

The Occupied Times

~ OF LONDON ~

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SUN STREET EVICTION

EMMA FORDHAM

OCCSTOCK & THE SNOW

MARK KAURI

A creative collective of Occupy supporters chose February 4th to bring their diverse talents to St Paul's Churchyard. The event was billed as 'OccStock', a thank you to the hardy Occupiers as well as a chance to showcase local artists and bring diverse communities together. Co-ordinator Gee knew it would be cold but didn't expect to be rewarded for his gift of entertainment with the most magical stage-set imaginable – a cathedral and an encampment blanketed in snow.

Punks with snow-frosted pink mohawks like candy cupcakes danced beside joyous lawyers and a bewildered Kosovan intent on explaining that "It snows one metre in my country, goes to minus twenty degrees, this is nothing!" It wasn't nothing to the rest of us. We danced on a snow-covered artificial lawn laid over the Churchyard cobbles. Snowballs were thrown. Snowmen and snow-women – and snow Anonymous characters – were built and given masks. Previously careworn activists gambolled about like chunky children, dressed in thirteen layers of thermals.

Musicians and poets mingled with Occupiers and curious city folk between sets. Lexi James Jr, Andy Secret, Robbing Eden, Smoky Love and Anna Savage gave it their all beneath a dressed-up gazebo, glad to share the bone-chill and exuberance of the crowd. The Common headlined with rhythms that made grooving imperative. For a finale Savannah Stone performed a heart-felt poem, confessing after whoops and applause that she'd been "...so scared to do this". The whoops and applause amplified as Savannah stepped off the makeshift stage into the arms of proud friends. >>



NO RESCUE PACKAGE FOR BANK OF IDEAS

A High Court possession order against Occupy London's Bank of Ideas was enforced last week with an eviction of activists in residence at the free-for-all community space. Protesters behind the 'public repossession' of the Sun Street site were forcibly evicted in the early hours on 30th January after two months' peaceful occupation which saw the empty, UBS-owned site transformed into an active hub of talks and events, and a refuge for some of London's most vulnerable citizens.

Protesters dropped their case against eviction on advice from lawyers that a loss in the courts could set a precedent affecting the right to protest elsewhere. Campaign groups Greenpeace and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament also advised the first incarnation of the Bank of Ideas to cede the battle for the site in light of wider considerations for protest rights in the UK.

The eviction saw bailiffs from the Rossendales firm gain entry to the site with the aid of City of London and Metropolitan police, with dozens of protesters resisting peacefully and leaving the building. An arrest was later made of a man believed to be a bailiff from the Rossendales firm over allegations of assault and criminal damage. Footage from the eviction reveals the alleged arrestee accelerating a vehicle into a crowd of activists and supporters outside the BoI; an incident which saw one victim carried on the bonnet of the vehicle for 50-100 yards. It is also claimed that police on site cleared the path for the alleged criminal to leave and refused to take crime reports from victims of the assault.

The Sun Street site was the third location claimed under the Occupy London banner, with residents breathing new life

into the unused building as a site for the free ideas exchange. The founders of the site promised an educational space for the free trade of ideas and creativity for activists, as well as those who lost their nurseries, community centres and youth clubs to government spending cuts – and began delivering on this pledge within days of the start of the occupation on 18th November.

Throughout its short lease of life, the Bank of Ideas played host to hundreds of talks, workshops, events and conferences featuring the likes of Caroline Lucas MP, comedian Mark Thomas, Tax Justice Shaxson, musician Billy Bragg, and a memorable Christmas "thank you" DJ set by Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke, 3D from Massive attack and members of UNKLE. Other events included a packed-out screening of peace protest

documentary How to Start a Revolution with a Q&A from director Ruaridh Arrow, a talk by Moneyless Man author Mark Boyle and a series of workshops by occupiers from other UK-wide camps converging on London during the first national Occupy conference in late November.

The BoI eviction followed a flurry of occupation activity across London, including a brief stay at the eight-story Roman House office building in the Barbican and a subsequent effort at the former Rafidain Bank building on Leadenhall Street. Protesters at Roman House used coverage of the brief stay to amplify calls for the City of London Corporation to publish full details of its City cash accounts. Occupiers soon left the site amid concerns that their stay would put at risk the jobs of contractors due to renovate the building. >>



Editorial

It's early February. There's snowfall on the tarpaulins of the St. Paul's camp, and chill winds force down the temperatures in the City. An unusual sight – normally, white powder in central London only marks the bankers' bonus season.

We are days away from a Court of Appeal hearing on the St. Paul's camp. Offers from the Cathedral for a symbolic, long-term presence at the site look increasingly unlikely. The demonstrated tenacity of the occupiers has long outlived the offers of dialogue that were half-heartedly voiced by the Church and the City before Christmas. One wonders whether the hesitant embrace of a truce prior to the High Court's ruling was ever more than an attempt to squeeze and suffocate the protests. Former Cathedral canon chancellor Giles Fraser, writing recently in *The Guardian*, raised concerns about that missed opportunity for the church: 'With a few tents and shedloads of determination, those who have huddled outside the cathedral in the freezing cold have acted as sentinels for an idea of social justice that can be found on almost every page of the Bible but which the church has too often lost sight of.' Love thy neighbour, except when she camps outside.

When the first camps were pitched at St. Paul's almost four months ago, mainstream media and party politics were largely dismissive: wasn't it crazy to think that a ragtag group of protesters could become the spark for change? Today, we can say: the only crazy idea is the unshaken belief in the status quo. Occupy began as a reaction to the nightmare of social inequality, economic injustice, environmental looting and political alienation. And as long as no answers have been found, as long as the future is filled with precariousness and disillusion, Occupy will continue to beat the drum of reform and the drum of revolution (depending on whom you ask). As long as we can set our own beat, we don't have to march to the beat of others.

Today, even the guardians of the status quo cannot deny that our lone rhythm resonates with many. Of the major European countries, only Great Britain remains opposed to the idea of a financial transaction tax. The logic of austerity has been questioned by new governments in Athens and Rome as well as by the European Central Bank. Members of all major parties acknowledge that declining voter participation is a problem. If they are confused about the causes, an afternoon of "democracy 101" at Tent City University might provide a few pointers. Since October, an increasing number of public officials, academics and



media outlets have voiced sympathy for Occupy – sometimes sheepishly, sometimes contritely. While they have dismissed the rhetoric of the 99 percent, they have felt the groundswell rise from below.

Yet at the same time, the answers they have provided seem laughably insufficient. Stripping Fred Goodwin of his knighthood is like clipping the toenail of someone with gangrene and hoping that the rest of the body has escaped infection. Speaking of "ethical capitalism" while defending the prerogatives of the City of London turns our Prime Minister into a viable contender for the honors of being inducted into the Hall of Hypocrisy. David Miliband seeks guidance in the past, and wants to return the country to 1997, when the events that ultimately culminated in the current financial and debt crisis began to accelerate. Policymakers seem to just be going through the motions. They act on reflex instead of reflection. Why? Because the consensus worldview they all shared has collapsed around them. They are lost, yet they continue to storm ahead into the fog.

Where is the paradigm shift? Where is the impetus to think creatively about the economic, social and political problems we face? It is certainly not to be found in Whitehall, in the City of London, or in the Houses of Parliament.

The curtain may fall on the St. Paul's camp, but it cannot stop or silence the movement. As long as groups of people gather to discuss, debate and demonstrate, the idea behind Occupy cannot be evicted. If this freezing cold is any measure of the will of the movement, there would seem to be plenty to go around.

>> Music over, hot chocolate was served and tents were shaken to prevent them buckling beneath the weight of the snow. Emergency space-blankets were handed out and the Occupy LSX Tent City University – newly lined and carpeted to provide a bedouin-style 'winterised' space – took on its night-time character as a dormitory for those with nowhere else to go.

St Paul's Churchyard lived this night. Public space was reclaimed – by Occupy, by artists, by the snow which blurs boundaries between highway and pavement, City land and churchyard. As those behind OccStock say "We can start to change society for the better by reclaiming our time, space and freedom bit by bit and step by step." As we shovelled snow at midnight, the smiles spoke to that. <http://occstock.org>



>> At Rafidain Bank, police evicted occupiers on the grounds of trespassing on diplomatic premises – with claims that although the bank was being liquidated by Big Four firm PwC, it retained its former diplomatic status from its former incarnation as the Iraq embassy. Three arrests were made by City of London police after reports of a notable stand-off with the force.

Beyond the effect of these evictions on protesters' efforts to highlight and tackle social, environmental and economic injustice, some occupiers and supporters claim that the impact of eviction activity falls hardest on the capital's more vulnerable residents. At the Bank of Ideas, Occupy's free community space was used by families unable to secure temporary housing and army veterans who fell into homelessness after leaving the forces. With the potential criminalisation of some squatters' rights under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act currently under government consideration, and increasing levels of homelessness across the board in the wake of the global financial crisis, the need to transform the UK's unused buildings is a pressing issue.

By the steps of St. Paul's, beneath now snow-lined tent canvases, protesters at the heart of the Occupy London movement await the result of an appeal on a High Court eviction ruling. The appeal will be held on 13th February.



CONTENTS

PAGES/

- 01 News
- 02 Editorial
- 03 Sheffield: One City, Two Occupations
My Tent for your Bonus
Occupy Women's Network
OccupyLSX Supports Syrian Embassy Protests
- 04 The Spirit of Co-operation
Occupied Elsewhere: Austria
- 05 Fighting for Democratic Values: The Hungarian Perspective
- 06 The True Culprit was not in Court
Preoccupying: Amanda Palmer
- 07 Our Ethics, Our Future
- 08 Growing Pains
- 09 Credit Default Swaps for Dummies: Part One
Time Crisis
- 10 The City of London & its Offshore Empire
- 11 Occupy the EU
- 12 New Labour for a New Future
- 13 Occupying Everywhere: A Global Movement
In the Lion's Den: Daniel Ashman
- 14 An Education
- 15 My Fair London
Libel to Change?
- 16 Asking the Occupiers
Stalwarts of Occupy: Steve
On the Soapbox
- 17 The Great Debate
- 18 The Occupy Effect
Is 'Is Occupy London an Inside Job' an Inside Job?
- 19 Crossword
Poems
- 20 Placard

CREDITS

CONTRIBUTORS/

Matthew Myatt
Steven Maclean
Martin Eiermann
Mark Kauri
Natalia Sanchez-Bell
Michael Richmond
Emma Fordham
Flaminia Giambalvo
Kit Marsters
Judith Shossboeck
Ragnhild Freng Dale
Mircea Barbu
Sara Callaway
Kiki Axelsson
Conor Gearty
Demand Nothing
Tim Jackson
Dr Michael Harris
Nicholas Shaxson
Chris Cook
Sam Halvorsen
Melissa Benn
Matthew Richmond
Robert Sharp
Dan Bernhardt
Mark Weaver
Chris Madden
Toni Spencer
Clement Van Sea
The Milla Network

DESIGN/

Tzortzis Rallis
Lazaros Kakoulidis

PHOTOGRAPHY/

Brian Leli
@HeardInLondon
Wasi Daniju
Ben Cavanna

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CONTACT US/

olsx.indymedia@gmail.com



SHEFFIELD: ONE CITY, TWO OCCUPATIONS

EMMA FORDHAM

Friday night, the Sheffield encampment, in the cathedral grounds. A pink-haired deacon facilitates the pre-conference General Assembly. For those from well-organised but somewhat lacking-in-home-comforts Occupy LSX, it feels like entering Granny's house. Tassled rugs, sofas, sideboards and chairs with all four legs intact. Outside, a stack of seasoned logs beside a brazier and a tiny field kitchen. Halfway through the GA plates of steaming stew are passed through the heavily blanketed doorway.

Miraculous food, materialised and devoured, is followed by comic entertainment from Madame Zucchini and her performing vegetables. We provide the shark music, Jaws is recast as Capitalism, Chief Brody is a potato (or possibly a turnip). Capitalism is overthrown after a brief tussle between the vegetables. Light relief over, we return to talk of evictions, agendas, the Christian response to Occupy, our visions of and fears for the future.

Saturday, it's over to the Citadel of Hope. A crumbling facade in the city centre. Bear, previously of LSX Tranquillity crew, now the Citadel's caretaker, is sweeping the front doorstep and welcomes us in. A dark entrance hall lit with low-energy LED lights leads into a cavernous room with exposed brickwork and a mildly musty air. In one corner techies huddle around computers. Wires snake across the broken floors. A smartphone taped to a decaying pillar acts as a wifi hub, a projector screen displays the day's agenda, in an ante-room walls are being built around a toilet. The kettle's on in the kitchen.

Mugs of tea in hand, we mount concrete stairs, step unexpectedly out of the gloom into a bright and airy amphitheatre with wooden floors, enormous windows and an imposing stage with lush velvet curtains. Half

chapel and half theatre, shabbily grandiose, this is the perfect venue for a national gathering of Occupiers.

Strategy, sustainability, non-violence, local issues, global solidarity, online platforms, community, networks, outreach... these are the words that repeatedly echo around the hall. Downstairs, talks on co-operatives and chaos theory compete for our attention.

In the afternoon we rally outside Sheffield Town Hall then proceed to the Occupy camp for a 'tea, cake and kindness' outreach event. Consideration of tax injustice and the bankers banking system weaves between plans for an Occupy 'caravan' and an eco-village. In the evening we retire to the most excellent Dove and Rainbow pub for a gig night featuring Occupy favourites Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly.

Sunday morning sees yawning Occupiers convening over coffee and laptops while cocooned still in their sleeping bags on the semi-industrial ground floor of the Citadel. The agenda is bursting with subjects we want to discuss but just chatting, getting to know one another, swapping contact details and sharing experiences is where we are at. The business of the day is shuffled, re-prioritised. We would need a week to fit it all in. A week-long summer gathering is suggested. We look forwards to spending time together in fields, in sunshine, without the fifteen layers of clothing necessary to camp out through a British winter. Earthian entertains us with a workshop on tent-monster creation. Gradually we realise the potential to be had once the Occupy camps are all linked up online and through personal contacts. Our skill set is immense. The Occupy hive mind knows so much already, from plumbing to law, land registry to permaculture, economic theory to outside catering,

computer programming, survival techniques, therapeutic techniques and how to open a squat. All that and we are learning faster than a high-speed train.

The Citadel of Hope was the former Salvation Army building. Elderly visitors to the conference remember its heyday and are overcome with emotion, so pleased are they to see the space back in use after years of neglect. The Sheffield Occupiers are in touch with the building's owners regarding the possibility of a negotiated stay. On Sunday evening The Invisible Circus treats us to a highly professional cabaret show in the round. We leave feeling, as one tired but exhilarated London Occupier declared, "...that we'd do anything for these other Occupiers, now we know they too feel this intoxicating hope."



WASI DANJU

OCCUPY WOMEN'S NETWORK

SARA CALLAWAY
KIKI AXELSSON

The Edinburgh Occupy National Gathering witnessed the formation of the Occupy Women's Network following a Safer Spaces workshop introduced by Women Against Rape, in which participants spoke about their experiences of dealing with discrimination, bullying and other disruptive behaviour. Some men are noted to have supported women against rape and violence - recognising that in defending women they defend themselves and our movement. Representatives from Occupy camps from across the UK noted that their sites have adopted some or all of the Safer Spaces action points and described how useful this has been, and how it has helped the camps to be calmer and more welcoming (including to children). There was general agreement that confronting discrimination and violence is a part of (not a diversion from) the task of confronting banks, corporations and the 1%; as a movement we are looking for change - not to replicate a violent society.

The subsequent Sheffield conference hosted the second meeting of the Occupy Women's Network. Around

20 women from seven sites including Leeds, Hebden Bridge, London, Hope Valley, Glasgow, Geneva and Sheffield met to discuss ways to make these sites safer and more inclusive. It was emphasised that women deserve recognition for our wide-ranging work and skills. Examples given at the Sheffield workshop included providing security, technical know-how and caring work which crucially was holding people and camps together. Some women felt that this often went unacknowledged, even by those who daily depend upon it. Women were energised by the chance to share experiences and left determined to ensure that our concerns and demands are listened to and addressed.

Proposals for a Safer Space Policy poster at each camp and banners highlighting women's work - for example "Women do 2/3 of the World's Work for 5% of the Income" - were agreed upon. An online women's forum was also set up and a more detailed report of the Women's Network and Safer Spaces policy is being prepared for the next National Gathering.



MY TENT FOR YOUR BONUS

EMMA FORDHAM

In early January, black-on-white A4 prints displaying a bold and simple message began to appear amongst the tents in St Paul's Churchyard. My Tent for your Bonus, the posters declared. The first day just a couple of tents were on offer.

"I could only afford to print a few copies," explained the brain behind this campaign. The next day he brandished a sheaf of fresh prints. "Some passers-by liked it so much they paid for me to make more!"

Daily, the number of tents available to be exchanged for bonuses grew. By January 29th practically every tent sported the offer. Was it pure coincidence that the very next day Stephen Hester hit the headlines for turning down a £1 million

Royal Bank of Scotland bonus? Perhaps he felt he was missing out on the zeitgeist and fancied a spot of winter camping.

