

Extremism Rebellion

A review of ideology and tactics

Tom Wilson and Richard Walton



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Preface

By Richard Walton

Extinction Rebellion has captured the public imagination over the past year —becoming the UK’s most active campaign group. Using maxims of ‘rebellion’ and ‘non-violent protest’, it has rapidly enlisted the support of tens of thousands of followers who have been prepared to protest and even be arrested for their cause. Like the public at large, many of these activists appear to be genuinely concerned about climate change and other environmentalist issues.

As this paper shows, however, the leaders of Extinction Rebellion seek a more subversive agenda, one that is rooted in the political extremism of anarchism, eco-socialism and radical anti-capitalist environmentalism. The ‘civil resistance model’ they espouse is intended to achieve mass protest accompanied by law-breaking —leading eventually to the breakdown of democracy and the state. Obscured from public view, these objectives mark Extinction Rebellion’s campaign out as an extremist one that seeks to break down the established civil order and liberal democracy in the UK.

Many followers of Extinction Rebellion are completely unaware of this secondary objective, despite it being readily espoused by their leaders in YouTube posts of their speeches and in their publications. Celebrities, politicians and members of the public have been seduced into believing that Extinction Rebellion’s methods and tactics are honourable and justified, when clearly they are not.

Those who accept planned mass law-breaking in a liberal democracy to further a political cause, are effectively condoning the breakdown of the rule of law. They may assert breaking the law is a means to an end, there is a crisis that needs addressing and law-breaking is the only tactic that will change government policy, but in doing so they have become extremists for their cause.

Extinction Rebellion is an extremist organisation whose methods need to be confronted and challenged rather than supported and condoned. If we fail to confront those who incite and encourage mass law-breaking, we fail in our duty to confront extremism. This new form of extremism needs to be tackled by Ministers and politicians, the Commission for Countering Extremism, police and the general public.

The honeymoon that Extinction Rebellion has enjoyed to date needs to come to an end. Members of the public need to be made fully aware this is not an organisation whose strategy and tactics should be applauded and copied.

As a result of the evidence this paper uncovers, no one can now plead ignorance of the ominous and threatening intentions of this

campaigning organisation.

The authors have successfully laid bare the history, strategy and tactics of Extinction Rebellion, revealing its underlying philosophy and intentions.

The country and the public will benefit enormously from this seminal paper that breaks new ground in the understanding of environmental extremism in the UK.

Extinction Rebellion is now at a cross roads. If it persists in its current strategy of encouraging mass law-breaking in order to bring down the government in the furtherance of its cause, then it will be treated as an extremist organisation, lose its mainstream supporter base and all public sympathy for its environmental cause. Conversely, if it changes its current strategy towards engaging in lawful protest whilst acknowledging the liberal democratic order, it has the opportunity to become a significant and influential global mass movement that is a positive force for change.

Recommendations

- The police response to law-breaking by demonstrators must be far more proactive in enforcing laws that relate to public protest, preventing Extinction Rebellion and other political activists from embarking on illegal tactics that cause mass disruption and significant economic damage.
- Legislation relating to public protest needs to be urgently reformed in order to strengthen the ability of the police to place restrictions on planned protest and deal more effectively with mass law-breaking tactics (including incitement and conspiracy offences) such as road and bridge blocking, aggravated trespass and criminal damage.
- The Crown Prosecution Service should prosecute all those engaged in law-breaking relating to public protest in order to uphold the rule of law, support the 'public interest' and deter others from illegal protest.
- Politicians and public figures should avoid endorsing, legitimising, or meeting with Extinction Rebellion, in particular whilst its leadership continues to encourage and incite law-breaking in furtherance of their political aims.
- The Commission for Countering Extremism should ensure that far left, anarchist and environmentalist extremism are sufficiently recognised and challenged within a wider national strategy on extremism.
- The Home Office should audit the financial cost of the unlawful protest activity that is being undertaken by Extinction Rebellion, including the cost of policing and the financial and social impact on businesses and the public.

Executive Summary

- Extinction Rebellion was formed in 2018 when a group of radical activists devised a strategy for a new environmentalist campaign, leading to the launch of a Declaration of Rebellion in October at a rally in Parliament Square.
- Extinction Rebellion rejects both our representative democracy and the liberal free market economy and explicitly seeks to overturn both; its leading figures have been clear that these objectives are indivisible from their demands on the environment. For instance, Extinction Rebellion's 'Declaration of Rebellion' states: "We, in alignment with our consciences and our reasoning, declare ourselves in rebellion against our government and the corrupted, inept institutions that threaten our future... the wilful complicity displayed by our Government has shattered meaningful democracy and cast aside the common interest in favour of short-term gain and private profits".
- Extinction Rebellion has won significant public attention, has rallied tens of thousands of followers to join in its protests over consecutive days, has established hundreds of local groups across the country and internationally and has been able to implement its desired strategy of law-breaking and disruption.
- Extinction Rebellion is not an organisation but rather a campaign of a pre-existing network of activists called Rising Up! —the campaigning arm of a company called Compassionate Revolution Ltd. These two organisations, which sit behind the Extinction Rebellion campaign, have their origins in the anti-globalisation Occupy Movement.
- Extinction Rebellion rejects a policy of seeking growth from a capitalist model of economics and promotes an ideology of 'post capitalism' and 'de-growth' as a means to reduce consumption and a greater degree of economic redistribution, which they acknowledge will result in a reduction of living standards.
- Extinction Rebellion espouses a 'civil resistance' strategy of mass protests involving large numbers of the public who are encouraged to break the law, cause serious social and economic disruption and place a burden on police resources.
- Extinction Rebellion's strategy emphasises the importance of its protests maintaining disruption over many consecutive days in order to achieve economic damage to a city. Its leadership believes that the economic costs of protest increase exponentially day by day.

- Extinction Rebellion's execution of its strategy has put pressure on UK policing resources and tactics, exposing weaknesses in existing legislation for policing protest and diverting police resources away from addressing other crime challenges. Extinction Rebellion's ten-day protest in London in April of this year is estimated to have cost the Metropolitan Police £16 million in resources and involved the deployment of 10,000 police officers over the two weeks.
- Extinction Rebellion's tactics have caused serious economic and social disruption to London. The impact of the first week of their protests during April 2019 was estimated to have cost shops £12 million in lost takings and to have delayed 500,000 commuters attempting to travel on London's road and transport system.
- While Extinction Rebellion espouses non-violent tactics, its leaders have considered using drones to disrupt flights at Heathrow Airport with the intention of bringing the airport to a standstill. Had they pursued this action the public would have been put at risk and the campaigners may have crossed the threshold into a terrorism offence. Given the extreme objectives of Extinction Rebellion, therefore, it is not inconceivable that some on the fringes of the movement might at some point break with organisational discipline and engage in violence.
- A leading figure in Extinction Rebellion, Roger Hallam, has spoken about people dying for its cause. In an address to one audience, he said: "we are not just sending out e-mails and asking for donations. We are going to force the governments to act. And if they don't, we will bring them down and create a democracy fit for purpose... and yes, some may die in the process".
- The social media accounts of Compassionate Revolution Ltd. and Rising Up! reveal notable examples of extremist content including conspiracy theories. In the case of the Compassionate Revolutionaries Facebook page, some of these have included concerning instances of anti-Semitism.
- Extinction Rebellion has stated that it is majority funded through crowdfunding, but its accounts show that it has also received some sizeable donations from wealthy individuals, foundations and businesses such as Lush Cosmetics Ltd.
- Politicians across political parties have shown a willingness to legitimise the leadership of Extinction Rebellion, meeting with them and committing to support some of their demands.

Introduction

Extinction Rebellion has been one of the most significant anti-establishment protest movements to have emerged in the UK for decades. It is arguably more politically significant than either the Occupy Movement of 2011-12, or London's May Day riots of 2000 and 2001. Extinction Rebellion has succeeded in mobilising large numbers of people for sustained protest, civil disobedience, and law-breaking on a scale not achieved by previous radical protest movements, resulting in serious disruption to large areas of central London for over a week in April 2019 and more sustained disruption across five cities in the UK during July 2019. More remarkable still, whilst doing so, it has continued to win support and backing from prominent and respectable figures. For instance, its mass law-breaking and disruption in April was rewarded with a meeting with a cabinet minister and the passing of a resolution in Parliament.

Yet, Extinction Rebellion has its roots in the political extremism of green anarchism, eco-socialism and radical anti-capitalist environmentalism. Extinction Rebellion is not a single organisation, but a campaign of two fringe organisations steeped in the extreme left. The people behind these organisations and the campaign they have sparked (Extinction Rebellion), advocate a political agenda with ambitions that reach far beyond environmentalism; a campaign that seeks to use mass civil disobedience over climate change to impose a full system change to the democratic order. Yet, the underlying extremism of the campaign has been largely obscured from public view by what many see as the fundamental legitimacy of their stated cause.

This paper does not seek to dispute any of the details relating to climate change or the damage caused to the environment by current human activities. It does not question the legitimacy of protest on environmental issues, nor is the paper arguing that either governments or civil society should ignore these urgent concerns. Rather it is concerned with the politics and strategy of this new movement in the UK. Through a remarkably successful strategy, Extinction Rebellion has brought the politics of a radical fringe into the mainstream and incited significant numbers of people to break the law and invite the police to arrest them—including previously law abiding, politically moderate individuals.

Extinction Rebellion is now thought to have over 130 branches across the UK, with offices in London and Bristol.¹ Its protests in London in April 2019 resulted in tens of thousands of people engaging in mass civil disobedience with over 1000 arrested.² A little over a year earlier the organisation behind the Extinction Rebellion campaign—Rising Up!—

1. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

2. Extinction Rebellion Protests: What happened?, BBC News, 25 April 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-48051776>

was a largely unknown fringe group of anti-capitalist and environmentalist activists. The vague and ill-defined political agenda with which they have been associated combines elements of eco-socialism and green anarchism.

Extinction Rebellion's abrupt move to national prominence can partly be explained by the fact that environmentalism and climate change have increasingly come to public attention in the UK through the interventions of respected figures such as David Attenborough, campaigns against ocean plastics, an increasing number of news stories about biodiversity loss, and the emergence of the youth climate strikes.

The sudden rise of Extinction Rebellion has owed much to the strategy of the campaign's founders. Most notably, Dr Gail Bradbrook and Roger Hallam of Rising Up! spent several years meticulously researching and developing a theory of mass protest movements and civil disobedience. According to Roger Hallam's explanation, Extinction Rebellion was created following a recognition that their previous campaigning over thirty years had failed to achieve political change.

While the campaigners have largely restricted their message and demands to urge action to avert climate and ecological disaster, evidence shows that this is a campaign which at its core supports an overturning of the existing economic, social and political order. Its philosophy is one that holds that the free market—usually referred to by the activists as neoliberalism or simply capitalism—will inevitably destroy life on earth and must therefore be brought to an end. Those who founded Extinction Rebellion and continue to act as its intellectual figureheads are clear that climate change cannot be addressed under the current economic system. Furthermore, the leaders of the campaign have repeatedly presented an argument that climate change cannot be addressed through the existing democratic process, instead urging law-breaking and an unelected “Citizen's Assembly” as the only solution.

Extinction Rebellion has been unequivocal in stating that it will maintain its campaign of disruption and law-breaking until all of its demands have been met. Yet even if the British government was to determine that this was an appropriate course of action, it is not at all clear that these demands can realistically be delivered, nor how it would be proven that the demands had been met. There is further reason to believe that this movement's current set of demands are by no means their final demands. In short, this may be the grounds for permanent protest -- the real objective being to destabilise the existing order, while recruiting the public to join their protests by telling them that in so doing they will help to avert the societal breakdown that would otherwise be caused by climate change.

Extinction Rebellion has expressed a strong commitment to non-violence at the core of its civil disobedience strategy. Yet, reports that the campaign have considered using drones to halt air traffic at UK airports have raised questions about the extent to which the activists are prepared to jeopardise public safety. No less alarming, leading figures in Extinction Rebellion have also spoken about activists dying for their cause, with Rising Up! campaigners having previously been involved in hunger strike

action. Given the extreme objectives of Extinction Rebellion, it is not inconceivable that some on the fringes of the movement might at some point break with organisational discipline and engage in violence.

As such, while the Government should continue to act to address environmental challenges, it is vital that this is **not** done in consultation with Extinction Rebellion or its activists. Every effort should be made to avoid legitimising the extremist ideology that sits behind this campaign, its law-breaking strategy and Extinction Rebellion's complete disregard for the rule of law. To do so would encourage other protest groups to believe that causing mass law-breaking and disruption is the most effective means for achieving political influence and change.

Origins of the Extinction Rebellion Movement

Compassionate Revolution

While the Extinction Rebellion campaign may have been publicly launched at the end of October 2018, its origins can be found in an organisation called Compassionate Revolution, which was founded as a UK registered limited company in the summer of 2015. Compassionate Revolution had ambitions that reached far beyond environmentalism and predominantly focused on political campaigns of the radical left. Furthermore, its Facebook page, Compassionate Revolutionaries, has been used to post notable examples of ‘conspiracy theory’ content. A number of these conspiracies featured concerning cases of anti-Semitism. The administrators of the Compassionate Revolutionaries Facebook page are also among the co-founders of Extinction Rebellion, and while there is not the evidence to suggest that the ideology underlying Compassionate Revolution is anti-Semitic, the anti-Semitic posts in question have remained on the group’s Facebook page.

Compassionate Revolution is the organisation and company that founded Extinction Rebellion, with Extinction Rebellion itself being a project of the campaign group Rising Up!³ Indeed, Extinction Rebellion notes that its bank account is under the name of Compassionate Revolution.⁴ The Extinction Rebellion website also explains that, “Compassionate Revolution was set up in 2015 to try to build mass civil disobedience through an online platform”.⁵

Compassionate Revolution Limited was registered with Companies House as a private limited company on the 3 June 2015.⁶ It is registered as having its office in Stroud Gloucestershire.⁷ At its inception, the company consisted of George Barda and Gail Bradbrook, each with director status and equal share ownership of the company.⁸ While in June 2016 the company appeared not to have gained any income, by June 2017 the company had assets of £6,735, and by the following year this had increased to £18,500.⁹ On 28 of January 2019, Roger Hallam—one of the leading figureheads of Extinction Rebellion—was appointed as a director of Compassionate Revolution Ltd.¹⁰ This may be a further indication of Compassionate Revolution’s continuing relevance to the Extinction Rebellion campaign and its finances.

The Compassionate Revolution website describes the organisation as having been “birthed” in the Occupy Movement¹¹ —the anti-globalisation

3. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>
4. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>
5. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>
6. Compassionate Revolution Limited – Filing History, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618/filing-history>
7. Compassionate Revolution Limited, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618>
8. Compassionate Revolution Limited – Filing History, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618/filing-history>
9. Compassionate Revolution Limited – Filing History, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618/filing-history>
10. Compassionate Revolution Limited – People, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618/officers>
11. About Us, Compassionate Revolution, <https://www.compassionate-revolution.net/about-us.html>

tent protests and campus sit-ins that impacted London and other major cities in 2011-2012.¹² Compassionate Revolution founders such as George Barda were particularly involved in this earlier wave of activism,¹³ and it appears that Compassionate Revolution's focus on direct action emerged out of some of the ideas and campaigning associated with the Occupy Movement.

Those behind Compassionate Revolution stated on their website that “we do not believe we have a functioning democracy in the UK”, claiming: “it has been captured by corporate and private interests and the media is owned by wealthy billionaires who use their power to systematically undermine informed public debate.”¹⁴ The website adds that “the existing political and economic system is set to destroy civilisation and much if not all life on earth if allowed to continue.”¹⁵ As such, the group advocates: “campaigns of civil disobedience in the UK, which may include the breaking of laws”, with the aim being to bring about “A society of genuine equality without poverty and privilege.”¹⁶

As an organisation, Compassionate Revolution appears to have undertaken little in the way of campaigns in its own name. Rather, the website and associated social media page appear to have served as a platform for the sharing of ideas and information, as well as for channelling support to other campaigns. Later, its more direct activism came through Rising Up!—created by Compassionate Revolution with others in 2016—which in turn eventually led to the launch of Extinction Rebellion in 2018.

In addition to the website, a Facebook page called Compassionate Revolutionaries posted content relating to Compassionate Revolution.¹⁷ This page has remained in use as a place for posting news and events relating to Extinction Rebellion. The Compassionate Revolutionaries Facebook page has as its administrators Extinction Rebellion co-founder Gail Bradbrook and an account titled ‘Simon Be’.¹⁸ This account has been identified as belonging to fellow Extinction Rebellion co-founder, Simon Bramwell.¹⁹ The Compassionate Revolutionaries Facebook page has largely been used by its members to post content relating to environmentalism, anti-capitalism and other associated activism – as well as in support of Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership of the Labour party. However, the page has also been used to post extreme conspiracy theories, several featuring anti-Semitism.

One post to the group’s Facebook page from May 2018 links to a blogpost which quotes from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The same article claims that Israel is testing a “Final Solution” ready for the extermination of the world’s population beyond those required to serve what is referred to as an “Anglo Zionist” empire.²⁰ Another post, this time from July 2016, included a video interview with the Holocaust denier Eustace Mullins.²¹ The video featured Mullins claiming that Zionists control the US government and that Israel was behind the 9/11 attacks.²² A more recent post on the Compassionate Revolutionaries Facebook page from June 2019 shows a Jewish Star of David superimposed over the American and British flags.²³ The image also features the pro-Jeremy Corbyn hashtag; #JC4PMNOW. It is notable that the page administrators have not removed this content.

12. Occupy London: What did the St Paul's protest achieve?, BBC News, 28 February 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-17188327>

13. Occupy London St Paul's eviction appeal bid thrown out, BBC News, 22 February 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-17011324>

14. About Us, Compassionate Revolution, <https://www.compassionate-revolution.net/about-us.html>

15. About Us, Compassionate Revolution, <https://www.compassionate-revolution.net/about-us.html>

16. About Us, Compassionate Revolution, <https://www.compassionate-revolution.net/about-us.html>

17. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Facebook, <https://en-gb.facebook.com/groups/compassionate-revolutionaries-910039479046757/>

18. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Members, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/910039479046757/members/>

19. Simon Be, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/simon.bramwell.5?eid=ARBnT2EQYuX3sK0Sd-621mCG2udJzFzOsPrk3RhUQbBmkWeGM9K4AR-HLyBDWjpwkTYn98S7pH_dJFv3xt

20. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Facebook, 15 May 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/910039479046757/permalink/1810876285629734/>

21. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Facebook, 18 July 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/910039479046757/permalink/1173372509380118/>

22. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Facebook, 18 July 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/910039479046757/permalink/1173372509380118/>

23. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Facebook, 13 July 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10156650320865674&set=a.66433145673&type=3&theater&ifg=1>

Indeed, Gail Bradbrook's posts have even appeared alongside some of this conspiratorial content without her acting to have it removed. Nor have the administrators acted to remove posts such as one from September 2016 showing a man dressed as Guy Fawkes carrying a barrel—presumably representing explosives—outside Parliament, with the words “Plan B” written over the image. Indeed, the text in that post stated “raising awareness and talk is good, but waving banners and asking nicely for them to stop, is not working”, and urged that “it really is time we made a stand to physically remove morally corrupted MPs”.²⁴

Rising Up!

Established in 2016, Rising Up! is the organisation that created Extinction Rebellion. In reality, Extinction Rebellion is not a conventional organisation, but rather a campaign of Rising Up! and its wider network. As such, Extinction Rebellion's fundraising page is still marked as being for “Rising Up Extinction Rebellion”,²⁵ the documentation of its accounts are marked as “RU Accounts 2018-19”,²⁶ rather than XR Accounts 2018-19; and its YouTube channel appears to have originally been the channel for Rising Up!—It is listed as having joined YouTube in February 2017, with the first videos uploaded dating from spring 2017 onwards, and these concern the campaigns Rising Up! initiated at that time.²⁷ While Extinction Rebellion may now have vastly outgrown Rising Up! the campaign's figureheads appear largely to still be the same people. This is significant, because while Extinction Rebellion may officially restrict its campaign to matters of climate, Rising Up! adheres to a far more radical and extreme political agenda.

According to the Rising Up! website, the organisation was originally formed by activists who had been involved with campaign groups such as “Earth First!, Occupy, Plane Stupid, Radical Think Tank and Reclaim the Power”.²⁸ Extinction Rebellion has stated that the organisation was founded in 2016 by Roger Hallam, Gail Bradbrook, Simon Bramwell and “others”, and that they were joined by Stuart Basden and Ian Bray later that year.²⁹ The Rising Up! movement appears to have crystallised around the bringing together of ideas from Roger Hallam and Gail Bradbrook and their work on developing theory and strategy for effective protest movements. The Extinction Rebellion website recounts that in 2016, a number of activists from the above groups had been seeking an approach that might prove successful in achieving their objectives.³⁰ Out of Gail Bradbrook's work on creating an online platform for activists with Compassionate Revolution, and Roger Hallam's research on civil disobedience theory, a draft strategy was written in the summer of 2016 followed by the launch of Rising Up! in the autumn as part of protests targeting Heathrow Airport.³¹

As is acknowledged by one of the foundations providing funding for Extinction Rebellion in 2018, the campaign's work is “conducted via their parent organisation and fiscal sponsor”, Rising Up!³² At that time the organisation was listed as being run by a core team of 15 people—none of them salaried staff—along with around 60 regular volunteers, a network

24. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Facebook, 27 September 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/910039479046757/permalink/1222691411114894/>

25. 2019 Extinction Rebellion, FundRazr, https://fundrazr.com/Global_XR?ref=ab_AmXMzwSGD-C5AmXMzwSGDC5

26. RU Accounts 2018-19 <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

27. Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYThdLKE6TDwBjh-qDC6l-CA/videos>

28. Rising Up, About Us, <https://www.risingup.org.uk/about-us>

29. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

30. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

31. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

32. Extinction Rebellion, Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrillafoundation.org/grantee/extinction-rebellion/>

of 500 activists, with 2,500 on the group's database, and some 5000 said to be interested people online.³³ Despite these numbers, footage and pictures from Rising Up!, activities consistently show very small numbers of activists engaging in mostly fringe³⁴ and low level acts of protest and law-breaking.³⁵ The Rising Up! website listed only Gail Bradbrook and George Barda as being a part of the organisation's team.³⁶ Until January 2019, these were also the only directors and owners of Compassionate Revolution Ltd.³⁷ George Barda's profile was subsequently removed from the Rising Up! website at some point after 18 April 2019, although he is still listed as a director of Compassionate Revolution Ltd.³⁸

At the time of its founding, the organisation's aspirations appear to have been incredibly far reaching. On its website Rising Up! states that what is needed is a:

“revolution, meaning a rapid change in wealth distribution and power structures, preventing rich elite from perpetuating a self-serving ideology. Our democracy, our media, our academia, our think tanks and businesses (organisations whose purpose should be to meet our needs) must serve all people and a healthy ecology.”³⁹

Politically, the group envisages a “functioning democracy, where people have real agency in decision making”, meaning “devolution of power to the lowest level”, along with an “economy designed to maximise well-being for all people and minimise harm”.⁴⁰ This would involve: “policies and law focused on greater equality, localising production, reducing consumption, zero carbon and zero waste.”⁴¹ In practice, however, the campaigns organised by Rising Up! appear to have targeted very specific issues, with the action taken being relatively modest. Campaigns involving Rising Up! have included a campaign on air pollution titled “Stop Killing Londoners”,⁴² a campaign targeting Barclays bank over fracking titled “#ToxicBankers”,⁴³ another opposing Heathrow expansion called “Heathrow #NoNewRunways”⁴⁴, and a campaign during the 2017 general election titled “This Election Stinks! How to Fake a Democracy”.⁴⁵ There were also a number of smaller locally focused campaigns, such as “Cancel the CONTRACT”, a campaign against the construction of a waste incinerator in Gloucestershire—where Compassionate Revolution has been based.⁴⁶ During this period, Roger Hallam and others attached to Rising Up! were also involved with a number of campaigns focused on London universities, such as a rent strike campaign at UCL, a campaign to pressure Kings College to divest from fossil fuels,⁴⁷ and another protesting income disparity at the LSE.⁴⁸

These small, single issue campaigns reflect the larger anti-establishment worldview of those behind the organisation. While they indicate the kinds of things this small group of campaigners oppose, it is not necessarily clear what they are proposing as an alternative. One answer to this question may be provided by a draft manifesto on the Rising Up! website, which broadly promotes, “the development of a mixed, locally-focused economy: small private enterprises, larger cooperatives and public ownership of things best

33. Extinction Rebellion, Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrillafoundation.org/grantee/extinction-rebellion/>
34. Life Not Money Campaign at the LSE, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 27 June 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHVDkwuhzbU>
35. #ToxicBankers, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 April, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BopP9dRbVM>
36. Rising Up, Internet Archive, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190418201628/https://www.risingup.org.uk/about-us>
37. Compassionate Revolution Limited, People, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618/officers>
38. Compassionate Revolution Limited, People, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618/officers>
39. Rising Up, About Us, <https://www.risingup.org.uk/about-us>
40. Rising Up, About Us, <https://www.risingup.org.uk/about-us>
41. About Us, Rising Up, <https://www.risingup.org.uk/about-us>
42. 'Stop Killing Londoners': Anti-Pollution Activists Shut Down Busy Road During Rush Hour, *Global Citizen*, 2 November 2017, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/air-pollution-stop-killing-londoners-protectors-lo/>
43. DONE - #ToxicBankers - protest to demand Barclays stop funding fracking and #DAPL, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/pledge/done-toxicbankers-%E2%80%93-protest-demand-barclays-stop-funding-fracking-and-dapl>
44. Campaigns, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/campaigns>
45. Campaigns, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/campaigns>
46. Campaigns, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/campaigns>
47. Extinction Rebellion - A Short History, Real Media, 15 April, 2019, <https://realmedia.press/extinction-rebellion/>
48. Life Not Money Campaign at the LSE, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 27 June 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHVDkwuhzbU>

run as monopolies.”⁴⁹ The document emphasises that it is merely setting out ideas to be considered, but it offers some sense of the kinds of policies that the group supports. These reflect a miscellaneous amalgamation of far left and green proposals that arguably lack any overall coherence. The draft manifesto is divided between five areas of policy, which are listed as:

- “An Economy for the people and planet”,
- “Reduce the potential for corruption and strengthen democracy”,
- “Tackle the Debt Crisis and prevent another from happening”,
- “Transform from an economy based on fossil fuels to renewables with reduced consumption”, and
- “Tackle inequality and level the playing field”.⁵⁰

