

May 20, 2014

Matthew Continetti brings us back to Abramson v. NYTimes. This piece is a hoot. Reading the New York Times' report on the defenestration of the paper's executive editor, Jill Abramson, and the coronation, at a hastily arranged meeting Wednesday, of her replacement Dean Baquet, I could not escape the feeling that the Soviet press must have covered the comings and goings of Politburo members in much the same way.

There was the strange construction of the headline, "Times Ousts Jill Abramson as Executive Editor, Elevating Dean Baquet," in which the identity of the man behind the ouster, Times owner Arthur Sulzberger Jr., was masked by his institutional affiliation, and in which Baquet was not promoted but—and here the metaphysical tone is intentional—"elevated" to his new position. There were the plodding, ceremonial, and forced statements for public consumption: "I will listen hard, I will be hands on, I will be engaged," Baquet was quoted as telling his new underlings. "I've loved my run at the Times," Abramson was allowed to reveal in a prepared statement.

There was political criticism of the outgoing commissar, made by anonymous sources using the passive voice: "As a leader of the newsroom, she was accused by some of divisiveness and criticized for several of her personnel choices." And there was a hint of samizdat irony smuggled into the article via the closing sentences: "An annual meeting for senior executives at the newspaper had been planned for Thursday and Friday. Ms. Abramson was scheduled to be one its leaders and to deliver a talk Thursday morning, titled 'Our Evolving Newsroom.' The meeting has been canceled." With that Jill Abramson joined the ranks of Zinoviev and Kamenev, becoming, as far as the New York Times is concerned, a nonperson.

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"This is incredibly un-Times-ian," one female staffer told Gabe Sherman. Really? She must not get into the office much.

Jennifer Rubin calls it "conservative schadenfreude."

... there is much for conservatives to enjoy as the liberal media thrash and squirm, caught on the hook of identity politics. Whatever you believe and whichever telling is the truth, it should be a lesson for reporters who reflexively side with everyone with a good yarn about victimhood, for liberals who confuse the Times for their religion and for those who reduce every human encounter to race, gender or sexual orientation. (As an aside the Times recently ran a piece bemoaning the lack of openly gay CEOs at big companies. Before leading a new diversity quest, maybe the Times should see how many openly gay people run media outlets and if there are none, consider if this factual nugget is meaningful.)

Conservatives can enjoy this comedy while it lasts. After they finish ripping each other's reputations to shreds, the liberal media will be back to attacking conservatives in the "war on women," running interference for Democrats and pursuing the next quest to show Justice Sonia Sotomayor had it right in the recent affirmative action case (i.e., American rubes are hopeless bigots). But their pristine image of moral superiority will be a bit blemished and their knee-jerk accusations of bias might just be met met with a tad more skepticism.

One of the world's leading climate scientists has gone over to the dark side and become a warming skeptic. And **Der Spiegel**, who you would have thought would savage him, has a fair interview.

The debate over climate change is often a contentious one, and key players in the discussion only rarely switch sides. But late last month, Lennart Bengtsson, the former director of the Hamburg-based Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, one of the world's leading climate research centers, announced he would join the academic advisory council of the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF).

GWPF, based in Britain, is a non-profit organization and self-described think tank. Conservative politician Nigel Lawson founded the organization in 2009 in order to counteract what he considered to be an exaggerated concern about global warming. The organization uses aggressive information campaigns to pursue its goals.

The lobby group's views markedly differ from those of the UN climate panel, the IPCC, whose reports are the products of the work of hundreds of scientists who classify and analyze vast amounts of climate knowledge accumulated through years of research. The most recent IPCC report states that man-made emissions of greenhouse gases are leading to significant global warming, with serious environmental consequences.

Bengtsson was known for maintaining moderate positions even during the most vitriolic debates over global warming during the 1990s. In an interview with SPIEGEL ONLINE, he discusses why he made the shift to the skeptics' camp. ...

However, Human Events reports Dr. Bengtsson is getting slammed elsewhere.

... The climate change cult is so important to socialist politicians, and so protected by the media, that it survived the massive Climategate scandal, which featured the publication of emails that demonstrated climate scientists were conspiring to suppress inconvenient data. The dirty little secret of the Church of Global Warming is that its apocalyptic warnings are based entirely on computer models that can supposedly predict the future. There is very little empirical evidence to support the notion of man-made climate change, few experiments that claim to prove out any of the key hypotheses linking human activity to disastrous changes in the global environment. Not even the shibboleths taught to schoolchildren about carbon emissions and "greenhouse gas" rest on any conclusive experimental proof. Efforts to "prove" a climate surge due to Twentieth Century industrial technology, such as the famous "hockey stick" graph, have utterly collapsed under sustained inquiry. Everything else is just conjecture based on computer models, which include a variety of assumptions about the interaction of complex forces... and as the intensive data-mining of the past half century moves forward, it becomes increasingly clear that many of those assumptions are dubious, because the climate models have been almost entirely wrong. Nothing predicted in 1980 or 1990 has come to pass. The actual behavior of the real world is overwhelmingly different from what it was supposed to do.

It would be fair to say that the idea of human industrial activity having minimal impact on the planetary climate (or maybe even beneficial impact, if we really are fated for a new Ice Age, which human activity is holding at bay) is also a hypothesis. The issue is whether people should allow themselves to be dominated by politicians and robbed of their livelihoods on the basis of apocalyptic theories that get repeated more loudly and insistently as the science behind them grows weaker. Nobody's calling for an end to climate science... except for the Church of Global Warming, that is.

Which brings us to ClimateGate 2, the new scandal about climate-change cultists using Stalinist tactics to suppress inconvenient data and destroy a "denier," in this case Swedish climatologist Dr. Lennart Bengtsson. Bengtsson declared himself skeptical of climate change dogma and joined a London-based think tank called the Global Warming Policy Foundation, which is not explicitly dedicated to denying either natural or man-made climate change – they're concerned with exaggerated alarmism for political gain.

