Educate Europe out of the crisis!

Foundations and prospects for the needed further development of "European learning"

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Whoever speaks with each other, does not shoot at each other.

Whoever asks each other questions, recognises common interests.

Whoever laughs together, cares about each other.

Of wars and crises – a brief history of "European learning"

Wars and crises have often played a decisive role in the formation of common European learning processes. This chapter looks at the origins of "European learning" and key aspects and categories of a kind of education that can help overcome the crisis in Europe.

The cataclysmic Thirty Years' War from 1618 to 1648 caused thinkers – at those times these were above all clerics – to search for alternative ways to solve conflicts. The Czech reformer Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670) developed the first comprehensive theory of European pedagogics at this time, which he effectively put into practice in his efforts to bring about peace, thereby laying the foundations for modern Europe (c.f. Sparn 2008, p. 22). I would like to present important aspects of our topic by first looking at this man.

Comenius did not take half-measures, he went the whole hog! He grasped the big picture when the task at hand was to bring about peace, and he was the first pedagogue who called for young boys and girls, men and women to take part in knowledge formation and teaching as a whole. The point of departure and reference in his pedagogical theory is the "*General Consultation on the Improvement of Human Affairs",* to quote the sub-title of his main work, the main title being Pampaedia.

"The state of human affairs" in large parts of Europe in the 17th century was marked by traumatic experience and the crude violence of war in which it was everyone against everyone. In his educational novel "Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart" (Comenius 1992), Comenius considers the development of humanity – the human species in general – to be inseparably linked to the development of the ability to live in peace. With regard to war, he wrote: "It is not wild animals of prey, but rather human beings who are assigned the task of mediation§ (ibid, p. 103). Thus Comenius assigns the human species the task of developing ways and means of solving conflicts instead of fighting each other (c.f. Gamm 2008, pp. 112 ff). Comenius mentions arrangements, agreements and contracts between persons as an alternative to war. This made another form of human being discernible in the distance: the non-aligned, self-determining human being reflecting upon his interests (c.f. ibid).

Comenius' pedagogics were intended to convey all useful knowledge with wide-ranging methods to all age groups and people in all stages of life – thus men as well as women (Omnes, Omnia, Omnio). The purpose of this learning process spanning an entire lifetime was to empower people to solve conflicts by peaceful means. In the view of Comenius, human beings need comprehensive education to do this.

His work Pampaedia stems from the desire for a better world. Comenius' approach to making "human affairs" and the aim of a better world into a topic of general discussion was a historically speaking new way of looking at things. He linked pedagogics with aspects of politics and the telos (ancient Greek meaning objective) of achieving a

peaceful world society. This made him the first classic in Enlightenment pedagogics.

Three hundred years after Comenius, his hopeful utopia of peace, which was meant to embrace the entire world, may sound surprising. We attribute this to his piousness and his bonds to God. We nevertheless recognise that with his pedagogics he laid the foundations for political, general education, which continues to reverberate on a European scale today. Theory and practice in such a general education is not limited to winning "Who Wants to be a Millionaire". It is instead realised through efforts to achieve a better world. The notion of general education takes on a political dimension as a result.

Present-day free democratic societies require wide-ranging participation and public discussion of current "human affairs" and their improvement as a result of the way they tend to be constituted. This is because democracy, in addition to being a "constitutional type" and its identification with a certain "form of government" (c.f. Agamben 2012, S. 12) is also a way of life in which democratic behaviour is also reflected in people's everyday lives. Democratic practices that make possible effective, purposeful and participative politics in the spirit of solidarity have to be learned anew by each generation - and explicitly not only by the respective generation of politicians (c.f. Negt 2010).

The pedagogical approach to "peace education" - i.e. preventing wars through education - has been successful. In general, in historical comparison wars have become fewer and more far between; Europe was awarded the Noble Peace Prize in 2012. This prize is a commendation for a policy since 1945 at whose heart was the avoidance of war. The prize has also been awarded among other things to five hundred million citizens of the European Union who demonstrate their commitment to peace in everyday life in Europe. Thus tribute has been paid to those educationalists and pedagogues who attempted in the wake of World War II to make "peace-making skills" a fundamental topic in education (for example, Gamm 1968). By the same token, the focus was placed on the causes of wars. The connection between war and economics, social and political relations was placed at the nexus of enquiry.

