

At the Crossroads of Humanity's Future



# **At the Crossroads of Humanity's Future**

**The steps towards the Universal Human Nation**

*By Guillermo Sullings*

## **Impressum**

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In May 2000, he published the book 'Beyond Capitalism: Mixed Economics' as a proposal for an alternative economic system to those of capitalism and communism. This book was presented in several conferences organised in Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Chile and Spain. In 2014 it was translated, published and presented in Italy. In 2001, he published the essay 'The Right to Rebellion and the Nonviolent Struggle' which was published in Argentina, Peru and Chile.

Since 2002, he has written several essays on social, political and economic matters, some of which have been included in books published by the University of Cordoba, Argentina; UNED, Madrid, Spain; The University of Panama; EUNED, Costa Rica; and by Tabla Rasa, Spain.

He was a presidential candidate for the Humanist Party in the Argentinian elections of 2003.

He has also participated frequently as a panellist in various forums around Europe and Latin America. Between May 2010 and May 2012 he held the role of General Secretary of the International Humanist Party. He currently works on the development of Real Democracy methodologies.



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# Dedication

This book is dedicated to ‘Us’. Despite the fact that these days it seems that this ‘Us’ is difficult to reveal, to build or to rescue, it lives in our roots as the only true identity accompanying us since our origins and towards our horizon.

But today there’s so much that divides us that it’s difficult for us to find something in common. We’re from different races, we speak different languages, we have different creeds, and our daily interests are often set one against the other. In this crossroads of history, plagued by contradictions, we often feel alone, divided and helpless to such an extent that it ends up impossible to talk about an ‘Us’.

Perhaps if we were to look in the depths within us we could evoke the moments in which we were together.

That’s what we were when we managed to sow and reap, to extract and build, when we created writing and poetry, the arts and sciences, when we discovered the laws of the universe, the cure for illnesses, when we invented everything.

That’s what we were when we had to organise ourselves into a society. And although time and time again we fell into the contradictions of war, violence and injustice, time and time again we were also capable of seeking peace, tolerance and solidarity in order to continue moving forward.

Today we’re in front of a new crossroads, and this is a greater challenge than previous ones because it involves the whole planet. And in front of this complexity arise discomfort and impotence, ‘Us’ is forgotten, a void gains ground within every human being, and we feel increasingly alone, helpless and lacking in meaning.

The time has come to ask ourselves, to ask from within, “Where do we come from, and where are we going?” Maybe in the answer we’ll recover meaning, we’ll re-find the ‘Us’, and the turning to take at the crossroads will become illuminated.

But we can only start from our own existence. No one asked us if we wanted to be born. No one asked our parents either, or those who came before them. And yet here we are in a situation of living without anyone looking out for our destiny.

Once we sought out the gods in order to not feel alone, in order to believe ourselves to be protected. We endowed them with infinite powers so that they'd be able to shelter us, illuminate us and even decide for us.

But today we're alone. Perhaps in the future, or maybe never, we'll know if the gods really existed, and if they're interested in us. Today, on this planet, we're alone, and we're the only constructors of our future.

Once we were told that the kings were descended from the gods, and maybe that's why we put our trust in them and made them responsible for our lives. Perhaps that's why today we believe that our present and our future are in the hands of those who govern or the powerful.

But we can no longer continue to look for people to blame, so the time has come to take charge. Everything's collapsing, and the names of those responsible matter little. It matters little if those who should have looked after our present and our future have been wicked, weak or inept. The important thing is to know that everything depends on us.

We're not talking about a society which someone else will have to transform, it's us who must transform ourselves in order to live differently. We aren't talking about saving our planet as if it were an inanimate vessel on the point of sinking. We are the planet, we're its life, its mind and its spirit.

We're the life that emerged from the water. We're the fish that wanted to see the sun. We're the lizard that wanted to feel. We're the primate that stood up on two feet and wanted to think. We're the first human being who conquered fear, approached the fire and learned to dominate it. We're evolution, and we're history. We're the descendants of those who, time and time again, changed their lives and changed the world.

We're the sons and daughters of the human species. We could do it before, and we can do it now.

# Prologue

## The arrow of time

The world seems to be entering a zone of chaos. The main indicator of this growing disorder is the fact that nothing is working, something which is seemingly obvious from where we're standing. Political, commercial, religious, sporting and even military institutions have lost their credibility almost completely, and, undermined by corruption and the trafficking of influence, they're starting to collapse. The much-vaunted efficiency of the ruling economic model for satisfying human needs which has been promoted *ad nauseum* by its disciples in all latitudes is today questioned not only on the streets but also by the informed opinion of renowned economists and academics given that, in the light of crude statistical evidence, its results have been disastrous and is provoking scandal and global repudiation.

In the field of politics, the old Nation State, once powerful and sovereign, now finds itself stuck in submissive impotence and manipulated at a distance by international financial capital: a kind of Para-state whose completely illegitimate power resides in its capacity to control the planet's capital flow, a position from where it can condition countries' democratic decisions. This phenomenon became patently obvious during the Greek debt negotiation with the so-called 'troika' (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund), an occasion on which the proposals presented by the Greek government with the majority backing of the people were ignored so that severe austerity measures could be imposed by force. The impact was so devastating that it led the chief Greek negotiator, Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, to resign his position in order to set in motion a movement for the democratisation of Europe (DiEM25).

In fact, recent studies have revealed that no more than 25 banks control around 90% of global capital. Never before in history has such an extreme degree of concentration been reached, never before has a position of such absolute power been reached. Nevertheless, we're talking about a faceless

power which is, moreover, stateless, meaning that it lacks a precise location, and so it went unperceived until the last great global financial crisis (2007-2008), since when it has started to face intense scrutiny. Certainly, to talk about a 'free market' in this context is simply a fallacy, a colourful argument to deceive the gullible because behind the flowery waffle there hides a monstrous reality: the tyranny of money.

This crisis that affects us today also manifests itself in other areas of social and personal life, and its effects resonate with similar characteristics in places where the geographical and cultural contexts are very different. This concomitance speaks to us, once more, of the global nature of this crisis, and its different manifestations reveal a common phenomenon: the destructuring of the current system. Social and emotional links are breaking down given that everyone has turned into a potential 'competitor', and individuals have been left isolated in a world inhabited by their own phantoms, one step away from madness. This reality that we've built is, among other things, undeniably desolate. Without doubt, the human cost required to reach the mirage of material wellbeing has been too high.

But how have we reached this situation which is so disastrous?

The first fact to consider is that the human process entered into a phase of planetarisation. The advances in communication and the capacity to travel have made possible the interconnected world that we know in which there are practically no isolated points. But this phenomenon isn't negative in itself. On the contrary, it responds instead to an ancestral impulse that comes from the dawn of history.

The second fact to bear in mind is the tendency towards homogenisation and uniformity that the planetarising process acquired and which is indeed a negative characteristic. The dominant mercantilist worldview has imposed a universal lifestyle, and its parameters of coexistence are replicated identically in every point of the planet (including in those countries previously called 'socialist'). This pact by the powerful to carve the world up between them that was first sealed with the famous Bretton Woods agreements around 70 years ago is what we understand by 'globalisation'. That was when the North American position triumphed over the European one and ended up consolidating into the so-called 'Washington Consensus'.

But its audacity and immense arrogance tried to go even further, to the extreme of decreeing the supposed 'end of history' with the establishment of a world without time in which any possibility of discussing the status quo would be eliminated once and for all. Nevertheless, a society without history is ultimately a dehumanised society given that human life is essentially

personal and social history. This birth defect extended everywhere like a sinister epidemic until reaching the extremes of violence that we see today: a perverse social reality in which human beings occupy last place in the scale of priorities.

Fortunately, History has its own dynamic and the arrow of time can never be detained. The process continued its irreversible course, invalidating all those spurious assumptions spread by the ideologues of the system. Strictly speaking, most of today's problems respond precisely to the need to change a few old structures and institutions that show themselves completely incapable of adapting to the transformations that our collective life has been experiencing. Certainly, the elites continue to think that a few adjustments will be enough – a kind of 'leadership re-engineering' – in a desperate attempt to maintain their privileged situation. But those efforts will be completely uncondusive because the train of History has already left them behind.

So, the most pressing questions in this historical moment are to do with the changes that have to be made, and how to undertake them in the most effective way possible. There's a saying by Gramsci that illustrates what is happening very well: *"The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."* In the light of this reflection by the great Marxist thinker, one can slightly better understand the explosive resurgence of irrationalism such as xenophobia and religious fundamentalism. As long as new responses aren't able to emerge, this grey area will tend to be colonised by the most diverse aberrations.

In any case, within this slightly discouraging social and personal panorama there is some good news to be found. The first of which is to do with the fact that globalisation has failed in its homogenising project. Following that old adage of New Humanism that says *"when you force things towards an end you produce the contrary,"* diversity from the grassroots has exploded as a reactive response. This creative entropy to which Prigogine alludes opens up a range of possibilities and generates a field of liberty for finding necessary variants, capable of breaking the mechanical tendency towards decomposition of the system. Now the challenge is to learn to coordinate this social base that is starting to organise itself until it manages to converge in a common objective.

The second piece of encouraging news has to do with the recognition that the historical process has already done a lot of the work by creating the conditions for a new evolutionary leap. It's not necessary (or convenient) to go back and start from zero. It's enough to modify the direction by small

degrees, moving the target: from the universal market to the Universal Human Nation. From globalisation to planetarisation.

It must be remembered that one of the founding texts of New Humanism, the Humanist Document, published at the start of the 90s already dealt with these things: *"Humanists are internationalists, aspiring to a Universal Human Nation. While understanding the world they live in as a single whole, humanists act in their immediate environments. Humanists seek not a uniform world but a world of multiplicity: diverse in ethnicity, languages and customs; diverse in local and regional autonomy; diverse in ideas and aspirations; diverse in beliefs, whether atheist or religious; diverse in occupations and in creativity."* Planetarisation is advancing on the back of human diversity.

This magnificent book by the humanist Guillermo Sullings explains in detail how to carry out this change of direction, and it describes with illuminating precision the route that will lead us towards this historic objective: the Universal Human Nation. The author is inspired by the proposals of Universalist Humanism formulated by the Latin America thinker, Mario Rodríguez Cobos, Silo, 25 years ago. Those proposals present the humanist position in the face of a global crisis that was already anticipated, although very few were capable of perceiving it in the moment in which it was circulated. Perhaps because of this particular circumstance Silo characterised his proposal as a way out of the emergency, a kind of plan B in the 'hypothetical' case that the globalising project would fail.

So then, today this failure is already a fact, and there don't appear to be any other options as precise and detailed as those proposed by humanism. This book takes care to extensively broaden those initial developments, making crystal clear the course that the humanising process must follow and giving foundations to every step and every stage in order to thereby ensure its viability over time. Those humanists who have accompanied this project from the beginning are thankful for Guillermo's efforts, his lucidity and erudition, because it has allowed us to harbour new hopes by opening a future that seemed to be categorically closed due to the stupidity of the times.

If before now the only thing that we could maybe know was where we're coming from, now, thanks to this book, we know with certainty where we're going.

*Francisco Ruiz-Tagle C.  
Santiago, July 2016*

# Introduction

Until now, the human species has journeyed on a path that, even if relatively short compared to the emergence of life on the planet, represents an important evolutionary process in a permanent search launched towards the future. There are those who think that the development of this process is down to chance, others suppose the pre-existence of a destiny, and some of us think that human life has a meaning that drives its evolution forward but that the choice of building a society which is coherent or contradictory with that meaning depends on the intentionality of human beings.

When deviations on the path generate contradictions, violence increases, divisions between people grow, and the future becomes uncertain. Then the imperious need arises to re-find our species' meaning, re-discovering the perception of what makes those around us human in order to advance together in the deconstruction of social contradictions and set off on the path towards the humanisation of the Earth.

Today one could think that the inertia of the historical process is leading us towards an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world in terms of culture, economics, politics and the military, and that the tendency towards increasing integration is irreversible. But the great doubt is: what will this supposed integration be like? Will it be a world controlled and governed by the biggest economies? Will it be a world controlled and dominated by international financial power? Or will a planetary civilisation emerge from the union of diversity of its people?

Those of us who aspire to the latter glimpse an image on the horizon: a truly Universal Human Nation, a world without borders in which human beings can fulfil their greatest aspirations, in peace, with justice, with freedom and with an infinite future ahead of them. For some this may seem to be an unrealisable utopia, but others are able to convert this utopia into an objective that orientates us and inspires us towards a project worthy of the human species.

A long path awaits us and a prolonged period of time. Surely many of us won't reach the goal even if we'd be happy just to glimpse it on the horizon. But more important than the time it may take to achieve this objective is that we set off decisively in this direction over the coming years, before the forces of anti-humanism consolidate into a power and control that then becomes very difficult to reverse.

The contradictions of today's world have been the cause of numerous crises which will multiply and become deeper if we don't change the direction we're going in. Because the irrationality of the economic system and the voracity of financial speculation will provoke new crises that will marginalise millions of people. The arms race, wars and terrorism will put an end to more and more lives and provoke growing suffering in the population. The lies of politicians and media manipulation will destroy all trace of credibility which will lead to widespread chaos if other kinds of coherent references fail to emerge. This social chaos will either push us towards drastic setbacks for societies or provoke the installation of a new order based on force. In any case, by continuing in this mechanical direction of events, the world is heading towards an inevitable catastrophe which is why it'll be essential that human intentionality re-finds the species' meaning and corrects the direction.

In the years to come, It'll be important that many people, organisations, social movements and hopefully a few governments support this cause, share its aims and endorse its proposals so that we can join forces to act in coordination, setting in motion a truly human project that allows us to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

A long path with numerous difficulties awaits us on which it will be necessary to have clear objectives at every stage, in every step towards the summit. And what we'll try to do in this book is identify the steps that have to be taken in order to approach the same objective from different parts of the world. This is a first approximation of the steps to take and will surely be improved upon, completed and multiplied on the way. Some are already being attempted, and in this case it'll be important to join forces together. In other cases we'll have to start the journey now. Of course, it isn't a linear process of consecutive steps but rather different partial goals in different areas in which we can make progress depending on the time and the place but always in a way which is convergent with the project of the Universal Human Nation.

We have to understand that the Universal Human Nation doesn't just represent an ideal world, but rather it has become a real historical need because on a globalised planet there's no way to confront a general crisis other than by finding global answers.



For a better understanding of what we're proposing, we'll start with a general semblance of the project in the 'Exordium to the Universal Human Nation'.

Then we'll move on and go deeper into a few subjects that we consider relevant in the chapter of 'Analysis and Foundations' where we'll try to cover the areas in which transformations should be produced at both a national and international level.

As a kind of summary of the above, the proposals will be condensed into 120 steps, ordered by subject and culminate in a synthesis in which we'll try to integrate everything.

All the notes and bibliographical references can be found at the end for those looking for more specific information on certain subjects.



# **Exordium to the Universal Human Nation**

*The only truth is Utopia,  
reality is a circumstantial starting point*



A few years ago at the turn of the century on the wall of some Latin American city or other someone wrote the following graffiti: *'Enough realities, we want utopias!'* Surely many of us share this feeling of rebellion in the face of the apparent immobility of a society in decline that only tries to offer us the mirage of economic progress as motivation. It would seem to be that every aspiration for change ends up being diluted in a labyrinth of relativism, that every dream must be abandoned in the face of a constraining reality, and that really what can be done is not much more than what's already been done. In front of this mediocre realism, we could affirm that it's much more comforting to dream about utopias than to remain asleep in the shadow of resignation. Although we also understand that, under the weight of impotence generated by failure, many people feel a sense of resignation in front of the evident contrast between the greatness of their aspirations and the triviality of the changes achieved. And then, bit by bit, perhaps to attenuate the feeling of frustration, they end up accepting the empire of a mediocre reality, dulling the shine of the ideal that once mobilised them. But it has to be said that those who only limited themselves to repeating revolutionary slogans without knowing the steps to take in order to advance weren't contributing to the change in any case, being as paralysed as those who ran aground in quiet resignation.

It seems to be that there are those whose reason turns off their passion, and those whose passion clouds their reason, and in both cases they end up immobilised. It'll therefore be necessary to find a way to keep the flame of passion alive and endow it with reason so that its strength flows through appropriate channels. And this is what we'll try to do here: find an image that mobilises us and indicate the paths from which we can approach it.

This image is the Universal Human Nation: a world without borders, a Confederation of Humanist Nations, without wars, without violence, without hunger, without discrimination, with social justice, with Real Democracy, with environmental balance, with solidarity and, above all, with an open future. We know that it's the profound aspiration of every human being of good conscience, of good heart, and it's the latent dream of the greater part of humanity, and that's why it's a great paradox that something that the majority desires seems impossible, as if it doesn't depend on humanity to achieve it! So that's what this is all about: seeing which steps have to be taken to achieve it.

# Social Mysticism and Cultural Change

What can drive forward human beings so that they may continue on in their evolution and give meaning to their existence and to the planet itself?

Maybe a new make of car, a heavenly beach or a new outfit?

Maybe a stable job, a health insurance policy or the security of a pension?

Maybe the accumulation of wealth, fame or power?

Maybe the identification with a musical genre, sporting heroes or movie stars?

What a sad destiny for human beings if they've reached this point only to sleep under the daily hypnosis of the consumer society!

What a sad destiny for human society, if its path is drawn for it by advertising companies, political manipulators and the media!

Millions of years of planetary evolution to end up in this spiritual decline that leads to self-destruction?

Someone has to rebel.

Of course human beings need food, clothing, work, recreation and social protection. But satisfying these needs cannot be turned into either the start line for a consumer race that blinkers the eyes of the privileged, or the unreachable goal that frustrates the marginalised and leads them to resentment. Satisfying the needs for all the world's inhabitants must be turned into an objective of elemental justice that endows human labour with meaning while advancing towards a bright future.

And in which direction must human beings go? What will be the horizon that inspires them and elevates them above provisional meanings?

It would be a mistake to try to impose a path because the meaning for human beings is precisely evolution itself, and it bears the sign of freedom and the infinite. Every human being is capable of making contact with the profound within them, with their own sleeping spirituality, and here they'll

find the answers and the strength to rebel against the emptiness that advances in their lives and in the lives of others.

Every human being is capable of finding the meaning of their life and from there draw their own certainties and the strength to be coherent with them. But even if this awakening is experienced internally and cannot be imposed, it can be contagious when it resonates with the essence of every human being, and this makes us able to tune into each other beyond words.

And when this happens a real cultural change will start. Not a change of fashion or styles but rather a change of profound conceptions, a change of values.

It's not by explaining how a new culture should be that this new culture will be born. It's not by saying what the new values should be that these new values will be internalised.

We could say a lot about a new culture in which individualism is replaced by reciprocity, irrational consumerism by satisfaction of needs, competition by cooperation and the pursuit of stupidity by the search for limitless knowledge. To change indifference for solidarity and the search for prestige and power for sobriety and humility.

Nevertheless, none of this will happen until a sleeping spirit awakens from within to connect human beings with their evolutionary meaning: this contact with their interior from where the need will emerge to be coherent and to treat others as they want to be treated. But when this happens, everything will start to change. And this moment is getting closer because the saturation that this advancing emptiness is producing within human beings will be the detonator of their rebirth.

And this is what social mysticism is all about: a current that takes its strength from the profundity of those who start to set it in motion and which is in tune with everyone's profound aspirations. And in this moment everything will come together, and this social mysticism will take off in large numbers of human beings, and change will be the consequence.

So, those who today feel the need to start to rebel in front of the lack of meaning and in front of social violence must, before anything else, keep the inner flame of this rebellion alive because others will perceive it and ignite theirs. Of course every genuine aspiration for change will have to be accompanied by as clear as possible proposals so that the current for change has somewhere to be channelled. But we mustn't get confused and hope that by just stating the proposals we'll be mobilised to change, instead the strength of social mysticism that inspires them will feed the engine of total transformation.

# Politics without Politicians and Power without the Powerful

There are those who've talked about politics as the art of governing and administering a society for the common good, and there are those who've talked about politics as the art of obtaining and keeping power. It could be thought that both points of view are complementary because in order to govern and administrate a society first one has to have power in order to govern, and in turn correct administration favours permanence in power for those governing.

Nevertheless, for a long time now the dark arts used to obtain power have had their correlate in administrations that defend the interests of the few and not society as a whole. When power is attained through brute force, or through the seduction of money, or through manipulation, blackmail and lies, it would be difficult to use this power for the common good. When someone proposes to reach power to fulfil noble ideals, and in order to do so takes the shortcut of speculation, they're crossing a line with no way back.

But it also happens that many of those who genuinely want the common good stop on their path towards power precisely because they don't want to betray their principles, without realising that in this abandonment they're betraying their best aspirations. And so politics remains increasingly in the hands of those specialised in the holding of power.

There are also those who reject the idea of power itself because they consider that power corrupts, and others do so because the simple exercising of power supposes the subordination of some human beings by others. And so power remains increasingly in the hands of those who enjoy subordinating others.

Humanity finds itself in a dead end without an appropriate channel for the aspirations of the majority to be transformed into actions that modify



reality. The accumulated pressure will continue to explode in violent catharsis, chaos and suicide.

It's necessary to bring down the walls of this trap and build the paths on which freedom and human intention may move. It's necessary to build circuits of human communication through which the real power of society may circulate because if power circulates, it doesn't accumulate. Of course in order to build these channels there must also be people to use them, and this will promote an awakening and rebellion in the face of the present decline. And it will only be possible to undertake this arduous task with the energy of internal coherence and not with the expectation of results, as results will also depend on how the level of social and institutional deterioration progresses, and so people's protagonism becomes an imperious need and not a mere theory.

But when large numbers of human beings start to take charge of the social destiny, the paths and processes will necessarily have to be clear because in times of confusion any charismatic leader could manipulate the situation and once more concentrate power.

Power must be de-concentrated but, for it to be power, what we de-concentrate must be organised in such a way that it's an invisible power that doesn't make its weight felt on any one human being, and this power must instead manifest as an impassable obstacle when someone attempts to concentrate it.

# The Diagnosis

It would be pointless to transcribe here the statistics of a globalised system that can no longer endure what we're doing to it and is collapsing under its own contradictions. The point is to know if it'll end up falling down on our distracted heads or if we'll do something to accelerate its dismantling and replacement.

Growing social violence, unbridled militarism, prepotent military intervention by powerful countries, and its counterpart in terrorism are leading us towards destruction.

The increasingly regressive and unfair distribution of wealth is condemning millions of people to marginalisation and hunger in a world which has the resources to supply everyone with their basic needs.

Intolerance and discrimination are dividing people within cities, within countries, regions and continents as a backward troglodyte reflex in front of the advance of planetarisation and the flow of migrants.

The devastation of the environment and natural resources caused by irrational consumerism from those sectors with greater resources is not only leading us towards ecological disaster but also creating a rising cost for raw materials thereby accelerating the impoverishment of the most vulnerable.

But as often occurs with some illnesses, this diagnosis doesn't reflect more than the external symptoms of a problem which is much more profound, and the prescription to lessen such symptoms is useless if it hasn't understood the roots of the phenomenon.

In this historical moment the complexity of the problem makes us believe that it's impossible to solve. This complexity doesn't allow us to clearly see what has to be done, and so we lack a guiding image with sufficient precision to be able to re-encounter the strength of spirit within it to set ourselves in motion.

Every impulse towards action ends up being diluted in the labyrinth of doubts because the 'who', 'how', 'when' and 'where' of whatever-must-be-

done in order to achieve who-knows-what is not clear. And all that remains is a clouded abyss that separates us from utopias that are now so far away that we daren't even dream about them.

Let's start by blowing away the clouds, and maybe the abyss will disappear as well.

# Step by Step

## The perception of progress

There's nothing worse for a navigator than to lose their compass. Nothing worse for a walker than to not know where they're going.

Whoever seeks to stand up and set off after a goal possibly isn't intimidated by the distance or the difficulty of their purpose as long as their strength of spirit is sufficiently motivating. But they could falter if they don't clearly perceive that they're making progress, that they're gaining ground. If someone realises that they're going round in circles without a clear direction, if they perceive that for each step forward they must take two steps back, if they observe that every time they advance the goal moves further away, then they start to feel impotent, and they abandon their objective.

So, if we're talking about transforming the world so that human beings start to move towards this objective then we must redefine what we're talking about when we talk about progress.

We've already had an experience of reformism that meant progress relative to a platform that's moving backwards. This is the illusion of those travelling on train carriages with their backs towards the direction of travel.

We've also had the experience of many revolutions whose abrupt and unsustainable changes created the mirage of accelerated progress that later ended up being an even greater setback. It's the illusion of someone advancing rapidly down a blind alley only to then have to double back to where they started.

True progress must be perceived as the scaling of a mountain where, despite the distance, the summit is not lost from sight. Where on every step taken, an anchor point is fixed in order to avoid falling back and so continue the ascent. Where despite the deviations needed to get out of difficult spots, and despite the tactical withdrawals to find more expeditious paths, it's always possible to perceive progress in the ascent. Where to camp overnight is experienced as a way of recovering energy and not as an injury break. Be-

cause the climber feels that they're stalking the summit and takes advantage of the night to dream about it.

Climbing is not the reformism of those who conform to the illusion of progress, taking steps on a platform moving backwards.

Climbing also isn't the irrational attempt to reach the summit in a single bound, in order to then crash down to earth time and time again.

Climbing is the hard work, yet comforting path, taken by those who, moved by the mysticism of the spirit, reconcile the strength of their hearts with the reflection of their minds in order to advance coherently towards their goal without faltering.

## Defining goals

Here, we won't talk about the goals of every human being in respect of the profound meaning that they want to give to their lives. This is something fundamental because any social objective loses its meaning when it isn't borne in mind. But here we're dealing with social transformation, something that must be concomitant with individual transformation. And the nexus between both transformations should be the golden rule, *'treat others as you would like to be treated'*, because by applying this rule one is attending to one's own internal coherence and simultaneously to one's immediate environment and society as a whole. And by attending to society, out of a need for internal coherence, the goals appear clearly:

To overcome pain and suffering of all human beings. Nothing less than this.

To eradicate violence in all its manifestations. To end wars, to abolish weapons, to bring an end to unfairness, to oppression, to injustice, to discrimination, to marginalisation and to ecological disaster. Nothing less than this.

And to achieve all of this, the voluntary disposition of a few will not be enough. It will require the union of all the world's humanists and the many people who become infected with humanism while we journey along the path of social transformation. A social transformation that, in order to reach the previously listed goals, will have to propose itself unmistakable goals and precise steps to reach them. Because profound social transformation will require the dismantling of oppressive power structures.

To dismantle every concentration of power. To dismantle oppressive economic power that marginalises and exploits. To dismantle the political power of dictatorship and formal democracies. To dismantle the media power of those who manipulate public opinion and human subjectivity. To dismantle the power of fanaticism of the dogmatic and the intolerant.

And while, step by step, all concentrations of power are being dismantled, stage by stage, we'll have to build the Universal Human Nation. Real Democracy. Humanist Economics. A Libertarian Society in which the spiritual and the rational are not set one against the other. A culture of learning without limits, of creativity and of diversity.

And in order to reach these goals, we'll have to clarify the steps to take and the indicators to know if we're making progress. And every advance will have to be anchored down to make it irreversible and the starting point for a new step. Because as we've said, in the climb towards social transformation, we must go stage by stage without losing the objective from sight. And this objective must be in the sights of all the world's humanists: the ordinary citizen, social movements and organisations, and also the governments that make the project of the Universal Human Nation their own.

## **Defining steps**

The steps to follow could vary according to the distance to travel, the kind of terrain and the energy of obstacles ahead. Sometimes we can go quickly and other times more slowly. Some societies will have to travel a greater distance than others. Some will have to concentrate energy before setting off, and others will be more prepared. But on different flanks, everyone towards the same goal.

What a citizen as an individual can do will be different to what an inorganic group can do, to what organisations and movements can do, and to what governments can do.

Where governments are in agreement with the objective of the Universal Human Nation, possibly they'll be able to advance more rapidly, and individuals and organisations should strengthen the direction with their support and participation.

Where governments waver, individuals, movements and organisations will have to apply pressure so that those governments rectify their direction.

Where governments are opposed to the objectives, they'll have to be changed for others, and that task will be down to individuals, movements and organisations to do, step by step.

Where organisations and movements waver or deviate from the objective, people will have to take responsibility for removing their leaders and rectifying their direction or creating new organisations and movements.

Where the majority of people are not aligned with the objective, a lot of work will be needed to clarify, to reconcile, to persuade and to raise awareness.

But in any case, the transforming strength will have to go from bottom to top. If certain leaderships are necessary and useful for synthesising what the majority think and feel, they'll have to emerge from the same social current and not position themselves from the media or the superstructure of the system. And it won't be enough for a majority to agree with the fundamental ideals of the Universal Human Nation, this majority will have to be ready to be coherent with those ideals and find the way to coordinate in order to act together, advancing step by step towards completely transforming society.

A first step to achieving this joint coordination will be to have clear images of what we want and the steps to follow at every point, as we said before. Clear images mark a horizon, and the social enthusiasm for this horizon is what could bring together those who think and feel similarly.

# What Must Be Achieved

## Nuclear disarmament and military reductions

The main threat to humanity's survival is nuclear weapons. No project for even a minimal coexistence between nations can be shaped while there exists any kind of weapon of mass destruction. They're a constant threat that are used as a tool of blackmail by those who possess them when setting conditions on international politics. They're the symbol of human barbarity that it is essential to eradicate as an evolutionary step.

Hypocritical treaties of nuclear non-proliferation are good for nothing while countries that already possess these weapons continue to maintain and modernise their arsenals. It is precisely those countries that have to take the first step by dismantling their nuclear arsenals before worrying that other countries may seek to possess them.

Governments that refuse to dismantle are the first that must lose all support from their people. And the possibility to apply pressure so that disarmament begins is in the hands of the people of those countries, first and foremost. But it's also the obligation of all the world's governments to apply pressure at an international level in order to establish nuclear disarmament as the number one priority.

And together with the complete dismantling of nuclear arsenals, a progressive disarmament of conventional weapons must also start. War must stop being an option in international politics, and the enormous resources that are today destined to military purposes must start to be targeted to the elimination of poverty in the world. We must progress towards the abolition of weapons and the consequent banning of their manufacturing.

## Real Democracy

We can't conceive of any political regime in which a minority exercises power over the majority. And in this context, totalitarian regimes and formal democ-



racies are different forms of the same elitist and manipulative concept. So, even if today's democracies are a more advanced step than totalitarianism, their representational nature is far from considering the people as the real ruler. People don't just want the possibility to vote in elections, they want to have greater decision-making power on the issues that affect them daily. The concept of the State and its government distant from the people no longer resists the new times, and a place must be made for the concept of a Coordinator State in which people really feel that they're coordinating themselves through a division of functions and that one of these functions is fulfilled by government representatives.

Step by step, we'll have to reach the point where people have increasingly greater involvement in matters of general interest, where they can frequently give their opinions through consultation mechanisms and that this opinion is binding. Of course in order for people's opinions to become an increasingly wise common intelligence, not only will mechanisms for consultation and decision making have to be designed but also the way in which people are clarified about the subjects on which they're asked to give an opinion. If a government that comes to power through today's democracy wants to carry out profound transformations, one of the first things they must do is transform the very political system through which they came to power.

And if governments don't take this initiative because it's not convenient for them, then people must mobilise and increase pressure and gain ground in decision-making power until a Real Democracy is established. And they'll have to mobilise with much more strength in order to achieve this than when asking for specific demands. Because what will achieve the avoidance of continuous exhaustion as a result of having to mobilise time and time and again against injustice and abuse will be the very achievement of a political system in which we no longer have to depend on the discretion of the government, because the simple will for change of the majority will be binding in decision-making.

In the framework of electoral processes in today's formal democracies, the people mustn't give their support to any candidate who isn't committed to carrying out this kind of transformation.

## **Mixed Economics**

Just as the failure of centralised economies has been demonstrated both by their inefficiency and their characteristic totalitarian nature, the failure of neo-liberal economics has also been demonstrated because the dictatorship of international financial capital has been spawned from the process of wealth accumulation.

Because even if in Capitalism there's an engine for permanent growth – namely the free initiative by people to work, to produce, to invest and to consume – which in turn is compatible with a political system that assures freedom, many times this engine is not set running with the fuel of real needs and the understandable aspirations of human beings but rather with the fuel of greed and a desire for unbridled consumerism. And this leads to an increasingly unjust distribution of wealth, it leads to irrational exploitation of natural resources and the ravaging of the environment. It leads to permanent dissatisfaction and lack of satiation. It leads to a struggle for power, it leads to concentration of power and, in many cases, it leads to war.

It seems that growth of the market economy carries within it the gene of monstrosity. Nevertheless, it's not the engine of free initiative which is to blame for this, and it would be an error to try to stop it or repress it. The distribution matrix biased towards capital and the monstrous concept of usury and speculation as generators of parasitic profit will be the main deviations to correct. Therefore, just as in a Real Democracy, the word 'State' will be the synonym for organised people, in a humanist economy that State must look out for the equality of opportunities. And this is what Mixed Economics is about; equitable and sustainable development coordinated by the convergence of individual needs and aspirations.

Beyond the circumstantial complaints to improve their economic situation, beyond the pressure of particular demands, profound transformations in the economic system will have to be demanded in order to advance towards a Mixed Economy. Because salary increases will never be enough in a system in which business profits increase more than salaries. Because unemployment benefits will never be enough in a system that excludes more and more people. Because the improvements in small businesses will never be enough in a system that tends towards a monopoly and the concentration of speculative capital.

Reformism that tries to bail out the water leaking into an enormous damaged boat will never be enough. Energy must be put into building a new boat.

We must work for the participation of the workforce in company profits, ownership and decision-making.

We must work to force company profits to be reinvested into new sources of employment, instead of channelling them towards usury and speculation.

We must work to definitively abolish usury and speculation, and this means that monetary management will have to be in the hands of Real Democracies and not in the hands of the leeches of private financial power.

## Changing everything

We've mentioned the transformation of the three fundamental pillars on which this system is supported, namely the concentration of military, political and economic power. Then we'll be able to advance in other areas whose malfunctioning is based on these foundations.

Human Rights in general won't be respected while large numbers of human beings are subject to the discretion of concentrated power. No one can expect the right to life to be respected while wars are a methodology of action for those who try to dominate the world and maintain the profits of the military-industrial complex. No one can expect the right to a dignified job, healthcare, education and housing to be guaranteed in a society in which concentrated economic power excludes increasing numbers of people. And no one can expect the most basic of rights to be respected while societies remain as passive spectators in front of the lack of future of those who seek to migrate to other countries, crashing time and time again against the walls of selfishness and indifference.

We can't allow the manipulation of human subjectivity through the media which operates as a function of economic power to go on, whether this manipulation be to strengthen the consumerism of those who feed their profits, or to manipulate the electorate and thereby have sympathetic governments, or to keep the population hypnotised so that they don't rebel. The technological advances in communication is humanity's heritage and doesn't belong to a few who take advantage of it in order to manipulate.

The ravaging of natural resources and the environment, growing ecological disaster and contamination that affects human and natural life are the consequences of the irrational exploitation of our planet. And all of this is the responsibility of Capital's greed and government complicity.

We must understand that it won't be possible to change one part without changing everything, because every part responds to the logic of the greater system that it is contained within. It's no use thinking about every part separately in order to generate a monster like Frankenstein's that was only able to come alive in fiction. This is why the project of the Universal Human Nation, although it seems paradoxical, is more realistic than projects that change only one part and insert it into the present system. We mustn't be confused: one thing is to think about total change in stages, and something else is to think about it in parts that will then be difficult to assemble.

## **The real agents of change**

No profound change will move forwards without the protagonism of the people. It's well-known that in several societies today, a great mobilising force is emerging in which young people and women appear to be the most dynamic factors. Nevertheless, this force that in some countries is already manifesting itself and in others will soon do so, usually clashes with the institutional wall and starts to lose strength in the unbearable labyrinth of formal democracy.

We won't be able to surpass formal democracy through Real Democracy, if the latter isn't exercised within the same social force that applies pressure for change. Then yes, it will be possible to channel organised social strength using institutional paths to then replace them with something new.

To conclude, we have to understand that the historical process is necessarily leading towards an integration of countries in regions, and those regions towards a planetarisation that will include more and more aspects of life in society. So the most important question is not if the world will eventually be unified, instead what we must ask ourselves is, what kind of world will it be, and who will govern it? Will it be a world governed by military force? Will it be a world governed by financial power? Or will it be a humanised world, the result of the convergence of people in a truly Universal Human Nation?

The coming years will be decisive in defining this direction.

# **Analysis and Foundations**



# Who, When, How and Where

As we've already said, if we're to advance towards the Universal Human Nation, it's extremely important to have clear objectives and steps to follow at every stage of the ascent because sharp images mobilise and give strength and cohesion. That's why we'll dedicate most of this analysis to going deeper into what has to be done in order to lay the foundations for the proposed steps to be taken and also to show a wide spectrum of inspiring possibilities that will then have to be multiplied through people's initiative. Because it's obvious that it isn't possible to cover everything that has to be done in one book, and in any case the implementation of these same proposed steps will require many small sub-steps that will have to be developed on the way.

But before starting with the analysis of WHAT, we'll talk about WHO will be the agents of change and HOW, WHEN and WHERE they could act. So we'll start by expanding on what was said in the exordium.

Should it be those in government, those with some kind of power who should commit themselves to a project of transformation? Or can't we trust them because they're part of the problem?

Should it be organised people? And how do you configure a popular will? And how do you organise it in an increasingly destructured world?

Should it be social movements? And how do you bring the diversity of demands from such movements together so that they line up in the same direction?

In history, social changes have had various actors; sometimes a majority of people participated right from the start, and in other cases a minority acted. When a majority was mobilised, the most active and organised members were a small percentage. On numerous occasions there have been political and social changes through palace coups and armed revolutions in which the participation of the citizenry has been minimal. Sometimes there have been those who acted in the name of the people, or the working class but more as an abstract ideal configured by a clarified vanguard than by a real

will of the majority. The will of the people generally hasn't been taken into account, and the public mood has only been occasionally considered as an indicator of the appropriateness of certain policies in a Machiavellian concept<sup>1</sup> of power management. In today's formal democracies, that concept hasn't changed much in terms of the manipulation carried out from positions of power, only now these manoeuvres are made to capture votes and so legalise the exercising of that power. All of this we'll talk about in greater depth in the chapter concerning Real Democracy but here it's important to analyse the role that citizens can have in the materialisation of social change because it's clear that a totally passive role leaves the population at the mercy of the will of elites. It could happen that, independently of the protagonism of the people, inspired individuals in government emerge ready to improve the situation of the people but if the processes for change are not founded on people's commitment then those changes could be reversed the next time there's a change of government. And similarly, if attempted transformations are not built together with the people but are instead imposed, then the direction will inevitably end up being deviated. The experience of the former Soviet Union at different times of its development illustrates perfectly the deviations, advances and setbacks that can occur depending on the leadership in power at the time. In 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev<sup>2</sup> described very well from within the system itself the historical deviations that it had suffered. But later on – and after he had driven forward profound transformations in the direction of democracy – there was a change of leadership, under which, once again, other kinds of deviations and manipulations were generated, this time within the capitalist system.

We're facing a complex problem, because on the one hand when an administration comes to power that tries to manipulate everything at will, it avoids the participation of citizens in decision-making. But on the other hand, where there's an intention by an administration to give participation to the citizens, if citizens don't get involved, then sooner or later the government mutates towards manipulation. These are two sides of the same coin.

Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the question becomes even more complicated because the organised participation of citizens in political parties has diminished even further. If political activists have always been a small percentage of the population ever since the emergence of democracies, nowadays there are even fewer of them, to the point where political leaders are driven more by the media than by their party structures. But paradoxically, social mobilisation in the face of certain conflicts is increasing its appeal thanks to the growing interconnectedness that new communication technology allows. An explanation for this phenomenon could be that people aspire to have



increasing participation in political, social and economic matters but at the same time mistrust organised structures. Nevertheless, while many political structures are being emptied of participation, social movements are gaining strength, generally organised around the struggle for concrete demands in certain fields but also in the search for a total change of paradigms.

Returning to historical experiences, we can see that some of the great social movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that achieved transformations and even reached political power were able to count on certain factors of cohesion – important although not easy to find in all peoples. The struggles of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela<sup>3</sup> have not only been true examples in terms of the methodology of nonviolence but they also counted on three essential conditions for progress in stages: homogeneity of the protagonist subjects in the struggle (the same race or ethnic origin), the identification of an opponent to strive against (an unjust authority) and a step-by-step strategy in which each achievement was the start of a new objective (progressive civil rights until achieving equality). Prior to starting a civil rights struggle in certain ethnicities, awareness had to be raised about what those inequalities and discrimination meant in terms of injustice and why it was necessary to transform the culture of submission. Something similar has happened in all cases of social discrimination in which there were step-by-step advances in the obtaining of civil rights; first the cultural conditioning and the naturalisation of unjust situations rooted in those societies for centuries were overcome.

In the case of gender discrimination, the feminist movement has achieved remarkable advances since its beginnings at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century up to the present day: from the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen in 1791, passing through the Declaration of Seneca Falls<sup>4</sup> in 1848, leading to the so-called third wave of feminism started in 1950 by Simone de Beauvoir<sup>5</sup>. And although there still remains a lot to be done, above all in the field of culture and in particular in countries with anachronistic and discriminatory legislation, we have equally advanced a great deal in terms of citizens and labour rights. And in this struggle we can also observe the same factors that we mentioned before: firstly, raising awareness and rebellion in front of cultural conditioning, and on this basis a struggle in which there was a homogeneity of subjects in the struggle (women), a clear visualisation of the subjects to protest against (conservative authorities upholding discriminatory legislation) and a struggle in progressive steps to gain increasing rights until equality is achieved.

Of course when we talk about homogeneity of subjects struggling for their rights, we aren't disregarding the support that can come from oth-

er sectors because in the struggle of black people there has always been support from other ethnicities, even from a segment of those whites who exercised domination. Feminist movements have also been able to count on the support of many men, just as movements in defence of sexual diversity have also been able to count on the solidarity of a high percentage of heterosexuals. An African-American president would not have been able to reach the White House without the vote of part of the white majority in the USA, neither would there have been women leaders without the votes of many men. All of this speaks of a great cultural change that has been generated throughout centuries of struggle, and what's more there's been an acceleration in the last century. When we talk about homogeneity among the subjects in a struggle, we're referring to the fact that it's less difficult to amalgamate a social movement when there's a clear identification of the sector affected in terms of the rights that are trying to be claimed. This is also evident in all sectorial struggles, whether they be for civil rights, labour rights, or any other kind of demand that serves to amalgamate a certain collective. We aren't saying anything new with this, but it's necessary to mention it when analysing the difficulties that can arise when there's a struggle against a situation that affects many people without some factor to give them cohesion. In the case of trade unions that count on this cohesion factor among their members – a workforce in the same activity – and who've made great progress since the start of their struggle back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by organising themselves in the face of the exploitative conditions of the industrial revolution, in recent times they've become weakened as a result of the new ways of working that have emerged from globalisation, the segmentation of work and the technological revolution. So says the sociologist, Julio Godio<sup>6</sup> when he talks about the current challenges for trade unionism: *"As a result of the fragmentation of the job market it becomes difficult to homogenise behaviour of the workforce and it weakens the chains of solidarity between and within categories."* The proliferation of informal work in conditions that represent regression to the worst times of the Industrial Revolution when the population migrated from the countryside to the cities in search of opportunities and were exploited in inhuman conditions also affects union organisation. It would seem to be that the advances in working conditions, achieved over almost two centuries of struggle, contrast with the levels of exploitation that globalisation imposes today, and we can't find any great difference between the working conditions described by Marx<sup>7</sup> more than a century and a half ago and those related by Naomi Klein more recently when she talks about multinational enclaves in emerging countries to where pro-

duction is outsourced. These forms of labour exploitation right here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century don't just weaken the situation for working people and labour organisations around the world, as the competition for low costs generates unemployment in countries with better employment regulations, but furthermore they make it enormously difficult for the exploited to organise themselves into unions given the threats by those multinationals to transfer their factories elsewhere. It will therefore be necessary to give new organisational responses in the field of labour, something appropriate to the new times, and to give cohesion to all those who work, starting from the complexity of their different situations and not in terms of a single abstract ideal known as the proletariat.

