

EIR Feature

On the 100th anniversary of 'Rerum Novarum'

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The following is the preface to his forthcoming book, The Science of Christian Economy, which we offer here by way of introduction to Pope John Paul II's new encyclical, excerpted below, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first great encyclical on the Catholic Church's social teachings, Rerum Novarum. Mr. LaRouche wrote this preface from his prison cell in Rochester, Minnesota, where he is held a political prisoner, on Feb. 17, 1991. For purposes of this publication, the footnote references have been omitted.

During the course of these next several pages, we shall come to the point at which we shall turn the attention of our ecumenical readership to numbered section 72, of the famous 1891 encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*. We shall then focus upon the concluding sentence of that section, and also upon the passage from Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* which the author of the encyclical has footnoted there. The referenced sentence of the encyclical's text reads thus: "For laws are to be obeyed only insofar as they conform with right reason and thus with the eternal law of God."

The footnoted passage from St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* reads: "Human law is law only in virtue of its accordance with right reason; and, thus it is manifest that it flows from the eternal law. And insofar as it [man-made law—LHL] deviates from right reason it is called an unjust law; in such case it is not law at all, but rather a species of violence."

A hundred years ago, *Rerum Novarum* treated the remedying of the evil then being run by a "devouring usury," which, "although often condemned by the Church, but practiced nevertheless under another form by avaricious and grasping men, has increased that "evil effected by the handing over of workers, each alone and defenseless, to the inhumanity of employers and the unbridled greed of competitors."

At the time of the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy at the end



President John F. Kennedy in his historic May 1961 message to a joint session of Congress, committing the U.S. to landing a man on the Moon. By the time of JFK's assassination in 1963, "it appeared to most observers then, that the pleas for economic justice in Rerum Novarum, if not yet successful, were assuredly on the way to becoming so," reports LaRouche.

of 1963, approximately three-quarters of a century had passed. It appeared to most observers then, that the pleas for economic justice in *Rerum Novarum*, if not yet successful, were assuredly on the way to becoming so.

In the so-called "industrialized capitalist" sectors of this planet, the trade-union movement and other meliorist agencies had won, and were continuing to win cumulatively invaluable, and putatively permanent gains in human rights for most strata of the populations. Although a vicious form of neo-colonialism had been established at the end of the 1939-1945 World War, the spirit of the U.N.O.'s First Development Decade Project, and the U.S. Kennedy administration's Alliance For Progress, suggested a commitment to global justice paralleling, and perhaps echoing the rise of the civil rights movement inside the U.S.A. itself.

During the middle of the 1960s, that hopeful direction of development was reversed. During the recent quarter-century, social conditions in most parts of the world are far worse, on the average, than during the 1960s, and threaten to become soon far worse than one hundred years ago.

'Devouring usury' stalks the globe

The impulses for evil which have caused this recent calamity are not altogether new. A conspicuously leading cause of the greatly increased immiseration and endangerment of the human species, during the past quarter-century, has been the willful murderousness with which such forms of the old "devouring usury" as so-called "International Monetary

Fund (IMF) conditionalities" have been so widely, so murderously, so shamelessly applied to the precalculable effect of rapid and large-scale increases of death rates by means of malnutrition, disease, and related mechanisms.

The most striking of the various included features of the new evil, is the dominant influence of the so-called "New Age." This feature includes such presently pandemic expressions of this as the "rock-drug-sex counterculture," and increasingly irrationalist mass-murderous expressions of self-styled "ecologism," or "neo-malthusianism."

The "New Age" is not itself an entirely new form of evil. It is as old an evil as the pagan roots of gnosticism. Prior to the 1963 launching of the "New Age" as a mass movement within the United States, this form of New Age satanism was an endemic cancer in such forms as the theosophical existentialism of the followers of the proto-Nazi Friedrich Nietzsche, and the pro-freemasonic satanists of Aleister Crowley's networks.

What is notable on these accounts is the increasingly emboldened way in which the two evils, the "New Age" and usury, have exhibited their natural affinities for one another, combining their forces in even the highest places of Anglo-American power, to demand, in the misused name of "freedom" and "ecology," the rapid extermination and global outlawing of every scientific and moral barrier which has hitherto existed as impediments to rampaging immiseration and dictatorial oppression of mankind.

Such are the leading characteristic distinctions between

the problems immediately addressed one hundred years ago, and today.

