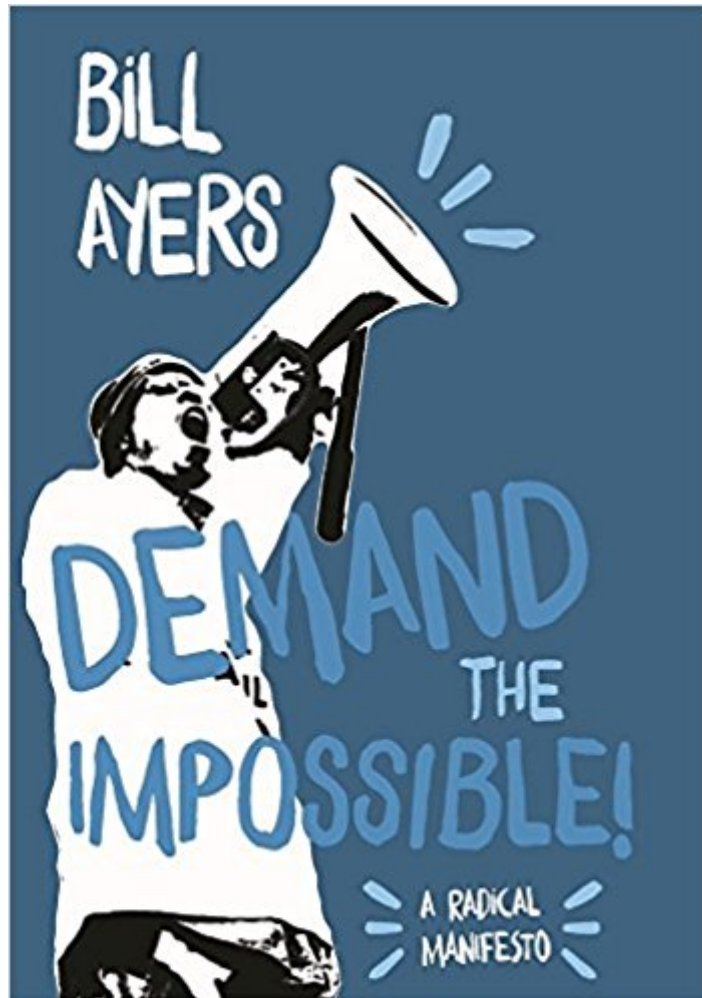




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# Demand The Impossible!: A Radical Manifesto



## Synopsis

In an era defined by mass incarceration, endless war, economic crisis, catastrophic environmental destruction, and a political system offering more of the same, radical social transformation has never been more urgent—or seemed more remote. A manifesto for movement-makers in extraordinary times, *Demand the Impossible!* urges us to imagine a world beyond what this rotten system would have us believe is possible. In critiquing the world around us, insurgent educator and activist Bill Ayers uncovers cracks in that system, raising the horizons for radical change, and envisioning strategies for building the movement we need to make a world worth living in.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Demand the Impossible is more than a book, more than a manifesto. It is a torch. Bill Ayers's vision for a humane future is incendiary; fire that incinerates old logics and illuminates new paths. If we do not end the violence of militarism, materialism, caging, dispossession, debt, want, ignorance, and global warming, our very survival is impossible. Read aloud."—Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams* "With the beautiful idealism of a young radical and the sage wisdom of an elder, Bill Ayers is making trouble again, and we should all be grateful. In *Demand the Impossible* Ayers troubles the waters of staid political practices, insisting that we close our eyes for a moment and think creatively about what a better world might look like, and then open our eyes wide and organize boldly to make that world a reality. This is an elegant and provocative manifesto for our time, one that honors the social justice organizing currently in motion."—Barbara

Ransby, author of *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*"Bill Ayers has produced a portrait of two worlds. One is a dystopia, recognizable as the world in which we live, the other a world that capitalism describes as a fantasy---a world reconstructed around values that place the advancement of humanity and the sanctity of the planet above the accumulation of wealth and power. The two portraits stand in dramatic contrast and make *Demand the Impossible* both illuminating and compelling. This manifesto is radical less in its rhetoric than in its daring to actually go to the roots of the barbarism of the capitalist system. *Demand the Impossible* is to be read and then shared widely. It can serve as a motivator for those of us engaged in the long battle for justice and social transformation."

• Bill Fletcher, Jr, author of *Solidarity Divided*"In his many years of practicing and theorizing pedagogy, Bill Ayers has proven himself a master teacher. Now, *Demand the Impossible* is a brilliant and accessible distillation of techniques and knowledge crafted into a powerful manifesto for our times, expanding the horizon of our expectations."

• Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, author of *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*"Bill Ayers is the philosopher of the revolutionary spirit. These are despondent times, and yet, as Bill muses - history can surprise us. In preparation for that surprise, Bill has written a smart and inspirational manifesto."

• Vijay Prashad, author of *The Poorer Nations*"Bill Ayers's *Demand the Impossible* is a strong shot of inspiration for anyone searching for deep social transformation. It is a heartfelt, upbeat manifesto in favor of activism as an antidote to despair. Chock-full of personal stories, real facts and concrete examples packaged in exquisite writing, *Demand the Impossible* will open your mind to possibilities you never thought existed. Ayers will get you off your seat and into the street, fist raised, heart full, reaching for the spectacular."

• Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink and author of *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*"*Demand the Impossible* is just what the world needs right now, a manifesto that challenges us to imagine bigger, love harder, create more expansively, and struggle toward a liberatory future in spite of our deepest doubts. Bill Ayers wakes us up and shows us that even the most entrenched, most permanent-seeming institutions•the military, the prison, the police, capitalism itself•are no match for the creativity and determination of the •universal family• and the •better angels of ourselves.â • *Demand the Impossible* is a call to abandon the illusory American Dream wholesale, and, in its place, to unleash our own collective, revolutionary dreams into the universe. I dare you to not be inspired by this book."

• Maya Schenwar, editor of *Truthout* and author of *Locked Down, Locked Out*"This is a deeply refreshing book, reminding us of why the core principles of socialist and anarchist thought•peace, justice, freedom, equality•are grounded, not in utopian fantasy, but in the joyous work of the creative imagination in everyday life. In large ways (an end to

the military-industrial complex and the U.S. prison system) and small (the rebirth of community and public life in neighborhoods) Ayers offers a program that is long on ideals and even longer on actually existing programs, groups, movements, and individuals working toward a humane future. By turns alarming in its realistic assessment of the madness and stupidity of the present global system, and inspiring in its down to earth proposals for alternative human futures, this is a must-read for discouraged progressives everywhere. It is a book that could be a clear and present danger to Western civilization as we know it—and in the very best way." —W. J. T.

Mitchell, editor of *Critical Inquiry* and author of *Seeing Through Race and Cloning Terror*"Every once in a while a book comes along that not only changes the way one thinks, but opens a new space for imagining and then acting to create a better world with commitment, courage, and a heightened sense of ethical and social responsibility. *Demand the Impossible* is one of those books, and it ranks right at the top of the list. Ayers has a gift—he not only writes like a poet but he never fails to deal with rigorous and important ideas in an accessible and moving style. Touching on a range of issues extending from police violence and racism to ecological destruction, Ayers raises all the right questions and connects the dots that provide a tapestry for energizing the radical imagination. This may be one of the best books written in that tradition. Powerful, insightful, prodding, challenging, and most of all hopeful—if you want to understand the problems facing a society tipping into the abyss of authoritarianism, this book is a must-read, a kind of master text for those of us figuring out how to change a world that seems at times beyond our reach." —Henry Giroux, author of *Theory and Resistance in Education* and *The Violence of Organized Forgetting*"*Demand The Impossible* provides the imperative we need now. As public consciousness and despair heighten in our various locales, we must be willing to engage lessons from the past and present while building a future that is reflective of our commitment to justice. If we're serious about this, we know there is no choice: all we got is US!" —David Stovall, author of *Born Out of Struggle*

Bill Ayers is a social justice activist, teacher, Distinguished Professor of Education (retired) at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and author of two memoirs, *Fugitive Days* and *Public Enemy*.

