

The Occupied Times

~ OF LONDON ~

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ST PAUL'S CAMP CLEARED

EVICITION MARKS END OF THE BEGINNING FOR OCCUPYLSX



Bailiffs, assisted by police, launched the action to clear the long-standing Occupy London camp at St. Paul's this week. Shortly before midnight on Monday, 27th February, bailiffs, officers in riot gear and police vans began to draw together to enforce the eviction order sought by the City of London Corporation - the archaic governing body of London's financial district - that had been upheld in court last week. As this enforcement was underway, the nearby 'School of Ideas' community centre was also evicted, in violation of ongoing court proceedings, with the building later razed to the ground.

Since the rejection of the appeals case before the Royal Court of Justice on February 22nd, most valuable items and a number of tents had already been removed by protesters from the site at St. Paul's in anticipation of police action and based on fears about the disregard for protesters' property. Since Friday night, occupiers had held a permanent and peaceful vigil on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral in anticipation of the eviction. Through the camp's General Assembly it was decided to endorse individual responses to the eviction, and legal guidelines were distributed throughout the camp and online to inform protesters of the possible legal ramifications of various forms of resistance.

On Monday afternoon, Occupy London received an anonymous phone call from someone claiming to work for the City of London, who warned of preparations for an imminent eviction. Shortly after midnight, activists alerted through phone trees and tweets began to arrive at St. Paul's. City of London police set up a cordon around the perimeter of St. Paul's preventing anyone from entering the area after 12:30 a.m. At the site of the camp, most occupiers had gathered on the Cathedral steps - considered by many a safe zone, since the church's land was not covered by the eviction order - while around 20 protesters gathered on top of a wooden structure that had been erected from pallets and kitchen shelves in front of the cathedral. Shielded by police in full riot gear, bailiffs began clearing and breaking up tents while some protesters prayed, sang, danced and broadcast the

eviction via several mobile livestreams. At around 2 a.m., and without any verbal warning, police and bailiffs tightened the kettle around the wooden structure and began to dismantle it. According to legal observers that were present at the scene, the police acted with "too much haste and not enough caution". Several protesters were forcibly pulled to the ground and stepped on by riot police for acts of peaceful resistance. By 3:20 a.m., the last remaining protesters had been dragged from the structure. When questioned about the disproportionate show of force, representatives for the City of London Corporation and the City of London Police had "no comment" for the Occupied Times. Legal observers reported that while there were around 20 arrests for obstruction of police work, the majority of activists on site complied peacefully with the eviction order. The last of the occupiers chained himself to a tree; it took an hour and a half to remove him.

Protesters who had withdrawn to the steps of St. Paul's also found themselves confronted by police. Officers claimed that church officials had asked them to clear the front of the cathedral under Section 14 of the Public Order Act - the threat of "serious public disorder, serious damage to property or serious disruption to the life of the community". While several police observers watched from the upper balcony of St. Paul's, units in riot gear dragged protesters off the church steps. Occupiers who wanted to collect their personal belongings were sometimes refused access, and saw their bags trashed by bailiffs and city workers. Around 3:30 a.m. the last protesters were removed while chanting "Shame on you!" and "You work for us!" to police officers.

No church officials were visibly present to witness the forcible eviction of peaceful protesters from the cathedral steps, and Giles Fraser, the former canon chancellor who resigned in protest against church chapter's decisions regarding the camp, was prevented from entering the site. Fraser described the eviction as "a terrible sight" and "a sad day for the Church of England". Tammy Samede, a supporter of Occupy London and litigant-in-person before the High Court, >>

CARMEN VALIDO

CARMEN VALIDO

Editorial

After four and a half months of peaceful, prolonged protest, the authorities finally called time on the St Paul's occupation in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

Riot police and bailiffs, enforcing the will of the 1%, were confronted by peaceful defiance from occupiers who were joined in solidarity outside of the police cordon by many other occupiers and supporters. The shadowy, undemocratic City of London Corporation were aided in arranging the eviction by the craven cowardice of St. Paul's clergymen, who, despite having previously suggested they would provide "sanctuary" in the event of a violent eviction, decided instead to invite police to physically remove peaceful protesters from the steps of the church - just as Giles Fraser feared. Fraser, who was prevented by police from passing through the cordon, tweeted the next morning: "Really proud of the way Occupy conducted themselves last night."

A cathedral spokesperson had told the Evening Standard back in December, "The only radical alternative would be putting [protesters] inside the cathedral. We have said all along that what we do not want is for this to end in violence. If [during an eviction] they run inside, the doors are not going to be shut. Everything has been discussed."

Occupy was never about critiquing religious establishments, but since landing on the steps of St Paul's obvious antagonisms between faith, morals and established religion have been exposed which are not unconnected to Occupy's central issue of financial inequality.

When given a choice between looking after the people and looking after their accounts, the chapter's agenda became obvious. Giles Fraser resigned from his role as Canon stating that he couldn't stand by and watch violence being perpetrated in the name of the church. When highly respected members of the clergy are leaving their positions in order to escape restrictions on their own ability to act morally - restrictions imposed primarily by financial concerns - it becomes clear just how deeply the power of finance has penetrated every area of our society. How can there be such a thing as ethical capitalism when even establishments whose very business is ethics cannot extrapolate one from the other?

A second Occupy site, the School of Ideas, was also evicted simultaneously, immediately after bailiffs moved in, with the building flattened to the ground just hours later. It's worth noting that while the School of Ideas was literally bulldozed

shortly after its eviction, the government are metaphorically bulldozing libraries and access to higher education for many.

These scenes were precipitated last Wednesday when Occupy LSX somewhat predictably had its appeal rejected at the Royal Courts of Justice. The case was fought on a narrow plain encompassing only the vagaries of land ownership and the question of whether the encampment blocked a public highway. Let's try to ignore the risible irony of the City of London Corporation positioning itself as protector of the "public good" when the spacious walkway in question is one of the last remaining examples of publicly owned land in the entire Square Mile. Given that the legal system was devised in line with political and economic values that favour the one per cent, it was always likely that the Corporation's claim to the land - home to hundreds of people these past four months without hindering pedestrian access in the slightest - would be upheld.

If the case were fought on a moral or ecological plain there would be no contest: Occupy would win hands down. History, to be written by a world stupefied at our era's inaction on climate change, poverty and global inequality, will record that Occupy the London Stock Exchange saw the coming

storm and helped sound the warning bell. History will also note that the established men and women of our age responded with dismissive scorn and references to their deluded idea of "common sense".

OccupyLSX's case was not destined to be successful in court but it did put forward a strong public defence of the right to meaningful protest. Protest is not about being 'allowed' to walk from A to B, wave banners, then return home only to see that the government is proceeding with its illegal war or unmandated privatisation regardless. It is about the right to make a prolonged case for genuine change. Whilst it is to be commended that legal process was respected in this country - unlike in the violent clearances of Occupy camps elsewhere - it remains the case that the parameters of debate are set by the media, politicians and institutions of the very system we are here to dismantle. There are profound implications, verging on tragedy or farce, when the people who control how political discourse is conducted then appoint themselves to judge the validity or success of our protest against them. As long as the targets of our actions are also the dictators of the form our dissidence takes, we risk being stifled into adopting methods of demonstration designed to fail.

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Regular repetition of the Occupy motto "you can't evict an idea" must not breed complacency. We have work ahead of us to be at the heart of the transformation that we all know is necessary; this work will require active participation not distracting disputes. We must be honest with ourselves that Occupy LSX, towards the end, was characterized less by vibrant political activism and more by insecurity and drift, fuelled by the destabilising threat of eviction and the inevitable tribulations of a social experiment in full media glare. Slavoj Zizek's advice to Occupy Wall Street bears repeating here: "There is a danger. Don't fall in love with yourselves, with the nice time we are having here. Carnivals come cheap—the true test of their worth is what remains the day after, how our normal daily lives will be changed. Fall in love with hard and patient work—we are the beginning, not the end."

Some voices from across the political spectrum have suggested that Occupy should jettison the homeless and mentally ill to avoid presenting a messy appearance or to give ourselves an easier ride. This fails to recognise that we are all part of the 99% and that many people without secure homes or with shaky mental health have been integral to the Occupy Movement - including having contributed invaluable to this newspaper. A statement agreed by consensus this month confirms that Occupy is a movement committed to working in solidarity with the homeless.

The occupation of public space has been crucial to the global uprisings of 2011 and the St. Paul's camp will be missed by many. Its prominence and symbolism provided a platform for occupiers to interact continuously with the public. Evictions of camps in other countries have sometimes caused the activism that established them to fizzle out but OLSX has stood strong in the belly of the beast for over four months, engendering hope that foundations have been laid for a movement far stronger and more sustainable than the fabric of our tents. Part of Occupy's power is that it unites radical and progressive people under one banner. Occupy first, to raise awareness of injustice. If enough people join our cause, then Occupy to halt the flow of capital and to undermine the one percent's exploitative systems. Above all, stay unified and keep growing.

Thirty years of neo-liberal culture has left a legacy of atomisation as normality. The space for public assembly has disappeared into a landscape of business

parks, Tesco superstores and luxury apartments. What looks like public space has been privatised and monopolised, as demonstrated by the recent injunctions at Paternoster Square and Canary Wharf. Unions have been neutered and the established Left has contorted itself out of all recognition. Those whose moral grounding would naturally align them against neo-liberalism have been scattered to a diaspora of causes: environmentalism, 'third world' poverty, efforts to salvage the Labour Party and practical attempts to live despite capitalism by retreating into private worlds of postmodern cynicism, Eastern practices and like-minded echo chambers; all the while failing to confront the common enemy. This reinforces Mark Fisher's concept of Capitalist Realism whereby the capitalist elite, lacking organised opposition, claims that 'There is no Alternative' while mainstream culture continually cements this as our 'reality', reproducing capitalism every time it fails. All that is offered now by policymakers in the West, locked into their dogma, is ever uglier, more hopeless versions of the status quo.

Fortunately there is hope to be found in the freshness, savvy and subversive humour of networks such as UK Uncut, Move Your Money, Frack Off and the student movement as well as Occupy and those who protested the demolition of the community at Dale Farm. These groups, via a diversity of tactics - including putting bodies on the line - are beginning to plot a course for the Left to escape its straitjacket of self-defeatist defensiveness. Movements are beginning to assert strong values around which we can build a new consensus. Together we have the chance to force this post-crisis period to be a transformational moment in UK history in the way that 1945 and 1979 began to redefine the country's prevailing 'common sense'.

Post-eviction, new occupations, events and direct actions will fill the void left by St. Paul's. The unique social atmosphere of Occupy must go 'on the road' with flash mobs in train stations, outside galleries and at national landmarks. Effective tools of coordination and communication will become even more vital, as will regular convergences - in the form of General Assemblies and National Occupy Conferences - of the movement's driving forces: people, passion and determination. Occupy's future will lie in initiatives such as this summer's 'Occupy Near You' walk: Occupy London, acting as



the nomads eviction has made us, will visit every London borough, creating bursts of free-thinking across the city, returning to St Paul's at the end of July - this time without the tents. Where politicians so often fail to connect with and listen to people, Occupy will reach out across all preconceptions of class, ethnicity or employment status. We will visit places too often in the blindspot of justice; places where riots took place last year and where the BNP have made gains, parts of society where the boom was never felt as well as those where community and creativity are thriving. We need to learn about local issues and to find common cause, so that we can connect and work with as many people as possible.

One of the best parts of being involved with this newspaper is the opportunity it gives us to engage with passers-by whilst distributing it. Many have already decided whether they sympathise with or are dismissive of our cause but in either case they are remarkably often willing to converse about the important aspects of life: meaning, happiness, the kind of society and life we desire, the type of planet we will be leaving future generations if our rapacious consumption continues unabated. These are not the conversations ordinarily had at our nation's bus stops or in our post office queues, never mind in the defunctive, trivial discourse of Question Time or politicians' interviews.

This is what the occupation of public space has achieved. Tahrir and Syntagma

Squares, Zuccotti Park, Occupy LSX and all the other camps worldwide are not mere signifiers of protest, they form islands with separate jurisdictions. The collective endeavour and refreshing honesty found in "occupied territory" differs so starkly from the surrounding society that it begins to subvert social norms, cutting through the humming anomie of modern life. The Occupy Movement has become an uncontrollable meme, a worldwide and technologically-networked Paris Commune, a space that frees people's previously privatised imaginations to not only dream of but also to practice alternative ways of being. This is what authorities around the world fear about the global Occupy movement and why they see it as something that has to be extinguished before the flame can grow and spread. As far as the ruling elite are concerned, there can be no space allowed to practice alternatives or even to discuss them, despite the increasingly obvious disintegration of their own ideology.

The struggles of ordinary people to confront entrenched powers are as old as history and what history teaches us is that our efforts must be both smart and persistent. We have to grow to love adversity, a word not to be feared by anyone who has camped all winter on London's streets. We have to keep coming back for more, armed with fresh focus, new ideas and bold hearts, because as Voltaire said "It is dangerous to be right in matters where established men are wrong."

>> agreed. "I am religious. To see the police sweeping across God's doorstep is very upsetting. Even during a war, churches are sanctuaries, priests are always able to move between opposing sides - but apparently not here." According to Anon, another Occupy LSX supporter, "Maybe we should seek sanctuary from a Mosque, because the Christian church totally let its own followers down".

To many, the camp at St. Paul's had become a real home over the past four months. According to a statement released through the Occupy London website, "We'll miss Occupy London Stock Exchange but not because of the tents, or even the kitchen shelves: it was a makeshift, loosely cooperative, occasionally quarrelling and fiercely idealistic group of people who came together to achieve something extraordinary. The relationships forged during these strange and beautiful four and a half months still have much further to run." Says Tammy Samede, "I had nothing but my tent, a change of clothes and a few books. But over the past months I have been happier

that I had been in many years." Ronan McNern, a member of the media working group, agreed: "This is where we built a community, of occupiers, homeless people and others. People lived here, people came for weekends. Their homes are now being destroyed, their tents are being taken. It is demoralising. What happens to the right to assemble? Will we be allowed to express our views here again, or is that right reserved for the Queen and the privileged?"

By 6 a.m., around 70 protesters were left without shelter. While the City of London Corporation promised to provide accommodation on the night of the eviction, they failed to demonstrate taking steps to ensure that vulnerable individuals had access to shelter, counselling, and food.

At the nearby School of Ideas, around 15 occupiers were evicted, despite the fact that court proceedings were still underway and the building - which had been established in the name of Occupy to serve as a community centre - was considered a legal squat. By 6 a.m., bulldozers had arrived at the scene. Two hours

later, the demolition of the abandoned school was underway. Reports later suggested that the possession order for occupiers at the School of Ideas had been signed by Secretary of State for Justice Kenneth Clarke.

While the eviction of the St. Paul's camp was an emotional moment for many occupiers and ended the world's longest occupation (and one of the largest), many supporters expressed optimism about the weeks and months ahead. Tammy Samede said: "This eviction is about tents, not people. They can remove our camp but they cannot silence us." According to Ronan McNern, ongoing projects such as Occupation Records, Working Group initiatives and the two weeks of protest that are planned around May Day will carry the momentum forward and signal that the movement has outgrown its initial "camp stage". Jamie Kelsey-Fry, a member of the media and citizenship Working Groups, agreed: "Movements move. This was the first step, but Occupy is about so much more than a single camp. If anything, this is the end of the beginning."

FINSBURY'S BUDDING COMMUNITY

FLAMINIA GIAMBALVO

As the St. Paul's encampment chapter of Occupy London closes, Finsbury's blossoming eco-village is preparing to accommodate some of the occupiers forced by eviction to relocate their passion, politics and possessions.

Public spending cuts have left the square's owners, the Borough of Islington, with an overstretched legal team. Although officially declaring the site an "unauthorised occupation", the council is "reluctant" to devote potentially millions of pounds to evict the protesters.

Walking into Finsbury Square on a grey Sunday morning, visitors are confronted with an eerily barren site. Yet scraping below the surface one finds a thriving community, rebuilding itself from its ashes.

In January a violent storm devastated a large part of the camp's infrastructure, giving the occupiers an 'opportunity' to rebuild the site and to realign with its original mission. The first Finsbury Square General Assembly, held on the 22nd of October, ratified that due to its setting, the ethos of the camp would be constructed around concerns for eco-friendliness and sustainability. However due to logistics and timing constraints these ideas were not implemented during the initial camp construction.

Margarida, one of the main proponents of the sustainable rebuilding project explains that "Environmental aspects are not separate from economic ones, and that's something we have to put on the table as part of Occupy."

At present, the eco-village is comprised of two model houses, a geodesic dome and a wooden yurt, which is under construction. The houses are built and insulated with 100 percent reclaimed material. The dome is an art installation donated by British artist Alex Hartley. Nature has been a constant theme in Hartley's work, which seeks to explore the connection between habitation and wilderness,

between belonging and isolation.

In its transition to self-reliant sustainability the project's key targets are energy, food waste and construction. The issues raised by the eco-village have resonated with a number of organisations external to Occupy. Particularly notable in it list of partners is the architecture firm Archetype. The studio is developing a low-cost demountable pavilion made from structural newspaper bales and reclaimed timber pallets for the protesters, built accordingly to the Walter Segal method. The Swiss architect developed a self building architectural system, using primarily reclaimed material. This model, which will guide the majority of the camps' infrastructure, takes two months to plan and two days to build.

The path to completion of the eco-village will unavoidably be a long and winding one. The majority of occupiers involved in its construction have never been involved in a similar project. Thus, as Margarida says, "Flexibility is key and we work on a trial-and-error basis. While we do have models to inspire us, diversity is essential. What may work for one community might not work for another".

Despite the many obstacles, ranging from the technical skills required for sustainable projects to the unforgiving weather, the potential of the project is immense. Margarida argues that while the Finsbury Square project is perhaps not an obvious course for Occupy to take, it is absolutely at one with the social, political and economic messages of the movement, as "during the coming year we will see thousands of families losing their homes. Projects such as this are a creative way to bring communities together and empower them, in the spirit of self-sustainability...". In this small central London square, people of all ages are learning the skills to help them build their own futures.



