

The trap of 'organization'

What we are interested in is sharing our skills and resources, in order to address the economic and political contradictions within technological society that obstruct real, physical change.

It's this latter objective which, over the last thirty years, sometimes makes our approach rather controversial.

Today 'mainstream' public movements have, like the political parties of most nation states, been captured by the Neoliberal economic dialogue. With pressure groups, however, that economic dialogue is further compartmentalized around the structures of lobbying and marketing that define how these debates take place in the mass media.

One of the main reasons for that is their need to utilize a large amount of resources to keep their organizations functioning.

The Free Range Network are a 'network' because that enables co-operation without organization. By lending resources to the Network we create the capacity to undertake work in common. At the same time this also

'The Environment' and Human Inequality

Let's consider a specific example of how the change debate fails – *inequality*. When politicians and campaign groups talk about addressing the ecological crisis they describe it as a society-wide problem – as if we were all equally responsible for the problem, and for reversing it.

This graph takes data for the Office for National Statistics on household incomes 'by decile' – household incomes are sorted into ten equal groups from the highest to the lowest income, and the average from each group is shown. What this demonstrates is that the incomes of the highest 10% of households is almost five times that of the lowest.

As households become more affluent, they spend more on household goods. An 'equitable' environmental policy would – under the 'polluter pays principle' – apply ever-higher charges to higher consumption, or reward lower consumption with cheaper prices.

gives us freedom as individuals to work on the issues which drive our own interest and creativity.



If the world has problems how do we, as individuals, create change?

This is the question we see asked in the media every day – with a variety of answers depending upon the political persuasion of those making the point. This question is also a trap, since it replicates the individualist model of society and social change – excluding the idea of collective action to achieve real change.

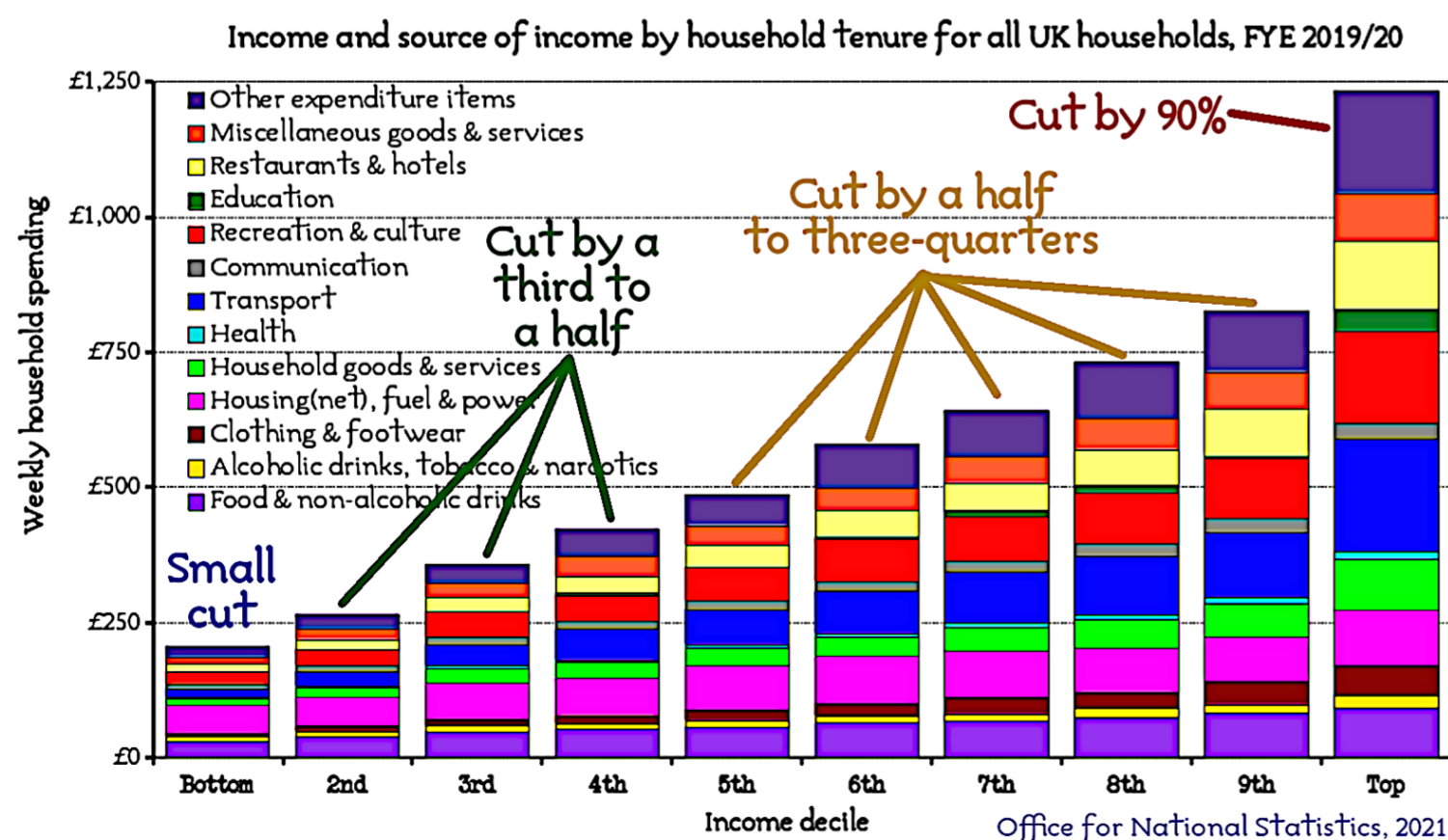
Putting that another way: The everyday consumer process of imposed or mindless consumption continues to be 'mindless' even if those products are 'green' or 'ethical'; changing a brand or supplier might have a marginal physical impact, but does not question the reasons or motivations for why we consume in the first place, giving us the option to avoid those impacts totally; and thus, the ephemeral consumer choices we are offered