Another point in the analysis of the necessary cohesion required for human groups to mobilise for social transformation is to identify the adversary because if many people, who on the face of it have nothing in common, register the certainty that many of their problems are caused by a government, a certain *de facto* power or any notorious party responsible for creating a conflict situation, then it's very probable that the visibility of that common negative factor will channel the convergence of those affected. For example, when in some countries, the banks didn't return savers' deposits due to disastrous financial management, the savers rapidly aligned without prior connection and organised mobilisations and protests because they felt affected by the same subject (the banks). But at other times, it isn't clear who's responsible. A few years ago in the essay, "The Right to Rebellion and the Nonviolent Struggle", we described what we called, "The bureaucratisation in the violation of human rights", in the following way: "... *If we live in a house and someone takes it away from us, it would be obvious to us that that someone had violated our rights. If a government were to legally establish that a certain sector of the population had no right to eat, the violation of a right would be very clear. The same would happen if they took away our right to healthcare and education by decree. Nevertheless in this complex and globalised world in which decision-making takes place in circles of power that can no longer be identified and have no geographical location, these decisions are transmitted through a web of circuits in which economic pressure, political power and the control of public opinion circulates. In this complex interaction of factors, our rights are frequently violated without us knowing very well where the whip is coming from or who is responsible – if there is someone – and so we find ourselves in the situation where the rights to dignified housing, a job, healthcare and education have been taken away, just like someone who's the victim of a flood, or an earthquake, or any other natural disaster out of the control of human will...*"

Of course, when the factors of power, through a chain of actions, provoke a crisis that crosses the threshold of what people can bear, many mobilise in protest. But everything tends to fade over time due to a lack of organisation and because the responsibilities also fade into a complex web that makes the solutions complex, and therefore the strength of those mobilised becomes sterile. In some cases pre-existing social and political organisations manage to gain space to the extent that they're identified as an alternative to the system that provoked the crisis, but rarely do they manage to advance towards true transformation.

Occasionally political leaders emerge who manage to express a diversity of demands around a synthesising image, something that Laclau<sup>8</sup> defined as an '*empty signifier*' through which the people accompanying the changes gain in identity and cohesion. Because precisely one of the greatest difficulties, maybe the greatest, for advancing in transformations demanded by the population is to configure a 'will of the people' because a transforming or revolutionary process doesn't just decant out of a mere multiplication of individual demands even if they are equivalent. It's in the phenomenological conformation – when certain leaders emerge out of popular protests while those popular protests are taking place and processing towards a popular will that converges with those leaders that protesters feel represent them – that popular movements can ascend to power in order to implement the changes demanded. And this difficulty, as Laclau well points out, becomes even more complex in a globalised world. This is precisely why the project of the Universal Human Nation will have a challenge to articulate demands and aspirations that are not just heterogeneous but also disperse.

So recapping, we can find ourselves with conflicts in different fields in which there already exists a cohesive element among those affected and generally an emerging, pre-existing organisation of that collective, for example, a union, a neighbourhood association, an immigration centre or a student group. Or we can find ourselves with conflicts that affect the population more transversally, and there are no previously formed organisations that cover this kind of conflict which is why new organisational bodies will have to emerge. Similarly we can find ourselves in situations in which the only ones affected are those protesting, or in a situation in which there are other sectors who show solidarity and accompany the protest. We can also find sectors of the population that, even if they don't participate or accompany certain protests, have a favourable opinion of them and would be willing to support those who resolve to tackle the resolution of such conflicts with their vote. And in all these options, we could be facing conflicts where it's clear where the responsibility lies and on which institutions of power pres-

sure must be brought to bear, or we could face situations in which it's neither clear who is ultimately responsible for the conflict, nor who has the capacity to resolve it. And another variation of the previous case is when those with possibilities to resolve a problem affecting part of the population are geographically out of reach of their protests.

In any case, what we can affirm is that in every conflict there's always a percentage of people who are willing to actively work for its resolution, another percentage willing to support in certain situations and another willing to at least vote for the alternatives for change. But the proportions can increase or decrease depending on different factors surrounding that conflict.

On the one hand – and this already has to do with the question 'when' – there's no doubt that there's a direct relationship between the existence and perception of a conflict and the proportion of people willing to do something to get it resolved. Generally speaking, a greater proportion of people are mobilised when a conflict erupts that crosses the threshold of what society is used to bearing. A catastrophe resulting from negligence, the massive layoff of staff, an abrupt increase in inflation, a wave of unusual violence and a financial crisis are all situations that provoke a rapid reaction from those who suffer the consequences and many others who feel solidarity. Inevitably after a moment of high tension, even though the conflict may not be resolved, the strength of mobilisation starts to fade and the continuity of the struggle to resolve the problem depends on the level of organisation of the most active if the situation isn't to become naturalised and taken as a new part of the social status quo.

There are other kinds of conflicts that, although they aren't about to erupt, are perceptible to a sector of society and have sufficient visibility to drive some people to organise themselves to do something about it. The mobilising capacity will always be less than in the moments of eruption but it can be enough to make it possible to work on an issue with certain permanence; for example, a problem of unemployment, or a housing shortage, or the deterioration in healthcare and education services. And there are other kinds of conflicts that are imperceptible to the majority, but because of their possible future consequences they motivate the few people who can visualise them to try to raise awareness in the rest of society, such as, for example, the problems of ecology and militarism.

It's also evident that the visualisation of certain conflicts by society is sometimes related to the media coverage given. And even if it's true that an agenda for the struggle for social transformation cannot be tied to the media coverage given to conflicts – because the media have their own interests

– it's also true that occasionally you can use the media to raise awareness of certain issues and enhance their media coverage and thereby work on them in a transformative way.

Here we see that the 'where' is very connected to the 'when'. Any place will always have opportunities for advancing in one of the issues related to one of the steps. And in that time and place, the greatest effort should be made to organise around the conflict and propose actions related to the step that we believe has to be taken in order to advance. And this point's important because in front of the same conflict the most varied proposals for resolution could emerge, but not all of them will necessarily lead us in the same direction in the medium or long term. For example, let's suppose that in a certain country there are severe unemployment problems, and therefore a number of citizens start to organise themselves in unemployment centres, others in unions, others in political parties, simultaneously working on the same unemployment conflict. Let's suppose that the media gives space to the issue thereby sensitising a high percentage of the population. In this context there could be a group of activists promoting the expulsion of immigrants so that there's more work for local people. There could be another group demanding higher unemployment benefits from the government. There could be yet others asking for donations in order to organise soup kitchens. In other words, not necessarily everyone mobilised by the issue will propose solutions that go in the direction of the Universal Human Nation because in the first case xenophobia obviously has nothing to do with this project. But in the other two cases, even if they're emergency solutions, they don't respond to the underlying question raised by the contradictions in the economic system. On the contrary, if we were to propose that businesses with greater profitability should be obliged to re-invest their profits in productive projects to generate employment, or if we were to propose that the government should drive forward the construction of a housing project to solve the housing shortage and at the same time generate employment, or if we were to propose a reduction of the working day while maintaining the same level of salary so that businesses could employ more people, any of these options, which would be more or less appropriate anywhere and at any time, would go in the right direction.

And in the examples just given, once again the question emerges of 'who' will work for the transformations that we propose; possibly we won't find them among those who propose the expulsion of immigrants, but maybe we will among the others, and it'll be possible to develop joint actions in the measure that awareness is raised about what the better alternatives are. Because there are many people with a very good sensibility ready to work

for conflict resolution, and we'll have to join forces with them in such a way as to achieve visibility so that a population sensitised to the issue in question will then support the transformations in the democratic bodies that are generated. But just as important as working together with those with the same sensitivity will also be to gain the support of other sectors that feel part of the same Universal Human Nation project.

One of the difficulties in the struggle for social transformation is the social fragmentation in which everyone looks after their own interests and rarely expresses solidarity with others. It's necessary to generate a team spirit in society, at least among those who start to endorse the Universal Human Nation project, and that's achieved by identifying ourselves as partners on the same path. For example, if there's a massive layoff in a metalworking factory, not only are we going to see the laid-off employees demonstrating but also many others who belong to the same trade, mobilised by their respective union. A sense of belonging operates as a mobilising factor out of solidarity. We aren't talking here about activists from political parties mobilised by party tactics but rather a real team spirit in large human groups. We'll have to reach the point where this feeling of belonging becomes widespread among all those who seek the Universal Human Nation. Awareness of every project must be as important as the awareness of the step to take in a certain conflict, firstly because sometimes the step that could be taken in any given moment might be relatively small yet it's the certainty of being part of a bigger project which maintains enthusiasm, and secondly because this very certainty drives solidarity and reciprocity with others who are in the same direction, even if in different issues. So if a group of people are working for transformations aligned to the Universal Human Nation project in the field of education, surely they'll feel fraternal with others in the field of ecology or employment, and joint actions will be possible. And everyone will understand that the actions defined in each situation will be more effective than isolated actions.

And this point above leads us also to the 'how' which has to do with an important aspect of this analysis, namely the steps that every transformation requires. Because one of the main reasons why the world isn't what the majority aspires to is because the dominant minority has a strategy, while the majority only has cathartic reactions, or in exceptional circumstances a simple tactic. But if the majority were to share the long term project of the Universal Human Nation, then they could act in a process within a strategic framework, and even though their actions would be specific, small steps in situational conflicts, every specific action would mean one more step within an integrated strategy; not only with the prior and subsequent steps in the

same issue but also with other steps to be taken around the world and in every field. That's why the interconnection between all those who work for the same project is extremely important because every advance in one place can be registered as progress in other places and also serve as an example or a demonstration effect.

The ways of working on a certain conflict in order to achieve the necessary transformations could be very varied; some could be known forms and others could be more novel or creative. But what's important is that they all converge in the same direction. Just as we took the example of different responses that could be given in front of the problem of unemployment, the same thing could also happen in several other fields in which the search for particular solutions shouldn't contradict the general project. With this in mind, we can say that in front of any conflict there will always be volunteers who will spontaneously want to work to resolve it, and surely there'll also be groups or organisations that'll get involved; maybe politicians and public officials too. There'll have to be a search for points of coincidence in order to act together, and for that it'll be essential that those already aware of the Universal Human Nation project not only join forces in this action but also act as a factor of cohesion among the parties by smoothing out possible differences as long as they don't represent profound contradictions with the project. Such contradictions could be about objectives or methodology. Regarding methodology, any kind of violence used in action would be contradictory to the project. Regarding objectives, actions orientated by interests divergent from the project would end up being contradictory, just like actions that tend to produce cosmetic reforms and mean no progress towards overcoming the roots of the conflict.

Returning to 'who', it's reasonable to think that there'll always be a small percentage that actively participates in the organisation and the setting up of actions among all those who endorse the project of a Universal Human Nation, however a more active participation by the majority who usually limit themselves to casting their votes in elections can also be achieved. Since there will also be numerous cases in which the regime doesn't even give space for expression in the ballot boxes, there'll have to be a way of organising in these places too. As we said before, there'll be situations in which governments agree with the project of the Universal Human Nation and will therefore also be subjects of change, and here the grassroots will accompany and push. In other cases when governments only support certain proposals and not others, the grassroots will therefore have to apply pressure so that there is progress in all fields, step by step. There'll be cases when governments won't want to produce any changes, and therefore democratic



alternatives will have to be generated in order to change those governments. And the grassroots will have to work with strategies and tactics of active nonviolence in order to force the departure of such governments and the establishment of Real Democracy.

Whereas in other moments of history, the only active subjects of social transformations were the organising teams, nowadays we have the conditions to involve many people thanks to new communication technology. Today there are the conditions for anyone to receive and send signals from a computer or smartphone about issues concerning the steps towards the objective. And we aren't just talking about rapidly agreeing to organise a mobilisation as has already been done with excellent results. We're talking about also organising a veritable Real Democracy network from the grassroots: putting the way to deal with an issue into consideration by the majority, consensus for certain proposals and actions, the decision to apply pressure for certain legislation projects and even the organisation of political choices to replace formally democratic governments. There are many possibilities that open up as long as options for participation are agile and not manipulated. We're saying, therefore, that the protagonists of change will be counted in their millions, even though there'll always be those who are more active and drive forward this Real Democracy network.

Nevertheless in every situation and in every moment, we'll have to ponder to what point it'll be possible to act with the support of networks, and when we'll have to go deeper in the organisation of cadres in order to be able to apply pressure that effectively forces social change. In the detailed study that Charles Tilly carried out regarding the historical evolution of social movements<sup>9</sup>, we can observe that their development was almost always simultaneous with the advance of democratic freedoms, and those democratic rights were won and secured thanks to the labour of social movements, whereas development under authoritarian and repressive governments who censored and banned public demonstrations was always difficult. Currently, the communication alternatives that new technology allows facilitate the coordination of protests and mobilisations even in undemocratic countries. But surely if such coordination is not accompanied by a more solid organisational level, it will be difficult to maintain over time and consolidate social movements capable of generating transformations. We don't share Tilly's mistrust regarding the possibility that a social movement substantially supported by social networks could become elitist due to the limitations of sectors marginalised from technology because the permanent growth of the universe of people with access to new technology will expand the surface of contact sufficiently. But the problem could reside in the fact that excessive

interconnection in social networks may generate a kind of massive 'illusion of participation' that doesn't then decant into the face-to-face communication and physical participation required to generate the necessary minimal organisational level to exert pressure and occupy political space. We'll therefore have to be clear on the steps to follow in organisational terms, setting as indicators the achievement of certain goals and know in every moment what organisational tools are the most effective for their achievement. In any case, a social movement should never be based exclusively on virtual communication, but instead it should be used as a factor of acceleration and in complementation with other organisational instruments. This point gains greater relevance when we come to think about the internationalisation of social movements<sup>10</sup>, as new communication technologies become indispensable for the coordination of global actions, and therefore the probability of falling into a tendency towards 'virtual activism' could increase. But on the other hand it has been demonstrated that when it's possible to coordinate concrete actions in several countries internationally, they're much stronger than if they'd been merely local actions. What could be more doubtful is the effectiveness when it comes to getting global actions by social movements to provoke real changes in international and national politics. Concerning this we can say that, if a first important step for change is the prior generation of awareness of the necessary changes, then it has to be said that many global actions protesting against those responsible for ecological disaster, or against the arms trade, or against the manipulation of financial power have broadened the level of consciousness of those issues in the population at large, and this is an extremely positive thing. Although it's clear that it isn't enough, because those with the power in their hands to change policies for the most part don't respond to this widespread clamour against contamination, war and financial speculation, rather they respond to the economic and geopolitical interests behind those global problems. Therefore, international social movements should act with the same global vision but with local rooting, understanding by 'rooting' the insertion in every country orientated towards the transformation of the power structures at a local level so that that local power may act in resonance with the search for local and global transformations. Of course, those governments with most responsibility for global issues will be those of the biggest economic and military powers, and it'll be extremely important that social movements develop in those countries with a vocation for power. However, what is done in every country of the planet is also important because a collection of nations can influence the biggest powers.

In summary let's say that:

## **Who?**

The agents of change can be very diverse. It'll be enough that they truly identify with the ideal and the project of the Universal Human Nation. There'll be more progressive governments willing to adopt at least some of the transformation proposals within their policies, and in this case they must be encouraged and accompanied. There'll be pre-existing social movements and others organised in the future with some of the objectives of the Universal Human Nation, and in these cases they must be supported in their struggles, and work must be done to join together the forces of diversity in order to give everyone a common objective. And there'll be millions of people in the world whose most profound aspirations coincide with this project, and although they may be unable to work intensely for them, they will be able to occasionally support the actions of social movements and governments going in that direction. In reality, many of those agents of change have already been in motion for a while, what is lacking is for them to multiply and, above all, to join forces under this common ideal. To see themselves as 'citizens' of this Universal Human Nation can be the starting point for coming together and coordinating actions.

## **When?**

Surely the appropriate moment to advance the quickest will be when a conflict gains visibility in a particular field. However, in order to be able to channel people's strength towards concrete progress, a prior work of awareness-raising and generating proposals will be necessary. So there must be a permanent signal about the problems and, above all, an interdisciplinary network of social movements must be generated in order to increase pressure on governments in situations favourable to change.

## **How?**

In a very few cases, when there are governments willing to drive forward a change that coincides with the project of the Universal Human Nation, they should be firmly supported. In other cases, when governments only respond in the face of popular protest, awareness must be generated, and work must be done on conflicts that end up mobilising people until governments act. And in many other cases, we'll simply not be able to count on governments, and so organised individuals, together with social movements, will have to intervene in politics in order to displace the reactionary forces from power.

To intervene in politics means different things according to the regime in power, and it will require different tactics of nonviolent struggle and an insertion into politics – however democratic a regime may be – in order to be able to transform it.

## **Where?**

In every corner of the planet there'll always be people with similar aspirations, there'll also be conflicts and opportunities to work on them. The important thing will be to find a common denominator so that people come together all over the world so that every action, no matter how small, is registered as progress in the common project.

# The Needle and the Seam

At one time or another we've all sewn a button on or seen it done, or perhaps we've seen an item of clothing mended, or perhaps we've seen a tailor or a dressmaker at work. We'll have observed how the needle is first threaded and then how agile fingers make the needle move from side to side until finally the thread is there almost invisibly joining the parts. And the needle? Of course the tailor removes it, because otherwise if it were to remain in the fabric it could hurt the person wearing it.

The joining of forces of organisations that endorse the ideal of the Universal Human Nation must function likewise. Those who work in different organisations with their look set on simultaneously working together with others must do so with the humbleness of the thread that remains barely visible and with the letting go of the needle that has no intention to remain.

It isn't desirable that personal leadership or a certain organisation tries to monopolise a project and propose to others that they join in. And we aren't only referring to the grotesque, never-ending attempts at manipulation. We're talking first and foremost about the subtle, almost subliminal attempts and sometimes even unconscious attempts to be in control. On the path of joining forces these tendencies must be let go of if we detect them in ourselves, and if we do so in others we must learn to observe them and not enter into such games.

As we said before, many of the organisations in operation have objectives in affinity with the Universal Human Nation. Many others will emerge if the image of this project is made to shine. The aspiration of a better world is Humanity's heritage. A large number of people who work in these organisations, and even officials in progressive governments, will put all their energy into their specific objective knowing that it's convergent with the general project. But that convergence will not be enough to dismantle the enormous powers of anti-humanism, a form will be necessary that allows us to act on an increasingly large scale. And for that there'll always be people

willing to work, not just for the specific objective of their organisation, their government or group, but rather they'll also put intentionality into working together with others. Those who have that vocation, if they want this to work, will have to do so with that letting go we mentioned, without being hungry for power. And this will give them great freedom and coherence in their action.

Se we've talked about who, when, how and where to act in order to progress, step by step, towards the Universal Human Nation. Next we'll see the main objectives that will have to be worked on by everyone wherever they live so that there may be real transformations: internationally and nationally. Of course, in order to achieve every big step, many other smaller ones will have to be taken and each one of them must be an end in itself.

# **The Big Steps at an International Level**





# Disarmament

## Dismantling nuclear arsenals

When, in 1968, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was opened for signing, the latent widespread fear of a possible nuclear holocaust, which had been present throughout the Cold War and strengthened due to the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962, still existed. Surely this was one of the reasons why most of the world's nations decided to endorse the treaty and commit to what was set out in articles II and III<sup>11</sup>, despite the fact that the biggest powers – the permanent members of the Security Council – would keep their nuclear arsenals and commit only to a vague promise to negotiate their disarmament in good faith under article VI<sup>12</sup>. Thirty years later after the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was some progress by the USA and the USSR/Russia, with the signing of the START treaties<sup>13</sup> but despite this we know that the agreed reductions leave both parties with sufficient power to destroy the planet. To this must be added the arsenals of France, the United Kingdom, China, North Korea, India, Pakistan and Israel (the latter four who aren't even signatories to the treaty). Some say that if, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, these weapons haven't been used again against people then it's thanks to the power of deterrence inherent in the threat of an immediate response against anyone who dares to fire the first missile. But no one talks about the power of blackmail that the nuclear powers wield over the rest of the world. If arguments regarding the power of nuclear deterrence in peace-keeping seemed to be barely credible during the Cold War, it's even less credible today, and keeping nuclear arsenals can only be explained by the interest of the biggest economic and military powers in maintaining situations of domination.

Without doubt the obstacle to humanity getting rid of the threat of its own annihilation is the interests of military powers, and it is they who should change their policies. It'll therefore be necessary to raise awareness in people – first and foremost in those countries that have these weapons – that they can no longer continue to support those governments that support

the interests of the military-industrial complex and the interests of economic power shielded behind the very power of these weapons.

So in this context, what must be done is to apply pressure on those governments so that they take a stance on this issue and clarify people so that they stop voting for governments who don't work actively for nuclear disarmament. Above all, there must be a cultural struggle, firstly explaining that the danger of nuclear holocaust is still here and didn't end with the Cold War, secondly making the spectre of external threats as a justification for keeping these weapons disappear, and thirdly comprehending that no one will have peace while a few powerful countries try to impose their will from a position of domination.

Of course there are numerous specialist organisations working on this issue, among which we can count World without Wars which promotes the creation of different levels of work<sup>14</sup> for coordinating and joining forces in the direction of nuclear disarmament. Those who want to work in campaigns directed to supporting this extremely important step towards the Universal Human Nation will surely have to do so in coordination with specialists and social activists involved in the subject. What's important to understand is that it's not enough to protest – a link in the chain of power of the violent must be broken by electing governments willing to take the necessary decisions.

## **Progressive disarmament of conventional weapons**

Even if the devastating power of nuclear weapons makes them the highest priority when talking about the need for disarmament, conventional weapons cause the greatest harm, accounting for thousands of lives in numerous armed conflicts around the world. Any reduction in conventional weaponry would require a complex process. In contrast to nuclear weapons which are simpler to explain to people because of the implicit irrationality of having weapons capable of making all vestiges of life on the planet disappear, conventional weapons usually have a greater number of defenders depending on a country's situation.

So it'll therefore be necessary to analyse the different levels of militarism, develop arguments and start a process for raising awareness in the population at large that leads to progressive disarmament, step by step. On this point we could differentiate at least five situations:

1. The militarism generated by the military-industrial complex<sup>15</sup> that seeks to sustain itself as a business through the creation of armed conflicts, or through the strengthening and perpetuation of existing conflicts.

2. The militarism sustained by the biggest powers with the aim of intervening in other countries or by invading territories using arguments about international politics to hide their true economic interests<sup>16</sup>.
3. The militarism of nations that suffer real armed conflicts be they internal or with other nations.
4. The preventative militarism that uses theories of future conflicts.
5. The maintenance of a level of defensive weaponry for national protection, without resorting to theories of conflicts in the short or medium term.

In order to tackle the stages of a conventional disarmament process, the real interests hiding behind false arguments of those governing the biggest powers – servile as they are to the military-industrial complex – must be denounced profusely. Even if there's abundant information circulating on this, it must be simplified in order to facilitate comprehension in the wider population and, above all, to get to the point where it reaches the entire population of those countries with the greatest responsibility for the growth of militarism. In this context, if campaigns start to be carried out relating to point one, showing the influence of the arms trade in the generation of armed conflict, it could be that many people who still don't have a critical position regarding the arms trade and the belligerence of their governments start to understand that in many cases what's at stake isn't even nationalist interests but rather the business interests of those who traffic in death. Even if the ignorance that tolerates point one and the imperialist nationalism that supports point two are equally noxious there is a distinction between them at the time of planning by steps the social awareness raising that will bring pressure to bear for progressive disarmament. It's not necessary to talk to pacifists about disarmament because they already agree, what's needed is to generate fractures in the electoral support base of those who participate in militarism, and for this we must start to take apart, step by step, the culture of national-imperialism. And the first step is to show the corruption that exists behind the scenes of the supposed Crusades against evil. There were many US citizens who supported the invasion of Iraq, convinced by the Hollywood script of the liberating nation protecting the world from villains, but they stopped their support when they found out about the business interests of former Vice-president Cheney whose companies grew in the shadow of death and destruction of that country. Divulging the business interests of the military-industrial complex to the wider population could achieve progress in social pressure towards a first reduction of militarism, at least the part that is directly linked to the exclusive interests of that industry.

Necessarily, widespread knowledge about the business of war will start to sow doubts about the entire warmongering discourse used to try to justify intervention in distant lands, and so we'll be able to make more progress in the awareness of point two. Here we aren't just talking about the interests of the war industry itself, but rather the economic interests that armies defend such as the appropriation and exploitation of energy resources and the control of strategic commercial routes or the protection of multinational markets. The disgusting colonialists underlying the civilian culture of military powers, fed by film and media propaganda, make many believe that their country has the right to militarily intervene in other countries. Many feel that they form part of a superior culture with the right and the task of correcting the errors of inferior cultures. They feel that their dead soldiers are heroes and that the soldiers and civilian population of second-class countries are irrelevant. It'll be an arduous but necessary task, to be tackled on several cultural fronts, to shake up such rooted beliefs which are definitely electoral fodder for militarist governments. On one hand, all the contradictions that exist between the epic war stories and the economic interests that drive most wars must be explained in a simple way. But a lot of work is also needed in the circulation of information and images which manage to humanise the way we look at other people. For many citizens of the so-called first world, Latin America is a region infected by dictators and drug-traffickers, Muslims are full of hatred and envy which is why they are the cradle of terrorism, and Africans will never progress because they're inferior. Although care is taken not to express it, many people in the first world feel all of this because they were formed that way through media manipulation, film propaganda, and in many cases through their own official education programmes. Such a level of insensitivity towards entire peoples anaesthetises against the impact of massacres which are then accepted as undesired but inevitable, collateral damage in a Crusade against the Axis of Evil<sup>17</sup>.

We must work on this sensitisation of those who live in militarist and warmongering nations so that they start to humanise the way they see other peoples and cultures, and so that they also start to feel jointly responsible for the atrocities that their governments commit with their armies and thereby force a change of policy or government.

It'll be a giant step towards the Universal Human Nation if we manage to substantially reduce the weaponry that corresponds to the interests explained in points one and two and which represents the greatest volume of global military spending. The statistics regarding what could be done if resources spent on weapons were to be targeted on eradicating global

poverty are well known. And this is precisely the other point that must be highlighted in the process of raising awareness and of putting pressure on governments: the industry of death must be reconverted into an industry for the development of the poorest countries. When we participated in the World March for Peace and Nonviolence at the end of 2009<sup>18</sup> we used to say that *“for every bullet that isn’t made, two lives are saved: the one that would have been lost by shooting it and the one that could be saved if the cost of that bullet were to be spent on food.”* Today we could also affirm that citizens of the countries of the so-called first world would be much safer if, instead of dropping bombs on poor countries, they would start to drop food and medicine. In certain moments it has been affirmed that the economy of some countries, above all the USA, would be extremely affected if the enormous machinery of the military-industrial complex were to be stopped because the number of jobs that it creates is enormous. Well it is precisely this information which shows the irrationality of the System that also shows that if the military industry were to be reconverted and orientated into being an engine for development of the poorest countries, then the vicious circle of death would be reversed and turned into a virtuous circle of life.

Moving on to the third point, we must understand that even if most weapon spending is explained by the first two factors, there are also armed conflicts between countries and civil wars that cannot be judged solely as the action of the biggest powers. There are numerous border conflicts, fights for natural resources, regional separatism, racial and religious conflicts, and power disputes that erupt with weapons, causing death and destruction, and occasionally real genocides. But the point is that if the first two factors didn’t exist, the conflicts under point three wouldn’t cause such destruction and in many cases could be resolved peacefully. Because even if it’s true that the UN needs refounding (and we’ll deal with this in another chapter), it’s also true that nowadays, under chapters V, VI and VII of the United Nations Charter<sup>19</sup>, mechanisms already exist for reaching a peaceful resolution of many conflicts or for at least moderating their violence. But the real problem is that the permanent members of the Security Council<sup>20</sup> are the largest suppliers of weapons on the planet, and so they have an interest in feeding conflict, and they’re also the ones with the most economic and political interests distributed over a large part of the world, which is why it’s hard to find a conflict in which they themselves, or some ally, don’t have interests. In other words, in the majority of conflicts there is not the slightest neutrality from those who wield the right to veto.

So that we can make progress in disarmament and involve countries with conflicts that fall under point three, necessarily the first two points

must be resolved beforehand, and once that's done, within the complexity of each case, it'll be necessary to work on the peaceful resolution of controversies.

And regarding the decrease of weapons in situations four and five which represent a smaller proportion of militarism as a whole, once progress has been made on the previous points, slowly people will experience that they're starting to live in a less violent and more human world, and so it will be possible to agree progressive and reciprocal regional decreases in weapons. Of course, it'll always be necessary to work for disarmament in all countries, because raising awareness must reach every corner of the planet, but we should know that until this is achieved among the people of the biggest military powers, the world will be an increasingly violent place.

But if we really want to advance in disarmament, taking real and irreversible steps – as we hope will be the case with all the steps proposed in this book – we must also raise awareness about the false steps that only serve to deceive populations and an example of this is the Arms Trade Treaty<sup>21</sup> approved by the UN at the start of 2013. This treaty – which is absolutely useless at controlling the flow of weapons from the arms-trading powers and which is only used, as with so many UN agreements, to arbitrarily punish weak and rebellious countries – is a clear example of delaying manoeuvres that are carried out at the UN so that people believe that someone is taking care of the world's biggest problems and thereby slow down attempts at mobilisation.

# Refounding the United Nations

It's possible that if the UN didn't exist today and someone were to think about creating it, then the first general intentions expressed probably wouldn't be very different from the Preamble of the United Nations Charter signed in 1945<sup>22</sup>. After seven consecutive decades, those intentions reaffirmed in the articles of Chapter 1 dealing with Purposes and Principles have evidently become nothing more than a mere exercise in rhetoric: dead words with the whiff of hypocrisy. This is why when thinking about a new world order and before thinking about the words to regulate it, we must start from the spirit that yearns for it, then move on to defining the power relationships that must be transformed for this to be possible, before reaching the point where the steps that have to be taken for these transformations can be proposed, and only then can we finally talk about shaping this new world order that we aspire to into international norms.

For example, we agree with what has been proposed by the G77<sup>23</sup> regarding the reformation of the Security Council and in particular the need to bring an end to the privileged position of the five permanent members. But the question is, why can't a group of countries achieve a different way of working of this organism given that they constitute a majority in the UN? Well, precisely because what carries most weight in the UN is not the majority view but rather the military and economic power in the hands of developed countries. Some countries use their strength to force certain joint decisions of the UN through pressure and blackmail, and when, despite their power, they can't get a majority of votes, they act unilaterally – even against UN decisions – because the UN has no power to prevent it. In summary, the UN is a tool at the service of the biggest countries to cast a veil of legality over their outrages, and they apply the makeup of philanthropy to disguise their total disinterest in resolving the roots of global poverty. Nevertheless, the G77 is far from representing a consolidated block given the diversity of the interests, political systems and international relationships of the differ-

ent countries involved. And the same would happen today with any kind of majority block that could be formed to counteract the hegemony of the big powers. However, although it would be impossible from this situation to radically transform the functioning of the UN, what can in fact be done is to deepen the deterioration of its image in the face of public opinion. In that sense, anything that the members of the G77 can do to make the failure of the organisation publicly evident by disrupting proceedings in the UN will be extremely useful when it comes to presenting the need for profound changes to the people of the world. Because the sooner societies understand and feel the need for profound changes – from the very heart of society itself – the sooner we'll be able to start to carry them out through a cultural change: a change of paradigm that will then allow us to advance towards the concrete changes within countries, and then those countries will be able to join forces as really United Nations.

The spirit that drives the search for a new world order should be forged from the starting point of accepting the failure of the current order and accepting that we can't approach true international cooperation until we proportionally distance ourselves from the selfish nationalism that's concomitant with the individualism encrusted in our societies. Surely if we extrapolate Silo's wise words<sup>24</sup> about selfishness to societies and countries, then we could contribute an understanding that societies are making an error in their calculations if they believe they'll be better off enclosing themselves within their borders and in their own interests, because in a world of real reciprocal cooperation and a world in peace, the component parts will be strengthened by making the whole work better.

Therefore, raising awareness of this new world order in society as an image of the future loved by everyone should take place through concrete demands for the UN and its member states. For example, banning member states of the Security Council from selling weapons. For example, the opening of borders to all the world's citizens. For example, setting up a system in which every country must set aside a percentage of its budget, and more than it spends on weapons, to an international fund aimed at financing the development of the poorest nations. For example, to agree a global plan to put an end to financial speculation and tax havens. Surely these proposals and others that we could propose would not prosper under current UN conditions but the mobilisation that they could generate would make the contradictions and the hypocrisy that reign in this organism, and particularly in the governments of the powers that run it, obvious to the people of the world and public opinion would increasingly feel the need for a total transformation. Furthermore, the impossibility of the UN attending



to people's demands in the short term won't be an obstacle for progressive governments who want to unilaterally carry out some of these proposals, something which will constitute a true demonstration effect.

Therefore, on the one hand there must be clear proposals that are easy to transmit and divulge so that people can mobilise around them, be it in front of governments, or embassies of the member countries of the Security Council, or members of the Economic and Social Council, or simply before the representatives of any UN member country, thereby instilling a process of general awareness. On the other hand, in diverse forums – existing or created for such effect – a debate should be promoted about the new UN wanted for a new world order: the Universal Human Nation. Because it's necessary to open a profound and extensive process of reflection in which the functioning of the new international ordering will be defined with great precision in different areas. Area by area, case by case we'll have to transform the sketch into a plan, into a project. This isn't about imagining a new island of Utopia<sup>25</sup> for ideal peoples, it's about real people aligning themselves with their best aspirations and, despite the obstacles, the interests of the powerful and their own selfishness, finding the best way of organising themselves.

In the process of reflection in the design of this new system of relationships between the peoples of the world, limitations will necessarily appear: the difference between what one would like and what one can have. In this instance it must be understood that one thing is the limitation that corresponds to the historical, social and cultural moment in which every country finds itself, but the limitation originating from the interests of a powerful minority is something else. In the former, we'll have to understand that we must go step by step, without the arrogance of a supposedly clarified vanguard trying to force the pace of the social times. It's valid and genuine to deepen awareness and clarification in order to contribute to the acceleration of the historical times, but we can't oblige people to do something they don't want to do or something that they aren't yet ready to do. The latter case is different because it's precisely the interests of the minority that occasionally tries to hold back or twist the path of history and prevent people from realising their aspirations. Therefore this can't be considered as a project limitation but simply an obstacle to overcome.

For example, when analysing the way in which a community of nations could bring an end to financial speculation which has caused so much damage to national economies, surely we won't find ourselves facing the limitation that people defend such interests in this historical moment. The limitation appearing will be the power that the financial capitalists have over

many governments. But that can't stop us from including the disappearance of this destructive power in the project of a Universal Human Nation. What we'll have to do is to understand that in order to achieve this objective we'll have to take many steps, and we'll have to exert a great deal of social pressure until governments act in accordance with people's requirements.

On the other hand, there may be some proposals that face some kind of resistance in some populations, even if they're the genuine aspirations for most people. For example, in the case of the non-existence of borders for the free circulation of people around the world, there may be different positions, and this will be the subject of debate and reflection until agreements can be reached that are compatible with every historical moment. In some countries there'll be resistances that arise from a discriminatory cultural formation or from baseless fears, and in those cases we'll have to work a lot to raise awareness of non-discrimination, and we'll be able to progress step by step at the pace of cultural change. In other cases, there could be particular situations in which a social or economic collapse or imbalance is produced which is harmful to everyone, and in those cases we'll have to advance by stages, shoring up the social and economic structures so that they don't collapse under the flow of migrants in one direction or another. But it will always be clear that the direction must go towards global integration.

Regarding global integration, it would be good to differentiate in broad terms what we could call the process of planetarisation from what is known as globalisation. Globalisation is a process of fundamentally expansionary economics in which the interests of the biggest corporations and financial power have woven a web of interrelations reaching all corners of the world. Whereas planetarisation, which is more interesting, is the intensification of relationships between different cultures and between peoples that has accelerated thanks to technological advances in communications. Currently, the UN and different international organisms are at the service of the process of globalisation which is trying to impose a military, financial and judicial order to guarantee the interests of economic power. Even if the political conformation of a virtual global government under the hegemony of the United States has been frustrated by the latter's own weakness and through the emergence of regional counterweights, economic powers have continued to advance on the back of a globalising process involving all the world's economies. Evermore frequently we hear that it's necessary to make progress in international legislation but in the current conditions this will always bear the sign of economic globalisation. We must change that direction before the dictatorship of international financial capital moves from being a *de facto* power to also being an institutionalised power. Instead of

that, we must reach the point where people of the world govern themselves in a Universal Human Nation in which diversity can coexist, and for that, and before anything else, it's necessary to explain to everyone that today the UN is at the polar opposite of the world we want, and it must be refounded based on the organisational principles of the Universal Human Nation.

## **Organisational principles of the Universal Human Nation**

- Convergence of peoples towards the organisation of a Confederation of Humanist Nations, joined together with the aim of constituting a Universal Human Nation.
- Existence of sovereignty and the right to self-determination with the only limitation being the binding commitments taken on as members of the Universal Human Nation, the requirements for inclusion and remaining within it being:
- Nuclear disarmament, substantial reduction of conventional weapons, prohibition of arms trading.
- Peaceful resolution of conflicts. Before any armed conflicts occurs, it's dealt with in a democratically elected Security Council which has the possibility to send international peace-keeping forces.
- Contribution of a percentage of national budget to an International Fund to finance campaigns for the development of the poorest countries.
- A financial architecture based on the principle of solidarity through the creation of interest-free national banks to finance development and complementary trade among associated nations.
- The exclusion of tax havens and the imposition of barriers to capital speculation. Dismantling of international financial power.
- The opening of all borders to allow entry to immigrants and refugees.
- The progressive transformation of the productive matrix currently focused on consumerism into a new matrix focused on ecologically sustainable development and fair distribution.

# The Campaign for Global Development

As we've already seen in many of the subjects that can be proposed at a global level, we always find ourselves with the expression of objectives similar to those of the UN, and it's always obvious that one thing is what is said but quite another is what is done. Certainly when it comes to talking about what should be done in matters of worldwide development we can find points in common with the 'Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs)<sup>26</sup> that, as we'll see, are very far from constituting a real commitment by the international community to end the deplorable living conditions found in one third of the world's population, once and for all.

Even if relevant progress can be found in the UN report for 2013 regarding the fulfilment of the MDGs, this isn't so much because of efforts by the international community, rather because of the growth experienced in China, India and a few South American countries. Instead, the real aid from developed countries has been diminishing in recent years, showing an almost zero commitment to the fight against poverty, not even reaching 0.3% of their GDP and representing less than one tenth of what they spend on weapons. Even if in the last 20 years the percentage of the population living on less than US\$1.25 a day has reduced noticeably, the increase in food prices means that the rate of malnutrition has remained at 15%, while one in every four children in the world suffers from stunted growth. Literacy improved in the first years but then stalled. And of course the commitment to the environment went unheeded and greenhouse gases have increased by 46% since it was proposed to reduce them.

In no way did the MDGs imply a commitment by the most developed countries to the poorest, instead every country had to rely on its own strength within an erratic international context. Some made progress because they would have done so in any case, and others couldn't achieve too

much and nobody bothered to help them. The MDGs didn't constitute a real project of international cooperation and solidarity, rather it just put goals whose evolution could then be compared statistically into words<sup>27</sup>.

When talking about a real Campaign for Global Development, what we're proposing instead is a genuine commitment by people, social movements and governments to improve living conditions across the planet, understanding that we're all brothers and sisters, and as such we must help one another regardless of nationality, beliefs and race. This implies taking responsibility, not just for the situations that need resolving in every country but also to contribute to other peoples. Let the more developed countries set aside an important part of their budgets to finance development in the most needy countries. Make millions of volunteers around the world available to travel in order to help with education and healthcare in other countries. Target a good part of the funds that today are used in financial speculation and the buying of weapons to this campaign. A project of this kind, besides representing in itself an enormous step towards the Universal Human Nation, surely will be the catalyst in other countries that will necessarily have to take part in this campaign.

In the first stage, this campaign must be targeted to resolving the basic deficiencies of populations, such as nutrition, healthcare and education, as soon as possible. But in a second stage, work must be done to create conditions for sustainable development everywhere by generating sources of employment, infrastructure and social organisation. In this stage there'll have to be a transformation of the development matrix so that it's no longer dependent on the consumption of a minority but rather turns into development sustained by the rational consumption of goods and services by the majority. Sustainable development in the most disadvantaged countries today will imply methodical steps synchronised with the necessary gradual steps that must take place within the most developed nations today, in order to achieve support for the former. For example, redirecting resources that are used by governments today for military purposes in order to apply them to the development of the poorest countries requires a gradual reconversion of the military industrial apparatus in proportion to the growth of those other industries that will be provided to countries receiving assistance. Such gradualness will be necessary to make this industrial reconversion viable but at the same time it will allow the political impact of the decisions by those governments that get involved in this international campaign to be tested. And in turn in nations that receive assistance, they'll also have to go step by step in generating the conditions so that this support effectively manages to drive their own sustainable development and not

be limited to humanitarian support. Education and training will have to accompany this process, and the time required must be made compatible with the other stages.

Tax reforms must also be carried out in the most developed nations to tax the highest incomes, and above all the income from financial assets, so that development may be financed in the poorest countries with these resources. Such tax reforms can gradually decrease the resources that are today spent on consumerism and luxury goods, something which will also imply a necessary reconversion in production as consumption is modified. All of this in turn will make it possible for the new companies that emerge both through reconversion in the richest countries and through development in the poorest countries to be internally organised along the lines of a Mixed Economics system.

What we're saying is that, on the one hand, by focusing on this campaign it'll necessarily implicate the planet in several other steps related to the path towards the Universal Human Nation: steps towards disarmament, steps towards economic transformation, steps towards cultural change, social mysticism and political transformation. And we're also saying that the unavoidable progressive nature of the steps for all the necessary transformations in this campaign must be made compatible with the necessary progressive nature of the steps to be taken at a social and political level in order for countries to commit themselves to it.

Certainly, in some countries with the potential to set aside resources to help other countries or with the possibility to call for volunteers, there could also exist internal sectors with unsatisfied needs; the result of unfair income distribution or because of mistaken government policies, as a result of which it could seem contradictory to be willing to collaborate with other countries without having everything resolved at home. Regarding this we can say that one thing doesn't stop the other, because in a country with sufficient resources, it'll be the task of many to work for the necessary transformations at a national level, while simultaneously it could be the task of others to help abroad.

The necessary gradualness will also mean that in some cases we can start putting this campaign as a first mobilising image when raising awareness about the Universal Human Nation project. For example, it could happen that military technology is reconverted and used to drive development in more disadvantaged regions. Or that in some developed country, campaigns are started to tax a certain proportion of profits from financial assets and with what is collected finance a programme of zero-hunger in certain poor countries. Or that in some countries campaigns are carried out to call for

legislation so that companies with the largest profits are obliged to set aside a part of their profits for literacy campaigns in certain countries.

In other words, this campaign could be subdivided into many smaller steps, starting with raising awareness in the societies of developed countries, moving on to the first advances in effective assistance to the poorest countries, to eventually reaching the point where it becomes a priority for the international community.

# Restructuring the International Financial System

Even if the issues that have to be dealt with in order to transform the world and achieve a Universal Human Nation are widespread, without doubt one of the most important is how to put an end to the Dictatorship of International Financial Capital because this is the source of many of the evils that afflict humanity. Social injustice, hunger, environmental destruction, social violence and most wars are the direct or indirect consequence of the voracity of this financial monster which distorts the real economy. The accumulation of wealth – the historical tendency of capitalism – has overflowed the channels of productive reinvestment to inflate speculative bubbles, systematise usury and accelerate concentration into the hands of a few cartels. Beyond discussions about what the causes and effects of the 1929 crisis were<sup>28</sup>, what is certain is that all the variables that fed back on each other in order to provoke the explosion and the depression were related to the problem of wealth distribution and the irrational and speculative use of surpluses. That crisis made it clear that, besides generating an already-known intrinsic and permanent inequity, contradictions in the system could also create an accumulation of systemic tensions that can explode in self-destructive crises which aren't limited to the field of economics but can also lead to political crises and armed conflicts. After the Second World War, a great deal of capital had to be invested in reconstruction and Keynesian policies seemed to bring two bonanza decades. But by the start of the 70s, the oil crisis had deprived the production system of cheap energy and so many petrodollars went into the financial system. And so international usury was strengthened, giving light to the possibility of multiplying profits by putting not only businesses but also countries into debt. Thus came about the foreign debt crisis in Latin America at the start of the 80s and the creditors, supported by international financial organisms, bled national budgets dry, impover-



ished entire peoples and took control of public and private assets<sup>29</sup> while debt continued to grow unabated. The neoliberal boom of the 80s and 90s, strengthened and globalised after the fall of communism, did away with the few remaining barriers to international financial capital that still existed, giving it *carte blanche* to plunder. Back in 1993, Silo<sup>30</sup> announced the arrival of a Para-state consisting of international financial power exercising its dominion over the economy and politics through speculation and usury in a de-facto dictatorship. In turn, and thanks to those same policies, the distribution of income in the real economy became increasingly unfavourable for the workforce, and the accumulation of wealth in a few hands became accentuated, something which swelled the flow of business surpluses to financial speculation even more. Likewise, as the system itself needs people to consume in order to continue generating profits, a lower income for salary earners was compensated for by the credit boom. In other words, the population went into debt in order to continue consuming. More business for the usurers. But as there was too much financial surplus, and as it had to be invested to generate more profit through the same mechanism, that surplus was used to inflate bubbles by over-valuing assets and taking profits before the bubbles burst – the last and biggest one being in 2008 with sub-prime mortgages and real estate overvaluation.