In the year in which the Nobel Peace Prize was conferred to it, Europe was already in the fourth year of a multi-faceted crisis. The prize makes us recall that at the end of World War II it was the idea of peace which stood at the beginning of modern Europe. This Europe is now limping as a result of monetary and economic problems. Can we also learn from the successful history of civilisation of warlike peoples through education in today's crisis? Have the battlefields of the past turned into "battlefields of the market", which are also just as much in need of taming today? This comparison broaches questions which I will address in this article.

That is why I would like to build on this success story of European education - which traces back to Comenius - and identify key aspects and categories with the aid of additional theories. These are intended to highlight the potential for crisis-managing, transnational education for Europe while at the same time underscoring the modernity of Comenius' pedagogics.

Understanding instead of warfare – To avoid wars and crises we need understanding. Because Comenius had all of humanity - especially in its diversity - in mind as a result of his Christian background, this understanding principally relates to human beings. That is why the common weal does not stop at borders. Comenius recommended learning the language of neighbouring peoples, for example. But language is only one aspect of understanding. Even more important are the reasons and purposes as well as forms of understanding. Political liberalism is rooted in the demand for religious tolerance (Todorov 2003, S. 26), which is also expressed in Comenius' works. Not to impose one's own belief, one's own convictions by violent means, was and remains an important learning tenet in present-day democratic societies.

Learning appropriate forms of understanding – Human forms of understanding should be found to avoid wars and

overcome crises which arise in societies that are becoming ever more complex. Comenius resolutely implemented this perspective in his didactics/methodology, already displaying reflected psychological knowledge way back then: in the phase of adolescence he recommended, for example, dialogue, disputations, stage presentations, writing letters, learning the art of conversation and keeping a diary because he was aware that drives can be focused by language-based reflection (c.f. Gamm 2008). Comenius thus drew attention very early on to the connection between drives and war and overcoming them or avoiding them through language expression.

Emergence of a political culture – At the same time Comenius developed the notion of political culture by means of learning ways of understanding which relate equally to the individual and the collectivity.

Work as a human category – Similar to Marx, work for Comenius is a human category. This means that the anthropogenesis is a dialectical process between work and human beings. From this perspective as well, a separation between intellectual and physical work makes no sense, as these always condition each other. Work was turned into "mere production" in vulgar materialism (c.f. Gamm 2001, S. 76 ff). Work is at the heart of individual and collective identity in politics, education and, finally, ethics. What Europe urgently needs today is a joint discussion on what work should mean to us nowadays. This could lead into a European discussion on decent work as well.

Work and education help people "become" while improving social relations (human affairs) – Work first of all reveals the individual as a subject, while however being conferred and at the same time developing the category of human beings. This definition of humanist education was also based on these preconditions, which developed in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century. Herder, for example, recognised the force which can unfold when people enter into dialogue. He characterised human beings as the first "creatures freed under Creation" (as a result of their independence from instincts). He recognised the freedom of human development possibilities lying therein - but at the same time the danger of degenerating into war and fighting. Meaning only comes about when people perceive themselves as a task and grasp the category as the "human" project (c.f. Gamm 2008, S. 85). Meaning comes about and is thus specifically, individually and collectively perceivable in interpersonal processes of mutual expression of work and education. Humanity as a category by the same token constitutes an obligation for every individual. Work must as a consequence - as Comenius called for early on - be performed by both genders. The definition of work as a result expands into a notion of "work by the collectivity" (c.f. Negt 2012). This expanded definition of work can serve to lay down new assessment criteria for good and decent work and the human evaluation of products and goods. Youth unemployment in Europe (it was over 55 per cent in Spain and about 60 per cent in Greece in December 2012) must therefore not only be understood as individual fate, however. People are robbed of the chance here to help develop the humane human being (Marten 1988).

Clinging to definitions of the "whole" and the "general" – As a Christian, Comenius set his focus on all his contemporaries, whose task it was to shape and design the world as a whole in a spirit of responsibility for subsequent generations. This presupposed unwavering notions of the "whole" and the "general". It must be possible to specify the "whole", particularly with reference to Europe. Europe is more than just the aim of "making the Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economic area in the world" (c.f. Lisbon Strategy). THz "whole" and the "general" have lost their meaning today - as a result of post-modern debates. This makes it difficult, for example, to focus on, analyse and criticise global capitalism as a "whole" (c.f. Euler 2011).

