

Pieces Together

KICK 'EM WHEN THEY ARE DOWN

"Disabled people will be hit with more than £9bn in welfare cuts over the next five years, a think tank has warned. Demos suggests the government's plans will see 3.6m disabled people and carers lose about £9.2bn by 2015. It said moving those on incapacity benefit who were reassessed as fit to work to jobseeker's allowance would account for half of the losses" (BBC News, 9 October).

GRIM PROSPECTS

"A million people are expected to lose their jobs in the next four years as a result of the Government's decision to cut public spending by £83 billion, according to a report out today. Nearly 500,000 jobs are likely to be cut in the private sector as the Government stops building schools, hospitals and roads and cancels other contracts. This is on top of about 500,000 job losses in the public sector as employers reduce budgets by about a third and lay off civil servants, town hall staff, nurses, teachers and police officers" (Times, 13 October).

HUNGER INCREASES

"UN food agencies said Wednesday that 166 million people in 22 countries suffer chronic hunger or difficulty finding enough to eat as a result of what they called protracted food crises. Wars, natural disasters and poor government institutions have contributed to a continuous state of undernourishment in some 22 nations, including Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program said in a new report" (Associated Press, 6 October).

REFORM FAILS AGAIN

"West Africa's cocoa industry is still trafficking children and using forced child labour despite nearly a decade of efforts to eliminate the practices, according to an independent audit published by Tulane University. A US-sponsored solution called the Harkin-Engel Protocol was signed in 2001 by cocoa industry members to identify and eliminate cocoa grown using forced child labour. A child-labour-free certification process was supposed to cover 50 per cent of cocoa growing regions in West Africa by 2005 and 100 per cent by the end of 2010. But independent auditors at Tulane University's Payson Center for International Development said in a late September report that efforts have not even come close to these targets" (Globe and Mail, 8 October).

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