

1968: A Missed Chance for Socialism

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The radical critique of capitalism requires the concept of a comprehensive alternative. What are the structures of post-capitalist society? Is there a realistic blueprint for planetary peace? We are at a historic point when the lives of countless fellow beings on our planet rely on genuine answers to these questions.

The German student movement of the last century was part of an international struggle against imperialist power and authoritarian structures. The movement reached its peak 50 years ago. At that time, I was a student leader in the area of Mannheim-Ludwigshafen. I loved the anti-authoritarian revolt, the solidarity on the streets, the hospitality among the comrades in all cities, and the common struggle against the barbarism of the existing society. Yet I wondered, did the comrades really believe in the things they were saying, such as, "All power in the state to the proletariat!" and similar slogans? We knew what we opposed but didn't actually have a positive aim. It was a pure anti-movement, carried by a kind of anger that would soon begin to rage mercilessly among the various left-wing factions too. I realized that this fight could never succeed, given the psychological structures of people within the leftist groups.

Genuine socialism needs a social basis. It isn't enough to propagate it ideologically and politically without knowing the interpersonal foundations that make it possible in the first place. How do we deal with conflicts around sexuality, love and jealousy, with latent

rivalries, competitive struggles etc.? As far as I know, almost all socialist movements up until now have failed due to such conflicts among people. The horror around us that we wanted to fight through political strategies also existed inside our groups. The original solidarity among us was replaced by ideological struggles, fights over leadership and intellectual authority, mutual slander and open hatred. After the first protesters had taken to the streets with Stalin posters and the original movement had begun to break into the many so-called "K groups," I sensed the brutal infantilism of these events. The violence they wanted to fight on the outside also lived inside themselves. Thus, the movement was doomed to disintegrate from the inside out.

Socialism points to the idea of a humane and just society. The left failed because of the contradiction between this goal and the behavior that emerged in trying to attain it. The socialist or communist structures which were to be built externally – e.g. structures of communality, justice, equality and solidarity – didn't yet exist within the people who were trying to build them. What was missing was a vision that had the power to overcome the very ordinary human conflicts around competition, envy and jealousy. It was no longer about humane goals, but – psychologically speaking – the ideological compensation of unresolved psychological problems around love, anxiety and power. I stepped out of the leftist movement and went off for some years of learning and wandering, visiting other places working on cultural metamorphosis. For me, it was about creating a sustainable social, spiritual and ethical basis for the political idea.

In 1968, Rudi Dutschke spoke of the "necessity of a long-lasting cultural revolution, particularly in the highly developed capitalist countries of central Europe, as a condition for the possibility of revolutionizing all of society." Four years earlier, he wrote in his diary that Jesus Christ was "the world's greatest revolutionary." These astounding statements, that seem to anticipate new ideas, have to be taken up and deepened today if we want to establish a worldwide movement for true liberation.

To be able to reorient society toward a humane direction we needed a completely different concept, which involved the inner transformation of the comrades. This is why I wrote the much-read "Mannheim paper" and the booklet "Revolution without emancipation is counterrevolution" at the time. I have continued working on these thoughts to this day. They led to the global "Healing Biotope Plan" and the vision of a new civilization on Earth: "Terra Nova." Over the course of our 40 years of community experience, we came to see some truths that I believe are fundamental to any humane movement.

There will be no peace on Earth as long as there is war within us, for example in our love relationships. We can only achieve as much peace on the outside as we have realized inside ourselves. That's why beginning to see a vision for sustainable peace is key for any peace work. We are set a challenge: to take the images of our true yearnings that are latent in our souls seriously and turn them into effective icons. These include soul images from the areas of love, sexuality, community and religion, images of a new ethic for dealing with each other, for worldwide cooperation with other groups, for our coexistence with the animal world and finally for the realization of our own purpose and entelechy. The project that has arisen around the "Healing Biotope Plan" works on creating a worldwide network of people and groups who are developing new answers both to the global situation of the Earth and to their own life situations. We currently work with groups around the world, such as the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia, Standing Rock in the United States, the permaculture center of

Tiyeda and Séda Abalah in Togo and many others. Working in crisis areas, these projects collaborate to find a common global direction. In this way a global movement is slowly arising that follows the motto "Defend the Sacred," coined by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and the overall vision of "Terra Nova."

At the same time as the German and international student movements rose up, completely different approaches for reorienting human society emerged around the world. Large communities based on ecological and spiritual approaches came into being, such as the spiritual community of Auroville in India, which also celebrated its 50th anniversary this year, the sannyasins in Poona and the well-known spiritual communities of Findhorn (Scotland) and Damanhur (Italy). Last but not least, there was also the Austrian "Friedrichshof," which briefly came into being after the first wave of revolutionary fervor and tried to deal with the topic of sexuality in their own – one-sided – way. Could all these varied movements contain relevant contributions to a well-founded renewal of human society? Viewed retrospectively from a distance, we can see a multitude of initiatives and movements that tried to liberate human life from the clutches of the capitalist world and bring us closer to a future worth living. It seemed almost accidental which of these movements one personally belonged to. However, there was still no common foundation and no common goal uniting these groups.

Many pioneering impulses entered the orbit at this time, many things needed to be seen and considered in order to develop a realistic overall vision for our situation as humanity. So, in the fall of 1976, I first retreated to a farm in Lower Bavaria for half a year to reflect on everything and find a meaningful way out of the ideological scrub.

Developing as a result of the path that started back then, we eventually founded Tamera in Portugal, a peace school and holistic life model with currently about 170 co-workers and a growing international network. We're no longer working only on building a local community, but on the worldwide foundations of a new humane civilization.

In the name of love for all that lives,
Dieter Duhm