Comprehensive understanding of democracy – Recalling the understanding of the "whole" and the "general"

described above, the connection between work, education and becoming a human being along with equality between men and women, Comenius finally draws our attention to a modern and wide-ranging understanding of democracy. This is because a modern understanding of democracy correlates with the ability to recognise history as part of society as a whole which individuals help design and hold responsibility for (c.f. Gamm 1979 and Dewey 1916). Let us now look for the place where we shape ourselves and the world in the past, present and future, placing the focus in particular on economic activity and its two sub-aspects of work and education.

The new Europe - identity and public

The aspects cited in the first part play a major role within the framework of a transnational European education in my opinion. Before I examine this new type of European education in more detail, I would like to first build a stable bridge from history to the current crisis with a digression on "European identity" and "European public".

European history has shown and still does show why education of the kind Comenius had in mind is important along with the "triad" of peace, education and politics. This "recollection of the historical beginnings of European pedagogics" ((Gamm 2008) opens our view to essential aspects of a political education which is urgently needed for the future social and political shaping of European unification.

Europe experienced many wars before its capability to bring about a lasting peace became a topic of *general* - and public - *discussion.* Another war between 1914 and 1945 - one is tempted to say another "Thirty Years' War" (c.f. ibid, p. 124) - had to end in a barbaric rupture of civilisation, the Holocaust, before Europeans were able to stand up before the dead and the ruins of their cities and cry out together: no more war!

The European Union was born of a deep, common conviction of these people who experienced the bloodiest wars and crises of the 20th century: battlefields, bombing, economic crises, hunger and concentration camps. Perhaps it was just this that allowed them to develop the courage to grow out of and beyond themselves and their national limitations (c.f. Mak 2012, p. 22), as aside from the wars in Yugoslavia at the end of the last century we have not experienced any more wars in Europe for over sixty years. Practically every European generation up until 1945 had experienced a bloody war that left its scars on almost every single European family (c.f. ibid).

The common desire for peace formed the foundations for the construction of a new Europe. The fact that to this end *nationalism* and *militarism* had to be effectively combated was clear from the wars which took had taken at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. This also went for the realisation that the European system of nation states - which had been crystallising since the 17th century - did not work because again and again it led to military disputes and other power struggles between countries (c.f. ibid). This political realisation led to the beginning of European unification and the willingness to give up elements of national sovereignty for the good of the whole.

The 1957 Treaties of Rome, which were signed by six countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), prepared the ground for the European Economic Community (EEC), which was then succeeded by the European Community in the Treaty of Maastricht and finally the European Union (EU) in the Treaty of Lisbon. This opened the borders between today's 27 member states. The endless queues of lorries at European borders, impenetrable exchange rates, bureaucratic customs requirements that turned the shipment of packages into a nightmare of red tape, problems when one wanted to study or work abroad, fear of one's neighbours - all this vanished (c.f. ibid). And in addition to the jingle-jangle of goods being transported throughout the Single Market, people from different cultures with wide-ranging thoughts and perspectives encountered each other, and

something developed that we would miss if Europe were to "fail". We could lose much of what has become taken for granted and dear to us if the new, modern Europe were to fail. We can no longer carry on without it - nor do we desire to.

This thus raises the question: can this experience from European history, which has left direct and indirect traces on our present everyday lives and has so to say become part of our intrinsic make-up - also help forge identity?

Only a process that seeks to understand from within what historical heritage we want to embrace (c.f. Habermas 2004, p. 49) and what we want to reject based on reflective responsibility can form both collective as well as individual identities relating in a positive way to Europe as a whole while drawing from it. As paradoxical as this might sound, a large part of my own German and European identity consists of non-identification with large parts of European history. That which we want to preserve from old Europe, and that which we no longer want to do without in new Europe offer a vast wealth of identity-forming material that we can and should use in a circumspect manner in a common educational process.

Forming an identity is a collective as well as individual educational process. Educational processes are always focused on the future. The formation of a European identity thus always relates back to the shaping of the common European future. It is along these lines that we should appropriate history – in the actual sense of the word. Where, how and when are there common educational processes in the form of processes of self-understanding at the European level, and who takes part in these?

Already in anticipation of the question as to whether such common European (identity-forming) educational processes can be systematically designed in the form of transnational political education, I would like to provide an example of a corresponding process of self-understanding. It was one term which ignited a public discussion on European identity – perhaps the first and, down to the present, only discussion of this kind.

