

The Occupied Times

~ OF LONDON ~

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ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

MARK KAURI

A number of emerging occupations cropped up at university campuses last week, with student activists railing against funding cuts, supporting teachers in the face of public sector pension cuts, calling for an end to neoliberal economic policies and backing the global occupy movement. The protests have emerged in light of the government's higher education White Paper, which would permit private providers to offer degrees.

In Bloomsbury, students from various University of London institutions began occupying a property owned by the School of Oriental and African Studies. The previously disused property at 53 Gordon Square was subsequently renamed the Bloomsbury Social Centre by occupiers and a statement was issued outlining plans for the site to be used as a community resource and a material instrument in the build-up to the N30 strike against public sector cuts. Despite the threat of arrests and >>



TIME TO STRIKE!

MARK KAURI

Millions of public sector workers and protesters are today staging a walkout over the government's changes to pensions contributions, in what is being hailed as the largest UK strike for a generation. Fourteen trade unions initially committed to the action during the TUC conference in September, but further support has since been pledged, raising the total number of participating unions to 33.

The unions' strike represents a critical response to the government's plan to increase pensions contributions beyond the agreed rate that came into force in 2008. Unions argue this overhaul should have meant the contribution rate would not need to be re-examined for a generation, but the government is now planning to remodel the rates at a cost to public >>

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>> sector employees. In one example, TUC calculations of the changes suggest that a full-time teacher earning a basic pay salary of £25k could face contributions 23.44% a year higher by 2014.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said the intention of the 24-hour walkout is to call for pensions justice in both the public and private sectors, but the strike has grown to represent a broader range of protesters' concerns about the government's austerity measures. Employees working in sectors including health, education, local government and the civil service will be joined by a number of groups and individuals outside of the public sector payroll to protest against these

measures - including student groups railing against tuition fee hikes and privatisation in the education sector and Occupy London activists calling for greater efforts to be made towards social and economic reform.

In the build-up to today's strike, Occupy London has been running a number of supporting events, including union outreach activities and talks on subjects including the importance of strikes and unionisation in capitalist societies. Today, Occupy London activists have made plans to raise the voices of the suffering members of society further through direct action in connection with the Shut Down The City campaign.

**EDITORIAL**

>> reports of intimidation from security officers, occupiers have since used the space to launch the world's first 'Museum of Neoliberalism' – a satirical space featuring creative 'artefacts' of the era, with the launch event featuring as its backing track D:Reem's 'Things Can Only Get Better' playing on a loop. The Social Centre has also scheduled a series of events and workshops in the run-up to Wednesday's strike.

In New Cross, the Goldsmiths University financial offices and an adjoining lecture theatre were targeted and locked down by students and staff. A subsequent statement was released pledging solidarity with the N30 strike and the global occupy movement. Goldsmiths' activists raised concerns with privatisation in the education sector and the neoliberal economic model. A request was also made for

lectures scheduled to be held in the occupied Ian Gulland lecture theatre to open with a short statement from occupiers. This request was declined by one English lecturer, who refused to teach his class at the site.

Student occupations have also sprung up outside of the capital. In Cambridge, an occupation got underway at the university's Lady Mitchell Hall. The movement followed a protest against the government's higher education policies during a talk on the 'Idea of University' by government minister David Willetts. Around 20 Cambridge protesters disrupted the minister's speech, forcing him to abandon it. Further afield, in Birmingham, students moved in to occupy an abandoned gatehouse on the city's university campus and made calls for guarantees that the university will remain a public and not-for-profit body.

TENTCITY UNI CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK**WEDNESDAY 30TH**

9.00 / Why are we still talking about 'race'? -Liza Schuster-St. Paul's. 9.00-17.00 / Striking academics will bring their lectures and classes to TCU to show solidarity across these social movements and to mark the day of joint action. TCU and Occupy London will be involved in strike and strike-related action all day. 18.00-19.00 / Archetype 2012, global crisis and the Occupy movement-Bank of Ideas.

THURSDAY 1ST

11.00-12.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 14.00-15.00 / Who are you' and Power Needs-Jennifer Foster-St. Paul's. 15.00-16.00 / Vote Occupy to change the system-Tom Wilding Davies-St. Paul's. 16.00-17.00 / Socialist-Employee-Socialist Program to oppose the banks-Bank of Ideas. 17.00-18.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 17.00-18.30 / Zero carbon Britain-Bruce Heagerty-St. Paul's. 17.00-19.00 / Overcoming ethnic segregation: a workshop on post colonialism in practise-Bank of Ideas.

FRIDAY 2ND

11.00-12.00 / Social Dreaming-Finsbury Sq. 13.00-18.00 / Reiki Treatments-Bank of Ideas.

14.00-15.00 / Deleuze&Guattari, Protest, Activism and Politics-Alex Farnham& Jason Lim-St. Paul's. 15.00-16.00 / Chris Pinney-St. Paul's. 15.00-16.00 / Banking and Finance workshop-Clive Menzies-Bank of Ideas. 15.30-17.00 / Inequality and Economic Crisis-Dr. Gabriel Palma-Sher-Finsbury Sq. 17.00-18.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 17.00-18.00 / Blackness, Capitalism and Radicalism-Cedric Robinson-St. Paul's. 18.00-19.00 / One Million Climate Jobs-John Sinha-St. Paul's. 18.30-20.30 / Radical Theory Reading Group-Bank of Ideas.

SATURDAY 3RD

TBA-The misery of job insecurity a catalyst for resistance-Alex Wood-St. Paul's. 10.30-12.00 / Stand up for Climate Justice-Teach-Out-St. Paul's. 11.00-12.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 11.00-12.00 / Philosophy with Children-Bank of Ideas. 12.00-12.20 / Climate Justice Placard/Banner Making-St. Paul's. 12.20-13.00 / Climate Tour of Shame-a guided tour of some of the worst carbon criminals in London. Some direct actions may take place along the way-St. Paul's. 13.00-14.00 / Low paid London-Bank of Ideas. 14.00-15.00 / An Introduction and open forum on sustainable development-Bank of Ideas. 14.00-15.00 / The misery of job insecurity-a catalyst for resistance?-Alex Wood-St. Paul's. 14.00-18.30 / PPS-UK National Gathering-Bank of Ideas. 15.00-16.00 / Workshop:Debt&Resistance-Bank of Ideas.

16.00 / The Arab Springs-Dr. Robin Ostle-Bank of Ideas. 15.00-16.30 / On The Crises of Capitalism-Lord Robert Skidelsky-St. Paul's. 15.00-17.00 / Cost of War Talks-Bank of Ideas. 17.00-18.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 18.00-20.00 / How to start a Revolution-Screening of award winning documentary incl. Q+A with director Ruairidh Arrow-Bank of Ideas. 19.00-20.30 / Writing Wrongs: Sidekicks & Socialists - Bank of Ideas.

SUNDAY 4TH

11.00-12.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 14.00-15.30 / Moving towards the Universal Paradigm shift- Four speakers from a Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Jewish background talking on a way forward for a new economics-St. Paul's. 16.00-17.30 / Right to the City?-Bank of Ideas. 17.00-18.00 / Links between food, climate and finance-Film showing-St. Paul's.

17.00-18.00 / Exploring the social issues behind the protest through dreams-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 18.00-20.00 / Ideas for alternative living-Bank of Ideas.

MONDAY 5TH

11.00-12.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 12.00-19.00 / Homeopathy and Alternative Healing workshop-Bank of Ideas.

17.00-18.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 18.00-19.00 / Breaking the Siege -The Passage of a Jewish Boat to Gaza-Glyn Secker-St. Paul's.

TUESDAY 6TH

11.00-12.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 16.30-18.00 / Community strategy building-Bank of Ideas. 17.00-17.45 / Poems and Protest-Bank of Ideas. 17.00-18.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 17.30-18.30 / Education in Hard Times.