CARMEN VALIDO

THE SCHOOL OF IDEAS

EMMA FORDHAM

In a derelict school on Featherstone Street in Islington, radical ideas took root. On 11 February the School of Ideas opened its doors after free-thinking squatters took possession of the previously abandoned building. Open-plan, primary-coloured classrooms, a gym, an assembly hall and overgrown playgrounds were transformed into workshop and meeting spaces, a donation-based cafe, a cinema, meditation space and more. Less than three weeks later, the school was not only evicted but demolished.

Those occupying the building had been excited by the possibilities it represented. The idea was for members of the diverse local community to use the space as a community resource, for their own projects. Members of Occupy London had been using the school as a workspace and a place to connect with local residents. Visitor Fiona Brennan felt that the School of Ideas had the potential to provide "an inspirational injection of positivity" into the once vibrant but now fragmented community.

Approximately fifty people attended the first School of Ideas Community Assembly. Occupiers introduced participants to consensus-based direct democracy. Small groups held brainstorming sessions about what to do with the reclaimed school building, then fed back to the Assembly. Ideas for how best to use the space included solar panels and permaculture gardens - if the building could be secured for long enough - as well as games, art and education. After the Assembly many people wrote letters to the local council and the owners of the land - a housing development company - explaining that they would like to utilise the space creatively rather than letting it stand empty or be demolished. The feeling of the Assembly was that even a few weeks' use of the building could be helpful in fostering community cohesion. We now know that the Assembly, those letters and the community were ignored.

The school was, for its brief incarnation as the School of Ideas, used for workshops, skill-shares, performances and as gallery space. The 'Free University', begun at the Bank of Ideas, took up residence in the school. A broad range of subjects, everything from political squatting to esoteric philosophy to renewable energy, were on the curriculum.

Plans hatched at the School of Ideas have already borne fruit. One such plan was 'Rockupy' - a collaboration between members of Occupy London, musical artists such as Kate Nash and Sam Duckworth (Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly) and local teenagers who, in the course of one intense and inspired day, produced, recorded and promoted their own song.

Dave Brooks, a teacher and part-time occupier, was impressed by the day he spent talking with other educators and occupiers at the School of Ideas. "These articulate and committed people have inspired me to become involved in transforming citizenship lessons in schools in my area," he said, going on to explain that "The citizenship curriculum meshes with the Occupy movement's mission. Occupy isn't just about economic injustice - though it has been very successful at highlighting that - it's also about how we think, communicate and treat each other. These are exactly the things we should be discussing in schools."

Those care-taking the school on Featherstone Street knew they faced eviction but expected the authorities to proceed according to the rules and laws usually applied to squatted buildings. Despite the unexpected brutality of a night-time eviction with no forewarning, in which belongings were trapped inside the building then bulldozed along with it, the plans made and hopes raised during this brief occupation will continue to flourish. The cat is out of the bag - or, as occupiers like to say, "An idea cannot be evicted". Squatters will continue to open up buildings and Occupy London will continue moving into communities and neighbourhoods - by being invited into fully functioning schools and colleges as well as by continuing to reclaim under-used public spaces.

The encampment in St Paul's Churchyard was the Occupy London nest and now the fledglings are flying. In the coming months occupiers will be marching, networking, teaching, facilitating change and kindling hopes. They will be creating independent media and music and they will be highlighting corruption. Court orders and wrecking balls cannot stop the public repossession of education, democracy and justice.



BEN CAVANNA

A BATTLE IN GREECE, A WAR FOR US ALL

DAVID
FERRERIA



By the tens of thousands they descended on parliament in an intervention by the public against the politics of theft practiced by the Greek government and demanded by foreign creditors. They filled subway trains and side streets en route to Syntagma Square. They even filled the square itself until the three lines of riot

police (always a sign of bad politics in action) unleashed tear gas for hours, but still the crowds refused to disperse.

The outpouring of indignation was but one convulsion of a Greek patient subject to the madness and inhumanity of the neo-liberal laboratory. It was a convulsion shared across Greece, from the south on the island of Crete, to the north in the city of Thessaloniki. Out of the depths of disinterest held by Greek lawmakers, they passed the latest round of savage cuts by a near two thirds margin, ensuring further suffering and further insurrection by a people living through the controlled demolition of their livelihoods.

Those inflicting this destruction have no intention of letting the carnage be contained. They have the opposite intention. With Greek politicians gutting the wages and living standards of Greek workers, so too must Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish politicians prove their own devotion to the Troika (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) by marching their citizens into the same abyss. But their fanaticism will be their undoing. Having slashed wages in half, the Troika has made Greece unliveable for its residents. When a government makes a country unliveable, its people will respond by making that country ungovernable. This toxic equation won't be unique to Greece.

With the prospect of wages being slashed in half as they have been in Greece, what other reasons are needed for Spaniards, Italians and Portuguese to fill the squares and paralyze the streets with a show of their strength in numbers? "What the parliament does, the street can undo" isn't just a slogan. The streets can be a rival institution to parliaments dominated by members who confuse their seats for a popular mandate to rule on behalf of the bankers. No such mandate has been given. The need for the streets to restrain parliament becomes all the more urgent for countries like Italy and Greece where democracy has been suspended and unelected technocrats serve as prime minister.

The protests this week demonstrate to me that Greeks have nearly assembled a street power to rival that of parliament. The youths and unions who have been fighting



all along are increasingly being joined by the middle class and business owners. This critical mass of Greeks will soon embark on the task of undoing the damage imposed upon them by their Troika government.

Just as the tide of austerity starts in Greece and washes over Italy and the Iberian peninsula, so must a Greek revolt ignite its way West. If people in Spain, Portugal and Italy delay this task of dismantling Troika rule, it only gives them more damage to undo later. This is damage that can be avoided by joining the battle being fought by Greeks today instead of leaving the battle to be fought later, and in isolation, by each individual country.

Last summer, Greeks took to Syntagma Square, joining the struggle of tens of thousands of Spaniards in Puerta del Sol. Now, Puerta del Sol and all squares beyond and in-between must reinforce the crowds who have assembled in Syntagma. The Troika officials and their henchmen in parliaments must be exiled from power. It's the same demand that came from Buenos Aires over ten years ago: "Que se vayan todos - They all must go!"



THANASSIS STAVRAKIS

OF ACCEPTABLE MUSLIM DEMOCRACIES & BRITISH INTERESTS

CLARA RIVAS

Turkey has been praised as a successful example of how 'Muslim' and 'Democracy' are not mutually exclusive terms. As it becomes increasingly difficult to justify economic and military ties with long-established dictatorships such as British links with Gaddafi or Mubarak's regimes, along comes Turkey to provide European premiers with the option of a new discourse of what relations with a self-proclaimed Muslim democracy ought to look like. Specifically, Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) promotes a conservative practice of Islam whilst embracing the traditional accentuated expressions of Turkish nationalism attached to the politician's profession and called for by the outdated Turkish legal system.

Winner of the 2002 elections, the then newly formed AKP changed as needed the previous policies of the religious conservative Refah to legitimize the expectations of a new class of business men. AKP profited in popularity terms via brotherhoods which were not part of the state nor civil society and further developed instrumentalisation of religion in Turkey. One of the most popular at the moment is the Fetullah Gülen movement, which manages to combine Islam and free market philosophy, and focuses on indoctrination via educational institutions all over the globe.

In spite of their religious tendencies, what is most convenient for those countries promoting the free international flow of capital is AKP's stance on capitalist policies. Firm believers in privatisation, AKP makes a perfect ally for European countries seeking further economic options in a dire scenario whose ideological coordinates are dictated by market forces. Using the common language of the free market, UK and Turkey have engaged in a love affair of sorts, where they are both unable to admit to each other's deficiencies. The religious tinge has been utilised to legitimise AKP's policy within Turkish borders, inasmuch as it has provided the UK premier with an easy discourse of artificial tolerance.

Going beyond the discourse, how exactly are these countries benefiting from each other? As Recep Tayyip Erdogan said over a year ago, "this is the golden age of Turkish-UK relations." However Turkey has not yet achieved a welfare state. Its long standing issues of working conditions, access to education, of women's and minority rights, amongst others have been only partially invested in, and those struggling for any of these are in fact in need of urgent international support, not profit-seeking investment.

But there is more. The UK and Turkey's agreements to increase their ties include further contracts between the Turkish Defense Industry and British multinational BAE Systems. Turkey's desire to become the world's tenth largest economy are more than strong enough to justify the links between the two countries.

What would happen if the UK government was to bomb and kill 35 of its citizens as happened in Turkey's South Eastern district of Uludere last December? Could we imagine that the majority of media outlets, clearly controlled by the state, wrongly labelled these citizens as terrorists and therefore the massacre as justifiable? It is well known how the voices of dissent are treated: jailed, threatened - or both.

AKP has recently been portrayed also as successfully winning the power struggle with the once-unbeatable Turkish army. In reality, they are doing away with any possible contender, paving the way for a virtually uncontested rule. As Nihat Ali Ozcan states: "...the success of 'democratic control over the military' is not measured by succeeding in locking up the top general or putting a high number of officers into military penitentiaries as is the case in Turkey."

With an educational system that accentuates Turkishness until it becomes a racist formula, Erdogan's AKP betrayed its own attempt in 2009 to deal with the country's institutionalised inequalities. The prosecution of civil society and human rights advocates, opposition members and anyone that does not buy AKP's populism has shown exactly the undemocratic path AKP has chosen. The so-called fight against terrorism that takes shape in the KCK Operations is a suitable excuse: "In this situation, the Prime Minister and AKP are trying to control a political party by using the authority of the judicial system and the power of the law. This means they are trying to establish custodial rights [over BDP]." Yüksel GENÇ, Bakırköy Women's and Children's Detention Center.

Repression in Turkey is brutal. Censorship is commonplace. Acceptance of difference is almost non-existent. Yet Erdogan and his entourage of businessmen campaigned in the Middle East marketing their product, a Muslim democracy that apparently works. With an urgent need of an uprising within its borders that liberates its citizens of an abhorrent and excluding nationalism, Turkey stands as an awkward ally for anyone that not only speaks of true democracy but also practices it.

EGYPT'S SECOND WAVE

PEDRAM SHAHYAR

January 25th marked the first anniversary of the Egyptian revolution. A year after the first mass protests filled the streets of Cairo, we saw the second wave of the revolt.

Again, Tahrir Square and many other places across the country were overcrowded by the masses, with more protesters than even optimists had expected. These people were not celebrating the revolution but protesting the ruling Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (SCAF). Since autumn, the world had witnessed a wave of social unrest, large demonstrations and riots. After January 25th, dozens of football fans died during a massacre at Port Said. Further protests marked the anniversary of the resignation of President Mubarak on February 11th.

Egypt is not calming down anytime soon. The unity of the revolution is now broken. While the army was seen as a guardian of the revolution a year ago, today's crowds are fighting against the influence of the military. The Western view of the revolution has changed as well. Instead of enthusiasm, concern and disillusionment dominate the media picture these days. In news reports, the revolution appears to be unfinished and failing to accomplish its goals.

However, this is the same Western view that failed to catch the roots of the uprising before – a perspective that does not understand the nature of real revolutions. Of course, this revolution is not “finished” – no big revolution was ever complete after one year! Any revolution is an ongoing process, and it is amazing to observe how fast the one in Egypt is changing society.

Real revolutions result in a deep transformation of the political and social power relations. The ruling and privileged classes can never be beaten with a single blow. January 2011 marked the breakdown of the central layer of the police state in Egypt. The second wave is now about to break the political power of the

army. This is nothing less than a Herculean challenge for progress in Egypt.

But what has this revolution already achieved? A lot of success is related to institutional demands: the former state security apparatus was dissolved; Mubarak is on trial; a parliament was elected, with the moderate Islamists of the Muslim Brotherhood in the centre together with conservative liberals, Salafists have emerged as the right opposition, and liberals and Socialist form an opposition on the left. After thirty years of living under a perpetual “state of emergency” decree, the army lifted restrictions in January. In a few weeks a new president will be elected, and he will be responsible to nominate the government. Free and independent parties, unions, and a variety of social movement organizations have emerged everywhere. Following the new culture of empowerment in the revolutionary process, there is a new structure of the political sphere in Egypt – a development that cannot be overestimated in a country that was always ruled by kings and generals.

However, the army plays a very important role in Egyptian politics. Confronting SCAF and the political power of the armed forces is a historical challenge for the revolutionary movement. Not only has the military dominated the state for decades, its history is also inextricably tied to the rise of the Egyptian state after the end of colonial rule. The anticolonial struggle of the 1950s under Nasser inspired the whole region and cemented the historical legacy of the army. Since then, Egypt has had a strongly militaristic culture. After the revolution, the army was the only central and powerful structure that could promise to secure some kind of order and the transition period to democracy. Thus the hegemonic dominance of the army was not too surprising. However, it is surprising how fast this power was lost again.

The army is not only a military unit, but also a political and economical force,

controlling more than 20% of Egyptian economic output. Due to this structural power, huge popularity and a lack of big rivals, it was again no surprise that the Generals didn't seek to transfer power to an elected civilian government. Instead, their goal is to establish a system that follows the Pakistan model, where the army stays independent and dominant over the political sphere. Yet the politics of SCAF eventually alienated the newly empowered conservative block of Islamists. They are pursuing the Turkish model, where the civilian public sphere is controlled by religious groups who are taking more and more political control.

When Egyptians took to the streets again, SCAF began to lose control of the

situation. Whilst during the summer the army was pretty successful at isolating the movement, new crackdowns and killings destroyed the legitimacy of the SCAF as the guardian of the revolution despite the propaganda in state media. The commanding generals has under-estimated the strength and resilience of the popular uprising. A post-revolutionary society cannot be ruled by military force alone. While the army was accepted as the guardian of the transition period, it is not seen as a legitimate new ruler. The generals are still sitting in the saddle, but the harder they attempt to restrain the horse, the wilder the ride of the Egyptian revolution becomes.



DON'T WEIGH OUR ANTI-IMPERIAL STRUGGLE ON SYRIANS ALONE

DAVID FERREIRA

There's great alarm over the fate of Syria's Revolution as the stalemate in the country leaves it subject to external forces capable of dislodging its beleaguered combatants. For the regime, it can rely on its Russian and Iranian benefactors to provide diplomatic, financial and military aid. For the opposition weathering military sieges in Homs, Hama, Daraa, and the suburbs of Damascus, such natural allies are not so readily found.

In the absence of natural allies, the opposition within Syria may soon or have already sought out the assistance of either Western powers or regional Arab states aligned with the West. This potential alignment has struck the most well placed suspicions of the West's intentions, but it plays best to audiences in London and New York who are inclined to both support the popular revolution in Syria while opposing any foreign intervention, whatever differing forms it could take.

The article “Imperialism, Despotism, and Democracy in Syria”, by Columbia University professor Joseph Massad isn't for an audience in besieged Homs. I'm at least hoping he wouldn't argue to irregular fighters in Homs that they confront Assad's tanks with what inadequate weapons they salvage from Assad troops just so he can be assured they surpass the highest of ideological purity tests. This is a test in blood that can result in a staggering death toll. It was a test some from the safety of London wished on the revolutionaries in Benghazi.

It's a difficult situation and we owe it to ourselves and the people in Syria to acknowledge it as such. From that, I'm incapable of arguing an effective model to balance the need of Syria's revolutionaries to make tactical choices with our need here in the West to maintain solidarity without abandoning our opposition to interference by the nations we reside in.

In any circumstance, as leftists in the West, we must own up to our own failings that leave an international order where revolutionaries have nowhere to turn when the dictator they fight plays by “Hama Rules”. They're left with limited options while some like Joseph Massad righteously wield against them a yet to be assembled ideal method to defeat Assad without any external help to even negate the support Assad is receiving from Iran and Russia.

We would be foolish not to credit the judgment held by those in Syria who've waged an ten month campaign against the regime. No one can say they've hurried to turn outside for help. They delayed escalation to armed struggle despite the brutal repression throughout 2011. They insisted on continuing their peaceful revolution even as Libyans achieved success in military battle.

We, like the tyrants of the Arab World, underestimate the Arab revolutions at our own peril. Tunisians renewed their revolution after the fall of Ben Ali to ensure his regime fell down with him. Egyptians are also undergoing this process in challenging the military state which produced Mubarak. Libyans, having lived through direct international intervention while toppling Gaddafi, have demonstrated to the world that their revolution is still in their hands, taking to the streets of Benghazi to protest the transitional government's combined lack of transparency and commitment to change.

Just as we shouldn't understate the Arab revolutionaries, we shouldn't assign them our responsibility to defeat imperialism. That victory is to be seized through collective struggle by those living in the West and those who've been made subject to it. It certainly won't be won on the back of an Assad tank shelling the ill-equipped defenders of Homs.



MADNESS -A NEW APPROACH

PHILIP THOMAS

The Occupy Movement's achievements, in drawing attention to matters that are fundamentally important for every single

one of us, have been remarkable. In this article I will outline what critical psychiatry is, then offer a personal view of the resonance between critical psychiatry and Occupy. Finally I will contrast what I and others have called a global understanding of "madness," based in a Western, technological world view, with local understandings of psychological difference based in a rainbow of communities.

In January 1999 a group of over twenty consultant psychiatrists working in the NHS met in Bradford because of deep concerns about the direction in which psychiatry was heading. These concerns related to the Labour government's proposals to increase powers of coercion in mental health practice, the growing influence of the pharmaceutical industry on the profession, and the rise of biomedical explanations for and technological responses to madness. Since then the Critical Psychiatry Network has campaigned actively in alliance with radical survivor and service user groups.

In my own view, one not necessarily shared by all who identify themselves as critical psychiatrists, many affinities can be found between Occupy and critical psychiatry. Occupy London's Initial Statement itself is something I and many of my colleagues would certainly endorse. The demand for authentic global equality is particularly significant, along with a call to prioritise the world's resources for caring for people and the planet over the wealthy, corporate greed and the military. It calls for a sustainable economic system that benefits present and future generations, and calls for an end to government actions that oppress people globally.

The statement also highlights the importance of diversity and difference which I would relate to the way we make sense of ourselves as human beings, the myriad ways in which we understand our suffering, distress and madness, in the face of the globalisation of Western concepts of mental illness and diagnoses.

