
Helga Zepp-LaRouche in Sudan

The world needs an ecumenical dialogue based on economic science

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the president of the Schiller Institute in Germany and the wife of economist Lyndon LaRouche, gave this speech in Khartoum, Sudan on April 26, at the international Conference on Religions. The full title of her presentation was "For an Ecumenical Dialogue Based on an Economic Science in Cohesion with the Laws of God's Creation." Subheads have been added.

Sometimes in human history, when mankind has violated God's laws for a long period of time and subsequently has brought enormous misery upon itself, God calls upon some of us to step forward and to intervene to change the course of events.

I believe that the initiators of this dialogue were guided by such a divine inspiration, and that what we are called upon to do is extremely necessary to avoid a catastrophe for the human species.

I also believe that it is not a coincidence that we are undertaking this effort here, in Sudan, the heart of Africa. Because it is Africa which is affected the most by this world crisis, by what Pope John Paul II has called in his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* the "structures of sin."

This encyclical was published in 1987, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the pope insisted that these structures of sin existed equally in the East under communism, as well as in the West under "unrestrained liberal economics."

It was to the dismay of many, including so-called Christian politicians in the West, that the pope reiterated after the opening of the borders in 1989 that the collapse, and thus the complete failure of communism, did not prove that liberal capitalism was any better, and that the "structures of sin" were still persisting, and that the proof of this was the impoverishment and misery in the so-called Third World.

IMF has written off Africa

Let me speak very frankly. The reality is that Africa has been written off by the international financial institutions for years. There is no intention of helping the economic development of Africa on the part of the International Monetary Fund [IMF], the World Bank, or any western government, for that matter. What is behind such words as "overpopulation," "structural adjustment," "appropriate technology," or "sus-

tainable development," is in reality the neo-malthusian policy of a relatively small group of people who believe that the world should forever be ruled by a small oligarchical elite, presently dominated by the Anglo-American establishment, and that the rest of the vast majority of the world's population should be kept in backwardness, practically modern slavery.

Rather than helping Africa to overcome the heritage of centuries of colonialism and to provide for cheap credit to realize the urgently required infrastructure and other development projects, there has been a net capital outflow of over \$100 billion from Africa to the North over the last 10 years! And this occurred during a time when even official United Nations reports spoke about the fact that 40 million people in Africa are threatened with death by starvation and disease.

There is a very simple name for this—it is called conscious and willful genocide!

The reality is that we are in a global depression as a result of monetarist policies which are concerned with the interests of the banks, but not with the existence of peoples. If these policies are not reversed, we are heading for a global catastrophe, the potential depopulation of large parts of Africa due to hunger and epidemics like AIDS, the "Africanization" of most of Ibero-America, the explosion of Russia and eventually China into civil war and chaos, and the danger of a global Thirty Years' War in which eventually all weapons would be used, including nuclear weapons.

Because we are looking at a potential crisis which is like none other in human history ever before, we are called upon to change the direction of global politics, not just some small reform here and there, but the entire direction of these policies. We have to overcome the depression; we need a global reconstruction of the world economy which allows the survival of all peoples on this planet.

Especially because the existing political and economic order in the world is responsible for the nearly limitless misery of hundreds of millions of people in the world, and which has violated the laws of the divine order of Creation, the religions are called upon to work together on an ecumenical basis to overcome the crisis.

The religious dialogue is not only necessary and eminently possible for all people who love God, our Creator, but it only fulfills its necessity when it addresses the existential question,

and that is how to create the basis for the survival of all presently living human beings on a level in accordance with the dignity of each human being as being in the image of God, *imago viva Dei*.

Malthusian lies

Contrary to the contemptuous propaganda of pagan interest groups, the problem in the developing countries is not one of overpopulation, since their population density is mostly only a tiny percentage of that of the industrial nations, but the problem is that the existing technologies are being denied to the larger part of humanity—this is what is openly called “technological apartheid.”

There are not too many human beings, but the problem consists of that fact that, as a result of neo-malthusian policies, the agricultural and industrial capacities have dropped below the level required to sustain the actually living individuals on an adequate level. A continuation of these monetarist policies is threatening to lead to the depopulation of entire continents, and could eventually lead to the collapse of human civilization.

Mankind is the only species in creation which has the capacity to increase its potential population density willfully, but at the same time, it is the species which *must* do this as the precondition for its continued existence. Because at each level of development, the so-called natural resources are relatively finite, or their development becomes relatively too expensive, so that a continuation of production on the same technological level indeed reaches relative limits to growth.

So, the population potential on the Earth, at the level of the “hunting and gathering” society, was maximally 5 to 10 million people, because a specific number of square kilometers of area was necessary to maintain every individual. It was only the unique, continued ability of man to again and again generate scientific and technological progress on the basis of his creative reason, which, applied in the productive process, always led to renewed definitions of what represented “natural resources,” and to a related increase in the potential population density.

The durable survivability of a society depends on the condition that the physical standard of living with respect to nourishment, health care, education, etc., increases per capita, and that also life expectancy increases, which is reflected in per capita and per square kilometer energy use in production and consumption. Technological progress and the increase in the potential population density are therefore existentially necessary because of the increasing division of labor. They are not a choice, but part of the law of God’s Creation.

