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Résumé : *La croissance financière a été considérée comme la solution aux problèmes tels que la pauvreté, la faim et ainsi de suite. Cependant, au lieu de résoudre ces problèmes, elle a, avec le surpeuplement et le rétrécissement des ressources naturelles, mené à un cycle vicieux d'une concurrence encore plus grande pour même moins de matériaux, résultant en tensions entre les pays ou les communautés, qui pourraient mener à l'affaire de guerre.*

Le nationalisme, qui au cours des deux derniers siècles a visé à la formation ou à l'intégration des Etats nations nationalement ou linguistiquement homogènes, semble de nos jours désuète. Néanmoins, la construction des mythes nationaux et la perception du passé à travers eux est toujours le procédé le plus commun pour la formation de l'identité nationale. Les systèmes scolaires nationaux sont les agents principaux de la formation de l'identité nationale.

Le racisme comme procédé de « taxonomie » des personnes et des groupes sociaux se base sur des caractéristiques spécifiques, soit des raisons biologiques -auparavant- ou des raisons culturelles -aujourd'hui-, et est accompagné d'arguments concernant la validation de cette taxonomie de telle façon que cette inégalité pourrait être légalisée. La violence comme moyen de changement social ne semble pas être efficace et compte tenu du fait que les moyens influencent fortement les buts, aucun des mouvements armés qui ont émergé après la deuxième guerre mondiale n'est parvenu à construire la démocratie. Au contraire, les manières non violentes de la résolution de conflits, si leur structure et les attitudes et les comportements des personnes impliquées sont étudiés, ont le potentiel de transformer ces conflits vers des directions plus paisibles.

Par conséquent, pour l'« enseignement » des questions mentionnées ci-dessus, un nouveau type d'éducation empirique, à travers une élaboration (pas exclusivement cognitive) des problèmes de la vraie vie, est suggéré. La question examinée est exactement le même monde avec ses structures politiques et financières qui visent habituellement la domination et l'exploitation. Des facteurs comme la compatibilité des moyens et des objectifs, l'empathie montrée par les professeurs aux élèves, l'effort de favoriser la communication, la coopération et l'estime de soi positive parmi les enfants, en même temps que les relations réciproques entre les composants personnel, sociopolitique et global, devraient imprégner cette philosophie éducative.

Mots-clés : Développement, Nationalisme, Racisme, Paix, Etudes, Non violence, Conflit Résolution, Prisonniers Dilemme, Education de la Paix

Abstract: *Development has been considered as the solution to problems such as poverty, hunger and so on. However, instead of solving those problems, it has, along with overpopulation and the shrinkage of natural resources, led to a vicious cycle of even greater competition for even less materials, resulting to frictions between countries or communities, which might lead to war affair.*

Nationalism, which over the last two centuries targeted at the formation or integration of nationally or linguistically homogenous nation-states, seems nowadays obsolete. Nevertheless, the construction of national myths and the perception of the past through them is still the most common procedure for the formation of national identity. National schooling systems are the main agents of national identity formation.

Racism as a procedure of "taxonomy" of people and social groups occurs on the basis of specific characteristics, either on biological grounds -earlier on- or on cultural grounds -today-, and is accompanied by arguments concerning the validation of this taxonomy so as this inequality could be legalized. Violence as a means of social change does not seem to be effective and given the fact that means strongly influence aims, none of the armed movements emerged after World War Two managed to construct democracy. On the contrary, non violent ways of conflict resolution, provided their structure and the attitudes and behaviours of the people involved are studied, have the potential to transform those conflicts towards more peaceful directions.

Therefore, for the "teaching" of the aforementioned issues, a new type of experiential education, through an elaboration (not exclusively cognitive) of real life problems, is suggested. The examined issue is the very same world with its political and financial structures which usually aim at domination and exploitation. Factors such as the compatibility of means and aims, the empathy shown by teachers to the pupils, the effort to promote communication, cooperation and positive self-esteem among children, along with the interrelation between the personal, socio-political and global component, should permeate that educational philosophy.

Key words: *Development, Nationalism, Racism, Peace Studies, Non violence, Conflict Resolution, Prisoners Dilemma, Peace Education*

Introduction

War is probably the most frequent tool used for conflict resolution. That is the reason why peace studies are proved to be more than ever, useful and necessary especially under the light of the recent war affairs against Afghanistan, Iraq and (possibly) Iran. We are among the educators believing that war culture can be transformed towards a peace culture and this transformation can at least partially, be materialised through education. The following article strives -given the complexities and difficulties related to the examination of the above named issues- to describe some aspects of the issue of conflict and to demonstrate the role that education can play to either avoid or resolve conflict. It is, thus, focused on the exploration of areas that conflict emerges (i.e. the model of financial development, nationalism, racism), it suggests ways of their interpretation and hypothesises the causes of these conflicts. The political, economical and social dimensions of conflict are also examined. Finally, this text suggests ways of conflict management focusing on the arguments against

violence, on non-violent conflict resolution and last but not least presenting the key role of education on this matter.

