

# The Insurrection of the English Underclass

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## **Introduction: The meaning of the term ‘underclass’**

The spontaneous uprising of the British 'underclass' was, of course, easily crushed by the massive force of the state amassed against it, illustrating one of the main lessons of History once more: that spontaneous uprisings can never overturn a socio-economic system (as opposed to its political personnel), if they are not backed by an organised political movement with its own antisystemic project, its own vision of the future society and a transitional strategy for moving from here to there.

However, it is important to assess the importance of this insurrection – which is neither the first (see e.g. the similar insurrections in France<sup>[1]</sup> and Greece<sup>[2]</sup> a couple of years ago) nor, of course, the last, as even a systemic magazine like *Spiegel* acknowledges<sup>[3]</sup> – and, in the process, to try to interpret its causes and effects. In fact, all these insurrections by what we may call the ‘underclass’, to my mind, represent the long overdue backlash of the main victims of neoliberal globalisation and particularly those who have not yet been integrated into it, despite the good efforts of the reformist Left, or what I call the degenerate “Left”.<sup>[4]</sup>

But first, we need to clarify the meaning of ‘underclass’, as it is obviously not used here in the usual pejorative sense to imply the ‘poor’ or ‘lumpen’ (proletariat) – the meaning that we see so often in various analyses throughout the systemic mass media. Instead, we should take ‘underclass’ to mean the victims of neoliberal globalisation par excellence, i.e. the unemployed and the marginalised, those living close to subsistence level and particularly the youngsters with no future: in a word, the present-day *sans culottes*, who do not belong to any of the established social classes as they have not (yet) been integrated into the social system of the internationalised market economy and its political complement, representative ‘democracy’ – unlike the working class, for example, who have been integrated into it to various degrees. Therefore, the underclass are very dangerous to the elites, not because they could overthrow the system, but because they force the elites into taking inevitable counter-action to crush their frequent insurrections, thereby revealing the true nature of what passes for "democracy" today — a political system which ultimately relies on physical violence to reproduce the economic violence on which it is founded. Furthermore, the elites’ backlash could lead other social groups who are presently only partly integrated into the system (low-income, occasional or part-time employees, etc.) to take part in the insurrections of the future and/or – even worse for the elites – to organise themselves ‘from below’ with the aim of overcoming the

trade unions and parties controlled by the system and creating an antisystemic movement.

The insurrections of the future, if motivated by an antisystemic project like the Inclusive Democracy project, could in turn establish the conditions for a future society with an equal distribution of all forms of power, i.e. without power relations or structures — the ultimate cause of every aspect of the present multi-dimensional crisis.[\[5\]](#)

## **The “criminality” of the insurrectionists vs. the real criminality of the elites**

The insurrection of the British underclass was seen by the entire British establishment and their followers – the bourgeois class and, particularly, the petty bourgeoisie – as a case of ‘pure criminality’. In other words, the real criminals of the political, economic and cultural elites have condemned the victims of their own criminality and have been both demanding and taking the worst kind of revenge on them for revolting against a system which has been destroying their lives since the day they were born. Of course, this is not surprising considering that, throughout History, the ruling elites and the privileged social groups have labelled the people who have revolted against them as criminals, from the French and Russian revolutions to the Spanish and Greek civil wars. Thus:

- the entire British political system, i.e. the war criminals of the Labour Party who did not hesitate to destroy the people of Iraq,[\[6\]](#) among others, or the corresponding criminals of the Tory party, who were similarly keen to destroy the people of Libya[\[7\]](#) -- the aim being, in both cases, fully to integrate the respective oil-rich countries into the internationalised market economy— played a leading role in creating tremendous hysteria against the underclass, presumably because they ought to have been content with their lot! This despite the fact that, under today’s parody of democracy called representative “democracy”, the underclass have no effective way of expressing their discontent, given that both main parties succeeding one another in power implement exactly the same sort of policies (with minor variations) – i.e. those that neoliberal globalisation requires;
- the real economic criminals (bankers, financiers, etc.) who created the 2007-8 financial crisis, as well as the present recession[\[8\]](#) under which the states intervened to save private banking at the expense of social spending and the remnants of the welfare states (while the profits of the economic elites and the bonuses of the bankers et. al. have continued to increase), now turn against the petty thieves who have been stealing in order to meet the needs that the system itself has created. The present-day “Misérables” are called “criminal” and are consequently awarded long prison sentences by an economic system which does not give every citizen the means to meet the needs that it creates but which, instead, privileges some and condemns others to a life of mere survival and anomie through no fault of their own or of their parents;
- the systemic mass media (which have already been conquered by huge financial conglomerates[\[9\]](#)), whose role in promoting the criminal wars of the political elites and the need for “austerity” measures hitting the lower income groups particularly hard – supposedly in order to “save the economy” – is well known. It is no wonder that, today, all the systemic

media massively promote the argument that the insurrections represent ‘pure criminality’, while their real systemic causes are not even mentioned, and even the most liberal media only stress the consequences of neoliberal globalisation (in terms of the cuts in social spending, or in police numbers!) and never neoliberal globalisation itself!

