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REASONABLE DOUBTS

A Case against Official Environmentalism

JUAN JOSÉ MERCADO

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Juan José Mercado is the executive producer of Amagifilms, an independent film production company based in Madrid. In 2012, Mercado directed the acclaimed documentary *Fraud: Why the Great Recession*. He is also responsible for the short film *Neither Justice Nor Social Welfare: How Pensions Work*. In his new documentary *Reasonable Doubts. A Plea Against Official Environmentalism*, Mercado offers viewers a reasoned explanation of why climate change, officially used as a defence for already unbearable levels of interventionism, is in reality a giant with feet of clay. Mercado has written articles in various media outlets and on the website of the Juan de Mariana Institute, and is one of the most prestigious creators in the liberal and libertarian circles of our country.

REASONABLE DOUBTS

A Case against Official Environmentalism

SCRIPT FOR THE DOCUMENTARY BY

JUAN JOSÉ MERCADO

According to the most recent estimates, the Earth is 4.543 billion years old, and anatomically modern humans have shared it for only 200,000 years.

During the vast majority of its existence, our planet remained uninhabitable. It was either a huge fireball; or being pounded by gigantic space rocks; or witnessing unimaginable floods, earthquakes, hurricanes... It survived the sharpest temperature changes and was covered in thick clouds and battered by the most violent rains.

The history of mankind has not been easy either. Our history has basically been one of adaptation and learning. The Earth, with its changing climate, was a hostile environment for us, and our ability to adapt to it was ultimately what enabled us to survive. We had a hard road, full of effort and suffering, until just two hundred years ago, when everything changed. Knowledge and institutions which had evolved spontaneously over time, when combined with a specific set of historical circumstances, gave rise to what we know today as the Industrial Revolution – and with it, progress and the abundance that had been denied us until then. At last, after millions of years, the famous Malthusian trap (the larger the population, the fewer the available resources) opened, and mankind managed to escape. Today, there are more than ever of us, and we have more resources than ever before.

Since the Industrial Revolution, advancement has been unstoppable, especially in recent times. In 1800, for instance, the life expectancy was just twenty-nine years, while today it is around eighty-five. Two hundred years ago, 94 percent of the population suffered extreme poverty, while today only 9 percent do. At the beginning of the twentieth century, 46 percent of children died before reaching adulthood, while today 97 percent survive into adulthood. In 1990, 30 percent of the world's population had no access to electricity. Just thirty years later, that percentage has fallen to less than half, even though the population has increased by more than 2 billion people during that same period.

Never in history had there been so many of us, and never in history has there been such a prosperous, healthy, and peaceful period as the one we are lucky enough to live in.

Of course, there is plenty of hard work left to do, but there are objective figures more than sufficient to justify a sense of pride and happiness in the path we, mankind, have embarked on.

Nevertheless, not everyone shares this view. In recent years, among the political and educational elites, some have been declaring that all of this has been nothing but an illusion and that, in reality, the Malthusian trap has simply expanded its reach temporarily and is about to clamp shut on us again. What is worse, they frighten us by proclaiming that, due to our current behavior, human beings may pose a danger to planet Earth of a magnitude never before seen in the 4.5 billion years of its existence.

Never in history have there been so many of us, and never has history known such a prosperous, healthy, and peaceful period as the one we are fortunate enough to be living in.

But is this true? Can we be sure of it? "Science says so," we are told. "An iron consensus exists," they claim.

But who is Science? And what is behind that supposed consensus?

Should we not think calmly and rationally before we abandon the path of health and prosperity that mankind embarked upon, finally, two hundred years ago?

With what severity will our grandchildren judge us in the future if they discover we have doomed them to start from scratch because we paid no attention to the doubts we know exist? Because there are doubts. Many of them. And they are more than reasonable doubts.

The argument upon which the entire global-warming narrative rests is well known: Our current standard of living, based on the capitalism that emerged from the Industrial Revolution, depends excessively on fossil fuels. When these are used, they release large quantities of carbon dioxide which remains in the Earth's atmosphere. We know that carbon dioxide is one of the so-called greenhouse gases, and thus that its emission causes a temperature rise across the globe. If we know how much carbon dioxide we emit, we can estimate, using the most sophisticated computer models, how much will be emitted in the future and, that way, we can take measures before the terrible consequences are inevitable.

When the argument is presented in this manner, the case seems closed. We know the crime is to increase the Earth's temperature. We know the weapon is the fossil fuels upon which our economic model depends. And, above all, we know with certainty the culprit can be none other than mankind.

However, the real question, the fundamentally important issue, is whether we can uphold this argument using the most profound legacy of mankind, the tool that best defines us as a species: rational thought, the critical method. In short, true science.

And that is where reasonable doubts begin to arise.

We tend to think of the Industrial Revolution as a mere historical event which took place many years ago. But there are more than sufficient reasons to believe that our societies are still immersed in that huge process of change. We do not yet have the perspective necessary to evaluate its profound implications. In fact, most people, regardless of their academic background, are still unable to grasp the influence this process has had on our societies. And in a way, this is only natural.

Until around 1800, few differences existed between the economies of humans and those of all other animals. For animals (and plants) it is always true that the larger the population, the greater the scarcity and the conflict between members. And for most of our existence on Earth, this has been the case for humans as well.

The great thinkers devoted a considerable amount of time to this matter, though perhaps none with the success of Thomas Malthus and his book *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. It was Malthus who made the famous statement, "Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio." And, with that, he crystallized a fear which, as we say, may have been justified in his time: Resources are scarce, and the more people there are, the fewer available resources there will be. This is the Malthusian trap, and we were caught in it until just 200 years ago.

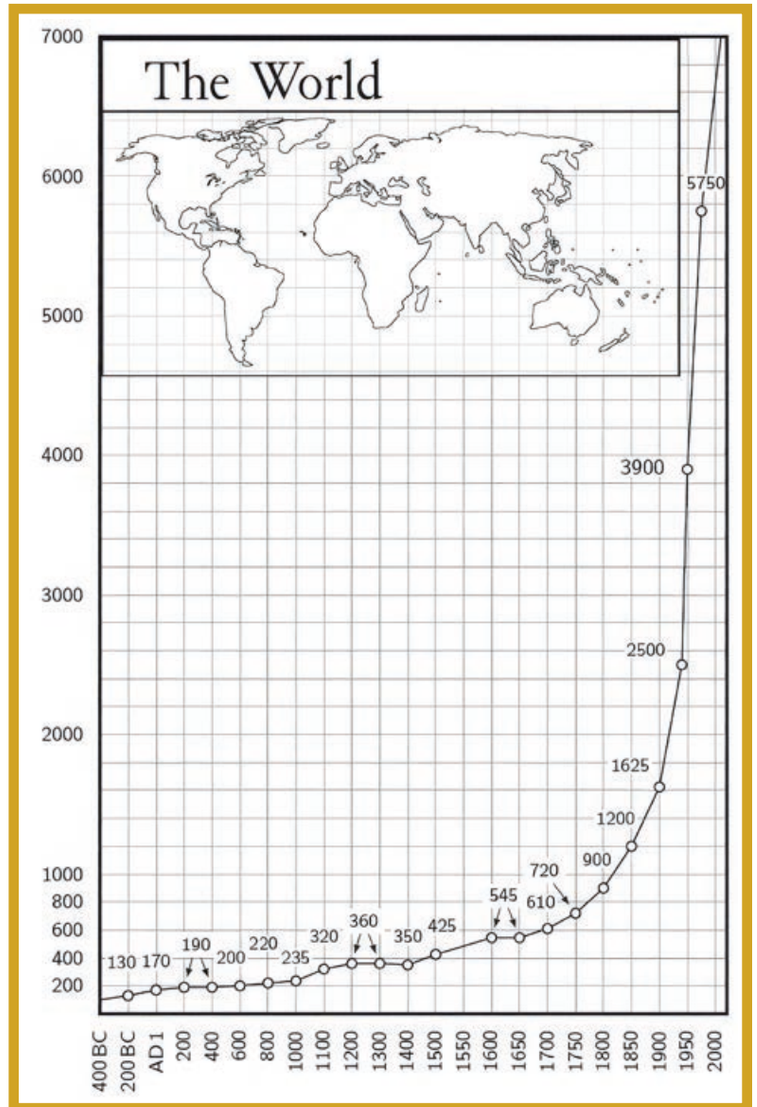


Figure 1. Total world population (millions).

Until then, the population had increased very slowly and at a more or less constant rate. But around 1800, an abrupt break in the trend occurred, and since then, the world's population has grown from 900 million to the almost 8 billion of today.

The old Malthusian fears spread left and right. The blackest omens seemed on the brink of being fulfilled. And yet, despite the enormous popularity Malthus's theories enjoyed, none of the pro-

phesies he made in 1798 came to pass. One of the most famous estimated that, in 1900, there would be 112 million inhabitants in England, while the entire Earth would be unable to produce food for more than 35 million people. The reality was that, in 1900, the population of England was 41 million people (three times less than the number predicted), and, at the same time, life in England had never been better. This was only the beginning of an endless list of inaccurate predictions made by all who accepted the assumptions of Malthus. For instance, Jevons, the famous economist, published in 1865 that England was about to see the end of coal, and that a deep crisis would doom its population to an unprecedented exodus.

In principle, it seemed reasonable that such a spectacular increase in the world's population would be followed by the catastrophe so widely predicted by the doomsayers. And yet, far from collapsing, mankind had never known such high levels of prosperity. The dizzying upward curve in population was followed by a parallel increase in per capita income.

What made reality turn its back on the entire Malthusian argument? Well, in addition to certain favorable historical circumstances, human beings had finally reached an intellectual maturity which permitted sufficient technological innovation. Such innovation was made possible by the savings resulting from abstention from leisure and from immediate consumption: what has come to be known as the capitalist economic system, the key to the Malthusian trap.

