Spain Is Strictly Neutral, Exclusive Interview Reveals

MADRID—Spain will continue to be neutral in the present conflict. Neither will she be tempted by any advantages cheaply gained through eleventh-hour alliance with the winning side.

Last week in Madrid, Henry J. Taylor, staff writer for the Scripps-Howard newspapers, executed a "scoop" when he won an exclusive interview from Spain's Foreign Minister Francisco Gomez Jordana, who enjoys high regard for statesmanship in both London and Washington.

Never in his 67 years, spent mostly in military and political service, had he ever before submitted to an interview.

Seeks Nought But Peace

Spain, said the Foreign Minister, "which suffered so intensely and so recently, finds herself in the early stages of convalescence. Against the background of her own experience, Spain seeks nothing but peace for the world.

"Up to now, we have succeeded in our policy in spite of our geographical situation and the vicissitudes through which the shifting struggle has passed. As the pendulum has swung back and forth between the great belligerent powers in the four years and four months of war, Spain has shown herself unmovable. We hope confidently that the co-related sovereign soils of this peninsula, which represents the 'Iberian bloc,' are to be respected by no impeachment of our sovereignty, for certainly it should be to the interests of both sides to respect our independence fully."

Upholds Neutrality Stand

Spain's position and neutrality, like that of Switzerland and Sweden, has been of great service to the warring world, Jordana pointed out, adding:

"And Spain's contribution will be even greater and more evident when the struggle ceases.

"It would be a grave error to shut out from the readjustment of the world those countries which have remained outside the conflict—which have done so regardless of how the victory looked at any time in those long years. Their counsel and participation in shaping the new world is indispensable if the world hopes to arrive at a durable peace. To whatever degree any victorious powers have contempt for those they consider weak, to that degree they will create the germs of another war."

Blames Refugees

Discussing false criticisms and mistaken opinions of his country, he blamed refugees and emigres for most of the inaccurate reports about Spain, and continued:

"Only a complete distortion of the truth can explain how there are those in the United States, for example, who seem to believe that Spanish public opinion is divorced from the government and does not support its policies and actions. We hear that even the loyalty of the army is questioned from afar.

"The truth is that not only is the army totally united and perfectly faithful to the orders of the Chief of State and I can testify to this as a person who knows perfectly well the interior workings of the army—but it is also equally true that this government's present acts and future intentions are supported by the full weight of public opinion in Spain.

"We live best in the world with those who understand us best, and as the Foreign Minister of Spain I have departed from the rule of my life to tell you these things in that spirit."

Fr. Bohmwetch's Funeral Rites At Watkins Glen

Solemn Mass of Requiem was offered for the Rev. John J. Bohmwetch in St. Mary of the Lake Church, Watkins Glen, N. Y., this morning (Thursday, Dec. 23), by His Excellency, Bishop James E. Kearney.

Father Bohmwetch, Catholic chaplain at Craig Colony, Sonyea, N. Y., died Monday, Dec. 20, after a short illness.

The eulogy was delivered by the Rev. Charles J. Azzi, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Rochester and friend of the deceased priest.

Choosing as his text, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21), Father Azzi stated. "During his twenty years as a priest, Father Bohmwetch served faithfully and well in the different parts of the Lord's vineyard to which the his Bishop assigned him."

Recalling Father Bohmwetch's many friends, the preacher noted:

"It is not flattering to say about a priest that he found many friends in life, since that is expected in a man who becomes another Christ, but because Father Bohmwetch did win a host of friends among people who were once total strangers proves that he followed very closely in the footsteps of his Master."

Officers of the Mass assisting Bishop Kearney were: Assistant priest, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. William F. Bergan; Deacons of Honor, the Rev. Thomas F. Carroll and the Rev. Frederick G. Straub; Deacon, the Rev. Norman Margrett; Subdeacon, the Rev. Adelbert J. Schneider.

