



1. The state of the world

Torch bearers of the new world: why a "new world" and what is a "torch bearer"?

An increasing number of people realize that our society has become a *soul crushing machine*. While some are satisfied with financial and economic theories to explain away the current crises, many men and women see them as a result of a "deficiency of humaneness" in the foundations of our society. The development of the human being is not at the center of the organization of society, it was replaced by profit, a compulsive consumption and a climate of competition at every level between citizens and against nature itself. As a result, an absence of wellness of being and a loss of meaning, of which our educational system is regrettably an active promoter, weighs heavily on their conscience.

This report is not new. It is made, more or less clearly and honestly and in different styles, within the context of political, intellectual, philosophical, spiritual, alternative circles ... But this awareness leads to no shared vision of what could be achieved because the ambition to change the world seems too big, too utopian, even dangerous on the basis of past experiments, the outcome of which was sometimes considered catastrophic. Many proposed solutions, by emphasising in particular "what to build" instead of giving priority to "who builds", consist in putting mere bandages on a devastated world.

Nevertheless, the impression of this being an impossible task may stem from a wrong perspective, which consists in wanting to fix the chaos in a superficial, "outer" way, ignoring the deep "inner" chaos of the human being which is its cause.

In response to the stream rolling by consumerist society, civil society has very fortunately become a pool of alternative experiments (of spiritual, educational, therapeutic life choices, etc.) which participate, in a more or less convincing way, to improve the world. These experiments, when they are not appropriated or diverted, are generally not well perceived, in particular by the government and French media, because change frightens those who make the most out of this destructive situation, and many prefer the fear which inspires them in the current situation, even if a harbinger of disasters, to the fear of a leap into the unknown towards a radical change.

Our project of the "torch bearers of the new world" has the ambition to reinvent the world, *not restore it as we would an old armchair on which we would put a new fabric but to reinvent it in its totality because we sense that it is "all or nothing"*. It establishes itself on the living experience of men and women, who wish to associate with this project all those who feel they would like to participate. We know that this sharing is possible because it has already touched many people.

2. Self-knowledge as the basis of the New World

What is my relation to others, whether they are relatives or close friends, colleagues, a husband, a wife or anyone else? The quality of a relationship at the individual level determines the quality of relationships on a vaster scale, whether in the family, the group or the nation. To understand what damages my relationship to another person allows me to understand what eventually damages society, step by step, on a larger scale. But it is not a question of understanding in an abstract and outer way, like an "expert" using a scientific theory to describe and make me understand what takes place within me. It is indeed about a personal experience of "a return to oneself".

In the case of a conflict with my spouse who spoke to me with "harshness" or with my manager who did not recognize my "merits": who is responsible for my uneasiness, for my suffering, for the feeling of not being liked, for the fear of being dismissed, for the humiliation of not being appreciated, etc.? The important point is not to point out a person as responsible (outside) but to find the place of resolution of the uneasiness (inside). Even if a third party is guilty of the abuse which I underwent, the resulting trauma will not be resolved by condemning him. It is therefore absolutely necessary to return to our inner being to handle conflicts.

These internal conflicts arise mainly from our unfulfilled emotional demand. Our desire to resolve them is perverted by the belief that somebody can bring us the love, the recognition, the answer to our expectations; to be loved, recognized, admired : we fill the bottomless pit reserved for our emotional demands with our love, professional and other affairs, the most intense possible, and yet disappointment is permanent. Yes, but a life where these love, emotional and relationship related conflicts would be appeased, is it not going to be boring, devoid of intensity? Will this New World not be too suggestive of a "Brave New World"?

This tension comes from our incapacity to realize our emotional independence, the only direction that can help us to accept ourselves and to look at the other person without weighing it against our own demands.

The emotional quest finds resolution in oneself. That is the radical reversal of perspective we propose: "The torch bearers of the new world" is a project of self-knowledge as a foundation to reinvent the world, whereby each one is invited to an intimate encounter with his inner life, the origin of all conflicts and the place of their resolution.

This work of self-knowledge, a hymn to the intelligence of life, was inspired and proposed since a dozen years by Thierry Vissac.

Auto-accompaniment:

The approach of Thierry Vissac, spiritual guide and writer, follows his meeting for 30 years with adults engaged in diverse spiritual or therapeutic paths. The following extract of a mail sent recently to government members summarises his approach:

"In the course of these meetings, I am struck almost every time by a generally unseen reality. Our civilization suffers, in my opinion, mainly from emotional immaturity. Most of the individuals, particularly those who live in western societies, are ignorant of their most intimate life. They all learnt to think, to cogitate and worry and can, at best, talk about political or philosophical concepts. But the constituents of their "inner life" are to them as if inaccessible, unexplored. I sometimes question a person on this subject, thus: "Do you know what you feel in this moment in time?" The answer is very often a silence. The immediate feeling is not "brought to awareness" and if this person can sometimes quite easily report on what she "thinks", she is generally cut off from what she "feels".

