

FEDERICO MAYOR ZARAGOZA

**THE CRIME
OF
SILENCE**

The time has come. It's time for action.

FEDERICO MAYOR ZARAGOZA

was born in Barcelona in 1934. He holds a Ph.D. in Pharmacy and Professor of Biochemistry. He became Rector of University of Granada and was co-founder of the Centro de Biología Molecular Severo Ochoa. Also Professor Mayor has had other political responsibilities, he has been Member of the Spanish Parliament (1977-78), Minister of Education and Science (1981-82), and Member of the European Parliament (1987). In 1987,



he was elected Director-General of that Organization, and was reelected for a second term in 1993. In 1999, he decided not to run for a third term and, upon returning to Spain, created the Fundación Cultura de Paz, of which he is Chairman.

In addition to his numerous scientific publications, Professor Federico Mayor has published several books of essays: *Un mundo nuevo* (in English *The World Ahead: Our Future in the Making*) (1999), *Los nudos gordianos* (1999), *Mañana siempre es tarde* (1987), *La nueva página* (1994), *Memoria del futuro* (1994), *La paix demain?* (1995), *Science and Power* (1995); *UNESCO: un idéal en action* (1996); *La palabra y la espada* (2002); *La fuerza de la palabra* (2005) and *Un diálogo ibérico: en el marco europeo y mundial* with the former President of Portugal Mr. Mario Soares (2006)(2006); *Enfermedades metabólicas* (2006) (ed.), *Tiempo de acción* (2008)...

Also, he has published seven books of poetry, *A contraviento* (1985), *Aguafuertes* (1991), *El fuego y la esperanza* (1996), *Terral* (1997), *Voz de vida, voz debida* (2007), *Alzaré mi voz* (2007), *En pie de paz* (2008).

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2011

INTRODUCTION

*"The voice that could be remedy...
but, for fear, was nothing".*

Awareness, foresight, prevention. Behaving in such a way as to forge the future and invent a tomorrow in consonance with equal dignity for all human beings. This commitment to the future generations requires profound transformations and radical changes, but also that we preserve the essential values that must guide our steps and serve as a point of reference when responding to the great challenges that we face.

Thus, against the wind, we must plow our fields and plant our seeds, even in bad weather and hostile environments. For centuries, in male-dominated circles of power there has been a culture of imposition, violence and dominance. And people, as obedient vassals, have remained silent and fearful.

But at last the time has come for the peoples, the women and men of the whole world, to take the reins of their destinies into their own hands. The time has come to refuse to accept the unacceptable. To rise up, to raise our voices and to offer an outstretched hand.

Information and communications technologies now make distance participation possible. And, thus, they can facilitate a transition from an economy of speculation and war to an economy of sustainable global development. From subjects to citizens. From force to words.

The time has come. It's time for action, and to cease being passive spectators.

The time for silence is over.

ENOUGH!

The time to say “Enough!” has arrived. To serenely and firmly proclaim that humanity cannot continue to suffer the interminable trauma of a system that has given rise to the present multiple serious crises (social, financial, food, environmental, political, ethical...).

The time has come for a great citizen mobilization against the dominating powers (economic, energy, military, media), so that a great transition may immediately commence from an economy of speculation and war (4,000 million dollars invested daily in weapons and military spending while –I will never tire of repeating- over 70,000 people die of hunger) to an economy of global sustainable development, which will rapidly reduce the enormous social injustice and inequity and the progressive (and possibly irreversible) damage to the environment.

The time has come to prevent and to sanction attacks that, through renowned rating agencies, the “market” is making on governments, those impoverished “rescuers” who must now slash their own budgets or risk financial collapse. Those who supported “less government and more market”, assuring us that the markets were “self-regulating” and that tax havens would disappear, must now retract those statements in public and correct the grave damage done.

The time has come to replace groups of plutocrats (created by President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher that have proved to be totally useless) by a strong United Nations, endowed with the personal, technical and financial resources that would enable it to fulfill its noble mission (of ensuring international

security; guaranteeing democratic principles; freedom of expression and access to accurate information; of coordinated action to reduce the impact of natural and man-made catastrophes; protecting the environment; providing appropriately applied guidelines for social and economic development)...

The time has come for passive subjects to become full citizens; for the silent to participate; for spectators to become actors... now that modern communications technologies make distance participation possible.

