

THE POSSIBILITY TO RECOGNISE AND MEET THE VICTIM

1. In Northern Ireland people meet in groups. They come from different backgrounds, with different experiences and expectations. Potentially the members of these groups are enemies of each other. Nevertheless, because of the atmosphere, the reality of freedom, being in the group, stories are told. Stories of hurt, of being a victim, a scapegoat, eventually of members of the group or of people with whom members of the group sympathise. How can the storyteller really be recognized and met, especially by those who belong to those who afflicted the hurt, who victimized, scapegoating?
2. First of all, all emotionality, all sentimentality does not work. Being horrified, saying that it is awful what the other had to endure, being, as in sentimentality is always the case, in the same time very happy that it is he/she, and not we, we ourselves, I myself who had to endure this, makes things worse. The victim is once again isolated and more alone. It looks like some help. In fact everybody stayed with him/herself. There is no real humanity and no real freedom.
3. Meeting the victim means letting him/her as a person in, into our being. It is not just the stories which come into us. It is the person, who tells these stories. As a person he enters our life and we have respect for her/him, as a person who suffered this. So we get a new understanding of suffering. Of this suffering person. Of the suffering of humanity. Of our own suffering, with which we could not get along until now. So there comes a new manner in being together, a new belonging together.
4. How it is possible to have this meeting? We are all ourselves victims and so it is possible that we meet, as victim, the victim so recognizing the brother, the sister, in the other. But in fact it is not so easy, because we all are not only victims, we all are too perpetrators. Accepting the victim in my life means, that I not only recognise in her/him my own being a victim. It means too, recognizing myself as a, the perpetrator. Meeting the victim always too means that I meet my guilt. Meeting, receiving the victim in my life I confess my guilt. By confessing this guilt, in which manner ever, the victim can forgive and she/he can confess her/his own guilt. Because there are not victims in this world who are not guilty in the same time.
5. It might be, that the meeting goes the other way round. Hearing the victim telling, I am hearing about my guilt. If I stand it to hear, if I don't turn down in one manner or another (and there are very many manners, it would be worthwhile to sum them up), then there is an entrance for the victim in my life as the human being she/he always was.
6. Meeting each other in this manner, the victim and the perpetrator, who both are always both, but that is an insight in the end, not at the beginning of the meeting, then human beings really meet and can go together, to unknown land, to a new life.