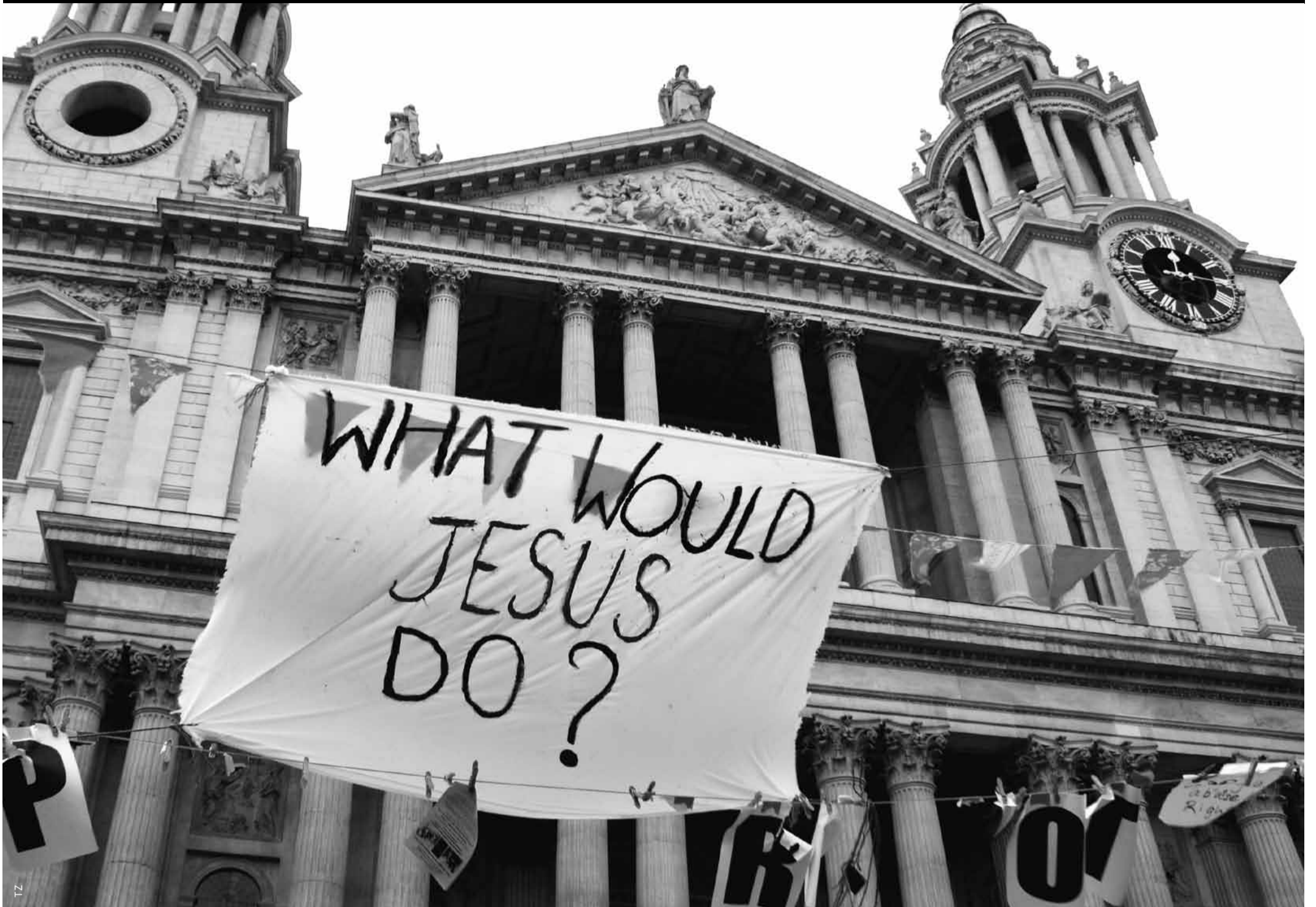


The Occupied Times

OF LONDON

#02 | theoccupiedtimes.com

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FEARS OF A VIOLENT EVICTION

STACEY KNOTT

Relations between OccupyLSX and St Paul's Cathedral took another twist last Monday when the Dean of St Paul's, Graeme Knowles, resigned amid the controversy of St. Paul's handling of the occupation.

Last week the cathedral sought legal action to evict occupiers, which has caused three clergy to quit.

In a statement, Knowles said he had resigned to "give the opportunity for a fresh approach to the complex and vital questions facing St Paul's, I have thought it best to stand down as dean, to allow new leadership to be exercised. I do this with great sadness, but I now believe that I am no longer the right person to lead the Chapter of this great cathedral."

With Knowles stepping down, the Cathedral has asked the Bishop of London Dr Richard Chartres to assist in providing an independent voice on the ongoing situation at St Paul's.

Two other St Paul's clergy quit their posts in solidarity with the protesters.

The first was the canon chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, Dr Giles Fraser. He said he could not support the possibility of "violence in the name of the church", then the Rev Fraser Dyer, who worked as a chaplain at St Paul's, stepped down because he was "left feeling embarrassed" by the cathedral's eviction decision.

Knowles' announcement came one day after he and Chartres met with the occupiers to listen to and speak to them about their concerns.

At the public meeting, they said they did not want the eviction to be violent, and that they were willing to open dialogue over the issues the movement was trying to address.

However, many protesters told the Occupied Times they felt the clerics were evasive of their questions, and did not say anything of real substance.

Many in the movement were concerned about a violent eviction, after it was announced on Friday that St Paul's and the City of London Corporation were planning on getting high court injunctions to remove the protesters.

Chartres told the occupiers "nobody wants to see violence." Musician and occupier Ben Doran felt the men were contradictory with their intentions to evict, but also not wanting violence.

"An eviction would apply violence. As a logical process you can't be against one and for the other," he said.

Occupier Tanya Paton, who was part of a working group responsible for liaising with the cathedral, told the Occupied Times she had been trying to open dialogue with the cathedral for the past two weeks, and was pleased they had finally started talking to occupiers.

However, she was also concerned about a violent eviction and hoped the church would commit to protecting the occupiers from one.

CHURCH & STATE SEEK LEGAL ACTION

RORY
MACKINNON

Camp residents voiced anger this week as clergy and councillors alike threatened legal action to force them from a public square.

Between 200-300 campers from Occupy London Stock Exchange have held St Paul's Square for more than a fortnight after police barred them from the privately-owned Paternoster Square directly outside the exchange.

But both St Paul's Cathedral and the City of London confirmed late last week they were seeking an eviction order to break up the camp on grounds of obstructing a public highway.

City of London said in a statement they believed protest was "an essential right" in a democracy - "but camping on the highway is not."

"We believe we will have a strong highways case because an encampment on a busy thoroughfare clearly impacts the rights of others," it read.

Meanwhile the Cathedral said only that legal action had "regrettably become necessary."

"The Chapter only takes this step with the greatest reluctance and remains committed to a peaceful solution," the Cathedral's ruling Chapter said in a statement. >>

CONTENTS

PAGES/

- 02 Editorial
Listing
O.E Oakland
- 03 Faith & Finance
- 03 The End of Atomism
- 04 Keep the Peace
This is Revolution
Who Funds St.P Cathedral?
Feeding the Masses
Stock Exchange Monopoly
- 05 City Voice
Closet Egalicians
- 06 This is 'Actually Happening -
World(S) in Movement
- 07 Money Talk
What Would Jesus Do
- 08 To the Occupier
From Occupy Wall Street -
to St.P Occupation
- 09 The Occupation Is Our -
Refusal To Forget
- 10 A Friend Indeed
St. Paul Principles
Poems
- 11 Anarchism For & Against
Pirates
- 12 Use As A Placard

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TENTCITY UNIVERSITY LISTING

WEDNESDAY 2ND

3PM / Anthea Lawson, Global Witness: "The dictator/offshore paper trail"
4PM / Mike Neary: "Radical education"
4PM / @ Finsbury Square Workshop on people's assemblies
5PM / Jasper Tomlinson: "Monetary justice and the need for effective protest"
6PM / Ernest Woolmer, a guide at St Pauls' Cathedral "The history of St Paul's"
8PM / Occupy Cinema presents Battlefield - Bolivian documentary on revolt in La Paz
THURSDAY 3RD
10AM / Rupert Read: "Green growth"
3PM / John Kinsella: "Activist poetics - using poetry to bring positive change"
6PM / "Ten theses on scarcity"
FRIDAY 4TH
12-1PM / George Irvin: "Plan B for Britain"
3.30PM / Skill share: "Improvising activism"
6.30PM / Radical Theory Reading Group meets Occupy LSX

>> The statements followed tense scenes at the council's meeting in Guildhall, where councillors immediately voted 12-4 to eject press and members of the public - including the Occupied Times - before discussing the eviction.

