

‘Chat’ from on-line debate ‘What now for Green Politics’, 24 April 2020

19:29:35 From Rupert : Here is the article of mine that prompted this debate, in case folk want to look over it before we start: <https://greenworld.org.uk/article/we-must-adapt-climate-decline>

19:32:50 From Anne Chapman : Thank you for coming! If you want to ask a question please use the chat box

19:37:29 From Ann : **Please be aware that this meeting is being recorded (speaker view) for future use on Green House's website**

19:46:29 From Caroline New : What do you mean by civilizational collapse? I have read other things you've written about it but have not found it clear. Economic/financial system; rule of current law, liberal democracy, practices, customs; the level of technology in the rich countries?

19:46:33 From Chris : The global debt burden will be so huge for most people and countries to bear. How might the post corona war economic settlement look?

19:47:28 From Rupert : Modern monetary theory.

19:48:37 From Rupert : ‘This civilisation is finished’ - book.

19:48:48 From Julian Dean : Some detail on how you think the GPEW has not played a good hand in this crisis?

19:49:21 From David Bent : Latest polling is that people trust the government on COVID far more than the media. (<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-britons-still-support-lockdown-despite-being-sadder-and-more-anxious-poll-11977655>) What evidence do you have that delegitimisation of our political class is happening?

19:49:56 From Rupert : Tainter

19:49:57 From Stuart Jeffery : How does the complexity of our social and economic systems play into the collapse and how can we act tactically to the benefit of the long term future?

19:50:57 From Rupert : Jared Diamond

19:52:38 From Steve Jackson : Green Party locally have not been silent

19:53:16 From Chris : The Greens did say bring in a basic income which would have been huge and made financial security so much less piece meal and unequal

19:56:02 From ME : There has also been a complete silence on the waste mountain generated by the pandemic. Green garden waste collections have stopped, kitchen waste collection has stopped,, and what is happening to the care homes, hospitals, clinics waste of all this single use gowns, gloves, masks, test kits, sanitizer bottles, body bags, etc etc - who is going to speak out on this? Have we taken our eyes off the plastic pollution nightmare?

19:56:15 From jonathan : Ironic that in the crisis only the media appear to have been given (by themselves) the permission to scrutinise and hold the government to account. We need to have all people, including politicians doing this.

19:57:37 From David Bent : Latest from Ugo Bardi called “Before the Collapse” claims that Tainter’s theory about civilisation collapse (overwhelmed by complexity, and therefore need to simplify) is not enough. Also need to add in extra costs of natural resources and of fighting pollution. p225 of <https://cassandralegacy.blogspot.com/2019/11/before-collapse-new-book-by-ugo-bardi.html?m=1>

20:02:17 From Anne Chapman : On public's view of the government here is an article saying people don't think the government is doing so well. It contradicts David bent's poll. just making a point on poll credibility

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/09/two-thirds-of-public-think-uk-coronavirus->

[response-too-slow-poll](#)

20:02:17 From Rupert : Example of Precautionary analysis: these are the kinds of questions Greens (and others) should be asking: <https://bylinetimes.com/2020/04/23/the-coronavirus-crisis-documents-reveal-government-and-nervtag-breached-own-scientific-risk-assessment-guidance/>

20:03:13 From Rupert : The piece I wrote and circulated to Greens and to Govt in February: <https://medium.com/@rupertjread/what-would-a-precautionary-approach-to-the-coronavirus-look-like-155626f7c2bd>

20:03:38 From Rupert : My piece on how corona can be our last chance:

<https://medium.com/@rupertjread/24-theses-on-corona-748689919859>

20:04:37 From Rupert : NB John, I have stated clearly that I don't think we are bound to collapse. I think we have a last chance. (I just don't think it makes any sense to bet everything on our succeeding in taking that last chance. Ergo we need to invest in deep adaptation too.)

20:10:19 From Steve Jackson : Q: does the Green Party's fundamental trust and emphasis in democracy, prevent it providing the path to a sustainable outcome?

20:10:56 From Rupert : I don't necessarily mind the term 'vanguard'; but I am wary of its associations with leninism! Which was of course anti-democratic and violent.

