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Foreword

We - especially us with this Journal in our hands- claim to be tolerant. We reject the negative discrimination of our fellow human beings whether it is based on real or supposed biological or cultural differences.

We are proud of this attitude and tend to look down on those who think or do things otherwise. Even more, we distance ourselves from such people. We distance ourselves from the racists, nationalists, Jobbik voters because the thoughts they represent we do not agree with. But is it not a form of discrimination in itself? And if it is so, where does it lead us? How long do we really want to pretend to be paralyzed while these ideologies are being embraced by more and more people. Is it worth to stay out of trouble and just watch while these thoughts keep expanding within the society day by day? And if we decide not to be just onlookers of the events and take action, what is that we can do exactly?

We are all different in many ways. There are brunettes, blondes, ones with curly hair others with straight, we love different women and/or men when we are capable of doing so. Within this variety non of us is normal. The existence of the category of normality supposes that there are people who are not normal. And who is to say where the lines of boundaries should be drawn and by it- whom should we exclude? Normal is nothing more nothing less but the cross section of acquiescence regulated from above, and negotiated from below in a given time and space. The regulation comes from above in a form of rules which sets the standards of normality and therefore it is linked to the power, whereas the negotiated conditions mean those norms and rules to be institutionalized which the common people, you and I are obliged to protect in order for the measurable tolerance of the society and the willingness to accept one another rise to a new level. Normality hence questionable, and it is our responsibility to question it constantly.

It is all too human to think in categories. To put people in certain boxes is what makes the world around us simpler to comprehend. Not only do the boundaries of these categories isolate their contents from each other, but create a certain homogeneity within the contents. These homogenized groups are then given values and bestowed upon certain features and properties by us. Properties and features are linked to values as well, but those groups which are relevant to us (whether the group is or own or not) and the values attached to them are prone to change as much as we can change them also. In today's world the categories such as of race, gender, culture, health, age, political and sexual orientation are such categories rich of values. While intelligence, successfulness, laziness, flexibility, pride, sensibility, egoism and beauty are typical examples of properties bestowed upon values. The more significant the certain group for us is, the better we distinguish it from the other groups. The more important a property for us is, the more extreme we judge ourself or others by these properties. And this is our nature.

The best we can do is to recognize this psychological function as something which needs to be worked on towards a more flexible handling of these rigid categories by making their boundaries more permeable, hence we can overwrite the features or values attached to one category. But are we aware of the limitations of our tolerance and openness? Don't we cling better to our wallets when we notice there are Romani people around? Don't we laugh along with the others out of conformity when an offensive joke about homosexuals is told? Do we speak up for that child labelled as a misfit and being just about to be expelled from school pressured by the other parents, when all his

fault is that he has different ways of doing things? And what do we do when we overhear a conversation of others on the bus or on the beach or anywhere else calling Jews, Romani or homosexuals names?

Due to the nature of this psychological function, it has no such mode as non- judgmental. In fact every time we are passed by a stranger on the street we make judgements about them, based on our categories. We detect if he is bald or brown, dressed in a gray suit, has dreadlocks, beard or a mustache. We discern how they look like, whether they are well dressed or not or have some recognizable features. These features all hold bits of information and since we don't have the whole story of the stranger we have to make up our own based on the meanings those features may hold in order to believe that we can read him or her, so as to make the stranger familiar. Thus in that moment on the street when we make up the story of the stranger we use nothing but our prejudices, ready to use categories and scripts. In this moment we are strongly judgmental and claiming the opposite is nothing but mere hypocrisy. The only way to refine these categories is to learn more about one another. To see the stranger again, to meet, to interact with them and meanwhile overwriting the knowledge we have gathered about them, learning to think in a more flexible way. This conscious mental effort is about a constant testing of previous hypotheses within our mind, the result of expanding our thinking towards alternative options, and these options we do need in order to identify the right one among them. We are only capable of such psychological efforts and make others capable of doing the same, if we open to the others and engage in discussions with them about the psychological boundaries. Discussions is the way in which options surface constantly, so that we can recognize or reject them. In this process the object becomes more and more important and we get a complex and more accurate picture of it. Therefore it is easy to agree with those who share our vision and likeminded. But might it be a challenge to engage in such conversations about otherness and tolerance with those who don't share our ideas?

