



THE OCCUPIED TIMES OF LONDON

#15

JULY 2012

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In Ancient Greece, power was centred around numerous city-states (poleis) acting as distinct political bodies. These poleis were perpetually at war with one another, but also traded together, made military alliances and integrated culturally, with resources at the centre of both conflict and cooperation.

It was in this context that the Olympics emerged, as much a political tool as a sporting competition, where poleis would push their agendas and vie for superiority. While a truce was in place between all participating poleis for the duration, political conflict continued.

The sport may be less overtly entwined with the politics than it was in ancient Greece, but London 2012 remains a facade for a turbulent political landscape. States in the midst of economic and military conflict – including Greece, Germany, Syria, Somalia, Libya, Iran and the US – will compete on London's new corporate-sponsored playing fields, as if austerity, brutal despotism and economic imperialism are themselves worthy of celebration.

Today's Olympics are no less a political tool. Instead of city-states asserting their dominance, the Games offer an "opportunity" for state-supported corporations to leverage even more wealth from public into private hands and to privatise and militarise our city. This is a process described by Professor David Harvey as "accumulation by dispossession". While the majority are priced out of attending events, there are endless lucrative revenue streams for sponsors and contractors, eager to help in the gentrification of some of London's poorest areas.

We don't have to look very far back to see the legacy of previous Olympics. The 2008 Beijing Games left a disused tourist trap, and 2004 saw the accumulation of massive debts and a herd of white elephants in Athens. It's likely too early to say what will happen to Beijing's park, but Athens provides a glimpse into the relationship between the International Olympic Committee, state "restructuring" processes and areas facing notable austerity measures. Like most in recent memory, the Games in Athens ran far beyond an initial budget of €4.5 billion, with little hope of reusing the spaces. What stands now at the Athens Olympic Park may better be referred to as the site of the 2004 Neoliberal Olympics, where the International Olympics Committee, large corporations and security firms took the gold in all events.

While the story in London will be only as vivid in retrospect, the 2012 Games are already shaping up to be the perfect case study of late capitalist urban reconstruction. An accelerated process of a well-worn formula that transfers public space into private profit. The process and actors involved in this heist are global and urban in nature – and the fightback must be equally borderless and urbanised.

The Olympic park at Stratford finally allows city authorities to force through sweeping changes in its most problematic boroughs. Under the guise of "restructuring" and "development", families are uprooted and displaced halfway



across the country, and only 675 out of 1,379 homes in the East Village complex are promised as social housing. This comes when the government is cutting housing benefit and neglecting to invest in social housing; in Newham alone, around 70,000 people are on a waiting list for properties.

The darker aspects of the prelude to the Games are most apparent in the massive security operation. In what is the largest mobilisation of the military in the UK since the second World War, the city has been transformed by surface-to-air missiles in residential areas, police special forces "trained to kill", "Good Behaviour Zones" and naval landing craft shored up on the Thames. The many security contracts issued bring the immediate cost of the security operation to no less than £550m, according to a conservative estimate. This extensive operation has brought London closer to Alfonso Cuarón's dystopian vision in Children of Men and is suggestive of a legacy feeding into the perpetual state of the "War on Terror" so desired by policy makers looking to cash in on the markets that this dynamic enables.

Instead to fulfilling claims that the Games will improve the British economy, they present instead a public short-changed in favour of the cataclysmically successful homeland securities industry. So-called 'security solutions' firms such as G4S have landed multi-million-pound contracts for the Games that

will see the deployment of tens of thousands of personnel, including military units. Behind the facade and the fanfare, it's nothing but business as usual – and with worldwide growth rates in homeland security of between 5% and 12% annually, the true competition in the Games is the race to this market.

In Athens, the 2004 stadia resemble modern, unused Parthenons, whilst the cradle of democracy is under a neoliberal coup. The \$300m surveillance system built for the Games remains in operation, having been used recently to control protesters rising up against the tide of austerity measures imposed by today's rulers. With the Governor of the Bank of England recently expressing renewed pessimism about the state of the global economy, concerns about the militarisation of London seem ever more present.

Towards the end of June, David Cameron was accused by an Olympic volunteer of "crippling the poor in London". Cameron responded: "This is not about politics. This is about Britain. It is about volunteering. It is about our country. It is about a successful Olympics."

While Cameron desires an Olympic 'truce' reminiscent of the games in Ancient Greece, the war of corporate interest against the people of Britain rages on. We must not let him pretend these Olympics are any less political than they were when they began thousands of years ago.

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Since October of last year, The Occupied Times has sought to offer a high-quality alternative to the corporate media. Our publication features articles by activists, citizens, thinkers and academic experts from the UK and around the world. The OT has now published 30,000 papers full of critical analysis, opinion, features and news, without printing a single advert.

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LEYTON MARSH PROTESTER ISSUED WITH TWO YEAR ASBO

RAGNHILD
FRENG DALE

A protester involved in the 'Save Leyton Marsh' campaign has been issued with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) by Westminster Magistrates' Court. The two-year order handed to Simon Moore on June 18th was granted "to prevent conduct leading to the disruption of the Olympic Games events 2012". Mr Moore's offences are listed as public disorder, aggravated trespass, organising demonstrations and highway obstruction. Amongst other prohibitions, the ASBO prevents him from going within 100 metres of Olympic Games' spectators, athletes, organisers and venues.

Speaking outside the court, Moore said that this ASBO criminalises peaceful

protest. He stated that he has no intention of disrupting the Games, but that he will continue to protest about other legitimate concerns, including the development of Metropolitan Open Land at Leyton Marsh, where the "exceptional circumstances" of the Olympic Games have been used to circumvent planning regulations.

Fellow activists have started an online petition entitled 'We are all Simon Moore', to show that they do not accept one person being singled out. They, like Moore, will continue to peacefully protest and to speak out about what is right "in the face of repression". Like-minded individuals are invited to sign the petition and show their support.



CREATING ALTERNATIVES: A SERIES OF GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

LIZ BEECH

The first in a series of General Assemblies under the umbrella title 'Creating Alternatives' took place atop the steps of St. Paul's on Saturday June 16. Initiated to encourage local community groups who are working to challenge various aspects of our broken system, the Creating Alternatives GAs seek to deepen Occupy London's link with existing community organisations. About 60 people came together to begin the process of discussing whether and how local communities can work collaboratively with the Occupy movement in the future.

The GA consisted of an introduction to the existing work and approach of Occupy, descriptions of the nascent

Community Bill of Rights and the Localism Act, and a talk on 'the commons'. There were also powerful contributions from a Haringey community group and the Save Leyton Marshes campaign. The break-out groups discussed ideas for future assemblies and the feedback session was full of enthusiasm to continue the process and encourage more groups to attend the assemblies.

It is impossible to say how this shared platform will develop, but the general attitude of those present was that the Creating Alternatives discussion series was a positive step for all parties involved and worth continuing.



OCCUPY BILDERBERG: THE FIGHT FOR TRANSPARENCY

HANNAH BORNO

A new branch of Occupy emerged this summer, outside a luxury hotel conference centre not far from Washington DC. Occupy London was there...

The black limos glide past the placards, the fingers pointing, the furious bullhorns, past the lines of security, and into the calm and leafy interior of the Westfield Marriott in Chantilly, Virginia. A limo slows at the gates and Henry Kissinger is spotted inside, the protestors start booing and cries of "war criminal" rise from the crowd. Another car approaches, flanked by security, and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands bows her head to avoid the cameras. Peter Brabeck-Lemanthe, CEO of Nestlé smirks and Bill Gates hides his face with his slender fingers.

CEO after CEO, Chairman after Chairman. From the CEO of Airbus to the Chairman of the Washington Post to the Lord Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke. All here for the annual three-day Bilderberg conference at the beginning of June. Around 130 powerful participants, cherry-picked from the highest levels of banking, diplomacy, government and commerce have cleared their schedules to attend. Ministers of Finance from Finland, Ireland, Poland. All the top people from Royal Dutch Shell, and the Chief Executive of BP. The summit is hosted in Europe for two to three years and then goes to North America – usually in an election year. Rumour has it that the UK's been tipped to host the conference in 2013.

Most of the 800-strong crowd outside were Americans, but protesters had flown in from Germany and the UK. There were occupiers from Occupy Portland, Occupy Denver and Occupy London – people wore 'Occupy Bilderberg' T-shirts that proclaimed: "More like the 0.01%". Many of the signs railed against the distasteful union of business and politics that was going on behind the security cordon.

The mood in the crowd was cheerful and good-humoured, except when a limo arrived and the catcalls began. The US protesters were incensed that their elected representatives were present, which meant they were violating the Logan Act which forbids US government officials to meet foreign representatives to discuss policy without the express permission of congress.

OCCUPY FESTIVALS

EMMA
FORDHAM

In early June Occupy activists joined festival enthusiasts and campaign groups in Somerset to collaborate in the creation of a "Tin Village" at the Sunrise festival site. Over the summer Solstice weekend, Tin Village existed as a temporary, self-sufficient, co-operative community within the festival – a community based on a radical egalitarian and environmental ethos. As veterans of temporary encampments and strongly in favour of putting people and planet before profit, the Occupy crew were welcome inhabitants of the Village, where they encouraged and facilitated discussions about creative alternatives to the failing, corrupt, unjust systems we currently live by.

Occupy London has also been offered a space at Latitude Festival, 12-15 July. Tent City University will be sited in the Faraway Forest, providing a venue for

The UK had two elected representatives at this year's conference – our Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke and Nick Boules MP, of the hawkish Henry Jackson Society. Ken Clarke was snapped sneaking out of the conference after most of the protesters had gone home. Clarke is a longtime member of the Bilderberg Steering Committee, alongside Peter Sutherland (Chairman of Goldman Sachs International), Marcus Agius (Chairman of Barclays) and Daniel Vasella (the Chairman of pharmaceutical giant Novartis). The steering committee meets in absolute secret several times a year. What long-term goals does Clarke hold in common with these bankers and CEOs? It is time to subject these kind of extracurricular roles to closer scrutiny.

A statement of support for Occupy Bilderberg had been prepared by members of the Economics Working Group and endorsed by the Occupy London GA. The statement condemned "the profound denial of a participatory, direct democracy" that Bilderberg represents. And warned against "the ever-increasing influence of unaccountable international bankers over our economic and democratic system". It was read out on the grass slopes outside the Westfields Marriott through a loudhailer, and livestreamed back around the world. A small blow for transparency was struck. When enough of these blows land, the security fences will fall. Until then, in the closing words of the statement of support: "stay strong!"



workshops, speakers, music and performance. An information tent, similar to the one that ran daily for four months at the St Paul's Occupy camp, will provide a space for outreach and informal discussion.

On the first weekend in August, Occupy will be at The Green Gathering near Chepstow on the Welsh borders, 'joining the dots' between the economic and environmental crises. Through performance and poetry, activists will explore the pathologically anti-social behaviour of multinational corporations, while demonstrating creative methods of getting our voices heard. Occupiers will also be facilitating festival assemblies, sharing skills and hosting campfire debates.

For more information about these festivals visit: www.greengathering2012.co.uk, www.latitudefestival.co.uk and www.sunrisecelebration.com

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PRINT RUN/ 2000 Copies

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO/

Aldgate Press, E1 7RQ

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EXPOSING OUR EXPOSURE

HOW ENERGY COMPANIES ARE RISKING OUR FUTURE & THEIR BALANCE SHEETS

LIZ GALLAGHER

"We now have around \$7trillion of subprime carbon assets in the global economy, and their value, like the subprime mortgages, is based on an assumption that is highly questionable," Al Gore explained in his keynote speech to a sustainable business conference in San Francisco in 2011. Yet the idea that investments in fossil fuels will become risky business as we drive towards a low-carbon economy is largely ignored and ridiculed by the financial services. "I think it's a bollocks subject," clarified one oil and gas analyst quoted in the FT, concluding that, "I'm not interested in this kind of subject. I think this is complete hot air."



TURN UP THE HEAT ON CORPORATE POWER & COMPLICIT GOVERNMENTS

RYAN PHILLIPS

Summer has arrived, and although the cold might not be biting too hard right now, the bite of our bills shows no respite. Fuel costs have grown seven times faster than income since 2004, and fuel bill debt has become a key aspect of UK private debt. As we struggle to pay off our bills in the summer, we dread the winter to come. According to the latest research, half of the UK population are set to be in fuel poverty by the end of the year. Thousands of people – particularly pensioners, young children and disabled people – might die from the cold, and millions will be forced to choose between heating or eating as they are unable to afford both.

The causes of fuel poverty tell a story of intersecting neoliberal trends. It begins with corporate monopolies: The 'Big Six' energy companies – British Gas, EDF, EON, RWE npower, Scottish Power and SSE – currently control our energy system and exercise complete authority over the production and pricing of energy. The Big Six's business model depends on generating energy from fossil fuels, since this is currently the most profitable form of energy production. But because fossil fuels are becoming more difficult to extract in 'conventional' ways, companies are turning to new methods of 'unconventional' extraction, such as tar sands oil and fracking for gas. These modes of extraction, as well as

being more polluting and dangerous, are more expensive and less efficient. The resulting additional costs are passed on to the consumer, and the Big Six are simultaneously seizing the opportunity to generate even more profit by pushing up bills beyond the rise in wholesale prices. It's not just the number of fuel poverty households that is skyrocketing – the average annual pay package of Big Six bosses has doubled in the past ten years, from £637,000 to £1.35 million.

But the story doesn't end at rising bills. As a result of the increasing privatisation of social housing, people are increasingly vulnerable to landlords as regulations for the protection of tenants are gradually removed. Drafty, damp and poorly insulated houses are the visible outcomes of this policy of deregulation.

On top of this, wage stagnation, low benefits and welfare cuts have made adequate heating a luxury for many Britons. This story has unravelled against the backdrop of close collaboration between the Big Six companies and government institutions. Recent exposés reveal that the Big Six have lent staff to government departments, influenced policy through informal consultations and paid for access to secret lobbying meetings.

Unsurprisingly, energy companies and the government have a different story to tell. The big lie they want

us to swallow is that our bills are increasing as a result of the cost of 'green measures'. Inaction on climate change is justified by a 'commitment' to bringing down the bills, while inaction on fuel poverty is justified by a 'commitment' to cooling down the planet. The truth is that increased investment in renewables accounted for just 6.5% of the increase in our bills between 2005 and 2010. Don't be fooled by the government spin surrounding the new Energy Bill, which is adding another £200 to our bills under the auspices of funding renewables. In fact, this £200 is primarily a subsidy for new nuclear power stations.

We should not have to choose between being green and being poor. Real renewables – solar, wind and tidal – are cheaper than fossil fuels as well as false solutions like nuclear power and biofuels. Fuel poverty and climate change both arise from the profit-led drive towards corporate cartels and the commodification of energy, both of which have locked us into a system of fossil fuel consumption. If communities reclaimed control from corporations, they could generate their own energy using localised renewable sources and distribute this energy on the basis of people's needs, not on the basis of their ability to pay.

Encouragingly, communities across the UK from Bristol to Brighton, and

from Manchester to Brixton, are leading the way with community energy coops that strive to do just this. But we can't hope to build real energy democracy in an undemocratic world. Positive energy alternatives must be built in the context of a broader movement for widespread social and economic change. Fuel Poverty Action is a campaign against fuel poverty and the Big Six's monopoly in the UK, but we see our activities as part of a global movement for the reorganisation of society and the economy along democratic, fair and sustainable lines.

Central to our approach is the support of local communities in taking collective action that goes beyond bargaining with energy companies for a slightly cheaper deal. We've just launched a new community organising project in Haringey and are currently building for a London-wide public meeting in the autumn. In this, we hope to get anti-cuts groups, disabled people's rights campaigners, residents' associations, environmental activists and others together to strategise about how we can work together in the coming winter. Earlier this year, during our weekend of 'Winter Warm Ups', communities across the country came together to occupy public spaces, town halls and energy company offices. Action like this can win immediate material gains. Further confrontational collective action of this sort can also



ANTI-FRACKING

ORGANISING IN THE NORTH-WEST

PAM FOSTER

Fracking' is the commonly used term for hydraulic fracturing, or shale gas extraction. It is a method of extracting pockets of gas from deep underground by drilling into rock, then cracking it open through the injection of pressurised fluid and sand. Fracking – along with extraction of oil from tar sands, deep water oil drilling and coal mining via mountaintop removal – is a controversial and carbon-intensive means of accessing fossil fuels. Millions of gallons of water, plus toxic chemicals, are used to release shale gas. Contamination of the water table with the fracking chemicals, or with chemicals leached from the cracked rock, is a major concern. Accidental release of methane (flammable and a major

greenhouse gas) into air and water has been reported. Minor earthquakes have occurred during exploratory drilling in the Blackpool area.

France and parts of the US, Canada and Switzerland have banned shale gas extraction. In Britain, the campaign group 'Frack Off' has been active against fracking and other extreme forms of energy extraction. Grassroots resistance is growing, as the following piece by Pam Foster of Residents' Action on Fylde Fracking (RAFF) shows.

Shale gas extraction crept under the radar for most in the UK's north-west. By the time we found out about it, Lancashire County Council had already given planning permission to drilling company Cuadrilla Resources for the exploratory process to begin. We discovered that five sites were to be explored immediately, and that Cuadrilla was talking about the possibility of drilling up to 842 wells in a small, but heavily populated, area of Lancashire.

The Fylde is a conservative area, both politically and socially, with a higher than average number of retired people. Initial reactions were largely apathetic and those who did have an opinion were mostly welcoming. What was there not to like? "We'll get cheap gas", "we'll become another Aberdeen", "my house will double in value". These views were backed up by Government reassurances to the area's residents that this would provide cheap fuel, independence from gas imports and huge economic benefits for the area. Thankfully, not all of us were taken in. Those with concerns about the environmental impact of fossil fuel extraction and usage quickly realised that fracking is a dirty business, a short-term energy fix with a potentially devastating effect on the planet.

RAFF was formed by half a dozen individuals who got together in October 2011. From the start we have been a little different from other pressure



groups in that we speak with many voices. The 'A' in RAFF stands for 'Action' not 'Against'. If we had gone in with all guns blazing and taken a strong anti-fracking stance, we believe that we'd have got nowhere. A less militant strategy meant that we could attract a much wider range of membership. We have members who are uncertain about fracking and want to learn more about it before making up their minds; some members want to see it happen providing the industry is properly regulated; others don't want fracking to happen at all. Within the latter group, members will vary from those who are mainly concerned about any detrimental effect on their property, to those who are worried about the effects on our planet.