1. Development

The term “underdeveloped countries” was first used to describe the planet’s poorer countries, by the USA president Harry Truman, in 1949, justifying the western idea that all nations move in one and only orbit, that of economic development. Ahead of this movement towards progress and civilisation (where progress and civilisation equals to material production) stood the USA, followed by the rest of the countries and the poor South at the very bottom line.

So the image that West hold for itself was projected worldwide, while development was, and is still, considered as panacea against disease, hunger and poverty, in spite of the fact that until today it has not manage to solve the problems that was supposed to cure. There is a dual criticism against that model of development: first, on the one hand is a huge waste of row material and energy which result to pollution of the Earth, on the other hand this ecological destruction is also followed by a deep cultural transformation of ideas, habits, ways and working paces, social relations and so on which were conceived as obstacles to the development. As Sachs (1993) put it, “all cultures that had not been organized according to the (capitalist) accumulation race, started dismantling”, driving South to an ever increasing subjugation of social life to the economy which was earlier experienced in the North. It also appeared that the “third world societies became underdeveloped, only when their economies started developing” (Modinos, 1998), since prior to that the aborigines lived in a state of non-development, but with plenty of free time, being indifferent towards accumulation, with a production procedure that might seem “irrational” but maybe with no more social injustice than today’s regimes.

The economic theory that responds to the aforementioned development model is not particularly interested in the context of that development. It is not concerned on the kind of products or the kind of industries that produce them. Its primary concern is to promote such procedures that increase the Gross National Product (GNP), without examining whether the product has anything to do with the basic essential needs of the humans or the planet (Trainer, 1995).

The consequence of such a way of thinking is that governments favor the kind of economic activities which produce goods that satisfy the needs of the richer social classes and not the urgent needs of the poorer. A clear example of this reasoning, are the huge lands of the Third World which are being used for agricultural products to be exported only to draw exchange and the vast amounts of cereals which will not end up to the hungry local people but will feed domestic animals of the rich world. A direct result of this practice is the world increase of poverty and economic inequality, despite the common fallacy of the “diffusion” of financial benefits (trickle down effect) from the upper to the lower classes (Trainer, 1989).

The 57 millions of poor people in the E. U. (13 of them being children) in the mid 90s (Newsletter of the European Anti Poverty Network, 1997) and the

continuously raising quotient of the income of the richer 20% to the poorer 20% of the world population that raised from the 30:1 in 1960, to 45:1 in 1990 (UNDP, 1991 and 1994) justify some more arguments concerning the interdependence of development, poverty and food production.

Almost one billion people receive insufficient food, nowadays, due to hunger. This has outnumbered the people who have ever suffered poverty throughout human history. At the same time, there are examples of famine and ecological destabilization¹ resulting from development choices - in places we mistakenly perceive as always being poor, i.e. India. Even more frustrating are inequalities inside the Third World countries: the underfed between 1970 and 1980 raised 14%, while the cars were doubled² between 1970 and 1985 and the poor people of the planet are 1.5 billions (UNDP, 2003). One should admit that development needs these inequalities, which are considered to be the moving force of history, and that it responds to those inequalities with even more development, in order to alleviate them. But in fact, more development reproduces higher levels of inequality (Modinos, 1996). Nowadays it has become even harder to survive as poor, one needs to commute on a private car to get away from the big city, can hardly imagine life without a mobile phone, and air-conditioning is an absolute necessity given the microclimate change in the big cities.

The people in charge do not seem to realize that ongoing development (as promoted by the conventional economic theory) is nothing but a fallacy, given the diminishing availability of wealth-producing resources of planet. In other words the overproducing/overconsuming life style of a Californian person cannot be transplanted in Ghana or Bangladesh because the planet will simply collapse due to the excessive demand of energy resources, minerals, wood, water, meat, seafood and so on. Since this development model cannot be materialized, the only solution to cure social inequality is the effort to transfer wealth from the North to South, so that social justice will be achieved and ecological balance will be guaranteed.

This need of redistribution of wealth tends to be satisfied through the increasing movement of refugees and immigrants from the Third World, who come and settle in the developed North. There they cause feelings of fear to their fellow-citizens along with racism and xenophobia.

Issues concerning development

Some crucial questions regarding the aims and the consequences of development can be put forward. What is the relation between GNP and the standard of living of a society? When development is considered adequate? What is that inevitable law dictating that “the more development we have, the more we have to aim for”? (Trainer, 1995). Why is it not possible to satisfy the basic needs of the poor people of the planet despite the economic and technological means available? What are the roots of hunger and poverty nowadays? How can we relate the excessive consumption taking place in the developed countries to the poverty of people in the Third or even the “Fourth” world? (Swee-Hin, 1988).

