SHARES plummeted around the world today following last night’s meltdown of Asian financial markets. Triggered by the collapse of Japan’s national bank. All through the night, investors worldwide have been fleeing equities and desperately seeking safety in gold and government bonds.

Fist-fights broke out on futures floors in Hong Kong and Frankfurt as dealers desperately tried to redeem their options. Gold suddenly reversed its long slide. Only stocks with interests in post-Balkan war reconstruction and reequipment plans such as Boeing, Raytheon, Bechtel and others have held their value.

After a crisis breakfast, London Stock Exchange officials closed the market at 9.00am - but not before the FTSE 100 index had lost 8% of its value in the first half hour of trading. Trading began once more cautiously at 10.30am, but panic soon set in again. As we went to press at 3.30pm the index was down over 1000 points at 5253 - a staggering 19% loss. Stock Exchange Chief Executive Gavin Casey tried to spread calm as he landed at City Airport this morning having cut short a “much-needed” holiday on a Caribbean island resort. “We are taking the situation extremely seriously,” he said. “London’s Stock Exchange is a world-class operator... We’ll be battering down the hatches with the best of them, but we are confident we can ride out the roughest storms.”

His words did little to calm New York traders. The news from London and the rest of world saw US dealers run to the hills, wiping 6% off US shares in just under an hour’s trading. Hugely inflated Internet stocks such as Yahoo and America Online have been effectively reduced to ashes.

President Clinton is planning to speak live to the US tonight while Tony Blair was unable to comment as he was “fully occupied with intensive discussions among G8 leaders to field a firm but flexible response”.

Chancellor Gordon Brown said “The City is safe with New Labour. There will be no departure from business as usual. Any talk of markets crashing is nothing more than the scare-mongering of shadowy subversives.”

US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers was forced to leave a banker’s lunch: “Read my lips. We are in complete control of the situation,” he said, wiping away crumbs. However, analysts – some speaking on condition of anonymity – already talk about the crisis bursting the bubble of unchecked economic growth. Warburg Dillon Read’s chief strategist Paul Khoakhed said “This crash is worse than the comedown off a three-day bender”. He warned that millions of middle-class people in the UK and tens of millions in the US faced poverty if private pension plans, linked to stock prices, were allowed to collapse. “Listen to what I’m not saying,” he said when asked about possible bank failures.

To further add to world financiers’ woes, some speaking on condition of anonymity, already talk about the crisis bursting the bubble of unchecked economic growth. Warburg Dillon Read’s chief strategist Paul Khoakhed said “This crash is worse than the comedown off a three-day bender”. He warned that millions of middle-class people in the UK and tens of millions in the US faced poverty if private pension plans, linked to stock prices, were allowed to collapse. “Listen to what I’m not saying,” he said when asked about possible bank failures.

GDP was called “the heart of the beast”. Lord Mayor Lord Levene was said by a senior police source last night to be “visibly bricking it” at the prospect of protests in his manor. He has already cancelled all engagements for the day.

Documents leaked exclusively to the Standards includes plans for tens of thousands of celebrants to encircle the Square Mile, for top 100 bluechip company bosses to be ‘pied’ as part of ‘Operation FLAN100’, and for a computer virus to replace Reuters and Bloomberg’s share-dealing information with images of laughing carnival clowns and a DIY guide to organic gardening.

Protesters’ spokesperson June Aytean told the Standards: “The rampaging bull market that has seen stocks rocketing for the last few years, regardless of environmental destruction and human hardship... is dead. We are determined to make the funeral a joyous celebration of alternatives. It will be unlike anything ever seen in the grey corridors of profit that are the City streets. So bring flowers. And drums, whistles, balloons, food, instruments, voices and feet for dancing.”

Continued on Page 2 Col 6
In a time of universal deceit — telling the truth is a revolutionary act.

— George Orwell
“If you are going to tell people the truth, you had better make them laugh or they will kill you.”

- Oscar Wilde
Stop me if you’ve heard this one before...

“The wealth of the world’s 447 billionaires exceeds the annual income of half of the world’s people” ¹

“70% of world trade, 80% of foreign investment and 30% of world GDP are controlled by 500 Transnational Corporations” ²

“The sparrow is now an endangered species” ³

“Depression is the UK’s biggest killer” ⁴

² The Ecologist, Vol. 22, No. 4
³ Sparrows have declined 90% in 25 years, and are now a Red list endangered species covered by the UK’s biodiversity action plan. See www.rspb.org.uk and search for “sparrow”.
⁴ WHO report, see The Guardian, 12th May 1999. Using what they called the Daly (disability adjusted life year), WHO measured the real burden of disease and ill health. In the west, they found that neuropsychiatric conditions from depression to alcohol or drug dependence, dementia and panic disorder accounted for 23% of the disease burden. "Neuropsychiatric conditions have been ignored for a long time as they are absent from cause of death lists," said the WHO report. However, when disease burden measurement includes time lived with a disability, several of the neuropsychiatric disorders become leading causes of disease burden worldwide.
No replastering - the structure is rotten 05

Our front page may not have told the truth, but one thing is true - things have got to change. It doesn’t take much to look around and see that despite the stock markets reaching record highs, things for most people are getting worse. Yet inequality and environmental destruction are still treated by the media, governments and corporations as if they were totally unrelated. This keeps us from grasping the true story and keeps many of us feeling confused and unsure how to act.

