

Vatican Denies Softened Stand

Says Analysis of Excommunication Decree Merely Clarifies View Toward Pro-Reds.

Vatican City, July 27 (A. P.).—A Vatican informant said today that the editorial interpretation published yesterday in the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, of the recent excommunication decree of the Roman Catholic Church was intended to clarify it and did not indicate any softening of the Vatican's attitude toward Communist supporters.

The editorial, he said, was aimed at rebutting contentions of Communist leaders that a person could be at once a Communist and a Roman Catholic. Palmiro Togliatti, Communist boss, had advanced such a view in Rome, and French Communist leaders have made similar statements seeking to minimize the effect of the decree.

The Vatican newspaper wished to emphasize, said the informant, that Catholics who freely and knowingly support Communism in many cases do so because they have been misled. These Catholics, it was stressed, are not excommunicated from the Church, but can be denied the sacraments—baptism, confirmation, holy communion, penance, extreme unction, holy orders and matrimony.

The informant said Osservatore's aim was to draw a distinction between Catholics who favor Communism without adopting its basic doctrines and those who aid and support the "anti-Christian and materialistic" doctrine.

Red Press Reacts Promptly.

The Communist press reacted swiftly today to the Osservatore interpretation, saying it demonstrated that the excommunication decree was inspired by political motives.

The pro-Communist newspaper Il Paese said that Pope Pius XII, dissatisfied with United States policy, had taken the lead in the ideological war against Communism.

"After a long phase in which the policy of the church was in the tow of the Department of State, today the Pope has taken over the ideological initiative, just as his predecessors did in past times whenever they lost their political confidence in this or that emperor, ancient or modern," the newspaper said.

Il Paese said confusion had resulted from the Vatican decree and indicated it thought l'Osservatore's restatement was aimed at such Catholic commentators who had minimized the scope of the Vatican order. The newspaper then charged that the Osservatore interpretation showed clearly that the decree "was born on a political basis and has strictly political aims."

The Communist party newspaper, l'Unita, said the Osservatore interpretation "proved the confusion reigning in the clerical field since the publication" (of the decree)."

Poles Push Church Pact.

Warsaw, July 27 (A. P.).—The Polish Government moved today to prevent the enforcement here of the Vatican's excommunication decree against Communists. At the same time it announced acceptance of a church proposal to negotiate a church-state agreement.

The Government forbade Roman Catholic priests to excommunicate any Pole belonging to the Communist party, denouncing as an "act of aggression" against Poland the Vatican's decree threatening excommunication. At

the same time the Government announced that it had agreed to a proposal by the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Poland "to start negotiations between the Government and the episcopate, aiming at a settlement of mutual relations."

Czech Reds Assail Pope.

Prague, July 27 (A. P.).—A Slovak Communist newspaper charged today that Pope Pius XII had entered into an alliance with President Truman to have capitalism from destruction by fighting socialist progress. Pravda said that the Vatican "didn't employ excommunication against the Fascist warmakers, but now uses it against progressive people who want to improve their lot on earth."

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