

Chapter 16

Have We Advanced since the Middle Ages?

Did you know?

- **Witch hunts increased during the Little Ice Age**
- **The Aztecs had one advantage over our climate experts—they realized the sun was responsible for global warming**
- **A University of Cincinnati professor blamed the rise of Hitler on global warming**

Have we really advanced since medieval times? Sacrifice to prevent climate change is now being routinely proposed. Laurie David, the producer of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, has extolled small acts to save the planet: "When you see that charger in the wall, you have to now say okay that's, that's contributing to global warming pollution, I have to pull that charger out of the wall," Laurie said on NBC's Today Show.¹

In 2010, the Japanese government told its citizens to go get to sleep earlier in order to fight climate change. "Japanese households are being urged to go to bed one hour earlier than normal in order to help tackle climate change," explained the UK's Daily Telegraph. "Many Japanese people waste electric power at night time, for example by watching TV until very late," a ministry spokesperson told the Telegraph. "But going to bed early and getting up early can avoid wasting electrical power which causes carbon dioxide emissions. If people change their lifestyle, we can save energy and reduce emissions."²

Just to confuse things, in 2014 the U.S. Senate urged citizens to stay up all night and watch TV to fight global warming. Senate Democrats, led by Rhode Island Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, were pulling an all-nighter to rail against climate change.

Miles O'Brien asked on CNN, "Are we under siege from nature? Is—is the planet angry?"³

Witch Hunts Medieval and Modern

Once, long before the modern SUV was the culprit, witches were blamed for causing bad weather and crop failures. Sallie Baliunas, formerly of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, has explained how the severe conditions of the medieval Little Ice Age in the

¹ Laurie David, NBC Today Show, 2007, www.ClimateHustle.com

² Danielle Demetriou, "Japanese told to go to bed an hour early to cut carbon emissions," The Telegraph, June 24, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/environment/climatechange/7851292/Japanese-told-to-go-to-bed-an-hour-early-to-cut-carbon-emissions.html>

³ Miles O'Brien, "Planet Angry?" American Morning, CNN, Clip seen in Climate Hustle, www.ClimateHustle.com

Middle Ages created a perfect atmosphere for witchcraft trials. “Those severe conditions in climate brought about crop failure, starvation, disease, death and social unrest,” Baliunas noted. “They said, for a hundred years such a storm has not been seen. The storm was deemed so unusual in this period of superstition that it had to be unnatural, it had to be supernatural.” Baliunas continued with the parallel. “Legal philosopher John Boden in 1580 noted that witchcraft was the most terrible problem facing humankind. Again a very, a very modern note.”⁴

Baliunas drew other links between witchcraft hysteria and today’s climate debate as well. “Now, there were skeptics who stood up but they were often accused of, or threatened to be accused of, sorcery as to squash any debate,” she noted. “Any feeble notes of humane skeptics had to be wrenched out of society.”

Something very similar is happening today, as Canadian physicist Denis Rancourt testifies from his experience. “When I tell environmental activists that global warming itself is not something to be concerned about—environmental activists attack me,” Rancourt explains. “They shun me, and they do not allow me to have my materials published in their various magazines and so on.”⁵

“Any country which tolerates these skeptics will be struck by plagues famines and wars,” Baliunas explained.

The belief that witches could alter the weather was so pervasive in the Middle Ages that even religious leaders believed it. In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII wrote, “Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that, just as easily as they [witches] raise hailstorms, so can they cause lightning and storms at sea; and so no doubt at all remains on these points.”⁶

In our modern era, the Associated Press echoes the medieval pope’s warning about witches and bad weather, but this time blames man-made global warming. “From smoke-choked Moscow to water-soaked Iowa and the High Arctic, the planet seems to be having a midsummer breakdown. It’s not just a portent of things to come, scientists say, but a sign of troubling climate change already under way,” the AP intoned ominously in an August 12, 2010 article.⁷

⁴ "An Evening with Michael Crichton," Independent Institute, November 15, 2005, <http://www.independent.org/events/transcript.asp?id=111#4>

⁵ Denis Rancourt interview for Climate Hustle, 2014, www.ClimateHustle.com

⁶ Emily Oster, "Witchcraft, Weather and Economic Growth in Renaissance Europe," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*—Volume 18, Number 1—Winter 2004—Pages 215–228, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/089533004773563502&within%5Btitle%5D=on&within%5Babstract%5D=on&within%5Bauthor%5D=on&journal=&from=a&q=economic+growth&page=5&per-page=21&from=j>