What's wrong with education and how could it be otherwise? -Clare Kelly, Vicki Obied, Maggie Pittfield, Ken Jones. 18.00-19.00 / A green response to the economic crises-Caroline Lucas MP-Bank of Ideas.

WEDNESDAY 7TH

11.00-12.00 / Social Dreaming-Mannie Sher-Finsbury Sq. 17.00-18.00 / Blackness, Capitalism and Radicalism-Cedric Robinson-St. Paul's. 18.00-19.00 / One Million Climate Jobs-John Sinha-St. Paul's. 18.30-20.30 / Radical Theory Reading Group-Bank of Ideas.

17.30-18.30 / Education in Hard Times. Jenny Jones, London's Green Party mayoral candidate, spent the night at the St Paul's camp and reiterated her support for the campaign. Writing on her personal blog, Jones said Occupy London has done well to raise the issue of social inequities and the problems of greed in the banking sector and kept these issues in the

time of year and surrounding tall buildings? The most painful pre-birth contractions have been rather more surprising – at least to the environmentalists amongst us – and have taught us that for all the idealism of the Occupy camps, in some ways we're a microcosmic version of the wider world and its contradictions are reflected in us.

The green energy crew visited each service-providing tent in turn to assess its electricity needs. Nearly every tent demanded far more than expected. We're so used to the flick of a switch providing an effortless and endless flow of electricity that the concept of giving



his week the Energy Working Group is expecting triplets. We'll soon be caring for three brand new shiny solar panels.

It sounds simple enough but the gestation has been lengthy and at times difficult. Some of the difficulties have been technical – which panels, what voltage, how many charge controllers and do we need inverters? Others have been practical – how do we get them delivered and is there a sunny enough location given the

**OCCUPYLSX: A HIGH-PROFILE OCCUPATION**

EMMA FORDHAM

SOLAR TO SOLVE PEAK OIL AT OLSX**EGYPT'S SECOND REVOLUTION**

JOHN REES

JOHN REES ANSWERS SOME KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DRAMATIC EVENTS IN EGYPT.

WHY WAS THERE A RENEWED REVOLUTIONARY EXPLOSION LAST WEEK?

When Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak was overthrown in February, he was replaced by a civilian government. Yet real power in the hands of the high command of the Egyptian Army, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). At that point the army were popular because they had refused to open fire on the protesters. In January and February the main forces used against the protesters were the police and the Central Security Forces, not the army.

The army promised an end to the

Emergency Law - which outlaws many forms of protest - and a quick transition to an elected civilian government. Some forces that had been against Mubarak went along with the army, crucially the well-organised Muslim Brotherhood which calculated that it would do well in elections if they were held quickly.

But SCAF failed to deliver on any of its promises and it has repeatedly attacked demonstrators in Tahrir Square and brought over 12,000 people before military courts. The last straw was when the deputy Prime Minister, Ali El-Selmi, published a proposal that the army and its budget should be removed from any democratic control in the proposed new constitution. Even the Muslim Brotherhood then realised that SCAF meant to control the new political set-up from behind the scenes.

The demonstration on Friday the 18th of November was called 'The Friday of One Demand' and it turned into one of the biggest demonstrations in Tahrir since the fall of Mubarak. It was made up of the youth coalitions, the Popular Committees, the Left, the Muslim Brotherhood and thousands of Egyptians without clear political affiliations. There was indeed 'one demand': that SCAF leave power in favour of an elected government. The demonstration in Tahrir was matched by demonstrations in Alexandria, Suez and other Egyptian cities.

WHY ARE SCAF SO DETERMINED TO HOLD ON TO POWER?

The Egyptian army is not just the country's military but an important economic and political actor as well. It owns factories and whole sections of the economic infrastructure of Egyptian society. The generals are not just the highly paid protectors of the state; they are themselves property owning members of this class. The military owns lucrative businesses including fertilizer and chemical plants, vast real estate holdings, road construction firms, factories that

make home appliances, clothing and much more. They have wide-ranging economic interests from bottled water, raising cattle, construction — things far removed from any sort of military industries,' notes Egypt expert Michael Hanna of the New-York-based Century Foundation. The term 'military-industrial complex' may be an overstatement when used about some societies. But it is simply a literal description of the Egyptian ruling elite.

CAN THE REVOLUTION WIN?

If heroism and sacrifice were sufficient for revolutionary success, then the Egyptians would have secured victory already. But in a revolution victory does not just go to the brave. The brave must also know how to formulate a strategy which can maximise their forces and organise them in a way that can defeat their enemies.

There is, in a sense, dual power in Egypt. The army is one source of power and the other source of power is the 'Republic of Tahrir' (i.e. the constant mobilisation of revolutionary forces including, but not limited to, the demonstrations in Tahrir). But the army has (and is rebuilding) state power as its weapon and the revolutionary forces are not creating their own institutional form of power, like the workers, soldiers and peasant councils of the Russian revolution or, even, the National Assembly of the French Revolution.

One of the reasons that the Tunisian revolution has made a faster transition away from the old regime is because it did at least create some form of popular representation, whatever the weaknesses of the regime that has emerged so far. Such an institution would make the revolution stronger by allowing it to co-ordinate and concentrate its forces and political demands. It would allow the working class to emerge as the leader of all the oppressed and exploited and not just act as (and be portrayed by SCAF as) a sectional economic interest. In short that strategy should be: no compromise with SCAF; for a Popular Assembly of all revolutionary forces; full support for the workers struggles; for workers to take a political lead in defending every oppressed and exploited section of society against the SCAF government. If these developments, or something like them, do not take place soon then the counter-revolution will gain a, perhaps decisive, advantage.

Rees participated in the revolution in Tahrir Square in January and February and is co-author (with Joseph Daher) of The People Demand: a short history of the Arab Revolutions (available from www.counterfire.org).



WHY DON'T MORE OCCUPY?

GUY AITCHISON



In some point in time anyone involved in social movement activism confronts a tough question: if things are as bad as we say

they are, then why are more people not taking action? This year has seen the beginnings of a popular response to the breakdown of the neoliberal global order. It has been a year of protests, riots, strikes and, of course, occupations. But the question remains: given the manifest harms being inflicted on the population, in the name of austerity, why did the resistance not start sooner? And now that it has begun, why are more people not getting involved?

The social movement scholar, Charles Tilly suggests six possible answers to the question of why subordinate groups don't rebel. In most circumstances, Tilly says, all of them will apply to a greater or lesser extent. Here I consider each of them in turn and try and draw some lessons for the occupy movement.



The premise is incorrect: subordinates are actually rebelling continuously, but in covert ways.

Anyone who secretly sticks two fingers up to authority – even if it's just moaning about the boss behind his back – is ripe for collective action. Consider this: 13.5 million working days are lost each year in the UK due to stress-related illness compared with 12.9 million due to strike action in the 1970s when we were known as the "sick man" of Europe. This is testament to the oppressive conditions of the modern workplace. But it also suggests that with the decline of organised industrial conflict over the last few decades we have seen the rise of privatised acts of rebellion against the discipline of work. A key question is how to turn these individual subterranean, transgressions into collective, politicised acts of resistance.

Subordinates actually get something in return for their subordination, something that is sufficient to make them acquiesce most of the time.

The economist Joan Robinson once said that "the one thing worse than being exploited in capitalism is not being exploited". Under a capitalist system, the immediate material interests of the population are intimately tied to processes of capital accumulation and

investment, which creates jobs and the possibility of a regular income. Over time, most people will come to identify their interests with those of capital.