Opposing economic growth

When economists talk about development, as previously described, they refer to economic growth. A money-centred procedure aiming to increase the GNP (by even using inhuman procedures such as weapon trading) and which has mistakenly been connected to increasing happiness (Zolotas, 1982, Hatzikonstantinou, 1988).

This procedure seems to increasingly be related with the environmental protection issues (Renner, 1996) as well as to a more specific cluster of issues which (along with nationalism, racism, and gender inequality) compose the core of Peace Education: growth (that is the continuously intensified effort for the satisfaction of human needs) in combination with overpopulation and the natural resources shrinkage (both renewable and non-renewable) leads to the vicious cycle of an ever more intense competition for the sharing of less and less quantities (usually downgraded) of natural resources, which results in disputes between countries or communities, which might end up to armed conflicts³ (Suliman, 1998, Williams, 2000, Myers, 1987, Westing, 1986, Georgopoulos, 1992). It is basically a socio-political choice, which under the pretext of increasing the material wealth, fights against any reasonable limitation of human economic activity and becoming a “hubris” in the sense ancient Greeks referred to it. This makes it even more necessary to seek for “a different kind of development, not only material, but also mental, emotional, moral”... (Moren, 1999 : 89).

2. Nationalism

The beginnings of nationalism date back to the Latin American elite of the 18th century. In their effort to rule effectively and to gain wealth that otherwise should be sent to Spain, they propagated the idea that the “nation” they ruled was no (more) Spaniards but Colombians, Bolivians and so on, introducing the idea of nation in its contemporary form. From this day forward, those belonging to the same nation are considered to compose an imaginary community (Anderson, 1997), in the sense that their members not only had no real contact with it, but any possible contact is conditioned by inequalities. One should not forget the function of nationalism as a coiling of society tool, usually under the threat of a (real or imaginary) danger threatening the nation-state, which results to the disguise of class oppositions.

The main purpose of nation-state was the identification of the national-political element with the cultural one. In other words “we” (the ones sharing language, religion, customs) ought to be within the same border, to function within the same national economy and to be governed by an acceptable national government. This aim was proved a fallacy, in a number of cases. One of the most characteristic is that of the formation of Balkan national countries during the 20th century, when for a number of reasons, “our people” found themselves outside the given borderline, while “others” went on living within them.

By projecting the demand for national integration, the imaginary community demands that either “we” should free our ‘brothers and sisters’ who live trapped in foreign countries, or “we” should transfer “our” population in “our” country.

This last option was a result of a military and political defeat of ‘our’ community. According to that mentality, Milosevic declared that even if one Serbian had been in the Moon “we” would have gone to free him. An example of the second case is the defeat that followed the Asia Minor expedition of the Greek army (1919-1922). It is believed that during the armed Serbo-Croatian conflict, there was a plan of national integration, both sides aiming at, the extermination of 1/3 of foreigners, the persecution of 1/3 and the assimilation of the final 1/3.

It should, however, be mentioned that under the status of globalisation, the hope for ethnic integration and homogenisation is falling apart under the burden of refugees and immigrants, whose numbers sum up to tens of millions. The Kosovars of Norway, the Keylans of Greece and the Chinese of America are the living masterpieces proving that this procedure (which cost dearly as far as concerns natural resources, pain and blood) is simply impossible (Tsoukalas, 1998). Therefore nationalisms of the 19th and 20th centuries which aimed at the creation or the integration of nationally and linguistically homogenous nation-states, seem out of the question, since during the last decades a new reality is obvious.

The great amount of cheap industrial goods, that gradually equated the lifestyle of people and the immigrants with different language, culture, features from those of the locals, who came, settled and lead their lives in all the First World countries, have led to the replacement of the traditional nation by new kinds of social and political identification. Nowadays, in the contemporary countries the nation/citizen complex creates a new social consciousness and creates the base onto which lay other political feelings and notions, connected with what is known as constitutional patriotism⁴.

This contemporary reality and the combination of massive movements of people along with the rapid socioeconomic transaction worldwide since the last quarter of the 20th century⁵, trigger defensive reactions to a great number of people, against real or imaginary threats.

Thus, the widespread sense of threat, which acts together with the efforts for national integration as well as the recent requests for the creation of new nation-states, make nationalism very powerful, despite the rigorous action of forces acting to modify or even abolish it, whatsoever.

Furthermore, the difficulty for the co-management of natural resources shared by two or more countries and the subsequent problems caused by increasing pollution, resource waste or reduction of biodiversity related to those natural resources, should, at least partially, be attributed to the extreme worry over the loss of national sovereignty (Georgopoulos, 2004).

Comments on Greek nationalism and national education

The procedure of the making of national identity -since this is a product of continuous rivalry between “national self” and “national other”-produces national prejudices. Research claims that educational system is one of the main agents of the formation of national identity and production of stereotypes (Dragona, 1997).