It’s clearly not in the interests of the powerful to tell us that the many crises of the late twentieth century are the results of the same global policies, that they are all reactions to an economic system that puts profit, growth and the ‘free’ market above anything else. What they also fail to tell us is that people all over the world are resisting the destruction of their lives and communities, that they are creating radical, democratic and sustainable local alternatives to the global economy. The powerful obviously have an inkling of the threat we might pose if we looked to and learnt from each other in our myriad struggles. And acted as one.

We are told to believe that the economic system operates on a rational basis on our behalf and that those in charge have benevolent motives and know what they are doing. After all, CCTV is installed ‘for our security’ and biotech companies have a burning desire to feed the planet and eradicate disease...

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The spoof headline on our front page is not a flight of fantasy - the financial markets thrive on turbulence and instability, as the higher the risk the quicker and fatter the profits. In financial centres across the world, a small number of people play the world’s largest and most risky video game - the money game. But the consequences of this game are very real: human lives, ecosystems, jobs and even entire economies are at the mercy of this reckless system. To the frenzied traders it’s just gambling with blips on a screen, but to the Colombian coffee grower who’s just had the value of his crop halved overnight, or the unsuspecting secretary whose pension is suddenly rendered virtually worthless; it’s a game of life and death.

As the economy has become increasingly transnational, so too has the resistance to its devastating social and ecological consequences. On June 18th, in over 40 different countries, thousands of people will be taking to the streets of their local financial districts to declare that these financial markets are at the root of the world’s social and ecological crises, as well as to demonstrate joyous, vibrant and diverse alternatives.

A unique diversity of different groups will be taking action on the day, ranging from garment workers union of Bangladesh to Israel environmentalists, from anarchists in Australia to Jubilee 2000 campaigners in Argentina, from Fisherfolk in India to postal workers in Canada, from indigenous groups in Nigeria to peasants in Indonesia. This simultaneous worldwide transformation of financial districts will strengthen global connections and build alternatives to the present social order. The action is timed to coincide with the first day of the Group of Eight (or G8) summit of the leaders of the richest nation-states in Köln, Germany. In Köln we will again be told by the economic and political elites that economic globalisation, ‘free’ trade and corporate dominance are the only way forward.

By having this worldwide day of action as world puppets pontificate in Köln, the aim is to show where the real power lies: in the markets, banks and corporations. The City of London, the world’s largest financial centre, will be unrecognisable on June 18th. Activists from around the country will descend on the City bringing it to a standstill in the morning. Then in the afternoon the roar of profit and plunder will be replaced by the sounds and rhythms of party and pleasure as a massive carnival of resistance snakes through the Square Mile. We invite all city workers to take a day off and join the carnival.

Many of us are frightened of change. We are scared of the uncertainties and threat of chaos it might bring, but the present system thrives on chaos. A global financial crash could be around the corner and no one knows how we might pick up the pieces; sticking those pieces back together with a few cosmetic reforms and returning to business as usual is not an answer. It’s time to imagine a radically different world. We don’t need certainty to change things, only possibility, and June the 18th will provide just that.

June 18th

Game over for Apocalypse Roulette

No replastering - the structure is rotten 05

This publication does not claim to be the voice of June the 18th, one of the key tenants of the day is diversity and autonomy. We have no spokespersons and no leaders, we are many voices, many visions and many strengths.