Anyone arguing for a change to a more egalitarian social system must therefore convince enough people that such a transformation will serve their material interests (or, if not, that other benefits, such as sustainability or community, will compensate). This explains why periods of crisis assume such significance in revolutionary critique. At times of crisis, like the one we're living through, the close link between individual material interests and capitalism is weakened.

With 2.5 million unemployed, a looming double dip recession, and savage attacks on living standards, there is a powerful opportunity to make the case for system-wide change.

Through the pursuit of other valued ends such as esteem or identity, subordinates become implicated in systems that exploit or oppress them.

It's easy to decry as "shallow" and "fake" the mixture of pleasure and social recognition people get from the latest Apple product or Adidas trainers; much harder to understand the complex processes by which capitalist consumer culture secures consent for exploitative practices across the globe.

The co-operative forms of citizenship practiced in the occupations point

towards more democratic ways of being.

They can also be socially enriching and rewarding. As sociologist James Jaspers observes "virtually all the pleasures that humans derive from social life are found in protest movements: a sense of community and identity; ongoing companionship and bonds with others; the variety and challenge of conversation, cooperation and competition. Some of the pleasures are not available in the routines of life."

As a result of mystification, repression, or the sheer unavailability of alternative ideological frames, subordinates remain unaware of their true interests.

Termed the "third dimension" of power, by philosopher Steven Lukes, this process takes place most explicitly at the ideological level where domination of the mass media by corporations helps ensure the elite mantra that "There is no alternative" to austerity dominates public discussion. It becomes, in the words of Antonio Gramsci, the "common sense" of the age, endorsed by our "moral and intellectual leaders".

Culture, too, is a key terrain where neoliberal beliefs and attitudes are reinforced. Think, for instance, of how "reality" TV shows reinforce the values of hyper-competitive individualism. As soon as the participants, in a show like Big Brother start to work together the producers nearly always introduce some new element to sow division, as if to prove collective action is futile.

Instinctively, many people are uncomfortable of thinking about power like this, because of the ideological baggage associated with the Marxist concept of "false consciousness".

However, the idea that people are mistaken about their "true interests" needn't presuppose some objective "truth", with all the authoritarian possibilities that implies. It can, as Lukes says, simply reflect the fact that subordinate groups lack the possibility of genuine ideological choice. The great

success of the occupy movement, to date, has been to highlight the fact we are not all in this together, austerity is a choice and that, in the words of the alter-globalisation movement, "another world is possible."

Force and inertia hold subordinates in place.

When all else fails, systematic violence on the streets keeps people in check. This refers, of course, to the Territorial Support Group, police batons and dogs; the threat of rubber bullets and water cannon. Yet the threat of force isn't limited to demonstrations. It lies always beneath the surface, reinforcing the various institutional rules that make collective action more difficult, such as those regulating trade union activity.

Over the last year, the state has been gradually escalating the costs of collective action. Obscene jail terms

have been handed down, including an 18 month sentence for Omar Ibrahim for throwing a joke smoke-bomb at Top Shop on the TUC march on March 26th. Such overt repression by the state can also be a costly gamble that backfires, especially in the era of smart phones and social media. Witness, for example, the mass



mobilisation and port shut down in Oakland in response to police brutalising protesters and putting Iraq war veteran Scott Olsen in hospital with brain injuries.

Resistance and rebellion are costly; most subordinates lack the necessary means.

Many lack the time to attend a protest, let alone take part in a lengthy occupation. People lead busy, stressful lives. Crucially, they also experience injustice and deprivation on a local level. That's why

successful opposition politics requires more than dramatic public protests, useful though these are in communicating ideas, building solidarity and exploring political alternatives. There is an urgent need to build the long-term groups and networks that empower people in their everyday lives, as workers, tenants, benefit claimants and public service users. This is difficult work. Understanding the forces that breed despair and inertia is an important first step.



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THE FORTNUM & MASON STORY SO FAR

On March 26th 500,000 people took to the streets to stand up against the cuts which are destroying our lives. One of the protests that day was 'Occupy for the Alternative' called by UK Uncut, where hundreds took part in a sit-in protest at Fortnum and Mason - Royal Grocers, and Tax Dodgers of £1000 million per year, highlighting the hypocrisy of the Government who say that the cuts are 'fair' and 'necessary' whilst letting big business and rich individuals avoid about £20 Billion of tax per year.

The decision is being appealed, and the decision is being appealed to the High Court, probably sometime before the other trials next March.

The sentence was 6 months conditional discharge for all but one, who got a £215 fine (different because of a breach in a previous conditional discharge). All ten have to pay £1000 towards prosecution costs – the judge took no account of differences in individual's abilities to pay. So that leaves the defendants collectively in £10,215 of debt for taking a stand (or a rather a seat) against unnecessary and unjust cuts.

WHAT'S NEXT?
November 29th is the next court hearing which will prepare for the appeal as well as hear the 21 brave Spartacists! We hope they will be given an official Not Guilty verdict, but they could be put on trial also, along with or after the other two trials.

The appeal of the verdict of the first trial will likely be in January or February 2011. And the second and third trials are due in mid and late March 2011 respectively.

I AM SPARTACUS!
In July, 109 people had their charges dropped. Even the Crown Prosecution Service didn't think it was worth the resources to try and prosecute 139 people so instead they picked a handful to make an example of. The remaining 30 were put into 3 trials, one in November 2011, and two others in March 2012.

In August, in an unprecedented move of solidarity, 21 of those who had their case dropped announced "I Am Spartacus!" by reviving their case and demanding that either all the cases are dropped or everyone gets a fair trial!

Meanwhile District Judge Snow got hold of the case. Snow's heart is as cold as his name. In recent times he has purposefully taken on many of the protest cases, from the student protests, March 26th and now Occupy, and takes pride in giving harsh sentences.

FIRST TRIAL
The first trial, of 10 people, started on the 10th of November 2011 nearly 8 months after the occupation of Fortnum and Mason. For the alleged offence of Aggravated Trespass, it is required to prove both trespass and an 'additional act', which in this case the crown claimed was 'an intention to intimidate persons'. After the prosecution failed to show any evidence for an act that any of the 10 defendants did that was allegedly showing an intention to intimidate, and after even the prosecution's witnesses, including a chief police officer, said that the protest was 'sensible' and 'good natured'.

After a tense few days of deliberation from the judge, he announced a guilty verdict for all ten defendants. Snow's closing speech was chilling, as he applauded the principles of the activists and talked about the importance of challenging and engaging in the system, "but within limits" then proceeded to convict them. These "limits", it is apparent, are created by the powerful and are used to protect the status quo and to quash the right to meaningfully protest.

The Fortnum145 arrests and convictions are just one example of a crackdown on the rise of protests since the cuts were announced last October, with many receiving harsher sentences. See <http://fortnum145.org> for more information about the campaign and how you can help.

Written anonymously by Fortnum and Mason defendants.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can send messages of support to support@fortnum145.org, come along to protests and events as the appeal and other trials approach; write to your MP; join the campaigns against the law of aggravated trespass, and of joint enterprise; and find out more at fortnum145.org or email campaigns@fortnum145.org for more information on this.

You can donate to help fund the campaign and support the defendants with travel costs and other expenses – this trial is hurting the pockets of the defendants as well as every UK taxpayer. You'll also be helping to stand up for the basic right of citizens to protest. You can find details of how to donate at fortnum145.org/donate.

The best act of solidarity is to not let these attempts to punish protesting discourage you. Take a stand against the cuts and all the injustices in our society, fight for equality, occupy for the 99% and don't let them stop you!

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THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO QUELL A PROTEST

KYM BEESTON

As is evident from events in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya and Syria throughout 2011, some governments make no reservations about using any means possible to kill a protest. By comparison, the UK has a long history of peaceful demonstrations – some of which have played an important role in effecting social change. The rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression were firmly entrenched in the fabric of domestic law in 2000, when the Human Rights Act came into effect.