Why? Who stands to gain from the globally homogenized approach to treating mental distress? Second only to the arms industry in the USA, Britain and Europe, the transnational pharmaceutical industry is the most profitable sector of this flawed and unjust economic system. Despite the economic uncertainties of the last decade, the pharmaceutical industry maintained its position in the Fortune 500 list of most profitable companies. On average, company profits fell 53% in 2001, but the profits of the top ten US pharmaceutical companies rose by 33%, to \$37.2 billion. They were the most profitable sector in the US, reporting a profit of 18.5 cents for every dollar of sales. The financial strength of the industry reflects a 30-year trend. The so-called "Decade of the Brain," declared by George Bush Senior in 1990, saw a 50% increase in drug company median profit as a percentage of revenue. In 2006, global spending on prescription drugs topped \$643 billion, even though growth slowed in Europe and North America. The United States accounts for almost half of the global pharmaceutical market, with \$289 billion in annual sales followed by the EU and Japan. Emerging markets such as China, Russia, South Korea and Mexico outpaced that market, growing a huge 81 percent. US pharmaceutical industry profit growth was maintained as other industries saw little growth. According to Time magazine the pharmaceutical industry is - and has been for years - the most profitable of all businesses in the U.S.

It follows that the industry has immense influence on the medical profession as Joanna Moncrieff's excellent paper *Is Psychiatry For Sale?* outlined. But there are other organisations who

benefit from the globalization of Western concepts of madness. My colleague Suman Fernando points out that international organisations have great influence in shaping non-Western countries' interpretations of and responses to their populations' mental health needs. He draws attention to the 'Grand Challenges in Global Mental Health' programme, coordinated by the US National Institute of Mental Health in low and middle-income countries. Service user groups and community organisations have had little, if any, say in its development. The programme assumes that categories of mental illness like schizophrenia and depression as defined by the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual are universals, and that they arise from 'molecular and cellular' disturbances in the brain. But it pays scant attention to the interests and concerns of the communities for whom such Western concepts are alien. Non-Western cultures envision quite different responses to madness and distress, based in local, cultural and spiritual support systems. Only the pharmaceutical industry benefits from the globalization of biomedical psychiatry, a process that risks irreparable harm to diverse indigenous beliefs and healing systems across the globe.

Global knowledge purports to be universal, relevant to all cultures at all times. Its epistemology is tightly defined, and protected by terminology, jargon and notions of expertise. Its interpretive systems include science and biomedicine, psychiatry and cognitive psychology, as well as sociology. It espouses the values and beliefs of global capitalism, demonstrated by the pharmaceutical industry's vigorous marketing campaigns. It seeks to exploit human relationships and the environment for its own purposes, serving corporate interests such as those of the pharmaceutical industry, the World Health Organisation, governments and professional elites like the World Psychiatric Association. It sees the



JUAN MANUEL PEÑA

outcome of madness in terms of cure and risk, leading to stigma and social exclusion. It seeks these outcomes through unsustainable, top-down systems of 'care' that are little more than medication delivery systems.

In contrast, the epistemology of local systems is heterogeneous, its values are participatory and democratic, based in social justice, diversity, and sustainable human relationships. Its interpretive systems are truly diverse, encompassing all forms of spirituality, lay belief systems, as well as the social and political struggles shared by oppressed and excluded groups. It functions economically on the basis of social bartering, black or grey economies based on local trust and inter-connectivity between households and families. Poverty and the need to subsist mediate people's day-to-day priorities, and this serves the interests of ordinary people, those who experience madness, their families, activist groupings, and communities. It sees madness as part of the human condition, a journey towards enlightenment, or as a Shamanic phenomenon. It too is concerned with crisis, but it negotiates risk within the community. It sees the ultimate outcome of madness in terms of social inclusion and recovery, delivered through sustainable local support systems.

This isn't a romanticized view. Local systems of knowledge and support are already well-established. There is the work of survivor groups like the Hearing Voices Network, Mad Pride, and community development projects such as Sharing Voices Bradford. In Britain there is a strong, radical tradition of community development originating with the Quakers, Robert Owen and so-called 'utopian' socialism, and the cooperative movement. Further afield, its ideals resonate strongly with Gandhi's Ashram, Julius Nyerere's work on Ujamaa (familyhood) in Tanzania, and Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy in Brazil. Community development and related forms of community action and consciousness-raising can play a central role in drawing together marginalized and oppressed groups and enabling them to challenge and respond to the sources of their oppression.

It was an inspiration meeting with people and discussing these issues in a recent talk I gave at Tent City University. I hope that the interrelated debates surrounding both Occupy and the desperately needed change to our approach to madness will continue to grow together.

Philip Thomas is Co-Chair of the Critical Psychiatry Network



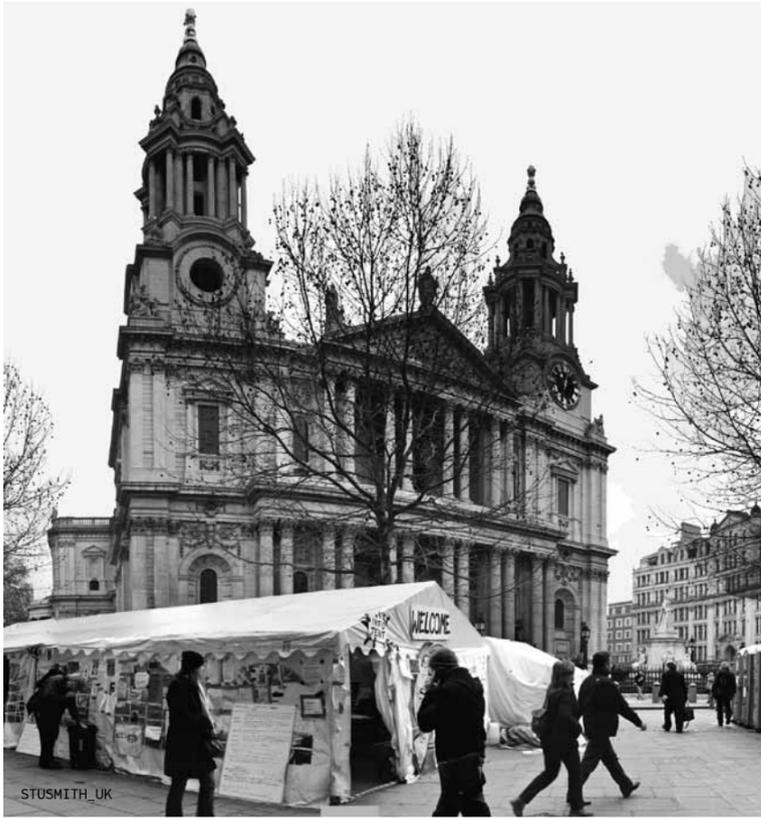
BEN CAVANNA



BEN CAVANNA

LONDON 2012 - THE REAL WINNERS

ANNA
MINTON



The increasing frenzy around the 2012 Olympics masks a hidden bailout and a dubious social legacy, says Anna Minton.

Landmark events always reflect the social and economic realities of the time which in this case is the tax-payer funded bailout of an economic model in crisis. In 2008, as the government prepared its bailout of the banks, another less well-advertised bailout was also underway, this time to save the Olympic project with public funding increasing by a massive £5.9 billion.

The initial proposal for the Olympic park and village, stated that it would fall to the private sector to borrow the majority of the finance – with the government, Lottery funding and London itself making up the rest. However, an investigation by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee reveals that less than two per cent of the Olympic budget has ended up coming from the private sector.

The budget is now around the £10 billion mark, a figure which does not include the escalating costs of the security operation. Commentators claim the final budget could top £20 billion.

So what are we getting for our money?

The real importance of London 2012, as the organisers continually remind us, is not about sport but about 'the legacy' – the wholesale redevelopment of a large swathe of East London.

The chair of the Olympic Park Legacy Company, and former banker, Baroness Ford, often mentions how the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Festival of Britain, are the inspiration for London 2012. The Great Exhibition left Britain with a legacy of museums and public spaces including the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum. The Festival of Britain in 1951 left as its legacy the Royal Festival Hall, one of finest public buildings in the country.

The legacy of London 2012 includes the Westfield Stratford City, the open air shopping mall through which visitors to the Games must pass and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – the first new park to be built in Britain since Victorian times. But despite its royal moniker, and a campaign for Royal Park status supported by local people and Newham Council, the Olympic Park will not be a Royal Park. Instead, it will be a private park, comprising a series of private developments overseen by a new quango, the Olympic Mayoral Development Corporation, which mirrors the London Docklands Development Corporation set up by the Thatcher government in the 1980s.

Sites within the park, from the Olympic village to the Olympic venues, will all be run by private companies and sold off piecemeal to the highest bidder – although the debacle over the sell-off of the Olympic stadium revealed how easily these deals can collapse.

Meanwhile a £1bn bid by the Wellcome Trust to buy the Olympic Park and village and create a 'Silicon Valley for Europe', in conjunction with two universities, and providing a museum, social housing and 7000 jobs, was turned down by the Olympic Park Legacy Company. Apparently, it didn't offer 'value for money' to the taxpayer. The Olympic village has now been sold to a consortium led by the Qatari royal family.

Another much-touted aspect of the legacy is the provision of affordable housing. The masterplan for the park promises up to 11 000 new homes. Currently, we know that the Olympic village will definitely provide 3000 homes from 2013, half of which will be 'affordable'. As always, the definition of 'affordable housing' is slippery especially since changes brought in by the Coalition mean that housing associations can charge up to 80 per cent of market rates for social housing – prices far out of reach for the majority in the Olympic boroughs, which include some of the poorest parts of the country.

Local people are increasingly being edged out of the picture. In 2004, Lord Coe, chair of the Olympic bidding committee, former Mayor Ken Livingstone and John Biggs, then deputy chair of the London Development Agency, signed an 'Ethical Olympics Pledge' in return for local support, giving guarantees on housing, jobs and training, promising that 30 per cent of construction jobs would be set aside for local people. But after London won the bid, the Olympic Delivery Authority refused to honour the agreement, on the basis that the ODA was not in existence when the agreement was signed.

The true legacy of the Olympics is this litany of collapsed deals and broken promises by a confusing array of quangos and companies. An Olympics in tune with the public spirited legacy claimed could only have gone ahead if the concept of the 'public good' retained some meaning in today's political discourse. Instead this term was quietly removed from legislation in 2004 reflecting the extent to which the market has squeezed the notion of the 'public good' out of politics. Given the context, the Olympics have never stood a chance of fulfilling a public spirited legacy in tune with 1851 or 1951.

Anna Minton is the author of 'Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the 21st Century City'.

OCCUPY MOTHERS

JANE
CHELLIAH



which to make a mark. Before October 15, there was no other place at which a feminist mothering movement would have been accommodated. Gender equality is a never-ending struggle – when one throws mother equality into the mix, it often sinks to the bottom. To be an ambitious mother in UK mainstream society is viewed suspiciously. Fathers are allowed to be ambitious for their sons but the same does not apply to mothers. Yet having ambition is part of being a feminist mother, and I am fed up of girls being viewed as only being good enough to have ambitions of being WAGs or who are expected to shop incessantly. I wanted to be part of a community where the debate was extended beyond these narrow confines. There isn't anywhere else where my daughter would be able to participate in discussions about political governance and money structures.

I now have the means to contribute to a worldwide movement that is the engine for global debate in which terms like 'capitalism' and 'equality' have all become part of the "Occupy" debate. In a single week in January, three British political leaders, an American President (Bill Clinton in the Financial Times), Bishop Desmond Tutu and an international gathering of world political and business leaders (Davos) have discussed capitalism.

This is the success of the Occupy movement. It has brought into mainstream discourse debates and arguments over fairness that once were only discussed at local levels over local areas where, for example, certain low-income groups of people lived together in underprivileged circumstances or of areas of high unemployment. The Occupy movement does not just recognise equality but, far more impressively, addresses equality as a diversity issue. By this I mean that women have been recognised in debates and discussions as being single mothers, mothers on welfare, working mothers and disabled mothers. The

UK feminist movement has not been able to achieve this much.

The Occupy movement has globalised a mother's worry, and I am thankful for this. As a feminist mother, I deplore the patriarchal notion of motherhood which places a mother's worry firmly in the private sphere of the domestic domain. The difficulties that our children face require a solution that comes out of a coalition-building consensus that reflects the fact that some of the drivers of global inequality were caused by global actions or inactions.

Feminist mothering is about reshaping societies so that mothers are recognised as both contributors to, and recipients of, global justice. That, it seems to me, is also the aim of the Occupy movement. Mothers have an interest in how dividends are paid out in areas such as climate change, monetary inequality, allocation of natural resources and government policies. Being the mother of a starving child is a political as well as a humanitarian issue. Being a mother is always wrongly talked about in the narrow terms of 'choice': A mother either stays at home or goes out to work. There is so much more to mothering than that and this is why mother activism is on the rise through the Occupy movement.

Occupy provides a strategic opportunity for mother empowerment and it has brought a vibrancy and dynamism into my life, which has led to a genuine positive transformation in the way I am bringing up my daughter. By Jane Chelliah, UK Outlaw Mothers ambitiousmamas@gmail.com

What do you think your child's life will look like in 10 years? My daughter is 12 years old now and in 2022, at the age of 22, she will have taken her place in the world as an adult. My hope is that she will be living in a world in which opportunities for people will be distributed fairly and evenly, and one in which she will be treated equally as a woman in every sphere of her life.

This is my dream for her. But dreams can be shattered by many variables. One of those variables is an environment in which inequality acts as a barrier to our ability to fully participate in society. As a feminist mother, it is not just my daughter I worry about but other children too. Feminist mothering is about creating a level playing field for all our children.

A mother's instinct when confronted with a problem is to try and solve it. The Occupy movement has enabled me to convert my worry about the obstacles raised against our full participation into positive action. The movement's focus on inclusivity and equal access to its resources has let me convert my raw maternal instinct to redefine the terms of inclusion in modern society into mother activism. I launched a feminist mothering group, UK Outlaw Mothers, at Tent City University in November.

Occupy LSX is an unparalleled opportunity for ordinary people like me who are seeking a platform from



OCCUPY AFTER THE CAMPS

TODD GITLIN

The occupations were brilliant. They created facts on the ground—many grounds. They pumped oxygen into the global atmosphere. They are, or were, not only symbols of a need (community, shelter, expression) but public spaces for contact, information, and conversation, as well as attractors of the curious. At their best, they are, or were, recruitment centers. At their worst, they were the opposite.

But the merits of the encampments are largely beside the point now because the authorities took a hand, often a heavy one, to bust them up. So now the question is, how can the most useful functions of the encampments be carried out in other ways? What becomes possible now?

For one thing, direct actions need to continue—partly because they gin up enthusiasm, partly because they ensure that the movement continues to exist in public sight, and partly because they can win concrete victories. When the actions are well chosen, and (crucially) nonviolent, then the movement attracts the public eye. (When the black bloc moves in, however, the movement repels. Not all publicity is helpful publicity.) Actions need to be chosen with a mindful eye to both symbolic meaning and concrete consequences.

Choices of direct actions and specific campaigns are obviously matters for local deliberation, but also for collaboration. One size does not fit all. In the States, a number of Occupy groups have gotten good results by targeting empty houses, or resisting bank foreclosures, or disrupting foreclosure auctions. Homework has to be done to see where victories ought to be most possible. Actual success in keeping people in their homes is the sort of victory that tells the rest of the world, outside Occupy, that this is genuinely a movement that works for the 99 percent.

In general, it's valuable when a number of encampments focus on common targets where they can compound their nonviolent force by combining. That kind of leverage makes victories more likely. In that spirit, Occupy Atlanta has targeted JPMorgan Chase foreclosures; Occupy Minneapolis, US Bank foreclosures; and there's talk about a national campaign focusing on the Bank of America, which holds a huge number of fraudulent subprime mortgages and might well be particularly vulnerable to a concerted campaign.

I also think the time is coming when concerted cross-national campaigns could resist the plutocracy, win results, and encourage movement growth all at once. Some shared research and consultation might be able to establish which multinational banks are especially heinous and vulnerable in the damage they've done across borders and the impunity with which they've gotten away with it. Holders of shares can clamor at stockholder meetings. (As I write, Bank of America stock is selling for less than \$8 per share.) Occasions for inventive civil disobedience are legion.

It's also promising that some kind of consensus seems to be growing among European governments that financial speculation should be taxed. (Europe has for years been way ahead of the U.S.

on this score.) That movement needs to spread. The fact that Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande agree on taxing the sales of commercial paper is not proof of dread co-optation, as some in the movement maintain, but rather a measure of the popularity of the principle. The fact that the Merkel government prefers some Europe-wide tax expedient other than the direct tax needs to be addressed—especially by those more knowledgeable than I. In the event, the more countries can be corralled into imposing such a tax, the better, in order to prevent capital flight toward the exception—the moral bottom.

But one way or the other, of course lightning-fast trading, with all the attendant volatility, and the rewards that accrue to the 1% of the 1%, should be discouraged! Of course beleaguered governments pummeling the majority need the tax revenue! There are lots of questions about how stringent the tax ought to be, but the principle is a sound one that benefits both the movement and the larger public. "Make it more expensive to lurch," as the economist Jared Bernstein nicely puts the objective.

As for the camps, public spaces matter, but not so much as ends in themselves. Indeed, it seems to me that, in general, the effort exerted to maintaining the camps is energy not exerted to carrying the movement outward—to working out joint efforts with unions and other groups, so that the oligarchs are isolated. Occupy groups should figure out how to best support workers like those employed under wretched conditions by the awful Taiwanese corporation Foxconn, which is subcontracted to build electronic stuff in China for Apple, among other companies. Carrying the message beyond the movement's immediate circles is hugely important. Teach-ins, or other educational events about the workings of the global economy should be tailored to communities that are not jaded about this sort of thing.

The global resistance to plutocracy requires ongoing ingenuity of tactics—as long as the movement is nonviolent and not hijacked by black blocs of one sort or another, whose parasitic seizure of the media spotlight is a gift to the billionaires who would rather have the population obsessed with smashed windows and what the media call "violent clashes" (whoever starts them) than with incursions upon their privileges. When the focus is on the brutality of the police—or the contemptuousness of the black blocs, or both—the plutocrats pop their corks. We ought not to help them change the subject.

