

UK this Week: Unaffordable Rents, Unsecure Jobs and Uncertain Pension Prospects but Genetically Engineered Cats will Finally Save the Day

News:

The UK's *Mirror* Newspaper reported on the results of a survey on the 13th June 2016, "on average, a single working person aged between 22 and 29 years old and renting a one bedroom home would spend 48% of their post-tax income on their rent." In London, the average was 57%. The *Mirror* also reported that, "across Britain generally, rents have increased by 27% since 2007, outpacing a 16% growth in incomes." These figures mean that despite increasing incomes, people renting houses are getting poorer in the UK.

Comment:

The house rent increases are only one angle on the poverty trap in the UK, where the gap between rich and poor widens. For the rich, it is as good as it has always been under capitalism. The UK news is now full of stories about Sir Philip Green, who bled UK retail shopping chain BHS dry and left the company with a hidden £571 million deficit in its pension scheme that will affect the retirement of 20,000 current and former employees. Sir Philip Green also paid dividends to his wife, Lady Green, from the company and according to the *Daily Mail* newspaper, "Wilton Equity Ltd, an offshore firm controlled by Lady Green, made £21.8 million profit when it sold BHS's headquarters in London." With BHS imploding from within, Sir Philip Green sold the company in 2014 to a friend for just £1! Despite the company's annual losses the new owner, Dominic Chappell, managed to suck a £510,000 salary from the company along with a £500,000 villa in Spain and the rent of a private helicopter. Now that the company has been declared bankrupt, 163 stores across the UK will close with the loss of 11,000 jobs and a depleted pension scheme.

Capitalism ensures that the poor are just healthy enough, and just educated enough and just paid enough to keep on working and paying from the cradle to the grave to keep the money barons in the lap of luxury. With unaffordable rents, unsecure jobs, uncertain pension prospects people are having fewer children and the population is aging. Without children to look after them, the role of pets for comfort is more important than ever in the UK. Even here, there is a new development. The *Daily Mail*'s science correspondent wrote on the 12th of June that a Bristol University scientist is promoting the idea of genetically engineering cats in order to make them lose their wild hunting instinct and to become more friendly as pets.

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