



THE GREAT OLYMPIC SWINDLE



Already the buildings and structures for the Olympic Games are in development and the PR machine is in full swing. Yet despite the best efforts of the Olympic Development Authority (ODA) and their allies to inform you otherwise the 2012 Olympics for most of us are going to be about selling us short.

- **Democratic control –**
Consultation is a sham. All is decided by the various government quangos.
- **Misuse of local resources**
The area is in dire need of a better housing, health and community services, jobs and better quality public spaces. Instead we are spending billions on a project whose overall effect will be primarily to drive the working class out and attract the better-off in the newly gentrified area.
- **Public debt**
Any money brought to the area will go mainly to big corporations, construction companies and property developers. Meanwhile, like in all previous Olympics, the general public will be stuck with a debt that will take years to pay off.

- **Corporate invasion**
What is supposed to be an international celebration of sport will be dominated by corporate sponsorship; the achievements of the athletes second to corporations using the occasion to increase their profits.
- **Ecological destruction**
Despite the claim to leave a 'green' legacy, the Olympic Park will be manicured and sanitised. Property developers are already buying up large tracts of land to build luxury flats near prime riverside locations.
- **Homelessness and higher rents**
As we approach 2012, the pressure on housing will intensify. Private landlords will raise rents and try and evict tenants in order to take advantage of the high demand from the global rich for property near the Olympic site.
- **Increased surveillance**
The Olympics is to be a showcase for Gordon Brown, Boris Johnson and other politicians. They don't want anything to ruin their 'show'. Because of the concern over a terrorist attack, everyone will be subject to increased stop and searches and surveillance. Human rights will be second to the Olympics running smoothly. Just look at what happened to Tibetan protesters in China.
- **Legacy**
Much is made of the legacy to be left in the East End after 2012. Already though, many of the plans have been scaled back, with the economic crisis used as an excuse. There is still plenty of money to line the pockets of the construction companies but as costs mount the first things to go will be the plans that might benefit the local community. In addition, as in all other Olympic cities, the hidden agenda has been gentrification rather than regeneration.

BORIS JOHNSON GETS RATTLED OVER LONDON CITY AIRPORT



After a good spirited and successful protest outside York Hall, Bethnal Green on Thursday 5 March, where campaigners donned red 'stop airport expansion t shirts', held banners and chanted 'Fight the Flights', resident campaigners took their seats inside the hall.

York Hall was the venue for Mayor of London, Boris Johnson's People's Question Time. As many of you will know, in the run up to the Mayoral elections, Boris did indeed indicate that he did NOT support

expansion at London City Airport. He also said he didn't support a third runway at Heathrow. But predictably once he was voted in, he changed his mind on LCA.

Boris, no doubt under the pressure of PR mercenary lobbyists and law firms, then strangely did a U TURN on London City Airport. What's stranger is Boris seems to have no idea about the situation at London City Airport, either now or in the past, or of the application lacking actual reliable data, and now we find missing/or not addressing a whole load of other key information. So FTF has a mission, and that is to make sure that Boris never stops getting asked about London City Airport, and his relationship with Richard Gooding. He is never going to be allowed to forget this dreadful, ill informed decision he made on flawed, incomplete data which he was told about many times, but chose to ignore.

We'd like Boris to know that 'Newham locals' have had their life changed by the princely amount of **120 directly employed airport jobs in 20 years**. Yes, that surely would have made a real difference to Newham residents and perhaps explains why Newham remains one of the most socially deprived boroughs in the country. Doesn't sound like fat cat Richard Gooding of London City Airport has shared much of wealth via job creation does it?

LDA: LONDON DESTRUCTION AGENCY

The London Development Agency literally bulldozed its way over the objections of local residents in its determination to create its vision of the Olympic Park. The pleas of two vibrant and successful communities, the Manor Gardens Allotments and the Clays Lane Housing co-operative, to be incorporated into the Olympic Park, fell on deaf ears. Clearly, the aim is to make a park that is sterile and 'landscaped'. There is no room for vibrant and homely places that don't fit in with architects' slick designs.

Land had been left to Manor Garden Allotments 100 years ago for them to have in perpetuity'. However, this didn't hold up in a court of law and after a long campaign they were evicted. They were eventually given another site, but this was far inferior to the one they had. They had argued that they would be an asset to an Olympic Park but were told that they did not fit 'the land profile'. Similarly, Clays Lane Housing Co-operative was a very special place. It had been set up to house single people, many who had been homeless. People could buy into the co-op for £1.00. It was a unique and successful community. Again, the Olympic planners clearly did not want such places to ruin their plans for gentrification of the area.

