

Tekst 4

Claims about global warming poison the atmosphere

- 1 The attempts by the global warming industry to use the hot weather in Europe to hype up the dangers of extreme climate change are a moral disgrace. In quite breathtaking examples of climatic colonialism, global warming protagonists have been baldly asserting this week that the people of India and China cannot be allowed to develop as the world's wealthy have done because of the imagined effects on the world's climate.
- 2 It is cant. The poor are even chastised for being poor, for having the audacity to disrupt European climates through an Asian brown haze derived from their dung and wood fires. The facts that the Asian brown cloud has been around for thousands of years and that it cools as much as it warms are conveniently forgotten.
- 3 Such insulting sentiments often emanate from organisations that claim to support the poor. We must always remember that more than 1.6 billion people have no access to any form of modern energy. Solving their problems is the real issue in achieving a global "sustainable" energy policy. Unfortunately, our hot air over global warming is diverting much-needed focus and finance from key development aims such as the provision of safe, clean drinking water for all.
- 4 It should not go unnoticed that the so-called UK temperature record was being claimed two to three days before it might, or might not, occur. Facts are not always the strong point of true believers, and global warming has morphed into an ancient-style religion, demanding sacrifice to the Earth, especially, it would seem, by the poor of the developing world.
- 5 Readers may thus be surprised to learn that, on August 4, 1881, for example, temperatures in Spain attained a truly siesta-sapping 50C. Moreover, the extremes for the different continents are spread out over the past 120 years like a line of English backs at Twickenham – that is, all over the park: 1889 for Australia (53.3C); 1905 for Latin America (48.9C); 1912 for Oceania (42.2C); 1913 for North America (56.7C); 1922 for Africa (57.8C); 1942 for Asia (53.9C); and 1972 for chilly Antarctica (15C).
- 6 There is no pattern whatsoever to these highs, although they might, I suppose, reflect a staggered rise of the world out of the Little Ice Age, which ended sometime between 1850 and 1880. But who knows? One of the world's longest temperature curves comes from De Bilt in the Netherlands. It makes a Blackpool rollercoaster look like a gentle ride for Teletubbies. It does show, however, that after

the rise out of the Little Ice Age there was a relatively cold period from the late 1940s to the 1970s – difficult to explain if climate is all down to us.

- 7 In truth, the global warming industry is just like Monty Python's *Life of Brian*. We all remember that glorious scene when the excited crowd persuades the luckless Brian that, whatever he says, he just has to be the Messiah. Brian: "I'm NOT the Messiah!" Girl: "Only the true Messiah denies His divinity." Arthur: "I say you are Lord, and I should know. I've followed a few."

- 8 Thus, if it is an especially hot summer, it is dire global warming, and you are unquestionably to blame, you selfish, greedy, rich Northerners, particularly if you are unfortunate enough to be American. Likewise, if it floods, it is global warming; if the land is parched and fires rage, it is global warming; if the monsoon is too wet or too weak, it is global warming; and, if winter freezes poor old robin redbreast, it is still global warming. Come rain or shine, hot or cold, it is always global warming. So there's an end of it, Brian.

- 9 Predicating long-term climate trends on single weather events, however extreme they may seem, is plain bunkum. During the Little Ice Age there were very hot summers in Britain. In his Selborne journal of 1778, Gilbert White records 88F in the shade, "... a degree of heat not very common even at Gibraltar". In 1779, by contrast, temperatures in August plummeted into the 60s.

- 10 10, a little warming in the UK can only be a good thing, reinvigorating our wine industry and increasing the number of resident bird species. Birdwatchers should note that we may even get to host such splendours as the penduline tit, the kaleidoscopic bee-eater, and the cattle egret. And, in stark contrast, who would want to return to the Little Ice Age and to 1816, the "year without a summer"?

- 11 Please can we grow up over the weather? It was Ludwig Wittgenstein who reminded us in his masterpiece, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, that "whatever a man knows, whatever is not mere rumbling and roaring that he has heard, can be said in three words". And those three words are: "Climate always changes."

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■ Tekst 4 Claims about global warming poison the atmosphere

- 3p **4** □ Geef van elk van de onderstaande beweringen aan of deze wel of niet in overeenstemming is met het standpunt van de schrijver in de alinea's 1-3.
- 1 All warnings that the environment in developing countries is under threat are wildly exaggerated.
- 2 Developing countries have problems that are far more urgent than the alleged problem of global warming.
- 3 Pointing the finger at the developing countries as a cause of environmental problems is outrageous.
- 4 The developing world should learn to maintain a balance between technological progress and a healthy environment.
- 5 It is inevitable that developing countries will come to face the environmental problems that the West is now having to deal with.
- 6 If those who warn of global warming have their way, the developing countries stand to lose out.
- Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door "wel" of "niet".
- 1p **5** ■ Which of the following words from paragraph 2 is used ironically?
- A cant
B chastised
C audacity
D cools
- 1p **6** ■ "global warming has morphed into an ancient-style religion" (paragraph 4)
What aspect of ancient-style religion is referred to in this paragraph?
- A The conviction that there is a divine explanation for each natural phenomenon.
B The division of people into believers and non-believers.
C The requirement that people give up their desire for material progress.
D The threat of being abandoned by the gods.
- 1p **7** ■ What is the main point made in paragraphs 5 and 6?
- A Compared to other continents, Europe is warming up only very little.
B Global warming is a misleading term, as temperature extremes are regional.
C The facts do not indicate a connection between human activity and climate change.
D The misinterpretation of freak weather situations is not a new phenomenon.
- 1p **8** ■ What point does Philip Stott make by comparing the global warming industry to Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (paragraph 7)?
- A Any event or phenomenon can always be interpreted as a confirmation of one's belief.
B Global warming could well have provided suitable material for a Monty Python film.
C People who show themselves devoted to any cause that comes their way are laughable.
- 1p **9** ■ Which of the following is true with regard to paragraph 8?
- 1 It points to America as the main victim of global warming.
2 It supports those who blame global warming for climate change.
- A Only 1 is true.
B Only 2 is true.
C Both 1 and 2 are true.
D Neither 1 nor 2 is true.
- 1p **10** ■ Which of the following fits the gap at the beginning of paragraph 10?
- A For this reason
B Nevertheless
C To be fair
D What is more