When in 2008 we analysed this ‘Implosion of the Empire’<sup>31</sup>, we cited as initial conditions: the enormous debt held by people in the USA; the greed of speculative financial capital that generated the bubble; and its globalisation that led to contagion in Europe. But if there were any doubt as to who the people are who manage the world and who are capable of generating a global crisis of such magnitude, you only have to observe what went on after the crisis erupted in order to finally understand to what extent the Dictatorship of International Financial Capital had consolidated. Not only did governments not take measures to limit the power of the financial sector, on the contrary, they subsidised the banks with billions of dollars and euros while the people lost their homes. In other words, those who provoked the greatest economic crisis in recent times were rewarded with more business, more money and more power – with the honourable and silenced exception of Iceland<sup>32</sup>.

But the power of the Banks doesn’t reside just in their capacity to buy political will, it mostly resides in the dependency that the real economy has on the financial framework. Curiously enough, when the last financial crisis kicked off in the USA, voices from Left and Right coincided in their disagreement over the government printing dollars to help the banks. The Left disagreed because they said that these funds should go to help the people

– those losing their homes and jobs. While the more conservative sectors of Republicans said that banks with problems should be left to fail so that the system could heal itself, leaving behind only the most solvent. Obviously, for the most conservative, allowing a chain of bankruptcies to be set in motion in the economy so that equilibrium could be re-established after a long period of time implied a social cost that they didn't remotely care about. In the case of the Left, they limited themselves to demanding what seemed to be fairer but without analysing the actual possibilities or the subsequent impact very much. The reality is that Obama really didn't have too many choices once the crisis had started because if he had allowed the banks involved to crash, the domino effect would have taken down many others, the chain of payments in the real economy would have been broken and a succession of bankruptcies would have led to unemployment at 1929 levels. And it's precisely here where the banks' power of blackmail resides because thanks to the banking multiplier effect which metastasises in the real economy, the effect of their crises is amplified, and they apply pressure to be bailed out under the threat of an economic and social disaster. Of course before the crisis erupted there was another option: inject liquidity into the system in order to avoid greater damage and, in exchange, nationalise the banks and take over the running of their finances. But this would have meant unthinkable audacity for governments committed to the system.

So we're saying that a first step towards taking power back from private banks and protecting societies from the operations of speculators and usurers is to transfer something as sensitive for the economy as capital flow to a State Bank. But for this to happen other transformations are necessary. Most national Central Banks have for a while now been subsidiaries of global financial power rather than instruments of State policies, and this is something that must be modified if we want to establish healthy financial policies without a fifth column of financial power living within the State and working only for the benefit of the richest 1% of the population<sup>33</sup>. But as the finances that States manage are not isolated from the rest of the world, and so must be complemented by financial policies on a global scale, it'll also be necessary to replace the international financial organisms that respond to the interests of global financial power.

It's known that the IMF's recessionary recipe, applied in the name of monetarist orthodoxy when drawing up the policies of indebted countries, has produced the opposite effect because not only does it generate recession and unemployment but in addition debt grows. It's also known that, in a similar vein, the World Bank's loan conditions follow the economic policies that it considers to be correct. But the biggest problem isn't the economic

vision that these organisms have because in this case it would be enough to change the profile of the officials to thereby change their policies. The problem is that these international financial organisms defend the interests of the biggest private corporations and financial groups who seek to make good business around the planet at the expense of people's interests<sup>34</sup>. A particular and exemplary case is that of ICSID<sup>35</sup>, a legal apparatus of the World Bank and therefore at the service of the interests of the multinationals of the main World Bank shareholders (the USA, the UK, France, Japan and Germany). These international financial organisms not only blackmail governments through the use of loans so that they open up and privatise their economies in favour of their multinational friends, but they also condition them to accept ICSID's jurisdiction in order to safeguard those businesses from any future change in policies. So if a government, either through complicity with economic power or through weakness in the face of blackmail, accepts the unfair and abusive conditions of those multinationals which start to operate on their territory; and if another government subsequently tries to reformulate such conditions, be they economic or environmental; then the multinational affected can go to ICSID which will inevitably punish the State (never the company) with huge compensation.

So this is how International Financial Power doesn't just count on its own firepower in order to control and plunder the world's economy, but it can also count on the complicity of international financial organisms and also manages its own global justice either through international tribunals such as ICSID or through their judge friends in jurisdictions such as New York in whose courts lawsuits between nation states and international companies and creditors must often be settled.

Once more, we're confronted with the great dilemma that we're trying to set out in this book. And because the world is heading towards ever-increasing integration in all areas, the point is, will the final destination be globalisation governed by International Financial Power or will we manage to reach a truly Universal Human Nation? Because there's no doubt that in the measure that nations increasingly complement and integrate, international organisms, policies, justice and even forces capable of guaranteeing peace will be necessary. And the question is, who will control all of this? A power that constitutes an empire? A select group of powerful nations? An unmasked International Financial Power? Or one disguised as a group of nations under its control? Or course we aspire to something different, we aspire to a Universal Human Nation in which decision-making power is really in the hands of the population. And insofar as it applies to managing finances, this implies a 180 degree about turn with respect to what has

been happening until now. And even though there may be a long road ahead and many steps to take, we can already start to glimpse signs in this direction. It's not by chance that the BRICS group<sup>36</sup>, which represents half of the world's population, has formulated the need to found their own bank. The hegemony of the Western powers plus Japan that dictated the rules of the game for decades are today challenged by the ascent of China as one of the principal economic powers on a par with the USA and by the strong growth of emerging countries. These are countries in which political power has a greater degree of independence with respect to economic power, which is why they can dare to think differently. Even if this doesn't mean that the world will have to take the economic policies of these new emerging powers as an example, what's interesting is that this multi-polarity represents a formidable counterweight to the established system in which new cracks will emerge to facilitate the advance of profound changes given that it has already been weakened by the crisis unleashed in 2008.

Regarding the nature of a new international financial structure, we find ourselves with abundant literature coming from the most diverse angles; from progressive economists to orthodox ones, and even a successful financial investor like Soros<sup>37</sup> has expressed the need for a systemic change. But beyond what could be taken from all the good ideas circulating around the world, as much in the field of finance as in many others, we must be aware that any system must fit in within a larger system – a set of systems – in order to function. We can't think about a new global financial architecture if we don't simultaneously think about a new economic system within a new political system and in a new culture. It would be like trying to put a piece of a jigsaw puzzle into a different one: it won't go. Not for nothing is the current financial system the creation of the liberal capitalist system whose roots can be traced back to an individualist and consumer society, governed in turn by pragmatic politicians. As we said in the exordium, for sure it'll be impossible to change one piece without changing all of them, which in turn is much more than the sum of its parts. And thinking thus, the piece with the financial system can't be considered from today's conditions but rather from the path towards the future. This integral conception means that we must therefore discard many partial proposals that, although well-intentioned, have not been systematically thought out. However, there are numerous tools suggested in such proposals that may be considered.

For example, the idea of a global single currency, a laudable objective in the long term, and one that could be achieved after first passing through a stage of regional common currencies, must be made compatible with the necessary political changes so that the issuing of such a currency responds

to the development needs of the people. The European experience shows that with the ECB having been created on monetarist values of inflation goals, and because in practice it's subject to the interests of private banks, not only has it been unable to counteract the impact of the financial crisis on populations in the Eurozone, but instead, it has increased unemployment and home evictions. Therefore, even if we agree that one of the most important chapters in the restructuring of the financial system will be a common global currency and a global central bank, this can only happen to the extent that the influence of private banks weakens to the point of disappearing in the decision-making of central banks.

But for private banks to lose power, we must replace the politicians that govern in their service, and once this is done – step by step in order to not generate a shock that harms the population, yet firmly so that progress becomes irreversible – there will have to be legislation to condition the channelling of private individuals' and business savings to the national bank. In this way, the issuing of currency and the creation of bank notes will not depend on the uncontrollable ambition of bankers but rather on sustainable development policies that nations project, and so the size of the financial system will stop being disproportionate in relation to the real economy. The first thing to be done is to stop rescuing private banks in crisis: those who have to be rescued are savers and the workforce by nationalising every private bank that collapses. But of course, returning to the systemic concept of transformation, a private bank can't be nationalised while leaving a corrupt State unscathed. A change in the world of finance must be accompanied by political change. Citizen participation in a Real Democracy and administrative decentralisation will be the guarantee that in every neighbourhood, every province and every State, the population's savings are turned into productive investments, into housing credits and into the financing of public works. So, when we talk about a Public Bank, we have to talk not only about national banks but more importantly about provincial and municipal banks.

Regarding public investment finance, even if some of it comes from the State Bank into which the savings generated in the country are channelled, it'll still be necessary to have external financing when restrictions on the balance of trade limit the capacity for spending in foreign currencies. In such cases, States will have to be able to count on the possibility of international financing, and for that alternatives to the already discredited IMF and World Bank will have to be created. In this context, the New Development Bank created by the BRICS group is a laudable initiative in that direction. But progress will have to be achieved towards an alternative of

global scope and inspired, above all, by principles of solidarity so that it may be placed at the service of development in the most disadvantaged nations. Thomas Piketty's proposal<sup>38</sup> to create a global tax on capital would not only contribute to the deconcentration of wealth but could furthermore be used to finance development. Notwithstanding this, the greatest push towards global development will happen when financial resources, today in the hands of private banks, pass into public banks and when the international flow of finance is managed by the interaction of those public banks and not through the speculation of private banks and funds. As in every process, we'll have to go step by step, starting with the nationalisation of bankrupt private banks, continuing on to regulation that increasingly limits speculative transactions, moving on to policies to incentivise savers to deposit in public banks and disincentivising those who do so in private banks, finishing with a total prohibition of usury and speculative activities. Possibly many will try to fall back on Benthan's old arguments<sup>39</sup> in defence of usury, arguing that a free contractual agreement between parties can only be achieved if both parties benefit, in the same way that some try to justify the existence of miserable salaries as a contractual agreement between employer and employee. But in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the rights of people can't be subjected to the whims of unequal power relationships but instead to norms that regulate relationships that guarantee fairness.

Of course, during the construction process of a new global financial system in which, as we said before, the flow of international finance is managed by public banks so that the surplus liquidity of one country may contribute to the development of another; during this process there'll be moments in which only a few countries will be willing to carry out these transformations to their banks, and at an international level they'll have to coexist with private banks that will continue to manipulate the flow of foreign currency at their leisure. In this situation, in addition to every country having to evaluate to what extent it accepts financing from private banks without compromising its economic sovereignty, this won't be an obstacle for advancing in compensatory monetary mechanisms between nations that notably reduce the need for private finance. On one hand, nations that agree to it can use their foreign currency reserves to a certain extent for the financing of an international bank of their own which they can turn to for financial urgencies. On the other hand, mechanisms to compensate the flow of trade between these nations can be implemented, thereby avoiding the use of other currencies. Progress can even be made in the concept of a 'Consolidated Balance of Trade' in which agreeing nations would be able to plan their development on the basis of trying to achieve an overall trade balance, even though there

will be transitional imbalances between the parties. Countries with weak currencies would be able to generate financial instruments backed up by commodity reserves or by stock investment, in order to use them as a means of payment for transactions with those nations involved. Of course in order to progress in this direction, the concept of complementation in international trade, instead of competition, must be strengthened. But it must be a complementation based on solidarity, and not the unequal international division of labour that Galeano describes so well when he says that “*The division of labour among nations is that some specialise in winning and others in losing.*”<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, as we said before about the hypocrisy of the UN Security Council, controlled by the greatest producers and exporters of weapons on the planet, we could say the same thing about the hypocrisy of the economic powers that, while speaking timidly of improving regulation of the financial system after the sub-prime mortgage crisis, continue to shelter financial tax havens on their own territories, while at the same time allowing global capital to go offshore without great difficulty to small countries that are extremely permissive about speculation and money laundering. Because of course if all nations were to agree to it they could put an end to tax havens<sup>41</sup>, and that should be a fundamental objective of this project of transformation. But as long as the economic powers continue to support them, those countries that genuinely want to work for a global financial restructuring will have to redouble their own controls in order to avoid capital flight.

# The Elimination of Borders for the Free Circulation of People

The idea that one could have of a future Universal Human Nation will surely contain positive images of a world we love, but in contrast it will also contain the fervent desire to never again have to see the negative images that the system shows us every day. Among the images that we'd like to leave behind in the past are the millions of people who are killed, mutilated or uprooted as a result of wars. There are also the millions of people who die of hunger and due to lack of medical attention as a result of poverty and unfairness in a perverse economic system. But perhaps one of the worst images that should shame humanity in its entirety, because it's the symbol of indifference, is that of the thousands of people who die trying to cross closed borders in the search for better living conditions. The Africans who drown trying to reach the Italian island of Lampedusa as well as those who perish in the attempt to cross the valley that separates Morocco from the Spanish enclave of Melilla, together with the Latin Americans who die in the Arizona desert trying to enter the USA are a few crude examples of how a lack of solidarity also kills.

Just as today humanity is horrified by the genocides of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and wonder how human beings could reach a point of such horror, likewise in the future humanity will have to ask itself how it was that we could close the doors on those who were knocking, clamouring for help, knowing that they were dying.

Without doubt the root of most migration currents is related to the search for better living conditions by those who are fleeing extreme poverty, a lack of future or the violence of war. And without doubt the best response that could be given to such a situation is to generate dignified living conditions in those countries that are least developed and to end the scourge of violence such as have been described in other passages of this book. But in



addition to improving the quality of life in those countries of origin, thereby avoiding the problems of uprooting that forced migrations generate, it's also necessary to facilitate entry into those destination countries for those who want to emigrate and obviously for refugees fleeing wars.

Some of the most developed countries have seen their economies flourish on the back of the exploitation of natural resources and slave labour, or quasi-slave labour, in countries of the so-called Third World, whether this be in the colonial stage prior to the Second World War or in the neo-colonial stage of globalised capitalism. Most underdevelopment has to do with the plundering of natural resources and the subjugation of populations. In fact, most migration waves are precisely from the old colonies towards the colonising countries. So, we aren't just demanding solidarity with the most disadvantaged, we're also demanding justice when we say that it's everyone's responsibility to work for the development of the poorest countries, and it's everyone's responsibility to take care that those who need to emigrate are received as brothers and sisters in any part of the world.

We know that it's not just governments who are responsible for xenophobia, indifference and a resistance to welcoming immigrants; there's also a percentage of the population that, whether as a result of discrimination, fear or simple selfishness is resistant to immigration, above all when coming from certain countries or from a certain race or religion. The growth of ultra-right parties in Europe is a sign of this. The cultural change that must be driven forward until those resistances dissolve is very great but, more than this, work will have to be done to deactivate many beliefs and taboos<sup>42</sup> surrounding the subject of migration.

It must be said that it's the dominant powers who have expedited the paths for their multinationals to exploit populations by way of Free Trade Agreements, competing in the so-called 'race to the bottom' to see which country reduces salaries the most and makes working conditions the most precarious in order to get multinationals to set up their factories there. This feeds South-South<sup>43</sup> migration currents from some countries to others that get the factories, and South-North by the part of the population trying to get a better income.

It must be said that if salaries have been falling since the seventies as a percentage of national income in favour of an increase in corporate profits, then this is due to neoliberal policies and the so-called 'New Division of Labour' that displaces industries to other countries, generating a decrease in the most qualified jobs. All this provokes a widespread situation of employment instability of which immigrants are one more victim and not the ones to blame.

It must be said that the statistics<sup>44</sup> show that there's no correlation between an increase in population and the increase in unemployment in the local population. Because when the population grows, there's also greater movement in the economy and more jobs are created. Nor should we overstate the rate of currency flow through money transfers that immigrants send to their families in their countries of origin when the real problem is the capital flight caused by speculators.

It must also be said that behind the façade of these fallacious arguments concerning the alleged negative impact of immigrants on the job market hide other reasons that are more connected to racism and in some cases even to political ideology. The rejection of migration waves of people of a black race or Latin Americans is much more frequent than that of those of a white race. Nor has the treatment in the USA of immigrants coming from Cuba or from Nicaragua at that time (well received because people were escaping from communist countries) been equal to the treatment given to Haitians (resisted because they were escaping a dictator friend of the USA: Duvalier).

And let's conclude by saying that taboos regarding illegal immigration increasing crime or facilitating terrorism haven't the slightest grip on reality either. The attack on the Twin Towers was perpetrated by foreigners resident in the USA who had all their papers in order. And the greatest attack on the USA prior to the Twin Towers was the one in Oklahoma, perpetrated by an ultra-right militant, United States citizen. And as for crime, there are numerous studies<sup>45</sup> to show that the propensity to crime of immigrants is usually less than that of locals, and in those cases in which they are similar it isn't due to cultural conditioning but rather because many immigrants live in the most vulnerable urban zones, and here marginalisation and destructuring increase the risk of delinquency.

In the case of Europe, restrictions on immigration are even greater because, in the Schengen Agreement<sup>46</sup> of 1990, free circulation within the borders of member countries of the European Union came at the price of strict controls on external borders – filtering the entry of people who don't belong to the Union in order to avoid a hypothetical permissiveness at a border which could allow 'non-desirable' people to freely circulate or end up staying illegally. And it's this very concept of illegality that is emphasised when making huge efforts to control immigration. And the point is that these very restrictions on staying are those that lead to the illegal status of all those who aspire to get a job that they can't find in their country of origin. This illegality ends up being useful both for mafia gangs that make a business out of bringing in foreign contingents in a clandestine manner and the compa-

nies who get cheap labour by taking advantage of the undocumented condition of immigrants. And of course when the exodus of both immigrants and refugees is left in the hands of the mafia, human life becomes worthless and many perish along the way.

We'll have to start by changing the terminology and defining that no human being is illegal due to the fact of moving from one country to another in search of a better future. However we should speak about the existence of undocumented people as a consequence of inhuman migration policies. And the solution to this is none other than the establishing of free circulation of people around the world. And in order to advance in that direction, as we said before, we'll have to work for a cultural change, for the end of discrimination, fear and prejudices. But as an international community, we'll also have to plan not only development campaigns in the most disadvantaged countries in order to improve the living conditions for people without them needing to uproot themselves but furthermore plan 'development poles' in different countries towards which those who need to migrate may do so. Without conditioning the freedom of people to migrate towards wherever they prefer, we can facilitate the orientation of migration towards these development poles where immigrants are trained and work, living together with their family group.

We can't help but point out the immense hypocrisy of some First World countries that today make it difficult for refugees fleeing from wars in their own countries to enter when most of those wars have gained strength thanks to the interventionist policies of some of these powers that today refuse to welcome them and, above all, thanks to the weapons supplied to the different sides in conflict.

Finally we must affirm that beyond the search for reasonable solutions to this issue, understanding that we must overcome social prejudices and resolve economic and labour questions; beyond planning in progressive stages to avoid the generation of worse social problems than those we want to resolve; beyond all of this we mustn't lose sight of the fact that the priority must be to end this inhuman situation in which millions of people are obliged to remain in territories in which they don't have the possibility to survive and live with dignity, places where the future is totally closed because the rest of the world won't allow them to cross a border. No pretext, no argument, no relativisation can be put forward to continue with this ignominious genocide of indifference and discrimination.

# Halting the Ecological Disaster

We've already referred to the United Nations' total ineffectiveness when it comes to fulfilling one of the main objectives laid out in the preamble to its charter, namely that of keeping peace on the planet. And we've also written about the hypocrisy evidenced by the double standards in the drafting and application of resolutions depending on whether they concern the dominant powers or weaker nations. Likewise the same ineffectiveness and hypocrisy is shown by this organism when it comes to making progress in the field of environmentalism. UNEP<sup>47</sup> recently warned African countries that they should invest in measures to adapt to climate change which could, in the coming decades, reduce the sources of water supply by 50%. Wouldn't it be better to warn the United States to drastically reduce their carbon dioxide emissions which account for 25% of the global total given that their population represents only 4%?

In this globalised world under the insignia of capitalist plundering, not only must we bear the military interventions of world powers outside their borders and the domination of the direction taken by the international economy by multinationals and financial groups from these powers, but in addition we must also bear the environmental impact of their predatory greed which affects every corner of the planet. But that's not all, we also have to put up with the voices of those who accuse emerging countries of accelerating the greenhouse effect as a result of their growth over the last decade. And some are already asking themselves, what will happen if the BRICS continue growing to the point where all their inhabitants reach the same level of average consumption as a US or European citizen? Because in this case we'll need 5 more planets to cater for them.

What do these people want? The world to stop right now so that those citizens of the so-called First World can keep their status for ever while the rest of the global population remains in poverty in order to not affect the environment further? Well such pretensions will not prosper, firstly because

people aspire to a more just and equitable world, and they won't accept such a world order, and secondly because most of the production of emerging countries isn't for their own consumption but rather to supply the First World. Factories built in China and other points of Asia and America supply the whole world with cheap products, and that's why they're swallowing up natural resources from all over the planet. The continued expansion of the agricultural frontier in Brazil and Argentina isn't to meet their own food needs but rather it's fundamentally for the production of soya and biodiesel for export. Extractivism in Africa and across the Andean region of Latin America obviously isn't explained by local consumption either.

Certainly, we live in a globalised world in which a small percentage of the population, basically composed of people in the First World and the 10% biggest income earners of other nations, suffer from an insatiable thirst to consume, and in order to satisfy this they've built factories spread around the globe, and the planet's natural resources are plundered to supply them. And there's a large percentage of the population whose jobs depend on this process and for which they receive an income that allows them to also consume and, with consumption by the elite above them as a model, they push to earn more. And so an enormous pyramid of income and consumption has been created which increasingly swallows up resources without anyone at the summit being able to see what the limits of consumption are and without those at the base able to reach the minimum to subsist. This pyramid explains most of the current environmental disaster. Some will just blame the multinationals who destroy everything in their greed for profit. Others will accuse the Chinese government<sup>48</sup> of accelerating the predatory process with a strategy of dominating global markets with their efficient formula of Market Communism. Others will point to governments in general who irresponsibly fail to take measures to put the brakes on the greed of this two-headed monster – production-consumption – and finally the people can be blamed for their moral weakness when it comes to being led into temptation for consumerism and avarice. But, what's certain is that we're all on the same planetary boat, and we'll have to do something before it sinks.

But let's review a little what we mean by 'environmental disaster', even though more and more people know about the issue thanks to the awareness raised about it in recent decades: an awareness that, as an aside, hasn't reached the point of resolving the central problems, let alone attacked its roots. There have even been cases of distractionary manoeuvres carried out under the guise of ecological awareness so that people concern themselves with secondary issues rather than asking about the substantial ones.

These days everyone's talking about global warming because, beyond the attention that has been given to the issue, the perception of climate change punishing several regions has turned it into a daily reality. Temperature increases, the distortion of seasonal cycles, unusually torrential rains in some regions and unprecedented drought in others; all of this affects people's lives, the lives of flora and fauna, harvests and ecosystems in general. There are those who attribute global warming exclusively to human action as a result of the growing emission of gases into the atmosphere, in particular carbon dioxide. There are others who affirm that in reality the Earth has cycles in which average temperatures vary, and we're in one of those cycles. Others say that in reality any increase in volcanic activity could be much more toxic for the environment than the emissions caused by mankind. In any case, global warming is an established reality, climate change is an established reality, and what's certain is that human depredatory activity, both by gas emissions and the felling of forests that could absorb them, has a great responsibility for the phenomenon, even if that responsibility is shared with nature. And even if it's already too late to reverse the situation, we could at least avoid aggravating it.

But not all the ecological problems generated by human action are limited to global warming because there are several limits<sup>49</sup> that are about to be overstepped to the point of no return. Contamination of the seas and rivers, the loss of freshwater reserves, the disappearance of animal and plant species, desertification and other scourges are the work of the depredatory action of mankind under the current economic system. Between 1950 and 2000 the consumption of energy quintupled, GDP multiplied by 7 and the population doubled. In the last three decades alone a third of the natural wealth of the planet has been consumed and should the current trend continue until 2030 we'll need two planets – something which shows the unviability of the current process in the short term.

Some scientists have already started talking about a new geological era, the 'Anthropocene', to signify the determining influence of mankind's action of on the climate – a slightly arrogant concept if you will, given that, even if mankind is capable of altering the climate with its activity, we're far from exercising control over natural processes. Others have introduced the concept of 'Ecological Footprint'<sup>50</sup> for measuring environmental impact and compared it to the possibility the Earth has for regeneration and providing resources. Of course, the ecological footprint of the most industrialised and biggest consuming nations generally surpasses the possibilities of their territory but global consumption had already surpassed the regenerative possibilities of the Earth as a whole back in 2010.

Faced with this sombre panorama, the question isn't just, "What do we do?" but fundamentally, "How do we manage to get done what needs to be done." Because already back in 1972 the Club of Rome talked about the limits of growth, and an Environment Programme was set up by the United Nations. In the 1992 Rio de Janeiro summit, 172 countries committed to work for sustainable development. In 1997 the Kyoto Protocol<sup>51</sup> was adopted, ratified in 2005 and signed by 187 countries, minus the United States – the same protocol which in 2013 was prorogued until 2020 without great hope of achieving results. And these are just a few milestones from the countless summits that have taken place on this subject and which have been good for nothing.

Of course, we mustn't underestimate the small achievements that have happened in some countries thanks to the conscious action of a few officials and to the work of a few non-governmental organisations. Nor can we minimise the awareness that exists in vast sectors of the population regarding the importance of not polluting and the need to contribute to the recycling of waste. But these are only small achievements in the face of an impetuous torrent that is advancing: the great machinery of infinite economic growth to cater for infinite consumption on a finite Earth.

What's more is that sometimes, whether as a result of the bad intentions of those with vested interests or through the naivety of others, the great awareness raised of people's responsibility for protecting the environment ends up deviating attention away from the real problem. Millions are spent on publicity to show how in some places people are recycling their rubbish, or saving energy with a solar panel, or saving a whale. This is no bad thing, but it would be better to use this publicity to say to people that their real citizen's responsibility lies in changing their government so that it approves laws to transform the functioning of the depredatory economy. Yes, those citizens will have to understand that consumption has to be slowed down and wealth redistributed, and if they don't agree, then at least the hypocrisy will be exposed and collective suicide will be accepted responsibly.

There are those who say that we can continue to grow without limits and that everything will regulate itself. Well unless they're hoping for a Malthusian regulation<sup>52</sup> of the population in which the impossibility to feed oneself exterminates millions so that then those who remain find an equilibrium with the limited capacity of the planet, there doesn't appear to be any other possible kind of regulation. Of course, we aren't at the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when many diseases, which have today been overcome, wreaked havoc with the population, and when technology for multiplying food production wasn't as developed as it is now. We know that today it's possible to feed a population even greater than the planet has. But the point is that the

resources that we extract from the Earth are not limited to food but must also supply the production of more and more objects, and more and more disposable things. There are those who warn about population growth, but the main problem isn't the number of people but rather the 'ecological footprint' they leave behind, above all in some sectors of that population. It's estimated that reserves of the most important metals and energy will run out in the next 30 to 60 years depending on the case. And then, what?

So, it won't be a surprise when, in times to come, more and more voices speak out against the demographic growth of emerging countries and above all their pretensions to strengthen their economic development. It's obvious that the ecological problem has the same root as the economic problem. Many say that it's fair for the entire global population to raise its standard of living, but they suppose that such a thing will happen through a linear growth of global production under the same distributive matrix that exists today, and this is impossible. You don't have to search very hard to find data to support the fact that the world's wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated and that in the measure that global GDP grows, the greater this concentration is – countless statistics show this. It's also true that in the measure that global GDP grows, even if the rich are increasingly rich, and the marginalised are increasingly poor, there are sectors of the population in emerging countries that are improving their standard of living. So one could assume that the more growth there is, the more concentrated income will become but also the more people there will be with an improved quality of life. So, given that global GDP has to double if consumption of the poorest is to increase by 20%, if global GDP is sufficiently multiplied, then the point will be reached where everyone on the planet has a level of consumption sufficient to cover their needs. But the problem is that we wouldn't be able to cater for it even with 10 planets.

In practice, this limitation of natural resources won't happen as a sudden crisis when the most important resources run out. Much before this moment arrives prices will increase until they become unaffordable for most people, and Malthusian regulation will be fulfilled as a wicked prophecy. Of course, such a situation will provoke social cataclysms and wars with an unpredictable outcome. Therefore, it would be better for us to try to organise ourselves better as humanity way before a violent collapse imposes an undesired new order.

It would seem to be that the only solution to the opening abyss of ecological disaster goes hand in hand with the solution to the economic disaster. We must urgently reorganise the economy to redistribute income in such a way that the basic needs of all human beings are covered and that the sum



of all 'ecological footprints' doesn't surpass the planet's possibilities. This means the end of consumerism and the end of economics based upon it. It will also imply another concept of what we know as development. There are those who speak about sustainable development, and this isn't a bad thing, but we should know what we're dealing with when the term is being used because some use it to refer to a non-polluting development – a clean economy which the ecosystem is resilient to – but this doesn't necessarily contemplate what will happen when natural resources run out. For example, if the current trend for consumption of fossil fuels is maintained and large scale alternative energy supplies aren't developed, then even if the problem of pollution is technically resolved, we'll continue to have the problem of energy shortage, and the species facing extinction will be human beings.

We know that several sources of alternative energy<sup>53</sup> haven't been developed on a large scale because they're more expensive than polluting fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal), and in some cases they require very large investment. But we also know that in the measure that some of these alternative energy sources are developed on a larger scale then costs diminish, while the costs of fossil fuels – beyond the temporary oscillations of prices due to market speculation – will increase permanently as we approach the moment they run out. But we can't wait for the comparative costs of alternative energy to become equivalent to or lower than traditional energy sources in order to start developing them because much sooner than that there'll be a great impact on general prices that will impoverish those with less resources even further.

The solution to this issue starts with developing these other sources of energy on a bigger scale, subsidising them in the first stage with the multi-million profits that today are obtained by the oil business. In this way, those who contaminate today will finance the same decontamination process and leave behind a clean energy infrastructure much before fossil fuel resources run out. This is totally viable economically, the difficulty will be to make the political decisions to oblige the oil industry to invest in clean energy or to charge a levy specifically targeted by the State to the development of clean energy. Of course, in many cases States obtain an important share of oil and gas profits which are usually used for various items of budget expenditure. In that case those States will have to give priority to investment in alternative energy. It'll be more interesting to generate jobs in the development of these energy sources than any other use that can be made of the money. And in this matter, we can't risk human lives with the expansion of nuclear plants, but instead we must make progress in developing non-polluting energy such as wind, hydro, solar and others.

Of course, in a world in which oil companies control, or at the very least notoriously influence, governments it won't be easy to make this turn of the rudder but this forms part of the political transformation through which the population must apply pressure if we want to head towards a sustainable world.

Leaving the subject of energy behind, and moving on to the rationalisation of consumption so that there may be a viable transition from the economic structure that the world is currently organised around, attention must be paid to several aspects: the consumption of a reduced segment of the population, the average consumption of others and the mere subsistence by a large marginalised sector. The current sources of employment, those which generate income for the workforce, are organised as a function of the current structure of consumerism and any abrupt modification in consumption levels which aren't accompanied by productive re-engineering will have a strong impact on unemployment levels. Therefore we'll have to go step by step. We'll deal with this later on when we analyse the steps to take at a national level, but it should be borne in mind when thinking about possible global campaigns that could be carried out regarding these issues. In recent times there have been people who talk about Degrowth<sup>54</sup>, and it isn't a bad idea, especially when they talk about sobriety in consumption by the planet's elite. But bearing in mind that most of humanity lives in a situation of under consumption, perhaps we'd be better off talking about a redistribution of current resources while simultaneously working on human development in order to improve the quality of life for people and a decrease in extractivism while increasing and improving services. For example, it's not the same for a country's GDP to increase because of mining activity or because the number of cars doubles, than for it to grow through an increase of health and education services, as there's no environmental impact as a result of the latter.

There are those who propose a bio-economy – incorporating the cost of every product's ecological footprint into its value – as a result of which cheaper products that contaminate the environment will end up being more costly, and so people will start to consume products that don't have that environmental impact. This can be a good option to the extent that international trade regulations are able to validate the practice. In any case, discouraging consumption can't just be achieved through price increases because there are those who, due to their purchasing power, will have no problem in consuming whatever they crave while depriving poorer sectors from consuming. It will be necessary to complement this policy of making products that pollute, or which are made with non-renewable components,

more expensive with redistribution policies that increase the purchasing power of the poorest to compensate for higher costs.

In the specific case of recycled materials, besides systematising the recycling process in each country, we must also consider that the recovery process is usually more expensive than the extraction process. In this case we'll also have to charge for the use of materials that originate from extraction and with these funds subsidise the cost of recycled materials so that they're more economic for the consumer. It will be therefore necessary for the WTO, or the future organism that replaces it, to regulate the charging of both raw materials as well as products made from non-recycled raw materials so that there's a worldwide common policy: one that doesn't allow countries to be autonomous.

Concluding this point, we could say that there are several actions that must be undertaken, the majority of which are at a national level. But at the international level we'll have to work much harder on a re-awareness of the issue in order to overcome a certain superficial vision that vast sectors have of the issue and to denounce the distracting manoeuvres of governments and international organisms that try to instil a belief that they're very seriously concerned with the matter. And to the extent that awareness is raised, we'll have to start demanding governments to make certain concrete international agreements. One of them should be the charging of a significant tariff on all products that use non-renewable resources and with these funds finance processes for recycling them. Another agreement should be to place limitations on the relocation of production stages that, in order to reduce costs, are atomised to different countries with cheap manpower, thereby generating a greater fuel consumption for transportation. And there should be international cooperation agreements to contribute to the development of clean energy sources in countries with few economic and technological possibilities.

We'll also have to establish a scale of priorities for the use of non-renewable resources and on that basis limit their utilisation to what is truly indispensable. In some moment, obviously before a resource runs out completely, we'll have to reach a point where consumption isn't greater than the amount of that resource that can be obtained from recycling, or of its alternatives in the case that it isn't recyclable. Such limitations should be established in international agreements in such a way that production and consumption within every country is adjusted to this rationalisation. We're talking about accommodating the ecological footprint to the existing resources.

The first thing that must be limited is the manufacturing of weapons which we dealt with in another section, but now adding the ecological point

of view we can affirm that the production of weapons represents a triple suicide: because weapons kill, because the resources that are spent on them could save the lives of impoverished people, and because we're also consuming some of the planet's non-renewable resources in these weapons.

We don't agree with those who try to simplify things by proposing to control the birth rate in order to stop population growth. Even if it's obvious that the Earth's population cannot grow infinitely because it'll reach a point where there's no way to feed it, we consider that the way to reach equilibrium will be through a substantial improvement in the living conditions of the whole population and in its greater cultural enrichening. It has been shown that demographic growth decreases in countries where education standards and expectations of human development have reached a better level and not because State controls are imposed but rather through a change in people's lifestyles. To now put the accent on the problem of over-population would mean to focus the question towards countries with lower per capita development, whereas prior to this the focus should be on consumerism in the most developed sectors.

# Cultural Rebellion in the Face of Media Manipulation

The term 'culture' covers many issues that could be the subject of discussion and analysis but here we'll limit ourselves to those aspects that are intimately related to the profound changes that must be carried out in order to progress towards the Universal Human Nation. The values, or rather the anti-values on which a violent, individualist and consumer society is based are surely the pitfalls to avoid if we want to advance in that direction. The belief system instilled by the media is an invisible fence that we'll have to hurdle. Materialism, nihilism and selfishness can only be overcome through action for simultaneous personal and social change.

It's clear that cultural changes can't be, nor should they be, established through government decisions or imposed by an illuminated vanguard. Every time in history when such attempts have been made, they've utterly failed. In many cases people's liberties have been taken away, and in others it has even reached the level of genocide<sup>55</sup>. It's not about forcing cultural transformations that go against the grain of the sensibility of groups of people, but rather it's about interpreting the changes that are being produced in the social sensibility as a result of the historical process and thus accompanying and strengthening them with a transforming meaning.

Nevertheless, we can't naively believe that the absence of direct imposition is a synonym for freedom, because media manipulation, frequently at the service of economic power, can generate a kind of collective hypnosis which is equally evil. As we build a new society step by step, we'll have to dismantle step by step anything that makes transformation difficult if we're to stagger change over different areas, the same applies to media manipulation. If we want this new sensibility and aspiration for change which is emerging among new generations to be translated into a cultural transformation that dynamises change in the world, then we must work to weaken

the hypnotic power of the media that generates a totally biased worldview in order to serve the interests of the powerful. This isn't about fighting like censors against the so-called 'freedom of the press' and against advertising manipulation, instead, it's about democratising access to the media to guarantee a plurality of voices on the one hand, and on the other it's about unmasking the manipulation techniques used throughout the media in order to weaken its hypnotic effect.

There are those who talk about 'Homo Videns'<sup>56</sup> when referring to a new society that was formed and conditioned by television, a society that embraces a vision of the world arriving through images, a society that only gives importance to what the TV highlights and ignorant of anything that doesn't reach it through TV images. It's vital to comprehend how people's freedom of opinion is always exercised within a framework, within a co-present context which subtly contains the scope of that opinion, and this framework is given by the media, above all by television. Of course representatives of various interest groups try to influence the public so that they have a certain opinion or consume one product instead of another, and the public, believing that they're free, can choose to think something else or to consume another product, but unfailingly they have an opinion about the instilled issue (not about other issues that don't exist for TV), and unfailingly they consume a product (the option of 'not consuming' doesn't exist for TV).

It's very difficult to imagine oneself today in a world without TV or without the mass media, nevertheless it was only little more than half a century ago when the media started to take an increasingly protagonist role in people's cultural formation. Before this, the vision that they had about life and the world basically depended on their experiences in the immediate environment (their town, or at most their region), and on the transmission of information that others could provide them with, whether this be through stories, education or religious instruction. It was a much more restricted and delimited vision and of course not exempt from manipulation. Today the stimuli have multiplied, and individuals have not only broadened the variety of experiences, being able to move more easily to other geographical places, but furthermore they have access to all kinds of information from any place on the planet because of the media, and on this basis they configure a broader vision of the world. To a certain degree this implies the possibility of opening the mind to new choices. Previously, the individual was more at the mercy of the bias of the formation they received through education, either in the family home, in education centres or in religious environments, while now an individual is faced with numer-

ous choices, and they feel that they have more freedom. Nevertheless this very sensation of freedom that makes people feel like the media is a window on the world, a window on life, something through which they can see everything that exists and can opt for whatever they prefer, this sensation is what converts them into a victim of a much subtler manipulation. Because when someone becomes accustomed to looking through a window, they no longer notice the window, they only see what the window lets them see, and they see this as reality itself and never question the window. They only form opinions about situations they can manage to visualise, and so they accept that opinion as their own. As soon as specialists advising businesses wanting to sell their products and politicians wanting to sell their image realised this, they started to manipulate that window on the world and were able to do so precisely because they could count on the economic resources to manage the media.

If today we had to reinterpret some of Ortega y Gasset's<sup>57</sup> concepts about the functioning of the 'mass-man', by necessity we would have to consider the impact that the mass media has on the generation of beliefs on the basis of which people have opinions, assuming they have their own ideas, when in reality they usually turn into the mere repeaters of the supposed truths instilled by the media. Today mediocrity of thought is not a phenomenon based on a lack of information or education because access to information surpasses all capacity to absorb it in many sectors of the population, rather it's a phenomenon through which others give an opinion through us but manage to convince us that such an opinion is our own.

There's no freedom of opinion if there's no freedom of thought and no incentive to make an effort to think, and there's no freedom of thought when populations are conditioned through media manipulation, and this is something which obviously depends on a certain intellectual laziness in most of the population. That's why we must rebel doubly in front of those who'd have us sleep and in front of our own lethargy.

It has always been affirmed that when people have no education, they can usually be manipulated by the demagogues of populism. But it must be said that people with education are also manipulated by the media. It's not just a problem of education because cultural change implies an awakening of the spirit and a liberation of the mind.

Stiglitz<sup>58</sup> analyses the reasons why, when the 1% well-off in the USA get favourable economic policies, they are supported by most of the population who don't even remotely belong to this elite. In his analysis, he refers to techniques that manipulate public opinion and how the framing in which things are presented can be made to vary people's perceptions until their

opinions and votes go against their own interests. For example, if in the columns of supposedly independent journalists the media starts to highlight news that could be related to some State inefficiency or other, then a public atmosphere of rejection of any State intervention in the economy can be generated. Later, when neoliberal politicians and economists come up with proposals to privatize and deregulate, the public has the perception that these people's opinions are right because they coincide with the idea or reality that this public has been formed to have.

The same happens with the advertising of the biggest brands dominating the market which impose their products, not through detailing their specific attributes but rather by showing the imaginary context surrounding those who consume them or the attributes that such consumers have. When people see propaganda in which a handsome man, surrounded by beautiful women, is enjoying a certain drink in front of a heavenly beach, no one asks if the taste and quality of that drink are better than alternatives, and they don't even ask if that drink is healthy or necessary, they simply identify with the proposed situation and therefore with the advertised product. Naomi Klein<sup>59</sup> has undertaken a detailed analysis of how the biggest brands have managed to impose themselves on the world through the sociological manipulation of advertising. After imposing themselves, these brands stop being interested in the manufacturing process and just dedicate themselves to producing advertising fantasies about items frequently produced by a semi-slave workforce in some corner of Mexico, Vietnam, China, Indonesia, the Philippines or some other free-trade zone. Klein also talks about the amount of resources available for advertising and how brands manage to impose themselves on different sectors of the public because, just as we used the classic example above of the drink in which the public identify with a 'successful' person, adverts are also designed in which people identify with other more sophisticated 'attributes' like 'being a rebel', 'being different', 'being carefree', 'being audacious' and the many other segments of potential consumers that exist.

We could say that the production cost of the biggest brands' products represents no more than 5 or 10% of the retail price, the rest is the price of the fantasy they sell us through advertising.

We're describing two fundamental aspects of media manipulation, one that has to do with commercial advertising and consumerism, and one that has to do with ideological conditioning determined by the field of politics. In both cases the first thing in common is the use of the same media manipulation techniques used for imposing products, whether we're talking about a commercial product or an ideological or political product. The sec-



ond thing in common is that in both cases huge economic resources are required because one second of television airtime costs a lot of money. This leads us to find a common denominator in all media manipulation, namely that there is always economic power behind it. The greater the economic power, the greater the capacity for manipulation. And if we consider that all of this is done in order to earn money – either through selling products or through controlling political power – we can also say that the greater the capacity for manipulation, the more wealth is accumulated, which leaves us in the vicious circle in which we find ourselves today. Economic power controls the biggest media outlets not just to have more commercial profit but also to impose on the public the politicians who'll serve them in order to continue accumulating the wealth through which they'll have even more control of the situation.

So, because people are the passive subjects of media manipulation, despite the fact that they – at least most of those who live in formal democratic regimes – possess the right to vote so that they can be governed by their representatives, they end up using this instrument against themselves by electing representatives of economic power. And these same people continue to buy products from companies that earn a fortune by moving their factories to places with cheap labour, while also demanding wellbeing and work for themselves.

