

Spain On 'Spot' As Both War Factions Hit Out At Franco

By Elmer Murphy

WASHINGTON, (NC)—Reports from various unofficial sources received in Washington point to the conclusion that Communist maneuvering is again under way. Unhappy Spain, lying between the warring battle lines of the Axis and the United Nations is again being singled out as the spearhead of the "psychological" attack.

Because General Franco has refused to cooperate with Communism he is accused of being an active pro-fascist, and, on the score that he is pro-Fascist, he is accused of being hostile to the United Nations. By the same logic, because the United States could be accused of being Communist because it is not only fighting on the same side as Russia, but supplying Russia with munitions and supplies.

Neither is the maneuvering confined to the Communist Axis propagandists are insisting that the present Spanish Government will be turned out if the United Nations gain control of the military situation. It appears, also, that the same kind of maneuvering is going on in French North Africa.

Maye Hit Hard

Against this background, the address recently delivered by Carlton J. H. Hayes, Ambassador to Madrid, before a gathering of diplomats and high Spanish officials, is significant. He "hit hard," the Associated Press reported, at Axis-inspired rumors that an Allied victory would mean the overturn of the present government. The American war aim, he said, "surely represent the aspirations and yearnings of all peoples who want to be free, decent and self-respecting," and he declared that the objectives of the Atlantic Charter "accord perfectly with the best and highest traditions of Christian civilization as expressed so clearly and authoritatively in the recent Christmas allocution of the Sovereign Pontiff."

He also said that the so-called "new order" was simply a gigantic pushing around and pushing down of all the peoples of the world in the selfish interest of a pair of swashbuckling would-be superior powers. If the political and social institutions of Spain undergo change, he said further, it will be the work of Spaniards within Spain, not of the United States or of Spanish emigres.

Of this "pushing around" General Franco is apparently to be the victim. The Communists allege that he is the foe of democracy and the Nazis and Fascists assert that he is playing into the hands of the Communists. He is probably trying to keep clear of

both. He is of the somewhat perilous position of a tight-rope walker who would meet destruction if he fell on any side or the other. He has no choice.

He has adopted an authoritarian regime which is not unusual in time of war. He is probably mindful of the help he received from the Fascists during the Spanish civil war, but this is slender evidence that he is Fascist at heart. There is reason to believe that he and many other Spaniards detest Nazism, no less than they detest Communism. It is not a matter of choosing one or the other but of rejecting both.

The efforts of the propagandists to obscure the Spanish situation and turn it to their own account are fairly clear. The Communists, who tried to seize control of the Spanish Government, are now protesting that Franco is playing a dictatorial role and is on the side of the Fascists and is, therefore, the foe of democracy. This contention is not infrequently echoed in the United States, where he is denounced by some persons as anti-liberal. On the other hand, the Nazis assert, rather grotesquely, that the Spanish Government will be overturned if the United Nations have their way. Communism, which is about as solicitous for democracy as was Peter the Great, is now crying out that it is threatened by France and the Nazis. The Nazis are proclaiming that Spain's Government is endangered by the Communists and the United Nations.

This concern on the part of the Communists for democracy and on the part of the Fascists for protecting Spain against aggression is a little too sudden to be taken at its face value. It gives rise to the suspicion that Spain is being used as the cat's paw of the propagandists. The Nazis as well as the Communists are playing a larger game. The Nazis don't want Spain to side with the United Nations. The Communists are using it as an example of anti-liberalism to be held up to Spanish-speaking nations. It is significant that Communist fifth column activities are on the increase in Latin America. The parade of Communism under the banners of liberalism and democracy is too sudden a conversion to be very convincing. Communism is neither liberal nor democratic and that distinction should always be kept in mind.

MIDNIGHT MASS ON GUADALCANAL



At an advance Naval Base on Guadalcanal, United States Marines attend midnight Mass at their chapel erected in the jungle camp. Chaplain Frederick P. Gehring, C. M., (below) reports that Japanese snipers had crawled through the lines and were sniping at the troops during the Mass. (N. C. W. C.)

