The challenge of the globalization of the world economy or - is the social and ecological misery in the so called Third World something of our concern?

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In a speech at the Independence Hall in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) held on 4th of July when he was awarded with the „Peace Medal", President Vaclav Havel has exemplified the meaning of the postmodern age as follows: a Bedouin, sitting on a camel, wearing jeans under his traditional clothes, drinking Coke and listening to a walkman with a Coca-Cola ad stuck onto the camel. True indeed. Closed cultures are breaking up and become westernized, and along with this development many ecological and social problems have occurred. From the standpoint of the given example, we could ask, where did the Bedouin get all this? Where can he recycle his empty tins? Let us discuss these social and ecological difficulties.

Our postmodern age is characterized by changes of values and viewpoints, kinds of labour, flexibility and mobility, mix of cultures, ethnic conflicts and new alliances. Something is going towards an end (like the planned market economy of communism), other new things are coming into existence by the painful process of trial and error.

1. Concern of ecological aspects

The term "ecology" is defined as the scientific study of the interactions that determine the territorial distribution and abundance of organisms.[1] It was first used sci-

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entifically in 1866 by the German biologist ERNST HÄCKEL in a study of plant ecology and is etymologically derived from the Greek "oikos" or "household". Each living species is assigned its own proper place in nature; its own specific type of food, geographical range, and population, within a harmonious pattern of interdependence between the different species.

Modern ecology is centrally concerned with the cycling of nutrients through ecosystems, and with patterns of energy flow and interchange. The economic metaphor by which the "functions" of different groups of organisms within an ecosystem are classified- 'producers' (mainly green plants), consumers (herbivores= animal that feeds on plants, and their predators= plundering or exploiting others) and decomposers (mainly micro-organisms)-carries a clear resonance of the earlier notion of an 'economy of nature'. The concept of "ecosphere" means that the planet is considered as an immensely complex global system of ecosystems. The shift from metaphorical to direct, literal application of ecological concepts to human social life was established only in the 1960s, following the globalization of the ecological perspective in the form of the concept of the "ecosphere". If we take out one factor of the natural circle of the environment, we are going to lose our ecological balance. The catastrophe of Tschernobyl in 1986 showed that it is not only a matter concerning the Ukraine or Russia but also other parts in the world as well. Similarly, pollution in the Third World should consider our thinking, too.

2. The problem of globalization

This is the process whereby the population of the world is increasingly bounded into a single society. Globalization as term came only into wide use in the 1980s. The changes it refers to are highly charged politically, and the concept is controversial because it suggests that the creation of a world society is no longer the project of a hegemonic nation-state but the undirected outcome of social interaction on a global scale. The term has established itself in fields as diverse as economics, geography, marketing and sociology, which suggests that its use is more than a matter of passing fashion. Culture and market combined in the 1970s in the activities of multinational corporations seeking to maximize the worldwide sales of products through global advertising. Globalization is attacked by those who see it as a new form of homogenization of culture, an extension of the mass culture which ironed out the variety of nineteenth-century local European cultures. The sense of a common fate for humanity is enhanced by recognition of global environmental issues, and political activism increasingly crosses national boundaries with the worldwide mobilization of social movements.

3. Guidelines for international business activity

Economic factors exert a profound and lasting influence on the life of all human beings. They can en-

courage, alter or question basic human values. This applies in particular to the effects of the international business activities of companies in areas where different cultures meet. Therefore, the responsibility of business goes beyond immediate entrepreneurial concerns and extends to primary human and social values. The first and most important principle is that of responsibility. It is much better for countries in the Third World to get fair trade conditions with partners from the northern hemisphere than getting gifts. One goal of the richer countries should be the clearly oriented help which induces new little initiatives or small enterprises in the particular country of the Third World.

Business activities are governed by the respective national legislation. Companies should co-operate in fighting corruption and they should also observe the principle of non-interference in the political affairs of a host country, because their very economic presence has effects on man and society. Therefore, co-operations with national authorities and local economy should be conducted in the spirit of fairness and good faith. In fulfilling their responsibilities, especially in economically underdeveloped countries, companies should orient their activities towards a development beneficial to all people concerned. Companies should inform the public about their activities and the economic and social consequences in a way consistent with their social importance. Dominating market positions should not be misused to the detriment of the economy of the host country or of its development. Decisions concerning important changes within companies must be made after careful evaluation of the social consequences.

4. Solidarity and subsidiarity

The basic notion of solidarity comprises interrelated connection and duty. It has its foundation in the human dignity of each individual and the social tendency of being with others, and also the need of other people. Solidarity is an ontic and ethical principle. And in the global sense we can say that we are responsible for one another. The individual is only thinkable as a dialogical being and therefore in need of solidarity. This idea is particularly important in the postmodern age and in the context of the philosophical thinking of existentialism which often fails to see it. Yet, MARTIN BUBER writes, "Man becomes an I through a You." A lack of solidarity (=egoism) destroys a community and is inhuman in itself. Individuals grow in encounter with others, in interrelated service and dialogue with sisters and brothers. Solidarity is a responsible and loving acceptance by a person based on the fact of human interdependence on the global scale today, based on the fact that one's own life and the lives of the countless others whom one never comes to know personally are intertwined for good and for ill.

