

the conviction that the equally venerable Fathers of the East and the West had been in communion on that basis. The bull *Laetentur coeli*, of the 6th of July, 1439, declares, in effect, that 'That which the holy doctors and the Fathers declare, that is to say, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father by the Son, is intended to signify that the Son, as well as the Father, is the cause—according to the Greeks—the principle—according to the Latins—of the subsistence of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>51</sup> This formula is not to be found at Lyons in 1274. Its addition is the fruit of dialogue and also, doubtless, of the spirit of St Thomas.

Clearly, we are concerned with principles that can be devalued, talking glibly and with too much facility of equivalence, of pluralism and of complementarity. Thomas knew that the spectacle of different teachings being proposed by men of repute could engender scepticism,<sup>52</sup> and ecumenism ought not to be, and is not, a school of scepticism. Listen, and this will be our conclusion, to these lines from the conciliar decree, *Unitatis redintegratio*: 'Preserving unity in that which is necessary, let everyone in the Church, each according to the function which is given to him, preserve his due liberty, whether in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline, or in the variety of liturgical rites, or even in the theological elaboration of revealed truth; and may charity be practised in everything. Thus they will show forth, always more fully, the true catholicity and apostolicity of the Church'.<sup>53</sup>

## Workers' Control in Chile by 'Jose Obrero'<sup>1</sup>

The last assembly we held before the coup was impressive. It was a sequel to an assembly which the administration had called several days before to inform us that our stock of raw material was down to zero; that with the truck owners' strike there was no way of bringing the stock of ingots reserved for us in Concepcion; that we'd have to consider seriously the prospect of a halt in production. The news was badly received.

<sup>51</sup>Denz. 691; Denz-Schonm. 1300-1301.

<sup>52</sup>C. Gentiles lib.I c.4 9 Tertium inconveniens.

<sup>53</sup>Ch. 1, n. 4 9 7. For the important idea relating certain differences to the apostolicity itself, cf. also ch. 3, n. 14 9 3.

<sup>1</sup>The author of this article is still living in Chile and writes under a pseudonym.

The Production Committees met immediately, and obtained unanimity quickly: except for workers of this plant, nobody was going to stop production. We'd get the raw material to Santiago—cost what it may—and that was that.

The determination was made and it was firm; we communicated it to the administration who gave us the green light, though it took a while to put together the means to realise it. . . .

### *Trucks Obtained*

Once we had obtained the transport to fetch the raw material, we convoked an assembly to inform all the workers of our success and ask for volunteers to accompany the trucks. Everyone knew what was involved—a long journey and a perilous one, most of it on our own time, with no bonus. The truck owners and right-wing terrorist groups were sniping at anything that moved along the roads, dynamiting bridges and railway tracks. The response was tremendous—just about everyone volunteered; the selection proved difficult.

We incorporated our trucks into a large convoy. There was police protection at the beginning, but only to the limits of the province—after that it was only sporadic. The convoy left on Wednesday, reached Concepcion on Friday, and got back Sunday night. Our guys had to load and unload, sleep in the trucks, oftentimes go all day without eating because they'd left with just the money they had in their pockets. The snipers assaulted the convoy at several points. Three workers were killed in the skirmishes (fortunately none of them from the foundry). The volunteers showed up as usual Monday morning. They were haggard but didn't complain. With a renewed enthusiasm we began to prepare the moulds. The next day, the 11th of September, we'd be able to renew the smelting. . . .

### *The Foundry*

When I first entered the foundry several years ago, I wondered what sort of snake pit I'd fallen into. The boss was a European who owned several other firms besides. He'd shrewdly used a time-tested tactic—divide to conquer—and it had worked very well. The executives and foremen were his trusted men, those he'd singled out as a mark of his favour. Then there was the institutional division between 'workers' and 'employed persons'. The latter, which embraced administrative and certain manual workers with supposedly more specialised trades, had its own privileged social status and social security benefits; union-wise the 'employed persons' were divided into 'administratives' and 'productives'. The division of the 'workers' was completed by a discriminating bonus system which favoured certain groups at the expense of others. The overall result was a climate of jealousy and antagonism which gave to everyone the pos-

sibility to scorn some and envy others. A judicious combination of these elements usually made it possible to neutralise the trade unions and put them at the boss's service. The foremen and executives were all-powerful; they dictated measures arbitrarily and didn't hesitate to dismiss anyone who questioned them; that didn't bother them. There were always twenty guys outside to take your place. No use in appealing to the Work Inspection Office; you'd have to pay lawyers, and there were hundreds of legal devices the boss could use to beat you.

