

## 16: The Last Generation, Part I

### **Lilly Marlen Stolze:**

One of the biggest challenges of any activist group starts with its composition. Climate justice groups in the German-speaking world appear to be conspicuously white, mainly academic or middle-class, and thus also far too elitist. This is currently also true of "The Last Generation". When asked "why", many different problems can be named. In view of the time available, I'm afraid I'll have to be brief. First of all, BIPOC, i.e. Black Indigenous People and People of Colour, are still struggling with structural racism in many different areas. This also applies to climate activism, an area in which the unjust distribution of privileges in this world is one of the most visible. In many ways, the needs and perspectives of BIPOC around the world are still not adequately enquired about, considered, taken into account and protected. The Last Generation sees itself as a climate justice group that has recently started to resist very resolutely but peacefully and is gaining more and more support and popularity. We are now cultivating alliances with representatives from the health sector, science and the churches, among others, and also regularly realise various forms of cooperation. The focus of our daily climate justice work is on civil resistance against the fossil fuel madness of our present. Taking the example of the Last Generation, we are faced with the challenge that our choice of form of protest currently still seems too inaccessible to many people in Germany, and certainly to the BIPOC to a much more profound degree, understandably so. Other attempts at resistance have already been carried out and exhausted in many ways within the climate justice movement in the past. We therefore consider the manner of our action to be the most effective and efficient means at present, but certainly not the most inclusive. Equally, we regret the lack of diversity within our street protests. During the street blockades we carry out, there is not only a confrontation with fellow citizens. As members of the Last Generation, we also stand up publicly for our values with our faces and our full names and bear the consequences. Participation always leads to police contact and identity checks and usually ends up in court, where fines or even imprisonment can be imposed. And even on our protest marches through city centres, there can sometimes be confrontations. All in all, repression of various kinds occurs, which indisputably vary greatly and can be a particularly high risk for BIPOC. Protesters of the Last Generation see themselves as contributors to the climate catastrophe and in this way acknowledge their responsibility. Our protests are meant to highlight this commitment, while we repeatedly admonish consistent political failure and demand necessary solutions. Safe spaces of protection can therefore only be established in internal working groups of the Last Generation, which among other things also carry out networking and educational work. These working groups, for example, offer extensive opportunities to help shape interesting important processes and affirm a greater diversity than we can represent on the streets. Currently, our awareness team is convening an anti-racism group that will offer thematic workshops in the future. The aim is to create access to information and knowledge, as well as to identify connections. Our idea of a socially just society is also reflected, for example, in our demand for a social council that would be selected according to socio-demographic characteristics and thus promote a more diverse image of our society. Decisions that affect everyone could thus also be made taking into account many different realities of life.