

# 'Free Range Activism Kit' (FRAK)

This poster outlines the history of our 'Free Range Activism Kit' (FRAK), the government backlash which meant it went out-of-date quickly, and our views on what comes next.

The need for this resource arose in the wake of the crackdown on political and environmental dissent over the decade of the 2000s, a deliberate extension of the 'War on Terror' by Britain's political Right – using terms like 'domestic extremist' or 'non-violent extremism' to target peaceful political dissent.

This began as a response to requests for help on creating campaigns which utilized the law. We set out to update our activist materials and the result was the 'Free Range Activism Kit' (FRAK).

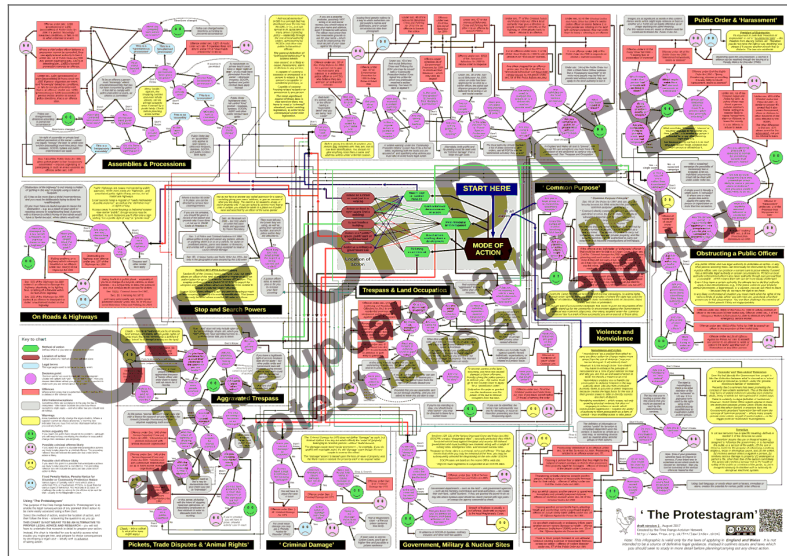
At the centre of FRAK was 'The Protestagram' – an infographic guide to protest law in England & Wales. The coloured shapes on the diagram linked to on-line activism resources, and gave access to the text of the laws and legal cases involved.

Following the flow-chart allowed those planning actions to educate themselves not only on what laws were applicable, but also read the relevant parts of the law so that they could more precisely know how to structure their campaign.

The process was simple:

- Go to the 'Start Here' box;
- Choose one or more 'methods of action' (green hexagons), and apply the general provisions that apply in all cases;
- Follow the lines from the 'method' to the relevant 'locations of action' (orange hexagons);
- From these points various coloured lines lead to the areas of law (labelled by black boxes) which are engaged when 'method X' is undertaken in 'location Y';
- End with a green smiley face, all-well-and-good – breaking the law is unlikely (though not impossible);
- A red frown face means likely arrest, a yellow or blue frown possible arrest, reporting/summons to court, or fines/penalty notices.

Testing the poster with groups over 2017 and 2018 went very well. After some further revisions it was decided that we could launch the final version of FRAK in 2019. Then 'stuff happened' to halt that...



A PNG graphic and an A3 PDF version of 'The Protestagram' is available from the Free Range Network's website. As we clearly state, this is 'out-of-date', and should not be used without further legal advice.

## The XR backlash

In our view the use of the law **must exploit a contradiction in the application of laws or policies by the state's bureaucracy – exposing the state's inconsistency as part of the defence to any legal action, to force change on the issue at hand.**

In 2018, one of the Network's members was asked to assist in the setting-up of what would become Extinction Rebellion (XR). After hearing what was proposed they declined to help, clearly giving reasons as to why. The 'action' which XR (and later 'Just Stop Oil') initiated was wholly flawed in its design – for many legal and tactical reasons related to their belief in certain questionable social theories.

The purpose of 'The Protestagram', and the workshops we ran around it, was to teach how to exploit the contradictions and inconsistencies of how the law is applied. Any state or organizational bureaucracy cannot fully operate under its own rules and procedures without breaking down; hence the best way to bring pressure upon the state is to 'hack' those bureaucratic flaws to effect action.

**The way Extinction Rebellion worked was not about 'using' the law, it was about making people the willing 'subjects' of it. In this way they created a pretence for the reactionary Right to lobby the Government, who enacted draconian restrictions on protest and dissent in Britain.**

## What comes next?

Dealing with this loss of our freedoms for protest and dissent is the burden we have to work with as we move forward.

We continue to make the old 'Protestagram' available as, although out-of-date, it's *better than nothing* (given we still can find nothing like it that is available for free).

We definitely will update the resource, but we must also be honest about the problems with Britain's socially-narrow activist movements:

**By definition, 'direct action' must exclude 'representative action'; which means challenging power on 'our terms', not 'theirs'. We have to stop 'asking' for change and create it directly.**

As we write, Palestine Action has been banned; which has then been used as a pretext to harass anyone protesting in support of Palestinians.

**This is not new.** This is exactly the kind of action taken from the late-1990s to the mid-2000s to destroy Britain's animal rights campaigns; which itself is just a small chapter within the demonstrable pattern of political repression in British over the last five decades – as explored in the recent 'Spycops' inquiry.

One of the failures of the UK 'Green' movement has been its fragmentation into 'issues', rather than working as a confederation which can relate the commonalities of many issues to the wider ideology and practices of Government(s) – and as a confederation, work collectively with the weight of public opinion across the nation towards a wholly new vision of government and politics.

**This is what we hope to tackle over the next few years, to build, piece-by-piece, a new up-to-date activism resource. If that is of interest and you wish to take part, please get in touch.**

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

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