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## Where Is the Mass Movement? Contribution to GTI Forum [Which Future Are We Living In?](#)

Valentine M. Moghadam

The questions that Paul Raskin poses in his [opening reflections](#) are very timely: “What future are we living in now?” And “What structures of collective coordination can catalyze a diverse yet unified movement? Who will change the world?” To my mind, it is precisely the continued power of [Market Forces](#) that have led to Barbarization and near-[Breakdown](#). And this after all the disasters those forces have wreaked on the world, for which they have not been held to account. Given the close ties between market forces and ruling classes, especially here in the US, we can hardly expect attempts at policy reform to be substantive and enduring.

In the post-Cold War early 1990s, there was much talk about a “peace dividend” and “human security,” but those aspirations lost out to civil conflict, big-power military interventions, and the “Washington Consensus,” with its neoliberal agenda of privatization and austerity. At the turn of the century, there was optimism about global civil society, transnational advocacy networks, and global social movements—including the transnational feminist networks that I studied. The anti-globalization movement produced the World Social Forum, but after a twenty-year run, it seems to have exhausted itself—likely because of its lack of a political program and leadership. Those of us who hoped it would unite the many diverse and disparate groups around something akin to an International eventually realized that this would not come about. Who, indeed, will change the world?

The future we are living in is perilously close to Barbarization. The past twenty years have seen the US bombardment, invasion, and occupation of Afghanistan; the devastating US/UK invasion and occupation of Iraq; and the 2011 NATO assault on Libya. Saudi Arabia, the richest country in the Middle East, has used US weapons to destroy the poorest country, Yemen.

Syria has endured assaults by Israel and Turkey, and the US assassinated the top general of a sovereign state, Iran, in a sovereign state, Iraq—after it had abrogated an international treaty (the Iran nuclear deal). NATO continued its eastward expansion, and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, European states decided to increase military spending, arm Ukraine, and call for Russian accountability for its crimes. One could be forgiven for wondering where US Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s “rules-based international order” has been in the past twenty years, and where former Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallstrom’s “feminist foreign policy” stands on Western militarized masculinities and arms sales. Who will change this brutal state of affairs?

The peace movement in the US is small, but it is vibrant and committed to a world of dialogue, international cooperation, and the reallocation of resources away from corporate and military sectors toward public health, good schools, clean water, decent work, and improved public transit. In the US, Code Pink, Massachusetts Peace Action, WILPF, Madre, the ANSWER coalition, and similar organizations exemplify the best in collective coordination. But they have yet to mobilize a mass movement because corporate interests (including the corporate-led media) and the political elites of both parties are adamantly opposed to their proposals—and to the new paradigm it entails. [Eco-communalism](#) is ideal, but some longstanding champions now seem to prefer “[eco-Leninism](#).” There is something to be said for that, but perhaps we first need a mass peace movement to stop the madness of endless weapons production, corporate profits, and military assaults, and compel our leaders to invest in the human security and dignity of all peoples, from the low-income Americans who experience appalling infrastructure and “deaths of despair” to the poor Yemenis who suffer hunger, bombardments, and the destruction of cultural heritage.

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## About the Author



Valentine M. Moghadam is Professor of Sociology and International Affairs at Northeastern University, where she researches globalization; transnational social movements and networks; economic citizenship; and gender, development, and women's movements in the Middle East and North Africa. Her books include *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*, the award-winning *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks*, and *Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement*. She holds a PhD in sociology from American University.

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