Todd Gitlin was the third president of America's Students for a Democratic Society (1963-64), and helped organize the first national demonstration against the Vietnam War and the first Wall Street civil disobedience against bank loans to apartheid South Africa. He teaches at Columbia University and has written 15 books, of which the most recent, Occupy Nation: The Roots, the Spirit, and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street, will be published electronically by HarperCollins in April.

IT AIN'T OVER TILL IT'S OVER

MARTIN EIERMANN

With Occupy camps around the world threatened by eviction, it is easy to pack up and go home. But many of the issues that drove dissenters into the streets of Athens, Madrid, New York or London remain unsolved.

ECONOMIC CHANGE

While Occupy has helped to put the issue of inequality back on the agenda, the problem persists. Debt continues to grow, income inequality continues to rise – and vast resources are being spent to keep the global economic system from tumbling into the abyss. According to recent calculations, payments towards Greece will total 145 billion Euros. Yet the effects are hard to see – unemployment in Greece continues to hover near 20%. Meanwhile, international hedge funds are considering suing their debtors for property rights violations. Regulatory initiatives such as the Tobin Tax are being discussed, but opposition from lobby groups and the British government continues to be fierce. Despite the crisis, the logic of laissez-faire and the rhetoric of austerity continue to hold sway within mainstream discourses.

POLITICAL CHANGE

In the UK, the government has tried to marginalise and defame dissenters. Despite historically low approval ratings – 13% for the US Congress –, parliamentary politicians continue to govern with staggering indifference towards the voices of their constituents. On a European level, the idea of citizens' participation is caught in the bureaucratic web. The democratic process has often been reduced to the ritualistic participation on election day. And even that is declining: In 2010, UK voter turnout hit 65%, the third-lowest since the end of World War II.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

The Durban Climate Change Conference in December 2011 failed to yield the strong guidelines that many had hoped for. Some emission reduction goals won't become effective until 2020, others are made porous by a myriad of small-print exceptions. It remains questionable whether the "Rio 20+ Conference" on sustainable development in June 2012 will produce better outcomes. Meanwhile, human habitation continues to extract a large toll from the environment. In 2011, around 13 million hectares of woodland were lost to deforestation; annual global CO2 emission have reached more than 30 billion tons.

SOCIETAL CHANGE

NHS cuts, tuition increases, reduced expenditures on housing and pensions – the politics of austerity manifest themselves in the middle of society. Since George Osborn announced 7 billion pounds in welfare cuts in 2010, the laundry list of government spending cuts has only continued to grow. Income inequality in the UK is rising more quickly than in any other OECD country. In 2011, the top 10% earned twelve times as much as the bottom 10%. The top 1% earn over 15% of overall wealth in the UK – and pay income tax rates that are lower today than they were in 1980.

LEGAL CHANGE

Once controversial policy proposals are codified as law, they become much harder to change or repeal. Yet even the law itself is far from uncontested. The conservative desire to repeal the Human Rights Act, debates about financial regulation, and the increasing restrictions on the right to protest – especially in anticipation of the 2012 Olympics – illustrate how much the legal sphere has become a political battlefield that concerns every citizen.

HORIZONS & PROSPECTS

OCCUPY LONDON'S WORKING GROUPS PT. II

With each day now taking us further towards Spring and the warmth of the year ahead, the plans and blueprints drawn up in wintry months by Occupy London's working groups are thawing to fruition. Multiplying. Gaining traction.

Beneath the bells of St. Pauls and through the wires of e-mail groups and message boards, dozens of working groups pursuing their respective goals are looking ahead to new horizons, with plans to carry further the narrative of a movement seeking social, economic and environmental justice from its tarpaulin roots at the gates of the London Stock Exchange.

Following our previous look at the origins and achievements of selected OLSX working groups to date, here we present a glimpse of some of their considerations for the future.

ENERGY EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP

The Energy, Equity & Environment Working Group was created to highlight the fact that to continue with 'business as usual' would simply be to allow large corporations and an over-centralised government to continue looting the resources of the planet which belong to us all by right. If we destroy nature, then we are destroying the conditions on which human survival and the survival of all species depends. In EEE we believe that power should be handed over to local communities and responsible providers of goods and services, and that we need

to restore our broken link to nature. The group has decided to work with other occupiers and other occupations and organisations, using events and other outreach activities, combined with direct actions, in the following areas:

- Raising awareness on and actively opposing false solutions to environmental problems (such as biofuels)
- Supporting a genuine "Green New Deal" including shifting from taxing labour to taxing carbon emissions, and supporting the campaign for 1m new climate jobs
- Exposing corporate lobbying and unethical environmental practices, and demanding tougher regulations
- Exposing major environmental destruction and human rights abuses overseas (such as land grabs and tar sands), especially by companies listed on the LSX
- Supporting measures such as replacing GDP and profit with alternative indicators of commercial and social success which take account of social and environmental factors
- Supporting the re-localisation of food production, smallholder agriculture and permaculture
- Strengthening environmental law so that it protects human health and biodiversity
- Supporting the campaign to recognise the rights of nature and to criminalise ecocide

- Campaigning for a global reduction in net carbon emissions. -Peter Colville

ECONOMICS WORKING GROUP

Occupy may have lost the right to maintain a physical presence, however, just because tents don't occupy St Paul's that doesn't mean that the movement doesn't occupy a valuable place in society. And let's remember one thing, which is central to the existence of Occupy in the first place. The camp may be at the steps of St Paul's but actually we are there because we are camped outside the London Stock Exchange. And we are camped there because of the gross injustice inflicted on society by banks and a complicit financial system. That existed before the tents arrived on that day in October. It continues now and, unless there is radical change, the banks and the financial system will continue to harm society, which will bear the scars for generations to come. That is justification enough for Occupy to continue to fight for the very many who's lives have been made worse by the very few. It is not enough to stand by and watch the car heading for another crash. Fundamental to averting disaster is to move towards new economic structures that lead to greater equality and economic security for society at large. That is what the Economics Working Group has been working on and will continue to work on and demand. Change will come. -Tom Moriarty

CORPORATIONS WORKING GROUP

The fact that the tented presence of many



of the Occupy camps is currently being shoved aside by what I believe is becoming an increasingly worried and embarrassed state is in the long run, of little consequence. Now that the movement has established itself in the UK and in the world, moving the tents will make little to no difference at all.

The future of the corporations working group has already started. No longer focusing on just releasing statements, the group is currently working with indigenous activist groups on three continents, three Occupy camps in Switzerland, UK Uncut, the Australian Miners' Union, the Economics WG, the Outreach WG and other centres of relevant expertise to create a national day of action around one corporation (by the time this goes to press, you will probably know which one it was).

We also intend to help shape the national WG hubs that will allow for WGs across the UK and Wales to link up, share skills and work towards co-ordinating national days of action where all the Occupy camps are focused on the same target for the same reasons, with the

same research backing up the same styles of direct action channelled through the same media approach. This process, once tested and refined could then lead on to a situation where there are global occupy working group hubs that will lead on to global days of action in the same way.

We are not sure that it was ever our place to remain isolated and to be simply a machine that churns out statements and policy through the assembly and courts the relevant media. At least, once our initial statement was out, it became more exciting to us to consider ways whereby we can connect up with other groups – inside and outside of Occupy – in order to target specific corporations. Reaching towards national and global days of action seems the ideal way to have the most impact on those often nameless practitioners of what we have called a 'psychopathic' form of behaviour that is unsustainable, unjust, undemocratic and... embarrassing.

Our long term aim is to have at least taken part in calling time on the often destructive and insane behaviour of corporations. -Jamie Kelsey-Fry

OCCUPY LONDON

TIMELINE

09TH OCTOBER 2011

London's first General Assembly held on Westminster Bridge. Plans are set in motion to occupy the London Stock Exchange.

15TH OCTOBER 2011

Occupy London emerges on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral. Organisers state their intention to highlight and address social and economic injustice as part of a global movement for real democracy.

16TH OCTOBER 2011

Initial Statement Released. Over 500 people on the steps of St. Paul's collectively agree an Initial Statement raising concerns with economic and social injustice, and expressing solidarity with other occupations around the globe.

18TH OCTOBER 2011

Tent City University opens.

22ND OCTOBER 2011

Finsbury Square camp established.

26TH OCTOBER 2011

The Occupied Times of London #1 is published. The first edition of the independent paper is printed; a run of 2,000 copies consisting of 12 A4-sized pages featuring comment, news, features, cartoons and event listings.

27TH OCTOBER 2011

St. Paul's Cathedral canon chancellor Giles Fraser resigns in eviction protest. Fraser states he could not support the possibility of violence "in the name of the church". The move follows Fraser's efforts to clear police officers from the cathedral steps and words of support for Occupy London's right to peaceful protest. Protesters are "deeply moved" to hear of his resignation.

28TH OCTOBER 2011

Activists call for the democratisation of the City of London Corporation. Occupiers publish first list of demands calling for an end to the Square Mile's unconstitutional power and influence.



05TH NOVEMBER 2011

Occupy London marches on Parliament. Some 2,000 activists set off from St. Paul's Cathedral to Parliament Square to spread the message of the occupation movement to the wider public. No arrests were made, despite heavy police presence, as protesters declared: "We are the 99 percent. You are the 99 percent!"

09TH NOVEMBER 2011

Occupy supports students. The national student strike against cuts, tuition fee hikes and privatisation receives support from NUS, trade unions and Occupy London.

12TH NOVEMBER 2011

Not the Lord Mayor's Show. Occupy London's alternative festival diverts Lord Mayor's coach outside St. Paul's. Rt Revd Michael Colclough, Canon in Residence at the cathedral, gives the camp his blessing.



BEN CAVANNA

15TH NOVEMBER 2011

City of London Corporation launches legal action for eviction.

18TH NOVEMBER 2011

Protesters occupy Bank of Ideas. The taking of the disused UBS-owned office block is billed as a 'public repossession'. Plans set in motion for the use of the site as a free Bank of Ideas (no bailout required) to educate, inform and serve as a platform for ideas and skills exchange for those that have lost their nurseries, community centres and youth clubs to government cuts.

19TH NOVEMBER 2011

Occupy London hosts first national Occupy conference. Occupiers from 17 camps across the UK converge in London for a weekend of talks, workshops and planning.

25TH NOVEMBER 2011

General Assembly endorses demands on City of London Corporation. Three demands produced by Corporations Working Group reach GA consensus. Occupy London demands that the City of London Corporation:

- Publish full, year-by-year breakdowns of the City Cash account, future and historic.
- Make the entirety of its activities subject to the Freedom of Information Act.
- Detail all advocacy undertaken on behalf of the banking and finance industries, since October 2008.

30TH NOVEMBER 2011

- Occupy supports UK-wide N30 Public Sector Pensions Strike.
- Xstrata 21 put spotlight on the 1%. Twenty one arrests are made at mining company Xstrata's offices after Occupy London activists storm the site to highlight inequality (Xstrata CEO Mick Davies was the highest-paid chief executive of a FTSE 100 share index company in 2011).

06TH DECEMBER 2011

Musicians support Occupy London. Radiohead

frontman Thom Yorke, Massive Attack member 3D, and members of UNKLE put on a gig at B.o.I. as a "thank you" to Occupy London.

07TH DECEMBER 2011

Occupiers discuss reform with Financial Services Authority. FSA CEO Hector Sants meets representatives of Occupy London to discuss reform of the banking sector.

15TH DECEMBER 2011

Jesse Jackson supports Occupy London. Acclaimed civil rights activist Rev Jesse Jackson speaks at the steps of St. Paul's. He states: "The occupiers' cause is a just cause, a moral cause. They should not be dismissed but heard – listen to their message. Banks got bailed out, people got left out. Protesters are criminalised but not a single banker has gone to jail for their crimes, the corruption and greed which drove the global economy to the brink of collapse."

18TH DECEMBER 2011

Energy, Equity & Environment Group hosts Big Green Day. A day of talks, workshops, art, music, and activities highlights the link between economy and environment.

19TH DECEMBER 2011

High Court eviction proceedings commence. Eviction hearing commences. Judge Keith Lindblom is later shown around the camp at St. Paul's by occupier Max.

20TH DECEMBER 2011

Occupiers take over Old Street Magistrates Courthouses. Plans are outlined for the site to hold "trials of the 1%".

25TH DECEMBER 2011

Christmas Day celebrations at Occupy London. Some occupiers attend cathedral Sung Eucharist and enjoy a meal at the camp, with donations from the public.

10TH JANUARY 2012

Finsbury Square camp makes long-term 'eco village' plans.

18TH JANUARY 2012

Judge rules in favour of City. Judge Lindblom pays tribute to protesters' conduct, but backs City in eviction calls.

19TH JANUARY 2012

Occupy Justice commence "trials of the 1%". Trials get underway focusing on war crimes and the implications of the Legal Aid Bill.

25TH JANUARY 2012

Bank of Ideas clears out. The threat of eviction prompts occupiers to clear out the first incarnation of the Bank of Ideas.

30TH JANUARY 2012

Bank of Ideas evicted.

09TH FEBRUARY 2012

School of Ideas launches.

28TH FEBRUARY 2012

St. Paul's and School of Ideas evicted.

- 1/Occupy London Stock Exchange
- 2/Occupy London Finsbury Square
- 3/Bank Of Ideas
- 4/Occupy Justice
- 5/School Of Ideas

1/OLSX
09 OCT

15 OCT

16 OCT

18 OCT

26 OCT

27 OCT

28 OCT

05 NOV

09 NOV

12 NOV

15 NOV

19 NOV

25 NOV

30 NOV

2/OLFS
22 OCT

3/BOI
18 NOV

07 DEC

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2011

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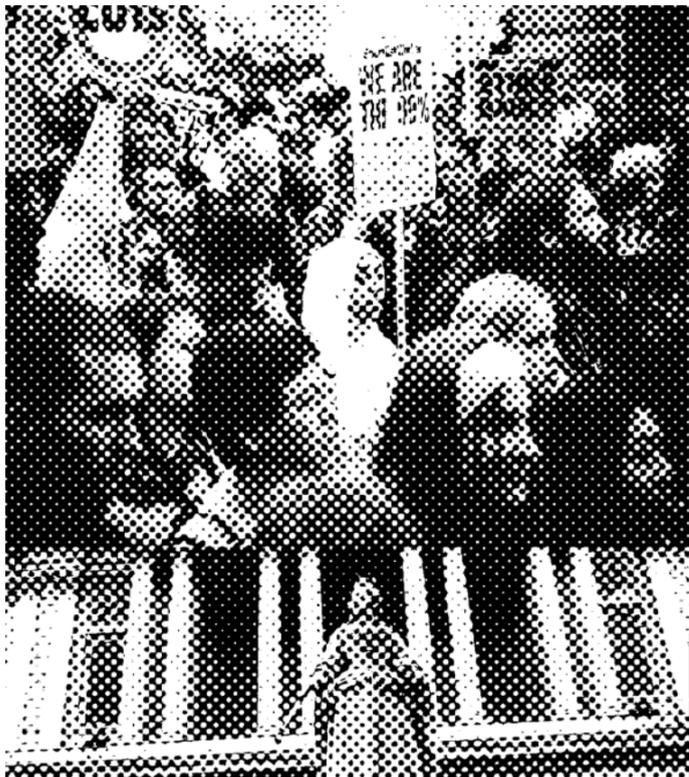
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OCCUPY 2.0

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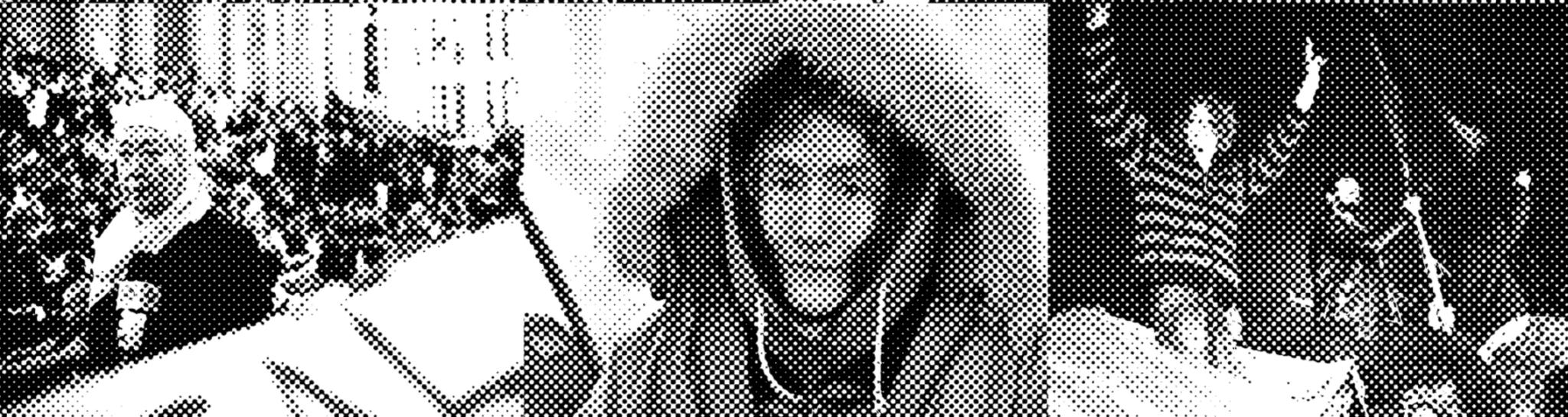


STENT CITY

CAN'T



CAN IDEA



THE STATE IS FAILING THE HOMELESS

ANDY MARLOW

It was on a Tuesday morning some weeks ago that three of us nervously stepped into the waiting courtroom. Even before the trial began, things had already started to go wrong. Fearing disruption of the proceedings from noisy protestors, the judge had restricted entry to one 'McKenzie friend' (a non-legally qualified representative) and two others. The colourful ensemble who had turned up in support from Occupy Exeter, including Bonzo the Public Repossession Clown and 'General Assembly' in his military garb, were left awaiting the verdict in the corridor with baited breath.

This was not the first case we had seen that day. Immediately before had been the possession proceedings for the original encampment of Occupy Exeter on Cathedral Green, which the General Assembly had decided not to contest. Instead, we had chosen to move on to our second site, an empty building abandoned several years previously when the owner ran out of money to develop it. From the start it was fraught with difficulties, like the lack of disabled access and the worrying creaking sound whenever you tried to ascend the staircase. These difficulties meant that in the end, Occupy decided not to fight the case in court as Occupy, but rather to allow those who wished to stay in the building to defend it themselves. For those who stayed, it soon became their home.

