

The Economy of **Communion**

a n e w c u l t u r e

THE ECONOMY OF COMMUNION

• A NEW CULTURE

Year XII • n.24 • July 2006

• Four-monthly cultural

periodical • 4 euro per

copy • Authorisation

from the Civil Tribunal of

Rome n.83 dated 18-2 •

45% postal subscription

despatch, art.2 paragraph

20/b law 662/96 - Padova

Editor: Città Nuova

Publishing house for

P.A.M.O.M.

Managing Director:

Alberto Ferrucci

Management and

Administration:

via degli Scipioni, 256 •

00192 Roma

Printer:

Grafiche Fassicom

Coop. Sociale a.r.l.

via Imperiale, 41

16143 Genova



24



24/06

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Printer:
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The photo on the cover page:
The Tassano inauguration

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LETTERS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Edited by
Carla
Bozzani

Excerpts of letters received from people who participate in the EoC project by accepting to be assisted in some of their material necessities. This is done by utilizing part of the profits of the EoC firms, and the personal contributions of the members of the Focolare Movement.

■ You can help someone who is more in need than us

Thanks loads for the help that we received in these past years. My family was able to survive and my daughter is about to conclude her studies. At present we no longer need the financial assistance you provided us: you could help those who are more in need than us.

(Philippines)

■ Providence that keeps me alive

I am deeply grateful for the help that I received in these last three years. I could finally undertake the urgently needed medical treatment. It is thanks to the constant and timely arrival of this Providence that I am still alive and I hope to live long enough in order to helping others who suffer in my turn.

(Philippines)

■ I will be able to study and to find a job

I was desperate after having sought help everywhere, and not finding someone who could help cover my school expenses. I had knocked on the doors of many institutes in Lahore, but it was in vain as no one was ready to help me gratuitously. It was only the help of this great family of the Movement has enabled me to experience the hundredfold, by giving me the possibility to be admitted into a good boarding school. The education that I will receive will facilitate my finding a job on the completion of my studies.

(Pakistan)

■ We can help others who are close to us

Thanks for the Providence that enabled us to repair the house. This concrete love helps us to make a firsthand experience of being part of one 'family'. Now all of us at home have providentially found a job, even if modest, and so we can help other needy persons who are close to us.

(Argentina)

■ More youth at the Agape General Hospital

A great number of Brazilian youth have to take up a job quite early in life in order to maintain themselves.

However the work market requires an experience that these youth often lack. To facilitate their entry into the work market, the government offers an incentive to business enterprises that employ these youth through the "Young Citizen Project – the first job". The Agape General Hospital too adhered to this project, employing two girls (Debora and Fernanda) from the gen3 movement, who were helped by means of the Economy of Communion. We had to teach them everything as they did not have any experience. It needed time and commitment not only from the management, but also from the hospital workers who had to patiently explain everything on a daily basis.

The government scheme did not envisage the same benefits for the youth as provided for the other workers, such as the monthly hamper of provisions. However, we felt it was really important that they received the same, not only because their families needed it, but also so that they might not feel discriminated against. We included them in the meetings, commemorations, and professional training programmes. At first the doctors were amazed by this attitude, but little by little they too got involved. Now one of them wants to emulate our example at his clinic.

Our firm progressed during this year, and since we had to employ new personnel, we confirmed the employment of these two youth at the end of a year's internship. It was a great joy for all to see how had the possibility to come out of their situation of poverty by inserting themselves in an EoC firm, thanks to the contribution of everyone.

Now we are employing another two gen3 girls who are in difficulty, and the government office that follows the project let us know that the positive experience of the general hospital evoked new requests of adherence, and they asked us to function as a point of reference and to provide clarifications to the new firms who adopted the project.

(Darlene Bonfin – director)



FIFTEEN YEARS OF THE EoC

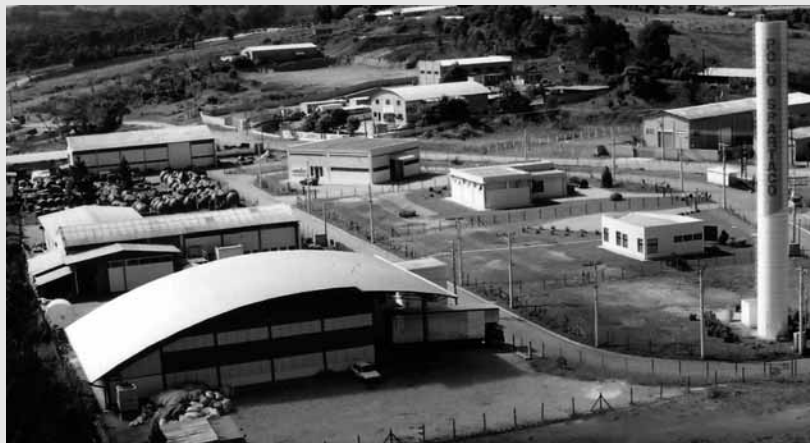
Alberto Ferrucci

Fifteen years ago no one would have imagined the world of today, with its incredible progress but also torn apart by cruel wars. It is a world in which the lives of the weak seem to have no value, whose natural resources reveal their limits and the environment its fragility.

God's gift of universal brotherhood applied by the EoC project in its own economy reveals its great value precisely for today's world. Today one can glimpse more than ever the golden thread of the Holy Spirit's action, who in 1990 had stirred the heart of a Brazilian focolarino of Chinese descent, during a visit to the Blessed Sacrament with Chiara in a New York church, to offer up his own life for the fall of the wall of consumerism that generates many of today's problems, as a follow up to the fall of the Berlin Wall together with communism the year before.

It is all the more evident why Chiara launched the idea of the EoC project precisely in Brazil in 1991. In these last years the Latin American people, who were at first absent from the international scenario, were able to react to economic depression and dependence on foreign debts by electing democratic governments and leaders who were attentive to the fight against misery and the lack of work. Despite the inevitable operative errors, these leaders were capable of exploiting their country's resources, and placing their countries at the forefront in environmental related issues such as aiming at the production of agricultural fuel oil.

These countries showed their awareness of their strategic role by not bowing down to the logic of the North at the level of international trade negotiations, while also set-



ting their debts with the International Monetary Fund. And in this common action, Brazil has acquired an undisputable leadership among the newly industrialised countries as well as those in the process of development.

From all this it is quite clear why God wanted the setting up of the Spartaco Business Park in the very heart of Brazil's production, despite the great economic difficulties that then existed. Today after 15 years Jesus, who is present in an already adolescent EoC, can begin "speaking to the doctors".

It means speaking through the reflections and studies deriving from the economic decisions and the daily behaviours of its protagonists. This is backed up by concrete achievements that are capable to make this new leadership of politicians, economists, and scholars to foresee a sustainable alternative for the future, which is based on the application of universal brotherhood even in economics.

After these fifteen years of experience and reflection, a group of fifty scholars from ten countries met at Castel Gandolfo to compare their studies carried out in universities in dialogue with economists, sociologists, and psychologists with varied orientations. The latter by now recognise the

study trend carried ahead by these scholars on relationality, happiness, of a different approach to Management Science and company relationships, scientific dignity together with high creativity, as shown by the book entitled "Reciprocity" that is reviewed in this newsletter.

We carry in this issue some of the earnest requests that were made in the seminar of these scholars, with the hope that in this way they would not remain limited to that small group but may become a treasure-house for all those who support the EoC project so that they might know how to incarnate it in their everyday activity. We also include the news about a successful moment of an important Italian EoC enterprise, which by now has taken up a public role of its own in its territory of operation.

Igino Giordani used to say, *"Christianity was not just a revolution, but the revolution. It is up to us to show that this revolution is alive today more than ever!"*

We hope that this outlook together with the communion among all of us, gives us strength, determination, inventiveness, and the joy to live and participate in such a magnificent project!



A WAY OF COMMUNION IN FREEDOM

Chiara
Lubich

"As we all know, the inspiring idea of the Economy of Communion was that of giving rise to business enterprises whose profits could be used in favour of those in need. I was prompted to do this on realising that we were unable to cover even the most urgent needs of some of our members, notwithstanding the communion of goods practiced in the Movement. Moreover, as the plane made its descent over the city of São Paulo, I was shocked by the sight of a horde of skyscrapers surrounded by an infinite number of slums, which Cardinal Arns called "the crown of thorns".

The Economy of Communion project was helping us to achieve, in a different way, the genuine idea with which the communion of goods had begun among all of us at the beginning of our Movement: that no one would be poor. Now it was a matter of setting up business enterprises that would produce profits always for the benefit of the needy, thus giving an example of economic activity inspired by Christianity.

From its inception, we seemed to glimpse in this project a concretisation of a possible "new way", in line with our Ideal, towards which the future would tend, a way of communion in freedom. Later on, an economist dared to tell me that he saw it as a "hope of the future".

...And because the Economy of Communion is the expression of a Work of God, we should look for signs and models, also with regard to the way of working in it, in the spiritual and religious world more than in the earthly and human one... Human beings fulfil themselves especially through their work. Therefore, we should also seek to carry out the Economy of Communion in the best possible way. Indeed, we should feel called to make of every hour devoted to it a masterpiece of precision, order, and harmony. We should be keenly aware of having to use our talents in order to improve them, and to perfect ourselves also through studies related to our professions...



