
Interview: Fr. Giulio Albanese

‘Evangelize the Economy!’ The World Needs a New Bretton Woods System

Il Mondo Capovolto (The World Upside-Down) is the title of a small book recently published in Italy by the Einaudi Publishing House. The book is creating a successful intervention in religious and political networks of what in Italy is known as the *società civile* (civil society), a name for all the differently organized associations and communities involved in all aspects of the country’s social life. The author is Father Giulio Albanese, born in Rome in 1959, a Catholic missionary of the Order of Saint Comboni, recently beatified by John Paul II for his religious and social activity in Africa and Third World regions.

Father Giulio is also a journalist and has studied theology in Uganda where he spent several years as a missionary, a vocation which also took him to Sudan, Sierra Leone, and other countries. As a missionary journalist, he collaborated with the Catholic daily *Avvenire*, Vatican Radio, and the Italian national TV network RAI. He served as director of the New People Media Centre of Nairobi, Kenya.

In 1997 Father Giulio created the Misna (Missionary Service News Agency), the international press agency of the Catholic missionary congregations around the world. The book’s intention is to present the reasons and initiatives which led to the founding of Misna. The press agency puts on the Internet all the main developments in the South of the World in English, French, and Italian. One of the main goals is to fill the gaps in the mass media reporting regarding Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and thus provide information and counterinformation on behalf of the “forgotten men and women.” In every region of Africa, for example, the missionaries are in the field every day and witness all sorts of events and dramas. The idea is to make use of this information to truly inform the rest of the world, and mobilize people on behalf of justice and cooperation. At the same time, through use of Internet technologies, Misna can keep many missionary centers informed and connected to each other.

Behind the decision of Father Giulio and his collaborators is a very simple but courageous philosophy: “The true problem is how we intend to make use of our life: if we prefer to direct the course of history in favor of the triumph of justice and peace or if, instead, we are willing to trade the value of a person for a bowl of beans.” One of the results that he intends to achieve is the promotion of a governance inspired by “the good government, *buongoverno* of humanistic and

*Renaissance memory.” He approaches missionary work and missionary communication work from the standpoint of the Encyclical *Redemptoris Mission* of Pope John Paul II, which says, “The testimony of Christian life is the first irreplaceable form of mission.”*

In his book, Father Giulio reports with courage about situations in Africa, where the combination of dirty agreements between local leaders and aggressive multinational corporations produces poverty and devastation, such as in the Great Lakes Region, in Uganda, or in Equatorial Guinea. In the latter, for example, the Texas company Halliburton, Inc. is making a lot of money with oil exploration, with the blessing of a dictatorship in power since 1968. The book dedicates a chapter to exposing the mercenary operations of the British-based “security” firm Executive Outcomes in Africa.

In the first few days of December, Father Giulio was a guest on several national television programs where he began to develop what he calls the need for an “evangelization of the economy.” In March 2003, Albanese wrote an analysis, later carried by Misna, in which he endorsed Lyndon LaRouche’s proposal for a New Bretton Woods monetary conference and system. He was interviewed on these subjects by Paolo Raimondi, head of LaRouche’s Civil Rights Movement/Solidarity in Italy, in the Misna central office in Rome on Dec. 15, 2003.

EIR: Could you develop your ideas about the evangelization of the economy that you are presenting in conferences and interviews in Italian cities and to the press?

Fr. Albanese: The fundamental concept is this: unfortunately the world of information today is in a situation where a political authority capable of promoting the common good, the *res publica*, no longer exists, and we can see this in the situation of many nations internationally; it happens that the economy dictates the rules of the game. From our standpoint, the economy must be evangelized. . . . I am the first to say that we must remain realistic, and say that the economy must serve the common good, must have the common good as its goal.

When I talk with people who are proposing pauperizing arguments, I say that we should remember that the development of peoples is also due to the economy. But it is important



*Father Giulio Albanese in his office in Rome. His new book, *The World Upside-Down*, is an economic policy polemic based on the experience of a missionary in Africa, and on his encounter with Lyndon LaRouche's New Bretton Woods idea. The book is making an influential intervention in Italy.*

that this economy be organized according to specific rules. I believe that one of the mortal sins of our times is deregulation: Deregulation means imposing on the world community an economy without rules, which has created the troubles and the disasters of our times.

I want to explain myself better by quoting from a document I wrote, and which I used in a recent speech I gave to a group of industrialists in the city of Novara, a few dozen kilometers away from Milan. “On the one hand, it is true that, faced with the unsustainability of the divergence between the speculative bubble and the real economy, it increasingly seems that the White House merely uses the war on terrorism as a pretext to hide geopolitical and geo-economic interests—oil *in primis*; the superpower would like to protect these interests by playing hardball, and possibly prolonging the Pentagon’s costly crusades against an enemy to be destroyed at all costs. On the other hand though, a global financial reorganization which would breathe new life into the real economy and the markets, which have been dominated by usurers for too long, has never been more necessary. In reality we must all admit that the present structure of the world economy represents a destabilizing factor for peace on our planet. Intelligent economists demand the convocation of a new Bretton Woods conference, an international conference where all forms of speculation would be penalized in order to establish new currency exchange rates that could support healthy, long-term development of trade, and further development for all peoples.”