www.j18.org
Do not underestimate the power of global resistance

A general strike closes down 80 percent of the Peruvian national economy as the trade unions, students, pensioners and peasants join forces. Up to 100 people a day, from all walks of life, are arrested in resistance to the building of a nuclear mine on world heritage and indigenous Australian land. Greek railway workers block a train carrying British military equipment bound for Kosovo. Colombian U’wa Indians threaten mass suicide if oil companies do not get off their land. Reclaim the Streets builds solidarity with underground workers, occupy London Underground’s HQ and holding a May Day party on a tube train. Opposition to genetic engineering spreads across every continent - in England campaigners uproot thousands of genetically modified plants, in India peasant farmers launch their campaign “Cremate Monsanto” by burning fields of GMO’s. American West Coast dockers strike in solidarity with framed black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Thousands of Indians pledge to drown in their homes, in resistance to hydro-electric dam projects that will destroy hundreds of villages along the banks of the Narmada river. San Papier’s protesters demand free trains to a demonstration in Paris and when refused throw an all night party in a train tunnel. Environmental activists celebrate a year-long tree sit to protect forests in Oregon, USA, while in the UK activists spend 17 days in a tunnel to stop the destruction of a local park. Russian workers occupy factories to protest against non-payment of wages. Greek students and community activists occupy dozens of schools. Riots are sparked off by fuel price rises in Jamaica, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Native American’s, Earth First! activists, radical unionists and Wobblies join local people in opposition to highway development. Ijaw youth of Nigeria start ‘Operation Climate Change’ and occupy off-shore oil rigs. Indigenous women and children in the Ecuadorian jungle seize a bulldozer belonging to an oil company and hold its operators hostage, demanding a halt to construction of an oil pipeline that has contaminated their water supplies. Thousands of workers take to the streets in Mozambique on May Day demanding higher wages and an end to mass sackings in privatised companies. The head of the World Trade Organisation is ambushed by the custard pie throwing Biotic Baking Brigade, he joins dozens of other corporate criminals and CEO’s to have been pied this year. Korean government cracks down on trade unionists after thousands take part in demonstrations and strikes break out across the country. Non-violent resistance continues to the Trans-Israel Highway, which threatens to destroy dozens of villages. Hundreds of Zapatista communities continue to organise themselves into “autonomous municipalities” to regain control from big business, landowners and the 70-year dictatorship of the ruling party in Mexico. 2,500 pilots at American Airlines call in sick...
Welcome to the single global economy. Here borderless, rootless capital, hungry for new markets and natural resources to exploit, has no loyalty - even to the people who serve it - and no reason to exist except to extract maximum profit. Globalisation annihilates the local, but it is on the ground, and in the local, where the things that really matter to us, the details of our lives, are to be found.

In practical terms, globalisation means that multinational corporations and distant, undemocratic institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund now form a virtual global government. Helped by international trade agreements, transnational capital has gained increasing control over our lives.

Activist struggles are beginning to gain extraordinary strength and inspiration from the knowledge that their local struggles are part of a battle against a more universal ill: globalisation. In 1996, some of the world’s largest and most innovative social movements heeded the call of Mexico’s Zapatistas to communicate and unite, and in February 1998 over 400 activists converged in Geneva to launch People’s Global Action against ‘Free Trade’ and the WTO, (also known as PGA).

This was an extraordinary meeting of grassroots activists from around the world. NGOs and ‘development professionals’ were nowhere in sight. Groups involved included hunger striking teachers arguing against private education in Argentina, women organising in the ‘maquilas’ factories of Mexico, farmers struggling against globalisation in India, Street Reclaimers and direct activists from all over Europe.

Out of this meeting came a vision: “Despite the huge material differences, struggles in privileged and under-privileged parts of the corporate empire have more and more in common, setting the stage for a new and stronger sort of solidarity...Scattered around the world again, we will not forget. We remain together. This is our common struggle.” (PGA manifesto - see www.agp.org)

May 1998 saw unprecedented demonstrations against trade policies. The millennium bug of transnational resistance gains in strength, vision and audacity. The Asian equivalent of PGA - known as APPA - has a powerful grassroots voice in that region; the Inter-Continental Caravan is loose in Europe...and June 18th, even before dawn hits the first financial centre, has already been an extraordinarily empowering event thanks to the diverse and defiant voices of the groups participating.

In the excitement of this revolutionary gathering of tribes, we shouldn’t forget the importance of June 19th and beyond. In November, groups gathered under the PGA ‘umbrella’ will unite to fight the next big meeting of the WTO (now renamed We Take Over) in Seattle. This meeting threatens to unleash a ‘Millennium Round’ of trade talks that could well end up incorporating a newly reborn version of the ‘free marketeers’ charter’, a.k.a the MAI. Right now, the WTO is enduring a poisonous and deeply satisfying rift over who its next leader should be - a perfect opportunity to target your enemy when he’s down. There’s still a world to play for in building a movement of global resistance that reveals in its diversity and refuses to accept the tepid bribe that is our leaders’ attempt to reform a fundamentally rotten system.

"We cannot take communion from the altars of a dominant culture which confuses price with value and converts people and countries into merchandise."

By taking direct action, people make connections, they talk and communicate with each other, they break down the isolation and fragmentation of this alienated society. These connections are now spreading across the globe as people realise that their particular local struggles are part of a wider problem - the global economy.
Or so it would seem from reading the Evening Standard or the Sunday Telegraph. Both newspapers recently ran stories on the June 18th international day of action, protest and party in financial centres. Both however, are guilty of scare-mongering, inaccuracies and outright lies - there’s a surprise for you.

The Telegraph on the 16th May led its Business section with an article headed “City Faces mass protest threat”; a “threat” repeated in the subheading’s “Fires pledge to defy anarchist threat”. From the report we learn that the protest events’ organisers are “shadowy”, that they “operate in small cells”, and include “extremist groups” like Reclaim the Streets “which organised a similar stop the City campaign 15 years ago.”

Obviously journalists can’t let the facts get in the way of a good story - after all, facts don’t sell newspapers. Nevertheless, leaving aside the overtones of the word “threat”, there are a few inaccuracies here. For instance, none of the groups listed in the article claim to be anarchists, the “shadowy” organisers have in fact been meeting in openly published meetings; while the “extremist” Reclaim the Streets, perhaps best known for its’ extremely free street parties, was founded in 1992 a mere 2 years ago.

