

Climate Change-Change

By Ken Hutchins

Are present predictions of global warming in league with the climatologists of the 1970s? Back then, was the data of the Camp Century ice core misread and/ or misinterpreted? Why has the then extreme concern of global freezing flipped to global warming? This is very puzzling to me.

My introduction to climate change came from *The Hunting Hypothesis* (1976) by Robert Ardrey. Yes, the book is now over 40 years old and might be passé in some regards, but it has a perspective on climate change startling to compare to the recent clamor about global warming.

Most of this information from Ardrey stems from a Brown University meeting on climate on January 26, 1972. The report of the meeting was drawn up by two world authorities on climate, George Kukla of the Czech Academy of Science and R.K. Matthews of Brown, and published inconspicuously in *Science* late in the year.

I will merely excerpt some of the poignant passages of the two chapters entitled, *The Ice Age* and *Interglacial Man*. I leave the reader to draw personal conclusions:

... This fourth major wave of glaciation, called in Europe *Würm* and in America, *Wisconsin*, contains within it almost the entire history of evolving *Homo sapiens*. One may speak of it as the last glaciation only in the sense that it is the last that we have experienced. We live in an interglacial period, a breathing spell, and glacial times will return.

... The Würm ice sheet that Neanderthal encountered was not the largest of the Ice Age advances, but it was the longest-lasting and the cruelest. In the course of its grip, nearly seventy thousands years long, there were several brief breathing spells that we call interstadials. None, however, presented weather like [as good as] ours. They were simply short intervals when times might be described as bad instead of worse.

...About 35,000 years ago there was an interstadial, one of those brief fluctuations in the which the ice sheet retreated a bit, as if to gather its forces for the later and more savage onslaught which we know as Main Würm.

... The very winter in which the scientists were meeting would be recorded as the worst in recent history. Permanent snow cover and ice-pack increased by 12 percent throughout all the Northern Hemisphere and failed to melt away the following summer. Difficult to accept though their conclusions may seem, according to the calculations of George and

Helena Kukla only six more such winters, coming not too far apart, could restore the Northern Hemisphere to the maximum conditions of the Würm ice sheet, twenty thousand years ago, when Chicago lay mile-deep in ice.

... According to many authorities, including world-famous Caesar Emiliani, in the past half-million years climates comparable to our own have prevailed for only about 10 percent of the time. I have seen estimates as low as 5 percent. We may be quite sure that the last time we experienced weather a shade warmer than today was 124,000 years ago. At about that time the hippopotamus grazed in Britain.

... An ice core [Camp Century] bored in the Greenland ice cap showed that 90,000 years ago there was a drop in temperature, all within a century, that if encountered today would wipe out the major cereal-growing regions of temperate climates north and south. The kill would have included the entirety of Canada, most of the American Mississippi Valley, virtually all of the Soviet Union, much of China, and the cereal-growing regions of Australia and Argentina.

... Yet perhaps the most disturbing of the Brown conclusions related to the duration of interglacials. In all the past half-million years there has never been one, with a climate comparable to our own, that has lasted more than ten thousand years. And ours has lasted just over ten thousand years.

... Studies of early interglacial lake-bed sediments in both England and Germany have revealed not only the same limited duration, but—through pollen analysis—the same inner cyclical variability of climate. Ours has been unique only in that *Home sapiens* had evolved to inhabit it.

... The Camp Century ice core in Greenland indicated what could happen in a hundred years; the rapid retreat of the last ice sheet meant quite simply that nature is in charge; and what could happen in two thousand years could happen tomorrow.

... The Brown meeting caught little attention.