



**BNC BUILDING A
NEW CULTURE**

MANIFESTO

TOWARD A CULTURE OF DIGNIFIED GLOBAL COEXISTENCE

Given the world situation, the BNC-Manifesto suggests to change the present course of human development. You find here a sketch of a culture for a future worth living, a global society project. We hope that you will take part in it and maybe help to shape this project. As a member of BNC you consciously support and carry forth this vision!

It is our concern to refine the Manifesto. Therefore we invite you to deposit your critical thoughts and points in our blog: bnk-mnc-bnc.blogspot.com

WHAT IT IS ABOUT

Taking responsibility for the future of mankind, we are creating the BNC (Building a New Culture), a worldwide grassroots movement of people who utilize their pooled energies to strive toward a new orientation of society. People who do not want to look on with resignation while nature is being destroyed and human co-existence is being misled.

What we care about is the well-being of our children and grandchildren as well as the welfare of humanity within a healthy natural environment.

In order to change the present course of human development, the BNC should become a decisive, independent movement from the bottom up. This goal is very large, and fills us with respect. The BNC advances new concepts regarding human co-existence and intends to implement these ideas patiently and with specificity in many countries within the framework of their respective constitutions. Therefore, the BNC will be founded in a large number of countries.

To begin with, a sober observation: the dynamic balance of nature is becoming increasingly disturbed; species are disappearing at a rapid rate. Humanity is recklessly exploiting natural resources, producing so much waste and pollution that nature is “striking back”, creating a great disturbance to the healthy self-regulation of the biosphere. The main responsibility for this is carried by the First World countries, “the West”, with its lifestyles that are imitated and coveted worldwide. “The West” has the potential to change this way of life quickly - within the next 20 years.

Underlying this crisis is a very limited value system: the idea that more material prosperity allegedly provides people with ever greater happiness. This orientation has driven humanity astray. Only when this driving misconception is seen clearly – when immaterial assets and intangible riches are seen as significant in determining contentment – can the battle of humanity against nature and the competitive fight among nations subside. The connection between material prosperity and contentment must be recognized as a far-reaching error. Only then will there be a chance to restore harmony within our natural environment and among human beings.

The present-day materialistic orientation of society also leads to massive social inequality in the distribution of affluence – a breeding ground for anger and a readiness for violence. In short: the materialistic culture has no future to offer.

With the 7.6 billion people who live on this earth today, humanity needs to cultivate other ideas about how we are to live together. In 1830, the world population was only 1 billion. The situation of humanity today is fundamentally different. There are no longer any thinly-populated places that are habitable to which people can migrate, as the Europeans did in the 19th century. And there’s no longer a clean environment: pollution is global. Thus, humanity in its thinking and living needs a new orientation: to learn to live peacefully with Nature; to learn to create more peace among people through a just distribution of prosperity (income, assets) and the power of capital.

This is first a matter of cultivating an attitude of benevolence in our hearts. The common welfare and our own self-interest need to be elevated to a place of equal value. New is also the need to advocate both our needs and those of Nature and simultaneously respect those of all others.

Second, it’s about paying close attention to what really matters for our contentment. Then we can recognize that our deep appreciation for life depends on our connectedness, our fellowship and on our peaceful relationships within the family, society, and in our social circles. We also need freedom and autonomy; an amicable atmosphere at work, creative activity in our careers and in the everyday. Our contentment depends also on security and justice in society, and on our inner peace and our self-knowledge. All of this cannot be purchased. This is intangible wealth.

As soon as we recognize that our joy in living significantly depends on non-material things, we can free ourselves from the pursuit of more consumption, income and wealth, as these tend to offer more of a compensatory gratification rather than a lasting satisfaction. If we turn toward immaterial growth, in ourselves and in society, we leave behind materialism and arrive at post-materialism. Within post-materialism, material goods still remain significant. Their production and consumption, however, demand a complete ecological re-evaluation. In principle, individuals as well as society are, within post-materialism, oriented toward the growth of their intangible, non-material wealth and the growth of the common “goods”, (such as education, health and communication).

In democracies, citizens determine the orientation and goals of society, and they secure these in their constitutions.

