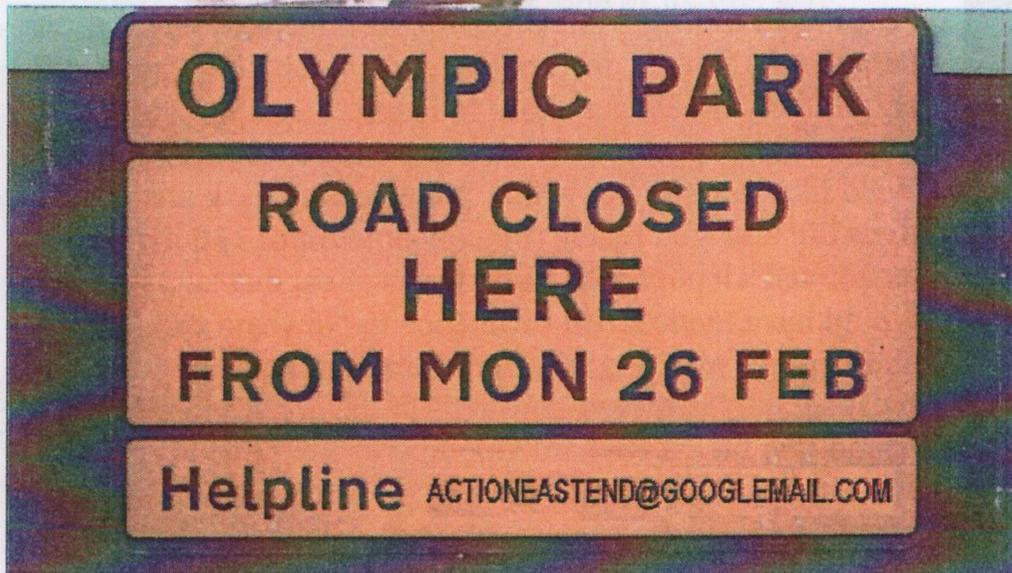




THE GREAT OLYMPIC SWINDLE

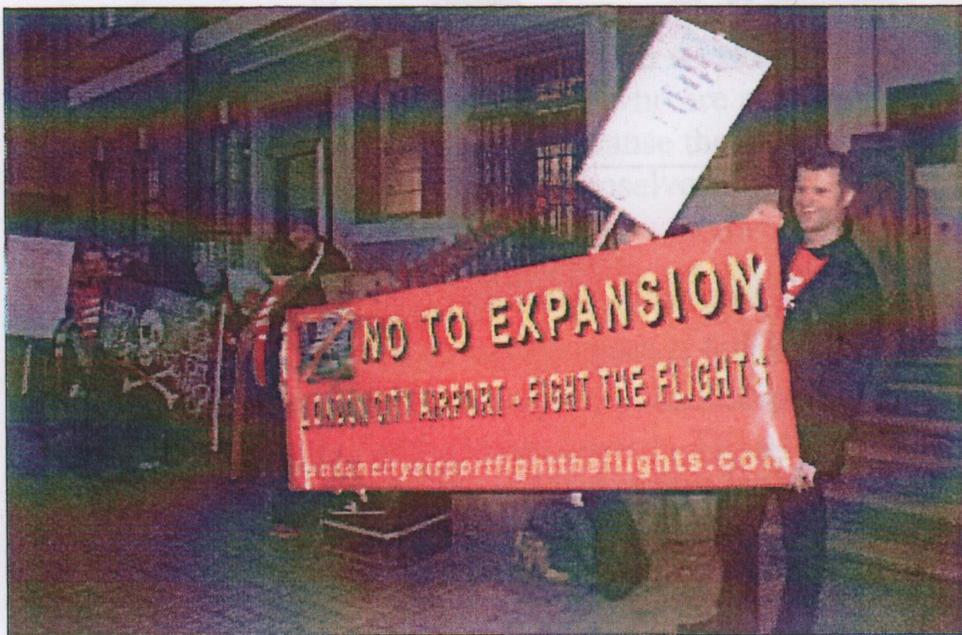


Already the buildings and structures for the Olympic Games are in development and the PR machine is in full swing. Yet despite the best efforts of the Olympic Development Authority (ODA) and their allies to inform you otherwise the 2012 Olympics for most of us are going to be about selling us short.

- **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



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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 bull-dozed 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 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!!

