

The Occupied Times

~ OF LONDON ~

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ONE YEAR ON STUDENTS MARCH AGAIN

RORY MACKINNON

CITY ISSUES ULTIMATUM

STACEY KNOTT

From occupation to an army on the march — Occupy London's student activists are to take to the streets again today over the Con-Dems' education cuts.

Up to 15,000 students, schoolchildren, parents and educators are expected to storm the Square Mile today, rallying outside the University of London in Malet St before marching through Trafalgar Square and up the Strand to Occupy London Stock Exchange in St Paul's Square — eventually arriving at London Metropolitan University in Moorgate Junction — the heart of London's financial district.

Organisers National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts said in a statement the march was an attempt to "derail" the government's higher

education agenda — "a chaotic and regressive attempt to introduce markets and private providers into education, effectively ending it as a public service."

The controversial policy includes plugging private universities, scrapping the education maintenance allowance for would-be school leavers and plans to cut university teaching budgets by a staggering 80 percent over the next three years — pushing administrators to drive up tuition fees and eke out new sources of revenue.

Today's march comes as the occupation movement appears to have returned to Britain's universities, with students at Birmingham University bedding down in its campus conference centre last week to protest staff cuts, increased fees and course closures.

Meanwhile students at St Andrew's in Scotland seized the university quadrangle to highlight its new £9000 fees and living costs, making it the most expensive place to study in all of Europe.

Camp residents told The Occupied Times last Saturday they hoped to see a turnout as big as last year's march on Tory headquarters in Millbank over the tripling of tuition fees.

Goldsmiths University student Ren told the Times she was still worried about how her younger sister would cope with fewer options and rising graduate debt.

But the second-year finance student said she also feared the changes would create a "two-tier system" of education, with working-class families and ethnic minorities missing out. >>

Last week both St Paul's and the City of London Corporation suspended their plans to evict the OccupyLSX camp, and the City called for a meeting with representatives from the occupation.

At the time of print, nominated members of OccupyLSX had attended one meeting with the City, which laid out three options; leave now, scale back the tents and leave within two months, or don't do anything but expect an eviction.

The City said it did not have a problem with protest, but the tents were blocking access of their "public highway" and it considered the tents "permanent erected structures".

Occupier James Albury, who attended the meeting, said the intention was just to listen to what the City wanted, and only respond if there was consensus at a later General Assembly.

Though there was no set plan on how to proceed after last week's meeting, James said "it's likely we will get about five recurring themes of what people want, then put those proposals to the General Assembly."

He said they will "respond (to the City) in the fashion the GA wants."

The City's requests were discussed at two different General Assemblies last week, and were branded an "ultimatum" by those present. >>

>> London Met would be one of the worst affected, she said: the university had the highest percentage of working-class students in the country and more black and minority ethnic students than Britain's elite 20 'Russell Group' universities combined.

But the university last year dropped around 70% of its undergraduate courses in the wake of government funding cuts, with further cuts predicted over the next year.

"They're losing the only place in the country that does Afro-Caribbean Studies — you can see how it impacts minority groups," she said.

So would Wednesday's march be a replay of Millbank? "I hope so; I think that Millbank really kick-started the movement.

Millbank had changed the media's perception of students as apathetic, she said — but nor were they violent either. "Smashing windows isn't violent — it's civil disobedience. "Violence is destroying people's futures; it's forcing people to choose between food and heating," she said.

Meanwhile union reps on last Saturday's Occupy march told the Times the students had teachers' support — even if they had to be back in the classroom.

The National Union of Teachers' Lambeth branch secretary Sara Tomlinson said she believed the issues of rising fees, funding cuts and struggling family finances were "all tied together."

Students who could not afford to pay their bills while studying usually turned to parents for help, she said: "It's a pay cut for parents."

Assistant secretary Jess Edwards agreed: students were channelling the fears of the entire education sector, she said, just as public sector strikes planned for later this month would channel anger over cuts to social spending. The anti-austerity message was holistic, she said.



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CREDITS

- CONTRIBUTORS/**
- Mircea Barbu
 - Sam Berkson
 - Hannah Borno
 - Nuria Domene
 - Martin Eiermann
 - Flaminia Giambalvo
 - Bennett Hartz
 - Dan Hind
 - Stacey Knott
 - Luka
 - Rory MacKinnon
 - Steven Maclean
 - Barney Mitchel
 - Alia Mossallam
 - Reverend Nemu
 - Wail Gasim
 - David Robinson
 - Natalia Sanchez-Bell
 - Zoe Stavri
 - Ben Walker
 - Ben Watson
 - Ben Yardley

DESIGN/

- Lazaros Kakoulidis
- Tzortzis Rallis

PHOTOGRAPHY/

- Matthew Myatt

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- Aldgate Press, E1 7RQ

CONTACT US/

- olsx.indymedia@gmail.com

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>> **Occupiers' views ranged over the issue, some believed the occupation should not have attended the meeting at all, others were receptive to moving the tents, but many said they wanted to come back with counter-demands; what they want from the City, before they committed to anything.**

Mark Weaver who is camping at St Paul's, said leaving was not an option. He was more receptive to moving some tents back and suggested either sending them to Finsbury Square or starting a new occupation. He said the occupation could agree to the two month time frame, and use that time to win over public support, "then who knows how powerful we will be."

However, in a statement, the City refuted claims it gave the occupiers the two month option. It said it had asked the camp to indicate when it planned leave.

Policy Chairman of the City of London Corporation, Stuart Fraser, said the City wanted to "ensure the highway is cleared and this issue is resolved peacefully."

He noted there were different voices to consider in the matter, and that the City had received complaints from surrounding businesses and residents.

He said the City needed to balance its legal responsibility to maintain the highway with the right of individuals to participate in lawful protest.

TENTCITY CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK...

WEDNESDAY 9TH

10.30-12.00 / Day of Action for Student Anti-Fees Protest @ Russel Square - followed by NCAFC march, with George Monbiot, Alex Callinicos, Richard Hall, Dave Hill & Polly Toynbee. **12.00-13.00** / Poverty in the UK and the debts of the poor. Rev. Paul Licolson. **14.00-15.30** / Facilitating consensus and open space workshops @ Finsbury Sq. Join us to work together on issues that matter to each of us to generate good will, creativity and results, with Annette Zera. **16.00-17.00** / Natural Laws of Economics. David Triggs, Executive Chairman of the Henry George Foundation. **18.00-19.00** / Social Dreaming Matrix @ Finsbury Sq. Mannie Sher + Others. **21.00-23.00** / Occupy Cinema. Cinema InTents: John Pilger's The War We Don't See.

THURSDAY 10TH

11.30-12.30 / The Euro crisis inside the global crisis. Prof. Riccardo Bellofiore. **12.00-13.00** / The Case against Usury (with ukelele) Tom Hodgkinson, Editor of The Idler. **14.30-16.00** / What to keep and what to lose from capitalism. Daniel Miller. **16.00-17.00** / Gendered Implications of Financial Crisis. Diane Perrons and Mary Evans. **17.00-19.00** / Parecon - Vision for a post-capitalist economy. Occupy Cinema. The Shock Doctrine plus Iraq For Sale.

FRIDAY 11TH

15.00-16.00 / Offshore finance: a realm beyond the imagination. Dr. Nicky Marsh. **16.00-17.00** / Women, work and walk-outs: fighting for liberation today. Judith Orr. **17.00-18.00** / TBA. Jeremy Leggett, Former Head of Science at Greenpeace. **18.00-19.00** / What can Participatory Society teach us about where to go next. James Arnold, PPS-UK.

SATURDAY 12TH

11.00-12.00 / Motherhood Activism-Mother Outlaw. Jane Chelliah. **12.00-13.00** / University for strategic optimism. **14.00-17.00** / Lord Mayor's Show Teach-Out. **15.30-17.00** / 23 Things They Dont Tell You About Capitalism. Prof. Ha-Joon Chang. **16.00-17.00** / The Spaces and Places of Popular Protest in Victorian Britain @ Finsbury Sq. Tim Cooper. **17.30-19.00** / Deconstructing Capitalism. Prof. David Harvey.

SUNDAY 13TH

15.00-16.00 / Real Democracy now. John Michell. **16.00-17.00** / The Peoples Constitution. John Andrews **17.00-18.00** / Food Sovereignty Debate. Graciela Romero, War on Want & Kirtana Chandrasekaran. Occupy Cinema. Cinema InTents: Handsworth Songs plus Handsworth Calling.

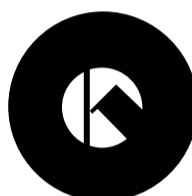
MONDAY 14TH

12.00-13.00 / Are there lessons from Latin America for the European debt crisis? Victor Bulmer-Thomas. **17.00-18.00** / International Law & the Rights of Children. Paul Chadha. **18.00-19.00** / The History of Money. Sargon Nissan.