Masters of Ceremonies, the Rev. Lawrence B. Casey and the Rev. Charles R. Reynolds; Acolytes, the Rev Leo C. Mooney and the Rev. Wilfred Craugh; Thurifer, the Rev. Hubert A. Biskey.

Father Bohmwetch, the son of Mrs. Mary Casey Bohmwetch and the late Frederick Bohmwetch, was born in Watkins Glen, Oct. 27, 1897.

He was ordained June 9, 1924, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Rochester, by the Most Rev. Daniel Curley, Bishop of Syracuse.

He was educated in the Watkins Glen High School and St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminary.

Following ordination, Father Bohmwetch was appointed assistant pastor of St. Peter and Paul's Church, Rochester. After three years he became assistant curate at St. Alphonsus' Church, Auburn, where he remained for six years when he was sent to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Rochester.

On June 4, 1940, he was appointed chaplain at Craig Colony, Sonyea.

Besides his mother, who resided with her son at Sonyea, Father Bohmwetch leaves two sisters, Mrs. Margaret Yates of Sonyea and Mrs. D. J. L. Spain of Danbury, Conn., and a nephew, Herbert Yates of Sonyea.

Burial following the Mass was in the family plot at the Watkins Glen Cemetery.

Mexico's Religion Ban On Military Stirs Wide Protest

"Freedom of Worship" and "Freedom of Speech," foremost of the democratic liberties cherished by the American people have been officially violated by the government of Mexico, professed ally of England and the United States against Axis oppression.

A member of the Mexican National Army is forbidden to express himself in books or the press on "political or religious matters."

Further, a Mexican soldier is now forbidden to wear his uniform "at churches or places where religious ceremonies of any kind are practiced."

These undemocratic and tyrannic prohibitions are contained in the Amended Article 31 of the Regulation of Military Duties, recently issued by the Ministry of National Defense and approved by President Manuel Avila Camacho.

Protesting the new military regulation, Alfonso Junco, Mexico City journalist, writes:

"In England and the United States, our great allies, the armies have chaplains, attend Mass, hear sermons, and perform acts of worship while wearing, logically, the [illegible] wear." He also mentions the recent Eucharistic Congress "in our sister Republic, Peru," where corps of the Peruvian Army were in attendance and received Holy Communion.

"What reason of public safety, what exceptional pressure," he asks, "induces us to separate ourselves from this noble custom of liberty, to require Mexican soldiers to remove their natural costume when they wish to exercise their natural right with respect to religion?"

Such a decree, he concludes, is as isolated as it is untenable, and offensive to "all friendly nations whose soldiers do not necessarily sully the dignity of their uniform when they wear it to religious services."

Must 'Remain Aloof'

The prologue to the decree says: "Since the military in its official mission as representing a public function of a laic State, ought to remain aloof from any manifestation of worship, it is essential to establish the prohibition against assisting at churches or religious ceremonies of any kind while wearing the uniform which gives to them such apparent representation."

It is further stated in the prologue that "the rites of the different religious creeds do not accord with the dignity of the military uniform and insignia, nor with the martial manner and severity inherent to the personality of every soldier."

As amended, Article 31 reads: "All the military have the right to express their ideas in books and the press provided they do not treat of political or religious matters, or affect the morals, discipline or rights of a third person.

"Likewise, in accord with constitutional prescriptions, they may profess the religious belief that pleases them most; but there remains prohibited their assistance, wearing uniform, at churches or places where religious ceremonies of any kind are practiced."

Challenging the reference of Article 31—"in accord with constitutional prescriptions"—Mexican critics declare: "There is no specific prohibition of the wearing of military uniforms at a religious ceremony in Constitutional Article 130 or any other article of the Mexican Constitution."

Article 131 of the Constitution states that "the Congress shall not enact any law establishing or forbidding any religion whatsoever," and that "no assemblies of any political character shall be held within places of public worship."