This was the cornerstone of our legal case. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects, among other things, the right to a home. Importantly, this right can be invoked whether or not the person claiming it lawfully possesses that home, so it has potential use for squatters and occupiers. There are also some tentative suggestions from recent case-law that it may be raised in court not just against the State, as was the original intention of the Convention, but also against private landowners.

Of course, if we had a right to occupy under article 8, the landowner also had a right to peaceful possession of his land. It was therefore the task

of the judge to balance these two competing rights and, inevitably, the judge chose to favour that of the landowner. In his mind, it was an open-and-shut case of him owning the land, so could we please get off. We lost the case and were ordered to vacate the premises "forthwith".

Nevertheless, despite his bravado in court, the landowner's solicitor later praised the presentation and construction of our legal argument. Although the judge dismissed it as an irrelevant factor in the case, it remains a fact that Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a treaty which the UK has signed, gives the State a duty under International Law to provide access to adequate housing. Crucially, the UN Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has stated that economic recession is no excuse for failing to fulfil this duty and that, in fact, this duty "continue[s] to apply and [is] perhaps even more pertinent during times of economic contraction".

A cursory glance at the news will tell you that the State is failing in this duty. Devon County Council has recently agreed to cut over 200 beds for the homeless. Westminster Council, instead of tackling the cause of the problem by providing better housing and welfare services, is planning to pass a bylaw banning soup runs for the homeless. Overall, reports the BBC reports, rough sleeping has risen by 23% in one year. While the same report includes a pledge from the government to give an extra £18.5 million to councils in order to help tackle rough sleeping, it also includes criticism from housing charity Crisis that current law may be failing single people who are homeless by not considering them a priority.

In light of this growing crisis, it seems at least the lesser of two evils to allow those without a home to shelter in abandoned buildings overnight, rather than to strictly enforce the landowner's property rights with the result that people are forced to spend another night out in the cold.

Andy Marlow is an active member of Occupy Exeter

HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

- 61,000 households (excluding the intentionally homeless) in England were officially recognised as newly homeless by their local authorities in 2010.
- The number of newly homeless households has fallen sharply each year since 2003 and the 2010 figure of 61,000 households is only a third of the 2003 number (202,000).
- Homeless males die 22 years earlier than average, with the lifespan of young females shortened by 17 years.
- Recent government figures showed that 26,400 people approached a local council for housing help in the first three months of 2011, a rise of 23 per cent compared with the same period last year.
- In a year, 75,000 young people had to seek help from services because they were homeless. That means 1 in 100 young people in the UK experienced homelessness.
- The main cause of homelessness in the UK is family breakdown, usually between young people and their parents or step-parents. Many homeless young people have experienced long-term conflict in the home, often involving violence.
- A large majority of rough sleepers in London are males. The latest figures suggest that only 1 in 10 people contacted were females.
- A quarter of those accepted as homeless and in priority need by English local authorities are from ethnic minorities. This means that ethnic minority households are, overall, around three times as likely to become homeless as the majority White population.
- In a London study of those rough sleepers whose support needs were known, 33% had drug problems, 48% had alcohol problems, and 30% had mental

- health problems. (Some individuals may be counted in more than one category).
- Numbers of rough sleepers in London have been rising since 06/07 (2,997) to 09/10 (3,673)
- Government cuts are likely to place up to 269,000 households into serious financial difficulty. Half of these households – up to 134,000 – will have to move or be evicted. 72,000 of these are families, equating to 129,000 children. Of these, 35,000 households are likely to approach their local authority for homelessness advice and assistance, and Local Authorities will be under a duty to provide temporary accommodation to 19,000.
- Historically, homelessness is a 'lagging indicator' following an economic downturn – meaning that it can be expected to rise for some years, independently of policy impacts.
- A 1997 study found that 22% of "street homeless" had a military background. By 2007, this figure was 10%.
- 40% of homeless people have served a term in jail.
- As many as 60% of homeless people have a mental health problem
- On average, homeless people die at just 47 years old.
- Homeless people are 13 times more likely to be the victim of violence.
- 3975 people slept rough on London's streets last year.
- The highest number of rough sleepers were in the London borough of Westminster (128)
- 97% of homeless people want to work but only 2% work full time.

For Help: Shelter Helpline - 0845 458 4590
Centrepoint - 0845 466 3400
Salvation Army Homeless Service - 020 7367 4865

HOW SHOULD WE BE TACKLING HOMELESSNESS?

KATHLEEN KELLY

The official story of homelessness is one of rising numbers. We are seeing increased applications to local authorities and rising numbers of rough sleepers. But like every story worth hearing there's more than one side to the story of homelessness.

On the one hand we have the official numbers – of those who have approached and who qualify for help from a local authority or are counted as rough sleepers. On the other are those who don't 'qualify' under the definitions for either of those counts and who won't show up in official statistics. Whilst they may be in contact with services they won't always be counted within official statistics on homelessness. This could be because they have never approached a local authority for help or because they are 'hidden' from view.

Those who qualify for a main homelessness duty can get help with finding accommodation from their local authority. The last year of complete figures for 2010/11 showed a 10% increase in those accepted as owed this accommodation duty – the first increase in seven years. There's no reason to expect this upward trend to have changed when the next set of annual figures for 2011/2012 is released in the summer. There's not space here to go into detail on the five legal hoops you have to successfully jump through to qualify for this duty. A common sticking point though is whether a person or someone in their household qualifies as in 'priority need'. You are in priority need if you are: pregnant (or live with someone who is); are responsible for dependent children; have been made homeless by a disaster like a fire or flood; in some cases if you are 16 or 17 or a care leaver; or if you are particularly vulnerable. Vulnerable means that you are more likely to suffer injury or harm if you sleep on the streets than someone else would be. I'll come back to this issue of vulnerability later on.

The reasons for homelessness in official statistics are varied but relationship breakdown has always been a strong feature. Some of you may find it surprising that despite the recession, mortgage repossession accounted for only 3% of homelessness acceptances between July and September 2011. The type of housing you get if you qualify for this duty can vary – it could be a social or a private rented tenancy. We will see an increase in the numbers of households who qualify



for help with accommodation from their local authority going into the private rented sector. Being accepted as homeless is not a golden ticket to a social rented tenancy and that's especially true of areas with high pressure on housing, like London. Households can spend long periods in temporary accommodation waiting to find a more settled housing solution.

Before I go on to talk about what happens if you don't qualify for this type of help with your accommodation; I have to be very clear that by international standards England does have a strong system of homelessness protection. Not as strong as Scotland where the distinction between those in priority need for help and those not will be abolished this year. The main problem with a system that defines categories of people who do and don't qualify for help is that some people will inevitably be on the outside of the system.

So what happens to those people who don't qualify as being a priority? And what is the main problem people face: is it the lack of a home or are there even more pressing problems in their lives?

Until recently the answers to these questions were an unknown quantity. We now know that official forms of homelessness such as approaching a local authority or accessing a hostel happen very late in people's journeys towards homelessness. We looked at low threshold services, the sort of services where you might expect people's main problem to be homelessness, to find out how many were also experiencing other issues. We defined this as 'multiple exclusion homelessness': the overlap

between homelessness, mental health problems, drug and alcohol dependency, street activities like begging, sex work or shoplifting, and experience of institutions such as prisons. Whilst 25% of people using these services did indeed have homelessness as their main problem; another 25% had as many as 16 other problems including homelessness. Low threshold services weren't set up to deal with this level of complexity. The level of expertise support workers need to deal with the extent of mental distress is also striking. Seventy nine per cent of service users reported anxiety and depression and 38 per cent had attempted suicide. The most complex needs were experienced by homeless men, particularly those in their 30s.

Services face a massive challenge co-ordinating the other agencies involved in working with people. If we're serious about tackling homelessness and rough sleeping we must turn the rhetoric about joint working into a reality. We know that support workers are crucial in helping people get their lives back on track. But where support workers do take on this role they can feel isolated and out of their depth.

Spending cuts pose a real risk. The lack of a budget ring fence means that the gloves are off. Homeless Link's survey of needs and provision found that 63 per cent of services that had funding cuts had reduced staffing levels, closed services and/or reduced their contact time with clients. However, if we're serious about tackling homelessness we need to use these funds to deliver more flexibly tailored, individual support services.

These are challenging times but there are opportunities. The current housing minister is serious about tackling homelessness with a £400m Homelessness Prevention Grant and another £20m for the transition fund to tackle rough sleeping. Campaigns such as the Homeless People's Commission which give voice to homeless people to influence policy around homelessness and the Making Every Adult Matter Coalition led by Homeless Link, Clunks, Drugscope and Mind are also active. These give me hope that whilst the media profile around empty homes might steal the limelight there are people working away on the things you need to have to go with a home, such as rebuilt relationships with supportive family and friends.

Kathleen Kelly is a Policy and Research Programme Manager at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation



LIFE ON THE STREETS

The Occupied Times: How long have you been homeless?

Kay: Well this is the second time I became homeless but this time I've chosen to become homeless because I just did not like the circumstances in which I found myself in after having been homeless for the first time.

Herman: I've been homeless for roughly the last three years. I also had an earlier period when I was much younger, in my teens which lasted about a year or two, with lots of moving about.

AS PART OF THIS SECTION FOCUSING ON HOMELESSNESS, WE SPOKE TO TWO HOMELESS OCCUPIERS ABOUT THE REALITY OF LIFE ON THE STREETS AND WHAT SOCIETY SHOULD BE DOING TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM.

OT: What led to you first becoming homeless?

K: That was unlawful eviction, a conflict between myself and my landlady. We did not get on well so she gave me a notice to quit, I took her to court and although she lost the case, I went for a weekend and when I came back she changed the locks and everything so I found myself out and the case is still continuing in court.

H: That was, like, family problems, you know. Growing up, teenager and all that business. You know, just finding a way.

OT: Are the services provided for homeless people in the UK adequate?

K: It depends. It depends on the individual, I suppose. I think people who simply wish to have a place to stay or to live, they don't have any other requirement, it may be okay for them but I think my demand maybe exceeded, a little bit, just having a place because most of my work I do at home. I cannot spend let's say... 16 hrs if I'm working, doing the things I do, in a box, in one room. No, I need much more than that. Especially, one big problem is that most of the things I do is music and I've had this problem most of the time I've been to places because I've had to control my level of noise, especially when I'm playing guitar so it became very difficult for me to find suitable accommodation where I won't disturb my neighbours. But for a person who just requires a place where they can eat, sleep, have a shower that will do but that's not for me.

H: Well, I'm not sure. There is some service there that is quite useful and the extent of the services provided I don't know. But I'm more concerned about the attitude of the establishment towards homelessness.

OT: Have you ever had any problems accessing basic services like the NHS or benefits when you haven't had a permanent address?

K: I don't think that is a problem, especially now. I think most of the homeless centres they help people with that so every centre they have social workers who actually deal with the job centres, with the housing benefit on behalf of the homeless people so I don't think that is a problem at all but my problem I don't want that kind of thing anymore because they're just too restricting for me. I've always been a musician, music producer and practicing law- I started practicing law when I lost my business because I wasn't satisfied with the services that solicitors were providing me with so I decided to go litigant-in-person. So when you sign a jobseeker's agreement you must state

your professional status which in my case is musician, music producer and legal executive- three job titles- they all imply that I'm self-employed. Department of Work and Pension regulation states that you have to be available for work, they verify that you've been looking for work and that you should accept work when it is offered to you. But after six months the jobseeker's agreement is no longer valid and you have to change to something else. I've been playing music since I was 16, I even refused higher education because I knew I wanted to be creating music for my whole life. I came to Britain for that purpose because I grew up in France. So, all the time I've been in Britain I've been doing that, producing music, getting involved with bands, and things like that and when I lost my business my jobseeker's agreement included that, so after two years they told me I couldn't carry on as 'self-employed' and must find a job. I said "no." I'm still in the process claiming damages in court. I hope that I'll win and then I can continue to do what I've always wanted to do all my life. There is no compromise. So I stopped claiming any benefit of any kind.

H: Not really but what I did find was that I wasn't aware of a lot of the services that was available and that is quite important because if you're not aware of it, you just don't bother about it you know...you just go on existing. When you think that if you'd known about it maybe it might have changed something about your circumstances.

OT: In your experience, how are homeless people treated by the police and the authorities?

K: It depends, it depends. I think it takes both sides. As far as I'm concerned I've never had any problem with the police because if the police find me on the street I don't look suspect so it depends on the individual and I believe that some individuals antagonise the police actually and they get in trouble. Obviously there may be cases [of police misconduct] but I have not come across a police officer who was aggressive. In fact most of the police officers who have found me on the street have been kind of friendly. Being homeless, after a while I think you just become pissed off and you get to a stage where you don't trust anybody, they can become antagonistic, they just lose it and they are trapped. I've never had any problem with the police or authorities, they just keep telling me I can't set up my tent but I just kept moving my tent. I started in Westminster, then I moved to Chelsea & Kensington and they move me and then I came here [Occupy LSX at St Paul's.] I've never had any problem if you just do what they ask you to do and you respect the authorities I don't think you'll have any problem whatsoever.

H: Umm, I don't really know about how they're treated by the police. I haven't had any sort of run-ins with them myself. I think that the authorities could actually do more for homeless people.

OT: How about your dealings with the public?

K: Most of the public have already a preconceived idea and I think that comes from the homeless people they have met before and so when they see a homeless person they already have an idea of what that person may be. In the summer, there is no problem sleeping in the park or in public places, it's warm. I was very surprised with Islington, for example, because I've stayed in the Angel a lot. Islington people have a strange attitude towards homeless people. They don't like to approach you. They provoke you with the way they look at you and talk to you. They have this idea that 'Oh, you are homeless so you are a bad person.' I was very surprised when I started to hang around in Chelsea because when I sat in the park there people would come and drop me £5 and £10 notes. Chelsea is a

very wealthy area, you would expect these people to be the kind who wouldn't even want to smell you! But they were most helpful compared to people in the Angel. I think many people are hesitant about how you [a homeless person] will react.

H: It was different. Some people treated you good and others wouldn't even give you the time of day, especially if you smelled a bit sometimes. I had one occasion where maybe I didn't have a shower for a couple of days or something and basically you could see they were turning up their noses at me. And another day, I was walking down the road and I was stopped by one of these...what do you call them? Joggers...she didn't believe I was homeless. She said, 'Oh you look so clean' and I'm going 'Well actually I am, I got nowhere to live' [laughs heartily.] So it's different how they treat you and sometimes it depends on your appearance and your attitude.

OT: What more do you think should be done by society about homeless in general?

K: Well, this is why I'm here at Occupy. From the speeches you've heard today [at the Occupy LSX homelessness talk-out] the common factor is this judgement and preconception of what homelessness is because homelessness extends to more than just having no home. I'll give you an example, at the present moment there are night shelters operating. They started at the end of November and will run until probably the end of March or April. So most homeless people are now circulating all over London, to churches [who run the night shelters] in every borough. So there are a large number of homeless people who don't or won't use this service, including me, because there is a strict time you have to be in these places and spaces are limited. But I feel restricted by these places and I know that many homeless prefer to be completely free and don't want to subject themselves to this kind of regime.

H: Well, I don't think homelessness is really necessary. There's no point. There's enough buildings around for people to actually live in and one of the main problems I think is that the cost of property i.e rent is far too expensive. If it was a lot cheaper then I don't think we'd have this problem. But homelessness



in itself, because it's such a large issue, people who find themselves in this position aren't a specific type. They're all sorts of different people and everyone has different needs. What we've got to look at is the organisations that are providing these services for the homeless people. Are they providing the services that are actually fitting for those individuals? And how much are the people using the services benefitting from that? One of the things I'm concerned about is when I see some people being banned from some day centres, how do they manage? If they're banned where do they go? What happens after that? How much support do they really get?

OT: What would people have been banned for?

H: Organisations have rules, they have codes of conduct. I'm a great believer in freedom of speech and freedom of the individual so if somebody is restricted in what they say and how they behave, taking into account that you have to behave in a certain manner which shows respect to other people around you in the vicinity where you are i.e. staff and other service users. You must show respect otherwise if you don't do that you got a problem, you know? Basically, I don't like restrictive rules where a person cannot express themselves as they'd like to

because they fear that if they actually say what they feel then they might be banned or stopped from using the services of that organisation.

OT: How do you think the potential eviction of Occupy LSX would impact the homeless community at the camp?

K: Well, someone has provided us with a list of sites and places which we can takeover but at Occupy we have a problem. These sites require homeless people at Occupy LSX to organise themselves as a community project in order to be able to enter transactions and negotiations with the authorities- local authorities or the government. But at Occupy we are not an organisation, this is a movement of ideas. So this incompatibility, you know if we set up this community project there will have to be rules which we live by, a code of conduct but in Occupy there is no hierarchy. The project is available but we need an organisation. We cannot speak on behalf of Occupy unless we have GA consensus but we can support it in any way we feel possible. There's no restriction on us creating an organisation which can work with the Occupy Movement, and we'd have a physical site where activists or anybody can continue with the activities but it will also provide those homeless people with permanent or semi-permanent residence. So those are the next steps.

OCCUPY LONDON'S HOMELESSNESS STATEMENT

Occupy London expresses its support for the massive and growing numbers of homeless people in London and in Britain as a whole.

Having a home is a fundamental human need and right. Only with adequate housing can people successfully contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

Many homeless people have become part of Occupy London and through this have found a sense of community and increased optimism. Many occupiers have unintentionally become homeless during their involvement in Occupy London. In essence, a part of the homeless has become Occupy London, and a part of Occupy London has become the homeless. Together we call for social and economic justice.

Occupy London intends to highlight the issue of homelessness and of eviction of homeless persons from refuges such as St. Paul's Churchyard. We abhor the violence and intimidation that occupiers and homeless people, around the world, have been subjected to.

Occupy London has been providing tented accommodation for between 30 and 70 homeless people staying at the St Paul's Occupy site. These people will be affected by eviction of OLSX. We believe that the City of London has a duty of care towards them and that they should be offered accommodation that ensures their safety, dignity and freedom – that is, in homes, not hostels.

