

FATHER BONIFACIO HONINGS

The Church Social Teaching And LaRouche Plan A and B

Father Honings is a professor of moral theology at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome; he gave this address at the Schiller Institute conference in Rüsselsheim, Germany on Feb. 22. For additional conference speeches, including those of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, see EIR, March 6, 13, and 27.

Not only we, but many others know that, for years and years, Lyndon LaRouche has not only forecast the worldwide collapse of the economic system but, at the same time, he has very wisely indicated the possibility of a worldwide solution. It is a thousand pities that he, for too many years, was like a prophet crying in the desert. Fortunately, the reality of things is more and more changing in the direction of his vision of the signs of time, and precisely on the financial level. Since the Clinton crowd took over much of the future government of the United States, under President Obama, there are reasons for optimism. LaRouche is thus, in a certain sense, a part of that crowd, by ties to it, and in particular, with the credibility which he has come to enjoy as a result of his successful forecasting of the greatest financial crash in modern history, which is now in process.

LaRouche Plan A and B

In his Dec. 5, 2008 address in New Delhi,¹ LaRouche emphasized that the solution to the global fi-

1. Cf. "LaRouche in New Delhi: As \$1.4 Quadrillion Crashes, There Is Reason for Optimism," *EIR*, Dec. 26, 2008, pp. 28-33.

ancial blowout, that began at the end of July 2007, is the formation of a Four-Power alliance to put the world system through bankruptcy reorganization, because there is not enough money or wealth in the world to pay off the trillions of dollars in toxic derivatives obligations. Therefore, the principal international reform is to start with cooperation among the United States, India, Russia, and China. They must together launch a general reform of the international monetary-financial system. Because without that kind of reform, in a nutshell, there's no possibility of avoiding what would become a New Dark Age.

However, what is required, is a way of getting the world economy out from under this financial derivatives bubble. The future will depend upon how the world looks at Eurasia: First, in Asia, where the greatest issue, the greatest crisis is located. In India, 63% of the population, perhaps, is in extreme poverty; in China and throughout Asia, you have comparable situations. We have a social crisis explosion on our hands and unless we have a perspective of effective development of Asia, we don't have much of a chance for the world at large. And therefore, it's very important, that the United States, which is key to the solution, because of its Constitution, and the major nations of Eurasia, be united; and the key nations of Eurasia are Russia, India, and China.

After this summary of LaRouche's forecasting of the crisis, and especially, of his solution, in this Four-Power concept, based on the natural rights of every



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis

Father Honings, addressing the Schiller Institute conference, outlined the coherence of Lyndon LaRouche's "Plan A and B" for a rescue of the world economy, with the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

human being, and the necessity of worldwide solidarity, LaRouche's proposals for reform, both on the U.S. domestic side, and also internationally, on that account, are rather influential. Before moving to my intervention about an ethical foundation of the LaRouche Plan, according to the social doctrine of the Church, I would like to make clear the moral theological reasons for my intervention.

The Reasons for My Intervention as a Moral Theologian

First of all, the fundamental reason: For a profound knowledge and appropriate solutions of issues concerning the different domains of economic, political, and social life, and science, philosophy, and religion are important wings. In his encyclical letter, *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), John Paul II "asks philosophers to have the courage, within the streams of a constant valid tradition, to include the metaphysical truth, to rediscover the space of wisdom and truth, that belong to all philosophical research."²

In the dynamic of her faith, in which the Holy Spirit fills the whole Earth with its guidance, the Church has to try, in the happenings, claims, and desires of people,

2. John Paul II, encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, Sept. 14, 1998

to grasp the true signs of the presence of God and His plans. After all, faith does not just shine on everything with a new light, but also illustrates God's salvation, especially concerning the full sentence of the vocation of every human being and society worldwide. In this way, faith focuses the spirit on the solutions that correspond with the dignity of mankind.³

That is why the wings of Faith and Reason are not just useful, but also necessary, for the social teaching of the Church. I believe that the Plan of LaRouche contains one wing of this social doctrine, and therefore, it is possible to investigate the ethical foundation of that Plan. Moreover, my second reason, is that the causes of the worldwide crisis forecast, and above all, the fundamental solution proposed by LaRouche, regards the dignity of all Mankind. The U.S.-Eurasia combination, of the development perspective for Asia, and the four cultures to unify the planet, correspond not only to the just reading, but also to the right interpretation, of the signs of our time, on the economic-financial and socio-political levels, worldwide.

