

# Corporate Watch

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## THE ART OF FUNDING



**BIG GREEN  
CORPORATE  
SAVIOR?**

**POLITICAL  
PHILANTHROPY**



**RADICAL  
ARTS COUNCIL?**

# editorial

As an organisation that is partly dependent on outside funding, Corporate Watch often faces the dilemma of balancing its financial survival with a critique of funding bodies and grassroots activists funded by them. While maintaining a critical view of corporate and non-corporate funders, we also recognise their role in political organising and social movements and the difficulties of being totally independent. Thus, while trying our best to avoid dodgy money and money with strings attached, some difficult questions seem unavoidable: Is there good funding and bad funding? Can activists avoid compromising their politics as they go down the funding route? Can they justify being paid for what others do for free? And in the bigger scheme of things, are foundations and fund trusts part of a big conspiracy to prevent, or channel, social change?

We try to tackle some of these thorny questions in this issue. Michael Barker and Joan Roelofs write about political philanthropy, focusing respectively on corporate and non-corporate funders. Barker argues that one of the primary purposes of Corporate Social Responsibility, dearly embraced by liberal not-for-profit organisations, is to "constrain the advent of social revolutions." Roelofs similarly argues that the not-for-profit sector not only helps sustain capitalism and imperialism but also fends off, often in creative and benevolent ways, any threats to the power of elites.

As a case study, we have included an article on the Arts Council and its role in "refining dissent." Providing a historical background about the Council's politics, we talk to a number of grassroots artists who have been funded by the Council and ask them what they think of it. Two other interesting examples are also included: the Big Green Gathering's accepting a loan from a joint venture with a right-wing sports and entertainment multinational, and French multinational Veolia's funding of green fairs. As a counter example, perhaps, we have included a long article about the recent, unprecedented crackdown on the animal rights movement, arguably one of the most effective anti-corporate movements in recent times.

Wary of the trap of mass, simplistic generalisations, we argue that funding foundations, or at least some, are the velvet glove of state repression against social justice movements. Through thinly disguised programmes and schemes, they utilise activists' need for money to channel their energy into projects that pose no serious threat to the status quo. In other words, in order to avoid real social change, they provide some outlets for discontent that can be kept under control.

One could argue that, to some degree, all funded activism, as opposed to DIY activism, is ultimately politically problematic. Many would argue, however, that it is possible to use some funds for socially progressive ends without becoming overly reliant on funding; that it is still possible to source funds that are more ethical than others and maintain a DIY ethos. The crucial thing is whose agenda do these funds and those projects serve. It is an important debate to be had among grassroots activists and campaigners. We hope we are opening it, once again, in a critical and constructive way.

## Corporate Watch

### Newsletter 43: April/May 2009

Corporate Watch is an independent not-for-profit research group, which aims to expose how large corporations function, and the detrimental effects they have on society and the environment as an inevitable result of their current legal structure. Corporate Watch strives for a society that is ecologically sustainable, democratic, equitable and nonexploitative. Progress towards such a society may, in part, be achieved through dismantling the vast economic and political power of corporations, and developing ecologically and socially just alternatives to the present economic system. If you would like to help with research, fund-raising or distribution, please contact us.

Disclaimer: The objectivity of the media is generally an illusion. Corporate Watch freely acknowledges that it comes from an anti-corporate perspective. It attempts at all times to be factual, accurate, honest and truthful in its reporting. We welcome any comments or corrections.

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# A CORPORATE GURU AT THE BIG GREEN GATHERING?

*Five days of camping, music, theatre, sustainable living and workshops - a seedbed of peace, climate and environmental consciousness-raising. So, what have the former managing director of the world's largest corporate producer of live music, Live Nation, and the Anschutz Entertainment Group, owners of the O2 Arena and funders of wide screen, blockbuster biblical parables with roots in the oil industry and links to homophobic campaigns, got to do with the Big Green Gathering?*

Following its 2007 festival, the Big Green Gathering, dear to the heart of many pacifist and green activists, found itself in dire financial straits. Threatened with bankruptcy, it was decided after much deliberation to cancel the festival in 2008 and attempt to pay off the gathering's £150,000 debts.

In a history spanning more than 20 years, from Green Gatherings in the 1980s and the Green Fields at Glastonbury to its establishment as the Big Green Gathering Company Ltd in 1993-4, the festival has sought to put into practice the ideals of being the change many people wish to see in the world, through inspiring thought and action on social and environmental issues, albeit in the confines of a week's holiday. It has become a central event for environmentally concerned summer revellers and is structured as a not-for-profit democratic company, whose shareholders have one share and one vote each. In 2007-8, partly due to new licensing costs and partly because of alleged maladministration, the BGG fell into debt, owing suppliers huge sums.

In attempting to cover the deficit and enable the gathering to continue, tensions between ethical-political and economic considerations emerged among directors and members of the Steering Group. From internal documents seen by Corporate Watch, it seems that a clear concept of organising alternative, radical and autonomous spaces within the current economic system was lacking and that the search for funds and the rise of 'party politics' became the predominant considerations for some on the Board of Directors. The search for new sources of finance pointedly revealed how the conflicts of business and ethics can ravage even the most politically conscious organisation. Corporate Watch has learnt that sponsorship by energy giant Npower was given serious consideration by the Board. The proposal, however, was soundly rejected due to pressure from more radical members, who saw how such a deal would fundamentally contradict the ethos of the green event.

## A knight in corporate armour

It was not from Npower but from a new joint venture, Kilimanjaro Live Ltd (KLL),

that a corporate knight in dubiously shining armour came riding. KLL is a relatively new joint venture between Stuart Galbraith, the former managing director of Live Nation, which describes its core business as "buying and producing artist rights and monetizing those rights via our global distribution pipe", and AEG, the world's second-largest music promoter. KLL's focus is described as festivals, tours and artist development. Galbraith was sacked from the world's largest music promoter for breach of contract, apparently due to his discussions with AEG, one of US billionaire Philip Anschutz's business interests.

Having previously been involved in organising the bloated and politically regressive Live 8 and Live Earth concerts, Galbraith approached the BGG with an offer of an interest-free loan in exchange for a place on the board. Following a closer look at the books, however, and with the effects of incipient recession, Galbraith's corporate backers were not prepared to provide the £150,000 initially proposed. What remained was the £50,000 Galbraith had contributed under a Heads of Agreement, with Galbraith becoming a member of the Board of Directors and Director of Finance at the BGG to "continue to provide his own expertise and the accounting and ticket sales facilities of KLL on a cost-free basis," according to the documents. Other funds were also pursued and, following what now seems to be an overtly green capitalist model, a new Sponsorship Committee was set up to seek appropriate commercial sponsorship. One board member resigned in protest at the new terms and Corporate Watch has been told that discontent amongst others who have worked for the BGG for years was rife. The documents state that the BGG's debt is "now owed mostly to [its] new partner, Kilimanjaro Live Ltd (KLL), and to shareholders who have come forward with loans, rather than to last year's suppliers." Attempts to retain the BGG in the hands of those who understood it best were thwarted by the Board of Directors, who rejected a £45,000 management buyout in spring 2008. The deal with KLL had already been struck.

