

PRO NATURA INTEGRA

Towards a Human Ecology and Biopolitic

By H. MISLIN

To live with and from nature, and yet at the same time to preserve nature, this can only be achieved by modern man if he will make new and strenuous efforts to bring about a state of equilibrium between nature and human society. If by economy we understand strictly human economy, and by ecology that of living nature, then we must recognize that the future of mankind will be largely dependent upon the creation of a true relationship between economy and ecology. Today we know all too well that the health of human societies is dependent in many respects on the state of the biological environment: that the health of human beings is bound up with the health of forests, oceans, waters, earth and atmosphere. For the health of mankind involves much more than the mere freedom from disease! In particular, the welfare of any human society depends on the numberless relationships of individuals to each other and on the relationships with their environment.

But science and technology have changed man's world to a highly significant extent. Industrial man has introduced totally new factors which have for some time been gravely disturbing the relationship between man and nature: factors which have produced such extreme conflicts between civilization and the natural world that mankind is increasingly threatened with sheer self-destruction.

The pollution of waters, the impoverishment of soils, the poisoning of the air, the destruction of forests, flora and fauna, all these have become human problems of the first order. Every day the true understanding and appreciation of our human environment and of its importance for the health of all mankind becomes more urgent. The more modern man becomes encapsuled in the every-day life of big cities and of the business world, the more he is removed and estranged from nature, the greater is his yearning for a world unspoilt by human interference.

The measures which have been taken up to now to preserve and protect nature are by no means sufficient. Firstly it is essential to realize that a mere conservation of nature is an utopian dream, since in reality we can only aim at a simultaneous utilization and maintenance

of nature. It is only by a scientific, biological understanding of human life that the basis can be laid for a responsible ordering of man's natural environment. In addition to our highly developed technical knowledge we need a highly developed ecological knowledge. It must become more and more widely realized that the welfare of man is not only an economic or social problem but also an ecological one¹. In the future much will depend on the humanizing influence of ecology upon economics. The younger generation is called upon to find the initiative, the creative strength and sense of integrity, and indeed a new way of thinking, necessary to control a technology which has become all-powerful. The rising generation must work out a practical way to achieve a responsible balance between the rightful demands of the individual and the interests of the community. To reach this goal it is inevitably necessary to establish **research centers for bioprotection and biophylaxis**² which guarantee the coordination of the basic research of general biology, microbiology, chemistry, ecology, hydrology, geology, meteorology, environmental physiology, hygiene, sociology, technology, agronomy, economics and others.

If mankind is to ensure its own survival, it must produce a constructive biopolitic, built upon exact information from basic research. Thereby is meant a realistic hygiene of environment which must reject both, an insatiable preservation of natural beauties and a grasping, autocratic form of technology. A realistic biopolitic should aim to establish healthy regional and super-regional states of equilibrium in the different countries between the greater technological and ecological units (water systems, forest areas, atmospheres, etc.). It should seek in the widest sense to inform the public, and in the most serious and responsible way to educate the young generation.

¹ J. G. HARRAR, Crises in Human Ecology. Proc. natn. Acad. Sci. 61, 357 (1968).

² Recommendation No. 10 of the UNESCO intergovernmental conference (Paris, September 1968) of experts in basic research (biosphere).

CONGRESSUS

Italy

Second International Symposium on Radiosensitizing and Radioprotective Drugs

Roma, 6-8 May 1969

Like the first one, the Second International Symposium of Radioprotective Drugs will be under the auspices of the European Society for Biochemical Pharmacology. The Symposium is planned to provide an opportunity for the exchange of information on recent advances in the field of radiation protection and sensitization. Further

information may be obtained from either one of the following scientific secretaries of the Symposium: Dr. H. Moroson, Sloan Kettering Institute for Cancer Research, Donald S. Walker Laboratory, 145 Boston Post Road, Rye, New York, USA. Dr. M. Quintiliani, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, 299, Viale Regina Elena, Roma 00161, Italia.