When we express what we think, and the other does likewise, we both take a certain position. We both have a certain relation to the subject under discussion and our notions about it can be divergent and dissenting. The verdict we express on the subject might be just a subjective one, or just a result of a biased position or a misinterpreted notion, but we need these notions as well as the others notions involved in the disputation in order to discern what we think as appropriate knowledge. When we utter our thoughts and notions, we reveal bits of information about ourselves as well, and this might be a threatening experience, as this revelation puts ourselves into play, so that we can easily become fair game to others. We are also compelled to stand up for what we believe to be true and protect our believes by reasoning. Eventually this process teaches us how to debate, and shows us that we indeed need the opinion of the others, even if we disregard it as faulty, because this is the only way to find middle ground, to negotiate and create a consensus regarding the subject. And when we form a dissenting reaction to what the other one has to say, we do not judge the other person per se, rather we express our disagreement with the content of what has been said by the other. This attitude allows them to stay in the game, because we need them to stay just as much as they need us to remain in discussion. Meanwhile everybody involved in the process gains new skills and knowledge in terms of being challenged, tested and through this we learn how to give up the positions we hold on to and we can be capable of changing our minds and protect the our freshly made ideas out of conviction. Not only does this process boost our self- confidence, but we begin to reflect to our own thoughts and emotions and this should provide the basis for a culture of debate we seek in order to no longer be just onlookers of the spreading of those radical ideologies and in order not to just to identify with the other side uncritically, but to be willing to express our own opinions, be ready to stand up for them and discuss it with others. Based on our undertaken responsibility we talk through again and again those basic values and norms with the people we share a sense of community with, whether it means to be colleagues, to be friends or just somebody we occasionally engage in a conversation with on the market on Saturdays, because these are the fixed points of a community built upon social consensus.

The idea of absolute knowledge or truth has long been challenged. In today's time natural sciences, owing to such notions as of quantum mechanics and the Heisenberg's uncertainty principle the modern dichotomy between the scientist and the reality to be discovered no longer exists as the basic categories of time and space have become relative. On the contrary, in some of the social sciences however, or in their mainstream branches at least the gap between the scientist and the truth they seek to uncover still remains. Distilling the truth by inductive statistical measures and then its objectification in the scientific language distances the scientist from their own social context, therefore discarding the effect this context may have on the outcome of the process as a whole. However it is our own embedment into a social context, the effect of self- reflection that truly is in the center of science, and therefore determines the methods used in the scientific experimentation as well as it influences the decisions we make, the measures we undertake and directs what we put the emphasis on when interpreting the results, and how we see the practical values of the outcomes, and the extend how much we explicate them, or perhaps armored with the shield of objectivity we think that all of these is no longer our task to be accomplished. Expanding the frames of objectivity within the scientific knowledge by adding the perspective of the scientist does not weaken the quality or relevance of knowledge, in fact it makes knowledge questionable, thereby giving room for it to be disapproved, refuted or supported. Knowledge which has been questioned can be material for debate and therefore can be subjected to reformation or can be built upon in order to create new knowledge which gives a better explanation for the world around us. The perspective one takes on, the thought and knowledge having been embedded in a context is a position which holds value - the perspective which is not taken on also of value, but that value has to remain implicit. Quality argumentation on the content of knowledge makes the opponents to agree with it, to accept and internalize this content. It is this disputation and the involvement in it that leads to a consensus which then creates the objective truth. Discussion, the process of challenging the opinions of one another creates conflict and conflict can be the inception of all real changes.

Not only is it our opinion that counts, but our deeds and accomplishments are of similar importance. We can set an example, we can be part of the process in which a society create its own norms. The quality of the achievements we accomplish is the only thing that gives us- whatever small it may be- the right to have our say in order to change the tendencies between these games of power and to be part of our own making. According to Zinn and Chomsky, it is the "countless small actions" of ordinary people which brings about the desired changes in society, those who remain unknown while they carry on with the infinite battle for the truth and peace. meanwhile giving rise to those "great moments" in history. Chomsky, in his speech about Zinn's life draws attention to the revolutionary and forceful actions that can contribute to historical change. .

Time can be another issue here. We might think our efforts to be meaningless, if others aren't willing to take actions either, we might think expressing our opinions to be pointless, when there is nobody to listen. We can retreat in the cocoon of the social passivity or indifference, or perhaps the fear of losing our status is too threatening, since introducing and supporting the new and alien thoughts to others who might disagree by means of intact reasoning is both time consuming and rather expensive, a cost we may fear we cannot afford. We can choose to yield to the pressure of conform, and try everything to fit into the normal, whatever that normal means, and be content with the present circumstances. But if we do so, how do we know then when we have reached the point after there is no more left to surrender of ourselves, or the society or the people around us? Are we aware that having reached this point there will be nothing more to be heard as whatever we have to say or no matter how loud we want to say it, it will be silent?

These disputable thoughts made us to take anti- racism as a conscious position on, by which we refuse to discriminate negatively the other human beings whether it is based on assumed or real biological or cultural differences. And we do it by means of being open to discuss with those who

challenge our ideas, meanwhile guaranteeing the quality of our reasoning and setting examples by our deeds.