

# World's ex-leaders worry about inequality

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Gordon Brown at the UN. Photo: Riccardo Savi/CC

## The only answer is to fight for socialism

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Over 40 world leaders, including former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, have called for a “powerful shift” in world economic policy “to address rising threats of poverty, disparity and environmental breakdown,” in reaction to the news that the next fifty years could see the emergence of the world’s first trillionaires while the majority of the world face destitution. In an open letter sent by the Club de Madrid group, a conference of former Prime Ministers and Presidents, they correctly identify that the world’s economic model is “outdated,” and that, “trillions of dollars exist for financing development – but too much public money is captured by private power,” calling for taxation on high-net-worth individuals.

We welcome this apparent damascene conversion by Mr Brown and his fellow Club de Madrid pro-capitalist leaders, who, while in power, did little to assist the working class and the millions who live in abject poverty globally. Their careers have instead done far more to bolster the profits of the very capitalists who are on track to become trillionaires. Gordon Brown was prime

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individuals and corporations. Poverty and inequality are not accidents of the system, they are how it functions. People all around the world are furious at their living conditions, and that anger won't be dampened by utopian appeals for the bosses to be nicer. The policies suggested in this letter, like the calling for higher taxation on multi-national corporations, will be watered down or ignored by the capitalist classes around the globe unless they have the power of working-class people breathing down their necks, as it would mean a reduction in their profits.



## How do we end inequality?

A serious programme to deal with the obscene wealth at one end, and poverty for the masses at the other, would need to have the democratic restructuring of society under the control of the working class central to it. The surpluses of large corporations could go to nationalised services, such as medical programmes that would provide care for all and large-scale housing projects that would ensure everyone has shelter, instead of the back pockets of the rich as mega-profits. As the anger and inequality grows, the need for a socialist alternative will also.

One of Club de Madrid's main causes for concern is the looming climate crisis, which threatens even the capitalist status quo. It is the world's poorest who will be most affected by the consequences of climate change, but again, the only actual solutions lay in the removal of the profit motive of large corporations who pollute the planet at the expense of the rest of us. We could start by bringing the large energy companies and the banks into democratic public ownership, shifting production and investment into green energy alternatives; making the bosses, not working-class and poor people pay.

Capitalism has no answers and neither do the politicians who defend that system. No matter what the Club de Madrid leaders think, the only people who can solve inequality are the working class. If you want to fight for a world without billionaires or even trillionaires then you should join the Socialist Party to fight for real socialist change and so no one has to live in poverty.

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