

SPANISH INFORMATION

SERVICE texts

and documents

A WEEKLY RÉSUMÉ OF OUR DAILY "SERVICIO ESPAÑOL DE INFORMACION"

No. 5

Barcelona, January, 7, 1938

556, Av. 14 Abril

—One of the things which those present at the operations of Teruel greatly admired was the tremendous progress made by the Republican Army, which is today an attacking army. I was in the Great War twenty years ago, and since then I had never seen a more disciplined and courageous Army.

HEMINGWAY

Ernest Hemingway on Teruel

"Franco's Army Suffered Heavy Losses" Said the Famous American Writer on his Return from Teruel

Late in the afternoon a tall, strongly built man stepped out of the d'Orsay station. A smile was playing on his frank, pleasant face.

—That's Hemingway! some one said at my side.

In fact, it was Ernest Hemingway who had just arrived in Paris. The great American writer, who is a personal friend of President Roosevelt, had just returned from Teruel where he was a witness of the military operations which culminated in the brilliant victory of the Republican Army.

—I can't tell you anything, he said. I haven't slept a wink for five days.

—But my dear friend, only a few words for «Ce Soir»...

—Oh! Are you from «Ce Soir»? Your people have a great correspondent in Teruel. Do you know that Mathieu Corman was the first correspondent to enter Teruel? He is a brave fellow.

One hour later I met Ernest Hemingway again at the hotel where we continued our conversation.

—Details about the capture of Teruel, My god! Where do you want me to start. First, it was a marvelous thing. No one knew anything about the offensive which was being prepared. Up to the 15th, when it began, it was maintained in the greatest secrecy. Another extraordinary feature was that not a single International Brigade took part in the offensive. The Republican soldiers showed enormous courage and heroism. A marvelous morale prevails in the present day army. Is it different from what we are used to and I base this statement on my experience, for I was in the Great War. It is the morale of the beginning of a war!

The Siege of the Seminary:

—What is the present situation in Teruel? I asked.

—The Republican Army at present occupies a line which lies eight kilometers beyond Teruel. When I left the city the rebels were holding out only in two places. One was the civil guard barracks. It surrendered later. The other was the seminary. Franco's soldiers and several officers of the German and Italian staffs took shelter there. These foreign officers must have been surprised by the speed with which the Republican offensive was carried out. The Germans and the Italians were in Teruel preparing the great «Nationalist» offensive.

—Are those positions impregnable?

Not at all. They are old buildings which could be demolished with a couple of artillery shots. But it would not do to sacrifice human beings needlessly, nor is it wise to cause any more ruins.

—How has the population of Teruel reacted towards the Republican Army?

—The great majority received them with enthusiasm; but part of the population trembled with fear because they believed that the city was to be occupied by Russian troops. When these people finally saw that they had been duped by Franco's propaganda, their attitude changed. The Russians were real, true, genuine Spaniards.

A New Caporetto:

Hemingway also spoke about the battle for the capture of Teruel.

—Franco's troops suffered heavy losses. And to tell the truth it cost the Republicans much less than it was expected to. Franco's staff made violent counterattacks from the fifth day of the battle onwards and did not take into consideration how many human lives they lost. Ten thousand Italians from the Guadalajara front and twenty thousand Moors and Spaniards were hurriedly brought to Teruel. *The Italian losses were very heavy.*

—The occupation of Teruel was carried out calmly and in great order. The Republicans had previously appointed men to head the different services, and these men closely followed the troops into the city. A few hours later the first steps to maintain order within the city were taken.

—The hospitals were immediately opened, and the supply of provisions was rapidly organized.

—I can assure you there were no reprisals. Not a single person was executed, and this, naturally, at once won the confidence of the population who were ready to collaborate with the Republicans.

—Exactly the opposite happened when Franco's troops captured the city last year. I heard ghastly tales about what happened then. I was told about a young worker who was captured by Franco's troops. He had been wounded in a battle. He was given medical assistance until he was well again. Then the young chap was taken to a public square and pompously executed while the band of one of Franco's regiments played the royalist anthem. A great many Republicans were also executed.

The famous author of «Have and Have Not» concluded.

—One of the things which those present at the operations of Teruel greatly admired was the tremendous progress made by the Republican Army, which is today an attacking army. I was in the Great War twenty years ago, and since then I had never seen a more disciplined and courageous Army.

—The Republican Army is today surprisingly well organized. As regards the air force, the republicans have today a force far superior to that of the rebels.

—I firmly believe that Spanish affairs hold in store a great surprise for us all.

Insurgent Casualties at Teruel

It is provisionally estimated that during the course of the Republican attack on Teruel the fascists lost 3,000 dead and 6,000 wounded.

Up to 11 a. m. on 30 December 1937 the number of non-wounded rebel prisoners amounted to 4,839 soldiers, 300 sergeants and corporals and 30 officers. There are also 80 civil guards and 5 officers of this body. (A number of the civil guards formed part of the garrisons of Valencia, Castellon and Cuenca who rose against the Republic in Puebla de Valverde in the early days of the war.)

When the Republican troops entered the Seminary at Teruel they released five of their own number who had been taken prisoner by the rebels in the first moments of the attack on the city. They also freed some fifty Republicans from among the civilian population who had been held as hostages by the fascists in the Seminary.

