

## PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE COMMANDER'S WORK

### A PARANCSNOKI MUNKA PEDAGÓGIÁJA

A parancsnok-beosztott viszonyról már sokan, sokszor írtak, jelen tanulmányunkban arra vállalkoztunk, hogy felelevenítsük a parancsnokok azon tudását, miből lett az az „alapanyag”, milyen folyamaton mentek keresztül azok az emberek, akikkel nekik dolgozniuk kell. A kérdés legáltalánosabb felvetése így hangzik: Nevelhető-e a beosztott, alakítható-e pedagógiai eszközökkel? A nemleges választ általában a parancsnoki ráhatás kudarcából alkotják, ami inkább a parancsnoki munka hatékonysága körébe tartozik.

Many have written, on several occasions, about the commander-junior relationship and this paper is intended to bring to surface the commander's skills and look at what this „raw material” is made of, and what processes the people the commanders need to deal with have gone through. A negative response to this question usually stems from failures of the commander's influence, which belong rather to the scope of efficiency of the commander's work and not to the discipline of pedagogy

Many have written, on several occasions, about the commander-junior relationship and this paper is intended to bring to surface the commander's skills and look at what this „raw material” is made of, and what processes the people the commanders need to deal with have gone through. The issues of accepting all kinds of differences and the acceptance of the other person – at all – have become increasingly problematic in our age. In our opinion, this topic should be looked at from pedagogical aspects, since the commanders have quite large a responsibility. Let us start with the paradigm of education as worded by László Zrinszky, saying that education is in fact the influencing of behaviour, in the course of which the commander tries to direct his subordinates toward things that are considered by the commander to be values. Obviously, a commander who considers punctuality, precision and formality to be important values, will require the same from his subordinates. But the question may be rightfully raised: is it possible to educate an adult person? In other words, what makes a may-bug (to use a Hungarian idiomatic phrase, meaning what makes a good soldier)? Can you still remember what determines the character of a given subordinate? And to what extent have we stereotyped them?

In this paper we would like to help commanders to brush up things they learnt in the past, about what factors make certain subordinates easy or difficult to educate, and we would also like to examine the issues of the possibility of education and heredity, so that we may look differently at our subordinates in the future.

The question of the possibility of education is a fundamental one, and there are essentially two attitudes toward it. Pedagogical optimism is the name of the approach in which we assume that man may be changed or developed through pedagogical means, in other words education is an efficient personality-shaping factor. Pedagogical pessimism, on the other hand, has doubts as to the possibility of education, due to the hindering factors, and questions regarding the efficacy of education. In the most general formulation, the question is this: can a subordinate be educated and developed through pedagogical means? A negative response to this question usually stems from failures of the commander's influence, which belong rather to the scope of efficiency of the commander's work and not to the discipline of pedagogy.

### A HISTORICAL OUTLOOK

We know well that education existed in every age, since even prehistoric man also recognised that his successors will need to be taught the ways of gathering seeds and using various tools. This is interesting, because this way males discovered always new areas, and got further away from their home place, but they still had to find their way back, and so their spatial orientation capabilities became better than those of women. On the other hand women stayed with the kids

around the home place, and they talked to them a lot, therefore their verbal capabilities became more developed. Later on, the educators and thinkers of ancient societies (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) also believed in the power of education, since in their environment they could actually experience the impacts and results of their educational efforts on intellectual and moral development. The practical evaluation of the possibility of education finally found its way to the mainstream of thinking on education through the ideological and social obstacles of the middle Ages. The humanists, Montaigne and Erasmus, professed the possibility of man's extensive development. As schoolwork became more successful, as the number of literate persons increased, all these development suggested that education had an extremely great potential, and the only thing one needed for this was the ability to manage people.

Several thinkers of the Enlightenment also voiced the opinion that society or even the world could be shaped through education. The teaching of Comenius confirmed this, as he promoted the "art of teaching everything". The theorists of the modern age did not stop at practical and experience-based optimism, but were advocates of exaggerating generalisations created through the enlarging of possibilities. Just think of Leibnitz who said: „give us control over education and we will change the nature of Europe in less than a century.” Helvetius, following the same path, pronounced the omnipotence of education. Based on the professed equality of the natural capabilities of men, he concluded that the differences observed among men could be explained only by the differences in their education. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the unity of optimistic standpoints was shaken by the emergence of a number of pessimistic views. They included social and scientific explanations, and at this time the emphasis shifted rather to the question of heredity and environmental influence. It was mainly Schopenhauer, who denied the possibility of education. He believed that heredity only played a role in the shaping of a character. It is here that the advocates of biological determinism must be mentioned, as they are the ones who saw man's development as a hereditary process.