At his first AGM, Galbraith, who has yet to attend a Big Green Gathering,

reportedly proposed that the BGG considers introducing cigarette stalls and advertising to increase revenue, despite the BGG's overtly proclaimed ideals that it is "for people who care about health, the environment, sustainability, our children's future and life in general." Galbraith has in interviews spoken admiringly of hardline business practice and confesses his lack of expertise in environmental issues. It has been claimed that working with the BGG will help Galbraith 'green' his other festivals, yet a quick look at another of his festivals, Bloodstock, suggests that the primary concerns of Galbraith and KLL remain increasing ticket sales and revenue, even if that means compromising the integrity or quality of a festival.

## The right-wing billionaire

Philip Anschutz is the world's 98th richest man, according to the 2009 Forbes Rich List, and his AEG is the largest sports and entertainment corporation in the US, owning arenas, cinemas, newspapers and sports teams. It was Anschutz who bought David Beckham for his US LA Galaxy football team and whose hospitality John Prescott accepted as deputy prime minister while Anschutz was bidding for a super casino in Greenwich, London. He is also an extremely conservative Republican and Christian evangelical who was named a 'Pioneer' by the Bush-Cheney campaign in 2000 for fundraising. Before moving into the telecommunications and film industries as the owner of Qwest Communications and Anschutz Film Company, his wealth had mainly been built on oil and railway interests.

What, then, does AEG gain from the BGG? It has been reported that KLL and Galbraith are part of AEG's plans for expansion in Europe and the UK. It seems that a larger stake in the BGG Co. Ltd was originally envisaged to parallel KLL's investments in other so-called 'boutique festivals', Bloodstock and Wakestock. Through KLL's holdings in smaller festivals, AEG is creating a base to operate in the UK and Europe, which will complement its mainstream, corporate possessions and help it compete with its rival Live Nation. As for the BGG, concerns persist that the gathering will become "less grassroots, more commercial [and] lose its edge," as one concerned festival-goer put it.



# REFINING DISSSENT: THE ARTS COUNCIL AND RADICAL ARTS

The Arts Council describes itself as “the national development agency for the arts... distributing public money to help artists and arts organisations.” Wherever there is the smell of money, however, art inevitably becomes a political issue. In this article, *Corporate Watch* takes a look at why a government body that is meant to “get more high quality work to a wider range of people” would be interested in funding radical and subversive arts projects.

## Some history

The Arts Council was originally set up on an ‘arm’s length principle’ popularised by Lord Redcliffe-Maud. But key politicians and government officials have always had varying degrees of influence on the Council’s decisions through direct and indirect channels, from the Chancellor, Arts Minister, Parliamentary Committees, to the Council’s appointed chairs and panel members. As Raymond Williams put it in a 1979 article in the *Political Quarterly* on the Arts Council, “all that is gained by an arm’s length is a certain notion of removal of directly traceable control.” And let’s remember, the Council’s first chairman was none but the founder of Keynesian economics, John Maynard Keynes himself. The current advisory panels system, which is often bypassed in major decisions, is also part of his legacy.

## Funding the enemy

In early 1970s, the ‘community arts’ movement represented a serious challenge to the elitist Arts Council. “It is not easy,” said the then Secretary-General Sir Roy Shaw in his 1978-9 annual report, “to work with artists who not only consistently bite the hand that feeds them... but often explicitly repudiate the basic premise of the Arts Council’s charter.” In that same report, Sir Roy reminded us that Lord Goodman, the former chairman of the Council, had “questioned whether it was the duty of the state to actually subsidise those who are working to overthrow it.”

The dilemma was carefully considered in a research on community artists commissioned by the Arts Council in late 1979. Despite disliking them, however, the Council has continued to fund many ‘community arts’ projects over the years, its defence being “they generate a new audience for the arts.” Between 1974 and 1978, the Council had already raised its community arts subsidy from £250,000 to one million.

Today, although a great majority of its budget is still spent on purchasing ‘the best’ paintings and sculptures and the bottomless pit of the Council’s ‘big six’ companies (the Royal Opera, Royal Ballet, English National Opera, English National



Ballet, Royal National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company), a significant proportion is increasingly spent on funding small, independent projects that combine arts with social struggles. Between 2008 and 2011, Arts Council England plans to invest over £1.6 billion of public money (from the government and the National Lottery) in grants. The money, according to the plan titled “Great Art for Everyone”, will be invested in 888 arts organisations, including 81 new ones.

So the question remains: why would the state, in this case represented by the Arts Council, fund those it considers to be its enemies? Apart from the obvious issue of state sponsorship, it is our argument that, while old-fashioned ‘artistic philanthropy’ has almost died out, its core concepts and practices continue to live today.

## Activists or artists?

With these questions in mind, *Corporate Watch* had an informal chat earlier this year with a member of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA), a member of the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination and a member of the social art group Platform, all of which have received funding from the Arts Council at some point.

Our informants were aware of the criticisms that radical artists may encounter when seeking funding for their ‘artivism’. The argument that many activists are dependant on other forms of state funding, such as the dole, or that someone is going to get the money, so it may as well be activists, did not seem sufficient to justify reliance on the Arts Council. All three, however, insisted that it is a different story when you’re not totally dependent on funding, i.e. if you don’t rely on a few large sources

of funding and don’t take on permanent overheads. Small bits of funding here and there, they argued, should be considered different politically than core funding or large amounts of money with ties, which is how many NGOs operate. Platform, for example, has somewhat changed since it secured core funding from the Arts Council as time now has to go into maintaining this funding, although it does allow more stability and forward planning. Similarly, the Clown Army’s tour of England in 2005, which was funded by the Arts Council and concluded at the G8 protests in Scotland, meant that the emphasis had to be on the artistic aspects of clowning rather than seeing it as a tactic used by protesters against police repression. On the other hand, our interviewee argued, the funding enabled the tour, which was ultimately a political project, to go ahead to reach the G8 in Scotland, which might not have been possible otherwise.

