

Catholicism

American Catholics reject authority

Associated Press

CHICAGO — American Catholics have learned to reject church authority while clinging to the fold, and their independence will thwart any attempt by the Vatican to undo 20 years of reform, says priest and sociologist Andrew M. Greeley.

The U.S. church survived reappraisal spurred by Vatican II with the loyalty of most members "unshaken and, perhaps, unshakable," Greeley said in a report, to be released Wednesday, that is based on surveys of American Catholic laity since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council of 1965.

His report is being released as Pope John Paul II and the church's bishops prepare for a November meeting to assess the impact of Vatican II. The pope has differed with U.S. Catholics over their interpretation of those reforms and calls for increased liberalization including married priests, more independence for nuns, and relaxed birth control restrictions.

Vatican II provided for Mass in the native language, eased remarriage for divorced Catholics and allowed more local custom in worship.

Debate on the reforms has centered on recent changes among U.S. Catholics: a higher divorce rate, lower church attendance and rejection of the official church stance on birth control, premarital sex and divorce.

Some trace these developments to liberalization from Vatican II, but Greeley contends they are the result of broad social trends.

"If sex and authority and especially authority about sex are one's criteria for the health of the Catholic population, then the Catholic Church is in grave crisis."

"If, on the other hand, the principal criterion of health is profound loyalty to the heritage and to the institution which transmits the heritage, then American Catholicism is in very good condition."

His report is based on surveys of U.S. Catholics conducted during the past 20 years by the Na-

tional Opinion Research Center in Chicago, where he is a research associate.

Since Vatican II, U.S. church membership has dropped about 2 percent, he said. The nation's 56 million Catholics make up about 25 percent of the population.

Greeley says U.S. Catholics' continued loyalty is linked to another change resulting from Vatican II — an image of God as warmer and more understanding, even if church leaders are not.

He contends a "precipitous" decline in church attendance between 1969 and 1975 was linked not to Vatican II, but to the church's 1968 pronouncement reaffirming strict prohibitions against artificial methods of birth control.

Four years after Vatican II, two-thirds of American Catholics attended church every Sunday. But six years after the birth-control encyclical, attendance had dropped to roughly 50 percent — where it has remained, Greeley said.

Three Nicaraguan rebel leaders claim CIA agreements unfulfilled

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Three Nicaraguan rebel leaders said Tuesday that CIA officers have brokered two agreements this year on how rival U.S.-backed insurgent groups should divide privately raised military supplies.

The leaders of the main coalition of Indians fighting Nicaragua's leftist government, said the agreements, brokered in Honduras, were made with the larger Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) in February and again in June.

The CIA's reported role in the deals came after Congress banned the agency from "supporting, directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua." Congress passed the ban, known as the Boland amendment, last October.

Two congressional panels next month plan to examine whether the

Reagan administration complied with the ban, particularly following reports that the White House's National Security Council helped the rebels raise money and offered military advice.

Rep. George E. Brown Jr., D-Calif., a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said the panel was aware of "continuing contacts" between the CIA and the rebels, but lacked any specific knowledge about the contents of those discussions.

The CIA has "been giving lip service to the Boland amendment, but not fully complying with it," Brown said. The (administration's) legal eagles are interpreting all of the laws in a way to favor the policies of the president."