As Hall put it, according to the theory of biogenetics, man essentially repeats the development of the race through his psychic development, and so education plays only a secondary role. At the same time, the so-called "milieu" pedagogy regarded man as fully dependent on the environment. Opposing this view, the socio-genetic researchers professed only the role of society in the changing of man. Socialist pedagogy on the other hand gave an optimistic response to the question of the possibility of education from the very beginning. This concept regarded development and the possibility of developing as fundamental attributes of man, inseparable from social progress. Makarenko is a well-known example for this belief.

In the process of education one should take into account the biological, physiological and nervous system-related endowments as internal conditions of the personality that are passed on through biological descent, but still the psychic factors – acquired and built in by man through his individual life – must also be taken into consideration. These internal conditions influence the factors determining the personality's activity and self-development.

#### A GENETIC OUTLOOK

We know that our bodies are made up of organs and tissues, each consisting of the same common basic component, the cell. Within the cell, in the nucleus, a basic aggregation can be found. During the process of cell division, the chromosomes of typical size and shape develop from them. The chromosomes contain the substance responsible for heredity, and their number is characteristic of the individual species and is constant. Man's 46 chromosomes consist of 23 pairs (fine threads). These threads are made up of proteins and nucleic acids. The functional unit of heredity, the gene, has been known as a concept for quite some time. Gene is in fact a specific section of the DNA molecule that is why a man is born always from the union of human gametes, and never an elephant or a mosquito. The law of base pairing and the DNA's capability to double itself will ensure the specificity and relative consistence of species and cells.

Mutations (changes) may be traced back to variations in the base sequence. In the old days, a birth defect was seen in a mystical light and interpreted as a divine punishment, while many living organisms have also become extinct due to the

lack of their adaptive capabilities. For instance, it is known that in the preceding ages there were short-necked giraffes as well, but since the trees grew always higher, and the giraffes could not reach the leaves, they adapted to the environment in such a way that in response to the changed environment, long-necked giraffes started to appear.

Galton tried to distinguish and define some human personality characteristics, such as intellect, temperament, character and creativity etc. He examined 111 highly gifted people and realised that these people had 222 very highly gifted descendants. What explained this? – he raised the question; is this due to heredity or the environmental impacts? These people included the Mozart family as well. But what explains the fact that in this family many good and famous musicians were raised? Heredity? Obviously, they had to have some kind of a talent, but those who have been touched by the love of music, will obviously help their children also to make progress in this direction. People are different and unequal with regard to their characteristics. Such differences may arise either from the environment or from heredity. One must definitely strive for creating equal environmental conditions, and those coming from disadvantaged circumstances, definitely need increased social support. But one should expect that such rebalancing efforts would eventually balance out the intellectual gifts, and eliminate the mental handicaps. The hereditary impacts reproduce differences, this is a fact. All living beings and their environments vary greatly. One should not regard difference as the basis of any standardised value-sets and perform any ranking on that basis! Only those will survive who are able to adapt to their environments. Populist geneticists claim that all our capabilities are genetically determined, and environmental impacts (family, school, society) do not or only slightly modify the traits we are born with. Populist sociologists on the other hand stress that man is born with a blank page, which is then written over by the impacts of family, education and society. Unquestionably, many talents have been lost and are still being lost, because their social and family situation did not favour their development. If everything depended on the environment, then the children of the ruling classes would all be congenial, while those of the lower layers of society would all be retarded.

Therefore, heredity gives only a potential endowment that may be significantly influenced by external circumstances. Detrimental impacts usually exert their effects more frequently. In the life of each man, only those skills may be realised (unfolded) whose talents are engraved in their genes' DNA codes. The environmental impacts, thus the family and the social influences determine what of these endowments will be realised, and to what extent they will be realised. Therefore, heredity has three main forms: *biological heredity* – when the parents pass on their genes and half of their chromosomes to their descendants; - the „*pattern*” for heredity (integration of the examples seen or learnt from the parents); - *socio-cultural heredity*, such as speech, language development and the handling of differences etc.