So, no surprises there, although the despicable stand of the Labour party does show how far this ex-social-democratic party has moved towards social fascism.[\[10\]](#) Not surprisingly, even a liberal newspaper like the *Independent* needed to stress in a leading article that:

*Less predictable, perhaps, was the near-unanimity on parade in Parliament on Thursday, where MPs from all parties vied to identify a malaise that stemmed, as they saw it, from a destructive moral laxity pervading Britain. From parenting to education to policing, a cross-party consensus called for discipline, toughness and the re-establishment and enforcement of boundaries.[\[11\]](#)*

However, what was even more surprising was the stance of ‘neutrality’ if not ‘tolerance’ shown by the trade unions and the working class in general towards this stand of the Labour party and British society’s associated trend towards full totalitarianism, which is promoted by the British establishment. Particularly so when this establishment, not content with the mass arrests of thousands of the members of the underclass who took part in the insurrection and the expected imposition of the hardest possible prison sentences on most of them by the bourgeois justice system (creating the need for even more prisons to accommodate them and therefore faithfully following the example of the USA, the nation with the highest incarceration rate in the world[\[12\]](#)), have now proceeded to impose social punishments, on top of the heavy penalties already imposed, which involve depriving the insurgents’ families of the right to social housing and making them homeless once again![\[13\]](#) Clearly, *Les “Misérables”* of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is being replayed with a vengeance at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>![\[14\]](#)

## **The “squares” movement and the return of traditional insurrections with a vengeance**

Yet, the insurrection of the English ‘underclass’ has also revealed a fact of high significance as regards the resistance to capitalist neoliberal globalisation. For the last six months or so, the degenerate “Left” have systematically been promoting the disorienting view that peaceful demonstrations like those of the indignados in Spain or the aganaktismenoi (outraged) in Greece[\[15\]](#) represent a new dawn of social radicalism that could even lead to the overthrow of neoliberal globalisation, similar to the overthrow of the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes.

However, this is a completely distorted view of events designed to justify the integration, initially, of the Tunisian and Egyptian peoples into the New World Order of neoliberal globalisation and representative ‘democracy’[\[16\]](#) through their ‘liberation’ from tyrannical regimes and, presently, the similar integration of the Spanish and Greek peoples through the “Left’s” systematic effort to defuse the grenade represented by the massive unemployment and poverty that their integration into the New World Order implies. Clearly, the squares

movement within the 'Arab Spring' had nothing to do with the overthrow of the system itself, as the main enemy of this movement was just a tyrannical version of the system and the peoples of these countries still aspire to representative 'democracy', given that they have never really experienced it. In other words, it was exactly because the interests of foreign and local elites coincided with those of the demonstrators at the squares that the overthrow of Mubarak and Ben Ali (with the decisive help of the Egyptian and Tunisian armies which are fully controlled by the transnational elite) was made possible. On the other hand, the peoples of Spain and Greece are directly or indirectly opposed to neoliberal globalisation itself, and therefore any attempt to fool them by replacing the pseudo-socialists, Papandreou and Zapatero, with other members of the system's political personnel is doomed to failure, given the long experience of representative 'democracy' that these peoples have had.

The insurrection of the British underclass, however, has clearly shown that peoples in despair are resorting to historical forms of rebellion again. This is because they know full well that these uprisings can never be ignored by the elites, like the peaceful demonstrations in the squares can be – which are praised by the elites and the systemic media and which now even include the peaceful demonstration of the "progressive" Zionist Israeli middle class on the Rothschild Boulevard of central Tel Aviv<sup>[17]</sup>, ignoring (of course!) even the fundamental rights not just of the Palestinians, but also of the Arab-Israelis who constitute 20% of the population of Israel. Such praise by the elites and their media for these peaceful demonstrations is not surprising, given that, as we saw above, the uprisings are much more harmful to them than the peaceful demonstrations in the squares could ever be.

