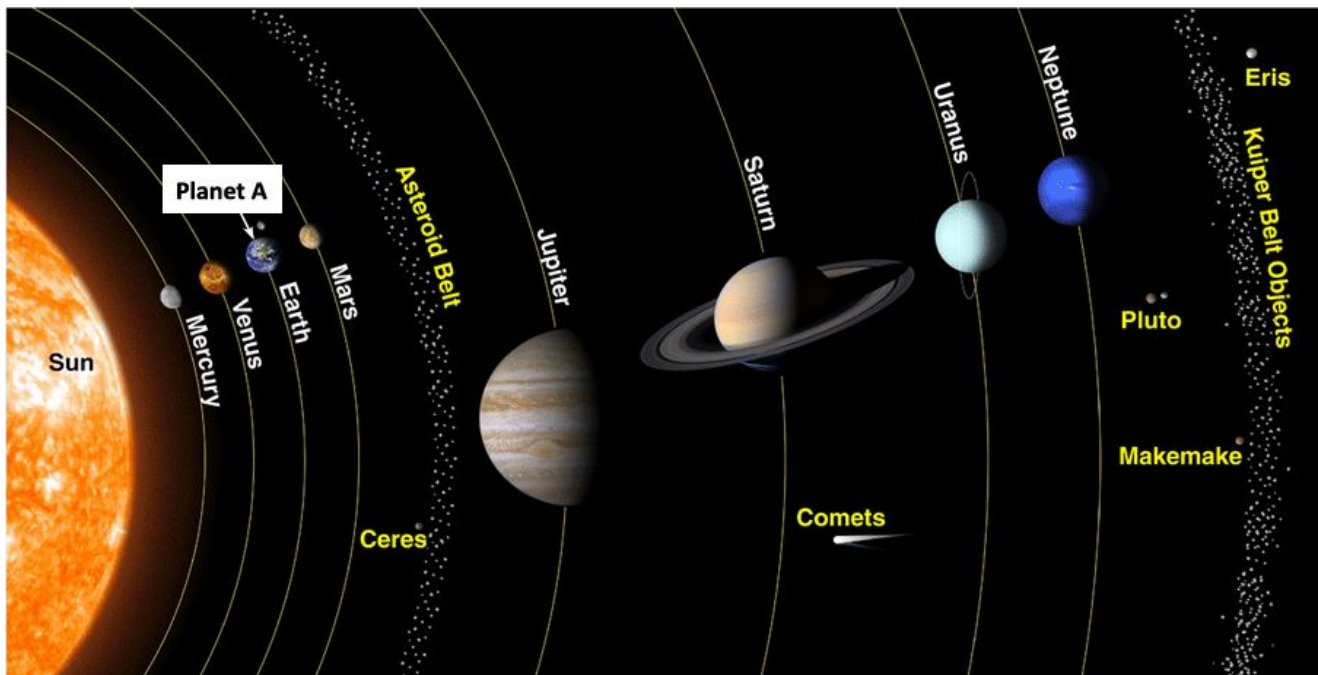


We don't need a "Planet B". We have an entire Solar System



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by Adriano V. Autino

A million and a half students, even very young ones, took to the streets Friday March 15th, in two thousand cities around the world, for the climate, responding to a Greta Thunberg's call. Greta is a 16-year-old student in Stockholm: "I will not stop. Not until greenhouse gas emissions have fallen below the alarm level." Considering the great support she had, it would seem that students were not waiting for anything else, with great outcry of the ecologists of various tendencies, who have for years repeated the same call, without being able to arouse mass movements of this magnitude.

There is no doubt that we are on the verge of great changes. The automotive industry -- by far a leading industry in the world economy -- is about to collapse, because it has not been able to innovate in time, and now it does not in fact have ready solutions, to satisfy a market that no longer intends to exchange mobility with health. Such imminent collapse will not do any good to economy. It will also offer vampire rulers new opportunities to increase the taxation, already exorbitant in many countries. And no one seems to realise that if producers die as a social category, consumers will soon die too, as they are the same people. There is no doubt, moreover, that the ruling politicians, more and more void of any basic culture, will find many ways to manage what Serge Latouche (in his essay on the so-called "happy de-growth") called "inevitable social problems following de-growth". Problems that the great philosopher cheerfully robs as "technicalities", which governments will have to deal with, and therefore he's not concerned about (SIC!).

And by now we already know too well which governments are being talked about: we are talking about ecotax dictatorships, whose avant-gardes are now defined as "sovereignist" and "populist". Accepting ecotaxes and carbon taxes today means setting precedents on the wave of which we can arrive to conditional mobility, waiting for a mythical improvement in public transport systems. And, when we begin accepting heavy restrictions on personal freedoms, we know when we leave, but not when and where we can get.



However, beyond political implications, though they are worrying enough, I am interested in the substance, the concepts on which the students have moved, and likely they will keep on moving. The positive aspect is that by now none strong ideological influences (such as those that moved similar movements in the past century) seem to be present, and these young generations may be ready and willing to expand their vision.