#### THE QUESTION OF BIOLOGICAL DETERMINATION

The presumption that man's mental properties are in fact of biological origin, and are inherited traits, are one held for a long time in history. This was important in feudal societies. They considered every negative or positive characteristic that resembled either of the parents, as inherited. Thus, for instance alcoholism or musical talents. Just think of how many idiomatical phrases, proverbs have originated from this belief, such as „Like the father, like the son – Such as the tree, such is the fruit – Blood will tell”- etc. But you may think of the Polgár girls (chess world champions!) also. Obviously, they were not born like that, they did not ask for a chess set for their very first birthday, in order to show what they can do. They needed a daddy, who oriented the girls toward chess at a very early age, and then later the play turned into a contest. But you have also counter-examples, like alcoholism and aggression etc. We are not born with these properties, but still, these people often claim reassuringly: „We can't do anything, as father was also like that”. Every man has some kind of a disposition, which gives him/her certain stability (reaction modes, sensitivity). The bodily constitution of the person was regarded as the physical carrier of the disposition. Naturally, it is important to know what the person has brought with it (the pregnancy, the delivery etc. are important), and we can inherit a lot of things, but the environment is the determinant factor, too, e.g. the diseases of infancy and childhood or the chronic diseases may influence behaviour. The

lack of relationship with the parent will damage for instance bodily growth. It is not the biological mother, who is important, but the fulfilment of maternal functions itself, since the new-born baby needs contact, and if this is there in adequate quantity, then the child's development will be undisturbed, and could be the basis for the development of a balanced personality. In most families children are surrounded by a healthy network of contacts, which, on the whole, is capable of facilitating appropriate psychological development. Early parent-child relationship is therefore important as a whole, as this will guarantee the pre-conditions for the development of self, and the person's sense of security depends on this, as this is the basic pattern for future relationships, as well.

Just think of socio-cultural heredity, such as the acquisition of a language, the development of speech and writing skills. But this field also includes the polygamy of the Arabic world, or we may consider the schooling of women, which is still a problem in Arabic culture, while it is a natural thing in the European civilisation. And let us look at our country, for instance the judgement about female-male chances. We might say that there is equality more or less, but we must also consider the example of – for instance – asking a woman in the countryside: "where is your husband", the answer will be: the man (the "human being" in Hungarian) is in the pub. And if a baby-boy is born, people will say, a "child" (instead of a boy) is born. This is also part of our socio-culture. But the fact that we today witness a significant positive change in the human parameters is also part of our socio-cultural heritage.

For instance, body height has increased based on data of the past 100 years (by 0.9 cm every 10 years), and we may also reasonably refer to the increase in physical performance and intellectual capabilities.

#### THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION

Seeing the development of wildlife or nature, the performance of the human species seems to be an unparalleled peak performance. There were probably two conditions for this: our inherent value, in other words the individual, intellectual endowments, and our community-creating capabilities. So far, the collective intellectual efforts of mankind brought about the greatest achievements. The hindrance in this respect is that people created a lot of shameful things also. The scorning of difference – for instance – is a terrible sin, and racism is one of its far-reaching manifestations, of which anti-Semitism and the gypsy issue are special expressions. Let us now look back a little into human history! Linnaeus believed that there were as many species as the number of different figures or shapes the infinite mind had created initially, and these figures or shapes created yet others, very similar ones, according to the law of procreation. The empirical facts refute this thesis.

Linnaeus distinguished between strain, class, family, order, genus and species. He divided the human genus into three races: Homo sapiens, homo ferus (savages) homo monstrosus (the distorted ones with severe abnormalities).

Within the category of Homo sapiens he mentioned four variations: 1. American, 2. European, 3. Asian and 4. African. Later on, the term varietas was replaced by race. Bernier, in his book titled "A New Division of the Earth" published in 1684 divided mankind into races. By race he meant larger human-categories within the human species, which had combinations upon the impact of the environment and the geographical life-circumstances, characterised by a consistent distinctive feature. Their typical marks are passed on from generation to generation in an unchanged form, and the races can be distinguished from each other based on these. In Hungarian mass media, the concepts of race and species are confused. They term racism consistently as "race theory, racialism, racial discrimination" (using the Hungarian term: "species" instead of "race"), although this relates to the social-political conflicts of large and small race groups within the human species, in other words all these groups belong to the same species. In a biological sense, only mosquito control measures can be termed "racial persecution", because an individual belonging to a species will destroy individual beings belonging to another species. But in South Africa white people oppress black people, and so this is not a conflict between species but races. Evolution, and within that, evolution into man is currently explained by two main factors. On the one hand the radiations, chemical effects and virus infections, as well as accidental errors occurring during the replica-

