
Interview: Publio Fiori



Parliamentarian calls for club of anti-IMF politicians

The Honorable Publio Fiori is a member of the executive of the Christian Democratic group in the Italian House of Deputies. He served on the councils of Rome and the Latium region during the 1970s, and in 1978, was seriously wounded in a terrorist attack by the Red Brigades. In 1979, he was elected to parliament with 100,000 preferential votes.

He chaired the Feb. 15 session of the Committee of Italian Parliamentarians Against Starvation (PARIFA) in Rome. He was interviewed on March 4 by EIR's Rome correspondent; the interview is translated from the Italian.

EIR: You have recently engaged in activities that favor the development of the emerging countries, both with your participation at the Schiller Institute's conference on St. Augustine in Rome Nov. 1-3, and by contributing to organizing the conference of the PARIFA a few days ago. Can you give us some details of what you are doing?

Fiori: When we started to concern ourselves with these problems, which was a quite a few years back, we linked up with the ideals of the Catholic tradition that arose and grew around Pope Paul VI in the 1960s; at that time, the initiative was launched to place Italy in the center of North-South relations with a revolutionary concept with respect to the past. That is, no longer conceiving of the West's attitude as a kind of neo-colonialism masked as aid to the countries of the Third and Fourth World, but attempting to encourage in those countries a form of social, cultural, and economic development that would truly eliminate the risks that existed, and still exist, for peace in the world. That is, to speak of peace in the world—when there are 300 million persons in danger of dying, when there are 30 million persons who die of starvation every year, when there are 10,000 children under the age of two who die of hunger every day—is an abstraction, a philosophical exercise, an illusion.

Whoever really wants to build peace must act so that the African continent and that of Latin America can finally join in one future.

Italy and Belgium are the only two countries in the world which have passed laws—in Italy two laws—to institutionalize aid to developing countries. At the last international conference, 10 days ago, various foreign heads of state or their representatives came to Rome, and they recognized that

we have created a law that earmarks 0.35% of the GNP for aid to Third World countries.

But naturally, the appropriation of these large sums attracted the appetite of the big financial groups, and therefore, a conflict opened up inside parliament and in the political parties on the distribution of such sums. The balance was not positive. While a part actually did go to help the inhabitants of the developing countries, a large part unfortunately has been the object of big business. Many Italian groups succeeded in getting the Foreign Ministry Department for Cooperation or the Italian Aid Fund to send the developing countries, not what they needed, but their unsold inventories. The charge that was leveled against us by the developing countries at the recent conference is that, yes, Italy is an example of a new way of linking up with the problems of peace and development, but we have not respected the true needs of populations. They told us, "Be careful: in the future, don't give us what you don't need, but give us what we need; don't give us what's lying in the bottom of your warehouses, which for us can be useless—if not downright harmful—but what we ask for, for development and for survival."

The fundamental theme which has guided our action is: no to emergency aid, yes to extraordinary integrated interventions. What does this mean? No to aid that keeps people alive but maintains the status of economic and political subjugation of the developing countries vis-à-vis the West, which allows them to survive, but not to live and develop, thereby achieving a parity of conditions in North-South relations. Yes to extraordinary integrated and localized interventions that allow populations to eat, become educated, understand, develop themselves, and finally to weave with Italy and the West a relationship of parity.

. . . There are countries where people are dying of hunger because they lack sufficient food—they don't have grain, for example—but they are forced to produce coffee for export to pay the debts to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. But the total exports are no longer sufficient to pay even part of the huge debt, which has reached the monstrous figure of \$10 trillion, if my information is correct. This is the source of the positions taken by [Peruvian] President García and also by the President [Abdou Diouf] of Senegal, the two leaders of the new course of the Third and Fourth

World countries.

Now, at this point the West should ask itself: Do we really want to behave as the Soviet Union does, which keeps these people deprived of food, but supplies them weapons in order to wed their desire to be free from hunger with guerrilla warfare and uprisings, which are pushed against the West? Or instead do we want to aim toward economic and spiritual growth of the developing countries. So, going back to the teachings of St. Augustine, we must fight to create a new great ideal frontier for the West, so that the bridge with the African, Asian, and Latin American countries becomes spiritual and moral, even before it comes to actual aid.

