Archbishop Stepinac, In Prison Interview, Says His Fate Depends On Pope, Not Tito

(Continued from Page 1)

papers. Whereupon an old gentleman, sitting on a bench with a group of petitioners for various favors, stood up and said: "Comrade. The American comrade has no legitimacia because anyone knows that in America you don't need such things."

THIS SEEMED to satisfy. The youthful official showed me politely upstairs to the office of the Minister's cabinet chief. The latter also spoke no language but Serb-Croatian.

"When do you wish to see Stepinac?" he asked.

"Immediately," I replied. "Where is he imprisoned?"

The answer was, "Lepoglava."

In Yugoslavia, Lepoglava has deep connotations. It is a prison some fifty miles from Zabreg that was built when Croatia belonged to the Austro-Hungarian empire. Patriots and opponents of all the regimes in the bloody history of this region have suffered there.

Under the Habsburgs, hundreds of Slav nationalists paid for ideals in Lepoglava. Under the Karageorgevitch dynasty both Marshall Tito and Moshe Pijade, and members of his Politburo today, were incarcerated at Lepoglava. It was there that M. Pijade, an artist by instinct, painted self-portraits with the aid of broken pieces of a mirror and carefully translated Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" upon scraps of paper.

DURING WORLD War II the Fascist Croatian Ustashi and the German Gestapo perpetrated horrors within its walls. Since Yugoslavia's liberation by Marshal Tito's partisans, fearful rumors have seeped through the country about Lepoglava. Its very name throws a dark shadow although the name means "Beautiful Head."

The Croatian Minister of Interior himself and politely asked me if I knew the way to Lepoglava. I replied that I did not. He asked if he might send someone from his office to escort me and I agreed.

Shortly thereafter a young man named Anton Sobotincitch, wearing the long brown leather coat often associated with members of the UDBA, entered the room and we departed.

We drove off through the lovely countryside of the Zagarije region of Croatia, where Marshal Tito was born in a small peasant house. It was an exceptionally beautiful autumn day. The sun lay softly on the ruddy mountains and velvet green fields.

THE UNIFORMLY Roman Catholic peasants of Archbishop Stepinac's own flock took advantage of the fine weather. They busily stored pumpkins, beets and cabbages in bins, strung pepper necklaces outside their barns, tended their small flocks. The woods were filled with girls in gaily colored costumes gathering faggots. Old women in aprons and kerchiefs beat their washing by purling streams.

After chatting at length with the amiable Sobotincitch, who speaks rudimentary German and who describes himself as not a Communist but a sympathizer (improbable, or modest, for a functionary in the Interior Ministry), we finally arrived at Lepoglava, a small village nestling below the mountain massif of Ivanscia.

This hamlet is dominated by the prison that has made its name famous. Virtually the first sight is a series of white walls punctuated with square watch towers, each of which is guarded by armed peasant boys in blue militia uniforms.

M. SOBOTINCITCH told the sergeant of the group that we wished to see the prison commandant. We were taken to his office and shortly afterward he strode in, a friendly if perplexed tough-looking individual wearing jackboots, brown leather overcoat, and the type of visored cap that twenty-five years ago was popular in America among motorists and golfers. Today it is fashionable among some members of the political bureaus of Eastern Europe countries.

