

TAKING STOCK OF LATIN AMERICAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY TODAY

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Editor's Note: We are publishing here one of the main contributions to the research project **Evaluation and perspectives of (Latin American) liberation theology**, of which we have already presented another paper in these pages (A. ABASCAL-JAEN: *The reception of Latin American liberation theology: an opportunity for Europe to re-create its roots*, in *COELI-I.I.*, Nr. 74, Summer 1995, pp. 2-11). The text here below was published in Spanish in DEI's review, *Pasos*, Nr. 57, under the title: *Liberation theology in the economico-social context of Latin America: economy and theology, or the irrationality of what has been rationalized*. It was also published in the book *Culture of hope and society without exclusion*, DEI - Editorial Caminos, 1995, pp. 355-387. The emphases are ours. We have also slightly abridged the text.

I would like to present here a view of liberation theology (LT), according to what I have lived as a participant to its development. I do not intend to make its history, for this would entail a much more diversified and possibly more impartial analysis than the one I can offer. I shall rather try and present what has been my concern and that of other companions, with whom I have worked at the DEI since 1976. This has led us to really feel partakers of that current of thought. The topic in question is more precisely the following thesis: Any liberation theology has to develop in the theoretical discussion over the economy-theology relationship. It is thus my **starting point** here.

1. LT as a concrete theology

LT is a concrete, historical theology. This makes the question of its historical context relevant. LT's de-

velopment can be observed over the last three decades, a very troubled historical period of Latin American history. We shall thus meet an LT which reflects, mirrors and re-elaborates that history of which it is a conscious part.

As a concrete theology, LT inserts itself into the Latin American society. The christian basic communities, the people's movements and even the political parties are **key loci**, from where that theology develops. By inserting itself into concrete Latin American history, LT anchors itself to concrete points of that history. It does not limit itself to speak in those places, but thinks the historical situation from them, to develop as a theology. This is why its analyses are narrowly tied up to the theories of **social science**. It cannot deduce its concrete analysis from its theological stands, but the latter cannot be independent from

the result of its concrete analyses.

However, LT is not a social science: it is a theology. In relation to its concrete analyses of the historical situation, LT develops like a theological dimension of that situation. As such, it runs the risk of error. It has no a priori specified absolute truths. In terms often used by those theologians, it is the only possible Christian orthodoxy which is an **orthopraxis**. Christianity itself was born as an orthopraxis and not as a closed system of empty dogmatic statements. Its problem consists in finding a praxis which is adequate to the situation. For this reason it undergoes a continuous development, in so far as the issues change and new knowledge is acquired to face them up. It is a living theology.

Nevertheless, a theology can be qualified as such, already before its entering into a concrete analysis and

its corresponding praxis. As a theology, it precedes praxis. But in doing so, it remains a set of empty beliefs. Confessed as articles of faith independently from any concrete historical insertion, God's existence, his/her Trinitarian character, redemption, etc., are mere empty abstractions belonging to a dogmatics without contents. LT is not trying to deny those articles of faith, but raises the issue of their meaning. Thus, the question is not "Does God exist?", but "How is he/she present?", "How does he/she act?". Hence, **LT's starting point** is the question of the concrete and historical locus of God's revelation.

LT is born from the answer it gives to that question, an answer given by the means of the "option for the poor". It is an option of God, but also of the humans in so far as they want to become free. Liberation is thus understood as the liberation of the poor, but not as an act of other people who have the duty of liberating the poor considered as objects. The option for the poor absolutely requires a mutual recognition between subjects. Human subjects cannot achieve such a mutual recognition without acknowledging themselves as corporeal and natural beings, as beings of need. Whence, poverty is the actual negation of that acknowledgement. From LT's viewpoint, human beings cannot attain freedom without such a mutual recognition between subjects. Thus, the poor as subject in such an acknowledgement relationship is the locus where it is decided whether this recognition becomes effective or not. The option for the poor is thus the other side of the mutual recognition of the human beings as natural beings, as beings of need (1).

The absence of mutual recognition between humans is thus manifested in the poor. But, according to LT, God is present where such a recognition takes place. The lack of it indicates a human relationship

where God is absent. The existence of the poor points to a God-less society, whether referring to God or not. However, this absence of God manifests itself by a cry, for God's absence is present in the poor. The poor are the presence of the absent God. It is a negative theology, in which the effective presence of God is rendered by his/her crying absence and by the need. By living God's absence, one perceives his/her presence when doing his/her will. There is no presence of God which denies the option for the poor, even if this option is sometimes only implicit. But it has to be present as an option.

God's presence is not found in some being, but in a **social relationship** between humans. By being a mutual recognition between subjects who exclude nobody, God is present and his/her absence is overcome. But his/her absence returns when such a recognition is lost.

LT is born as a concrete theology from this reflection, with very diverse expressions according to the theologians. Thus LT has a locatable place, wherefrom it can interpret historical reality. It can protest on account of God's abandonment and absence, it can call for God's acknowledgement, to transform him/her into a present God. God's presence cannot just be an inner feeling. It is a praxis, an orthopraxis endowed with criteria in the very reality. God's presence demands the disappearance of poverty. Consequently, the opposite of poverty is not the abundance of things, but the fullness of life constituted from the mutual recognition between corporeal subjects, between subjects of need.

In this way LT is an orthopraxis. God does not tell us what to do. His/her will is to free the poor, but the road to freedom has to be found. The contents of God's will depends on the analysis of reality. God's will

can only be discovered through such an analysis, which requires social science. The results of social science have thus a direct incidence on what God's will is for LT's orthopraxis.

The theology of "orthodoxy" is different. It abides by dogmatic statements, without looking for their embedding into concrete and historical places. Whence the pitfall: it easily stands on the side of domination. Domination is always abstract, pretends to validity independently from concrete and historical situations. It is however striking that, in the dispute between LT and closed theological "orthodoxy", there is so little controversy about the dogmatic corpus. Both the "orthodoxy" and LT assert that corpus. In this sense, there is no religious conflict. The situation is completely different from that of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation, when the conflicts concerned the contents of the dogmatic corpus.

2. Economy and theology in the beginning of liberation theology

When the conflict about LT appears towards the end of the 60s, the visible motive does not have much to do with divergences about the dogmas. Thus, the discussion does not bear on the formal theological contents, but on the concrete meaning of those contents. However, being given that the so-called orthodox official theology is exclusively dogmatic, the discussion confronts the orthodox stand which reduces the theological contents to the pronouncement of empty eternal truths and LT which defends the historical concretization of that same faith. Consequently, the use of social science in LT manages to play a key role in this conflict.

The conflict appears for the first time on the public forum at the time of the People's Unity government in

Chile (1970-73), some years after LT's birth. The latter was not born in academic milieus, but rather from the pastoral action of the Churches. They were priests and church ministers working in the popular neighborhoods. Their first publications were stenciled manuscripts. At the end of the 60s, the first books appeared (H. ASSMANN, G. GUTIERREZ, J. MIGUEZ-BONINO, J-L. SEGUNDO). Very soon those thoughts had an influence in the seminaries and in the theology departments. They created in Latin America a current of opinion, which was more intensely manifested in Chile after the electoral victory of the People's Unity (1970).

From the beginning, this LT was closely bound to the very successful **people's movements of the 60s**. In Chile, these movements were looking for a political expression both in the People's Unity parties and in the Christian Democratic party. Those movements were aimed at an economic and social integration of the popular groups. This issue was pointed at more and more, especially from the two current trends of that decade. One was the fringe situation found in the shanty towns and also in the rural areas (landless peasants, minifundia). The other one was the stagnation of employment: industrial production was expanding sometimes a lot, but especially thanks to increased labor productivity and without creating new jobs. Marginality thus became structural instead of being a mere transitional phenomenon.