The arms captured which have so far been classified amount to: more than 4,800 rifles, 184 machine-gun rifles, 211 machine-guns, 97 mortars, 30 pieces of artillery, as well as an enormous quantity of ammunition and hand grenades. The Republicans also captured 300 trucks and other vehicles and a large number of mules and horses belonging to the civil guard and other military units.

The Military Situation

A tremendous battle is in progress on the front immediately to the north of Teruel. Although it is impossible to speculate as to the outcome of this battle, it is not only possible but essential to explain the circumstances under which it is being fought.

Following the fall of the Asturias the insurgents announced the preparation of a great offensive which they claimed would deal a crushing blow to the Republicans from which they would never recover. For a long time it was not known on which front the rebels intended to attack, but a few weeks ago it became obvious that the point where they were concentrating the greatest part of their material was the Guadalajara front. In other words, the Italians were attempting to avenge their defeat of last March and at the same time to surround and isolate Madrid.

The Republican attack on Teruel, apart from having the aim of capturing a city of considerable strategic importance and likewise of demonstrating to people both in Spain and abroad the strength of the Spanish People's Army, was primarily intended to delay the rebel offensive on Madrid by obliging the insurgents to send some of their shock forces and a certain proportion of their artillery and air force to the Teruel front. But the Republican command had little idea that their successful attack on Teruel would force the insurgents to break up their entire concentration in Guadalajara and expedite all the forces and material at their disposal in order to try and recapture Teruel, the fall of which they have never admitted. In other words, the rebels have been forced to abandon

all idea of an offensive. On the contrary, they have been forced to fight on ground chosen by the Republican command. This is perhaps the greatest sign of weakness the rebels have shown since the beginning of the war.

The Republicans, who counted on the element of surprise, were able to capture Teruel and the surrounding villages with infinitesimal losses among their own troops. On the other hand, the rebels lost 8,000 killed and wounded, while 5,000 of their forces were taken prisoner by the loyalists. Now the rebels are counter-attacking under very different conditions, for they have to face an army fully prepared for resistance and even should they succeed in recapturing all of the territory they lost in the recent attack, the strain on their army would be so great that the latter might well receive a blow from which it would never recover.

The battle of Teruel is, perhaps, the greatest battle of the war. And whatever may be its immediate result, it is important to remember that it is being fought on the initiative of and on the ground chosen by the Republican command. The insurgent menace to Madrid has, moreover, vanished in a flash. And even were the Republicans to end up where they began at the commencement of the Teruel offensive, they would still have won an enormous advantage: the rebels would need many months to make up their losses in men and material and the Republican Army would take advantage of this period to carry out their plans in the very best of conditions.

All articles and items
in this weekly
may be reprinted

Ayuntamiento de Madrid

Confiscation of Property

by Antonio Ruiz Vilaplana

Private property in rebel territory was, and still is, divided into two classes: the first class comprises the property of the supporters of the military movement. This is held sacred and inviolable. The second class comprises that of people who do not support the military movement or who are hostile to it. This class of property is not respected and may be encroached at any time.

Armed patrols made up of men belonging to all the parties bound together in the rebellion went through towns and villages during the first days at the outbreak of the revolt, confiscating by right of conquest all property belonging to the «leftists». Under this term were classified all people from the most moderate liberals, mere readers of the liberal newspapers, right down to the most radical extremists.

At the beginning of August, 1936, my court was required to go to a town near Burgos, Villafria de Burgos, to make an inventory in connection with a heritage; but on arrival we found that all the objects, cattle, furniture, even the most insignificant household utensils, had disappeared from the estate.

The Mayor and the Municipal Judge who had accompanied us were not at all surprised.

We explained to them that the disappearance of property which was the object of judicial intervention was of great importance; but the small town authorities thought it was natural, and explained:

—The militiamen have taken everything. Don't you see these people belonged to the left wing...

And as the future heirs also belonged to the left wing, the inhabitants of Villafria de Burgos, who belonged to the right wing, constituted themselves into a *Militia* and had confiscated all the property.

This first case caused us a little surprise; but in future ones we did not bother to make any inventory without first enquiring what the political beliefs of the principal and the heirs were, and if our visit was preceded by that of the *Militia*.

This kind of abuses reached such proportions that civil cases relating to inheritance or collections of debts no longer appeared in the district courts. Due to the prevailing economic system, this situation was serious enough and created great difficulties for us. In a meeting held by the Judicial Secretaries the situation was examined with great concern.

It became customary in the «Nationalist Zone»—and in this all the forces were in agreement—that a «right wing» creditor never went to enter a claim for collection of a debt; but instituted proceedings of his own. He would march at the head of «his *Militia*» to confiscate the property of the enemy of the movement. And a «left wing» creditor never ventured to molest anyone, since he was afraid of making for himself an enemy «with possible military influence». The results were that we court officials who belonged neither to the right nor to the left were unable to practise because we had no cases.

This state of affairs could not surprise anyone inasmuch as the Authorities had set an example. Our court was continuing proceedings on an old law suit, concerning a very important claim against a debtor by «Sociedad Minas y Ferrocarril de Burgos», a company entirely controlled by British capital. During the process of the suit several tons of steel beams and rails were confiscated and placed «exclusively» at the disposal of our court.

