

East London Declaration

from the people to the G20 ministers meeting in Canning Town, East London on April 2nd.

1. Neo-liberalism is finished. Your ideology of unrestrained growth and free market sovereignty is shattered and discredited. The whole system you've been defending is now dead and must be replaced. Despite our fury at the hubris, greed and corruption that led you and your associates to impose on us this crisis, the situation facing humanity is so grave that we're willing to put recrimination aside. Let's instead focus on action. Please switch off your political iPods and listen to reality for a moment.

2. For six months – since the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 – you have floundered. In your partial and failed bank bailouts, your inadequate attempts at fiscal stimulus and your lack of global co-ordination, one impulse from you has predominated. At all costs, and until the very last moment, you've tried to avoid any solution which might encroach on the sovereignty of the market or the sanctity of private property. At this London Summit, you must change course. Do it now, or force us to take the necessary action in your place.

3. We demand:

- a) Swift and decisive nationalization of all privately owned banks and insurance companies.
- b) An immediate move to zero interest rates. Print sufficient money to free up productive commerce and trade.
- c) A fiscal stimulus at least equal to 3% of GDP, with increased public spending and job creation as high in the mix as possible.
- d) A new multilateral fund, superseding the IMF, to bail out emerging markets and developing countries now facing bankruptcy.

4. We don't know whether any of this will avert a global Depression. What we do know is that you're still committed to rebuilding the old system – a consumer economy driven by consumer and corporate debt, high speculation and low wages. That project is no longer viable. The world must now move towards a new kind of economy: one in which social justice and sustainable development are the objectives, not the maintenance of market freedom, the growth of inequality or the corporate-controlled captive state.

5. This crisis is a window of opportunity – a once-in-a-millennium chance to reverse the relationship between human values and capital. We must seize it while it lasts. The future finance system will be complex, global and multilayered. But however difficult to specify in advance, it must serve the basic needs of humanity – mobilizing savings, delivering income to pensioners and parents, funding the borrowing needs of small businesses, home-owners and ordinary people in their daily lives. To achieve this, we insist on a fully socialized banking system. A mixture of publicly owned, socially controlled banks, plus mutual societies, credit unions and other forms of microfinance might form the base layer of the new 'mixed economy' of banking. Sitting at the top table, you have the tools and materials to create such new forms from the wreckage of the old system, starting today. Up to now, you have been refusing to control, refusing to own, refusing to accept your responsibility. We'll be blunt. If you continue to insist on privately-run, anti-social banking, we will do all possible to remove you from power.

6. All companies must be regulated; all must be registered and taxed onshore in a country fully subject to regulation, scrutiny and international law. Close down the tax havens, wherever they are! We must redraw international regulation, acquiring the ultimate sanction to ban any asset class or investment tactic posing a threat to society as a whole. So-called 'risk based' regulation didn't work. It was a fig leaf for deregulation and regulatory incompetence. Our new system must be based on strict supervision and sanctions under the criminal law. Regulatory institutions must be under the democratic control of civil society, with bankers excluded from their boards.

7. By virtue of the financial collapse, elected governments now stand at the centre of economic life. But you ministers and state functionaries have become more than ever detached from the people. Politics is professionalized; your parties are empty shells, hollowed of mass support. Our traditional and hard-won liberties are increasingly compromised by your surveillance and so-called 'anti-terror' abuses and obsessions directed at ourselves. A new regime of state capitalism, run top down by the remnants of the old elite, will guarantee only further disintegration and collapse. Indeed, the retreat to national pools of capital, to the defence of national interest – which you are overseeing even as you decry protectionism – raises the danger of a 1930s-style finale to this crisis. We call for the democratization of economic control. Let consumers and producers run the banks for ourselves. Let small-scale innovation, horizontal networks, microfinance and social credit be freed up, given development funding and allowed the regulatory space in which to flourish.

8. The crisis you have inflicted on us is global; the solution must be equally global. Please stop insulting our intelligence with your diatribes against what you term 'protectionism'. This crisis is the result of capitalist protectionism. Wall Street was protected from scrutiny. The incomes of your millionaire friends were protected from taxation. Interaction between politicians and the super-rich was protected from democratic accountability or control. Abandon your own protectionism and we may consider how to abandon ours.

The people of the world will not forgive the politicians who in this situation let them down. We commit unconditionally to global solidarity in the face of what is now becoming a threat to our own and our children's very existence. We will build up international links and alliances from below – through our unions, our social networks, our structures of collective empowerment. We will resist the victimisation of migrant workforces and communities. We will resist all forms of economic nationalism. Yet through all this, we still demand social protection. If that means an end to the offshoring of jobs from America, or an end to Chinese workers being ripped-off by fly-by-night bosses from Taiwan and Hong Kong, then so be it. International trade may decline as a result; the free international movement of capital will certainly decline. We recognize the danger that the world economy will fragment and disintegrate. But be warned: such fragmentation is a certainty if you continue on your current course. Can capitalism deliver social justice? You claim that it can. We've yet to see the evidence. But regardless of who is right, you should know that your days of playing off the workers of the rich countries against the world's poor and needy are over.

9. You expect us and our children to pay for this crisis over the coming decades, maybe over the future generations. We refuse to comply. You and your business associates are the problem and it is you who will have to pay. The moral claim of the bankers to high profits and luxury lifestyles is over: not for a year, not for a business cycle – but for good. Having strung out the safety net for the bankers, you have conceded the principle of socialism – from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. We are determined to build a global economy in which there is a safety net for everybody, from single mother in a shanty town to recently bankrupted western millionaire. We say: use your newfound economic power to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable future.

10. Finally, having had the ideology of neo-liberalism stuffed down our throats – in schools, universities and by a corporate controlled media – we have no wish to create a new orthodoxy. Humanity needs a huge and diverse gene pool of ideas if we are to get out of this. Our alternative vision amounts only to this: the radical hope that humanity can take control of its destiny. We are filled with optimism, despite the challenges we face. Can we create a socially just, democratic and green future for the people of Planet Earth? YES WE CAN. You poor take courage; you rich take care. Bring the world economy under public ownership and control – or make way for those who will.