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 took further steps to criminalise behaviour not previously regarded as criminal, mainly by turning the civil action of breach of the peace into aggravated trespass. Ten peaceful protesters from UK Uncut were convicted of aggravated trespass earlier this month for staging a sit-in occupation at Fortnum and Masons department store in March to oppose tax avoidance.

The Human Rights Act involves both positive and negative obligations. It requires government, as well as all public bodies like the Metropolitan Police, to take active steps to promote and protect freedom of assembly and expression, as well as negative duties to not obstruct peaceful protest.

Granted, these rights are not absolute. But they can only be interfered with in accordance with laws setting out particular parameters to the restriction, and in a proportionate way that is necessary in respect of countervailing social needs. Guidelines published by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe say that a "high threshold will need to be overcome before it can be established that a public assembly could extend its application to other forms of protest with minimum parliamentary scrutiny. The European Court of Human Rights has identified the requirement of prior authorisation

deter protesters from acts even as minor as waving banners and handing out leaflets outside an arms fair.

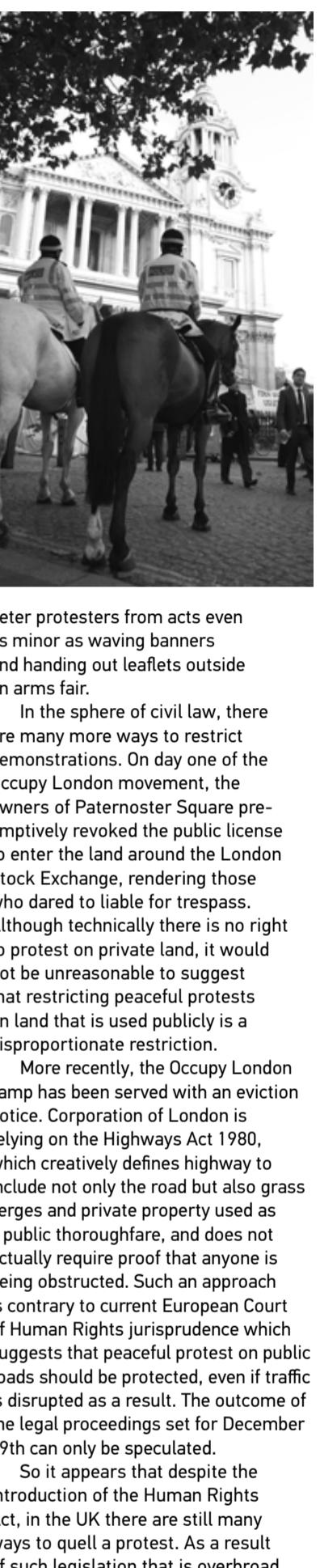
In the sphere of civil law, there are many more ways to restrict demonstrations. On day one of the Occupy London movement, the owners of Paternoster Square preemptively revoked the public license to enter the land around the London Stock Exchange, rendering those who dared to liable for trespass. Although technically there is no right to protest on private land, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that restricting peaceful protest on land that is used publicly is a disproportionate restriction.

More recently, the Occupy London camp has been served with an eviction notice. Corporation of London is relying on the Highways Act 1980, which creatively defines highway to include not only the road but also grass verges and private property used as a public thoroughfare, and does not actually require proof that anyone is being obstructed. Such an approach is contrary to current European Court of Human Rights jurisprudence which suggests that peaceful protest on public roads should be protected, even if traffic is disrupted as a result. The outcome of the legal proceedings set for December 19th can only be speculated.

So it appears that despite the introduction of the Human Rights Act, in the UK there are still many ways to quell a protest. As a result of such legislation that is overbroad and excessively vague, the policing of protest has become heavy handed, peaceful protesters are being threatened, intimidated and deterred, and the law is being informed by order rather than rights. The student protests on November 9th were a prime example, when 4000 police were deployed to deal with 2000 students who peacefully marched through the city, the authorisation of baton rounds was publicly announced, and prior offenders were sent warning letters encouraging them to not attend.

It is therefore no surprise that the Joint Committee on Human Rights says that public order law should be reviewed, and that police should be better trained about the human rights regime in which they operate. Only then will it be possible that the freedoms of expression and assembly promised to UK citizens can be properly realised.

Kym Beeston is a professional lawyer and student at the London School of Economics.



as a potential obstacle to freedom of assembly in circumstances where an immediate response might be required.

A wide range of other laws not intended to deal with protest are also being relied on to obstruct peaceful assembly and intimidate and deter people from expressing themselves freely. The Terrorism Act of 2000 infamously defines terrorism very broadly, to cover many types of non-violent protest action. Police have wide stop-and-search powers over people and vehicles anywhere in greater London for articles that could be used in connection with 'terrorism'. It is reported that the police do not hesitate in relying on this power to intimidate and delay activists. Anti Social Behaviour Orders, or 'ASBOs', were introduced into the legal lexicon in 1998 to restrict anti social public behaviour such as swearing or drinking alcohol. An ASBO itself is not a criminal offence, but breach of one is. They too are reportedly widely used by police to

PROTESTS, STRIKES & OCCUPATIONS ARE ALL THE SAME STRUGGLE



November 30th is a milestone. It's the biggest co-ordinated strike since the 1926 General Strike, which led the then-Tory Government to fear imminent "red revolution". Up to three million workers from across the public sector will take part in the most widespread form of direct action the Cameron regime has faced so far.

Public sector workers are often dismissed as "vested interests", or demonised as parasites on the taxpayer, so it's worth describing who we are talking about. Those going on strike range from dinner ladies to teachers, lollipop ladies to health workers, care workers to bin collectors. They are pillars of our community – and of any decent society. (And taxpayers, while we're on the subject).

Technically, this dispute is over pensions. The Government has argued that public sector pensions are becoming unaffordable. This isn't true. According to the report commissioned by the Tories, and written by arch-Blairite ex-Minister John Hutton, public sector pensions are projected to fall as a proportion of our Gross Domestic



Product. An agreement struck with the last government means that workers pick up the bill if they end up living longer than expected.

But this isn't really about pensions. The extra contributions the Government is forcing public sector workers to pay aren't going to their pensions – the money will go straight into the Treasury's coffers. It is a tax on public sector workers to pay off a deficit they had no role in creating – it's as simple as that.

Some activists may wonder why the dispute isn't much broader. Why only strike over an unjust deficit tax on nurses and librarians – what about the deepest cuts since the 1920s, the shredding of the welfare state, the privatisation of the NHS, and so on? There is no shortage of injustices to protest or strike about in Britain. But – as Tony Blair once boasted – British labour law is "the most restrictive on trade unions in the Western world."

Workers cannot strike unless they are in direct dispute with their own employer:

pretty much the only issue where that applies is pensions. If the laws are broken, then unions will have their funds seized by the state and they will be bankrupted.

But just because – for legal reasons – the official reason for the strike is "pensions", doesn't mean workers won't really be striking over all the other great injustices of Cameron's Britain. Indeed, the reason there is such widespread support for industrial action is because of the sheer scale of attacks from all directions.

And the strength of support should not be underestimated. Strike ballots have shown support for action ranging from 3 to 1 and 4 to 1. The Conservatives and their media allies argue that turnout undermines the legitimacy of the strike. There has been chatter about introducing even harsher anti-union laws that would ban strike action unless 50% of eligible workers support it. If the same principle was applied to Parliament, there would be virtually no MPs left. The Conservative Party itself received the support of less than a quarter of eligible voters, and yet still claims a mandate to radically transform British society. If the Government was really concerned about turnout, they would allow unions to ballot members electronically or at the workplace.



against public sector workers. The media will cry: private sector workers have rubbish pensions – so why should they be subsidising workers in public services? Private sector pensions are one of the great scandals of our age (and let's face it, there's stiff competition for that accolade). Only 40% of private sector workers are now in an employer-sponsored pension scheme; for low-paid workers, it's just 20%. But we should be arguing to drag private sector pensions up, not to drag public sector pensions down – otherwise we get a race to the bottom. Why punish public sector workers for the bad practices of private sector bosses?