Existing systems and shelters fail to provide homeless people with support, access to acceptable shelter, and homes. The hurdles that homeless people

have to overcome are too high; they are unnecessarily bureaucratic and dehumanising. Hostels can be dangerous places and are often not available unless a person has a history in the local area.

Homes are being lost because of cuts to housing and other benefits, because of job losses, wage cuts, loss of council housing and mortgage default repossessions. Landlords and the rents they charge remain unregulated and in some cases landlords are unscrupulous, without compassion and even exploit the social welfare system.

Occupy London calls upon the City of London, on the Greater London Authority, on local and national government, on churches and on businesses to open up vital space for short-life and long-term housing schemes so that empty buildings can be put to good use and self-help communities can be established.

There are nearly 1,000,000 homeless people in Britain and 2,000,000 families in need of suitable housing; yet there are over 7,438 hectares of public land, 930,000 empty homes and many other empty buildings that could be used to provide homes.

The money to tackle these problems and implement solutions does exist. Billions in bonuses, executive pay, tax havens and corporate profits could be put to wiser and wider use.

[Homeless people include rough sleepers, sofa-surfers, hostel dwellers, those sleeping in other insecure and unsuitable places and those who are considered to be of 'no fixed abode'.]

THE REAL JUBILEE A MOVEMENT FOR FINANCIAL JUSTICE

TIM
JONES

This year the Queen is celebrating her 60th 'jubilee' but the original meaning of jubilee had a lot more to do with righting injustice than an extra bank holiday and Brian May on the roof of Buckingham Palace, says Tim Jones of jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

The word 'jubilee' comes from the Jewish scriptures, and describing an ancient event occurring every fifty years. In the jubilee year everyone, remarkably, took a whole year off from working the land - not just one day - living simply off surpluses from previous years. All debts were to be cancelled. All slaves were to be released. All land was to be returned to the original sharing between the Hebrew tribes.

Jubilees were instituted in order to restore a sense of equilibrium into the economy. People working on the land got in debt when harvests failed. To feed their families they borrowed from their neighbours - supposedly without being charged interest, though many found ways to get round this law. As debts accumulated and families became unable to pay, they had to sell off their land to their creditors. Rent was charged on the sold land, so as creditors got richer, the debtors got poorer - and their debts were only likely to increase. As David Graeber sets out in his book *Debt: The first 5,000 years*, farmers often became stuck in debt and even had to sell their children into debt slavery.

The first known jubilees took place in Mesopotamia (the area comprising current day Iraq and chunks of Syria, Turkey and Iran) 3000 years ago where rulers would periodically cancel the debts - and they can be interpreted as either an act of benevolence, or a safety valve to prevent economic collapse or violent overthrow of the lenders.

Nowadays, of course, we do not have the benign safety valve a jubilee brings to society, instead inhabiting a permanent debt economy. During the Wall Street crash and great depression, in the early 1930s, 24 governments defaulted on paying their debts. This was, however, followed by a period of relative stability because from 1945 to the mid-1970s, just four countries had to default on paying their debts owing to a global system of regulating loans and debts across the world which limited the movement of capital across borders.

This system broke down in the 1970s when the current economic

system - what we might call neo-liberal capitalism - began to emerge. The US abandoned the gold standard and began printing far more dollars. Controls on capital were removed and at the same time, oil price increases led to large amounts of 'petrodollars' from oil exporters being put into western banks. These dollars were lent across the world - huge amounts going to Latin American and African countries.

At the start of the 1980s, the same US banks who had lent the money out, increased interest rates in order to control inflation. The prices of commodities fell - a problem for the many Southern countries dependent on these commodities for export. Many Latin American and African countries were unable to pay their loans to the bankers and the 'third world debt crisis' was born.

Rather than allowing these countries to go bankrupt, or instituting some form of jubilee, the powerful pushed for so-called 'bailouts' by the IMF and World Bank - effectively repaying the banks, and simply transferring the debts. At the same time they insisted on structural adjustment; austerity, and rapid radical deregulation and liberalisation. The result: countries lost their ability to make democratic decisions about their economic policy. Latin America and Africa saw their economies decline for the next twenty years, and poverty and inequality increase.

With continued deregulation across the world, loans and debts between countries continued to increase and grow rapidly. And so the debt crises continued from Mexico, to Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia, then Russia and Argentina, and a few years ago reached the US, UK and Eurozone.

Today we live in a world of huge debts. The debt owed by everyone in the UK - individuals, companies and the government - is 950% of our annual income. The total debt owed to foreigners by the most impoverished countries still stands at \$930 billion, an increase of \$300 billion since 2006.

Whilst slavery is formally abolished, in many parts of the world the burden of debts still denies people their freedom. A family with a large mortgage and negative equity are trapped where they live. Deeply indebted countries, from Greece to Jamaica, have their economies run by foreign powers. Land and capital have become increasingly owned by a few at the top.



ILIAS BARTOLINI

But the indebted are beginning to fight back. In the late-1990s The Jubilee 2000 campaign was launched, calling for a debt free start for 52 countries - a jubilee that was to be declared in the year 2000. It was based on the work of activists from indebted countries who saw that the loans had done little or nothing to benefit ordinary people, but had created a debt which was bleeding their countries of resources.

The campaign has some impact. From 2005, thirty-two countries, mainly in Africa, began to have significant amounts (around \$130 billion) of debt cancelled. But to qualify, governments had to keep following IMF and World Bank neo-liberal policies.

Other governments took matters into their own hands. In 2001, Argentina, in the middle of a debt crisis, defaulted on its debts, devalued its exchange rate and brought back controls on capital. After a few months of turmoil, its economy grew strongly.

A real jubilee would allow us to stop and examine what sort of society we are living in and strive to ensure everyone's needs are met. In a modern context it would mean radically reducing debts, regulate finance and control the banks to ensure they are run in the public interest.

Across Europe, this vision is inspiring people again as campaigners call for 'debt audits' - public assessments of an economy's debt so that ordinary people can assess these debts and decide whether they should be paid. The idea comes from the global South, but debt audit movements have now been set up in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy and France. Activists in the UK are now considering following their own debt audit campaign.

The call for a jubilee goes well beyond a call for charity. It is a call for justice. Just as it mobilised people 15 years ago to combat debt slavery in the global South, we believe it can mobilise people now to combat debt slavery everywhere, to challenge the type of finance-run economies we live in and to restore the notion that we should all have a say in how our economy works.

THE OT'S GUIDE TO CREDIT DEFAULT SWAPS (PART DEUX)

Time again to strap on your armbands, kick off your flip flops, and go for swim in the dark waters of the derivatives market. Careful not to swallow anything - this water is toxic.

Last edition, you'll remember (how could you forget?) we talked about Credit Default Swaps: how they're a kind of insurance against risk. Let's say you own a chunk of debt - some Greek government bonds, for example - and you want to insure yourself against a default on the debt, you buy some risk protection (a CDS) - you pay the CDS seller some money, in return for your money the seller underwrites the debt. So if the Greek government defaults, it's payday.

The CDS has a value (it's a pledge to pay), and can be traded on, like any other derivative. Tony Crawford, a campaigner against derivatives at petition44.com, calls a CDS a "Non-bank Note". He explains: "a CDS is a Non-bank Note filled out for debt signed by its 'Maker' [the seller] as a promissory note to pay cash to its 'Holder' [the buyer]."

But here's the twist. What if you don't own the government bonds, but you take out insurance against them defaulting anyway? It's not your debt, but you're insuring against it defaulting, so if it defaults, you get paid. You're betting on a default. The Greek government defaults, you win. The economy goes down the toilet, and you're flush with cash.

What we've just described is a "Naked Credit Default Swap". It is, in the words of Tony Crawford, "a CDS sold with no underlying security to purchasers" - and why they're so dodgy is that "so-called Naked Credit Default Swaps make no financial sense except as surefire instruments to profit from Non-bank Notes in default." We're talking no-strings profit created from a

loss. It's so bizarrely unethical that it's hard to comprehend that these financial instruments of doom could have been allowed to exist.

And not just exist. Flourish. "Allowing naked CDS trading resulted in the creation of a massive gambling opportunity - a lottery of unprecedented size" (Willem Buiters, in the FT, March 2009). It created a casino of doom.

And here's what's super-creepy: it's been estimated that Naked CDSs are up to 80% of the credit default swap market. When someone as money hungry as the billionaire convicted fraudster and serial currency crasher George Soros calls them "toxic", you should take note. Of CDSs he says: "Only those who own the underlying bonds ought to be allowed to buy them" - and not sold to "others who want to speculate against countries or companies."

Again, to recap, just so we're clear: a Naked Credit Default Swap is a 'side bet'. It comes into existence when the policy is taken out "without ownership of the underlying securities... Naked CDSs are the instrument of choice for those who take large bets against European governments, most recently in Greece" (Wolfgang Münchau, in the FT, February 2010). So when you see Greeks throwing bricks and lobbing rocks, don't forget: other folk are popping champagne corks.

But let's end on an upnote. Recently, the EU Parliament agreed on regulation designed to outlaw NCDS, regulation which is scheduled to come into force in November 2012. So watch this space. And in the meantime, now that your toe has properly been dipped into the CDS and NCDS market, it's time for you to strip off your shorts and take a wild leap into the whacky world of short selling, sovereign debt, and hedge funds. Have fun, and don't forget to breathe.





ILIAS BARTOLINI

OCCUPIED TIMES: You say Athens is in a "deep depression" - how does it feel to be living there?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: People can talk about little else except the crisis. You meet people that you have not seen for decades and instead of asking each other how life has been, you launch into a discussion of the 'disaster'. The lights are going out on the city, as many families have had their electricity supply disconnected. Every other shop is now closed, even in the posh areas of Athens. Businesses that are hanging on are readying themselves for the final curtain. Everyone owes money to everyone else and no one can pay. Jobs are a mirage, with unemployment amongst young people reaching 45% across the population.

criminal miracle during the good times, especially in Wall Street and the City. They played a crucial part in helping the banks print their private, toxic money (e.g. CDOs or collateralised debt obligations) by labelling it AAA or 'riskless'. An unholy alliance between these agencies and the banks created the pyramids that crashed in 2008, with the results that we all feel worldwide to this day. Nowadays, I do not think they matter much. And if they do, it is the politicians fault - for example, when a Central Bank (like the ECB) states that it will only take in as collateral bonds or titles with a certain minimum rating from S&P or Moody's, whose fault is it if S&P and Moody's then exercise exorbitant power?

OT: It seems like the technocrats are

also forces them to pretend that they are doing this voluntarily. Why? To ensure that the Credit Default Swap contracts (in effect insurance policies, that some hedge funds and banks bought from other banks and hedge funds, that pay their owner money in case of an involuntary Greek default) do not 'fire' - since if they do then those bankers that have issued the CDSs will end up being insolvent too (since they lack the money to pay out the insurance contract owners). Thus, Greece is now being asked to negotiate with the bankers what hit the latter will take 'voluntarily'. It is like asking a mouse to negotiate with a cat as to which part of the mouse the cat can eat. And all that as a precondition for the EU and the IMF granting more loans to Greece, that Greece will be using to pay the bankers leading to even more crippling austerity - while being prohibited from using even a fraction of that money to boost its economy or fund hospitals.

OT: It's been rumoured that certain currency exchanges are preparing for a return of the Drachma - do you think that's going to happen? What would happen if Greece pulled out of the euro?

YV: It would be criminally negligent if our governments were not preparing contingency plans for such an eventuality. Having said that, I think that a collapse of the euro would be awful for all of us; both those inside and those outside the euro area. Moreover, the human cost in a place like Greece from leaving the euro, while the euro remains legal tender, would be appalling.

OT: Will people be forced to leave the big cities (Athens, Rome, Lisbon etc.) and go back to rural areas?

YV: A number of people are, indeed, leaving Athens for the countryside, hoping to establish a simpler more sustainable life. But this is not the solution. We live in urbanized, cosmopolitan societies in which the city is our civilisation's lynchpin. The task ahead is to made them work. Not to abandon them.

OT: Why is 'debt' so powerful?

YV: Because the creditors possess monopoly power over the political system. Especially after the Crash of 2008, we live under a system I call Bankruptocracy - rule by the bankrupt banks. The greater the black hole in their midst, the greater their capacity to mobilise the state in order to extract rents from the rest of the social economy.

OT: Do you think the people will ever take back control of their banking system?

YV: Not until the middle class also revolts, and the political system realises that they must yield to the masses, or be done away with themselves.

OT: What do you make of the Occupy movement?

YV: It is the only ray of hope during a particularly dark night.



GIAKOUMIS

IN THE WAKE OF THE BRUTAL AUSTERITY PACKAGE - CUTTING 3.3 BILLION EUROS OF WAGES, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS - WHICH HAS JUST BEEN PASSED BY THE GREEK PARLIAMENT, PROFESSOR YANIS VAROUFAKIS, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMIC THEORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS, GIVES THE OT HIS UNIQUE INSIGHTS INTO THE DARK DAYS THAT LIE AHEAD...

OT: Aren't electricity bills in Greece going up now, and isn't there some new electricity tax...?

YV: Both. Electricity itself has just gone up by 12% while, on top of that, the government is introducing new lump sum taxes via the electricity bill. If it were not so tragic, it would have been hilarious.

OT: People talk about "the Greek malaise". What exactly is it?

YV: Let me remind you that until 2008, Greece was doing rather well. The economy was growing faster than the average in Europe, investment was on the rise both in the public and the private domains. So, why did Greece implode in 2009/10? The reason is both simple and complex. The simple story is that Greek industry retreated in the late 1970s, following the combined shocks of the oil crises (that boosted energy costs) and the removal of tariff protection, so as to support Greece's entry into the EEC - the predecessor of the EU. At that point, the losses of the private sector were transferred to the state sector, inflating public debt (especially as the state was utilized to employ workers and employees that industry was shedding). Add to this mix a chronic dose of tax evasion (that began with the rich and then spread down to the 'lower' classes) and you have the makings of strains in the public purse. Before the euro, Greece managed to avoid crises through frequent devaluations. But once we were in the euro, the shock absorber of devaluations was gone. That was a time when rivers of cheap toxic money (mostly produced by Wall Street, the City and the large Northern European banks) were flooding their way into countries like Greece, Ireland, Spain etc. They gave everyone a false sense of complacency, but in reality they were creating a consumption-led boom. So, when the Crash of 2008 hit us, it was just a matter of time before the capital which had flown in flew again, leaving nothing more than devastation behind. And given the impossibility of a fall in Greece's currency, to absorb the shock, the result is that something else had to give - Greece's social economy.

OT: And credit rating agencies, how did they fit into all this..?

YV: These outfits performed their

taking over (in Italy & Greece) - you think they can do a better job?

YV: No, this is not a matter of personalities. It is a deep structural flaw in the guts of financialised capitalism in general and the eurozone's unsustainable architecture in particular. In some respects, a degree of personal competence is not a bad thing. Italy's Mario Monti is certainly better than Berlusconi. Not so our own 'technocrat', Lucas Papademos, whose greatest asset, in my estimation, has been his readiness to act as his master's voice for a long, long time (his master being the European Central Bank). Although in a way, he's doing a sterling job, given that his job description was, from day one, to orchestrate the acceptance of these loans by the Greek parliament. Once a lackey always a lackey!

OT: Is there any more to give? Any more assets to strip?

YV: It is important to emphasize that the worst aspect of the Greek 'bailouts' is that their purpose is [ITALICS]not [END ITALICS] to asset-strip Greece. Their purpose is to hide the true, sorry state of northern European banks. For this reason, the insolvent Greek state, and its battered citizenry, is being asked to take on loans that it cannot repay for a simple reason: so as to pass them on to the insolvent banks. But to pass these loans through the German parliament, whose members do not want to pass these loans, the German government must demonstrate to its MPs that Greece 'deserves' its loans because it is suffering, bleeding and selling out. Thus, Greece is asset-stripped in order to placate German parliamentarians to pass loans to the bankrupt banks.

OT: What's your issue with the PSI? (Private Sector Initiative) and the debt 'restructuring' we're about to see?

YV: My issue with it is that it is fraudulent. I am all for haircuts. If a loan turns bad, then both the borrower and the lender must take a hit. So far, the burden and the pain has gone only to the Greek people, while the EU and the IMF are piling up new debt on Greece's weak shoulders so that the bankers do not lose a penny of the money and the interest due to them. The reason why the PSI is fraudulent is that it forces the bankers to take a hit, but

MOVE YOUR MONEY! MARLOES NICHOLLS

This month saw the launch of Move Your Money UK, a national grassroots campaign to spread the message that we, as individuals, can help to build a better banking system through our buying power. The campaign follows a highly successful movement in the US which has led to over 10 million people moving their money into local financial institutions.

It is clear that the banks have failed us. The financial crisis of 2008 saw the biggest tax payer bailout in history, and since then the UK has experienced the worst recession in living memory. Instead of helping to build a productive and stable economy, the major high street banks have and continue to persistently use their enormous power to steer the economy through their lending decisions to the detriment of society.

Move Your Money UK believes that top down reform can only take us so far; the banks won't change of their own accord and politicians and regulators are too narrowly focused on maintaining the status quo.

Banks rely on the deposits of ordinary savers, so when you choose where you keep your money, you are choosing between supporting business as usual or taking a simple but powerful step towards a better banking system and a better future. By moving your money you can directly support an ethical and socially useful bank, and send a message about the sort of society and economy you want to see. And one you'd rather not.

Though most people in the UK currently bank with the "Big 5" - Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, RBS and Santander (and their subsidiaries) - we aren't reliant on them. There is a flourishing group of financial providers that offer a safe and credible alternative. These include credit unions, building societies, banks with strong ethical commitments and community development finance institutions.

They have ownership structures and business strategies that are more geared towards benefiting people, communities and the environment.

Move Your Money UK aims to provide people with the information and confidence they need to make informed decisions regarding the types of financial institutions they want to support. We also hope to strengthen the ethical banking sector, and broaden and enhance the debate on financial reform.

The first Move Your Money UK event took place outside a Barclays branch in London on 10th February, the day that Barclays announced its annual results and a bonus pool of over £2bn. Members of the public turned up for the 'Better Bail-out' to close accounts, remove their money and write letters of complaint. Several more events will follow this month to coincide with the bonus announcements of the other major High St banks - RBS, HSBC and Lloyds TSB.

