

The series
“On the front line with a Solar bike”

Able to be Human:
Equatorial America

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Introduction

Global warming is, raising significantly temperature, causing sea level rise, causing spectacular floods and fires, causing serious consequences for people, for life under water and one earth and threatening peace. Scientists have been warning us about these phenomena since the middle of the twentieth century, phenomena that are now well- documented, to the point that the United Nations have taken up the subject but also many associations such as the French Peace Movement.

David Ligouy, a long-time climate activist and peace volunteer, travels the world on a solar bike to warn about the urgency of changes in individual, economic and political behavior, to gather experiences and testimonies, and to encourage to act now. After bicycling 10,000 km in Europe from France to Poland at COP 24 (2018), he crossed the Atlantic Ocean to Argentina by boat in November 2019. And he traveled from East to West. He crossed the Andes Mountains and went up from Chile to northern Peru. Confined in Peru from March 15th 2020, for a year, because of COVID, he stayed there, chomping at the bit, sharing his own resources with families fallen into misery, due to the collapse of the economy and the health system.

He had time to think: “The pandemic is causing upheavals more considerable and longer lasting, linked to the disrupted climate where the most fragile are the most exposed and the most penalized.” After the opening of Ecuador's borders at the end of March 2021, getting back on the road was an effort after the forced quarantine that broke his momentum and reinforced his anxiety and anger about the inaction of our rulers of all kinds, and a necessity because David was not destined to settle down. He gives here the story of his quarantine in Peru, his trip to Ecuador, then Colombia, Panama, and to Costa Rica. Countries where the welcome differs, but where he always finds help, thanks to his vehicle, his smile and his lucky star.

He meets several indigenous people determined to be heard about their history, their ways of life, their symbiosis with their environment. Meanwhile, in November 2022, COP 26 was held in Glasgow; whose poor results greatly affect him and add to the unfair situations he is facing. Driven by an objective that overwhelms him, he finds that he is supported beyond the seas, by all the positive figures he meets, by all the examples he sees and, by the certainty that the path of peace leads to solutions for the planet. Costa Rica is a delightful example of this, and it turns narrative towards a future within reach of our goals, far from the return of goose stepping, international tensions to world legally rid of nuclear weapons since January 22, 2021.

His low morale recovers at the slightest gesture of kindness, his humor alleviates his setbacks, his attentive gaze memorizes images of beautiful humanity and of wonderful biodiversity in this area of the Equatorial Amazon. The facts recounted, the people met, the various interviews in which he participates give flesh to this coming-and-going between the here and the distant, between the here and the universal, always in the perspective of an individual, collective and structural awareness that he wants to contribute building.

By Elisabeth, February 2022

I. Peru

- **COVID, an opportunity for our planet and for me too?**

After offering 10,000 meals to the needy during the 4 months of total confinement in Trujillo, thanks again to the donations of the Cher and Doubs Peace Committee and my musician friend! I took the solar tricycle in August 2020 in the direction of the Ecuador border! 30 km away, I discover the prohibition to cross it, for an indefinite period. Only one thing is clear: the rest of the trip will be linked to the control of COVID in the world and Sustainable Development Goal 3, (#SDG3), access to care for all, especially in the poorest countries. My entry into Ecuador will therefore depend on this United Nations Goal of the 2030 Agenda, but there is a long way to go for Ecuador and Peru on the subject. There are no solutions for climate and biodiversity without solutions for the health of all, without a common destiny and responsibility that could be classified in the Sustainable Development Goal 17, #SDG17 (Partnership to Achieve the Goals). As a result, the link between all these notions seems more obvious. Fortunately, the campesinos and indigenous people of the Amazon and the Andes are organizing and proving their solidarity.

While we have a collective social and ecological responsibility, we also have an individual responsibility. Like everyone else surprised by COVID, too many uncertainties and too much confusion in my head weaken me, especially since I am emptied of all my inner energy. Thus blocked, in Mancora, a city of 20,000 inhabitants, I feel that I have failed in my mission of raising awareness about the climate and biodiversity. I have a kind of "hangover". My patience and good mood are almost completely gone. Fortunately, I meet Robin, a French volunteer in the hotel of an Englishman, Elton, and a solution quickly presents itself: if I can no longer act on the global, let's act on the local: local action for more resilient communities.

- **The sun shines for everyone and for different uses**



Elton looks a lot like the image of the man on Quaker oat packs. He made a "messy" electric solar installation. I can fix it for free and save it before it seriously breaks down. It makes sense to me if I can complement this work with another form of solar use. I am lucky to be accommodated for free not far away in a "hostel" without hot water: Wally's house, kept by a Peruvian of the same name. He is the friend of a friend of a friend, he doesn't want to ask me for money; we will exchange housing for the

building of a solar hot water system. So it then becomes a good exchange of services. Here, near the Equator and on the Pacific coast, there is a need for hot water only during the winter, which begins precisely. My strategy is to show the three practical forms of uses of the sun: domestic electricity, thermal and transport. I will try to find the clearest form possible for a quick

understanding and I will put a condition to their owner: that the equipment can be visited.

I immediately start to install the 4 panels of 250W on the roof of the hotel, helped by Wally and a 17-year-old employee. We have a lot of work because all the possible mistakes have been made previously, but in four half-days, the light returns to the delight of our British neighbor.

With a Peruvian from the coast, things take longer, and I have to wait despite my lost good mood. Suddenly, a 200-liter barrel of used oil arrives. Two half days later, all the equipment will be purchased, the iron barrel washed and painted black, installed on the roof and connected to the water tank of the hostel. I had a cold sweat of a long minute at the time of starting the shower because the hot water did not arrive. It was enough to wait this minute for the cold water to empty the pipe and give way to hot water! This shower is still used and works very well because it is very simple. It cost 150 Peruvian Soles or less than \$40. It brings lukewarm water from 10 am. Around noon, the burning water must be mixed with cold water, hence a mixer tap or two taps is needed. With the night around 6 pm, the water becomes lukewarm again around 8 pm. The rest of the year it is not used. In one month, it will be paid back. With three times more hours of sunshine than in France, an installation becomes profitable three times faster. I have created confidence through these two achievements and I have given it to myself. The DIT (Do It Together) solar thermal will be duplicated twice in a large hotel and a differently-abled child center. I set a precedent!



Basic solar thermal

For the third use, it will be much more complicated because everyone wants a solar bike or a solar motorcycle but few dare to take the plunge to manufacture it. So I proposed to train people for the construction of a solar tricycle with a pizza oven, but the project will not be followed and in the end, the solution will come from the smart Chinese. A Chinese manufacturer exports electric motorcycle taxis that can transport four people for the attractive price of \$1,300 and a speed of 40 mph. There is a local distributor of this brand and nearly 200 Chinese thermal motorcycles in the city. The green energy transition, #SDG7, could happen very quickly and give a beautiful image to this seaside city.



The last week, I discover that the local distributor can get this famous electrical motorcycle taxi but that he is reluctant to sell it. It was enough to ask to show it and arouse desires.

I go to visit a young doctor who runs the health center, working without a hospital bed and little medication. COVID cases are hospitalized at home. She tells me that I can help with the purchase of oxygen and medicines and gives me the address of a citizens' committee dealing with it and their distribution. It is run by a courageous woman, a single mother of two teenage girls, with two jobs. In nine months, together we have supported 500 people symptomatic of COVID and the amazing result of zero deaths, with a ridiculous low budget of \$25,000, in this country that has the worst management of pandemic (6,600 deaths per million inhabitants). We use generic medicine



Women & Children thrown on the roads

(Ivermectin) and natural medicine like Artemesia and Matico. In France, there are emergency services capable of bringing oxygen day and night. Our committee has also fulfilled this function. Incredible! I was only able to help for six months and it was really a privilege to be around these anonymous heroes, who saved around 100 lives.

The last action I supported, organized by a group of four women, is a "solidarity kitchen" for Venezuelan refugees, mostly women and children.

We were able to offer 1,000 meals, when 10,000 were needed; it gives a feeling of being helpless and ridiculous. With more poverty, xenophobia, and misogyny grow against refugees. Misery of misery!

For months, I tried to stay afloat and at the same time to give my support where I could in the urgency of the situation. Looking back, I don't really know who supported whom. Actually, I think survival is pretty good, when you are in the worst place in the worst time. We even did miracle!

- **A towel, scissors and a plastic sheet**

I decided to give myself 15 days of vacation. On the first Saturday I am in the dense and rich Amazon rainforest by a river where people bathe. Under tropical weather, I am tired and I really need this moment of relaxation in this cool water. I get out of the water and come face to face with a panicked mom holding her inert baby in her arms. I ask her what is going on. She explains to me with panic that her child is no longer breathing, that he has swallowed water. I take this fragile little being and apply the rescue gestures that the firefighters of my town in Berry's region taught me: I put the baby on my arm, upside down and I apply small pressures between his shoulder blades with my two fingers. He suddenly begins to breathe. I return him to his mother, relieved. She gives me a big smile of gratitude. I take the time to explain the first aid gestures that I have just performed. And I leave. It will take me several days to realize what happened, and for

the joy and satisfaction begin to reach me because I was so tired.

Still in the Amazon rainforest, I enjoy my holidays in another city in the same province of San Martín, region of Tarapoto. Friday, January 22, 2021 is the day of celebration of the official abolition of nuclear weapons for our NGO and our 467 partner organizations in 101 countries. I am at the home of a young Frenchman that I had met for only 15 minutes in Mancora. He offered to host me. We go to the market to buy food in anticipation of a trek in the forest toward a beautiful turquoise waterfall. I have never seen a market so well stocked with vegetables, fruits, medicinal plants, and so cheap... for me! We've stocked up on groceries and medicinal plants when my phone rings. His girlfriend, who is due to give birth in 15 days, urgently asks him to bring back scissors, a large towel and a plastic sheet. The dad, beset with emotions, is happy that I am at his side. Then he comes to his senses. He helps his partner to give birth in the night. The baby presents himself with his head down; the father will succeed with great gentleness to make the baby turn. A fit little girl is born in his hands in the early morning of Saturday, in a world where nuclear weapons are illegal. It is symbolic, this little flower that life offers me on that special day. It also just reminds me that it's easier to go around the world by electric bike than to give light (Spanish expression: dar la luz) to a child.

At the end of March, two associations are waiting for me in Ecuador, my 18th country: a women's corporation of Ecuador, CORFEC, and a foundation Center for Investigation and Electrical Capacity including decarbonized transport. We can see the frightening and brutal setback of the 7 SDGs related to the economy and socially and the surprising progress of the 7 SDG's related to the environment. Because of the pandemic, the destruction of the planet was paused temporarily and this little virus was a last-minute chance. It gives us an ultimate opportunity to make the radical decisions to save the climate (and life on earth) at the COP 26 in Glasgow in November 2021. This life-saving decision has also to be decided in each country and each association. After eight months in Mancora, my body, my bike, and my motivation are rusty. On my way to the border of Ecuador, I hope to have a lot of luck.

Ecuador

- **First miles post COVID in a new country, Ecuador**

On March 24, 2021, a year late, I crossed the border between Peru and Ecuador without any problem. Well, almost. I had to receive the green light from three administrations: the French Embassy in Peru and in Ecuador, and the Ministry of External Relations and Human Mobility of Ecuador. The second is missing at the last minute. However, I am at customs, in the middle of the desert, and I can neither imagine turning around to redo a last minute compulsory COVID test whose results are obtained after seven days, nor redo all the papers on the new departure date. Did customs officers receive a last minute e-mail? Or did they like the bike so much? I was able to pass. And that's enough for me, determined not to stay too long in this high-risk region because of smuggling, amplified by the COVID crisis. In a hurry, the bike and I miss the access ramp of exit of the customs and we make a fall of one meter, under a general laughter of the customs officers. I leave happily, not seeing that a triangle necessary for parallelism has been damaged. The tires will wear out quickly, the spokes will break one by one, without me being able to understand.

For South Americans, I am nicknamed El Pinky, from the cartoon "Pinky and the Brain".

World famous question from the Brain to Pinky:

What are we going to do today?

Answer: *Conquer the world, like every day...*

And I add: *...with humor, love and peace!*



No project of conquest for me, not before and even less now in Ecuador, which is home to the misty forests of the Andes and the most biodiverse forest of Amazon! Just the desire to bear witness of the state of the world and the solutions already at work to avoid disaster, despite my soul, my body and my bike rusted by the months of immobility and the uncertainty of continuing my project.

Of the three major cities of Ecuador, Guayaquil the economic capital, Quito the administrative capital, Cuenca, capital of the province AZUAY, known for its preservation of the environment, I instinctively chose this last one. Located in the Andes, it is a sports town with many mountain-bike shops, where I should be able to repair mine. But how cold it is and how hard I am struggling at this altitude!

The road is long to Cuenca, my next real stop. I have time to think. Before continuing my story, here is my analysis of the general situation.

With this tiny planetary virus, we have just experienced a serious economic setback. Thirty

years are lost in the fight against extreme poverty, according to the UN. Especially in Latin America, this translates into more empty pockets, empty stomachs, risks of getting sick or even dying due to the collapse of health systems, more lack of education because of closed schools, more violence against women and even more so on children. In these conditions, how to respect the 2030 Agenda on the economic SDGs (SDGs 8 to 12), necessary to stabilize the climate? At the same time, there have never been so many billionaires.

Also, the first seven social SDGs are in sharp decline, it is an additional brake on an energy transition. Curiously, by the slowdown in industrial production and the economy, this virus has given a pause to the planet and its inhabitants. People pay a heavier price depending of their previous, aggravated situation. Yet, it is probably less heavy than the price to pay for global warming, towards which, in the absence of international decisions, humanity is heading toward inexorably with half of its population affected by 2030 with unlivable conditions according to the 6th report of IPCC, working group 3.

Life calls me to continue. What if emptiness would call for fullness? What if it was the chance to finally put the living (human and nature) back at the center, to go to the essential, to finally meet the basic needs of the human being (the SDGs) No, alas! The world before COVID seems to start again. It is even a huge economic opportunity for billionaires to privatize the social, buy at low prices restaurants, small businesses, public hospitals in economic difficulties. This plan to privatize schools, hospitals, prisons, water has a name; it is known in South America as the Washington Convention: basically, the disappearance of the state with an overpowered president. The legislative assembly is bypassed by the executive and reduced to a registration chamber. I recall the principle of a democracy: the sovereign people decide, the assembly puts the decision into law, the executive implements. Here it is the same person who holds all the roles and in fact all the powers.

This bleak picture cannot make us forget that we are not immune to new epidemics: many viruses due to the loss of biodiversity are already circulating and how many due to the upcoming melting of permafrost.

Phew, Africa and Asia, more than the majority of humanity, have not been in quarantine in 2020, hence less collapsed, upset economies. They preferred to test, isolate only cases and treat with medicinal plants, such as The Artemesia Anua of Professor You You, Nobel Prize in Medicine 2015, or with the repositioning of generic drugs accessible all over the world and inexpensive. For example, Ivermectin, of a Japanese Professor, co-winner of the Nobel Prize in the same year 2015, the same we used to save many lives in Peru. I like the name of this plant because there is "Art" and healing is an art. It is also named after the temple of "Artemis" that I visited in Ephesus, Turkey during my first tour.

When I think back to the already difficult situation of the old shoemaker I met in Argentina (volume 2), victim of a 50% hyperinflation per year in his rich country, I am sad to the bottom of

my heart, because millions of shoemakers now live all over South America! What awaits these peoples: Bankruptcy? Recession? Borrowing from the World Bank that leads directly to modern slavery? Huge austerity to pay off huge debts? Certainly, impoverishment of the population, weakening of public services, including those of health so necessary to stop a pandemic. It looks like a copy of the last 50 years in South America accompanied by more violence, state repression, with a rise in racism and fascism. Perfect recipes for wars. Yes, the world of after is the world of before, except it is worse and accelerated, in the midst of climate chaos.



Thus, we need so much to build new happy days, a new economic perspective, really at the service of life and the planet, with a currency taking care of life, (Caring Currency) named after its inventor, Philip McMaster, former MBA teacher. He is a colorful Canadian, travelling like me, but for decades. He has the magnificent idea of putting first; human relations to build an economy no longer of accounting relations and confrontations, but based on the qualities like generosity, altruism, or the common good. I met him at COP 24 in Poland. We had just learned of the failure of the COP and its terrible consequences: The COP in Madrid did not help anything. What will the Glasgow do on

November1, 2021? I do not see any reassuring signs.

Finally, it would only be enough to redirect 1% of the world's GDP used for armaments to solve climate change. Better, with only 5% of this same GDP, we could re-enchant the world by achieving the 2030 Agenda. Idea dear to my NGO, the French Peace Movement.

Before carrying on with my journey in the direction of Cuenca, Azuay Region, South Andes with a bicycle and a rusty body, in these forests as foggy as my brain, allow me another travel anecdote.

In Peru, six months ago, the French Embassy was concerned about the mental health of its nationals because 2/3 of the volunteers have already left their mission in the first months of COVID. It is true that having crossed the ocean to just give courses by video-conference on arrival no longer makes sense. To stop this leak, the embassy offered group support with a psychologist, once a week during six weeks. That's good, because I was at the bottom of the wave. We had two sessions on Boris Cyrulnik's resilience, adaptation in times of crisis, emotional management and better listening to each other. Super interesting, but for me, completely disconnected from reality. How can we focus only on ourselves when the world is experiencing such suffering? As I am not isolated from the world, it is a disconcerting approach. The search for inner happiness without worrying about the outside? No, thank you. The outside and the collective, with whom I am in interaction every day, can also enrich us emotionally. Is it not the best time for sharing or caring? Let's be honest: my stomach is getting more and more sore, which must generate hyperthyroidism, a kind of way of protecting my brain from a saturation of stressful and negative information. I wonder how any political leaders manage to sleep when I do it so badly! My priority is also to regain good

mental health, and, yes! Yes! to rely on the embassy's training, which is more useful than I imagined. Then it is up to me to put it quickly into practice at my level and share it for the collective. My neighbors at the time, a young French couple on a three-years bike tour, were also in doubt about what to do because of COVID. I shared with them the fresh training received, which we follow with a small tasty meal that is worth a mouthful in these circumstances. The very shy young woman concludes with full confidence:

*"In life,
there are good days,
there are positive days,"*

Of course, she meant negative days. We leave with a crazy laugh that will be the humorous summary of this training. In life, there are good days and less good days that one must convert into a positive experience. In my next country, Ecuador, I will meet them again just before their ascent of Chimborazo (officially the mountain, higher in absolute than Everest, because the earth is not round but oval). During our reunion, we will take the opportunity to add a fourth sentence:

"... and there are even perfect days."

Human warmth and smiles comfort me, moving me away from my dark mood.

The route I chose is the most difficult, the weather conditions horrible (torrential rains, altitude sickness, and temperature down 20 degrees). Finally, I get to the top, but in such a poor state! Suddenly, I find myself, like a fool, ass on the main Avenue of Cuenca, capital of Azuay Region. The bike has broken in two; simple anecdote, to be ignored in a country with full political turmoil of the presidential election.

