

The Occupied Times

~ OF LONDON ~

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RORY MACKINNON

POLICE "BUBBLE" STUDENTS

Campers, construction workers and student activists alike have been left steaming over heavy-handed policing at last week's protests.

An estimated 10,000 university students, schoolchildren and parents swarmed through the city centre last Wednesday to protest the government's higher education agenda — described by organisers from the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts as an attempt to end education as a public service.

Scotland Yard reported just two-dozen arrests from the day's events — but the protesters themselves complained of heavy-handed policing.

Around 4,000 officers policed the demonstration, hemming in the march on all sides in a moving kettle known as a 'bubble'.

Even before the march began, organisers voiced anger at reports police had authorised rubber bullets and written to activists with no criminal record warning them they could be arrested for "anti-social behaviour."

Meanwhile videos uploaded to YouTube showed dozens of >>



GOVT TARGETS SQUATTERS

RORY MACKINNON

STACEY KNOTT

THE CITY VS OLSX

Westminster's war on squatters will hit protest camps next, housing activists have warned.

Members of Squatters' Action For Secure Homes issued a call for solidarity this week, after 15 appeared in Westminster Magistrates Court charged with unlawful assembly for their part in an overnight protest outside Parliament. The activists' lawyer Raj Chada said last week he had won a two-week adjournment to lobby Crown prosecutors to drop the case, since the charges stem from legislation which has technically been repealed.

The Serious Organised Crime and Policing Act bars "unauthorised"

demonstrations within a square kilometre of Parliament — but the government's Police Reform Act, which has been passed but not yet come into force, scales down the scope of the ban to protests in Parliament Square directly outside the House.

Mr Chada appeared confident of an acquittal, saying the Crown had until 23 November to decide.

But spokesman Rueben Taylor warned that the vilification of squatters and the Occupy movement was "intimately connected."

"We are being ruled by a government that believes that property is more important than

people, and is passing violent and draconian laws to silence those who are losing out.

"Certain Tories have also made it clear that if they would like nothing better than to extend these laws against squatting to cover other types of properties, and thereby to criminalise occupation as a form of protest - in universities, workplaces, and public places."

Meanwhile the current proposals were "just a test", says Taylor. "If they are allowed to get away with it, we will undoubtedly see even more repressive laws being pushed through in the coming months," he warned. >>

After the City of London Corporation told OccupyLSX campers to pack up by Christmas, or expect an eviction, occupiers turned the tables, telling the City what it would take for them to make any further decisions. The General Assembly of OccupyLSX told the City it planned on staying on in solidarity with the global movements.

It issued three demands to the City last week; for the City to publish, in full, year-by-year breakdowns of the City cash account, future and historic, that the City be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and thirdly, it wanted a detailed account of all advocacy undertaken on behalf

of the banking and finance industries since the 2008 financial crash.

The occupation regards The City of London Corporation as an undemocratic authority, which is more accountable to corporations than the public. In a statement, occupiers said "We cannot negotiate with such an institution without undermining our sister occupations across the globe, who are being violently oppressed by authorities with the same interests as the City of London Corporation."

"The occupation was still working with the fire service, the health and safety executive and St Paul's over logistics of the camp.

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>> The charges stem from a 150-strong campout near the Houses of Parliament earlier this month after Justice Secretary Ken Clarke rammed through an amendment criminalising squatting in residential buildings.

Police ordered the demonstrators to disperse, then kettled around 50 protesters who refused to leave. The amendment - tacked on just six days

>> plainclothes police and snatch squads dragging away apparently peaceful protesters.

The day's events also saw yet another clash between police and the Occupy movement: around 30 activists from Occupy London Stock Exchange broke away as the march rounded Trafalgar Square, dashing across the flagstones and throwing up pop-up tents around Nelson's Column in a matter of minutes.

Police originally held back, with one camper drawing laughter as he congratulated the officers on "upholding their oath to protect and serve the Olympic Clock" — a reference to clashes with protesters in the Square in March amid claims of vandalism.

But police moved in just over an hour later, arresting around a dozen of the campers for a public order offence - deviation from the authorised march route.

Occupied Times reporter Mircea Barbu was among those arrested.

Meanwhile in nearby Fetter Lane police kettled around 150 striking electricians from the Unite union

before it was passed and before publication of the government's consultation report - threatens homeless people in residential buildings with fines of up to £5,000 and up to a year behind bars.

Around 35,000 people in Britain will lose their home between now and Christmas, according to estimates from housing charity Shelter — an average one person every two minutes.

who had sought to link up with the students' march.

Even the march's endpoint at Moorgate was subjected to kettling, with a further cordon near St Paul's preventing protesters from rejoining the occupation.

A Tranquillity team member who did not wish to be named told The Occupied Times he was in a group of around 50 protesters held en masse while trying to get home at around 5pm.

Police told them they had deviated from the march route and ordered them to disperse, he said.

The group was escorted to Farringdon Police Station more than a mile away before being issued street bail, he said.

But many protesters remained optimistic: second-year Sussex University sociology student Elsie told The Occupied Times the day's events were a sign of things to come.

"This is a moment when people are realising that even our left-wing parties are actually quite right-wing.

"It's a time when people on the streets are important — not politicians," she said.

TENTCITY CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK...

WEDNESDAY 16TH

12:00 – 13:00 / Personal Income Limits - Alan Cottey. 14:30 – 16:00 / Connecting Universities and Social Movements - Tristan McCowan et al. 16:00 – 17:30 / The economics of crisis Lord Robert Skidelsky. 18:00 – 19:00 / Putting the 'men' in feminism'. 21:00 – 23:30 / Cinema InTents: The Floor, introduced by Christo Hird the producer.

THURSDAY 17TH

11:00 – 13:00 / Participatory mapping - Teresa Hoskyns. 14:00 – 15:00 / Presenting two special guests from Colombia to share their experiences of similar issues - Maggie Scrimgeour. 15:00 – 16:00 / Economic Crisis and Democracy - Paul Feldman. 16:00 – 17:00 / Gender and the Conscious Revolution - Beatrix Campbell. 17:30 – 19:00 / The School and the Street - Ken Jones.

FRIDAY 18TH

11:00 – 13:00 / Visions of another world. 15:00 – 17:30 / Speak out and speech buddies. 17:30 – 19:00 / Sharing experiences from the 1979 Iranian revolution with others. 21:00 – 23:30 / GrowthBusters: Hooked on Growth.

SATURDAY 19TH

10:30 – 12:00 / Bring back improvisation, - Maciej Burdynowski. 12:00 – 13:00 / Occupying the Olympics: Citizen Media and London 2012 (Reclaiming the narrative). 14:00 – 15:00 / Contemporary Capitalism - Robert Skidelsky. 15:00 – 16:00 / Anticapitalist Poetry - Jim Drysdale. 16:00 – 17:00 / Migration Control - Bridget Anderson / Nando Singona.

SUNDAY 20TH

11:00 – 12:00 / Veronica Chapman. 12:00 – 16:00 / Tent City University Drawing Class: Documents of Hope and Resistance. 14:00 – 15:00 / What is the Impact of Capitalism on Children? 15:00 – 16:00 / Fuel Poverty Action. 16:00 – 17:00 / Deep politics and the revolutions business. 17:00 – 18:00 / Food Sovereignty: The case of Farmers' Rights - Dwijen Rangnekar. 18:00 – 19:00 / Signs of Revolt - Creative Resistance to a Commodified World - Noel Douglas.

MONDAY 21TH

14:00 – 15:30 / Researching Power + State Crime - Chris Williams & Penny Green.

TUESDAY 22TH

11:30 – 12:30 / Economics and land reform. 14:00 – 15:00 / The Free Lunch - Fairness with Freedom - Charles Bazlinton. 17:30 – 19:00 / Traveller Solidarity Network. 21:00 – 23:30 / Food Waste evening with Food Cycle.



EDITORIAL



fter editorials focussing on the birth of the movement here in London, Cannon Fraser's resignation, and the student march

of last week, perhaps it is time for a little introspection. The Occupied Times is now a familiar sight around St Paul's every Wednesday, despite a print run of only 2000 copies each week.

What started as an ambitious endeavour is starting to look like a legitimate newspaper, we hope, if a little more aesthetically radical. Like the movement itself, those of us producing the paper have had our ups and downs. We've had three changes of premises, two changes in format, and one arrest. Is it like this at the Guardian?

Four weeks in, we have time to sit back, look at the lessons learned, peek around the next corner and ask ourselves: What is the role for this newspaper? Even that question might be contested: Should we aspire to implement a long-term program within a movement that has preserved its fluidity and versatility? And from where do we derive the authority with which we now write editorials?

Indeed, we cannot give any conclusive answers to all these questions - but we can share our thoughts. We want this to be a good newspaper, with certain editorial standards and interesting articles. We want to be read not because of the paper's name but because of our content. We are fully aware that a single paper cannot do justice to the variety of

opinions within the camp, and we reject the idea that The Occupied Times in any way resembles an "official" publication. It is our intention to provide an alternative journalistic narrative and offer a platform for discussion. We hope that campers at St. Paul's and Finsbury Square will learn as much from our articles as do visitors who stop to pick up a copy.

