

Business Briefs

Debt

Repudiate malthusian conditions, say Catholics

A proposal to suspend repayment on all loans which were contingent on adoption of malthusian policies was put forward by a group of lay Catholics at the Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM), which began meeting on Oct. 12 in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic.

"We know and have proof that loans from various international agencies, for the last 20-30 years, are contingent on the recipient country imposing birth control programs," charged Cristina Vollmer, head of the lay group, from the plenary floor. When debtor countries balk at such policies, she explained, they are simply denied credit.

"Birth control in Latin America and the Caribbean is a form of racism which greatly favors large multinational corporations," said Vollmer, a Venezuelan who was the Holy See's envoy to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro last June. She singled out the Ford and Rockefeller foundations for coordinating such policies, and added that she is "certain" that the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and the World Bank practice such policies as well.

Israel

'Free market' economics a disaster, says Zvi

Hershel Zvi attacked free market economics in a commentary in the Oct. 22 edition of the weekly Houston, Texas *Jewish Herald-Voice*. The piece was in response to an accompanying article by Hollinger Corp. head Conrad Black which was syndicated by the *Jerusalem Post*. Zvi assailed Black for his argument that Israel needs more free market economics of the kind associated with former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the Reagan-Bush team in the United States.

As the result of the free market deregulation of the Thatcher and Reagan eras, wrote Zvi, "today, Britain and the United States are

mired in a deep recession, one that a handful of honest economists now admits is really a depression. . . .

"The economic miracle which enabled Israel to survive and prosper in the decades after its birth was based on precisely the outlook which Black has attacked, one in which the state plays a critical role. It was through the state's role in directing credit, enforcing regulations, and adopting protectionism, that scientific and technological progress was fostered," Zvi wrote.

"While there are economic problems facing Israel, many of them stem from the advance of a global depression, one which has been caused by the implementation of the policies promoted by Black. For Israel to adopt his proposals would be a prescription for disaster."

Ukraine

New prime minister rejects 'shock therapy'

Ukrainian Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma rejected the Polish "shock therapy" model, in an interview in the Oct. 21 French daily *Le Figaro*. At the same time, Kuchma praised the slave-labor "China model" as an ostensible "alternative" to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies. Backing for the China model coupled with attacks on the IMF and "shock therapy" has become characteristic of the military-industrial complex faction in the former Soviet Union, including from Russian Civic Union head Arkady Volsky in recent weeks.

"I appreciate the situation in Hungary. I don't understand, on the other hand, the privatization *à la Polonoise*, is like an earthquake. By contrast, I very much like the Chinese variant," Kuchma said. When asked, "Including its political consequences?" Kuchma responded, "You understand perfectly well what I want to say. It is not a matter of tanks. In any case, the primary thing that the Chinese have done, is to distribute land to the peasants. Additionally, there was the creation of free economic zones." *Le Figaro* persisted, "How can that be transposed into Ukraine?" Kuchma answered that such zones could be created in

"Crimea, Odessa, the Transcarpathians," adding that the appropriate economic infrastructure requires, obviously, the avoidance of political instability.

Kuchma is critical of the IMF, saying that while he looks forward to cooperating with the IMF, that must be "without diktat," especially if the IMF demands overly severe budget cuts.

According to *Le Figaro*, Kuchma was making his first visit abroad to Russia, arriving in Moscow on Oct. 22. He is taking this trip "even before he has formed his cabinet." Kuchma stressed the importance of maintaining good relations with Russia: "To say, today, that we can take a path separate from that of Russia is not serious. We must harmonize our economic policies, but that does not mean that Ukraine must submit to Russia."

Cold Fusion

'Direct evidence' of deuterium reaction found

Researcher Eiichi Yamaguchi observed helium-4, one of the products of deuterium fusion, in five separate cold fusion experiments, the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp. (NTT) announced at a press conference in Tokyo, the Oct. 23 *Wall Street Journal* reported. An NTT spokesman said, "This success will be an important step toward the realization of clean energy for the future."

Yamaguchi's experiment differs from the usual cold fusion experiments. He takes a small plate of palladium metal coated with gold on one side and manganese oxide on the other, saturates this with deuterium, and then heats it in a vacuum chamber. He describes his experiment in an interview in the Fall 1992 issue of *21st Century Science & Technology* magazine. However, his finding of helium-4 occurred later.

The Oct. 19 *Wall Street Journal* reported on cold fusion experiments using light water (ordinary H₂O) as opposed to heavy water. Whatever is happening in the experiments, reporter Jerry Bishop said, "it isn't the nuclear fusion" that the scientists originally thought. Light water has no deuterium, the heavy isotope of hydrogen, and therefore deuterium fusion could not take place.