The bankers' banker, Lasso, yet an Ecuadorian media tycoon, ended up in the "unacceptable" position of third. Logically, he should not go to the second round, unlike Yaku, the second in the election, an indigenous lawyer for water rights and Governor of the Azuay Region. With him, no more water contamination by mining or oil extraction projects. Unthinkable for the banker! Everyone knows, that if Yaku runs in the second round, he will be elected. Unthinkable for the 15 families owning the country, their banker and the previous president! A week after the official declaration of the results, they organize a recount in their favor and finally, Lasso, wins the presidency. Everything is back in order. FYI, Yaku in Kichwa means water. Imagine, a president, Inca, called Water!

No! The reality is:

- An all-powerful new president, will sign, on the day of the Inca festival, Inty Raymi, June 21st, the Washington Convention,
- on July 7th, three months before COP 26, he will double, by decree, with 1 million barrels a day, oil extraction in the Amazon as an economic and social recovery plan,

- a president who unofficially sold the minerals & oil rights of the southern Amazon of the country and all the mountains of the Andes with protected forests and protected areas to mining groups,
- and on top of everything, I am frozen and tired because of the altitude, my bike is broken, I have more and more pain in my stomach. I absolutely also have to take care of the vehicle, and of myself.

- **Try to go back on my seat**

While people still live in fear of the foreigner likely to bring known contamination or a new COVID variant, I have to live with it; I endeavor to adapt to it, not without incredible additional stress.

For accommodation, I can rely on the CICE Foundation, Center for Research and Electrical Training of Ecuador, thanks to its network as excellent as that of Chile, with a strong ecological fiber. What a pleasant surprise when their unknown local contact side on scene offers me hospitality from the outset for 15 days, which will become a month, then two. In this region, it is really good to take your time to know people. Hugo was a director of the regional public hydropower company before being fired because of his humanist positions and his opposition to its privatization. To survive, he runs a small shop, which has suffered severely from the health crisis; despite everything, it is out of the question for him that I contribute to the costs.

After a year of quarantine, my legs lost their vigor, more seriously, my brain and my confidence in humanity sank during this long quarantine. Hugo, with a paternal firmness, refuses to let go of my dreams of peace. By his great ecological, social and economic knowledge of the field, exactly the same elements of expertise of the Peace Movement, he wants me to benefit from his great experience.

Every evening, Hugo waits for me around a nice hot meal for my remedial and a teaching on the SDGs in Ecuador. He explains to me that economic inequalities have worsened during COVID. In the city, poverty is exploding. Children, without school, are idle, left to themselves and to the worst temptations. Food prices are rising, fueling stress in families and domestic violence, which is already very high given the machismo. With a few friends, including Rose, he created a cultural, indigenous, multi-language university. Rose is a peasant leader. As the hospital cannot cope with COVID, Rose, who fell ill with COVID, after a few weeks in hospital, will be unplugged from her cardiopulmonary to leave it to a younger one. This death plunges us into sadness and anger because this health system kills.

Ecuador seemed to me to have a better distribution of wealth than the countries I previously crossed; I already saw here the possibility of an economy full of meaning for all. Hugo, listens to me with patience, asks me about the French post war program called "Happy Days", with full social security, full pension for retirement, unemployment fund, (SDG8). For me it is the most powerful lever to carry out the necessary economic transformation with a salutary impact on the planet. Our exchanges make me understand that he and his companions have been in resistance for 40 years; he has paid a high price at all levels. It is much more interesting to listen to him confronting my ideas with the harsh reality of South America. I become disappointed about the former President, Correa. He tells me in detail about corruption, mining & oil extraction in the Andes and the Amazon, among the indigenous Guarani in the northeast, about fraudulent elections, violence against farmers, trade unions and indigenous leaders. A regional indigenous peasant leader, opposed to a Chinese gold

mine has just been assassinated in this month of March.

Hugo's humanity, his polite listening, will lower, every day, my negative emotional charge. Thanks to him, I can participate each time a little easier in local projects, which he helps me find.

When I found my buttocks on the road because the main shock absorber broke in two and despite this embarrassing situation, a passerby, Mirella, started the discussion on my project and took my contact information. After disassembling my bike, I realized that the breakdown is much less serious than I imagined. A mechanic, Hugo's friend, then machined the broken part of the shock absorber so that I could continue, at the end of May 2021, and reach the capital Quito. Even if the spring is working again, the rear wheel still jumps and makes the bike chase from side to side with intermittent braking.

One of his friends, a peasant leader, Gaspard, invites me for three days in the eco-village of Aguarongo, 3,000 meters high, without an electrical or drinking water network, only accessible on foot or on horseback.

I am welcomed with a lot of surprise because I look a bit like an alien with my solar bike. Gaspard and two young women are managing this center for tourists, closed for months due to COVID. Each of the four houses is equipped with a solar thermal panel and two electric solar panels. Everything is down! My job is to repair the maximum without money. Some of the light bulbs are simply dead and the electrical panels are okay. Stones have been thrown at the glass tubes of the thermal panels. By "cannibalizing" tubes, we can save the other thermal panels. Even without money, we do a good job. One of the young coordinators, who trained with Gaspard, turns out to be very brilliant. Despite my rough Spanish, she understands everything the first time. She is also very motivated, because she just made a four-hour roundtrip on horse to come to the practical course.



Centre Aguarongo

Gaspard would have built a solar mountain bike, less urgent than a henhouse, using the sun to heat the chicks, essential to their survival. His questions smell of peasant good common sense. Successful work before returning to the city of Cuenca.

Hugo and Mirella, thanks to their very good contact with the press, will allow me to talk a lot about our contemporary challenges. Mirella, the passerby who witnessed my mechanical bummer, has a physical disability. She won an international award for the pedagogical quality of her books on "integral" education. It includes the education of the heart and the brain integrated into its environment, giving the possibility of being eligible to a label of excellence awarded by UNESCO

to the city. She provides cities guidance to earn the UNESCO label. Cuenca is the only city in Ecuador having this very demanding UNESCO label with this official program of integral education. Mirella invites me to present it to another city, Loja, and to its mayor in the region of the same name, south of Azuay and close to northern Peru, in front of a panel of journalists from this huge province.

As it is very far away and Mirella is very busy, I cannot go with my bike, we take the bus. We need to present this label even more demandly than the 10 targets of SDG4: to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Of course, this label must include all women and also all types of disabilities. Mirella speaks with such conviction about the inclusion of women with disabilities in education and work that all journalists were down cast. With her, everything seems possible. For example, model agencies refused people with disabilities. Never mind, Mirella has created her own agency, breaking the codes, she is herself a model. She is also a coach. For her, the concept of bipolarity and depression are outdated, she considers that life has always had ups and downs, more or less long. It is necessary to work on individual and collective self-esteem to shorten the negative phases. What strength and confidence! Mirella is a fan of extreme neoliberalism and fan of the new president Lasso. She swears by private schools, does not mention public bodies. I have no right to judge, but her reasoning dismays me. But we will become friends. The best judges are the results on the SDGs and its 169 targets, establishing a common, easy, universal, and inclusive reading. Let's give it a chance and it doesn't matter if the cat is white or black, as long as it catches the mouse, it's a good cat. We'll see if she's a good feline.

When I returned to my host, Hugo explained to me in detail the defects of this neoliberalism of the 70s implemented by the Chicago Boys in South America. It is based on the search for unlimited financial profit in industrial, agricultural, and commercial activities. It ignores the populations, reduced to misery. And it depletes the planet as it accelerates its destruction. French writer Albert Camus wrote: *This misery puts one more ban on the beauty of the world.*

My other projects with Hugo are:

1. To put in pot, 100 seeds of Cappulis, a kind of cherry endemic to the Andes at the botanical garden of Cuenca with the help of the staff of the library (SDG15),
2. to hold a conference for the Alliance Françaises on respect for homosexual minorities in the city (SDG5),
3. and finally to promote bike paths for the city. (SDG11).

Now, and increasingly, the scientific evidence for climate change related to human activities is well established. It affects water resources, the loss of biodiversity, air quality, water quality and consequently food quality. All living things are in danger. The Polish COP 24 in December 2018 concretely addressed these issues and their challenges, unfortunately without a decision taken at the time. In Cuenca, where I am, four rivers receive the rains. A single degree of global warming is producing 7% more evaporation. The rains that have come from it, more abundant and strong are

also more devastating. Two months after I left, Cuenca is partly flooded.

In Ecuador, there are even more refugees from Venezuela than in Peru, and they are the most unhappy of all. They often left their beautiful homes, with a good job and a lot of money. But Venezuela is the victim of an illegal US embargo. No country has the right to destroy the economy of another country. They had 4 million percent inflation in less than five years. Once they cross the border, all their savings are worthless. Even the Germans after the crisis of 1929 did not have as much inflation: Hitler came to power thanks to this fertile ground. **"Today it is them, tomorrow it can be you, the social, economic or climate refugee."** Twenty years ago, following money laundering in tax havens, Ecuadorians learned from their banker that their economy of a lifetime had vanished (in these tax havens). So, Ecuadorians left, massively, to work in their very rich neighbors, Venezuela or the United States.

I can't get stuck anymore in this region! I will cross the Andes in these perilous conditions. But I will have great fears in the great descents of the Andes. For now, I am again on my solar bike in the city, going to see radio stations, televisions, newspapers and especially exemplary projects. After my two months in the province of Ayuay, on the way to Chimborazo, I sleep one night in a rural mountain cottage, without hot water, run by two cousins, organic market gardeners. They work really hard for very low incomes. They ask me for an exorbitant price worthy of a palace, a first of the whole trip; I pay it, however, because their suffering is glaring, and I am well aware that I represent in their eyes the blue-eyed "gringo", so much richer than them. I continue on my way to a municipal farm, run by women who will refuse to let me pay them. They explain to me that their men were forced to go to work abroad, because here it is too hard.

On Sunday morning, when I wake up, the solar panel of my bike is covered with ash. There was an eruption of the Sangay volcano in the night. The landscape has become all grey. All the crops and grass of the pastures are severely damaged because they are covered with volcanic ash. Harmful at first, even afterwards it then brings a lot of minerals to the earth. In these protected mountain forests, deforestation is gaining ground, another sign of misery. And yes, they have to survive, so as a last resort, they cut down the forests to sell them. Yet these misty forests help considerably to transform CO₂ into oxygen and thus reduce global warming. I make a detour to see sand dunes in the mountains where desertification is spreading. During my visit, an electric cable from my bike was stolen. Another first in this journey of almost three years! Decidedly, misery is revealed in several aspects.

I later learned from the peasant leaders of this region of Chimborazo that 80% suffer from undernutrition for lack of economic resources. That's the reason for my little setbacks! I also learn, through the national feminist representative, that violence against women is part of the careless national strategy of successive governments, because if the couple is divided, the indigenous and peasants remain divided. Despicable and lethal strategy. I am very affected by these numbers and methods and I get sick again (still my digestive system) to the point of going to the hospital several times. I discover public hospitals without drugs. I still manage to make a television show that the

national feminist representative found for me.

I have another invitation to honor, deep in the Amazon. I feel just better enough to go to the bus station to study schedules and connections. I discover that the road is blocked by a landslide, which extends the trip by 12 hours with a detour to the city of Puyo, province of Pastaza. Above my strengths of the moment! Yet, I buy the ticket. I go to a local lunch, and as a dessert I have a message from the eldest daughter of an Amazonian Chief, ready to welcome me in Puyo. What a chance! I jump on the bus. He arrives later in the evening and takes me to his village in the heart of the Ecuadorian Amazon province of Morona Santiago. His tribe is known worldwide for reducing the heads of their dead enemies. Formerly! He is polygamous and introduces me to his two wives, each with eight children. Faced with my ignorance of the forest and its dangers, I am constantly accompanied by one of his children. This will not prevent me from having two nasty bites on my left foot, which will become infected. This week, with them, is going to be an exhilarating dream. After the tropical rain, we go for a swim, surrounded by butterflies, my favorite insect. I never imagined that a tribe in the Amazon would shorten the downs of my life and even put me back on the upward slope. At the beginning of COVID, in April 2020, this isolated tribe made the choice not to respect the confinement, nor to adopt masks. "Not afraid of death, but I am for the love of life!", explains a grandfather surrounded by his many grandchildren, showing me the fruits and plants of the forest that heal COVID and the healing power of the presence of his grandchildren. Even though his wife, lifelong companion, couldn't recover from COVID, they were all prepared to take that risk. The children no longer have a teacher, so they play, sing in their languages, dance all day. They even set up a troupe from Augusto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed", called Grupo Cultural Yanpankan. Remember this name!



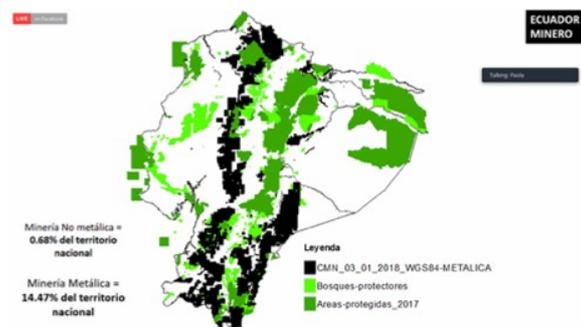
The butterfly of change

- **From the Southern Amazon to the capital Quito**

The peoples of the Amazon live according to millennial rules in the respect of natural balances, such as not fishing or hunting more than they can eat and especially not selling extras. Many live without money, (and without a mask in these times of pandemic). This seems so reasonable to me, so much the opposite of our societies of endless consumption. Their 1,000-year-old traditions certainly help them to reflect, analyze and undertake the struggles provoked by the ultra-capitalist economy that is brutally raging in Latin America.

I arrive in the village of Chief Shuar, well known for his fight against illegal mining & oil extraction on his community's land, and whose eloquence is famous for his strength of conviction. He brings together villagers to inform and to talk about the importance of the Amazon for the climate and the SDGs. There is a great deal of participation from the population, including young people. At one point, I have to talk about domestic violence, of which eight women out of 10 people are victims, SDG5, the highest rate in the country, because it is a major factor limiting the balance of their tribe that conditions the behaviors that are needed to fight the effects of global warming and loss of biodiversity. But the subject is immediately very sensitive. The chief asks me not to "make a mess in his village", especially just before the weekend of Mother's Day, which is celebrated with great magnificence in another village, where I am then invited with him accompanied by his youngest wife. However, this one will come discreetly, in the evening, to give me her different opinion. I feel that there are problems, as everywhere, but it proves that the State is doing nothing to change this status quo. The infamous method "Divide to conquer" a woman who is a victim of violence in the middle of the forest has virtually no help, except that of the two families to whom she is related, if they are willing to listen to her and then act.

The natives own and guard a huge, supposedly protected forest and battle peacefully to conserve it despite the insatiable appetites of mining companies attracted by the very rich underground. The State owns it and the mining rights; however, it is required to ask "free of any influence" for the approval of each mining project, a consultation rigged by the government. Being a village chief in these conditions is "risky". I get to know the one who welcomes me. In the 90s, he was incorporated into an indigenous elite unit of the army during a war against Peru secretly



Mining map on protected area

unleashed by foreign mining companies. He is now very bitter to have realized this hoax too late. But how to be clairvoyant at 20 years old? He really likes my electrical bike free from fossil fuel and wants one of his children being able to make one. He and his group are recognized as heroes of the nation for their military prowess. He is an expert in explosives and sabotage, others are snipers, or experts in strategy and military intelligence. This makes them the best guardians of the forest like the former poachers make the best rangers. He is like a Geronimo with the most advanced military skills. The entire subsoil of their land has been sold to these companies who benefit from the support of the army with disreputable techniques. The chief is almost always one step ahead of them and easily manages to outsmart their shenanigans. For example, he was brought to court five times on false accusations. One of them concerned the sabotage of a bulldozer, which the mining group had sabotaged itself. Even if he is acquitted each time, it is a constant and wearing harassment, not to mention the expenses that the trials entail, and that the tribe bears, thanks to external help always to rebuild. To counter opponents, companies do not hesitate to use the most violent methods, such as the murder of one of their employees, a Chinese translator, and then put the blame on the native.

In Macas, the capital of the province of Morona, the archdiocese's radio station supports the natives, who asked me to come and talk to them, which I do with pleasure. In 2015, I wanted to help preserve the Amazon, which is vital for the entire planet. Never would I, an unknown little Berrichon from the deep countryside of France, have imagined that six years later I would contribute to the preservation of the planet, and thus live a kind of consecration of my journey in the most biodiverse part of the Amazon. Whew! My self-esteem goes back up! The Shuar's Chief is also the former president of his entire Shuar nation. As a recognized pacifist resistance fighter, as a good communicator of his cause and as a good defender before the courts of his country, he feels the urgency to take the cause of his people to the international level: COP 26 in Glasgow. He would like me to help him to register at the COP. It is very clear that neither his government nor the pro-extraction and carbon lobbies would like to see such a man at COP 26. A hard task for me.

The road blocked by a landslide has finally been cleared, and I leave by bus without having to make the detour of 12 hours. Before leaving, I invite to lunch the three children of the family accompanying me to the bus. Often, we foreigners are charged to a bigger bill than others in the restaurant, and often it is not worth protesting and arguing, but then I realize that the owner has increased the bill because I am accompanied by natives. This cruel reality of another form of racism puts me out of myself, spoiling a little the end of this time with them.

I fell again, the cold and altitude of the Andes motivates me to make a detour with my bike to Baño, a small spa town with warm waters, to complete my recovery. There are baths for tourists and baths outside the city, known only to the villagers, where they meet in the evening. So it's very family-friendly and relaxed. Grandfathers and grandmothers come to talk and gossip like in the old time at our washhouses of my country. By chance, one of them has a guest room in the next city where I have to pass. My body and my psyche are getting better, and I am looking more easily for other ways to get better and better. The warm waters give me a healthy relaxation, even if a strange

deeper nostalgia follows me. My landlady from Baño insists on conversing with me in the early morning because she is a militant ecologist involved in the subject of earthworm-composting. She explains to me how she feeds the worms with organic waste, and then she trades them at the organic market for vegetables, which are welcome in these times of greatly reduced tourism. The worms feed her!

The mountain road is beautiful, I walk along a large canyon to go to the highlands. I meet a colorful parade of Andean Indians, accompanied by music and dancers. They celebrate the memory of their ancestors. I will live three perfect days from Thursday, June 3rd, to Saturday, June 5, 2021. At 3 pm, my 60 miles daily traveled, I find a newspaper reporter from the city of Ambato is waiting for me in the main square to talk about the climate emergency, followed by a video for his website. As I already have a place to sleep, I could be at the other important newspaper at 6 pm. The next day, Friday morning, I just had time to repair the support of the solar panel that had broken by chance just in front of my guesthouse, before I had to be at a TV studio at 9 am. Here I answer the wise and feminist questions of the young presenter on the climate emergency and the aggravating factor that is domestic violence (SDG5, 75% in that region). At noon, I continue, without pause, with the invitation of the indigenous governor of the region to make a small speech. We symbolically plant trees together on the square of a village in the south. A much larger program of 1 million trees in agro-forestry has been launched to combat climate change in these hard-hit highlands. At 1:30 pm the transport planning department of this city, the most congested in the country, is waiting for me to discuss a possible greener and safer transport policy.