The Telegraph’s investigative journalism pales though, in comparison to the Standard’s 20th of May article on the event. Their astrologer, sorry I mean reporter Peter Gruner, predicts “riots re-run” in the headline and to illustrate has a photo of a police officer about, it seems, to be hit from behind. The caption reads “Reclaim the Streets protesters clash with police in Downing Street during the eighties riots”. The “riots”, explains the article’s opening sentence, were the ‘Stop the City’ demonstrations “15 years ago”.

To recap, Reclaim the Streets did not exist in the eighties. What’s more the ‘Stop the City’ protests, now de facto “riots”, were obviously in the City; nowhere near Downing Street; while the uniform of the pictured police officer complete with recent issue ‘quick cuffs’ sets the scene in the nineties, not the eighties. In short the picture as presented as a lie. When we telephoned the extremist Gruner at his shadowy Evening Standard office he said, “even the police have complained that the article is over the top”, and the full page article mysteriously disappeared from later editions of the paper. Gruner also claimed to have called his ‘facts’ from another newspaper. Evidence, if needed, of how the media feeds on its own inventions.

There is a more serious point however. The press, which is often presented as a counter balance to the power of government and big business, is in fact a big business itself. Its job is to do our thinking for us - at a price. The constant trivia, sensationalist reporting and factual processing of the mainstream press serve to accustom us to the status quo; to fragment recent history and obscure our everyday lives, while parodying and marginalising forces for basic social change.

So, when reading the paper on June 19th or any other day, keep in mind the common wisdom and don’t believe all you read in it: look critically at the ‘facts’ presented, consider whose interests they serve, find out what’s really going on from a variety of sources and, most importantly, think it through for yourself - then act on it.

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Do you find it difficult to spend your money the way you want, without those uncomfortable pangs of guilt?

Do endless televised scenes of universal misery, suffering and oppression give you an unsettling urge to cut up all your credit cards and spend your life trying to make this world a better place for future generations regardless of race, gender creed or class?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then take heart. The world of medicine has conquered many of nature's curses - syphilis, cholera, childbirth and more. But none of these have had such an effect on the productivity of the middle-classes as that ancient disease.....guilt.

But now NARCADIA brings you new MORALEZE. Designed to neutralise troublesome guilt hormones (sinogen and dishonestone) produced by our oversensitive brains.

Bliss is innocent with MORALEZE™

Warning: This product is for the treatment of social conscience only. NARCADIA evades all responsibility for criminal acts committed during treatment.
Those who make revolutions half way only dig their own graves

On the 18th of June, eight men will sit around a big table. They will chew over the state of the world and jockey for poll position at the photocall. They will feel important - after all they are the leaders of the eight most industrialised nations in the world. Koln, the city where they are meeting, will resemble a war zone: swathes of the city will be closed off to the public, armed police will be stationed on the rooftops, helicopters will hover overhead and journalists will schmooze the hotel lobbies. On the surface these men will emanate confidence and authority - but a tiny scratch will reveal that they are frightened. In 1997 their official statement read "we will make globalisation a success from which everyone will benefit". But that same year a study showed that 26 million Americans had visited soup kitchens in the previous 12 months, a 15% increase over the previous year. At the same time, corporate chief's salaries had grown to 326 times that of the average factory worker. (Perhaps it comes as no surprise that between 1994 and 1997 there were more political mass strikes than at any time in the 20th century!)

Then, in 1998, G8 confidence seemed muted: "Our challenge is to build on and sustain the process of globalisation" - unbridled faith had become a "challenge", and as they met, the world came under the influence of a revolutionary cocktail of illegal carnival, protest and direct action. Coordinated protest took place on every continent, including over 30 Reclaim the Streets parties in 21 countries. In Brasilia 50,000 unemployed and landless peasants were on the streets, while in Hyderabad, India, 200,000 protested. Riots took place in Geneva and Prague while over 50,000 Jubilee 2000 campaigners created a human chain around the building where the summit was taking place in Birmingham, demanding an end to third world debt.

Even the corporate puppet masters of the G8 were beginning to have doubts. Following the Asian financial crisis, the Chairman of Goldman Sachs, one of the world's most powerful investment banks, called the existing organisations governing the global economy - including the G8, the World Bank, and IMF - "inadequate", and proposed a summit conference to promote "a serious rethinking of how international institutions and world leaders cope with the stresses and strains of globalisation." This year, the pre-G8 summit spin finds them clearly on the defensive: "On the eve of the 21st century, we are faced with the task of using the opportunities of globalisation to create sustainable growth, socially equitable and ecologically responsible development. This is vital for the economically less developed countries." This is the rhetoric of the opportunist politician, out to cadge a few votes from an uneasy electorate hoping for soothing words of concern and reform. In this way the G8 acts as the public relations department for the hidden forces behind the free market.

