

# WORK AS THE PRECONDITION OF OUR HUMANITY

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## 1. Introducing thoughts

### 1.1. We can talk about work in varied senses of the word:

- In the *anthropological* sense of the word we can talk about the role of work in the course of becoming a human being of man;
- In the *physiological* sense of the word we can talk about the great importance of physical work in the preservation of human health;
- In the *psychological* sense of the word work is one of the spiritual needs of a person; it ensures the delight of creation and usefulness, hereby it is also very often one of the therapeutic (healing) means;
- In the *ecological* sense of the word each type of work is an intervention into the natural processions: it can be promoting as a part of the natural cycle, and it can have a destructive effect aborting the reformation of nature.

**1.2.** Since the beginning of the modern age we are talking about work mostly in the *economic* sense of the word. Prior to that work was indispensable as the insurance of the essential conditions of the individual and his family and it remained in the frames of the gratification of individual (familiar) needs. With the technical development of working equipments and the growth of labour productivity savings and familiar accumulations became possible which granted a material security for the family in point of their future and then it could be invested in the economy as an aggregation and thus became a part of the procession of social production. The need for the recourse of extraneous work arose in the production course which was given a social character by the division of labour, the excess of products and the barter and human work became the source of the profit. Since then the division of the increment of human work has been the bone of contention between employer and employee firstly, then – if this question is completed with the general sharing of taxation – between the proprietary of work and capital and the society (redistribution).

**1.3.** Human work is closely related to the worker himself. The success, the quantity and the quality of his work is largely affected by his physical force, capacity of working, expertise, diligence, etc. In this sense of the word work is always individual and there are significant differences between each working person. Man does not live on an island, however, as Robinson, and does not work as an isolated individual either, work has always a communal character at the same time.

*1.3.1.* The communal character of work was deriving from the familiar division of work through centuries. Apart from the genetic and emotional attachment it was the material base which kept the family together. In the economic sense of the word this could be completed by the cooperation of the large family and the genus or the organisation and togetherness of the tribe. These communal forms of work did not alienate people from each other, on the contrary they increased the feeling of interdependence and togetherness, the demand for giving mutual assistance.

*1.3.2.* It was the industrial revolution, the establishment of great work organisations („industrial military”) namely the evolution of multitudinous work which meant the great turning-point in the communal character of work. The workers had already been organised for working one by one as strangers here and the legal relationship with the employer had been established also between strangers. In case of local work organisations with lower number this community had already been strong during a longer period; they had held together and also disposed common lobbyist ability. In case of work organisations with a larger size concentrated in the industrial cities the estrangement (alienation) is also growing in line with their size. Nowadays we are not talking about only national but global work organisation as well. The employees of multinational world companies are working diffused in the world without even knowing each other.

*1.3.3.* As the socialization of work and the defencelessness of workers had grown to a certain degree the demand for state intervention had intensified in order to protect workers and realise a much more equitable distribution of worth produced by work. This demand has been lasting invariably for some 200 years, and it exists today too, not only on a national but also on an international level.

*1.3.4.* The apportionment order of earnings brought on with elemental force the demand for justice and solidarity, the relating legislation and the intervention of the legislator public authority. Although the work of slaves and serfs had been also regulated, this regulation got a social size only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We can

talk about labour law since then, about work as a legal phenomenon, as one of the main area of the national and international law.

**1.4.** Historically the legal labour relationship appeared in the law as a labour contract and was part of the freedom of proprietary rights, and the *freedom of contract* derived from that right.

*1.4.1.* Labour contract as a traditional two-pole contract of *civil law* theoretically assumed the *equality* and the *coordinate relation* of the two parties and mostly the *principle of equivalence*. Consequently both parties are the subjective and not the subject of the legal relationship in this contract, so the worker's manpower is not a product. However, the real economic equality missed behind the formal equal treatment and the economic superiority became characteristic at the employers' side. As a result of this superior position the employee became subordinate and defenceless legally, too, concerning the duration, the circumstances, the worth of his work and his wage. These disadvantages are even more serious in case of the work-oversupply on the market.