About the signs of the time, and that which confirms the reason for my intervention, Paul VI and 2,000 fathers of Vatican II declared in 1965: "The people of God believe that they are led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the whole world. Moved by this faith, it tries to discern in the events, the needs, and the longings which it shares with other men of our time, what may be genuine signs of the presence or of the purpose of God. For faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal which God has set for man, thus guiding the mind towards solutions that are fully human."⁴

"Therefore, if it is to carry out its task, the Church carries, at all times, the responsibility for reading the signs of the time, and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. In language intelligible to every generation, she should be able to answer the ever-recurring questions which men ask about the meaning of this present life, and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other. We must be aware of and understand the aspiration, the yearnings, and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live."⁵

3. Acc. "De kerk in de wereld van nu," "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," *Gaudium et Spes*, Pope Paul VI, Dec. 7, 1965, n. 11.

4. *Gaudium et Spes*, 11.

5. *Gaudium et Spes*, 4.

According to this authentic declaration of Vatican II, the best way to construct, as a teacher of social moral theology, an ethical fundamental of LaRouche Plan A and B consists in reading of the signs of the time and the corresponding solutions proposed by the social doctrine of the Church, beginning with the signs of the time and the solution proposed in *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII, the 15 of May 1891.

I. The Social Doctrine of 'Rerum Novarum'

This encyclical letter of Leo XIII about work became the first Magna Carta of the care of the Church of the social order under construction. A good concept of this first papal circular letter requires a few words about the historical context, in which Leo XIII lived, and that motivated him to write that document.

1. The Signs of the Time

It was a time of darkness, radical revolutions in economics and political areas. The materialistic philosophy of liberalism was profiled to be omnipotent. Thanks

to technical progress, one harvested a previously unheard-of expansion of production. The most common and widely used notion about economics was that all is a game of the necessary forces of nature, and because of that, there was no connection between ethical and economic laws. In economics, one can and must exclusively seek his own advantage, by which the mutual positions of people in economic areas are only specified by the all-important law of liberalism.

However, this automatic freedom of the market did not lead to a fair distribution of wealth. It left workmen to their fate, completely powerless against ruthless employers and uncontrolled greedy competition. In most countries, it was prohibited for workmen to organize themselves, so the authority of the strong could reign supreme, also concerning the relative positions of people. On top of that, the Empire should take a neutral economic position; not only that, it was not even allowed to intervene in this unjust situation.

Such a statement not only throws over the entire economic order, but even has, as an inevitable consequence, that workmen will become more and more dissatisfied, and will openly resist. The different stream of Socialism, united in the "scientific socialism" of Karl

LaRouche's Plan A and Plan B

The following is excerpted from Lyndon LaRouche's remarks to a press conference at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France on Dec. 17, 2008.

The key problem is that, in the area of economy, there are very few people in the economics profession or otherwise, who have any actual comprehension of this problem [the biggest financial-economic crisis in history] and its nature. They didn't forecast it, they didn't see it coming...

My qualifications, which have been proven many times in the area of forecasting, are actually based on a branch of science known as Riemannian physics, a physical economy conception of Riemannian physics.

And I've been successful...

And as a result of my success in forecasting, people in the incoming government of the new President have acknowledged the fact that I've been right, and decided that I have to play some very significant role in shaping what will be the policy of the new government...