Although in many ways this is a political battle, RAFF has deliberately not aligned itself with any political party. Our local Conservative MP Mark Menzies initially appeared to be in favour of fracking. More recently, perhaps realising that this could potentially be a vote loser, he is making more sympathetic noises. The local Labour Party is now saying that it will ask for a moratorium on fracking at next year's Lancashire

County council elections, however we fear that will be too little, too late. We are happy to advise, inform and offer presentations to any party or group if we feel it will help get our message across and gain wider support and believe this strategy has paid off, as we now have a mix of members of all political persuasions, who aren't alienated by RAFF voicing a preference for any particular party.

RAFF holds regular public meetings in different parts of the region. We show a PR film from Cuadrilla, together with Fracking Hell!, so no one can accuse us of not offering a balance. One great contributor to the group is a local engineer who has worked on drilling sites. His knowledge has been invaluable, not only in helping us understand some of the technical aspects of the fracking process, but also in providing hard facts for our members.

We still have an immense battle ahead of us and much awareness-raising to do, but

RAFF currently has a database of hundreds of local members, many of whom are asking us to get noisier and more militant. Now that we have them on board, we intend to do just that.



REVISITING RIO: THE EARTH SUMMIT 20 YEARS ON

The UN Rio+20 Earth Summit is underway. It has been two decades since the first Rio Summit in 1992 when the UN first began to talk about sustainable development and environmentalism. However, this time around, the commitments are political rather than legal, and the sense of momentum and ambition that's needed to push things forward seems to have gone missing. Thirty Occupiers have just set up tents in a park in downtown Rio, and nearby the People's Summit is bringing together activists from Brazil and around the world, many from indigenous communities, to flesh out alternative visions for our future.

The movements are still growing, conversations are still happening and ideas are still spreading. Since the UN may no longer be the forum to work out solutions to our environmental issues, perhaps Occupy will open up some space and donate some energy – the issues of environment and corporate greed go hand in hand. One of the major topics being discussed here and at the G20 is fossil fuel subsidies. The total, global amount of fossil fuel subsidies provided in 2012 is likely to be at least ¾ of a trillion dollars annually – \$775bn. In the UK, according to the OECD, gas, oil and coal prices were subsidised by £3.63bn in 2010, whereas offshore and onshore wind received £700m in the same year.

We are paying these companies to contribute to climate change, wreak havoc in developing countries, and pollute our atmosphere. Public money is going towards these goals, instead of providing us with social protection, decent jobs, and healthy communities. These issues need to be part of the global conversation too, and Occupy could be just the space for such a dialogue. The UN process is not dead, but it isn't providing the results we need.





ANDREA BAKACS

COUNTERJihad: FASCISM REINVENTED

SIGVE
INDREGARD

As the legal case against terrorist Anders Behring Breivik draws to a close in Oslo's courthouse, his ideological relatives are approaching parliamentary power in several European countries.

Mr. Breivik has described in court how the ideology of counter-jihadism inspired him, and how his terrorist actions are to be understood as an exemplary soldier's call to arms in a resistance against the "Islamisation of Europe". Those who inspired the terrorist obviously disagree with the mode of his operation and concede only reluctantly that they agree with Breivik on many political questions. Nevertheless, proponents of Islamophobia ideas stand by their words and often argue for the inevitability of a forthcoming civil war as a result of immigration.

Europe's near future holds a "ragnarök", and "we must prepare for it", according to counterjihadist ideologue Peder Jensen, known to the internet as "Fjordman". "Ragnarök" is the Norse mythology's equivalent to the apocalypse: the Gods will die in battle, and natural disasters will submerge the world, which then resurfaces anew and fertile. The surviving gods shall then repopulate the world through the two sole human survivors. In Mr. Jensen's analogous vision, Europe will soon be submerged by Muslims, and only the chosen few – the prepared counter-jihadists – will be left of the "original European stock". Their task, as they see it, is to "plant the seeds" that will enable the good values of Europe to remain after the Ragnarök strikes. In that task, counter-jihadists expect no help from democratically elected leaders, whom they see as controlled by an Arab agenda.

According to professor Roger Griffin of Oxford Brookes University, fascism is an ideology that seeks to mobilise a people through an elite, to conquer cultural hegemony and eventually save the nation from perceived decadence by bringing about its rebirth, where the traditional values once again will unite the (geographically or racially defined) nation. There could hardly be a more accurate description of the counter-jihadist agenda.

Yet Peder Jensen believes that there is a difference between preparing for an apocalypse and inciting violence. His essays refers only to the necessity of "someone" doing "the necessary actions". As he writes, Europe must be reserved for "people of demographical European stock". He does not spell out the consequences for the millions who would then have to leave, nor does he elaborate on how this racial purification would be achieved.

To state the obvious: Mr. Jensen does not share any guilt for the actions of Mr. Breivik. Still, the

ideology he defends points towards the need of elitist violence on the behalf of "us" – whoever "we" are – to save "our" Europe.

While Mr. Jensen is not at all alone in spreading such fascist ideas through blogs and social media, their overt political influence appears negligible. There is no "new NSDAP" appearing on the political scene. But there is also no reason to believe that Islamophobia must parallel the rise of Nazi fascism. As the Occupy movement highlights, parliamentary politics are not objective measures of popular opinion or of the private convictions of elected representatives. The counter-jihadist agenda can exhibit its destructive influence outside the chambers of parliament as well, or influence the agenda of other right-wing parties throughout Europe.

The British ideologue Edward S. May is attempting to organise the counter-jihadist movement through his blog "Gates of Vienna". His "counter-jihad manifesto" demands the deportation of muslims "unwilling to assimilate completely". Since 2007, he has organized annual conferences for counter-jihadist ideologues, where prominent parliamentarians from the Swedish radical right-wing party Sweden Democrats (SD) have been in attendance and on the podium. The party serves as an example of how fascist leanings are indirectly linked to "serious" politics in well-educated, modern nation-states.

According to the current leadership, SD's openly neo-nazi origins have long turned into severed ties. But today, they are aggressive counter-jihadists. In May 2012, the SD reached an all-time high in opinion polls, topping out at 8.7 percent and eyeing the possibility of becoming Sweden's third largest party after the next parliamentary elections in 2014.

A recent report by the Norwegian "Centre against Racism" on right-wing extremists in Norway points out that this phenomenon is apparent elsewhere as well: groups and people formerly identifying themselves as neo-nazis (and later as anti-immigration activists) are now reinventing their image as "anti-Islam". The biological racism of "old fascism" is no longer socially accepted, so the same politics of hate are now supported by different arguments: same shit, new wrapping.

Xenophobia, racism and fascism are constant undercurrents in European politics. Events such as 9/11 draw new cadres to simple explanations based on murky logic and historic myths. One such cadre is due to be sentenced to a long life behind bars. A few write anti-Muslim treatises as we speak. And some seek influence in parliaments once again.

SCAF - THE REAL POWER BEHIND EGYPT'S ELECTIONS

MAI SHAMS
EL-DIN

One day before the official declaration of the final results of who will rule their country, Egyptians in Cairo were pondering a curious fact: the runoff elections for the Egyptian presidency were between Mohammed Morsi, the candidate for the Muslim Brotherhood, and Ahmed Shafiq, Mubarak's last prime minister. Yet the candidate who appeared to be the winner wasn't even on the ballot: Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi, head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). To many outsiders, this sounds like a joke. But to most Egyptians, it is reality.

Days before Egypt knew who would become the first democratically elected president in its thousand-year long history, SCAF decided to take the lead. A complementary constitutional declaration was issued in the middle of the night, granting unprecedented powers to the ruling military council and placing military rule above and beyond the presidency.

The new declaration strips the upcoming president of all power to control the military and deprives him of the right to declare war without prior permission from the decaying generals – not to mention the wide legislative powers granted to the military only a few days after the first democratically-elected parliament was dissolved.

It does not matter whether Egypt is ruled by the Brotherhood or Mubarak's client; the military will be in control regardless of the electoral outcome in what seems to be a critically troubled transition towards democracy.

Preliminary results show a lead by the Brotherhood's candidate Mohammed Morsi, and although Egyptian revolutionaries will not be that happy with the Brotherhood, Morsi's lead remains a strong symbolic victory against the remnants of the Mubarak regime, mastered by Ahmed Shafiq and his supporters. Yet the happiness of the revolutionaries was stunted when they woke up to a soft military coup. A central demand of the revolution – to put the military under civilian oversight – was shown to have been totally ignored by SCAF.

And SCAF wasn't finished yet. A new National Defence Council, in which decisions will be made by majority vote, was formed. It is headed by the president and consists of 11 military generals and 7 civilians. The tasks and powers of the new council are yet to be defined, but observers believe it will further tighten the military's iron



fist over the country. The decades-long state of emergency has also not ended since the revolution. Less than one month after ending Mubarak's emergency law, the Minister of Justice issued a new law that granted members of the military police and military intelligence wide powers to detain and arrest civilians. The new law is said to legalize the existence of the military inside the Egyptian streets, while the presence of soldiers would otherwise be unjustified without an ongoing state of emergency.

SCAF's actions amount to a clear and troubling military coup. With the legislative power and most of the executive powers in their hands, the military is in full control over the process of drafting the country's new constitution, thus making the situation even more critical.

While reporting the elections – whose turnout is believed to be around 40% – I talked to a poor woman who sold groceries in front of one of the polling stations:

"May I ask you who did you vote for?" I said to her.

"I didn't vote. Why should I?" the woman wondered.

"Because everyone is voting for their new president," I said.

"Look, I have stayed for hours under the rain in January to elect parliament members, and more hours in the heat last month to elect the president in the first round. Now those hours are wasted, the parliament is dissolved. So why should I waste more hours if I know that the president will be controlled by the big guys?"

At that point, SCAF's declaration hadn't been issued. But today, I remember the words of a woman who reached a complete disbelief in democracy as her efforts went in vain. Who should be held accountable for her depression, and for the depression of millions of Egyptians who once believed in the revolution and thought their lives would be better? Egyptians who thought that they managed to end a decades-long dictatorship, but found it reincarnated again in the hands of 19 decaying military generals whose aim is only to protect their interests and their giant economic empire.

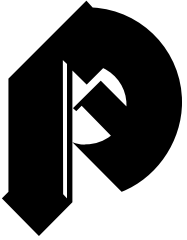
As thousands flock to Tahrir Square to protest against a so-called "constitutional" declaration of SCAF, millions of Egyptians already had enough of instability, a troubled economy and insecurity. Thousands of poor Egyptians are facing trial before military tribunals for supposed crimes committed during the revolution and many more were injured by the security forces, before being neglected by the new government. To many, revolution has come with a high cost to the individual.

The road ahead is very long. With the military retaining full control of the branches of government, the road towards democracy is troubled. It is hard to know what will be next for Egypt, but I believe the road will be stained with more blood in future. The generals will not be easy-going. They have much to protect; not only to defend themselves against possible persecution, but also to shield their huge economic interests.

Yet despite all of this, some Egyptians feel that the revolution does not have the luxury of pessimism – the revolution has no choice but to continue!

THE MYTH OF THE PASSIVE PORTUGUESE PUBLIC

DAVID
FERREIRA



Portugal is now a year into a structural adjustment program overseen by the troika, a term widely used in "bailed-out" countries to refer to the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission. Even though Portugal was the third country to turn to the troika for financial support, it is largely seen as the second flashpoint in the Euro Zone crisis after Greece. But as the second most troubled country on the European periphery, there are expectations of disorder in Lisbon to match that of Athens. With English language news outlets like the New York Times and Reuters failing to witness the long-running economic protests by the Portuguese public, they've concluded the Portuguese are a passive people and that social peace has been won in Portugal. Reuters and Al Jazeera English even went as far as to suggest the melancholic Portuguese Fado music is to blame for the lack of resistance to austerity.

There is much to dispute about this portrayal of Portugal. It's worth pointing out that Portugal can claim a great deal of credit for the massive protests last year led by Europe's indignados. On March 12th 2011, tens of thousands poured into the streets of Portugal's major cities to protest against the economic crisis. The protests were organized through social media and by word-of-mouth. This tremendous turnout was achieved without labor unions or political parties driving their ranks onto the street.

ES.COL.A DA FONTINHA

DAVID FERREIRA

ES.COL.A DA FONTINHA IS A PROJECT IN PORTO, A CITY IN NORTHERN PORTUGAL, WHERE ACTIVISTS OCCUPIED A SCHOOL ORIGINALLY ABANDONED BY CITY AUTHORITIES IN 2006. REGULAR OT CONTRIBUTOR DAVID FERRERIA SPOKE WITH ACTIVIST VIOLETA ABOUT AN OCCUPATION THAT PRECEDED EUROPE'S INDIGNADOS AND NORTH AMERICA'S OCCUPY MOVEMENT.

Occupied Times: For starters, recap for readers how Es.Col.A got started? **Es.Col.A:** It was a Sunday afternoon, April 10th, 2011. Some of the activists lived near the school so occupation seemed to be the logical way to give the place back to the neighbourhood. The occupiers invited the community to participate in the communal dinners and activities, for them to be present at the assembly in order to discuss the best way to develop the project. **Occupied Times:** What did the Es.Col.A hope to achieve by occupying the school? **Es.Col.A:** The main goal was to create a place that was truly communal, open to everyone and where anyone can enhance cultural activities; a place that is organized horizontally, commerce-free, where decisions are defined by consensus; a place where the neighbourhood feels that they are part of the project. Since the beginning,

These protests were watched closely in neighboring Spain. The first protest in Portugal was called Geração à Rasca (Precarious Generation) and the movement in Spain that followed weeks later was Juventud sin Futuro (Youth Without a Future). Ironically, as Reuters blamed Portugal's music for the lack of protests, the Portuguese song that started the protests was promptly subtitled and featured on Spanish news sites like El Pais.

Though the Portuguese public has held multiple, mass protests over the last year and a half, the street opposition to austerity has lacked coherence. In Greece, labor unions call general strikes on days of austerity votes, and the Greek public adds their weight to the strikes by joining the demonstrations in front of parliament. To the detriment of the anti-austerity movement in Portugal, no such alignment has occurred. Portuguese general strikes happened after austerity legislation had already passed, giving little motivation to public sector workers to strike in force, let alone the more non-unionized sectors of the Portuguese economy. To make matters worse, the General Union of Workers (UGT) signed a social pact with the government, taking the second largest union confederation out of the struggle.

Greece and Portugal are also at different stages in their political life cycles. In Greece, the center-left PASOK party implemented the troika's austerity program. In Portugal, a departing Socialist Party government signed onto the troika's austerity program and the incoming center-right Social Democrats zealously implemented the program, even being called more troika than the troika. In Greece, center-left PASOK

imploded as it alienated its base with the most right-wing economic policies. With Portugal, the center-right Social Democrats implement austerity that's supported by the party's base, while the opposition from the Socialist Party is neutered as the party that signed onto the "bailout" on its way out of power.

This different political dynamic during austerity implementation results in a slower disintegration of the ruling political consensus in Portugal. The government of the Portuguese Social Democrats doesn't have to suggest a referendum on the austerity program because it isn't at war with its base. Further, the government doesn't have to worry about elections as it's just one year into its term. But while the Portuguese government has a lot working in its favor, the social peace hasn't been won.

Despite rain, an estimated 30,000 marched on June 9th in the city of Porto against austerity, this on the day of a major football match between the national team and Germany. A larger demonstration is expected on June 16th in the capital. The protests are important but the context is key. While Reuters issued a piece that wrote off the Communist Party as a political force, polls suggest a surge for Portugal's left-wing not dissimilar to that of their Greek counterparts. The two left-wing parties, Left Bloc and the Communist Party, each polled 9% in the survey as support declined for the government but crucially didn't switch to the Socialist Party and their austerity-lite model. This is all before the government ends collective bargaining for unions, the latest policy measure sought by the troika, a measure that would terminate the above mentioned social-pact with the

moderate General Union of Workers.

The narrative of a passive Portuguese public collapses without anecdotal quotes that stereotype the country. The narrative isn't all that surprising given how the international media stereotypes Greeks as violent and ungovernable, as if being ungovernable was a bad thing when self-preservation is at stake. Both countries are enduring failing policies from the troika, policies that are driving up unemployment and driving down wages. The markets merely catapulted Greece into the austerity abyss one year before giving Portugal the same fate.

For Portugal, the situation can become far more desperate. The Organization for Economic Co-

operation and Development expects the economic downturn to continue. There is also the added trouble of neighboring Spain suffering the same austerity. Both Iberian countries are simultaneously poisoning the economic waters they share so closely. With this in mind, journalists visiting Lisbon should ask people whether the ongoing resistance to austerity will strengthen. As Filipe dos Santos Henriques, a board member of one of the largest student unions in Portugal explained: "If anyone shows us there is an alternative, an alternative like that in France where they're lowering the retirement age and making it more expensive to fire workers, we can expect true resistance to austerity, with or without fado."



ANDREA BAKACS

members of the project. After that, there was a meeting between two Es.Col.A representatives and the city council. The city council said that Es.Col.A had to leave the building but that they would send us a "contract". The next day we received the contract which said we must leave the building in June with no possibility of further negotiation. It was an eviction contract! The council said that if we didn't sign the contract, we would be evicted. We didn't sign the contract.

After that, the community started to organise several forms of resistance like protecting the building and organised more actions to alert the public to the risk of eviction and to show the work that the project had accomplished. On the day of the eviction a huge number of police showed up: riot police, municipal police, undercover agents. Even the fire brigade were called but they thought they were there for a simulation, they didn't know about the eviction. It was a flash police eviction. In about one hour they cleared the building. Three people were arrested, and this time the police were much more violent than during the last eviction.

Occupied Times: A large protest march on April 25th defied local authorities and **Es.Col.A:** For the recent eviction, we had prior notification from the city council. The first notification came up in February and was a letter sent to two

at hand: (1.) The legal situation of our arrestees. (2.) A formal complaint to the city council. (3.) Explore the legal aspects that can support our work in the building and our right to be there. (4.) Re-organise activities, considering that we don't have a roof. (5.) Try to find some place near the Fontinha neighborhood to develop activities and store equipment. (6.) Occupy more public buildings that are neglected. **Occupied Times:** The Es.Col.A project has been going for over a year now, and it started before Puerta del Sol in Madrid was occupied and before tents were set up in lower Manhattan. From where did the movement find its inspiration and purpose? **Es.Col.A:** Most of the people who had the idea to occupy the school had some relationships with movements in the UK, Germany and Poland. So it was something natural. I think the city was also a major catalyst. Porto has a huge number of neglected buildings, some public, others private. The city is getting older and losing residents. The particular neighborhood of Fontinha is inhabited by elderly people who don't have a place gather and talk. So, the idea was to somehow make people feel like the city was their living room. People should be proactive in their cities. I think this was the point that inspired the movement: "Free spaces, create alternatives".



