

# RUPTURE

## J18, 1999

Burps in the timeline? History must be repeating  
APRIL / MAY 2009  
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**10 years ago**, on June 18<sup>th</sup> 1999, the City financial district of London was visited by thousands in a day of carnival rioting and well organised action. Having been at J18, the recent G20 protest felt like a fractally small parody (or crap remix). Some facts on J18 worth bearing in mind:

J18 was a year or more in the making (unlike the hastily 'organised' and copy-cat G20). A variety of orange promo stickers appeared all over London and elsewhere for many months before the event, with inspiring slogans and a web address for more info. The organisers, Reclaim the Streets – the London affinity group of the Earth First! network – were on a roll at this point, having pulled off some audacious actions in the context of the then relatively vibrant UK DIY culture (note: this culture had its roots in DIY/traveller/crusty scenes, and in the resistance to the Criminal Justice Act, which had drawn together disparate groups and individuals, but which, it should be noted, was frequently not explicitly 'anarchist'; with much room for middle class posturing and a lack of class analysis and struggle – much like certain currents of the present Climate Change 'movement' and liberal 'activism' in general – see below).

A booklet, 'Squaring Up to the Square Mile', was produced which detailed many aspects of how the City and global finance operates, together with legal and other information. This was accompanied by a map of the City, showing 'targets' – the core infrastructure of London's ongoing capitalist empire (an updated map was produced for G20). Most of the organising for J18 was done in person, not on the internet – as has been claimed many times since – and involved many people. In some cities at the time, direct action 'skill shares' were held (not uncommon at the time), dealing with seriously useful stuff such as working in small affinity groups (ie: a gang of like-minded accomplices aware of tactics

and strategy, with pre-event discussion on likely actions to accomplish, and awareness of each other's strengths and limits for action), and how to successfully de-arrest people. Concurrent with these days – which were open to all members of the general public – most cities organised actions in the City, and, so, many people at J18 were not relying on a 'central organising committee' whose ambitions for the day they were simply acting out. The pre-J18 build-up made it possible for people to adapt what had been learned by that point from blueprints on direct action – *information was shared, people learned skills, and were prepared for the situation* (up to a point, of course).

On J18 the police were caught off guard. Four processions of enormous numbers (10,000 in total, big for this country, but small compared to, say, India) moved off from different locations to *unknown destinations*, and all participants were offered Carnival masks – to hide identity on a day when the usual order was denied – and bust cards, detailing rights when arrested together with legal support. Under cover of the jack hammer beats of a cunningly positioned sound system, the Stock Exchange was smashed into and masked anarchists fought with traders, bringing work to a halt and costing millions. Meanwhile, the police faced a barrage of bricks and other artillery, or just strength of numbers of protestors (the police ran over a woman while escaping an angry crowd); while many simply partied, elsewhere actions were carried out against banks and businesses.

This was not the first time the City had been targeted – in the mid 1980s there were three 'Stop the City' events aimed at disrupting business as usual, which by the third time the police had apparently largely sussed out how to deal with the roaming gangs of anarchos. Check out the 'You're Already Dead' pamphlet by

Crass, available from Active Distribution ([www.actedistribution.org](http://www.actedistribution.org)).

Following J18, the police began its Section 60 ('kettling') tactic at a Reclaim the Streets event in support of rail and tube workers in September of 1999 (a week later thousands of protestors shut down the World Trade Organisation in the 'Battle of Seattle' – see [schnews.org.uk/archive/news240.htm](http://schnews.org.uk/archive/news240.htm)), and repeated this at every 'mass action' that followed, leading many in this country to *dispute the wisdom of announcing one's intentions to the police in advance or massing in one place to protest*.

J18 was a worldwide event, with events organised in many countries on that day by the then nascent Peoples' Global Action. The PGA had resulted from an 'Encounter' in the Lacandon jungle held by the Zapatistas, and aimed to link resistance movements worldwide in the common struggle against Integrated World Capitalism.

The DIY/direct action culture in 1999 was larger than now, and had not experienced the same level of police repression and stiff prison sentences. Terrorist legislation was then just being extended and would branch in all directions following September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (the same day as protestors were 'kettled' by police at the DSEi arms fair at Excel, in East London, curiously enough); this welter of legislation has had as a desired 'side effect' – which was surely one of its actual central aims – to depopularise direct action by establishing a climate of fear regarding both personal freedom and civil disobedience.

### J18 reports:

[schnews.org.uk/archive/news217.htm](http://schnews.org.uk/archive/news217.htm)

**Excellent primer on direct action, focussed on the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty campaign:**

[crimethinc.com/texts/rollingthunder/shac.php](http://crimethinc.com/texts/rollingthunder/shac.php)

**Earth First! Action Update:**

[earthfirst.org.uk/efau/](http://earthfirst.org.uk/efau/)

# The Invisible Theatre part I

“We cannot go on prostituting the idea of the theatre, whose only value lies in its excruciating, magical connection with reality and with danger.”

– Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre of Cruelty* (First Manifesto)

If **modern society** is characterised by the accumulation of spectacles, as Guy Debord argued, and all that was once lived has become mere representation, then theatre – spectacular art-form par excellence – would seem to epitomise all that is wrong with contemporary culture. Indeed, Jean-François Lyotard uses “theatre” as a metaphor to explain the mechanisms by which the ideology of representation exercises its power, equating it to a pseudo-religion whose claims to truth always constitute falsity and injustice.