Since the collapse of Asian and Russian markets, there has been a lot of talk about changing the world's "financial architecture", but in fact this would only be rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. To those who suffer increasing poverty, inequality and despair, it is not a question of reform. For them the whole house needs to be demolished and then collectively rebuilt.

But the elites will not dismantle the system - they will try desperately to repair it, but their efforts will be in vain. They really don't understand that change is coming from the bottom, from local communities and large social movements and that this change is going to be more radical, more creative and more subversive than they could ever imagine - because there is no time left for anything else.

"Most politicians still do not realise how much they are already under the control of the money markets and even ruled by them."

Dr Hans Tietmeyer, while chief of German Bundesbank 1996.
(Now head of European Central Bank)
organised CRIME

together we'll CRACK IT.
In the ES Lion’s Den - one woman banker braves it. (conversation between Helen Parsons, Head of Institutional Sales UK and US with a major German bank based in London, and Jenny Lewis, June 1999)

**JL:** How did you come to work in the City?

**HP:** I always knew I wanted to work in the City. I wanted to work in a job that was exciting. And I had a wonderful friend in the bond market who employed me after university. People in the City tend to be fairly dynamic. It’s an environment where people are quite switched on. The dynamism is very seductive - bright people often quite a lot more... Thinking on a scale.

**JL:** But surely that means that the majority of workers are being encouraged to abdicate responsibility - to have no real interest in the real life consequences of their actions?

**HP:** (laughs) They need to know enough to be motivated of course. But the responsibility lies with the senior managers, the directors, the chief executives, who must answer to their shareholders, to public opinion, to their staff to a degree, and I suppose in your terms - to the planet. That is why we are paid so well. That is a heavy weight to carry. Let me tell you something. There’s a vivid image I have in my head from my first days in the City. It’s from the facade of a wonderful building in Cheapside - the old Atlas Assurance building looking down Queen Street. Above the three-sided clock, there is a gilded statue of Atlas bearing the world on his shoulders. I remember looking up at that one day and thinking “I’d people hope to spend their capital on making their lives meaningful again?"

**JL:** You know that ES is extremely critical which underpin it. Why have you agreed to be interviewed in this context?

**HP:** I think it would be foolish to deny that people in my position don’t have doubts. We are not blind. We see what you see, and often quite a lot more... Thinking strategically or broadly about one’s impacts and stakeholders is not something that is encouraged on all levels - that would mean that there were too many opinions floating around. It would take time, be impractical. When you are dealing with transnational companies with thousands of staff, how could you operate that way? No. I mean people in strategic positions, scenario-planners etc. We see. How could we not?

**JL:** But are you saying that there is basically no need for most people employed in such companies, especially in the banking sector, to have any real knowledge of the impact of their work?

**HP:** Well, I’m saying it’s not practical, at such a scale.

**JL:** But surely that means that the majority of workers are being encouraged to abdicate responsibility - to have no real interest in the real life consequences of their actions?

**HP:** (smiles) I’m financially rewarded to. I’m paid to take responsibility so others aren’t. I’m concerned by this - you are here today, so you obviously do wish to engage in a debate about ethics, and yet you freely state that businesses couldn’t run if the majority of workers really understood the nature of the decisions to be made. Doesn’t this suggest that most people who work in these financial corporations are engaged in activities which have short-term rewards (if any), but which have no ultimate real meaning, no purpose. You don’t think that everyone should be responsible? That abdication or delegation of responsibility is a huge problem?

**HP:** I think this is very much one of the doubts... The system as it stands is about like to feel the weight of some of that. As a woman, as a young person with a future to look forward to, I wanted to be part of it. And now I am. The weight, and the reward. I’m paid to take responsibility so others don’t have to.

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**JL:** But here’s the rub. How can you live with these doubts?

**HP:** (smiles) I’m financially rewarded to. But seriously, I think if you look closely, many people in this cut-throat environment are looking to make a good deal of cash, and then get out. Retire early.

**JL:** But because of what? Is it because the pulls and consequences...they live fundamentally with meaninglessness, even at your level. They supplement the void with hopes of financial gain and short-term stimulation or distraction - truders are an extreme example.

**HP:** Yes, the City is actually very insecure, despite the lure of financial rewards. I think that explains why some of the bitterest people I’ve ever met are from the financial services industry - victims of “down-sizing”, burnt out.

**JL:** But ideally, on retirement, most people hope to spend their capital on making their lives meaningful again?

**HP:** Well, I think you are simplifying a little there. There are many people who feel there’s lots of meaning in what they do on a day-to-day basis. It’s just that... Yes? Yes?

**HP:** It becomes harder to look beyond the dazzling or glare of the immediate context. Surely that’s so for many people’s lives?

**JL:** Yes, but few work in jobs that have such direct, horrendous power, such as international finance and its support industries.

**HP:** (pause) Many people I know would be shocked to know that you think like this.

**JL:** To what extent do you allow yourselves to feel. To feel connected. What role does feeling have in the City?

**HP:** It’s certainly not a commodity of the financial markets... And men are not much good at. And they - the white ones anyway - are still driving this whole thing.

