

Love & Rage : A Rebel's Tale

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is known for its audacious and carnivalesque street protests, using visual art to capture the attention of the public, the press, the government, and targeted institutions and to broadcast their three core demands to the government: Tell the Truth, Act Now, and Decide Together.

Love and Rage on Monday, September 14th, was no different. XR once again pulled it out of the bag, presenting a visually spectacular, two-mile procession to thousands of onlookers through central London, fostering a profound sense of community, togetherness, and collective effervescence.

The giant pink casserole or crucible filled with a "steaming soup" was carried shoulder-high by rebels like an icon through the streets. Surrounded by "flaming" flags, the casserole was filled with symbolic objects: a large chili to remind us of the record-breaking heat of our summer and the spice of XR; an Atlantic salmon representing endangered sea creatures and warming oceans; a giant potato to symbolize staple foods and famine; and a frog to evoke the "boiling frog" anecdote. The message was clear: we are unable to jump free of our boiling planet, we are all in the same soup, and it is coming to a boil. The climate crisis is quite literally too hot to handle.

Behind the casserole marched the "Redacted Rebels." Dressed in white with their eyes blacked out, they bore placards printed with paragraphs taken from the crucial National Security Assessment document warning of the extreme implications of climate and nature breakdown to our health, food systems, national security and the economy. This alarming report, written by the Joint Intelligence Committee, was suppressed by Keir Starmer. Only a freedom of information request forced its partial, heavily redacted, release.

Stopping outside No. 10 Downing Street, the Redacted Rebels stood in a silent line. Amidst a soundtrack of drummers and a cacophony of rebels banging steel pans decorated with XR symbols, and banner declaring "TELL THE TRUTH", the Redacted Rebels presence demanded the release of the full unredacted Joint Intelligence Committee Assessment document and a clear answer from the government on what they have planned to mitigate the worst effects of climate crisis.

Moving on to 55 Tufton Street, the procession reached a crescendo. Charlie Gardner gave a powerful interview to Etienne Stott on the live stream, leaving no one in doubt about the climate denial activity and dark money flowing through those doors. Rebels from all walks of life joined the procession from across the UK, with estimated numbers at over 1000. There was a large contingent from the North of England and others from as far afield as Wales, Cornwall and Scotland.

In the days following Love and Rage it's interesting to note that The Guardian used the boiling frog analogy in an article focussing on complacency in the face of climate crisis (see below) and various politicians have raised the issue of National Security in the face of climate collapse, including the Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband debating the threats of climate crisis to National Security at global

level.

While the mainstream press may choose to turn away from our actions for the moment, Extinction Rebellion continues to make a significant impact, and our creativity cannot be ignored on the streets. XR still has the power to cut through the ongoing polycrisis, to stop the public in their tracks, to make them think, and hopefully - driven by Love and Rage - to ACT NOW.

This article was written by Turquoise for the XRUK North Newsletter

Photo : Gareth Morris