Above all, this strike is part of a broader movement. It should be seen as the latest stage in the struggles that have emerged against the Tory-led Government. Our current "age of rebellion" began when 52,000 students took to the streets of London on 10th November 2010. The size of the protest surprised demonstrators and participants alike, and sparked off a wave of occupations and protests. It was argued that the British weren't like those hotheads in France or Greece: but the students shattered that myth, and showed that it was possible to fight back.

They will be called lazy, even though public sector workers do the equivalent of 120 million hours of unpaid overtime a year – the equivalent of employing an extra 60,000 people. One in four public sector workers put in unpaid overtime worth almost £9 billion a year.

It will be argued that they have "gold-plated" pensions, even when the average pension of a civil servant is £4,000 a year.

And of course these strikes should be seen as part of the same struggle as Occupy. The great achievement of the activists surrounding St Paul's

OWEN JONES

itself. Protests, strikes and occupations – these are all part of the same struggle against the Government and against neo-liberalism. It's a struggle that is taking place not just here – but from Athens to New York.

November 30th is the most important stage yet of the struggle here in Britain. It's when hundreds of thousands of working people defy attempts to punish them for the crimes of a wealthy, unaccountable elite. If it is successful, it will be a springboard for an even greater wave of popular resistance to the neo-liberal project.

I know that Occupy will be standing in solidarity with them.

Owen Jones is the author of CHAVS: The Demonization of the Working Class



MARK SERWOTKA IS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES UNION (PCS), THE TRADE UNION FOR BRITISH CIVIL SERVANTS.



OT: How effective are one-day strikes, like the ones on November 30? What can they achieve?
MS: One-day strikes can be very effective but they're never a solution on their own. For example, we held a one-day strike on 30 June alongside colleagues from three other unions. That forced the issue of pensions – public and private – into the mainstream media and ministers were found wanting in their arguments. We've kept up the pressure since then and we now face the prospect of up to 30 unions with nearly three million public servants walking out on 30 November. That is an incredibly powerful thing in itself, for those people to show for a day that they do not accept the lies they are being told by this government.
OT: Do you think that unions have not been able to steer public discourse about inequality and austerity cuts in the past years?
MS: I think we have had some success in doing this, to be fair. We haven't won

NOT IN A UNION? HERE'S HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT N30

DONNACHA DELONG

Just over a quarter of all British workers are in a trade union. Up to three million of them will be out on strike on Wednesday, 30 November (N30).

That leaves millions of workers not coming out, many of whom might be wondering why public sector workers are striking over the kind of pensions that no longer exist in the private sector.

Some people call socialism the politics of envy, but isn't it interesting how many people opposed to the strikes talk about gold-plated pensions and how bad the pensions are in the private sector? Sounds a bit envious, doesn't it?

The tragedy is that the people who are pushing this argument – the government, bosses in the private sector hoping to profit from the government's demolition derby through the public sector – many of them still have really good pensions.

If you're not in a union, you should still be supporting N30, but there are a couple of other things you should do – in this order: Join a union. Find out which union or unions are the appropriate ones for

your workplace and choose one and join them. If you have political issues about unions – whether you think they're too radical or not radical enough – join and get involved. Most unions have very democratic structures; the problem is nobody uses them. Join, get active and change things. If you're unemployed, you can join Unite the Union.

Get your workplace organised. Recruit more people to the union, form a shop or a chapel or whatever your workplace calls it.

Start demanding things. More money is a good start, but start putting pensions into the mix. A 2% increase in pay would be good in the current economic climate, but add in a 1% increase in management contributions to staff pensions.

Take part in solidarity actions on N30 – before work, at lunchtime, after work – during work if you think you can get away with it.

Bring down the government. Take a break, you've earned it.

This might be a little bit ambitious, but even if you just manage step 1, that'll be a start. If you're already in a union, but not one of those on strike on N30, start with point 2 and you can take a break earlier.



PREOCCUPIED MARK SERWOTKA

Occupied Times: Union membership is shrinking. What is the role of trade unions today?

Mark Serwotka: While union membership overall has been falling, in some areas where we organise, despite job cuts, the percentage of people in the union has been going up. That's the crucial thing we have to look to. Naturally, unions are strength in numbers. We believe that unions have a vital role to play, not just in protecting workers' jobs, pay and conditions, but also offering a counter to the greed culture of the City and the corruption that has infected too much of the political classes and their friends in the media.

the argument by any means, but the public is deeply sceptical about the need for cuts and trust in politicians is rock-bottom. The Unite union commissioned a survey recently that revealed, on pensions, unions were more than three times more trusted to provide accurate information than the government. We will continue to do what we can to put forward our economic arguments – and we've published pamphlets in the last year on our alternative to cuts, our vision for the welfare state and on pensions in the private, public and state sectors. Copies have been brought down to the St Paul's site I think, but we're more than happy to give you more so you can distribute them.

OT: Are there any synergies between the occupy movement and modern trade unionism? What support are unions willing to give to occupy?

MS: Definitely. We both stand against oppression and corporate greed, we both stand against the political elites who try to mislead people into thinking our society's problems are caused by the most vulnerable, rather than by the wealthiest and most powerful. I am personally very excited and inspired by what you're doing, and I think you enjoy a huge amount of public support.

OT: What is your assessment of the Labour party's stance on welfare and labour policy? If they cannot provide a satisfactory alternative, who can?

MS: If they can't, we are and we will. I'm not a member of the Labour party and my union isn't affiliated to it, but they've been a great disappointment to millions of people in this country. Many of the worst aspects of Tory welfare policy were started under Labour. Ed Miliband's opposition to our strike in June was nothing short of a disgrace. There are signs they are moving more in our direction, but it's very slow.



BURSTING THE BUBBLE

AMY HORTON

It happened with the dotcom bubble, then, more tragically, with the subprime mortgage crisis, and soon after, most lethally, with the global food crisis. The extreme boom and bust of markets, force-fed and distended by the financial sector.

After each crash, financial speculators have sought new arenas in which to make quick profits. As the housing market imploded, billions poured into food derivative markets. Food prices mirrored that influx, rising 80 per cent in 2007-8. Over a billion people went hungry. Then the bubble burst and prices crashed, only to break records again earlier in 2011.

Across Europe, governments are considering reinstating regulations that kept feral finance out of food markets. But that process could be derailed by the financial lobby, its ideological alignment and nepotistic relationship with decision makers. Current or former staff of Goldman Sachs now lead Italy, the Greek debt agency and the European Central Bank.

Even if public mobilisation wins the battle to curb food speculation, the frontiers of finance are likely to expand elsewhere. From carbon to land to water, natural resources that we all have a right to are being privatised and repackaged so that bankers can gamble with them. Campaigners warn of a glut of questionable carbon credits becoming the next subprime risk. Speculators are fuelling the global land grab – Egyptian financiers have just taken control of a quarter of a million acres of South Sudan. Water could be next. Predicting a global market in water within the next couple of decades, Citigroup economist William Buitier said earlier this year that: "Water as an asset class will, in my view, become eventually the single most important physical-commodity based asset class, dwarfing oil..."

This is what the 'green economy' means to most of those inside the Durban climate talks – held, fittingly, in the world's most unequal country – with next June's earth summit to take place in the similarly unequal Rio.

It's said that economists know the price of everything, but the value of nothing. Subject to the shockwaves of speculative finance, we are at risk of no longer knowing either. This makes it all the more critical that movements challenging big finance and austerity come together with those seeking to protect the global commons that we all depend on.