*1.4.2.* The defencelessness of the individual employees was tried to counteract with collective contracts and trade union lobbies at the beginning. At the same time strong organisation, reconciliation of interests and joining forces were needed for that at the employee's side. The necessary concomitant of this kind of collective cooperation is also a strong sameness of views, that is to say, an ideological basis.

*1.4.3.* The employers had also unionized opposite the unionization of employees and a stalemate evolved with it. Strike-struggles and other violent actions required the intervention of a third, neutral party. This theoretically outsider and neutral party could be the power enforcement organisation covering the whole society: the state. The state appearance, however, turned inside out for two reasons. Firstly, the representatives of the economic force, the possessors of the economic power have always influenced much more the state as public authority than the working masses being defenceless to them. On the other side the state, which had been practising only the *political public authority* till then, obtained *authority above the economic life* and a *concentration of powers* could evolve with an unprecedented size. The Italian corporativism, the German National Socialism or the Stalin communism caused human and social catastrophes grievously abusing with this concentration of powers, which could not have been imagined till then.

**1.5.** Learning from the faults of the totalitarian systems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the horrors of the Second World War the United Nations Organisation is trying to place state life and law life on new bases in addition to the organisational guarantees of international peace. Its starting point is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations from 1948. According to that Declaration the sphere and content of *fundamental freedoms and human rights* is continuously widening and improving. The *right to social security* also constitutes the part of these rights as the newest „third generation right”, and within this sphere the *right to work* is at the first place, as a fundamental human right. Right to work itself also consists of several partial entitlements like the right to the free choice of profession and workplace; right to the worthy working-conditions; right to the security of work; right to the fair wage; right to relaxation; right to holiday; right to social insurance services related to the labour relation, etc. There exist great differences even now in the question how certain countries are able to ensure these rights and to what extent. Furthermore, if certain nation states or certain employers within them do not fulfil completely the international requirements the mechanisms of control and enforcement (sanctioning) of these haven't been completely assured yet. Therefore this right is also considered today even more as „moral right” – like the majority of human rights – than rights which can be enforced by real public force.

## **2. Historical retrospection to the relation of work and property**

### **2.1. Formation of the liberal property-conception**

*2.1.1.* Adam Smith – who was not only an economist but a moral philosopher, too – conceived correctly of work in the cognition of the several age-long traditions: „His own work of a man is his property which is the main source of every other property of his, and it is *the most sacred and invulnerable*. Every paternal heritage of the poor man is the force of his arm and the skill of his hand; obstructing him in living with this force and skill at his discretion without the harm of his fellow-beings is equal with the obvious violence of the most sacred property.” He also knew it very well that „There is no prosperous and happy society where the majority of people are miserable and poor.” (Adam Smith: *Wealth of Nations*) That's why he considered important the intervention over and above the „night-watchman role” of the state against the exaggerated exploitation and claimed for a real and equitable wage for workers. This concept of Adam Smith about the state appearance was reduced later to the so-called „night-watchman role”, and it was interpreted in the sense that the state has to keep away itself completely from the economy.

2.1.2. Consequently the central category of the liberal economic theory was the work and the working person, and human work and private property formed a unity. That man, whose permanent effort and unceasing exertion was to better his own and his family's situation is the main driving force and engine of the economy. This man is also in the centre of the *social model* of Locke. The *free owner* as private proprietary is a *free citizen* at the same time and the totality of all those creates a *free society*. In this concept the private property based on the own work guarantees a material security and also a personal and political independence for the free citizen opposite the state authority. The main limit of the state authority is the property of citizens (each citizen!). The inseparableness of property and freedom is the dogma of the liberal theory which is effective till now.