Honest Occupiers from the St Paul's camp felt it was important to keep their side of the bargain, even though it meant losing a precious tent just when the camp was at capacity due to eviction at the Bank of Ideas.

Four stalwarts of OLSX carried the erect sacrificial tent through the streets of London and with due ceremony presented it outside RBS headquarters. Despite the presence of mainstream journalists keen to record Hester's reaction to this gift, the RBS boss chose not to accept it in person.

Will Bob Diamond of Barclay's also win himself a tent this bonus season?

OCCUPYLSX SUPPORTS SYRIAN EMBASSY PROTESTS

MARK KAURI

Protests erupted near Syrian embassies and consulates around the world this weekend after an incident in the city of Homs in which state forces are said to have taken the lives of at least 200 people - in what appears to be the most brutal episode since the uprising began.

In London, around 150 protesters gathered outside the embassy in Belgrave Square on Saturday afternoon, hurling objects at the building following reports of the violence. Crowds with calls of "free Syria" attempted to close the embassy in response to the brutal repression of the country's uprising, prompting police reinforcements at the site. Activists from Occupy London joined Syrian protesters outside the embassy in a show of support, while similar protests were underway in Berlin, Hamburg, Cairo, Athens, Istanbul, Washington, New York, Nicosia and Canberra.

The protests came ahead of a vote on a UN security council resolution calling for Syrian president Bashar al-Assad to step down, which was subsequently vetoed by Russia and China amid fears of a potential violation of Syria's sovereignty, which, it is feared, could lead to military intervention or regime change. The veto prompted a furious response from other council members, with claims put forward that the draft resolution did not permit military action or impose sanctions.

Speaking after the vote, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the international community still had a duty to bring an end to the violence in Syria and promote a political transition towards the departure of Assad. UK foreign secretary echoed this sentiment, with claims that hope now rested on the Arab League to pressure the Syrian authorities towards political change.

According to the UN, more than 5,400 people have died in Syria since pro-democracy campaigners began protesting against President Bashar al-Assad's regime on the streets last year amid the wider Arab Spring uprisings. Between 12,000 and 14,000 are also said to be detained in Syria, subject to torture and abuse. In response to the killings in Homs, Tunisia made moves to expel the Syrian ambassador, with claims that the



country - where uprisings last year resulted in the ousting of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali - no longer recognised the Assad regime.

The weekend's protests follow previous acts of solidarity and support between the Occupy movement and those facing oppression in Syria, including a memorable two-way livestream event connecting demonstrations at St Paul's Cathedral with those in Syria in November. The event in London was attended by around 50 UK-based Syrians protesting in solidarity with actions in Damascus and Homs. An OccupyLSX livestream technician commented on the show of solidarity between the movements, stating: '...we feel all our movements are components of the same thing.'

THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION:

RAGNHILD
FRENG DALE

WHAT THE THIRD NATIONAL OCCUPY UK CONFERENCE CAN TEACH US

Occupy Sheffield hosted the third national Occupy UK Conference over the weekend 20-22 January. Around a hundred Occupiers from the north, south, east and west of Britain, plus visitors from Geneva and Australia, came together to share experiences and plan future strategies. The conference was, for many, a much needed fire-lighter, invigorating and inspiring. A place where passionate individuals, usually dispersed around the country, could find each other and create networks.

On Saturday the conference kicked off with a discussion of eviction. The camps threatened with removal received advice about strategy; the support for these camps, especially the smaller ones, was overwhelming. Attentive listeners and participants in the wide auditorium of the Citadel of Hope understood the severity of their situation well. Immediately after this first meeting, those with experience in eviction matters linked up with novice occupiers from Sheffield, Liverpool and Exeter – all facing eviction in the coming weeks.

International updates were next and the message was clear; the movement goes far beyond the borders of this country. With visitors from Occupy Sydney and Occupy Geneva at the conference, there was direct affirmation that the world stands united. Meetings and greetings for the far-flung occupations were captured with a hand-held camera by enthusiastic members of the Swiss contingent.

Maca from Glasgow talked passionately about her home country, Chile, where the occupations of universities have lasted seven months. In Chile occupying as a form of protest has been used for decades and has brought about significant change in the past. "We need to learn from Chile", Maca said, to an

enthusiastic show of the jazz hands that have come to signify Occupy's consensus-process; hands that were actively used throughout the three days that the UK Occupiers spent together.

Maca's call for global solidarity was not the only one. London's International Communication working group had been contacted by several other occupations – from Barcelona and Frankfurt to New York and Chicago – and were anxious to instigate a UK-wide MayDay action. The proposal was welcomed. A MayDay fortnight of actions entered the planning stage, the intention being to begin on 1 May, the traditional workers' day, then to build to a series of events on 12 and 15 May. Still a work in progress as the conference ended, the prospect of moving forwards with ambitious but realistic goals, regardless of threatened evictions, brought a glow to the proceedings and the participants.

Whilst hiccups are inevitable when a large group of leaderless strangers gather – agenda-setting, time-management and food co-ordination were slightly tricky – these challenges were handled with warmth, intelligence and willingness from the excellent Sheffield hosts and helpful Occupiers from elsewhere.

The glow was, in many ways, exactly what the weekend was about. Discussions ranged from direct action, to the autonomy of Working Groups, to community outreach and dreams of a changed future. A UK-wide independent news platform for Occupy was launched. Skill-shares abounded and crowd-sourcing was recommended. Flash occupations, teach-outs, assemblies and meeting points were plotted. This was change being actioned. A conference to co-ordinate a revolution, unfolding before our very eyes.



BRIAN LELI

JUDITH SCHOSSBOECK

OCCUPIED ELSEWHERE: AUSTRIA



In October 2011, the Austrian Occupy movement formed itself with concentrations in Vienna and a few other cities. Since then, they have organized meetings, demonstrations and coordination efforts to form a larger Occupy community. These strategies had previously been used in 2009, when activists occupied the main lecture hall at the University of Vienna for three months and held daily assemblies. However, continuous working groups with frequent and transparent updates on activities or general assemblies have yet to emerge this time. Different interest groups operate under the Occupy label. Particularly in Vienna, a lot of different action groups and smaller organisations can be found taking action at demonstrations. In December, Occupy Christmas organized a demonstration against the marginalization of the poor at the Vienna Christmas market with the help of several activist groups. On January 20-22, a nationwide conference was organized to facilitate

cooperation and networking among Occupy and other democratic movements in Austria.

Activist networks have traditionally been strong in German-speaking countries. Organisations like Attac or anti-racism networks have a strong following – which is why some question whether there is a need for a separate Occupy movement in Austria. Others insist that the need exists, and despite the harsh Alpine winter, activists set up a small protest camp in the city of Innsbruck in November.

Squatters groups have also been active throughout Austria. From 14 October to 8 November 2011, the Epizentrum in Vienna offered space for workshops, a kitchen, a free university, a cinema, living rooms, a library, queer working groups and ateliers. The emphasis was on building an infrastructure for a culture of learning and shared experiences. Yet the building was evicted in November when the national police turned up with an armored vehicle and a helicopter.

Solidarity demonstrations took place until late in the night.

Yet in addition to coordination and harsh temperatures, the Austrian movement faces an additional challenge: Austria's media landscape is dominated by a few large publishing houses and proprietary media. Newspapers reported that some protest participants belonged to the far-right part of the political spectrum. Some articles addressed an investigation into National Socialist activities. A prominent supporter of the Occupy network, the Viennese economist Franz Hörmann, is as well-known for his criticism of the current monetary system as he is for anti-Semitic views. His appearance at an Occupy event was picked up by mainstream media outlets. Hörmann has since decided to leave the sphere of civic activism to found his own political party. Occupy Austria has also taken steps to distance the movement from his views. He will not be invited as a speaker again. Occupy Austria further declared in a statement: "We don't wish to act as platform for a political party, but to provide space and publicity for people's ideas." Whilst Occupy is open to everyone, it also made clear that anti-Semitism or racist views are not tolerated within the movement. The Facebook page of Occupy Austria explicitly states that its administrators distance themselves from fascism, racism and religious or other fanatic views.

The controversy highlights a larger challenge for the Occupy movement: as a leaderless and decentralized movement, the Occupy name can be claimed by others in ways that undermine the credibility and thematic focus of the movement.



BRIAN LELI

FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUES

THE MILLA NETWORK

THE HUNGARIAN PERSPECTIVE

BY THE ORGANIZERS OF THE ONE MILLION FOR THE FREEDOM OF PRESS IN HUNGARY FACEBOOK COMMUNITY

Hungary's new media laws have been criticised for showing contempt for democratic principles by introducing the creation of a strong censorship authority and a separation of powers. In particular, the law gives the government the power to control the internet, endangering the freedom of speech and journalism in general. Whilst these problems have been debated on a European level, mass media usually do not provide much information on grassroots movements fighting these regulations through activism and protest. One of them is Milla, a network of activists focusing on social justice and media freedom in Hungary. Actions are largely coordinated online via social networks, e.g. the One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary and (Milla) Facebook site.

The One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary (Milla) Facebook site, was established in December 2010, right after the first draft of the new Media Laws was published. Soon, the number of organizers increased. A big protest in March 2011 was planned by sixty to seventy people and the fluid group is now organized into around fifty core members.

The Milla network is not a political party and does not wish to support any, it is not even an organization, but a grassroots movement. "There are many different types of people among us, many of them have never met before Milla. We are here for the same reason: to defend democratic freedom and human rights." says an organiser.

THE CENTRAL AIMS OF THE NETWORK ARE TWOFOLD:

- To show politicians that active and informed people hold an important position of power: If they oppose political or popular programmes and concepts, they will take to the streets, write letters and request public information. When citizens know about their rights and act on that knowledge, politicians will know that citizens are capable of replacing them. People can create an alternative system and act as an opposition if parliamentary ones are incapable of doing so.

- To create a platform for different civil or political interest groups and individual activists. The more independent and diverse groups there are, the stronger the civil sphere is. One aim is to create a sense of community, so that the peoples' motives for taking action are not only based on the individual's immediate situation.

Currently, Hungary is facing many problems. On the political level, the legitimacy of politicians is being questioned, the Hungarian President has been accused of plagiarism, and many want to see the PM leave office. In 2010, the governing party Fidesz, won 53% of the votes, which earned them a two-third majority in parliament. According to new polls, they have only achieved 16% recently. Yet their parliamentary majority allowed them to pass more than 350 laws in the last 18 months, including a new constitution - which was not addressed in the previous election campaign, nor made subject to any referendum or discussion with experts or the public.

The opposition parties did walk out on Fidesz during voting for the

new Basic Law in April of last year. The next important event for parliamentary opposition, happened a day before Christmas, when the Hungarian police detained opposition MPs who were involved in a chain protest outside of Parliament, objecting to the adoption of key laws on elections, taxation and the central bank. Many Hungarians believe that these laws will have large and long-term influence on their lives, even if Fidesz should not become the governing party from 2014.

There is a long list of questionable actions by the government. Amongst them are the so called 'on-off tango' with the IMF; nepotism in relation to the "House of Contemporary Arts" (Trafo), the presence of Christianity in the new Constitution, and many more. Related to the violation of freedom of speech and media freedom, a major issue was the sacking of two journalists who have been on hunger strike since the 10th of December. These employees reported that pro-government editors frequently interfered with their work. Other incidents were the close scrutiny of Atlatzo.hu, the first Hungarian investigative online journalism site that was taken to court just after its launch for not identifying a confidential source or its informants, or the fact that a large amount of state media workers with anti-governmental views were made redundant. On top of that, no broadcast frequency was given to an opposition radio station to transmit (Klubradio), and there was no coverage or an underrepresentation of anti-government rallies in the news - like the massive protests organised by



Milla on the 23rd of October and the 15th of March 2011.

The protest that followed the hunger strike on January 2nd attracted worldwide attention. However, Hungarian state television reporters somehow "missed" the crowd and their report of the protest was based on an empty side road scene. By contrast, their subsequent coverage of the pro-government rally on the same road did not miss the crowd - they even exaggerated its size and the state television programme was interrupted with breaking news on the rally.

Censorship can be direct or indirect. Whilst direct censorship comprises obvious acts like those mentioned above, indirect censorship thrives on fear and results in silence. Volunteers participating in the "I don't like the system" video initiated by Milla, a campaign for the 23rd October protest which reached 660,000 hits on YouTube, requested to be taken out of the clip afterwards, as their boss "wanted to have a word" with them. Such things do not only happen to individuals, but can be found on the organisational level as well. In Hungary, many civil organisations are funded by the government. Thus, the whole system is doomed to failure and journalistic autonomy hard to realise. Additionally, modern surveillance technologies might play a role.

The credibility of political actions is undermined by politicians' attitudes. If those in political power lie and don't resign when they get caught, but even come up with misleading statements, people will lose their faith in justice. This could be one of the reasons that nearly 60% of Hungarians are currently not interested in voting. Many feel that they have no say or cannot imagine being represented by politicians. As for the social situation, the number of poor people increases significantly. Not to mention the country's currency troubles and other economic factors.

Many members of Milla and other Hungarian activists feel that these issues are not only the result of the government's acts, but based on twenty years of apathy that many are responsible for: anyone who has behaved and created the conditions, but also anyone who stayed silent and let them be created.

The aim of Milla is to put more energy into this fight and take action at the next level. "To all the people fighting for their rights around the world we would like to send the same message: Stay strong, keep your head up, commit yourself to mutual respect and do so in a democratic but in the most professional way possible. With this attitude, goodwill will flow back to you."



THE TRUE CULPRIT WAS NOT IN COURT

CONOR GEARTY

All flourishing Christian organisations need to steer a careful course between mammon and morality.

On the one hand there is the wealth, power and influence that flow out of such success, especially if it is millennia old (as with the Roman Catholic church) or backed by the state (as with Anglicanism): how can one bite the hand that feeds if the food is so good and one's corpulent body now so dependant? On the other hand there is the unsettling example of Jesus himself – uninterested in money; contemptuous of luxury and of worldly power; devoted to the needy (or as we would say today the disadvantaged).

Some churches solve this problem by assimilating mammon to morality – the good are good because they are rich, and vice versa. This is too obviously special pleading for the more thoughtful faiths for whom, however, the problem remains: how can they be rich and radical at the same time?

These churches usually manage to side-step this dilemma by using their knack of fine rhetoric to call upon others to act. A prime example is the Report Value and Values: Perceptions of Ethics in the City Today issued by the St Paul's Institute in November last year, an excellent critique of the ethical emptiness of global capital out of the mouths of financial services practitioners themselves.

But by the time this Report came out, the Occupy LSX camp had arrived at St Pauls, sparking a crisis of identity for the great Cathedral that supports this 'challenging and well-resourced space for conversation' (as the Archbishop of Canterbury had described the Institute in June 2010).

With eviction proceedings to remove the camp having recently produced a judgment against the occupy group, things are likely to get worse before they get better for the cathedral. At the back of everyone's mind will be the feeling that a rare opportunity has been missed for a heroic religious engagement, for action as well as words.

Yet it had all begun so promisingly.

The camp had only arrived at St Pauls in October last year when the stock exchange proved impenetrable. The police did not initially act, and the Cathedral itself – in the ebullient and civil libertarian form of the Canon Chancellor Giles Fraser – was positively supportive. Services continued. The talk was of a presence until Christmas. Early compromises allowed visits to the Cathedral to continue. The peaceful nature of the protest was acknowledged by all, the atmosphere good. Treated with respect and properly self-regulated,

given as Giles Fraser was later to say on BBC Newsnight 'nice cups of Anglican tea ... and a warm embrace', a camp such as this might well have grown into a benign witness to the need for radical change, as the anti-nuclear Greenham Common women had done a generation before. And what a gift this would have been to a Church about to launch its critique of City capitalism.

Faced with an open goal, the senior church authorities promptly turned tail and shot into their own net.

The talk was suddenly all of health and safety and of the risk of fire. The advice of professionals in these fields was immediately accepted, leading first to closure of the Cathedral (soon shown to be quite unnecessary) and then to a legal action launched with the intention of expelling the protestors. When the latter action was suspended the more hard-nosed Corporation of London, took on the job of clearing out the protestors, the custodians of the Cathedral whispering encouragement while trying to look the other way. By then the Cathedral had lost both Fraser and the Dean himself, Graeme Knowles.

The law appeared stacked against the protestors from the outset and the court judgment can have come as no surprise, with both highways and planning law being deployed by the City to legitimise its effort to get the protestors removed, not just from the areas all around the Cathedral but from the Cathedral land as well.

Of course the protestors pleaded the right to freedom of expression under the Human Rights Act, but that measure was always unlikely to greatly to assist. The European Court of Human Rights has been reluctant to extend its protection to those who invade private property in the effort to get heard, and the same has now proved to be true (so far as this case is concerned) of deliberate efforts to obstruct the highway for the same purpose. Lindblom J, had the job of assessing the proportionality or reasonableness of the disruption as against its value as speech – and here again the background hostility of the Cathedral was likely to weigh heavily against the Camp.

