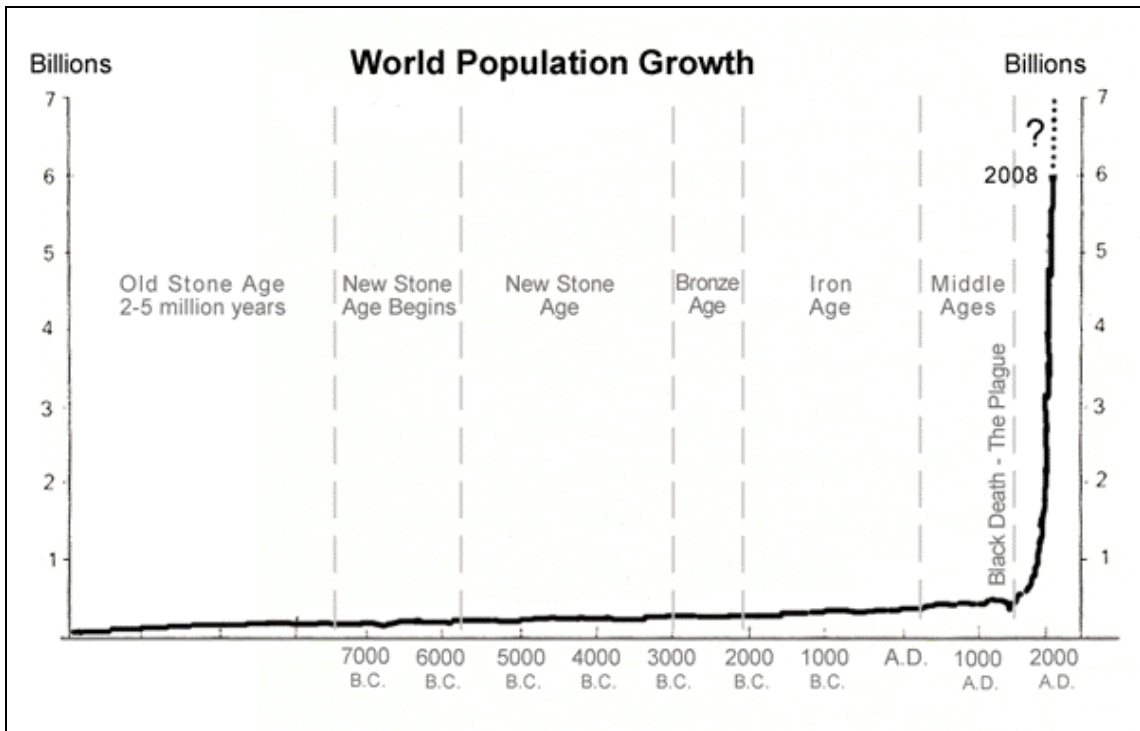


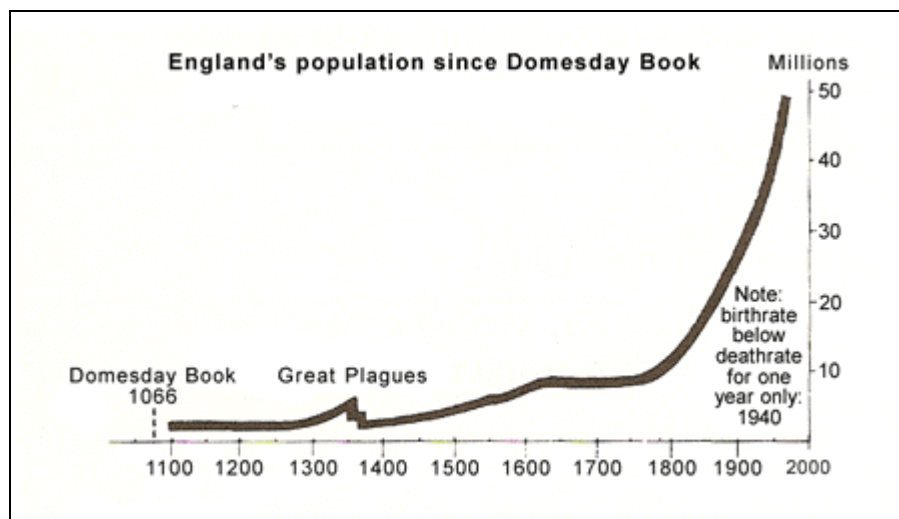
I wrote and published this article in 1972. Its predictions proved all too accurate.