Therefore:

The BNC proposes the following comprehensive approaches to solving the large problems of the world, anchored within their constitutions:

1. We resolve to adjust the individual and common ways of life to the healthy limits of the earth's endurance (reduction of raw material consumption and environmental impact per person).
2. We resolve to introduce a fair distribution of income, wealth and power (true democracy).
3. We resolve to strive for non-material, inner growth (inner wealth), which should replace material growth (material wealth).

Countries with a higher level of prosperity will be in the lead, as already today they use, measured against the world population, the natural resources of three to four planets like Earth. Changes in ways of life and ecologically sound technologies should reduce the global environmental impact (climate change, reduction of biodiversity, pollution) of nine billion people and bring it under the load limits of the earth. **Quality of life unfolds further, thanks to the growth of the intangible wealth of all, fair distribution of material prosperity and a better organization of society.**

We are concerned with the development of individual and collective maturation, the commitment to greater responsibility, more engagement. **The overall social vision of the BNC can be an uplifting project for the West. Europe and North America urgently need a mobilizing concept for a livable future.** Humanity as a whole will also have to soon take the historical step away from materialism.

We consider the world as it is. The BNC does not lapse into an illusion of a perfect society. It is concerned with cultural development, not perfection.

STATING THE PROBLEMS – HOW THINGS STACK UP

We mention here several basic problems which raise a great number of further difficulties.

MATERIALISM

Our culture is marked by materialism: it believes that our contentment would become ever greater through the ongoing growth of material prosperity. This is the error of this culture of growth; it misunderstands the essence of the human being. Of course, in times of chronic distress, growth to a certain level of prosperity means less day-to-day worry and stress. But in the case of a rampant increase of prosperity, this partial truth turns into self-deception. The materialistic path toward a contented life is based on an obsolete understanding of human beings. At least three quarters of peoples' basic needs are not material: emotional needs (love, connectedness), mental (knowledge, awareness, culture and art in all forms, creativity) psychological and spiritual needs. This is valid just as much for people who live in poverty! Community, solidarity, song, dance, sport, spirituality, freedom, peace and security are all of greatest importance for them as well.

For the most part, the way of life of the wealthy is deeply irrational: it destroys the very foundations of life. It also leads to a permanent struggle among people - for material prosperity, prestige and power - and to a permanent battle against nature - for the resources and raw materials to produce material goods.

> see constitutional changes 1 and 2

CLIMATE CHANGE, DESTRUCTION OF OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Rapid climate change threatens humanity - the inhabitants of all countries - and primarily the most impoverished. This is about bringing this rapid climate change caused by human beings to a pause. At the same time, significant pollution and overuse of natural resources must be dialed back to a level that the planet can endure.

> see constitutional changes 3

EROSION OF DEMOCRACY DUE TO THE CONCENTRATED POWER OF CAPITAL

Today about 0.1% of taxpayers in wealthy lands have a net worth at their disposal of 10 million US\$/Euro/Swiss Francs and more, and about 0.01% have a net worth of 50 million and above (the super rich). This group of the super-rich has the power to significantly influence higher education, the formation of political opinion, and political decisions. Since 1980, this continual concentration of capital resembles a way back to the Middle Ages. Democracy - the just disposition of power among citizens - is being more and more

undermined. Additionally, a large part of the capital elite form the cornerstone of material growth. Great wealth means immense power and unlimited freedom to act. Thirty to forty percent of taxpayers, however, have no wealth, or even have debt. Liberalism today is primarily concerned with the unlimited freedom of the richest. This enormous inequality of riches and freedom creates anger, a readiness for violence and political extremism.

> see constitutional changes 4

STRUGGLE OF RELIGIONS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

These struggles remain intensive: within and between religions as well as between two political systems: one as a “democratic constitutional state with independent media” and the other as an “autocracy with controlled media and citizenry”.

A quality education for everyone and a just distribution of affluence can only strengthen an openness and tolerance for different ways of thinking. Education also helps in recognizing the meaning of values and goods. Consequently the West would be well-advised to safeguard the achievements of enlightenment such as individual freedom, rule of law, democracy, free and independent media, civil rights (non-discrimination), freedom of religion, and a secular state. These are intangible goods of significant importance for the contentment of human beings. Migrants who need asylum should be educated in language and culture (a minimum of acculturation) and integrated as soon as possible into the professional world, if only provisionally. (integration)

LACK OF A PEACEFUL WORLD PERSPECTIVE - NATIONALISM

Powerful governments in the world today do not strive for any kind of globally peaceful co-existence. Common good has too little priority. Crucially necessary are new global perspectives, ideas concerning the welfare of all of humanity in the context of a healthy environment. A common orientation and rules are required for humanity to flourish. The pursuit of national goals must take place within a context of promoting a peaceful world.