South African groups and La Via Campesina, a movement of a quarter of a billion small scale food producers, are calling for an international day of action on December 5th. Activists are mobilising for climate justice and to reclaim our food system from carbon intensive industrial agriculture and corporate control.

MONEY TALK\$

OCCUPIED TIMES: What do the next 12 months hold?

MIKE RUPPERT: 12 months? We need to focus on the next 12 weeks. That may be all the time we have to press for change before chaos sets in. The global economic system will likely be totally dysfunctional by next February.

THE OCCUPIED TIMES TALKS TO STAR OF THE MOVIE 'COLLAPSE', MIKE RUPPERT, ABOUT THE ECONOMICS OF SURVIVAL.

AMY HORTON

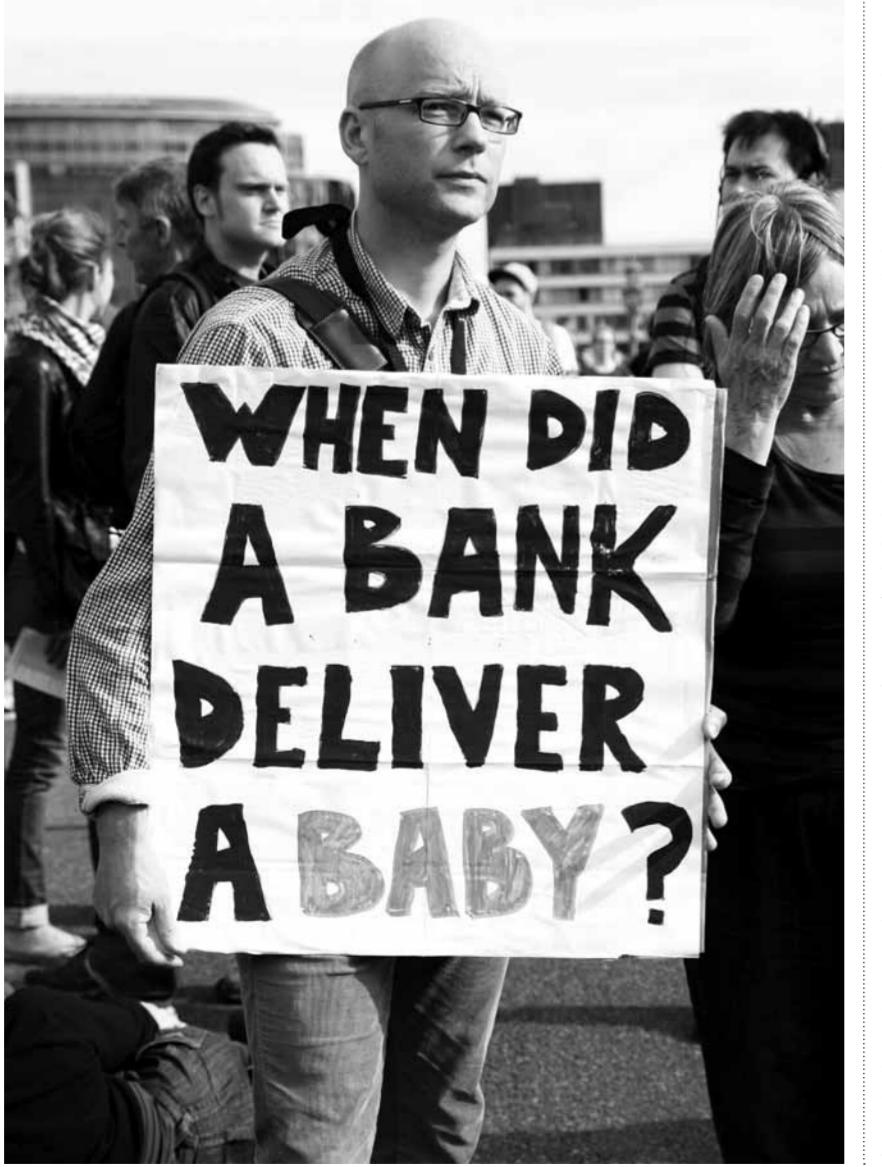
In place of that system, we must recognise food as a right, with decisions made democratically, respecting small-scale producers, women's rights, local knowledge and the environment. This approach is known as food sovereignty.

In practice, it embraces everything from the hundreds of thousands of Landless Workers Movement Brazilians who have occupied uncultivated land to campaigns against supermarkets here in the UK.

In Durban on December 5th, activists will march on the 'conference of polluters', take direct action against multinational corporations like Monsanto, and hold an assembly of the oppressed to discuss how to end this unjust system.

Here in London, on Saturday December 3rd, the LSX occupation will hold a climate justice teach-out, followed by some visits to climate criminals, before finally joining a bigger march. The following evening, you can watch food sovereignty films at the Tent City University. And on December 5th – take action for food sovereignty and climate justice.

By Amy Horton, food justice campaigner at the World Development Movement.



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OT: So get the money out of politics?

MR: It's essential. Assuming that I had dictatorial powers I would instantly scrub the airwaves clean of all commercial advertising paid for by lobbying groups, especially those connected to energy and banking interests.

OT: What is the fundamental problem?

MR: We live in a civilization predicated on infinite growth, which is obviously no longer possible.

OT: You've been charting problems in democracy, politics and society for decades. Is there anything new about what's going on today?

MR: What's new is that there is no more room to focus on the false or half-measured "solutions" that we have been manipulated into pursuing until now. Humanity's back is against the wall. We solve this problem completely or else many of us – many more than necessary – are going to die and suffer. No sacred cows can be exempt from examination or challenge. In fact, it is our most sacred cows that must be challenged first! Our revolution must be complete and total, resulting in the death of the infinite-growth paradigm. Nothing less will do. The revolution -- as Thomas Jefferson might say -- must be complete and thorough.

OT: If you were President for the day, what's the first thing you'd do?

MR: Tough question. My first instinct would be that I would resign, because the American president is a prisoner of the banking system, housed in a government with three branches that

OT: How would you tackle the energy crisis?

MR: I would immediately eliminate all corporate tax deductions for energy. This idea was originated by my colleague Colin Campbell in Ireland and it's a brilliant way to incentivize conversion to renewable energy where possible. I would order immediate halts to fracking and then I would order a safe shutdown of every nuclear reactor in the United States within 120 days. These reactors must all be shut down before collapse and infrastructure failure make them impossible to control. Fukushima is far from contained and Japan is mortally wounded as a result.

OT: Can measures like the Robin Hood Tax help?

MR: It doesn't excite me in the least. Until you change the way money works, you change nothing. I'm sure the bankers would like to lead occupy down into this cul de sac. What the Robin Hood tax says is, "Leave infinite growth in place. Leave the banks in power. Leave the politicians in power. Let them earn their greedy inexcusable profits and then just feed ourselves in a parasitic partnership with the criminals". Yuk! I will not be an accomplice to the way the system operates. All the Robin Hood tax does is essentially demand a bribe. It is also quite parasitic.

OT: If it's a let off for the banking system, what gets them on the hook? How do we win this thing?

MR: Our fight will not be over until fractional reserve banking, compound interest and fiat currency have been forever removed from the human (and planetary) experience. Those three things constitute the heart of the beast and until and unless they are removed, the beast -- like cancer -- will always return like a Zombie. Until you change the way money works, you change nothing.

OT: What is it like for you, as an ex-cop, to see the trillion-dollar frauds and theft that goes on?

MR: It is still as aggravating, painful and frustrating as it was when I discovered CIA

seven billion people.

OT: So there are no economic quick-fixes in your book?

