JeS® to the NEWS

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VATICAN DETENTE

In the recent Italian elections, the Communists established themselves as the leading politicai party in Italy's eight largest cities: Rome, Naples, Milan, Turin, Genoa, Florence, Venice, and Bologna. Nationwide, the Communists came within two percentage points of being the number-one political party in Italy.

It used to be thought that the Vatican was one of the world's greatest bulwarks against Communist advance. However, the Vatican policies have followed the leadership of the United States and re placed the resistance to Communism of the cold-war years with a new period of bridge-building and accomodation with the Soviet Union.

The Vatican policies of detente are now biting the bullet. Vatican spokesmen could hardly persuade Italian voters to reject the Communists in the polling booth, while the Secretary of the Vatican Council for Public Affairs, Archbishop Casaroli, pursues shuttle diplomacy to fraternize with Communist dictators from Eastern Europe to Cuba. In a recent interview he declared that the Catholics in Cuba "are happy" under Castro, and that 11the Catholics andthe Cuban people in general do not have the slightest problem with the Socialist government."

In its new era of detente, the Vatican even publicly shelved Cardinal Mindszenty, in the last 15 months of his life, as an ana cronism from the cold-war years, and deprived him of his Archbishop's See and his title, Primate of Hungary. Cardinal Slipyj, the Ukrainian:prelate who spent 18 years in Soviet slave labor camps, has been silenced in the Vatican compound, lest he speak out, like

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Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and upset detente by describing in gory detail how clergymen are- treated in the Gulag Archipelago.

Whereas a decade ago, the Jesuits maintained anti-Communist truth centers in Rome and other Italian cities to expose Communist propaganda, they were closed several years ago and their highly educated director, Rev. Antonio Gliozzo, was transferred to Sicily.

Every year, thousands of people who have had first-hand experience with Communist governments are voting with their feet to get away. In Europe, they dodge mines and armed guards to try to escape past the Iron Curtain. In Asia, they swim through shark infested waters to get out of Red China. No one is running or swim ming the other way.

At the end of the Korean War, some 50,000 Red Chinese soldiers voted with their feet to leave their homeland and relatives and come to the Free World. At the end of World War II, two million Russians voted with their feet to escape from Communism, only to be forced back under Stalin by orders of Churchill and Roosevelt.

That more than ten million Italians would voluntarily vote for Communism is a stunning indictment of the Vatican's failure to have an educational program to teach the facts of life about Commu nist lies and tyranny.

It is bad enough to have Communism imposed on a country by force, as has been the fate of the 30 Captive Nations for whom President Ford proclaimed this week as Captive Nations Week. (Three new captive nations were added this year.) It is far worse to invite the Communists to take over the government, as one-third of Italian voters now are doing.

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