Some of the more radical proposals include:

- “Localise decision making as far as possible, introduce liquid democracy”,
- “Localise food production through cooperative, permaculture farms”,
- “Instigate a Modern Debt Jubilee – give everyone some money to pay off debts”,
- “Promote cooperatives and employee owned businesses”,
- “Limit the pay differentials in any business, for example to 15:1”,
- “Put credit into the economy by giving everyone a Citizens income”,
- “Remove the charging of interest for loans (other charges for a service would remain). Think differently about usury and from a Christian perspective”,
- “Introduce a land value charge (and charges for the use of other commons) to free land back to ordinary people.”⁵¹

Other policies appear to be more specifically directed at the financial sector, and the campaigners’ belief that private sector companies possess too great an influence in society. These proposals include:

- “Media (e.g. BBC) must include someone who does not support the financial interests (e.g. the City of London) in discussions about finance, for balance”,
- “Limit the scale of political donations and lobbying (IDEA’s review and ideas for change)”,
- “Support transparency in lobbying (see Who’s Lobbying for more details)”,
- “Reduce financialisation of the economy”,
- “Prosecute the board members of businesses who break the rules and tame corporations”,
- “Tackle tax havens and tax dodging (manifesto for Tax Justice through the book *Over Here and Undertaxed*)”,

49. Draft Manifesto, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/draft-manifesto>

50. Draft Manifesto, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/draft-manifesto>

51. Draft Manifesto, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/draft-manifesto>

- “Re-introduce capital controls”,
- “Make it illegal for any enterprise other than the State and local cooperatives to create the nation’s money (and create money as a credit not debt)”,
- “Re-regulate the financial sector to give complete separation ordinary banking and investments (See the Charter for a new Financial System). Use a Financial Transaction Tax to reduce speculation to a minimum”, and
- “Build publicly, cooperatively owned infrastructure, housing and health services (an overview from Common Wealth and a debunking of the myth of public sector inefficiency)”.⁵²

Naturally, many of the policies included in the draft manifesto have an environmentalist orientation. Indeed, the document is balanced fairly evenly in the degree to which it promotes both a green agenda, and one that aligns with the worldview typically associated with the anti-capitalist and anti-globalist New Left. Policies focused on the environment include, “Spend money into the Economy through a Green New Deal”, “Create the offense of Ecocide as the 5th International Crime Against Peace”, “Plan change into a zero carbon country (for example Zero Carbon Britain)”, “Use Green taxes, regulations and tariffs to reduce carbon footprints and pollution”, “Reverse desertification across the globe, work with nature (e.g. regenerative agriculture) and reforest to capture all the carbon released since the industrial revolution”.⁵³

It is unclear when this undated manifesto was written, or who was involved in its composition. More recently, however, on 17 February 2019, Rising Up! posted a lengthy statement on its Facebook page outlining the politics and objectives of the “Rebellion”. The contents of this statement appear to be far more directly relevant to the activities of Extinction Rebellion. The post asserted that “only transformative system change can begin to address” the environmental crisis, and claimed that “a Rebellion will not be successful by pursuing incrementalism, legitimising state power or ‘greening’ capitalism.”⁵⁴

As such, the statement declared that corporations “need to be replaced by worker-owned co-operatives that don’t seek profit or growth”, arguing that corporations cannot be reformed, and that “they are the problem.”⁵⁵ According to the statement, the rebellion will “not seek jobs or work for the sake of work - a post-capitalist system is possible”.⁵⁶ Indeed, the statement claimed that “bullshit jobs are a central mechanism of oppression.”⁵⁷ The statement further argued that “power must be decentralised”, and opposed a “national assembly”, insisting that “direct democracy mandates regional and local assemblies which inform a national body.”⁵⁸ Indeed, the statement argued that the rebellion itself “should not seek leaders” and that “structures should evolve to empower the collective”.⁵⁹ The Rising Up! post warned that “we’re creeping towards fascism” and that the rebellion must “seek to understand the mechanisms that this fascist body uses to entrench its power”.⁶⁰

52. Draft Manifesto, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/draft-manifesto>

53. Draft Manifesto, Rising Up, <https://risingup.org.uk/draft-manifesto>

54. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

55. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

56. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

57. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

58. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

59. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

60. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

Taking a still more militant tone, the statement announced that “a Rebellion must attack a resilient system at every locus of power” and that this included “blockading nuclear sites” and “acting on the fracking frontlines”, as well as “acting to prevent aviation expansion”.⁶¹¹ Despite Extinction Rebellion’s approach of consciously avoiding open hostility towards the police, the post on the Rising Up! Facebook page stated that, “A Rebellion does not ask permission from the police; it understands that the police are a fascist organisation who are enforcing a racist, patriarchal neoliberal system.”⁶² The statement further claimed that, “a Rebellion knows that state power and borders are constructs to be challenged” and that “it recognises that this country’s arms trade and its neo-colonial corporations and tax havens are a toxic evolution of its imperial history.”⁶³

Furthermore, the statement explained that, “the Rebellion must challenge and break down intersectional power dynamics that are entrenched within the current system” and insisted that “the Rebellion will not be patronised, tokenised or liberalised.”⁶⁴ The statement also specified that while the rebellion would be televised, it would mostly be promoted over social media, and cautioned, “do not expect the tools of state enforcement such as the BBC to truthfully report revolutionary actions.”⁶⁵ It argued that the “narratives of the mainstream media must be debunked” and that “the Rebellion will centre young and marginalised voices.”⁶⁶

In addition to this statement, in recent years Rising Up! has used its Facebook page to post articles on a wide variety of subjects, giving further indication of the organisation’s outlook. Many of these provide an indication of the group’s opposition to the current system and the kinds of social policies and activities that the activists might wish to replace it with. Much of this appears to revolve around the themes of post-capitalism, de-growth, and rewilding. For instance, in October 2018, Rising Up! posted an article to its Facebook page titled “Capitalism’s Final Solution Is Nothing Less than Complete Ecological Collapse”.⁶⁷ In its post, Rising Up! wrote:

“Industrialised capitalism is a hunger that will consume the planet. Its the inevitable outcome of a system that promotes only all devouring growth at any cost. De growth, though an alien concept to many is likely the planets [sic] only real chance.”⁶⁸

The article states that “unfettered, unregulated, capricious, vampiric capitalism has brought us to the brink”, and claims that the “nightmare logic of scarcity capitalism, the macabre calculus which is content to let millions of people starve in the third world” will “ultimately exterminate refugees who dare to escape a parched landscape”, so as to maintain the status quo “before the process kills us all.”⁶⁹ What is needed instead, the article argues is “a massive, international, eco-socialist mobilization of governments and industries”.⁷⁰

The Rising Up! Facebook page has featured other examples of content going into greater detail about the nature of a post-capitalist system oriented around de-growth. On 2 March 2019, Rising Up! uploaded an article to its Facebook page titled “Post-Capitalism: Life within environmental

61. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

62. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

63. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

64. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

65. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

66. Rising Up, Facebook, 17 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/606510523122169?__tn__=K-R

67. Rising Up, Facebook, 14 October 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/540724873034068>

68. Rising Up, Facebook, 14 October 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/540724873034068>

69. Capitalism’s Final Solution Is Nothing Less than Complete Ecological Collapse, History News Network, 10 September 2018, <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/170192>

70. Capitalism’s Final Solution Is Nothing Less than Complete Ecological Collapse, History News Network, 10 September 2018, <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/170192>

limits”.⁷¹ The article by two University of Melbourne academics stated that “capitalism is ecocidal” and claims:

“Capitalism needs what it cannot have: limitless growth on a finite planet. This is the ecological contradiction that will bring an end to capitalism, probably sooner rather than later.”⁷²

This, the piece argues, “has become the defining contradiction of capitalism in the twenty-first century.”⁷³ Claiming that “hopes of ‘green growth’ have failed”, the article insists that to avoid “mounting social and ecological crises”, the wealthiest nations in the world now “need to initiate a ‘de-growth’ process of planned economic contraction”.⁷⁴ If the capitalist system is inevitably to fail, then the authors argue that there will need to be “grassroots action that builds a post-capitalist society within the shell of the old”.⁷⁵ However, only the vaguest impression is provided for what this post-capitalist society would consist of. The authors simply explain:

“In broad terms it would involve radically downshifting levels of consumption in order to maximise freedom and resilience; redirecting energies toward increasing home-based and local production; engaging ‘beyond the market’ in the informal and non-monetary economies, including increased sharing of resources and goods; and organising collectively for distributive equity and collective sufficiency, especially as economic contraction takes hold.”⁷⁶

Further discussion of what de-growth would mean is provided in a piece posted to the Rising Up! Facebook page on 18 February 2019, titled “De-growth: A Call for Radical Abundance”.⁷⁷ Whilst the piece makes such statements as claiming that “scarcity is the engine of capitalist expansion”—with Rising Up! quoting from the article that “the birth of capitalism required the creation of scarcity”—the article itself is once again extremely vague about what de-growth would entail.⁷⁸ At one point the article states that one of the core claims of “degrowth economics” is that by “restoring public services and expanding the commons, people will be able to access the goods that they need to live well without needing high levels of income.”⁷⁹ Later the article states that by “de-enclosing social goods and restoring the commons” people will be able to “access the things that they need to live a good life”; and that while “private riches may shrink”, nevertheless, “public wealth will increase”.⁸⁰

It is notable that through Extinction Rebellion, the activists who also founded Rising Up! have taken a particularly unequivocal tone about the inevitable collapse of the current system due to an approaching environmental crisis. Gail Bradbrook openly expressed the belief that civilisation is finished in a video introducing Extinction Rebellion in April 2019.⁸¹ These are ideas that this group of activists have promoted previously. In November 2017, Rising Up! posted an article to its Facebook page titled “The Collapse of Global Civilization Has Begun”.⁸² Quoting from the article, the post from Rising Up! states that “it is obvious that the techno-industrial system can’t continue to try to fix occurring issues forever. There are simply not enough resources left.”⁸³ The article, which

71. Rising Up, 2 March 2019, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/613304512442770>
72. Post- Capitalism: life within environmental limits, Pursuit, 21 February 2019, <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/post-capitalism-life-within-environmental-limits?fbclid=IwAR2VIXv732tXf5207LloSi-doa01Hdyuv5hUUR5NtUx-LY28iq6KQbjrOzls>
73. Post- Capitalism: life within environmental limits, Pursuit, 21 February 2019, <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/post-capitalism-life-within-environmental-limits?fbclid=IwAR2VIXv732tXf5207LloSi-doa01Hdyuv5hUUR5NtUx-LY28iq6KQbjrOzls>
74. Post- Capitalism: life within environmental limits, Pursuit, 21 February 2019, <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/post-capitalism-life-within-environmental-limits?fbclid=IwAR2VIXv732tXf5207LloSi-doa01Hdyuv5hUUR5NtUx-LY28iq6KQbjrOzls>
75. Post- Capitalism: life within environmental limits, Pursuit, 21 February 2019, <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/post-capitalism-life-within-environmental-limits?fbclid=IwAR2VIXv732tXf5207LloSi-doa01Hdyuv5hUUR5NtUx-LY28iq6KQbjrOzls>
76. Post- Capitalism: life within environmental limits, Pursuit, 21 February 2019, <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/post-capitalism-life-within-environmental-limits?fbclid=IwAR2VIXv732tXf5207LloSi-doa01Hdyuv5hUUR5NtUx-LY28iq6KQbjrOzls>
77. Rising Up, Facebook, 18 February 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/607175399722348>
78. Degrowth: A Call for Radical Abundance, Films for Action, 3 January 2019, <https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/degrowth-a-call-for-radical-abundance/?fbclid=IwAR2s-8L18wisTgyJeKkL9bX-js3ZRcpvqGCCURAEeNLCSC41YxBHIQSN9g-30#.XC6T1upiVQ0.facebook>
79. Degrowth: A Call for Radical Abundance, Films for Action, 3 January 2019, <https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/degrowth-a-call-for-radical-abundance/?fbclid=IwAR2s-8L18wisTgyJeKkL9bX-js3ZRcpvqGCCURAEeNLCSC41YxBHIQSN9g-30#.XC6T1upiVQ0.facebook>
80. Degrowth: A Call for Radical Abundance, Films for Action, 3 January 2019, <https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/degrowth-a-call-for-radical-abundance/?fbclid=IwAR2s-8L18wisTgyJeKkL9bX-js3ZRcpvqGCCURAEeNLCSC41YxBHIQSN9g-30#.XC6T1upiVQ0.facebook>
81. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>
82. Rising Up, Facebook, 15 November 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/362619997511224>
83. Rising Up, Facebook, 15 November 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/362619997511224>

was published on Medium, features the kinds of claims about capitalism often heard in the eco-socialist movement, this time applying them to civilisation as a - whole, stating that: “Civilizations can, by definition, not be sustainable, since every expansion on a finite planet logically has a limit”.⁸⁴

This piece is also particularly noteworthy because it presents one of the most extreme visions of what this group of campaigners aspire to achieve when they talk about overturning the current form of society. The article from Medium argues that the inevitable collapse of modern civilisation is already well underway - and proposing that the most sustainable way of life for humans is that of “nomadic hunter-gatherers” and indigenous peoples.⁸⁵ While the author reassures that it is not expected that everyone should adopt this lifestyle, it does commend it. It advocates “self-sufficiency, autonomy, independence, simplification, localization and rewilding.”⁸⁶ The author explains that this involves: “doing things yourself and not relying on people you don’t know. Feeding yourself, planting trees, building your own house, creating and nurturing a community and caring about the people you love.”⁸⁷ Furthermore, the author states: “I advocate trying to do everything yourself, from materials that you yourself collected and processed. I advocate quitting your job, going back to the countryside...”, and suggests that the collapse of civilisation should be embraced as an opportunity to create “something better”.⁸⁸

While the message found in articles such as this may sound fringe and extreme, as will be seen, it appears to represent the kind of thinking embraced by the figures from Rising Up! who have gone on to create Extinction Rebellion. Indeed, one indication of just how normalised talk of civilizational collapse has become in this circle was suggested when Gail Bradbrook raised the subject before Parliament’s Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee in June 2019. During the oral evidence session, Bradbrook was asked her thoughts on nuclear power as a low carbon alternative, to which she responded by saying, “given that many credible commentators talk about the collapse of civilization how are we going to manage nuclear power stations in the face of a civilization collapse?”⁸⁹ This would seem to raise the question of whether the agenda advocated by the activists is really intended to avert such a collapse, or to embrace it.

Founding Extinction Rebellion

The Extinction Rebellion campaign was launched by Rising Up! activists in the spring of 2018. Roger Hallam has traced the origins of the initiative to January of that year when he wrote a paper for the group titled “Pivoting to the Real Issue”.⁹⁰ Hallam described the initial scepticism that his paper received from others in the group, but explained that by April his fellow campaigners had come to support the proposal.⁹¹ It is not clear who all of the founders of Extinction Rebellion were. The Extinction Rebellion website acknowledges that Gail Bradbrook and Roger Hallam were responsible for some of the thinking up behind the campaign, and also lists the names of others from Rising Up! as founders, such as; Simon Bramwell, Stuart

84. The Collapse of Global Civilization Has Begun, Medium, 14 November 2017, <https://medium.com/@FeunFooPermaKra/the-collapse-of-global-civilization-has-begun-b527c649754c>

85. The Collapse of Global Civilization Has Begun, Medium, 14 November 2017, <https://medium.com/@FeunFooPermaKra/the-collapse-of-global-civilization-has-begun-b527c649754c>

86. The Collapse of Global Civilization Has Begun, Medium, 14 November 2017, <https://medium.com/@FeunFooPermaKra/the-collapse-of-global-civilization-has-begun-b527c649754c>

87. The Collapse of Global Civilization Has Begun, Medium, 14 November 2017, <https://medium.com/@FeunFooPermaKra/the-collapse-of-global-civilization-has-begun-b527c649754c>

88. The Collapse of Global Civilization Has Begun, Medium, 14 November 2017, <https://medium.com/@FeunFooPermaKra/the-collapse-of-global-civilization-has-begun-b527c649754c>

89. BEIS Strategy Committee question Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=117DHI24PTE>

90. Extinction Rebellion - The birth, the theory and the practice, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKSUNnAnIwg>

91. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKSUNnAnIwg>

Basden, and Ian Bray.⁹² Others listed as helping to found the campaign are: Robin Boardman, Clare Farrell, Nils Agger, Frieda Luerken, and someone simply referred to as Sibi.⁹³ George Barda—of Compassionate Revolution—has also been identified as one of the figures behind Extinction Rebellion,⁹⁴ although on other occasions he has been described simply as a spokesperson for the campaign.⁹⁵ Hallam has described a meeting that took place in a café in Bristol at which it was decided to go ahead with launching the campaign, followed by a period of several weeks of working groups attempting to plan how to undertake the project, and disagreeing about the campaign’s name.⁹⁶ Gail Bradbrook has also spoken about the founding of Extinction Rebellion, recounting that this happened in her home in April of 2018.⁹⁷

The significant next stage in Extinction Rebellion’s emergence was a period of several months, during which a number of the founders toured the country building support for the kind of mass mobilisation of large numbers of people that would be required for the kinds of civil disobedience they were hoping to organise. The outreach ranged from talks and presentations for local groups, to structured training days for preparing activists.⁹⁸ These talks, which appear to have acted as a primary means for recruitment, were held in town halls, libraries, pubs, churches and universities.⁹⁹

A video produced by *The Guardian* newspaper shows Roger Hallam giving one of these outreach talks in Frome (Somerset) in late September 2018, with Hallam explaining that the approach involves going into a town hall meeting, and telling the audience that it is “effectively over, we’re all going to die unless there’s a major mobilisation”.¹⁰⁰ Out of this, Hallam reports that 30 percent of people agree to be arrested, while between 10 and 20 percent agree to go to prison.¹⁰¹ Hallam is shown explaining to those gathered that emailing, writing letters and going on marches is not effective and that around 400 need to go to prison, and for two to three thousand people to be arrested. At the end of the meeting Hallam is shown counting forms that listeners have filled out specifying if they are willing to go to prison.¹⁰² During the talk in Frome, Hallam discusses the need for people to be arrested.¹⁰³ He continues by telling listeners that “I’m at the position where I’m going to go down in November, because I’m ready, got nothing else to lose.”¹⁰⁴ A month later, Extinction Rebellion were reporting that almost 500 people had signed up and volunteered to be arrested.¹⁰⁵

In a network database produced by Extinction Rebellion it is possible to see the vast number and variety of groups that were contacted as part of the campaign’s outreach activities.¹⁰⁶ In some cases it appears that these groups were communicated with directly, while in other cases someone from Extinction Rebellion might simply have posted on the group’s Facebook page. To a large degree, the activists drew upon an existing network of environmentalists, thereby gathering contact details for—and potentially reaching out to—over 600 anti-fracking groups, over 230 local green “Transition groups”, around 70 local Green Party groups, 60 local Friends of the Earth groups, and 50 anti-fossil fuel groups.¹⁰⁷ However, the network

92. Extinction Rebellion - FAQs <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

93. Extinction Rebellion - FAQs <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

94. *DailyMail*: The faces behind the climate change chaos <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6927195/The-faces-Extinction-Rebellion-climate-change-chaos.html>

95. Gloucestershire Live: Gloucestershire mum is ‘Godmother’ of group behind naked Commons protests who want to bring London to a standstill today <https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/gloucester-news/london-protest-extinction-rebellion-bridge-2710501>

96. Extinction Rebellion - The birth, the theory and the practice, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKSUNnAnIwg>

97. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] - Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

98. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7B-GVX-pM580>

99. *The Guardian*: ‘We have a duty to act’: hundreds ready to go to jail over climate crisis <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/we-have-a-duty-to-act-hundreds-ready-to-go-to-jail-over-climate-crisis>

100. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: ‘We can’t get arrested quick enough’, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAH3lQwHKag>

101. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: ‘We can’t get arrested quick enough’, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAH3lQwHKag>

102. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: ‘We can’t get arrested quick enough’, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAH3lQwHKag>

103. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: ‘We can’t get arrested quick enough’, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAH3lQwHKag>

104. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: ‘We can’t get arrested quick enough’, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAH3lQwHKag>

105. *The Guardian*: ‘We have a duty to act’: hundreds ready to go to jail over climate crisis <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/we-have-a-duty-to-act-hundreds-ready-to-go-to-jail-over-climate-crisis>

106. UK Groups and networks database - Extinction Rebellion https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t48uVrr1sH_xzrjEWcQ4u13vgtRdx-Ju7oEZ-bUW1XQU/edit#gid=0

107. UK Groups and networks database - Extinction Rebellion https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t48uVrr1sH_xzrjEWcQ4u13vgtRdx-Ju7oEZ-bUW1XQU/edit#gid=879351890

building also extended to others on the far left. The database includes details for over 80 different Momentum groups, around 40 Global Justice groups, Trade Unions, and a series of small anarchist and radical left wing groups.¹⁰⁸ Going further still, the database document indicates that Extinction Rebellion reached beyond political and campaign groups, gathering contact details and apparently reaching out to numerous cycling groups, ‘Yoga, Health, Mums’ groups, Quaker groups, and other religious communities.¹⁰⁹

Structure & Organisation

Determining precisely which individuals are organising Extinction Rebellion and where power lies within the campaign is far from straightforward. In part, this might be explained by the fact that Extinction Rebellion is strictly speaking only a campaign of an already existing organisation – Rising Up!. The fact that Extinction Rebellion functions much like an organisation, with many of the key figures in Extinction Rebellion also linked to Rising Up!, suggests that it may actually be a rebranded incarnation of Rising Up!, and that through this rebranding a small fringe group of radical activists has become a large national movement, whose model and branding is now being implemented internationally. This achievement is made all the more impressive by the fact that—from what is presented on the campaign’s website—observers are given the impression that the movement is essentially leaderless.

Evidently, there are prominent figureheads within the campaign. Gail Bradbrook and Roger Hallam appear to be the intellectual driving force behind Extinction Rebellion, and they also happen to be two of the most articulate proponents of its worldview and strategy. Nevertheless, others are often put forward to represent the movement and to act as spokespeople. The picture is further blurred by the fact that Extinction Rebellion does not admit to having any formal leadership, but instead presents an extremely complicated account of what Gail Bradbrook has described as a “Self Organising System”,¹¹⁰ which is represented as an effort to run a decentralised movement in which Extinction Rebellion permits anyone who adheres to its 10 principles to carry out activism under its name.¹¹¹ However, this also makes it extremely difficult to determine where power or accountability lies within the campaign.

Extinction Rebellion has produced a complex map of semi-autonomous “circles” which appear to be working groups.¹¹² Many of these circles appear to have multiple additional circles sitting within them, with little clarity about precisely what these circles have authority over, how they interrelate, or in certain cases even who is sitting in some of these teams.¹¹³ In a video published on the Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel outlining the campaign’s structure, Gail Bradbrook mentions the existence of an “Anchor Circle” which is made up of representatives from several of the other key circles.¹¹⁴ Given that this circle features prominent figures who had been involved with Rising Up! and Extinction Rebellion’s founding—such as Roger Hallam, Gail Bradbrook, and Robin Boardman¹¹⁵—it may be considered that this body is the closest thing the campaign has to a

108. UK Groups and networks database - Extinction Rebellion https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t48uVrr1sH_xzrjEWcQ4ul3vgtRdx-Ju7oEZ-bUW1XQU/edit#gid=520504301

109. UK Groups and networks database - Extinction Rebellion https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t48uVrr1sH_xzrjEWcQ4ul3vgtRdx-Ju7oEZ-bUW1XQU/edit#gid=1198765370

110. Power, Decision Making & Strategy in Extinction Rebellion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsh-5eWVksCE>

111. Extinction Rebellion, About Us <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/>

112. XR UK Organism <https://app.glassfrog.com/organizations/16070/roles/11285365>

113. XR UK Organism <https://app.glassfrog.com/organizations/16070/roles/11285365>

114. Power, Decision Making & Strategy in Extinction Rebellion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsh-5eWVksCE>

115. XR UK Organism: Anchor Circle https://app.glassfrog.com/circles/44479#_roles

leadership council or board. Notably, the Anchor Circle also features Tim Crossland, whom Extinction Rebellion has described as both its legal adviser¹¹⁶ and its “Legal Strategy Coordinator”.¹¹⁷

Further confusing matters, Bradbrook has explained that during the so-called period of rebellion, the campaign has a “Rapid Response Team”.¹¹⁸ Bradbrook mentioned that during the April protests the team met each evening, and it appeared that this body may have an element of decision-making power about how protests were implemented as events unfolded.¹¹⁹ At that time the membership of the Rapid Response Team was given as:

- Linda Doyle – (Political Circle)
- Larch Maxey – (Actions Circle)
- Clare Farrell – (Art Circle)
- Roger Hallam – (Actions Circle)
- Sam Knights – (Political Circle)
- Farhana Yamin – (Political Circle)
- Gail Bradbrook – (Movement Circle)
- Robin Ellis – (XR Youth)
- Robin Boardman – (Communities Circle)
- Claire Pardoe – (Regeneration Circle)
- Stephanie Kent – (Self Organising System Team)
- April Greiveson – (Guardians Circle)
- Ronan McNern – (Media Circle)

This list includes several of the Extinction Rebellion founders who also sit on the Anchor Circle. It may be that Extinction Rebellion is still primarily driven by a core group of individuals from Rising Up! Equally, Roger Hallam assuming a position as one of the three directors of Compassionate Revolution Ltd in January 2019,¹²⁰ may indicate that financial control of the initiative actually rests there. A lack of transparency about the inner workings of Extinction Rebellion remains, and the nature of the decision making processes is likely to remain difficult to ascertain for as long as those behind the campaign continue to follow the line they have set on running a “Self Organising System”.