Finding the key took thousands of years. Over time, the spontaneous action of human beings gradually shaped a series of fundamental institutions: money, language, law... At the same time, an even slower process took place, in which man, who was physically weak and little prepared to

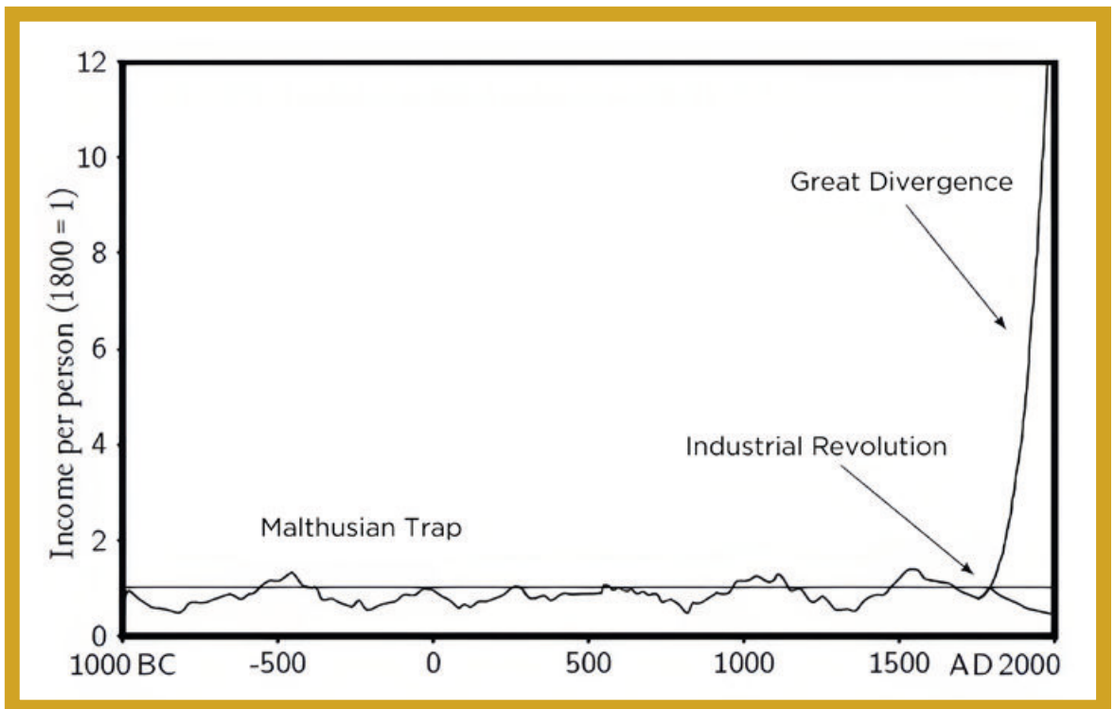


Figure 2. Global economic history. Per capita income from 1000 AD to 2000.

grapple with nature, was progressively obliged to develop a sufficiently acute intelligence.

One of the pressing factors in the development of this intelligence was precisely the climate. Contrary to the idea official environmentalism presents to us today, the climate was far from constant and peaceful in the past. Quite the opposite was true: Mankind has experienced abrupt temperature changes since the beginning of time. Human beings' struggle against the climate has been a fundamental catalyst for our cognitive development. In fact, our own survival as a species has depended on our trying to predict climate changes and fluctuations to anticipate their effects and ensure the future food supply (animals and plants). The occurrence of these constant changes and fluctuations over time (rains, droughts, heatwaves, frosts...) made it necessary to take into account, if we wished to survive, increasingly remote factors like the sun, the moon, and the stars, as well as lengthier and lengthier time frames. Human beings were forced to study longer and longer chains of cause and effect. They had to broaden their planning horizon: to act now in order to achieve success much later. Crops had to be planned and livestock dealt with in terms of years, rather than days or months.

Thus, in a simultaneous, dual process, while a series of fundamental institutions (such as property rights) were developing, human intelligence was expanding to the point that mankind discovered the benefits of saving and investing what is saved to generate future income. This was neither obvious nor trivial, nor was the concept of first planting crops, then caring for them and protecting them from the elements, and finally, harvesting them. Nor was the idea of domesticating, handling, and breeding animals. All of these required thousands of years of natural selection while we were hunger-gatherers until enough intelligence was finally generated to make such achievements possible.

That is why we needed so much time to escape from the Malthusian trap. And, therefore, it may be only natural that the fears which have been perfectly justified throughout practically all of human history should continue to haunt us.

After Malthus, the years passed. And though, as we have seen, the population grew like never before in history, at no time had there been such an abundance of resources and well-being. However, Malthusians did not relent in their efforts to predict the Apocalypse.

They frighten us by proclaiming that human beings could pose a threat to planet Earth on a scale never before seen in its 4.5 billion years of existence.

It was the famous entomologist Paul Ehrlich who sounded the big wake-up call. And, with him, roughly 200 years later, history repeated itself. There was, again, a highly successful book (*The Population Bomb*), and again, a bunch of prophecies which, when repeated today, can sound ridiculous. Here is a mere sample: "*Between 1980 and 1989, 4 billion people, including 65 million Americans, will perish in the Great Die-Off*"; and "*In ten years* [in 1980] *all important animal life in the sea will be extinct. Large areas of coastline will have to be evacuated because of the stench of dead fish*"; and "*By the year 2000, the United Kingdom will be simply a small group of impoverished islands inhabited by some 70 million hungry people*"; and "*If I were a gambler, I would take even money that England will not exist in the year 2000.*"

On the subject of bets, probably the most famous one Ehrlich has made (and the only one in which he has dared to risk anything) was with the economist Julian Simon. Simon, a professor at the University of Maryland, did not share the neo-Malthusian view and actually posited the exact opposite: Natural resources will not only not come to an end, but will be more and more abundant, since resources are, in fact, infinite. After many debates, the two decided to make a wager. Simon challenged Ehrlich to choose any five natural resources he wished. If, at the end of ten years, their prices had risen, Simon would pay Ehrlich the difference between the 1980 and 1990 prices. If the prices had fallen, Ehrlich would pay. During the period, none of the evils predicted by Ehrlich and his supporters materialized. Not one. In fact, the world's population grew like never before in history, and 800 million more people came to inhabit the planet. On the agreed-upon day, Simon and Ehrlich met and looked at the prices of the resources the latter had chosen. They corrected the prices for inflation and … found they had all dropped. Some resources, like tin, cost less than half what they had cost at the beginning. Ehrlich wrote Simon a check for $576.07 and stopped betting. Simon even proposed they extend the bet for another ten years and raise it to $20,000. He again invited Ehrlich to freely choose the resources, but Ehrlich declined the offer.

However, he continued, in the most distinguished intellectual forums, to announce the worst evils, without being right about any of them. Nevertheless, far from making a dent in Ehrlich's reputation, this would ultimately raise him to the status of a great environmentalist guru from his professorship at Stanford.

His influence was key to the Club of Rome, perhaps the most direct source of the current environmental movement. Just five years after Ehrlich's book appeared, the members of the Club of Rome published their own book titled *The Limits to Growth*, probably the most read neo-Malthusian book in history, with almost 10 million copies sold. It contains the same, well-known Malthusian arguments, but with a fundamental addition: For the first time, a series of mathematical models were included and gave the authors' theories an apparent scientific soundness and made them extremely visually attractive to the media. These models would be the direct predecessors of the current ones the United Nations uses to prophesy about future climate dangers. In both cases, and despite their effectiveness in boosting prestige with the public, such models have a fundamental flaw: their static view of human action and their erratic understanding of human beings themselves. Hence, these models constantly clash with reality.

In the view of the Club of Rome, given the dramatic population growth that was taking place, it was urgent to call for a new world order to slow the pace of industrialized nations. One of the main leaders of the organization, Maurice Strong, was quite explicit when, in 1990, he stated: "Isn't the only hope for the planet that the industrialized civilizations collapse? Isn't it our responsibility to bring that about?"

What has come to be known as the capitalist economic system is nothing more than the key to the famous Malthusian trap. It took thousands of years to find it.

The other members of the Club of Rome also took on this goal, and finding a plan of action to achieve it became their main task.

There is no speculation or conspiracy theory in any of this. From the very beginning, the members made their objective and their strategy clear. In a key Club of Rome report, its authors wrote in 1991: "In searching for a common enemy against whom we can unite, we came up with the idea that pollution, the threat of global warming, water shortages, famine and the like, would fit the bill. In their totality and their interactions, these phenomena do constitute a common threat which must be confronted by everyone together." What follows is even more illuminating: "…All these dangers are caused by human intervention in natural processes, and it is only through changed attitudes and behavior that they can be overcome. The real enemy then is humanity itself." Beyond the anti-humanitarian nature of the message, what is clear is that the scientific method and the search for truth were absent from the beginning: The official environmental movement started from the fundamental bias of assuming that we are dealing with a human problem, one caused by humans. And none of the subsequent efforts have ever been – nor are they now – aimed at showing whether this theory is falsifiable or not. On the contrary, the ambitious challenge was to articulate a set of tools with which to prevent people from questioning the theory.

From the beginning, Maurice Strong was clear about the two conditions necessary for his idea to prevail. He and his associates needed maximum political power to implement their ideas, but they also needed to adopt an air of scientific impartiality that would place them morally above partisan struggles. They found the perfect solution in the United Nations, where Strong was in his element, thanks to his innate abilities and his extensive network of contacts of the highest level.

It all began at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm. Strong himself presided over the conference as Secretary-General. His success was resounding. At the first plenary session, he gained the approval of his three main objectives: a formal declaration on the human impact on the environment, a plan of action, and the creation of an organized structure financed by a world environment fund.