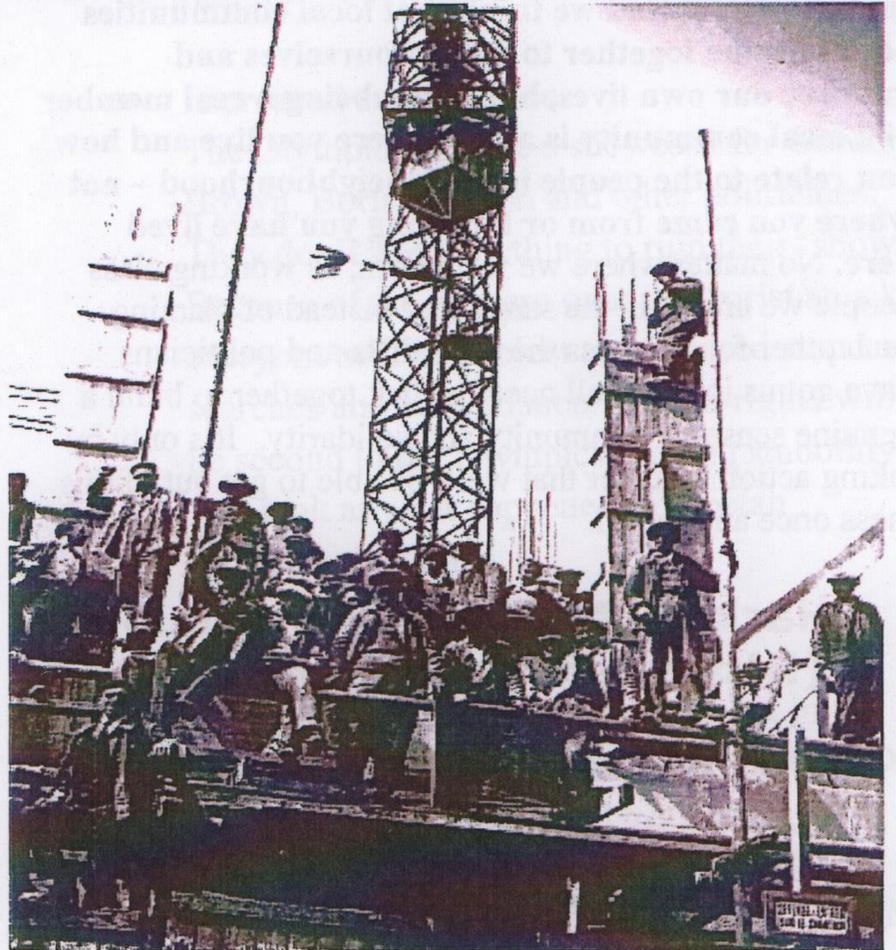
“BRITISH JOBS FOR BRITISH WORKERS” is a slogan that’s become very familiar in the past few months. There have been wildcat strikes and demonstrations by energy sector workers across the UK to protest at the fact that workers have been brought in from outside the UK while local people go jobless. Now 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 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.

Hackney Marshes User Group (HMUG) are volunteers who:

Organise walks round the Marshes, and explore and enhance their wildlife through planting and caring for trees and hedges. Work to improve the Marshes for all sectors of the community, and campaign to protect them from inappropriate development. Organise free activities and skill-sharing days, and run Hackney Community Tree Nursery & Forest Garden. To be added to our email list and / or to get involved please contact us:

Email: HMUG@km551818.demon.co.uk

Telephone: 07950 539 254

Campaigning to save London's most ethnically diverse market from municipal neglect and a property developer.



To contact the *Friends of Queen's Market*:

Address: 142 Clements Road, London E6 2DL

Email: friendsofqueensmarket@yahoo.co.uk

Saif: 07915 234 404

Pauline: 0208 472 4730, 07903 374 009

Need more than advice?

LONDON COALITION AGAINST POVERTY is a coalition of local community activists and individuals working in advice.