All hell broke loose as fanatics from the Church of Global Warming came after Bengtsson with a zeal that would make any old-time Inquisitor proud. ...

Steve Hayward of Power Line does a neat job on the "97% climate consensus" canard.

... Where did this 97 percent figure come from? This story has become interesting over the last few days. The most prominent form of it comes from Prof. John Cook of the University of Queensland in a paper published last year that purported to have reviewed over 11,000 climate science articles. Does anyone really believe that Cook and his eight co-authors actually read through all 11,000 articles? Actually, the abstract of the paper supports the point I made above that most papers don't actually deal with what the Climatistas say:

*We find that **66.4% of abstracts expressed no position on AGW** [Anthropogenic Global Warming], 32.6% endorsed AGW, 0.7% rejected AGW and 0.3% were uncertain about the cause of global warming. Among abstracts expressing a position on AGW, 97.1% endorsed the consensus position that humans are causing global warming. [Emphasis added.]*

Pause here and note that it is odd to see that some folks apparently haven't gotten the memo that you're not supposed to call it "global warming"—"climate change" is the term of art now. Anyway, to continue, read this slowly and carefully:

Among abstracts expressing a position on AGW, 97.1% endorsed the consensus position that humans are causing global warming. In a second phase of this study, we invited authors to rate their own papers. Compared to abstract ratings, a smaller percentage of self-rated papers expressed no position on AGW (35.5%). Among self-rated papers expressing a position on AGW, 97.2% endorsed the consensus.

Let's translate: Among the one-third of papers that "endorse" the "consensus," there is near unanimity. In other words, among people who agree with the consensus, nearly all of them agree with the consensus. Again—the only mystery here is that the number isn't 100 percent. Perhaps this would have been too embarrassing to report, like a North Korean election. For this exercise all climate scientists may as well be called named Kim Jong Il. ...

Bad news. A study shows there are no health benefits from consuming red wine and chocolate. However, [Instapundit](#) says until confirmed by more studies, he'll keep drinking lots of red wine. The story comes from [HNGN News](#). No. Never heard of them. You figure it out. We report. You decide.

Free Beacon

[The Bonfire of the Inanities](#)

The New York Times Devours Itself

by Matthew Continetti

Reading the *New York Times'* [report](#) on the defenestration of the paper's executive editor, Jill Abramson, and the coronation, at a hastily arranged meeting Wednesday, of her replacement Dean Baquet, I could not escape the feeling that the Soviet press must have covered the comings and goings of Politburo members in much the same way.

There was the strange construction of the headline, "Times Ousts Jill Abramson as Executive Editor, Elevating Dean Baquet," in which the identity of the man behind the ouster, *Times* owner Arthur Sulzberger Jr., was masked by his institutional affiliation, and in which Baquet was not promoted but—and here the metaphysical tone is intentional—"elevated" to his new position. There were the plodding, ceremonial, and forced statements for public consumption: "I will listen hard, I will be hands on, I will be engaged," Baquet was quoted as telling his new underlings. "I've loved my run at the *Times*," Abramson was allowed to reveal in a prepared statement.

There was political criticism of the outgoing commissar, made by anonymous sources using the passive voice: “As a leader of the newsroom, she was accused by some of divisiveness and criticized for several of her personnel choices.” And there was a hint of samizdat irony smuggled into the article via the closing sentences: “An annual meeting for senior executives at the newspaper had been planned for Thursday and Friday. Ms. Abramson was scheduled to be one its leaders and to deliver a talk Thursday morning, titled ‘Our Evolving Newsroom.’ The meeting has been canceled.” With that Jill Abramson joined the ranks of Zinoviev and Kamenev, becoming, as far as the *New York Times* is concerned, a nonperson.

But still a dangerous one. For on Wednesday evening Abramson’s allies, under cover of anonymous quotations in a report by the *New Yorker’s* Ken Auletta, accused the *Times* of not paying its former editor an equal wage. Leveling the charge of sexism at a bastion of liberalism such as the *Times* is an incendiary act, and Sulzberger, in a memo to staff obtained by *Politico*, said, “It is simply not true.” Ira Stoll, whose smartertimes.com is an indispensable companion for *Times* readers, rejected that claim, noting that the “increased cost of employer-provided health insurance (up way more than 10 percent over 3 years)” would erase any nominal advantage Abramson’s salary might have had over Keller’s. And Leslie Bennetts, who left the *Times* in 1988, told former State Department employee Ronan Farrow on Thursday that “salary discrimination is endemic” at the paper.

What makes the story so enjoyable, on the most superficial level, is its lurid combination of identity politics—Abramson was the first female editor of the *Times*, and Baquet is its first African-American editor—and liberal hypocrisy. Equal pay has been one of the rallying cries of the American left, a category that very much includes the *New York Times*, and the possibility of sexism at the paper is rich indeed. But I have to say I am less interested in equal wages, in comparable worth, and in what the *New Yorker* calls the “inescapably gendered aspect” of the *Times’* latest scandal than I am in how that scandal confirms one of my pet theories. The theory is this: The men and women who own and operate and produce every day the world’s most important newspaper are basically children.

This is the same *New York Times* that in 2003 admitted, in a multi-thousand-word correction, that it had been harboring, for reasons of political correctness, a serial fabulist who created tales and characters out of imaginative reverie and had seen these fictions published on the front page. This is the same *New York Times* that in 2005 fired its former Baghdad bureau chief after the paper’s management discovered that she had been emailing the wives of two foreign correspondents to say that they were having affairs. This is the same *New York Times* whose staffers are engaged in a “semi-open revolt” against op-ed and editorial page editor Andrew Rosenthal, a “semi-open” rebellion in which propaganda by the deed consists of not sitting at Rosenthal’s lunch table. And yet this is the same *New York Times* that day after day, in article after article, instructs its readers, and the country, in how to think, how to vote, what to eat, what to wear, who is in, who is out, what is doubleplus, and what is crimethink. The gall.