At that point, a dual action plan was initiated and, over the next twenty years, relentlessly developed: on the one hand, the advancement of a practical and certain political agenda and, on the other hand, the creation of scientific evidence to give the project moral legitimacy.

The first great success came with the Montreal Protocol in 1987. Before pointing to CO2, Strong and his associates, in search of a human product to blame for imminent climate disasters, hit upon the famous CFCs and their supposed destruction of the ozone layer. Though it was later shown that the ozone hole was due to natural causes, nothing kept Strong and his allies from peddling the success of the protocol and continuing to move forward with their measures.

By this stage, science had already yielded all ground to politics, as was openly admitted at the UN conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Maurice Strong (Club of Rome): "Is not the collapse of industrialized civilizations the only hope for the planet? Is it not our responsibility to bring this about?"

On the one hand, Agenda 21 was adopted. It is the action plan of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, principle 15 of which states: "*In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.*"

On the other hand, the same conference saw the signing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which officially defines "climate change" as "*a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.*"

Thus, the official view on climate change was determined and given a doubly corrupt form: First, there was the unscientific assumption that human beings were to blame for any dangers the climate might expose us to; and second, there was the need to take political action accordingly, even in the absence of scientific data to support the action.

The official narrative was also determined, though in the process, the experts had to contradict all they had said over the previous ten years. Indeed, until the 1980s, the cause of the fears and exaggerations was not global warming, but global cooling. Front pages, scientific studies, large headlines… all proclaimed, with the same emphasis and insistence with which they proclaim the opposite today, the imminence of a world dominated by cold and ice.

But in the 1980s, everything changed. The average temperature of the planet began to rise. To make the narrative consistent with the guilt of human beings, it was now easy to find the murder weapon. This is when we saw the emergence of CO2 and the revival of the now-famous theory of the greenhouse effect, which was widely ignored and dismissed from the outset by the very people who now embraced it.

The activists were filled with enthusiasm: The regulation of CO2 emissions enabled them to attack the industrialized nations right at the heart. If the symbol of these nations was a car with a fuel-injection system, the greenhouse-effect theory, when applied to anthropogenic CO2, would justify depriving these nations of fuel, and thus the activists would achieve their main objective.

At this point, the original plans of Maurice Strong and the Club of Rome were definitely ready. They already had an officially predetermined culprit: mankind. And they had found the murder weapon that gave him away: CO2 emissions.

Still ahead lay the huge task of sowing these ideas in the minds of millions of people, of convincing them of something that was impossible a priori: that now that they had finally known abundance, it was necessary for them to return to a period of scarcity; they must voluntarily give up their own liberty and get back into the Malthusian cage. And only one method exists by which such a task can be accomplished: the spread of fear.

The official view of climate change unscientifically assumes human culpability and the need to act accordingly without data to support it.

All efforts of the United Nations (specifically, those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC –) were to be focused on this major goal. And there was no room for doubt. The aforementioned founding principles were to be rigorously applied: Mankind is guilty with all certainty, and doubt is no excuse for not taking measures.

The problem is that holding these positions brings one face-to-face with a striking paradox: On the one hand, it is necessary to forget the scientific method. But on the other hand, for everything to make sense, the IPCC needs scientists to endorse its message as far as possible. That way, the group can present its conclusions as supported not by a set of scientists, but by Science itself. Today, the IPCC is portrayed as the "scientific consensus," when it really represents the political consensus, as its very name indicates ("Intergovernmental Panel…").

The activists have been gradually accomplishing this by screening the personnel in charge of preparing reports, among other methods (controlling major publications, agencies responsible for distributing funds, universities…). However, in the beginning, everything was not so neatly sewn up, and a few incidents revealed the methods and tactics of the IPCC.

Once such instance occurred in 1995, in connection with the preparatory meetings for the IPCC *Second Assessment Report*. A group of reputable scientists met in Madrid and agreed on the text of what would be the report's most important chapter, titled "Detection of Climate Change and Attribution of Causes." Among their most significant conclusions, the following are noteworthy:

- "*None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed [climate] changes to the specific cause of increases in greenhouse gases.*"
- "*While some of the pattern-based studies discussed have claimed detection of a significant climate change, no study to date has positively attributed all or part [of the climate change observed] to [man-made] causes.*"
- "*Any claims of positive detection and attribution of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total natural variability of the climate system are reduced.*"
- "*While none of these studies has specifically considered the attribution issue, they often draw some attribution conclusions, for which there is little justification.*"

To maintain the official position, one must resort to a paradox: on the one hand, it is necessary to forget the scientific method itself, and on the other, the endorsement of scientists is needed.

In short, it was a text characteristic of honest scientists. More than absolute truths, it reflected the true state of the climate question: full of uncertainties and reasonable doubts.

The great architects of the IPCC did not like the text, but the organization had provided for a way to rectify this type of situation. In its own general principles, the IPCC establishes that every scientific report will be accompanied by a second report referred to as the "*Summary for Policymakers*." A priori, this second report should be a summary of the first one; it should distill the first report and make it accessible to the uninitiated. But the summary is not simply an autonomous document. In fact, according to the very

principles of the IPCC, the authors of the scientific report may be obliged to change it to avoid conflict with the summary, which, incidentally, is published (and publicized) several months before the scientific report is released. Indeed, the summary is the only document the media and politicians use. On this occasion, the principles of the IPCC were invoked to cleanse the text of all reasonable doubt and make sure the certainties pointed in the right direction. Though the above scientific conclusions were approved at a plenary meeting in Madrid and ratified a month later in Rome, Benjamin Santer, who was responsible for the chapter, saw to it that over fifteen sections were erased or modified so substantially that the meaning of the original statements was radically altered. Thus, in the final text, one reads statements such as the following:

- "*... There is evidence of an emerging pattern of climate response to forcings by greenhouse gases and sulphate aerosols ... from the geographical, seasonal and vertical patterns of temperature change... These results point towards a human influence on global climate.*"
- "*The body of statistical evidence in Chapter 8, when examined in the context of our physical understanding of the climate system, now points towards a discernible human influence on global climate.*"

The scientists in charge of the original report were dismayed by this high-handed behavior and swiftly called it out.

In the words of one of them, Dr. Frederick Seitz, "In my more than sixty years as a member of the American scientific community, including service as president of the NAS and the American Physical Society, I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer-review process than the events that lead to this IPCC report."

But it was already too late. By the time these complaints were aired, Benjamin Santer and the other IPCC authorities had managed to present the supposed "*discernible human influence*" as an absolute truth in the global media, including the most prestigious scientific journals.

The media coverage of the manipulated text was accompanied by a parallel campaign to discredit those who spoke out about the case, and this has become a standard tactic against dissenters. Official climate science does not consist of testing arguments to refute them, but of searching for justifications for an argument given a priori.

Official climate science does not consist of testing arguments in order to refute them, but rather of seeking justifications for a given argument *a priori*.

The gravity of the events surrounding the IPCC *Second Assessment Report* was soon forgotten. An even greater scandal was on the horizon.

In 1998, a group of American scientists led by Michael E. Mann published an article in the journal *Nature* in which they established a correlation between CO2 emissions and the rise in temperatures from the year 1400 until the end of the twentieth century.

The conclusions arrived at in the article were resounding: From the earliest date considered until the dawn of the twentieth century, a practically flat temperature line appeared. However, in the twentieth century, the line abruptly rose. The reason for this break seemed obvious: The Earth is warming due to man-made CO2 emissions.

This graph, commonly known as the "hockey stick" because of its shape, automatically became the symbol of the entire environmental movement. Scientific journals, the media, politicians, NGOs, documentaries, and thousands of popular-science articles were illustrated with this famous graph. Ultimately, in 2001, the hockey stick was adopted and cloaked in a veneer of scientific seriousness, as it was included in the IPCC *Third Assessment Report*. The activists had finally found the graph they had spent years looking for [and that appeared to support their theories]. Unfortunately, it did so because that is what it was designed to do.

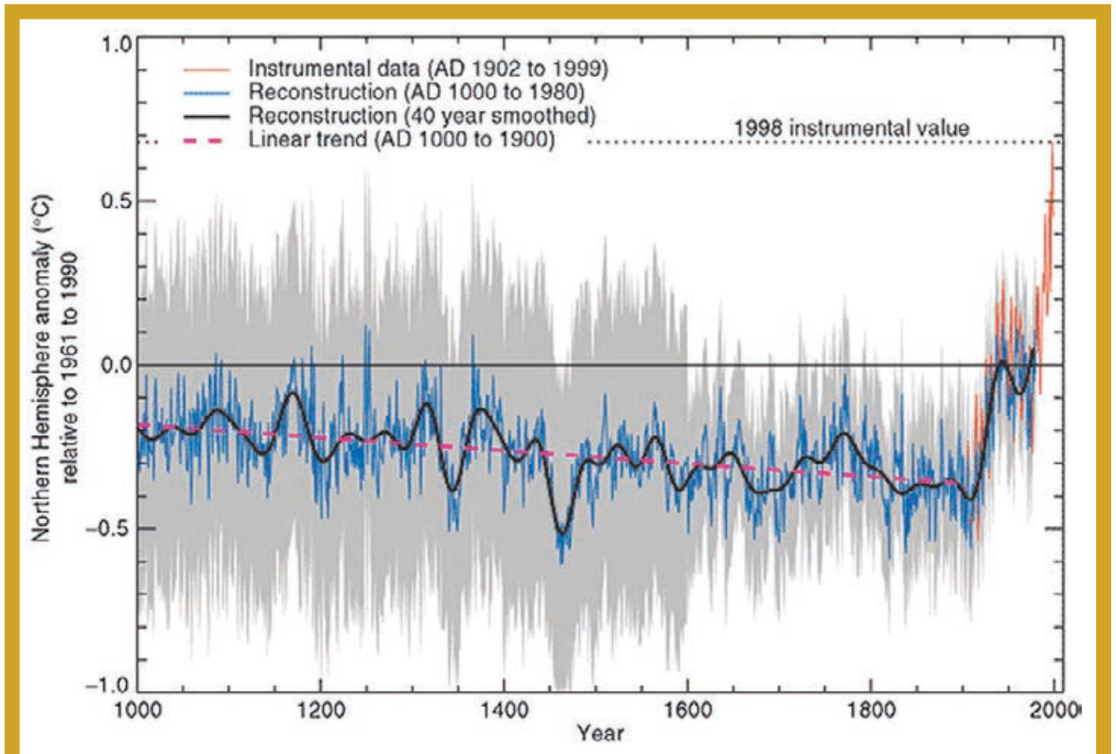


Figure 3. "Hockey stick" graph: temperature anomaly in the Northern Hemisphere.