We have to be prepared, on the one side, with knowing what we should do, what the objectives of mankind should be, what the policies should be, what the resources are that we can use to achieve those objectives; and also have a Plan B, as well as a Plan A. Plan A is what could happen and would be good for humanity. Plan B is what if that isn't provided. You always, in policy, have to have two options: One is the best option that you should follow, and the other is what you have to do in case the first one doesn't work out. I think those of you in politics long enough, know and understand that. But that's the situation we're in...

Marx, presents itself as a solution, by means of collectivism, the communalism of all production goods. But the remedy which occurred is worse than the disease.⁶ In this sad and dramatic situation of the world of workmen, the Pope systematically elaborates the teaching of the Church.

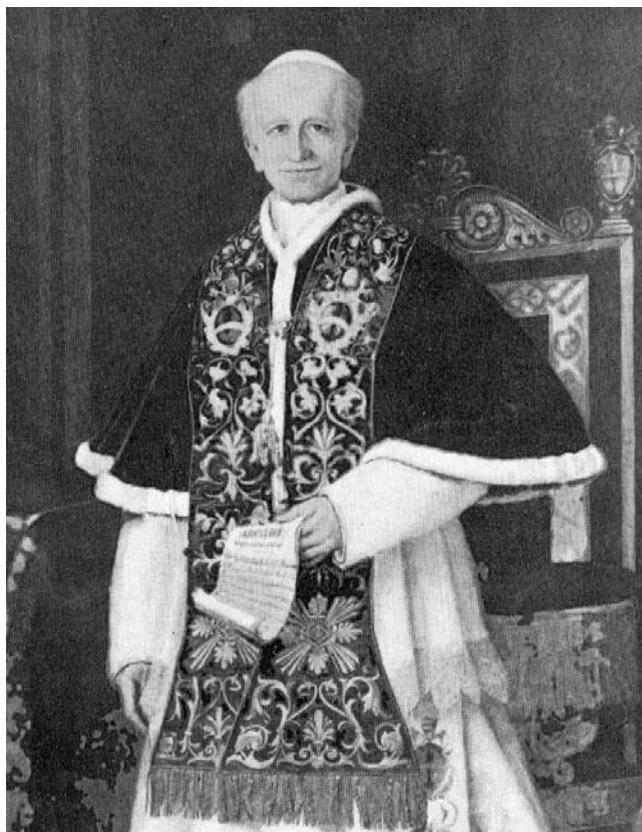
2. The Solution of the Church

At first, Leo XIII gives some reasons why the solution proposed by Socialism is a disadvantage for the workmen. The main reason is that it discards the right to have property. Of course, God gave the Earth to all of mankind to use and enjoy, but this does not imply the denial of private property; to the contrary, as a deeper understanding of human nature shows. “As a reasonable being, mankind has different reasons to have property. In the first place, because he knows, with reasonable knowledge, numerous things and connects, as well as attaches, the present to the future; secondly, because with his own free will, he is master of his acts and can, under the everlasting law of God, that guides everything in His Providence, with reasonable vision direct himself.

“From this reasonable reflection, it follows that it lies within the intellectual ability of mankind to chose things that he finds most suitable for caring for his necessities, and not just for the here and now, but also for the future. As a consequence, mankind does not only need the right to own the fruits of the Earth, but also the Earth itself, that needs to give the necessary fruits for the here and now, as well as for the future. Reasonably considered, the Earth, given to the community by God, has given mankind something durable and lasting, which will always provide. Every human person must protect his right to life and body given by nature before the community came about.”⁷

Moreover, the history of the Church’s social ethics is based on many texts of the Old and New Testaments.