Upwards of 30 protesters sat silently as the resolution passed: only then did protester Ronan McNern break the silence as the 30-odd protesters prepared to leave.

"We're peaceful protesters — we have a just cause and we have a right to be able to demonstrate," he said to applause.

It is understood Occupy's lawyers will likely invoke a

"lawful excuse" for the camp's existence under the European Convention of Human Rights.

Legal volunteer James Smith, a law graduate from Leicester university with a background in conveyancing, told the Occupied Times the case would largely centre on whether or not the act of camping was itself a form of protest.

The camp would then be protected under the Convention's binding right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, he said.

The camp has also accepted an offer from human rights monitors Liberty to mediate talks with councillors and clergy.



EDITORIAL

"All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking," said one of Canon Chancellor Giles Fraser's favourite authors - Friedrich Nietzsche. In the light of last week's events, we can take this affirmation even further and say, at least in the case of Canon Fraser, that some great thoughts are embodied by walking away.

It takes much integrity for a man in his position to recognise the value of moral action despite the implications of his resignation for the church, and still act upon his religious convictions.

We cannot know for sure what happened behind closed doors in the church. But what we do know is that his decision to resign signalled the separation of the church as an institutionalised entity from the person of faith within it. Many Christians - whether serving within the church by virtue of their beliefs, or simply those for whom the Bible's teachings resonate - will recognise this as a crucial moment. Giles Fraser's resignation shows the ability of individuals to moralise where institutions often cannot.

You do not have to be a Christian to acknowledge the discrepancy between the church and the man. By walking away, Fraser has highlighted the dichotomy between the religious establishment and Christ's original moral teachings. As an individual, he has rejected the institutional acceptance of possible violence. Historically, the church has not always shied away from such measures in pursuit

of a perceived 'greater good', so Fraser was not obliged to say: 'Not in my name'.

The Canon's departure leaves a large void within the church. Without his spirit filling the walls of St. Paul's - giving metaphysical meaning to the sound of bells awakening protesters nightly - the cathedral is suddenly reduced to just another building of marble and glass in the centre of this Mecca for bankers. It remains architecturally astonishing, but has been emptied of the morality that cements its foundation.

It is also worth mentioning the warning that Fraser included in his letter of resignation: "If the camp is forcibly evicted, there will be violence in the name of the church against peaceful protesters." We must not fool ourselves; if all other methods to censor our voices and remove our presence fail, violence will occur. It is important to remind ourselves that this protest is not a festival campsite of peace and love. We are seen by many - especially the powers that be - as a hostile presence, and in our hostility to that which is unjust lies our virtue.

This protest provides a physical reminder of the failure of those in possession of socio-economic power to act morally. By leaving St. Paul's in sympathy with those camping out in the tents St. Paul himself once made, Fraser has illustrated that by forcing those with power into moral dilemmas and highlighting the chasm between people and profit, we can succeed in bringing about real change.

OCCUPIED ELSEWHERE

RORY MACKINNON

Occupy Brighton has begun: activists held their first general assembly Saturday with an estimated 130 protesters gathering at the 16-tent camp in Victoria Gardens. The Times' Brighton correspondent described the session as "fruitful."

Authorities across America have continued to crack down hard on occupation camps: New York's fire department had confiscated Occupy Wall St's generators and fuel as the Times went to print, citing a fire risk; while police in Oakland, San Diego and Atlanta broke up local protests with batons, tear gas, flashbang grenades, rubber bullets and kettling, ending in dozens of injuries and arrests.

In an Occupied Times exclusive, a street medic and member of AnonMedics from Occupy Oakland checks in with her own account of police brutality.

"We arrived in Oakland before the march began on Wednesday". Between a thousand to two thousand people gathered on the library steps making speeches. People said the [Oakland Police Department] attempted to force the library to close, but the library refused.

We started off from the library, raucous but peaceful, and into downtown to rally around the jail. Cops tried to kettle, block by block, and the first major altercation occurred when one of them got (harmlessly) splattered with blue paint. At this point, batons came

out, kettle got tighter, they split the march [my partner medic got cut off from me], and they gassed the half of us that got caught, including little children and bystanders. I found gas victims on the ground in a parking lot, and washed their eyes with LAW [liquid antacid and water].

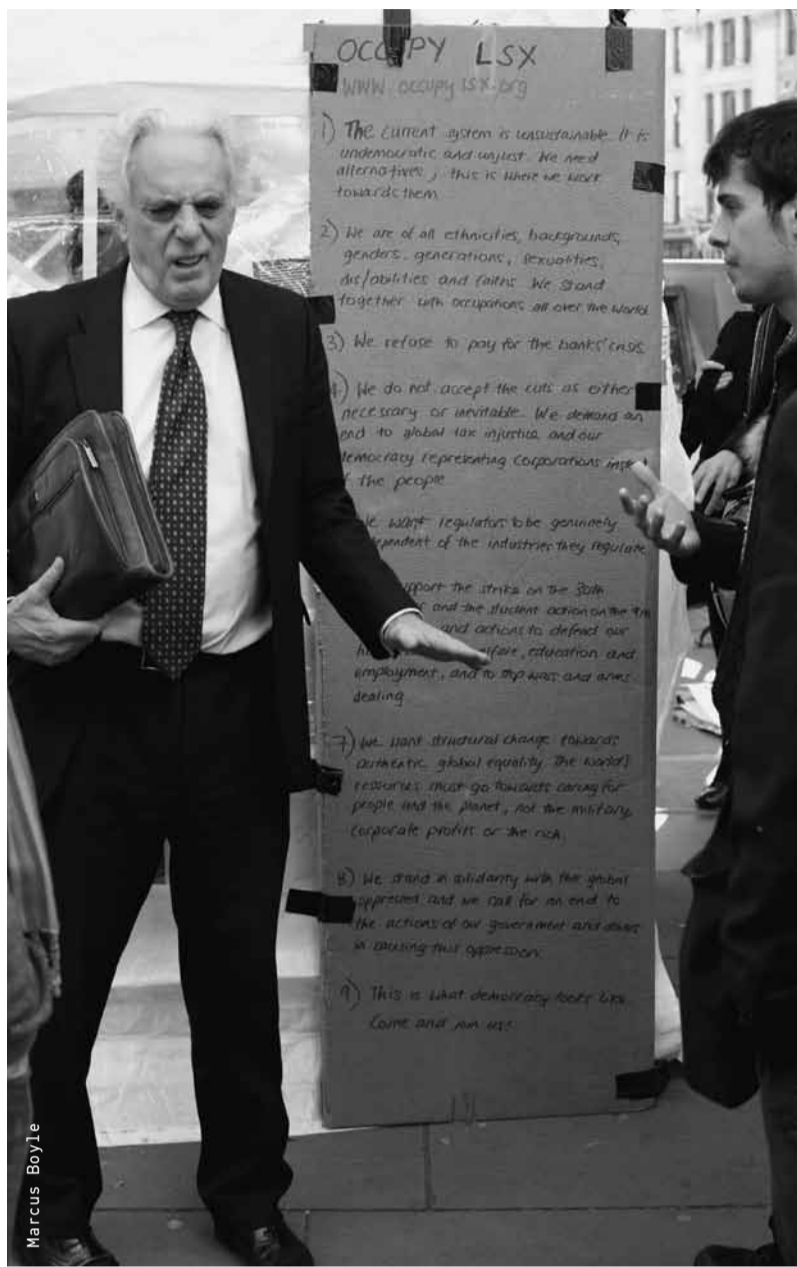
We found the other marchers and approached Oscar Grant, née Frank Ogawa, Plaza. [Grant was an Oakland resident shot in the back while pinned to the ground in police custody in 2009. His killer served two years for involuntary manslaughter.] The plaza was barricaded, so the march moved around downtown, consensus taken repeatedly about where to go next.

