

Which brings us to the concluding point: To whom is Chapra's book addressed? Or better, who are the partners in dialogue who should join Islamic economic theorists in hammering out truly a "third way"? If outside the Islamic world there has been one healthy economic current, responsible for real development, it has been the mercantilist school of Hamilton and List, continued today by LaRouche, as well as in certain Catholic traditions, stretching from Leo XIII to the current pontiff. Historically, these currents have not been at loggerheads with Islam, but have in various moments converged to bring about some of civilization's highest achievements. From Charlemagne's collaboration with Baghdad's Haroun al-Rashid, to the transmission of Arab science through the Renaissance to medieval Europe, culminating in the extraordinary achievements of Moorish Spain, the two cultures—Islamic and Christian—have succeeded in furthering human progress, by virtue of the fact that they share certain fundamental values, which, though proper to each religion, are *universal* in character. In other words, the worldview which Chapra attributes to Islam is not unique, but is coherent with that of apostolic Christianity, such that the economic models springing from each are compatible.

The question implicitly posed by Chapra's book, therefore, is both epistemological and political: If, as he asserts, Islam carries the promise of social justice emanating from its commitment to the universal brotherhood of mankind, then Islam must be eager today, as in the distant past, to seek out those co-thinkers in other monotheistic religious traditions, who lay equal emphasis on these universal values.

Bombarded with propaganda about "Islamic fundamentalism on the rise" and similar bogeymen, many in the West are avidly profiling works, like that of Dr. Chapra, on the perspectives Islamic economics has to offer. Some are well-intentioned; others are seeking to find ways of dressing the old monetarist formulas, including outright usury, dear to Smith and Malthus, in what might pass as "Muslim" garb. At the same time, many thinkers in the Muslim world seriously grappling with these real issues, are scouring the horizon in the West, in search of kindred minds. What they are most avidly looking for is a school of thought which brings economic theory and practice into coherence with morality. This may explain why the recently released book *The Science of Christian Economy*, despite its name, has had such a fascination for Muslim intellectuals.

Catholic monthly blasts American free traders

"These neo-conservative theologians could be financed by the same CIA that once paid the progressives," says the editorial (entitled, "U.S. Theologians Against Vatican II") of the May 1992 issue of the internationally circulated Italian Catholic magazine *30 Giorni*. The targets of the outspoken piece are Michael Novak and the gang of the nominally Catholic "pro-Bush theologians" in the United States. The *casus belli*: the campaign launched by the "emerging neo-conservative Catholic intellectual" George Weigel in the magazine *First Things* against "Roman anti-Americanism." Wrote Weigel: "It is an anti-Americanism that can be found in the Roman left, an ideological deformation based in part on the [European] continental and Latin American resentment vis-à-vis the position of the United States in world affairs and, in part, concerning Gulf war, on anti-Zionism."

30 Giorni explains that this is a direct attack on the Holy See and that Weigel and his neo-conservative friends, the former Lutheran pastor John Richard Neuhaus and the "inseparable" Michael Novak, known for his "theology of capitalism," are the organizers of an international conference in Liechtenstein next July on the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. In reality they are falsifying the

meaning of the encyclical, which reflected on the social doctrines of the Church 100 years after the famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII.

The Rome-based monthly points out that the U.S. "neo-con" group, which was the first to go into print in the *Wall Street Journal* with the analysis that *Centesimus Annus* was an endorsement of U.S.-style capitalism, lifted quotes out of context from the very section of the encyclical which the pontiff himself described as being offered as the basis for further discussion—the evaluation of the fall of communism in Europe in 1989.

"We are facing a new form of 'American heresy' already condemned by Leo XIII," writes *30 Giorni*, aiming its heavy artillery against the American group. "While exalting American civilization and accusing others of leftism, these pro-Bush theologians forget the most important things." One of the things forgotten is "the condemnation by the Vatican II Council and Paul VI of the identification of the Kingdom of God with a specific social and political system. This condemnation, taken up again by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger with the liberation theologians, must be brought with equal force to the attention of these neo-conservative theologians who could be financed by the same CIA that once used to pay the progressive theologians."

"But the word of the New Testament cannot be canceled, and even less so because of U.S. money and blackmail," concludes the editorial.