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Dr. Ildikó SZELEI

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tion and duplication of the hereditary substance, the DNA, bring about change in genetic information, which is called mutation. On the other hand, the biological diversity developing this way, will result in varying aptitudes for adaptation to the environment, in order to ensure the sustenance of the individual species, races and single organisms. Thus, humanity forms a single species. In the development of the typical marks of the races, one should reckon with two determinant factors, the hereditary adaptation developing and becoming fixed in the chain of generations, as well as the individual adaptation acquired after birth. Mutation allows for a wide range of variability, of which predominantly those who are able to adapt best to the environment will survive. (E.g. white skin colour in the North and dark skin colour in the equatorial zone.) The sun will tan everybody's skin, and so its permanent impact may play a role in the development of pigmentation. Therefore, dark skin could develop in hot belts, upon the impact of bright sunshine, while the white skin colour could develop in the cold areas. A substance called melanin is responsible for skin colour in the organism, as this substance is present in greater quantity in dark-skinned people than in white-skinned ones. This is true, but at the same time the acquired attributes will not be inherited (despite so much sunbathing). Skin colour is determined by the genes of 4 different loci of the chromosomes. In the equatorial belt dark skin means protection against the intensive ultraviolet radiation of the sun. Since European man has no such protection, the strong sunshine impacting his skin is harmful. On the other hand the poor sunshine could be fatal for the dark-skinned prehistoric man who found his way accidentally to the cold areas of Europe. This is because the poor sunrays could not penetrate the thick pigment layers of the skin, and so the Vitamin D production became insufficient, and so fatal development disorders developed in children on the one hand, and childbirth became impossible due to the pelvic distortion that developed in women.

Mutation and geographical isolation made living in a different zone possible. Racism, as a quasi-scientific political demagoguery appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the roots of the history of ideas take us back to the times when man started to exist. Xenophobia, that is pathological fear from other people, especially strangers, could be traced back to as early as the epoch of prehistoric primitive societies. But this was not a groundless fear, since foreigners broke into the territory always with the intention to conquer and kill (they always had more and better things etc.) – but as we know, this is a kind of infantilism. Added to this were the religious prejudices, since every community was convinced of its unsurpassable uniqueness of divine origin, and that is why they feared the influence of foreigners. Initially, they could explain the development of the races by referring to differing geographical conditions. Thus, Hippocrates professed that: „the human genus is one in terms of physiology, and peoples are distinguished by the climate, the waters and the geographical environment, the food and the morals”. He considered the white race as highest ranking. In the United States, intelligence tests were widespread and admissions to school and to the military were normally based on the results of these. Thus, they noted quite early that the intelligence quotients of the whites were higher than those of the blacks in most cases. The average IQ of Europeans of matching age was really by 15 to 20 points higher than those of African origin. The explanation came as natural: the social-economic level of the blacks and, in connection with it, their level of education was commonly lower than those of the whites, and therefore the difference is explained primarily by their cultural backlog. Jensen (1969) thought he was able to prove the hereditary determination of the difference in intelligence levels between whites and blacks. He argued that the whites were normally born with better intellectual gifts than Africans, and so the two races were unequal. Some did not refrain from trying to implant these theses into practice. Noble prize winner Shckley, for instance, wanted to sterilise blacks, and wanted to do this in a very "humane" way. He suggested money rewards to those blacks who volunteered for sterilisation, and the sum was proportionate to the extent by which they failed to meet the average IQ value of 100.

USD 100 was proposed for every IQ score below 100. Thus, a black person with an IQ value of 80 would have been paid USD 20,000.

