

QUAKER CONCERN OVER POPULATION

NEWSLETTER 12
SPRING 2023

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Pamphlets on Climate Justice

As part of the Woodbrooke year-long course on Exploring Faith and Climate Justice, QSPW have produced a number of pamphlets on the subject which can be found at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/exploring-faith-and-climate-justice-a-journey-of-discovery-and-prophecy/>. We were informed by our

QPSW link person that the fourth pamphlet in the series, 'What happens if we don't focus on justice', contains a section on Population (Section 4). When members of the committee looked into this, it is not too strong to say that we were horrified. Without giving any actual relevant facts, it painted an extraordinarily negative image of anyone concerned over population issues as an extreme right-wing neo-Nazi racist. The pamphlet was written and published without any attempt to consult QCOP about our views, although the authors were certainly well aware of our existence as an established Quaker Recognised Body.

After some discussion among ourselves, three of us met with our link person over zoom to explain our objections to the text and request that it be revised, and in a follow-up letter we gave a detailed list of many of our objections to the presentation. Although it was not an easy conversation, it

was agreed that the text could be “slightly revised” and some modifications have now been made, although in our view the emphasis and tone is still completely misguided and indeed damaging and un-Quakerly. Some of us also consider other parts of the course to be ill-informed and to have a misguided emphasis.

We are deeply concerned and disappointed that such educational online material is being put out in the name of Friends and we feel it is important not to let it pass unchallenged.

Some of you may have seen the excellent letter Roger Plenty has written to the Friend on the subject and reprinted in this Newsletter. We hope that some of you may be able to look at the pamphlet in question and form your own opinion. Do please raise the issues anywhere you can, either by writing to the Friend, writing to Woodbrooke, or bringing the subject up in your

local Meeting. Rest assured that the QCOP committee is doing all it can.

*Caroline Series
QCOP Committee*

Letter to The Friend

Many Friends will be aware of the Quaker Recognised Group 'Quaker Concern Over Population', which seeks to inform Friends of the dangers of population growth. This arose from a Concern recognised at Nailsworth LM, and confirmed at Gloucestershire AM. We have a website at qcop.org.uk. In common with all bodies acting to address this issue, we do not advocate coercion: indeed much of such bodies' efforts are in countering the coercion of those working against our cause, such as the American right wing efforts to ban abortion (and possibly to ban contraception too), consequences of religious dogma about contraception, economists who subscribe to the current mantra that all growth is good, populist rulers who

see strength in numbers, and general unawareness.

Recent reports of the drop in fertility have caused some panic because the inference is drawn that humanity is in decline: but a drop in fertility is not the same as a drop in the rate of growth, much less a drop in total numbers. The last three billion have taken twelve, twelve and eleven years: the rate of growth is as fast as it has ever been, and is slightly increasing.

The reason that I am writing this now is that we have received notification of a group of Friends who are concerned, as we all are, I hope, with climate justice, who are on the point of publishing, or have already published, a booklet which includes a passage in which they equate population activity with fascism, and accuse activists of racism and eugenics. I shall not name them, but I hope they

will see this letter and respond. No good comes of name calling: it is un-Quakerly apart from anything else, and reasoned debate is better

Roger Plenty, Nailsworth Meeting

Difficult Questions Over Population.

This booklet is still available for £3.50 (£5 incl UK postage). From jmrr57@outlook.com.

2023 Events Diary

AGM June 14th 7pm followed by a short workshop to identify the root cause of QCOP being accused of racism.

Wednesday 26th July at 7pm

'Considerations in Strengthening Family Planning Programs'. Our speaker Marc Okunnu will talk about Sub-Saharan Africa. We are planning events for autumn 2023 and welcome suggestions for future topics.

Understanding terms used to describe aspects of a population.

Populations are dynamic and continually changing. There is no single term that describes what is happening to a population and what will happen. However, understanding the different elements helps in responding now and in the future.

Term	Definition	Comment
Birth Rate	Number of live births per year per 1,000 mid-year population.	Births are a key element in contributing to population. Birth rates rise and fall for many different reasons.
Death Rate	Number of deaths per year per 1,000 mid-year population.	Deaths limit the size of the population. The number of deaths occurring at different ages determine the age profile of the community.
Demographic Transition	A fall in death rates, followed by a fall in birth rates.	A fall in overall death rates may be due to better community health and nutrition, often associated with urbanisation. Birth rates begin to fall when confidence rises that children will survive and family planning services become available. The longer the interval between the fall in death rates and the fall in birth rates the greater the increase in population size.

