

# Christian Democrats Strongest in Italy

(The following analysis of the Italian communal elections was prepared by Federico Alessandro, a well-known Italian writer.)

**By FEDERICO ALESSANDRO**  
(Written for N.O.W.C. News Service)

Rome—(Radio)—For the first time in 20 years Italians are exercising their right to vote. The administrative communal elections which began March 10 will continue, city by city and town by town, throughout the Italian peninsula until each community has had a chance to elect its administration.

To hold one general election in Italy was not possible at the present time, owing to the practical difficulties presented by the lack of transportation and the deficiencies of organization in this semi-destroyed country, nor was it practical in view of possible election disorders.

The present elections, however, do furnish some basis for an analysis of the present political atmosphere in Italy, and they do justify the hope and the confidence that the Italians are on their way toward an effective democracy.

**Six Party Government**  
Naturally, in elections such as these, local considerations are not to be overlooked. For example, in many instances candidates with strong local backing have been elected to office without any particular regard for their political affiliations and theories, if any.

Apart from this, however, it is possible to gain from the elections some indication of the relative strength of the various political parties and of the political trends in that historic land which is now a frontier, as it were, of western culture.

Since the liberation of Italy, the country has been governed by a six-party government. The Christian Democrats, the Democratic Labor party, the Actionist party, Communists, Socialists and Liberals: these six parties, forming a coalition called "Committee of National Liberation," have served as the basis of the Italian government.

From the present elections three parties stand out as the principal political protagonists in present-day Italy. They are the Christian Democrats who, without having any confessional character, express the aspirations of all those who have faith in Christian values; the Communists, faithful to the dogma of the dialectical materialism of Marx and

Lenin; and finally, the Socialists who, although leaning lately toward Communism, here still maintain many points of contact with the Christian Democrats.

**Opposite Appeals**  
The administrative elections seem to reveal two sharply contrasting ideologies. The first appeals more or less directly to Christian values and is spiritual in character. The second looks to Karl Marx as interpreted by Soviet Communism, which assumes ever more evidently the character of an "anti-religious church" with universalist and materialist pretensions of which the Soviet State is the secular arm.

What is true of Italy in this regard is also true of France, Belgium and the other countries of Europe.

One factor which must not be overlooked in any study of the election returns in Italy is this: while the Christian Democrats in almost all cases presented their own representative and exclusive lists of candidates under the Christian Democratic emblem of Shield and Cross, the ancient emblem of medieval Italian communes, the Communist, Socialist and Republican parties offered, in the main, coalition lists, thus pooling their strength against the Christian Democrats.

The election results up to now seem to indicate that despite the strength shown by these leftist coalitions, especially in some sections of northern Italy, the Christian Democrats will emerge as the strongest single group in Italy. This fact has an added significance when it is remembered that this single group will probably not have an absolute majority and that, consequently, the balance of power may fall to several parties of the center.

**Watch Local Block**  
Much will, therefore, depend on the attitude of these parties toward the Christian Democrats. The leftist block, if aided by the center parties, can nullify the great relative individual strength of the Christian Democrats. This is a development which the latter party must watch very carefully.

These elections, marking the beginning of the resumption of democratic election processes in Italy, do not, therefore, as yet fully indicate the political atmosphere prevalent in Italy—this will not be possible until many more elections have been held. But they are important in revealing the relative great strength of Christian Democrats as an individual group.

# Crown of Thorns

(The author of the following article on conditions, especially in relation to Catholic missionaries, prevailing in the new so-called Netherlands East Indies, is a priest of the Diocese of a Hague province, Holland. He has been in the country for a number of years and serves as advisor on Catholic matters to the Netherlands Embassy in Washington. A reserve officer in the Netherlands Army Chaplain Corps, he was called into active service in 1942.)

**By REV. P. J. M. H. NEUMANN**  
(Written for N. O. W. C. News Service)

This is an attempt to present the true facts in a situation about which there has been much misunderstanding—the situation in the Netherlands East Indies.

Communists and anti-religious writers from The Netherlands are imperialists and nationalists, interested primarily in the material advantage of their mother country—rather than in the spread of the Gospel. Reports of their sufferings have been branded as "cheap propaganda." The actual facts of the case prove something quite different. In order to understand these facts it is necessary to know something of the condition of the Netherlands East Indies today.

According to a report of the Apostolic Administrator of Merak, Mr. James Grant, M.S.C., 282 priests, Brothers and Sisters, missionaries, have died since March 1940 in the Netherlands East Indies, as victims of the war and its aftermath.

During the occupation of the Netherlands East Indies, most of the missionaries were treated with great cruelty. The Japanese regarded them as propagandists of an ideology which was incompatible with their own. Hence the murder of Bishop John J. Aerts, Vicar Apostolic of East New Guinea, the story is known of Bishop James Peters, Vicar Apostolic of Timor, and Magr. Gildard Martens, Prefect Apostolic of Manado, who had to work in bare feet and with bare legs in the internment camp of Arbon.

**No Imperialistic Reason**  
In 1940, 2,890 Netherlands missionaries worked in the mission field of the Netherlands East Indies. They did not go there for any imperialistic reason. Nor did they compromise themselves with a narrow nationalism, which showed interest in the propagation of the Faith only where the material interests of their own countrymen were the highest.

Another 3,506 Netherlands missionaries worked in other parts of the world's mission fields. These fields had no relationship to the material interests of the Netherlands. Of all the Catholics of the world less than one per cent are Netherlands, yet in 1945 more than eleven per cent of the Church's missionaries were Netherlands and most of them did not work in what one may call Netherlands possessions.

Those who did, however, went there under the direction of the highest ecclesiastical authorities. Claimed by Islam.

It is possible that the present crisis in the Netherlands East Indies may close this territory to Christianity. Islam claims this area. The Moslems claim that they have between 70 and 80 per cent of the whole population as followers of their religion.

They will, therefore, if they become identified with the Nationalist Republican Government, dominate the executive, legislative and judicial power.

They have not officially come out for the Nationalist government. In fact, the Moslems have initiated a "War for Freedom" against it. And there is not as yet any official and open war against the Christians. Those who know the situation, however, feel that this is merely a matter of strategy. There are two reasons for this view.

First, the "War for Freedom" has been published in many places as a "Holy War" and those who die in the heavy fighting in the city of Surabaya have been called by Muslims "Islam Martyrs." The city itself was called the "Gate of Heaven." The Netherlands have been pictured as the Anti-Christ.

Second, Islamism, as everybody knows who has studied this still viable religion, demands totalitarianism and consequently, political power. It is reasonable to suppose that they will want to get rid of all Christian elements in the population as soon as they dominate the situation. There is no doubt that they will do so as soon as they see it.

**Church Burned**  
There are many indications that they are opposed to the Christians. For instance, in the village of Sawah the Catholic Church was burned and the Christians were forced to be circumcised. In the city of Magelang they looted the priest's house and sacristy and shot eight Jesuits last November 1.

The late of many of the Catholic missionaries in Java is unknown. Most of them are interned. There is no communication. Their relatives, anxious and waiting for some news about them.

The 3,000 Netherlands missionaries in the Netherlands East Indies have always been supported by the 3,000,000 Catholics of The Netherlands. Now these 3,000,000 Catholics are no longer able to support the missionaries. There are 400 missionaries in The Netherlands ready to go out in the field to replace those who have passed away and those who are unable to come.

The United States have a right to know the facts, and not the half-truths and untruths which have thus far obscured and distorted the real picture. The missionaries of the Netherlands East Indies are waging a battle which recalls the times of the martyrs. Cut off from aid from their homeland, they are helpless. Their situation is critical, desperate, and calls for swift and decisive action.

# Islam's Challenge to Church Seen in Dutch East Indies

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# Medalist

Dr. Carlton Hayes, noted historian, former Ambassador to Spain, has been awarded the Laetare Medal for 1946. It was announced here by the Rev. J. Hugh O'Donnell, C.S.C., president of Notre Dame University.

**DR. HAYES WINS LAETARE MEDAL**

The medal is given by the university on Laetare Sunday every year to an outstanding American Catholic whose achievements "have illustrated the ideals of the Church and enriched the heritage of humankind."

Dr. Hayes was cited for "his brilliant discharge of a wartime diplomatic mission that called for extraordinary tact and fortitude" and for the time and talents he has contributed "in furthering a better understanding among all classes of society."