TUESDAY 15TH

17.00-18.00 / Tar Sands: A First Hand View of the Most Destructive Project on Earth. Crystal Lameman-Cardinal and Chance McPherson. **18.00-19.00** / Way Forward for Kashmir: Good Bye to Terrorism and Welcome to Curruptocracy. Ammar Raja.

EDITORIAL



ne year on from the demonstration that culminated in the trashing of Millbank, students are again on the march. It would be easy to dismiss the protests then as a failure. Fees were raised and EMA scrapped despite mass opposition, but what 'began' then has mutated throughout the year, leading to - but not ending - in what we are doing here, now.

It is often claimed the occupations currently taking place around the world were spawned by events in Tahrir Square, but in truth, the lineage can be traced right back through a global history of protest and social movements - each helping to inspire the next.

Something did begin though - or was reawakened - with the many student occupations of last year. Some of those who occupied UCL and other universities are here now at St Paul's and Finsbury Square, passing on the lessons they learned.

Since then we've seen March 26th, repeated UK uncut actions, the summer riots, and now, another student march and plans for collective strike action later this month - the scale of which hasn't been seen for a generation.

While the complexity-fearing mainstream media dismissed the riots as the result of 'greed' and 'thuggery', a more nuanced analysis might point to a political and economic climate stripping people of hope.

Society is comprised of a variety of people with different ideas, means and privileges, so our responses to a government turning back the clock thirty years are equally diverse. Some strike, some march, some occupy, and some riot. We might not condone the actions of others, but neither should we condemn them because they differ from our own.

If we had genuine democracy, we wouldn't have a government privatising the NHS when there was no mention of it in pre-election manifestos. We wouldn't have a deputy prime minister who promised not to raise student fees, and then did exactly that. And we wouldn't be camped out in front of St Paul's creating a democracy of our own.

Faced with these betrayals, and the prospects of no jobs, no housing and no future, the fear that ordinarily keeps us in line is banished, and replaced with a sense of vital urgency.

Today we march in protest at those who want to deny us our futures, because, as Martin Luther King said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."



A WORKING COMMUNITY

STACEY KNOTT

As OccupyLSX enters its fourth week, the Finsbury Square camp has become a well established community, complete with a hotel, bike workshop and a group set up to help the homeless.

Conor Hohan, who has been camping at Finsbury Square said the occupation is "now in the process of refining" its space. Conor is part of the housing team, and has implemented a system to make sure the camp utilizes as much space as possible and to accommodate new occupiers.

They have a peg system where pegs on a tent represent if there is room in a tent, and if it is male or females currently occupying it. For safety reasons, Conor said they try and keep tents to either male or female.

The camp also had set up a "hotel" - the only free hotel in London - which holds six people so if someone arrives late they can be housed in the hotels, then moved into a tent the next day.

The camp was currently at peak capacity and they were trying to come up with more ways to increase

capacity, like putting up larger tents in place of smaller two person ones.

Even if people are sharing spaces with relative strangers in the camp they endeavour to make people feel comfortable. "Even if people don't own the tent they are staying in they feel comfortable and safe in it," he said.

Also at the camp is Ace's Bikes, a bike workshop set up by occupier Ace MacCloud who has been homeless for the last 25 years. He spends his days fixing the bikes of the campers and also those not in the movement, at no charge. He said it keeps his mind occupied, and he bikes between the two camps to fix St Paul's occupier's bikes. He is also part of an OccupyLSX homeless working group. He said this group is about "trying to get people back in hostels or a place like this."

"We tell them to go to the housing tent, see if they have a spare tent, give them something to eat and then try to help them out. We want them to stick around and help them out if they have a bike needing fixing."

HOW IS THE CITY BUILT?

RORY MACKINNON

As the City of London prepares to usher in its new Lord Mayor this week, the Occupied Times asks: just how does the City elect its leaders anyway?

The City's residents get a single vote each; businesses get anywhere up to 79 votes depending on how many employees on payroll. 'Qualified' voters - such as ex-company directors and those who've worked in the City for five years or more - get to vote twice, once in City elections and again in their home electorate.

For comparison, the business vote in 2009 was about 24,000 - compared with just 9000 votes from people who actually live there.

Those votes don't have anything to do with deciding the mayoralty, though. That role is the sole preserve of the City's livery companies - a medieval cross between industry

lobby groups and Masonic lodges - who decide between themselves in a meeting known as Common Hall. The Common Hall also elects the City's two Sheriffs, who each hold a yearlong sinecure at the Old Bailey "so that he may be tried as to his governance and bounty before he attains to the Estate of Mayor."

So where do those votes go? Well, they decide the 'aldermen' who each represent one of the City's 25 wards, and another 100 'common councilmen.'

Aldermen get a six-year tenure and do not need to live in their ward or even live or work in the Square Mile. Those common councilmen on the other hand get four years, must own land in the City and have been a resident for at least 12 months. But there's one thing they both have in common - no-one is allowed

to stand for either office unless they have first been recognised as a 'Freeman of the City', meaning they must have been recognised as a suitable candidate by those livery companies we mentioned earlier.

And uniquely among district councils, the City of London Corporation - whose supposedly elected members are directly vetted by business lobby groups and whose rates come from the City's big businesses - also directly controls and funds its own territorial force, the City of London police. In other words, the councillors which have threatened eviction and the officers who would enforce it are respectively selected and paid for by the same companies Occupy London Stock Exchange is protesting against.

So who's to say the City doesn't tolerate democratic discourse?

POEMS

THE DEATH OF CAPITALISM

Like the fat man in Monty Python,
you ate yourself sick,
and your death is a messy affair.

Like the sad career of Mike Tyson,
you gave some mighty licks
but you were your own worst enemy
there.

You chewed our ear off,
aggrandising your own worth,
but this earth was just too small for you.
You ripped off millions
so a few could bathe in gold
but you ran out of human souls
to grind up and enslave.

Your doctrine of 'each to their own'
left you friendless and lonely
with no Samaritan to phone.

Your obsession with growth
made you obscenely obese,
and you ran out of the meek and the weak
to trick and to fleece.

You plundered nature relentlessly
until you had drilled your own grave;
the only skills you acquired were to
conquer and tame,
till you'd no fresh water and no clean air:
where once was abundance, now
nothing's there.

Your worship of profits
meant that even love was commodified
and your soul cold and hard.
Now your corpse is putrefied,
your body bloated and scarred:
for he whose face gives no light, shall
never become a star.

Sam Berkson

ODE TO PROPAGANDA CHARLIE

Your not an activist but a factivist
Showing certain info to be top dog, the
biggest bull at this rodeo.

Put out your videos on the tube of you
because that's the only thing you're
really trying to prove.

Walking around, mega phone proud,
thinking your words are insightful and
you stand on firmer ground. Deceitful!
Play the role of the struggle but not one
night have you spent on these cobbles.
No ropes you've tightened or dumpsters
dived, with only the community
prospects in mind.
You're filled with lies, the aviator
disguise.

Not a voice of the struggle but a
misguided squeal.
Trying to divide instead of pushing
humans forth,
cos only together we will thrive!

Adolescent grafters perform true
culture on this red brick parchment.
We could be epic names.
Diverted by inebriation but held down
with passion as the populace play these
sickly games.
We sit on the sidelines watching
humanity's decline
but no worries here cos our blood runs
deeper than a pay check and a movie
screen.

But the price of a soul gets cheaper,
wordsmith craft frees the mind, capture
culture with intent to supply.
Act out the impulse. Move mountains
with what you believe.
Because everyday is a dream.

Ben Watson

NIGHT WATCH PREVENTS A SUICIDE

STACEY KNOTT

If it weren't for a quick-acting occupier, St Paul's could have had a dead body on its steps last week. George Mayne, a student who has been camping at the OccupyLSX St Paul's base since October 15 was on night watch when he came across a suicidal man on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral.

The man was already known to the camp as a problematic alcoholic with suspected mental health issues. George said he was radioed by another night watch member who came across the man writing a suicide note, so the team all agreed to keep an eye on him. George had the foresight to get the the first aid team members numbers, in case something happened. He said night watch had been trying to get the man to cut down on his drinking, but this night it appeared he had drunk a bottle of vodka, and mixed four packets of painkillers into it. George went to talk to the man, who was sitting on the steps of St Paul's.

"He said he had taken all these pills and was holding my hand saying he was going to die."