All three also seemed to agree that one of the dangers of fund-seeking is careerism. In their attempts to use their skills while still doing ‘something good’, many activists-artists have ended up becoming professional artists who risk compromising their politics to maintain their funding. This is almost impossible to avoid because formal engagement with and production of art, as well as having to be ‘accountable’ to funders, require meeting certain standards, building up the right kind of CV, spinning your project to fit the funder’s agenda and so on and so forth. It further creates a tension between those who seek funding to do activism and those who elect to avoid it, dividing the movement and marginalising the latter.

The role of the Arts Council, thus, could be seen as streamlining political arts projects into ones that promote ‘social peace’ and ‘harmony’ rather than ones that embrace direct confrontation with the system and the establishment. This not only legitimises the state, represented by the Arts Council, and those who get funding from it, while marginalising or demonising those who don’t, it also channels activists’ energy into acceptable projects that might otherwise go into unwanted forms of dissent.

# VEOLIA: GREENWASHING WAR CRIMES

**The Camden Green Fair and Bikefest, held to coincide with the World Environment Day, advertises itself as aiming to “inspire Londoners to help make their capital a world-class green city, letting visitors find out about the huge and growing number of sustainable companies, products, campaigns, and lifestyle choices that are available to us all.”**

In 2008, the Camden Green Fair was sponsored by Veolia Environmental Services. The French multinational's website boasts that “Veolia Environmental Services has firmly established itself as the United Kingdom's leading waste management provider.” The company further affirms its commitment to operating in a “responsible and sustainable manner.” Veolia's track record, however, does not sit well with the ethical lifestyle promoted by the Green Fair organisers.

Veolia, together with Alstom, holds the contract for the construction of a tram system built on occupied Palestinian territory, linking West Jerusalem with illegal settlements including Pisgat Ze'ev, the French Hill settlements, Gilo and Neve Ya'akov. According to Israeli authorities, the rail infrastructure will also help link Ma'leh Adumim and the Jordan Valley settlements to Jerusalem.

Veolia claims the Jerusalem light rail project “benefits and in no way discriminates against Palestinian people.” However, the settlements and settlement building are illegal under international law; they are in breach of the Geneva Convention, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Hague Regulations. Thus, Veolia's involvement in a construction project building infrastructure on illegally occupied territory is helping to tighten Israel's grip on more and more land in the West Bank. The tramline will be inaccessible to Palestinians who live next to it, such as the residents of Shuafat refugee camp, who are separated from the tramline by concrete walls.

Back in 2006, Connex was forced to cancel plans to train Israeli engineers and drivers on Dublin's Luas light railway after the Irish tram drivers union, SIPTU, refused to participate. Later that year, following a sustained campaign by Dutch NGO Civilians for Peace, the ASN bank in Holland divested its shares in Veolia stating, “We believe that Veolia's involvement in the light rail project is not in line with the UN's demand to stop all support for Israel's settlement activities.”

Veolia has also been the subject of legal action in France. Two years ago, Association France-Palestine Solidarité filed a complaint against Alstom and Veolia Environnement, which responded by arguing that French courts had no jurisdiction to rule on their business dealings abroad. In April 2009, however, the Nanterre court ruled that they did have jurisdiction and the case would go ahead.

A recent letter from Daniel Machover of the British group Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights to a local London council argued that Veolia's involvement in the Jerusalem light rail project involves “grave misconduct” because it assists Israel in its violation of international law. Campaigners realise that Veolia is vulnerable to pressure as it relies on large government contracts and local authorities are able to exclude companies from tendering for contracts if there is evidence of grave misconduct. Veolia has numerous local government contracts across the UK and the rest of Europe for recycling services, waste management and incinerators. Often these contracts are worth millions of pounds and last for decades.

An international campaign against Veolia, called Derail Veolia, has succeeded in losing the company contracts worth several million pounds. Local authorities in Stockholm, Oslo, Bordeaux and Sandwell in Birmingham have all been persuaded by campaigners not to grant Veolia any new contracts or renew existing ones. Campaigners in Hampshire, Camden, Lambeth, Liverpool, Hastings and Portsmouth are currently pressuring their local councils to exclude Veolia from local contracts. Galway County Council has recently voted unanimously to adopt a motion calling on the County Manager not to sign or renew any contracts with Veolia. Sligo County Council has also adopted a similar motion. But despite this, Galway director of transportation and infrastructure, Ciaran Hayes, has chosen to ignore the motion and award Veolia the contract.

Protests against Veolia have not only been over the company's involvement in Israeli settlement building, however. In

Sussex, a local campaign has recently been set up to stop Veolia building a waste incinerator at Newhaven. Campaigners see the construction of the incinerator as environmentally destructive and a direct attack on public health. Last year campaigners occupied cranes at the site of the incinerator in protest at the commencement of construction. There are over 100 incinerators planned across the UK. Veolia holds contracts to build many of them and is tendering for many more. Veolia also owns Onyx, which was the subject of bitter strikes in Sussex over pay and the wrongful dismissal of refuse collectors.

Veolia and its subsidiary Veloway have now tendered to run the Transport for London Cycle Hire scheme. Campaigners are pressuring TfL and mayor Boris Johnson to exclude them from the tendering. In a further greenwashing move, Veolia has just signed a contract with the University of Birmingham to work together to “promote environmental research, innovation and sustainable development in areas such as carbon savings and energy efficiencies.” Veolia also issued a press release boasting that the company was part of the Prince's May Day Network, a group of businesses “committed to taking action on climate change.” Along with McDonalds, the Network is sponsoring an initiative called Capital Clean Up, which is apparently aimed at “urging Londoners to clean up their city.”

The Derail Veolia campaign is an example of grassroots campaigning successfully challenging a profit-driven multinational corporation. Veolia's lost contracts are estimated to have cost it £7.5 billion. Veolia has every reason, therefore, to try and greenwash its image.

As part of its revamped News Updates, Corporate Watch has recently produced extensive profiles of companies complicit in the Israeli occupation of Palestine territories, from arms manufacturers to supermarkets selling illegal settlement produce. The briefings can be found on the Corporate Watch website:  
Part 1: [www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3192](http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3192)  
Part 2: [www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3207](http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3207)

# THE 20 E IN D W NO E TO A E

CSR, or Corporate Social Responsibility, is a phenomenon that free-market gurus like the late Milton Friedman railed against, and that concerned non-governmental organisations often rush to embrace. Yet, both of these seemingly paradoxical reactions to CSR are arguably misinformed: they falsely take the rhetoric of CSR at face value and believe that its proponents are actually concerned with improving corporate social responsibility to the broader population, not just to their shareholders.