That means we have to straddle many borders. We must reconcile the need for open debate with the constraints of our weekly publication schedule. In relation to the many issues discussed - sometimes very passionately - in the camp, we want to avoid taking sides. Our shared questions and individual convictions outnumber the conclusive answers we can give. And in relation to the mainstream media, we want to preserve our independence as well. We welcome outside voices and attention, but we must not become part of someone else's agenda.

Many campers have written for The Occupied Times or have helped with a myriad of other tasks, from setting up our newsroom tent to the folding and distribution of the printed papers. To all of you, we say a heartfelt thank you. Like most things at the camp, this paper would not exist without the initiative, personal commitment and helping hands of many. If anyone wants to become involved, we invite you to our weekly editorial meeting at 6pm every Thursday in our new tent at Finsbury Square. As long as the system remains intact and the tents remain on the street, we will be here as well. Writing, editing, publishing, and giving a platform to the many voices around this movement.



By Hari and Jake as featured in the Guardian

STRONG VOICES OF YOUTH

RAGNHILD
FRENG DALE

A movement is bubbling away in the supply tent at OccupyLSX to get a marginalised voice in society heard. They are Occupy our Future, a youth movement using OccupyLSX as their base to gather momentum and reach out. 'We were sitting in the General Assembly in the first week, but we felt that our voices weren't being heard', says Yasien. He explained the difficulties of getting their message across: youth are not as experienced as some of the older protesters, who don't necessarily see their side of things.

They are about creating a more positive way for youth to express themselves and be constructive. Their base is the former supply tent, which they have not hesitated to make useful: "We livestream every day at 10pm, music jam as a way to bring out our message and yesterday we had 400 people logging in," said Yasien.

Focussing on stretching their network through social media and word-of-mouth through the camp, they are also

encouraging youth to come and see the camp for themselves rather than trusting the media picture.

One of the group organisers, John, said the movement started as a response to budget cuts. "Nick Clegg and the LibDems betrayed us when they tripled the fees. The riots happened because youth were angry and agitated. When you are pushed up against a wall, you have nowhere to escape, no other choice than to express yourself violently."

Last Sunday the General Assembly was replaced by a Youth Assembly where youth expressed their concerns about society, and discussed the reasons behind the riots earlier this year. They are now debating where to go next. Their ambition is certainly not small: they are making a 10-point statement, and want to put a draft online to connect to a wider audience. They hope to reach out and to bring in; to spread their message of peaceful revolution and make youth central to the process.



FINSBURY OCCUPIERS AIM FOR SUSTAINABILITY

STACEY KNOTT

While the City of London Corporation itches to rid St Paul's of OccupyLSX campers, Finsbury Square campers are getting advice on how to make their camp more sustainable - from the landowners.

The occupation has been in talks with the Islington Council, whose land the camp is on.

Finsbury Square occupier Solomon Schonfield had been liaising with the council over issues it had with the camp, which were health, safety and fire based.

The council had stated it considered the occupation a "continued trespass

against the council," but recognised the group's right to protest.

Solomon said dealings with the council went "very well" and the camp was trying to comply with all its requests, including replacing the generator with a diesel one, having more fire extinguishers, fire exit strategies and keeping two metres between each tent.

Solomon said the council was helpful and gave recommendations on how to make the site safer and more sustainable.

They even offered to deal with the camp's waste, and buy the camp wood

chips, to counter the mud that was becoming an issue in the square.

However, the camp did not want to be a financial burden on the council and planned to source what it needed without cost to the council.

Solomon said they were trying to make the camp an attraction for workers, residents and tourists.

"We have plans to erect communal spaces, larger tents to house more people and we want to make the square an attraction, and more positive to the community."

POLICE FOILED EDL ATTACK

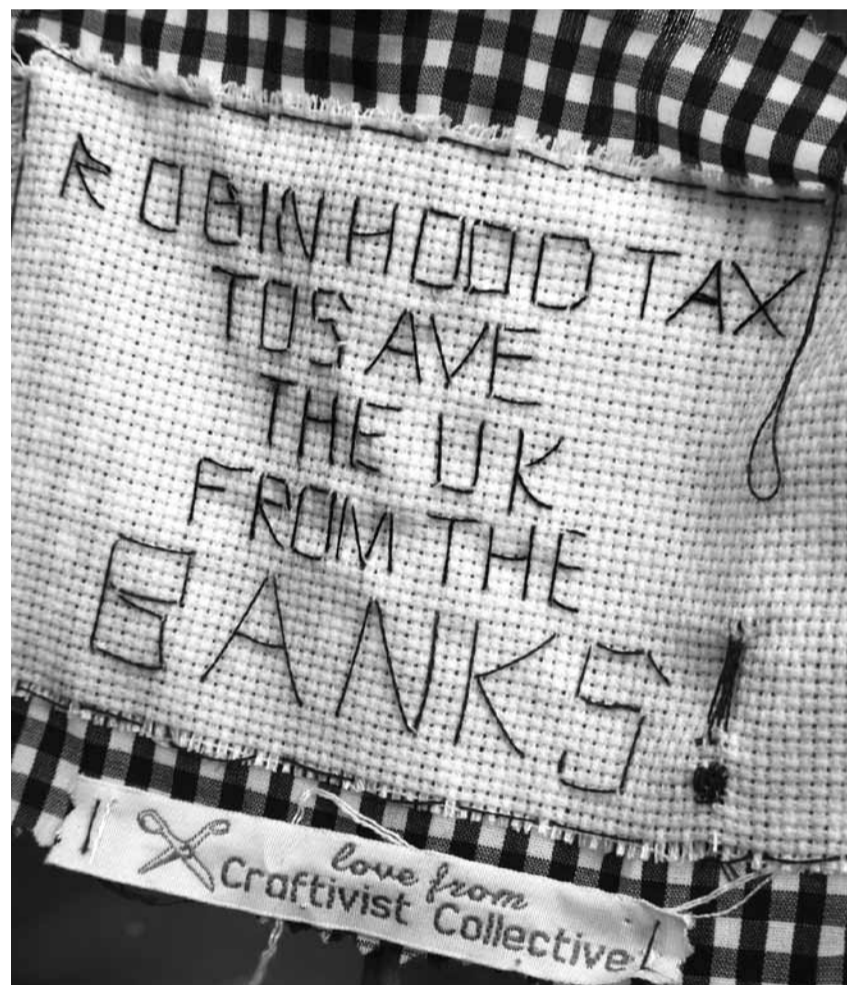
RORY
MACKINNON

Police have arrested more than 170 right-wing extremists in what they say was a planned attack on Occupy London Stock Exchange.

Police said the arrests stemmed from a suspected "breach of the peace" last Saturday after members of the ultra-nationalist group gathered near the Cenotaph on Whitehall last Saturday, with talk of marching on to St Paul's Square. The Occupied Times has seen a

Facebook post by EDL organiser Michael Rafferty in which he wrote that the League had guns and the time had come to "show [his] hand". "You have snipers so do we you have riot trained officers so do we [sic]," he wrote.

Mr Rafferty was stopped and was searched, but was not arrested and no firearms were found. Arrestees included neo-Nazi activist and RedWatch editor Eddie Stampton.



RAGE WITH THE OCCUPATION

STACEY KNOTT

The words roared through the frosty air around St Paul's last Wednesday as anti-capitalist rocker Tom Morello led campers and student demonstrators in a literal rage against the machine. Morello, best known for playing guitar in activist band Rage Against the Machine, joined the occupation after the November 9 student march through the city.

He played an acoustic set outside the kitchen to an enthralled crowd, and spliced his set with commentary on the global occupation movements between songs - told using the human microphone technique (when the crowd repeats what he says, so all can hear). After the concert, he told press OccupyLSX was the ninth occupation he has visited across the globe.

"I'm on my occupy the planet tour at the moment to express my solidarity with the people of London who are

part of the 99 percent who are standing against the corporate Malthusians that have torpedoed the global economy."

He said the movement represented the "stock and trade" of what his musical career has been about.

His music urged direct action, and social and political reform, and was often about injustice through the world.

Morello said that every successful struggle for social justice needed a good soundtrack and he was doing what he could to provide one.

"It (protest music) puts wind in the sails of the struggle, it's something that speaks truth to the reptilian brain in people in the combination of melody, rhythm and rhyme."

He had been to eight other occupations and said people are learning that "in order to change the world, walk out your front door and just do it."

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING...

STACEY KNOTT

Thefts, drunken abuse, paranoid schizophrenics, argumentative bankers, copious amounts of coffee and plenty of pacing is all in a night's voluntary work for one of the toughest roles in the OccupyLSX movement. The Tranquillity Team - also known as Night Watch - is made up of a variety of occupiers who stay up all night to keep a beady eye on what's going on around the camp. They pace around, keep in touch over radios and try to calm down any trouble that may be brewing.