According to Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm, 1994) the development of nationalism is directly connected to schools and universities, as educational institutions are the most conscious defenders of nationalism. This is also argued by Anderson (Anderson, 1997), who considers a huge pedagogical industry that forces young people to forget or remember, forming in that way, national memory.

National education is still a fundamental vehicle of national instruction and of strengthening the national spirit. Educational institutions function in a way that national identity is projected and national culture is imposed, reproducing the extraordinary image of the nation and its unbreakable continuum throughout history. And it is via the educational system that social representations leading to national cohesion and solidarity, reinforcing the sense of belonging to a group that is above all, are formed. National history has a major role in this procedure, by putting together memories of a fictionalized past. The teaching of national history, through educational systems, is the basic means of the formation of national identity as this history is identified with the collective memory of the national group (Avdela, 1998). This national memory has to respond to historical fantasies of the group and to formulate the equivalent national culture, through the establishment of a privileged relation to history (Matvegevits, 1998). A practice of “failure to mention” specific elements, exaggerations, and distortions produces a distorted national memory, necessary for the development of national consciousness, as according to Reman “mistaken beliefs of history are part of a nation’s existence.”

As regards Greece, its written national history -which was proved to be a difficult task⁶- was based onto the triple notion of unity between “Antiquity - Byzantines - Greek Revolution” which is reflected in the structure of history curricula. This triple notion is the corner stone of the organization of teaching for primary and secondary education, forming two parallel teaching stages which cover the spectrum of history teaching leaving very little space for any attempt of teaching the history of other countries. Even when world history is taught, the aim is the reinforcement of national ideology and strengthening of national obsessions. Thus, according to Kokkinos (Κόκκινος, 1994), the teaching of world history, functions either as the arena in which Greek superiority emerges or as a reminder of a continuously persecuted nation (the myth of world conspiracy against Greece).

Teaching of history, aiming at the formation of national identity, refers mainly to the acquisition of knowledge, while anniversaries and national celebrations which take place at schools aim at the emotions of the pupils. Historic incidents are discussed in history teaching and selectively reminded and dramatized by national celebrations. The use of symbols and heroes aims at the greatest possible emotional involvement of children. Patriotic poetry and literature are the basic axes around which the whole national ritual is materialized.

According to Le Goff (Λε Γκοφ, 1998), national celebrations are, from the moment they first appeared, not only one of the basic arenas of conflict between memory and censorship, history and myth but also constitute a fundamental expression of the manipulation of memory. That need first emerged and was promoted from the revolutionary groups but later on conservative and nationalist circles became

more and more interested about it seeing in the manipulation of memory a mean for domination. Making up the national tradition and using myths is a corner stone in remaking of the past. Constructing national myths and perceiving the past through them, presupposes the “transcendence (transgression) of rationalism and the subjugation of a cognitive request to a psychological request” (Asdrahas, 1995). Myth (not cosmology or genealogy myth, but the transformation of history to myth, Asdrahas, 1995), which was initially restricted to oral tradition, became written history through national celebration speeches, and was then projected as an unquestionable historical truth. It was gradually evolved into collective representation and with this ideological and political gravity became a part of the practice of national education. National myth remains untouched even when historical research proves it false. The myth’s status in collective consciousness is rarely affected.

National history, national myths, national symbols and rituals are the basic line in which the procedure of national education and political socialization are constructed, throughout schooling, even from nursery classes. Especially in nursery schools social reality seems to be full of national notions, ideologies and symbols⁷.

3. Racism

Racism is a procedure of “taxonomy” of people and groups, of a wider society, based on certain characteristics - mainly biological and basically unchangeable⁸ - accompanied by arguments concerning the validity of this taxonomy which legalize inequality). In spite of the fact that there was racial discrimination long before the formation of nation-states, what is interesting nowadays is the combination of xenophobia and politics, in other words the political exploitation of feelings of xenophobia.

Anderson discussed that issue and noted:

The most important thing is that nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism sees the nightmare of eternal infections transferred from the beginning of times through the endless sequences of detestable intercourse: out of history. Nigers will thanks to their invisible Niger blood, be always Nigers; Jews , Abraham’s semen, are always Jews, no matter which passport they carry, which languages they speak or read. (Therefore for the Nazis, German-Jews pretended to be somebody that never existed). In reality the dreams of racism are rooted in class ideology rather than nation ideology: above all in the claims of divinity of leaders, “blue” or “white” blood and “nurture” of the aristocracy. Thus, it is not surprising that the supposed ancestor of modern racism is not a middle class nationalist but Count de Gombino. And that racism and anti-Semitism are not exhibited out of national borders but within them. In other words, they do not cause external wars but internal oppression and submission.