The man was shaking, and agitated, but slowly became tired as George tried to calm him down. Knowing he could not radio for help, as it would further agitate the man, he stlyly texted one of the first aiders, who got to the steps straight away. "I went over and called an ambulance, telling them we needed someone here immediately. "Then two police came along. I told them not to interfere because he would probably lash out at police, so they didn't get involved."

An ambulance came, but the man lashed out at the paramedics, so George and another night watch person had to put the man in the back of a police van, who then took him to hospital. While the relations with the police were formal, George said it was obvious they were pleased with the work of night watch, because of the responsibility they handed on to them.



MYTHS IN THE MEDIA

DAVID ROBINSON

“OLSX IS ANTI-CAPITALIST”

The fact is that there are a variety of views within the camp on capitalism. Many dislike the system and wish to see an alternative; many more wish to see the current model reformed. The initial statement released by the camp, which was agreed upon by consensus, makes no mention of overthrowing capitalism, yet many media outlets have taken to describing the camp as anti-capitalist. This is either lazy journalism, or it is by design. Much of the press has an agenda to discredit or marginalise the Occupy movement, and has made extensive use of labels to pigeonhole the movement.

“THE MOVEMENT CHOSE TO OCCUPY ST. PAUL’S CATHEDRAL”

It was never our intention to target St Pauls. The initial target of the protest was the London Stock Exchange in Paternoster Square, adjacent to the cathedral. The police got wind of this, blocked all entrances, and kettled the protesters into the courtyard at St Pauls cathedral. The Dean of the cathedral, Giles Fraser, then gave us permission to stay. For the first week we were guests of the church. The level of welcome from the cathedral may have changed since, but at no point did we choose to occupy the grounds of the cathedral. That said, we like the space and intend to stay.

“THE FORCED THE CHURCH TO SHUT DOWN”

The decision taken by St Pauls to shut its doors for the first time since World War II was baffling and has ultimately led to the resignation of Dean Graham Knowles. The claim that health, safety and fire regulations were to blame proved unfounded, as neither the London Health & Safety Executive nor the London Fire Brigade had any pressing concerns after the camp was re-organised during the first week. The entrances to the cathedral were unimpeded, and the camp had accommodated the cathedral's request to clear space from the fire exits. A more likely explanation lies in the influence exerted over the cathedral by the police, the Mayor, the City of London Corporation and the extensive list of corporate and financial donors. It was the cathedral's decision to close, and it has been much derided since.



“MOST TENTS ARE UNOCCUPIED”

There has been much debate over the science of thermal imaging the occupier's tents by a newspaper reporter, which appeared to show many empty. Occupiers hit back with claims that the thermal imaging camera doesn't detect heat inside tents - which led to the counterclaim that occupiers had not allowed enough time for heat to build up, followed by tent makers claiming that many tents are designed to retain heat therefore rendering thermal imaging useless. Many questions remain open: Did the reporters who took the initial photographs allow enough time for heat to build up in the tents? Why did

serve the media's agenda - but that alone does not make it true.

“THE MOVEMENT HAS NO AGENDA”

The camp is not just here to provide concrete alternatives to the current failing system. It exists to facilitate debate and to serve as a forum for ideas that can be picked up and elaborated at St. Paul's and elsewhere. Already, working groups are engaged in discussions about possible demands and concrete articulations of change proposals. We are well aware a diverse group might produce a muddled message, and that our decision making processes may appear cumbersome. But the movement intentionally



they take pictures around midnight, when most of the campers would not yet be in their tents? Are the aims of the protestors rendered less important just because some go home at night? It takes a high level of dedication to visit the camp day after day, let alone to sleep on the cold, hard concrete courtyard of St Pauls in the middle of October. As of now, hundreds stay through the nights to protest.

“THE PROTESTERS ARE EITHER MIDDLE-CLASS STUDENTS, OR LAZY BENEFIT SCROUNGERS”

The media can't seem to make their minds up which of the two we all are down here at the camp. The fact is that we are a diverse grouping of classes, races, nationalities, employment status and political persuasions. This movement is not party political, nor is it class-focused. It stands against corporate greed and against the recklessness of the financial sector, and it recognises that the current political and economic model is only working for those at the top. These are issues that transcend political loyalties and class. We have many protestors here that have jobs, some that don't, and some that have recently lost jobs. We have teachers, soldiers, civil servants, youth workers, former bankers, musicians. The labelling may

stresses inclusivity and democratic processes rather than short soundbites. This may be frustrating for the media but it is vital to our message.

“THE PUBLIC DOES NOT SUPPORT THE PROTEST”

Opinion polls suggest that the public largely support our occupation and its goals. Polls by ICM and Yougov show clear and unquestionable support for the camp (51-38% and 39-26% respectively), whilst a poll in the Guardian showed 82% support for our movement. Even 42% of Daily Telegraph readers also backed us, no mean feat considering some of the coverage they've given us! We've had emphatic support from the Guardian, the Independent, the Daily Mirror, the Observer, the Financial Times, the economic editor of BBC's Newsnight, and from a large number of influential political commentators and economists. We've even had sympathetic articles in the Daily Mail, the Daily Telegraph and the Economist. What defenders of the status quo fail to realise, or completely ignore, is that there is a palpable sense of public anger over the situation we find ourselves in, and it is this anger that is propelling us toward a tipping point towards achieving change.

CANARY WARF SEEKS PROTEST INJUNCTION

RORY MACKINNON

Skittish City traders have banned protest camps from Canary Wharf in a bid to keep Occupy's anti-poverty activists at bay.

External media reported Thursday that lawyers for Canary Wharf Group, plc - which owns more than half the area's office and retail space - had sought a high court injunction barring "any persons unknown remaining on the Canary Wharf estate in connection to protest action."

The complex is home to some of the world's biggest banking juggernauts, including the international headquarters for HSBC, Citigroup and Barclays -

making it a frequent target for tax avoidance activists UK Uncut and Occupy London's Tent City University.

It is understood the court order is to last indefinitely.

Spokespeople for Occupy London did not say whether there had been plans to invade the Wharf, but criticised private landowners for creating "a public space in which the public is not welcome."

"Like their counterparts on Paternoster Square, the owners of Canary Wharf appear to be deeply afraid of legitimate debate: it is worth asking why this is so," they said.

OCCUPIED ELSEWHERE

BENNETT HARTZ

MINNEAPOLIS (OPC) — With its famously brutal winter approaching, Minnesota's ongoing foreclosure crisis is one of the most dangerous in the country. That makes OccupyMN's latest victory against foreclosures that much sweeter.

On Tuesday occupiers in Minneapolis marched on the U.S. Bank tower. Their demand: delay the eviction of Ruth Murman, a small business owner whose home was foreclosed on earlier this year. Having previously refused to negotiate, U.S. Bank promptly agreed to delay Murman's foreclosure, which will allow her to make new living arrangements for her and her father, a Korean War veteran struggling with cancer and heart disease. The bank will also be helping Murman with the cost of the move.

"It's amazing how desperate they were to get in touch with me all of a sudden, after they have ignored my calls and refused to help my father and me for months," Murman said in an interview with #OccupyMN.



Murman, owner of a pet care facility in nearby Minnetonka, contacted OccupyMN for help with her foreclosure earlier this week. In lieu of laying off her staff, Murman has worked without pay since the 2008 financial collapse. Hers is one of over 75,000 Minnesotan homes foreclosed on in the last three years. Meanwhile, Richard Davis, CEO of U.S. Bank, saw his pay double to \$18.8 million in 2011.

ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

FLAMINIA GIANBALVO

On Thursday afternoon an online protest in Syria specifically organised in conjunction with the London occupation was projected at St Paul's, as part of a cross cultural joint solidarity protest with the Syrian people. The event, which featured the first live broadcast of a Syrian protest in Europe, was aimed at emphasising the need for solidarity amongst peoples rising up across the world.

The live stream, hosted by Occupy LSX's channel, began at 6 pm. In London a crowd of around 100 protestors gathered above the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. In Syria thousands of people rallied across several cities to demand an end to the dictatorial regime of president Bhashar Al-Assad, who inherited Syria's harsh dictatorship from his father, Hafez al-Assad.

According to UN official figures, over the past seven months, 3,000 civilians have been killed and over 30,000 have disappeared as a result of a military crackdown on peaceful protestors launched by the government. However, Armand, one of the organisers of the event, explains "tonight it is going to be different, because when there is a live broadcast of a Syrian protest abroad, the government can't shoot".

When unrest in the country kicked off in mid March, President Al-Assad appeared to waver between force and hints of reform. But in April, just days after lifting

the country's decades-old state of emergency, he launched the first of what became a series of ruthless crackdowns.

The atmosphere of the protests, both in London and in Syria, is of playful defiance. Chants, colourful banners and dances fill the air. Armand explains, "they want to show people that the revolution is not just about death and blood and violence—it can be cheerful as well".