The first gas, bullet, and flashbang attack happened at the plaza, as we rallied in the intersection. It happened again and again — gas, flashbangs, bullets, the crowd scattering, and within ten minutes everyone was back at the barricades, unfazed, every time. Street medics pulled person after person out of the cloud, washing their eyes and mouths with LAW, bandaging and photographing their bullet and grenade contusions. Some medics, without protective masks or armor, were gassed three or four times and kept going back in.

The victims were shaken, weeping, shocked that they were being attacked for no reason, by people who we paid to protect us. And it happened five times that night.

FAITH & FINANCE

GABRIEL BALFE



Marcus Boyle

The Occupy London movement is directed against the proverbial “one percent” – not against St. Paul’s Cathedral. It is directed against

the disproportionate concentration of wealth and power at the expense of the many. Bearing this in mind, here are 7 of the 10 trustees of St Paul’s Cathedral Foundation, the charity organisation which oversees all events and projects to do with the cathedral:

- Chairman Sir John Stuttard Partner at PriceWaterhouse Cooper’s; former Lord Mayor of London.
 - Dame Helen Alexander DBE Deputy chair of the Confederation of British Industry, one of the largest business lobbying groups in the country
 - Lord Ian Blair of Boughton Former Metropolitan Police Commissioner
 - Roger Gifford Investment banker
 - Gavin Ralston Global Head of Product and leading international asset manager at Schroder Investment Management
 - Carol Sergeant CBE Chief Risk Director at Lloyds TSB; formerly Managing Director for Regulatory Process and Risk at the Financial Standards Authority
 - John Spence OBE Former Managing Director, Business Banking, LloydsTSB
- Nobody suggests that the trustees are gathering for

clandestine meetings, like members of a secret brotherhood. But what we can conclude from the above is just how collusive, how intertwined, the institution of St Paul’s is with the ideology which we are trying to fight. It would be naïve to expect the trustees to offer skills and knowledge to St. Paul’s without being influenced by their experiences and interests. Their biographies, after all, reflect a very particular way of life. St. Paul’s, as an institution, obviously lends great weight to their views and opinions.

The trustees of St. Paul’s have benefitted enormously from the present state of affairs. Yet they are now dealing with a movement that brings attention to the injustices embedded in that state of affairs and to those who do not benefit from it.

The events of the last few weeks have led to a very interesting dynamic. At the time of writing, two clerical figures have resigned over the church’s decisions. We are witnessing the clash of two visions for the role of the church. According to the first view, St. Paul’s is primarily a tourist attraction and a provider of church services.

It is comfortably situated in the centre of the largest concentration of wealth in Britain even in times of economic crisis and hardship. Yet this view now clashes with the self-image of the church as the moral conscience of society.

Until recently, St Paul’s has limited itself to areas of activity where it has never had to confront this contradiction directly. Words sufficed whenever moral questions were put before the church. As recently as last week, Graeme Knowles, the Dean of St Paul’s, wrote in a statement that, “The debate about a more just society is at the heart of much our work at St Paul’s and indeed we hope to contribute to the wider debate in the very near future through a Report from the St Paul’s institute.”

To us, the vague promise of “a Report” seems disappointingly non-committal. Fed up with the inequalities of our society, people have brought themselves out onto the streets to actually manifest change. Our unique situation of Occupy LSX has not only highlighted problems of injustice but has also shone a light on the role of the church as a moral guardian of society.

Many clerics are now faced with a moral dilemma: How will the church (and the individuals that comprise it) deal with a protest movement whose aims converge with certain ideals of the Christian faith? And how will St. Paul’s financial interests influence discussions about moral leadership? The resignation of two clergy members indicates the severity of the dilemma that might eventually result in the forcible removal of protesters from the doorsteps of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

THE END OF ATOMISM

A BRIEF CRITIQUE OF THE NEOLIBERAL AGENDA

TARYN LADENDORFF

When I was little, my grandfather took me on his knee and explained the market to me. In theory, it was a way for people to invest in businesses and commodities that they saw had a future in the economy. For a handful of bills, we could own a tiny slice of a business. However, in the last decade this simple act has exploded into complexity, with over-the-counter derivatives, futures contracts, currency speculation, or tax credit default swaps.

Market finance became a new form of worship: What would the market think? What would the market say? Without even knowing why, the common person was suddenly exhorted to care very deeply about how the market “felt” about something. If the market was upset, something so unspeakably terrible would happen! Better to offer up our flesh and blood as sacrifice, cut social spending and our children’s futures short so that the market might be pleased. The high priests of power encourage us to trust them and to simply let them act in our best interest – whether or not we understand what is going on.

“Why”, might we ask, “is it so important to develop an understanding of the market and of neoliberal market theory?” There are two answers to this: First, it is not difficult to understand what is going on. There might be very confusing terms thrown about, but the confusion boils down to simple concepts. Secondly, the “Occupy

_____” movement is a movement directed against the neoliberal agenda, although it does not always articulate its opposition in those terms. In order to cure an illness, we must first diagnose it. Only then will we be able to formulate the proper medication needed to get better.

Neoliberalism can be a confusing term. David Harvey defines it as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.” To put it simply: the market must be free, without government interference beyond enforcing private property laws. The confusion sets in when we remember that with all these bailouts, tax cuts, and slaps-on-the-wrist, the market isn’t really free at all! If anything, it is now intimately connected with the state. So neoliberalism is something that is inherently contradictory in its stated ideology.

Yet if we understand neoliberalism as an ideology that encourages the accumulation of assets and power through the free market, state involvement by way of bail-outs and austerity cuts suddenly seems more reasonable to prevent a growing imbalance between the marginalized many and the powerful few.

Neoliberalism assumes that the state has a new role in our

lives. Instead of it being something that is elected by and for the people, it is now an institution that is the protector/enforcer of the market and its whims. In return for protecting the free market, the state gains an incredible amount of power. Under the auspices of “protecting private property”, governments now have the legal ability to intrude on your life in ways never before imagined.

Neoliberalism started out by attacking the most vulnerable among us: those who live hand-to-mouth in the third world, the poor, the mentally ill, the cold, and the hungry. Yet just as neoliberal capitalism demands more access to markets in order to expand, it also demands that new populations live according to its logic.

The United States is a fantastic example. A reckoning for the sins of the father came upon the United States in the form of rotting houses in New Orleans, empty factories in Detroit, and homeless veterans freezing to death in the streets of New York. The wealth gap grew as wages started to fall and jobs grew scarce. Suddenly, we began to notice that our social safety net had been cut from under us: No health insurance, unemployment compensation at £120 per week, houses being foreclosed on, and retirement accounts that suddenly became worthless. As social security and education are hauled up on the chopping block, forces that the US government helped to unleash consume our future.

Yet the most dangerous part of neoliberalism is that it pursues an atomistic view of society. According to that logic, society is simply made up of individuals whose primary democratic responsibility is consumption. This individualisation of humankind created not only a vacuous consumer culture, but also ended up isolating us to an astonishing degree.

The true achievement of the Occupy movement has been a reclaiming of public space and human solidarity. When was the last time you stood around and spoke to perfect strangers about how the world should be run? The Occupy movement has begun to refocus our attention on non-monetary values. The potency of those discussions is evident. This is why skulls get cracked in New York, flash bangs and gas gets thrown in Oakland, and why the police parade around with machine guns here in London.

It is the simple act of gathering and independent thinking that constitutes the biggest threat to the status quo. If the people have found a way to excuse themselves from their bleak existence by gathering and feeding and caring for each other, the system of speculative profit begins to crack.