2.1.3. Thirteen years after the publication of Adam Smith's work Article 17 of the „Declaration of Human and Citizens Rights” adopted by the French Constituent National Assembly used the following wording: „*Private property is an inviolable and sacred right, no one can be deprived of his own private property...*”. This phrasing detached the private property from the own work, it was abstracted and extended over any kind of private property on a constitutional level. The property inherited from feudal times, the property acquired by colonization and exploitation and also the property acquired by any other unfair means had been granted constitutional protection. When this question arose during the codification of the Code Civil as well, Napoleon did not say accidentally that „The vision of the bloodiest battles has not even horrified me like the legal abstraction.” The feudal *natal* priorities were changed by *priorities and privileges relating to property* later.

2.1.4. The exaggerated freedom of private property independently from its origin and size manifested itself the most forcefully just against the workers without „material” property. The equality concept became empty, moreover it became a lie. It was not by accident when *Anatole France* mocked the legal equality according to which sleeping under the bridge, begging in the street and steeling bread is prohibited for both the poor and the rich. So the *effectively* realized liberal economic and social model was *not the same* as the project which had been conceived *theoretically* correctly by its followers on moral bases. The real model had been carrying the lack of equality and its realization efforts in itself since the moment of its birth. A second phase became necessary, *the pursuit and realization of equality after the freedom*.

## 2.2. Spreading of equality ideas

2.2.1. The first representatives of equality ideas were the utopian socialists. They attributed social organising force neither to the private property nor to the freedom of contacts and the competition on the market yet. They imagined the ideal social life in little communities on a moral and natural right base. They also hoped to transpose the private property and market competition for scientific and artistic values and communal modes of existence by voluntary renunciation on the base of ratio and morality.

2.2.2. Branding the conceptions of the utopian as naivety and seeing the avarice and unscrupulousness of the capitalist proprietary the representatives of Marxism-Leninism suggested class struggle, revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat. Referring to the social production and the social work in it the Communist Proclamation suggested placing the production instruments expanded to social size under public ownership. At the same time the Proclamation promised the protection of little property acquired by own work and based on own work. In the field of the distribution of goods they promised the „distribution after work” which would have been changed by the „distribution after needs” in the communism. The Marxism promised the dictatorship of the proletariat instead of the rule of the capitalist which also meant the full powers of the communist party over the proletariat in the reality depriving them from their property and from the possibility of acquisition of ownership with their work. The proprietary communist states could realize an absolute exploitation as „one-man” capitalists.

## 2.3. Recommendations of the Rerum Novarum

2.3.1. Pope XIII. Leo – who knew not only his era but saw the perspectives very well, too – advised a third way in his circular letter instead of the struggle of ideologies and classes and instead of the rule of the capitalist or the working-class. He refused the absolute freedom of private property and set the state as its main task: „Rescuing the poor workers from the despotism of the insatiable persons who handle the person as lifeless objects by reason of their hunger for benefit, and exploit them not knowing any measure.” At the same time with his refusing of the violent socialization of the private property he stood up for the natural law concept of it: „Since, however, man place his intellectual ability and corporal force into the material at the acquisition of natural goods, and in this manner he compares the worked material-natured piece to himself and leaves the mark of his own personality on the work. Therefore it is absolutely correct and crucial that this piece be possessed as his own and this right of him be inviolable by anyone.” It is well visible that the encyclical placed *the indi-*

*vidual person* into the centre of his cogitation and instruction instead of the freedom of the abstract private property and the class interest of workers. We could say that it replaced the individual into the legal status in which it had been placed originally by the natural lawyers and civil (liberal) philosophers.

2.3.2. Instead of the one-sided overstressing of the capitalist's and the worker's rights the encyclical also discusses *the fundamental obligations of both parties* in detail in the spirit of equilibration. It gives full details of the capitalists' obligations towards the workers on a moral and economic base, but it emphasizes the workers' obligations towards their employers too. The encyclical also emphasizes the fundamental obligations of both parties towards the state as the repository of the common good.

