

Vatican by Augustinus

Liberation Theologists are gleeful

After the Philippines coup, there is an open fight over economic policy—and the outcome is still uncertain.

Perhaps no man of the Church pushed himself so far back to medieval times as the Filipino Cardinal Sin. He declared one President legitimate and deposed another." With this enthusiastic statement, Gianni Baget Bozzo, the friend of the Theology of Liberation priests, commented in the press on the role played by Cardinal Sin in the recent coup d'état in the Philippines. Baget Bozzo gloated: "What Sin has carried out in the Philippines, with the Vatican's consensus, goes beyond everything that the Theology of Liberation has dreamed of."

Baget Bozzo, an ex-priest and Socialist Party figure, plunges into bold prognoses: "After the deeds of Cardinal Sin, the Church can change much more: perhaps also in the Roman Pontificate. What we see enacted in the Philippines is a form of primacy of action over theory. . . . The Cardinal's choice remains an event which marks the Church and history."

For this fantasy-ridden rebel "priest," Cardinal Sin is the modern reincarnation of Pope Boniface VIII, whom the poet Dante Alighieri justly put among the damned for simony in Hell. For others, he is just the latest opportunistic servant of the multiple interests that wanted to bring Mrs. Aquino into the government of that key Asian country. But Baget Bozzo leaked important aspects of the new destabilizing plots of the Theo-libbers: Sin's victory will be used to attack groups inside the Church fighting against the genocidal monetary policies of the major financial institutions

which, not by accident, helped bring Aquino to power.

Baget Bozzo spilled the beans: "Cardinal Sin has achieved on the practical level precisely those results of the Church's direct engagement in society which Cardinal Ratzinger condemns on the theoretical level." And it is against Ratzinger and his recent stances against free market economics that everyone is now raging. Part of the strategy is the attack on the Opus Dei order kicked off by the weekly *l'Espresso*, by printing revelations from a book released last year, by Paulist Father Giancarlo Rocca.

According to *l'Espresso*, Opus Dei is run by secret statutes or rules which "establish members' access to high office, in particular in administration, as a peculiar means of attaining social goals, and tie them to obedience to superiors in the association's hierarchy." The exposé prompted Independent Left parliamentarians Franco Bassanini and Stefano Rodotà to put a parliamentary question to the premier and interior minister, as to whether Opus Dei is an illegal secret society. The two deputies also asked the government to start inquiries into the nature, purposes, and possible secrecy of Opus Dei.

The real source of the attack is clarified by the magazine itself, when it labels Cardinal Ratzinger as Opus Dei's strongest ally. According to *l'Espresso*, Opus Dei has no financial problems, unlike other Catholic organizations; it managed to organize an international meeting on the Church and the Economic World in the Vati-

can in November: "a pharaonic symposium," writes the article's author. He certainly was not there, or he would have known that the echo from that meeting did not come from its grandiosity, but from the speech Cardinal Ratzinger made against Marxism and free-market economics, and for reconciling economics with morality.

Ratzinger's economic views seemed to have been shared by Opus Dei. One of their spokesmen, Father Antonio Livi, summed up to a journalist from a Milan newspaper: "Neither Marxist state capitalism, nor the capitalism of 'hard' free market economics, attains the common good. The former, because it strives for the hegemony of one class over the other with the vision of an abstract, atheistic, and totally impersonal society; the latter, because it determines the concentration of wealth in a few hands, making capital hegemonic over man. The optimum is a capitalism which conceives profit as a means to reach the common good." Father Livi calls for a state policy of incentives for productive investments, and protection of citizens' lives through good public services.

The Theo-lib crowd is gloating over the recent victory in the Philippines, but in a few months, when the situation explodes due to the unpayable Philippine debt, they will have to admit that those who today have the courage to condemn the usury of the big international financial institutions were right. For Cardinal Sin's Jesuit friends, if they lose the fight, there's a spot waiting in Moscow. A Russian Orthodox Church spokesman told a Roman newspaper: Pope "Wojtyla may want to ruin the Society of Jesus and replace it with Opus Dei, but the Jesuits could take refuge in Russia again, as they did in Catherine the Great's time."