Theatre, in its “prostituted” form, appears to be an elitist taste: shut away in darkened boxes, performed in front of an audience who can afford high ticket-prices and *know how to behave*. It allows the sort of people who wouldn’t [admit to] watch[ing] reality TV feel powerful emotions by proxy, in the privacy of darkness, without, *heaven forbid*, having to *act* on them. The 4th wall of representation is seductive, it plays to our desires: we want to be awed by the spectacle, and the better the show, the more it keeps us passive.

This is not a new thing. Aristotle identified *catharsis* as an effect of tragic drama: a kind of purification achieved through the release of excessive emotions that helps maintain equilibrium. He considered such balance to be an ethical virtue because stable people make a stable State. As such, spectacular theatre plays a role in keeping the masses subservient to the few. Not much has changed – the logic of spectacle has been around at least 2000 years longer than the age of mass media.

Lyotard sees this channelling of desire to places where it doesn’t have any effect as a *political* problem. He identifies 3 levels on which the theatrical apparatus of representation works: the outside wall which contains audience and stage, keeping both isolated from the rest of the world; the invisible line which separates the audience from the actors, the “4th wall”; the hidden mechanisms off-stage that support the illusions on it. This set-up creates a conceptual framework which allows us to think the world, but it always conceals its own workings. At the same time it limits the movement of desire. “Truth”, he argues,

is not an objective reality waiting to be unveiled, but always a construction within the framework. As such any critique of representation creates another ideology, another (mis-)representation. So the only practical way to do politics in the society of the spectacle is to un-make the apparatus, unfolding the theatrical volume to a sensuous surface where desire can play in all the directions it wants. In order for change to happen, the old forms must be replaced by a new, *pagan* theatrics.

So perhaps, if liberated from its enclosed spaces, it’s temples, theatre could be of some practical use after all. Performance is of a different nature to most of the mediated world of spectacle because it happens in real time, *live*. This gives it an immediacy that sets the medium apart from film, TV, etc.; it needs an audience to complete itself as an event. So there is always some form of communication, an energy, passing between performers and audience. This exchange sets up a system a bit like a feedback loop, where no one party is completely in control, and it forms a kind of community. But how does one go about liberating the prostitute,

making the magical connection with reality and danger that Artaud was calling for?

Augusto Boal, who set up the *Theatre of the Oppressed* in Brazil in the 1970s, vigorously rejected Aristotelian ethics as oppressive because spectacular forms of theatre allow no dialogue between actors and their audience. He proposed various tactics for breaking down the performer/audience divide, thereby empowering the formerly passive spectators. One is forum theatre, where members of the audience are invited to intervene in the social injustices being enacted on stage in order to create better outcomes for the situation. Other interventions move outside the theatre into the (hyper)real world:

“‘Invisible theatre’ consists of the presentation of a scene in an environment other than the theatre, before people who are not spectators. The place can be a restaurant, a pavement, a market, a train, a line of people, etc. The people who witness the scene are those who are there by chance. During the spectacle, these people must not have the slightest idea that it is a ‘spectacle’, for this would make them



'spectators'.'

Is this practice devious and manipulative? Probably. It is counter-intuitive to think that one more spectacle in a world where spectacle=control could be liberating. And yet, if there is no truth to be uncovered beneath the seductive surface of representation, if there are only effects and affects, action or inaction, then only the theatre exists. *The simulacrum is real.* Whatever gets remembered is what *really happened*, in the end, no matter what brought it about. By dismantling part of the apparatus of representation – removing the barrier which contains the performance, so that “art” is no longer set apart from “life”,

and perforating the 4th wall that separates performers from audience, Boal allows spectators to become spect-actors who can act freely and fully. They may choose not to, but that is the nature of choice. These performances are dangerous because the people who set them up let other take up control. The camouflaged nature of such “invisible” performances creates a situation where the feedback loop generated between performers and spect-actors can become live in a way it seldom does in the confines of theatrical institutions precisely because the Institution known as Art allows people to leave their ethics at the door when they enter, secure in the knowledge

that what they are about to see is only an illusion. The theatrical apparatus is not dismantled entirely – how could it be? Such guerilla action requires a disappearing act with a theatrical operation of its own. In this society of the spectacle it is necessary to wear a mask in order to be “real” (after all, we all play roles most of the time). The difference is that in this “performance” the many are permitted to speak and act according to their own desires, and their own consciences. “While some people make theatre,” says Boal, “we are all theatre.”

**\*\*\* Part 2 of this article will feature in next month's issue**

## Not a snappy chappy

**As of Monday** 16th of April, 2009, a Law under section 76 of the Counter-Terrorism Act is active, posing serious questions about the police's actions and the citizens' interaction with them.

The law states that if anyone takes a picture of a policeman/woman/officer in duty it will be considered illegal if they prove connections to “terrorism”.

Considering the events unfolded around Ian Tomlinson's death the past couple of weeks, this Law could have tremendous impacts on the way the Met Police handle protests, the way they handle those taking photos of them acting in ambiguously

legal ways, unprovoked assaults leading to casualties.