Everything we knew about past temperatures over the last thousand years was erased at a stroke. Before Mann's graph, not only the scientific evidence, but also the historical and artistic (pictorial and literary) evidence clearly attested to the existence of a Little Ice Age about five hundred years ago and, several hundred years earlier, what is known as the Medieval Warm Period. We knew that, during this period, temperatures higher than those of the present – and higher even than many of the most catastrophic predictions for the future – had been reached. It was not the scientific evidence alone that indicated this. Thousands of historical testimonies, as well as pictorial and literary representations, bear it out. Furthermore, from all of the evidence, one could draw the same conclusion: Mankind advances and progresses during warm periods and suffers and moves backward during cold ones. The IPCC itself, in its first

report, endorsed this graph of historical temperatures over the last thousand years.

Nevertheless, this obvious reality was entirely done away with by the results Mann and his colleagues presented. The change was of such a magnitude that it aroused suspicion. How could we have been so mistaken?

In 2003, the Canadian statistician Stephen McIntyre and the economist Ross McKitrick started to uncover the methodology used to formulate Mann's famous graph. They began by asking him for the original data the group had used. Despite the initial refusal (which was completely inappropriate in the practice of science), they did eventually comply. However, the hesitant and incomplete manner in which they did so suggested no one else had ever requested the data, which reveals the corruption of the peer-review system in the climate field.

With the data in hand, McIntyre and McKitrick not only discovered a truly botched job, methodologically speaking (comparison failures, unjustifiable extrapolations of the source data, localization errors...), but they also found something worse: The errors had not been an accident. Mann and his colleagues had fudged the information so the hockey stick could be maintained.

In this task, they did not hesitate to manipulate and choose the data that most suited them in order to, later, apply a statistical methodology so designed that, as McIntyre and McKitrick demonstrated, it would yield patterns shaped like a hockey stick, even using random data. As if that were not enough, Mann and his colleagues reworked the graph several times, making the temperature of the year 2000 higher and higher in each new version in order to underline the main thesis that the decade of the 1990s was the warmest of the last millennia, and 1998 the warmest year.

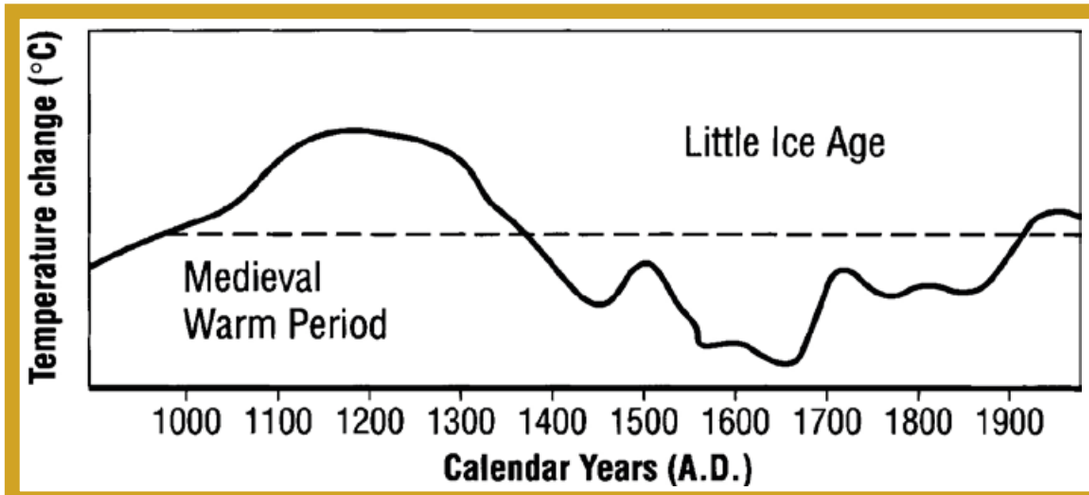


Figure 4. Temperature change over the last thousand years (first IPCC report).

However, the findings of McIntyre and McKitrick fell on deaf ears. The author of the famous graph, Michael E. Mann, continues (as happened before with Ehrlich and Malthus) to enjoy academic prestige today, and his graph is still published right and left, even in the textbooks of our children.

And of course, Al Gore based his famous documentary on the graph. In the film, in one of the scenes with the greatest impact on viewers, Gore himself pretends to need to ride up in an elevator to show the highest point on the hockey stick. Far from recanting when the fraud was uncovered, Gore would proudly accept the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature in 2007. That same year, he and the entire IPCC would receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

The worst thing about these examples of scientific corruption is not the individual cases. Without a doubt, the worst thing is the silence of many in the scientific community, who perhaps fear the terrible consequences speaking out publicly could have. What is more, there is the complicity, if not the initiative, of the IPCC itself, raised up as the official mouthpiece of global climate science.

In 2003, statistician Stephen McIntyre and economist Ross McKitrick began to expose the methodology used to produce Mann's famous hockey stick graph.

Indeed, "climate science" would appear to be governed by its own rules.

Attitudes that in any other scientific field would bring discredit on a researcher have become the norm in the area of climate. Errors that would usually mean general disrepute appear here to be rewarded with greater prestige.

Such is the case with the famous climate models used in each and every IPCC report. These models are designed not only to predict future climate behavior, but also –what is worse– to point out political and economic measures governments all over the world should take. And governments take these models very seriously, though they should not.

The adulteration of the natural sciences with the social sciences (which is increasingly common in IPCC models) offers no improvements and actually ends up ruining both: The scientific method is corrupted, and society is destroyed. The natural sciences cannot prescribe what must be done on a social level. Making scientific analyses the guide of social action, with no thought for the consequences, is far from a virtue and can even be absurd. If we were to enter the data on traffic accidents into a mathematical model, the recommendation, to reduce accidents to zero, might well be to eliminate cars altogether or make the speed limit ridiculously low. It can never be an appropriate decision for politicians to blindly obey science while dooming the very citizens who elected them.

Well, apart from erring in their social proposals, the IPCC climate models are turning out to be a fiasco with respect to their scientific predictions. In 2017, John Christy carried out a well-known comparative study of 102 IPCC models. He contrasted the output of the models with the real temperatures observed between the years 1979 and 2016. The conclusion was clear: The models were failing, and by a large margin. And they always reflected the same bias: All of the climate models (except one) produced temperature estimates much higher than the temperatures actually observed. When the scientific method is applied to the results of the IPCC climate models, specifically to the trends in global atmospheric temperature since 1979 (a key period, due to the indisputable rise in greenhouse gases during those years), the consensus of the models fails, by a significant margin, the test of coinciding with real-world observations. The models simply do not work.

This does not imply an a priori denial of warming. What is does suggest is that these models

are not valid as a guide to action when it comes to taking political and economic measures that affect the well-being and progress of humanity.

Everything having to do with the climate continues to be immensely uncertain, and the vast majority of the data available to us are far from reliable. With this in mind, the scarce reliability of these models can be grasped scientifically. However, precisely because we are aware of the countless reasonable doubts we face, we should act responsibly in terms of using these models to fight against climate change, if that even means anything.

Indeed, to speak of climate change is to speak of something self-evident. The climate is ever-changing by definition, and only statistical manipulation can present the current era as a dangerous exception in the Earth's geological history.

The following graph is quite well known. In it, we see the global temperature deviation beginning in 1850, and a marked increase from 1980 onward stands out. Everything would seem to indicate that something has happened since then, but what does this graph reflect exactly?

Someone could point out, rightly, that we observe a rise of 1.1°C over a period of 120 years and conclude that there has been an increase of 0.09°C per decade. However, there are periods of several decades in which we see very different behavior. For instance, the rate of increase actually doubled that average over the years between 1980 and 2020 (0.2° per decade), and yet the rate was negative over the previous forty years,