**JL:** Do you comfort yourself with that? I feel a great unease about this, Helen. You have to cut off so much...anger, feeling. What a weird way to live. Think about how the outside sees you.

**HP:** I don’t know how to relate to what you’re saying. I don’t see it the way you do. Come on, it’s not me that’s unusual, it’s you. Ask in any High Street!

**JL:** No Helen, you are not unusual. Your problem is that you think you are. You are not the majority. You are the minority. As a woman, you are an even tinier minority within a minority. Think about the world in general, and your techno-centric reality... most people on this planet don’t even have access to a phone, and you are saying that you are the norm! You’ll say that your work can give birth to these people phones...fresh water or whatever...I’ll say you don’t bring them...you respond to profit-related needs, where can you make a killing?

**HP:** Are you interviewing me because I work for the bank?

**JL:** Of course, but also because you said you wanted to talk about it. I thought this would be a mature debate.

**HP:** Yes but of course I have to consider my position to a degree. Don’t be naive.

**JL:** So when are you honest?

**HP:** You think that one through. Use your imagination.

**JL:** This experience explains a lot why nothing comes up on the Guildhall Business Library catalogue when searching under “corporate responsibility” and “ethics” and why over dozens of titles come up for “stress management”. Business would rather blame their inadequate staff than the core activities. Is their a stress management technique for “moral nausea”? Yes. It’s called resignation. In one or other sense.

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**Stop this cruel trade in live commuters!**

Whenever transport workers go on strike, newspapers write about misery on the roads and on the railways. Business leaders talk of damage to London’s economy, but what is that economy really about? It is about working hard just to survive while making profits for others to live at our expense.

Passengers already know that the privatisation of British Rail is an expensive disaster. Delays and fares have both increased, while Railtrack and the other private companies rake in huge profits. And the costs of privatisation can be more than finance. When the primary motivation is profit, corners are cut on health and safety. On the Jubilee Line Extension, largely funded by private finance, the pressure to meet deadlines has meant the sacrifice of safety, leading to injury and death.

Tony Blair is determined to continue the Thatcher Revolution. Labour wants to show it has embraced privatisation extends the logic of the market to all areas of life breaking us down into consumers’ and ultimately units to be consumed. Nowhere is this more evident than when we are packed into the rush hour crush that we are separated us from each other- alienated individuals: workers and passive consumers.

So next time there is a tube strike, just think - Strikes are for the spirit, commuters get the day off work, tube workers get to socialise and management are made to account for their actions. Help the tube workers reduce our misery!
London’s International Petroleum Exchange (IPE) is “Europe’s leading energy futures and options exchange.” Now, in the wake of the 1997 Kyoto climate change agreement, it’s lobbying hard to become the world’s centre for so-called ‘emissions trading.

The virtual volumes of oil and gas that flicker across the digital screens of the IPE amount to a staggering John worth of contracts every day. Now they want a big slice of a new cake - emissions trading. In a nutshell, emissions trading works like this: each country is allocated a quota of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses to discharge each year. If one country emits less, it can sell the difference to another. Naturally, corporate interpretations of climate change skirt around such potentially catastrophic implications as coastal sea levels rise and reversal of the Gulf stream that prevents the UK from sharing the climate of Greenland.

In March Chancellor Gordon Brown infuriated the IPE when he announced measures for reducing carbon pollution and trading wasn’t on his list. IPE boss Lynton Jones explained his anger thus: “Attempting to reduce emissions by taxation is rather like trying to kill a fly in a crowded room with a shotgun. A lot of people get hurt but there is no guarantee that the fly will die.” In other words, taxation will damage business. The only way to make companies act responsibly is to make agreement ‘game’ trading schemes. Companies that can easily reduce emissions do so, selling excess reduction to companies that can’t. BP Amoco call this 5 year scheme a trading “game”, played with their derivatives (futures) traders and marketers in London, Singapore, and Cleveland.

Crucially, it showed that a trading system could be successfully introduced with players who are unfamiliar with the process. The UK’s largest company obviously sees a duty to its ever-hungry shareholders to corner the market in new reputation enhancing areas like emissions trading, yet it still remains devoted to its core activity: a seemingly ceaseless cycle of oil exploration and production. BP Amoco’s head, Sir John Browne, recently told investors that: “We want big fields, giant fields, which we can develop at low cost. We have carried on with that strategy and keep adding to it every year. We can replace reserves for as long as we can see forward.”

The twentieth century has been the century of oil, and the industry is now economically more powerful than any country outside the G7. There are enough oil stocks for the companies to keep going (going, gone...) for another hundred years, and the oil industry is now attempting to make a few small structural adjustments to cope with the onset of climate chaos, whilst making a quick buck in the process. With the IPE’s play to corner the world emissions market the corrosive mantra of the free market is now seeping into planetary preservation. The prospect of a second century straddled by the oil industry - including its green guises - darkens every corner of our lives. Let’s pay closer attention and respect to the people of the Niger Delta, Colombia, Chad, Buruna, Ecuador and countless other countries who are risking and often giving their lives resisting Big Oil.