"CHARISMATIC" ECONOMICS



**Luigino
Bruni**

History, and civil and economic life can be interpreted as a dynamics between charism and institution. The theologian H. Von Balthasar proposes a vision or theory of the Church as a dialogue, a dynamics between different "profiles" or principles that are linked to the charisms of certain persons of the nascent Church. In particular two basic principles are the "Petrine" and the "Marian". The Petrine principle highlights above all the institutional, hierarchical, juridical, and objective aspect of the life of the Church, while the Marian principle reveals its charismatic, horizontal, and fraternal nature. These principles are not in conflict with each other but complimentary with a dynamic and vital rapport. Balthasar says that the history of the Church can be narrated as a development and interweaving of these two co-essential dimension of the Church. It is a history of *institutions* and *charisms*.

I am convinced that this vision of the life of the Church is very apt also to understand the economic and civil dynamics of humanity. But just as there is (or at least there was) a tendency to emphasise the institutional aspect of the Church while reading the life of the Church and leaving the charismatic aspect in the shadows, analogically while interpreting the life of humanity, and its civil and

economic dynamics, there is always the tendency to see only the institutional aspects and to neglect the action of charisms. Often we see and narrate only the history of great events, political treatises, and wars. With regards to economics we narrate the economy of big business enterprises and bankers, Marco Polo, the marine republics of Venice and Genoa, the discovery of America and the influx of gold, inflation crises, and colonial expansions. Instead, one does not consider and narrate other economies and histories which I refer to in this article as "charismatic", since they arose from religious and civil charisms. However if we commit this mistake we are neglecting fundamental elements in understanding the civil history of societies, and even of economics.

For example, let us try to narrate some fundamental history passages of charismatic economics. A first important example is monachism. The Benedictine rule of "Ora et labora" (pray and work) signified much more than a mere individual spirituality. The Benedictine culture through the centuries became a true and proper culture of work and economics. In the Greek-Roman world those who studied did not work, and the one who worked was not a cultured person but a slave. The charism of Benedict, who is not the patron saint of Europe by chance, reunited these two dimensions of human life – the interior life and work – and thus gave life also to the first great economic innovation, among which the modern accounting techniques. The charism of Benedict and other founders was decisive for the formation of the market economy. The monastic culture was the cradle that also gave rise to the first economic and commercial lexicon that would influence early



medieval Europe. And it was the working and commercial experience of the monasteries where the ethical legitimisation of economic activity was created, which was the decisive element for the start of modern economics.

Another example is the Franciscan charism that played a decisive role in the emergence of modern market economy. This charism represents a very significant moment in the history of economics and western society. It also represents a paradox: a charism that is based on "sister poverty", on a real detachment from goods and money. However it became the first economic "school" which gave rise to the spirit of the market economy. Francis was the son of a merchant and also a merchant himself. His criticism of money and of a world regulated by prices in favour of gratuitousness and the immeasurable value of the most precious goods (what is the cost of "brother sun", or "sister water"?), was the most radical in history. However the Franciscan charism gave rise to the "Monti di pietà" (or pawn shops) in the second half of the fifth century, initially in the regions of Umbria and Marche in Italy and then spreading all over Italy and the rest of Europe. The emergence of these "Monti di pietà" was principally inspired by "fraternity" and not by any economic moti-





ve. It was aimed at liberating people from money-lenders and misery. The first banks came into being as a “cure for poverty”. They used to say the whole city was poor if one of its citizens was poor. To “cure” misery meant to cure the entire city; it meant healing the whole civil body! The emergence of the first modern banks was inspired by love.

In the centuries that followed, charisms gave rise to the “reducciones” in South America (Jesuit missions), the first hospitals and public schools, and works of assistance. The first work contract for a minor was drawn up by Don Bosco whose charism emerged out of love for teenagers and youth.

Charismatic history does not end with the charism of saints. There is also a charismatic principle at work in humanity, in persons who are not explicitly religious but who are inspired by the spirit and gratuitousness. An expression of these “civil charisms” is the European Cooperative Movement, which attempted a non-capitalistic alternative to the market economy in the second half of the nineteenth century, giving rise to cooperatives based on fraternity. Today’s social and civil economy is still the fruit of many charisms. Charismatic economics is not just limited to the West. The 12 March 1930, when Gandhi began his “salt march”,

was a landmark for India: it set into motion a revolution that emerged from the Gandhian charism.

I would like to highlight some of the characteristics of charismatic economies:

1. **Ideal motive:** The motive behind such experiences is neither primarily nor exclusively the pursuit of individual advantages. The founders or animators of these experiences are moved by civil zeal that is stronger than the mere economic aspect.

2. **Principle of reciprocity:** Their founding principle is neither altruism nor philanthropy but reciprocity (which in practice is often expressed in terms of solidarity, mutuality, and even fraternity).

3. **Gratuitousness:** This is a founding element.

Gratuitousness exists whenever the act is an end in itself, and it is not just the results that count. Thus the activity that emerges from a charism is never only a means but an end in itself. It is worth noting that the words gratuitousness and charism both come from the Greek “charis” (grace).

4. It emerges from the **civil society**. Charismatic experiences come into being from the communal level, from below, from people who enter spontaneously into associations. Thus they are experiences of free people.

5. They come into being in **answer to concrete problems of**

justice and equity, and not from “abstract” theories. The experience begins in order to meet some kind of “need” of concrete persons or community. That is why the identity aspect is very prominent in these experiences.

History, including that economic and civil, would not have been the same without these great charisms, of economic experiences arising from “vocations”, and which brought about important civilisation effects, including those economic. They continue to exercise their influence to this very day. The EoC is one of such experiences that (a) has its beginnings from an ideal, (b) is based on reciprocity, (c) practices gratuitousness or the “culture of giving, (d) it is the economy of a people and of fraternity, (e) it emerges from an “act of love” for concrete persons who lived in the shanty towns of São Paolo.

Modern economics is urgently in need of charisms without which the economy churns out malaises. Charisms bring a human touch to civil life, they render the yoke of daily toil suave and light, and they highlight people as being “persons” before being colleagues, clients, or consumers.

1. Cf. B. Leahy, *Il principio mariano nella chiesa*, Città Nuova, 2000.

THE TASSANO MIRACLE

Silvano Gianti

The factory building set up by the Regional Foundation to gather the social activities of the Tassano Consortium, whose aim is to provide work to disadvantaged persons, was inaugurated on Thursday, 15 June, at Casarza Ligure. Nearly a thousand people, among whom influential persons, politicians, and many ordinary citizens, were present at the "simple" yet "solemn" ceremony.

In following with the setting up of the "Regional Foundation for social investments" that was strongly desired by all the regional politicians in recognition of the Consortium's valuable work in the region, and the subsequent transfer into the new premises, the inauguration showed once more how much this activity of the Consortium was appreciated, and its importance for the public administration, the civil society, those who operate within the activity, and local citizens.

The inauguration was a real celebration, with the participation of the auxiliary bishop Mons. Gero Marino, mayor Andrea Lavarello of Sestri Levante, the regional councillor Luigi Merlo, the Consortium's managing director Maurizio Cantamessa, the Regional Foundation's president Passalacqua, and Alberto Ferrucci for the Economy of Communion project.

Chiara Lubich sent a message for the occasion that was read out by Antonia Benaglio, one of her first companions. (see alongside)

The inauguration concluded with the president of the Consortium, Giacomo Linaro, calling upon stage all the present public administrators who in these years made possible the setting up of the new office.



He thanked them on behalf of everyone, and observed that they belonged to different political inclinations. He hoped that this unique event of unity in working for a common project would be a good sign for the resolution of the Italian society's problems.

In the end, the president invited everyone to celebrate the inauguration by taking a place at the over thousand places set

around tables that were mostly laid out on the big terrace of the new office. All the places at table were filled up, and two exquisite dishes prepared by local specialist cooks were served: the "bagnun", a simple dish made of bread and blue fish, and an "assado" [barbeque], whose aroma had invaded the whole surrounding area while it was being prepared.

Dearest all of the Tassano Consortium,

I am united with you in this new and important stage of your activity, to thank God for the many fruits obtained in all these years of its existence.

He is the main "Partner" in your businesses; he has blessed your commitment and made you experience the hundredfold, promised to those who seek His kingdom, in the most varied ways.

You have adhered with generosity to the Economy of Communion project since its inception, perceiving in it that "novelty" that can respond to the needs of today's humanity and promote the unity of the human family.

Your witness has involved many persons, and the inauguration of the new office, with the active and generous collaboration of the Ligure Regional Council, is recognition of it and a further confirmation.

My best wishes that the Tassano Consortium continues to be an affirmation of those social, economic, and cultural values from which many can draw on, and thus contribute to building authentic fraternity in your region and beyond.

While assuring you of my prayers for this to come about, I heartily greet each one present with a special thanks to those who believed in this initiative and supported, encouraged, helped and brought it to this happy goal.

A warm and special greeting to H.E. the Bishop, and all the dignitaries present.

Chiara Lubich



The local Liguria media called the operation that was promoted by the Region, the Province, and the district communes as a “miracle”. It permitted the Consortium to continue existing, by transferring its social cooperative office from Sestri Levante to the new zone of Casarza Ligure.

The administrators were well familiar with the Consortium’s goals. On more than one occasion they showed their being struck by this social experience, so much so that they proposed without much ado across party lines the setting up of a Foundation to procure land in an industrial zone, and the construction of a complex of around 600 square metres.

As the Social Policy councillor, Dr. Gatti, explained at that time, “The motivations that brought about our serious involvement was precisely because one could see the extraordinary way in which all the Tassano directors acted. We were struck by their moral drive. It would have been a failure for us if we did not concretise this task, because we needed to correspond to the deep convictions of Linaro and his directors...” It is a “miracle of Providence...”, but also the fruit of long and patient efforts of dialogue, rapport, and mutual sensitivity that the Consortium carried ahead in these years with public institutions. The construction

work of the new office began in October 2004 and was completed by the end of last year. The new office began functioning at the beginning of 2006.

