

Together – from one another – for one another

From self-understanding to understanding of education

The special feature of trade union education

Three theses :

1The self-understanding of man requires the possibility of social change

The human self-understanding forms the basis for a targeted transformation of society

2 Man is only able to develop a human self by close relations and encounters with other human beings.

Interpersonal Humanity is the primal experience of human development and the reason for the development of special characteristics of man (for example, cooperation)

3Trade union education is basically cooperative and a type of learning which embodies solidarity

Trade union education is common and non-competitive learning to achieve goals through solidarity and solve problems

1The self-understanding of man requires the possibility of social change

In 1995, Archeologists found a gigantic and fascinating complex in the south-east of Turkey on the hill Göbekli Tepe - the scientists were astonished.

They did not know yet that this discovery leads to a fundamentally rewriting of the history of mankind.

The archeologists were delighted at first by the well-preserved buildings with tons of heavy columns, uniquely decorated reliefs, symbols and animal figures; nearby that columns lay a half-finished pillar weighing more than 50 tons.

According to more detailed investigations, there was even more amazement - and that continues until today. According to what is known about the complex, it was built approximately 11.500 years ago - for comparison: Stonehenge was built 4500 years ago.

That means that this enormous facility, with highly complex planning work and with a high organizational and logistical effort was built by foragers (hunters and gatherers).

How was that possible? And what was the purpose of this facility?

This project seemed to had been very important to the thousands of people who worked on it, including priests and those who were something like engineers. People from different groups and tribes had to work together for a long period of time. It was not a mammoth-catching system; the building also offers no protection from wild animals or storms.

Until today there has been no single indication that any external constraints have led to the construction of this temple complex.

There must have been ideas, convictions, and abilities that were by these hunter-gatherer. Perhaps it was only the belief that a project in which many people of a community work together will create a new kind of cooperative relationship between people - it determines the quality of the relationship within a group and the life itself.

Such great cooperative efforts – this was the opinion of the majority of scientists before the discovery of Göbekli Tepe - were only possible for people with a highly developed religion or ideology. Similarly, it was assumed that Homo sapiens only extended and improved its cognitive performance with the agricultural revolution.

A great part of science declared for a long time the transition to agriculture as the greatest advance for mankind, which also led the progress of the intelligence.

While many people believe that human intelligence grew steadily as we learned to grow goats and grow crops like wheat and finally we raised many of the secrets of nature, we must now assume that the time of the hunter-gatherers was probably much more beautiful, peaceful and the common sense, their cooperative skills and her intelligence were highly developed, and may be they lead a life that was ordered in a democratic way. This may imply that women, men and children participated in a society in which people were responsible for others.

We do know that only agriculture and technology may support a larger number of men on earth. However, whether in other respects it was such a good idea that we decided to settle down having much less leisure, accepting monotonous food, and sometimes even famine and starvation, class differences, many diseases and wars. Anyway we formed large societies and built mega-cities and see us today confronted with problems which we can only solve worldwide.

Göbekli Tepe makes clear that we still have not really recognized the characteristics and practical abilities of humankind and its rapid development: we are social beings who cannot live alone

Göbekli Tepe clearly points out that social cooperation is always part of our nature and that our self-image and self-understanding plays a very important role in which direction we will develop our society further in the future.

The self-image of man must be of interest to us. When we take it for granted that we are driven by ideas and beliefs, then our behavior is restricted by the way we think about ourselves!

Where does our self-understanding come from and what influences it today?

For thousands of years we were able to live quite comfortably with a god-oriented self-image. In Christianity we believe in God as our Creator. That gave us meaning and the mission to make the earth subject to us. An interesting task of course, which we gladly followed.

In Christianity, we are created in the image (a failed copy) of God, which probably made us particularly proud. But then came Darwin. He extinguished God from our daily reflection mirror and sat a monkey at his place.

A new self-image was forced upon us, which was accompanied by a loss of meaning and sense of life for which a replacement had to be found urgently, because we became fundamentally untenable and scared.

Reorientation had become necessary but *change management seminars* were not yet invented! But from a distance they were already waving...

For precisely in this phase of the new orientation of human being between sense deprivation and sense-preservation, the economy developed its self-consciousness!

The 19th century was the so-called economic century. And the predominance of economic discourse did have its effect on Darwin and his adherents and interpreters. Thus the economic principles of the market, the struggle, and the competition flowed into the elaboration of the Darwinist doctrine.

Keep in mind that the core-sentence of the social-darwinist's belief, the "survival of the fittest" was added to the fifth edition of that book after the philosopher of mechanistic evolution Herbert Spencer had invented this catch phrase!

It is not only neoliberalism - which has been rightly criticized - that has promoted a selfish, egoistic, homo-economic self-image of man. .

No, the second sinful event, which finally closed paradise on earth, was the reduction of the human characteristic to the economic, which began with the unfortunate liaison of economics and Darwinism.

But human life is much more than just economic thinking and acting! Therefore education must be more than a preparation for the economic "struggle for life".

Is it so difficult, I ask you, to develop a self-understanding of man as a solidary and cooperative fellow human being, creates the basis for a solidarity and cooperative economy? Do we not see how the caring interpersonal life accomplished daily before our eyes?