"Old Europe" – that is the term Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defence in the USA at the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003, coined in a polemical attack against those Europe countries, among them France and Germany, that did not want to take part in the war and did not join the "Coalition of the Willing". For the first time since 1945, Europe was no longer prepared to fall in behind the policy of the United States. The supporters of the war were dubbed "Atlanticists" and the opponents "anti-Americans". Because Rumsfeld drew a distinction between the "old" and the "new" Europe in this context, the proponents and opponents of the war were unavoidably catapulted into a reflexion on the constitutive elements of their own European identity. The conflict thus became a public question of European identity (c.f. also Todorov 2003, p. 12).

What was new about all this was this: the discussion was not only between "professional" Europeans or experts – it became the subject of a general discussion. The citizens of individual countries (for example, in Great Britain, Italy and Spain) adopted a position against their own governments in this question. The identity of Europe was defined in public debates, and the question was posed as to what Europe of the 21st century should look like (c.f. ibid). Habermas saw this as the first debate in which a European public discussed a common understanding of Europe (Habermas 2004). Together with Jacques Derrida and other reputed intellectuals (Adolf Muschg, Fernando Salvater, Umberto Eco, Gianni Vattimo and Richard Rorty), he published a sort of European Manifesto in Europe's biggest daily newspapers shortly after the pan-European anti-war demonstrations on 15 February 2003.

Together with his colleagues, Habermas was overwhelmed by the masses of demonstrators in London, Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Berlin and Paris, who reacted directly when European governments supported the Iraq War, pledging their loyalty to Bush under the leadership of Spanish Prime Minister Aznar. They viewed these demonstrations, rather, as the historical signal for the birth of a European public, and they broached the issue of European identity. General public discussions of crucial human affairs (war is moreover an existential affair) became

commonplace on a European scale. Comenius himself must have viewed his vision of what he wanted to achieve through education something like a "pipedream".

No comparable situation or comparable discussion has taken place in the last ten years since this great crisis to my knowledge. The failure of the European Constitutional Treaty in the referendums in France and the Netherlands in 2005 probably also additionally contributed to a greater concentration on the domestic policy of Europe's nation states once again.

In 2012 Europe appears to be at the end of the rope. The crisis has become more multi-layered; it is often interpreted very differently from wide-ranging perspectives and has developed into a European "crisis of confidence". More than a few are questioning the overall "European project".

What links us today, what unites us in our effort to find a European identity and European public which also bonds people together in the current crisis in a desire to discuss common possible solutions for a common Europe? What now offers a viable foundation for a social Europe and human coexistence in security and peace?

Prospects for transnational education

In part three I draw conclusions from the foregoing for processes of education. What content and forms must processes of political education have today in order to help surmount the current European crisis?

How can a European public and a European identity be fostered? In the current crisis, what can help develop a "commonality" of Europeans based on a spirit of solidarity? In addition to the notion of peace which was defended in the 2003 Iraq War, there must somehow be more than what we are perceiving at present; something which is common to us in our everyday work and lives which is perhaps so general and normal that we no longer perceive it. Thus, as Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote in his "Philosophical Investigations": "The most important aspect of things are hidden by their simplicity and everyday pervasiveness. One does not notice them because they are always right there in front of you." (ibid, p. 129; c.f. also Tully 2009, p. 230 f.)

That which in our everyday lives becomes a topic of general discussion involves those major human affairs that we discuss in our work and our private networks. Human affairs – very generally speaking – revolve around a successful life and the pursuit of happiness (c.f. the ethics of Aristotle). These general goals (regardless of whether we perceive them in our everyday lives or not) are part of the individual and everyday lives of everyone.

The human affairs which need to be a subject of discussion and which bear relevance to a good life are reflected in the working and living conditions of people. When we look at these more closely, the connection with our "search for happiness" become evident. Work is key to a successful life and source of identity and humane living. This is why economic action is a key element of our action as human beings. It creates interpersonal meaning and must therefore always be viewed and assessed in ethical terms. This thus causes us to recall important aspects discussed in the context of Comenius.

In connection with the current crisis, we thus find that crises – just like wars before them – can be solved through general public discussion and understanding. Everyone is affected by the crisis. So everyone should be involved in the discussions and consultations. Everyone should be encouraged with the aid of appropriately organised structures and through individual knowledge and ability be able to take part in this process if they want. This requires a new perspective on "European learning": transnational political education. To this end I would first like to address two areas which this touches upon: "transnationality" and "political education".

