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*Global Auction of Public Assets*, Dexter Whitfield, Spokesman Books, £18

Anyone working in, or dependent on, education, health, housing, transport, civil and social services knows the negative impact that privatisation has wrought on pay, jobs and the quality of these vital services.

At best, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and their variants like Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) have become code words for cheapened services benefiting only the private part of these lopsided "partnerships". Wags among you will have much ruder interpretations of the PPP and PFI acronyms!

At worst, spectacular disasters have cost taxpayers a fortune. You may know about the Skye Toll Bridge, Inverness Airport, Southwark and East Lothian schools, National Air Traffic services, Dudley Hospitals, Norfolk and Bedfordshire County Councils. Yet companies such as Balfour Beatty - involved in Metronet's collapsed London Underground contract which cost over £15 billion - are to this day still getting government contracts for schemes like Building Schools for the Future.

With the public sector now ripe for further abuse by drunken capitalists staggering to sustain their unsustainable system, we need all the clarity we can muster to defend and improve the full range of our services, and the economic infrastructures of a post-Lehman Brothers world. We can find it in this book:

"We are at an important juncture, where the remedy for getting out of recession and creating a new framework for the future of the global economy is more and better regulation, economic collaboration, elimination of tax havens and tax avoidance scams and increased transparency and disclosure.

"Yet the neoliberal model of public service transformation, adopted most fervently in Britain, of commissioning, outsourcing, contestable markets, private finance and partnerships, are precisely the policies and practices that led to the crisis."

Not only will we have to repair the damage inflicted on traditional services, but we also need to factor in various imminent new challenges. Adapting to climate change, the growth of mega-cities and regions, the water, food and energy supply crises, the exploitation by markets of digital and medical technologies, and the general lack of progress towards joined-up global governance make a daunting new agenda.

Dexter Whitfield has now brought all his excellent previous analyses of these issues together in this essential handbook. His forensic account of the manner in which global public assets have been sold off or exploited, and how we could recover from neoliberalism's excesses, is an indispensable tool for every trade union, environmental and socialist activist. Apart from anything else it really brings home what a criminal regime Tony Blair's was in these respects, let alone in his warmongering foreign policies.

The very notion of "public" or "common" wealth, its institutions and physical spaces, is under threat of extinction in our daily lives, both culturally and ideologically.

Whitfield's economic remit does not run quite so far as to deal with those wider nuances of capitalist alienation, so while this may not be a fully-rounded revolutionary call to arms, it will certainly arm very many revolutionaries.