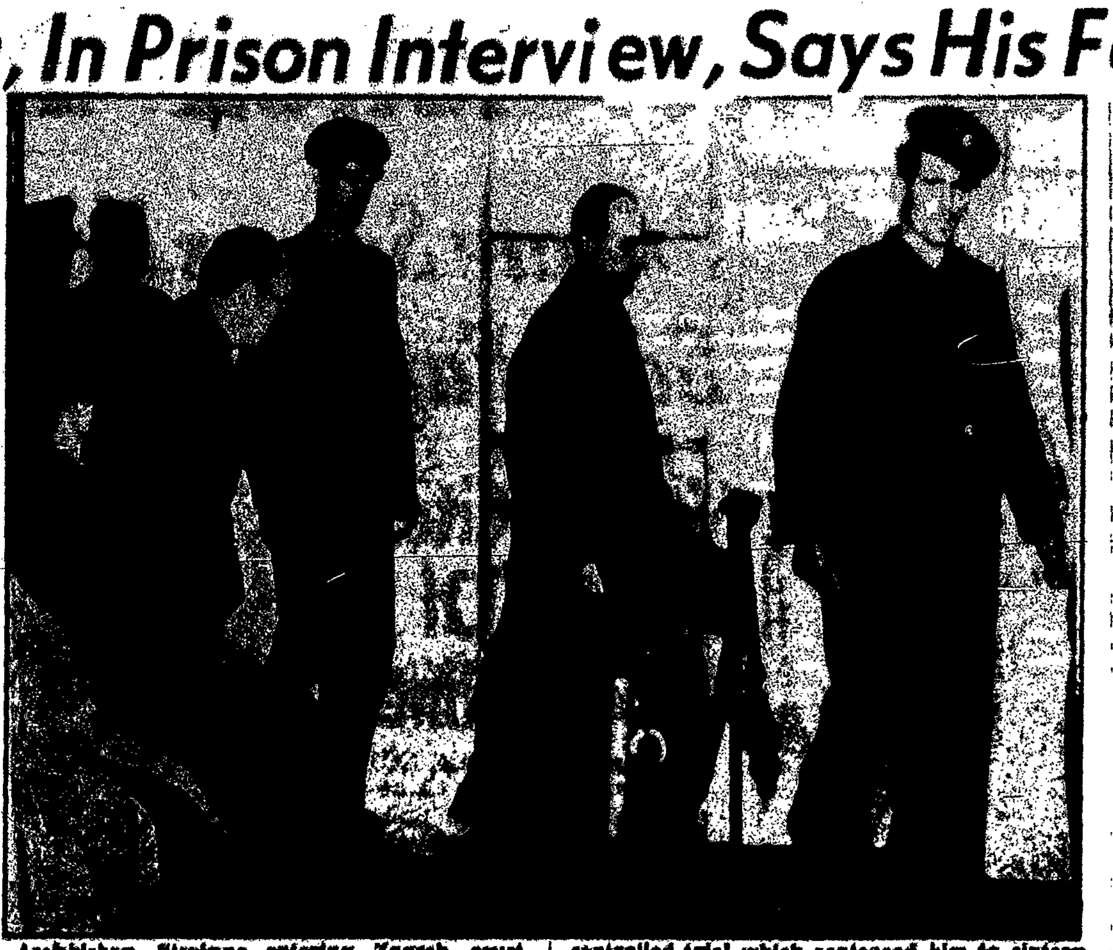
He was introduced as Josip Spiranec, a former major in the Partisan army of Marshal Tito, a war hero, and undoubtedly—although this is my assumption—a member of the UDBA, or security police.

When the purpose of my visit was described by M. Sobotincitch, M. Spiranec appeared a bit doubtful. When I asked him how many prisoners were in Lepoglava he seemed still more so. M. Sobotincitch then said that, first of all, Marshal Tito had himself approved this trip and, secondly, the Government had nothing to hide. At this, M. Spiranec brightened up.

WE WENT INTO the sunny courtyard, examined the village church which abuts upon the prison, and he said there were about 1,000 persons locked up here with only one "special prisoner"—Archbishop Stepinac. The other live in dormitory rooms, which I did not see, and work eight hours a day six days a week in neighboring fields and workshops. The Archbishop has exceptional quarters and treatment.

Accompanied by the assistant prison director, we walked down the village street past groups of idling militiamen and UDBA troops to the actual prison gate.

A young soldier with a tommy-gun flung this open, saluting the Commandant, who entered first. We three followed, passing more guards in blue uniforms in a courtyard, going through still another gate, and then climbing a stairway to a brick building. Just inside the doorway, we halted in a corridor, on each side of which was a row of wooden doors. In each was inserted a tiny peephole, covered by a wooden disk.



Archbishop Stepinac entering Zagreb courtroom in October 1946 for session of Communist-controlled trial which sentenced him to sixteen years imprisonment

M. Spiranec said something to his assistant. He then took a key from his pocket and entered the first door on the right. M. Sobotincitch urged me to follow. I went in.