MONEY TALK\$

PROF TIBOR MACHAN

THIS ISSUE THE OT LOCKS HORNS WITH ONE OF THE LIBERTARIAN MOVEMENT'S MOST EMINENT ETHICAL THINKERS - PROFESSOR TIBOR MACHAN OF THE ARGYROS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ETHICS, CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA, WHOSE VIEWS CAN BE FOUND ON HIS BLOG, A PASSION FOR LIBERTY. WHILST PROF MACHAN'S VIEWS ARE PROVOCATIVE, AND MANY OCCUPIERS MAY FIND MUCH TO DISAGREE WITH HERE, HE'S NEVERTHELESS STAUNCHLY OPPOSED TO GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES FOR BANKS AND CORPORATIONS. READ ON AND BE PROVOKED...

THE OCCUPIED TIMES: What measures do you think would start to solve this global crisis?
TIBOR MACHAN: Well, I am a convinced libertarian. Ever since I was smuggled out of communist Hungary, or shortly afterward, I have championed the fully free society where no one gets to order anyone else about (apart from children and some the severely handicapped). I have debated the matter with innumerable statist and never found any of them convincing. I have written some 35 books on the topic and considered criticisms, objections galore, but freedom is my answer to most of the world's human-made problems.
OT: I think you share common ground with the Occupy movement when you criticise the corporate bailouts.
TM: Certainly bailouts are wrong. Everyone seems to want to beat everyone else to the various public treasuries (which tend to contain only borrowed monies now). It is a Hobbesian world out there, it appears, with everyone getting what he or she can get.
OT: Do you believe in the ultimate selfishness of mankind?
TM: It doesn't have to be this way! But a great many people seem to find that to be desirable since they believe they will be among the powerful. As to what is right, that would be a world in which individual rights are fully respected and competently protected. By the way, true selfishness, prudence, is healthy. Check out what Socrates and Aristotle thought about promoting one's true self-interest! It is the rapacious sort that is vicious.
OT: You've talked about how commerce

has had a very bad press for hundreds, even thousands of years – tracing back anti-business sentiment to Plato, Aristotle and the Bible...
TM: From the start commerce or business had been linked to soulless materialism, a value-free approach, and thus has done battle with the more spiritual views of human life, but these are false alternatives in my view! Intellectuals, today, are a kind of clergy who scoff at wealth, technological progress and economic growth. There isn't enough solid intellectual, philosophical criticism of this (to my mind misguided) outlook. Still, living well has always been an attractive prospect.
OT: The film and book, The Corporation, puts forward the thesis that corporations are psychopathic. What's your take on this?
TM: Sadly, this is very misguided. People organise corporations in order to prosper economically, which is a very fine thing, but because of some of what I said above, this approach has not gained respectability among the intellectuals, clergy and pundits. There is a general hostility that's still very much part of our culture against freedom of choice - e.g. "ordinary people don't handle freedom properly and need to be directed by politicians and educators" - and this infects the attitude toward corporate commerce. Corporate commerce is very much part of life, but it has acquired this reputation of being amoral, ethically deaf and dumb. The false notion that the right ethics is altruism, a life of

relentless self-sacrifice, supports this, since commerce and its institutions are clearly aiming at creating wealth for their agents.
OT: But the opposite of unrestrained profiteering doesn't have to be "relentless self-sacrifice". Can't you imagine a criticism of corporate excesses and predatory practices coming from a place of pro-business, pro-prosperity, pro-capitalism?
TM: Calling it 'predatory' shows it really isn't capitalist at all! Predation is doing violence to people and their property.
OT: In the free-market which you advocate, some Corporations have become all-powerful, putting small and medium sized companies out of business. How can we even the playing field (or should we even try?)
TM: The notion of an even playing field is a false ideal. Small people and large people are both people, after all! It is a mistake to try to cut everyone to the same size. Here the best lesson comes from George Orwell's Animal Farm, in my view.
OT: You say: "corporations are what people organise in order to prosper" but you'd presumably agree that there's more than one way to prosper? The Mafia is a fairly prosperous organization...
TM: Of course I meant prosper peacefully!
OT: What about arms companies? - or would you withdraw 'morals' from the field of economics, and leave everything to 'law'?
TM: Morality applies in all voluntary human affairs - whenever people do

what they choose to do, their conduct is open to moral assessment, for better or worse. Arms companies that trade with criminals are themselves criminal. Only trades with defensive customers are legitimate. Otherwise it's like trading with murderers, child-molesters, rapists, robbers and the like - all criminal!
OT: If the only limit to economic action is the law, how do you protect the law and regulation from the business interests they're meant to regulate?
TM: Interesting, but sadly the only answer I have is education. Also, let's be clear that pollution and other negative externalities are the result of the lack of full protection of private property rights.
OT: What about when the law no longer works in the interests of the majority of the population?
TM: Sadly, those who have power will try to make it work for them, so the law and morality need to be taught and implemented widely enough, in order to restrain them. Government is always captured by the powerful in the land!
OT: Could give any examples of this?
TM: Huge drug companies have politicians they pay off, including bureaucrats in the FDA (Food and Drug Administration). In brief, this is what economists call "capturing the regulators" through a process of hiring them when they move back into the private sector. The education industry has many politicians seduced into thinking that universities, colleges and such may be funded from confiscated funds, funds obtained through the extortion process called taxation (which comes to us from feudal times when monarchs took 'rent' from their subjects at gunpoint).
OT: Some people believe land tax is a fairer tax...
TM: I know of the Henry George position on this and it doesn't have any justice in support of it. Moreover, even if some land is owned undeserved, it is a non-sequitur to believe that this entitles others to confiscate it. It should be adjudicated in a court of law, not by bureaucrats. The case against taxation is complex, but ultimately taxation is extortionist.
OT: Do you believe in state-funded education?
TM: I don't believe that the government may get involved in anything apart from adjudicating disputes and protection of individual rights (including from foreign and domestic aggressors). No one has the moral, or should have the political authority to rob Peter to supposedly benefit Paul, be it through education, medicine, the arts, sciences, whatever. Such aggressive policies underlie corruption, wielding of power of some over others. I do not believe economic 'power' or wealth is aggressive if it is come by peacefully.



OT: And welfare?
TM: Welfare states pretend to serve the poor, but in fact serve fat cats who capture the government routinely. It is not the stereotypical single mother who soak the government for welfare, but mostly businesses, farms and banks who with their subsidies and protectionist laws are keeping others away from the free market! If the governments acted like referees do at a game, staying out unless someone violates the rules, they would do the job for which liberal theorists like the American Founders supported them: "to secure our rights."
OT: So if there is no tax, where does the money come from for basic policing and for all the 'adjudicating' and 'refereeing' that the state would need to do?
TM: As a consistent libertarian I do not use the term 'state' but 'government' to label the institution established to protect individual rights. Government and the maintenance of law can be funded by a contract fee. Since contracts need to be backed by law, a fee can be charged when they are entered into – of course, one would be free to rely on a handshake but no sane person would do this with major economic transactions. The funds raised this way would suffice to fund the kind of minimal government that a just society requires.
OT: You say "It is a mistake to try to cut everyone to the same size" – would you then oppose measures to break up 'too-big-to-fail' institutions – for example, those institutions (most of them banks) deemed 'systemically important'?
TM: Yes, if they got big peacefully, they must be left alone. Just as very tall basketball players need to be kept within the rule, that is - no handicapping except when the fans demand it and that's in a game, after all, not in life. Again, the issue isn't size but peacefulness!
OT: Presumably then, left alone to fail as well to thrive?
TM: Exactly. None should be deemed too big to fail if the risks are assumed voluntarily.
OT: Do you sympathise with the Occupy movement's desire for transparency in government?
TM: Of course I am for transparency, but I'm afraid Occupy seems to me too diverse, too unfocused, and too emotional to do any good other than perhaps call attention to some problems...
OT: If you had a banner to wave yourself at a financial protest, what would you point on it?
TM: "Assert yourselves, but very thoughtfully!"
These are not views necessarily endorsed by The Occupied Times. If you disagree with Tibor Machan, why not send us a rebuttal and we will publish the best ones online.

THE EUROZONE CRISIS

REPORTS FROM THE FRONTLINE

SERGIO CASESMEIRO
IN MADRID

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT... SHOULD I FEEL FINE?

"I am very satisfied, I think we have taken a very decisive step" – Spanish Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, announcing Spain's €100 billion bailout.
I'm puzzled. Our government is celebrating that it has received a "line of credit" (not a rescue) of €100 billion Euros, and our Prime Minister welcomes it as "a global plan to breathe life back into the Spanish economy". Meanwhile, in Asturias, to the north, a miner's strike is developing into intifada-style guerrilla warfare, and the International Monetary Fund is 'suggesting' that the government raise taxes. Luis de Guindos, our smart, Lehman Brothers-educated Minister of Economy, stutters when he mentions the 'volatility' of the situation, and even with our financial sector bailed out, Moody's still downgrades our banks.
We should be raising our glasses of sangria to the fact that we've sold our soul to the devil, but we hardly have the strength – we are, after all, one of the 'sick men of Europe' – or one of the 'PIGS', as the Financial Times affectionately used to call us.
Everytime I try to discuss what is happening with my father, he tells me to shut up and not to talk about complicated things I do not understand... maybe I should write a letter to nice Mr Moody, asking for some clemency and explanations, since after all, we are only obeying his masters.
But what puzzles me even more, is to see how the government and the main opposition party (the PSOE – which was in power until 2011) both agree that the only solution for Spain is 'more Europe' – that is, less national sovereignty and more integration with Brussels.
Strangely it's not even Brussels telling us what to do, but Berlin. Every time President Rajoy goes to meet Angela Merkel, he looks like a schoolboy being called to the principal's office. It's sad when a nation seems to have lost control of its own destiny, but personally I do not blame the Germans;

we Spaniards were all very happy and thoroughly enjoyed all the flashy infrastructure that's been built since the 1990s with European Union funds.
This crisis should not have come as a surprise. In 2005 the Spanish economy was booming – the flights from Madrid to New York were packed with Spaniards going shopping in the Big Apple. That same year a BP executive in London pointed out something I never forgot: "The situation in Spain scares me," he said. "I see construction taking place everywhere, but I do not see a productive structure capable of sustaining that growth..." Two years later in 2007 our previous president, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, proudly stated that his government had managed to classify Spain amongst the "Champions League" of world economies.
But something is changing in Spain; people are pissed off and they are organising themselves. For example, in Catalonia the movement "No vull pagar" ("I do not want to pay") has managed to convince more than 25 000 Catalan drivers not to pay the excessive amount of tolls that flood Catalan highways. Albertis, the company that operates the concession, has calculated that the economic cost of this civil disobedience campaign exceeds €180 000 Euros.
In 2011 there were more than 58 000 foreclosures throughout the country. But a social movement, the "Plataforma Stop Desahucios" ("Stop Foreclosures") has managed to stop countless foreclosures nationwide, giving some hope to families who not only are left in the street, but are unemployed and are still obliged to pay mortgage debt to the banks. Even though the value of those houses has decreased more than 12%, unlike their debts...
Back in 2010, Rodrigo Rato – former Economic Minister and once Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund – merged a few debt-ridden banks

to create the cataclysm that today is Bankia, Spain's fourth largest financial institution. Back then Rato never would've imagined that two years later, members of the 15-M movement would, in only a few hours, collect the €20 000 Euros necessary to bring a people's lawsuit accusing him of falsifying the balance sheets. Back then, Rato never would've imagined that two years later, despite the flashy advertisements and PR campaigns, the government has had to nationalise Bankia, and pour €23 billion Euros into it. Soon, if we are lucky, he won't even have to imagine himself standing in front of a judge, looking like an embarrassed child caught with his hands in the cookie jar.
Despite all this chaos, confusion and anger, and more than 20% unemployment of over 5 million people, bars are still when Spain plays in the European Cup, Big Brother still has an audience, people are planning their summer holidays, the streets are full of beautiful señoritas, and life goes on.
But this time, something tells me that this is just not another crisis. 22% of Spanish families live under the poverty line; every night there is an army of dispossessed waiting to pick up the food discarded by supermarkets; the immigrants that arrived in the 1990's are abandoning ship; and in the streets of Norway it's easy to find Spanish builders sleeping in the streets begging for something to eat.
Yes my friends, we are, in the words of the great Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca, fucked. And we know it – but this time, we won't go down without a fight. The question is, against whom? Ourselves? Evil German technocrats in black suits? Our incompetent politicians? McDonald's? Which makes me wonder, how is it possible to fight against the civilisation that engulfs us, without destroying ourselves in the process?
There is definitely something in the air; I just hope that it is the sweet smell of reassurance, not the bitter taste of bloody revolution.



PUT THAT CREDIT DEFAULT SWAP RIGHT HERE

REVEREND BILLY

We walk inside the high church of the big bank. Oh, it is JP Morgan Chase, and buried somewhere deep in the headquarters is the beautiful Ms. Blythe Masters, creator of the credit default swap (CDS), and head at the world commodities desk. We stand at the teller's window and demand that a credit default swap be brought to us. By Blythe Masters personally. Put it here. Right here. This is personal. Put it here on this table. And then, explain what it is.
A CDS isn't a thing, or an object, or even money. It's a sort of promissory note made of pixels. Well, no-one really knows what it is, and that is the point. We must hire an elite priesthood to handle them for us, to steady and bring on the thing which hovers over the community like a damaged adolescent: the "economy". So put that credit default swap right here, Ms. Masters.
Passing a note to a teller demanding a CDS. We in the Church of Stop Shopping will attempt this in the next few days. Is this attempted robbery? Probably. Even though it's impossible? Demystifying our present danger - trying to bring the universal threat into our own hands, to hold onto a physical CDS - is illegal.
Yet it is true that we find ourselves in a life and death emergency, that we have years or possibly just seconds in which to put our affairs in order. Some geeky environmentalists have found a causal link between the default market and this fire and flood and freak wind storm trouble. The sea seems to be rising. The animals and plants going extinct. Yes, you see - JP Morgan Chase is the top financier in the world of industrial projects that emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Yes, put that swap right on the counter. What does it look like?
The fact that our death-dealer constantly disappears matters less than the fact that the bank is still standing there before us, with its pillars. And as for the brilliant Ms. Masters, we've seen her on the business news, with her blonde hair and high accent. She seems to be scolding us for misusing her mysterious invention. She seems to scold the entire economy for its recession. She seems let down by the world. Blythe, would you like a talk with the pastor? If a fire or flood is overwhelming us, we try to counter forces coming toward us with safety barriers or higher ground. And we are often trying to communicate in a heightened shout. If the attack is personal, we will try to protect our bodies by raising an arm over our heads, or by turning and running hard. But all we're asking for at present is that you bring that credit default swap out here in the lobby of the bank, put it on a flat well-lit surface and tame it, or make it walk on its hind-legs, or something. Explain it to us.
Or do we start running with our children and belongings toward the horizon? The sun is still shining and our neighbours are stalwarts, marching with briefcases toward... somewhere. This sickly meta life around us, finally succumbing to the drilling, scraping, burning - it can kill us but we can't put our finger on it. We only throw hapless swear words and our catty blog at these mathematical monsters. How do we arrange to understand the deadly fix we're in? It might take the form of depression, of cancer or an impolite losing of the mind. The wound that we suffer seems to come from some unlocatable source.
Is it absolutely necessary that our children be guaranteed an atmosphere? Yes it is. Our present emergency resembles the worst ones that we've seen on TV or read about. There is the same, sudden localising and personalising of something that had been only a vague, distant idea. Take the end time phenomenon of flooding. There are many floods around the world these days. We have read about a flood somewhere in the world every day for years. Then, suddenly, we are on our own rooftop waving at rescue helicopters.
My point, children, is simply this: Our life and death emergency must now be re-imagined. In order to get an accurate picture, we must pass over a bridge that looks like science fiction. For instance, a banking system led by an elite subculture whose language no-one understands must be brought into the room, and examined in all its ugliness. And so our idea that we walk into the bank together and demand that a CDS be brought physically to us - is this really fanciful? No, it is the natural request from our present danger.
As I type this essay, there are hundreds of people on the rooftops of banks in Barcelona. Flamenco dancers are circling in the lobbies of Seville. Few in the USA know anything about it. The stories that might endanger the banks are now silenced. So we ourselves must be the human media. Can we self-induce our imagination and see the unseeable? Put that credit default swap on the table. Does it bite?
The Reverend Nemu has been on pilgrimage this month. His regular column will return next month, if God wills it.

THE GREAT DEBATE

CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

CORPORATE PERSONHOOD GIVES CORPORATIONS BOTH RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND HAS BEEN USED TO PROSECUTE CORPORATIONS FOR CRIMES, BUT ALSO TO GIVE THEM LOBBYING POWER. THIS MONTH’S GREAT DEBATE TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPT, AND ASKS WHETHER IT SERVES PEOPLE, PROFIT, OR POWER.

FOR / ANDY MARLOW

The law often likes to obscure the meaning of already clearly-defined words. Take, for example, the word “consideration”. In ordinary parlance, this means something akin to contemplation or thought, the act of thinking something through. In contract law, however, it carries a meaning only tenuously linked to its ordinary usage: “consideration” is the object, money or service that one gives in exchange for an offer or acceptance which seals the deal and creates a legally binding contract.

So it is also with the word “personhood” or “personality”, and this confusion of meaning lies behind the criticism of Occupy’s demand to “end corporate personhood”. When emanating from the mouth of an activist and amplified by the force of a megaphone, its meaning is clear: stop treating corporations as if they were people and stop giving them rights that should only apply to human beings. If this is the true meaning of Occupy’s demand, then it is fairly un-objectable and should be met with unanimous agreement. Yet when given its legal meaning, corporate “personality” is something actually quite different which, rather than abolish, we should seek to promote and extend.

Personality, at least in Public International Law, refers to the ability of an entity to be seen as a “person” within the legal system. In theory, this “person” can be bound by obligations and enjoy the exercise of certain rights. In practice, it often refers to the ability of an entity to enforce its rights before

a court, tribunal or, crucially, to have others enforce their rights against it, and hold it accountable for any violations it has committed.

Transnational corporations clearly have some measure of legal personality; it is what allows them to claim that contributing to political campaigns is an expression of free speech. This is what occurred in the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission US Supreme Court case. More positively, it makes it possible to hold large corporations accountable before a court of law when they commit human rights violations in the course of business operations abroad. This is an ability which has been relied upon by Human Rights lawyers invoking the US Alien Tort Statute since the 1980s to claim compensation for environmental disasters and complicity in torture.

In a legal sense, ending corporate personality would mean ending corporate accountability for human rights violations and other criminal acts. Yet it is not enough merely to defend the current state of corporate personhood, because as it stands it remains woefully insufficient; rather, we should be encouraging greater corporate personality in the international arena to make it easier to hold them accountable for human rights violations which, unfortunately, they often get away with.

