

# The day I joined the clown newspaper

By Miffy Rabbit

ENVIRONMENT CAMPAIGNER

It is almost 9am, the workers are streaming into the offices, and I am standing on my own clutching a fake ID in a glassy foyer near Canary Wharf. I take a deep breath and scuttle past the cordon of bored security agents, flashing my fake ID, and suddenly I'm in!

At first sight the newspaper offices seem quite chaotic, but it quickly becomes apparent that they have divided into different sections, by their function; There's "Big Brother and celebrity," "Sport," "Classified ads," "smear jobs," "blowing hot air/editorial," "the television supplement," more "celebrity," the "finance pages," and last but not always least, "news."

I decide to attach myself to the "smear jobs" neighbourhood, which is connected to the news section by a crowded moving walkway. I find the person whom I had phoned in advance- a "Mr Mendacious" and introduce myself as "Bibi Knowsless." I adopt a giggling, scatter-brained and defensive posture, claiming that I'm a trainee journalist. No-one seems in the least bit suspicious of me, and everyone is sullen and harried. I am able to take notes (sadly, I am unable to read many of them later, because I haven't really mastered joined-up writing yet) about what I see, without drawing any suspicion.

The noise of phone calls and barked orders is sometimes overwhelming. In the background there is a steady drumbeat of drivel. I ask what that is and Mr

Our environmental campaigner, Miffy Rabbit has participated in world events from Prague to Drax, but nothing in her life prepared her for what she found when she infiltrated the offices of a major tabloid newspaper. Read her shocking expose here...

Mendacious tells me shortly that it is "the Mighty Wurlitzer." I make a note to look that up later...

Alongside Mr Mendacious, I sit in on endless planning meetings. Although the journalists claimed to be free-thinking and fearless seekers of the truth who wrote exactly what they pleased, it rapidly became obvious that they were constantly told what to say

## 'violent and libellous elements have infiltrated the fourth estate'

by editor. The hierarchical and bullying nature of the newspaper office was obvious within hours of arrival, despite the stated ideology.

And most troubling were, without doubt, violent and libellous elements that had infiltrated the fourth estate. Using stories that bear some relationship to reality as 'cover,' these thugs are planning unrelenting attacks on people exercising their democratic right- and duty- to protest.

In one meeting I sat in on, some of them discussed plans for bomb hoax hoaxes. No-one mentioned the damage this will do

to their own credibility or the tone of public debate. No-one thinks for a second about any accountability for their actions.

The Police ideological cordon was were everywhere to be seen, feeding stories, demanding that this or that quote be used. The 'smears section' was constantly on the phone to Scotland Yard and Millbank, asking for more and more lurid quotes and guesses, or receiving them.

It appears that one particularly old and venerable hoax is known as "the Elders", which was always advocated violence. The 'Elders' was short for the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Originally conducted as a 'false flag' smear campaign against Jewish political action by the Okhrana, the Russian Secret Service of the day, this hoax took on a life of its own. Any lie is halfway round the world before the truth has its boots on.

At one point Mr Mendacious slapped his forehead and said, "I know, let's re-do the Zinoviev letter- maybe the Zinoviev txt msg?" But his colleagues were too busy comparing climate protesters to the rioters in Norfolk and to the BNP to hear what he had to say.



A journalist welcoming the new insect overlords

This tightly-knit group contains many veterans of the attacks on democracy in the 1980s such as the Battle of the Beanfield and the Battle of Orgreave, and the capitalist riots known as "the Big Bang." They are highly motivated, willing to use whatever it takes to confront and intimidate anyone who doesn't agree with them.

Eventually I had to use the toilets. Far from our salubrious straw bales which will later be used for compost, they actually flushed their waste away- an "out of sight out of mind" policy that seems grotesquely irresponsible. There were specks of white powder around the wash basins, which I can only assume is the 'marching powder' that I hear whispered references to.

The toilets seemed a perfect metaphor for the paper, since both are recipients of leaks. The toilets were kept reasonably clean, but this was through no work of the journalists- for this task they had employed undocumented Polish workers. Ironically, the headline of their paper last week had talked of floods of immigrants stealing British People's jobs.

Only once did I see any doubt or self-consciousness among these



A journalist and his relationship to those in power

hideously self-righteous people. At one point the phone rang and Mr Mendacious took the call. It was someone who was upset by something that had been published under his name.

**"Suffice to say I understand what you're saying and I can't go into it. Er, and I would further say it's, er, not something I was actually massively involved with and, er, I'll leave it at that."** There was a pause and he added **"I really can't go into it."**

When he finished the call he looked a little shame-faced, and was sweating. He muttered

## 'veterans of the capitalist riots known as the 'Big Bang'

something about "bloody five", but since it was already 6pm he cannot have been referring to knocking off time. I dared not ask him what he meant.

What cannot be doubted is their commitment to recycling. Many an old story was dragged out and re-knitted together with tenuous threads. Where necessary, facts