That problem helps us to understand that the people's movements were pushing towards changes in the very economico-social structure. During the 60s, many of those movements were still waiting for a solution in the framework of the reform capitalism then advocated by Chile's Christian Democracy. But especially from 1968 onwards the popular movements leant towards People's

Unity, supported by a split in the Christian Democracy.

That change of political orientation on the part of the popular movements was corresponding to a deep experience. It had indeed become obvious that no economically and socially integrated development was possible within the logic of the existing capitalist structures. One first spoke of the need of a non-capitalist development, and later of a socialist development. Theoretically, the situation was thought out by the means of the theory of dependence. The majority of liberation theologians were sharing that experience and evaluation about the inefficacy of the capitalist structures, with their own logic, to create a society able to solve the economic and social problems of the popular groups. They were thus sharing the interpreting tendency that an integral development could only happen through a profound change of the capitalist structures themselves. This provoked the formation of a Latin American bound ecumenical organization, representing many liberation theologians: "**Christians for Socialism**", which held its first important meeting in Santiago (Chile) in March 1972.

This critique of capitalism and looking for an alternative by transforming the structures led the budding LT into a conflict, both with the official theology and with the R. Catholic hierarchy notably in Chile. This hierarchy had been closely united with the Christian Democracy during the 60s. When the latter took an antisocialist-anticommunist turn, it was followed by the hierarchy.

It was nevertheless very difficult to refute the experience of the liberation theologians and the theory of dependence used to interpret that experience. Furthermore, we can see today, after thirty years of prolongation and reinforcement of capitalism in Latin America, that this interpreta-

tion of capitalism by LT and hence of the theses of the theory of dependence backing them up has been fully confirmed. Even if today it is harder to conceive alternatives than 30 years ago. Indeed, by driving its logic to the extreme, Latin American capitalism has deepened the marginalization of the population to the point of transforming it into an exclusion without future.

For that reason, the official theology and the R. Catholic Church were short of arguments while looking for a conflict with LT. On the one hand, there were no divergences at the level of the dogmas of faith, and on the other hand, LT's critique of capitalism was at least in its main lines irrefutable. Thus they did not enter the discussion with rational arguments, but contented themselves with denouncing the new theology.

3. Denouncing LT

An institutionalized theology, working in the name of a dogmatic corpus with a claim to eternal truth, cannot be historically concretized. Its only possible way out to face and dismantle LT is to declare irrelevant and even perverse the manner in which this theology is concretized. That institutionalized theology cannot join in the discussion on concretization, because it ought then to accept that theology is and should be concrete and historical.

Denunciation then remains the way out for that closed theology. And as the liberation theologians often have recourse to the Marxist theory to think out their experience, LT is denounced as Marxist. Further, in modern bourgeois society, MARX is in the Orwellian sense the non person to be shouted at by everybody, in order to demonstrate one's faithfulness to the values of the self-proclaimed "free world". Marx is for the "free world" what TROTSKY was to the Soviet world: the non person, incarnating evil. Thus, the denunci-

ation of LT's Marxism implies an irrational and ideological condemnation of that theology, dispensing with the need to answer its concrete concerns. Concreteness vanishes. There is no need to discuss. The opponents are revealed as the enemy, independently of their thinking.

In order to achieve such a denunciation, **Marx's thought is transformed into a great magic without any escape.** Those who draw near are lost. It's a great whirlpool like the Maelstrom. Even if you try to stay at a distance, you are irremediably swallowed by it. It is not a theory, but an evil temptation. Some time later, Cardinal RATZINGER summarized quite well the view of that Lucifer:

"Marx's thought constitutes a totalizing conception of the world, in which many data of observation and descriptive analysis are integrated into a philosophico-ideological structure, imposing the meaning and relative importance attributed to them (...). The dissociation of the heterogeneous elements composing that hybrid epistemological amalgam becomes impossible, in such a way that believing to accept only what is presented as an analysis, one is obliged to accept the ideology as well" (2).

However, the theologians had only said that the option for the poor conflicts with the logic of capital structure. Taking things earnestly and realistically this logic had to be outgrown, and they called this development socialism. The discussion should have revolved around LT's questioning, i.e., whether things were or not as they were claiming them to be. No word about this: facts are unimportant.

The reason for the refusal was not LT's use of Marxist theories. It would have been condemned anyway, even without reference to Marx. The conclusion according to which

the option for the poor conflicts with the logic of capital structure would have been perceived as a proof of their Marxism. The question is forbidden by the ideological condemnation, and there is thus no need to discuss the answer.

With the magic denunciation of Marxism, **the anti-utopian denunciation** already appears at the time of the People's Unity. The anti-utopian denunciation is but the other face of that magical antimarxism. Once more, the discussion over concrete and historical situations is replaced by a denunciation: there is neither discussion over the utopia nor analysis of the problem. LT was asking for structural changes, so that society could solve the poverty issue. It was not asking for the realization of utopias. The aim was very realistic, even though the realism of that goal was known to lie beyond the possibilities of the capitalist society.

The above would, of course, have implied a discussion over the utopian dimensions of the political goals, and hence a critique of the utopian contents in relation to the realism of structural change. The liberation theologians initiated such a critique. The anti-utopian denunciation, on the contrary, only demonized them and ruled out the dialogue (3).

This led to a situation in which the strongest condemnation of the "Christians for Socialism" (CfS) by the R. Catholic Church in Chile happened after the coup, when they were already persecuted by the State terrorism of the totalitarian system of National Security.

The formal condemnation of the CfS has its history. It was decided in secret by the Bishops' Conference in April 1973. Two days after the coup, on September 13, 1973, the Conference approved an additional document. Those condemnations were first circulated on October 26,

1973, and were published in April 1974. During that period, over 60 priests had been expelled from Chile and some had been tortured. Many lay CfS members had been killed, tortured or arrested (4).

4. Liberation theology and National Security dictatorships

Not only for the CfS but also for LT as a whole, the Chilean military coup meant a deep break. It was not a traditional military coup, by which a military group takes over the government and ensures the continuity of an already installed bourgeois society. The Chilean coup was a coup of National Security. The military government undertook the task of restructuring the Chilean bourgeois society from its roots, following a preconceived ideological scheme. A society was installed according to abstract principles without any relation with Chile's history. Such a society was not found either at world level in "really existing capitalism", for it was at the time a reformist and interventionist capitalism. It was the **first occurrence**, in contemporary history, of a **clearly neoliberal regime**. State terrorism requires an abstract model deduced from the principles of the total capitalist market. Whence, the **Jacobinical character** of the coup (5).

The policy of the Chilean Military Junta aimed at changing the whole society. Not simply scraping off any trace of People's Unity politics, but transforming from its very roots capitalism as it had existed so far. An interventionist capitalism of reforms had begotten a large civil society, in which the people's organizations had found a legitimate and important place. The ideologists of the Military Junta saw in that capitalist reformism the basis of the People's Unity surge. Indeed, the latter had only driven that reformism beyond the limits of the capitalist structure.

Thus, the Military Junta had two

main lines of action. First, it worked against all the popular organizations especially the unions, the neighborhood associations and even the cooperatives in order to destroy them completely. As they had deep social and political roots, this implied destroying all the popular parties. Here, State terrorism played its main role. The military established their power from the beginning, but the terror regime lasted over a decade and succeeded in eliminating any popular power. The Junta's second line of action wanted to change the State. Intervening in the market, the reform State the other side of the strength of the people's movements was transformed into an anti-reform State. The **privatization** of the State functions in the economic and social fields, and hence of the public enterprises, transformed Latin America: it is the first case of an application by principle of the abstract schemes of the Chicago School. This policy was soon going to be taken over at world level by the International Monetary Fund under the name of **structural adjustment**. Later, Milton FRIEDMAN called it "total capitalism".

