

Vatican by Augustinus

Pope greets Schiller Institute

The Pope's appeal for policies based on the American republican tradition contrasts to what Washington is doing.

On Friday, April 12, Vatican Radio ran an interview on its afternoon newscast with a German representative of the Schiller Institute, Gabriele Liebig, in which she announced the international demonstrations called for April 13 by the Institute to protest unemployment, illegal drugs, and hunger in the world, and to stop the genocidal policies of the International Monetary Fund. Over the radio station with the world's largest broadcasting radius, Mrs. Liebig put forward the proposal of Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche, that President Reagan convene an international summit with the concerned countries to discuss and resolve the debt problem: "We ask that the Pope bless this summit, which should be dedicated to Indira Gandhi in honor of that great leader of the non-aligned countries."

No blessing has come as yet for the Gandhi Memorial Summit, but on April 14, the Pope after his customary Sunday Angelus warmly greeted the large delegation of the Schiller Institute gathered in St. Peter's Square under the huge banners which had been used in the previous day's demonstration. John Paul II said, "I especially greet the delegation grouped under the banner of the Schiller Institute on which I read 'War on Drugs.'"

The Pope also struck a theme similar to the Schiller Institute's calls for the United States to break with the IMF, by appealing to Americans to return to the United States' republican tradition on the issues of Central America and the debt—which would certainly contrast with the policies

Washington has been pursuing. On April 13, while hundreds of thousands of people around the world from Stockholm to Mexico City were marching together with the Schiller Institute and the Movement for the Inalienable Rights of Man, Pope John Paul II received in the Vatican a delegation of American senators bringing him a letter from the U.S. President on Central America. The Pope's response was: "It is extremely evident from history and from an accurate reading of the signs of the times that the American people have a special mission of service in the world. God has abundantly blessed your forebears and the land they settled in: It is no wonder that he permits so many people throughout the world to place so much hope in America. How many refugees and immigrants have found new life in your land!"

He continued: "In order to make a lasting contribution of service, in order to promote the true solidarity of peoples, America must remain faithful to herself as 'One nation under God,' being truly conscious—in the expression of your own Declaration of Independence—of 'nature's God,' of the 'Creator,' of the 'Supreme Judge,' and of the 'Protection of Divine Providence.'"

"In the awareness of this dependence on God, America is then able to sustain the defense of those rights which your Founding Fathers reverently spoke of as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.'"

The Pope concluded with a strong exhortation: "As Senators of the United

States you are in a splendid position to make a monumental contribution to the defense of life, the preservation of liberty and the attainment of true human happiness for countless men, women, and children—millions of whom are yet unborn."

Meanwhile, the press organ of the Holy See published the statement of the Permanent Council of the Peruvian Bishops' Conference on the occasion of that country's elections.

The document, inspired by the Pope's speeches during his recent visit to Ibero-America, reiterated that "Any political project must start off from, necessarily, man himself, his dignity, and the inalienable rights that such dignity of the person brings."

Citing expressly the Pope's words, the bishops stressed that two great problems afflict Peru and the Latin American countries: scarcity of jobs and foreign debt. On the debt, the Pope had said: "The international community for its part, and the institutions operating in the context of cooperation among nations, should apply just measures in their economic relations with the developing countries. They must abandon all discriminatory treatment in trade. Offering the necessary financial aid, they must seek, by mutual agreement, those conditions which allow them to aid these peoples to get out of a situation of poverty and underdevelopment; renouncing imposing financial conditions that, in the long run, instead of helping these populations to improve their situation, drive them in deeper, till they reach desperate conditions leading to conflicts of incalculable gravity."

Obviously this quotation from this speech of the Pope, just a few days before the interim IMF meeting in Washington, sounds like a warning against the IMF's austerity policies becoming codified in that meeting.