Since 1929, Dr. Hayes has been Catholic Co-Chairman of the National Conference of Catholics and Jews. He is a former president of the American Catholic Historical Association and a former member of the executive council of the Foreign Policy Association. His newest book is "War-time Mission in Spain," a description of his experiences and observations at the Madrid Embassy.

**SET EXAMPLE SCHOLARS TOLD**  
Lima, Peru—(INC)—An appeal to Catholic university students in the Americas to set an example for their fellow-students by Christian living, highlights a letter to the Second Inter-American Assembly of Catholic University Students here from His Eminence Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities in Rome.

Cardinal Pizzardo, addressing the delegates from 15 American nations who met here under the banner of "Fides Romana," quoted from the 1946 Epiphany discourse of His Holiness Pope Pius XII to Catholic Action Graduates.

The Roman Cardinal, who is president of the Central Office of Catholic Action, said that "nothing is more in conformity with the mission of charity which Catholic Action develops than the contribution which the Catholic university students of America hope to make, both by alleviating the multiple and grave wounds inflicted by the world war, and by the reconstruction of university and intellectual life in the post-war period."

**ADVICE TO CONGRESS**  
Washington (INS)—Bernard M. Baruch advises Congress: "Increase production. Stop decreasing taxes until the budget is balanced."

# Heroes Told by

Washington—(NC)—The old Filipino bayonet in a Manila street. Uncle Sam, just beginning his long fight back up the Pacific from Guadalcanal, had some bombs sent on that day in 1942. The old man's wife had been killed. A Jewish priest had already been martyred in the Philippines trying to escape.

Just before he died, they were our places.

Father John F. Hurley, S.J., Secretary General of the Catholic Welfare Organization, official organization of The Philippine Hierarchy, the priest in the picture, told the story as best an illustration of the Filipino people's intense loyalty to the United States.

"I am alive today," he said, "only because of their loyalty. Their countless heroic exploits would fill volumes. Some of their guerrillas have been discovered by our Government. But I would nominate for highest honors those who will never receive any decorations, back-pay or honor—the rank and file of the Filipino people."

**Twice Reported Missing**  
It's like talking with a "vibe from the dead" when you talk with Father Hurley. He was reported as missing during the Philippine occupation.

Father Hurley will remember January 2, 1942. That was the day when the Japanese took over Manila. A group of officers came to the Jesuit college, determined to take over the buildings they later destroyed. They waited on the "No. 1," but when they met him it was "like the Tower of Babel all over again," Father Hurley recalled.

That they came with a Japanese Catholic priest, who spoke no English. He and Father Hurley talked in Latin. The Jesuit explained he couldn't give up the buildings because of Canon Law, where would "No. 1" go to permit them to occupy? He stressed the word "occupy," made an impression on the officer, being the opposite of "take over." He saved the day—but just the day.

"We resorted to all sorts of tricks to get things," Father Hurley said. "What looked like a delay, for a moment stretched into a week. We had a set of signals and I'd climb into bed, indisposed whenever a Japanese officer showed up. That one was 'indisposed' passed them for a long while."

Philippine loyalty proved itself again on July 2, 1945, when the

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# German Cardinals Visit War Prisoners

Washington—(NC)—The four German Cardinals who attended the Vatican Consistorial visited a number of German prisoners of war camps in Italy before returning home, the Vatican radio has reported.

Ronald Cardinal von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin, visited camps in Rieseone and Rimini, the broadcast stated. In the latter place, he celebrated an open-air Mass before 6,000 Catholic prisoners.

Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich and Freiburg, went to Florence and Pisa and said Mass at a camp at Leghorn. His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, stopped to visit prisoners of war hospitals near Naples.

# Card. Faulhaber Tours Catacombs

Rome—(Radio NC)—The Rev. George Landzaat, O.S.B., Auxiliary chaplain at the club conducted here by the National Catholic Community Service and distinguished archeologist, served as guide for Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich and Freiburg, on a tour of the catacombs of St. Callistus.

# Catechism 'Quiz Kids' on the Air



In a unique weekly radio program entitled, "Catechism Comes to Life," six Catholic boys and girls from the grade schools in the Archdiocese of St. Paul, meet with the Rev. Louis A. Gales and discuss over the air the application of their catechism lessons to the problems of everyday living. Nearly 3,000 letters per week are received weekly from children who listen to the radio program. Father Gales, pictured above with the children, is Managing Editor of the Catholic Digest. (NC Photos)

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