I joined the team for a few shifts - on a Monday and a Friday - and soon realised it is a tiring, frustrating and dangerous role. But someone has to do it. I attached myself to Antonio Maniscalco an Italian chef who alternates between tranquillity and kitchen duties. He is dedicated to the movement;

ecstasy first. His final request, at about 3am was for Tranquillity to arrange a date for him with a 16-year-old girl he met earlier that day.

Antonio tried to offer the man, who was clearly in desperate need of medical attention, a place to sleep but he was not interested, and eventually moved on. Lacking manpower and no one with experience on how to deal with the man's delusions, there was nothing Tranquillity could do. I also joined the team on a bustling Friday night, when there were rumours flying around of an English Defence League (EDL) infiltration, so numbers were beefed up after a call out at the General Assembly for more volunteers.

Despite the anticipation, the night was relatively quiet, made up of what is

world there will always be a need for a form of security or a police force, this isn't something new it dates right back to the dawn of humanity, even in the animal kingdom. "There are threats out there, it's always better to have an alert system in place, if that means having people walking around at night with a radio in communication with each other, then so be it."

Two nights with Tranquillity and it was pretty clear something had to change, there were people who could not hold their alcohol and got aggressive from it, and there were also people flocking to the camp for lack of a better option, and they needed help. This is a sentiment many in the camp are aware of, and are trying to address.



OCCUPIED ELSEWHERE: BIRMINGHAM

JAKE BEXX

is highly intelligent, compassionate and a natural at resolving conflicts and keeping the peace - the point of the role. Antonio moved around groups loitering on the St Paul's steps, in the tea tent and around the kitchen with ease. He is well liked, and spoke well of the people he was trying to keep safe. His main tactic was to "keep people relaxed." He urged everyone to "behave, be respectful and civilized."

On the Monday, between 10pm and 6am there were always at least six people on the lookout, and the problems came from people who were not camping at St Paul's but hanging around the area - some with the sole intent of causing trouble.

There was a group of young men spotted rummaging through people's tents, trying to steal clothing and sleeping bags, they were quickly surrounded by Tranquillity as well as curious campers, and when they realised they would be intensely watched all night, skulked away from the camp. Later on, there was an old man, with a hacking cough, wrapped in a shawl and carrying a staff. At varying points he was aggressive, dismissive and nonsensical to the Tranquillity volunteers. He demanded Antonio organise a meeting with two campers the man had met earlier, so he could discuss meeting government officials and starting his own march. He later asked for a taxi to be called to take him to a hospital, but it needed to bring him some

becoming the usual antics of a Friday night at St Paul's; bankers and city workers on their way home from after-work drinks trying to instigate arguments with campers, people more aligned with the movement letting loose at the free concert by the St Paul's steps, and others getting drunk and rambling to each other in the tea tent. Antonio was pleased it was an easy night, as the one before certainly wasn't - last Thursday one of the volunteers had been repeatedly assaulted, and had clothes stolen from his tent while other Tranquillity members had to try and defend the kitchen from campers' drunken rummaging.

Tranquillity members that I spoke to all agreed it was excessive drinking that was making their roles difficult, and that was what made a division between those camping out to make a change, and those camping out to party. "Seventy to eighty percent of the people here believe in the movement, but the rest have no idea, and should party elsewhere," Antonio said. They had been repeatedly called fascists last Thursday night, also a typical occurrence. Military veteran Matthew Horne said when he was on Tranquillity duties he often came up against people who deemed the group as another form of authority to oppose. "They need to realise that no matter what society you want to live in, no matter where you go in the

Occupier Alison Playford is one of them.

She is involved with the new welfare centre set up at St Paul's - the centre aims to deal with all the issues I witnessed while with Tranquillity. When the centre is better established, it will provide help for Tranquillity as they patrol the camp.

Alison said the centre was set up to deal with peoples' mental well-being, from stressed out campers to those who come to the occupation suffering mental illness, addiction or homelessness problems. I visited the centre on a Wednesday afternoon when there was a counsellor and homoeopathist on site, waiting to help anyone who may need it. They were but two of the many who responded to a call out for health service providers to offer their expertise to the camp. The centre was working on having counsellors, clergy and other service providers available around the clock. Alison said as soon as they had the numbers they would support Tranquillity with remedying situations and getting people the help they desperately need. She, like so many others I have spoken to at OccupyLSX, was aware the movement has become a beacon for London's vulnerable and disaffected, but, unlike wider society, this community did not want to ignore them. "We are supposed to be the change we want to see... an inclusive society that protects its vulnerable members and that's what we are trying to do."

In the shadow of a new £193 million library lies Occupy Birmingham. Having been moved on from its original site to accommodate the annual German market, the dozen or so occupiers are set up in a small picturesque garden behind Symphony Hall.

Although this new space isn't as much in the public's face as the last, the message is still strong and it seems that this fraction of the 99% won't be going anywhere anytime soon. Two tents serve as a kitchen and a living room, passers-by donate goods to the cause, and an uplifting spirit surrounds the people who live here.

As the squirrels ran around foraging, I sat with Carl Lewis who three weeks ago joined the camp on the pavements of Victoria Square, where Occupy Birmingham began. I asked him why he thought that now was the time to stand up and be counted, and he replied, "I've awoken to the moment, to what's needed now out of me."

Carl tossed a crust to a passing squirrel and said: "when you finally realise who you are and what you're doing here, you can see what makes sense from your past and how you need to pave your future. That's when you make a change."



TAHRIR SQUARE & THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

DAVID WEARING



the rising wave of international protests happening under the Occupy banner, Cairo's Tahrir Square has gained iconic status, frequently

invoked by activists from New York and Oakland to Barcelona and London. The substantial differences between what is happening now in Zuccotti Park, or outside St Paul's Cathedral, and events in Egypt at the start of this year, are obvious enough. Concerns about the abuse of civil liberties and the undemocratic distribution of power in Western societies are certainly

real, but thankfully we do not live in anything like the sort of authoritarian police state that was presided over by Hosni Mubarak (and which in many ways persists today under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces). In one sense, it is those very differences that form part of what makes Tahrir Square so important to activists in the West. If Egyptians can begin to achieve positive social change in spite of the huge obstacles they face, then what excuse do we have for not mounting successful challenges to our own structures of power? Tahrir Square undoubtedly stands as an inspiration, but the connection goes deeper than that.

Throughout his reign, Mubarak enjoyed long-standing and substantial military and diplomatic support from the United States and Britain. Barack Obama's response, when asked if he viewed Mubarak as authoritarian, given the thousands of political prisoners held by the Egyptian regime, was to say "no, I prefer not to use labels for folks". While gangs of pro-regime thugs were being unleashed on protestors in Cairo, Tony Blair saw fit to describe Mubarak as "immensely courageous and a force for good".

During the revolution itself, the position articulated by the British government until very close to the point where Mubarak fell was that the dictator should "listen" to the protesters and make "reforms". The call from Tahrir Square, by contrast, and as William Hague and David Cameron well knew, was not "the people demand that the dictator listen to our legitimate aspirations and enact reforms". The call, now famous throughout the world, was a simple one: "ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam", "the people demand the fall of the regime". Only when it became clear that Mubarak's position had become untenable irrespective of their wishes did Britain and the US belatedly decide to support his departure, notwithstanding a brief alliance with the idea of replacing him with the regime's torturer-in-chief, Omar Suleiman.

A recent poll showed 51% of Britons agreeing with the statement that OccupyLSX and Occupy Wall Street "are right to want to call time on a system that puts profit before people". That system - perhaps more accurately understood as putting profit and power before people - is an international one, with its 1% ruling class including a diverse range of figures from David Cameron and Tony Blair, Fred Goodwin and Bob Diamond, to regimes like the notoriously tyrannical Saudi

monarchy, with whom the British state and associated corporations enjoy one of the world's most lucrative arms contracts.

The connection between the British and American governments and the tyrants of the Middle East has endured since the early twentieth century, as Washington and London have sought to exert proxy control over the huge material and strategic prize that the region's energy reserves represent. The regional order in the Middle East is a key component of the US-led, UK-supported, neoliberal capitalist system, and notwithstanding its lack of oil wealth, Egypt's historic role as the indispensable nation of the Arab world make it a lynchpin of that system, and vital to Western interests (or rather, the interests of the West's 1%). Mubarak's fall was bitterly lamented by his fellow one-percenters in the House of Saud,

Tunisian revolution was not just to gain political rights, but to sweep away that 1%, popularly imagined as a sort of dam against economic opportunity."

All over the world, the economic crisis became a crisis of political legitimacy for governments who had adhered to the now discredited neoliberal orthodoxy. And as the system is international in scope, so the protests became consciously internationalist in character. It should therefore come as no surprise that activists from Tahrir Square recently sent a message to Occupy Wall Street which said that "we are now in many ways involved in the same struggle".