20:12:22 From Chris : Given the massive majority the Tories gained in December this seems to make things much harder. A five year mandate is huge barrier to overcome. It is not great grounds for a revolution. Pity the election was not next December :- (Lets hope the ideological collapse of turbo capitalism will make the mood change enough but scary how bad things will have to get for that to happen.

20:13:09 From Rupert : Agreed, Chris. That's why I wrote this:

<https://greenworld.org.uk/article/we-must-adapt-climate-decline>

20:13:38 From Georgia : you haven't said anything about communications - which is how the tories won - it was a comms coup, using new media to spread hyper-targeted messages to segmented groups of the population who were primed to receive their lies. XR should spend a whole load on an information campaign with same tech used... but to tell the truth but not lies

20:13:44 From Rupert : I have more hope today, because of the wonderful way in certain key respects that people have responded to Covid19. Ergo

<https://medium.com/@rupertjread/24-theses-on-corona-748689919859>

20:14:11 From Rupert : I like what you say, Georgia. I'm working on that with a group in XR.

20:16:52 From Caroline New : John, this sounds like a sort of middle-class Leninism! This party's position on the (im)morality of class, on sexism, its awareness of racial and economic inequality would be crucial because otherwise there's a real danger of perpetuating all these structural inequalities in its eco programme.

20:17:01 From nancy : Agree with Georgia on communication, but would add—what are we communicating? Is there an existing concise and imaginative yet practical picture of the future one would be aiming for?

20:17:41 From Rupert : Of course the Green Party too has NVDA in its 'armoury': that is one reason I am a member! No other party does.

20:18:09 From Rupert : As I say, I think violent ecotage - i mean if you hurt people - is a bad idea and would fail.

20:19:36 From Andrew Sayer : What does John think about the lesson of the Gilets Jaunes: viable sustainable alternatives have to be available before they'll abandon the old ways of fossil fuel dependence

20:20:53 From ME : Middle class Leninism, does that fit well with dough-nut economics? Is that not the target to replace capitalism?

20:21:17 From David Bent : Q to John. Many histories of India independence put Ghandi's

success on non-violent direct action to the possibility of violence from elsewhere. Even so, Jacques Mallet du Pan speaking of the French Revolution: "like Saturn, the Revolution devours its children". Has played out with other revolutions (eg Soviet). What would need to be true for a revolutionary approach to not be quickly taken over by zealots who believe the ends justify the means, and so, requirement for purity of thought, and so into terror of those who disagree? This would remove the requisite variety that studying ecosystems tells us means nature can adapt. Quite apart from everything else.)

20:22:16 From Maryla H : John, I find your idea of an unelected shadow state interesting, as we are more accustomed to shadow politicians within political parties. And you say this shadow state will also be putting out media. Do you have any examples of this kind of thing happening in other countries in a similar way to which you have described?

20:23:54 From Chris : The thing is surely we do now have to put so much effort into building the nakedness that our present society is showing. We need to do everything to say we can live differently now. That can reach across the whole of society

20:28:26 From jonathan : The idea of a 'shadow state' to be sounds a bit like the government-in-exile of Tibet. Also, makes me think of standing for the change that is needed now - Speak truth to power now, as a way to 'empower' to decentralise and recapture the belief that collective action can shift norms. I think this is also crucial because demand reduction is hard to deliver top-down. It is not in the self-interest of ruling politicians or big businesses banking on the status quo.

20:28:35 From Rupert : <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0009690> - go 5 mins to see my encapsulated 'vulnerability story'. We need deliberative democracy probably to make this happen. The point I was making is about some level of consent. I think that John is unrealistic/naive in thinking that a vanguard can rule against mass public dissent. The gilets jaunts show this.

20:30:52 From Georgia : what about Northern Nigeria, Chad, Somalia

20:31:23 From Georgia : What about malaria, infant mortality

20:31:47 From Georgia : knife crime, femicide

20:31:52 From Georgia : gangs

20:31:55 From Chris : It is a good angle Rupert, vulnerability across all areas needs to be talked up

20:32:08 From Georgia : in Mexico

20:32:10 From Georgia : favelas

20:32:22 From Georgia : some communities do

20:33:15 From Rupert : Thanks Chris!