⁷ CHARLES J. HANLEY, "Long, hot summer of fire, floods fits predictions," *Seattle Times*, August 12, 2010,

Scholarly studies confirm that witch trials were on the upswing during the Little Ice Age. According to a 2012 Live Science article, “Historical records indicate that, worldwide, witch hunts occur more often during cold periods, possibly because people look for scapegoats to blame for crop failures and general economic hardship. Fitting the pattern, scholars argue that cold weather may have spurred the infamous Salem witch trials in 1692.”⁸

Emily Oster studied witchcraft and temperatures for her senior thesis at Harvard University and found that the Little Ice Age coincided with the most active era of witchcraft trials in Europe. Lower temperatures correlated with higher numbers of witchcraft accusations. She published her witchcraft research in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* in 2004. Oster explained that “popes and scholars alike clearly believed witches were capable of controlling the weather, and therefore, crippling food production.”⁹

Salem State University historian Emerson Baker’s research agrees with Oster’s findings. “A harsh New England winter really may have set the stage for accusations of witchcraft,” noted a Live Science analysis of Baker’s research. The bad weather may have helped stir up the population’s psychological state into a full blown mass hysteria. “The young girls who accused their fellow townfolk of witchcraft are believed to have been suffering from a strange psychological condition known as mass hysteria, Live Science noted.”¹⁰

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A Book You’re Not Supposed to Read

http://old.seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2012601441_apussiclimatbreakdown.html

⁸ Natalie Wolchover, "Did Cold Weather Cause the Salem Witch Trials?" Live Science, April 20, 2012, <https://www.livescience.com/19820-salem-witch-trials.html>

⁹ Emily Oster, "Witchcraft, Weather and Economic Growth in Renaissance Europe," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*—Volume 18, Number 1—Winter 2004—Pages 215–228, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/089533004773563502&within%5Btitle%5D=on&within%5Babstract%5D=on&within%5Bauthor%5D=on&journal=&from=a&q=economic+growth&page=5&per-page=21&from=j>

¹⁰ Natalie Wolchover, "Did Cold Weather Cause the Salem Witch Trials?" Live Science, April 20, 2012, <https://www.livescience.com/19820-salem-witch-trials.html>

A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience by Emerson W. Baker (OUP USA, 2014).¹¹

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Princeton Professor Emeritus of Physics William Happer in 2017 drew parallels to today's man-made climate change claims. "I don't see a whole lot of difference between the consensus on climate change and the consensus on witches. At the witch trials in Salem the judges were educated at Harvard. This was supposedly 100 per cent science. The one or two people who said there were no witches were immediately hung. Not much has changed," Happer quipped.¹²

A 2014 Scientific American analysis found "in Medieval Europe the idea of a sort of demonic conspiracy, perpetuated by sorcerers and witches against society, became common lore."¹³ "These difficult times also see the emergence of a new kind of superstition, that witches could 'make weather' and steal the milk from the (starving) cows," the analysis added.

According to Scientific American, Bavarian and Swiss accounts of the era reported:

"1445, in this year was a very strong hail and wind, as never seen before, and it did great damage, [...] and so many women, which it's said to have made the hail and the wind, were burned according to the law."

"Anno 1626 the 27th of May, all the vineyards were totally destroyed by frost [...], the same with the precious grain which had already flourished.[...] Everything froze, [something] which had not happened as long as one could remember, causing a big rise in price.[...] As a result, pleading and begging began among the peasants, [who] questioned why the authorities continued to tolerate the witches and sorcerers

¹¹ Emerson Baker, "A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience," 2014,

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/a-storm-of-witchcraft-emerson-w-baker/1119045464#/>

¹² William Happer, "Quote of the Week," CO2 Coalition, JUNE 3, 2017, <http://co2coalition.org/2017/06/03/the-week-that-was-quote-of-the-week/>

¹³ David Bressan, "Medieval Witch Hunts Influenced by Climate Change," Scientific American, November 3, 2014,

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/history-of-geology/medieval-witch-hunts-influenced-by-climate-change/>

destruction of the crops. Thus the prince-bishop punished these crimes, and the persecution began in this year..."