In Britain, critics of the Occupy movement have cited the numerous causes espoused by the protesters as a sign of their incoherence of purpose. In reality, the protesters understand that a complex but nevertheless identifiable



MYTHS IN THE MEDIA

DAVID ROBINSON

THAT PROTESTERS GRAFFITIED ON THE CATHEDRAL WALLS

Someone did spray '666' on the side of the cathedral, but there is no evidence it was the work of anyone from the camp. The graffiti was daubed on the wall to the left of the cathedral, the opposite side from the camp, which means any member of the public with an agenda of discrediting the camp could have done it without being seen. It also makes little sense for the camp to antagonise the church; it relies on their goodwill and support for its existence. The cathedral understands this, and released a statement stating 'there is some evidence people are doing this because of our relationship with the protesters'.

SOMEBODY FROM THE CAMP USED THE INSIDE OF THE CATHEDRAL AS A TOILET

A member of the clergy at the cathedral claimed that they found 'human excrement' on the floor just inside its doors. The tip off seemed to

come from a single anonymous clergy, and it's no secret that not everyone within the cathedral supports the camp. There is no evidence to prove that this was the 'work' of anyone within the camp, nor that the excrement is even human. St Paul's is a place of worship, and its doors are open to anybody. Besides, the camp has its own portaloos. The church has, for its part, said that it doesn't believe members of the camp to be responsible.

TOURISM AND LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE BEING AFFECTED

The loss of tourism was one of the reasons cited for the initial closure of the cathedral, but the truth is the camp has become an attraction in its own right. Thousands of people pass through the camp each day, interested in, and supportive of, what is going on there. It is true that some local businesses located within Paternoster Square have seen a big drop off in trade over the past few weeks, but

that is down to the decision taken by the corporate owners of Paternoster Square to block access. Other businesses in the vicinity have seen a large increase in trade, both from the camp and its visitors.

DRINK, DRUGS & PARTYING ARE RIFE

There are several drug and alcohol addicts on site; people that have long been abandoned by the rest of society, and who have come to the camp for assistance. No apology is made for this, and there are trained counsellors on site to help them deal with their dependency issues. The use of alcohol and drugs have been banned from the camp after a consensus decision was taken by the General Assembly. There is live music, theatre and comedy on most evenings. The arts and protest movements have always gone hand in hand; the camp is there for a serious purpose but it's not all education and politics, it's as much about enjoying the occupation!

whose subsequent involvement in the violent crushing of the pro-democracy movement in Bahrain gives you a sense of the nature of our government's alliances in the Middle East.

In addition to his role as regional strongman, Mubarak also moved to integrate Egypt into the global economy along 1%-approved lines, tasking his son Gamal with effecting neoliberal reforms that saw the living standards of ordinary Egyptians plunge, yet still earned the regime regular praise from the IMF. Meanwhile Tunisia, another IMF poster child, was undergoing a similar experience, as growth under crony-capitalism was embezzled by the Ben Ali clique while people like the young street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi fought a losing battle to keep their heads above water. The financial crash that plunged the world into recession in 2008 inflamed the existing grievances of the Arab 99%, with Bouazizi's self-immolation triggering the uprisings that toppled Ben Ali, and then Mubarak in quick succession. As Juan Cole, Professor of History and Middle East expert at the University of Michigan, points out:

"It's easy now to overlook what clearly ties the beginning of the Arab Spring to the European Summer and the present American Fall: the point of the

system - which puts profit and power before people - is responsible for a wide range and variety of malign outcomes, from global warming to wars of choice to welfare cuts and unemployment. To the extent that politicians and pundits are capable of discerning the mere existence of this system, they have seen it as no more than the natural way of things, the best of all possible worlds, to which there is no alternative. That position, however, is no longer tenable at a time when neoliberalism is undergoing a profound crisis, with increasingly devastating consequences for millions around the world. The protesters understand that neoliberal capitalism is not ordained by God, but sustained by human beings through a series of choices. They have therefore taken up the duty abrogated by the political class to subject those choices, and that system, to proper critical scrutiny and challenge, within the particular context of their own local circumstances. That is the connection between Tahrir Square, Zuccotti Park, the City of London, and "scores of other locations worldwide".

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FUNNY MONEY POLICIES

HERMAN DALY

HOW OUR OBSESSION WITH GROWTH AND CHEAP LABOR UNDERMINES ECONOMIC POLICY



front-page story in the Washington Post on July 31 of this year might have considered other reasons why growth has not led to more employment,

besides simply claiming that growth has been "too slow". First, the jobs that workers would have gone back to have largely been off-shored as employers sought cheap foreign labor. Second, cheap foreign labor by way of illegal immigration seems to have been welcomed by domestic employers trying to fill the remaining jobs at home. Third, jobs have been "outsourced" to the consumer (the ultimate source of cheap labor), who is now his own checkout clerk, travel agent, baggage handler, bank teller, gas station attendant, etc. And fourth, the swollen, bloated financial sector has drained enterprise and energy from the real economy into the symbolic economy. The financial sector now accounts for 40% of total profit in the US. And what have they been producing? Bets on debts and toxic assets.

These obvious but unmentioned facts suggest other policies for increasing employment beside the mindless call for more "growth," gratuitously labeled "economic growth" when on balance it has become uneconomic.

Let us consider each of the four reasons and related policy implications a bit more.



First, off-shoring production is not "trade". The good whose production has been off-shored is sold to satisfy the same market that its domestic production used to satisfy. But now, thanks to cheap foreign labor, profit is greater and/or prices are lower (mainly the former). Off-shoring increases imports, and since no product has been exported in exchange, it also increases the trade deficit. Because the production of the good now takes place abroad, domestic stimulus spending simply stimulates imports and employment abroad. Demand for domestic labor consequently declines, lowering employment and/or wages. It is absurd that off-shoring should be defended in the name of "free trade". No goods are traded. The absurdity is compounded by the fact that off-shoring entails moving capital abroad, and international immobility of capital is one of the premises on which the doctrine of comparative advantage rests--and the policy of free trade is based on comparative advantage! If we really believe in comparative advantage and free trade, then we must place limits on capital mobility and off-shoring. Budget

deficits, printing money, and other measures to stimulate growth no longer do much to raise domestic employment.

Second, for those jobs that have not yet been moved abroad or cannot easily be off-shored (e.g., services such as bartending, waiting tables, gardening, home repairs, etc), cheap foreign labor has become available via illegal immigration. In the United States, many employers seem to welcome illegal immigrants. Most are good and honest workers, willing to work for little, and unable to complain about conditions given their illegal status. What could be better for union busting and driving down wages of the American working class, which includes many legal immigrants? The federal government, ever sensitive to the interests of the employing class, has done an obligingly poor job of enforcing our immigration laws. Immigration reform requires deciding how many immigrants to accept and who gets priority. All countries do that. Most are far more restrictive than the US. Whatever reforms we make, however, will be worthless unless we control the border and actually enforce the laws we will have democratically enacted. Ironically our tolerance for illegal immigration seems to have caused a compensatory tightening up on legal immigrants and tourists—longer waiting periods and more stringent requirements. It is cheaper to "enforce" our immigration laws against those who obey them than against those who break them—but quite unfair, and perceived as such by many legal immigrants and people attempting to immigrate legally. This is a very perverse selection process for new residents.

Third, the automation of services of bank tellers, gas station attendants, etc. is usually praised as labor-saving technical progress. To some extent it is that, but it also represents labor-shifting to the consumer. The consumer does not even get the minimum wage for his extra work, even considering the dubious claim that he enjoys lower prices in return for his self-service. Ordinary human contacts are diminished and commerce becomes more sterile and impersonally mechanical. This is particularly evident in one context: Interaction between people of different socio-economic classes is reduced. When I worked at the World Bank, for example, I remember that the mail clerks were about the only working class folks that professional Bank staff came into daily contact with. Even that interaction was eliminated when automated carts were introduced that delivered mail to each office cubicle. While not highly productive, such jobs provide a valuable service and also an entry into the work force, and help distribute income in a way more dignified than a dole. Reducing daily contact of World Bank staff with working class people does nothing to increase sensitivity and solidarity with the poor of the world. And of course this does not only apply to the World Bank. The idea that it is degrading to be a gas station attendant or mail handler, and that we will re-educate them to become petroleum engineers or investment bankers, is delusional on several levels.

Fourth, a "Tobin tax", a small percentage tax on all stock market, bond market, and foreign exchange transactions would slow down the excessive trading, speculation, and

gambling in the Wall Street casino, and at the same time raise a lot of revenue to help close the federal deficit. This could be enacted quickly. In the longer run, we should move to 100 percent reserve requirements and end the commercial banks' alchemy of creating money out of nothing and lending it at interest to people who can't pay it back. Our money supply would move from being mainly interest-bearing debt of private banks to being non-interest bearing government debt. Money should be a public utility (a unit of account, a store of value, and a medium of exchange) and should not be the by-product of commercial lending and borrowing for private profit.