And above all, through cyberspace the time has come to stretch our listless bodies; to awaken to a new day in which the reins of our common destiny are no longer in the same secular hands.

The academic, scientific, artistic, that is, the intellectual community must lead the process that will enable us in less than a decade to make the “new beginning” proclaimed in the Earth Charter.

The time to say “Enough” has come, the time to rise up, and as José Ángel Valente expressed in his poem, the time to refuse to give up.

The time has come.

REREADING UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I. Citizen power

All of us should read and reread the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that it is worth the effort to continue fighting for the great ethical principles our daily behavior. In order to realize that we "are endowed with reason and conscience" to remedy the temptation to resort to force.

All of us, in solidarity without our fellow men, living together and devoted to each other "in a spirit of brotherhood", in the words of Article 1.

All equal in dignity: regardless of the color of our skin, gender, beliefs or ideologies... All of us –as the Declaration indicates in its Preamble- studying and remembering both the letter and the spirit of Human Rights, at all levels and in all types of educational institutions, in the communications media, in parliaments, in municipal councils, at all levels of government, in NGOs, in international agencies... "without distinction based on the political status of countries and territories".

This "active reading" is urgent, since our present errors are not being remedied. We are not decidedly replacing plutocracy with multilateralism. We are not finally closing tax havens that facilitate trafficking (in drugs, weapons and people!...). We are not regulating speculation or irresponsible economics. We are not off-setting the power of the media. We are not taking steps toward a new productive model of sustainable global development. As was the case before the crisis, the important thing is to barter, sell... to manufacture at the lowest possible cost by delocalizing to the East, where no one cares about the living conditions of the "manufacturers" in those countries, nor whether their human

rights are protected... More of the same... while society continues to remain silent, looking the other way.

Although they were incapable of foreseeing or preventing the crisis, public institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as well as hardly impartial private institutions, are now acting in the interests of those who caused the present serious situation.

And what are the scientific, academic and artistic communities doing? They are generally distracted, subjugated spectators, controlled from afar by the media that prevent them from reflecting on our serious problems and acting in consequence.

II. Fear

It is time to take action against those who perceive the world simply as an immense market and the world's inhabitants as mere consumers. It is time to apply our great stock of available knowledge to meet the challenges of a raging environment.

We must recover from our apathy, our fear. The first paragraph of the Preamble to the Universal Declaration that it has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of human kind "the advent of a world in which human beings, freed from fear and want, shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief...".

From time immemorial humans have existed in very limited spaces, both physically and spiritually. Thus, with the exception of a few great minds capable of overcoming that confinement, they lived in fear of angry and merciless gods and lords of the manor here on earth. All possible efforts have been made to prevent citizens from abandoning their status as vassals. Until the 1980s education was always limited to teaching basic literacy and basic instruction on the part of the colonial powers, and authoritarian systems promoted indoctrination, dependence and herd mentality. There is no greater ignorance than the ignorance of a trapped man, and "kidnapped thought" (as Susan George calls it) leads to superstition... And this generates fanaticism, dogmatism, obstinacy and cowardice.

III. Rebellion

When at last there are those who are able to become “educated,” that is, able to “be themselves”,... when the time has come not only to vote and be counted in elections, but to count and to be taken into account,... then the immense powers of the media unfurl their wings to reduce those citizens to mere passive spectators, to indifferent witnesses who can be activated and deactivated with Pavlov’s famous bell.

Until one day, after years and years of fragile and manipulative democracies, modern communications technology arrives with the possibility of building in cyberspace what “real life” has here-to-fore been able to prevent. With mobile phones and internet we can now change a reality that has been obstinately formed and remains unperturbed. We can now mobilize millions of human beings capable at last of joining their voices and wishes, to prompt a *peaceful but steadfast rebellion*, which the guardians of inertia and privilege, of the storehouses of the past, never allowed us to even dream of.

And this is because they ignore the next paragraph of the Preamble of the Universal Declaration: “Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be *compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion* against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law...”. Anything that subjugates and reduces human beings must be eliminated to prevent a justified popular uprising among those who have suffered so much and continue to do so.

IV. Freedom

But to transition from passive recipients to active emissaries was very difficult and frequently risky. In addition to the ballot box, other forms of expression lacked influence and were often rigged. But with distance participation the emancipation of citizens vis-à-vis the powers that be will change radically in a very few years.