The experience that characterises Tassano’s behaviour

The Economy of Communion, which is directed in particular towards providing work to those who are unemployed and have a great difficulty in obtaining one, is the experience that characterises the Tassano’s way of operating.

In fact, among its fifty two cooperatives that are at the service of social assistance organisations, and a range of services spread out over the zone, there is one that we could call as the Consortium’s “buttonhole flower”.

It is a special laboratory in which over a hundred disadvantaged persons are employed. Their work consists in assembling, confectioning, and packing various articles for third parties. It is a work that renders meagre revenue. However the challenge that is lived out is of immense value. It all began with the desire to give employment to these persons, which would substitute the charity, or the sporadic or continuous help to cover an emergency; a concrete act that would give them back hope and dignity.

The “pearl” consisted in this act. But it required a lot of money. And it came in con-

stantly from the Consortium itself. Without expecting the due involvement of government institutions, the Consortium took from the profits of its other cooperatives to maintain in existence this special laboratory.

This is the guiding thread that led the genesis of this unique work experience from the very beginning. It was the initial wager that acted as a springboard for what is known today as “sector B” within the Tassano Consortium, which carries out the work of assembly, confection, and packaging of various articles for third parties.

The “laboratory” experience is made within this sector in which 130 disadvantaged persons work. It is a fascinating story that narrates the setting up of “Ponte”, “Pellicano”, “Giglio” – special laboratories that facilitate the inclusion into the labour market.

Pierangelo Tassano, the Vice Present of the Consortium narrates, “While we were aware right from the onset of our inexperience in this field of providing employment, we had the faith to keep alive that small seed, thanks also to the contribution of all the volunteers who gave their time to work with us in the ‘Il Ponte’ laboratory.

We accepted a small subcontract right away: the assembly of lower/raise window levers for cars. We have a working pace of around 100 square



metres, together with a lot of passion and enthusiasm". Meanwhile the "Pellicano" was growing, both in the number of associates and in the volume of work. By now the back workshop was too small, more space was needed.

Help was sought from the Mayor of Sestri Levante who understood the situation, and from local trade unions. An agreement was reached with the owner of a shed with an area of 10,000 square metres that was located in the centre of Sestri Levante, regarding the use of the shed on gratuitous loan, and with the commitment to leave it as soon as the commune's new City Plan became operational.

Pierangelo continues, "At this point this third party transfer was very important, especially because our experience began to be known at the institutional and social levels, and among the citizens. When SERT (rehabilitation centre for drug addicts) in Chiavari too learnt of our experience, it understood that the work is a 'therapy', even before being productive.

With this understanding this institution drafted with us the regulations of the project 'Vivere Liberi' [Live free] to provide employment to drug addicts and alcoholics. It wanted to collaborate directly with us, and even offered us psychologists. They recognized that there was something 'novel' in our experience that would facilitate the social rehabilitation of these categories of persons.

This collaboration is still in vigour." Another important stage in the Consortium's history was the meeting with the then regional Work Policies councillor who was struck by this particular experience after a visit to the laboratory. He helped in connecting the Consortium with big businesses enterprises in the region.

The aim was to be able to procure more work. Therefore he organised a conference with these businesses at Genoa and asked the Consortium to narrate its story. This brought on visits by journalists, politicians, mayors, administrators, associations who on each occasion

left the shed in wonder, edified, transformed, and they spoke about it immediately with others. Today this experience which thanks to them is known, felt and loved at the local level, is open for all.

The arrival of Klemens Ries in the cooperative, who is the present Laboratory Director, gave a "scientific" and "professional" touch to the project. Pierangelo Tassano says in conclusion, "Today we have reached this stage, but there is still a long way to go in order to ensure greater security. We are awaiting a public recognition from national and regional institutions to institutionalise this project, and to professionalise the experience of future operators who will be responsible to work within our laboratory. In the meanwhile we carry on with our seeking funds and resources, even if they might be modest, for the future of this special Laboratory. We adhere to the Economy of Communion project, and we would like a good measure of our profits to be distributed in keeping with its aims, and that we might not need to use a major part of the profits to cover tasks that we feel pertain to the community."

II The Consortium today

The Roberto Tassano Social Cooperative Consortium was formed in 1997 with the aim of unifying the different business and social experiences in ope-





ration since 1989, as well as to function as an “incubator” for the new productive realities that subsequently emerged within the Tassano Group.

The Tassano Consortium is the promoter of a network of inter-linked consortiums – Campo del Vescovo Consortium, Gianellinrete Consortium, Alpe Consortium, Primo e Val di Vara Consortium – with 52 cooperatives employing 1200 working associates and employees.

Through these cooperatives the Consortium manages rest homes, mental healthcare homes, protected residences, various works for third parties carried out by the laboratory for inclusion into the labour market, regional services, formation, and planning. It is primarily organised into three sectors, gathers social assistance structures, and the social tourism sector with its hotel structures. The assembly, confection, and packaging of various articles for third parties; it is the sector which contains the “Laboratory” experience for disadvantaged persons.

And lastly there is whole set of services spread out over the region that include: house assistance for the elderly and the disabled, management of school canteens, animation of summer centres and rest homes, cleaning of streets, garden maintenance, the Centro Unico di Prenotazione ASL [appointment centre for local health services] for health check-ups.

ALIVE HISTORY PAGES

Our Gross Domestic product is the highest in the world.

But it also counts air pollution, cigarette advertising, and the ambulances that pick up the wounded on the highways.

It counts the destruction of our forests, and the loss of our natural wonder.

It counts napalm and the cost of storing nuclear waste.

Instead the GDP does not count the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play.

It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages.

It does not count our courage, our integrity, our intelligence, our wisdom.

It measures everything, except that which makes life worthwhile.

Robert Kennedy

The economy that arises out of interest and the economy that arises out of love

CONTRACTS, FRIENDSHIP, AND GRATUITOUSNESS

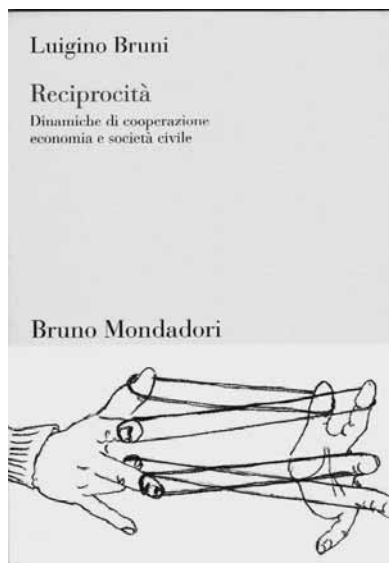
Luca
Crivelli

In this newsletter, Luigino Bruni applies the categories of the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar to the analysis of economics. One finds the two dimensions present in the life of the Church also in the economic context: one that is more institutional – *the economy that arises out of interest*, and which has traditionally been the object of interest for scholars, and one that is more charismatic – *the economy that arises out “of love”*.

I believe that by analogy we can also apply this concept to the world of ideas. There are theories that are conceived out of interest, and books that are written out of love. In my opinion, Luigino Bruni's book “Reciprocity”, recently published by Bruno Mondadori, fits this second category. Although there is no explicit reference made to the Economy of Communion except in the acknowledgements, the 190 pages of this book embody an act of love towards the EoC project.

The subject of “reciprocity” that the book deals with is not surprising as this subject, which has traditionally been the study domain of sociology and anthropology, has since some years entered to form part of the research of economic sciences. The surprising element of Bruni's work is rather the theory enunciated in the last chapter. It considers as an error to theoretically separate the “interest” element in contracts from the more genuine elements of friendship or indeed of gratuitousness, insofar as “*reciprocity is one, but reciprocities are many*”.

Bruni is inspired by the passion for civil life as a whole, the logic of contracts, rapports of



friendship, and acts prompted by the desire to gift and by gratuitousness. For civil life to flourish, to what extent does it need to have a pluralistic vision and to develop internally these various kinds of relationships?

According to the author the dividing line that separates the civil from the uncivil passes through various forms of human sociality. In the first section of the book he outlines three main kinds of reciprocity: one which is wary of contracts and is very similar to “eros”; then the reciprocity of friendship that brings to mind “philia”; and unconditional and gratuitous reciprocity that is typical of “agape”. There is a remarkable similarity between the contents of this book and the recent encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI entitled *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love).

Bruni is convinced that a societal existence that is unable to bring about all the aspects of reciprocity, unwittingly ends up in a world made up only of contracts, or in general non-cooperation. Civil life flourishes when it maintains together the various aspects of reciprocity.

Neither the liberalistic view

according to which the pursuit of self-interests is sufficient motive to promote the well-being of nations, nor the position of those who consider the market and contracts as destined to bring about a “desertification” of civil life is essentially correct.

Both these positions reveal a Manichean reading of reality. Often there are two opposing visions also with regards to love. Some exaggerate on one hand by exalting the role of “eros”, or love that is moved by the desire to possess, and which claims total independence from disinterested forms of love. Instead others consider “eros” as a real and constant threat to the higher forms of love such as “agape”. In this regard Pope Benedict XVI writes, “*Yet eros and agape—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized*”.

For those who are not familiar with game theory models and numeric simulations, the most difficult part, which is also the most enthralling part of the volume, is represented by the final chapters. By combining the rigidity of the scientific method with an extraordinary efficacy in formulating the formal propositions in a language comprehensible to all, Bruni demonstrates how one could configure the cultural and social evolution of a community wherein there exists only one, or two, or all three forms of reciprocity.

The demonstration instrument is that of the repeated prisoner's dilemma, which is analysed with the developing games language and by



varying the number and relative importance of each of the strategies present in the population.