Bonuses might be down this year, but the sums being paid out are still multiple times the average wage, and they are symptomatic of a system that is acting in the interests of a few at the cost of wider society. Among the long list of damning findings, research by Ethical Consumer Magazine has uncovered evidence that, for years, the big banks have been paying excessive bonuses to executives, avoiding tax, investing unethically, and providing poor customer service. If your money is sitting with any of the major high street banks, then it's helping to fund these practices.

Find out more about moving your money and how to get involved with events this month and during 'Move Your Money Month' in March by visiting our website www.moveyourmoney.org.uk, our Facebook page "Move Your Money UK" or follow us on Twitter @moveyourmoneyuk.

THE GREAT DEBATE

IS SQUATTING THE SAME AS OCCUPYING?

Both the occupation of squares and the squatting of buildings are seen as strategies for re-claiming public space. Recently, some occupations (Sydney, Oakland, London) have turned to squatting in order to utilise empty space as community centres or housing options, in particular after facing eviction from parks or squares. This week we ask: Is squatting the same as occupying? What are the pros and cons of taking empty buildings? And should squatting be an integral part of the Occupy strategy?



YES

MICHAEL SABBAGH (MIKE D.)
The relationship between squatting and Occupy is far more complex than the contrast between the camp and indoor spaces. The Bank of Ideas in London is (or was) a fine example of why squatting, especially of large spaces, is and should remain an integral part of Occupy.

Traditionally squats are living and communal spaces. The sheer amount of community-oriented events that went on at Bank of Ideas over its short two and half month stint is mind-boggling. From the early days with Mark Thomas to a long evening of films, conversations and heart breaking stories with activists from No Borders South Wales, to some guy named "Thom", not to mention the weekly clowning and yoga workshops – Bank of Ideas was truly a community space. The ground floor provided computers with web access open to the public, whilst the first floor consisted of a large communal space anchored by the kitchen – as an ideal communal space should be.

Besides all these events, Bank of Ideas housed the heart of Occupy LSX's tech operation. There were many practical reasons for this, the least of which being reliable access to power and Internet. Anyone who spent time in the tech tents at St. Paul's or Finsbury Square knows reliable power and Internet are hot commodities in outdoor spaces. It is easy to see how a larger, indoor and more permanent space is more conducive to tech operations. In our case, the ground floor had a general tech room and housed the live-stream team on the other side near the theater. This gave us our own separate space while remaining in proximity to events and happenings. A good chunk of the third floor housed and protected servers vital to Occupy LSX's tech research and development efforts – which is now sadly scattered and disjointed. Another advantage was being the same building as all the other community events: This meant that anyone could walk in, hang out and contribute to any project going on. So in a way, our idea of "squatting" at the Bank of Ideas was very different than the norm.

Along with the technology, Bank of Ideas gave us plenty of room to make massive banners for demonstrations while being shielded from the elements.



Banner making was always open to anyone that wanted to pop in and help, but being in an enclosed area aided keeping things somewhat discreet, not to mention the difficult logistics of trying to make a 40 foot banner on a pavement.

On the flipside, we're all painfully familiar with the rift between the 'squatters at Bank of Ideas' and occupiers in tents on the harsh pavement of St. Paul's. This was, on the one hand, completely understandable and on the other hand very difficult to reconcile. How can you convince someone sleeping outdoors that her or his relationship to Occupy is in the same league as someone sleeping in a room without the constant chiming of church bells and the

unpredictable London weather?

I'm not sure that you can or should even try. Instead, everyone should embrace the fact that indoor spaces affords the movement unique opportunities that outdoor spaces simply can't offer. We shouldn't think of places like Bank of Ideas solely as squats any more than St. Paul's as a wall-less squat. The motto all along has been that Bank of Ideas, and any subsequent buildings, are truly a public repossession and as such integral to what we're doing. The full calendar of events was just one aspect to Bank of Ideas; we should not forget that many important aspects of Occupy LSX are simply more difficult, if not impossible to conduct outdoors.

ASKING THE OCCUPIERS:

FLAMINIA GIAMBALVO

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE OCCUPY EXPERIENCE TO DATE?

TAMMY: "When I first turned up here at 11 o'clock on the 15th of October, there weren't many people around. I thought to myself, this is not going to happen. I sat down on the steps of St. Paul's just checking my phone, and when I popped my head back up after 10 minutes there were hundreds of people who just seemed to have appeared out of nowhere. It was amazing. Then the general assembly with hundreds of people the police turning up and kettling us. I was really frightened, but I was determined not to go anywhere. Then at night I was playing with a balloon and it went on the other side of the riot police lines. I asked if we could have it back. they said no. So I started chanting: "whose balloon?" and immediately after hundreds of people shouting with me "our balloon". It's hard to say just one thing.

FANNY: "The very first morning, the 16th of October. I wasn't even sleeping in a tent. I had been sleeping on a piece of cardboard on the concrete, right next to Starbucks. I woke up and it was freezing, but it was a beautiful day. Then a total stranger just walks up to me and asks if

I wanted a hot drink, initially I said I was fine. But she insisted on buying me a cup of tea or coffee, as she said it would be her honour, because she appreciated so much we were occupying. That was a beautiful moment, where I realised the strength of the movement and how much I wanted to be part of this."

PEDRO: "I have been here since the 15th of October, I can't specify any one particular experience. But generally speaking the most memorable experience has been meeting so many amazing people. During these four months I have met such a variety of wonderful people and that is something I will always remember."

JAMES: "On November the 30th public sector strike, using the demo units, which were those big, tall bamboo structures. I was a part in helping bring those into London and out on the day. They really caught everybody's eye and gave people a focal point, around which to gather. But probably more than that I would say the most memorable Occupy experience is the next one."

NO

WAIL QASIM

What is the difference between occupying and squatting? Presumably in this debate we are referring to 'occupying' as the conscious political act rather than any given state of habitation or being – of course the act is politicised regardless of a conscious decision, but it is necessary to be more pragmatic with our definitions for our intention. This is to say that occupying is an antagonistic act of protest defined by one's very presence in a particular place: public squares, foreign lands and buildings are some of these examples. Here we find an overlap with the term 'squatting' – the habitation of unoccupied property, an act often political in a very different sense – a politics defined through necessity. This is why I would argue that squatting is not the same as occupying.

The necessity to squat is born out of a very real social issue: the lack of affordable housing. It is the need to assure one's material conditions in such a society that drives one to squat; housing – in this case regardless of its precarity – is not an optional condition for the adequate sustenance and reproduction of life over any extended period of time. Unfortunately, though empty properties are readily available, often those truly on the fringes of society in fact do not have access to the skills and support networks needed for squatting. With a housing crisis and increased homelessness looming, this is a skill we

should be proliferating. In this way it is a politicised act in reaction to prevailing social relations that perpetuate conditions where people suffer the effects of a lack of affordable housing.

An occupation may well be aesthetically similar in its use of spaces, but implies a very different form of politicisation. It is a consciously political use of a space that bares significance to the wider political point being made. Students occupied their universities over tuition fee rises, UK Uncut protesters occupied the stores of tax avoiders, Greek protesters occupied their ministries to protest against their government's austerity program and Occupy protesters have taken to global financial districts in protest over the material and political consequences of the financialisation of the economy. In each of these examples the space taken is significant to the protest. Here we find a very simple distinction drawn along the lines of political consciousness and the significance of space.

The Occupy movement throws up confusion for this distinction however. To occupy becomes to Occupy – this transition from the verb to the concrete noun subsumes all acts and verbs under the new noun of Occupy. This means that if something is carried out in the name of the movement, it becomes labelled as Occupy – by the media or by protesters themselves. Thus, when discussing squatting it is all too easy for the act to

become synonymous with the noun. We see this in the reclaiming of foreclosed housing in the United States which has largely come out of the Occupy movement. This is squatting under what has become a brand name: Occupy – one which has perhaps even engaged in reengineering the past to fit the brand. The tented encampment which is the aesthetic now synonymous with this movement has a historical lineage including Tahrir square. We now find that both protestors and the media see Tahrir, simply for its aesthetics, as an Occupy before Occupy.

'Occupying' is one of the political acts under the Occupy brand name. It can be tempting to historically subsume squatting acts under this brand as they occur, especially if they involve individuals or the types of individuals who are also involved in the Occupy movement. But the squatting tradition as a political act, and as the simple tradition of obtaining the means by which to live, has a long history before Occupy, and continues to occur in London and throughout the world apart from it. Both are, arguably, responses to the same thing, or at least the symptoms of the same thing: acts of resistance against the excesses of capital; and though their aesthetics and physicalities may be blurred, it would be wise for those concerned with either to appreciate and differentiate the differences and advantages of the two.



Like chickens, sheep, wildebeest and monkeys, humans are safer from predators in groups. The main difference is that we follow invisible systems as well as alpha males (so a chinless, gutless creep at the head of a creeping police state can command almost as effectively as a charismatic dictator). Though our superior intelligence occasionally inspires a Thoreau or Lao Tze to turn his back on the system, far more intelligence is invested into manipulating and marshaling obedience than escaping it.

So what about evil? Fatally torturing a friendly stranger is pretty nasty, but unless you want to write off 65% of your species as evil, we have to look for answers elsewhere. And where else would a reverend look than the good book?

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exd 23:2)

It is not the people in the multitude which are evil, nor the following, but the deed. The word 'evil' suggests serial killers and souls that are blacker than the inside of a wolf's gullet, but 'evil' is more complex in Hebrew. 'RA' describes the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but it also describes something quite different in a verse that always makes me giggle:

"the other basket had very naughty (RA) figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad (RA)." (Jer 24:2)

Naughty naughty, but we're clearly not dealing with morals or Satanic possession here. (This might make you think about the tree in a very different light, if you are wont to think about such things.)

Even God cooks up some "evil" [RA], with a plan to destroy the Israelites, until Moses stands up to Him and persuades Him to change His mind (Exd 32). It is our duty to derail schemes which lead to suffering and destruction, even if the author is the supreme authority in the universe. The Old Testament is absolutely clear on this point, and the rabbis of the Zohar slam Noah for his atrocious defending, letting God get away with something so dreadful as flooding the world without raising a stink. Indeed, the name Israel means "wrestles with God", and is given to Jacob after he spends all night doing just that.

People are not 'Evil' with a capital E, a shiver down the spine and a cameo by Boris Karloff, but we are obedient. We are horribly, mindlessly, murderously obedient. We are pawns marching along predetermined courses, and our lack of initiative opens up a space for a king to take power. A king need only point out an enemy across the board, and we play follow the leader, goose-stepping down the track to war abroad and oppression at home. The 65% is not the enemy. The 1% is not the enemy. Squatters are not the enemy, Arabs are not the enemy, bankers are not the enemy, the EDL are not the enemy. The evil things on this planet are not individuals but systems which have gone bad, putrid institutions and calcified chains of command. Why do we feel obliged to honour contracts which have passed their use-by date?

Centuries ago, bishops brought their black and white Gospel to every corner of the board on the point of a knight's lance. Today the endgame

is underway as castles dominate the board, but can a pawn push through hostile territory to the end and the promise of transformation?

Check. The king is getting desperate.

Check again. The law does not govern your actions. You do! Dodge his knight and pin his queen. Pay attention, and keep the king in check. A full spectrum lies between the black and the white, so choose your shade and raise a banner.

Pawn threatens castle. Milgram repeated his experiment with teachers in a group, only one of whom was the real subject whilst the rest were actors. When an actor refused to continue, 90% of subjects ignored the technician and followed his example. We obey until a better course of action is presented, at

which time nearly everyone will adopt new rules, even if the plan comes from a source with much less authority, a pawn rather than a bishop. Our movement does not need leaders, but we do, each of us, need the courage to unleash our natural leadership qualities. We do not need badges or titles to speak with authority and expect to be followed, because following is what humans do by nature, and decency trumps rank for 90% of us. A freethinker need only stand up and suggest a game less heartless than the one being played. Given the sorry state of the state, this should not be too difficult.

Pawn takes castle, transforms into whatever he likes.

Checkmate in three.
The Irreverent Reverend Nemu blogs at www.nemusend.co.uk



ON THE SOAPBOX

REV NEMU PREACHES 'CHECKMATE IN THREE'

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" - Exodus

Back in 1961, as the mild-looking, pen-pushing architect of the Holocaust Adolf Eichmann was on trial for genocide, Stanley Milgram began investigating the question of obedience. What he revealed is unsettling, but contains an element of hope for the free-thinking subversive.

The basic experiment begins with two subjects deciding by lot which would be the 'teacher' and which the 'learner'. The teacher first watches the learner being strapped into a chair and covered with electrodes. Then the teacher is seated in an adjacent room at a machine labelled 'Shock Generator'. A man in a white coat tells him to read questions to the learner through a microphone, and punish errors with increasing electric shocks.

After the first mistake, the teacher must flip the first switch, labelled "15 volts - slight shock". The machine buzzes, lights flash, a meter swings, and the experiment continues, with each shock increasing by 15 volts. After twenty errors and a 300-volt "very strong shock", the learner pounds on the wall. If the teacher expresses concern, the technician explains that although the shocks can be extremely painful, they cause no permanent tissue damage, and that "the experiment requires that you continue". The next question goes unanswered, and the technician explains that no answer is a wrong answer, and must be punished. More pounding follows, but this is the last that is heard from the learner. The remaining questions go unanswered, and the teacher keeps increasing the voltage.

The experiment was rigged to study not pain-assisted learning but obedience. Both lots read 'teacher', and the 'learner' was really a friendly middle-aged actor in league with the scientists. All 40 subjects continued until the pounding, at which point five stopped. A further nine disobeyed over the next four questions, but 26 (65%) continued through "intense shock", "danger - severe shock", to the full 450 volts, marked "XXX".

According to an observer: "I observed a mature and initially poised businessman enter the laboratory smiling and confident. Within twenty minutes he was reduced to a twitching, stuttering wreck, who was rapidly approaching a point of nervous collapse. He constantly pulled on his earlobe, and twisted his hands. At one point he pushed his fist into his forehead and muttered: 'Oh God, let's stop it.' And yet he continued to respond to every word of the experimenter, and obeyed to the end."

The implication is that 65% of men will obey completely an authority figure, without threat, coercion, or profit motive, causing extreme pain or worse to a friendly stranger (many admitted in follow-up interviews that they believed the learner was either dead or unconscious). Milgram comments: "Each individual possesses a conscience which, to a greater or lesser degree, serves to restrain the unimpeded flow of impulses destructive to others. But when he merges his person into an organisational structure, a new creature replaces autonomous man, unhindered by the limitations of individual morality, freed of humane inhibition, mindful only of the sanctions of authority."

In reruns, the figure of 65% barely changes across countries and decades; the seventies counterculture appears to have had no impact whatsoever on obedience. It is hardwired into us.



STALWARTS OF OCCUPY: BETTY

EMMA FORDHAM

OCCUPIER AND OT REPORTER EMMA FORDHAM CHEWS THE FAT WITH ANOTHER OF OCCUPY LONDON'S FAMILIAR FACES.

EM: When did you arrive at OLSX?

BETTY: Just before Christmas.

EM: What brought you here?

BETTY: I read about it in newspapers. I was having my own personal credit crisis and needed to do something positive about that. I didn't know when I turned up how long I'd stay, I've just been living from day-to-day, not thinking about the future.

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

BETTY: I was living in Hampstead, writing a book. I put the book on the internet - it's called The Buzzing Guns in the Battle for Light and it's a book for these times, there's stuff in it that's symbolic of what is going on right now. I ran out of money while writing the book.

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

BETTY: I've mainly been helping in the kitchen. I was drawn to the atmosphere there.

EM: Why did you decide to stay?

BETTY: On arriving in the camp I walked into a wave of generosity. I didn't have to justify myself. I was welcomed and it was heart-warming. I had my first ever Christmas without cash and for the first time I really felt the spirit of Christmas. I was given food, a tent... it was an amazing lesson, I've learnt that the universe will provide.

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

BETTY: Not hardship, not joy... There are elements of both. It has been a tremendous eye-opener.

EM: Of all the issues Occupy aims to

address, what are the most important for you?

BETTY: I just want lasting positive change towards a fairer system.

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

BETTY: Oh, I don't know at the moment what the best three would be. I can come up with some ideas... The top financiers who messed up should go without bonuses and fat pensions. I'd like to see a better value system based on fairness and kindness. And I'd like to replace any incompetent, unethical people in powerful positions with people more able to create a more just and better world. I might change my mind on these later, it's a difficult question.

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

BETTY: On a practical level what we've done in the camp is amazing. We've opened people's eyes, we've had a masses of public support and there has been an enormous amount of giving and generosity. It is incredible how a few hundred people can be fed three times a day - and given hot drinks too - from two small gas burners. And there's no judging. Everyone is welcome, from the bankers to the rough sleepers.

EM: Where will you go after St Paul's?

BETTY: Finsbury Square is probably the next step. I'm going to take one day at a time and see what happens. I want to feel as though I'm learning and moving forwards but I don't have a clear view of the future.

GUARDIANS OF THE FUTURE

RUPERT READ



MARC LALLANILLA

INDUSTRIAL FOOD & HOW TO AVOID IT

There was a time – long, long ago – when all food was organic, local, fair trade and pesticide-free. Of course, that era was also the time of the Black Plague, the Spanish Inquisition and an average life span of 42 years, so don't get too nostalgic.

Today, we humans are faced with a dizzying array of food choices: mangos in the dead of winter, exotic liquors distilled in isolated rural villages, and fish harvested in distant oceans are available to diners everywhere. Never before in the history of mankind has so much food been so readily available all year-round.

And it's killing us. Medical researchers have found that, because of the countless health risks associated with the typical Western diet, young people today are a part of the first generation in history that is expected to live shorter lives than their parents. Diabetes, heart disease, cancer, strokes and other health issues are stalking people as mercilessly today as the bubonic plague did centuries ago.

The risks of the modern industrial food industry, however, extend beyond human health. CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations) and other factory farming techniques have been described as "a frontal assault on the environment, with massive groundwater and air pollution problems" by renowned animal sciences expert Peter Cheeke, Ph.D. Estimates vary, but somewhere between 18-51% of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming come from livestock production.