In that way, in less time than many may foresee, the 21st century will (finally!) be the century of the people, of the force of reason and never more of the reason

of force, of a history worthy of the faculties that distinguish each unique human being, thus ending the history described by Fukoyama, which has so tarnished human dignity from the beginning of time. Thus, the last “Whereas” of the Preamble of the Declaration that inspired this article will have been implemented: “Considering that the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and *better standards of life in larger freedom*”... .

This concept of larger freedom, which those who drafted the Declaration so clearly envisioned in the terrible aftermath of World War II, is now within our reach. Let us serenely but courageously loosen our bonds and remove the muzzles from so many silenced voices. The provisions of the Universal Declaration will soon be a reality. I urge everyone to read them, especially politicians and parliamentarians. And even more specifically, those who so often talk of Human Rights when it is obvious that they have never read the Declaration. Or that they haven’t read it very carefully.

NATURAL DISASTER OR INDUCED: A NEW CONCEPT OF SECURITY

Today, the effects of climate change, global warming, greenhouse gases and, in particular, carbon dioxide emissions, can be included in the issues to be addressed by a “Security Council” with a broader scope of competence. The issues requiring armed forces would be entrusted to the “blue berets” and, in line with Nicole Guedj’s proposal, the establishment of the “red berets” should be encouraged as a supranational, exclusively humanitarian force, to act specifically in response to natural or man-provoked disasters. In Spain, the Military Emergency Unit, UNE (*Unidad Militar de Emergencias*) was established in 2005 and has already demonstrated its ability to act (fires, etc.)

The “black tide” has now been added to the proven inefficiency and inability to react in the form of rescue and rehabilitation in the case of earthquakes, floods, etc., due to the massive oil spills, resulting from the unforgiveable greed of a deepwater oil company which did not have the resources available to allow for any faults. President Obama is unduly expected to shoulder the blame which should be assumed by the British oil company alone. A spill of this nature is not a hurricane.

In the early 1990s we set up the GOOS (Global Ocean Observing System) in order to be able to give early warning of *tsunamis* and to denounce the oil carriers that wash the bottom of tanks offshore instead of using the appropriate port facilities.

It produce a monolayer of low density by-products which in a vast area surrounding the ship causes suffocation of the phytoplankton that is essential for recapturing CO₂. Because International trusts operate with absolute impunity, due to the United Nations not being strong enough to impose the authority that could benefit each and everyone, the oil tankers from different countries –who nonetheless sail under the same two or three “flags”– continue to pollute the sea, and the lawbreakers –such as the ones who traffic in weapons, drugs and human beings and who seek shelter in tax heavens to escape from their responsibilities– cannot be either arrested or taken before the courts.

Those who have tried to eradicate multilateralism –driven by human rights and democratic principles– and to replace it by a market-oriented government of a few have failed completely. But they still behave as they have always done and they impose a speculation and war economy (3 billion dollars per day) based on a huge media power and on “evaluation” institutions who couldn’t warn us when the “economic bubbles” appeared but who are now raising the alarm to support big merchants.

The same prescriptions... without any attention being paid to distress, social turmoil, or fear felt by so many human beings all over the planet. Market, always market and foreign and defence policy, because only a few are here to command and the rest of us just have to obey.

After the big wars, there were still ideals; there was utopia and there was hope of attaining new paths enlightened by peace, equal human dignity and harmonious coexistence. Because a few indisputable values –justice, liberty, fraternity– existed that mobilized citizens and gave sense to their lives.

The big difference with regards to the current situation is the spiritual, intellectual and mental gap that makes so many people feel defeated and paralyzed, because they have strived –and to a large extent they have managed– to fill their whole space with leisure, material goods, hobbies... with submissive and resigned individuals who let life pass them by under the pressure of supranational events which seem inexorable.

Until when will the world population remain impassive and let things happen “as usual”? I think this will not last much longer. Because the new communication technology allows gradual participation of individuals who have been mere spectators, but who will start building a global net that will reinforce both on a worldwide and a local scale the genuine democracy, the transition from a culture based on subjugation, violence and war to a culture of dialogue, conciliation and peace; from a security strategy merely oriented to territorial issues to a food and health security to deal with disasters; from a market economy to a sustainable global economy...

This has been said by President Obama who, despite the huge impediments he must overcome, keeps progressing on his proposals for a nuclear disarmament, for a new military strategy leading to dismissal of “preventive war”, for the prevalence of diplomatic action... “A new start is needed”. Natural disasters are generating a global awareness that might accelerate the advent of a wider conception of security, which might even impel it.