Excuse my populism, but the working class in the U.S., as well as in other countries, really exists - and it is here to stay. Cheap labor and funny

poorer by increasing the uncounted costs of growth faster than the measured benefits? That simple question is taboo among economists and politicians, lest we discover that the falling benefits of growth are all going to the top 1 percent, while the rising costs are "shared" with the poor, the future, and other species.

Herman Daly served as Senior Economist at the World Bank's Environmental Department from 1988 to 1994. He has since taught in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland. Daly is one of the pioneers of the concept of "steady-state economics". For his work, he has been awarded the Right Livelihood Award and the Heineken Award of the Royal Netherland Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2008, he was elected as "Man of the Year" by Adbuster Magazine.



money policies in the name of "growth and global competitiveness" are class-based and elitist. Even when dressed in the emperor's new wardrobe of free trade, globalization, open borders, financial innovation, and automation, they remain policies of growth by cheap labor and subsidized money for banksters. And we wonder why the US distribution of income has become so unequal? Obviously it must be because growth is too slow—the single cause of all our problems!

That we would be better off if we were richer is a definitional truism. The question is, does further growth in GDP really make us richer, or is it making us



MAY WE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES

MARTIN EIERMANN

A while ago, I interviewed Herman Daly, whose article on labor policy is on the opposite page. Towards the end of our discussion, we had shifted focus from economics and politics when Mr. Daly invoked his teaching experience to drive home a crucial point. He would always ask his students two questions, he said: "What are the presuppositions of policy? What do you have to believe already in order for this to be a sensible thing?" And he continued: "Two things always come up: You cannot be a determinist and do policy. And you also cannot be a nihilist. You need to be able to believe that things can change, and that some outcomes are better than others."

Amen to that. Politics: the exercise of conviction, the search for alternatives, the joy of agency. It would be absurd to engage in politics – within the halls of parliament or in the streets – without subscribing to the ideals of non-determinism and non-nihilism.

Now contrast Daly's statement with another quote, from David Cameron on the OLSX camp: "I don't feel that it's particularly constructive", he said two weeks ago. It is ridiculous that the country's prime minister can get away with looking at the most political square mile in the UK, at some of his most political constituents, and call it "not particularly constructive". If there is something unconstructive (or even destructive?) about politics, it is surely to be found elsewhere in the City of London: in the partisan politics that reduce politics either to shallow theatricality or technocratic bureaucracy. In the shadow networks that dominate political decision-making and render any idea of the public interest laughingly insignificant. In the rhetoric of inevitability that dulls discussion and offends the creativity of the human soul.

Real politics require people who really are political. As Daly reminds us, there are always alternatives. And it is worth caring about them. Or, put differently: "People don't know exactly what they want, but [...] they know one thing: FUCK THIS SHIT! We want something different: a different life, with different values, or at least a chance at different values" (Matt Taibbi on Occupy Wall Street for Rolling Stone Magazine).

Seen in that light, politics in the interest of financial elites is a symptom rather than a cause of injustice. The marginalization of dissenting narratives and the narrowing of the scope of political imagination could not have happened without our silent consent. The problem, I think, is lethargy rather than apathy. Too many of us who care about politics and policy were simultaneously very happy to outsource responsibility for those politics and policies to elected and distant representatives. Our ritualized interaction with the political system happened at the ballot box, but that was the end of it. There were always

activists seeking to change that dynamics, but neither did they represent the proverbial 99 percent, nor did they manage to unshackle and inspire mainstream discourses. We did not receive accountability, transparency, sustainability or justice because we – as consumers, citizens, neighbors, and individuals – did not demand it forcefully enough. We cared – but not too much.

Today, the tents at St. Paul's have been up for a month; Liberty Park Square has been occupied for two months. Thousands of General Assemblies have been held in hundreds of camps around the world. Tencity Uni has kicked into full gear, Ed Miliband has flip-flopped (as has the Anglican Church), and the Tobin tax has become a household name. It has become too hard to avoid the discussion.

Yet there is a second lesson to be drawn from Daly's initial statement: If there are always alternatives, no success should be taken for granted. There is no incremental change that cannot be reversed, no policy that cannot be changed – which is yet another reason why the logic of "you have been heard – now pack up and go home" does not seem to hold. The inertia of the status quo requires an inertia of dissent. The idea that political discussion can be compartmentalized and neatly packaged (and then stored away) is yet another sign of the misunderstanding of politics itself. The camp remains active because the need for discussion remains pressing.

When you wanted to insult someone in ancient China (but do so politely), there was a handy proverb you could use. With a smile on your face, you could turn to your enemy and declare: "May you live in interesting times". With the same smile (but without evil intentions), I wish the same today for ourselves. May we live in interesting times, the only times worth living in. And to the movement: Grow, baby, grow! You have not reached your prime yet.





THE OCCUPIED TIMES MEETS JAMES G. RICKARDS, GEO-POLITICIAN AND AUTHOR OF CURRENCY WARS: THE MAKING OF THE NEXT GLOBAL CRISIS

THE LOOPHOLE ECONOMY

PREM SIKKA

PREM SIKKA, PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX, CHALLENGES NEOLIBERAL PARADIGMS, AND GETS HIS TEETH INTO INTERNATIONAL TAX EVASION.

As human beings we have to be optimistic. There is nothing natural or inevitable about the current state of affairs. We all need to steer the social system.

People these days are well aware of corporate bribery and corruption. You can hardly turn a newspaper page without reading about phone hacking, banking scandals, energy companies ripping people off, or the economic elites giving themselves telephone number salaries without creating anything of social value, while subjecting workers to wage freezes and loss of pension rights. But there has been virtually no scrutiny of the tax avoidance industry.

Various economic models suggest that the government may be losing around £100bn a year due to organised tax avoidance and evasion, but the UK government has done little to check it. It is the biggest sponsor of tax havens and could combat their destructive practices, but the political will is not there.

We all look to the state to take action, but the state's autonomy to act is severely compromised. Political parties have sold out to the highest bidder. Partners from major accountancy firms, the global epicentre of tax avoidance, are now ministers and their colleagues hold senior position at HM Treasury. Organised tax dodging is a cause and symptom of a deeper crisis of democracy.

About 1% of the world's population controls about 40% of the global wealth. They could pay decent wages and democratically agreed taxes, but choose not to. What does on in their heads, hearts and minds? Many make headline-making donations and receive vast media coverage and public accolades, yet the payment of miserable wages and relentless tax dodging consigns millions to an early death and miserable a life. Do they ever think about such things?

The Occupy movement has done a



great public service by bringing issues like these to light, and raising the level of public debate. It needs now to turn its moment into calls for a series of democratic reforms.

The UK government could easily take practical steps. These would include publishing tax returns of all corporations; all companies should be forced to state the amount of corporation tax that they pay in each country. The government could stop awarding public contracts to companies abed in tax havens or those who avoid taxes. There should not be any knighthoods and peerages for anyone involved in tax avoidance.

The tax authorities should have unfettered access to the files of accountancy firms peddling tax avoidance. When these firms lose court cases, and they often do, the government should recover the costs of fighting the case and also fine them ten times the tax lost. Firms that persistently offend should be closed down.

How did the rich become so rich? Successive governments have helped corporations to maintain their profitability by transferring wealth

OCCUPIED TIMES: What's happening in the world economy now? Is it a convulsion, or the death throes?

JAMES G. RICKARDS: We are not at the death throes yet. We are at the stage where 18th century doctors apply leeches to 'bleed' the patient back to health. The death throes will come later. The leeches consist of central bank and IMF intervention in the form of new money printing to paper over a collapsing banking system at the expense of average citizens. This will work for a while, perhaps through 2013. After that, the deluge. The most recent acute stage of financial collapse, the Panic of 2008, was papered over by the U.S. Federal Reserve.

OT: And after 2013?

JGR: The next acute phase will be too large for the Fed and will be papered over with SDRs, a kind of global money printed by the IMF. By that point, faith in paper money will be at the breaking point mainly as it becomes clear it's a rigged game favouring those who understand the system best and disfavours those who naively trust the system - savers, retirees, annuity and insurance policy holders and others living on fixed incomes. All of these will be robbed while the financial mavens are properly hedged. Central bank policy is neither more nor less than organised theft from average citizens with state sanction.

OT: Greece's new Prime Minister is a central banker and a member of the Trilateral Commission since 1998. Is he the right man for the job at this time?

JGR: No, he is part of the problem. The right man for the job would announce that the debt was not being repaid as agreed and needed to be restructured in a way that freed Greece from debt slavery in order to facilitate Greek innovation and entrepreneurship.

OT: What future do you see for Greece?

JGR: At first they will experience debt slavery to euro-creditors. Later, perhaps in 2013 or 2014, they will reassert sovereignty and democracy and

default on their debt in order to free their people to make a new economic compact.

OT: Italy is passing its new austerity measures. What does 'austerity' mean to you?