After a quick lunch, I will swallow the next 60 miles to get closer to a natural wonder, the lake of the Quilitoa's Volcano. Luckily, I soon found a bed and a place for my voluminous bike when I arrived in a backpacker dormitory. There, a Venezuelan refugee woman on the street in front of the dormitory, with three small children in her arms, wants to generously share with me a part of her dinner. Saturday morning at 8:30 am, a local radio station of Latacunga awaits me for a live talk on the link between climate and poverty (#SDG1 & #SDG13). A TV interview, first scheduled in the afternoon, will follow; this will allow me time to go see the high altitude lake. Rarely have I benefited from such an organization, which has even given me time to relax and enjoy contemplating the emerald green waters of the lake. In the evening, a group of young people from Chile organized a 2-hour online conference about COP 26. It is such a great feeling to be useful. Sunday, I continue with climbing a 60 mile road to Quito, the capital. The previous three days, I had a heavy rain. I still have a heavy rain but now it is colder. Never three days without four! In Mancora, Peru, tap water is available only three times a week; there will be free cold weather and prolonged cold shower every day. I did not anticipate that Quito stretches over 30 miles from south to north. Fortunately, I am expected in the north by the brain of the organization of my trip to Ecuador, Director of CICE Foundation, accompanied by Auntie, the president of CORFEC, the Women's Corporation of Ecuador, neurologist for disabled and abused children. I still don't know how I found the strength to do 90 km with such a steep and long climb in a single day and with so little sun.

Quito

Deserved rest, conducive to heal my wounds. Auntie diagnosed very quickly this unknown nostalgia that I drag: I have been in eco-stress for the last 20 years. If I am as an adult so affected, then what poor conditions should our young people be in! It's absolutely normal and human that I can't sleep well, but it can't last. Every morning and for a month I will be treated by Auntie and her assistant for free. Auntie is a doctor in neurology, with a lot of diplomas, but her treatments or tools are minimalist: her words and a candle. She pours a drop of wax on the necessary acupuncture points: for me the belly, thyroid and left foot badly infected in the Amazon Forest. My stomach and thyroid react like if they had a tumor. If the wax turns black in its center, it is because there is a health problem. This hot wax puts a thermal stitch on the nervous system. Day after day, she repeats this care until each point turns white. She will then have me do an ultrasound to control the digestive system and thyroid. Everything is back to order. I even have an oxygenation rate of 97% with a slow heart-beat of an athlete. A big thank you, Auntie!

The director of the CICE Foundation, Electrical Research and Training Center, is scrambling to get me interviews at the regional and national level. It is difficult because newspapers and mainly national televisions are in the hands of few billionaires, not interested in climate and biodiversity. His relations with the media have always been successful at the regional level but rarely at the national level. We end up getting two interviews with a national youth network, NEO, on the link between climate crisis (#SDG13 and the other SDGs) and with the National Institute of Green Energy. Because of my NGO neutrality, I am not allowed to give my opinion on the country's climate priorities, but the data of 70% on domestic violence (#SDG5) clearly gives us the country's major problem and by default the beginning of the solution.

The conclusion is clear: Women are the ones who suffer the most from economic inequality, poverty, hunger, greatest difficulty in accessing education, work, protection and happiness; they are therefore the most exposed to climate chaos. The NEO interviewed me and CORFEC. But the young female presenter of this national network was not ready to understand the connection about gender inequality and climate. They voluntarily postponed for a long time the release of the video because they thought it was too focused on women and not enough on the climate. The Institute of Green Energy will have the same confusion because talking about women discrimination is not a scientific enough approach. These very good scientists are unable to see the link (or the interaction) between SDG5 and SDG13, as in his time Einstein with the dangers of nuclear weapons for the planet. However, no climate peace without social peace! Ecology is no more important than the human, it integrates it. We will suffer many other refusals and we will finally decide to publish a video ourselves in exchange on the quantified and official SDG situation in Ecuador and possible solution strategies.

Here is the situation of the first 8 SDGs, in Ecuador:

SDG1 32% with less than 2.8 US\$ per day,

SDG2 25% of children under 5 in malnutrition

SDG4 63% of children do not attend school for lack of money,

SDG5 70% families have domestic violence,

SDG6 51.5% without running water,

SDG7 World leader in green electricity transition with an economy equivalent of 18 Mio Barrel Oil,

SDG8 Unemployment in 2020 was 33%.

Possible Solution strategies in Ecuador:

Axis number 1: SDG5 & SDG10 (reduce aggravated economic and social inequality for women),

Axis number 2: reduce carbonized transport, a huge problem in Quito,

Axis number 3: reduce or stop mining & oil extraction in the Amazonian and Andean forests.

Apart from being the surprising world leader of the green electricity transition, SDG7, this data is so disastrous, that they put a brake on my own healing and, even more serious, social obstacles to any climate transition in this beautiful country so important for the climate and biodiversity. My little personal health weighs little in front of these issues, but finding solutions to this eco-stress can help other people in the future. I have a personal interest in finding some quickly, a few months before the COP 26 in Glasgow, and especially before the next country, Colombia, on a national strike. My present solution: look for help and have trustworthy partners.

- **Final surprise; Art&Climate**

Five years ago, at a conference, I met Minh Ha Dong, IPCC expert, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2007. He has a PhD on assessing the irreversibility of climate and energy policies. He argued that if we did not act quickly and early, in 2020 it would be too late to avoid dangerous climate change. His assessment was far from the official IPCC reports, bringing us a lot of confusion with false dates like 2040 or 2050 or discrepancies in numbers, which no longer mean anything. Unfortunately, he was right. He confirmed to me what I and the majority of children knew intuitively. Following this, I undertook an even more radical change in my “integrated ecological” commitment and began to think about this journey by solar bike. Fortunately, the environmental break due to COVID gave us, in-extremis, a one-year reprieve. So, we have until November 1st, 2021, the date of the start of COP 26 in Glasgow. This man pushed me to change my life; I hope he will change yours too. Afterwards, awareness of this emergency can take as many forms as there are human beings on earth.

The CICE Foundation helps me a lot to deepen my knowledge of the situation in Ecuador, in

exchange, I share mine on the solar bike. In Cuenca, thanks to a video on the internet, I caught the attention of a family from Quito. A young Bolivian woman in her thirties, her son and her boyfriend from Quito made three identical electric tricycles from scratch to travel from Ecuador to Bolivia. They created a puppet company “Zinkodoz”, talking about human values, poetry, joy. I and the foundation, we will bring them the knowledge about the solar part. They think that change only comes from within and not from outside, because like a lot of people, they have very little confidence in international treaties like the 2015 Paris Agreement, and even less so in politics. I can understand this mistrust, but I think the changes are on both sides, inclusive and interconnected. Unfortunately, their unidirectional approach prevents them from traveling with me, despite our kindly understanding. In any case, our roads



go in opposite directions. I'm no longer the only one in Ecuador on a solar bike it is followed by triplets. They start by crisscrossing the country to travel the first 600 miles to test it. The Foundation has been enthusiastic and continues to technically support them. To be continued... They are carrying on my work in an artistic way!

The Foundation helps me find a used shock absorber for my trike and to adapt it thanks to parts made on demand by a turner-miller. I really like these countries for their resourcefulness to repair. I will now head to Colombia, which is in turmoil since May. A law wants to make everyone pay equally for the COVID crisis. For the poorest who have already lost what they got from the informal economy, to accept it is to die, they have nothing more to lose and this gives birth to a peaceful protest, gradually turning into a national strike, called "Paro nacional", harshly repressed by the police. The result: many dead, missing, torture, rape and injuries.

Scared, I take the road again, head full of this explosive and alarming situation, when, at the first great climb, the bike makes a horrible noise and stops. I know this noise, since the similar accident in Chile (volume 2, Being able to live in Peace). Back to square one, disheartened, with the Foundation van, we return to the Foundation. A ferro-magnetic liquid ensuring better cooling, leaked from the engine to the engine power contacts, insulating one of the three phases and melting the plastic connector. I had this little leak since our repair in Chile; a seal must have been damaged. I clean them well; I insulate and even double the connection of a phase to decrease by two the power on each. It is a prototype; this failure may be avoided by other people. I am on the proof of concept stage.



Art et Climat à l'Alliance Française de Quito

The Foundation insists that I take the opportunity to hold a conference in French with the Alliance Française of Quito. With the festivities very close to the National Day of July 14th, a conference seems unthinkable. But a pacifist arming himself with patience, surprisingly supported by the managers of the French Restaurant of the Alliance, and convinced environmentalists, a conference entitled "Art and Climate" is able to be recorded. It is duplicated live to France for 20 members of the Peace Movement. The Alliance gave me carte blanche, for which I thank them. I talked about Picasso and his painting Guernica on war, of the local puppet troupe on a solar bike, Zinkodoz, and finally about the film "Jour de fête" by Jacques Tati, who was a Jewish refugee in the south of Berry (my region) in Sainte-Sévère during the 2nd World War.

The result of this conference is astonishing. An insurance broker in my home region will offer me health insurance (a first in three years, which will be more than welcome!). Another Frenchman invites me, the Chief Shuar and a drama teacher to lunch in a famous French hotel. This professor, who fell seriously ill, and whom

conventional medicine could not treat, turned to natural medicine of the Shuars. He was cured, and out of gratitude, he trained children of the Amazon in theatre. They have since set up their company, the Yapankan Cultural Group. We decided to bring the troupe from the Southern Amazon to the Northern Amazon, to the Guarani in the very dangerous Yasuni Province. I cover half of the troop's travel expenses. Philip Unger of Bochum, Germany, covers the other half. Philip is also the global organizer of the project. Oil extraction is raging prevalent there and ravaging this province. It is strongly discouraged to go there without protection, and even worse if you are going to perform a play critical of mining or oil extraction. I have to travel alone and at night to Francisco de Orellana, capital of the province Orellana and wait a day before Yapankan company joins me. I have trouble falling asleep when I find the tropical heat but above all I am very afraid. The next morning, the whole company, with me, piles up in a bush bus and travels into the heart of oil exploitation. We follow oil pipelines for hours in the middle of the beautiful primary forest, where it is hollowed out from their installations. So much devastation to fuel our societies, which run at full capacity, completely dependent on oil.

As soon as he got off the bus, Chief Shuar is recognized by a distant cousin: it's market day. He gets 30 minutes permission to mount a black curtain and play the play. Quickly, a crowd gathers, ensuring a good audience. People are very touched by this representation in their language. To see

the exhausted face of the spectators, the message, tinged with humor but much stronger than I had imagined, was well received. At lunch break, people spontaneously come to give us fruit, then very timidly a woman, dressed in traditional clothes, comes to talk to us. She is the women's leader of a Guarani tribe; she thanks us very much for the play. Her tribe suffered greatly from the contamination of the river due to oil extraction. Many children have become blind. A discussion begins between the two chiefs, despite the menacing looks of those who live on oil. The woman explains that she is invited to the COP in Glasgow by the Mapuche tribes of Chile. Her people are autonomous but without money, she will not be able to go there if the National Council of Indigenous Peoples cannot support her at least in part.

We take a bus to sink even deeper in the forest and continue our tour. We meet local chiefs of the two tribes gathered for negotiations. At the end, we are called to perform the play again. Another promising success. The cousin's family offers us hospitality for the night in his house on stilts. Before sleeping, we go to see the village chief to offer him a performance the next day in the village hall. We pass by the huge oil refinery of the village. A flare burns day and night, accompanied by the loud noise of big pumps. We are received by the chief who explains that the refinery generates \$200 million for distant owners. Here, it generates some precarious jobs, alcohol, drugs, prostitution, contamination, poor health and shortened lifespan. The cousin's husband will get drunk and will not come until morning. As agreed, in the morning we will go to the village hall and finish to perform our last play... in the lion's den. But the chief of the lions is also drunk, does not give us the key to the village hall. The



Therese Blum in Shuar

grocer we meet on the way, bores us with curious questions. Nevertheless, we take the bus back with the feeling of having accomplished our mission and I was relieved to have escaped an indefinite but real danger. Former President Corréa has developed economic growth like in Bolivia, based on oil and gas, against the will of indigenous peoples, creating areas of "sacrificios". This is detrimental to them but also to the whole world as these dismissed forests transform less CO₂ into oxygen and have less biodiversity. I think, Yapankan touched hearts, restored some courage and dignity to the indigenous people of this area; I'm sure this troupe has a great future. Chief Shuar tells me again that he also would like to participate in the COP and asks me to find him a registration. It's going to be very complicated because, I think, the government has no desire for such a man to go and tell the world the truth.

Back in Quito, I take the road again without problem to face the hard mountains of the Andes and to try to reach the border. I still make beautiful encounters. One night, I am hosted by a master archer who used to be a great clown and cellist; he will play me a French waltz, another from the Balkans, before letting me join the arms of Morpheus. I pass through a village of Afro-descendants who found refuge in these mountains after escaping their slaveholders a few centuries

ago. And then a great gift, on the morning of my last day in Ecuador, the local hero, "la locomotora del Carchi", Richard Carapaz, is on the third place of the Tour de France. He would even become Olympic champion a month later. I meet a physically handicapped peasant who takes me to Richard Carapaz mother's house. With simplicity, she offers me coffee and a local specialty on her farm. She agrees to make a video of a plea for better compensation and protection of cyclists by Ecuador's presidential decree, inspired by the French Badinter Law of July 1985. The video will go viral on the internet.

In Ecuador all my goals have been achieved and even more. This put me back in the saddle.

III. Colombia:

- **Floods and a major breakthrough on urban transport**

Almost everyone advised me against going because it has been 3 months that the young people are occupying the street. There were hundreds of deaths and rapes. Wouldn't it make sense, as a member of the Peace Movement, to go there to talk about peaceful transition?

Since my visit in 2019, Chile has elected citizens to replace the old constitution of the dictator Pinochet, some are friends who are human rights activists or nature rights activists. It gives me hope to see the same dynamic here. With my experience in Chile, I really know that it is worth trying to attest of this possible change. My friend tells me that young people are eager for a change, they are desperate for solutions, but it can go easily wrong. Thus, he convinces me to come to Columbia. And then, I wish so much that from time to time the good guys win in the end and not the far-right president of Colombia, with his hands covered in blood. I start the administrative



Pipelines in the Yasuni Park

procedures, although it seems impossible to get out of Ecuador. I try, without papers, directly at the border, and maybe President Lasso who has just doubled oil extraction in the Amazon was happy to see me go, or more humbly, the customs officer liked the blue-green color of my eyes, in short, the magic exit stamp is affixed (or put) to my passport. I would never know if the Women's Corporation of Ecuador worked silently to facilitate my exit!

My entry into Colombia is done without problem, just that it has been so long since a foreigner has passed that the computer system crashes. As a result, I entered without an address in Colombia, without a vaccine, without a health pass and without a COVID test. Incredible! I must not delay because at almost 10,000 feet above sea level temperatures drop very quickly and mainly because this corner is infected with smugglers. They know how to take advantage of this place of crossing for hungry, cold and penniless Venezuelan refugees.



Volunteers from the Italian Cooperation invited me to visit the large refugee camp. I refused, to protect myself since my traumatic experience of Samos in Greece, even if the camp is vital. Colombia hosts almost 2 million refugees. The refugees leave the country mainly due to the crazy inflation. The mainstream media blames the inflation on president Maduro's government. The real reason is the economic embargo, despicable and illegal of the USA followed by Europe. Like I explained before, 60 Venezuelan Bolivarians were worth \$1 in 2018. In 2021, you need almost 4 million to have a dollar; 4 million Bolivar to buy your baguette, it becomes foolish, and so cruel! The road is filled with women dragging baby strollers in the cold and humidity. Today it's raining cats and dogs and the fugitives have taken cover. I come across a smaller empty UNHCR camp in the mountains during the day. I have to stop there to see the facilities and am very well received by the two local volunteers, very young, to face such a harsh reality:

*Child of the world, refugee,
I'd love for you to play at home safely,
That you choose your place on the carousel,
Rather than the cold taking you.*

El Pinky with a crying heart

How long are we going to make the unsustainable last, accept the unacceptable, support the unsustainable?

Climate chaos and also economic and social injustice, challenges that we must tackle with responsibility and urgency!

I do not dwell too much because I must not forget the three goals of my trip: the climate emergency, the 9th limit of the planet and the abolition of nuclear weapons (illegal since January 21, 2021).

After four days of cycling and 20,000 feet of altitude gain, I arrive without problem in Pasto where a friend is waiting for me. The next day, Sunday, we will visit a very touristic place, La Cocha. It's a gigantic lake. Due to a flood, like there has not been for 10 years, canoes would be better than our bikes. In Virginia Risaralda, in the center of the country, floods have impacted more than 10,000 people. In Europe and Russia it is worse, there were deaths.



La Cocha transformed into Venice

I have a special thought for farmers, especially the market gardeners, who lost everything. A few weeks before, about 500 people died from a heat wave in Canada. Climate chaos!

Not to mention the unprecedented famine in southern Madagascar. As we can now clearly see in different parts of the globe, the planet's population is suffering: from alteration of food production due to weather changes, rising sea levels, heat waves, wild fires, stronger storms, chaos is increasingly visible and impossible to ignore.

We are three months away from the Glasgow COP, a decisive moment to successfully face the greatest challenge of all time. For sure the COP, the most important since Paris! Unfortunately, the echoes I have of it do not foreshadow anything good. Yet this is our last chance to prevent more than half of the planet's humans from being permanently affected and the other half to be more or less so. If we don't take all the drastic measures today, it will be more and more expensive and difficult to adapt in the future. Maybe we will have unlivable conditions soon.

Next week, I am invited by an association of four universities to highlight an incredible solar mobility project for their 12,000 students. When the sunlight enters the universities, my heart begins to vibrate! I have to wait until July 21st because July 20th is the national holiday that celebrates independence. Warned of the deadly violence of the state, discretion in the demonstrations is highly recommended. My curiosity takes over because I really want to feel the motivation of these young people. And I am not disappointed: there are only young people singing and playing music. But quickly the atmosphere will change when a small group attacks the town hall with small Molotov cocktails. We will narrowly avoid getting carted off by the police. Shattering these young people's dreams of the future surely leads to a social tragedy. This conflict lasts three months and the Colombian president has not given up anything.

Before going to the environmental engineering department of one of the four universities, I researched the situation of the SDGs in this country so rich but where:

- SDG1: 42.5% of the inhabitants live on less than \$3 a day,
- SDG2: 560,000 children under the age of 5 are undernourished,
- SDG4: 1.2 million children do not go to school for lack of money,
- SDG5: 7 out of 10 people suffer from domestic violence,
- SDG6: 3.7 million people live without tap water,
- SDG8: in 2020, 1.8 million are added to the already numerous unemployed, (30% are young people!)
- **SDG7: 87% of electricity is green, a major step forward.** What good news!

The rest of the numbers are so bad that like every time I feel ill. I can't sleep anymore and I secretly dream that the politicians have the same reaction when reading these indicators of the lack of well-being of their country. I can now manage my eco-stress better and I am quickly again on my feet. I am received by the Director of the Department of Environmental Engineering, an efficient, handsome and visionary woman but does not know about COP 26 or IPCC.