2.3.3. The most impressive part of the encyclical is the accentuation of the state's tasks. The state considers the service of common good as one of its first-class tasks, but it poses the question which is actual even now, namely: how much part of the solution of social problems can be expected from the state. It was a correct conjecture that if the state obtains too much power that will be turned inside out. That's why the encyclical specified separately the most important tasks. It considers firstly the stressed handling of the worker-question as the duty of the state. It is nothing else than the protection of the weaker party and the restitution of the balance of power, the insurance of the legal and social equality through it. Therefore it emphasizes the compensatory role of the state, adding nevertheless that the social welfare has to be so that its participants become better and therefore it needs to be measured primarily with a moral scale. It is also emphasized that: „The state can absorb neither the citizen nor the family; both of them dispose of equitable acting freedom till the frontier when the public interest or the right of the individuals sustain an injury.” The encyclical warned in advance referring to the later really started „social legislation wave”: „The law must not extend more and must not go on more than it is necessary for redressing troubles and averting dangers.” Beside these it emphasizes particularly the protection of certain social fundamental values like morality or belief and the protection of family. Inside the family it sets out particularly the necessity of the increased protection of women and children. All these obligations of the state appear today in each international human rights document as institutional obligations of the state.

2.3.4. The distinct argumentation of the encyclical referring to the freedom of association is remarkable. It considers the organisation of the workers and the civil society in general as a natural right like the private property itself. It recommends specially the establishment of associations, christian work-organisations and trade unions supposing their utility also in the preservation of belief

beside the politics. These organisations of the civil society can really constitute a counterbalance opposite the eventual overpower of the state. The civil organisations (NGO-s) have been important participants of the protection of rule of law and human rights nowadays.

## **2.4. Aberrations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

2.4.1. In the century after the Rerum Novarum our history was characterised by class-struggles and world wars instead of the gentle and peaceful solutions of the social democracy. With the promise of order, security, equality and justice totalitarian dictatorships came into existence on the field of several ideologies which made horrible destructions in morals, human lives and material goods. The common lesson of all these could be: *if the great majority of the society is hopelessly poor in the lack of work and property, it is very susceptible to every promise and it might become the quarry of extreme ideologies. Nowadays it is the most serious problem of the so-called world-poverty.*

2.4.2. The so-called welfare states went the closest to the realization of the social-economic order included in the Rerum Novarum. The manpower became more important in social democracies, the political lobby force of the workers increased and a relatively balanced distribution of income evolved due to state redistribution. This stimulated the workers for an overwork for some time, that real „economic miracles” were mentioned. The more and more extended state provision lay, however, more and more common charge on the private property. The extensive state provision made the people gradually more and more comfortable at the same time. Where the unemployment benefit and the social allowance are higher than the wage, there is no use to work there. After the collapse of the soviet-type socialisms the german-type and svede-type socialisms also came to a crisis. In fact, they have only lost their competitiveness in comparison with the Asian countries rapidly improving by other values.

2.4.3. In certain rich countries the boost of competitiveness was tried to be solved with neoliberal arrangements – opposite the conception of the welfare state. The essence of these is just the reduction of the compensatory role and social provision of the state. During the quarter of the century these solutions had been raising the number of dollar-millionaires, they had been raising, however, the poverty and the concomitant social tensions as well.

2.4.4. Had been given out the internal stores of neoliberalism, they relocated its pursuit for profit making into the developing world. The profit is the highest where the wages are the lowest, the work-circumstances are the cheapest and there is a lack of work security and environmental protection. The globalization could be very successful with fair methods and on the ground of mutual bene-



fits, it also includes, however, great dangers if the rich countries become even richer and the poor ones even poorer by this. The biggest challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the world poverty. The destruction of nature is closely related to the world poverty, the exploitation of nature is also a global problem.

