

Dialogue Group KAS/ Ordo socialis/KSZ:

“Global World and Social Justice: Subjects and Challenges of the Future”

8th October 2010

Event Report

“New questions cannot be responded by old answers” – thus reads a request to the Catholic social doctrine with a view to the modern time. For globalization raises questions. And places traditional notions in a modified context. What do mean responsibility and social justice against the background of the new situation?

Under the slogan “Global World and Social Justice: Subjects and Challenges of the Future” the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAS), Ordo socialis (OS) and the Catholic Social-Scientific Centre (KSZ) have tried to find answers to this question. On 8th October 2010, under the leadership of Dr. h. c. Josef Thesing, Vice President of Ordo socialis, Christian social philosophers met for an exchange of views on the challenges of the future which are to be expected in the area of social ethics: Which subjects will come about? Which are the responses available to Christian social ethics? Which items and texts become important? Matter of discussion was not only the future of Europe, but moreover the fact that in many parts of the world the issue of social justice, last but not least, has become also a question of political stability, a question of creditability of democracy.

The meeting was attended by: Cornelius G. Fetsch, President of Ordo socialis and by his proxy Helmut Linnenbrink, together with Mrs. Beate Kaltefleiter, Secretary General of OS; KSZ was represented by its director Msgr. Prof. Dr. Peter Schallenberg and his proxy Dr. Arnd Küppers, as well as by the Secretary General of the Berlin Institute of Christian Ethics and Politics (ICEP), Prof. Dr. Axel Bohmeyer, and by Markus Krienke, Professor of Christian Social Ethics and Ecclesiastical Social Doctrine at the university of Lugano and director of the there located professorial chair “Antonio Rosmini” The KAS was represented by Dr. Marlies Abmeier, coordinatress of religion and value orientation, and by Dr. Angelika Klein for the correspondent international subject areas.

In his welcome address and in the introduction to the subject matter Dr. Thesing stressed the unbroken importance and performance force of the Christian social doctrine to give assistance to the worldwide growing disorientation: seldom had happened such significant phases of radical change like at present. This had effects also on politics – which had difficulties to keep pace with the reality and which be scarcely acting, in most cases “re-acts”. But in the forehand it be important to take an “inventory” of some fundamental questions – and this under the prognosis of globalization. The actual world and reality could only be understandable as being of global nature. This again requires thinking over what should be understood by Christian social doctrine under the changed conditions. However, this thinking over

offered also the chance to fertilize basic ideas of the Christian social doctrine for other cultural contexts. One example be China, where a growing need of ethical founding could be stated: a need which in the meantime exceeds the own tradition – for instance Confucianism – and be also open for conceptions offers of different origin. This be shown amongst others by the fact that meanwhile it had become possible to publish the social doctrine by Höffner in Chinese and by the demand which this publication experiences.

The presentation of the participants and of their institutions made evident many desiderata and common concerns. In the forefront was placed the request of opening of the up to now predominantly national orientation of the German socio-ethical institutions in theory and practice and their extension to the European and international area. Were also requested the need of a better netting of amongst each others and the abrogation of possible competitive and demarcation tendencies in favour of common interests and cooperation as well as the need of better linking of church and economy and their glancing power into the community.

Moreover became evident the multiple experiences available to the participating institutions already nowadays and which with regard to the concerns mentioned can be allied and fertilized. The university professorial chairs and institutions perform important contributions in the area of research, while Ordo socialis can prove a valuable anchorage in the business community and international orientation; since the foundation Ordo socialis has been oriented towards internationalization and did understand under “globalization” not only for example transport systems and trade, but has directed attention also to a “globalization of values”. And finally KAS as political foundation can contribute multiple experiences resulting from the project of its international cooperation: many congresses on important socio-ethical issues and political framework conditions, relevant papers and publications, interconfessional expertise in Eastern Europe, especially with regard to the socio-ethical orientation of the Orthodox churches, the political education of future elites and multipliers. As an excellent example Dr. Thesing, ancient director of the international Institute of KAS, mentioned the Summer-Academy at Bad Honnef, whose 278 ancient participants hold meanwhile leading positions – amongst them fifteen professors and three bishops. Following this model the Mexican Institute of Christian Social Ethics (IMDOSOC) be prepared to offer meanwhile lectures on the spot. Also in other continents the Summer-Academy could serve as model, the financial expense being low, but the multiplication factor very high. It be important to straightly contact in all countries the target group of students who wish to become priests. With its several thousands of ancient scholarship holders from abroad the scholarships of KAS proved moreover as a permanent and long term investment.

