

Freedom's Edge

January 2012

A magazine for those seeking justice and liberty

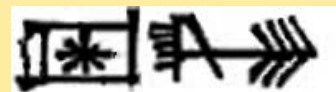
Special Edition
"Overpopulation"

People



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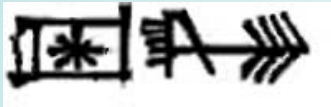
Special



A magazine looking for Justice & the roots of society:

**For: All people having thoughts of Freedom.
Those who regard government as the greatest threat to our
freedom, security and future well being.
And those believing in the sanctity of human life.**

Front Cover:
part: Picture from the Guardian U.K.



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Introduction

There are many people on the Earth! Indeed, with much publicity and hullabaloo, it is claimed that we have passed the seven (7) billion mark. Whether this is true or not depends upon your level of belief in the United Nations and its statistics. It should be noted, however, that many countries do not have a census and of those that do many are not compulsory.

Population control has been tried from the time of the Ancient Greeks, who believed the world was overpopulated; to India under Mrs. Gandhi, where some eight (8) million people were sterilised in 1975-76, and to present day China which still practises a one child policy using the most foul means to achieve its objective, whatever that is!

In Australia there is much angst about refugees, their ethnicity, and the means they use to get here. This has been lumped together by the "population is bad" scaremongers. The xenophobic qualities of the politicians, in government office and in opposition, have come to the fore. The advocates of "overpopulation" are shouting loudly, in a land that has more space per head of population than any other nation on Earth. Listening to the radio or television or reading the newspapers gives one the impression that we (Australians) hate foreigners. No matter what their governments are like, Australia is specifically reserved for white, middle class, voting, xenophobes - and God said so!

Arguments over population and populations effects upon the environment have been in the forefront of economics since the days of the Rev. T. R. Malthus (1766 - 1834). The Reverend gentleman wrote an article entitled "An Essay on the Principle of Population" (1798). A copy may be downloaded from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4239/4239-h/4239-h.htm>.

Primarily a response to William Godwins "perfectibility of society" and to the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), his "Essay" was so well received that there ensued another five editions. "In 1805 Malthus became Professor of History and Political Economy at the East India Company College (now known as Haileybury) in Hertfordshire. His students affectionately referred to him as "Pop" or "Population" Malthus." (There is an extensive biography of him and his works, and this is an extract from, the online Encyclopaedia, "Wikipedia.") For over a hundred and fifty years his theses was known as the Malthusian doctrine. Here, in the 21st Century, his name is almost unknown except among academics and politically aware people. This has been used as an argument for some who would wish to show that, whilst they believe in "overpopulation" they are not Malthusian. A rose by any other name?

The theories of "overpopulation" began with Malthus (there is some dispute over this) when the worlds population was less than one billion (There is no record of who counted them.) The absurdity of the Malthus claim is obvious to us today. But the idea of "overpopulation" persists. Its latest advocates produce arguments that are no more than variations of those put by Malthus. There are however, much deeper roots to this argument, and these have been pointed out many times. Suffice at this moment to merely mention them and defer the subject to later in this dissertation

Malthus and his latter day doomsayers.

"The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race"

There are many supporters of the Malthusian theory. They have not diminished over the years. Perhaps the most prominent supporters of the Twentieth Century were Paul [Professor Paul R. Ehrlich, Stanford University] & Anne Ehrlich with *The Population Bomb* (1968). This book predicted mass starvation for the foreseeable future and an increasing death rate.

Organisations advocating overpopulation as the cause of all our earthly woes abound. Earth First, Earth Policy Institute, the Australian government (<http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population/publications/pubs/population-strategy.pdf>), Sustainable Population Australia, Population Justice Project, Optimum Population Trust, Australian Conservation Foundation; are a few in the English speaking world. A video basically outlining one of the modern approaches to the subject "Growthbusters" (See: <http://vimeo.com/30647439>) tells some of the story.

All these organisations primarily preach as one with Malthus. Ever since Malthus the story has been the same; whether you look to his supporters in the 19th Century, 20th Century or the 21st Century. This line of thought has been backed by big money and the Universities around the world. In the simplest of terms, the Malthusian theory and its modern day supporters tell us, in no uncertain terms, that we face a devastating disaster because of lack of food and water and that the environment faces unrecoverable damage at the hands of too many people.

