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# The false promise of alternative power

By ARTHUR WIEGENFELD

When you hear the issue of climate change discussed in the media, the discussion likely focuses on the degree to which carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) result in warming the planet. It is often accompanied by a discussion of alternatives to fossil fuels, as if alternative energy is largely a derivative problem, rather than one in its own right.

I take a different view. Apart from climate change, energy critically affects national security and the economy. Fossil fuels make us dependent on hostile nations, and they produce pollution in many forms, such as damage to the environment (oil spills), emissions of dangerous chemicals (sulfur dioxide), and radiation. Thus a new, robust source of power that is not based on coal, oil, or natural gas would solve a number of problems, with the issue of the effect of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on the climate rendered irrelevant.

Unfortunately, with the exception of nuclear power, proposals for alternative energy are not viable. They simply do not provide enough energy. Furthermore, when you

look at the full process, they may increase CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. For example, electric cars may require more coal plants.

Proposals for alternative energy may also, like hydrogen, require more energy to produce than they provide. They will not provide net new jobs—replacing efficient energy with inefficient sources will no more advance the economy than replacing trucks with horses. Some examples:

**ETHANOL**

Ethanol requires almost as much energy to create as it produces. Its yield is very low: The grain required to fill an SUV tank with ethanol once equals what a person eats in a year.

The removal of large tracts of land from food production has dramatically raised world food prices by reducing supplies. As a result, there have been food riots, with millions of people exposed to hunger. A food consultant for the U.N. called it a "crime against humanity." In addition, ethanol from corn requires fertilizers that increase

nitrous oxide emissions that are themselves greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub>, only more powerful.

**HYDROGEN**

Hydrogen is not freely available, but must be extracted from molecules such as water. To do so requires more energy than it produces. Hydrogen is also flammable and hard to contain.

**WIND AND SOLAR ENERGY**

Thousands of wind turbines are required to provide the power of a standard (fossil fuel or nuclear) plant. They must be spaced widely apart to prevent

the air flow of one from interfering with that of the next, meaning that wind farms must consume hundreds of times the land that standard plants require. Furthermore, the power must be transported from wind farms to cities. Because the wind is highly variable, turbines must be backed up by traditional power sources anyway.

The same is true of solar plants, which work best in warm climates

with direct sunlight. Interestingly, environmentalists themselves have opposed these installations due to environmental damage and land requirements. Household installations of solar power may have some limited long-term potential, but are expensive to install and maintain, and may require devices to convert the electricity created from DC to AC.

**HYDROPOWER**

River dams offer a modest contribution to national energy needs (about 3 percent), but the most productive sites are already used up, and dams radically alter the environment.

As a result of their deficiencies, alternative power sources require massive government subsidies in the form of tax breaks and requirements that utilities buy inefficient power; otherwise, the barely noticeable fraction of power they now offer, (less than 1 percent for solar and wind), would drop further.

Furthermore, to reduce fossil fuel use, massive "cap and trade" programs will effectively ration our primary energy source. These three policies will result in the direct and indirect cost to the world economy of trillions of dollars.

**NUCLEAR ENERGY**

I see no alternative to fossil fuels other than nuclear energy. It reduces our dependence on hostile countries, so it can be justified regardless of where one stands on global warming. Its yield exceeds that of fossil fuels by a factor of millions because it alone utilizes the energy in the nucleus of the atom, providing the enormous energy described by Einstein's famous equation, E=mc<sup>2</sup>. (Most energy sources rely on the limited chemical energy of electron bonds.)

Nuclear plants are safer than coal plants and produce less radiation. Furthermore, they can directly produce electricity and power our cars by providing electricity for batteries, making a hydrogen infrastructure (and the "Cash for Clunkers" program) unnecessary.

Unfortunately, there are irrational biases against nuclear power, and environmentalists widely oppose it, though some are taking a second look. Let's hope more do so.

Arthur Wiegenfeld is an independent investor in New York City. He has training in physics, computer simulation, finance, and economics. Comments to artw@rcn.com.

Alternative power sources require massive government subsidies.

## In other news: The inequities of food

Part two

By CHRIS MALLINOS

In this two-part series, Chris Mallinos looks at the policies and practices behind the global food disparity. This month he explores the economic, environmental, and ethical implications of food waste in the Western world. Last month he looked at global food subsidies. Part One may be read online at [www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/20148/](http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/20148/).

