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The Moral High Ground

The Left's "morally superior" policies kill millions and impoverish billions.

Soon after I published an article questioning the global-warming orthodoxy, the world's foremost hypocrite, Al Gore, informed anyone who still listens to him that my position is akin to racism. The wise course of action would be to ignore the rants of a man who desperately needs the world to remain fearful of carbon, the element on which all life on earth is based. If that fear were to vanish, how would he continue to rake in the millions needed for the purchase of his next beach house?

But enough is enough. Why should I sit quietly and let myself be branded a racist? In fact, will someone please explain how the Left is always assumed to have the moral high ground in these kinds of debates? I am particularly curious about this, as leftist policies continue to destroy the lives of tens of millions in this country and billions worldwide.

Let's go through just a small part of the evidence.

The Left has fought the spread of genetically modified (GM) foods with every weapon in its arsenal. Leftists did this in the name of combatting a long list of "potential risks" that never materialized. They have been permitted to overlook the fact that their assaults on GM food were not cost free. For instance, they have greatly delayed and in some places stopped cold the use of rice modified to increase vitamin A content. For the Left this is cause for celebration. In fact, widespread use of this "golden rice" would have prevented a half-million cases of child blindness a year. So the next time someone talks to you about the evils of genetically modified foods, remind him of the millions of poor children this crusade has condemned to a lifetime of blindness. How do folks prepared to allow millions to needlessly go blind still command the respect of any truly moral person?

However, even looking the other way as children go blind pales in comparison to the needless starving of millions that has occurred because anti-GM-food groups have frightened and bullied the people and governments of Africa into forbidding the use of GM seeds. Such seeds, modified

to resist the effects of drought and disease, would make Africa self-sufficient in foodstuffs. But for most African farmers they remain unavailable because of the successful efforts of American and European anti-GM-food groups. Even though every American consumes GM foods on an almost daily basis, with no ill effects, they remain off limits to those most in need.

There is no reason the Somali child pictured below needs to be hungry except for the fact that some groups are working overtime to prevent his country from growing the food needed to feed him. What do you call people who are willing to let millions starve to death rather than let them grow food that scientists long ago proved safe? Why the anti-GM groups are not condemned for crimes against humanity escapes me. For that matter, as these groups have made it their life mission to starve poor Africans, Asians, and other peoples of color, how come they have never been branded as racists?



And malnutrition is not the only problem afflicting Africa and other poor regions of the world. Among the greatest scourges is malaria, which infects 250 million and kills 1 million every year. In fact, in Africa, one in every five childhood deaths is a result of malaria. If you are a reader of average speed, then consider that ten to twelve children will have died from malaria between the time you started this article and the time you finish it. None of this is necessary. Malaria was vanquished in the United States and Europe through the copious use of DDT. But this blessing has been denied poor African nations because Rachel Carson in her 1962 book *Silent Spring* blamed DDT for killing eagles and other birds.

Fifty years later Carson's discredited work remains a rallying cry for environmentalists who tirelessly work to ensure that poor nations do not have access to DDT, favoring instead a cocktail of methods that have been proven ineffective. Interestingly, I was once accosted by an environmental zealot over that last statement. He wanted to know what proof I had that other methods were ineffective. I pointed out the continuing deaths of a million people and asked how long he had been involved in the environmental movement. When he told me he had been doing

this for a dozen years I casually mentioned that during his activist years he had worked for a movement responsible for killing two times as many persons as perished in the Holocaust, and that was just from malaria-related deaths alone. Yet he thought, and probably still thinks, that he occupies the moral high ground.

In truth, almost all the harmful effects attributed to DDT have been proven not to exist. Moreover, the benefits of DDT use can be achieved using a fraction of the quantity used to eradicate malaria in the United States. Just what do leftists have against blacks, particularly blacks in Africa, that causes them to push policies that sicken and kill them by the tens of millions? And why do they get to claim they sing with the angels as they preside over this slaughter of innocents?

