

## MASS ARREST

### Cops Clampdown Critical Mass Cyclists but the worst is still to come

The Metropolitan Police arrested 182 cyclists for straying too close to the Olympic venue. They were taking part in the regular Critical Mass, which has taken place on the last Friday of every month for the past 18 years. The Mass is famous for having no pre-organised route, or even organisers. Those who turn up on the night decide where the ride is to go.

The nature of the Critical Mass puts it into direct confrontation with current police strategies for 'facilitating protest'. Public order strategies, which are applied to all large gatherings, whether protest related or not, invariably prioritise the capacity of the police to control and restrict freedom of movement. Police forces across the UK have shown an intolerant approach to any assembly or procession which is spontaneous, which has taken place without formal notification or which has diverted from a pre-agreed route. Any gathering without organisers, or that has not engaged with the police in advance is likely to be treated with suspicion. The Critical Mass falls foul of all these things.

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### LENS CAP OLYMPIC GRAFFITI



A statue of Olympic mascot Wenlock situated in London's Brick Lane – the graffiti lasted for just a day before it was removed. See pages 12 and 13 for a look at how the IOC operates as a global brand and how it generates and uses its funds.

Photo © Max Reeves

## MELTDOWN CONTINUES

Climate change has been on the back burner for a while, but just because the media has other interests doesn't mean it's gone away. So we would like to draw readers' attention to the continuing decline in Arctic sea ice.

Sea ice in the Arctic melts each year in spring and summer, reaching a minimum in mid-September.

In 2007 there was a dramatic escalation in the area of ocean that became ice free.

This year there is already two million square kilometres (that's a hundred times the size of Wales) more open sea than the long term average for this time of year.

So that means that the North West passage is now open and soon shipping will be able to travel to Japan and China far more quickly and the vast mineral resources of the Arctic Ocean will be exploitable,

especially its oil, which will help to further increase global warming.

The longer term consequences of this meltdown are far more catastrophic, and potentially unfathomable as the Arctic provides a mirror reflecting sunlight that, once gone, will accelerate climate change in the area. This will then release the massive methane deposits which are presently locked both undersea and in the permafrost on the northern tundra, and methane is a far more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

You can follow the unfolding picture day by day on:

- Cryosphere today  
<http://arctic.atmos.uiuc.edu/cryosphere/>
- National Snow and Ice Data Centre  
<http://nsidc.org/>

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## NEWS

## FREEDOM STOCKISTS

You can now pick up your monthly copy of *Freedom* at the following venues.

## LONDON

- **Freedom Bookshop**, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, tel 020 7247 9249 email [shop@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:shop@freedompress.org.uk) <http://www.freedompress.org.uk/>
- **56A Infoshop**, 56 Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE, email [info@56a.org.uk](mailto:info@56a.org.uk) <http://www.56a.org.uk/>
- **Housmans Bookshop**, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, tel 020 7837 4473 email [shop@housmans.com](mailto:shop@housmans.com) <http://www.housmans.com/>
- **London Action Resource Centre (LARC)**, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES tel 020 7377 9088, <http://www.londonarc.org/>
- **Newham Bookshop**, 745-747 Barking Road, London E13 9ER, tel 020 8552 9993 email [info@newhambooks.co.uk](mailto:info@newhambooks.co.uk) <http://www.newhambooks.co.uk/>

## BRIGHTON

- **Cowley Club Social Centre**, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, tel 01273 696104 email [cowleyclub@riseup.net](mailto:cowleyclub@riseup.net) <http://cowleyclub.org.uk/>

## BIRMINGHAM

- **Birmingham Bike Foundry**, 1539 Pershore Road, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JH, tel: 0121 459 7276, email: [info@birminghambikefoundry.org](mailto:info@birminghambikefoundry.org) <http://birminghambikefoundry.org>

## BRISTOL

- **Hydra Books**, 34 Old Market, Bristol BS2 0EZ tel: 0117 3297401 email [info@hydrabooks.org](mailto:info@hydrabooks.org) <http://www.hydrabooks.org/>
- **Kebele Social Centre**, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5 6JY, tel 0117 9513086, email [kebelesocialcentre@riseup.net](mailto:kebelesocialcentre@riseup.net) <http://www.kebelecoop.org>

## NOTTINGHAM

- **Sumac Centre**, 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX, tel 0115 960 8254, email [sumac@veggies.org.uk](mailto:sumac@veggies.org.uk) <http://www.veggies.org.uk/sumac>

## LIVERPOOL

- **News from Nowhere Bookshop**, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY, tel 0151 708 7270 email [nfn@newsfromnowhere.org.uk](mailto:nfn@newsfromnowhere.org.uk) <http://www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk/>

## EDINBURGH

- **AK Press online**, AK Distribution, PO Box 12766, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 9YE email [ak@akedin.demon.co.uk](mailto:ak@akedin.demon.co.uk) <http://www.akuk.com/>
- **Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)** 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA tel 0131 557 6242 email [ace@autonomous.org.uk](mailto:ace@autonomous.org.uk) <http://www.autonomous.org.uk/>
- **Word Power Books**, 43-45 West Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DB, tel 0131 662 9112 email [books@word-power.co.uk](mailto:books@word-power.co.uk) <http://www.word-power.co.uk/>

## SOUTHAMPTON

- **October Books**, 243 Portswood Road, Southampton SO17 2NG, tel 023 8058 1030 email [info@octoberbooks.org](mailto:info@octoberbooks.org)

## LENS CAP BOW QUARTER



Photo © Max Reeves

Marching from Mile End Park in East London, counter-olympics protestors pause outside Bow Quarter. The water tower at Bow Quarter is one of several sites to be used for controversial surface-to-air missiles during the Olympics. The marchers continued to Wennington Green for a range of inspiring speeches.

## Legal Defence

The Legal Defence and Monitoring Group (LDMG) was founded in 1994 from the experience of the Trafalgar Square Defence Campaign and the need for legal observers on demonstrations to provide independent evidence of police misbehaviour and also to distribute legal information and solicitors' numbers.

We hold regular trainings for legal observing and also arrange defendants meeting after major actions; attend court with defendants and co-ordinate with solicitors on witness and evidence gathering.

We do legal and practical policing workshops ranging from hundreds of people at student occupations to one on one advice to individual arrestees. We often act as a McKenzie Friend for those who can't get legal representation.

We have a website with extensive information and, aside from bust cards, our principle publication is *No Comment*, a

pamphlet which gives advice on what to do if you're arrested. All the reprints of *No Comment*, and the vast majority of LDMG's income, comes from donations made by people who have sued the police. We help and encourage anyone who has been acquitted to take the cops to court as the most effective way to punish police excesses and support others in future.

If you need to contact us in writing, the address is BM Haven, WC1N 3XX, or you can pop into Freedom Bookshop at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX any Friday from 12noon until 6pm for a chat.

LDMG works closely with other support organisations including the Green and Black Cross, Newham Monitoring Project and Anarchist Black Cross and is also part of the Network for Police Monitoring.

- The LDMG website is at [www.ldmg.org.uk](http://www.ldmg.org.uk)





# How to break a campaign

## Was this the killer blow against Save Leyton Marsh?

With just days to go before the 2012 Games began Matt, a member of the Save Leyton Marsh campaign in Waltham Forest, London, heard his phone ring.

The call wasn't entirely unexpected but the outcome was catastrophic – and highly suspicious.

Matt and several hundred other people in the East London community have been pushing hard for months to minimise the damage being done by representatives of the Olympic Development Authority (ODA) as they built a three-storey basketball court on it.

The facility, which residents are not allowed to even enter let alone use, has concreted over one of Waltham Forest's best-loved green spaces and there are fears that the "temporary" structure will be used as an excuse to take the space permanently out of

the public realm over the next few weeks.

People from across the borough have opposed it and initially direct action managed to significantly slow the bulldozers – until the ODA slapped a blanket ban against "persons unknown" protesting anywhere near the build site and notoriously, used Asbo legislation against activist Simon Moore to cow further dissent.

The June ruling meant that the full force of the judiciary and police was now backing up the ODA's own G4S private security thugs.

It seemed physically stopping the project would be impossible, so campaigners hoped a judicial review would succeed where direct action had been outlawed.

As it turned out, not only would they not get a hearing, but the mere fact of their application would be turned into a weapon against them.

Matt picked up the phone.

"Hello? Yes that's me... how much?"

At the other end of the line, a faceless apparatchik explained that the courts had

considered the case, without informing campaigners, and thrown it out. In a vicious twist, they had awarded £20,000 in costs to Waltham Forest and the ODA – payable by Save Leyton Marsh's leading members.

They were given just two weeks to appeal, meaning that even if they got the levy revoked the ODA had already won, eliminating some of its most stringent critics for the duration of the Games.

To add to the pressure, security services even went as far as to put in intimidating phone calls, with the Met phoning the host pub of a campaign comedy fundraiser to tell them to "expect a police presence" on the night.

The efforts to break the Save Leyton Marsh Campaign, with state and corporation so entwined as to be near-indistinguishable, seem to be part of the austerity era textbook.

Criminalise to discredit. Brutalise to isolate. Then slap on the threat of destitution to round it all off.

This is "democracy" for the 21st century.

Rob Ray

## Mass arrest

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The police have claimed that they placed restrictions on the Mass in order to prevent 'serious disruption' to the community on the night of the Olympic opening ceremony, an event which certainly caused a fair bit of disruption in its own right to residents of East London. They have not made public the nature of the 'serious disruption' that was feared.

The conditions imposed on the Mass were enormously restrictive. They including a requirement not to go anywhere north of the river, to start and complete the ride within a set time framework and to stay away from the Olympic Route Network.

The context to all this is that the Met Police has for some years attempted to restrict the

Critical Mass to an agreed and pre-notified route.

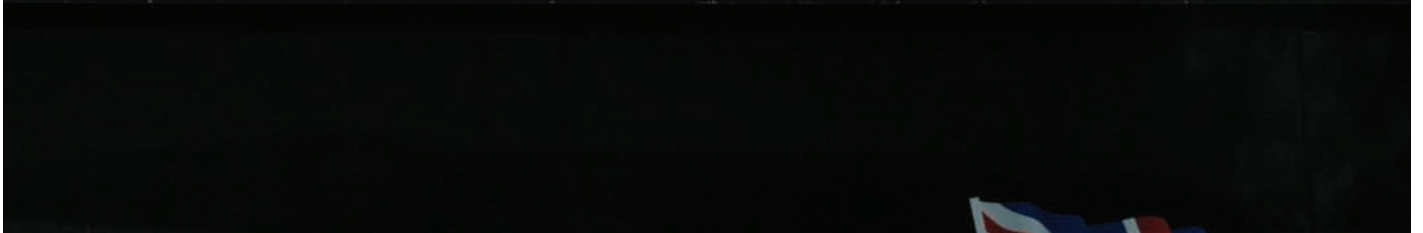
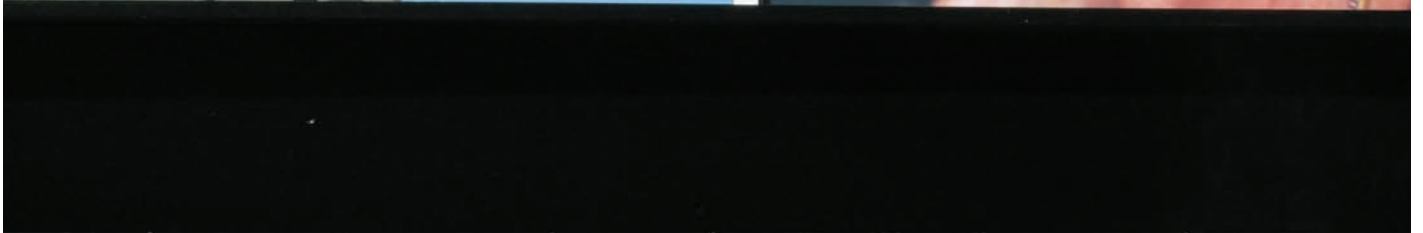
In 2005 they stated that the failure of the organisers of the Mass to provide six days' notice of the proposed route made the event unlawful, and handed out notices threatening participants with prosecution. The resulting legal case made it all the way to the House of Lords, who held that the Critical Mass, as a regular and customary event without organisers and without a pre-planned route, was entirely lawful and that the participants committed no crime.

Arrestees have told us of having been denied water, blankets or access to a lawyer. And all have been subject to highly restrictive bail conditions, which in some

cases have left people unable to work without breaching the conditions of their bail. Some have had to face a significant struggle to reclaim their own cycles.

The mass arrests of 182 cyclists provided huge benefits for the Metropolitan Police. They got 182 names, addresses and photographs to add to their database; 182 potential anti-Olympics demonstrators (as they saw it) given bail conditions to stay away from Olympic venues; a clear message sent out to anyone contemplating anti-Olympic protest that it is a dangerous thing to do. But it was also an opportunity for the police to attack the Critical Mass itself, and in doing so to further erode some important and fundamental freedoms.