Gossipy, catty, insular, cliquy, stressful, immature, cowardly, moody, underhanded, spiteful—the *New York Times* gives new meaning to the term “hostile workplace.” What has been said of the press—that it wields power without any sense of responsibility—is also a fair enough description of the young adult. And it is to high school, I think, that the *New York Times* is most aptly compared. The coverage of the Abramson firing reads at times like the plot of an episode

of *Saved By the Bell* minus the sex: Someone always has a crazy idea, everyone's feelings are always hurt, apologies and reconciliations are made and quickly sundered, confrontations are the subject of intense planning and preparation, and authority figures are youth-oriented, well-intentioned, bumbling, and inept.

We learn, through anonymous sources, that Abramson was offended by something Sulzberger did or said during a meeting in the spring of 2010. But she did not confront him. "Jill went to Janet and told Janet she had enough of Arthur and had an offer to go. Janet patched things up." We learn that Sulzberger did not like all of the attention his first woman editor was getting, that he lost faith in her when she gave an interview to Alec Baldwin on WNYC in February of last year (one wonders what Baldwin's comment to this story might be).

Sulzberger never confronted Abramson. "At one point, Sulzberger went to the *Times* PR department and asked an executive when Abramson was going to stop doing interviews," reports Gabriel Sherman. We learn that when Sulzberger hired Mark Thompson, a BBC executive, as the company's CEO, Abramson went behind his back and assigned reporter Matthew Purdy to travel to London and investigate whether Thompson had been involved in the Beeb's Jimmy Savile pedophilia scandal. When he learned about this, Sulzberger was not happy. "He was livid," a source told Sherman, "in a very passive-aggressive way."

Reflect on that description for a moment. Sulzberger was not livid in a "passive" way—which seems to be impossible under most common definitions of "livid"—nor was he livid in an "aggressive" way. He was livid in a "passive-aggressive" way, which probably means he fumed about the matter to his allies while playing nice for the cameras and for Abramson. Maybe Carlos Slim, the Mexican oligarch who owns slightly under a fifth of the *Times* company, walked Sulzberger back from acting hastily.

Why was Jill Abramson fired? The answer provided by the *Times* itself is less than satisfactory: "People in the company briefed on the situation described serious tension in her relationship with Mr. Sulzberger, who was concerned about complaints from employees that she was polarizing and mercurial." That much seems clear. Another childish decision on Abramson's part—attempting to hire a co-managing editor from the left-wing *Guardian* without bothering to inform Baquet—may have been the catalyst for her removal. It is impossible to say.

"It was just a lot of accumulated backbiting," a source told Sherman. That quote, said former *Times* media reporter Brian Stelter, now a television host for CNN, "rings truest." And Abramson seems to have done as much of the biting as Baquet or Sulzberger or any number of *Times* staffers. It is hard to have much sympathy for her: A native of the Upper West Side whose parents were devoted supporters of Adlai Stevenson (better Stevenson, I suppose, than Henry Wallace), Abramson liked to say that, growing up, the *Times* "was our religion." Now comes the crisis of faith.

The details of her biography make Abramson seem less like the ideal editor of the *Times* than its ideal reader. Her family had not one but two copies of the paper delivered to their Central Park West apartment. Abramson graduated from the progressive and modish Ethical Culture School and from Harvard. During the summer of Chappaquiddick she was working in a cheese shop while vacationing with her family on Nantucket.

Abramson got her start on Democratic campaigns and in writing copy for Democratic advertisements, returning to journalism in 1980 via NBC and Steven Brill's *The American Lawyer*. From there she went to the *Wall Street Journal* before settling in at the *Times*. Named to the top job in 2011, she quickly came to embody the weaknesses of liberalism in power—the best of intentions, the worst of results.

She is an odd duck. A recent photo posted to Twitter shows her flashing the peace sign while hitching a ride on a pickup truck at South By Southwest. Another photo, released after her dismissal, shows her working out some aggression by boxing. She comes across as a bobo pretender, one of those aging boomers who tries to stay “with it” by playing to the Millennial crowd. Profiling Abramson last year, the *New Yorker* observed, “The first thing that people usually notice about Jill Abramson is her voice,” describing it as “the equivalent of a nasal car honk.” One of Abramson’s friends said the affect “probably had something to do with trying to sound a bit like Bob Dylan.” Never before have I encountered a human being who wanted to sound like Bob Dylan.

Nor is it exactly common for 60-year-olds to get tattoos. Abramson has three: one of a subway token, one of an “H” to represent both Harvard and her husband, and one of her former newspaper’s famous gothic “T.” Somewhere in Manhattan, a tattoo-removal parlor is about to get a customer.

Another strike against Abramson is her friendship with the *New Yorker*’s Jane Mayer, who has made a career out of writing partisan and misleading hit pieces that target conservatives. The two wrote an anti-Clarence Thomas book when that was the fashionable issue of the left. “She works incredibly hard, holds everyone including herself to the highest standards, and is a forceful and fearless advocate,” Mayer told the *Times*. I laughed out loud when I read that last sentence because, in the matter of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Abramson has shown herself to be forceless and quite full of fear.

When Brandeis University revoked an honorary degree it was planning to award Hirsi Ali, I asked Alana Goodman to email Abramson, who is also scheduled to receive an honor from Brandeis, for her reaction. Abramson told Goodman she would not comment on the story because it was being covered by the *Times*—an outright and scurrilous dodge, considering that, as Arthur Sulzberger will no doubt tell you, there are few political or professional issues on which Jill Abramson has been unwilling to share her opinion. Hirsi Ali is the one woman Abramson will not “lean in” to defend.

