

Discussion of Dr. B. Vymetalik's paper

ZAMPETTI

Io ho seguito con molto interesse la sua relazione. Del resto siamo in sintonia culturale, abbiamo le stesse idee sulla tematica della partecipazione. Intendo soltanto fare alcune osservazioni. La *Laborem exercens* prima ancora che del lavoro dell'uomo, parla dell'uomo del lavoro. Con questo vuole chiaramente affermare che il soggetto del lavoro è l'uomo integralmente considerato, nell'unità delle sue dimensioni. Questo concetto è molto importante perché ci permette di interpretare l'attuale trasformazione della società.

Stiamo assistendo al fenomeno della scomposizione delle classi sociali. I contrasti o addirittura la contrapposizione tra capitale e lavoro è avvenuta nell'ambito delle classi sociali. Ora dobbiamo porci la domanda: che cosa sostituiamo alle classi sociali? Qual'è la nuova struttura non più classificata della società? Io chiamo la nuova società, quella che dovrà sostituire la società di classi, società di ruoli e di funzioni, nella quale ciascun lavoratore deve avere una sua identità determinata dalla sua preparazione professionale. Oggi non è più possibile arrivare al mercato del lavoro senza un'adeguata e specifica preparazione. Quindi la formazione e l'acquisizione delle conoscenze che avviene nella scuola è importantissima per la nascita e lo sviluppo della nuova cultura del lavoro. Ora lei faceva rilevare che tempo fa era considerata utopistica la concezione che sosteneva il primato del lavoro sul capitale. Oggi non più. L'utopia si sta dissolvendo. Io penso, anzi, dal momento che l'acquisizione delle conoscenze fa parte del capitale umano, che l'unità di capitale e lavoro avviene interiormente "in interiore homine", prima ancora che esteriormente nel tessuto sociale. L'unità di capitale e lavoro è la diretta conseguenza del riconoscimento dell'uomo-persona nell'unità di tutte le sue dimensioni. Nella cultura del lavoro imperniato sull'uomo persona la partecipazione diviene fondamentale: per essa l'uomo titolare del suo capitale umano diviene altresì titolare di parte (proporzionalmente al lavoro prestato e al capitale umano conferito) del capitale finanziario di una impresa. Tra i due principi enunciati nella *Laborem exercens*: "uomo del lavoro e proprietà dei mezzi di produzione" esiste pertanto una stretta connessione trovando la sua radice nell'unità dell'essere umano dal momento che è la preparazione personale,

che è *essere*, che permette al lavoratore di *avere* una parte della proprietà. Comproprietà significa infatti avere una *parte* della proprietà dei mezzi di produzione. Dalla comproprietà si giunge “naturaliter” alla partecipazione. Credo che la tesi che ha sostenuto possa rientrare in questa concezione. Per questo ho desiderato sottolineare questo punto.

VYMETALIK

I tried to stress this standpoint in my paper, too. Nevertheless, I would like to signal one danger: if knowledge nowadays becomes the decisive capital, we must endeavour to prevent an increasing number of people from being left without this knowledge capital.

ARROW

There is a recurrent interest among a few economists in producers' cooperatives as an alternate economic system. As a practical problem, the traditional producers' cooperative can raise capital only from retained profits, which may frequently be inadequate. I merely wish to call attention to the very interesting work of the late great English economist, James Meade and to a book of essays in his honour, *Alternatives to Capitalism* (edited by Anthony Atkinson).

I also want to ask a question. In several of the post-communist societies, privatization of state firms is accomplished by distribution of vouchers to ownership, in some cases (as frequently in Russia) to the workers, in others (as in the Czech Republic) to the general public. Has this difference had any significant consequences?

VYMETALIK

A considerable number of our citizens participated in the voucher privatisation. Due to the influence of huge publicity campaigns, they invested their vouchers in large amounts in newly established investment funds. These funds, however, were founded by big companies and big banks in which the state had the decisive owner's share. Besides, the funds have often invested the vouchers back in banks that founded them. A confused ‘crinkum crankum’ was thus created when banks own funds and funds, on the other hand, have owners' shares back in banks. Small shareholders are “out”. They do not receive any dividends, or only very small ones.

The funds — in spite of the fact that they belong nowadays to the biggest owners in the country — rather look after trading with shares and after royalties for their staff, but we lack the real owners who would care about the company as if it was their own. That is why the productivity of our companies continues to be low.

SCHASCHING

Zwei kurze Anfragen: Die erste betrifft die Stellung der Gewerkschaft in den post-kommunistischen Ländern.

