

## EIR Feature

# Pope defends rights of man against usury and looting

by Carol White

The Papal Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, delivered at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome at the end of December 1987, and published on Feb. 18, 1988, is a major statement by the Pope on the rights of man in the modern period. It is meant to address a situation in which whole sections of the globe have been scheduled for destruction, by oligarchical financial institutions which put the "sanctity" of their power literally before the most basic rights of all men to feed their families and provide a future for their children, and their children's children.

The economies of Ibero-American nations are being forcibly transformed into plantations for the drug cartels, as a way of meeting the usurious payment schedules forced upon these peoples by the World Bank, the Bank for International Settlements and the major Western private banks. Secret agreements negotiated between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet party chief Mikhail Gorbachov have defined areas of the globe which would be made available to the United States for such exploitation, while Europe and Central Asia would become Soviet spheres of influence.

Equally horrible, is the cynical exploitation, by the Russians, of Eastern Europe's captive nations, such as Estonia, which have been included within the Soviet Union. In order to support the current frenetic pace of their military build-up, they have looted these countries down to the bare bone. It is reported, for example, that in Poland there are fewer basic medicines available to the population today, than were available under the Nazi occupation during the Second World War.

It is this reality which is addressed by the papal document, and condemned as the "structures of sin." This is a document which will be read and studied by patriots throughout the world, who are seeking a means of opposing the precipitous descent into a new dark age, which presently threatens humanity. The particular proposals contained in the Encyclical have appeared in other documents issued by the Vatican over the past several years, but this document restates the commitment of the Pope to use his own full authority to expose and defeat the "structures of sin," whether they occur within the East bloc or the West.



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*The right to private property is valid and necessary, but it does not nullify the value of this principle. Private property, in fact, is under a "social mortgage," which means that it has an intrinsically social function, based upon and justified precisely by the principle of the universal destination of goods.*

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*St. Lawrence distributing the treasures of the Church to the poor, fresco by Fra Angelico, Rome, Vatican Palace (1450).*

He attacks the economics of Milton Friedman, liberal capitalism, and demands a restructuring of the financial system in order to free developing-sector capital for reinvestment in desperately needed high technology. In this regard, the Pope calls for the integration of an Ibero-America-wide bloc for trade and production, and he denounces the way in which nations such as the United States try to keep the countries of Ibero-America as virtual colonies.

Twenty years after the 1967 Encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* of Pope Paul VI, in which he proclaimed that "development is the new name for peace," the condition of the majority of mankind has sunk to a level of misery, that can no longer be tolerated. This is the message of this moving document.

The Encyclical should be viewed against the backdrop of the Pope's speeches over the past several years. John Paul II has traveled over the face of the globe to confront his enemies—the enemies of man and God, as he described them in a speech in Munich on May 15 of last year. There the pontiff warned of "Satan's deceptive temptation, not to take this challenge [the fight against evil in all of its guises] seriously and to avoid hardships, which often accompany the fight against the forces of evil."

In his new Encyclical the Pope pays lip service to the principle of détente, and is even-handed in his criticism of the two superpowers, the United States and the U.S.S.R.; although his impassioned plea for the rights of all nations to

national sovereignty clearly addresses the plight of the captive nations who live under Soviet domination. The reader should remember his dramatic four-day trip to his native Poland last June, when he beatified Karolina Kozka, a 16-year-old Polish peasant girl, who in 1914 refused to be raped by Russian soldiers and was, as a result, murdered by them.

The only weakness of the document is the extent to which it maintains a judicially balanced tone between East and West, and to that degree fails to differentiate between republican forces in the developed as well as developing sector, and their oligarchical opponents. The Pope correctly attacks the virus of "liberal capitalism," but he fails to counterpose this to the genuinely republican traditions of industrial capitalism, typified in the United States by the policies of the President Abraham Lincoln, who forged an alliance with Mexico's republican President, Benito Juárez.

### **On the question of the debt**

On Jan. 27 of last year, in Rome, the Vatican's Pontifical Commission "Justitia et Pax" released a ringing call for the immediate reform of the international monetary system. That document, which was commissioned by the Pope, was called, *At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question*. It was circulated among Presidents, cabinet ministers, and financial leaders throughout the globe.