LT's reflections sprung up in that new atmosphere. Although there was no break in that theology, important shades of meaning were introduced. Whereas in the period before the Chilean coup the emphasis was on liberation, **resistance** was now in the fore. There had always been an intense work from the **ecclesial basic communities** (EBCs). However, at the beginning, that work had always been closely tied with that of the people's organizations. The latter were now the most persecuted and thus very weak. The EBCs then played a much greater role. Moreover, as the Churches secured some spaces protected from repression, in many places the EBCs became the only spots of popular action. The people's organizations were substituted by many human rights defense groups. Only Central America especially Nicaragua and Salvador knew

a different situation.

The theme of **idolatry** then occupies LT's center: the God of life confronts the gods of death. The idolatry theme fits in a long tradition with Jewish roots: the idol is a god whose experience and veneration lead to death. We have not to wonder whether idols exist or not, ontologically speaking. Idols are considered as a force of death, venerated as God. They are a **god of death facing the God of life**. Consequently, the latter is seen as a God whose experience and veneration yield life and not death. As LT is a strongly corporeal theology, life and death take up a meaning in which bodily life is the highest instance of any life. Although the body lives only as an

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(...)

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animated body, the soul does not live without the body.

Thus, for LT, the problem is not theism and atheism, but idolatry and

God of life. Its opposite is not **atheism**. Faith in God can be idolatrous or not, just as atheism. An atheism whose lived experience leads to death is idolatry, while an atheism whose lived experience leads to life is not. Life and death not abstract metaphysics supply the discerning criterion. There are also atheists in God's people. However, the affirmation of life is always seen from the mutual recognition between subjects, who acknowledge themselves as natural beings of need. The criterion of life and death meets that of the option for the poor. These acquire in this way a new dimension: they are not only poor but also victims i.e., poor and persecuted by the State's repressive apparatus.

From this perception of idolatry and its victims, LT deepens its analysis of the processes of production of victims. The official theology is now confronted as a **sacrificial theology**, with a God exacting human sacrifices. LT develops a strong critique of that sacrificial theology, from the analysis of the sacrificial character of the economic and social system imposed upon Latin America. One discovers a whole history of human sacrifices in the conquest of America, as well as reactions supporting the indigenous people, from the beginning of the conquest. Gustavo Gutiérrez comes back on the discussion over the theology of conquest, and retrieves the figure of Bartolomé DE LAS CASAS as a key ancestor of LT (6).

On the other hand, one deepens the issue of the economy-theology relation, especially at the DEI (7). This allows to deepen the theme of **the sacrificiability of the current economic and social system** (8). One discovers in this way the sacrificial character of Western culture itself, which allows to retrieve the non-sacrificial Judeo-Christian tradition.

5. The conflict around liberation theology

There has always been a latent conflict between LT and the official theology. We have seen how this conflict burst open at the end of the People's Unity government in Chile. But, with the *Rockefeller Report*, at the end of the 60s, another conflict started: the conflict with the political power, with the empire.

For the empire, LT is a danger for several reasons. An important one is ideological, and it played a special role during the cold war. That confrontation, interpreted in Manichean fashion, was demanding clear-cut trenches. The empire was self-interpreting itself as the Christian West, like a kingdom of God facing an atheistic and evil kingdom. The western empire seemed to be fighting alongside with God, like the archangel Michael. Even if the foundation of the legitimacy of the bourgeois society is not Christian for it rests on secular myths, it is also vital for such a legitimacy to have a religious dimension in order to be able to anchor itself in transcendency. Believing in God and fighting alongside capitalism against his/her enemies seemed to be one and the same thing. That identification is even stronger in the USA than in Europe. In the United States, it leads to what is called "civil religion", i.e., a religiosity underlying the "American way of life". That religiosity encompasses all the specific religions. Consequently, tolerance towards the different denominations requires they respect the framework set up by that civil religion. Religion is considered as a private affair, provided it fits in the civil religion, i.e., the public religiosity.

LT was threatening that religious even Christian homogeneity of the empire. When gods are discerned, some of them are bound to get worried. The issue was all the more sensitive that the LT theses had been positively welcomed in several Churches and even in the public opinion as a whole of the USA and

Europe. The Manichean condemnation of the people's movements with their demands for structural changes was no easy thing, when important currents of those movements were drawing their inspiration from their religious faith. Furthermore, public opinion could doubt the simplistic ideologies of the cold war.

Something similar, but with an opposite sign, happened in the Latin American popular movements. LT was one of the currents enabling to get out of the narrowness of Marxist orthodoxy, especially from the one promoted by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. This orthodoxy was quickly tiresome, because it had not managed to think the reality lived by the members of the popular movements. In front of that reality, it was just as abstract as the market ideologies. During the 70s, the weariness vis-à-vis this orthodoxy was notorious. One was then rediscovering Marx's thought, which was not in the least exhausted by this orthodoxy. There appeared several new currents of Marxist thought. However, a particularly important contribution for the popular movements was the birth of a theology, thinking the world from a viewpoint close to them and enabling them to live their faith as participants in the struggles of the people's sectors. Even if the majority of LT theologians were not anti-Marxist, and went as far as drawing their inspiration from the Marxist thought to analyze reality, they kept a critical stand in front of Marxism, and this effectively strengthened those people's movements.

All this was a sufficient reason to attract the reactions of the empire. The *Rockefeller Report* set the landmarks. The empire then began to develop its own theology, which was first a negation and later a co-opting of LT.

In the 70s, **theological centers of a completely new type** appeared. The first one was the theology de-

partment of the "**American Enterprise Institute**", headed by Michael NOVAK. Its reason of being was the fight against LT in Latin America and its repercussions in the USA. It was soon followed by the Institute on Religion and Democracy, directed by Peter BERGER, with the same goal but working more at the level of the State, of the political organizations and of the Churches in the USA. Novak's books were distributed by the employers' organizations and by the US embassies in Latin America. The same organizations set up lecture cycles south of Rio Grande. The Pentagon too trained specialists in the theological field to act in the military panamerican organizations of the armies and in the secret services including in the torture centers. Important newspapers became the spokespersons of the new theology of the empire, a now developed and promoted "liberation theology". The *Santa Fe Document* (1980) formulating the electoral platform for Ronald REAGAN's first period designated the united front of the people's Church and LT in Latin America, as one of the major concerns for US security.

Until the mid-80s, the arguments put forward against LT resembled very much those of the official theology. They attacked foremost the Marxist analysis which looked like a theoretical element of LT's concretization and the utopian formulation of a liberated future. Nevertheless, there is a least one very clear and remarkable difference: the **anti-utopianism** of the empire's theology is much more extreme than the one of the official ecclesiastical theology.

The official theology was reproaching LT rather with having a false utopia, but not with having a utopia as such. As a Christian theology, the first one maintains its own view of the coming Kingdom of God and of the heavens to be reached. It cannot thus blame LT for its hope in a Kingdom of God. Consequently, it

charges it for its interpretation of God's Kingdom in material and corporeal terms, and thus for its wrong concept of it. God's Kingdom of institutionalized "orthodoxy", on the contrary, is conceived as a kingdom of pure souls, for which corporeity is something ethereal, even ephemeral. Whereas for LT, the Kingdom is the New Earth, i.e., "this earth without death", a kingdom of satisfaction of the corporeal needs. Orthodoxy views this as "materialistic", as a false hope, to which it opposes its conception of the "true" hope. However, orthodoxy does not deny the conception of a Kingdom of God to come (9).