VALUES

Freedom – Justice – Sustainability

These are pivotal values for the BNC.

FREEDOM

Individual and collective freedoms are fundamental to the joy of living for human beings. What is needed is “freedom from” an anti-democratic attitude and the suppression of critical thinking (freedom of expression and the media) and a “freedom to” – freedom to act, which is congruent with income, education and wealth. These two complement each other. Freedom also has limits: the common good – the limits of what nature can endure as well as the freedom of other human beings. Global responsibility includes the acceptance of these limits.

JUSTICE

Human contentment requires justice. Injustice creates anger and a readiness for violent action. What people feel as just is dependent upon their cultural conditioning. This needs to be newly established from time to time; for example, the just distribution of income and wealth.

ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

The population density of the planet (longer life expectancy, growth) and human beings' way of life make ecological sustainability an absolute necessity for all of humanity.

EQUALITY OF ALL PEOPLE

Each person has equal value. In life partnerships, duties will be freely and fairly agreed upon.

I, YOU, AND WE-CONSCIOUSNESS

The I-consciousness (individual, egocentric) has become dominant in western society. Attention and esteem for the good of the YOU (partner, society, nature) is insufficient. WE-consciousness should be established, in which I and YOU respect each other and the I strives for the well-being of both. An attitude of “as-well-as” is being requested, the balance of I and YOU.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, ENGAGEMENT

We are responsible for our welfare and are co-responsible for the good of our community (family, village, neighborhood, city, country). Today, as we live in extensive interconnection, we also share responsibility for the good of humankind and the planet.

PERCEPTUAL ABILITY, ATTENTIVENESS

Attentiveness – the conscious perception and experience of the world through all of our senses – is the doorway to deep appreciation for life. This needs training. A trained attentiveness to taste, smell, music, color, language, dance, form, landscape, tenderness, Eros and friendship open the human being to relish the fullness of nature and culture. Thanks to the great joy offered by these immaterial riches, material prosperity substantially loses significance.

THE STATE WITHIN DEMOCRACY

The State is the sum of constitutions and laws that the society of voters or its parliament has established for a good quality of co-existence. The State (government, administrations), even though it possesses partial autonomy, is the hand that acts on behalf of democracy. Like the economy, the State is not a separate, overriding power, but a part of society.

RULE OF LAW

All members of society will be handled in the same way by the justice system (non-discrimination). The justice system is independent.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy distributes decision-making among all citizens regarding the comprehensive rules of co-existence. A fair distribution of power does not square with concentration of power in the hands of a few people. Particularly, the concentration of the power of capital is undemocratic. Democracy requires a good education for each and every one, freedom of speech, and an independent media.

SUBSIDIARITY

Decisions will be made on the level where they, with the best knowledge and efficacy, can be decided. Subsidiarity extends from the local region, gradually, to the rest of the world. More and more fields, however, require supranational regulations.

ECO-SOCIAL CONTROLLED MARKET ECONOMY

The market economy should remain free, wherever possible. Where social and ecological

goals of society are not achieved, an eco-social framework will be established politically (consumption limits, for example) and enforced by the State.

HOMELAND, IDENTITY – WORLDWIDE CULTURAL WEALTH

Home and security can be offered by life partners, family, village, city, a region or landscape, a local culture or a religious/philosophical community. For cosmopolitans, the planet earth can be home, for physicists and mystics the universe.

Care for the homeland enhances the cultures of the world. This does not stand in contradiction to world perspective and to necessary worldwide regulations. A livable homeland depends also on peace in the world.

APPROACHES TO SOLUTIONS – CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS SOUGHT

A goal of the BNC is to embed the following approaches to solutions in the constitutions and legislations of many countries. These formulations are not written in stone, but they are intended to provide a direction.

