

## Debunking Environmental Quackery

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*  
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It's bad enough that liberals worry, but it is worse when they act upon those worries by invoking lame proactive public policies. One of the most lurid examples of such misplaced worries is the modern environmentalist paradigm. Liberal thinking is wrong, mistaken, foul, and often inane. Every postulate of the liberal environmentalist position is not only questionable, but has been rebutted, seriously disputed, or plainly debunked time and again. Yet it still lives on. Liberal environmentalists tell us that the world is hurting. It is overpopulated, poisoned, and decaying due to human misdeeds and greed-induced endeavors. We need to pay homage to mother earth. What they do not realize is that most social and environmental troubles are caused by government failures, and that nearly all of the coming calamities they fear are of the Chicken Little variety.

The late professor Dr. Julian Simon was a champion of optimism and realism. In his tome *The Ultimate Resource 2* (1998), Simon showed that the civilized world has never been cleaner. Pollution is an unavoidable outcome of human interaction and productive activity, but we are getting better all the time at minimizing it. Natural resources abound and are becoming even more abundant and cheaper. There is no shortage of any resource: e.g., oil, lumber, food, copper, etc.—only a short-term lack of technology to efficiently obtain these resources. And the amazing human mind is always coming up with new ways to effectively exploit the natural resources that we need. Noting that the human mind is the most important (and only truly scarce) resource on the planet, Simon contends that the worst thing that we can do is try to limit population growth. We need new, fresh, bright minds. Einsteins, Gates, and Beethovens only come around (perhaps) once every hundred million births or so. So let's engender them. The world has plenty of room and potential for food production for not only 6 billion people but for 10 billion people (or more). Simon has hard data to back up all of his claims. The liberals have no real data and, as a substitute for it, rely on fear-mongering and demagoguery to appeal to their constituency and policymakers.

Simon is not alone. Despite all the liberal media and professors who are profiteering through raising false fears about coming ice ages and worldwide famines (1970s and 1980s), or shams like global warming (1990s and beyond), many scientists and analysts see through the liberal myths. Here are just a few examples of fine books that should be on every thinking man's shelf: (1) the sincere *Eco-Sanity: A Common-Sense Guide to Environmentalism* (Bast, Hill and Rue 1996), (2) the very funny *All the Trouble in the World: The Lighter Side of Overpopulation, Famine, Ecological Disaster, Ethnic Hatred, Plague, and Poverty* (P.J. O'Rourke, 1995), and (3) the scholarly *Global Warming and Other Eco Myths: How the Environmental Movement Uses False Science to Scare Us to Death* (Ronald Bailey, ed., 2002). This third book is a compendium of top-notch scientists and Nobel laureates, who blow away common liberal environmentalist myths, false science, and fears popularized by doomsayers like Al Gore and Paul Ehrlich.

In addition, look at the wealth of policy studies provided by the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Reason Foundation, and the Pacific Research Institute (which also mails out its *Index of Leading Environmental Indicators* to those who request it). All of these think tanks have websites with online viewable archives that will be able to arm the most timid researcher with facts and logic that are sure to dismantle the staunchest of liberal environmentalist quackery. There are many examples of environmentalist falsehood and folly that such organizations uncover. For instance, liberal outcry to protect an endangered species is once used to deprive thousands of people from enjoying the benefits of certain lands, only to find out later that the species in question is not endangered at all. The liberals had a hidden agenda and use a lie to make a policy. Moreover, DDT

is a wonderful pesticide that at one time reduced the incidence of deadly malaria in the Third World to almost nothing. Nevertheless, the false science of the liberal environmentalists brought in a ban on DDT. Now hundreds of thousands of poor people die from malaria each year. Yet, even after such myths and lies are debunked, the bad policies that are based on these errors still remain on the books. Yes, liberal environmentalists fight to retain harmful policies based on lies.

Global warming, overpopulation, and diminishing natural resources (shortages) are myths. They cannot be supported by the data, economic theory, or what we know from the natural sciences. Public policies that support these inane ideas are either based on ignorance and idiocy or are the vicious concoction of liberal fear-mongers who are looking to make a buck (or worship their earth goddess) by promulgating known falsehoods. Even if there were serious calamities on the horizon, government is the worst institution to try to combat them. Liberals have not only failed to recognize genuine environmental problems, they have also chosen a poor champion to alleviate their woes. Market-based solutions are always the best means to deal with social problems. Liberals are consistent at least—consistently wrong—in both their diagnoses and prescription for a cure. Like other forms of quackery, their policy craft brings nothing but misery and inefficiency.