With Ian Tomlinson's case, the truth would have never emerged if it wasn't for professional and amateur video and photographic evidence which surfaced in response to the police's claim that “Ian Tomlinson's death was due to a heart failure”.

This Law only enforces the brutality with which the police (and in a larger scale, the government) deals with people disagreeing with what they do. These people are supposed to “serve and protect” us, not rule us.

However, in the past few years, under the blanket of “Terrorism”, governments

around the world (especially in the US and the UK) have removed rights from their citizens to monitor so-called “terrorist activities”. This way, every two steps you see a “Area monitored by CCTV” in London, and the police can take videos or photos of you at any point, without you knowing or being able to say anything. But wait... if we try to do the same we... get arrested. Because we are considered the terrorists.

If you are a UK resident, you can sign this petition and send it to as many people as you can. Just think what could happen to you if you see your friend being kicked by a policeman and you capture that on video at your next legitimate protest.

[petitions.number10.gov.uk/Photorestrict/](http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Photorestrict/)

## London social centres and related spaces

**100 Flowers Social Centre** – new fantastic autonomous space in Hackney! Website ready soon. 2a Belgrade Road, Dalston, Hackney, N16 8DJ

**The Library House** – 52 Knatchbull Road (entrance on Burton rd, behind Minet library) SE5 9QY. [thelibraryhouse.wordpress.com](http://thelibraryhouse.wordpress.com)

**Rampart** – 15-17 Rampart St, E1 2LA [rampart.co.nr](http://rampart.co.nr)

**56A** – 56a Crampton St, SE17 3AE [56a.org.uk](http://56a.org.uk)

**Freedom Bookshop** – Angel Alley, E1 7QX [freedompress.org.uk](http://freedompress.org.uk)

**Pogo Café** – 76 Clarence Rd, E5 8HB [pogocafe.co.uk](http://pogocafe.co.uk)

**ASS (Advisory Service for Squatters)** – Above Freedom – Please ring first 020 3216 0099 [squatter.org.uk](http://squatter.org.uk)

**Pullens Centre** – 184 Crampton St, SE17 3AE

**LARC** – 62 Fieldgate Street E1 IES [londonarc.org.uk](http://londonarc.org.uk)

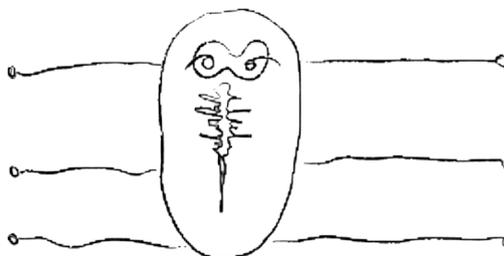
**Housmans Bookshop** – 5 Caledonian Rd, London

## dormitory

**i was waiting** for the axe to fall, had felt it hovering over my head for several nights as i slept in the scrum behind the main temple. but i had not seen it. not really. if i turned my head on the pillow, i saw a haze of grey that reminded me of crows but contrary to this as if scribbled under duress. my associates in this place prepared me for it by telling stories of the floating hatchet: how it initiates the tenants of this godless monastery by decapitating the head of their astral body and imprisoning them for all time within this domain. “you will hear a loud roar like an aircraft and then a snap like a finger click,” one of them said. i scoffed at first but on my third night in the bedded chamber when the weapon's mosquito hum roused me, i began to pay heed to their instructions.

the sky was roaring panoramic earthquakes from east to west and i could send the axe poised above my prone form, relishing the moment when it would strike. quick as spit i leapt up with my astral and corporeal bodies moving in synch (like i had been trained in the other place) and grabbed the axe. i did the rounds beheading all the boys, releasing them from this collective yoke and then tucked the bloody thing into my carry-all as i departed.

very soon i will put down this pencil and take up the axe once more. i will visit the high priest and we will see.



# ROOT DREAMS

**The first night** I passed there I had the most terrible dreams, dreams of my mother and others I had left behind.

« Root dreams » the bearded old man said to me when I replied honestly to the question of how I'd slept.

« Root dreams? »

« Come, I'll show you how we pass our days here »

I followed him outside into the purplish morning light to the garden in which grew very little but some large trees and the young trees sprouting from their roots.

« These are the cause of all root dreams. All the best and worst dreams you ever had in your life originated from this garden, from the roots of these trees »

« What? »

« Look, this is what we do, and you've arrived here to help. We have some tools there, look, that fork and shovel, but the majority of the time we're forced to use our hands, damned slippery these roots. I'll give you a demonstration before breakfast, then you'll see; your days will consist of harvesting these roots, and taking them for delivery by the birds... you'll see.» The old man uncovered the soil surrounding a young sucker with the fork, revealing its

roots. For such a tiny tree it had a very large root, fat and tuberous. He gave it a sharp smack with the blade of the shovel to disconnect it from the mother root. It seemed to writhe a little in the ground. The old man jumped into the hole and grabbed the root lithely with both hands; sure enough it moved.

« It's alive ! » I said, shocked.

