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Abstract

The formation of the C ing cuts presented as necessary austerity, together with the promotion of the ‘Big Society’ as the panacea for social ills. This article argues that the cuts continue a thirty-year process of redistribution to the rich. Rather than being a necessary response to the economic crisis, they constitute a neo-liberal shock doctrine, forcing through punitive policies which undermine the collective provision against risk that constitutes the ‘just’s umbrella’. However, arguments for reduced consumption and self-organization in civil society have purchase partly because of real needs for sustainable development and human well-being. Reading austerity and the Big Society through a ‘hermeneutics of faith’ rather than a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ opens up the utopian possibility of thinking holistically about an alternative, equitable, sustainable future radically different from that offered by conventional politics.

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Biographies

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