JGR: Austerity means some combination of higher taxes and reduced government benefits in order to improve the ability of governments to pay back foreign bondholders. In other words, citizens of democracies are being asked to accept a kind of 'debt slavery' for the benefit of the international creditor class. It would be much better to default on the bonds, impose losses on the creditors, and allow democracies to reorder their priorities in favour of wealth creation rather than debt slavery.

OT: You once ranked Ben Bernanke a greater threat to the US than Osama Bin Laden - why?

JGR: Bin Laden was symbolically important, but strategically irrelevant. He could at most destroy several thousand lives. Bernanke has destroyed millions of lives with unemployment, eviction, foreclosure and lost opportunity through his policies that favour banks over individuals. Bernanke's policies condemn tens of millions of Americans and people around the world to a decade of stagnation at best and a new collapse at worst. This is because of the promotion of the banking interest over the general interest.

OT: Are things fixable?

JGR: Yes. The policy remedies are straightforward. Break up too-big-to-fail banks so that the failure of the parts is no longer a concern or cost to the citizens. Ban derivatives and other structured financial products that serve no purpose other than to deceive customers and enrich bankers. Reduce regulation on entrepreneurs and increase regulation on banks receiving state subsidies in the form of deposit insurance. Lower taxes to increase incentives to save and invest. Create a sound money system, perhaps based on gold, so that investors, savers and entrepreneurs can plan for the long run instead of making financial bets. So things are fixable. But that does mean they will actually be fixed?

OT: So, you can wave a magic wand: what's the first economic law or regulation you bring into existence?

JGR: Ban derivatives.

OT: Is there such a thing as a free market?

JGR: Yes, but only if justice is applied. In the past I have called for more bank regulation and been criticized by those who suggest I do not favour 'free' markets. However, banks benefit from government subsidies in the form of deposit insurance and too-big-to-fail bailouts. I believe if you benefit from the government, you must accept government regulation. If you want free markets, begin by taking away the government subsidies. Only then can business people ask for a reduction in regulation and only then does one move toward truly free markets.

OT: What's your advice to the average homeowner or worker who's caught up in this crisis?

JGR: If you have a mortgage that is worth more than your house, you should stop being a debt slave to your banker and default on your mortgage and become a renter. Home ownership is a myth perpetuated by bankers who profit from mortgages. Renting is a perfectly acceptable economic arrangement between those who need housing and those who provide it. If you are an average worker, take 10% of your income and buy gold in the form of coins as proof against the day of reckoning for paper money.

OT: Why is Gold going up, and has it got further to go?

JGR: Gold has not changed its intrinsic value in 5,000 years. When people say gold is going 'up' they need to understand that what is really happening is that paper money is going 'down.' Gold will be priced at \$7,000 per ounce or higher in the next five years, but this will be a reflection of the collapse of paper money rather than any change in the true value of gold.

OT: What bit of hidden-away financial deviance would you most like to know about?

JGR: Central bank transactions in the gold market.

OT: Finally, what's your message to OccupyLSX?

JGR: Non-violence, love, persistence, faith. The focus of the Occupy movement is fairness and justice and that is the right focus. My concern is that the focus shifts to revenge or violence. You are a conscience, not a battering ram. A conscience is more powerful.

of any economic revival but the UK government is oblivious to the calls. We need someone like President Roosevelt to take on the vested interests and introduce a modicum of economic reforms, but I cannot see any politician with the moral and philosophical backbone on the horizon.

The world of money is totally disconnected from the real economy. I say, if bankers want to gamble let them do it with their own money and would remove the benefit of limited liability from the speculative side of banking. Let them pick them the tab for their own follies. It is sobering to realise that the global GDP is around \$65 trillion, but at December 2007 bankers had bets (they call them derivatives) with a face value of \$1148 trillion.

We need to democratise corporations and look at alternatives, such co-operatives, mutual, employee ownership and other structures. Nearly 70% of the world trade and 80%-90% of the foreign direct investment is controlled by just 500 corporations and a mere 1% of corporations own half the total stock of foreign direct investment.

Just 20 corporations control the global coffee trade; only 3 account for over 80% of the global cocoa trade. 10 global corporations control 55% of the global trade in pharmaceuticals. There is no sign here of 'free markets' - if anything, global power of corporations are becoming even more concentrated. We need to look at the world as it is and develop new policies and practices for democratic reform and accountability.

A better world is possible. Durable change always comes from the grassroots and ordinary people need to ensure that their voice is heard and that they are not take-for-granted by any political system. Organised dissent and protest are the mother and father of all social reforms and it is so good to see that the Occupy movement has been peaceful. That strengthens its credentials.

The truth is that we all enjoy many rights today which are only here because someone somewhere was willing to challenge the conventional wisdom and argue that lives can be lived differently. So history is on our side and emancipatory change will come.



ON THE FUTILITY OF REGULATING FINANCE

COUNTERPUBLIC

If anything bridges the gap between many in the Occupy movements, the mainstream press, and many in the financial elite, it is their diagnosis of the causes behind the current crisis. Finance got out of hand; bankers got too greedy; governments didn't regulate properly.

Having a similar diagnosis of the problems, it's no surprise that their solutions retain the same similarity. "Regulate finance!" it is declared. Cut banker bonuses; introduce a financial transactions tax; break apart too big to fail institutions; ringfence the banks, and so on. It is hoped that with these reforms, we can return to the good capitalism of years before: low unemployment, high wages, and a well-functioning system of public services.

The problem with all these analyses is that they fail to ask the key question: why did our economic system turn to financialisation in the first place?

It is here that the full contours of our current situation become clear. Financialisation did not arise as an aberration of capitalism; it was instead a necessary outgrowth.

Despite the contingencies and accidents of history, a clear systemic pressure can be discerned behind the rise of finance. By the 1970s, investment in productive sectors of the economy was becoming increasingly difficult to generate a profit from.

On the one hand, technology was reducing the number of workers available to exploit. On the other hand, the low-hanging fruit of early industrialisation had been used up, leaving only increasingly difficult profit opportunities. These are the long-term causes of the current crisis that most

mainstream economics misses.

So in order to maintain some semblance of profitability, the surplus capital in the world had to seek out new investment sectors. It was here that the financial sector was constructed as a new space for investment. The derivatives markets, for instance, rose from a negligible level in the 1970s to having a nominal value of over \$600 trillion by the time of the 2008 crisis.

Simultaneously, the economies of the developed world shifted away from investment in the productive sectors. For instance, UK government figures show that in the last 20 years alone there has been a 50% decrease in manufacturing as a share of UK GDP. The upshot of the necessary turn to financialisation is that it is simply not possible to turn back the clocks and revert to a form of capitalism premised upon manufacturing and a chastened financial sector. Finance arose precisely to resolve the problems of declining manufacturing profits and declining profitable investments. These original problems have not been solved, but only displaced into the financial sector. Financial speculation was a stop-gap measure. In other words, greed was built into the system. Individuals are not at fault; this is a systemic problem, and only systemic solutions can resolve it.

What is necessary now is a rethinking of what economies can be. Drawing upon the successes and failures of the 20th century's experiments in economies, the aim of the occupy movements and those on the left needs to be to establish the parameters for a 21st century economy.

What is usury? It is a charge made for the use of money. More or less, it means lending of money at interest, and medieval economic systems

were dead set against it. Why? Because it threatened to wreck communities, and the medieval man and woman were community-minded to an extent that is difficult to imagine in our individualistic days. The medieval city states referred to themselves as communes. Life was lived as a community rather than a collection of warring competing individuals.

The idea of "the common good" can be found in the New Testament. St Paul says: "Let all our actions be for the good of everybody, and especially those who belong to the household of the faith." This constant emphasis on community was taken up by medieval ethical systems, and "the common good" was a frequently repeated phrase in medieval legal documents.

In the 13th Century, we find Thomas Aquinas defining "law" as: "an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community." Against this "common good" stands usury. Aquinas says: "Making a charge for lending money is unjust in itself, for one party sells the other something non-existent and this obviously sets up an inequality which is contrary to justice". Usury is by its very nature "unjust". It was not just a crime, it was a sin. A sin that the Bible railed against – in Leviticus, for example: "Do not exact interest from your countrymen either in money or in kind, but out of fear of God let him live with you."

Another medieval manuscript, the *Tabula exemplorum*, also from the 13th century, talks of usury as "an endless sin". It says: "every man stops working on holidays, but the oxen of usury work (boves usurarii) unceasingly and thus offend God and all the saints; and, since usury is an endless sin, it should in like manner be endlessly punished." The victims of usury have been dehumanized into cattle. For them, there is no rest.

Still, usury did take place: the new burghers of the free cities, buzzing with work and trade, needed credit. And commercial credit was accepted. But the various councils — Lateran, Lyon, Vienna — strenuously objected to it when it was directed downwards, towards the poor. Today's equivalent would be those ads on daytime TV for loan consolidation companies, which prey on the weak and alone.