We found ourselves in a room about nine by fourteen feet in dimensions. The window was barred but not in such a way as to exclude the light of day. The room was warm. The furniture was simple: a cot with sheets and a pillowcase as well as blankets; one table and one chair; a bureau upon which, among other things, were a wash basin, a pitcher and a tin vacuum bottle. The floor was bare wood. From a series of hooks hung some clothing and a towel.

Having worn dark glasses because of the bright sun in the courtyard, I needed a moment to adjust my vision. Then I saw a slender man of medium height standing behind the table, looking first at M. Spiranec and then at me. It was Archbishop Stepinac.

Marshal Tito said he thought an interview might be possible but could not give me a definite answer at the time. Nevertheless, a resume of the Marshal's conversation with me including the references to Archbishop Stepinac was published two days ago by the official news agency and in all the leading newspapers as the principal article of the day. It was clear that the project of an interview with the prelate had been approved.

THIS IN ITSELF was a forthright thing for a Communist Government to do because it is scarcely a secret that Archbishop Stepinac is an avowed enemy of the regime, and his most bitter enemies acknowledge that he is a fearless man who says what he thinks. That indeed he did

Even before I was officially advised to go to Zagreb the Yugoslav public, because of the prominence given in the local press to my conversation with Marshall Tito, was discussing the projected interview.

Orthodox Serbs of all political shades came up to me and growled: "Stepinac should have been hanged. It was he who condoned the murder of thousands of the Orthodox."

"The only good thing this regime has done," said these in opposition, "was to put the rascal in jail"

Croats virtually homogeneously Roman Catholic beckoned me aside in secluded places and whispered: "You should know before you see the Archbishop that no matter what they tell you we adore him. He is the great hero of the people and no slanders launched against him are believed. He is our hero and our martyr."

IN THESE antithetical views one sees the basic difficulties that face any regime in Yugoslavia. I sought to elicit a somewhat less fiery viewpoint in Slovenia, also a Roman Catholic province.

Of three persons I questioned, two avowed a deep affection for Archbishop Stepinac. The third, who was in no sense a Communist, said: "He would have been shot by any other Government—for example, the Royal Government before the war. I am a Catholic, but he was a traitor. Like our own Bishop in Ljubljana, who fled to Argentina, he collaborated with the Germans and permitted the slaughter of innocent Orthodox Serbs."

As a reporter, one can only seek to ascertain the varying views on so deeply emotional an issue and set them down accordingly.

The Archbishop is a man of pale but evidently healthy countenance, fine features, thin brown hair, and a facial expression that clearly denotes a tremendous inner passion.

He stood there for a moment, looking at me, his left hand holding open the pages of a large book upon the table, his reading glasses set beside it. It was then that I realized he had not the faintest idea who I was or why I was there. His contact with everyday affairs is slight, and Mr. Spiranec had not had time to explain the circumstances.

The Archbishop's four visitors stood awkwardly for a moment, clutching their caps and hats. Then I told the prelate who I was, how I happened to be there, and that with due respect to the circumstances of the interview and to his own desires I wished to report to the world any messages he might care to send on how, in general, he felt about his physical treatment and psychological condition.

WE SPOKE in French, which no one else in the room understood. The Archbishop apologized for his French, saying he was far more fluent in Italian and German. Nevertheless, he has mastered the language

"Monseigneur," I said, "could you tell me what the state of your health is?"

He replied, still standing "I feel well. I am in no way ill. I have lost no weight since I came here four years ago."

I then asked the Archbishop how he occupied his time. He said he devoted many hours to prayer, contemplation and, at the moment, to the translation of a work on the lives of the saints. He is studying church history He showed me the work he was engaged in examining. A Latin tome on the Franciscan order by an Irish prelate named Wadding.

I ASKED whether it was difficult for him to receive reading material. My three escorts stood silently by and I am convinced they understood not one word of the conversation As for the Archbishop, it became evident as the interview progressed that he could not care less

He told me he received books continually. Most of them are brought by his sister, who visits him every month, he said. He complained, however, that all the reading material, even ecclesiastical, was first scrutinized by the prison censors. He said he had no access to newspapers; that he especially missed l'Osservatore Romano, the journal of the Vatican, which he described as "prohibited."