### 3. New challenges, new answers

#### 3.1. Old problems in a new version

3.1.1. The right to social security as a third-generation human right had been acknowledged all over the world at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Declaration of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations and the Social Charter of the European Union played a great role in it. The effect of *Rerum Novarum* can also be proved obviously in their contents.

It had also been realized that the number-one independent right is the right to work within the group of social rights. Since this is the source of every other social entitlement such as the right to habitation, right to health care services, right to pension, right to education and civilization, right to the family and children benefits, etc., it is only the factual assertion of the right to work which guarantees the social security of the individual, the family and the society. So, as concerns the human rights evaluation and rank of work, we could say that the *Rerum Novarum* has reached its aim and everything is all right now. But the legal regulation has always been in a phase delay by its nature compared to the changing world and particularly the rapidly changing economic relations. In the changed political, economic and technical circumstances new questions have been arisen concerning work, too.

3.1.2. The „class” problem became a „world” problem. While the tension of the *two-pole world* system turned milder after 1975 (Helsinki), the *problem between north and south* has been deepening, the *developed and developing world* has split in two parts and new tensions have come to surface by it. It is once more the unjust division of work, property and goods which lie behind this new source of tension, as it lay behind the capitalist - worker class problem earlier. It is a great achievement of Pope John Paul II that he reacted immediately to these new problems with two of his encyclicals. Let's see a few important thoughts of the encyclical „*Laborem exercens*” firstly.

3.1.3. The requirement of the *universal designation of goods* has arisen in a new, global sense now. The fundamental question became whether the enormous manpower available in the developing world has to be employed as foreign workers in the developed world or the production instruments have to be

settled there ensuring work and bearable life circumstances. In the first case foreign workers also bring along their family, national identity, culture and religion to the developed work beside their manpower. In the latter case it is the developed world which brings to them the technical civilisation, the culture and values of the industrial and consumer society. Both solutions are the source of serious tensions, whether the first or the second solution the equitable and solitaire distribution of the new value produced by work, the income of work and the property arising by work remains a fundamental question. While this redistribution is working relatively in a well balanced way on the basis of a social consensus within the developed countries, the international regulation, the controlling and direction mechanisms of the redistribution do not exist at all.

3.1.4. While the most developed technique – particularly the computer technique and robot technique – is replacing and making human work needless more and more, in the resting areas human work itself also gets a technical character. Man is very often a „component of the machine” or the attendant of the technique. Therefore the restitution of the spiritual and ethic value of work and its personal character arises more and more strongly. Man is not a robot, a soulless instrument, but someone who aspires to creative and productive activity which is worthy of his personality. So the technique must be set and improved to the work and not deform the human personality to the technique. We also have to emphasize more strongly that man is not a means of production or a product, so his manpower is not a product either. It must not be allowed that the technical and existential compulsion of work lead to the giving up of human personality and family life. Work has to serve continuously the personality and familiar security of the working person.

3.1.5. The priority of work against property and capital also has to be underlined once more. Till the human work is always personal (even when it destroys the personality), the property and capital is impersonal (abstract, anonym) in huge proportion and dimension. Some people are afraid of the *world power of multinational and transnational capitalist companies* (David S. Korten). The global turnover of the dematerialized securities through electronic stock exchanges is even more fearful. Nobody knows the measure of the global, speculative capital property which circles around the world through the world wide net like a swarm of bees which is searching for a blooming field, lands there, sucks out the profit and goes on not caring about the consequences. The consequences are certainly quite often the worsening poverty, the widening and deepening of the social gap between the two poles of the world.

3.1.6. The rehabilitation of the so-called „working-in-your-own” consciousness is seemingly an anachronism in this new world. The contrary of it is proved by *Ernst Schumacher* who wrote a book about that „*The small is beautiful*”. The book is about the little property which is man-sized so it has a personal and familiar character. It is also humanitarian, since it improves the personality helping on the creativity, and it is environment-friendly, for it fits into the natural cycle thus serves the health of body and soul. This book also quotes the thought of *Mahatma Gandhi* who said that „*I want a producing mass and not mass-production*”. Consequently there is no use of the developed technique and modern mass-production, which plunges masses of people into poverty and makes them unemployed and it makes persons and families homeless.

