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TO : Reports Office  
THROUGH : Chief, SICE  
          : Chief, SI  
FROM : ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Crabbe  
SUBJECT : Vatican policy towards Soviet Russia  
          : --conversation with Under-Secretary  
          : of State Mons. Montini

Mons. Montini is the "substitute" Secretary of State in the Vatican and the closest friend and advisor to Pope Pius XII. Since the death of Cardinal Maglione, the late Secretary of State, Mons. Montini has been the real head of all Vatican political activities. Mons. Tardini, who has the title of Vice-Secretary of State in the Vatican, is inactive and seems to be ill. I have known Montini for more than ten years and have contacted him several times. He has been aware for a long time of my political opinion and of my activity in the Hungarian Legation to the Holy See.

I expressed to Mons. Montini my opinion that the position of the Catholic Church in Hungary is in some danger, due to the inevitable conflict between the feudal system of the Church and the new democratic movement. I asked him for his opinion in regard to supporting other, more progressive Catholic elements in the country, elements which are well known by him and by me. I asked him whether it would not be possible to make it known that the Holy Father holds a different view from that of the reactionary representatives of the Church in Hungary. I told Mons. Montini that as soon as communication facilities have been established with Hungary I shall be able to consult with my old friends in this progressive Catholic movement, which has existed for some time.

In the course of the conversation which followed my statements (which were made only for the purpose of beginning the conversation and drawing out his opinions), Mons. Montini told me that he was most anxious to get news from Hungary.

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and Central Europe. The Vatican receives little news from that area because communication between the Budapest Nuncio and the Vatican has been cut off. Concerning my question about the progressive and democratic groups in Hungary, it is Mons. Montini's opinion that the Vatican cannot abandon the so-called "reactionary" Church circles in Hungary because they have belonged so long and have been so strong an influence in the tradition and history of Hungary. Even though the Vatican may not agree with the attitude of these traditional groups, it cannot condemn them. Concerning the situation in Hungary and in Eastern and Central Europe, Mons. Montini told me (and stressed this statement) that the Vatican will not recognize the Debrecen Government until the Holy See has secured absolute proof that this Government really is in control of the country. He said that although the members of the Debrecen Government may be well-known figures in the country, this fact does not mean that they can actually and freely control the country. The policy of the Vatican towards the Debrecen Government is that the Government depends on the measure of Russian influence in Hungary. Because of the anti-clerical movements in Hungary, Mons. Montini was not completely sure that the Budapest Nuncio would be able to remain at his post. Several times he pointed out the fact that Russian policy is very clever; he stated that although the Russians may seem kindly disposed toward the Church, what they really want remains to be seen. Several times, very emphatically, he condemned Russia's policy in Poland. I remarked to Mons. Montini that there was not such a change in the Vatican's policy toward Rumania, and Montini replied that the Vatican could not do otherwise because in Rumania there had been no constitutional change.

At the end of our conversation, I asked Mons. Montini to help me secure an audience with His Holiness. I asked that this conference be made in the form of a family audience, so that I would be received first with my whole family and later alone. Mons. Montini made no promise about it, but I have also tried through other channels to secure such an audience.

My contacts with Mons. Montini will now be continuous, in a certain sense, and I have hopes that the Vatican will be interested in talking to an independent person for their Danubian purposes.

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