(This is a key concept for me.) “In other words, this will allow the sovereign nation-states to re-establish economic controls against the free trade and liberalism of a small group

of financial lobbies.

“I believe that a little history can be of some help here. In July 1944, while the war was coming to an end in Europe, in New Hampshire (U.S.A.) some of the best economic and financial minds in the world at that time met at a conference which, through its programs and indications, marked the destiny of the world economy for the following decades: Bretton Woods. Representatives of 45 nations gathered there, and the IMF and the World Bank were created. For those who inspired the Bretton Woods agreements, John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White, the world needed a system of stable exchange rates which could be modified in case of necessity, with the aim of preventing a situation where some nations, guided by nationalistic tendencies, could deliberately proceed with systematic devaluations of their currencies. Without any doubt, the system allowed for sustained and regular economic growth for thirty years, in a situation where, we must admit it, the U.S. detained two-thirds of the entire stock of gold worldwide (about \$20 billion).

“But during the following years, with the reconstruction of the European economies and the increase of the reserves in the old continent, the system, based on the convertibility of dollars into gold (\$35 per ounce), became more and more unsustainable for Washington, as the United States’ gold reserves decreased year after year. In 1971 Richard Nixon decided to cancel the convertibility of the dollar into gold, marking the end of the system of the ‘gold-exchange standard’ and initiating—two years later with the beginning of the present system of flexible exchange rates—a monetary ‘non system’ . . . in which the extreme volatility of currencies prevents the world from moving further along the path of stable growth.

“Authoritative economists are convinced that to overcome this crisis which punished everybody—families and both small and big investors—it is necessary to propose a new financial architecture.”

Industrial Countries Cure Yourselves

In other words, what I want to emphasize is that this is not an issue that one can face with just a “solidaristic” approach. Many times—and this sometimes is true also with the missionary world—people address the deep feeling of the donors. They say, “Look, there are many starving children that need help.” I believe that this is a noble sentiment—like Mother Teresa who demanded charity and help for the poor because they have great human dignity which is sacred in front of God. All this is very good and positive. I do not make these kinds of speeches, because if I use this language, there is a risk I will be misunderstood. I believe that if we look at today’s globalization process, we must teach the entrepreneurs, and the important subjects of the economic and financial world, that one must not help the South of the world, the so-called weak economies, just for Christian charity; we have to do so in the interest of the economy and of the market.

In other words, I say that if the number of poor increases exponentially month by month, year by year, then to whom will we sell our goods? What we have to understand is that when we increase the level of sustainability of the countries, and increase the living standards, including through a process of redistribution of wealth, certain mechanisms inevitably come into play which allow producers to sell and expand their economic activities. What we have instead, is that when poverty and misery increase, the economy and the markets also collapse.

And we have to recognize that poverty is growing more and more not only in the South of the world, but also in the North. In Italy, we speak of about 17-18 million poor, of people under the poverty level and some who live in real misery. I heard these figures a few days ago during a conference. In the U.S.A., we have 60-70 million Americans who live beneath the poverty level, in a country of 250 million people. They are many, and one should ask why the premier power in the world is facing such a phenomenon.

I think that the solution lies in overcoming deregulation. We need to re-affirm the rules in economy and in the markets.

Here a phrase of Lyndon LaRouche comes to mind, which I fully agree with—referring to the greatly missed Enrico Mattei, the president of [Italy’s state oil company] ENI, deceased in a mysterious plane accident: “If I were President I would sign agreements directly with the producer countries (of oil and other materials), bypassing the oil companies, which in this case would not have the possibility of unloading the margins of indebtedness, due to speculation and to the processes of mergers and acquisitions that have increased the indebtedness itself, onto the buyer. . . .”

What is important is to re-impose certain rules, and to

reaffirm the primacy of politics over economy. Today, if we want to talk about peace, we must speak along these lines, or we are just playing games. This is my fundamental concept.

EIR: Africa needs to free herself from underdevelopment through a policy of economic development and infrastructure. The human and other resources are immense. You have a direct personal experience of Africa. Can you share with us some of your thoughts on these matters?