Among chants in opposition to Al-Assad and the Arab League it was striking to also hear "down with Cameron". Mohammed, one of the organisers of the London protest explains that every Saturday, for the past eight months, this group of people has been demonstrating outside Downing Street. He says "if we don't put pressure on Downing Street they won't do anything to support the Syrian cause" then adds, "our government is just not reliable."

On the 2nd of November the government came to an agreement with the Arab League calling for an end to the violence and accepting to convene talks with the opposition within two weeks. The following day, Syrian military forces killed 12 people in the flashpoint city of Homs. Commenting on this, Mohammed said, "We just want respect".

Finally he adds, "I hope the militancy and defiance of Syrian people will also encourage demonstrators in London".

WHY THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION MATTERS TO US ALL

ALIA MOSSALLAM

If

the occupations that have sprung up across our globe are indeed inspired by Cairo's Tahrir Square (as we say they are), then it is worth mentioning that a number of people who were crucial for

the organization of the Tahrir Square demonstrations are now behind bars. In fact, over 12,000 of them have been imprisoned.

The Egyptian military has practiced systematic violence against protestors since the beginning of the revolution. Covert at first, repression escalated when the security services fired into crowd that had gathered in Tahrir Square in April. Particularly, they targeted a small group in military uniform who claimed to be splitting ranks and had come to the square for protection. In June, the military attacked a protest by the families of those killed during the revolution. In August, the square was forcefully evicted.

The strongest blow, however, was on October 9th, when hundreds of protestors who marched in solidarity with Coptic Christians were attacked in a night of bloodshed and violence. Twenty-eight peaceful protestors died, hundreds of others were injured.

The army announced its investigation into what became 'The Maspiro Massacre', and within two weeks summoned activists and bloggers Alaa Abdelfattah and Bahaa Saber to be interrogated as suspects for the violence that had occurred. Mina Daniel, an activist shot dead on that day, was designated as the prime suspect for inciting violence. Essentially, Mina was being accused of his own murder.

Abdelfattah and Saber refused to be interrogated by a body they deemed illegitimate. They argued that the military was too implicated in the violence to be able to properly investigate it. As a result, criminal charges (of inciting violence and stealing military equipment) were levelled against them. While Saber was let out on bail, Abdelfattah was detained for 15 days pending investigation.

Has anything changed since Mubarak, one asks? As a matter of fact, much has.

More and more arrested bloggers and activists are refusing to appear before military courts, demanding civilian trials where their cases will be considered objectively. For this, many pay with their freedom. But they insist they will not answer to an illegitimate body. We are not afraid to say it: the Supreme Council of Armed Forces is not fit to rule.

In Mubarak's era, we were an opposition movement. We operated in the margins, creating spaces for dissent in make-shift theatres and online blogs, where we practiced our vision of democracy. Our spaces grew wider and wider until a nation revolted against tyranny and our vision took centre-stage. As the rallying cry of a popular revolution, our vision has legitimacy. Since January, we could no longer be branded as a

marginal opposition movement. The only illegitimate body in Egypt today is the Supreme Council – it rules but fails to deliver justice.

A 'No to Military Trials' campaign is one of many grassroots initiatives that have developed since the start of the revolution. It mobilizes lawyers and campaigners whenever protestors or civilians are arrested and tried by the military. The campaign demands fair investigations and trials. It is one example how we have taken justice into our own hands. While the military continues to lose legitimacy, civil society is trying to fill the void.

Alaa Abdelfattah is an activist, but also a friend. I personally believe that his incarceration is not only on account of his bravery, but is a reaction of the authorities to his incessant description of the revolution as 'an opportunity to dream'. In one meeting a few months ago, he announced: "We have achieved the impossible and surprised ourselves... we have the opportunity now, like no other time to dream up our new country. Let's not wait for experts and technocrats tell us how to do it. For, they have already failed us and we have done what they could never do."

What connects Tahrir to Occupy Wall Street and Occupy London is our ability to create spaces to develop our dreams. Within the squares and the camps, we can imagine a different world. We can dream up alternatives and experiment with them in our daily practices. We meet people whom we would usually never meet, and tickle and trigger each others' imaginations. This ability to dream, to imagine that another world is possible, is the biggest threat to any establishment, more so a military junta.

We are all implicated in the global web of power that works to keep us apart. A dream in one country is a threat to the world; and a threat to one dream, should mobilize us all in support of the alternative. Only then will our dreams prevail.



SAFETY IN THE CAMPS

STACEY KNOTT

Keeping female campers safe has been an important issue discussed over the last week at OccupyLSX. At last Thursdays general assembly occupiers discussed any personal safety problems they had experienced, and how they can keep women safe in the future. While most females said they generally felt safe within the movement, it was people outside the movement, who passed through the camps at night that they were wary of. Teenage occupiers B* and Ella* told the Occupied Times they both felt safe, especially since they had been adopted as substitute daughters to people within the camp. They said

unwanted male attention within the camp was "annoying" but they never felt threatened.

Zena,* a student who had been camping on and off for the past few weeks at St Paul's, was quick to state she felt safe within the movement. "I think the majority of people here are on the same vibe, there's not really a lot of violence or dodgy stuff going on that I have noticed." She said she felt as safe at the St Paul's camp as she would anywhere else in London, and is as aware of her safety as she usually would be. "I'm not doing anything I wouldn't usually be doing, I'm not out late by myself at night, and I'm

around people all the time if I want to go somewhere I ask someone to go with me. She said her main concern was people outside the camp trying to cause problems, like drunken revelers stumbling past.

Natalia, also a student echoed her sentiments, and was particularly grateful for the Tranquillity group, who patrol the camp through the night, keeping an eye out for trouble. While another woman, who did not want to be named, said she understood why women would feel vulnerable camping out at either occupation. "I feel fine, but it (women's safety) is a real issue in protest camps, the nature of them

usually means there is a male majority here." She said she would not feel comfortable on her own tenting in the city, due to passers-by. It is the people passing by in the night that the Tranquillity group are most aware of.

The group is made of men and women who patrol the camp from 10pm until 8am, some of who have worked in security in the past. One of the tranquillity members, Bear* said the group urge "mutual respect," so people can sleep. They do not get physical with anyone, rather "purely negotiation and dispute mediation." They try and reason with those causing trouble and steer them away

from the tents, but if anyone does feel threatened, they call over the police. Weekends in particular were proving difficult for camper's safety, said occupier Lisa Ansell. She had come across people intentionally antagonising protesters, looking to incite trouble. "We are in a real bind. We have no authority to protect the site; we don't have the right to ask people who are not in the camp to behave in a certain way because this is a public space. "We are firmly peaceful and keep repeating 'you will not find a fight here', and try and move away from them," she said.

*Last names/real names withheld.

HOW THE OCCUPIED MOVEMENT HAS SHIFTED MEDIA DEBATE

DAVID ROBINSON

The sight of Adam Boulton comparing OccupyLSX protesters to Nazi occupiers in France during WW2 on Sky News this week was not just indicative of Boulton, but also demonstrates how progressively desperate and defensive those who wish to defend the status quo have become since the Occupy movement began (see also spying on protesters with thermal imaging equipment, the now debunked reporting of the number of overnight campers). Why are they so worried? Because we're changing the terms of the debate right under their noses. Since the financial crisis of 2008 the national, and indeed global discussion has been dominated by

economic growth were sidelined, and with them went any opportunity to tackle the underlying causes of the financial crisis, which was not public spending but an unregulated, immoral, out of control financial sector which was symptomatic of a deeper, more systemic culture of corporate greed. That changed on the 15th October, when the OccupyLSX movement began. Since then the movement and its grievances have been the focus of discussion right across the media, and the debate that should have been had 3 years ago (and probably before) about the state of our economic and democratic system is being played out. The camp has found support in some unexpected quarters; The Daily Telegraph led with the headline 'it doesn't take a Marxist to see that the St Paul's protesters have a point'

complete support of the movement, while the Guardian have been wonderfully supportive. The Independent, perhaps surprisingly, have been absolutely nowhere on the issue. The very fact that they are talking about us and our issues justifies our existence. The effects of the shift in the debate can be seen in the analysis published by Think Progress regarding the impact of the OccupyWallStreet movement on the media debate within the United States. They examined the use of keywords over three major US television networks in the weeks before, and the weeks after the establishment of the camp. In the weeks before the camp the word 'debt' was used over 7500 times. In the weeks after the camp, the word debt was used just 398 times, with the phrases 'jobs', 'occupy' and 'Wall Street' at the top of the list. Piers Morgan Tonight recently held a one hour special with Oscar winning documentary maker and Occupy champion Michael Moore on the Occupy movement in front of a live studio audience made up of those hit hardest by the crisis. This reframing of the debate within the media has helped to sway public opinion towards the side of the protesters (54% of the US public back the camp), which has led to Democratic politicians (belatedly) championing the cause of the Occupy movement.