THE IMMENSE POWER OF THE MEDIA. TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION

After (or in addition to) military, political, economic or technological power, what is now foremost and omnipresent is the power of the media. “No matter what happens, what we want to happen is what will happen”, is the attitude of certain magnates of the communications media. Whether through sound, print or images... the majority of citizens receive their news carefully selected or previously filtered. In some countries, high government authorities –even the Prime Minister- or members of the opposition parties have close ties to large media conglomerates including the press, radio and television... It is true that in some cases freedom of expression and opposition still exist, but they certainly have little room to maneuver.

Certain sports and athletes, actors and actresses –many of whom are controlled by their “managers”- are given exaggerated attention on the radio, television or in the press, reaching fanatical proportions to the extent that certain clubs dominate not only the leisure time, but also the very lives of many people, regardless of the quality of their players and their success on the playing fields.

News of important events that might make us reflect and adopt our own decisions and attitudes (and this is precisely what education is all about) are concealed, distorted or otherwise disguised. The meetings of the G8 (a group of plutocrats who attempt to govern the world) fill pages upon pages, while proposals for reform made by the United Nations as a whole or by its financial institutions (managed by the President of the General Assembly with the participation of Nobel Prize Laureates in Economics) receive only a few paragraphs. The same may be said of worldwide meetings such as the recent

UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (not even a line!) or with respect to the topic that for me (and for that reason I reiterate this) constitutes our greatest problem of conscience: the extreme poverty and hunger, which, in a horrendous genocide, results in the death of 60,000 persons daily, while we invest over 2500 million euros in useless weapons. This simple fact should be capable of mobilizing millions of citizens around the globe, but the powers that be in the mass media want these ethically inadmissible situations to continue to be ignored and, once they have received their financial “bailouts,” continue with the status quo.

This means that we all have to look the other way. All of us minding our own business. All silent accomplices. Silence, even when we should applaud the funds announced by the President of the Government to relieve poverty in moments of crisis. If the thousands who die from hunger each day are unable to awaken our sense of solidarity, what will it take to mobilize our citizens, especially today’s youth?

Gervasio Sánchez has expressed this not only with profound and courageous words, but with his moving photography. And what impact has this had? Very little. Solidarity movements could light the way to a future of inclusion, concord and mutual understanding. But if Sánchez’ photography of lives shattered by land mines or of those who die of hunger and neglect are unable to awaken our conscience, we will continue in the dark, in this simulated world in which millions of people live artificial lives, acting upon the dictates of the media. But I am sure that our youth will soon take action, and will become the flag bearers of an initial resistance, which will blossom into concerted action. Several recent literary works have set the stage to divulge the underlying reality, the real world, what lies behind so much window dressing.

“Money talks”: several Spanish newspapers, some of them quite prominent, have lost their dignity by openly contradicting the “values” they previously defended, commencing with the dignity of women, carrying despicable advertising with images and texts that may seriously affect the behavior of

children and adolescents. Schools and teachers are almost always blamed... without realizing that it the mass media that so negatively influences our youth. The same may be said of advertisements for certain brands, especially foreign ones, which are not only in bad taste but also approach the limits of what may be considered tolerable. And in the meantime we continue to be spectators. It would suffice for an association of NGO's to recommend a boycott of publications that contain these repugnant articles or the products of companies whose advertisements are as indecent as they are ridiculous.

Some journalists toe the line, others don't: not long ago it was made known that a "live" press conference of an autonomous community official had been pre-recorded.

And, as has become customary but is also inadmissible, no questions were allowed. Press conferences have given way to simple press releases. Disguised as simple news, because there was really no press conference, while avoiding any contact with journalists. Some firmly criticized this tactic. Rest assured that sooner or later the truth shall be known. I am convinced –after having defended in UNESCO freedom of expression and the right to accurate information- that the age of citizens as mere recipients and witnesses is coming to an end.

Those who control information basically control our daily activities, including our free time. They control our lives. Through images the reigning "videocracy" impose their points of view on television audiences. Silent indifferent spectators, who fail to realize that they should never relinquish their only strength: being themselves.

It is time to take action, to rebel, to initiate a profound change toward transparency and a true knowledge of reality (the initial requisite for transforming that reality).