The principle of subsidiarity requires that the state leaves to individuals and intermediate bodies what they are able to achieve by their own capabilities and inter-

venes only to the extent where they are unable to secure important needs of the citizens (cf. CA 48).

Solidarity is expressed by the love of the other. In a very concise way love of neighbour has been defined as 'willing the good of another'. Willing the good of another means first of all to accept and appreciate the good endowments a neighbour possesses as natural gifts or as acquired facilities. It also means wishing him the good which he ought to possess and to develop or perhaps regain. But merely wishing good to another is not enough where one is in a condition to actually help him. One must also commit oneself to the active protection of the good endowments of the other and work for the restoration or promotion of what is lacking in goodness according to one's possibilities. Integrating these various aspects, love of neighbour could be defined as the sincere esteem for one's neighbour's gifts of body and soul and their active protection and furtherance in accordance with his calling by God. The neighbours to be loved include all men, relatives and outsiders, nationals and foreigners, friends and enemies, individuals and groups, the families, communities and nations.

Love of self, rightly understood (and not in the egoistic sense), calls for the realization of the same objectives as love of neighbour and is motivated by the same motives. God wills his likeness in us as much as he wills it in our neighbour. Again, love of self has to realize the same objectives as those pointed out in love of neighbour: acceptance of oneself and promotion of one's divinely willed growth in accordance with one's calling within the all-comprising scope of God's eternal design. Love must be interior, i.e. sincerely affirm and accept another person's value and good endowments and talents without envy and curtailment. It must be active by an effective concern for the welfare of other. The political thrust of love orients the ethos towards social horizons. Another, most indispensible quality of love appears to be humble, reverent respect for the person or community who is loved and helped.

5. Justice in the world

Evaluations of the basic and political institutions, particularly with respect to the consequent distributions of benefits and burdens, are standardly expressed in terms of justice and injustice. Justice is often held to be the priority social value which overrides all other normative considerations. In its most general sense the concept of justice requires that each individual have what is due to him or her. Within this formula we may distinguish formal and material justice. Formal justice requires distribution which are in accordance with existing or agreed criteria or rules. It is often identified with legal or individual justice. Material (or substantive) justice concerns the identification of the appropriate distributive criteria (such as rights, need or choice) that constitute competing conceptions of justice.

John Rawls argues in his *"Theory of Justice"* (1971) that the principles for determining the basic institutions of a society which would be chosen in a procedurally

fair situation, and which are endorsed by our firmest reflective intuitions as what is just, are (A) each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all (cf.p.250); and (B) social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that are both [a] to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and [b] attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (cf.p.83).

The justice question is linked to the human rights. Realities of political life often do not correspond with the pledges made by the declarations of human rights and not seldom stand in glaring contrast to them. Nevertheless the recognition of a common moral authority is in itself a reason for hope. The Church considers it as her prophetic mission to defend justice and right in the social, national and international domain and to denounce injustice where the basic rights of man and his salvation require it. The Church, especially today, is judged by her own practice. The Church´s prophetic defence of human rights can only be credible if she herself is perceived by others to be just and merciful. Her service to human rights thus pledges her to a constant examination of conscience and a continuous purification and renewal of her own life, her own laws, institutions and conduct. The service that the Church can perform for the realization of human rights consists not merely in verbal appeals, however important they may be, but also in setting an example herself by doing right. Least of all by the Church must the thirst for justice and the yearning for humanity in our world be disappointed.

6. The concept of values

We live in a time of competition of interests and values (i.e. helping my own national economy and/or supporting Third World countries), and in changing value systems around the world. Therefore, let us look to the values, its means and its different understandings.

The term values may refer to interests, pleasures, likes, duties, moral obligations, desires, wants, attractions and many other modalities of selective orientations. Values are found in the large and diverse universe of selective behavior. The limits of value may be conceived very broadly or quite narrowly, but the limits should never be arbitrarily set, and their location ought to be justified in any particular case. Values regulate 'impulsive satisfaction' in accord with the whole array of hierarchical enduring goals of personality, the requirements of both personality and sociocultural system for order, the need for respecting the interests of others and the group as a whole in social living. Values serve as criteria for selection in action, and they become criteria for judgement, preference and choice.