We have rejected the aid system and we are linked in some way to the effort, which unfortunately failed in the 1960s, of the U.N.'s Development Decade for the Third and Fourth World countries. But we have also understood that that plan failed because it was drawn up by the world financial and banking system in such a way that, behind the screen of an aid intervention, it frankly contained a plan of exploitation and neo-colonialism, which is today the line of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. If we don't understand that such aid is useless if it has no soul within it, we do not understand what the real cosmic, world problem is, which is about to lead the world into war, ruin, and destruction; because the problem is not resolved with quantitative financial means only. The funds help, but before the funds, we need a philosophical and cultural decision.

We must realize that the laws of economics alone would not be sufficient to feed all the human beings of our planet, if we don't first accept the discovery of a link between the laws of morality and those of economics: Detached from morality, the laws of economics have never resolved any problem, at least, the laws of free-market economics and those of historical collectivism, Marxism, do not resolve problems, since they leave out immense strata of people. I want to invoke the Extraordinary Bishops' synod, the words also recently pronounced by the Pope, and to recall Cardinal Ratzinger's speech at the Urbaniana University [on Nov. 19, 1985—ed.]: Either we rediscover a new type of solidarity which is built on the true principles of Christianity or, on this road, the gap between us and the developing countries will widen. We call them developing countries, which is a euphemism. They are dying: The last figures given by the FAO tell us that the food needs of the African countries of the Sahel have grown in the last 10 years. That is, the more we give, the more they need, and the more funds we bring in, the more they starve, which means something has gone wrong. We try to give *carit pelosa* ["hairy charity," an Italian expression meaning apparent generosity inspired by an ulterior motive—ed.] as the saying goes in Rome—charity, not to resolve others' problems, but to try and solve our own problems.

But this is a myopic vision, because in reality, we are not solving our problems, but frankly, the West is preparing its own eclipse. I would like for politicians throughout the world

to reflect on this fact, because already the wisest men of culture are realizing that the West, with this policy toward the Third World, if it is not blind, is certainly nearsighted, and is destroying the possibility for building a real relationship with the countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. And we all run the risk of seeing these countries plunged into an orbit which is no longer the Western one, which would mean a military upheaval in the world balance.

EIR: At the Schiller Institute's St. Augustine conference last November, several developing sector participants took up proposals to reform the international monetary system which were similar to those of American economist Lyndon LaRouche's Operation Juárez. What do you think about this?
Fiori: This problem of developing-sector indebtedness and the responses that are given to such a problem are significant. They bear witness to two strategies. One is the strategy of Castro and hence, of the Communist parties, to exacerbate the conflict—essentially planning a revolution in the developing sector countries that have Western-type regimes, to

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force them to break with the West; on the other hand, the position of Peru and Senegal, which, on the contrary, wish with all their might to keep their relations to the West, but which know that to keep it, they must not fall into the two extremes, of paying all the debts, which would be death for their countries, or not paying anything, which would mean a total break with the Western countries.

We must find a middle way, and this middle way carries with it these points: the reduction of the quota of the GNP of the developing countries which goes to debt payment, which quota cannot surpass 15-20% of revenues; moreover, the West must utilize and appropriate funds for the developing countries which aim at self-subsistence, which are bilateral accords for intervention, i.e., not emergency ones but for independent development; third, the use of part of these funds for a cultural exchange, such that young leaders of the advanced countries can go to work in the developing countries and vice versa, youth from the developing sector countries come to live and work in our countries, because only by an osmosis of this type can we build a common future.

EIR: How do you see the need for a change in U.S. policy toward the developing sector, which today unfortunately tends not just toward distancing them from the West, but even toward their destabilization?