With this ruling handed down, the case is already shaping up to resemble the Dale Farm debacle, with endless litigation, media summits, appeals, further clarifications of court orders and – eventually – a nasty moment when the camp is physically dismantled by the authorities.

If and when this does come about, the Cathedral will have been primarily responsible. Had it adopted Fraser's line, the protestors would probably be gone by

now (as they had always intended), the Institute's report on the city would be a widely admired and much read document, and the church's commitment to economic justice would have been given a tremendous boost.

Instead, we have this spectacle of a great cathedral acting not as a focus for Christian action but as a grand religious NIMBY.

The chance to undo this damage will not come about – opportunities of the sort offered by the Occupy movement are rare. No doubt there will be many more remarks such as that of the Reverend Michael Hampel, Canon Precentor, who commented on the Value and Values report that "Action is a crucial goal of the protest camp outside St Pauls Cathedral. We hope that the telling findings of this report can provide a solid foundation for future engagement and highlight issues where action might be of mutual concern for all sides of the debate." This kind of comment is so within the comfort zone of the Church to be indistinguishable from complacency.

During Mass at the start of January, celebrating the Epiphany, Catholic Christians listened to Psalm 71:

'For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor.'

What kind of an epiphany has St Pauls offered the world this Christmas season?

Conor Gearty is Professor at the London School of Economics and the former director of the LSE Centre for Human Rights Studies.



PREOCCUPYING: AMANDA PALMER

Occupied Times: Amanda, you have been playing quite a few Occupy camps – how come?

Amanda Palmer: I play free outdoor gigs for my fans anyways when I tour. Occupy started up just as I was leaving for a tour and so I decided to play Occupy Spaces instead of random parks: it seemed like a perfect wedding of events. A lot of my fans knew about Occupy but only from what they'd read online and in the news but hadn't actually been on site. I gave them a reason. Musicians can be handy that way, they always have been. They act as umbrellas under which people can physically gather and connect. I truly love that part of my job: being a human megaphone, acting as a spotlight to shine on what might be dimly lit.

AMANDA PALMER, LEAD SINGER AND COMPOSER OF THE DRESDEN DOLLS DUO, HAS BEEN VISITING PROTEST CAMPS AROUND THE WORLD. WE ASKED ABOUT HER EXPERIENCES WITH OCCUPY, TAKE AWAY FULL-STOP AT THE END.

OT: Where have you been and what were your impressions of the different sites?

AP: Well, I started with Occupy Boston, which was a few blocks from my house. Then I went to Wall St about a week later... this was back in the early fall. When my tour started, I hit all the cities I was touring in: Oakland, LA, Seattle, Portland, Vancouver. I'm going to play a free gig at Occupy Christchurch in New Zealand. It's like having a floating pop-up venue... perfect. Every site had it's own character and energy. LA felt slightly hostile; Oakland felt more solid and peaceful. Portland felt homey; Vancouver felt somber... someone had just died in a tent. I think my impressions really depended on the moment I dropped in on the camps. It's like visiting a person. You're never going to find them in the same mood twice.

OT: Did you want to express a particular message for people?

AP: Yes. Do shit. And don't forget you have the power to create your own fucking reality every single day. The fact that we're alive and human beings on planet earth is a ridiculous fucking miracle. Rejoice.

OT: What effect, do you think, did your music have on the occupations?

AP: I hope that in my own way I brought joy? Distraction? And fuel? To the movement – or at least to the moment.

OT: What was your best experience with Occupy?

AP: Playing "The World Turned Upside-down" in various cities and hearing people across the country cheering at the same points in the song. Pretty inspiring, that words strike a universal soul chord.

OT: Was there any bad experience?

AP: Sure. Plenty. One of the worst: a dude at Wall St came up while I was playing and starting haranguing my site contact, complaining that I was "hijacking the movement". He wasn't listening to what I was playing or noticing what people were doing (a lot of my fans brought donations and help). It was sad. That moment spoke volumes about the problem of the movement in general... the "ownership" problem. Who owns this movement? Who can claim that?

OT: Do you think this movement will have a long-term effect on society?

AP: God I hope so.

OT: Do you see yourself as an activist artist, or is art mostly independent from politics?

AP: I always say the personal is political. I kind of detest the word "political". It carries so much bullshit baggage. And if I'm an activist artist, then every artist is an activist... of something or other. I always used to say to journalists that my job wasn't to tell people what to do, or who to vote for, or how to think. My job was to provide them with a safe space to become who they already are. The band was always really dedicated to a kind of radical honesty and radical acceptance... having been outcasts as kids, we didn't want to perpetuate that kind of clique and exclusive mentality.

OT: What do you think is wrong with today's society?

AP: Honestly? That we live in fear of each other and are terrified to non-judgmentally love and help each other.

OT: What can we as individuals change?

AP: Our attitudes towards each other and the possibilities of human kind. It isn't hopeless: the whole world is changeable. It just takes a certain kind of faith that the status quo is not the king.

OT: What does "Occupy yourself" mean to you?

AP: It means that before you can occupy an outside space, you have to be standing on solid ground with yourself – which is hard, but necessary. Nothing will destroy real human progress more than people trying to make a progressive change that comes from a place of fear, lack and anger. That's what will take us down.



OUR ETHICS, OUR FUTURE

DEMAND
NOTHING

“DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELVES, WITH THE NICE TIME WE ARE HAVING HERE. CARNIVALS COME CHEAP - THE TRUE TEST OF THEIR WORTH IS WHAT REMAINS THE DAY AFTER, HOW OUR NORMAL DAILY LIFE WILL BE CHANGED. FALL IN LOVE WITH HARD AND PATIENT WORK - WE ARE THE BEGINNING, NOT THE END.” - SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK



In

order to abolish the present state of things, revolution is a certainty. Reformism and pleading with those who have power will not (as if it ever could!) accomplish our egalitarian goals. Similarly, we must not fool ourselves into thinking that we can resist from outside the system, especially considering how widely and deeply capital has saturated our lives. Our culture is sponsored by Exxon Mobil for art and Tennent's for music. As Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt write in their book "Empire", "[It] is not to simply [enough to] resist these processes but [necessary] to reorganise them and redirect them towards new ends". Occupy has placed itself as at the centre of radical action in the UK. It is a place and an event. A place for flowers to grow and to blossom. However, the process of revolution must take a more concrete form. It is not enough to just wait for the revolution and it is not enough to occupy space.

I. RESIST

The economic and political are dovetailing together once more. On the one hand, we are rediscovering the economic sphere as a political project - something that can be altered and shaped by our hands. Yet on the other hand, the oppressive constitution of politics and the global economy are being used to support each other under the rationality of functionalism. Our state is constituted of two contradictory ethics: the state stands for justice, peace, prosperity, security, and life. It proclaims family values and motivation

to work hard. However, its process of consolidation of power to enforce these ethics reduces the laws and motivations of the state strictly to a functional ethic. This other, functional ethic is the ethics of austerity propagated by the likes of Moody's AAA ratings and the focus on gross domestic product.

This coalescence of power is only maintained through our subjugation under the instruments legitimised by this ethic of austerity. Therefore, our first and foremost task is to oppose austerity and oppose those that practice and preach its methods.

Our forms of resistance should be of our own creation, and should not be those safe-routes espoused by liberals who, through either their inexperience or a desire to co-opt, reduce our movements to images, devoid of concrete revolutionary effect. When we say forms of resistance should be of our own creation, we do not preach ideals and utopias. We say that resistance must be based on the material analysis of peoples' lives.

In the first world, we are no longer solely alienated by capitalists who own the means of production. We are oppressed in a more unstable and abstract sense. Today, in the UK, we are valued in our capacity to produce networks and circuits of communication. It is in our capacity to service our debt through labour, produce more of it through consumption, and to communicate circuits of debt ("I like this post on Facebook, and that book on Amazon - and don't you too?") that our value is created. With this new and open form of valuing the people, new and open ways are required to organise and direct action. Strikes, marches and sit-ins are not enough!



LEFTERIS PITARAKIS

II. REORGANISE

Capital is 'a motley painting of everything that ever was', a process that flows, shifts and changes. We must change and shift to combat it; otherwise we will remain politically stagnant and neutralised. While Occupy stands still, the state moves and adapts. It is attempting to find ways to push through Occupy using the police force and the laws to try to stamp it out. The news cycle has moved on as well, leaving behind a memory of a revolt that seemed to promise the renewal and the re-energisation of resistance in our society.

Occupy is an open space - but so is the state. Occupy is not localised - but neither is the state. There seems to be a belief amongst the multitude of participants within the Occupy movement that openness and egalitarianism is to allow all voices an equal volume. Through which consensus and conference progress is made. This consensus approach can open up problems as Occupy members, such as in Glasgow, use their open approach to negotiate their way out of taking responsibility for events in their camp or we engage in dialogue with the likes of the EDL, an organisation that is fundamentally opposed to the actions of Occupy and its supporters. Consensus is only a tool to help achieve concrete aims and is not exclusive to egalitarian resistance. The state aggregates consensus to exert its power as well through policing, law, government, and appeals to our wallets. We must match it.

We think a positive and proactive response that is more than an advert is necessary. Occupy should challenge

itself to move beyond press statements, music albums, and directionless actions. It should organise around the proposal of an aim and gather allies under that aim. We are not just anti-capitalists but, instead, pro-revolutionaries.

III. REDIRECT

Occupy has set itself up to challenge the functional ethics of our state. We see words for fairness and redistribution. Everyone has to pay their way to protect each others' rights: the rights of the worker, the rights of the exploited, and the rights of everyone. By challenging austerity with this ethic, we shake the state. By itself, however, shaking the state is not enough.

This is not a question of fairness and rights - this is a statement for the eradication of debt and the wage system for all. We do not believe, or care, about taming Capitalism. We do not call for stitching a human face to

the abhorrent, shambling form capital takes. When we challenge austerity, we also challenge the ethics that are built on top of the state. We challenge it all or we do not challenge it at all. Simply removing austerity will create spaces for movement but you will just be encouraging a vacuum.

The state has more power and resources to occupy that vacuum than the Occupy movement. We must forge our own ethics and our own future. This is an ethic opposed to rights and wrongs and fairness. This is an ethic that says, "end all debt," and the other concrete material conditions of our existence that oppress us. We must stress a revolutionary character. Dispense with the ideals and concentrate on what matters: the cancellation of all debt, and the end of greed.

This piece was written by the people behind the Demand Nothing website. www.demandnothing.org

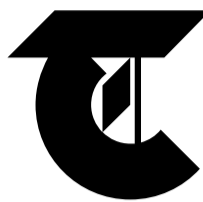


WASI DANIJU



GROWING PAINS

TIM JACKSON



The fault lines within modern capitalism are widening. What once seemed tiny fissures, barely visible to the Western eye,

have now become deep chasms threatening to engulf entire nations.

Between the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the rise of the financial crisis in September 2008, capitalism's star had never seemed brighter. There was, to echo Margaret Thatcher, no alternative. Debates about the variations of capitalism were more or less academic. The Anglo-centric nations trumpeted the virtues of 'liberalised markets'. Germany and France championed the 'social market economy'. Communist China even developed its own particular brand of centrally planned capitalism, triggering a mixture of anxiety and quiet satisfaction in the Western mind.

All of these forms of capitalism rely inherently on the assumed insatiability of human needs: confident expectations of a relentless growth in consumer spending. Across the world, capitalism advances by seeking out new consumer markets for new consumer products. The continual throwing over of the old in favour of the new, together with the intrusion of the market into ever more personal areas of our lives.

In the beginning, this process can be immensely productive, leading to manifest improvements in our real standard of living. But to keep the process going in perpetuity as the system requires, we need people resolutely hooked on stuff, prepared

to borrow and spend – even to mortgage their own financial future if necessary – to carry on shopping.

Let's be honest, it's pretty easy to find these people. Novelty matters to us. Through novelty, for instance, we tell each other stories about how important we are. Status is just one of the social dynamics that thrives on novelty. Novelty also signals progress. It offers hope. A brighter shinier world for our children and their children. And if we're ever inclined to forget or forgo that desire, there is a host of canny advertisers, marketers, investors and politicians on hand to help us remember it. To persuade us, in very simple terms, to spend money we don't have, on things we don't need, to create impressions that won't last, on people we don't care about.

In short, there appears to be an uncanny fit between the demands of capital and the restless soul of the consumer. Armed with this rationale, and with economic growth as its mantra, capitalism itself seems unstoppable. 'Accumulate, accumulate, that is Moses and the prophets', as Marx once put it. By the beginning of this century, the global economy had already expanded five times over the size it had been in the middle of the last century.

The default assumption is that – financial crises aside – growth will continue indefinitely. Not just for the poorest countries, where a better quality of life is desperately needed, but even for the richest nations where the cornucopia of material wealth is beginning to threaten the foundations of our wellbeing. At the historical rate of expansion, by the end of this century the global economy will be 80 times the size it was only 50 years ago.



WASI DANJU

This unprecedented ramping up of economic activity is without historical precedent. It is totally at odds with our scientific knowledge of the finite resource base and the fragile ecology on which we depend for survival. And it has already been accompanied by the degradation of an estimated 60% of the world's ecosystems.

For the most part we tend to ignore the stark reality of these numbers. The reasons for this 'collective blindness' are easy enough to find. Expanding demand is the default mechanism for achieving economic stability. When demand falters, bad things happen. Businesses struggle to survive. People lose their jobs and sometimes their homes. A spiral of recession looms. In these circumstances, questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries.

But question it we must. The collapse of Lehman Brothers on 15th September 2008 signalled more than the onset of a cyclical liquidity crisis. The pallid light of recession illuminated crack after crack in the shiny surface of capitalism. It is now apparent that these cracks run right to the heart of the model.

Leaving aside for the moment that a system built on continually increasing demand is ecologically illiterate. The financial crisis revealed that it is also structurally dangerous. Relentless expansion of demand requires rising levels of debt. When the debts become toxic, the system collapses. Since September 2008, governments have committed trillions of dollars to bail out the banks and re-stimulate the global economy. But fiscal spending financed through government borrowing has only precipitated a further crisis.

Across the Eurozone, country after country is facing rising deficits, unwieldy sovereign debt, and downgraded credit ratings. Austerity policies, brought in to protect these ratings, have failed to solve the underlying problems. Worse, they have created new social problems of their own. The withdrawal of social investment has bred an increasingly agitated public.

In London, during August last year, a spree of rioting left the streets in chaos, buildings burning out of control. Not all of that unrest can be attributed to political protest. But the injustice of bailing out the architects of the crisis at the expense of its victims has become plain for all to see. The conditions for wider social unrest are palpable. In the United States, that unrest is now playing itself out in the form of the Occupy Wall Street protest, later mirrored by Occupy London in the UK and over a thousand others under the Occupy banner worldwide. Civil action is striking at the living, beating heart of capitalism, expressing resistance and rage at the injustices carried out in its name.

The only remaining moral framework for capitalism is one in which ecological and social justice go hand in hand. Prosperity for the few founded on ecological destruction and persistent social injustice for the many is no foundation for a civilised society. One of the most fundamental errors of capitalism is to mistake citizens for consumers. Another is to mistake prosperity for income. Living well on a finite planet cannot simply be about consuming more and more stuff. Nor can it be about accumulating more and more debt.

Prosperity, in any meaningful sense of the term, is about the quality of our lives and relationships, about the resilience of our communities, and about our sense of individual and collective meaning. Prosperity, as the word itself suggests, is about hope. Hope for the future, hope for our children, hope for ourselves. Maintaining this hope remains a task worth engaging in. Capitalism must adapt to it or perish.

Tim Jackson is Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Surrey in the UK and author of Prosperity without Growth – economics for a finite planet.



BRIAN LELI



CREDIT DEFAULT SWAPS FOR DUMMIES: PART ONE

It pays not to stare too long at the Credit Default Swap system, in case your brain melts and your eyebrows fall off into your lap. This issue, the *Occupied Times* is going to dip a careful toe into the maelstrom; next issue we'll look closer at the darker secrets and the unsettling trillion-dollar scale of the derivatives insurance market. Holding our hand through the pain will be Tony Crawford, speaker at TCU & the author of *Contaging*, and the broadcaster & financial commentator Max Keiser.

Let's begin by looking at some of the basic terminology. Deep breath. Ready...? A Credit Default Swap or "CDS" is a contract in the credit derivatives market that transfers risk from one party to another. The risk of a default. It's a kind of insurance - a derivative insurance contract.

If you're lost already, it's probably best to take a step back and ask: what's a derivative...? A financial derivative is a contract, relating to an underlying asset: e.g. currencies, commodities, stocks or bonds. Let's say, for the sake of argument, orange juice. If I speculate on the future price of orange juice (let's say I bet that the price of orange juice will be higher than it currently is in 6 months' time), the value of my speculation is "derived" from the price of orange juice at a particular time in the future.