And yet I have to admit that as I read more about the reasons for her dismissal I developed a grudging respect for Abramson. One of her pet peeves was online video of two reporters discussing their own work. “She thought there is nothing more boring than two print people talking in front of a camera about a story you can read in a minute.” I cannot agree more. Abramson also had qualms about incorporating native advertising into the *Times* website—an appropriate concern, it seems to me, considering the *Times*’ tradition of being the media’s fuddy-duddy, the boring old Gray Lady.

As a daily reader of the paper I also agreed with Abramson’s assessment when she told Dean Baquet that some of the articles he was putting on the front page were boring. My only quibble

is with her use of the word “some.” Editor’s prerogative, one would think, to critique the work of subordinates. Baquet’s response was to punch a wall.

Sulzberger may soon find that Baquet has his own “issues” with authority. His previous employer, the *Los Angeles Times*, pushed him out when he protested cuts to the newsroom. Those cuts were necessary due to the changing finances—which is to say, lack of finances—of America’s newspapers. The coming weeks may reveal that it was Abramson’s resistance to all of the fancy products and instruments that the *Times* is planning to use to charge subscribers more for the same liberal conventional wisdom, rather than her weirdness and Queen-of-Hearts management style, that spurred Sulzberger’s decision to fire her. Not even identity politics can withstand the crush of money, the global flow of capital. Leave it to Sulzberger, though, to execute that firing in a haphazard and immature and rather embarrassing way.

“This is incredibly un-*Times*-ian,” one female staffer told Gabe Sherman. Really? She must not get into the office much.

Right Turn

[New York Times v. Abramson: Conservative Schadenfreude overload](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

It is almost as if Karl Rove secretly took over the New York Times for sheer delight in mocking liberals. If so, he really is the mad genius whom liberals fear. The New York Times-Jill Abramson story, more like a farce, has become something only conservatives could dream up.

Consider the following scenario: The most revered liberal media outlet in the country fires its first woman executive editor. Then this bastion of gender politics and wage-gap obsession is accused of firing her in retaliation for her complaints that she was paid less than males who have held the job. Liberal media pundits buy this hook, line and sinker and viciously turn on the Times. The Times is outraged, sputtering mad that an aggrieved ex-employee should make such a scurrilous charge. There are explanations, context and nuance in these cases, the Times discovers — and besides, aggrieved ex-employees will make up all kinds of excuses to explain their terminations. (Defense attorneys everywhere nod, knowingly.)

Finally, the Times, in a fit of pique, lets it rip. She was the boss from hell in [their telling](#). And then they dump the story in [Politico’s lap](#). According to the Times she deceived her boss on a key hiring move, prompting a key co-worker (now her successor) to threaten to quit.

According to the Times, their colleagues in the liberal media are a bunch of rumor-mongering saps who are prone to accept any accusation of gender bias as the gospel truth; their iconic ex-editor who became a role model for women in journalism is, well according to the Times, a liar playing victim to disguise her own dishonesty. If a conservative is a liberal who’s been mugged, perhaps a responsible newspaper is a liberal one that got smeared in the gender-victim game. But don’t get your hopes up that the Times, editorially speaking, will address gender bias with a more skepticism. Compartmentalization is essential for ideologues (too many messy facts!).

The Times may have it wrong, of course. In Jill Abramson’s version (via her leak to the New Yorker and then her fans in MSM-land) she was tough and accomplished, vilified for the same behavior tolerated in men. She too was a victim of gender bias and like Joan of Arc was burned

by the Times, a martyr to her cause. Lying? Bullying? What a bit of nonsense, she would claim. But here too the irony is palpable. She co-authored a book and rose to fame on her demonization of now-Justice Clarence Thomas. Could it be that powerful people's slight flaws and occasional behavior gets exaggerated, magnified and distorted in the retelling so they become in the public eye someone barely recognizable to them and those who know them best?

Either way, there is much for conservatives to enjoy as the liberal media thrash and squirm, caught on the hook of identity politics. Whatever you believe and whichever telling is the truth, it should be a lesson for reporters who reflexively side with everyone with a good yarn about victimhood, for liberals who confuse the Times for their religion and for those who reduce every human encounter to race, gender or sexual orientation. (As an aside the Times recently ran a piece bemoaning the lack of [openly gay CEOs at big companies](#). Before leading a new diversity quest, maybe the Times should see how many openly gay people run media outlets and if there are none, consider if this factual nugget is meaningful.)

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Der Spiegel

[Climate Change Debate: A Famous Scientist Becomes a Skeptic](#)

Meteorologist Lennart Bengtsson has long been considered a cool head in the often heated conflict over global warming. In an interview, he defends his decision to join an organization that is skeptical of climate change.

by Axel Bojanowski

The debate over climate change is often a contentious one, and key players in the discussion only rarely switch sides. But late last month, Lennart Bengtsson, the former director of the Hamburg-based Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, one of the world's leading climate research centers, announced he would join the academic advisory council of the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF).

GWPF, based in Britain, is a non-profit organization and self-described think tank. Conservative politician Nigel Lawson founded the organization in 2009 in order to counteract what he considered to be an exaggerated concern about global warming. The organization uses aggressive information campaigns to pursue its goals.

The lobby group's views markedly differ from those of the UN climate panel, the IPCC, whose reports are the products of the work of hundreds of scientists who classify and analyze vast amounts of climate knowledge accumulated through years of research. The most recent IPCC report states that man-made emissions of greenhouse gases are leading to significant global warming, with serious environmental consequences.

Bengtsson was known for maintaining moderate positions even during the most vitriolic debates over global warming during the 1990s. In an interview with SPIEGEL ONLINE, he discusses why he made the shift to the skeptics' camp.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: Mr. Bengtsson, why did you decide to join the Global Warming Policy Foundation, an organization known for its skepticism about climate change?

Bengtsson: It is important to allow a broad debate on energy and climate. We must urgently explore realistic ways to address the different scientific, technical and economic challenges in solving the world's energy problems and the associated environmental issues.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: Why do you think the GWPF is particularly suitable for that goal?

