

Discussion of the paper by T. Nojiri

MALINVAUD

I would like to thank Professor Nojiri who has prepared this excellent presentation for us. It should greatly stimulate our reflections. I shall ask a question and make two comments.

Speaking in your second part of democracy as a rule, you persuasively stated three vital conditions for democratic regimes to work properly: concern for the common good, a powerful leadership, and trust in political leaders. You also said that achieving these conditions requires a certain level of education and culture amongst the people. The question then comes to mind: how can we develop education and culture in societies where they are inadequate, particularly in the Third World, where formal education is weak according to modern criteria? How can we promote a democratic culture where the level of general education will still be low for many years?

My two comments relate to the fourth part of the text. Firstly, it is shown there how Christian Humanism, with its focus on the dignity of the human being, has been an important source for democracy as a mental attitude; attention is also drawn to the risk which individualism is now causing for democracy, where personal duties are forgotten because of an erroneous interpretation of human rights. I wonder whether a premonition, somehow a forecast, of these difficulties does not explain part of the reservations against democracy expressed in the nineteenth century by some Christian thinkers who were, however, firm believers in Christian Humanism.

Secondly, the paper points to the self-contradictory development of welfare society. I, too, am much concerned about these contradictions. As the French Professor Rosanvallon wrote, our societies are schizophrenic about their values. This is a potential source of important future misbehaviour of, even troubles for, Western European democracies.

ZIOLKOWSKI

In this very perceptive paper I find something on page 7 which puzzles me. You say that some newly developing countries would be better off under an autocratic system. Maybe, I will not argue with that. Then the

second point – you claim that the establishment of the modern nation-state was brought about (or preceded) by despotism. What do you have in mind? What sort of country? Now, take France. It was an absolute monarchy, but it was a far cry from what you call despotism. Take England, where under the rule of monarchy it was possible to establish democracy.

RAMIREZ

I appreciate your conceptual framework by which we can examine whether our respective countries are democratic in form and in mentality.

The Church, I believe, has a significant role to play in nurturing a culture of democracy, since the Church's social teachings basically emphasize the dignity of the human person, a sense of the common good, and the law of subsidiarity. The Church is included in the workings of civil society where we find also the Academy, as well as movements or associations of solidarity and compassion. All of these associations and movements are trying to develop a culture of democracy, to educate leaders who will each strive to make the movements they represent render a contribution to the common good of society. Indeed, the Church should exercise its privilege of sensitizing the individual to his/her responsibility towards his/her dignity which she/he will feel good about whenever she/he can contribute to something greater than himself or herself. Farmers, small fisherfolk, indigenous groups, the urban poor – they will feel their richness when they as a sector or group can contribute to the greater good of the larger community. I must say that the Church through its many social initiatives has already contributed significantly to developing a culture of democracy as a mental attitude.

ZAMPETTI

Ho seguito con molto interesse la sua relazione perché ha trattato un tema cruciale: la relazione tra la persona umana e la democrazia.

È un problema questo che si trova al centro della nostra discussione, perché la democrazia è nata come democrazia rappresentativa, come democrazia individualistica. L'uomo come persona, e cioè inteso nell'unità di tutte le sue dimensioni, non può esprimersi soltanto nella democrazia rappresentativa. La democrazia rappresentativa, pur essendo necessaria, è insufficiente. È incompleta. Non è casuale la diminuzione della percentuale dei votanti negli Stati democratici. L'uomo non ha soltanto una natura individuale, ma altresì una natura sociale. Per conseguenza quando parlo di "persona umana e democrazia" non devo limitarmi a considerare i rapporti tra individuo o Stato, ma altresì i rapporti tra la società (i soggetti sociali) e

lo Stato. L'uomo in quanto membro della società deve potere influenzare le scelte politiche. La società oggi è in continua espansione sia a livello interno, sia a livello internazionale. Diventa molto importante, se mi metto da questo punto di vista, il principio enunciato dalla Dottrina sociale della Chiesa relativo alla "soggettività della società" che rappresenta il riconoscimento dell'autonomia della società medesima nei confronti dello Stato.