## THE BIG PICTURE



The compartmentalisation of culture and emotion that comes with Olympics and consumerism is illustrated in this scene just opposite the site of Albion Mills in London's Blackfriars. Albion Mills was the first great factory in London and is thought to have been the inspiration for William Blake's references to "dark Satanic mills".



# The weak link of a union

**Adam Ford on the PCS' aborted strike action, and the unions' Olympic failures.**

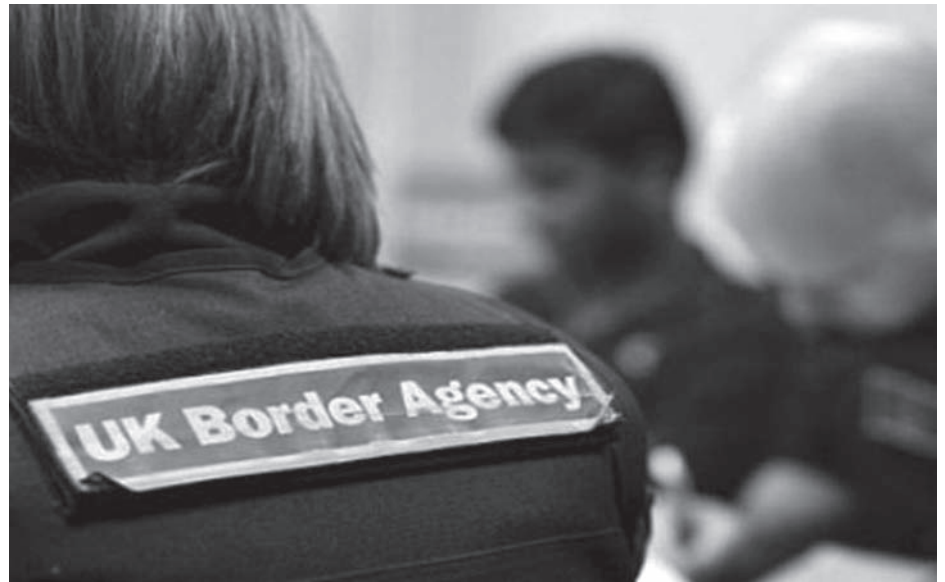
As women footballers were getting ready to unofficially kick off the London Olympics, the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union general secretary was preparing to bow to ruling class pressure, and call off a strike of workers in the Border Agency, Criminal Records Bureau, and the Identity and Passport Service. In doing so, darling of the fake left Mark Serwotka was setting the seal on years of collaboration between union officialdom and the London Olympics authorities.

The aborted strike was originally called as part of a dispute over 8,500 Home Office jobs the PCS say are at risk as a result of government cuts. Had the walkout gone ahead, it would have caused some disruption to last-minute Olympics preparations, particularly with spectators, athletes and others in their entourages still arriving in the country.

Serwotka faced a storm of right wing abuse over the strike, with the usual papers seizing on the opportunity to bash the supposed "arrogance" of workers choosing to withdraw their labour at a time when it might have most impact. "Debate" focussed heavily on the "national pride" side of the Olympics, and against working class consciousness.

The PCS bureaucracy made their statement just minutes before the union was to be hauled before the High Court by the government, over what they had claimed were "procedural errors" in the strike ballot – the now standard ruling class mantra. In his remarks, Serwotka declared there had been "major progress" in talks with the government, which had decided to create 800 jobs in the Border Agency, alongside 300 in the Passport Service.

Now in the context of 8,500 lost jobs, 1,100 would not have been much of an improvement. But it would be the first time the coalition government had so much as



blinked in imposing its austerity agenda, and would therefore be something of a watershed. However, within minutes of Serwotka's speech, immigration minister Damian Green was telling BBC News he "did not recognise that figure at all." He went on: "They knew the strike was irresponsible and likely to be destructive ... I'm glad to say the government has not made any concessions at all. I'm glad the union has taken this decision."

It should really go without saying that in a negotiation, if one party publicly denies they have made any concessions, they cannot exactly be said to be "in the bag". So doubtless there will be many disgruntled would-be strikers who must now go to work while "negotiations" go on behind doors closed.

While this particular dispute wasn't over work at the Olympics itself, the timing of the strike date very much linked it in to the spectacle. And the Serwotka sell-out is emblematic of the way the trade union tops have engaged with the Olympics project from the start.

Even five years ago, the Trades Union Congress were telling the Olympic Delivery

Authority that "The TUC and affiliated unions wish to put on record our shared commitment" to the "core objectives" of the ODA. The bureaucracy put forward the business/nationalist line that the Olympics provided an "opportunity" to "showcase" Britain. For the sake of the "smooth running of the games" it was therefore crucial that they should be "consulted at all stages of the planning and operation." In other words, the trade union tops were offering their services to police the working class.

As part of this consultation, the TUC received advance notice that there would be 70,000 "volunteers" – or in plain speaking, unpaid workers – staffing the games. No protest was raised, though it was initially suggested that a "Volunteers' Protocol" should ensure that appropriate training and meals were given. After no fight whatsoever, this idea fell by the wayside.

Perhaps the most damning indictment of the TUC's role comes from the praise of slimy Organising Committee chair and former Tory MP Lord Sebastian Coe, who – at the signing of a "Games-Time Grievance Resolution Protocol" with the bureaucracy – trumpeted the fact that "We have always enjoyed great support from the trade union movement since the very beginning of the bid, and today's signing of the protocol with the TUC and ACAS is a natural next step."

At a time of huge unemployment, one of the most expensive sporting events of all time will be serviced by an army of unpaid workers, and any disputes will be quickly sewn up by the union tops at the 'conciliation service' ACAS. What a graphic illustration of the filthy role by those suits who claim to fight for workers' rights, and the even filthier one played by those who cheer them on, while pretending to be revolutionaries.

Adam Ford



Photo: Ivan Bandura

This article first appeared in *The Commune*.

## ANALYSIS

# Intellectual property is theft!

Contrary to what scores of so-called ‘conservatives’ like to believe, copyrights are government-granted monopolies; they are not creatures of the ‘free market’. Many neoclassical economists get their underwear in a twist over government trade polices that cause the price of a product to exceed its (marginal) cost of production, yet it would be difficult to argue that the economics profession directs the same level of criticism towards copyright protection – even though its impact is, arguably, comparable to some instances of government protectionism in international trade.

There is, however, at least one exception to this conspiracy of silence. Dean Baker, co-founder and co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) in Washington, has authored a series of studies which highlight the economic inefficiencies associated with intellectual property rights (including copyrights).

In his 2005 study, ‘The Reform of Intellectual Property’, which was published in issue 32 of the *Post-Autistic Economics Review*, Baker explained that: “[w]hile tariffs and quotas rarely raise the price of goods by more than 30 or 40 percent ... copyrighted material, recorded music and video material that could be transferred at zero cost over the internet, instead command a substantial price when sold as CDs, DVDs,

or licensed downloads”. According to Baker, the “monopoly profits” that result “encourage all sorts of anti-social rent-seeking behaviour, activities that” are seen “in abundance in the case of both patent and copyright protection”.

Readers of *Freedom* who have followed the *Beating the Fascists* photograph saga are now all too familiar with the “anti-social rent-seeking behaviour” encouraged by government-granted copyright protection (see page 5 of the July issue of *Freedom*). In any case, there may of course be nothing inherently wrong with the idea that the government should support innovation and creative work; the relevant point is that the existing copyright system is perhaps the least efficient and most invasive mechanism conceivable for supporting such work.

As Baker notes in the study cited above, government-granted copyright protection “leads to enormous economic inefficiency” because: (a) copyright protection ensures that “recorded music, movies, and software, material that could generally be transferred at zero cost, instead carr[y] a high marginal cost”; (b) “the difficulties of protecting copyrights in an era of digital technology” lead “to enormous enforcement costs”; and (c) copyright protection “impinges on artistic freedom”.

A more efficient mechanism for supporting innovation and creative work – one which

would not subject the public to the costs and restrictions outlined above – is described in detail in Baker’s 2003 study ‘The Artistic Freedom Voucher: An Internet Age Alternative to Copyright’. This study can be read on the CEPR website ([www.cepr.net](http://www.cepr.net)).

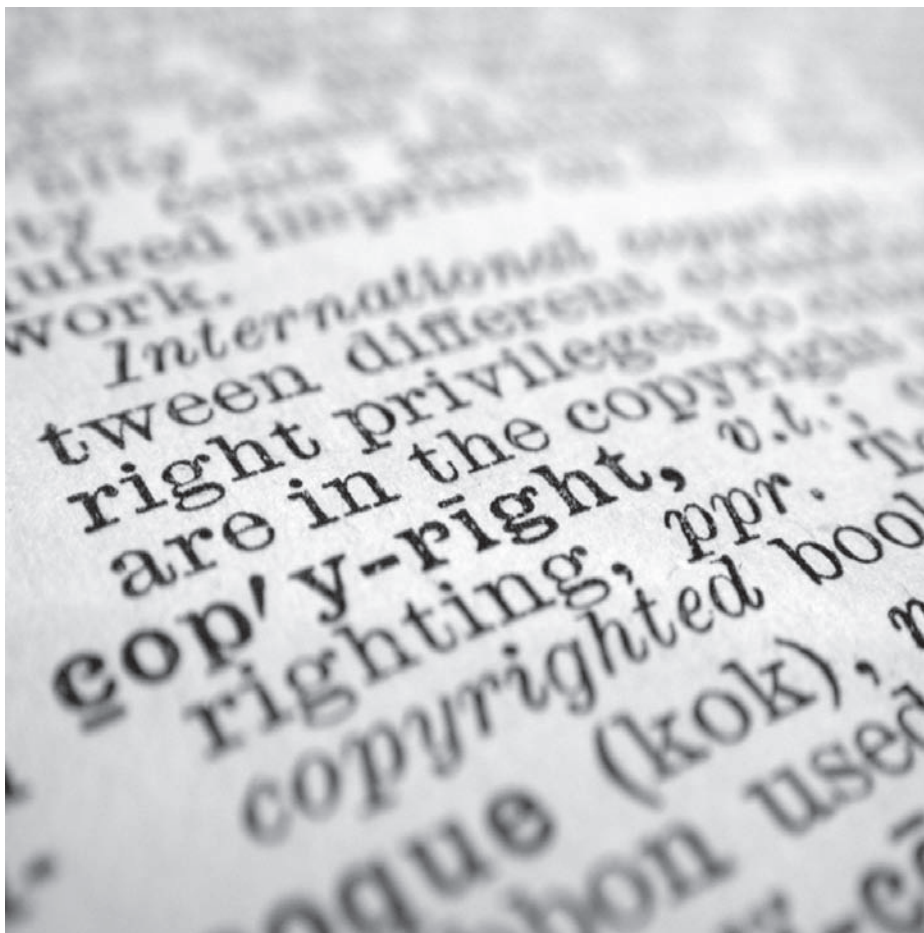
In short, the Artistic Freedom Voucher (AFV) system Baker describes would allow individuals to contribute a refundable tax credit (e.g. £100) to support creative or artistic work of their choosing. Potential recipients of AFV funds – whether an individual artist or an intermediary organisation – would register with the government in the same way that charitable or religious organisations currently register for non-profit status. The condition for receiving AFV funds would be that recipients would not be eligible to receive copyright protection for any work produced for a substantial period of time (e.g. five years) after receiving funds through the system.

The AFV system would make available to the public an enormous amount of uncopyrighted music, movies, books and other publications. Moreover, since the AFV and copyright systems could exist in parallel (and hence compete) it is probable that the vast amount of uncopyrighted, AFV-funded material circulating freely over the web would crowd out copyrighted material – the market would very likely finish off copyright protection in exactly the same way that Wikipedia has virtually eliminated traditional encyclopaedias.

Perhaps more importantly, “almost all creative workers” – with the exception of a relatively small, elite group of artists and corporate CEOs who currently benefit from the concentrated distribution of copyright royalties and related payments – “would stand to earn far more [money] through the AFV system than through the copyright system”, according to Baker’s conservative estimates.

In fact, even when employing unadventurous assumptions, Baker’s calculations still illustrate “that an AFV system would lead to both a more diverse set of creative and artistic offerings, and also enormous gains in economic efficiency”, but even if there are better ways than the AFV to support creative work, the central point remains: it is not difficult to think of alternative mechanisms to the inefficient and grotesquely restrictive copyright protection system that currently dominates.