Some of the highlighted results, which cannot be taken for granted, are of great practical relevance. If gratuitousness were to be missing in a society, a part of its members would never experience cooperation. In fact only gratuitousness knows how to awaken dormant co-operators.

If there were to be only two of the three aspects of reciprocity present in society besides non-cooperation, such as friendship and gratuitousness, but contracts were missing, then friendship would be the only form of reciprocity capable of emerging on its own. However for this to occur, it is necessary "to dose" the presence of gratuitousness. In fact too many gratis acts would result not only in the extinction of gratuitousness but also in non-cooperation defeating friendship.

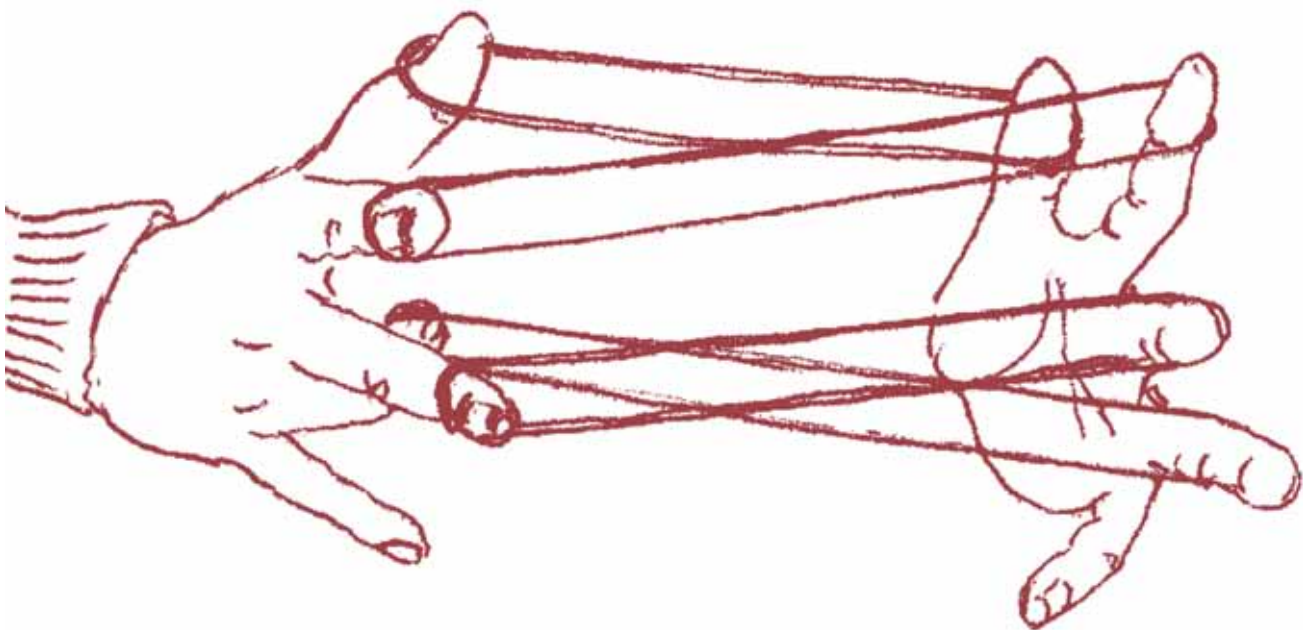
The situation would improve if all the three forms of reciprocity were to be activated in the community. In fact this would facilitate gratuitousness to assert itself. Thus paradoxically, the presence of contracts can favour the flourishing of gratuitousness itself with respect to friendship and non-cooperation.

The last pages of the book deal with those expressions of civil life that the author considers as fundamental for society, inasmuch as they act as "yeast for the dough and salt for the earth". Their behaviour is motivated by strong ideals. And this brings to mind the Economy of Communion project.

It is important that the businesses adhering to the project are careful about not dissociating the various aspects of reciprocity. If one positions the crossbar too high by excluding *a priori* forms that are wary of reciprocity such as the con-

tract, and because they are not considered as being sufficiently generous or "lofty", then over time this could result in the death of the organisation itself.

But another kind of risk could lie in wait. Due to the inevitable delusions provoked by encounters with opportunistic persons and the overemphasis placed on vocation and gratuitousness by the one who began the business, the second generation of managing directors could react by renouncing gratuitousness. This would mean the disappearance of an essential "degree of freedom" from the system, resulting in the impoverishment of the civil dynamics and undermining the foundations of the inspiring ideal around which the identity and the organisation's very reason for existence had been shaped.



NEWS FROM BRAZIL

Armando Tortelli

The EoC projected completed 15 years on 29 May 2006. The national congress from 23-26 June 2006, including the Forum and Expo of business enterprises, will be an occasion to reflect on the developments and on future prospects.

A two day meeting was held in February to define the congress programme. The Philadelphia Study Centre, Espri, Empresial EoC do Nordeste Business Park, National EoC Association, and those responsible of the little town of Mariapoli Ginetta were present at this meeting, which was very fruitful for the unity built among all.

Entrepreneurs, professors, students, collaborators, and also persons who receive an aid from the projected are expected to participate in this year's congress. Business enterprises that adhere to the project as well as those who support it will be present. Representatives from Italy and Argentina are expected.

The National EoC Association

Entrepreneurs from Brazil had participated at the international meeting at Castelgandolfo in 2004, which had led to the formation of the International EoC Association. These entrepreneurs also decided to form a Brazilian National Association (ANPEC), which was formally constituted in July 2005. Its aim was to assist and connect the EoC enterprises among themselves and with EoC enterprises in other countries, and above all to encourage the development of Business Parks.

After its foundation meeting at São Paulo, the EoC Association was holding its second meeting 3000 km away at Recife, following the fourth assembly of 500 shareholders of the "Empresial EoC do Nordeste Business Park" company that was launched to administer the nascent industrial business park in that region



The North East Business Park

The Assembly had defined the objectives to be achieved in 2006. The main office of the management company and the services necessary for the businesses (water, electricity, natural gas, accessible roads, etc.) had already been provided for, thanks also to the prompt collaboration of government bodies who were interested in a quick launching of the Business Park. The Assembly approved the construction of sheds for the first two enterprises, one for the production of marmalade that was also exported, and another for the production of plastic handicrafts. These businesses had entrepreneurs partners both local and from southern Brazil, and they will be helped in their launch by the technical collaboration of other Brazilian EoC enterprises.

The Spartaco Business Park

The Spartaco Business Park has many visitors nearly everyday. They are happy to meet the enterprises and to have a firsthand experience of the place where this new economy is being realised.

Seven businesses with 75 direct and 130 indirect employees are presently operational in the business park. ESPRI S/A that manages the structures of the business park, is presently organising the establishment of a new enterprise – UNITÀ MOVEIS e Decorações – that produces and markets furniture for homes, offices, and shops (www.unitamoveis.com.br). Espri is proposing to its associa-

tes to subscribe for an increase in capital, in order to gather the necessary funds to build a new shed for this enterprise.

Youth and the Business Park

A workshop entitled "A new economic culture" was held at the Ginetta Mariapoli Centre on 9 April 2006. It was organised by youth participants of ESPRI 2010 project. The workshop, which combined idealism with life experience, was attended by 62 youth together with workers from the business park enterprises. One of the youth said, "It was more than just a day of work. We lived a day immersed in a new culture. This contact with the EoC experience gives courage to us youth who aspire to do something to change the world".

One of the workshop's achievements was the formation of an "e-group" to remain in contact and to share ideas and even curriculum vitae, so as to exchange professional experiences.

Academic world

These 15 years of EoC in Brazil have influenced academic life at various levels. The Philadelphia Study Centre was set up in 2005. At present there are 95 works as part of university courses conclusions, among which 24 are at a Master's level and 5 at Ph.D.

The project has been drawing an increased attention from universities. EoC entrepreneurs and protagonists have been invited to present its story, dynamics and development at various study meetings in religious, political, cultural, and academic spheres.



SEVEN YEARS OF “ROTOGINE”

Rodolfo Leibholtz

On 4 May 2006, the company celebrated its seventh anniversary. It had been founded by the partnership between Kentinnis – holding company of the Femaq group, and the Estrela Participações. The abbreviation KNE was added on to the original name of Rotogine.

Rotogine was founded on the basis of a sheer act of faith of François Neveux, a French entrepreneur who was fascinated by the EoC project. He had come to a congress in Brazil to offer his services free of charge to set up a company that would introduce his technology into the business park; a technology that had already been successfully marketed in various countries.

Then, the only company operating in the business park was the garment manufacturers La Tunica. François, who had been present at the inauguration by Ginetta Calliari of a shed built in the business park for a company which had gone bankrupt in the meantime, was struck by her faith and decided, against all economic calculations, to set up a company in the business park to produce plastic handicrafts for the Brazilian market.

His choice came at a time when the Brazilian economy was facing a very difficult moment. It provided the necessary thrust for the Spartaco Business Park to takeoff.

It has not been easy going for Rotogine in these years. It was necessary to identify the right product and raw material for

Françoise e François Neveux



the Brazilian market. François egged on an EoC entrepreneur to produce the raw material at a favourable price through the recycling of discarded plastics. François zeal to ensure that the company took off led him to invent a new water treatment technique – the “Upflow Anaerobic Sludge Blanket” (USAB) Reactor – that is marketed today even in Europe with a potentiality for other world markets.

The workers at Rotogine grew from the initial two to thirteen, without considering the work induced on the marketing front. The 350 m2 sized shed was doubled, and the production was also extended

to hydrocarbon separation systems, rain water collection structures and recovery systems, the production of sports equipment such as kayaks, and very colourful outdoor play equipment for children in public gardens.