The predictions of the Ehrlichs, as with those of Malthus, have not come true. Death rates have fallen and birth rates have risen worldwide. And the poor we still have with us. The Club of Rome produced "Limits to Growth" in 1972 (12 million copies were distributed in 37 languages). It effectively backed the Ehrlichs' Population Bomb and continues to be in the forefront of population politics. There was an update in 2002 (to Limits to Growth).

Books, films, videos are all used to push this line of overpopulation, and the worlds press is very sympathetic. Those who advocate these policies have done little other than frighten the general public. SPA has proposed a one child policy for Australia (see their literature). Both India and China have introduced policies restricting, under penalty, the number of children allowed to any couple. India, under Mrs. Gandhi, had some 8 million men sterilized. India, 30 years later, wants to be the most populous nation on Earth.

"The essential point made about population growth is as valid today as it was in 1968: "Basically there are only two kinds of solutions to the population problem. One is a 'birthrate solution,' in which we find ways to lower the birthrate. The other is a 'death rate solution' in which ways to raise the death rate - war, famine, pestilence - find us" (p.34) *The Population Bomb Revisited Ehrlich& Ehrlich 2009.*



Counter argument.

Increasingly, modern man has come to believe that he faces a serious problem in the near future because of the so-called population explosion. The world, he is told, is running out of room and out of food for man, and, as a result, drastic measures may be necessary in order to prevent disaster. Before the question, "Does the world face over-population?" can be answered, another question must be faced: "What is overpopulation?" *The Myth of Overpopulation. Rousas J. Rushdoony 1969 (Prosper Library.)*

The arguments put forward by the reverend were not without dispute. "In 1820, Godwin published 'Of Population: An Enquiry Concerning the Power of Increase in the Numbers of Mankind, as a rebuttal to Malthus's essays" (*Wikipedia*). Frederick Engels opposed Malthus (1844) and called Malthus's hypothesis "...the crudest, most barbarous theory that ever existed, a system of despair which struck down all those beautiful phrases about love thy neighbour and world citizenship." Engels also predicted that science would solve the problem of an adequate food supply. (*Wikipedia*.)

Economists have calculated that a city that is twice as big as another city is almost 10 per cent more productive, because it can engage in a more advanced division of labour. Everybody can focus on what they do best and perfect their skills and invest in supporting technology, and buy the rest from others. It is easier to find the right talent, workers and customers, and you get a multitude of lifestyles and tastes, which creates a more dynamic, pluralist and exciting society. *Johan Norberg The Australian 20 August 2010.*

Ester Boserup wrote in her book *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure*, that population levels determine agricultural methods, rather than agricultural methods determining population (via food supply). A major point of her book is that "necessity is the mother of invention". (*Wikipedia; Malthusian Catastrophe*.)

Julian Simon was one of many economists who challenged the Malthusian catastrophe, citing (1) the existence of new knowledge, and educated people to take advantage of it, and (2) "economic freedom", that is, the ability of the world to increase production when there is a profitable opportunity to do so. Engels states that the calculation that Malthus made with the difference in population and productive power is incorrect because Malthus does not take into consideration a third element, science. Scientific "progress is as unlimited and at least as rapid as that of population". (*Wikipedia; Malthusian Catastrophe*.)

"Our debate with populationists is not about the raw numbers. It is about *what the numbers mean*. What are the causes of environmental crisis, and what does that tell us about the solutions? Populationists isolate one number -population size or growth - and claim it is the underlying cause for all the rest. Population increased: economic activity expanded and environmental degradation increased; so population must have caused the expansion and degradation.

That only shows *correlation*, not *causation*. *Ian Angus & Simon Butler "Too Many People" 2011.*



What is Seen and What is not Seen (With apologies to Frederic Bastiat)

The publicity surrounding advocates of "overpopulation" is extraordinary. The substance of their claims has always proven to be false. From the Greeks, an obvious absurdity; Wallace, Malthus and a host of writers and countries through to the present day. With such prominent advocates such as Dick Smith (another multi millionaire) and innumerable professors from prominent universities adding their voices.

Further the U.N. has added its voice "... in 2010 the UN reported that 925 million of the world's population of nearly seven billion people were in a constant state of hunger." (*Wikipedia; The Population Bomb.*) Now that statement is "true." But what people do not see is that we produce sufficient food for some twelve billion souls, in a world that has only seven(7) billion. (See: *Africa: Food for 12 Billion - So Why Did 854 Million Go Without?* <http://actionaidusa.org/news/>) Production has more than kept up with the growth in population.

