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Rachel Carson: Debunked, but Still Lionized

By [Tom Blumer](#) | June 10, 2007 - 11:20 ET



It has become clear to anyone with eyes and an open mind that the worldwide ban on DDT that is just now in the process of too-slowly being lifted has caused massive loss of human life over a period of decades that could, and should, have been avoided.

So you would think that the person who began the DDT scare in the early 1960s would be discredited, or her work at least shunted to the background. **You would be wrong** (link may require free registration; HT [Instapundit](#)):

For Rachel Carson admirers, it has not been a silent spring. They've been celebrating the centennial of her birthday with paeans to her saintliness. A new generation is reading her book in school — and mostly learning the wrong lesson from it.

The real "lesson" is that "[Silent Spring](#)" was perhaps the first successful use of junk science paired with corporation-bashing media hype to fool the general public:

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Ms. Carson used dubious statistics and anecdotes (like the improbable story of a woman who instantly developed cancer after spraying her basement with DDT) to warn of a cancer epidemic that never came to pass. She rightly noted threats to some birds, like eagles and other raptors, but she wildly imagined a mass "biocide." She warned that one of the most common American birds, the robin, was "on the verge of extinction" — an especially odd claim given the large numbers of robins recorded in Audubon bird counts before her book.

..... She cited scary figures showing a recent rise in deaths from cancer, but she didn't consider one of the chief causes: fewer people were dying at young ages from other diseases (including the malaria that persisted in the American South until DDT). When that longevity factor as well as the impact of smoking are removed, the cancer death rate was falling in the decade before "Silent Spring," and it kept falling in the rest of the century.

Even in 1962, as New York Times writer John Tierney notes, there were attempts to debunk this junk that have, unlike Carson's work, stood the test of time. In fact, Dr. I.L. Baldwin, a



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professor of agricultural bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin, published a review of "Silent Spring" that clinically tore it apart -- and was, apparently, ignored:

But scientists like him were no match for Ms. Carson's rhetoric. DDT became taboo even though there wasn't evidence that it was carcinogenic (and subsequent studies repeatedly failed to prove harm to humans).

So who will be the first bona fide member of the environmental movement to acknowledge that Rachel Carson was flat-out wrong, and that the movement's first "heroine" is, more than anyone else (with the help of an EPA director), responsible for millions of premature deaths from malaria that need not have occurred?

And will this early, tragic failure of "junk science" cause anyone in the Old Media to be at least a little skeptical about the validity of the global warming alarmists and the globaloney they are relentlessly pushing?

Cross-posted at BizzyBlog.com.

—Tom Blumer is a CPA based in Mason, Ohio and a contributing editor to NewsBusters

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A fraudulent writer

June 10, 2007 - 11:42 ET by [SportPolitics](#)

What the heck is wrong with this picture ? Well, the supporting frauds thing the democrats do has been going on for, at least since 1962.

Silent Spring - everything is dead... and Al Gore tells us now it's going to happen again... AGW....they need a running Armageddon like any state run religion lol

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when the liberals run the sho

June 10, 2007 - 18:12 ET by [PK](#)

when the liberals run the show they move from crisis to crisis. the democrats did in in about a two week cycle.

what they infer is that the people of the united states must give up certain small rights/liberties in order to combat this immediate crisis.

these rights can be: the right to bear arms, the right for parents to know about a minor daughter having an abortion, the right to certain religious observances, the list goes on and on.

before the conservatives can rally a reply they have moved on to the next crisis.

but the solutions to the last crisis are never stopped and normally don't work well.

its kind of like a "temporary tax"

questions remain (0/1)

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- Did the IPCC lie about sea level change? ([Sister Toldjah](#))

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commies and science

June 10, 2007 - 12:04 ET by [bulbasaur](#)

Was it Chairman Mao who thought he could help agriculture by ordering a purge of sparrows? Farmers obediently threw stones at the little birds, killing them far and wide. By upsetting the food chain, (and probably many other cycles that nature is very good at regulating all by itself), the communist *solution* ended up causing the very agricultural catastrophe it was meant to avert.

Also, I have it in the recesses of my memory that famous leftist philosopher August Comte once proposed a nutty scheme to forcibly change the earth's period of rotation for some god-awful reason. I was laughing so hard I forgot to write down where I read it, so I could be wrong about this. But if true, doesn't it just sound as nutty as something Algor would say?

What is it with leftists thinking they're experts in science? I mean, let's face it, lefties don't exactly flock to the engineering and natural science departments in the universities. They go into the Marxist disciplines, and if they can't get accepted into one, they hold a sit-in at the Dean's office to *create* a new Marxist discipline.

Can we at least agree that communists have a very bad track record when it comes to coercive scientific utopias?

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Mao ordered killing of the 4

June 10, 2007 - 20:39 ET by [stratman](#)

Mao ordered killing of the 4 evils of the country: Rats, Flies, Mosquitoes and Sparrows. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3371659.stm>)

I offer that there should have been a 5th evil to be eradicated: Communists.

Anyhoo, with sparrow populations devastated, locusts were free to damage crops. Nice call Mao-ron!