Rotogine organised scientific conventions at Brazilian universities, and is renowned for its adherence to the EoC project. When the initiative in Brazil to collect and destroy firearms gathered momentum, it was precisely Rotogine that was chosen to recycle the metal obtained from the fusion of firearms by producing the metal parts for children’s toys.



27-28 October 2006:

THE INAUGURATION OF THE LIONELLO BONFANTI BUSINESS PARK

Cecilia Cantone

On Sunday 28 October 2006 at 3.30 p.m., the "Lionello Bonfanti Business Park" will be inaugurated in the presence of many representatives from politics and civil society, and a group of around 500 associates of the EdiC Spa and adherents of the Economy of Communion project. This productive business park will complete the design on the little town of the Focolare Movement named after Renata Borlone, and situated at Loppiano near Incisa Valdarno.

Considering the importance of the event, the EdiC Spa is organising a study conference entitled **"Signs of fraternity in Economics"**, in collaboration with the Central Commission of the Economy of Communion of the Focolare Movement.

Vera Araujo a sociologist, Adriana Cosseddu a professor of law, and Luigino Bruni an economist will be the speakers at the conference. Their expositions will be followed by a round table discussion open to various people who operate in the Italian economic sector.

The inauguration also includes an "open door" event to the Lionello Business Park. It is open to all those who wish to visit the Business Park, and in particular to the inhabitants of Burchio, Incisa, Loppiano and the surrounding towns who witnessed its formation and growth either with anxiety, or fears and doubts, or hope. The aim of this event is to extend the working dialogue established with citizen, provincial and regional institutions also to all the inhabitants of the region.



The details of the programme:

• Sunday, 22 October 2006

"Open door to the Business Park"

There will be a presentation of the function of the Lionello Business Park with regards to the little town of Loppiano and the Economy of Communion. This will be followed at 3.30 p.m. by an address of the Mayor of Incisa in Val d'Arno, the presentation of person of Lionello Bonfanti, and interviews with some of the entrepreneurs of the Business Park.

• Friday, 27 October 2006

Study conference

"Signs of fraternity in Economics"

At 10 a.m., following a welcome to participant from various countries, there will be speeches by Vera Araujo, Adriana Cosseddu, and Luigino Bruni that will touch upon cultural, sociological, legal and economic aspects with regards to the theme of the conference.

This will be followed by the speech of Giuseppe Manzo an engineer on "The significance of Business Parks in the Economy of Communion", and experiences narrated by Brazilian businessmen with enterprises that are functional at the Spartaco Lucarini Business Park. This was the first productive business park of the Economy of Communion, which was laun-

ched in Brazil besides the little town near São Paolo named after Ginetta Calliari.

There will also be the testimonies of people who have participated in the EoC project, and who have experienced solidarity in moments of crisis.

At 3.30 p.m., the RAI journalist Gianni Bianco will chair a round table conference with the confirmed participation of representatives from Banca Etica, Unicoop, Finsoe, Compagnia delle Opere, ACLI. There will also be a moment of open dialogue with the hall.

• Saturday, 28 October 2006

"Inauguration"

At 3.30 p.m., a welcome of the representatives of the little town of Loppiano and the EdiC Spa will be followed by a video presentation of the business enterprises already present at the Lionello Business Park and an address by Prof. Stefano Zamagni, lecturer of Political Economics at the University of Bologna.

Following the welcoming of the institutions present, Dr. Cecilia Cantone, President of the EdiC Spa, will present Chiara Lubich's message to the Lionello Business Park. The slab bearing the "Word of Life" gifted by Chiara Lubich to the Lionello Business Park will then be exposed.



SCHOOL FOR EoC SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

**Silvano
Gianti**

A few entrepreneurs with social business enterprises that adhere to the Economy of Communion met at a location with a fantastic panoramic view and that overlooks the Riva Trigoso bay. They wanted to share their ideas and experiences in order to appreciate the potentialities of their businesses, while also taking into consideration the recent developments of the Italian legislation that official recognises the social business enterprises as a new category.

The first meeting took place at Rome on 20 February 2006. At this second meeting, there were representatives from Consorzio Tassano of Sestri Levante, the social consortium "Solidarietà" of Cagliari, the consortium "Il Picchio" of Ascoli Piceno, Cooperativa Sociale Nuove Dimensioni of Potenza, and Cooperativa sociale Form.A.P. of Salerno.

At the first meeting itself there arose the need to define the profound nature of the cooperatives and social enterprises that adhered to the EoC, as well as to structure and programme common operative and professional itineraries with regards to business policies.

Thus there arose the immediate need to compare the experiences made until now in order to facilitate the sharing of the same company management culture. To this end they took the help of persons who reflect by profession on themes that are specifically related to the EoC. However, this did not exclude the possibility of the development of a more structured reality in the future.

Thus right from the onset, professor Luigino Bruni was involved as a "teacher". He immediately tackled one of the fundamental difficulties of operating of a social enterprise: bringing together the demands of ordinary economic administration with the rapport of equality that is proper to the cooperative movement and gratuitousness, which is one of the



features of the EoC project.

Bruni began by describing the *contact*, which is the foundation of traditional economics that emerged from the need to obtain something that the other person has. This leads to "woo" the other person by offering something in exchange. It does not require gratuitousness as incentives and good rules suffice. Bruni then described *friendship*, which gave rise to the cooperative wherein each associate has a say, whether worker, financier, or consumer. "If the persons in an EoC enterprise do not become as a group of friends with mutual trust, then it is difficult for their collaboration to last. Within the company we need to feel united by a common destiny."

In conclusion Bruni questioned if it was possible to combine *contract* with *gratuitousness*. It becomes more difficult to understand the motivations that spur a person to act in a certain way if the monetary incentives are greatly used in a social context. The system of incentives creates ambiguities, though it is not wrong in itself.

It is possible that if economic incentives are involved, the person who offers his services goes out of *interest* and not out of *vocation*. Thus in order to attract persons with a vocation that

coincides with the social orientations of the business, the company must not offer high wages. However it could offer in addition to the wages the possibility to carry out one's work well and to grow professionally. For example, one could procure funds for a researcher; one could facilitate his or her attending conferences aimed at increasing knowledge. Thus it is not a question of increased wages, but of incentives that increase one's self-fulfilment.

Those present at the meeting felt the practical importance of these reflections for their businesses. They intervened with questions and experiences, requests for clarifications, and proposals.

The topic of voluntary work was raised. A social business enterprise should attract volunteers and if this is not the case then it must question itself. It was pointed out that in the case of EoC enterprises, a considerable amount of "internal" voluntary work was carried out by the workers of the cooperatives themselves.

Other moments of study and reflections are envisaged in the future. In the meantime, the group of entrepreneurs present at the meeting returned to their own businesses with the desire to personally assume and apply the ideas developed during that day.



ASK AN OLD SEA-DOG

Giuseppe Argiolas

Have you ever asked yourself on seeing the wharf of a small tourist port or a big industrial port: how is it built? It is thanks to this construction that a sail boat, a small boat, or a huge merchant ship can find a secure support; they can hold out in calm as well as turbulent waters.

Ask any old sea-dog. They will know how to reply: numerous small and big stones, of which perhaps none will ever know their forms nor appreciate their importance, are thrown one after another into the sea. However without them that strong, secure, imposing, and proud wharf would not have been able to stand.

I believe this depiction in some way summarises the path undertaken in these years by some young and not so young scholars from different countries. They firmly believe in the Economy of Communion, and offer their intelligences to further its development by questioning themselves on some of its characteristic aspects, but also by sharing them besides scholars also with the other protagonists of the project (entrepreneurs, managers, consultants...). They do so precisely to obtain *from communion and in communion* encouraging confirmations, stimuli to bring about improvements, illuminations for new paths to be undertaken.

A study and reflection seminar on the EoC was held at Castelgandolfo (Rome) from the 23-25 April 2006. It was entitled "The Economy of Communion today: cultural prospects and challenges". The contributions made during various sessions of the seminar touched upon the aims of the EoC project through the interpretative key of different disciplines that persist on the economic reality. A summary of some of them is presented below.



In his presentation **John McNerney**, a teacher of Business Ethics at the University of Dublin, underlined that the Economy of Communion proposal uses a new approach in dealing with the problem of poverty, due to its anthropological and philosophical characterisation. A new business ethics is emerging from the fact that business enterprises can constitute a valid instrument not only in immediately relieving situations of poverty, but also in offering possibilities of development by creating the conditions so that the poor can be co-protagonists of their own emancipation, through their own work and also by participating in the creation of new business initiatives.

Chiara Possia, a young economist from Padova, also dealt with the theme of poverty in her presentation, and in particular the dilemma of the Samaritan, or rather what is commonly known as the problem of giving the fish or teaching how to fish. The point is to avoid the dependency of the poor on their benefactor once they are helped. Her paper highlighted that the majority of scholars reached the conclusion that altruism results in dependency. Then what distinguishes the Economy of Communion? It has an added worth that is characterised by "closeness" as «the



mutual communication of difficulties, efforts, successes, and joys enables us to give a more personal character to the aid». But above all in view of a growth of the EoC assistance, it will be necessary that organisations such as the AMU flank the persons who have distributed the assistance till now, in order to maintain a rapport of closeness so that besides teaching how to fish one also teaches to share the catch by offering one's own abilities.