Literal witch hunts are not a thing of the past. "Weather patterns continue to trigger witchcraft accusations in many parts of Africa, where witch killings persist. According to a 2003 analysis by the Berkeley economist Edward Miguel, extreme rainfall—either too much or too little—coincides with a significant increase in the number of witch killings in Tanzania," reported a 2012 analysis in Live Science.¹⁴

Climate skeptic Tony Heller of Real Climate Science has pointed out parallels between Aztec sacrifices to stop bad weather and the modern global warming movement's efforts to appease the CO₂ gods. In 1450, Aztec priests encouraged people to sacrifice blood to the gods to end severe drought that was decimating corn crops. They ended up sacrificing thousands of people in a few weeks.

Heller quipped, "Like the Aztecs, many scientists believe that sacrificial offerings are necessary to stabilize climate. But there are some key differences. 1. Aztecs correctly believed that the climate was controlled by the moods of the Sun. Modern climate scientists have not progressed that far yet. 2. Aztec priests believed that only a small percentage of the population needed to be sacrificed, whereas the modern priests believe that everyone (except for themselves) needs to sacrifice."¹⁵

Aborigines in nineteenth-century Australia blamed the bad climate on the arrival of the White man. A March 11, 1846 article in the *Maitland Mercury* explained that "great changes have taken place in the climate of Australia," citing "heavy rains" and "deluging floods" and noted, "The aborigines say that the climate has undergone this change since the white-man came in country."¹⁶

¹⁴ Natalie Wolchover, "Did Cold Weather Cause the Salem Witch Trials?" Live Science, April 20, 2012, <https://www.livescience.com/19820-salem-witch-trials.html>

¹⁵ "What Climate Scientists Can Learn From The Aztecs," Real Science, DECEMBER 27, 2011, <http://tomnelson.blogspot.com/2011/12/what-climate-scientists-can-learn-from.html>

¹⁶ "The Change of Climate," The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser, March 11, 1846,

<https://stevengoddard.wordpress.com/2013/05/21/was-captain-cook-the-first-climate-climate-wrecking-white-man/>

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/679787?searchTerm=climate%20change&searchLimits>

That great changes have taken place in the climate of Australia all testimonies satisfactorily prove. It is evident to any observer, at some period, the country has been subjected to the mighty action of heavy rains, and of sweeping, deluging floods. The mountains and hills are cut and furrowed into deep ravines; the parting ridges are at acute angles, and frequently washed bare of vegetable mould; and all so precipitous, that the waters are no sooner showered from the blessed heavens than they run off with rapidity and fury through the gullies into the recipient creeks, scarcely leaving a witness of their visit, either as running brook, clear spring, or stagnant pool, a few days, perhaps a few hours, after. The aborigines say that the climate has undergone this change since white-man came in country. "Old-hands"

In 2013, the White man was once again being blamed for climate change. Climate activist Bill McKibben lamented, "White America has fallen short"—by voting for "climate deniers." In a March 14, 2013 Los Angeles Times op-ed, McKibben complained, "Election after election, native-born and long-standing citizens pull the lever for climate deniers."¹⁷

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¹⁷ Bill McKibben, "Immigration reform -- for the climate," Los Angeles Times, March 14, 2013, <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/mar/14/opinion/la-oe-mckibben-immigration-environment-20130314>

Not Like a Yo-Yo Schoolboy

In 1933, Syrians banned the yo-yo because they thought it caused drought.

A January 23, 1933, headline in the *Barrier Miner* read, “Yo-Yo banned in Syria. Blamed for Drought by Muslims.” As the article reported, “The Muslim chiefs at Damascus have attributed the wrath of the heavens to the recent introduction of the yo-yo. . . . The chiefs interviewed the Prime Minister and exposed the evil influence of yo-yos, so they were immediately banned. Today the police paraded the streets and confiscated the yo-yos from everyone they saw playing with them.”¹⁸

Today, global warming activists blame Syrian drought on man-made global warming. In 2013, PBS’s Bill Moyers claimed, “Climate change in Syria helped spark the civil war there. Which country is next?”¹⁹

