

Pope Brings 'The Common Good' To Judge Globalization and War

by Marianna Wertz

In a world-historic mission, Pope John Paul II launched, in May, a global fight in defense of what he calls "the common good," in opposition to globalization, which he branded a "new colonialism." In statements made prior to and during his ecumenical Middle East mission in mid-May, the Pope used the principle of the "General Welfare," as enunciated in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, and as developed by Lyndon LaRouche, as the basis for a monumental effort to pull the world back from the brink of war and from a new dark age.

LaRouche, on May 2, noted the striking fact, that "contrary to some nominal Catholics, what the Pope has said consistently on this issue, from *Centesimus Annus* on, has been exactly what I've been saying. [John Paul II's 1991 Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, celebrated the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's famous 1891 *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of the Working Classes)]. Not because we're copying each other . . . but because this is a common principle of natural law; all persons who believe in natural law, in the real sense, will agree with this."

In a May 7 statement, LaRouche likened what he called the "great ecumenical mission of Pope John Paul II"—"he of weakened body but triumphantly loving spirit"—to the mission of the just-concluded conference of LaRouche's movement in Bad Schwalbach, Germany: "Future history, looking back to these days, will recognize, that the only development of world importance to be compared with our sessions here, is the closely related, continuing ecumenical mission of Pope John Paul II, beginning with his recent, strongly repeated attack, in defense of the universal principle of the general welfare, on the issues of globalization."

Globalization Is New Colonialism

The Pope's statements on globalization, issued on April 27 and 28, were clearly timed to coincide with the then-ongoing meetings of the G-7 finance ministers and central bankers, the International Monetary Fund, and World Bank.

According to the Vatican Information Service, on April 27, in a speech delivered in English to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, and again on April 28, in a statement, also delivered in English, to the new Iraqi Ambassador to the Holy See, the Pope identified the "common good," the "universal common good," and the "inalienable rights" of all human beings, as the standards by which the economic system, and social practice, and specifically "globalization," should be judged.

In his speech to the Pontifical Academy, the Pope attacked all forms of "ethics" based on utilitarianism, and denounced globalization, which, he said, goes in the direction of "a new version of colonialism." Referring to his Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, the Pope noted that "the market economy is a way of adequately responding to people's economic needs while respecting their free initiative, but that it had to be controlled by the community, the social body with its common good. Now that commerce and communications are no longer bound by borders, it is the universal common good which demands that control mechanisms should accompany the inherent logic of the market. This is essential in order to avoid reducing all social relations to economic factors, and in order to protect those caught in new forms of exclusion or marginalization."

Just as Lyndon LaRouche has insisted that it is only the nation-state, as opposed to some "global" entity, that can de-

defend the interests of human beings, Pope John Paul II said that “globalization, like any other system, must be at the service of the human person; it must serve solidarity and the common good. . . . Social, legal and cultural safeguards—the result of people’s efforts to defend the common good—are vitally necessary if individuals and intermediary groups are to maintain their centrality. But globalization often risks destroying these carefully built-up structures, by enforcing the adoption of new styles of working, living and organizing communities. . . . All societies recognize the need to control these occurrences and to make sure that new practices respect fundamental human values and the common good.”

The Pope also warned of the “emergence of patterns of ethical thinking which are by-products of globalization itself and which bear the stamp of utilitarianism. Ethics cannot be the justification or legitimization of a system, but rather the safeguard of all that is human in any system. Ethics demands that systems be attuned to the needs of man, and not that man be sacrificed for the sake of the system.”

End Iraqi Embargo

Anticipating his Mideast trip “in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul,” on April 28 John Paul II met Iraq’s new Ambassador to the Holy See, Abdul-Amir Al-Anbari, and renewed his “appeal to the international community that innocent people should not be made to pay the consequences of a destructive war whose effects are still being felt by those who are weakest and most vulnerable.”

“Today’s world,” the Pope continued, “although sadly afflicted in many regions by tension, violence and armed conflict, is seeking greater equity and stability, so that the whole human family can live in true justice and everlasting peace. These are not abstract concepts or remote ideals, rather they are values which dwell in the heart of every individual and nation, to which all peoples have a right.”

John Paul II affirmed that “it is precisely the pursuit of this justice and this peace which is the driving force behind every activity of the Holy See in the area of international diplomacy.”

“The Holy See therefore sees as one of its principal duties that of reminding public opinion that ‘no authority, no political program and no ideology is entitled to reduce human beings to what they can do or produce.’ The inalienable rights and personal dignity of every human being must be upheld, the transcendent dimension of the human person must be defended,” as must be “the religious dimension of human beings and human history . . . [which] is a vital element in shaping the person and the society to which people belong.”

“In this context,” the Pope said in conclusion, “my thoughts turn naturally to the members of the Iraqi Catholic community. Together with their Muslim countrymen, Iraqi Christians wish to work for unity and harmony. Their Christian faith and values inspire them to cultivate a spirit of

mutual respect, with pride in their national identity and concern for the progress of their country.”

Making History

While the Pope’s Middle East trip made history in many respects, two aspects of that trip deserve special mention here, as they mirror the long-standing ecumenical work of the LaRouche political movement, to win a “Peace of Westphalia” solution to the Middle East crisis, based on economic development of the region and a mutual forgiving of past injustices.

Both in Athens and Damascus — where John Paul II was the first Pope in history to enter an Islamic mosque — the Pope called on the Orthodox and Muslim communities to put aside all conflicts of the past, and concentrate on what Catholics, Orthodox, and Muslims have in common, to build on the future. At the same time, he oriented the dialogue to the concrete task of elevating the condition of man on Earth, and called on political leaders to pursue the common good.

In order to lead by example, the Pope, in Athens, went so far as to “humble” himself in calling for pardon for the 1204 crusade, backed by the Catholic Church at the time, in which Constantinople was sacked.

Greek Basis of Christianity

Then, during the official welcoming ceremony for him at the Presidential Palace in Athens, on May 4, the Pope delivered a profoundly important address on the Platonic Greek basis of Christianity, a theme which LaRouche has repeatedly called crucial to a renaissance of Western Civilization.

“My wish is in some way to recognize the great debt which we all owe to Greece,” the Pope said. “In fact, no one can be unaware of the enduring influence that her unique history and culture have had on European civilization and indeed on that of the entire world. . . . The world that Jesus himself entered and knew was already deeply imbued with Greek culture. The New Testament was written in Greek, with the result that it spread rapidly. But it was much more than a simple matter of language, for the early Christians also drew upon Greek culture in order to transmit the Gospel message.”

He referenced Raphael’s painting, “The School of Athens,” in the Vatican Palace, which, he said, “makes clear the contribution of the school of Athens to the art and culture of the Renaissance, a period which led to a great exchange between Classical Athens and the culture of Christian Rome.”

All of this, the Pope concluded, “calls us to engage in respectful and honest dialogue, and requires a new solidarity which evangelical love is capable of inspiring. . . . We are in a decisive period of European history, and I hope most fervently that the Europe now emerging will rediscover this long tradition of encounter between Greek culture and Christianity in fresh and imaginative ways, not as the vestige of a vanished world but as the true basis for the genuinely human progress that our world seeks.”