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TO: MR. EARL BRENNAN

FROM: Harte

February 2, 1945

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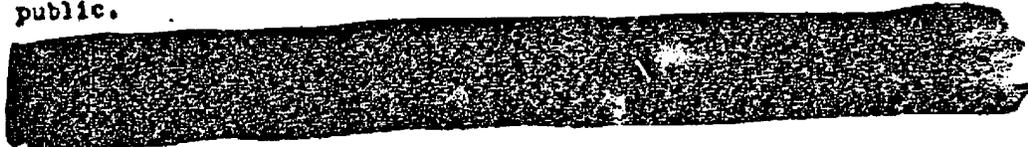
Catholic Church and "Christian Communist" Movement

The Catholic Church, through a formal statement in the L'Osservatore Romano--as previously reported--and in other ways, has condemned the movement in Italy known as Sinistra Cristiana or Catholic or Christian Communists. This action was taken despite the fact that a number of the organizers of the movement were, and presumably are still, practicing Catholics. A few priests were connected with the organization and a fair number of young Jesuit-educated laymen as well as many others.

The movement is opposed solely on religious grounds and not for any economic teachings proposed. The fundamental point, from the Church's point of view, is that Communism is anti-God and anti-religion. Even assuming that Communism in Italy did not advocate any anti-religious measures and had purely a neutral or negative attitude towards God it would still be opposed by the Catholic Church. It is suggested that in a Catholic country a system with even a neutral attitude towards God may not be accepted.

The aims of Sinistra Cristiana may or may not be acceptable to the Church but the link and at least tacit approval of Communism, even by the name of the organization, is opposed. It is recalled that the late Pope Pius XI was most explicit, "No one who wishes to save Christian civilization may cooperate with Communism in any undertaking whatsoever." (It is important to realize that the prohibition was against cooperation with Communism and not against cooperation necessarily with Communists.)

The position taken by the proponents of the Sinistra Cristiana movement was that Communism is going to be a vital or even dominating factor in Italy and the Christian interpretation of the system should be brought before the public.



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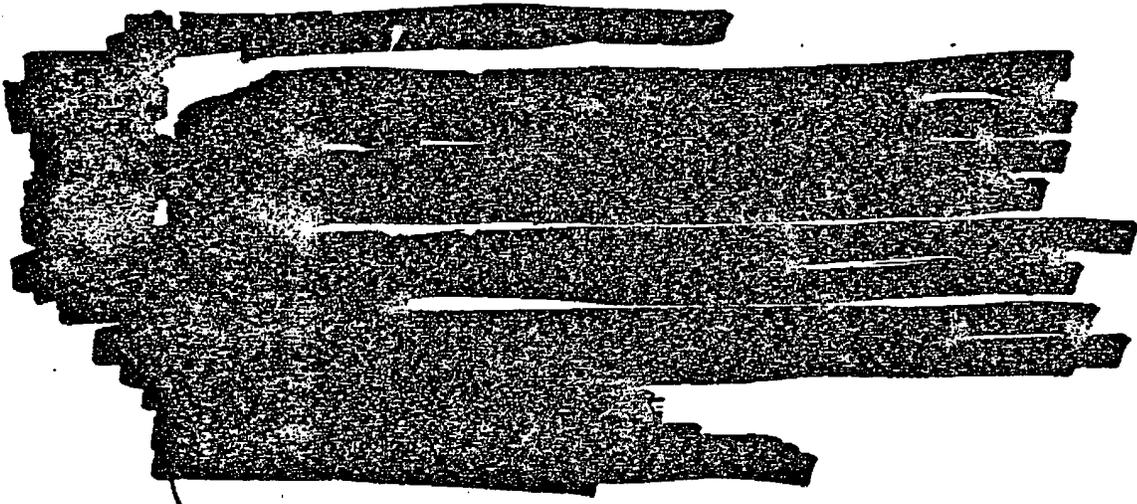
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Sheltering of refugees

During the German occupation one German religious house in Rome served as a center of organization and activity for aiding escaped allied personnel. This work was carried on despite the fact that the German Embassy in Rome knew of the work and cautioned the German religious house to be careful but did not take steps to restrict the activity.

At present a number of fascists have been given refuge in certain religious establishments in Rome. The number is small since in relation to the many sheltered during the German occupation.