Therein lies the real threat to the 1%. Concerns about health and safety violations, about fire codes or the loss of tourist money merely mask the much bigger jeopardy to the status quo: A people who are self-actualized and determined to break the endless cycle of consumption. It is precisely in those ruptures that we may find a cure to the disease of neoliberalism.



Matthew Myatt



Matthew Myatt

HIP-HOP REVOLUTION

MIRCEA BARBU

Some of London's best underground hip-hop artists turned up at Occupy LSX for an impromptu concert on Friday night. Following the routine general assembly, St. Paul's square became an outdoor music venue as artists tackled social issues with rap.

Just minutes earlier, protestors had been debating whether or not to adopt resolutions regarding the bio-sphere and global action into a planned set of demands.

Rap artists Sunny Green and Robert Proverbz were just two of a host of performers who took the debate to a new level with their subversive lyrics about government, police and inequality.

Occupiers and passers-by quickly gathered to listen to the artists expressing their support for the occupation the way they know best: through music.

16 year old Sunny Green was first on stage. His creative anger announced what soon became a memorable night at LSX. "We need to be taught from a young age about the lawful meaning of words" said Sunny.

"Through music we will change things. That's why there's many 16 year olds down here, they know what's going on".

His enthusiasm, energy and creativity were remarkable. Their potential to inspire our

youth to become more aware of the real connotations of this movement was clear as the crowd responded positively to very specific lyrics.

Robert Proverbz, 28, followed shortly after with an emotionally charged performance, again using lyrics in keeping with the movement which resonated with the gathered crowd.

The experienced rapper was less optimistic than his younger contemporary, expressing his doubts about the outcome of the movement while speaking to The Occupied Times, "To be honest I don't think change is possible right now, the agenda is far too long in, but that doesn't stop me.



FEEDING THE MASSES

STACEY KNOTT

Alessandro Petrucci has become a familiar face to participants of the London occupation, whom he feeds us daily. Working from a small camp kitchen, a tent tucked on the right side of St Paul's Cathedral, he provides at least 400 meals a day using food donated by supporters of the movement.

A trained Italian chef, Alessandro runs the kitchen in an unorthodox but professional manner. He worked in some of Milan's top restaurants, and now lives in London working nights at a security firm and spending his days running the kitchen. The make-shift kitchen is in a gazebo, with gas cookers, long tables and a washing up section. And it's not only the occupiers he has been feeding.

Alessandro has had homeless people and tourists as well as business people stopping by for nourishing meals.

The kitchen usually has snacks, like bread, spreads, fruit or biscuits laid out, and the staff are often seen bent over gas cookers making rice dishes, lentil, soups or pasta when trying to provide 3 hot meals a day. As he is fully trained in kitchen health and safety, the kitchen meets all the requirements needed to operate. "Safety in the kitchen is very important, we have danger in every corner, we have knives, we have fire, everything," he said. A city health inspector has come around to check out the kitchen a few times since its inception and has found it up to standard each

time, something to be expected, Alessandro said.

He always has an eye on what all his voluntary staff are doing, and coordinates them as needs be. He also enforces rules that are found in any professional kitchens, like the no smoking requirement, hair covered and tied back and clean and tidy clothing. "I don't want to make myself responsible for eviction because of the kitchen; the kitchen is safe", Alessandro told Occupied Times. The kitchen is always in need of donations, and they are grateful for all offers.

If you want to meet Alessandro or any of the dedicated, hard-working volunteers working in the kitchen come down to St. Paul's Square. We're open!

STOCK EXCHANGE MONOPOLY

MARTIN EIERMANN

The "Capitalism Is Crisis" banner might have come down, but there is a new centerpiece of (self-) expression at the St. Paul's camp: A giant monopoly board that plays on discussions of greed and bailouts. The piece was donated to the camp by an unnamed artist ahead of the Monopoly Bike Ride on October 27. Since then, several pieces of art have been added to the original installation, including a mock get-out-of-jail card with the tags of the street artists Banksy and Zeus. The Occupied Times spoke with several people who indicated that the art had indeed been donated by Banksy.

"Monopoly" began its history as an educational game titled "Landlord's Game" in the early 20th century. The original creator, a woman named Elizabeth Margie, wanted to use the game to explain the benefits of a single tax on land that would have made it less costly to run individual businesses and more costly to amass large amounts of land in private hands. During the Great Depression, the idea caught the eye of

American economics students. They adjusted the rules to allow players to link properties and construct buildings. The emphasis of the game shifted: Instead of discouraging the monopolization of land, the successful gameplay now depended on the ability of players to monopolize color groups. The game was re-named "Monopoly" and first sold during the 1934 holiday season.

Only in the 1970s did someone try to return the game to its original idea. Economics professor Ralph Anspach won an out-of-court settlement in 1974 that allowed him to sell his own game under the name "Anti-Monopoly" - which is just what you would expect: A "game which is against monopolists", according to Anspach.

True to its message, the St. Paul's board has already begun to evolve from installation to message board. Political graffiti covers most of the art while the adjacent Tent City University hosts regular discussions and lectures about economics, politics, and justice.

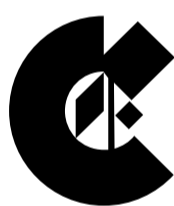




"My job is to help people become financially secure, to protect their families and income and ensure they are not just relying on the government financially when it comes to their retirements. I've seen how some people have been quite frustrated with what's been going on in the last few years with the markets and the way things are run here, and reckon it was only a matter of time before a protest like this happened. If you want to make a statement you've got to do it somewhere the world can see, and St Paul's is one place in London to do just that. I do believe there will be a change, to a certain degree - just look at how much media interest there has been. I feel sorry for Canon Dr Giles Fraser though - because he's been placed under a huge amount of pressure and he probably never thought that something like this would happen! After all that's happened, people who were undecided about these sorts of issues are now finally seeing that there is another side to the coin, and that perhaps there is some truth in what you're saying after all..."
 Kristian Win - Financial advisor

CLOSET EGALITARIANS

MARTIN EIERMANN



Earlier this year, the economist Michael Norton from Harvard Business School and Duke University's behavioral economist Dan Ariely published a study with the title "Building a Better America - One Wealth Quintile at a Time". In it, they asked a representative online panel two simple questions:
 1. What is the distribution of wealth in America today?
 2. What should the distribution of wealth be like?

Respondents to the survey predicted that the top 20% of Americans controlled close to 60% of overall wealth, and that the bottom 40% of Americans controlled close to 10% of wealth. When asked to outline their ideal wealth distribution, respondents came up with an almost egalitarian scheme that would give the top 20% control over 30% of wealth, and give the bottom 40% around 25% of wealth.

The results were rather surprising, even to the two researchers: Both wealth distributions were far off the statistical data that they had gathered about actual wealth distribution. In contemporary America - the land of opportunity, of the American Dream, Hollywood and social mobility - the top 20% control over 80% of wealth. The bottom 40% control less than 2%. That's two percent of wealth, for forty percent of the population - a staggering level of inequality that has been growing rather rapidly since the mid-1970s.

What do you make of those numbers? Norton and Ariely conclude that we tend to be overly optimistic about social mobility (especially in the United States) and

often under-estimate the level of inequality in the world. At the same time, we intuitively reject excessive inequalities. When asked about our moral intuitions, the vast majority of us are closet egalitarians.

Those numbers are specific to the US and cannot be superimposed on the British context. But a recent non-representative Guardian poll (indicating that 88% of respondents support Occupy LSX) provides indication that our intuitions are not all that different. In the UK, the top 10% control one hundred times as much wealth as the bottom 10%, according to the National Office of Statistics data.

Here, too, a large majority of people are shocked to realize how wide the socioeconomic gap between rich and poor has become - and is at least vaguely sympathetic to a movement that has arisen in response to these inequalities. They are concerned about the effects of that gap on those who struggle in their daily lives, and on society at large - a concern that is evident in conversations around the Occupy LSX camp every day, with passers-by, tourists, bankers, and the scores of people who stop for a quick chat and leave with a deeper sense of awareness of the enormous strains of inequality.