It is time to make use of all available communications networks, particularly digital ones, to counteract the omissions and concealments of the lying

manipulators, the great “information empires” that, moreover, presumably spy on the “famous” to feed their gossip columns.

It is time to demonstrate the premeditated contradictions of those who have been bailed out, and who soon thereafter condemned the politicians of the very governments that tossed them a lifeline from public funds; the contradictions of those who, yearning for a Condor Operation, consider that the coup in Honduras “puts an end to a populist adventure of a constitutional president”; the contradictions of those who insist that the European democracies with the support of their multinational companies should continue to exploit the countries of Latin America, Africa or the Far East; the contradictions of those who immediately believe videos that are shameless fabrications based on the idea that there is always some truth in an accusation, aimed at world leaders – such as has recently been the case in Guatemala and Ecuador— who are no longer mere subjects and wish to become allies and partners.

It is time to take a stand, to join fora and services that facilitate the mobilization of citizens. We may very well be on the threshold of a new era in which the people will finally take the stage through their democratically-elected representatives, who will have been chosen with complete freedom and responsibility.

Let us refuse to be deceived any longer. Let’s say “no” to those who promote new cults, with ceremonies that attract large numbers of adherents, as a result of mass publicity on the one hand, and on the other the informational and conceptual “vacuum” that they have so skillfully created. Above all, young people must be free to be themselves and to refuse to follow the dictates of others. They should not spike their hair, wear low rise jeans or get tattoos unless they really do so on their own initiative. They must learn to distinguish the tendencies dictated from afar by the powers of the media that, while making huge profits, seek to standardize citizens in general and –what is even more dangerous- young people in particular. But we can now take action from a distance, thanks to new communications technologies. We can make ourselves

heard. We must make ourselves heard. We must take a firm stand against this new form of submission and exclusion. A freer and transparent world is the legacy that we must leave to those who will come after us.

Let's urge them, as in the 2008 Oscar-winning song from the film "Once", "Raise your hopeful voice.../ you have a choice".

FROM SUBJECTS TO CITIZENS, THE GREAT TRANSITION

The solution to the terribly serious challenges that we face is more democracy, better democracy. And this requires active participation and a profound knowledge of reality that “educated” people especially possess, in the sense of those people who act upon their own reflections and never upon the dictates of others. Article I of the UNESCO Constitution proclaims that education creates people who are “free and responsible”. Education for all throughout life. *For all*, and not merely for a chosen few. And this *all* is very dangerous, because people with education will not remain passive, resigned and in subjugation. They will not be spectators, but rather actors. Not merely numb recipients, distracted and fearful, but rather transmitters. They will not remain silent nor will they be silenced. They will firmly and persistently, but peacefully, express their points of view.

With educated citizens there will no longer be dogmatism, extremism, fanaticism, since nothing will be “indisputable,” nor will there be blind obedience. Education erases apathy and incites people to action.

Yes, education is the solution. There is no genuine democracy without participation, if leaders and parliamentarians do not truly represent the “voice of the people”. To mobilize, to take a stand, to get involved it is necessary to have time for reflection. It is essential to “listen” to the world. To observe it, which is much more than merely looking at it. To have a planetary vision, a conscience of the whole of humanity, which will enable us to react without having to wait for *tsunamis* to jolt our emotions and prompt us to take action.

Those in power, who have always kept their distance from citizens who, with

increased confidence are taking the stage, never realized the power of a “virtual revolution”. The capacity for distance participation (via mobile phones, SMS, Internet...) will change present consultation and election procedures. In synthesis, democracy.

Citizens’ disappointment at their governments’ incapacity to implement the now very watered-down Millennium Objectives and, more recently, their leaders’ failure to face their global responsibilities concerning climate change has accompanied their perplexity and indignation at the “rescue” of the financial institutions that are largely responsible for the serious situation we are presently facing.

And the people? When are the people going to be “rescued”? It is essential that we achieve efficient multilateralism, with international institutions endowed with all of the means required to fulfill their missions.

Only then can there be an end to trafficking and the mafias that today enjoy greater impunity thanks to tax havens, which should be closed immediately without further contemplation.

A United Nations that could rapidly deploy Blue Helmets when human rights are massively violated in the name of “national sovereignty”. And rapid and coordinated action to reduce the impact of great catastrophes, whether natural (hurricanes, cyclones, floods, fire, earthquakes) or provoked.

the transition from a speculative, virtual war economy (3,000 million dollars of military spending daily while 60,000 people die of hunger) to an economy of global sustainable development, which would progressively increase the number of people who have access to services and goods.

