
AURELIO PECCEI: A FEW STROKES TO THE PORTRAIT

Valeri M. Leibin

Institute for System Analysis of RAS, Moscow

It appears that at least in the global studies framework the personality of Aurelio Peccei (1908–1984) a gifted organizer, knowing several languages, an outstanding public figure and the first President of the Club of Rome is that very significant figure, who undoubtedly not only made his considerable contribution to the development of the humanity in the second half of the 20th century, but also visually demonstrated the way a non-ordinary and purposeful person can influence the politicians' thinking and acts, as well as the activity of economists, financiers, industrialists, ecologists and scientists.

Basing on the ideas expressed by Peccei in his work 'On the Edge of the Abyss' (1969), the 'Project on the Predicament of Mankind' was worked out within the framework of the Club of Rome. After the discussion concerning different possibilities of realization of the project in question it was admitted that the most perspective plan to reach the respective goals consists in introducing and analyzing the world problems with the help of systematic use of global models. Thus there was discovered a new direction in studying and comprehension of future which was named the global modeling.

Peccei proceeded from the fact that the humanity consists of interrelated elements, and in the age of globalization those ones that depend on a person get a particular significance. To realize which aspects of human behaviour are responsible for the global crisis and what changes should be made the shock therapy is needed. Such a therapy may be realized basing on the quantitative arguments, which people perceive more clearly than the reasoning of qualitative character. Therefore, the Club of Rome paid special attention to the development of mathematical models that were based on the methods of system dynamics and simulated the development of the World System by means of such interconnected variables as population, investments, usage of non-renewable natural resources, pollution of environment, and food production.

In 1972 the world community was presented with the first report of the Club of Rome, which was published as a book 'The Limits to Growth', where the results of global modeling were shown concluding that if the existing at that time upward trends in the circumstances of the restricted resources of the planet preserved, the global crisis and failure would be inevitable in the early 21st century. The global catastrophe can be prevented only in case of taking measures to limit and regulate this growth, and formulation of new goals aimed at saving the planet.

During the subsequent twelve years Peccei took an active part in organization and realization of the further projects of the Club of Rome. He constantly met famous business, political, scientific and cultural figures and generated productive ideas concerning the opportunity to form new strategies and aims of the human development. With his direct support within the Club of Rome thirteen reports were prepared and published.

In these reports not only the most significant aspects of regional and global developments were studied, but also proper recommendations aimed at changing general position of human system were suggested.

In 1977 A. Peccei's book 'The Human Quality' was published which showed the breadth and the profundity of the thought of the man worried about the humankind destiny. While some researchers took a great interest in mathematic modeling trying to prove or disprove the external limits of material growth discovered by the Club of Rome, he quite definitely emphasized that all these limits originated from the inner ones, related to the human development and connected mainly with culture. Peccei was firmly convinced that the opportunity to prevent the global catastrophe is straightly correlated with the use of the main resource – human potential.

Without having a liberal or philosophical education Peccei came to the conclusion of necessity of the development and formation of what he called a new humanism. This new humanism must be characterized by the sense of globality, love for justice, intolerance to violence, thoughts about the world unity and human integrity, the necessity of human cultural development and the improvement of human qualities of all people on the planet, the aspiration for a self-expression, uncovering of opportunities and abilities of a personality.

In his other books including 'The Hour of the Truth' (1975), 'The Chasm Ahead' (1979), 'One Hundred Pages for the Future' (1981), Peccei not only warned about a global disaster threatening the humanity, but also suggested his ideas concerning the strategies of the way out of the catastrophe. In particularly, he wrote about a new system of human values oriented at *not to have more* but at *being* a person responsible not only for himself but for the destiny of other people and humanity in general.

Using Freud's analogy about three blows on human narcissism (*cosmological* – the Earth is not the center of the Universe, *biological* – the hypothesis that a person descended from a monkey, *psychological* – a person is not a conscious but unconscious creature and his ego is not a master in his own house) one could suppose that Peccei stroke the fourth, not less shattering *global* blow on the self-complacent humanity hoping for the material growth, whose representatives are guided in their activity, directed at *having* not *being*, by momentary mercenary considerations, not correlated with the future of the planet.