

Epilogue

Many of the activists, including the younger ones, the older ones, and the scientists, are people who might prefer to sit under a tree at the edge of a field, chewing a blade of grass, looking at the world and dreaming about getting caught up in an adventure.

Many of them would like nothing more than to return to that place, to those summer evenings in August many years ago, when the heat was not yet so brutal. One day, maybe, all the “earthlings” who protest will set off in summer together and sit under a tree. And look back at the days when they were caught up in an almost absurd story, together with all of us. But the suffering cannot be reversed, and nor can the destruction caused by the crises. The summers will not suddenly become colder. If a radical collective transformation does successfully take place, only the worst can be prevented.

By then, we might succeed in changing politics fundamentally and stopping the corporations in the world which are responsible, through the trade in fossil fuels, biomass, and the corresponding financial instruments, for most of the emissions. All of us can then look at the development of a renewable infrastructure which connects the world, at the almost complete shift in nutrition from slaughtering animals to plant-based food; to a different school and university which include everyone in exploring what it means to be in the world sustainably; to cooperation on providing unconditional basic services and resources to all people; and to a fairer world for all of us creatures on this planet, “world citizens”, beyond oppression and domination in relation to gender, ethnicity, class etc.; as humans who have dared to look at the damage caused by colonial history and who have tried to react to it by enabling justice and a humane convivialism (see appendix).

All we need to do is pause what we are doing, take a deep breath, and get organised. We can all become part of the movement for a sustainable, global democratic society.

Many people would like the world to change; they would like security, and enough to eat for everyone. Many have had enough of the terrible fires in the rainforests, of the droughts and floods. And they want to contribute – even on a long-term basis – to stopping all of this.

Fridays For Future (and Extinction Rebellion) has introduced the idea of a global united grassroots movement, with the help of scientific research and universities. Now what is needed is to strengthen this idea. Not by trying to intervene and tell the young people what to do. Older activists can take on their own responsibilities, as teachers, carers, parents, grandparents, or simply as people.

For that, we need a different form of organisation than simply taking to the streets now and again: a real popular movement which not only fights for but also embodies a substantial, humane democracy, with corresponding explorative centres. In most countries, politics has not changed. Emissions are rising worldwide year by year – except for the drop due to the pandemic. And fossil infrastructure continues to be expanded in many places.



How do we stop this process and deepen democracy? How do we approach that? Not merely by coming up with party policies; those just end up disappearing in the mass of proposals. But at the same time, abstract demands are too unclear; hardly anything changes. Seeing the ecological, social and climate crises as interdependent crises means drawing attention to a new framework with action plans and standing up for it, in an uprising of all of us, until it has

been realised (see the appendix for the three pillars and two principles). During the last five years, young people, movements and scientists have worked on it, building on decades of research and the long history of the struggle against the ecological and climate crisis (a struggle which has often taken place in the Global South and been led by BIPOC communities).

What does it mean to say that we will stand up for this until the framework is realised? How? By continually working together and seeing ourselves as one humanity, part of the same “fabric of integrity”, the “people... for future”; a movement which everyone can join, without membership, without giving up the identity of other movements or organisations. The core: we stand up for the three basic ideas and two principles for global, sustainable democracy. Every day, together. Towards governments, institutions, universities. Until we have made them a reality. With Friday strikes and civil disobedience in the centres of power. And with education, knowledge transfer, and continuous organisation.

All those of us (who live in privileged circumstances with the required resources) can take on three roles. We can be the emergency brake which strikes, signalling non-cooperation with the fossil society with all its structures of domination, and literally refuses to allow the machinery of the “Great Acceleration” to go on running, creating pollution, burning down the forests, and insisting on oil, coal and gas, producing so much pain and suffering.

As Workers, Artists, Developers, Economists, Teachers, and Parents For Future, as experts in our areas, we can build sustainability and not only dream about it; we can make it a reality and report back on this, collecting knowledge about the dimensions of substantial democracy.

And finally, everyone can contribute to this: we can continually make the new framework clear which we now need as a crisis reaction (see appendix). We are here and can help each other, building up centres and spaces for education and support. We can draw attention to crucial scientific findings. We know what it means to meet everyone’s needs, within planetary limits. And we will make sure that happens, as an intergenerational, intersectional and global movement. Everyone is needed, everyone is welcome.

