

Werner Wintersteiner and Alfredo Pena-Vega

Open Letter to Youth / Lettre ouverte aux jeunes / Carta Abierta a los Jovenes /  
Offener Brief an die Jugend / Carta aberta aos jovens

# HOMELAND EARTH

## Thinking, feeling and acting globally

In the 21st century, we are facing unprecedented threats and disorders that can endanger the very existence of humanity. The Covid-19 global pandemic, which triggered the “first economic crisis of the Anthropocene” (Adam Tooze), is one component of a multi-crisis. Drastic human-induced climate change, species extinction triggered by our economy and way of life, the danger of self-extinction by a nuclear strike and wars motivated by nationalism are all examples that clearly show the seriousness of the situation. For a long time now, however, alternative forces have been forming all over the world, in the fields of science, culture, politics and civil society, which are not only working to warn of the dangers, but are also looking for possible ways out of the crisis by proposing alternative forms of living. It is a challenge, the stakes are high, but it is one that can be taken up and that can help the actors to grow.

Faced with this situation, the concept of “Homeland Earth”, proposed in the book by the French thinker Edgar Morin, *Terre-Patrie* (1993), could help to better understand the background and context of the crisis and the ways out. While humanity is facing hitherto unprecedented challenges, it is also possible to avoid impending disasters and to achieve a new quality of human life through wise and resolute action.

### “Homeland Earth” – what does it mean?

“Homeland Earth” means :

- Whether we like it or not, humanity today forms a „community of earthly destiny“ as a whole.
- We must replace our current way of life and economic models with a world view that no longer fights against the entire ecosystem of the planet, but integrates itself into it in a sensible and measured way. We must maintain the biosphere in a functional state in order to safeguard the life of living beings.
- To do this, we need a new kind of political organization of world society, whatever its nature, based on the common good, democracy, social justice and peace.
- All this can only succeed in an open, tolerant and non-violent exchange with the forces that want to maintain the status quo at all costs.

## **Awareness of the crisis**

We must have the courage to grasp the crisis of the „Earth system“, to recognize the scale of the dangers and the current reality of the problems.

We must have the courage and intellectual strength to accept and manage the complexity of the situation.

We must overcome all simplistic thinking (nationalist, racist, sexist) and reach a humanist and planetary thinking, because this is the only one that suits our world today. We must broaden the emotional bond we feel for our local: neighbourhood, city, region, and nation, to our planet, our “Homeland Earth”.

## **The power of vision**

In order not to resign, we need to be aware of our situation. We can count on creativity, strength and human prowess. From the acceptance of the fact that no superior being can save us, at least in the belief in the “locomotive of progress” or in some saving ideology, can be born the will and the courage to take in hand the adventure of our life as humans.

The dynamics of our present time teach us that the future of the human beings is not necessarily accomplished. Until now, we have used only a minimum of our intellectual potential, we have the knowledge and strategies to rethink our relationship with Nature. We have an accumulation of knowledge to make social relations peaceful and convivial and to transform conflicts without violence.

## **Modes of action and commitment**

Any movement towards solidarity is healthy. In this perspective, all projects and actions within the framework of concrete experiences of solidarity should be realized and generalized.

Today we are faced with a paradox: on the one hand the community of destiny – because all human beings have to face the same problems – and on the other hand a tendency to close in on one's particular identity, ethnic, religious, etc., denying one's belonging to this human community.

This sense of belonging to the whole community is lacking in education, in families, in political parties, in schools.

It is therefore necessary to give a common orientation to our modes of action and commitment towards a new way of life, a better quality of life, fulfilment and conviviality.

New social inventions must be made to create mechanisms for democratic control at local, national and global levels to counter the threat of climate change, the mass

extinction of species and the destruction of the essential diversity of life, as well as the danger of self-extinction by nuclear weapons, hunger and war.

*To sum up: “Homeland Earth” – this means a double mission: to achieve global citizenship, therefore solidarity among humans; and, at the same time, to achieve planetary citizenship, therefore solidarity with all beings in the biosphere, our basis for life.*

### **For an education for “Homeland Earth”**

To understand the world, to understand our place in the world and to understand ourselves, a transformation of education is also needed: *teaching to live* should be the ultimate goal and the main objective of education.

The widest possible cooperation and participation of you, the youth, is needed as part of an effective and appropriate trans-generational response for a healthy Homeland Earth!

### **Works consulted:**

- The Convivialist Manifesto. A declaration of interdependence. 2014. <https://www.gcr21.org/>
- Morin, Edgar: Pour une nouvelle conscience planétaire. Le Monde Diplomatique, October 1989, p. 1, 18, 19. <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1989/10/MORIN/42105>
- Morin, Edgar / Anne Brigitte Kern: Homeland Earth. A Manifesto for the New Millenium. Cresskill: Hampton Press 1999.
- Morin, Edgar: Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future. Paris: UNESCO 2003.
- Morin, Edgar: La voie. Pour l'avenir de l'humanité. Paris: Fayard 2011.

*Dear students,*

*We hope that this open letter (which is also published in French, Spanish, Portuguese and German) will provoke lively discussions among you. We invite you to send us your comments, all of which will be published on the [gycp.eu](http://gycp.eu) website. In this way, we want to give youth a voice and ensure that the voices of young people are heard!*

*When you write your comment/criticism/proposal, you can (if you want) draw inspiration from these questions:*

- What, in your opinion, are the most urgent challenges raised in this text? And why?*
- Choose an aspect, a question, which you will pursue with your own arguments, examples, and questions.*
- How can we act for a more exemplary democracy, more open and more representative of the citizens? How can we act to open up citizenship for all?*

*With our best wishes for your struggle to achieve a better life for all in our “Homeland Earth”!*

*For any contact and feedback [Werner.Wintersteiner@aau.at](mailto:Werner.Wintersteiner@aau.at)*

*Werner & Alfredo*

*Werner Wintersteiner, peace researcher and peace educator, Austria*

*Alfredo Pena-Vega, sociologist, Scientific Director of the Global Youth Climate Pact, France*

*Spring 2021*