1 – CONSCIOUSNESS SHIFT – POST-MATERIALISM

CORE THOUGHTS:

“FOR THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INNER ABUNDANCE, OF IMMATERIAL GOODS”

Civil society or parliament is aware that, with the guaranteed satisfaction of modest material needs, peoples’ happiness depends essentially on their inner abundance and immaterial goods. With this understanding, it decides that growth will shift to immaterial goods and intangible abundance, and material growth will be largely superseded by this (post-materialism).

CLARIFICATIONS: We will not overcome materialism within ourselves through its suppression but rather in the way we give the material realm its justified but limited place in our life. The cultural change we strive for will be associated with a gain of quality of life for human beings, as three quarters of our basic needs are immaterial.

A brief enumeration of these immaterial goods that offer quality of life: peaceful relationships within the family (partners, children, parents) and in community, in the social environment. Good relationships in the workplace; work that is enjoyable and offers the possibility to get involved; knowledge, education, competence; self-realization, serenity, a sense of purpose; enriching free time activities like singing, making music, writing, painting, acting, crafts, gardening, dance, sports, reading. The fulfilling experience of closeness, touch, and tenderness. And further: dignity, individual and collective freedom, health, social justice, security, peace and the rule of law. The principles that guide our community and society also determine our quality of life.

Immaterial abundance can grow endlessly. As opposed to material goods, it multiplies through distribution and sharing. For their construction, immaterial goods need material goods, also for collective or communal projects. The economy remains in this way meaningful!

People who have a developed immaterial abundance at their disposal enjoy the abundance of nature and culture. They can live modestly without the feeling of relinquishment. They honor the needs of other people and of nature. Immaterial, inner abundance is the compatible and peaceful way of being in harmony with nature to promote the development of a lasting happiness for human beings.

2 – EDUCATION

CORE THOUGHTS:

“EDUCATION FOR COMPETENCE, CREATIVITY, CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS, AND ATTENTIVENESS”

Civil society or parliament resolves: thanks to their education, young adults of 20 years should have a vast inner abundance of immaterial wealth at their disposal. Great competency and creativity are sought in many fields; these serve joy in living, culture, science and economics. Special attention is dedicated to ways of self-realization, toward inner satisfaction, the ability to love, toward peaceful conflict resolution, to successful relationships and to sensuality. This is an education of high quality, and open to all.

CLARIFICATIONS: It is new that consciousness-expansion as well as emotional and social competence are fostered, thanks to instruction in social, philosophical and psychological fields. The art of living, particularly harmonious co-existence, is sought.

The basics of quantum mechanics will be taught to all young people. These convey a picture of the world that expands the Newtonian worldview and helps us to make relative our way of seeing, thus developing tolerance for people who think in a different way.

3 – TO LIVE CONTENTEDLY WITHIN THE LIMITS THAT PLANET EARTH CAN ENDURE

CORE THOUGHTS:

“FOR PEACE WITH NATURE”

The people resolve: we strive to foster the flourishing of humankind in peace. By the year 2050, lifestyles will be adjusted gradually to the circumscribed limits of the planet. The limits of the burden of the 9 billion inhabitants per capita will be determined as scientifically as possible. The maximally allowed burdens apply to the domains of climate change, biodiversity, and environmental pollution. The reduction of these burdens should take place due to changes in lifestyle and restrictions of consumption (non-negotiable,

per capita) as well as an ecological-technological revolution. (recycling of resources and raw materials). By the year 2050, a creative and strong ecological circuit of economy will be introduced, based on a new post-growth economy. Price manipulation (permits, taxes) affect the less affluent more than the wealthy. Privileges due to wealth should be avoided. We will strive not for a shock therapy, but for a well-ordered transformation of the economy and life-style within about twenty years.

This project for a new society needs the power of creativity and a spirit of invention from each and every one. The people commission the government and urge political systems, research, economy and education to actualize this decision, and commits itself to support this profound change.

CLARIFICATIONS: Well-to-do nations are in the position to actualize this change first. After this, material abundance should suffice for a satisfying life-style for everyone.

A circular economy functions like a mature forest, a primeval forest. It does not grow any further. Its total material turnover remains the same. Growth in one place will be compensated by a dying off and decaying in another place. Decay nourishes growth. A climacteric forest such as this regulates itself. It is dynamic: new species spread, others become crowded out or die off. Structural change is possible, accordingly.

The economics of a no-growth economy with stable public finances and secure pensions still needs to be thought through and written in detail and context (post-growth economics).