Additionally, referring to the relation between racism and nationalism, Liakos (Λιάκος, 1998) notes that the support of the nation to the outside (foreigners) is usually in pace with the inside defence (minorities), as in both cases the national homogeneity is threatened.

Racism keeps on being present and powerful, despite the proved fact that consists of a nexus of misconceptions, attitudes, behaviours and institutionalized measures obviously against humans and despite the important actions of the antiracist movement, basically because it is based on fear. Racism also owes its existence mainly to the fact that in the short term it benefits the ones that do not belong to its victims and to the fact that governments easily submit to citizens' pressure and organized interests, who are not in favour of politically powerless groups.

4. Violence

It has become evident that after the horrible attack at the World Trade Centre, the need to reconsider the issue of violence is even more pressing. Is violence a way of struggle with future or does it only have past? Are the problems that it itself creates minor or major? Is the notorious declaration that "violence is the midwife of history", a positive statement or is it nowadays considered a monstrous ideology? Is hatred and resentment (rancour) -usual but not necessary companions of violence- able to guarantee a more humane future?

Generally speaking violence is a technique to control human behaviour. A person's or a group's behaviour is violent when in their effort to prompt some other person or group to attempt or not attempt some activity, use against them actions that can threaten their physical or psycho-social integrity (i.e. torture, imprisonment and so on) or threatens to use practices of this kind (Katsouras, 1987).

Terrorism⁹ is the extreme consequence of violence, and will probably exist for as long as there is a division between "good" (legal) violence which is monopolized by the state and the "bad" (illegal) violence which accompanies the potential rebels against status quo. Violence is in itself a system of political governance. The more able a political regime is in the establishment of a fearsome climate (which can paralyze the opponent, but not necessarily to exterminate it), the more effective it is.

Violence as an instrument of social change

Violent struggle polarizes society, reproducing the "friend-enemy" dipolar, preventing the resolution of social, political or economical disputes in alternative ways, other than the armed method. At the same time, under the pressure of the very common practice of violent methods of conflict resolution, citizens become insensitive towards violence, and tend to believe that "this is the most effective way of conflict resolution". This kind of insensitivity means the degradation or extermination of the moral content of human values for which the armed movement struggles¹⁰. All the above, combined with the militaristic values that sooner or later are diffused in an armed group, which questions the state monopoly of violence, with authoritarian personalities staffing it, with the inevitable secrecy accompanying illegal activities and the concomitant difficulty of the grass roots to control their leaders, produce a cruel hierarchy whose interest is to reproduce the delusion that a supposedly gifted minority or a charismatic leader will lead to the envisaged social emancipation. This delusion has no relation to democracy (Pontara, 1985).

Violence and democracy are like oil and water; they never mix! They are two incompatible notions. The fear accompanying pistols and Kalashnikovs makes any discussion about free and democratic election, simply ridiculous. The violent expression of a movement is an expression of degradation and weakness (Arendt, 2000 : 115)¹¹. It means that it cannot persuade the society therefore it resorts to the last “persuasive” argument: that of armed struggle. Unfortunately, as means determine the final goal, none of the armed movements that emerged after World War Two, managed to establish democracy. On the contrary, in many cases repressive institutions (police, army) that had been created to supposedly protect “people”, didn’t take long until they became autonomous and suppressed people, especially after the so called “liberation”.

Non violence: the peaceful equivalent of war

By definition, for any kind of social change an amount of pain is required. When in violent conflict, each group tries to avoid pain and hand it down to its opponents. When violence reaches its extreme versions and turns into terrorism, then pain turns into death. Imposing the death “penalty”, a terrorist has the illusion that he/she dominates life, controls, and can change the flow of history.

A non violent activist leaves behind the illusions of terrorism and the “unsolved problem” of whose shoulders should load that pain, with a relatively simple and rather radical way: he/she accepts to take over and suffer her (him) self (Holmes, 1991). (S)he knows very well that the imposition of violence nurtures whole generations of people with the obsession of revenge. That’s why same as BL6avoids violence, suggesting, instead of this ambiguous and problematic tool of political violence, the non violent struggle. So, who can be identified as non-violent? Violent is someone who kills a policeman. Non violent is the one who denies obeying the police. Consequently, revolution does not have to be violent, just as violence is not necessarily revolutionary (Katsouros, 1987).

Non violent rebels try to injure the legitimacy of the state, knowing that they should not risk other people’s lives. They are very well aware that the opposite would strengthen the state’s power. In that very realisation lies the radicalism of non violence. Non violent people accept death (i.e. hunger strike) denying state. For instance, Gandhi’s non violent strategy would not injure physical integrity, would not cause revenge, would not prevent communication between opponent groups. That was the reason for being so difficult to defeat the non violent struggle. The historical example of India as well as the defence of political and human rights around the group of Martin Luther King in the American south in the 60s, of Polish Solidarity in 1980, of Serbian opposition in 1996-97, and of non violent resistance in Kosovo against the repressive regime of Milosevits from 1989 to 1996 (Clark, 2000), show that there is plenty of potential for effective and decent resistance without the use of weapons.