The empire's theology of the 70s and of the first part of the 80s is different, for it is clearly anti-utopian. It opposes a hopeless world to the utopian view of hope. Even if it goes on providing a utopian view of the market, of its invisible hand (the market as locus of the "providence") and of its tendency to equilibrium, it does not establish a relation between market utopia and Kingdom of God. Consequently, solidarity itself looks like a perversion and an atavism (10).

That theology corresponds to the manicheism of the cold war. The empire sees the utopia as such embodied in the kingdom of evil, and considers itself as a kingdom of realism without any need of a utopia. To the God-devil confrontation now corresponds the realism-utopia conflict. This utter manicheism was expressed by K. POPPER: Those who look for heaven, produce hell.

But this view of utopia raised problems inside the conservative coalition formed in the 80s. We have seen that, in its clear-cut form, this view was not acceptable to theological "orthodoxy". But it wasn't useful either to bind the political coalition with US Christian fundamentalism, one of the pillars of Reagan's government. Indeed, this fundamen-

talism is highly utopian and messianic, with a clearly apocalyptic view of history (11).

At that time of the visible collapse of the socialist countries, there happened a growing utopianization of the empire itself. The **structural adjustment** policy, with its disastrous effects on the Third World, **needed the promise** of a better future to obtain its legitimization. The hells produced on earth were demanding the promise of the heavens to come. Even neoliberalism transformed itself into a religion with its conversions and its market gospel.

6. The empire's theology attempts to co-opt liberation theology

From all that has been said, a transformation has happened in the theology of the empire: it has passed from the negation of LT to its co-optation. Around the mid-80s, this co-optation was already being realized and it manifested itself in Latin America as from the Chilean military coup (12). When, in 1985, David STOCKMAN with a fundamentalist past resigned as head of the budget in the Reagan government, he published a book: *The triumph of politics*. In this book he reproaches the president with having betrayed the pure neoliberal model and with having given way to populism. He develops a whole theology of the neoliberal stand, which made disciples rapidly. The book **no longer denounces the utopias**, but presents neoliberalism as the only efficient and realistic way of achieving them. It attacks the socialist "utopias", to co-opt them into the field of the so-called neoliberal realism. According to Stockman, the threat is not utopia, but false utopia to which he opposes his realistic utopia, neoliberalism.

Michel CAMDESSUS himself, IMF's general director, echoes that theology and develops it directly from some LT key theses. This happened

during his lecture at the Lille congress of French Christian businessmen on March 27, 1992 (13). Here are his central theological theses:

"Third message: Speak of Reign rather than of Kingdom. Assuredly, the Kingdom is that locus: the New Heavens and that new earth which we are called to enter one day; a lofty promise, but the Kingdom is somehow geography, the Reign means History, a history of which we are the actors, which is both on the way and at hand since Jesus has come into human history. The Reign is what happens when God is King and we acknowledge him, when we make the Reign spread like an oil spill, impregnate, renew and unify the human realities. 'Your Reign come'".

Later, he opposes power of this world and Reign of God:

"The one is founded on power, the other on service; the one, leaning on strength tends to possess and hoard, the other to share; the first one exalts the prince and his barons, the second one the excluded and the weak; the one draws borders, the other welcomes; the first one relies on the spectacular (media) aspect, the second one prefers the discreet germination of the mustard seed. At the opposite! and at the heart of all these differences, one sums them all up: the King identifies with the poor.

Highest feature of the difference: Who is judge, who is King in that Kingdom? In the Gospel, the answer is given us most solemnly in the announcement of the perspective of the last judgement: today my judge and my King is my Brother who is hungry, thirsty, a foreigner, naked, sick or a prisoner...".

Camdessus opposes power to

service, pride to humility. And he discovers that the IMF, the structural adjustment and the whole neoliberal conception of society precisely embody that humility in front of the pride of those who resist them. The IMF's general director concludes:

"Our mandate? It has sounded in the Nazareth synagogue, and the Spirit is given us to receive what Jesus' fellow countrymen refused to swallow, namely the fulfilment of the promise made to Isaiah (61, 1-3) from our present history! Jesus unrolled the scroll and read Isaiah's text (Lk 4, 16-23):

'The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor'. And Jesus has only one comment: 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'.

That 'today' is our 'today' and we, who are in charge of the economy, are the administrators of at least a part of those benefits of God: the relief of our brethren's sorrow and the broadening of their freedom. We have received that Word. It can change everything. We know that God is at work with us to make brotherhood grow".

This text could have been written by a liberation theologian. It formulates what LT considers to be the core of its interpretation of the evangelical message: the promise of God's Reign and the option for the poor.

Nevertheless, the above text is but a part of Camdessus' lecture. What comes before and after gives to the theological text a quite contrary meaning to the one a similar text would have in LT. From the start of his conference, Camdessus fires at

"populisms". In IMF language, this word summarizes all the attitudes and policies which do not strictly follow the structural adjustment. The general director's attack is fierce:

"(...) all those forms of populist demagoguery already at work and of which we know where it leads: to hyperinflation and through it even before the market fulfils its promises to economic disarray, to the rise of misery and the return of the so-called 'strong' regimes, or rather to the end of liberties".

In this way, he transforms the option for the poor into an option for the IMF. Those who want more or something else than what is conceded or imposed by the structural adjustment policy of the IMF, produce "economic disarray, the rise of misery and (...) the end of liberties". This would harm the poor. Being on the side of the poor must necessarily mean being with the IMF. There is no alternative.

Addressing a R. Catholic audience, Camdessus attacks the traditional R. Catholic social doctrine:

"Naturally, the market is the most efficacious mode to increase individual and collective wealth; we should not be embarrassed to join it, like some generations of our social R. Catholic brothers with a kind of 'yes, but'. There is nothing more to add, and the Holy Father has made things clear in "*Centesimus annus*". Through its efficacy, the market can ensure a stronger solidarity. Hence, market and solidarity are not opposed, but can meet one another. Moreover, you are well aware that enterprise economy is an economy of responsibility where human beings can give their full measure".

Outside the market, there is no more activity possible; even solidarity must be exercised through it and

within the limits of its logic. Camdessus thus presents the IMF as the great world organization responsible for the exercise of solidarity. To this end, he wipes out a century of social doctrine of the R. Catholic Church without provoking the least echo.

However, the general director presents himself as a realist. He speaks of the "market - Reign of God" relation, by trying to distinguish them. He perceives quite clearly the destructive and even self-destructive logic of the market:

"Hence, if the market is totally left to its own mechanisms, there is a great danger there is no need to go back to the 19th century to witness it that the weakest be trodden down. In its sheer logic, the price tag can be a deathblow. "30 pieces of silver and the bargain is struck". This is no singular episode of the history of a Judaeon prophet, it is an ongoing daily element of human history. From this indifference of the market towards the person, you can quickly trace the deep origin of many evils of the developed societies: pollutions, work injuries, family destruction, exclusion and unemployment, corruption, inequalities, etc...

That is why we have known for a long time that the market has to be watched and organized in order to remain free, but also to be just. Thus, Marxist fundamentalism cannot be substituted by a market fundamentalism. The market cannot be left to its sole logic, for economy is not technical, it is human".

Faced with the destructive character of the market, Camdessus tries to energize the hope of God's Kingdom:

"Market-Kingdom, we know very well that we have to manage

thesetwo. Anyhow, in our lives...”.

And he adds:

“Yes, that market reality is full of forces of death and of life. That reality upon which everyone of us, in one way or another, has a hold, a responsibility”.