To put it briefly, copyright protection is a form of conservative nanny-state intervention in the market that ultimately has the effect of redistributing wealth upwards towards CEOs at corporations like Sony and Microsoft. What’s more, it is now also imposing increasingly negative consequences on almost all of us, especially in the internet age – alternatives should therefore be discussed and pursued.





Stormy warnings ahead in Higher Education  
It has been announced that there was a 15,000 drop in applicants to HE institutions this year. Most notably this drop in numbers was centred on England, because the £9,000 cap on tuition fees does not affect Welsh or Northern Ireland students who will pay the £3,465 agreed base rate. Scottish students attending Scottish university are further exempt from fees entirely.

This signals out clearly that the hike in fee costs and the potential milestone of future debt (regardless if the repayment starts after graduates earn £21,000) is putting a significant number of people off the prospect of education. Given that the expansion of education in the post-war period as been a relatively sound way of taking large numbers out of the job market, adding the surplus of those who have opted out of HE to the youth unemployment figures of just over a million, is a sad indictment of the governments policies.

The cost of tuition fees, factored alongside those students taking out maintenance loans – to support them while they study – means student debt could easily hit around £40,000 for a three year degree (give or take bursaries, lower tuition fee charges but made excessively worse from repeat years of study and four year courses.)

Will Hutton, representing an Independent Commission on Fees investigating the impact of the new fees, has been at pains to point out that the UK now operates the most expensive system of university funding in the world. Almost three times the personal cost involved in the US.

While David Willetts the University minister was quick to point out that there was a peak in applications the year before, and other commentators have spoken about the drop in numbers coming from largely higher income families, little is being said of the uncertainties of job security in the sector or what the full effects of Tories “new regime” fees experiment will have.

A significant drop in student numbers entails a knock-on effect for funding of Universities from HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and other regional equivalents.

The union Unison recently revealed that government policies within FE in England had attributed to 60% of 248 respondents saying courses were cut due to funding cuts and funding eligibility rules. This is something which could easily be mirrored across the HE sector, as marginal subjects get squeezed and academics become excessively evaluated to arbitrary expectations.

This is happening alongside a clear policy designed to cherry-pick students with the best grades. Universities for the first time have quotas for non-AAB students, possibly squeezing those who have just missed out on top marks.

And despite rhetoric to the contrary, privately educated students have increased their hold on the more selective institutions at the top end. This, in parallel to an increasing division between pre and post '92 institutions should be seen as part and parcel of a drive to restrict access to education.

# Our constitution

Recent controversy has attracted a lot of debate about Freedom Press and, as all publicity is good... well maybe. However it's apparent that there are lots of people who don't know how the Freedom Press setup works.

The building itself is held in trust by Friends of Freedom Press, but the active part of the operation is overseen by a collective and run by officers appointed by them. In addition there are lots of comrades who contribute in various ways. So here we give the Freedom Press constitution for added transparency.

- The Freedom Collective consists of the following:
  1. The Editor/s of *Freedom* newspaper, the Director of Distribution, the Administrator and the Bookshop Co-ordinator are *ex officio* members of the collective.
  2. Members may be appointed by the collective. Appointed members remain on the collective until they resign or are expelled.
  3. Regular volunteers working for the collective shall become full members after three months and after attending two meetings, unless their membership is blocked on grounds of political incompatibility with the aims of the collective. Volunteers will cease to be automatic members if they have either

not contributed to the work of Freedom Press or not attended meetings, or sent apologies, for two months.

- Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible but, if necessary, by a majority vote.
- Meetings are open to all building users (i.e. members of ASS, CorporateWatch and LCAP) and other interested parties in the movement, unless the membership decides to hold a closed meeting.

Currently there are twelve members but, as you can gather from point three, the membership tends to come and go as most people volunteering end up getting jobs, education or doing other stuff instead.

What sharp eyed viewers will notice is there is no ‘aims and principles’ or attempt at a definition of anarchism. In this we are similar to other pan-movement bodies such as the London Anarchist Bookfair.

Freedom Press has endeavoured to keep a balance from different strands within the movement, but mostly having a bookshop, running a meeting space, etc., are reasonably uncontroversial roles. Editing the anarchist movement's only monthly publication, however, may be thought to entail both the danger of sectarian bias and be fraught with competition to reach the top of anarchism's ‘greasy pole’. So maybe it's time we had an election? More in our next fun issue.



## INTERNATIONAL

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**CANADA:** Over 2,000 construction workers at the Long Harbour site have organised a wildcat strike, walked off the job and blocked the site entrance. They are demanding parity of pay with other workers across the country. On average, workers at the site earn \$15 an hour less than their counterparts at other sites. The bosses have responded by trying to gain a court injunction.

**CHINA:** Tens of thousands of people have protested in the region of Qidong against plans to build a waste pipeline through the area. Protesters stormed the local municipal buildings and ransacked offices. Following the protests, the government have suspended the project.

**GREECE:** Following direct interference from the Greek prime minister, police have been utilised to break the nine-month steel workers strike at Halyvourgia Ellados. Workers have been on an indefinite strike against bosses attempts to enforce a 40% pay cut. Police have attacked the pickets, using teargas and batons to disperse them.

**INDIA:** Nurses on casual contracts have gone on strike, demanding parity with fully employed staff in pay, hours and working conditions. Following the refusal of the government to negotiate, hundreds of nurses burnt an effigy of the health minister at a rally and stormed his home. The nurses were subsequently battered by the local police, and many of the alleged ringleaders imprisoned.

**PAKISTAN:** Doctors in the state of Punjab are three weeks into a strike over pay, hours and career progression. The government has reneged on its promise to discuss the their concerns and have implemented a plan of brutal strike breaking. Supposed agitators have had their phones tapped, their houses raided and have been seriously attacked by police. Several striking doctors are in intensive care due to their injuries, and many more are in solitary confinement in prison for organising the strike.

**SWAZILAND:** Teachers have been on strike for over five weeks, demanding a modest pay rise. The government has responded by slashing salaries by 33%, and are using the security forces to attack peaceful strikers wherever they organise. Nurses and taxi drivers have since come out in support. The Swazi monarchy and government have promised a violent crackdown if strikers do not return to work immediately.

**TURKEY:** Over 300 aviation workers have been sacked via text message by the government. The reason for their dismissal is that they dared to fight-back against the recent decision to ban all industrial action in the aviation sector. The government have also launched court action against the trade union (Hava-is) to crush any semblance of an effective union.

### LENS CAP CHIAPAS, MEXICO



Zapatista supporters in San Marcos Avilés are at very serious risk of violent assault and displacement. The threats made against them have increased sharply since Mexican elections in July, and armed paramilitary-style government supporters have already stolen crops and livestock, leaving them without a food supply. For details see <http://sanmarcosavilesen.wordpress.com/>

## The FBI target anarchists in Oregon

Heavily armed FBI agents utilising sledgehammers and stun grenades have raided the homes of three anarchists in the Portland area of Oregon. Suspects were handcuffed to chairs and watched over by fifteen agents with assault rifles, whilst their homes were ransacked.

One of the search warrants left behind showed that agents were looking for evidence of conspiracy to destroy government property, interstate travel with intent to riot and items such as anarchist literature, anti-government literature or material, black clothing, sticks and flags, flag-making material and flares.

The FBI claims that the raids are part of an on-going investigation into “violent crime”, but are refusing to be more specific or provide any further details

Despite there being no arrests or any

illegal items being found, two of the people whose homes were raided have been subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury.

Both individuals have stated that they will give their names, but will not cooperate any further. They have been warned that refusal to cooperate will likely result in being sent to prison. Since the initial raids, it has come to light that a further five individuals from Oregon and Seattle have also been subpoenaed to testify.

Whilst state repression of anarchists and other political radicals is nothing new, it is of particular concern that heavily armed FBI agents are being used to confiscate anarchist or anti-government literature, which is supposedly “first amendment protected material”, and that they are so open and blasé in doing so.

## Notes from the US

A draft agreement leaked in the middle of last month showed that Obama and his gang are pushing a secretive trade agreement that could vastly expand corporate power.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact between the United States and eight Pacific nations would allow foreign corporations operating in the US to appeal against key regulations to an international tribunal in order to evade them. The body would have the power to override US law and issue penalties for failure to comply with its ruling.

Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch, a fair trade group that

posted the leaked documents on its website, commented: “This is not just a bad trade agreement... this is a 1% power tool that could rip up our basic needs and rights.”

As this extension goes on, a new analysis by Bloomberg News has found that the country’s largest banks are still getting billions of dollars in taxpayer-funded corporate welfare.

Incredibly, because of government subsidies, artificially low interest rates persist. This means that banks have been able to borrow at a lower cost. A recent paper by the International Monetary



# Iranian nationalism

## The rise of reactionary nationalism in Iran

In the last few months, there has been concerning news emanating from Iran regarding the treatment of Afghan immigrants. The authorities in the northern province of Mazandaran have banned anyone of Afghan origin from bathing at the Caspian Sea, to ensure that the environment remains “safe for Iranian families”.

The majority of Afghans in that province are servants in the plush holiday mansions of Tehran’s wealthy, or they work as labourers on construction sites.

Last month the homes of many Afghans were attacked and set on fire and the occupants badly beaten. The reason for these attacks was the unconfirmed rape and murder of an Iranian woman by Afghan workers. Around the same time, local authority’s passed a law that made it illegal to sell food and other goods to Afghan immigrants.

Around two million Afghans have moved to Iran over the last thirty years, yet they have no right to education for their children, no right to marry or have children with Iranians and no right to any social welfare. Afghans are treated like second class citizens in Iran – they work the lowest paid jobs and are often harassed and persecuted by the police. The situation has been described as a form of ‘apartheid’. Afghan immigrants are not the only people to be subject to horrendous racism in Iran. Immigrants from Turkey, Pakistan, and China, are also treated very badly.

This situation is part of a much bigger picture. After the suppression of the Iranian green movement – the electoral coup three years ago – and the general lack of any meaningful progressive politics, more and



In response to the regime’s latest assault on Afghans, Iranians have been quick to condemn its racism by posting photos and videos saying ‘I am also Afghan’. In the picture the signs in Persian say ‘I am also Afghan’ and ‘No to Racism’.

more people are turning to ideas of Persian nationalism, rather than the current military theocracy.

Persian emperors from thousands of years ago are becoming increasingly popular as political role models. The hatred of Arabs (“people who finished Persian glory”) is at its highest, and there are huge campaigns to change the name of the ‘Gulf’ to the ‘Persian Gulf’.

The Iranian regime is shrewdly riding a wave of nationalism and xenophobia. They are attempting to channel people’s feelings in order to regain the legitimacy that they have lost – and sadly, to some extent, they have been successful. Sanctions and warmongering on one side, regional competition between despotic states on the other, and crushed opposition at home, is leading Iranian society towards a dangerous and uncertain future.

## Notes from the US

### ◀ page 8

Fund estimates the subsidised interest rates end up saving banks 0.8% of their borrowing costs.

While not sounding a lot according to Bloomberg, that amounts to US\$76 (£50) billion in subsidies for the nation’s 18 largest banks per year, including US\$14 (£9) billion for JPMorgan Chase – or 77% of the bank’s income.

It’s just as well that representatives of the people are kept in the know, though, so that they don’t run any risk of losing out themselves: data released at the end of June shows that 130 members of the United States Congress have financial links to hundreds of millions of dollars in stock in

the same companies which lobby them in their committees.

Specifically, lawmakers traded up to US\$218 (£140) million in 323 companies registered to lobby on bills that came before Congress. Then, at the peak of the financial crisis of 2008 some three dozen members of Congress made major changes to their financial holdings after speaking with top administration officials.

In January 2008, then House Minority Leader John Boehner moved up to US\$100,000 (£65,000) from a mutual fund into a safer investment the day before the Bush administration gave details of the stimulus package.

Meanwhile the Californian city of Stockton became the largest in that state so far to declare itself bankrupt.

Lawmakers there reached a budget deal with Governor Jerry Brown in June, which was based on significant cuts in social services.

Nearly one million children of low-income families, for instance, would lose health coverage.

College aid would go, as would funding for child care assistance.

In addition, stricter work requirements and shorter time limits for welfare would be imposed.

## ECONOMICS

# The snake eats itself

## Explaining the panic surrounding a banking system which cannot lend

As economies around the world continue to falter, the *Financial Times* blog FT Alphaville has published a fascinating series of articles discussing the role, and failure, of banks, lending and quantitative easing.

It all concerns a somewhat esoteric concept they call “negative carry,” why banks are finding it so hard to make money and hence why, despite all the cash being pumped into them, we’re still not seeing any increase in lending.

They suggest that perhaps the problems we’re seeing aren’t because of banks making mistakes, but are the consequence of a fundamental restructuring of the underlying economy, away from scarcity and towards abundance.

What if the crisis wasn’t caused by bad decisions, greed, or overly complex derivatives, but in fact overly successful investment?