If you’re able to, have a look at these websites: www.oilcompanies.org www.moles.org www.antenna.nl/aseed/oilwatch/index.htm

Get a life

“It’s not a lifestyle calculated to nurture rounded human beings with broad experience and diverse interests. It’s excellent at breeding rich, neurotic people who see the world in terms of numbers to be bought and sold, as if it’s all one massive video game. If there is any glamour in this life it is all in the pay cheque. No one goes into investment banking to make the world a better place. They go in to get rich. Since money is the reason they are there, they make sure they get it.”

Every day in the UK 27,000 people fail to report for work because of stress-related illness. Stress can show itself in many ways, from back, head, or muscular aches to heart-attacks or depression. Depression, a stress-related disorder, is now the second most common cause of death in the world. In 1990 the Health and Safety Executive revealed that amongst those who have suffered from work-related stress, in most cases “the condition was caused, not merely made worse, by work”. But what is so stressful about our working lifestyle? A big problem for many of us is the large amount of time that our jobs require of us. Time that could be spent relaxing, tending the garden, enjoying the company of our loved ones. Most city-workers commute from London suburbs, and it is not uncommon for several hours to be spent simply getting to and from the office. Other factors include competitive working environments, constant pressure, and lack of fulfilment from jobs where the only motivation is money. The results of this frantic life can be horrific. Depression, relationship difficulties, panic attacks, heart failure, alcohol and drug dependency, suicide, and increased violence, can all be directly attributed to work-related stress, as can many of the accidents on our roads.

“I felt as if my life in the City was empty, I hated getting up in the morning. As a symbol, I deliberately used my posh tie as a tourniquet. Heroin is a way of forgetting... My boss knew, he didn’t care as long as I was making money for the company and didn’t shoot up at my desk. But he saw my needle scars and asked me to cover my wrists when we went to see clients... I would shoot up before work, during lunch and during the evening, I was blitzed all night to avoid being sick all day.”

The great unwashed

When all else fails, dealers start telling each other rumours…and when their financial wellbeing hangs on something as unpredictable as a rumour, it is hardly surprising that pit traders, like gamblers, are profoundly superstitious...One has a lucky tie - he owns a drawer full of the identical article but wears one tie until it is little more than a collection of ragged threads hanging round his neck before discarding it and starting on the next. Another, when he is on a winning streak, wears the same underwear every day without washing it until the streak comes to an end.

You are all alone
You cannot do anything
So go back to sleep

Every individual can make a difference to the activities of every company. That’s why BP are introducing a “cleaner, greener” image to substantially reduce criticism and substantially increase profits.

BP. For the journey to hell.

www.oilwatch.org
The final act of enclosure

One cold winter morning in 1997 Lord Simon, Minister for Competitiveness, awoke to find bio-activists in white coats in the back-garden of his Islington residence collecting samples of his pot plants and tagging his petunias with bar-codes. This was the day that Lord Simon was travelling to Europe to sign a directive allowing the caring, compassionate biotech companies to patent plant strains with engineered genes - of course for the ‘good of mankind’. This was a huge leap in the concept of patents. No longer did companies or entrepreneurs have to invent something to patent; under the new concept, pioneered by the US and forced on the rest of the world by the WTO, engineered strains of plants and animals could be converted to private property thanks to trade related intellectual property rights. Almost overnight life became an ‘invention’, a commodity, a product.

Extravagant claims spin their way through the corridors of the biotech industry and, amplified by large sums of PR money, out into the public domain. On the other side the financially challenged NGO’s and direct activists scrape together their resources and challenge the biotech giants and their governmental puppets head-on.

But on the ground are farmers, who depend on strains of plants that have been gradually and painstakingly selected over about 10,000 years. The focus of the biotech giants’ attentions: the ‘Third’ (and majority) World. India, for example, is home to some of the greatest genetic diversity in the world, much of which is found in their valuable crops such as rice.

Basmati is the champagne of rice varieties. It’s distinctive aromatic flavour makes it a favourite in the US, Europe and the Middle East, netting India $280 million in 1996-97 and employing around a quarter of a million farmers. In September 1997 Rice Tec Inc (a US based multinational) was granted a patent on Basmati ‘rice lines and to plants and grains’. Their claim stemmed from a genetically altered strain. However it could ultimately extend to all strains of basmati rice producing the ridiculous scenario where basmati growers could violate Rice Tec’s patent merely by continuing their traditional farming of an age old strain of rice.

In India, unlike in the US, patents on life are not allowed. However, under the WTO’s trade related property rights regime (TRIPs) all signatories are due to unify patent laws sometime this year - consolidating corporate (and Western) control over the genetic diversity of the world.