The future has yet to be decided. The future must be invented by overcoming the inertia of those who insist on solving the problems of tomorrow with

yesterday's solutions. Many things should remain the same. But many others must be changed. And we must have the courage to do so. We must dare.

It is civil society's turn! From force to dialogue, encounters, conciliation. From subjects to citizens, the great transition.

CAN THE WORLD BE FIXED?

- 1) If democracy is consolidated and political leaders take the reins instead of bowing to pressure from financial institutions, and replace our present speculation-based economy with a knowledge-based economy.
- 2) If investment in weapons and military spending is reduced and more money is devoted to global sustainable development, significantly increasing the number of people who benefit from progress.
- 3) If tax havens are decisively closed down and alternative financing measures are put into place, such as fees for electronic transactions.
- 4) If, for once and for all, the plutocratic G-7, G-8, G-20... factions imposed by the "globalizers" are dissolved and the United Nations is reinforced and endowed with the means for fulfilling its worldwide security missions, enforcing international law, including the World Trade Organization and ensuring that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund carry out the goals for which they were founded, with rapid deployment of UN *Blue Helmets*, rather than remaining as passive witnesses to genocide and massive human rights violations, and if the actions of *Red Helmets* are coordinated, being specially prepared to reduce the impact of natural or man-made disasters...
- 5) If it is decided overnight that drugs are worthless and are made universally available at reasonable prices, as is the case with alcohol and tobacco. This "legalization" would be accompanied, as warranted, by a

campaign in the communications media, educational institutions, etc. to discourage drug use and clinical treatment to cure addiction.

- 6) If citizens the world over, aware of the power of distance participation, cease to be resigned “receivers” and turn to action.

The world can be fixed. But the “Bush solution” G-20 will not solve the world’s problems. They will not be solved by “rescuing” irresponsible bankers with public funds. Nor by delocalizing production for “greed-added” motives. Nor by investing thousands of millions in weapons of defense and security designed for past conflicts. Nor by allowing embarrassing tax havens to exist. Nor by maintaining the people distracted and blinded by the new real and virtual circuses of the 21st century. Nor with outdated formulas incapable of meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow.

This will only be achieved with imagination. By inventing the future.

By applying solutions designed by reliable people: "in times of crisis, imagination is more important than knowledge" (Albert Einstein).

And another: "All change is possible... No challenge is beyond the reach of human creativity" (John F. Kennedy).

In his excellent essay "*Crisis, culture and democracy*" José Monleón quotes Amin Maalouf when he writes: "Mankind is facing previously unknown dangers that require previously unknown global solutions".

The future has not yet been forged. A new world worthy of human dignity may at last be built at the dawning of the 21st century.

AN UNCONTROLLABLE TIDAL WAVE FROM CYBERSPACE HAS COMMENCED!

The mobilization of the peoples has commenced.

Those who continue to speculate on the deathbed of “globalization”, those who met in Davos... are generally ignorant of current reality: citizens are starting to express themselves through modern communications technology. The time for resignation and silence is over.

They have consistently refused to listen: for years I and many others have predicted that distance participation using mobile phones and Internet would change the course of history, greatly increasing citizens’ capacity to influence the democratic process, which previously was limited in the best scenarios to voting in elections. But I added that genuine democracy is not only being counted in elections, but counting, being taken into account daily. The voice of the people! The “We, the Peoples!” so lucidly proclaimed in the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations have been reduced to an international humanitarian agency and an institutional refuge of convenience, conferring real power to groups of the world’s wealthiest nations (G6, G7, G8... G20). Since the 1980s when values (social justice, equity, solidarity ...) were replaced by the rules of the market and the “democracy” that the UN represented was replaced by plutocracy, it became clear that inequalities would increase, production would be outsourced, tax havens would overflow instead of being shut down once and for all,

supranational trafficking (drugs, arms, people) would go unpunished, financial transactions would remain unregulated...

But it was all in vain.

Cyberspace's capacity for moving the masses soon became apparent, even in Iran! It is now extending to the Maghreb. Hopefully it will be peaceful, and what could have been predicted won't be put down with violence.

