

The autarky „emancipators“

For many, "autarky" may sound somewhat uncomfortable. The connotations of this term may evoke feelings that are likely to make people retreat quickly into their comfort zone — as long as one still exists. If it has been destroyed or lost for some reason, things look different. Then the secondary ideas change abruptly, and they turn into the opposite.

What one feels with a certain concept can change quickly. The theory of meaning knows not only the bare factual content of a term, but also the emotional and mood value that it evokes individually, and also the secondary ideas associated with it. A part of them is rather general, the other part again individual, according to the life history of the individual.

"Emancipation" tends to enjoy greater comfort and currency in the average mind than „self-sufficiency." Who needs self-sufficiency these days? And doesn't it bring additional work and effort? But being "emancipated" — around this idea revolves the feeling of freedom and independence. Young people eagerly await the day when they gain their full capacity to act and do business. Many then strive to find their own living space. However, it is also important that the state does not then restrict the young citizen again and treat him or her like a minor. Such tendencies are alarming and have recently become apparent on a case-by-case basis. The scary thing is that everyone is affected by such treatment, not just the young. Paternalism through politics does not stop at anyone. It affects bachelors as well as seasoned fathers, employees as well as businessmen, pensioners as well as students.

In ancient times, emancipation meant being released from domestic authority. Although I am not so old as to have experienced that time myself, I know from my childhood days the legal provision: 'The man is the head of the family.' In many states today, this is no longer imaginable. Today, hardly anyone dares to touch the self-determination of women in particular, even in

the gentlest way; and yet there seem to be influential personalities who tighten the screw of relativization on the term "emancipation".

That sounds oppressive, doesn't it? You can imagine a big screw clamp, so big that it fits around your neck; and then someone tightens the screw so that the clamp gets tighter and tighter. There, the joy of one's own emancipation quickly evaporates. True emancipation knows no such screw.

What is the reason for such a renewed constriction, the reason for a set-screw emancipation that is at the mercy of the interests and arbitrariness of a minority of the empowered? The reason is quite simply "mistrust." But who are the "empowered"? They are those who exert the greatest influence on legislation and politics, by whatever means they are "empowered." As a rule, their gigantic material assets provide them with this effect, on the one hand, and their routine of positioning themselves, on the other hand, and their networking with other authoritative people. As a rule, they are not elected politicians. They do not trust — also as a rule — the broad population to adopt a reasonable lifestyle, fear the envy of the masses and the danger of another revolt against the "capitalists". For about a hundred years, they have been considering and planning how to protect themselves from the loss of their goods, pushing their strategies as long-term as they are persistent.

In doing so, we touch on problems that are deeply rooted in human beings and have remained the same for millennia: envy and mistrust. These two names, however, mark only one side of the sheet. On its reverse side greed and hypocrisy are noted. To the greed belongs the intemperance. The two reinforce each other. The one continually brings forth the other at the expense of others, one man's gain becoming another man's loss. Under this process, the number of losers becomes larger and larger and the number of winners becomes smaller and smaller. This can only lead to disaster, both human and material. The envy of the deprived increases to hatred, the distrust of the winners against the envious losers to the oppression of the disadvantaged. The pressure on them becomes stronger the smaller the number of winners becomes. This will not be a "brave new world" — not even for the "winners", so that in the end there will only be losers.

Such a sociological course must therefore be clearly recognized as a course of crisis. Our word "crisis" is a loan word from Greek. There the term is "kriv-sii" (krísis) and means "divorce", "discord", "dispute", also "choice", "decision". Thus, a sociological crisis is a decision about where to start moving, always keeping in mind that no decision is also a decision; because life inevitably continues in one direction. Therefore, part of the crisis is to perceive the destination of this locomotion.

Individuals must therefore be clear about where they are heading themselves and where a society is heading. From this, one can confidently conclude that conscious crises are important and necessary. They address the individual's own responsibility and grant him the possibility of a change of destination and of course corrections. We humans are capable of reflective thinking and thus of recognizing crises. It is not to be wished to anyone to bring his years there without crises, because whoever does that denies his being human, his specialness as a responsible being. This will by no means have a good end.

Emancipation means assuming one's own responsibility — which can be cheaply expected when one is released into independence. Autarky means exactly that. This term is also of ancient Greek origin. "Αυτάρκεια" (autárkeia) = self-sufficiency, self-reliance, sufficient livelihood, also: independence. Emancipation is therefore release into self-sufficiency and not into a freedom to do whatever one feels like. Through emancipation, man is thus given a task that reminds him of his responsibility to fulfill this task by using the best possible knowledge and skills.

Here the question arises quite naturally, to what extent the school education, which flows from the public or otherwise a teaching system, is suitable to provide the knowledge and the relevant skills to cope with that task. One might also ask whether that was or is even intended by the leaders. Does educational policy intend it at all? What psychological processes underlie its status? Are students not led to ask themselves repeatedly whether what they are learning is useful for their lives, for their autonomy and independence? In the prevailing system, do we not also learn the beautiful Latin saying: *Non*

scolae, sed vitae discimus (Not for school, but for life we learn)? How much of what we learn do we use in life? Let us estimate how much of the extensive subject matter we have forgotten! The forgotten has not found any application, at least not often enough. We learned most of it only for the school grade, or not to lose time in school because of necessary repetition of a course. A temporary fun in learning will have been present with the fewest. In such a case, at least the fun factor would count. But who remembers fun-filled learning, about which one still talks gladly in sociable round decades afterwards. Doesn't one prefer to reminisce about pranks in the classroom and schoolyard, about playing hooky, about things one did instead of learning?

Unfortunately, it is a regrettable fact that school does not adequately prepare us for the demands of life in terms of self-responsibility and thus also autonomy and independence. Things are not much better with universities. It is up to each individual to address this deficiency through his or her own initiative. The problem is that the need for this is usually not recognized early enough and the path to dependency is taken much more easily than to its opposite.

To a certain extent, almost everyone strives for emancipation and thus also for self-sufficiency. Exceptions are usually of a psychopathological nature; and because this is so, it is against not thinking about an expansion of one's self-sufficiency. It is coherent, on the other hand, to do exactly that. Possibly you will notice then very soon that the present way of life, the common standard of living holds greater dependencies than this was ever the case, was, and at the same time far more means are available, than for the development of autarky were ever available.

You only need to start at one point and continue at another — then it becomes a shoe, a shoe made to measure for autarky "emancipates".

[\(back to the subject area\)](#)