« Of course it's alive; it's a root from a living tree »

« Yes, but... »

« Just help me grab it will you! » It took both of us to prise the root from the soil; it seemed reluctant to leave the ground. It flapped a little like a fish out of water, and then its wriggling arrested. « There, » said the old man, « that's it, now we take it for delivery, although usually we fill a wheelbarrow and wheel that over. Come on; I'll show you where we take them. »

We walked through the little forest of strange silvery grey tree trunks that bordered the garden to the other side, where there was a reasonably large lake of clear blue water reflecting the morning sun. On the lake there were hundreds of cranes. As we approached, one came near; the old man presented the root in his hands, and the crane loomed forward and took it in its beak, placed it upon the ground, picked it up with one foot, and, after regarding

me carefully, took off. « He will now fly to his place in the world, and drop off the root somewhere. That's why you often see cranes stopping in fields; they're planting the roots. This tree has no seeds; we are its sole form of propagation. If one was planted, for example, in your back garden, everyone who lived in the house would have the most interesting of dreams, the scariest and most perturbing of nightmares. On the other hand, if you lived far from such a tree, you would dream very little, just mundane dreams, sex dreams, dreams directly from your subconscious. But even passing one of these trees on the bus one day, would be enough to trigger a nightmare the next night. Do you see now? »

« I suppose so » I replied.

« OK, a light breakfast and then we'll begin work for the day. You'll be here for some time, I imagine, judging by your records. I gave them a look over before you arrived, rum do that, killing your own mother. You'll feel better after a few decades here though, I promise ».

I traced the old man's footsteps back though the forest and followed him into the little house that was to be the dwelling place of my purgatory for porridge before I began work.

M.E.G.

## MUSIC REVIEWS

### **Monster X – Satan Iz Love**

[Ms.Adv]

Now living back in le 'omeland this froggy fella turns out a new EP of his Reaktor-based twitchy glitch-funk. Tuff head-nodding beats get continually rugby-tackled by filthy noise bursts and granular washes. If you caught his livesets whilst he was living in London you know what kind of goodness to expect, if you didn't this is a mighty fine introduction.

### **Tim Exile – Listening Tree [Warp]**

It's a bold change of style, away from the wicked electronica/drum'n'bass hybrid of his first LP to this largely vocal-electro offering, with Tim providing all the vocals himself. Therein is, sadly, the problem; his voice verges on the annoying and is stuck in a samey on-the-beat delivery most of the time. Though his voice, like so many other track elements, does get thrown through big sound effect baths, that doesn't save the day. Despite him being an accomplished live musician, and his choir like vocal treatments belie the work he's done with classical musicians,

it's hard to find many moments of joy when listening to this.

### **Venetian Snares – Filth [Planet Mu]**

Mr Funk lowers the tempo for his latest and turns up the squelch knob to +11, ripping acid lines over some reasonably steady percussion, well, by his own standards anyway. It's closer in feel to his recent work under the Last Step moniker which may now have been consolidated into his main guise. It's ticking boxes, in a nice shade of ink.

### **Disrupt – Foundation Bit**

[Werk CD]

Now, if I was asked for an opinion on dub-electronica I would probably tilt my nose skyward. But wait a minute... this is actually quite enjoyable due to nice production and choice vocal samples. It's definitely night-in music but sets a nice mood and a steady course.

### **Stagga – Sick as Sin**

[Rag and Bone]

Wasting no time in dropping the wobble in the form of a huge descending square wave bassline the opener is pure smack down, punctuated by the 'sick as sin'

vocal edits. The following track turns the pitch around with a steady UFO bass climbing up and up, though without the frantic hype set out by the first. The last track of the EP takes a more traditional dubwise angle on the beats and bass. A diverse collection of tracks making for yet another quality release for this label.

### **Clark – Growls Garden EP [Warp]**

Halfway through the opening track, as a fat growling bass enters the fray, it becomes clear that Clark (providing the vocals on this number) has regained the ability to keep up the intensity. The other 20 mins of the EP traverse a wonky path through some gritty techno beats and breaks with typical Clark percussion elements. It harks back to his earlier albums but with a huge production sound.

### **dDamage – 100% Hate [Tigerbass]**

Glitchy electronica-hip-hop act dDamage pump up the bass for some driving 4x4 numbers so they can snuggle into the Tigerbass sound. This is low-slung electro with warm, fuzzy synthlines and some stutter edits – to make it just that bit more contemporary darling.

# Shiver me timbers

Over the past few months there has been a milestone trial in the ongoing debate over file-sharing, Intellectual Property and copyright. A consortium of media, film and music companies took one of the most popular torrent based file-sharing websites, The Pirate Bay, to court in their native land of Sweden. The charges were initially a more direct charge of 'assisting copyright infringement' which, after the prosecution failed to substantiate this charge with any evidence, was then lessened to 'assisting making available copyrighted content'.

On 17 April the four co-founders of TPB were found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison and a fine equating to £2.4m, which was split equally between them. This decision farcically asserts that the TPB, for running a service, are indeed 'thieves' and that the media corps are presumably fighting for all the wee musicians, producers and artists they have under contract. Now that they've won their case, and should they actually get any money from the fines, will they actually be sharing out the loot amongst those wounded creators? One thing to note is that it was the founders, and not the service itself, that was taken to court; so the TPB is still open for sharing as usual, from its current server location in Thailand.

