



ROBBER BARONS

A CASE AGAINST THE G8



UR world in crisis. No longer a doom on the horizon, global warming has started to hit us and the weather is getting weird. And no one is denying that we're in the midst of a global economic crisis like none we've ever seen—even first world countries are being torn asunder by austerity measures.

And there's an undemocratic group of rich assholes who gather together every year to set the policies that will only exacerbate our woes. The "Group of Eight." The G8.

WHAT IS THE G8?

FROM THE COUNCIL of Canadians:

The G8 is an annual forum for the leaders of eight of the richest and most powerful countries in the world to discuss economic and political issues. It is made up of

the leaders of **Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan.** First established in 1975, the G8 has appointed itself the central forum for global governance. The decisions made at the annual summits have come to shape key decisions in the management of global political and economic affairs. With their combined economic, military, and diplomatic power and influence, the nations of the G8 have tremendous influence over institutions of global governance and economics.

Like the G8, the G20 is a self-appointed forum of major developed and developing nations. Its membership includes G8 nations as well as leaders from **Australia, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Argentina, Indonesia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the European Union.**

The G8 and G20 are not legitimate. The G8 and the G20 are both self-selected, exclusive groups of nations that don't have any right to be making decisions that impact the entire world. Unlike the United Nations (UN), which could be referred to as the G192, neither the G8 nor the G20 are elected bodies that can claim any legitimacy to act or speak for more than 150 other nations that aren't invited to the meetings.

The G8 has long been criticized as nothing more than a "rich countries" club, one that wields a

disproportionate amount of global power through its control of the main international institutions of the IMF, World Bank and WTO, despite representing a small fraction—less than 15 per cent—of the world’s population. Similarly, the G20 is a slightly expanded tent of wealthy and powerful countries that will make decisions in their own self-interest. The small and least-developed countries in the world are excluded from the process; the continent of Africa has just one representative—South Africa—and Central America has none.

The G8 and G20 have put failed economic policies into action. For three decades the rich nations of the G8 and later the G20 have pushed the so-called “Washington Consensus” of neoliberalism, deregulated markets and free trade on the rest of the world through the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization. Much of the blame for the most recent economic crisis—and the ones that came before it—is the direct result of these failed policies. Despite being the cause of the crushing debt crisis of the Global South and the discredited structural adjustment programs that forced poor nations to privatize, deregulate, focus on exports, and open up their markets in return for needed loans, the G20 has handed responsibility for getting the world out of this economic mess largely to the IMF and the World Bank.

AUSTERITY

COLONIALISM NEVER ENDED. The age of empire never came to a close. The first stage of imperialism was to show up and strip countries of their natural resources (as well as their freedom), sending them into poverty. The second, current, stage is to set up predatory loans for these now-impooverished countries and demand impossible returns. It's astounding that a colonizing force would claim that a country they have colonized could ever be debt to them, but it happens every day. And when the countries can't pay back this imaginary debt, the colonizing countries force "structural adjustment programs" and austerity measures, like the gutting of environmental and labor laws that stand in the way of turning developing nations into sources of cheap labor for the colonizers.

And now it's coming for the first world. Youth unemployment in Greece and Spain are both over 50%, yet the governments of those countries are passing measure after measure cutting back on jobs, wages, and social services. It's little wonder these countries are in open revolt... there are politicians literally selling the livelihoods of the populace in exchange for a bit of cash to pay off the loansharks. These austerity measures are nothing more than a way for wealthy nations to squeeze every little drop of extra cash and resources from entire populations of people while sending those countries further into economic decline.

We have fought and bled for the labor laws we have. Strikers were shot by police and organizers were hanged by the state when we fought for the eight-hour work day. Union organizers have been machine-gunned down by private security in Appalachia when they dared to unite black and white workers to fight against the bosses. We've been arrested and killed for the few environmental protection policies we've got. Damned if we're going to let them take those away from us.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE IS real and it's barreling down on us. And how are these unelected leaders of the world handling it? By advocating market solutions. By claiming that we can just buy and sell the right to pollute on a global market, so that the rich retain their right to destroy everything. Sounds like something the rich would do.