One day Sr. Antonio Almagro, the Governor of Burgos, informed the court that «owing to the fact that the material was needed for the construction of an aerodrome»—a very important airfield which the Germans had under construction in Burgos in order to dominate all the plains around Burgos and the town of Fresno de Rodillo, although some malicious persons affirmed that the Germans were more interested in France—, it had been confiscated. This fact was communicated so that the court, might «act accordingly», that is to say, give all kinds of facilities for the «legal and patriotic» confiscation of this material.

Here is another typical case. An important shoe factory, belonging to Hijos de Arati, and which had an enormous stock of materials, was under attachment for bankruptcy, and our court was conducting the legal proceedings.

Two «militarized» Catalans whose names I cannot recall now, but who are owners of a very important textile mill in Barcelona, came to our court with an order issued by the military authorities. This order was not at all clear to us; but the Catalans were authorized to take possession of the factory and all the stocks. The Judge offered some legal objections; but a few months later we learned that the army had «requisitioned» the factory and the stocks. And the court which was conducting the bankruptcy proceedings was informed «a posteriori».

If the so-called authorities indulged freely in the confiscation of property by this and other similar illegal procedures, we should not be surprised that the mob did likewise.

Our court had to go each November to a small town near Burgos to settle an argument which came up every year as a result of a sentence passed on an old law suit brought by a rich landowner against some of his neighbors, also well-to-do people. The sentence ruled that the latter must pay the rich landowner a yearly fee; but the others refused to pay, and only obeyed the ruling after the court arrived and started proceedings to confiscate their property. Then they would pay. And this happened every year.

As was our wont, in November 1936, we made our trip to that small town at the request of a solicitor, Mr. Echavarrieta. On our arrival the first native of the town we met informed us, beaming with joy:

—There will be no argument this year... There will be nothing for you to do. Thank God, from now on we shall have no more trouble!

We wondered what he meant. In town we were informed that the affair had been definitely settled in a very simple way. When the first rebel armed groups arrived in town, shouting, to hunt down all the «reds» in the town, the inhabitants denounced the creditor, the rich landowner, to them as a «dangerous socialist». The poor man, who had never mixed in politics, was arrested and immediately executed to the satisfaction of the whole town.

—At last we shall not be bothered any more, said another cunning native.

Once the «disturber» was removed, peace was restored to that ingenious small town...

When the first stage of the military rebellion with its prevailing factor of general anarchy was over, a second stage ensued. This second era can be rightly termed «controlled anarchy».

This new stage was characterized by the numerous taxes levied by the rebel authorities in the form of requisitions and «voluntary» contributions.

They appointed hundreds of «orderly people» as members of a great variety of commissions who went all over the provinces escorted by armed groups to make requisitions and collect «voluntary» contributions for the «Glorious Movement».

These commissions collected everything, money, cars, radio sets, clothing, cattle, mattresses, grain, anything which they might consider to be useful, was seized by these collecting forces.

Every «Chief», and even «Chiefs» of groups could dispose at will of the goods thus requisitioned. Particularly in the case of automobiles great disorder prevailed. Any «Chief» could requisition an automobile previously requisitioned by another «Chief». When this occurred, the victim was left an inferior car in exchange. The situation was so serious, that a «Chief» who drove a requisitioned car had to keep an eye on it all the time for fear of losing it.

Collection of «voluntary» contributions was also effected in a peculiar way. An armed patrol would pay a visit to known left-wing people, and the «Chief» would say in all seriousness:

—We have come to thank you personally for the amount of... (he would specify a sum) and to get the check from you for that amount.

If the «leftist» appeared to be surprised or showed signs of hesitation, he was promptly given a «stimulus».

«We expect», the «Chief» would say, «that this affair about your contribution has not been merely a joke on your part, or that you have changed your mind. You know, to play a joke under present circumstances, may, you know...»

The poor man, naturally, was scared into making a check out for the amount specified by the «Chief».

Later on, after a long series of abuses had been committed, the confiscation of property was properly organized. Two methods were employed. First, by primitive (feudal) remunerative punishments, and later commissions for the confiscation of property were set up.

By the first method, every «Chief» or General in command was empowered to impose and collect fines, or any sort of economic impositions, without any restrictions. His rulings could only be annulled by a superior in rank.

The fines were imposed for an enormous variety of causes. They had to be paid immediately, or heavier ones would be imposed. The «Official Bulletin» publisher in Burgos is highly illustrative of the ways and means employed by the rebel authorities to extort money from the population. It was common to see in the bulletin fines of one million and half a million

pesetas imposed on people in North Africa and in Andalusia.

The case of Luis Garcia Lozano, the Mayor of Burgos, is a typical one. At the outbreak of the military rebellion Sr. Garcia Lozano was «ratified» and continued in office for several months, until he quarrelled with the Governor. The Mayor and a lawyer, Sr. Tomás Alonso de Armiño, who had been a deputy for several terms, signed a document which displeased the command. The General of the Division imposed on each of them a fine of half a million pesetas.