Of course, in this country, not all the media have been supportive. Many are attempting to smear or belittle the camp and its aims, hence constant references to the 'anti-capitalist movement' designed to isolate us (the camp isn't anti-capitalist, there are a broad range of views on capitalism within the camp), or news coverage that concentrates on the closure of the church, or on the lack of concrete demands, rather than focusing on the behaviour of the banks, or corporate greed. The same people in the media criticising us now are the same vested interests who helped cement the Thatcherite neo-liberal economic consensus that led to the crash by brow beating an increasingly feeble left. It is little wonder they are feeling threatened, because they can see that world beginning to crumble around them.

Others are confused by the message coming from the camp. This is a more understandable criticism. The system of decision making the camp uses - consensus decision making - can be cumbersome and certainly doesn't lend itself to the demands of a media obsessed with news cycles and sound bites. But this system is designed to be this way. People at the camp feel the current model has let them and others down, and refuse to run the camp on the terms of others. The camp is a place for discussion, ideas and will eventually, as with the announcement of demands to reform the City of London Corporation, lead to some concrete demands.



phrases such as 'austerity', 'debt', and 'bond markets'. This suited those in the financial sector who wished for things to carry on business as usual, and they were helped by friends in parliament, who spent all of their efforts deflecting blame from the banks onto government spending, and in the media, who stifled debate on the issue. The debate had thus been framed in these terms, and despite the fact that austerity during difficult financial periods has never worked throughout history, politicians from all sides campaigned during the general election on how quickly they would get the debt down, how many jobs they would cut, and how many services they would slash. Issues such as jobs, essential services and

and asked, 'if bankers don't pay a price for their folly, why should the poor?', while Richard Littlejohn of the Daily Mail - normally slightly to the right of Hitler - said 'most of us would probably agree that the anti-capitalism demonstrators in the City of London have a point. You don't have to be Wolfie Smith to work out we've all been screwed by the banks'. Paul Mason, economics editor of BBC's Newsnight points out that most of those at the camp are 'ordinary people' and 'for every protester camped in the freezing dawn there may be many more quietly fuming in their living rooms who feel the same way'. A remarkable editorial in the Financial Times, the newspaper of choice for the discerning financier, came out in



The criticism is irrelevant anyway, as the role of the camp isn't to come up with a concrete set of demands that we wish to be enacted. The mere fact that the camp exists is enough to keep the debate going. In the US public support is behind the Occupy movement, and politicians are engaging with it. In the UK, a Guardian poll showed 82% support, whilst a poll taken after a BBC Radio 4 debate in Devon showed support for the camp. Even a poll in the Daily Telegraph shows 42% support for us. You don't have to agree with every decision the camp takes in order to support it, you just need to have the desire to see the debate take place. The existence of the camp has created space for this debate to take place, and the continued publicity will help to fuel it.



ED MILIBAND & THE POLITICAL MAINSTREAM

DAN HIND

Ed Miliband wrote an article in the Guardian on Sunday in which he notices the existence of the occupation of Saint Paul's, and of 'hundreds of similar demonstrations in cities across the world'. The piece is a masterclass in political positioning and it deserves a little close reading.

He claims that 'some are swift to dismiss' the occupiers 'for putting forward what is a long list of diverse and often impractical proposals'. There's no need for him to mention any of these proposals, of course, or to use reason to show that they are impractical. Doing so might force him

into the realm of substantive debate, an area he cannot afford to enter. Remember, he is a serious politician.

Miliband goes on to put some distance between the occupiers and the focus of every politician's tender consideration, the ordinary, decent men and women of Great Britain:

Certainly, few people struggling to make ends meet and worried about what the future holds for their children will have either the time or the inclination to camp outside a cathedral. And many people will not agree with the demands or like the methods of the protesters.

Some of the people outside Saint Paul's are struggling to make ends meet and worry about their children's future. But Miliband's division of the world into hardworking home-dwellers and wacky campers can't find a place for those people. Either you are at home reading Miliband's wise words over breakfast, or you're a outdoorsy eccentric without a care in the world.

As for Miliband's 'many people' who don't agree with the demands of the protesters, they are something of an invention. In a recent poll, 51% of people said that they agreed with the proposition that...

'THE PROTESTERS ARE RIGHT TO WANT TO CALL TIME ON A SYSTEM THAT PUTS PROFIT BEFORE PEOPLE'

Still, Miliband concedes that the occupiers 'still present a challenge: to the church and to business – and also to politics'. Note that Miliband doesn't think that the occupations are themselves political. Oh, no. The occupiers 'reflect a crisis of concern for millions of people about the biggest issue of our time: the gap between their values and the way our country is run'. They reflect 'a crisis of concern', nothing political about that.

proposes to do about the collapse of the country's economic model.

He says that people are 'wondering whether politics can make a difference'. Remember, what's happening in the assemblies and the working groups, all that the effort of coordination and communication in hundreds of cities around the world isn't politics.

Politics is about promising to reduce tuition fees before slipping in something about 'measured spending cuts'. Politics is about complaining that banks won't lend to entrepreneurs. Politics is talking tough about making welfare reflect 'the values of hard work, contribution and getting something out when you put something in'.

That's what politics is. It isn't open debate between equals about the fundamentals of social, economic and political organization. Everyone clear on that? The last two paragraphs are worth quoting in full:

"Business as usual is not an option. In every generation, there comes a moment when the existing way of doing things is challenged. It happened in 1945. It happened in 1979 and again in 1997. This is another of those moments because the deeper issues raised by the current crisis are too important to be left shivering on the steps of St Paul's. We cannot leave it to the protesters to lead this debate."

[1997? Really? 1997?]

"But we can only win this debate with a movement which stretches beyond politics. That is why in the months and years ahead Labour is determined to construct and to lead a coalition which includes business and civil society to make the case for a responsible economy, fairer society and a more just world."

'A movement that stretches beyond politics' is what Miliband says when he means 'a movement that I can co-opt and disappoint, like Obama did'.

We don't need a movement that stretches beyond politics, we need a movement that stretches the boundaries of politics so that they include meaningful



discussion of things that matter. We all need to act to secure a public status as political beings.

'We cannot leave it to the protesters to lead this debate' says Miliband. But we tried leaving economic and social management to fair-seeming professionals and it led us to the current crisis. Political operators have forfeited their right to pronounce on who and who isn't going to lead the debate.

We must take a lead for ourselves, join an assembly, start one. Miliband has said what he has said because the occupations are too big for him to ignore. There is no telling what he will say – and do – if we make them bigger.

More to the point, what will we decide to do, once we've had a chance to talk with one another?



MONEY TALKS

OCCUPIED TIMES: Professor, you can wave a magic wand - what economic changes do you make?

WALTER WILLIAMS: First thing, I'd stop the government bailing out businesses, stop the government bailing out banks. The big thorn in the side of free markets is the capacity for powerful people to use governments to rig the economic game in their favour.

OT: So you think it's right that an effort to forge a 'real democracy' should be at the heart of the Occupy movement?

WW: My advice to you is focus on your bedrock concerns. And I honestly cannot identify a single issue you're protesting about that doesn't have its roots in government. Think of the bailouts, think of agricultural subsidies. In Europe, you've got poor people paying higher prices for food so that the farmers can be richer. I would end that.

OT: What do you see happening with the eurozone bailouts?

WW: The bailouts are going to fail. Greece has already in effect defaulted; I'm afraid it's going to go down the tubes. And I feel sure they're going to be followed by Portugal, Spain and Italy. It's the end for Europe, or fast approaching the end.

OT: Isn't the political will strong enough to keep it afloat?

WW: This is the tragedy of Europe: down through history, Europeans have been trying to kill each other, in the name of trying to unite Europe. Trying to unite people who don't want to be united. The Germans don't have great love for the French, the Greeks hate the Germans...

OT: What would you replace the eurozone with?

WW: There's a very strong argument, I think, for a peaceful Free Trade zone across Europe. But at the end of the day, you want to be in charge of your own domestic policy, Brussels can't do it for you, clearly.

OT: Looking back, do you see the Occupation movement as something new?

WW: I've lived through people marching against the Vietnam War, marching against Reagan's idea to put missiles in Europe, and people protesting outside

IMF and World Bank meetings. Really, I see it as a continuation of that.

OT: What kind of system do you favour?