## **How can neoliberal globalisation be overthrown?**

It is economic violence that pushed the English underclass to physical violence and looting during the era of neoliberal globalisation, since their anger, indirectly if not directly, was aimed at the terrible inequality created by capitalist globalisation. An inequality that has assumed Victorian dimensions in Britain today, as a recent report showed according to which the household wealth (including cars and other possessions) of the top 10% of the population is 100 times higher than the wealth of the poorest 10%!<sup>[18]</sup> Members of the underclass rightly perceive – albeit often subconsciously – the nature of neoliberal globalisation, which is summarised accurately by Charles Moore, the High Tory former Daily Telegraph editor and official biographer of Baroness Thatcher:<sup>[19]</sup>

*The rich run a global system that allows them to accumulate capital and pay the lowest possible price for labour. The freedom that results applies only to them. The many simply have to work harder, in conditions that grow ever more insecure, to enrich the few.*

In other words, the underclass implicitly realise that the overthrow of capitalist neoliberal globalisation is not a matter of overthrowing some evil conspirators and their catastrophic policies which, supposedly, simply reflect some criminal "dogma" based on a new capitalist "strategy", but it is actually a matter of overthrowing the very same system of the market economy, whose dynamics have inevitably led to the present globalisation! So, neoliberal globalisation is neither the outcome of a conspiracy nor of some dogma adopted by 'bad'

economists and politicians, as is misleadingly claimed by the reformist Left and through such channels as Naomi Klein's best-seller[20] putting forward a conspiracy "theory" on neoliberal globalisation, which is heavily promoted by the systemic mass media and which (not accidentally!) won the systemic [Warwick Prize for Writing](#) (2008/9). Instead, it can be shown to be the outcome of the dynamics of the capitalist market economy, which is now institutionalised on a global scale by the transnational elite, either "peacefully" through the international institutions they control (IMF, World Bank, EU, etc.), or by force (Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya), with the obvious aim of integrating every country into the internationalised market economy. Therefore, contrary to these utterly naïve (if not also dangerously disorienting) views, as I tried to show elsewhere,[21] neoliberal globalisation is a SYSTEMIC phenomenon and can only be reversed through the overthrow of the institutions on which it is founded – in particular, the open and 'liberalised' markets of capital, labour, goods and services (the "four liberties", as they are euphemistically called in the Maastricht Treaty on which the EU is founded!).

This, in turn, can only happen when the capitalist market economy is replaced by a new system for allocating resources, which is neither based on the market system nor on central planning, both of which are historically bankrupt. Instead, it should be based on an economic democracy, as part of an Inclusive Democracy in which citizens' assemblies would determine the allocation of scarce resources in such a way as to secure both the satisfaction of all citizens' basic needs according to need and their non-basic needs according to the principle of freedom of choice.  
[\[22\]](#)

The obvious conclusion is that the first step towards such a society is the breaking of each country's economic links with the internationalised market economy and the creation of the preconditions for a self-reliant (not autarchic!) economy, which would rely mainly on indigenous economic resources to meet the needs of its own people, while engaging in bilateral or multilateral relations (within an economic union of countries at a similar level of economic development) to cover those needs that could not be met locally. This is not localism, of course, but a new genuine internationalism based on the principles of solidarity and collective autonomy, rather than on individualism and the greed for profit, as at present.[23] It is confederations of self-reliant Inclusive Democracies which could really overthrow the present catastrophic system of neoliberal globalisation and lead to a new international society based on self-determination, involving no exploitation, poverty, mass unemployment or wars to impose the power of transnational or local elites.

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[\[1\]](#) Takis Fotopoulos, "France: The revolt of the victims of neoliberal globalisation", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (November 2006).

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/newsletter/vol2\\_no4\\_revolt\\_victims\\_global.htm](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/newsletter/vol2_no4_revolt_victims_global.htm)

[2] Takis Fotopoulos, "A systemic crisis in Greece", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (Spring 2009),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5\\_no2\\_takis\\_systemic\\_crisis\\_greece.htm](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5_no2_takis_systemic_crisis_greece.htm)

[3] SPIEGEL ONLINE Staff, "Flash Points Across the Continent", *SPIEGEL*, 12/8/2011,

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,779906,00.html#ref=nlint>

[4] see Part II of my long article on Libya, "The role of the degenerate "Left", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (Summer 2011),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol7/vol7\\_no1\\_takis\\_Libya\\_part2\\_degenerate\\_left.html](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol7/vol7_no1_takis_Libya_part2_degenerate_left.html)

[5] Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy, The Crisis of the Growth Economy and the Need for a New Liberatory Project*, (London/New York: Cassell/Continuum, 1997); see also *The Multidimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy*, (IJID, 2005),

<http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/>

[6] Takis Fotopoulos, "Iraq: the new criminal "war" of the transnational elite", *DEMOCRACY & NATURE*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (July 2003),

[http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol9/takis\\_war2.htm](http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol9/takis_war2.htm)

[7] Takis Fotopoulos, "The pseudo-revolution in Libya and the Degenerate "Left"", Parts I & II, *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (April 2011).