Contrary to conservative not-for-profit corporations, which tend to join with Friedmanites in deriding CSR, their liberal counterparts correctly maintain that a world without some form of corporate social responsibility is not conducive to capitalism's ongoing viability. Indeed, by acknowledging that massive and unregulated corporate power is potentially easily undermined by popular resistance, liberal power-brokers recognise the need to provide a controlled outlet valve for popular discontent. This enables them to prevent popular power from coalescing in a way that could challenge elite prerogatives. Thus, not-for-profit corporate foundations use the economic resources of their for-profit parent companies to help steer progressive activists into political channels that present no serious threat to the status quo. Sadly, the most problematic part of such anti-democratic strategising is that it is rarely talked about outside of elite corporate circles.

Despite the relative silence around the influence of not-for-profit foundations, evidence has slowly accumulated to demonstrate that, contrary to popular belief, liberal foundations have profoundly shaped the contours of global civil society, actively influencing social change through a process otherwise referred to as either channelling or co-option. It is interesting to note here that, although some scholars have defended the need for foundations to shape democratic processes, they usually fail, as Joan Roelofs put it, to “probe the contradictions to both ‘free enterprise’ and democratic theory implied by the need for extra-constitutional planners.” (*Foundations and Public Policy*, 2003, p.5)

By channelling resources to environmental groups with a moderate-liberal approach to social change, Daniel Faber and Deborah McCarthy suggest that liberal foundations have helped promote “the primacy of ‘professional-led’ advocacy, lobbying, and litigation over direct action and grassroots organizing, a single-issue approach to problem-solving over a multi-issue perspective, the art of political compromise and concession over more principled approaches, and the ‘neutralization’ of environmental politics in comparison to linking environmental problems to larger issues of social justice and corporate power.” (*Foundations for Social Change*, 2005, p.178)

Given that the not-for-profit foundation side of CSR is not quite all it is cracked up to be, is it logical to ask if the same is true about direct, allegedly apolitical, corporate philanthropy? Unfortunately, direct corporate philanthropy, institutionalised as CSR, suffers from much the same problems, as it is regularly used to maximise corporate profits. Perhaps the most useful exposition of this argument was surmised by Gretchen Crosby Sims in her PhD study *Rethinking the Political Power of American Business: The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility* (2003). The central thesis of Sim's groundbreaking analysis of the CSR practices of Fortune 500 companies is that "these activities, which have been all but overlooked by political scientists, represent an enormous, largely hidden source of political power for corporations". Indeed, even today, almost all researchers focusing on the means by which corporations influence politics strictly delimit their analyses to studying business Political Action Committee (PAC) contributions, soft money donations and/or lobbying. Strategic political philanthropy, thinly disguised by the rhetoric of CSR, remains untalked about and, thus, the ostensibly altruistic intent of business elites remains unchallenged.

**When McGeorge Bundy**  
**Ford Foundation, was t**  
**in 1969, he was asked w**  
**radicals. He replied:**

[illegible]



# THE OTHER CORPORATIONS

by Joan Roelofs

Investigations of for-profit corporations are proceeding well, but not-for-profit corporations, although part of the same problem, are mostly neglected. And these not only include foundations, but also charities, causes, non-governmental organisations and think-tanks.

Not all not-for-profit corporations are shoring up the system, but many are. And you wouldn't know unless you looked - even progressive activists are reluctant to do this (see *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, 2007). Even such an obvious subject of interest as the foundation and corporate funding of the World Social Forum has been almost entirely ignored, despite the fact that the Funders Network on Trade and Globalization, created primarily for the WSF, includes the Ford, Rockefeller, Mott, Tides and Levi Strauss foundations (RUPE-India, 2007).

Earlier in United States history, all corporations, even charitable ones, were viewed with suspicion as they assumed powers over which government had little control (Hall, *Inventing the non-profit sector*, 1992). Yet the non-profit sector, which not only helps sustain capitalism and imperialism but also fend off, often in creative and benevolent ways, any threats to the power and wealth of elites, is given little attention.

One sign of these other corporations' power is their great success in buying silence, so that journalists, scholars and even activists rarely investigate.[1] And that also includes most of the 'alternative media', which are themselves largely funded by such foundations.

By power I mean the ability to influence the actions of others, be they groups, individuals, institutions or nations. Thus, foundation funding has gradually changed the mission and methods of radicals and dissenters, and doomed many of those holding fast to defunding and extinction. Foundations are the soft cops, working alongside governments' repression and violence.

One source of foundation power that amplifies the persuasion of funding is organisation. Although there are outliers, the non-profit world is networked with peak organisations such as the Independent Sector, Council on Foundations, Philanthropy Roundtable, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy and many others. The Environmental Grantmakers Association has among its members the major liberal foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, MacArthur, Mott etc.); conservative funders (Pew, Smith Richardson, Packard, Hewlett etc.); and corporate foundations (Ben and Jerry's and Patagonia, as well as BankAmerica, Heinz, Merck, Philip Morris and so on). Grantees and those hoping for grants read the newsletters, attend the conferences and participate in training provided by these entities, where an understanding of 'appropriate goals and methods' is conveyed.

Furthermore, foundations and their funded (and sometimes created) non-governmental organisations work with governments at all levels, as well as with for-profit corporations. Connections are tight, for example, between the Rockefeller and Gates foundations, pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical companies, health and food advocacy organisations and UN agencies. Similarly, many organisations work with the Lockheed Martin Corporation Foundation

in supporting the NAACP, the Urban League and the Children's Defense Fund. Thus, business corporations are not only the source of foundations' original assets and current investment income (hedge funds are now popular) but also their primary values.

The US National Endowment for Democracy, which does overtly what the CIA once did covertly, partners with many foundations and citizen organisations in attempting to influence elections and political movements throughout the world, including the support of overthrow movements. NED also has a foreign network of cognate organisations, including the Canadian Rights and Democracy and the British Westminster Foundation for Democracy. At the local level, great influence is exerted by such organisations as the International City Managers Association and the National Municipal League, which are funded by foundations.

Here are a few examples of the influence these other corporations could exert, and these are just the chip of the tip of the iceberg.

- In Eastern Europe, following the 1975 East-West European Security agreement, known as the "Helsinki Accords", foundations created Helsinki Watch (now Human Rights Watch), an international NGO for monitoring the agreements. The Rockefeller, Ford and Soros foundations were prominent supporters. In the 1980s, the Ford Foundation also funded the London-based East European Cultural Foundation to promote Western-style pluralism in Eastern Europe. The EECF stated that it was "created in response to requests from Central and Eastern Europe for effective assistance in maintaining cultural, intellectual and civic life in these countries and to prevent their isolation from each other and from the West."

