

Fondazione Aldo della Rocca

Ente Morale per gli studi di Urbanistica eretto con decreto Pres. Rep. 5-7-1958 n° 1013

Palazzo Baldassini, Via delle Coppelle 35 – 00186 ROMA Tell. (06) 68131869 – 68134316 (fax) - (081) 5753357 - 5756858 (fax)

C.F. 01828940583 www.fondazionehellarocca.it

e-mail : fond.adr@beguinot.191.it - beguinot@tiscali.it – pec@pec.fondazionehellarocca.it

For the Future of the City, a Manifesto.

Today, the contemporary city has become a narrow cage, where most human beings are imprisoned, in which the most atrocious crimes are perpetrated. Man in captivity loses his nature and spreads his innermost violence. The vast majority of human beings is imprisoned there, attracted by the idea of a peaceful life.

The concentration of the most varied functions in the urban areas suggests that the city is the ideal container for working, having fun, dealing with others, developing knowledge, and living comfortably. Instead, the desirable functions result in malfunctions, by delaying the time for obtaining any service and generating a growing nervousness that are externalized through different forms of mental and physical disorders, from depression to aggression, from mortification to hatred, from tolerance to crime.

As for anyone who is imprisoned in a cage, the city produces despair, alienation, suffering, having lost all its meaning.

For some time now, a desperate cry of alarm has risen from the urban areas and no one, especially the Institutions, seems to realize this. Feeling alienated, man subverts any possible reason: minds are dull and copious demonstrations of intimate discomfort emerge. The rules of good social life are disregarded, or have never been regarded at all, whereas no Constitution can compensate for the actual experience of life. The City, therefore, is in deep crisis and some of its effects seem to have reached elements of irreversibility. With conscience and sacrifice, Institutions and Governments should understand this and find remedies. They cannot just deplore any externalization of cruelty, derived from the perseverance of abuse. La città è uno spietato killer e l'Istituzione è il mandante.

Of a total of 20 million human deaths occurred in 2011, more than 15 million are attributable to the City: 9 million from hunger, 2 million from cancer (data relating only to urban causes), 1 million from road accidents and 3.5 million for pollution. A picture that relegates the issue of capital punishment, which were only 680 (0.03% of the urban data), to an infinitely lower level. Why do people and Institutions only emphasize the principles of lesser importance, while ignoring the real problem, the container of all the problems, which determines the actual human drama?

The UN, although burdened with innumerable problems, has always been attentive to the issue of Human Rights, which has resulted in a number of Resolutions since 1948. Yet, it has not even promoted a resolution on the *Right to the City for All*. Why is it so?

The answer to these painful questions is perhaps exemplified by a parallelism: as those who, confident, go to live in the city, the Institutions at all levels have not realized it yet, in spite of everything. Solving the problem of the urban crisis means solving, according to one direction, the set of problems that envelops the beings inside the cage called City.

Fondazione Aldo della Rocca

Ente Morale per gli studi di Urbanistica eretto con decreto Pres. Rep. 5-7-1958 n° 1013

Palazzo Baldassini, Via delle Coppelle 35 – 00186 ROMA Tell. (06) 68131869 – 68134316 (fax) - (081) 5753357 - 5756858 (fax)

C.F. 01828940583 www.fondazionehellarocca.it

e-mail : fond.adr@beguinot.191.it - beguinot@tiscali.it – pec@pec.fondazionehellarocca.it

Breaking down the barriers of the city/cage is the first duty of those who, with skill and power, can act on a global level. It does not only mean to open up the doors of the ancient city, the City of the Stone Age. This has already been done and, paradoxically, the city is experiencing both a physical and relational growing compulsion, in proportion to its uncontrolled expansion. And so also the great expectation of the City of the relationships succumbs. This latter had to be the one where the government of innovation should have acted as a driving force to the overall rebalancing and where the citizen could feel a member of it.

However, innovation has proceeded without rules, mainly oriented towards an excessive consumerism, exacerbating the discomfort and mortifying any ambition to see the implementation of the great design of the *Third City*, where beauty and culture come together in an effective synthesis, where time and space give rise to a sustainable and harmonious coexistence.

For many years, the awareness of this plight has moved the attention and actions of scientific communities. A growing awareness, which is proportional to the increase of the urban deprivation.

Since the early 80s, these communities have carried forth that great interdisciplinary research project called *The Wired City*, attended by universities and scholars from many Countries around the world.

The City in functional crisis was rethought through advanced technological applications and, in 1994, the ten principles of the New Urbanism Charter were emanated. This was the *Charter of Megaris '94, for the City of Peace and Science*, which was spread through a World Conference and translated in publications for a better circulation.