Bengtsson: Most of the members of GWPF are economists and this is an opportunity for me to learn from some of these highly qualified members who are active in areas outside my own expertise. At the same time, it will allow me to contribute by my own meteorological knowledge, to broaden the debate.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: The people at GWPF don't exactly have a reputation for reconsidering their opinions. Have you become a so-called climate skeptic?

Bengtsson: I have always been a skeptic and I believe this is what most scientists really are.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: But weren't you one of the alarmists 20 years ago? Do you think your position at that time was wrong?

Bengtsson: I have not changed my view on a fundamental level. I have never seen myself as an alarmist but rather as a scientist with a critical viewpoint, and in that sense I have always been a skeptic. I have devoted most of my career to developing models for predicting the weather, and in doing so I have learned the importance of validating forecasts against observed weather. As a result, that's an approach I strongly favor for "climate predictions." It's essential to validate model results, especially when dealing with complex systems such as the climate. It's essential do so properly if such predictions are to be considered credible.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: You think there's a need for climate research to do some catching up in this regard?

Bengtsson: It is frustrating that climate science is not able to validate their simulations correctly. Since the end of the 20th century, the warming of the Earth has been much weaker than what climate models show.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: But the IPCC report discusses these problems in detail.

Bengtsson: Yes, the scientific report does this but, at least in my view, not critically enough. It does not bring up the large difference between observational results and model simulations. I have full respect for the scientific work behind the IPCC reports but I do not appreciate the need for consensus. It is important, and I will say essential, that society and the political community is also made aware of areas where consensus does not exist. To aim for a simplistic course of action in an area that is as complex and as incompletely understood as the climate system does not make sense at all in my opinion.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: In the past, you have complained about what you described as a strong tendency towards politicization in climate research. Why have you now joined an organization that is inherently political in nature?

Bengtsson: Throughout my life, I have been fascinated by predictability and frustrated by our inability to predict. I don't believe it makes sense for our generation to believe or pretend that we can solve the problems of the future because do not understand what these problems will be. Just do this thought experiment: Imagine you're in month of May 1914, and try to work out a plan of action for the next 100 years! Hardly anything will make sense.

SPIEGEL ONLINE: So do you suggest we should carry on with business as usual just because forecasts are complicated?

Bengtsson: No. I think the best and perhaps only sensible policy for the future is to prepare society for change and be prepared to adjust. In 25 years, we'll have a world with some 9 to 10 billion people that will require twice as much primary energy as today. We must embrace new science and technology in a more positive way than we presently do in Europe. This includes, for example, nuclear energy and genetic food production to provide the world what it urgently needs.

Human Events

[The new Climategate scandal](#)

by John Hayward



Science is all about testing hypotheses with real-world data. "Climate change" is *not science*. It started as an outright scam, an alarmist creed field-tested through various incarnations that sounded scary and indicted human activity, for the purpose of pulling down bigger research grants. Version 1.0, the "new Ice Age" global cooling scare of the Seventies, had the most actual science associated with it – we might indeed be heading into a new Ice Age – but it couldn't be tied to human activity, and it was too difficult to frighten people in most of the Western world with the image of a gradual temperature reduction. "Global warming," in which smokestacks people could easily see were going to rip open the ozone layer and wipe out coastal cities with apocalyptic floods, sold better, but alas it was too *specific*, too easily disproved... so we got "climate change," and when it turned out the climate hasn't really been changing much over the past two decades, the final devolution to "climate disruption" was rolled out this year. "Climate disruption" is perfect, because it's literally *impossible* to disprove – no matter what happens, even if nothing very much happens, the con artists can claim human industry is severely disrupting the ordinary processes of nature.

Along the way, "climate change" metastasized into a malignant intellectual cancer, as it became infused with big-dollar politics. Socialist politicians realized it was the perfect vehicle for unlimited centralized power. Oppose their agenda and you want to murder the Earth!

"Climate change" also provides an intellectual framework for hysterical fantasy, because its adherents – including a number of heavily credentialed scientists – are willing to either actively or passively endorse all sorts of alarmist nonsense pumped out by their pop-culture allies. They justify this by saying that it's important to "raise awareness," so even the most absurd, anti-scientific doomsday horror story is defensible. This, again, is contrary to the principles of science, which relies upon *clarity* and *honesty*. Committed scientists don't look at some Hollywood director's pile of 99 percent absurd claptrap, shrug, and say "What the heck, close enough... as long as it gets people talking about global warming, it's all good."

As time went on, and actual *data* turned more and more against it, climate change became more an example of bad politics than bad science. It's a full-blown fanatical cult now, using thug tactics to silence dissent and intimidate critics into line. The level of pressure brought to bear against "deniers" in the scientific community is *enormous*. All of my life, the scientific community has told itself stories about closed-minded fanatics suppressing inquisitive minds and crushing dangerous ideas in the Middle Ages. The Church of Global Warming has become a perfect example of what scientists in my youth despised.

The climate change cult is so important to socialist politicians, and so protected by the media, that it survived the massive Climategate scandal, which featured the publication of emails that demonstrated climate scientists were conspiring to suppress inconvenient data. The dirty little secret of the Church of Global Warming is that its apocalyptic warnings are based entirely on computer models that can supposedly predict the future. There is very little empirical evidence to support the notion of *man-made* climate change, few experiments that claim to prove out any of the key hypotheses linking human activity to disastrous changes in the global environment. Not even the shibboleths taught to schoolchildren about carbon emissions and "greenhouse gas" rest on any conclusive experimental proof. Efforts to "prove" a climate surge due to Twentieth Century industrial technology, such as the famous "hockey stick" graph, have utterly collapsed under sustained inquiry. Everything else is just conjecture based on computer models, which include a variety of assumptions about the interaction of complex forces... and as the intensive data-mining of the past half century moves forward, it becomes increasingly clear that many of those assumptions are dubious, because the climate models have been almost

entirely *wrong*. Nothing predicted in 1980 or 1990 has come to pass. The actual behavior of the real world is overwhelmingly different from what it was supposed to do.