The problem is both legal and political. Legally, Public International Law today only recognises states and a few international organisations as having



FOONG WAI

AGAINST / JULIE BECK

When courts create or assume facts, we call them legal fictions. They are often counterintuitive, and should not be used to circumvent an existing rule or real facts. One common example of such a fiction is corporate personhood. Historically, the concept was established after the Industrial Revolution; before this, it was the owners who were liable for the debts of the business. With the advent of corporations, business owners enjoyed limited liability, and to resolve the issue that corporations could not be sued, courts created the fiction of corporate personhood. The concept was reaffirmed in the 1970s, after which corporations barged into the fields of lobbying, political financing and began exerting their power over governments and in court.

Later, courts extended rights to corporations that go beyond those necessary to ensure their liability for debts, which has been challenged on a variety of fronts. In particular in the US, social movements and bottom-up initiatives called for the end of corporate personhood, criticising the extension of corporate rights at the cost of human citizens. What is problematic is not only the extension of these rights in themselves, but their embedding in the constitution: in January 2010, the Supreme Court ruled in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission that corporations are persons and are entitled to all rights granted by the US Constitution. Some states, like Hawaii and New Mexico, have passed resolutions against this ruling in an attempt to stave off its impact. While it is claimed that corporate personhood can serve as a useful legal fiction, the concept has so far been of less beneficial to the population than the corporations.

The problem of defining corporations as people on the constitutional level is inherent: when corporations are entitled to the same rights as people, and political spending is seen as free speech, it allows them to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence elections. Yet, constitutional rights were originally made to serve the people - of which corporations are not members. When activists wave banners like “Money is not speech” or “Legalise democracy”, they refer to a political system easily influenced by money flows and to a lack of citizen recognition within the constitution. They are tired of big money in politics, the corporation-as-person influencing and corrupting governments, turning election

processes into power grabs, exploiting the environment and committing countless other frauds with little actual recourse.

The current system of representation needs changing, including bans against corporate campaign donations, or increased authority for the state to regulate election spending. Amendments of the constitution could even be left to the people, like it was done in Iceland after their financial collapse. The crisis provided a climate ready for open debate, and a new constitution was written based on the original ideas of citizens, with emphasis on the realignment of civil rights.

What is needed is a profound change in the definition of the relationship between human beings and corporations, and to make corporations legally subordinate to humans and the government again. Making this clear in our constitutions by the necessary amendments is one step in the right direction, and in the past, we have seen such quick amendments as a result of popular uprisings. This would not rule out the possibility of holding corporations accountable in court (e.g. regarding the violation of human rights), while still emphasising that corporations are not entitled to the same constitutional rights as people. It would further have a strong symbolic meaning against the dominance of corporations and profit that has both destabilised economic security and affected trust in politics and democracy. Governments are encouraged to disregard certain fictions and look at the real facts: corporations are not people. Granting them power over people thus only adds to the pathological and narcissistic state of our society.



FOONG WAI

TRAGEDY & HOPE

TAKING ON THE ECONOMICS OF AUSTERITY

RACHEL NEWTON, THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF THE PEOPLE’S CHARTER, TELLS THE OT ABOUT THE GROWING RESISTANCE AGAINST THE AUSTERITY CUTS AND HER DELEGATION TO GREECE TO MEET ANTI-AUSTERITY POLITICIAN, ALEXIS TSIPRAS.

In the recent Greek elections, whilst the anti-austerity party, SYRIZA, the Coalition of the Radical Left, came second to New Democracy, it’s still crystal clear that the vast majority of the Greek people oppose the austerity programme. The Greeks came under immense pressure to vote for the pro-austerity parties, both internally organized by the Peoples Charter and the Coalition of Resistance to meet with Alexis Tsipras, the leader of SYRIZA. He outlined what he sees as the priorities for Greece: to tear up the memoranda imposing the austerity measures on Greece, to renegotiate the terms of the bailout, and to implement an alternative programme.

Tsipras talked about the importance of the social movement in propelling from below the opposition to austerity in Greece, and in particular he highlighted the significance of the Squares movement and its links to Occupy movements around the world. His anti-austerity programme included

In his commentary just before the Greek elections, Tony Blair stated that regardless of what happened across Europe, people had to accept “major structural reform and austerity”. It couldn’t be clearer that what’s being forced on the people of Greece - wholesale removal of rights and gains for ordinary men and women (pensions, health, education, protection of employees and collective bargaining) is what’s planned across Europe unless we stand up against it and demand alternatives.

MEETING ALEXIS TSIPRAS

Back in May I spent three days in Athens as part of a delegation jointly organized by the Peoples Charter and the Coalition of Resistance to meet with Alexis Tsipras, the leader of SYRIZA. He outlined what he sees as the priorities for Greece: to tear up the memoranda imposing the austerity measures on Greece, to renegotiate the terms of the bailout, and to implement an alternative programme.

Tsipras talked about the importance of the social movement in propelling from below the opposition to austerity in Greece, and in particular he highlighted the significance of the Squares movement and its links to Occupy movements around the world. His anti-austerity programme included

a number of measures similar to those in the People’s Charter: the socialisation of the banking industry and overhauling of the tax system, so that the wealthy in Greece and the corporations pay their share.

My personal impression of Alexis Tsipras from our meeting was that he seemed both down to earth and politically and culturally sophisticated (particularly by comparison with UK politicians!) He appeared in no way demagogic but rather thoughtful in approach. He appeared passionate and serious about bringing about progressive, systemic change. And he appeared to value all parts of the progressive opposition movement - on the streets, in communities, in parliament, and internationally.

A GREEK TRAGEDY

During my time in Athens, the devastating impact of the austerity ‘shock’ policies was highly visible: queues for food at soup kitchens, destitute people in the city centre, health unions telling us about hospitals running out of medicines, increase in suicides as a direct result – two were reported while we were there.

There is evidence of an infrastructure breaking down. The firefighters union told us about the deaths of their members as a result of using faulty equipment, and driving around in 30-year-old fire engines that should be replaced, whilst police union representatives told us that they had to pay themselves to fix and fill up police cars. The police union told us that they did not think they should be suppressing the people, and that their members too were suffering from these policies. They had organized and joined in with demonstrations against austerity, and told how they too had been gassed and attacked by riot police.

Whilst in Greece, I also met with a national pensioners organisation, OSTOE. They were keen to use a European-wide network of pensioners’ organisations to raise awareness of the appalling situation facing Greek pensioners, who in many cases have seen their pensions halved.

INSPIRED AND IMPRESSED

I was shocked by what I found in Greece, but I also came away inspired and deeply impressed by those fighting austerity there – by their determination, their creativity, their democratic spirit. We met with the Mayor of Ellinikon, a municipality in southern Athens. He told us about the social solidarity that is developing between people, resulting in new ways of organising. People are buying potatoes, olive oil and other foodstuff directly from farmers through the town halls so that farmers can survive and people can afford basic food supplies. Volunteer health workers are providing free health services; children are planting olive trees; local residents forums are springing up, where people can go for practical support from one another, to express their personal stories, tragedies and get involved in the anti-austerity movement.

All of these are lessons in how people can defend themselves, a demonstration of the endless potential for organizing in our communities in new ways and how we can build a mass movement for change. Everyone we met reaffirmed the importance of international support for those opposing austerity in Greece and the delegation has led to a Greece Solidarity Campaign being launched in the UK. A common European movement in solidarity with the Greek people is needed more than ever as they now begin their fight to topple the ‘inevitability’ of austerity.

A NEW WAY OF THINKING

What we need to confront is the belief that there is no alternative - that people and politics cannot control financial institutions and corporations, that globalization is irreversible. And it is not surprising that this is the public’s view, as it is all around us in the media - it’s the only view the politicians and their pundits put forward.

The bank bail out in 2008 did, however, temporarily shift this perception, as millions could see that

actually the banks are just businesses like any other, run by people who move vast sums of money around the globe to benefit people just like them and, likewise, that there’s nothing natural or pre-determined about globalisation. Millions could also see that if governments can choose, as they did, to intervene in a crisis to shore up the position of the super rich, they also have the power to intervene on behalf of the people they are supposed to represent.

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

The People’s Charter was set up by leading trade unionists, anti-austerity politicians, academics, campaigners and activists at the end of 2008. The goal of the campaign was to agree on and promote six basic reforms to our economy and financial system, reforms that would provide an alternative to the immense attacks that were being prepared on our health, our services, our pensions and our standard of life.

Its goal is to encourage a united mass movement that can sweep away those who seek to defend their past by ruining our future. In practical terms, we need our banks to be nationalised with a social purpose and to meet people’s needs. That means the government could stand behind all the debts and the investments that benefit the people (pensions, Local Authority finance etc.) and ‘default’ on the super profits and bonuses that go to the rich. We could have an investment bank that builds and rebuilds our housing stock. We could have a bank promoting new technology, green energy and cheap medicine, or we could put our savings, taxes and national insurance to work for all of us, not just the super rich. All of these things are possible. What is so far lacking is a political will to represent the interests of the majority.

Find out more about the People’s Charter on the website: thepeoplescharter.org



BEN CAVANNA

OFFICIAL PROTESTERS™ OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES™

SPACE HIJACKERS



Official rhetoric surrounding the London 2012 Olympics presents a shining image of a supportive and festive public, a legacy of local infrastructure improvements, and beautifully toned abs. But there is discontent among the ranks. Many criticise the Games as merely a vehicle for corporate sponsorship and property development, and point to the destructive effects of so-called 'regeneration' imposed on East London.

The Space Hijackers are one such group - but with one key difference. The Space Hijackers are the only Official Protesters™ of the Olympic Games™. We hold the sole rights to dispense tickets to the Official Protest™, and demonstrations held by non-registered malcontents will be considered illegitimate. London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games's (LOCOG) retribution against such interlopers will be swift and merciless, and we advise our prospective Protest Customers™ to beware of imposters.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE OLYMPICS? We're not killjoys, in fact, hosting badass parties is arguably one of our stronger points. We don't hate sport either. One of our number is an amateur triathlete, and a serial Marathon masochist. So what's our problem?

US AND THEM: WHO ARE THE OLYMPICS FOR? The ticket fiasco showed that it was practically impossible for the public to get hold of a ticket. No concessions were given to those whose lives will be disrupted by the event. Roughly two thirds of all tickets are thought to be reserved for corporate sponsors rather than being on sale to the general public, but the government still refuses to disclose the exact figure.

Special road routes dubbed 'VIP Lanes', will surrender huge swathes of London's streets to an unspecified entourage of Olympic dignitaries and hangers-on, all day, every day throughout the Games. Proles will be fined £200 for entering them. The VIP lanes will effectively blockade entire areas of the city, particularly East London. Not only will people be prevented from getting to work, but small businesses needing regular deliveries, eg pubs, are likely to go bust in the process.

Despite claims that the Olympics will boost youth participation in sport, the organisers have shown their lack of confidence in achieving this by dropping it as an official measure of the Games' success. Draconian security measures will make Bow look like Baghdad, with thousands of army troops deployed, aerial drones used in Afghanistan, missiles stationed on rooftops, and battleships in the Thames - all guarding against the ever-present threat of unspecified and invisible terrorists.

A series of land-grabs have commandeered ancient public green space, destroying habitat at Leyton Marshes with a basketball facility (this struggle will be familiar to Occupiers), installing a police station on Wanstead Flats, building Olympic worker accommodation in Epping Forest, and battling over parks in Blackheath and Greenwich for equestrian events.

HOUSING CRISIS The Olympic Park developments will exacerbate East London's housing crisis, through its plans to 'regenerate' - i.e. gentrify - Stratford. Rather than improve services and infrastructure for existing residents, the legacy project will continue London's trend of pushing out local inhabitants to make way for a professional commuter class. It will create a wealthy enclave that is physically and socially separated from the existing inhabitants just down the road.



Only 35% of the new houses will be 'affordable' (defined as 80% of market value). Meanwhile, the waiting list for a council house in the area is around 10 years.

This suggests that, rather than gentrification and social cleansing being an unhappy side-effect of the Olympics, the reality is the other way round - the Olympics are used as an excuse to drive through neoliberal measures to help property developers build and sell houses at extortionate rates.

LOCAL BUSINESSES VS CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP We are constantly told that the Olympics will boost the economy by encouraging tourism and hence helping local businesses. However, the 2003 'Games Plan' report, assessing the viability of London hosting the Games, was quite clear: the Olympics present no economic



opportunities. They are for feel-good purposes only. In fact, host cities should be prepared to take a financial loss. The London Olympics Act 2005 also blocks small businesses from cashing in on the event by making it unlawful for anyone who isn't an official sponsor to associate themselves with the Olympic brand - even going as far as to ban the use of the words and phrases such as 'Olympic'. One baker got a slap on the wrist for icing the Olympic Rings™ on her cakes.

OFFICIAL PROTESTERS™ With all the official sponsorship deals, including everything from Official Cereal Bar to the Official Sustainability Partner (which is BP - no, seriously), the Space Hijackers noticed that one omission was notable by its absence: there were no Official Protesters. We decided to step up to this challenge and fill the void.

The first thing we did was change our Twitter avatar to an anarcho-coloured (black and red) version of the famous '2012' logo, and changed our bio to claim that we were the Official Protesters of London 2012. We started Tweeting satirical messages, such as "There are no rights but @copyrights", and "It's OK to protest Shell today, but once in the Games period please direct attention to BP, proud partner of the US Olympic Committee".

OFFICIAL CENS***PTM** Then, a funny thing happened: Twitter - that self-proclaimed champion of free speech and democracy during the Arab Spring - shut down our account. LOCOG had contacted Twitter and complained that we were "Using a trademark in a way that could be confusing or misleading with regard to brand affiliation", as Twitter told us in an email on 22 May - despite it being an obvious spoof.

Twitter immediately capitulated and censored our account, before writing to us demanding that we change our profile to remove the offending image and bio details. In order to continue our campaign to raise awareness of Olympics issues, we complied with their requests, and were back Tweeting our parody messages by the following afternoon.

Meanwhile, the Streisand Effect reared its beautiful head, and LOCOG's attempts to silence us resulted in the story of our Twitter ban being plastered all over the international press. We like to imagine the long and heated debates between LOCOG's legal and PR teams.

Legal: "But don't you understand that unauthorised brand affiliation is illegal?" **PR:** "But everyone will think we're dicks!" **Legal:** "But... ILLEGAL!" **PR:** "But... DICKS!" etc.

WHAT NOW? After seven years of the Seb Coe PR offensive, it's only in the last few months that the mainstream media has started to provide coverage of some of the cracks in this narrative.

We won't stop London 2012 from happening. But we can spread awareness of the underlying issues to help mitigate the worst of its effects, and maybe reduce the impact of the Games on future hosts.

But remember, if reading this article has made you want to speak out against the Olympic Nightmare™, you must not take part in any unauthorised protest that hasn't been licensed by the Space Hijackers. Doing so will put you in breach of Olympic brand affiliation laws, and Seb Coe will come round your house to give you an Olympic Torch™ experience you'll never forget... *Join the Official Protest here!* <http://www.protestlondon2012.com>



LONDONERS ORGANISE AS THE OLYMPICS SWALLOWS UP THEIR COMMUNITIES

WAIL QASIM

An increasingly familiar sight in London are posters on public transit that invite residents and workers to "Get ahead of the Games." The message is that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games are happening, like it or not, but life for the average Londoner should continue as normal - or at least as normal as possible. Yet one particular poster sums up well the lack of regard for London's poorest, and an ignorance of the difference between the mild inconvenience some will face due to the games and the stark reality that, for many, the period will mean getting to work becomes nearly impossible. "Walking part of your journey may be quicker during the Games," it reads. With jobs in London heavily concentrated in the city's center, where housing is least affordable, many are already forced to embark on long commutes from the peripheries of the city. If they could avoid some of London's expensive transit fees by walking, they already would.

The games themselves, meanwhile, are helping to erode what public housing there is in Inner London. Since the announcement in 2005 that the city had won its host bid, there has been much talk of the legacy that the Olympics will leave once the summer is over. While some people who are more detached from life in east London imagine an abundance of publicly accessible sporting facilities - though recent host cities such as Athens suggest that debt and derelict buildings are more likely - it has been abundantly clear for residents of London's East End for some time that the true legacy will be a city cleansed of its poor.

For a case in point, consider the Olympic borough of Newham. There, 32,045 households (nearly double that of most other Inner London boroughs) were on the waiting list for public housing in 2011, yet the council continues to decant and demolish its existing stock under the guise of regeneration. New commercial projects proceed, however, including its own brand new £111.5 million offices complete with designer lighting, often hand-in-hand with companies that make the standard no-show promise of "affordable housing."

Gentrification sold as regeneration is nothing new and certainly isn't a stranger to Olympic host cities. But with London and the U.K. facing a housing crisis already, this latest assault on people's homes has become a piece of direct action was taken in conjunction with protesters from Occupy London, and it is another example of collaboration between local communities and movements well-practiced in direct action. As the Olympics continues enclosing spaces across London, it has also begun to make that space ever less livable. Many parts of the city are set to essentially go into lockdown during the games. The result of the Leyton Marsh occupation was that several protesters found themselves taken to court, given fines, held in custody and even presented with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

join other institutions, such as the University of London's Birkbeck College, which have already expanded east from their central London home of Bloomsbury.

Universities, despite what their spokespeople might suggest, are unlikely to bring new jobs for residents. But what they have brought are students fresh from fighting battles with university management over course closures, low wages, redundancies and tuition fee changes, and who are more than willing to provide solidarity with residents threatened by the likes of UCL. Those living on the Carpenters Estate and students from universities around Bloomsbury have already been organising together through Carpenters Against Regeneration Plan (CARP).

For now, they've focused on ensuring people know what Newham council and UCL plan to do. While delegates from the International Olympics Committee were going on tours of the Olympic sites, CARP held its own public tour of the Carpenters Estate, which made it impossible not to see a still thriving community left to rot and placed under threat.

With that campaign is in its relatively early stages, others have been organising around the effects of the Olympics on their doorstep for longer. Residents living near Leyton Marshes



decided to camp-out and halt construction of basketball training facilities that fenced off much of their green space. This particular piece of direct action was taken in conjunction with protesters from Occupy London, and it is another example of collaboration between local communities and movements well-practiced in direct action.

As the Olympics continues enclosing spaces across London, it has also begun to make that space ever less livable. Many parts of the city are set to essentially go into lockdown during the games. The result of the Leyton Marsh occupation was that several protesters found themselves taken to court, given fines, held in custody and even presented with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

(ASBOs) designed to keep them away from Olympic sites, the torch relay and anyone connected with the Olympics. Even protest actions unconnected to the Olympics in any real sense, such as Occupy London's recent day of action, have seen bail conditions imposed that mirror the use of ASBOs to keep activists far from anything Olympics-related. It is also becoming clearer how "Dispersal Zones" - areas where police can require groups to disperse and leave - will be used during the Olympic period as the Metropolitan Police have announced that much of Stratford will become one of these zones.