The actions of the LDA and the Olympic site developers in these cases does not bode well for the 'Olympic Legacy'. The legacy supposedly contains targets for 'biodiversity' and social housing. Yet, one of its first acts is to evict the very communities that fit in with these goals. As East End boroughs compete to attract better-off



We at Action East End

want to see an alternative, one based on a genuine sense of community and solidarity.

Action East End is a local group based in East London that wants to contribute to the resistance, both defending ourselves in our communities and workplaces, but ultimately helping co-ordinate activities to improve our quality of life. This we believe can only be done through our own initiatives, outside the agenda of the local authorities or political groups, and by taking collective action for ourselves.

This is no flight of fancy but the basis from which radical change springs, and we would urge others to join us or get in touch at:

Send an email to:

actioneastend@googlemail.com

residents at the expense of the working class, we cannot trust the authorities to keep any promises. Under the guise of 'regeneration', the aim is to transform the East End into a posh London neighbourhood. We must not let this happen.

DON'T LET THEM FOOL YOU!!

“BRITISH JOBS FOR BRITISH WORKERS” is a slogan that’s become very familiar in the past few months. There have been wildcat strikes and demonstrations by energy sector workers across the UK to protest at the fact that workers have been brought in from outside the UK while local people go jobless. Now the protests are spreading to the construction industry. The union Unite is planning pickets and unofficial action at construction sites where foreign workers are employed, and the Olympic site in Stratford is being highlighted as a high-profile target for the campaign.

Media news coverage of the energy sector strikes was quick to seize on the “British jobs for British workers” angle and did its best to reduce the workers’ legitimate protests to a racist campaign against foreigners. The same thing has already started happening with the Olympics site, this time even before the pickets and protests have got underway. The local and national press has been full of stories about “too many” foreign workers on the Olympics site, and rent-a-quote politicians like Jim Fitzpatrick and George Galloway have been only too happy to jump on the bandwagon.

But what’s really going on here? It’s true that only a small proportion of the jobs created on the Olympics site have gone to people living locally – about 25%, according to the Olympic Development Authority (ODA)’s own (disputed) figures. It’s also true that about 30% of the jobs have gone to foreign workers, mostly from the EU. The rest of the jobs have gone to UK workers from outside the East End of London. That’s partly because of the effect of the recession on the construction industry – there just aren’t enough jobs to go round. Building contractors can’t afford to hire new workers from the local community, so they’re bringing their existing workers onto the Olympic site instead. If those British workers didn’t come into the East End to work on the Olympic site, they’d end up being made redundant. The foreign workers who have come here are no better off either. They haven’t left their families behind and come here to work because they’re out to steal other people’s jobs, but simply because they can’t earn a living wage at home. Although newspapers like the Daily Mail have been trying to make out that the foreign workers are getting salaries of £60k, most of them are working hard and struggling to make ends meet – just the same as the rest of us.

This recession’s biting hard, and workers everywhere are having to do whatever they can to keep themselves afloat – not just here in the East End, or even in the UK, but across the world.



Across boundaries Workers Solidarity: an East End tradition

The cause of the problem isn’t the people who have come into the East End to work, whether they’ve come from overseas or just from elsewhere in the UK. **The cause of the problem is the recession – and the cause of the recession is the banking crisis, which saw the whole financial sector collapse thanks to the greed and stupidity of bank bosses who had been making money out of poor people’s debts. In other words, if local people are struggling now to find jobs, that’s the fault of bosses and politicians, not of foreign workers.** And it’s those same bosses and politicians who are now trying to push the anti-foreigner agenda, because they want to divert workers’ anger away from themselves. By speaking out against the use of foreign workers on the Olympic site, local MPs and councillors are simply trying to keep the workers divided along lines of race and nationality. The ODA itself has an obvious vested interest in keeping the workers on its sites as divided as possible. The same even goes for the union bosses. The unions were taken by surprise by the wildcat strikes in the energy sector and they’re determined not to let it happen again. Focussing their campaign on foreign workers, rather than on the real causes of the recession, is the union bosses’ way of trying to keep the protests under control and prevent them from spilling over into demands for real change in the way our society is run and organised. Politicians, bosses, and union officials are all terrified of what might happen if angry working-class people really got together to take collective action against them!

