

WELFARE OR A HEALTHY ECONOMY?

One of the slogans of the neoconservatives is that a healthy economy is far better than any welfare scheme and, moreover, welfare programs are a drain on the economy. This is one of their arguments for dismantling the welfare state.

At first sight the idea is correct. Indeed, if the economy is healthy, then there is no need to support the unemployed and the poor. But those who use the argument do not presuppose this concept of health: to them an economy is healthy only if it grows and thereby enriches the business class, regardless of the income or lack of income of the underprivileged.

However, one must admit that the welfare state is not a stable solution to the problem of social injustice. Indeed, it does not fully satisfy the

poor because it does not give enough; it does not satisfy the rich because it taxes too heavily; and it cannot satisfy anyone because it is not a solution but only a palliative to the problem of unemployment.

The question then is not to dismantle the welfare state leaving nothing behind it, but to design a social reform that will make welfare unnecessary: that will institute a just society including a genuinely healthy economy.