Therefore, after referring to different texts of the Old and New Testaments, Leo XIII writes: “In general the rich and employers must remember that neither divine nor human laws allow them, on behalf of their own benefit, to exploit needy and unfortunate people, and to raise profits from the powerlessness of others. To deny someone his wages is a major sin that calls for revenge in Heaven.” In fact: “When the world received



“The encyclical letter of Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* [1891], about work, became the first Magna Carta of the care of the church of the social order under construction,” said Fr. Honings.

the light of the Gospel and the great mystery of the incarnation of the Word, and had learned about the salvation of mankind, the life of Jesus Christ, God and man, the nations were fully aware of and left with His teaching, His commandments and laws.”⁸

A text of the Old Testament confirms very strongly this ethical foundation of the solution based on the wings of reason and faith: “Thou shall neither desire the wife of your neighbour nor his house, nor his land, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that belongs to him” (Deut. 5, 21). All mankind may therefore not only conclude that, within the law of nature, one can find the foundation of the distribution of all goods, but may agree that the civil laws, which derive their force from the laws of nature, confirm natural rights, and protect them even by means of punishment.⁹

6. Acc. John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 10-14; also C. Van Gestel, o.p. *Sociale leer van de kerk*. 'T Groeit-Antwerpen 1951, p. 54.

7. *Rerum Novarum*, n. 7

8. *Rerum Novarum*, n. 17.

9. *Rerum Novarum*, n. 8.

That means, when healing needs to be brought to human society, this can only happen by the prolongation of Christian life and Christian institutions. Here is a very important speech of Pope John XXIII. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*, on 14 May 1961, he asks the Catholic workmen: “What has brought you to this place in such a big number from all countries, men and women of all ages, all classes, every nation? His categorical answer was: “What brought you together is the memory of a great Pope and of a letter that he has written in his time, and that he had sent to the whole world. This letter didn’t speak about a subject of the normal papal ministry, for example, to encourage religiousness and Christian devotion, but he spoke theoretically and practically about the work of all, that puts human energy, arms, head, and heart, body and soul, in service of life support, of the concrete development of the whole world.”¹⁰

This answer—and that was my intention—proves that the ethical foundation of the solution regarding the questions of the signs of time by *Rerum Novarum*, is the basic foundation of LaRouche Plan A and B, insofar as it is based on the natural rights of every human being, created in the image of God. It is very important to insist on this anthropological argument, because it proves how the Social Doctrine of the Church may be presented as an ethical foundation of the LaRouche Plan. In fact, anthropology is particularly accentuated in the encyclical letter of Pope Pius XI.

II. The Social Doctrine of ‘Quadragesimus Annus’

Pius XI, the Pope of Catholic action and Lay apostolate, declares that his circular letter, 40 years after the appearance of *Rerum Novarum* (1931), was about the renewal of the social order and its fulfillment in agreement with the teaching of the Gospel.¹¹

1. The Signs of His Time

To follow the further construction of the economic, social, and political order, our attention is concerned with the great changes that have taken place since the era of the Magna Carta of Leo XIII. The situations of economic

10. *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 14, 1961, p. 1.

11. As with *Rerum Novarum*, I also here follow the text of C. Van Gestel, *Kerk en samenleving*, p. 63.

life, capitalism, and socialism, have undergone large mutations. The economic systems of capitalism, as far as one provides capital, and the other provides labor, are, in themselves, not judged by Leo XIII. His most important question was to indicate norms for distributing justice and the demand of the general well-being.¹²

But how are things after 40 years? The capitalistic system has soaked up completely the social and economic relations of those who are immediately outside its area. They mainly take part in its advantages, but also, and above all, in its disadvantages and flaws. Pius XI pays special attention to the accumulation of capital, which created a concentration of unlimited power, and a despotic predominance in the hands of a few. This conglomeration of capital and power causes a fight for predominance that, in no way, takes ethics into consideration. For this reason, the economy will exert more and more influence on national and international politics. In a word: The capitalistic system has grown into some sort of economic dictatorship.¹³

Going on, we will see that the ethically founded solution, given by the social doctrine of the Church, can again be presented as an ethical foundation of LaRouche Plan A and B. I note, as a particular proof, that LaRouche forecast the end of the Bank-dictatorship, because it was completely immoral.