- Many Soros Open Society Institutes operated throughout Eastern Europe (and now all over the world) to transform university curricula, subsidise 'civil society organisations' and create political parties, while their economies were left to rot and provide distressed assets for Western capitalists.

- The US civil rights struggles of the 1960s prompted much 'channelling' activity by foundations. The Ford Foundation greatly expanded 'public interest law', by means of which the poor and minorities could achieve gains through litigation. Its objective was to change public policy by means of court decisions, as mass movements were potentially dangerous and current legislatures were not moving with the times. Ford also created the National Urban Coalition (NUC) to fund moderate civil rights groups and to transform the slogan "black power" into "black capitalism". The NUC is significant because it included corporate foundations, which in the past had concentrated on community projects, business think-tanks and product-related charities. Now corporations became part of the liberal foundation network and were directly funding activists and citizen organisations. In 1968, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for NonViolent Social Change was established in Atlanta by corporations and foundations. The result was that its programmes and presentations deradicalised King's message.

## Notes:

[1] Among the few critical works: Joan Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy* (2003); Robert Arnove (ed.) *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism* (1980, just reprinted by Indiana University Press); the works of James Petras; and David Horowitz's series in *Ramparts* (1969). Earlier studies include a Congressional investigation in 1915 by the Commission on Industrial Relations (also known as the Walsh Commission), which is now available online (Google Books); and Horace Coon, *Money to Burn* (1938), which focuses on military contractors embedded in peace organisations.

\* Joan Roelofs is Professor Emerita at Keene State College, New Hampshire, USA.

INVESTIGATING THE OTHER CORPORATIONS

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# OCCUPATION AS PROFIT: THE SETTLER ECONOMY

*The calls for a boycott of Israeli goods are gaining increased mainstream credence. Much noise has been made about the British government finally beginning to question Israel on their export of settlement produce. But the single direct result so far has been a freeze on negotiations on an upgrade of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which already gives Israel preferential trade terms with the 27 EU countries. Whilst politicians make symbolic gestures, it is the people of Palestine who feel the harsh reality of Israel's illegal settlement economy, writes Therezia Cooper.*

The Jordan Valley is located in the north-east of the Occupied Palestinian Territories and makes up 28.5% of the West Bank. As the most fertile region of Palestine, with land perfect for agricultural production, it has been relentlessly exploited by the Israeli state. Since the beginning of the occupation in 1967, Israel has attempted to annex the valley for its own political, military and economic gain. 44% of the area is now controlled by the Israeli army and 50% by the 36 illegal settlements established there. Israeli checkpoints effectively separate its Palestinian inhabitants from the rest of the West Bank. For agents of the Israeli state, such as the agricultural company Carmel Agrexco and the national water company Mekorot, this creates prime business conditions.

## Profiting from the occupation

Carmel Agrexco has previously testified in court that it markets and sells 60-70% of all agricultural produce grown in the Occupied Territories. Its signs and packinghouses can be seen all over the Jordan Valley. Agrexco is known to deal on a large scale with at least nine illegal settlements: Tomer, Mehola, Hamra, Ro'i, Massu'a, Patzael, Mekhora, Netiv Ha-Gdud and Bet Ha-Arava. At the end of 2007, a delegation from the Brighton Tubas Friendship and Solidarity Group entered one of those settlements, Tomer, where they found produce packed for Tesco and destined for its British supermarkets. What shoppers are not told is that, behind the label of cheap Tesco dates, there are endless tales of dispossession and exploitation.

## Facilitating ethnic cleansing

Communities in the Jordan Valley live under the constant threat of settlement expansion. The first new settlement to be approved in a decade, Maskiot, is located there. In 2005, Israel's Ministry of Agriculture started a programme aimed at doubling settler numbers in the Jordan Valley by issuing grants and tax breaks to settlement farms. Most of the settlers in the area are economically rather than religiously motivated; they are placed there to support and expand the Israeli settler economy. For the

Palestinians, each settlement expansion has devastating consequences. One long-running example is the struggle for existence of the Bedouin community of Al-Hadidya and Hamsa. Located in the path of the Ro'i settlement's expansion plans, the community are the embodiment of the expression "to exist is to resist." In August 2007, their houses, or shacks, and animal sheds were bulldozed by the occupation forces in order to facilitate Ro'i's plans to increase their agricultural production, much of which will then be supplied through Agrexco. Families in the area have had their homes bulldozed as many as eight times in the last 12 years, in what can only be described as the occupation force's attempt to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Al-Hadidya. Harab, who lives in Hamsa, told the Brighton Tubas group that people there are defiant and will stay but that it is "obvious that the Israelis want to empty the land so that they can take it."

It is not just Agrexco that makes a profit out of these policies. Mekorot, Israel's national water company, is one of the other big profiteers. Most villages in the Jordan Valley used to have their own water supply as there are plenty of natural springs and wells in the area. But over the years, Mekorot dug deeper wells to facilitate the industrialised settlement business and the natural resources dried out. Palestinians are now forced to buy back their water from Mekorot at inflated prices, while the settlers' water supply is subsidised by the Israeli state.

## Worker exploitation

Because most villages have had all or some of their land confiscated, Palestinians are often forced to take jobs on the settlement farms and frequently end up working on land which used to belong to their families. The life of Yusif from Ein El-Beida is a typical case. Ein El-Beida is located next to the Mehola settlement, which was established immediately after the occupation in 1967. Before the occupation, Yusif's family owned a large farm but this has since been swallowed by Mehola along with 70% of the village's land. For a while, Yusif had a job at the

settlement but, after questioning his supervisor about the working conditions after an injury, he was instantly dismissed. He now works with his father on land they have to lease for 60,000 Shekels per year. Yusif can still point to the exact location where their own land used to be: it is on the other side of the settlement gates and full of young, green banana trees.

The Brighton Tubas group have conducted a series of interviews with Palestinian settlement workers from the Massu'a, Mehola and Tomer settlements, all of which supply produce to Carmel Agrexco. The interviews reveal consistent and serious issues of worker exploitation. All workers interviewed earned between 60 and 70 Shekels a day, although supervisors get paid 90 Shekels a day. Under-age workers get as little as 20 Shekels. The official Israeli minimum wage is 170 Shekels. All workers also lacked contracts, pensions, sick-pay and the right to join a union. Despite frequent injuries, such as fork lift accidents and blade cuts, they get no insurance. In case of such an injury, the common outcome, as in Yusif's case, is dismissal.