So, if we aspire to undertake the long road towards the Universal Human Nation, one of the pitfalls that we first have to avoid is that of the contradictory behaviour which media manipulation induces. This is a change that must take place in the sphere of culture through developing antibodies. We must carry out campaigns via different channels to creatively explain the way in which adverts manipulate, to ridicule the techniques employed and to expose the manipulator's intentions. The filming of grotesque video spots caricaturing certain adverts and distributing them through social networks could be a cultural resource for developing antibodies. But the task of laying bare the media manipulation of any sign or ideology could also be the inspiration for theatre, literature, comics, films and music. Disseminating data about the cost price of certain products compared to their sale price could be an alternative way of weakening the image of certain brands. Of course the criticism that has already been made of the slave labour used by some multinationals is also of vital importance. But the fundamental thing will be to dissolve the power to manipulate and reach the point where individuals stop being passive subjects and can see the intentions that lie behind the 'realities' instilled by the media. Because just as fashions, preferences and valuations can be instilled which lead us to consume certain objects, so

can the alleged truths regarding politics, economics, morality and lifestyle. Many people don't doubt these truths because they endow everything that comes through the media with credibility, and the more powerful the media outlet, the more credible it becomes for the passive receiver. What is heard through a small-town radio station doesn't have the same weight as what's seen on CNN. The more important the media outlet is, the less doubt there is of the opinions espoused and the world vision that they want to show because it's assumed that if the media outlet is important, then so too are those who express themselves on it, and the more trustworthy the information broadcast is. What isn't considered is that if the media outlet's importance is given by its reach, and if this depends on its economic power, then there are also strong interests involved that condition the partiality of the information and world vision broadcast. The media have managed to turn themselves into the eyes through which every individual sees the world, and just as we all believe firmly in what we see with our own eyes, we also believe what enters through the eyes of greater reach that we call the media. Anyone can make a value judgement about something they've seen with their own eyes, but they'll never question the fact that they saw what they saw because they trust their senses.

Of course, everything isn't always controlled, and many times the media grants space and gives visibility to social and political leaders with proposals and points of view that confront the system out of an interest to gain audience. Sometimes for one more ratings point, other times because they can't hide relevant phenomena, and occasionally in order to use an enemy as a battering ram against others. Sometimes space in the media opens, and this can be taken advantage of by those fighting against the system. But it must be clearly understood that in the moment when the system considers these people to be a real risk, they'll use their power against them or simply close all the doors so that these people will cease to exist in the public opinion of 'Homo Videns'. It's intelligent to use that space when it opens but we must be prepared to act when it closes. There are many examples of public figures who started out pushing for a rebellion against the system and then had to adapt to powerful interests and their media in order to maintain visibility. Those who don't adapt are either never heard of publicly, or neutralised and caricaturised as marginal and incapable elements. Some know this and try to not depend exclusively on media visibility<sup>60</sup> and instead try to build a social base, but it will also be necessary to counteract the collective hypnosis generated by such media during that process.

If we want to favour a real cultural change, we'll have to work to unmask the media manipulation that conditions subjectivity because most of

the banality, hypocrisy and violence of modern-day culture is fed through media channels. In this sense, it isn't about censoring the media but rather about laying bare its intentions and interests, revealing their manipulation techniques and dismantling their hypnotic power. Organised groups that want to work for this will surely appeal to creativity in order to carry out campaigns to distribute counter-propaganda, clarifying people about the manipulation techniques and using all the alternative communication channels enabled today by new technology. And those governments that feel themselves to be the victims of media manipulation, or that simply consider it interesting to work to dismantle it, should avoid implementing censorship measures that are usually counterproductive, and instead they should facilitate the existence of television and radio spaces in which anti-manipulation campaigns may be broadcast.

It will be important to have international campaigns on this issue in order to start establishing a cultural current that rebels in the face of media manipulation because this has become globalised and is too strong to counteract with isolated actions. When '*pensée unique*' [single thought], an 'ideal society', a life style is implanted by the powerful communication media of certain important countries, it's usually difficult to oppose with other values and other ideas coming from what are considered to be marginal spaces. When a prejudice is instilled that there are certain countries and societies that are 'serious and responsible' and others that aren't so much, then many initiatives founder on this prior disqualification for not having come from the centre of power. So it'll be important that initiatives for action in these international campaigns succeed in transversally circling the world using multiple broadcasting sources. We have to succeed in instilling a questioning of the media by revealing their manipulation through both written and audio-visual media going viral. Enlightening explanations, such as pedagogical videos and the caricaturising of media manipulation techniques will be useful for facilitating popular comprehension.

# Human Rights

Nowadays, people talk about three generations of Human Rights<sup>61</sup>, and there are even those talking about fourth and fifth generation rights connected to information technology. It's no bad thing that there are those concerned with adding more and more rights to the long list of those that have been set out, but it's much more important that we concern ourselves with fulfilment of the fundamental rights that are permanently violated all over the world, at the very least. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 lists the majority of first and second generation rights between articles 3 and 27 but until article 28<sup>62</sup> is fulfilled, the mere listing of the previous articles will serve for little because it's the latter that deals with guaranteeing fulfilment of the others.

Within the borders of every country, people should be working today to achieve guarantees for all these rights, and we'll see this in the proposals for steps at a national level. But the situation at an international level is very different because straight away International Law is limited in terms of its power of coercion because flagrant violations of human rights in a country risk, at most, the consequences of economic sanctions, embargoes, exclusion from certain international arenas and other kinds of indirect pressure. This is not insignificant if pursued with objectivity and neutrality, but we know that these instruments are frequently used politically by the powerful countries that control international organisms in order to punish their political enemies, while neglecting to concern themselves with abuses that they themselves commit and the abuses of their allies. And now there's a much more risky acceptance by countries of military intervention under the pretext of defending human rights, as Silo warned of more than 20 years ago<sup>63</sup>.

The proclamation of Rights by the UN was an attempt to lead us to a greater level of commitment by nations through treaties such as the Inter-

national Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, but reality shows that they haven't been very effective. Nevertheless, as we've already said elsewhere, hypocrisy and double standards by powerful countries and international organisms contribute little to progress within International Law in terms of ensuring the fulfilment of Human Rights, but we shouldn't discard the instruments with which a really neutral and objective international justice system could count on in a different context and in the future<sup>64</sup>.

In the meanwhile, efforts will have to be redoubled so that international campaigns expose to public opinion all those governments that violate Human Rights so that concerns for their international image makes them at least lighten up their conduct slightly. But such campaigns should avoid political speculation and have Human Rights as their one and only axis. There are groups and organisations that only campaign when they're dealing with rights violations in rival countries to the USA and NATO, likewise there are groups antagonistic to these powerful countries who only concern themselves with denouncing their aggressive policies, neglecting to worry about Human Rights abuses among these country's enemies. A few years ago these campaigns that were biased against one faction or another used to coincide with the antagonism between capitalism and communism, whereas nowadays, even if there's an inertia of those past rivalries, there's a greater diversity of factions. On the one hand, economic interests usually outweigh political differences, and so it is that the USA has maintained an economic embargo on Cuba with the justification that political freedoms are not respected there and at the same time has had no objection to establishing growing commercial relationships with China. Yet despite this contradiction and the double standards being so obvious, even today US public opinion, and that of most of the world, presumes that there's a terrible dictatorship in Cuba, whereas China has a much more benevolent image. Obviously in this area of double standards in Human Rights, the media have done a good job. The same behaviour, although inversely, exists within some organisations that specialise in denouncing abuses by governments that they define as right-wing, while looking the other way when rights are not respected in nations that they consider to be left-wing or progressive. In the Middle East this phenomenon is even stronger. On one hand, there are those who denounce violations of Human Rights in some Arab countries, often in order to manipulate public opinion before a military intervention whose mission is not Human Rights but rather oil wells. And on the other, there are those who, with great justification, question the invaders' motives but neither before nor after denounce the atrocities of some of the region's

dictators. It would seem that the old adage 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' continues to prevent objectivity of thought in many people and, when dealing with the defence of Human Rights, this is very serious.

Some non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International have very complete information available about the Human Rights situation around the world<sup>65</sup>. It would be desirable that their reports had more space in the media but without being politically manipulated. And their campaigns in favour of Human Rights are fundamental for raising awareness on these issues. But if we really want there to be progress in respecting Human Rights, then there must be organised demonstrations that propose changing governments responsible for the abuses of such rights. Because if we put a bull in a china shop, it's no use asking it to be careful and not break the plates because it will do so with every step it takes. What we have to succeed in doing is getting the bull out of the shop. Likewise, we can't ask violent governments to concern themselves with Human Rights; we have to change those governments for others.

This will be resolved at a national level but at an international level campaigns must also give clear signals that power has to be taken away everywhere from those who believe in violence as a methodology for resolving matters. We have to end the hypocrisy of those societies that are scandalised by Human Rights abuses in Africa and Asia while their countries sell weapons to the different factions on those continents.

We've already spoken about other big steps that have to be taken on an international level, and we have referred on the one hand to disarmament and on the other to a global development campaign. Well, it has to be said that in terms of first generation Human Rights, we'll really make progress when we stop the trafficking of weapons and end wars because it's impossible for Human Rights to be respected while more and more weapons are put into the hands of governments and people. And as for second generation Human Rights, we'll really make progress when there's solidarity among nations and the rate of development of the poorest countries can be accelerated so that citizens of the latter can have work, housing, healthcare and education.

In synthesis, if we work for the construction of a Universal Human Nation, we'll be working for the application of Human Rights.

# **The Big Steps at a National Level**





## General Considerations

We won't try to cover here every single one of the issues that could be developed while progressing in the profound transformation of a country that's in tune with the ideals of the Universal Human Nation. It'd be materially impossible to include the necessary knowledge in every area, and in any case the idea of this book is that it's just a very general first approximation of the most important issues to bear in mind for global transformation. This is something that must be enriched by the contributions of many specialists in every subject area who develop proposals for steps to be taken in every specific area, inspired by the mysticism of this utopia in motion.

That's why, in terms of national issues, we'll delve into three big subjects which seem to us essential to develop if this transformation is to be structural. One is the transformation of the democratic system, progress towards a Real Democracy. Another is the transformation of the economic system, progress towards a Humanist Mixed Economy. And the third has to do with a change of cultural paradigms in which we'll include issues related to Human Rights and migration.

Nevertheless, we don't want to let the opportunity pass us by to mention two big issues: healthcare and education. It looks almost obvious from where we're standing that in order for every citizen of a nation to have assured healthcare and education, the State should guarantee that these services are public, free and of the best possible quality and up to date with the latest advances in science and technology. We already know that when these fields are left in the hands of the private sector, only the elites can access them satisfactorily. But in the world of the future, it won't be enough that healthcare and education are basic rights, but instead we'll be aspiring to a continuous extension of life expectancy and limitless knowledge for everyone on the planet. And all of this implies that, in addition to basic State coverage, a cultural change will be required so that the paradigm of consumerism turns into the paradigm of the highest levels of healthcare

and education. Currently the right to a dignified quality of life implies being able to acquire certain material goods in common usage, however the cultural trend for consumerism is leading to an unbridled race to acquire more and more material goods, way above what's necessary and, although this can only be achieved by 10% of the global population, the demand this puts on the planet is already leading to the point of collapse. This irrational consumer race is attacking the health of people and the planet. We must transform this avidness for consumerism, prompted by an insatiable search for commercial profits. This mirage of a false consumer paradise must be eliminated from humanity's collective horizon, and the image of a permanent evolution of human beings must be allowed to emerge. And in order to progress towards this new horizon, every human being will feel the need to value much more their own lives and the lives of others (and therefore everything relevant to healthcare will take priority), and they'll feel the need to multiply and deepen their knowledge (and therefore everything that has to do with education will grow without limits).

We've already said that economic growth in countries where basic needs haven't yet been resolved will necessarily imply an increase in the consumption of material goods. But to the extent that people's basic material needs are satisfied, most economic growth can be orientated towards services that don't impact on the environment. And in this context, the growing development of numerous services linked to healthcare and education should become a synonym for an optimal quality of life.

# Real Democracy

Even though all the steps towards the Universal Human Nation are important, it's clear that many of the transformations will be very difficult to carry out if we keep the current system of government that, in most countries, corresponds to what we call 'formal democracy' in which people have the right to vote but, time and time again, these representatives betray the electorate. Back at the start of the 90s, Silo – anticipating what would become increasingly obvious to people – described this phenomenon of formal democracy<sup>66</sup> very clearly. In an essay written in 2002<sup>67</sup>, right at the time when traditional politicians were being increasingly discredited, we tried to develop this subject during the institutional crisis being experienced in Argentina. A few years later, in 2008, the global financial crisis was unleashed releasing waves of social protests – fundamentally in Arab countries, in Europe and in the USA – and, as traditional politics has no answers, one of the biggest demands was for Real Democracy. Until now the greatest progress has been made in Spain where the strength of the 15M movement was successfully channelled towards a significant level of popular participation, and where the political expression of this movement, *Podemos* – thwarting the caste<sup>68</sup> of traditional political parties – incorporated some of the demands from this popular participation into the heart of its political agenda, voting with the use of internet tools. It's difficult to predict how this process will evolve but it's clear that the intention to progress towards Real Democracy is mobilising people and producing transformations.

Nowadays, many question the viability of a system in which people's interference in public decisions is growing, arguing that people lack knowledge and capacity. The development of democratic forms of government throughout history has been a long road. In ancient Greece, decision-making power was limited to a minority of the population back in the first attempts at democracy because the majority didn't have citizen's rights, being considered unfit to exercise democracy due to the empire of a supposed

natural law, something reasoned by thinkers of the age such as Aristotle<sup>69</sup>. It could be argued that that's a very antique way of thinking, yet, having experienced the collapse of monarchies since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and after centuries of authoritarian and absolutist governments, it was only in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on average, when women won the right to vote, while African-Americans had to wait even longer in a country which proclaims itself to be an exemplary democracy. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Rousseau<sup>70</sup> wrote 'The Social Contract', a work which initially influenced the ideals of the French Revolution but was subsequently considered too utopian for the conditions of the population. The same work was also reviled at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by supporters of fascism. However, not only does the principle that sovereignty lies with the people continue to be very relevant, we could further add that today's social and technological conditions bring us closer to the possibility of people being able to deliberate and govern themselves, noticeably limiting the arbitrariness of their representatives. Those who consider that people aren't yet ready for greater participation in public administration decision-making are, in reality, defending the interests of the narrow alliance of economic and bureaucratic power which has formed through formal democracy – something that brings us ever closer to plutocracy.

In any case, recalling the principle of advancing step by step, it would be good to review historical experiences and, more importantly, to analyse the current situation in every society when searching for a balance of governance in a Real Democracy. Even if in most societies today, naturalistic concepts about who is or isn't fit to express opinions and participate in decision-making have been cast aside, it will be necessary to capacitate citizens and endow them with the essential elements on which to base judgements so that they may evaluate and vote on certain issues. Even if many considerations such as Ortega y Gasset's<sup>71</sup> 'mass-man' are correct, societies are permanently evolving, and individual and collective human behaviour can't be naturalised in order to limit popular participation and so leave decision-making in the hands of the few. Furthermore, there'll always be those who use this mass-man behaviour to manipulate public opinion, making people believe that their ideas are their own, when in reality those ideas have been sown by the media to orientate public opinion towards certain decisions. It's therefore vital to raise the level of thinking and debate through information and, more importantly, to dismantle media manipulation. A staggered approach will also be required for dealing with the other limitation when it comes to exercising direct democracy, namely population size because, as Rousseau himself cautioned, the greater the population, the more difficult it is, even

if today this can mostly be resolved by communication technology. To start with, not everyone will want to get involved in a greater level of democratic participation, but when a relevant percentage does, every instance of power concentration will be dismantled.

## **The crisis of formal democracy**

It would be an error of judgement to consider that the crisis is limited to how a few bureaucrats and politicians represent us and that we'd solve the crisis if only we could replace them. Of course, when a system becomes corrupt, the worst elements establish themselves at the top, and they must be removed from there. But when the crisis is proper to the system itself, any change will leave us with more of the same. This isn't just a problem of corrupt or inefficient individuals in public positions, it's an all-encompassing institutional crisis. For example, if we were to interview 100 recently qualified doctors and found that 30 of them didn't know how the liver functions, would we think it a problem limited to those 30 doctors, or would we think that the Medicine Faculty is functioning very badly and needs profound changes? Surely the latter, because it's inconceivable that a doctor wouldn't have that basic knowledge as it should be part of their specialisation. Likewise, when we see in the justice system and police force that there's a large number of corrupt officials and police officers committing crimes and murders, can it be dismissed by saying that it's just a small percentage? Not at all, because these are precisely the people who are supposed to combat crime and deliver justice. So, any time we see politicians who should be defending people's Rights doing the contrary, or when we see legislators voting for laws that harm people and benefit economic power, or when someone in executive power negotiates behind the backs of the people who elected them, we shouldn't think that this is just a case of a few bad apples. These are structural problems, and these institutions must be overthrown. In this situation, the problem isn't just the individuals, the problem is that the system no longer works.

## **The division of powers**

It's common to hear talk in the media about the problems that exist when the division of powers isn't respected: when the Executive encroaches or puts pressure on the Judiciary, or when the Judiciary takes a political stance, or when legislators blindly align themselves to the Executive.

However, today it escapes nobody's attention that the three branches of power: executive, legislative and judicial, and even the so-called fourth

power – the press – all answer to a single absolute power: Economic power. Money buys the media, legislators, judges, ministers and presidents. Police chiefs, police officers and officials of all kinds can be bought. Money buys trade unionists and politicians. And when we say that they can be bought, we're speaking in general terms because in some cases there are corrupt actions in specific situations, but in general there's really an organised mafia with public officials acting as intermediaries for economic interests.

Of course, this process through which the power of money has co-opted democratic institutions in order to place them at its service has been on the increase over many years to the point where the entire institutional system has become a big corporation with different divisions. And of course, in this big company, dedicated to the business of diverting public funds to economic power in exchange for a part of the spoils, laws are necessary to suit businesses, and for this there are legislators, and at other times it's necessary to ignore the laws, and for this there are judges and corrupt police chiefs. And it's also essential that many things are not known about, or that other things are reported badly, or that other things are spread like propaganda, and for this there's the media.

That's why, to talk about a division of powers, in this sense, is to talk about divisions within a big corporation looking out for the interests of their own sectors so that no one takes their part of the business away, but this is never what's meant by democracy.

### **Elected representation**

It's assumed that the three branches of a democracy represent the interests of the people. However, the great paradox is that the people abhor the short time it takes them to cast a vote for the candidates, and sometimes despise them before even voting for them but they feel that they've little choice. This is the terrible trap of formal democracy: having to choose between false options.

If we could carry out a rigorous scientific study about the attributes of all the people in a country in terms of their: capacity for work, suitability, honesty and efficiency, and on that basis choose those considered the best according to the results, surely elections would have different results. Perhaps we'd discover that the best person for a certain position would be a university professor, or a neighbour, or a labourer. But, what can be done so that everyone knows who has the best attributes and so choose on that basis? Maybe we should expect that the press, as the fourth power, will highlight on their screens and in their headlines an honest candidate with whom neither they nor their partners will be able to do business?

One of the most important causes of the crisis in today's representative democratic system is the fact that the options to choose from are limited by factors outside people's control. And not in vain do different statistics<sup>72</sup> demonstrate that citizens have less and less trust in their representatives and increasingly demand the implementation of direct democracy mechanisms. Faced with this, the old political professionals try and defend their own interests by looking for a way to convince the people that democracy is just a synonym for elected representation<sup>73</sup>.

### Political parties

One possible answer to this paradox of formal democracy would be to say that if people were to participate in party democracy, they'd have a voice and a vote in candidate selection procedures, and so they could choose among the best options. And this answer could imply participating in the parties that usually take turns in power, or in smaller parties, or by directly creating new parties. The problem then becomes the democratic, or supposedly democratic, mechanisms of political parties and the difficulties to participate that can make this option unviable.

Many honest people who tried to make incursions into the thickets of power of traditional parties have already stopped trying out of impotence and disenchantment which is something totally understandable. But it's also true that the less people participate, the easier it is for the corrupt to have a free run at becoming candidates. And even if many people decide to leave their ballot paper blank or not vote, all they achieve with this is a reduction in the number of valid votes, and the same people end up sharing out the positions anyway.

Even if, in their origins and in their structure, political parties corresponded to the models described by specialists in the field such as Duverger<sup>74</sup> – who explained the difficulties for the grassroots to achieve real decision-making power when faced with autocrats and the inner circles within political parties – the point is that, today, to these difficulties must be added the growing association between political leaders, economic power and the media. Today, the autocratic tendency in political parties isn't just founded on the inner circles of power but, more importantly, on the media who decides which leader is the most acceptable, because whoever has the media in their pockets has the voters, and whoever has the voters decides in the party.

Economic power doesn't start corrupting elected officials the minute after they've been elected to their positions. That work starts much beforehand, during the ascent through the inner ranks of the traditional parties. It would seem to be, then, that just as it's assumed that democracy is about

representatives representing the people whereas it turns out the reverse is true (which is why we call it formal democracy), so we can also say that party mechanisms, under which it's assumed that everyone has the same opportunity to present themselves as candidates, are also formal.

## **The crisis of elected representation**

Never before has economic power crossed borders to globalise the world at will and impose its conditions through blood and fire as it does today. Even if there have always been corrupt people, never before was it so obvious that money is the central value in society, sweeping away other scales of values and ideologies. And all of this is so obvious for people that the credibility of our representatives is starting to deteriorate.

But then the system itself tries to capitalise on the crisis of elected representation, strengthening the discrediting of politics in the media but taking very good care to not give space to real alternatives for change, above all to those who come from organised groups or anti-system parties. To this end economic power gets rid of its political accomplices when they're no longer useful and replaces them with new teams of pragmatic technocrats. We mustn't allow ourselves to be fooled by the media because even if many times they're critical of the same elements that people abhor (traditional politicians and corrupt officials), they do so with the interest of replacing them with other kinds of accomplices from the system and not with people from organisations.

Surely the system will look for new ways to fool and blackmail us, and when a politician is no longer capable of deceiving anyone, the system will pull the plug on them and try to strengthen credible media figures who will sometimes be new politicians and other times personalities such as entrepreneurs or people from the world of sport or the arts. But the crisis of electoral representation will rapidly devour them all. Indeed, the system will try out new formulae in order to maintain power but regardless of this, we have to see what people can do to generate a joined-up option for power, in the condition to replace the system. And regardless of whether this is through new political parties, or a new grassroots social organisation, we'll have to resolve the difficulties of electoral representation if we want to avoid the will of the people dissolving into impotence once more.

## **Structures**

The crisis of electoral representation and institutions has generated an understandable rejection in people of organised structures. To the extent that



destructuring evolves, divisions between those in leadership positions become acute, and those cracks can allow for the appearance of new organisational forms. But in front of that possibility, the challenge is how to create a different, more dynamic organisational form that allows for the will of the majority to be channelled in a fluid way. One of the problems to resolve is the organisational levels that allow for the delegation of functions and responsibilities without falling into bureaucratic structures which lend themselves to manipulation.

It's not easy to find a balance between the old inflexible structural forms open to manipulation by the leadership, and the disintegrating tendency of horizontality. In any case, when priorities are confused, it's always a good idea to return to first principles for clarification. We start out with the assumption that if a group organised itself then it did so in order to achieve a goal that cannot be reached alone, otherwise there'd be no sense organising. Therefore, the pros and cons of such-and-such an organisational form can't be analysed from any point of view other than that of fulfilling those goals. If an organisational form has a propensity to manipulation by its leaders which deviates it from its goal or to crystallisation without progress, then that form doesn't serve its purpose. If an organisational form has a propensity to disperse individual or group determination thereby preventing it from progressing towards its goal, then that organisational form isn't useful either.

These conclusions are extremely elementary, but sometimes, if the goals are not constantly clear, the plot can be lost and with that the possibility of evaluating an organisation's efficiency. We shouldn't lose sight of that fact that it's very common for the explicit goals of an organisation to become intertwined with the implicit goals of the people who participate in it, and often personal interests and individual protagonism end up distorting the common goals. That's why it's very important that a group has the organisational tools to correct these distortions. Short, medium and long-term goals must also be clarified, and goals that only depend on an organisation's action must be distinguished from those that depend on greater cooperation with others. In our case, where the Universal Human Nation is the goal on the distant horizon, organisations will have to work for their own goals that resonate with one of the subjects dealt with here, but also they'll have to be increasingly ready to join forces with other organisations in order to produce transformations on a larger scale. This greater construction will also have to meet the conditions of neither forming a superstructure susceptible to manipulation by leaders, nor limiting itself to a horizontal coordination of cathartic protest.

If we had to define some very elementary points about the characteristics that more agile and less structured organisations that are adapted to the present moment should have, we could point out the following. An organisation should first define its goals very well and, on that basis, define its strategy, then it should delegate the tactical aspects to appropriate people. In terms of tactics, there should be sufficient freedom of action to speed up decision-making but there should also be mechanisms for rapidly recalling those who perform badly. Any variation of strategy should be agreed upon by consensus among a majority of an organisation's members. In volunteer organisations not everyone involves themselves in deliberations when important collective decisions need to be made, but everyone must have the right to do so if they want, and all of this can be speeded up through the use of networks.

People's participation is usually inversely proportional to how much time they need to dedicate to it, so we'll have to make it as simple as possible to use networks so that every interested person can get involved for a minimum of 15 minutes per week by expressing opinions and approving or rejecting motions, proposals for ideas and other initiatives. Let's take the example of a university organisation started with the aim of training a group of people on how to set up a cooperative, and let's assume that among the students and those interested in learning there are 500 people who support the project. In this case, it'll be necessary to have a team of around 10 dedicated people to whom the day-to-day project management can be delegated. In that case the other 490 could contribute opinions and ideas any time they so desire. In practice, many people won't, but if the organisation succeeds in getting between 50 to 100 people every week deliberating through networks it will be enough to make it dynamic and for there to be a minimal basis of consensus so that progress can be made. Those 50 to 100 people we're talking about won't always be permanent, they won't be chosen or regular, but rather this will be the average participation of the 490. Then, when the need to take important strategic decisions arises from deliberations, there will be motions voted on by everyone.

So, in an organisation, everyone elects a team to which to delegate things, and this will be on the basis of trust, of those people's capacities or whatever attributes may be appropriate. Everyone gives freedom of action to this team to implement the tactics, but they can revoke that mandate if the team deviates from the strategy. Until this point we have a representative democracy but with a rapid recall mechanism. But to this, and taking advantage of new technology, we can add a 'basic deliberation space' made up of a varying number of people who give opinions and propose ideas about the is-

sues at hand by way of constructive contributions. The team takes elements that arise from these deliberations and incorporates them into their management. From here ideas for campaigns, activities and position statements may arise that can be proposed to everyone. And when there are different points of view with sufficient strength, votes can be proposed. This would be the embryo of Real Democracy in organisations that later on would have to be scaled up into political practice. It will be important to maintain a balance between these roles of deliberation and execution, so that the former feeds the latter instead of holding it back, and so that the different functions may operate efficiently.

## **Some organisational tools**

If the seed of Real Democracy must exist prior to taking power then as soon as possible we should start to put it into practice in any social organisation that wants to dynamise institutional change. Therefore, and by way of a summary of some of the concepts scattered above, attention should be paid to the following steps:

- Promoting the organisation of groups on the basis of issues of common interest to their members.
- Converging by city in issue-specific forums with different groups, for planning collective actions and for debating projects and ideas.
- Carrying out popular consultations so that those who don't participate in assemblies or forums can give their opinions about specific proposals being debated.
- Setting up professional committees that work on the design of specific proposals to be implemented in every district. Such proposals, once agreed upon by consensus, should constitute a sort of government plan, available to anyone willing to implement it.
- Debating transformations that should be made at a national level, in addition to proposals at a local level, orientating towards the consensus of a truly integral project.
- Promoting the circulation of information, proposals and points of view throughout the entire network of social organisations so that social references may be created, not only physically in assemblies and forums but also at a regional and national scale (without depending on the system's media) as a way of building a truly coherent social power.
- Joining forces with other organisations in various issues that share the ideal of progressing towards the Universal Human Nation.

Indeed, there will be various forms of participation at the grassroots while a Movement develops which is capable of bringing pressure to bear on those in government so that, either the Movement's proposals are implemented, or those in power are simply replaced in an election. But whatever these participative and technological forms used for communication may be, we'll have to bear in mind that it's always a small proportion of the population that gets involved in active participation. It'll be down to volunteers to take the initiative, design proposals and make simple tools available for getting them agreed by the majority, and then to succeed in getting this consensus turned into electoral support or pressure applied on those in power.

The contrast between this practice of grassroots Real Democracy and the indifference of officials who turn a deaf ear to such proposals will strengthen the need in people for these instruments of Real Democracy to become institutionalised in order to be able to give viability to projects agreed by consensus without depending on the bureaucracy of formal democracy. So a constant demand will be that laws are passed which transform formal democracy into Real Democracy, because that will facilitate the implementation of transformative proposals in all other fields.

## **Demanding the incorporation of Real Democracy instruments**

It's clear that in a formal democracy there are only two ways to succeed in getting those in power to consent to popular initiatives. Either large numbers of people put pressure on those in government at the time, or those who govern are changed in elections. Both ways must complement one another, because in order for 'formal' representatives to be replaced by other 'real' ones, most of the population will have to be sufficiently fed up with the former and have gained confidence in the latter. And this can only be achieved if we work coherently to design proposals and by pressurising those in power to carry them out. The act of pressurising could have several connotations but in our case we'll always mean a nonviolent struggle of which there are numerous historical cases and examples to follow<sup>75</sup>.

We said at the beginning that one of the first objectives for those who want to work in any country on the project of the Universal Human Nation will be precisely to transform formal democracies into real ones in order to more quickly set in stone the transformations in all other areas. These transformations will necessarily have to be staggered, step by step, just like

everything else we're proposing, because it implies a cultural change in society that must be carefully carried out in order to avoid a premature failure defrauding the population and taking us back again to either formal democracy or, even worse, authoritarianism. So the proposals for democratic transformation detailed below will have to be progressively attained:

- A law of political responsibility. All elected representatives must make their plans of work public, identifying the measures that they'll undertake and their time scales. In case of non-fulfilment of such electoral promises they'll have to cease their functions and be replaced.
- Recall elections. Any elected or appointed representative will have to cease their function if a simple majority of citizens so demands it through a binding consultation which will, in turn, be called through a sufficiently representative popular initiative.
- Direct election through popular vote in the three branches of government, including judges and police chiefs.
- Direct elections in any organism that regulates and audits government functions with these elections differentiated from those for the officials they regulate and audit.
- Generation of a rapid and dynamic system of binding referendums for issues of general interest that allow citizens, through the use of a personal password, to be able to vote for simple choices through internet or telephone. The speed of the system should allow for evermore frequent consultations.
- Establishing debating spaces, prior to consultations, in order for citizens to hear the different points of view about all the issues they're asked to vote on, guaranteeing that the media dedicates equal space to all of them. In such debates, representatives from all political parties and representatives from organisations and institutions with a stake in the issue at hand should participate. Any media interview of anyone supporting a certain point of view should be considered as part of the debating space, as a result of which others will have the right to the same space in the same media publishing the interview in such a way as to avoid a monopoly of opinion formers financed by those who can buy media space.
- There are some areas that should be identified as 'obligatory consultation' due to their general importance, but in addition unforeseen situations could arise that merit consultation as a result of popular initiatives with sufficient support of the people.
- Participatory budgets must be implemented but on a bigger scale than those known today in a few local experiments. On the one hand, there must be more budget items subject to popular decisions, but consulta-

- tions should also take place for very important economic decisions at both regional and national levels. Decisions about large investments, government borrowing and allocation of funds to significant budget items must also be the object of popular consultation.
- Laws that regulate political parties must be inclusive rather than exclusive with respect to new and small parties, facilitating their participation in electoral processes at all levels. Electoral results must show the real social insertion of every political force and not be a result filtered through disproportionate prior requirements. The monopoly of professional political parties in the world of politics must be dismantled.

## **The transitional steps towards Real Democracy**

When we talk about Real Democracy, we aren't talking about one instrument in particular but rather a system in which the will of the people is faithfully translated into government measures. For a democracy to be real implies that, whether dealing with mechanisms for a representative democracy, or with instruments for participative democracy, or with procedures for direct democracy, something that will depend on the scale of the population and the geography, in any case there should be guarantees that the popular will is respected.

However, in every country, in every region, in every city, the initial conditions will be very different, and so the starting point and the steps to take will vary. To talk about favourable or unfavourable conditions for the implementation of certain democratic instruments is an extremely delicate matter because the argument used by those who deny greater democratisation is that the population isn't ready for it. But it's also true that if a political-social organisation rests on instruments that then aren't used or are used badly, this can lead to manipulation or to disorder that favours the return of authoritarianism.

There are some who consider that the appropriate proportion between representative and direct democracy is to be found in a parliamentary system complemented with popular initiatives and mandatory referendums<sup>76</sup>, and of course it seems to be a good starting point from where to continue progressing. But this focus, based fundamentally on the European experience, demands a more extensive analysis in order to be assimilated into the situations of other points of the planet and, besides that, it requires a review of the way this system currently works where it has already been implemented. Previously we talked about how important it would be to put democratic instruments into practice at the grassroots, independently of whether or not

they're required by law, because this practice could lead to not only a greater pressure to institutionalise democratic channels, but it would also generate the necessary capacity-building and experience so that society incorporates democratic practices into its lifestyle.

In some societies, the popular clamour for democratisation has been growing, becoming a driving force for many important demonstrations, but a lack of prior democratic experience has been a difficulty for finding the paths to a new kind of social organisation. For example, during the so-called 'Arab Spring' popular discontent with those in power and the demand for reforms brought different results in every country but in general the expectations raised by this movement remained frustrated. In some cases the effervescence was used by certain violent opposition groups that, with external military assistance, unleashed civil wars. In other cases, democratic elections that followed the overthrow of an authoritarian regime brought religious sectors to power, intolerant of diversity and the rights of minorities, and so power started to swing from one authoritarian regime to another. When the exercising of democracy hasn't been incorporated into a society's lifestyle, powerful groups dispute control of government; sometimes taking it by assault and other times taking advantage of institutional circuits, but both cases lead to authoritarianism. And the saddest thing is that in some cases the population ends up accepting authoritarian governments as the lesser evil in order to guarantee a certain order and stability in the face of the alternatives of chaos and civil war.

However, it would be an error to say that some societies are further away than others from the goal of Real Democracy for this reason alone. Because formal democracy, which evolves into plutocracy in which economic power takes advantage of institutional channels in order to govern, is perhaps just as far away from Real Democracy as dictatorship. In other words, it won't necessarily take longer for countries with authoritarian governments to become Real Democracies although certainly the path to ascend is different than for those countries with formal democracies.

In the case of Latin America, a region that for many decades was subject to *de facto* governments, ever since the 90s there's been progress in the inclusion of direct democracy mechanisms into constitutions such as referendums, citizens' initiatives and recall elections. Depending on the country, these mechanisms may or may not be binding and have a greater or lesser number of institutional filters<sup>77</sup>. But beyond the differences, in general there have been important advances, above all in South America. Nevertheless there are those who question the quality of the democracy in some of these countries where instruments of direct democracy have been used to bypass

other institutional instances, generating a direct relationship between people and leader in what has come to be known as 'delegative democracy'<sup>78</sup>. But although it's true that some governments fall into the temptation of populism and are strongly criticised by the opposition and the international press to the point of comparing them to dictatorships, the reality is that in those cases the government usually has great popular support. And although it's true that the quality of institutions doesn't match the ideal of a polyarchy, it's much more true to say that formal representative democracy has disappointed citizens for the reasons previously explained, which is why these institutions usually put numerous obstacles in the way of transformation processes. In other words, if the elites who dominate in formal democracies – accustomed as they are to prioritising their own caste interests and the interests of economic power – have succeeded in putting down roots in all State institutions, it's to be expected that any government that seeks to transform the system and put a stop to the privileges and inequalities will be resisted in those places of power. And so, the logical reaction of any government that feels endorsed by the majority support of the population will be to try and avoid those obstacles, and while these obstacles may formally be called 'democratic institutions', those who manage them don't represent the interests of the majority. We aren't saying that this is a good thing because the temptation for leaders to concentrate power, which is usually justified in a sometimes messianic epic of popular causes, leads to a personality cult incompatible with a diversity of opinions. What we're saying is that the main reason why people sometimes try to take shortcuts in order to make progress in political transformation is the failure of formal democracies, although these shortcuts don't always give good results.

In any case, the direct democracy instruments incorporated into Latin America must always be considered as progress in the democratic rights of citizens who can use them to support their governments, apply pressure on them or revoke their mandates. The virtue of these instruments isn't placed in doubt because someone in a position of power tries to manipulate them to their advantage. On the contrary we should build on them in order to progress from where we are with the creation of more Real Democracy instruments so that the institutional checks and balances also answer to the interests of the people and not the elites. The case of participative budgets<sup>79</sup> is a good example of how it's possible at a local level to start to empower people in the exercise of direct democracy which isn't limited to voting between options, but rather one that implies the involvement of citizens in a process of deliberation that brings quality into decision-making, and above all gives people experience and encourages them to demand greater participation in



all areas and levels of the State. And in perhaps the most emblematic case, the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil, the two biggest challenges facing participatory democracy have been found, namely the issues of effectiveness and participation<sup>80</sup>.

So, by way of synthesis, we could say that the issues of effectiveness and participation are the intrinsic limitations in a process of deepening Real Democracy whereas the extrinsic resistance is the opposition coming from the establishment. So, a staggered approach to Real Democracy must contemplate a step-by-step strategy, adaptable to the different scale of resistance in every country. Many will be the strategies and tactics according to every country's idiosyncrasies, and above all according to its political organisation because in some cases we'll have to work in totalitarian regimes and dictatorships, in other cases in democracies with weak institutions and in other cases in formal democracies.

Nevertheless, as we said before, we shouldn't necessarily think that the distance that separates us from Real Democracy is greater in some regimes than in others because our point of view has nothing to do with that of the apologists for Western democracy. In this context, we cannot take as valid the classifications about the state of democracy in the world that are carried out by prestigious international organisations financed by the USA such as Freedom House<sup>81</sup> which puts Russia on the same level as North Korea and the United Arab Emirates, or the Economist Intelligence Unit that considers that in Latin America full democracy only exists in Uruguay and Costa Rica. Freedom is complete in the eyes of these organisations as long as economic power controls political power and the mass media controls public opinion, and if any government dares to question these powers it's marked down as anti-democratic even though it received its mandate in the polling stations. Moreover, Freedom House classifies India as almost the only full democracy in Asia, whereas Russia and China are in the category of 'not free' countries. However Indian society isn't exactly the most democratic as the caste system remains in place, and as regards respect for democratic procedures, even though there are elections every five years in which the participation of all citizens is assured, it's very common for candidates to take advantage of poverty and buy votes, and furthermore an extremely high percentage of candidates are family members of those who are already in power, constituting true political dynasties. What we're trying to say is that: the criteria for these classifications regarding the state of democracy in the world are by no means trustworthy or objective, sadly these are the ones most talked about in public opinion, and the real situations are much more varied and relative.

From our point of view, in order to evaluate the steps to take in each case, we should pay attention to the following indicators in every country:

- Is it possible for citizens to elect their governments through a popular vote, or not?
- Are expeditious mechanisms available so that any citizen can be nominated for a public position?
- Are there expeditious mechanisms for channeling citizen initiatives?
- Is it possible to organise public demonstrations, nonviolent protests and to question the government without fear of repression, or not?
- Is the mass media open to a diversity of opinions, or are they controlled by the State or economic power?

These simple parameters can indicate to us: the starting point in order to work for Real Democracy, what tools we can count on, and how to design the strategy on that basis. Indeed, the most difficult case is that of tyrannies in which governments concentrate absolute power, where the people have no right to vote or to protest, and any attempt to do so is repressed by the police or the army. In these cases, organising to design a strategy that considers several tactics of nonviolent struggle must be started covertly in order to minimise the risk of violent repression. A broad level of awareness must be achieved in the population as the effectiveness of many nonviolent tactics is based on the fact that there's a large number of protagonists. But in any case, we can't avoid this step even if it takes time because it's impossible to democratise a society if that society doesn't feel a true yearning for it, something necessary, and after the eventual fall of a dictatorship we can't build a Real Democracy either if there isn't broad participation of people. And we aren't talking about replacing one dictatorship with another or replacing it with a formal democracy. Depending on the awareness raised and the number of volunteers ready to apply the tactics of nonviolent struggle, the tactics that work best will have to be chosen according to the weaknesses of the dictatorship. Civil disobedience, non-cooperation, boycotts, strikes, interventions, acts of protest and many other methods can be used to undermine power, working simultaneously on the attempt to capture for the cause the dissenters in the heart of power (police, military, government officials). Gene Sharp in his book 'From dictatorship to democracy'<sup>82</sup>, carried out an exhaustive classification of 198 different methods of nonviolent struggle – and the historical record is rich in this respect. But it's fundamental that people's aspiration for freedom is genuine so that the path embarked upon leads to Real Democracy and not to another dictatorship or formal democracy. The tools for nonviolent struggle are simple tools and morally more

valid than violence, but their use doesn't necessarily guarantee that the goal being pursued is correct. Occasionally imperialist interventionism has used weapons to meddle in other countries' affairs, but occasionally they orchestrated peaceful rebellions, financing campaigns against governments that weren't their allies.

We should distinguish between those totalitarian governments in which power is concentrated in the hands of a small group – sometimes just one family – and those cases in which there's a bureaucratic apparatus that thousands of people participate in over several areas, because in the latter case there are greater possibilities to influence towards transformation and gain an opening within the system as ended up happening in the USSR when the crisis of communism gave rise to Perestroika. In the case of China, in the highest instance of power alone – the National People's Congress – there are 3000 deputies elected indirectly by tens of thousands of representatives in provincial, district and cantonal assemblies. Even though it's true that the bureaucratisation and hegemony of the Communist Party of China has produced a concentration of power that contradicts the apparent full democracy consecrated in the Constitution<sup>83</sup>, democratic channels exist in law. And even though it's true that many individual rights and freedoms proclaimed in chapter II are restricted under the pretext of safeguarding protection of the socialist system from those who would undermine it (as expressed in the preamble), such rights have constitutional rank. We don't mean to say by this that it'll be simple to progress towards a Real Democracy by limiting ourselves to petitioning for strict compliance with the Constitution, something that in itself is also insufficient in formal democracies. What we're saying is that the strategy and tactics developed should take maximum advantage of the law itself, highlighting any contradictions and using democratic channels to produce a change in the leadership that controls power. When in May 2007 a group of Chinese activists started to oppose the construction of a chemical factory in the city of Xiamen, raising awareness through blogs with millions of visitors, the government, despite all attempts at censorship, couldn't slow the growth of the protest down and finally relocated the plant. And this is just one example, because in recent years the number of protests throughout China has been growing<sup>84</sup>, obliging the government to make democratic concessions.

What we're saying is that it's possible to make progress in any situation by adapting strategies and tactics to any given reality as long as there are motivated people who organise themselves. But a summation of demands doesn't necessarily equate to a staggered process towards Real Democracy, because if the organisation of people takes place around a specific conflict

and then exhausts itself in the process, the necessary organisational capacity to progress towards Real Democracy doesn't accumulate.

Recapitulating the above, if Real Democracy means that official decision-making isn't divorced from the interests of the people, then any decision by any official that comes into conflict with what people want could be the catalyst for a citizen's initiative against it. The form that this initiative could take will vary according to the political conditions in each place: it could be a public protest to support a petition; it could be a strike or a cleverer tactic of nonviolent struggle; or it could simply end up being a clandestine spreading of discontent, waiting for the appropriate moment to act. But in all those cases we have an agglutinating factor which is the conflict itself and a way of organising among those interested in it. What we must succeed in avoiding is that an organisation's fate is tied to the luck of each conflict but rather that it evolves, grows and improves in other conflicts. In this growing process, people should comprehend that beyond whether or not a specific conflict is resolved, there's a root which all conflicts have in common, and this is the lack of legal and expeditious mechanisms to ensure that official decision-making reflects the will of the people. So, along with the demand at the heart of every conflict, there will also be the demand for instruments of Real Democracy so that in subsequent conflicts it'll be enough, for example, to get a certain number of signatures in order to resolve an issue to everyone's satisfaction, and there'll be no need to start from zero every time.

