

THE CONCEPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR THE BIO-ENVIRONMENT

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We not only highly appreciate the enormous activity of the B.I.O.s' President Dr. A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, but we would primarily like to do our best to take her fascinating idea into reality. Every year there are more and more meetings on the protection of the natural environment, accompanied by an increasing number of papers whose production does more to destroy forests than to solve real problems.

Many decision makers try to explain the worse quality of the human environment as the cost one must pay for a higher living standard as a result of the side-effects of technological progress. This is not the truth. The wrong stereotype of thinking and the very narrow-oriented principles of cost-benefit analyses seem to be the main reasons behind the technocratic orientation of our contemporary civilization. So called technological progress is not oriented towards human well-being. This progress dramatically increased the scale of deterioration of the natural environment, especially in technically underdeveloped countries including Eastern Europe. Application of out-dated technology in big industry was followed by the significant deterioration of the natural environment, cutting down the mean life expectancy especially in Hungary and Poland during last several years. At the same time the environmental quality in West European countries has improved and the life expectancy has been prolonged.

The belief of technocrats that technological progress could repair what technology has destroyed proved to be false. Now we are faced with the tendency of the exportation of cheap technologies to developing countries. In reality these technologies are energy-consuming resources, while they also pollute the natural environment. This situation calls for the international solidarity of experts and all honest people. The most important reason for this solidarity is ethical. It should be supported by the latest knowledge on the progression of the ecological disaster on a global scale.

Promotion of knowledge about the real situation and connections between technology used on a regional scale, the health hazard for local residents, as well as some implications to the whole Biosphere such as transboundary pollution, changes of climate, deterioration and desertification of distant regions - appears a most important field of activity of the International University of the Bio-Environment (I.U.B.E.), in cooperation with mass-media including TV satellites.

The history of civilization diseases would be the best lesson for mobilizing more effective prevention. The progress of common knowledge about risk factors and the results of prognostic studies about future environmental quality may be recognized as equally important to the sense of moral responsibility. Both factors play key roles in times of democratic decision-making processes both on a local and international scale. The training of top decision makers, politicians and staff of governmental and non-governmental organizations - towards international cooperation for respect of life, the human right to a healthy environment, and the preservation of natural resources for future generations - should be recognized as the main purpose of the I.U.B.E.

The loss of the humanistic values of Greek origin in the Euro-American culture has resulted in an ethical crisis followed by an ecological crisis on a global scale. Ceasar's slogan, *si vis pacem, para bellum* - if you want peace prepare for war - is well known. The former deputy President of the World Academy of Arts, Professor Aleksandr, has enunciated the adage: *Si vis salutem, para pacem* - if you want health, keep the peace. Such a relation seems reasonable if one takes into consideration that militarization and weapons production are both more and more expensive, as well as the main factor contributing to the deteriorating of our biosphere. Therefore disarmament could be considered as a very important task of the I.U.B.E. Education about common ecological dangers may be a way for changing human behavior toward fighting with our lack of knowledge, and shortage of clean technologies, imagination and responsibility, instead of fighting with nature and other people. It seems to be of crucial importance for the future of life.

Only several months ago we were informed about the death of thousands of seals in the region of the North Sea. It reminds me of the situation in Japan - the birth place of diseases of civilization caused by pollution of the natural environment and by intoxication of food. In the region of Minamata Bay in the early 1950s, many cats died within a short time. A few years later, the first symptoms of the so-called Minamata diseases appeared among the people living in the same environment. The history of these incurable diseases draws interest to the ancient Greek concept of education, Hippocrates' concept of preventive medicine and the Franciscan idea of brotherhood between people and nature. In my opinion such nice traditions are supported by the progress of deep ecology and developed by Bios theory as a new model for future civilization.

The depletion of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, the increasing pollution of the air, water and soil, erosion, intoxication of food and civilization diseases, mutation, congenital malformation, increase of cancer incidents as well as the rapid destruction of old architecture and masterpieces of fine arts could be prevented under two basic conditions. The first condition is a new model of education and training, particularly at university level. The second condition is more effective, large scale international cooperation. I believe that the I.U.B.E. could contribute in both of them.

I wish to point to the relation between the educational model and the ecological crisis. In the world-dominating system of expert training there is a growing tendency towards narrower and narrower specialization. This situation is accompanied by the dehumanization of technology and the reduction of our ability to perceive the real place of man in relation to all of nature. Narrow specialization limits the intellectual potential needed for solving crucial problems of sustainable development and improving the quality of the environment and health of the present and future generations. At stake is the quality of human life. Economic motives opposing ecological motivations is a paradox and a promotion of law and energy-consuming.

Technology is convergent with both economic and ecological aims. Professor Goethel, the President of our university was one of pioneers of the idea of ecodevelopment and he introduced a new, cross-disciplinary science on how to protect the total environment and save natural resources for future. This science is called Sozology from the Greek sozeo. Following his suggestion the name of the IUCN was changed during the Congress of 1956, underlining the importance of the proper resource management of nature. He also introduced the first open, interdisciplinary seminars about 30 years ago.

With the Interuniversity I have initiated informal education for improvement of the quality of the Human Environment in 1967. In Poland, I have been directing the country and the International schools since 1968 and 1972 respectively, including interdisciplinary 'case studies' and courses. We introduced some new methods and later applied them in field studies for solving real problems such as prevention of health hazards connected with pollution of the environment, side effects of mass tourism, traffic output, and the promotion of the ecodevelopment of Europe's oldest border parks. As far as we know these were the first such schools including natural, social and technological aspects of environmental management. There were many foreigners, especially from Japan, who were interested in application of our methodological experiences in education towards ecological prevention. Before starting with cross-disciplinary training activity on a system approach management of environment in the U.S.A., the Soviet Union and other countries, some colleges visited us to learn the practical results of applying the slogan think globally, work locally. I informed them of our experiences during the 1st Symposium on International Cooperation of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Geneva UN Center before the Stockholm Conference, as well as at the 1st International Conference of Scientists for a Better Human Environment in Kyoto at the UN University, and the World Conference on Environmental Education at the University in Tokyo in addition to some European Conferences.

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