Warum besteht dort immer noch ein gewisses Mißtrauen den Gewerkschaften gegenüber während *Laborem exercens* ausdrücklich feststellt, daß sie ein konstitutives Element einer demokratischen Gesellschaft darstellen und einen wesentlichen Anteil an der Verwirklichung einer "Kultur der Arbeit" haben.

Die zweite Frage: Herr Kohler sagte, daß in den Vereinigten Staaten ein Arbeitsverhältnis im Durchschnitt nur 4 Jahre dauert. Wie wirkt sich diese Mobilität auf die soziale Bindungskraft der Arbeit aus? *Laborem exercens* spricht davon, daß die Arbeit "eint" und "Gemeinschaft schafft". Wie ist diese Aussage in einer hochgradigen Mobilität der Arbeit zu verstehen?

VYMETALIK

It was probably a great mistake that in our country the former trade-unions managed to be classified as democratic ones and that they could take over all the public property they were formerly controlling. To their disadvantage they thus created mistrust in citizens and initiated the process leading to the situation where the trade-unions lost most of their legal power for the protection of employees. Practically the only rights that remain to trade unions consist of the right to conclude collective agreements and the possibility of strikes. In the companies where there are no trade-unions — and this is the case of many newly privatised companies, in which the owner simply does not allow them — the owner has a right to cover by its internal regulation the questions otherwise regulated by collective agreement. The owner simply does not need trade-unions and he often behaves towards his employees as in the nineteenth century.

That's why, for example, in Christian trade-unions "Labour and Freedom", we create regional organs, where we accept such employees with no protection, and we provide them with advice and necessary legal assistance.

Concerning the second question about the temporary jobs, I am also of the opinion that such employment does not contribute to employees' integration in society. This leads to another paradox: on the one hand, the demanding technologies require active workers with appropriate social security; on the other, replacement of older technologies leads to "freeing" a considerable number of employees without new required qualification, who cannot get an adequate job with the same salary as the previous one. It obviously suits well their new employers. This presents the danger of creating new divisions in society.

McNALLY

Most of the papers for the first two days have been concerned with the major Western European political problem of the day, which is unemployment in Western Europe. And today we have turned to the problems of Eastern Europe. I had hoped that we might get on to the comments in *Centesimus annus* about the development of the Third World. However, I make the observation that the Church is going to have to be very careful in following up the ideas in *Centesimus annus*. We are learning more and more that the old generalisations are turning out to be generalisations about the West. Trade Unionism is, for instance, at an entirely different stage, with different problems, in Eastern Europe. In Africa we have another picture, and about Asia we are wholly uninformed. Generalisations about the one will not apply to the other.

VYMETALIK

My paper was not focused specially on the trade-unions' activities. I only tried to answer questions that were put during discussion. The topic of trade-unions would undoubtedly deserve much broader independent attention. My paper concerned relationships between employees and, generally speaking, relations in the process of work. I believe that opinions and approaches contained in it are important not only for developed countries, but due to globalisation also for other countries. Sooner or later they will probably play a role also in the countries classified nowadays as developing countries.

MARTIN

Two observations, on the basic theme of the culture of work and the quality of human relations at work. Traditionally, the social teaching of the Church, because of its concerns for the priority of labour over capital, because of its emphasis on the right to work and also because of its pastoral concern for workers, has tended to stress security at work and protection of the worker. My question would be: what qualities of human relationships at work, or what vision of the organization of labour, should the social teaching of the Church be stressing today, to equip people to face a situation where security of employment, in many cases, does not mean permanence in a specific job, but rather employability at different jobs in the life span. How can we approach a situation in which flexibility is a value? Creativity, and creative potential, is certainly a key or a way. But the other side of the coin is precariousness. How can we, in that situation, guarantee that labour doesn't again become more radically contingent, in

the way which Professor Kohler demonstrated yesterday? Moreover, the older you get, the less there may be on offer; then flexibility becomes very questionable. What aspects of the culture of work should we be stressing to equip people to live their life in that new situation?

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has the specific project to enter into a new dialogue with the structures of organized labour. Certainly, the realities in Western Europe and the United States are different from those in Eastern Europe. The situation in Latin America is different from that of the Tigers of Asia. There is also the reality of the large confederations of trade unions, which are themselves in a process of examining what it means to be representing the workers today. It is important and urgent that the social teaching of the Church, which has always stressed the importance of trade unions, gets involved in this dialogue urgently. Otherwise, with the rapid demise of trade unions, we may end up saying: "You are a beautiful corpse, you are something wonderful, but you are no longer alive".

VYMETALIK

These questions are very serious. Growing uncertainty at work, which concerns particularly the workers without qualifications due to technological and other changes, but also, related to it, growing uncertainty for others because of deteriorating living conditions — this is certainly a very threatening problem. It brings danger of new divisions, as it has been highlighted, for example, by Professor Robert Reich. He sees the solution in significant support to the growth of education and in extensive re-qualification programs. This is undoubtedly an important solution, but it is obviously insufficient. It will be necessary to search intensively new possibilities.