The Root of Humanity's Problems

The population of the world is growing at such a fantastic rate that most experts say our present situation can only be described as a crisis. If the present rate continues - in other words, *if we do nothing to slow it*, the population of the world will double during the next 35 years¹. This means that, even to keep up our present standard of living, we will need twice as many houses, schools, hospitals, roads and cars and twice as much food, fuel, power and *space*. It also means that we will use up the world's natural resources twice as fast and so create twice as much pollution of the land, sea and air.

It is a commonly held view among the richer industrialised countries that population control is only needed in the poorer countries of the world. It is certainly true that the richer countries have slower rates of growth. But they *are* growing. Look at this graph showing the population of England and Wales for the past thousand years.



At the time of Domesday Book, which must have been the world's first proper census, the population was just over a million. By 1825 after it had been rising slowly for 700 years, it was 10 million. Since then it has been rising faster and it has now reached nearly 50 million² (not including

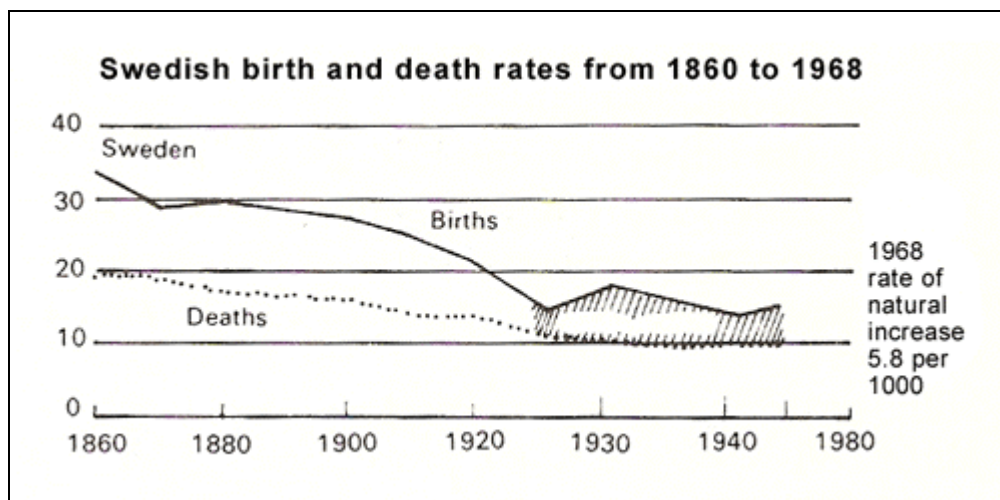
¹ I've updated the graph which reveals that this is in fact what happened.

² 60 million in 2008.

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Scotland). At the present rate of growth, the population of Britain will double in the next 140 years. This may seem a long time but there are two points to remember: firstly, Britain's land area and natural resources cannot themselves be extended. Every year there are 300,000 more Britons but there is not one single extra square yard of land. Secondly, every new Briton uses about 20 times as much of the world's resources as, for example, every new Indian. In these terms, Britain's yearly growth is equal to a yearly growth in India of 6 million. The U.S.A., with 6% of the world's population, uses 50% of the world's resources and every new American uses about 40 times as much as every new Indian so that the U.S.A.'s yearly growth of 2 million is equal to 80 million in Indian terms. And remember that these are highly industrialised countries with what are thought of as 'slow' growth rates.

Many optimists will tell you that the *birth rate* of the industrialised countries has been falling for years and so claim that the problem is no longer serious. They will mention Sweden as an example. This graph shows the birth and death rates for Sweden from 1860 to 1968.



The graph shows that although Sweden's birth rate had indeed been falling more or less continuously until 1960 (it is now going up again slightly), the *death rate* had also been falling and at no time had the birth rate fallen below the death rate. Unfortunately, this is all that is needed for a growing population, and indeed, Sweden's population has *never* stopped growing.

Optimists will also point at open fields and hills and say, "Look at all that empty space! No people in sight!" They forget that every single human being, optimists included, has to be supported by 'empty' space. It must be remembered that every time someone eats a steak, he or she eats the meat of an animal that had been feeding on grass for months before it grew big enough to be eaten. No grass, no cow. No cow, no steak. This is true of everything we eat. It is not only that the countryside is beautiful to look at - *it is necessary for our very existence.*

In a lecture given in 1969 Sir Frank Fraser Darling had this to say:

"All governments should face their responsibility to work out population and food policies, not play the opposite game of subsidising irresponsibly reproductive families. Is vote-catching to be the incurable weakness of democracy?"