Transnationality and political education

The term "transnationalisation" points towards social, cultural, political and economic relationships and interactions between people and institutions. This perspective departs from the level of transnational relations, in which governments are usually the actors. Geography begins to lose its contours in the formation of identity and collectivity, with new transnational possibilities of belonging being created (c.f. Pries 2008, pp. 44 f. and Kehrbaum 2010). Transnational ties are expressed in transnational feelings of belonging together, cultural commonalities, communications networks, work-related contexts and life in general (ibid). And in the organisations this relates to such as, for example, trade unions, societal orders and types of regulation reflected transnationally in social structures and social areas (c.f. ibid). Transnationalisation, according to Pries, must be viewed as an expanding, deepening process in which new social practices, systems of symbols and artefacts come about through growing international movement of goods, people and information. These economic, social, cultural or political dimensions are at the same time interrelated, ultimately forming human "webs of relationships" (Elias 1986, based on Pries 2008, p. 45). Such transnational processes have already been a reality in Europe (and beyond) for some time, and can be perceived when examined more closely. Which brings us to the question of whether the political dimension of this transnationalisation can also play a role or are even be systematically taken into account in the political education being practiced in Europe in manifold ways. What consequences are there for pedagogical practice?

The debate over "political education" in Europe differs greatly nationally and historically. In post-war Germany, political education had a new beginning in the guise of so-called re-education. In present-day Eastern Europe, the post-Communist era or current relations with Russia has an effect in the alignment of processes of political education. Political education is explicitly not viewed at the level of European educational policy. "Active citizenship" is the objective in "*civic education"* which continues to be practiced at the national level (in Germany the term is usually translated into "politische Bildung"). Civic education in the European discussion thus relates to citizens of a state, and not to citizens of the Union.[1] What is the term "active citizen" understood to mean? Here as well, the EU is pointing in the direction to take.[2] Active citizenship is manifested in an "entrepreneurial spirit". Active citizenship accordingly means entrepreneurship. Economic activity has thus been moved to centre stage at the European level as well in the context of political education. In principle, this is good! Provided that we included aspects which have been addressed and developed in the first and second part of this article. All too often the view is forwarded that ingenious individual entrepreneurs can come up with innovations in moments of inspiration which would solve the problems of the world.

This individualised view of economics goes back to Schumpeter and has been preserved down to the present day. Aside from the fact that in his opinion this view constitutes a sort of secularised belief in salvation, it prevents perception of how strong Europe's economy and the world economy are networked and are operating within the framework of socially cooperative processes at present (c.f. Kehrbaum 2009).

Reports on the *Bill Gates'*, *Steve Jobs* and *Marc Zuckerbergs* are keeping this individualised, radically abridged

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[1] Under Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, citizens are entitled to certain rights: freedom of movement, freedom to vote and the right to petition.

[2] In its concept of "Education for Democratic Citizenship", the European Council has gi en political education another orientation. This plays a secondary role in the public debate over political education in the member states, however, and has not been implemented much in national programmes. This contrasts with the concepts of active citizenship in Germany, for example.
c.f. on this: http://www.jugendpolitikineuropa.de/downloads/4-20-2029/Demokratiebildung_Empfehlung%2012-2002.pdf,
and: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec%282010%297&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site,
and: http://www.unternehmergeist-macht-schule.de/sid_106FCDF5602DE32A5E0ACF75418E94C8/DE/Startseite/home_node.html.

perspective on economic activity alive, however. By the same token, it is overlooked that especially the desire for global human networking or cooperation is both a precondition as well as consequence of these three examples of entrepreneurs with their ingenious ideas. In a nutshell, today's crises and problems – consider only climate change, the phase-out of nuclear power, the use of natural resources – can only be solved through global cooperation, and hence not only by Europeans.

An economy which is purely focused on economic competition is detrimental to innovation in this context. If the basic task is to produce innovation – i.e. radical innovation – in business and society, change should and can logically only be anticipated conceptually and designed in a practical manner through a joint effort. Technological cooperation in this case means that all kinds of different people work together cooperatively towards a common objective.