It is equally important to seek a new role for trade-unions in contemporary society. In my opinion, especially the Christian trade-unions should support and assert practical application of ideas of the Catholic social doctrine. And not only trade-unions. Other organisations are needed that would participate in the propagation of these ideas. It is very important, as e.g. in our country people know practically nothing about them. The press does not show special interest in the Catholic social doctrine — not even the Catholic press.

MINNERATH

Herr Kollege, ich hätte nur eine kurze Frage. Glauben Sie, daß es eine Verbindung gibt oder geben kann zwischen Verbesserung der Arbeitsverhältnisse im Betrieb, was Sie heute so glänzend behandelt haben, und Verschaffung von neuen Arbeitsplätzen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt.

VYMETALIK

So. Schwer zu antworten. Wahrscheinlich wenn gute Beziehungen am Arbeitsplatz sind, so die Leute wollen nicht weggehen, aber trotzdem manchmal müssen sie, so ... Und wenn sie müssen, so ist es eine andere Frage, die Politik, die neue Arbeitsplätze schafft. So, ich weiß nicht, ob diese Beziehung existiert, genau, ob es beeinflussen kann.

MINNERATH

Ja. Vielleicht als kulturelle Voraussetzung für die Annahme mancher Lösungen wie Teilzeitarbeit oder so.

VYMETALIK

Wahrscheinlich nicht so viel bei uns. Da, nach dem Absturz des Kommunismus, es hatten sich viele Möglichkeiten geschaffen für Kurzarbeit, für *entrepreneurship*, viele Leute wollten das versuchen. Sie sind jetzt langsam weggefallen, aber sie wollten das versuchen. So, viele Leute sind in der Schattenökonomie, ja, angegliedert. Bei uns ist es bis jetzt nicht klar, wie diese Beziehungen sich entwickeln werden.

ZULU

I should like to explore some of the fundamental principles, which I feel inform your paper, and the strategies you recommend in order to create a culture of work. To me, the concept "culture of work" assumes a community of interests, rather than what I call a convergence of objectives. Practically, a typical employee-employer relationship is unlike a marriage; it is rather a situation where capital's primary objective is accumulation. Hence, the concentration of capital in a few hands, typified by the existence of large conglomerates. In this instance, the contribution of labour is on the terms of capital; until there are limits set to the extent to which capital can accumulate, I cannot see a situation where we could say that equals define a common culture. Given such diametrically opposed positions, how do you create a community of interests which would lead to a culture of work?

And this leads me to my second point. It particularly concerns Third World Societies, often referred to by sociologists as plural societies in terms of economic interest. Empirically, the capitalist is a stranger; multinational corporations, with very little indigenous input, dominate the economy. What you refer to as strategies of human resource management in your paper, strikes me as generally management on the terms of capital, which is both foreign and strange. The factory, therefore, becomes a center of contest not only for economic purposes, but for political relations as well. Given these

economic and political situations, and the divergences in the social composition of the actors, how does one create a culture of work? Is it not an ideal? And if it is an ideal, what are the practical steps we should take towards the realization of this ideal?

VYMETALIK

I have tried to show that the first steps towards the realisation of a culture of work must in fact come from the management. It is hard to imagine that the employees would simply walk up to their employer and say: "We want a new culture of work". We must first guide the employers to realising that nowadays, even for accumulation of capital, it is important to respect a man, to give him such conditions that would bring him satisfaction. This is the first step.

The second step is creation of such relations at work that they will fully respect the subjectivity of employees. Many institutions can help, in accordance with the specific conditions of individual countries. The third step consists in intensive communication, because people do not know much about these ideas. I will give a small example from our "voucher" privatisation. Initially people were not interested in it. However, a fortnight of massive professional publicity, made by an Harvard investment fund, was enough to lead 6 million to buy the "voucher booklets". That's why it is so important that Christians as well manage to publicise efficiently the ideas of Christian ethics. In this case it is particularly important to present examples of successful solutions. This is what people want to hear. We know how difficult it is to find such examples. They, nevertheless, exist and we should not hesitate to speak about them, although obviously as examples among several other possibilities of implementation of the social doctrine.

TIETMEYER

There is no doubt that economic, structural and traditional starting points differ fairly substantially from one country to another. An interesting example in this context is German reunification, where two different traditions suddenly came together. In this case we are dealing with a system in transition in the East and an established system in the West. When these came together, several inconsistencies and incompatibilities clearly came to light. I must emphasise that we naturally transferred much of the established Western system Eastwards. However, there have been a number of interesting reactions to these transfers to the East, and these may help us in the West to get necessary reforms under way.