Nevertheless, that responsibility is only a responsibility concerning the running condition of the market. **Market logic can destroy the market itself.** That problem haunts Camdessus’ mind; the capitalism of the 80s has been a self-destructive capitalism: it has not only destroyed the human being and nature, but also its own working capacity. **Market corruption** is no longer the affair of the sole State, but it penetrates today the market relations themselves, tending to block them up. Today, the main locus of corruption is not the State any more, but the capitalist enterprise itself in its relationships with other capitalist ventures. Camdessus needs a market ethics, because this ethics is subverted by the very logic of the market. And he looks for that ethics in the reference to God’s Kingdom and in the “marriage” between market and Kingdom:

“There are, in the life of the market, dealings we have to refuse in the name not only of our citizenship of the kingdom, but also on account of our loyal citizenship simply of this world. Such a refusal is not easy, it often requires courage and even more than courage. You know better than I that shady side of economic life. (...) ‘What, concretely around us, diminishes, wears out, destroys: hardships, injustices, exclusions, manipulating customers and staff, ... money idolatry, mad life, etc...’. I need not dwell longer on this. Economic life is not only that, and there is a huge field where both surfaces, yes, somehow overlap. Let me dwell on this

a little longer. It is a whole ground where the Kingdom’s value carrier not only does not impose I don’t know which kind of brake to the dynamism of the market, but brings to it that “plus” the market lacks in order to serve the integral human person. In other words, it is the whole ground where economic rationality and kingdom building converge. And it is immense”.

But what happens when there is no convergence? In this case, according to Camdessus, nothing can be done. Apparent realism leads to the same fundamentalism he was claiming to criticize. **Even though, for Camdessus, the market is not the Kingdom, it constitutes its only possible presence.** Market with its logic is transformed into the eschatological logic of the whole human history. For Camdessus, watching over the market just means to make it viable. He wants to intervene in the market only to keep it running. The criterion of that intervention is thus to ensure the working of the market according to his own logic, a logic always conceived as God’s passage in history. The market is not perfect, but any perfection not produced by it no longer belongs to human praxis. The Kingdom is the oil, lubricating the market machine.

Following Camdessus, there is a definitive Kingdom beyond the market. However, it is a Kingdom beyond history, not interfering with the market. He thus reaches the following conclusion:

“The citizen of the Kingdom let’s us call ourselves like that stands right ahead of the endeavors to drive backwards all forms of fear, distrust, hoarding, that ‘idolatry’ in St Paul’s words (Eph. 5,5), and finally to broaden the sharing field, the one where the Kingdom already impregnates the human realities, so that the humans may find a little more space, gratui-

tousness and blossoming. All this, while being fully aware that ‘there will always be poor people among us’. Which means, among other things and it must have been hard for Jesus to say so, that the Kingdom won’t be for this earth, in any case until the day when ‘he makes all things new’.

We shall not achieve this task of impregnation of the human realities without having our hearts and minds widened, renewed, ‘filled with the Grace from above’. For people doing our kind of job, in that urgency at the service of the people, there is no other solution I am sure of it, and far from it than holiness or, if you want, ‘putting on’ the New Man: a man made of earth but who I’m reverting to St Paul ‘since Christ came from Heaven, like him belongs to Heaven’. Made of earth but belonging to heaven: the key lies there, and in prayer to receive that gift”.

It is the declaration of the total empire, without the slightest escape, neither on earth nor in heaven. The IMF policy had been transformed into God’s will on this earth. A will not expressed on some kind of Sinai, but by reality itself. Reality is such that, if human action leaves the framework of the structural adjustment policy, the results will necessarily be worse than the situation one wants to change. **There is no alternative, because trying to find one infallibly leads to worsen the situation.** For this reason, opting for the poor means choosing realism. And realism compels us not to worry about the poor. Market dealings allow no questioning. Capitalism has been transformed into “**total capitalism**”, according to M. Friedman’s expression. The preferential option for the poor amounts to a preferential option for the IMF (14).

It is a stand frequently met nowadays: it appears in great number of

publications claiming to be LT (15).

There springs up obviously a great temptation for the Churches. In Camdessus' outlook, the option for the poor can be done without the slightest conflict with power. The great harmony has apparently arrived, brought up by the invisible hand of the market. And LT now seems to be part of "orthodoxy". The New Man has come back, but under the form of an IMF executive (16).

The empire thus looks like a **total and closed empire**. It declares having no alternatives, and it has the power to chastize so harshly any attempt to seek them, that it seems indeed better not to try. When the punishment is greater than what might be obtained by researching alternatives, it is preferable not to seek them. In such a situation, the power dictates what the reality has to say. A circuit has been set up between power and reality, in which the latter tautologically confirms the theses of the former (17).

This situation of a total and closed empire is now perceived by several liberation theologians, according to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, as an **apocalyptic situation**. In such a stand, there is no visible way out, and there can be no concrete projects of change. One rereads JOHN's *Apocalypse*. Traditionally, apocalypse means **revelation**. The *Apocalypse* reveals that, in front of the total and closed empire, there is an alternative, even if it is not known. The empire's total power reveals its weakness, but its fall is not considered as the result of an intentional political action. That empire is called Babylon.

That reading of the *Apocalypse* leads to the analysis of the known apocalyptic texts and of their economic, social, political context. One discovers that those texts originated in historical situations similar to ours. The believers confront an empire

leaving them no way out, but they insist there must be one.

Here, "Apocalypse" does not mean catastrophe. It is a revelation unveiling that the monster is a clay-footed giant, whose fall will leave open a future for alternatives to be realized (18). Thus, this LT's **reading of the *Apocalypse* should not be confused** with the one made by US Christian fundamentalism. For the latter, it is a catastrophe, fruit of God's will in the sense of an inexorable law of history. The world is condemned to perish, and its salvation is achieved by the judge-god by consummating history itself. However, the law of human history is the catastrophe of history. It is a fundamentalism claiming to write tomorrow's history today. The presidents Reagan and BUSH have adhered publicly to this metaphysics of history (19). But, in fact, LT's co-optation attempted by Camdessus is perfectly compatible with such a worldview.

LT's current reading of the *Apocalypse* is quite different. Today's total and closed empire similar to the Roman, Hellenistic or Babylonian empires is a Babylon, i.e., a clay-footed giant. However, the reason of its fall cannot be a voluntaristic human act, for the empire is too strong. Its fall is occasioned by unintentional effects resulting from its own omnipotence. But no metaphysical law of history will schedule its fall. It falls because "(...) suddenly a great stone broke loose from a cliff without anyone touching it, struck the iron and clay feet of the statue, and shattered them" (Dn. 2,34) (20).

Nevertheless, the apocalyptic situation is the origin not only of apocalyptic literature, but also of its twin sister, **wisdom literature** which has always been the other face of apocalypics. One of the great witnesses of sapiential literature, drawing LT's attention today, is the Old Testament book of *Qoheleth* or *Ecclesiastes*. It offers a rather tragic sense

of life, facing an impregnable and disastrous empire. There prevails in it a lamentation over the loss of the meaning of life, combined with a remote echo of a shattered hope. It is a conception of life which has much in common with some of our contemporary postmodern trends (21).

7. The challenge for liberation theology. The irrationality of what has been achieved.

As we have seen when speaking of IMF's theology, one has passed from LT's negation to the elaboration of an anti-LT, which is an inversion of LT.

It should be remarked again that those two contrary theologies cannot be distinguished at the level of purely theological discussion. At that level, there is no clear distinction between LT and IMF's anti-LT. Apparently, one comes upon a situation in which the conflict ceases to be theological to become a conflict about the application of a theology common to both parties. The empire's theology for IMF's **theology is the theology of the empire** seems to have assumed key parts of LT: the preferential option for the poor and the hope for God's Kingdom incarnated in orthopraxis.

The problem we have seen at the beginning of this article reappears at a different level. At the beginning of LT, the conflict with institutionalized theology did not appear as a religious conflict, since no dogma was being questioned. The conflict manifested itself as a conflict about the concretization of a common faith. The preferential option for the poor and the incarnation of God's Kingdom in the economico-political world were the instruments of that concretization of LT and the source of the conflict.

