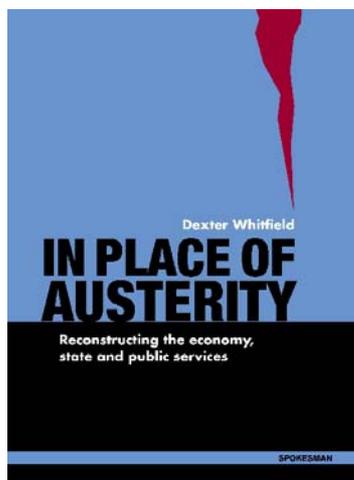


Public Services Beyond Cuts

Andy Morton reviews *In Place of Austerity* for *Chartist*, March/April 2012



Whitfield – and the European Services Strategy Unit he heads – has done more than most to highlight the corrosive role that private interests have had in making the public sector less and less public. This includes standout contributions through researching the role of PFI/PPP and various forms of procurement contracts in public sector services and utilities. In exposing problems of poor service, value for money, impact on unemployment relations and the stripping of public assets that result from the various forms of privatisation in such detail, Whitfield has become an authority in this field.

His new book *In Place of Austerity* follows on from these themes, and those of his previous book *The Global Auction of Public Assets*, and places them within the current context of economic depression and swingeing public sector cuts. Whitfield also offers prescriptions as to how the public realm can be restored within an economic model which it can fit. As in *Global Auction* Whitfield maps out expertly the different and complex forms of private involvement in the public sector. He shines a light on those insidious forms of privatisation – that include the varied use of procurement, outsourcing and commissioning procedures – that have proved just as dangerous as the more aggressive forms of privatisation such as the wholesale selling off of public assets and the use of tendering.

Whitfield's breadth is also impressive. It is by bringing in those questions of social policy attached to public services and economic policy without neglecting the detail that makes Whitfield's and ESSU's work so valuable. It makes this an accessible and informative study for those interested in the future role of public service provision during, and after, an age of austerity.