Now the Chinese are killing all the civet cats they can because they were found to spread SARS (bird flu). I guess they decided not to kill all the chickens and ducks. Nothing like a little convenient relativism when (not) wiping out the reservoirs of disease.

As if they can't kill enough things, the Chinese went on a dog killing spree, 50K in five days, after 3 cases of rabies in Yunnan Provence (http://www.marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2006/08/china_story_of_.html). These peace-loving and gentle Chinese patriots would take a dog away from its owner on the street and beat it to death in front of its owner. Sweeeeee! Showing their craftiness, the Chinese would wait till night and then make noise to cause any hidden dogs to bark. Then they would follow the barking sound to the evil dog and kill it, probably in front of its owner. Heartwarming, isn't it?

What's next? Euthanizing newborn baby girls? Oh wait a moment... they've already done that.

I hope the Chinese keep occupied killing things in their own country. I'd hate to see what would happen if their ignorant bloodthirstiness ever was turned on the West.

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How long does the list of deb

June 10, 2007 - 12:19 ET by [mattm](#)

How long does the list of debunked junk-science peddling socialist charlatans have to get before people develop a healthy level of skepticism about their claims?

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The history of the race, an

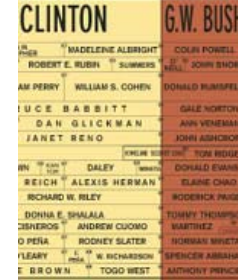
June 10, 2007 - 20:44 ET by [Inthomp](#)

The history of the race, and each individual's experience, are thick with evidence that a truth is not hard to kill and that a lie told well is immortal.-- Mark Twain

Lee T.

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U.S. Navy (ret.) / Vancouver, Washington

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While, Mark Twain was one of

June 10, 2007 - 22:02 ET by [liberal_bug_zapper](#)

While, Mark Twain was one of the early progenitors of modern day Liberal think, this statement of his was very true.

If you want to know more about how the Marxist movement has picked up on Twain's writings, you can go [here](#). Read closely. She is advocating revolution to overthrow the rich and to establish a socialist state, and she's using Mark Twain's writings to justify her traitorous rant because he too wanted this to happen. She even called for the hanging of Bill Clinton. Now while I find his presidency to be a joke, I would never call for violence against him. Yet the Marxists in our midst find no qualms on doing just that.

Leftists, lie. It's what they do. They use any justification for their lies, and in many cases, actually begin to believe their own lies. Rachel Carson lied, and tens of millions died. Bill Clinton lied and millions died (think Rwanda).

But the best weapon of all for the Leftist is to yell at the top of one's lungs that their opponent is lying. Then, repeat that accusation as often and in as many ways possible until it permeates the very fabric of society. Example: "Bush lied, people died!" it's short, memorable and effective... even if it is not even close to the truth, it works. They have become very good at this, and unless we make lying that harms people a crime, they will continue.

People like Rachel Carson and those who took her book and her method and ran with it are a blight on society. They use hyperbole based on unsubstantiated claims (basically lies) at every step to frighten people into submission and capitulation.

I guess I would say that unless anyone claiming that AGW or that the chemicals Rachel Carson scared people over are really going to do what they say, they should be told to shut up or be put in jail for being a public threat.

Prove it or go to jail. If you don't want to go to jail, you must preface every argument with: "It is my opinion that..." and you must never use the word fact. Anyone who uses the word 'Fact' in a public document claiming something as fact, and yet cannot back it up, should face fines and/or jail time.

I'm tired of junk science winning because they have a larger megaphone and are able to spread their lies faster than the truth can get out there to counter the lies.

"We can only reason from what is; we can reason on actualities, but not on possibilities." ~ *Thomas Paine*

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I'm just going to post this w

June 10, 2007 - 15:25 ET by [ferrimanf355](#)

I'm just going to post this without comment, and see how you guys can dance around the money trail...

http://scienceblogs.com/deltoid/2007/05/this_week_in_the_unending_war.php

http://scienceblogs.com/deltoid/2007/06/raw_story_follows_the_money_on.php

Uzumaki/Ayanami '08. Because a ninja and an Eva pilot can govern the nation better that what we have now...

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Fer,From your first link:Ever

June 10, 2007 - 15:31 ET by [botg](#)

Fer,

From your first link:

Every year, 800,000 small children die from malaria, a disease once nearly eradicated. Ponder that.

And all The Washington Post can say is "numerous?"



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That's scandalous.

Thanks

Supreme Court, National Security, Borders, Fiscal Restraint, my litmus test for President.

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From the first link:Because o

June 10, 2007 - 15:46 ET by [dahliatravers](#)

From the first link:

Because of Carson, the agricultural use of DDT was banned, but not the anti-malarial use of DDT and it has continued to be used to this day. You can buy it from Yorkool Chemical:

In the past several years, we supplied DDT 75% WDP to Madagascar, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Africa, Namibia, Solomon Island, Papua New Guinea, Algeria, Thailand, Myanmar for Malaria Control project, and won a good reputation from WHO and relevant countries' government. ...