La ringrazio vivamente per le considerazioni che ha fatto e che ri-prenderò domani quando svolgerò la mia relazione.

MENSAH

Thank you very much. May I also thank the Professor for raising this question of the relationship between the individual and the forms of representative democracy.

I do not myself feel that there is a contradiction, because when we talk about democracy we are of course, as was made clear here this morning, talking of an organized State. We cannot talk of democracy without an organized State. Hence we proceed on the basis that there is a community of which the individual is a member. On that basis the concept of democracy has these two elements: first, the relationship of the individual to him or herself as an autonomous being, and second the relationship of the individual to the community. The concept of democracy is relevant only in the context of a community of individuals under a common governance. I note that this point has been raised in the paper and I welcome it. I do not, myself, share all the conclusions reached in the paper. For instance, the suggestion that in a developing country some form of autocracy, despotism or whatever one may call it, is either inevitable or even desirable has been proved completely untenable by the history of many independent States in the Third World. And the reason is not very difficult to find.

One may of course quibble about whether there is true representative democracy in all parts of the Western world. However, the undisputed fact is that these countries have developed both materially and spiritually mainly in proportion to the existence of democratic principles and institutions. One must of course take account of the historical perspective. For like all human institutions democracy is not static: it develops and evolves according to the evolution and change of norms, knowledge and expectations of peoples and societies. I will give an example here. When I was a little boy at school, the practice in my school, and in all the other schools, was that if a child misbehaved he was given corporal punishment. Now, in spite of what has been claimed by many modern psychologists, we did not at the time consider this to be a demeaning system. This was because everybody

got it, and everybody accepted it. However, the situation is very different now and a similar treatment would have a serious impact on the psychology of the child. This is because it is no longer considered an acceptable form of punishment in a modern society. So, the fact that two hundred years ago countries such as Germany, England and France were prepared to accept a king who had executive and legislative powers does not mean that such a system would be acceptable now.

Expectations have changed – and people will not accept it now, and they will resist it, if anybody tries to impose it on them. So, I believe that in a society in which the values of the dignity of the individual and the right of the individual to participate in decisions that affect him or her have become absolutely non-negotiable, it cannot be accepted that we should have an absolutist system in which one person decides what is good for everybody. Such a system would give uncontrolled power to whoever is in charge and all history has shown that uncontrolled power will be abused. Therefore I do not believe that we should entertain the idea that any country, no matter how poor, or how underdeveloped it may be, can in fact be developed by the decisions and dictates of one person, no matter how strong, no matter how benevolent that person may be. Thank you.

ZACHER

In your presentation, you are plainly arguing from the standpoint of Western philosophy. But when we are talking about the living conditions of democracy in other parts of the world, we always hear that there are quite other worlds of values, especially traditional values. And when we discuss the living conditions of democracy in other parts of the world, the next thing to be heard is that in post-colonial developing countries these traditional values are destroyed and weakened. But you come from Japan, and this is a country where we know the modern life-style is very dynamic with traditional values being very strong on the other hand. And so I would like to ask you: is there a stock of values or are there societal principles in Japan or in other Asian countries known to you which can be useful for democracy, or, on the other hand, which hinder democracy too much, and which are a challenge to democracy?

SCHAMBECK

Zu den treffenden und dankenswerten Feststellungen des Herrn Professor Utz drei kurze Bemerkungen. Erstens: Die Demokratie verlangt — wie kaum ein anderes politisches System — ein Verantwortungsdenken.

Zweitens: Die Demokratie wird in unserer Zeit in verschiedene Zusammenhänge mit verschiedenen Sachgebieten gebracht. Jeder dieser Bezüge hat seine eigene Sachgesetzlichkeit. Daher kommt es darauf an, die Demokratie nach der jeweiligen Sachgesetzlichkeit im Wertbewußtsein zur Anwendung zu bringen. Drittens: Es ist unmöglich, eine Demokratie — ganz gleich auf welchem Gebiet — ohne eine Erziehung zur Demokratie zu verwirklichen. Die Tragik besteht darin, daß vielfach Demokratie gefordert wurde, ohne daß man die erzieherischen Voraussetzungen dafür geboten hat und vorhanden waren. In der Folge ist dann diese Freiheit in der Demokratie oft verloren gegangen.

