

## **Bed-In CUT PIECE**

**by the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home**

9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010 – the Bluecoat

Performed as a part of the Big Bed-in at the Bluecoat

*Mother (Courage) and (Her) Children sit still, wrapped in large white sheet on the bed.*

**Mother:** Children, it's time for cuts!

*Father checks on the children and mother and takes place on baby stool at the side of the bed with a pair of large scissors in his hands. He performs a performative cutting action (waving the scissors in the air) before he begins.*

**Father:** It is time for cuts. Yoko Ono first performed her seminal piece 'Cut Piece' in 1964 in Tokyo and later in different cities and venues such as Carnegie Hall in New York. She re-enacted it in Paris in 2003. 'Cut Piece' is about Yoko Ono sitting motionless on the stage after inviting the audience to come up and cut away her clothing. There was one instruction: CUT! Kristine Stiles, professor of art history, says:

'Cut Piece' entailed a disrobing, a denouement of the reciprocity between exhibitionism and scopophilic desires, between victim and assailant, between sadist and masochist: and, as a heterosexual herself, Ono unveiled the gendered relationship of male and female subjects as objects for each other.

The piece changed each time with new locations and new audience members. It is said that in Japan, the audience was shy and cautious, in London the audience was violent and in Paris, somewhat too courteous. Com'n Liverpool, It's time for cuts!

We will now perform a re-enactment of Yoko's piece with a contemporary twist. You the audience will do the cuts.

Mother, children are you ready?

**Mother and Children:** No! Nearly! Yes...

**Father:** The government is a public body, an executive that decides how money from taxes (and other things) will be spent. 669.62 billion pounds was spent last year on the public sector. See the Guardian chart behind us. The government, in order to spend all of this money, is organised into departments. For example the Department for Work and Pensions or The Department of Communities and Local Government or The Department of Health or the Ministry of Defence or the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

The Spending Review 2010, as delivered by the Chancellor (who is in charge of all the money) George Osborne on the 20<sup>th</sup> October proposes many, many cuts to the government's spending. Here are some:

490,000 public sector jobs – CUT!

**Mother:** Who will do the cutting? C'mon Gary. Choose somebody. Just point at somebody and make them.

**An audience member** makes a cut into the white sheet with a pair of scissors and signs the register. Over the time, with each new cut, mother and children emerge from underneath the white sheet.

*Mother: Sign our petition. Bed-In Against the Cuts. We'll be posting it to directly to Cameron and Clegg.*

19% of all departmental budgets – CUT!

**Father gives scissors to another audience member.**

The Department of Communities and Local Government

Social Housing 60% - CUT!

**Father gives scissors to another audience member.**

Council Budget 7.1% - CUT!

**Father gives scissors to another audience member.**

Capital Spending on Local Government 100% - CUT!

**Father gives scissors to another audience member.**

Capital Spending on Communities 74% - CUT!

**Father gives scissors to another audience member.**

The Department for Work and Pensions

Welfare Benefits – 7 Billion ON TOP OF 11bn already announced – that's 18 billion pounds – CUT!

**Father gives scissors to another audience member.**

State pension age to rise from 65 to 66 for men and 60 – 66 for women by 2020. – Women’s Pensions – CUT faster and harder than pensions for Men. Overall, this is 5 billion pounds – CUT!

**Mother:** Intervention! Intervention! ... As we will be working ourselves to our grave, some very rich billionaires have it easy... Yes, yes the government has decided to spend 900 million to target tax evasion. But do you know what's been going on?

At the same time as making massive cuts to public services, this government is letting rich individuals and corporations avoid billions of pounds of tax.

For example, Philip Green is a multi-billionaire businessman, who runs some of the biggest names on British high streets. His retail empire includes brands such as Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins, Burton, Miss Selfridge and British Home Stores.

Philip Green is not a non-dom. He lives in the UK. He works in the UK. He pays tax on his salary in the UK. All seems to be in order. Until you realise that Philip Green does not actually own any of the Arcadia group that he spends every day running. Instead, it is in the name of his wife who has not done a single day’s work for the company. Mrs Green lives in Monaco, where she pays not a penny of income tax.

In 2005 Philip Green awarded himself £1.2bn, the biggest paycheck in British corporate history. But this dividend payout was channelled through a network of offshore accounts, via tax havens in Jersey and eventually to Green’s wife’s Monaco bank account. The dodge saved Green, and cost the tax payer, close to £300m. This tax arrangement remains in place. Any time it takes his fancy, Green can pay himself huge sums of money without having to pay any tax.

Philip Green’s £285m tax dodge could pay for:

- The full, hiked up £9,000 fees for almost 32,000 students. - I'll come back to that one.
- Pay the salaries of 20,000 NHS nurses.