The case was referred to our court to start legal proceedings to collect the fines. The court could only collect 137 pesetas which the mayor had in a bank and, in the case of Alonso de Armiño, his money, state bonds and furniture, a total of 20,000 pesetas.

Both men were highly looked up to in the province. They appealed to General Mola who, being superior in rank, to the General who had imposed the fine, «would do something in their favor».

Mola reduced the fine from half a million pesetas each to TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED PESETAS for both. This amount was immediately paid. But the General who imposed the fine remained in his post...

Cases like this gave rise to shameful bargaining and ingenious manoeuvring, so that the method lost prestige and had to be replaced by the «Commissions for the Confiscation of Property».

Owing to the fact that I was a court official they appointed me secretary to the Burgos Commission. I was asked for advice almost every day by other commissions in the vicinity, and I was, therefore, in a position to witness the lamentable practices in which these commissions indulged.

«Commissions for the Confiscation of Property». The name in itself is highly significative. There was a commission for each province controlled by the rebels. These commissions had the Governor of the respective province as chairman, and their members included the most trusted magistrate of the district court and the state attorney. The commissions, in reality, only served to cover formalities, because all decisions were taken by the Governor alone, who had only to render account to himself for his decisions.

Each governor acted on his own initiative, without in the least taking into account the other members of the commission, who were only too glad to be relieved of that unpleasant task. I have before me a copy of the «Official Bulletin» published in Burgos May 14, 1937, which contains proof of the dictatorial decisions taken by the Governor. Under the heading «Commission for the Confiscation of Property» it says:

«I have decided to start proceedings against the following» (a list of the names of persons whose property is to be confiscated follows) and at the foot is the signature of the Governor A. Almagro.

The same procedure was followed in each case. The Governor made a list of all «personas non grata» and persons who were in prison or had been executed, and their property was confiscated solely on the strength of the lists.

Confiscations of property reached such a proportion that it was necessary to have printed forms made to facilitate the work of the courts.

The process was simple enough. The forms were filled in with information supplied by the local priest, the Mayor and the commander of the civil guard detachment. Then followed the «declaration of the defendant» and testimony given by two or three witnesses «for the defence».

To find a person «guilty» it was only necessary for the priest or the Mayor or the civil guard to supply unfavorable information about the person involved. It should also be noted that the property of a suspect was first «provisionally» confiscated, and the decision as to whether he was guilty or not guilty was made later on.

Many cases were profoundly dramatic, while others were highly comical. It has been my lot to witness many of both kinds.

I recall a very sad case, that of a widow from Buñuel, whose husband had been executed because he was a «leftist». Our court had to evict her from her wretched house with her three small children clinging to her skirt in a flood of tears. The poor wretched woman did not have a penny to her name. By an act of Justice she saw herself and her three small children converted into paupers and placed out in the cold to starve. They were dispossessed of everything they had in the world, even a pig which she was raising at great sacrifices in order to sell it and make a little money to keep herself and her three small children for a little while. The Governor, I remember, was very angry because our court delayed the eviction.

A very comical case, and one which I shall never forget, was one in which a small town intellectual was

(Continued on page 4)

Ayuntamiento de Madrid

THE CHURCH MILITANT

I. The Republicans and the Church

The Spanish writer Larra has very neatly summed up the mentality of the Spanish clergy in his famous work, *«Nadie pase sin hablar con el portero»*. «*Recherches?*» asks the monk who has discovered a French book among the luggage of a traveller. «This fellow *Recherches* must certainly be a heretic. Into the fire with him!»

Reference has already been made in the introductory chapters to the singular development of the Catholic Church against the feudal social background of Spain. We have seen that in this socially backward country the development of the Church has also remained in a medieval stage. Whereas the confiscation of Church property was carried out in France in 1789 and to some extent in England under Henry VIII, and the separation of Church and State constitutes one of the features of the bourgeois era, in Spain the Church was, until the year 1936, one of the largest landowners in the country, and all demands for secular education were regarded until quite recently as treason and heresy. The temporal, material interests of the Spanish Church were as great as those of the French Church about the time of Richelieu, and those of the English Church up to the Reformation. We have further seen that the Spanish Church had such considerable sums invested in banking, industry, and even in large-scale commercial undertakings and shipping, that in order to safeguard these material interests it was obliged to meddle even in the petty intrigues of day-to-day political life.

The political attitude of the Spanish Church has been determined in no uncertain fashion by these secular interests; as a result the clergy in Spain has always pursued a strictly anti-liberal and anti-Republican policy, and has always championed the cause of absolute monarchy.

During the Great War the Spanish clergy was the chief exponent of pro-German propaganda, the object of which was to induce Spain to join the Central Powers.

In its espousal of the German cause the Spanish Church did not hesitate to employ the crudest methods of propaganda. France was represented as being a decadent nation, corrupted by «cocottes and anticlericals»; England, the egoistic and perfidious Albion, as being the arch-enemy of Spain and of the Papacy. Germany, on the other hand, was a «chaste and healthy nation, which possessed an extraordinary powerful army and fleet and whose friendship was likely to be in all circumstances of advantage to Spain, and to contribute to the welfare and prosperity of the Catholic Church».

