

# Fat Cats for Africa



The place is always described as exclusive, but that's one thing it is not. Davos is a Swiss ski resort for *hoi polloi*, an Atlantic City with snow, although

it's far prettier than Donald Trump's Jersey playground. Last time I was here was about ten years ago on the frozen lake for a car race that ended up in a humongous spin that lasted for more than a minute.

Davos only becomes exclusive during the annual gathering of fat cats—the World Economic Forum, as it prefers to call itself. GFC (Gathering of Fat Cats), however, is a far more appropriate name.

There is something ludicrous in watching world political and financial leaders jostling to rub elbows with brain-dead celebrities, but such are the joys of the modern world. Pretending to care for the poor is the order of the day, both for the suits as well as for the celebrated, and if one were a ten-year-old who happened to be particularly innocent, he might believe this year's Davos message: the end of poverty is near.

Davos Man returned home from the GFC last week full of dinner-party stories—how Bill Gates and Bill Clinton stood beside Tony Blair and Bono and Angelina Jolie and Sharon Stone and pledged to turn Africa into Palm Beach in the near future (by the year 2025, according to the economist Jeffrey Sachs; 3025 according to the economist Taki).

Mind you, everyone meant well. First and foremost among the assembled was the desire to publicize themselves and the companies they represented. The second priority was to network. Last but not least came the plan to end poverty, as noble a cause as there is, but for one problem. Nobody mentioned the c-word. Corruption—as in African leaders' corruption.

Bill Gates might have the cash and commercial credibility, Bill Clinton the soaring rhetoric, and Bono the blarney and celebrity, but if these cats manage to eliminate hunger from even one tiny African village, I will gift my beautiful sailing yacht to Monica Lewinsky. Call me cynical, but when economists, civil servants, politicians, and company suits start naming countries such as the United States, Japan, and Germany as the top sinners in the not-giving-aid-to-poor-countries category, it's time for the sick bag—especially when in the presence of mega-crooks like the president of Nigeria, top Saudi oil ministers, and—by satellite—Jacques Chirac, a man who is trying to pass a special law making him senator for life in order to avoid jail the minute his presidential term is over. (Chirac wants to introduce global taxes on air and sea travel and financial speculation to help Africa.)

Well-intentioned crusades against poverty in developing countries are good for publicity but little else. Accusing rich nations of not doing enough is just another way of ingratiating oneself with celebrities and the chattering classes. But the reason so many thousands of lives are lost daily in sub-Saharan Africa is not lack of aid but because too much money goes into fighting wars, leaving nothing for hospitals and schools.

Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone are three glaring examples of this. Ethiopia has spent huge sums fighting Eritrea over a disputed border. Over 65 million Ethiopians can now hardly feed themselves, while the government spends bil-

lions on arms. Zimbabwe, once the breadbasket of Africa, is an impoverished nation because of Robert Mugabe's greed and disastrous anti-white policies. The psychopathic Liberian murderer Charles Taylor is living in Nigeria with the hundreds of millions he stole from the nation's coffers, and his protector, Olusegun Obasanjo, presents himself in Davos and lectures us on the need to help Africa. Ditto Thabo Mbeki, president of South Africa and the prime mover behind the theory that AIDS does not exist but is an American plot to weaken Africans.

Hand-wringing by corrupt African leaders is nothing new. Africa is suicidal, and its problems are man-made. They began when the British hastily granted African nations independence. Ensuing tribal warfare in Angola, Uganda, Liberia, Eritrea, and the Sudan robbed their citizens of health care and education. The rest was predictable. Africa's epidemics—malaria, cholera, typhoid, and AIDS—will not be beaten by grand gestures from the West. The problems lie in African attitudes. One dinner in Davos for a fat cat costs more than the annual income of most African families, and I do not condemn his appetite—but I do condemn his rhetoric. How dare the Saudi oil minister open his mouth in Davos, when fat Fahd spends \$200 million dollars in his three-week annual holiday in Marbella?

It may not be politically correct, but the only way to save Africa from itself is to recolonize it. The only solution is good governance, an impartial judiciary, secure borders, internal peace, modern medical practices, and an end to kleptocracy. But I won't hold my breath till it happens. Nor will I ever set foot in Davos again. Despite the altitude, too much hot air. ■

# It might be the most taboo question in America, but why are today's kids more troubled, more overweight, "learning disabled," and plagued by STDs?

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— *The Economist*

"Absent fathers or mothers might read all this and feel guilty. Eberstadt doesn't consider that a bad thing, arguing that the reflex to protect parents from ever feeling guilt serves 'to stop discussion just when it needs to start.'"

— Rich Lowry, *National Review*

"No one can reasonably doubt that parental neglect is a serious problem. Ms. Eberstadt repeatedly emphasizes this problem, sometimes by citing good scientific studies and sometimes by wishing that such studies existed."

— James Q. Wilson, *Wall Street Journal*

The book's "strength comes out on every page, as Eberstadt casts aside orthodoxies and forces us to look at ourselves and our children with new eyes."

— Stanley Kurtz, *National Review Online*

