

Who are the real extremists?

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There are some stories in the media so surreal that you have to doubt the collective sanity of a society that requires that they be reported. One such story is in The Observer this morning, [where it is reported that](#):

A government extremism adviser has admitted during a private meeting that it is wrong to label Extinction Rebellion (XR) supporters as “extreme”, despite the home secretary, Priti Patel, condemning the group as “criminals” who [threaten the nation’s way of life](#).

The government adviser was former Labour MP, but now Tory supporter John Woodcock, who sits in the Lords as Lord Walney.

It is reported that during a conversation with XR he accepted that XR was not, per se, extremist. He added that he agreed there was a need for urgent action to address the climate crisis but said:

I have become increasingly convinced of the need to act further and faster than we have. I supported the Labour party’s position of declaring a climate emergency [in parliament] but what comes from that is not clear in my mind.

He apparently then speculated on XR harbouring a “far-left” anti-capitalist agenda and said of XR's participatory democracy that:

You can change the form of democracy, make it more participatory, but ultimately the public are not going to accept ... the level of economic reduction, which you believe is necessary, and therefore ... you will end up in an alternative to democracy itself.

In other words, opposing the form of capitalism that we have that is unquestionably destroying the planet that we are living on is extreme, after all. And representing the will of people is also extreme, apparently, and even anti-democratic.

Woodcock, I am quite sure, does understand all of this.

And I am sure he also knows more than enough about what climate change is all about.

But he also knows that his Tory paymasters require that nothing change.

So he labels those who think that we must change to survive - which is a necessity - as potential extremists after all - not for any logical or factual reason but because he wishes to maintain the neoliberal political and anti-democratic status quo.

As [I have already said elsewhere](#) this morning, this is what is not just killing politics in the UK, but quite literally us too.