

This is the time for labour to protest

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The [FT has noted](#):

Gordon Brown was on Tuesday battling to contain union demands to tighten the law on the use of foreign workers in Britain as he attempts to prove to the rest of the world he is serious about fighting protectionism.

I am opposed to protectionism.

I am utterly opposed to xenophobia.

But it's Gordon Brown who has brought Mandelson back into government and he is a proponent of the Doha trade round, which liberalises labour markets. And it is he who has helped relax labour laws in the EU.

The consequence is that the UK will not have control over labour rights in the country. It is wholly unacceptable that an Italian company working in the UK can work to Italian health and safety standards, Italian employment standards including those relating to the minimum wage and so on.

This is not the creation of a level playing field. It is creating a very, very unlevel playing field in which the loser will always be labour.

Those who are striking have a good point: basic labour protection is being lost because of the rampant advance of the madness of free market neo-liberal dogma into labour markets just at the time it has been convincingly proven to have destroyed our banks.

Now is the right time to protest. If Doha is approved it will be too late: labour will be on the back foot forever, or turmoil in society will be inevitable. It will be one or the other: maybe both if it happens.