

better to offer the poorest countries of the world than a recipe based on . . . the Internet. A decision which may favor some multinational company and fit the interests of Japan, which hosted the summit. But it means proposing the latest invention of modern communication science to people who often have neither water nor electricity. . . .

Above all, this proposal goes against one of the criteria upon which debt relief is based: Such relief must go in the direction of favoring the reduction of the gap between rich and poor (it may be better to say, between governing elites of highly indebted countries and the great mass of populations which are at risk of dying of hunger). This means favoring the creation of infrastructure: dams, bridges . . . and plans for education and professional formation. . . .

The Catholic Church and the Debt

The true contradiction, the crux of the problem, lies in the fact that the tools of politics “calibrated” as they are for the national level, are rendered de facto incapable of governing phenomena which, for their very nature, happily transcend borders, moving very large (although also virtual) sums of money from one part of the world to another in a fraction of a second. The only actor which is still able to act with a global dimension in terms of confronting the strategists of the global capitalists, is the Catholic Church, in all of its articulations, from Alex Zanotelli to the frontiers of humanity, all the way to the elderly Pope in St. Peter’s Square.

It was precisely the Pope, who, in his speech to the diplomatic corps last Jan. 13 [2001], recalled a very simple truth; that we can’t go on like this: that a situation in which wealth, culture, and health are confined to a small global elite (and, let’s be explicit, we Italians and Europeans are part of this elite) while the rest of the world is drowning in hunger, desperation, AIDS, and other endemic diseases. The fight against poverty therefore becomes a global political program which today appears both the most realistic and the most difficult, in an epoch in which—and this is the true moral evil—the dollarization of every value and every dignity is the true spirit of the times.

It is important that the Pope was immediately echoed by an important director of the United Nations such as Staffan De Mistura [UN representative in Italy], who, quite honestly, recognized the impotence of his organization in attempting to contribute substantially to this fight. And it couldn’t be otherwise, I think, given that the UN is the expression of the governments which, in turn, are heavily conditioned by transnational economic interests.

Politics can only work partially, and it is in this perspective that the law on foreign debt was developed, which I had the honor and the responsibility of presenting to the Chamber of Deputies: a law which attempts to adapt the needs of a onetime cancellation of debts which some countries had with Italy, and the indication of the basic criteria to be used (that is, including international cooperation, among other things)

when dealing with the indebted countries in the medium term. . . .

If we take a more general view of the issue, we can say that the current period, for the social and political forces of the progressive and reform area, is and will be for some time, more a period of resistance than one of proposals, at least until the strategic question of the possibility of a political and social action which moves to a global level is resolved. (And smashing windows in Prague or Nice is certainly not the best method to accelerate this process.) In the meantime, the old motto of “think globally, act locally” is still extremely current: There are many ongoing initiatives on the theme of globalization and the fight against social injustice around the world. These mobilizations are the result of the energy of associations, parishes, missionary groups, but also of regions, provinces and towns, and names such as Serge Latouche, José Bové, Jeremy Rifkin, Riccardo Petrella, and now, also Lyndon LaRouche, who are now integral part of the debate in our country.

It’s necessary to help this still nameless movement develop a strategy, and construct, step by step, a grid defining its objectives: There is no time to lose.

Minister Patrizia Toia

Students Must Debate The International Debt

We publish here an excerpt of the speech by Patrizia Toia, Italy’s Minister for Relations with the Parliament, to the conference on “Debt Forgiveness and the New Bretton Woods,” on Jan. 14, in Milan.



I must say that I am very pleased, I must say it openly, to speak about these problems in a university environment, because I, too, believe that the universities, as places of study, research, and where culture is formed and there is time for reflection, can represent very strong instances in the creation of a vast movement. A movement of public opinion, in the most qualified sectors of public opinion, so that these themes do not remain confined to, or only the responsibility of, governments and parliaments, or of merely a small circle of persons or associations. Today, the Church

LaRouche to Nader: Voodoo Won't Save California

Lyndon LaRouche, who has announced his intention to seek the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2004, issued the following statement on Jan. 23, in response to Ralph Nader's demand that California Gov. Gray Davis "let the state utility companies go bankrupt."

The voodoo trick, of suffocating and burying a man, and resurrecting him as a zombie, is not the way to improve the performance of California's energy deliveries to its people and institutions.

You may not like the choice of George W. Bush as President, but, you must act as I do in this matter. He is the President, and we must not forget that his problems may become, more or less automatically, those of our nation as a whole.

This new President has done, as I had stated my fears on this point before his inauguration. He has, for this moment, painted himself into a deadly political corner on the California energy-crisis. He is presently trapped, at least for the moment, in a choice between Enron's profits from its looting of our nation's energy sector, and a collapse of a state economy, that of California, equal to that of the sixth largest nation of the world, and the most developed part of our U.S.A. Therefore, our new President's stated position on the matter, if he sticks to it, could be, even probably, the blunder which detonates a chain-reaction collapse of the already tottering and financial-derivatives-bloated world financial system.