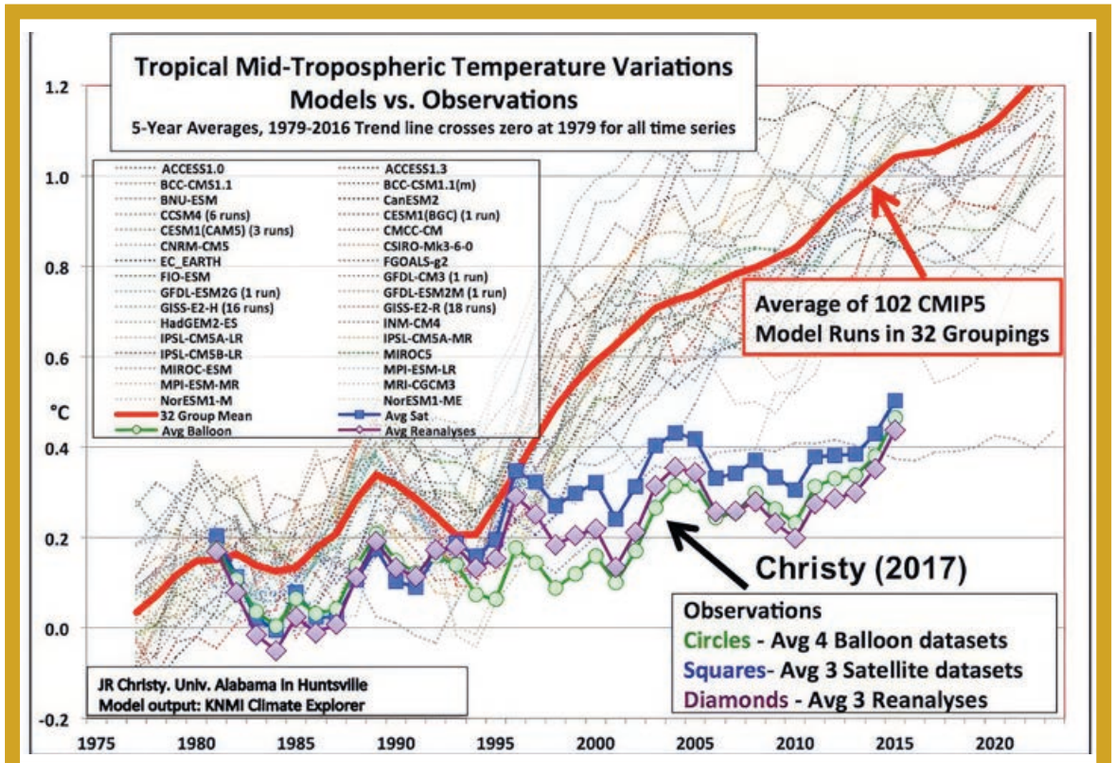


Figure 5. Divergence between predicted climate models and actual observations, from 1979 to 2016.

from 1940 to 1980 (-0.05° per decade). And thirty years earlier, from 1910 to 1940, the rate had also been close to doubling the average of 0.09°C per decade. From this, it follows that trends usually depend greatly on the time interval chosen: One can derive practically any trend, whichever one wishes, depending on the interval one chooses.

If we expanded the graph to the right and focused on the period from 1979 to 2019, really the only interval in which we could say the measurements are precise and global, thanks to modern satellites, we would see that the rise in temperatures in this period (when, incidentally, more CO2 than ever has been released), temperatures have barely risen one-tenth of a degree per decade. Moreover, from 1997 to the present, the trend has remained stable.

Not only was this period, popularly known as "the pause," not anticipated by any of the IPCC climate models, but it also presents an authentic challenge to scientists today: How is it possible that, though more greenhouse gases than ever have been released, the temperature has not shot up in parallel? Why was this disparity also maintained for forty years during the last century (1940-1980), leading the scientific consensus at the time to focus on the fear of an imminent ice age? Indeed, the lack of perspective when examining data can have disastrous effects.

To establish the extent to which human influence is driving global warming, it could be very useful to again expand our above graph, but this time to the left.

Advances in geological science make it possible for us to reconstruct the climate prior to any human influence. This reconstruction must be done using what are called "proxy data." Measurements are determined based on the characteristics of different elements: tree rings, ice, the ocean floor...

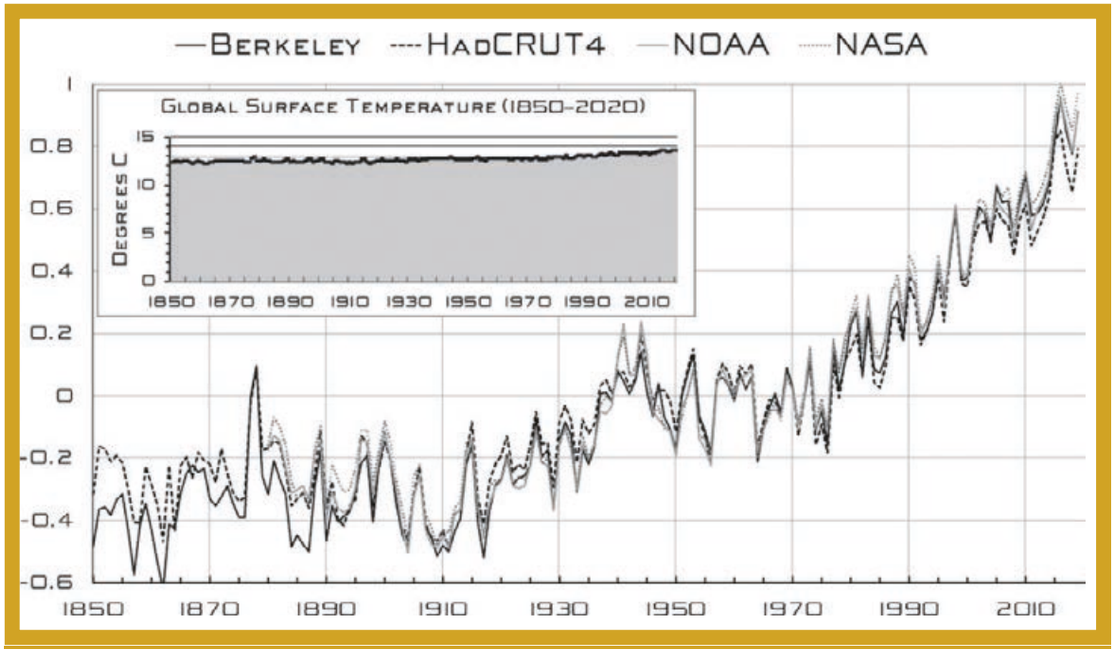


Figure 6. Global temperature deviation (1859 to 2020).

Let us focus on the following graph.

In the panel to the right, we see that the planet has warmed 5°C in the last 20,000 years, when much of the Earth was covered with ice sheets. In fact, our knowledge of history enables us to conclude that the relatively warm and stable temperature of the last 10,000 years has been a key factor in the rapid development of human civilization.

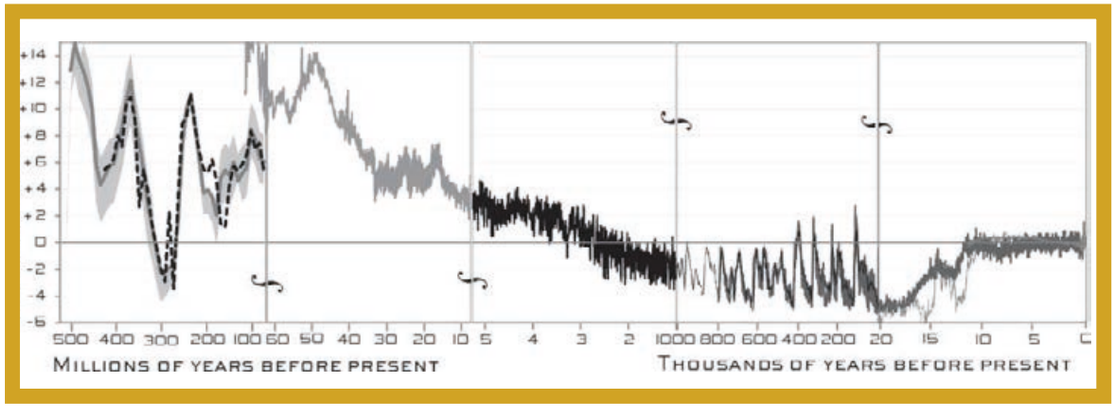
In the next panel, we see alternating periods of rapid warming and slower cooling. At first, every 40,000 years, and after that, every 100,000 years. These changes can be explained by changes in the Earth's orbit around the sun and the tilt of the Earth's axis. We also see that the last warm period before the current one began approximately 127,000 years ago and lasted around 20,000 years. During that period, the temperature rose to 2°C, and the upper ocean warmed to between 2 and 3°C above its current temperature.

Further back in time, we can see much higher temperatures and more abrupt changes.

It is worth noting that, though the time scale of the graph may even disorient us due to its breadth, it covers barely 10 percent of the Earth's history, and human beings did not appear until halfway through the penultimate panel. Among others, there are two clear conclusions to be drawn from this: First, that the climate does not need human influence to change; and second, that the Earth has, without coming to an end, undergone changes far more sudden than those we can imagine.

In any case, variations in the surface temperature and the ocean heat content prior to 1880 do not refute the theory that the rise in global surface temperature of around 1° has been caused by human beings. Nevertheless, these changes leave no room for doubt that the forces of nature are also powerful factors driving the climate. So, the real question is not whether the planet has warmed in recent times, but to what extent the CO2 (and, more specifically, the anthropogenic CO2) is responsible for the warming. And to find this out, we need to be able to determine the impact of the natural factors which affect the climate – something which, at least at present, is completely impossible for us.

Ascertaining how the climate system responds to human influence is a lot like the problem of understanding the relationship between nutrition and weight loss. It is tantamount to trying to infer the affect the daily addition of half a cucumber (around twenty calories – an increase of 1 percent in the average daily intake for an adult, about 2000 calories) would have on a person's weigh loss over an entire year. If we take into account



all the factors that influence diet, and that we are unable to precisely measure many, if not most, an attempt to assess the affect of adding half a cucumber a day would require everything else to remain constant every day, which is practically impossible: energy expended, energy ingested, body regulation...

The problem with man-made CO2 and the climate is that, just as would happen in the cucumber experiment, the rest of the factors do not necessarily remain constant, due to their own nature or to other circumstances.

For example, it is enough to know that there are other human influences, such as the emission of methane and other less abundant gases, which have a warming effect almost equivalent to that of anthropogenic CO2.

Furthermore, not all human influences cause warming. For instance, human-generated aerosols and deforestation increase the Earth's albedo to the point that they cancel out almost half the warming caused by man-made greenhouse gases. Also, we must remember that natural forcings, such as solar variation and volcanic eruptions, exist as well and are able to completely neutralize human influence for months.

All of this gives us a general idea of the number of variables we would have to have absolutely precise knowledge of to calculate the real impact of human influence. Meanwhile, we see that our equation is virtually full of unknowns to clear up. To attempt to convince ourselves that such a task is possible seems rather like madness.