There is continual propaganda from neo-classical economists about "scarce resources" and this has been added and supported by the "overpopulation" advocates and, in Australia at least, proposals from the left of politics for the "user pays" catastrophe. All these have come together to "prove" each others points, irrespective of the political alignments. An overlap which confirms the "no difference" attitude in the electorate. This alliance has not helped the poor or righted any injustice. It has been a boon for the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. (<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/27/business/la-fi-rich-poor-20111027>). Genuine environmentalists and Georgist who want basic reforms are pushed aside by the sheer force of this alliance. We have extreme exaggerations about "costs" and "resources" which, if politically implemented would make the Ehrlichs' Population Bomb seem like a penny banger. These exaggerations appear across the reform networks like a plague, they distort, and obfuscate the true meanings of all they touch, always to the benefit of the extremely wealthy. We are now reaping some of this "free enterprise" politics with electricity pricing and Carbon tax.

We hear much about countries suffering from famine and drought. Australia has just been through fourteen (14) years, or more, of drought. The politics have been fascinating, many farmers have been deprived of their land; Private companies have been making gains in water ownership never before seen, and are successfully staying out of the limelight whilst state and federal politicians fleece the farmers and the general public. Throughout the drought in Australia, whilst many had to restrict water usage* none have suffered from either lack of water or from starvation. If there were any danger from lack of environmental facilities, from a fractured environment, from a shortage of any description, it would most surely have shown during this period. This is a typical "What is seen - What is not seen" situation. There was the usual media information about the drought ("poor" farmers etc.), but it was not till the later years that the situation was seen to require political interference to "solve." And politics, true to tradition, has only added more problems to the problems. The troubles with the Hume dam (<http://www.abc.net.au/programsales/s2519154.htm>) have not been publicized and the Wonthaggi fiasco has been pushed to the background by a weak government and compliant press and media.

Worldwide, the same conditions apply, the only disaster in recent years in the more developed countries that caused widespread people problems was hurricane Katrina. That was not lack of resources, but political incompetence. The current drought and famine in Somalia (<http://www.unrefugees.org.au/emergencies/current-emergencies/east-africa-crisis>) is one caused purely by politics and some unprincipled anti-human selling people guns and tanks.

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When enough food is being produced to feed twelve (12) billion people (approximately 58% more than required) and approximately 14% cannot get enough to eat it points to two possible problems. First that their demand is ineffective, they are poor and cannot afford to buy the food, or that there is a failure in the distribution system, which is simply another facet of the first problem. Yes! There are people starving to death, but it has nothing to do with environmental degradation or too many people. It is purely an economic problem with the distribution of wealth.

**The water usage fiasco across Australia is possibly the political scandal across two centuries. It is worthy of some intensive investigative enquiry.*

Clearing a few points

India: In the 1970s' under Indira Gandhi extensive measures were taken to "control" population. Mrs. Gandhi was awarded the UN World Population Prize in 1983.

"I'm not going to piss away foreign aid in nations where they refuse to deal with their own population problems." Lyndon Johnson.

The Food First Institute, citing UN statistics, points out ... "The world today produces enough grain alone to provide every human being on the planet with 3,500 calories a day. That's enough to make most people fat!" (Too Many People.)

"...60 percent of the worlds hungry are small farmers and 20 percent are landless agricultural workers." (Too Many People.)

"Pollution begins not in the family bedroom, but in the corporate boardrooms." Prof. Barry Commoner (quoted in Too Many People.)

A Matter of influence!

Paul Ehrlich (The Population Bomb) received at least twelve major awards for his work,..." (quoted in Too Many People)

"If Malthus was right, then all attempts to build a better society are doomed." (Too Many People.)

"People who claim that population growth is the big environmental issue are shifting the blame from the rich to the poor"

"It's time we had the guts to name the problem. It's not sex; it's money. It's not the poor; it's the rich." <http://www.monbiot.com/2009/09/29/the-population-myth/>



The Definitive Answer

What it's all about.

What it is all about is that age old question of who gets what out of the economic cake. The whole Malthusian "populationist" approach is putting the "blame" for poverty upon people numbers always in the poorer sections of our community. This is patently a defence of those who have more than they can reasonably spend in their lifetime, and diverts attention from how they got it.

In 1879 Henry George wrote "Progress and Poverty" in which he examined the Malthusian doctrine and set about demolishing it for two reasons. First was its support for the Wage Fund Theory. This theory promotes the idea that wages come from a fund of capital set aside for wages, that wages depend on the ratio of labour to the capital fund. And secondly that the increase in the number of people diminished this fund therefore causing poverty. *"According to the current doctrine of wages, wages fall as increase in the number of laborers necessitates a more minute division of capital; according to the Malthusian theory, poverty appears as increase in population necessitates the more minute division of subsistence."* If these two things were true then there was no need for George to write his book.