116. Breaking: High Court backs Heathrow Expansion <https://rebellion.earth/2019/05/01/breaking-high-court-backs-heathrow-expansion/>

117. Statement from Extinction Rebellion: Philip Hammond's Letter to Theresa May <https://rebellion.earth/2019/06/07/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-philip-hammonds-letter-to-theresa-may/>

118. Power, Decision Making & Strategy in Extinction Rebellion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsh-5eWVksCE>

119. Power, Decision Making & Strategy in Extinction Rebellion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsh-5eWVksCE>

120. Compassionate Revolution Limited, Companies House <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618/officers>

Extinction Rebellion's Philosophy and Ideology

Apocalyptic Warnings

Key to Extinction Rebellion's message, are the warnings about the cataclysmic effects of climate change on human life on earth. The leading figures in Extinction Rebellion deploy these warnings with particular effect. The recruitment lectures that Roger Hallam and Gail Bradbrook have given across the country have emphasised a message of environmental catastrophe. In these lectures, both Hallam and Bradbrook have encouraged their audiences to engage with their message at an intensely emotional level, even encouraging crying and time for personal reflection as part of an experiential process to be worked through before committing to taking action. This process likely plays an important part in securing the commitment of potential adherents, who are being asked to sign up for arrest and prison time, or to quit their jobs to volunteer full time for the rebellion.

As a device, the warnings about inevitable societal collapse caused by climate change arguably work both ways for the movement. Such warnings are likely help to recruit less politicised people who want to preserve their existing way of life. Yet it is also apparent that Extinction Rebellion uses a message about ecological disaster to construct an argument about the unsustainability of the current economic system and the inevitable collapse of capitalism, a message that carries great appeal for those in the movement shifting towards a more radical mindset. The focus on fast approaching apocalypse also gives the movement a certain millenarian feel. Just as the campaign arguably claims to offer various forms of redemption.

It is a notable feature of Extinction Rebellion's message, that the possibility that technological solutions might be developed to counter climate change and reverse environmental damage is routinely dismissed. This message is present in Extinction Rebellion's 2019 handbook, *This is Not a Drill*. The social scientist Jem Bendell writes in that book that he does not believe we can place our hopes in either technological innovation, or political change, and that we must instead prepare for social collapse. Bendell states "my guess is that, within ten years from now, a social collapse of some form will have occurred in the majority of countries around the world."¹²¹ In his essay, Bendell ponders the possibility that if societal breakdown from climate change is now likely, "might we communicate that view as widely as possible without offering a set of answers and action

¹²¹. *This is Not a Drill*, pg 75.

agendas?”¹²² Answering his own question, Bendell claims “there is a lot that people can gain from feeling lost and despairing before then piecing things back together for themselves, in their personal, professional and political lives.”¹²³ Bendell proposes that “normalising discussions about how to prepare for and soften collapse will benefit society.”¹²⁴

This proposed approach from Jem Bendell corresponds with the messaging some of the movement’s co-founders have used. In Extinction Rebellion’s introductory video “Welcome to the Rebellion”, Gail Bradbrook warned viewers about climate change, stating that the, “mother of all crises, means that it’s quite possible that all life on Earth—97 percent of it—is going to go, and possibly in my children’s lifetime.”¹²⁵ Bradbrook admonished that, “our complicity really is our silence, and our separation from each other. And so what we’re doing in Extinction Rebellion is saying it’s time to really come together and express our power.”¹²⁶ Later in the same video, Bradbrook explained:

“If we have three years of really bad El Nino weather events, the food systems are fucked, and we’ll be fighting over cans of beans. We really are at a crossroads. What we choose to do today is the difference between life and death on Earth. We’ve got to make something more beautiful and more connected and more local. Lives are short, lives start and they end and you’ve got to do something wild and amazing with that time. Grief is the price we pay for love and from love comes courage. And that’s when you say; I’ve had enough of this. And that’s when you go on to the streets.”¹²⁷

During an Extinction Rebellion action outside the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in November 2018, Bradbrook repeated the warning about serious food shortages to the press, stating: “we are at severe risk of food supplies collapsing in the next few years, and of societal collapse.”¹²⁸ Equally, speaking at the HSBC sponsored Cog X conference in June 2019, Bradbrook referenced the writings of David Wallace Wells to tell her audience that the economic impact of global warming is “why this civilisation is finished”, and warned that this would likely also be triggered by food shortages.¹²⁹ This is a theme that has also been particularly emphasised by Roger Hallam. Speaking on an Amnesty International platform in February 2019, Hallam warned his audience that “we are facing an El Nino year this year and next”, and continued by explaining that:

“A Sustainability professor with decades of expertise says if this happens there would be starvation in Europe in three years. A Conservation Biology professor with decades of expertise says the human race will be extinct in a decade. A Climatology professor says we don’t face a climate emergency; we face a climate catastrophe within three years.”¹³⁰

Describing a series of catastrophic effects of an ecological and climate driven crisis, Hallam warned listeners that:

“All this means one thing; no food. At two degrees centigrade you can’t grow

122. This is Not a Drill, pg 76.

123. This is Not a Drill, pg 76.

124. This is Not a Drill, pg 76.

125. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

126. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

127. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

128. UK: Police detain climate activists ‘glued’ to UK energy department building, YouTube, 12 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9V04-T9U0c>

129. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

130. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

grains at scale in the centre of continents. It means economic collapse. That means mass starvation. Many people won't die from lack of food, they'll die from the secondary effects; the slaughter of global war, mass mental breakdown, mass torture, mass rape. You all know this, it's all connected. It's the end. It's over."¹³¹

Hallam even mentioned that during a recent panel at Kings College he had "told the students they're soon going to die if they don't rebel."¹³² Stressing rebelling as the only appropriate response to the impending crisis, Hallam pointed out to his audience:

"that's what we would do if our parents were lying at home and hadn't eaten for weeks. That's what you would do if there were body parts on the way to the tube, if there were women in this room who had been raped."¹³³

During his speech Hallam said he would not stay for the question and answer session at the end of the panel. Indeed, he also encouraged those present not to carry on with the formalities of the event. Rather he told his audience, "what... I suggest to you now, instead of continuing with the panel, you split up into small groups and share your emotional response to the prospect of losing everything you love. It seems to me that's the only human thing to do."¹³⁴ Hallam continued by saying, "I suggest then you go home and watch the professors on YouTube until you breakdown and cry, and cry like you don't think you're ever going to stop and then come back and do what is now obvious. Rebel!"¹³⁵ During an interview with Real Media from April 2019, Hallam issued a similar instruction, saying:

"Our children are going to die in the next 10 to 20 years. Think about it. And then think about it again, and then think about again until you cry. And then get up in the morning, and do your duty, to your kids. And get out there. This isn't- we're not playing games, this isn't some sort of like- it's not a game."¹³⁶

The same sense of this duty or obligation to act was made particularly starkly in a remark Hallam made after one of Extinction Rebellion's recruitment talks in a London community café in the approach to the campaign's October 2018. As Hallam put it at the time:

"In the end, we have to realise that we will all be alone on our deathbed and asking ourselves whether we lived a worthwhile life – and for this generation the climate crisis is the overriding existential challenge. There are no guarantees but doing nothing, not trying, is not an option."¹³⁷

Presenting his message in this way, Hallam is clearly well aware of the effect that this can have for mobilising support. He outlined how this extreme message helps to recruit volunteers while on his way to give a talk for Extinction Rebellion in September 2018. Hallam explained, "So it goes like this; you go into Town hall X, you tell them that its effectively over, we're all going to die unless there's a major mobilisation—30 percent of people agree to go get arrested, 10 to 20 percent of people agree to go to prison."¹³⁸ Volunteering for arrest and imprisonment is not the only commitment Extinction Rebellion has urged its recruits to make in

131. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

132. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

133. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

134. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

135. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

136. Extinction Rebellion - The birth, the theory and the practice, Real Media, YouTube, 19 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKSUNnAnI-wg>

137. 'We have a duty to act': hundreds ready to go to jail over climate crisis, *The Guardian*, 26 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/we-have-a-duty-to-act-hundreds-ready-to-go-to-jail-over-climate-crisis>

138. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: 'We can't get arrested quick enough', *The Guardian*, YouTube, 22 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JA-H3IQwHKag>

response to its message and warnings. Adherents are also urged to take time off of work to join the protests, and even to leave their jobs to volunteer for the campaign full time. In a YouTube video uploaded by Extinction Rebellion days before the London actions of April 2019 were scheduled to begin, Hallam talked about ordinary people needing to decide whether they wanted their children to die, before then stating:

“So this is the message of this video; take two weeks off work. Okay, this is it! You know this is what we’ve been waiting for, for 30 years. This is our first major chance to actually make an impression on this completely out of your head dire situation. You know all these carbon emissions have been going up all these governments have been giving us these promises. It’s over. We know it’s over. It’s done. So what do we need to do? Take two weeks off work. It’s no big shakes, right. It really is no big deal. And if it is, then it is right. But this is bigger.”¹³⁹

Hallam then followed up with a still more substantial request from supporters:

“The second thing is we want you to work full time and part time for the rebellion. Now obviously some people can’t do this. But let’s face it a lot of people can. You know, if you give up your job it’s alright. The next day you still exist. So give up your job. Get in touch with Extinction Rebellion. People are doing this everyday. People come into the London office, the Bristol office, and are going; ‘you know what, this is the most important thing in the world’, because it is right. It’s the most important thing in the world. Sometimes things are the most important thing in the world. And this is it. So, coming and going; ‘you know what I’ve been working in the City for 30 years, but I’m giving up my job’. ‘You know what, I was a caterer. But that’s not important anymore. This is important’.”¹⁴⁰

Gail Bradbrook encourages a strongly emotional response from her audiences, particularly before encouraging them to engage in action. In September 2018 when Rising Up! was still in the process of building support for the launch of Extinction Rebellion, Bradbrook began one presentation by explaining that, “Traditionally when you are giving talks about climate change you try to be a little bit hopeful and tell people to think about something positive they might do off the back of it; this is quite a different talk.”¹⁴¹ She outlined that the talk would be structured with Part One covering “the truth about the ecological crisis”, and Part Two being for the emotional responses, and what could be done practically.¹⁴² Before beginning her presentation, Gail Bradbrook cautioned her audience saying:

“Some of it’s hard to hear. And I thought I’d faced this stuff, but I realise I haven’t. It’s layers isn’t it, with grief. And it’s welcome here tonight, permission of your neighbour, but feel free to hold hands, shed tears, and so on—or going on is the typical traditional English way isn’t it. And there’ll be an opportunity at least to pause, for that peace.”

In the course of her talk, Bradbrook had cited writings from Professor Jem Bendell to argue that “societal collapse is inevitable”, stating that “immense

139. Roger Hallam - Why International Rebellion? - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 April 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

140. Roger Hallam - Why International Rebellion? - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 April 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

141. Heading for extinction and what to do about it | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 September, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Vkc4SnwY0>

142. Heading for extinction and what to do about it | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 September, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Vkc4SnwY0>

catastrophe is very likely—we're talking about a massive loss of human life—and human extinction is possible."¹⁴³ She then referenced further research suggesting that changes to the Arctic Jet stream could lead to a collapse within three years.¹⁴⁴ Bradbrook warned that these were the kinds of conditions that might bring about fascism, telling the audience that World War Two is a reminder of what humans are capable of doing under extreme circumstances. She continued by reading a historical account of the treatment of Soviet Prisoners of War held by Nazi Germany, followed by an account of mass rape perpetrated by Soviet soldiers invading Germany. "When society gets into a state of horrendously immoral behaviour, terrible things happen", she told the audience.¹⁴⁵ Later in her presentation as promised Bradbrook announced several minutes of quiet reflection as she moved from the section of her talk laying out the evidence of environmental disaster, before moving on to what the response should be.

During her talk at the Cog X conference in London, Bradbrook also made her warning particularly stark and encouraged a strong emotional engagement from her audience. Early on in her presentation, Bradbrook used a picture in her slides of the body of the Syrian child Alan Kurdi, who had drowned in 2015 when a boat sank as his family attempted to travel from Turkey to Greece. As she presented this image, Bradbrook stated that there are 400,000 deaths annually—with the implication being that these are being caused by climate change.¹⁴⁶ Towards the end of her talk, Bradbrook put it to her listeners:

"So what does it mean to look at this truth? For me it meant a feeling of a dark night of the soul over many weeks of grief. I expect to die, I expect that my children will die; but that all life on earth will die? How are we to live in these times? How are we to stand up and talk about business opportunities and business as usual? We have to tell each other the truth. In the way we say in Extinction Rebellion; we are fucked, we are fucked! Humanity is Fucked!

"It's a disaster, folks, of biblical proportions and we have to allow in that feeling of grief. This is a feminine piece for all of us, men and women and other genders, to feel the grief because when you feel grief you feel love and when you feel love you can feel courage. And let's take courage in the fact that the solutions to this crisis—which is multiple—are about re-loving nature, rewilding, regenerating, in reducing what we do, being together."¹⁴⁷

It was from this sentiment of heightened emotion that Bradbrook introduced the idea of rebellion as the appropriate response, telling the audience "in order to see these solutions come forwards we're going to need to rebel, and we've started that with the Extinction Rebellion."¹⁴⁸ Outlining explicitly what she meant by this, Bradbrook stated that "civil disobedience is essential right now", and claiming that the social contract is now broken, she stressed, "I'm not organising protests, I'm organising a rebellion against my government."¹⁴⁹

143. Heading for extinction and what to do about it | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 September, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Vkc4SnwY0>

144. Heading for extinction and what to do about it | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 September, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Vkc4SnwY0>

145. Heading for extinction and what to do about it | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 September, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Vkc4SnwY0>

146. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

147. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

148. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

149. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

“System Change, Not Climate Change”

When Extinction Rebellion took control of London’s Oxford Circus as part of their April 2019 actions, the protestors installed a large pink boat in the middle of what had been a busy road. A large banner was placed on the boat reading “System Change Not Climate Change”.¹⁵⁰ This same slogan has also featured on the placards of the Socialist Worker, of the Socialist Workers Party¹⁵¹, and has appeared at environmentalist and anti-globalist rallies internationally. For some radical left wing groups, environmentalism may simply be the latest vehicle for promoting the “system change” that they had already been campaigning for over many decades.

Writing in the Extinction Rebellion handbook, *This is Not a Drill*, Roger Hallam enthuses that they have succeeded in creating a movement of “scientists, academics, lawyers, diplomats, councillors, campaigners, teachers, doctors, nurses, artists, writers, actors, graphic designers, psychologists”, and that this movement has been “united behind one shared vision. A vision of radical system change.”¹⁵² The underlying worldview sitting at the core of Extinction Rebellion shows no meaningful deviation from that of the Rising Up! group which launched the campaign. It is a worldview in which anti-Capitalism and environmentalism are inseparably entangled. As another Extinction Rebellion banner from Oxford Circus put it: “Capitalism is costing the Earth”.¹⁵³

The degree to which the Extinction Rebellion campaign is willing to be entirely transparent about its extreme political views remains unclear, as does the precise nature of the movement’s ambitions on this question. Suspicion that those behind the campaign are intentionally concealing the full extent of their agenda was fuelled during the April 2019 actions in London. On 18 April, Extinction Rebellion tweeted a message—which has subsequently been deleted—calling for supporters to join protests in Parliament Square. In the tweet Extinction Rebellion stated openly:

“This movement is the best chance we have of bringing down capitalism. Get on board, induction through the day at Parliament Square. You are welcome. You are needed.”¹⁵⁴

While this overt expression of radical anti-capitalism was quickly removed from Twitter, in many respects the campaigners have made no secret of their views. Early in the April 2019 protests Sam Knights—a prominent figure in the campaign—tweeted:

“Surprised that we managed to hold all four locations overnight. A policeman told us this morning: ‘We have run out of cells. You’ve totally broken us’. Today we are using this space responsibly. We are talking about radical politics and alternative economics. This is democracy.”¹⁵⁵

As these protests came to their conclusion, Knights tweeted once again about wider political goals, this time saying:

“Extinction Rebellion leaves today with a beautiful closing ceremony. But not before gluing ourselves to the London stock exchange... We have all outgrown

150. What if we all had a pink boat in our pockets?, Medium, 15 May 2019, <https://medium.com/@iain.farrell/what-if-we-all-had-a-pink-boat-in-our-pockets-b49f77faa522>

151. Climate emergency declared - now it's time for action, *Socialist Worker*, 1 May 2019 <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/48289/Climate+emergency+declared+++now+its+time+for+action>

152. *This is Not a Drill*, Pg 99.

153. *Financial Times*, <https://www.ft.com/content/5229af86-5f72-11e9-b285-3acd5d43599e>

154. Extinction Rebellion: Protesters set sights on Heathrow, *The Times*, 18 April 2019, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/climate-change-protest-police-call-for-reinforcements-c0mfh8zqg?t=ie>

155. Sam Knights, Twitter, 16 April 2019 <https://twitter.com/samjknights/status/1118119328237391872>

capitalism. It is a tired, broken system, totally incompatible with a healthy, sustainable future. We have to dream bigger.”¹⁵⁶

Often the narrative adopted has been as focused on matters of ‘social justice’ as on environmentalism. It is striking how in an introductory video to Extinction Rebellion—“Welcome to the Rebellion!” uploaded to YouTube 20 April 2019—Gail Bradbrook begins not by discussing the environment but by talking about wider issues of social justice. She introduces herself by stating; “My dad was a coal miner and I have spent my life feeling a little bit of a fraud, like I’m not supposed to be in the room, like trying to be a scientist as a woman, and a working class woman.”¹⁵⁷ Bradbrook continues by saying:

“Working people find it hard to make ends meet. And they don’t have a choice. In conventional politics the democracy we have right now is essentially deeply flawed, deeply flawed. It is ‘OK’ for lobbyists who have billions of pounds of money to spend on these issues to be constantly in government pushing for their agendas, which is generally to do with self-interest and moneymaking, not the interests of the ordinary person. I think it’s a deeply toxic system. It’s got this machinery based on the idea that we have to have constant economic growth.”¹⁵⁸

Only at this mention of economic growth does the video pivot to the environment, with Bradbrook repeating the belief that, “you can’t have constant economic growth on a finite planet.”¹⁵⁹ As noted in the material presented by Rising Up! via social media, this idea sits at the core of why this movement sees environmentalism and anti-Capitalism as necessitating one another. In place of the Marxist belief that the capitalist economic system must inevitably collapse because of its own internal contradictions, so this movement holds that capitalism must end because its own perpetuation necessitates destroying and depleting the resources it depends upon. For Bradbrook this point has already been reached. As she explains; “Conventional politics is fucked, it’s finished.”¹⁶⁰ Later in the same video she reiterates; “This civilisation is finished. It’s finished. You know, whether you like it or not.”¹⁶¹

In this respect, it seems little is being concealed here. Yet, somewhat remarkably, Extinction Rebellion has tweeted out an article openly discussing the virtues of the movement avoiding openly embracing anti-capitalism, while nonetheless undertaking anti-capitalist activity in practice. On 10 May 2019, Extinction Rebellion tweeted an article titled, “Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics”, along with the message:

“When we have forced governments around the world to meet our demands your local #CitizensAssembly advised by natural and social scientists who #TellTheTruth will determine the role of capitalism, i.e. the role of infinite growth and infinite inequality.”¹⁶²

The article from The Ecologist—which describes itself as a “Journal for the Post-Industrial Age”—is written by Samuel Hayward and provides a detailed discussion of the pragmatic necessity for Extinction Rebellion not to come out as an openly anti-capitalist movement. Linking to an

156. Sam Knights, Twitter, 24 April 2019, <https://twitter.com/samjknights/status/1121301639577636864>

157. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

158. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

159. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

160. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

161. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hCOE1R8>

162. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 13 May 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1127982538847395847>

open letter from the Green Anti-Capitalist Front¹⁶³, the article notes that Extinction Rebellion has been criticised by some on the far left for not taking enough of an overtly anti-capitalist approach. To this Hayward retorts that the critics of the Extinction Rebellion movement miss two points:

“first, the current of anti-capitalist practice and principle that runs through the movement; second, that adopting a strong anti-capitalist stance would be movement suicide.”¹⁶⁴

As Hayward explains later in the piece, “by not providing an explicit critique of capitalism, XR has opened the doors to a bipartisan coalition of citizens”.¹⁶⁵ Hayward acknowledges that this “deviates from the approach of explicitly politicised climate groups” but notes that Extinction Rebellion’s strategy “has so far mobilised thousands of people to take part in civil disobedience over consecutive days”, pointing out that this is something that other campaigners have found extremely difficult to achieve.¹⁶⁶ As such, Samuel Hayward warns:

“To demand that XR adopts an explicit and overarching anti-capitalist narrative, which has previously failed to move enough people to action, is to demand that the movement gives up part of what has made it successful.”¹⁶⁷

Nevertheless, readers are reassured that Extinction Rebellion does have the anti-Capitalist credentials. As well as pointing to the campaign’s actions at Canary Wharf and the Bank of England, the article argues that by Extinction Rebellion protests shutting down areas of London, “spaces that had been reclaimed were subsequently decommercialised, eradicating pricing systems and excluding no one based on their ability to pay up.”¹⁶⁸ Hayward points to “the ideological implications” of shutting down Oxford Street; “a symbol of consumer capitalism”, and suggests that the distribution of free meals at these locations represented a form of “beyond-money system”.¹⁶⁹ Hayward goes so far as to suggest:

“This value-system, newly instated across the five London sites, echoed a late stage communist society, which, according to Marx, will consist of self-organised communities, free from private property.”¹⁷⁰

In the article, Hayward also welcomes the policy on a Citizens Assembly, which he points to as a “crucial plank” of Extinction Rebellion’s strategy and explains that this is “designed to overcome the UK’s failing democratic institutions.”¹⁷¹ Looking to the future, the article argues that as the Extinction Rebellion movement evolves, “those with strong anti-capitalist motivations should be forming affinity groups within the movement”, and that through this they should be “organising disruptive actions that target corporations and financial actors.”¹⁷²

In contrast to the line presented on Extinction Rebellion’s website, over its social media accounts, the campaign is far more overtly focused on promoting anti-capitalism. While those running the Extinction Rebellion Twitter account quickly took down the tweet advertising their movement

163.Green Anti-Capitalist Front Manifesto & Open Letter to Extinction Rebellion, Freedom, 11 March 2019, <https://freedomnews.org.uk/green-anti-capitalist-front-manifesto-open-letter-to-extinction-rebellion/>

164.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

165.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

166.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

167.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

168.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

169.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

170.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

171.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

172.Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics, *Ecologist*, 10 May 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics>

“as the best chance we have of bringing down capitalism”, other posts have remained online. On 15 February 2019, Extinction Rebellion tweeted an interview with Gail Bradbrook from The Sustainable Century. Quoting from the interview, Extinction Rebellion wrote:

“@gailbradbrook, #ExtinctionRebellion,... says non-violent confrontation with government... may be the only way to force the change required to reverse the damage neo-liberal economic & failing democratic systems are [doing].”¹⁷³

Equally clear, on 25 of April 2019, Extinction Rebellion tweeted an article from *The Guardian* titled “Dare to declare capitalism dead – before it takes us all down with it”. Alongside this, Extinction Rebellion tweeted a quote from the article reading:

“While some people have rejected capitalism gladly and swiftly, I’ve done so slowly and reluctantly... Our choice comes down to this. Do we stop life to allow capitalism to continue, or stop capitalism to allow life to continue?”¹⁷⁴

Discussing what the article sees as capitalism’s unavoidable failings and collapse, it repeats the movement’s commonly heard line on “perpetual growth”, writing that “capitalism collapses without growth, yet perpetual growth on a finite planet leads inexorably to environmental calamity.”¹⁷⁵ The piece further stresses that finding a way to continue economic growth alongside a reduction in the consumption of material resources will not be possible, and so declares; “Green growth is an illusion.”¹⁷⁶ In another example, on 30 May 2019, Extinction Rebellion tweeted a link to an article titled “Capitalism is killing the world’s wildlife populations, not humans”. Extinction Rebellion wrote in its tweet:

“The word that they dare not utter - capitalism. Surely capitalism along with fossil fuels would be amongst the things that your #CitizensAssembly on climate and ecological justice would deliberate over.”¹⁷⁷

The article states that capitalism, “particularly in its neoliberal” iteration, is an “ideology founded on a principle of endless economic growth driven by consumption, a proposition that is simply impossible.”¹⁷⁸ The article further argues that by simply referring to “consumption”, rather than explicitly to capitalism, “blame and responsibility for species loss is disproportionately shifted onto individual lifestyle choices”, so risking that the “larger and more powerful systems and institutions that are compelling individuals to consume are, worryingly, let off the hook.”¹⁷⁹ A further display of this view comes from 22 April 2019, when the primary Extinction Rebellion Facebook page posted an article from Big Think, titled “Scientists to U.N.: To stop climate change, modern capitalism needs to die”.¹⁸⁰ While the article is not as extreme as the title might suggest, it does present arguments stating that “conceptions of modern capitalism are inadequate”, and is critical of “continued unchecked consumption and growth”.¹⁸¹ Again, on 3 May 2019, Extinction Rebellion tweeted a link to an open letter addressed to the campaign that had been published on the left wing website Red Pepper. Extinction Rebellion’s tweet stated:

173. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 15 February 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1096476736919928835>

174. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 25 April 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1121577983033184260>

175. Dare to declare capitalism dead – before it takes us all down with it, *The Guardian*, YouTube, 25 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/25/capitalism-economic-system-survival-earth>

176. Dare to declare capitalism dead – before it takes us all down with it, *The Guardian*, YouTube, 25 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/25/capitalism-economic-system-survival-earth>

177. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 30 May 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1134060660407640064>

178. Capitalism is killing the world's wildlife populations, not humanity, *Kinder*, 8 February 2019, <https://kinder.world/articles/problems/capitalism-is-killing-the-worlds-wildlife-populations-not-humanity-20278>

179. Capitalism is killing the world's wildlife populations, not humanity, *Kinder*, 8 February 2019, <https://kinder.world/articles/problems/capitalism-is-killing-the-worlds-wildlife-populations-not-humanity-20278>

180. Extinction Rebellion, Facebook, 22 April 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellion/posts/366410243975090>

181. Scientists to U.N.: To stop climate change, modern capitalism needs to die, *Big Think*, 29 August 2018, https://bigthink.com/stephen-johnson/scientists-to-un-to-stop-climate-change-modern-capitalism-needs-to-die?fbclid=IwAR1MxCluGczG3wGN_9ICMEi9Tq0TDOOHJp8_ssp5pMA6BsHzm-cuzizz8Y

“The toxic system that we live in is predicated on racism, sexism & classism. The indigenous, working class, black, brown, queer, trans & disabled are hit the hardest by this system. Therefore, the privileged must use their privilege to change the system.”¹⁸²