Fiori: I don't want to seem naïve, but I am flabbergasted, because I cannot understand how the United States—a rich country from the economic standpoint, and above all, from the standpoint of the tradition of freedom which represents, without a doubt, the reference point of the entire Free World—I don't understand how it has not understood that it must put itself in the lead of a great world movement for solidarity among peoples; I don't understand why the United States does not understand that the right path is not only that of building ever-more-perfected systems of defense and offense, but of creating firm ties of solidarity, ties with the millions, the billions of human beings who essentially want their right to life guaranteed. The world challenge will be won by him who applies completely the principles of St. Augustine. It seems like an abstract idea, but actually the future of the world is at stake between those who deny the dignity of man and those who instead believe and work from the concept of the *Filioque*, who believe that man draws his dignity and his responsibility directly from God.

But whoever expects to go into Africa or Latin America to get rich, is just working for his own destruction.

EIR: You proposed at the PARIFA meeting the creation of a club of politicians against the International Monetary Fund. Could you give details on this idea?

Fiori: I am convinced that this concept, this idea is an idea-force. I think that it, like all idea-forces when they are right, have a pulling power, and hence I don't think that to make this idea win, it is necessary to create a huge line-up with quantitatively imposing means. I think it is enough to start to bring together the political leaders who in the various Western countries understand that this is the decisive move. They must also link up with the political representatives of the Third and Fourth World, who have understood that this is the route to follow. Now, we of PARIFA have decided that from now on, we will go outside Italy. Next month we will organize a meeting in Paris, then Brussels, then Madrid.

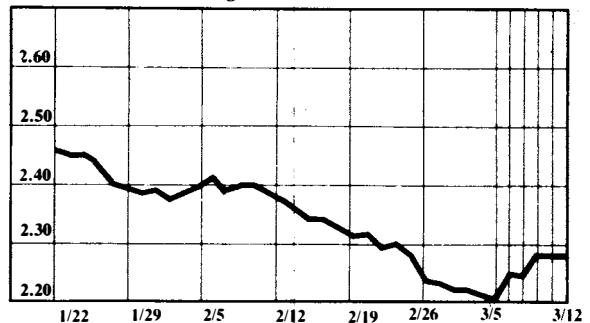
That is still not enough. It is not possible to face and resolve these problems if European parliamentarians do not link up with those of the United States. It seems impossible to me that within the U.S. Congress there are not men who can understand these problems.

And that's still not enough, because such a link-up must be carried out with all the developing sector politicians, who have understood that what is at stake in their countries is not just freedom, vis-à-vis the East, but their lives are at stake. We must put together an international club, without superstructures, which poses as its central objective modifying the international monetary system, changing the rules, the objectives, the behavior of the IMF and World Bank, to give an immediate, real hope, to the developing countries.

Currency Rates

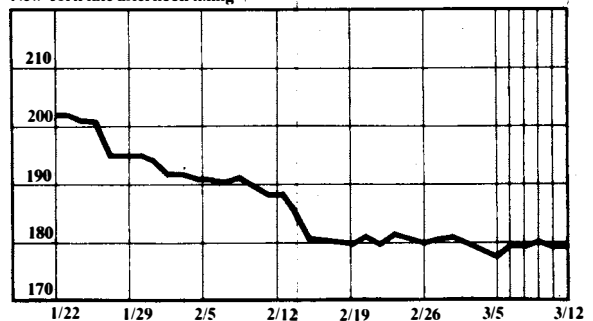
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



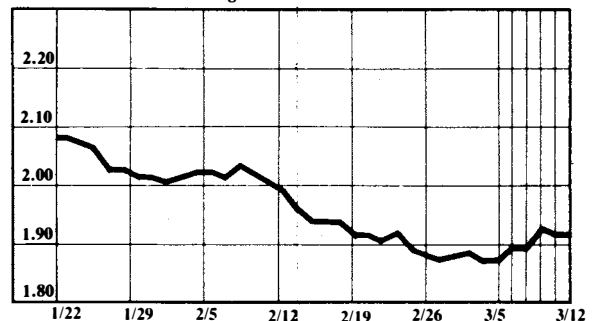
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing

