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Extinction Rebellion's tactics are working. It has pierced the bubble of denial

Matthew Todd Mon 10 Jun 2019 The Guardian

Extinction Rebellion is working. A YouGov poll last week showed that the protests by the direct action group, as well as those of millions of children led by Greta Thunberg, have sent public concern about the climate crisis to record levels.

Extinction Rebellion shouldn't have to exist. It only does because most of the media and government have failed. Despite Nasa warning we faced global disaster as far back as 1988, the media has taken an emperor's new clothes approach. It has conveyed what Sir David Attenborough calls "our greatest threat in thousands of years" with the urgency of a quiche recipe on a daytime TV show, and with a detachment that suggests it doesn't believe what it is saying. For years, it has told us the most you can do is recycle plastic and unplug your phone charger. But this hasn't worked. Last year global emissions were the highest on record. Meanwhile, the scientific warnings have become louder and louder. The world's leading climate scientist has urged parents to take to the streets.

Extinction Rebellion has pierced the bubble of denial. By giving talks to local communities across the country, it has humanised this crisis. Instead of flatly explaining that sea levels will rise, diseases will spread and crops will fail, it has made it clear this is about our children and us. It has expressed grief for our kids, for wildlife, for nature and fear at the degrading of the systems that keep us alive. Paradoxically, by stating the terrible truth, it has created authentic hope for the first time. It has been the small child brave enough to step forward, pointing at the naked king, stating the reality: that all life on Earth is under threat, even the families of journalists and MPs, and only a mass mobilisation of people across the world will force our deluded leaders to act.

With that knowledge, thousands have stepped forward and taken to the streets to cause the peaceful disruption that seems the only way to get the media to focus on a story that should have led the news from the moment they knew the facts until this nightmare is solved. The battle is not yet won. Two weeks ago, when more than a million school kids protested for their lives, the BBC News website gave greater priority to a story about the dangers of dog leads. When Philip Hammond suggested £1tn is too high a price to ensure the future of our children, serious commentators nodded in agreement. It seems that the terrifying reality of what we are facing has not yet hit home. There are still too many people in positions of power who believe that if they state that the situation is not dire then that makes it so. These people cannot see that the disruption we face now is nothing compared with the coming fury from a nation of parents realising that the science, certain for a very long time but presented constantly with doubt, means that, if the worst-case scenario comes to pass, their children may not live past middle age.

Question 1: What is according to M. Todd the part played by "people in positions of influence" in the "bubble of denial" he denounces? Answer the question in your own words. 80 words +/- 10%

Question 2: Do you believe that climate activists can make a difference and lead to meaningful climate action? Support your answer with examples. 180 words +/- 10%

Don't forget to indicate the number of words used at the end of each answer.

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