## Trade over people

Europe is the biggest recipient of Agrexco produce and, hence, one of the main upholders of the agricultural settlement trade's profitability. Whilst recent concerns have been raised on an official level about the import of settlement goods, their main focus has been on distinguishing settlement imports from other Israeli goods for tax purposes, with humanitarian issues as a secondary concern. According to the current Association Agreement, settlement produce is not legible for import tariff rebates as the settlements are illegally built on Palestinian land according to international law. In reality, however, deceiving labelling makes it almost impossible to separate settlement from other Israeli produce on the border. So as long as that trade continues, European governments are effectively aiding the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the expansion of illegal settlements.





# campaign spotlight

*For almost a decade, the small rural community of Killcommon, County Mayo, Ireland, have been successfully resisting a Shell-led consortium's attempts to build and operate a high pressure gas pipeline and refinery in their remote and ecologically sensitive region. For the past four years, the community-led campaign, Shell To Sea, has been supported by the Rossport Solidarity Camp. The unusual situation of a local community campaign with an integral international activist element has resulted in an inspiring struggle which remains dynamic, both tactically and ideologically.*

## Shell to Sea

by Kaitlyn Temple

The Corrib gas field has a potential value of over 50 billion Euros, including its associated fields. It is jointly owned by Shell (45%), Statoil Hydro (36.5%) and Marathon (18.5%). The Irish government has offered its full support to the oil companies. Planning processes have been bypassed, laws changed, hundreds of Gardai (police) brought in to repress resistance and members of the community imprisoned. Despite the odds stacked against it, however, the community campaign has remained resilient. The health and safety of residents, the livelihoods of the mainly farming and fishing population, and the fragile ecology of the region all depend on the campaign's success. Resistance is not so much a choice; it is as a necessity.

From 2000 until now, the campaign has used a diverse range of tactics to resist the development. The construction site has been repeatedly blockaded and occupied; machinery and equipment sabotaged; lock-ons used and water-based action taken. All legal and planning avenues have further been explored and environmental agencies appealed to. The effectiveness of the resistance can be gaged by observing the extensive CCTV; scores of security guards on 24-hour watch at the refinery; hundreds of Gardai posted to the region; increasing number of bribes offered to local individuals and community groups; and the ongoing delays to work. This rural community has become a thorn in Shell's side that the multinational remains unable to remove despite its best efforts.

In 2005, the community first shifted towards the use of direct action as they forcibly resisted Shell engineers' attempts to stake out the route of the pipeline. The indefinite jailing of five men who refused Shell access to their land galvanised resistance to the project. Solidarity actions were organised across Ireland. Meanwhile in Mayo, pickets shut the refinery construction site down. After three months, popular protest forced

the release of the five men. The pickets, however, continued and the site remained closed for over a year. In October 2006, almost 200 Gardai were drafted into the area to break the picket. Hundreds of people travelled across Ireland to support the community. Gardai violence escalated and many people were injured. In the face of this state repression, and fearing for protesters' safety, the community took the decision to call off a major demonstration in November. The cancellation of the demonstration meant the campaign lost momentum, particularly at the national level.

Perhaps the resistance during this early period highlights the strengths and weaknesses of a campaign led by the heart. The passion that drives resistance means direct responses to acts perceived as unjust are rapid, strong and unified. On the other hand, the decisions taken may not be the most politically expedient, as was the case with the November 2006 demonstration. In the period following this de-escalation of resistance, the campaign was considerably weakened. The picket continued at the site but it almost became a place for people to meet, rather than an effective act of resistance. State violence had instilled fear in the community, limiting their willingness to continue engaging in action.

In summer 2007, activists from the Rossport Camp attempted to diversify tactics and took part in a lock-on to blockade the site. The action successfully stopped work but a number of community members responded with ambiguity. In contrast, when Shell forced their way onto a private pier later that same week to construct a new compound, the landowner, community and camp acted together to stop them. The incident at the pier arguably follows a pattern in the campaign. Periods of greater resistance are typically reactionary; they build up around flash points. Later in the summer of 2007, three prominent community

activists were jailed. Resistance intensified in response. Two local men blocked the site with another lock-on and other locals blocked alternative access routes. When the three men were released on bail, a convoy of over 150 cars met them and drove to the refinery site. The gates were forced open and the site occupied.

In 2008, the more moderate voices in the campaign left Shell To Sea to form a new group. This allowed Shell To Sea to follow a more radical agenda and, over that summer, the community and the camp worked together using direct action to prevent the laying of the offshore pipeline. Many took to the water in small boats to stop work; local fishermen exercised their legal right to work in the bay, obstructing the path of the ship and preventing its access; and one local woman began a hunger strike, demanding that the ship left Irish waters. Eventually, the ship sustained damage that prevented it from completing work.

This was a time of change in the campaign. Direct action was now considered a legitimate tactic in most situations. Trust had built up between the community and outside supporters, enabling both collective action and greater dialogue around the limited aims of sending Shell to sea compared to the broader concerns of those who approach the struggle from an ecological and anti-capitalist perspective.

Attempts at offshore pipe laying are resuming in Spring 2009 and actions against Shell are continuing. For instance, a day of action was organised on 9th May. On 19th May, activists from Dublin Shell To Sea blocked the entrance of the prison van carrying activist Maura Harrington. A Summer Gathering also took place 29th May and 1st June as Shell returned to Glengad. For more up-to-date information, check out [www.corribsos.com](http://www.corribsos.com) and [www.indymedia.ie/mayo](http://www.indymedia.ie/mayo).

# CRACKDOWN ON ANTI-CORPORATE DISSENT: THE ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

During the past three years, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service have launched a new campaign against anti-corporate animal rights campaigns across the country. The crackdown has led to the imprisonment of activists linked to Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) for a total of 50 years and the jailing of Sean Kirtley, who was linked to the Stop Sequani Animal Torture Campaign (SSAT), for four and a half years. The sentences, the charges and the nature of the prosecutions have all been political. Public opposition to the crackdown has been confounded by a media smokescreen thrown up by the press releases churned out by the National Extremism Tactical Coordination Unit (NETCU), portraying activists as 'extremists' and disseminating misinformation. Many of those jailed have not committed any conventional crime but have been targeted by new legislation intended to counter the threat posed to the pharmaceutical industry by effective direct action.

## The role of NETCU

The National Extremism Tactical Coordination Unit was set up partly as a replacement for the Animal Rights National Index (ARNI). The creation of NETCU came at the same time as a realisation by the police that the small, autonomous direct actions against companies involved in vivisection in 1980s and 90s were being replaced by mass campaigns such as the campaign to shut down the Hillgrove cat breeders and, later, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC).