Today in the U.K., 7 million slices of bread, 2.8 million tomatoes, and 660,000 eggs will be thrown in the garbage. Most will be perfectly good and entirely edible.

The same amount will be thrown out tomorrow and the next day as it was yesterday and the day before. In fact, these items make up just a small portion of the food that is wasted every single day in the U.K.

Put together, more than US\$16 billion a year is literally being thrown in the trash.

Such is the cruel irony of our age. As governments in the developed

world face massive deficits and people in poor countries struggle to feed themselves, we are discarding expensive food on a mammoth scale.

Few of us give a second thought to the leftovers on our plates, the apple that just doesn't look right, or the bread crusts we don't like. But the economic, environmental, and ethical implications of wasting them resonate across the globe.

This reality hit home in the U.K. last year when a study revealed just how much food residents were throwing out. It found that roughly one-third of the food produced there—or 6.7 tons—found its way to the trash. More than 60 percent of it could have been eaten, and 15 percent was still in its original packaging.

The study also found that this wasted food was pumping so much greenhouse gas into the air that stopping it would be like taking one in five cars off the road.

To say that these numbers were a wake-up call would be putting it lightly. The report caused such a stir that even Prime Minister Gordon Brown riled against "unnecessary"

purchases at the grocery store. Suddenly, food conservation became en vogue.

Of course, the U.K. is not the only offender, nor is it the worst. Depending on whom you believe, the United States throws out between 30 and 50 percent of its food, totaling some \$100 billion a year.

Compare that to the developing world, where food scarcity is so severe that a spike in prices last year caused riots in 30 countries. More than 1 billion people suffer from malnutrition, and a child dies of hunger every six seconds.

Yet according to the World Food Program, America's food waste alone is enough to feed every hungry person in Africa. Talk about being born in the wrong place.

So why the disparity? How can it be that so few waste so much, while the rest starve? On a practical level, many people have a poor understanding of how to store their food. Meat, fruit, and vegetables go bad far quicker than they have to simply because we don't store them properly.

But the bigger culprit is the culture

of abundance so pervasive in many Western countries. We simply produce too much, far more than we need, and feel entitled to doing just that. Somehow, overproduction and overconsumption have become symbols of a free and democratic society.

And when we have too much, we simply throw it out. It doesn't seem to matter, since there's always more at the grocery store. Rows and rows of cheap packaged goods means we never have to worry about where our next meal will come from.

Food, after all, is just another commodity. It's long lost its true value. The days where your grandmother told you not to waste food because you're lucky to have it are long gone.

But not all the news is bad. In pockets around the world, movements toward smarter shopping are gaining traction as people commit themselves to a responsible lifestyle.

More and more consumers are logging on to Web sites like Wasted-food.com to find tips on food preservation—everything from advice on storing what you buy to recipes for your leftovers.

And for the food we do throw out, Sweden is leading the charge to turn organic waste into fuel. The country already has 7,000 cars and 800 buses that run on biogas. In 2005, it even

unveiled the world's first biogas commuter train.

There's still a lot of work to do, but these are important first steps. In the end, the way we view what we eat will only change once we realize just what it means to throw food away and what we are really losing when we do.

There's certainly nothing wasteful about that.

Chris Mallinos is a Toronto-based journalist whose work has appeared on six continents and in seven languages. You can reach him at [www.chrismallinos.com](http://www.chrismallinos.com).

4 PUZZLES...PEACE  
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PUZZLE ON P2

The 'Nine Commentaries' is the book that is disintegrating the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and changing China.

This award-winning Epoch Times editorial series discloses the true history and nature of the CCP. Now it is serialized here.

# Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party

## Commentary Eight

On how the Chinese Communist Party is an evil cult

The Communist Party's cultish traits can be summarized under six headings:

**1. CONCOCTION OF DOCTRINES AND ELIMINATION OF DISSIDENTS**  
The Communist Party holds up Marxism as its religious doctrine and shows it off as the unbreakable truth. The doctrines of the Communist Party lack benevolence and tolerance. Instead, they are full of arrogance.

Marxism was a product of the initial period of capitalism when productivity was low and science was under-developed. It didn't have a correct understanding at all of the relationships between humanity and society or humanity and nature. Unfortunately, this heretical ideology developed into the international communist movement, and harmed the human world for over a century before the people discarded it, having found it completely wrong in practice.

Party leaders since Lenin have always amended the cult's doctrines. From Lenin's theory of violent revolution, to Mao Zedong's theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, to Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents," the Communist Party's history is full of such heretical theory and fallacy. Although these theories have constantly caused disasters in practice and are self-contradictory, the Communist Party still proclaims it is universally correct and forces the people to study its doctrines.