2. The Solution of the Church

The principles of healthy reason in the Christian social philosophy must be defined for capital, as well as for labor, because the economic order relies on capital and labor. The judgment of the double character of possessions on one side, and labor on the other side, must be fair and correct. To go around the rocks of individualism and communism, a fair and correct judgment about the individual and social character of capital and labor was absolutely necessary. Mutual relations, supported by Christian love for thy neighbour, must be arranged according to the laws of a strict justice. The free concurrence and, especially, economic power-dominion must stay effectively submitted to the state-authority, as far as this is necessary for the public interest in worldwide well-being. After all, and that is the anthropological ethical foundation, human society must be brought to consensus by the public mentality of nations, with the demands of public well-being and the norms of the social justice.

12. Acc. *Rerum Novarum*, n. 15 and *Quadragesimo Anno*, n. 100-101.

13. Acc. *Quadragesimo Anno*, n. 103-109

The economic system can continue to rely on capital and labor, but only on the condition that we create an ordered system, arranged by conditioned trade as well as social justice.¹⁴

In other words, from one side, a reaction to the changes of socialism is needed, and from the other side, more social justice is requested from capitalism. The social doctrine of the Church explicitly highlighted the Christian vision: “a true united cooperation for the one common well-being is only possible when all ranks of the complete society are deeply conscious of the fact that all are members of a large family, that all are sons of the same heavenly Father; yes, that they all together are one body in Christ, according to the word of the Apostle:

“There are many parts, but one body” (1 Cor. 12, 20), so that “when one part suffers, all parts suffer with it” (Rom. 12, 5).¹⁵

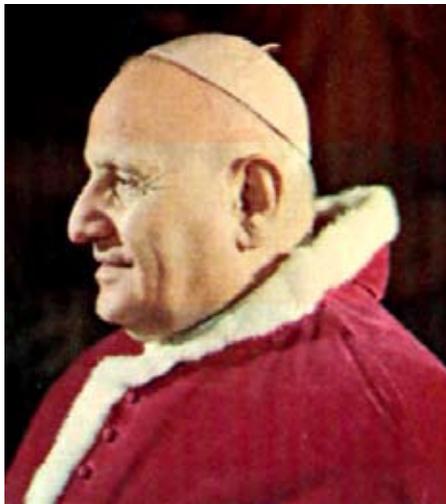
In LaRouche Plan A and B, as solutions for the economic and social crisis explosion on our hands, we have the same ethical foundation, because, I repeat, unless we have a perspective of effective development of Asia, we don’t have much of a chance for the world at large. In the social doctrine of Pope John XXIII, this ethical foundation is especially present but, and this is still more important, with particular attention to the problems on the global level.

III. The Social Doctrine of ‘Mater et Magistra’

“Although it is the first task of the Church to bring people to holiness and make them share in the heavenly goods, nevertheless she is also concerned for the needs of their daily existence, and not just looking at their required sustenance, but also concerning their greater prosperity

14. Acc. *Quadragesimo Anno*, n. 110; especially the second part: The social teaching of the Church in social-economic areas, n. 41-98. In the exertion of the constant principles we come back to this.

15. *Quadragesimo Anno*, n. 137.



Speaking of John XXIII, Fr. Honings said: “Characteristic of the encyclical letter of Pope Roncalli [Mater et Magistra, 1961] is his attention to the social-economic order in its completeness and to all people. He strives especially for the different problems on a world level.”

in several areas and in different circumstances.”¹⁶ Characteristic of the encyclical letter of Pope Roncalli [John XXIII] is his attention to the social-economic order in its completeness and for all people. He strives especially for the different problems on a world level.

1. The Signs of Time

Some world problems are mentioned: first of all, the agricultural problem. One of the most demanding issues of justice is to repair the economic and social balance between the two territories of human society, the production territory and agriculture. “Historical development shows us more and more clearly that there must be reached a fulfillment of the demands of justice and fairness, not only in the rela-

tionship between workers and the leaders of industrial enterprises, but also between the different economic territories, and among stronger and weaker economic zones from the same country, and on the international level, in relation to the countries’ different degrees of economic and social development.”¹⁷ Which solution meets the demand of the social doctrine of the Church for more economic justice and social fairness all over the world?

