

The People's Front of Extinction Rebellion points to a deeper divide within the Green cause



A number of them have been accused of hypocrisy after protesting against climate change while regularly hopping on planes Credit: Peter Nicholls/Reuters

The [Extinction Rebellion mob](#) are the most visible example of what passes for political protest these days; the dialectics of dummy-spitting and scweaming and scweaming till you're sick – more Violet Elizabeth than Vladimir Ilyich. This being so, I was delighted to find that they are already experiencing a People's Front of Judea/Judean People's Front moment with the splinter group XR Youth (motto: "Act Now, Do Homework Later") interrupting an Extinction Rebellion meeting to demand that their elders drop plans to spoil people's holidays by disrupting Heathrow with drones.

One of them, Robin Ellis-Cockcroft (aged 24 – swipe my shadow and call

me Peter Pan!) said that the younger members had delivered a list of demands, a declaration, and a cake, telling this newspaper: "The planes might crash and people will be hurt." He further objected to young people being excluded from positions of authority: "It's become an organisation run by adults. We live in an adult world, made by adults for adults."

Of course, these youngsters have (suntanned) skin in the game when it comes to travel; a number of them have been accused of hypocrisy after boo-hooing about climate change while hopping on planes quicker than you can say "Instagram". One of them, Robin Boardman-Pattinson (XR has more hyphens than the Almanach de Gotha), decreed "Air travel should only be used in emergencies" – despite having been on a number of skiing trips – while another, Zoe Jones, was shown in old photos on social media enjoying safari holidays in Uganda, boozing on the beach in New Zealand and bungee jumping over the Nile. That's not a simple carbon footprint – that's a carbon clown-shoe footprint.

Instead of giving these layabouts a verbal clip round the ear, one of XR's co-founders, 47-year-old Gail Bradbrook, simpered: "We have left our young people to organise on their own by failing to address adult privilege within our organisational and decision-making structures. It's time to change that and heal the division and hurts between us. It was a relief to name how harmful this separation has been for us all."

She'd know about how harmful privilege can be – Gentile privilege, that is – having displayed a deal of it herself by allowing posts quoting from The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, an anti-Semitic forgery beloved of conspiracy theorists, to be shared on a Facebook page she runs. What a sleazy, shifty shower XR are – hippies, hypocrites and horrible Jew-baiters.

Coincidentally, [the legendary James Lovelock](#) celebrated his 100th birthday this week. I'm not an environmentalist, believing that life will always find a way, but this is a hero with a hinterland so much bigger than

scrounging off the state and going on holiday. From a working-class rural family, he was a maverick from the start. Working on ways of shielding soldiers from burns, he refused to use anaesthetised rabbits and exposed his own skin to heat radiation instead.

Always ready to change his mind when facts contradict theories, he registered as a conscientious objector at the start of World War Two, then tried to enlist after hearing of Nazi atrocities but was told that his medical research was too valuable.

In 2004 he caused a sensation by declaring that "only nuclear power can now halt global warming". In 2012 he stated that he had been "alarmist" about climate change, criticising recent environmentalists for [treating global warming like a religion](#): "The green religion is now taking over from the Christian religion – it's got all the sort of terms that religions use. The greens use guilt. You can't win people round by saying they are guilty."

The divide between the two faces of environmentalism could not be greater; it's not just some people in their twenties squabbling with some people in their forties. It's the difference between children who know little of life versus a centenarian scientist of vast experience. If we have so little faith in the human race that we favour the self-loathing scaremongering of [Greta Thunberg and her ilk](#) over the life-affirming wisdom of James Lovelock, we really do deserve to meet a sticky end.