As an integrative factor, economic activity must become an important part of cooperative, human and sustainable life.[3] That is why people in Europe must and want to think and act in new directions[4] (Kehrbaum 2012). With regard to the European debates on "active citizenship" described in the foregoing, in addition to the entrepreneur and his individual "spirit", social entrepreneurship and, beyond this, cooperative entrepreneurship[5] are becoming tangible and are necessary. How can socially valuable characteristics be fostered through social and collective learning? What role does transnational political education play here, and what shapes can it take on?

Content of transnational political education

Everyone should hence first of all be aware of or at least be interested in dependencies in their work and life context present today at the transnational level (c.f. Nussbaum 2012, pp. 97 ff.). Not infrequently an understanding of transnational interrelationships leads to a direct transnational commitment in the area of environmental protection (e.g. campaigns against the sinking of the Shell oil tank "Brent Spar" in the North Sea), against child abuse or protection of the animal world. Many so-called non-governmental organisations bear witness to this. Transnational processes of education in essence constitute awareness-raising work, as these explore everyday experience and things taken for granted in terms of the underlying transnational causes and interrelationships.

Many persons would throw up their hands at this point and complain that awareness-raising and political education are first urgently required in the national context before the global level can be addressed as an educational area. This must be countered by pointing out that one cannot properly understand the history of one's own country without including world history to a certain extent as well (ibid).

When the fog surrounding a national frame of focus is penetrated, it becomes evident that we have long since become members of heterogeneous nations. If we so desire, we can identify and analyse transnational interrelationships in our everyday lives. In Europe we have many possibilities to ask: what are working conditions like

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[3] In his new book, "Zusammenarbeit – Was unsere Gesellschaft zusammenhält", Richard Sennett (2012) forwards the hypothesis that cooperation improves the quality of social life. A cooperative division of labour is all-pervasive, its positive social nature is not perceivable as such, however, inter alia because economic-competitive aspects predominate in the rhetoric of many public dabes (including in social and educational policy) and have thus penetrated deep into the realm of interpersonal communication (c.f. Adorno 2001).

[4] c.f. Ipsos, 2012. In view of the crisis of the Euro, the Germans are developing a new attitude towards prosperity. For German citizens, the quality of relations and social cohesion are increasingly becoming more important than material wealth.

[5] Martin Roggenkamp brought my attention to this term in this context.

at present in Greece, Vietnam, Macedonia or Sri Lanka? Before we capitulate before the seemingly impossible task of educating world citizens, we should already here and now perceive our everyday world that we live in as a transnational learning area and learn to deal with heterogeneity. The best way would be through interpersonal contacts. Transnational political education develops responsibility for the living contexts of those who depend on our living contexts. That is why transnational education does not stop at the borders of Europe, but rather enquires about the living and working conditions of people in the world.

The current crisis in Europe has created a new public and summoned forth enormous fears and existential uncertainties. It is understandable as a human reaction to cling to that which is familiar and well-known in these times of uncertainty. Is there thus any chance at all of using this new European public in a positive manner? This time it is not about a war in a far-off country and the defence of the ability to make peace for which we have even received the Nobel Peace Prize and about which we should rejoice because we all safeguard the peace in Europe through our individual capability of making peace an everyday reality - in our everyday work and lives, creating the foundations for our peace – in the truest sense of the word. The task at hand is to secure, preserve and expand these foundations as well as the peace upon which they are based while giving it all a human face. That is why at stake in this crisis is the specific defence of working and living conditions of people in Europe, which are coming under enormous pressure. What we are defending here at the same time is the economic foundations of peace, which are nowadays based on transnational cooperation between people – without our noticing this in everyday life – and which mean a lot more than merely generating "profit".

We are thus once again very close to the definitions of work and education expanded in the foregoing and Comenius' global perspective on peaceful human coexistence because it is clear that we cannot limit human cooperation to nations, nor can we limit it to work. A globally networked economy here means that the division of labour is being organised on a global scene. Cooperation does not automatically mean solidarity, however. First deliberate reflection and adoption of global cooperation also means an opportunity for global solidarity from a trade union perspective. Transnational political education is thus in essence knowledge about how business functions today.

Economic activity is today common activity spanning the globe. The formula is: profit = revenue – costs. The language of business is English. Profit has the same meaning everywhere in the world. The canon of education today almost everywhere in the world is focused solely on this – I refer to it as the *impoverished perspective on economic activity* – and no longer addresses the wealth of human experience produced in economic history – with all its advantages, but also all its dependencies and suffering.