We, too, are closet egalitarians. But increasingly, we are coming out of the closet. Current levels of inequality have simply become economically, politically and morally unsustainable.

Some of us are anti-capitalist, some are anti-corporatist, some are anti-corruption, we are participatory democrats, left libertarians, social democrats, liberal socialists, or environmental activists. But on the question of inequality, we speak with one voice.



THIS IS 'ACTUALLY HAPPENING' - WORLD(S) IN MOVEMENT

AARON JOHN
PETERS

POST-MATERIALIST YOUTH TRYING TO REDISCOVER THE SIGNIFICANT'

HOME-MADE SIGN FROM THE TUC 'MARCH FOR THE ALTERNATIVE' 26TH MARCH, 2011

In 1968, social scientists and politicians alike lamented the 'end of ideology', and a declining public interest in politics. Likewise at the end of the 20th century, immediately before the rise of the anti-globalisation movement and its 'coming out' party in the streets of Seattle in 1999, pundits focused on the institutionalisation of previous social movements into bureaucratised organisations and the 'anti-political' stance of a new generation that was supposedly without precedent. Society, coming out of periods of relative quiet, rarely sees the next wave of contentious 'collective action' on the horizon.

Genuine social movements interject energy into an environment characterised by political inertia. The streets become vibrant only when we know that institutional politics is failing us. The present moment and the events we have witnessed during the course of the last twelve months are no different.

Protest movements have historically varied in dimension and duration. Yet there are a few common characteristics that unite rather than divide them. As Sidney Tarrow wrote, protests frequently

coincide with "a phase of heightened conflict and contention across the social system that includes... a quickened pace of change in the forms of protest; a combination of organised and unorganised participation; and sequences of intensified interactions between challengers and authorities which can end in reform, repression and sometimes revolution".

All that one can establish at the outset of any new 'cycle' is that what seemed established is once again in motion. According to one activist collective, "...social movements come into being by creating problems; or perhaps we could say, movements form as they make specific issues into problems that must be addressed."

The occupy movement can be seen in this light as well. Those who complain about the lack of concrete demands or deem the movement irrelevant because "it lacks focus" fail to understand that this is precisely the nature of protest movements in their early stages. Contemporary public debate has lost its grasp of real grassroots movements.

Social movements are no lobby groups, they do not issue writs

on the nuances of public policy or acclaim cardinal bulls about how to revivify economic growth. They are not think tanks or political parties. They are none of these things. Instead, social movements transform specific issues - unemployment, underemployment, privatisation of public services and space, high energy prices, high inflation, over-priced public transport, a feral 1 percent of financiers and politicians, tuition fees, the surveillance state, a supremely undemocratic political and electoral apparatus, low pay - into problems that must be addressed by institutional actors.

We must raise issues, and we must raise our voices. Problems of immediate pertinence to our everyday lives and material needs must be articulated. Amid political and economic stagnation, we must articulate shared public problems that demand to be addressed.

The rectification of current problems will take time. That is not necessarily a bad thing. After all, the formulation of demands offers a rare glimpse into the inner working of democracy. As Manuel Castells writes, "political democracy, as conceived by the liberal revolutions

of the eighteenth century, and as diffused throughout the world in the twentieth century, has become an empty shell." According to Castells, "the new institutional, cultural, and technological conditions of democratic exercise have made the existing party system, and the current regime of competitive politics, obsolete as adequate mechanisms of political representation in the network society."

Today, we have realized the shortcomings of the current system. And in our collective memory, we know the importance of preventing "tyrants from occupying the vanishing space of democratic politics. Citizens are still citizens but they are uncertain of which city, and of whose city."

The uncertainty is perhaps beginning to fade. Things are in movement and times indeed are changing. We have reached a historical watershed moment. From Athens and New York to Cairo, London and Oakland, problems are being articulated. We have started a discussion that has been long overdue. And this is only the beginning. Indeed: We live in interesting times.



MONEY TALKS

OCCUPIED TIMES: So Ben, let's talk money.

BEN DYSON: Money is at the root of all the social problems that we're facing today: poverty is a lack of money; the lack of jobs is because there's not enough money moving around the economy.

THIS WEEK, BEN DYSON OF POSITIVEMONEY.ORG.UK EXPLAINS HOW HIGH STREET BANKS CREATE MONEY THEY NEVER EVEN HAD IN THE FIRST PLACE...



OT: We've seen some 'Positive Money' signs around the camp. What's the Positive Money campaign all about?

BD: We think there's a huge problem with allowing the private corporations that we all know as 'banks' to create the nation's money supply. When you take out a loan from a bank, the money you borrow doesn't actually come from anyone else's savings. Instead, the bank just opens up an account for you in its computer system, and types the numbers in. Last year alone the banks created £110 billion of brand new money, according to Bank of England figures, and pumped most of this into pushing up house prices and speculating on commodities (i.e. oil and food prices). And if you ever wondered why there's so much debt, it's because almost all of the money we use to run society has to be borrowed from the banks.

OT: What are the social implications of this?

BD: For one thing, inequality is made worse because we as the public have to pay interest on the entire money supply, and most of that interest gets redistributed to the highly-paid guys who are based in the City. Also, because we don't have control over how our actual savings are used, then our society and the economy ends up reflecting the short-term priorities of the banks - so without most people realising it, we have pacifists funding bombs, and environmentalists funding Canadian tar sands. Think what kind of impact it could've had if just half of that money had gone into say, reducing poverty, or investing in switching to clean energy.

OT: What brought you to this position?

BD: I simply couldn't understand where all the money was coming from to fund all the credit cards and personal loans that banks were pushing on people. One day I stumbled across a book, *The Grip of Death* by Martin Rowbotham, and that explained how banks are able to create money out of nothing when they make loans. When I realised that actually all this money was just being created out of nothing, it seemed like a huge problem that needed to be talked about.

OT: Should we be paying off our debts, as David Cameron suggests?

BD: Well, that's a truly stupid suggestion from the Prime Minister. This is an example of people in power not understanding how the monetary system works. Remember how I said that banks create money when they make loans? Well when someone repays a loan, the opposite happens - the money basically disappears. So if everyone starts paying down our debts, it reduces the amount of money in the system - it's like sucking the life blood out of the

economy. What we need is to put new money into the economy without increasing the level of debt at the same time, and the only way that can be done is if the government takes back the power to create money from the banks.

OT: Does 'positive money' currently exist in any form?

BD: No, unfortunately the vast majority of countries in the world use the same debt-based, privatised money system as the UK, and as a result the vast majority of countries are sinking under the weight of all the debt. The existing system is tried and tested, and every time it's been tested, it has failed. That said, this idea of stopping the banks from creating money has been tried in the past. It was tried on a small island about 170 years ago, where the government of the day stopped banks from printing their own paper money, and said that only the state would be allowed to print paper money. The small island was called Great Britain, it was in 1844, and it was a Conservative Prime Minister who passed the law. So there might be hope for the present government!

OT: How would the reforms you suggest help to raise people out of poverty worldwide?

BD: Don't forget that all this money is just numbers in computer systems, which means that if we could reclaim the power to create money from the banks, then we could cancel much of this 'third-world' debt without any of the big banks losing even a single penny.

OT: So, you're Chancellor of the Exchequer for a day, what's your first bit of legislation?

BD: Simply this: I'd take the power to create money away from the banks, and make sure that newly-created money is used for the public benefit instead of the benefit of the bankers.

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

Christian camper writes...

Poor old Church of England. They were hoping to get away with another 100 years of not saying anything at all about anything at all, then OccupyLSX comes and lands on their doorstep. What a pickle they're in. What's that they're moaning about? Injustice? Theft? Something about the massive concentration of wealth and power in a few hands? Gosh. Should we say something...?

It took a while, but finally a couple of senior church figures spoke out. George Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, cast his loving arms about the protest, and branded it "opportunistic and cynical". Carey cried out against the injustice at the heart of the occupation: that "yet another blow has been struck against Christian worshippers" who can't get into the cathedral to pray. Because, don't forget, there aren't any other empty churches in central London.