Problems and Subjects

As a first difficulty it was brought forward that the Church as a whole be too unpolitical: it be true that the bishops nowadays as ever dispose of an enormous

spiritual power; the Bible be still the mostly printed book – and yet persons make too few use of it. Just now, where in the prevailing value vacuum orientation is lacking, the existing potential be not sufficiently exhausted. Necessary be a stronger occupation with global matters – democracy, justice, social state and politics.

Moreover – according to the above mentioned desiderata – was also defended an Europeanization and globalization of the application of values: not only the socio-ethical principles were to be placed in an enlarged context, but also their communication and application. The new challenges resulting from globalization were well valid for the principal reflection of the intellectual substance of the socio-ethical conviction as for their application in practice too. The formation of multipliers be here of central importance. As example has been mentioned the “Social State”: this one could not longer be interpreted “in a classical way”, because the correspondent self-evidence does not longer exist. Principles were eroding, were no more self-evident and thus ought to be newly defined and adapted.

Also as a whole, the too strong narrowing on the German national state context was conceived as the still blind mark of the German national economy. This became evident, thus the participants, also with regard to property issues. Nowadays as in the past be regarded as a type of entrepreneur the director of a middle class firm who as the owner and patriarch had a personal feeling of responsibility for his firm and for the staff and could be contacted for ethical and virtue issues. But this had basically changed. The new type of manager in big groups, in banks and stock exchanges had – differently to the owner-entrepreneur directly concerned by deficient decisions – a more abstract relation to the prosperity which he manages. The two models or concepts of entrepreneur-ship be to distinguished – and it be now the challenge to draw the “Ackermanns and the Middelhoffs” to the socio-ethical area. The big entrepreneurs or stock-brokers had less conscience as regards also the personal responsibility of their doing. The example “Commerzbank” had also shown: The bank manager is less reached by moral roll-calls, whilst the owner-entrepreneur is responsible of his acting. Basic feature of a stock exchange morality, of a strategy for groups and for anonymized and abstract business alliances ought to be developed.

Just these difficulties had also played a role in the preparatory phase of the Encyclical: The Catholic social doctrine presents itself as centred on the individual, which is justified by theology. The acute question be however, how moral expectations were to transfer to institutions and organizations. This would be hardly possible otherwise than by persons – as it is known, the market itself had no morality, but only the persons behind the market. Therefore the new type of manager himself be a problem which must be considered.

Therefore the participants decided to stronger include the question of entrepreneurs into the socio-ethical considerations, to consider more precisely the big entrepreneur as a concrete, as an acting subject and to discuss with priority the personal dimension. The urgent question be how in the area of regulatory policy can be

created instruments – in order to “moralize” the responsible person and to bring together the individual-ethical and the entrepreneurial areas.

Just this, thus the summary, were the typical challenges of the further development of the idea of the social market economy under global framework conditions. The social market economy be well in a position to be sold as “exportation hit” - of the German model, but the transfer of its basic ideas and its adaptation to a respective cultural context. Thus also, for instance, in China the social issue be of importance (the country counts 80 millions of unemployed persons) and a context-conform solution must be found. The persons concerned should not operate like missionaries but enter a dialogue. The Christian churches could play an extraordinary role in this context.