2 - Man becomes a human being in a fellow-human relationship

Images - The first experience people make when they come to the world is that they are not alone. The **mother** takes the newborn into her arms, keeps it close to her body and there by allow the newborn to makes the most crucial experience: There are other human beings around you who take care. Mabe the rest of the world is loud, cold and unpleasant, but you are here and we are here to help you through, no matter what will come. You do not need to be afraid because you will never be alone.

This "primary pedagogical scene" is a crucial foundation for all relationships and social interactions in the adult world to come.

In the first two years of life, the foundations of human being are created and strengthened exclusively by close contact in interpersonal interactions. They appear in the later development of the child as abilities and motivations for human cooperation.

We humans can only become selves and function as natural and cultural beings, we are only able as adults to cooperate in community with others, if we have this primordial interactional background of early experience. But Cooperation is what every type of culture consists in. And : Cooperation is a way of continuing the early experience of interactional experience by reducing fear and creating trust and solidarity.

The anthropologist and behavioral researcher Michael Tomasello (2010, p. 11f) argues:

Artifacts and social institutions - the world of work and life, which surrounds us every day, and which gives us support, orientation and security - would be impossible without the ability to share and understand the emotions and intentions of other people. This is the motivation of people to cooperate at all.

Tomasello (2009) demonstrates that cooperation is fundamental to human culture, by understanding glances and gestures.

In recent studies, Michael Tomasello (2010) has especially worked out the qualitative aspects of human cooperation, which enable cooperative pursuit of intentions and goals in practice.

They are shown in the specifically human and social behaviors of helping, informing, sharing things and time, listening, mutual attention (respect!) And shared intentionality. (Sometimes we trade unionists must help the Employers with sharing, but this is helping again ...)

And, of course – we add to Tomasello's researches - the concern for others, the need for the presence of other people, to befriending and the hostility belongs to social behavior.

But life-sharing exchange, which is based on a real dialogue, opens people not only to one another, but also to the various approaches to objects, events, and ways of life.

Man is also becoming a trade unionist through fellow human beings! Who was your fellow-man who made you a trade unionist through trust and confidence?

The very important questions are:

- Can we live these human qualities in our workplace?
- Can we lead a human life when we are in the sphere of work?
- Can we live these human qualities in our education spheres in school, vocational training or "active citizenship"?

3 Trade union education is cooperative and embodies solidarity in learning

The special aspect of trade union education

Trade union education is cooperative and solidarity learning based on shared interests and goals. Trade union education has in many countries a strong tradition of self-organised, self-financed, independent and interest-oriented supplementation of the general educational system. Because trade unionists need special skills to fight a social struggle instead of a fight of everyone against everybody else.

What skills and capabilities do we need as trade unionists from the point of view of everyday practice?

Triad of knowledge, ability and action

- Mindset, Attitudes and Beliefs build up orientation for
- Acting (purposive)
- Critic (needs values!)
- Courage (comes from a community)
- Solidarity
 - Political Judgement & Certainty Acting
 - Force and Assertiveness of the Union
 - Practice of a social idea of democracy

Trade union education develops these skills in interpersonal, participatory, democratic and humanist ways.

The special feature of trade union education consists in

Learning together rather than in competing,

Learning from one another instead of learning self-centered,

Learning for one another instead of learning for an other.

We need each other!

Human beings are wonderful and have many good qualities. But as a creature who could possibly make the world a paradise with the ability to co-operate, he, on the other hand, also developed the possibility of abusing others systematically and for his own purposes and advantage.

Some governments even consider it good policy to promote this exploitative use of human beings by other people. They call it deregulation and enabling and “offering challenges for smart people”. But today the people with the most economically power wins. Or those with the most or bestly weapons. Are these in the middle and long run smart people?

But those people which use only power and domination, which only use other men for their purposes suppress and destroy the basic "need of one another". *Need* and *use* makes a difference. Wherever people only are used the need to need one another cannot be developed. Then critic is our duty and countervailing power is to be organized!

The basic rule could be: We do not exist as humans just to be used by another, we exist to be there for one another!

Interpersonal and social relationships can shape our lives positively if they are embedded in dialogue, equality and participation. Therefore, the participation of as many as possible, especially in the social fields of education and in the sphere of work, is the best guarantee for developing the human potential.

Truly human Education and work create requires justice and social economy with sustainable technology and ecology. For what then will guide thinking and acting is mutually respectful existence, even if solutions are reached as results of conflicts.

Dispute, argument and even hard conflicts with others is usually effective and helpful if it really involves the others – if their mutual engagement is the core of interaction. And thus co-operation and coexistence can become both effective and meaningful. Democracy - which has to be much more than a model of government - becomes a basic condition of human life.

We trade unionists know very well that conflicts may create respect, responsibility and trust. We have learned this together. It came to pass because our mothers and fathers took responsibility for a human society and built up those trade unions which allow us today to continue that struggle in a very important place and subject: the trade union education.

Therefore I summarize again the human qualities, which we should give space in our seminars:

- We are able to focus our attention on a common goal
- We are able to develop common intentions and purpose
- We develop individuality and collective identity simultaneously - the best way to know oneself are other people
- We can and want to help, share and inform
- We learn from and for each other by problems and also through conflicts
- Only with others we can learn to develop trust and take responsibility
- Only with others we can free ourselves from fear and develop courage
- We can mourn together and celebrate and laugh together

Thank you for your attention.

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