

THE FRUITCAKE FACTORY

One sunny day as you walk down the street, you see a dishevelled man approaching with a sign around his neck proclaiming, “The World Ends On Tuesday”. You smile, and in a rather unkindly way, you say “Fruitcake” to yourself as you pass him. Why have you responded this way? This man might be convinced he is right, and you have not even heard his story.

During the past four or five thousand years of human existence on this planet, there have been thousands of people, or groups of people who, for a variety of reasons, have declared that the world is going to end in the near future. The smarter ones, who did not wish to be embarrassed with failure, forecast the date of the Earth’s demise well after they have died. Studying the history of such people, we can learn several important lessons.

First, on every occasion, they have been wrong. Second, on every occasion, they have been very wrong. That is, we did not see 80% of the world ending, or 50%, or a 5% ending. In fact, it has been hard to detect any difference between the day before, and the day after, the magic date. Next, these people, or groups of people, have extremely strong convictions that they are right and many, at first glance, have a convincing rationale for their prediction. Notwithstanding, none of them have ever been right. Finally, either through ignorance or by ignoring the history of the ‘End is Nigh’ brigade, some gullible people are always attracted to the siren’s song of doom sung by such people.

Today, we have the Greens declaring: “The Planet is doomed, and we should save the Planet”, “Life as we know it will end”, “Our grandchildren will see forests self combust, and lakes boil”, and on our television we are fed images of the planet browning off, then bursting into flames, or the planet breaking into three pieces. Because the Greens have become experts in spreading such tales in the past fifty years, their doomsday date now remains flexible, and depends on either the audience’s gullibility or the Greens’ agenda at the time. Some dates are close to the present date to engender urgency, while other dates are so far off that ‘prediction failure’ will never be experienced by anyone living today.

Are the Greens Fruitcakes?

Normally, I would smile and say “Fruitcake” to myself, and let the Greens pass on by. However, on this occasion, I am told that the Greens really do know what they are talking about, and I should unquestioningly believe them. Such an argument would not normally sway me. However, several other factors in the Green’s campaign of doom force me to listen to their stories. Without my agreement, the Greens are already taking money from me. They are bullying me, and coercing me to mimic their behaviour and lifestyle. They also intend to take other freedoms from me. To add insult to injury, they are calling me a ‘Fruitcake’ for

not believing them. So let us look at a few of the Green's past predictions to try to give us confidence that, this time, this group of people are not 'Fruitcakes'.

In the 1960s, a Green campaign was being waged against industrial chemicals. The publication of Rachel Carson's book 'Silent Spring'¹ galvanised the Greens to predict that all the birds in the world would die within fifteen years. At the same time, the Greens predicted that within ten to fifteen years cancer, solely caused by the use of industrial chemicals, would spiral out of control and cause the longevity of American adults to drop to 40 years. Well past the predicted doomsday dates, we find that longevity rose from the low 70s to the high 70s and early 80s, and the loss of bird life, due to industrial chemicals, was such a small fraction of one percent, most could not accurately measure the figure.

Paul Ehrlich's 1970 book 'The Population Bomb'², encouraged the Greens to announce that through the Non-Greens' lack of action, it was too late, and mass starvation in the world could not be avoided. As an example, it was predicted that 25% of India's population would be lost within 7 years, and this would be followed with the loss of another 25% within fifteen years. Since that prediction, India's population has continued to grow and is better fed, while the number of people starving to death has been reduced significantly.

In 1972, 'The Club of Rome' predicted that by 1985 all our most important minerals would be exhausted³. Yet by the year 2000, the reserves of all these minerals, except lead, exceeded the reserves in 1970, even though the consumption since then had significantly exceeded the consumption rate used by this august body of 'experts' to make their prediction. In the 1980s, the Greens told us that within fifteen years all the world's forests would be killed by acid rain⁴. Fifteen years later, we find that some trees died and some others may have suffered from the effects of acid rain, but not one forest has been lost solely because of acid rain.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Greens told us that by the year 2000, the world would be engulfed by a man made Ice Age. Yet in the year 2000, there was no Ice Age, and the very same Greens were predicting that the Planet will be cooked by a man made global warming. The ice age has not arrived yet, and I am having trouble believing that global warming 'is going to kill the Planet', or any other exaggerated claim made by the same Greens who have had such a long history of failed predictions. Like their forebears, they have not only been wrong, but they have been very wrong.

I personally believe the Greens are unbelievable.

Notes:

1. Carson, Rachel, *Silent Spring*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1962. Discussed in Handout 7-2.

2. Ehrlich, Dr. Paul R., *The Population Bomb*, Ballantine Books, New York, 1970. Discussed in Handout 7-3.
3. Meadows, Donella H.; Meadows, Dennis L.; Randers, Jorgen; Behrens, William W. Título, *The Limits to Growth - A report for the Club of Rome*, Universe Books, New York, NY, USA 1972. Discussed in Handout 7-4.
4. Discussed in Handout 7-5.