

## Extending democracy

A Britain based on local and regional People's Assemblies would aim to democratise society as a whole in new ways:

**Co-ownership of resources.** The key areas of the production and financial process, including land, would transfer from private shareholder ownership into forms of co-ownership. These resources would be held in trust by locally-elected bodies and placed under democratic control.

**The workplace.** All workers should have the right to democracy at work, whether in a factory, hospital, call centre, in public transport, civil service, local government, offices, shops, schools, colleges or university. All major decisions would require the consent of the workforce. Self-management would be encouraged in place of top-down control.

**Education.** School, college and university students and staff should get the right to take part in the running of their institutions.

*The principles for a transitional democratic state could include:*

- self-organisation throughout society wherever possible
- involving as many people as possible in governing and administration
- an end to special privileges and incomes for state officials
- total accountability and subordination of all officials to elected bodies
- elections for all public offices
- complete transparency and openness at all levels
- new legal and justice systems based on community control and self-policing.

## Your views about People's Assemblies

**Peter:** "I believe in a republic of direct democratic control".

**Simon:** "I think we need to take a leaf out of the Digger's book and start becoming autonomous. We are part of the eco-system of this world, not separate from it. By growing your own food, reclaiming derelict land and withdrawing cooperation (in tax or otherwise) we can collectively change this planet".

**Marius** (from Togo): "I think we should think locally and act globally. The world needs every one of us to participate for a better change".

**Pete:** "Yes. A people's assembly should be the building block for the world's working people to take control of the world which THEY have developed."

**Amelia:** "We have waited long enough for others to take up the responsibility - it's time we saw to it ourselves".

**Support the building of an assembly where you live.**

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# Beyond resistance

## Build People's Assemblies



People's Assemblies are the future shape of democracy.

**In Egypt**, they mobilised people to overthrow the Mubarak dictatorship and are challenging military rule.

**In Greece**, People's Assemblies provide a democratic forum for people fighting savage IMF/EU spending cuts.

**In Spain**, the Real Democracy Now! movement says the present political system is a barrier to future human progress. So activists are building People's Assemblies.

**In Britain**, the political establishment is discredited by scandal and disregards the interests of ordinary people in favour of the bankers and corporations. People's Assemblies can go beyond resistance and create a new, truly democratic economic and political system based on co-operation and self-determination.

# FAQs

## **Q: What could People's Assemblies achieve?**

**A:** Assemblies will bring together anti-cuts campaigns and all organisations resisting the Coalition's attack on jobs, services, pensions and standard of living.

A network of People's Assemblies will have the capacity to facilitate a transition to a democratic society based on co-operation and self-determination instead of profit and corporate power.

They will challenge the lie that there is no alternative to the capitalist system, which has plunged into a global crisis and is the source of the Coalition's attacks.

## **Q: How will Assemblies come into being?**

**A:** Through local initiatives of people and communities who want to resist cuts, job losses, repossessions, and go beyond protest to build a real democracy.

## **Q: What is A World to Win's role in setting up Assemblies?**

**A:** AWTW is joining with others to take the idea forward. We advocate the policy of setting up People's Assemblies wherever cuts, closures or strikes are happening, where young people gather, where people are at risk of benefit cuts, and home repossessions or evictions are threatened.

## **Q: What will Assemblies do to show they are the legitimate representatives of the people?**

**A:** They will have a strong defensive role, as the government launches its attacks. They can learn lessons from others about how to defend communities and individuals. For example, from the movements in the US against evictions, where communities are getting together to stop people being thrown out when they can't pay their mortgage.

The experiences of Transition Towns who have been encouraging communities to do things for themselves, exploring new ways of living, can provide a source of inspiration.

Assemblies can learn from history – from the Paris Commune, early Soviets or Workers Councils in Russia, from the Councils of Action; the movement that brought down the Berlin Wall to the struggles in Venezuela and Bolivia today.

## **Q: How will this be different from the old politics?**

**A:** The Assemblies will involve and mobilise the whole community, including young people, people from minority ethnic communities, small businesses and self-employed people as well as workers from every sector.

They will show by their own actions that there is another way of living, and another way of "being political" that isn't about money-grubbing and getting expenses. They will work for education, for culture and a decent life for all.

There will be opportunities for everyone to share their skills and talents, and for young people to work creatively and learn. A wide range of people will gravitate towards them. They will embrace different points of view, not only those on the left.

## **Q: What will AWTW's role in the Assemblies be?**

**A:** Our Manifesto says: "The Assemblies will also look beyond a failed economic system towards building a true democracy in place of the sham one we live under now." That is the revolutionary policy we will campaign for in the Assemblies.

The Coalition government is taking the actions it is because the system it serves – the capitalist system – is terminally unstable. It must be replaced.

The existing parliamentary system is a façade that increasingly undermines and devalues the right to vote that was won in bitter struggle against the ruling classes. We have to extend and expand democracy to give expression to what the term actually means – the power and rule of the people.

We will work within the Assemblies to win people to the idea that they should not be talking shops, or just organise protests or social support, but start to see themselves as the legitimate representatives of the people, with the right to replace the existing undemocratic structures of both local and national government. This includes revolutionising the Welsh and Scottish assemblies, which in their present form have dashed the hopes raised by devolution.

# People's Assemblies can

- ◆ **defend** communities against closures, evictions, and job losses
- ◆ **fight** for democracy and rights
- ◆ **campaign** for action on climate change
- ◆ **oppose** war and the secret state
- ◆ **struggle** against racism and attacks on minority communities
- ◆ **build** links with movements internationally
- ◆ **create** a new democratic society through a transfer of economic and political power.