Derivatives 'derive' their value from the value of this underlying asset. Here's where the risk comes in. Assets

can lose value, markets can plummet, earthquakes can flatten power stations, companies can fail, loans can go bad, homeowners can "default" on their mortgage. And if scientists prove a link between the consumption of orange juice and the occurrence of athlete's foot, then the value of my orange juice speculation is likely to fall through the floor.

Say I get nervy about the risk, maybe I want to buy a little peace of mind. Here's where a credit default swap comes in. For a fee, the seller of the CDS underwrites or guarantees the credit-worthiness of my orange juice contract. You could describe a CDS contract as a kind of "insurance policy" against the falling value of an asset.

Your CDS insurance contract buys you compensation (or the promise of compensation!) - in exchange for a fee (which could be monthly, yearly, whatever the terms of the contract). The agreement is that the compensation is paid if the asset has lost value by a certain time. So if everything goes pear-shaped, the seller of the CDS - the protection seller - picks up the tab. That, at least, is the idea.

The CDS transfers the risk associated with a derivative without actually transferring the ownership of the underlying assets. The contract happens, as it were, 'above' the underpinning layer of asset-value.

It also happens off the balance sheets, and out of the prying eye of regulation. As the former head of the



Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan once said: "Regulation of derivatives transactions that are privately negotiated by professionals is unnecessary."

TONY CRAWFORD: "A credit default swap is treated as a standard contract agreement between private parties that financiers argue need not be regulated and are too numerous for oversight."

One of the main problems with the CDS system is that one agreement can lead to another can lead to another. Here's what happens. Suppose the party that sold me my insurance against the collapse in orange juice price drinks two litres of orange juice and gets athlete's foot. Maybe he gets nervous about

the credit-worthiness of my orange juice speculation, so he goes away and approaches yet another CDS seller and enters into further "insurance" contract. This other party is free to approach yet another investor, and take out yet another insurance policy - creating what risk consultant Satyajit Das - author of *Extreme Money: The Masters of the Universe and the Cult of Risk* - has termed an "unholy chain". The risk doesn't go away, it just gets passed on. The bottom line, as Das says, is that: "if the seller of protection is unable to perform then the buyer obtains no protection."

But never mind that now! Tucked away happily off the balance sheet, and joyously free from regulation, the risk gets chopped-up and passed on, with fees being picked up along the way, until a chasm has grown between the last CDS contract and the original underlying asset value (the price of orange juice). My original derivative (my speculation) has essentially vanished from sight. As has the scale of the debt (and debt-guarantees) which are floating around above the assets...

TONY CRAWFORD: The CDS credit derivatives market hides debt in off-the-balance-sheet accounting methods: tucked away behind misleading co-dependent loans in the complex workings of SIVs - Structured Investment Vehicles.

Remember we called a CDS "a derivative insurance contract"? Maybe we were overstating the value of the guarantees that are being traded:

MAX KEISER: As was discovered during the AIG scandal, these so-called insurance policies should not be called insurance because they have no actual collateral backing them up, only theoretical collateral that, as we have seen, does not work in a crisis - which is exactly when the CDSs are supposed work best.

In a crisis, what happens is this "unholy chain" breaks, and the Ponzi pyramid collapses.

MAX KEISER: Brokers and bankers who sell credit default swaps flood the market with them to garner the fees, and in so doing increase the likelihood of a financial meltdown caused by a cascade of sell orders tied to a market swamped with uncollateralized and impossible-to-honor CDSs. We saw something similar in 1987 when the CDS product of its time - 'portfolio insurance' - was oversold into the market, setting up the stock market crash on October 19th of that year.

One way of describing the CDS problem is that it's a problem of value. Things are being sold as having value, where in reality they have precious little. What's "real" are the fees being charged for every breath that blows up the bubble. This bubble of swapped and re-swapped risk, floating around above the 'real world', has become utterly abstracted from the layer of asset-value which actually determines the value of the derivatives.

TONY CRAWFORD: In around 2002, financiers discovered they could sell third-party "Nonbank Notes" (essentially functioning as legal tender) that had no trace of property ownership. In such a case, purchasers are said to buy 'naked'. However, 'Naked' CDS makes no financial sense except to profit from certain failure in default.

This is where it starts to get really nasty. If you think you've got your brain around the basics of credit default swaps, get ready to have your head twisted off next issue, when we'll talk more about planned defaults, and "Naked Credit Default Swaps", and plunge deeper still into one of the foulest corners of the global financial pit.

TIME CRISIS

DR MICHAEL HARRIS

The 1 per cent solution to the economic crisis includes the prescription to work harder. The 99 per cent caused the crisis by their insolent attitude to work and their debt-fuelled greed, now they need to recognise it's payback time. Young people will work longer for fewer rights and it will be easier to retire older workers. The unemployed - of whom there will be more for the purposes of productivity - will work for free or be punished. And when people get sick from too much or too little work they'll have to meet more stringent tests to prove they're unable to work.

The 99 per cent solution should include less work for many and work for all who want it. Reducing normal working hours and sharing work more equally across society could be a critical path out of the crisis and towards a healthier, happier, fairer society. We here at NEF (the new economics foundation) published a report outlining the many benefits of a 21 hour working week last year.

In a slump, cutting the working week is one way of managing a low (no) growth economy. The longest working hours in Europe, contrary to stereotype, are found in Greece, not Germany, and Italian workers are not far behind the Greeks. One of the reasons that German workers are more productive is because they work less and in the first phase of the crisis, unemployment fell in Germany, partly because the government supported shorter working hours. In the US and the UK, by contrast, we cling stubbornly to the traditional notion of full-time hours, which is part of the reason why unemployment and underemployment are so high. Shorter working helps to spread a diminishing amount of paid employment around more people and cuts the benefits bill. It makes it easier to create more jobs, since each job requires less capital to fund it. It's only controversial to conventional economists.

But this is not just a temporary response to crisis, and this is not just a temporary crisis. Alongside the economic and environmental crisis, we are experiencing a time crisis - how we use and trade the hours we are granted and the consequences of this, even how we experience time. The post-war work-time bargain is long gone. Working hours stopped declining for most people long ago, and now wages are stagnant. We have entered into the era of the 'end of work' but clung onto a historical idea of full-time employment. 'Productivity tools' make it harder to work and play in any way productively, which is to say mindfully. Our increasingly fragmented time is less our own, but not really anyone else's either. We have no real time for anything.

Fewer and fewer of us working harder and harder, and spending more and more, is unsustainable both individually and collectively. Spending our diminishing free time going shopping

is not the way to build a flourishing economy, cut carbon and improve human well-being. Work, now damages our health, our economy, our society and our environment. It's not a symptom of the crisis, it is the crisis.

Some of us will instead have to trade some money for time in order to live more sustainably. For all of us, a permanent move away from our long-hours and micro-seconds culture would produce a rich mix of social, environmental and economic benefits. Redistributing paid and unpaid time would improve work-life balance, narrow gender inequalities and free up time for us to be parents, carers, friends, neighbours and citizens. It would allow us to live.

The 1 percenters, or rather their apologists, hate this argument. But the way they hate it is instructive. They say that people should have the right to choose what hours they work. If only. Nearly 1 in 10 people would work fewer hours for less pay, but can't. Most of us don't have any real choice about our working hours, and at the request of corporate interests the Government is working to narrow this choice further. It's another of those real-life demonstrations that neoliberalism isn't about choice, it's about compliance. Opponents of a shorter working week don't believe in freedom because they fear we might make the wrong choice. They stand opposed to a free market in time.

The debate about working time is not just about time at work. It raises questions that matter to all of us. Why are housing, food and transport so expensive and how can they be made more affordable and sustainable? How can we improve public services to enhance social justice and wellbeing for all? How can we achieve gender equality within households and across society? No wonder the opponents of shorter working hours don't want it to become more popular.

A 99 per cent government would support us to work less. Nearly half of all employed people in the Netherlands work what we in the UK would consider 'part time', but only because in the 1980s their government embarked on a long-term plan to reduce and share working hours. Increasing productivity was taken in slightly less wealth but in much more free time. A 99 per cent government would also help to redistribute work by making the welfare state fairer, not least by providing more support for low-income earners and better childcare. A more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work represents a different kind of recovery for a different kind of society. It is a vital part of a new economics of work - one that creates meaningful and sustainable employment that serves human needs, instead of abstract economic theories from a time that has long past.

Dr Michael Harris, New Economics Foundation.



THE CITY OF LONDON & ITS OFFSHORE EMPIRE

NICHOLAS SHAXSON

A few weeks ago Westminster MP Mark Field, one of Britain's most prominent cheerleaders for tax havens and the City of London, cited a couple of interesting statistics, to bolster his argument that people should go easy on tax havens. "The UK has a constitutional relationship with half of the top 30 offshore finance centres," he said – implying that this is a good thing. He added, for good measure, that just the three island tax havens closest to the UK – the Crown Dependencies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man – provided net financing to UK banks of a staggering \$332.5bn in the second quarter of 2009. Jersey Finance, the promoters of the profoundly corrupt tax haven of Jersey, puts it in plain English: "For many corporate treasurers, institutional bankers and treasury specialists, fund promoters, brokers and other corporate financiers, Jersey represents an extension of the City of London."

These statements are all quite correct. In my book *Treasure Islands*, I describe the City of London as the spider at the centre of a web of tax havens scattered around the world, feeding vast tides of money, and the business of handling money, to the City.

If you are worried about the political and economic might of the City of London and want to know how to confront it, you cannot make serious progress without tackling tax havens. And tax havens make an excellent target, especially for the Occupy movement. In November I said in a speech on the steps of St. Paul's that I believe Occupy's greatest strength – the key to its ability to resonate with ordinary people around the world – is in its focus on two things: extremely high and rising inequality, and the corruption of capitalism. In both respects, tax havens are right at the very heart of concerns about both. And Britain is right at the heart of global concerns about tax havens.

First, take a look in a little more detail at this British web of tax havens.

In the inner ring of the British web lie these three Crown Dependencies: Jersey and Guernsey in the English Channel, and the Isle of Man between the UK mainland and Ireland. The next set of links in the web are the Overseas Territories: the remnants of the British Empire which resolved to remain constitutionally attached to Britain after most of the rest of Britain's empire achieved independence. The Overseas Territories include some of the world's biggest tax havens: the Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands and Bermuda – along with Gibraltar, Turks and Caicos, Anguilla and Montserrat.

The spider analogy may seem unnecessarily sinister, but it is quite apt. The tax havens will generally focus on hoovering up money flows from nearby jurisdictions: so the tax havens in the Caribbean will focus heavily on attracting money flows from North and South America, for instance, while the Crown Dependencies will focus heavily on Europe, and so on. These places are often merely serving as booking centres, entries in an accountant's computer that allow a company to pretend that it is really located in the especially mucky Overseas Territory of the British Virgin Islands while the real business – the hammering together of that banking syndicate, the legal work for that giant property deal, and so on – gets sent up to London. "If I have money to spare, I pass it to the father," said Martyn Scriven, secretary of the Jersey Bankers' Association in 2009. "Great dollops of money go into London from here." Vast, secretive and often dirty financial flows wash into the stock markets and football clubs and financial institutions in the City every day from tax havens. Whatever this offshore money touches, it causes harm: blowing up unproductive property



bubbles, corrupting football clubs, hiding ownership patterns in the stock markets, and on and on.

The whole relationship between the UK and its tax havens plays out as an elaborate charade. These territories are partly inside, and partly outside, the UK. They have their own local politics, with all the fun of the fair, and they love to say they have full independence when it comes to setting their own laws. But probe into the constitutional relationship, and it becomes clear that responsibility falls to the UK. Smokescreens come wafting out of London and the tax haven capitals whenever the relationship is probed – 'there is nothing we can do' is the typical response to those who say that the UK cracks down on the criminality, abuse and corruption run out of these places. And behind it all lies the City of London, anxious to preserve its access to the world's dirty money.

In both the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories, the Queen appoints the governor, domestic legislation is given royal assent and the United Kingdom is responsible for their good governance, defence and international relations. It is also the guarantor of these territories' debts. Given that many of the tax and secrecy facilities provided by these places constitute acts of economic warfare against the revenue authorities and taxpayers of other countries, and is an aspect of the governance of these islands, this puts the responsibility for their tax haven activity firmly in the UK government's hands. As I say in *Treasure Islands*, the British spider's web "is a money-laundering filter that lets the City get involved in dirty business while providing it with enough distance to maintain plausible deniability."

The City of London Corporation loves its tax havens. Although it did not appear on his official itinerary (why not?) the Lord Mayor of the City of London visited the Isle of Man last month, where he praised its "longstanding and much-valued partnership" with the City. The City of London Corporation has called the Isle of Man a "core asset" for the City. The Lord Mayor roams the world with an official mandate to expound the "values of financial liberalisation" around the globe (what a strange role for the head of a municipal authority). The more that other countries liberalise their economies, the more financial activity there is buzzing around, ready to be caught by the nearby tax havens and funneled up to the City.

These tax havens love to declare how clean they are – but they can be shockingly, even terrifyingly corrupt. Anyone visiting Jersey on a summer holiday might be forgiven for thinking that this is simply another part of Britain: apart from the different-looking ten pound notes, the high street in St. Helier looks and feels just like any other in Britain. But look into the politics in enough depth, and the difference is staggering. People won't believe you when you explain how corrupt Jersey is.

In an affidavit signed in May 2011 Lenny Harper, Jersey's former Deputy Police Chief, said: "I went to Jersey in 2002 full of expectation of the challenge that lay ahead. I soon learnt that it was like nowhere else in the British Isles. . . . There are no checks and balances on power and the abuse of it. This is obvious each time one tries to make a complaint against any member of the government. With such an absence of controls, such an absence of accountability, the ordinary decent people of Jersey are helpless." Stuart Syvret, a former health minister, is less diplomatic, and he is worth quoting at some length.

"Jersey is governed by a crypto-feudal oligarchy which, of itself, is captured by the international offshore banking industry. It is a gangster regime, cloaked with the "respectability" of the trappings of the British establishment. . . . As the local elites of these tiny islands continue to provide a loyal service to the rich British elites – for example, enabling them to dodge taxation – then the miniature oligarchs of places like Jersey are guaranteed protection. No matter just how nakedly lawless their own conduct."

The media – both the Jersey Evening Post, as well as the Jersey arm of BBC – are captured by the finance industry. They parrot the pro-tax haven line daily – sometimes almost to a comical degree – and dissidents are only quoted rarely, and usually highly disparagingly. Syvret has been thrown in prison more than once. The dominance of the finance industry in Jersey is nearly absolute. And few people in Britain care.

We should all care. As the British web of tax havens around the world feeds the City, pumping up its already mighty powers, Britain is turning into more and more of an offshore island in the world – and the City of London is turning into more and more of an offshore island within Britain. If we don't stand up to the City and its tax havens, we face a future that looks increasingly like Jersey's. But without such nice beaches.

Nicholas Shaxson is the author of *Treasure Islands: Tax Havens and the Men Who Stole the World*



WASI DANIJU



BRIAN LELI

I stood on this platform only a year ago and said that Europe could recover its dynamism. I still believe we can. But only if we are bold. Only if we fight for our prosperity. Get to grips with the debt. Take bold decisions on deregulation, on opening up the single market, on innovation and trade and address the fundamental issues at the heart of Eurozone crisis.

All these decisions lie in our own hands. They are the test of Europe's leaders in the months ahead. Yes, the stakes are high, incredibly high. But there is nothing about the current crisis that we don't understand. The problems we face are man-made and with bold action and real political will we can fix them.

Prime Minister David Cameron,
at Davos 2012



TAKING STOCK - OCCUPY THE EU!

Chris Cook, a former director of the International Petroleum Exchange and new member of the Economics Working Group, takes issue with David Cameron's analysis of the financial crisis...

Perhaps the most striking statement made by David Cameron in his speech at Davos this year was right at the end... "But there is nothing about the current crisis that we don't understand."

This may come to be seen as one of the most staggeringly complacent, blithely arrogant and completely and utterly wrong statements in political history.

Mr Cameron's speech is a classic text in the Shock Doctrine genre. The € patient is bleeding to death from the effects of disastrous neo-liberal fiscal and monetary policies, and the apothecary's remedy is a combination of the application of leeches and the removal of healthy limbs.

There is unfortunately nothing about the current crisis which Cameron or his audience in Davos understands since the € system is based upon a vacuum, and his rhetoric upon myths.

THE VACUUM

The European Central Bank (ECB) is the Black Hole at the heart of a monetary system which is based exclusively upon interest-bearing debt. The € consists of credit created and lent or spent into circulation by private credit institutions (also known as banks) and by the ECB.

Private bank credit is essentially a pyramid scheme of credit based only upon a tiny sliver of bank capital. The ECB is just a private bank writ large, and the public credit it creates as currency has no basis on any underlying value – such as tax revenue – and is supported by confidence and trust alone.

Credit is a Latin word meaning 'he believes' and the problem is that belief in the € system has been lost because the pyramid of debts upon which it rests is unrepayable which in turn means that the banks are almost without exception insolvent.