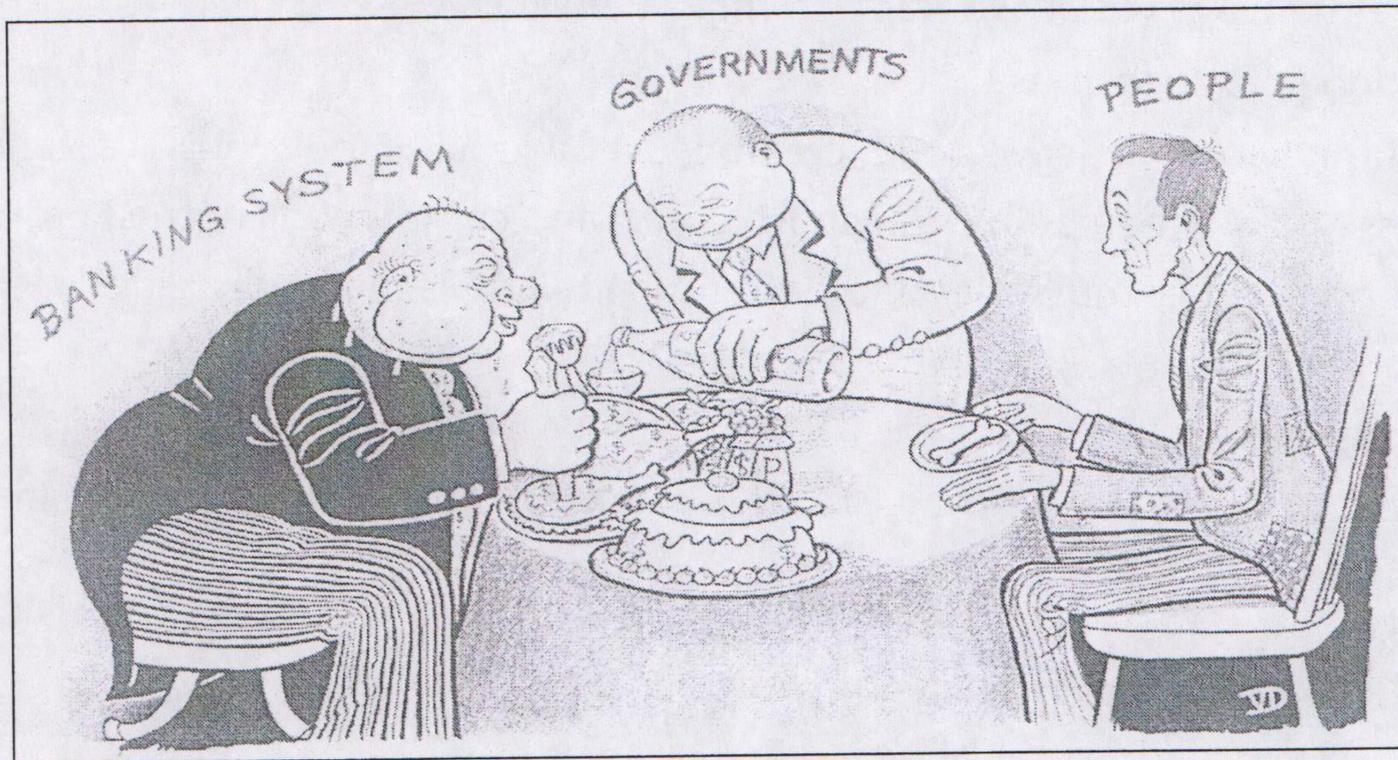
We believe that by coming together to combine advice work with direct action within our communities, we can access the rights that we are often denied. These rights are not enough, but at least they're a start.

If you want to get involved or think we can help you access your rights, contact us on

tel: 020 7247 6101

londoncoalitionagainstopoverty@gmail.com

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. Docklands has been transformed from a working class community to the heart of global finance. Canary Wharf is the headquarters of many of the world's banks and investment houses. Thousands of bankers and associated occupations have flocked to live in the 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. The British economy is now heavily reliant on financial services, which represent around 30% of total national product. The current crisis is therefore more serious in Britain than elsewhere, and in the East End the consequences for working class people are devastating.

Now the government is busy giving away billions of our money to the banks, the very people who caused the crisis in the first place by their incompetence and greed. The strategy is based on faulty logic. They're giving money to banks so the banks will be more willing to lend to us. But if we are losing our jobs, having our houses repossessed or our wages frozen, why the hell would we be stupid enough to start borrowing money and get into debt again, just so the banks can get rich at our expense! What absurdity!

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 billions of pounds could go a long way in the right hands: ours!

SOME BETTER WAYS OF SPENDING BILLIONS!