Today, on the contrary, the empire's theology itself takes up those

stands. Hence they no longer serve to characterize a concretization of faith specific to LT.

It is sure that the empire's theology radically alters LT's option for the poor. This option is for LT the consequence of the mutual recognition between human subjects. The poor are the signs of the loss of that recognition, and the proof that all the social relationships are distorted. But the theology of the empire can only consider the poor as objects for the others, for those who are not poor.

Nevertheless, the option for the poor can no longer identify any concretization of faith as proper to LT. The question now bears on the realism of the concretization. No preconceived faith can provide the answer. One cannot decide upon the truth of the different stands, without having recourse to empirical sciences, especially **economic sciences**. These make the decision, and thereby become the carriers of the truth criterion concerning the theologies. Indeed, according to neoliberal political economy, the option for the poor is transformed into an option for the IMF. However, from the viewpoint of a critical political economy, this option leads to demanding an alternative society, in which there is room for everybody. Theology as such cannot decide. The concrete content of theology is decided upon by the results of science.

For this reason, the attempts at co-opting LT compel it to develop new problematics. In order to go on supporting the option for the poor in terms respecting the poor as subjects which constitutes **LT's specificity**, that option has to be linked up in a much more determinate manner with the mutual acknowledgement between subjects, who are corporeal subjects and subjects of need.

This conduces to the need of developing LT particularly along two lines. The first one regards the critique of the neoliberal political economy and of its utopist view of the market law. The second one concerns the Christian tradition of a theology critical of the law. Both together constitute the space for a discussion often called "**economy and theology**". One notices the relevancy of economic analysis to discern the contents of faith, thus going beyond the viewpoint which regards economics as a place for the application of faith.

The market laws of total capitalism destroy society itself and its natural environment. By absolutizing those laws by means of the market automatism myth, those destructive tendencies become uncontrollable and thus a threat for the very survival of humankind.

This critique leads to an analysis of rationality which precisely includes the irrationality of what has been rationalized. It is the development of a concept of the natural and social circuit of human life, which has to encompass and condition the

means-end rationality underlying the profitability reckoning. This excludes the neoliberal totalization of market laws, to integrate market relations into social life. The neoliberal policy, on the contrary, considers the market as the constitutive element of all social relations, thus leading to total capitalism (22).

With an analysis of this type, LT comes back to the **need of meeting Marx's thought** and this happens even involuntarily. For that

thought is the great existing theoretical body, springing up precisely from the critique of the irrationality of what has been rationalized. By facing up this contemporary problem theoretically, any conceptualization will develop thoughts close to those first developed by Marx. And in this relation with Marx's thought, there appears a deep critique which is fundamental for LT. It is the Marxist hope: being able to solve the problems of total capitalism by going totally beyond it. Marxism has led to a totalization analogous to the one we are living today with the neoliberal totalization of capitalism. LT must go beyond totalizations, if it wants to make an effective contribution to the constitution of a new faith. Nevertheless, once those totalizations have been critiqued, the conceptu-

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This makes it quite clear that the State of right does not at all guarantee justice.

(page 28)

In the first line, that of the **critique of the neoliberal political economy**, the argument could be summed up as follows: rationalization through competitiveness and efficiency (profitability) reveals the deep irrationality of what has been rationalized. By reducing rationality to profitability, the current economic system becomes irrational. It unleashes destructive processes it cannot control by the rationality parameters it has chosen. The exclusion of an ever greater number of persons from the economic system, the destruction of the natural bases of life, the distortion of all the social relationships and hence of the market relations themselves are the unintentional result of that **reduction of rationality to profitability**.

alizations of the critique of irrationality of what has been rationalized are irreplaceable to be able to set up an adequate concept of the rationality of human action. The theory of rational action, as worked out by Max WEBER does not go beyond that reductionism of rational action to expressions of means-end rationality, i.e., to what is measurable in terms of profitability.

This brings us to the second line of LT's necessary development in the world of today. The critique of the irrationality of what has been rationalized ought to be expressed in proper theological terms. And this is done by retrieving a long **theological tradition of the critique of the law**, which already starts in the Scripture with as first theological elaboration that of PAUL of Tarsus, especially in the *Epistle to the Romans* (24).

The liberation theologians who follow this theology of Paul, underline two key elements of his critique of the law. On the one hand, Paul remarks that the law, as a law to be observed, brings about the death of those who observe it or are obliged to observe it above all else. In this case, the life oriented law becomes mortiferous. This is true of any law, both the Jewish law known by Paul in the Pharisaic tradition and the Roman law. Consequently, the State of right, which appears for the first time in history with the Roman Empire, is not the highest expression of humanness but a threat. Observing the law does not save. On the other hand, Paul does not consider sin as law trespassing. In Paul's view, sin is the one committed by observing the law and in order to have it observed. Law trespassing is secondary. Thus sin can bring about death while obeying the law, and is committed with the good conscience of those obeying the law. There are still traces of this thought in the expressions of the European Middle Ages: "summa lex, maxima iniusticia" (Law taken to its climax is the greatest

injustice); "fiat iustitia, pereat mundus" (Let justice be done, even if the world is to perish).

This leads to **human sacrifices** as the result of the law. Considered as totalizing, the law exacts human sacrifices. There is an acute awareness of this in early Christianity. All the gospels, for instance, insist upon the fact that those who kill JESUS do so to follow the law. The relationship to the law lies at the origin of Jesus' murder. It is very understandable that later conservative theology preferred to lay the guilt on the Jews. This was done to escape the consequences of law critiquing theology, which was totally incompatible with the aspirations of Christianity to imperial power (25).

This explains why in its affirmation, negation, inversion and falsification Paul's law critiquing theology has been **Ariadne's thread in the history of Christianity and, hence, of the West**. The key text is the *Epistle to the Romans*. It is not a "theological" text in the sense of the division of modern universities into faculties, for it analyzes the key of the Roman Empire in Paul's time, but from a theological viewpoint. It is just as much decisive for theology as for philosophy and critical thought. Nevertheless, it is a taboo for philosophers: it does even appear in philosophy histories, whereas it expresses a thought around which western thought has revolved in the course of centuries. The *Epistle to the Romans* has been of a decisive importance for the Reformation, especially for Martin LUTHER. This is why it lies at the basis of Protestant ethics and of its transformation into capitalist spirit. It has again played an equally important role at the beginning of modern theology, with the commentary devoted to it by Karl BARTH. It is still as important today for LT. It is one of the most subversive books of history. NIETZSCHE was one of the rare persons who remarked that character, but he did

so to pinpoint Paul as his main enemy.

Paul's critique of the law is a critique of the "just" laws, particularly the law given by God on Sinai. Even these commandments are not just in themselves. Any law whatsoever kills, according to Paul, if taken as a law to be obeyed. This is even true of "God's law", because the injustice lies in the general form of the law. Justice for Paul does not reside in the law, but in the relationship to it. The subject is sovereign in front of the law, to relativize it in all the cases where its observance kills.

There is a very clear difference between this critique of the law by Paul and liberal tradition. The latter seeks just laws. It believes it has found them and asserts that the law is just, when those who have to obey it are at the same time as citizens the legislators. This law is the divine law of that tradition: "vox populi, vox Dei". The democratic law is just and, hence, a State of right based on that law is a just State.

For Paul, there is no State of right in the meaning of today's ideology, according to which the State of right has just laws, which implies for the citizen the duty to observe them without any possibility of discernment or resistance. Max Weber calls it the process of legitimacy through lawfulness. This is incompatible with Paul's stand of discernment. From the Pauline viewpoint, the liberal State of right is an unjust State because it is a total State. Paul's stand implies the right to resist, a right denied by Max Weber.

