

Human rights

Comments by A Carvalho, panel on Human Rights, Universalist Humanism. Fifth European Humanist Forum, Madrid, May 13, 2018

The New Humanism or Universalist Humanism

It affirms the freedom of the human being. It defines the human being not as a natural being but as a historical being, an intentional being, launched into the future. Towards greater awareness and freedom, transforming itself and the world in its path, humanizing it.

The ethical and action principle par excellence is the golden rule "Treat others as you want to be treated". It is at the base of all the great religions and civilizations. Already, in written form for more than 4000 years, and practiced, perhaps much earlier.

The foundations of human rights are implicit there. And from there, they can also derive in the treatment of others, compassion, empathy, solidarity, reciprocity, affection and so many qualities that inspire Human Rights in their social dimension.

We have a record of our actions, there are unitive actions and contradictory actions as we well know. The accumulation of unitive actions frees us internally from suffering and violence. So even for technical reasons it is also important to treat others well.

These themes are outlined in the so-called Harangue of The Healing of Suffering given by Silo in Punta de Vacas, Argentina on May 4, 1969. Date recognized as the foundation of the Humanist Movement.

Silo explained on that occasion the distinction between desire and need. How violence exists in the depths of our consciousness fed by our desires, and how this is the basis of our suffering. We must learn to distinguish between need and desire.

He explained that violence does not remain in our consciousness, but is projected onto others in our behavior.

He distinguishes the different types of violence and stresses that there is no party or movement on the planet that can end violence. That it is useless to

look for false doors and that one can only end violence in oneself and in the world around one by inner faith and inner meditation...

Extensive developments of doctrine were made in the following years, deepening these themes, and which aimed precisely at overcoming suffering in oneself and in society.

Over the years, Universalist Humanism launched a series of social action organizations to spread the message of non-violence, of overcoming suffering, of individual and social transformation simultaneously while acting in specific areas of social change: Thus the Humanist and Green parties, The Human Development Community, the Center for Cultures, the Humanist International, the World Center for Humanist Studies, Humanist Clubs, World Without Wars, World Marches for Peace and Disarmament, Pressenza International News Agency, personal change practices, Silo's Message, and a number of specific actions and campaigns around the world.

These organizations, very active and distributed on all continents, have always promoted non-violence, equality, freedom and simultaneous personal and social change and have touched millions of people around the world with their campaigns and actions.

I mean, we've been busy...

The state of the art today:

25 years ago Silo wrote a letter on the subject of human rights, later published with other topics of relevance for political and social action under the title "Letters to my friends".

It highlights the action of nation states as the main perpetrators of human rights violations in the world, and of the suppression or denial of them, under the pretexts of their protection or defense. In his analysis he uses the Amnesty International report for that year, 1992: invasions, forced migrations, exploitation, famines, massacres, wars in the Balkans, ethnic cleansing, etc

If you read Amnesty's report for 2017/18 there is no difference: Imposition of austerity in many countries and regions (in the UK alone, Amnesty estimates 120,000 premature deaths due to budget cuts to the NHS national health

system; impoverishment of populations, gender exploitation and slavery, millions of displaced people, expulsion from the Rohingya nation in Myanmar, indifference and mistreatment of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants in Europe, continuation of wars in the Middle East with massacres of civilian populations, used as human shields... NATO's wars.

And once again, the main perpetrator: the Nation States whose function is precisely to protect and guarantee the human rights of the populations.

The control of states by the "Deep State," the cancer that infiltrates the internal mechanisms of the state.

Using the state for the large concentrations of capital in the hands of a few, the 1%

Under the pretext of balancing the state's accounts (which they unbalance in the first place) the power groups reduce social security, the budgets for health, housing, education, services, infrastructure... everything that belongs to or benefits people. Either they privatize it by increasing the rates or they eliminate it, while increasing the military budgets, police, citizen surveillance, etc

What a paradox in which we live where the protector is the assailant

But, Humanists are optimistic

The Universal Human Nation is the future and it is inevitable

We have more and more in common because we are more interdependent

This situation opens up the possibility of perceiving and feeling the other as a human being.

The same is happening rapidly throughout the planet.

History is moving at an increasing pace towards a synthesis of races, cultures, languages and sensibilities, of political systems and social experiences... we are closer than ever to human rights becoming a new reality

Violence has been a historical constant. To produce a break in that constant will undoubtedly require a mental change, a higher consciousness.

Helping to awaken that awareness should guide our joint work today.

Intensifying human rights education and dissemination from the earliest age at all levels of society is essential.

Any political or social action should be clear about which right it defends and strengthens and explain it in this way.

The world has changed in the last 70 years. A revision and updating of the Universal Declaration is a task that deserves attention. Incorporating the new rights or placing them within those that exist. E.g. the right to vital water for so many peoples

Environmental Rights,

economic rights (e.g. universal basic income)

LGBT gender rights;

Cyber, virtual and other rights.

Human rights are still in part an aspiration, an intention launched into the future. Its full fulfillment will allow us to sustain a truly Human society.

Whether that future is more or less distant depends on our efforts today.