As the levels of security that London will face becomes apparent, activists have begun to respond by transferring skills developed within activist circles to community organising. The Newham Monitoring Project, an anti-racism group at the heart of east London, have begun training Community Legal Observers that will provide similar support to that seen on demonstrations but with the particularities of law surrounding the Olympics and the community in mind. When one considers that between 24,000 and 49,000 military, police and security personnel are being deployed during the Olympics, it is easy to see why oversight is vital.

When what is meant to be the greatest show on earth is on your

TAKING THE POLITICS OUT OF THE GAMES

PRIVATISATION & THE LONDON OLYMPICS

PROFESSOR
MIKE RACO

NO LOC OG®

For private companies, projects like the London Olympics represent an enormous business opportunity. There are lucrative government-backed contracts to be won, reputations to be enhanced, iconic images to be manufactured and goods and services to be sold. Much has been made of the Games' uniqueness in this respect, but it is dangerous to write it off as an 'exceptional' event that is somehow separate from the everyday politics of capitalist cities. On the contrary, it tells us much about the intricate relationships that are now being forged between states, private corporations, and international finance.

Intuitively we might imagine that corporations advocate smaller government, along the lines proposed by neo-liberals. But firms have increasingly realised that that some of the world's biggest and safest investment opportunities are now to be found in state-backed projects. Bigger government, in terms of investments, could paradoxically generate greater profits. The new business lexicon amongst global elites has, therefore, shifted away from the mantra of free-trade to that of privatisation and aggressive 'contract-capture'. Why invest in risky market-based ventures in the midst of a recession when government projects like the Olympics offer up billions of pounds worth of guaranteed expenditure, ripe for private sector expropriation? Why create complex financial packages to help smaller businesses and young entrepreneurs in poorer neighbourhoods when in every city there are state projects and assets that can be commodified and turned into profit-making opportunities undervritten by contracts?

The Olympics is a visible symbol of these processes in action. From the outset, global firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers were funded to carry out feasibility studies and compile materials for London's bid. Other multinationals gave their services for free, hoping and expecting that future contracts would come their way. A plethora of other consultants, including PCU3ED and AECOM - the latter of which is playing a key role in master-planning the 2016 Rio Olympics Games - rapidly became involved

in various parts of the construction and planning processes. Corporations began to extend their influence into the heart of decision-making structures. The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOC OG) is obliged to raise \$376m from corporate sponsorship 'of which approximately two-thirds is in the form of goods and services values in kind'. This has opened the door for big corporations to flood key management and executive positions in LOC OG with their own personnel. It has happened to such an extent that the boundaries between what is public and what is private have become increasingly difficult to disentangle. According to the International Accounting Bulletin, the global business services firm Deloitte has seconded over 130 staff to LOC OG since 2005. This includes key personnel such as Neil Wood, LOC OG's Chief Financial Officer, and Laurie Neville, its Procurement Programme Manager.

Others such as the Anglo-German multinational legal firm Freshfields have used secondees to cement their status as the 'official legal services provider' to the Olympics. Thirty or more of its employees have worked for LOC OG's legal team. The company has played a leading role in negotiating the lucrative contracts for the Games' procurement arrangements covering a broad range of activities from catering to seating to sponsorship. This is all part of an expensive corporate-Olympic merry-go-round. LOC OG's Chief Executive, for instance, Paul Deighton was taken on from Goldman Sachs in 2005, along with Terry Miller who took over as head of the legal team in 2006. These corporate individuals demand corporate salaries. LOC OG's accounts reveal that the former was paid a basic salary of £479,873 in 2011 alone and could receive bonus payments well in excess of this if all goes to plan. But this is just the tip of the iceberg.



Recently released government figures show that the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) sub-contracted out £5.6bn worth of business for the Games, through 1,433 major contracts. These contracts were then sub-contracted by contract-holders with over 43,000 separate awards being made. The scale of the resources and rewards on offer through such arrangements explains why global corporations have focused so much effort on capturing state resources. It also indicates the degree of privatisation that has taken place. For instance, within a year of being set up, the ODA hired a conglomerate of three global corporations - C2MHill, Laing O'Rourke, and Mace - to act as a Delivery Manager for Olympic infrastructure projects. It was paid fees of £718million, including a series of bonus payments for meeting specific targets. Other major contractors have done consistently well. Government data shows that in the first six months of 2010, four global firms working on key infrastructure - Carillion, Lend Lease, Balfour Beatty, and ISG - were given bonus payments totalling £10,170,000 and such figures give a sense of just how resource-intensive this state-led privatisation project has become.

Advocates of this model of development argue that it delivers infrastructure on-time and on budget. The contracted companies have done what they were paid to do. The UK government now showcases the Games as an example of 'UK PLC' operating at its best. However, all of this comes with democratic and financial costs. Contracting-out becomes a 'commercial matter' to be systematically insulated from democratic politics and wider social demands in order to enhance commercial viability. Companies have to bid for contracts under open competition

rules. Public money cannot be handed to companies just because they happen to be located in a particular place or are fulfilling a wider social function. Governments have effectively waived away their basic right to determine where their money is spent and to whom it should go. Attempts to access detailed information about these processes then become subject to the constraints of commercial confidentiality and the contractual right of private firms to keep their business decisions out of the public gaze. The bigger the project, the more complex the financial and contractual arrangements, and the more difficult it becomes to follow the money. We simply don't know where much of the £10bn or more that is being spent on the Games ends up. It may be supporting east London residents and small businesses, or it might be finding its way into international tax havens through complex and obscure financial arrangements.

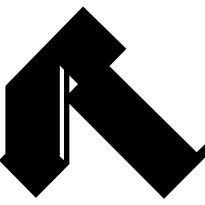
The implications of these trends for societies are enormous. In the 1960s Robert Dahl famously argued that within a functioning democratic system all affected interests should have some say in shaping the laws and policies under which they are governed. If in an era of austerity, governments continue to acquiesce to the demands of private investors and use contracts to 'take the politics out of development', then the formal political grounds for contesting and shaping projects becomes more and more limited. As Jacques Rancière recently argued in *Hatred of Democracy*, the new political priority of many Western states has paradoxically become the elimination of politics.

By Professor Mike Raco, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London (m.raco@ucl.ac.uk)



IN SEARCH OF LEGACIES LOST

STEVE DOWDING



circus pulls out, leaving behind mere memories and mess.

The five ring circus works on similar lines over a longer eight-year timescale. Why did London agree to host this circus? The time to reject a London Olympics was during the bid stage, back in 2004-2005. But at the time, the No London 2012 campaign was tiny; the main political parties and mainstream media backed the bid; and cynics were convinced it would go to France, so they barely bothered to engage. Consent was manufactured on promised legacies - 'regeneration', 'health' and 'sporting'. These promises are turning out to be myths but by the time realisation began to dawn, it was too late for resistance. Olympic bids have been seen off, in part due to popular resistance, in Amsterdam in 1986, in Leipzig in 1992 and, more recently, Chicago's 2016 bid and Anney's Winter Olympics 2018 were defeated. However, only once, in 1976 Denver, have residents rejected an Olympics after the bid was won.

I live in one of those 2012 'Host Boroughs' where the Olympics' parasite feeds and I contribute to the GamesMonitor website. Our strapline is 'debunking Olympic myths'. What fascinates me is how the stories change and the goalposts get shifted over time. Here are two Hackney tales.

London Fields Lido has become part of the Olympic mythology. Closure of the Lido was forced by Tory cuts in the 1980s and Hackney's plans to demolish were only stopped by 18 years of grassroots campaigning. Eventually, Hackney refurbished the Lido and it has been very popular since reopening in 2007. Three years later there were reports in the media that the US swimming team would use it as their base. Then in May 2011, Hackney announced that the US Paralympic swimmers would use it for training. This means that, although the Lido has long been a community resource or, when closed, the subject of a community campaign, it will almost certainly be claimed as part of the

'Olympics legacy'. Thus, history is rewritten in the form of 'legacy' myths.

The Media Centre is Hackney Mayor Jules Pipe's greatest claim to legacy. Originally proposed as a temporary facility in Stratford, in 2006 it was announced that the International Broadcast Centre and Main Press Centre would be permanently located in Hackney, giving a post-Games employment legacy. In previous Olympics the media centres had been temporary, so this new approach suited the rhetoric of a Games based on sustainable 'regeneration'. Jules Pipe and apparatchiks seized on the opportunity, trumpeting this legacy win as the greater good in mitigation for the loss of Metropolitan Open Land on Hackney Marshes (Arena Field and White Hart Field).

In 2008 the Olympic Delivery Authority confirmed the proposal to create a hub for the creative industries, but by then we were in the throes of the global financial crisis. Private funding collapsed and the scheme was bailed out from the public purse. In 2009 responsibility for the Media Centre was passed on and the Olympic Park Legacy Company was tasked with finding anchor tenants for after the Games. Chair Baroness Ford told the Greater London Assembly in 2010, "We are working to a Plan A, and Plan A is to try to deliver that vision of ... a cluster of media uses and related educational uses on that site."

In September 2010, the London Assembly reported that "The Government has stated its ambition that 12,000 jobs will be based in the Olympic Park after 2012, and it has been estimated that the Media Centre could provide two-thirds of these."

However, in February 2011 emerged an "Off-piste bid for Hackney's media hub ... Basically, the company behind Dubai's Ski Dubai, the world's first indoor ski resort, wants to create a winter sports-anchored resort." The fabled jobs legacy was missing, 'sustainability' had gone up in smoke, but the plan still stopped short of the unmitigated disaster of warehousing sheds.

In November 2011, bidding formally opened for post-Games use of the Media Centre. Guy Nicholson, Hackney Council cabinet member for regeneration and the 2012 Olympic and



Paralympic Games, was still claiming that the Media Centre's infrastructure presented "a great opportunity to enable a wider community to take part in... prosperity". The Hackney Citizen noted that "A proposal from the Wellcome Trust sought to buy up the entire Olympic Park and Village and build 'a world-class centre for technology and innovation, and up to 7,000 high-quality new jobs'. Conversion of the Media Centre into a science research centre could have come close to fulfilling the original legacy promises. Instead, a Qatari bid to buy out the Olympic Village was favoured.

The Media Centre's future was still up for grabs. There was talk of a bid to turn it into a data centre after the Games, but no acknowledgement that data centres do not create large numbers of jobs. Other possibilities included populating the Media Centre with a consortium of fashion brands, turning it into a sports retail hub, or creating a theme park. The Wellcome Trust were believed to be considering a bid and there were reports of negotiations with the BBC, which considered using the centre as a studio in which to film *Eastenders* and other programmes. The Olympics Park Legacy committee produced a list of potential occupants including Channel 5 and Trumans Brewery, but while these might take tranches of space at the Centre, they would not anchor the development.

Then there were hopes that multibillion-dollar Google would lease

the Media Centre, hopes reported dashed in January 2012. Three months later a final bid was due from Oxytene, but they pulled out. Two rival bids were shortlisted: iCITY (an 'Innovation City') and UK Fashion Hub.

Now, 'Games Time' is upon us, and there are no firm details on the employment legacy of the Media Centre. The same is the case with the Main Stadium, where the bidding process has been extended again. We are left guessing what 'the legacy' might be; at GamesMonitor we refer to it as 'the aftermath'.

www.gamesmonitor.org.uk



ON THE SOAPBOX

TIERNAN DOUIEB AIN'T GAME FOR THE OLYMPICS

Personally, I can't wait for the Olympics. So many things to look forward to, including an opening ceremony based on the English Countryside, which means two hours of racism, being blocked by 4x4s, no phone reception and the smell of horseshit. It should be spectacular. Especially as we've seen just how the Jubilee Eternity - sorry, weekend - was. Now that it's finally finished, I think it's safe to say in retrospect that everyone had a really great time. Especially those who got hypothermia, anyone who tried to get around the city and all those who hungered for any other bit of news or television other than the consistently dull commentary that accompanied a lot of different large, slow moving types of transport. Yes, I include Elton John in that description.

All of the UK enjoyed the spectacle of watching millions of pounds that could have been used fishing our erstwhile dead economy out of its black hole of deficit, instead of being used to provide the sort of party only the kind of people who'd start a neighbourhood watch might enjoy. Those sorts of people. You know the type. The ones who'd spend far too much time pruning a hedge and spent at least six months saying how awful Russell Brand was when he did that thing they'd heard about once and never researched. Many people, who pretend they can actually feel emotion when an Adele song comes on the radio despite it being proven scientifically impossible", spent four days pretending they didn't mind dressing like a fool and waving flags. Cameron stated

that while the whole shebang wasn't "good for the economy, it was good for the soul". Great. We can all relish the fact that while thousands are unable to pay their bills due to unemployment, they can at least enjoy a well nourished mythical notion that will allow them to live in a better post-death nothingness. I am almost tempted to become religious just so I can say I got some sort of measly benefit from it all.

But whose soul was it actually good for anyway? Probably not those at Close Protection UK, who, according to a Guardian expose and a call for an enquiry from former deputy PM John Prescott, hired jobseekers to do unpaid work at the Jubilee celebrations, where they were forced to sleep in the cold, get changed in public and had no access to toilets for 24 hours. All this, apparently, whilst being denied pay as it would affect their JSA. Lucky the same company are hiring the stewards for the Olympics too, eh? There are times when I wish there was a font for sarcasm. However it'd only end up with me constantly upset when I read Tory MPs tweets that didn't use it, sadly proving they really aren't just fictional characters invented by Chris Morris.

All the thrills of being at a music festival if you'd had no choice in going, the line-up was awful and you didn't even have cheap cider and people with poi to punch so you could numb the despair. But in defence of such awful treatment, Downing Street has said this was a 'one-off'. Molly Prince, head of the company has said it is the



"nature of event work" and Abi Levitt at Tomorrow's People - the charity who set up the placements with CPUK, have said it was all important work experience to help young people get jobs. Backing those views up, several Tory MPs have accused Labour and left wingers of nit-picking about the exploitation of people just to be anti-Monarchy, and the Daily Mail managed to find some named 'volunteers' who seemed all too happy with their 'labour camp' treatment. So with all those trusted resources, it'd be hard to see why all the complaints, huh? Cue further need for sarcasm font.

There are an awful lot of issues behind this, and I'm not clever enough to coherently delve into the intricacies of Close Protection UK's financial difficulty, or Molly Prince's previous five companies' history. Or that she has allegedly been convicted before for perverting the course of justice. All in all she's clearly a person to trust for this sort of important position of

responsibility. Ahem. Neither will I discuss that it's perhaps suspicious that the boss of Tomorrow's People is Baroness Scott, a Conservative peer who contributed to the funding of the Tory Party "manifesto" which she has been reprimanded for by the Charities Commission. But what I do want to point out is that even if - somehow - this is all reasonable, non-exploitative correct practice, then how have we become a nation that presumes doing 'work experience' alongside the river Thames in the pouring rain, for an event that happens once in a blue-blooded moon, will in any way lead to a valuable career?

If you are honestly of the opinion that those are qualities that would be revered on a CV that might lead to a decent career, then you're barking up something that isn't even a tree in the first place. How can you 'tackle' the vast unemployment in the UK by equipping jobseekers with skills that, after the Olympics, will be largely useless? I've

done awful work experience before, but while all of them made me never want to do those jobs again, they did look after me. I learnt customer service skills, admin abilities - and never to go near ancient artefacts with a massive metal trolley ever again. All, with clever wordplay, 'transferable skills'. How do you translate 'standing in the rain', 'being forced to change in public' and 'sleeping under a bridge' into qualities? Weather resilient, willing to abandon dignity and adaptable to the environment? Well done, you've qualified for homelessness! I can only assume Tomorrow's People have seen the Conservatives recent take on environmental policies and are training 'aqua people' for the coming horrors of climate change.

So while you're not enjoying the Olympics, spare a thought for those who may be working there for no pay, in order to save their current benefits and any hope of keeping them, in truly awful conditions. It's incredible how the government keep berating 'problem families' for having a 'something for nothing' attitude when that is exactly what they are condoning by allowing crooked companies to operate like CPUK did during the Jubilee. Anyone who defends slave labour is and always will be fundamentally wrong, no matter how good the bunting is for your soul. * It hasn't. But I bet it will be one day.



launched their own legal challenge against their building being commandeered as a missile base. In Blackheath, South London Against Missiles (SLAM) have taken up the fight holding marches and campaigning with the support of the local community. The campaign is at its strongest in Bow, where 200 locals packed out a hall to voice their concerns at a debate the MoD initially agreed to attend but later ran away from.

Since putting my head above the parapet and having the audacity to voice my dissatisfaction with a part of the 2012 Olympic games preparations, I have had my tenancy terminated and will

now have to move out before the opening ceremony this month. I have also been contacted by scores of people in similar situations - people who were busy going about their lives before having the Olympics land on top of them. Every week I hear from tenants evicted because their landlords want to charge huge fees during the games, local teenagers who face curfews to keep them out of sight and families who can't use local sports amenities for the duration of the games.

At Mile End stadium, US security services are to be deployed and the centre will be closed off to the local community to allow

FROM LA TO LONDON OLYMPIC RIOTS

KOJO KYEREWAA



Almost a year ago, the streets of London, and subsequently many more in England, exploded with fury. High

streets were turned into war zones as footage of buses and shops being engulfed in flames were broadcast on 24 hour news channels across the world. Some Egyptian protesters mocked the English, saying "we go on the streets against tyranny, the English seem to go for flat screen TVs". The British government took four days to form a response; Prime Minister David Cameron labelled the events "criminality, pure and simple", and therefore the solution was law and order: police numbers were tripled and the courts rushed through cases at unprecedented speed. It appeared to work, the streets of London simmered and images of burning cars were being replaced with images of crowds of Londoners fawning over a politician carrying a broom.

BBC Newsbeat, the youth news service from Radio 1, held an interview with self-confessed rioters - two white teenage girls who were drinking alcohol. While being portrayed in a less than favourable light, they clearly articulated that they firmly believed there was no future for them as the rich and the government held them in contempt, so they were returning the favour.

In the noise of the aftermath, something was being lost, and now near forgotten, the initial spark that ignited those days of rage: the shooting of Mark Duggan. In a major high street in Tottenham at 6:15pm on Thursday 4th August, Mark Duggan was shot and killed by police officers in what was originally dubbed "a shoot-out". It was later proved that all of the shots that were fired were from police issued weapons and there was no evidence that the gun found near the scene was used or even owned by Mark Duggan. His family were not told of his death for over a day and were left to find out via television news broadcasts. The vigil at Tottenham Police Station peacefully demanding answers about the circumstances



of Duggan's death typified for many a disregard for the lives and families of young (predominantly) black men. It was not only the police violence, but the lack of transparency and apparent impunity on the part of the officers involved, which added fuel to the fire.