Today, an holocaust of the Third World is obviously being prepared. If it comes about, it will be the fact of States of right and within the strict limits of the State of right (26). This makes it quite clear that the State of right does not at all guarantee justice. Resistance humanizes the State of right and, where it is successfully

repressed or does not take place the State of right transforms itself into a Moloch god. This is why the **State of right and totalitarianism, democracy and totalitarianism are compatible** (27). Cashing in on the Third World's external debt is also a crime committed by observing the law. The very State of right commits it. When Paul speaks of sin, he refers to those crimes committed by obeying the law, without paying much attention to law trespassing (28). They are crimes committed with a good conscience, believing one serves God, humankind and the poor.

In this sense, law critiquing theology already develops the problem of the irrationality of what has been rationalized. That is why LT can follow that theology regarding **the law of the market**. On the one hand, if we treat it like a law which saves through its observance, the law of the market leads to death, even humankind as a whole. On the other hand, there is a sin which is committed by observing the law of the market, and this with the good conscience of obeying the supreme law. It is the opportunity of going back to Christian freedom in the Pauline sense, a liberty sovereign in front of the law. The free subjects are free in as far as they are capable of relativizing the law according to the needs of their own life. Freedom does not lie in the law, but in the subjects' relationship to it. As far as the market law is concerned, freedom consists in being able to submit it and even infringing upon it, if the needs of the subjects require so. Mutual recognition between corporeal subjects of need irreplaceably implies the relativization of any law according to that acknowledgement. By mutually acknowledging themselves as subjects, they become aware of being sovereign in front of the law. The law only applies in so far as it does not prevent that mutual recognition.

It is now possible to come back to

the option for the poor, in a sense which the empire's theology will never be able to accept. The mutual recognition between corporeal subjects of need implies the option for the poor, and thus at the same time the sovereignty of the human subject in front of the law. From this new conceptualization, there also appears a new conceptualization of the Kingdom of God (29).

For this reason, LT does not only deny the absolutization of the market law in "total capitalism", but also any **metaphysical law of history**. The absolutization of the law i.e., its transformation into a metaphysical law of history is a totalization which, in the long run, leads to totalitarianism. Its slogan is always that of "the end of history" and of the negation of all the alternatives (30).

Thus, LT arrives at a critique of modernity, and not only of capitalism. It ends up stating a crisis of western society itself. However, **LT is not postmodern**. The postmodern philosophers beware of analyzing the market law as a metaphysical law of history. They forcefully attack the metaphysical laws of history, especially in historical socialism where those laws have indeed been at work. But they do not even mention the market law as a unique case today. They hide the metaphysical law of history working today, in the name of the critique of other laws of history in the past.

Notes

(1) The philosophy of E. LEVINAS is one of the sources of this thought. Cfr. Levinas, E.: *Totalidad e infinito. Ensayo sobre la exterioridad* (Castilian translation), Ediciones Sigueme, Salamanca, 1977 and *De Otro modo de ser o má allá de la esencia* (Castilian translation), Ediciones Sigueme, 1987. In a later

book, Levinas summarizes quite well that position when speaking of the love of the neighbor: "What does 'like yourself' mean? BUBER and ROSENZWEIG have had enormous problems of translation with this. They have said 'like unto yourself' will not mean that you love yourself more. Instead of the translation mentioned by you, they have translated 'love your neighbor, he/she is like you'. But if one already agrees to separate the last word of the Hebrew verse 'kamokha' from the beginning of the verse, everything can be read otherwise: 'love your neighbor; that work is like yourself'; 'love your neighbor: yourself is him'; 'that love of the neighbor is what you are yourself' " *Du Dieu qui vient à l'idée* (Of the God coming to mind), Paris 1986, p. 144.

(2) *Libertatis nuntius*, VII, 6. About this, see HINKELAMMERT, F.-J.: *Befreiung, soziale Sunde und subjektive Verantwortlichkeit* in VENETZ, H.-J. and VORGRIMMER, H. (dir.): *Das Lehramt der Kirche und der Schrei der Armen*, Exodus-Edition Liberación, Freiburg-Münster, 1985, pp. 60-76.

(3) J. COMBLIN summarizes in this way that critique of utopia by LT: "The future has been disposed by God, and always remains out of our reach: it is the renewed humanity, the humanity of the new covenant (...). We live the future in the present. The present cannot be sacrificed to the future; on the contrary, the future ought to be lived and realized in the present under the form of an image or resemblance. Not sacrificing today's humans to a future brother/sisterhood and peace, but living that future peace in a present, imperfect but valuable and real image. On the other hand, the present has no meaning in the immediate satisfaction it brings, but in the image of the future it enables to accomplish (in *Mensaje*, Santiago de Chile, July, 1974, p. 298). See also HINKELAMMERT, F.-J.: *Ideologías del desarrollo y dialéctica de la historia*, Editorial Universidad Católica de Chile- Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1970.

(4) Cardinal Raúl SILVA-HENRIQUEZ, archbishop of Santiago, has declared that the CfS had taken a road "actually leading them to renounce their Christianity" (*El Mercurio*, October 25, 1973).