We do know that anthropogenic CO2 plays only a relatively small part in the natural cycle of carbon, which moves between the Earth's crust, the oceans, plants, and the atmosphere. We also know that our contribution to this cycle will continue to grow over the coming decades under any scenario. But these data are insufficient to address the real influence of CO2 on the Earth's temperature.

Despite the threats of Al Gore and his colleagues at the IPCC, if we expand our perspective and consider a geological time scale, as we did with temperature, we see that only once in the geological past (300 million years ago) were atmospheric CO2 levels as low as they are now.

The Earth was formed four and a half billion years ago with a fixed amount of carbon. Today, that amount is distributed, in a variety of forms, throughout the planet in what are called "carbon deposits."

If we look at time on a geological scale, we see that only once, 300 million years ago, were atmospheric CO2 levels as low as they are today.

The Earth's carbon moves between those deposits through the action of powerful natural processes which often transform its chemical composition. The most important of these processes is the one triggered by the action of plant metabolism and photosynthesis, which moves close to one-fourth of the carbon from the surface to the atmosphere and vice versa.

This major yearly cycle is altered by the CO2 that is emitted due to the burning of fossil fuels, since carbon must first be extracted from deep underground. This accounts for around 4.5 percent of the annual carbon flow, approximately half of which is absorbed by the surface (thus causing, among other effects, an increase in vegetation), while the other half remains in the atmosphere (thus increasing its CO2 concentration).

Between the years 1750 and 2019, this concentration rose from 280 to 410 parts per million, and it continues to rise 2.3 parts per million each year. Though most of the current CO2 is natural, it appears evident that the increase in CO2 is due to human activity.

So far, everything seems clear. These are facts we know for certain. The problem is that, as I have already stated, everything we know is dwarfed by the immensity of the climate-related factors we have no knowledge of yet.

When the scientific community tries to go further; when, in fulfilling their duty, scientists venture into the hazy area of doubt, they must do so via speculation and hypotheses. And, to become definitions, these must pass the test of confrontation with reality. Skipping this final step may pose a huge danger to everyone, particularly since those with the highest political authority are encouraging it.

Nowadays, we have become accustomed to confusing speculations with definitions; to the corruption and confusion of the most diverse concepts; and, especially, to the simplification of something as exceedingly complex as the climate.

We can discuss the climate in general terms. But we become totally disoriented the moment we wish to get into the details.

"Climate" is canonically defined as "the average or typical weather conditions of a certain place." It is a synthesis of weather conditions which is derived from long-term statistics on a series of complex elements that are connected in a chaotic manner: temperature, solar radiation, albedo, ocean currents, the action of the clouds... All these elements exert an erratic, dynamic, and simultaneous influence on a massive web of relationships we are incapable of sorting out. There are no linear or stable relationships, by definition. Not only do we not know how all the elements of climate interact with each other, but (and if there is anything we know for certain it is this) we are not even aware of all of them. What is more, we cannot even be sure of understanding well those we are aware of.

In light of this, does it really make sense to jeopardize our current well-being, while thinking that, in doing so, we will be able to master the climate? Are we really in a position to identify fossil fuels as the weapon used in an alleged climate crime?

Does it really make sense to jeopardize our current well-being in the belief that we will be able to control the climate?

There is no room for doubt in the official climate agenda. The United Nations, and, more specifically, its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) were created with a dual original sin: 1) not using science to seek the truth, but creating the science necessary to justify a premise given a priori; and 2) never letting doubt justify the postponement of specific political actions to curb the development of industrialized nations.

From the hockey stick report onward, the IPCC began using in its reports more and more terms suited to the social sciences, such as "sustainable development," which became the great mantra of environmentalism, together with "consensus." Not only are these terms inappropriate to the natural sciences, but they are radically opposed to them.

If we can be sure of anything about natural science, it is that it is not done precisely by consensus. The soundness of the theory of gravity does not depend on a majority vote. Indeed, the history of science shows us that the great truths have always emerged in the face of resistance from the majority. One need only remember Galileo. However, it appears that here also, "climate science" has its own rules: It admits no debate; any who doubt are seen as heretics. Everything is immediately overshadowed by a magical figure: "97 percent of scientists."

Where did that figure come from? It arose from a research paper by John Cook, the conclusion of which was summed up by President Obama himself in 2013: "*Ninety-seven percent of scientists agree: Climate change is real, man-made, and dangerous*." In fact, a summary of the paper literally stated: "*Over 97 percent* [of the papers surveyed] *endorsed the view that the Earth is warming up and human emissions of greenhouse gases are the main cause*." Regardless of the bias in Cook's selection of articles to analyze in his research, if we examine his methodology, we discover that barely 2 percent of them could fall into the category of "explicit endorsement with quantification" (that is, where the authors defend the view that human beings are responsible for at least 50 percent of the warming). Since the 2-percent figure is laughable, Cook created the category of "explicit endorsement without quantification," in which the authors did not state whether human beings were responsible for 1 percent or 100 percent. As if that were not enough, he added a third category, "implicit endorsement," in which he placed all the articles which suggested that humans had some influence on global warming. In this light, one wonders what sort of articles made up the 3 percent that did not fall into any of the above categories.

Here we see one more example of manipulation and, above all, of a mockery of the scientific method. And again, it is not at all a trivial example, since upon it rests the great argument used to immediately shut down any debate on global warming.

Nevertheless, the environmentalist message keeps colliding with the frustrating fact that, though society is constantly bombarded with related propaganda, the message is not getting through. Regardless of its scientific validity, it appears its premises are not accepted in practice.

The constant barrage of environmentalist propaganda fails to sink in. Beyond its scientific validity, it seems that its premises are not accepted in practice.

If they were, governments would not need to resort to (direct or indirect) coercion of their citizens to oblige them to save themselves from the coming apocalypse. Despite the fears with which official environmentalism threatens us, citizens demonstrate in practice that they are unwilling to make any of the extreme sacrifices those in power wish to impose on them. If the case were otherwise, state planning would be unnecessary, as in the past. Let us think about the transition from the horse-drawn carriage or ox cart to the automobile or tractor, or the transition from the sailboat to the steamboat and later to a boat powered by diesel engines. None of these changes was arranged, and yet, each happened naturally. Basically, this may have been due to the fact that these transitions were voluntary and occurred because the new source of energy and the

new form of transportation offered real advantages (subjectively perceived as such) to their potential users.

From these historical examples, we also learn that the absence of state coercion in the process permitted the coexistence of the old techniques, the current ones, and those that were still being developed, thus avoiding the discoordination typical of state interventionism. Moreover, as a result, there was no need to make plans on a gigantic scale to help with the transition, to assist people either in acquiring the new technologies or in abandoning the old ones. Such is not the case at present. A recent poll from the Washington Post (2019) revealed that the vast majority

public. If we focus on the practical data, the 70 percent of emissions mentioned, only 20 percent come from private companies. The rest are the sole responsibility of the very governments trying to spread fear of fossil fuels. Recently, in what was the height of hypocrisy, we saw that, when the international situation pushed up fuel prices, not only did government officials not seize the opportunity to lower emissions, but they rushed to subsidize fuels so people could continue to use them as they normally do.

In practice, all of these facts simply refute the entire narrative that energy transition is irreversible, and they particularly discredit the idea that it is urgent. The paradox is that the main propo-

Each and every one of the agreements, treaties, summits, and international meetings to combat climate change are, in practice, nothing more than empty declarations.

of respondents would not spend more than twenty-four dollars a year to solve a problem they said they were very aware of. Let us recall that green policies already involve an annual cost that varies from thousands to tens of thousands of dollars per person.

But it is not only the citizens who, in practice, reject the arguments of the environmentalists. Still more serious is the hypocrisy of governments themselves. If we really face an existential problem and that problem is reversible, one would expect government officials (ultimately the ones promoting the environmentalist message) to be the first to set an example.

One of the arguments most used to attack capitalism is "*A hundred companies are responsible for 70 percent of global CO2 emissions*." However, when we analyze the list of companies, we get a surprise: Eight of the ten companies responsible for 32.3 percent of total CO2 emissions are

nents of this narrative are, themselves, its principal source of discredit.

Also, does anyone imagine that the major international agreements on the use of nuclear weapons were mere declarations of intentions based simply on voluntary adherence and with no thought of any sanctions in the case of non-compliance? Well, those are the basic pillars of every environmental agreement. Despite the media hype, each and every one of the international agreements, treaties, summits, and meetings to "fight climate change" (which is supposedly going to wipe out not just a country, but the entire planet) consists, in practice, of nothing more than empty statements.

Faced with this problem, the leaders of the environmental movement are clear on the solution: We need a world government able to centralize decisions and impose sanctions on all who do not obey its dictates. This is an obvious solu-

tion in light of the socialist tenets upon which all of the environmental arguments rest. (Remember that the global warming cause offered the perfect excuse – due to its intrinsic characteristics – for bringing this about.) What is more, the creation of a global superstate would be the ultimate ideal of the movement's top leaders.

Nevertheless, this would only worsen the severe consequences that are already arising from the intervention of the different governments. Indeed, as the theory of the impossibility of socialism demonstrates, state intervention results in nothing but discoordination and chaos and is useless for furthering even the state's own interests.

combustion engines more efficient in the future. Factories that produce this type of engine will begin to drastically reduce the twenty-year investments they may have planned and will start to be unable to recover their investment in specialized machinery. Something similar will happen to the refining industry. It will gradually close down and cease to invest in improving the quality of its product and in doing research into products with lower emissions. All investments in improving fossil fuels will gradually be abandoned, given the strict nature of the ban required by the environmental message. And in this way, little by little, every process that might have led to a future with much lower emissions will be given up.