Fr. Gehring Writes Of How Snipers Failed To Halt Mass In Guadalcanal

NEW YORK (NC) — The celebration of Holy Mass on Guadalcanal, which even the bullets of Japanese snipers could not interrupt, is described in a letter received by Military Ordinate here from Father Frederick P. Gehring, C. M., a chaplain of the United States Marine Corps.

(Father Gehring, a former missionary in China, is a member of the Vincentian Fathers who are in charge of Niagara University. He, with the Rev. Frederick J. McGuire, C. M., now in China, are well known in the Rochester diocese, having visited many parishes about ten years ago prior to leaving for China.)

Describing divine services in their jungle camp, Father Gehring wrote:

"My altar breads come from a Carmelite convent, my linens have been laundered by refugee Belgianes from Belgium—they even made an extra alb for me."

"Thus comments the Rev. John E. Kenney, of New York, now an Army chaplain on duty somewhere in England."

Great Lakes Training Station:

The Rev. George A. Russo, of the Archdiocese of New York, now on duty as a Navy chaplain here, was impressed deeply by the devotion of men of the Navy at the Christmas season. Excerpts from his report:

"A very edifying Christmas Season has just closed. I am certain that none of the Chaplains on duty with me has ever spent so many hours in the confessional. We started to hear Confessions on Monday before Christmas (Friday) and were busy until late Christmas Eve. On Christmas morning six Deacons from Mundelein assisted us in the distribution of Holy Communion at all Masses.

"The response of the recruits had been so spontaneous and edifying. We didn't bring them out. The recruits themselves scoured their barracks and routed every lad whose Catholicism was even suspected. A Chief Petty Officer in charge of an outgoing unit that billets some 2,500 men, spoke to his men over the public address system and informed them he was receiving Communion at the ninth-thirty Mass on Christmas. The Chaplain's hearing Confessions. I am going up myself and I'll march the party. Those interested fall in. Confessions were heard that day from 10 in the morning until 9 at night with only time out for lunch and dinner."

ing wrote: "At the very time when Mass was said, snipers had crawled through the lines and were sniping at us, but the men remained through it all, with the exception of a handful who went out to hunt the snipers."

"Our Christmas in Guadalcanal was the kind of Christmas that brings joy to the heart of a chaplain," Father Gehring wrote. "The evening before I had been hearing confessions for hours, right up to midnight. We had Christmas carols outdoors under the palms and coconut trees. Rugged Marines travelled in front posts wherever they could find replacement, sailors came from ships at port, and the army boys stationed nearby joined us, too."

Officers Give Example

"Generals, two Marine Generals and our own Commanders were present, giving the kind of example that means much to the men in service. . . . In the afternoon we had a Christmas party for our boys and the wounded and malaria stricken patients at the various hospitals, then on as far as we could go to the boys at the front. That evening we were rather tired, but comforted in the thought that we had brought some little cheer into the lives of these heroic boys at Guadalcanal.

"Did you hear how Major Daubin and Major Galore would call for me and drive me to their jungle camp where we would hold services for the boys? I am enclosing a photo of those airmen and you can see for yourself the faith which seems to emanate in their various expressions. At that very time when Mass was said, snipers had crawled thru the lines and were sniping at us, but the men remained through it all, with the exception of a handful who went out hunting the snipers. . . . Each day when those flying Marines would take off to stave off the enemy, we who were waiting and watching below at our dug-outs would be praying for the brave lads above. One day they brought down 23 out of 26 Japanese zeros. It was like watching an air circus. When this is all over, much will be written about the 'Flying Marines.'