do not create the kinds of fundamental change that benefits us as conscious, living beings.

You could, for example, create major changes to your life by *doing nothing*, if 'doing nothing' broke you out of the cycle of harmful actions within which you were trapped.

Unfortunately, as this usually means not consuming or undertaking expensive activities, the media or public policy rarely focus on this option except as a means of selling alternative forms of consumption (e.g., buying electric instead of fossil-fuelled cars, rather than doing without private transport altogether by reducing the need to travel or using public



Currently environmental policy in Britain works the opposite way: The poorest/lowest consuming households are hit (e.g., standing/service charges) with proportionately higher prices for a given level of household income than the most wealthy households.

To meet ecological limits the poorest households need not cut consumption very much; in contrast, the richest households need to cut consumption by 90%! This is what a truly equitable policy would seek to implement – but this is not what the media say.

Free Range 'Dysorganization'

The Free Range Network is a 'dysorganization' of activists and researchers... **What does that mean?**

'Dys'-organization literally means "we have no interest in creating an organized structure for our work". We are not interested in forming a group as, in our view, that would create obstacles to achieving our aims. This page outlines this idea as a more general political and social agenda – and how it is tied innately to change in the world around us.

transport – by adopting a lifestyle which made those alternative options far easier to use).

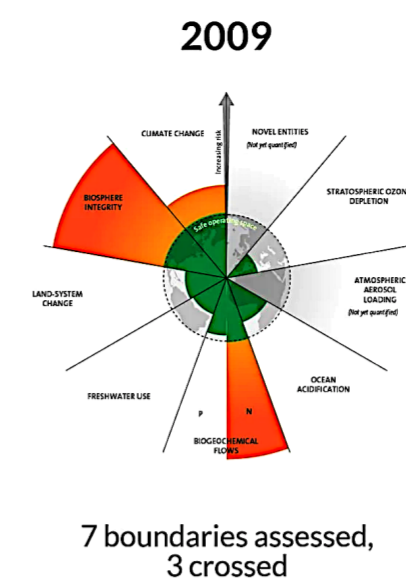
The difficulty is that so much of the change that is talked of today is built around 'things' – either: Building them or building something to replace them; or buying them or buying something to replace them; identifying with or displaying them to follow fashion; and even 'green' ideas have largely become a construction or consumption agenda, rather than minimizing our use of resources by changing our lifestyle.

Rarely do we ever see an argument about 'not having' growth or development, and instead dismantling systems or technologies which are creating problems in the world today.

In a world which primarily values material or economic goods, unless we change the fundamental metrics used to value human existence, you can only measure change in terms of a change in 'stuff', and/or striving to 'have more' of it – rather than focusing on a broader set of measures based around health, well-being, and ecological and social quality.

The latest research on ecological limits tells us is that the 'stuff-based' model for a happy life is deeply flawed; the whole thing, not just the elements within it.

