

MANIFESTO

OUT OF THE PROFIT ECONOMY BUILDING UP THE CARE SOCIETY



Image: Alessandra Sicuro, "Albero della vita, Mosaico di Otranto", 2016

Introduction

A virus has put into crisis the whole world: Covid 19 has spread around all over the planet in a very short time, has led half the world population to self-reclusion, has stopped productive, commercial, social and cultural activities and it still continues to claim victims.

Inside the social and sanitary emergency each of us has experimented the precariousness of existence, the fragiity and interdependence of human and social life. We have had clear demonstration of which activities and jobs are really essential to life and community. We have been given proof of how frail the connection with life and different ecological systems is: we are not the planet's owners, nor do we own the life it contains, we are part of life on the earth and on it we depend.

For decades we have had politics of cutting, privatization and corporatizing, of profit driven globalization, and this has turned a serious epidemiologic problem into a mass tragedy, showing how essential and broad the social dimension of the right to health is.

The pandemic disease has highlit the fact that a system based on the market's unique thought and on profit, on a predatory anthropocentrism, on the reduction of all living beings to mere goods, is not able to guarantee protection to anyone.

The pandemic disease is a proof of the systemic crisis in place, whose main evidences are determined by the dramatic climate crisis, caused by global warmth and by the gigantic social inequality, reaching unprecedented levels.

Climate emergency is nearing the irreversible breaking point of the geological, chemical, physical and biological balances that make Earth an habitable place: social

inequality has become more evident yet during the pandemic disease, showing clearly that the current economic, health and cultural system has an inclination to select between worthy lives and waste ones.

Climate justice and social justice are two faces of the same coin and they require a radical change of direction in an extremely short time, as regards the current economic model and its social, environmental and climatic aspects.

Nothing can be as it was before, for the simple reason that disaster was caused exactly by the previous condition.

Now more than ever, we have to counter a system subjecting everything to profit economy with the building up of a care society, which is self care and care for the other, for living creatures, for the common home and for the coming generations.

1. Ecological society conversion

Climatic emergency is dramatically nearing the tipping point. Time at our disposal is running out: global warming is getting worse, fires are increasing, glaciers' disappearing and coral reefs' death are getting faster, whole ecosystems and animal and plant species are disappearing, floods and extreme weather events are rising.

Our growing vulnerability to pandemics, too, has its deep cause in the destruction of natural ecosystems, in the progressive productive industrialization first of all in the food and agriculture sector, and in the quick rate of funds, goods and people moving.

A production model based on toxic chemical and on intensive livestock farming has caused a vertical increase of deforestation and a drastic decrease of biodiversity. All this, added to a rising urbanization, to the mega-cities expansion and to pollution intensifying, has led to an abrupt habitat change for several animal and plant species. This has overturned well-established ecosystems, modifying their functioning and allowing greater proximity between wild and domestic animals.

A drastic change of direction in extremely fast times is absolutely necessary and mandatory.

We need to promote the social repossession of ecological reserves and of the food supply chains, saving it from agribusiness and large scale distribution, in order to guarantee food sovereignty, that is the peoples'right to healthy and culturally appropriate food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.

We need to start a deep ecological conversion of the technological and industrial system, starting from the collective decision on "what, how, where, how much and for whom" to produce; we have also to adopt an ecosystem-based and circular approach to processing cycles and to supply chains, from the extraction of materials to production, from enhancement to markets, to final consumption.

It is necessary for us to invert the course of international commerce and of financial investment, and to substitute the current untouchability of profits with human, environmental, economic and social rights inviolability. We need to make all rules on social and environmental protection binding for every company, starting from corporation ones, instead of allowing them to act only voluntarily or in philanthropic forms.

A new energetic paradigm, with immediate abandonment of fossil fuels, has to be based on energy that is "clean, territorial and democratic", instead of "thermic, centralized and militarized". A healthy approach to land and mobility should stop

consumption of soil and useless and damaging large works and even less large ones, so that we can live in communities, cities and settlement systems that are places of dignified life, social relations and culture, interconnected in a sustainable way.