Eliminating dissidents is the most effective means for the evil cult of communism to spread its doctrine. Because the doctrine and behavior of this evil cult are too ridiculous, the Communist Party has to force people to accept them, relying on violence to eliminate dissidents.

After the Chinese Communist Party seized the reins of power in China, it initiated land reform to eliminate the landlord class, socialist reform in industry and commerce to eliminate capitalists, the movement of purging reactionaries to eliminate folk religions and officials who held office before the communists took power, the Anti-Rightist Movement to silence intellectuals, and the Cultural Revolution to eradicate traditional Chinese culture.

Mao Zedong was set up as the 'red sun' and 'big liberator.'

The CCP was able to unify China under the communist evil cult and achieve a situation where everyone read the "Red Book," performed the "loyalty dance," and "asked for the Party's instructions in the morning and reported to the Party in the evening."

In the period after Mao's and Deng's reigns, the CCP asserted that Falun Gong, a traditional cultivation practice that believes in Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance, would compete with it for the masses. It therefore intended to eradicate Falun Gong and initiated a genocidal persecution of Falun Gong, which continues today.

**2. PROMOTING WORSHIP OF THE LEADER AND SUPREMACIST VIEWS**

From Marx to Jiang Zemin, the Communist Party leaders' portraits are prominently displayed for worship. The absolute authority of the Communist Party leaders forbids any challenge. Mao Zedong was set up as the "red sun" and "big liberator." The

Party spoke outrageously about his writing, saying "one sentence equals 10,000 ordinary sentences."

As an ordinary Party member, Deng Xiaoping once dominated Chinese politics like an overlord. Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents" theory is merely a little over 40 characters, long including punctuation, but the CCP Fourth Plenary Session boasted it as "providing a creative answer to the questions such as what socialism is, how to construct socialism, what kind of party we are building and how to build the Party."

The Party also spoke outrageously about the thought of the "Three Represents," although in this case actually mocking it when saying it is a continuation and development of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong thought, and Deng Xiaoping theory.

Stalin's wanton slaughter of innocent people, the catastrophic Cultural Revolution launched by Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping's order of the Tiananmen Square massacre, and Jiang Zemin's ongoing persecution of Falun Gong are the dreadful results of the Communist Party's heretical dictatorship.

On one hand, the CCP stipulates in its Constitution, "All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise state power

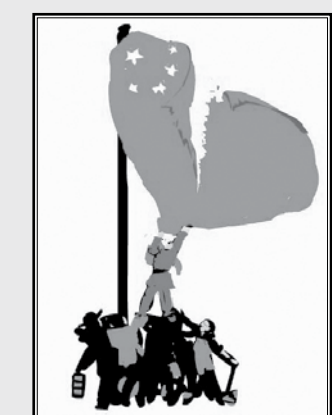
are the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at different levels." "No organization or individual may enjoy the privilege of being above the Constitution and the law."<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the CCP Charter stipulates that the CCP is the core of the leadership for the Chinese-featured socialist cause, overriding both the country and the people. The chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress made "important speeches" across the country, claiming that the National People's Congress, the highest organ of state power, must adhere to the CCP's leadership.

According to the CCP's principle of democratic centralism, the entire Party must obey the Central Committee of the Party. Stripped to its core, what the National People's Congress really insists upon is the dictatorship of the general secretary, which is in turn protected in the form of legislation.

<sup>11</sup> A kind of group dance popular during the Cultural Revolution to show loyalty to Mao and the Party. See a picture of the dance on [www.shm.com.cn/yantai/2004-05/13/content\\_3717.htm](http://www.shm.com.cn/yantai/2004-05/13/content_3717.htm).  
<sup>12</sup> Constitution of the People's Republic of China (official translation, 1999).

## QUITTING THE CCP



Inspired by the 'Nine Commentaries,' as of August 26, at 9:28 p.m.

59,576,406

Chinese people have announced their intentions to quit the Chinese Communist Party and its affiliated organizations on a special Web site established by The Epoch Times. Many others, unable to break through the Chinese Internet blockade, have posted their withdrawal statements on poles or buildings. Others have written them on Chinese currency. Read recent statements of Chinese quitting the Party, the latest news on the "Nine Commentaries," and more at <http://www.NineCommentaries.com>

### Letters to the Editor



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