In this connection it is intriguing to note that all those groups who are to-day fighting on the side of the insurgents—the officers' cliques, the Carlists, the clergy, the conservatives—were, even as far back as 1914, passionately Germanophile, whereas those strata of the population which to-day constitute the People's Front, from the Trades Unions to the Basque and Cata-

lan Catholics, were supporters of the allies. The social antithesis between the dictatorial regime of the Kaiser and the Western democracies had its counterpart even at that time in a similar rift in the Spanish nation.

The post-war policy of the Spanish clergy followed the same course. The clerical Press indulged in apologia for, and passionate eulogies of, Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism. The clergy and clerical Press in Spain enthusiastically acclaimed the Italian campaign in Abyssinia, and even went so far as publicly to pour contempt on England's attitude on the Abyssinian question.

The Spanish clerical Press systematically avoided all reference to the persecution of German priests and pastors by the Nazis, or to the charges of immorality brought against the German Franciscan orders, which are regarded even by anti-clericals as utterly base. In this respect again the one exception was «Euskadi», the organ of the Basque Catholics, whose peculiar position, already mentioned, was reflected in their attitude to foreign politics.

The Spanish clergy's immediate reaction to the proclamation of the Spanish Republic in the year 1931 was of a most violent and aggressive character. The archbishops and priests turned themselves into electioneering agents, issuing pastoral letters against the Republican parties, the workers' organizations and their leaders, and not scrupling to employ the most unsavory methods in their campaign against the Republic. On the occasion of the 1933 and 1936 elections to the Cortes, Spaniards were privileged to witness the curious spectacle of nuns being marched in a body to the polling stations to vote against the Republic.

It is quite understandable that the provocative attitude of the clergy should have aroused violent anti-clerical feeling amongst the people. Their attitude, as has already been said, was not anti-religious, but anti-clerical. There are large sections of the people who, while to this very day imbued with strong traditional religious feelings, are yet opposed to the attitude of the Spanish Church. The Church has increasingly cut itself off from the masses. The Church dignitaries' identification of themselves with the ruling caste, their open resentment of even the most elementary demands of the poor peasants, their cold and calculated policy of encouraging the wealthier peasants, has increasingly intensified this process of isolation. Not only those workers who have come under Socialist or Syndicalist influence, but the illiterate rural population too, have turned away from the Church.

The tension between clergy and people showed itself as open enmity when, during the first few years of the Republic, Gil Robles founded his *Acción Popular* and thus created the new form of Spanish clerical fascism. The Gil Robles party aimed literally and explicitly at the restoration of the Middle Ages; one of its leaders even declaring, on the occasion of a meeting in November 1935, that the only

means of putting an end to the prevalence of Godless Socialism in Spain was to set up a new Inquisition.

The young Republic itself, on the other hand, was far less militant. It never attempted to introduce, let alone enforce, a single reform that had not long since been embodied in the constitutions of many of the democracies of Europe; such as, for example, the separation of Church property, the right of divorce, secular education in the State schools, the dissolution of the Jesuit order. The Republic respected the Concordat concluded in 1851 with the Holy See; it allowed all the religious orders, with the exception of the Jesuits, to continue to exist on Spanish soil; it allowed the Church schools for adults and children to continue to exist as private institutions, it permitted all the churches to remain open, and made no attempt to interfere with practising Catholics in the observance of their religion.

The Spanish clergy, nevertheless, was not amenable to reason or prepared to appreciate tolerance. During the rising in Asturias in October, 1934, certain fanatical priests went so far as to denounce Socialist workers to López Ochoa's hangmen, and amongst other things to conscript seminarists for the firing squads.

The cynical frankness of the document issued by the rebel Command, quoted in Chapter IV of this book, instructing officers to use church towers as strategic points during street fighting, may astound the foreigner; it was no novelty to the Spaniard. Long before the outbreak of the insurrection it was known throughout the country that a number of fortress-like monasteries and churches in Spain were being mis-used by the *Falange Española* as depots for arms and munitions, and that some priests even put these buildings at the disposal of the conspirators for their nocturnal meetings. As early as the elections of February, 1936, crowds were fired on from certain church-towers. In Granada, during the victory celebrations of the People's Front, panic broke out when sharpshooters fired on the crowd from house-tops and from a church tower in the center of the town.

The reaction was inevitable. In the stormy months between February and the July insurrection, feeling ran high in a number of villages in Catalonia and Andalusia, and found expression in the burning of churches.

During the first few days of the insurrection churches were again used as strategic points. On July 19th, in Madrid, machine-guns were fired from the Salesians monastery in the calle de Francisco Rodríguez (in the Cuatro Caminos district), from the Cathedral of Saint Isidor and from several priests' seminaries. After the fighting barricades of mattresses were found behind the windows of a convent in 7, calle del Sacramento. Twenty-four hours before the insurrection the nuns had been evacuated, and a troop of Falangists had taken up their quarters there. The same thing happened in other towns of Spain. In the smaller towns in Catalonia the inadequately armed or entirely unarmed Militiamen were frequently

obliged to smoke out the machine-gun nests set up in the monasteries or to blast the walls with dynamite.