THE MYTHS

Firstly, Banks do not take in deposits and lend them out again: that is the Fractional Reserve Banking myth. As stated above, banks create modern 'fiat' currency upon the basis of a small amount of capital when they lend or spend and this currency is simultaneously deposited into the system. Bank creation of money is not constrained by reserves of cash (ie liquidity); but by the bank's reserves of capital (ie solvency).

Secondly, Treasuries do not collect taxation and then spend it: that is the Tax and Spend myth. For 500 years our sovereigns were able to spend and invest in public assets by issuing Stock (in the form of half of a wooden tally-stick) to those who provided value to them.

This Stock was then returnable to the Exchequer in payment of taxes. Indeed, the very phrase 'rate of return' described the rate over time at which stock-holders could return stock to the Exchequer for cancellation against taxation.

Unfortunately, from 1694 onwards, when the (then private) Bank of England started to manufacture credit with which to purchase government Stock,

we have become accustomed to think that the source of credit is the banking system, rather than the Treasury on behalf of the people.

The € is based on a pyramid of debt built upon pyramids of debt. In order to re-base the € we must in a parallel process resolve unsustainable debt, and transition to a sustainable credit system based directly upon value, rather than claims over value manufactured by a bank.

RESOLUTION - EURO STOCK

Every EU national Treasury – or their Central Bank on their behalf – could issue undated Stock to the ECB at a discount, in much the same way that government branches issued Stock to each other.

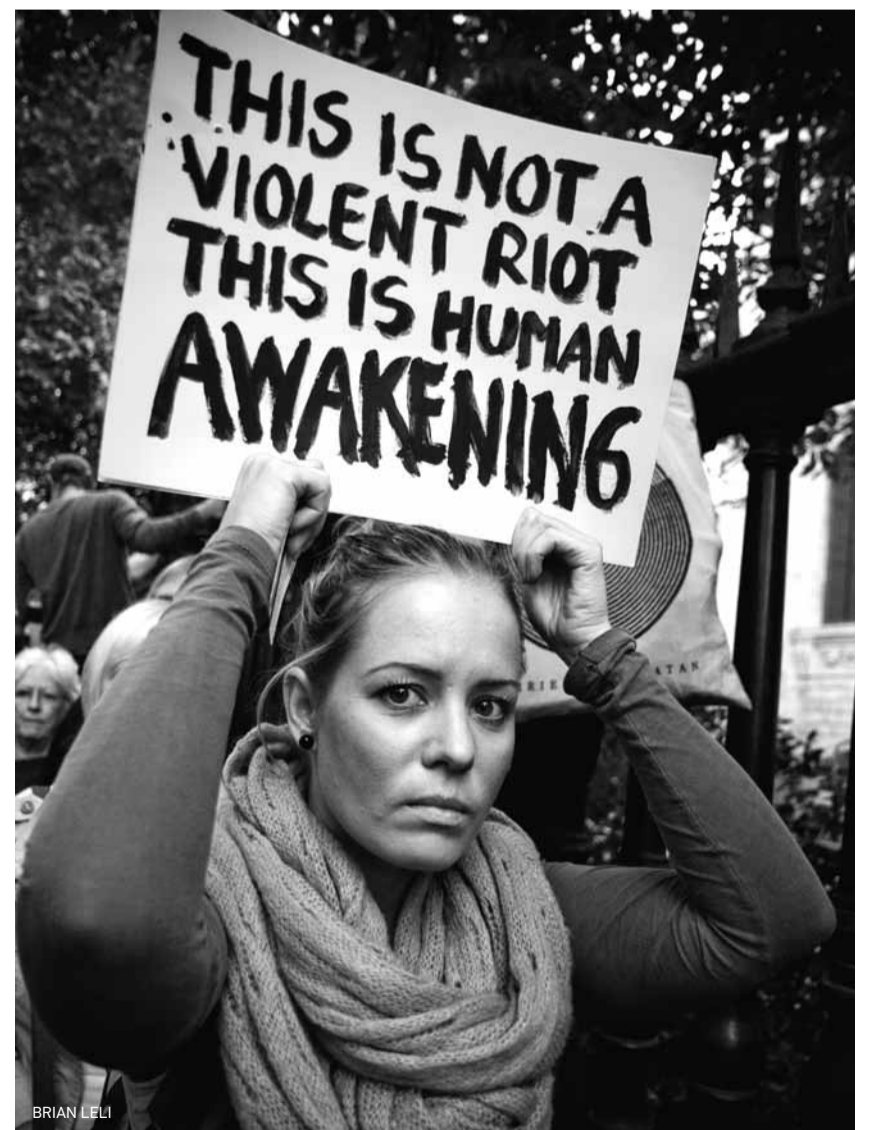
So a €1.00 Unit of € Stock sold for 80c gives a 25% absolute return: the rate of that return depends upon the ability to return the Stock in payment of taxation, or to sell it to a tax-payer. The ECB in turn could then issue a undated Consolidated € Stock (Euro Consols?) at a discount to investors in exchange for both ECB and domestic EU member debt. The amount of € Stock exchanged for a particular national debt issue would reflect the value of that debt in the market.

The outcome – at a stroke – is to resolve all dated Euro debt into undated Euro Stock, the value of which would depend upon the flows of taxation within member countries. This top down process would give a breathing space – since there is no longer any debt repayment – and would stop the bleeding. But it will not put the € patient back on his feet, since it addresses only public sector debt.

Transition to a sustainable EU economy will take place bottom up through resolution of private housing debt, and networked community based investment in housing; renewable energy and – the cheapest energy of all – in energy savings or NegaWatts.

But that is another story.

Chris Cook is currently working on networked, resilient markets and non-toxic market instruments. His blog is: www.nordicenterprisetrust.wordpress.com



'NEW' LABOUR FOR A NEW FUTURE

OCCUPY LONDON'S WORKING GROUPS



So long as the headlines of mainstream and corporate media remain the dominant billboards adorning the motorway of our media landscape, the prospects and achievements of Occupy London will remain stories untold to all than those who were here - venturing off-road. Rarely comprehended - and not often discussed - by red tops, broadsheets and broadcasters, are the movement's many working groups hammering away on keyboards and crafts, plans and discussions. Beneath the bells of St. Pauls and through the wires of e-mail groups and message boards, dozens of working groups are continuing to pursue their respective goals towards social, economic and environmental justice. Here is a glimpse at some of their achievements to date.

INITIAL STATEMENT WORKING GROUP

From the first peoples' assemblies on October 15th, people were being asked to articulate "why are we here?" There were several assemblies on this, usually using break out groups. All in all, I estimate 3,500 different people had their voices involved in this process over two days, all ages, all nationalities, all backgrounds, all abilities etc.

On October 16th, at around 4pm, the assembly asked for the spokespeople from each of the working groups to have a separate meeting to draft the statement based on all that had been said. A dozen of us sat in a circle outside Blacks tent shop and met for two hours, drafting the statement. It was a well facilitated meeting and had a wide span of voices represented. By the end, we had an eight point statement. Then, someone suggested a last point which received crazed jazz hands from all: "This is what democracy looks like, come and join us!" Because, at the time, we knew that we were all practising a form of democracy

that felt and still feels, revolutionary.

We appointed five people to be the wordsmiths and then met half an hour later. Satisfied that the wordsmiths had done a good job, we took the statement to assembly and found full and cheering consensus. -*Jamie Kelsey-Fry*

ECONOMICS WORKING GROUP

The overriding focus of the Economics Working Group has been to consider and propose the changes that need to be made within our current economic system to better the lives of the majority. This is the common denominator of all discussions within the group. It is both about the reform of existing structures and the adoption of new economic paradigms. It is not about 'isms', it is about ideas.

The beauty of the Occupy movement is that it has brought together people from all walks of life and backgrounds, where a shared motive is to better the lives of people beyond ourselves. We have considered views and ideas from across the ideological and political spectrum. Without changes in banking, the majority will be one day at the mercy of a financial meltdown the likes of which has not been seen. We have looked at changes to taxation, regressive taxes, Land Value Tax. And of course we are looking at the ecosystem of money; how it is created, distributed and what is the true 'cost' of money. Without changes in these and other areas we will see a widening of the chasm of economic inequality, which will destroy the society of which we are all a part. -*Tom Moriarty*

CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION WORKING GROUP

This group was hurriedly put together, in the very early days of the camp at St Paul's. The process of working groups was still being shaped at that time but the group had to form as a reaction to a statement from the camp regarding the COLC which had been released without consensus from

the assembly. That statement and ensuing coverage had definitely kicked us off with some excellent coverage but people were devastated that it had seemed to come in the name of the camp even though the camp hadn't been able to engage with and endorse the statement first through assembly.

In that fact alone, something else was being shaped: the importance of the assembly being responsible for whatever the camp says as a whole.

The group met around five times, with around ten people on average meeting each time. The variety of expertise was intoxicating; from a young man who had just left a local COLC secondary school, to a man who had lost his house in the crash of 2008 and had connections with COLC, as well as the author of the first 'unofficial' statement and an Imam. That was back in the days when Ye Olde London was packed with working groups downstairs. We eventually drafted the first statement of the COLC working group that could go to assembly for consensus. By then, it had grown in importance as COLC had made their demands on the camp - so our statement became Occupy LSX's counter demands. The statement passed in one hearing at assembly, after the 75 people had the time to scrutinise and amend. -*Jamie Kelsey-Fry*

THE CORPORATIONS WORKING GROUP

This was one of the first groups set up with the specific focus on creating an initial statement to voice the camp's position on a given issue. The first meeting was in Ye Olde London Pub with only five people present. The group rapidly grew to being a regular fifteen at a time. Again, the mixture of voices was intoxicating; from a Norwegian student to a London care worker, an ex-fireman to an expert on Deleuze.

From then, the process for working groups was more set. Regular shout



WASI DANIJU

outs for the meetings were made at assemblies, continually underlining that this was not a call out for middle class people with degrees but to all people who want to have their voice heard about corporate behaviour. Minutes were taken regularly and, as with all groups, meetings were facilitated tightly to ensure all voices heard equally. We met around eight times until we drafted an initial statement. We had the proposal put up online thanks to John Bywater, four days before the assembly, and printed 200 copies of the proposed statement, leaving a stack in the Info tent, distributing on the days leading up to it and having fifty kept back for the assembly itself.

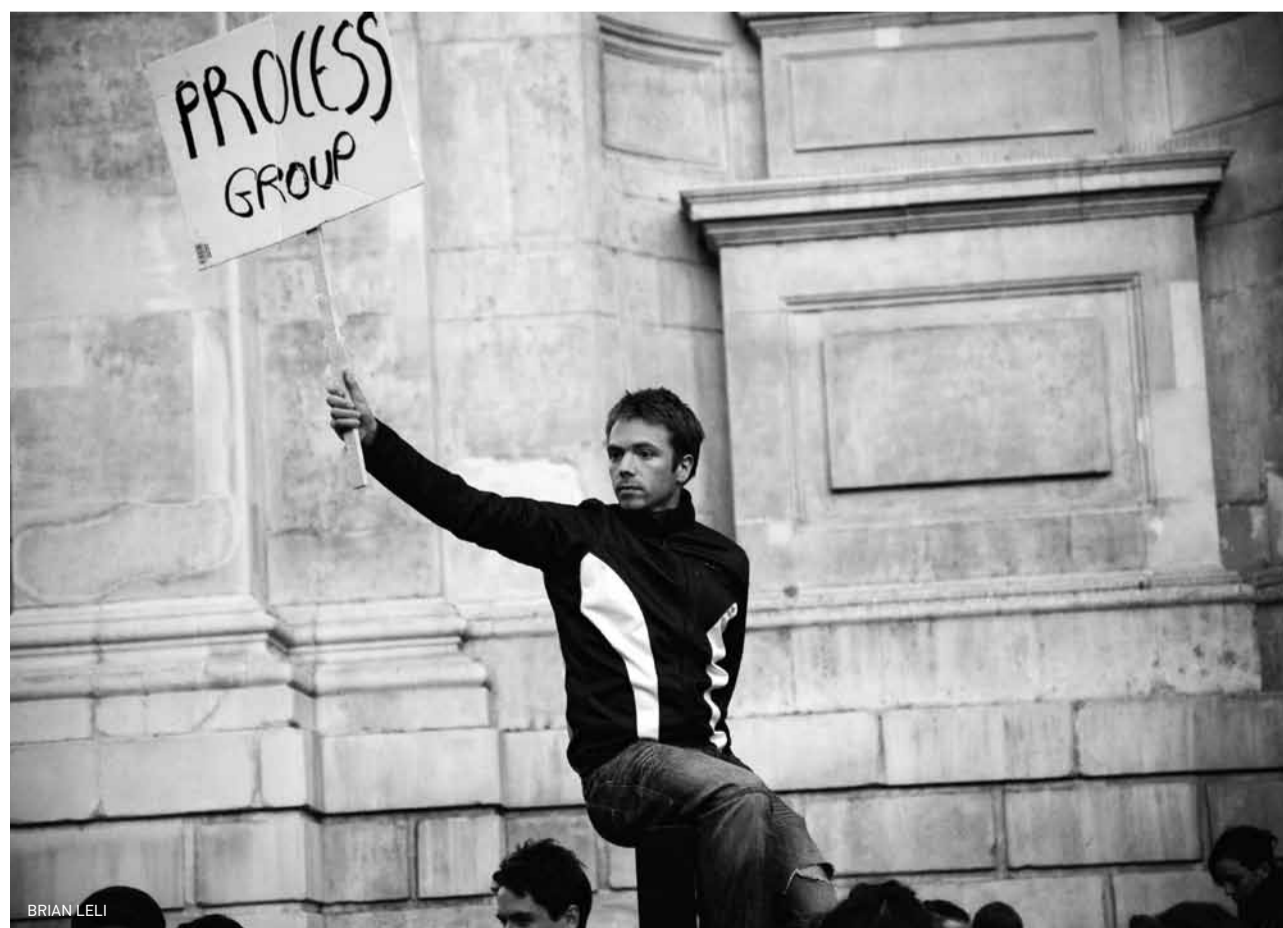
When we went to the assembly for the first reading, there were around 200 people on the steps - as this was the weekend when the first national conference was being held at London. We were very excited indeed. Only days before, the legendary Bear had brought through a new process that meant that if there was a continual block on a proposal brought to assembly, then the blockers had to go with the working group to see if they could rewrite in a way that the blocker feels represented too. This had been brought in to ensure that people who were blocking for the hell of it would have to be responsible for their choice and follow it up with the group. It was a brilliant idea of Bear's, in my opinion.

So- we ended up being the guinea pig for this new aspect process. The meeting was at least an hour. To begin with, people were really happy about the proposal - but were coming up to the mic to make minor amendments, while there were two people who were persistently blocking. This was the first time that 'revolutionaries' rather than

'reformists' were clashing. Eventually, one blocker stood aside but the other remained firm and the statement didn't go through.

At first this was depressing as we had put so much work into the document. However, the next day, the group met with the blockers. We had an eight hour meeting but still hadn't found consensus in the group. Two days later, we met again and had a four and a half hour meeting and this time, came up with a statement that made the reformists and the revolutionaries happy. In my opinion, this was a massive improvement on the original document (it starts with stating that corporations can be defined as being psychopathic!) and profound testament to the real democracy that the peoples' assembly represents.

A week later, this statement was passed: It was covered by the Guardian and influential economic websites Forbes and Motley Fool. -*Jamie Kelsey-Fry*



BRIAN LELI



OCCUPYING EVERYWHERE: A GLOBAL MOVEMENT?

SAM HALVORSEN

Having just spent a week with occupiers, indignants, and social movements from across the world, I have been thinking lots about what it means to have a truly 'global' movement. I would like to sketch two different outlines of what this may mean based on my experiences as participant in a large social forum on the one hand, and my contrasting experience with a local Occupy group on the other.

The 24th to 29th of January 2012 saw the Thematic Social Forum take place in Porto Alegre, part of the 11 year-old World Social Forum process, which was considered by many to be an integral component to the global justice movement that flourished last decade. Following the explosion of Occupy around the world, they decided to invite a few individuals from the movement to participate in various discussions about the capitalists crisis and social and ecological justice. Whilst I learned from and shared ideas with numerous activists, in particular from the global south, I could not help but feel that the Forum itself was an old model for our contemporary 'world' movement.

The Forum process was centred around a series of panels and talks, in which speakers would sit at a table and talk to their audience, before answering questions. I participated in numerous of these, and enjoyed responding to some of the critiques posed about the occupy movement (how can you hope to change the world without taking power being the most common). However, as I left the air-conditioned rooms and rigid chairs of the Forum's space, and moved into the Occupy camp outside I realised just how limited their process was.

It is not simply the model of panel-audience interaction in an institutionalised setting, but it is the whole concept of pre-determining who should speak and how they must do so. The Forum was set up at a time when the decentralised networked movements, that spanned the global north and south was being celebrated. It was based precisely on the importance of global social movements. However, 11 years

on, the whole concept of 'social movements' seems to have been reified and transformed into an essential and yet at the same time completely ignored concept in the forum. A list of established trade unions, NGO coalitions and long standing 'movements' are called upon to debate the state of the contemporary crisis and the social response. Doing so ignores the wide plethora of activists who are constantly experimenting with responses to crisis, yet do not hold the flag of any specific organisation.