In many CAFOs, the reckless use of antibiotics in livestock poses an imminent threat. Up to 70% of all the antibiotics used in the United States go not to sick people, but to healthy animals. Experts fear the overuse of these drugs is creating a vast army of "superbug" bacteria that is completely resistant to the most powerful antibiotics in our medical arsenal.

What can you do? Plenty- and fortunately it doesn't involve hoeing a row of potatoes in freezing weather like a medieval serf. Along with the numerous food choices available to consumers today are a surprising variety of foods that are as healthy for the environment as they are for you.

First, consider buying fruits, vegetables and other produce that is organically grown. Certification varies from country to country, but most are

similar to America's USDA organic program, which requires that farmland – and the plants and animals on it – be completely free of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers for years.

Not all organic food, however, is grown under sustainable conditions. An organic tomato flown in from Mexico has a huge environmental impact and, according to author and activist Michael Pollan, many food items travel about 1,500 miles from farm to dinner plate. Thus, many people are turning to local foods as an alternative to industrial foods, and in the process, getting to know their local farmers.

Seafood can be a difficult dinner choice, because large-scale industrial harvesting techniques have caused some fisheries to crash, and many species of fish are in danger of extinction. Fortunately, there are many resources for choosing safe, sustainable seafood, including some green apps for smartphone users.

For too many people, however, the thought of eating local or organic foods comes loaded with some grievous mistaken impressions. Cost, first of all, is a deterrent, and it's true that some organic foods cost more. But smart shoppers have found that there are some foods that are best to buy organically – fruits and vegetables that are not peeled, for example, like tomatoes and apples.

Shoppers can economize by buying other foods that are not grown organically and are safer to eat because they're peeled – like onions, avocados and bananas. Buying organic milk can also save money because it's pasteurised at very high temperatures, so it lasts longer in the refrigerator (no more tossing out a container of spoiled milk!).

Another misconception is that eating healthy, sustainable food means eking out a hair-shirted existence of cold gruel and raw vegetables – yet nothing could be further from the truth. Epicureans delight in the complexity and variety of biodynamic wines and organic chocolates, and beer aficionados speak in glowing terms of the rich taste of organic beer. Grass-fed beef and organic eggs are known to have a more succulent flavor than industrial meats.

So dig in – there's plenty of great food available in large cities and small villages alike that are healthy, sustainable and delicious, and they avoid the worst aspects of industrial foods. Bon appetit!

I've got a proposal to end the chronic culture of short-termism that we have in our politics, our electoral cycles, our business and economics. Because when one is trying to think on a timescale of hundreds of years or thousands of years or hundreds of thousands of years – which is the timescale for nuclear waste, and the scale on which most severe environmental changes happen – then those kind of short-term cycles don't make a lot of sense.

One starting point from which to think about the consequences of short-term thinking is the idea of "democracy" itself. What does it mean? Etymologically, democracy means 'the people rule' or 'the people govern'. I am sure that most occupiers would agree that at the present time it is inaccurate to say – in any meaningful sense – that "the people govern" in our society. We don't even have the alternative vote, let alone proportional representation; we're still waiting for the upper house to be democratically reformed. And beyond those electoral reforms, we need also participatory democracy, economic democracy, and a serious re-localisation. Let there be no doubt: If we want real democracy, we have to be willing to accept vast changes in our society.

But even if all those changes occurred, we would still be in a society which ran the risk of being chronically short-termist. Why? Even if we make far-reaching changes to our institutions, the laws that would result from such changes still focus on the interests and wishes of present people – of people who are alive today. They are the people who vote, and they are the ones whose votes alone would count even in an improved and enhanced democracy.

But a people, I want to suggest to you, is not something that exists as a time-slice; a people is something that exists over time. It begins in the past and goes on indefinitely far into the future.

And while people in the past are hard to harm (because they've had their time) people in the future are extremely vulnerable to harm. Indeed, they are vulnerable to policies that prevent them from existing at all. But their precariousness is also a source of great hope. If we get things right, people in the future could have the chance to have a great existence and to go on indefinitely longer into the future having that existence. We need to find a way of making democracy actually include future people. We need to find a way of representing them in our political system.

How could that be accomplished? Can you give future people a vote? Well, obviously, that's not very feasible... So we need to find some form of proxy representation for them. The

people of the future need to have something like a proxy vote.

If we don't screw up so badly that we stop them from existing altogether, over time there will be far more future people than there are present people. While "present people" includes everyone alive today, the concept of future people would include the next generation, and the generation thereafter, and thereafter, and so on. Pretty quickly, the number grows incredibly large.

This leads to a curious paradox: In a democracy, they would out-vote us every time. They would be the vast majority. So, in order to express their proxy 'vote', I suggest that what we need to give them is a proxy veto. I want to suggest that we need proxy representatives for future people empowered in and by our political system to veto things that we might want to do but that they don't want us to do. And the people who are going to be these proxies I'm calling "Guardians for Future Generations", guardians to represent the interests of these future people to us.

So, who should these guardians be? How should they be selected? It doesn't make any sense for us to vote for them, because they are proxies for future people – they're there to express the votes that future people would cast if they could cast those votes.

I suggest that actually all of us and none of us are equally well positioned to be these proxy representatives for future people. We need, plainly, to draw these proxy representatives from across the entire population. I suggest that the only fair, reasonable and democratic way of doing this is through the same principle that animates the jury system: random selection. Anyone and everyone should have an equal chance to be one of the guardians for future people.

This is the idea: Guardians for the fundamental interests – and for the basic needs! – of future generations, to be selected at random, as jurors are, to form a super-jury. This body would sit above our existing political institutions and have the power to veto proposed legislation or to force a review of existing legislation that they (the guardians) adjudged – based on their own deliberations, based on their seeking to uphold the basic interests and needs of future people, and based on the absolute best expert advice available – would be adversely affecting the fundamental interests and needs of future people.

Rupert Read is a Green Party politician, head of the "Green House" think tank and philosophy reader at the University of East Anglia. Read has lectured at Tent City University on the impossibility of perpetual growth.



BRIAN LEI

IMPERIALISM CROSSWORD:

MICHAEL RICHMOND

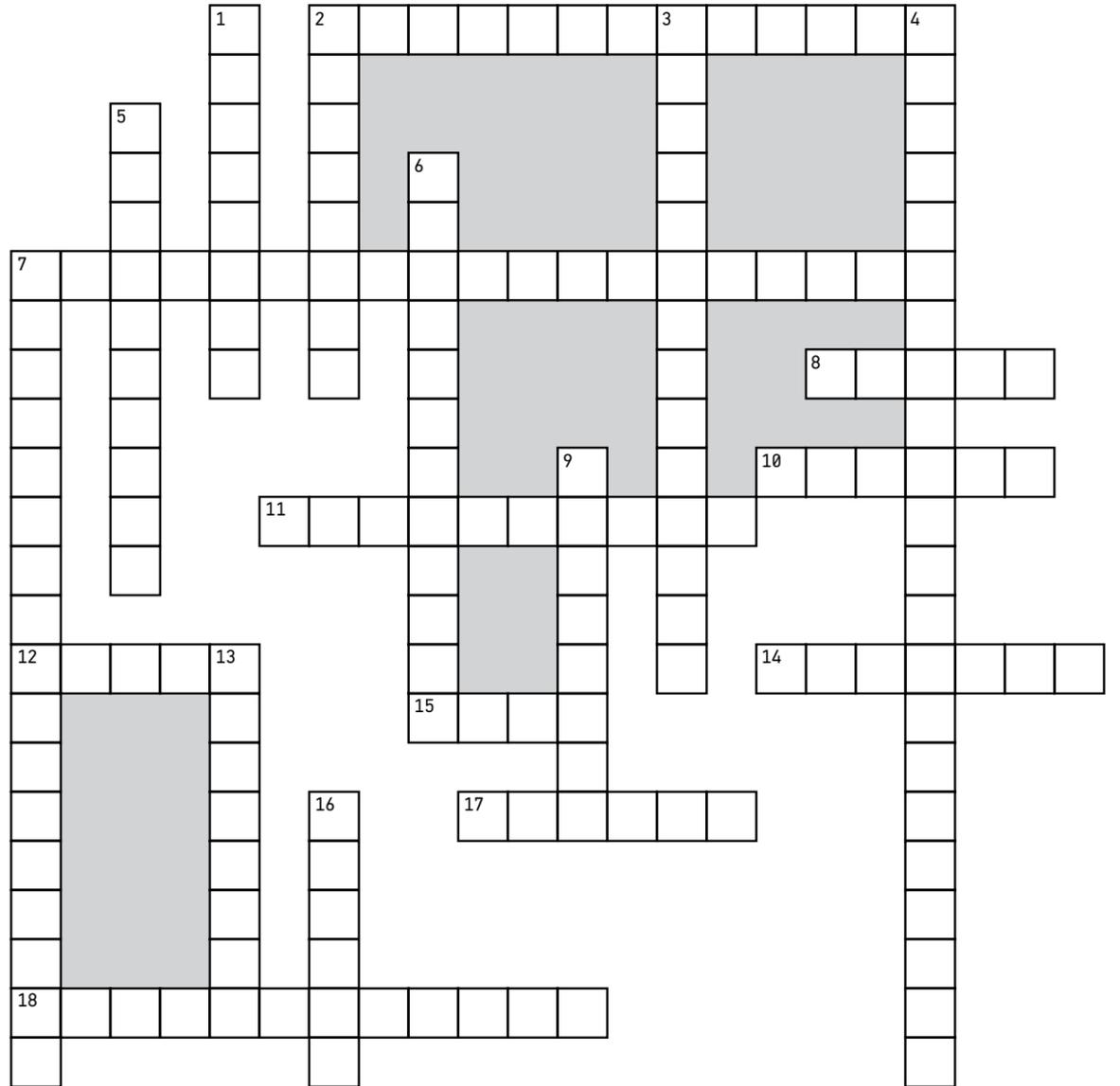
THE EMPIRE SHITE'S BACK

DOWN

1. Tyrannical and capricious Roman Emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty whose name translates as 'little boot.' (8)
2. Ancient powerhouse and city-state which fought three wars with Rome before eventually being conquered by them. (8) **3.** Mark Twain described his conversion to anti-Imperialism in this quote from 1900: "We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem. It should, it seems to me, be our pleasure and duty to make those people free, and let them deal with their own domestic questions in their own way. And so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land." Which country that America interfered with is he referring to? (3, 11) **4.** Expansionist sultan of the Ottoman Empire. (8, 3, 11)
5. Mongol ruler, grandson of Genghis. Blank Haiku (anagram) (6, 4) **6.** Author of *The Age of Empire*. (4, 8) **7.** Long-ruling Empress. (9, 3, 5) **9.** This Old World imperial power became the only European nation to be ruled from one of its colonies when Napoleon chased its ruling family out of the country (and the continent.) (8) **13.** In their pathetic desperation to remain relevant after Britain's post-imperial decline, our financial imperialists have turned many of our former "possessions" into one of these, so that they could continue to steal from other countries (mostly "legally") and profit from their people's misery. (3, 5) **16.** Which John, in his 1902 work "Imperialism," posited that empires are driven not by patriotic pride but by an oligarchic ruling class whose unequal dominance of their own nation-state leads them to subjugate foreign countries in order to open new markets and find new sources of profit. (6)

ACROSS

2. Privateers of the Spanish Empire who decimated the indigenous population of the New World through a combination of brutal suppression and epidemic. (13)
7. A modern form of transnational hegemony that is more subtle than just economic exploitation or military colonisation. Casual Rim Multiplier (anagram) (8, 11) **8.** The Belgian Empire, ruled by Leopold II, committed some of the worst atrocities in this country during the entire "Scramble for Africa." (5) **10.** Indian empire which oversaw large-scale territorial expansion, architectural exploits like the Taj Mahal and was succeeded by British colonialism. (6) **11.** Capital city of the Achaemenid (or First Persian) Empire, built by Darius the Great. (10) **12.** The "king" of this ancient empire would spend most of his time in Memphis. (5) **14.** In a clear act of imperialism the Soviet Union removed the government of which country in 1956 after their anti-Stalinist leader, Imre Nagy, withdrew from the Warsaw Pact. (7) **15.** Penultimate ruling dynasty of China. (4) **17.** Name for the head of state in the Islamic Empires. (6) **18.** Co-wrote "Empire," a work on modern-day imperialism, with Michael Hardt. (7, 5)



POET'S CORNER

LOST GENERATION

Lost degenerates with long coat and hood
 Deep pockets carrying all you believe good,
 Waste, filter through your hands touch and grab
 Make sure for certain recheck you still have,
 Lost in the day with your routine and time
 Check all your pockets is all still fine?
 Emptied, used or lost, it is not well,
 Fear not for capitalism! We'll get the hard sell!

Lost degenerates you must have collapsed,
 Where have you gone? They have no grasp!
 Streets are emptied, derelict decayed,
 We have the control, degenerates wrongly enraged.

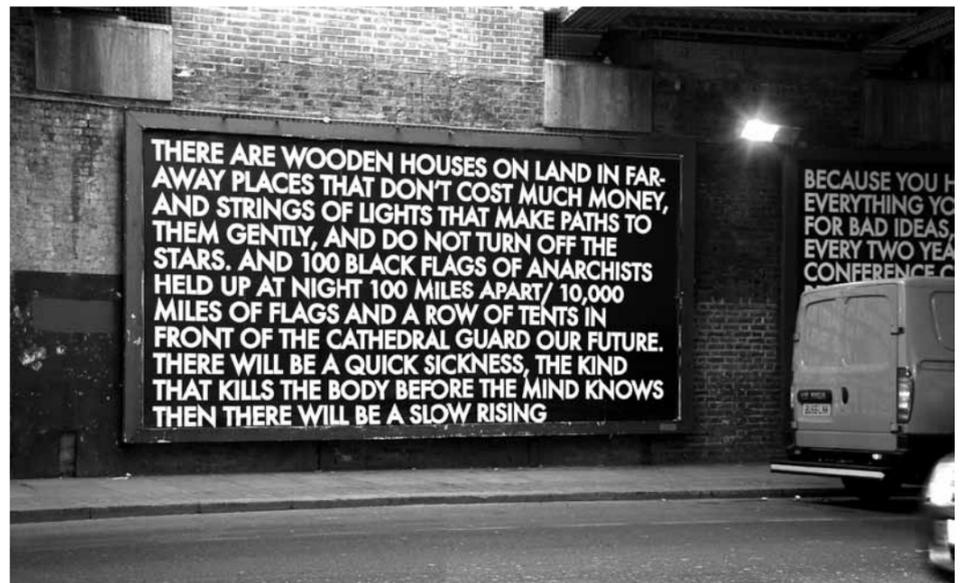
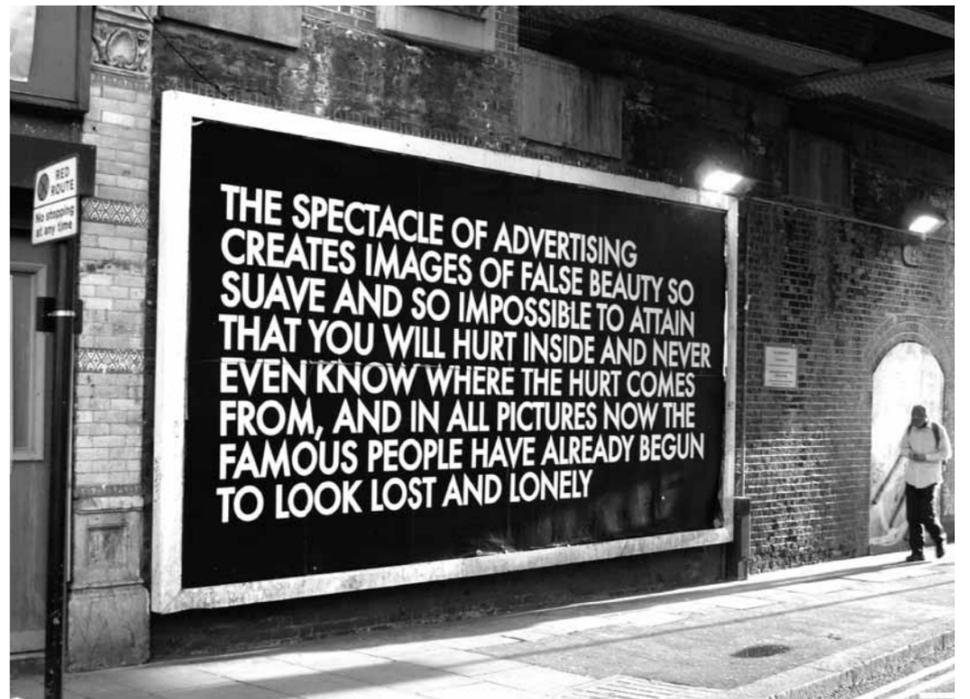
Feel the wrath of us the degenerates of our times
 We take heed in these troubles these political crimes,
 You! With your tie and un-creased white shirt
 Speaking of justice with head out the dirt,
 Look at us when we are as clean as you!
 Despondent from answers and lies we are roué,
 We are the people the whole flock of this hour
 The creators, the artists, the revolutionary power!
 Seize all you can from the wisdom of old
 Insert their knowledge, examine and remould,
 They are naïve to the present destruction
 Lost in their affirmations with corruption.

Lost degenerates with long coat and hood
 Deep pockets carrying all you believe good,
 Realise the old clock has past its time
 Has ticked for too long and lost its chime,
 Globalisation has been born and sprung
 Has woven its web and meticulously spun,
 Run ragged with pride, gluttony and greed,
 They have ripped all nations to let the vultures feed,
 Degenerates take of your coat, let down your hood
 Speak proudly of the fighters, who previously stood,
 Surrender nothing to their power of will,
 You are the freeman of democracy read the bill!

We are the lost degenerates who've been suppressed!
 We have watched with heartache the nation regressed!

Let us all be one and one for all, let us pick up all who fall!
 Let us march together now with frenetic stimulation
 Let us spread shanti in each and every nation.

By Thomas.c.Batten



Photos of Robert Montgomery's billboard poems in Old Street



**EVICT US
AND WE
MULTIPLY**

