

HOMELAND EARTH - AN ASPR APPEAL FOR PLANETARY THINKING AND FEELING, PLANNING AND ACTING

In this 21st century, we are facing unprecedented dangers that threaten to call into question the very existence of humanity itself. The worldwide pandemic Covid-19, which triggered the "first economic crisis of the Anthropocene" (Adam Tooze), is another element of a poly-crisis. The drastic and man-made climate change, the extinction of species triggered by our economic and lifestyle systems, the danger of self-extinction through a nuclear strike and nationalistically motivated wars make the seriousness of the situation evident. However, opposing forces have long since emerged worldwide, in science, culture, politics and civil society, which are with their means not only pointing out the dangers, but also looking for ways out and testing alternatives. This is a challenge, and the size of these forces can also help the actors to grow.

In the spirit of this work on alternatives the "Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution" (ASPR) organises the campaign "Homeland Earth / Terre Patrie". The title is inspired by the book with the same name by the great French thinker Edgar Morin, who will celebrate his 100th birthday in 2021, and to whom we owe many of these insights. Above all it is about

- The acceptance of the complexity of reality, which must be grasped by complex thinking;
- The willingness to engage with others in dialogue and criticism at the same time;
- The insistence on a new humanism that strives to get rid of its anthropocentric prejudices.

Together for a "Great Transformation"

The campaign aims to bring together academics and activists working on different issues of the current poly-crisis to join forces and to raise public awareness that while we as humanity face unprecedented challenges, it is also possible to avert impending disasters and achieve a new quality of human life through prudent and decisive action. The campaign wants to contribute to strengthening a planetary consciousness and stands in solidarity with and seeks to ally itself with countless other initiatives around the world that are working towards similar goals.

"Homeland Earth / Terre Patrie" means

- Whether we like it or not, humanity in its endangered state today as a whole forms a "terrestrial community of destiny".

- We must replace our present way of life and production with a system that no longer fights the entire ecosystem of the planet, but rather fits into it in a meaningful way. We must maintain the biosphere in a functional state to safeguard our own life.
- To do this, we need a new type of political organisation of world society, whatever its nature, based on democracy, social justice and peace.
- All this can only succeed in an agonistic and non-violent confrontation with those forces that want to maintain the status quo at all costs.

Pathetically speaking: What is on the horizon is nothing less than a new leap in human development:

"It is no longer time to merely acknowledge the ecological disasters. Nor to indulge in the idea that the development of technologies alone could remedy the situation, let alone remedy the major misguided developments that threaten to seriously destroy the planet and the biosphere. The saving leap in development can only be achieved through a major upheaval in our relations with mankind, other living creatures and nature. What is needed is an ecological awareness of solidarity that replaces the culture of competition and aggression that currently dominates global relations" (MORIN 1989).

This requires an intellectual three-step approach - knowledge, vision, action.

The recognition of the crisis

We must have the courage to fully grasp the crisis of "System Earth", to accept the magnitude of the threats, and to admit that the problems are acute.

We need the intellectual ability and the psychological strength to accept and deal with the complexity of the situation.

We must overcome any narrow local patriotic, nationalistic, racist, sexist thinking and find our way to a planetary thinking, as only this is appropriate for our world today. We must extend the emotional bond we feel for our region or country to planet Earth as our home - Terre Patrie.

The power of vision

Being aware of our situation, in order not to surrender, we can rely on human imagination, creative power and efficiency. From the acceptance of the fact that no higher being can save us, just as little as a belief in the locomotive of progress or any salvific ideology, the willingness and courage can arise to finally take the adventure of our life as human beings into our own hands.

The dynamics of our present time teach us that the incarnation of mankind does not have to be completed. So far we use only a small part of our brain potential, we have the knowledge and the strategies to reshape our relationship with nature, we have all the necessary knowledge to make social relations peaceful and amicable and to transform conflicts without violence. We have the technical means to create a sustainable, prosperous, meaningful life for all people on our planet instead of destroying the foundations of our life, and to master the great challenges we face as a "humanity united in conflict".

The ways of acting

Hundreds of millions of people worldwide long for a life other than an existence based on exploitation of nature and fellow human beings, fierce competition and senseless accumulation of wealth on the one hand and scandalous poverty and bitter misery on the other. Many millions are searching for alternatives in their own field and with the means at their disposal and implement them as far as they can. Hundreds of thousands are formulating ideas for a "Great Transformation" to overcome this "iron age" of human history, thus struggling to ensure that the human race does not perish prematurely, but instead creates a leap in development which is possible but by no means self-evident, and which could be called the "civilization of civilization".

The existential struggles for the future of our "homeland earth", which are being fought today, must be given a common direction while preserving their plurality and diversity, to give them strength and assertiveness. New social inventions need to be made in order to create democratic control mechanisms from the local to the global level, which will counter the threat of climate change, species extinction and destruction of the necessary diversity of life, as well as the danger of self-extinction through nuclear weapons, hunger and war. It is necessary to overcome capitalism, create a new culture of peace and appropriate political structures to enable a meaningful, sustainable and secure life.

For this purpose, we - the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) as the supporting organisation of the campaign - would like to connect with like-minded people, partner organisations and networks all over the world and work together to promote an awareness of the protection of "homeland earth", planetary thinking and global solidarity.

The campaign, which will start in autumn 2020, will consist of the following elements in Austria:

- A manifesto in which the thoughts of this appeal are explained in more detail, as an international offer for discussion;
- An appeal for support by Edgar Morin;

- A low-threshold campaign to raise awareness as an instrument for broad-based impact: A website as a democratic platform with opinions, criticisms, proposals for action, to which everyone who wishes can contribute;
- A passport cover for the "citizens of the "homeland earth" – as a symbol for "planetary citizenship";
- Geochaching Travelbugs, which inspire to document the beauty of our homeland earth;
- A conference of as many NGOs and individuals in Austria as possible who are working on similar goals to explore the possibilities of free and solidary cooperation;
- Relevant educational materials, online courses, workshops and educational days;
- An international conference in the form of the ASPR Summer Academy 2021.

Quoted Literature

Morin, Edgar : Pour une nouvelle conscience planétaire. Le Monde Diplomatique, Octobre 1989, p. 1, 18, 19. <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1989/10/MORIN/42105>
Morin, Edgar / Anne Brigitte Kern: Heimatland Erde. Versuch einer planetarischen Politik. Wien: Promedia 1999.

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