If our planet is truly in danger due to human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, is government intervention really helping to reduce them?

Let us temporarily accept the central argument of official environmentalism: Our planet is in danger due to man-made emissions of greenhouse gases. Can we really say that state interventionism is helping to reduce them?

In their alarmist zeal, those in power usually stress specific time frames to emphasize the urgency of the interventionist measures. When these time frames appear only in propaganda ("Time is running out," "The world will end in five years"...), the most they can do is weaken the message. But when they are incorporated into law, they cause real and irreversible damage.

In especially well-capitalized economies, like those in the West, production processes are very lengthy and take a long time to execute. Since the market anticipates future prices, consequences arise the very moment measures are implemented. For instance, this means the young engineers of today will decide not to research ways to make

We could also mention that interventionist policies are responsible for stimulating excessive production and consumption, which are not based on real saving. When information that should flow freely in the market is discoordinated – mainly in the process of price formation, due to the harmful role of central banks – numerous inefficient and wasteful processes are set in motion, thus, without a doubt, increasing emissions to levels higher than they would have been in a context of free competition.

It is also worth noting that, in the name of going green, environmental policies would stop the immense process of regreening the planet which has taken place in recent years due largely to the fertilization effect of CO2. In the last thirty-five years, the leafiness of plants and trees has increased by an area equal to twice the continental United States. In other words, it is equivalent to covering the entire Australian continent with

plants and trees twice. Contrary to the narrative touted by official environmentalism, wealth and freedom are making it possible to recover a level of vegetation.

Furthermore, there is the fatal conceit of the state in choosing, in a centralized manner – where competition and the free formation of prices are conspicuously absent – the different types of energy with which to sustain the progress of humanity. Clearly, the use of renewable energies of this sort in a context of freedom could be very beneficial in certain circumstances of time, form, and place. But as those circumstances are not being defined in a context of freedom, they can have disastrous environmental consequences, as is, in fact, already occurring. There are numerous examples:

- the death of millions of animals caused by wind turbines and the impact of renewable-energy facilities on ecosystems: Members of a multitude of species of insects, bats, falcons, eagles, owls, and condors ... die by the millions without any hype or widespread scandal.
- the immense quantity of land we would have to devote to the generation of energy: A wind power plant, for instance, requires approximately 450 times as much land as a natural-gas power plant.

The two main courses of action in the face of climate changes are adaptation and mitigation. The state interventionism of governments blindly (and exclusively) chooses the second option, and in so doing, commits two major errors.

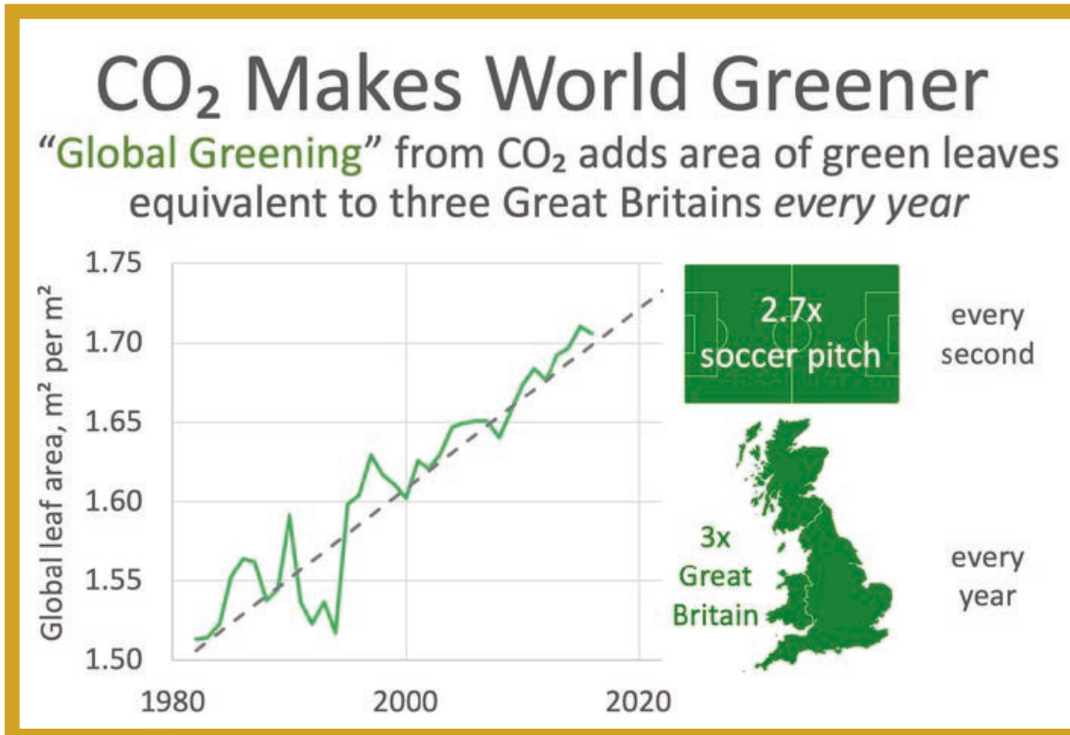


Figure 8. Global greening: CO2 adds three times the area of Great Britain to the planet every year.

First, the very idea that mitigation is possible is an error and is perhaps the worst of the misconceptions which have arisen from the official propaganda of anthropogenic warming. The arrogance of politicians who believe (or say they believe) they can contain the forces of nature based on decrees that impoverish the population is grotesque. And to do so in the name of science is even worse. Their own models are incapable of yielding optimal results. At best, the Paris Agreement will achieve only 1 percent of what the politicians have promised (to limit the rise in temperature to 1.5°C), at a huge cost to citizens in resources.

Second and moreover, by removing this quantity of resources from the market (in the form of money, knowledge, coordination...) governments are obstructing the path of adaptation, which is precisely what we know how to do best.

Government interventionism blindly and exclusively opts for mitigation, thereby making major mistakes.

Human beings have come to be as they are precisely by fighting for survival against climate conditions. A large part of human cognitive development can be traced to our need to develop ingenuity to fight against the elements. One of the keys to discovering capitalist technology was learning to think in the medium and long term, and in large part, that was our survival response to the great natural cycles (seasons, day and night, tides...).

Thanks to capitalism and fossil fuels, human beings have become more independent than ever before from having to think about weather conditions to survive. Never have the day-to-day lives of so few people in the world hinged on heat, cold, or rain. And this is because we have buildings, technology, clothes... which protect us from all of that. Above all, we have more knowledge than ever to help us continue to develop courses of action for dealing with the elements. Well, official environmentalism not only discourages adaptation strategies, but, in the models used to frighten us, it denies these strategies outright: The figures for projected deaths in the grave catastrophes with which proponents try to scare us are obtained only if we take for granted that human beings will be completely unable to adapt to any of the possible outcomes of climate change.

One of the most common ways of arousing fear is to show photomontages depicting cities flooded with water. What we are not told is that mankind solved that problem a long time ago. Currently, 110 million people live "under water" every day. Such is the case with the Netherlands: Large expanses of land, including Schiphol Airport, one of the largest in the world, are literally below sea level at high tide. London is another example. However, no one in the Netherlands, London, or the Mekong Delta needs to swim to get around, because mankind has adapted to the environment and has built dams and flood protection systems. If we achieved that in the past, what might we be capable of in the future?

Well, environmentalists try to convince us that a supposed rise in sea level would cause damages amounting to fourteen billion dollars. Where do they get that figure? Regardless of the dubious scientific validity of the projection of rising sea levels, the estimate is made on the assumption that, when the event occurs, though we will probably be wealthier and have better technologies, all of the endangered countries will insist on taking no adaptation measures, not even

that of copying the old (and successful) technologies that already exist.

Environmentalists apply the same erroneous logic to heatwaves: They assume no one in the supposedly imperiled cities will manage to do something as sensible as buy an air conditioner. This may seem ridiculous, but it is the only way to justify the terrible figures. It was precisely the use of air conditioners that enabled New York to reduce by two thirds the number of heat-related deaths between the 1960s and the 1990s. The same thing happened in France when, in 2003, the French began to install air conditioning in homes for the elderly; heat-related hospitalizations fell drastically.

trol the climate at whim. The only answer is adaptation and development, not stagnation and utopias. The Congo is not more susceptible to disasters than European countries because the climate is racist: Our greater development makes us stronger. That is all. And capitalism does not transform a safe and stable climate into a dangerous one (as maintained by proponents of official environmentalism), but rather makes a naturally volatile and dangerous climate safer and safer for everyone.

Finally, we must focus on the principal contradiction that could arise from energy transition: While its main purpose is to reduce emissions, it could increase them considerably. If a country's

In prosperous countries, we tend to think of fossil fuels in a frivolous way because of the image that their detractors have managed to create.

So, what happens if we expect the population to react as it always has, but with more resources, more wealth, more technology? Fear completely vanishes. And the same is true of each and every one of the natural disasters environmentalists attempt to terrify us with: fires, hurricanes, earthquakes…We have never been as prepared as we are now to cope with them, and they have never harmed us as little as they do now, when weather-related deaths have decreased by 99 percent.

Ultimately, whether or not countries like the Congo are flooded or suffer other types of humanitarian disasters will not depend on the world's implementing sustainable or climate-activist policies. Instead, the well-being of these countries will depend entirely on their economic development. In the same way, one's getting wet or not on rainy days will depend on whether or not one has an umbrella, and not on any capacity to con-

generation of electricity is gas neutral, as in Norway, the transition process will fulfill decarbonization objectives. But if, on the contrary, carbon, fuel, or gas is required to generate electricity, as in China, it could well happen that, in the end, the adoption of supposedly clean technologies like the electric car could ultimately result in higher emissions than before and, at best, the adoption of new technology would be useless.