The power relation among human beings and every other form of life on the planet must be deeply reconsidered: we can not stand and watch the destruction of so many animal species and the brutal exploitation of several others, thinking we can stay free of the epidemiological, environmental, ecologic and ethical consequences.

We need an ecologic conversion, a cultural revolution that may inspire and promote a change both in economics and in lifestyles.

2. Work, income and welfare in the care society

The pandemic disease has made more evident the fact that no economic output is possible without assuring the biological and social reproduction, as the eco-feminist thinking and the cosmogonic vision of native peoples have always maintained.

Social reproduction, meaning all the activities and the institutions necessary to guarantee life in its full dignity, means care of yourself and of others, care for the environment: and it is around these issues that the whole socio-economic model has to be reconsidered.

The pandemic disease has sunk the vulnerable groups of society more and more deeply into desperation, from migrants to homeless, from unemployed to disabled ones, from frail people to dependant ones; it has widened the condition of precariousness, causing millions of people to find themselves without any income.

A care society cannot exist without overcoming every condition of precariousness and ridefining the notions of social well-being, work, income and welfare.

The ecological conversion is a fight to give up all the activities which harm human co-existence, among them and with the Earth, to foster different activities providing self care, care of the other and of all the living system: life reproduction under the best conditions we can achieve.

Working activities must be based on a wide socialization of necessary work, together with a sharp reducing of the individual work-devoted time: in this way access to work will be the result of a solidarity redistribution, not of a cruel competition among people and countries. We need to build up a new scenery subjecting exchange value to use value and organizing production on the basis of social , environmental and gender needs.

If self-care, care for the other and for the environment are the goals of this new social pact, income is the social dividend of cooperation among everyone's activities, and the right to a guaranteed income is the recognition of the central role of every individual's activities in the construction of a society that takes care of everyone and leaves out no one, cancelling precariousness, exclusion and marginalization from people's life.

The right to knowledge, to education, to culture, to correct information, to learning as a powerful factor of reduction of inequality, whose key reason is cultural poverty, has to be fully recognised.

A new universal welfare system has to be realized, and it must be based on the acknowledgement of personal affections' community and of supportive mutualism, on a collective self-governing of services and on the care for the common house.

3. Social Reappropriation of commons and public services

No protection is possible if the fundamental rights to life and to life quality are not guaranteed. Recognising natural commons, starting from water, essential good for life on our planet, and social commons requires putting the social, ecologic and gender paradigm in the place of the financial one; since natural commons and social ones, emerging and at civic use, are founding elements of life and of life dignity, of territorial cohesion and of an environmentally and socially oriented society.

If we want to protect commons and public services, which guarantee their access and availability, we have to take them immediately out of the market, and realize a decentralized, community-based and participative handling.

It is mandatory to socialize production of all basic goods, strategic to general interest purpose: from primary goods and services (foodstuffs, water, education and research, health and social services, housing); to those that make a considerable part of other economic activities possible (transport, energy, telecommunications, optical fiber); to long term investment choices of a scientific, technological and cultural type, able to modify people's material and spiritual life over time and in a significant measure.

4. Centrality of territories and local democracy

Up to now we have lived a growth totally based on the quantity and speed of the flow of goods, people and money, on the centrality of global markets and of intensive production, and on the subsequent unregulated hyperconnection of financial, productive and social systems. This has been the main vector which has allowed the virus to spread all over the planet at a rate never seen before, travelling in the body of specialized managers and specialized technicians, as well as in those of logistic and transport workers, and of tourists.

Rethinking society organization involves relocating lots of production activities starting from territorial communities and their associated cooperation, which all have to become the core of a new transformative economics, environmentally, socially and ethically based.

Communities are the places where humans, other animals, land and landscape coexist, each with its irrepressible history, culture and identity. Globalization planer has tried to homologate differences and peculiarities, giving rise to resistances that have too often pushed towards a closed and exclusive communalism version. The challenge, also a cultural one, is to design future as a system of open, cooperative, inclusive and interdependent communities.

This involves also the reterritorialization of political choices, with an essential role entrusted to town councils, towns and territorial communities, as they are places of real local democracy, whose inhabitants take a proactive part in collective decision making.

Through popular repossession of national and international institutions it will be possible to guarantee, defend and state equality of rights and relationships among the various areas of country systems, regional and continental systems and world system.