The letter itself—which was sent from a coalition of radical campaign groups under the banner of “The Wretched of the Earth”—largely welcomes Extinction Rebellion but also criticises the movement for allegedly overlooking “communities in the Global South”, which it claims are leading the “building of new worlds free of the violence of capitalism.”¹⁸³ Contrary to that letter’s claims, it seems that Extinction Rebellion has taken a particular interest in activities in poorer non-western countries. On the 15 of April 2019, as the campaign was launching its actions to shut down parts of central London, the campaigners tweeted out a clip from one of its rallies in Parliament Square, accompanied by the quote:

“Jamie talks about International Solidarity: ‘Colonialism and capitalism are a different name for the same creed. We are being led by the global south. We are listening. This movement is about listening and acting.’”¹⁸⁴

Similarly, on 20 April Extinction Rebellion tweeted an article about the movement’s international activities, accompanied with the comment:

“An excellent article by @farhanaclimate. ‘We can and must succeed in catalysing a peaceful revolution to end the era of fossil fuels, nature extraction and capitalism.’ Our international work is the heart of this movement. #InternationalRebellion”¹⁸⁵

The article titled “Global rebellion: die, survive or thrive?” states that, “Extinction Rebellion is forging an international solidarity network to challenge capitalism, neo-colonialism and extractive industries.”¹⁸⁶ Discussing the various campaign groups that have had the support of Extinction Rebellion as part of this international network, the article states, “What all these movements have in common is a complete rejection of the neo-liberal economics and business as usual politics.”¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, in a rather unusual turn, on 24 February 2019, the primary Extinction Rebellion Facebook page posted a link to an interview and video with the environmental activist Vandana Shiva on the left wing media outlet Democracy Now.¹⁸⁸ The Extinction Rebellion post hails Shiva for “telling it like it is”, and “taking no hostages” in her exposure of “Bayer, Monsanto, Gates and Bezos”, and notes that she will write the foreword for the campaign’s new Handbook.¹⁸⁹ The article is titled “Vandana Shiva: We Must Fight Back Against the 1 Percent to Stop the Sixth Mass Extinction” and during the interview Shiva explains,

“I’m talking about the large corporations, but I’m also talking about the mechanisms of the neoliberal economy, which puts in place ways to make the money machine keep growing, at the cost of life, of the people and the planet. So, it’s not an accident that we are in an ecological catastrophe.”¹⁹⁰

Using the terminology that became popular at the time of the 2011

182. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 3 May 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1124430560607309825>

183. An open letter to Extinction Rebellion, *Red Pepper*, 3 May 2019, <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-open-letter-to-extinction-rebellion/>

184. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 15 April 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1117768358944964612>

185. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 20 April 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1119545815406665729>

186. Global rebellion: die, survive or thrive?, *Ecologist*, 18 April 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/apr/18/global-rebellion-die-survive-or-thrive>

187. Global rebellion: die, survive or thrive?, *Ecologist*, 18 April 2019, <https://theecologist.org/2019/apr/18/global-rebellion-die-survive-or-thrive>

188. Extinction Rebellion, Facebook, 24 February 2018 <https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellion/posts/342746739674774>

189. Extinction Rebellion, Facebook, 24 February 2018 <https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellion/posts/342746739674774>

190. Vandana Shiva: We Must Fight Back Against the 1 Percent to Stop the Sixth Mass Extinction, *Democracy Now*, 22 February 2019, https://www.democracynow.org/2019/2/22/vandana_shiva_we_must_fight_back?fbclid=IwAR1L7gZOThStX-lajIV5gyReSkSnK2OY0UxxPGbletarPk3L4gnczxEB08s

Occupy Movement, Shiva states that, “the 1 percent is the symbol of the concentration of wealth under the rules of the neoliberal economies, that are basically, on the one hand, turning every natural resource into a war zone. Even the Venezuelan issue is really a war over oil.”¹⁹¹ Shiva continues by claiming that there is currently a war over seeds by a “poison cartel”—in which she includes Monsanto and Bayer, Syngenta and ChemChina, Dow and DuPont; “all of them with their roots in Hitler’s Germany and finding chemicals to kill people. No wonder they’re still killing people.”¹⁹² During the interview Shiva attacks Bill Gates, including his philanthropic work, and states that, “the tragedy these days, is that the 1 percent money machine has become so powerful that it actually controls the political machine in a very big way.”¹⁹³

At its core, Extinction Rebellion is an anti-capitalist movement that envisages no possible accommodation with a free market economy. Given the background of its leading figures’ involvement in the Occupy Movement, it seems likely that they reject capitalism first and foremost out of ideological principle. Yet, in an approach characteristic of Extinction Rebellion, any opposition to capitalism is framed in purely pragmatic environmentalist terms. According to the internal logic of the movement’s worldview, capitalism must inevitably end because it is materially unsustainable. In one scenario, capitalism will end because it will bring about the collapse of its own system—and possibly the end of civilised life on earth. Yet the alternative that Extinction Rebellion offers is for human intervention to end capitalism and thus secure its own survival. In both scenarios capitalism ends, but what remains unclear in the second scenario is what it will be replaced by.

De-growth, Rewilding, & Post-Capitalism

Writing about the politics of the environmentalist movement, the contemporary philosopher John Gray has observed that:

“Climate protests such as Extinction Rebellion are spin-offs from the anti-globalisation movements of a decade or so ago, and like them they believe contemporary western capitalism is dysfunctional and headed for history’s scrap heap.”¹⁹⁴

Yet, as Gray points out, countries run by communist governments have had a particularly bad record on causing environmental damage.¹⁹⁵ An article in *The Guardian* “Dare to declare capitalism dead – before it takes us all down with it”, from April 2019, appeared to share some of these claims; that Soviet communism’s destructiveness on this front stems from the fact that, like capitalism, it is a system “obsessed with generating economic growth”.¹⁹⁶ The article did not propose an explicitly socialist system as the environmentalist alternative to capitalism. This too reflects John Gray’s observation when he noted:

“Greens will tell you they want an economic system different from a state socialist command economy. But how this new system would work has never

191. Vandana Shiva: We Must Fight Back Against the 1 Percent to Stop the Sixth Mass Extinction, *Democracy Now*, 22 February 2019, https://www.democracynow.org/2019/2/22/vandana_shiva_we_must_fight_back?fbclid=IwAR1L7gZOCThStx-laJIV5gyReSkSnK2OY0UxxPGbletarPk3L4gnczxE-BO8s

192. Vandana Shiva: We Must Fight Back Against the 1 Percent to Stop the Sixth Mass Extinction, *Democracy Now*, 22 February 2019, https://www.democracynow.org/2019/2/22/vandana_shiva_we_must_fight_back?fbclid=IwAR1L7gZOCThStx-laJIV5gyReSkSnK2OY0UxxPGbletarPk3L4gnczxE-BO8s

193. Vandana Shiva: We Must Fight Back Against the 1 Percent to Stop the Sixth Mass Extinction, *Democracy Now*, 22 February 2019, https://www.democracynow.org/2019/2/22/vandana_shiva_we_must_fight_back?fbclid=IwAR1L7gZOCThStx-laJIV5gyReSkSnK2OY0UxxPGbletarPk3L4gnczxE-BO8s

194. John Gray, Why the Greens should stop playing God, *UnHerd* 3 June 2019, <https://unherd.com/2019/06/climate-change-and-the-extinction-of-thought/>

195. John Gray, Why the Greens should stop playing God, *UnHerd* 3 June 2019, <https://unherd.com/2019/06/climate-change-and-the-extinction-of-thought/>

196. Dare to declare capitalism dead – before it takes us all down with it, *The Guardian*, YouTube, 25 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/comment-is-free/2019/apr/25/capitalism-economic-system-survival-earth>

been made clear, and in practice their demands amount to little more than what they call ‘sustainable development’.”¹⁹⁷

An article from *The Guardian*, tweeted by Extinction Rebellion at the time, suggested that just as technology had “found means of generating useful energy that are better and less damaging than coal”, so too is there now a “need to find means of generating human wellbeing that are better and less damaging than capitalism.”¹⁹⁸ The article conceded that no any one person currently has a complete alternative system to propose. Instead it offered the following framework:

“I think I see a rough framework emerging. Part of it is provided by the ecological civilisation proposed by Jeremy Lent, one of the greatest thinkers of our age. Other elements come from Kate Raworth’s doughnut economics and the environmental thinking of Naomi Klein, Amitav Ghosh, Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq, Raj Patel and Bill McKibben. Part of the answer lies in the notion of ‘private sufficiency, public luxury’. Another part arises from the creation of a new conception of justice based on this simple principle: every generation, everywhere, shall have an equal right to the enjoyment of natural wealth.”¹⁹⁹

What this constitutes is difficult to conclude, other than that it is something that draws heavily on the thinking of those on the contemporary radical left. When *The Guardian* journalist Owen Jones met with Roger Hallam at the Extinction Rebellion offices in late April, the two discussed the elements of Hallam’s approach that aligned with the radical left, and where Extinction Rebellion might diverge from traditional left wing approaches. Jones questioned Hallam on the protestors’ approach asking, “Doesn’t it need more of a full frontal assault on capitalism though?” to which Hallam replied, “Absolutely!”²⁰⁰ Pushing further, Jones asked whether the campaign should be doing more to target banks and fossil fuel companies.²⁰¹ Hallam responded by saying “yeah, well arguably yes, but probably not—this is my position on that”, explaining the tactical considerations of a campaign that has an appeal to make to both those on the left and on the right.²⁰²

While Hallam set out what the environmental case to the political right might look like—warning that the fastest way to destroy the free market would be by ignoring climate change—nevertheless, he also stated during the interview that “everyone on the left knows” that it won’t be possible to achieve the objectives on carbon emissions “without a big political revolution.”²⁰³ Indeed, Jones expressed his view to Roger Hallam that he does not believe that “there is a market based solution to this crisis”, to which Hallam agreed “Absolutely. Yeah you’re totally right.”²⁰⁴

When asked about his criticism of the “traditional left” and its approach to transforming society, Roger Hallam reassures “I’ve been on the left all my life and I think it’s fantastic. You know the whole socialist project; amazing. You know, it’s brought loads of people out of poverty; brilliant.”²⁰⁵ However, Hallam went on to outline a more specific complaint of the left, explaining:

“There’s a certain dishonesty on the left. I think in terms of the science, the left

197. John Gray, Why the Greens should stop playing God, *UnHerd* 3 June 2019, <https://unherd.com/2019/06/climate-change-and-the-extinction-of-thought/>

198. Dare to declare capitalism dead - before it takes us all down with it, *The Guardian*, YouTube, 25 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/comment-is-free/2019/apr/25/capitalism-economic-system-survival-earth>

199. Dare to declare capitalism dead - before it takes us all down with it, *The Guardian*, YouTube, 25 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/comment-is-free/2019/apr/25/capitalism-economic-system-survival-earth>

200. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion | We're the planet's fire alarm, Owen Jones, YouTube, 26 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ign-9ERpNM4>

201. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion | We're the planet's fire alarm, Owen Jones, YouTube, 26 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ign-9ERpNM4>

202. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion | We're the planet's fire alarm, Owen Jones, YouTube, 26 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ign-9ERpNM4>

203. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion | We're the planet's fire alarm, Owen Jones, YouTube, 26 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ign-9ERpNM4>

204. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion | We're the planet's fire alarm, Owen Jones, YouTube, 26 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ign-9ERpNM4>

205. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion | We're the planet's fire alarm, Owen Jones, YouTube, 26 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ign-9ERpNM4>

is going to say 'yeah yeah yeah. We can put all this money into these industries and everything will be fine, and we can still basically be screwing nature.' Well, screwing nature is arguably bad anyway. So that's a problem with the left, but aside from that, just from a sort of physical design point of view, if you don't get on with it it's a lot more— like you're going to have to be honest with the public and say 'we are going to have a reduction in living standards.' And we're going to have to deal with that."²⁰⁶

Hallam's insistence here about a reduction in living standards may be an acknowledgement of the realities of the so-called de-growth approach favoured by those in the wider movement out of which Extinction Rebellion has grown. As seen with Rising Up!, through its social media accounts, Extinction Rebellion has issued a number of posts and articles promoting de-growth. In a tweet from December 2018, Extinction Rebellion responded to a question raised about whether it has a "clear stance on the role of economic growth in driving climate change" by stating, "we support the decoupling of development from capitalism & fossil fuels, i.e. we support #degrowth & #postgrowth."²⁰⁷ Similarly, in March, 2019 Extinction Rebellion tweeted a lengthy piece by Giorgos Kallis dealing with de-growth with the comment, "@g_kallis on why the #GreenNewDeal narrative must be careful not to reproduce 'the hegemonic ideology of capitalist growth, which has created the problem of climate... [& ecological crisis] in the first place.'"²⁰⁸ Along with the hashtag #Degrowth, the tweet is also addressed at US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who has been an advocate of the Green New Deal.²⁰⁹

Gail Bradbrook promoted de-growth when speaking at the Cog X conference from a lectern bearing the HSBC logo in June 2019. Speaking about overconsumption "especially by the rich", Bradbrook told her audience:

"This idea we can keep having economic growth—these global goals that all look great with economic growth stuck in the middle of it—don't make any sense to me. We have to de-growth the economies of the West, and in fairness and allow the economies of other countries to grow."²¹⁰

From the pieces posted by Extinction Rebellion, it is clear that de-growth is not only proposed as a means to reduce consumption, but also as a way to pursue an undefined model of post-capitalism, and greater degrees of economic redistribution. In June 2019, Extinction Rebellion tweeted a piece from Prospect Magazine accompanied by the hashtag #Degrowth. Quoting from the article the tweet states, "If we share what we already have more fairly, we can improve people's lives right now without having to plunder the Earth for more. Fairness is an antidote to the growth imperative."²¹¹ Another article posted on the Extinction Rebellion Facebook page in November 2018 was based on a lecture titled "Post Capitalism by Design not Disaster: creating common wealth via degrowth".²¹² This piece argues for "planned economic contraction" as part of a transition to a post-capitalist society.²¹³ In line with some of the policies proposed in the Rising Up! draft manifesto, the article argues the current "systems of

206. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion | We're the planet's fire alarm, Owen Jones, YouTube, 26 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lgn-9ERpNM4>

207. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 2 December 2018, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1069236927562428423>

208. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 14 March 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1106239587238797313>

209. What is the Green New Deal and how would it benefit society?, *The Guardian*, 11 February 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/11/green-new-deal-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-ed-markey>

210. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkM3nw>

211. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 15 June 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1139922102000201731>

212. Extinction Rebellion, Facebook, 3 November 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellion/posts/296284870987628>

213. Post-Capitalism by Design not Disaster, Simplicity Collective, 31 October 2018, <https://simplicitycollective.com/post-capitalism-by-design-not-disaster-creating-common-wealth-via-degrowth>

banking and finance currently have a growth imperative built into their structures” and that “any degrowth society would have to create systems that did not require growth for stability”, suggesting that “debt jubilees would probably be required”.²¹⁴ Like the Rising Up! manifesto, the article also discusses the prospect of having some form of Universal Basic Income, and states that in a de-growth economy, “rather than growing the economic pie, a politics of degrowth would slice the economic pie differently through redistribution of wealth and power.”²¹⁵

As has been consistent in the kinds of articles posted by the activists, only the most vague impression is provided about what the future society will look like. However, this article states that “a degrowth economy involves significant localisation of the economy, moving toward an economy where local needs are predominantly met with local resources, shortening the chain between production and consumption.”²¹⁶ Further elaborating on this, the article posits that, “any post-capitalist economy is going to require new forms of business enterprises, moving away from profit-maximising corporations which are often owned by absentee shareholders, toward an economy where worker cooperatives, community enterprises, and not-for-profit models”.²¹⁷ Once again, these proposals reflect the picture seen in the draft manifesto from the Rising Up! website. Yet going further still, this piece argues that the de-growth system will see “non-monetary forms of the sharing economy, whereby communities self-organise to share resources in order to save money and avoid significant amounts of production”.²¹⁸

While Extinction Rebellion have so far avoided any open calls for reducing the world’s human population, this particular article does touch on that topic, but restricts its remarks to euphemistically quoting the 19th and early 20th century scientist Paul Ehrlich in saying that, “whatever problem you’re interested in, you’re not going to solve it unless you also solve the population problem.”²¹⁹ In November 2017, Rising Up! had posted an article to its Facebook page²²⁰ which listed overpopulation as one of the major causes of the civilizational collapse.²²¹ Equally, during her speech at the June 2019 Cog X conference in London, Gail Bradbrook did mention population and featured a slide giving “overpopulation and overconsumption” as the “ultimate” cause underlying the ecological damage.²²³ However, rather than directly advocate for a reduction of the world’s population, Extinction Rebellion has simply promoted a reduction in the proportion of the world taken for human use and habitation through a policy of rewilding.

Through its social media accounts, the campaign has shared numerous posts and articles on rewilding, such as in February 2019 when Extinction Rebellion tweeted a blogpost on rewilding, accompanied with the description, “why if government were to finally act on the climate & ecological crisis they should focus on things such as rewilding rather than ‘impractical, expensive... and dangerous.’ geoengineering.”²²³ In another example from November 2018, the campaign tweeted, “The #ExtinctionRebellion is rebelling for #ZeroCarbon2025 through things such as a decoupling of development from fossil fuels & rewilding rather

214. Post-Capitalism by Design not Disaster, Simplicity Collective, 31 October 2018, <https://simplicitycollective.com/post-capitalism-by-design-not-disaster-creating-common-wealth-via-degrowth>

215. Post-Capitalism by Design not Disaster, Simplicity Collective, 31 October 2018, <https://simplicitycollective.com/post-capitalism-by-design-not-disaster-creating-common-wealth-via-degrowth>

216. Post-Capitalism by Design not Disaster, Simplicity Collective, 31 October 2018, <https://simplicitycollective.com/post-capitalism-by-design-not-disaster-creating-common-wealth-via-degrowth>

217. Post-Capitalism by Design not Disaster, Simplicity Collective, 31 October 2018, <https://simplicitycollective.com/post-capitalism-by-design-not-disaster-creating-common-wealth-via-degrowth>

218. Post-Capitalism by Design not Disaster, Simplicity Collective, 31 October 2018, <https://simplicitycollective.com/post-capitalism-by-design-not-disaster-creating-common-wealth-via-degrowth>

219. Post-Capitalism by Design not Disaster, Simplicity Collective, 31 October 2018, <https://simplicitycollective.com/post-capitalism-by-design-not-disaster-creating-common-wealth-via-degrowth>

220. Rising Up, Facebook, 15 November 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/RisingUpUK/posts/362619997511224>

221. The Collapse of Global Civilization Has Begun, Medium, 14 November 2017, <https://medium.com/@FeunFooPermaKra/the-collapse-of-global-civilization-has-begun-b527c649754c>

222. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

223. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 26 February 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1100464616734363648>

than the mechanical capture of emissions that would allow fossil fuel companies to continue to pollute.”²²⁴ While elements of rewilding could prove popular and beneficial, given current global population projections, it is unclear how food production needs would continue to be met alongside such a programme of extensive rewilding—which might raise further questions about where the activists stand on population issues.

The focus on rewilding, coupled with “de-growth”, appears to sit alongside a subtext that dismisses the idea that technological solutions can be developed to help confront and avoid environmental disaster. When asked about maintaining jobs in industrial parts of the country during an oral evidence session with Parliament’s Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee in June 2019, Gail Bradbrook said that she doesn’t “personally rule out technology”, but then quickly countered this by claiming, “as many scientists and engineers say its magical thinking about carbon—just don’t think we should be putting our eggs in the basket of a technology that’s not proven at scale”.²²⁵ The prospect of developing such technologies would of course sit within an expectation of essentially maintaining the existing economic and political system. For those on the environmentalist far left, such an approach might risk invalidating their claim that there is no option but to end free market capitalism, abandon the pursuit of improving living standards through economic growth, and roll back the amount of land taken up for human habitation and agricultural use.

Taking a broad view, the model of society that Extinction Rebellion and those behind it rather vaguely advocate for might be described as a form of eco-socialism or green anarchism. What is clear is that they believe the existing social order and economic system must be overturned. Yet, there is a notable absence of a serious or precise explanation about what the alternative would look like. This may not necessarily be because there is any hidden agenda here, but rather the movement’s intellectual leaders themselves appear to lack a workable answer to this. Despite some elements that might sound utopian, at the most extreme end, the picture conveyed is of a very much materially poorer population, sustaining itself through local production, organised through workers cooperatives, governed by devolved assemblies, with various mechanisms for redistribution and common ownership. The details are lacking, but for the most part, the activists appear far more focused on agitating against the existing system, than they are on what comes after it.

224. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 11 November 2018, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1061690155403227138>

225. BEIS Strategy Committee question Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Il7DHI24PTE>

Extinction Rebellion's Strategy and Tactics

Demands

Officially, Extinction Rebellion has restricted its campaign to three demands, each of which may sound plausible and reasonable to many onlookers. These are:

- Government must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change;
- Government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025;
- Government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice.²²⁶

These demands raise a number of immediate questions. How would it be determined that biodiversity loss had indeed been “halted”? How would economic and infrastructure ramifications of bringing greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2025 be managed? How to justify such a significant constitutional change in the British political system as having the Government “led” by the decisions of a “Citizens Assembly” on a given issue? Nor should these demands by any means be viewed as conclusive or definitive. Rather, it is possible that these should be viewed as comparable to the “transitional demands” employed by Marxists and those on the hard left. Such demands do not represent the full extent of the ambitions of those who ask for them. Instead, these are demands that cannot realistically be satisfied under the present system and are intended to heighten existing tensions and move events further towards the version of society that the campaigners desire.

Roger Hallam has made comments that suggest Extinction Rebellion's attitude to its demands may be essentially tactical. Following the campaign's actions in London in April, a video titled “We've Already Won” posted to the Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel showed Hallam discussing the importance of having “intermediate demands” in protest movements.²²⁷ Hallam suggests that initially it may be more effective for the demands to be broad enough to bring large numbers of people on board with the

226. Our Demands, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/demands/>

227. Roger Hallam: We've already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 May 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZKrVFFjkBs>

protests. Comparing Extinction Rebellion to the Occupy Movement of 2011, Roger Hallam states:

“So what Extinction Rebellion has done is similar to Occupy, which is it’s just said ‘we’re over this shit’, and we’re going to go around to learn—and we don’t really care what we want particularly. We’re just like making—I mean we’ve got these broad three demands but it’s like the main feeling is just we’re just over this. Now that enables loads of people to come in to the system because they can project their own political egos onto the movement.”²²⁸

Only after this stage does Hallam suggest that the movement would move to more concrete intermediate demands, explaining: “in order to create political power you have to have this broad demand initially right, in order to get the mobilisation. But then you should pivot to having intermediate demands.”²²⁹ As Hallam had also explained in a video from early April 2019, initially the activists should not overly concern themselves with what concessions they might secure from politicians, but rather the principle of having forced the Government to engage with them would represent a significant victory.²³⁰ As Hallam put it,

“People can get stressed about you know, will they give this, will they give that, or should we go for that. That’s not really the story here. The real story is that for the first time in a generation popular people power have forced a genocidal government to come to the table to talk about the genocide that’s happening, and that is going to be massive.”²³¹

Of the three demands made by Extinction Rebellion, the calls for the establishment a “Citizens Assembly”—or possibly multiple “Citizens Assemblies”—is the most politically significant. While the campaigners may frame this as a democratic move, it would in fact represent a significant break with the UK’s established political system, bypassing and subverting representative parliamentary democracy. Even if an unelected body of this nature could be viewed as legitimate, it would inevitably only serve to further delegitimise our existing electoral system. During her talk at the 2019 Cog X conference, Gail Bradbrook, stated from the HSBC branded platform, “we are at a choice point; do we want more democracy or do we want less, because this democracy is not working for us—in my view it’s a fake democracy.”²³² Citizens Assemblies would appear to be a key part of changing what Extinction Rebellion views as our illegitimate political process. As the campaign argued in a tweet on 14 June 2019, “Representative democracy is no substitute for participatory democracy. This is one of the reasons why your government must #ActNow and create and be led a #CitizensAssembly on ecological and climate justice”.²³³

In the campaign’s introductory video “Welcome to the Rebellion”, Bradbrook discussed the prospect of establishing a Citizens Assembly on climate change as part of creating “a new form of politics”.²³⁴ She argued that, “it shouldn’t be left to politicians and it shouldn’t be left simply to experts, it needs the voice of the people”.²³⁵ Bradbrook outlines this in greater detail, explaining:

228. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 May 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZKrVFFjkBs>

229. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 May 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZKrVFFjkBs>

230. Roger Hallam - Why International Rebellion? - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 April 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

231. Roger Hallam - Why International Rebellion? - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 April 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

232. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkIM3nw>

233. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 14 June 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1139582083314200576>

234. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hC0E1R8>

235. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hC0E1R8>

“There are ways in which people can have a voice. We want to have a Citizens Assembly and I think that’s a really exciting innovation for a campaign to be calling for that. We would take, I think it’s around a thousand people by sortition, by you know selection, like you would for a jury. And they would look at the reality of the situation, and if they don’t know it they’ll be shocked and frightened. And then they’ll be presented with potential solutions and they’ll need to come up with a package for the UK.”²³⁶

Precisely who would be presenting these “potential solutions” is left unexplained. Bradbrook’s representation of a “really exciting innovation” for creating “a new form of politics” strikes a more upbeat tone than Roger Hallam did when he referenced citizens assemblies during his Amnesty International speech in February 2019. At that time Hallam stated:

“We are setting up assemblies where ordinary people can decide whether they want their children to be delivered to their deaths by the rich and powerful.