Crime, psychological disorders, psychosomatic diseases, depression, the feeling of a "loss of meaning" are connected to this chronic division, too little considered or too late, between mental activity, which takes up all space, and the living experience of emotions and feelings, which is relegated to the background when it is not completely repressed. I met a criminal whose testimony was a trigger on this point when he confided to me that he had been "taken by surprise" by the emotion which had led him to murder. On a less tragic note, the daily life of our fellow citizens is filled with conflicting moments rooted in the "unconsciousness" of what really brews inside of oneself."

Proposal summary

Auto-accompaniment, in this proposal, points to a natural capacity, provided it is taught and developed early enough, to "recognize" in oneself what comes alive, to put it into words, to take responsibility for it and to let it dissolve. Thierry Vissac has for some years, for those who attend his conferences, summarized this capacity by the expression "to be with". "To be with " means that we are aware of what goes through us at some point, may it be anger or joy, and that this immediate feeling is not lost sight of during the actions we undertake. We are indeed used to acting from impulses which are not always very clear. We "react" rather than "act". The escalation of conflicts is largely due to this impulsiveness which tries to find a resolution "outside of oneself" (by attacking an "enemy", the designated cause of our uneasiness or suffering) rather than by taking responsibility for our own reaction (to return to oneself) and by recognizing its cause. "To be with" means on no account "to analyze" but "to accompany the feeling" during the time of its passage to allow it to dissolve naturally in the easing produced by this "return".

A related benefit to this approach is to allow each one to develop an autonomy which is lacking in the majority of people engaged in modern spiritual or therapeutic paths. The tendency to look for an external support (model, spiritual teacher, therapist) frequently takes precedence over the search for a certain autonomy.

Auto-accompaniment is a form of revolution for many individuals today and will require a preliminary explanation, perspective and accompaniment but, soon, the simplicity of this approach, especially if it is generalized, should help improve the quality of life of our fellow citizens.

The effects of this approach will then be perceptible in several areas of our society. To date, several hundred persons have already participated in workshops set up for this project.

Thierry Vissac's web site: www.istenqs.org

To be a torch bearer of the new world

To be a torch bearer of the new world implies a commitment to be in truth and in friendship with what is experienced at every moment and to be ready to share it. The conscious look, which sees no more enemies outside of oneself, is demanding because our inclination to protect ourselves from this enterprise of truth is constant. Nevertheless, through this work, the task to reinvent the world is brought back to a human scale and allows to envisage educational, economic, artistic, social activities, etc., which do not escalate into tensions, violence and diverse conflicts in the long term,. Peace in the world begins in oneself.

We are not talking about a "smooth" society, which would not correspond to the reality of a life full of joys and trials, but of a society where what was previously lived as a suffering becomes a source of learning about oneself. It is a question of accepting life completely, as it manifests, while being effectively autonomous, rather than to search, through artificial intensities, for an outlet to the fear of living.

3. The beginnings of a new world

Around thirty people, having noticed the deep beneficial change which this work of self-knowledge produced in their lives, wish to create an environment conducive to this new vision for all those who feel this inner call.

In practice, it is a question of finding a place to live for proposing this work of self-knowledge to many and also to offer a residence to its facilitators. This place would also be a center of gestation and maturation, a true laboratory, of the new world.

The project of the torch bearers of the new world does not have all turnkey solutions but proposes a program of exploration in seven stages:

The first stage is that of awareness: we do not know who we are and what we are doing here. This confusion is dramatic and must be treated as a priority, particularly in the education of the child but also, starting right now, by the "conscious look" of the adult. Such a look allows one "to live consciously" without deceiving oneself or others.

The second stage is that of dialogue: on the basis of the "work of consciousness", the fact of sitting down together around a project to "reinvent the world" is a dynamic that exceeds the boundaries of our personal story and brings in new values, new directions for this look, without which the collective consciousness of the world goes round in circles on the same worn out axes. Every personal development course, spiritual gathering, prayer group, therapeutic workshop, every mass should include in its process to be allowed a time devoted to reinvent the world, to note down the brightest Eureka and to put them together into one document. The workshops of the torch bearers of the new world going to be set up will have the aim of gathering voluntary participants for these brainstorming sessions, thus allowing in people's consciousness an igniting of the beginnings of a new civilization.