MR: There has to be a complete cultural transformation to a resource-based economy in harmony with the planet that we live on. It's as simple as that. I see that awareness emerging fairly quickly throughout the occupy movement. Whether it will be enough or in time to prevent total extinction events is in question. We are all watching this movie to see how it ends.

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smuggling drugs into the country thirty-four years ago. I still take great satisfaction in seeing real bad guys go to jail.

OT: Are you optimistic about the future?

Are there glimmers of hope...?

MR: There are big glimmers of hope. I see an awakening I have waited a lifetime for taking place at almost the speed of thought. But certain things are unavoidable. There can be no return to growth. Prosperity (as we have conceived it) will not be returned, any more than any of the missing pension funds, benefits and services will. The street lights that have been going off around the world for three years will not come back on again. Infinite Growth is over and we cannot expect to create conditions of better living conditions, wages, benefits, and low prices for

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A JUST TRANSITION OR JUST A TRANSITION?

HANNA THOMAS



major criticism that has been levelled at Occupy LSX is that the movement has become an umbrella for too many issues.

"What do they

want?" our mainstream media asks, as a stroll through the camp makes it clear that democracy and corporate greed are not the only issues being debated. Linger around St. Pauls, or peek your head into the Tent City University, and you will soon find yourself debating and discussing issues of mental wellbeing, gender equality, class, the environment, parenting, and the role of religion, amongst many, many others. However, rather than betray a lack of focus, to me the diversity of topics being discussed means something quite different – that our movements for social and environmental justice are growing up, that we are seeing connections and joining the dots between issues, and that we recognise that we are most powerful when allied.

There is much that we can learn from each other, and the global Occupy / Indignados movement has provided us with the perfect opportunity to compare notes. What's working, what isn't? Are our demands aligned, and does that even matter? However, there is one area of discussion that certainly needs to be addressed by the environmental and Occupy movements together, and that is 'what does transition look like'? We say that another way is possible, but what journey do we have to take to get there? How can we work together towards building a new low carbon economy, one that incorporates values of social justice, equity, and democracy? Of course this conversation is already well under way in many countries across the world, but different elements of our movement are in danger of pulling in very different directions. You might not think it, but transitioning away from a pollution-based economy and transitioning away from our current capitalist model do not necessarily have to have much in common.

Let's not kid ourselves – the new, low-carbon economy could be one that retains all of the inequities and corporate greed of our current economic system. One where companies profit from the transition, while workers are stuck in green McJobs, doing the essential work of decarbonising our energy systems and retrofitting our homes but in a vicious circle of low pay and few opportunities for progression or training. Nor does the Anarcho-Marxist model of transition away from a capitalist state make any promises to those who are currently most underserved by our society. We are experiencing rapidly rising levels of inequality and, according to the IEA, we have only an estimated 5 years before the fight to mitigate dangerous climate change becomes a fruitless one.

Yes, the challenge ahead is immense, but so is our movement. Who would have thought, just one year ago, that the world would be engaged in a global conversation about corporate greed and the terms of democracy? A fair society that respects our earth may seem out of reach, but that is all the more reason to keep striving for it. As David Harvey has said, "Of course this is utopian! But so what! We cannot afford not to be."

Hanna Thomas is Lead Organiser for the East London Green Jobs Alliance

comprehensive vision of a new world. Questions about growth, nuclear, and means of production go unanswered. However, it is the beginning of an essential conversation about how we can create a new system that is both economically and ecologically viable.

What is not questioned is the speed at which we must act. The need to transition away from our current economic and social model in this country and the rest of the developed world is an urgent one. We are experiencing rapidly rising levels of inequality and, according to the IEA, we have only an estimated 5 years before the fight to mitigate dangerous climate change becomes a fruitless one.

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CANVAS OR CONCRETE – IS OCCUPY A TAZ?

KESTER BREWIN

With the shift from a tented village towards the solid structure of the Bank of Ideas, it seems that the Occupy London movement has another step forward in the quest to be taken seriously. Despite the fact that the St. Paul's camp has been around more than five weeks, momentum has not dwindled and interest has not seeped away. To the contrary: New possibilities are opening up. The physical and material changes are not insignificant. The partial move from "under canvas" to "under ceilings" serves as a metaphor for how far a disparate group of ideas and grievances have begun to solidify into an agenda for change at the highest level.

The framework is not fool-proof – it does not deal with the capitalism question, nor does it build a

flashmob is a TAZ: a momentary intensification of life that leaves those who experience it thinking: "What just happened there?" It refuses to force intensification upon us as a permanent mode of being but is instead happy to simply suggest that another, more marvellous life, is possible.

A festival can be a TAZ too.

Glastonbury is great for a few days... but to try to sustain that space as a permanent place would likely lead to violence: arguments over space, people getting exhausted, disputes over resources.

What Bey understood was that the temporary can be more powerful than the permanent. Oddly this is borne out in the old Hebrew scriptures, where God expresses frustrations with the Israelites for wanting to replace the canvas tabernacle with a stone temple – and it is interesting in the interactions with St Paul's Cathedral to see the effect that this petrification has had on Christianity.

Let me offer a word of caution, and encouragement, as Occupy moves into a new phase. The caution is that the move into solid structures – politically and materially – will need to be taken with care, and with the foreknowledge that more disputes may well result.

The encouragement is that, as a TAZ, the Occupy movement does not need to 'win' every round. If evictions succeed, so be it. Violence will not be required to resist, simply a determination and joyous belief that a new space will be liberated, somewhere else, at some time, and that as people experience – perhaps only for short moments – the marvellousness of this life penetrated by equality and liberty, then things will begin to change.

By Kester Brewin, a teacher and writer from South East London. kesterbrewin.com



BE GREEK FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

DIMITRIS DALAKOGLOU

Imagine becoming poor overnight. Since May 2010, when the government decided to get a loan from the IMF, EU and ECB, most people in the country have lost at least one third of their annual income. For those who still have a job, the value of their labour has fallen dramatically; many people now work full-time for €500 – €600 a month.

Helping to keep the value of labour so low is unemployment, which is more than 18% overall (below 10% in 2009), and an estimated 50% among young people, not counting the ones who work under precarious and 'flexible' conditions.

In order to repay the enormous debts, taxes are also on the increase. An emergency tax was recently implemented to everyone who owns a house; a very effective measure given

that private ownership of houses in Greece is widespread and even people with relatively low income often own their own home. This property tax was attached to electricity bills, so if you don't pay it – as is common, under circumstances where some must choose between buying food and paying it – your power is cut.

Since the EU and IMF instructed structural adjustment of the Greek economy that accompanied the May 2010 loan, the suicide rate in Greece has been doubled. Reports of desperate people ending their lives are published daily in a country that, until 2009, had the lowest suicide rate in Europe.

Research published in a recent issue of Lancet shows that the crisis has already had a significant negative impact on the general health of the Greek population.

Now imagine further. Imagine your country gets a new kind of experimental government that eliminates social provisions and represses any social movement that dares rise up against this new regime. Two weeks ago a new government was appointed with the former vice-president of the European Central Bank (ECB), which gave that huge loan to Greece as the PM.

Moreover, MPs who are members of the extreme-right-wing party LAOS were included in the new Greek government, along with social democrats and conservatives. Italy has also appointed an unelected government. During a crisis, whatever it takes to enforce the sustainability of capitalism is permitted – even appointing unelected governments.



The actual people undertaking each role matter little, however. The example of Greece is pretty straightforward: governments of the last few decades (elected or non-elected, Left or Right) are working towards a common goal: the creation of an authoritarian and a ruthless neoliberal capitalist regime, which may be spun as democracy from time to time, but never really is.

But perhaps you people of Britain don't need to use your imaginations so much? Across Europe, several countries are already experiencing a 'light' version of what is happening in Greece. The full recipe is already being prepared for Ireland and Portugal – who both took similar loans from IMF/EU/ECB troika soon after Greece – while Italy has now taken its place at the table.