3.1.7. Strengthening the „*co-proprietor side*” of big society properties and similarly the state property and other public properties is a very important thought of the encyclical. It is the „personification” of absolutely impersonal huge properties through the involvement of individuals. This solution would mean *the democratization of properties* similarly to the democratization of political life. It would ensure direct or – through elected bodies – indirect participation for everyone in the biggest and most considerable proprietary decisions.

3.1.8. The socialist political system and *planned economy* system was named „totalitarian system” by many people. A Hungarian economist, *Tibor Liska* called it directly „*state wage-slavery*”. Working the less and partaking the most state provision. This was the attitude of many people to the socialism. But we have also mentioned that the weakening of competitiveness can be discovered in the welfare states too as a negative result of the exaggerated social allowances. Therefore it is not surprising when the encyclical underlines that „Work is an obligation primarily – then it is the source of rights.” Neither the welfare states nor the transformed socialist states are loaded now with the employment obligation and the social supply level as before. Higher responsibility and more obligations fall to the certain individuals therefore, and being aware of it is required of them if they are made realized by the responsible.

3.1.9. For me – who comes from a peasant family from the countryside – *the laudation of peasant work* and the stressing of its honour is maybe the most likeable in this encyclical. This social layer and this occupation have been a despised and scorned occupation for thousand years in Europe, although it is the peasantry which provided the living of both the urban people and the aristocracy by producing foodstuff and industrial raw materials. The countryside meant a shelter in the hard historical times. The peasantry is the carrier of folk culture and national identity. Furthermore, this ancestral trade and familiar

form of property corresponds to the newest environmental requirements today and ensures every advantage of the little property. It is also said to be modern according to the newest requirements of the so-called ecologic economics and bio-farming and it has fine prospects.

The employment of the handicapped and other people living with disabilities, also their integration into the world of work and into the smaller and bigger communities has the same order of magnitude and importance as the equal opportunities of the peasantry and countryside. The society could prove with it their treatment as persons with equal dignities and could develop the healing feeling of usefulness in them.

### **3.2. Re-reading the hundred-year-program**

3.2.1. The „Centessimus annus” encyclical (1991) underlines therefore reasonably that the *Rerum Novarum* is „invariably” current in the „changing world”. Its re-reading is still a permanent task equally for politicians, jurists and church leaders. For those who have known it from earlier times re-reading also means an adaptation to the new affairs of our time. But for those who lived in the communist-atheist systems of Eastern Europe and have just started to learn the „social market economy” it might seem absolutely new. Christian-democratic parties or parties with christian-democratic values have been established also in these countries as a part of the political reformation which could use the hundred-year-instructions for their programs. Under the circumstances of *the wild capitalist spontaneous privatization and shock therapy* the *placatory and balancing* recommendations for solutions of the *Rerum Novarum* were as current as hundred years ago.

3.2.2. Since the Eastern European countries considered the more developed Western European countries as models concerning their social, economic, political and constitutional state institutions, such serious tensions did not occur in the capitalist-worker relation following the transformation as hundred years ago. The relativity of class peace does not mean, however, social peace at the same time in national frames, still less does it mean between civilisations. The liberal and neoliberal concept about work and property – as the base of „civilisation” – can not be called absolute or sustainable, not even in the developed Western countries. In other civilisations of the globalizing world it is even not acceptable at all for many reasons; insisting on it is the source of serious dangers. If it is valid that *the social peace* inside the European Union and the single member states *is founded on the bases of justice and solidarity*, its realization is the main task in a global sense in order to create *peace between civilizations*.