In all the hot air about foreign workers on the Olympic site, a lot of fuss has been made over who is and isn’t really “local”. But here in the East End, for centuries, our local community has always included huge numbers of people who were born elsewhere and who have come

here for all kinds of reasons, sometimes to escape poverty or persecution, sometimes just looking for work.

In Action East End we think that local communities need to come together to defend ourselves and improve our own lives, but for us being a real member of a local community is about where you live and how you relate to the people in your neighbourhood – not

ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE EAST END: BRING BACK ROBIN HOOD

The people of the East End of London have witnessed first hand the massive increase in wealth of the world's financial institutions. The Docklands has been transformed from a working class community to the heart of global finance. First it was one skyscraper in an eerie ghost town but that soon changed. As a result of

Thatcher's deregulation of financial institutions, other banks soon followed, seeking to outdo each other with these symbols of wealth and power, which now loom over the remaining working class homes, blocking the light of those left at the bottom. Canary Wharf became the headquarters of many of the world's banks and investment houses with thousands of bankers and associated occupations flocking to live in the various 'condominiums' and luxury tower blocks that have sprung up around the East End.

The increase in the financial sector has gone hand in hand with the decline in manufacturing, with the Tate and Lyle factory one of the last remaining signs of traditional industry in East London. Many 'eastenders' moved further east, with their sons and daughters now commuting in from Essex to work in Canary Wharf and the City. This trend has been mirrored in the country as a whole, except most other places have not had the financial sector as an alternative for the loss of employment opportunities.

The British economy is now heavily reliant on financial services, representing around 30% of total national product. The current crisis is therefore more serious in Britain than in other parts of the world, and in the East End of London, the consequences for working class people are devastating. Firstly, though the focus is on the bankers, they will not suffer at all apart from maybe losing their reputation and having to put up with a bit of public humiliation. But even if they do lose their jobs, they will soon find another ridiculously high-paid one or else they will be able to live very comfortably indeed on the vast amounts of money they have already amassed. The managing director of Northern Rock, which was the first bank to get into difficulty, sold his own shares in the company the year before the scandal went public, pocketing 2.7 million pounds. The ones who will suffer are the ordinary bank workers, already on low

where you came from or how

long you have lived here. No matter where we were born, as working class people we are all in the same boat. Instead of blaming each other for the mess the capitalists and politicians have got us into, we all need to stick together to build a genuine sense of community and solidarity. It's only by taking action together that we'll be able to get out of this mess once and for all.

salaries, will be denied any wage increases or will lose their jobs.

Meanwhile, the repercussions will be felt through-out the economy with the working class bearing the brunt as usual. The government is busy giving away billions of taxpayers' money (again our money- the rich usually avoid paying any tax!), to the banks with no visible results for the average person. The money seems to be going just to pay off the bad debts of banks and into keeping shareholders happy. And in any case, the whole logic is faulty. They give money to banks so the banks will be more willing to lend to people, both individuals and businesses. But if we are losing our jobs, having houses repossessed or having our wages frozen then why are we going to be stupid enough to start borrowing money and get into debt again!! So they want us, without any more real wages, faced with a serious housing problem, to get the economy going again by getting into debt and making the banks rich! What absurdity. The economy has been kept going artificially for the past several decades because of rising house prices, giving many people the illusion that they were well-off. Meanwhile, the banks fell over themselves to encourage people to keep buying houses and also to get into consumer debt on the basis that they owned property, which could always be repossessed if they failed to repay the loan or the credit card. The last decade has been a debt-fuelled boom and anyone with any sense could predict that it couldn't last.

The answer is obvious: don't give money to the banks who will only use it to get themselves out of trouble at our expense. The behaviour of the bankers is not exceptional behaviour- it is just business as usual under capitalism. The billions of pounds could go a long way in the right hands: ours!

- Cancel all debt: mortgage, credit cards, student loans
- Increase the wages of all workers, no more loans
- Fight rent increases
- Build more social housing
- Turn unused office space such as Canary Wharf into homes and social spaces

Join Action East End and thousands of others in the protests around the G20 summit. Let them know that we have had enough of an economic system that puts profits before people and that allows a few to amass enormous wealth at our expense.