

## Book Review

# Sachs Qualifies for Nobel Prize: He's Reached That Level of Incompetence!

by Nancy Spannaus

### **Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet**

by Jeffrey D. Sachs

New York: Penguin, 2008

386 pages, hardcover, \$27.95

It takes a certain level of gross incompetence, usually with a heavy dose of promotion of genocide thrown in, to qualify an economist for a Nobel Prize. Earth Institute head Jeffrey Sachs, despite his attempts to reinvent himself as a bleeding-heart liberal for the extremely poor, has a resumé which has already put him into the running—most notably, his role in pushing through genocidal shock therapy in Russia and Poland in the 1990s, and in turning Bolivia into a cocaine economy in the 1980s. With his latest book, however, Sachs demonstrates his level of theoretical incompetence, which should make the case conclusive.

Start with this apparently serious proposal from the “Global Problem Solving” conclusion of Sachs’ book:

“With the recent publication by *Forbes* magazine of the ranking of the world’s richest people, a new prospect comes into focus. According to *Forbes*, there are now around 950 billionaires in the world, with an estimated combined wealth of \$3.5 trillion. . . . Even after all the yachts, mansions, and luxury living that money can buy have been funded many times over, these billionaires will still have nearly \$3.5 trillion to



*Economist Jeffrey Sachs at The Earth Institute: Is he incompetent, or evil, or both? His new book, taken straight from what he's peddling at the UN, gives you pause.*

change the world. Suppose they pooled their wealth. . . . By standard and conservative principles of foundation management, a \$3.5 trillion endowment would have a 5 percent payout of around \$175 billion, an amount sufficient to extend basic health care to all the poorest of the world; end massive pandemics of AIDS, TB, and malaria; jump-start an African Green Revolution; end the digital divide; and address the crying need for safe drinking water for one billion people.”

This guy is nuts!

### **Money Is Not Economics!**

Hasn't Sachs noticed that the world financial system, billionaires included, is going through a meltdown? That meltdown has, conservatively, already liquidated trillions in paper assets, and is now ravaging the physical economy of the planet, by leading to shutdowns of productive activity globally. Not only are Sachs' billionaires disappearing, but so are the physical goods and services required to provide the basis for the extremely poor, and everybody else, to get out of destitution. The destitution is spreading, even under conditions of an increase of “money,” most of which was pure debt.

Sachs' belief in “money” is a fundamental flaw throughout his analysis, not just in this quixotic proposal. He is constantly measuring progress, and calling for redistribution, in pure (meaningless) monetary terms. For example, his idea of measuring economic activity is to “multiply the average income per person

by the number of people"! He understands *nothing* about what makes economies work.

Second, why should wealthy individuals, working through private philanthropies, be given the power to dictate conditions to governments and populations? This is essentially a feudal idea, especially at a time where rampant monetarism has made many privateers much richer than many governments, mostly on the basis of speculation and other nefarious activities. But Sachs wants to eliminate sovereign governments, in favor of NGOs—which means a *de facto* dictatorship by private capital.

Third, take a look at the beliefs and character of those individuals to whom Sachs is appealing to “save” the poor, and you’ll find a pack of some of the biggest scoundrels ever known. George Soros, the unrepentant Nazi collaborator, is the most obvious case; but there are many more, emphatically including the Rockefeller Foundation, which Sachs considers the greatest non-governmental organization of the 20th Century. While Rockefeller Foundation-funded scientists did play a seminal role in the Green Revolution which greatly improved agricultural productivity in the 1970s, this foundation has been a prime mover behind the sustained, and, unfortunately, quite successful, drive for a new, Malthusian, anti-population ethic throughout the world.

### **The Logic of Genocide**

Throughout much of this book, Sachs talks a humanitarian game: attacking pure free-market ideology and unilateralism; pushing for aiding the poor with AIDS drugs and other ameliorative measures; and calling for the revival of “global cooperation.” But his assumptions give the story away. They amount to the promotion of Malthusian genocide. Incompetence is no excuse.

Sachs sees humanity threatened by four crises, the first two of which come straight out of the Malthusian agenda. Number one is the assertion that human beings are putting too much pressure on the Earth’s ecosystems, and thus causing potentially devastating global warming. In fact, the anthropogenic explanation for global warming (if the phenomenon even exists) is scientific bunk, and simply functions as an excuse for a murderous cutback in scientific and technological progress. Man is not an imposition on the Earth, but its rightful proprietor, with access to the scientific knowledge to expand his dominion over it, and en-

hance its condition for future generations.

Reducing man’s impact on the environment, as Sachs and his cheerleader Al Gore propose, is a sure-fire recipe for devolution of the planet, as well as mankind.

Sachs’s crisis number two makes explicit the Malthusian implications of number one: He says the world’s population is rising too fast, especially in the poorer parts of the planet. Since he wants to show himself to be a liberal, Sachs sticks to the line that cutting population growth, so that the overall population “stabilizes” at 8 billion or less, must be voluntary. But the economic conditions that his approach to the world economy will create, will mean that the escalating death rate will be anything but by choice.

The idea of potential relative population density, determined by man’s ability to improve his knowledge and mastery over the universe, seems never to have crossed Sachs’ mind. Thus he considers Africa—which is devastatingly underpopulated—to be overpopulated, because its people have been deliberately denied the technology and infrastructure required to support a growing population. On the Malthus dictum that exponential population growth must outstrip resources, Sachs demurs.

Sachs also lies that rapidly growing populations lead to war, because they result in what he calls a “bulge” in the population of young men, who then, he asserts in typical Samuel Huntington “clash of civilizations” logic, become fodder for extremist movements that will destroy the peace.

It’s all poppycock. If Sachs understood the growth of the United States, especially in the 19th Century, for example, with its high fertility rate, he could see that there is nothing lawful about the negative connection he draws between the rate of population growth, and economic progress. The difference today is that the rapidly growing nations are being denied the ability to develop their technologies and populations, by the global financial interests whose philanthropy Sachs is so anxious to solicit.

Is Jeffrey Sachs just stupid, or is he evil? Is he both? It’s not worth the debate. What’s required to deal with the real crises of devastating poverty, which are about to get much more horrific, is to restore a world credit system based on nation-states dedicated to providing for the general welfare of all mankind. LaRouche has put that proposal on the table—and any other agenda is a diversion.