In fact, as FT Alphaville reports: “The Western economy has been plagued by overcapacity issues. Output gaps have been negative not only in developed countries, but on a global level.”

Why does this matter to banks? Well, banks are supposed to operate – and create a profit – by matching people who want to lend short term and borrow long term, performing an intermediating and guaranteeing role.

Savers want to maintain their liquidity (access to their money) but people and companies want to borrow on a longer scale to invest in production or property and so on (and you don’t want your bank to suddenly recall its loan on no notice or apply for a new one every week).

Normally the yield curve (the interest rate) slopes upwards over time, so rates for long term loans are higher than short term loans – you pay out a higher rate on your mortgage than you receive from a current account – and so the bank makes a profit off this difference in rates. This is called positive carry.



But since the credit crisis this hasn’t always worked as it should.

When the credit crunch happened no-one wanted to lend anymore and interest rates went up. The central banks reacted by creating new liquidity (quantitative easing, or QE) in a bid to restart lending, hoping this would fix the problem.

FT Alphaville explains: “The hope was that this was a system-wide liquidity crisis not a system-wide insolvency crisis. Provided the central bank could tide banks over with liquidity in the short-term.”

Unfortunately for them this didn’t work. Although the extra money helped the immediate problem, several years down the line, we’re clearly still in trouble. With little else at their disposal the central banks tried even more liquidity and so we got ‘QE2’ and ‘QE3’.

But all this monetary intervention has pushed yields so low we are now seeing negative real interest rates on some government bonds – are effectively paying to lend to those governments rather than getting paid.

This, for the Alphaville writers, is key: “The battle is no longer about liquidity but about preventing the negative carry universe from impairing bank profitability forever. Indeed, unless a positive carry is re-established banks will never be able to support themselves, for they will never be able to make money according to the old model.”

So how does fit in with the first story about over-production?

Another way to look at the normal functioning of banks is to think of it as them borrowing money from the future to invest in future goods by paying for production

today. In theory, money will grow over time and goods will be used up, unless we use future expectations of money to invest now to create more goods. This is how productive investment is meant to work.

And here we come to the underlying problem. Banks didn’t get into trouble because they made bad decisions (though they probably did make bad decisions) – the corollary of which is that given support and better decision making everything will work out – but because the underlying future distribution of goods and money is changing.

Alphaville notes: “In a negative carry universe – one in which goods, collateral and assets are expected to permanently outnumber money in the future – bank profits can only be achieved through pariah practises rather than lending.

“Banks are ironically encouraged to destroy capacity, disincentivise investment, borrow money from the economy rather than lend it, and hoard wealth. All are phenomena we are currently seeing. All phenomena which are economically destructive.”

In the end maybe we’re not just seeing a crisis of financial management but a real crisis of over-production. Automation and increasing productivity are increasing supply, stagnating wages and personal debt can no longer maintain demand to keep up and opportunities for productive investment are disappearing.

As the crisis deepens capital finds it can no longer sustain itself by feeding on living labour, but turns to feed on itself. The vampire becomes Ouroboros, the world snake which has circled so fast it begins to eat its own tail.



# Remembering Clara Gilbert Cole

## A short biography of the anti-militarist and anarchist

Clara Gilbert was born on the 4th December 1868. She was the daughter of a boot manufacturer who had got into financial distress because of his refusal to “produce anything save honest, hand-made all-leather wares” (according to feminist icon Sylvia Pankhurst in her book *Home Front*).

Left an orphan and without means, she got a job as a postal worker in Manchester. Here she met her future husband Herbert Cole.

Herbert Cole (1867-1930), like Pankhurst, studied at Manchester School of Art and was heavily influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris and illustrators like Walter Crane who had volunteered their work for papers like the Socialist League’s *Commonweal*.

Upon their marriage Clara became known as Clara Gilbert Cole. Both Clara and Herbert seem to have been involved in suffragism, Herbert becoming the staff artist for the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) later progressing to provide illustrations for popular left-wing paper *The Worker’s Dreadnought*.

He was a prolific artist from the 1890s into the 1920s. His work, including that as an illustrator for children’s books, is unjustifiably ignored today.

Clara became a passionate opponent of the First World War. Pre-empting the State call for conscription, she founded a League Against War and Conscription in early 1915 which published an eight-page pamphlet written by her, *War Won’t Pay*, in 1916.

**Clara Gilbert, with her unusual slender loveliness, her deft fingers and vivid imagination, was like a caged bird in the post office. *The Home Front*, Sylvia Pankhurst**

**A remarkable, sincere and much loved woman. John Hewetson**

In the same year Clara, along with Rosa Hobhouse, walked through Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire distributing hundreds of anti-war leaflets. Rosa’s husband Stephen had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector that year. They were arrested after five days and convicted at Kettering Crown Court, both receiving five months’ imprisonment.

Clara was associated with the Workers Socialist Federation (WSF) of Sylvia Pankhurst and may have been a member of it. She produced a book of poems, *Prison Impressions*, based on her own experiences and those of others, in 1918.



She became involved in the early unemployed movement in the 1920s and was arrested after an action organised by the group Camberwell Organised Unemployed, on 3rd February 1922, along with Stanley Dallas and Bill Rust (Rust was the noted Communist Party stalwart and *Daily Worker* founder who remained true to Stalinism) for which she received a forty shillings fine or 28 days imprisonment.

She wrote *The Objectors to Conscription and War*, a record of their suffering and sacrifice, their letters and tribunal appeals, their testimony for liberty of conscience, in 1936.

She gravitated towards the anarchist movement and remained a supporter until her death, providing “vigorous” support during the Spanish Revolution and in anti-war agitation, according to *Black Flag* editor Albert Meltzer in his book *The Anarchists in London*. She wrote anti-war articles in *War Commentary*, Guy Aldred’s *The Word*, and Labour’s *Northern Voice*. The latter publication did not have an anti-war policy but nevertheless opened its columns to her.

She died on 4th February 1956 at the age of 87. An obituary by then-*Freedom* editor

Dr John Hewetson appeared in the paper on 11th February of the same year, where she was described as “one of the oldest comrades of the anarchist movement.”

Hewetson remembered visiting her at her very small cottage at Kirby-le-Soken in Essex in 1943 and how popular she was with the village children, who regularly visited her to hear her story-telling, for which she apparently had a flair.

He also recounts the tale of a performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony (incidentally Bakunin’s favourite music!) at the Queen’s Hall in London when the orchestra followed up with God Save the Queen.

The audience was electrified to hear Clara shouting from the gallery “God Save the People!”

Hewetson also described her as a “most determined opponent of all established religion, concurring with Bakunin that acceptance of a heavenly authority was not compatible with rejection of earthly authority.

Unhappily, and against her clearly expressed wishes, a religious service was performed at her funeral.

Nick Heath

## FEATURE

## BREAD AND CIRCUS

## The shady business of the International Olympic Committee

Ian Blunt and Beth Lawrence from Corporate Watch outline some key events in the history of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and explain how it operates as a global brand and generates and uses its funds

Bread and circuses were mainstays of the domestic politics of ancient Rome: keep down the price of food and put on a good show and the masses would be happy and the emperor would have a decent chance of not being overthrown or assassinated.

The biggest of the modern global circuses do not function in exactly the same way as their Roman forebears. A deal to host a 'mega-event' like the Olympics or the football World Cup can bring a certain political kudos to the government concerned, but they are more concerned with profiting from, rather than placating, the masses.

There can be negative side-effects of course: a public and international spotlight on domestic social inequality, lack of democracy and so on. Commenting on the most recent World Cup, Patrick Bond, director of South Africa's Centre for Civil Society, which ran a World Cup Watch project, said: "The elite have pulled off bread and circuses for the masses." We live in one of the most unequal societies in the world, and we've just seen an amplification of that inequality. The costs will become increasingly clear. There has already been no



shortage of criticism of the social and economic effects of the London Olympics, but the hope for the organisers is that the blaze of publicity once the event starts will offset such negative criticisms. Sports reporters are, after all, paid to focus on sporting records rather than human rights.

The ringmaster of the modern Olympics circus is the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which moves from city to city, imposing its demands and ensuring its members are never short of canapés or red carpets. However, while the IOC is never shy about espousing respect, excellence, friendship and so on, its history of organising the Games stands in stark contrast to the rhetoric of the official Olympic values. As C.A. Shaw, author of *Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games*, says: "Were they ever a democratic, egalitarian organisation promoting sports for the masses? Well, no. Of nine actual or acting presidents, the IOC had put three barons, two counts, two businessmen, an overt fascist and a fascist sympathiser in its top job. With leaders like this, are the outcomes surprising?"

## Some history of the IOC

A brief overview of the IOC's management of the Olympics shows what these outcomes were:

- 1894, the IOC is founded. Working class people and women excluded from the first 'official' modern Olympics in Athens in 1886. 'Workers' Olympics' held in 1925 in opposition to the official Olympics for a number of years, in response to this exclusion.
- 1936, the Berlin Games saw IOC members openly supporting fascism, enabling the Games to be a huge propaganda victory for the Nazi regime. These values continued to shape the IOC for many years, with openly repressive regimes being allowed to compete in the Games. Berlin also saw a huge effort to 'clean up' the streets of all 'undesirables' – mainly Gypsies and political enemies – who were preemptively arrested and put in detention. Hitler also used the event to install an early form of CCTV surveillance.
- 1968, the Mexico City Games showed the full extent of the IOC's hypocrisy: claiming to have progressive values while enabling widespread racism, repression and militarism. Days before the Games, the Mexican police and army killed as many as 500 student protesters in the Tlatelolco massacre. The protests were partly against the Games, due to the amount of money being spent on them while the poor in Mexico were being neglected. The IOC refused to let the massacre 'politicise' the Games, but the expulsion of medal winners Carlos and Smith for their black power and solidarity salutes shows the mechanics of the running of the Games trumped



every other concern, social or ethical".

- 1976, the Montreal Games only attracted a very small domestic sponsorship (\$7m) compared to the debt generated (\$1.5bn), which took 30 years to pay off. From then on, the IOC's funding model changed from many small national sponsors to fewer, larger international sponsors.
- 1978, Richard Pound was elected to the IOC and transformed the so-called 'Olympic movement', better described as the



# CUSES



Photograph © Max Reeves

Olympic industry, by striking huge sponsorship deals with multinationals, such as Coca-Cola, Kodak, McDonalds and Visa and arranging TV sponsorship deals. From then on, the Games became a multi billion dollar enterprise, spreading corporate power and imagery throughout the world.

- Since the 1980s, it has been estimated the Games have displaced over three million people and contributed to massive increases in homelessness, such as in Vancouver. This

has contributed significantly to gentrification, securitisation and surveillance in the host cities.

- Late 1990s, corruption nearly destroyed the IOC and many people were expelled. For example, in 1999 there was widespread bribery going on in the IOC regarding the decision to give the 2002 Winter Games to Salt Lake City. An investigation led to ten IOC members being expelled or resigning. Since this period of scandals that nearly brought down the IOC, it has improved its PR, but any issues that do arise are pretty much left unchecked by the mainstream press.
- 2008, the Beijing Games saw displacement on a massive scale and a pre-Olympics systematic round-up of political activists, involving imprisoning, beating and torturing dissenters, showing that the Games continue to facilitate and reinforce repression wherever they go, yet the IOC still pretends to be apolitical.
- 2012, the London Games have seen pre-emptive arrests and evictions across London and protests being held in July against, amongst other issues, the failure of the IOC to take action against the discrimination of women athletes, corporate sponsorship, mass surveillance and the restriction of the right to protest that the Host City Contract enforces.

## The IOC's revenue streams

The main reason the IOC is thriving in the modern world is because it can sell television rights, among the world's most sought-after commodities, on a scale that promises a massive audience for the advertising space that can be attached to the televising of the event. The Olympic Games is in effect the biggest billboard in the universe.

Television companies are thus the IOC's biggest customers. The *Vancouver Sun* reported in 2007: "Television rights, according to figures released by the IOC, will generate more than \$1bn US dollars from the 2010 [Winter] Olympics alone, and some \$3.8bn in total between Vancouver and the 2012 London Games." The National Broadcasting Corporation of America (NBC) alone paid \$2bn for the US broadcasting rights to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and 2012 London Games.

The IOC earns more than half (53%) of its income from selling television rights with around 30% coming from sponsorships and partnerships, 10% from ticketing and the rest from direct marketing and/or licensing of products. It also gains the large fees paid by candidate cities at each stage of the bid process, which amounts to \$14m for each four year period.

Overall the IOC makes around \$750m a year, which is a low-end estimation. It is not possible to gain a more accurate figure, because information about the IOC and its

revenue is not publicly accessible. The IOC claim it only gets 8% of this total, with the rest going to the National Organising Committees and other organisations involved in the Games, but there is no independent auditing to prove this percentage. This means it makes a minimum of \$60m, which does not include their own revenues from the sale of Olympic products.

