., one that keeps the earth's climate in rough equilibrium.

If the public swallows this new greenhouse dogma, it won't just be carbon taxes on an airline ticket. It will be huge new carbon offset charges on your utility bill for the alleged carbon savings of the hundreds of immensely expensive nuclear plants the industry is so eager to build. And you, having been softened by the propaganda of the CO<sub>2</sub> fearmongers, will be delighted to pay those hefty levies to give a cooler, cleaner world to your grandchildren.

Finally, A word on sources and authorities. They begin with papers and talks by Dr Martin Hertzberg. These are being scanned and as soon as this is done, I will give the relevant links – probably in a week – In an updated version of this piece.

---

M. Hertzberg and J. B. Stott, "Greenhouse Warming of the Atmosphere", 25th International Symposium on Combustion, Irvine, CA (1994), Poster Session No. 5, Paper # 73, p459

M. Hertzberg, "The Facts and Fictions of Global Warming", talk presented at the 'Cafe Scientifique at the Summit', Frisco, CO, Oct. 3, 2006

J. A. Glassman, "The Acquittal of Carbon Dioxide", posted in [www.rocketscientistsjournal.com](http://www.rocketscientistsjournal.com)

F. Goldberg, "Climate Data Show That the Increase in CO<sub>2</sub> in the Atmosphere is Due to Natural Causes", lecture at Cal Tech, Pasadena, Jan 10, 2007, work in progress available by request from:  
Fred@materialdata.se

M. Milankovitch, 1940, "Canon of Insolation and the Ice-Age Problem" Royal Serbian Academy, Special Publications, Vol 132, Sect. on Math & Natural Sciences, Vol 33, Belgrade (in German, translated by the Israeli Translation Services)

R. Essenhigh, Chemical Innovation, May 2001, Vol 31, No.5 pp 44-46, available on line at <http://pubs.acs.org/subscribe/journals/ci/31/special/mayo1viewpoint.html>

R. Essenhigh, Energy and Fuels, 2006, Vol 20, pp 1057-1067

Z. Jaworowski et al, "Do Glaciers Tell a True CO<sub>2</sub> Story", The Science of the Total Environment, 144 (1992) pp 227-284

Z. Jaworowski, "Ice Core Data Show No Carbon Dioxide Increase", 21st Century Science & Technology, Spring 1997, available on line at [www.21stcenturysciencetech.com](http://www.21stcenturysciencetech.com)

D. G. Rancourt, "Global Warming: Truth or Dare", Activist Teacher: Global Warming: Truth or Dare?

R. Lindzen, The Wall Street Journal, Wed. April 12, 2006, Editorial Page

R. Lindzen, "Is There a Basis for Global Warming Alarm?", Oct 12, 2005, Yale Center for the Study of Globalization, on line at:

[www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1714](http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1714)

The following are all available on the John Daly web-site:

J. L. Daly, "The 'Hockey Stick': A New Low in Climate Science" available at [www.john-daly.com/hockey/hockey.htm](http://www.john-daly.com/hockey/hockey.htm)

J. L. Daly, "Days of Sunshine", available at [www.john-daly.com/solar.htm](http://www.john-daly.com/solar.htm)

H. Hug, "The Climate Catastrophe - A Spectroscopic Artifact", available at [www.john-daly.com/artifact.htm](http://www.john-daly.com/artifact.htm)

J. Ahlbeck, "Absorption of Carbon Dioxide From the Atmosphere", available at [www.john-daly.com/co2-conc/ahl-co2.htm](http://www.john-daly.com/co2-conc/ahl-co2.htm)

J. Ahlbeck, "Increase of the Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide Concentration Due to Ocean Warming", available at [www.john-daly.com/oceanco2/oceanco2.htm](http://www.john-daly.com/oceanco2/oceanco2.htm)

Footnote: a much shorter version of this piece ran in the print edition of *The Nation* that went to press last Wednesday.