2. The Solution of the Church

Different guidelines strive for a gradual and harmonious development of economics. The farmers themselves need to foster their higher prosperity, by using the advancement of science and mechanics, chemistry and biology. A strong demand is especially for solidarity and mutual cooperation so that farmers can be equal to other groups of the productive sector.¹⁸

At this point, Pope Roncalli stressed that, “the greatest problem of modern times is most probably that of the relations between economically developed countries

16. John XXIII, encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra*, preface, n. 1; according to the text of “*Ecclesia Docens, Papal Documents for our Time*,” NV Gooi en Sticht, Hilversum 1961; translated by: Dr. M.H. Mulder C.ss.R and Dr. J. Kahmann C.ss.R.

17. Acc. *Mater et Magistra*, n. 122; to be concrete see: “The move to cities, the causes and consequences of this”; n. 123-125.

18. Acc. *Mater et Magistra*.

and those countries that are still developing. The first mentioned are wealthy, the last mentioned suffer from scarcity. The solidarity that will unite people these days, so they feel as one big family, must get the wealthy countries that have abundance, to care for those countries where people suffer from such great difficulties, that they almost die of famine and shortage, and cannot enjoy primary human rights.”¹⁹

The ethical foundation according to the social doctrine of the Church is always very much more evident: we need a greater and more effective world-solidarity. In a speech on 3 May 1960 John XXIII said: “We all together have responsibility for the less developed populations.”²⁰ The social teaching of the Church must, more than ever, take care of a just economic order and a more human social configuration, completely focused on the integral development of all humans. After Vatican II, the Church realizes still more clearly and deeply what the Gospel of Jesus Christ demands: to help in every dimension the integral development of all people.

I think, without exaggeration, that LaRouche Plan A and B denote the same ethical foundation of a worldwide solidarity. Moreover, it is well known that this foundation of a particular great common responsibility was one of the first preoccupations of Pope Paul VI in his circular letter *Populorum Progressio*.

IV. The Ethical Foundation of ‘Populorum Progressio’

Montini [Pope Paul VI] teaches with great care and deep concern that, at this vital turning point in history,



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“Every one who knows the LaRouche Plan at our turning point in history, knows how the ethical foundation of the global economic-social order of *Populorum Progressio* [1967] is the ethical foundation of his Plan,” declared Fr. Honings. Shown, Pope Paul VI, author of the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*.

it is crucial, on the wings of faith and reason, to act in solidarity.²¹ Or, every one who knows the LaRouche Plan at our turning point in history, knows that his ethical foundation is based on the global economic-social order of *Populorum Progressio*. For Montini and LaRouche, the center point of their social and economic issues is an anthropological global dimension: The integral development of all people, which requires liberation from injustice and famine, from misery, diseases, and ignorance. The whole of mankind is entitled to a larger share in the riches of civilization, and that includes the right to their own human qualities, and their continuing realization of their full development.²² Initiatives that are undertaken individually or groupwise, as well as existing technological structures are not enough.

Pope Montini devotes his attention to the integrality of human completion, i.e., of every man, of the whole man, and of all men. Because every human is a member of society, his development is a shared task. Heirs of previous generations, the people of our time, have the duty to show, worldwide, a human-worthy solidarity. Thence, even if the continuing of the development project is in need, each day, of a growing number of technicians, it demands even more wise and sharp-thinking people. More than ever, we need people that are seeking a new humanism, in which every person is capable, for himself and all together, of transferring from less human to more human living conditions.²³ Every program for rising production must help the human person. Moreover, development must go harmonically, so a crucial balance is maintained.