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¹⁸ "2013 conflict in Syria blamed on drought caused by global warming — Flashback 1933: ‘YO-YO BANNED IN SYRIA – Blamed For Drought By Moslems,’” Climate Depot, September 6, 2013, <http://www.climatedepot.com/2013/09/06/2013-conflict-in-syria-blamed-on-drought-caused-by-global-warming-flashback-1933-yo-yo-banned-in-syria-blamed-for-drought-by-moslems/>

¹⁹ "2013 conflict in Syria blamed on drought caused by global warming — Flashback 1933: ‘YO-YO BANNED IN SYRIA – Blamed For Drought By Moslems,’” Climate Depot, September 6, 2013, <http://www.climatedepot.com/2013/09/06/2013-conflict-in-syria-blamed-on-drought-caused-by-global-warming-flashback-1933-yo-yo-banned-in-syria-blamed-for-drought-by-moslems/>

YO-YO BANNED IN SYRIA

Blamed For Drought By Moslems

BEIRUT (Syria), January 21.

Drought and severe cold is disastrously affecting the cattle in Syria, and the Moslem chiefs at Damascus have attributed the wrath of the heavens to the recent introduction of the yo-yo.

They say that while the people are praying for rain to come down from above the yo-yo goes down, and before reaching the ground springs up through the subtle pull of the string.

The chiefs interviewed the Prime Minister and exposed the evil influence of yo-yos, so they were immediately banned.

To-day the police paraded the streets and confiscated the yo-yos from everyone they saw playing with them.

The history of mankind is one of superstition and fear of the weather gods. It is a history of ritualistic appeasements in attempts to prevent bad weather.

“Naked Girls Plow Fields for Rain,” blared the headline of a July 24, 2009, Reuters report. “Farmers in an eastern Indian state have asked their unmarried daughters to plow parched fields naked in a bid to embarrass the weather gods to bring some badly needed monsoon rain, officials said on Thursday.”²⁰

A 2009 article in AllAfrica.com reported, “The Karimojong [in Uganda] blame the spell of calamities like drought and disease to the “angry gods.” As the report explained, “Little do they know that their area is suffering the consequences of a larger problem, climate change.”²¹

As University of London professor emeritus Philip Stott pointed out, “From the Babylon of Gilgamesh to the post-Eden of Noah, every age has viewed climate change cataclysmically, as retribution for human greed and sinfulness.” Stott explained, “Extreme weather events are ever present, and there is no evidence of systematic increases. . . . Global warming represents the latest doom-laden ‘crisis,’ one demanding sacrifice to Gaia for our wicked fossil-fuel-driven ways. But neither history nor science bolsters such an apocalyptic faith.”²²

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The End Is Nigh

NBC’s Today Show hyped one warm winter today in Central Park as a sign of the end times. “I’m running in the park yesterday in shorts thinking this is great, but are we all going to die? Ya know? I can’t figure it out,” pondered anchor Meredith Vieira.²³

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Extreme weather expert Roger Pielke Jr. of the University of Colorado wrote of the mystical qualities of the climate change claims in an analysis titled “It has been foretold.” “Because various unsupportable and just wrong claims are being advanced by leading scientists and

²⁰ “Naked Girls Plow Fields for Rain,” Reuters, July 23, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-girls-odd-idUSTRE56M3G020090723>.

²¹ Joseph Miti, “Uganda: Climate Change Fuels Conflicts in Karamoja,” All Africa, JULY 8, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200907081085.html>

²² PHILIP STOTT, “Global Warming Is Not a Crisis,” ABC News, March 9, 2007, http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=2938762&page=1#.UB_XbNn5k74

²³ Meredith Vieira, Today Show, NBC, January 8, 2007, www.ClimateHustle.com

scientific organizations, it would be easy to get the impression that on the issues of extreme events and climate change, IPCC science has a status similar to interpretations of Nostradamus and the Mayan calendars.”²⁴

Scientist Doug Hoffman mocked the climate change establishment. “The whole enterprise is reminiscent of Medieval mystics claiming to predict the future while spouting gibberish,” Hoffman, a mathematician and engineer who worked on environmental models and conducted research in molecular dynamics simulations, Hoffman wrote on October 13, 2009. “Palm readers and fortune tellers stand as good a chance as any in this game.”²⁵

Today’s global warming narrative blames every bad weather event on man-caused global warming. As we have seen, there is no way to falsify these “climate change” claims because bad weather events are always going to happen—and every bad weather event “proves” their case. Have we really advanced since the days of the medieval witch hunt?