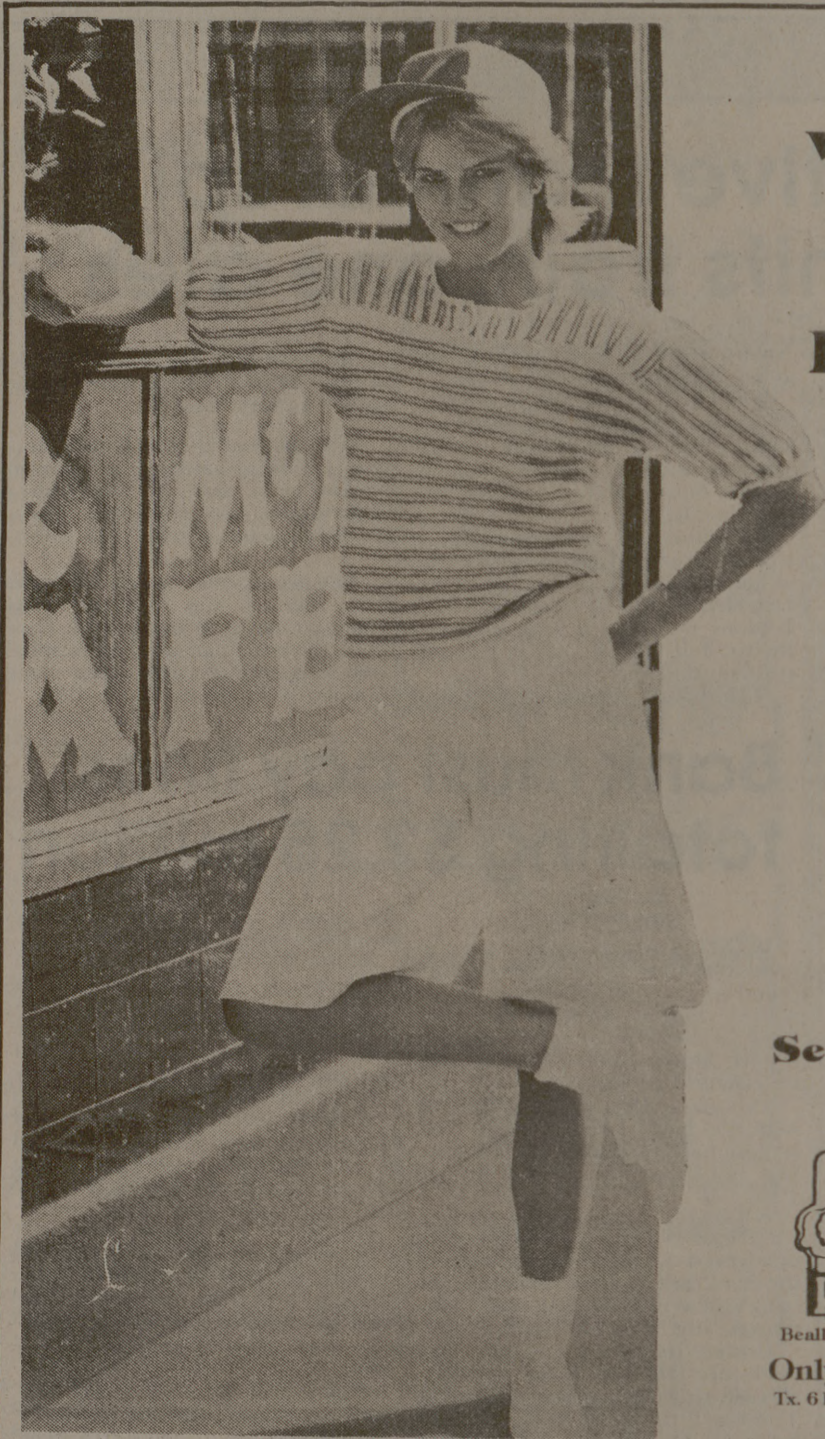
CIA spokeswoman Patti Volz said the agency is "complying with congressional obligations and restrictions."

The Indian leaders said despite the agreements, the FDN has failed

to live up to the commitments, and has used its control over supplies to gain control of the Indian movement on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. As a result, they said, the Indians' military campaign against the Sandinista government has been crippled in recent months.

The Indian rebel leaders were Teofilo Archibald Wilson, a political director of Misura; Efraim Smith, a member of the Misura military high command and top commander of the Misura-aligned Southern Indigenous Creole Community, or SICC; and Charles Hodgson, an SICC political leader. They said their troops face serious shortages of food, uniforms and military equipment.

Bosco Matamoros, the FDN's representative in Washington, denied the charge. "We have always lived up to our obligations," he said. "We have always helped out the other groups when they are in need."



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