The results were what might have been expected. I have seen the ruins of churches and monasteries in Catalonia; the sight of them is staggering. I have also seen churches in Madrid which were blown to bits by Franco's artillery and aircraft and the hospitals that suffered a like fate; the sight was equally staggering. It is to be expected that the propagandists of both sides should made all the capital they can out of their demolished churches; in the Great War the Allies and the Central Powers also denounced each other for the destruction of church buildings. But that there should be journalists who never weary of returning again and again to the subject of the burned churches of Catalonia, expressing their horror at the effect, without mentioning the cause, is a thing I have never been able to understand.

In November, 1936, I had an opportunity of talking to Sergeant Fernando Ocier, of the Fifth Regiment of Militia, a former mechanic, at the Montaña barracks. He described to me a scene which he had witnessed in Gerona on July 22nd.

«After the suppression of the insurrection», he said, «the romanesque church in a suburb of Gerona was guarded by a detachment of Workers' Militia. About twenty Militiamen had posted themselves some in front of the church door, others at the corners of the streets in the neighbourhood. Since things were already quiet in the district, the Militiamen were taking things fairly easily, and were smoking and chatting with passers-by. About seven o'clock in the evening a machine-gun began to rattle unexpectedly from the church tower. A Militia-man and two passers-by were wounded: chaos ensued, and no one knew what was actually happening. The Militiamen took cover and began to fire at random at the tower, but their Commandant ordered them to stop, and sent a messenger to headquarters to ask for instructions. He was loath to attack the church on his own responsibility, for it had been placed under his protection. At length orders arrived from his superior officer to storm the church. In the meantime uninterrupted machine-gun fire had been kept up; I think the people in the church must have had automatic quick-firing revolvers as well. A woman who was imprudent enough to go near was wounded in the head and died in the doorway of the house into which she was carried. A considerable crowd had gathered, which after this incident could scarcely be kept in check. When at last the Militiamen stormed the church, losing, incidentally, two men, the choir stalls burst into flames. In the course of the night the church was completely gutted. I don't know who set fire to it; the Militiamen arrested several suspects, but the feeling of the crowd easily explains the occurrence. I myself am a practising Catholic, and go to confession twice a month, but at that moment my sympathies were entirely with the crowd. When a man in a priest's robe

shoots down a woman with a machine-gun for no reason at all, then he is no longer a priest.

«Later on it turned out that three soundrelly Falangists had been shooting from the tower; the Sacristan had fed them with ammunition. After the insurrection the Falangists had hidden in the church and on the wireless set they had brought with them they had heard a rebel report that a fresh revolt had broken out in Barcelona. That is why they thought the moment had arrived to blaze away with their machine-gun. Two of the Falangists were shot, the third is in the model prison, together with the Sacristan.»

When civil war followed upon the insurrection, a number of priests in Spain developed a real crusading mania.

In Galicia the Bishop of Mondoñedo personally assumed the command of a rebel column which was sent to the relief of Oviedo before General Yagüe's column arrived on the scene. The Bishop of Mondoñedo was a prelate who had been notorious ever since the time of the Asturian rebellion, and his hostility towards the workers had led to grave conflicts within the ranks of the clergy itself. During the first few days of the Civil War the detachment that fought under his command was composed entirely of priests and seminarists; a number of these bellicose priests were taken prisoner by the Government troops.

The memorandum already referred to, drawn up by the Governing Body of the Madrid Faculty of Law, describes a positively fantastic scene in Pamplona, which shows how the darkest traditions of the Inquisition were being resurrected.

«About this time (the end of August, 1936) a procesion with the Archbishop of Toledo at its head marched through the streets of Pamplona carrying an image of the Madonna del Pilar. When it was over, the image of the Madonna was set up in the middle of the principal square of the town, and the clergy were drawn up round it in military formation; after a short ceremony, sixty prisoners were shot 'to the honour and glory of the Virgin' and the accompaniment of a peal of bells.»

A letter written by a Catholic priest in Valladolid to an English colleague, the Rev. E. B. Short, of Bulwell (Nottingham), breathes the same medieval spirit.

«... Much is to be done», it concludes. «They will do it. Communism... is to be burnt from the land. No false sentimentality. They are offered the Sacrament and shot. If they blaspheme the Sacrament, they are flogged before being shot. More than 3,000 have been shot here. Many to follow. Each case is scrupulously examined.»

This unparalleled effusion on the part of a priest appeared in the «Nottingham Evening News» of November 26th, 1936. Five days later the same paper published the following letter to the editor:

«A Priest's Letter»

«Sir,

«Regarding the disgraceful letter to the Bulwell priest from his co-religionist in Valladolid, Spain, published last Thursday,

(Continued on page 4)

Confiscation...

(Continued from page 2)

involved. He was a pedantic fellow bitten by the literary bug. He had already composed twenty-five hymns glorifying the Army, Imperial Spain, and one day when he was rehearsing a new hymn glorifying Franco, the court officials arrived to confiscate his property. The man, being such a staunch supporter of the movement, could not get over his astonishment.

—It is all the work of the priest, he said. The priest believes that he is a very good musician, and as I did not let him collaborate in this new hymn, he has accused me out of spite of belonging to the left wing. But he will pay for this... as a matter of fact, I am going to see Franco tomorrow...

