

Faced with today's food and energy crisis ,
How can society improve its well being?

The problem humanity is faced today with is just part of a vicious circle which is hard to pinpoint in order to find a solution but it isn't impossible. First of all, we can all agree on the fact that throughout the years humanity has searched ways to improve its well being to satisfy most of the needs faster and easier by creating or diversifying new or already existing activities. Mainly, this is the base of economy: satisfying needs and creating means to do so. But it is also well-known that needs are endless while the resources to satisfy them are limited. This is the reason why we have ended up in the situation we are nowadays in: the race to improve our well being by fulfilling many and diverse needs while ignoring the effects we have created along the way.

It is not hard to notice that we live in an economy based society. Whether you live in Europe, Africa or Australia the same rules apply: we need, we work to gain and in the end we buy. If given a better look, this is the main reason for which human activity exists, or simply said, "because money makes the world go round". But when we come to better think of it, something seems to be a bit wrong when looking at the big picture of this situation. Why did we reduce everything to means of production, resources, to sell, to buy, to have more of something that we really don't need. Along the past decades humanity has witnessed the rise and development in areas like medicine, electronics industry, transportation, communication, PC and mobile phone industry, all of them becoming must haves. We call it improvement of our well being, we cannot imagine life without them or the activities sustaining them. Not long ago people could live without them. What I'm trying to emphasize is that we tend to develop new needs and activities, that, we say, improve our lives, or don't they? And if they really do so what is the price we and our followers have to pay for them?

In my opinion, today's methods of creating an economy are proving to be inefficient and vulnerable, especially due to the fact that resources are becoming scarce while our needs are growing. We can see the vulnerability and inefficiency of these methods in the economical crisis the world is facing nowadays. In other words, the purpose and the means through which we develop our activity has to be strongly rethought if change and efficiency is desired.

In order to face and solve the problem human society deals with today, it very much needs the thorough help of the ones who rule us, the governments. And that is because they play a major role in the puzzle of our well being. The government of every country tries or is supposed to assure the well being of its citizens, and how else could they do this if not through creating new jobs, by assuring a favorable law environment in which economical development is possible and thus saying that they have done better for their people. Mainly, till now this is the basic model for most of the countries to face people's needs. But the concept of well being is different from one country to another, more accurate from one person to another and what we all think is better today will it have the same value in the years to come? I don't really think so. The jobs created today to satisfy today's needs may some day disappear but the damage made by the industry that sustained them won't.

The link between politics and economy is very tight. One comes in support of the other trying to support society. These two elements are very hard to separate and they play a major role in solving the problems we are facing today. In the race for profit and diversity of products, along the years a new world has appeared into our minds and on our lips. Globalization is more than a word, it has become part of our life without us

noticing it or giving it too much attention. I think that globalization is just a pseudo reason for well being. Actually it brings well being only for investors not for every people. For example, while in a part of the world new jobs are created in another part people are fired, thus well being becomes a frail notion relating it to the realities of our modern day society. So, in the end nothing is really gained for most of us. Same product is made with the same amount of energy consumed, if not more, when we think for example at the cargo's transport. The only difference is that for the same work some people are paid less. This is economy, would say most of the investors, but wouldn't it be far more efficient if we regionalized production and developed a way for producing the adequate amount of products that would better fulfill local needs? I mean how many things are annually produced and end up unsold just because they were made in too many numbers or people didn't really need them. I'm not suggesting here economical anarchy, just a simple way, theoretically, of efficiency in production, in energy management, in managing the resources we still have left, because too much waste is still being made.

After all this talk about economy, profit and production something weird but true came up to my mind. The very source of the problem we are confronting is ourselves. That's right, we alone stand responsible for the situation we have created along the years. It all actually resides in the complex way we think, in the way society has evolved. We have become voracious consumers of everything from food and water to the surfaces hidden beneath the surface of the Earth. We tend to desire more and more of everything, even though it might turn up useless in the end. The real problem is that we act as individuals when we buy, we don't see each others as a whole, part of what we call human society. As consumers, we act irresponsible, we don't think of our impact as part of the whole, as individuals we consider ourselves harmless. The truth is that no one can imagine today's life without all the abundance, without all the activities that sustain it. All the branches in the industrial activity were developed and are kept working for us, for our needs which seem to have no end. We tend to be so irresponsible, so self-destructive. I mean so much energy, so many resources used up to create energy, only to have the comfort we have become used to.

In the past people used to create illuminating ideas, now we have mainly ended up creating things that we consider to be the base of our existence. Philosophers have tried for centuries to answer the question: "What is the purpose of our existence on Earth?". I'm no philosopher to answer it but I can only tell which isn't the purpose, and I don't think it's the destruction of Earth and of ourselves.

If something needs to be done to improve our well being, that is to rethink the concept of well being, mainly the way we see our lives today and the activities in which we are involved to sustain our needs. This could take some time, but it would be great if we could start today. A good beginning would be to look more and more at nature as the support of life on earth, not as a source of raw material through which endless needs are fulfilled. A change in our selfish lifestyle could bring some results, if we become responsible consumers, if we become aware of our individual actions upon the whole. Changes in means of producing energy would be useless if we don't try to reduce the way and purposes we use it for. This responsibility lies on the shoulders of each and every one of us.

Today much cannot be done, but we have the reason and the means to make tomorrow a better world. Future generations have to be prepared for a different life style than ours, they have to be equipped with a different way of thinking first off all. They need to prepare for a world in which "less" will be an everyday fact of life, a world in which basic needs like water, food, shelter will have the highest priority. I don't want to sound anarchist or something like that, but a new Dark Age will probably come but the difference can be made if we start making small steps to the future, if we start preparing

today for the years to come, and not let ourselves crippled by indifference as we do today. We have to rethink the purpose of human activity, the very source of today's problems. If we won't do so, we could probably end up in a perpetual crisis.

Humanity has the means, the time and the opportunity to make a change, why not start doing so before it becomes too late to do something about it?