I ASKED HIM if he was in touch with the world outside the prison walls He replied, "Letters are not strictly forbidden. But they are all subjected to censorship. Therefore I do not write"

I then explained to the Archbishop what Marshal Tito had said to be concerning the possibilities of his release either to a Roman Catholic monastery within Yugoslavia or to exile—on condition that he should never return.

He stood there silently for a moment, dressed in his black, clerical garb, one hand on Wadding's ecclesiastical history, absolutely motionless.

Then, in a calm and quiet voice, he replied: "Whether I go to a monastery, or whether I remain here, or whatever should happen to me, I am utterly indifferent.

"Such things do not depend upon Marshal Tito. They depend only upon the Holy Father, the Pope, and upon on one else."

I asked the Archbishop if he had any kind of message he would like to transmit through me to the world outside the walls of Lepoglava.

Again, after slight deliberation, he replied: "I have nothing to say. I am content to suffer for the Catholic church. Whether or not I shall ever resume my office depends only upon the Holy Father."

I then asked, "Monseigneur, are you well treated?"

"There were some difficulties" he replied. "It is better that I should not speak of it"

He added that he received plentiful food and that his cell was heated every day

ALL THIS TIME, the Archbishop was standing before the one chair in the room. I asked if he would not please sit down. He remained on his feet and said:

"I am sorry that I have nothing to offer you. I regret that I can not even ask you to seat yourself"

I asked if he was able to perform his religious services and to take communion. He pointed to another wood door opening on to one wall of his cell and said:

"THERE IS MY chapel. You may go in." I opened the door and saw another cell, slightly smaller, dominated by one table covered with a white cloth and bearing an altar.

Archbishop Stepinac explained that there were two other Catholic priests imprisoned in Lepoglava who were permitted to pray with him daily.

"I am completely indifferent as to the possibilities of my liberty," he said again. "I know what is at the root of this matter. It is a question which only the Holy See can resolve.

"My freedom, or what I may do afterward, is not for this Government to decide.

"If Marshal Tito wishes to free me he should speak with the Holy See. The Catholic Church cannot be the slave of anyone or any country."

After this conversation we bade each other farewell and, led by M. Spiranec, walked out of the building, out of the prison compound and into the sunny village street.

"What did he say to you?" asked M. Spiranec with considerable curiosity and a gleam in his hard, intelligent eyes.

I PRECISELY recounted the interview. He thought for a moment. Then he said:

"That is not entirely true. For example, he has never asked for that paper, the Osservatore Romano. What he asks for he gets. Why he lives better than the guard here.

"In the morning he gets coffee, bread and butter. For lunch he has soup, meat, dessert and half a liter of Dalmatian wine In the evening he is given either a schnitzel or eggs and half a liter of coffee. Every day he has either Schlivovitza (plum brandy) or a liqueur. We give him between one and a half and two liters of Schlivovitza each month to drink when he wishes.

"How can this man complain? We can never forget the crimes he committed, who fought this war. It was under him that thousands of Serbs were butchered because they were not Catholics. It was he who collaborated with the enemy. It was he who hid gold and valuables in his church, contravening our laws."

ON THE WAY back to Zagreb, after a very considerable silence, a conversation began between myself and M. Sobotincitch. He described himself as a strongly pro-regime Catholic who went regularly to church. He contended that Archbishop Stepinac should be where he is and that the Roman Catholic people of Yugoslavia had largely forgotten about him. But he confessed to an admiration for the prelate's obdurate courage. At this moment my Montenegrin chauffeur, who is of the orthodox faith, muttered "They should have killed the pig."

When I got back to Zagreb, two men rushed up to me in the street and asked: "Are you the American journalist? Did you see the archbishop?"

"Ah, he is a fine man, a saint. Tell the American people he is our hero."

Open Mondays

B. Forman Co.

our wonderful

mouton-collared gabardine

warm coats for teens and twixteens

Heading into our well-remembered Rochester winters, you'll cut the finest of figures in your Forman coat! They are definitely best-fashion, with expert tailoring in alpaca-lined gabardine! Best value, as always assured you at Forman's!