In the Bible, in the book of Genesis 1:26, we read: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make men in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds in the air, over the livestock, over all the earth’s creatures that move in the surroundings.’ ” And then he mandated that man “Go forth, multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it and exert

mastery over it.”

This *is* the law of Creation. Whenever mankind follows it, there is progress, whenever he violates it, society collapses, as it is doing now.

Man in the living image of God

What distinguishes man absolutely from all other species of Creation is his capacity for reason, and therefore, in the realm of the spiritual, to generate again and again ever more adequate hypotheses, which, applied in the material realm, lead to an ever better domination of the physical universe, which again leads to an increase in the potential population density.

The continued existence of mankind is therefore the proof for a correspondence of the microcosm and the macrocosm, for the cohesion of the laws of human reason and the physical universe.

That which differentiates man from all other created species is this creative reason, is his identity as *imago viva Dei*, as the living image of God, and therefore his ability to imitate the most noble aspect of God, the Creator.

It is precisely *not* the possession of raw materials or the right to extract usury which is the source of wealth in society, as the monetarist theory of Adam Smith claims, nor is it some ominous “social forces,” as communism insists. The *only* source of wealth in society is rather the creative capacities of man.

Is it therefore not in the highest self-interest of the state to develop all the creative potentials of its citizens? A true definition of human rights is therefore not only the inalienable right of a person to life, food, housing, and so forth, but it is the inalienable right to develop all the creative potentials embedded within the individual, and this not as a limited self-interest, but because only in this way can the individual contribute in the maximal way to the benefit of society and to the improvement of the generations to come.

It is therefore the identity of man as *imago viva Dei*, as the living image of God, which is the key to everything. It is the key to overcoming the economic crisis. It is the key to overcoming moral sins, and it is the key to peace and cooperation among religions as well as nations.

If society fosters the creative spark in its citizens, with the utmost emphasis on the development of the children and the youth, utilizing the best scientific and cultural traditions of mankind in a way similar to the one used by the great Caliph Haroun al-Rashid, who collected all true advancements of knowledge up to his time, then this is at the same time the best investment in economic progress.

If the individual tries to develop his or her creative potential in the best possible way, because only in this way can he or she best contribute to the improvement of the nation and/or mankind, this person will also try to perfect his or her likeness to God. And as the great astronomer Johannes Kepler said, the more man understands the laws and the



Helga Zepp-LaRouche: We must overcome what Pope John Paul II called the "structures of sin."

beauty of God's Creation, the greater and more passionate will be his love for God, and the more he will want to live in atonement with Him.

The basis for an ecumenical dialogue

If each religion relates to the members of the other religions as being in the image of God in this way, a true collaboration for the common good is possible and the basis for peace is given.

In the same way, peace at large is only possible in the world today if the political and economic order is brought into cohesion with natural law. Concordance, peace in the macrocosm, is only possible through the maximum development of all microcosms. Only if a nation respects the maximal development of its neighbors as its fundamental self-interest, and vice versa, can there be peace.

This is not a utopian idea, it is the only practical way to get out of the gigantic crisis which is facing us today. It is *agapē*, the love of God, the love of mankind, and the love of your neighbor. It means concretely that the "structures of sin" have to be overcome and replaced by a just, new economic order in cohesion with the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* of Pope Paul VI ("On the Development of All Peoples"), and such a just world economic order must be centered on the image of each individual on this planet as *imago viva Dei*.

Economic development for Africa

The concrete development plans for this great union do exist for Africa. My husband, the American economist, currently a political prisoner of the Anglo-American establishment, already in 1974 commissioned and worked on a study, predicting that if the then-existing IMF policies toward Africa were continued, this would lead inevitably to a biological holocaust, since it is not possible to lower living standards

and therefore weaken the immune system of an entire continent, without encouraging the emergence of epidemics. He could not have known about AIDS then, but the prediction was correct.

At the same time, he proposed an economic development plan for the entire African continent, starting with the absolutely necessary infrastructure, ports, waterways, roads, a railway network from south to north and from Dakar to Djibouti, but also irrigation systems on a large scale, desalination, energy production, and communication as absolutely necessary preconditions for the development of agriculture and industry.

If there had been an annual investment into this continental program of only \$50 billion, which is less than the destructive Gulf War cost, and if this had been maintained over the last 20 years, then Africa today could be on the road to prosperity and in many parts a blooming garden, and now, with two generations having had access to general education, development could really take off.

For Ibero-America, for Asia, and for practically every part of the world, similar programs exist. All that is required is the mobilization of political will of the decent forces around the world, working together for the needed global change. What the world most urgently needs in order for mankind to survive is a global reconstruction program to overcome the presently dramatically worsening situation.

If we do what we have to do, then this dialogue will give hope to the world, and later in history people will say, "It was in Khartoum, in the heart of Africa, that people united in the name of God, and they took the fate of those who were downtrodden and heavy-laden upon their shoulders. And it was from this conference that a struggle was waged which turned mankind away from the abyss and helped overcome oligarchism." So let us do what we are called to do!