And, above all, let's hope that those responsible for the current situation, particularly the "great dominion" (the energy, military, economic and media powers) promptly take the appropriate measures. When the Berlin Wall fell and with it, thanks to Mikhail Gorbachev's magic, the Soviet empire, I warned that if the current tendencies weren't rapidly rectified, the same would happen in the "Western" empire. "A system based on equality, but lacking in freedom has just collapsed. Now, if there are not radical changes, this system based on freedom but lacking in equality and justice will also collapse".

The exploited, frustrated, poor and impoverished, those who have been humiliated may now make themselves heard and "seen". Until recently, the scope was local and the basis for protests was also "local". Now there are global causes, and the markets' intolerable hounding of political action has become widespread.

Today it's so easy to see that those who provoked this situation are those who are now accusing the leaders of the countries affected by this "tidal wave"! They must immediately start taking corrective decisions, because citizen mobilization, like an uncontrollable high tide (which hopefully won't become a tsunami) is now unstoppable.

We were silenced because they deemed our voices utopian, irrelevant, irritating but insignificant... instead of realizing that this was a gradual process toward mobilization at all levels.

I remember years ago they called us “do-gooders,” when from positions of responsibility all over the world we advocated a rapid reform of the United Nations, so that citizens could finally play the role that the United Nations System represents and promotes, inspired in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Don't look the other way. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Accelerate change. Change is going to come, regardless. Think of that uncontrollable tidal wave ...

THE CRIME OF SILENCE

*From wave to wave.
The sea is all knowing.
But it forgets.*

Mario Benedetti

I wrote this in August 1994 in Salobreña, sitting across from the sea as the sun went down:

The crime
of silence.

We must become
the voice
of the silenced
ones.

The voice
that denounces,
that proclaims
that man
is not for sale,
is not part
of the market.

The voice
that reaches out to
the four corners
of the earth,
forceful and loud.

Let no one who

can speak
stay quiet.
Let all those who can,
join in with
this cry.

The silence of the silenced, of the gagged. The silence of ignorance. Terrible silence. Though even more terrible, so terrible it is a crime, is the guilty silence of the silent. Of those who can speak but remain quiet. Of those who can and should speak, but choose not to.

We owe our voice. To our own conscience, primarily. But, immediately after, it is our duty to be the voice of the voiceless. We owe them our voice: *The voice owed to you*, as in Garcilaso's eclogue, as in Salinas' book. The voice owed, above all, to those who follow just behind us, to future generations.

Without ceasing. Without flinching. Resisting distraction or weariness. Resisting the pull of the screen (s), passive viewers. It is a duty to speak out. To fail to do so is, or can be, wilful insolidarity, a moral transgression, a crime. "When the tired man / ... stops, / he betrays the world, because he yields / in hte supreme duty, which is to continue".

Try again. Without stopping, without pause, because -as Salinas continues- "It makes our lives complete / that pure, restless flight...".

A watchful voice. A voice that warns and corrects. A voice tha guides. "The voice must preceed the fact, / prevent it. / Any later and it is useless. / Nothing more than trembling air" (verse on Cambodia, 8 April 1979).

The voice owed, pledged. The voice that liberates as it utters. The voice that is a handhold, that cures. In 1995, I wrote in Paris,

"... The voice sometimes / was not a voice out of fear. The voice that could have been the remedy / and was nothing".

In his poem, *On Present Time*, José Ángel Valente warns us:

"I write from a shipwreck.
I write about the present time.
I write... about what we have destroyed
above all inside us.
I write from the night,
from the infinite progression of the shadows,
... from the clamour of man and the netherworld,
from genocide,
from the children, infinitely dead...
but I also write from life...
from its powerful cry".

Like Garcilaso, "No longer could I remain silent," let us raise our voice. A voice owed, a voice of life. The crime of silence. "... Let the voice of everyone be heard, / solemnly and clearly". This is the message of Miquel Martí i Pol. Of everyone! The clamour of the people, so that our descendants do not look back one day and think: "They could have but they did not dare. We waited for their voice, and it never came".

The sea can remain silent.

We cannot.

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Enough!.....	4
Rereading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.....	6
Natural disaster or induced: a new concept of security.....	10
The immense power of the media. Take immediate action.....	13
From subjects to citizens, the great transition.....	18
Can the world be fixed?.....	21
An uncontrollable tidal wave from cyberspace has commenced!.....	23
The crime of silence.....	26



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