Moreover, the participants remembered that the social market economy in its beginnings had everywhere to overcome hurdles – in Latin America for example the notion “*economia social de mercado*” first had found resistance, because people associated the notion “social” with “socialismo” (socialism). This had to be basically changed, meanwhile it be recognized as a standard notion of a certain regulatory system and be self-evidently part of the system. And even in Germany there had existed difficulties and misunderstandings which in the after war epoch came up due to the supposed equilization of “social” and “socialistic”.

The social market economy had generally been conceived for a long time not as a desideratum. To the contrary the economism of Anglo-Saxon character had been considered as successful and exemplary model which had served as orientation for many countries amongst others also in Eastern Europe. The crisis now had brought about a caesura which required not only but also made possible new reflection. It has opened chances which must be made use of – if the crisis were forgotten, the chance be lost.

The social philosophers share the observation that the neo-liberalism which seemed to keep first the forehand had meanwhile fallen in discredit. With the downfall of communism thinking in blocs in the two extremes be now no more possible. Thus one meet in the middle and had good chances to find echo with socio-ethical ideas. Not to forget be the normative power of the facts; the public morality do also develop as a result of experiences – and the experience of the crisis shows already a change of conscience. Here the church must give “official assistance” and contribute more effectively its moral orientation force to the process.

It should however be considered that the social market economy cannot be obtained at the “zero tariff”, but only with “metaphysical coin”. Without the idea of the “incarnation of the human being”, without individual rights and freedom rights – and at least without the correspondent divine conception – this model be lacking its basis. It presupposes determined convictions and basic principles which must first be communicated in a globalized world.

In this context the basic problem of a preceding definition was discussed: What precisely is meant by “Christian social doctrine”, what is really understood by “personality, solidarity and subsidiarity” and what is their relation each other? According to which criteria should be considered for example certain subjects or texts? etc. or should be (newly) discussed. To apply here the “Christian human image” as proprium would not be sufficient, as it be variously interpretable as “passepartout-formula”. Instead of this, such the reflection, could be considered as possible – although not normative – analysis figure the idea of the human being as “not only homo oeconomicus”. This against the background of a creeping “dehumanization” of the economy: the danger that in political economy the “mathematicians and statisticians” were advancing and that the human being be no longer in the centre. For in this way be lost the attention for the fundamental fact that the human being is living within a community – and thus be not only a homo oeconomicus but also a homo socialis. A regulatory doctrine taking into account these aspects be also necessary on the global level. As further components be added the idea of the human dignity and of the worldwide prosperity in relation to the common prosperity – and the tendency to detach the latter of the national discussion and to set it in relation to the first.

The (gradual) striving for a worldwide prosperity be finally, thus the participants, the target concerned and with “globalization” be meant the Christian social doctrine: the challenge of the century be not missionization but the way to a worldwide prosperity. This could only be achieved through the exchange of opinions, the discussion of ideas – shortly the dialogue. Moreover, the participating institutions OS, KSZ and KAS conceive themselves as mediators to give access to these ideas and to bring them to discussion in the global world against the background of pluralistic possibilities of orientation. Prior to giving a definition it be simply important to create at first a consciousness of ethics and responsibility.

At first it be necessary to initiate an analysis on the question which social and economic concerns could be important in the next ten years. Moreover how it could be achieved that these concerned are translated in political creative power and to let them flow into the political agenda. This also in outlining against the medial tendencies which try more and more to cooperate in the fixation of the political agenda without being in a position, by means of the information flow (partially also remote form reality), to make more transparent and to influence the information.

In this context was pointed out an area largely neglected by social ethics: the political sphere. The participants stressed how important it be to consider also the prerequisites and the framework conditions of a regulatory doctrine (for example the legal definition). Nevertheless there were scarcely existing relevant scriptures on democracy or on genuine political issues. But these would become more and more urgent. Thus for example the problems around “Stuttgart 21” invite to further thinking over questions of the representative democracy and to disclose also new forms of

information, participation and communication. In Germany new aspects of the “community organizing” are still largely in their beginnings, here socio-ethical basic notions like “personality”, solidarity and subsidiarity could be made fruitful in this context such as it can be demonstrated by the example of Brooklyn priest Leo Penta.