NETCU monitors the policing of animal rights campaigns and other political movements, often focused anti-corporate campaigns; follows prosecutions through courts and cultivates informants. One of NETCU's most important roles, however, is the undermining of campaigns through partisan use of the media and support for groups presenting counter arguments to the dissenters NETCU is targeting. For instance, the NETCU website hosted links to the pro-vivisection Research Defense Society and articles praising PROtest. NETCU is also one of the least transparent of all UK police departments and shrug off all requests for information about the work of the unit. The political nature of NETCU's work is illustrated by several press releases boasting of activists being prevented from doing street collections and leafletting (see, for example, 'Animal rights campaign refused permission to hold street collections in Sunderland' at <http://www.netcu.org.uk/media/article.jsp?id=280>)

## The Sequani Six

*"All effective campaigns that have tried to change the world have suffered severe repression at the hands of the state. If the state isn't interested, then you're not being effective."* - Sean Kirtley

An amendment to the Serious Organised

Crime and Police Act (SOCPA) in 2005 made it illegal to "interfere with the contractual relations of an animal research organisation" or to "intimidate" employees of an animal research organisation. One of the people consulted during the drafting of the act was the CEO of Sequani labs in Ledbury, Herefordshire. The labs had been the subject of protests due to their involvement in animal testing.

On 9th May 2006, coordinated dawn raids took place at various homes around the Midlands. The massive police operation, dubbed 'Tornado', was given up-to-the-minute coverage on the news section of the NETCU website. Computers and mobile phones were seized as well as items like a plastic witches' nose that were later exhibited in court. Twelve people were charged under SOCPA. In the trial of the first seven defendants, in January and February 2008, the prosecution alleged that the events at 16 demonstrations against Sequani and related companies amounted to an 'interference with the contractual relations' of Sequani. The incidents related to words spoken (allegedly offensive), acts of trespass and the sending of a repeating fax message to block up company fax machines. All of these charges are minor and would be extremely unlikely to carry a prison sentence. However, when they form an element of a SOCPA offence, they can carry up to five years in prison.

The 18-week-long trial, subject to a media-gagging order imposed by the judge, examined reams of computer and mobile phone evidence. The prosecution produced an 'expert analyst' who examined the network of phone calls between the defendants and presented them as evidence that they were organising demonstrations. The very act of planning to demonstrate against

Sequani was portrayed as illegal. The prosecution identified what they presented as a 'hierarchy' in the SSAT campaign and portrayed certain defendants, including Sean Kirtley, as the 'leaders'. Much was made of the fact that Sean Kirtley's computer showed that he had updated the SSAT website. SMS messages and emails downloaded to computers, through email clients like Thunderbird or Outlook, were read out in court.

What the defendants were accused of essentially amounted to nothing more than a public, legal protest campaign. Nothing the average person would perceive as illegal occurred. No acts of direct action were relied upon by the prosecution and no physical damage had been done to Sequani or any other company (except for one window broken by accident).

The trial at Coventry Crown Court took its toll on the defendants. According to Sean Kirtley, defendants suffered *"mental and physical exhaustion, nightmares and disturbed sleep"* as a result of the stress. Wendy Campbell told Corporate Watch, *"It nearly killed me but I was innocent, so I stood my ground."*

All defendants apart from Kirtley were acquitted. The judge, a game-shooter, remanded Kirtley and later sentenced him to four and a half years imprisonment and a five-year CRASBO on release, which is an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) imposed by a criminal court.

So let us look for a moment at the specific charges against Kirtley. He was not directly accused of using offensive language: the prosecution admitted he was mostly silent at demonstrations. Nor was he accused of sending disruptive faxes. The only charges against him were of allegedly 'organising' demonstrations through phone calls and

emails and updating the SSAT website. The SSAT website was not offensive and did not even advertise the demonstrations at Sequani. It merely discussed animal abuse by Sequani and listed companies doing business with it. It also encouraged readers to engage, politely, with these companies and not break the law. SSAT was also a general animal rights resource with information about the fur and dairy trades and anti-foie gras campaigns.

Thus, Sean Kirtley, perhaps more than any other prisoner in the UK at the moment, is a political prisoner punished for nothing but exercising his right to freedom of expression and right to protest.

### The SHAC Seven

Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) is perhaps the most ambitious and most effective anti-corporate campaign against vivisection in the world. Its aim is to close Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), Europe's largest animal testing laboratory. In its attempts to do so, it has aimed to persuade companies to desist from investing in, supplying or providing services to HLS. This tactic recognises that corporations cannot do business in a vacuum but rely on other companies to provide a network of services to them.

In May 2007, police arrested 32 people in raids dubbed 'Operation Achilles'. Since then, 15 people have been charged with 'conspiracy to blackmail' and are being tried in two separate cases, of which the trial of the 'SHAC 7' was the first.

The charges related to six years of campaigning against HLS, which the prosecution claimed was 'blackmail'. Blackmail is defined as "making an unwarranted demand with menaces." The alleged blackmail in the three and a half month long trial at Winchester Crown Court takes a little bit of creative thinking to understand. SHAC, in which all seven on trial were allegedly active, published publicly available company details of customers, investors and other companies doing business with HLS. SHAC supporters were encouraged to write to them or protest against them in the hope that they would cease trading with HLS. SHAC always added a caveat that actions should remain within the law. In fact, SHAC went to such lengths to remain within the law that Natasha Avery, one of the defendants, entered into long correspondences with the police over SHAC-related demonstrations, even praising the policing of some as even-handed.

Throughout the history of the SHAC campaign, autonomous direct actions, often under the banner of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), have taken place against HLS, secondary and tertiary

companies and their employees. Cars have been paint-stripped, company property damaged and letters threatening more damage have been sent to company offices and, sometimes, to directors' homes. Hoax bombs have been sent and, on one occasion, an incendiary device was placed at the home of a company director of a related company. These actions are not alleged to have been carried out by SHAC. However, during the trial a spreadsheet, allegedly pieced together from fragments of a document linked to a computer in the house where the SHAC office was based, was produced. The spreadsheet detailed actions against HLS, including the sending of letters accusing directors of being paedophiles and damage to cars, giving the place and the date when the actions occurred. The prosecution alleged that other documents recovered from computers provided tenuous links between some defendants and the spreadsheet.

Thus, the alleged 'unwarranted demand' was what SHAC had asked companies: to sever links with HLS. The supposed threat, or 'menace', was that of direct action carried out by others. The existence of some evidence, albeit weak, of links between some of the people on trial and direct action was an added extra for the prosecution.

