

Rutland Herald & Barre-Montpelier Times-Argus Published: June 1, 2019

[https://www.rutlandherald.com/opinion/perspective/weekly-planet-rebellion-to-save-the-earth/article\\_6e51224b-0cdc-59f2-8a69-435f60d122fd.html](https://www.rutlandherald.com/opinion/perspective/weekly-planet-rebellion-to-save-the-earth/article_6e51224b-0cdc-59f2-8a69-435f60d122fd.html)

## Rebellion to save the Earth

Alan Betts (<http://alanbetts.com/writings>)

Late snowmelt delayed the transition to spring after a long winter. The six months from November to April were very wet across the Northeast. For Vermont, this was the fourth wettest April on record and we have had another 4-5 inches of rain in May. The leaf-out of maples was delayed a week or so, as was the planting of our vegetable garden. But while the central US was cold in the first quarter, Alaska, Europe and much of Asia had very warm temperatures. While it was exceptionally cold in the northern US, February temperatures set new records in Europe, and especially England where high temperatures reached 70 degrees and the moorlands started burning. At the same time, visionaries in England were planning the first rebellion to save the Earth.

As the burning of fossil fuels continues and the greenhouse gases trap more heat in the oceans, the climate system is changing. The Arctic ice shrunk to a new minimum for April, and the mid-latitudes are seeing more nearly stationary global weather patterns that are increasing climate extremes. However poorer tropical countries are seeing far worse. In southeast Africa, where tropical cyclones used to be very rare, two powerful storms developed over the warmer ocean and hit Mozambique. First came cyclone Idai in March with massive flooding which left about 1 000 dead. Then Kenneth, an even stronger category 4 storm struck in April with five to six feet of rain in less than a week. Try to imagine the flooding and destruction in a poor nation.

In early May, a new UN report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reported that soon a million species will go extinct from loss of habitat and climate change. Nature is in an unprecedented global decline and species extinction rates are accelerating. The report chair, Sir Robert Watson comments "The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide. We need transformative change."

We must recognize that it is the rich nations that have been responsible for this tragedy that is devastating the Earth and the lives of children everywhere. For 27 years, we have not kept the promises we made in 1992 to stop dangerous climate change, and now we are deep into a climate emergency. Instead we listen to the soothing propaganda from the fossil fuel industry and their many affiliates that say: "Buy bigger cars and trucks and buy more consumer stuff, so that our profits are larger. Use your freedom to exploit the poor and the Earth: the future is not your responsibility."

Yes, it looks as if 'business as usual' intends to go on with our consumer growth economy based on fossil fuels, exploiting people and life on Earth, until the crash comes with the collapse of the Earth's ecosystem.

So it was heartening to see that a new global group, the **Extinction Rebellion** (Website: [rebellion.earth](http://rebellion.earth)) has grasped that the destruction of the Earth is now a civil rights issue, which can only be checked by civil disobedience. This rebellion to save the Earth is not to defend individual rights, but to defend the

rights of our children and the rights of life on Earth that faces extinction. They will not accept that while our corporations have the 'right' to exploit the Earth, so far the Earth has been given no rights.

This group is trying to force rich countries who are responsible for destroying the planet to take real action on the global climate and ecological emergency. They shut down London April 15-17 with a huge street party, and they were successful in getting their first demand. The British and Scottish governments declared a 'climate emergency'. We shall see whether this is more than symbolic.

It is clear that given the pathetic collapse of ethical standards in Washington, the attacks on climate science, and the war-mongering, there will be no leadership here from the executive branch. So study and support these global movements to hold governments accountable. Recognize we have no right to sacrifice our children and much of life on Earth. Take a deep breath and start talking to your neighbors and politicians.

Attacks on EPA clean air and clean power acts.

EPA Aggregate emissions of six common pollutants dropped 73% between 1970 and 2017.

Attacks on Integrity of science

Aside of new attacks by reactionaries on womens rights in states like Alabama (echo earlier column)