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Global Justice

# How to change the world?

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**How do we change the world? This is the question asked by thousands of people intent on changing things, the question that is often repeated in alternative social gatherings – a question that the French philosopher Daniel Bensaïd said has no answer: “Make no mistake, no one knows how to change the world.” We do not have an instruction manual but we do have some hints on how to do it and some working hypotheses.**

Fighting in the streets and in social movements is the first premise, as there will not be spontaneous changes from above. Those in power today will not give up their privileges without this. Any process of change will depend on the consciousness of those below and the fight to take back our rights in the street, defying the powers that be. This is what history shows.

But it is also necessary to build political alternatives that go beyond social mobilization, since we can not just be a lobby of those who rule. It is necessary to formulate alternative policy options which have their centre of gravity in social struggles, antagonistic to today’s ruling class. We are well aware that the system cannot be changed from within the institutions but rather from the street, but we can not give up spaces that also belong to us.

Today institutions are hijacked by private interests and capital. A social minority, which is the one with economic power, is totally over-represented in these institutions and has the full support of the majority of those who hold elected office. The dynamics of “revolving doors”: those who are currently in the institutions and tomorrow on the advisory boards of major companies in the country, is a constant and a reality. We present here the socially dominant neoliberal ideology – and the fact that it is untrue. We think that anti-capitalist and anti-systemic voices would be useful in breaking the hegemonic political discourse of the institutions, proving that “other worlds” are viable and that “another political practice” is both possible and necessary.

We must move in both directions, subjecting the latter to the former, creating mechanisms for control from the bottom up and learning from past mistakes of both the political and social left. On the basis that no one knows the absolute truth, that the process of change will be collective or it will not happen, that we must learn from each other, that is necessary to work without sectarianism or tailendism and that labels more often separate than bind. Without however falling into relativism or ideological resignation. Surely these are the most difficult lessons: to break the moral and ideological domination of the capitalist and patriarchal system.

And how to change the world is not something that will happen in two days – it’s a long-haul task, which requires consistency, perseverance and “slow impatience” as Daniel Bensaïd used to say. We have to go forward in our utopias starting from daily life in parallel with social mobilization against the current policies and in defense of alternative measures. We have to change the world in our own lives, demonstrating in practice that “another way of life” is both possible and desirable. Alternatives learning from the cooperative economy, self-management, critical consumption and agro-ecology, ethical finance, the alternative media – all these initiatives are essential to move towards a different model of society.

We have to be aware that these prefigurative models are not an end in themselves but a means to move forward without losing sight of the goal of more just and equitable society for everyone. Fighting for an economy based on solidarity in daily life and demanding a progressive tax policy, in which those who have more pay more, which will eliminate unit trusts, where tax evasion is prosecuted, which builds agroecological projects and works to ban GMOs, in favor of a public land bank, to have our savings in a credit union but to claim a public banking service from below. The way forward is shown by walking it and this cannot wait until tomorrow.

## How to change the world?

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We should not forget that our model of social change requires the conscious mobilization of the majority of the population and a process of breaking the current institutional and economic framework. The emergence of the “revolution” in the political landscape again, following the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, despite their weaknesses and limits, was the great and unexpected news that 2011 has brought us.

We also need to understand our role in the world and the impact of our practices on the ecosystem. We live on a finite planet, but the capitalist system ensures that we often forget this. Our consumption has a direct impact where we live and if everyone consumed as we do here a single planet would not suffice. But we are also encouraged in unbridled, compulsive consumerism, with the promise that more consumption means happiness, though in the end the promise is never fulfilled. We must begin to ask whether we can “live better with less”.

Anyway, we want to hold responsible those who impose such practices. We are told we live in a consumer society because people like consumption, which is why we have industrial agriculture and genetically modified foods “â€” lies. Our model of consumption is based on the logic of a capitalist system that produces goods on a large scale and needs someone to buy them to keep the model running. They want to make everyone accomplices of policies that benefit only themselves. Fortunately, this great myth has begun to crumble. The ecological crisis we live in has turned on the warning lights. And we know that the climate crisis is rooted in a system that is productivist and short-sighted.

Today, a wave of anger is sweeping across Europe and the world “â€” breaking the scepticism and resignation that for years have prevailed in our society, and restoring confidence in collective action which is useful and necessary for changing the existing order of things. We have seen the Arab Spring, the movement against the debt in Europe, the Icelandic people, the popular uprising, general strike after strike in Greece and now Occupy Wall Street in the “belly of the beast” which says we are the 99% opposed to the 1%. The time is short and moving quickly. We know we can.