Briefly

Curiously, Bishop reports only on the five labs that have achieved excess heat using light water, and makes no mention of the many experiments with heavy water that have replicated and expanded on the original experiments of Martin Fleischmann and Stanley Pons in the United States, Japan, Russia, India, France, and elsewhere. Among the light water results he mentions are those of Randell Mills (covered in the Spring 1992 issue of *21st Century Science & Technology*) and those of the Bhabha Atomic Research Center in Trombay, India, where "all but one of 25 light water experiments have produced excess heat."

Eastern Europe

Western aid not matched to needs

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has found that western aid offered is not what eastern European republics want or need. In a new study on western aid to the new republics of eastern Europe and Central Asia, based on a computer list of 750 requests for aid and 2,600 offers of aid compiled since July, the OECD found that there were huge mismatches between what was desired and needed, and what was being provided, the Oct. 17 *London Financial Times* reported.

While there has been duplication in the food and medicine being provided by the West, the republics say they have been given insufficient aid in shelter, housing, and construction, there is not enough assistance to convert military industries to peaceful uses or to improve the ability to provide health services, and there is not enough support for democratic institutions. At the same time, there are too many offers to teach "management skills" or provide "comprehensive economic reform plans."

On Oct. 29-30, ministers and senior officials from 70 donor and recipient countries will meet in Tokyo to review the aid given so far, and its efficacy. It is expected that the conference will propose changes in the aid programs of western nations.

AIDS

Kenya could be wiped out, President warns

"If there is anything that could wipe out Kenya's population, it is AIDS," Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi warned, according to coverage in Oct. 19 German newspapers. Moi noted that there is a dramatic increase in the number of people sick with AIDS from 1990 until now.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) figures, every 40th African is already infected with the HIV virus—compared to every 250th person worldwide.

The World Bank has already adjusted its projections for life expectancy, and it expects a decrease of the average life expectancy from 62 to 48 years of age in Africa.

Health

New diseases pose serious threat to U.S.

"The emergence of new infectious diseases such as AIDS and the reappearance of old scourges such as tuberculosis pose a serious public health threat that the United States is ill-prepared to address, an expert panel of the Institute of Medicine warned," the Oct. 16 *Houston Chronicle* reported, in an article headlined "Panel Warns that New Diseases Pose Serious Threat to Nation." The panel echoed warnings against the threat of new diseases made by independent presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche beginning in the mid-1970s.

The report is entitled "Microbial Threats to Health in the United States," (National Academy Press, 1992, 308 pages).

The panel attributes the problem of re-emerging diseases to complacency going back to the late 1950s when "many public health officials began to believe the war on infectious diseases had been won." The *Houston Chronicle*, however, makes no mention of inadequate funding for health care. To deal with the problem, the panel recommended that "the United States beef up its vigilance in tracking and responding to new outbreaks."

● **THE WORLD BANK** has found that one-third of its projects fail to meet objectives, according to an internal study, the Oct. 17 *Journal of Commerce* reported. One standard which must be met for the bank to grant its support, is that a project "earn the equivalent of a 10% return on the bank's money."

● **AFRICA** needs the Japan economic model, Bolya Baenga of Zaire told Reuters Oct. 20. "To follow Japan is the best method for Africa. The Meiji model is a universal experience just like the democratic political system and human rights of the West," said Bolya, author of *Africa in Kimono*.

● **THE REAGAN-BUSH** administration has "unscrupulously sacrificed the interests of a civilized society," the German financial daily *Handelsblatt* charged Oct. 22 in a survey on the U.S. economy. The vast debt burden is not the root of the underlying problems, but is preventing a solution, it said.

● **PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION** collapsed by 30% in 1991 in Italy, partly as a result of the "Milagate" scandal, the National Association of Building Contractors, *L'Unita* reported Oct. 23. "For a large number of companies, already facing a deadly financial crisis, this could be the final shot, opening the way to a buy-out campaign at sale prices . . . probably from foreign giants."

● **RUSSIA** is "politically and economically on the scrap heap" as a result of the policies of the Gaidar government, declared Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy, the Oct. 22 *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* reported. If the "so-called reforms" go any further, then Russia should "invite the Italian Mafia" to give "practical training," he said.

● **BURUNDI** is trying to stop a meningitis epidemic, and the health minister has announced the closing of primary schools. In a few weeks, more than 1,200 cases have occurred and 207 patients have died.