FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK “STRATEGIES FOR THE EARTH AND SPACE. GEOISM AND COSMOISM”

Back in the decade of 1960 the Spanish architect Antonio Lamela developed the idea of Geoism, which deals with the need for a territorial strategy, to be considered from a planetary perspective to a supra-municipal one. He presented his ideas in, amongst other places, Paris, at a worldwide conference in 1968. Of particular note are the publication of a book on this issue in 1976 and another in 2007 (LAMELA, A., 1976 and LAMELA, A and others 2007), as well as the presentation of the idea at the Rio de Janeiro worldwide conference on the Environment and Development, organised by the United Nations in 1992, with the support of the Argentine government of the time.

Geoism can be defined as a proposal for discipline and professional practice, aiming to contribute to the organisation, in territorial terms, primarily of the planet as a whole, providing solutions to global problems, amongst other ways, by means of directives and worldwide indicators, and secondly, with a local focus, by means of supra-municipal planning, which would take into consideration those directives and which would be evaluated with respect to the indicators.

Geoism proposes:

- Socio-economic development, which efficiently manages the Earth’s resources in the most effective and logical way.
- A human society in which inequality is reduced, giving priority to the solution of more pressing issues such as malnutrition or lack of drinking water and adequate sanitation.
- Maximum environmental protection, starting with the most valuable and endangered elements.
- Coherence in the use and organisation of the planet’s territory in the short, medium and long terms.

In order to achieve these objectives, Geoism proposes directives and measures, e.g. the creation of a Sustainable Development Tax which would be paid principally by
developed nations, with the aim of providing finance for third world nations in exchange for a commitment to protect their valuable natural spaces. A part of the territorial plan would be to determine which areas would be most in need of protection, as well as determining which economic development plans would be most efficient in each case, always from a global point of view.

The idea is not to make a rigid territorial plan, but to advance with different, flexible territorial strategies, which would take into consideration problems and opportunities affecting the earth and its diverse regions, always aiming to achieve maximum consensus between the interested parties. The tendency would be to integrate a maximum number of relevant variables – flora, forest, fauna, climatic, water, social, economic, urban and a very long etc.– but, given how difficult a comprehensive focus would be, it is suggested not to wait for a holistic vision and start dealing with those particular aspects with a greater territorial impact.

Geoism, from a global planetary management perspective advocates territorial strategies on different levels: worldwide, continental, national and supra-municipal. It tries to establish reasonable solutions to find logical, admissible and harmonious processes to deal with urgent and pending challenges facing the planetary habitat as a whole. Geoism can help make concepts such as desirable or sustainable development a reality (WCDE, 1987), by being a useful instrument in finding the answers to some of the key questions (TRZYNA, T.C., 1995, 16) which are being asked: How can it be measured? How can the concept be transformed into action? On which aspects should we concentrate?

Geoism shouldn’t only be the practice of worldwide territorial planning but also an applied discipline. In accordance with urbanism and territorial organisation, Geoism would be an attempt to organise knowledge and practice with territorial implications on a worldwide scale, as well as the proposal and coordination of environmental, infrastructure, urban, economic, social and cultural policy for nations, regions and municipalities, tending towards strengthening synergy and avoiding dysfunction in order to better satisfy the needs of both present and future generations, within a context of maximum environmental protection. In particular, Geoism would try to reduce poverty and inequality, as well as protecting, as much as possible, areas of the natural environment relatively undisturbed by Man. The three scientific compendiums – Urbanism, Regional Planning and Geoism– have a common objective: the organisation
of the inhabitable areas of the earth for the well being of mankind, but from different points of view and with different dimensions. Professionals with a wide general vision, familiar with essential elements of many disciplines, while not being experts in any of them, “Geoists”, are needed to develop Geoism. Possibly these “Geoists” would be the most adequate people to lead and direct multi-disciplinary teams, with the objective of Global territory planning.

Today, the importance of a planetary territorial strategy is becoming more and more evident and undisputable, given the growth in the globalisation of activities, flows and ideas. This leads to greater consciousness of the serious nature and inadmissibility of worldwide problems currently existing in the world, such as:

- The extent of malnutrition, unavailability of water fit for human consumption and sanitary deficiencies that still affect a scandalously high number of people.
- Poor living conditions, where a huge number of people find themselves living.
- Changes in the Global Natural System evidenced so clearly by global warming, caused at least in part by the greenhouse effect, of human origin.
- The destruction of the tropical rainforests and the deterioration of many other eco-systems, both on land and in the seas.
- The existence of numerous species in danger of extinction and the loss of the bio-diversity that this implies.
- Inadequate use of renewable and non-renewable resources, including the excessive over exploitation of aquifers and the uncontrolled use of energy resources.
- The negative environmental impact of many human activities, such as pollution caused by numerous industrial processes or the disorganised, inadequate and over development of urban areas along coastlines.
- Etc.

In some respect, mankind has achieved some relevant advances to be noted, such as the general increase in life expectancy. It is clear that there are still many challenges to be met such as those which have just been mentioned, as well as new challenges such as HIV/AIDS or new forms of terrorism. However there is room for hope, to a large extent thanks to the recuperation of moral values and to technology, which is constantly providing very interesting advances, such as the incipient storage and re-use of CO₂.
Together with the concept of Geoism, Antonio Lamela put forward the idea of Cosmoism (LAMELA, A., 1976) where he highlights the need to develop a strategy for the use of the Cosmos, whose use was at that time even more incipient than now. In this way, as Urbanism is the science of city or urban organisation, Geoism could be that of the Earth or Geos, and Cosmoism that of the use of the Universe or Cosmos by Man. He had to coin the terms Geoism and Cosmoism due to the lack of concepts or expressions to describe the enormous amplification of the area of organisation and theory proposed. There are some aspects relating to the use of space that will have to be dealt with very soon. Some criteria were established by the United Nations in the Treaty on principals which should govern activity by States in exploration and utilisation of ultra-terrestrial space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies of 27 January, 1967. Some aspects relating to outer-space have been regulated, such as: its peaceful use; that it can’t appropriated by any nation; that it is available for exploration and utilisation, with equal conditions, for all nations. At present, there are some urgent issues that are being dealt with. One of these deals with the reduction of dangerous space waste or junk, minimising the elements that can become junk and maximising the prevention of accidental explosions. Another worrying area is the exploitation of the geostational orbit and the need to avoid saturation of the frequency spectrum used by satellite communications. In addition, greater investigation into the search for, cataloguing of and tracking of asteroids with possible dangerous trajectories towards the Earth is necessary, as is a defence system, which would be able to avoid eventual collision. With regards to this issue, it is estimated that for a person of 25 years, the probability of dying as a result of the impact of an asteroid measuring half a kilometre in diameter is approximately the same as that of dying in an aviation accident (REES, M., 2004, 108).

An up-dated version of the ideas of Geoism and Cosmoism is has been published by Espasa in May 2007, in a book titled “Strategies for the Earth and Space. Geoism and Cosmoism”. This outline, on the whole, is based on the introduction to this book.

**BIBLIOGRÁFÍA**