It would be fair to say that the idea of human industrial activity having minimal impact on the planetary climate (or maybe even *beneficial* impact, if we really are fated for a new Ice Age, which human activity is holding at bay) is also a hypothesis. The issue is whether people should allow themselves to be dominated by politicians and robbed of their livelihoods on the basis of apocalyptic theories that get repeated more loudly and insistently as the science behind them grows weaker. Nobody's calling for an end to climate science... except for the Church of Global Warming, that is.

Which brings us to ClimateGate 2, the new scandal about climate-change cultists using Stalinist tactics to suppress inconvenient data and destroy a "denier," in this case Swedish climatologist Dr. Lennart Bengtsson. Bengtsson declared himself skeptical of climate change dogma and joined a London-based think tank called the Global Warming Policy Foundation, which is not explicitly dedicated to denying either natural or man-made climate change – they're concerned with exaggerated alarmism for political gain.

All hell broke loose as fanatics from the Church of Global Warming came after Bengtsson with a zeal that would make any old-time Inquisitor proud. Bengtsson's stature in the meteorological community – particularly with respect to those computer models, in which field he was considered a pioneer – made him more of a target, rather than affording him any protection.

Bengtsson was forced to resign from his advisory capacity at the GWPF after just one month... and [spoke of McCarthyism](#) in his resignation letter:

I have been put under such an enormous group pressure in recent days from all over the world that has become virtually unbearable to me. If this is going to continue I will be unable to conduct my normal work and will even start to worry about my health and safety. I see therefore no other way out therefore than resigning from GWPF. I had not expecting such an enormous world-wide pressure put at me from a community that I have been close to all my active life. Colleagues are withdrawing their support, other colleagues are withdrawing from joint authorship etc. I see no limit and end to what will happen.

It is a situation that reminds me about the time of McCarthy. I would never have expecting anything similar in such an original peaceful community as meteorology. Apparently it has been transformed in recent years. Under these situation I will be unable to contribute positively to the work of GWPF and consequently therefore I believe it is the best for me to reverse my decision to join its Board at the earliest possible time.

The surprising thing is that his treatment came as a surprise to him. Has he really been unaware, until now, of the way climate change "science" has degenerated into a feral cult? How could he have so thoroughly underestimated the threat his shift to skepticism – which he clearly regarded as a fairly modest adjustment, saying in various interviews that he's always considered himself skeptical, as every good scientist should – would pose to the fanatics, and the political interests who both fund them and profit from them?

What turns this into a full-blown Climategate 2 scandal is that Bengtsson says he wasn't just personally attacked – his research was suppressed as well. As the [UK Telegraph](#) reports, he "believes a paper he co-authored was deliberately suppressed from publication in a leading

journal because of an intolerance of dissenting views about climate change by scientists who peer-reviewed the work.”

“The problem we have now in the scientific community is that some scientists are mixing up their scientific role with that of climate activist,” he told the Times.

Professor Bengtsson claims a scientist advised that the paper, which challenged findings that global temperature would increase by 4.5C if greenhouse gases were to double, should not be published in a respected journal because it was “less than helpful.”

The unnamed scientist, who was asked to peer review Professor Bengtsson’s paper, said in his comments: “Actually it is harmful as it opens the door for oversimplified claims of ‘errors’ and worse from the climate sceptics side.”

The paper, co-authored with four other scientists, challenged the findings of the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) but was rejected by Environmental Research Letters published by the Institute of Physics, one of the most highly regarded journals in the area.

And Bengtsson wasn’t even calling total B.S. on the sacred dogmas of the Church of Global Warming. He merely wondered if the rate of potential climate change due to greenhouse-gas emissions might be considerably less than previously supposed. He didn’t offer a definitive answer to the question – he wanted more work to be done in the field.

But even that level of modest scientific skepticism was too much for the climate change cult, which is keenly aware that its power is slipping, and cannot afford to have skeptical taxpayers asking uncomfortable questions... or give young up-and-coming scientists the idea that disagreement with the ayatollahs of man-made climate change is acceptable.

What is the proper term for describing an idea so fragile that it cannot survive even the most restrained intellectual challenge? Not “science,” that’s for damn certain.

Power Line

[Breaking: The “97 Percent Climate Consensus” Canard](#)

by Steven Hayward

TV watchers will recall the familiar advertising trope of yesteryear in which we were told “4 out of 5 dentists [or doctors] recommend” using fluoride toothpaste, aspirin for headaches, or some such. We were always left to wonder whether that fifth doctor was a moron or something, never pausing to consider that the fifth doctor might well recommend the same thing, but emphasize something else first (like flossing perhaps, or Tylenol instead of aspirin because of sensitive stomachs, etc). But Archie Bunker was coming back on the air in 30 seconds, so most of us didn’t follow up on these puzzles.

Likewise we ought to wonder about the favorite cliché of the Climatistas these days—that “[97 percent of scientists ‘believe in’ climate change](#).” As I’ve written before, the only real surprise is that the number isn’t 100 percent. There is virtually no one who thinks the climate hasn’t changed or won’t change in the future, or that there is no human influence on the phenomenon.

The leading so-called “skeptics—like MIT’s Richard Lindzen or Cato’s Patrick Michaels or NASA’s John Christy or Roy Spencer—would be included in the 97 percent figure. I’m guessing the outlying 3 percent are actually just anomalies of an arbitrary classification scheme (more on this in a moment) that serve the same point as a magician’s misdirection—to get you to buy an illusion. In this case, the illusion is that the scientific community is nearly unanimous in thinking we’re on the brink of catastrophe unless we hand our car keys over to Al Gore.

