

Humanist Party UK – press release



The G8 acts but keeps everything the same

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We are all very happy that Africa and poverty seem to be top of the agenda for the G8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland and that music celebrities are driving a wonderful agenda for justice and that a few corporations appear to be supporting this festival of good intentions and human solidarity.

Is this really going to change the situation of the Africans (and all other continents subsumed in misery by neoliberal financial colonialism)? Probably not...

It is not a question of pessimism or cynicism because, if there is a big influx of money, that will save lives. But in the absence of any proposals that will change the economic system that led to the financial debacle that today we call poverty, we are clear that the proposed G8 “solutions” do not go far enough. The talk of debt cancellation does not mean that lending for profit in the future will not cause exactly the same situation in a few years time. In fact it will be more profitable for the banks of the developed world if the poor countries elevate their economies. A bankrupt country does not pay interest. Perhaps Blair and Bush see an opportunity for redemption for the mess still raging in Iraq and Afghanistan or that the US will be exonerated from its sabotage of the Kyoto treaty.

It is also well known that loans and “aid” arrive with conditions that insist on the receiving country buying products and services of the “donor” countries (including weapons) and liberalising their economies even further, selling off their resources and national industries. Since the belief in neoliberalism has not been dented by these catastrophes the G8 today are trying to appear as the “saviours” of a situation that they, themselves, produced. The list of catastrophes is very long in recent years apart from the poverty across the developing world we have also witnessed economic melt-down in Russia, Argentina and the collapse of the tiger economies of South-East Asia. Far from accepting the inherent inequality-inducing power of free-market capitalism we hear that Africa will be “rescued” by the very same model that devastated it.

Grassroots organisations, NGOs, and in general the anti-globalisation movement carry the right agendas: fair trade, elimination of subsidies by rich countries to their own agricultural producers, changes in the way the World Trade Organisation and World Bank protect the interests of the powerful, etc. but we should all beware of being swept along by the powerful current of enthusiasm generated around this G8 summit and the rock concerts around the world which project the illusion that big capital is not working in it's own best interests.

The Humanist Party proposes:

- A rejection of the neo-liberal economic model that promotes competition and the accumulation of wealth into fewer and fewer hands to be replaced by an economic model that promotes cooperation and social justice.
- We want an economic model where the important macro-economic indicators are those that concern human well being and not financial success. This means that we give more importance to the measurements of poverty rates, infant mortality and access to education than to the value of the stock market and bank interest rates.
- The funding of health, education and infrastructure development in the developing world through the progressive taxation of speculative transactions leading towards the complete elimination of speculation.
- A real transformation of world trade where goods, services and people can move freely without prohibitive barriers that only operate in one direction.