The former hegemony of scientific and technological progress, upon whose continuation the existence of our populations depends, is being suppressed by both the loss of simple rationality in the education of the young, and by the spread of the paganist cults of anti-science, irrationalist “ecologism.” As a concomitant of such specific, catastrophic effects as this one, those European and American forces which are committed to calculated mass-murder of populations of all developing nations, and which are committed to the extermination of the Christian faith and conscience, have come plainly into the ascendancy in the policy-making processes of most of the governing international and national governmental institutions which have gained leadership and dominance over this planet today.

The ecumenical standpoint

We propose that it is necessary, but not sufficient to view the referenced state of affairs from a Christian standpoint; for practical reasons, it is essential that even the Christian standpoint itself be presented here from an ecumenical standpoint as *ecumenical* is typified by Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa’s dialogue, *De Pace Fidei*. On that account, we have considered it most important to reference the explicitly cited sentence and attached footnote from the encyclical.

Different faiths, religious and/or secularist, can be brought to principled agreement only in two possible alternate ways of manifesting mutual good will. In the one case, they may agree on a common point of taught doctrine, such as the principle of monotheism, as in opposition to the pantheistic pluralism of pagan Babylon, Rome, or the Apollo Cult at Delphi. Or, otherwise, differing faiths may reach coincidence of principled views by the means indicated in the referenced features of the encyclical’s section 72. It is the latter alternative upon which we concentrate attention here.

It is the obvious intent of the author of the encyclical that his own intention and that of the referenced passage from the *Summa Theologica*, respecting reason, should be received as identical. We adopt that intent here.

Faith may read those writings it deems sacred, or as authoritative commentaries on such writings. Or, faith may “read the bare book of universal nature,” a book which plainly has been written directly by none other than the Creator himself. It is certain to all men and women of ecumenical good will, that the two kinds of books—the written ones, and the book of nature—cannot contradict one another, on condition that the written one be true, and that both the written and the natural one be read by means of the inner eye of true reason.

So, where doctrinal writings differ, we may turn the eye of ecumenical reason to the common book of nature.

Let us argue the point in the following, twofold way. We emphasize, on the one side, the ecumenical notion of

intelligible representation of a principle of knowledge of cause-effect in our universe, a means by which all men and women, despite differences in profession of monotheistic faith, may be brought by their own powers of reason to agreement upon a common principle of law. Second, we emphasize the importance of stressing *Christian* principles of Christian civilization as *Christian*, even within the framework of a monotheistic ecumenicism.

God’s book of nature

Consider next this simple illustration.

The most ancient among known astronomies, that of the ancient Vedic peoples of Central Asia, illustrates the obvious manner in which a so-called “primitive” people may construct a reliable solar astronomical calendar from scratch. Observe successively the position of the Sun, at dawn, mid-day, and sunset. Mark these observations each in stone. At night, observe the constellations and their stars, to which each of the respective three, day-time observations point. After five years, we have thus the data on which to base a solar astronomical calendar of approximately $365\frac{1}{3}$ days per calendar year, measuring the year either from the winter solstice to winter solstice or from the vernal equinox to vernal equinox.

By the same method, the long decimillennial equinoctial cycle is adduced. So, a system of solar astronomy, free of the whore-goddesses Shakti’s and Ishtar’s lunacies, is built up by aid of reason. So the book of nature may be read. God’s book of nature.

In such successive revolutions, and related ways, *reason* reveals to us that our universe has the apparent form of a unified cause-effect process of *becoming*, a process of *becoming* which is subsumed by an indivisible, supreme Being, who embodies, among other qualities, what Plato admired as *the Good*. Of such matters of principle, in such a manner, do the very stones cry out.

Consequently, when we demonstrate by access to reason that a certain universal or approximately universal principle must be true, a monotheistic ecumenicism has gained a twofold advantage. Since all of human knowledge is finally supplied by reason, there can be no valid teaching presented by any religion which contradicts true reason, as we define *reason* in the following chapters; there can be no valid objection to this principle which is to be tolerated on premise of secularist rejection of religious precept.

Physical economy

By the nature of the case, there is no field of inquiry which unites all subjects of human reason—law, science, art—as directly, as immediately, as the science of physical economy which was founded by Gottfried Leibniz. That is a special standpoint of the work we preface here.

As is to be seen in summary in the appended document, *Physical Economy* is the science of *successful change*, a study of the dependency of the continued existence of a soci-

ety upon *successful* forms of successive generation, transmission, and efficient assimilation of fundamental scientific progress. The measure of that effective progress is an increase in what Physical Economy defines as the rate of increase of the potential population-density of that society as a whole. That thus serves as an efficient empirical measurement of both the appropriateness of the society's way of changing its method of reasoning, and, therefore, the appropriateness of the principle of change adopted for that practice.