It is little surprise that such a harsh punishment was dished out for a poorly constructed prosecution case as TPB are one of the very few file-sharing sites with an openly political agenda. Some of their members made major contributions to the documentary *Steal This Film*, which expounded the idea that file-sharing is another huge step in the evolution of the communication era – begun by the printing press – and which enables new methods and reasons for publishing and creation of media and artwork. The TPB website proudly sports a pirate flag and their homepage also offers anonymity services and free and uncensored blogging, image and text hosting. This has made them a clear target for the might of the media industry which, from its base in the US, has spent years putting pressure onto governments around the world to increase legislation related to copyright, IP and file-sharing. Had the industry lost this trial we would have been one step closer to the new business models the boom and popularisation of file-sharing is forcing into birth.

Instead, this may end up setting a precedent which might have devastating results on the internet as a whole. The Pirate Bay and other torrent sites explicitly point to torrent files, though they don't actually store any 'illegal' data themselves, and this is why the 'assistance' charges in the trial were drummed up. Yet, if you put in a software product or film name into Google you will find direct links to torrent files in the top 10 results returned. To weed them out would mean Google having to filter all of its results, not just those which could now be punishable by law. YouTube also has a wealth of copyrighted material or material not for public consumption on its servers at any one time, though they do make an effort to keep their servers clean. Basically, breach of copyright guidelines are commonplace amongst all aspects of the internet –

though it will be the Internet Service Providers who will be clamped down upon first.

Obviously there are major conflicts of interest here, and not just between the big media corps and those who believe that data should be free and that no one has had anything 'stolen' when only a copy is made. The capitalist system is in constant internal conflict because everyone is only concerned with their own interests. Scientists develop products in labs, marketing people sell them based on perceived or actual consumer demand. No one works in tandem, not even within one company, let amongst competitors – and it's obviously all driven by profit. It seemed like a logical step to go digital – cleaner picture/audio/signals, smaller disks etc.



Now the move into the digital domain has bitten them on the arse and a whole other can of worms has been opened. Perhaps they should have given some thought to the possibility that as soon as people were given the taste of something free – provided by development of CD burners and file-sharing – that everyone from teachers to priests to kids to grannies would now want something for nothing. Even with threat of prosecution the corps will have a hard time convincing these new converts that they will have to have their influx of free information and data stifled.

The most common arguments against file-sharing and breach of copyright fall flat because they are based on existing business models and we haven't had a chance to fully sketch new ones. People won't know what they've lost till it's taken away and it's true that Peer-2-Peer file-sharing might inevitably lead to depleted levels of the big-scale, high-end productions of films, music and books which bring a lot of joy into people's lives. Without the current distribution models which are designed to easily fill the silk-lined pockets of the shareholders they might not get created in the first place. This would be a great loss to the world of culture, but it would

leave in its place a new world of culture – one where everyone feels that they can contribute, where most work is done for the sheer pleasure of creating and where there is less waste and more efficient modes of distribution.

Music has already forged new business models, and has more flexibility to be able to do so as now entire productions and distribution can now be done by one person, to a high standard and perhaps using just a single computer (and some cracked software). Some of these models are working, others need to be given time to flourish. Live performance and concerts, as well as through a website, provide an easy way for the performer/producer to connect directly with their audience.

For books there are Print-On-Demand services – where books are only printed to an order – no surplus books to pulp, less waste, less storage space needed.

Films have always been difficult to manufacture, often requiring a large crew of people working extremely long days. This may not continue to be financially viable on a big scale, though people already make thousands of low/no budget short films each year, mostly at a loss, because they love what they do. Big budget films could do with a vigorous spring clean anyway as its chief subject matters and leading characters are the police, government and idle rich people. Maybe the loss of big productions will mean a return to meaningful subject matter.

TV in the 90s was mostly full of crap, but with a few decent things peppering up the schedules. Now it's unbearably full of crap – yes, even more so – and now that it's gone digital there's even more space to fill with dirge, most of it completely unrelated to the lives the majority of the world. Will we really lose out?

Ordinary people, and not just the pwoor wickle media conglomerates, do stand to lose out in practical terms over these changes to media production and distribution. Many jobs will cease to exist; venues and cinemas may close; many people will have to find new careers. Still, it's worth remembering that this has happened already – when cinema took over from theatre, when TV took the focus away from radio.

Picture a future where only things of quality and passion are produced; where it is pointless and unprofitable to produce unnecessary crap; where the money, if involved, goes straight to the artists and where profit margins are set sensibly so that people are actually encouraged to buy the product rather than copy it; where people who previously could only conceive peddling recycled storylines about cops, death fantasies, money/cars/bitches are out of the picture; where ordinary people feel that they have something to say and that they can contribute, control and own the world's media... is that such a bad thing?

**Watch the docu** at [www.stealthisfilm.com](http://www.stealthisfilm.com) (soon to be updated with new material based on the TPB trial). You can continue to use [www.thepiratebay.org](http://www.thepiratebay.org) and also these torrent search engines: [www.torrentz.com](http://www.torrentz.com), [www.isohunt.com](http://www.isohunt.com), [www.usniff.com](http://www.usniff.com)

# G20 RUP+URE COMMENT+

## Call...

I took a definite sideline view of the G20 protests. Firstly, the idea of being a bit-player in what seemed to be a pre-conceived strategy of events, dictated firstly to and then by the media, simply didn't appeal. Alas, I didn't hook up with anyone to do smaller break-off actions, and didn't have any ideas in that area myself. I instead spent most of day at work nearby and ducked out to see what was going in my lunch break and from the late afternoon. It was certainly a strange experience – watching live coverage and reading Twitter feeds from both the Indymedia reporters and the Guardian/BBC. The level of how the main protest was covered and constructed by the media was unprecedented. I was there, sucking it all up, with some first-hand experience to complete the menu.