And if that’s not reason enough to take action against Sir Philip, it is worth noting that he has built his £5bn fortune on the back of sweatshop labour, using Mauritius sweatshops where Sri Lankans, Indians and Bangladeshis toil 12 hours a day, six days a week, for minimal pay.

I urge us all to join UK Uncut’s Big Society Revenue & Customs (BSRC) and become part of an army of citizen volunteers determined to make wealthy tax avoiders pay.

And Vodafone... they avoided paying £6bn tax bill. George Osborne, yes, that same guy who proposed severe public sector cuts, let them off!

This was one of the most shameless, blatant and costly examples of corporate-government cronyism in years.

Vodafone do it everywhere. They tried in India too. £1.6bn tax bill. However, the Indian authorities, unlike the British, have successfully pursued Vodafone for the money, forcing them to pay up.

Typically, companies rely on the indifference of the media and the technical difficulty of the issue to avoid public anger at tax dodging activities. But in October, anger at the Vodafone deal spilled onto the streets. In dozens of cities all across the country people came out to protest, forcing around 10% of Vodafone stores to shut down.

And it is not over, the campaign against Vodafone continues.

**Father:** Thank you for that. Where were we? Who will cut and sign away a 5 billion cut in State Pensions? Please, for all the honest workers in the country. £5 Billion - CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

Council Tax Benefit - 10% CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

**Father:** Child Benefit 2.5 billion - CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

**Mother:** Intervention! Intervention! It is not children but bankers that got us into this mess! All mothers need child benefit. Actually, all mothers perform invisible labour every day - no one is paying them for the fact that they are bringing up the workers of tomorrow. A Mother's work is all for love, a bit like artists'. In 1972, Selma James set up the International Wages for Housework Campaign, which argues that running the home should be recognised as work in official statistics and that people doing this labour should be paid a wage by the government. According to Selma James, housework should be paid £500-£600 per week. Now, Child Benefit is being cut!

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport

The Arts Council England 29.6% - CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

RFO's (Regularly Funded Organisations) which get desperately needed money from the Arts Council every year will be...you guessed it - CUT! (goodbye Bluecoat?) RFO's to suffer even further cuts of an extra 10%

(this is on top of the 33% cuts to fund the Olympics). This means a total Arts Council cut of more than 40% - CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

Within The Arts Council, Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE), which focuses on children and young people, will see its budget reduced from £38m to £19m. That's a 50% CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

The Arts Council's development funds, including money to support touring and cultural leadership 64% - CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

**Mother:** Intervention! Intervention! Artists are a bit like mothers and housewives - they also work for free. The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home are not being paid to participate in this event by the Bluecoat. And I doubt that any of the others got any money for this. Yes, we all have tea coffee and cake. Why do we do it? There is no money in the arts, not for artists! And neither for interns!

Let me tell you about Carrotworkers' Collective, a London-based group of current or ex interns, mainly from the creative and cultural sectors who regularly meet to think together around the conditions of free labour in contemporary societies. They are currently undertaking a participatory action research around voluntary work, internship, job placements and compulsory free work in order to understand the impact they have on material conditions of existence, life expectations and sense of self, together with their implications in relation to education, life long training, exploitation, and class interest. We shouldn't be working for FREE!!! None of us!

**Father:** The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills 25% - CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

This is the department that covers further and Higher education. The Department of Education does not exist anymore. It was replaced by all sorts of other departments. This makes it easier to - you guessed it - CUT!

Universities teaching budget - across the board cut by 40%. The STEM subjects - meaning science technology engineering and medicine will not be cut at all. This means the teaching budget for arts and humanities will be cut by more than 90%. This means there will be virtually NO

public funding for the teaching of arts and humanities in England. This is an unprecedented 90% CUT!

***Father gives scissors to another audience member.***

The tuition fees will be raised to £9000. The EMA (the Education Maintenance Allowance) will be scrapped. This means that university education is only for the privileged. For those with private means - meaning lots of money. The government will not pay teaching salaries anymore - the students will. Tuition fees are set to skyrocket and students will not be seen as human beings with ideas to learn but as customers with products to buy. The lecturers will be customer services providers. The government is to vote on the issue on raising tuition fees at 4:30 today - in 2 hours time...

Students all over the country have been fighting and protesting. We've seen a magnificent revolution and the occupation of the Millbank Tower on 10.11.10, we've had our first national walkout on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov and a second national walkout on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov, we had a day of action yesterday, we've had university occupations all over the country, we've had Tate Britain turned into a teach-in, and Lloyds TSB a classroom for an inaugural lecture of the University for Strategic Optimism.... Today we have a march, a protest, a vote....

**Mother:** Intervention! Intervention! Calling all students, calling all workers - We are in this together...

...

**All:**

They say CUT BACK we say FIGHT BACK  
No ifs no buts, no public sector cuts!