His sentiments chimed with the Bishop of London, who summoned up every last ounce of charity in his bones to say: "the time has come for the protesters to leave, before the camp's presence threatens to eclipse entirely the issues that it was set up to address." Yes. We wouldn't want a few dozen tents and some homemade banners eclipsing the impending global financial collapse. Good point, Bishop.

To be fair to both these venerable clerics, it's likely that in their busy lives as churchmen they've never managed

to find time to read the Bible. If they had, they would have seen Jesus telling his disciples: "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven" (Mark 10:21). They'd have heard him say he had come "to preach good news to the poor" and "to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18).

To many Christians, the closing of St Paul's and the chilly reception from senior clergy, has been a real crisis of faith - a "scandalon" in the ancient Greek. There's a schism growing, between those who would cast out the protesters, and those who are scandalised by the moral weakness of the Church. Christian Tony Gosling of Bristol says that: "many would be shocked that you have to pay to enter a cathedral, so that the poor - whom Jesus' ministry was all about - are excluded from the temple! Extraordinary."

He also notes that irony that "there is evidence St. Paul himself was a tentmaker. St. Paul's chapter are supposed to be stewarding the land using Christ's teachings and looking after these dispossessed. The people there in the tents have come because they have been shut out of the democratic process."

And coming there, we find ourselves facing eviction. And have a former Archbishop condemn their "self-indulgence" for being there. Jesus Christ must be spinning in his grave. Oh no, hang on...



Matthew Myer

TO THE OCCUPIER

MIKE CZECH



What Is OccupyLSX? Something exciting has happened. A wave of loosely affiliated occupations are springing up across the Western world, drawing thousands of people to the streets in hundreds of cities expressing dissatisfaction with the current economic order. We are creating a network of unignorable reminders to those in charge that we demand better from them, while at the same time finding ways to relate on a direct and human level, forming closer and more meaningful bonds of communal cohesion than government can provide. Occupation is the word of the moment. We are reaching a point where the idea of occupation has taken on a mythical quality, divorced from the act itself, and the meaning is becoming distorted and confused.

The word has spread from the streets to new domains, as people heed the call to #occupyeverywhere. In the US, the website www.OccupyTheBoardroom.org declares "THE 1% HAVE ADDRESSES. THE 99% HAVE MESSAGES" and provides the contact details of various 'Wall Street elites' to facilitate their personal harassment at the hands of the disgruntled.

Perhaps most impressive is the work of studentvote.ca, encouraging people to improve poor voter turn out and 'Occupy the Ballot Box'. There are very few certain commonalities between the different occupation movements, but perhaps the most obvious is the lost faith in established democratic processes and the creation of new ways for their voices to be heard. Telling them to return to Parliamentary voting, even under the trendy guise of 'occupying the ballot box', is to miss the point entirely.

Furthermore, the more ubiquitously the word 'occupy' is used, the more it becomes the default verb for any kind of political engagement, the more meaningless it is. Put simply; to #occupyeverywhere is to occupy nowhere.

So, what is occupation? Traditionally the word occupation has been used to denote; the act of inhabiting and controlling a space; university buildings, workplaces, government buildings, shops or anything else (rather than just loitering in it). Sometimes this is to cause as much disruption

as possible in order to create a bargaining chip when making demands. Sometimes it is simply because people believe they can put a space to better use than those who currently own and run it. When protest is inspired, as it is now, by the effects of austerity, and when those involved do not have the luxury of their own space, taking control of new areas from which to organise is essential. Whether undertaken to disrupt or to re-order, occupation is a truly radical act. Among the many iconic images to have come out of Greece in recent months, the six story banner dropped from the roof of the Finance Ministry in Syntagma Square which proclaims to the world that it is OCCUPIED perhaps best shows the escalating power of the protesters. Personally, when I hear the word 'occupation', I think instantly of the 2010/11 actions of student protesters in the UK, but walking around the camp, veterans of the anti-war movement have been quick to remind me that 'occupation' is what the British and American military did in Iraq (or the Nazis did in France).

So what is occupylsx? Though dogmatically peaceful and avoiding causing any damage, The occupation is a defiant and antagonistic action and we, started to properly acknowledge that when we decided to stay after St. Paul's asked us to leave. There had been a mood around the camp while we nominally had the Church's blessing to be there that we were guests, making a protest without causing any trouble.

Now we more fully recognise that the existence of an occupation is a point of conflict between the property owners and the occupiers, and that we are in a rebellious position. During the first days, I heard someone advise us not to risk our camp's future by responding to the provocations of the '1%'; but the camp is a response, and by being here we are taking the first steps towards fighting back. We are radicals, though some are still in the process of realising that. The more we reject the interferences of outside influences, the more we resist the inference of authorities, the more we control the space as our own, the more we are an occupation.

FROM OCCUPY WALL STREET TO ST. PAUL'S OCCUPATION

RECENTLY RETURNED TO LONDON AFTER A WEEK IN NEW YORK, STEFAN SIMANOWITZ EXPLORES THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE LONDON OCCUPATION AND OCCUPY WALL STREET

"I've had enough" says Tim Saunders. "Enough of this grotesque greed and fraud on a massive scale. Enough of spiralling education costs and watching my mother scraping by on a meagre pension. Enough of the claim that the banks are too big to fail." Forty-five year-old chartered accountant Saunders joined to the occupation outside St Paul's Cathedral in his lunch-break and his discussion with other protesters drew a small crowd. As a middle-class father of two his eloquent anger struck a chord and people cheered him enthusiastically as he finally headed back to the office. "I only came down for a sandwich" he shrugged. "But I'll be back tomorrow." Saunders was back the next day, and the next, and the next. He may not fit the template

of the typical protester but that is because the occupation does not fit the template of a typical protest. Instead it is part of a wider global movement which is articulating the anger and frustrations of the so-called "99 per cent" who do not belong to the world's wealthy elites.

Having recently returned from a week with Occupy Wall Street I can report that in a short amount of time the London occupation compares favourably to its sister occupation in New York. Both have successfully occupied a central site which provides a crucial practical and symbolic focal point for the movement. Both are using outreach to spread their message and are expanding to more sites across the city. Both have established working groups to support specific initiatives ranging

from food, medical, and legal committees to media and technical support. The Occupy Wall Street's working group on Alternative Banking includes bankers, a professor of financial law, the heads of various credit unions, and a quant trader.

Both the OLSX and OWS are run by General Assembly, a horizontal, autonomous, leaderless, consensus-based system at which anyone present at the assembly can propose an idea or express an opinion and decisions are reached by a show of hands. Both are committed to non-violence and both are attracting a wide range of people of all ages and from all backgrounds.

In London a grandmother has been camping in front of St Paul's Cathedral since day one. In Zuccotti Park I met 80 year->>

THE OCCUPATION IS OUR REFUSAL TO FORGET

TIM HARDY/ BEYONDCLIKTIVISM.COM



our lives are based on forgetting. We forget the misery of low-wage work in the UK when we casually spend more than

the cashier's hourly wages on a sandwich and a coffee then get angry because they did not smile. When we applaud the athletes preparing for the Paralympics, we forget the disabled people driven to suicide as their benefits are wrongly stopped by a cruelly stupid system created and administered by the company sponsoring the Games. We marvel at our shiny new gadgets and the glittering icons distract us from the plight of those who labour in inhuman conditions to make these devices. All is not for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Our riches are built on the misery of others and too many of our good causes are used to whitewash the evil done by those with wealth and power. We are encouraged not to think of these and countless other injustices every day. It makes life easier to do so. The occupation is our refusal to forget. Our libraries are closing, our universities are stripped of funding, our health service is being offered up for sale. Wages are frozen while the cost of everything goes through the roof. The poorest are attacked and threatened with homelessness. And over and over again a small clique of obscenely rich men and women sneer and tell us that we're all in this together as they use a crisis caused by those that fund them as an opportunity to further increase their wealth.