So what does the IOC do with its vast profits? Pay local taxes? No! It does not pay taxes anywhere. The Host City Contract ensures it does not have to pay tax on any aspect of the Games or Games-related profits. In many countries, such official tax exemption usually only applies to charities, non-profits and religious organisations. The IOC's elusive status as neither a corporation as such nor a state institution, or indeed any other known category of organisation, means it manages to operate in a way that enables vast profits with few formal responsibilities.

- *Pay its employees well?* No! Many people who work for the IOC do not benefit from the vast profits and people volunteer to work at the Olympics in huge numbers. Only the people at the top see the money.
- *Invest in progressive projects relating to the official Olympic values, such as ethics in sports?* No! The IOC works towards the values in the Olympic Charter relating to its own protection and preservation, but only plays lip service to its other supposed values, such as promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.
- *Spend it on champagne and other luxuries?* Yes!

## Conclusion

As the Olympics are underway, the UK's recession appears worse than predicted, with UK outputs at 4.5% lower than it was when the economy peaked in early 2008. Whether the Olympics will exacerbate this remains to be seen, with London boroughs coughing up thousands, including for the installation of new CCTV cameras, for the privilege of hosting one of the events while council budget cuts continue to take effect. In light of this it is heartening to know that resistance to and criticism of the Olympics in London has been widespread, with many community groups joining forces to get their voices heard, in the absence of any possibility of democratic representation. The International Counter Olympics Network (ICON) was launched in London the day before the Olympics started.

To get involved with ICON contact the Counter Olympics Network at <http://counterolympicsnetwork.wordpress.com>.

For more coverage of the Olympics, its sponsors and resistance, and for the referenced version of this article, see [www.corporatewatch.org](http://www.corporatewatch.org).

## INTERVIEW

# Interpreting the Signals

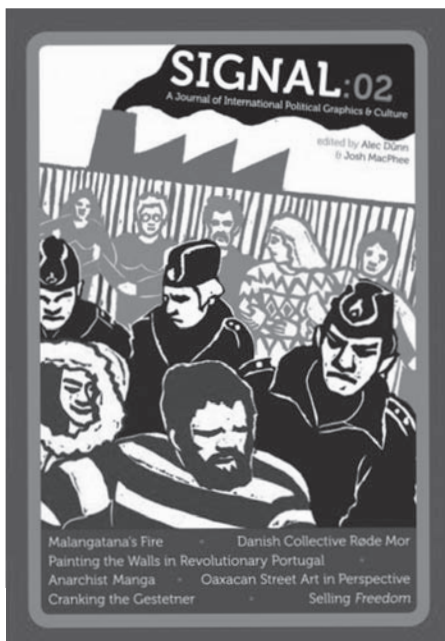
Rob Ray talks to Alex Dunn and Josh MacPhee about their political graphics magazine

*Could you say a little bit about why you decided to start Signal and what its ethos is?* We both come from a specific background, the US activist and counter culture of the 1980s and '90s. As such, we really wanted to begin to break out of the myopia of US political art and culture, which tends to be very inward looking, with only a small number of reference points. Our goal is to bring the broader terrain of cultural struggle back to our communities here, and hopefully turn on a broader audience to the powerful history and diversity of political graphics and culture.

*In Signal:01 you get hold of a wide range of people around the world to talk to, from a US graffiti artist to a Dutch cartoonist and former Freedom Press artist Rufus Segar, while the latest offering is picking up on Japanese, Mexican and Danish work – what's driving your choices in this regard? Are there any articles which you're particularly proud of or which were tough to do?*

To give one example, the article about the Yamaga Manga grew out of a general interest in having work from Japan. We wanted this because Japanese political graphics are so distinctive.

This lead to a correspondence with folks from the Center for International Research on Anarchism (CIRA)-Japan about material that they had access to, and what they thought would be informative for a western audience.



The process of choosing an article then became a bit of collaboration, which was pretty rewarding. Other times, we have a specific feature that we'd like to have, e.g. the article about the Røde Mor collective, and it's more a matter of finding someone to run with it. And finally, in *Signal:02* we had three writers (Judy Seidman, Lincoln Cushing, and Deborah Caplow) who share some of the same goals as we do, and we asked if they had anything that they would like to contribute.

As far as difficulty in acquiring content, there has been a lot of research and documentation on European movements, we have friends and contacts over there, so that hasn't been very hard. Material and information from Africa (with the exception of South Africa), and Central and South Asia, has been more elusive.

*What was behind the decision to make it pocket-sized? And I know the price will raise a few eyebrows in the anarchist scene!*

We wanted to have something that people could stick in their pocket, read on the bus, just easily have on hand. Unfortunately it seems that much of the buying public doesn't recognise how expensive it is to print in full colour, and see that these little pocket-books cost the same as a trade paperback and bulk. We would love to have them be cheaper, but our publisher PM Press says it isn't possible. In person we always sell them for \$10 or less.

Because these books are so expensive, we are investigating other formats, and there is a good chance *Signal:03* will be a newspaper.

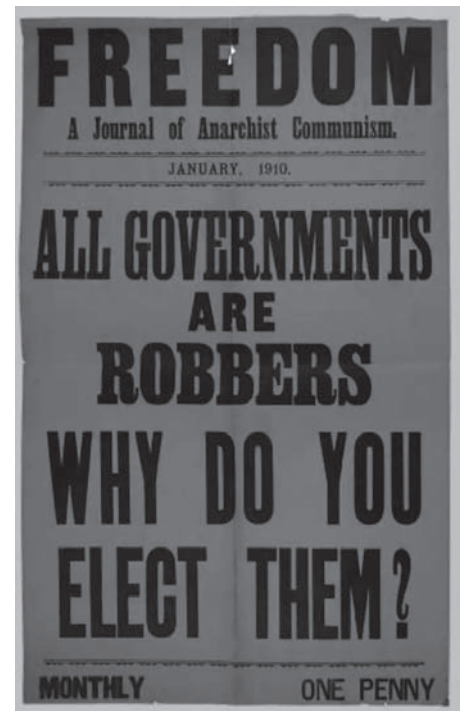
*You seem to have taken a shine to some of the old Freedom stuff, what drew you to these posters?*

We were digging through the archives at the Kate Sharpley Library and came upon an old box filled with these 100-year-old, folded-up broadsheets advertising *Freedom*. We quickly realised this was a goldmine, a snapshot of what UK anarchists were thinking about on a month to month basis from 1908 to 1917.

In addition, they were all printed with hand-set woodblock type, and are a fabulous example of the aesthetics of political placards from the early twentieth century.

*I know its early days but are any themes starting to emerge from your investigations that can help inform today's radical graphical community?*

We firmly believe that the culture produced by social movements is both a product of those movements, and informs them. By looking at the images, graphics, and art produced in the midst of complex struggles, we hope to understand the role that cultural



workers play in movements, the ways their identities evolve and change, and how culture shapes the wider population's understanding of the struggles.

It's clear that this kind of culture is often produced in different ways that traditional art made for commerce or self-expression. Social movement culture is often collectively generated, anonymous, and deeply rooted in a specific context. The lessons which may be gleaned from past experience can provide a treasure of insight for contemporary movements today.

*Other than Signal, could you recommend any good starting points for people interested in getting into making progressive graphics?*

Josh has written and edited a series of books that focus on the art of social struggles, most specifically *Signs of Change: Social Movement Cultures 1960s to Now* (co-edited with Dara Greenwald, AK Press, 2010). We would also suggest searching out the books produced by Lincoln Cushing and Liz McQuiston, both are great chroniclers of movement culture, and political posters more specifically.

*If it's not too early to ask, what sort of thing can we expect as the series grows more generally?*

We will continue our internationalist focus, and draw on even wider examples, from film to dance, theatre to more graffiti and street art. As the project evolves, each issue will likely change in format, to something fitting for the content. Sadly the small books will likely be less frequent, but newspapers, pamphlets, and even posters might take their place.



## INQUESTS

Whilst the surprisingly swiftly convened inquest into Ian Tomlinson's death at the G20 protests has been much in the news, other much more belated inquests into deaths in custody have faced more meagre coverage.

In the first concerning Kassa Osebu, a 30-year-old Ethiopian on remand for murder who had been found hanged alone in his locked cell at HMP Leeds in September 2007, his inquest jury had been forbidden by a high court judge (on the basis of an application by the Prison Service) from considering possible verdicts of murder or manslaughter. This was despite evidence that wounds to his neck was inconsistent with the bed sheet he was found hanging from, together with the testimony of fellow prisoners about bullying by other inmates that had been ignored by prison staff and evidence of a disturbance in Kassa's cell the night he died. Instead, the jury returned an open narrative on his death, which also held that prison officers had turned a blind eye to his bullying by inmates at Leeds, found failings in the risk assessment process and criticised the personal officer scheme, saying management had failed to ensure the scheme was workable on his wing.

A second inquest, this one into the death at the G4S-run HMP & YOI Parc in August 2010 of 29-year-old Shaun Beasley, a vulnerable prisoner with a history of self-harm, severely criticised the company and its sub-contracted healthcare services provider, Primecare Forensic Medical Services, stating that both companies' neglect contributed to Shaun's self-inflicted death. An IPP prisoner already over tariff, Shaun had recently been transferred to Parc in order to complete a drug rehabilitation course before being considered for parole, only to find that it was unavailable at the prison. Already on ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody, and Teamwork) after having made several previous serious suicide attempts, Shaun was also on a half-hour suicide watch. Despite this, and in spite of the prison having been told by his family that day that the news had made him suicidal, his care level was not increased and the jury found that he "took his own life in circumstances contributed to by neglect of healthcare and prison".

Meanwhile, at the inquest into the death in August 2008 of Sean Rigg, a 40-year-old physically fit musician with a history of mental health problems, who died in mysterious circumstances in Brixton police station in south London, the police officers involved in Sean's arrest for assault have been subjected to sustained and hostile questioning about the massive inconsistencies in their testimonies, which contradicts evidence from the station's CCTV, a police van's mobile computer and digitally timed and dated photographs from a witness. All point to the cops having tried to cover up what at the least is gross neglect and at the worst is an extra-judicial killing.

# The pips are beginning to squeak

As we have mentioned in this column previously, the only sector of the PIC on this side of the Atlantic that seems to be suffering in these hard times (see last month's column) are public sector prisons, which are currently subject to massive cutbacks in funding and wholesale privatisation. And it is not just the 'consumers' of prison 'services', the poor cons, that are noticing these cuts to 'services' – less time spent outside their cells; a massive deterioration in quality and quantity in their meals; decreased access to medical care and education; the list goes on – nor is it solely the POA, the screw's union with their 'concerns' about manning levels and lack of overtime, that are noticing the effects. Now even the Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB), a statutory organisation of unpaid local volunteers – do-gooders and local worthies – who monitor the welfare of prisoners and immigration detainees in individual prisons and detention centres, have cottoned on to the fact that public sector prisons' pips are beginning to squeak.

*Behind Closed Doors*, the IMB's national council's 2011 annual report published in April, highlighted the usual long-term recurring issues – overcrowding and overpopulation, slopping out, poor quality food, transport issues, prisoners votes, monitoring of immigration 'removals', the increasingly older and infirm prison population, etc. – but underlying that were a whole host of additional issues that the Board directly attributed to the Coalition's cuts programme. Now it has taken the unprecedented step (and we are talking here about an organisation whose Chair is a Church of England Bishop) of publicising these issues (via a document entitled 'Issues of Concern?') that they clearly think have been ignored by the government.

Amongst the points raised is the 'salami-slicing' that is effecting not just non-mandatory provisions, but more particularly

the essentials: everything from the availability of the reducing re-offending, resettlement and rehabilitation courses that prisoners are forced to take by a prison system dominated by the pseudo-science of psychology before they can be considered for release by the parole board; via the provision of health-care, and particularly mental health, the lack of the latter being "a particularly serious and continuing concern"; to "deficits in accommodation ... affect[ing] levels of decency and respect prisoners have a right to expect" and threatening the Prison Services' own "Respect and Decency agendas". Serious stuff for the IMB to get so worked up. Expect the lid to blow soon.

Just as it did at HMP Moorland in November 2010 – currently in the news as the trial takes place of 15 prisoners allegedly involved in the "pre-planned riots" that resulted in £641,500 of damage. Also in the news, and you no doubt missed this despite the hoopla surround its launch (we referred in passing to it in the June column), was the creation of One3One Solutions – basically a rebranded Prison Enterprises Department – in what will no doubt prove to be an entirely futile attempt to mimic UNICOR, the US Federal Prison Industries Inc., with a new website and shiny brochure. This, of course, has been pitched as the latest brick in the edifice of the 'Rehabilitation Revolution', though we all know that it is merely a naked attempt to maximise the amount of money that can be squeezed out of the prison population. (Compare the 'Victims Levy', which has recently been given the green light following a High Court challenge by prisoners.) Amusingly, Ken Clarke has now come out and admitted the inevitable – that the Rehab Rev will take years to implement and that the target for getting prisoners working is now to merely double the current number, rather than getting all of 'em slaving away.



