

Open Letter to Extinction Rebellion

Green Anticapitalist Front

1st March 2019

As climate catastrophe draws near, we are impressed and encouraged by the movement that Extinction Rebellion is building. This mobilisation has reinvigorated environmental activism at a time when we most need it. XR has been bold in its aims when much of the established movement has been cynical, and has managed to tap into a broader sense of alarm over environmental degradation, and mobilised many people not previously involved. XR has grown at a speed that many people would have thought impossible before we saw it happen. XR has also been far more radical in this broad appeal than many people would have thought, pursuing a strategy built around both local direct action while maintaining an international orientation. We cannot overstate the overwhelmingly positive effect that XR is having on environmental politics.

Those of us already involved in various radical and green movements have been attending XR meetings and actions and found them deeply inspiring. However, at the same time we also have doubts about some of the tactics that XR has adopted in its pursuit of a green future, and we have discussed how we should bridge the differences between our views and those of XR. We do not want to undermine the important work that XR is doing, but we also feel that there is a conversation that needs to be had about some of XR's tactics.

While we hope that these tactics do work, we are dubious that they will be enough. We fear that the government will be less willing to negotiate in good faith and more willing to use violent repression against a truly disruptive campaign than is assumed. Capitalism systematically incentivises environmental destruction, and we worry that the costs of any government initiative to combat climate change will fall on the poor and powerless unless a clear anti-capitalist stance is articulated. We will never be free from the spectre of environmental crisis while the profit of the few is put above the lives of everyone else.

Against the existential threat of human extinction hanging over us all, cooperation is our greatest strength. We feel that a separate organisation that works alongside XR while allowing for a greater diversity of tactics is the most honest way to do this. We want to support XR with a parallel mobilisation that has a greater focus on the capitalist roots of climate catastrophe.

We believe these actions can be mutually supportive and bring a zero emissions world closer to reality. See you on the streets.

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