Let's move on a bit. That most stupendous of hypocrites, Al Gore again, uses more electricity in a week than 28 million poor Ugandans use in a year. Still he gets to brand me a racist for doubting his unsupported claims about global warming. The simple fact of the matter is that alternative sources of energy are inefficient, unreliable, and very expensive. If poor countries are forced to adopt alternative energy sources over cheap carbon-based energy, then there is no feasible scenario in which developing nations will be able to afford even a fraction of the energy required to escape poverty. As the Ugandan Fiona Kobusingye points out in a recent article:

Not having electricity means millions of Africans don't have refrigerators to preserve food and medicine. Outside of wealthy parts of our big cities, people don't have lights, computers, modern hospitals and schools, air conditioning — or offices, factories, and shops to make things and create good jobs. Not having electricity also means disease and death. It means millions die from lung infections, because they have to cook and heat with open fires; from intestinal diseases caused by spoiled food and unsafe drinking water; from malaria, TB, cholera, measles, and other diseases that we could prevent or treat if we had proper medical facilities.

She goes on to say, "Telling Africans they can't have electricity and economic development — except what can be produced with some wind turbines or little solar panels — is immoral. It is a crime against humanity." And she concludes, "We need to stop listening to global-warming witch doctors, who get rich telling us to keep living 'indigenous,' impoverished lives."

Yet I am the one Al Gore brands as a racist.

But the damage the warmists are doing or hope to do does not end there. To save a planet that stopped warming in 1998, they want the United States and other industrial countries to reduce carbon output by 80 percent by 2050 (many are shooting for 2020), relative to a 1990 baseline. Let's assume we multiply our wasteful spending on solar and wind power tenfold. If we do, then

on particularly sunny and windy days we may eventually get 25 percent of our energy from those sources. That leaves us short about half the energy we need to support current GDP levels. As studies demonstrate that every 1 percent reduction in power causes a 0.7 percent reduction in GDP, I wonder how the warmists plan to employ the additional 25 million Americans thrown out of work.

Moreover, in the world's emerging economies each 1 percent loss of GDP causes almost 2,500 premature deaths per 100,000 population. So, if the warmists get their way, they would kill off about 50 million persons a year on their way to a 2050 nirvana. One could plausibly claim that as soon as the pain became apparent, politicians would immediately reverse course before more damage was done. Such a belief would be comforting if we were not witnessing the destruction of huge amounts of food in order to turn it into inefficient and costly energy. One would think that global food riots and millions of starving people would cause a rethinking of our priorities. But this year, American farmers will grow more corn for ethanol than for food. After all, why should the empty bellies of countless children get in the way of saving the planet from warmist fantasies? Look again at that picture of a starving black child and tell me whose policies are racist.

How about something closer to home? Data released last week show that America's jobless rate among black teenagers was 46.5 percent, and the overall rate of black joblessness is double that of the white population. Why? One needs to look no further than liberal policies implemented in our major cities, which have destroyed the black family unit, discouraged business investment, and subsidized the worst education system in the developed world. In fact, if a foreign power tried to force our education system on inner cities, we would send in the Marines to stop it.

Instead, we let leftist-dominated teachers' unions run an education system that ensures half of the students trapped in it will be unemployable upon graduation. When these unions are called to account, they attack the critics as wanting to hurt the children. For how much longer will unions be allowed to claim they are "all about the children," while in fact they are wrecking those children's futures and condemning many of them to spend the rest of their lives in poverty? And why am I called a child-hating racist for daring to point out the truth?

There is so much more. What, for instance, can one say about the morality of economic policies that place a \$70,000 debt on every American child? Is it really moral to take all the money the better-off earn and thereby deprive them of funds they could have invested to create the millions of jobs the unemployed need? What is moral about expanding the multicultural dogma, when the one thing it definitely creates is an unassimilated mass of youths with limited future prospects? What is moral about diversity programs that more often than not create isolated warring tribes within America's most important institutions? Finally, is it really moral to force Americans to

purchase medical insurance coverage they don't want? And if you think it is, then where does government power over private lives end? What of freedom?

The day has long since passed when the Right needs to concede the moral high ground to the Left on any issue. Yes, we may be able to win most of the great debates on the merits of our ideas; but as a wise man once explained to me: "What I believe rationally is open to debate and change. What I believe emotionally cannot be changed by reason. An emotional belief can only be changed by an emotional argument." The Left has known this for decades. That is why the those on the left never misses a chance to brand those on the right with the most contemptible slurs they can think of. We need not descend into the gutter and trade personal insults, but we should never miss a chance to point out the vile results of the policies the Left is pushing.

In every sphere of public debate, the moral high ground belongs to the Right. Claim it!

— *Jim Lacey is the author of The First Clash and Keep from All Thoughtful Men.*