Mark Duggan's story echoes that of Rodney King, the figure at the centre of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, who died at his home last month aged 47. In 1991, King was the victim of serious police brutality and pursued the police in court. Yet despite filmed evidence of his savage beating, all the officers involved were acquitted of any wrongdoing. The riots happened not because of King's exceptional case, but rather because it had been proven to be the rule.

Dave Zirin in the US political magazine, The Nation, wrote an article in April titled: "Want to Understand the 1992 LA Riots? Start with the 1984 LA Olympics". In the article he argues that though King was the touch paper that set off the explosive cocktail of anger mixed with a deep sense of injustice leading to the loss of 53 lives, thousands of injuries and approximately a billion dollars worth of damage, a longer-term cause was the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Zirin points out that the mix of sustained high youth and African-American unemployment, unchecked police violence led by Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates, the loss of secure "union jobs" and economic recession, paved the way for entrenched disadvantage and heightened racial

tension. The parallels between the social and economic conditions that existed in advance of the 1984 and 2012 Olympics are striking.

The 1984 Olympics was the banner under which LAPD Chief Gates brought in what Zirin describes as "...in effect [a] military occupation in South Central LA". Gates, who was LAPD Chief from 1978 to 1992, is considered the inventor of Special Weapons and Tactical (SWAT) teams. Gates' paramilitary and highly aggressive style brought about record levels of complaints about police operations and excessive force which often went ignored. He boasted that harassing people was part of his policing strategy. After the LA riots he resigned in disgrace as his arrogant leadership and tacit acceptance of - or at least, indifference to - racist policing were faced with heavy criticism. Though his rhetoric and personal manner was condemned, and the move to community policing followed, some of his paramilitary sweeps and populist tactics has influenced policing across the English-speaking world.

Though England likes to project the image of having the friendly, unarmed "bobby", the August riots dropped that pretence permanently. London has gone from community policing to "Total Policing", Bernard Hogan-Howe's personal war on crime with "Big Wing" actions, often compared to the Battle of Britain. Hogan-Howe has claimed he wants to put "fear into the hearts of criminals"; since then he went on a charm offensive visiting boroughs



and having public meetings. He argued for a stun gun to be placed in every police car and this was soon followed by an incident involving a South London commuter of African origin being "Tasered" nine times for carrying a white toy gun for his son. During his lecture at the London School of Economics, when Hogan-Howe was questioned on issues such as police brutality and "stop and search" towards the black community, he professed ignorance on the details and thought it was less than 30 people that had died in predominantly road incidents when the actual number of deaths whilst in police custody was closer to 350. This oversight could appear to be indifference. Hogan-Howe orchestrated a high profile raid inviting both the Mayor of London and the media to watch officers break down a door on an estate in Peckham which resulted in nothing being found. Like the District Attorney's office in 1984, in 2012, the Crown Prosecution Service initially refused to prosecute an officer who called a black youth "a nigger", despite recorded evidence. It was media attention through the Guardian that forced a reconsideration. For many young inner city Londoners, particularly those of African, Caribbean and Asian

origin, the "war on crime" is akin to a war on their youth. The militarisation of communities has taken on a literal meaning with the Ministry of Defence placing surface-to-air missiles on estates in the East End, prompting campaigns to resist them.

In 2012, with youth unemployment at record levels, the London Olympics have been accompanied by promises of construction jobs but less than half of those jobs have gone to local workers and have been on a project basis, with companies preferring temporary agency labour rather than taking on permanent new staff. Even permanent staff faced 35% pay cuts last year. Collective organisation has successfully resisted this attack but with the blacklisting of union activists still rife in the industry, the future is not promising.

All this combined with the economic backdrop of the longest recession since the 1930s, and over 80% of planned government austerity yet to bite, rather than the English riots of 2011 acting as a safety valve against frustration and youth disenfranchisement, within a few years post London 2012, we may come to reflect back on the Riots as having only been the warm-up.



GOING BALLISTIC

"I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN A BUILDING WITH ARMED POLICE AT MY DOOR AND MISSILES ON THE ROOF"

BRIAN WHELAN

Until two months ago I was happy to have the Olympic stadium next door to my apartment in Bow Quarter, East London - I thought there would be traffic issues but never worried the games would intrude on my life.

I was never excited to have the Olympics here, but I certainly wasn't opposed to the games and had naively believed that they would do more good than bad for the area. In retrospect I was living in a dreamworld; I woke up to the Olympic nightmare on April 30th when a leaflet from the Ministry of Defence announced plans to turn my apartment block into a small military base.

I was to live in the shadow of a missile battery on top of the roof, staffed by 10 soldiers working around the clock and guarded by armed police lurking at the end of my corridor. This imposition would be part of a much bigger security plan involving missiles at five other locations across London and an aircraft carrier in the Thames. At Bow Quarter we reacted quickly to the announcement forming a campaign with members of the

local community, pursuing a legal challenge and hosting public meetings. We demanded the MoD explain when it became acceptable to turn civilian homes into military installations and what purpose missiles with a range of just five miles could serve over Tower Hamlets, one of London's most densely populated areas.

The MoD have failed to address even our most basic concerns, stating that the location is not up for debate and citing 'national security' and prevention of terrorism as their motivation.

Of course nobody wants to see the Olympics attacked but the supposed threat of terrorism should not be used to shut down debate or infringe on people's rights to enjoy their homes.

The MoD thought they could sneak this plan under the radar with a leaflet delivered at the very last minute, but with their arrogance they have provoked a critical campaign that is determined to stop them.

At the Fred Wigg tower in Leytonstone families have

WHOSE LAND?

EMMA FORDHAM

The Occupy movement was not, initially, about land. It was about the economy, democracy, justice and climate change. It was about bank bonuses, public service cuts and being the change we wanted to see. It was also about joining the dots between apparently disparate issues and, recently, the realisation has dawned that land is one giant polka dot.

The London Occupy movement unwittingly flagged up the privatisation of public space from the outset. On 15th October 2011, protesters were prevented from entering Paternoster Square by an injunction brought by its private owners, Mitsubishi. Occupy has always been about using land for temporary camps, originally for the purpose of making a political stand and later - as the movement engaged with immediate local issues such as homelessness - to enable those without homes to enjoy shelter and community. Occupiers are now working with the Diggers 2012, a group of activists who claim disused land and use it to practise sustainable living. Occupy is joining with international campaign groups and indigenous activists to highlight landgrabs by mining corporations Xstrata and Glencore in Asia, Africa and Oceania. Occupy activists are also kicking-up a fuss about landgrabs closer to home, for example the appropriation of Metropolitan Open Land in Hackney for the London 2012 Olympic Village.

In the eight months since the Paternoster Square injunction, land issues have come to the fore and even the mainstream media has taken note. The Guardian recently published a piece by Jeevan Vasagar which referenced the Occupy movement, while describing just how ubiquitous and restrictive private ownership of outdoor space can be. Character, community and biodiversity are frequently subjugated to profitability

and showcase ornamentation in privately owned spaces. Canary Wharf has practically been declared a no-protest zone, whilst in Northern cities such as Liverpool, quirky districts stuffed with recycled-furniture markets, independent bookstores and community cafes have been stripped bare and sterilised.

Occupiers have been educating themselves on the subject of land. In squatted social centres and tent universities, Anna Minton's Ground Control (2012) jostles for bookshelf space with Kevin Cahill's Who Owns Britain (2002). Minton considers the deeply undemocratic nature of private land ownership and the harm done to communities when open spaces are corralled for profitability instead of being tended for the public good. Cahill underlines the inequities inherent in land ownership, whilst uncovering the myth of land scarcity. He reports that less than one percent of the UK population own approximately 70 percent of the land and that land is nowhere near as scarce as we are led to believe. Only a tenth of the UK's land mass is built upon. Rural landowners pay no taxes on land and actually receive subsidies simply for owning unused acres. Cahill's conclusion is that a redistribution of land could go a long way towards addressing economic and social problems, not just in Britain but globally.

As Occupy supporters marched through the City of London during an international day of action on 12th May, issues of land ownership were raised with the chant: "Whose streets? Our streets!" Later, whilst temporarily kettled, protesters broke through police lines, only to be arrested soon after simply for having an assembly, hanging out and playing music on "our streets". Elsewhere, squatters are continuing to fight for the right to use derelict buildings for the common good; bailiffs evicted Occupy's squatted Bank of Ideas and went one further with the School of Ideas, razing it to the ground. Between April and July the Nomadic Occupy group was taken to court by Tower Hamlets



JUAN MANUEL PEÑA

council, evicted from a Hackney park and threatened with arrest when tents were erected on Hampstead Heath. The stated aim of the 'nomads' is to set up small, purely temporary encampments for outreach purposes while maintaining good relations with their neighbours and lending a compassionate ear to vulnerable members of local communities.

Politicians decry the decline of community and yet attempts to use our outdoor spaces for collaborative, creative activities are regularly thwarted by injunctions, health and safety regulations or trumped-up public order offences. Red tape and bureaucracy frequently prevail in preventing unauthorised gatherings, protests, celebrations, leisure or pleasure from occurring even in public places - unless, of course, the activity in question is an Establishment-bolstering Jubilee party. Policies instigated in the Thatcher years - from redevelopment of the London Docklands by an unaccountable, but publicly-funded Urban Development Corporation, to the Criminal Justice Act (no more subversive partying in fields) - have served subsequent governments well, while enshrining in law the separation of people from land.

Taking their inspiration from Gerrard Winstanley's True Levellers, the Diggers 2012 are attempting to redress these injustices. On their simple website the Diggers "declare our intention to go and cultivate the disused land of this island; to build dwellings and live together in common by the sweat of our brows". They believe that "...every person in this country and the world should have the right to live on disused land, to grow food and to build a shelter. This right should apply whether you have money or not".

These latter-day Diggers set off to walk from a community allotment in London to the Crown Estate in Windsor on 9th June, with the intention of starting an eco-village on disused

crown land. The True Levellers attempted a similar project in 1649, with a view not only to planting vegetables on common land but also to reforming the existing social order. By the time the Diggers 2012 reached their destination they had an escort of police and an injunction had been slapped on the entire area. A walk along the banks of the Thames ensued, the peaceful Diggers tailed by police and Crown Estate officials. A succession of temporary camps were set up, despite attempts by police, council, estate and park officials to run the Diggers off the land.

On 11th June, as the group scouted for a suitable location to grow vegetables and community, one of their number was arrested. Simon Moore was deemed to be in breach of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order he was given for his participation in a peaceful Save Leyton Marsh protest. Jailed for a night, Simon rejoined the Diggers the following day. By then the group had managed to 'dig in' to a piece of woodland on the edge of Runnymede Park, the birthplace of our modern democracy.

Gathering around the Magna Carta memorial at Runnymede - a memorial inscribed with "Freedom under the Law" - the Diggers discussed land, freedom, democracy, irony and injustice. Planning law is used to prevent groups like the Diggers from solving their own housing issues and is abused by those in power, who can declare 'exceptions' when it suits them, as they have done on the Hackney Marshes. For now, the Diggers 2012 are camped on a piece of disused land that was sold by Brunel University to developers in 2007. They are beginning to build structures from natural materials and are inviting all - but especially forest gardeners and permaculturists - to join them for a spot of guerrilla gardening.

Todmorden's Incredible Edible project, dreamed up by a couple of

self-proclaimed 'old birds', shows just how successful guerilla gardening can be. In an unusual community-spirited 'landgrab' the town's residents planted up roadside verges, roundabouts and council-owned flowerbeds with fruit, vegetables and salad crops. Now locals and visitors alike can grab a handful of fresh food as they walk down the street and international eco-tourists are flocking to this formerly down-at-heel South Pennine town. This project is a baby-step in the right direction. It is an example of the kind of dignified, creative, co-operative solution that Occupy in London is exploring in its 'Creating Alternatives' assemblies.

Regaining control of land and buildings, claiming space and building communities, living on the earth and protecting it from rape and pollution - these endeavours are at the heart of Occupy, even though we didn't trumpet land rights in our initial statement.

Diggers 2012 meet every Saturday at 1pm, Magna Carta Memorial, Runnymede Park.
<http://diggers2012.wordpress.com/>



REFLECTIONS ON FINSBURY SQUARE

In the early hours of June 14th, the camp at Finsbury Square was evicted with no arrests. As the character of the site changed over the seven month occupation, Finsbury Square (FS) became a contentious subject for both the general public and members of Occupy.

Islington council tolerated the camp for longer than many activists, but finally brought a case at the beginning of June. A broad spectrum of defence strategies were taken up, including invoking articles of the European Convention on Human Rights concerning freedom of conscience and expression, and the right to a home. One defendant's contention that it was God's will - made exactly as the colourful activist Sister Ruth entered the court - was dismissed. The opinions of another on the validity of the queen's coronation were equally unsuccessful.

"Do you have a right to judge me?" asked the defendant, referring to the judges oath to an illegitimate monarch.

"Well yes," replied the judge. "That is my job."

How are we to judge FS? If this is the shape of things to come, and tent cities are to be a feature of either activist or homeless communities, what can be learned from the experiment? What went right, and what could have gone better? The OT explored these questions through a range of perspectives.

CLAUDE MELVILLE

If the government or police wanted to know how to derail activists combating their agenda, they need look no further than Finsbury Square. David Cameron's crackpot 'Big Society' idea was designed to relieve the state of its responsibility towards vulnerable people, tasking the people with providing welfare instead. This alone should be opposed, but at Finsbury Square we saw another side-effect of such a plan which further enables the status-quo.

Activists tend to be compassionate people. For most of us, our motivation to organise or agitate comes from wanting more for those worst off in society. When FS started to become more of a refugee camp than a political occupation, some of us were made to feel that we should drop all political activism to care for the homeless. I was told I had no compassion, despite the fact that I already volunteer in a recognised homeless centre, where they have the expertise and resources to genuinely help.

By falling into the trap of providing quasi-help for people at FS, rather than highlighting and combating the source of problems like homelessness (which Occupy started off doing), people played right into the government's hands. On one hand the protest was quelled, and on the other, people did the state's work for it.

CATHERINE

Over time, the camp exposed class divides within Occupy London, as well as the difficulties derived from inequality. As the Evening Standard observed, FS wanted to be an eco village, and started out with herbal teas, while Occupiers at St Paul's cracked open the beers. It all changed.

The FS welfare team gave hours of love and support. This included practical measures towards harm reduction for drug users, and a qualified psychiatrist who came to listen to people with respect and solidarity for their humanity and their political struggle, their anger and their love for each other.

People took care of those around them. There was a lot of sharing (albeit of vodka as well as food, blankets and tent space). A lot of Occupiers walked

away from FS, disgusted at the conditions and behaviour, unwilling to engage with difficult issues on a human level with people who might be violent and drunk. For some of us, however, both 'privileged' and less so in our conditioning, FS allowed us to get closer to each other as real people, and help within the process unfolding in this small patch of occupied land. Finsbury was off-line and off-the-grid, where news travelled by word of mouth. It was an opportunity for people to be real human beings. There are as many FS experiences as Occupiers, and some of us are deeply grateful for our time there.

HAZEL

Finsbury Square was the country cousin of Occupy LSX. It had soft grass that you could stick a tent peg into. Residents lived in cute huts made from reclaimed wood, skipped for food and planned an eco-village.

Then St Paul's was evicted. Alcoholics and "wannabe" anarchists descended on the Finsbury idyll. Soon the drive to be self-reliant was aborted. The Occupy movement's money - legacy of donations collected at St Paul's - was a new rallying point. "What's the money in the bank for, if not to support us?" the campers whined. Finsbury became dependent on Occupy funds and attracted more and more takers, fewer givers. Those advocating energy efficiency and self-sufficiency were shunned, punished, pushed out. Political activism was largely dropped, along with temperance and a spirit of consensus.

In the last weeks at Finsbury, dissolution ruled under the guise of compassion. Addicts were enabled by the 'anything goes' mantra. As rain turned the camp into a quagmire, violence and self-harm spiraled. Occupy money poured in but the kitchen cupboards were frequently bare.

It was a nightmare that many activists withdrew from, unable to endorse what was happening but powerless to prevent it... but still the camp provided more love, stability and comfort than many of its inhabitants could find elsewhere.

EMILY

By the end, the camp in FS was certainly a shadow of its former self, but taking the site at face value undermines the efforts of those activists who worked tirelessly towards the changes they feel are necessary in the world. It appears that Occupy activists living in Finsbury Square were the only people willing to take care of the desperate individuals who turned to them for help. They were forced to turn their attentions away from their original cause in order to address the plight of those more needy than themselves. The social conscience and responsibility which this group has shown in its selfless aid of fellow humans is a rarity in this financially-focused city.

LETTER FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

As a local city worker nearby, I am concerned by attempts to evict the Occupy camp in Finsbury Square. The space was often used as a dog walking area, shortcut and sometime summer picnic zone, but was hardly an area of outstanding natural beauty. I feel that it is a much more productive use of the space, to embody the disquiet of the nation at spiraling financial events, than used as a grazing zone for bored office workers. We do have a choice of venues to escape our desks. There is valuable discussion raised by virtue of the camp existing. It might be a bit messy and inconvenient at times, but so is democracy and for sure our financial system.

Find further reflections on the OT blog, please feel free to add your voice.

THE CANTERBURY CAMPEERS

THE IRREVERENT REVEREND NEMU

Twas not at Southwark's famous Tabard But at St Paul's where pilgrims gathered, Where some months ere, no Christian pity, Could save the ropery tented city. No holy sanctuary was given, Ye chapter did well as t'was bidden For though St Paul's dost boast a cross Ye corporation's almighty boss. So there began, at winter's close As t'ward ye steps was turned a hose A quest to find another way To cry for peace another day.

At length was hit upon a plan To form a motley caravan A penitent walk for thirteen days Following a pilgrim's ways. And if ye clergy saw it right To clear ye steps on fated night, Pardon ye bailiff, constabulary We alight now for Canterbury

A bishop left ye pilgrims bless'd, And out struck they, t'wards ye West, And for fair Blackheath, in deluvius rain And there they couched in tents again. Morning mass, then t'ward Dartford Heath Passing out scrolls, marching 'neath A glorious and sun-filled sky. Ye merry folk of Occupy.

Oft called to preach and proselyte To sound alarm, and radic'lise Ye sleeping people of ye churches, To kick them up their sleeping breeches. For truth and justice is e'er ye mission Of every right God-fearing Christian, So preached ye pilgrims on their way Of equal rights and equal pay.