The first decree establishing the confiscation of

property covered only the property of the parties and societies which composed the People's Front, such as the U. G. T., the Left Republican Party, etc. But by a new decree issued January 10, 1937, it was extended to cover the property of all members of the parties forming the People's Front.

Under the same date an order was issued to start proceedings against all persons «considered hostile to the regime, and persons who by their previous activities and ideas might be suspected of committing acts which might be considered hostile to the «Glorious National Movement».

In this manner the civil population was entirely under the sway of the military authorities, who could dispose at will of their property and their lives. By simply being suspected of being unfriendly to the military rebellion, all their property could be taken from them. People lived in constant terror, for fear of

losing everything they had, even if they did not commit any act against the rebel army.

The military authorities in each province naturally were wise enough to make the power thus given them highly productive. They could dispose of everything as they liked. Each General in each Province constituted a dictatorship of his own.

They had only to say: «Ordeno y mando», take whatever decisions they considered adequate, confiscate the property of any citizen, and unless that citizen was influential enough to appeal for the protection of a superior in rank, no other alternative was given him than surrender his possessions.

From the book «Doy Fe...» (I Certify...) by Antonio Ruiz Vilaplana, Secretary of a Law Court in Burgos who recently escaped from rebel territory. This book has just been published in Paris.

The Church Militant The Military Rebellion in Teruel

(Continued from page 3)

it is reminiscent of the dark ages, or at least some 400 years ago. When Philip and Mary of Spain, egged on by the bigoted and cruel priest-hood, sent the Armada, with numerous priests replete with various instruments of torture on board for the spiritual uplift of our heretic forbears.

«Happily, priests and torture machines found a watery grave in the great storms that decimated the Armada.

»Doubtless had he lived at that time, the Valladolid priest would have been on board one of Philip's galleons in charge of his pet instrument of torture.

»It is the same bigotry and hatred that burnt Ridley and Latimer at the stake.

»It would be interesting to know if our Valladolid Christian is «blessing» Franco's Moors as they pass by his seminary?

«Essex Farm», Kimberley, Notts.»

The indictment implicit in these documents is directed against only a section of the Spanish clergy, primarily against the hierarchy at the top, the Princes of the Church and the Bishops. A considerable section of the clergy with a social conscience was staunchly Republican.

In contrast to the grim scenes in Pamplona and Gerona, really touching incidents have from time to time been recorded which reveal how close is the tie binding simple village priests to their flocks. In the village of Calahorra, in the Ebro Valley, the priest, at the peril of his life, prevented a massacre of Republicans and Socialists. Similar incidents have been reported from several little towns in the Basque provinces.

The whole course of the Civil War has shown that the Spanish people can be relied upon to react instinctively to such differences of behaviour. Personalities such as those of the Archbishop of Toledo and the Bishop of Mondoñedo have very gravely discredited the Spanish clergy in the eyes of the people; but in those cases where the priests have displayed human feeling and shown understanding of the misery of the peasants, both believers and non-believers have respected them, protected them, and treated them with that spontaneous warmth which is so typical of the simple Spaniard. There were little villages in Catalonia where the Anarchists protected the priest, whose church had been occupied against

his will by the insurgents, against the fury of the crowd and got him away safely.

In Madrid a Militiaman of the Fifth Regiment showed me with pride a much-thumbed letter that he had been carrying about in his pocket.

«We feel we must express our thanks to the Militia for its kind behaviour and the assistance it has given us. Permit us to express in particular our grateful admiration for the way in which your militiamen have respected the art treasures and objects of value in our chapels.

(«Sister Veronica La Gasca. Capuchine Convent, plaza del Conde Toreno, Madrid».)

Taken from a book entitled «Spanish Testament» by Arthur Koestler, foreign correspondent of the London newspaper «News Chronicle», who was taken prisoner by the insurgents at Málaga. The book is published by Gollancz and contains an introduction by the Duchess of Atholl.

From a Letter signed by Dr. Juan Orís González, Spanish Evangelist Church, New York, N. Y., Published in the «New York Times» replying to the propaganda letter issued by Spanish Rebel Prelates

The Spanish hierarchy claim «The elections of February 16th (not 3rd) 1936, were unjust». In what respect?... When one considers the circumstances of the 1936 election, he cannot but be surprised at the victory of the Popular Front. Conditions for the victory of the Right parties were so favorable, and for that of the Popular Front so unfavorable, that many of the Republican leaders advised Azaña not to enter into that election. The following are facts which nobody can deny:

During the two years the Right parties were in control, they ejected from office all Socialist and Republican mayors, and put in their places monarchists or friends of the Right hand. When Portela Valladares was given the decree for the dissolution of Congress and the proclamation of a new election, he promised to restore those ejected mayors; but he never fulfilled that promise. Two cardinals, as well as several archbishops and bishops, published pastorals ordering the people not to vote for the Popular Front candidates but to vote for those of the Right, under penalty of mortal sin. The aristocrats, and particularly the great Spanish millionaire, Juan March, gave millions of pesetas to make propaganda and buy votes for the Right.