This is not the only place today where the dominant political-economic system manifests the limits of its 'democratic' mask. The Occupy movement all around the world sees profound levels of repression. Tunisia, Egypt, USA and Spain are just a few of the countries where the authorities have tried to smash the local versions of the Occupy movement, with various parts of the establishment (e.g. corporate media) playing their parts in these attempts. If nothing else, these attacks make explicit the political significance and the potential of the Occupy Movement, especially when combined with more traditional means of struggle such as strikes and marches.

If it were not so dangerous for the global economic and political establishment, they would not attack to the Occupy Movement so aggressively, and when the establishment is so rotten, posing danger feels great.

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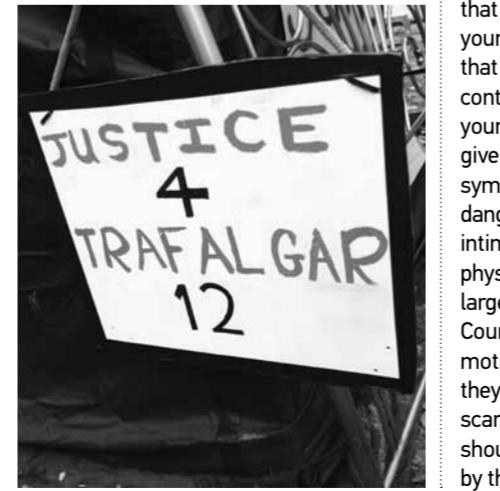
ARRESTING DEVELOPMENTS?

HOWARD HOGAN BERN

Some weeks ago, as the novelty started to wear off the Wall Street occupation, media interest was suddenly renewed by reports of mass arrests. Arrests for peaceful protest, arrests for voicing an opinion, arrests for walking on the wrong bit of street. Arrests, even, for withdrawing one's own money from the bank. When our media reports on the occupy movement, it is often because things are going badly, rather than well, and we ourselves often find other occupations most inspirational when they are overcoming great obstacles. This has led some people to think that we must seek out obstacles in order to strengthen our protest.

Chatting at St. Paul's and Finsbury Square, I have heard from many intelligent and sensible people the same sentiment when planning protests: 'what this movement needs now is some arrests. Look at what happened with the media when they arrested people at Wall Street.'

The treatment that protesters routinely get from the police would be unbelievable to the general public who don't see it, and so we naturally want to expose the authoritarian nature of the



state's response to us. Rosa Luxemburg said "Those who do not move, do not notice their chains," and there are protesters among us prepared to be arrested in order to demonstrate to the wider public the limits of our freedom.

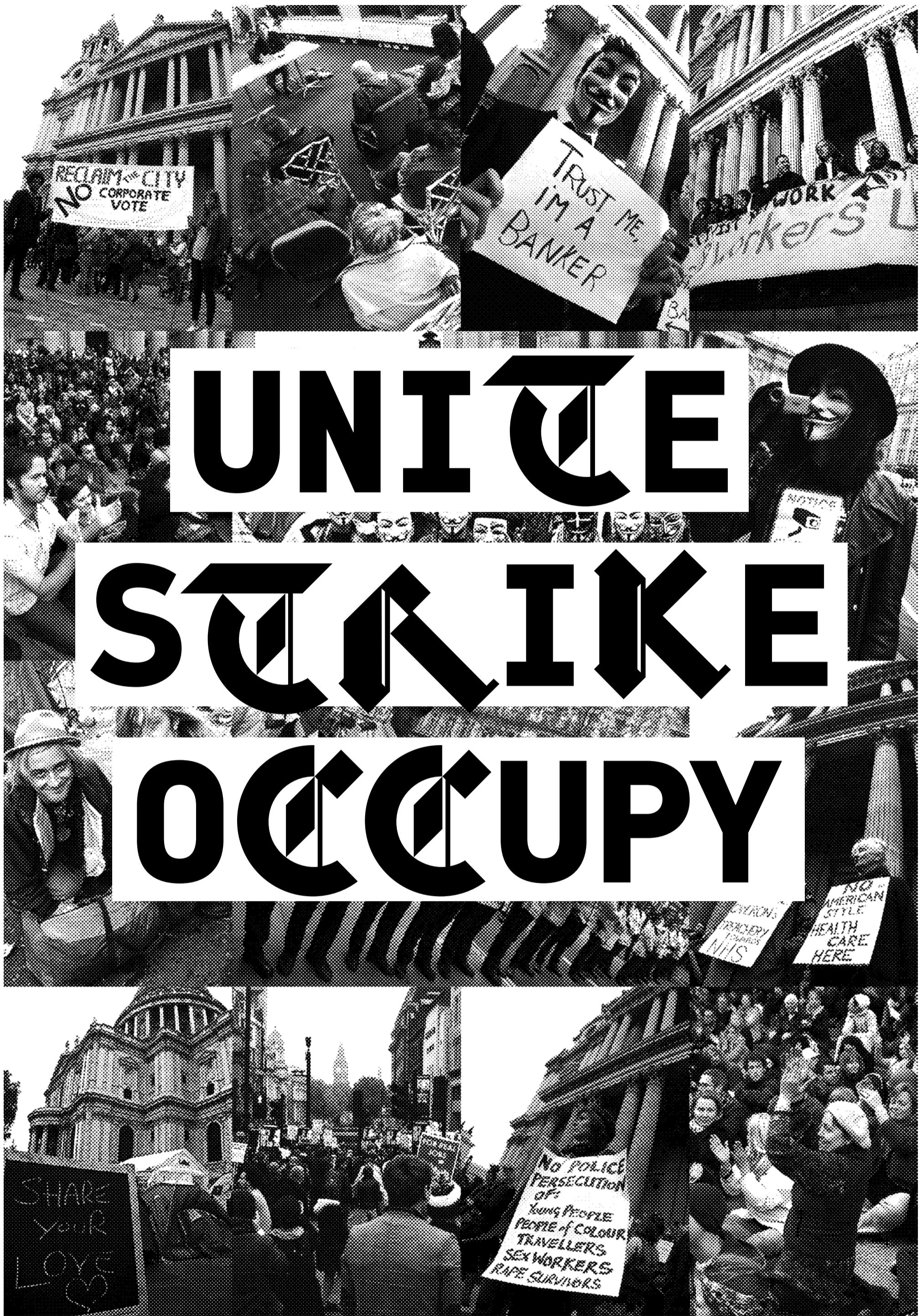
IS IT WORTH IT THOUGH?
While I respect the choice of individuals to act freely, I question the principles of any movement which prioritises media attention over personal liberty. If someone really thinks that their best possible contribution to the aims of the occupation or to protecting free speech is to offer themselves up for arrest then so be it, but it's not something for us to expect of others.

Being afraid of arrest may demonstrate defiance to the state and undermine its power over us, but actually getting arrested places the individual at the mercy of the police and the legal system; it empowers the state to control us further. As an arrestee, you have fewer freedoms than other protesters, especially if you have bail restrictions placed upon you. Many people have been bailed away from the City of London recently, meaning that they cannot return to the St. Paul's camp. If you consider that place a home, do not willingly allow yourself to be kept away. If you believe that the state already has too much control over your liberty, your time and your limited finances, don't submit to give them more power for the sake of symbolic defiance. Police stations are dangerous places, people are bullied, intimidated and abused, emotionally and physically, inside them and the police are largely unaccountable for their actions.

Courts are handing down politically motivated sentences for minor offences if they're related to protest, with the hope of scaring us and discrediting our cause. We should never be put off from protesting by this, but we should get wise to their



~ OCCUPY LONDON ~



~ FOR OUR FUTURE ~