The regional government provides 300 electrical bikes for free and also has set up 14 solar stations for four universities of Pasto; charge for free up. Every station can charge up to 22 electric bikes.



300 Electric “Urkubici” under the solar station

This makes 300 solar bikes. I come back the next morning to shoot a very serious video to promote the project. We wrote the scenario, in order to present first the climate situation, the SDGs and among the solutions: **carbon-free transport**, 3rd problem of the country. In the end, I have to arrive, like a telenovela actor, with solar bike, by wanting to explain how to make a solar bike. Students will answer me calmly and with a smile, that they already have 300 of them. There, I must seem to be surprised when I discover that I am only the 301st solar pilot in this region. And they show me the solar charging station, and this is the

last scene of the video. The video should hook the audience! The video that will only be released eight months later, because climate chaos is not the priority of the management.

Despite everything, I feel that our world has just reached a new level, when I am then invited to meet a PhD student in electricity and electronics. We talk about how to accelerate this transition to **green mobility**. He explains to me the amazing subject of his thesis: he works to get disabled people with spinal cord injuries to walk again. I tell him right away not to go on green mobility but to stay on human mobility for all (SDG4: Health for everybody). A day like that, I want it every day!

- **The Colombian Cordillera to the sulphurous Cali.**

In Pasto, the friend's family is taking care of me. My bike suddenly shows signs of right front braking weaknesses and the wearing of the front tires since its fall at the Ecuador customs. To solve the second problem, the dad first guides me to a super mechanic who regulates the parallelism of the front wheels, with much more precision than my abilities allow. Then to solve the first problem, he directs me to another mechanics to machine a stronger part for the right front shock absorber, the most exposed to potholes on the road.

This loose front shock absorber was causing the braking problem. Spectacular result! Better braking on the right wheel, immediate cessation of unnecessary tire wear, reduced battery consumption to less than 14 Wh/mile, allowing me to finish with more energy at the end of the day. Very useful in the Cordillera.



2016 Peace Agreement

The 2015 Global Paris Agreement to limit warming to 2°C, and hopefully to 1,5 C, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% for 2020; 2°C does not allow three-quarters of humanity to escape global warming without serious consequences; "climatic accidents" are multiplying everywhere. This is humanly unacceptable.

The GHG emissions has not decreased but increased. Colombia is the worst. The majority of the agreement was not respected in the acts. It has remained unfulfilled, as if it did not exist despite the official signature of most the whole planet. Colombia is officially the second country in the world with the best greenhouse gas (GHG) emission balance vs. GHG storage thanks to its primary forests. But the reality is that since the 2016 peace agreement, which put an end to the guerrilla warfare between the state and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), Colombia has increased its GHGs by 50% due to deforestation directly driven by mining & oil extraction, by the illicit cultivation of 270,000 hectares of Coca, by selling illegal timber (30%) and livestock (20%).

Transport, normally the largest emitter, is only in third place with 12%. How is it that neither the Paris Agreement nor especially the 2016 Peace Agreements have not been respected, worse, that the last ones have worsened the situation? Despite itself, the guerrilla war had preserved for the last 60 years the forest from the appetites from international mining groups, too scared to enter the forest; 60 years that international companies had had the country scanned by planes with great success and salivated over potential profits they could derive from it, but it was impossible for them to enter without paramilitary support. So they knew exactly where to go for their biggest profits. They had already theoretically shared the cake among colleagues for a long time. From 2016 to 2021 there were only three criminal groups and five terrorist groups. In 2021, there are 67 criminal groups and 28 terrorist subgroups that refused to negotiate and still live in the

forest. The multiplication of these criminal gangs is dazzling. Are these 67 groups mercenaries in the service of foreign companies and wealthy ranching families who also bought the complicity or discretion of the state? Politicians are capable of it! It is possible the AUC, *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, Colombian self-defense groups, paramilitaries, act with impunity directly under the orders of the State, as a militia serving the interests of international companies. Still, the violence is always very great towards the peasants and their families, especially on the natives, harassed (or hassled), murdered, robbed of their land. However, they are normally the first recipients of the 2016 Comprehensive Rural Reform. This reform grants them ownership of their land and forests through notarial deeds and legal protection. To accompany the peaceful transition, the JEP, Special Jury for Peace, has even been created. But the JEP is a façade. Colombian peasants are the best guardians of the lungs of humanity and the greatest biodiversity in the Amazon. I had the honor of being trustworthy enough for the natives and peasants to receive this information.

As in Ecuador, the mining companies, the big owners, structure the economy for their sole benefit. As in Ecuador, the Colombian government has decided to pass on the cost of the COVID epidemic equally to the inhabitants. As in Ecuador, the poor have taken to the streets because they have nothing left, so they have nothing to lose. Here, the strike lasted more than three months. Exceptional! They are called "the front line", in France it may look like the Yellow Jersey! They were joined by the students, the white line. The police response was brutal: 50 official death, plus unofficial death. For the first time, state violence has also spread to cities.

I would not have been able to enter Colombia without the invitation of the ONIC, Colombian National Indigenous Organization, as well as Maestro de la Tierra, a youth association for the environment. I meet some of the members in Pasto, the first major city after the Ecuadorian border. ONIC brings together indigenous peasants. During the 60-year conflict, 30,000 were killed, including the 6,000 falsely accused of being FARC terrorists and the government. They should be the rural beneficiaries of the 2016 Peace Agreements. ONIC tries to help them obtain their property rights, the planned compensation for being war victims and environmental services ("oxygen bonus" from the preservation of their primary forest). But everything is so slow that five years later, nothing has really changed for them. ONIC requests that I visit a pilot community in the north, in the Province of Antioquia. There, I can directly explain to them the concept of this idea of carbon credit (or oxygen bonus) to these millennial guardians of the forest. Going up to \$150 per hectare/year, it could become a major source of income for them; a very "**Bank on the Climate**" idea. Economic support for environmental peace! (SDG8 to support SDG13 and SDG15).

Initially, ONIC established my roadmap. It crosses the Cauca region, with the first city, Popoyan, followed by the dangerous Cali of the Cauca Valley, to finish in Medellín of the Province of Antioquia with its reputation as dangerous as Cali because of its illegal production. It is the famous "coffee" road but also cocaine, illegal mining of minerals and timber and forest burning to enable livestock farming. I consider it an asset that the State, before the COP, especially does not want to create problems to a peace and climate activist, member of an association supporting Peace. I will do my best, by only talking about the COP and the Agenda 2030 but be careful who I talk to

about it. It is clear that I am afraid, even more than in Ecuador. But for the sake of the planet, I have to overcome it. After Medellín, it will be downhill to the Caribbean Sea and the port of Cartagena where I have to try to find a sailboat to go to Panama. ONIC warns me not to travel without their approval, as there may be ongoing incidents on the road. Unfortunately, since the strike, too many of its leaders have been arrested, detained, with trials to pay, too many of their forests have been taken over, so that they can think of something else and bother with me. Finally, and to their great regret, the visit project will be cancelled. But for lack of human resources and time, if I go, I have to fend for myself.

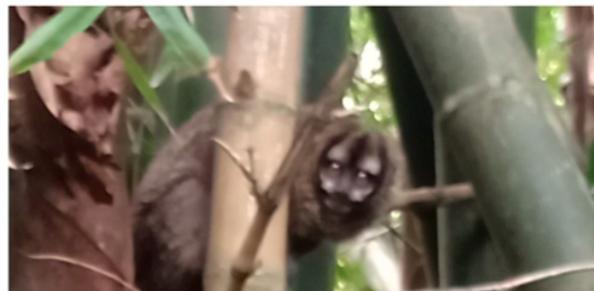
I have time to do a radio show on Canal CNC Pasto, perhaps more listened to than I imagine, because following my time on the radio station, a listener contacts me, insisting on meeting me. He explains to me that he is urban, a rag picker, married, father of three children. He experienced police violence, prison, alcohol and drugs; he lives in extreme poverty. After his involvement in "el paro" (the national strike) on the front line, he developed an economical, social and even ecological political consciousness, quitting drugs and alcohol. Surprising! The three months of strike allowed him an unlikely dialogue with "the white line", more organized, more scholarly, but more easily ready to give up if the white line risks losing an academic year or worse, to end up in prison. The encounter between these two lines always arouses strength and hope. These two urban lines have discovered the violence experienced by rural people for the last 60 years. The rag picker knows that his testimony will not go on the airwaves, but he had to entrust it to me, to me the messenger of peace and climate, for his example to bounce and extend to others.

On July 26th, I feel ready to hit the road despite the lack of the support and protection of ONIC, and ready to improvise. At the end of my first day, at dawn and in a small village of Afro-descendants, I met, on the side road, the distressed gaze of a Venezuelan refugee. She is holding her two children, and has left her country on foot to join her sister in Quito. She is hungry, tired, homeless, cashless but doesn't ask me anything. She tells me she is waiting for a dinner offer by the owner of the motel where I am staying. I offer her breakfast for the next morning in order to leave in better conditions. In the morning, she is gone, a vehicle brought them closer to their destination. Her gaze remains deeply engraved in my memory.

I arrive in Popoyan, the oldest university town of the country, all turned around by the recent violence. During the national strike, a young student girl protesting, was taken to the police station then assaulted by police officers. On her way home, she committed suicide. She was the daughter of a police colleague. The big blunder! The other young students let their anger explode by attacking and setting fire to the police station where she was assaulted. Newspapers, in the hands of billionaires who are hostile to the "Paro" headline that she was suicidal, lesbian rejected by her father. I bike away from this awful town and climb on the Cordillera of the Cauca region. When I cross a mountain pass, I have a sad panoramic view of many small arson fires in this forest called "forest of clouds". I am overcome with anger and a traumatic feeling of helplessness.

Next province is the Cauca Valley and its large city Cali. In Cauca, the native peasants,

much more courageous, have grouped together in CRIC (Regional Committee of Cauca), in rupture with the ONIC, considered too soft. During the strikes, while remaining peaceful, they march in the lead in front of the police, who bludgeon them unscrupulously. Those that fall are immediately replaced. Going down the valley, I find street craftsmen, met in Cuenca, Ecuador. They offer me a piece of land to pitch my tent in their poor neighborhood of Cali, an unexpected idyllic place in this big noisy and violent city. My two neighbors are a gun shooting center and a family of very discreet monkeys. No shower but a beautiful natural waterfall for a shower and washing in this city so hot during the day. Everything "demorra", i.e., everything takes time. People easily cancel and postpone an appointment; you just have to resign yourself to it. The country is in a state of shock. People live like the western laborer of our 19th century. If a better work proposal appears, they accept easily, by changing the agreed schedule in the morning. It is a condition of survival. You have to eat! My friends take to discover the Park of San Antonio, a bit like the Montmartre hill of Paris.



The monkey, my neighbor

The improvisation continues: I had kept the number of a French biker, Jacques, friend of a Peruvian biker I met a year before. I call him. We met, we get to know each other over coffee, and he quickly invites me into move in his house in the next neighborhood. It's not a house, it's a palace: I go from the camping tent to great luxury! His welcome is mixed with some words that shock me. I explain to him that our movement opposes all forms of racism. He continues, and I respect his freedom of speech. Thanks to all the important and high-ranking relationships of his family, I can already imagine a good article in a newspaper with a national circulation. Two weeks to wait, but it will never come! The acronyms COP 26, SDGs, Agenda 2030 will, therefore, remain unknown in Colombia. The newspapers, all right-wing or far-right, do not want to talk about it.

Incredible transition between my tent and the upscale neighborhoods. There are poor neighborhoods and there are rich neighborhoods and nothing in between. These are two worlds side by side that don't know each other well and misunderstand each other. Here also live the narco-rich, whose construction of the villa sometimes stops as abruptly as the shooting death of its owner. We will even be entitled to hear a shooting during a night. Jacques helped me well with the rear derailleur that was just starting to make some noise after almost 40,000 km of good and loyal service. But he doesn't hear anything about the message that I'm trying to promote. Not easy to shake the certainty of the rich. I think, I had hit a thick wall of indifference to have failed part of my mission in Colombia.

But the day before I leave, a dog walker for rich people offers me a meeting with a green citizen network supported by the city's environmental department and the municipal police. Urban-park, clean city, neighborhood compost, urban and nature biodiversity, it's a very dynamic and motivating meeting. As it happens, the next morning, I am invited to the organic market, one of their realizations, on the hill of San Antonio Park to present my bike, COP 26 and the SDGs. I meet a woman from Vierzon, a working-class town of the region. High-level researcher, she studies the impacts of climate on coffee cultivation, which she combines. On the weekend, she also has a small job of production-sale of organic products. She explains to me the impacts of climate chaos on this culture. For example, the obligation to elevate the cultivation above 10,000 feet, so less area, so less coffee.

I take a passion fruit juice mixed on a bamboo bike blender. The local entrepreneur "Bamboocop" makes bamboo bikes of all kinds; tandem, and...blender bikes. I swallow fruit juice. I cannot wait anymore. I am ready to go. But they require me to participate in a conference. The conference is in a house, which is an upside down boat hull. A boon for me in desperate need of audience for too long. Small audience, but of very high quality, including two architects specialized in eco-districts. They explain to me that they imported this concept from France. Of course, at the end of the conference, new fruit juice for all, blended on this surprising bike. I shoot a video about this amazing blender that will have its success. Tomorrow, Sunday morning, for sure, I will leave for good. But before...I should not have forgotten that Cali is the capital of salsa dancing. Two dog walkers for the rich, a job for many precarious, take me dancing, the only art I practice pretty much correctly. And my third resilient factor! Last unforgettable evening with relaxation of my hips, very useful for a European cyclist.

- **Cali-Medellin: The concept of CASA CYCLISTA, a South American phenomenon**

The first days of COVID quarantine in Peru, I had been rescued by my first "**casa cyclista**" (bicycle house) in Trujillo, the oldest in all of South America, known as the casa de la amistad (House of Friendship). Lucho, the owner, has launched a concept unique in the world, copied throughout South America. Let us hope that it can be copied one day in the North America and Europe. The concept is simple: a person or a couple, bicycle lovers, opens his/their house or garden and offers a shower. This is a bit like the Anglo-Saxon concept "warm-shower" found in Europe, but it is free with the warm welcome of South American. The concept has become greatly enhanced. Each "casa" has its own uniqueness.

In Pasto, I was invited to visit an ultra modern casa cyclista of a young couple. They rent bikes, have a bike school for young and old, publicize the very good Colombian law on bicycling to work and support the "Urkubici" 300 solar bikes project. This law, one of a kind, makes sure that if you go every day of the month to your work by bike, a paid (by the State) day of work. Most surprising in the very modern casa cyclista of Pasto, is its theatre, running on electricity produced by bicycles. No cyclist; no show, no concert!

Before arriving in Cali, I briefly met the first two new post-COVID cyclo-travelers, just enough time for them to give the contact information for the casa ciclista of the next city after Cali: Ginebra. One contact leading to the next, it will gradually transform into a chain of contact of casa bici. I would classify the “casa ciclista in the green, local, social, solidarity economy, exactly part of the peaceful transition.

An ex-accountant converted into an innkeeper of cyclo-travelers by his love of the “petite reine” (it means little queen in French, another bike’s name). He has invited me to pitch my tent in his garden where there have been all kinds of bikes from all over the world, but it will be the first solar-powered bike. His specialties are the organization of bike races, mountain-bike rides, and cooking for the bike races and rides. I’m very close to his place when suddenly, the two aluminum supports of the chassis supporting the front bags break, leaving the two bike panniers and the tent on the road. From the beginning, I had feared this breakdown very much, especially downhill mountain and at full speed. The panniers would have made the bike somersault by blocking or by going under the front wheels. It could have easily happened and quickly turn into drama. On the contrary, it happened to me going level at low speed and 1,000 feet before arriving. I feel lucky that I was not hurt, a good luck in my bad luck, helping me to not get too worried about how to fix it. It is an appropriate attitude, because my innkeeper finds me quickly the only aluminum turner/welder in the area, Aristipo. The next day, in two hours, everything is fixed, even reinforced. I admire the resourcefulness in South America, a value less common in other part of the world. Aristipo gives me a discount bill in support of our common cause. During the work, my innkeeper, in love with the “petite reine”, hastily shoots a video about the link between “casa bici” and the climate, then slips me the contact of another casa bici for the end of the day.

Here I am hosted by another turner/welder but on stainless steel, designer of small machines for the food industry. The casa bici is simply inside his home, and out of the question to pay him, too. What he is looking for is friendship and encounter. His speciality is mechanics, he tinkers with everything you want on your bike. In the morning, I have a technical conversation about my bike with employees of his small workshop. Exercise that I enjoy. To thank him for his hospitality, I offer him my miniature model of my tricycle handmade with copper wires by my artist friends from the hill of San Antonio. He receives this gift as a connoisseur. He calls the next casa bici in Pereira to recommend me.

It is a “squat” in a century-old wooden house belonging to the family of a former president of Colombia. The ground floor was occupied by poor families. The second floor is being used as a casa bici and university, nicknamed “University Without Borders”. This university is multi-purposes where up to 20 backpackers, cyclists, sleep, live, exchange, teach to the locals. I feel like in Linz in Austria (book 1). It is held by the one who opened this squat, a dozen years ago, a peasant, who also was a sociologist of communities and great bike traveler. Like the next casa bici in Medellín, thousands of travelers from all over the world have passed through this place. He is affectionately known as the Dean of the University.

The rain of the whole last week and this week caused land flows on deforested land, blocking the roads of the Cordillera and causing heavy flooding on the Caribbean coast, where I have to go. Forced pause for me, the climate change activist, at the University Without Borders. How can this extreme rain be explained? With +1 degree of warming, there is 7% more evaporation and in the 3 cordilleras (central, eastern and western) of the Andes this quickly translates into roads cut by landslides, worsened by deforestation. This rain will spill out to the coast of Cartagena, causing flooding. A bit of an apocalyptic setting! This phenomenon is manifesting itself all over the world. So imagine with +2°C or +3°C!... Scary!

The specialty of this casa- cyclista is the debate and the meeting with the great travelers. The great traveler is the “raison d'être” of this place, amazing! With COVID and then the general strike, the great traveler is becoming rare, therefore precious. There are only four of us: an Argentinian couple, an indigenous Mexican, Estella, and me. We are bombarded with questions by local visitors. A new situation for me! I am not too focused on the debate, because for me the situation is quite clear thanks to the good SDGs indicators. There is so little time left before the COP that it is more urgent to make this data known and to act than to debate the meaning of a word like sustainability, or the place of the comma in the SDGs explanation. But while waiting for the sunny days, the small group takes the opportunity to confront the far right analyses of South America that I received from Jacques, the Frenchman from Cali with his savage capitalism versus, the critical analysis by North-American linguist, Noam Chomsky, on economic degrowth. We also discuss on art, or exchange more simply on the routes tips and possible ways to enter Panama without too much problem. A radical change in our societies seems vital, but which one?