So the steps to take for progressing towards Real Democracy must be based on people's motivation to resolve conflicts. Motivation will be the factor that will mobilise many to organise themselves, others to accompany that organisation and many more to support it in certain circumstances. Indeed, although everyone shares an interest in Real Democracy, there'll be many who'll only mobilise for specific activities of a conflict that interests them, but it'll be important that at least a few organise with a vision of process so that the steps taken aren't just useful for trying to resolve a specific conflict, but rather they also call for Real Democracy instruments. And those who work with this double objective will certainly interconnect with people doing the same thing in other conflicts, in other issues and in other places. Thus will be weaved an organisational network whose objective is Real Democracy but inserted in specific conflicts, and even though it won't be possible to resolve many of those specific conflicts, a grassroots organisation will consolidate as a result of government action, or inaction. This organisation will, in turn, have to analyse situations, design proposals and take decisions regarding campaigns for both Real Democracy and for specific conflicts. The working methodology for all this activity will have

to be organisational democracy in which every volunteer and collaborator involved will take part, consulting all the stakeholders involved in the issue. To this end, the first task for Real Democracy will be within those organisations whose objective is to incorporate it institutionally. This will allow for capacity building in an important part of the population and for them to gain experience in the mechanisms while evaluating how effective they are for making decisions.

Let's see a concrete example. Let's assume that an area of a city lacks drinking water. There are many people affected by this conflict who are willing to do something to resolve the situation and others who are interested to accompany them, although not directly affected. So here we have the mobilising factor. In this situation, one option will simply be that people organise and bring pressure to bear on the authorities until they do something, and once a total or partial solution has been obtained they can then go their separate ways. Another possibility is that no response is forthcoming, and over time the demand weakens, and people become discouraged. What we're proposing is that starting from the mobilising factor (the lack of drinking water), people organise not just to bring pressure to bear to resolve the conflict but also to incorporate Real Democracy mechanisms. In terms of this water problem, to start with, distributed functions must be organised. There'll be those who'll take care of getting more people involved, others will establish relationships with the authorities, and there'll be those who'll bring in specialists to analyse what can be done and in what timescales, where to start, etc. With this information those involved can prepare a position paper and an action plan to be approved democratically by all stakeholders. Once approved, the position paper can be presented and publicised through all possible media channels, and this will start to apply pressure on the officials responsible so that they allocate a part of the budget to solving the problem. But at the same time, the organisers will put pressure on the local government to include the idea of the Participatory Budget or the binding citizen's initiative, so that when there are other similar problems in the city, the solution won't depend on the arbitrary actions of officials but rather on the will of the people. Whatever the answer officials may give to these demands, the participation of those affected and interested in this grassroots organisation will fluctuate because it's impossible for everyone to actively participate all the time. But the organisational footprint that will have remained will be sufficient for a percentage of those involved to keep the organisation going, either working on the same issue if it still hasn't been resolved, or on other issues in the same part of the city, or collaborating with other neighbourhoods on similar issues, because there'll be

a common denominator which is the people's aspiration for increased decision-making power through mechanisms of Real Democracy and a common utopia, namely the Universal Human Nation.

From these basic organisational forms, we'll be able to progress until a true web of grassroots Real Democracy has been formed at a national level, and subsequently pressure can be applied at all levels to achieve the replacement of formal democracies.

# Mixed Economics

## The new sensibility and a change of paradigms

When dealing with economic paradigms, the subject could be tackled from very different points of view and in very different levels of profundity, and if all of this were to be multiplied by the number of authors who've written on the subject then we'd have a spectrum of analysis and proposals so broad that the mere listing of titles and authors would exceed the length of this book. In Chapter 1 of the book 'Beyond Capitalism: Mixed Economics', we made a cursory revision of economic theories, giving an approximate idea of the variety that abound.

We could differentiate between the paradigms defended by ideologues of the dominant economic system and those in which people believe. After more than a century of attempts to struggle against the dominion of capitalism, both in praxis and in theory, many people no longer believe so blindly in some of the paradigms of economic liberalism yet end up resigned to its predominance, just as they've resigned themselves to the fact that there's no better alternative.

For example, the trickledown-effect theory – in which a cascade of investments and resources will shower down upon the poorest when those who get rich start to spend their money – is no longer so credible for the impoverished majority who see every day how the rich become richer, and the poor become poorer. However, there are many who believe that this trickledown effect isn't happening only because their governments are corrupt or not serious and that investors prefer to take their capital elsewhere. On the flip side, those who receive some sort of investment and a few drops from the famous trickle are convinced that we should all toe the line and behave nicely for the markets in order to continue receiving a few crumbs. In other words, the trickledown-effect paradigm has mutated into a carrot and stick in which an entity called 'the market' is a kind of new god who rewards or punishes according to how obsequious people behave towards economic power.

Another example is the old paradigm of self-regulation and natural balance – Adam Smith's famous invisible hand – through which prices and salaries reach a balanced level and a business owner's profits can't surpass a reasonable minimum because of free competition and the natural rules of supply and demand. It's assumed that individual ambition is a force that drives general progress, and in turn, the overlapping of individual interests will generate equilibrium and self-regulation that guarantees social harmony. That invisible hand has today become a claw and materialised into the IMF, WB, WTO and Free Trade Agreements and into the dominant economies of the world who look after the interests of international big financial capital and the multinationals. Today, no one believes very much in the friendly hand that regulates and balances everything, but they do believe in the claw and the non-existence of choice and this is the paradigm that neoliberalism has instilled.

Another paradigm is the cost of money: loan interest. Money came about as just a tool for exchange, to dynamise a barter economy and didn't have the ability to generate new value in itself. Nevertheless, the position of strength of the lender who has accumulated money allows them to demand payback for lending to the borrower, and this has turned into a doctrinal truth that has been immutable ever since: a truth in which people and governments live indebted and ripped-off by the banks. It's curious to observe how, despite the big crises that the financial sector has unleashed everywhere throughout history, and despite the systematic external debt of countries, all this has done is to make people question some of the corrupt behaviour in the creation of debt but never the mechanism of usury itself.

Another paradigm is that of private property: the central pillar of capitalism and liberal economics. But in recent years it has turned into the paradigm of the efficiency of private enterprise in areas previously reserved for the State (public services, healthcare, education, etc.), thereby decreasing protection even further for those who haven't benefited from either the promised trickle or the regulation of the invisible hand. Private property of the few is growing as the world gets smaller for the many marginalised – those dispossessed by the possession of others as Proudhon<sup>85</sup> condemned almost two hundred years ago – and leading us slowly but surely to the acceptance of an old and terrifying paradigm (explicit in the inner circles of economic power): the survival of the fittest – there are too many people in the world, and marginalisation is the product of natural selection.

Humanists start from a totally opposite paradigm. Humanists affirm that every human being, by the mere fact of being born, must have equal rights and identical opportunities.



Equal rights and identical opportunities: the paradigm from which all other paradigms for a new economics should be derived. A new economics in which the State is the protagonist guaranteeing equitable distribution of wealth, free healthcare and education for all, technology at the service of everyone in society, access to interest-free credit, participatory ownership by the workforce and the productive reinvestment of profits.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2004, Silo said in Punta de Vacas, “*The people will experience a growing yearning for progress for all, understanding that progress for the few ends up being progress for no one...*”; previously, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1999, he expressed the need to work in order to, “*go beyond the mere formality of equal rights before the law, to advance towards a world in which there is true equality of opportunity for all.*”

In fact, today we see that, despite the few (but powerful) who continue to believe in the paradigm of the law of the fittest and natural selection, the vast majority are starting to understand the need for progress with social equity. Yet, the old capitalist system can't give a response to this need because it's mounted on the paradigms of a world in decline, the world of individualism, selfishness, exploitation and indifference. In the meantime, social organisation sits on institutions and legislation that, while conserving the formal appearance of equality for all before the law, in practice increasingly aligns itself with the dictates of international capital which feeds on inequality and marginalisation.

It's increasingly obvious that this new sensibility being born in people and which, in the field of economics, is expressed in this need for progress for all, can only be channelled into profound social transformation in the measure that the organisation of the State and the economy is mounted on new paradigms in tune with this new sensibility.

Some of capitalism's ideological axes are mounted on the premise that human beings are selfish and individualistic by nature, and that an economic organisation based on competition and inequality will liberate the forces of human nature to feed the engines of production and creation that will generate sufficient progress so that the overflow from the richest will reach to even the poorest. It's not the purpose of this book to review history and analyse how an alternative capitalist system could have been three centuries ago bearing in mind the social sensibility of those times but we're in a position to state with certainty that today's human beings have outgrown the Darwinian clothes of capitalist economics. There are more and more people who register contradiction when put in a situation of having to fulfil roles of exploitation, competition and obsequiousness just because those are the rules of the game that ensure success for the

company. Of course there still remain those beings of primitive conduct who enjoy this behaviour, and obviously as they're at the service of economic power they end up filling important positions both in businesses and in public institutions at the service of the system. But there are more and more people who are trying to step aside from these mechanisms of alienation, sometimes adapting to it out of necessity, other times marginalising themselves from the system. It would surprise us to learn just how many human beings in apparent conformity with the lifestyle scripted by capitalist values would feel great relief if only they could manage to direct their economic activity from a different point of view and with other values.

Human beings are growing, and the capitalist system no longer fits us.

The organisation of the economy lacks new paradigms. All the procedures of a new economic system, one that fits human beings, should be founded on a fundamental paradigm: equal opportunities for all.

Equal opportunities don't exist for those who can't access education because it's expensive, or because the State neglects public education and neglects social and family problems, making it difficult to access.

Equal opportunities don't exist for those born into poor families, unlike those born into a well-off family, faced as they are with an abyss of social differences that gets wider and wider, while the State doesn't care about making the path easier for the least protected.

Equal opportunities don't exist for those who only inherit misery, unlike those who inherit capital, at least not while there's an economic system that rewards possession of capital more than the capacity to work, imagination and talent, and not while the State doesn't care about compensating such inequalities.

Equal opportunities don't exist for those who only let themselves follow the path of honesty, compared to the unscrupulous who don't hesitate to take the road of corruption, clearly expedited as it is by the absence of Real Democracy.

Equal opportunities don't exist for those who must accept conditions imposed on them when there's no alternative because the State won't protect them from abuse, unlike those in a position of strength that allows them to impose their conditions, be they in the field of work, production or business.

And equal opportunities don't exist for those born dispossessed who have to beg for a miserable space in a world that already has owners.

There are those who maintain that any State intervention to protect the weakest promotes weakness and idleness, distorting the way the economy works, provoking stagnation that holds back progress, and so, even though

there would be greater fairness in income distribution, the poverty level of the average citizen would be worse than in more liberal countries. But what we're trying to say when talking about the State guaranteeing equal opportunities has nothing to do with equality in the goals reached but rather ensuring equality at the point of setting off towards such goals. When Milton Friedman<sup>86</sup> argues in favour of what he considers 'freedom of opportunities', as opposed to what he calls 'equality of outcomes', not only does he limit himself to looking for examples that fit his argument, but when it comes to talking about equal opportunities he also totally minimises the disproportionate advantage of accumulated capital (very well explained recently by Piketty) over an individual's virtues and their potential.

Nevertheless, for the defenders of the so-called 'free market' (not free of monopolies, of course) there's a doubt. And even accepting that economic activity isn't the most important thing in society and that it isn't a pseudo-sport where the losers remain marginalised, and even accepting the ideal of a fairer society from the economic point of view, the doubt still remains. Economics has a social aspect and a mathematical aspect, and in its mathematical aspect there's a principle that says that you can't consume more than you can produce. This principle seems to be contradicted by the aspiration of socialism 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their need', because when it comes to applying it, the summation of needs demanded by all is usually much greater than the sum of what we're willing to produce. In front of this apparent contradiction between an ideal and reality, capitalism proposes that everyone takes care of resolving their own needs, and so no one will be able to consume more than they produce. And this has even more contradictions because the majority of those who make the effort to work consume much less than they produce<sup>87</sup> and need, while others who exploit them consume much more than the product of their own efforts and very much more than their needs, and moreover the number of people who don't even have the opportunity to apply their effort through lack of work is growing and growing. So the doubt is that despite capitalism's contradictions, if the State somehow compensates those who don't make efforts to produce what they consume, then no one will make an effort, sheltering under State protection, and the fall in GDP will impoverish everyone, including the State that will no longer be able to protect anyone, while those who still make an effort will become discouraged on seeing their productive efforts being diluted among the idle majority.

This reasoning in the first place completely omits from consideration what are social goods and social needs because when a person works and makes an effort to cover their needs, not only do they do so to buy a house

or a television, they must also do so to contribute to society as a whole which looks after them thanks to guaranteed State organisation, whether it be in terms of infrastructure, education or healthcare, security or culture, technology and knowledge accumulated over generations. Therefore the individualistic calculation that production equals consumption, starts to become relative. Moreover, such reasoning starts from a naturalist and dreadful conception of human beings, implying that the majority are capable of leaving their children to starve while waiting for the State to feed them without even remotely understanding what human intentionality is capable of.

In any case, when we talk about equal opportunities, we aren't talking about the State having to compensate people's lack of economic effort (except of course in those cases where they aren't in a position to make such an effort) but rather that the State should guarantee that everyone has equal opportunities to make such an effort and to receive benefits proportional to those efforts. When there are equal opportunities, everyone will see what to do with them. There'll be some who prefer to consume less and have more free time for other non-economic (but possibly more rewarding) activities, there'll be others who dedicate themselves more to economic activities because they want to consume more, and likewise there'll be those who may opt for either one or the other according to their living situation. But the State should guarantee that everyone has the same opportunities to make such economic efforts to a greater or lesser degree, that their economic compensation is proportional, and above all that those who make a greater economic effort don't gain power over others because of it, and much less over the State. Furthermore, the State must ensure that every human being benefits equally from technological advances which create the situation where less and less manpower is required to cover our needs.

In the field of economics, a few other paradigms are derived from 'equal opportunities for all'.

One of them is that public and free education of the highest quality should be assured for everyone. Of course it's not the only thing that should be free and public (also healthcare and other rights) but we're putting public and free education as a paradigm in the field of a new economic model because it's one of the factors that ensures equal opportunities.

Another derived paradigm is fairness in the distribution of wealth. In this sense, participation of the workforce in business profits, ownership and decision-making should be a fundamental pillar in order to succeed in getting this paradigm really set in stone. One thing is to respect an investor's ownership, and something else is that they arbitrarily place conditions on those who work for them<sup>88</sup> from their position of power.

Another derived paradigm is the concept of Social Heritage. Today, excesses in the right to private property have not only generated monstrous capital accumulation in a few hands which, through the right to inherit, has perpetuated the power of family dynasties who have controlled society as a whole for generations, but there have also been advances in the field of so-called 'intellectual property' as if scientific discoveries and technological advances could be appropriated by businesses or individuals rather than being humanity's heritage! What's more, the wave of privatisations in recent years has made the already limited areas of public and social heritage recede, increasingly limiting rights to free circulation, education and health-care, to enjoy nature, etc. Of course, here we aren't talking about going to the extreme of considering everything as public property, instead we're saying that there should be greater restrictions on what's considered available for appropriation by the private sector, broadening the scope of public ownership to include everything of common interest to a society, and that the concept of Common Ownership should be expanded to include everything that could affect human groups. For example, a factory as a source of work is social heritage whose use affects many families, so the decisions about its destiny shouldn't be monopolised in the hands of those with the biggest ownership shares. Of course this concept should be developed carefully in its practical implementation, and the idea isn't to go into such details in this book, many of which are already set out in the book *Mixed Economics*<sup>89</sup>, but it remains clear that equal opportunities would be severely affected if the freedom of choice for people were to remain limited to the scarce marginal spaces that haven't yet been privatised.

Another paradigm derived from equal opportunities, and very much related to the others, is that of considering money as public heritage. Private usury (understanding by usury not only the charging of interest but in general the speculative nature that the use of money has acquired), has generated a monstrous accumulation of financial capital to the detriment of productive capital, as a result of which income distribution has become more distorted than ever. The control of the financial sector by private hands not only doesn't guarantee equal opportunities when accessing credit but rather also leaches money from people, businesses and countries with the mechanism of perpetual debt. Only the existence of a State Bank that gives interest-free loans can guarantee equal opportunities and productive reinvestment of profits.

Moving on to another focus of economics, we could say that, just as the paradigm of equal opportunities is a central axis on which an economic system must turn, so too another fundamental axis from which other par-

adigms derive is what we could call 'The Subordination of Economics to an Integral Human Project'. Because even though neither capitalism nor communism put the economy as a centre of gravity in people's lives as an explicit paradigm, a materialistic dynamic has led to this. Money has become a new god that regulates the lives of people and an anxiety to accumulate it or the fear of not having it has become the meaning of life. Consumerism has become a lifestyle to which one aspires and which establishes codes of relationships and a scale of social values. Those who hold economic power have taken ownership of political power and the media, and with that they control society. Everything is measured in economic terms in an irrational logic of what is or isn't viable which ends up discarding most of humanity.

Of course, when the supremacy of the economy has been passed down culturally for generations, imagining life differently could be as difficult as imagining colours for someone who has never seen them. Or course, for a society to be able to organise itself around a central value other than money, subordinating economics to a mere practical function of producing and administering resources, not only is a new economic system necessary but also a new way of seeing things, a new regard, a renewed contact with existential necessity. But as we said at the start, a new sensibility is being born, and the new generations can no longer be hypnotised the same way, and that new sensibility needs new paradigms, and one of them is precisely that everything related to economics should be just one more issue among others and not the fundamental issue. There are more and more authors who question economism because we aren't just talking about a better distribution of wealth but also of overcoming the alienation that the race to get it generates. There are those who talk about 'Economy for Life'<sup>90</sup>, those who talk about 'Human Scale Development'<sup>91</sup>, others who talk about sustainable development, and there are those, as we saw previously, who propose degrowth and sobriety. The principles of human-centred economics are contained in our concept of Mixed Economics, and in turn we try to reach proposals with progressive viability that allow us, step by step, to be able to realise the transformation yearned for by more and more people.

## **Some basic concepts of Humanist Mixed Economics**

Generally speaking, when it's said that an economy is mixed, this refers to countries where a private economy prevails and the State is reserved for the management of a few nationalised industries, or vice versa, where the economy is nationalised but the doors are open for private investment. From this point of view you could almost say that any economy is mixed

to a certain degree. However, when we talk about Mixed Economics we aren't talking about public sector islands in a private sector sea or vice versa, instead we're talking about a real economic system in which the interaction between the public and private sectors constitutes a true social intelligence at the service of sustainable, equitable economic development at the service of humanity.

That's why the first concept to incorporate is the concept of a State that's very different from today's, one in which there's a system of Real Democracy that allows people to become involved, participate and decide on matters of public administration. Thus the abyss and antagonism between the public and private sectors will disappear, and so, just as people will be able to implement policies that tend to the common good in aspects as important as healthcare, education, the environment and justice, they'll also be able to plan sustainable economic development and a fair distribution of income.

Today, everything's back to front: we live in a formal democracy in which the State is controlled by economic power, and so its policies always tend to favour that power. Economic power not only buys the three branches of government, but moreover in order to remain in power it also buys the media through which it tells the people who their false election alternatives are.

So, in the future, assuming that the State isn't still prey to the corrupt partners of economic power or a bureaucratic superstructure but is instead an ambit of coordination thanks to Real Democracy mechanisms in which common policies are implemented, then we can talk about the most important axes of a Mixed Economics system and its differences with Market and Statist Economics.

In a Market Economy, the factors of production can only be set in motion if those who've acquired capital decide to invest it productively, and if they don't, as happens in these times, then millions of people are left marginalised, unemployed and out of the system.

In a Statist Economy, the factors of production can only be set in motion through slow and bureaucratised planning by elite officials who are disconnected from people's daily reality, thereby generating an atrophied and inefficient economy.

In a Mixed Economics System, the factors of production are set in motion through the management and creativity of people who are coordinated and ordered collectively through State policies that they themselves design.

### **An example of local development**

We'll take as an example the summary of a paper that I had the chance to present in a forum on 'Local Development and Public Policy' in the Autono-

mous National University of Costa Rica in 2009 which dealt with proposals on different levels. Here, we'll try to mention a few relevant points.

To progress towards a Mixed Economics System doesn't mean that the State has to become an entrepreneur but neither does it mean that it sits and waits for the private sector and market forces to generate genuine employment with a fair distribution of profit. And even though there are already examples in different areas where the State and the private sector work together to strengthen development, it will be necessary to progress towards a more integrated system in which all stakeholders in the economy coordinate for sustainable and fair development that gives priority to needs over consumption. It's from this coordinated integration that the two most important variables can be corrected and so modify the distribution matrix of capitalism: participation of the workforce in profits, and the strengthening of small and medium enterprises by freeing them from their dependence on the monopolies and cartels that reign over the markets today. This integration, which in practice will be done at a local level, will need an appropriate framework of national and local policies.

## **National policies**

- A tax policy that increases the rate of tax on company profits the bigger they are and which channels that tax to a development fund, reducing the tax burden on companies that reinvest in local development projects.
- Increased participation by local government in the national budget, incorporating budget items specifically to encourage local development.
- Labour and business policies that allow for workforce participation in business profits and that facilitate the working relationship between businesses who adopt such practices.
- Creation of a State Bank that gives interest-free loans for the financing of productive projects linked to local development.
- A foreign trade policy that gives priority to the generation of market conditions for sustainability of local development projects.

## **Local policies**

- Implementation of participatory budgets, with specific budget items for local development projects, prioritising those that generate the greatest number of formal jobs within the concept of human development. Establishment of clear guidelines to control the application of funds related to the objectives set out.



- Coordination with universities, technical institutions, schools and trade unions in order to implement appropriate training both for skilled and unskilled activities of all kinds.
- Creation of a Local Development Committee made up of representatives of employed and unemployed people, business owners, universities and government. This committee shouldn't be a paid body of government officials but rather a working team that allows the synergy among different sectors to accelerate and one that plans local development initiatives.
- Establishing bridges of integration and exchange to other parts of the region, other regions and other countries in a way that can appropriately incorporate exogenous variables within local development projects.

## **The role of the Local Development Committee**

Basically, the committee must function as a project generator, an activator of projects by the different sectors represented and, fundamentally, as an ambit where the necessary synapses are produced in order to develop the productive fabric of local development. Of course the relationships that may develop could be multiple, serving the various necessities that may emerge in the measure that the projects progress. But we can at least give some examples of the activities that should pass through this committee.

- Analysing the region's potential in terms of human and natural resources, sunk capital and infrastructure. Investigating in which areas production may be increased and in which other areas new production processes may be started.
- Analysing the possibility of inserting links into the value-chains of production processes already in place at a local or regional level. Studying the potential of the local, national and international market for goods and services that could be produced.
- Selecting projects that are considered viable, considering whether the necessary investment for such projects can be sourced from the local business sector or whether State financing may be required.
- Setting up technical training at all levels involved in the project, including the training of future employees in collective administration.
- Organising the project implementation in stages, so that the results of each stage may be evaluated and any necessary corrections made.
- Gathering the experience of all parties involved in every project underway in order to improve them, analyse their respective social impacts and optimise the design of new projects.

## Considerations at the set-up stage

We know that many value chains start to be formed around certain industries that operate as a development 'engine', but for this to work you can't depend exclusively on market forces. If a region has the potential to develop a certain product competitively and on a sufficient scale so that it becomes a driving force for a value chain, then it's the State's responsibility to put in place the mechanisms so that that dormant potential is awakened. And this means providing the stakeholders with information, training, finance, fiscal and labour policies, market access and everything else that has to do with a true development policy.

A region's potential should therefore be analysed in order to both put in place new production processes and create new value chains associated with already existing production processes. Then there should be research into the needs and motivations of the stakeholders in order to be able to arrive at a project mounted on dynamic factors. Finally, those stakeholders should be invited to be part of the local development project from its genesis so that they make it their own. And it's these stakeholders themselves who must in turn demand the necessary policies from the State in order to avoid the pitfalls, and they must also supervise the process so that such public policies are appropriately and transparently applied.

And it's in this interaction, in the processes of preparation, set-up and follow-up of local development projects that there should be an effective working interface between the State and stakeholders.

## Fiscal policy in Mixed Economics

When different tax systems are analysed there's usually an initial question about what are the best strategies and tools for achieving sufficiency (when State expenditure is covered) and fairness (when the State is financed by those with a greater capacity to pay tax). However, before asking this question, it should be questioned whether it's ok that the State permanently and increasingly compensates the intrinsic unfairness of the economic system. Because as we said elsewhere, the concentration of wealth is a progressive process that works like an inclined plane on which the steeper the incline the more wealth is concentrated, and the more that wealth is concentrated the more the plane inclines in favour of those who have most in a vicious circle that ejects people and generates increasingly profound and long-lasting crises. In this context, it would seem that governments have only two choices: either they stop concerning themselves with what happens to people and let the system find a point of equilibrium in the background of a recession,

or they resort to tax policies to try to give State assistance to their people. But even assuming that the second option is better than the first, we should ask ourselves for how long will the State be able to collect sufficient tax in order to be able to compensate the system's growing social inequity and the growing debt resulting from speculation in the financial system. Because it's great that the State subsidises the unemployed, the poor and the marginalised, but if a system that increasingly marginalises people doesn't change, then the State will need an ever-increasing budget in order to mitigate the systemic inequity, and there'll be fewer resources to invest in other areas. Moreover, if wealth continues to be concentrated, then there'll be fewer and fewer companies and people with the capacity to pay tax, and we'll have to apply increasingly higher tax rates in order to collect what's needed, reaching confiscation levels. There are those who talk about the dilemma between direct redistribution and fiscal redistribution<sup>92</sup>, and of course, depending on the circumstances, sometimes direct redistribution through wage increases leads to price inflation, and so the imbalance remains, but it's also true that many taxes (in addition to being avoidable and evadable) are also passed on to consumer prices, but none of this hides a resigned acceptance of the intrinsic unfairness in the system which taxation tries to compensate. It could also happen that in certain sectors where it's possible for capital to supply manpower, greater salary costs lead business owners to hire fewer people and to instead use more equipment. That's why it'll be necessary to contemplate all the variables and try to reach a balance between mixed redistribution systems in which we succeed in increasing the share of a country's total income coming from wages without losing jobs in the process and in which tax policy encourages the generation of employment.

We believe then that, before anything else, we have to talk about a tax system which hasn't been designed only to raise enough money to cover public spending but rather to reverse the process of concentration inherent in the economic system. It's in this context that we consider that corporation tax should be substantially modified in order to oblige productive reinvestment of surpluses, avoiding them being channelled towards financial speculation or luxury consumerism. In reality, tax rates should be progressive, not only for private individuals but also for corporations, and this progressiveness should be directly related to the level of investment made and the jobs created by each taxpayer in order to both generate profit and spend it. We're saying that there must be a fixed basic rate and on top of that a variable rate which is relative to an indicator. This indicator will be a coefficient that will be related to the capital invested in order to obtain the profit and the number of jobs generated from that investment, and so the

amount of tax will diminish if a certain proportion of profit is reinvested to generate new employment. Today, corporation tax in most countries is a fixed rate for businesses, and for private individuals it's a variable rate with an upper limit but always related to the size of the surplus regardless of how that surplus is generated. But the situation of a company with a profit of one million that invested capital of ten million and generated 500 jobs shouldn't be equivalent to a different company with the same profit having invested two million and having generated only ten jobs, for example. In the former, the tax rate should be closer to the minimum, and in the latter it should be closer to the maximum. And in turn, there should be a reduction of the resultant tax payable if some of that profit is targeted to productive reinvestment to generate new employment, and there should be no reduction without reinvestment.

Of course, every country will have to quantify these variable rates, step by step, looking for a balance so that the decrease in tax paid by some taxpayers is compensated for by an increase from others so that the Treasury isn't left without money for current expenditure and investment. But gradually progress must be made towards a situation in which direct taxes constitute an increasingly greater share of national revenue, reducing the regressive effect of indirect taxes. Today the situation varies by region, but generally speaking sales tax – a regressive<sup>93</sup> form of taxation – is predominant, above all in countries with greater inequality.

Something else to consider is the decentralisation of tax-raising powers with a greater level of autonomy given to local government while still maintaining a balance to avoid falling into 'fiscal wars' for attracting investment and, more importantly, to avoid a segregation of rich areas and poor areas according to the tax-paying capacity of their residents. However, without losing sight of the principle of solidarity that must give cohesion to a country's regions and cities, we must make progress towards fiscal decentralisation. We must also take strides to simplify taxation, putting the greatest tax burden on the two most obvious ways of measuring the ability to pay tax, namely income and wealth. If taxation on these two manifestations of economic solvency were sufficiently increased in proportion to wealth and were administered effectively avoiding evasion and avoidance, then we could eliminate several regressive and distorting taxes, likewise we could noticeably reduce sales tax. The use of banking operations – that today serve to generate profits for the financial system – should become even more widespread and channelled through a State bank, reducing the use of cash to a minimum in order to limit the possibilities for tax evasion and money laundering.

Without losing sight of the fact that national policies should start to converge within the Universal Human Nation project, something else to consider is the development of international fiscal harmonisation policies to the extent that progress is made towards economic integration, first regional and then global. There must be a step-by-step approach, from basic compatibility agreements, passing through harmonisation, until reaching fiscal unity, but we must progress gradually while resolving the asymmetry between nations as best we can. Even though it's a process, all of this will be much less difficult than it appears when it's clear what people's common interests are and who their common enemies are: international financial power and corporate greed. It's common sense that no country can agree to commercial openings and import tariff reductions if this means the destruction of their local industries and the closure of employment sources. But in the first stage of compatibility – the commercial and economic integration among nations – attention can be paid to favouring the development of those productive sectors with comparative advantages without ignoring the impact on sectors that employ the greatest number of people. First progress is made in the complementation between those productive sectors where there's no conflict in order to then quickly move on to a gradual reconversion of those sectors that must compete with their counterparts in other countries. Always giving priority to the development of all parties. This is all common sense and therefore possible. What makes these processes of real integration between peoples difficult in terms of trade and economics are the interests of multinational corporations and speculating banks. Corporations always apply pressure on governments to get favourable investment conditions, and this provokes genuine fiscal wars between nations to see who can reduce their fiscal and environmental legislation the most in exchange for a few crumbs of investment. And this way of defining the location of industries obviously never considers the interests of the people and the compatibility of regional economies, but rather it only considers the interests of corporations and complicit governments. Something similar happens with financial sector pressure, not only in terms of manipulating capital flow which should be used to finance productive development but also through debt conditioning. Because indebted countries are under pressure to earn foreign currency, and, in order to achieve a positive trade balance, they give priority to the primary sector of the economy, postponing development. They unleash devaluation races with other countries of the region and condition their fiscal policies in order to achieve a budget surplus that allows them to buy foreign currency to pay debt. In other words, before designing a

trade integration strategy between nations, we need a strategy to dissolve the power of multinational corporations and the speculative banking sector. And this will also contribute to the fiscal harmonisation that every integration requires because common fiscal policies should be agreed in which corporations are taxed, bank speculation is restricted, indebtedness to usurers comes to an end and the tax haven mafia<sup>94</sup> is dismantled. On the basis of these basic agreements between countries, gradual fiscal compatibility could then be agreed, in tune with complementary economic development in which everyone wins. When we dealt with international issues in a previous section, we talked about restructuring the international financial system, and it's in this framework that regional policies should start to be harmonised.

And even though we've already proposed that fiscal policies should be based fundamentally on direct taxation, such as income and wealth taxes, limiting sales taxes as much as possible, we must also consider the most convenient strategies for taxing the extraction, production and commercialisation of commodities. When international prices ensure big profits for oil, mining and agricultural companies, governments normally appropriate a part of this profit through taxation, and this is very good as it's an important source of State income and favours the redistribution of wealth. Yet, to depend too much on such income could end up being counterproductive, because on the one hand, the permanent oscillation of international prices can noticeably affect fiscal balance, and, on the other hand, as we said before, the dependence on foreign currency generated by extractivist industries usually affects environmental policy, and then what is urgent in the short term takes priority over long-term planning in everything to do with strategic resources. In the particular case of hydrocarbons, as we said before, because of both the inevitable exhaustion of reserves and their toxic effects on the ecosystem, some of the profits should be set aside and targeted towards the development of alternative energy. That's why it isn't convenient to depend on taxes from the oil industry to finance current expenditure and much less to cover foreign debt payments, rather those taxes should be targeted to the development of a long-term energy policy, limiting extraction to ration the use of reserves and in turn develop alternative energy sources.

## **Monetary and Finance Policy**

As we've already seen in the section on steps to take at an international level in the chapter on restructuring the international financial system, nations

that want to progress in their transformation towards the Universal Human Nation will have to coexist for a while, at the beginning, with the international financial powers that today run the world until people finish dismantling its power in every country of the world. For this reason, progress in terms of the transformations in the local currency financial system and in terms of the finances managed in foreign currency will have to proceed in different lanes.

When we talk about foreign currency today, we're mainly referring to those currencies accepted in international transactions and which, on a day to day basis, belong to a handful of economic powers that possibly won't be the first countries to move towards these transformations given that they're the headquarters of financial power. But as a number of countries starts to transform, there'll be possibilities for developing financial alternatives between them that will allow them to limit the need for international finance outside of that group of nations. Therefore the financial needs that cannot be met in the local currency could be covered partly by the new international solidarity banks with only a fraction temporarily having to come from resorting to the current untrustworthy international financial system. Regarding this latter fraction, countries will have to be extremely careful in budgeting their finances, in accordance with their strengths in overseas trade, in order to avoid falling into the trap of growing foreign debt with the consequent economic asphyxia and loss of sovereignty that comes with it. As part of this strategy, there'll be a need to support the general development of goods and services producing companies that are capable of generating foreign currency, even if occasionally there'll be a need for government subsidies. It'll always be more convenient to subsidise productive jobs than bureaucratic employment when it comes to looking for palliatives for unemployment and doubly so if we're talking about sectors with the capacity to generate foreign currency, because the solution to external restrictions will strengthen many other branches of a country's productive apparatus, something which will abundantly compensate the investment in subsidies.

But apart from this external restriction which, we repeat, will be something to resolve with care as long as the current international financial system continues to dominate, in terms of financing the local economy with either local currency or with foreign currency from this aforementioned international solidarity bank, monetary policy should be clearly expansionary in the measure that development requires it.

In recent times, in the capitalist world there have been two opposing visions when it comes to monetary control: the neoliberal concept led by

Milton Friedman<sup>95</sup> of the Chicago School, and the Keynesian concept of State intervention. In the former, priority is given to monetary stability in a framework of absolute freedom for markets and trade, and, in the latter, greater importance is given to full employment. Even though we consider it feasible to simultaneously maintain a certain stability in a currency's value and achieve full employment, it should be clarified that, in front of this dilemma, it'll always be better to give priority to employment – even if it comes with inflation – than to maintain a strong currency with an army of unemployed people. Nevertheless, we must say that Keynes's theories<sup>96</sup>, dating back to the first half of the last century, should be focused in a very different way: from the current perspective of a globalised world. Indeed, when we define 'Mixed Economics' as something that goes beyond Capitalism, not only do we consider centrally-planned economies to have failed just as totally liberalised economies have, but moreover we think that there's a need to go beyond the intermediate concept of State intervention in the private economy and move to the concept of integration and coordination spaces in which the public and private sectors synergistically complement one another. This will be a space of real freedom for human beings and not the freedom of the fox in the henhouse, which is no more than the dictatorship of the powerful, and it will be a space that isn't controlled by the omnipresence of State bureaucracy. In terms of the State's role in currency circulation, the priority should always be to ensure sufficient money flow in order to achieve the financing of investment and production, employment and consumption, avoiding pockets of idle capacity, involuntary unemployment and dormant potential as a result of a lack of financial resources. But this active monetary policy shouldn't be turned into blindly-launched public spending of dubious impact but rather into investments targeted with quasi-surgical precision. Returning to what we said about an expansionary Keynesianesque monetary policy not being enough in these times of globalisation, what we partly mean is something that Keynes predicted, although in his day it had a different magnitude. We're saying that a monetary policy that generally strengthens internal consumption had an important dynamising effect on national employment in industrialised countries in the middle of the last century, because a large part of what people consumed was manufactured domestically with intensive labour. But these days, most of that increased consumption in many countries ends up impacting on the demand for imports and therefore generates employment in other countries. Either it impacts on the demand for products whose prices reflect a very low percentage of labour costs, or it impacts on the demand for goods and services whose supply is difficult to increase, and so prices go up.



But let's go back and see some basic concepts of Keynesian policies in order to better understand what we're saying. There are still arguments about the old formula from the quantity theory of money,  $PQ = MV$ , which states that the price of goods and services [P] multiplied by their quantity [Q] must be equal to money supply [M] multiplied by the velocity of circulation [V]. Several conclusions can be drawn from this formula, one of them being that if we increase money supply and the other variables remain constant – the economist's famous *ceteris paribus*, indispensable for theoretical analysis, but difficult to find in reality – then for the formula to hold true, prices must go up. From this conclusion arises the explanation that if the quantity of money grows over and above the growth of goods and services, then inflation is created. And to a certain extent this is true (*ceteris paribus*), but as variables don't exist in isolation and the movement of one can modify the others, there are those who maintain (Keynes among them) that if the money supply increases, what then increases is the demand for goods, consumption increases and in front of this increased demand, supply can also increase, in other words more objects are manufactured and more services are offered and therefore, as M goes up, so does Q and the formula remains in balance. Likewise, as money circulates and passes through several hands (the definition of velocity [V], considered to be the most stable term in the equation), a multiplier effect is produced in the growth of consumption and in the growth of production to satisfy it. Put simply, when the State pours money into the economy through public works, government subsidies or other expansionary policies, then this money has a primary target (the new employees in those public works, suppliers, beneficiaries of subsidies, etc.) and this primary target spends money on goods and services (food, clothes, home appliances, etc.), which is why there's now a secondary target which receives this money and which in turn spends it on other goods and services generating a chain of supply and demand for goods, which is called the multiplier effect. What we're saying is nothing more than what governments do in an attempt to activate the economy by feeding the internal market through consumption. Now, Keynes tries to establish a value for this multiplying factor because not all the money that changes hands is targeted to consumption, rather there's what's known as the 'propensity to consume' which is nothing more than the percentage of total income that people spend and that, when added to their savings, adds up to total income, hence we can also talk about a 'propensity to save' as the inverse of propensity to consume. This propensity to consume varies greatly depending on the individual, but in general we know that people who have lower incomes tend to consume most of it, while the more that incomes increase, the greater the

percentage set aside for savings. Nevertheless, it must be considered that this percentage that goes into savings can also end up indirectly in consumption, depending on how much is channelled to productive investments and so the virtuous circle of growth would be complete, and this is precisely one of the problems because, in practice, investment isn't always proportional to savings as some classical economists believed, but we'll come back to that later.

Of course, these expansionary policies, in which the State intervenes by injecting money into the economy in order to incentivise consumption and thereby drive growth, have their detractors, above all among the monetarists of neoliberalism because, apart from generally opposing any State intervention in the economy, they affirm that these expansionary policies are inflationary. And in the world of politics this argument sometimes ends up in positions that are more extreme than the real differences in criteria that economists such as Keynes and Friedman could have had because the fanatics of monetarism are capable of letting unemployment grow as long as there's no inflation, and likewise the fanatics of incentivising consumption are capable of affirming that although excessive money is issued, this isn't the cause of inflation. Keynes himself recognised that there would always be an impact on prices by increasing demand through an expansion of public spending and that there would always be 'bottlenecks' in the productive apparatus that wouldn't respond to the growth of demand with a greater supply of goods but rather with increased prices. But the problem for us isn't that there's a bit of inflation, if in exchange the result is an increase in employment and real income for the population, instead it's the consideration that will have to be given to the characteristics that State spending must have in order to improve levels of employment without generating significant inflation, because it's known that when inflation goes beyond a certain point it becomes counterproductive. And this is what we mean when we say that a recipe that worked well in economies of the middle part of the last century can't be applied to today's context. Let's see the behaviour of some of the variables.

We've already mentioned how the capitalist system has a tendency for income concentration, and we've already mentioned Piketty's theoretical and statistical contributions regarding the fact that the accumulation of Capital is increasing more quickly than Product. This is a vicious circle in which the more you earn the more you accumulate, and those who accumulate more have more possibilities to increase their profits and to impose conditions on the markets, and even on politics so that they can improve their profitability even further. However, besides the social problems that accompany the

unfair distribution of income, this tendency also carries with it difficulties for expansionary monetary policies. Because precisely as Keynes asserted, if the greater the income, the greater the propensity to save, then the multiplier effect of public spending becomes rapidly sterile, because even though the State's money could initially go into the pockets of the workforce (with less propensity to save and greater propensity to consume), when they consume goods and services, the price they pay for them has a very low wage-cost component and a high component of business profit (which instead of being recycled in spending, goes towards savings). Today, the price paid for the majority of goods has a relatively low wage-cost component and a high portion of advertising costs, trademarks and patents, and high profit margins for the supply chain; all sectors with a high propensity to save. The multiplier effect is definitely much lower than in the last century. But there's one other factor, and it's that this greater propensity to save in the economy – the fruit of an increase in income right in the sector of those with the greatest income – isn't targeted on the whole to productive investment, but rather it feeds financial speculation, speculation bubbles and asset transfers, big business activities and property transfers that don't contribute to economic growth and much less to employment. So, when a government targets resources at the population in an attempt to reactivate the economy, an important part of such resources rapidly ends up in the coffers of those who have the most, and so an important percentage isn't invested in production but rather goes into financial speculation.

Another factor also related to global markets is the high component of imported products and raw materials among the goods consumed. This means that the resources that the State throws at the population to drive consumption could be not only limited by external restrictions if equivalent amounts of foreign currency aren't generated through exports, but moreover a proportion of those new jobs created through such policies won't be based locally but rather overseas. This wouldn't be a problem if all governments were to have the same policies because then the effects would be evened out, but it's clear that this isn't always the case, and if it were it would be necessary to evaluate the impact of every policy very well to coordinate them internationally.

Another difficulty with indiscriminate expansionary policies is that sometimes they don't consider the levels of idle capacity per sector of the productive apparatus. Because when an economy's in recession and most of its industry is working below capacity, it's known that an active policy to incentivise consumption by government tends to rapidly reactivate production to cater for greater demand. This happens in the first place because

the deflationary effects of every recession have a certain degree of inertia before an economy's incipient reactivation, something which means that, in the face of greater demand, producers will tend to increase production before raising prices, earning more from a greater volume of sales than from higher prices, similarly the workforce gives priority to having a job more than to asking for pay rises. Secondly, because there's idle capacity and unused manpower, the productive reaction can be very rapid in the face of greater demand. But the reactions of producers, when their factories are working to full capacity, are very different because in order to be able to respond to incrementally increasing demand they would have to make investments in new buildings, buy machinery and train new staff, and in front of this scenario not all react the same way, and some prefer, instead of taking a risk, to optimise their profits by putting prices up. In other words, sometimes indiscriminate expansionary policies can be useful for recovering jobs lost in a recession, but they aren't always useful when it comes to generating new jobs in an economy with structural unemployment or underemployment.

Macroeconomic policies that limit themselves to controlling interest rates and the amount of money in circulation are no longer sufficient. Strides have to be taken towards new instruments that suit the integrating space between macroeconomics and microeconomics, something which some people are calling mesoeconomics. Some of this we saw somewhat in the example of local development above in which the State should, among other things, support productive activities with financing on both sides – supply and demand – in order to achieve a growing integrated development circuit. A good example of this is housing projects; there's a need, an unsatisfied demand, namely housing for those able to access credit; and there are building companies and materials suppliers who can also access credit. Monetary expansion by the State Bank that gives loans without real interest will be offset by the money repaid through loan repayments. More jobs will be created and the production of durable goods will increase with everything in an integrated circuit that shouldn't generate higher inflation as the increase in  $M$  (money supply) is compensated for by an equivalent increase in  $Q$  (quantity). This mechanism that works for the construction of houses could also work for numerous goods and services in which the State could involve itself in order to simultaneously finance demand and investment for a growth in supply. But for this it'll be necessary to analyse the economy's input-output matrix very well, study the unmet demands and the potential production, put them together and then supply the financing. And all of this at a national, provincial and local level. We aren't talking about

subsidies (that may be necessary in some cases), we're talking about financing – money that is repaid and recycled – precisely because it must be managed with surgical precision, ensuring that the money is used for sustainable projects, that there's an impact on production and that jobs are created. We already have interesting examples around the world, through microfinance experiences and the Grameen Bank<sup>97</sup>, of how financing benefits individuals and the economy as a whole when specifically targeted at productive projects, achieving the maximum productive yield from loans. Moreover, we're talking about a kind of Keynesianesque precision, not an indiscriminate monetary expansion. And it's precisely through a decentralised policy that it'll be possible to achieve the follow-up of every new productive project in order to ensure that an injection of finance generates a balance between supply and demand everywhere.