Etienne de Villemeur, an economist from the University of Toulouse, tried to show that Economics and Ethics must move on, hand in hand. The need for this collaboration is particularly felt in seeking the "common good". «In this perspective, the economy of communion project acquires an important significance. The business enterprise is not a passive element of a large mechanism, i.e. the "economic system", which is rigid and blind, but it is a protagonist proper, and the persons operating within the company can work together to bring about the good within the economic sphere itself and not outside it. And if one does not accept all what derives from economic functioning as a necessary evil, neither does one refuse to face the real world with its contradictions, thus committing oneself to transform it from within.





The contribution of **Alessandra Smerilli**, a doctoral candidate of research in Economics with the l'Università La Sapienza di Roma, moved along the lines of cooperation and "we-thinking". Beginning with the assumption that the atmosphere lived with the business enterprise constitutes «an added worth, and at the same time one of the most essential elements of an EoC enterprise», she considered some of the problems that are inherent in such as aspect, by linking it with the methodologies and the reading of the Games Theory. She affirmed that «New persons and ideas are needed to bring about "new enterprises", but the organisational techniques too must reflect this novelty. Otherwise there is the risk to unwittingly destroy relational capital, which identifies an EoC enterprise».

Two Spanish management scholars, **Miguel García-Cestona** and **Jordi Surroca**, spoke precisely on the study of management techniques in a specific case. Starting from the experience of the Basque cooperatives of Mondragon, the two scholars compared the incentive and management systems with regards to a classic capitalist enterprise. They highlighted that the extension of the company's aims beyond profits – something that is sought even by EoC enterprises – requires a meticulous elaboration and

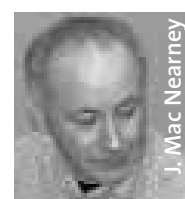
experimentation of appropriate mechanisms of management and incentive. The experiment seems to have proved successful in the Mondragon case and this is also a cause of encouragement for the EoC, with the necessary in-depth studies.

Prof. **Roberto Cintra-Martins** from Brazil, in collaboration with Heloísa Helena A. Borges Q. Gonçalves and Maria das Graças Gomes de Azevedo Medeiros, tackled the many theoretical and practical challenges posed by the EoC. In particular he dwelt on the methods that the industrial engineering sector can field to contribute in improving the distribution of assistance to the poor, the organisation and management of EoC businesses and their integration within business parks.

Caterina Mulatero, an expert in social ethics, dealt with the theme of the "sense of work". Beginning with Chiara Lubich's discourse at the EoC 2004 conference, she place emphasis on the significance of work in man's life and then focused attention on an aspect of the contribution that the charisma of unity can make: «work that is seen, understood, and lived out as love». In this perspective work does not have an exclusively instrumental worthiness, but contains its justification and motivation within

itself, precisely like love. Moreover, it is possible to recognise in work the Trinitarian dynamics «also from the fact that when one works, somehow one always does so along *with others, for others, through others, and thanks to others*», showing the influences of this concept on the possibility of orienting the company organisation and of making work as a fully human and humanising activity.

What were the positive outcomes of the Castelgandolfo seminar? The first evident one was to highlight that there is a gradual movement towards the encounter, the anchoring of the novelty presented by the Economy of Communion with the "hard core", with the best patrimony of our disciplines. It is an anchoring that can guarantee the necessary theoretical solidity of the novelty on one hand, and the possibility of building bridges of authentic dialogue with all on the other. In the sometimes agitated waters of Economics and Management, the seminar made us glimpse those steady rocks that have begun to surface, and which constitute the solid base of that wharf which won't delay in materialising with the contribution of everyone. At least this was the profound and joyful impression of those who attended the seminar. Ask an old seadog.



J. Mac Nearney



C. Possia



E. de Villemeur



A. Smerilli



M. García-Cestona



R. Cintra-Martins



C. Mulatero

Traces of communion in managerial thought

BARNARD'S PROPHECY

Giampietro Parolin

Managing a business enterprise, by trying to introduce the logics of gratuitousness, fraternity, and communion alongside the well-known conditions of economicity, not only calls for courage and audacity, but also the need to rethink or at least critical review the principles of managerial science.

This observation led to the launching of a research project that involved me together with Giuseppe Argiolas, a teaching fellow at the University of Cagliari. The Castelgandolfo meeting gave us the possibility to present and discuss the initial research results that are based on the recognition of the reflection of some scholars in the period that runs from the beginning of the last century up to our times. The results were very encouraging. Many of us remember clearly the scene in Chaplin masterpiece movie "Modern times" wherein the worker is run through the factory's enormous gears. We are in full fordistic era with its energetic quest for efficiency fuelled by the revolutionary ideas of Frederick Winslow Taylor. Also with undoubted productive results, taylorism leaves no room for doubts: "Men left to themselves are only rabble". This led to the need of equipping oneself with a scientific organisation of work, which defines tasks and duties in a clear and detailed manner, reaching the paradoxes of Modern Times.

However in the same historic period, a voice apart from the crowd proposed solutions that we could call "prophetic". We are speaking about **Chester I. Barnard** who spoke of "conditions of communion" at the height of taylorism. Its consonance with the economy of communion is evident, especially when Barnard defines these conditions namely "the

feeling at ease in social relationships that is sometimes called solidarity, social integration, sociability, or social security" (in the original sense, and not in its present reduced economic sense).

Another surprising aspect of that era is that Barnard had a very broad vision of business enterprise, which considered not just the personnel of the business itself but included without distinction workers, managers, shareholders, customers, suppliers who were considered as equal cooperating members. It is clear how much this vision would anticipate but also exceed the current notions of corporate social responsibility and the stakeholder theory. Naturally, Barnard does not deny that economic protagonists can take decisions based on rational calculations, but he emphasises in a completely new way that these calculations are not merely utilitarian but inspired by moral feelings and profound convictions.

What we call today as the "*economics of knowledge*" went about asserting itself over a century. The Italian scholar **Enzo Rullani** has carried out a comprehensive study of the same. He highlighted two characteristics that we feel are of particular importance to our research. The first concerns the topic of sharing. The economics of knowledge produces value as much as the increase in the sharing of knowledge itself.

The second characteristic has to do with the world of significances. Rullani states that in modern capitalism "consumers, workers, entrepreneurs need above all personal significances, which emerge from unique experiences that are not directed towards money but towards meaning". So much so that one speaks also

of the *economics of experiences*. Thus the sharing is not only connected with the instrumental knowledge to produce goods and services, but also with the *building of significances*.

This explains why initiatives of communion and organisation process forms are not a trend but experiences that respond to the needs of the persons working in the organisations besides the challenges imposed by the economic world.

What we have just said compels us to also rethink the democratic process in organisations. **Stefano Zamagni's** suggestion moves in this direction. He proposes civil business enterprises (of which the EDC business enterprises are a significant expression) to implement "democratic stakeholding", or to be more precise to implement management systems in which all the subjects are empowered to discuss and deliberate on issues that concern them in relation with the company, sharing rights and duties. This is a rather demanding challenge with no ready-made answers, which involves a patient experimentation to be carried out gradually in order to avoid paternalism or assemblism, while valorising the contribution of everyone in relation to the roles and responsibilities that can develop in time.

Alongside Barnard's prophetic contribution one can glimpse a tendency that increasingly values the person in all his or her dimensions. All this seems to us in perspective important especially for the EoC, and in particular for the development of its characteristic managerial culture.



TWENTY THREE NEW THESES

**Antonella
Ferrucci**

We have information on over 240 graduation theses on the EoC. Of these, over 180 have been made available by their authors on our internet site www.ecodicom.net. We received as many as 23 others in recent months whose contents are necessarily expounded here only briefly. This record number of theses shows the growing interests on the theme of the culture of the Economy of Communion.

We have 15 graduation theses, 6 theses at the master's level, and 2 doctorate level theses – by Dr. Luiz Antonio Brandalize of São Paulo in Accounts, and by Heloisa Borges Quaresma di Rio de Janeiro in Engineering.

The majority of these, including the two at the doctorate levels, come from Brazil, while seven were completed in Italy and one in Argentina. Most of them are

researches carried out in Business Economics sectors, followed by those in Political Economics, Operations Research, Law, Psychology, and Communications.

Most of the themes deal with the work relationships within the business enterprises, with reference to the centrality of the person and to the cultural message that favours sustainable development.

We have also been informed that Dr. Salvatore Leonardi from Palermo (Sicily) won the Graduation Award in memory of Giovanni Marra announced by the Milan city council. He presented his graduation thesis that was carried in our newsletter no.22 at the competition. We cite below the motivation with which he was conferred the award.

The City Council of Milan Confers the Graduation Award in memory of Giovanni Marra to Dr. Salvatore Leonardi

«Not only did Salvatore Leonardi merit the “Giovanni Marra Award” for his careful analysis on “The economic theory amongst rationality, happiness and relationality: an inquiry into the centrality of the person in the context of the Economy of Communion Project”, but he also managed to grasp the spirit of this initiative dedicated to a person who always knew how to make his professional and human commitments coexist. Even though the author was dealing with a topic that apparently is little disposed to spirituality, which is precisely the world of work, he demonstrated how only a work environment shaped on the centrality of the person renders more happiness, which in turns renders more productivity.

This is the Economy of Communion Project that was launched following an original inspiration of Chiara Lubich, as explained by Salvatore Leonardi in his thesis. And it is also the criterion on which Marra would have wanted to develop his own life if it had been spent in institutional responsibilities or in favour of the needy and the under-privileged.»

Milan, 12 May 2006

**The Mayor
Gabriele Albertini**

I invite all those who have compiled theses on EoC themes to participate in competitions, as we have seen that the themes dealt with were winners on more than one occasion! In conclusion I wish to invite all those reflecting on this project to send us their theses so as to share them with all through our website. All you need to do is compile the abstract form that can be downloaded from the homepage: www.ecodicom.net, and e-mail it together with the thesis files

World archives of EoC theses:

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The theses made available by their authors can be consulted on www.ecodicom.net.