5. Non-violent conflict resolution

Galtung (Galtung, 1989) claims that every conflict has three basic parameters: structure, attitudes and behaviours of the involving parts. The conflict’s structure is related to the notion of the conflict, the involving parts and the opposing interests, values or aims. The conflict participant’s attitudes may be

the one-sided understanding of the conflicting situation, lack of understanding of the needs and interests of the “others” and generally a dual understanding that allows “our” behaviour to be considered as fair and logical, while the same behaviour when conducted by the “others” to be considered irrational and unfair. It has to be noted that before, as well during the conflict, stereotypes are created, “enemy images” are structured, each group projects its destructive emotions to the opponent, considering it aggressive and “bad”, provoking thus an aggressive response that agitates mutual hostility (Miall, 1992). The behaviour of involving parts, exhibits a series of negative actions characterising a situation of dispute or open conflict such as repression, torture, death, violent threats, and some positive actions such as good will gestures, appeals for deeper communication and discovery of ways of cooperation.

The structure of violence, the attitudes and behaviours of the involving parts are mutually influenced and change. Thus, to be able to resolve a conflict, one has to change its structure, to alter attitudes and to influence the behaviours of the involving parts towards socially positive directions. A transaction of the structure of violence from the initial “lose-win” (zero sum) situation towards a different setting of its components, so that the previously non compatible interests to be transformed into common interests which favour the solution of the conflict, seem to be the central notion, around which conflict resolution efforts are organised (Fisher & Ury, 1983, Miall, 1992, Miall et al, 1999).

The justification of this effort is based on the theory accompanying the “prisoners’ dilemma” and the relevant experimental implications. Two prisoners accused of a crime each having two choices: to cooperate with each other (that is to remain silent) or to cooperate with the authorities and betray the other. These choices have to be made individually without one knowing what the other one is going to do, as those prisoners are kept in different cells. Each one thinking that if the other offers information and cooperates with the authorities, will be rewarded, while the first one will find himself in a particularly difficult situation, will tend (deciding rationally at a personal level) to cooperate with the authorities and betray the other. This choice however, leads both to an even worse situation (lose-lose situation), while if they had cooperated, both remaining silent they would both have won (win-win situation). Consequently, this has to be the collective rational decision.

If the protagonists of this dilemma situation are called to act only once, then it is almost certain that they will chose the narrow personal interest each against the other. If this “game” however goes on, then there are possibilities that cooperative behaviour will emerge. So, the famous series of experiments conducted by Axelrod (Axelrod,1984) during which different interaction strategies between people in “prisoners’ dilemma” situation were examined, “tit for tat” proved as the most successful strategy. That strategy consisted of initial cooperation and then coping the previous movement of the opponent. This success of the generous (as the first step cooperation is suggested) and forgiving (no matter what had previously happened, the first positive movement of the opponent is instantly copied) strategy shows that the “good come first” (despite the opposing myths) and they win the game of natural selection, because it itself benefits cooperation (Miall et al, 1999).

Consequently, while trying to resolve conflict, its structure and the attitudes and behaviours of the involved parts, can be transformed after a study of the situation and the proof of the deeper interests of the opposing social groups, towards a cooperative atmosphere.

6. Education for peace

Children do not enter school as “*tabula rasa*”. They have already formed ideas about war and peace even at a young age of 6 or 7 years (Hicks, 1998a, Paidá, 1998). It is worth noticing that while their ideas of war seem to be much elaborated, their representations of peace are rather immature, confusing peace with passivity and “*do-nothingism*” (Davies, 1984). Around the age of 8 or 9 years, they start developing fear of war, while around the age of 14 or 15, 50% of the children are afraid of nuclear war (Davies, 1987).

Research has shown that from an early age children exhibit a clear preference to members belonging to same national group and are capable of expressing judgmental comments about “*national others*” despite the fact that their knowledge regarding them is extremely limited (Durkin, 1995). Another research work from North America reveals that children at the age of 4-5 already show “*national awareness*” and begin to express national prejudices (Durkin, 1995). In any case, they are quite sure that they like or do not like certain social groups or nations and that they prefer or not prefer specific countries or cultures and have constructed stereotypes, painting their own “*enemy images*” (Paidá, 1998).

While the mainstream belief is that those children’s ideas are normal and obvious psycho-mental notions accompanying human development, another stream of research work points to a quite different direction: not only our supposed savage and wild ancestors is a convenient legend (Wright, 1965, Fromm, 1973) but violence and aggression can be a result of education within a particular culture (Montagu, 1976). There is, therefore, a hope for change of attitudes, values and behaviours through Peace Education. Peace in this case, meaning alternative ways of being, behaviour and organization of humans and human communities. The role of this education should aim to offer knowledge, to reform attitudes and values and to cultivate such skills that (Burns, 1983):

- The possibility to explore different notions of peace and the causes of its absence, should be given
- The emotional and mental skills for conflict resolution towards a less violent and more fair society, should be acquired
- The possibility of dreaming alternative future landscapes on an ecologically and financially sustainable planet should exist.