3.2.3. The encyclical emphasized very correctly not only for the Eastern European countries transforming from socialist public property and planned economy to a private property and market economy system, that: „*Private property is not an absolute value.*” It is an important message to the whole world. Market is not omnipotent. Market can not organise social life in all details and can not subject individuals, their family life and ethic-religious-cultural values to its domination. The fact that socialism has fallen, is not a proof yet for the final victory of capitalism. Someone who expressly refuses communism is not bound to love and celebrate capitalism and not obliged to submit to the market or the consumer society. Not submitting themselves to some possession and wastage desires is an important warning just for the citizens of the richest countries living in the highest welfare. It would not mean a development if wide social crowds became the wage-slaves of multinational world companies from the wage-slaves of the socialist state. Neither does it mean a development if the more and more arising possession desire and the bigger and bigger number of the possessed things dominate the man. The famous book of *Erich Fromm* which is entitled: „*Possessing or Existing?*” made many people realize this compulsion for choosing. Who chases himself more and more in order to earn always more, to possess more things, to consume more and to change his acquired affairs even faster, well, he is going to realize soon that he has missed to live, and has forgotten to *enjoy the miracle of existence*. It is particularly difficult to choose existence instead of possessing when the individuals’ minds are manipulated by the enormously effective promotion and marketing activity of the consumer society, and they are forced into a lifestyle according to its own values. Brainwashing is not the privilege of totalitarian dictatorships; utilitarian economic authorities are also able to realize it.

3.2.4. By reason of the above mentioned danger it is good to know that the Church is building the „*civilization of love*” more consequently than ever for two thousand years. Many people think that the 21<sup>st</sup> century *is going to be* the century of love *or it is not going to be*. From the three pillars of the European Union, which are freedom, justice and solidarity, *justice and solidarity* can be grasped *as the part of love*. These are the frames and barriers of the freedom which also means the freedom of selfishness, unscrupulousness, greed, envy and the desire for acquisition of power above others without it. The whole world is searching for the *universally valid minimums* of fundamental freedoms and human rights and when these minimums will be founded, building on them as constant bases can be carried on. *Fraternal love could be* such a universally valid minimum of human rights which includes naturally the respect and acceptance of the other person’s life, dignity and personality on a mutual base.

3.2.5. The new requirements of sustainable development set the *industrial and consumer societies* – namely the rich countries – the biggest challenge. The development tendency which could not be stopped by the *Rerum Novarum* and by other moral instructions with similar contents, national laws and international legal norms seems to be hindered by the *laws of nature*. As Mahatma Ghandi wrote: „Nature is rich enough to satisfy every people’s needs, but is not rich enough to satisfy every people’s desire for richness.” The limited character of natural (material) goods turns our attention *to the infinity of intellectual (immaterial) goods*. Such intellectual (cultural, artistic, scientific, moral and religious) goods can be given, distributed and redistributed without becoming exhausted; moreover *they can be consumed more and more abundantly*. Their consumption induces not a psychical but an intellectual, spiritual pleasure, joy, regeneration and renewal. Provided of course that there is no exclusivity and exclusion among them and there is not any intention for autarchy and domination above others either in contrast to the material objects of property. The freedom of intellectual properties and their choice beside (or instead of) material goods is the great proof of individual, national and global responsibility. The intellectuality, openness, modernity and tolerance of Pope John Paul II are exemplary in this respect, too. Plenty of intellectual and spiritual duties, tasks and works arise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for all of us. The *spiritual need of usefulness* exists in this respect, too; these goods can be also „made good use of”. I hope it is perceptible that this „knowledge-capital”, „human capital” is not the same for which Nobel Prize is donated in the liberal economics. These *intellectual and spiritual capitals* and their „profit” can only be correctly interpreted according to absolutely new values: *in the civilization of love and peace*. The possible definition of intellectual goods according to the old utilitarian values of private property and market economy might plunge the world into new catastrophes (see Samuel P. Huntington: *Clash of Civilizations*). Mental, moral and religious renewal is needed in order to avoid new catastrophes. We can not forget, however, the warning of the encyclical: „Offering models is not the task of the Church; it offers its social teaching as an indispensable intellectual line.” Learning from this social teaching finally remained the task of all of us. And when we have already learnt and understood it, we have to teach it also in the universities, in the parliaments and in the societies as well through good laws. Human rights provide excellent opportunity for that, particularly the right to social security and the right to work, since there is an overlap between the contents of these secular legal norms and the social teaching of the Church. So we have the possibility to offer the most important elements of the teaching as a content of these correctly interpreted human rights for the legislatives, law-appliers and also for each member of the society. Because each person feels deep in his mind and his instinct that: *work is the precondition of our humanity and also its guarantee at the same time*. That’s why we can hope that the moral and natural social-economic model built on it is possible to be found commonly.