In ordinary speech the term "value" is used in two senses: in one meaning, we refer to the specific evaluation of any object. Here we are told how an object is rated or otherwise appraised, but not what standards are used to make the judgements. The second meaning of value refers to the criteria, or standards in terms of which evaluations are made. Value-as-criterion is usually the more important usage for purposes of social scientific analysis. It is often difficult in specific instances to

distinguish between values and such related concepts as beliefs, needs, or motives, reasonably clear distinctions can be drawn in general terms. Needs derive from deficiency or disruption. Desires are wishes or appetitions directed toward certain objects and states. Values are not motives. A given value may have a strength that is relatively independent of any particular motive. Some values are freedom, equality, honesty, humanitarianism, authority. Most of them are questioned today, because the standards and evaluations are not clear enough. There is a main problem: many norms are multivalued, relating simultaneously, for example, to hedonic criteria, considerations of efficiency, and values of social integration. Values enter into each of the four great systems human action: organism, personality, society and culture. Both philosophical analysis and social science often fall into serious error by paying attention to a single kind of value while ignoring or underestimating others.

I gave this philosophical consideration, because the awareness of differences in other cultures is a presupposition for dealing with people from different continents. On the one hand, we are changing not only our behavior (in the Second World), but our value system as well. So that it seems helpful to me thinking about roots and backgrounds of values. On the other hand, dealing with other cultures means knowing the system of the brother or sister. Contextual analysis is a necessary corrective in comparisons. Health, security, wealth, enjoyment, faith in the supernatural, knowledge, and other values that figure prominently in the value systems of many cultures are similar in name only. In different cultures, knowledge refers to such divers contents as revealed religious doctrine, traditional formulas, and modern science. Context is needed also to locate value judgements that do not contain explicit value terms, the counterparts in other languages of the English "That simply is not done!" Verbal explanation as well as context is needed to understand nonlinguistic signs of evaluation, including sanctions. Not every spanking is a punishment. Not every smile is a sign of joy: it may only express incomprehension. Since no value system is a perfect fit to life conditions, each contains socially acceptable alternatives to formally established principles. These secondary rules and norms permit individuals to come to terms with reality without running afoul of society. Cross-cultural perspective is perhaps the most promising single factor for refining and enriching our comprehension of cultural value systems.

7. Democracy as precondition for a stable society

The term "democracy" is difficult to define, not only because it is vague, like so many political terms, but more importantly, because what one person would regard as a typical example or paradigm case another would deny was a democracy at all. However, there is still this much agreement: democracy consists in 'government by the people' or 'popular self-government'.

Obviously, the conditions of face-to-face democracy, with direct participation, cannot be fulfilled within

the political structure of modern states, both because of the size of their populations and because of the specialized knowledge needed to govern them. The idea of making decisions raises the difficulty of how many different individual decisions can be combined into one collective decision. A decision by the whole people amounts to something more than a decision by the majority and must involve compromise and consensus. Near universality of approval is a salient feature of democracy today. The other key feature is that modern democracies are indirect or representative rather than direct.

The dominant form of democracy today is liberal democracy. The term 'liberal' applied to governmental systems usually implies a concern with protecting individual freedoms by limiting the power of the government (which is until today one of the biggest problems in the Second and Third World, where governments are still too powerful and often enough, they don't have political oppositions).

Another feature of democracy is equality. There is a connection between the ideas of democracy and equality because, apart from anything else, the idea of the whole people making a decision involves the notion - summed up in the slogan 'one man, one vote' -of each individual having an equal say. On the other hand, the notion of liberal democracy is usually associated with important ideas about further kinds of political structures and processes that are necessary for limiting governmental power and providing electoral choice. Prominent amongst these is the concept of a multiparty system and the associated idea of parties whose function is to oppose the government. These can be seen as components in the overall idea of pluralism. This centres on the concept of a plurality of political/interest groups, as well as parties, as being important both for providing sources of power alternative to and limiting that of the government, and for creating choice for the electorate. The one-party systems of the former communist world and of many Third World countries are no alternative to the liberal and democratic system of the western world. Another difficulty is the undemocratic tribalism in many countries all over the world, but particularly in the southern hemisphere.

Somebody could ask, why do I say something about democracy in this connec-tion: I think it is necessary speaking about it, because only with democracy starts the change in a bad economic and ecological situation (cf. South Africa). Therefore it is very important to consider it in that way and to look at the foundations or the philosophical background of political stability.

8. Conclusion

The Third World is still far away for the most of our fellow citizens in the northern hemisphere. But it is our duty as human beings and Christians to consider the misery of other parts in the world, in the decades coming more than we did in the past. One presupposition is the change in our narrow European and profit-oriented attitude. The other has to be towards a responsibility of global thinking taking into account not only the difficult

situation of our home countries but particular countries of the poorer world as well.

If it is not possible to help solving the even bigger problems of social and ecological distress in the Third World, we will suffer more because the distance between the "different worlds" is getting smaller. Christians have to influence the world in the positive sense because all people are equal in front of God, and we are responsible for one another.

Notes:

[1] This speech has been given by: The Conference of the Christian Democratic Academy for Central and Eastern Europe about "Democracy and Market Economy" Budapest, April 25th, 1995. And at the International Ecumenical World-Meeting in Minsk/Belarussia, October 1t to 3d, 1996. The whole text in German is published in the online-journal under the title „Das Phänomen Globalisierung und seine Auswirkungen auf unser Leben." http://www.aurora-magazin.at/gesellschaft/global_schnarrer.htm