WW: Look, you're not going to find a perfect system until we get to heaven. Any economic system on earth is going to have its flaws. But let's rank countries on whether they're towards the communist/socialist end of the economic spectrum, or towards the capitalist and free market end, then rank countries according to per capita income, then go to Amnesty International, and rank countries according to human rights protections, you'll find that capitalist countries that have the highest incomes and the greatest human rights protection.

OT: So you're a libertarian capitalist?

WW: I'm a Thomas Jeffersonian liberal. If I was protesting, on my banner I'd have the words: 'Get government out of our lives.' In history, the very greatest human rights abuses have their root in government. On my other flag I'd have: 'stop governments interfering with other nations'. For most of our history in America, we've minded our own business. We had huge oceans between us and anyone else. Which meant that we did not have to maintain huge standing armies to protect ourselves. Minding your own business is one of the means to higher wealth.

OT: If you're against global interference, you're presumably not a fan of the Robin Hood tax on financial transactions?

WW: I'm not a fan of it, no. As a matter of fact, I don't think that we should insult the Robin Hood of legend with that name. They've got him upside down. Robin Hood used to rob the king's despicable tax collectors that were ripping off the people. He robbed the tax collectors. Robin Hood - he's my hero!

THIS WEEK, THE OCCUPIED TIMES BUYS AN INTERNATIONAL PHONECARD AND RINGS WALTER E. WILLIAMS, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST DISTINGUISHED ECONOMISTS AND A LONGTIME CHAMPION OF RACIAL EQUALITY.



OT: What are your thoughts on the Occupy Movement?

WW: Many of your objections are entirely legitimate. For example, crony capitalism and the bailouts. But I would argue that you're in the wrong place - and you need focus. It's important to remember: these private companies that are engaging in crony capitalism, getting special favours, they didn't just 'take' the money - Congress and the White House gave it to them.

OT: If we're in the wrong place, then where's the right place?

WW: If you're against crony capitalism, you should be outside the White House and the Houses of Parliament. Outside government. At no point are the protesters asking government to back off, they're saying: "get more involved". You want a piece of the political action? You want to be a part of it? Go where the action is.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DEBT

HANNAH BORNO

The tuition-fee generation will limp into the world owing tens of thousands of pounds. And they are not alone. More and more of us - through a combination of college loans, credit cards, mortgages and bank loans - are being stealthily habituated to debt. We end up feeling that it's an inevitable and mundane part of life - like blisters and bus stops.

"The underlying message for graduates, when they take on student loans, is that they are never able to become truly independent - they are just switching from the parental purse strings to those of the banks," says London based psychodynamic counsellor Virginia Mallin. "When our power is in another's hands we feel vulnerable and unstable. Subservient and childlike." Debt denies us the exhilaration of living as a sovereign individual believes Mallin. "As we take on debt we risk giving our own self-determination up which runs counter to our psychological need to discover the exhilaration of doing things for ourselves; the ultimate power to determine our own fate and enjoy the self-responsibility, self-pride and self-esteem this entails."

It's no accident that people talk joylessly about the 'burden' of debt. To shed this burden is to become 'debt free' - to enter a state of liberty and fulfilment. "When you get in debt you become a slave," said US President Andrew Jackson - and how delighted the banks must be when they see a nation of debtors dutifully slaving away to repay loans, plus interest, from day

one of their working lives. While the debt remains, the power is all theirs.

It's easy to get habituated to debt. "Whilst some people will be able to repay quickly and free themselves, many others will accept or be unable to shed this yoke of disempowerment, and perhaps even welcome the dependency. Debt can almost feel comfortable as it means someone else - paternalistic banks or the state - is supposedly looking after us and we don't have to feel alone," observes Mallin.

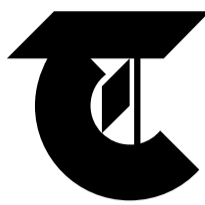
As we get deeper into debt we enter a trance-like state of denial. For many of us casting off the shackles to create a debt and mortgage-free life seems but a dim possibility, but Jen, 33, who's originally from Barbados did just that. "My partner and I worked hard and bought a flat in south London, but the mortgage weighed heavily. I felt as if a thin grey veil was draped between me and truly living life," she says. "So we sold everything and bought a small place in Portugal outright, making our living by doing building work for other expats. On our land I feel sovereign and secure. No bank can ever take it away from me."

It's easier said than done, but if we can peek out of debt denial for a moment, we might just have a chance of getting out in the future. "My goal was always to be debt-free," said Jen. "Even though friends thought I was overreacting at the time, I'm glad I felt so allergic to credit cards and my mortgage - for me, working hard to pay off my college debts and walking away from a mortgage was the most empowering thing I've ever done."



WOMEN ARE 50% OF THE 99%

ZOE STAVRI



The Patriarchal Beast Must Be Banished From Our Camps.

What are we doing here? Are we building a new society, or

are we merely the latest incarnation of a wave of indignant protest? I hope we are the former: the beginning of something special.

If that is so, we are currently building our new society in the image of its predecessor, albeit with more tents and banners. In our camps, we see the same kinds of oppression as we do in the unoccupied old world.

In the outside, a beast called patriarchy rules the social domain. In our camps, the situation is little better. Many women do not feel safe camping overnight. Perhaps it is *not* safe for us to stay.

Over the last week I have heard accounts of women who have been sexually harassed in the camps, usually by drunken men. There has been gendered name-calling and dismissal of the opinions of women. There have been rapes: one in Occupy Cleveland, the other in Occupy Glasgow. Women face the same kinds of oppression in occupied spaces as they do outside. While rape is an issue which can affect people of any gender, it is most commonly men raping women. The system which allows this to happen thrives upon silencing other kinds of sexual violence.

Meanwhile, Occupy Baltimore has included in its security statement on

rape the promise to provide abusers with "counselling resources to deal with their issues", as though a rapist is a victim too. In Anonymus's document providing guidance for living in a revolution, they suggest the solution to prevent rape is to "NEVER PROVOKE", as though rape is the victim's fault. At Occupy LSX, when we discussed banning alcohol, a topic that often came up was whether this would solve the problem of lagered-up harassment.

These solutions do not attack the root of the problem and some present somewhat dangerous thinking, tangled up in the language of the outside world. To build a new society, we must all work together to make our camps a safe space for women. First our occupied spaces, then the world.

THE PATRIARCHAL BEAST MUST BE BANISHED FROM OUR CAMPS

This is what we can do.

- **DON'T RAPE PEOPLE.** Rape is never the fault of the victim, always that of the rapist. To stop rape completely, don't rape.
- **LEARN ABOUT FEMINISM.** We're here to learn from each other. Feminism provides the solution to taking sexism out of life, and provides us with a language to discuss such issues. Read books, read blogs, talk to feminists.
- **ADOPT A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY ON SEXISM.** We say we have this. Let us show we have this. Do not let an

instance of sexism—be it a gendered slur, a pat on the arse, or an "ironically" sexist joke—go unchallenged. Call it out. Something as seemingly harmless as a joke reflects and legitimises sexist beliefs in wider society.

- If a woman has a complaint, **TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.** It is a myth that a lot of rapes are falsely reported. Statistically, it's very likely the allegation will be true. The same goes when a woman talks about experience of sexism or sexual harassment. She's probably *not* overreacting.
- **WOMEN-ONLY SPACES.** Until we have stamped out all instances of sexism in our camps, women will need somewhere safe to be. Many women find it a lot easier to deal with problems without men present.
- If any of the above seems unreasonable, **CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE.** Perhaps you've been lucky enough not to experience sexism in your life and don't see why you should have to do anything to help others as you've never experienced any of the problems yourself. This does not mean the problems don't exist. Not having experienced these problems is what feminists call "privilege". It doesn't make you a bad person, but it means you need to learn more.
- Finally, and I cannot stress this enough, **DON'T RAPE.** What are we doing here? Are we building a new society, together as a community? It will be hard work to overcome sexism yet to grow this movement and rebuild from the bottom up, it is a matter of urgency that we begin to create a safe space. Women are 50% of the 99% after all.

ON IDENTITY & STRATEGY

FLAMINIA GIANBALVO

The idiosyncrasy of voices within the camp, has been, thus far, one of the characterising features of the occupy movement. Our difference, have made us strong, avoiding to be pigeon holed whilst leaving passers-by and media pundits baffled at the high levels of organisation and social cohesion within the camp. However our heterogeneous identity has also hindered a wider debate within the movement, that of achieving a long-term perspective.

Under the powerful banner "We are the 99 per cent" a varied amalgam of views and people has been able to coalesce, creating truly inclusive, dissident spaces and reconstituting the realm of the possible. Our permanent nature has become an unavoidable reminder that an alternative is more essential than ever, the lack of a collective vision for the future constitutes our actions, still, as largely symbolic.