We must re-regulate the existing industry, and reestablish the rule of the general welfare of the nation and population as a whole. We must save the industry, not lurk like voodoo priests, waiting for the time to call the dead to rise from out of the cemetery. We must act to save the industry and its service to the general welfare now, before President Bush's recently stated wrong-headedness on the issue, if uncorrected, sinks his Presidency, virtually at its start.

acts not only on the level of teaching: it is enough to read the Pope's messages of Jan. 1, or his Jan. 13 message to the diplomatic corps, a message in which he speaks to the world, to nations, to governments, to the countries of the world, but also to the supranational institutions and all the world which wants to hear.

But this world which mobilizes is still too limited, and I believe, though I say it with the full responsibility of the institutions, that if something more, something more advanced is to be mobilized, it must come from civil society. Then there will be institutional realities ready to act, but if this movement doesn't exist, if there is not a sense of interpreting a widespread will, then the risk is that some steps forward may be taken, but, as you know, moving forward in international situations is extremely complicated and slow. . . . It seems that time has two dimensions: the normal dimension, that of reality, where people die of hunger, that of children, and, on the other side, there is the world of diplomacy, of the agreements and their slow progress.

It is important, therefore, that in the university environment (good for the people who organize and allow these meetings!) there is debate, and qualified opinion is formed among students, teachers, and the people who gravitate around the university. . . .

I like to underline, especially for young people, and not because I want to sing the praises of the Parliament and the government, but to say that Italy, on the whole, moved because there was a public opinion which pushed us to move. The movement that there has been in Italy for a few years

now, the Jubilee campaign, the campaign by the Catholic Church, have made an important point, and this has been recognized. And you should also see—I'll cite this historical parallel, about the movements and the associations—an important step was taken at the [1999] G-8 summit in Cologne, when the associative movements, Msgr. Charrier for Italy, went to the eight great countries to say, "with this document, we say that the initiative under way today, at the level of the IMF, for the highly indebted countries, is insufficient," and in that summit a decision was made. So there is a track in which official institutions and international voluntary institutions confront each other.

Now, Italy has passed a law which everyone sees as advanced. The government proposed the law, the Parliament improved it, in my view. The speaker on the law in the Parliament was Giovanni Bianchi, who played the strongest role. What I did, was to reject an amendment proposed by one of my colleagues in the government, who didn't accept certain aspects. These aspects, which were then kept in the law, had to do with the fact that our law is good not merely because it established a large amount for the reduction or elimination of the debt, but because it has certain passages which say that Italy can go at a faster pace, with a schedule and also a form that is different than those of the Paris Club. . . . This is the law of the Parliament. Naturally, some people at the Treasury Ministry said, "No, it's not possible, we have to follow the reforms," and to me, it seems that, to the contrary, this proposal of the Parliament, which I signed onto, was the sign that it is possible to do more. . . .

EIR SPECIAL REPORT

THE 'NEW ECONOMY' IS DOOMED

The Fraud of the Information Society

The Group of Eight heads of state, meeting in Okinawa in July 2000, proclaimed as its major accomplishment, the establishment of a task force aimed at giving the Third World access to the "Information Revolution." In a parody of Marie Antoinette, they said of the world's poor: "Let them eat laptops!"

EIR's Special Report rips apart the fraud of the Information Society, and tells what must be done to restore economic health to nations where billions of people face hunger and death by infectious disease, while transport, power, and water infrastructure is collapsing.

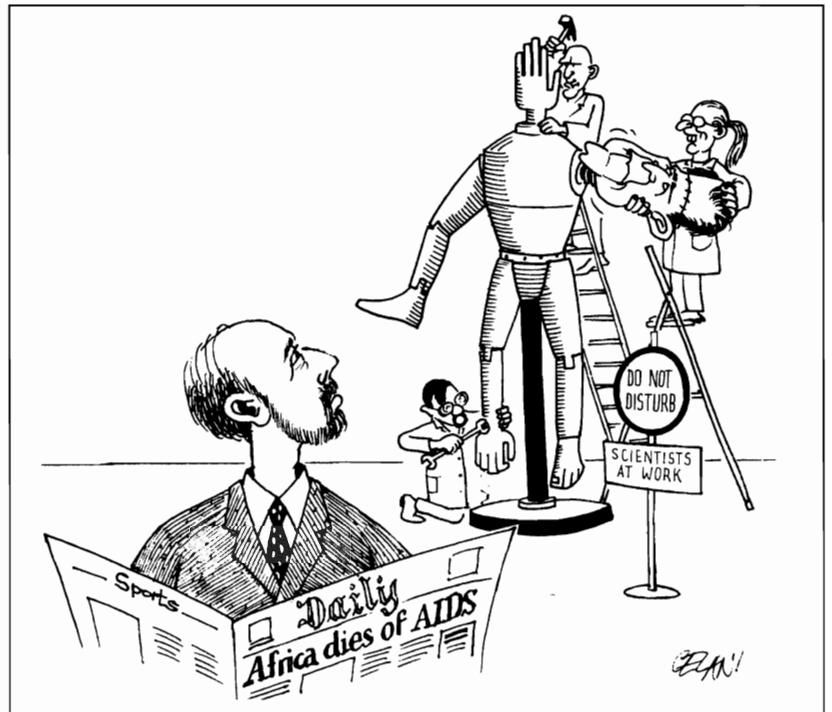


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