Even in Europe, there are already cases in which the adoption of renewable energies, far from producing any supposed benefit, is causing a clear regression to more polluting forms of energy. Germany is the textbook case. Engaged in an interventionist energy transition for the last twenty years, in 2025 the country will have spent over 580 billion dollars to generate only 42 percent of its electricity from wind, solar, and biomass power, while relying on natural gas, the

importation of energy from neighboring countries, and the forced return to burning coal (the fossil fuel with the most emissions) as backups. Even so, the country is constantly in danger of blackouts, to the point that the government has even broadcast announcements with tips for surviving them (in Germany!). And all at a staggering cost: Electricity prices have risen by 50 percent since 2007, and in 2019 they were 45 percent higher than the European average. Germany is not an isolated case from which to draw conclusions. In the United States, for instance, there is California, on the cutting edge of "clean energies," and where the price of energy has risen six times as fast as in the rest of the country since 2011.

But, in the end, all of these effects are incidental. The ultimate and sure result of all of these interventionist policies is none other than the widespread impoverishment of the world's population, and especially of the most needy, those to whom, in the name of a better future, we deny,

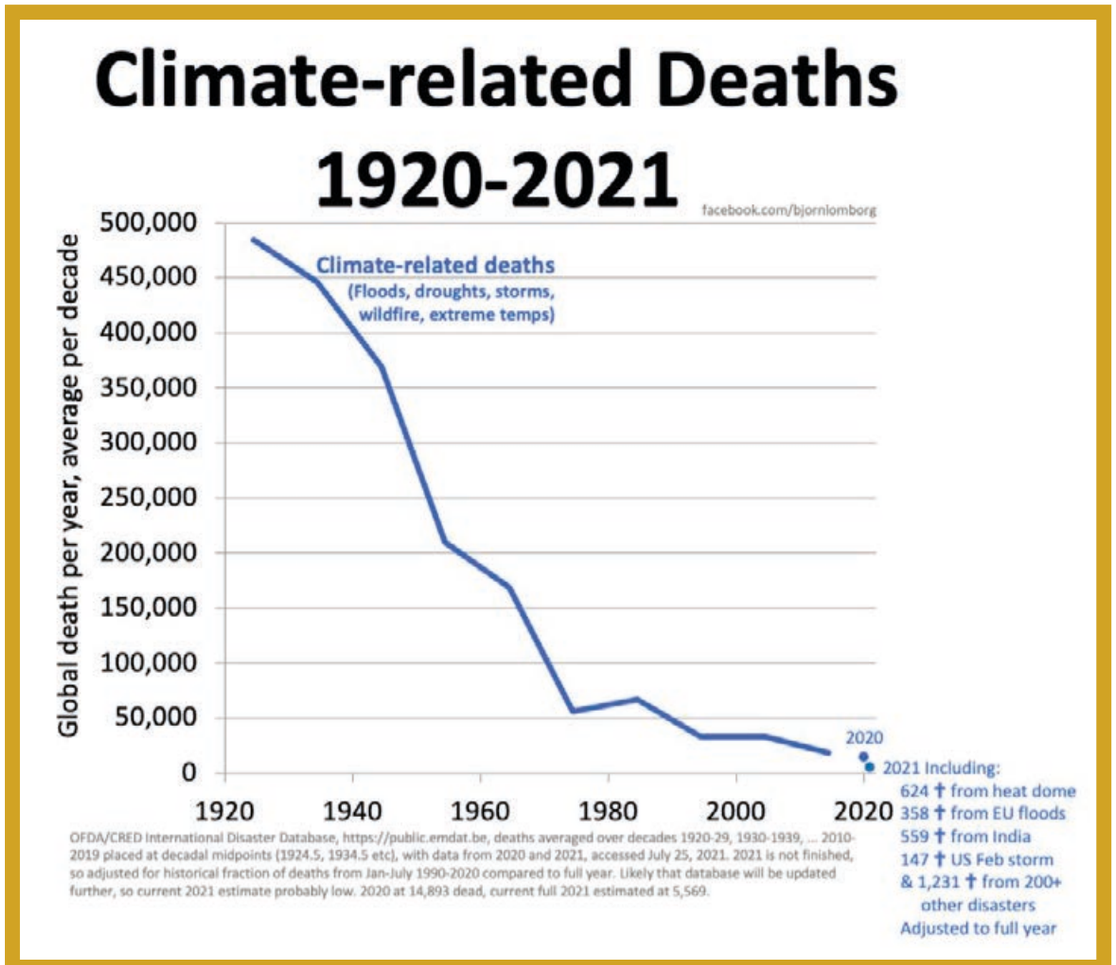


Figure 9. Evolution of weather-related deaths, from 1920 to 2021.

with supreme arrogance, access to the tools responsible for our wealth and well-being: fossil fuels. Indeed, ultimately, fossil fuels are largely responsible for continuing to feed the world's population. The example of Sri Lanka is eye-opening in this respect.

On the advice of the Rockefeller Foundation and numerous committees of scientific and social experts, the President of Sri Lanka, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, promised to transition the country's farming industry to organic agriculture over a period of ten years. In April of 2021, he banned the importation and use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and ordered the country's two million farmers to switch to organic agriculture.

poverty. This is what occurred in Sri Lanka: economic suicide that did away with 30 to 50 percent of the crops within a few months, and with that, put an end to social peace and drove up prices and hunger.

As we see, though a green face appears on the front of the environmental coin, widespread impoverishment is always on the flip side.

With this impoverishment, it would be back to square one for the countries that have finally managed, with enormous effort, to escape from the Malthusian trap and the living conditions that have gripped human beings for most of their history. Improvements in health, life expectancy, literacy, well-being... are not guaranteed. They are the direct result of a specific way of life based on liberty and capitalism. This way of life is underpinned by cheap, dependable, and abundant energy which today can be provided only by fossil fuels. Certainly, in the future, we will use other forms of energy that will offer us more economic and environmental benefits. And no government will have to force us into it. Nuclear fission and fusion are within our reach and point to a future of splendor and abundance (if environmentalism does not prevent it).

Seeking to condemn capitalism or fossil fuels means condemning us all to death and poverty.

The green revolutionaries in the West were so satisfied that they gave Sri Lanka an almost perfect environmental, social, and governance (ESG) rating of 98, much higher than the United States' score of 51.

What were the immediate results of these measures? Well, people who, up to that point, had lived in a prosperous country that exported raw materials came to know poverty and hunger in record time.

In wealthy countries, people tend to have a flippant regard for fossil fuels, thanks to the imagery their critics have managed to instill in society: smoking chimneys lit by evil capitalists. However, their importance goes far beyond that. We owe everything around us to fossil fuels: technology, clothes, hospitals, highways... And above all, at least at present, we owe our food to this type of fuel. Its elimination by decree would send us back to our old and natural condition of extreme

Condemning capitalism and fossil fuels means condemning all of us to poverty and death. Therefore, a particular quantity of conclusive and (by any reckoning) clear evidence is needed.

"Reasonable doubt" is a fundamental concept in civilized legal systems. It refers to the principle according to which a defendant must not be declared guilty unless the evidence against him or her is so convincing that no reasonable doubt remains in the minds of the jury or the judge.

In this case, we have an enormous amount of evidence in favor of both capitalism and fossil fuels. Against them, we have a huge number of exaggerations, deliberately false evidence, and, at best, not entirely well-founded suspicions.

In light of this fact, are we really willing to declare them guilty?

Filming of the documentary. Above, interview with Manuel Fernández Ordóñez, nuclear physicist and member of the Board of the Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty. Below, interview with economist Daniel Lacalle.

Filming of the documentary. Above these lines, the interview with Professor of Economics Jesús Huerta de Soto. Below, the interview with economic journalist Domingo Soriano.

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION, THIS MAGAZINE AND ITS SPANISH AND ENGLISH SUPPLEMENTS

The publisher of *AVANCE de la Libertad* magazine and the supplement you are holding is the Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty (Fundalib), based in Madrid. Since 2015, the Foundation has been working in Spain and internationally for the cause of economic and personal freedom for all human beings. Fundalib is an entity associated with the prestigious Atlas Network, based in Washington, which brings together some 500 pro-freedom think tanks in a hundred countries. It is also a member of European networks such as Epicenter and ELF. The Foundation researches different aspects of freedom in various areas. In particular, it periodically compiles several national and international indices on the state of freedom, including the Regional Tax Competitiveness Index (IACF) and the Economic Freedom Index for Spain's Cities (ILE-CE). The IACF was one of the six finalists for the prestigious Templeton Prize in 2024, and the ILE-CE was awarded the Europe Liberty Award in 2020. Fundalib has won several other awards and distinctions, notably first place in the international think tank competition organized by the European Resource Bank in Chişinau (Moldova) in 2019. The two documentaries produced by the Foundation have been included in the official selection of festivals in the United States and South Korea, and one of them won an international specialized festival (New York, 2023). The Foundation supports various civil society activist organizations and is a top publisher of books on the ideas of freedom. The Foundation's publications are available on the fundalib.org website, including the series of Brief Reports on Current Issues. Since June 2020, the Foundation has been publishing the aforementioned monthly magazine, which provides readers with brief opinion pieces aimed at spreading ideas throughout society. With a classical liberal and libertarian orientation, the magazine covers the entire ideological spectrum from classical liberalism to agorist and ancap positions, as well as objectivist philosophy. Fundalib thus seeks to promote the various families of individualism, aware of the fearsome resurgence of various forms of collectivism in our time, generally through the various populisms that are regaining political ground.

Fundación para el Avance de la Libertad

Since 2021, this magazine of short articles has been complemented by the supplement *Cuadernos para el Avance de la Libertad*. What you are looking at is an English edition of one of those *Cuadernos* (*Papers*). On page 2 of this Paper, readers will find the code and web address to subscribe to the magazine, and on the website there are several other options for joining and supporting Fundalib.

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