Most occupiers at St Paul's have a more or less definite idea regarding the future of the camp. For some such as Venus, who is responsible for waste management, the priority is "to stay fresh in the moment, elaborating continuity within our framework of solidarity with other occupations and with our way of working".

Others see shortcomings in living and working on a day to day basis. Emanuel is involved in the international outreach working group, which is currently drafting a document aimed at linking occupations and assemblies across the world. He believes that "it's normal we don't have a strategy yet", but then goes on to add "I believe we

need one. Not only to carry on past a potential eviction, but in order to achieve a real impact on the decision making process". He then looks at me, pauses, and elaborates "see, our actions need time, a couple of months won't suffice in achieving this; we need a perspective".

Mark, has been involved in the campaign for real democracy in the UK and Spain for several years and is part of the group who helped to coordinate the 15th of October date in London. He has the uttermost faith in the current process, but also feels there needs to be a strategy based around the concept of popular assemblies with actions aimed at reinforcing this. Although when going into details he admits that "some aspects might be seen as controversial from some within the camp".

Perhaps it's true that by taking a shape we risk alienating some within the movement, but the perils of shapelessness are just as daunting. In its current form the movement is left exposed to co-opting and manipulation, by individuals and political parties.

What the London occupations have achieved in a few weeks is baffling. Yet in order to take this forward we need to start questioning our nature and our purpose. This process of introspection is one of the greatest challenges confronting us, removing us further away from the comfort zones of our past experiences. The debate might be never ending, but only by engaging with it, do we stand a chance of achieving what no other movement has done: inventing the unknown.



GOOD COP? BAD COP?

BARNEY MITCHEL

RIGHTEOUS RESISTANCE

THE IRREVERENT
REVEREND NEMU



At Occupy LSX we have been involved in a continuous process of negotiation with the Metropolitan Police. We maintain a

constructive relationship in order to ensure the safety and security of our protest and do not seek confrontation. However, as activists, we need to ask ourselves about the role of the police.

Why have kettling tactics and riot gear been replaced by cops who are more friendly and approachable? Are these officers, who have become a constant presence around the camp, really our friends and potential allies? Who exactly are the police and what is their role in our society? What attitude should we have to them and how should we interact with them? As our presence at St. Paul's becomes more permanent, we have to find answers to these questions.

THE STORY SO FAR

On October 15, the initial Occupy LSX protest march was kettled by police and prevented from reaching the London Stock Exchange. The police had deployed officers in full riot gear; units from the Tactical Support Group (TSG) and the Forward Intelligence Teams (FIT) surrounded a peaceful protest. Eight people were arrested.

That evening, senior officers entered the camp and demanded the clearing of the St. Paul's front steps, apparently out of concern over damage to "the pillars of St. Paul's". As the general assembly began discussing the issue, 30 to 40 officers entered the scene and attempted to remove protesters.

When the campers refused to leave after a standoff, the police presence was reduced. Somewhere in the corridors of power a decision had presumably been made that images of the Metropolitan Police beating peaceful protesters on the steps of St Pauls Cathedral would risk public outrage similar to that which occurred at the Wall Street protests.

To date the police have not used force, partly because of the initial support from members of St Paul's Cathedral. Yet the question is how long the authorities will tolerate a protest that questions corporate and state power.

WHOSE SIDE ARE THE POLICE ON?

The restrained approach of the police has led to improved relations with campers. Many protesters have begun to engage in friendly conversation with members of the police. Some argue that officers, as public sector employees, are sympathetic to the demonstration even when they are forced into containing it.

However, the real issue is not whether individual police officers are 'nice' or 'nasty', sympathetic or unsympathetic. They remain members of the police force. Regardless of their individual leanings, their role as members of that institution is to serve and protect the status quo.

Before the uprisings of inner-city youth against police repression in 1980 and 1981, there was a big difference between Britain's policing tactics at home and abroad. Within England, Scotland and Wales policing

was largely "by consent", while policing in Hong Kong and The North of Ireland was violent and dominated by overt and covert repression tactics. All this changed in 1982 when Kenneth Newman, formerly Chief of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), was appointed Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. Colonial policing tactics were used against striking miners in 1984/85 and the black community of Broadwater Farm in Tottenham in 1985.

This summer, the police were initially caught off-guard by the London riots. Yet within days, forces were drawn into London from all parts of the country. Vast areas of the city were patrolled by paramilitary units and effectively subjected to a curfew. Heavy policing continued for several weeks, with raids on homes, mass arrests and continued disproportionate

capped boots and fireproof overalls. Stockpiles of CS gas, baton guns and plastic bullets, as well as Specialist Firearms Officers, were all available if police lost control of the situation. The FIT undertook overt mass surveillance while officers from the National Extremism Tactical Co-ordination Unit monitored key individual targets and surveillance helicopters hovered above. After the student protests Police launched Operation Malone.

Officers trawled through hundreds of hours of CCTV footage to find "instigators". On March 26, political policing of activists was clearly evident when 145 peaceful protesters were arrested at the UK Uncut occupation of Fortnum and Mason. In Glasgow, activists involved in anti-cuts campaigning have been targeted with constant harassment and arrests. They set-up the Glasgow



stop-and-search harassment of young black men. On October 19, the residents of Dale Farm were removed with the excessive use of force while protesters were shot with tasers and beaten with batons.

POLICING DISSENT

At St. Paul's, police are confronted with a non-violent and static permanent protest. Tactics have been adjusted accordingly. They vary from friendly intelligence gathering conversations to the use of coercive force.

Political policing tactics have a long history as well. Already, Britain has the largest DNA database worldwide, and the Met's Criminal Intelligence database details political affiliations of people attending political events of any kind. In November and December 2010, student demonstrators faced riot police equipped with acrylic glass riot shields, 26-inch Arnold batons, visored 'NATO' helmets, reinforced steel toe-

Defence Campaign In response (glasgowdefencecampaign.blogspot.com) to resist these attacks and support others who experience similar harassment.

The police are paid to protect the very institutions that are criticised by the Occupy Movement. The police, quite simply, is no neutral force. The state has a large repertoire of repressive laws that can be drawn on to contain popular discontent and opposition. There also may well be attempts to divide and rule and to 'buy off' sections of our movement with minor concessions and promises of change. We should have no illusions about the role of the police at demonstrations. Regardless of the sympathies of individual officers, the institutional role of the police is to serve the State and preserve the status quo, which in Britain today means protecting Banks, monopoly corporations, and those who benefit from capitalism. The long history of British police work is proof of that.

The bells, the bells, the bells which ruined my blessed sleep on the first Saturday of the occupation barely register anymore, having merged into the general background, but who ever imagined that all this Jesus-talk would become so normal? On the cathedral steps, everyone has become a theologian, taking up whips against the money-changers and rendering unto Caesar what is his.

We seem to have agreed that social justice and consideration for the poor are fundamental Christian values, and, along with several important men in frocks, we are prepared to make sacrifices for them. But what kind of tactics does scripture suggest?

"Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matt 5:39)

This must be one of the best known Biblical passages, and one of the least understood, because whilst it appears to be a piece of masochistic nonsense designed

to enslave you for generations, it is in fact a subversive's crowbar.

A strike "on thy right cheek" from a right-handed attacker must be a roundhouse punch or a back-hand slap. Seeing as Judea is a long way from Shaolin, we can assume the latter, which was commonly delivered by Roman men to their slaves, wives and children. It was not intended to injure, otherwise it would have landed firmly on the left cheek. It simply reinforces a hierarchy.

Turning the other cheek challenges that hierarchy. Having failed to overwhelm his subordinate with symbolic violence, the bully finds himself with his right hand at his right side, a left cheek taunting him, and a choice to make. He could back down. He could call his guards, and reveal his cowardice. Or, if he still has the courage, he could strike again, fist-to-face as an equal. But whatever he does, he is forced to consider his subordinate as an individual, a person with their own will rather than a slave subject to his.

Cool-headed, strategic civil disobedience is much wiser than flinging yourself at entrenched and armed authorities, as the Macabean martyrs discovered in 117BC, and as you will discover if you punch a copper.

The verse immediately after the turning of the cheek goes from bully to banker: "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." (Matt 5:40)

Under Jewish law, a creditor could take a man's final possession, his coat, in lieu of monies owed. He had to return it, however, at sunset, because the poor man had to sleep in it. (Deu 24:13) Our Lord of discord suggests that, rather than waiting for small mercies, the debtor should give up his final layer as well, indecently exposing himself and exposing his creditor's indecent greed. Worldwide, the homeless, the indebted and the indignant are occupying the streets together to expose the greed of their creditors.