Speaking to Occupy activists in Brazil, it is clear that for every similarity we have a difference. Crucially, however, we are united in our commitment to the process of social change, in which we seek to constantly (re)create open spaces for dialogue and action. Sadly the forum seems to have forgotten this, and perhaps one reason for inviting occupiers was precisely to give it a new breath of life. A global movement for the Forum is based on an unproblematic clustering of external 'social movements' that come together for question and answer sessions. A global movement for Occupy however, is to ask what a global movement might mean for us, as individuals and collections of individuals. We do not want to find the answer to this question, for it is question itself that guides us.

A global Occupy movement, if we can call it that, is a patchwork of experiences and imaginations taking place in the minds and actions of individuals and collections of individuals worldwide. It is an open space for direct action that grounds itself in very particular contexts. Constantly (re)territorialising itself in diverse corners of the world, Occupy has taken us beyond the 'network' of the World Social Forum and into a truly global movement, full of very real places. The camp in Porto Alegre is one of them, and so is St. Paul's courtyard in London. These places, which exist as much in our mind as our actions, are at once together and apart, and no panel will ever be able to answer what it is that brings us together. This is why we occupy.



WASI DANIJU

IN THE LION'S DEN: DANIEL ASHMAN

FLAMINIA GIAMBALVO

Anyone who spends more than a few hours at the St. Paul's occupation camp is familiar with Dan's face. Curly dark hair, thin and tallish, with a look which is permanently enthusiastic yet frazzled. Besides his involvement in the livestream working group he tells me he helps out with "the recycling, showing people around the camp, a few internal working groups". Then he pauses, looks at me and says: "What other working groups am I involved in? I'm involved in quite a bit really". In addition, he has stood as a litigant-in-person in the legal case brought by the City of London Corporation against the Occupy London protest camp outside St. Paul's Cathedral. He is now preparing his appeal.

On the 18th of January, Mr Justice Lindblom ruled in favour of the City of London Corporation, rejecting the defences brought forward by Daniel Ashman and George Barda, the other litigants-in-person. During the court proceedings, Dan had submitted evidence demonstrating "undue influence of corporate lobbying, complicity in war crimes, corporate tax avoidance and disregard for life", which was rapidly dismissed by the court, as only the geographical factors were taken into consideration. The verdict left Dan,

and many others, feeling "failed" by the justice system. However, he has by no means exhausted his hope, determination or resources.

Despite his relatively young age of 27 and legalistic inexperience, his resoluteness in defending Occupy and his unwavering belief in the movement's core values, make his voice one difficult to ignore. He explains to me: "If we concede our physical presence without exhausting the route of justice, it demonstrates a telling underlying belief that we are unable to genuinely bring about the change we wish to see". He then adds: "Non-tokenistic action is of the utmost importance. Can we believe in a politicians "Moral Capitalism"? Do they seek peace or believe that there should be peace?"

While his involvement at Occupy LSX is indisputable, Dan doesn't define himself an activist. "I try and avoid all categorisation, because labeling people de-humanises them", he says. "I am a human being who is concerned enough to take a stand and who advocates finding a different way". He has attended a few demonstrations, the first being the 'million march' against the Iraq war in 2003, but mainly Dan is concerned with issues related to social



justice and inequality.

Prior to the start of the London occupation, he saw himself as having two jobs. A remunerated one - which was working with children with autism - and a voluntary one as part of a comedy sketch group. It is his background in contemporary theatre which propelled him to begin researching political issues and write plays related to self empowerment. He loves both of his jobs, although he has given them up now, feeling that the most important thing he could be doing for himself and generations to come was to occupy. In his own words: "St Paul's is one of the most important conversations. The chaos is being exported and we are caught in the storm. We don't feel like we are involved and perhaps we aren't directly, but through our passiveness we give tacit consent to these actions".

He decided to stand as a litigant-in-person since he was uncomfortable being "spoken for". The feeling of unease was bolstered when he heard one of the country's most prominent humanitarian barristers, John Cooper QC, was

defending the camp pro-bono. "For me, the whole point of being here is speaking for yourself. This isn't about anyone's personal greatness. Only if we take a stance as individuals with our own power can we bring change to our lives". This has been the beginning of Dan's journey into the unknown.

He admits to me: "I am not a legal person, and I had never been in a court room before." Yet his tone is neither agitated nor nervous, but one of playful defiance, perhaps peppered with a hint of madness. When Daniel initially stood as a litigant-in-person, he could have potentially lost a sum ranging between £30,000 and £100,000 in legal costs. Eventually these charges were dropped, as the City of London Corporation sought to speed up the legal process. In addition to the possible financial hardship, this experience has been tolling on the relationship with his fiancée, who he now sees once a week. He confesses: "Initially it was difficult for her. But she knows why I am here and she recognizes the potential I see in this movement". But what would have happened in case you had to pay legal costs? "Costs are simply

a way to instill fear into people seeking justice, it's a way of financial bullying", Dan responds.

When explaining the whole process, what he emphasises is the feeling of empowerment, partly bolstered by the opportunity of holding prominent people within the corporate ladder to account. For example, Dan was able to directly question comptroller Andrew Colvin as to the reasons why he had not responded to the counter-offer made by the St. Paul's occupation. This offer proposed that the City of London Corporation opened their account to scrutiny, thus making themselves subject to the Freedom of Information Act and publishing their records since 2008. Grinning, he adds, "he couldn't really come up with a convincing answer".

In the span of few months, Dan underwent a 'transition' from ordinary, concerned citizen to full time occupier. But what has motivated such a life change? "The lack of fear" says Dan, smiling through his eyes. He then explains how the physical manifestation of St. Paul's and the permanent nature of the camp bolstered his confidence in being proactive and finding concrete alternatives.

Now occupiers are bracing themselves for a potential forceful eviction. Dan, like many others in the camp, advocates a 'peaceful resistance'. He says: "It does not seem just to impede a process that so many have been waiting for". But he also recognizes the need to keep the momentum alive. The court verdict pushed occupiers to begin thinking creatively in regards to the future of the movement. According to Dan, "if there is an eviction it is not the end by any stretch of the imagination, nor should it be. The goals we have set are not even close to being realized." While Dan is still uncertain in regards to the concrete future manifestations of Occupy, there is no doubt in his mind about the overall outcome of the occupy process: "I hope to see respect for people's lives regardless of their financial value".





BRIAN LELI



For the Tory-led Coalition, many of whom were educated privately, schools seem to be detached from their communities, places that exist largely for the acquisition of credentials, including many currently low status vocational qualifications - one reason for the supposed success of many academies - and worker-ready presentational skills. For the more affluent child, meanwhile, school serves the social purpose of fostering useful or even elite networks for the future.

It is a depressingly limited and short-term view of human potential.

A return to the values of 19th century schooling - complete with ex-soldiers instilling discipline in classrooms in poorer industrial areas - will not revive our flagging economy, or enable us to compete with China or India. In these countries, educational and economic success is predicated on a form of dawn till dusk slavery.

ALTERNATIVE VISIONS

We need to draw, instead, on a deeper vision of human and economic potential. Here, we could learn from some of the best systems in the world which are admirably simple and yet entirely non-selective, such as Finland, or the province of Alberta in Canada, where an excellent school in every neighbourhood gives each child a rich, rounded education.

Not only do all children go to school together, it is also made sure that no child, particularly those from a poorer background, is left behind.

The private sector and market values cannot deliver a fair, high quality, stable system. This depends on a thoughtful, democratically accountable national and local state.

National government should ensure fair distribution of resources, aided by increased taxation, and set the terms of a minimal curriculum, thereby ensuring maximum autonomy for each area, school and teacher.

Local bodies should ensure that schools have fair admissions policies, do not unfairly exclude children, and foster collaboration, not competition.

Teachers should be highly trained, encouraged to take regular breaks to reflect on their subject knowledge as well as their teaching skills. No class in the country should be bigger than 20, and substantial resources should be directed to schools in poorer areas, and to poorer pupils.

Of course, every child should be literate and numerate. But the acquisition of such skills should be a prerequisite of schooling in the 21st century in what is still one of the most affluent countries in the world.

BROADER HORIZONS

The key to a good education lies not in narrowing down the curriculum but in opening it up. Finland, which has a far broader, more imaginative and personalised approach to learning and the measurement of learning, has some of the best results in the world.

Schools should be places full of constant enquiry and spirited debate. They should foster the understanding and enjoyment of all forms of art, music, literature, other languages and cultures and be a place of artistic and scientific experiment.

Qualities such as inquisitiveness, tenacity, creativity and risk-taking should be developed and celebrated. Young people should be encouraged to deepen their own intellectual and practical enthusiasms, not merely be drilled to pass exams.

Parents and students would respond far more positively to a system that did not rigidly categorise a young person by the time of puberty but instead recognised her/him as a unique complex moral being with enormous potential. The individual and social rewards would be untold.

Melissa Benn's School Wars:

The Battle for Britain's Education is published by Verso.

AN EDUCATION

MELISSA BENN

Imagine, for a moment, our nation's schools as places of real enjoyment and stimulation, as proud civic institutions where all children - black, white, rich, poor, Jewish and Muslim - could be educated together. Imagine a school system free from the influence of business interests and corporate values. Utopian dreaming? The Coalition - and many on the Labour front bench - would certainly have us believe so.

The Government are currently reforming state education at breakneck speed, posing as a radical administration acting in the interests of poorer families while, in reality, returning us to some very 19th century notions: schools as places of strict discipline and rote learning, increasingly run by private interests, encouraging the separation of children on grounds of faith, wealth and so called intelligence.

It has no electoral mandate for many of these changes, just as it has no mandate, beyond the flimflammy of opinion polls, for the current dismantling of the benefit system or the National Health Service.

This diminution of democracy - a growing threat throughout Europe, as the economic crisis grows - is reflected in the host of speedy, sham consultations taking place around the country as schools are bribed or bullied into becoming academies

COMPREHENSIVE REFORM

But, just as in health and benefits, there are alternative visions of a reformed welfare state, one which does not reward the already strong or profit-seeking or diminish the potential of the vulnerable.

Michael Gove is right on one thing: history is a vital key to understanding the present and the future.

Free universal education was introduced in the UK after the Second World War as an attempt to rationalise and transcend the unequal patchwork of provision that characterized the pre-

war years.

But the 1944 settlement was fatally flawed in one important respect. It divided our children, aged eleven. The so called 'clever' minority were siphoned into the grammars while the majorities were shipped off to under-resourced and lesser regarded secondary moderns, a division that mostly followed class lines.

Changing attitudes to intelligence in addition to massed parental revolt led to the slow implementation of comprehensive education. Indeed, the more idealistic and economically buoyant Sixties and Seventies produced many positive developments in primary and secondary education and much rich experimentation.

But comprehensive reform was never consolidated thanks to the ambivalence of successive governments, both Labour and Tory, and intense media hostility to 'all in' schools that has only intensified.

The private schools were never dealt with, a significant minority of grammar schools remained, and faith schools and other forms of subtle and covert selection were encouraged.

All this ensured that inequality remained inscribed in the system, slowing educational advance for poorer families.

21ST CENTURY INEQUALITIES.

As a result, our school system is more unequal than ever. Elite private schools, some charging up to thirty thousand pounds a year per pupil, continue to thrive.

The eleven plus still exists in some parts of the country, with thousands of poorer children beginning their secondary school life officially told they are failures, while children from better off families are often heavily tutored to get through the test.

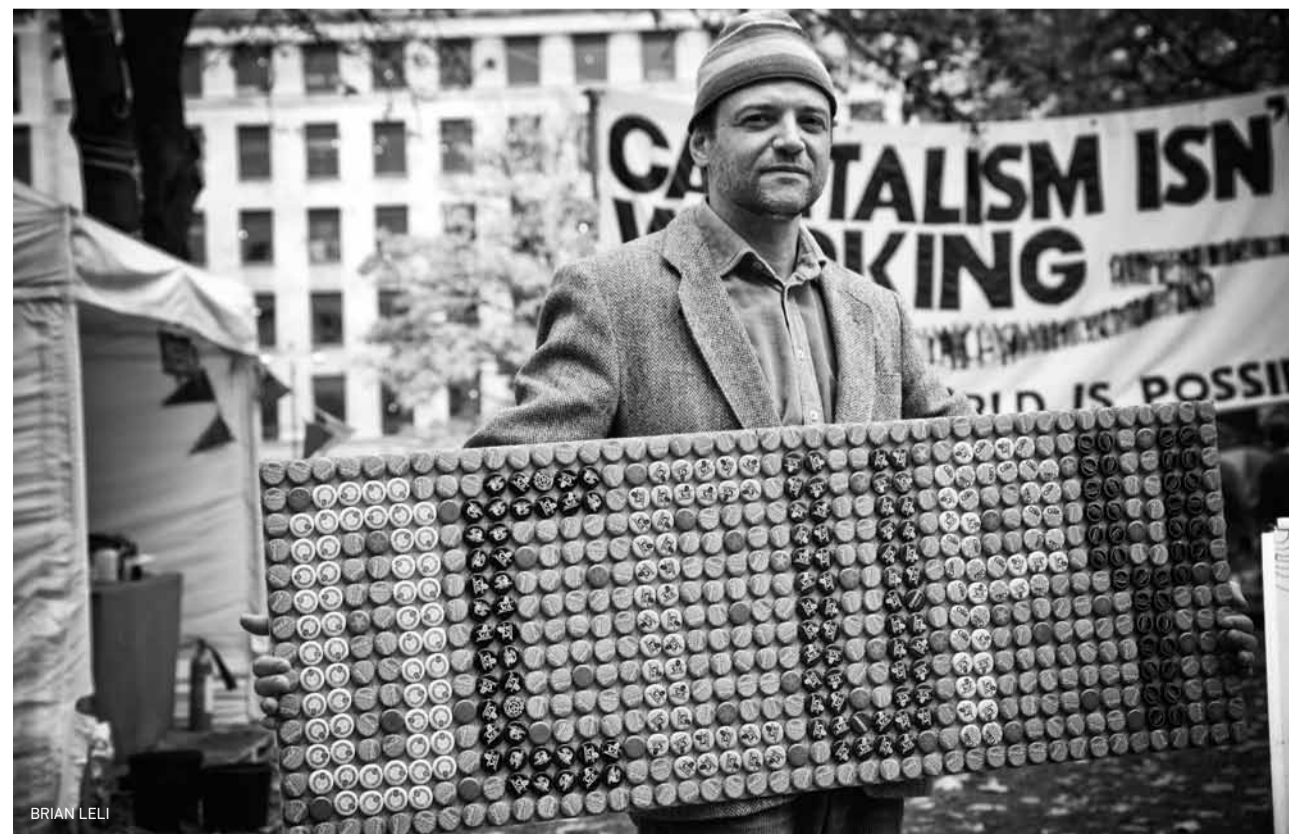
Now the arrival of the so called 'free schools,' the rapid growth of the academy programme, the rupturing of the link between elected local authorities and local schools, and the

growth of powerful educational chains, are further disfiguring the landscape.

So that although we have many great schools, teachers and students, our school system is likely to become more segregated than ever. Local authorities and community schools are increasingly struggling with severe funding cuts while the new free schools and academies take valuable revenue.

EDUCATION PLC

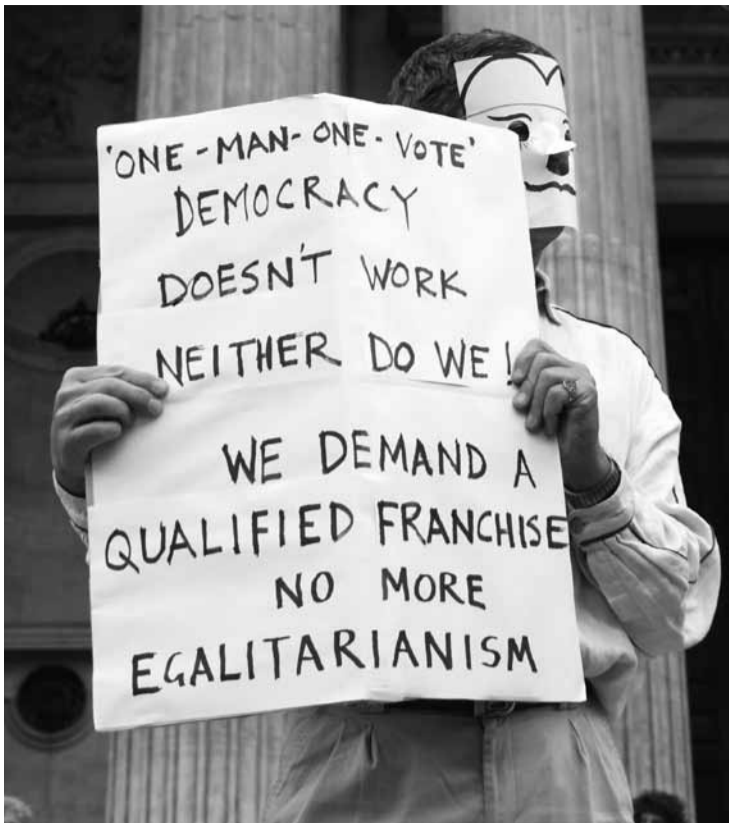
If we want to see where this is leading we only have to look to the USA where the growth of charter schools, backed by powerful "philanthropic capital," has led to increased testing, a dangerous narrowing of the curriculum, yet more social and ethnic segregation and an aggressive assault on the public (state) school system.