Otherwise than in Europe, in the USA the target group be constitutive. Nevertheless, also in Europe the importance of the “small unit” be meanwhile growing. Thus for example the most recent Shell-study be indicating a decline of “political frustration” and instead thereof a growing interest in politics and social engagement. The latter did however not apply to the established big people’s parties, official churches and others, but moved along with a dramatic refusal of the “establishment” and the search of new possibilities of representation.

This development, thus the participants, must be kept in mind. In the same way also their dangers, of which the “danger of the street” striving for undermining the constitutive state, be the biggest. Within the so-called “citizens’ moves” too had to be distinguished the personal interest and the common welfare interest: not always be shown factual political engagement, but often also selfish interest in contrast to the common welfare (thus for instance if exclusively personal calm in the own residential district is concerned).

Lacking be also a genuine discussion of values – contrary to inflationarily used “terminological shells”. Fundamental values be scarcely discussed, a frustrating fact for persons. The question of principles, values and morality takes a dimension which be seldom or not at all perceivable for political decisions so that the citizen and the voter could no more understand how decisions can be ethically justified. One could, however, not renounce to make clear that also this dimension and not only certain interests determine the acting of people. As soon as the trust nourished by this dimension be risked and lost, democracy be confronted with the problem of creditability. This be a soil nourishing populism and creating ever more civil movements.

This too could be, thus the consideration, a concern of the started initiative – to ask how could be created a platform to fire with enthusiasm the discussion on value and to transfer it to politics. It be true that decisions become more and more complicated and that it became more difficult to understand them. Nevertheless it be important to stick to the key-word “trust” which in politics be not yet sufficiently appreciated. Authorities which people trust in be also relied upon if they be not comprehensibly understood, if their decisions in their complexity be not also prudent. Primary it be the concern to describe complexity as such, even if it could not be exhaustively explained, and to search solutions commonly and not as opponents.

Ways and possibilities of transformation

It was decided to first concentrate to Europe and to open sources of new orientation and future perspectives in starting from Europe. At an international conference in Rome or in Brussels too could be probed best the renewal potential of the European value discourse. A cooperation of KAS, OS and KSZ with BKU, COMECE and others could be envisaged.

For a future conference in Rome could be contacted the there existing Catholic universities and, if possible, the pontifical counsellors too. As to the subjects to deal with one could start with the new social Encyclical and consider its “blind marks”: with a view to the conference location the title “Further thinking on *Caritas in Veritate*” could be chosen. Within this subject *Centesimus annus* could also be considered. In this context globalization should be considered as a challenge and chance and not as threat.

For a possible conference in Rome was considered as subject the analysis of the differentiated structure of the social market economy under the conditions of globalization or to consider also European impulses and innovations from the “borders”. Here one of the questions could be how under the aspect of the demographic development and economic problems social justice could be maintained, taken as example the smaller countries (as for instance the Netherlands or also Belgium).

Besides of the option of big congresses the possible successes in a smaller framework should not be underestimated – just as workshops and background dialogue by direct and personal contacts. Seen as a whole it be necessary to create and to deepen contacts, to form cooperations and to activate firmly the available potential. It be also important to verify and to disseminate the relevant texts (for example by references to the homepages of the institutions or their newsletters) as well as to translate the texts, if necessary. Be also helpful a linking of texts by search notions as well as other netting possibilities by electronic media in order to achieve a broad effectiveness and to establish a big network with low administrative expense for the multipliers.

Besides of the principal need to communicate socio-ethical contents concretely into the area of politics and to open therefore also new communication platforms, it be necessary to initiate a firm political education for students of theology from abroad. Successful examples according to the model of summer-academies and “social seminars” could serve as standard.

As concerns all formats, the participants asked to bear in mind not to include only church representatives and persons with university education but also entrepreneurs, in order to consider practice.

The dialogue group will continue. For future meetings it is planned to deal with a determined subject (for example democracy) in order to collect different perspectives in the light of social ethics.

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