“We are not just sending out e-mails and asking for donations. We are going to force the governments to act. And if they don’t we will bring them down and create a democracy fit for purpose.”²³⁷

Speaking in an Extinction Rebellion YouTube video from early April 2019, Hallam commented on the choice that would be put before ordinary people in a Citizens Assembly, remarking “we can make a prediction that people don’t want their kids to die and they’ll go; okay, you know what’s the deal, how do we transform the economy?”²³⁸ Given the evidence indicating that those behind Extinction Rebellion see action on environmental issues as inseparably connected to their wider commitment to radical social and political change, the Citizens Assemblies may be best viewed as a step towards a much more ambitious—if ill defined—agenda. On a number of occasions, the campaign has issued statements over social media indicating that Citizens Assemblies would stray into areas far beyond those exclusively concerned with the environment. In one tweet from late April 2019, Extinction Rebellion stated, “Higher marginal taxation of the most affluent rather than philanthropy that is too often reinvestment in business as usual would surely be something for your local #CitizensAssembly to consider in terms of the cost of our demands.”²³⁹ In another case, tweeting an article about why better technology won’t avert ecological collapse at the beginning of April 2019, Extinction Rebellion stated that, “The impossibility of an ‘absolute decoupling of GDP growth from material use’ would surely see a #CitizensAssembly explore #degrowth and the decoupling of health and wellbeing from GDP as a pathway to net #ZeroCarbon2025”²⁴⁰

More far reaching still, was a tweet from 30 May 2019 in which Extinction Rebellion stated, “The word that they dare not utter - capitalism. Surely

236. “Welcome to the Rebellion!” - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52o3hC0E1R8>

237. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 20 February 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

238. Roger Hallam - Why International Rebellion? - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 April 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

239. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 26 April 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1121884346200182784>

240. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 2 April 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1113041030750900224>

capitalism along with fossil fuels would be amongst the things that your #CitizensAssembly on climate and ecological justice would deliberate over".²⁴¹ Equally, in a tweet from 26 May, the campaign asked, "If you were on a #CitizensAssembly on climate and ecological justice would you call for more, less or no capitalism?"²⁴²

The activists clearly have far reaching ambitions for the Citizens Assembly they wish to see created, although this is also somewhat confused by their occasional references to local Citizens Assemblies. Statements issued by Rising Up! repeatedly reference localising democracy and decision making. While for the most part it appears that Extinction Rebellion demands a national Citizens Assembly which would specifically focus on issues of environmental "justice", there is no reason to think that this would be the limit of either these activists' ambitions, nor the ambitions of those from a wide variety of campaign groups on the left which have demanded the establishment of Citizens Assemblies for numerous other issues.

Non-Violence and Civil Disobedience

On a number of occasions, the founders of Extinction Rebellion have indicated that they see their campaign's approach as being rooted in a tradition of civil disobedience used throughout the 20th Century. They reference campaigns such as the Suffragettes and the Civil Rights Movement in America. These are causes that today enjoy a wide spread consensus of support. Notably, these movements largely avoided engaging in violence, but they did use law-breaking—or civil disobedience—to create dilemmas for the authorities and to win public attention and support. Those behind Extinction Rebellion appear to view themselves in the same light, believing that by replicating the non-violence civil resistance model they are likely to succeed.

On the campaign's website, the activists are clear, stating: "at the core of Extinction Rebellion's philosophy is nonviolent civil disobedience."²⁴³ The group repeatedly asserts that it adheres to non-violence not only out of principle, but also pragmatism. The founders of Extinction Rebellion do not believe that a strategy of violence would successfully achieve their political objectives. As is stated on their website, Extinction Rebellion asserts a belief in "using non-violent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change."²⁴⁴ The campaigners also situate their pragmatic commitment to non-violence within the findings of the extensive research they report to have carried out into protest movements. As they claim elsewhere on their website: "according to research on conflicts between non-state and state actors around the world between 1900 and 2006, it was found that 53% of nonviolent campaigns were successful as opposed to 26% of campaigns that used violence."²⁴⁵ Writing in the campaign's 2019 handbook *This is Not a Drill*, Roger Hallam has said of violence: "It is brilliant at getting attention and creating chaos and disruption, but it is often disastrous when it comes to creating progressive change."²⁴⁶ Indeed, Hallam observes that the use of violence in pursuit of political change is highly likely to lead to fascism and authoritarianism.²⁴⁷

241. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 30 May 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1134060660407640064>

242. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter, 26 May 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1132672494920458241>

243. About Us, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/>

244. About Us, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/>

245. FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

246. *This is Not a Drill*, Pg 100

247. *This is Not a Drill*.

There are a number of further reasons why the campaign appears to favour a non-violent approach. Roger Hallam explained in a video uploaded to the Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel in May 2019 that non-violent actions allow for the maximum number of people to be involved.²⁴⁸ Again, this comes down to practical considerations, with Hallam explaining that whereas it is possible for an elderly activist to sit in the road, throwing rocks is another matter.²⁴⁹ More broadly, non-violence is presented as a key part of the ‘respectful’ attitude²⁵⁰ that leading Extinction Rebellion figures have encouraged their campaigners to adopt towards their perceived opponents – most significantly the police. There can be little doubt that non-violence is integral to the civil disobedience theory these leading figures have developed. Causing maximum disruption without resorting to violence is evidently intended to heighten the so-called ‘action dilemma’ faced by the authorities. It is this dilemma that they believe will ultimately undermine the state’s ability to respond, thus eventually leaving politicians with no other options but to start conceding to the group’s demands.

At the core of this activism is the argument that it is not possible to overcome such ‘entrenched power’ through persuasion and traditional methods of campaigning.²⁵¹ This can only be achieved through disruption—which in effect means lawbreaking. This use of mass civil disobedience to shut down parts of London is not simply intended to cause inconvenience, but also serious financial costs to the city. Writing in the Extinction Rebellion 2019 handbook, Roger Hallam has compared the economic costs caused by shutting down parts of the capital to labour strikes.²⁵² This is intended to create a situation in which the authorities are forced to act by carrying out mass arrests, with this becoming newsworthy in itself, thus creating controversy around the police arresting and potentially imprisoning such large numbers of ordinary people engaged in peaceful protest.

Reflecting on the campaign’s London actions in April, Hallam has also spoken about the importance of the experience of protestors being arrested together for providing adrenalin, solidarity, and a shared bond between those engaging in civil disobedience together, describing the experience as “ecstatic”.²⁵³ This serves to motivate those involved to go on and engage in further lawbreaking, so securing further arrests for the movement. Gail Bradbrook has similarly spoken about the empowering sense of connectedness that came from strangers protesting together and preparing food in makeshift kitchens in the middle of major London roads that were supposed to have traffic running through them.²⁵⁴ Those behind Extinction Rebellion do not underestimate the power of this shared social experience of mass lawbreaking. With the need to recruit for mass arrests a key part of the campaign’s model.

On a number of occasions, Hallam has outlined the six fundamental steps for the civil resistance model that Extinction Rebellion can be seen using. These steps are also set out in the campaign’s 2019 handbook. Broadly these six steps are as follows:

- The campaign needs to mobilise significant numbers behind it.

248. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZKrVFFjkBs>

249. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZKrVFFjkBs>

250. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZKrVFFjkBs>

251. This is Not a Drill.

252. This is Not a Drill, Pg 102

253. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZKrVFFjkBs>

254. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

While this doesn't need to involve millions of people, Hallam states that ideally the campaign would involve around 50,000.

- The activists have to carry out their action in the country's capital city, as this is where the government, elites and media are based and they will be able to ignore action carried out in the provinces.
- The campaigners need to break the law. As Hallam explains, "this is the essence of the non-violent method because it creates the social tension and public drama which are vital to create change."²⁵⁵ This can help create the public perception of an underdog, as Hallam puts it, "the brave go into battle against evil".²⁵⁶ Furthermore, it is the breaking of the law that causes "the necessary material disruption and economic cost" which forces those in power to take notice.²⁵⁷
- The activism must remain non-violent. If violence occurs, then this will destroy the model that is essential for this mass mobilisation strategy to happen. Accordingly, Hallam explains that "people need to be trained to stay calm and groups need to be assigned the role of intervening when tempers flare up. This needs to be organised, and non-violent discipline is rule number one for all participants."²⁵⁸ In Extinction Rebellion's case there are signs of this through the training workshops held in advance of the protests, as well as the presence of what would appear to be Extinction Rebellion stewards and "legal observers" among those engaging in demonstrations and lawbreaking.
- The disruption must be maintained over many consecutive days. Hallam argues in the Extinction Rebellion handbook that to exact "real economic cost for bosses" activists must keep the disruption going over a number of days. This, he explains, is because when blocking a city "the economic costs go up exponentially – increasing each day."²⁵⁹
- The action taken should be fun, getting artists involved to create a festival atmosphere. As Hallam explained in an Extinction Rebellion video from early April: "think of Glastonbury in the streets. It's going to be a big festival.....you just don't want to miss it. Forget the politics. You're coming down for a free festival and it's just going to be all over the place, all over London."²⁶⁰

The interspersing of culture and entertainment with protest may not simply be motivated by the need to encourage large numbers of people to turnout and stay out, but also to give the demonstrations a more benign appearance. As Roger Hallam explains in the handbook, the objective is to present the authorities with a dilemma of having to choose whether to "let people continue to party in the streets" or be seen to be using "repression" against them.²⁶¹ According to Hallam, the creation of this "dilemma action" for the authorities is the central dynamic of the mass civil disobedience model. The authorities are not able to permit the shutting down of the capital for days at a time. Yet if they react by arresting large numbers, or

255.This is Not a Drill, Pg 101

256.This is Not a Drill.

257.This is Not a Drill, Pg 101

258.This is Not a Drill, Pg 101

259.This is Not a Drill, Pg 102

260.Roger Hallam - Why International Rebellion? - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 April 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

261.This is Not a Drill, Pg 102

perhaps by using excessive force, against peaceful ordinary people holding street parties in the name of a worthy cause, then this may only serve to rally further public support for the demonstrations. Hallam expresses the belief that such action by the authorities will likely lead to more people coming out onto the streets, arguing it would only take 1-3 percent of the population to mobilise in this way to bring down a government.²⁶²

While Roger Hallam has noted that the civil resistance model is not guaranteed to be successful every time, he argues that it has a chance of succeeding in a way that sending emails and going on day marches do not. Large numbers of people causing massive disruption through breaking the law represents “a rolling of the dice” as he has put it. Later on in his piece in the Extinction Rebellion handbook Hallam states, “Rebellions are created because some people have had enough. They are over it and don’t care if they are successful or not. It’s sublime madness. It’s the only thing which will save us now.”

Dying for the Cause

While those behind Extinction Rebellion believe in non-violence this does not preclude them from putting themselves and others in personal danger. Underlying their non-violent civil disobedience theory, it appears there is some sense that gaining martyrs for their cause would help assist them in achieving their objectives. This notion is by no means alien to this movement. Notably, the pink boat that protestors installed in London’s Oxford Circus was named in honour of Berta Cáceres, a Honduran environmental activist who was murdered in March 2016 when opposing the construction of a hydroelectric dam.²⁶³ Equally, Gail Bradbrook has spoken of Cáceres and asking about the degree to which those being arrested in the UK can be thought of as brave, remarked that 47 environmental campaigners die around the world each year.²⁶⁴ The Extinction Rebellion activists have consistently explained their commitment to non-violence in predominantly pragmatic terms; that they do not believe violence would work. Yet, by the same token, they have also been heard making an equally pragmatic case for why protestors being killed or injured might assist a civil disobedience campaign.

For the most part, comments about people dying or being injured as part of the campaign have been made by Roger Hallam, a co-founder and one of the most prominent figures in Extinction Rebellion. Hallam’s ideas about protest movements have been instrumental in driving the Extinction Rebellion campaign forward. Furthermore, while Hallam has often been careful to stress that he does not speak for all those in Extinction Rebellion, his remarks on this subject have at times been uploaded to the official Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel, and have appeared with the Extinction Rebellion logo. Nevertheless, Hallam is not the only one to have made these kinds of remarks. Gail Bradbrook—who is equally prominent in the movement and whose ideas have been no less significant in shaping Extinction Rebellion—has also made remarks about dying for the cause, even if she is not always as outspoken as Hallam. On 12 November 2018,

262. This is Not a Drill, Pg 104

263. Berta Cáceres a powerful symbol of resistance at Extinction Rebellion protest, Rabble, 20 April 2019, <http://www.rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/brent-paterson/2019/04/berta-c%C3%A1ceres-powerful-symbol-resistance-extinction-rebellion>

264. Dr. Gail Bradbrook - CogX London [June 2019] | Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 14 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0AizkJM3nw>

Extinction Rebellion activists glued themselves to the entrance of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Gail Bradbrook and Simon Bramwell²⁶⁵ were among the demonstrators, and during the action Bradbrook told a journalist interviewing her:

*"I am willing to be arrested. I am willing to be jailed. And I can tell you something else; I am willing to die for this movement, because I am not leaving my kids with the future that they are set on right now."*²⁶⁶

Bradbrook was subsequently arrested²⁶⁷ after she climbed above the entrance to graffiti the words "frack off" onto the side of the building.²⁶⁸ In the short clip featuring Bradbrook making her remarks, no indication is given of how she imagines she or anyone else might die for the movement. Roger Hallam has, however, indicated two ways in which activists might die; state violence and hunger strikes. The use of hunger strikes as a tactic might be particularly relevant given Extinction Rebellion's openly stated strategy of ensuring considerable numbers of activists are not only arrested but also sent to prison.

On 4 February 2019, Roger Hallam gave a speech on an Amnesty International platform in which he outlined his campaign and approach. As usual, Hallam cautioned that these were his own views and not shared by all those in Extinction Rebellion.²⁶⁹ Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the speech appeared to clearly outline much of the group's strategy. More telling, however, is that while the video is not featured on the Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel, it does carry the Extinction Rebellion logo, and has been uploaded by an account called "Jamie XR" which features many other Extinction Rebellion videos.²⁷⁰ During his speech, Hallam offered a particularly extreme version of the apocalyptic predictions that leading Extinction Rebellion figures typically promote. This included a warning about the possibility of "starvation in Europe in three years", and the risk that "the human race will be extinct in a decade" if damage to the climate continues.²⁷¹ These warnings were the justification for the action that Hallam called for next, which included both potentially bring down the government, and the extreme measures by which to achieve this. Speaking about his campaign's approach, Hallam told his audience:

"We are not just sending out e-mails and asking for donations. We are going to force the governments to act. And if they don't, we will bring them down and create a democracy fit for purpose.

"And yes, some may die in the process.

*"Some of us have passed through the dark night to the soul and are ready, or at least we are no longer fearful of our fear."*²⁷²

Hallam acknowledged that some might be upset by what he had to say, but warned "there's no real change without pain".²⁷³ How activists might die in the process of their campaign was not stated explicitly, but in this case appeared to relate to Hallam's threats of hunger strikes—rather than

265. 'The Political System Is Failing Us': British Energy Dept Blockaded to Protest Climate Inaction and Fracking, Common Dreams, 12 November 2018, <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/11/12/political-system-failing-us-british-energy-dept-blockaded-protest-climate-inaction>

266. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: 'We can't get arrested quick enough', *The Guardian*, YouTube, 22 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAH3IQwHKag>

267. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: 'We can't get arrested quick enough', *The Guardian*, YouTube, 22 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAH3IQwHKag> &, Extinction Rebellion, Facebook, 12 November 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellion/videos/735033623541082/?v=735033623541082>

268. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: 'We can't get arrested quick enough', *The Guardian*, YouTube, 22 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAH3IQwHKag>

269. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, 20 February 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvx-c0Wg7sA>

270. Jamie XR, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkqlxGA5QF-3G8269a9JeAg/videos>

271. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, 20 February 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvx-c0Wg7sA>

272. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, 20 February 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvx-c0Wg7sA>

273. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) addresses Amnesty International, Jamie XR, YouTube, 20 February 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvx-c0Wg7sA>

through the use of violence by either the activists, or the authorities. As Hallam urged those listening:

“Rebel! Both individually and as an organisation. For inspiration look at the civil resistance struggles in the global south. What does it mean? It means arrest, imprisonment, and hunger strikes.

“Come on the 15th of April; rebellion here in London. And join thousands of people who will stay out on the streets for as long as it takes”²⁷⁴

Hallam also appeared to address his call for hunger strikes to others in the established environmentalist NGOs, which he explicitly criticised during the speech. As he is recorded stating during the video:

“Get your top people from behind their desks and start to lead for a change. That means, yes, arrest, prison, and hunger strikes. If they won’t then go on hunger strike yourself until they do, or get replaced by people who will. You can contact me for how to do it, because that’s what we have to do.”²⁷⁵

In addition to this speech, Roger Hallam has also written about the use of hunger strikes as a tactic within his civil disobedience strategy. In a review copy of a forthcoming book by Hallam titled, *Common Sense for the 21st Century: only nonviolent rebellion can now stop climate breakdown and social collapse*—which comes with the Extinction Rebellion logo on the cover, he details the use of hunger strikes under several circumstances.²⁷⁶ In one scenario Hallam argues that that councils and civic institutions should call a climate emergency, but warns against only symbolic gestures by saying that, “the hypocrisy of accepting the truth but not taking appropriate action only makes them more complicit in the criminality of the political class.”²⁷⁷ As such, Hallam argues that councils should be called upon to issue central government with an ultimatum, when they fail to act however, then they should be “asked to break off all administrative cooperation with the genocidal regime and leaders should go on hunger strike show their horror at the inaction of central government.”²⁷⁸ This, suggests Hallam, will attract press attention and will “raise a rebellion movement’s profile around the country and thus increase recruitment for a central mass civil disobedience event.”²⁷⁹ In a second scenario, Hallam proposes that campaigners should call on media outlets to declare a climate emergency, and on the main day of direct action, suggest that those in the media go on hunger strike.²⁸⁰

There is good reason to believe that the threat of hunger strikes by some of those behind Extinction Rebellion is not merely rhetorical or theoretical. Hallam made mention during his February 2019 speech that he had already been on two 14 day long hunger strikes in the past three years; one to pressure Kings College London (KCL) to divest from fossil fuels, another to attempt to persuade the Labour Party to vote against the expansion of Heathrow.²⁸¹ These earlier hunger strike actions appear to have been undertaken as campaigns associated with Rising Up! and its wider network of activists. The Rising Up! website still carries a lengthy report from Roger Hallam regarding his KCL hunger strike in 2017,²⁸²

274. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) Addresses Amnesty international, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

275. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) Addresses Amnesty international, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

276. Roger Hallam 2019, *Common Sense For The 21st Century*, <https://www.rogerhallam.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Common-Sense-For-The-21st-Century-Roger-Hallam.pdf>

277. Roger Hallam 2019, *Common Sense For The 21st Century*, <https://www.rogerhallam.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Common-Sense-For-The-21st-Century-Roger-Hallam.pdf>

278. Roger Hallam 2019, *Common Sense For The 21st Century*, <https://www.rogerhallam.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Common-Sense-For-The-21st-Century-Roger-Hallam.pdf>

279. Roger Hallam 2019, *Common Sense For The 21st Century*, <https://www.rogerhallam.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Common-Sense-For-The-21st-Century-Roger-Hallam.pdf>

280. Roger Hallam 2019, *Common Sense For The 21st Century*, <https://www.rogerhallam.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Common-Sense-For-The-21st-Century-Roger-Hallam.pdf>

281. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) Addresses Amnesty international, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

282. RisingUp!, DONE! - Kings College Climate Emergency - successful campaign <https://risingup.org.uk/pledge/done-kings-college-climate-emergency-successful-campaign>

while the 2018 hunger strike action on Heathrow is reported to have involved over 50 campaigners from Rising Up! and Vote No Heathrow.²⁸³ This included the then 20-year-old student Robin Boardman, a fellow founding member of Extinction Rebellion who has been associated with the campaign's youth wing.²⁸⁴

In addition to making the case for hunger strikes, Hallam has also spoken about the place of state violence in civil disobedience theory, and what role this might have for advancing a movement's objectives. In the Extinction Rebellion video, "We've already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019", which was published on the Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel on 20 May 2019, Roger Hallam discussed undertaking civil disobedience in countries governed by highly oppressive regimes. During his reflections on Extinction Rebellion and civil disobedience theory, Hallam outlined his belief that greater repression by the state can sometimes be to the advantage of campaigners. Hallam cautioned that he was not telling anyone to put themselves in harms way, and claimed to simply be presenting the facts. As such, Hallam explained:

"So the first thing to say is, yeah I'm just going to give you some information as a social scientist. I am not suggesting anyone should do anything. People have to make their own decision, you know. If I say you know it would be good to sit down in the streets and that might lead to injury and death, like I'm not saying that people should do that, it's not my role obviously. You know, it'd be ridiculous for me to suggest anyone should do anything that will put themselves at risk.

"But my role as I say, is to say if you do this, you know obviously people may get injured or even die; and it may also win. That's just a fact. Right. I'm not putting pressure on anyone."²⁸⁵

In these remarks it would seem fairly clear that while Hallam is careful not to directly instruct anyone to put themselves in harms way, he nevertheless does not discourage the belief that provoking authorities to kill or injure activists may be effective in helping to achieve political goals. Talking about why he believes that civil resistance can be successful in many different circumstances, including repressive regimes, Hallam states:

"And the reason why that's true is—and this is a really difficult thing to say—but you know, it's just the fact of the matter, is the backfiring effect, the sort of dilemma action becomes more acute and potentially effective the more repressive a state is."²⁸⁶

Hallam acknowledges that when a state represses a "rebellion" it may succeed in ending the campaign at the outset, however, he continues by explaining:

"When the state represses a movement it shakes a dice. Because it can go either way and it's very unpredictable. So you can see there's a certain logic, which is you go and you use violence; people don't like the violence and they clear off the streets. So there's plenty of evidence for that.

283. *The Young European News* 2018, I went on Hunger Strike for 2 weeks to protest Heathrow's Expansion <https://theyounguropeannews.com/single-post/2018/07/05/interview-i-went-on-hunger-strike-for-2-weeks-to-protest-heathrows-expansion/>

284. *The Young European News* 2018, I went on Hunger Strike for 2 weeks to protest Heathrow's Expansion <https://theyounguropeannews.com/single-post/2018/07/05/interview-i-went-on-hunger-strike-for-2-weeks-to-protest-heathrows-expansion/>

285. Roger Hallam: We've already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ-KrVFFjkBs>

286. Roger Hallam: We've already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ-KrVFFjkBs>

“But there’s plenty of evidence also for the people in the street, and they use violence against those people, and then people see that being enacted—who belong to that cultural group and they feel solidarity and empathy and rage and what have you—And they come onto the street. So it backfires.”²⁸⁷

On the question of whether or not people should take this risk, Hallam refuses to issue a clear instruction. However, he repeats his position on why repression by the police may work to the activists’ advantage, claiming:

“So what we do know is if you don’t have a rebellion you’re not get to shake the dice. So again people have to decide if they want to have a rebellion or not, it’s not for me to say. But what is for me to say is if you do choose to have a rebellion and the police repress you then that’s not necessarily a bad thing in inverted commas, in terms of rebellion success. So that’s like just an analytical point to be to be clear about.”²⁸⁸

During his talk, Roger Hallam also presented the notion that oppression is only effective to the degree to which those being oppressed cooperate with it. Hallam recognises that this is “quite a dodgy idea”, but nevertheless sets out the case that activists always have a choice, even if non-cooperation has lethal consequences. Hallam explained this line of thinking by saying:

“In non-violence theory, a central idea is that the oppressor can only oppress to the extent that the oppressed cooperate in that oppression—that’s quite a dodgy idea in some ways—But the fundamental point is you always have the option of not cooperating.

“Now obviously that might cost you your life, but that’s another issue. The fact of the matter is you can choose not to do something when someone has—unless someone’s pinning you to the ground—you can say I’m not actually going to pick up that stone. Now the guy might come and shoot you. But the fact of the matter is in the last analysis you have that choice.”²⁸⁹

Hallam concluded his remarks on civil resistance in repressive settings by repeating his underlying supposition that, “ironically, the more repressive a state, in some ways the more likely it can be that you’ll get this mass mobilization because of the backfiring effect.”²⁹⁰ As noted above, when making remarks on this subject, Hallam has generally been careful to stress that he doesn’t claim to speak for all those in Extinction Rebellion, even while it seems quite apparent that along with Gail Bradbrook, it is his thinking and strategy on civil disobedience that has been key to Extinction Rebellion’s approach.

As Hallam told Owen Jones in late April 2019, when *The Guardian* journalist asked him whether the emphasis of the campaign should be about pain and sacrifice, Hallam responded by arguing that, “what Extinction Rebellion has shown—and you can see in the mid 20th century left tradition—is people are mobilised by sacrifice and pain, tradition and duty.”²⁹¹ Hallam stated the point yet more strongly during the Amnesty International speech in which he advocated hunger strikes and warned that some were ready to die in the campaign. Towards the end of his talk

287. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ-KrVFFjkBs>

288. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ-KrVFFjkBs>

289. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ-KrVFFjkBs>

290. Roger Hallam: We’ve already won: An analysis of the UK April Rebellion 2019 Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ-KrVFFjkBs>

291. Owen Jones meets Extinction Rebellion – We’re the Planet’s Fire Alarm, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ign9ERpNM4>

Hallam told those listening:

“Someone told me recently that there is one thing worse than death, and that is hell, and hell is to live a massive lie. Those of you sitting here today have to decide if you’re going to rebel and be the lucky ones. Because you escaped the worst. You may even find some inner peace and joy. The tragedy is what awaits for those of you who continue to sit there and don’t face the pain, what awaits you are the horrors for which there are no polite words. Or as they say where I come from; ‘You’re going to be completely fucked up.’”²⁹²

Mass Civil Disobedience, Activism, and Law-breaking

One of the most striking things about Extinction Rebellion’s activism is the degree to which the movement has maintained the discipline of adhering strictly to the strategy that its founders devised from the outset (despite its protests appearing at times to look spontaneous). No less noteworthy is that doing so has so far largely resulted in the kinds of outcomes that Roger Hallam and Gail Bradbrook predicted that it would. What Extinction Rebellion outlined in its theory, it has thus far managed to enact in its practice.

Extinction Rebellion’s first known example of direct action came on 31 August 2018 when a small group of activists blocked a road on Trafalgar Square.²⁹³ The numbers involved made it look little different from the kinds of roadblocks Rising Up! had occasionally participated in over recent years. Only the presence of the Extinction Rebellion logo marked it as a different campaign. On 17 October 2018, Extinction Rebellion undertook its first occupation of a building. Perhaps counterintuitively, this involved a number of activists entering the London offices of Greenpeace, a group that Extinction Rebellion evidently does not believe is radical enough in its approach. The group of activists taking part in the action included Roger Hallam and Robin Boardman.²⁹⁴ Hallam explained that they had previously held a number of meetings with senior figures in Greenpeace, but that the organisation’s chief executive had refused to commit to “mass civil disobedience”—hence why this action was being taken.²⁹⁵ The Rising Up! website carried an announcement about the protest explaining that the action had been taken to call on the organisation to show “leadership” in the face of the ecological crisis.²⁹⁶ The statement further noted that later that month Extinction Rebellion would be making a declaration of rebellion “against the criminal inaction by the British government on the climate crisis.”²⁹⁷

Extinction Rebellion’s campaign got underway in earnest in the autumn of 2018, when activists formally issued their declaration of rebellion. On 31 October 2018 Extinction Rebellion officially launched with a declaration of rebellion in Parliament Square. Around 1000 people are reported to have gathered,²⁹⁸ with speeches being delivered by Labour’s Shadow Minister for the Treasury Clive Lewis, *The Guardian* columnist George Monbiot, Green Party leader Caroline Lucas,²⁹⁹ the youth climate strike activist Greta Thunberg,³⁰⁰ and Green Party MEP Molly Scott Cato.³⁰¹ At the time the declaration of rebellion was published on the Rising Up!