## SUMMARY

**Work as the Precondition of our Humanity**

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It is a widely held view that the motor of the evolution of man was labour. Indeed, labour has been playing a crucial role also in retaining man's humanity. Man earned the right to consider natural objects as his own by working them. In other words, ownership also owns its origin to labour. While man tilled, cultivated and multiplied natural objects in his ownership, a need for further labour arose. That is how man could assure secure livelihood for himself and his family. Moreover, the property man acquired by the sweat of his brow yielded him prestige and respect in the eyes of his community and earned him the right to protection by the community. With time, self-sufficient livelihood and the liberty of ownership guaranteed liberty for the citizens and, on a broader scale, liberty for society. The division and subsequent conflict of labour and ownership (under capitalism) and the arbitrary attempt to reunite them (under socialism) inflicted tragic consequences for mankind. Even today it is a precondition of man's right to a worthy life, to humanity and to harmony between people, and people and nature, to restore labour's original prestige and make it worthy to man. This is the essay's main train of thought with repeated reference to the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and ideas of Pope John Paul II.

## RESÜMEE

**Die Arbeit als Voraussetzung unserer Menschlichkeit**

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Viele sind der Ansicht, dass der Mensch durch die Arbeit zum Menschen geworden ist, und dies ist nicht nur im Prozess der Menschwerdung, sondern auch im Prozess des Verbleibs in der Menschlichkeit gültig. Die „Bearbeitung“ eines Teils der Natur berechtigte den Menschen dazu, den gegebenen Naturgegenstand „sein eigen“ zu nennen, das heißt, auch das Eigentum war durch die Arbeit geschaffen worden. Dieses Eigentum gab dann dem Menschen – durch seinen Anbau, seinen Gebrauch und seine Vermehrung – weitere Arbeit und gewährleistete sowohl ihm, als auch seiner Familie den Lebensunterhalt und die materielle Sicherheit. Daneben gab ihm sein mit eigener Arbeit erworbenes, erarbeitetes Eigentum in den Augen der Gemeinschaft auch Rang und Ehre, Anerkennung und Schutz seitens der Gemeinschaft. Durch die materielle Unabhängigkeit und die Freiheit des Eigentums wurden die Freiheit der Bürger und insgesamt gesehen die gesellschaftliche Freiheit gewährleistet. Die Trennung und später das Gegenüberstehen von Arbeit und Eigentum (im Kapitalismus), bzw. der Versuch der Wiedervereinigung mit Gewalt (im Sozialismus) führte aus Sicht der Menschheit zu zahlreichen Tragödien. Die Wiederherstellung des ursprünglichen Ranges, des menschenwürdigen Charakters der Arbeit ist auch heute Voraussetzung der Menschenwürde, der Menschlichkeit und der Harmonie zwischen Mensch und Mensch, sowie zwischen Mensch und Natur. Die Studie versucht dies auf Grund der Enzyklika Rerum Novarum und der Gedanken Johannes Pauls II. zu belegen.