

Pope Pius Saw Communism as Threat To His Dream of World Peace

By United Press International
Pope Pius XII was an implacable foe of Communism, and the last half of his reign was devoted to a relentless struggle against its "cruel and bloody irony."

His life was devoted to the furtherance of peace and his personal motto was "peace, the work of justice." Communism, he believed, spawned wars and was the greatest threat to his dream of peace.

But he served through an era that knew no peace, when the bloody World War II was succeeded by the "cold war," the development of the atomic and hydrogen bombs, and the persecution of Christianity by the Communists.

Though saddened by his struggle, the Pope remained convinced of the eventual victory of good over evil.

The first serious illness of his reign came after the exhausting ceremonies of the consistory of Jan. 12, 1953. He suffered, on Jan. 22, a severe attack of bronchitis that kept him in his apartment for two months. But he recovered fully and had a vigorous year.

Near-Fatal Illness

Early in 1954, he fell ill again of gastritis stemming from fatigue caused by overwork and concern over world conditions. The acute stage of his illness, accompanied by hiccups, started Jan. 25, 1954, and the following day he canceled all audiences. It was March 19 before he made a public appearance at a window of the Vatican palace.

On Sept. 16, 1954, he suffered a brief recurrence of gastritis at his summer residence but refused to cancel public appearances.

On Dec. 2, 1954, the Pope suffered a near-fatal crisis just 12 hours after having a vision of Christ at his bedside at dawn. A team of five doctors struggled to save his life, feeding him intravenously. On Dec. 16, he had im-



POPE PIUS XII
Saw U.S. Importance

proved sufficiently to allow an x-ray examination showing he was suffering from gastritis and hernia of the esophagus. By Christmas day, he was able to appear at a sickroom window to answer the cheers of pilgrims in St. Peter's square.

Despite the purges, the wholesale arrests of priests and nuns, the jailing of cardinals, the Roman Catholic church grew during his pontificate from 375 million to 428 million. And although spiritual leader of so many, Pius was temporal sovereign of the world's smallest independent state, Vatican City, with an area of only 108.7 acres.

Named Four U.S. Cardinals

His reign was noted for the importance he attached to the United States, first recognizing its importance in the postwar world and later acting toward it with a special benevolence, marked by his naming of four American cardinals and his interruption of his summer vacation in 1953 to dedicate the \$4 million home of the Pontifical North American college in Rome.

High scholars and ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic Church are in accord that the major theological decision of his reign was the proclamation of the dogma of the Virgin Mary's bodily ascension to heaven.

The proclamation climaxed the 1950 Jubilee Holy Year and was pronounced by the Pope in an open air ceremony in St. Peter's Square Nov. 1, 1950, before an estimated 500,000 pilgrims from the four corners of the world.

A dogma is a truth proposed by the Catholic Church for the belief of the faithful as an article of divine revelation. His proclamation coincided with his report he had seen the "miracle of the sun" for three days at that time, and Catholics interpreted this as a sign of divine pleasure at

the proclamation.

The Pope, a brilliant scholar who spoke many languages, will be remembered for his efforts to correct a widespread belief there is an irreconcilable conflict between science and religion.

Study of Evolution

In an address to the Pontifical Academy of Science Nov. 22, 1951, the pontiff supported scientific estimates that the earth is billions of years old instead of the thousands as some religious scholars contend on the strict interpretation of the Old Testament.

In 1950 he issued an encyclical letter, "Humani Generis," in which he made it clear the church had no objection to qualified research into Darwin's theory of evolution which had been denounced by many clergymen. He made it equally clear that evolution must be regarded as a still unproven theory on the origin of the human body alone and that "souls are immediately created by God."

Pius XII was generally regarded as the 261st Pope of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, but scholars agree that the exact number of popes since St. Peter is not certain. The confusion arose in the immediate succession after St. Peter when it was not clear whether Cleto or Anacleto were among the first five popes.

Toward the end of 1943 the Pope gave concrete shape to one of the ideas most dear to his heart by inaugurating the Roman Catholic Church's first Marian Year, or "Little Holy Year," devoted to the Virgin Mary who had always been the object of his special veneration.

Hundreds of thousands of Romans lined the route of the papal cortege when Pius XII, in one of his rare appearances in the streets of Rome, went to the Basilica of St. Mary Major to open the Marian Year Dec. 8, 1953—the 99th anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary by Pope Pius IX.

On May 29, 1954, in one of the highlight ceremonies of the Marian Year, in the presence of 350,000 Romans and

Greek Orthodox Head Sympathizes

Los Angeles — (UPI) — Sympathy to members of the Roman Catholic church over the death of Pope Pius XII was expressed today in a statement by Bishop Demetrios, spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox church for the 11 western states.

The bishop's statement read: "On behalf of the Orthodox people of our diocese, I extend our deepest sympathy to the clergy and laity of the Roman Catholic Church on the loss of their leader, His Holiness Pope Pius XII."

pilgrims, Pius XII proclaimed Pope Pius X a saint.

Another occasion on which he had descended into the streets of Rome was during the war when he rushed to bring the comfort of his presence to the victims of an allied air raid.

It was the Pope's untiring, and eventually successful, effort to make Rome an open city during the war that earned him the title of "Defender Civitatis" defender of the city.

The underlying theme of the Marian Year, like that of so many other acts in the Pope's reign, was peace. He urged Catholics to recite special prayers for world peace during Marian Year celebrations.

More than anything else perhaps the Pope was saddened by the ruthless Communist persecution of the church.

Although the post-war years marked the greatest intensification of Communist persecution, the Pope had worked actively against Communism many years before that. He first fought Communism as the Vatican's secretary of state during the Civil War in Spain.

