

UTOPIA MOVEMENT

Citizen cooperative of popular education

Let's change our way, let's change our life

Edgar Morin's appeal

Countless are we, though scattered around the world, to find it more and more difficult to put up with the hegemony of profit, money, calculation, growth, GDP and polls, all those ignoring our true needs as well as our legitimate desire to live our life both self-sufficiently and in a community.

Countless are we, though fragmented and compartmentalized, to wish that the trinity "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" became our standard of personal and social life and not the mask of growing servitudes, inequalities and selfishness.

In the past decades, with the outburst of global free-market economy, profit has raged to the detriment of solidarity and friendliness, social conquests have been partly canceled out, life in the built-in obsolescence, even hidden defects, and food has no more virtues, flavours or taste.

Indeed there are still numerous oasis of lives based on love, family, brotherhood, friends, solidarity, games, showing how the will to live well can resist. The civilization of interest and calculation will never manage to absorb them. But these oasis are still too distant and do not know one another well enough.

And yet they expand and their conjunction sketches out the face of another possible civilization.

Environmental awareness tells us how important it is to develop new sources of renewable energies, gradually eliminating the others, including the so harmful nuclear power. We must also devote a greater part of our economy to the salubrity of polluted cities and to the healthiness of agriculture thus reducing the more and more unhealthy industrialized agriculture and livestock farming to promote eco-farming and agro-ecology.

A huge reflation of economy in this direction, stimulated by the increase of social and united progress would greatly reduce unemployment as well as job insecurity.

A reform in the working conditions would be necessary in the name of that profitability which today engenders mechanization in behaviours, even automation, burn out, unemployment, thus reducing the promoted profitability. In fact profit may be made by the full use of personality and responsibility of the workers and not by robotizing the behaviours. The reform of the states may be obtained, not by reducing or increasing the staff, but by putting an end to bureaucratization i.e. by communicating with the different departments, making constant initiatives and taking into account retrospective effects between the levels of management and execution.

The reform in consumption would be of the utmost importance. It would allow a well-informed

especially in the fields of beauty, hygiene, seduction, luxury, which would make consumerist desinformation lose ground such as in car advertising. Taste, flavour, esthetics would guide the consumers. Consumption would therefore increase, reducing industrialized agriculture, tasteless and unhealthy food and consequently the rule of profit.

Encouraging short production/distribution circuits, especially concerning food via markets, farmers' cooperatives, the internet ... will improve our health as well as push down the hegemony of supermarkets, canning industries and frozen food.

In addition, industrialized standardization has created a need for craft industry as a reaction. Not cars, refrigerators, computers, mobile phones, stockings, socks... would promote a neo-craft industry. At the same time encouraging corner shops would make our towns and cities much more human. All this would thus put an end to that impressive techno-economic power which leads to anonymity, to the lack of friendly relationships with others, often so in the same block of flats.

So the consumers, that is all the citizens, have acquired a power they cannot see because of a lack of collective connection but which, once it is enlightened and enlightening, might determine a new industry, agriculture, retailing, but also to our lives becoming more and more convivial.

such as setting up solidarity centers in small towns and districts of big cities. It would stimulate conviviality, this original human need inhibited by our rationalized, timed, efficient life. We can find again the benefits of living well through an existential change.

We must regain a time to our own rhythm and only partially obey the timed pressure. We will be able to alternate speed with serenity virtues.

The current increase in the number of festivities and festivals clearly indicates our aspirations to a life poeticized by partying and communing in arts, drama, cinema and dance. Community arts centres will have to find a new life.

Our personal needs are not only in concrete terms linked to our sphere of life. Through the news given by the press, the radio, the TV, we are willing to take part in the world, sometimes subconsciously. What should reach awareness is our belonging to an interdependant humanity. We believe, as Montaigne already claimed in the 15th century, that "any man is my fellow-countryman" and that humanism spreads as respect due to any human being. Our countries, in their uniqueness, belong to the human community. Our individualities, in their uniqueness, belong to the human community. The problems and vital dangers brought by globalization from now on link all the human beings in a shared destiny. We m

which acknowledges our responsibility for the earth destiny. Each of us is a moment, a particle in a gigantic and unbelievable adventure, coming from homo sapiens demens, our own kind ever since the prehistoric era. It has been going on with the birth, greatness and fall of empires and civilizations and is now swept away to a future where everything that seemed impossible has become possible for better or for worse. That is why a detailed and regenerated humanism is necessary for our will to rehumanize and regenerate our countries, our continents, our planet. Globalization, with its opportunities and its dangers, has created a shared destiny for all human beings. We all have to face the environment damage, the increase in the number of mass destruction weapons, the hegemony of finance over our states and destinies, the rise of blind fanaticism. At a time when we ought to become aware of that common destiny shared by all earth people, under the pressure of the global crisis and the anxiety it arouses, paradoxically enough we find refuge in distinctive ethnic, national and religious identities.

We appeal to each of you to a necessary public awareness and wish it would spread so that the big issues concerning our planet should be dealt with.

Let all those who agree with this text give it their full approval.

Edgar Morin

Appeal made at the Utopia summer university.

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