- (5) HEGEL's analysis of jacobinism is very relevant to explain the Chilean military coup and the policy of the putschists: "once in power, those abstractions have offered the most prodigious spectacle ever contemplated since the beginning of humankind: the attempt to start all over again the constitution of a State by destroying all that existed and by relying on thinking, in order to endow that State with a foundation deemed rational. But, at the same time, because they were only abstractions without Idea, that attempt resulted in the most dreadful and cruel situation" (*Philosophy of right*, § 258).
That jacobinism, with its disposition to State terrorism, is also to be noticed in many posterior to the Chilean coup cases, in which a neoliberal ideological scheme has been imposed. They are Jacobins, even though it be only a caricature. One of their slogans comes straight from SAINT-JUST: "no freedom for the enemies of freedom". On the French Revolution, see GALLARDO, H.: *La revolución francesa y el pensamiento político* in *Pasos*, Nr. 26 (November-December, 1989).
- (6) Victim theology is also rooted in the German theology of Nazi times. See: *Los límites de la teología moderna: un texto de Bonhoeffer* in GUTIERREZ, G.: *La fuerza histórica de los pobres*, CEP, Lima, 1979; HINKELAMMERT, F.-J.: *La crítica de la religión en nombre del cristianismo: Dietrich Bonhoeffer* in the collective work *Teología alemana y teología latino-americana de la liberación. Un esfuerzo de diálogo*, DEI, San José, 1990.
- (7) ASSMANN, H. and HINKELAMMERT, F.-J.: *A idolatría do mercado. Ensayo sobre economía e teología*, Editora Vozes, São Paulo, 1989. French translation by the Editions du Cerf.
- (8) HINKELAMMERT, F.-J.: *Paradigmas y metamorfosis del sacrificio de vidas humanas* in ASSMANN, H. (ed.): *Sobre ídolos y sacrificios. René Girard con teólogos de la liberación*, DEI, 1991.
- (9) "The Marxist doctrine of final time is a promise of salvation in this world. Karl Marx has secularized both the fate of the Jewish people the bondage of Egypt and the exodus to the promised land and the hope for O. T. messianic salvation, to transpose them into our time, the time after Jesus Christ. It is a perturbing reduction and an aping of the salvation which, in Jesus Christ was freely given to the whole of humankind. Marxism is an anti-gospel" (HÖFFNER, Cardinal Josef: *Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, Kevelaer, 1975, pp. 171 ss.)
- (10) "(...) traditional and socialist societies present a unitary view. They breathe into any activity a **symbolical solidarity**. The human heart hungers for that bread. Atavistic memories haunt any free human being. **The "naked plate" we find at the heart of democratic capitalism is like a battle field through which the individuals wander in the midst of corpses.** But that wilderness, like the dark night of the soul in the inner journey of the mystics fulfils an indispensable role (...). The field of transcendence is undoubtedly mediatized by literature, religion, family and the kind, but in the last analysis, it is centered around the inner silence of each person" (NOVAK, M. *El espíritu del capitalismo democrático*, Ediciones Tres Tiempos, Buenos Aires, pp. 56 ss. It is the Castilian translation of *The spirit of democratic capitalism*, American Enterprise Institute - Simon and Schuster, New-York, 1982). And he concludes: "The 'children of light' are in many respects a greater danger for the biblical faith than the 'children of darkness'" (*Ibid.*, p. 71).
- (11) It suffices to page through books like PENTECOST, J.D.: *Eventos del porvenir, Estudios de escatología bíblica*, Editorial Vida, Miami, 1984, or LINDSEY, H.: *La agonía del gran planeta tierra*, Editorial Vida, 1988. Over 15 million copies of the latter book written by one of the Raspoutine of Reagan's retinue have been sold.
- (12) The *Declaration of principles* (1974) of the military Chilean government sketches out this line already.
- (13) CAMDESSUS, M.: *Marché-Royaume. La double appartenance* (Market-Kingdom. The double belonging) in *Documents épiscopats. Bulletin du secrétariat de la Conférence des Evêques de France* (Bishops' documents. Bulletin of the Secretariat of the French Bishops' Conference) Nr. 12, July-August, 1992. Camdessus has read a paper on a similar theme to Mexican Christian businessmen at the 19th UNIA-PAC meeting (Monterrey, September 27-29, 1993). The other lecturer was Cardinal Roger ETCHEGARAY (cfr. *Selat*, Lima, Nr. 17).
- (14) H. ASSMANN quotes Roberto CAMPOS in this sense: "Strictly speaking, nobody can opt for the poor directly. The option to be made is actually for the employers who create jobs for the poor" (ASSMANN, H.: *Economía y religión*), DEI, 1994, p. 101.
- (15) See, among others: MOLL, P.G.: *Liberating liberation theology: towards independence from dependency theory* in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, March, 1992; HAIGH, R, SJ: *An alternative vision: an interpretation of liberation theology*, Paulist Press, New-York; SHERMAN, A.L.: *Preferential option. A Christian and Neoliberal strategy for Latin America's poor*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992. On this sacralization of the market in the context of modernity, see DE SANTA ANA, J.: *Teología e modernidade* in SILVA, A. (dir.): *América Latina: 500 anos de evangelização: reflexões teológico-pastorais*, Edições Paulinas, São Paulo, 1990.
- (16) See ASSMANN, H. - HINKELAMMERT, F.-J., *op. cit.*
- (17) Hannah ARENDT magisterially describes this circuit: "The affirmation according to which the Moscow underground railway is the only one in the world is a lie, only if the Bolsheviks do not have the power to destroy all the other ones. In other words, the method of infallible prediction, more than any other method of totalitarian propaganda, denotes its ultimate goal of world conquest, being given that the totalitarian dominator can make all his lies come true and achieve his prophecies only in a world under his control" (ARENDT, H.: *Los orígenes del totalitarismo*, Castilian translation, Taurus, Madrid, 1974). "Then, any discussion on the accurate or erroneous character of the prediction of a totalitarian dictator becomes just as fantastic as discussing with a professional murderer whether his victim is dead or alive, since by killing the said person the assassin can immediately prove the truth of his statement" (*Id.*).

During an interview, Camdessus has described that mechanism, from the IMF viewpoint:

(Question): "What is the social cost of the measures to be taken in order to put order in public finance?"

(Answer): "The question is: what would be, for the people of Costa Rica, the social cost of not adjusting their structure? The cost could be: interruption of internal financing, investment reduction, paralysis of an agreement to renegotiate the debt, interruption of imports. The cost would be recession... Our position does not exactly consist in advising or imposing measures. Our position is one of dialogue... But the fact that the goals have not been met and that we have suspended the credits does not mean a punishment. It is just a reality the country has to face by adapting its policy. We shall pay in the money later (*Entrevista á M. CAMDESUS, director general del FMI in La Nación, San José, 5 March, 1990*).

(18) Dn 2, 31-35 is possibly the best text to describe the apocalyptic situation.

(19) Pentecost's book quoted above (see note 11) is entitled *Evénements de l'avenir* (Future events). These fundamentalists know the inexorable laws governing the future, just as the Soviet Academy of Science did. But the latter still believed in a better future, whereas present fundamentalism believes that the destruction of humankind is decided beforehand.

On the first day of the Gulf War,

President BUSH appeared on TV, accompanied by the fundamentalist preacher Billy GRAHAM, to implore together God's blessing upon that war.

(20) Voir RICHARD, P.: *El pueblo de Dios contra el imperio. Daniel 7 en su contexto literario e histórico in Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latino americana (RIBLA)*, DEI, Nr. 7, (1990); *Apocalipsis. Reconstrucción de la esperanza*, DEI, 1994; MESTERS, C.: *El Apocalipsis: la esperanza de un pueblo que lucha*, Rehue, Santiago du Chili, 1986; FOULKES, R.: *El apocalipsis de San Juan. Una lectura desde América Latina*, Buenos Aires, 1989; SNOEK, J.N.: *Daniel y el Apocalipsis*, DEI, 1993.

(21) See TAMEZ, Elsa: *La razón utópica de Qohelet* in *Pasos*, Nr. 52 (March-April, 1994)

(22) GALLARDO, H.: *Radicalidad de la teoría y sujeto popular en América latina* in *Pasos* (special) Nr. 3/1992; HINKELAMMERT, F-J.: *La lógica de la expulsión del mercado capitalista mundial y el proyecto de liberación* in *Id.* (reprinted in *Cultura de la esperanza y sociedad sin exclusion*, DEI, 1995.

(23) Voir DUSSEL, E.: *La producción teórica de Marx. Un comentario á los "Grundrisse"*, Siglo XXI, Mexico, 1985; *Hacia un Marx desconocido. Un comentario de los manuscritos de 1861-63*, Siglo XXI, Mexico, 1988.

(24) The most remarkable book in this sense is TAMEZ Elsa: *Contra toda condena. La justificación por la fe desde los excluidos*, DEI, 1991. See

SHAULL, R. *La reforma y la teología de la liberación*, DEI, 1993, and also HINKELAMMERT, F-J.: *Las armas ideológicas de la muerte*, DEI, 1981².

(25) See HINKELAMMERT, F-J.: *La fé de Abraham y el Edipo occidental*, DEI, 1991. *Sacrificios humanos y sociedad occidental. Lucifer y la bestia*, DEI, 1991, PIXLEY, J.: *La violencia legal, violencia institucionalizada, la que se comete creyendo servir a Dios*, in *RIBLA*, Nr. 18 (1994).

(26) See RUFIN, J-C.: *L'empire et les nouveaux barbares* (The empire and the new barbarians), Paris, 1991; ENZENSBERGER, H-M.: *Aussichten auf den Bürgerkrieg* (Civil war perspectives), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main, 1993.

((27) In the literature on totalitarianism, only Hannah Arendt accounts for this fact. See ARENDT, H.: *op. cit.*

(28) HINKELAMMERT, F-J.: *La deuda externa de América Latina: el automatismo de la deuda*, DEI, 1988; *Democracia y totalitarismo*, DEI, 1987.

(29) See SUNG, Jung Mo: *Economía. Tema ausente de la teología de la liberación*, DEI, 1994.

(30) ASSMANN, H.: *Teología de la liberación: mirando hacia el frente* in *Pasos*, Nr. 55 (September-October, 1994) and the second chapter of the second part of HINKELAMMERT, F-J.: *Cultura de la esperanza y sociedad sin exclusion*, *op. cit.*