Fr. Albanese: What worries me, from a political standpoint, is the weakness of the African political class. The leadership of Africa and of the South of the world in general, is facing—in my view—a sort of disorientation. Yes, in comparison with the past, there has been a certain maturation. The fact that in Africa there is a leader like Mbeki is a positive fact. Whether you like him or not, people like him, and there are enlightened minds who say: Let *us* do the governance. I am referring to NEPAD [New Partnership for African Development]; but a governance where we all are really sitting around a table of decision with the donors, civil society, governments, etc. This is where the program for large-scale infrastructure can be debated. Otherwise, we will still be in the logic of what I might call “Big Brother”; because even if some have difficulty believing it, we still have to deal with certain occult powers which in one way or another are still dictating the rules of the game, and are causing many disasters—disasters which, in the final analysis, involve all of us directly, because all of humanity has a common destiny.

When I say that politics has to affirm the concept of the common good, it is because the phenomenon of immigration we are experiencing in our countries, such as in Italy, is just the tip of the iceberg of a phenomenon that shows us how the South of the world comes to us, and can end up in front of our house. I always say that the Roman Empire fell because of invasions. Invasions and migration flows are very difficult to control, unless we initiate intelligent policies of development.

One more thing. I am annoyed to see that often policies are not dealing with the substance of things, particularly when we speak about the South of the world. We always stop at secondary, palliative aspects. A concrete example: I write in my book that at the beginning of the 1960s, there was a blackout in New York, and the citizens stayed home for about three days. No electricity in the Winter, no transportation. Nine months later, there was a baby boom in this area; many mothers were sent to hospitals in nearby states because there were not enough beds. I always say, if the Americans experienced a baby boom because there was no electricity for a few days, then what can one say about Africa, where there is no electricity and other things, and not only for three days?

The reasoning I follow is this: If we seriously want to face the question of underdevelopment, then let us create wealth, let us create investments, and allow the South of the world to live well and in dignity. And we will see that the so-called demographic question will be solved, along with all the prob-

lems of the black continent, including the phenomenon of the child soldiers, the forgotten wars. These things will die out, and will be solved when there are just, intelligent policies. But if the logic is only one of looting and exploitation, then poverty will increase, degradation will increase exponentially. And sooner or later, these problems will be paid for by all, not only by the South of the world. Chronologically, the South is paying first, but later all of us are going to pay for this.

EIR: As you know I am with the International Civil Rights Movement/Solidarity, the organization of Lyndon LaRouche in Italy. We are promoting the fight for civil rights and creation of an international movement, including in Africa, in order to change the deadly axioms of the political and economic system of today. A fight for civil rights which is also inspired by the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Fr. Albanese: When I think of Martin Luther King, one of his most beautiful speeches comes to my mind: "I am worried about the silence of the honest people. I am not afraid of the voice of the evil and the powerful, but of the silence of the honest people." This is the key.

I believe that Martin Luther King was the true father of what we today call "civil society." I believe that the great discovery of Martin Luther King is to have understood that politics alone cannot succeed. And this is true for European politics, but even more for America. For two fundamental reasons: We say that democracy is based on a dialectic between a majority and the opposition. The representatives of the people are those who vote the laws and there is always a majority on one side and the opposition on the other side. Sometimes the scenarios can shift.

But I ask myself: Regarding this democracy of which we speak so much and which is based on noble values, to what point it is able to defend itself against the interference of what are called the "occult powers"? When we know that the elections of the Presidents, and of the representatives of the people, are financed by large economic groups, by global financial lobbies, how can we think that these representatives of the people are really free? It is clear that before responding to their voters, they have to respond to the demands and needs of those who allowed them to gain their position, their seat.

The second point is linked to the question of participation. I am aware that today there is a crisis, above all, among the youth that are disillusioned with politics. The youth are afraid of politics, and are sometimes disgusted by it. This is evident in Europe, where there is a decrease in voter participation. Many have a total lack of confidence in the candidates. This is a very evident phenomenon in the U.S.A., which I believe is a great democracy. But today, I am disturbed by the motto: "You are with me or you are against me"; and if you express some criticism, you are immediately identified as an enemy.

I have a great deal of respect for what American culture represented and continues to represent for the world. It is a nation which succeeded in reaching gigantic results. But now



A child-soldier in southern Sudan. "The reasoning I follow is this: if we seriously want to face the question of underdevelopment, then let us create wealth, let us create investments, and allow the South of the world to live well and in dignity. And we will see that the so-called demographic question will be solved, along with all the problems of the black continent, including the phenomenon of the child soldiers, the forgotten wars."

it is facing a profound crisis, an internal crisis, even before an international crisis. When I know that less than 35% of the Americans went to vote in the Presidential elections, then I say to myself that something does not function. When I know that the young American university students do not go to vote, this is a serious problem. A President of the U.S.A., Democratic or Republican, cannot ignore this. Whom does he represent? Those who did not go to vote? With what courage can he consider himself the President of those who did not go to vote?