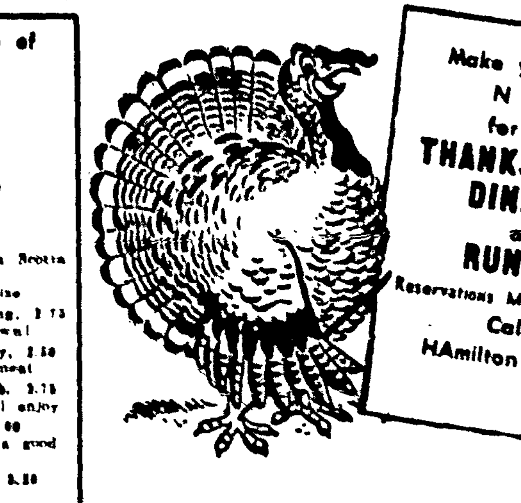
Twixteens	Teens
29.95	35.00

Sketched: For teens, water-repellent rayon gabardine, alpaca-lined, natural or green. 10 to 16. 35.00

TEEN SHOP, THIRD FLOOR

RUND'S OYSTER BAR AND STEAK HOUSE
48 SOUTH AVE.

Enjoy a new measure of Eating Pleasure
DINNER SUGGESTIONS for your THANKSGIVING DINNER
Lobsters, 1.65
from the cold waters of Nova Scotia
Best lobsters obtainable
any style any size
Delicious Long Island Duckling, 1.75
Roasted to a golden brown!
Roast Young Vermont Turkey, 1.50
Your choice light or dark meat
Roast Whole Milk-Fed Squab, 1.75
Generous portion, a dish you'll enjoy
Roast Milk-Fed Capon, 1.60
Rich in flavor Always a good selection!
Roast Prime Ribs of Beef, 1.80
Extra choice quality!
Louisiana Jumbo Frog Legs, 1.50
Something different!
Mother is sure to enjoy it
African Lobster Tails, 1.80
A strong favorite
Choice Porter House Tenderloin Sirloin Steaks
None better anywhere!



Make your plans NOW for your THANKSGIVING DINNER at RUND'S
Reservations May Be Made
Call HAmilton 1750

These Dinner suggestions are only a few of the many entrees featured for Thanksgiving Day. You will always find your favorite dishes, expertly cooked and attractively served at RUND'S.

Remember! You can order anything from our menu to take home.

Good Old Fashioned
CLAM BAKE
Now Being Served EVERY DAY AND SUNDAYS
1 P. M. TO 10 P. M.
Clam Broth, Celery & Olives, Broiled Mackerel Boiled Potato (with Butter & Parsley), Steamed Clams, Milk-Fed Broiler, Candied Sweet Potato, Corn on Cob, Boiled ½ Lobster, Cantaloupe, Lemon Sherbet, Ice Cream or Jello, Coffee, Tea or Milk.
$4
No Advance in Price
Don't Miss It!

Special Rund's Deluxe
SHORE DINNER
Clam Chowder or Clam Broth
Clam or Shrimp Cocktail
Salad, Ala Rund
Celery, Radishes, Olives
Choice of:
Half Broiler or Whole Broiled Lobster
Steamed Little Neck Clams
Choice of:
Potato Vegetable
Beverage Dessert
$3.50

Fresh Caught Prime Grade Nova Scotia
LOBSTERS
are carefully selected for quality and firmness
Lobsters that are alive to guarantee freshness. Cooked by top Seafood experts with results that will be remembered.
BROILED LOBSTER
LOBSTER NEWBURG
LOBSTER COCKTAIL
LOBSTER STEW
LOBSTER THERMIDOR

RUND'S STEAKS
Thick, Juicy, Properly Aged
STEAKS
Sirloin, Tenderloin, Porterhouse and T-Bone
Rich in Flavor, Tender and Juicy
Prepared by skilled chefs as you like them, rare medium, or well done.