- Cancel all debt: credit cards, mortgages, student loans
- Grants for students, not loans
- Increase the wages of all workers, no more debt
- More money for pensions
- Spend money on things we need, creating useful jobs: schools, hospitals and health services, green public transport, youth and community centres, parks and recreation facilities, nurseries and better quality provision for the elderly, city farms and allotments
- Low rents and social housing
- Use the buildings in Canary Wharf and other wasted office space as housing 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. Then continue to organise at work and in your community to ensure that the fight goes on! **People before Profits National Demonstration: March 28th. Meet Embankment Tube.** **Financial Fools Day: April 1. Bank of England and elsewhere around the City.** **Protest at G20 summit: April 2nd. Excel Centre**



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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



Action East End ★ *for community and solidarity*

WE DEMAND

- **Affordable housing** whether to buy or rent
- Housing must suit the **living needs of a variety of local people**, which means both family homes and flats that are comfortable, safe and secure, with plenty of light and green spaces and access to local services
- Housing should be **attractive** and enhance the general look of the area
- Property and construction companies **must not be allowed to make huge profits** on the back of these developments
- Spaces set aside for **wildlife** and for **quiet recreation**
- **Leisure facilities** built to suit the interests of a variety of ages
- Land for **allotments** and **community gardens**
- **River side open to all** and be enhanced for use by a range of leisure pursuits as well as wildlife; it should not be where luxury housing is built but should be part of the common land for the community
- Not just become a place to live, but the development of **employment opportunities**
- **Reduction of traffic** with improved public transport, more cycle and walking tracks, and increased use of the river for transporting goods



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Or call: 07795183479

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS

Housing is a basic human need that is increasingly becoming a luxury item for many people. The recent decline in house prices doesn't mean that those on average or below average wages can afford to buy a home and rents continue to rise, with social housing practically non-existent.

Rising house prices have been a feature of the past 30 years. This has left the majority of people, in particular young people, with **huge mortgages or high rents**. Prices have got so far out of reach of most people that the current fall in prices doesn't mean first time buyers will be able to afford anything. Instead, those that have taken out large mortgages are seeing their **hard-earned savings** disappear as the value of their home declines. With many people unable to afford to buy, rents will continue to remain high and may increase. The end result is your average earner is **paying a large part of their salary on a place to live**.

Making Money at our Expense

Many of the major new home builders have hit the headlines, making us think that these developers are really suffering. Profits may be down at the moment, but these companies have made **enormous profits** over the past decades and are certain to weather the storm. The top executives and shareholders will continue to pay themselves high salaries as they cut back by axing jobs. Meanwhile, they continue with major building projects, around the capital, with **East London a major target**. They are aiming to save their high profit margins by demanding that the government give them more subsidies, with the pretext that they need this to continue to build **'affordable homes'**. We all know what a **sham** this is. The definition of 'affordable' is well beyond the reach of your average London wage.

Tower Blocks for the Rich

What is advertised as an affordable development is highly suspect. **Barratt's Homes** is currently promoting a major development on the site of **St. Andrews Hospital by Bromley-by-Bow station**. The glossy brochure that came through local residents letter boxes, made it seem that all the housing would be within the reach of locals and would provide a number of community services. A closer look reveals that the developer is hoping to build **two large tower blocks, one which is 27 stories**.

Luxury Flats

The result of the worry over falling house prices as well as the general motivation to make as much money as possible has led to the proliferation of tower blocks. It is clear by looking at the adverts on property developers' websites that the target buyer for these is not your average wage-earner in the local community. The Olympics has made the East End a magnet for developers and is likely to remain so despite the fall in house prices. According to the Daily Telegraph (Sept 2007): **'The countdown has begun for the 2012 Olympic games and with less than five years to go, London's East End is already feeling the buzz, with investors flocking to locations around the Olympic Park and its huge regeneration area.'** They highlighted all of the new developments in the boroughs around the Olympic site and 'who is buying, who is renting'. In the section on Tower Hamlets, the St. Andrews development gets a mention. **'Buyers and renters'**, according to the Daily Telegraph, will be: **'The highly-paid, transient workforce of Canary Wharf on the doorstep provides a ready rental market for both seasoned investors and newcomers in search of a bargain.'**

TAKE ACTION HOUSING FOR THE COMMUNITY, NOT PROFITS FOR THE DEVELOPERS

We need to **organise locally**, linking up with others in similar situations across London. We need to reject the logic that says that 'we can't control market forces' and start demanding that **communities are under the control of the people who live and work there**. We must not let ourselves be subject to the whims of property developers and investors who put profits ahead of people, despite their advertising gimmicks.