Now, I couldn't say I have felt any urges to go to the annual face-offs with the Old Bill since they pulled up their socks, post J18, and (yawn) used their Section 60 powers without fail, in an effort to wind everyone up to the point where they won't return next year – hey, it sort of worked with me. Though there is a clear feeling of solidarity when bunched in at these protests, there isn't a feeling of anything solid, and it generally feels like a waste of time to me.

The opening days of April could now be seen as the ultimate neo-liberal-style protest event in so far as many people had their role for the day pre-prescribed for them – from the angry black bloc to the airy-fairy climate campers through to the “you're-going-nowhere” police lines and even down to the regular city workers; they were all expected to take to the stage. This is the twisted beauty of the subtle manipulations of neo-liberalism – make everyone think they at least get the freedom to be who they want to be. Back in reality, this means “here's your little box, don't think about stepping out of it or we will come down on you, hard”.

The city workers were enjoying the two days of protests more than most as they were told to dress down in order to not exacerbate any trouble. It was like a game for them, or some weird Comic Relief event, though with a dollop of fear and paranoia instilled by the London papers and the telly. Did anyone really believe that widespread ‘chaos’ (oh, that Evening Standard favourite) would break out in the City with 6,000 coppers from around the country drafted in?

As no one was really taking the flaky goals of the protestors seriously what does that imply for future protests or attempts

at mass mobilisation? Surely many people would prefer any actual stabs at revolution to be a popular uprising rather than some unstable state of civil war between rich and poor? Putting the temporarily de-robed City Chat Gros aside (who are mostly a lost cause anyway), it's a harder battle ahead if you face animosity from even low-level, average-earnings professionals.

I feel that many social (and political) divisions are the main obstacles we face if there is to be any progress in creating a popular movement against the capitalistic system. People don't just need to be told what is unjust, evil or wrong – they also need to be presented with alternatives. Despite having their own failings, the Climate Camp part of the G20 protests did prove that a few fresh-faced students and drop-outs could peacefully take over a main road, under the nose of the filth, and stage something positive which didn't just shout “No!”. Plus, them lot had some pukka pop-up tents.

The majority of the country need to find a new focus; away from the telly, flashy clothes, perfumed nights out, drinkinaning and stoopid cars. Unless some decent alternative structures and modes of living are shown to them they certainly won't be looking to us for it when their lives finally fall to shit under a massive dead weight of debt, threats on their homes and barely any food or fuel. Most DIY people have spent years living under the bread-line, sometimes wilfully and sometimes as a direct result of existing injustices of an inhumane system, and making good use of whatever resources they have to hand. It seems only fair to share this information and positivity wherever possible; and not look like a bunch of clueless fuckwits intent solely with pissing on the consumer parade (which they are rather enjoying, thank you very much).

Further divisions between activists, casual protestors and old-skool political party or union members will ensure that the minority who are currently prepared to take a stand will remain a minority – one which never connects with, whether it seems a good idea or not, the sadly very real world of workers and businesses. However, this will require effort from all sides, moving towards a centre at the same time, and at the moment everyone is very much engaged with their own agenda.

On the flip side, the world at large has been asking for a good hiding for some time; from people who mostly want to be left alone to explore uncharted avenues of creativity, collaboration, beauty and promise. The thing is, if you do want to smash things up

and attack certain people, groups and places – you can, 24/7. You don't need to wait for there to be 6,000 police and several hundred press photographers waiting for you.

## Response...

Some of the comments below are a direct response to points made in the G20 commentary above, others not!

Since G20, an email about Ian Tomlinson – the actually ‘innocent bystander’ whom the police arguably murdered – from a group called Avaaz (‘globalisation with a human face!’ – from their website) has circulated far and wide, asking people to sign a petition demanding that the police be brought into line to do their rightful job of dealing with the ‘handful of trouble-makers’ at protests. Unfortunately, this group, that promotes peaceful protest as a way of changing the world – reform and tinkering with capitalism, rather than its dismissal – has a misplaced belief in the liberal notion of ‘justice’ (which doesn't exist). People who ‘work with the police’ sell out the rest of us – let's not forget the many racist deaths in custody, casual brutality, wrongful arrest and detainment, violence on an everyday basis, and the fact that the police were formed to protect the interests of the landowners who have taken everything from the greater population over the last 1000+ years. Granted, the police in this country are not as extra-legal as in other countries (ie. they do follow the law up to a point – but only when it suits them – and with less killing etc.), but to expect anything to come from an investigation carried out by the IPCC (ie. the police themselves) seems naive at best. As usual, concerned citizens expect others to do the work for them, rather than making change happen. Experience has shown that the IPCC will find any excuse not to do anything. Look at the de Menezes case, the pig in charge has since been promoted... business as usual.