Clearly, the masses can be easily manipulated, and thus it is sufficient to buy the means of communication. But I believe that inevitably, some mechanisms of reaction are set into motion in people's minds. People are fed up with this media bombardment. If the media bombardment were to succeed as hoped, then people would go to vote in some manner. But the reality is that people do not go to vote. The mass media has a narcotizing effect on the masses, but the phenomenon goes on for a certain amount of time and then goes back to the previous situation: The disgust of the people with all of the leaders is there all the time.

At this point, I think serious thought is needed. It would be welcome and positive if enlightened political minds could have the courage to put the entire system into discussion—in the U.S.A., and also outside the U.S.A., in the rest of the world.

EIR: In your book, you denounce the domination of neo-colonialism and of neo-colonial forces that are behind all the wars and destabilization of Africa, with consequences

of famine and genocide.

Fr. Albanese: It is an enormous problem because, leaving the propaganda aside, the continent of Africa is seen as a cow to be milked. All the forgotten wars to which the missionary world is a witness, show us that, despite other explanations, the wars are not fought over ethnic questions—even though these problems do exist—or over religious conflicts. These problems are manipulated; they are used to cover other reasons which are more relevant questions: first of all, the control over raw materials, the immense mineral resources of the continent.

If the war which began in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Aug. 2, 1998—contrary to many reports—is still going on; if today, in the Presidential Palace in Kinshasa, the losers and the winners sit together, because the warlords have divided power; if 3.5 million people have died in the Democratic Republic of Congo since Aug. 2, 1998; it is because this war has been fought in the name of the god of money. This is neo-colonialism, even if somebody denies it. It is because of this that the *super partes* role of the UNO has to be given more power and responsibility to become the real liaison for the demands and needs of the international community.

Never before have we needed to give more power to the UNO, never as much as today. And above all, the United Nations cannot go on with the present system, where we still have the winners of World War II at the table of the Security Council. On this point, we are outside of time and history. Here the ones with money rule. The world community cannot be represented by this system. And the the game of vetoes.

I am the first one to say that the UNO has a sacred vocation, and the UNO as an organism must be defended, always. Even if it has defects, it is important that it exist. But now, it has to be modified. The issue is not to be supporters of the Third World. The only issue is to be part of the party of good sense.

EIR: You have intervened clearly several times on the preventive war in Iraq.

Fr. Albanese: This has been a flagrant violation of international law. Let me read some remarks I wrote for a recent conference.

“In these months, much far-sighted work has been done by Vatican diplomacy. The action of the Holy See in favor of peace, as stated by Cardinal Jean Louis Tauran, until recently Vatican Secretary of Relations with States (Foreign Minister), can be located on two reference points. The first one is ‘Christ is our peace’ (*Ephesians 2:14*) and the second one is the text of *Gaudium et Spes*: ‘Human beings as sinners will be always under the threat of war until the coming of Christ; but, if united in love, they can defeat sin and violence’ (no. 78,6).

“Guided by these beliefs, John Paul II has tried to indicate to the international community, in the years of his Pontificate, the road to peace on many occasions; particularly during the first Gulf War, and then 10 years later, regarding the ongoing second war in Iraq—which is still going on, despite the fact

Bush says it is over. Regarding this second crisis, the Pope demanded that all the resources of international law be exploited in order to prevent a new war, keeping in mind the dramatic consequences military intervention has on civilian populations, as well as the effects and foreseeable reactions of the other nations of the region. For Vatican diplomacy, it was also important that the leaders of Iraq locate their actions in the context of their membership in the community of nations.

“At that time, Cardinal Tauran said that international law ‘does not know the concept of a “New World Order,” as is said today, which would allow for the use of unilateral force by some nations in order to guarantee it is respected.’ International law has outlawed war, in particular due to the Charter of the United Nations. Article 2.4, which nobody except Vatican diplomacy has quoted in this period, is very important, because it states that nations renounce war as a method of solving their conflicts. For the Vatican, everything has to be done in the framework defined by international law, with the UN Security Council having the main responsibility in maintaining peace and international security.

“No article of international law authorizes one or more states to make unilateral use of force to change a regime or the form of government of another State because, for example, it might possess weapons of mass destruction. Only the Security Council could have, in particular circumstances, decided that such acts constitute a threat to peace; but this does not imply that for the UN Security Council, the use of force would be the only adequate response.

“The Holy See has never taken murky positions, because it has been profoundly worried about the presence of weapons of mass destruction, not only in the Middle East but also in other parts of the world. ‘Their dismantling,’ declared Cardinal Tauran, ‘is clearly a peremptory necessity, because they represent a threat to peace. This is why, in the case of Iraq, the Holy See believes that the process of inspections, even if slow, could create a consensus that, if shared by States, would make it almost impossible for a government to act in a different way, without the risk of international isolation.’

“The difference regarding the legal dimension of international relations, is one of the most worrying elements of the military option of Washington and its allies. The United States chose the law of force, the Pope chose the force of the law.”

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