Despite the great opportunity given by the enormous potential of innovation, the pressing boundaries of technology have travelled at speeds greatly exceeding those of its enforcement capacity. And in the meantime, the City has become increasingly complex and ungoverned, assuming disarming critical proportions, receiving almost 70% of the world population, occupying an area equal to 4% of the planet and consuming 75% of the total resources.

The distance between the growing demand of the society and the inability of the City to answer to it was raising issues of social, economic and environmental character, and also regarding town planning, health and safety, international terrorism, organized crime, inadequacy of the Institutions to the increasing complexity, exponential gap between GDP and urban cost, social quality, loneliness and abandonment. Topics addressed by the research groups which, more recently, found themselves before the further inconvenience of a historical period called to deal with other civil and moral matters: multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism. The intense work, translated into a significant scientific production with proposals for remedies to the urban crisis, was submitted to the UN, through a process

Fondazione Aldo della Rocca

Ente Morale per gli studi di Urbanistica eretto con decreto Pres. Rep. 5-7-1958 n° 1013

Palazzo Baldassini, Via delle Coppelle 35 – 00186 ROMA Tell. (06) 68131869 – 68134316 (fax) - (081) 5753357 - 5756858 (fax)

C.F. 01828940583 www.fondazione dellarocca.it

e-mail : fond.adr@beguinot.191.it - beguinot@tiscali.it – pec@pec.fondazione dellarocca.it

of participation in numerous events, from the first meeting held in New York, at the closing of the General Assembly in September 2009.

We want that the continuity of such work is entrusted not only to the current and future actions of the researchers, but also to the Institutions involved and to be involved. In particular we want the UN to be involved, in order to reach a Planetary Resolution on the issue of the *Right to the City for All*. In this context, the meritorious action of UN-Habitat and other UN Agencies, has been a factor of great importance.

Science and research have already done much, and will continue the commitment. Now more than ever, it is up to the decision makers, so that so much work is translated into application, through a new policy for the City. According to a constructive view, we need now to push for the creation of a network of consensus, through aggregations, associations, to gain strength and power. It is a new and exciting challenge, which hopefully will be taken into consideration by the 192 Countries belonging to the UN, which are all the bearers of multiple and diverse needs.

When a phenomenon - such as the urban crisis – assumes gigantic and widely spread proportions, when the usual methods of approach to the solutions turn out to be clearly insufficient, when sublime thoughts work by sector and lack of confrontations that are essential for an effective response to the problem, a planetary Cultural Revolution is required.

A Cultural Revolution requires a start-up: a time of proclamation, a tool for massive and penetrating spreading for a greater involvement. Beauty and Culture of living spaces are Rights for all and are the most important economic assets: it is time to open up to the world through a "*Manifesto for the future of the City*." Scholars, organizations, associations, are called to an exchange of views, to a sharing of ideas, even to a contrast, to enable the debate and implement the network. History teaches us that every great Revolution, based on shared principles and values, has needed an informative consecration. Without the play *Wirrwarr* by Klinger, the *Sturm und Drang* movement would not have contributed to the cultural investiture of the Age of Goethe. Without the *Letter on Tolerance* by Locke, Empiricism and the Enlightenment would not have had the importance achieved. Without *The Manifesto* by Marinetti and the artistic hazards by Balla, the Futurist movement would not have had the same great capacity of penetration. Without the writings of Alice Bailey and the work of Edgar Cayce, the New Age movement would not have spread. Without the declaration by Rudolf Steiner, the Anthroposophy Movement would not have been founded. Without the Athens Charter and the work of Le Corbusier, the modern concepts of Cultural Heritage and Urban Planning would not have been achieved, and subsequently translated into primary economic values.

We must spread these thoughts. We must attract young people to these problems. We must create a positive and revolutionary movement of opinion. We need an intercultural and intercontinental "Manifesto" of high visibility and penetration, which does not result in yet another small and circumscribed attempt aimed at the satisfaction of cultural and sectorial niches. It is necessary that the City, aware of the discomfort that is mortifying all its tradition and that is turning it into a place of incivility, achieves the necessary goals. To this end, we must move forward and insist in the only

Fondazione Aldo della Rocca

Ente Morale per gli studi di Urbanistica eretto con decreto Pres. Rep. 5-7-1958 n° 1013

Palazzo Baldassini, Via delle Coppelle 35 – 00186 ROMA Tell. (06) 68131869 – 68134316 (fax) - (081) 5753357 - 5756858 (fax)

C.F. 01828940583 www.fondazionehellarrocca.it

e-mail : fond.adr@beguinot.191.it - beguinot@tiscali.it – pec@pec.fondazionehellarrocca.it

way possible: more research and yet more and more spreading. Each association, every individual, every young mind, then everyone is called to promote the cultural movement for the future of the City and the new generations. Because the City is well worth a Revolution - and a Resolution - for a better tomorrow.