19. Acc. *Mater et Magistra*, n. 157.

20. John XXIII, “Vous êtes venus,” AAS, 52, 1960, 465, quoted in *Mater et Magistra*, n. 158.

21. Acc. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, preface, n. 1.

22. Acc. t.a.p.

23. Acc. *Populorum Progressio*, n. 15-16.

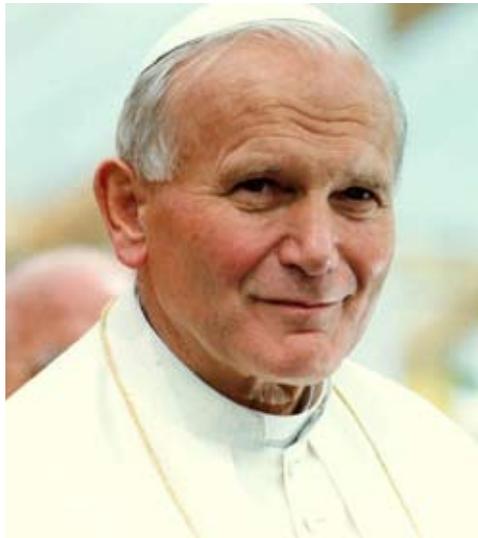
Conclusion

Coming, in conclusion, to the specific reason why the social doctrine of the Church can be presented as an ethical foundation of LaRouche Plan A and B, it should be noted that, in spite of praiseworthy efforts, the conditions of humanity worldwide have become notably worse. The responsibility for this deterioration is especially due to those holding economic and political power. Moreover, one must denounce the existence of economic, financial, and social mechanisms which, although they are manipulated by people, often function almost automatically, thus accentuating the situation of wealth for some, and poverty for the rest.

Paul VI already forecast, that under such a system, the wealth of the rich would increase and the poverty of the poor would remain. To stress my ethical foundation of the LaRouche Plan, based on the social doctrine of the Church, I quote what John Paul II, 20 years after *Populorum Progressio*, answers, in his encyclical letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, on why the social question has acquired a worldwide dimension:

“This is because the demand for justice can only be satisfied on that level. To ignore this demand could encourage the temptation among the victims of injustice to respond with violence, as happens in the origin of many wars.... On the contrary, in a different world, ruled by concern for the common good of all humanity, or by concern for the ‘spiritual and human development of all,’ instead of by the question for individual profit, peace would be possible as the result of a ‘more perfect justice among people.’”²⁴

But from the other side, and that was, is, and remains very important, we need much prudence, as Pope Roncalli denoted in his *Mater et Magistra*, about agricultural renewal. Premature industrialization can, respectively, go beyond its purposes, and not only disrupt



“To stress the ethical foundation of the LaRouche Plan in the social doctrine of the Church,” Fr. Honings cites John Paul II’s encyclical letter, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* [1987], on why the social question has acquired a worldwide dimension. “This is because the demand for justice can only be satisfied on that level.”

the needed structures, but also cause disorder. So, instead of constructing humanity, one is tearing it down.

Also, here, the two wings of faith and reason must prevent ambivalence of development, by harmonizing the universal destination of goods and personal property; they must disarm the temptation to violence. Still they must face the current situation with great energy; the integral development asks for daring changes that implicate fundamental renewal. In this way, reason will answer to the expectations of people, and faith will grant the participation of the Holy Spirit, “because the yeast of the Gospel raised a demand for dignity, and still does so.”²⁵

Therefore, I am convinced that LaRouche Plan A and B is the answer to the demand for justice on the worldwide level, and finds its ethical foundation already in the social doctrine of *Rerum Novarum*, as John Paul II declares in *Centesimus Annus*. “The commemoration of *Rerum Novarum* would be incomplete unless reference were also made to the situation of the world today. The document lends itself to such reference, because the historical picture and the prognosis which is suggested have proved to be surprisingly accurate in the light of what has happened since then.”²⁶

What LaRouche said about the signs of our time, concerning the bankruptcy of the present system, is the same thing we said about socialism; even when it is seen as teaching or as an historical fact of an action, it cannot be reconciled with the doctrines of the Catholic Church, not even when it would be adapt to truth and justice. After all, its opinion of society is in flat contradiction with Christian truth.²⁷

24. *Populorum Progressio*, n. 32; also see: *Gaudium et Spes*, 26.

25. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* n. 10.

26. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 12.

27. *Quadragesimo Anno*, n. 117; also see nn. 111-113.