A further complication was that three people had pleaded guilty. A SHAC statement said that this was because they "could not hope for a fair trial" and that the government "had a political will to find them guilty of something." However, this effectively meant that it was accepted that blackmail had occurred, although the other five defendants denied conspiracy. The trial, therefore, was about how much the remaining defendants could be linked to this 'blackmail'. Much of the evidence, including the aforementioned spreadsheet, could not be challenged as the defendants who pleaded guilty were not cross examined.

Although it was technically accepted that blackmail had occurred, the prosecution never specified the exact nature of the blackmail. At its highest, the prosecution case linked most defendants to direct action through the computer evidence. However, the evidence of such a link was tenuous to non-existent. Failing that, the prosecution essentially argued that SHAC operated legally but gave tacit support to direct action. In some cases, particularly where activists had not been involved in SHAC for long and could not be painted as organisers, the prosecution argued that words they had said on demonstrations, ranging from threats to articulate speeches about the need to end vivisection, were evidence of 'conspiracy to blackmail'. The judge even instructed the jury that

simply being on demonstrations where threatening statements were uttered could be evidence of 'conspiracy to blackmail'.

When the jury found 7 out of the 8 defendants guilty, it remained unclear which one of the prosecutions many definitions of the charges they accepted. It may be that they were simply influenced by the media storm whipped up by NETCU press officers or the wealth of irrelevant allusions to actions not carried out by the defendants, such as the theft of the body of Gladys Hammond in the completely separate campaign against Darley Oaks Guinea pig farm. It is evident that the defendants were convicted, to a large extent, through guilt by association with the actions of others.

At the three-day-long sentencing in January 2009, Judge Butterfield sentenced the defendants according to how he saw them in the supposed hierarchy of the SHAC campaign, not according to the evidence against them. Thus, Greg and Natasha Avery were given the heaviest sentences possible but were given credit for their guilty pleas and sentenced to serve nine years each. Heather Nicholson, who plead not-guilty, received the longest actual sentence, eleven years. Gavin Medd Hall was sentenced to eight years; Daniel Wadham, five years; and Daniel Amos and Gerrah Selby were each sentenced to four years.

So what does this mean for free speech and anti-corporate dissent in the UK? By the same logic, an anti-war campaign that publishes information on the whereabouts of a military base or arms factory and calls for its closure could be put in the frame for the same crime if that base was then the subject of an arson attack. All it takes is for the police to imply that the people running the public campaign are linked to those involved in direct action. Consequently, campaigners might feel compelled to publicly distance themselves from acts of direct action lest they find that, unbeknown to them, those involved in public action are responsible for the covert actions too and the whole movement is charged with 'conspiracy'. In fact, the use of such charges is a classic police tactic aimed at spreading paranoia and convicting as many activists as possible for acts carried out by a few anonymous people. The other aim is to minimise public support for illegal actions by harassing and criminalising those who speak up in solidarity.

For more on the crackdown on animal rights activists, see:  
<http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3179>  
<http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3191>  
<http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3194>  
<http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3385>



# Babylonian Times

*Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all of the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Jeremiah 51:7*



## DWP: We're closing UP

Terms change, and so do policies and social attitudes. The 2003-2006 government campaign Targeting Benefit Fraud became Targeting Benefit Thieves (2006-2009). As with 'illegal immigrants', not only the practice but the person him or herself became the target of state criminalisation and demonisation.

The latest reincarnation of the campaign targeting 'benefit thieves', or 'benefit fraudsters' or 'criminals', conveniently called "We're closing in", was launched in September last year in 30 local authority areas. In January this year, ten more local authorities joined in, and the list is growing.

In 2006-7, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) spent £6,860,000 on its media and PR campaign targeting 'benefit fraud', which included glossy, customisable posters and TV commercials. It was the most costly of all DWP publicity campaigns for that year. A 2008 DWP report assessing the scheme was titled "Ready to work, skilled for work: unlocking Britain's talent", although it might have been more aptly entitled "unlocking Britain's intolerance". To quote Anti-Fraud Minister James Plaskitt, the campaigns run by the Department to counter 'benefit fraud' are "designed to positively reinforce honest behaviour, to create a climate of intolerance to benefit fraud and to undermine its social acceptability."

The lengths to which the government is prepared to go in its pursuit of this mythic threat to social cohesion and stability sometimes crosses the boundary into science fiction. Last year a new technology to combat 'benefit cheating' over the phone was piloted for a number of local authorities. The Voice Risk Analysis (VRA) technology, which spots changes in a caller's voice "enabling trained operators to decide whether a call is high or low risk", was developed by Capita Group in conjunction with Digilog UK.

Meanwhile, Work and Pensions Secretary James Purnell has stepped down from the cabinet, allegedly in protest at Gordon Brown's leadership. Last month the Telegraph reported, in the latest MPs expenses fiasco, that the minister had claimed second-home expenses for a London flat, despite having sold it in October 2004. Oh, and he 'forgot' to pay the capital gains tax. That's, of course, not benefit-cheating. Politicians don't do that, do they? Apparently only poor people do.

## COP15: A darker tomorrow

It's no joke. Global advertising leaders have joined forces with the UN in the run-up to the crucial Copenhagen UN Climate Change Conference in December, dubbed Kyoto II. Last September, at the instigation of the International Advertising Association (IAA, an advertising business association with 4,000 members in 76 countries), UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with over 20 representatives from the world's largest advertising groups to discuss climate change and Copenhagen.

The list included WPP's subsidiary Ogilvy, which won the bid to work with the UN leading up to the summit and has been contacting 'thought leaders' in climate change campaigning and business to formulate its proposals. The same advertising group, through Ogilvy Primary Contact, is the creator of BP's recent greenwash campaign "Creating A Brighter Tomorrow", with adverts implying that an energy mix of fossil fuels 'offset' by 'renewables' (such as biofuels!) is just super.

And it's not just Ogilvy's deadly corporate grip that's squeezing any remnants of life from COP15. The talks have already been riven by other corporate interventions as revealed in the Corporate Europe Observatory's timely and excoriating new report Climate Summit Inc. The report delineates the Danish government's active pursuit of business involvement in Copenhagen and its role in the creation of the World Business Summit held on 24-26th May, which sought to engage companies in the business of influencing the climate agenda.

At the UN September meeting, the executive director of IAA, Michael Lee, set an enthusiastic tone: "The idea of this meeting [...] has its origins in the plain and unmistakable fact that good and responsible advertising and communications can accomplish great things." It can accomplish great things, indeed: it can paint black, white and fossil fuels green.

The CEO report can be found at [www.climategreenwash.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/climate-summit-inc.pdf](http://www.climategreenwash.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/climate-summit-inc.pdf)

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