The G8 says: "We are committed to avoiding the most serious consequences of climate change [...] within a timeframe that should be compatible with economic growth and energy security."

It's pretty simple to understand that it's largely giant industrialized infrastructure that got us into this mess and that it doesn't make a ton of sense to ask those same people how they think we should get out of it. Yet the G20 asks people like free market capitalist Amory Lovin to be the

advisor on climate issues, a guy whose resume includes work for Coca-Cola, Walmart, Shell, Monsanto, Lockheed Martin, and the Department of Defense.

The G8 is explicitly invested in continuing the world as it is: unsustainable and unjust. But the future can be found in sustainable infrastructure, industry, and agriculture instead of the monolithic, homogenous culture that we've got now.

POLITICAL REPRESSION

EVERYWHERE THE G8 and G20 go, political repression of activists duly follows.

In 2001, a protestor named Carlo Guiliani was shot and killed by a police officer at anti-G8 protest in Genoa, Italy. The protests were militant (as they ought well be, when we're talking about an undemocratic body making decisions for the entire world without our consent!) and Carlo was attempting to smash a cop car with a fire extinguisher when a masked police officer shot him in the face at point blank range.

In 2009, noted steampunk author Professor Calamity was arrested outside Pittsburgh during G20 protests for running a twitter account that kept protesters informed about the movement of police on the streets. The arrest was only months after the US government stated its support for the use of twitter by Iranian protestors. After his arrest

in Pittsburgh, Calamity's house in NYC was raided for 16 hours on a sealed warrant. They stole practically everything from him, down to his Curious George posters and the shark costume for his dog... as well as all the backups of the novel he was nearly done writing. Nearly three years later, his goods have not been returned.

Also in 2009, during protests against the G20, the London police killed Ian Tomlinson. The newspaper vendor was on his way home from work, not participating in the protests, with his hands in his pockets, when he was victim of the indiscriminate violence of the police—an officer struck him in the chest with a baton and killed him.

In 2010, the Canadian government spent \$1.2 billion on security for the G20 summit in Toronto so that these heads of business could meet undisturbed by the protests of those whom they would claim to represent. Media widely reported on a law that allowed cops to detain and demand identification of anyone within five meters of the fence around the summit, and cops acted on it, but no such law was ever found to exist. Protest organizers were rounded up and charged as terrorists. Computer activist Byron Sonne was arrested for pointing out that the security fence could easily be scaled, and prosecutors made up an imaginary bomb plot to charge him with that he was later found innocent of. Too bad it cost him his marriage and his house and years of his life.

STILL, WE FIGHT

ROBBER BARON CAPITALISM is alive and well in the 21st century. Rich men gather behind closed doors, guarded by murderous thugs, to plot the ruin and destruction of us all. I would give anything to be speaking hyperbolically, but I'm not. We need to end the corporate reign of this world. We need to put a stop to economic imperialism. And we desperately need to find a way to stop the rulers of industry from destroying the natural world.

There is no single right way to do this. The solution can look like storming these meetings and shutting them down, it can look like laying siege to their ivory towers with hundreds of thousands of people in the streets. Part of it can look like internet activism: blog posts, facebook shares, twitter, etc. and it can look like DDoSing the servers that are used to organize these elements of social control. It can look like the destruction of corporate property, increasing the financial cost of their destructive behavior. It can look like books and zines and public speeches and demonstrations and puppet shows and songs. It can look like stepping outside their systems: growing our own food and making our culture, inventing our own lives. The solution will absolutely look like all of us telling the world, by whatever means, that we don't consent to being ruled by these bastards.





1 AK-47 OR 1 SPROUT = 10 BILLION USD
BLACK AK-47 = US SPENDING
GRAY AK-47 = THE REST OF THE G8

*In 2011 world military spending was **\$1.738 trillion**.
G8 nations made up 61.5% of this with **\$1.069 trillion**.
The US alone made up 66.5% of that with **\$711 billion**.*

*Under the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative, G8 leaders
agreed to dedicate **\$22 billion** to fighting world hunger
over **three years**. The program has fallen short of its goal.*

This has been a lovely first date, but tell me, what is your opinion on the villainous politicians who are running our world into ruin?



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