Have Your Next Party, Reception or Banquet Here
For Reservations Call HAmilton 1750

RUND'S
48 South Ave.
(Completely Air Conditioned)
"The House of Good Food"
(PARKING FACILITIES)

Near East Missions
Francis Cardinal Spellman, President
Msgr. Thomas J. McMahon, Nat'l Sec'ty
Rev. Wm. Kailer Dunn
Rev. Andrew H. Rogosh
Rev. Joseph F. Connelly

The Little People

Not the leprechauns, nor the gremlins. Just folks, like you and your neighbors. Pretty much the same the world over. With the same interests, and the same problems. Like the people in the little town of Agordat in Eritrea, East Africa. Under the leadership of their pastor, Father Pier Giulinae, a Cappuchin, they combined their meager wealth, limited materials and hard labor to build their own little chapel. To furnish it they need the help of others. If you're interested, here's an idea or two. An altar $75; vestments $50; monstrance, chalice, ciborium . . . $40 each; tabernacle, missal, stations . . . $25 each.

RUSSIA AND ROME

. . . are linked together in a little colony of men in Rome . . the students of the Pontifical Russian College. These seminarians, like Bozidar Vidov, are preparing zealously for the day they can return as priests to preach the Word of God to the Russian people Meanwhile they and their preparation depend heavily upon us You can adopt one of these Russian College Seminarians for $100 a year or $600 for his entire course.

THE MONTH OF THE DEAD IS RUNNING ITS COURSE. WE CAN ARRANGE FOR MASSES, SINGLE OR GREGORIAN, FOR YOUR DEPARTED ONES.

SHOP EARLY . . . AND EASY

Avoid the Christmas rush. Just send for information about our Gift Card This attractive card tells a friend of a gift made to God and the missions in honor of that friend Our gift list covers the needs of the missions . . . and has a price range from $5 up And you can make a gift of masses to be said in the missions. All without moving from your desk. Write now

THE BACK ROOM OF CITY HALL

Makes you think of reporters, ward captains and all that. But the back room of the old Mayor's office in Arab Jerusalem is occupied by a small group of Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. They lost convent and everything during the Arab-Israeli War. Reason would suggest that they depart. But Faith keeps them going at their accustomed round of Charity. A little Charity would help them, too. Like a gift of $25.

AN ASSUMPTION MEMORIAL CHAPEL IN THE HOLY LAND, THAT'S OUR DREAM. ANYTHING YOU CAN GIVE WILL HELP THE DREAM COME TRUE.

FIVE STAR FINAL

Our five mission clubs. They wind up our monthly report with a bang every month. A sure-fire item All because a lot of good people give just $1 monthly to each club. Will you join them? You support chapels, maintain schools, supply vestments, educate priests and nuns through these five clubs.

CECILIA

A nice name . . . and a wonderful saint. Her Feast Day is Nov. 22. A namesake is a novice in a community of Nuns in the Near East . . . and needs help to support her during the years of her novitiate. $150 will provide for one year, $300 for both years.

THANKSGIVING THOUGHT . . . CHRISTMAS IS COMING. AND IT WILL BE A COLD AND HUNGRY DAY FOR MANY ARAB REFUGEES. SOME OLD CLOTHES WILL HELP A LOT. SEND THEM TO OUR WAREHOUSE AT 52-15 FLUSHING AVENUE, MASPETH, L. I.

THE CALORY CLUB

. . . might be a nice name for the good people who help us send food packages to the Refugee priests and their people from behind the Iron Curtain. Their Xmas Dinner . . . a food package . . . depends on us. $10 buys a food package

DID YOU FORGET? SOMEONE DID. MANY OF OUR LETTERS INVITING OUR GOOD FRIENDS TO RENEW THEIR MEMBERSHIP HAVE NOT BEEN ANSWERED. MUST BE FORGETFULNESS. YOUR MEMBERSHIP MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO US AND TO THE MISSIONS. PLEASE RENEW IT. $1 FOR THE INDIVIDUAL. $5 FOR THE FAMILY ANNUALLY. PERPETUAL MEMBERSHIPS ARE $20 FOR THE INDIVIDUAL, $100 FOR THE FAMILY.

Send all communications to:

Catholic Near East Welfare Association
480 Lexington Ave. at 46th St. New York 17, N. Y.