

Editorial

Dante refutes Global 2000

Aurelio Peccei's elite genocide planning body is named the Club of Rome in honor of the capital of the Roman empire, which is still a capital of some of the nastiest, and oldest, oligarchical families whose well protected "funds" finance the zero-growth movement. It is highly ironical, therefore, that everything Peccei stands for was dealt a major blow on Dec. 1-3 in Rome itself, when over 1,200 people, most of them the very same young students targeted for recruitment by the Club of Rome, enthusiastically participated in a conference dedicated to turning back the dark age through the revival of classical education.

The occasion was a three-day symposium on "Teaching Dante Today," organized by Italy's Accademia Umanistica (Humanist Academy) whose chairman is *EIR* Milan bureau chief Muriel Mirak, and co-sponsored by two Italian ministries, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture.

Far from the usual scholastic interpretations of Dante Alighieri and his *Divine Comedy* which seek to turn the great poet into an embalmed symbol of the Middle Ages, the Rome symposium attracted so many students and teachers because it demonstrated that Dante's poetry was the basis for launching the scientific Renaissance. In her opening address Dr. Mirak reminded the audience that great civilizations of the past had died as our own is in danger of dying, unless we recapture the rigorous scientific method embodied in Dante's writings. One highlight was the discussion, in general and as it applies to Italian, of Lyndon LaRouche's program for regenerating modern languages to the level represented by such poets as Homer and Dante.

There is a precise analogy between Dante's struggle in the year 1300, the year in which his *Divine Comedy* is set, and the great battles of today. After achieving the highest political office in his native Republic of Florence, Dante was defeated by an alliance known as the Black Guelphs. The "Blacks" were an alliance of feudal Florentine families, the corrupt Pope Boniface VIII and his bankers, and the military

muscle of the Angevin monarchy of France, all dedicated to a scheme to loot the peasantry of Europe through the tithe-collecting mechanisms of the Church and prevent cities from gaining enough power to oppose them. Dante violently opposed these usurious practices and belonged to the "White Guelph" party which embraced a policy of urban growth and development. As one speaker pointed out in the Rome symposium, the Black Guelphs were the ideological ancestors of today's International Monetary Fund and World Bank—and in some cases actual physical ancestors of the families behind those institutions.

After the Black Guelph takeover, the looting of the labor force led to a persistent decline of the population of Florence from the high point of 105,000 in 1300, to 90,000 in 1338. In 1340 plague wiped out one-sixth of the city. By 1347 the population had risen back to 80,000. In 1348 the Black Death bubonic plague swept Europe: from one-third to one-half of all the Florentines died. This was, as Dante had warned, the consequence of the Black Guelph policies.

Most interesting is the fact that many of Dante's fellow citizens—like the credulous believers in today's Global 2000 rationales—actually thought that diminished population would "solve" the scarcities in wealth. Writing shortly after the 1348 Black Death, the chronicler Matteo Villani reports that: "It was believed that because of the lack of people there should be an abundance of the things the earth produces, and instead because of man's ingratitude everything became scarce and continued to be for a long time: and in certain lands . . . there were grave and unusual famines. It was thought that there would be abundance and plenty of clothing, and all other things the human body requires besides life, and on the contrary it turned out in the long run that most things cost twice or more than before the plague. Labor, manufacture of all kinds and trades rose more than double in a disorderly way. . . . There were wars and uprisings all over the world, contrary to the opinion of men."