The site www.edc-online.org in 4 languages can be consulted in the “news and events” section for the latest updates of appointments relating to the EoC. The other sections provide bibliography, data, statistics, articles, and much more.



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First Level Degree in
Management Science
*Universidade Federal
do Rio Grande do Norte*
16 September 2003

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **Analysis of the strategic dynamics of EoC enterprises**

Tutor: Prof. Mauro Lemuel Alexandre

EoC is a new way in which entrepreneurs who decide to share their profits operate. Studies reveal that entrepreneurs adopt this style of operating not only to improve the lives of their workers or a section of society through the equal division of profits, but also to prove that one can operate and survive in the market with this management style. Regardless of this new strategic vision, the businesses that we examined functioned by respecting the principal values of the project such as respect for the person, the wellbeing of workers, relationships with all, and they showed themselves as active and competitive.



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Ph.D. in Accounts
Universidade de Sao Paulo
25 September 2003

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **The use of profits in Economy of Communion business enterprises**

Tutor: Dr. Sérgio de Ludícibus

In developing countries, wherein the disparity in incomes of a few and the majority is glaring, the new style proposed by Chiara Lubich of sharing profits through the EoC project can even become an important factor in the distribution of income.

The EoC project places the person at the centre, and by modifying the destination of profits, it amplifies the aims of the enterprise to contribute to bring about a change in mentality and culture.

The study examines under the accounting profile this diverse distribution of profits with regards to societal legislation, and thus compares the accounts situation of EoC firms with traditional firms in the same sector. It demonstrates that notwithstanding the diverse destination of profits, the former are capable of maintaining their position in the market.

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First Level Degree in
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*Universidade Federal do Rio
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December 2003

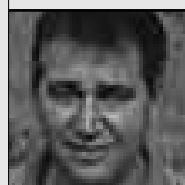
Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **Economy of Communion in freedom: an experience of solidal economics**

Tutor: Prof. Eduardo Kaliniewicz

The Economy of Communion project, which the Focolare Movement has put into operation throughout the world, is considered in the Social Economics sphere that is oriented towards the creation of jobs as a reaction to the exclusions and inequalities linked to a capitalistic economy.

The project's development from 1991 to 2000 is analysed, and its validity is demonstrated in the creation of jobs and resources in a competitive global market. Its importance is highlighted for workers, entrepreneurs and even governments given the EoC emphasis on tax legality and the promotion of economic development.



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2 January 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **The small enterprise and social responsibility: internal consequences**

Tutor: Dr. Soraya Abdul Nour

Small enterprises in Brazil have significant importance as they form 80% of the production activity. The study shows how small enterprises who adopt a socially responsible behaviour, both towards their workers and their environment of operation, acquire the ability to last in time as they attract the necessary talents for their objectives, and they are able to establish lasting relationships, thus contributing to build a more just society.

Jorge Leandro Delconte Ferreira

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Second Level Degree in
Management Science
Universidade Federal do Paraná
27 January 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **Rationality and organisational dimensions: comparing traditional and EoC business enterprises**

Tutor: Prof. Clóvis Luis Machado da Silva

The study analyses the structural, technological, cultural, and strategic differences between a traditional and an EoC enterprise in the same sector. This is carried out by examining the internal documentation, the recognitions obtained by the enterprise, and through interviews with the company directors. The study concludes that the EoC enterprise, which is more flexible and attentive to strategies, does not do away with the traditional organisational model but rather improves on it, particularly under the structural and strategical profiles.



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Psychology
Universidade de Fortaleza
Centro di scienze umane
30 June 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **Work as a place of subjectivity building: feminine experiences in EoC business enterprises**

Tutor: Dr. Clerton Martins

After an excursus on the evolution of the significance of work for humanity in history, the theme of subjectivity as applied to organisations is dealt with. The case study of the Economy of Communion is conducted by means of a research using qualitative methods, discussing life experiences pertinent to the study theme. These verify that the work experience in EoC businesses has greatly contributed to the edification of human subjectivity.



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First Level Degree in Law
Universidade Federal
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3 September 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **The social function of property and its effectiveness in the EoC**

Tutor: Dr. Daury Cesar Fabríz

The Brazilian Federal Constitution declares the principle of the social function of property. This study presents the EoC project as a concrete experience that contributes towards clarifying the concept of the social function of property. A case study is conducted on the company Femaq S/A, which is a protagonist in the fight against inequality in today's society, courageously facing new paths to the development of the human community.



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First Level Degree in Law
Faculdade de Direito de Curitiba
21 October 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **Principle of the person's dignity and Principles of economic organisation: adaptation of economic factors for the Economy of Communion**

Tutor: Prof. José Carlos Cal Garcia Filho

The Brazilian Federal Constitution declares that economic activity must ensure a dignified life to everyone, and enumerates the principles to be observed to make this possible. This thesis wants to emphasise the supremacy of the Principle of Human Dignity even in economic activities, wherein the person becomes an instrument instead of being at the centre of these activities. The EoC project offers a concrete business model that places the dignity of the person at the basis of economic behaviour, while respecting the demands of competitiveness of the market economy.



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Five year Degree in Economics
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4 November 2004

Language:
Italian

Thesis: **Economy of Communion (EoC): aspects and problems for a new business culture**

Tutor: Prof. Cesare Piacentino

When the culture of giving, which is based on the Gospel law of mutual love, is put into practise in life of the company, it contributes in changing the mentality of the persons who come into contact with it. This brings about a more just and solidal socio-economic order that measures up to the person. Thus through the business people will no longer do the good as individuals but in a structured and collective way. In order for this to occur, communication and love understood as friendship needs to be enhanced within the EoC companies, avoiding the situation wherein an employee does not know how to work in an EoC company. This is the way to implement a sharing of ends within the company, generating cohesion.





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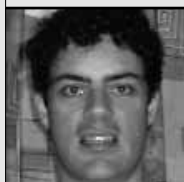
20 November 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **Analysis of Pró-Diet Farmacêutica Ltda market strategies**

Tutor: Prof. Marcos Kahtalian

The examination of the market strategy of the company on whom the case study is conducted, leads to the conclusion that the adhesion to principles of social justice and ethical behaviour that is typical of the EoC, leads to having a greater competitiveness. Despite operating in a market which is not subject to ethical behaviours, Pró-Diet through its increased turnover proved itself as a successful company in the pharmaceutical distribution sector. Today many companies in this sector are passing through difficult moments.



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Universidade Regional de
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14 December 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **New forms of enterprise for a sustainable development: experiences of Company Social Responsibility and Economy of Communion**

Tutor: Prof. Carlos Alberto Cioce Sampaio

The thesis compares the sustainable development dimension in business enterprises adhering to CSR and EoC in order to highlight the aspects that are congruent with the attempt to go beyond the prevailing utilitarian economic reasoning. Two suitable businesses from the metal and mechanical industry in the Santa Catarina region were selected. The analysis was made by means of documentation and interviews with key persons. It underlined the fact that the utilitarian economic reasoning in these businesses is surpassed and enriched by further reasoning of an ethical nature, resulting in a more balanced reasoning.



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First Level Degree in
Economics
Universidade Federal do Acre
3 February 2005

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **EoC Project: 12 years special experience of solidal economics**

Tutor: Prof. José Porfirio da Silva

The thesis studies the EoC project as an alternative that is useful to heal the inequalities resulting from the present capitalistic form. To this end a bibliographic research was carried out, with visits to businesses and interviews with entrepreneurs and workers from EoC enterprises. The study concluded that these valid and concrete experiences are capable of contributing towards a better world.



Andreza Daniela Pontes Lucas

First Level Degree in
Operational Research
Universidade Federal
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5 March 2005

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **An analysis of production management in EoC business enterprises**

A case study was carried out in the ambit of production engineering of the company Policlínica Agape as regards the process of adhesion to the project and the necessary requisites. The study highlights that like the other EoC businesses, Policlínica Agape too is often faced with difficulties that are proper to behaviours tied up with EoC project values. Notwithstanding this, this business too is constantly and greatly sustained by an "immaterial capital" that does not result in the balance sheet, but flows from rapports of trust that were built.

Luigi Pagliacci

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Second Level Degree in
Business Economics
Università degli Studi di Bologna
22 March 2005

Language:
Italian

Thesis: **Economy of Communion Business Enterprises in Business Economics: Lionello Business Park and relevance to tourism**

Tutor: Prof.ssa Maria Gabriella Baldarelli

The aim of the thesis was to underline the differences between EoC and traditional companies that come about on the book-keeping level, particularly in companies operating in the tourism sector. A study was carried out by interviewing those responsible of the Lionello Business Park and the "Arezzo più" travel agency.

It concluded that the EoC is a new and modern economic process that can be applied in any economic sector. It requires a particular organisation and attention from the management. Innovative methods of control and accounting are applied on the book-keeping level, which are linked to principles lying at the basis of the projects.

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Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro - Alberto Luis Coimbra Institute - (Brasile)

31 March 2005

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: The first ten years of experience of EoC pioneers in Brazil: Lights and shadows of mentality changes in entrepreneurs

Tutor: Prof. Roberto Cintra Martins

The thesis offers a qualitative evaluation of the first ten years of experience of the EoC pioneers in Brazil. Progresses, contradictions, tensions and limits are analysed as dimensions that correlate with Chiara Lubich's proposal to live mutual love within the enterprise.

The results reveal EoC as a developing economic and socio-political form of organisation, which is different from other experiences of inclusion within company dynamics, and which offers a new understanding of profit and relations of production. The EoC practise is still centred on a micro level and within the Focolare Movement. It calls for a cultural change that still needs to be generalised and thus it cannot be proposed as yet as a substitutive model for capitalism.



