

Alleged Pope Bugging

Rome

An Italian news magazine said yesterday that the late Angelo Cardinal Dell'Acqua headed an intelligence network that bugged papal audiences kept files on hundreds of priests and gave confidential information to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

L'Espresso, a non-Communist leftwing magazine, gave no sources for its story. It said the main figures in the alleged spying network were Cardinal Dell'Acqua, who died in 1972, and Archbishop Iginio Cardinale, the Vatican's current nuncio (ambassador) to Belgium.

Cardinale, an Italian who spent several years in the United States, shrugged off the allegations when he arrived in Rome from Brussels.

"I am no CIA agent! I'm just a

person who spent some time in America," he told reporters.

L'Espresso said agents of Italy's Defense Intelligence Service, acting on instructions from Dell'Acqua, bugged a private conversation in the papal private library in 1967 between Pope Paul VI and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras of Istanbul.

"The audience lasted exceptionally long" L'Espresso said. "It was the first time they could talk face to face. Athenagoras was just back from a trip to three Communist capitals—Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia. Right afterward he was to visit Moscow. He had very interesting things to tell Paul VI and him alone."

The magazine said tapes of the conversation found their way into Italian intelligence offices.

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