The role of the trade unions is one example. Here, too, there was

initially a transfer from West to East. It emerged, however, that West German trade union practices could not simply be transferred to Eastern Germany. There are now more rules in Eastern Germany which are tailored to the needs of individual enterprises. This has something to do with the economic situation there, but is also associated with the fact that in the East people have become more reluctant to accept fairly large collective organisations. To that extent, I believe it will be the East that will bring the West on to the right course on this issue, i.e., replacing collective agreements increasingly with rules governing individual enterprises, as that will be necessary in the West, too, in future.

I do not wish to deal in more detail with the subject of voucher privatisation at this juncture. Suffice it to say that we in Germany have chosen quite a different model, and that is the trustee solution. In my opinion, this will ultimately prove to be economically superior, because old structures can be broken up more easily with this approach than with voucher privatisation. Although the latter has changed the status of ownership, the former power structures have remained in practice.

I would like to make another general comment, and it is on the subject of solidarity and the community of employed people. It has been said that the need to change jobs more frequently has undermined the old classical solidarity of employees. That may be true, but I believe there has been a new development which I would like to describe as team work. That is to say, we often have new cooperation structures at work these days, which are no longer based on solidarity within the various hierarchical groups such as workers or — as we call them — employees, or on the solidarity of an enterprise's management. At one time a person was employed, for example, at Krupp's and belonged to the Krupp family. Nowadays it is a small team of ten, 20 or 30 people who work in a given area or on a particular project. This leads to another solidarity question which is concentrated mainly on the working area. Such team structures are to be found increasingly in new and large firms, in particular. In the light of these new structural developments and the growing differences in interests, it is likely that the old mass solidarity of the trade unions will lose more and more ground.

Incidentally, this also applies to the cooperative structures that were mentioned. The cooperative is no longer very attractive from the employee's point of view and is increasingly disappearing. It still exists, of course, as a form of organisation in certain small and medium-sized enterprises, for example, in the form of cooperative banks in banking or in the form of trading cooperatives in the marketing of goods. However, that is something different from a worker cooperative.

I would like to point out in conclusion that Professor Utz was right to

address a topic which we are not yet able to deal with here but which, in my opinion, we should be dealing with elsewhere. The question is whether we can limit the term 'work' to the work offered in the market or whether we should define the term much more broadly. I think Professor Utz is right in adopting the broad definition of work. In that event, however, we would have to be clear about the economic consequences of such a broad definition, because payment in that case will be demanded for work performed outside the market, too. And that brings us to the real issue: which types of transfer are suitable for solving this income problem? Unfortunately, society's sense of values is based one-sidedly on market-related work. I regard this restriction of the term work as dangerous in the long run and would be happy if society's values were to become broader again. But we shall have to discuss the consequences for income in that case and find relevant solutions. And that will not be easy.

VYMETALIK

Thank you, I have nothing to add, just a small note. I mentioned the team-work in my paper as well. Unfortunately, it is practically non-existing in our country. This is perhaps again a question for the future.

BATLINER

Nur ganz kurz: In Anbetracht der hochinteressanten Ausführungen, die Sie uns gegeben haben über die derzeitige Situation in Tschechien, hätte ich folgende Frage, wie Sie die Sache beurteilen, und was das zukünftige Wirtschaftssystem sein soll. Wir sprechen von der sozialen Marktwirtschaft, wir sprechen von der freien Marktwirtschaft. Ihr Ministerpräsident Claus ist ein starker Verfechter der freien Marktwirtschaft und spricht nicht von der sozialen Marktwirtschaft; wir haben das erfahren beim Weltwirtschaftsforum in Davo. Glauben Sie, daß das System der sozialen oder der freien Marktwirtschaft dazu geeignet ist, in Tschechien, weitere Arbeitsplätze zu schaffen oder glauben Sie, daß ein bestimmter Dirigismus — ich spreche bewußt nicht von der Planwirtschaft — daß ein bestimmter Dirigismus notwendig ist, um weitere Arbeitskräfte, und zwar leistungsbezogene Arbeit, zu begründen.

VYMETALIK

The first problem is that people in our country have rather vague and different ideas about the social market economy. Even the supporters of so called "pure" market economy assert in practice state interventions, which are approaching rather socialist concepts. The social market economy could

obviously be a solution for our country too. I personally would prefer to speak about a solution based on the principle of subsidiarity. I, however, fear that the social market economy within the frame of one state is nowadays not quite possible; owing to globalisation, it is necessary to form also global institutions at various levels. This is probably a way to the future.