Term	Definition	Comment
Demographic entrapment	A rise in the population in a defined area above the carrying capacity of the area with a consequent impact on health of the population.	The carrying capacity of any area is always going to be finite, but it may be increased by improved agriculture, trade or external support. Carrying capacity falls as a result of conflict, crop failures or a reduction in trade.
Demographic dividend	Socioeconomic growth linked to an increasing proportion of the population who are economically active while the proportion of the very young or aged decreases.	So long as there are economic opportunities the higher the proportion of people available to work the more the population can thrive.
Dependency Ratio	Number of people aged 0 to 14 years plus the number of people aged 65 or over per 100 people aged 15 to 64 years.	The proportion of the population that require support determines the human resource available to do other tasks and grow the economy.
Population Growth Rate	Change in the number of people in a defined population over a one year period expressed as a percentage of the population at the start of the year.	Population growth rate is a key determinant in predicting future population size. Populations rise with births and inward migration and fall with deaths and outward migration.

Term	Definition	Comment
Life Expectancy	Average number of years a person of a defined age expects to live if current age specific mortality rates continue. Often calculated at birth and then at defined ages in later life.	Understanding life expectancy at different ages allows the population size to be predicted for the population as a whole and enables the life insurance industry to calculate their premiums for individuals seeking to provide for old age or their children.
Migration	Movement of people across boundaries for the purpose of establishing new or semi-permanent residence.	People migrate for many reasons. Climate change is accelerating migration. Wars and poverty are also a cause of migration, which may be within or between countries
Natural Increase	Difference between the number of live births and deaths during a year.	The number of people in a population may rise or fall because of changes in birth or death rates.
Net migration rate	Number of immigrants minus number of emigrants divided by the mid-year population, expressed per 1,000 of the mid-year population.	Migration affects population size and structure. Migration is often started by movement out of young males resulting in labour force shortages in the area of origin.

Term	Definition	Comment
Fertility Rate	Average number of live births for a woman during her child bearing years, (ie 15 to 49 years).	The number of children born to a woman is a major factor in population changes.
Age at first birth	Average age of a woman in a defined population having her first live birth.	The age women start giving birth affects overall fertility. Very young women have a higher fatality rate linked to with pregnancy and delivery.
Birth Interval	Average time between all live births.	The longer the interval between births the better the health of existing children.
Age at last birth	Average age of a woman in a defined population having her last live birth.	Older women giving birth have a higher fatality rate than younger women, there is also a higher neonatal fatality rate.
Neonatal mortality rate	Number of children dying at birth or within one month of birth per 1,000 live births.	Neonatal mortality rates are an indicator of the health of mothers and the competence of maternity services.
Infant mortality rate	Number of children dying within the first 5 years of life per 1,000 live births.	Infant mortality rates are an indicator of disease prevalence and nutritional state of the community.
Population Pyramid	A way to show the structure of the population in proportion to age and gender.	Understanding the age and gender structure of the population enables predictions and service planning.

Martin Schweiger

WHY GREENPEACE WON'T CAMPAIGN ON POPULATION

It has always been frustrating that environmental organisations, such as WWF, Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth, do not consider the population issue, even though it is a main driver of many if not all of the issues they campaign on. To quote Chris Packham: *“There’s no point bleating about the future of pandas, polar bears and tigers where we’re not addressing the one single factor that’s putting more pressure on the ecosystem than any other - namely the ever-increasing size of the world’s population.”* But something must have been getting through, because last August, a page explaining why Greenpeace doesn’t campaign on population appeared on their website. On our website <http://qcop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Response-to-Greenpeace-statement.pdf> we address some of the points in the article.

Our Newsletter

The opinions in this newsletter are the views of the contributors and do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or QCOP.
Editor: jmrr57@outlook.com

Changes to the Committee

Jonathan Riddell is standing down as convener but will remain on the committee and edit the newsletter.
Fran Worpe will replace Roger Plenty as our Treasurer.
Caroline Series has joined the committee. To be confirmed at our AGM.

Committee details

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