A local “planetpreneur”, Greg, in his twenties, heard about my arrival on a solar bike. Immediately,



Painting of Edward Van...
Pedaleando la Palabra Otra América es Posible

he came to meet me. I quickly perceive his interest because he and his friend set up a company creating electric bikes. His heart was with electric bikes but for economic reasons (debt and COVID), he was forced to create another more lucrative accounting software business that works well. The first evenings, and after seeing the solar bike, his interest is again on electrical bikes. He wants to go with me up to Mexico to promote micro-electro-mobility and will, like the Argentinian couple, follow us, and even offer them to lend two of his electrical bikes... His heart and head are confused!

Very quickly, I am taken on a demonstration of the front line, or the Yellow Jersey, of the area, puis a music festival, stupid to believe that I could remain discreet with the solar bike. Even before the

demonstration starts, I was noticed by a local TV channel, and with more than 60,000 followers (or viewers) on internet, now, it will be impossible to go unnoticed throughout the city. I explain that I remain neutral but support the right to non-violent expression of citizens, I present the inglorious data on the SDGs in Colombia and I am careful not to comment on them. I am just here to support economic peace, environmental peace, the Paris Agreement and the Colombian 2016 peace process. Greg presents his exciting local business of electrical bike. The weekend is coming. The ambivalent Greg was caught up again by the head. Now, he wants to become Greg the millionaire and, therefore, abandons the travel project. He thinks that, first, by getting rich, he will be able to help others better.

The Dean loves to cook for everyone and this Sunday we eat together a trout that I offered for the departure of the Mexican women. While drinking a good coffee offered by a local producer, our dean explains a painting by the master painter Edgard Varon, a painting offered in exchange for a bicycle: Don Quixote gets on a bike and no longer his old Rocinante. The painting touches me, I, who see me better in Sancho Pança! This house was almost empty during COVID, but it was soon temporarily filled by the poors, numerous in Colombia, looking for shelter. The Dean would like the casa bici and the university to gradually regain their original vocation. So he asks them for a voluntary departure.... Hard, hard...

To my great regret, my solar bike always attracts more than my speeches on the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit warming to 1.5°C, also on the 2016 Colombia Peace Agreement or an even stronger possible agreement at 1.5°C at the COP in Glasgow. It is then always with great pleasure that I answer the interview. So I had pleasure to be interviewed by the very militant TV-Café, aptly named in this coffee-producing region.

I am troubled in Perreira by the standardization of women's physiques. Hardly any young woman loves her body and many of them have used surgery. 100% would be prepared to use plastic surgery. If I go back to Colombia in 10 years, maybe all women will look the same. Worldwide, \$250 billion is spent per year on advertising to influence our young people on their consumption, and their look. I was able to express my feelings at Radio Café. This strong diversion by mass media cannot hide from our young people their greatest suffering: the terrible future. Already 2/3 of young people know that we are travelling towards an environmental tipping point, but also social and economical tipping point. They suffer enormously and in silence.

My last meeting will be with a farmer leader, Lucas (not his real-name for safety reason). I had no idea how vulnerable Lucas was when we were planning to go to town, not to talk serious things, just to play pool. We were hoping to play pool in a special place known to him. The place is not open onto the street from where it is so easy for killers on motorcycles to shoot and then flee. For that reason, in certain towns, two men on the same motorbike are forbidden. In some bars, you have to leave your firearms at the entrance. **What a violent society!** It will be so complicated to organize playing pool in a place secure enough, that we will not be able to do it. We can only in areas that he knows very well. Lucas shows me his peasant leader's card and one detail catches my eye: his blood

type is on it. My question springs up: "Why is it important? Colombia is the most lethal country for activists after Brazil with 50 per year. Every Colombian asking for freedom is a potential target. His blood type is listed on his identity card to accelerate a possible necessary blood transfusion. Lucas is threatened with death, he is wanted.

- **No spiritual shortcut by taking hallucinogenic plants**



Ruta del Café

It is September 1st, two months before the COP 26, the deluge of rain begins to slow down, allowing me to leave, just after giving a last virtual course to young students in sociology. I will follow the Ruta del Café to Medellín. It is truly an enchanting setting in these mountains covered with coffee trees.

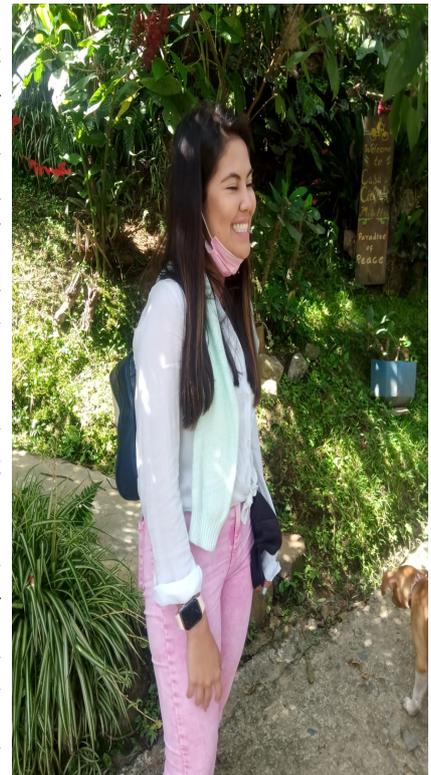
I arrive in Manizales at the small farm of Daniel, university teacher, great connoisseur of indigenous peoples, where I have to give a virtual class on Friday night on the legitimacy of the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, the UN and whether we can change the content of an SDG. SDG8, "Decent work & economic growth", really brings a lot of problems. We should move urgently towards economic degrowth, and rather towards the growth of health protection, socio-economic equality, and a growth of well-being. Of course, we can have the democracy dreamed of by Abraham Lincoln. Of course, we can change any

SDG, as sovereign people of the world. I only have to make clear to them how democracy works. For me, with SDG8, I never speak of economic growth but of decent work, which we can choose freely, with decent wages, and with adequate training. I should add: a work that respects people and nature. From my travel and my life experience, I have gained such confidence in human beings. I am convinced that, if we finally give everyone the chance to be able to freely choose their work, that they would never choose to destroy the planet, nor will they harm human beings. In my city of Bourges, many work in manufacture weapons for lack of choice and decent wages elsewhere. Daniel, my host, welcomes young natives who cannot afford housing. In exchange, the young people must take care of a small chicken farm; then they must kill, pluck, gut and sell at the market on the weekend to pay their rent. These are young people from the Amazon, recognizable by their constant good humor, and young people from the highlands. Those in the Amazon are much sought after by people around the world looking for a spiritual shortcut and willing to pay for big money. The Amazon is full of highly hallucinogenic and psychotropic natural substances. Some young Amazonians that I met cannot resist the temptation of easy money, and portray themselves as healers. I must issue two small warnings: do not fall into this trap, nor do not feed the extraction of their culture. First warning, when you pronounce the word "shaman", it is immediately very suspicious. A shaman is a healer from Siberia, but not from Amazonia. The word healer still exists in his native language. Second, these plants are free of charge and treatments are often inexpensive. Plants are used as medicines in very specific cases and not as spiritual plants. Sorry, there is no spiritual shortcut. Do not forget the main goal of these peoples against the despoliation of their land,

done by the mining groups supported by organized criminal gangs and by the government, is: resist, communicate and rely on the law to protect their forest. Are there other easy and quick so-called “spiritual” escapes from the situation in the forest that they are facing? And also, there are enough drug problems in Colombia. So let's not add more!

- **Medellin to Cartagena: The deception of these private television broadcasts**

After an evening dancing Salsa on Saturday in a crossroads in the mountains, and after a very steep elevation gain, I arrived at the surprising casa cyclista in Medellin with its vernacular architecture. Within a week, a Medellin TV crew will have filmed my bici and the casa bici de Medellin. A young team arrives with a cameraman, a sound and light technician and a female presenter/director to be part of the local ecological program simply called “Eco”, a 22-episode documentary. It was supposed to last a very short time, but they are happy to stay all day filming almost two hours of rushes. It is the most successful video project to date on local action such as this eco-place that is Medellin’s Casa Bici. It has with compost, bicycle powered blender, shared bike workshop, rainwater recovery, selective recycling, and eco-construction with local or recycled materials. It will be released either as episode 7 or 8 at the start of COP 26. Perfect. One could think of “mission accomplished” less than 50 days from COP 26 and a nice summary of my trip to Colombia, but this is a cover up in an attempt to green wash up an enormous problem and here is why.



TV Director

In San Antonio de Prado, where me and the local casa bici were filmed, 8 million pigs and 20 million chickens are largely owned by one man. He employs 10,000 farm workers to feed animals with hormones and transgenic soy, taken on land taken from cleared Amazon rainforest. It is a huge source of groundwater pollution in Medellín and the largest source of Green-House-Gas (GHG) including methane. By the way, with these mega industrial farms, the corona viruses multiply strongly, easily passing from chicken to pig, then to man. The industrial pig/chicken is the culprit, not the pangolin!

How can one man own a farm with 8 million pigs? The small peasants saw appearing one day the letters AUC (which stand for United Self-Defense of Colombia) painted on farm buildings. These letters or other names of organized criminal gangs, this amounts the equivalent to a death threat to the farm and the farmer. As in a bad western movie, the big landowner comes with his gang demanding: “Your land or your life”. The small farmer is forced either to accept the bargain price or grow illicit crops. Then some members of these criminal gang were themselves killed and then disguised as guerrillas. These corpses were added to the famous 6,000 false positives, these corpses

disguise as guerrillas. Double benefit: increase the number of guerrillas killed and eliminate troublesome witnesses.

The television director, a pretty smile and pretty face, is only interested in pollution due to individuals, or 1% of GHG emissions. She wants to blame the average citizen and only talk about individual solutions. So she films the three composts, the recovered rainwater, the natural and recycled building materials of this ecological casa cyclista. She prevents me from addressing the biggest source of local pollution: agro-industry. She just tolerates me talking about climate change and biodiversity loss based on Colombian official government data. Nobody knows what the 2015 Paris Agreement is, nor the 2030 Agenda of the SDGs, because the media have never talked about it, of course. I can not blame the average citizen for this situation. I refuse to forget my farmer leader Lucas, my chief Shuar, the Colombian imprisoned indigenous leaders, my three years of traveling around the world to denounce the destruction of man and the planet. I mention everything, unfortunately I am certain that she will have the last word when she edits the show. These television practices should not last any longer. This kind of person perpetuates a system of premeditated genocide and ecocide. Premeditated, because today we have the scientific evidence of who is causing climate chaos. Anyone who endorses these irresponsible policies or who generates a diversion or who delays the implementation of the Paris Agreement is consciously guilty of premeditated mass crimes and ecocide against humanity. There is a new Nuremberg Tribunal for this: the International Criminal Court (ICC). Another global action that needs doing! But does a TV director have the choice to talk about farms with millions of animals and risk of losing her job?

In the suburbs of Medellín, in San Antonio de Prado, meetings and invitations will multiply as in a government's minister diary, while waiting for the 12 minutes on the Antioquia's National Television. What often strikes me in my encounter with other people is their vulnerability, here more than elsewhere. It really makes me want to do no harm, then protect them, take care of them, love them, and do the same for our wonderful planet. I want to take care of, and at the minimum, do less harm to of all these young people that I have met, who are on the front lines of climate chaos.

I have often heard from my Amazon Chief friend from Ecuador, who is still very vulnerable. A new Chinese gold mine project will be located on one of the sources or tributaries of the Amazon, compromising the cleanliness of their drinking water. He insists on the importance of him going to COP 26 to carry the voice of his people, and really wants me to register at the COP 26, knowing that registration has already been closed since March, that his community lives without money and, therefore, without means to go there, and that the State has already put him in prison for 25 days, making it difficult to obtain a visa. I will really try to get him the registration, but because of the lack of means and the visa; I doubt that he will be able to go.

I will come to the live show on TV Antioquia. Nothing interesting to talk about! Let's all keep in mind the situation in Colombia. About 40 families own the whole country, the industries, including agriculture, and the media.

I almost gave up with medias, until I was invited to two local radio stations by a young vegetarian activist, an acrobatic tango teacher, Zora. She and her father set up a self-financing youth house with their own local and independent radio station. Unbelievable! She gets me a slot to speak freely on her radio station with two young and passionate Colombian cyclo-travelers. She even gets me another slot on another liberal radio station.

I work on air with a Franco-Colombian woman who co-created a French network of around a hundred eco-villages, for which she is responsible. She wants to create another network in Colombia. She details everything that can be done at an individual level and in a small group: local action for global impacts. I try to clarify from the other point of view: how the global action like COP 26, for example, also impacts the local. My three years of living in China have taught me that things rarely oppose but rather complement each other, the famous principle of Ying/Yang. The individual and free speech is not easy for a young person under such external constraints from the media, from the lack of respect for national and international agreements by our politicians, and all under the violence of the Colombian police! Pierre Perret, a wise and funny French song writer, reminds us in a song that when faced with a soldier (or a Colombian policeman in our situation), we are never right. All Perret's life, through humor and art, he managed to never be lukewarm in his songs. Would he have known how to stay alive here? I am not so sure.



Teacher of Acrobatic tango

I am invited to visit the large local compost factory. It treats agro-industrial waste like skins of avocados and oranges, and skins of GMO onions!!! Even if the guide swears it is organic and has methane emissions (the second largest GHG in the world), I cannot accept this statement or any other lies. And here is the last but biggest masquerade of this municipality with 28 million animals in factory farms: I was invited at the last minute by the municipal council, which presented a year of awareness-raising work on recycling, compost, and herbal garden, but still, nothing is being done on factory farming!

The last remarkable young person I met before leaving the suburbs of Medellin is Dawe, a young foreign investigative journalist, specializing in armed conflicts. He came to look for evidence on organized criminal groups so that he could then have them convicted. He documents who the mercenaries are, what companies they work for, who are the crooked politicians who support and cover them, and who are the victims. A precise and risky investigative work. There are many young people like him in the world, ready to give their lives for our planet and for human beings. They

have my admiration and my respect.



African Quarter, Getsemani, Cartagena

Cartagena.

It's time to set off for and reach the coast in Cartagena. I reap a series of troubles: theft of money, theft of my old tent, leaving the road and falling in the ditch, and losing my phone on the road. All under torrential rain! With the inundation on the coast, it is not surprising that a fortnight of difficult days followed in Cartagena where I landed in the Afro-descendant quarter of Getsemani. I have often been knocked out, knowing that the light always comes back. A French sailboat captain, who is carrying organic Colombian coffee and high-quality rum to France, offered to take me on board. It was tempting in my weariness. Then, a glazier offered me to repair for free my broken bicycle mirror. Then I heard the voice of Giani, a young female singing teacher from Chile and the music of Alexandro, the skillful guitar teacher boyfriend; these gave me back the light that had fled. The human being is truly capable of

generosity (the glazier), of poetic texts of great depth, and bewitching music. I spend the evening listening to them on the white sand of Baru beach island. Their art nourishes my soul and recharges me. In the morning, after having slept on one of restaurant's table, the three of us spent an hour picking up the plastic waste that litters this heavenly beach. Then by magic, all my problems were unlocked. (This time the local to the global!), here is why:

- After suffering two refusals, I find a sailboat from Cartagena to Puerto Lindo in Panama, which accepted my imposing bicycle. The COVID vaccine is becoming mandatory to enter Panama. The captain of the sail boat Santana will just tolerate me with negative COVID tests,
- since the beginning of the year, I travel upon my own money, but just two generous donors just gave an important donation,
- My German colleague has just obtained a registration to COP 26 for our Chief Shuar.
- By incredible luck, the summit of the Caribbean countries (La Cumbre de los Caraïbes "en Camino para la COP 26", translated as a stage on the way to COP 26) is being held from Wednesday the 6th to Friday the 9th of October in the quarter of Getsemani, a few blocks from my hostel.

I park my solar bike in front of the entrance, just long enough to get kicked out by the police. No permission to stay in front of "La Cumbre" for my solar bike, even though a good ambassador for the COP and the SDGs. I come back the next day, Friday. I discreetly install my solar bike at the nearest café terrace, being very careful, because it would be stupid for the police to impound it,

three hours before boarding the boat for Central America. There I meet a rich Colombian family living on the border with Venezuela. They have just attended the pre-COP 26 and want to plant 30,000 hectares of "forest", thanks to the oxygen credit. Firstly, planting pines and eucalyptus trees is not a forest but a plantation, and secondly with \$7 per ton of CO₂ the project is not economically viable. It will generate \$ 7 millions of green government bonds per year. And they will lose money the first 10 years. It is a fraud from major GHG-emitting countries, when we know that a ton of CO₂ is worth \$70 today. This foreshadows that at the next COP our political representatives will talk about carbon trading, but above all not about limiting climate change to 1.5°C. This sad news is a huge blow to me. It is high time to arrest these criminal politicians. Give them a fair trial and possibly put them in jail. Moreover, the French president Macron and his government were tried by the Administrative Tribunal of Paris for climate inaction in February in the so called "Trial of the Century". In October, I'm waiting to find out if, first, they are going to be sentenced for climate inaction; second, sentenced to repair the ecological damage (with our money!), and finally be forced to not do anymore harm and make the situation worse. I hope that is finally going to be the first victory for the future of the planet. Another example on a global action (legal) to enable us to survive on a daily basis.



*Down-size
bici on
Catamaran*

I boarded the catamaran Santana the next night, Saturday October 10th. I have the feeling of being exfiltrated of the country like a “green secret agent for the climate”. Setting sail for a four-day crossing is a first experience for both the bike and its rider. It is a challenge for the bike to not be too oxidized by the salt of the sea and the solar panel not being tossed about too much in order to be in a condition to continue in Panama then to Costa Rica, final destination of this book. At night, the setting is reduced to the simplest: the silvery light of the moon on the water and silence. During the day, it is the sea and the sun. The sloshing of the waves, the reassuring and benevolent presence of Captain Carlos and his crew, the fact of being sheltered and fed for four days, the festive spirit of the other travelers, everything pushes me to calm down and relax.

IV PANAMA

- **A COCONUT at COP26?**

The beautiful catamaran Santana sails at 6 knots, due west towards the San Blas Islands, which are bristling with coconut palms. A real paradise on earth! A true picture postcard! With mask and snorkel to see the aquatic life, it's even more enchanting. Coral reefs provide refuge and food for thousands of brightly colored fish, the same fish we see in aquariums, but so much more beautiful here in the wild. I cannot get enough. Truly the sea gives me rest. It's such a contrast to Colombia's climate of violence. I feel far from any problem, even if I do not forget the current news.

I'm doing great on my boat. I don't even get seasick. I savor my well-deserved relaxation. Why did I randomly casually select music that I've listened to hundreds of times, that of a deceased singer-songwriter in my family? Suddenly very soon, my stomachache that was gone since the Auntie's treatment in Quito, reappears. Not logical! I somatize something that I have to identify quickly in order to free myself from it. The memory of my song-writer relative death could have reminded me of death in general, of which I believe, I am not afraid. But my discomfort is deeper than that. Of course, Colombia was the most dangerous country for an activist that I passed through, creating the multiple tensions in me. More broadly, as never in history, life itself is in extreme danger with the premeditated mass genocide, which is already shaking so many populations. I feel that the fear of mass



Panama Customs

genocide is not the reason of the unease buried deep inside me. What really worries me more and more is the **suffering** of any kind of life on earth generated by the lack of water, food, money and by natural or geopolitical disasters. The songwriter/composer, who suffered a lot before his death, reminded me that death is not the most terrifying vision, but the conditions of life before it. As I learn a little bit to deal with this terrifying vision of suffering before death, I relax and my stomachache goes away. We go through Panamanian customs on an island held by one of the seven minorities of Panama. Sheltered from the sun under a majestic rubber tree, the native customs officer in uniform gives me my entry visa to Panama in five minutes. He takes me aside to tell me how important he finds my work. He, who lives 50 cm above the sea, who sees the water rise every year and the beaches disappear, knows that his living conditions are and will become increasingly harsh. He points out that during strong tides coupled with violent winds, the rare sources of drinking water are filled with seawater, making life practically impossible on what still seems like a paradise to me. Islands have already disappeared. These customs officials are the coolest, most self-aware customs officials I've come across.