Any society which defies those considerations, is threatening its own continued existence, and, a society implicitly becoming an abomination in God's eye, a society which is not only losing the moral fitness to survive, but which, by God's clock, will not long survive in its present form.

Historically, to date, the closest approximation of a form of political economy consistent with Christian principles is the so-called *mercantilist* form growing out of *Colbertisme* in France, and the far-reaching influence of Leibniz. This outgrowth came to be known by the name given to it officially by U.S. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, "the American System of Political Economy." This name came to be associated with the work of the U.S. economists Mathew and Henry Carey and of Germany's Friedrich List.

The deadly adversaries of the so-called "mercantilist," or "American" system, were the Anglo-French-Swiss known in the early eighteenth century as the "Venetian Party." This was the political faction allied against Leibniz and his friends, and allied with the first Duke of Marlborough, allied with the networks of Voltaire, with the Physiocrats, and with so-called eighteenth century "British liberalism" of Hugh Walpole, David Hume, Shelburne, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, and Thomas Malthus generally. These Physiocrats and liberals were the chief guise for the pro-usury faction of that century.

That issue of the eighteenth century is more efficiently understood by emphasizing that the liberals and *illuminati* of Voltaire's eighteenth century were committed to a return to the model of a pagan imperial Rome. Hence we call them "romantics." These romantics were dedicated to the overthrow of Christianity for the purpose of advancing their *romantic imperial utopianism*. That is the root of the structures of sin in Western European and North American civilization today. These were then, and are still today both the pro-usury faction, and the utopian cultural form from which the present-day satanic "New Age" utopianisms have sprung.

We do not uphold the Leibniz-Hamilton-List form of "American System" to be a perfect model. We do not propose that the American leading stratum of 1776-1789 was a pure embodiment of Christian principles.

The 'American System' model

We make two modest claims for that system. First, it was, in the domain of political economy, the only significant resistance at the time to the evils of eighteenth century British

imperialism, and for as long as it did resist that evil thereafter. Second, that relative to the British liberal and communist systems, the Leibniz-Hamilton-List form of American System is the only historically notable form of modern political economy which is a proven successful alternative to the twin, catastrophic moral failures of British liberalism and communism. Thus, historically, this American System is the only significant approximation of a modern agro-industrial system which tends to afford the means to satisfy the requirements of *Rerum Novarum*. In contrast, British liberalism, intrinsically, implicitly fosters even in the worst degree all of the principal evils addressed by that encyclical.

In the relatively shorter, or even the medium term, sweeping changes in general practice can be successful only if much of the population can be induced to regard innovations as bearing the historical authority of a successful precedent.

So in the United States of America, for example, nearly every person over 40 years of age today has a vivid recollection of the moment and circumstances each first heard the news of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. So, it is relatively easy to recall the happier economic policy trends of the Kennedy administration, relative to the comparably depressing trends of the adjacent Eisenhower and Johnson administrations. So, the idea of reviving anti-recession policies referencing successful precedents from the 1961-1963 period, is one which must tend to enjoy support under the rudest economic circumstances of the United States today.

Similarly, it requires only a slightly longer reach of the American or European mind to recall the happier "mercantilist" policies of the American System, Friedrich List, Charles de Gaulle, Konrad Adenauer, or Italy's Enrico Mattei.

So, those of us looking at today's global conditions from the standpoint of an ecumenical reading of *Rerum Novarum*, are compelled to take a practical historical view of available meliorative measures whose employment represents a philosophically *unobjectionable* tactic for furthering the cause of principles. Thus, we are obliged to inquire, formally and historically, why the American System of Hamilton, List, et al. is consistent with Christian principles, when British liberalism is adversary to those principles. We are not thus adopting the American System as a point of Christian, or ecumenical doctrine.

Nonetheless, although we are obliged to recommend such attention to historically proven methods, that required work does not allow us to descend into the moral mediocrity of mere pragmatism. It does not free us from the duty of setting forth principles which are fully consistent with the eternal laws which reason may make accessible to our knowledge. So, if we recommend the American System as an historically proven precedent for modeling short-term and medium-term remedial policies today, we must also set forth the lawful principles which must guide us through the medium-term into the long-term, which may be different than those of the American System precedent.