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

There's a slight end-of-term feeling in the Alley, with lots of people going away for the summer. Many of course to key political events such as the Earth First summer gathering or the Saint-Imier 140th anniversary anarchist international. Others simply to veg out after, as one of our subscribers put it, what a shit year so far. Freedom Press seems to have had more than its fair share of controversy with bannings, expulsions, near-suings and all manner of other troubles, but we are really pleased with the amount of support shown after the appeal in our last issue. Apologies for not writing back to everyone who's expressed support but the time and energy spared really is being put to good use. It's somewhat early days to say what this means for the paper, but we will have a clearer idea by the September issue and will formulate alternative strategies for the October London Anarchist Bookfair Special.

Event wise, we're pleased to have old comrade and friend Peter Marshall give a talk on William Blake on Thursday 2nd August. More excitement will follow soon as our programme of summer events unfurls.

As it seems with every issue our thoughts go out to Grace, Al and Slugger, all formerly of this parish, in their respective difficulties with the forces of reaction.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

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## NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

The next issue will be dated September 2012 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Sunday 12th August. You can send your articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

A few welcome signs have been emerging from the embattled world of council housing. Where I live, the elected Mayor recently considered a report that suggested building up to 250 new council homes. While this is a modest number, and fraught with difficulties, it is at least a step in the right direction.

For most of the last twenty five years, the only social housing that has been built has been by housing associations. There's been the odd council flat or two but the political will of all main parties has been to demolish or sell off council homes. Tied to this low priority, council housing has been portrayed as subsidised housing for people on welfare. Anyone with any sort of aspiration would aim for something better, that they owned themselves; this was the Thatcherite myth. Right-to-Buy took large chunks out of the good homes available, leaving the worst and a legacy of underinvestment.

Where estates were demolished, or "regenerated", a euphemism for trying to change the social make up of the area, any replacements were a mix of private and housing association. Governments both red and blue have tried to induce council tenants to transfer to new landlords, often without success despite multi-million pound carrots of investment.

But despite all the denigration, the need for council housing has never gone away. It's bad enough being young and single and moving every few months. Imagine doing it with a family and all the ties to schools and friends and relatives. The government complain that poor people shouldn't live in nice areas, subsidised by housing benefit. But it's not the poor people being subsidised – it's the landlords. And one reason that

landlords are doing so well is that there is no alternative. Councils don't really have waiting lists any more, but if they did the average wait might see you past retirement age.

There is a massive shortage of housing, exacerbated by the prices paid by those well-off enough to consider buying. And there aren't many of them – my old boss has just moved into his fourth rented house in three years. Building more council housing is a no-brainer under almost any sort of economics: it creates jobs and would bring a return on the investment – they wouldn't be standing empty any time soon. So, if the economics makes sense, it can only be politics that is stopping it happening.

And of course it was politics. Council housing has been seen as something that only affected the working class, and not even all of us. As all parties competed for the same aspirational voters they focused on cheap mortgage costs. We know how that turned out. But council housing is now a distant aspiration for millions of people who want some security of tenure and a rent that is at least lower than their likely wage. It's no surprise that politicians are now sniffing around the issue again. Much as I dislike the politics around it, it can only be a good thing to have more homes for people who need them. The politicians will then of course worry that the housing bubble in the south east might burst. We can only wish. People who buy a house to live in will not be massively affected if it does, unless they've borrowed more than they can afford to pay. People who've bought loads because they fancied a life as the sort of parasite who coins it in while refusing to do repairs, well, what do you think should happen to them?





## FEEDBACK

I have just received the July journal but am disappointed with Iain McKay's article on Rucker. The article, that has a literary theme rather than a political one, ignores Rucker's main contribution, to the AF. This has set a model for libertarian organisation and deserves a whole article to itself. Could he do a part 2?

I also think he was a bit brief over the tailors "adoption" of the striking dockers children, which is a major event. This is just a note, but more needs to be done.

Alan Woodward

Several times now the assertion has appeared in the pages of *Freedom* that it is the only regular anarchist paper in Britain. Sorry, but what about *Resistance*, the free newsheet of the Anarchist Federation? It appears 10 times a year, has reached issue 143 and is distributed in several thousands in town centres, outside rail and tube stations and on demonstrations and other actions. Whilst recognising the good work that *Freedom* does, *Resistance* reaches the parts that other papers cannot reach.

Ron Allen

An open message to all who seek a new and better world

We are members of what is called the Interim Consultative Committee of the International Organisation for a Participatory Society – or IOPS for short.

IOPS is actually an interim entity, pending a future founding convention. IOPS was convened just a few months ago and already has over 2,100 members from 85 countries and a ten language site, despite that it is barely known publicly. IOPS is currently building local chapters, which will unite to form national branches that in turn will compose an international organisation.

**DONATE YOUR OLD BOOKS**

The ravaging wolves of capitalist depredation are constantly howling around Angel Alley seeking the destruction of our noble bookshop. You can help keep these fey hounds at bay by donating books that you no longer want so that we may sell them on to knowledge-hungry proletarians for a pound a piece (more to rich arty types who only came in 'cos they got lost on the way to the Whitechapel Art Gallery).

We send this open letter to invite you to please visit the IOPS site to examine its initial features – including especially and most importantly its Visionary and Programmatic Commitments.

The IOPS commitments emerged from a long process of discussion and debate. We believe they correspond closely to the most prevalent, advanced, and widely accessible political beliefs on which to build an organisation for winning a better world.

We also hope and even believe that if you read and consider the IOPS commitments, you will likely find that they are congenial to your interests and desires and that they provide reason for great hope that IOPS can become a very important organisation in the coming years.

If we had to summarise the IOPS commitments, we would note that they emphasise: that IOPS focuses on cultural, kinship, political, economic, international, and ecological aims without a priori prioritising any of these over the rest;

that IOPS advocates and elaborates key aspects of vision for a sustainable and peaceful world without sexism, heterosexism, racism, classism, and authoritarianism and with equity, justice, solidarity, diversity, and, in particular, self-management for all people and that IOPS structurally and programmatically emphasises planting the seeds of the future in the present, winning immediate gains on behalf of suffering constituencies in ways contributing to winning its long term aims as well, developing a caring and nurturing organisation and movement, and welcoming and even fostering constructive dissent and diversity within that organisation and movement and based on its commitments.

We think hundreds of thousands of people, in fact, millions of people, will, on reading the commitments, overwhelmingly agree with them. We hope that if you look at the commitments and feel that way, you will join and advocate that others join as well. If you instead have problems with the IOPS commitments, we hope you will make your concerns known so a productive discussion can ensue.

On the other hand, we also understand that agreeing with the IOPS commitments will not alone cause those same hundreds of thousands and even millions of people to join IOPS. There are numerous reasons why a person might support the IOPS commitments and even hope that IOPS grows and becomes strong and effective (and not just online, but at the grassroots, in every neighborhood, workplace, and social movement), and yet, at the moment, not join. Our best effort to summarise obstacles people may feel to joining even while they like the IOPS commitments, and to address those obstacles also appears on the IOPS site, in a question and answer format. Essentially we argue: If not now, when? If not us, who?

Asked to provide a succinct summary paragraph for the IOPS site about his involvement, Noam Chomsky wrote: "Hardly a day goes by when we do not hear appeals – often laments – from people deeply concerned about the travails of human existence and the fate of the world, desperately eager to do

something about what they rightly perceive to be intolerable and ominous, feeling helpless because each individual effort, however dedicated, seems to merely chip away at a mountain, placing band-aids on a cancer, never reaching to the sources of needless suffering and the threats of much worse. It's an understandable reaction that all too often leads to despair and resignation. We all know the only answer, driven home by experience and history, and by simple reflection on the realities of the world: join together to construct and clarify long-term visions and goals, along with direct engagement and activism shaped by these guidelines and contributing to a deepening of our understanding of what we hope to achieve... IOPS strikes the right chords, and if the opportunities it opens are pursued with sufficient energy and participation, diligence, modesty, and desire, it could carry us a long way towards unifying the many initiatives here and around the world and combining them into a powerful and effective force."

And as Cynthia Peters wrote: "You hear it all the time. There is always another urgent crisis. They don't just come in a steady stream, they seem to multiply geometrically. More draconian policies with life-threatening consequences, more corporate control, more prisons, more bombs, more funerals. With so many immediate fires to put out in our day-to-day organising work, how can we make time to attend to larger issues, such as long-term strategy, vision, and movement building? IOPS creates the space for us to do the essential work of movement building and envisioning and then seeking a better world. Without these elements, we'll continue to work in isolation. By enlivening and enriching IOPS with your presence, you will both give solidarity to and receive solidarity from so many others – across the world – in the same situation – up to their necks in the daily fight, and at the same time turning their creativity and energy towards revolutionary social change. That is not just good company. It's the solid beginnings of another world being possible."

We hope you will join us as we try to make it so.

Ezequiel Adamovsky (Argentina); M Adams (US); Michael Albert (US); Jessica Azulay (US); Elaine Bernard (US); Patrick Bond (South Africa); Noam Chomsky (US); Jason Chrysostomou (UK); John Cronan (US); Ben Dangl (US); Denitsa Dimitrova (UK/Bulgaria); Mark Evans (UK); Ann Ferguson (US); Eva Golinger (Venezuela); Andrej Grubacic (Balkans/US); Pervez Hoodbhoy (Pakistan); Antti Jauhainen (Finland); Ria Julien (US/Trinidad); Dimitris Konstantinou (Greece); Pat Korte (US); Yohan Le Guin (Wales); Mandisi Majavu (South Africa); Yotam Marom (US); David Marty (Spain); Preeti Paul (UK/India); Cynthia Peters (US); John Pilger (UK/Aus); Justin Podur (Canada); Nikos Raptis (Greece); Paulo Rodriguez (Belgium); Charlotte Sáenz (Mexico/US); Anders Sandstrom (Sweden); Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Portugal); Lydia Sargent (US); Stephen Shalom (US); Vandana Shiva (India); Chris Spannos (US); Verena Stresing (France/Germany); Elliot Tarver (US); Fernando Ramn Vegas Torrealba (Venezuela); Taylon Tosun (Turkey); Marie Trigona (US); Greg Wilpert (Germany/Venezuela/US); Florian Zollman (Germany)

## GETTING ACTIVE

### WHAT'S ON

#### AUGUST

■ **2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email [london@afed.org.uk](mailto:london@afed.org.uk) beforehand.

■ **4th** John Zerzan is giving a talk, 'The Murderous Idolatry of the Future: Anarcho-Primitivism and the End of Technology' from 5pm until 7pm at the Raven Row, 56 Artillery Lane, London E1 7LS as part of The Real Truth A World's Fair, see <http://www.suzannetreister.net/THEREALTRUTH/menu.html> for details.

■ **5th** Clit Rock, an event to raise awareness/funds for Daughters Of Eve (see [dofeve.org/](http://dofeve.org/)), featuring Nu Pogodi! (<http://themassacrett.tumblr.com/>), Husbands & Knives (facebook.com/HusbandsNKnives), Hissyfit (myspace.com/hissyfitband), Climax Change (facebook.com/pages/Climax-Change/281660191860055) plus stalls, films and vegan cake at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA from 6pm, suggested donation £5.

■ **7th and 21st** Practical Squatting Evening at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm to 8pm, for more see <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>

■ **11th** News from Nowhere Club presents 'Fair Trade in an Unfair World', with speaker Brian Madican at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts 8pm, for details see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/>.

■ **14th and 28th** Practical Squatting Evening at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.

■ **17th** The Red & Black Club at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 8pm, Dissident Island Radio will be broadcasting live as the local anarchists host a traditional east end knees-up.

■ **23rd to 27th** Off Grid 2012, skilling up for the new paradigm featuring four days of radical and inspiring conferences, transition health and medicine school, amazing alt-tech and crafts area, eco-build courses and demos, live music every night, forest school, permaculture garden, bushcraft, alternative currencies, low impact living and much more... Fernhill Farm, Cheddar Road, Compton Martin, Somerset BS40 6LD, call 0845 009 4463 or see <http://www.sunrise-offgrid.co.uk/> for details.

#### SEPTEMBER

■ **1st** Juke Joint Saturday Night, a blues night benefit for Anarchist Federation (London) at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7.30pm, with a fine selection of the best of rocking, jumping, swinging blues in all styles from a seasoned and refined connoisseur at the decks, plus live music is also being looked into.