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Godwin’s Law

We scoff at medieval witch hunts and Aztec sacrifices, but can we put any crazy theory about the weather past our modern “experts”? In 1941, Clarence A. Mills, a professor of experimental medicine at the University of Cincinnati, claimed that warmer temperatures “may produce a trend toward dictatorial governments” and blamed global warming for—the rise of Hitler. “The rise to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany and Benito Mussolini in Italy may be due in part to the gradually warming temperature of the world,” Mills explained. “People are more docile and easily led in warm weather than in cold.”²⁶

²⁴ Roger Pielke Jr., "It Has Been Foretold," Roger Pielke Jr.'s Blog, AUGUST 12, 2010, <http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2010/08/it-has-been-foretold.html>

²⁵ "Scientist mocks warming predictions: ‘The whole enterprise is reminiscent of Medieval mystics claiming to predict the future while spouting gibberish,’” Climate Depot, October 14, 2009, <http://www.climatedepot.com/2009/10/14/scientist-mocks-warming-predictions-the-whole-enterprise-is-reminiscent-of-medieval-mystics-claiming-to-predict-the-future-while-spouting-gibberish/>

²⁶ "Flashback 1941: Scientist claimed Global Warming Caused Hitler – Warmer temps ‘may produce a trend toward dictatorial govts’ – ‘People are more docile & easily led in warm weather,’” Climate Depot, November 22, 2015, <http://www.climatedepot.com/2015/11/22/flashback-1941-scientist-claims-global-warming-caus>

Interestingly, global warming may have *saved* Hitler's life and regime. Very hot temperatures on the day of the nearly successful assassination attempt on the brutal dictator's life may have saved him. Hitler survived the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944, in part because the heat had forced a change of venue for a meeting. "The briefing conference was normally held in a bunker" but on that day "it was held in a flimsy hut owing to the heat." according to Peter Hoffman's *The History of the German Resistance, 1933–1945*.²⁷ Hitler may not have survived if the briefcase containing the explosives had not been moved and the bomb had been detonated in the original location in the bunker.

So global warming helped bring Hitler to power by making people "more docile and easily led" and then global warming saved Hitler by forcing a change in the critical meeting place.

During the 1940s, some blamed World War II itself for causing extreme weather. An August 19, 1941 article in the *Barrier Miner* stated referred to the "ancient belief that years of war tend to bring abnormal vagaries in the weather" and reported, "There have been remarkable extremes to weather since the war began, and these have continued all

ed-hitler-warmer-temps-may-produce-a-trend-toward-dictatorial-govts-people-are-are-more-doci
le-easily-led-in-warm-weather/

²⁷ Peter Hoffmann, "The history of the German resistance, 1933-1945," p655,

https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=212hoVrF3B4C&pg=RA1-PA655&lpg=RA1-PA655&dq=stauffenberg+bunker+heat&source=bl&ots=6yqnZpSbvM&sig=zEscQ3bcKLwBs4VoIfhmt9fVl1k&hl=en&ei=K5F0S4TQN4vy0gTx3bG1CQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result#v=onepage&q=stauffenberg%20bunker%20heat&f=false

through the year.”²⁸

²⁸ "War Blamed For Weather Extremes" Barrier Miner, August 19, 1941,
<http://www.climatedepot.com/2012/03/28/flashback-1941-war-caused-weather-extremes-and-global-weirding-the-ancient-belief-that-years-of-war-tend-to-bring-abnormal-variations-in-the-weather/>

WAR BLAMED FOR WEATHER EXTREMES

LONDON, August 18.—One of the most extraordinary volte faces by the weather within living memory occurred in July, when, despite record heat early in the month, the rainfall was the greatest for July since 1924.

This, says the "Sunday Times," supports the ancient belief that years of war tend to bring abnormal vagaries in the weather. There have been remarkable extremes of weather since the war began, and these have continued all through the year. The spring was one of the bleakest on record, and the summer began in the same way. The first 10 days of June yielded 13½ hours of sunshine, which is the ordinary "allowance" for January. Then a drought and heat of an unusual character occurred suddenly, with temperatures up to 94 degrees in London.

Summer's magnificence ended in mid-July with three days of terrific thunderstorms.

The weather since has been almost as unmitigatingly bad, the first days of August adding an unpleasant foretaste of autumn chill.

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