BRIAN LELI

LIBEL TO CHANGE?

ROBERT SHARP



MY FAIR LONDON

MATTHEW RICHMOND

According to the National Equality Panel's report in 2010, London is the most unequal region in the UK and one of the most unequal cities in the world. On average, the top 10 per cent richest Londoners are 273 times wealthier than the bottom 10 per cent. The top 20 per cent of earners take home 60 per cent of the income, while the bottom poorest 10 per cent of households are just getting by – at retirement age they have a total wealth of under £3,500. Economic inequality has risen sharply since the 1970s and it continues to rise. We at the London Equality Group believe this level of inequality is not only morally unacceptable, but also damaging – for individuals and for society as a whole.

The Spirit Level, a book by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, broke new ground when it was published in 2009. Based on thirty years' research and hundreds of academic papers, it demonstrated that more unequal societies are bad for almost everyone – the well-off as well as the poor. Reviewing academic studies and statistics, it found that almost every social and environmental problem – ill-health, low levels of trust, violence, mental illness, drug abuse – is more likely to occur in a less equal society. The evidence has been subjected to close academic scrutiny and vicious right-wing attacks but the findings have proved remarkably resilient.

Politicians often claim that voters are not interested in equality (remember Peter Mandelson being 'intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich'?). However, an IPPR (Institute for Public Policy Research) report last year on attitudes to high pay showed that three-quarters of Londoners say they would support government action to reduce the gap between high and low earners. These results are consistent with successive British Social Attitudes surveys, which show that over three-quarters of Britons are concerned about inequality and over half feel it is the government's responsibility to reduce inequality.

Many of the causes of growing inequality are created at the global level, for example through the "race to the bottom" in national taxation levels, overinflated transnational markets for CEO pay, and the offshore tax haven system. Others, like unbalanced regional policies and the erosion of the welfare state, arise at the national level. Everyone who is concerned about inequality should campaign for national governments to confront its causes collectively and individually.

However, there are also important things that can be done at the city and local levels. That's why the London Equality Group is launching its My Fair London election campaign on Saturday 25th February. We are calling on all candidates for the London Mayoral elections to sign up to our plan of action on proactive measures to reduce inequality in London. These include:

- Lobbying other employers to make their pay more equal;
- Reducing the gap between the highest and lowest earners in the Greater London Authority (GLA) group to 10:1 and using procurement powers to influence GLA suppliers;
- Monitoring inequality in London;
- Lobbying central government to adopt policies that reduce inequality;
- Using housing, transport, health and planning powers to reduce inequality.

To support our campaign please:

- Visit our website www.myfairlondon.com where you can find information on our upcoming launch, how to get involved and sign our petition to the candidates
 - Like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/myfairlondon and follow us on Twitter @EqualLondon2012
- Matthew Richmond is a PHD student at King's College London and part of the London Equality Group



The protesters at the #OccupyLSX camp at St Pauls know all about free expression and censorship. Their chosen site of protest has been a symbol of free thinking for centuries. Dissident pamphlets were sold in the churchyard, and reformist preachers gave their open-air sermons at St Pauls Cross, long before Wren raised his iconic dome. In past months, the camp has fought off legal challenges to their presence and the threat of eviction still looms. The right to political protest is under constant threat as was shown by the recent removal of protestors from Parliament Square.

Both these protest movements have been fighting censorship imposed upon them by landowners and local government. However, free speech can be suppressed in other ways. The libel laws of England & Wales enable a form of privatised censorship, where wealthy individuals can launder their reputations in the High Court, and multinational companies can ensure that negative reporting of their business practices and products never reaches the consumer.

The emergence of 'libel tourism', where wealthy interests based overseas use the English Justice system as a weapon of reputation management, highlights the nature of the problem. Dr Peter Wilmshurst, a cardiologist from Sheffield, was sued by the Canadian pharmaceutical giant NMT for comments he made at a conference in the United States, and reported on a US-based website. Wilmshurst was talking about his research showing that a heart implant produced by the company was ineffective. Publishers Little, Brown spent several years defending litigation over *Slave* by Mende Nazer, a memoir describing her incarceration in London by a Sudanese businessman. In both these cases, the defendants prevailed, after spending hundreds of thousands of pounds in lawyers' fees that they have little hope of recovering. This is not free speech – it is prohibitively expensive speech! Other doctors and publishers see this, and decide publication is not worth the cost.

Meanwhile, ordinary people are finding their right to discuss issues that matter to them is being curtailed. The Citizens Advice Bureau recently had to halt the publication of their report describing the predatory 'civil recovery' demands of some High Street chains, due to libel threats. The parenting website Mumsnet was sued by baby-raising guru Gina Ford, for comments left on one of their forums. Advocacy groups like Human Rights Watch have been sued for naming and shaming genocidaires around the world. The British Medical Journal is routinely advised to 'spike' articles that criticise pharmaceutical trials, for fear of a libel writ. For years, reporting of the harmful effects of Thalidomide was censored through the civil courts, and only a ruling from the European Court of Human Rights (the body criticised by David Cameron this

phone hacking scandal, some politicians are concerned about offering the media greater freedom of expression through reformed libel laws. Could the low public opinion of the mainstream media derail the libel reform process? Let us hope not. A key message of the libel reform campaign is that the high costs of fighting a case benefit the wealthy, regardless of what side of the argument they are on. Rich oligarchs can launch libel claims, confident that their critics cannot afford to defend themselves. But wealthy media barons can libel individuals with impunity, confident that they can outspend the target of their smears. The proposed reforms place a premium on truth, public interest, and responsible journalism, which would benefit investigative journalists, biographers, memoirists and scientists, while doing nothing to enable the gutter



week) allowed the scandal to emerge... too late for the hundreds of children damaged by the drug.

However, a window for reform has been prised open by a genuine grassroots movement. When the popular science writer Simon Singh was sued for libel by the British Chiropractic Association, a large group of scientists and self-styled 'geeks', led by the campaign group Sense About Science, were mobilised against the current laws. Meanwhile, English PEN, the writers association, and Index on Censorship co-authored the report 'Free Speech Is Not For Sale', highlighting the myriad problems with the law and offering concrete ideas for change. Jack Straw, the Secretary of State for Justice at the time, was initially sceptical of the need for reform, but changed his mind after the Libel Reform Campaign brought him evidence of the scale of censorship that was taking place. A motion backing reform was signed by the majority of MPs, and all three parties included libel reform in their 2010 manifestos. The coalition government has produced draft legislation, which has since been scrutinised by Parliament. A combination of people power, celebrity spokesmen, and detailed policy research has taken an obscure legal issue to the brink of legislation.

Job done? Problem solved? Not quite. Following the News of the World

journalism currently under scrutiny at the Leveson Inquiry. Meanwhile, changes to procedure, and to the way lawyers are paid, would allow individuals – whether they are libel claimants or defendants – to compete on a level playing field with big companies and international millionaires.

The Libel Reform Campaign is entering a crucial phase. The coalition Government needs to follow through on its draft legislation, and promise a reform Bill in the next Queen's Speech. Those who believe in free expression, and in levelling the legal playing field, should visit www.libelreform.org and help the campaign cross the finish line.

Robert Sharp is Head of Campaigns & Communications at English PEN



ASKING THE OCCUPIERS:

MIRCEA BARBU

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CURRENT CHALLENGE TO THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT?

Julian, 36: "The eviction ruling. We have to make sure all of these structures are being safeguarded. We need to find a place to store the equipment, solar panels, generator, tents and shelves that we all worked so hard to build and maintain in the last 3 months."

Katherine, 20: "The biggest challenge for me is to maintain contact with the people I've been interacting and working with on social change. We have a powerful and amazing social network in place but it's not going to be the same as being here and talking face-to-face."

John, 26: "Finding another place to occupy is relatively easy. The challenge will be in engaging with the general public in the same way we did at St. Paul's."

Anna, 30: "It was never about St. Paul's for me. I see no challenge in having to move. With over half a million empty buildings in UK alone and so many public spaces in London we'll manage to find a way."

Shawn, 44: "So far it's been really difficult to start an eviction plan. Next week we'll need as many volunteers as we can to make sure all these wonderful structures and materials don't go to waste."

Owen, 31: "The biggest challenge is tackling the increasing ways in which the 1% is coming down on us. They have started a vicious campaign against our Internet freedom along with social-economic enslavement."

STALWARTS OF OCCUPY: STEVE

EMMA FORDHAM

OCCUPIER AND OT REPORTER EMMA FORDHAM SPEAKS TO ANOTHER OF OCCUPY LONDON'S FAMILIAR FACES

EM: When did you arrive at OLSX?

STEVE: At the end of October. Two weeks in.

EM: What brought you here?

STEVE: I wanted to visit London and thought I'd check out what Occupy was about. I didn't expect to stay.

EM: What were you doing before you came to St Paul's?

STEVE: I was living in Brighton. Just living.

EM: What have you been doing while staying at the OLSX camp?

STEVE: I do water runs for the kitchen. It involves loading empty barrels into a trolley, pushing them around to the other side of the cathedral and across the road, filling them at a public water fountain then wheeling them back without losing any precious water. I help the Shelter Working Group with looking after the tents and building wooden constructions. Shelter makes sure all the tents are okay and that the people and stuff in the tents are okay. If a tent becomes empty we pack it up and store any stuff that's left in it and allocate the tent to someone else, until the owner returns.

EM: Why did you decide to stay?

STEVE: I enjoy the camaraderie and the chance to help out.

EM: Is camping in the city a hardship or a joy?

STEVE: Somewhere in-between. It's easy to find food in the city but hard to

find nature. I don't feel the cold but I miss the countryside. I'm not normally a city-dweller. In Brighton there's the sea.

EM: Of all the issues Occupy aims to address, what are the most important for you?

STEVE: Trying to make life easier for the masses.

EM: Tell me three things about the current system that you'd most like to change...

STEVE: Eliminate the rich - well, not eliminate them, I'm a peaceful man - but eliminate their riches. Redistribute the riches to the poor, and make sure everyone in the world has enough to eat. I'd like to see an even financial footing throughout the world.

EM: What do you think Occupy has achieved so far?

STEVE: We've raised a slight awareness of the problems. There's a long way to go.

EM: What do you think Occupy should do next?

STEVE: I haven't a clue. But I think this movement is important and can't be stopped. The authorities are trying to stop it, with court cases and evictions and changing the rules about camping and protests but hopefully they won't manage it because we've got it rolling now.

EM: Where will you go if the St Paul's camp is evicted?

STEVE: I'd go and find another camp and see if I could help there.



ON THE SOAPBOX

REV JAMES LAWSON

REVEREND JAMES LAWSON WONDERS IF OCCUPY HAS PRESENTED A LAST CHANCE FOR CHRISTIANITY

The Occupy London camp outside Saint Paul's Cathedral is unique. No other protest in hundreds of cities across the world was so passionately engaged with the church. That gave the church a chance to learn from the movement. In an essay called "The Judgement of the World" Archbishop Rowan Williams writes about the way Christian identity has always been worked out in relation to what lies beyond its borders. The church may even find out what scripture itself is saying in its confrontations with the world. The Christian community may be enlarged in understanding and even in some sense evangelised in such encounters. Christians rediscover their own foundational story in the parables of the acts and deeds of others.

The Occupy movement seems to exemplify this "judgement of the world." Christians could learn from the movement about the injustice and destructiveness of capitalism. We could discover our own complicity and complacency. We were reminded that we worship God or mammon, not God and mammon. But Christians who visited the camp could experience more than this kind of judgement. David Graeber, the anthropologist who was one of the initial organisers of the Occupy Wall Street protests, speaks of a prefigurative politics. It's one thing to say "Another world is possible." It's another to experience it, however momentarily. People expecting lists of demands were missing the point of the movement. Prefigurative politics is not about demands. It's about being the change you want to see in the world. And joy, festivity, laughter and desire are a revolutionary impetus that brings an alternative future into the present. The Occupy camp at St Paul's could feel like an enclave of Friday night in the perpetual Monday morning of the City. It could feel like church on a good day. Perhaps its prefigurative politics could even enlarge Christian's understanding of the realized eschatology of Jesus who brought the great banquet of the future kingdom into the present in the festivity of his meals with sinners?

So I hope that the church will not turn its attention away from this prefigurative politics after the eviction of the Occupy camp outside Saint Paul's. I hope that it might even learn something also from the response of the Protestant churches in Communist East Germany to dissident groups.

Church leaders there had been taught by the martyr theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Nazi era that the words of the church lose their force when it is more concerned with self-preservation than with service to others such as the Jews. So they wanted their church to be a "church for others," a church that stands up for more than just the faithful. In the 1970s groups began to be founded to oppose the injustice and destructiveness of communism not in the name of capitalism but of "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation." Some were of these groups were Christian. Many were not. They still found shelter in space controlled by the church, just as in London. The Stasi denounced the leaders of these groups as "fanatics who want to shine politically." The churches of East Germany provided these groups with the use of its roofs and its rooms, and also with protection, inspiration, pastoral care, and help with networking and communications. Inside the church the seeds of a revolution were sown and tended. The church of St Nicholas in Leipzig still has a banner up that says "Open to All." In October 1989 thousands of people lit candles and prayed there for peace at evening services organized by its pastor. They took their candles out onto the streets to demonstrate against the communist system. They had an incredible experience of power of a non-violent revolution by candlelight.

Could a church within capitalism imitate this church within socialism? Could a beautiful friendship develop out of this chance encounter at St Paul's when the movement was unable to occupy the Stock Exchange as it originally intended? And could the crisis of capitalism and an intensifying fear of ecological catastrophe even provide "a last chance for Christianity" as the East German Green thinker Rudolf Bahro asked ironically? Although he was an atheist he argued that these are ultimately spiritual problems that demand spiritual solutions. "No order can save us which simply limits the excesses of our greed. Only spiritual mastery of greed itself can help us. It is perhaps only the Prophets and the Buddhas, whether or not their answers were perfect, who have at least put the questions radically enough." Could occupying faith release a power that will change the world?



THE GREAT DEBATE

CAN OCCUPY ACHIEVE ITS POLITICAL GOALS BY REMAINING OUTSIDE OF MAINSTREAM POLITICS?

AGAINST

JUDITH SCHOSSBOECK

What Occupy can achieve outside of mainstream politics depends on how one defines its political goals. I argue that a lot of these goals have already been fully realised, as one of the main functions of social movements is to bring specific, so far underrepresented topics on the political agenda and to provoke change in people's mindsets. Who would claim that this has not been the case with Occupy? So far, the movement has been tremendously successful in provoking discussion on the subcultural level and in public discourses. In a second step, this could lead to a change of values towards more ethical business and government practices.

The function of social movements is often mistaken with the one of parties although both goals and actions differ considerably. Direct action activities outside of the main political channels are a significant element of the political counter-public. Occupy thus needs radical visual events and actions to reach visibility and publicity of its claims. Public occupations and civil disobedience are crucial in this regard and cannot be undertaken while being bound by the rules of mainstream politics. And whilst mainstream institutions do not provide an arena for expressing alternative or more radical political concepts, social movements offer a playground for these ideas or failures and seek to make them known.

I am all for experimenting with new and alternative political concepts (e.g. the liquid democracy model used by some Occupy formations). However, mainstream politics does, at least at the moment, not consider these alternatives to classic representative democracy. Unless such models are seriously discussed, Occupy entering the political mainstream would interfere with the core idea of the "Real democracy now!" slogan,



WASI DANIJU

Occupy's direct democracy procedures and other principles of the movement. Occupy should not fall into the trap of the current political system, in which people feel disenfranchised with politics as they think they have no say. Considering alternative models of democracy and delegation becomes particularly relevant in international Occupy activities, e.g. international coordination meetings, when individuals might have to represent a national perspective. In mainstream politics, individuals are turned into party mouthpieces while politics becomes increasingly populist. Thus, electing people into the current system and making them a voice of Occupy would be in itself problematic. One of the frequently criticised characteristics of Occupy is actually one of its strengths: that nobody owns it or can claim the name (although people cannot be prevented from doing so sometimes). Nevertheless, whether occupiers decide to stand as a candidate for a political party as individuals is still their own business.

It goes without saying that the current nature of mainstream politics is part of the reason why Occupy exists. Right now, the majority of activists are against turning the movement into a political platform and most occupiers oppose the idea of entering into the political mainstream. Given that

consensus would be needed for such a move, this is very unlikely to happen in the not too distant future, although some endorse the concept of real participatory democracy for a new society. However, entering the political mainstream would currently get people divided as the majority does not want to be in a political party or support the political system in its current status.