Communists Excommunicated
But one by one in the post-war years the top-ranking Catholic prelates behind the Iron Curtain were arrested, sentenced to prison, confined to home arrest or deported. The Pope struck back with his most powerful spiritual weapon—excommunication of those responsible.

One of those excommunicated was Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia for the arrest in 1946 of the Archbishop Aloisius Stepinac, later made a cardinal. Later the Pope acted against those responsible for the persecution of Josef Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary, Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague, Archbishop Josef Groz of Hungary, Bishop Augustin Pacha of Timisoara, Romania, and Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski of Poland.

In addition to these retaliatory excommunications Pope Pius also issued a general decree of July, 1949, stating that any Catholic, in East or West, would incur excommunication by becoming a Communist or by associating himself with Communism.

He also issued on July 17, 1952, what is believed to be the first apostolic letter ever addressed to the peoples of Russia, calling for a strengthening of the Christian faith. The eventual conversion of Russia to Catholicism was considered by many to be among the long-range aims of his pontificate.

In a bold move to modify "usages which may have once had a purpose but no longer have one today," the Pope encouraged modernizing of nun's dresses, slight modifications in the dress of some orders, and encouraged stricter links between the various

orders to fight the poverty conditions of some.

Born Near Vatican

In other steps to bring the church in line with modern times Pius XII altered restrictions on the fasting that must be observed by Catholics before taking the holy communion, and authorized the holding of afternoon masses wherever required by special conditions.

The Pope was a frail man, with a high brow, delicate hands and skin that was almost transparent. His soft eyes burned with intensity; his gentle voice grew stern when he was denouncing atheism, Communism, man's inhumanity to man, and social inequities.

He was born Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli on March 2, 1876, the son of a patrician family. His birthplace was a third floor apartment, almost within the shadow of the Vatican.

He was ordained a priest at the age of 23, became a monsignor at the age of 28, a cardinal on Dec. 16, 1929, Vatican secretary of state in 1930, and Pope on March 2, 1939, his 63rd anniversary.

He was one of the most traveled of Popes and made his first visit abroad for the Vatican when he went to London for the coronation of King George V. In 1936, as secretary of state, he visited the United States and became the only Pope to have done so.

He disclosed during his 1936 visit he had been offered the post of professor of Roman law at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., in 1906. But Pope Leo XIII who had congratulated him on the brilliance of his studies refused to let him go.

The pontiff celebrated his 82nd birthday March 2 of this year and continued his arduous schedule unabated, despite persistent pleas by his doctors and Vatican associates that he ease his pace in the interests of health.

Pope Pius XII was a worker who rose at dawn and retired past midnight.

Recurrence of Hiccups
He continued that fatiguing schedule, including almost daily audiences and a multitude of speeches, even during his "vacation" period since July at Castel Gandolfo, where he was stricken.

Last Tuesday, United Press International learned that the Pope had the previous day suffered a recurrence of the hiccups that wracked his weakened body in the critical winter of 1954.

The following day, he valiantly went through with a scheduled mass audience but omitted his usual remarks to pilgrims of many nationalities.

A Vatican radio announcer told the disappointed audience that the Pope was suffering "a light indisposition." The Pope continued the audiences, including a private

one with Francis Cardinal Spellman and one with the American pilgrimage which the New York archbishop led here. Spellman and his group are now enroute home aboard the liner Olympia.

The Pope's hiccups persisted. On Saturday, he cut short a lengthy technical address to a visiting group of plastic surgeons. His slight frame was again shaken by hiccups.

On Sunday, Oct. 5, the pontiff defied chill and windy weather three times—in audiences, and for a stroll in his garden. The next morning, he was stricken.

In recent years, even since his near-fatal illness of 1954, the pontiff, if anything, accelerated his work. After that illness, he resumed his audiences on Feb. 13, 1955.

He kept an eager and alert eye on the spiritual and political state of the world.

His actions included the excommunication in 1955 of Juan Peron, then president of Argentina, in connection with the arrest and expulsion of two Roman Catholic monsignors.

He forwarded many cases for sainthood and the stages leading to sainthood for worthy Catholic church laymen of the past.

His discourses ranged widely from one in January, 1956, giving approval to natural methods of easing childbirth

to an encyclical warning the world against rampant materialism in July, 1957.

The pontiff maintained his keen interest in the church in the United States during his latest years.

Appointed American

Early this summer, he appointed Samuel Cardinal Stritch as pro-prefect of the important Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, but the Chicago archbishop died in a Rome clinic May 27, 1958, shortly after his arrival and before he could assume his new post.

The appointment, Vatican sources said, demonstrated the Pope's appreciation of the importance of American Catho-

lics. Stritch was the first American-born churchman to receive such a high post, which included membership in the Roman Curia, or ruling body of the church.

On Sept. 24, the Pope ap-

pointed the Rev. Albert G. Meyer as successor to Stritch in the Chicago archdiocese. He also appointed Gregory Cardinal XV Aganian of the Armenians as pro-prefect to succeed Stritch.

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Seaton Predicts Republican Victory
Peoria, Ill. — (UPI) — Secretary of Interior Fred A. Seaton has predicted a GOP victory next month in the aftermath of the "sorry record" written by the Democratic-dominated, big spending 85th Congress.

Speaking at a Republican fund-raising drive Wednesday night, Seaton said he saw evidence of a rising GOP "tide" during visits to 20 states since Congress adjourned.

"They (the Democrats) holler about the Sputniks in defense," he said, "but they forget to tell that in the previous session of Congress they meat-axed the President's appropriations and went home bragging about it."

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