However, poking around a little myself, I found this:

... USAID's Peterson claims "Insecticide Treat Nets (ITNs) are unquestionably the most effective way that families can protect themselves from malaria." But because of this one-pronged ITN approach, conditions in many Asian countries have deteriorated since the time when DDT was used in combination with effective drug regimens. Dr. Roberts revealed that many countries were pressured to stop using DDT by WHO in the late 1970s and today other aid agencies, including USAID, continue the pressure. ...

<http://www.fightingmalaria.org/news.aspx?id=292#>

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junk science

June 10, 2007 - 18:22 ET by [bulbasaur](#)

I tried, I really tried, to suffer through the "science" site. Here's what passes for debate at your "science" site:

Glenn Reynolds is stupid. Glenn Reynolds has an agenda. Glenn Reynold's agenda is stupid. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing in the hands of a stupid man with a stupid agenda.

Yes, leftist. Glenn Reynolds is a poopie head. Feel better? Good.

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Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!

June 10, 2007 - 18:41 ET by [Newsbusterbrown](#)

Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!

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What can I say.... except yep

June 10, 2007 - 19:29 ET by [liberal_bug_zapper](#)

What can I say.... except yep.... the left have the same playbook. Use hyperbole to make your point and scare people... then try and force worldwide policy to address that hyperbole. And strong arm countries wanting aid to implement policy that is clearly not in their interest. African nations were forced to stop using DDT.

The scary thing is that they succeed more often than not. [Want to read more? Here's a good start.](#)

Here in Taiwan, during what was supposed to be a technology showcase, there were booths set up outside showing Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" or as we here at NewsBusters like to call it... "A very convenient lie". The hysteria is spreading and they do it every time. Much like Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring', Al Gore's movie is full of hyperbole and outright lies. But no one in the mainstream media calls them on it. And so they continue on with an air of authority they do not deserve.

The Left has grasped that Junk Science has worked in helping them institute their policies worldwide. Silent Spring and the junk science that followed worked for more than 40 years, and we're only now beginning to debunk it, but we have a lot more bureaucracy in place because of that movement and the Left knows it. Think "The Environmental Protection Agency" and you'll know what I mean.

"We can only reason from what is; we can reason on actualities, but not on possibilities." ~
Thomas Paine

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Rachel Carson, mass murderer

June 11, 2007 - 08:43 ET by [Hoosier Daddy](#)

Yeah, well, look at who Rachel Carson killed. Just the same wooly-haired Negros that Margaret Sanger wanted to get rid of through her eugenics program (you could look it up) and that Darwin thought were barely a step above apes. These are the heroes of the liberal left?

Evolutionists have heard of Darwin; Creationists understand Darwin.

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If you believe their rhetoric

June 11, 2007 - 08:54 ET by [kathleenirish](#)

If you believe their rhetoric, it would be more than compassionate to have abortion clinics on every street corner of poor neighborhoods throughout the world...can forced abortion, sterilization and 'mercy killing' of the sick, infirm, disabled and old be far behind? Oh, that's right. They're already here. Look at China and Europe.

Anyone who says they support the troops but not the mission is a liar.

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Even chemists praise this idiot

June 18, 2007 - 17:01 ET by [ConservativeChemist](#)

My first post here. I was so jazzed by this thread, I finally registered, though it took a whole week to finally post. Sheesh.

The editor's column for the June 11 issue of Chemical and Engineering News (quite a liberal rag considering its supposed focus on chemistry and chemical engineering, IMO) was a simultaneous puff piece on Carson and slam on conservatives. Apparently, Sen Ben Cardin (D-MD) wanted to pass a senate resolution to hail the great work of this nincompoop. Fortunately, Sen Tom Coburn (R-OK) blocked the resolution so it could never come to a vote. I quote from the article (emphasis mine):

"According to Coburn and **other conservatives**, Carson should be remembered as one of history's worst mass murderers. Her indictment of DDT, they claim, has resulted in something like 90 million preventable deaths from malaria. Like Coburn, **these detractors** often refer to "Silent Spring" in **disparaging** terms like "now-debunked" or "junk science" **without offering any evidence** other than their claim that DDT is perfectly safe and should never have been banned.

<http://pubs.acs.org/...>

Like the quotes around now-debunked and junk science?

Now to the "without offering any evidence part." Would you like to hear our esteemed Editor's evidence for the greatness of Carson? Again, I quote:

"Carson was obviously obsessed with DDT. She returns to it again and again in "Silent Spring" and makes claims about the insecticide that, even at the time, seemed unlikely to turn out to be true...Carson's prose gave voice to millions who yearned for a value system that effectively opposed the indiscriminate poisoning of their world in the name of economic efficiency. For that, Sen. Coburn and his ilk still cannot forgive her."

I am of that ilk. I am also of the ilk that deplores cheesy statements like "millions who yearned for a value system...yada yada yada." Millions eh? I can count three from this article.

Point is, even in the world of chemistry we've got liberal loons. I know this was an editorial, but that someone in science would praise this non-scientist's unsubstantiated blatherings confounds me. Liberals love science when it questions the existence of God or condemns conservative thought. But when science is against them, they have to go back to the bleeding heart argument.

That's all.

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