Afore strode a nun spirited with God Behind came ye hirsute, ye sick and ye odd A flower-weaver, a mushroom gatherer, A chariot driver who pressed close behind her There too came a knight, Excalibur blade Whetted and sharpened and for battle made To take on a dragon and announce his woe At quickening gale and melting snow. An adept of physic and mathematics teacher

A quietly radical Wales-dwelling preacher, Servant of Jesus in search of ye grail. Whilst running around, chasing his very tail

A hound was there, who served well his mistress A witch's familiar with familiar sorceress.

Radical Kentish youths were there With dirty gowns and messy hair A Frenchman who despised ye food His voice was loud, his parley rude.

And in yon merry company, Recording all were there scribes three, Whose great black eyes did watch ye mission Whose magic ears hardened words spoken Recording prayer and words profane So might they one day watch again.

One day Lord God, as they were walking, Sent down a man who started talking About how he began that morn' With bitter heart and hopes forlorn That he would ne'er behold ye day That greed would all be rubbed away, His cheek grew red, his eye shed tear To spy ye party drawing near, By parting time, his hopes were high His hand held Times of Occupy.

With standard flapping in ye wind Ye posse stopped at old Gravesend, Were welcomed by a turbaned brother And Sikhs who seek in their Gurdwara. This noble faith did please the Quaker As like unto his, but spiced of flavour. With humble manner, gracefully They ladled dhal and poured out tea And conversed they, without a hurry See how ye bishop serves thine curry. While wholesome tolerance they did meet, Intolerance to milk and wheat Smote a bowel amidst ye party They left serene, but gravely farty.

A vicar's wife, most pure of heart, Drove a folk's wagon horse and cart With Christ at rear, symbol of fish, With googley eyes, ye twain skew-wiff They hauled ye stinking baggage onward Recently skipped, presently putrid Ye soggy canvas and socks gone rotten And victuals that wert long forgotten In Christian service she endured profane To glory of Christ, for love of Father. She'd hail a bus, to meet at luncheon



In yon rustic inn where they sat a-munchin'.

Once upon ye pilgrim's way When sweetmeat, fig roll had eaten they The pilgrims came upon a churchyard To salute ye sun and stretch out eastward. Each God-sent day, they were awoken, A chorus sang that morning was broken But ne'er didst choristers e'er rehearse And ne'er learned they ye second verse.

Rising once in Kentish pastures To punningly punish Kentish Bankers At Rochester, 'neath tow'ring steeple Occu-priests met merchant people. There spake a deputy in lies "Our Tory goals art Occupy's!" Pilgrims durst ask bishop that day For fifty pounds, and if he was gay. (The answers, shouldst thou care to know Were yea to first, and to second, no)

Newington's canon did with them sing And ancient church bells did they ring The ether occupied wi' chimes, They left behind, ye Occupied Times. At Faversham, 'neath waxing moon A farmer and planter did join platoon.

Ye faithful's grandest occupation, A Medieval chapel at ye destination, Where at morning worship, all prayed together, Various creeds, to just one Father, Wide-wandered feet upon one ground. Ancient stone there echoed ye sound Of clerics in frocks, rememb'ring ye needy And pilgrims decrying and cursing ye greedy And turning their God-wrought dissatisfaction To march and strike, and t'wards direct action.

Gospel songs sung, the pilgrims a-clapping And then ye Sikhs came tabla tapping. In a thousand years, had old Kent's cathedral E'er heard drum of yon Indian minstrel? Newington's canon a headscarf did don The cathedral fathers harked they with none And in ye hallowed chapel there Was sung an imman's call to prayer.

And thence the pilgrims, away they went For three days with ye wise of Kent, To jaw with scholars and vie with clerics On exegesis and economics The scribes recorded ev'ry meeting I know not when will be ye screening.

Beneath a great and gnarléd oak Ye pilgrims sat and traded joke To make compleat ye past'ral idyll Ye elder scribe did stroke his fiddle And play his tunes, of quick and dead As quaffing wine and gobbling bread The pilgrims laughed, as well they might, High spirits on midsummer's night.

The wand'rings here are all but ended In Kentish field, where fast befriended Justice pilgrims bid goodbye To fellow folk of Occupy. But who knows where, and who knows when The pilgrims wander back again?

Jerusalem lies o'er the sea, But the heavenly citadel lies within thee. Verily, ye Kingdom of Heaven's at hand And hands that reach across understand A pilgrimage i'faith goes to ye source Ye seeker's soul's where ends ye course Ye angels cheer when holy ghost Occupies flesh, and makes it host.

For poesy, pilgrims, find your way To nemusend dot co dot uk

PREOCCUPYING:
JOHN HOLLOWAY
“HOPE DEPENDS ON OUR
CAPACITY TO CREATE A
DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING”

JOHN HOLLOWAY IS A LAWYER, MARXIST-ORIENTED SOCIOLOGIST AND AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS BOOKS INCLUDING ‘CHANGE THE WORLD WITHOUT TAKING POWER’, ‘NEGATIVITY AND REVOLUTION: ADORNO AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM’ AND ‘CRACK CAPITALISM’. JOHN HAS LIVED IN MEXICO SINCE 1991, AND HIS WORK IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT. HE CURRENTLY TEACHES AT THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AT THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF PUEBLA.

OCCUPIED TIMES: In your recent work, you propose that one method to change the world without taking state power is to ‘crack’ capitalism. What do you mean by this?
JOHN HOLLOWAY: Occupy. Reclaim the world wherever we are. Say “No, we refuse the logic of capital, we will do things our way. We refuse a world shaped by the logic of money and profit. We shall create a different sociality, a different way of connecting our creativities.” That is what we do all the time. We cannot take over the whole world at once, but we are doing it interstitially, creating cracks in capitalist domination. Cracks are not defined spaces: they open up, expand, run, join up, get filled in, break the surface again.
OT: Are there any successful examples of this method? When and where has capitalism been cracked, and have these cracks managed to spread (or get filled back in)?
JH: I don’t think of it as a method, but as a way to picture what we are already doing and suggest that we need to keep on doing it more and more. To live in the aggression that is capitalism is to resist, to rebel, to try to create spaces that are sheltered from the onslaught. Sometimes these spaces, or cracks, or dignities, are spectacular, like the Zapatista uprising, sometimes more modest like the St. Paul’s occupation or Grow Heathrow, sometimes just individual walkings in the wrong direction, refusals-and-creations. Cracks are everywhere, sometimes very different from one another, but it is important to see the lines of continuity, because the lines of continuity are lines of potential, hidden trails of gunpowder.
The cracks spread all the time – look at the flow of indignados and occuppies over the last year, and yes they often get filled back in (the Egyptian elections, for example) but they burst out again. Domination without resistance is hard to imagine.
OT: From labour to leisure, mass media to social networking, the capitalist dynamic is apparent in almost every aspect of our lives. In light of this, is it not unreasonable to believe that alternative (perhaps ‘anti-capitalist’) spaces could be ‘cracked’ beyond the efforts of fringe activists?
JH: Of course it’s unreasonable. It’s much easier to say that there is no way out, that we are doomed to ride the dynamic of capital until the end of humanity, probably not very far away. That’s much easier, just not very helpful. But in fact I see the cracks as being deeply ingrained in our everyday lives, even when we’re not very conscious of them. We try all

the time to create qualitatively different social relations, relations that do not go with the flow of money, relations that we call dignity or love or comradeship or solidarity. The challenge is to start from there, from the ubiquity of revolt, and see how these flows of revolt can gather the force necessary to break the system. The answer is not obvious, but I see no way of conceiving of revolution other than as the recognition, creation, expansion, multiplication and confluence of cracks.
OT: The Occupy movement has been criticised for its failure to articulate a solution to what the Financial Times suggested was a “capitalism in crisis”. Are these criticisms fair? Do you believe Occupy should have produced an alternative vision to our current predicament?
JH: But the Occupy movement does articulate a solution: by occupying, by constructing forms of direct democracy, by creating different ways of relating to one another. That is the only possible solution. Perhaps they mean that the Occupy movement should articulate suggestions for reconstructing capitalism, possibly for making a fairer capitalism. But why should we articulate suggestions for reconstructing a system which, even in its most attractive versions (Bolivia, Venezuela, perhaps), constitutes an attack against humanity and against the conditions of human existence? Let the destroyers themselves think how they want to destroy, that is hardly for us to propose.
OT: Is it possible for a movement in the global North today to escape state mechanisms of co-optation and move towards a credible, alternative anti-politics of resistance?
JH: TINA. There is no alternative. We just have to break through capitalism before capitalism annihilates humanity.
OT: The Zapatista movement seems to be one of the very few able to create a sustainable decision-making structure wherein power rests with the ‘bottom’, rather than moving upwards. Why do you believe other movements which have attempted to replicate this model have not been as successful?
JH: Certainly the Zapatistas have special conditions, with their long established peasant communities, but what I find very striking is the degree to which horizontalism has become part of the culture of protest all over the world. The Yo Soy 132 student movement which has suddenly arisen here in Mexico in the last few weeks is very clear in its rejection of leadership

structures and its adoption of assemblies as the basic form of organisation, giving it a structure very similar to all the Occupy and indignado movements of the last year or so. That this form of organisation is going to have contradictions and difficulties is clear: it moves against the dominant forms of organisation in the world, against the vertical practices and assumptions of capitalism.
OT: Much of your work focuses on differentiating abstract labour from concrete labour. Why is understanding labour as a unified concept problematic?
JH: The rejection of labour (that is, abstract or alienated labour) is central to our everyday experience. We want to do things, but we want to do what is meaningful for us, and in the way that makes sense to us, not to spend our lives doing things just because that will give us money (and, directly or indirectly, generate profit for someone else). The conflict between these two types of activity runs through our daily lives and when we create a crack or an occupy, a space of negation-and-creation, we are pitching the what-and-how of what we want to do against the what-and-how of capitalist labour. If we have a unified

concept of labour, we gloss over this antagonism between these two types of activity, and we lose the real force of the push for a different world. I think Marx was right in insisting on the crucial importance of what he called the two-fold character of labour, but it is a distinction that got sidelined within the Marxist tradition.
OT: In the light of this, would it be fair to say that workfare schemes in the UK could be considered the byproduct of a left that “seems determined to lock us firmly into capital and close down all alternatives”?
JH: Yes. I think that as long as we think only in terms of capitalist labour-employment, we close down the possibilities of going beyond capitalism. Hope depends on our capacity to create a different way of living, a different way of doing.
OT: You suggest that a broader “grammar of anti-capitalism” connects our efforts to crack capitalism. But what are the prospects of such a grammar gaining currency among ‘the 99%’ when our channels of communication are dominated, distorted and coerced by a grammar more in tune with the commercial interests of corporate media?
JH: The antagonism is there all the

time. Capital attacks us and we resist in whatever way we can. Part of the constant attack is the attempt to pretend that they are not attacking us, but the attack goes on and becomes more and more violent and destructive, and there are limits as to how much it can be hidden. So I don’t think we should give too much importance to the power of the media. But certainly part of the struggle against capital is developing our own forms of communication, our own anti-grammar of resistance and revolt. That is what we are doing at the moment, isn’t it?
OT: We like to think so! When all is said, done and “cracked” - what next?
JH: If all is said and done, there is nothing left to say and do. But if everything is cracked – as it is, because there is no corner of existence where capital reigns supreme, free of our drive in the opposite direction – then there is a whole world to say and do, a whole world to create, a whole world to which we must collectively give birth. Fortunately, we no longer know exactly how this can be done. It is a creation we are creating, a multiplicity of paths we make by walking, and we walk asking. The question “what next?” never goes away.



ANDREA BAKACS

QUEER GROUPS ORGANISE AGAINST THE CUTS

ASHLEE
CHRISTOFFERSEN

As the name already suggests, the LGBT (or “LGBTQ”, or “LGBTQI”) political community is incredibly diverse and complex. Class, race, gender, disability, age, nationality and immigration status intersect with “LGBT” to create multiple and sometimes conflicting interests and experiences. Additionally, there are huge differences in experience between lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people: it is a community united not by one thing - sexuality - but by marginal relationships to dominant institutions of heterosexism and to mainstream gender relations. LGBT activists contest the structural privileging and normalisation of “opposite” sex relationships. Additionally, they challenge the idea that there are only two genders: the dominant “straight” versions of masculinity and femininity.
Unfortunately, issues of identity-based inequality are often ignored or downplayed by mainstream Leftists. Dominant, institutionalised LGBT organisations would have us believe that the most important issue for LGBT people in the UK at the moment is equal marriage. But, as Louise from Queer Resistance points out, “lots of us are fighting for accommodation, medical care, there are so many more important things in the world. Equal marriage campaigns take attention away from the more important stuff.” The Coalition for Equal Marriage’s all-white campaign video, depicting a gay returning British soldier proposing to his partner, is an excellent example of how the “rights” of minority groups can be instrumentalised by, and assimilated into, mainstream narratives. Granting gay marriage is a relatively easy and inexpensive facade of progressivism, but it obscures the role of governments in creating structural economic inequalities that disproportionately affect LGBT people. Gay marriage has already been instituted by neoliberal governments in Canada and Latin America, with arguably little impact on the everyday lives of the majority of LGBT people.
And as with race or gender, there can be misconceptions not only that “they” are already “equal”, or that they “have it pretty good”. The term “the pink pound” explicitly refers to the idea that gay couples (supposedly with no children, and two incomes) are financially better off than their straight counterparts. The commercial gay press in London participates in propagating this myth. And of course LGBT people who are visible in the media are predominantly white, ‘middle class’, and not disabled.
But most LGBT people do not belong to this privileged group. In fact, they are disproportionately impacted by public sector cuts, as are women, non-white people, and disabled people. The unprecedented attack on disabled

peoples’ rights by this government has been documented; and LGBT people are more likely to be disabled than the general population due to the impact of HIV/ AIDS and homophobia and transphobia on mental and physical health. The same vulnerability exists in the socioeconomic realm as well. As queer organisers point out, when jobs and affordable housing are scarce, people who differ from the norm are likely to find it harder to secure work and affordable housing. “If they’re already struggling, employers are more likely to avoid the butch dyke, trans person, gay man”, says Elaine from Queer Resistance. Ronan adds that austerity politics now means that “things affecting minorities are not priorities. But this is the wrong way of looking at it – who is ultimately benefiting? People in minority groups lose the most.”
Liam from Queer Resistance points out that NHS cuts will have a particular impact on trans people who require access to treatment, including hormones and surgery - an issue echoed by many queer organisers. “People are not aware of it, and the general public is not always supportive [of trans people’s access to care] in the first place. I have to explain how important surgery is to people, how important it was for me.” There is already anecdotal evidence of treatment being denied, and of suspended referrals from general practitioners to specialist gender identity clinics. Cuts have also impacted HIV treatment and prevention, services for LGBT youth, anti-homophobia work in schools, and domestic violence support. To highlight some of these cuts, queer organisers opened a sexual health clinic outside of the HSBC in Covent Garden on 28 May 2011 as part of UK Uncut actions.
The actual impact of neoliberal policy is impossible to gauge, as information on sexuality and transgender status is usually not collected by the government, employers, or even most trade unions. “The percentage of LGBT people who are unemployed is practically invisible,” says Anton Johnson of Left Front Art Collective. Homophobia and transphobia mean that some people don’t want to disclose their sexual orientation or transgender status to anyone. At the same time, institutions use a lack of information on LGBT people as an excuse for inaction. Information collection that includes sexuality is something many LGBT activists have been demanding for a long time.
Working in coalition and mixed movements brings both opportunities and challenges for LGBT people who organise against the cuts. “Privileged groups shouldn’t speak for the oppressed, there is an appropriation there. We need to speak for ourselves, but there is room for allies,” says Elaine from Queer Resistance. But Liam sees new coalitions as unavoidable: “We have to

be in solidarity with other groups if we want our voices to be heard”. But left-wing movements have much to learn if they are to be inclusive of queer people. “There can be issues around recognising gender diverse identities. A heterosexual viewpoint is often assumed.” Richard Farnos of Queers United Against the Cuts agrees: “We attended the Lambeth Save Our Services People’s Assembly last year and there was no recognition that LGBT people were disproportionately affected by the cuts. Sadly, despite pointing this out to them more than once, they have not amended their declaration yet. Ironically, Lambeth has one of the largest LGBT communities in the country.”
What can Occupy do to be more inclusive and representative? Ronan from Queer Resistance and Occupy says that “we could do a lot better. We need to recognise not only what unites us but what makes us different from one another, our privileges and our oppressions. One of our big challenges is to figure that out.”
Queer Resistance, Queers United Against the Cuts and Left Front Art Collective are currently building support within LGBT communities toward the TUC’s 20th October mass demonstration.



CHRISTINA E LOZANO

FROM QUEBEC
TO LONDON
IS STUDENT POWER
ON THE RISE?

MARK
BERGFELD



NUS President Liam Burns and a number of Guardian columnists have claimed that student power is on the rise. But in their exuberant optimism, they fail to address the process by which the government is pushing through a ‘consumer-model’ of higher education, cloaked in the language of student power. The agenda of Universities’ Minister David Willetts and UK vice-chancellors has nothing in common with the cry for student power that echoed from the streets two years ago, during the biggest student revolt since the late 1960s.
In many universities, students are now represented on almost every decision-making committee. They have a say about capital investments at a university level, they influence how subjects are taught and can even grade their teachers. Thus many within the student movement and commenting on it believe that students have far more power than they used to have.
However, membership in the governing body of a university which is strapped for cash, intent on cutting unprofitable courses and which values the ‘student experience’ higher than the education it provides does not empower students. It effectively renders them powerless. Willetts and the vice-chancellors are rubbing their hands at the prospect of students presiding over cuts to lecturers’ salaries, evaluating their teachers’ bad performance, and arguing for ‘value for money’ in their education.