Here I am already in Panamanian territory, but these islands were Colombian in the 19th century. Some French people started the Panama Canal project, which turned out to be a real financial scam. After this fiasco, some engineers, including Philippe Jean Bunau Varille, went to see American bankers to save the project. They said to themselves that it would be more lucrative for this part of Colombia to become independent, and first financed a revolution in order to achieve their Machiavellian plan. Is it surprising from bankers? No! Panama was created on November 3, 1903. These islands became territory of the newly born Panama. Since then it has specialized in tax evasion, which the recent Panama Papers clearly highlighted. Just before I boarded the boat, the Pandora Gate scandal came out. Recovering this money will be very useful to finance climate transition and adaptation. It would be a very "Bank on the Climate" idea, because we are talking around 10 trillions of dollars. The silence in the media is very revealing of the values and complicity of their owners.



Leaving Santana to land in Panama

We arrive at Puerto Lindo in Linton Bay in the early morning. There we find sailors from all over the world, including many French people, who have set off for a round-the-world trip. Some have finished it and now refit the boat before reselling it. Others, with less money, live here by refurbishing one in order to be able to start a tour. Others are repairing the damage caused by 300 km/h cyclones, which hit the Caribbean, including the West Indies, this year. After the Panama Canal, there are strong winds pushing towards Polynesia. As I am going to North America, I tell myself that other sailboats will perhaps come forward by accepting me and my bike. I already have some ideas. Puerto Lindo is the former haunt of the Caribbean pirate, including the famous English pirate Morgan. There continues the tradition of hot and violent partying until the end of the night. Physically and mentally, my anxiety and stomach pain is over, but I'm

very weak, and it's hard to think in these conditions; the idea is just to be able to get going again and ride. As soon as I disembark, I am eager to find out the judgment against president Macron called "The Trail of the Century", released in October. Wow! The president Macron and his government have been found guilty as charged, responsible for four years of inaction in the issue of climate change. They are required to repair and compensate the climatic damage and finally required not to worsen the situation any further. He will still be able to go and make beautiful blah-blah of being climate world champion at the COP 26 in Glasgow, but the 2.5 million French people, signatories of the petition "Affaire of the Century" or "Trail of the Century" are not fooled. He knew and he voluntarily did nothing. It means to serve his and the interests of those who set him up. In French, there is a word for that: a collabo, a quisling during WW2 helping the third Reich. Also, he would

never have been able to do this without the support of a “regal” police, etymologically the king's police and, therefore, police officers of the same caliber as Jabert in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Finally, legally, the damage must be repaired or compensated and this is a very fine beautiful and encouraging victory, forcing the next presidents to have a program that respects the Paris Agreement and that of the COP 26 to come. I breathe better. Do I need a great victory? Yes, it's nice, but I like to not be dependent on victory to act.

The German owner of the catamaran kindly offers me to stay on board for free in exchange for a little helping hand. This is good, because I have no more cash and no cash machines in this small port. Suddenly, I remember that two years ago, when I left, I hid a €50 note in the bike in case of emergency. It is still there and in fairly good condition. A young Spanish navigator changed it for me. The two days that follow, I have to help wash the toilets and then the kitchen in exchange for food and lodging. During the breaks, I find the energy to dive; my strength is coming back little by little. The sea becomes more important to me (and my health) every time. The owner has invited his first guest. I have the pleasant surprise to be called in French by this Quebecker, who has come from the mainland on board. His gaze is smiling, he has an enormous capacity for listening. René is a largely self-taught researcher. He was greatly affected with eco-depression about climate change in the early 2000s and decided to take action. He left for Bhutan, then Auroville in India, before arriving here where 15,000 container ships cross the Panama Canal every year. These boats use crude oil, which greatly contaminates the drinking water (#SDG6). The Panamanian government are gradually banning crude oil. This massive CO₂ emission receives little media attention. The local association, Pana Sea, where he volunteers, is working on its replacement. We both work on “eco-friendly” transport, even if my lithium batteries are not very “human friendly”.

On the Santana, there is also a board with an oar which tempts me. The next morning, on the board, I decide to look for Léon, an old sailor I met in the sailors' on the back of his boat. I set off for the monohull and s Positif”. And again, good luck, he is there. His 70s sailbo his skipper. He is very hospitable and reassuring. We drink talk about nothing and that does me a great deal of good God and that tires me. But am I not doing the same with much?

Later, René takes me to the office of his association. I dis passionate about aquatic life. I learn that with +2C°, 1 +1.5C°, 99% will disappear. We are not talking anymore last 1%. I also visit the company "Ocean Builder", a bui floating houses (self-sufficient in food, water, and energ people surrounded by the apocalypse? Does it solve the reminds me of 2 old apocalyptic movies: Mad Max and oasis like Waterworld. I point out two small dysfunctions in these films. First, Mad Max fought for the last drop of oil, strange that he did not even know the solar energy yet present in Australia.



Secondly, a Waterworld oasis will not resist for long the increasingly violent hurricanes and will not resist very long if half of the planet's population are under unlivable conditions. The solution is necessarily inclusive. I also discover Sunreef, builder of solar sailboats at €4 million. Even more sustainable at that price?

Finally, I'm going to see the owner of a light and efficient trimaran converting (or switching) his diesel engine 25kw to solar electric. The electrical motor has to be strong enough to be able to move the big weight of the boat out the port. Solar panels and batteries have to be big (or large) enough to get him out of the Bay. He doesn't have enough space for a lot of solar panels. If no wind, so without the force of the sails, he would therefore need 12 times more electric solar panels than the space he has to move this 12-tonne racing trimaran. So the solution is to leave with full batteries and then use his sails. The solar panels will then recharge the batteries over several days to enable to return to port. Well decarbonized and well thought out!

If I had to be a fruit, I would like to be a coconut. I met some floating coconuts coming all the way from Africa. These coconuts can travel, because they are floating, they can cross the entire Atlantic just using the current and then grows a coconut tree, only if all the conditions are met. A nut rarely gives birth to a tree. It is more likely to fail. It is in its nature to accept it. Good philosophy of life, that I should apply to my life, my trip and my work. It is always worth trying.

So, because of my project in America, I will not go to COP 26, but Philip, the project's co-administrator, will be there. I'm already happy to have landed here, in Panama mainland, with my dismantled solar trike. Now, I have to reassemble the batteries and the solar panel on the trike and check. I involve René and the owner of the Santana to pass on to them what I know. Like the coconut, will the complete bike be able to set off again in order to transport your servant on favorable ground to bear fruit?

- **Panama Canal and meeting the Ngäbe Bugle**

Panama, like Ecuador, is a “dollarized” country, that is to say under USA influence. All around me, the vegetation displays a luxuriant greenery proportional to the tropical rains that follow one another day and night. Getting back in the saddle and getting back on the road is hard. To cope with the feeling of the suffering of living beings has really taken from me a lot of my energy. Therefore, this small country seems to take a long time to cross while my electric motor emits slight strange noises, far from reassuring me.

The first evening, I stop, in search of accommodation, a little before the famous Panama Canal. A very modest family generously offers me a pretty hammock. And a very chic young woman in a 4x4 offers me a fruit platter while filming the scene with her cell phone. Subsequently, two days later, her mother will find me accommodation in a relief center for the fight against natural disasters. The center explains to me that this year, fires and especially floods with landslides have multiplied by 5. These centers are able to very quickly provide food and housing to victims. These small gestures, full of humanity, gradually help me regain my strength.

After crossing the Panama Canal, thanks to the large donation I received earlier, without lingering, I bought a small and very cheap tent. Good idea? The bike engine seems to consume too much. Something is wrong. Suddenly it stops completely. I just have time to take shelter, the bike and me, before a heavy downpour. I'm trying to diagnose. The connectors are once again filled with dielectric cooling oil. I just clean up and leave for 300 feet and...same breakdown! I'm discouraged, running out of ideas, with a furious desire to be further than my very precarious shelter. I reason with myself: “Calm down David, calm down!” My ultimate solution is to check other connectors! The plastics of some of them are melt down. I replace them. Phew, the bike starts again, with the same noises.



Panama Canal

Night falls, even darker under the steady rain. At night, in the fog, soaked, hungry, exhausted, on a steep, endless uphill, I urgently look for a place to spend the night and end this "cursed" day. Off to the right of this main road, on my right, I see appearing in the mist a kind of camp surrounded by barbed wire. More desperate than scared, I ask the guards if I can pitch my tent inside the camp. After hesitation, they go to ask their leader, Zorro, who, to my surprise, moves. Zorro, means fox, but that's not what emerges first from this kind man, with eyes full of mischief in a laughing face. The man scans the bike. After discovering the "Pinky" rat sticker, he smiles and makes the decision to accept me. Immediately, I was given a location close to the road.



The incessant noise of truck brakes, the light of street lamps, the tropical rain filling my tent, which was too cheap to be waterproof, made me spend an almost sleepless night. Zorro, still with laughing eyes, younger than me, comes to greet me when I wake up, and to get me out of my swimming-pool tent. At dawn, I understand that this camp filled with banners is a ZAD, Zone to Defend, fighting for 11 years against a large private hydroelectric dam "Barro Blanco". They easily opened a breach in the barbed wire, mounted by the police to prevent them from entering the areas. ZAD is full of children and their young parents. All, like me, have slept very badly and are soaked.

The people of the ZAD belong to the Ngäbe Bugle people, one of the first peoples to have been enslaved by Christopher Columbus. I was about to leave when Zorro invites me to drink a cup of chocolate inside his dwelling: four poles cut with an axe, a roof made of banana leaves and a few wood-planks sawn lengthways by hand, laid on the mud-soaked ground. Slowly, I perceive that Zorro is a very shrewd strategist, one of the tough guys in a non-violent struggle, who mixes humor and the sacred. He welcomed me because I represent a Peace NGO, because they humorously nicknamed me the Pinky and because my real name is David. He knows well the stories of Pinky and the Brain and that of David against Goliath. He's such good company that I ask him if I can stay the weekend. He accepts, explains to me the organization and the situation. The villagers work four days and rest three. They bathe three times a day as their traditions dictate. (They must have laughed when, 500 years before, they saw the dirtiness of the colonizers). They sing every four

hours, mixing Christian songs with those of their people, sung a Cappella. In the night, I had been struck by hearing melodious voices with tribal tones, in the middle of the deafening noises of truck brakes; I was not dreamed that. When I ask him about the future of this huge dam, he replies with humor that it will not be necessary, because it was built on an earthquake zone.

Not surprising to me, in Chile, they did build a nuclear power plant on an earthquake zone. For such a project, the native people, who own the place, should have been consulted and had the final decision. Established on their cemetery, this hydroelectric-dam expelled them from their land 11 years ago. Since then, they have built a makeshift school and a makeshift church on the ZAD. They are very good farmers in a region that is certainly very favorable. But on September 21, 2021, the police came with bulldozers to destroy the school and the church, as well as half of their fields of banana trees, cassava, rice and vegetables, to starve them. Even if Zorro jokes that a renewal of the trees is beneficial and that the rest will be resown or replanted, I see that the children are hungry. I remain unmoved in front of them, this weekend, I'm providing food for the 20 or so people gathered around the Chief's hut.

11 years old ultra pacifist struggle, and in great destitution

This hyper-courageous people who have been fighting peacefully for so long in great destitution,



Diomède on the bike

protecting nature, protecting our children's future. The Ngabe-Bugle people have 24 other ZADs like this one to counter other mining or oil mega projects. I feel the benefits of their ways of being, despite their more than Spartan living conditions. I was welcomed by a real community, respecting the Earth and life in all its diversity. I was welcomed by a community full of compassion, understanding and love. I was welcomed by a community that is just, participatory, sustainable, peaceful and free of alcohol and drugs, a community that secures the goodness and beauty of our Earth

for the present and future generations. After having soothed me with their pure songs, it is reviving my hope. The hour of my departure, I take a picture of Diomède on the bike, for his birthday anniversary. Do not forget his name.

Police harassment

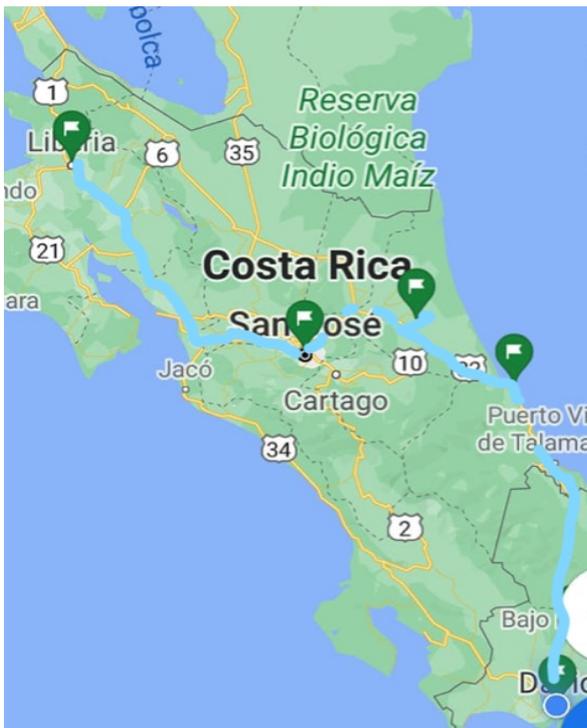
But I have to leave on Monday, October 25th, to reach the city bearing my name, David, and then enter Costa Rica. I can't wait to get closer to myself! The sun came out. My solar panel and my hub of 4 USB ports made it possible to recharge the cell phones of the camp without electricity.

During the last weekend, the hub was used so much that it died. A phrase from Gandhi comes to mind, "Live simply so others can simply live", and it would fit right in with them. I've been pedaling for a while now, when a big dark gray 4x4 with dark windows keeps driving past me for a mile. More people wanting to photograph me on my bike? Windows up? Weird! After a while a window is lowered and a man, whom I have trouble seeing, because he was so high, tells me to stop at the next toll. Why? Is it intimidation? I comply. This man is actually a high-ranking police officer. They are very numerous, well-armed, are waiting for me, the un-armed Pinky. When I set foot on the ground, one of them speaks to me directly in French. How do they know that I am French? It shows me that they have inquired about me. Internally, I am astonished and that makes extra alert. Are they arresting me because I stayed in the ZAD with the natives? Could it be, they destroyed the church, the school and the fields? They must be furious that Zorro and his clan have returned. The senior officer tells me about Jacques Anquetil, his love of cycling and the Tour de France (to coax me?). Finally, he allows me to leave, I take the time to explain my 3-years' road trip to him and the role played by the SDGs to secure peace. Some 20 miles later, during my lunch break, as if by magic, a man in an unmarked car, a strong sportsman, stops in front of me and invites me to eat: he is the policeman from the toll who had tried to speak to me in French. Free lunch for me? Mistrust! Bilingual Inspector Javert (of the book of the Miserables of Victor Hugo) asks me about the Ngäbes. I try to say as little as possible and ask him as many questions (as possible) to learn his point of view on this people. "They are alcoholics, they don't do anything except ask for family allowances, the husbands are very violent, and they have a territory far too big for them". Inspector Javert is going to use the pretext of leaving the table faster than me, to take lots of pictures of my bike. Why such an interest in my modest person (in the lazy bag of shit)? What are they up to?

Then I remember a true story that Zorro told me. When I was there, his wife was visiting her family. She is the real leader of the fight. For 11 years, the couple has been very discreet about their relationship. If their romance were too exposed, the other would suffer greatly. A justified caution, alas: one of the historical leaders, Geronimo, was mistaken for her husband and he was assassinated, with the aim of breaking her, too.

- **The City of David and the Massacre of Natives by Modern Cowboys**

I had high expectations about the city that bears my name. I approach it by a ring road with intense traffic, populated by supermarkets and advertising signs of all kinds. It is an ordinary David, perverted by the modern consumer society. Not at all a David who pushes for the decrease of futility but for the growth of better living. I am very disappointed, incorrigible dreamer that I am. I arrive completely soaked at a hotel, where I rent the only room available at a very good price with 5 beds and a luxuriant jacuzzi shower. It doesn't work, like almost everything in this town.



The next 4 stages in Costa Rica

Early in the morning, I learned that Elie, a young retiree from her position as head of international relations at ICE, Instituto Costa Rica Electricidad, the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity, wanted to be the awareness multiplier for the "Bank on the Climate" tour of Costa Rica. It changes everything for me. First, I have to cross the country again to return via Boca del Toro (mouth of the bull), Northeast region of Panama and, therefore, cross the mini Panamanian Cordillera with a very steep up-and-down. So it's an extra week in Panama, and then 600 miles crossing from southeast to northwest in Costa Rica. But the most important is that two universities are interested in meeting me, including the prestigious Earth's University. This one could give me room and board (organic) in exchange for my presenting at the conference. In addition, an Association of French Abroad (AFDE), contacted by Elie, also seems to want to act for our climate. This means that I'm going to take it up a

notch in terms of environmental activist and that the project is back on track. This time, the first exciting face-to-face with the students, since the appearance of this virus with a survival rate for earthlings of barely 99.9%. Another scourge kills a child every 5 seconds, this one has an effective remedy: food! Let's not even talk about climate change. IPCC gives us almost 0% chance if we do not stop the GHG's curve by 2025 (less than 1,000 days).

On October 26, 2021, I turn back to take the only road leading to Boca del Toro and I begin the ascent. It's really too steep, the electric motor coughs and heats up. For sure, the crew (Pinky and strange monkey) won't reach the summit tonight; it's time to find shelter for the night in the mountain. A peasant around my age walks home, he stops to strike up a conversation while the engine cools. The man is shy but curious. He offers to let me have a piece of land to pitch my tent. I discover his living conditions: he owns 4 hectares and his modest home. Everything grows on his

land including vegetables and many fruit trees. He obviously has extensive experience in market gardening. His level of autonomy and resilience impress me: he is ready to face the climate, social and economic challenges that await us. Are we prepared like him?

I take the hard road still as steep and cross in the early afternoon the aptly named pass "Breath of the Devil". The temperature difference between the two oceans creates a "thermal", violent wind at the summit. The heavy rains caused landslides that I can easily avoid with my bike. This climb was grueling and adds to my already very significant tiredness. I am recovering less and less quickly over the last week. Why did I accept this detour? I start the descent to this new region where it rains 300 days a year.