The 1987 document condemned the International Mone-

tary Fund by name, for its "authoritarian and technocratic" policies. It stated: "The phenomenon of international indebtedness has sharply increased in the last few years, presenting new challenges to the international community both because of its size and its implications. . . . The accumulation of payments due has reached such a level that many countries are no longer in a position to honor their agreements, and find themselves forced to seek further loans.

"Debtor countries, in fact, find themselves caught in a vicious circle. In order to pay back their debts, they are obliged to transfer ever greater amounts of money outside of the country. These are resources which should be available for internal purposes and investment and therefore for their own development. . . .

"Debt servicing cannot be met at the price of the asphyxiation of a country's economy, and no government can morally demand of its people privations incompatible with human dignity. . . . Economic structures and financial mechanisms are at the service of the human person and not vice versa."

On Feb. 20, 1987, not quite one month later, Brazilian President José Sarney proclaimed that Brazil was suspending debt payments. At the time he stated: "We are suspending our debt payments. . . . We cannot pay the debt if it means the hunger of the people. . . . A debt paid through misery, surely is an account paid at the price of democracy."

This courageous action by Brazil signaled that an end was in sight to the rule of usury. By failing to honor the fiction of maintaining debt payments, the Brazilians challenged the practice of the major Western banks, which attempted to paper over their own debt by rolling over the debt of nations such as Brazil—siphoning off their life's blood as debt service for this artificially escalating debt.

On April 6, 1987, John Paul II spoke before the foreign diplomatic corps in Argentina, just hours after arriving in that country. Implicitly endorsing the action of Brazil, he called for an "ethical judgment of the international debt, which defines the responsibility of all the parties involved, and not just that of the debtor nations."

Referencing the recent document by the pontifical commission *Justitia et Pax*, he said that in the view of the Catholic Church, beyond the "national and regional selfishness" which must be overcome, the most radical threat to peace stems from "the foreign debt of many developing countries."

On Sept. 19, 1987, the Pope came to the United States, where he addressed a stinging polemic against the liberation theologians who are rightly known as the American heresy. Noting the fate of the poor in the major American cities, as well as the degeneration of the culture, he nonetheless found inspiration in the institutions of the American republic, saying in one of his speeches: "And finally I come to join you as you celebrate the Bicentennial of that great document, the Constitution of the United States of America. I willingly join

you in your prayer of thanksgiving to God for the providential way in which the Constitution has served the people of this nation for two centuries: for the union it has formed, the justice it has established, the tranquillity and peace it has ensured, the general welfare it has promoted, and the blessings of liberty it has secured."

Two years earlier, in February of 1985, the Pope attacked those who profiteer on drugs. In a trip to Peru he told an audience of one million, in the city of Cuzco: "Egoism is also the cause of a corrupting business that has been created around the growing of coca, a product which natives sometimes use in a natural way as a stimulant of human activity, but which on becoming a drug has been transformed into a deadly poison that some exploit without the slightest scruples, with no concern about the grave moral responsibility of some reaping economic benefit at the cost of the physical and mental health of many, especially adolescents and youths who so remain incapacitated from living decent lives."

The message of the Jan. 27, 1987 document issued by *Justitia et Pax* is not qualitatively different than the voice of the Pope today, with the key exception that now it is the Pope speaking in his own voice. The call to arms in that document was quickly heeded by Brazil, but the essential battle for monetary reform remains to be won. Now, one year later, following the "Black Monday" October 1987 stock market crash, the bankers have good cause to tremble.

## Integration of Ibero-America

Up until now, the nation's of Ibero-America have remained disunited. First Mexico, then Peru, then Brazil have acted to throw off the yoke of slavery imposed by the international bankers' conspiracy of David Rockefeller and his cronies, but in each instance they have acted alone, against the united force of international oligarchy. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, the Pope recognizes and addresses this weakness. He issues a call for Ibero-American integration extremely reminiscent of Lyndon H. LaRouche's similar program.

The Pope writes: "It is desirable, for example, that nations of the same geographical area should establish forms of cooperation which will make them less dependent on more powerful producers; they should open their frontiers to the products of the area; they should examine how their products might complement one another; they should combine in order to set up those services which each one separately is incapable of providing; they should extend cooperation to the monetary and financial sector."

The Pope makes the profound argument that every person who is complicit in imposing bankers' usury, whether as an agent of the usurious financial interests, or merely by failing to make join in active resistance to them, is guilty of participating in the structures of sin. Equally to the point, he has pointed his vast following in precisely the direction which they must take, to topple these structures.