NOJIRI

Thank you very much, professors who have made a lot of valuable comments on my report. Your main questions may be summed up under four headings: (1) the terminology of autocracy; (2) the relation between the individual and representative democracy; (3) the idea of democracy and its reality; and (4) democracy and education. On these topics my own views are as follows.

(1) Prof. Ziolkowski and Prof. Mensah asked me some questions about my usage of the term autocracy. "Autocracy" in my report means a regime, i.e. a centrally managed system. In my opinion, in the developing nations such a system based on an eminent leader can be more suitable for their rapid modernization than a democratic regime, because most premodern nations are extremely poor economically, quite unequal in their social strata, seriously disrupted in politics, and very low at the level of education. Were there not somewhat similar situations in the European nations before the civil revolution? At any rate the Bourbon and the Tudor monarchies can not be called democracies. Is it ordinary terminology to call them despotism or absolutism? Of course, this does not deny that there can be various consultations among nobles under an autocratic ruler.

(2) On the relation between individuals and representative democracy, I wholly agree with Prof. Mensah and Prof. Zampetti. However, I distinguish, with J. Maritain, between the individual (*individuum*) and the person (*persona*), (please see part 3.1.1. of my paper). And I understand modern individualism as a one-sided development of the idea of the individual person, and find it in the paradoxical development of modern democracy as well. Part 4.1.2. of my paper seeks to analyse this ideological process.

(3) In relation to Prof. Zacher's and Prof. Schambeck's questions on the idea of democracy (above all as a mental attitude) and its reality, some

of my opinions are shown in part 2.1.2. and 3.1.3. of my paper. Although it is universal and immutable that the mind to respect anyone as a person should be the basis of democracy, its real way of existing is largely determined by historical and social conditions, and therefore becomes particular and mutable. In Asia, where almost all parts have their own old traditions and moreover were dominated for a long time by the European and American nations, the social and cultural differences between nations are much greater than in Europe. In this region, however, modernization is nearly synonymous with Europeanization. For this reason, the steps towards the modernization of Japan may offer a pattern. It was after the Meiji-Restoration (1868) that Japan began to push forward with her own modernization. However, by 1890 Japan had already built up a parliamentary democracy with a two-chamber system. At that time, the Constitution (the so-called Meiji Constitution) on which this democracy was based had taken above all the Prussian Constitution as its model. And after the Second World War, in a Japan occupied by the American forces, a new Constitution advocating human rights was enacted and individualistic democracy of an American style was developed. This does not mean that in Japan there was no humanistic and democratic idea at the outset. As partially mentioned above, in Japan too there was a view of man involving the idea of the person, and at the time of Meiji Restoration the Emperor himself declared that the extension of the democratic reformation was one of the five fundamental lines for modernization. Needless to say the Japanese experience cannot apply to the present East-Asian countries pursuing their rapid modernization. However, it can be a model for democratization in East Asia where the Christian background is slight. And it makes us hopeful that nowadays the idea of human rights, a flower of Christian humanism, has taken root far more deeply inside and outside the Christian sphere than at the end of nineteenth century.

(4) As pointed out by Professor Malinbaud and Professor Schambeck, a certain level of education and culture is indispensable to the operation of democracy because under the democratic system each qualified social member participates in the decision-making of the whole and the control of its implementation. I, too, stressed this in my report (part 2.3.4.).

Then, how can we develop the education for democracy in question? I think it will not be possible to draw up something like a common detailed manual because the best practical method will be different according to the time and the place. However, at least two things will be always indispensable: to enhance the general level of culture and to foster the idea of human dignity, the mental basis of democracy.

Regarding this point too, we can recognize, with Professor Ramirez, the great historical role that the Church and Catholic social teachings based upon the dignity of man as a person have played directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly. However, what is required in the present developing countries will be not to thrust the Christian ideas upon them but to integrate these ideas into the cultural climate of the nation concerned.