When Ambassador Fernando de los Ríos, the leading Republican candidate for the Province of Granada, went around the province campaigning, in many towns the Civil Guards forbade him to enter and speak; twice he was shot at, but fortunately not hit. In Málaga, where I was living, in their desperate attempt to win the election the Right forces did away with the voting boxes in all of the 65 precincts in which Popular Front had the majority of votes. And yet, in spite of all such treachery and tricks, the majority was overwhelmingly for the Popular Front. Even Gil Robles himself, leader of the Right parties, said two days after the election in his own paper, «El Debate», that until two o'clock he had been confident of winning but that, after two o'clock, avalanches of working men who usually did not vote went to the polls for the Popular Front, and so he was defeated...

After the fall of Teruel the Republican journalists reconstructed the story of the fascist uprising in that city on July 19th, 1936. They obtained most of their information from the civilian population of Teruel, which has been evacuated by the Government to the cities and towns of the rear in order to insure their safety.

Every detail of the insurrection had been prepared beforehand. It was known exactly how many forces would be at the disposal of the rebels when they rose against the Republic. The rebel officers in command of the Teruel garrison had threatened with imprisonment all their subordinates whom they suspected of not sympathising. All the armed forces stationed in Teruel, except the Assault Guard, knew what was going to happen.

Infantry Major Aguado, who was later killed in the Battle of Corbalán, had been entrusted by the leaders of the rebellion with the organisation of the uprising against the Government in Teruel. It was he who secured the support of the Civil Guards and organised the requestes, phalang-

ists, and monarchists of the city. All this, of course, was done in secret, without the knowledge of the Lieutenant-Colonel in command of the Teruel garrison. Aguado frequently made secret trips to Calatayud where he discussed the situation with Muñoz Castellanos, another rebel, who transmitted to him orders from Mola. Everything was carefully prepared. The reactionaries, the very rich, the fascists, the monarchist officers, impatiently awaited the final order.

Finally an artillery officer, sent by Muñoz Castellanos from Calatayud, arrived at Teruel on July 19th at 11 J. M. bringing the eagerly awaited order. Major Aguado, the clerical authorities (including the Bishop), and Castellanos's envoy went into conference in the Bishop's Palace. At 1 A. M. the artillery officer returned to Calatayud.

At 7 A. M. the Civil Governor issued a proclamation declaring the state of alarm in the province of Teruel in name of the Central Government. The proclamation was pulled down from the walls by rebel groups and another one put in its place in which Major Aguado, who had in the meantime appointed himself Military Commander of Teruel, declared a state of martial law.

When news of this reached the representatives of the Government, it was too late. Aguado himself, followed by eight soldiers, posted his proclamation in the Plaza del Torico, to the amazement of the people. At this point the Civil Governor ordered the Assault Guards to arrest Major Aguado.

At 8 A. M. the Assault Guards appeared in the Calle San Juan on their way to the plaza del Torico to arrest Major Aguado. On Calle de los Amantes they stopped before a contingent of Civil Guards. The officer in command of the Civil Guards and the one in command of the Assault Guards spoke to each other for a few seconds. Then the latter turned to the loyal troops, and addressed them urging them to go over to the side of the rebels. This they did, and Civil and Assault Guards went together to Military Headquarters, crying «Down with the Government». The alarm was given and all the members of Parties belonging to the People's Front, seeing that there was no hope of resistance since they had no arms, decided that the wisest thing to do was to flee as best they could.

At this point armed rebels who had been waiting in the Seminary, the Military Headquarters, and the Bishop's Palace came out and took all the principal build-

ings of the city. Teruel had fallen into the hands of the rebels.

The rebels then proceeded to arrest those Republicans who had not succeeded in escaping. Among those arrested were the Governor, the Mayor, the Deputy Vilatela, Professor Aranz, and Macario, a commercial agent. All of them belonged to the Left Republican Party. The provincial deputies, Marin and Obispo, were also killed. But more than 4,000 people, most of them known in Republican, trade union, and political centers, had fled.

When news of this mass flight of the Republican elements from the city was received, Aguado sent several patrols of Assault and Civil Guards to arrest «eliminate» the fugitives. More than 400 were captured and imprisoned in the jails of the city. Many, even women and children, were killed and their bodies left to decompose in the fields. Hundreds of others were shot by the Civil Guards from Puebla de Valverde, near Teruel.

These Guards at first pretended to be on the side of the Government and declared themselves prepared to assault and capture Teruel from the insurgents. But on the way they suddenly turned round and murdered all the civilians who had joined them with the idea of helping them retake Teruel for the Republic.

All this was outside the city. Inside the phalangists, requestes, royalists, etc., raided the homes and commercial and industrial establishments of republicans, struck up fascist posters, etc.

It is calculated that in all more than 3,000 men and 200 women were killed in Teruel during the 17 odd months of fascist rule.

(«Las Noticias». Barcelona, december 1937.)

The Fall of Teruel Has Caused Great Depression in Rebel Territory

Paris. — According to information sent from Gibraltar by the Spanish Press Agency, the Republican victory at Teruel has caused a tremendous moral depression in rebel territory. This can be observed in places near Gibraltar. Yesterday morning a captain of Carabineros, who was in command of the whole sector, deserted. He left La Línea and crossed over to Gibraltar. Immediately on his arrival he affirmed his desire to leave for Barcelona to offer his services to the Republican Government.