I don't reckon that any of the protests in relation to the G20 achieved anything at all so far as making politicians do anything other than their usual work of pandering to profit and exploitation. While the motivation to make one's voice heard may be a sound one, let's not pretend that the authorities have any interest in listening to anyone other than their focus groups – who represent the floating voters that decide elections. Did the 2 million anti-war march in London the other year achieve anything? As with petitions, demonstrations give the impression (especially to oneself) of having done something, when in fact at the end



The raid on the Rampart social centre in East London after the 1st day of G20 protests...

...this pimped up armoured vehicle assisted the raid and eviction of the G20 convergence centre squat...



...though the Space Hijackers got to show off their own latest armoured personnel carrier for a few hours during the City protests.



of the day everyone goes home and the world remains much as it was. So (most) demonstrations straddle the fence and are therefore not much to do with direct action (see recent Resist Now: Direct Action in Rupture: [randomartists.org/rupture/rupture-jan09-screen.pdf](http://randomartists.org/rupture/rupture-jan09-screen.pdf)).

Some people do 'actions' regularly, of whatever variety and due level of efficacy, and don't only come out to resist when responding to the announcement of 'a day of action'. The point here might be that any of the disparate groups (we don't have a 'movement for social change') wants to make sure that their style of action and message gets placed in the public view – not exclusively, but simply because the opportunity presents itself. So that if, for example, people feel that property damage demonstrates who the targets are and shows they are not immune to attack, they go ahead and smash them up – RBS have financed a whole range of horrors over the years, as well as overseas development – oppression including dictatorships, land theft, environmental disasters – and the arms trade (straight-forward murder), and been propped up by *tax-payers* for their sterling efforts. Property damage of banks and the rest of the infrastructure of Integrated World Capitalism works very well on many levels, and can be understood very easily.

Unlike in other countries, at G20 the black bloc was not tooled up and combined in numbers in order to successfully combat the police (though there were flashpoints of success, see [325collective.com/autonomy\\_vegan-g20-havin'-it.html](http://325collective.com/autonomy_vegan-g20-havin'-it.html) for one excellent black bloc report). As with anti-fascist actions, sometimes the best option available when people are a menace to humanity can be a good kicking. The police might think twice about their behaviour if they know they're gonna get a good hiding if they don't mind their own business (or their bosses' business,

to be strictly accurate). Not everyone got bunched in at the protest, as some people were well enough organised and took the risks necessary to bypass such containment.

The Climate Camp at G20 has been in the mainstream news due to the severity of the attacks against 'innocent protestors', who had made the mistakes of (a) meeting with the police before their protest, and, even more foolishly (b) expecting to be left to their camping holiday on Bishopsgate in the centre of the City for 24 hours (they planned to have their picnic until the next day!). Early in the day, when riot police moved in on the Camp for the first time, a very few black bloc formed a line to keep them at bay, and one went to speak to people at the Camp to get some back-up, but the Camp was perfectly happy to let half a dozen people do the work for them while they munched lentil vol-au-vents.

Complimenting the climate camp doesn't work for me – the backstage middle management shenanigans of how these people operate and, yes, the class issues involved, are powerful stuff. Their 'positive example' I find to be smoke and mirrors, and has terrible consequences for people who aren't like them, who don't get the opportunity to appear in the papers – try being poor and/or excluded in this country and do something about police brutality (or even climate change) and see what happens (see, for example: [schnews.org.uk/archive/news298.htm](http://schnews.org.uk/archive/news298.htm) on Delroy Lindo; the 'Injustice' film: [injusticefilm.co.uk/](http://injusticefilm.co.uk/); 'Operation Solstice': [video.google.com/videoplay?docid=4161936873351059233](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=4161936873351059233)). The newspapers as usual have pandered to the white middle classes (see [schnews.org.uk/archive/news672.htm](http://schnews.org.uk/archive/news672.htm) for what Tamil protestors have been up to since G20).

It can be easy to be seduced by the various media outlets' brute descriptions of events,

and forget why anyone would want to take to the streets and reclaim every aspect of our lives – the media does a great job of helping people forget, and of spinning trite distractions. What might be described as 'evil, unjust, and wrong', could be the way the media allows the actual realities of how governments and corporations and the police exist in such a harmonious state of injustice – and what they do every day all over the world to turn a profit and keep us in our places – to remain hidden and glossed over with empty and pacifying pseudo-logical words.

Most people live in dire situations due to the actions of the rich minorities and the control they exert through the hierarchical structuring of reality, programming by the media and etc, technological repression, work/rent etc, and how this conspires to try and prevent us all from making grassroots change occur. Lots of people never get a chance because of their background, lack the funds to get projects started, and have no access to land. The alternatives are out there, but try and bypass or struggle against: the structure of the education system when spreading that info; computer games and passive consumption etc; planning regulations and other outdated legislation; lacking the funds to spread sound ideas as blueprints that people can adapt.

When the city workers finished enjoying the spectacle, they went back to their offices and signed away people's lives and continued to exploit the planet. Same as the G20 leaders. That's the issue, eh? And how we all do that in nearly everything we do? Of course I'd love everyone to experience consciousness expansion that goes in a trillion non-damaging dissensual directions that celebrate diversity and life and values other than those of the marketplace, to learn useful skills, and to find outlets for these in everyday reality. That's the goal for me.