Going back to the question of whether a more expansionary monetary policy is or isn't inflationary, we can add the following. When talking about investment in public works in order to increase the population's income and thus consumption in an attempt to thereby increase production, there could be different sources of finance available to a government in order to carry out that public investment, and sometimes this may have repercussions in terms of an inflationary impact to a greater or lesser degree. It could be that a government has accumulated reserves for countercyclical policies and in some moment uses them; it could be that the financing comes from current revenue from tax collection; or financing could be sourced with debt; or it could be that finance comes from issuing money. Nevertheless any possible inflationary impact will not always depend on the source of funding. There's a belief in many people, and also in some economists, that inflation is caused by a weak currency, one without reserves, nevertheless it should be remembered that one of the first inflationary processes in history came about when the means of payment was metallic, i.e. gold and silver. This was in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when tonnes of gold and silver started to arrive from America<sup>98</sup>, the economy monetised too much, the demand for goods increased, and the economy of the time couldn't grow at the same pace as the volume of money, so what went up were prices. The same happens when a country has foreign exchange reserves (hard currency) and uses them to inject resources into the economy and this goes into the consumption of goods and services whose supply don't increase. In this case prices also go up, even though the weak currency is backed up by an allegedly hard currency. In other words, prices go up when demand outstrips supply, therefore this is the only thing that we should be concerned with when expansionary policies are applied, independently of whatever the monetary resources

used may be. Of course, if the monetary resource that floods the economy is too much because of a disproportionate issuing of money, then there's no productive response capable of matching demand and inflation is the result which is proportional to the excess of monetary growth over and above the growth of goods and services. But even in less extreme cases, we can end up with problems of a deficient response to investment, when faced with an increase in demand, not this time because of technical or labour limits, or external restrictions but rather from speculative bottle necks. Specifically, when there are monopolies or cartels that can impose their prices, maximising their profits from the population segment that can pay such prices and abandoning the rest, they take advantage of the situation to speculate on greater demand by increasing their profit margins. Such monopolies can be within the productive sectors and in this case production doesn't increase when demand increases, but rather prices go up because there's no competition, or it can also be within the supply chain that often has control of the productive sectors, and in this case the margins for these intermediaries increase to the detriment of the producers. Therefore, another aspect of this 'precision Keynesianism' should be to contemplate the utilisation of public finance for projects that contribute to dismantling monopolies and cartels. In this context, and in the framework of the development financing that we've been talking about, the emergence of production or supply chain companies that create competition in order to dismantle dominant positions should be supported.

In terms of the banking and finance system in general, we must say that in principle a State counts on the possibility to plan development financing of the type we've been talking about through their own State Banks at all levels; banks which are normally sustained by their own collection of deposits and which could be further sustained by fiscal surpluses generated through taxation policies and, eventually, also resorting to issuing money. And surely this should be a first step towards progress in our proposals. But we know that for most countries capital flow that circulates through private banks is much greater and that much of it has to do with today's speculation and usury. Private banks are largely responsible for channelling savings towards speculation instead of productive investment. And all of this should be dismantled step by step, until reaching the point where most individuals' and companies' savings are channelled through an interest-free State Bank. With the growing use of banking operations, private banks are increasing their profits as the proportion of sight deposits (current account deposits), on which the bank pays no, or very low, interest depending on the case, gets bigger and bigger, thus increasing the bank's lending capacity with the con-

sequent increase in profitability. The banking system must be regulated so that these sight deposits progressively end up in the State Bank that grants interest-free loans. As for fixed-term deposits, many times the rate paid by private banks is insignificant, or barely maintains the deposit's purchasing power, which is why many people will prefer that, all things being equal, their savings are channelled into the State Bank that will be the only one to guarantee deposits. Because the State doesn't have any reason to guarantee deposits made in speculating private banks, and therefore those deposits will be entirely at the depositor's risk, and furthermore there will be regulations to minimise the speculation margin of these private banks. Of course, a few private banks will be able to work with the interest-free State Bank as long as they abide by the same criteria and principles of development financing, but their profit cannot come from usury, instead it should come from the generation of other kinds of products, the charging of administration costs and participation in risky investments. Little by little, step by step, the banking system will have to align itself to the interests of Mixed Economics and stop sucking the blood out of the real economy.

And as we said before, to the extent that several countries start moving towards the project of the Universal Human Nation, and to the extent that an International Solidarity Bank can be established between those countries with their own reserves in a common currency, then jointly-planned productive projects can be financed from there, with the interest placed in complementation of comparative advantages and not in competition. And for this international funding, the same criteria of precision monetary expansion, based on the virtuous circle of growing equilibrium between supply and demand, should continue to be applied.

Regarding capital markets, there must be step-by-step progress in limiting investments in stocks and shares to a genuine interest in productive investment, cleansing them of all vestiges of speculation. Whoever buys shares in a company should do so as a medium to long-term investment, and not like betting in a casino. To this end operations will have to be regulated, always be nominative and for a minimum investment term. Derivatives, the source of speculative manipulation, must be limited and the search for higher income in the economy channelled through wages and productive profitability, whilst speculation and usury must disappear and the vocation for gambling be channelled to games of chance. And it would be utmost hypocrisy to argue that State intervention in regulating and restricting speculation in any field of the economy implies an attack on individual freedoms because in one way we could see it as a deepening of the freedom for everyone to exercise their right to work.

## **The false paradox: State vs. Freedom**

It's all too common for people with an individualistic and selfish sensibility to want collective matters to always turn out to suit their particular desires and interests. When social organisation, whose job is to attend to everyone's needs, puts obstacles in their way, the selfish claim that individual freedoms are being infringed. There are those who, if it weren't for the fact that their irrationality would be so blatantly obvious, are capable of demanding that traffic lights should always be on green when they approach, or that they should be attended to first when they go into a shop where others are waiting. To mistake social order for a restriction of individual freedom is something very common in selfish people.

When historical liberalism emerged in opposition to the State's absolute power there was no doubt that this meant progress for humanity in the fight for people's rights. But then there were those who tried to appropriate the banner of freedom to justify the establishment of oppressive powers in its name. To defend the right of international financial power to constitute itself as a Para-state in the name of economic freedom is as ridiculous as trying to portray a State's bureaucratic elite as representatives of the proletariat.

Surely Adam Smith trusted that if the State could just take care of guaranteeing private property and security for citizens, then everything else would in the economy work harmoniously. Later on the historical experience would demonstrate that it wasn't that simple after all, but this doesn't invalidate the strides taken in their field by the classical economists of those times. But the anachronistic rallying cry of old economic liberalism, recently taken up by neoliberals, no longer responds to libertarian idealism but rather to the need to endow the assault against any State obstacle that opposes the immeasurable accumulation of predatory capitalism with a supposed ideological and scientific foundation.

Why must the State's role be just to protect private property and internal and external security for citizens? If what they're really worried about is freedom, wouldn't they be better off asking for absolute freedom and the absence of any form of State or social organisation so that then any individual may do whatever they can or want to do? The reason they don't ask for this is that they possibly know that in this case the successful little men of capitalist business would be stripped of power and even enslaved by groups of thugs. What we're trying to say is that wanting the State to reach a point that's convenient for them is something demanded in the name of selfishness and not in the name of freedom.



If we're talking about freedom, then people are free to organise themselves to mutually guarantee all the rights of all the people. There are some from the field of anarchism<sup>99</sup> who've objected to any kind of limitation on individual freedoms, even though it's understandable in a historical context in which the known State options were totally oppressive, and perhaps from an idealistic vision of spontaneous social self-regulation. From this point of view, even the old adage 'my freedom ends where your freedom starts' could be seen as an unacceptable limitation on individual freedom. Nevertheless, even in the most extreme cases of purism regarding the concept of freedom, whether liberalism or anarchism, it's possible to argue in favour of a certain level of social organisation from the principle of freedom. Because a total absence of social organisation that restricts the freedom of any individual to act should allow for someone to beat their neighbour with a club if they feel like it. But then this same freedom should allow for the attacked neighbour to defend themselves, prevent the attack with security guards, or, after receiving the attack, disarm the attacker and imprison them in a dungeon for life. Because total freedom, by definition, must allow anyone to do what they want. That's why it's as valid for me to club my neighbour, as it is for my neighbour to trap me and lock me up, or simply kill me. And also from the exercising of this total freedom comes the possibility that some could organise themselves to defend themselves from the unhinged people walking around clubbing others and exercise their freedom to prevent or contain them. All of this is exercising freedom.

In the field of economics, it's assumed that transactions between people are free: employer and employee, manufacturer and retailer, retailer and consumer, lender and borrower. Neoliberalism demands absolute freedom in these operations and any regulation is seen as an attack on freedom. Nevertheless, they forget that in what they demand, there's also State intervention that provides a legal framework to guarantee private transactions and property. If freedom were as absolute as they demand, then there shouldn't be any legal framework and the employee could keep the capitalist's machinery without the latter having anyone to appeal to, and the borrower could decide to not repay the loan without justice demanding it. Why should freedom's reach be to the level convenient for some and not for others? The advance of unionisation in defending workers' rights has been nothing more than their freedom to organise themselves, and obviously neoliberals deny the exercising of those freedoms with the sophistry of labour flexibility, saying that the freedom for an employer to enter into a contract with an employee makes the economy more efficient. They talk about economic freedom from the point of view of the principle of freedom or from

the principle of efficiency according to what's best for them. And in both cases their arguments don't hold water, because if it's freedom we're talking about, then individuals have the freedom to organise themselves into a State and endow it with the tools considered best for the majority; and if it's efficiency we're talking about, then we should study very well what economic policies are efficient for the benefit of the majority and not for the few.

# Cultural Paradigms

Previously in the chapter on Cultural Rebellion in the section on international steps, we talked about cultural matters, and with a critical eye we stressed that the manipulation exercised by the mass media is one of the most important obstacles when it comes to countries changing the values of individualism and consumerism for those of reciprocity and solidarity. Of course, in order to deactivate media manipulation, be it in the local or international media, a lot will have to be done at a national level with work needed to unmask the vested interests behind the opinion-formers, the biased news and the invisibilisation of certain issues.

But now we'll talk about the value system that should be promoted in a society in order for it to progress towards the Universal Human Nation. Because even though this profound aspiration is already latent in the sensibility of many people, and in many others it's already showing through concrete actions, it's also true that in many others individualism, selfishness, discrimination, violence, indifference, materialism and superficiality still dominate.

## Value systems

We can talk about what people should do in order to achieve the transformations for Real Democracy, we can also explain what we think must be done in order to transform the economy, and we can propose to open the doors to all the world's immigrants, but it might be that a segment of the population doesn't believe that it's possible to take charge of their own destiny, and so they'll settle for being managed by professional politicians. It could also be that an important percentage of the population is indifferent to the suffering of their brothers and sisters caused by an unfair economy. It might be that many are unmoved by the plight of immigrants or that they discriminate against other races and creeds, or they may believe in violence

as a methodology for resolving differences. In fact, all of this happens, and it's one of the most important reasons why transformations take time to happen. As we've said before, where people are impassive to these transformations efforts will have to be made to generate consciousness, to persuade, to explain and to sensitise.

But when it comes to creating consciousness, we have to see what values we want to create consciousness of, because there are different peoples and different cultures. Even within what we know as Universal Human Rights doubt has been cast on their universality from the theory of cultures as written about by Silo in 1993<sup>100</sup>. Nevertheless, there are first generation basic rights which should be fought for in any country and raising awareness of these – and above all fighting against indifference in the face of violations – implies a value system that we clearly have to work for. Starting from the golden rule of '*treating others the way you want to be treated*', which in different forms can be found in all religions and cultures, we find a common language for communicating the inspirational idea of a transforming project that starts by concerning itself with local issues but that can be projected into the world.

For many, the diagnosis of a world in which violence and injustice are growing has its roots in the loss of moral values, and there's something to be said for this. Indeed the problem is that somehow these values have been lost, possibly because they no longer measure up to human beings, or perhaps because they were values from an external morality, and these days a greater internal coherence is required, an ethic internalised by one's own conviction and not something imposed from outside. In a monograph we wrote a few years ago, we dealt with the problem of morality's external nature and the decline of this psycho-social mechanism as an orientator of behaviour<sup>101</sup>. We also underlined the correct position, namely the purpose to treat others the way we want to be treated, because this implies a double-positive attitude towards others and towards oneself simultaneously in a phenomenological conception of behaviour and not one based on an 'obligation' dictated from outside. This is no longer the external morality with its roots in resentment which was demolished by Nietzsche<sup>102</sup> in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but neither is it a Darwinian anti-morality in which only the strongest must survive. This isn't the struggle between the weak and the strong, it's about the struggle of the human species against its own limitations so that it can make an evolutionary leap, and this means a higher level in human relationships. The dividing line is between Humanism and Anti-humanism, and Humanism means an attitude to life based on the Golden Rule and this

means opposing all kinds of violence: physical, economic, racial, religious, sexual, psychological and moral<sup>103</sup>.

However, as we said at the start, there are people who try to act in accordance with this principle out of their own sensibility even when they don't explicitly propose it as an objective. But for others, it doesn't necessarily mean that they lack this sensibility rather that, for the most part, it's something dormant which needs awakening. It's just that this can't be done merely by giving a recommendation. No one can have their head in two opposing places simultaneously. No one can see the sun if their head's in a dark cave. You have to point out how dark the cave is so that they can start to take their head out of it, even if just for an instant. The system's contradictions must be permanently pointed out, but so too should the contradictions of societies and the individuals who form part of them. Anti-humanist behaviour and that subservient to anti-humanism must be described, typified and exposed to the point of ridicule: discrimination, violence, indifference, selfishness, individualism, consumerism, authoritarianism and other backward behaviours should form part of a catalogue of human stupidity. Without attacking individuals, rather typified behaviour, but of course if the cap fits...

The value of coherence and the Golden Rule, and the contrast with undesirable behaviour is something that should be permanently highlighted but not as moralist preaching in a void but rather in the dynamic of actions themselves. If, for example, a campaign were to be carried out for the inclusion of direct democracy mechanisms in local government, something for which signatures were being collected on a petition in order to subsequently apply pressure through demonstrations, in the framework of this campaign not only should relevant explanations about what we want to achieve be circulated, but there should also be a caricaturising of the authoritarian attitude of government officials who may oppose such an initiative and the indifferent and passive attitude of servile citizens. Even though no one is being specifically identified, there will be many who recognise something of those attitudes in themselves. They may not internally like to see themselves this way, and so try to surpass their own tendency. As a result, there'll be those who, after initial doubts, will contribute with their signature at the very least or with their support in a demonstration, something which will add strength to the activity's objective. But furthermore the other objective of cultural change will have been achieved by succeeding in getting at least some people to stop being distracted and change an aspect of their behaviour. This will be very good for them as well.

## **International solidarity**

Sensitising a society to the needs of other human beings can't be limited to the people of one's own country, instead this has to be extended to our brothers and sisters from other countries. Thus, all vestiges of xenophobia and discrimination should be banished. Any resistance to immigration with the use of pragmatic and economic arguments should shame the whole of society. And any refusal to receive refugees fleeing from wars and hunger should be considered a crime. The mass media and the film industry, which have contributed so much to distorting the image of certain peoples by promoting a certain kind of political propaganda and justifications for wars and invasions, should be used in the future to sensitize viewers about the humanity of every inhabitant on the planet. The victims in any country are human beings with families, with loved ones, with hopes, with a future, and they can't be vilified by presenting them as a number, as a statistic.

There are some who question the fact that the leading character in some films is shown smoking, because they say that this promotes tobacco usage. It's not bad to be concerned about this but they should be more concerned about transmitting images charged with violence, above all when it's done in a context in which the value of human life is minimised, lulling the viewer into empathy with the 'correct characters' and into indifference or repulsion towards their irrelevant victims (those coming from enemy nations or ethnic groups). All of this contributes to the instilling of indifference when in real life human beings from certain countries are dying in their thousands.

Previously in the chapter on international steps we talked about the lies to be found in economic arguments which claim that immigrants take jobs away from the local population. In reality, behind this pretext lies discrimination: an assumption that foreigners shouldn't have the same rights as the local population in terms of work, education and healthcare. Of course this resistance to foreigners by those 'nationalists' doesn't present itself when foreigners come from the First World, just when immigrants come from poorer countries. There is a not insignificant conflict in terms of a clash of cultures that occurs as a result of differences in customs, languages and religions, but more than that there's a problem of discrimination against the poor.

Those who decide to emigrate (not all, as in the case of refugees) do so fundamentally searching for an opportunity to work and mostly they're very poor people and without much education. When they arrive in a foreign country in large numbers they have to live in marginalised places because they don't have the economic possibilities for anything better and so they usually form communities and sometimes real ghettos. Those who

discriminate usually disparage the lifestyle in marginalised neighbourhoods even when the people living there are from the same country, not just for reasons of class, but also because it's common for there to be a clash with certain habits related to the way of speaking, food, hygiene, tastes and behaviour in general. Well, if to this propensity to discriminate against the lifestyle of the poor we were to add the characteristic of being a 'foreigner', with different customs, with their own codes of community relationships, and with a very defined identity, then discrimination turns into stigmatisation. It's necessary to work on a programme of sensitisation that allows the way the discriminator sees those they discriminate against to be humanised until they understand that the correct response to their conflict isn't rejection but rather communication, integration in social relationships, education and improvement of the quality of life through action by the State.

## **The Culture of Nonviolence**

We have already spoken about the ethical values on which we should create consciousness in society in order to deactivate all the types of violence that exist. We spoke about the application of the 'Golden Rule' as a basic attitude that allows us to be sensitive to what is human in others as an attitude for life and, from there, to establish relationships. For this creation of consciousness we would have to use all the means of communication at our disposal as progress is made in organised groups, through to social movements and reaching the point of State policies.

As for physical violence in particular, due to the irreparable nature of the damage done, a special effort will have to be made to reach the point where human life is placed as the highest value both in terms of its social standing and in legislation. The naturalisation of physical violence that has taken root in society must be surpassed. Both in terms of crime, and in terms of domestic violence and violence between rival groups, some societies have become accustomed to it, thus indifference, underestimation and even the value of certain violent conduct grows. Frequently, there are attempts to relativize certain acts of physical violence with possible motivations. In law a very clear sign must be given that the most important thing for a society is human life, and anyone who attacks the physical integrity of another person is committing the most aberrant of crimes. But simultaneously, through education and social inclusion, the codes of conduct that lead to violence, and the situation of marginalisation that feeds them, must be transformed. In the field of education there's a lot being done and much more that could be done to put more emphasis on a person's development than mere information training<sup>104</sup>. Vio-

lence has not only become naturalised in the heart of society but more than this it's growing at a dizzying rate in educational institutions themselves and a rapid response is needed to look for the roots of the phenomenon<sup>105</sup>. Because we agree that society must protect itself from those who commit monstrosities, but if the monster factory is not deactivated then violence will overrun any prevention measure and any punitive measure will be useless.

## Conclusions

We've considered a change in cultural paradigms concerning everything that has to do with the way people treat one another, behaviour and the disposition to work for, or to contribute to, the steps towards the Universal Human Nation. And surely many will find a meaning in their lives by working for these transformations. But many others, even though their contributions go in the same direction, will have the most wide-ranging aspirations to dedicate their lives to. And so that these people are able to choose with the greatest freedom, the system's hypnotic mirages will have to be cleared from their path.

We've talked about the manipulation by the mass media when it comes to instilling consumerism as the supreme value. Models of life, of success, of the victorious, of the prestigious and of the rich and famous have been instilled but so too have alternative, extravagant, special and every other kind of stereotype within which it's assumed that one must fit. And for those who don't fit in, the escape valve of alcohol, drugs, depression and suicide will always be available. Of course there are on the one hand more and more people who don't believe in those models based on competition and differentiation as a form of self-realisation, but on the other hand it's true that the pathways towards more interesting objectives than those proposed by the system aren't very visible or expeditious.

The path has to be cleared and weeded, the mirages have to be pointed out in order to stop their hypnotic power, and the doors to genuine inspiration, heartfelt vocation and the plain and simple, healthy enjoyment of life with loved ones have to be opened. There's isn't much to invent in terms of what people could do in the search for their own happiness, instead it's about removing from the path the false doors produced by the system. As human beings, we have an infinite field ahead of us in which to develop, whether it be in the sciences, technology, art, sport or culture in general. We're capable of delving within ourselves in order to make contact with our profound spirituality and we have our entire future ahead of us. No one has to tell us where to go, we only have to remove the obstacles from the path.



# 120 Steps



Following on from the above analysis of the most important issues, we'll now try to synthesise everything into some of the steps that we consider should be taken in order to advance towards the Universal Human Nation. On no account is this an exhaustive list, rather it's a starting point to which more proposals may be added by those who share this objective. In any case, we're talking about very general steps, each of which will need other smaller, prior steps in order to be completed because all of this is a process. What's important is to have a few images of the basic objectives and above all to remember that, in order to climb to the summit of the Universal Human Nation, the first steps – the easier to tackle objectives – can surely be undertaken in isolation in many places. But let's be clear: in order to move onto the more complex steps, it will be necessary to join forces with others in order to gain strength and this joining of forces will be more viable if we tackle it from the start and connect with those who are going down the same path.

Firstly, we'll look at certain generic steps that individuals, organisations and governments should bear in mind as a working mechanism. And then we'll look at the specific steps that should be taken in each area; those that should be supported by individuals, promoted and demanded by organisations and implemented by governments.

# Generic Steps

## Individuals

1. Endorse the project of the Universal Human Nation, defining oneself as a 'citizen' thereof and being ready to receive information about activities that are happening around this common project.
2. Support grassroots consultations about specific local or regional conflicts to do with any of the objectives with one's signature, ideas, or vote.
3. Support some of the activities organised by social movements that work for any of the objectives.
4. Participate as a volunteer in one of the movements or social organisations.
5. Vote for candidates in elections who are committed to the project, if there are any, and never vote for those who openly propose policies to the contrary.
6. Collaborate by spreading the ideals and objectives of the Universal Human Nation in one's immediate environment.
7. Propose to oneself in daily life to make progress in behaviour founded on coherence and solidarity – treating others the way one wants to be treated – either through simple actions of one's own initiative, or training oneself in humanist values together with others.

## Organisations and social movements

1. Endorse the project of the Universal Human Nation as an organisation.
2. Practice Real Democracy in their internal affairs.
3. Work for any of the objectives, call for volunteers, work on the issues, publicise activities, shine a light on conflict.
4. Mobilise to demand that the authorities take the necessary measures to resolve the aspects of conflicts that are within their remit.

5. When there's a lack of response, publicly denounce those in power and demand that they tackle the issue through a referendum and implement instruments of Real Democracy.
6. Coordinate with other organisations that work on the same issue and organise referendums about the resolution of specific issues, even if they may not be legally recognised, and request the resignation of government officials.
7. Join forces with other organisations at a local and national level that endorse the objective of the Universal Human Nation even if they work on other issues.
8. Organise joint forums among coordinated organisations and publicise them on a bigger scale. Join forces with endorsing organisations in other countries.
9. Ratchet up the pressure on governments in all the issues on an organisation's agenda and continuously request binding instruments of Real Democracy.
10. Political intervention. Firstly, try to get sympathetic political parties to adopt the proposals as their own and, when they say yes, publicise this commitment and ask for support in elections. And when they say no, strengthen Real Democracy within the organisations' coordination body and put together a new political force to compete in elections.
11. Invite more organisations and social movements to: endorse the project of the Universal Human Nation, join in with the political strategy and work strongly to displace professional politicians from power.
12. Make progress in joining forces with endorsing organisations at an international level in order to interchange experiences and jointly organise actions related to global objectives.

## Governments

1. Endorse the Universal Human Nation Project as a government.
2. Evaluate in which objectives progress can be made in the short, medium and long-term and act on this basis at the corresponding level.
3. Independently of the time that other objectives could take, start in the short-term with an opening to social participation through Real Democracy mechanisms.
4. Contribute from their function to the publicising and organisation of activities which are related to the objectives within society throughout its geographical area of influence.

5. Relate to and coordinate with social movements, organisations and governments that are working for the same objectives within its geographical area of influence, in other parts of the country and at an international level.

# Specific Steps

## Disarmament

1. Work to raise awareness in those who live in militarised countries about the need to not vote for those governments that aren't committed to disarmament as a foreign policy priority.
2. Coordination with organisations that work on the issue of peace and disarmament in order to organise forums, events and demonstrations demanding of governments, and in particular the strongest military powers, the following:
3. The total dismantling of nuclear arsenals and all weapons of mass destruction.
4. Awareness campaigns among the populations of countries in conflict to strengthen the value of peace and life in front of the horror of war, and call for referendums to support peace processes.
5. Peace agreements with the explicit renunciation of the use of weapons to resolve conflicts, while conditions are negotiated with the support of the international community.
6. A ban on the sale of weapons to countries that refuse peace agreements with other nations or that are in civil war.
7. Progressive reduction of conventional weapons, in accordance with the progress made in peace agreements.
8. Progressive reconversion of the military industry into an industry for manufacturing machinery and equipment for the development of countries with fewer resources.
9. A ban on the sale of weapons over and above the quotas agreed for a country's national defence and internal security.
10. Incorporate the methods of Education for Peace and Nonviolence into education systems.
11. A ban on the manufacture and sale of weapons for civilian use.

## **Refounding the United Nations**

1. Organise local and national forums to debate what the true role of the United Nations should be and how the UN's current policies affect every country.
2. Coordinate worldwide public campaigns to denounce the existing hypocrisy within the UN and in particular the manipulation of the UN by economic and military powers.
3. Denounce in every country but particularly within the territories of economic and military powers and members of the Security Council, the UN's complicity with the stagnation in the fight for world peace and hold the governments of those powers responsible.
4. Pressure campaigns on all governments so that they bring concrete proposals to the United Nations for the following steps:
5. The democratic election of a Security Council without veto-wielding permanent members through a ballot of all nations.
6. The impossibility for a member of the Security Council to be a country that attacks other nations, one that sells weapons to aggressor countries, or one that facilitates or doesn't control weapons-trafficking.
7. Abandon the policy of simple, innocuous recommendations, and establish compliance with resolutions linked to the upholding of peace, the defence of human life and the planet's sustainability, as a prerequisite to membership.
8. Make the organisational capacity of the UN available to facilitate any initiative that arises from the population which is convergent with progress towards a Universal Human Nation.
9. If there were to be no progress in these proposals within the UN, a bloc of 'Countries for the Universal Human Nation' would be established to denounce the manipulation of economic and military powers, and it would refuse to recognise their moral authority to propose initiatives. This bloc would agree joint actions to be set in motion in the direction of the aforementioned aims.

## **Campaign for Global Development**

1. National campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of solidarity with all the marginalised people of the world, starting with those in one's own countries but also committing support to other countries with more critical situations.



2. Campaigns searching for volunteers to donate funds, or materials, or their own labour to contribute to the development of other territories.
3. Coordination with already existing, trustworthy organisations and other new organisations to be set up with volunteers in order to channel efforts and material help.
4. Strengthen and expand every activity dealing with healthcare and education, together with employment-skills training as part of the development agreements between companies and governments.
5. Give ample publicity to aid projects in order to obtain greater civil and institutional backing for them.
6. Demand governments set aside a percentage of their budgets for these campaigns along with the logistical support and international coverage from their diplomatic missions.
7. Push ahead with a strong increase in the tax on luxury goods so that it may contribute to this campaign, not just as a source of financing but above all as a clear sign of the priorities that a society must have.
8. Progressively advance in the demand for government support, until international agreements can be put in place in which every country commits itself to setting aside a percentage of its GDP on a scale from 0.3% up to 3% depending on their level of development.
9. In order to comply with such gradual commitments, establish a progressive reassignment of the budget used today for military purposes so that it may be used for global development.

## **Restructuring the International Financial System**

1. Raise awareness of the fact that the worst scourge on the economy and the worst enemy of democracy is international financial power: a cancer whose offshoots can be found in every one of the world's private banks and that today controls most of the planet's political power. It must be demanded of governments that they fight against its domination before it destroys the productive economy, exhausting States and impoverishing populations. If we had to define one enemy, this would be it.
2. Another step for social movements in the task of raising awareness will consist of producing a change of ideological paradigms in terms of our vision of the world of finance. It's necessary to strengthen the concept that finance made available as a result of savings must be exclusively targeted to productive investment. Financial services and speculation that have become naturalised as a legal and even prestigious activity

should be denounced and disparaged. It should be suggested that those who earn a living from this sector look for a dignified job.

3. Demonstrations must increase around the world in order to repudiate criminal speculation by private banks and to demand a complete reformulation of the financial system with attention paid to the following:
4. Financial power must start to be dismantled in steps, avoiding undesirable impacts due to the complex web of finance in the real economy. A first step will be for every country to prevent capital flight to tax havens through strict regulation, removing any vestige of legality there may be for offshore companies that operate within their territory.
5. International agreements must be signed to avoid financial dealings that end up in tax havens, and the flow of capital must be limited to nations that don't contribute to international controls even if they aren't tax havens themselves.
6. Today's international financial organisms at the service of economic power and global finance must be replaced by an International Solidarity Bank that helps the financial needs of countries so that they aren't the victims of usurers and vulture funds. This bank will start off being capitalised partly from countries themselves and partly through a global tax on big capital and financial transactions.
7. Any clause in international treaties that restricts the freedom of a country to impose controls on international financial capital must be removed. Gradually countries will adapt their regulations to cause a progressive flow of people's savings from private banks into interest-free State Banks and such measures can't be limited by treaties made to fit global financial power.
8. To the extent that progress is made in national financial transformations, the International Solidarity Bank can be further capitalised thereby allowing it to start to finance regional productive projects, until finally it fulfils the functions of a World Central Bank, able to issue a common currency for international trade while nations keep their own currency.

## **The Elimination of borders for the free circulation of people**

1. Work must be undertaken basically to raise awareness and sensitise people to the situation of immigrants and refugees. This is a task for individuals, organisations and governments, and fundamentally the mass media have to be put at their service.

2. The population must be put in condition to perceive the humanity and sensibility of foreigners so that they feel them as brothers and sisters and not as invaders. Prejudice, the fear of job-competition and the use of public services, and insecurity must be broken down.
3. Social organisations should generate integration spaces for local people and immigrants that facilitate co-existence. The clash of cultures is resolved with respect for diversity and integration, and not with rejection and the formation of isolated ghettos.
4. Governments must plan for the integration of immigrants into society and the workforce, just as they should with local people.
5. Conventions between countries should be expanded to include the aim of totally opening borders, trying to orientate migration to where the best opportunities exist but without putting restrictions.
6. Strengthen the concept that no human being is illegal.

## Halting the ecological disaster

1. Even though people have been made very aware of the ecological issue, social movements should redouble their efforts, putting emphasis above all on the central problem: the unbridled consumerism which is leading to the plundering of resources, contamination and global warming.
2. Campaigns carried out to prevent global warming and the plundering of resources should not only emphasise the direct factors involved in the problem but also the consumption matrix at its root. It should be explained that transforming the economic system is the indispensable condition for reversing the ecological disaster and that the culture of consumerism in which most of the population participates must change.
3. The 'throw-away' culture has to be replaced by one in which more durable goods are used. There must be more sobriety in the consumption of objects and an orientation towards the demand for services without environmental impact.
4. Even though every country's development is a matter for national planning, there must be agreements for progress in transforming the consumption matrix. In less developed countries, a growth of raw materials and service consumption is still lacking but in more developed countries and the more affluent sectors of other countries, material consumption must be reduced and services increased.
5. Transformation of the consumption matrix must be planned in gradual steps so that there isn't an impact on the productive apparatus in the

form of unemployment. A re-engineering of the productive apparatus should be planned as a gradual reconversion.

6. The concept of 'bio-economics' must be introduced in which the cost of the 'ecological footprint' is incorporated into the price of every product in order to discourage the consumption of products with greater environmental impact.
7. The production of alternative energy such as solar, wind and hydro must be financed and subsidised and some of the profit from the oil industry must be set aside for this.
8. In the case of all non-renewable resources, the criteria of imposing a tariff on products that use them must be implemented, and with this resource subsidise the recycling industry of those materials.
9. At a national level, companies that contaminate must be obliged to invest in non-polluting technology. At an international level, barriers should be raised to all products coming from nations that still pollute in their production.
10. International trade agreements should be stripped of their neoliberal, free-market hallmark and instead international trade should be regulated under the premise of drastically reducing the factors of contamination.

## **Cultural rebellion in the face of media manipulation**

1. The farcical manipulation by big media corporations and their dependence on private and State economic power must be unmasked for the population to see. A first step is the publicising of information about the vested interests behind every media corporation, something which contrasts with their apparent journalistic neutrality and independence.
2. It must be explained how economic interests promote consumption by the population, something which leads to economic concentration and the plundering of natural resources and how the vested interests of economic and political power influence electoral behaviour so that nothing very much changes.
3. Progress must be made in a psychological and social analysis that explains how media manipulation works and how the passive and naïve receiver can be manipulated. How the media manages to model the collective consciousness and thereby implant fictitious needs, desires, points of view, absolute truths, 'common sense', fears, trust in institutions, chauvinism, the value of superficiality, conformism and other ways of brain washing.

4. Social organisations and movements can work to highlight the problem and contribute to raising awareness of it even though surely the production of cultural expressions on this subject will emerge from the inspiration of spontaneous individuals and groups. It will be possible to expose media manipulation and ridicule it from the fields of graphic art, literature, theatre, film and music among others.
5. Cultural productions of this type can begin with the simplest things broadcastable through social networks, up to and including complete works of theatre, films, songs, magazines and cultural expressions of all kinds.

## Human Rights

1. Every proposal in the direction of the Universal Human Nation is related to one Human Right or another which is why all these proposals include raising awareness of them. Nevertheless Human Rights will always have to be underlined, and above all the hypocrisy of those who systematically violate Human Rights while proclaiming them should be exposed.
2. For complaints made about the violation of more fundamental rights to be credible, they should be free from any kind of ideological bias in order to avoid falling into contrasting denunciations and justifications depending on the faction of whoever violated someone else's rights.
3. More than just raising awareness so that the importance of Human Rights may be perceived, work will have to be undertaken for everyone to perceive what it is that makes every one of the Earth's inhabitants human so that consequently their rights will be respected. Populations must be sensitised about the suffering of many human beings, because although people don't say it out loud, in much of the collective consciousness these suffering people seem to be sub-human and their rights relatively less important.

## Real Democracy

1. The first step consists of every organisation and movement working for any of the objectives of the Universal Human Nation to exercise Real Democracy internally. This implies, as a minimum, the delegation of functions through direct elections and mechanisms for swift recall. It also implies a fluid contact between the people in those functions and the whole through a flexible and purposeful environment for delibera-

tion and participation and it further implies binding consultations for important decisions.

2. When a conflict arises, those who spontaneously organise themselves should propose that Real Democracy is practiced in the running of the organisation, whether it be in keeping the work on that specific conflict going, or in undertaking new issues.
3. Any time that complaints are made of public institutions requesting the solution to a specific conflict, there should also be demands for the incorporation of Real Democracy mechanisms that open channels for expediting people's participation in subsequent conflicts.
4. Every organisation should drive forward, and predispose themselves to, a basic level of coordination with other local endorsing organisations through interchanges, forums and joint activities in order to gain strength when it comes to working on conflicts and demanding Real Democracy instruments. When organisations join forces then this should also happen on the basis of Real Democracy.
5. Every time organisations coordinate there should be a clear position on transforming the system with defined political aims. Therefore the most important thing will be to prevent the strength of the whole being depleted by secondary disagreements. Every stage of the deliberation process which allows the direction to be clarified must be followed by a stage of action that everyone accompanies.
6. As organisations join forces, a political movement should start to emerge which specialists from different fields can join in order to progress in the design of legislative projects on different issues. Such projects should follow a process in synergy with the opinions and concerns that arise from the joint deliberation body through rapid mechanisms of citizen participation that aren't limited to the members of the organisations.
7. At election time it will have to be evaluated whether organisations will limit themselves to the role of political pressure group (when there are candidates to vote for who are committed to adopting their proposals) or if incursions will be made into the political arena with their own candidates (when there aren't). But in addition to specific objectives, the institution of Real Democracy instruments in public policies such as those listed below must always be a priority:
8. Generate spaces for citizens to interchange and deliberate on different issues through all available communication technologies and oblige the private media to make space available to that effect. Facilitate opinions, criticism and proposals of the most participative people in society in a meaningful proportion thereby generating a dynamic,

democratic environment that neutralises the tendency towards institutional paralysis.

9. Inform the population through the media and provide a similar amount of space to the spokespersons of different points of view about the issues being debated in the time prior to consultation.
10. Institute binding referendums about important issues that arise from citizen or government initiative. Defining both at the level of local government and at a national level what the possible issues are and the frequency of consultation. The process will have to go step by step from the simplest to the most complex, and from a minimum frequency of annual consultation to a greater frequency, in the measure that training and the speed of participation channels progress.
11. Incorporate recall elections for removing those government officials who perform badly when a certain percentage of the electorate votes for it.
12. Incorporate a law of political responsibility in virtue of which, before an election, candidates will have to set out the commitments they want to implement on assuming their posts, and removing them in the case that their commitments aren't fulfilled.
13. Direct election through popular vote for judges and police chiefs with a calendar that's different from the one for legislative and executive elections.
14. Incorporation of participatory budgets at a local level and consultations on general budget items at regional and national levels.
15. Binding referendums on international issues, whether this be on decisions of national foreign policy, or global and regional decisions, in the framework of dynamic international complementation towards the Universal Human Nation.

## Mixed economics

1. Deepen the questioning of capitalist and neoliberal economic paradigms, such as the trickle-down effect, market self-regulation, bank interest and the cult of private property.
2. Instil the paradigm of 'equal rights and equal opportunities for all', explaining its real meaning, foundations and consequences.
3. End the financial drain of company profits to speculation and usury and force their productive reinvestment through the application of a tax scale on profits with rates inversely proportional to the percentage of reinvestment and the generation of jobs.

4. Creation of a decentralised, interest-free State Bank that starts to operate with State Banks and which is financed with public money, private savings and an expansionary policy of the central bank.
5. A scaled channelling of private savings towards the interest-free State Bank, starting with the nationalisation of bankrupt banks, followed by the redirection of all current account deposits to State banks, and continuing with the removal of guarantees for deposits in private banks that don't comply with strict regulation or that don't finance production.
6. An absolute ban on usury and speculation, putting the entire financial system at the service of development, reducing to its minimum expression, and taking away all central bank protection from, private banks that don't integrate into the project.
7. A precise expansionary monetary policy targeted to the financing of planned productive projects in coordination between the public and private sectors.
8. The formation of Local Development Committees at the local level made up of education centres, companies, the workforce, the unemployed and government sectors with the aim of designing and setting up productive projects to strengthen the area's capacities, coordinated with the national and regional economy.
9. Adapt labour laws to promote a gradual participation of the workforce in company profits, property and decision-making, seeking a balance between the rights of the entrepreneur in terms of their investment and the rights of employees in terms of their integral contribution to the functioning of the company.
10. Improve the distribution of income at source: that of the workforce through participation in a percentage of profits; and that of the small and medium-sized productive business owners through the dismantling of monopolies that appropriate most of the value chain.
11. Dismantle monopolies through strict regulation and, above all, through the drive of multiple new companies in monopolised areas of the economy, supporting them with financing, industrial promotion and training in an action which is coordinated between the State and the small and medium-sized businesses.
12. Dismantle cartels that exploit small producers by generating cooperatives with greater negotiating strength and promote the diversification of actors in national and international trade.
13. Awareness campaigns about media manipulation exercised by the biggest brands to condition the consumer and achieve a market monopoly with disproportionate profitability with respect to the production cost.



14. Regulation of capital markets, avoiding speculative investment, establishing minimum terms between the purchase and sale of shares and charging a levy on every transaction.
15. Plan general productive development by looking to transform the consumerist and natural-resource-plundering matrix into one of rational and balanced consumption for all sectors of society. Strengthen growth in the areas of services, optimise healthcare, education and research.

## Cultural paradigms

1. Question the values of anti-humanism, such as violence in all fields, individualism and consumerism, and the lack of solidarity, through all possible media channels. Typifying anti-humanist behaviour in a 'catalogue of human stupidity' that helps every individual to internalise the need for change.
2. Implement 'Education for Nonviolence' in all levels of education. Propose 'resistance to all kinds of violence' as a behavioural hallmark.
3. Create awareness about changing values, not through moralist preaching but rather through the actions that have to do with any Universal Human Nation project.
4. Create awareness that humanist values are universal and as such involve the relationships we have with those closest to us and with all other inhabitants on the planet as well.
5. Strengthen a fondness for the Golden Rule, 'Treat others the way you would like to be treated', as the greatest internal reference for conduct in all individuals.



# Synthesis



In different places and at different times, each and every one of the steps listed can be undertaken as a project in itself. In fact, there are many people working on some of these issues all over the world. Nevertheless, it's not common for those working on similar aims to join forces, and much less common among those working in different areas. Frequently, overlapping paths generate contradiction instead of convergence.

Every one of the conflicts to resolve, every reality to transform surely awakens in many people the need to work for it. And in that necessity, in that concern, in that will for change which is characteristic of human intentionality resides the hope and driving force for this utopia. However, energy isn't always applied effectively and the target isn't always correctly identified. Sometimes we end up accepting cosmetic changes, or we go after ephemeral goals that the powerful take care to constantly push to the front, or simply all of the energy is used up in making the powerful hear our complaints, and we leave it to trust that they'll do something about them.

That's why we've tried to present the steps here not only as progressive strides towards the resolution of conflicts but, more than that, as an irreversible climb on which the power of anti-humanism weakens and is dismantled in the measure that we ascend to new levels of social transformation so that then there's no need to go back to the starting point. Because there's no sense in working for ecological awareness if we don't change those in power who do nothing for the environment as they're colluding with plunderers. Neither is there much sense in constantly demanding an equitable distribution of wealth if we don't also work for a transformation of the economic system. Nor does it make sense to protest against wars and military spending if we don't work to take power away from the violent.

Behind each and every conflict, behind every obstacle on the path to the Universal Human Nation, there's a power that must be dismantled and we shouldn't see this power as an ally that we could ask to make changes on our behalf.

But apart from the obstacles in the ascent, there's the force of gravity pulling us down, something which is nothing more than our own weaknesses and which should be counteracted with the force that lies within the human spirit. And this force is awakened by the light of utopias, just as we proclaimed at the start of the exordium; it's difficult to find the strength to advance if all we have is a theory or different recipes for action on specific problems.

When we talked about those who could be the actors of change, we spoke about the necessary social mysticism capable of mobilising large numbers of human beings. But we were also talking about the need to gain in common

intelligence and to find dynamic organisational procedures that facilitate participation. And above all we talked about the need for all action fronts with the same long-term objective of the Universal Human Nation to join forces in order to achieve an indispensable synergy for confronting the powers of anti-humanism.

But just as the long-term image of a utopia that constantly strengthens us and unifies us in action is necessary, it's also necessary to have images of what can be done in any problem, any conflict, anywhere and at any time. And that's why we've analysed the main areas in which profound transformations will have to be carried out, and we've detailed the steps that should be taken in each case. Therefore, every step can be turned into an end in itself in which the reflex which moves us is the response to the stimulus of every immediate objective. But the energy source for not giving up in the face of failure will be found in that simultaneously individual and common utopia.