● The Squatter's Network of Brighton (SNOB) is calling for a Mass Squatting Action on Saturday October 13th to resist the new anti-squatting laws. This act is draconian, unworkable, an attack on our way of living and some of the most vulnerable in our society. We will not take it lying down.

Around the UK, while increasing numbers are forced to sleep on the streets, hundreds of thousands of properties are lying empty, decaying and derelict. We watch property tycoons, speculators and corrupt landlords get richer, whilst housing benefit is cut and rent goes up.

The UK is facing a massive housing crisis only made worse by the Tory government, and we – the homeless and insecurely housed – will not stand for it any more.

As both the birthplace of the bill, and as one of the places where affordable houses are most difficult to come by, Brighton and Hove has a special significance in the national and international struggles for the right to home.

They take our houses, so we'll take their city! Everyone to the streets! Whatever they say, squatting will stay! We will resist the squatting ban by any means necessary. Mass squatting action on Saturday 13th October at 2pm, Victoria Square Gardens, Brighton. For further details see the SNOB website at [www.network23.org/snob](http://www.network23.org/snob) Twitter: [www.twitter.com/snobaha](http://www.twitter.com/snobaha)

● Atos isn't going to have an uncontested sponsorship of the Paralympic Games if Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) have anything to say about it – they're going for a

big finale with the Closing Atos Ceremony.

Atos are sponsoring the Paralympics, whilst wrecking disabled people's lives. George Osborne has vowed to slash £18 billion from the welfare budget, regardless of people's needs and ignoring the alternatives. To help them do their dirty work, the government are paying Atos £100 million a year to "test" sick and disabled people and decide whether they're 'fit for work'. But Atos' Work Capability Assessments are driving disabled people to suicide and over 1,000 people have died of their illnesses soon after being found "fit for work".

The government claims that the welfare system is being abused – this just isn't true. Less than 0.4% of Incapacity benefit payments are fraudulent, but the government want to cut welfare spending by 20%. And instead of helping to get people into work, the government are closing workplaces for disabled people.

DPAC will be joining up with Boycott Workfare on Friday 31st August with the aim of shutting down Atos' London headquarters. Meet in Triton Square on at 12.45pm for direct action and creative protest, with plenty of surprises.

Close down Atos, meet at Triton Square, Regent's Place, London NW1 3HG on Friday 31st August at 12.45pm. The nearest fully accessible British Rail station is King's Cross. From there, catch Bus 30 towards Marble Arch or Bus 205 towards Paddington from stop R or A, and get off at Warren Street, bus stop V.

Email [mail@dpac.uk.net](mailto:mail@dpac.uk.net) or text 07502 022 077 if you have any specific communication of support needs. British Sign Language will be available on the day.



# Bedpans and broomsticks

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come out of a tree. They then proceed to do the only choreographed dancing that will happen for the next three hours. It comprises of four hand movements. It will happen, over and over and over again. And again. And again...

The peasants then proceed to do all the work while the posh top-hat men do shit dance moves. Then the advent of industry, the suffragette movement and the First World War all happen simultaneously!

Then the top-hatted posh lads do Vic Reeves's patented dove-from-above move, which causes the peasants to work really hard on their mill and shitloads of Beatles impersonators arrive, followed by some people from the 1950s with a broken ship, then some admirals and then a big ring catches fire. Then, as the pearlies arrive, they all start hitting the floor with hammers, except the poshos, who are only pretending, because they're lazy.

Then lots of big hot rings rub together a bit and some fireworks frazzle about a bit, representing all of our big hot rings coming together to sit on the sofa watching the Olympics. Everyone then look on in pride at our big hot rings coming together and a man with a sweaty face says 'mmm' and licks his lips.

The crowd then cheers our hot rings.

After this we get some lovely pre-recorded regal flummery and James Bond pushes the Queen out of a helicopter into the stadium, but luckily the Queen has a parachute, they hang out a lot you see and she knows he's a bit of a prankster, oooh hahahahaha.

The corgis knew what he was up to – they were going to eat her remains when she hit the floor. Did you know that cats eat their owners if they die in their homes? It's gross innit, a horrible way to pass, near miss m'am, near miss. They then comment on the Queen's sense of humour, and she looks dead miffed. I'm not surprised. Bloody corgis, the bastards.

Well anyway, then the Navy, Army and

Air Force bring the flag, which is lucky because the organisers forgot to arrange staff to do that.

Meanwhile outside the police assaulted a disabled man on a bicycle.

Then the theme tune to the *Twilight Zone* began and some nurses arrived with lots of beds – finally they found them. I bet they were all at Cameron's house, he's a right bugger.

The nurses had a dance then put the kids to bed, but then monsters came and Voldemort scared the crap out of a little girl by being a big puppet at her while Dementors tried to kidnap children. Then lots of Mary Poppins turned up and got rid of them by waving umbrellas at them. After this they all line danced to celebrate and a giant baby appeared.

Then a tribute to mobile phones and texting and the confusing decadathon begins which is thinly strung together with a romantic interest. The boy picks up the girl's phone, then later calls her to let her know she'd lost it and, by some freak of reality, she receives the call and he gives her the phone back despite having lost her phone??? But before this strange contortion of reality they dance

to music representing each decade, the most confusingly represented one being the late 1970s where Bratz doll punks arrived and danced to a butter advert.

We then get treated to some clips of *Trainspotting* and Dizzee Rascal gets mashed up by the worst DJ who ever lived.

A bloke turns up and invents the web for everyone, which was very nice of him. The Olympic ceremony should have just focused on him. He's awesome.

After this they get the flamey gold stick out the white van and show some VT of people wandering about with it.

At this point I watched Rastamouse instead. I was knackered from the surrealism and needed to watch something with a bit more content and reality.

After a rest I went back to viewing and saw loads of athletes and figured it was over.

So there you go, all these things happened, if you read through my blog post as it happens from the beginning you will be amazed. It really happened or, you could take finding this article as something informing you of what happened without having to watch it. Your choice.



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## REVIEWS

## FICTION

## The Day

They met outside a café on the south side of town. The EDL were going to march in from the west and the UAF were standing behind the police at the Clock Tower that marked the centre of Hurstbourne. The anarchists' plan was simple: to pair off and scout out the town. Take only clean mobiles and neutral clothes. There were several reunion points at particular times and a number to call if busted or in trouble.

Connie was paired with Dave and they had hooked up with four younger activists. The march was well-policed and, more to the point, the whole route was covered by CCTV. But they would meet an EDL break-away and try to stop them.

West Street was the likely flashpoint, it had several Asian shops and several families in the side streets. However, it was well covered. A local karate club practised in the hall behind the church there and had been more than willing to have an extra training session that afternoon. Dave nodded to her.

"Got a message about numbers, there's only about 80 of them," he said.

"Good, that's a lot less than we feared," she replied.

"It's still more than we want," said Dave. Connie bit her lip. They were by West Street now, Connie put her head round the corner, she could see a lot of overweight men with short hair and England flags. There were a few women but no sign of the EDL's much vaunted black or Sikh divisions. They were shouting and drinking cans of lager. One of them threw a can at Khan's Minimart, and shouted something about 'Muslamics'. The police escort did nothing. The rest of the EDL, feeling emboldened, stopped outside the shop chanting and throwing things. Suddenly, three young Asian men rushed out of an alleyway by the shop, smacked the fat mouthy guy at the front and disappeared. Now the police reacted, but too slowly to catch them. Some of the skinheads tried to give chase but their leader was screaming at them to stick together.

Half a dozen ran off in the direction that Connie knew Pete's crew was waiting. Sure enough, a few minutes later they reappeared, blood streaming over casual sportswear. Connie thought of their poor mums, all that extra washing. The EDL didn't look like they were having a good time, they trudged on, flags forlornly flapping, the ritual trading of insults with the UAF across police lines all they had to look forward to.

A few men in black polo shirts peeled off and headed towards Connie's group. She looked at the others. The adrenalin started to kick in...

Martin H.

To be continued...

# CHILDHOOD

## Julie Goldsmith reviews painting, sculpture and soundscapes by young people from Kids Company

London, sixth richest city in the world, is under the Olympic spotlight, but a hidden London exists where the poorest young people can't afford to leave their postcode areas. Camilla Batmanghelidjh has seen children so malnourished that they have lost their teeth. Homelessness and hunger is on the increase. The charity currently feeds 2,000 children a week in London who would otherwise go without their main meal of the day.

This show, whilst using Olympic imagery, is not about celebrating Cameron's Olympic dystopia. In spite of the government's preoccupation with inquiries, Cameron appears to neither care nor understand that children are literally starving in London and beyond. It's not part of the R.A. elitist summer show either, but is presented in the building behind that, in Burlington Gardens, made in collaboration with the Royal Academy learning support team.

The artworks are created by young people from the most depleted environments and high-risk neighbourhoods, with the

*They have so much poetry these children, because they have seen the worst of humanity. When they re-engage with life they have deep insight that is absolutely extraordinary – Camilla Batmanghelidjh, founder and CEO of the charity Kids Company*

therapeutic support of staff and artists at Kids Company. Importantly, the work is a result of a long process involving a crucial and gentle build-up of trust. It tells a story in rare visual and poetic language, of parallel heroic endeavours, and celebrates the

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The militarisation of the militias during the Spanish Civil War, and in particular the Iron Column, it was written anonymously by a young militant freed from prison.
2. That, "having spoken up in defence of animals, should we not also busy ourselves setting up a league for the protection of man?"
3. Folk blues legend Dave van Ronk, who was pivotal in the New York folk scene in



courage of the unseen and vulnerable.

The entrance to the exhibition is the 'Tunnel of Dreams', a kaleidoscope of mirrors, beads, and bits of glass. The first room is darkly fairytale. A fifteen-foot-high wooden cot infantilises the viewers. Brightly painted sculptures symbolising fears and nightmares hang underneath the bed. Coloured lights cast large shadows on walls recalling childhood fears of the dark. Two giants, painted with psychedelic patterns, are part of a larger soundscape. Little voices speak out from them, the first with negative messages, such as "Wait, I'll give you something to think about," and the second with kind and affirming words, "You've tried hard, that's all that counts ... You are creative and perfect ... I'm always happy to see you."

The bed installation is called 'Monsters under the Bed'. Over 150 children created their own idea of what is under the bed. Others created haunting monsters of what is under their bed at home.

Children who have experienced chronic maltreatment at home find their everyday life is disturbed. It becomes difficult to function in a normal school environment. Often these children are then further punished for not conforming.

the 1960s, and described himself as an anarchist.

4. By September that year, when the UK government decided that a sufficiently low number of civilians were being killed and not all the country's medical staff were on trial, or something. The British government even laid on cars and a reception for the Bahrainis to look at various arms deals, including "riot control equipment".



# — THE REAL EVENT

The work is reminiscent of the art of the Niki de Saint Phalle, who made brightly painted sculpture and assemblage and drawings. Sexually abused as a child, Niki de Saint Phalle wanted to destroy her childhood memories at all costs. She made a series of shooting paintings, firing pellets of paint which would then explode over figures of men and sculpture of churches and altars. This liberated her creatively, and continued for several years, whilst gentler work appeared, of brides and monsters, assemblages of plastic toys and other small size articles.

In the next rooms a little running track winds around and through the length of the gallery. Each child created an 'athlete' figure of him or herself to put on the track to run, ski or swim. It continues across a stairwell like a high wire act of skill and verve. The figures dodge monsters from the 'Whirlpool of Woe', messages appear written by the children on the tracks: "I would like a medal for sleeping on the floor" or "I would like a medal for listening to my Mum." They run past a puppet theatre section, where younger children have created characters of themselves. One of the frames, as in the current 'Invisible' show at the Hayward Gallery, is empty. A note by the empty frame describes how on the eve of the show the artist ripped out the tiger drawing as she wanted to send it instead to her father in prison, because she missed him so much.

A poem from a 15 year old describes how he does not want to go back to being a drug runner on his estate, and the pressure to belong in a gang: "I know a place with a running track, but it ends with a concrete wall / This proves that if I run for them, that I won't run far at all"

There are themes of homelessness and squatting. One extensive installation by a girl called Alley Cat portrays her story of running away from an abusive home with a stuffed toy tiger. She sleeps in a launderette, and a high-rise squat and receives food handouts in a park. A note pinned on the sculpture of the launderette reads: "Can you find me? I slept here often. I would wait for the lady to go to the back room. I would sneak in and curl up inside the dryer. It was small and sometimes a little scary. When the lady had locked up I would make a camp on the floor. I often wondered whether the lady knew I was there. I hoped she did. I dreamed she would save me." The young artist has just won a place to study at university this year.