No one can possibly keep up with the flood of scientific articles published on climate-related topics these days (we’re spending way too much on climate research right now, but that’s a topic for another day), so it is ridiculous to offer sweeping generalizations like this about the character of the scientific literature. I keep up with a fair amount of it in *Nature*, *Science*, and a couple of the other main journals, and what is quite obvious is that most climate-related articles are about specific aspects of climate, such as observed changes in localized ecosystems, measurement refinements (like ocean temperatures, etc), energy use and projections, and large data analysis. Many of these articles do not take a position on the magnitude of possible future warming, and fewer still embrace giving the car keys over to Al Gore. Only a handful deal with modeling of future climate change, and this is where the debate over climate sensitivity and the severe limitations of the models (especially as relates to clouds) is quite lively and—dare I say it—*unsettled*. (Just read the IPCC Working Group I chapter on climate models if you don’t believe me.) The “97 percent of scientists ‘believe in’ climate change” cliché is an appalling abuse of science, and a bad faith attempt to marginalize anyone who dissents from the party line that we need to hand our car keys over to Al Gore. The tacit message is: if you dissent from the party line, you must be in that 3 percent who think you shouldn’t brush your teeth, take painkillers for headaches, etc.

Where did this 97 percent figure come from? This story has become interesting over the last few days. The most prominent form of it comes from Prof. John Cook of the University of Queensland in [a paper published last year](#) that purported to have reviewed over 11,000 climate science articles. Does anyone really believe that Cook and his eight co-authors actually read through all 11,000 articles? Actually, the abstract of the paper supports the point I made above that most papers don’t actually deal with what the Climatistas say:

We find that **66.4% of abstracts expressed no position on AGW** [*Anthropogenic Global Warming*], 32.6% endorsed AGW, 0.7% rejected AGW and 0.3% were uncertain about the cause of global warming. Among abstracts expressing a position on AGW, 97.1% endorsed the consensus position that humans are causing global warming. [*Emphasis added.*]

Pause here and note that it is odd to see that some folks apparently haven’t gotten the memo that you’re not supposed to call it “global warming”—“climate change” is the term of art now. Anyway, to continue, read this slowly and carefully:

Among abstracts expressing a position on AGW, 97.1% endorsed the consensus position that humans are causing global warming. In a second phase of this study, we invited authors to rate their own papers. Compared to abstract ratings, a smaller percentage of self-rated papers expressed no position on AGW (35.5%). Among self-rated papers expressing a position on AGW, 97.2% endorsed the consensus.

Let’s translate: Among the one-third of papers that “endorse” the “consensus,” there is near unanimity. In other words, among people who agree with the consensus, nearly all of them agree with the consensus. Again—the only mystery here is that the number isn’t 100 percent.

Perhaps this would have been too embarrassing to report, like a North Korean election. For this exercise all climate scientists may as well be called named Kim Jong Il.

The plot thickens. Prof. Cook refused to share his data with anyone. Shades of the East Anglia mob and their tree ring data. But also like the East Anglia mob, someone at the University of Queensland left the data in the ether of the internet, and [blogger Brandon Shollenberger](#) came across it and starting noting its weaknesses. Then the predictable thing happened: the University of Queensland claims that the data was hacked, and sent Shollenberger a cease-and-desist letter. That just speaks lots of confidence and transparency, doesn't it?

The irrepressible [Steve McIntyre of ClimateAudit](#) has more, including a link to the inevitable Hitler parody video. But just remember this: 4 out of 5 claims by the Climatistas are self-serving political tommyrot. (And [more here](#) from *The Daily Caller*.)

HNGN News

[Red Wine and Chocolate Do Not Have Health Benefits: Study](#)

by Vishakha Sonawane



Refuting previous researches, a latest study shows that red wine and chocolate do not have a positive impact on health.

Researchers examined the health of 783 older people living in two towns from the Chianti region of Italy. They were asked about their daily food habits and were told to give their urine samples, which the researchers used to measure resveratrol levels. They were tracked for nine years.

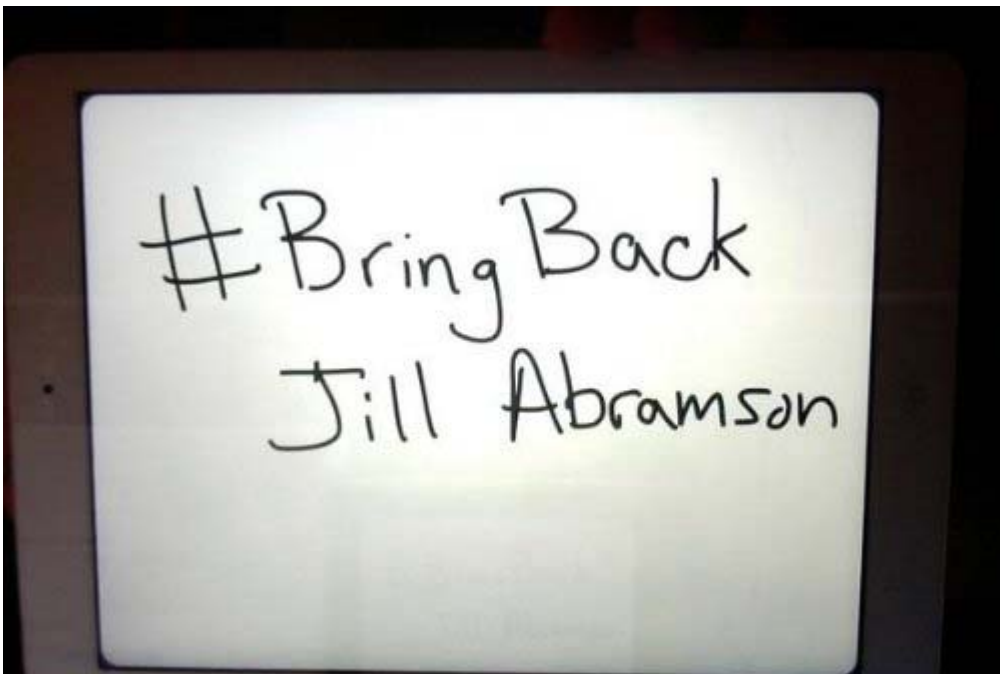
The research team noted that 268 men and women died, 174 people were diagnosed with heart disease and 34 developed cancer. They also examined the possible association between resveratrol levels and risks of death, heart disease or cancer. However, no link was established.

