



# WE HAVE A WORLD TO CHANGE



**We march today to demand change. So much is wrong in our country and our world. People are denied their Bodily Autonomy or endure Direct Provision racism. Some struggle to find decent work or keep a roof over their heads. Meanwhile, our media is dominated by one super rich villain. Beyond this island, the news is worse. Oil companies are driving us into climate disaster.**

Europe's border controls have killed over 15,000 people, many fleeing the wars our governments created in the Middle-East. Clearly, we face a system designed to ensure the rule of the most privileged 0.1% of the population, an elite who divide and rule the rest of us. We join the many people resisting these policies and fighting for real change.

Every now and then a victory is won in one area, although often riven with compromises and incomplete. Winning the Marriage Equality referendum was one such example, forcing the suspension of Water Charges another. But, particularly on the global level, our struggle can feel like an impossible whack-a-mole game: for every victory that is won another fifty bad moles pop up elsewhere. We need a movement that listens to and involves all those who are exploited, oppressed and unfree. We need to create a society where the whack-a-mole game ends because we are all liberated.

The Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM) is our contribution to building that struggle. We draw on the rich tradition of anarchism to build a movement that values grassroots action and learning over the top-down competition for power.

**EDUCATE, ORGANISE & RESIST.**





# EXAMPLES OF HOW THE WORLD COULD WORK



## A. Transformation in Spain

**The largest anarchist experiment in building a free society to date took place 80 years ago in Spain. At the time of the Civil War in 1936, as many as two million workers were members of the anarchist trade union, the CNT. For the first year of the civil war they started a profound revolution on the land and also in the cities, in particular Barcelona.**

The English writer George Orwell, arriving in Barcelona six months into that process, described how "The Anarchists were still in virtual control of Catalonia and the revolution was still in full swing... when one came straight from England the aspect of Barcelona was something startling and overwhelming. It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the Anarchists;...The revolutionary posters were everywhere, flaming from the walls in clean reds and blues that made the few remaining advertisements look like daubs of mud.

"Down the Ramblas, the wide central artery of the town where crowds of people streamed constantly to and fro, the loud-speakers were bellowing revolutionary songs all day and far into the night. And it was the aspect of the crowds that was the queerest thing of all. In outward appearance it was a town in which the wealthy classes had practically ceased to exist. Except for a small number of women and foreigners there were no 'well-dressed' people at all. Practically everyone wore rough working-class clothes, or blue overalls or some variant of militia uniform. All this was queer and moving. There was much in this that I did not understand, in some ways I did not not even like it, but I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for."

Orwell was describing Barcelona where the major industries, including transport, had been taken over by the workers and run through workplace assemblies and mandated, recallable delegates. Some 3,000 enterprises were collectivised in this way. Services under workers' self-management rapidly improved. Elsewhere in the agricultural province of Aragon, over 300,000 people took part in working the land in common by forming 400 collectives. Revolutionary Spain was defeated by fascism, a process that saw brutal repression in which tens of thousands were murdered. However, it demonstrated that the power we have when we come together to protest can also be used to create an entirely new society, without politicians or bosses.

Find out more at <http://www.wsm.ie/spanish-revolution>



## B. Rojava

**Perhaps the bravest experiment in building a free society is that happening right now in Rojava, the area of northern Syria with a large Kurdish population. There, a network of thousands of community-based assemblies and some 4,000 co-operatives are working to create a society built on principles of gender equality, environmentalism and direct democracy. There is a vicious civil war in Syria, and what is called the 'Rojava Revolution' has had to defend itself against brutal attacks from ISIS on the one hand, and the Turkish state on the other.**

The militia units that defend Rojava include the autonomous women's YPJ, while behind the front there is the Asayish, a police force of sorts that aims to give all citizens 6 weeks training





as a route to eliminating the need for any distinct police force at all. Their current training includes feminist theory and non-violent conflict resolution before they gain access to weapons.