5. Peace, cooperation, reception and solidarity

The pandemic disease has not respected any of the manifold geographical and social divisions, nor any of the human-built hierarchies: from borders to social class, going through the fake concept of race. It has demonstrated that real safety can not be built against and at the expense of others: to feel safe you have to make everybody safe.

To make this happen, it is necessary that every people is granted the right to a healthy environment, social equality, non-destructive access to natural resources. We need to stop every policy of domination inside the relations between people, putting an end to every colonialistic politics exercised through military domination and war, trade or investment agreements, exploitation of people, of living beings and of the common home. We cannot accept anymore our consumption levels to be supported by exploitation of other countries' resources and on outrageously uneven exchange relations.; neither can we accept the existence of military alliances having as their goal the control and the exploitation of strategic areas and of their resources.

The care society refuses extractivism because it attacks native peoples, dispossesses the common natural resources and multiplies environmental devastation. For this reason the care society supports the self-determination of peoples and communities, fair trade, horizontal cooperation and the shared and jointly responsible custody of global commons.

War against migrants is by now one of the basic elements of the current global system. Whole areas of the planet- seas, deserts, border zones- have become open air giant graveyards, places where excruciating violence and oppression take place, where millions of human beings are denied each and every right and dignity.

The care society dismantles ditches and walls, and it does not build up fortresses either. It says no to dominion and recognizes cooperation among peoples. It faces and gets over institutional racism and economic and cultural colonialism, by means of which still today dominant powers enter into relationship with natural persons, cultural knowledge and the planet's resources.

The care society refuses every form of fascism, racism, sexism, discrimination and it builds bridges among people and cultures practicing hospitality, rights and solidarity.

6. Science and technology at the service of life, not of war

Scientific research and technological innovation are essential for the construction of a care society allowing everyone a decent life, but they can be turned into destructive elements if they are put at the service of oppression and war, and not at the service of life. Directions and results have to be led back towards people's empowerment, not social authoritarian control, towards wealth redistribution, not accumulation, towards peace and solidarity, not destruction of lives, society and nature.

It is particularly serious that atomic arms race and improvement of nuclear weapons' targeting system are still going on, while international commitments to outlawing the use of the deadliest weapon get weaker. The knowledge and resources of a society can not be directed to make arms, keep armies, be members of alliances based on military dominion, take part in military missions and war, reject migrants, build up a digitably manipulatable and falsifiable reality.

Control on Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and digital infrastructures will decide the form of future institutions, and people have to be able to exercise digital sovereignty on every sensible aspect of their existence. A digital democratic future, where data are a public infrastructure and a common good under people's control, has to be conceived.

7. Finance at the service of life and rights

The pandemic disease has clearly shown that in order to cure people The European Union has been obliged to suspend stability pact, fiscal compact and Maastricht benchmarks. This means these links are not only unnecessary, but also are against people's life, dignity and care. Economic financialisation and society's and nature's commercialization are the causes of the deep social inequality and of the dramatic environment devastation.

Putting finance at the service of life and rights means taking back the produced social wealth, thus cancelling illegitimate and hateful debt and applying a strongly progressive tax system, able to go and get resources where they are, in the affluent social classes, in the large estates, in big business profits.

No ecologic and social transformation will be possible without putting an end to the only globalization the capitalistic model has succeeded in realizing totally: the one of uncontrolled movements of goods and capital. A borderless capital that can proceed without any constraint where it likes, determining the choices of the economic and social policy of States, thus compelled to compete one against the other, offering national and foreign investors benefits more and more harmful to their citizens' and the environment's rights.

To obtain this goal it is necessary to nationalize the banking system, turning it into a public service for savings, credit and investment, territorially run with the direct involvement of organized users, bank workers, municipalities and territorial productive sectors .

Without a new public and participative finance, no ecologic and social transformation of the economic and productive model will be possible, and long term decisions about society will stay in the power of financial lobbies and big multinationals.

We want a society that places life and its dignity at the centre, that is able to be interdependent with nature, that builds its productions on use value, its exchanges on mutualism, its relations on equality, its decisions on participation.

We will all fight together to make it come true