Under so much pressure from the public one wonders why the UK government is so keen to support the biotech firms in their race to gain control and intellectual ownership of the world’s food supply. Perhaps the Minister of Agriculture, Jack Cunningham’s words on the recent BBC Panorama programme hands us a clue. As he sat in the spotlight justifying the use of GMOs, repeating industry rhetoric he eventually hit on the key: GMOs are good for the British economy. In short the share prices of Zeneca (a British based biotech firm) are more important to our representatives in the government than the will of the people.

This is part of a wider process that has been taking place for centuries, from the enclosure of common land in England in the 18th century, to the claims now being made by Corporations. From the local to the global, things that once belonged to all of us are being transformed into exclusive private property. Today a few powerful institutions are, in some sectors, virtually eliminating small business and securing all trade for themselves, turning public streets into guarded shopping malls, and life it’s self into a profit-making venture.

As our ‘leaders’ meet in Cologne today to discuss the economic and political future of us all, they face global ridicule. Hundreds, even thousands of people from around the world will be laughing in the streets of the city at the policies they are pressing and the power they claim to command.

This ‘laugh in’ is the culmination of a month long Inter-Continental Caravan, bringing grassroots activists from the global South- Latin America, Africa and the Indian Sub-Continent, to Europe where they are uniting with us to raise the truly transnational voice of resistance to corporate power and ‘free’ trade.

At the end of May around 40 of the 400 Southern activists in the Caravan came to the UK, leaving their comrades (mysteriously refused visas) in France. From Gujarat, Punjab and Nepal, they came all the way to Bank Square, bringing an uncompromising message for the City.

Then, in a beautiful, active expression of international solidarity the Caravan, many of them farmers from some of the poorest parts of the world, joined us in reclaiming land and life from Corporate control.

As the sun rose on a Monsanto-owned (ex!) GM crop test site. They set up tripods, tents, banners and flags, and for two days the land was squatted and reclaimed. Battle songs from the Punjab were exchanged for English ballads about the Diggers land squats of 1649. Organic plants were planted where GM Rape had once contaminated the ground and flags and ideas for resisting Corporate dominance were exchanged.

The message from the Caravan is clear “We want to say to the G8 leaders ‘We do not want your charity, we do not want your loans.’ Those in the North have to understand our struggle is part of their own. We all face the same future.”
In 1649, when the world was being turned upside down by the events and ideas of the English revolution, a group calling themselves the Diggers went to George Hill in Surrey and began to work the land, sharing their produce in common, and recognising no property ownership and no laws. Even then the important role of property and finance in misery was clear, and part of the long history of the ideas moving the June 18th actions can be found in this letter from a Digger:

To the City of London August 26: 1649

Thou City of London, I am one of thy sons by freedome and I do truly love thy peace; but by thy cheating sons in the theieving art of buying and selling, I was beaten out of both estate and trade.

Not a full yeere since, being quiet at my work, my heart was filled with sweet thoughts, and when I began to speak of them, some people could not bear my words, and amongst those revelations was this one, That the earth shall be made a common Treasury of livelihood to whole mankind (Everie man, both Male and Female) without respect of persons; and I had a voice within me bad me declare it all abroad; I declared it by word of mouth wheresoever I came; yet my mind was not at rest, because nothing was acted, and thoughts run in me, that words and writings were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act thou dost nothing.

I took my spade and went and broke the ground upon Georgehill in Surrey, thereby declaring that the earth must be set free from intanglements of Lords and Landlords, and that it shall become a common Treasury to all, as it was first made and given to the children of men: For which the Dragon presently casts a flood of water to drown even that freedom that is now declared, for the old Norman Prerogative Lord of that Mannour, M Drake, caused me to be arrested for trespasse against him, in digging upon that barren Heath. Consider the case thet England is in; all men have stood for freedom; thou hast given thanks for victories, because hope of freedome; plentie of petitions and promises thereupon have been made for freedome, and you are like all men in a mist, seeking for freedom, and know not where, nor what it is: and those of the richer sort of you that see it, are ashamed and afraid to owne it, because it comes clothed in a clownish garment; for freedome is the man that will turn the world upside downe, therefore no wonder he hath enemies.

And assure yourselves, if you pitch not right now upon the right point of freedom in action, you will wrap up your children in greater slavery than ever you were in: no true freedom can be established for Englands peace, but such a one as has respect to the poor, as well as the rich; for if thou consent to freedom to the rich in the City and yet allowest the poor no freedome, thou art a declared hypocrite, and freedome himself will be the poor's portion, when thou shalt lie groaning in bondage.

And London, nay England, look to thy freedome, Ile assure thee, thou art very neere to be cheated of it, and if thou lose it now, after all thy boasting, truly thy posterity will curse thee, for thy unfaithfulness to them: everyone talks of freedom but there are few that act for freedom, and the actors for freedom are repressed by the talkers and verbal professors of freedome; if thou wouldst know what true freedome is, read over this and my other writings, and thou shalt see it lies in the community in spirit, and community in the earthly treasury; and so I leave thee.

Being a true Denizon of thee, and a true lover of thy peace
Jerrard Winstanley

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