20:33:31 From jonathan : Many places already feel vulnerable (except for the elites in most places). The biggest wake up call seems to be for those who are in high emitting cultures and societies. Like us

20:33:51 From Rupert : Agreed, Jonathan. Ergo: <https://medium.com/@rupertjread/24-theses-on-corona-748689919859>

20:33:58 From Caroline New : I agree Rupert because at last people are understanding that weak health services in the Global South are a threat to all - this is like Engels remark that proper sewage services could only be provided when cholera spread to the districts of the rich.

20:34:26 From Rupert : thanks caroline - yes!!

20:34:37 From Rupert : <https://www.newstatesman.com/international/2020/04/why-crisis-turning-point-history> - this piece by john gray also very relevant.

20:35:11 From jonathan : How vulnerability is linked to brutality and complexity - <http://saskiasassen.com/PDFs/ASA%20Expul%20Trajectories%20Spring%202016.pdf>

20:35:22 From Rupert :

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/economy/2020/04/coronavirus-crisis-has-sounded-death-knell-liberal-globalisation> - and this by Lord Glasman!

20:35:57 From Georgia : we also export our toxic economic policies

20:36:25 From Rupert : agreed georgia.

20:36:34 From Chris : Vulnerability: peoples income, food supply, health, rents, savings, assets, jobs - so much - really a common theme across all groups

20:36:40 From Rupert : yes chris.

20:36:49 From mark jackson : Communism ended with the fall of Gorbachov and Sheverdnaze Perestroika and glasnost. Socialism in uk was resoundedly rejected in 1979. Blair and Brown with social democracy and the 3rd way gave a brief opportunity for a new politics. Socialism was rejected once again in 2019. Socialism and it's vanguard is finished I believe even with momentum. Labour Parties will be useful for 10-15 years to bring about a good society (as espoused by the compass Labour think tank). Capitalism as an idea/theory and ideology is dead too. It died in 2008. We are living in a post capitalist world where populist and fascist politicians are coming to the fore. Climate change is running apace we have no time to procrastinate. Politics as usual hasn't dealt with it. So I see NVDA is the logical step to bring people with us. See Hong Kong in the early days. This is the revolution, a green revolution. The red revolution has failed.

20:37:21 From ME : The astonishing millions raised by the 100 year old major John, has everyone say how great he is, but actually, it is like all charity giving a form of self-income taxing, a way to get the masses to give up their income to get done what as a whole the population refused to trust the government to do with PAYE and all other taxes.

Q: Can we see a reflection on people's willingness to pay more, when they can see direct benefits, like not seeing the money wasted on weapons and pointless wars?

20:39:35 From Yasmin Aytüre : I think that striving for money and status has just become so embedded into people's psyche, admittedly even someone like myself who is passionate about saving the environment can't help but worry about money, this seems so trivial - it's hard to not be absorbed by the day to day; this probably prevents some people from having the time or means to think about the climate, the prioritisation of firstly meeting basic needs

20:39:58 From Rupert : but yasmin, don't you think that has all been thrown up in the air by corona?

20:40:33 From Rebecca : I agree with Yasmin. You need headspace to be able to see the big picture.

20:41:08 From Rupert : but people are FEELING the difference. that their dad's life matters more than 'GDP'!

20:41:26 From jonathan : Coronavirus has caused a massive reduction in demand, particularly in transport. How might this experience be 'vanguarded'?

20:41:53 From Steve Jackson : I agree with Yasmin - I am constantly 'suppressed' by having spent a lifetime bulding up a pension and am scared of the prospect of losing that

20:42:34 From Rupert : The emergency transcends those old ideologies. That is essential to XR. And we are SEEING it right now in right wing governments almost bringing in Citizens income etc!