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First Level Degree in Business Economics

Università degli Studi di Catania

27 July 2005

Language:
Italian

Thesis: Relationality and economics: from Adam Smith to the Economy of Communion

Tutor: Prof.ssa Giovanna Acciarito

The first chapter of the thesis delves into the theoretical reasoning that lie at the basis of the EoC project, beginning right from the thinking of Adam Smith and the concept of sympathy understood as rapport, which is a fundamental element in every kind of human relationship including that economic. Subsequently, the "sympathetic relationship" is explained as the main source of wellbeing and happiness, and focus is placed on the inverse relationship that exists between income and happiness. Thus the characteristics of EoC business enterprises and the concept of relationality as the basis of the economic activity in running the company are brought into evidence. Finally a model of company organisation is proposed, which emerges precisely from the EoC experience and relationality.



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First Level Degree in Business Economics

Universidad Nacional De Cuyo (UNCu) - Mendoza (Argentina)

2 August 2005

Language:
Spanish

Thesis: Analisi delle relazioni lavorative nella EdC

Tutor: Prof. Pedro A. Marsonet e Prof. Roberto Latorre

The aim of this thesis is to analyse relational values of trust, reciprocity, justice, equity, friendship that are established between the owner and the worker in EoC businesses, and which are usually not considered in traditional economic analyses. Taking them into consideration not only implies a change of perspective, but also the possibility to improve efficiency at work, thereby enriching the current anthropological view held not just in economics. Within this framework, EoC businesses, which operate alongside other organisations within the market economy, tend towards the creation and formation of new persons who are sensitive to these relational bonds.



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31 August 2005

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: Interpersonal relations and organisational learning in EoC: The FEMAQ case

Tutor: Prof. Sérgio Proença Leitão

The present market economy requires of business enterprises a great capacity for adapting to market demands. The most difficult aspect, but also the most important aspect, which concerns learning is not to limit organisational opportunities to the rigid instrumental vision of work. Learning also promotes transformations within organisations, increasing their creativity and innovative capabilities. Studies carried out on EoC companies show that their interpersonal and inter-organisational style of operating constitutes one of the distinctive characteristics of the project itself. The conclusions reached by the study confirm that the quality of relationality favours tasks and cooperative behaviour within the company.



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29 November 2005

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: A historical-economic approach to Sustainable Development, and the EoC contribution

Tutor: Prof. Tânia Rissa de Souza

Even the United Nations underlines the fact that sustainable development is the answer to problems of environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources, and poverty. However there is the need of a new mentality and culture in order to bring it about.

A research carried on the company Femaq S/A, which adheres to the EoC, offers elements to conclude that the culture underlying the EoC is the one that is suitable for a sustainable development.





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19 December 2005

Language:
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Thesis: The "Economy of Communion" project: characteristics and effects

Tutor: Prof. Carlo Scarpa

An in-depth analysis of literature on the EoC project, also through conversations with some entrepreneurs, confirms that those businesses which operate in conformity with ethical principles, improve the quality of the company, as well as internal and external rapports. While it still has a long way to go, the study reveals that if the idea of a solidal economy as proposed by the EoC spreads, it could find wide application with great benefits for the world situation.



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Communication
IULM di Milano
3 March 2006

Language:
Italian

Thesis: Communication profiles in Economy of Communion business enterprises

Tutor: Prof. Stefano Rolando

The aim of the thesis was to analyse how EoC project business enterprises are able to communicate their ideal choice, and to involve also those who are not familiar with the spirit that animates them.

It was observed that the communication was rare and complicated in those companies which had enhanced their own activity by involving persons external to the project, and many of the employees were not familiar with the EoC project. The practise of a management style based on a culture of giving becomes difficult even if the entrepreneurs placed their profits in common. Instead in the case of the company ECIE from Lainate, which believing in the possibility of truly involving all its collaborators had relied on the consultancy "Rainbow", the EoC choice was successfully communicated. Would the EoC and the "culture of giving" be able to go beyond the confines of the Focolare Movement?



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Economics and Management
*Università Gabriele d'Annunzio
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7 April 2006

Language:
Italian

Thesis: The importance of communication for a modern company management: a concrete Economy of Communion experience

Tutor: Prof. Antonio Zappi

Today communications is an indispensable aspect for any corporate organisation. However it assumes an essential value within the Economy of Communion reality, so much so that the rapports with all the stakeholders are considered as "occasions for authentic encounters among persons". The study carried out at an insurance agency of the Gruppo Foniarria-Sai that adheres to the EoC, revealed that all the workers of the agency who were contacted considered communication as a fundamental factor that positively characterises their organisational reality, both in internal and external rapports.



Paolo Bartolacci

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7 June 2006

Language:
Italian

Thesis: The relationship between ethics and enterprise: the novelty of the Economy of Communion

Tutor: Dott. Mario Minoja

The thesis explains the ethical approach concept in the business context. It continues with a description of the origins and key aspects of the nascent Economy of Communion Theory, presenting some comparisons with the traditional economic theory. A company case study of S.S.D. S.r.l. from Milan is presented in support of the theoretical considerations, by means of an interview with the managing director and the book-keeping data of the company, which enabled the analysis of the company's performance.

It was shown that like all other phenomena of a social nature, even economic transitions presume and are reinforced through the building of lasting relationships, which in the specific case reach the point wherein gifting and reciprocity are considered as principal values of every rapport, whether economic or not. Thus the Economy of Communion represents an example of how an Ideal of justice and communion can produce results that already exceed expectations and which, with a careful evolution of the relative culture, we can expect to attract the attention of more and more scholars and economists.

LETTERS TO THE DIRECTOR

a cura di
Alberto
Ferrucci

Scholarships for the Higher Institute of Culture (ISC)

Dear Director, I wish to thank through this letter the Economy of Communion entrepreneurs and all those who courageously believe in this project! I got interested in the EoC since its inception, and it might make someone smile to know that I was only 12 years then. It was certainly one of the reasons that made me enter in the Economics studies stream.

While still at university, I was offered the possibility to attend the Higher Institute of Culture, which was in its first year of commencement. I still remember the excitement shared by both students and professors to be able to contribute to the emergence of a place of culture, which was necessarily *new in method and contents*, precisely because it was inspired by communion.

In fact this experience made us question our idea of university. The main element was no longer just studies, but knowing how to embody it into a life of communion and mutual love throughout the day. Knowledge was not merely a unidirectional transfer of knowledge from the professors but something that was also obtained with our contribution as students, by valorising the different cultural backgrounds from which we came, and thus enriching all. The various disciplines did not vie with each other for superiority, nor did they engage in mere comparisons, but one was able to recognise the golden thread of love that lies behind each discipline and unites everything.

I truly experienced within me the feeling of recomposing in unity mind and heart, reason and life. When I returned home, my dream was to write a thesis that dealt with what is certainly the *raison d'être* of the EoC: the

needy. And so I began to delve into economic theories regarding help to the poor, with the hope of finding something that would prove to me the EoC practices. However the majority of economists agreed on the inefficiency of assistances, and worse on the risk of opportunism on the part of beneficiaries.

At first I was tempted to downright oppose these currents of thought in order to bring out the novelty of the EoC. Instead I was helped to confront the issue with humility in order to grasp from the evolution of the various theories that path which led me to understand all the more the novelty of the EoC and to situate it within a historical course.

With regards to the distribution of the aid, I intuited that to avoid the risks of opportunism, it is important that even those who provide the assistance must firstly be "new persons". This helps to bring about trust and reciprocity in those who receive the aid. For example, when someone who besides offering resources for assistance also goes to visit the needy, it can go a long way in motivating those who are helped to commit themselves and to collaborate in order to overcome poverty.

This unassuming attitude in preparing the thesis allowed me to understand in my small way *the difficulty involved in creating a bit of new culture*; that culture which I had perceived in all its splendour at the ISC, and which had fascinated me. I can truly say that the ISC was a small but exemplary expression of the formation of "new persons"!

This experience made me understand the importance of that "one-third" of profits intended for the formation of new persons not only to create and promote a new culture, but also to enhance the distribution of

help to the needy so that they can overcome their poverty at the earliest. Double thanks to the EoC entrepreneurs!

Chiara Possia (Vicenza)

I think that your experience is very useful for all those who sincerely wish to commit themselves to spread the culture of fraternity even in economics. A superficial criticism of the system is not enough in order to offer a new perspective. The study method of the ISC advocates the need for hard work that involves humility and listening to the reasoning of all those who have preceded us economic reflection, and in an open confrontation with them.

It would be very important that young scholars in many parts of the world are able to make a similar experience like yours at the ISC. This would enable them in turn to become founts of this new culture in their countries. Your letter has given me an occasion to suggest once again this year to persons and businesses that support EoC, to finance a scholarship enabling the participation of a youth from the southern hemisphere to the ISC. You could send a contribution of 1500 Euros to the following current account number:

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relax of elderly
and sick persons*

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- Management of residential and tourist structures
- Protected residences for the elderly
- Homes for specialised mental health treatment
- Tourism: holiday and relax homes

*Work activity as a
propaedeutic means
for socialisation,
rehabilitation,
personal development*

GROUP B

- Productive sector
- Manufacturing of various products for third parties
- Simple and complex assembly
- Various kinds of packing and assembly
- Seaming and packing of technical clothing

GROUP C

- Territorial services
- Management of school canteens
- Animation for all ages
- Residential assistance for elderly and disabled
- Street cleaning
- Planning and maintenance of green areas
- Training, Planning, and Development