I remember the day they fired the smelting oven crew—about twelve comrades. They'd been working between 14 and 16 hours a day for several months, Saturday and Sunday included, and they were out on their feet. So they got together and refused to work overtime one weekend. Monday morning they were forbidden entry and told they had been fired for 'refusing to cooperate in the production'. They didn't get a dime of indemnity, and it took about two years to train guys to replace them.

At one point the boss got the brilliant idea that Argentinian specialists were a whole lot smarter than the local Chilean technicians and imported a whole lot of them. They certainly had nice diplomas, but from the first day it was evident that they were seeing iron smelt for the first time in their lives. We tried to indicate their mistakes to them; those of us who were too insistent were given the gate. At the end of a year, more than 50 per cent of our production was being rejected, and of course the Argentinians kept putting all the blame on the Chilean workers. (It was only when we passed to nationalised ownership under Allende that we were able to replace them. The rejection percentage immediately dropped down to less than 5 per cent.)

Our boss had a good heart. One year when he made just a little too much money and was in danger of passing into another income tax bracket he gave us a big fiesta to get rid of the excessive loot. It was phoney and paternalistic and even insulting; afterwards we felt ashamed at ourselves for having been drawn into such a thing. . . .

Then there were the Friday pay lines. There you kept vigil for hours, sometimes under the rain, to receive like a beggar what you'd earned during the week. The boss paid you when he felt like it; if you didn't like it, lump it and go work somewhere else.

### *A New Birth*

About six months prior to the 1970 elections, the boss went to Europe to 'see his family'. When he got back there was no money to pay us—and during the following months bank loans kept us going. In a year's time we were on the edge of bankruptcy, and the foundry, with its 400 workers, was in danger of being closed down

within two weeks. When we realised how critical the situation was, we moved. A delegation succeeded in exposing our problem to Allende—a takeover was being planned, but it wasn't necessary: the State intervened. The boss was obliged to sell 51 per cent of the stock to the state at a nominal value of a peso per stock to cover his debts. An administrator was named and the changes began. In the subsequent months, the State bought the other 49 per cent.

What happened next in the foundry was a reflection, at our level, of what was going on in the country as a whole. It was sort of a new birth. All of a sudden this factory belonged to Chile, our production to the national welfare. The destiny of the foundry was in our hands, and, through it, the destiny of our country. We were listened to for the first time; we could suggest, criticise, invent.

A worker participation system was set up. At first no one knew what these new organisations were supposed to be; but as time went by they took form and importance, and developed into embryos of working-class power. All decisions of importance were amply discussed in the Production Committees, in the sections, in the assemblies. The new technicians were there to guide us, to share their knowledge with us, to help us with the elements of decision which only they could furnish. The whip gave place to confidence, and, in general, the workers proved themselves worthy of this confidence.

The response to the periodic appeals for voluntary work demonstrated this new morale and awareness. Oftentimes our assemblies lasted well into the night, and, in spite of the transportation problems, the guys remained till the end. Discussion was totally democratic—sometimes a bit disorderly—but everyone was listened to and respected. We formed a Discipline Commission (with a majority of worker representation) to help those comrades who got into trouble. All in all it worked extraordinarily well.

This doesn't mean that we didn't run into problems. Sometimes the administrators who occupied the politically distributed posts were incompetent; others tried to limit the worker participation by restricting it to lower level decisions without real control in the direction of the factory. Thus it was that, in the face of internal frustrating limitations, we took over the plant and exacted the replacement of our first state-named administrator. We won the battle and several subsequent ones. More and more we became conscious of our possibilities.