4 – EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION – A SOCIETY OF OWNERS

CORE THOUGHTS:

“PEACE AMONG PEOPLE – EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION”

The people resolve: in strengthening democracy and solidarity, we establish a more equitable distribution of material abundance and power of capital. The maximal span of yearly income by those fully employed will be established (for example) from 1 to 20. Yearly incomes above this will be channeled for the good of the general public.

All adults will inherit from the large private wealth. Private wealth up to (for example) 5 Million US\$/Euro/Swiss Francs remain protected. Through this, the economy belongs largely to citizens, not to the State. Citizens become responsible owners or co-owners. A society of owners is established, a kind of small capitalism. Personal inheritance within capital re-distribution - the mature capital - cannot be consumed. It will be up to 95% invested by the owners (homeowner, joint partner).

CLARIFICATIONS: The prosperity of people with a lower income should be raised not by further economic growth but rather by better distribution. The society of owners makes possible, in connection with the improved income distribution, a decided expansion of freedom and power for about 99% of economically responsible people, sovereign citizens. Thanks to their good education, the society of owners is feasible for about 90% of citizens today in prosperous countries.

“Justice” does not mean “equality”. Society needs to define whatever distribution of income and wealth that it finds to be just. For Switzerland, for example, a first meaningful step in this direction would be: a relationship of yearly income per person (for example between 40,000 to 800,000 Swiss Francs) and a distribution of the wealth in the bandwidth from 1 to 25 (for example 200,000 to 5 million Swiss Francs).

It is also new that companies with over 5-10 employees belong to at least 51% of the workforce (co-owners). In this way, farmers and craftspeople remain owners of their businesses. To finance their investments and research, corporations need benefits. This capital income is for the benefit of all co-owners.

In case the abundance of the society grows further, it will be significantly invested in public goods and infrastructure.

IMPLEMENTATION – ACTION

Our strategy is merging the power of countless people who, from their depths, demand and encourage this cultural change with a clear understanding, empathy, patience and perseverance. The BNC works with the pooled power of compassion and awareness. The BNC utilizes all peaceful means so that politics, economy, research, education, and people themselves alter the course of society's development. This shift in consciousness away from materialism is already taking place today. The BNC co-operates with like-minded movements and organizations. To promote this shift in consciousness, the BNC especially uses political debate through the media, which the proposed constitutional changes will trigger over decades. The various countries who participate in the BNC cooperate with each other in order to secure a unified global political strength of will.

LAUNCH OF THE BNC

After completion of the Manifesto, the strategy for launching the BNC will be thought through. In addition, for the development of a legal entity (an association, for example), an advisory board will be established. Logo and corporate design will be commissioned. The website of the BNC will be at first established in three languages: German, French and English. Initially, the Manifesto and BNC will be made known through the internet.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL BNC

BNC's will organize themselves independently on a country-by-country basis, on the principles of the Manifesto. The BNC's form a legal organization and establish their committees. They strive for round-table democratic management structures and use goal-oriented management tools. The executive board of a national BNC will be complemented with advisory committees, for example the Strategic Council, that thinks through strategy, and a Program Council that reviews goals and approaches to solutions. Decisions that will point the way of the BNC are provided by national members – or conferences of delegates. Finances will be transparent. The BNC's will use the latest information technology with great care.

MEMBERSHIP – DONATIONS

By filling out a form on the website, women and men over the age of 15 can become members of the BNC. Membership for most people will mean little effort: support of the

contents of the Manifesto; making it known in one's own social circles; payment of annual contribution; the (electronic) transmission of materials for electronic signatures (initiatives, petitions); possible participation in regional meetings and educational seminars. Donations without membership are welcome. Amounts over a thousand US\$/Euro/Swiss Francs will be verified according to ethical criteria regarding origin.

PROCESS

The Manifesto should be reviewed ca. every 5 years in light of new insights. For this, the Program Councils of the many BNC's could meet about every five years. However, there should not be a permanent remodeling process of the Manifesto so that calm and continuity remain in the basic goal and the work.

Gil Ducommun, with many other thinking people

September 2019 | gil.ducommun@bewegung-neue-kultur.ch
BNC: www.building-a-new-culture.ch
Adress: BNK/MNC, Bewegung Neue Kultur, CH 3098 Köniz