**In the current climate of cuts, existing divisions between students and academic staff will only be reinforced by advocating this flawed model of student power. Academic staff no longer live in ivory towers. In fact, the university sector is highly casualised, often forcing PhD students to work for free and leading lecturers to concentrate on the marketing and branding of their course rather than the teaching itself. Rather than working co-operatively, students are co-opted and lecturers are forced to compete against each other. In one section of the “Higher Education White Paper”, Minister Willetts wrote about ‘putting students into the driving seat’. The only problem is that he has tied us to the seat and set the car on fire. Having to deal with a student representative on the board of governors or in the Senate is something Willetts and his lackey vice-chancellors can live with. Having 400 students demonstrate against the decisions these bodies make is something they handle less well. The student revolt in 2010 showed a different kind of student power, a force which successfully united students with academic and non-academic staff in demonstrations, strikes and occupations. The slogan of student power hardly featured. Instead, they chanted: “Students and workers unite and fight!”
Today, students are learning the same lesson that students learnt in 1968: Student power collapses if isolated. It must succeed in mobilising broader social forces,**

most importantly, the working class. In 1968, French students of the Sorbonne university ignited the largest general strike in history. Today’s student strikes have a long way to go to match the energy of ‘68. Nevertheless, the strikes have been successful in sparking new social struggles and reigniting old ones.
Students in Quebec have been asserting themselves in the streets for more than 130 days now. They have won concessions from a neoliberal government and have brought the popular classes of Quebec behind the demands of the movement. Undoubtedly, police and legislative repression has played a significant role in galvanising support for the Quebec student protests, but one cannot underestimate the role of the trade union movement.
This autumn could see a new phase of student protest in the UK. With the TUC demonstration for pensions, a student demonstration by NUS, and a new round of industrial action by teachers and lecturers being planned, workers and students can create the kind of power which has the ability to change not only our campuses and universities, but also the society we live in.
Mark Bergfeld has been on the National Executive of the NUS for the last two years. He is part of the Education Activist Network and tweets at @mdbergfeld

FOONS WAI

TALES FROM THE GRIND

JEMIMA CRAIG

“I COORDINATED THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF ABOUT 1,000 COCK SHOTS”

Working any nine-to-five entry level office job in midtown Manhattan (ten to six, in my case) presents a varied if predictable set of challenges: the subway, other people, dawdling tourists, foul odors of both known and mysterious origin, dead rats, skyscrapers that block the sun, harsh air conditioning, terrible yet irresistible break room coffee, irrational, micromanaging bosses, and the like.

So you devise coping strategies. You invent silly life stories for the people you see on the train every day; you maintain epistolary relationships with your friends who are similarly bound to desks; you take long walks during your lunch breaks to find any surprises that might still be hiding in such a sterile and uninviting neighborhood. And you get on with it. There are forces in this world, however, for which I have no natural defence.

For three years I worked as an assistant at an erotic photographer's archive which, despite how it sounds, was a typical office job. Without going into the saucy details, I coordinated the international distribution of about 1,000 cock shots. Outside of work I was often introduced as "my friend who administrates gay porn," a moniker I learned to embrace. But I didn't work in gay porn. These photographs were in fact considered "high art" by the institutions that determine such things so, nominally at least, I was doing well by my degree in art history. I even got to indulge in the New York art world's after hours displays of pseudo-

intellectual vanity, in its sombre parade of champagne parties and benefit dinners. What a drag.

I entered the job thinking I would be able to cope well enough with this sort of thing. I'm an adult, I'd tell myself. Not only am I an adult I'm a student of art. I've seen Carolee Schneeman pull a scroll out of her vagina. What's a naked man being dragged across a dungeon by his nipple ring to me? As time went on though, I had to accept that I was losing the war of attrition against the penis army.

Don't get me wrong, I don't object to erotica or pornography. I consider myself sex-positive. But I am the puritan my foremothers made me and, as a puritan, there are only so many times I can look at a man's bloodied genitals or two fists entering a sudsy anus. My day job began to take a toll on my inner life. I saw phalluses everywhere I looked: on coffee tables, at fruit stands, in the clouds. The very thought of a penis began to fill me with a seething repulsion. And soon enough came along the cock that broke this poor puritan's back.

From the window above the copy machine I could see into all of the offices in the adjacent building and, needless to say, much of my day was spent making photocopies. There was one character who had consistently caught my eye. He wore an olive green trench coat and a faded white fedora. He appeared to be at least middle aged, though I had never seen his face. I had, however, watched him watch an



astonishing amount of actual porn. He would jump from video to video and, when inspiration apparently never struck, he would start up a game of solitaire. He performed this anti-mating ritual at least three times a week and, according to my colleagues, this had been going on since long before I started working there.

One day, while I was making photocopies of some useless document, the man was seated at his desk watching porn as usual. I had a three-quarter view of him, though I still could not see his face. I was waiting for him to open the green solitaire screen, to remind me that there are things in life you can always count on. Suddenly I saw something I never asked for: the pink tip of his sad little penis peeking out from under his desk. Inspiration had finally struck. Why? I asked myself. Why me? Haven't I had enough cock for one day? And why don't I just look away? Why am I calling all of my coworkers over? Why are we all standing here watching this wretched display of humanity? Or am I unfairly judging this man? Am I

really any better? As his arm flailed wildly under the desk, we watched together yet alone, suspended between fascination and revulsion, shock and depression.

It ended as suddenly as it began. He grabbed a tissue and gingerly wiped away the evidence. He then appeared to untie a black string from around his penis and, sure enough, started up a game of solitaire. I finally turned away, horrified and a little bit sadder.

The masturbation became a frequent occurrence after that and I always watched. I couldn't stop wondering how I had gotten to this place in my life. By day I was a peeping-tom office drone watching strangers masturbate, both live and recorded, and by night an increasingly annoyed socialite who could no longer stand the sight of male genitalia, an awkward position for a heterosexual woman to be in. When it all came to a head (pun intended) not only did I leave that job, I left the country. One day I'll go back, but I'll never be the same.

THE OT HOROSCOPE

OPPRESSORS



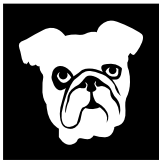
COP

July will bring increased demands on your services, but with it, increased powers at your disposal. While Olympians compete on a level playing-field, it's your job to ensure those trying to even things up in the real world don't get a footing. This is no time to be sporting; crack down hard on any dissent, and you may just end up with a medal of your own.



BANKER

Everyone is terrified that Atlas will drop the globe on Greece, but you're sitting pretty. Who cares if a sovereign falls when you've bet on both heads and tails? Your debt will be offloaded onto those less fortunate this month, as it always is. So as long as your number is never up, keep that roulette wheel spinning. The number 99 could bring bad luck.



NATIONALIST

A veritable orgy of Jubilee flags has perked you up no end. What a shame Independence Day and an Olympic invasion of foreigners will spoil all that pure (or puerile?) splendour. Beware when the Euro crisis strikes again: the Union will get Jacked and it'll be once more into the breach, dear friends, as you cry forlornly for Harry, England and St. George! Your lucky colour this month is Imperial Purple.

PROTESTERS



ANONYMOUS

For someone supposed to be incognito, your presence is almost ubiquitous. But is that really you? Are the flag-waving masked avengers at every demo really the ones doing the hacking, or are they subcontractors - just doing your branding and product placement? With a (Mc)flurry of sports branding under fire elsewhere this month, perhaps now is the time to check whether your own reps are as clean as the starting whistle.



PACIFIST

The world peace you dream of looks more distant by the day. But remember, 'Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it'. Can you find contentment in a warring world? If not, perhaps it's time to combat the combat and join the fightback. You don't have to resort to violence, but tolerance isn't always a virtue, and another letter to your MP will help nobody.



ANARCHIST

While everyone else gets carried away with the Olympic pomp and ceremony, you just can't get excited about rewarding the fittest and strongest among us. Of course, the real winners don't have to compete. You'd rather have roses on your table than a medal on your neck, so if people call you a spoil sport, prove them right and find a way to spoil the sport. Your colour this month is black.

POLITICIANS



NEOLIBERAL

Crisis, what crisis? The current planetary alignment might be taking its toll on society, but up in your ivory tower the view looks good. Unless you look into the future, that is. Your greedy 'want now' attitude might have served you well thus far, but you may soon see that two in the bush trumps one in the hand. Your hand has fed only yourself, expect to get bitten soon.

CHAMPAGNE SOCIALIST



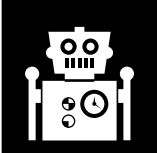
You're no stranger to cries of hypocrisy, but last month was worse than most. Why can't you be an egalitarian "and" a Royalist? Your friends are so rigid in their principles, but things aren't simple; life is complicated, which is why you employ some 'help'. Wanting more for others shouldn't mean self-sacrifice, and like the Queen, you deserve the perks that make life bearable. Your lucky colour this month is Royal Blue.



LIBERAL

To you, the Olympics are one of the things which make life worth living. People of all colours and creeds competing for their nations on a level playing field - it's right in tune with your ethics! But what lies beyond the stadiums? The ticket to your perspective can't be afforded by all, and the markets don't care for second place. Don't be blinded by the golds and silvers, and spare a thought for those disqualified from the fun.

CITIZENS



WORKER

First they take your pay rise, then they take your pension and now they take you to London and make you sleep under a bridge?! Such precariousness can no longer persist - the only answer is to resist! With London set for a fortnight of gridlock, there's no point in even attempting the commute; instead why not stay at home with friends and plan how to seize the means of production?



STUDENT

There's no better way to forget results than to run to the hills for festival season. Of course, festival may spell "wash out" but who needs sunshine when you're sticking it to the man (or getting stuck in the mud)? If hedonism isn't the recipe of choice, perhaps you might find pots, pans and protests where gold once lay beneath the rainbow. Swap hills for streets, ignite your community and we'll all be dining out on casseroles! Your colour this month is squarely red.



PENSIONER

You remember when Her Maj was but a fairytale princess, so bringing in this Jubilee was especially poignant. As much as you enjoyed the occasion, you can't help but feel that a Debt Jubilee might have served the majority better. Your senior Railcard may get you to Buckingham Palace but don't forget which side of the fence you're on. Your lucky number is 65, oh, no...make that 68.



DEMO DATES

7th: The Gift (Liberate Tate) - 11am
End oil sponsorship of the arts. Central London, details day.

7th & 8th: PayUp UK - 12pm
Nationwide actions demanding Sainsbury's pay a living wage. Check PayUp.org.uk or facebook.com/payupuk for details.

9th: Campaign Against Arms Trade: Dinosaur Demo - 4pm
No night at the museum for arms dealers. Natural History Museum SW7 5BD

10th: Disarm the Gallery: Picnic in Trafalgar Square - 5:30pm
Picnic to celebrate National Gallery not hosting arms dealers. Trafalgar Square WC2N 5DN

27th: Critical Mass - 6:30pm
Monthly anarchist bike ride. BFI Southbank (on riverbank)

28th: Counter Olympics Network Action - All Day
Mass co-ordinated Olympics protest. Check http://www.ourolympics.org/ for details

GENERAL ASSEMBLY: “WE NEED YOU!”

ENFORCING NON-VIOLENCE & HORIZONTALITY - WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!



Tennnnnnnnnn-Hut!!!

Now listen up you filthy occupiers! I have reliable intelligence that an elite international force are planning an invasion of the capital city this coming month. These guys are pros: they've already strategically placed surface-to-air missiles at civilian locations and are preparing for a relentless month-long assault. It's gonna be tough, and they'll throw everything they've got at us, but it's up to us to resist this attack on our democracy! Are you with me? I SAID ARE YOU WITH ME, SOLDIER? If any one of you latrine-lickers puts so much as a nostril hair out of place I'm gonna make me a Liberal Intervention: my boot in your ass! That's better...

The enemy is highly organised, has huge resources to draw on, and aims to spread their sick misinformation and propaganda of corporate sponsorship, efficient markets and gentrification. They will implement an elaborate "hearts and minds" strategy, throwing a huge "sporting event" as a smokescreen to hide their true intentions. It's one of the oldest tricks in the book, and one of the most effective, so we're going to need a highly strategic plan.

There ain't no point in playing them at their own game - they'll just out-gun us. Instead we're gonna have to employ non-violent guerrilla tactics of subversive agitation. The enemy will attempt to disable us by capturing our leaders, so we won't have any! They will try to find weak points in our hierarchy, so we'll adopt horizontal organisation. And they will try to demoralise us, so we will need lulz.

It may seem unconventional, but dang it, these are unconventional times, and a wave of autonomous resistance might just take them by surprise. Either way, it's our only hope.

We live in grave times, soldiers. Greece has already fallen to the imperialist forces, and Spain, Italy and Portugal are in the enemy's sights. If we don't act now, soon it could be too late. One thing we have to our advantage is numbers. We outstrip them 99 to 1, and have honour, integrity and solidarity on our side.

So I want to see a movement, people! And I want to see it move! Now march with me...

*I don't know but I've been told...
(I don't know but I've been told)
It's us who pay when the banks all fold...
(It's us who pay when the banks all fold)*

*We take the flak because the 99 percent...
(We take the flak because the 99 percent...)
Can't afford health-care or pay the rent...
(Can't afford health-care or pay the rent...)*

*Bailed out the banks and got sold-out...
(Bailed out the banks and got sold-out...)
This is class war without a doubt...
(This is class war without a doubt...)*

*Whose streets? (Whose streets?)
Your streets! (Your streets!)
My streets! (My streets!)
Our streets! (Our streets!)
Mean streets (mean streets)
Reclaim them streets! (Reclaim them streets!)*

*This is what democracy looks like...
(This is what democracy looks like...)
Not a big fat bonus or a corporate pay-hike...
(Not a big fat bonus or a corporate pay-hike...)*

*We want change, and we want it now...
(We want change, and we want it now...)
Destroy the FTSE and smash the DOW...
(Destroy the FTSE and Smash the DOW...)*

OLYMPIC SHAMES CROSSWORD

THE OT

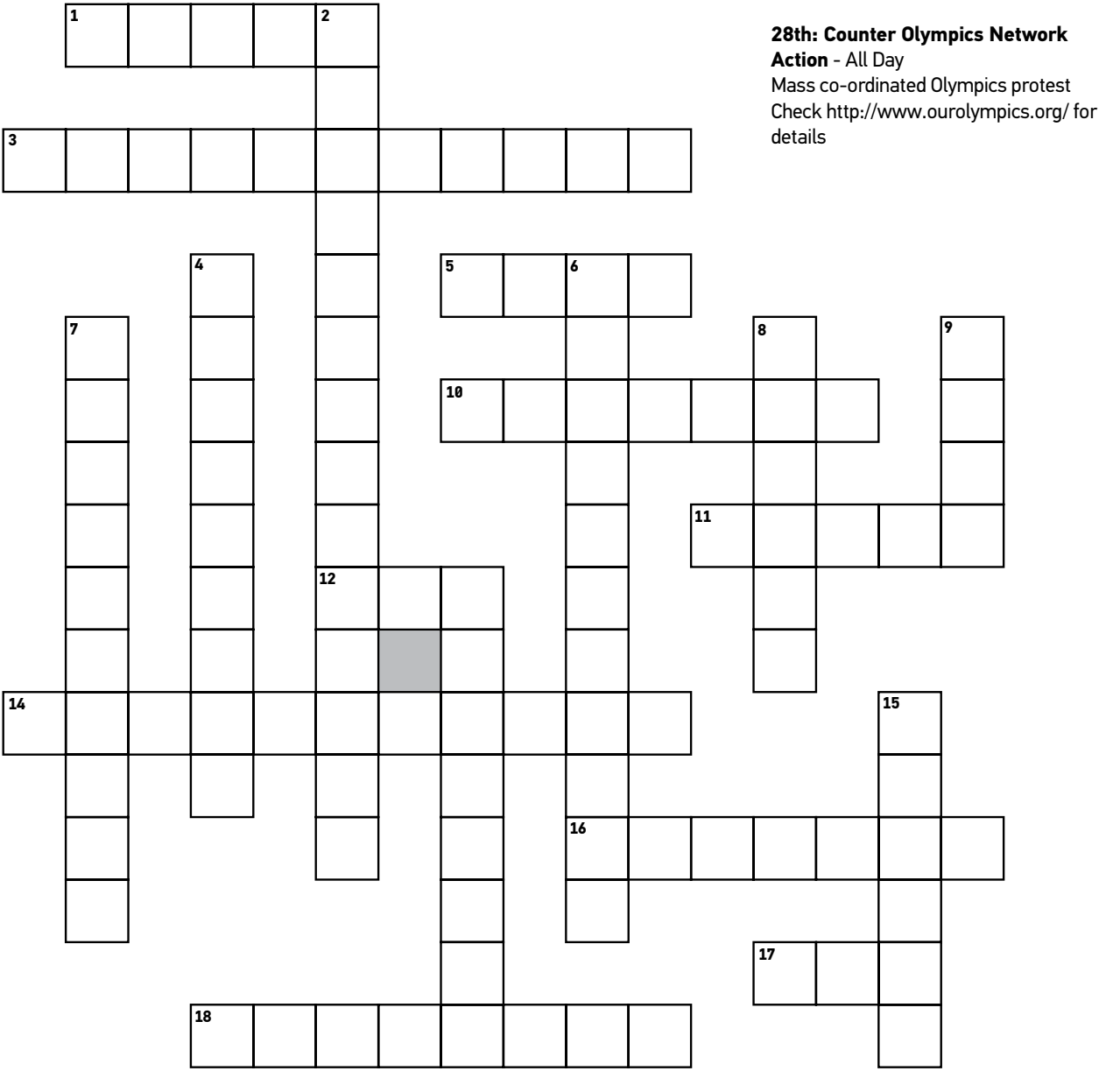
IT'S THE TAKING PART THAT COUNTS

ACROSS

1. Last name of athlete who made the host nation's notion of their own racial superiority look ridiculous when he stormed to 4 gold medals at the Berlin Games in 1936. (5) // **3.** Brunel, Qatar and this Western-backed country are the only nations never to have been represented by a female athlete. (5,6) // **5.** Gordon may have flogged all ours, but we'll be hoping to bring some back in the swimming, cycling and rowing events. (4) // **10.** A whole bunch of capitalists did this to Moscow in 1980 so a whole load of communists did it to LA in 1984. War's Cold. (7) // **11.** Northern city where a man with a beautiful dread-mullet was arrested for attempting to put out the Olympic flame (5) // **12.** Lord who was head of the bid for the London Olympics. (3) // **16.** German electrical conglomerate found to have paid bribes to officials to secure contracts at the Athens 2004 Games. Ein Mess (anagram) (7) // **17.** After 2 US athletes raised their fists during their 1968 Olympic medal ceremony, in protest at the endemic racism in society, this organisation decided to force the US Team to send the athletes home. Funny, as the organisation's president Avery Brundage was head of the US Team in 1936 and had no problem with Nazi salutes. (3) // **18.** First they moved their station from Waterloo to St. Pancras, now they're opening a new stop at Stratford. East London will finally have decent baguettes! (8)

DOWN

1. The Official London 2012TM Olympics ProtestersTM. (5,9) // **4.** This keen Fascist and favourite of the Franco regime was president of the International Olympic Committee from 1980-2001. Must have been an oversight. (9) // **6.** Site where residents protested about the building of an Olympic basketball court. (6,5) // **7.** The man charged with putting together the opening ceremony. Why depict gritty urban life when there's an idyllic countryside few get to see? (5,5) // **8.** The Olympic Park in this 2004 host city resembled more of a weed-infested parking lot than 'urban renewal'. (6) // **9.** This global IT corporation, who are responsible for the inept and discriminatory assessments for Disability Living Allowance, are, of course, one of the main sponsors of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. (4) // **13.** First corporate name to appear on the London Tube map, thanks to the cable car addition near Greenwich to accommodate Olympics transport. (8) // **15.** Eleven Israeli athletes were murdered by the group Black September at the 1972 Olympics in this city. (6).





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