At a large hydroelectric dam I am stopped by itinerant sellers of fruit jellies, very curious about cycling and so friendly. A good-natured stopover before setting off again on the bumpy road! Twelve miles further down I realize that I no longer have my recycled bag, handmade by Mrs. Léger, a friend. It contains my passport, \$200 in cash and my credit card. It may have fallen on the road, But I am unable to go back with my bike. I leave it on the spot with all the bags and try to hitchhike. Very soon, a driver agrees to take me and to look for the bag, then to bring me back to my bike. He asks me to pay for gasoline, which I don't have cash. I suddenly remember that I had hidden \$10 in my phone case... Enough to pay him... So back to the dam. Nothing on the road, I start to have big doubt. Luck! The friendly vendors found my bag and left it with such a friendly trucker coming downhill in my direction. How did we not meet each other? Only one solution, to call him, because the seller left me his business card. Unfortunately, there is no network coverage. My driver manages to have some network, but the number does not answer, while his battery fails. We really don't know what to do or where to go. Imagining the worst, we go back down to my bike. And on the seat, my bag! Everything is there, including the \$200... The smile comes back to me even though I do not understand how the bag arrived.

Dripping with sweat, very tired, I find myself starving and stop at a restaurant on the road for my first meal of the day. I tell my story, which makes the boss laugh. So nice that he offers me to take a shower. I savor it before the meal and, sated, I set off again in search of a good place to pitch my tent before dark. I find it 12 miles further down. It's a real paradise for wild camping: a grassy spot and a beautiful mountain river. The river will vigorously massage my back and relax me. The spot must be known because three women in their thirties arrive to bathe. I feel like I'm dreaming when the svelte one comes naturally to me and talks to me. The three bathers are primary school teachers in a rare bilingual school, with Spanish and Ngäbe. They invite me to take a look there tomorrow morning before heading to the pirate island of Boca del Toro. I spend a delicious night in the hollow of this green setting and lulled by the sound of water.

In the early morning, the three bathers were replaced by three young Ngäbe cowherders. They have to load a truck with cows and are waiting for the cow dealer and his vehicle. The bicycle attracts and intrigues them. To wake up well, I'm going to bathe and be able to respond to their curiosity. They are Ngäbe. One has no shoes and I give him my extra sneakers. The other doesn't

have glasses, I give him my spare pair of glasses, and the last one, a piece of clothing. They also ask news about the struggling camp of Barrio Blanco and about Zorro. They would like to help them.

Now, on to school. Right or left of the bridge? A very loud voice grumbles: "It's the one who has no brains to forget his bag!" A broad-built native appears with a no less broad smile of mischievousness. It was John, the truck driver who carried my bag and left it on my bike. I offer to compensate him, but he categorically refuses. He knows that I go to the other school of his people for free and that is enough for him; he shows me the way. I even get a coffee, cookies and an electric recharge for my phone before leaving (my USB hub is dead). Inspector Javert will no longer be able to say that it is a nation of thieves and state profiteers!

I am expected at the other school by the svelte teacher who is also the vice-director of the bilingual school. A dozen little Ngäbe girls in uniform welcome me. I present the first 7 SDGs and offer the vice-director to ride the bike, which she does to the children's giggles. I then have the right to a full visit to the very well-kept and very "green" school: remedial lessons, free meals for the poorest, family support fund, lessons for disabled children. A remarkable organization! The found bag, my benefactor, and the visit to this school gave me a good dose of endorphins. This revives me too for the continuation of the Costa Rican program, not thinking of the last days in Panama. I regained the energy to travel 90 miles to catch the last ferry to Bull's Mouth Island. I manage to find cheap accommodation there where I sleep almost 24 hours non-stop. It is a tourist island with very beautiful beaches a few kilometers from the city.

When I wake up on Saturday October 30th, I see an SOS from the great Ngäbe chief, Alex Mendoza, sent the day before: the one I call Inspector Javert and his general returned to the camp yesterday. They machine-gunned the Zadists (the natives) with plastic bullets. These weapons, made in Switzerland, targeted the entire group, without distinction. The physical damage is as serious as on the 300 injured French Yellow Vests. Let's not even talk about the psychological injuries. Diomedes is mutilated and has lost an eye. Arms were broken; worse, children were shot, including in the back. How can we, humans, manage to do this? The targeted person is no longer considered human. These natives have been taken for sub-humans. What about the shooters of Inspector Javert's team? What a disproportion of strength between them! These displaced natives had only their bare hands to defend their ancestral land.

If I remain silent about such barbaric acts, all the more so two days before the COP 26 on Climate, am I still a civilized being? I hesitated for a long time before including these photos. I won't show you the photo of police violence on a young Ngäbe woman, it traumatized me so much. Those plastic bullets hit something of my humanity. They are painful and unbearable proof of lives flouted for the benefit of the powerful. They reach me in my flesh and in my intimate being. This proves that "the search for peace "in oneself" "and peace "around oneself" (in society, the family)", a concept put forward by Daniel Durand, former leader of the French Peace Movement, are inseparable. I have to seek this balance. I will hardly be able to remain in peace as long as these practices against indigenous defenders of nature and their territory continue. The following week, at

COP 26, the President of Panama proclaimed loud and clear before all the Nations that the Panamanian State really listens deeply to its indigenous peoples. Can we make an ecological war against the First Peoples? This is absurd and a denial of democracy. This is a serious obstacle for the development of hydroelectricity dams in Panama, because these industrialists have just alienated the whole Ngäbe nation. No ecology without peace or democracy, therefore, no ecological dictatorship.

On this paradise island of Boca del Toro, this blow remains hard to take, because I can't do anything. I wander lost, far from the ZAD but inhabited by it. I meet a first European who was cheated out of \$6,000 by a prostitute who had drugged him. Survival of this woman (and her family) is costing him dearly, why did he need a prostitute?

I begin my discovery of the island. The one who's really going to get me back on my feet is an Italian. A bio-construction architect, he lives and works here. He is a brilliant man, quiet, very open, speaking French perfectly. Before I leave the island, he admits to me that the ecological villas he has built are slowly being submerged by the rising water, and cannot resist to the increasingly powerful hurricanes in the Caribbean. The Caribbean is doomed by greed and endless consumption by a very small minority.

I leave for the Costa Rica border.. Costa Rica requires a lot of papers to enter, including very expensive foreign health insurance and quarantine insurance. All these insurances allow you to have a QR code (to be completed on the internet) to present to customs officers. Will I manage to get it all together for the 1st November, the start of COP 26?

v. COSTA RICA

- **Entering through a mouse hole to end up in the prestigious Earth University**

Crossing the border is really very complicated. You must have this international insurance, which covers the costs of hospitalization and quarantine. The quarantine insurance must cover the cost of 14 days of quarantine in a hotel, up to \$2,000. On Saturday October 30th, the day before entering Costa Rica, I received from a very generous donor in my region "Centre, Val de Loire", a very good insurance covering hospitalization costs up to \$500,000, but not the quarantine cost. Big thank you, Mathieu. This is the first time in three years that I will be traveling with health insurance.

Eco-stress has returned. I have a stomach ache, I sleep badly. For a long time, I struggled to think. To wash myself, to cook for myself, everything requires too much of energy from me. This superb gesture of Mathieu gives me a little energy. No desire to meet people, no patience, no way to smile, to marvel. Obviously, I can't get over the attack on the ZAD and the injuries done to the natives. One of the solutions remains action. But the more we act, the more we become aware of the magnitude and urgency of the tragedy of global warming; a real vicious cycle. However, not acting would be worse. Am I the only one suffering from this inside? NOPE! The young and the greatest scientists are really not well, too. And I understand them all the better when I look around the external situation of our planet.

1. Lithosphere: The resources of the lithosphere (underground) are running out; oil, minerals, phosphorus for agriculture, not to mention the ravages of rare earth mining.
2. Hydrosphere (water): Is polluted by our plastic waste, acidified. Magnificent corals all over the planet have virtually no chance of surviving, yet they are home to a quarter of the fish. The waters rise only a few millimeters so far, but already the salinization of the agricultural soils of the delta of the Ganges and the Mekong, the rice granaries of the world. This starves the poorest. Bangladesh has one of the lowest ecological footprints in the World, but it is the country most affected by change. Unfair and cruel. Other regions are affected, and to a lesser extent Lake Auron in my town of Bourges, which dried up in 2019. However, the Doubs River dried up in 2018 in Besançon where I prepared the solar bike. No place is spared, even in the ocean, there are dead zones.
3. Cryosphere (icy water): Ice cap, permafrost, glaciers are melting at a faster rate than

expected with multiple “snowball” effects.

4. Atmosphere: Air pollution is one of the great scourges: each year 9 million humans die and also billions of animals and insects die. In 2021, emissions are at their peak for 2 million years with 420 PPM, Part Per Million. The link between CO₂ and climate chaos is well established: Temperatures are rising rapidly around the world. The Paris Agreement of +1.5C° is only respected by two countries to date, Bhutan and Costa Rica. For the moment, we are heading towards a warming of 3.2C°. No one will survive it. Even the geography of the continents will be changed.
5. Biosphere (life on land): Vertebrates are down by 66%, invertebrates are disappearing even faster.
6. Pedosphere (soils): Arable soils are degrading. Deforestation, illegal or encouraged for the production of GM soybeans and pastures in South America, is worsening the state of the soil.
7. Anthroposphere: The term refers to human activities that modify the environment such as construction associated with concrete, roads and asphalt surfaces, plastics, etc. Our ecological footprint affects the earth's bio-capacity. Proportional to our destruction, the natural physical rebalancing is, therefore, more and more violent.

Even more important is the interaction between these seven domains. We are in the Anthropocene, that is to say the time when human activities weigh negatively on living conditions. It is normal to suffer from eco-anxiety (solastalgia): “psychic or existential suffering or distress caused by past, current and expected environmental changes” according to Wikipedia. It proves that I am human, who does not want to harm myself and those around me. It is normal that I have not yet properly adjusted my individual & systemic strategy in relation to the suffering in the face of this unprecedented situation of climate change and biodiversity loss. On the contrary, not suffering from eco-anxiety is suspicious.

To heal, you just have to find its opposite! The opposite of Solastalgia is Solaphilia. This new word is made up of the Latin word *sōlācium* (consolation, comfort) and *philae* (love). It is also called “Symbiocene”. It is the love of life in all its forms, from litho- to atmosphere. This love of oneself and around oneself must grow in a very short time and on a large scale, if you and I are to come out of this alive. A very approximate explanation for the momento, but which I promise to continue to deepen and experiment with. It is an enticing program and you, solaphilologist, I invite you not to hide your failures and your successes, but share them. Success, that I wish for us, because guaranteeing comfort to all living forms on the beautiful blue planet. Our attractive program will propel us into a kind of new century of enlightenment where humans and biodiversity would be in symbiosis. Or die like fools.

How? To Cure eco-anxiety is like the basic steps of medicine, or like love. The first step is just to stop doing harm to yourself and others. The second is to protect yourself and life from those who do harm. The third is to judge them with a fair trial, to be honest about the situation. The fourth is to have them repaired the damage.

To get out of this painful state of eco-anxiety, you have to know your physical resilience factors. For me, it's first swimming, second dancing, and then only third, riding a solar bike. I managed to drag my body to the sea. Regenerated by the swim, I managed to talk to two Europeans, another benefit. I then managed to fill out in Spanish the ton of forms needed for the health "Salud", which gives access to a QR code valid for one day only to enter Costa Rica. Finally, Saturday evening, in this tourist place, I will be able to go dancing for an hour. No more. Near 10 pm, the atmosphere becomes really unpleasant, because of alcohol, drugs and prostitution.

Sunday, October 31st, I have to get up early, to do the 15 miles by boat that separates the island from "Boca del Toro" (the Mouth of the Bull) to the port to pick up my solar donkey, left guarded in a parking lot. A taxi driver recommends a shortcut, a path that is first dusty for 3 miles (damn him!) then smooth like a real pool table for 30 miles (bless him!). I avoided 300 meters of very steep positive elevation. A real helping hand from fate. On the road, I get stopped by a state car, "Autoridad de ASEO". For what? The driver, an environmental engineer, is accompanied by two young women in their twenties, interested in my bike. They have just completed a field awareness campaign on plastic sorting, recycling and its impact on aquatic biodiversity. They are very happy and passionate about what they do; it can be seen. I quickly film them with my phone for an interview. When they leave, unbeknownst to me, a lens of my glasses, which are essential for reading up close, falls on the ground. As soon as I realize this, I turn back to the place of the interview. The lens is on the ground, undamaged. A helpful young onlooker puts it back on my glasses by tinkering with a holder out of plastic fishing line. Yes, I will be able to read the papers at customs where I will soon be arriving. There, surprise: the Costa Rican customs blocks my entry into its territory, because my insurance does not cover the quarantine. Called to the rescue, Elie, my guardian angel, acts as guarantor at the last minute. However, the customs closed at 5 pm. The 24-hour health pass has expired. All the papers must be redone with the new date, with the obligation to go through Panama customs again. I sweated and found the hours so long, before I was allowed through! I am a rat that really went through a mouse hole.

On Monday, Philip, the German co-manager of my world tour, is organizing for me and the chief of the 400,000 Ngäbes of Panama, a video conference scheduled for Thursday of next week in an off-program (side event) of COP 26. At the end, the short presentation video of our theater play Shuar in the Ecuadorian Amazon will be presented. So exciting.

For 48 hours, uninterrupted tropical rains have been pouring down on my engine, which is still spitting out cooling oil. The Costa Rican Caribbean coast is flooded. I am forced to take a break, in a lodging, also flooded. The situation is going to be critical if the rain doesn't stop. The owner of the lodge takes the opportunity to organize a meeting with the children and teachers of the village. One of the first face-to-face meetings since this pandemic in a "blue banner" school, a Latin eco-label. Great! On her side, her husband introduces me to a young Russian who has just started, with two compatriots, a small workshop for the sale and repair of electric bicycles and electric scooters, in Puerto Viejo (old port) 15 miles further south. It's backtracking again and I've already

lost a Hjek. In the afternoon, the downpours finally stop. I make the not rational choice at all to go see them to play it together (or to show my solidarity) by sharing my experience of the solar bike, which bravely crossed its 40,000 km at customs, the equivalent of a world tour. I've 'hacked' too much with this engine, showing significant inefficiency in my tinkering. The Russians come to the rescue by giving me a good degreaser for electrical contacts, a heat-resistant resin tape for power cables. Two immediate effects: the engine no longer "coughs", and neither does my morale. And above all an answer to this engine spitting oil that I have been looking for since Chile: I put too much cooling oil out of fear. The engine simply spat out the excess. End of the problem that had been going on for almost two years!

Arrival at Earth is the Possible in a single day without clouds, ideal covered. Wednesday, it to the garden shed of Elie, transformed into a house, of which she The bike drives really go along the Atlantic opportunity to swim, Water has both a calming impact on me. affects my brain. What



Arrival at Earth

plan for Thursday. with a sunny day for the 90 miles to be is a question of getting my guardian angel, pretty little secondary leaves me the keys. well, it's a pleasure. I Ocean. I take this second happiness. stimulating and Solaphilia positively a quick ability it has to

"regenerate" itself with this kind of stimuli! A few dozen miles from the hut is the Earth University of Agro-ecology and Agro-forestry, where I am expected tomorrow, Thursday November 4th, my birthday and that of my twin who died 10 years earlier. So far, nothing to confirm. On Wednesday noon, a roadside restaurateur, very concerned for his customers, offered me a WiFi connection. I got in touch with Professor Manrique from the university, to whom Elie recommended me. This director of the environment center made enormous efforts so that I could have health permissions to enter his university. He organized a conference for me at 7:30 pm. tomorrow, Thursday. Summoned at 2 pm. by the Costa Rican Transport Service of the university, the head mechanic and his colleagues scrutinize the bike with interest to copy it and achieve this carbon neutrality of the Campus, synonymous with the famous 6th star of the Latin blue banner. They discover the supports of the bike, re-welded in Colombia, again torn off, they were held only by a fragile velcro (fabric) strap. A real miracle. Resoldered immediately by the same transport service, they are my best birthday present. If Elie hadn't hosted me, if the restaurateur hadn't been nice, if the three Russians and the guys from the transport department hadn't helped me, the rest of the trip would have been very complicated. I like to think that my twin has something to do with this series of positive sequences.

This international university has five of the six blue banner stars, all of which are related to the seven points seen previously. It's not far from earning the last star: carbon neutral establishment.

Indeed, two solar-powered electric golf carts already provide transport for twelve students, the other for maintenance of this huge campus. They can run at 35 mph with 30 to 60 miles of range. They would like to replace all thermal motorcycles with fast e-bikes. This university, where the current Minister of the Environment was trained, welcomes students from 40 different countries, specialized in tropical sciences: agriculture and forestry, who know more about these subjects than I do. This takes the pressure off me, although I feel that



Conference

the director fears me as an international activist. It's a new sensation, which honors me. So the conference takes place in joy and serenity in front of this enthusiastic audience, far from being green terrorists! For the suite, luxury accommodation, usually assigned to a professor, with solar water heater, organic dinner and organic breakfast served with two birthday gifts: a thermos in the colors of the university and a cycling accessory. I have just entered the "next world", concerned and caring for the planet. In two years of traveling in South America, this is the first country where I feel safe. I dream, is it true? I'm not trying to find out too much to better savor this moment here, because meanwhile, in Europe, the first week of COP 26 looks like an international disaster without surprise. The same week is a real success for me. How will the second be?

- **“Blue banner” everywhere**

Unlike the countries I have crossed previously where I have found islands of real hope in the midst of more than difficult and even scandalous situations, respect for the environment guides the conduct of Costa Rica. People will object that I did not stay long enough to see everything and understand everything, that the cultivation of pineapples by large private companies pollutes, that other pockets of shadow must exist, that ... and that Everywhere I want to look at what is positive for the planet and the population; here everything appears to me in an advanced ecological transition never encountered before. Yes, it is possible at a country level! But what are their secrets?

First a bit of history:

Discovered in 1502 by Christopher Columbus, Costa Rica becomes a Spanish colony; the geographical and climatic conditions force the first settlers to work the land, because the natives have retreated to the mountains. In 1821 the country became independent. The land is distributed among the different peasant communities, and, in the absence of large properties, the population develops a high civic sense. The young republic based its economy on cocoa, livestock, and coffee, which was exported to Europe. The flag is inspired by the three colors of the French Republican flag, an example of the close exchanges with European humanist thinkers of the time. At the end of the 19th century, Minor Keith, an American billionaire, financed the construction of a railway line, which facilitated the interior penetration (or the introduction) of banana plantations, which supplanted coffee trees. He is one of the founders of the United Fruit Company, a user of large quantities of pesticides, which pollute groundwater. The country becomes one of the banana republics of Latin America, the population is impoverished severely.

Inequalities become untenable. Emerging from a year-long civil war, the 1949 constitution included the abolition of the army as a permanent institution, the transfer of its budget to the Ministry of National Education (its secret?) and the transformation of barracks into fine art museums. Banks and electricity are nationalized, women and blacks get the right to vote.