There was no repression whatsoever. When we were right we proved it. . . . When we were wrong it was proved to us. A whole new dimension opened, and little by little we began to have confidence in ourselves. We had access to all the levels of decision. I can honestly state that no door was ever closed to us when we wanted to consult someone or when we sought a solution at a high level. I had spent years in the foundry without ever knowing where the adminis-

trator's office was—and I remember the day last year when we presented ourselves at a Minister's Office and were immediately received and listened to. . . .

### *A New Social Unit*

We tried to break down the barriers which had been erected to divide us. We dissolved the three trade unions and formed a single one. Any executive or foreman could be submitted to the Discipline Committee. A collective bonus system was set up. In general there was a qualitative change in human relationships. The executive and technicians assisted at the worker assemblies, as did everyone else—but their vote wasn't worth more than that of a worker. We were all 'workers' with different functions—but the function didn't define social privilege. It was the birth of a new sort of society—the reflections of our hope and aspirations. Great perspectives opened—and for this we were ready to sacrifice ourselves. And so we did, simply because we were convinced that this would mean a better world.

One of the most striking changes in the foundry was that the workers were now of more importance than what they produced. In fact, the first big changes were social changes: decent wages, a canteen, decent sanitary facilities, showers, etc. Now, with a decent level of life and being treated as human beings, and aware of our dignity and responsibility, we produced more—and better. In the process, the suggestions of the workers led to several major improvements.

The foundry now wasn't just a productive unit—it was a social unit which produced. A recreation programme was set up. Ample facilities were given to complete one's basic education in the foundry itself, or to follow programmes of technical and professional education. A library was created through voluntary efforts of the workers. Cultural groups periodically visited the plant with concerts, chorales, plays, etc. The 'roto' (or 'broken-down one') could now pull himself together, stand on his own two feet, and take in hand his destiny. He was no longer a tool to exploit; he was a person who had a right hitherto reserved to the fellow born on the other side of the tracks.

### *September 11th*

Tuesday morning, 11th of September, the oven was relighted and we began to load it with the raw materials from Concepcion. At 9 a.m., when we got the first news, we called an assembly at once to explore what was going on. We decided to remain more united than ever. But there was the problem of the oven. If we were to dump it now we'd lose all the moulds prepared the day before; but if we went on loading it and then had to dump it we'd lose not only the moulds but more of the ingots obtained with such sacrifice. The guys decided to go on loading and hoping we'd be able to cast the moulds

in spite of everything. At 11 a.m. it was obvious that this time the situation was terribly serious. The order was given to dump the oven; those who wanted to go to their homes could do so. I went to see the oven crew which was looking at the half-melted metal, just dumped. They looked as if they were going to cry: 'Hell, we shouldn't have dumped it, should we?'

The 19th of September, ordinarily a national holiday, we were ordered back to work. Many of us discovered we'd been suspended. The trade union had been dissolved, the participation system along with it. The wage increase, due the 1st of October (which would have restored our purchasing power in relation to the inflation increase), had been annulled. The following Saturday all were obliged to work without being able to claim overtime. The working week was extended to 57 hours.

Those workers who did return, came at bayonet point. The Junta ordered the 'patriotic' among the workers to denounce any 'subversives'.

Something died September 11, 1973, in Chile: it was this hope, these aspirations to a better, more fraternal and more just society. This newly recognised dignity and confidence in ourselves, these new possibilities which enabled us to control and direct our production . . . that was the subversion and that was the sin of the 'roto', the crime of the poor of Chile.

Great was the sin and dearly have we paid for it. Chile has lost some of its noblest leaders, leaders who in spite of their failings and contradictions had recognised in us something worthy of confidence, something with possibilities of development, the essential dignity of all those created in the image of God.

## Priorities in Religious Life —An Alternative View by Denis Keating, O.P.

Once the primacy of the existential witness provided by the quality of community life is firmly established, the community can undertake, either corporately or individually, *any of the works of mercy*. *Material services* have their place, but this is very definitely a secondary one. What people DO by way of work, projects, etc., is irrelevant to the apostolic dimension of religious life. This apostolate, as I have tried to stress in various ways, is exercised in and