<http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/>

[8] see Takis Fotopoulos "The "new world order" hype and the new version of social-liberalism", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (Spring 2009),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5\\_no2\\_takis\\_new\\_world\\_order\\_hype.htm](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5_no2_takis_new_world_order_hype.htm)

and "The myths about the economic crisis, the reformist Left and economic democracy," *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (October 2008),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol4/vol4\\_no4\\_takis\\_economic\\_crisis.htm](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol4/vol4_no4_takis_economic_crisis.htm)

[9] Takis Fotopoulos, "The conquest of speech by media conglomerates", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY*, Vol. 4, No.2, (April 2008),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol4/vol4\\_no2\\_takis\\_conquest\\_speech\\_media.htm](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol4/vol4_no2_takis_conquest_speech_media.htm)

[10] Takis Fotopoulos, From Social-Democracy to Social-Fascism, *The International Journal of Inclusive*

*Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (November 2006),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/newsletter/vol2\\_no4\\_socialfascism.htm](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/newsletter/vol2_no4_socialfascism.htm)

[11] Leading article, “Liberalism has improved Britain – its defenders must speak up”, *Independent*, 11/8/2011.

[12] see The Sentencing Project, “U.S. PRISON POPULATIONS – TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS “ (May 2003),

<http://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/sp/1044.pdf>

[13] Alistair Keely, “Councils set to evict rioters”, and Kevin Rawlinson and Genevieve Roberts, “Mother of man arrested in riots is served with eviction notice”, *Independent*, 11/8/2011.

[14] see e.g. Matt Blake, “On the rap sheet: 'looter' who pocketed £1, and a suspect caught with an empty box”, *Independent*, 11/8/2011.

[15] Takis Fotopoulos, “Greece: The myth of the revival of classical democracy in Athens”, *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (April 2011),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol7/vol7\\_no1\\_takis\\_myth\\_revival\\_democracy.html](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol7/vol7_no1_takis_myth_revival_democracy.html)

[16] see Takis Fotopoulos, “The pseudo-revolution in Libya and the Degenerate “Left”, Parts I & II.

[17] Tobias Buck, “Israel’s middle-class revolt hits fresh peak”, *Financial Times*, 12/8/2011.

[18] National Equality Panel Report (John Hill’s Report), *An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK*, (2010); see, also, Amelia Gentleman’s report, “Unequal Britain: richest 10% are now 100 times better off than the poorest”, (*Guardian*, 27/1/2010).

[19] Quoted by Stefan Stern (professor of management practice at Cass Business School, London), “Marx was right about change”, *Independent*, 16/8/2011.

[20] Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007) or see e.g. Φώτη Τερζάκη, “Ο νεοφιλελευθερισμός ως έγκλημα κατά της ανθρωπότητας”, (Βιβλιοθήκη, “Ε”, 21/5/2011).

[21] Takis Fotopoulos, “Globalisation, the reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation ‘Movement’”, *DEMOCRACY & NATURE*, Vol.7, No.2, (July 2001),

[http://www.democracynature.org/vol7/takis\\_globalisation.htm](http://www.democracynature.org/vol7/takis_globalisation.htm)

[22] Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, ch. 6 or [The Multidimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy](#), ch. 14,

<http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/ss/ch14.htm>

[23] see Takis Fotopoulos, “The Latin-Americanization of Greece and the lessons for the European South”, *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 2/3, (Spring/Summer 2010),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol6/vol6\\_no2\\_takis\\_latian\\_americanization\\_greece\\_south](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol6/vol6_no2_takis_latian_americanization_greece_south).

see also “The transition to an Inclusive Democracy”, The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy, Vol. 6, No. 2/3, (Spring/Summer 2010),

[http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol6/vol6\\_no2\\_takis\\_ID\\_meeting\\_Barcelona\\_2010.htm](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol6/vol6_no2_takis_ID_meeting_Barcelona_2010.htm)