Missioners Sain

"It was my privilege to help in the evacuation of some 30 or more missionaries scattered throughout the Solomon Islands. It was an experience not soon to be forgotten. The Captain placed a small Australian inter-island schooner at my disposal. We would go to the va-

rious islands with a handful of faithful natives and get the missionaries who had received previous word from the General to evacuate for the time being. Japanese were landing everywhere and the missionaries' lives were endangered. As you already know, four of the missionaries were killed by the Japanese. Two priests and two Sisters. Another Sister managed to escape and hid up in the mountains until we were able to send Marines to her rescue. We went down later and brought her safely to our lines and evacuated her by plane. The native Christians are indeed a valuable help to all of us. They kept us in contact with the missionaries and told us when it was safe to get them, through the lines. They are now left in my care since we have all but two of the missionaries and Bishop Aubin evacuated from these islands. Father Wall, a New Zealander, and Father de Clark, a Dutch priest, are the only missionaries left with Bishop Aubin.

"Two weeks ago some natives came to my chapel with a basket containing the bones of the two Marist missionaries who had been murdered by the Japanese. One such relic was the arm and hand of Father Henri Ogdenbrink (the flesh was still on the arm and the hand in rigor mortis was stiffened as if giving a final blessing to his confere). The other bones belong to Father Du Hamel. The natives had given the two Sisters proper burial. The priests' remains were found near the river where they had been dragged. The priests had been bayoneted in the throat and the Sisters in the side. I have had the remains of the Fathers encased and have received permission to bury them directly behind my altar, with a beautiful concrete monument made by our men.

"Please assure those who should ask for us that we are well and feel privileged in being chosen to do this work out here.

"I just received the list of names of those Sisters and priests who were more recently evacuated from the Northern Solomons. They left here today.

"Their names are as follows: "Marist Fathers: F. Allotte and A. Morel.

"Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary: Sisters Elie, Remy, Henriette, Hortense, Fabian, Claire, Francis Xavier, Cecilia, Gladis and Blaise.

"Sisters of St. Joseph: Sisters M. Isabelle, Irene, M. Hedda and M. Celestine."

'ROUND THE WORLD WITH THE CHAPLAINS

Rosary Recited Daily at Post in North Africa; Chaplain Meets Native Pastor.

(By N. C. W. C.)

North Africa:

"The church in one battle area of North Africa is identified easily. Its outstanding characteristic is that it is a large well tent, standing where 'pup' tents are in the majority to the extent of ninety-nine and ninety-nine one-hundredths per cent. Mass is celebrated every morning in the tent-church and whenever possible on the battlefield itself. For the past two weeks it has been raining quite regularly. It isn't very cold, but when it rains here, it comes down in sheets. Our camp is a veritable lake, and the little pup tents are flooded often. The desert changes into sticky gumbo mud. Religious work goes on nevertheless together with intensive training and engineering problems." Latest word from the Rev. William J. Moran, of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, now an Army chaplain.

The Rev. Francis S. McGuire, S.J., Army chaplain, reporting:

"The people here are very friendly to the Americans; this holds for the Arabs as well as the French. Last Sunday I called on the local Pastor, who is an invalid for the most part, confined to bed. He told me that in the 30 years he has been here only three Arabs have become Christians. . . . We have the use of a large room for Sunday Masses, and I

have just gotten permission to use it exclusively as a chapel. We have a very beautiful altar, the work of my assistant, Corporal Gerald Nadeau. Beginning tonight at 8:30, we are going to have daily recitation of the Rosary, the Litany of Our Lady and a Prayer for Peace."

"Nearly every day I offered Mass on the beat. The Mass on Christmas Eve was crowded and Confessions and Communion were numerous. Each day while on the water we recited publicly the Rosary and the Litany on the main deck. The men responded in large numbers and the results were great. Thus reported the Rev. George W. Sherry, O.S.B.

England:

"It is a wonderful ministry. The constant mobility of this unit makes it extra difficult. Many of the men. I am sure (in spite of personal interviews with everyone) still do not know whether I pull teeth or sell tractors. I am still clinging to my original analysis of the situation, namely that the only thing to do is to stay right near the men.

"I am still able to bear witness to the wonderful good that the privilege of evening Mass has brought. It has brought participation in the Daily Sacrifice to men who probably have never known week-day Mass before in their lives—nor Sunday either, for that matter. Laus Deo for that privilege!