So, climate change: hard to deny that it exists, since it has existed for thousands of years, probably since the birth of our planet. In the history of climate change there are long, more or less stable, phases and phases of rapid change.

From Wikipedia we learn that there are slow climate changes, measurable over millions of years: glacial ages that follow interglacial ages. Millions of colder years, with glaciers extending over the earth's surface alternating with millions of warmer years in which there is no trace of glaciers on Earth. The average changes, on a scale of thousands of years, alternate between glacial and interglacial periods, i.e. thousands of years in which most continents are covered with glaciers, and thousands of years in which only the polar regions are covered with ice. Finally, there are quick climate changes, in the order of hundreds or tens of years, which alternate moments of cooling, with a general decrease in temperatures, and moments of heating, with a general increase in temperatures. On the basis of such classification of the Earth's climate, the last Ice Age, which began about three million years ago, is currently underway and we are about to end an Interglacial Period, that is, a period of small glacier extension with a general retreat that began about ten thousands years ago.

It seems that we are therefore in a macro phase of progressive warming. However, many say that through our activities we are helping to accelerate natural warming. For many years CO₂ was indicated as the main responsible for the greenhouse effect. Such hammering has served a great purpose in putting into popular belief the idea that climate change is mainly due to anthropogenic activities. Now that the concept seems to have passed, the accusations to CO₂ as a powerful greenhouse gas have been somewhat reduced. Also because, since CO₂ is a ridiculous greenhouse gas compared, for example, to methane, this argument ended up discrediting the global warmers propaganda. However, the heavy responsibility for acidifying the oceans remains with CO₂. And of course there are other wrongdoings, the responsibility for which we cannot discharge: plastic in the sea, and pollution of the soil, air and sea, due to our discharges and wastes.

Therefore the Greta's call, although based in part on incorrect or at least questionable data, is nevertheless true as regards the urgency of equipping us with sufficient strategies to save our civilization, more than the planet. As Samanta Cristoforetti also pointed out recently, planet Earth is strong enough, and will survive anyway. Who's really fragile is our civilization, that is at great risk of extinction, if not as a species, as a cultural civilization.

Then, from the young people of the new generations, whose minds should work at a speed certainly higher than those of my generation (©), I would expect concepts a bit broader, and including all the necessary considerations. For example, the fact that we are eight billion growing up in a closed system. Growing, not for long time, if we do not start expanding into a larger niche. But, remaining confined within the limits of our mother planet, civilization risks implosion, and it will be anything but a "happy implosion". Therefore, the best solution must include the continuation and improvement of civil life for eight billion people and their descendants. All in all, it is simple. While an ideal "platform" of the Greta's movement encompasses the 17 sustainable development goals of the UN 2030 agenda, a platform truly worthy of the youth of the 21st Century should include the unwritten 18th goal: **the expansion of civilization into the outer space**, starting with geo-lunar



space, which can become part of our world in the next twenty years. Such process is the only one that can, in the future, also relieve the anthropic pressure on Mother Earth. And Mom will can, at last, breathe a sigh of relief!

This is the real urgency: if it is true that a space revolution is underway, which reduces the cost of the Earth to orbit transport systems, it is also true that very few seem to want to solve the problems still preventing a real civil expansion into outer space, i.e. transporting and housing untrained civilians in conditions of safety, comfort and green environmental pleasantness. Vehicles with low acceleration, safe re-entry into the atmosphere, habitats protected from cosmic radiations, endowed with artificial gravity. Without neglecting the recovery and reuse of orbital wreckages and debris, continuously increasing. These are the key points of a real industrial revolution, comparable to those of the automobile and civil aeronautics of the past century.

I know that any solution of true progress will not please the moralists, the orphans of class struggle, all those who think that someone should "pay" for having "ruined the nature", yesterday for having "exploited the workers" (although such things are true, the guillotine never produced wealth, friends ...). All of them do not care about a real improvement of civil life, except as a claim and reason for uprising against the "power", which they want to punish first of all. Therefore they are ready to applaud any movement that justifies liberticide measures, fiscally vexatious, and propagandistically in support of a so long dreamed social revenge... As a rare wise politician correctly said "we should fight poverty, not wealth". A movement of young people of the 21st century should know how to avoid falling into such traps, as well as into the no less insidious traps set by so-called champions of freedom (new fascists).

The next few months and years will tell us if this movement includes the enzymes necessary for the birth of a new ideology, finally able to navigate in the open space and in the abundance of resources of the solar system. If it is true that we do not have a planet B (at least so far), we have an entire solar system, with sufficient resources and energy for trillions of human beings, as Jeff Bezos said. And the ability to build rotating habitats, with 1G gravity, reproducing the Earth's environment. Why should we need a planet B?

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Also, you might be interested to my last book **"A greater world is possible: The expansion of civilization beyond the limits of our home planet is the moral issue of our time"**, available on Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/greater-world-possible-expansion-civilization/dp/1727889924>

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