## PARTIES + EVENTS

www.headfuk.net  
 www.nofixedabode.info  
 www.pitchless.org  
 www.ketwork32.com  
 www.squatjuice.com  
 www.crossbones.co.uk  
 www.partyvibe.com  
 www.hekate.co.uk  
 www.tribeofmunt.co.uk  
 www.clubneurotica.com  
 www.ragandbonerecords.co.uk  
 www.uglyfunk.com  
 shockraver.free.fr  
 www.dayliterobbery.org  
 www.rif23.org  
 www.abacusounds.net  
 www.hyponik.com

## ART + MEDIA + THE REST

www.taaexhibitions.org  
 www.randomartists.org  
 www.network23.org.uk  
 www.resonancefm.com  
 www.dbreach.fm  
 c8.com  
 www.indymedia.org.uk  
 schnews.org.uk  
 www.eroding.org.uk  
 www.squatter.org.uk  
 squatworld.blogspot.de  
 www.riseup.net  
 www.56a.org.uk  
 325collective.com  
 www.braindamageradio.com  
 www.dirtysquatters.com  
 www.instructables.com

## PARTYLINES

### Headlight

<b>Fuckery</b>	07092 898151
<b>Disjunkt</b>	07835 175534
<b>Arena.lsd</b>	07985 552013
<b>NFA</b>	07092 812259
<b>Hekate</b>	07092 017667
<b>Pitchless</b>	07946 839775
<b>Ill Eagle</b>	Rig active, phonline not
<b>Abacus</b>	07974 892670
<b>FUBAR</b>	07984 199768
<b>Malfauteurs</b>	020 7806 9555
<b>Unsound</b>	07946 466573
<b>Club</b>	
<b>Neurotica</b>	07788 856941

If you run any of the above infolines please put the date on your messages so that people don't travel to an empty building!

01 - 31.05.09

### BRIGHTON STREET BLITZ

Month long session of creative subversion aim to turn the town into an open gallery. brighton.streetblitz.org

02.05.09

### DISSIDENT

Awesome lineup of drum'n'bass and breakstep. 10pm-6am. Tickets £11, £14 on the door. Motion Skatepark, Bristol

02.05.09

### POKORA / BROKEN SYSTEM

Breakcore, speedcore and hardcore in the main room facing off to darkstep, broken beatz and hardbreakz in the other. £5 entry, 10pm - morning. Medusa, 302 Barington Road, London SW9 7JJ www.myspace.com/pokorasoundsystem

01 - 05.05.09

### FRENCHTEK

As with most years there is an illicit teknival and one on a government appointed site, both should be in North France. Check info online.

03.05.09

### LONDON ZINE SYMPOSIUM

Bringing together zine, small press, comic and radical writers to celebrate DIY and zine culture. 12pm - 6pm. The Rag Factory, 16-18 Heneage Street, London E1 5LJ www.ragfactory.org.uk

03.05.09

### BRIGHTON TAA FUNDRAISER

A night of live bands to raise funds for the TAA. 8 til late, Hector's House, Brighton www.subterraneanartbrighton.org

04.05.09

### MAYDAY RECLAIM THE STREETS AGAINST EDO MBM/ITT

Reclaim The Streets style demo/carnival on Mayday - against EDO-MBM/ITT, Brighton's bomb factory. For details see website. www.smashedo.org.uk

22.05.09

### PLEX

A wide spread of electro and techno sauce. 10pm-7am. £10 adv/£12 door. Corsica Studios, 4-5 Elephant Rd, London SE17. www.plexlondon.com

13 - 16.05.09

### BRIGHTON TAA

The first of the year's TAA squatted art exhibitions hits the south coast. Hoping to build on last year's success the space will be open publically on the Weds for people to come and install their artwork and prepare the space for film night, cabaret and bands in the days ahead. www.subterraneanartbrighton.org info@subterraneanartbrighton.org

15.05.09

### GENERATION LOST

In anticipation of the Generation Lost EP on the Datablender label this is a night of live sets and DJs playing Industrial/Hard Techno in one room and Breakcore/Speedcore in another. 10pm-5am. £10 in adv. Electrowerkz, 7 Torrens St, London N1

21-31.05.09

### UN SOUND SYSTEM PARTY

10 day private party on the beach in Metaponto-Matera, Italy. www.unsound-system.org

30-31.05.09

### FREAK/TAA

A mini FREAK event over the course of a weekend. A free and autonomous arts space for artists and non-artists alike to come together. 11am - 6pm, Arts Complex, St Margarets House, Meadowbank, Edinburgh, EH8 7TG www.myspace.com/freaktaedinburgh

05-07.06.09

### SCUM FEST

Various London venues www.scumfest.org

24-26.07.09

### POL TEK

Free and open teknival in Poland, keep an eye on shockraver.free.fr/infoparty23.htm

29.06 - 08.07.09

### 13<sup>TH</sup> AUTONOMOUS MUTANT FEST

North West of America

07-?.08.09

### SLOVAKIA TEK

Wild east artists and performers gathering. Sound systems contact sptxyz@gmail.com and check network23.org.uk/forum/

### OTHER SOURCES FOR LISTINGS:

Squat stuff: radar.squat.net  
 Cheap/free in London: freelondonlistings.co.uk  
 Other parties: www.headfuk.net/parties.htm  
 EU parties: shockraver.free.fr/infoparty23.htm