# Notes





- 1 The concept of Machiavellian politics refers to the considerations and counsels contained in the book by Niccolò Machiavelli, "The Prince", in which politics is taken as an absolutely pragmatic vision in which the main objective is the obtaining, conserving and accumulation of power. In reality it corresponds to a position from where one considers the population as a totally passive subject. From this position, the passivity of the population justifies every manipulation that could be exercised to keep it conforming, while opponents are enemies that must be destroyed through strategies in the exercising of power. It turns out to be extremely interesting to read this book in the edition commented upon by Napoleon Bonaparte, as here we count on the vision of someone who was in a situation of putting into practice many of those Machiavellian recommendations and even questioning others. Despite Machiavelli's book being written at the start of the 16th century and the comments by Bonaparte at the start of the 19th century, many of the recommendations are extremely current when we observe the way in which politics is managed. In one of the paragraphs of chapter XIX, Machiavelli says, "As princes cannot help being hated by someone, they ought, in the first place, to avoid being hated by everyone, and when they cannot compass this, they ought to endeavour with the utmost diligence to avoid the hatred of the most powerful." To which Bonaparte added, "It's always the army, above all if it's as powerful as mine." In another passage, Machiavelli affirms, "Princes ought to leave affairs of reproach to the management of others, and keep those of grace in their own hands".
- 2 In 1988, in the 19th National Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev criticised the distortions of the Soviet system, evaluated the progress of the economic transformations set in motion and advocated their deepening and the advance of democratisation in the USSR. Regarding this, when he spoke of the reform of the political system, he started by saying, "It's in our very own country where the power of the workers was embodied in the Soviet Republic, workers control, the right to work and other very important social rights of the individual, equality of the sexes, and of nations and ethnicities. In other words, we have been the promoters of many democratic initiatives of the 20th century. Why, then, is the task of radically reforming the political system being put forward today? First and foremost, comrades, it is a fact – and we have to admit this today – that at a certain stage the political system established as a result of the October revolution underwent serious deformations. This made possible the omnipotence of Stalin and his entourage, and the wave of repressive measures and lawlessness. The command methods of administration that arose in those years had a dire effect on various aspects of the development of our society. Rooted in that system are many of the difficulties that we experience to this day."
- 3 As Mandela himself recognised in his autobiography, "The Long Road to Freedom", on certain occasions he doubted the effectiveness of the nonviolent struggle but finally it was his resistance to violence that triumphed and above all what allowed him to progress towards reconciliation in South Africa once in government. Apartheid's segregation established differences between the different ethnicities: the blacks, Indians, coloureds and obviously the whites that had all the privileges. In the 50s, racial discrimination was added to political discrimination with the banning of the Communist Party. In this panorama, racial discrimination, political persecution and injustices were suffered by the majority of the population. Both

Mandela and the ANC at first doubted the possibilities of carrying out a struggle integrating all the discriminated sectors and they preferred to work with the black majority, nevertheless they fought for a non-racial constitution that benefited everyone.

- 4 In 1848, the first convention on the rights of women in the United States took place in Seneca Falls (New York). Organised by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The result was the Seneca Falls Convention, a document in which restrictions were denounced, above all political restrictions, to which women were subjected; no power to vote, or to be candidates in elections, nor to occupy public positions, nor to affiliate to political organisations or to take part in political meetings. Some of the most relevant points are the following:
  - that all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature and therefore of no force or authority.
  - that woman is man's equal, was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.
  - that the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want.
  - that the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behaviour that is required of woman in the social state also be required of man, and the same transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman.
  - that woman has too long rested satisfied in the circumscribed limits which corrupt customs and a perverted application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her.
  - that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.
  - that the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.
  - that the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce.
- 5 Simone de Beauvoir, in her book, "The Second Sex" deals with the subject of the feminist struggle from her existentialist philosophy, profoundly questioning the cultural and social taboos that persist even beyond the equality of rights. In one of the paragraphs of her conclusions she writes, "The woman confined to immanence tries to keep man in this prison as well; thus the prison will merge with the world, and she will no longer suffer from being shut up in it: the mother, the wife, the lover, are the jailers; society codified by men decrees that woman is inferior: she can only abolish this inferiority by destroying male superiority. She does her utmost to mutilate, to dominate man, she contradicts him, she denies his truth and values. But in doing that, she is only defending herself; neither immutable essence nor flawed choice has doomed her to immanence and inferiority. They were imposed on her. All oppression creates a state of war. This particular case is no exception.

The existent considered as inessential cannot fail to attempt to re-establish his sovereignty.

"Today, the combat is taking another form; instead of wanting to put man in prison, woman is trying to escape from it; she no longer seeks to drag him into the realms of immanence but to emerge into the light of transcendence. And the male attitude here creates a new conflict: the man petulantly "dumps" the woman. He is pleased to remain the sovereign subject, the absolute superior, the essential being; he refuses to consider his companion concretely as an equal; she responds to his defiance by an aggressive attitude. It is no longer a war between individuals imprisoned in their respective spheres: a caste claiming its rights lays siege but is held in check by the privileged caste. Two transcendences confront each other; instead of mutually recognizing each other, each freedom wants to dominate the other."

- 6 Julio Godio, Argentinian sociologist specialising in the subject of trade unions in his book, "Market Economics, Regulator State and Unions", describes the new challenges which unionism is facing around the world from the new world order emerging from globalisation. In one passage of the book he comments, "Neoliberalism has created great ideological confusion in social and political forces in favour of deepening democracy. This confusion presents itself in unions in two planes: a) in the strictly ideological, given the historical exhaustion of old union concepts, and b) in union tactics, given that the politics of structural cuts are segmented in the world of labour, making it difficult to homogenise the demands of different sectors of employees."

In another passage he says, "It is impossible to think that one country or a group of countries can today achieve optimal goals of economic growth on the margins of globalisation of the world's economy. This is why it's impossible to conceive of a successful union movement, if it's limited to its exclusively national radius of action. On the contrary, today it's essential to strengthen the joint action of unionism on an international scale."

- 7 In Chapter VII of "Capital", Marx describes labour conditions in different industries on the basis of different reports of the times of which we quote a few by way of example:

"William Wood, 9 years old, was 7 years and 10 months when he began to work. He "ran moulds" (carried ready-moulded articles into the drying-room, afterwards bringing back the empty mould) from the beginning. He came to work every day in the week at 6 a.m., and left off about 9 p.m. "I work till 9 o'clock at night six days in the week. I have done so seven or eight weeks." Fifteen hours of labour for a child 7 years old!

The manufacture of lucifer matches dates from 1833, from the discovery of the method of applying phosphorus to the match itself. Since 1845 this manufacture has rapidly developed in England, and has extended especially amongst the thickly populated parts of London as well as in Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol, Norwich, Newcastle and Glasgow. With it has spread the form of lock-jaw, which a Vienna physician in 1845 discovered to be a disease peculiar to lucifer-matchmakers. Half the workers are children under thirteen, and young persons under eighteen. The manufacture is on account of its unhealthiness and unpleasantness in such bad odour that only the most miserable part of the labouring class, half-starved widows and so forth, deliver up their children to it, "the ragged, half-starved, untaught children."

Of the witnesses that Commissioner White examined (1863), 270 were under 18, 50 under 10, 10 only 8, and 5 only 6 years old. A range of the working day from 12 to 14 or 15 hours, night-labour, irregular meal-times, meals for the most part taken in the very workrooms that are pestilent with phosphorus. Dante would have found the worst horrors of his *Inferno* surpassed in this manufacture.

"The work of a London journeyman baker begins, as a rule, at about eleven at night. At that hour he 'makes the dough,' – a laborious process, which lasts from half an hour to three quarters of an hour, according to the size of the batch or the labour bestowed upon it. He then lies down upon the kneading-board, which is also the covering of the trough in which the dough is 'made'; and with a sack under him, and another rolled up as a pillow, he sleeps for about a couple of hours. He is then engaged in a rapid and continuous labour for about five hours – throwing out the dough, 'scaling it off,' moulding it, putting it into the oven, preparing and baking rolls and fancy bread, taking the batch bread out of the oven, and up into the shop, &c., &c. The temperature of a bakehouse ranges from about 75 to upwards of 90 degrees F [24° and 32° C], and in the smaller bakehouses approximates usually to the higher rather than to the lower degree of heat. When the business of making the bread, rolls, &c., is over, that of its distribution begins, and a considerable proportion of the journeymen in the trade, after working hard in the manner described during the night, are upon their legs for many hours during the day, carrying baskets, or wheeling hand-carts, and sometimes again in the bakehouse, leaving off work at various hours between 1 and 6 p.m. according to the season of the year, or the amount and nature of their master's business; while others are again engaged in the bakehouse in 'bringing out' more batches until late in the afternoon... During what is called 'the London season,' the operatives belonging to the 'full-priced' bakers at the West End of the town, generally begin work at 11 p.m., and are engaged in making the bread, with one or two short (sometimes very short) intervals of rest, up to 8 o'clock the next morning. They are then engaged all day long, up to 4, 5, 6, and as late as 7 o'clock in the evening carrying out bread, or sometimes in the afternoon in the bakehouse again, assisting in the biscuit-baking."

Naomi Klein, in her book *No-Logo*, describes the working conditions in free-trade zones created at the service of multinationals. "Though it has plenty in common with these other tax havens, the export processing zone is really in a class of its own. Less holding tank than sovereign territory, the EPZ is an area where goods don't just pass through but are actually manufactured, an area, furthermore, where there are no import and export duties, and often no income or property taxes either. The idea that EPZs could help Third World economies first gained currency in 1964 when the United Nations Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution endorsing the zones as a means of promoting trade with developing nations. The idea didn't really get off the ground, however, until the early eighties, when India introduced a five-year tax break for companies manufacturing in its low-wage zones.

"Since then the free-trade-zone industry has exploded. There are fifty-two economic zones in the Philippines alone, employing 459,000 people – that's up from only 23,000 zone workers in 1996 and 229,000 as recently as 1994. The largest zone economy is China where by conservative estimates there are 18 million people in 124 export processing zones. In total, the International Labour Organisation says that there are at least 850 EPZs in the world, but that number is likely much closer to 1,000, spread through seventy countries and employing roughly 27 million workers. The World Trade Organisation estimates that between \$200 and \$250

billion worth of trade flows through the zones. The number of individual factories housed inside these industrial parks is also expanding. In fact, the free-trade factories along the U.S.-Mexico border – in Spanish, *maquiladoras* (from *maquilar* “to make up, or assemble”) – are probably the only structures that proliferate as quickly as Wal-Mart outlets: there were 789 *maquiladoras* in 1985. In 1995 there were 2,747. By 1997, there were 3508 employing about 900,000 workers.

“Regardless of where the EPZs are located, the workers’ stories have a certain mesmerising sameness: the workday is long – fourteen hours in Sri Lanka, twelve hours in Indonesia, sixteen in southern China, twelve in the Philippines. The vast majority of the workers are women, always young, always working for contractors or sub-contractors from Korea, Taiwan or Hong Kong. The contractors are usually filling orders for companies based in the U.S., Britain, Japan, Germany or Canada. The management is military-style, the supervisors often abusive, the wages below subsistence and the work low-skill and tedious. As an economic model, today’s export processing zones have more in common with fast-food franchises than sustainable developments, so removed are they from the countries that host them. These pockets of pure industry hide inside a cloak of transience, far from home and with little connection to the city or province where zones are located; the work itself is short-term, often not renewed.”

- 8 Ernesto Laclau, in his book, “On Populist Reason”, analyses the challenges facing a society in which demands and interests can be very diverse, in order to reach the point of constituting itself as “people” surrounding a leadership which he describes as populist; employing the term in the face of detractors who associate it only with totalitarian governments. For Laclau, populism may or may not be democratic, but this isn’t what defines it, but rather its capacity to join forces with and bind together different demands in a signifier that synthesises them. Laclau states in a passage of his book: “The construction of a chain of equivalences out of a dispersion of fragmented demands, and their unification around popular positions operating as empty signifiers, is not totalitarian but the very condition for the construction of a collective will which, in many cases, can be profoundly democratic. It is certainly true that some populist movements can be totalitarian, and present most or all of the features so accurately described by Lefort, but the spectrum of possible articulations is far more diversified than the simple opposition totalitarianism/democracy seems to suggest.”

He continues further on:

“An ensemble of equivalential demands articulated by an empty signifier is what constitutes a ‘people’. So the very possibility of democracy depends on the constitution of a democratic ‘people’.”

Later on, Laclau refers to the challenges in a globalised world, in order to be able to articulate heterogeneous demands: “But the more extended the equivalential chain, the less ‘natural’ the articulation between its links, and the more unstable the identity of the enemy (located on the other side of the frontier). This is something that I have encountered at various points in my analysis. In the case of a specific demand formulated within a localised context, it is relatively easy to determine who is the adversary; if, however, there is an equivalence between a multiplicity of heterogeneous demands, to determine what your goal is and whom you are fighting against becomes much more difficult. At this point, the ‘populist reason’ becomes fully operative. This explains why what I have called ‘globalised capitalism’ represents a qualitatively new stage in capitalist history, and leads to a

deepening of the logics of identity formation as I have described. There has been a multiplication of dislocatory effects and a proliferation of new antagonisms, which is why the anti-globalisation movement has to operate in an entirely new way: it must advocate the creation of equivalential links between deeply heterogeneous social demands while, at the same time, elaborating a common language. A new internationalism is emerging that, at the same time, makes traditional institutionalised forms of political mediation obsolete. The universality of the 'party' form, for instance, is radically questioned."

- 9 Charles Tilly, in his book "Social Movements" describes their characteristics throughout history, pinpointing their origins at the end of the 18th century in Western Europe and North America in concomitance with the advance of freedoms to demonstrate and democratic rights multiplying throughout the 19th century and expanding and becoming international in the 20th century. Tilly considers that a social movement must carry out public demonstrations joining together four organisational conditions for which he employs the acronym WUNC, and which refers to "worthiness" (sober demeanour), "unity" (matching banners, singing and chanting), "numbers" (in terms of participation, petitions, filling the streets), and "commitment" (resistance to repression, braving bad weather). This type of organisation unfailingly requires the existence of committed cadres, and Tilly distrusts some modern social movements supported by internet communication, above all because of its unequal use between the world's populations and between social segments of a single country. And he also raises a question about the effectiveness of international social movements because of their difficulty to exercise real pressure over governments in any place.
- 10 Tilly also puts in doubt the internationalisation of social movements, from the point of view of a possible democratic weakening, as he assumes that on an international level dependency on the use of new communication technologies which many sectors are marginalised from is increasing. But on the other hand he observes that international mobilisations against global financial institutions and other campaigns have facilitated the participation of diverse groups in the most diverse countries that then act in their countries for democratisation and the struggle for certain rights. The number of international social movements has multiplied by 10 in the last 30 years, and coordinated actions against global problems has multiplied exponentially.
- 11 Non-nuclear-weapon States commit to not develop nuclear weapons, nor acquire them from another State and to accept International Atomic Energy Agency controls.
- 12 "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."
- 13 The first START treaty was signed in 1991, the second in 1993 and the third in 2010, and within their texts were agreed the reduction of nuclear arsenals of the United States and initially the Soviet Union and later on Russia.
- 14 Rafael de la Rubia, in his "Call for Total Nuclear Disarmament", in the Moscow Academy of Sciences in 2006, proposed the following broad areas of action: 1)

World Conference of Universities and Research Institutes for the elimination of nuclear weapons, 2) Civil Forum for Global Nuclear Disarmament, 3) Conference of countries for Global Nuclear Disarmament, 4) International team of technicians and civil and military experts in the elimination and reconversion of nuclear weapons.

- 15 The military-industrial complex, made up of economic groups that obtain enormous profits from the sale of weapons are part of the political power within the biggest powers, and therefore have driven those countries' arms trade ever since the times of the Cold War. But they also feed conflicts in Africa and Asia and they no longer just sell weapons, rather they also negotiate for mercenary army contracts. According to research published in the book *Disarmament and Reconciliation*, there are around one hundred mercenary army companies with headquarters in 15 countries, and operations in 110 countries, and they have signed lucrative contracts.
- 16 Noam Chomsky, in his book *What Uncle Sam Really Wants*, makes a detailed historical analysis of successive US military interventions, sometimes overt, sometimes covert, in different countries of the world explaining the real interests that motivated them.
- 17 Noam Chomsky, in the book 9-11: Was there an alternative in which he describes very well the roots of the escalation of terrorist violence as a consequence of the USA's and their allies' own terrorism, relates how in a television interview with the then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright regarding the death of half a million children in Iraq as a consequence of the sanctions on the regime, she said: such consequences were a "hard choice" but, "we think the price is worth it."
- 18 From October 2009 to January 2010, several humanist organisations carried out a World March that circled the entire planet, publicising the need for disarmament and the ending of violence in various forums and public events.
- 19 Reference to the chapters that guide the action of the Security Council and the peaceful resolution of controversies.
- 20 Even if the Security Council is made up of 15 members, it is the permanent members: the USA, Russia, China, France and the United Kingdom, who have the power of veto that can scupper any resolution.
- 21 The final United Nations conference relating to the Arms Trade Treaty adopted its text in March 2013 in which "Each State Party is encouraged to apply the provisions..." always in accordance with national laws, something which leaves a lot of room for manoeuvre in avoiding controls that the treaty aims to establish. After years of work and analysis, a text was arrived at with extremely lax proposals, subject to good faith and the good intentions of States Party. In some cases it borders on ridiculous naivety, like in article 6, which establishes that arms sales cannot be authorised when a State Party has knowledge that arms or items would be used to commit genocide.
- 22 The Preamble to the United Nations Charter that was signed by member states commits them to, "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind. To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the



equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. To establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. To practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. To unite our strength to maintain international peace and security. To ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest. To employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples”

- 23 A group of developing countries, founded in 1964 with 77 countries, today consisting of 133, which makes joint declarations about different subjects in the UN and which has signed cooperation agreements and agreed common policies.
- 24 A reference to a passage from the book, “The Internal Landscape” in which it says, “I tell you that your selfishness is not a sin but rather the fundamental error in your calculation, for you have naively believed that to receive is better than to give.”
- 25 A Reference to the book “Utopia” published by Thomas More in 1516 in which he describes the functioning of an imaginary society which was advanced for the paradigms of the times.
- 26 The Millennium Development Goals were approved by all member States of the United Nations in the year 2000 and consisted of 8 goals to be reached by the year 2015: 1) To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) To achieve universal primary education, 3) To promote gender equality and empower women, 4) To reduce child mortality, 5) To improve maternal health, 6) To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, 7) To ensure environmental sustainability, 8) To develop a global partnership for development.
- 27 In his book “The End of Poverty”, the economist, Jeffrey Sachs, who has worked for years on establishing international policies to develop poor and emerging countries and advised governments and international organisms, describes very well the difference that exists between the high-sounding declarations and reality with regards to international assistance. In the case of Africa, most countries were unable to reach the first step towards development without sufficient international assistance, as extreme poverty is incompatible with saving and the capitalisation necessary to undertake development. Likewise it is demonstrated that with a small percentage of the income of the richest countries it would be possible to drive a self-sustainable development process in the poorest countries. It isn't an economic problem, it's a problem of a lack of political will. The case of Ethiopia illustrates the point, in which Sachs mentions the double standards of the IMF that in public assures that this country is doing very well with the assistance it is receiving and in private recognises that it will never achieve the Millennium Goals. The author also recounts the case of Ghana whose five-year plan to fulfil the minimum objectives would require 8 billion dollars over the time period, but the donors were cutting back their support to reduce it to 2 billion, and in the face of Sachs's questioning, they told him that the previous plan “wasn't realistic”, understanding by realistic not that it didn't correspond to the real needs of the African country, but rather that it didn't correspond to the convenience of the donors. According to World Bank calculations, 1.08 dollars per person per day is required in order to satisfy the basic needs of every poor person. For those living on an average of 0.77 dollars per



- day, this would require a total of 124 billion dollars per annum so that everyone can reach this minimum level of 1.08 dollars per day and this would have meant only 0.6% of the income of the richest countries; nevertheless, they are very far from reaching this insignificant support.
- 28 Isaac Johsua in his book, "The crisis of 1929 and the emergence of North America", made a highly detailed analysis of the different theories about this crisis. Some attribute a greater impact to the banking crises; others blamed over indebtedness; others over-production; others stock market speculation and others the wages crisis.
  - 29 Starting with the Mexican Moratorium of 1982, different budget adjustment recipes were tried out. Misnamed "adjustment with growth" processes like the frustrated Baker Plan consisted of operations to convert debt through which creditors bought shares in national companies which in the 90s simply turned into the privatisation of all public companies.
  - 30 Between 1991 and 1993, Mario Rodriguez Cobos, more commonly known as Silo, published 10 letters that are included in his Collected Works under the title of "Letters to My Friends", regarding the social and personal crisis of today's world. In the Sixth Letter, which includes the "Statement of the Humanist Movement", he analyses the "tyranny of money" among other issues, whose principal executors are precisely those who manage finance.
  - 31 A reference to the essay by the same title published by the University of Panama in which the causes of the global financial crisis, the historical context and the possible future consequences are analysed.
  - 32 Before the crisis, Iceland was considered an example of prosperity because of the disproportionate development of its financial sector. When the bubble burst and the crisis hit with the subsequent social impact, the people rebelled against the idea of taking responsibility for the debts left behind by the banks. A political crisis ensued which led to the government being replaced and giving rise to a great participation of people in assemblies from where work began on the writing of a new constitution. Beyond the difficulties that subsequently emerged, and beyond the doubts about whether this example of popular participation could be replicated in countries with a larger population, the example of Iceland was a confrontation with financial power and surely that's why it isn't given greater space in the media and that's why it's called "The Silent Revolution."
  - 33 Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize winner for Economics, in his book, "The Price of Inequality", and in several newspaper articles coined this concept of the 1% of the population who concentrate wealth, as opposed to the 99% who become increasingly poor. The concept was subsequently used by the Occupy Wall Street movement in their protests against economic policy and financial speculation. Stiglitz describes to what extent Federal Reserve policies – and those of Central Banks in general – have not only failed to prevent the crises and failed in their subsequent resolution, but rather they always act in favour of the 1% of well-off people who are, in turn, those who condition their policies.
  - 34 This intentionality of international organisms, which goes beyond simple "miscalculations", becomes evident when it's observed who are always the beneficiaries when a country ends up harmed: the largest corporations and banks with draconian contracts, purchases of public assets at give-away prices and deregulation

- of all kinds in order to plunder. John Perkins, who defines himself as a former “economic hit man” and who acted for many years as an international adviser promoting indebtedness of the poorest countries, describes in detail in his book, “Hoodwinked”, the negotiations that took place promoting indebtedness of countries with the intention of conditioning them.
- 35 ICSID (The International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes) is the World Bank’s court of arbitration that deals with controversial cases that arise between States and those multinationals that invest in their territories.
- 36 An acronym which identifies the group of countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. These countries are considered to be emerging economies with greater potential and sufficient economic and political weight to challenge the hegemony of the USA and Europe in the leadership of the world order.
- 37 George Soros the speculator and investor – famous for having speculated against the Pound Sterling with one of the greatest fortunes in the world until breaking the Bank of England in 1992 – later on becoming a philanthropist and writer, in his book, “The Alchemy of Finance”, recognises the need for regulations in the financial system and proposes the need for a World Central Bank.
- 38 The French economist, Thomas Piketty, in his work “Capital in the 21st Century” undertakes a profound analysis of the evolution of the concentration of capital, stating that the main cause of such concentration is related to a growth rate of capital profits which is greater than the growth of the economy. He considers that the main instruments for reversing this process are inheritance tax increases and a global tax on capital.
- 39 Jeremy Bentham, English thinker, founder of the philosophical current of Utilitarianism, wrote a series of letters in 1787 which were compiled into the book “Defence of Usury” in which he argued for the virtues of the freedom to charge interest on loans, respecting the freedom of parties to enter into contractual agreements and dynamising the capitalist economy of those times.
- 40 A reference to Eduardo Galeano’s book, “The Open Veins of Latin America” in which he describes at great length the plundering of natural resources and the colonial and neo-colonial policies in Latin America by those economic and Western powers who built their empires thanks to the exploitation of that region.
- 41 Juan Hernández Viguera, in a conference in Barcelona in 2009 published by AT-TAC PV, spoke about “Shadow Banks” as entities of great opacity, with a management operating with enigmatic names but which are the dependents of large banking groups. These entities, he says, “escape the supervision of Central Banks because these opaque entities manage to unlink the ownership of those financial assets from the banking matrix thanks to the gaps of deficient regulation and the intentional benevolence of supervisors impregnated with neoliberal doctrine.” But he also affirms that progress towards eradicating tax havens is possible, citing a few concrete measures such as: not legally recognising offshore subsidiaries and societies in countries and territories without local economic activity, the total freedom of countries to establish limits on the movement of capital (a freedom restricted by the Lisbon Treaty in the case of Europe), and, in the case of Europe, regulating the “European Financial Area” which lacks community supervision.

- 42 Aviva Chomsky, in her book “They take our jobs!” describes exhaustively the numerous myths that exist around the subject of migration, the majority without real foundations. Such as the erroneous belief that immigrants take jobs away from the local population, or that competition from them makes salaries go down, or that they’re to blame for insecurity and terrorism, or a burden on the economy, and other affirmations that some opinion-formers take the time to amplify, generating a rejection of immigrants.
- 43 In the 2013 report about worldwide migration, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) explains that of the four migratory directions considered (North-North; North-South, South-North and South-South, considering the least developed countries as the South), the number of migrants in the direction South-South is equivalent to the number going South-North, although the latter is more widely known.
- 44 A study carried out by the Pew Hispanic Centre in the United States, covering a decade, established that no consistent pattern emerged to show that local workers are harmed by the arrival of foreigners.
- 45 In an essay written by Ramiro Martinez and Matthew Lee published by the Spanish Journal of Criminological Research, numerous studies published throughout the 20th century about the relationship between immigration and crime are analysed, proving that the reality contradicts the prejudices.
- 46 This agreement established a border-free territory known as the Schengen Area for free circulation among countries of the European Union while setting out strict controls on the so-called external borders in which every member country must take responsibility for exercising strict migration controls which in many cases lead to arbitrariness.
- 47 The United Nations Environmental Programme
- 48 Some economists warn of the dangers of China’s progress in conditions which are unfair for the world’s markets. Julian Pavón in his book “China, Dragon or parasite?” synthesises this unfair competition with the metaphor of marked cards that are played with in Chinese markets: monetary (undervaluation of the Yuan), environmental (basing their energy on coal and not exercising any control over the levels of contamination), social (as the working conditions in China are semi-slavery which allows for cost reductions), technological (because they copy and appropriate Western technology), and finally, political (as a totalitarian system possesses greater speed of response and decision-making). With all these advantages, China has been able to accumulate sufficient reserves to acquire assets all around the world.
- 49 Some scientists talk about “red lines” that could be overstepped and would lead to a big disaster. 1. Carbon dioxide concentration. 2. The disappearance of species. 3. Disturbance in the natural nitrogen cycle. 4. Acidification of the oceans. 5. Excessive demand for fresh water. 6. Deforestation. 7. Possible marine catastrophe caused by phosphorous. 8. Depletion of the ozone layer.
- 50 At the start of the 90s, at the University of British Colombia the concept of “Ecological Footprint” was developed with which it was attempted to measure the impact on nature and ecosystems generated by human activities and contrast this with the

Bio-capacity of each territory, from which emerges a difference that determines if natural resources are being used above a territory's means.

- 51 The Kyoto Protocol proposes a reduction in gas emissions to reduce the increase in temperature due to the greenhouse effect which contributes to global warming, setting objectives by country. The United States never ratified it and emerging powers such as Russia, Brazil and China have resisted respecting it in order to prevent a slowdown of their development.
- 52 Thomas Malthus, in his "Essay on the Principle of Population" first edited in 1798 on the basis of the accounts of travellers of the times, analysed the obstacles that societies face in different geographical regions in order to grow, and established a supposed formula for geometric growth of the population that when compared with a lower growth rate in food production, would necessarily impose a natural limitation on population growth.
- 53 There are many possible sources of energy, many of which are renewable and clean. Photothermal and photovoltaic, using the energy of the sun. Wind energy, transforming its energy into electricity or physical force. Hydrographic and hydroceanic which are also convertible to electricity. Also, Ocean thermal, geothermal and bioenergy.
- 54 The term Degrowth was used for the first time in 1979 by the Romanian ecologist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegan. Currently the French economist and philosopher, Serge Latouche is one of the most important ideologues of Degrowth, promoting the idea of a "voluntary sobriety" that diminishes consumption, values free time and reorganises productive relationships and localizations.
- 55 In the last century examples abounded of attempts to change the system based on a supposed cultural change that didn't turn out according to expectations, such as the "New Man" and the "New Work Culture" in Cuba. In many cases, being forced towards a society with more solidarity had to be accompanied by the closure of borders in order to avoid a diaspora of those who were most prepared and least capable of it. In China the "Red Guards" of the so-called Cultural Revolution, tried to destroy the old millenary culture, the old thought, closing schools and universities, in the name of the fight against the supposedly reactionary bourgeoisie and intellectuals. At the same time the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, in a demented attempt to sweep away the bourgeois culture of the cities and change it for orders from Angkor, forced an exodus to the countryside in which almost two million people died from hunger or were killed.
- 56 Giovanni Sartori, in his book "Homo Videns: Teledirected Society", analyses the effect of the media, in particular television that functions like the Greek "paideia", by forming people from childhood and then shaping their opinion over time. The TV image is implanted with authority, whatever appears is real, and its opinion is true. What TV prioritises is what's important, and sometimes the only thing that exists for the viewer. Sartori affirms that the argument that TV produces the content that people prefer is not so certain because television is the only producer that produces its consumer.
- 57 José Ortega y Gasset, in "Revolt of the Masses", says in chapter VII: "That man is intellectually of the mass who, in the face of any problem, is satisfied with thinking the first thing he finds in his head. On the contrary, the excellent man is he who

contemns what he finds in his mind without previous effort, and only accepts as worthy of him what is still far above him and what requires a further effort in order to be reached.” And adds in chapter VIII: “Today, on the other hand, the average man has the most mathematical ‘ideas’ on all that happens or ought to happen in the universe. Hence he has lost the use of his hearing. Why should he listen if he has within him all that is necessary? There is no reason now for listening, but rather for judging, pronouncing, deciding. There is no question concerning public life, in which he does not intervene, blind and deaf as he is, imposing his ‘opinions.’ But, is this not an advantage? Is it not a sign of immense progress that the masses should have ‘ideas,’ that is to say, should be cultured? By no means. The ‘ideas’ of the average man are not genuine ideas, nor is their possession culture. An idea is a putting truth in checkmate. Whoever wishes to have ideas must first prepare himself to desire truth and to accept the rules of the game imposed by it. It is no use speaking of ideas when there is no acceptance of a higher authority to regulate them, a series of standards to which it is possible to appeal in a discussion. These standards are the principles on which culture rests... There is no culture where there are no principles of legality to which to appeal. There is no culture where there is no acceptance of certain final intellectual positions to which a dispute may be referred.”

- 58 Joseph Stiglitz, in his book “The Price of Inequality”, in chapter 6, “1984 is upon us”, analyses the manipulation and brain-washing carried out by US media to convince the rest of the population that they share the same interests as the most powerful 1%. For example, it’s clear that if the 1% would pay more tax, the other 99% would benefit; nevertheless the population has been convinced that the State is inefficient and that if those above earn more, they will be better off by the “trickle-down” effect, a statement that is contradicted by reality, but the strength of the media’s conviction is stronger. Particular mention is made of what is called the “framing”, the context in which an analysis is proposed. To illustrate the point, he uses the example of the phenomenon of witness behaviour in criminal line-ups in which one of the suspects is always identified even if none of them had ever been at the crime scene because the prior “framing” leads the witness to assume that one of them must be guilty. For example, if the general framing is that we live in a society in which everyone’s achievements are obtained on the basis of merit, then there will be greater predisposition to believe that the richest 1% are rich because they deserve it, because they worked hard, while the poor are poor because they are deadbeats.
- 59 Naomi Klein, in her book, “No-Logo”, carries out an exhaustive historical and contemporary analysis of how the biggest brands have imposed their products all over the world through advertising and reached a situation of power from where they can exploit the workforce and the businesses to which production is sub-contracted, while earning a fortune by imposing monopolistic pricing. According to Klein, it no longer matters how a product is or who makes it, the only thing that matters is to sell a brand. Over the years an entire commercial culture has been built up on brands and their adverts are thought about by specialists in human behaviour. By imposing a brand as something superior to any competitive alternative without the same level of advertising, prices with extremely high profit margins can also be imposed, and higher prices even end up becoming a distinctive feature of a brand as people assume that they’re buying something exclusive, of the highest quality, not because they’ve compared it to other products but rather in the context of advertising that makes them feel this way.

- 60 Pablo Iglesias, leader of the Spanish political force, “*Podemos*” (We Can), who became a reference for a large part of the Indignados of the 15M movement on the basis of his visibility on the TV as a political scientist on his chat show “*La Tuerka*” (The Screw) and who later would appear in the most important media as he knew how to express what many Spaniards wanted to hear at that time, knows the limitations of the media very well. In his book “Disputing Democracy” he says, “... it’s true that private media outlets, that never cease to talk about us and who regularly invite our spokespersons, will be able to veto us the day on which their owners so decide.”
- 61 First generation rights are defined as civil and political rights, such as the right to life, liberty, equality before the law, freedom of expression, the right to a fair trial, freedom of religion, the right to suffrage, and other fundamental rights already included in declarations at the end of the 18th century in the United States and France, and subsequently included in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. So-called second generation rights have to do with economic and social rights such as the right to work, a dignified standard of living, healthcare, education, social security, to form part of a trade union and to strike. And third generation rights include the right to a balanced environment, the use of advanced technology, consumer rights and others.
- 62 Article 28: Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.
- 63 Silo, in his ninth letter written in 1993, describes the dangers carried by international sanctions in the face of human rights violations in a world managed around the interests of powerful countries.
- “Human Rights, Peace, and Humanitarianism as Pretexts for Intervention”
- “Today there is renewed vigor in the discussion of human rights, yet the cast of those who carry this banner has changed. In decades past, progressive movements have worked actively in defense of these principles, which have been established by a consensus of the nations. Of course, even while paying lip service to these rights, many dictatorships have made a mockery of human needs and of personal and collective freedom. Some have announced that as long as citizens did not speak out against the prevailing system they would continue to have access to housing, health care, education, and employment. Logically, these governments said, we should not confuse liberty with license, and “license” is to speak out against the government.
- “Today it is the right wing in many countries that has raised this standard anew and tries to appear active in defense of human rights and peace, above all in those foreign countries where their own domination is not complete. Taking advantage of certain international mechanisms, they organize forces for intervention capable of reaching any point on the globe with the stated goal of imposing “peace and justice.” Supporting the faction that is most subordinate to them, they begin by bringing in food and medicine, only to later attack the populace with bullets. Soon, any fifth column will be able to claim that elements in their country are disturbing the peace or that human rights are being trampled, and thus request assistance from these interventionists.
- “By now, primitive treaties and mutual defense pacts have been perfected into documents that legalize action by “neutral” forces. In this way, the old Pax Romana is being revived and introduced once more. These are, in short, ornithological ava-

tars that, beginning with the eagle on the banner of the legionnaires, later take the form of Picasso's dove, until by the time we reach the present day we find talons growing once more beneath its bedraggled plumage. No longer does this feathered creature fly back to the biblical Ark bearing an olive branch, it now returns to the Ark of Assets with a dollar clutched in its strong beak.

"Of course, all of this is well seasoned with compassionate arguments. And we should be concerned by such events, because even when these "neutral" forces intervene in third countries for humanitarian reasons clear to all, they are setting precedents that may subsequently be used to justify new actions whose motives are neither so humanitarian nor so clear to all. As a result of the process of globalization the United Nations is seen to be playing an increasingly military role, one that entails more than a few risks. Once again the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples are being imperiled by this manipulation of the concepts of peace and international solidarity."

- 64 In an article written by Jorge Herrera Guerra regarding international sanctions, the supposed innocuousness of International Law sustained by many is discussed. "International Law is a normative order that establishes sanctioning responses in the face of compliance or non-compliance with the norms it establishes. Sanctions in International Law are diverse and of different kinds. In many cases they are less effective than internal State laws and this is because International Law is more recent which prevents it from counting on a centralised and developed executive structure for sanctions, and moreover, because the particularity of their subjects makes it difficult to adequately comply with the sanctions imposed because it is not the same thing to sanction an individual person whose legal assets are clearly established (life, liberty, property, etc.), as a corporate entity with collective responsibility and who sovereignly participates in the formation of legal norms. But, 'the differences between internal society and international society, between State judiciary ordinances and International Law, do not presume the non-existence in the latter of a mechanism for application and sanction of legal norms, but rather that they are different and more precarious than those of State judiciary ordinances'. Brierly also points out that sanctions in International Law are 'precarious in their realisation'. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that International Law lacks sanctions or that they don't comply with inherent requirements of any judicial sanction. They are different, less effective if you will, but they are legal sanctions."

He then goes on to describe some of the possible international sanctions: "Retaliatory measures imply restrictions on the benefits on the infringing State or their non-participation in certain international activities, in particular economic and commercial; so there are restrictions and the breaking off of diplomatic and consular relations, interruption of commercial and economic relationships, legal expulsion measures, restriction of residence and travel by citizens of the infringing State, the strict application of customs laws and external trade, bans on the entry of boats and aircraft, etc. In certain circumstances these measures may mean very strong sanctions for infringing States; let's imagine, for example, that State A is a country exporting certain products to other countries, and that the economic income derived from those exports is a very important component of its Gross Domestic Product; if one or more of these importing countries, as a retaliatory measure in response to an illegal act committed by State A, closes their external trade with the infringer, the sanction implemented would be harmful and soon State A would correct its position. In today's globalised and interdependent world, such measures



will be much more effective. So at the present moment, the behaviour of numerous under-developed States conforms to International Law out of fear of retaliatory sanctions coming from the biggest countries, mainly in economic terms.”

- 65 In its report for 2014/2015, about the situation of human rights in the world, Amnesty International details the state of rights in 160 countries. An extensive list of human rights abuses; starting with the more than 200,000 deaths as a result of the civil war in Syria, with 4 million refugees and 7 million displaced people. Crimes by the self-styled Islamic State. The conflict in the north of Nigeria, with thousands of killings and hostages. Sectarian violence in the Central African Republic that already accounts for 5000 victims. The civil war in South Sudan. The deaths of thousands of immigrants trying to cross the Mediterranean, in the face of indifference from several European countries. The war in Ukraine, with numerous civilian victims. Crimes and disappearances in Mexico. The usurping of indigenous people's lands in Paraguay. Repression of demonstrators in China. Impunity for torture carried out by the US government in the framing of the War on Terror. Violence and discrimination against women. And a long list of atrocities that would seem to indicate that we have progressed little in matters of human rights in the world.
- 66 In the Statement of the Humanist Movement written in 1993 in the chapter called “Real Democracy Versus Formal Democracy”, Silo wrote:  
“The edifice of democracy has fallen into ruin as its foundations – the separation of powers, representative government, and respect for minorities – have fallen into ruin. “The theoretical separation of powers is nonsense. Even a cursory examination of the practices surrounding the origin and composition of the different powers reveals the intimate relationships that link them to each other. And things could hardly be otherwise, for they all form part of one same system. In nation after nation we see one branch gaining supremacy over the others, functions being usurped, corruption and irregularities surfacing – all corresponding to the changing global economic and political situation of each country.  
“As for representative government, since the extension of universal suffrage people have believed that only a single act is involved when they elect their representative and their representative carries out the mandate received. But as time has passed, people have come to see clearly that there are in fact two acts: a first in which the many elect the few, and a second in which those few betray the many, representing interests alien to the mandate they received. And this corruption is fed within the political parties, now reduced to little more than a handful of leaders who are totally out of touch with the needs of the people. Through the party machinery, powerful interests finance candidates and then dictate the policies they must follow. This state of affairs reveals a profound crisis in the contemporary conception and implementation of representative democracy.”
- 67 In 2002, in the midst of the Argentinean institutional crisis, when a large part of the population demanded ‘everybody out’, referring to politicians, I wrote an essay titled “An Introduction to Real Democracy” in which the way formal democracy works was analysed and actions for a profound change of the system were proposed.
- 68 Pablo Iglesias and other Podemos leaders have used the term “the caste” to synthesise traditional politicians, especially those from the Partido Popular (People's Party) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Par-



ty) who have taken it in turns to be in power ever since the return of democracy in Spain and who Iglesias accuses of representing economic power. In interviews published by Jacobo Rivero, Iglesias said: Podemos is citizens doing politics. Politics is too important to leave it in the hands of the caste, in the hands of those who at the end of the day have become the banks' butlers and not the people's postmen." Later on adding, in regards to what he considers the new politics should be: "This doesn't mean that there shouldn't be spokespersons or that there shouldn't be spaces for decision making, but the power for political change is in the fact that politics isn't a question just for militants but rather it's a question for everyone."

- 69 Aristotle, in his "Politics" right in Book One defines such a nature in the following way: "For that which can foresee by the exercise of mind is by nature intended to be lord and master, and that which can with its body give effect to such foresight is a subject, and by nature a slave; hence master and slave have the same interest. Now nature has distinguished between the female and the slave." And he continues in Book Three: "Nay, in ancient times, and among some nations the artisan class were slaves or foreigners, and therefore the majority of them are so now. The best form of state will not admit them to citizenship; but if they are admitted, then our definition of the virtue of a citizen will not apply to every citizen nor to every free man as such, but only to those who are freed from necessary services. The necessary people are either, slaves who minister to the wants of individuals, or mechanics and labourers who are the servants of the community."
- 70 Jean Jacques Rousseau, in "The Social Contract" whose postulates were slogans of the French Revolution, questioned this naturalistic concept that justified slavery and subjugation of the population to the authority of one person or of a minority. In chapter IV he states: "Since no man has a natural authority over his fellow, and force creates no right, we must conclude that conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men." Later on in chapter VI he says: "The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem of which the Social Contract provides the solution." And in chapter XI he clarifies: "I have already defined civil liberty; by equality, we should understand, not that the degrees of power and riches are to be absolutely identical for everybody; but that power shall never be great enough for violence, and shall always be exercised by virtue of rank and law; and that, in respect of riches, no citizen shall ever be wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself. . . Such equality, we are told, is an unpractical ideal that cannot actually exist. But if its abuse is inevitable, does it follow that we should not at least make regulations concerning it? It is precisely because the force of circumstances tends continually to destroy equality that the force of legislation should always tend to its maintenance."
- 71 In his book, "Revolt of the Masses", José Ortega y Gasset, in the framing of the convulsed and declining Europe of the first half of the 20th century, proposes the problem that in his judgement meant the advent of the masses in all orders of life: in thinking, politics and culture. Starting from this phenomenon described by the author, democracies and societies in themselves were condemned to decline through the dominion of vulgarity and mediocrity.

In chapter V he says, "If we observe the public life of the countries where the triumph of the masses has made most advance- these are the Mediterranean countries- we are surprised to find that politically they are living from day to day... it does not offer itself as a frank solution for the future, it represents no clear announcement of the future, it does not stand out as the beginning of something whose development or evolution is conceivable. In short, it lives without any vital programme, any plan of existence. It does not know where it is going, because, strictly speaking, it has no fixed road, no predetermined trajectory before it. When such a public authority attempts to justify itself it makes no reference at all to the future. On the contrary, it shuts itself up in the present, and says with perfect sincerity: 'I am an abnormal form of Government imposed by circumstances.' Hence its activities are reduced to dodging the difficulties of the hour; not solving them, but escaping from them for the time being."

But in chapter XII he goes back to clarify, "By mass is not to be specially understood the workers; it does not indicate a social class, but a kind of man to be found today in all social classes, who consequently represents our age, in which he is the predominant, ruling power."

- 72 In the book, "Direct Democracy" by Jos Verhulst and Arjen Nijeboen in 2008, the different forms of direct democracy are analysed and overwhelming statistics are included to illustrate the crisis in formal democracies.

"In Germany, research by TNS Emnid, commissioned by the Reader's Digest magazine, showed that citizens' trust in political parties decreased from 41% to 17% in the ten years from 1995 to 2005. Trust in the parliament decreased during the same period from 58% to 34%, and trust in the government from 53% to 26%. 'Under the surface, there's a big storm brewing,' commented the political scientist Karl-Rudolf Korte. 'This is much more than the traditional lack of interest in politics and political parties. People now despise their official representatives.'"

Later on it continues: "A poll by SOFRES in 2003 showed that 90% of French people believe that they exert absolutely no influence on national political decision-making; 76% also believe this about local politics. (*Lire la politique*, 12 March 2003). The Belgian sociologist Elchardus surveyed Belgians' views on democracy in 1999. He summarised: 'A large majority of the voters have the impression that their opinion and their voice do not permeate through politics into the policies.'... 'In 2002, Gallup organised a mammoth poll on the degree of trust of those questioned in 17 social 'institutions' - from the army and trade unions to parliament and multinationals. This involved questioning 36,000 people in 47 countries. Of all institutions, parliaments appeared to enjoy the least trust: an average of 51% of people had little to no trust, whereas only 38% had a moderate to high level of trust.'

