

## The Time for Civil Disobedience is Here

*The struggles against the eco-social crisis are multiplying in Europe as we approach the point of no return. A few weeks ago, temperatures were recorded at 30 degrees above average in the Arctic and 40 degrees in the Antarctic*

Juan Bordera, Agnès Delage and Fernando Valladares

In his letter "The last speech I give before I become a criminal",<sup>1</sup> one of the best living Danish writers, Carsten Jensen, has given us a powerful text. An enumeration will gain even more power and resonance over the years as the echo of our presumed silences reverberates irremediably in our ears. Here are a few pearls from the speech:

"If you think you can live as you've always lived, you're wrong.

"If you think your children will have a life like yours, you're wrong".

"If you think the disappearance of insects won't turn empires into rubble, you're wrong.

"If you think humans can't live like rats, you're wrong.



A group of activists cut off a street in Germany.

LETZTE GENERATION

<sup>1</sup> ↪ Carsten Jensen: [The last speech I gave before I became a criminal](#) — Extinction Rebellion, 9 May 2022.

"If you think the planet's patience is infinite because it has endured the presence of your species for a few hundred thousand years, you're wrong.

These are just some of the lines of the text he made public just before he was arrested in a protest action, in which he participated together with Extinction Rebellion Denmark: Vendepunktet, which could be translated as "The turning point".

Anyone with information on the seriousness of the two major crises we are facing, climate and energy - the economic crisis, which worries us so much, depends on them, not the other way around - knows that we have been hovering dangerously close to the point of no return, of irreversibility, which no one can determine exactly where it is but which seems very close. That is why the time for civil disobedience has come. As Victor Hugo said: "There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come".

And good old Carsten and the brave Danes are far from alone. A spectre is once again haunting Europe. A wave of climate disobedience is spreading across many countries. In the UK, two collectives stand out as part of Extinction

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Rebellion: Just Stop Oil, which in addition to blocking fossil infrastructure, is leaving images for posterity - one of their most talked-about actions consists of tying themselves to football pitch posts, thus paralysing matches to open up a social debate on the issue -, and

Insulate Britain, a movement that already has several members in prison for defending, through non-violent civil disobedience, the need to urgently thermally insulate homes in the cold British Isles to reduce dependence on fossil fuels that are going to abandon us anyway. They began advocating this long before the invasion of Ukraine.

In Germany, Last Generation is another of these emerging movements that will make waves and is another radical flank. They also specialise in blocking roads and highways by sticking or chaining themselves together, like Insulate Britain; although they have tried other tactics such as hunger strikes to fuel an inevitable debate in which the stability of harvests, and therefore, after all, of order, is at stake. There are seven meals between order and chaos, they say, and warnings of a major food crisis are already emerging.

In France, just a few days ago, a group of recent graduates from one of the most prestigious schools of agronomy, AgroParisTech, proclaimed a speech that has gone tremendously viral, calling for desertion of the jobs of the system that is condemning us: "We do not believe in sustainable development, nor in green growth".

The school principal has responded with the classic argument: don't be catastrophists<sup>2</sup> - but look at the wonderful speech of these young people and think about whether they are even missing a comma.<sup>3</sup> To which he should be told that they are not catastrophists, "Principal Mr. Wonderful", the reality is catastrophic. And it is catastrophic because of a systematic process of denialism and negotiationism<sup>4</sup> fed from positions of privilege such as the one enjoyed by the director himself.

<sup>2</sup> ↪ Florent Vaire: [Le directeur d'AgroParisTech répond aux 8 étudiants](#) « déserteurs » : « Ne soyez pas fatalistes ! » — Les Échos Start, 17 mai 2022.

<sup>3</sup> ↪ Llamada para desertar - Ceremonia de graduación de AgroParisTech 2022, Youtube – 10 Mayo 2022.

<sup>4</sup> ↪ Juan Bordera y Antonio Turiel: [El Neogocionismo](#), CTXT, 22 de octubre de 2021.

And in Spain? Well, here we have not stood still, and the rebellion of part of the scientific community has stood out. An international movement that protested on 6 April in coordination with more than 25 countries on five continents coincided with the report's publication watered down by the IPCC lobbies. The most powerful action was undoubtedly carried out by Spanish scientists and activists, including those of us who write here. In the action we smeared the façade of the Congress with a kind of blood-coloured syrup to denounce that climate inaction is bathed in real blood. This syrup did not damage the façade, as it was diluted with water and cleaned up in less than 30 minutes. But the images will go down in history. And when we have 50-degree heatwaves -spoiler: not long to go- maybe that action will be remembered, and -hopefully- we will not regret not having done more.

*There are many solutions that would allow a transition to a civilisation in balance with its environment, low in emissions and rich in emotions.*

Because this should quickly spread to other groups. Shouldn't teachers disobey their curricula and teach that the future hangs in the balance? Don't firefighters have a more urgent fire to put out?

When time passes, the look towards the disobedient will be one of absolute understanding, as if thinking, how could we not join them? How could we not risk more? How could we not see that our privileges were temporary mirages? We are at a definitive and defining fork in the road. We will not want to look back when all is lost and think, what if we had dared to try something that historically has worked?

The struggles of the women's suffragettes, for US African rights or against apartheid are there to learn from. To learn that on all these occasions, the law has been challenged. It has even taken arrests and convictions for the population to react by massively supporting these struggles and thus succeed in changing the slow course of history.

As Vandana Shiva says: sometimes it is not about disobeying a law. It is about obeying a higher law.

It is time to exercise the courage of one who has much to lose. We know what needs to be done. There are many good nature-based and community-based solutions that would enable a rapid transition to a civilisation in balance with its environment, low in emissions and rich in emotions. Participatory democracy is central to this, squeezing the powerful and redistributing burdens and wealth. And for that, we need pressure and organisation.

We hope you enjoy reading this text in the shade during the heatwave we suffered in May. And may you remember the one that recently devastated India or the one that just a few weeks ago generated unexplained thermal anomalies of 30 degrees above the expected average in the Arctic, the climatic ground zero, and 40 degrees in the Antarctic. And may the rage they may feel at the thought that hardly anything is being done, except manipulating public opinion from the great economic powers, hiding the truth about the tragedy from them, push them to act because there is hardly any time left.

Carsten Jansen's text concludes:

"If you think it is illegal to block a bridge and briefly stop the traffic choking it to draw attention to the planetary crisis, you are wrong.

We are here because we love all life on Earth, and that is why we will stay here again and again.

If you think you can stop us, you're wrong.

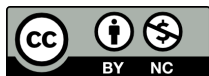
Note: Science Rebellion will receive the Berta Cáceres Environmental Commitment Award from the Ecozine Festival.

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