292. Roger Hallam (Extinction Rebellion) Addresses Amnesty International, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvxc0Wg7sA>

293. Extinction Rebellion – A Short History, Real Media <https://realmedia.press/extinction-rebellion/>

294. Extinction Rebellion occupy Greenpeace HQ, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MixCTe334io>

295. Extinction Rebellion occupy Greenpeace HQ, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MixCTe334io>

296. Extinction Rebellion Occupy Greenpeace Offices, Rising Up! <https://risingup.org.uk/extinction-rebellion-occupy-greenpeace-offices>

297. Extinction Rebellion Occupy Greenpeace Offices, Rising Up! <https://risingup.org.uk/extinction-rebellion-occupy-greenpeace-offices>

298. 15 environmental protesters arrested at civil disobedience campaign in London, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/31/15-environmental-protesters-arrested-at-civil-disobedience-campaign-in-london>

299. Declaration of Rebellion – October 31st 2018 – Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUCqyqN15U0>

300. Greta Thunberg at Extinction Rebellion, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8prVarP-rQ>

301. 15 environmental protesters arrested at civil disobedience campaign in London, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/31/15-environmental-protesters-arrested-at-civil-disobedience-campaign-in-london>

website, and although this appears to have been subsequently removed, a link to the declaration on the Extinction Rebellion Facebook page can still be found referring to the British government’s “criminal inaction on climate breakdown”.³⁰² A full version of the declaration of rebellion also remains on Extinction Rebellion’s own webpage. That document states:

“We, in alignment with our consciences and our reasoning, declare ourselves in rebellion against our Government and the corrupted, inept institutions that threaten our future.

“The wilful complicity displayed by our Government has shattered meaningful democracy and cast aside the common interest in favour of short-term gain and private profits.”³⁰³

The declaration goes on to explain that when government and law “fail to provide any assurance of adequate protection, as well as security for its people’s well-being”, then it becomes “our sacred duty to rebel.”³⁰⁴ Furthermore, the declaration calls on “every principled and peaceful citizen” to join them in rising up, explaining that the government has rendered the social contract invalid, and that as such Extinction Rebellion declares its “bonds” to be “null and void”.³⁰⁵ True to their word, during the gathering activists blocked roads around Parliament Square, leading to 15 arrests.³⁰⁶

The campaign’s first spate of organised civil disobedience would come shortly after this declaration. For a week in November 2018, Extinction Rebellion protestors took a series of actions which appear to have been part of a number of activities taken in an effort to increase publicity for the much larger day of disobedience on 17 November. On 12 November, a group of Extinction Rebellion protestors glued themselves to the entrance of the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy. Around 30 people are reported to have taken part³⁰⁷, including Extinction Rebellion founders Gail Bradbrook and Simon Bramwell.³⁰⁸ The group also included members of Christian Climate Action.³⁰⁹ In all, 22 of the activists are reported to have been arrested as part of the protest, including Bradbrook.³¹⁰ On 14 November, activists unfurled a 68-metre long banner on Westminster Bridge which read, “Climate change: we’re fucked”,³¹¹ while other protestors attempted to block the entrance to Downing Street before painting the words “Climate emergency. Frack off. Climate breakdown equals starvation”, on the exterior of the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs buildings.³¹²

In its primary action of that week, on 17 November, Extinction Rebellion shut down five London bridges—Southwark, Blackfriars, Waterloo, Westminster and Lambeth—by gathering large numbers of demonstrators on them. The blocking of Westminster and Lambeth bridges caused particular concern about emergency vehicles being able to access St Thomas’ Hospital.³¹³ Green Party peer Baroness Jenny Jones was among protestors on Westminster Bridge,³¹⁴ while demonstrations on Blackfriars Bridge saw the protestors playing music and dancing in the road.³¹⁵ Following the demonstrations on the bridges, Extinction Rebellion held a gathering

302. Extinction Rebellion, Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellion/posts/press-release-london-31st-oct-rebellion-against-uk-governments-criminal-inaction/293538497928932/>

303. Declaration of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion <https://rebellion.earth/declaration/>

304. Declaration of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion <https://rebellion.earth/declaration/>

305. Declaration of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion <https://rebellion.earth/declaration/>

306. 15 environmental protesters arrested at civil disobedience campaign in London, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/31/15-environmental-protesters-arrested-at-civil-disobedience-campaign-in-london>

307. 22 arrests after climate change blockade of energy department, Drill or Drop <https://drillordrop.com/2018/11/12/22-arrests-after-climate-change-blockade-of-energy-department/>

308. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: ‘we can’t get arrested quick enough’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAH3lQwHKag>

309. Reggie, Climate and Civil Disobedience, twitter <https://twitter.com/extinctionnr/status/1112706196107128832?lang=en>

310. Climate Change protests leads to ‘22 arrests’ over blockade, BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-46172661>

311. Social Media influencer urges young people to protest over environment, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/nov/14/social-media-influencer-jack-harries-extinction-rebellion-urges-young-people-to-protest-over-environment>

312. Climate protesters glue themselves to Downing Street gates, BBC News <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-46213454>

313. Life inside Extinction Rebellion: ‘we can’t get arrested quick enough’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAH3lQwHKag>

314. Dozens arrested after climate protest blocks five London bridges, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/17/thousands-gather-to-block-london-bridges-in-climate-rebellion>

315. One Love Extinction Rebellion Waterloo Bridge 17 11 18, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cj1o-GPa3U8>

in Parliament Square³¹⁶ where they reported holding a “tree planting ceremony”.³¹⁷ The organisers claimed that some 6000 people joined the demonstrations.³¹⁸ In all, 85 people were reported to have been arrested as part of the bridge blocking protests, while 60 people were reported to have been arrested in the days leading up to 17 November.³¹⁹ Roger Hallam would later indicate that the November actions were a “warm up act” for the much larger London protests planned for April, with Hallam explaining that they were trying to find out whether they could get several thousand people to break the law.³²⁰ They confirmed that they could.

On 24 November Extinction Rebellion held another day of actions, or so-called “Rebellion Day 2”, this time attracting a smaller crowd, estimated at around 1000 people.³²¹ Demonstrators held a mock funeral for the planet at the gates of Buckingham Palace and in Parliament Square.³²² They blocked off parts of Whitehall and dug up turf in Parliament Square itself, at which point police intervened to stop the activists. Footage from the event shows this resulting in some scuffles between police and protestors, but maintaining organisational discipline individuals can be heard urging the crowd to adhere to non-violence.³²³ Nevertheless, 14 people were reported to have been arrested.³²⁴

During the winter of 2018-19, the campaign appears to have taken a conscious decision to pause civil disobedience activities. However, on 27 February 2019, Extinction Rebellion activists targeted an International Petroleum Week meeting being held at the Intercontinental Hotel on London’s Park Lane.³²⁵ The Metropolitan Police confirmed that 9 people had been arrested for offences including aggravated trespass and criminal damage.³²⁶

The first major action of 2019 came on 9 March, when approximately 400 Extinction Rebellion demonstrators protested on Whitehall, throwing 200 litres of red paint (to represent blood) on the pavement outside Downing Street.³²⁷ Roger Hallam subsequently reflected on the fact that as organisers they had gone to speak to the police in advance of this action and that they had confirmed with the police that this would amount to criminal damage.³²⁸ Yet as Hallam explains:

“So I was thinking, yeah, yeah, maybe we won’t even get to Downing Street. But, not only did they let us get to Downing Street, then they let us throw the blood on the ground, and then they don’t do anything. You know, what’s that about?”³²⁹

On 1 April, in the run-up to the group’s April 15 actions, semi-naked Extinction Rebellion activists disrupted a Brexit debate in Parliament by gluing themselves to the window of the public gallery in the House of Commons.³³⁰ Police arrested 12 of the demonstrators on charges of “outraging public decency”.³³¹ At the time, Labour MP David Lammy retweeted Extinction Rebellion’s pictures from the incident with the comment, “Don’t know what all the fuss is about. These aren’t the first arses I’ve seen exposed in the House of Commons.”³³²

On the evening of 15 April, Extinction Rebellion launched its most significant wave of direct actions shutting down major roads in central

316. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1063833601329045508>

317. 5.30pm UPDATE Extinction Rebellion plants trees in Parliament Square, more than 3K people present, Extinction Rebellion <https://rebellion.earth/2018/11/17/5pm-update-extinction-rebellion-plants-trees-in-parliament-square-more-than-3k-people-present/>

318. Extinction Rebellion protests block London bridges, BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-46247339>

319. Dozens arrested after climate protest blocks five London bridges, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/17/thousands-gather-to-block-london-bridges-in-climate-rebellion>

320. Roger Hallam - Why International Rebellion? - Extinction Rebellion, Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

321. Environmental protesters block access to Parliament Square, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/24/environmental-protesters-block-access-to-parliament-square-extinction-rebellion>

322. Extinction Rebellion London Protest 24 Nov 2018, Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/303912449>

323. Extinction Rebellion London Protest 24 Nov 2018, Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/303912449>

324. Environmental protesters block access to Parliament Square, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/24/environmental-protesters-block-access-to-parliament-square-extinction-rebellion>

325. Extinction Rebellion activists arrested outside oil conference, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/feb/27/extinction-rebellion-activists-arrested-outside-london-oil-conference>

326. Extinction Rebellion activists arrested outside oil conference, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/feb/27/extinction-rebellion-activists-arrested-outside-london-oil-conference>

327. Extinction Rebellion Activists pour 200 litres of 'blood' outside Downing Street https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2_Kd5n8WVw

328. Extinction Rebellion - The birth, the theory and the practice, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKSUNnAnlwg>

329. Extinction Rebellion - The birth, the theory and the practice, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKSUNnAnlwg>

330. Semi-naked climate protestors disrupt brexit debate, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/01/semi-naked-climate-protesters-disrupt-brexit-debate>

331. Semi-naked climate protestors disrupt brexit debate, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/01/semi-naked-climate-protesters-disrupt-brexit-debate>

332. David Lammy, Twitter <https://twitter.com/davidlammy/status/1112764957324644353?lang=en-gb>

333. Extinction Rebellion Protests: What happened? BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-48051776>
334. Extinction Rebellion Protests: What happened? BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-48051776>
335. We'll win the fight with maths, vow Extinction Rebellion protesters, *The Times* <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/well-win-fight-with-maths-vow-extinction-rebellion-protesters-hxjx29bqf?t=ie>
336. Eco Warrior Bill: Extinction Rebellion's protests which shut down parts of London cost the taxpayer £16million, *The Sun* <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9398163/extinction-rebellion-protest-taxpayer-cost/>
337. Extinction Rebellion protests: Met wants to charge more than 1,100 activists, *Evening Standard* <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/extinction-rebellion-protests-met-pushes-for-more-than-1100-activists-to-be-charged-a4151401.html>
338. Shell's London Headquarters Vandalized by Climate Protesters, Bloomberg <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-15/shell-s-london-headquarters-vandalized-by-climate-protesters>
339. We'll win the fight with maths, vow Extinction Rebellion protesters, *The Times* <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/well-win-fight-with-maths-vow-extinction-rebellion-protesters-hxjx29bqf?t=ie>
340. Extinction Rebellion: London protests 'cost Met extra £7.5m' BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-48269042>
341. Extinction Rebellion Protests: What happened? BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-48051776>
342. Extinction Rebellion protests: Met wants to charge more than 1,100 activists, *Evening Standard* <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/extinction-rebellion-protests-met-pushes-for-more-than-1100-activists-to-be-charged-a4151401.html>
343. Police and government need to stop dancing around nuisance protests, *The Telegraph* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2019/04/19/police-government-need-stop-dancing-around-nuisance-protests/>
344. Raving Mad: Fury as cops dance and skateboard with Extinction Rebellion London protesters they're meant to be arresting as eco-warriors take over Vauxhall Bridge, *The Sun* <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8888682/cops-rave-extinction-rebellion-eco-warriors-oxford-circus-arrests-commuters-agony/>
345. Extinction Rebellion London Waterloo bridge Protest – Skateboard Mini Ramp, Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnPbd1pk0mU>
346. Statement from Extinction Rebellion on Heathrow Pause <https://rebellion.earth/2019/05/30/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-on-heathrow-pause/>
347. Statement from Extinction Rebellion on Heathrow Pause <https://rebellion.earth/2019/05/30/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-on-heathrow-pause/>
348. Statement from Extinction Rebellion on Heathrow Pause <https://rebellion.earth/2019/05/30/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-on-heathrow-pause/>
349. Statement from Extinction Rebellion <https://rebellion.earth/2019/05/31/statement-from-extinction-rebellion/>

London by occupying five high-profile locations; at Oxford Circus, Parliament Square, Marble Arch, Waterloo Bridge, and Piccadilly Circus.³³³ Precise figures for how many took part in these protests remain unclear, but the BBC reported that “tens of thousands” took part.³³⁴ Activists maintained their actions for over ten days, including over the Easter Bank Holiday. The impact of the first week of protests was estimated to have caused shops £12 million in lost takings,³³⁵ with the 10 days of actions costing the Metropolitan Police an additional £16 million,³³⁶ with 10,000 police officers deployed over two weeks to police the protests.³³⁷ Activists at the Shell Headquarters are reported to have caused over £6000 in damages.³³⁸ This may have been part of an intentional effort by the group to cause levels of damage sufficient to secure a jury trial. Additionally, it is thought that the disruption caused to London’s roads and transport system delayed over 500,000 commuters attempting to travel to work.³³⁹ Other actions by the protestors included activists gluing themselves to the top of a Docklands Light Railway train and across the entrance of the London Stock Exchange, while a small group chained themselves to the fence outside Jeremy Corbyn’s Islington home.³⁴⁰

In all, 1,130 people were arrested, with 69 being charged at the time.³⁴¹ However, the Metropolitan police pushed to be able to charge over 1,100 people in the hope of deterring the use of similar tactics by protestors in the future.³⁴² Despite the tough stance adopted by the police at this later stage, there was considerable criticism of the police’s initial strategy which allowed protestors to take control of significant sites in central London. Similarly, footage of officers dancing alongside protestors in Oxford Circus during a night time street party with a sound system installed in a pink boat was particularly criticised.³⁴³ In another piece of footage, a police officer was filmed skateboarding on Waterloo Bridge³⁴⁴ where the road had been closed to traffic by the demonstrators creating a temporary skate park on the bridge.³⁴⁵

The Heathrow Protest Controversy

On the 30 May 2019, Extinction Rebellion announced that on the 18 June, it planned to “carry out nonviolent direct action to ensure Heathrow Authorities close the airport for the day, to create a ‘pause’ in recognition of the genocidal impact of high carbon activities”.³⁴⁶ If the Government still refused to cancel the expansion of Heathrow, then “Extinction Rebellion will act to shut the airport down for up to 10 days from July 1.”³⁴⁷ The statement cautioned that the movement was at the “consultancy stage with its members on the proposed action”.³⁴⁸ Rumours that the activists might be planning to use drones to force the airport to shut drew particular condemnation. The following day, Extinction Rebellion released a further statement clarifying that reports about its plans were a “misconstrued interpretation of a document circulated within the movement asking for feedback.”³⁴⁹

Subsequent reports in the *Times* stated that a dispute had broken out within Extinction Rebellion regarding attempts to shut down the airport. According to the report, it had led to “rival sides battling for control” of the

campaign.³⁵⁰ Claims were made that the proposals had come from Roger Hallam, along with three others.³⁵¹ Farhana Yamin claimed that “in the old days maybe that would have just gone through”, saying, “Roger is used to thinking, ‘If I put forward a proposal, it will happen’.” However, she claimed that “the movement wants to be much more involved and much more strategic.”³⁵² Yamin also expressed the view that forcibly shutting down an airport “is not consistent with non-violent direct action”.³⁵³ The founder of Doctors for XR, Chris Newman, has similarly expressed concern, saying of the proposed action targeting Heathrow, “I think that’s too far,” and arguing “we don’t want to risk human lives or even make it look like you would risk human lives, if you’re going to risk anyone as an activist you risk yourself.”³⁵⁴

Were members of Extinction Rebellion to threaten the safety of planes through the use of drones in an effort to further their cause, then it is arguable that under the terms of the Terrorism Act 2000, this would cross the threshold into terrorist activity. The Metropolitan police have warned that the use of drones at Heathrow Airport could result in life sentences, stressing that “if flown into the path of an aircraft, a drone has the potential to cause great harm to those on board.”³⁵⁵ The police assured that they would deploy both officers and equipment to monitor for illegal drone activity around Heathrow’s airspace at the time of the planned protest.³⁵⁶ However, days before the first stage of this action had been scheduled to take place; Extinction Rebellion released a statement announcing the postponement of the Heathrow actions whilst, noting that the airport had not been removed from the campaign’s “strategic planning”.³⁵⁷

The abandonment of this planned action may indicate a desire to secure and maintain certain levels of public sympathy; something which would appear to be vital if the campaigners are to achieve the levels of mass mobilisation that their “civil resistance model” deems necessary for overthrowing a government. More significantly, the use of drones by a small group of radical activists would have moved Extinction Rebellion away from the very mass participation protests that sit at the core of what founders such as Roger Hallam have advocated for. Farhana Yamin’s reference to how things might have been done “in the old days” would seem to be an allusion to the methods of Rising Up!, when a small band of hard core activists would take maverick direct action, including an attempt to shut roads leading to Heathrow. If there is indeed a conflict playing out in the movement—as has been suggested in the Times report—then it may concern the extent to which Extinction Rebellion will continue to mirror the character of its founders in Rising Up! and the degree to which it will instead be shaped by others who join subsequently.

350. Heathrow Protests splits Extinction Rebellion activists, *The Times* <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/heathrow-protest-splits-extinction-rebellion-activists-js0p2p8rx?t=ie>

351. Heathrow Protests splits Extinction Rebellion activists, *The Times* <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/heathrow-protest-splits-extinction-rebellion-activists-js0p2p8rx?t=ie>

352. Heathrow Protests splits Extinction Rebellion activists, *The Times* <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/heathrow-protest-splits-extinction-rebellion-activists-js0p2p8rx?t=ie>

353. Heathrow Protests splits Extinction Rebellion activists, *The Times* <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/heathrow-protest-splits-extinction-rebellion-activists-js0p2p8rx?t=ie>

354. Founder of Doctors for Extinction Rebellion group ‘draw the line’ at sending drones over Heathrow <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/founder-of-doctors-for-xr-group-draws-the-line-at-heathrow-drones-a4161836.html>

355. Extinction Rebellion protesters ‘plan to use drones to disrupt Heathrow Airport’ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/extinction-rebellion-protesters-plan-use-16517895>

356. Extinction Rebellion protesters ‘plan to use drones to disrupt Heathrow Airport’ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/extinction-rebellion-protesters-plan-use-16517895>

357. Extinction Rebellion postpone Heathrow drone protest <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-48652840>

Supporters and Financial Backing

Funding

Extinction Rebellion has stated that it is majority funded through crowdfunding, in addition to receiving money from NGOs, foundations, and some larger donors.³⁵⁸ An online crowdfunding drive through the website FundRazr shows that a fundraising drive that appears to have begun in early October 2018, had by the end of January 2019 raised just over £131,000, with 2,165 donations having been made.³⁵⁹ This covers the period of Extinction Rebellion’s declaration of rebellion at the end of October, and the first major actions in London in November. However, the shutting down of parts of central London in April of 2019 gave a dramatic boost to the campaign’s fundraising prospects. An ongoing fundraising drive that appears to have started in January 2019, has so far raised £596,786, with donations from over 12,000 contributors.³⁶⁰ Given that Extinction Rebellion reports not to have salaried staff, with only 3 percent of volunteers receiving living expenses,³⁶¹ this alone is a significant sum.

Additionally, Extinction Rebellion’s accounts also show that the campaign has received some sizeable donations from wealthy individuals and foundations.³⁶² An article about Extinction Rebellion from the *Financial Times* describes Gail Bradbook as having “fundraising discussions with a London hedge-fund owner” amid her other activities.³⁶³ The campaign is known to have received some funding from the British company Lush cosmetics. The funding came through the “Lush Charity Pot” and was technically made to Rising Up! with it being unclear whether these funds were always intended to be used to create what would become Extinction Rebellion. The Lush Charity Pot lists Rising Up! among the groups that received funding in 2017, specifying simply “Rising Up! : Training and education about climate change for those taking action”.³⁶⁴ The amount of funding given is also unspecified. The Lush Charity Pot states only that it offers funding grants ranging between £100 and £10,000.³⁶⁵ The Rising Up!/Extinction Rebellion accounts for 2018-19 show a donation marked “Lush 2017” of close to £2000 being paid into the account in July 2018.³⁶⁶ This may be the full amount originally received, or possibly what remained of the 2017 donation. The same document also shows a donation of £4000 marked “lush” having been made on 16 November 2018.³⁶⁷ On 7 January 2019, Extinction Rebellion posted a thank you message to Lush on its Facebook page stating:

358.FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

359.2019 Extinction Rebellion, FundRazr, https://fundrazr.com/ExtinctionRebellion?ref=ab_AmXMzwSGDC5AmXMzwSGDC5

360.2019 Extinction Rebellion, FundRazr, https://fundrazr.com/Global_XR?ref=ab_AmXMzwSGDC5AmXMzwSGDC5

361.FAQs, Extinction Rebellion, <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/faqs/>

362.RU Accounts 2018-19, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVlr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

363.Financial Times, <https://www.ft.com/content/9bcb-1bf8-5b20-11e9-9dde-7aedca0a081a>

364.Charity Pot Donations, Lush, <https://uk.lush.com/article/charity-pot-donations>

365.A bi about our Charity Pot, Lush, <https://uk.lush.com/article/bit-about-our-charity-pot>

366.RU Accounts 2018-19, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVlr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

367.RU Accounts 2018-19, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVlr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

“We’re very grateful to LUSH UK for helping us. They’ve provided us with seed funding for the start of the Rebellion. Here’s a viewpoint on why the UN’s ‘#COPout24’ isn’t enough to safeguard our future, and why direct action is needed to tackle #climatechange and ecological collapse.”³⁶⁸

The post linked to an article on the Lush website by Kit Vaughan titled “The UN Climate talks ‘Groupthink’ cannot save us - we need citizen action!”³⁶⁹ This piece names Extinction Rebellion as one of the movements that NGOs should learn from, instead of “legitimising the negotiations” on climate being held by the UN.³⁷⁰ In fact, the article argues that NGOs should “boycott and disrupt the talks”, and insists that “only a radical revolution of citizen action can deliver real change”.³⁷¹ Asserting that it is “time for a citizen revolution”, and that there should be “a new climate revolution” led by citizen action, the article urges readers: “Get political. Have the difficult conversations, and start rebelling.”³⁷² The Lush blog had also featured a piece about this group of activists following an incident of direct action from Rising Up! at Heathrow Airport in February 2017.³⁷³

Through Rising Up!, Extinction Rebellion also received some of its initial funding in 2018 from a German fund called the Guerrilla Foundation. This foundation, which funds a range of radical and far left initiatives was created by the German-Greek philanthropist Antonis Schwarz, who “has used his inherited wealth to support a variety of social causes since 2011.”³⁷⁴ The Guerrilla Foundation’s website states that it supports activists and “social movements working towards bringing about major systemic change across Europe.”³⁷⁵ In line with Extinction Rebellion’s own scepticism on economic growth—and preference for de-growth—the Foundation states that it wishes to see citizens “pushing for an ethical and sustainable economy not predicated upon unrestricted growth.”³⁷⁶ The mission statement on the Guerrilla Foundation website explains, “we see citizen-movements as the vehicle for redirecting the global trajectory toward a socially equitable, culturally enriched, and ecologically resilient planetary civilization”, and states that it supports activism for “shifting from an extractive economy, exploitative labour, and militaristic governance”, to a “living economy with cooperative labour and a deeply democratic society that prioritises social and ecological wellbeing.”³⁷⁷

The Foundation website features a lengthy page on Extinction Rebellion, detailing that in 2018 it provided Rising Up! with a grant ranging in size from 20,000 to 40,000—although it does not specify whether this amount was in pounds or Euros.³⁷⁸ The fact that a precise figure is not provided here may be explained by a line on the foundation’s website which notes that Extinction Rebellion has a to-do list “which will be supported by our funding as and how it is needed”, in addition to committing some of its funding to Extinction Rebellion’s “compensatory budget” to provide voluntary staff with “money when they need it to pay bills.”³⁷⁹ The statement stressed that this “is not about NGO style salaries”, while also pointing out the necessity for “not trying to run a revolution on thin air.”³⁸⁰

Extinction Rebellion’s accounts also detail that on 29 October 2018—

368. Extinction Rebellion, Facebook, 7 January 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellion/posts/were-very-grateful-to-lush-uk-for-helping-us-theyve-provided-us-with-seed-funding/322285861720862/>

369. The UN Climate talks ‘Groupthink’ cannot save us - we need citizen action!, Lush, <https://uk.lush.com/article/un-climate-talks-groupthink-cannot-save-us-we-need-citizen-action?fbclid=IwAR1cdULPLSp55Mcw3kqKcG16mkd1UyMJXakMU6rlhDQAzB6OJADdNlJelMU>

370. The UN Climate talks ‘Groupthink’ cannot save us - we need citizen action!, Lush, <https://uk.lush.com/article/un-climate-talks-groupthink-cannot-save-us-we-need-citizen-action?fbclid=IwAR1cdULPLSp55Mcw3kqKcG16mkd1UyMJXakMU6rlhDQAzB6OJADdNlJelMU>

371. The UN Climate talks ‘Groupthink’ cannot save us - we need citizen action!, Lush, <https://uk.lush.com/article/un-climate-talks-groupthink-cannot-save-us-we-need-citizen-action?fbclid=IwAR1cdULPLSp55Mcw3kqKcG16mkd1UyMJXakMU6rlhDQAzB6OJADdNlJelMU>

372. The UN Climate talks ‘Groupthink’ cannot save us - we need citizen action!, Lush, <https://uk.lush.com/article/un-climate-talks-groupthink-cannot-save-us-we-need-citizen-action?fbclid=IwAR1cdULPLSp55Mcw3kqKcG16mkd1UyMJXakMU6rlhDQAzB6OJADdNlJelMU>

373. Rising up against Heathrow expansion, Lush, <https://uk.lush.com/article/rising-against-heathrow-expansion>

374. About, the Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrilla-foundation.org/about/team/>

375. About, the Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrilla-foundation.org/about/>

376. About, the Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrilla-foundation.org/about/>

377. Mission Values, the Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrillafoundation.org/about/mission-values/>

378. Extinction Rebellion, the Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrillafoundation.org/grantee/extinction-rebellion/>

379. Extinction Rebellion, the Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrillafoundation.org/grantee/extinction-rebellion/>

380. Extinction Rebellion, the Guerrilla Foundation, <https://guerrillafoundation.org/grantee/extinction-rebellion/>

days before the declaration of rebellion in Parliament Square—a donation of £1,500 was received from the Edge Fund.³⁸¹ On its website the Edge Fund records giving a grant of this same figure to Rising Up!³⁸². On that page, the Fund describes Rising Up! as being “focused on system change through non-violent uprising” and also states that they “deliberately don’t identify with a particular political orientation (e.g. anarchist or socialist)”.³⁸³ Most striking is that the description of Rising Up! from the Edge Fund website fails to make a single mention of ecological campaigning, climate change or anything else relating to the environment; instead it notes an interest in “participatory democracy”, “trying out methods like sortition”, and “the importance of civil disobedience, and direct action”.³⁸⁴ The Edge Fund itself makes no secret of having a radical agenda. Setting out its values on its website, the Fund states that “if we are to create a world free of injustice and inequality we need to completely change the way our societies are organised.”³⁸⁵ The statement of values explicitly attacks capitalism for allowing a “small number of people to become wealthy at the expense of others”, and criticises representative democracy on the grounds that it “forces us to choose someone to make decisions for us”.³⁸⁶ The Edge Fund is not registered as a charity, but raises money through public donations for supporting “radical grassroots organising.”³⁸⁷

The campaign’s accounts record a particularly large donation to Extinction Rebellion of £121,140 being made on 8 April 2019,³⁸⁸ prior to its protests aimed at shutting down much of central London. The funding is listed simply as coming from CIFF and throughout the account sheet, amounts are recorded as having been drawn from a “Donation Pot” marked as CIFF.³⁸⁹ Notably, Farhana Yamin, a leading figure in Extinction Rebellion, has worked with the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)³⁹⁰. CIFF’s original mission statement was to “improve the lives of children in developing countries who live in poverty”.³⁹¹ However, CIFF has also made environmentalism a priority, stating on its website that “climate change poses the single biggest threat to the future of today’s children.”³⁹²

In addition to donations from Foundations, the campaign’s online accounts also list sizeable donations from a number of individuals. The name Joe Corre (and JF Corre) appears a number of times as having provided donations, with a JF Corre listed as donating £20,000 in February in 2019, while the name Joe Corre appears as having donated £10,000 in March 2019 and the same figure again in April and May 2019.³⁹³ This may be relevant given that Joe Corre, the son of Vivienne Westwood and Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren, has been reported by the press as being a supporter of the Youth Climate Strikes³⁹⁴, and as a “key figure in the campaign group Extinction Rebellion”.³⁹⁵ Corre, who founded the lingerie brand Agent Provocateur³⁹⁶, was included by Extinction Rebellion in a list of celebrities, public figures, politicians and academics which it claimed supported its actions on the eve of the April protests in London.³⁹⁷ As that list of names indicates, the campaigners have had the expressed support of many prominent individuals, although it is not clear how many of these have provided financial support for the movement.