The content of Peace Education

How could we teach complex, ambiguous and demanding issues such as the growing hunger and poverty, the increasing influence of nationalistic ideologies, the existence and explanation of militaristic and authoritarian regimes, together with the violation of human and socio-political rights, and the growing ecological degradation of the Earth? Which is the best way, so that children

will not have feelings of helplessness, but to be empowered and encouraged towards their active involvement in the world of the grown ups, aiming at its non-violent reformation?

Empathy: the specific characteristic of the “ideal” teacher

We insist to consider the compatibility of means and aims as a key point in Peace Education. Therefore the need of change of the educators’ behaviour, towards a different teacher-pupil relationship, is essential.

Rogers (Rogers, 1983) quotes the findings of an extended research in which 550 primary and secondary schools in the USA and other countries participated. It became obvious that the top virtue for a teacher was his/her ability to see the world through the eyes of his/her pupils and the respect he/she showed to each of the children. In the classes of those gifted teachers, children seemed to have higher cognitive skills, better self esteem, caused less discipline problems and were less absent from the classes. Those teachers were also found to have a better self image, to be open and reveal aspects of their characters to children, to be responsive the ideas and the emotions of the children, to encourage them with comments and conducting the lesson in the class with less traditional ways (i.e. not using monologues etc.)

In other words, “ideal” teachers were those who exhibited empathy, listened, put themselves in the children’s shoes, showed respect to their individuality, felt safe and confident enough to reveal themselves and generally to be open and honest, and believed that children act positively, constructively and effectively (Whitaker, 1988).

Compatibility of means and aims

If the above title is one of the requirements of Peace Education, then we should ask for those educational ways that guarantee the non violent nature of teaching process. This duty is not at all easy because of the dominance of traditional view about education, which can be summed to: monologue of the agent of knowledge teacher, non critical memorizing of information and facts, together with the belief that the best criterion of selection and evaluation of people is their ability to pass exams (Rogers, 1983). Other accompanying characteristics are the competitive atmosphere in classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 1994), the simplistic admission and dangerous chimera that children automatically learn what they are taught (Dewey, 1938/1998) and the epistemological (philosophical) dictum that children cannot mature unless they are forced to, a value in which modern school is based (Neill, 1968). Thus, we cannot trust children’s course to knowledge, self awareness and emotional maturity (Rogers, 1983). In other words, the only way for children to become adults is through numerous expressions of stifling instruction.

Fisk (Fisk, 2000), using the same thinking thread, comes to the conclusion that Peace Education intrinsically consists a contradiction because of the “normal and obvious” obedience required for the transition of knowledge from the “specialist”, that kind of education implies (Freire, 1974) and the consequent

absence of personal involvement and investment that is related to lives, interests, emotions and needs of the involved parts. This climate could also lead to the opposite results¹². So, instead of Peace Education, Fisk (Fisk, 2000) proposes a kind of experiential education, education through real life problems elaboration (problem-solving education). The examined problem is the world with its political and economical structures -usually dominating/exploitative- that constitute the common life situations for teachers and children and promote their mutual dialogue, and the democratization of the educational procedure. Maybe this way of looking at things together with all the elements of progressive education¹³ (Dewey, 1938, 1998) can move not only Peace Education but modern school in general, forward¹⁴.

Via the proposed “problem solving education”, the connection between personal and political becomes more obvious. Additionally, the care for the compatibility between means and aims helps pointing out the extremely neglected idea that “the way we live and act now, should be in accordance with what we would like things to be in the future ... and that consequently, if our vision is a non violent future, then the means we use to get there should also be non violent” (Fell, 1988).

So, is school today an institution of peace?

Most probably not. Is there any hope for a society that constantly reproduces in its inner self the relationship successful/unsuccessful? Especially, as this polarization starts at a very early age. As Holt (Holt, 1971), puts it, before entering school children have a series of virtues -cleverness, curiosity, fearless facing of the unknown, research disposition, perseverance, independence-which are crashed during their school lives. The cure of this trauma is not possible for the majority of the people for the rest of their lives. It is therefore obvious that an institution that produces “invalid” people is not peaceful, but on the contrary is one of the main factors of the establishment of structural violence¹⁵. What should then be the objective of a peaceful school?