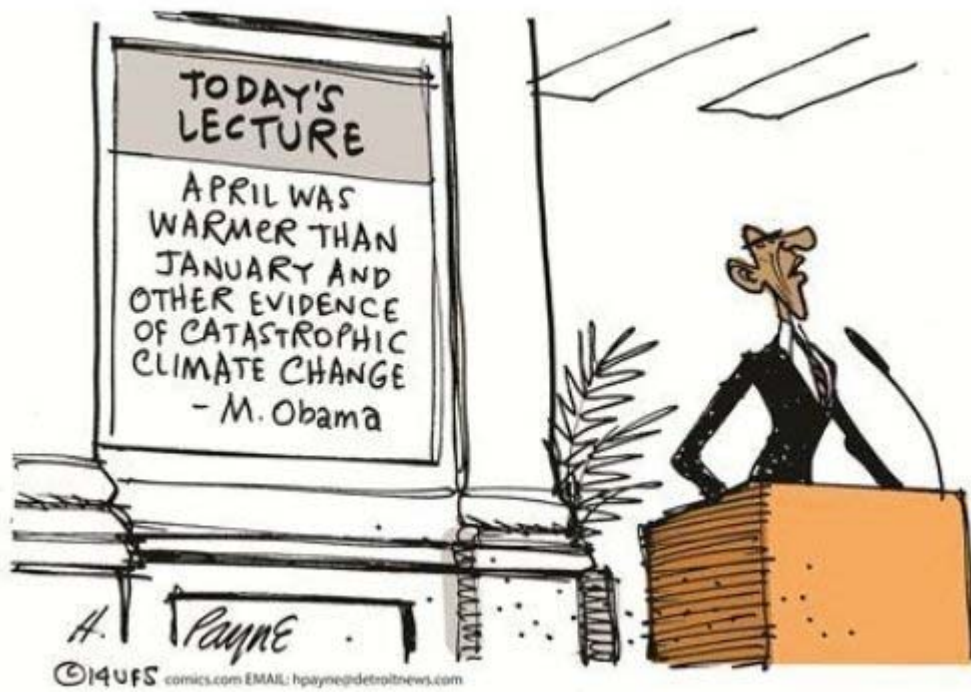
"The thinking was that certain foods are good for you because they contain resveratrol. We didn't find that at all," professor Richard Semba from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, said in a [press release](#). "The story of resveratrol turns out to be another case where you get a lot of hype about health benefits that doesn't stand the test of time."

The team stated that if there are any benefits from red wine, dark chocolate and berries, it would be only after a combination of different ingredients in a person's diet.

"It's just that the benefits, if they are there, must come from other polyphenols or substances found in those foodstuffs," Semba concluded. "These are complex foods, and all we really know from our study is that the benefits are probably not due to resveratrol."

The study, '[Resveratrol Levels and All-Cause Mortality in Older Community-Dwelling Adults](#),' was published in the 'JAMA Internal Medicine.'

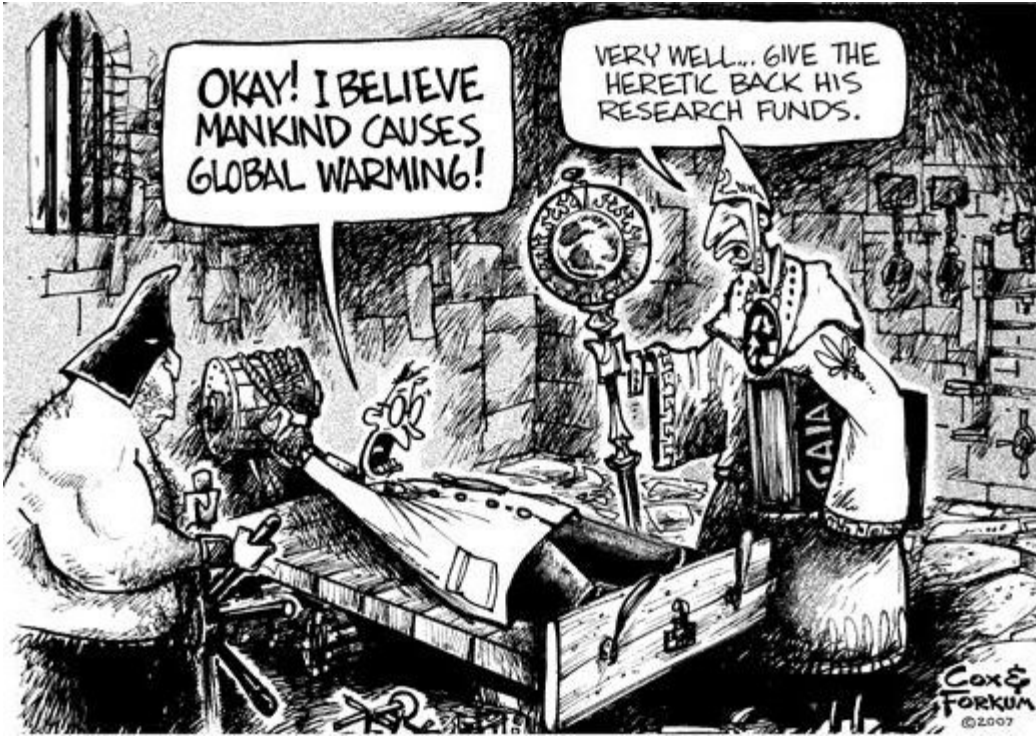




CLIMATE INQUISITION



MEDIEVAL DATA TORTURE



7-11'S IN ISRAEL

For some reason, not a lot of robberies