

Title: Break the Mold: A DIY Guide to Counter-Hegemony Subtitle: Inspired by Antonio Gramsci + DIY Culture

"The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born." – Antonio Gramsci

What's This About?

You've probably felt it: - The world's on fire  - Bosses demand more for less - Tech is cool but locked behind gates  - School taught you obedience, not how to fix your bike or organize your coworkers

This zine is for people who: - Love to learn **outside institutions** - Want to **build and share** tools, not just consume - Know that knowledge should be **free, accessible, and liberating**

This is your intro to **counter-hegemony** — Gramsci-style — for hackers, makers, and builders of better worlds.

SECTION 1: What is Cultural Hegemony?

The ruling class doesn't just control the economy — it controls the *narratives*: - "Success = wealth" - "Capitalism = freedom" - "If you're broke, it's your fault" - "Democracy means voting, not organizing"

 This is **ideological conditioning**. It's how systems stay in power — not with violence, but with **consent**.

Gramsci said: If we want freedom, we need to **build our own ideas, spaces, and schools** — from the ground up.

SECTION 2: Makerspaces as Resistance

Makerspaces can be counter-hegemonic if they: -  Share tools + knowledge freely

-  Run democratically (no bosses)
-  Value **collaboration over competition**
-  Teach skills *and* critical thinking
-  Welcome the excluded (women, queers, disabled, Black and brown folks)

Makerspaces can be mini-laboratories of liberation — not just cool garages with 3D printers.

SECTION 3: DIY + Free Skools

What if education was free, peer-led, and fun?

Start a DIY Radical Education Project: - Hold a workshop on “Basic Electronics + Capitalism” - Host a film night on labor history or Gramsci’s life - Teach soldering + mutual aid at the same time - Zine printing night: “How to Resist Bosses and Build Co-ops”

Examples: -  Noisebridge (SF) -  Detroit Community Technology Project -  Barnard Zine Library Workshops -  FABLabs -  Public Lab

SECTION 4: Skill-Sharing = Class War

“Every person is a philosopher.” – Gramsci

Skill-sharing is how the working class builds *its own* intellectuals. You don’t need a degree. You need curiosity and community.

DIY topics that subvert the system: - Lockpicking 101 → Know your rights & privacy - Build a radio → Decentralize media - Mutual aid tech → Mesh networks, solar USB, water testing - Tool libraries → Collective ownership in action - Build a co-op → Make capitalism irrelevant

SECTION 5: Think + Do

Combine Gramsci’s Theory + Hands-On Practice:

Gramsci Idea	Makerspace Action
Cultural hegemony	Deconstruct tech-as-profit narrative
Organic intellectual	Everyone teaches something — from code to sewing
Praxis	Learn and act — build protest gear, zines, co-ops
War of position	Occupy minds slowly — build new norms + networks

Toolkit: How to Start Your Own Radical Space

1. Find a space — A garage, a back room, a shed. Or online.
2. Start small — Teach what you know. Ask others to join.
3. Make it horizontal — No leaders. Shared decision-making.
4. Share materials + access — Screw NDAs and gatekeeping.
5. Document + publish — Zines, blogs, wikis = radical memory.
6. Connect to others — Hackerspaces.org, Mutual Aid networks, Anti-University collectives.

Further Reading / Listening / Doing

- Antonio Gramsci – Selections from the Prison Notebooks
- DIY Toolkit (Free Skool): crimethinc.com / sproutdistro.com
- Noisebridge wiki: noisebridge.net/wiki
- The Public School: thepublicschool.org
- Hack This Zine
- Tech Learning Collective

Last Words

Education doesn't belong to the state.

Innovation doesn't belong to Silicon Valley.

Freedom doesn't mean waiting for permission.

Build your own school. Wire your own network.

Think with your hands. Break hegemony with a soldering iron.