Cost of Living Problems for Clergy

The clergy in Rome are having a serious cost of living problem. Most of them have to buy directly or indirectly their food and clothing etc. Prices of course are very high. Salaries are extremely low. Officials at the Vatican only receive a few thousand liras a month. Fees for various services were stabilized years ago and at present lire exchange mean almost nothing.

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### Russian Propaganda and Relief

The Russian Government is alleged to be financing its propaganda activities in Italy through the sale of English and American gold coins. On the black market these are said to bring 20 times the official rate of exchange for currency. A small quantity of gold now brings a large supply of liras.

Source: A Swiss national resident in Italy for some years who may or may not know.

The Russian Government through the Italian Communist party is alleged to have workers in every district with money and supplies to aid those in need of relief. It is said the relief is extended even to ex-Fascists and membership in the Communist party is not a condition for obtaining relief.

### Russian Films Backed by Fascists

A number of distinct sources in the Italian film business report that the G.D.B. firm which is handling the distribution of Russian films in Italy is actually backed by Scalera Films, the latter one of the most notorious of the Fascist film enterprises.

Scalera made his fortune constructing Italian ports in the colonies. He had difficulty in collecting some of the many millions and, as a condition, he was told by Mussolini to invest 30 million liras in films. This was done by Scalera with considerable success both from the film point of view and to keep the way open for more business in the construction lines.

It is alleged the Russian authorities wanted the best experienced film backers available irrespective of their political beliefs. That is supposed to explain why Scalera is behind the Russian film distribution in Italy.

Source: Individuals in, or connected with, Italian film business.

Comment: The report may be true or one source may have widely circulated the story and it was picked up throughout the trade.

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### Italians & "U.S. Broken Promises"

The enormous goodwill which the Italians have had for the United States may be lost in the next year or two. Unquestionably from many Italian sources the spirit was at its height the day the Americans came liberating Rome. First doubts came in the minds of some when conditions did not approach the alleged "promises" and simultaneously the Americans began to turn over more and more authority to the English.

The question of the Four Freedoms, or at least some of them, is quite academic to the average Italian. But he did expect to be better fed. Many feel it had been promised. They point to what they say was a promise last Fall of the President of the U.S. that the bread ration would be increased to 300 grams from 200. Nothing has happened. They are told that transport is the big problem: transport overseas and in Italy. And so they wonder when the Italian press writes that only 70 of a promised 1700 American trucks have been delivered in Italy.

One current story which is alleged to be true is that one Italian tells his friend---"I could slap my face, when I think I wept for joy when the Americans arrived in Rome!"

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### Americans Found Poor Customers

The Italian businessmen are not doing the business they had expected with the Americans. It is alleged that the American, officer as well as soldier, will not buy anything that costs more than \$10. Art dealers, book sellers and others who did a good business with both Germans and Italians (later seeking inflation insurance) during the Nazi occupation are disappointed. It is further said that the military authorities do not encourage but rather discourage buying by Americans of any articles of value in Italy.

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Source of items above: A German-born Jew who has been in Italy for 15 years.

**Attitudes in Albania**

The new administration in Albania is very cool towards, and suspicious of, England and the United States. Russian influence is great and there are signs that Albania will adopt a government-controlled economy somewhat on Russian lines.

The attitude towards the English is much more severe than that towards the United States. Two months ago the British mission was not at all liked and on a couple of occasions serious difficulties were only narrowly averted.

Likewise, but to a lesser degree, the new leaders of Albania appeared not to be well-disposed towards the U.S. The minister of culture who has spent most of his life seemed to go out of his way to indicate a lack of friendly feeling towards the U.S.

The present Government of Albania apparently intends to have close and friendly relations with the Yugoslavia of Marshall Tito.

Despite the long partisan struggle against the Germans, the Albania leaders are ready for more fighting if things do not go the way they wish. They seem ready to fight about the border with Greece.

For films and probably other imports the Albania government is considering adopting a monopoly as Yugoslavia has already done. This involves a serious question for American business in general because American business has been opposed to having trade with foreign government monopolies.

Source: An OWI film man who was in first <sup>Allied</sup> plane to land at the Albania capital airport following the liberation of the city. He was in the country several weeks and had contact with government officials and businessmen.

*For Journal -  
and Hoover  
In connection  
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P.S.  
Curt*

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Catholic Church & Christian  
Communist Movement -  
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