

Meeting: “ From the Genoa G8 to the “Laudato Si” : The Debt Jubilee?”

19th July 2016

23 August 2016 by **Collective**



15 years after the Genoa [G8](#) and in the year of the Mercy Jubilee we agreed to meet in order to [share](#) one of the most pressing global issues: the progressive getting into debt of the whole planet. On this theme we decided to start a discussion with laical and faithful thinkers who have been engaged on this topic for years.

The collective responsibility of mercy, which means giving everybody an opportunity of life, requires to get to a public exposure of indifferences and reservations and to a public, unanimous undertaking of responsibilities: we need to flush out the privileges and the hypocrisies that contribute to make the dominant classes richer and richer, and more and more arrogant, while the oppressed and cast out portions of peoples get poorer and poorer, and more and more exploited.

For several years debt has been used as an emergence on a local, national and international scale, with the aim to make us accept the liberalistic policies of public heritage alienation, [common goods](#) mercification,

public services privatization, democracy and rights theft as unavoidable. Actually, debt represents the shock which is necessary “to render politically unavoidable what is socially unacceptable”.

In Europe too we see the supremacy of the financial ideology and of the [balance](#) obligations which have created debt and inequalities and woken up selfishnesses, nationalisms and isolationist spurs: these widen the grooves of a soulless Europe and bring the history clock back to periods marked by dramatic conflicts.

Under our eyes the horror of exclusions and of the most dangerous construction of material and mental walls takes place: it is the consequence of a misguided sense of limit which strikes human targets, instead of hitting the logic inspiring this finance without rules.

An extractive economy seems actually to prevail, bringing along privatization of common goods, destruction, wars, huge migrations and irreversible climatic changes that strike vulnerable areas of the planet: the result is an ecologic debt, paid mainly by countries which are not responsible for these environmental disasters. Moreover, these countries are excluded from the wealth distribution, and crunched under a mostly illegitimate public debt, which puts them in a worse and worse condition of slavery towards an economic system that is exploiting both the planet and mankind.

This is also the direction taken by the “Apostolic Council for Justice and Peace” in the message sent by its President, Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, to the participants of this meeting “ From the G8 to the Laudato Si’: the Debt Jubilee?”.

This short excerpt of the Cardinal’s message is both brightening and politically relevant: “ In the last years, as a consequence of the economic and financial international crisis, the problem of public debt has strongly appeared also in the developed countries economies, particularly in Europe. Looking at a debt crisis which has become more and more global, it would be advisable (in these last months of the Mercy Jubilee year) to think again about the opportunity of reducing, if not even remitting, debt to those countries which are unable to lay the foundations of human development for their people, especially the young generations, because they are crushed by this heavy burden.

In the “Misericordiae Vultus”, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Mercy Jubilee, Pope Francis reminds us that “ the summon of obedience to law cannot hinder the attention to those necessities touching human dignity”.

The Cardinal’s message also underlines the declaration of the African Centre for Development and Strategy Studies, stating that “ Debt demolishes schools, hospitals and nursing homes: its effects are no less devastating than those of a war.”

The ideology of debt puts democracy under a heavy set back: it pre-establishes political and economic choices both on a national and local level, endangers the public and social function of proximity bodies and saps the social tissue of communities.

Taking action against the ideology and materiality of debt represents therefore a priority pledge we want collectively to take on.

Not for the first time, in these 15 years, social and ecclesial movements have met, in order to [share](#) analyses, reflections and social actions to fight the “killing economy” and the “invisible tyranny” of financial markets (Evangelii Gaudium 53, 56).

Together we have undertaken actions for the democratic control of financial assets movements; together we have fought the free Exchange treaties (from the Bolkenstein directive to the current TTIP – hypothesis for a Free Exchange Treaty between the USA and the EU); together we have promoted sensitization and mobilization in defence of common goods and for a new model of society and democracy.

Together again, we think our duty today to act towards the promotion of the liberation of peoples and communities from this illegitimate and hateful debt, at every level, fostering direct participation of people.

In our country too routes of debt accountant surveys and audit started quite a long time ago in several areas and municipalities (Rome, Naples, Parma, Livorno etc.), exposing the power geography hiding behind debt.

Starting exactly from these experiences, the birth of a Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (Cadtm) has been set going in Italy too: it is a collective route which wants to evaluate the theme of the debt cancellation as a nodal point for a fairer economy and finance.

It is on the basis of these shared reflections and considerations that

We, gathered in Genoa today, after this day of joint work, approve the present Paper of common intents and express our [interest](#) to commit ourselves either as single or organizations, proposing the construction of a route to every interested and active committed group, on a local, national and international level, with the following aims:

- a) promoting a different social and economic model that puts the full dignity of every person in the centre, in complete respect of the life of our planet, our common home;
- b) promoting a sensitization campaign on the topics of debt, finance and social wealth which is able to express these complex themes in simple forms;
- c) starting the institution of a Survey Popular Commission to find out the truth on the Italian public debt, in order to know if and to what extent this debt is illegitimate.

Following what has come out from the common discussion of this day, we think of a route:

- 1) that starts also from local and sectorial realities (Welfare, education, essential services, great works etc), because the pressure of austerity and of social cuts is more deeply felt on specific topics and starting from beneath; this creates also a space for a bigger involvement, that can produce a new common sense and form alliances with different parts of civil society;
- 2) that is accompanied by a facilitation group, which can draft a first work proposal; this will be submitted to every interested group, for a first national appointment which will also have to take into consideration the date fixed for the Italian Constitutional Referendum;
- 3) that is characterized by a popular work starting from beneath, in order to make its contents accessible; it will be necessary to use an effective form of communication that points out the relationship between social uneasiness and debt. We have to make people feel this theme crucial for their everyday life, creating consciousness on the ties between debt and welfare decline;
- 4) that specifically involves young people and competent figures;
- 5) that shows the features of a popular open movement, inclusive towards social, cultural and religious differences;
- 6) that defines effective strategies with short, medium and long period aims and recurring feasibility checks;
- 7) that questions and invests institutions too, without being bound by any proximity to the same institutions;

8)that entwines with other campaigns already started on public finance; the first will be the one for socialization of “Cassa Depositi e Prestiti” ;

9) that is connected to the defense and fulfilment of article n. 47 of the Italian Constitution, in order to encourage and guard access to popular saving and regulate credit;

10) that puts the experiences of the towns rebelling against local debt in a grid ,so that people are able to get back the right to insolvency of illegitimate debt.

<http://www.cadtm.org/Meeting-From-the-Genoa-G8-to-the>