Communication, Cooperation, Positive Self Image

Good communication is considered (among other things) as one of the virtues on which successful conflict resolution is based. While generally education promotes language development (speaking and writing) Peace Education emphasis is on the development of listening, as well as on the development of communication. It is a positive thing when educators teach the art of listening by implementing practical exercises during which a child *only* speaks and another *only* listens without answering, commenting or advising, for a short time. The continuation of this exercise with the listener to be called to set out the substance of what (s)he heard and express the accompanying emotion developed into him/her out of what (s)he has listened to, may be considered as part of the teaching process¹⁶.

Traditional education considers competition the main drive to learning. One of the elements that questioned this consideration was the sharp distinction of winners and losers -main characteristic of the competitive atmosphere in classroom- with all the sad outcomes such as sense of failure, disappointment and possibly withdrawal

or aggression. Furthermore, the isolation of people within the competitive atmosphere, creates a sense of insecurity, marginalizes the “different” people (people of “other” colour, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, people with special needs and so on), prevents the creation of groups and the consequent realization of their power, favouring the status quo. Nowadays, modern viewpoints consider cooperative learning as a powerful antidote for the above products of the traditional function of classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 1994).

Children have the right to feel that they have value, which is accepted and appreciated by their environment and that this value stems from real virtues and from their emotional-mental potential. The development of positive self image does not mean that the teachers are asked to praise pupils by attributing to them imaginary qualities, but they encourage them to keep on developing, showing belief in their future abilities. Children and adults with positive self image are more confident, and learn therefore, easily. It seems that there is a certain sense of reservation and fear in the western culture, towards those processes aiming to stress positive characteristics, while at the same time there is a clear tendency to focus on the negative points on somebody’s personality or work. The relation between positive self image with critical thinking and Peace Education is obvious, radical and hopeful: self-confident people and persons with a strong sense of self are less likely to blindly obey orders and rules for the value of which they are not persuaded. Additionally these people accept easier challenges and “risks” and take up responsibilities to achieve changes in their lives (Fell, 1988).

Linking the personal with the socio-political and the global elements

Processing of the personal element along with the socio-political dimension and the global perspective, are considered fundamental ingredients of quality education (Hicks, 1988b). Developing of emotions of the children, is thought as an antidote to a culture that either does not care, “forgets” and silences or imposes the control of feelings without distinguishing the healthy and suitable way of their management, from its ill and inappropriate conceal, with all the harmful consequences. (Heron, 1992). One should specially refer to the supreme emotion of compassion which is defined as “the readiness and willingness to use persuasion and a rational way of thinking, as a compass of human behaviour in general, and especially of conflict resolution”. The opposite is compulsion, which is defined as the “readiness and willingness of somebody to use violence to control human behaviour and resolve conflict” (Eckhardt, 1984).

Children should also be trained to a political way of thinking. That is to understand the way natural resources are distributed among different social groups, to be informed on decision making processes which affect us, to think about current major political problems and the most important solutions that are suggested. There should be special care on the approach of ambiguous issues because it is important to tackle some of them in a variety of ways although sometimes are not fully understood by children.

Finally, the global perspective is the recognition that every technological progress is followed by possible negative consequences on social and ecological level,

which should not be regarded simply as collateral damages, but having long term harmful effects. The development model, the situation of human health, the decline of the cities, the degradation of global resources, the paranoia of armaments, are all different aspects of one and the same global crisis with different faces. Each of them consists a systemic problem interrelated to all the others (Porritt, 1984, Spretnak & Capra, 1985).

Maslow (Maslow, 1976), when trying to exhibit the interdependence of personal and political, claimed that in order to be able to help, someone has to become a better person. But one of the ways to become a better person is to be helping others. Maybe this “spiral” thinking is related with a slogan that recently appeared on the walls at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki: “We are what we do, in order to change what we are”.

Epilogue

The main issue is to drive war culture to decline. That decline most probably can be achieved (at least partly) by education that tries to connect the offer of knowledge with the personal development of children. Therefore, criticizing the current model of one-dimensional (economical) development, should also include the deeper exploration of personal needs and values of children aiming at the critical examination of i.e. consumerism (or even our antagonistic relationship with the non-human beings of the planet) as well as revealing their conflicting outcomes on both personal and social level. It should be noted that environmental education may well offer towards this direction.

The examination of nationalistic and racist phenomena should be accompanied, on the one hand with an experiential approach and exchange of viewpoints with people or institutions of the “others”, and an effort of decoding of the “other’s” culture, through a democratic, anti-hierarchical perspective; and on the other hand, by a careful analysis of socio-economic facts that shows their relation to the above mentioned phenomena. Consequently, antinationalistic, intercultural education has an important role to play, by offering a critical and self-critical perspective to children, by referring to the human rights which “different” people are deprived of and by revealing some (not always obvious) expressions of arrogance, competition and lack of tolerance, which may lead to hatred and violence¹⁷.

In order to achieve all these, we need an educational process inspired by the movement of progressive education balancing between content and methodologies, which uses compatible means and aims and which tries to materialize in and out of the classroom glances of the future to be.

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