The third stage is that of development of the project "to reinvent the world": the goal is to formulate a proposal stimulating more people to get mobilized for a radical metamorphosis without generating fears which would block the process at once. The outcome of these meetings, over several months or several years, will permit to propose a charter for the building of a new society.

The fourth stage is that of dissemination of the project "to reinvent the world": from the reflections of thousands of conscious people, laid out to be presented as a relevant, coherent and workable project, and through the ties that will be woven by the network which will have been created, the means of disseminating the project will be discussed so that it may circulate internationally, because "everybody" is concerned.

The fifth stage is that of promoting the project with sponsors and wise men: change in the world will not come from authorities in place today but from those who constitute it: the people who are the elite, responsible for the human species and still too much in the background. These torch bearers will need a moral and financial support to promote their initiative.

The sixth stage is that of implementation of the project "to reinvent the world": whether on a local or national level, something has to arise from these debates, an example should be shown to the rest of the world. This stage of the foundation of a just society may happen faster than we think if enough of us feel the urgency and the value of this project and if it is presented so that it does not arouse sarcasm and skeptical reactions.

The seventh stage is that of a life worth living in a healthy society.

Charter of the torch bearers

- The participants to the project of the torch bearers of the new world understand that the transformation takes place first in oneself before being hoped for elsewhere.
- The principles of the conscious look are the foundations of this transformation.
- One is a "torch bearer" as soon as the transformation begins to operate in one's everyday life, by the natural development of the conscious look. The torch bearers are first the actors of a fundamental reconciliation in themselves, and the basis for a constructive, honest and pacified action afterward. Without a clear idea about what will arise from the union of their enlightened consciousnesses, they stand ready to share their vision and experience to generate, without anger or haste, a similar reconciliation on a collective plane.
- The torch bearers gather to share their views, in an atmosphere favorable to the emergence of new directions for our civilization. This "pooling", in freedom of expression without fear but also without certitudes to be defended nor too entrenched political convictions, is forging a sound footing for the new civilization.
- The pooling during these meetings aims not only at producing concrete projects to submit and to spread afterward but to generate the very possibility of a renewal just by being together and bringing to life new values.
- Subsequently, and as soon as possible, groups will be formed in this spirit, wherever there are torch bearers.

4. The specific project of a “torch bearers spiritual center”

The implementation of the project includes the purchase of a property which would ideally meet the following conditions:

- A wooded environment, protected from noise and crowds, without immediate neighbors but close enough to shops and schools and at a reasonable distance from a road, a railway station and an airport;
- At least ten hectares of land which can be built upon;
- The existence of at least one big building which can host seminars, including accommodation, for twenty to thirty people;
- Welcoming neighborhood and local representatives, open to a lifestyle which is respectful of man and nature.

The region which best seems to meet these criteria lies within a perimeter between Castres, St-Girons, Figueras (Spain) and Haut-Languedoc. We have in mind at present a very beautiful property in Aude offering a great potential.

The project involves the purchase of the property by a patron who would establish a long term lease (bail emphytéotique) for the benefit of an SCI composed of some of occupants of the place. This lease will confer on the lessee an effective right to the leased property and the possible improvements made to the property will benefit the owner at the end of the lease.

The people interested in the project but can settle down in the neighborhood. Besides participating in developing the local economy, the presence of these people, engaged in this work, should contribute to a serene and warm atmosphere in the villages and surrounding areas.

Various meetings in the form of dialogues will be proposed, as they already happen with the existing pilot group. It is in no way a community life, since we believe that each family and individual should live an independent personal and professional life. It is a spiritual Center, place of gathering and of resources open to all participants.

Simultaneous to the activity of seminars and meetings, several other activities are envisaged to provide for the life of the place, financially and in terms of attracting new people:

- the construction of guest houses;
- the management of forests;
- the production of organic products;

A life based on a conscious look opens the door to many opportunities and, if the project frame is clear, the project in its development remains open as everything remains to be discovered. It will be a place where all experiments can be attempted, insofar as they offer future solutions to the profound crisis of human values that our society is going through.

Everyone is invited to become aware in himself of the interdependence of all beings, the organization will not be based on profit and the desire to accumulate more and more but on the meaning of sharing, mutual help and service.

It is not a question of shutting out the world but, instead, recognising the difficulties it is facing, to work together to rediscover the original meaning of human life on earth because we have the feeling that out of this discovery could spring forth a salutary renewal for the consciousness of humanity.