"Resist not evil" is misleading, because anthistemi does not refer to all forms of resistance. "Do not stand fast / cause insurrection against evil" would be more faithful to the Greek (anti: against + histemi: stand / make firm), and it makes more sense given the rest of the chapter. The King James Bible is full of such deliberate acts of mistranslation and misdirection. It was translated in 1611 as England fizzed with revolution, six years after the gunpowder plot, and with civil war looming. King James demanded a new Bible that was neither controversial nor provocative, and he got it, because then as now the media was controlled by the Man. That was exactly 400 years ago, and 400 years is quite long enough for slavery. One little reverend can't remove all the bad words from the good book, but allow me another dab at the sermon on the mount, because it really is a subversive's cookbook:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

It is said that religion keeps the masses oppressed, promising rewards in the afterlife so we accept our lot on earth. This may be true of many forms of Christianity, but it is not true of scripture. The Greek word translated above as "heaven" is ouranos, but it also means universe or world. Often "heaven", as in the place you go after you die if you behave yourself, makes no sense at all in context (see Rev. 21:3).

Therefore resist, my brothers and sisters in chaos and Christ, because if we keep level-headed and pay attention to detail, the entire world can be ours.



PRIVATE COMPANIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

WAIL QASIM

As thousands of students march through London today and impose themselves, as we have, on unscrupulous corporations, the real reason we are here is brought back to us.

The issue concerning Higher Education is not one of privatisation (most universities are in fact already private, though run as charities) but that the government hopes to deregulate the market in such a way that companies currently operating mere minutes from our occupation would be able to enter the Higher Education sector with a view to competing with the existing University institutions. Even worse, it is expected that quality education will be provided by virtue of 'market forces' and a profit motive.

In short, a sector which has thus far been free from the greed of the 1% is to be opened up to companies that care for little more than profit – regardless of the quality of teaching and whether their students gain degrees at all.

One such company is Apollo Global, an owner of for-profit education institutions such as the University of Phoenix in Arizona which currently has an incredibly poor completion rate of 9% in the past six years and often leaves students with double the debt of 'non-profit' institutions. Apollo Global already operates in the UK and owns the for-profit education provider BPP. Under the government's current plans they would be given the opportunity to open a 'university' institution with full degree awarding powers and the ability to vastly undercut current universities.

The creation of a for-profit market within the Higher Education sector is the most fundamental attack on what education really means. As lessons are shared and swapped in our very own TentCity University, these companies threaten to drive universities even further away from what they are meant to be about: the sharing of skills, knowledge and understanding – without regard for profitability.



NOT A FEE IN SIGHT

BEN WALKER

We exist in a precarious space, tucked into the collarbone of the London Stock Exchange. What we choose to fill this space with, in the little time we've made for ourselves, is what will decide our success or failure as a movement once we're history.

Consider that, precisely because we have magicked up our own village out of canvas and gaffer tape, we bear total responsibility, and total freedom, to craft it in the image of our choosing. So perhaps it is a little disheartening to see emerge, out of all the infinite possibilities that festoon the walls of our lovely brains, a thing that bears the exact same title as an institution that we already see repeated in thousands of towns and cities around the world: the university. For hundreds of years, they have disseminated certain habits of reasoning, justified certain dogmas of explanation, and directly contributed to our current, rather humiliating, predicament: trussed up in a gordian knot of global crises. Finally, maybe most importantly of all, this is the year

in which UK universities will wholly embrace their evil-twin neoliberal identity and start charging mortgage-like fees for the privilege of selling education-products to their student-customers.

You'd have to look pretty hard to find another university like Tentcity, though. You, if you'll remember, as a part of the voice of the General Assembly, made us up out of thin air just over three weeks ago, to serve the occupation as an autonomous, non-hierarchical centre for learning. Our one purpose is to find and enlist speakers to discuss with the occupiers and the general public on the issues that stand out as of paramount importance to our cause. We derive our license from you, our purpose from you, our goals from you.

Every week we've held teach-outs on the steps of the Bank of England, in the long shadows of Canary Wharf or on the banks of Embankment, anywhere we can bring public debate into the financial capital, and preferably in the places where it's least wanted.

Everyday you can come down and listen to the speakers and take part in the debate. Every evening, Occupy Cinema shows a mind-expanding collection of films in the same space. Soon we'll be taking our occupation's debates into prisons, churches, campuses, all in an attempt to bring to account the power-interests that have operated for too long, protected by a privileged kind of silence. Tentcity is far from perfect in form, sometimes we're guilty of letting a hierarchy emerge in a workshop, or letting a speaker take over a debate, and yes, we could be getting a better breadth of expertise and experience in for you. Perhaps what we're guilty of is sometimes letting the shadow of what a normal university is re-emerge in our new space, of allowing the sarcasm of our name to solidify into something not intended. That is the challenge that faces all of us, though; to make anew a better kind of world, from the iniquitous structures we've inherited. If you've got any notions as to how we can do that better, grab the mic and let us know.

FREE EDUCATION

THE GREAT DEBATE

THE GREAT DEBATE: THIS WEEK THE TOPIC UP FOR DISCUSSION IS FREE EDUCATION. AS STUDENTS MARCH AGAIN OVER INCREASED TUITION FEES, WE'RE ASKING IF EDUCATION SHOULD BE TOTALLY FREE, OR IF THERE SHOULD BE SOME CONTRIBUTION.

FOR / NURIA DOMENE

We could claim that education does have a cost after all, whether it is paid by students themselves or by the taxpayers. We can also affirm that education is an important tool for economic development, thus it should be considered a profitable investment not only for the student, but for society too. Many of us would also defend the view that education is not a commodity, nor an investment, it is a fundamental right.

There are several utilitarian arguments to defend free education. However, in my opinion the most important arguments have to do with ethics and in particular with equality.

This society, so devoted to neoliberal values, really 'bought' that we all have the same opportunities to succeed in this crazy race up to the top of the social hierarchy. Obviously this is a tall tale, but we believed it. As we all have realised by now, in a capitalist society absolutely everything has a commercial value. Even education, one of our fundamental rights, has become a commodity which is becoming increasingly inaccessible for the majority. For me this is a violation of the principle of equality, for others it may merely translate to the logical consequence of increase in demand.

This makes me think of Alain Bihl, who wrote that for those who are counterrevolutionary, the idea of equality for all is an ethical and political scandal. It is also an ontological aberration because, for them, inequality is a natural law, divine and inviolable. But our so-called democracy makes sure this is not too evident. Apparently, we are all equal under the law, you know? It is a right recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by the Human Rights Act!

We have to remember that education is one of the tools that we, the 99%, have to fight back. It can be used to eradicate an anti-human economic system that is increasing social differences and making social injustices widespread. While it is true that making high quality education accessible for all automatically increases the opportunities of people, regardless of their economic background; it is also necessary to enforce changes that make social justice a reality. That is a goal worth fighting for.

AGAINST / BEN YARDLEY

In 1998 the Labour government introduced university top up fees of £1000, which was subsequently increased to £3000 after the following election. From 2012 the Conservative led coalition will increase the maximum charge to £9000 per year. Much has been said about the wisdom of such an extreme move, but the case for some level of contribution is compelling.

Amongst the foremost arguments is that a university education is an investment by a student in their own future. According to a PWC study, a graduate will earn on average £160,000 more over a lifetime than a non-graduate. Therefore it is only fair that they should contribute. It also gives each student a stake in their own education, much the same as taxation gives each person a stake in society.

The increase comes at a time when higher education in England & Wales is facing severe cuts in funding. Our universities are traditionally amongst the best in the world, so the need for universities to make up the loss is paramount if this is to remain the case. This is particularly true in terms of our reputation as a centre of research.

While the increase in student numbers over recent years is generally a good thing, it has also led to a higher number of dropouts. Making students contribute will, in theory, sort out the wheat from the chaff. Reducing numbers of students also creates an opportunity to introduce more skills and trade based qualifications for those who don't attend university, something the country desperately needs, particularly in light of calls to return the British economy back to a manufacturing based economy.

Of course, it is imperative that there are safeguards against deterring poorer students from university. Access should be about academic ability, not ability to pay. Therefore any top up fee contributions should be means tested to encourage students from poorer backgrounds to apply. Under the current system debt accrued is only paid back once a graduate reaches a certain salary. Alternatively the much mooted 'graduate tax' will ensure further education is free at the point of delivery.



A debate is scheduled at TentCity University after the GA on Wednesday November 9th for us to carry on this debate in person. See you there!

~ OCCUPY LONDON ~

**NO JOBS
NO HOUSING
NO FUTURE!**

**NO
FUCK!**

~ CHOOSE YOUR SIDE ~