381. RU Accounts 2018-19, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVLr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

382. Previous Grants, Edge Fund, https://www.edgefund.org.uk/previous_grants

383. Previous Grants, Edge Fund, https://www.edgefund.org.uk/previous_grants

384. Previous Grants, Edge Fund, https://www.edgefund.org.uk/previous_grants

385. Our Values, Edge Fund, https://www.edgefund.org.uk/our_values

386. Our Values, Edge Fund, https://www.edgefund.org.uk/our_values

387. Edge Fund, <https://www.edgefund.org.uk/>

388. RU Accounts 2018-19, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVLr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

389. RU Accounts 2018-19, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVLr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

390. Farhana Yamin, Climate Strategies, <https://climatestrategies.org/team/farhana-yamin/>

391. Who We Are, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, <https://cifff.org/about-us/who-we-are/>

392. Climate Change, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, <https://cifff.org/priorities/climate-change/>

393. RU Accounts 2018-19, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UqQmzcXNnN9SD0AAHrH7Eeg-wyxltd7FMVJNslZVLr6s/edit#gid=521830536>

394. Green militants urging YOUR children to skip lessons: Pupils as young as nine to walk out of classrooms across UK in a mass protest over climate change, *Daily Mail*, 10 February 2019, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6689385/Green-militants-urging-children-skip-lessons.html>

395. Three teens arrested following climate change demonstration today as thousands of truanting schoolkids walk out of class, *The Sun*, 16 February 2019 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8434927/climate-change-strikes-school-kids-60-pound-fines/>

396. ‘A phenomenal stitch-up’: Founder of luxury lingerie brand Agent Provocateur attacks sale to Sports Direct billionaire Mike Ashley, *Business Insider*, 3 March 2017, <https://www.businessinsider.com/agent-provocateur-joe-corre-attacks-sale-sports-direct-billionaire-mike-ashley-2017-3?r=US&IR=T>

397. From Monday 15 April: Extinction Rebellion to block Marble Arch, Oxford Circus, Waterloo Bridge & Parliament Sq round the clock until Government acts on Climate Emergency, Extinction Rebellion, 9 May 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/09/from-monday-15--extinction-rebellion-to-block-marble-arch-oxford-circus-waterloo-bridge-parliament-sq-round-the-clock-until-government-acts-on-climate-emergency%EF%BB%BF/>

Public Figures, Celebrities, and Fellow Travellers

During its campaign, Extinction Rebellion has benefited from winning the support of a number of prominent public figures and celebrities. Indeed, the activists even managed to attract celebrities to participate in its illegal civil disobedience activities in London in April, with the actress Emma Thompson joining demonstrators in blocking Oxford Circus, while the Olympic gold medal-winning canoeist Etienne Stott was arrested among demonstrators occupying Waterloo Bridge.³⁹⁸ The YouTube personality Jack Harries was arrested in February 2019 when Extinction Rebellion activists glued themselves to the entrance of a Park Lane hotel hosting International Petroleum Week.³⁹⁹ Notably, Extinction Rebellion's "handbook", published in June 2019, includes pieces by a number of prominent figures. Published by Penguin Random House UK, it includes a How to Guide showing how activists can illegally block roads and bridges. Contributors to the book include, former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, psychoanalyst Dr Susie Orbach, Labour's shadow Minister for the Treasury Clive Lewis, and Green Party leader Caroline Lucas.⁴⁰⁰

From the time of the movement's public launch, the activists had been receiving this kind of backing. On 26 October 2018, days before Extinction Rebellion announced its declaration of rebellion in Parliament Square, an open letter was published in *The Guardian* from 94 academics and public figures warning of "ecological crisis".⁴⁰¹ The letter stated that "we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction", but also echoed some of the lines associated with Extinction Rebellion, stating:

*"Our government is complicit in ignoring the precautionary principle, and in failing to acknowledge that infinite economic growth on a planet with finite resources is non-viable."*⁴⁰²

Going further still, the letter also accused that the government "irresponsibly promotes rampant consumerism and free-market fundamentalism".⁴⁰³ Mirroring the language and the sentiments found in Extinction Rebellion's own declaration of rebellion, the letter continues by stating:

"The 'social contract' has been broken, and it is therefore not only our right, but our moral duty to bypass the government's inaction and flagrant dereliction of duty, and to rebel to defend life itself."

Explicitly endorsing Extinction Rebellion, the letter concluded by stating:

*"We therefore declare our support for Extinction Rebellion, launching on 31 October 2018. We fully stand behind the demands for the government to tell the hard truth to its citizens. We call for a Citizens' Assembly to work with scientists on the basis of the extant evidence and in accordance with the precautionary principle, to urgently develop a credible plan for rapid total decarbonisation of the economy."*⁴⁰⁴

Prominent among the signatories of the letter were former archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams, psychoanalyst and author Dr Susie Orbach, Shadow minister for environment, food and rural affairs David

398. Extinction Rebellion: Etienne Stott 'does not regret' arrest in climate change protests, BBC Sports, 22 April 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/canoeing/48010468>

399. YouTuber and activist Jack Harries 'arrested' during non-violent protest at International Petroleum Week, *The Metro*, 27 February 2019, <https://metro.co.uk/2019/02/27/youtuber-activist-jack-harries-arrested-non-violent-protest-international-petroleum-week-8766448/>

400. This is Not a Drill.

401. Facts about our ecological crisis are incontrovertible. We must take action, *The Guardian*, 26 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/facts-about-our-ecological-crisis-are-incontrovertible-we-must-take-action>

402. Facts about our ecological crisis are incontrovertible. We must take action, *The Guardian*, 26 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/facts-about-our-ecological-crisis-are-incontrovertible-we-must-take-action>

403. Facts about our ecological crisis are incontrovertible. We must take action, *The Guardian*, 26 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/facts-about-our-ecological-crisis-are-incontrovertible-we-must-take-action>

404. Facts about our ecological crisis are incontrovertible. We must take action, *The Guardian*, 26 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/facts-about-our-ecological-crisis-are-incontrovertible-we-must-take-action>

Drew MP, Green Party MEP Professor Molly Scott Cato, Vice-chancellor of the University of Winchester Professor Joy Carter, Pro vice-chancellor Arden University Dr Alison Green.⁴⁰⁵ Another open letter was published in *The Guardian* that December, this time with signatures from 100 academics, authors, and politicians. The signatories reflected the more international reach that the movement was starting to gain by this point, and several of these were also arguably more high profile. However, the contents of the 9 December letter takes an even more politically radical turn, gesturing sympathies not only for a far left agenda, but also pushing a strain of anti-Western identity politics. The letter states that, “if global corporate capitalism continues to drive the international economy, global catastrophe is inevitable.”⁴⁰⁶ The letter instead urges:

“Conventionally privileged nations must voluntarily fund comprehensive environment-protection policies in impoverished nations, to compensate the latter for foregoing unsustainable economic growth, and paying recompense for the planet-plundering imperialism of materially privileged nations.”⁴⁰⁷

Similarly the letter calls on individuals, “especially in the materially privileged world”, to change their habits of consumption, as well as to “uphold human rights”.⁴⁰⁸ As with the letter from November, this letter similarly expresses support for Extinction Rebellion, stating:

“We further call on concerned global citizens to rise up and organise against current complacency in their particular contexts, including indigenous people’s rights advocacy, decolonisation and reparatory justice – so joining the global movement that’s now rebelling against extinction (e.g. Extinction Rebellion in the UK).”⁴⁰⁹

Prominent signatories to this letter included the political writer Naomi Klein, philosopher Noam Chomsky, author Philip Pullman, former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, philosopher AC Grayling, naturalist Chris Packham, psychoanalyst Susie Orbach, Sir Jonathan Porritt, environmentalist Vandana Shiva, Vice Chancellor of the University of Winchester Professor Joy Carter, and Pro Vice-Chancellor of Arden University Dr Alison Green.⁴¹⁰

The Guardian further demonstrated its support for Extinction Rebellion on the eve of the campaign’s April 2019 actions in London, publishing an editorial the day before the protests were to be initiated. The editorial titled “*The Guardian* view on Extinction Rebellion: one small step”, stated that the road blocks being planned to target central London “falls somewhere between street theatre and direct action.”⁴¹¹ Embracing the radical political change inherent within Extinction Rebellion’s objectives, *The Guardian* editorial asserted that, “the idea that we can change the whole basis of our planetary economy without pain and inconvenience for the global middle classes is simply false.” However, the editorial also warned that the “enormous political challenge” facing us is to ensure that the “pain of adjustment towards a carbon-neutral economy is fairly distributed”, claiming that at the moment it is falling on “those least able to bear it”.⁴¹²

405. Facts about our ecological crisis are incontrovertible. We must take action, *The Guardian*, 26 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/26/facts-about-our-ecological-crisis-are-incontrovertible-we-must-take-action>

406. Act now to prevent an environmental catastrophe, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/09/act-now-to-prevent-an-environmental-catastrophe>

407. Act now to prevent an environmental catastrophe, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/09/act-now-to-prevent-an-environmental-catastrophe>

408. Act now to prevent an environmental catastrophe, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/09/act-now-to-prevent-an-environmental-catastrophe>

409. Act now to prevent an environmental catastrophe, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/09/act-now-to-prevent-an-environmental-catastrophe>

410. Act now to prevent an environmental catastrophe, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/09/act-now-to-prevent-an-environmental-catastrophe>

411. *The Guardian* view on Extinction Rebellion: one small step, *The Guardian*, 14 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/14/the-guardian-view-on-extinction-rebellion-one-small-step>

412. *The Guardian* view on Extinction Rebellion: one small step, *The Guardian*, 14 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/14/the-guardian-view-on-extinction-rebellion-one-small-step>

Indicating just how extreme a change is being envisaged, the editorial continued:

“The activists of Extinction Rebellion use the metaphor of war, and this is not entirely exaggerated. Although one of the purposes of groups like Extinction Rebellion is to avert wars over resources, this may – paradoxically – require the kind of social and political mobilisation only otherwise seen in wartime.”⁴¹³

Less than a month later, on 7 May, *The Guardian* published a further editorial along similar lines. While this one was not explicitly about Extinction Rebellion, the editorial was titled “The Guardian view on extinction: time to rebel”.⁴¹⁴ As part of the solutions proposed, the editorial referenced recommendations for taxes on “wildlife-degrading companies”.⁴¹⁵ However, going further, *The Guardian* also alluded to the radical politics and thinking of the wider movement within which Extinction Rebellion sits, stating that “many believe a more radical rethinking of our economic model is needed.”⁴¹⁶

As *The Guardian* letters demonstrated, a considerable number of prominent individuals have aligned themselves with the Extinction Rebellion campaign. Former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams—signatory to both letters—has been particularly vocal in his support, even recording a video endorsing the campaign’s actions. In that video, which was published on the Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel with the official logo, Williams tells viewers that “it’s not at all surprising that people in this urgent situation feel they’ve got to take non-violent direct action”.⁴¹⁷ Referring to what Extinction Rebellion is seeking to do, Williams continues by explaining “that’s why I believe a wide, deep support from the public is needed”, before referring to bringing about “democratic change”—something that might be considered at odds with elements of the campaign’s approach.⁴¹⁸ On the weekend before Extinction Rebellion’s London actions were due to begin, the former archbishop led climate demonstrators in a vigil outside St Paul’s Cathedral.⁴¹⁹ Images from that demonstration show Williams seated on the ground, addressing protestors through a megaphone, with a number of Extinction Rebellion flags being held by the crowd behind him.⁴²⁰ Writing in the afterword of the Extinction Rebellion handbook, Williams stated that:

“In this time of massive public denial and displacement – so miserably evident in the ego-boosting dramas of the Brexit debates and the resurgence of the surly, self-protective localism across the world’s political landscape, Extinction Rebellion urges on us the revolution of coming to ourselves, coming to truthfulness, healing the broken connection with what we are.”⁴²¹

Another prominent figure to have joined with Extinction Rebellion is the BAFTA and Oscar winning actress Dame Emma Thompson. Days before the campaign’s April actions were to begin in London, the Extinction Rebellion YouTube channel released a video with Emma Thompson urging people to join the activism. Thompson speaks in the video as if she were

413. *The Guardian view on Extinction Rebellion: one small step*, *The Guardian*, 14 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/14/the-guardian-view-on-extinction-rebellion-one-small-step>

414. *The Guardian view on extinction: time to rebel*, *The Guardian*, 7 May 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/07/the-guardian-view-on-extinction-time-to-rebel>

415. *The Guardian view on extinction: time to rebel*, *The Guardian*, 7 May 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/07/the-guardian-view-on-extinction-time-to-rebel>

416. *The Guardian view on extinction: time to rebel*, *The Guardian*, 7 May 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/07/the-guardian-view-on-extinction-time-to-rebel>

417. Dr Rowan Williams, “... the future of the human race is now at stake” - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 11 March 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7aOc1oeBzk>

418. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7aOc1oeBzk>

419. Rowan Williams leads climate change vigil outside St Paul’s Cathedral, *Christian Today*, 15 April 2019, <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/rowan-williams-leads-climate-change-vigil-outside-st-pauls-cathedral/132219.htm>

420. Rowan Williams leads climate change vigil outside St Paul’s Cathedral, *Christian Today*, 15 April 2019, <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/rowan-williams-leads-climate-change-vigil-outside-st-pauls-cathedral/132219.htm>

421. *This is Not a Drill*, p184

any other organiser of Extinction Rebellion, introducing herself by simply saying: “I’m Emma Thompson, I’m a climate change activist—have been for decades”, before announcing that on 15 April the “international rebellion will begin”, explaining that “creative non-violent direct action will start to take place”.⁴²² Encouraging others to join, Thompson urges “come down, be with us; there’ll be talks, there’ll be politics, there’ll be music, there’ll be arts, it’s going to be a lot of fun, but be prepared to stay.”⁴²³ Emma Thompson was present at the London demonstrations, and was photographed in the pink boat blocking Oxford Circus.⁴²⁴ Thompson gave a number of interviews to the press during the demonstrations,⁴²⁵ and even expressed the desire to be arrested⁴²⁶, although it is not believed that she was among the 1,100 Extinction Rebellion demonstrators who were.⁴²⁷ The actress was subsequently ridiculed by parts of the press for having flown to London from Los Angeles before joining the protests.⁴²⁸ She is also reported to have accused the police of wasting tax payers’ money in their policing of the demonstrations.⁴²⁹

In June 2019, the rock group Radiohead made headlines when it was announced that the proceeds raised from some of the band’s newly released mini-disk recordings would go to Extinction Rebellion.⁴³⁰ Radiohead had also given permission for Extinction Rebellion to use one of their tracks in one of the campaign’s promotional videos.⁴³¹ A statement issued by Extinction Rebellion on 9 April, days before the actions to shut down locations across central London, lists Radiohead as being among those offering support for the campaign.⁴³² In that statement, Extinction Rebellion lists those it claims have given “Expressions of support for the international call to do whatever is necessary non-violently, to persuade politicians and business leaders to relinquish their complacency and denial”.⁴³³

Support on the Political Left

Given the underlying anti-capitalist and anti-establishment message that runs throughout Extinction Rebellion’s campaign, it is unsurprising that it has gained traction with sections of the wider left. This is best exemplified by the campaign’s alignment with Labour’s Momentum. Activists’ support for Momentum and the left of the Labour party predates the creation of Extinction Rebellion and is particularly apparent on the Compassionate Revolutionaries Facebook page.⁴³⁴ Equally, it appears that Extinction Rebellion undertook considerable outreach to Momentum groups in its efforts to mobilise a large network behind its direct action campaigns.⁴³⁵ To a degree, this outreach appears to have had some success. At the end of April 2019, following Extinction Rebellion’s London actions, the chair of the Manchester branch of Momentum, Isaac Rose, wrote in the left wing publication *New Internationalist* of his recently acquired support for the campaigners. In his piece titled “I was wrong about Extinction Rebellion: This is why”, Rose acknowledges the scepticism he had initially expressed about the campaigners, but describes his “joyful experience” at being proven wrong by Extinction Rebellion’s success at “shutting down significant areas of central London for over a week.”⁴³⁶ In a section of his

422. Emma Thompson - “On April 15th the International Rebellion begins, be there!” - Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 8 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yx9HokE2FBE>

423. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yx9HokE2FBE>

424. Extinction Rebellion latest: Dame Emma Thompson defends herself against claims of hypocrisy after jetting from LA to London to attend, *The Evening Standard*, 19 April 2019, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/extinction-rebellion-latest-dame-emma-thompson-defends-herself-against-claims-of-hypocrisy-after-a4122196.html>

425. Sky News - Day #5 London Actions - Extinction Rebellion - April 19th, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 19 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0cM8bEwvY>

426. Emma Thompson ‘wants to be arrested at Extinction Rebellion protest’ - after flying from LA to take part, *The Telegraph*, 18 April 2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/04/18/emma-thompson-accused-hypocrisy-takes-overnight-flight-la-take/>

427. Emma Thompson Dodges Arrest At Extinction Rebellion Protest, *Huffington Post*, 19 April 2019, https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/emma-thompson-dodges-arrest-at-extinction-rebellion-protest_uk_5cb9aa25e4b032e7ceb74e1e

428. Emma Thompson flew 5,400 miles to join climate change protest, *Metro*, 19 April 2019, <https://metro.co.uk/2019/04/19/emma-thompson-flew-5400-miles-join-climate-change-protest-9262552/>

429. Emma Thompson blames POLICE for ‘wasting taxpayer money’ tackling Extinction Rebellion eco-warrior protests, *The Sun*, 20 April 2019, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8898682/emma-thompson-police-extinction-rebellion-protest/>

430. Radiohead release hours of hacked MiniDiscs to benefit Extinction Rebellion, *The Guardian*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/jun/11/radiohead-release-hours-of-hacked-songs-to-benefit-extinction-rebellion>

431. Radiohead release hours of hacked MiniDiscs to benefit Extinction Rebellion, *The Guardian*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/jun/11/radiohead-release-hours-of-hacked-songs-to-benefit-extinction-rebellion>

432. From Monday 15 April: Extinction Rebellion to block Marble Arch, Oxford Circus, Waterloo Bridge & Parliament Sq round the clock until Government acts on Climate Emergency, Extinction Rebellion, 9 May 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/09/from-monday-15-april-extinction-rebellion-to-block-marble-arch-oxford-circus-waterloo-bridge-parliament-sq-round-the-clock-until-government-acts-on-climate-emergency%EF%BB%BF/>

433. From Monday 15 April: Extinction Rebellion to block Marble Arch, Oxford Circus, Waterloo Bridge & Parliament Sq round the clock until Government acts on Climate Emergency, Extinction Rebellion, 9 May 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/09/from-monday-15-april-extinction-rebellion-to-block-marble-arch-oxford-circus-waterloo-bridge-parliament-sq-round-the-clock-until-government-acts-on-climate-emergency%EF%BB%BF/>

434. Compassionate Revolutionaries, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/910039479046757/>

435. UK Groups and networks database, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t48uVrr1sH_xz-rjEWcQ4u13vgtRdxJu7oEZ-bUW1XQU/edit#gid=1198765370

436. I was wrong about Extinction Rebellion. This is why., *New Internationalist*, 30 April 2019, <https://newint.org/features/2019/04/30/i-was-wrong-about-extinction-rebellion-why>

article titled “Eco-socialism, not green capitalism”, Rose states:

“At root, climate breakdown is the product of capitalism: a system that demands continuous growth; that requires sacrifice zones of the natural world; that enriches those who hold wealth at the expense of those who work.”⁴³⁷

Furthermore, he also states that Labour had a “massive role to play in building upon the work of XR.”⁴³⁸ In practical terms, these sentiments do appear to have led to some collaboration between the two movements. In advance of Parliament voting on a motion brought forward by Labour to declare a climate emergency, it was reported in the press that Momentum and Extinction Rebellion would join forces with the youth climate strike protestors for a rally in Parliament Square.⁴³⁹ Speaking on behalf of Momentum, Laura Parker stated that climate change “isn’t caused by ordinary people” and instead claimed that it is caused by “elite politicians, oil executives and bankers who all profit from causing climate breakdown.”⁴⁴⁰ Parker continued by arguing that “only Labour can challenge this climate-wrecking elite and deliver a green industrial revolution”, which she said will involve “transforming our economy and society in the interests of the many, not the few.”⁴⁴¹

Prominent figures on the left of the Labour party also appear to have been eager to associate themselves with Extinction Rebellion, and to praise its activists. This was the case at the time when the campaign first announced its rebellion, and has only become more apparent since the actions to shut down parts of central London in April 2019. Labour’s Shadow Treasury Minister Clive Lewis spoke at the campaign’s declaration of rebellion held in Parliament Square on 31 October 2018. Lewis told the crowd gathered that it is important that “we change the way we live fundamentally, our economy fundamentally”.⁴⁴² On Extinction Rebellion’s calls to break the law, Lewis stated,

“And I understand as well that some of you guys are feeling impatient. You’re here to say that ‘if we decide to break the law in the interest of the planet, in the interest of future generations’, well you know what? I support you in that.”⁴⁴³

Lewis continued by saying that he wanted to change the law, so that the protestors would not have to break the law, and that “the people who end up behind bars are those that destroy the planet, burn the planet; they are the ones that should be breaking the law.”⁴⁴⁴

Some of the loudest praise in Labour has come from John McDonnell. Most recently, in June 2019, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor publicly defended the disruption caused by Extinction Rebellion and the Youth Climate strikes, saying that the “relatively minor disturbance to everyday life caused” had “definitely been worth it”.⁴⁴⁵ McDonnell stated that he had “paid tribute to, and indeed joined, those people who have been campaigning and protesting to force the issue of the climate emergency”.⁴⁴⁶ According to McDonnell, this “direct action” had created “a space” for “ongoing creative and constructive dialogue”.⁴⁴⁷ Previously, speaking on the Andrew Marr Show on 5 May 2019, McDonnell stated of Extinction Rebellion, “I

437. I was wrong about Extinction Rebellion. This is why., *New Internationalist*, 30 April 2019, <https://newint.org/features/2019/04/30/i-was-wrong-about-extinction-rebellion-why>

438. I was wrong about Extinction Rebellion. This is why., *New Internationalist*, 30 April 2019, <https://newint.org/features/2019/04/30/i-was-wrong-about-extinction-rebellion-why>

439. Extinction Rebellion and Momentum join forces on climate crisis, *The Guardian*, 29 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/29/extinction-rebellion-and-momentum-join-forces-on-climate-crisis>

440. Extinction Rebellion and Momentum join forces on climate crisis, *The Guardian*, 29 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/29/extinction-rebellion-and-momentum-join-forces-on-climate-crisis>

441. Extinction Rebellion and Momentum join forces on climate crisis, *The Guardian*, 29 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/29/extinction-rebellion-and-momentum-join-forces-on-climate-crisis>

442. Clive Lewis speaking at Extinction Rebellion rally, Real Media, YouTube, 4 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKcz4YnQJKU>