Agreements aimed at restoring peace throughout Central America were signed in 1987 and 1989. As early as 1988, a law relating to biodiversity was passed. The still North American company Chiquita Brands International succeeded in 1989 to the United Fruit Company dissolved in 1970 (with the desire to make people forget the corruption and conflicts favorable to its interests); it initiated the ecological shift in the 1990s, without however abandoning sad practices towards its workers, for example. Costa Rican governments are accentuating this movement. Public money has been redirected towards education and health for several decades, including minimum coverage for all in these two areas, while initiatives to decarbonize activities continue.

A few words about "The Blue Banner"

The Blue Banner is first of all a structuring guide, but also a label, which rewards a city, a district, a school, a university, a company, a beach, a structure, to succeed in having its ecological footprint low - or zero -and preserve biodiversity, meeting specific criteria allowing the acquisition of 6 stars.

I am not yet able to explain the concept of the ecological blue banner to you, but this site www.banderaazulecologica.org explains it in Spanish.

After all these preambles, I resume the story of my crossing of Costa Rica, a narrow strip of land clinging to the central mountain range, to fertile coastal plains, bathed by two oceans. Monday November 8th in the morning, I attack without problem the rise of the small cordillera to join the capital San José. I progress carefully in the middle of heavy traffic. However, my situation must be considered dangerous by the traffic police, who stop me, requisition a van, help load my solar trike into it and get me into the vehicle. Thus ends my ascent and descent. The Road Police commander soberly explains to me that he is there to serve and protect. What a change with Panama!

The ADFE, Agence des Français à l'Étranger, gives me a superb welcome and one of the members, affectionnada de la bici, offers to host me, not far from the French high school where she teaches. Nice Franco-French solidarity from the other side of the world.

Tuesday, at the Salazar Popular Theater in the city center, begins an international seminar "Rethinking the capital", a sustainable capital (#SDG11). The government wants to create new ecological ministerial buildings, with the SDGs (or the six stars of the Blue Banner) as guidelines. They must be positive energy, zero waste or even supra-recycling, green transport, green communities and resilient communities, etc. Scientists and experts from all over the world are on video conference or present to explain achieving the SDGs and their implementation in this new ministerial eco-district. I pinch myself to make sure I'm not dreaming while listening to them all. Unreal!

The facilitator is none other than the Deputy Minister of the Social and Solidarity Economy. She presents her already existing project of E-coin, called Ecolones, whose symbol looks a lot like the EURO. If you bring back your plastic or other waste, you receive this digital, social, ecological, circular currency on your digital wallet. We seem a long way from the dangerous excesses of crypto-currencies. With it, you can buy ecological products in stores across the country. Ecolones are directly inspired by the word ecolonomy. According to Wikipedia; it is savings having a positive effect on the natural environment. Doing ecolonomy is rewarded with the silver star of the Bandera Azul. On the gigantic stage, one of the speakers, Christopher Brosse, Franco-Costa Rican, member of ADFE, is a young world expert in circular economy and supra-recycling. With passion, he explains that entrepreneurs are actors capable of



ecolones
la nueva moneda que premia
tu compromiso con el reciclaje



E-Coin: Ecolones

innovating. They are increasingly discovering forms/ways of producing with greater ecological value. They will contribute to solving climate and biodiversity issues, adhering (or respecting) to the following seven principles:

- The raw material must be waste or a substitutable material.
- The final product must increase the ecological value.
- The final product must increase the economic value.
- The final product must increase the product quality and the original material.
- The end product should tend towards increasing the durability of the original material.
- A supra-recycled product must take aesthetics into account.
- A supra-recycled product must be traceable and transparent over its life cycle.

At a very precise moment, I have to enter, installed on my solar bike and interrupt both the conference and the deputy minister. I see that she is very surprised, even annoyed. This makes me very uncomfortable. In fact, she was informed of my intervention, by microphone, and must act the offended. She played her role so well that it's me who's surprised and unsettled. Sprinkler sprinkled!

I stay in the afternoon to listen to the round table on the transport envisaged for this eco-city of the future. An urban architect from Barcelona has studied the fastest and least kilowatt-hour transport. He explains that a pedestrian, by breathing, emits more CO₂ than a cyclist on an electric bicycle in a country with green electricity like Costa Rica. For him, the ideal will be to have a city, where 90% of the necessities for life in society and various supplies are accessible at a distance of 10 miles and in a time of 30 minutes. The only quick and low CO₂ solution is an electric bike with a minimum power of 400W. Thus, it could drive at 18 mph on average. I drink donkey or goat's milk, I mean I'm jubilant!

Wednesday morning, I am at the French high school with three face-to-face classes. This is a first for me since the beginning of COVID, a satisfaction, because many of these young people can influence their parents who are well-integrated into society and secure in their future. I remember that teaching requires an enormous amount of energy.

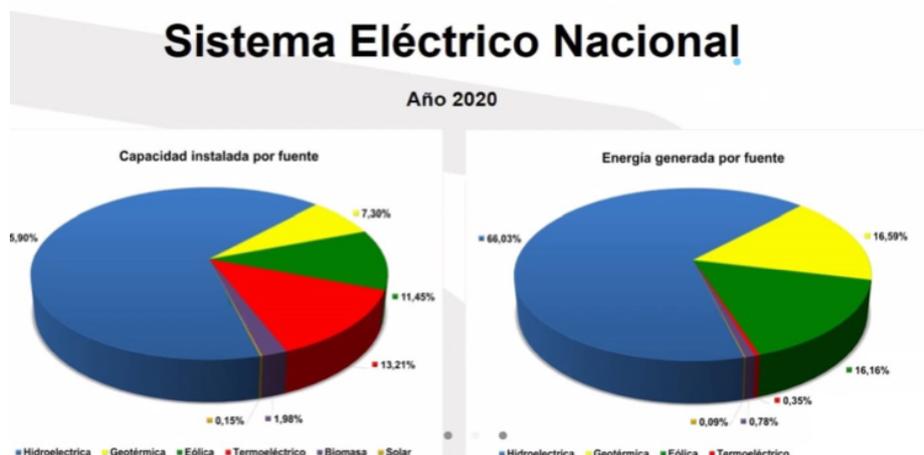
Thursday, November 11, 2021, Philip's video conference at the side event of COP 26 with the indigenous peoples of Ecuador and Panama is very poignant and powerful. The message on the right of these peoples to self-determination and also to respect has passed. The leader Ngäbe will be of great eloquence, dignity and restraint. It is a moment of intensity where the tragic Ngäbe and the hopeful Shuar mingle.

Friday, I participate in a video-conference with the association of women ALAS and its president Nuria Marin, deputy and lawyer. Problem number 1 in America Latina. At the end, I give her a few words about police violence against indigenous women in Panama and ask her for her support. I obtained her promise to examine the file that I compiled. I have news from Zorro and his native Ngäbe camp. They came back and reassembled their camp with plastic sheeting thanks to national and international solidarity. When I see their ability to start all over again, I think, that the

Ngābes are much more prepared to face climatic or social challenges than many inhabitants of developed countries like Europe. For example, in March 2021, the Ever Given super-container stranded in the Suez Canal, which blocked 15% of the world's economy is a perfect illustration of this. Thus France has only 2% of its food locally. The Ngābes, even in their makeshift camp, are practically self-sufficient and much more prepared for rapid change than people in rich countries. Reader, are you ready? Should I worry about them or you?

Elisabeth (Elie), who has already done so much for my coming to her country, opens her comfortable, warm house to me surrounded in family serenity. On Saturday afternoon, she invites me to a face-to-face conference in her neighborhood. Saturday evening, we learn the final result of the COP in Glasgow and the disastrous agreement to a 2.7°C tolerated increase in climate temperature. Genocidal and ecocidal agreement of 2.7°C from Glasgow. At the COP, where Jeff Bezos spoke about his three minutes in space aboard his rocket with a gigantic carbon footprint (the equivalent of the emissions of the poorest 1 billion humans), himself at the head of Amazon, one of the most polluting companies. Three minutes of his realization that the Earth is fragile. Come to think of it, 2.7°C is better than Madrid's previous 3.2°C agreement, although no one will survive it, except perhaps a handful of billionaires on islands. With the scientific evidence from the IPCC of the consequences of climate inaction on living beings, politicians have knowingly and coldly premeditated the genocide of their own race, a great conscious and assumed "reset". Unheard of in human history. I am inevitably dejected, stunned, lost, unable to stay in place, to speak, to eat anything. As a good guardian angel, Elie understands that I need a derivative. She invites me to walk with one of her daughters and her grandson, in nature, so that I don't sink into the darkest (eco) distress. What a second week!

On Monday, I went almost deaf, probably because of this terrible news. I just have time to see a doctor to unclog my ears so that I can hear Don Rolando Castro Cordoba, the Vice Minister of Environment and Energy. The Minister and the President have not yet returned from COP 26 in Glasgow. This is why I am received by this young deputy (or vice) minister. Decarbonizing industry and transport are the government's first priorities because 99% of electricity is already green. Being auditioned by such an influential person shows that I am recognized in my action, it is a great honor for me. The discussion begins around soft and green mobility. We are light years away from the debates of the French expert Jean Marc Jancovici who favors nuclear rather than renewable energies. No need for nuclear here. Besides, the French president took an undemocratic decision alone to invest in the construction of nuclear EPR until 2045 and then usable for 50 years. A Century of Nuke! As the



99% of Green Energies in Costa Rica

budget is not extensible, this prevents us from investing in the renovation and insulation of millions of energy-straining houses and in renewable energies until the end of the century. Green solutions do not seem to be able to cross French borders. Yet the five million Costa Ricans already have green electricity: 2/3 from hydropower, supplemented by geothermal energy (1/6), two predictable green energies and 1/6 from wind, unpredictable energy, such as solar. For Don Rolando Castro, coming from the world of NGOs, the COP has not been completely useless, because a global agreement has been reached to ban petrol vehicles in 2035, the biggest emitter.

In addition, the government subsidizes 100% green electricity for charging electric vehicles. The vice-minister shows me the map of the country, which has a lot of charging stations, visible on "PlugshareCR". He tells me that no hydraulic project is done without a peaceful discussion upstream with a sociologist from the ICE (Costa Rica Electricity Institute), Marta Obando, then without a peaceful agreement with the Ngäbes and Bugles of southern Costa Rica. What a difference of method! The consultation is made possible because ICE is a public electricity company, agreeing to patiently wait for the response of the indigenous peoples, which entails an additional cost but involves the entire population.

He adds that the country, which does not benefit from external carbon credits, has created an internal carbon tax, redistributed as an oxygen bonus to the natural parks, to the natives for the preservation of their forest and to the peasants who practice agro-forestry, either at about \$200 per hectare. He explains to me with satisfaction that a bare agricultural land is worth less today than a land shaded by trees.

In addition, the ability to wonder for the living is enshrined in the constitution. This mention attracts many tourists, from which the country benefits. The preservation of biodiversity is entirely compatible with the economy or ecolonomy. To conclude, he quotes this 1970 sentence from Ahmed Zaki Yamani: "The stone age did not end for lack of stones, and the age of oil will end before the world runs out of oil." It's honey for my (unplugged!) ears.

I would like my bank, Crédit Agricole, to stop investing billions in new oil or gas wells and act to respect the Paris or Glasgow Agreements. The NGOs, Reclaim Finance and Friends of the Earth, have very "bank on the climate" ideas by pushing banks for more transparency.

- **Welcome to the new age, that of the symbiocene**

Army money redirected to education and health for decades, including minimum coverage for all in both areas (parents especially appreciate this in case of possible default on their part). The ecological transition dates back to the 1990s. Almost 100% renewable energies, free electric charging stations, ensure individual travel, industrial and craft activities. Already, supermarkets are renting electric motorcycles and electric vehicles to bring groceries home. No more need for personal vehicles. It would be selfish not to contribute to the general production, wouldn't it?

The result is that today the country is number one in the Happy Planet Index. When global military spending is over \$2 trillion a year, imagine the peaceful transition that could be funded with that huge sum! Is the world ready to no longer have an army or have a peaceful truce for six years in order to solve the climate problem? A risk worth taking that would facilitate entry into the symbiocene, or the era characterized by human intelligence and practice whose footprint of human activities will be reduced to a minimum. This presupposes a massive surge of innovation, courage and creativity. Do you want it?

“The symbiocene in Costa Rica is not happening in the future. I've been there since I entered.”

Tuesday, I am welcomed at the University of Peace as a member of the family by Grace, a friend of Manrique. The University of Peace – the only one in the world – is a beautiful green campus, an almost carbon-neutral place, thanks to photovoltaics, entirely dedicated to Peace. I give a conference in front of students from all over the world, preparing for Masters of Peace. My remarks are based as always on my reflection resulting from scientific data, enriched by the experiences encountered. I combine the most recent knowledge on the state of the planet with the most concrete reality. For example, I share the contact of URKUBICI in Pasto, Colombia, with its campuses already equipped with 300 solar bikes. When I list the disastrous results of not satisfying the SDGs in the countries I have visited and those of the COP 26 at +2.7°C, I break down nervously, in tears in front of all the students. I'm embarrassed and have to shorten it.



Who wants peace prepares peace

Grace then takes care of me, shares a good organic vegetarian meal with me, and leads me to a methanizer fed by all the biodegradable waste

from the kitchens; it provides two hours a day of biogas to the kitchen. Once digested, the residues are used as fertilizer for the garden. She takes me to the sculpture park of the greatest men and women of peace in the world. On the base of one of them, I read with delight this quote, which comforts me in my action: "Who wants peace, prepares peace!" Costa Rica is one of the big players, with the Red Cross and other NGOs like the Peace Movement who worked together for the ratification of the TPNW (Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons), on January 22nd, 2021. Will we manage to enforce the Paris Agreement at +1.5°C?

In the afternoon, the ICE offers me a private conference to explain geothermal energy capable of supplying (or producing) electricity for decades. It is a large natural pressure cooker supplied with water from wells dug nearby. (See photo/diagram below) The secret to its longevity is injecting the right amount of water. Water increases productivity and profitability in the short term. Its excess damages or even can destroy the pressure cooker, it is the difficulty of this source of energy. An electric turbine recovers the mechanical force of the steam from the pressure cooker.

Reservorio Geotérmico



Once cooled, the steam turns back into water, which is re-injected into the wells. The water thus circulates in a closed circuit, without adding or losing.

Another restorative night in a room reserved for teachers before starting a tough 180 km ride, this time along the Pacific, with an inevitable and healthy swimming stop. Thursday, I am expected for the last stage of this Tour-of-the-new-age, (where I feel so much in the future that I hope for), by another executive of the ICE in Tilaran, province of Guanacaste. Tilaran is an altitude city, cold, hyper windy, swept by torrential rains, so many perfect conditions to produce 40% of the green electricity of the country. However, some wind farms there are shut down, because Costa Rica has reduced its consumption. Crazy, they are surplus in green electricity. The national

company ICE has its own specifications to achieve the 6 stars of the Blue Banner. It just lacks carbon neutrality. This is her main motivation for receiving me: it wants to de-carbonize its vehicle fleet. My interlocutor is a geologist-geographer, not an engineer. I'm surprised to have an exchange where we have no disagreement. Yet I try to put him at fault in this new world of the symbiocene, to look for the difficulty, to see in him the "Amish" side, the caveman. Nothing divides us. Would changing our lifestyles towards solafilic actions be so simple? He had a technician come in to study the bicycle. The man, trained in-house, is recognized by his colleagues for his great practical inventiveness, because he has started up hydro, wind, and geothermal turbines. The solar bike will surely be copied for ICE sites.

A little further north, in Liberia where the main geothermal reservoirs are located, ICE is in the process of tripling production, with new wells dug on new reservoirs needed for future electric or hydrogen vehicles. Everything is already scheduled. The company Ad Astra Rocket manufactures hydrogen conversion kits for cars there. Green, of course, because all electricity is green. I'm not even surprised anymore, as everything is coherent (or consistent) in this country, which managed a peaceful transition without outside help. Why is it the only one on the planet? I'm completely dreaming: so much green energy, and diversity!

It is precisely in Liberia that a house was lent to me by friends of my family. I rest there for a fortnight, harassed and demolished by world decisions once again running counter to the urgency of the climate situation. The place is enchanting, I live next to an emerald blue torrent. I walk in the mountains, quietly pamper the bicycle, savor the dishes I cook for myself. In one of the many national parks, I discovered such varied flora, fauna such as monkeys, and even a magnificent coral snake. I am amazed, I regain strength and mastery of my body and mind, I have an almost normal life. As a farewell, the attentive neighbor naturally offered me two boxes of organic spirulina tablets very rich in protein and a bag of activated charcoal for my stomach problems.

Without being fooled by the probable North American influence on this country, which was once so heavy on the economy and so significant in politics, I did not feel it today. I'm leaving Costa Rica with regret, the safest and most ecological country of the 24 countries I've visited, France included. It is clear that green energy promotes peace, which has been achieved by preparing peace!

A quote from
Hernani to
"My step
and urges it
Where am I
know, but I
an impetuous
insane fate.
equal flight



Victor Hugo in
end this volumen:
seeks your step
and follows it.
going? I don't
feel pushed. With
breath, with an
Let's start with an
towards a better

Coral

world!”

Scene: Hernani, Act V, Scene 6 (1830)

This better world with respect for all life forms could be the era of the Symbiocene.

A Conclusion

Yes, petty crime has increased, because you have to survive and I have suffered a little from it. Yes, post-COVID border crossing has been more complicated but, no, much less than expected.

Yes, oil companies and banks have never invested so much in their deadly (unconscious) sciences but, yes, it is possible to have 90% to 100% renewable energies and to fight against these projects, which destroy the most great biodiversity that is the Western Amazon. I never thought I would have the privilege to visit it.

Yes, with +1.5°C inevitable, 1/4 of the world's population can no longer be saved and many ecological, social and economic tipping points have been crossed. But, yes, the blue planet remains magnificent and as in Costa Rica, with a good organization and with a world temporarily without an army we can and must preserve the remaining 3/4 of humanity and biodiversity.

Yes, the Glasgow Climate COP 26 and the next Montreal COP 15 on biodiversity often produce little, but they give the people of the South the chance to be listened to and remain the only place for peaceful and democratic resolution of climate conflicts.

Yes, the temptation of nationalist withdrawal is growing stronger, but only a democratic transition with truly sovereign peoples can make this ecological transition to the Symbiocene peacefully succeed.

No, the most carbon-rich countries and their adults are unable to challenge themselves or face the wave of a small virus, a diversion while we have to face the tsunamis of climate and more serious biodiversity. But, yes, young people are suffering, are hyper aware of the situation, are not easily manipulated and put pressure on us.

No, the "Happy Days" for our planet are not yet here for everyone. But, yes, the signs of a happy planet are there for Costa Rica. An example to follow!

We can no longer lie to each other, nor waste our time because it is criminal. We have less than three years to stop the GHG curve. After that, it's uncontrollable. Are we going to succeed by saving ourselves, (or to) save the living? Are we able to finance and produce millions of electro-solar conversion kits for micro-mobility in record time? States are able to spend dizzying sums during COVID or for wars, they now have to finance the climate (www.bankontheclimate.com). Life is hard. It brings us back more than ever to the essentials but remains very beautiful and will always be worth defending. We must at least preserve it, just by stopping to harm it (or damage it). Then increasing our efforts and commitments.

Me, I suspend my story here and continue my role of awakening witness.