The educational canon of transnational education looks at the essential, common core of human culture in everyday life and economic activity by addressing history, geography, politics, social systems, cultural diversity, law, religion, etc., from a transnational perspective (c.f. Nussbaum 2012). This would be a type of general political education which would put people in a position to assess politics and, if they so desire, to become politically active in their common interests.

Transnational political education: the example of "Quali2move"

In this last section I would like to provide an example for such a form of transnational political education. The EU "Quali2move" project was based on this concept. European projects are becoming visible as transnational political areas of experience and learning.

Expanded definition of labour policy

In the preceding text I have attempted to highlight deeper levels of meaning with respect to labour, education and politics relating to these. In the European project "Quali₂move", subtitled *Development and Dissemination of a Labour-Policy Understanding of Education in Europe",* the terms "work", "education" and "politics" all referenced these foundations, examining current European labour and educational policy. Our definition of "labour policy" in this context related not only to "industrial relations" of social partners, to labour market policy or European employment policy, but rather went beyond the past meaning of "labour policy" – just consider the aspects discussed in the first and third part of this article. Our definition of "labour policy" raises the fundamental question of defining labour at the beginning of political and hence theoretical deliberations on education, seeking agreement on what importance we should attach to work as a basic human need. This fundamental transnational agreement on "work" allows common political judgment on "labour policies" which differ greatly at the national level and intentions, content and forms of respective educational measures.

Specific topics that we have discussed are marked by current political discussions. Thus, one issue is the "skills" which are capable of jointly designing a European labour market (in the expanded sense of the word), the "mobility" of employees and, finally, the "labour-policy understanding of education in Europe", which should be examined from a trade union perspective.

Project partners from eight countries realised immediately that the respective terms such as "skills", "mobility", "education" and "European dimension" display a variety of meanings, as different cultural, historical and political situations have an impact on the evolution of terms within the framework of communicative processes in the national context. The current European discourse is in addition contributing to the meaning denoted by key terms, or even transforming these. To take one example already discussed in the foregoing: the debate over "civic education" and "active citizenship". Clarifying these definitions thus stands at the beginning of productive European projects. "Mobility" was a key term in the project application. I would like to sketch the discussion in the project briefly taking this example.

Already in the national context, perspectives and meanings of this term differ, which thus raises the question as to what is meant by "mobility" if this feature is demanded by Europeans and is to be attained with the aid of education. Is it the desired scenario of a free European labour market if the dream job of a Swedish engineer leads him to Portugal and a Greek nurse for elderly people to France, which is to say well-trained and multi-lingual employees change their domicile and thus the fulcrum of their lives simply because they want to or out of curiosity? The real life and work situation is far off from such phantasies in EU policy strategies. "Mobility" at present in these times of European crisis demonstrate this. Pure desperation led sixteen thousand Greeks, eleven thousand Spaniards and six thousand Portuguese (on average 70 per cent more than in the previous year) to come to Germany in the first half of 2012.[6] This real "mobility" is brought about by the socio-economic situation in their respective countries of origin.

Thus one key realisation regarding transnational projects which became evident to the project partners in the exchange over the current situation in their countries was: the repertoire of definitions bearing relevance to us (in our case English) can only bring about successful communication when there is a discussion of the real working and living conditions to which these relate.

Development *of interactional cultural sensitivity*

In transnational projects there is a possibility to experience a systematic exchange on terms and different cultural,

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6   Figures from the German Federal Statistics Office, cited according to Jürgen Trabant, SZ from 17-18 November 2012, p. 13.

historical and political aspects and situations which these terms relate to. By the same token, however, this explicitly involves not only getting to know cultural differences, as not much will be gained for "European learning" – in the form of transnational political education – if these perceived differences remain unreflected. Intercultural skills do not end with the acquisition of a broad knowledge of cultural differences which exist, for example, in the different meaning of gestures. What has to be developed above and beyond this I refer to as *interactional cultural sensitivity*, as culture exists in the close ties between social practices and the ideas which these practices map in the minds of the group members (Todorov 2010, p. 43). Anyone who wants to interact effectively and meaningfully with other people/ethnic groups in the transnational context should above all have a sensitivity for the connection between social practices and collective ideas relating to this. Transnational processes of political learning thus go far beyond the exchange and learning about *differences* in which comparable experiences and their interpretation are always discussed verbally and are to be jointly explored and reflected.