George pointed out that. *"...the physical fact that no more people can exist than can find subsistence"* And whilst many may be facing starvation on the planet today, it is evident that seven billion have and have had sufficient to get this far. And this alone points to the stupidity of the Malthusian doctrine, the predictions of the Ehrlichs, the cant of organisations such as SPA, the grandstanding of Dick Smith and fellow travellers.

"But it has triumphantly withstood the ordeal, and in spite of the refutations of the Godwins, the denunciations of the Cobbetts, and all the shafts that argument, sarcasm, ridicule, and sentiment could direct against it, today it stands in the world of thought as an accepted truth, which compels the recognition even of those who would fain disbelieve it." And. *"According to the current doctrine of wages, wages fall as increase in the number of laborers necessitates a more minute division of capital; according to the Malthusian theory, poverty appears as increase in population necessitates the more minute division of subsistence. It requires but the identification of capital with subsistence, and number of laborers with population, an identification made in the current treatises on political economy, where the terms are often converted, to make the two propositions as identical formally as they are substantially. And thus it is, as stated by Buckle in the passage previously quoted, that the theory of population advanced by Malthus has appeared to prove decisively the theory of wages advanced by Smith."*

George, and many others, have nailed the problem down. It has nothing to do with people. It has, everything to do with wealth. The population question arises only because the wealthy find it necessary to divert attention from their opulence.

Indicators of the Problem

The richest 1 percent of Americans take in and spend more than the bottom 40 percent.

The richest 5 percent of Americans own more than everyone else in the United States combined.

The bottom 80 percent of Americans account for less than 40 percent of consumer spending.

In Australia, eleven very rich individuals own more than the country's 800,000 poorest households combined.

The 147 individuals who topped the 2002 Forbes "Worlds Richest People" list had a total wealth equal to the total annual income of three billion people, half the worlds population. (Too Many People. Angus and Butler.)

Australias' top eight (8)

1	Gina Rinehart	\$10.31 billion	Hancock Prospecting	[Mining]
2	Ivan Glasenberg	\$ 8.80 billion	Glencore commodities trading	
3	Andrew Forrest	\$ 6.18 billion	Fortescue Metals Group	[Mining]
4	Anthony Pratt & family	\$ 5.18 billion	Visy Industries	
5	Clive Palmer	\$ 5.05 billion	Resources	[Mining]
6	Frank Lowy	\$ 4.98 billion	Westfield; property	(shopping centres)
7	Harry Triguboff	\$ 4.30 billion	Meriton Apartments	
8	James Packer	\$ 4.16 billion	Crown Limited; Consolidated Media Holdings	
		\$48.96 billion	Source: Wikipedia. Taken from <i>Forbes Top 200</i> .	

"To those who, seeing the vice and misery that spring from the unequal distribution of wealth and privilege, feel the possibility of a higher social state and would strive for its attainment."

"...the sentiment of justice is yet fundamental to the human mind, and whatever dispute arouses the passions of men, the conflict is sure to rage, not so much as to the question "Is it wise?" as to the question "Is it right?"

It is evident that the distribution of wealth causes many problems. Among those problems are the distortions used by the Malthusian doctrine. That these figures can be so openly promoted and supported demonstrates a clear manipulation of the public opinion. That so many awards can go to the supporters of this doctrine and so few to opposing views illustrates the power of privilege.

The battle against privilege has a long way to go; justice is further away today than it was in 1879 when George wrote Progress and Poverty. This is the challenge to all clear thinking people.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And that cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.
—Mrs. Browning

The widow is gathering nettles for her children's
dinner; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in
the Oeil de Boef, hath an alchemy whereby he will
extract from her the third nettle, and call it rent.
—Carlyle

Why hesitate? Ye are full-bearded men,
With God-implanted will, and courage if
Ye dare but show it. Never yet was will
But found some way or means to work it out,
Nor e'er did Fortune frown on him who dared.
Shall we in presence of this grievous wrong,
In this supremest moment of all time,
Stand trembling, cowering, when with one bold stroke
These groaning millions might be ever free?—
And that one stroke so just, so greatly good,
So level with the happiness of man,
That all the angels will applaud the deed.
—E. R. Taylor