

Catholic Journal Hits Novak's Free Trade

by Claudio Celani

A healthy exposure of the destructive role played by “Catholic” neo-conservative Michael Novak in the economic ruin of Ibero-America has come from important quarters in the Catholic Church. In its January issue, the monthly *Thirty Days* denounces American Enterprise Institute star Novak, as a supporter of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies that have driven Argentina to bankruptcy. *Thirty Days* is close to high Vatican circles (it often reports interviews with Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, chairman of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) and is edited by former Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti. Andreotti co-signed a motion calling for a New Bretton Woods monetary system, now gathering support in the Italian Senate (see *EIR*, March 15, 2002).

Thirty Days blames the bankruptcy of Argentina on the neo-liberal economic reforms imposed by the IMF, especially under the decade of Carlos Menem's Presidency (1989-99). “In those days,” the article states, “that very government economic policy found more or less warm supporters also in the Catholic world. Circles represented by the Asociación Cristiana de Dirigentes de Empresa (ACDE), which publishes the magazine *Empresa*, as well as professors at the Economics Department of Catholic University, supported, with cultural and academical arguments, the ‘productive revolution’ started by Thatcherism-Menemism. And frequent were the visits of *mâitres à penser* such as former IMF director Michel Camdessus and American neo-conservative Michael Novak, who came to spend encouraging words on the ongoing process and to illustrate the full compatibility, if not the total identification, between the neo-liberal economic model and the social doctrine of the Church.”

Not only that. The Menem government, *Thirty Days* reports, had promoted a seemingly pro-Catholic policy on single issues such as “abortion, birth control, or so-called ‘reproductive rights,’ ” on which issues the Argentine government profiled itself in international conferences, “often with more intransigent positions than the Papal delegation itself.” This gave Menem a sort of protection from neo-conservative circles in the Vatican, to fend off criticism against his social and economic policy that was coming from the Argentine Church. With Argentina's bankruptcy and the collapse of its insane economic policy, a debate has opened in those same economic circles that had supported the policies promoted by Novak and Camdessus, *Thirty Days* writes.

Argentine bishops are on the front line in demanding re-

versal of neo-liberal policies and reconstruction of the lost national wealth. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires speaks of the Menem decade as “real financial-economic terrorism” and accuses the “international imperialism of money” of “eliminating even work, which is the means through which Man expresses his creativity, which is the image of God's creativity.” “We are tired,” Bergoglio says, “of systems that produce the poor, for the Church to maintain.”

Bergoglio is skeptical that anything has changed in the international community, and is cautious about the new Argentine government as well. The Church has opened a dialogue with the Duhalde government on the future of the country, which is being carried out in public forums, but this should not be misinterpreted as support for Duhalde. “This is a moment in which institutions, and not persons, are to be supported,” says Bergoglio. The Church has reason to be cautious. Among other things, the figure who covered up Menem's neo-liberal policies in the Vatican, Esteban Caselli, is now Minister for Religion in the Duhalde cabinet. As his first move, Caselli tried to remove the Argentine Ambassador to the Vatican, Vicente Espeche Gil, a step which has so far been prevented by the mobilization of certain Argentina bishops.

A Necessary Cleanup

It is to be hoped that the *Thirty Days* exposé opens a debate, leading to the dismissal of neoliberal doctrines from the Church. Such doctrines are the opposite of what the Pope has been writing, but they nevertheless enjoy much too great influence in the Catholic world.

Responding to the *Thirty Days* report, U.S. 2004 Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche characterized Novak's case as the expression of a system of “state religion” currently operating in the United States, by which a financial and political oligarchy has chosen approved versions of world religions to be included in a “Pantheon,” as instruments of state (or anti-state) policies. Not accidentally, on the board of a daughter-association of the American Enterprise Institute, the think-tank led by Novak, sits Samuel Huntington, the promoter of the Clash of Civilizations doctrine.

LaRouche wrote in a March 11 memo: “Novak's stock-in-trade, the advocacy of the populist delusion called ‘free trade,’ was originally known in Europe as a doctrine of the gnostic Cathars, otherwise known in English slang as ‘the buggers.’ This was introduced to modern European culture through such empiricists as Sir Francis Bacon, his Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, the Physiocrat François Quesnay, and the British East India Company agent Adam Smith. These modern American ‘buggers’ argue, that there is, in effect, a secret army of ‘little green men,’ deployed under the floorboards of the universe, who determine the outcome of the roll of the dice, and thus make some men rich, and others poor. Those ‘little green men’ are the god whose grace Novak serves, by whatever name he and his confederates (and Confederates) may choose to call him.”