In addition to the lack of support for such plans, Occupy does also not seem to have the infrastructure or simply the money required for political campaigns in many countries – let alone on the global level. This does not mean political platforms cannot come out of some movements, but it should not be priority at this stage.

Occupy is currently entering a new phase in which ways of gaining more political influence need to be considered. I am not arguing against strategies of influencing political parties or even cooperating with them. But staying autonomous in this game and influencing the political system from the outside in unconventional ways is an often underestimated strategy, although it has been the movement's mission from the very beginning. In this regard, building permanent civic networks can even be more influential than entering mainstream politics.



BRIAN LELI

FOR

KIT MARSTERS

It is becoming increasingly clear that mainstream politicians do not always have the public's best interest at heart. Over the last few years dodgy practices have been exposed, and few would deny the influence of big business on the political process. The comment sections of online publications, and programs such as Question Time, reveal the general population's lack of faith in politicians, and in politics as a whole.

For many people, elections are frustrating because there is no real choice and they do not know who to vote for. They feel betrayed by Labour; and the Tories target the vulnerable. During the last election the Liberal Democrats benefitted from a willingness to get rid of the two-party system but now they, too, are regarded as more of the same.

So who is left? Not many voters would opt for the BNP, with their questionable agenda. UKIP isn't considered to be much better. The Greens? They could be an option, but how much would truly change if they were to be elected? The environment may be better off with them in charge, but what about the UK as a whole? The same system and the same flawed processes would still remain in place.

It may seem hypocritical to suggest a move into mainstream politics when Occupy protests decisions made by mainstream politics. Then again, the government has proven that it's unwilling to listen to the 99%, and sometimes you have to get inside the system in order to achieve desired change.

When reading the comment sections in the media, and various forums around the Internet, the same questions are repeated over and over: Who are these Occupy people? What do they stand for? What are their plans? How, exactly, do they represent me?

At best, Occupy is seen as ineffective. When the looming eviction was announced, some were surprised that we were still there. At worst, those who oppose Occupy tell others that it's made up of a bunch of "benefit scroungers" and "trustafarians" who are jealous of the rich and too lazy to earn their own money.

Another question that comes up, with increasing frequency, is "why don't they stand for election, then? If they don't like the government, why don't they form a political party and give people the option to vote for them?"

Why not indeed? If Occupy wishes to represent the 99%, why don't we allow the 99% to decide whether or not they want us to represent them? It would offer the public an alternative during elections. It would

give them a voice. By ticking the Occupy box, it would allow them to affirm clearly that they are not okay with the way the country is run. This would give a lot more weight to the movement.

How can we expect the government to listen to us when those we are meant to speak for do not know who we are, or what we stand for? When some do not even realise we are still going? It is far too easy for those in power to cling on to the misperception that we are just a bunch of work-shy youngsters out of touch with the real world and without any meaningful knowhow. They are not worried about us. They have no reason to be.

Working with the system rather than against it does not mean we have to sell out. If the 99% did rise up and vote for Occupy, we could change the system. We could give it the values we stand for, and create fairness for all.

It would be another tool, another resource to effect change, not only on a national but also on an international basis, because if we could make it work, it might just get other countries to sit up and pay attention. It would show people around the world that there is another way.

Occupy is NOT made up of the lazy or the work-shy. It is a movement that involves people of different ages, cultures, backgrounds and skills who, between them, could certainly come up with an effective and inclusive manifesto. All we would need to do is get it out there and prove that change does not always mean a change for the worse.



IS "IS OCCUPY LONDON AN INSIDE JOB" AN INSIDE JOB?

MARK
WEAVER

MARK WEAVER OF THE PARANOIA WORKING GROUP REVEALS A WORRYING DEVELOPMENT LURKING DEEP IN THE CORRUPT BELLY OF OCCUPY LONDON.

Fears have recently been raised within the Occupy London movement. Facilitators using mind control techniques, secret hierarchies and financial corruption are just some of the theories in circulation.

At first I thought this was natural; something to be expected from a fearful society making it's first big move against power. But then I woke up. What if these brave, hot headed truth seekers were themselves part of a super secret conspiracy to distract people from the real threat? A plot so murky and abstract that even the agents themselves are in total self-denial of its existence. This would mean that the Occupy movement has been infiltrated by the 'Occupy Truth Movement', which has itself now been exposed by the 'Occupy Truth Within The Occupy Truth Movement Group', or 'OTWTOTMG' for short.

Of course, at this level things can get confusing. No one knows who anyone is, who they are working for or what that work consist of. It is entirely possible that the 'Occupy Truth Within The Occupy Truth Movement Group' contains double agents from the 'Occupy Truth Movement' working to undermine the efforts of the 'Occupy Truth Within The Occupy Truth Movement Group'. This would mean the infiltrators are trying to co-opt the hidden infiltrators who are themselves unaware of their role in the real conspiracy.

If you reveal to people this truth they may seem sceptical, but don't hate them. Their rational minds are not yet equipped for this kind of quantum logic. They will ask for evidence, which is itself known to be part of a complex government hoax.

Keep asking questions; keep creating answers. The truth will prevail.

THE OCCUPY EFFECT

PROF DAN BERNHARDT

DAN BERNHARDT, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, TELLS US HOW HE THINKS THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT HAS INFLUENCED THE WORLD OF ECONOMICS.

The Occupy movement has had a significant impact on how the public perceives the optimal degree of progressivity of taxation (more public support to tax very high income earners by more), and within the US this represents a significant shift of views from the simple-minded assessment that all taxes are bad (and that the government does nothing for people). Long-term, I suspect that this will be the primary contribution, and a healthy one. It probably has a secondary impact on how short-term government discretionary spending is viewed (more favorably).

I definitely think that Occupy has had an impact on perception of inequality, and that one manifestation of this is the attitude toward capital gains taxation. Among many economists there has long been a view, for example, that the description of what represents capital gains is inappropriate for many hedge fund managers -- these fund managers typically receive 2% of assets under management plus 25 percent of profits above a benchmark -- the two percent is roughly risk free, and should not enter capital gains (taxed at 15% in the US), but instead should be taxed as ordinary income (much higher tax rate!). Mitt Romney's tax release highlighted the low tax on capital gains that accrues to the wealthy predominantly.

Overall, there is now a heightened sensitivity to equity. There is also a heightened sensitivity among economists about the dangers of short-term budget tightening on the economy by many governments (as opposed to fixing long-term budgets, something that is clearly necessary to do), for economic growth/ job creation, etc.; but I'm not sure whether this is due to the Occupy movement or the negative experiences of economies whose governments have engaged in the belt tightening and have been observed by economists.

As to Wall Street / financiers, etc., I think a fair summary of the views would be: (a) there was very bad regulation / under-regulation that influenced individual / firm behavior that underlay the housing problem, and that this drove the crisis in some sense; (b) there are some aspects of the system that created very bad compensation incentives for some forms of risk-taking by financiers; but still (c) there is nothing intrinsically wrong with Wall Street were adequate regulation in place.

Beyond that, there is probably a general view that the Occupy movement does not have a coherent vision, and, in particular, a clear idea of what is both feasible and desirable to do; rather that the movement is reflecting a general unhappiness. There is a view that it mixes the vague and the difficult to achieve (jobs creation, etc., beyond a general idea that government spending might help), and that this lack of focus on what might be feasible, desirable and achievable, has hurt the movement, and has made it, on occasion, vaguely annoying.

I suspect that the social unrest will die out as people get tired, have trouble seeing further progress, and the public ceases to view it as new and novel, and goals are hard to articulate, at least in terms of feasibility. How long it will continue, I do not know, but needs to stay fresh, which is hard to accomplish.

OCCUPYING THE MEDIA

Since Occupy began, detractors of the movement have continually rolled out the same lazy questions and criticisms. Often these relate to a lack of concrete demands or aims despite the messages of social, economic and environmental justice - amounting to the pursuit of greater equality - being easy to comprehend.

By now, anyone who has cared to listen should understand what Occupy stands for, but some still mistakenly think a social movement should be about providing answers, when in reality starting a debate, influencing media discourse and creating a platform to begin putting together new ideas is the first step to coming up with solutions.

At just four months old Occupy is still an infant in social movement terms, but already we have had tremendous success in shifting the zeitgeist and raising awareness about the key issues. Here are some facts about Occupy's media impact:

- In the first two weeks of November, over 9% of front page news in British papers was related to Occupy or broader questions of inequality.
- Over 54 Comment is Free pieces and 96 news articles on Occupy have been published by The Guardian.
- The Tobin tax is now supported by most European heads of state (except Cameron)
- Occupy websites have close to a million visitors a month, vastly outranking all other progressive movements.

Thanks to Helmut Anheier for supplying some of this information.

POET'S CORNER

Occupy is an Invitation
It's 3.43 in the morning and I can't sleep...
I am woken by a Mic check
[Mic check]
"This is just the beginning.
Occupy is a process"
[Mic check]
"Slow it down,
the issues of our times are urgent.
Slow it down,
Your attention is needed.
Occupy is an invitation
To wake up
Join us
Occupy is an invocation
To wake up
Join us
We the people, are the ones we've been waiting for
We have lost our faith in the leadership of government and big business
We have found our faith in each other
We have found our humanity in the beauty
and the clumsiness that is Occupy
We are finding our way.
Occupy is a process.
We the people, are so many more than you see here today.
We the people, are a voice for peoples and beings who have no voice
Occupy is process
Occupy is community
Occupy is an invitation
To wake up
Occupy is an invitation
To be the change we want to see in this world
To be the courage that asks questions
To be the patience taking time to find answers
To be the hearts not prepared to wait any longer
for the madness to end.
For Occupy is an invitation
for love
to be made visible
For humanity
To wake up
For humanity
To wake up
Join us.

By Toni Spencer

ONE SOLUTION

Bankers rule with technocrats, neoliberal leaders
Looking after all their own they nonchalantly bleed us
No revolution of the mind, the problem is systemic
Love can't cure the ills of a financial epidemic
Voting,
Products,
Media,
All methods of control.
Either sell your soul to them, or sign up on the dole.

Class is still the issue now, just Chavs instead of proles,
They changed the names, the beast evolved, to keep us in our roles
Distractions of celebrity to keep our minds from thinking
We're staring at the mermaids while the ship is slowly sinking,
Stand up,
Rebel,
Have agency,
We must take it, not ask kindly.
No longer just subordinates to those who lead us blindly

The enemy is borderless, a small migrant elite
But us! We are the 99, together we'd compete
With those who have the power and ideals of exploitation
Haunted by austerity we pay our owed taxation
Profits,
Land,
Infinite growth,
A plan of pure delusion.
In worlds with finite resources they sell us an illusion

By Steven Maclean



NEOLIBERALISM CROSSWORD: NOT TAXING AT ALL

MICHAEL RICHMOND

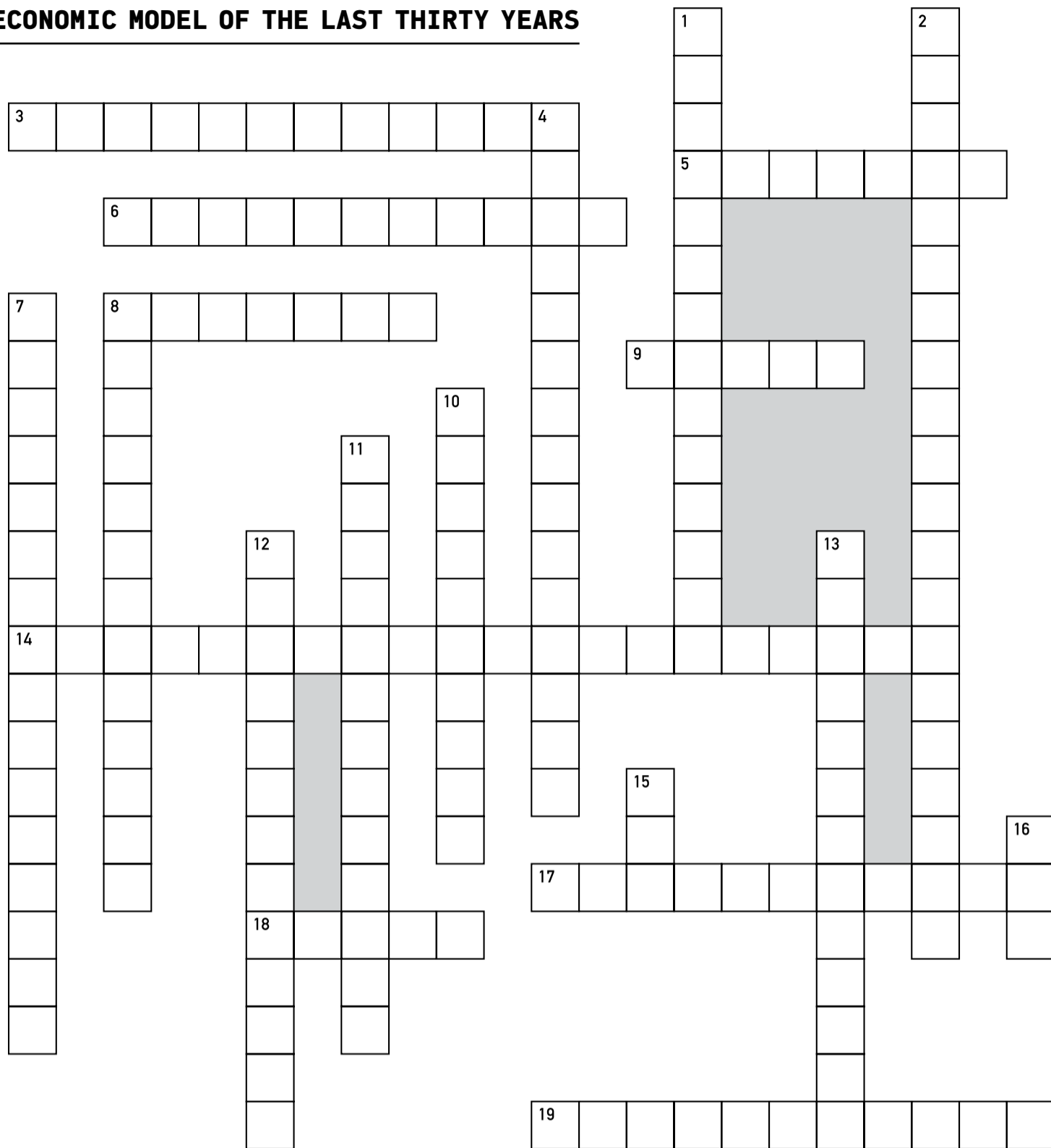
ALL CLUES PERTAIN TO THE RUINOUS ECONOMIC MODEL OF THE LAST THIRTY YEARS

DOWN

- 1.** Evil Genius. Damn Merit Of Nil (anagram) (6,8) (2 Words)
2. Idea behind public service reforms of the past two decades, based on fallacy that everyone has access to the same information before making a decision. (8,6,6) (3 Words)
4. Hubristic 1989 essay that now looks rather silly. Doesn't seem to stop its author being invited on Newsnight though. (3,3,2,7) (4 Words) **7.** Uber-Libertarian neoliberal Holy Book written by Friedrich von Hayek. (3,4,2,7) (4 Words) **8.** A chief architect of American Neoliberalism. Admitted: "I have found a flaw" after the global economy exploded. Earn Penal Snag (anagram) (4,9) (2 Words) **10.** Barbaric, neoliberal ritual sacrifice broadcast once a week to an audience of around 12million. (3,1,6) (3 Words) **11.** Neoliberalism's best effort at feminist theory. Day She Extinct (anagram) (3,3,3,4) (4 Words)
12. Neoclassical economic thinking developed in the Windy City. (7,6) (2 Words) **13.** This is a conspiracy concocted by socialist scientists. (7,6) (2 Words) **15.** Acronym for global institution that has imposed neoliberal economics (mostly) on developing nations. (1,1,1) **16.** Acronym for UK "think tank" who claim to support "free markets" but don't like to reveal how they are funded. (1,1,1)

ACROSS

- 3.** Self-satisfied weekly magazine that has been somewhat confused since September 2008. (3,9) (2 Words)
5. Catchphrase from obnoxious 1980s privatisation ad campaign. (4,3) (2 Words) **6.** Financial instruments which made value merely notional and as such their combined market value is ten times that of global GDP. Evasive Dirt (anagram) (11) **8.** Ultra-Libertarian author of Atlas Shrugged (3,4) (2 Words) **9.** Gekko said it was good. (5) **14.** Margaret Thatcher's cul-de-sac maxim of neoliberal exceptionalism. (5,2,2,11) (4 Words) **17.** Discredited taxation theory (6,5) (2 Words)
18. Latin American country that was used as a guinea pig for early neoliberal experiments. (5) **19.** The theory that wealth (as opposed to disdain and urine) will flow unto poor people if you don't tax rich people. (7,4) (2 Words)



"They say it's a loophole in the law, sarge - we can't evict them now that they've converted their ternts from places of habitation into articles of clothing."



WORLD SOLIDARITY.
IN ONE PLACE.
WE LIVE IN...

OCCUPIED TIMES