Unfortunately, we need to sweep in front of our own door as well, because we have, for instance, the gypsy problem at our hand. The gypsy population in Hungary is increasing year after year, and so Hungary today belongs among the

European countries with the highest gypsy population. Based on their mother tongue, gypsies may be classified in three large categories – the Hungarian (71% of the gypsies), the gypsy (21%) and the Romanian (8%) populations. In 1970 the number of live births per 1000 citizens was 32, which is more than double of the national average (15). The average weight at birth of the gypsy new-borns (2860 g) is significantly lower than the national average (3150 g). The premature birth ratio is much higher, in which both their endowments and socio-cultural legacy play a role. 24.1% of the mentally handicapped people are gypsy, and this indicator is rising. What does not come as a conclusion from these statistics is that gypsies have lower intellectual potentials than Hungarians. The explanation, in fact, is this:

- Low level education of the parents;
- Poor income;
- Disadvantaged economic and cultural situation;
- Deficient fluency in Hungarian;
- Prejudices;
- Different socio-cultural heritage, customs;
- Lack of family planning;
- Their rise from self-effort and with the support of society.

Research into genetics provides an increasingly accurate picture about the structure of the chromosomes, genes and the DNA. The properties passed on through heredity, such as the body shape and nervous system type, temper and inclinations define only the broad setting of the potentials, and numerous factors influence their development. External conditions influence man's development and education.

Society, that is the most important external condition, with its economic and political arrangement, fundamentally defines the general conditions for education and schooling, as well as the education possibilities of the social classes and layers. The educational institutions are important components of the social environment from the perspective of education. The question is: to what extent external conditions impact the development of personality. Two extreme standpoints can be distinguished in this debate. One is the functional and the other is the intentional approach to education. This "broader" concept of education regards all impacts affecting the individual fundamentally as education, or educating influence, since they all play some kind of a role in the development and socialisation of the individual. Thereby education is deemed a function of the entire environment. "Life educates", and everything educates everyone. They are therefore the representatives of the functionalist pedagogy. The advocates of the other standpoint claim that only intentional, goal-oriented impacts could be called educational influences. This means that they exclude all spontaneous impacts. The controversy could be resolved only if the aspects of purposefulness are applied to the "pedagogical organisation" of the direct and broader environment as well. Education – that is purposeful, planned development – naturally contributes to the development of personality subject to the external and internal conditions, and familiarity with the specific possibilities.

#### MILITARY IMPLICATIONS

The number of people subordinated to the commander gives us the number of the types of personal education strategies he must apply.

No two persons are identical. Many deny the importance of education today, but they are wrong. Those who have – so to say – walked the triumphant way of warfare, know that with listening, focusing, custom tailored tasks, by good example, even during the period of the compulsory regular service, remarkable achievement could be made in the 1970s and 80s. Naturally, appropriate pedagogical skills were required for this, and these people gradually ascended the ranking ladder. They always acquired the experience and skills that serve as a good basis for fulfilling the more and more complicated leadership tasks. The commander must therefore become acquainted with the capacities of the individual soldiers, their limits of load-bearing capability, and must also make effort to reduce the risks of burn-out due to stress. Naturally, today

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Dr. Ildikó SZELEI

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the military personnel must be educated differently, since their responsibility and the requirements related to them are different. While in the past, caring for the soldier and focusing on him was done almost uninterrupted during his entire service, today the garrison is almost fully emptied by the end of the working day.

A commander can say that his educating activities have been successful, when his subordinates continue to behave in a disciplined and civilised manner even outside the garrison, and the sustaining of military order and the aptness to serve are not in danger even for a moment.

Discipline, compliance and commitment to the observance of obligations are all based on the quality of organisation.

And organisation is the responsibility of the commander. Organisation is one of the features of military life, and a determinant segment of socialisation within the military.

To sum up, the commander's situation is not an easy one. With the emergence of contracted military personnel, we continue to have the education of people into good soldiers as a crucial task. The appropriate treatment of "difference" is of key importance and it offers many positive impacts, for instance because of the appearance of women in the military in great numbers, more civilised speech and behaviour is now gaining ground within the military, and should still continue to enjoy further support. At the same time a more liberal attitude toward military order and discipline might also arise as a negative impact sometimes.

This paper was intended as a means to draw attention to this issue and to allow the commanders to utilise the points contained herein. In order for a commander to do a good job, he must know what makes a man work, in other words, how a human being works. In this paper, with a few theoretical contributions, we wanted to draw attention to these questions.

*Keywords: management, education, commander, nature-nurture, subordinate*

*Kulcsszavak: vezetés, nevelés, parancsnok, öröklés-környezet, beosztott*

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