

*Summary of the discussion
after the paper of R. Minnerath*

After the presentation of Professor Roland Minnerath, speakers agreed that he had approached a very important subject for the Academy, one that deserved a much fuller discussion than was possible in the time available. While refraining from going into a precise examination of specific points, several speakers expressed the wish that this be the subject of the second Plenary Session, or of some future activity of the Academy. In particular, and in the light of previous discussion, the paper was concerned to show the possibility of conflict between economics and other social sciences, and perhaps with the social doctrine of the Church itself.

The focus was placed on the increasing division of labour resulting from the globalization of the world market in manufacturing. In the most developed countries there was a strong temptation to save jobs by protectionist measures, but one speaker insisted that this would be detrimental to the people of these countries in the long run and, still more importantly, would be unjust to people of developing countries who are far poorer and need to export in order to raise their standards of living. On the other hand Professor Minnerath pointed out that the social doctrine stresses satisfaction of one's own needs as the first aim of work and that this aim was not achieved for a number of poor people working for the international market.

A related question was to know how far difficulties resulting from the functioning of the market economy could be solved thanks to the safety net of the welfare state. Should one recognize trade-offs with respect to the objective of ploughing back the unemployed into employment?