Only by rank distortion of Article 131, Mexican critics state, can any constitutional support be alleged for the new military decree.

THESE FIVE PRIESTS give their first priestly blessings to His Excellency Bishop James E. Kearney, who ordained them for the Rochester Diocese on Saturday morning in the Pro-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. From left to right: the Rev. Leo A. Lynch, the Rev. John A. Widman, the Rev. Gennaro J. Ventura, the Bishop, the Rev. Edward J. McAniff, and the Rev. Joseph T. Lynch.

Middle East Chaplain Offers The 'Thanks' At Cairo Conference

CAIRO — When President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and official guests celebrated Thanksgiving Day during the historic Cairo Conference, it was Major James A. Carey, a Catholic Chaplain, who thanked God for the turkey and pumpkin pie.

As reported by Gault McGowan, special correspondent to the "New York Sun," Father Carey, better known as Father Jim of Seton Hall College, South Orange, N. J., is Chief Chaplain of the United States Forces in the Middle East.

Besides the President, Prime Minister and Father Carey, the banquet guests included members of the Roosevelt and Churchill families, senior officers, diplomats and Ambassador Winant.

Father Carey, writes McGowan, "found himself in grand and appreciative company for tales" about how he built his "Little White Church in the Desert."

As the "Sun" correspondent describes it, Father Carey's "Little White Church in the Desert" is a typical "New England Colonial church with wrought iron railings about the entrance and a little belfry over the doorway, and a bell that might have just finished ringing for Paul Revere."

WRITE TO SERVICEMEN

Bishop Kearney Will Present School Oratorical Awards

His Excellency, Bishop James E. Kearney personally will present medals of award to all winners in the forthcoming Jubilee Oratorical Contest.

As announced previously, the Bishop's Jubilee Oratorical Contest under the joint sponsorship of the Catholic Education Office and the Catholic Courier will be conducted in all the high schools of the Diocese.

Final competitions of the Contest will be concluded during the month of March, 1944.

Besides affording the diocesan high schools the opportunity of commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of the Diocese, the Bishop's Oratorical Contest has the added purpose of familiarizing the students with contemporary Catholic thought on present-day problems, especially postwar society.

Student entries are to base their discussions on topics presented in the recently published diocesan Jubilee Magazine.

Each school has been instructed by the Catholic Education Office to conduct competitive discussions to determine the school representative for the semi-finals of the Contest.

In order that the purpose of the Contest may be fully achieved, the Rev. John M. Duffy, Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, has urged that as many students as possible participate in the competitive discussions in each school.

An innovation in regulations governing the semi-finals and finals will be the fact that boys will compete against boys, and girls only against girls.

Individual and school awards as well as further regulations governing the semi-finals and finals will be announced at a later date.

TRUE STORY CARTOON
See Page 12

Story of the Nativity From Pen of St. Luke

(Continued from Page 1)

Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.

And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us.

And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child.

And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Daily Curtailed

New York.—De Tijd, one of Holland's leading Catholic daily newspapers, now under German control, has been compelled to reduce publication and now appears only thrice a week, following a decree of German authorities effective on November 1 curtailing De Tijd's allotment of paper, it has been learned by the Netherland's Information Bureau here.

Vigil Of Christmas

The Vigil of Christmas, Friday, Dec. 24, is a day of fast and abstinence. No general dispensations apply on this day.

Msgr. Sheen To Return To 'Catholic Hour'

A new series of radio sermons entitled "One Lord: One World," by America's foremost pulpit orator, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen, will begin on Sunday, Jan. 2.

Monsignor Sheen will again appear, as in other years, under the auspices of the Sunday evening "Catholic Hour" program which is produced by the National Council of Catholic Men and broadcast over a nation-wide network of the National Broadcasting Company.

The final address in the new series by Monsignor Sheen will be concluded on Easter Sunday, [illegible]

Priest-Educator Heads State Interracial [illegible]

ST. PAUL.—The Rev. [illegible]