The Rojava revolution is surrounded by enemies: the Turkish state, the Assad regime and ISIS. Much of the region is also economically deprived and the people are divided by religion and ethnic background. If such a transformative revolution can be attempted amid such seemingly impossible conditions, how much easier should it be here?

More information <http://www.wsm.ie/rojava>



### C. The Anarchist Alternative

**Many people have come to associate the left with political parties in search of power. In the mild form, they demand your vote at election time. In extreme forms, they produce the horrific abuses of the Soviet Union or 'communist' China. But even in the mild form encountered in Ireland, the top-down party model very often produces aloof politicians who see the rest of us as foot soldiers to be controlled and ordered around.**

When the socialist movement was born there was an enormous argument between these top-down socialists and another sort, the anarchists. The anarchists argued that seeking state power would corrupt the left and that the process would select the worst people amongst our ranks, those most inclined to seek power for themselves whatever the cost. Anarchists maintained this argument, which was proved correct by the revolutions of the 20th century in Russia, China and elsewhere, and by those various left governments elected on socialist promises, only to become indistinguishable from the old ruling class.

Anarchists propose an alternative. We argue that we, the working class, have to organise ourselves through the sort of assemblies and councils described here. And it is not enough to fight capitalist exploitation but ignore the many other oppressions that people struggle against. All manifestations of oppression have to be opposed in the here and now.

The WSM exists to promote this vision of a free society and to help organise resistance and transformation today.

If this makes sense to you, we'd love to work with you. You can register your interest at [www.wsm.ie/user/register](http://www.wsm.ie/user/register)

For more on anarchism, see <http://www.wsm.ie/basic-anarchism>



# PEOPLE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR POWER

Those who rule from above - the bosses, politicians and media - tell us a very simple lie. The lie is that if we vote for them, at election time then they will do what we want. In reality, once the elections are over, the elites do as they will and the rest of us must either suffer or resist. Remember the politicians who joined the anti-water tax movement, promising not to introduce them when running for election and then breaking their promise once elected? But we stopped them anyway. Not 'we' as in any particular group, but 'we' as in the movement of communities that emerged all over the country to blockade water meter installers and spread the message of mass non-payment. The establishment tried hard to break our movement using threats, bribes and Garda repression, but they were still defeated. The lesson is clear. Our real power is not at the ballot box but in the streets, organising together.

Why do elections have so little impact? The last election saw a lot of independents and self-described radical parties elected. In reality, this has translated into nothing apart from the occasional TD giving the government a bollocking in the Dáil. We laugh with everyone else when government ministers fidget in their seats and look uncomfortable. But the reality is that this entertainment changes nothing.

This is not a flaw in the system. This is how elections are intended to work. The point is to give us a false sense of control. After each election, rather than recognising that the system doesn't work as we want it, we blame the failure on the people currently in power and vote instead for a new lot of leaders. The result is a political system where the parties in power regularly change hands without anything else changing very much at all. Every now and again a new party appears that promises not to compromise. But, as happened with the Workers Party and the Green Party here or with Syriza in Greece, these parties are quickly house-trained to play the same game as everyone else.

The political movement we need to build is not a party that joins the game and gets into government at some future election. We need an entirely different system based on democratic assemblies to replace the old system of parliaments all together.

The water charges movement has shown we can force change by organising together, and that massive and widespread organisation doesn't even have to happen under a single banner. It's not a question of getting behind a particular party or leader, but believing in ourselves. Many groups used collective decision-making and direct action to resist water charges. These same methods can be used to run the country and indeed the world. We need to build democratic assemblies in every community and workplace and take their running into the hands of the people living or working there. Alongside this we need to develop effective ways of coordinating these assemblies and of making decisions at the level of districts, cities, the island and indeed the planet. We have no interest in telling you to vote for us so that we can get into power. We want to work with you to build a movement that will end their systems of power.