443. Clive Lewis speaking at Extinction Rebellion rally, Real Media, YouTube, 4 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKcz4YnQJKU>

444. Clive Lewis speaking at Extinction Rebellion rally, Real Media, YouTube, 4 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKcz4YnQJKU>

445. Extinction Rebellion: John McDonnell defends disruption caused by climate change activists, *The Independent*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/extinction-rebellion-protests-john-mcdonnell-labour-climate-change-a8972561.html>

446. Extinction Rebellion: John McDonnell defends disruption caused by climate change activists, *The Independent*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/extinction-rebellion-protests-john-mcdonnell-labour-climate-change-a8972561.html>

447. Extinction Rebellion: John McDonnell defends disruption caused by climate change activists, *The Independent*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/extinction-rebellion-protests-john-mcdonnell-labour-climate-change-a8972561.html>

just love them. I think they're great, I really do. I just think they're brilliant! We need those sorts of people. We need them on our case"⁴⁴⁸. McDonnell further mentioned that he had invited Extinction Rebellion to brief his team, and that he had asked "Jeremy" if they would be able to brief the shadow cabinet.⁴⁴⁹

Extinction Rebellion activists had met with John McDonnell at Portcullis House on the morning of 30 April.⁴⁵⁰ Three of the campaign's activists are listed as having attended the meeting. One was a 19-year-old dance student from Extinction Rebellion Youth.⁴⁵¹ The other two representatives from Extinction Rebellion are listed as 54 year old Sarah Lunnon, a former Green party county councillor for Stroud and 42 year old Skeena Rathor, Labour member of Stroud District Council—both members of the Extinction Rebellion's Political Strategy Team.⁴⁵² The connection to Stroud may be significant here. Not only is Stroud home to Extinction Rebellion's founders Gail Bradbrook and Simon Bramwell,⁴⁵³ but it is also where Compassionate Revolution was launched and is where Compassionate Revolution Ltd is still registered as having its headquarters.⁴⁵⁴

An Extinction Rebellion statement on the meeting confirms McDonnell's reports about offering the campaigners an invitation to brief his team and the shadow cabinet, and while the statement mentions that McDonnell agreed to consider 2030 as a new target date for reducing carbon emissions to net zero, he did not commit to formally change the target from 2050, as specified in an earlier Labour party motion.⁴⁵⁵ Extinction Rebellion also reported meeting with Jeremy Corbyn the day before the opposition debate on climate change.⁴⁵⁶ However, other than noting that Shadow Environment Secretary Sue Hayman, was also present, little more is known.⁴⁵⁷

The civil disobedience organised by the campaigners appeared to have a notable impact on Labour policy. Following Extinction Rebellion's April actions in London, Labour announced that it would force a vote in Parliament to declare a national climate emergency.⁴⁵⁸ Describing the protests as a wake-up call, Jeremy Corbyn called for "rapid and dramatic action, which only concerted government action and a green industrial revolution can deliver."⁴⁵⁹ During the debate on the motion—which took place on 1 May—Corbyn adopted Extinction Rebellion's own language, and told the House of Commons that it must "declare an environment and climate emergency", assuring MPs that "we are living in a climate crisis".⁴⁶⁰ Voicing his support for the youth climate strikes, Corbyn stated that, "it was inspiring but also humbling that children felt that they had to leave school to teach us adults a lesson."⁴⁶¹ Corbyn continued with his praise by explicitly referencing Extinction Rebellion, stating:

"The truth is that they are ahead of the politicians on this, the most important issue of our time. We are witnessing an unprecedented upsurge of climate activism, with groups such as Extinction Rebellion forcing the politicians in this building to listen. For all the dismissive and offensive column inches that the protesters have provoked, they are a massive and, I believe, very necessary

448. BBC - The Andrew Marr Show - April 5th - John McDonnell MP, on meeting Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 May 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL8r1sx4l-0>

449. BBC - The Andrew Marr Show - April 5th - John McDonnell MP, on meeting Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 5 May 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL8r1sx4l-0>

450. Extinction Rebellion today: 8.45am John McDonnell; 11.30am Michael Gove; 4.30pm XR Families @ the Treasury, Extinction Rebellion, 30 April 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/30/extinction-rebellion-today-8-45am-john-mcdonnell-11-30am-michael-gove-4-30pm-xr-families-the-treasury/>

451. Extinction Rebellion today: 8.45am John McDonnell; 11.30am Michael Gove; 4.30pm XR Families @ the Treasury, Extinction Rebellion, 30 April 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/30/extinction-rebellion-today-8-45am-john-mcdonnell-11-30am-michael-gove-4-30pm-xr-families-the-treasury/>

452. Extinction Rebellion today: 8.45am John McDonnell; 11.30am Michael Gove; 4.30pm XR Families @ the Treasury, Extinction Rebellion, 30 April 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/30/extinction-rebellion-today-8-45am-john-mcdonnell-11-30am-michael-gove-4-30pm-xr-families-the-treasury/>

453. Stroud, the gentle Cotswold town that spawned a radical protest, *The Guardian*, 20 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/20/stroud-cotswold-town-that-spawned-radical-protest>

454. Compassionate Revolution Limited, Companies House, <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09622618>

455. Statement from Extinction Rebellion on meeting with John McDonnell this morning, Extinction Rebellion, 30 April 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/30/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-on-meeting-with-john-mcdonnell-this-morning/>

456. Statement from Extinction Rebellion on meeting with John McDonnell this morning, Extinction Rebellion, 30 April 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/30/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-on-meeting-with-john-mcdonnell-this-morning/>

457. Statement from Extinction Rebellion on meeting with John McDonnell this morning, Extinction Rebellion, 30 April 2019, <https://rebellion.earth/2019/04/30/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-on-meeting-with-john-mcdonnell-this-morning/>

458. Corbyn launches bid to declare a national climate emergency, *The Guardian*, 27 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/27/corbyn-declares-national-climate-emergency>

459. Corbyn launches bid to declare a national climate emergency, *The Guardian*, 27 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/27/corbyn-declares-national-climate-emergency>

460. Environment and Climate Change, They Work For You, 1 May 2019, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2019-05-01c.225.2>

461. Environment and Climate Change, They Work For You, 1 May 2019, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2019-05-01c.225.2>

wake-up call. Today we have the opportunity to say, 'We hear you.'"⁴⁶²

While the motion put forward by Labour touched on some of the sentiments present in the Extinction Rebellion campaign, mentioning biodiversity loss and adopting the first of Extinction Rebellion's three demands by proposing that Parliament formally declare an "environment and climate emergency", it effectively ignored the second two demands.⁴⁶³ Indeed, the motion made no mention of a Citizens Assembly, and rather than supporting a commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2025, it instead talked vaguely about "reaching net zero by around 2050".⁴⁶⁴ The motion was approved by the Commons without a vote.⁴⁶⁵

Labour unveiled more concrete moves aligning with Extinction Rebellion's agenda in late June, when Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell made an announcement in which he defended and praised the actions taken by both Extinction Rebellion and the Youth Climate strikes.⁴⁶⁶ At the time McDonnell announced that he was establishing a review to assess how "the financial system" as it currently exists "relates to the climate emergency".⁴⁶⁷ McDonnell outlined that the review would cover commercial banks and investment banks, as well as pension funds, hedge funds, private equity, asset managers, derivatives and securities traders and exchanges.⁴⁶⁸ As part of this, he said we would be putting forward proposals for legislation that would require any company listed on the London Stock Exchange to "contribute to tackling the climate crisis".⁴⁶⁹ Those who failed to comply with the proposals would be sanctioned by being de-listed from the London Stock Exchange.⁴⁷⁰ This focus on targeting finance—rather than placing the emphasis on investment in green technologies for instance—appears entirely in line with the approach favoured by Extinction Rebellion, and indeed by Rising Up! and the activists behind that network.

Days after these announcements, on 30 June 2019, John McDonnell gave an interview to Sky News while wearing a large Extinction Rebellion badge.⁴⁷¹ Once again McDonnell stated that he congratulates Extinction Rebellion and justified his announcements on regulation of the London Stock Exchange in light of the climate emergency.⁴⁷² Notably, during the interview John McDonnell also spoke of the need for a growing economy.⁴⁷³ It is unclear how this would sit with Extinction Rebellion's apparent enthusiasm for a de-growth economy. Asked about the kind of economy he envisaged, McDonnell answered, "I want to see a transformed economy, so not capitalism as it now operates", before continuing by explaining, "so the way I've defined it is an economy which is basically radically fairer, radically more equal, radically more democratic—that is economically sustainable, but also environmentally sustainable—but where the rewards from that economy, that prosperous economy, are shared by everybody." "Is that socialism?" the interviewer asked. "Yes", McDonnell replied.

462.Environment and Climate Change, They Work For You, 1 May 2019, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2019-05-01c.225.2>

463.Environment and Climate Change, They Work For You, 1 May 2019, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2019-05-01c.225.2>

464.<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2019-05-01c.225.2>

465.UK Parliament declares climate change emergency, BBC News, 1 May 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48126677>

466.John McDonnell praises Extinction Rebellion and says disruption from protests was 'definitely worth it', *The Evening Standard*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/john-mcdonnell-praises-extinction-rebellion-and-says-disruption-from-protests-was-definitely-worth-a4174816.html>

467.John McDonnell praises Extinction Rebellion and says disruption from protests was 'definitely worth it', *The Evening Standard*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/john-mcdonnell-praises-extinction-rebellion-and-says-disruption-from-protests-was-definitely-worth-a4174816.html>

468.John McDonnell praises Extinction Rebellion and says disruption from protests was 'definitely worth it', *The Evening Standard*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/john-mcdonnell-praises-extinction-rebellion-and-says-disruption-from-protests-was-definitely-worth-a4174816.html>

469.John McDonnell praises Extinction Rebellion and says disruption from protests was 'definitely worth it', *The Evening Standard*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/john-mcdonnell-praises-extinction-rebellion-and-says-disruption-from-protests-was-definitely-worth-a4174816.html>

470.John McDonnell praises Extinction Rebellion and says disruption from protests was 'definitely worth it', *The Evening Standard*, 24 June 2019, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/john-mcdonnell-praises-extinction-rebellion-and-says-disruption-from-protests-was-definitely-worth-a4174816.html>

471.McDonnell: Antisemitism holding Labour back, Sky News, YouTube, 30 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPDEslitqvc>

472.McDonnell: Antisemitism holding Labour back, Sky News, YouTube, 30 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPDEslitqvc>

473.McDonnell: Antisemitism holding Labour back, Sky News, YouTube, 30 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPDEslitqvc>

Policing and Political Response to Extinction Rebellion

The Police Response

Extinction Rebellion's direct action protest tactics have presented unique challenges to the police service and exposed weaknesses in public order legislation and police strategy. During the April 2019 protests in London, the Metropolitan Police Service implemented a strategy of passive containment and engagement with Extinction Rebellion which led to flagrant law-breaking and mass obstruction of roads and key transport hubs in London. Levels of disruption to London increased leading to an intervention by the Home Secretary who called for the police to "take a firm stance" against protesters who were "significantly disrupting the lives of others". The police subsequently appeared to harden their tactics towards the protestors which resulted in 1,200 arrests by the time the protests had finished.

A subsequent statement by the Metropolitan Police defended their policing strategy, claiming that there was no legal power to forcibly contain protestors who were moving from location to location. The statement said:

"We have been asked why we are not using tactics such as containment, physically and forcibly stopping the protesters from moving around. The simple answer is we have no legal basis to do so. These are peaceful protesters; while disruptive, their actions are not violent towards police, themselves or other members of the public".

The police admitted that the protests significantly drained their resources and that legislation was inadequate to deal with Extinction Rebellion's direct action strategy:

"We are looking at other tactics, such as tighter police cordons, but again that is resource-intensive in terms of officer numbers and, more often than not, it just shifts the protesters to another location nearby and does not assist in reopening roads."

In a subsequent later admission that the policing strategy for dealing with Extinction Rebellion had been too tolerant and passive, Cressida Dick, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police told the London Assembly that the police were unprepared for the "very new" type of protests involving large numbers of protestors engaging in direct action for a number of days:

“Extinction Rebellion both came in larger numbers than we expected, used different tactics from what we had been led to believe and expected, and certainly new tactics well beyond anything that we had seen before,” Ms Dick said.

“Next time we will have to quite simply have more people earlier, and be very fast and assertive about getting people arrested and getting obstructions where we can lawfully out of the way quickly...”

Political Impact

Although the activists had been responsible for organising mass lawbreaking in line with Extinction Rebellion’s objectives, the demonstrations led to the Government agreeing to hold a meeting with representatives from Extinction Rebellion. On 30 April, Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) met with members of the group. Immediately following the meeting, the activists spoke to the press with Clare Farrell describing the meeting as “less shit than I thought it would be, but only mildly.”⁴⁷⁴ Farhana Yamin reported that Michael Gove had pledged to discuss the group’s demands with the cabinet, and plans for Citizens’ Assemblies with London Mayor Sadiq Khan.⁴⁷⁵ However, Sam Knights particularly criticised the Government’s refusal to declare a climate emergency, stating “it is important to stress how out of step the current political class is with ordinary people”, and continued by saying “we see this in the democratic deficit we have in this country and it is why we have had to be out on the street in force.”⁴⁷⁶ Members of the Government meeting with Extinction Rebellion might not have been aware of the extent to which events surrounding these meetings may have been choreographed by the activists in advance. Notably, those attending the meeting included not only 22-year-old Sam Knights,⁴⁷⁷ but also 14-year-old Felix Ottaway O’Mahony.⁴⁷⁸ Weeks earlier, before the April protests had even commenced, Roger Hallam had set out his vision for how the protests would force the Government to meet with the activists, and how the activists would then respond following that meeting. In a video from 5 April, Hallam explains how once the activists have compelled politicians to meet with them, that’s when they would “send the young people in”, but then they would immediately denounce the politicians to the media. As he put it in that video:

“And then the young people will come out and whatever—and I’ve got this idea they’ll be on the steps you know with the world’s media watching them—and they’ll say these people still want to kill us. So we’ll be out in the streets again tomorrow. End of press conference, you know because that’s it right. It’s pretty simple. And so it carries on.”⁴⁷⁹

Extinction Rebellion has subsequently reported having a follow-up meeting on 26 of June with both Michael Gove and Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi.⁴⁸⁰ A tweet issued by the campaign dismissed the Government’s 2050 net zero carbon emissions target as being “a death sentence” and insisted that “it is essential that

474. Extinction Rebellion: Michael Gove admits need for urgent action, The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/30/extinction-rebellion-tells-politicians-to-declare-emergency>

475. Extinction Rebellion: Activists say meeting with Michael Gove ‘disappointing’, BBC News <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48109764>

476. Extinction Rebellion: Activists say meeting with Michael Gove ‘disappointing’, BBC News <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48109764>

477. Extinction Rebellion: Activists say meeting with Michael Gove ‘disappointing’, BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48109764>

478. Roger Hallam – Why International Rebellion? – Extinction Rebellion, Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c2f_JmzoWU

479. Extinction Rebellion Follow-up meeting with Michael Gove and Nadhim Zahawi <https://rebellion.earth/2019/06/26/extinction-rebellion-uk-follow-up-meeting-with-michael-gove-and-nadhim-zahawi/>

the... #CitizensAssembly.. will... consider... radical action”.⁴⁸¹ A Citizens Assembly was also mentioned in Extinction Rebellion’s statement on the meeting, although it is unclear to what degree those representing the Government had endorsed the idea. That statement claimed that an agreement was reached between Michael Gove and the Extinction Rebellion representatives on “further conversations about the transparency of a UK Citizens’ Assembly.”⁴⁸² Allegedly, there was also an agreement “on a meeting with the new prime minister and cabinet”.⁴⁸³

Potentially more politically significant than the activists meeting with ministers, was a claim made by Gail Bradbrook on Sky News during the April protests in London. While standing amidst demonstrators on Waterloo Bridge, Bradbrook told the presenter that “politicians behind the scenes, including this current government, are telling us that they need a social movement like ours to give them the social permission to do the necessary.”⁴⁸⁴ The presenter questioned whether it could really be the case that government ministers could be telling the activists that this is what they wanted. Bradbrook responded by saying, “I’m giving you anecdotal evidence; I won’t be able to prove that to you, but I’ve met a couple of people who talked to Theresa May’s advisers and they have said they do know how bad it is and actually they do need you guys to help.”⁴⁸⁵ Without further clarification it is impossible to know precisely what Gail Bradbrook was referring to.

In a further indication of Extinction Rebellion’s growing political influence, on the morning of 18 June the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee heard Gail Bradbrook present oral evidence regarding the Government’s commitments on net zero carbon emissions by 2050.⁴⁸⁶ During the session, Citizens Assemblies were discussed on a number of occasions, with Bradbrook explaining, “I think that’s why we’re calling for a Citizens Assembly because we don’t trust politics as it currently exists to deal with this issue because there are too many vested interests”, and then reiterating “this whole current political system is captured to vested interest”.⁴⁸⁷

Days later, on 20 June, it was reported that six parliamentary select committees—including the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee—were announcing plans for a Citizens Assembly on climate to be formed in the Autumn.⁴⁸⁸ The five other committees collaborating on the plan were reported as being “the Environmental Audit, Housing, Communities and Local Government, Science and Technology, Transport, and Treasury committees.”⁴⁸⁹ On this move, Rachel Reeves, who chairs the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee and who had questioned Gail Bradbrook during the oral evidence session earlier that week, stated that achieving the target on emissions would require “buy-in from the public”, arguing that “this isn’t a challenge for just one Parliament, one political party, or one generation”.⁴⁹⁰ Still more significantly, the move was welcomed by Energy Secretary Greg Clark, although it remains unclear whether this is government policy.⁴⁹¹

June 2019 saw another major political move on the environment that onlookers may attribute to the Extinction Rebellion protests. On 12 June,

480. Extinction Rebellion, Twitter 26 June 2019, <https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1143958494980333568>

481. Extinction Rebellion Follow-up meeting with Michael Gove and Nadhim Zahawi <https://rebellion.earth/2019/06/26/extinction-rebellion-uk-follow-up-meeting-with-michael-gove-and-nadhim-zahawi/>

482. Extinction Rebellion Follow-up meeting with Michael Gove and Nadhim Zahawi <https://rebellion.earth/2019/06/26/extinction-rebellion-uk-follow-up-meeting-with-michael-gove-and-nadhim-zahawi/>

483. Gail Bradbrook, “We will rise up because we love our children...” Sky News – Extinction Rebellion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvFW6UWKNPM>

484. Gail Bradbrook, “We will rise up because we love our children...” Sky News – Extinction Rebellion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvFW6UWKNPM>

485. BEIS Committee question Extinction Rebellion, Commons Select Committee, 14/06/19 <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-energy-industrial-strategy/news-parliament-2017/climate-change-net-zero-target-evidence-17-19/>

486. BEIS Strategy Committee question Extinction Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, YouTube, 18 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II7DHI24PTE>

487. Climate change: MPs announce citizens’ assembly, BBC News, 20 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48706352>

488. Climate change: MPs announce citizens’ assembly, BBC News, 20 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48706352>

489. Climate change: MPs announce citizens’ assembly, BBC News, 20 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48706352>

490. Climate change: MPs announce citizens’ assembly, BBC News, 20 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48706352>

during her final weeks in office as Prime Minister, Theresa May unveiled a new plan for Britain to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.⁴⁹² While the target may be one that falls far short of what has been demanded by Extinction Rebellion, its timing—coming less than a year after the campaign announced the start of its protests—will no doubt be judged as being significant. On 24 June, the Commons passed an amendment to section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2050.⁴⁹³

On 27 June, the House of Lords responded by passing a motion put forward by Labour’s Lord Grantchester expressing regret at the regulations on the grounds that “the government have given little detail of how the emissions target will be met”, and that the Government had “made a substantial change in policy without the full and proper scrutiny that such a change deserves”.⁴⁹⁴ Lord Grantchester stressed that the Government is right to “create a more ambitious target” to “avoid a carbon catastrophe and the horrors that will be realised if the world does not come together” to prevent a rise in temperature.⁴⁹⁵ Nevertheless, he took issue with the lack of detailed explanation provided by the Government. Viscount Ridley stated that he was “genuinely shocked by the casual way in which the other place nodded through this statutory instrument on Monday, committing future generations to vast expenditure to achieve a goal that we have no idea how to reach technologically without ruining the British economy”.⁴⁹⁶ Viscount Ridley continued by pointing out, “we are assured without any evidence that this measure will have, ‘no significant ... impact on business’— but where is the cost-benefit analysis on which this claim is based? Where is the impact assessment? They do not exist.”⁴⁹⁷

491. Climate change: UK government to commit to 2050 target, BBC News, 12 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-48596775>

492. Law for net zero emissions begins passage through Parliament, Gov.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/law-for-net-zero-emissions-begins-passage-through-parliament>

493. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2019/june/lords-debates-carbon-emissions-target/>

494. Amendment to the Motion Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, They Work for You, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2019-06-26a.1087.0&s=c>

495. Amendment to the Motion Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, They Work for You, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2019-06-26a.1087.0&s=c>

496. Amendment to the Motion Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, They Work for You, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2019-06-26a.1087.0&s=c>

Conclusion

This paper proposes that the Extinction Rebellion campaign – one that politicians and the public associate with environmentalism – is deeply rooted in a much wider extreme political agenda. Those running this campaign, which enjoys significant public sympathy, appear sincere about urgently wanting to prevent ecological crisis but argue that capitalism is irredeemably entangled with the ecological crisis which they have set themselves against. It is therefore, unlikely that these leaders would settle for any accommodation that proposed to address environmental damage while keeping the present economic and political system in place.

The leaders of Extinction Rebellion insist on bringing about systemic change in the name of stopping climate change by encouraging mass lawbreaking, causing large scale disruption, and inflicting significant economic damage. Presently, the activists are committed to keeping their actions non-violent, even while some of their most prominent figures have spoken alarmingly about people dying for the cause. At this early stage it is difficult to judge in which direction the movement may yet go. Referring to the internal dispute over the possibility of using drones at Heathrow, a piece in the *New Statesman* about Extinction Rebellion's Farhana Yamin went so far as to refer to these internal disagreements over tactics as “internecine disputes”.⁴⁹⁸ It is impossible to know whether this is an exaggeration, particularly as it remains unclear which individuals or committees exercise real control over the campaign. It certainly appears that, for now, the co-founders from Rising Up! remain decisively influential over the campaign's direction.

It is conceivable that these figureheads could eventually be side lined by more moderate figures who will seek to move into the mainstream. Under such a scenario, a more radical fringe might breakaway so as to have a free hand to undertake actions, such as those involving drones or hunger strikes. For the moment, the momentum of significant numbers of people joining the campaign's demonstrations and the vocal support from politicians and celebrities may be incentive enough for the activists to rein in any more extreme elements. At the very least, those leading the campaign remain clear that they must avoid any violence during their protests if the strategy they have placed their hopes in is to succeed.

If it maintains its current direction of travel, it can be anticipated that Extinction Rebellion will continue to instigate mass disruption, mass law-breaking and ongoing de-legitimation of the free market and the UK's existing democratic system. Further support from public figures and celebrities will only assist it in these efforts, encouraging more people to

497. Extinction Rebellion goes mainstream: what's next for the climate activists?, *New Statesman*, 26 April 2019, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2019/06/extinction-rebellion-goes-mainstream-what-s-next-climate-activists>

participate in causing disruption and seeking arrest, while adding weight to Extinction Rebellion's radical critique of our existing way of life. Yet, if the campaigners want to continue making headlines then they may be forced to raise the stakes; getting greater numbers not only arrested but also prosecuted by perpetrating ever greater levels of criminal damage and engaging in increasingly illegal and disruptive stunts.

The Government should take two courses of action to counter and undermine the rise of Extinction Rebellion in the UK. It should focus on preventing the campaigners from causing massive disruption and economic damage—including incitement and conspiracy offences—as well as by opposing and challenging the campaigners' message. Most immediately, the police must act to prevent demonstrators from taking control of locations in city centres or from blocking roads and bridges. Where Extinction Rebellion succeed in doing so, the police should act quickly to remove and arrest those involved before demonstrators have secured control of these areas. As seen during the April actions in London, once the demonstrators have control of roads and bridges, they are then able to attract large numbers of the public and onlookers to join the cultural and entertainment activities provided by the activists. The authorities must prevent events from reaching this stage.

Legislation relating to public protest needs to be urgently reformed in order to strengthen the ability of police to place restrictions on planned protest and deal more effectively with mass law-breaking tactics (including incitement and conspiracy offences) such as road and bridge blocking, aggravated trespass and criminal damage.

The Police and Crown Prosecution Service must also recognise that there is a public interest in not simply arresting those involved, but also in prosecuting and sentencing those who break the law during these protests. While doing so will not be enough to discourage a small hard core of professional activists, it should act as a deterrent to those in the wider public who might be tempted to join law-breaking protests in the belief that they will face no real consequences for doing so.

Simply acting against the protestors, however, will not be enough to undermine Extinction Rebellion, which may be on the verge of becoming a wider social movement with significant support from public figures and even those in the political establishment. Justified public concerns about climate, ecological damage and biodiversity loss are now increasingly widespread. The Government must demonstrate that it is taking extensive and effective action on these fronts. Yet, more also needs to be done to counter the extreme message of Extinction Rebellion who argue that catastrophe can only be averted if the free market and economic growth are abandoned. Government and civil society must make the case for Green growth more effectively, while also actively investing in the technologies that could support greater sustainability in the future. This would challenge the underlying message of some in Extinction Rebellion who dismiss technological solutions and insist that only de-growth and a reduction of living standards in Western countries—coupled with rolling back human

land use through extensive rewilding—will prove viable.

Those encountering Extinction Rebellion should be under no illusions about just how destabilising and extremist their agenda is. Not only is it unclear how their three formal demands could realistically be satisfied, but also it appears unlikely that their actions would end even if government committed to trying to implement them. The words of Extinction Rebellion's founders and its posts on social media make clear that the objective is system change. This means bringing down our existing democratic system—which several of the campaign's leading figures hold in contempt—and causing rapid economic disaster for the country. The proponents of this course of action have no serious explanations for how the country would function if their demands were implemented.

Government, public bodies and all politicians should act with maximum caution when considering any course of action that could legitimise Extinction Rebellion. Ministers should not be meeting with extremists who openly incite the public to break the law with the expressed aim of causing severe economic damage in the short term and overturning representative democracy and the liberal free market in the long term. To date, there has been a marked failure to call out this extremist agenda for what it is.



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