In the wake of the Reformation, the idea of usury became normalized,

its sinfulness melted away. By the time we come to the 18th Century, Benjamin Franklin can say "time is money" and "credit is money". For him, welfare for the poor is "a premium for the encouragement of idleness." He doesn't like to see the poor "easy in poverty" – rather they should be "driven" out of it. Hardly a Biblical sentiment. The verse before the one in Leviticus quoted above reads: "When one of your fellow countrymen is reduced to poverty and is unable to hold out beside you, extend to him the privileges of an alien or a tenant, so that he may continue to live with you." Don't drive him out with a stick, for his own good!

Today, "love thy neighbour" has been replaced with "beat the competition". We work hard (the oxen of usury work that we are), we fret, we are fearful, we buy stuff, we throw it away, and we are lonely. Better that we follow St Augustine, who said: 'Love, and do what you like.' Send out love, and the rest will follow of its own accord.

Love is the antidote to usury. The 18th century English mystic William Law writes: "by love I mean a larger

principle of the soul, founded in reason and piety, which makes us tender, kind and gentle to all our fellow creatures as creatures of God, and for his sake." This is neighbourliness, a concern for "the common good".

How can Tesco's present itself as community-minded, or a friend to the poor, when it lends money at interest? Tesco's is an exploiter of the poor, like a bank it hoards excess value, which it has extracted from the poor and distributes it among its shareholders. It undercuts on price and holds suppliers to ransom. It would have been seen as a colossal evil in 1350. In fact, it simply could not have existed: it was impossible. Tesco's is just too sinful.

Well, brothers and sisters, it appears that Occupy LSX is asking usurers to repent once again - just as they were asked in the Middle Ages. Today's condemnation of the bankers is the direct descendant of the medieval culture's hatred of the usurers. So I say to you: love thy neighbour. And when you ask 'how shall I love my neighbour?' I say, love thy neighbour!

THE EVIL OF USURY & THE GOOD OF NEIGHBOURLINESS

TOM HODGKINSON

WELCOME SISTERS, BROTHERS.
TODAY I WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU OF GOOD AND EVIL!



INTERNSHIP MODEL

THE GREAT DEBATE

THE GREAT DEBATE: THIS WEEK TWO OF OUR OWN EDITORS TACKLE THE SUBJECT OF INTERNSHIPS. AS THINGS ARE, MOST INTERNSHIPS ARE UNPAID, BUT DO THEY GENERALLY BENEFIT THE INTERN, OR THE MAN?

FOR / MARTIN EIERMANN

A bit of etymology: The modern "intern" came into use in the late 19th century and originally described young doctors or graduate students who would work under the supervision of fully-trained supervisors. Today, internships are seen as the modern equivalent of Tom Sawyer's fence painting scheme: A group of people is cleverly tricked into doing work that harms rather than helps them. And they (or rather their parents) are willing to pick up the bill.

That picture is incomplete at best, and seems to suffer from a bit of conceptual confusion. Interns acquire important qualifications. Many jobs (journalism included) require hands-on experience that cannot be learned in the classroom.

Every career has to begin somewhere – and in many cases, interning in a



professional newsroom might teach an aspiring journalist more about the profession she is about to enter than writing yet another article for yet another student publication. Internships are opportunities. Doing copy-and-paste work for two months is an opportunity gone to waste.

This leaves us in a peculiar bind: In order to make internships useful, they actually have to become more like regular work. Yet the work-like nature is precisely what many critics reject.

One obvious answer: If internships resemble work, interns deserve to be paid. I concede that point. But this brings us back to the example of doctors and graduate students. One reason that internships were warmly welcomed in the 19th century was the entrance they offered into the world of medicine or academia. Companies, universities and hospitals could not afford hiring more regular staff, and they were also unwilling to hire someone without clear credentials. Internships allowed for a gradual entrance into the professional world. They also brought a great improvement for graduates: Instead of finding themselves thrust into the competition for jobs (but essentially unqualified to compete), they could rely on the internship to prepare themselves more adequately. Rather than putting people off, internships opened the job market to all those who could not have afforded the risk of outright job competition. Rather than perpetuating the nepotism of family connections, they nudged us towards meritocratic assessments. That's not a bad deal.

AGAINST / STEVEN MACLEAN

The journalism industry perfectly demonstrates the problems with the internship model. Browse any media jobs site for paid positions and the words 'two years experience' will soon be familiar. The Catch-22 is obvious, but there is a way out – for some.

To get the two years of work experience needed to land a job at the foot of the ladder, the next Orwells, Pilgers and even Littlejohns must undertake an array of internships – or one very long one – almost all of which are unpaid.

That's fine, if you have enough money or well-off parents to bankroll you, but if you happen to be a debt-riddled student, it might not be an option. Even for those from 'comfortable', generous families, two years' wage subsidy is an excessive burden likely to fell most at the first hurdle.

It isn't only journalists who happen to have the wrong parents who suffer the consequences, though. When the selection process is based on 'who can pay', rather than 'who has talent', the standard of journalism available to us suffers, and we end up with a media representative of only a small section of society whose interests are often at odds with the rest of us. For democracy, this is clearly bad.

The 'free labour' available in the form of interns has implications for established hacks, too. Already fighting to keep their heads above water in what has become a highly volatile industry, one journalist's job can be replaced by three eager would-be writers.

Internships not only offer a backdoor to free labour at odds with minimum wage laws; they perpetuate class elitism in industries already riddled with nepotism and impact on job security. While the journalism industry exemplifies the problems with the unpaid internship model, they aren't exclusive to it.

Internships are another part of a system which keeps the jobs people aspire to the reserve of the already 'haves', impacting directly on social mobility. Let's make all internships subject to the minimum (or in London living) wage. The 1% already have enough working in their favour.

A debate is scheduled at TentCity University after the GA on Wednesday November 16th for us to carry on this debate in person. See you there!



DO WE HAVE CONSENSUS?

SID RYAN

One of the biggest internal issues facing OccupyLSX at the moment is organisation and co-ordination. The progress in setting up the camp over the last month has been phenomenal. The camp now has a well established kitchen, on-site security, a media team, cleaners and groups working on welfare, policy, the environment and on out-reach to neighbouring communities. But how much further can we take this model of organisation? Those who have been here from the start are the pillars of this small community. The pressure upon them is beginning to take its toll; not only are they responsible for the running of the camp, but the image we project to others around the country and the globe.

However, their success could be their downfall. By having to take on so much and

so fast they have become indispensable to the cause. Only they know all the camp's background, what is happening now and what the plans are for the future. Naturally, anyone new to a working group lacks this information and immediately put at a disadvantage and other groups in the camp cannot effectively coordinate with each other.

I think the solution is full and total transparency. We operate a democracy, but the biggest challenge to a democracy is an uninformed electorate. Rational decisions cannot be made without the full facts available.

If we're going to demand that the City of London releases all its records then the least we can do is attempt to lead by example. We also need to make efforts to produce full lists of the working groups in

operation, publicise when they meet and publish the finances of the camp. Working groups often live in fear of the General Assembly (GA), when proposals are put forward the discussion that follows almost exactly mirrors what has gone on in the working group beforehand. This tends to waste a lot of time and has the possibility to kill off worthy proposals if the full arguments and counter arguments cannot be discussed.

By making full minutes of the meetings freely available and getting the agendas for the GAs published beforehand, it means that the people that are interested in the topics discussed, but who haven't been able to attend prior meetings, can give valuable comment on any proposal. Not only will transparency improve the democratic process on site but it will allow people off-site to get involved too. As someone who only joined the movement this week, but who has been following intently from Bristol, I think allowing more people to engage with OccupyLSX can only be a good thing. Many people who support Occupy would welcome an insight into our discussions and the problems we face. Another suggestion which has been made is to substitute working group meetings for the GA on a quasi-regular basis – this way those who work full-time can attend working group meetings from time to time.

We are up and running, and at our core is a small group of highly skilled people who are willing to give everything to the cause, but the only way we can expand the movement is by reaching out to all those supporters who wish us the best, but don't know how to get involved – and there are many.

We need to focus on attracting hundreds, if not thousands, of part-time Occupiers to drive the movement forward. Not only will this relieve the pressures upon those holding the camp together, but it will allow us to broaden our understanding and discussion of the issues we oppose. The greatest challenge to Occupy is not having a single leader who can oversee and co-ordinate the camp. But we can free ourselves from leadership if only everyone is given the tools with which to improve the movement as a whole. After all, transparency and democracy are the reasons we are here in the first place.



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING LEARN-IST

HARVEY BRUCE

Yesterday somebody called me a "wonderful person". Over the past week I've also been told I'm "naive", "a breath of fresh air", "self-indulgent" and "exactly the sort of person this country needs". I'm on the verge of an identity crisis.

This barrage of adjectives was delivered by passers-by at the Finsbury Square occupation. Luckily for me, and my sense of self, it was accompanied by political arguments, an overview of hedge funding, demands for intellectual output, demands for community investment, demands for lunch, PR advice and one rather dramatic song of praise for Michael Bloomberg's philanthropic endeavours.

I've learned a lot. And I hope you have as well. Never before have I seen so many people listening to each other. Learning, my friends, is the real strength of what we've got going here.