Notions relating to social practices are culturally conditioned – or, to be more precise, they are "culture", as the community in which we are born and in which we grow up has already made certain decisions and has thus limited the spectrum of cognitive and action-related options. These "natural cultural restrictions", so to say, which only make cultural comparisons possible in the first place, paradoxically enough produce a certain security in action, forming the foundation for "freedom" in the thinking and actions of people – they are thus usually part of the sub-conscious. "Culture" thus offers an infinite wealth of "pedagogical potential", as the individual and collective development process takes place, for example, in the deliberate acceptance and rejection of certain culturally conditioned social practices and the notions and ideas which belong to them (be it in the deliberate rejection of brass bands or in the dramatic struggle against female genital circumcision and criticism of the way of thinking it denotes). In the debate and the conscious struggle between self-determination versus being determined by exogenous forces or adaptation versus setting one's own course, processes of self-understanding take place within the framework of certain cultures. Individual as well as collective identities come about as a result.

Cultural sensitivity in interaction can be systematically achieved in pedagogical processes if by comparison culturally conditioned social practices also always get to know notions and ideas, analysing these and placing them in relation to one's own ideas on comparable social practice. What is special about the pedagogical process within the framework of transnational education, then, is *the process of understanding oneself through understanding others.* In other words: a deeper knowledge and understanding of others leads to a more profound understanding of oneself.

One key aspect of transnational and intercultural learning is hence a special process of finding common terms.[7] This process was approached systematically in three steps in the "Quali2move" project. In the first step the respective practice in trade union education was presented and categorised (general condition of trade union education, self-understanding, objectives, values, fields of topics, content, methods and transnational skills). By the same token, in part the same, but also differing terms were used. The terms which apparently played a key role in the field of trade union education were then collected in the second step and then evaluated in terms of common relevance. An exchange thirdly took place at the next respective meeting, which allowed the ways of thinking in respective trade union educational practice to be analysed. The contexts underlying practice were then examined again and

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[7] The project partners deliberately decided to carry out four workshops (in Germany, Ireland, Turkey and Poland) in English. There were only interpreters at the final event. Communication and understanding of course took longer. After the participants had agreed on key terms, communication became more direct because the gestures and facial expressions were perceived in connection with the meaning assigned to terms, with the listeners comparing this to their own maps. This led on the one hand to questions to make sure that the participants had understood things correctly, but on the other hand to enhanced sensitivity to differences in the meaning of gestures and facial expressions.

described in more precise detail using the terms and explicitly addressing the way of thinking about social practices as a topic. This exchange on terms and the respective specific contexts and situations relating to everyday work and life produced common general terms. This insight into actual practice then lent terms an actual meaning which everyone agreed on, although at first their definitions were relatively vague – because of different cultural contexts.[8]

The terms "work", "education" and "politics" were redefined by expanding them. These new definitions now form the new foundation for future joint action based in a spirit of solidarity, for example, with joint educational programmes or cooperation within the framework of multinational enterprises. Economic action, everyday work and life of Europeans is the door to cultural diversity in Europe, and interest in each other is the key. The concept of transnational political education developed *cultural sensitivity in interaction,* which once again probably leads to a realignment of concepts of *intercultural skills*, which merely serves as the basis for cognitive conveyance of knowledge.

The concepts and methods have now been presented as the result produced by the "Quali2move" project. These have tremendous importance to the further development and Europeanisation of trade union education and beyond. In the context of the current European crisis these project results offer an important foundation for the needed further development of "European learning" at schools and in non-school adolescent and adult education towards a type of "transnational political education" which has an impact on the field of practice in Europe.

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[8] In methodological terms this procedure is based on key aspects of philosophical pragmatism. First of all, the pragmatic maxims of Charles Sanders Peirce, who placed the importance of a term in relation to the effect it produces in use in actual practice. According to Helmut Pape, the pragmatic maxim is conceived as a methodological rule serving the purpose of enhancing the clarity of our thoughts. This is: "Think about the impact which could conceivably have practical importance which we attribute to the subject of the term in our minds. Then our grasp of this impact constitutes the entirety of our definition of the object " (Peirce cited based on H. Pape 2007). The pragmatic maxim has had a major influence inter alia on John Dewey (Kehrbaum 2009, pp. 75 ff.), according to whom a situation constitutes a contextual entirety relating objects and events to one another, turning these into objects of experience and judgment (c.f. Pape 2009). At the same time, objects and events and their relationship are specified or re-specified.

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