There are stories of children going hungry, eating dog biscuits, stealing food from supermarkets to survive, or in one case a boy stealing baby formula to feed his baby sister. Another note reads: "Half term was hell." (The government only give free school meals in term time.)

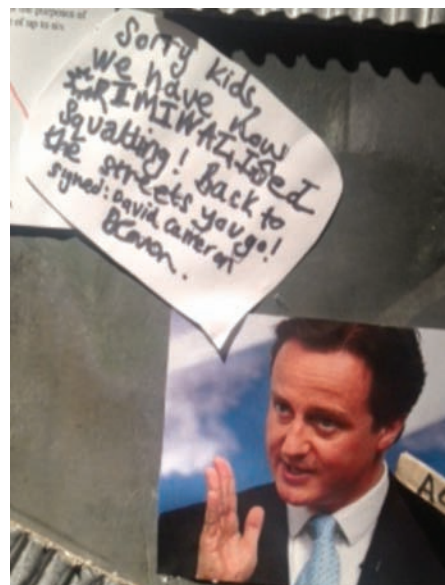
A series of shelters and safe spaces, beautiful structures built to rest in, describe



recovery and the ability to dream and let go. A brain box shows images from brain scans of the damage caused by extreme trauma. Another box contains dreams and nightmares, fears and hopes. Each memory sits in a box with its own key. "Art unfreezes trauma from a state of explosive potency."

A video installation 'Wearing my Emotions' features the children wearing costumes that they made, and explaining the content and ideas behind their creations. The vivid creations hanging on the wall have titles like 'Spiteful and Shy' or 'Cold, Fearful, Lonely, Angry and Shut down', 'Excitement', 'Anger and Love'.

A poster contrasts the Athlete and the Abused child, the abused child trusting that tomorrow "I'll wake up and it was just a



bad dream", the athlete trusting that his country loves him.

A toddler-sized papier-mâché sculpture, covered in blood, has its heart ripped out of its chest. It seems to be screaming. It is bravely made by a sexually abused boy.

Elliott Smith songs belong in here. Roman Candle resounds: "He could be cool and cruel to you and me, knew we'd put up with anything, I want to hurt him, I want to give him pain, I'm a roman candle, my head is full of flames, I'm hallucinating, hallucinating, I hear you cry, your tears are cheap, wet hot swollen cheeks, fall asleep, I want to hurt him, make him feel this pretty burn." Elliott, like one in every 18 children in Britain today, was a self-harmer, once driving a screwdriver through his own hand, and finally committing suicide by stabbing himself through the heart.

Medals to those they love, and winners' cups symbolise the triumphs and struggles and letting go. One 15 year old boy has made two cups: "I'm doing two trophies. One with money and drugs in and the other with my poems. It's about how my life was and how it is now." Tyler, aged 21.

One sculpture fills the final room. A dramatic tableau of a beautiful, but limp and broken, child lying on a idealized pink bed, with hearts and stars and Disney-princess bed-linen. Above the bed hangs a medieval looking contraption with several men's shoes attached; hovering and dominating the air above the child. In this piece innocence coexists with violence and outrage. It portrays a longing for and the loss of childhood wonder and safety. It is made by a group of survivors of sexual abuse. Reminiscent of the work of Louise

## THE ARTS

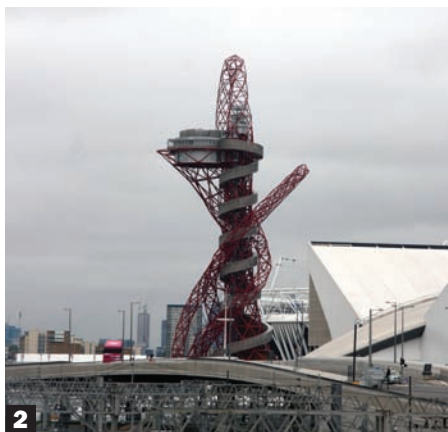
## TOWERING CONTE

I first met Kemal Pervanic in 2010 in Kevljani, a little village near Prijedor in the Republika Srpska, the predominantly Serb part of Bosnia. Kemal is a co-founder of the UK-Bosnian charity called Most Mira, or Bridge of Peace, which works to encourage understanding and tolerance between young people of all ethnic backgrounds in Prijedor area.

Every year Most Mira hold a youth arts project for over 500 children from the area with up to 100 volunteers from all parts of Bosnia and overseas helping the children discover talents, develop skills and have fun. A week of workshops culminates in a festival day for the local community, including parents, to showcase the creativity, friendships and diversity of the children. As Kemal explains "Our mission is to promote understanding and a peaceful shared future among young people from all ethnic groups in Prijedor and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The shiny repaired building which serves as the centre for the festival is surrounded by derelict and broken houses. This is because the Prijedor area was ethnically cleansed by Bosnian Serb forces in 1992 in the biggest massacre of the Bosnian war after Srebrenica. According to the Sarajevo-based Research and Documentation Center (IDC), around 5,200 Bosniaks and Croats from Prijedor are missing or were killed during the massacre.

Five kilometres away from Kevljani is the Omarska mine, once the infamous Omarska concentration camp. Here about 5,000 to



2



1

7,000 Bosniaks and Croats were held in appalling conditions for about three months in the spring and summer of 1992. Hundreds died, no-one is sure exactly how many, estimates say 700 to 800, mostly from beatings. More than 1,000 men, women and children are still missing.

Kemal and his brother Kasim survived the camp. Kemal now lives in London but Kasim elected to return and rebuild his home in Kevljani and his life. But tensions still run high between the local Serbs and the Bosniaks that returned. Kasim still has his mail delivered in the morning by one of his old camp guards.

The centre building, now the hub of the festival, was once a community centre where the victims were mustered before being taken to the camps.

After the war, as foreign investors picked through state-owned assets in Bosnia, the Omarska site was bought by ArcelorMittal, as well as a complex of rich ore mines and facilities around Prijedor (including locations of mass graves where the bodies of murdered Omarska inmates were dumped by Serb authorities).

ArcelorMittal is the largest steel producing company in the world, ranking 70th on the Fortune Global 500 list in 2012. Although their official headquarters is Luxembourg, ArcelorMittal is in fact run from London, namely from Berkeley Square House, 7th Floor, Berkeley Square, London W1J 6DA. As Aditya Mittal, the chairman's son, says "the power is in London".

In 2005 the company made a promise that a memorial to the genocide victims would be built on the site financed by Mittal and that certain buildings at the Omarska complex would remain untouched and accessible to survivors and victims' families. Unfortunately, shortly after, the mayor of Prijedor Marko Pavic forcefully rejected the initiative. Mittal suspended the Omarska Memorial project 'temporarily'.

Contrary to his previous statements acknowledging the deaths in the camp, in October 2009 Pavic made a complete turnaround – he accused former prisoners of Omarska of lying, saying that in 1992 there were no camps in the Prijedor region and saying that it was nothing more than a 'transit centre' for refugees.

## Review

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Bourgeois, an artist who was in intense analysis herself to overcome the tyrannies in her own childhood home, the piece is a powerful and original piece of work, worthy of a place in a museum collection.

In East London, the Olympic site has a sizeable military presence and surface-to-air missiles on the rooftops. Chosen artistic director of the Olympics, film-maker Danny Boyle, is making an elaborate English idyll,

with real clouds, real children and real animals. This "green and pleasant land," inspired by William Blake's poem 'Jerusalem' has run over-budget somewhat but the government intends to show the best of England to the world. The Olympics since ancient times have been about nationalism and politics. Blake had problems with the Royal Academy – they wouldn't grant him the status of academician because he had

married an illiterate market trader – but if he were here today he would be standing up for the vulnerable and starving children of London.

*Childhood – The Real Event* is showing at The Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BD, open Tuesday to Friday until 22nd July from 10am to 6pm, admission free. <http://www.kidsco.org.uk/>



# MPT

ArcelorMittal has bent under Bosnian Serb pressure and frozen the development of the memorial and has denied access to the site on 'health and safety' grounds. Also they have been 'tampering' with the site. The 'white house' has been painted, destroying the traces of blood and gore – and even a chair used in the tortures has been removed, apparently now being used somewhere else in the complex.

"It later transpired that the ArcelorMittal management acted upon an explicit order from mayor Pavic not to allow the visit, for fear of drawing attention to Omarska and associating it with the fascism of World War Two," according to Mirsad Duratovic, the head of the 'Prijedor 92' Association of Camp Survivors.

The Most Mira children's festival received a substantial part of its funding from the company and this year the funding evaporated at the eleventh hour, forcing the festival to be cancelled and disappointing hundreds of children, teachers and volunteers. Instead the funds went to a local Serbian project that put on a diluted facsimile of the Most Mira project.

ArcelorMittal is, of course, the sponsor of Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond's 115-metre high Olympic vanity project 'The ArcelorMittal Orbit'. Art critic Brian Sewell said: "Our country is littered with public art of absolutely no merit. We are entering a new period of fascist gigantism. These are monuments to egos and you couldn't find a more monumental ego than Boris." A jibe at the enthusiasm of the mayor for the Olympics, and a company whose steel 'Orbit' towers over London proclaiming a message of supposed corporate responsibility.

But there may be even darker aspects to the tower. It is made from metal from all of ArcelorMittal's sites all over the world,



All photographs © Max Reeves

including the Omarska mine. As Satko Mujagic, another Omarska survivor, says: "There are still more than 1,000 people missing in Prijedor, of which many [were] Omarska prisoners. There are indications that many corpses have been left inside the pit of the mine. As far as I am concerned this monument to the Olympic spirit is really the 'Orbit of Shame'. We are certain that British people are not aware of the fact that their newest landmark may have somebody's bones built in it."

I met up with Kemal a few weeks ago at the Olympic site in the shadow of the 'Orbit of Shame'. He was there with other Omarska survivors and protesters to highlight

ArcelorMittal's appalling behaviour and put pressure on them to keep their promise of a memorial, allow access to the Omarska camp site and not to build a new mine to exploit the iron ore but respect the site as a mass grave. Mujagic again: "Until then we will be free to consider the London Orbit our memorial in exile. We appeal to ArcelorMittal and the City of London to make a real copy of the White House beneath the current Orbit Monument to commemorate those whose bones may be melted in Orbit."

MR

*Pictured here:*

- 1 Kemal Pervanic, Satko Mujagic and Rezak Hukanovic (Omarska survivors) and other demonstrators campaigning for ArcelorMittal to recognise the Bosnian genocide with a memorial on the site of their Omarska mine (site of the infamous Serbian concentration camp).
- 2 The ArcelorMittal 'Orbit of Shame'.
- 3 Most Mira project 2010, in Kevijani near Prijedor, which saw ethnic cleansing and genocide by the Serbs against the Bosnian and Croat population.
- 4 The Omarska mine owned by ArcelorMittal. Once the notorious Serbian concentration camp where an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 people were killed. The white house at the front is where the victims were tortured before being killed.

For further details see:

- <http://blogs.independent.co.uk/2012/05/17/the-dark-side-of-the-olympics-orbit/>
- <http://www.forensic-architecture.org/explorations/a-memorial-in-exile-orbits-of-responsibility-for-a-war-crime/>

Omarska survivor Kemal Pervanic is the author of *The Killing Days*, a book about his experiences in the Bosnian war.



## SPORT

# Bedpans and broomsticks



The Olympic ceremony opens with a rural setting not dissimilar to *Midsomer Murders*, although sadly, everyone had lost the plot. Over emotive strings, a water-wheel with really dirty water and water sound effects, we hear clips of the shipping forecast while people in the crowd flap about a bit of tarpaulin. Then it all goes a bit mad.

We see footage of large swathes of the upper-class countryside while we ride in a

CGI helicopter and hear “God save the Queen” by our butter-loving nihilist sell-out friend, before Bradley Wiggins rings his big gold bell and some women from rural England play catch with some apples. Then some people in silly hats tend to invisible bees and a larger woman exchanges a glance with a horse.

Then some of the new upper class, which are there of course to represent the advent of Calvinist capitalism and the change in the

peasants’ life from rural feudalism to city factory work, yet strangely enough, they are dressed as if from the Victorian times. A continuity error that certainly vexed me out.

As the capitalists arrive one of the peasants mouths something and looks worried. Maybe it was ‘oh dear, our kids are about to lose their fingers working down t’mill’.

But we do hear what the posh guy says, which seems pretty apt considering.

The posh boss man then stands there while some drum banging makes some peasants

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## THE QUIZ

1. What is *A Day Mournful and Overcast* an account of?
2. When libertarian educator Francesc Ferrer put his name to a campaign against bull-fighting in 1905, what other point did he make?
3. Who was *The Mayor of MacDougal Street*?
4. In early 2011, Bahrain was banned from attending UK arms fairs after its regime started killing civilians. How soon were they back in?

Answers on page 20

WILDCAT