20:43:23 From Rupert : Lockdowners of the world unite: you have nothing to lose but your mental chains... ;-)

20:43:59 From Chris : I think Steve that is the question so many have to face, are we/they prepared to accept a new world comes with less to spend and use - obviously for some they have nothing to lose and just worry about getting food

20:44:13 From Yasmin Aytüre : it says the host muted you

20:45:46 From Rupert : <http://simplicitycollective.com/this-civilisation-is-finished-conversations-on-the-end-of-empire-and-what-lies-beyond> - some of these issues are

discussed in my book, which you can get for free at this link :-)

20:46:29 From Rupert : My pamphlet on the vulnerability story (written before corona!):

<https://app.simplenote.com/p/NGYRyP>

20:46:41 From jonathan : Yasmin - I agree too. For many concerns beyond basic needs are a luxury. Robert Chambers suggested that we shift from a notion of development from 'putting the last first' through increasing participation and voice to first considering whose reality counts and putting the first last. Thus our reality, those with more than 'needs' to shift first. And need to shift from culture following celebrities and the rich!

20:47:27 From Andrew Sayer : Re vulnerability monbiot described the welfare state as our collective immune system - paralleling ecosystems as our life support system

20:47:44 From Rupert : You can download the whole chat at the end if you want, folks :-)

20:48:25 From Maryla H : If you right click on the chat you can do "select all" and then copy and paste it. I only just figured that out.

20:49:02 From Steve Jackson : I remember that

20:51:18 From Diana : Are there connections to other countries' green parties sharing your views and ideas? Bad example probably, but far-rights are connected very well in Europe and beyond.

20:53:36 From Yasmin Aytüre : I also often think that a lot of people don't know that they live in a capitalist system, like I know for a fact that a lot of my family don't look into things so deeply, things just are as they are, going to the shops, going on holiday etc, so being told to change and anything that sounds radical is likely extremely uncomfortable when you don't internalise that, because of being so pervasive, you are in a system to begin with!

20:55:13 From Nicky Clark : I agree Yasmine.

20:55:16 From Maryla H : Even for those of us who are fortunate enough not to be so vulnerable day to day, when you are working full time and/or or have other responsibilities, it's possible to have all or most of your brain power used up and not feel like you have lots of time and headspace to think as much "outside the box" and be as active on green issues as you would like to. any tips on this?

20:55:55 From Anne Chapman : The idea that things just are as they are, is what Green House is here to challenge!

20:56:15 From andrewmearman : Agreed, Yasmin: we cannot avoid talking about 'capitalism'.

20:56:15 From Rupert : :)

20:56:27 From Rupert : Well said, Anne!

20:56:45 From jonathan : The way we localise and decentralise must be more resilient - so it will be more self-reliant and less 'just in time'. Sharing isn't possible on a linear take-make-break supply chain. A (locally) circular economy is by definition a sharing one.

20:57:03 From Rebecca : I think John is saying that people who have headspace have a responsibility to use it.

20:57:29 From Rupert : yes

20:58:18 From Rupert :

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/economy/2020/04/coronavirus-crisis-has-sounded-death-knell-liberal-globalisation> - Glasman is good on this. People who have to labour are still working...

20:58:26 From Yasmin Aytüre : I agree though that you cannot wait for support from the masses (as it were) (John's point) because with all these complexities, such as some people not even (for reasons not their fault) not even recognising capitalism, it cannot be reasonably expected probably for an entire consensus?

20:58:30 From Rebecca : Headspace is not the same as time!

20:58:56 From ME : Are there enough well informed and scientifically aware and

responsive in the Green movement to form a government? Most members are not involved and ideologists only.

20:59:25 From Andrew Sayer : Vulnerability again: the neoliberal illusion that economies are primarily about buying and selling from wherever rather than securing production of necessities like food and PPE at home is exposed by the crisis - not just a problem of just-in-time, but lack of self-sufficiency

20:59:35 From Caroline New : Having headspace doesn't mean you understand your own place in the oppressive social system, and you can't safely subvert it without understanding that

20:59:59 From Caroline New : Thank you Anne

21:00:04 From andrewmearman : Thanks all!

21:00:05 From ME : Thank you all!

21:00:09 From Caroline New : Thanks R nd J

21:00:10 From Steve Jackson : Thanks guys

21:00:19 From Yasmin Aytüre : Goodbye nice to meet you all

21:00:35 From Rupert : <https://twitter.com/rupertread/status/1253745522667597826?s=21>