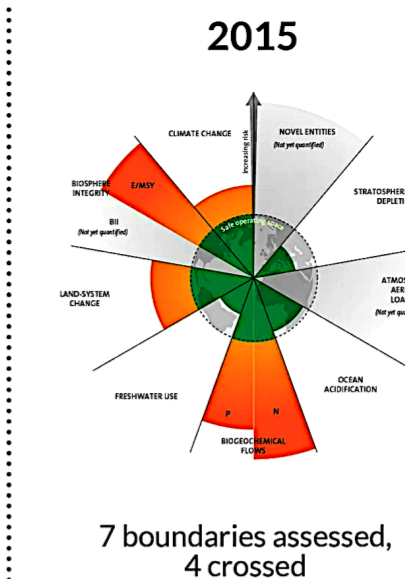
Even the green movement has



7 boundaries assessed, 3 crossed

A study published in the science journal Nature in 2009 – 'A safe operating space for humanity' – created the metric of 'planetary boundaries': We assess how much human pollution the Earth's systems are able to absorb, then we compare that to the actual level of human pollution.

What the study found was that in the first decade of this century we were breaching 3 of 7 boundaries; rising to 4 of



7 boundaries assessed, 4 crossed

7 a decade later; and most recently that rose to 6 of 9.

Too often the debate over the environment is reduced to single issues: Carbon emissions, or air pollution, or river quality. The reality is that all these factors are linked as each is a proportional facet of the operation of the growth-led human system – and that only by reducing the total level of consumption and growth will this impact be reduced.

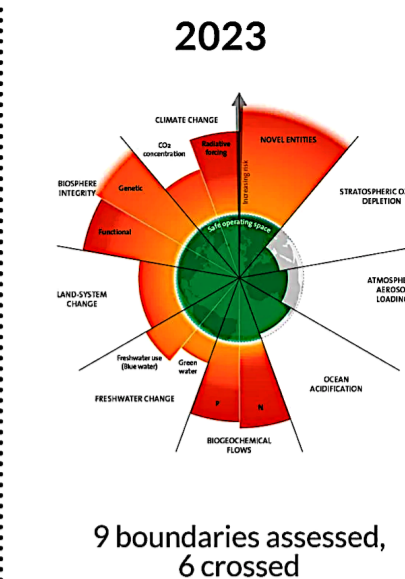
been caught up in this vacuous debate. Instead of arguing for changes in the level of overall consumption, the green movement lobbies for 'sustainable' or 'green' consumption – despite the evidence that shows this will not create sufficient change to address the problems they are concerned about.

Change has to be a process of consciousness; a process of accessing the objective information on the state of the world around us, and then finding ways to express that new understanding through change in our lives.

The Revolution Between Your Ears

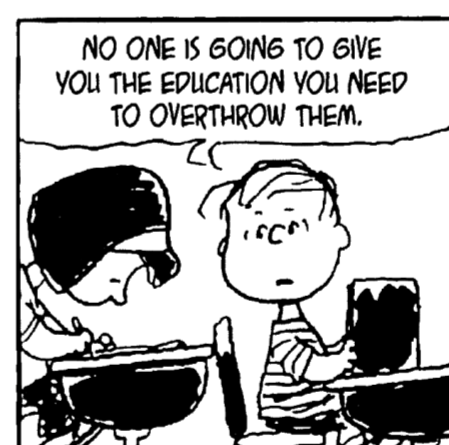
Change happens when people act differently: not 'think'; not 'lobby'; not 'petition'; but physically 'do' the alternatives.

The strength of collective action for radical change is that 'change' can be wide-ranging, interconnected, and thus more permanent, when arising from people's self-supporting choice and actions.



9 boundaries assessed, 6 crossed

If pressure groups want to succeed they have to stop being 'single issue' and realize the connectedness of all these issues – and that the common factor they share is the human consumption of resources, the emission of pollution, and that, in fact, about half of this impact is caused by just 10% of the people on the planet – the 'globally affluent'.



The Free Range Network and Website exist to communicate the skills and information required for people to define their own solutions; and from that, personal action to create more widespread change from the grassroots.

The Free Range Network aims to create 'change' not directly, but through enabling others to express their own desire for change. We do not enforce what the nature of that change is; our aim is to supply the means whereby people are able to express themselves.

The Free Range Activism Network
<http://www.fraw.org.uk/>

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