This is why people occupy. The claims made about the occupiers are many. The occupation has many voices, many faces. This makes it almost impossible to understand. Outside commentators pick the voices that fit their prejudices and pretend that these views alone are what it is really about. Some here want celebrity endorsements, others are sick of rich people cashing in on their fame. When some will be happy to walk away when asked to go,

others insist that they will have to be dragged kicking and screaming away when the time comes.

Some are upset to be called anti-capitalists while others are outraged by calls to remove the "Capitalism is Crisis" banner. A few at St Paul's are in open communication with the police and have stated they would be willing to hand over others "to save the occupation". Others view such behaviour with total disgust. There is something here for everyone to hate, there is something here for everyone to love. It is maddening, frustrating, slow and messy. And it is beautiful.

The occupation is many things, one thing it can never be is harmonious. If the majority the movement terms "the 99%" all agreed, then those called "the 1%" would never be able to maintain their hold. Can such manifestly different points of view ever be reconciled into a set of demands on which all can agree?

The occupation is a chance to experience politics as lived experience, as a self-determining body of people living together and engaged in discussing both the things that affect our immediate existence, like food, shelter, health and sanitation, but also to discuss the possibilities of applying the lessons learned here to the larger world.

It is not an economic blockade. It is not direct action. It is not an attempt to create a position of counterpower from which to negotiate with power. This is what people mean when they say the occupation is its own demand. Even if there is no consensus here as to what should replace the global system of systemic inequality whose latest crisis has provoked this and countless other protests worldwide, the occupation is still a collective "No" to those in power. It is a refusal to forget that the solutions proposed by politicians are more of the same things that caused the crisis in the first place.

The occupation is the beginning of a conversation the whole world needs. Whatever happens, we cannot rest until we have built a world based on mutual respect for all in which no one is forgotten.



"THE STRUGGLE OF HUMANITY AGAINST POWER IS THE STRUGGLE OF MEMORY AGAINST FORGETTING." MILAN KUNDERA



>>old Joan Davis who was there because she remembers the Great Depression. "My sister and I would often go to bed hungry and I still remember the look on my dad's face the day he was forced to sell our farm" she told me.

So far, the movement has no set solutions or concrete list of demands. While these may emerge in time, there is no sense of urgency to focus on anything other than growing the movement. Addressing the general assembly in New York on Sunday October 9, the political philosopher Slavoj Zizek acknowledged that: "There are truly difficult questions that confront us. We know what we do not want. But what do we want?" But for Zizek, the central message is a clear one: "We are allowed to think about alternatives."



A FRIEND IN DEED

NATALIA SANCHEZ-BELL
STEVEN MACLEAN



As the Cathedral caretaker explained the impact the occupation was having to the gathered crowd, he was on the verge of tears. We were, he said, disrupting a number of plans and activities that normally took place, including a children's fair and a wedding complete with horse and carriage.

Such inconveniences, the flock of protestors tentatively argued, could not be put on a par with the suffering of the 99% they were here to represent. Just then, the caretaker saw a familiar face within the expanding crowd, "I know you James, we've been feeding you for years" He said to a tall red-haired man.

"Yes," came back the reply in a distinctly Liverpudlian accent, "and you've never once asked me how I am. Then all these beautiful people turned up and now I'm not alone any more."

The local among occupying activists was James McMahon, 48. Homeless for over twelve years, he's spent the past ten living around St. Paul's, and is now a familiar face at the camp, "I split up with my wife in Liverpool and came to London on a coach. After sleeping rough in different locations, I came to stay at St Paul's"

When we first arrived, James wasn't initially sure what we were all doing here, "I thought you were something to do with the church. I didn't know it was a demonstration at first,"

"I don't read newspapers, and I don't listen to radios. I've just been living a free spirit life. I spoke to a chap later on who explained about the cuts, and tax dodging and the gambling of the banks. Anything that needs to be done, they shout this thing called 'mic check' and then everyone gets involved."

"They all run round, get together, and it's done within minutes. It doesn't matter what it may be, it's done in a loving, humble way, together as a community."

While St. Paul's consider the 'community' that has sprung up in its shadow an inconvenience, for James it has been a lease of life,

"For me to refuse to be part of it - I'd be a fool. They're so loving and understanding. I've accepted most of them as friends,"

But it isn't just new friends James has found, "Working in the kitchen shows me what I'm capable of. It's been a graceful path for me to play my part and be involved." The experience hasn't been entirely positive though, "I think over the course of this week I've been a bit stressed out."

Hundreds of relatively privileged strangers suddenly pitching up on your patch would certainly agitate most of us, but that isn't what is making James tense. Instead, it's some of the general public "passing comments as they walk by,"

"If they'd come to a general assembly they'd really understand," James feels the church, despite its kindness, also lacks some understanding at times, "the Church has been kind, but not so kind." "They know of me sleeping here, but I think they are annoyed to see me

in a sense. They come to move me at six thirty in the morning to clean the stairs and other people's mess. They could clean around me,"

"It's not the community church, it's a cathedral, a tourist attraction. I don't think they want people to see me. London is a wonderful city; I don't think they actually want to accept that there's homelessness here. People have offered me money in kindness, but I would rather them sit down and talk with me, or any of the rough sleepers."

The homeless are at the foot of the 99% either ignored or abused by society's socio-economic elite. Though new to this movement, the words "involved" and "understanding" pepper James' rhetoric,

"I wish people would understand who I was and what I am. I've been writing a book for four and a half years. If people don't know, how can they really help?"

James knows exactly how he'd like occupiers to help,

"I'd like you all to stay there until Christmas. If you stay here until Christmas it means I'll have a beautiful big family to have a turkey with."

"We could crack a few crackers, maybe have a few glasses of wine in the pub before we go back for dinner."

So, what does James want as a Christmas gift? Nothing material. What he wants is of far greater value: empowerment and companionship,

"I'll be in the kitchen on Christmas day if we're able to stay here. I'll cook a roast all on camp. It will be lovely to have you all there for Christmas dinner."



POEMS

SAM BERKSON

LONDON 2012

The shard looms large
New flats grow from the Marshes,
Sweatshop treats in new consumer
pick-a-mix
Overseen by Lord Seb Coe of the
London Olympics,
New laws in place, a dying welfare
state,
Did the Mayans predict this?

Tories back in power again
Dissidents in the Tower again,
Bang Bang, Duggen's dead,
Police bullets in his head,
They want to blame the blacks again,
Take us back to that again,
Trap us like lab-rats again,
Experiment in how to take the piss -
Fuck the poor and help the rich,
Evict the gypsies, tax the barges,
Relieve Chelsea of congestion
charges.
I want to slap these elegant
Machiavellians,
All the PR men and the shit they're
selling them,
Moral messages with twisted policy,
Liberty costs money, forget equality,
No fraternity, it's been like this for
fucking eternity.

But it's a condition of my existence
To deny them my compliance
I am the science of resistance,
The crash of thunder and dread,
I am the blood red under your bed,
I am the scorpion in your sheets,
The screaming skull beneath your
moisturised sheen
The skein of truth under your
perfumed cleavages,

The piles of squalor and the sum of
our grievances.
I read about these pharaohs in their
summer palaces,
Erecting oriental chalets of
Marakesh fantasies,
The locals hit the road, work as
guards at their homes,
Keep their own away from this
tasteless opulence
Makes me want to burn the whole
crew in their pigsty monuments.

Please understand, I never had a
problem with authority,
But authority seems to have a
problem with me,
Can't take the rejection
It checks on me and demands my
attention,
Cos I know of a world where we
don't need laws,
Work together, not for profit, build
for the cause.
It doesn't take a genius to know why
they feel threatened
Termites in their oak panel, ivy in
their walls,
The hum of the mosquito, the
tapeworm in their bowels.
I know we've all heard what the
meek will,
And mission seems impossible,
But numbers ARE unstoppable,
tyrants ARE toppable,
Combined and collective
Immune to their rhetoric,
We've all seen the film and learnt
from past lessons,
Invincibility lessoned,
See where their weapons get them.