Bill Ayers' short new book, *Demand the Impossible: A Radical Manifesto*, is different from the typical liberal view of a better world in two ways. First, its goals are a bit grander, more inspiring. Second, it adds as the first and most important goal one that others don't include at all. A typical proposal that a lesser evillist might give for "voting against Donald Trump" might include minor economic or police or

prison reforms, a bit of environmentalism, healthcare, or education. Ayers wants to abolish prisons, end capitalism, disarm the police, redesign schools, create universal healthcare, and nationalize energy companies. And he's right. The radical vision is the better one, not just because it leads to a better place but also because the incrementalist approach will get us all killed -- only a bit more slowly than doing nothing. The more important, because rarer, difference in Ayers' manifesto is the addition of the missing topic. Most U.S. "progressives" imagine a world of greater economic equality and opportunity, environmental sustainability, fewer police killings, shorter prison sentences, investment in human needs, and the withering away of all sorts of bigotries, prejudices, sexism, racism, and other sorts of unfairness and cruelty -- resulting in a multicultural community all united in our support for dumping a trillion dollars a year into preparing for battle with our collectively loathed foreign enemies, and supporting the weapons trade as a supposed economic program. Ayers takes a different approach. "What," he asks, "if we broke from the dogma of militarism -- rejecting the anemic and seemingly endless debates about whether the United States should bomb this country or instead boycott some other country . . . -- and organized an irresistible social upheaval strong enough to stop U.S. invasions and conquest[?] What if we occupied bases, blocked munitions shipments and private militias, boycotted arms dealers, sabotaged surveillance operations and drone manufacturers -- and forced the U.S. government to disarm and close all foreign military bases within a year? . . . Or what if we built a colossal transnational movement that organized shadow elections (initially), inviting any resident of a country with a U.S. military presence within its borders to vote in U.S. national elections?" Ayers proposes that we take on the culture of militarism, not just the industrial structure of it. "[I]magine," he writes, "any bit of the war culture transformed into a peace-and-love culture: the Super Bowl opening with thousands of local school kids rushing through the stands distributing their poetry, and then everyone singing 'This Land Is Your Land,' or 'Give Peace a Chance,' or 'We Shall Overcome'; an airlines or bus terminal clerk saying, 'We want to invite any teachers or nurses in the gate area to board first, and we thank you for your service'; urban high schools eliminating ROTC and banning military recruiters in favor of school-wide assemblies for peace recruiters featuring Code Pink, and after-school programs led by Black Youth Project 100 and the American Friends Service Committee." Some of us like this idea so much we've organized an event this weekend to try to advance it. The event is called #NoWar2016. This Friday and Saturday, you can watch the live stream at [TheRealNews.com](http://TheRealNews.com). Videos of Friday through Sunday will be quickly posted online. Sunday will include activism workshops and a planning session for a protest at the Pentagon at 9 a.m. Monday morning. The details are all at [...].

Great book, I like Bill Ayers, he is very open minded. He is not racist and tells it like it is.

Fastastic analysis of the state of our society. It really opens your mind to other possibilities and encourages community and communication, compassion and understanding. I love this book.even if you don't like Bill Ayers, you'll like this book.

great

Bill continues to be an articulate advocate for needed political change. His "radical" suggestions for reform, are actually quite reasonable.

Twisted history, spin. and lies. Marxism reworked. The most brutal, bloody, oppressive regimes come from this propaganda. The poor are destitute and the leader elites end up wealthy. The "revolutionaries" of Ukraine who vowed to stop corruption are now on the Forbes List. Read this years ago, sad it is making a resurgence in any way

Food for thought. An interesting perspective suggesting radical change in confronting radical problems in increasing disfunctionalsocieties ravaged by neo-liberalism. Sets important benchmarks as to where we should ideally be heading in the struggle forsystemic change to a more humanistic society.

Read it. This work stands in opposition to the wrongs we are all being subjected to by those illegitimately in power vis-a-vis archaic social institutions and our own damn government.READ IT.

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