

## Charging for benefit appeals is no accident: it is the ...

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As [the Guardian report this morning](#):

*People who have been stripped of benefits could be charged by the government for trying to appeal against the decision to an independent judge.*

To contextualise this they say:

*Earlier this week figures showed that in the past year nearly 900,000 people have had their benefits stopped, the highest figure for any 12-month period since jobseeker's allowance was introduced in 1996. In recent months, however, 58% of those who wanted to overturn DWP sanction decisions in independent tribunals have been successful. Before 2010, the success rate of appeals was 20% or less.*

They then note:

*One welfare legal adviser said the number of appeals being lodged at independent tribunals would be decimated if the government introduced a charge.*

I am sure decent people would like to think this is some mistake. It is not. This is the philosophy of neoliberalism. All of life is reduced by that ideology to a state of competition. You have to compete for everything and access to nothing is guaranteed.

So, in this case access to justice is denied to those who cannot compete successfully enough in the market to secure the resources to access an appeal. The fact that they are already claiming benefits because they have not won in the market place is their own fault to those of this mindset. The fact that this decision compounds that is just the way that competition works. It's not injustice to them; it's the natural order of competition with which they think they must not interfere because this is, they think, the way to create maximum overall well being - even if not well being for all.

This is what I have called the [Cowardly State](#). It is the state that runs away from duty to those it is meant to represent. It is the state that is being corroded from within by an irrational belief that competition solves all issues. It is a state without compassion for

the losers from competition - because they are part of the natural order of being. It is a state that promotes injustice. It is a state that affronts all notions of decency. It is a state I oppose.