This is how our camps go beyond mere protests, because protests are a one-way affair. When you join a protest, you declare a particular message: "No cuts!" "No war!" "Down with this sort of thing! Down with that sort of thing!" To be part of the occupations you just have to show up with your ideas, hopefully share them and definitely listen to and respect the ideas of others. I've never heard any protest shout "What do you think?" before.

As an interesting experiment I've let almost every conversation I've had be controlled by the other person these past days, so I think it's time for me to give something back. In the spirit of two-way dialogue – here's a few declarations from the heart: Take your education seriously.

So you want to learn about banking? This is tough stuff – I'm only just beginning to grapple with some key fundamentals. You'll probably get more from a lecture, debate or Q&A session if you take notes. Set yourself some real goals. What beliefs do you have that you want to develop and support? What areas do you lack informed ideas about? Are you just going to talks for entertainment? Bettering yourself takes serious work; encourage others to do the same!

You don't have to be left-wing to oppose the vast inequalities of our system. It's great to talk about socialism and anarchism. It's great to argue why capitalism is inherently flawed. However these camps have sprung up at a time of pathological mickey-taking by a tiny corporate elite. This encompasses institutionalised theft, child soldiering, smoke, mirrors, oppression, gambling with the livelihoods of millions and all the rest. These things pluck a strong moral fibre in an awful lot of people with all kinds of political persuasions.

By all means share and teach, but let people teach you as well. Through mutual education find shared human ground. Be polite! Be respectful! If a person disagrees with you on an issue you feel is fundamental then this doesn't mean you have to sculpt a new opinion for them. Provide information and evidence and let people form their own ideas. Trust in them!

Cooking, cleaning are tasks for all of us. Nobody should have to dedicate themselves solely to the manual tasks of the occupation camps. Everybody needs to have the chance to join in with the self-betterment. Compared to the future of the planet, site management is boring. If we all do a good chunk of this kind of thing every day we allows those who tirelessly devote themselves to it a breather. Feel you're doing too much? Immediately ask somebody to help you. Arguing at general assemblies about such things is not good. If it happens, find a way to stop it ASAP – it's an emergency.

Seek support for change, not just support for the occupations. I've seen many people visit to donate equipment and supplies because they feel that's all they can do to support what's going on. They've managed to support the occupations, but they haven't been able to join in. Let's create events and facilities so everyone can do both. It's great that people show their support for the occupations, but if we help and inspire them to educate themselves, inside and out of the camps, then who knows what is possible... Let's find out.

OCCUPY LOCAL COMMUNITIES

KWADWO
KARI - KARI



"All day, all week, we sleep on London's freezing streets." - Occupy LSX placard.

Let me start with a confession: I have not spent a single night sleeping at any of the occupations. If that appals you, I can only apologise. However, I was one of two protesters that successfully "occupied" Paternoster Square from noon to 2pm on 15th October (mainly by hanging out in Starbucks).

Yet still, I see myself as part of the Occupy Movement, and admire those who camp at St. Paul's and Finsbury Square. And I believe that many others share my point of view. Many sympathisers and supporters are not attracted to sleeping on freezing streets as a means of enabling social change. It might thus be useful to diversify the movement and engage more of the 99% we claim to represent.

Whilst many take inspiration from Occupy Wall Street, my inspiration comes

from the South: From the "Indignados" of Spain, the uprisings in Egypt and Uganda, the "Women of Zimbabwe Arise" movement, the international peasant movement "Via Campesina" and the South African shack-dwellers movement "Abahlali baseMjondolo".

All these social movements share a non-hierarchical structure and a particular vision for the world with the Occupy movement. They all strive for a world where people take priority over capital. Let us unite and learn from each other's experiences. We are not all anti-capitalists - but we are all united in the belief that the current system is not working for the 99%.

That is easier said than done. I have been part of the London activist scene for five years - I have found it uplifting, but I have also found it depressing. A perennial concern of mine (and of many others) is how unrepresentative this scene is of the people we claim to represent.

We are the 99%, we are the oppressed, the mocked, the exploited - but we do not all face the same social problems in equal measure. A poor Nigerian disabled lesbian asylum seeker faces more barriers in our society than a privately educated English millionaire. Yet when it comes to direct action against the 1%, I am more likely to see privately educated white people than poor working-class immigrants. Brixton and Peckham are parts of London that are majority black/African. Many of those immigrants' countries of origin will be very affected by climate change in the coming decades. I have been involved in setting up Transition Towns in both neighborhoods, yet throughout I have been the only participant in the group who was actually of African origin.

Please don't misunderstand my point: I'm pleased and inspired by people of all backgrounds participating in the struggle for a better world, and I am glad to see privately educated people taking sides with the 99%. It would be easy for them not to care. However, something is seriously wrong if those who experience privilege are more representative of our

community of rebellion than those who are the most directly affected by the oppressions we seek to abolish.

I am a volunteer in the South London Anti-Fascists Group, an organisation that is supported by the Battersea & Wandsworth and Croydon Trade Union Councils. For the last four years we have been building community groups in areas like Morden as a way of developing solidarity against the BNP, the EDL and other racist organisations and practices. We have established a working coalition of a local Mosque, three churches, activists from six political parties (including mainstream parties), and activists without political or religious affiliation, such as independent trade unionists and anarchists. Establishing that coalition was a slow and sometimes painful process. There were many preconceptions and distrust to overcome in a one group of just 30 odd people. Yet despite our differences and different visions of a better world, we were united on what we needed to oppose. That was our strength. We developed structures of accountability without imposing authority on another. People voluntarily contributed in whatever way they saw fit to fight local racism. We came through the process of struggle with increased or renewed respect for each other, and we felt part of something bigger than ourselves.

This story, I believe, could also become the story of the Occupy movement. We can develop working groups that reach out to local trade union councils and anti-cuts groups, acting as hubs of solidarity between localities. Already, that process is under way. Anti-cuts groups from Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth have a tent in Finsbury Square. I hope that this momentum will spread. We can reach out to local communities, we can listen and understand why many ordinary people who find their own lives a daily struggle haven't yet participated concretely with us. If we want to show solidarity with under-represented groups, let us start in our own communities.



WHAT DO BANKERS HAVE TO DO WITH OCEANS, ICE SHEETS AND ORANGUTANS?

EMMA FORDHAM



The Occupy Movement isn't just about bankers, or cuts. It's much deeper, broader and more complex than that... and it's got a lot to do with loving this earth we live on.

Environment and economics are inextricably linked. One doesn't have to understand fractional reserve banking to understand this. The current profit-driven economic system is not sustainable, literally. In a world of finite resources we cannot have perpetual growth, it won't work. Already the financial system in the Western world has begun to implode. We've knocked back the 'good' times - the greed times - and now we're lurching about like drunkards trying to pretend we just need a cup of coffee and then we'll be fine to drive.

It's time the car keys were confiscated because it's not just economies that we're crashing, it's the planet.

Economic and social injustice is what many of us are feeling most keenly at the

moment but we can't afford to ignore the looming dual impacts of climate change and resource scarcity. They'll hit the most vulnerable first, especially those living in marginal lands - the deserts of Africa, the floodplains of Bangladesh - while the super-wealthy 1% will relocate to the least affected areas and insulate themselves in robust palaces. We can't wait until our low-lying cities flood, until the glaciers melt and the gorillas are gone before we do something about it; if we do it'll be too late, we'll be trapped in a chain-reaction of crises way more severe than job losses and home repossessions.

So, in addition to railing at banks and corporations for stealing our money and corrupting the politicians who are supposed to represent us we must remember that they are the ones destroying our land - again, for their own profits. Extracting oil from the tar sands of Canada, deep-water oil drilling in the

Arctic, fracking for gas in Lancashire, slashing rainforests to grow cash-crops such as palm oil; these environmentally devastating practices need to be stopped.

British environmental lawyer Polly Higgins has proposed to the UN that Heads of State and directors of corporations be required to take individual and personal responsibility for their actions; that ecocide, the environmental equivalent of genocide, becomes an International Crime Against Peace (alongside genocide itself, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and war crimes).

While this may give profit-hungry polluters pause for thought, it's not just the elites who need to re-evaluate; we all do. We need to stop being selfish. Selfishness is behind the unsustainable profit-driven economy, the destruction of environments, over-fishing, over-consumption, pollution and war. We

need to look at what is really needed to have a decent quality of life. Let's try to get those things - food, clean water, shelter, warmth, security, community, education, leisure, meaningful pursuits - for everyone on the planet... and get rid of everything else. Stop lusting, hoarding and competing. Demand that the bankers do their bit but be prepared to do our bit too. If everyone stopped being selfish we have the intelligence and resources to sort it out. For example, an IPCC Report (Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change) shows that with political will and investment we could meet 80% of the world's energy needs with renewables by 2050.

That would go some way towards heading off environmental catastrophe; towards saving the oceans, the ice, the orangutans and the people. We might even find enough compassion in our hearts to invite the bankers onto the ark.