Whereas opinions were favourable regarding instruments of Direct Democracy: "The Guardian (29 February 2000) published a poll according to which 69% of British people wanted a referendum on the new electoral system proposed by Prime Minister Blair. This clearly shows that the British people want the last word on the organisation of their political system. In Germany, more than 4 out of 5 citizens want the citizen initiated referendum to be introduced nationally. According to a SOFRES poll, 82% of French people are in favour of the citizen-initiated referendum; 15% are against (*Lire la politique*, 12 March 2003). In the Netherlands, according to an SCP poll in 2002, 81% of the voters support introducing the referendum. The majority of people in the USA also want direct democracy. Between 1999 and 2000, the most extensive poll on direct democracy that has ever taken

place in the USA was carried out. In all 50 states it was found that there were at least 30% more supporters than opponents; the average for the whole US was 67.8% for, and 13.2% against, direct democracy.”

- 73 Tomas Hirsch in his book, “The End of Prehistory”, says regarding this: “When- ever there’s talk of democracy there’s a mandatory association with elected rep- resentation as if the imagination, apparently unwilling to cross a line, were facing an impassable barrier. The political class, for its part, fearful of being consigned to the dustbin of history, makes sure this indecision is reinforced by hammering continually on the impossibility of governing without parties or representatives.”
- 74 Maurice Duverge in his book, “Political Parties” carries out an exhaustive analysis of the origins, structures and characteristics of different political parties, along with the ways their leaders are elected, highlighting their autocratic tendencies under the guise of democracy.
- 75 In the essay written in 2001, “The Right to Rebellion and the Nonviolent Struggle”, in addition to our own considerations regarding the methodology of nonviolence as a way of striving for social transformation, we also cite the rich historical record in the field and include the classification made by Gene Sharp about different tac- tics to use in a struggle.
- 76 Verhulst and Nijeboer, in their book, “Direct Democracy” say: “Our current, pure- ly representative democracy is in fact the response to the aspirations of more than a century ago. This system was suited to that time, because the majority of people could find their political views and ideals reflected in a small number of clear-cut human and social beliefs, which were embodied in and represented by Christian, socialist or liberal groups, for example. That time is long past. People’s ideas and judgements have become more individualised. The appropriate democratic form in this context is a parliamentary system complemented with the binding citizens’ initiative referendum (direct democracy), because such a system provides a direct link between individuals and the legislative and executive organs. The greater the degree to which citizens incline towards individual judgements, and political par- ties lose their monopoly as ideological rallying points, the higher will be the de- mand for tools of direct-democratic decision-making.”
- 77 Alicia Lissidini, in her book, “Direct Democracy in Latin America, between del- egation and participation”, analyses the various mechanisms of direct democracy that have been incorporated into the region and the contrasts that appear in every country and describes the controversy generated in cases when the practice of refer- endums can be used to bypass intermediary democratic instances. The author synthesises the democratic progress of the region: “In terms of instruments incor- porated, there has been an important diversity. While some countries approved several mechanisms in one single reform (giving more powers both to the executive and to the people at the same time) as in the cases of Venezuela and Colombia, oth- ers included more restrictive regulations such as Argentina, Brazil and Peru. In Bo- livia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela presidents can call for binding referendums (in Argentina a referendum isn’t binding). In Bolivia and Ecuador cit- izens can call for a referendum; in Uruguay they have the power to promote consti- tutional reform (which must be ratified or rejected in a referendum). The citizens of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela have the possibility to promote a legislative initiative. However, the real possibilities for

social organisations to promote a law differ in many ways; and also the way in which it is discussed and approved (for example in Colombia and Venezuela, parliament is obliged to consider a legislative proposal, but in Argentina there are no sanctions if a legislative initiative is not debated). There are also differences regarding the issues that can be subject to initiatives: whereas in Venezuela there are no established limitations or restrictions on the use of initiatives, in the majority of constitutions citizens cannot propose laws to do with taxation or the budget. Meanwhile, the abrogative referendum or people's veto is a resource for citizens who seek to repeal laws approved by parliament. In Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela this instrument exists, but it has only been used in Uruguay (1989, 1992 and 2003). Finally, a recall election is a tool that enables citizens to revoke the mandate of those elected by popular vote (an instrument similar to impeachment, but exercised by citizens). Of the countries we are looking at, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela contemplate the recall of the president (and all elected positions). At a local level, it is envisaged in some provinces of Argentina, in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. Peru is the country where most mayors have had to give up their positions because of the use of this resource. Regarding the exercising of direct democracy, since the nineties, either because a referendum was obligatory (to ratify constitutional reform) or by the will of the Executive or Legislature, citizens have been consulted in: Bolivia (2004, 2007 and 2008), Brazil (1993 and 2005), Colombia (2003), Ecuador (1994, 1995, 1997, 2006 and 2007), Peru (1993), Uruguay (three times in 1994, 1996, twice in 1999, in 2004 and twice in 2009) and in Venezuela (twice in 1999, 2000, 2002, 2007 and 2009), at least. Furthermore, people's initiatives (popular and legislative) were presented in Argentina (2002), Brazil (1999), Bolivia (2006), Peru (2000, 2002 and 2004), Uruguay (1992 and 2003) and Venezuela (2004).

She later underlines the positive and negative aspects of such instruments: "Certainly direct democracy can contribute to the transformation of democracy as proposed by Cain, Dalton and Scarrow (2003), democratising the political agenda and promoting citizen participation, but it can also promote an increase of the Executive's power and discretion to the detriment of other mechanisms of intermediation and representation; and therefore promote a kind of delegative democracy (with the meaning given by O'Donnell). To evaluate its effects; the legal design of the mechanisms, the characteristics of the actors who exercise them and the political and social context should be considered."

- 78 Guillermo O'Donnell, in his article, "Delegative Democracy" characterises it as follows: "Delegative democracies are grounded on one basic premise: the person who wins a presidential election is enabled to govern the country as they see fit, and to the extent that existing power relations allow, for the term to which they have been elected. The President is the embodiment of the nation and the main custodian of the national interest, which it is incumbent upon them to define. What they do in government does not need to bear any resemblance to what they said or promised during the electoral campaign—they have been authorized to govern as they see fit. Since this paternal figure has to take care of the whole nation, it is almost obvious that their support cannot come from a party; their political basis has to be a movement, the supposedly vibrant overcoming of the factionalism and conflicts that parties bring about. Typically, and consistently, winning presidential candidates in DDs present themselves as above all parties; i.e., both political parties and organized interests. How could it be otherwise for somebody who claims to embody the whole of the nation? In this view other institutions—such as Con-

gress and the Judiciary—are nuisances that come attached to the domestic and international advantages of being a democratically elected President. Accountability to those institutions, or to other private or semi-private organizations, appears as an unnecessary impediment to the full authority that the President has been delegated to exercise. Delegative democracy is not alien to the democratic tradition. Actually, it is more democratic, but less liberal, than representative democracy. DD is strongly majoritarian: democracy is constituting, in clean elections, a majority that empowers somebody to become, for a given number of years, the embodiment and interpreter of the high interests of the nation.”

- 79 In a study written by several authors and published by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina), titled “Participatory Democracy, a utopia in motion” the foundations and historical background of participatory democracy and its concrete practice through participatory budgets are analysed. In the year the study was prepared, the participatory fervour emerging from the institutional crisis of 2001-2002 in Argentina in which assemblies of people said to traditional politicians “everybody out”, was still latent; something that surely encouraged the authors’ optimism towards citizens’ commitment, something essential for a participatory democracy. Notwithstanding this, in the analysis they also warned of a possible assimilation of those instruments into formal democracy: “It would seem that participatory democracy is destined to follow the overthrow of representative democracy. This is a fork in the road between revolution and concession. On the one hand the path of the humanist and plebeian demand initiated by the radical philosophers of the Enlightenment, and continued by the heirs of the tricolour against the Restoration in the first half of the 19th century. On the other hand, the pathway of establishing modern institutions under the shelter of aristocratic and monarchic continuity, followed by the concession of universal suffrage as a consequence of the violent disturbances caused by the Paris Commune. Later on, some of the positive impacts of this practice are listed: “The democratic question is without doubt a central point in every process of resistance that tends to the overcoming of predominant neoliberalism. In this context, PD is “awareness raising” due to its mobilising potential, and allows the people “... to rediscover the State, appropriate it and establish a revealing effect for other sectors of society.” The experience of PD brings together certain characteristic aspects independent from the substantial aspects of each reality for other experiences, such as: Direct and indirect popular participation, through different government and civil society organs. Direct practice of direct actions by people in different instances of meetings, debates and information analysis for decision-making, to form control and audit committees, as well as to have its own space for complaints and criticism. Self-organisation built by and made up of citizens themselves, Raúl Pont in this respect points out that “... in a healthy exercising of popular sovereignty that is not at the mercy of laws and decrees decided by others.”
- 80 Marion Gret and Yves Sintomer, in their book “Porto Alegre: the challenges of participatory democracy”, describe the process through which the experience in Brazil evolved. From this they were able to collect several positive results, but they were also able to highlight the challenges that remain ahead and which are the same that Real Democracy will have to face in order to establish itself. One of those challenges is effectiveness, as deliberating assemblies – working at different levels

in a participative pyramid in which there is usually a lack of information and formation – frequently work to the detriment of the effective set up of projects. And the other difficulty resides in the level of participation that in Porto Alegre was estimated to be around 1.5% of the population in plenary meetings, and a maximum of 5% occasional participation in preliminary neighbourhood meetings.

- 81 In the report, “Freedom in the World 2015”, Freedom House evaluates the state of democracy and freedom in the world in accordance with its particular point of view, classifying countries as “free”, “partly free”, and “not free”. In Latin America, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Paraguay, Bolivia and a large part of Central America appear in the “partly free” category, while most of Asia, Russia and Africa appear in the “not free” category.
- 82 Sharp develops in minute detail the steps to take for democratising a country governed by a dictator, citing historical experiences and formulating a progressive sequence from the initial strategy design, passing through various tactics, and the different methods of nonviolent struggle. He also takes time to propose a transition to democracy after dictatorship, in order to avoid falling into another dictatorship, although his concept of democracy doesn’t transcend that of today’s formal democracy. His criticism of communism limits both his perspective on the universe of totalitarian regimes and his perspective on democracy, but his analysis of the different possibilities for nonviolent struggle is instructive.
- 83 The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, written in 1982, establishes a socialist democracy through which the representatives of the highest organ of government, the National People’s Congress, are elected indirectly through several representative entities that in the first instance are elected by the people locally. Even though in practice, many of the rights proclaimed in this Constitution have become mere formalities in the face of the concentration of power, from a certain point of view it isn’t very different from what happens in Western formal democracies with other kinds of Rights, in the sense that economic power has seized control. Below we quote some fragments of the Chinese Constitution to illustrate the point:  
Article 1 - The People’s Republic of China is a socialist state under the people’s democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants. The socialist system is the basic system of the People’s Republic of China. Sabotage of the socialist system by any organization or individual is prohibited.  
Article 2 - All power in the People’s Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise state power are the National People’s Congress and the local people’s congresses at different levels. The people administer state affairs and manage economic, cultural and social affairs through various channels and in various ways in accordance with the law.  
Article 3 - The state organs of the People’s Republic of China apply the principle of democratic centralism. The National People’s Congress and the local people’s congresses at different levels are instituted through democratic election. They are responsible to the people and subject to their supervision. All administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs of the state are created by the people’s congresses to which they are responsible and under whose supervision they operate. The division of functions and powers between the central and local state organs is guided by the principle of giving full play to the initiative and enthusiasm of the local authorities under the unified leadership of the central authorities.

Article 28 - The state maintains public order and suppresses treasonable and other counter-revolutionary activities; it penalizes actions that endanger public security and disrupt the socialist economy and other criminal activities, and punishes and reforms criminals.

Article 34 - All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of nationality, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious belief, education, property status, or length of residence, except persons deprived of political rights according to law.

Article 35 - Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.

Article 41. Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to criticize and make suggestions to any state organ or functionary. Citizens have the right to make to relevant state organs complaints and charges against, or exposures of, violation of the law or dereliction of duty by any state organ or functionary; but fabrication or distortion of facts with the intention of libel or frame-up is prohibited. In case of complaints, charges or exposures made by citizens, the state organ concerned must deal with them in a responsible manner after ascertaining the facts. No one may suppress such complaints, charges and exposures, or retaliate against the citizens making them. Citizens who have suffered losses through infringement of their civil rights by any state organ or functionary have the right to compensation in accordance with the law.

Article 57 - The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China is the highest organ of state power. Its permanent body is the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Article 58 - The National People's Congress and its Standing Committee exercise the legislative power of the state.

Article 59. The National People's Congress is composed of deputies elected by the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government, and by the armed forces. All the minority nationalities are entitled to appropriate representation. Election of deputies to the National People's Congress is conducted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The number of deputies to the National People's Congress and the manner of their election are prescribed by law.

- 84 Despite all attempts at censorship, the number of protests has grown from around 10,000 in 1994 to 87,000 in 2005, and the figure continues to grow, according to Charles Tilly in his book, "Social Movements".
- 85 In his book "What is property", Pierre Proudhon referring to the sale of land, asked himself, "Can the generation of today dispossess the generation of tomorrow?"
- 86 Milton Friedman in his book "Free to choose", possibly on the basis of a critical view of communism held at the time, also by association qualified as the politics of "equality of outcome" practically any State intervention that tried to redistribute any wealth, or even to give basic welfare to the marginalised, to the point of affirming that in the United States of the 70s this was the predominant meaning of equality. In support of his criticisms (directed above all to the Democratic Party because of their policy of State intervention), he quotes Tocqueville: "There is... a manly and lawful passion for equality which incites men to wish all to be powerful and honored. This passion tends to elevate the humble to the rank of the great; but there exists also in the human heart a depraved taste for equality, which impels the



weak to attempt to lower the powerful to their own level, and reduces men to prefer equality in slavery to inequality with freedom.”

But Friedman not only argues from a totally naturalist vision of human beings but furthermore totally minimises the tremendous advantages of those able to accumulate capital over and above the talents of the hard-working when it comes to comparing equal opportunities, reaching the point where he starts to wield arguments that verge on the grotesque: “Much of the moral fervor behind the drive for equality of outcome comes from the widespread belief that it is not fair that some children should have a great advantage over others simply because they happen to have wealthy parents. Of course it is not fair. However, unfairness can take many forms. It can take the form of the inheritance of property—bonds and stocks, houses, factories; it can also take the form of the inheritance of talent—musical ability, strength, mathematical genius. The inheritance of property can be interfered with more readily than the inheritance of talent. But from an ethical point of view, is there any difference between the two? Yet many people resent the inheritance of property but not the inheritance of talent.”

- 87 Karl Marx, in chapter VII of the first volume of *Capital*, referring to surplus-value says the following: “During the second period of the labour-process, that in which his labour is no longer necessary labour, the workman, it is true, labours, expends labour-power; but his labour, being no longer necessary labour, he creates no value for himself. He creates surplus-value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of a creation out of nothing. This portion of the working day, I name surplus labour-time, and to the labour expended during that time, I give the name of surplus labour. It is every bit as important, for a correct understanding of surplus-value, to conceive it as a mere congelation of surplus labour-time, as nothing but materialised surplus labour, as it is, for a proper comprehension of value, to conceive it as a mere congelation of so many hours of labour, as nothing but materialised labour. The essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave-labour, and one based on wage-labour, lies only in the mode in which this surplus labour is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the labourer.”
- 88 José Luis Montero de Burgos, in his book “Business and Society”, develops the concept of worker participation, from the point of view of the lack of democracy in the economy and in businesses in particular, where it’s a given that ownership is synonymous with power. Montero de Burgos says, “Given that democracy is a universally accepted value, it must be said that if someone thinks that businesses are going to keep their doors shut to democracy, they can also think about throwing this idea into the dustbin of history. How naturally ownership of the means of production has been interchanged for ownership of the business! As if they were identical concepts! I say, then, that it’s accepted, and without discussion, that if the owner of the machines, the buildings, the money, and things in general, contributes them to a business, they must have power over people. But this is a mistake, no matter how rooted the idea is – and it is – because this implies accepting that things are sources of power over people.”
- 89 The book “Beyond Capitalism: Mixed Economics” was written by the author in the year 2000 and the proposals for an alternative system to Capitalism and Communism were developed, analysing in depth some of the issues mentioned here.



- 90 Franz Hinkelammert and Henry Mora Jimenez, in their book "Toward an Economy for Life", carry out an exhaustive critical analysis of the way market economics works, proposing viable alternatives, but always starting from ethics and meaning of life and not from economist suppositions.
- 91 Manfred Max-Neef, in his book, "Human Scale Development", proposes a revision of economic a priori assumptions in order to pass to an economy at the service of people and society. Regarding this he says in one passage: "The Logic of Economics Versus the Ethics of Well-being. It is necessary to counter a logic of economics, which has inherited the instrumental reasoning that permeates modern culture with an ethics of well-being. The fetishism of numbers must be replaced by the development of people. The state's vertical management and the exploitation of some groups by others must give way to a social will encouraging participation, autonomy and the equitable distribution of resources. It is absolutely necessary to do away with a priori categories and assumptions which, thus far, have not been questioned at the levels of macro-economics and macro-politics. A commitment to Human Scale Development makes it necessary to encourage individuals to assume responsibility for a development alternative based on self-reliance. In this respect, the central question for Human Scale Development is: What resources are to be generated, and how should they be used in order to nurture self-reliance in individuals and in micro-spaces? Self-reliance involves a kind of regeneration or revitalization emanating from one's own efforts, capabilities and resources. Strategically, it means that what can be produced (or worked out) at local levels is what should be produced (or worked out) at local levels. The same principle holds true at the regional and national levels."
- 92 The French economist, Thomas Piketty, in his book, "The Economics of Inequality", analyses different policies for reducing inequality whether it be between salary incomes or between capital income with respect to salaries or the patrimonial inequality, the product of the differences in income plus the process of hereditary accumulation. Regarding the issue of direct redistribution through salary increases, Piketty says that the risk of that policy resides in the possibility of substitution of manpower with machinery as the cost of manpower increases, something that doesn't happen with indirect redistribution through taxation.
- 93 The Institute for Fiscal Studies, in Madrid, Spain, financed by the European Union, published a study in 2009 on the "Tax Systems of Latin America", comparing them to European versions. In European Union countries, the share of national revenue coming from income tax varied between 45% and 63%, whereas in Latin America it varied between 18% and 49% as a maximum. While, in Latin America most revenue is collected from corporations, in Europe it comes mostly from private individuals, something which gives greater possibilities for increasing rates accordance to the ability to pay. In addition to greater regressiveness in the tax system, in countries with greater inequality fiscal discipline is much more relaxed and tax administration less effective. The fiscal harmonisation required at an international level is also analysed, to the extent that progress can be made towards regional integration through free trade zones, customs unions and economic unions.
- 94 Tax havens have been created by international financial power itself in order to have impunity in their speculation, tax-evasion and money-laundering operations. Alberto Garzón Espinosa, in his paper "Tax Havens in Financial Globalisation"

quotes the following definition: "Tax havens are financial centres that carry out unregulated and uncontrolled activity outside the common regulations of other countries they have relationships with, and they're specially targeted towards companies and non-resident individuals. This activity is incentivised through little or zero tax."

These havens, generally speaking, are very small countries which are easily manipulated by the financial mafia, and in some cases they're territories within a country, but with a sufficient degree of self-governing autonomy. The most important tax havens are: The Cayman Islands, which with only 350,000 residents, counts on 584 banks and 2,200 hedge funds, The Bahamas with 350 banks and 58,000 companies, Bermuda with 37 banks and 11,000 companies, there is also Barbados, Aruba, The Virgin Islands, Belize, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and many others. One particular case in point is the island of Sark in the Channel Islands that, even though it forms part of the United Kingdom, remarkably has the autonomy to function as a tax haven. Despite the fact that it has only slightly more than 500 residents, at one time it was home to no less than 15,000 off-shore companies and a single resident was the director of 2,400 of them. Of course these havens are the preferred locations for banks, transnational companies, the capital of the well-off and above all the Hedge Funds which, as a result of their speculation, caused the financial crisis of 2007.

- 95 Milton Friedman, in his book "Free to Choose", argues in favour of classical liberal theories, above all those of Adam Smith, reaffirming that the State should only take care of citizens' protection, borders and carrying out those works that individual citizens can't do alone. For Friedman the problem of unemployment is resolved by the free market itself and any measure that a government could take would be counterproductive: "The same fallacy of looking at only one side of the issue is present when tariffs are urged in order to add to employment. If tariffs are imposed on, say, textiles; that will add to output and employment in the domestic textile industry. However, foreign producers who no longer can sell their textiles in the United States earn fewer dollars. They will have less to spend in the United States. Exports will go down to balance decreased imports. Employment will go up in the textile industry, down in the export industries. And the shift of employment to less productive uses will reduce total output."

This assertion assumes that all products that could be manufactured are equivalent in terms of the employment they generate, disregarding the fact that the value of imports and exports, even though they may balance out, may imply different employment levels in every country. Such a situation would occur in a country that imports manufactured goods and exports raw materials, and which can only generate employment by developing its industry, something which would possibly need tariffs to protect it.

In another passage, Friedman totally disqualifies the State from its social function: "An essential part of economic freedom is freedom to choose how to use our income: how much to spend on ourselves and on what items; how much to save and in what form; how much to give away and to whom. Currently, more than 40 percent of our income is disposed of on our behalf by government at federal, state, and local levels combined."

And he then goes on to question any kind of regulation and even basic controls that should be undertaken by the State when he says: "Another essential part of economic freedom is freedom to use the resources we possess in accordance with our

own values—freedom to enter any occupation, engage in any business enterprise, buy from and sell to anyone else, so long as we do so on a strictly voluntary basis and do not resort to force in order to coerce others. Today you are not free to offer your services as a lawyer, a physician, a dentist, a plumber, a barber, a mortician, or engage in a host of other occupations, without first getting a permit or license from a government official. You are not free to work overtime at terms mutually agreeable to you and your employer, unless the terms conform to rules and regulations laid down by a government official. You are not free to set up a bank, go into the taxicab business, or the business of selling electricity or telephone service, or running a railroad, busline, or airline, without first receiving permission from a government official. You are not free to raise funds on the capital markets unless you fill out the numerous pages of forms the SEC requires.”

- 96 John Maynard Keynes, in his book “The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money”, published for the first time in the United Kingdom in 1936, questioned some classical postulations. In those days, Keynes considered it necessary to define ‘involuntary unemployment’ as classical theory didn’t allow for its existence saying: “...Men are involuntarily unemployed If, in the event of a small rise in the price of wage-goods relatively to the money-wage, both the aggregate supply of labour willing to work for the current money-wage and the aggregate demand for it at that wage would be greater than the existing volume of employment.” It must be remembered that classical theory in those days maintained that in the market everything is regulated by the balance between supply and demand, as a result of which, if there’s unemployment at a certain salary level, then that level would drop until finding a new point of equilibrium with full employment, or at most a minimum percentage of frictional unemployment. Even though Keynes demonstrated the error of that theory, with the subsequent advent of neoliberalism the fallacy of the wisdom of the markets was insisted on, in this case through deregulation and labour flexibility, trying to reinstate the concept that the marginal disutility of labour is equal to real wages and that supply creates its own demand. In another passage of his book, Keynes relativises the old saying that ‘saving is the basis of fortune’ because even though this could work individually, in a society, an excess of saving necessarily implies a decrease in consumption, therefore a drop in consumption decreases factory income and decreases employment, thereby diminishing the capacity to save. Regarding this he says, “...saving [is], like spending, a two-sided affair. For although the amount of his own saving is unlikely to have any significant influence on his own income, the reactions of the amount of his consumption on the incomes of others makes it impossible for all individuals simultaneously to save any given sums. Every such attempt to save more by reducing consumption will so affect incomes that the attempt necessarily defeats itself.” On this basis, Keynes develops the concept of propensity to save, and its increase relative to the increase in income and the marginal propensity to consume as  $dC_w/dY_w$ . As by definition the increase in consumption is less than the increase of income, the difference would be accounted for as investment. On the other hand, by increasing consumption and investment in front of an increase in wages, this would lead to a multiplying effect that would also increase employment as investment grows; and this creates the virtuous circle generated in a public investment economy. In any case, Keynes (quoting Kahn) warns about factors to consider in these policies of increased public investment and income for the population: inflation, an eventual increase in preference for liquidity that delays investment, and an

opening-up to imports that leads the increase in consumption to be translated into higher employment in other countries.

Later on Keynes questions the supposition that all savings are equivalent to investment, and that therefore it will also generate consumption, in this case, of durable goods: "The absurd, though almost universal, idea that an act of individual saving is just as good for effective demand as an act of individual consumption, has been fostered by the fallacy, much more specious than the conclusion derived from it, that an increased desire to hold wealth, being much the same thing as an increased desire to hold investments, must, by increasing the demand for investments, provide a stimulus to their production; so that current investment is promoted by individual saving to the same extent as present consumption is diminished. It is of this fallacy that it is most difficult to disabuse men's minds. It comes from believing that the owner of wealth desires a capital-asset as such, whereas what he really desires is its prospective yield. Now, prospective yield wholly depends on the expectation of future effective demand in relation to future conditions of supply. If, therefore, an act of saving does nothing to improve prospective yield, it does nothing to stimulate investment. Moreover, in order that an individual saver may attain his desired goal of the ownership of wealth, it is not necessary that a new capital-asset should be produced wherewith to satisfy him."

- 97 In his book "Banker to the Poor", Muhammad Yunus, microfinance pioneer and founder of the Grameen Bank, explains the way the bank for poor people was put together and the contrast with the way the World Bank gives finance, something that for the most part is lost in bureaucracy and corruption. In one passage of the book he says, "In January 1977, when we started, I looked at how others ran their loan operations, and I learned from their mistakes... We decided that if Grameen was to work, we had to trust our clients... From the very first day, we decided that in our system there would be no room for the police... Our experience with bad debt is less than 1 per cent... We looked at the conventional banks, and we turned everything around... The entire Grameen Bank system runs on the principle that people should not come to the bank, the bank should go to the people..."
- 98 John K. Galbraith, in his book "Money" tells the history and evolution of different payment instruments around the world, and concerning the effects that the conquest of America had in monetary terms, he says: "Discovery and conquest set in motion a vast flow of precious metal from America to Europe, and the result was a huge rise in prices – an inflation occasioned by an increase in the supply of the hardest of hard money. Almost no one in Europe was so removed from market influences that he did not feel some consequence in his wage, in what he sold, in whatever trifling thing he had to buy. The price increases occurred first in Spain where the metals first arrived; then, as they were carried by trade (or perhaps in lesser measure by smuggling or for conquest) to France, the Low Countries and England, inflation followed there."
- 99 Noam Chomsky, in his essay on Anarchism and Marxism, quotes Bakunin saying: "If one were to seek a single leading idea within the anarchist tradition, it should, I believe, be that expressed by Bakunin when, in writing on the Paris Commune, he identified himself as follows: 'I am a fanatic lover of liberty, considering it as the unique condition under which intelligence, dignity and human happiness can develop and grow; not the purely formal liberty conceded, measured out and regulated by the State, an eternal lie which in reality represents nothing more than

the privilege of some founded on the slavery of the rest; not the individualistic, egoistic, shabby, and fictitious liberty extolled by the School of J. J. Rousseau and other schools of bourgeois liberalism, which considers the would-be rights of all men, represented by the State which limits the rights of each — an idea that leads inevitably to the reduction of the rights of each to zero. No, I mean the only kind of liberty that is worthy of the name, liberty that consists in the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers that are latent in each person; liberty that recognizes no restrictions other than those determined by the laws of our own individual nature, which cannot properly be regarded as restrictions since these laws are not imposed by any outside legislator beside or above us, but are immanent and inherent, forming the very basis of our material, intellectual and moral being — they do not limit us but are the real and immediate conditions of our freedom.”

- 100 In the “Ninth Letter” from his book, “Letters to my Friends”, Silo deals with this issue explaining the care that must be taken when it comes to this Western view of certain rights, something that isn’t an obstacle to working for the most basic rights anywhere:

“There exist diverse conceptions of the human being, and this variety of points of view is often related to the different cultures from which people observe reality. And these issues necessarily affect the question of human rights as a whole. Indeed, faced with the idea of a universal human being with the same rights and functions in all societies, today some are raising a cultural thesis in defence of a different position regarding these questions. The supporters of this position regard supposedly universal human rights as simply a generalization of the Western point of view in an unjustified claim of universal validity. For example, consider Article 16:

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

These three sub-paragraphs in Article 16 present numerous difficulties of interpretation and application in various cultures that stretch from the eastern Mediterranean through the Middle East and into Africa and Asia – that is to say, they create difficulties for the greater part of humanity. The world is so large and so varied that over vast parts of it not even marriage and the family coincide with the parameters that seem so “natural” to the West. As a consequence, these institutions and the universal human rights associated with them are the subject of continuing debate. The same occurs if we consider the general conceptions of law and justice. If we compare ideas regarding criminal punishment and the rehabilitation of criminals, we find no agreement on these points even among nations from the same Western cultural context. To uphold the point of view of one’s own culture as valid for all of humanity, then, leads to positions that are frankly ludicrous. For example, the legal penalty of cutting off the hand of a thief as practiced in certain Arab countries is viewed as a clear violation of human rights in the United States – while at the same time they like to hold academic debates on whether to execute criminals by the use of cyanide gas, 2,000 volts of electricity, lethal injection, hanging, or some other macabre delight of capital punishment. It should be noted, however, that just as in

the United States a significant proportion of the society rejects capital punishment, so too in Arab countries many oppose corporal punishment for those who have broken the law.

Even the West itself, swept along by changing practices and customs, is having great difficulty in trying to uphold its traditional idea of the “natural” family. Can a family today contain adopted children? Of course it can. Can a family have spouses who are members of the same sex? Some legislatures already allow this. What, then, defines the family – its “natural” character or the voluntary commitment of people to fulfil certain functions? On what basis can we say that the monogamous family of some cultures is better than the polygamous one of others? And if this is the state of the discussion, can we continue to speak of a single set of laws that is universally applicable to the family? Which human rights are to be defended – and which are not – regarding the institution of the family?

Clearly, the dialectic between the universalist thesis (hardly universal even in its own culture) and the cultural thesis cannot be resolved in the case of the family (which I have considered as only one of many possible examples), just as I am afraid that for now it will remain similarly unresolved for other areas of the social endeavour.

To sum this up: Here we find in play a general conception of the human being that is not sufficiently well-founded to encompass the many positions in conflict. Yet the need for such a comprehensive conception is evident, because neither the law in general nor human rights in particular can prevail if their deepest meaning is not clear.

No longer can we raise the most general questions of law only in the abstract. **Either we are dealing with rights that, to have effect, must flow from established power, or we are dealing with rights that are only aspirations yet to be fulfilled.** In regard to the issue of rights, I have written elsewhere (see the chapter “Law” in *The Human Landscape*):

Practical people who have not become lost in theorizing have declared that law is necessary in order for there to be social coexistence. It is also said that the law is made to defend the interests of those who impose it.

It seems that in the situation previous to power a particular law is installed, which in turn legitimizes that power. So it is that power, as the imposition of an intention – whether accepted or not – is the central issue. It is said that force does not generate rights, but paradoxically this statement is normally accepted only when force is thought of as brutal physical fact, when in reality force – economic, political, and so on – does not need to be expressed perceptually to make its presence felt and to demand respect. In any case, even physical force, that of arms, for example, expressed as naked threat creates situations that are justified legally, and we cannot deny that the use of arms in one direction or another depends on human intention and not on a right.

And further on:

All those who violate the law are ignoring a situation that is asserted in the present, exposing their temporality – their future – to the decisions of others. But it is clear that this “present” in which the law begins to take effect has its roots in the past. Customs, morality, religion, or social consensus are the sources customarily invoked to justify the existence of the law. Each depends in turn on the power that imposes it. And these sources are changed when the power that gave them origin declines or transforms so that maintaining the previous judicial order begins to clash with what is “reasonable,” with “common sense,” and so on. When the legis-

lature repeals or rewrites a law, or a group of representatives of the people amend a country's basic charter or constitution, they apparently do so without violating the law in general, because they are not subject to the decisions of others, because they hold power or act as the representatives of established power, and in this situation it is clear that power generates rights and obligations and not the reverse.

To end, let me cite the following:

**Human rights do not have the universal application that would be desirable because they do not flow from the universal power of the human being, but only from the power that one part now exercises over the whole.** If even the most elementary claims to the governing of one's own body are trampled underfoot in all latitudes, then we can speak only of aspirations yet to become rights. **Human rights do not pertain to the past, they lie ahead in the future, calling our intentionality, sustaining a struggle that is rekindled in each new violation of humanity's destiny.** For this reason, every protest in favour of human rights has meaning because it shows the powers that be that they are not omnipotent and that they do not control the future.

As for our general conception of the human being, it does not seem necessary to review it here or to reaffirm that the recognition we give to diverse cultural realities does not invalidate the existence of a common human structure that is in historical flux in a converging direction. The struggle to establish a universal human nation is also the struggle, from each culture, to put into practice human rights that are ever more coherently defined.

If the right to a fulfilled life and freedom is suddenly ignored in a certain culture and other values placed above the human being, it is because something there has gone astray, something is diverging from our common destiny. Should this happen, then the expression of that culture *in that precise point* must be clearly repudiated.

It is true that the formulations of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are imperfect, but for now this is all that we have at hand to defend and to perfect. **Today these rights are still considered aspirations that cannot be fully realized given the established powers. The struggle for the full application of human rights leads necessarily to questioning the powers that be, orienting action toward replacing them with the powers of a new and human society."**

- 101 In the monograph titled "The Internalisation of Morality", after an analysis of different religious and philosophical concepts of morality, we go into the issue of morality's external and internal aspects:

"The Morality for Oneself and the Morality for Others

"It could be assumed that if every human being were to act of their own initiative according to an objective and universal morality, then social pressure and justice would be unnecessary because, in general, laws deal with situations in which first morality is violated, and then the gravity of the resulting situation constitutes the crime. But as we don't live in this ideal world, social pressure and justice seem to be necessary. But it's blatantly obvious that neither social pressure nor justice have succeeded in preventing the growing loss of moral values and its consequences in this historical moment.

"Possibly society's demands for moral behaviour between its members has turned into a formal and objectifying demand in which moral behaviour is validated according to the benefit for others and not for the benefit of the one acting morally. And it must be added that several moral precepts which have been culturally



transmitted from generation to generation through the mechanical repetition of customs from another time in history are completely anachronistic and incomprehensible today.

"All this externalisation of morality brings with it problems in people's internal behaviour, because objectification and social hypocrisy narrow down our references in the world of relationships, and this produces relativisation in an individual's value system in a society 'unworthy of respect'. And if we add to this the growing clash between religious moral dogmatism on the one hand, and rationalism and nihilism on the other, then moral relativism increases.

"It's evident that the 'morality for others' – the external morality – has failed not just because of the 'death of God' previously announced by Nietzsche, but rather because of the 'suicide' of rationalism which has fallen into a dogmatisation of its own reasoning.

"Nevertheless, the possibility of a morality 'for oneself' – and only for oneself – proposed on the hypothetical basis of an individual's absolute existential sovereignty, someone who can only relate morally with their own existence and their own destiny, doesn't seem to be the appropriate answer to this moral crisis either. Cruelty, evil and indifference are alternatives that may seem to be morally valid choices, to the extent that the other person is negated in a false path to self-affirmation of one's own freedom. Such world-denying self-affirmation, however, wouldn't be affirming one's own being, rather an illusory creation approaching megalomania.

"So we're talking then about the need for a morality that comprises the dynamic structure of a human being made in the world; not a morality of a being made by the world, or without the world.

"An individual configures their image of the world and their image of themselves through the structuring done in the memory. So morality, as a representation, is always constructed internally even though such representation can be permanently updated by sensorial pathways in contact with the world, through the reworking of memory, or through the pathway of imagination (see *Psychology Notes* by Silo). We're broadly saying that the Experience is one that allows someone to internalise a morality which is both 'for oneself' and 'for others'. And when we talk about experience we aren't talking about positivist empiricism, but rather a structure of internal and external experience."

And later on we talked about the Golden Rule in these terms:

"The principle of 'treating others as you want to be treated' is without doubt one of the highest moral guidelines that any human being can propose to themselves, and it's not a coincidence that the Golden Rule is a proposal in several religions. The way the principle is expressed should leave no room for doubt even though we're never far away from those intellectually sophisticated friends who question it, arguing that it could give rise to someone projecting onto others their own interpretation of what it means to treat others well. Such intellectual relativism is nothing more than the consequence of a merely formal interpretation of the principle, something that could also be said of attempts at applying it.

"We could say that this principle contains the morality both for oneself and for others, including them in a single act in which one humanises oneself by humanising others.

"Because when – either out of fear or self-censorship – someone subjects themselves to an external morality and so their external action ends up being apparently good for others, such externalisation of the act oppresses the actor who objectifies and denies themselves, becoming no more than a reflection of something exter-



nal. And simultaneously they objectify and dehumanise others when they relate to them as mere guardians of their own prisons of external morality.

"Likewise, someone who, in the name of their own 'freedom', mistreats someone else by affirming themselves through their own individual compulsions, or someone pervaded by their own selfish individualism who is indifferent to the mistreatment of others, is someone who objectifies others, dehumanising them as if they were mere prosthetic extensions of their own will, and so in turn they dehumanise themselves by affirming themselves through their Darwinian nature and not through their human intentionality.

"So it's clear that applying this principle requires a constant interaction between the contact with what's human in oneself and the contact with what's human in the other person. By necessity I must pay attention to what's within me and I must pay attention to the other person. That attention creates the conditions for a permanent updating of the memory structure, of one's self-image and the image one has of the other person – images that aren't neutral, of course, but instead have emotional charge.

"It's clear that this thing of 'putting yourself in someone else's position' isn't possible literally as I can't register what someone else is registering. But I can capture it through sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle indicators as and when I pay attention to the other person and don't remain bottled-up in my own compulsions (which is why I must also be attentive to what's going on within me). Thus, I represent myself as if I were in the other person's position, and so I'm able to connect to a sensibility that, even though it's mine (which is why I can feel it), I can also recognise in the other person, and this recognition puts me in tune with what's human in both of us. Tuning into what's human in both of us is what allows me to find the way to act in line with the principle in any given situation. I can treat someone else the way I want to be treated because I'm tuned in to them, and not because of some instruction manual. And this humanises me as I humanise the other person because all of this happens within me, even though of course there are external consequences in the form of actions or gestures.

"You could argue that if the register I have of someone else's humanity comes to be part of my representations, and if that register is an internal reworking in the memory which is updated with new sensory data, then this doesn't stop it from being an illusory vision of reality; as illusory as any other from a solipsist way of seeing things in any case. But the key is that this intentionality that I have to apply in order to observe within myself – because I'm looking for registers of coherence and unity – allows me to locate myself in other internal spaces from where my observation of someone else also becomes more subtle and sensitive. And this search for internal coherence is only compatible with a humanising way of seeing the other person and my corresponding treatment of them. In other words, the level from where I relate to the world goes up and I approach a more structural experience of what's internal and what's external – a more phenomenological way of seeing things if you like.

"Surely if the exercise of 'putting yourself in someone else's position' – trying to feel what they feel – is not attempted with a double attention (internal and external) but rather from an introspection in one's own internal representations, then the result would end up being fairly incoherent behaviour. Such is the case of those obsessives who believe they can see in other people the meanings that they themselves project from within. That's why it's important that the true engine in all of this is the search for internal coherence, for unity forged in the relationship dynamic with the world.

"The issue is, how to set this intention in motion through a moral proposal. Because perhaps someone looking for their internal unity and doing so with dedication would reach a point where they're in tune with the Golden Rule even though they've never heard of it. And likewise it happens that many of those who have heard of it, even though they consider it to be appropriate, don't internalise it to the point where they feel the internal need to apply it as an act of unity."

102 Friedrich Nietzsche, ferocious critic of Judaeo-Christian morality, profoundly questioned the paradigms of the morality of the times in all his books, but in his reaction against it he fell into the extreme opposite. In his "On the Genealogy of Morality" he says: "The beginning of the slaves' revolt in morality occurs when *ressentiment* itself turns creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of those beings who, denied the proper response of action, compensate for it only with imaginary revenge. Whereas all noble morality grows out of a triumphant saying 'yes' to itself, slave morality says 'no' on principle to everything that is 'outside', 'other', 'non-self': and this 'no' is its creative deed. This reversal of the evaluating glance – this essential orientation to the outside instead of back onto itself – is a feature of *ressentiment*: in order to come about, slave morality first has to have an opposing, external world, it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all, – its action is basically a reaction. The opposite is the case with the noble method of valuation: this acts and grows spontaneously, seeking out its opposite only so that it can say 'yes' to itself even more thankfully and exultantly, – its negative concept 'low', 'common', 'bad' is only a pale contrast created after the event compared to its positive basic concept, saturated with life and passion, 'we the noble, the good, the beautiful and the happy!' When the noble method of valuation makes a mistake and sins against reality, this happens in relation to the sphere with which it is not sufficiently familiar, a true knowledge of which, indeed, it rigidly resists: in some circumstances, it misjudges the sphere it despises, that of the common man, the rabble; on the other hand, we should bear in mind that the distortion which results from the feeling of contempt, disdain and superciliousness, always assuming that the image of the despised person is distorted, remains far behind the distortion with which the entrenched hatred and revenge of the powerless man attacks his opponent..."

103 In the book, "Silo's Message", the commitments that participants assume are set out in the following way: "We consider human beings to be the highest value above money, the State, religion, social models and systems. We promote liberty of thought. We promote equal rights and equal opportunities for all human beings. We recognise and encourage diversity in customs and cultures. We oppose all discrimination. We consecrate just resistance against all forms of violence: physical, economic, racial, religious, sexual, psychological and moral." In addition to this clear position in front of social problems, in the same book there are also recommendations for the life of any person, in the so-called Principles of Valid Action:

1. To go against the evolution of things is to go against yourself.
2. When you force something towards an end, you produce the contrary.
3. Do not oppose a great force. Retreat until it weakens, then advance with resolution.
4. Things are well when they move together, not in isolation.
5. If day and night, summer and winter are well with you, you have surpassed the contradictions.

6. If you pursue pleasure, you enchain yourself to suffering. But as long as you do not harm your health, enjoy without inhibition when the opportunity presents itself.
  7. If you pursue an end, you enchain yourself. If everything you do is carried out as though it were an end in itself, you liberate yourself.
  8. You will make your conflicts disappear when you understand them in their ultimate root, not when you want to resolve them.
  9. When you harm others you remain enchained, but if you do not harm anyone you can freely do whatever you want.
  10. When you treat others as you want them to treat you, you liberate yourself.
  11. It does not matter in which faction events have placed you. What matters is that you comprehend that you have not chosen any faction.
  12. Contradictory or unifying actions accumulate within you. If you repeat your acts of internal unity, nothing can detain you.
- 104 Mario Aguilar and Rebeca Bize, in their essay “On the Pedagogy of Diversity” underline the ‘habit-forming function’ that education should have, ceasing to consider the student as a ‘passive entity’ to which information should be given – or some formation at best – in order to start to recognise the student’s intentionality and the process that their active consciousness should carry out in the internal construction of their learning. Regarding this proposal Humberto Maturana says: “But if what we want is for children to grow up as citizens, as ethical beings and responsible people who possess a dignified, aesthetic, pleasurable, creative way of living, in the sense of having imagination and having presence for wellbeing, then we must be concerned with emotions. And this is what I see in this proposal, and this underlies its foundations.”
- 105 Juan José Pescio and Patricia Nagy in their book “Creating a culture of solidarity and nonviolence” give a guide to the formation of individuals and organisations in the methodology of nonviolence. The proposal consists of the creation of Permanent Active Nonviolence Councils within education and healthcare establishments, NGOs, etc., aiming towards an Integral Plan for Change for the surpassing of violence on an individual, institutional and social level simultaneously. “We start from a strong questioning of this social ‘normality’ in which there exist poverty, exclusion, war, drug-addiction, pessimism, loneliness, fear, hopelessness and a nonmeaning in which everything is considered as something ‘natural’ or ‘normal’, a product of ‘modern-living’ or ‘human nature’.”



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