KARIZMAH - OPEN MINDS

In a side alley of life
two unsuspecting minds embrace
here they enter a vacuum
lost in time and space
amongst their thoughts
ordinary constraints have no place
feelings are effortlessly lifted
as they exchange face to face
banter gives way to passion
which noticeably overflows
similarities become obvious
and their imagination grows
life moves forward
which draws this moment to a close
but it will live on
in meaning to be froze
met in a different moment
these people may not have
connected
with open minds
we can all be accepted

ST. PAUL PRINCIPLES

These four principles were devised by American activists resisting the 2008 Republican National Convention.

1. Our solidarity will be based on respect for a diversity of tactics and the plans of other groups.
2. The actions and tactics used will be organized to maintain a separation of time or space.
3. Any debates or criticisms will

stay internal to the movement, avoiding any public or media denunciations of fellow activists and events.

4. We oppose any state repression of dissent, including surveillance, infiltration, disruption and violence. we agree not to assist law enforcement actions against activists and others.



ANARCHISM: FOR & AGAINST

THE GREAT DEBATE

The Great Debate: last week we weighed up the 'for' and 'against' arguments for being portrayed as anti-capitalist. This week, anarchism is our topic. As political philosophies go, anarchism is one of the most misunderstood, but could it contain the answers to the world's problems?

FOR / DONNACHA DELONG

Do you like being told what to do with your life? Do you appreciate it when politicians, bosses and experts seem to think that they know more about what you should do than you do yourself? If you do, then stop reading now.

If, on the other hand, you think you are the best person to decide about you and that the same is probably true of most people, you're on your way to becoming an anarchist. Anarchism is based on the idea that true freedom is only possible where people are in control of their own lives.

Anarchists argue that our lives are controlled by coercive authorities and imposed hierarchies that control our lives both politically and economically. That is why most anarchists oppose both the existence of the state and of capitalism. As Bakunin argued, "Liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice;

and [...] socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality."

Anarchism, as it developed as a political movement over the last 150 years or so has been a key element of the fight for women's rights, for gay rights, against racism and other forms of discrimination and helped build the radical trade union movements that gained workers the basic rights they now enjoy. Inspirational figures like Albert and Lucy Parsons, Louise Michel, Emma Goldman, Rudolf Rocker, Errico Malatesta, Buenaventura Durruti, Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky are just some of the names in the anarchist tradition. Unlike other political viewpoints, anarchism is a conversation over the ages, not tied to specific doctrines or one thinker.

Anarchism has a bad reputation, misrepresented as a violent creed stereotyped by bomb-throwing terrorists in the past and black-clad vandals in the present. These aspects do exist, by they have never represented the majority of anarchists – who can be found everywhere. Some anarchists are teachers, doctors, trade unionists – the people who spend their time working to make life better for everyone inspired by an idea of a future free from oppression and inequality, a world based on free distribution of the things we need and free association of autonomous individuals.

AGAINST / BRIAN O'FAOLAIN

The anarchists can't save us now. As the global economy went into meltdown in 2008 a British anarchist group took to the streets and called for the system to 'collapse faster'.

For me this event captured all the worst aspects of a movement that increasingly has nothing to say about important events beyond glib slogans.

The anarchist movement is amorphous, made up of vast and contradictory groups together under one banner, united by their ideology of opposition to the state. There are many positive elements, I won't deal with them here.

This year's London anarchist bookfair posed the question 'Is Capitalism destroying itself? And can we replace it?'. The unfortunate answer is no.

As capitalism teeters our society faces a choice of socialism or barbarism, yet many anarchists still place their faith in spontaneous insurrections, naively hoping capitalism might topple itself so they can pick up the pieces.

They praised the recent riots as a sign of a society fighting back, where a more appropriate analysis would see them as neo-liberal riots against a backdrop of a defeated working class.

Elsewhere anarchists, lacking a real analysis of the current situation, have blamed the financial crisis on 'the bankers', missing

a trick by allowing the inherent failures of capitalism off the hook.

There are huge parallels to be drawn between the anarchists and the Occupy movement and serious warnings to be heeded too.

The Occupy movement has uncritically taken some of the worst aspects of anarchist practice on board, adopting the consensus decision making process and fetishising form over content.

The usual failings of the consensus model are clear; meetings drag on, informal leaderships emerge and frustrated activists drift away. It is a hangover of the worst parts of the late 60's countercultural libertarian movement.

The anarchist focus on direct action has helped to keep the movement interesting but all too often leaves them stuck in a cycle of activity for the sake of it.

If the goal of the Occupy movement is to take advantage of a perceived historic rupture and begin the work of changing society then your first job should be to pack up the tents and go back to your communities.

Learn the historic lessons of anarchism, stop petitioning the city and go do the hard work of building a real political movement.

A debate is scheduled at Tencity University after the GA on Wednesday, Nov 2nd for us to carry on this debate in person. See you there!

PIRATES ST. PAULS, AND THE ROOTS OF ANTI-CAPITALIST PROTEST

KESTER BREWIN

In May 1724, in a small bookshop just a stone's throw from St Paul's, Captain Charles Johnson's *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates* went on sale, and became an instant hit. Though pirates' bodies were hung in gibbets along the banks of the Thames to frighten those who thought of mutiny the crowds that gathered to watch these hangings were there less to jeer at criminals meeting just punishment than for the spectacles that these events often were.

One such spectacle was the hanging of the notorious pirate William Fly on 12th July 1726. Fly was given an opportunity to speak. Having complained at the poor workmanship of the executioner and re-tied his own noose, he went to his death unrepentant, using his moment to speak to warn that 'all Masters of Vessels should pay sailors their wages when due, and treat them better.'

We think of pirates as thieves, yet the truth is far more complex. Sailors aboard Royal Naval ships and merchant vessels were some of the sorriest men alive, 'caught in a machine from which there was no escape, bar desertion, incapacitation, or death' as one writer of the day put it. These merchant ships were the engines of the emerging global capitalism, yet the sailors themselves were utterly excluded from the wealth they worked to generate. The decision to 'turn

pirate' was thus a decision to wrestle back some autonomy, and when they did, life on a ship changed dramatically. Officers were democratically elected. Food was shared equally among men of all rank. When booty was collected the Captain only took two shares where the lowest took one – income differentials that would make modern CEOs faint. Loss of a limb aboard would be met with a payment of around £20,000 in today's money – an amazing form of early healthcare. So, far from being simple thieves, pirates were perhaps the original anti-capitalist protesters. The reason they were hunted down and suffered such savage public executions was because the powers of the day were petrified of the consequences of the pirates' ethos. Historian Marcus Rediker writes: 'Pirates abolished the wage relation central to the process of capitalist accumulation. So rather than work for wages using the tools and machine (the ship) owned by a capitalist merchant, pirates commanded the ship as their own property and shared equally in the risk of their common adventure.' It is this 'equal sharing' that the banks do not want. Yes, they want to nationalise debt, but profits must remain private and enclosed. Interestingly, this is the view of the Anglican Church too – the 38th 'Article' of which reads: 'The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common... as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast.'

Appropriately, pirates emerge whenever 'the commons' is under threat of enclosure into private property. They rose up to battle the crown-censored publishing monopolies of the 17th century. They rose up as Levellers to defend the poor as they were turfed off common land and forced into vagrancy. They rose up in the 1960's as pirate DJs when the BBC refused to play Rock and Roll.

Look around. Pirates are everywhere. The Jolly Roger is to be found on baby bottles, t-shirts, children's clothes, skate boards. Why? Why do we send our children to pirate parties, but not 'aggravated robbery' ones?

The reason, I believe, is this: deep down, we know that pirates say something to us about freedom from oppression, about standing up to systemic violence, and about taking back free access to that which has been enclosed and privatised by the wealthy.

We are not much brutalised, nor often beaten or left unpaid, but our lives are no less reduced, narrowed and controlled by powerful forces far beyond our control. So now, more than ever, we need pirates to rise up again against the princes, the captains and merchants, raise the Jolly Roger, and restore to life some democracy, some fairness... and not a little merriment. That's exactly what Occupy is about, so, avast occupiers, stay strong and mutiny! Kester is a teacher and writer from South East London.



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