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The Last Of Europe's Fascists!

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Generalissimo Francisco Franco — He's looking for the way out.



A Nazi officer explains glider principles to a Falangist Youth Glider Club.



Like Mussolini, Franco offered bonuses to those who raised large families.

The Last Of Europe's Fascists!

By Cpl. KLAUS MANN
Staff Writer

The Days Ahead Are Numbered For Spain's Francisco Franco

THE DICTATOR of Spain, Generalissimo Francisco Franco, has plenty of worries these days. Ever since the fall of his former bosses and protectors, Hitler and Mussolini, "el Caudillo" (which is the Spanish equivalent of *der Fuehrer*) has been living on borrowed time. What is the origin of the Spanish dictatorship? Why is the nature of this regime so incompatible with the principles and purposes of the United Nations? What is General Franco's record?

The government which established itself in Spain in 1939, after three years of civil war, owes its existence to two foreign powers—namely, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. It was with the military, economic and political support of Hitler and Mussolini that the Spanish generals, including Francisco Franco, started their revolt against the legitimate government of their country. The tenacity and determination with which the people of Spain resisted the rebellious officers indicates clearly that the Fascist movement was not popular with the majority of the nation. It took Franco and his followers three years to overcome this resistance—which was all the more remarkable as the rebels (or "Nationalists," as they chose to call themselves) continued to enjoy the material and military help of their Italian and German friends, whereas the Republicans, or Loyalists, were not able to obtain the most essential supplies—not even on a cash and carry basis. The non-intervention policy maintained by the democracies worked one-sidedly in favor of the Fascists.

SPAIN'S CIVIL WAR was indeed a prelude to World War II—a dress rehearsal in which the powers of evil tested, in a moral and military sense, their war of aggression upon the cause of humanity. When Franco's troops marched into Madrid on March 28, 1939, the dictators in Berlin and Rome could congratulate themselves on the victorious conclusion of a major campaign. Franco was right when saying, in a

speech he delivered on July 17, 1941, that the first battles of World War II "were joined and won on our soil."

When the real thing started, Franco's interests and sympathies were naturally on the side of the Axis. Even before the outbreak of hostilities the Caudillo had coordinated his policy with the Italo-German line by joining the Anti-Comintern Pact and withdrawing from the League of Nations. If he now hesitated to declare war on the democracies, it may have been partly because of his country's physical and moral inability to face a new conflict after three years of devastating internal strife; partly because Spain's status as a "non-belligerent ally" of the Axis powers promised to be more advantageous, for the Franco regime as well as from the German point of view, than an open military partnership would have been.

THE MASTERS of "Nationalist" Spain made no secret of their loyalty to the Nazi-Fascist cause, as long as Hitler held the upper hand in Europe. During the opening phase of the war, Franco and his government-controlled press were jubilant about Allied setbacks. In 1941, the Caudillo stated triumphantly in an official proclamation addressed to members of the National Council: "The war has taken a bad turn for the Allies, and they have lost it."

Some months later, in February of 1942, he was still certain of German victory, and promised that "if there were one moment of danger, if the road to Berlin were to be opened, it would not be one division of Spanish volunteers that would go, but a million of Spaniards would offer themselves."

The next year, however, found the Generalissimo somewhat less confident. On March 6, 1943, he appealed for peace—suggesting that it would be senseless

to go on fighting as the war had reached a "dead point" at which "none of the belligerents has the power to destroy his opponent."

BUT THE WAR continued, and Franco went on assisting, by deed and word, those whom he was wont to call "our Fascist comrades." He sent his Blue Division to fight with the German Army against the Russians. He let Spain serve as a convenient supply and espionage base for the Nazis. Hitler's agents were free to use Spanish consulates and embassies throughout the world for the transmission of information to Berlin and as headquarters for their world-wide intrigues. Spanish ships reported the position of Allied merchantmen to German U-boats. Spanish workers were sent to Germany to aid in Hitler's war plants. The so-called "neutral" press of Franco Spain was a valued Goebbels' mouthpiece. Nazi operations were tolerated within the Spanish police, the Spanish radio system, and in every department which could aid Hitler in his war against the Allies.

The dossier on Franco's pro-Axis activities bulges with evidence. Even so tolerant an observer as Sir Samuel Hoare, now Lord Templewood, had to admit that "Spain was practically a semi-occupied country in which German influences pervaded important sections of national life." Having served for five years as British Ambassador to Madrid, and having been widely criticized for his pro-Franco leanings, Lord Templewood astounded the House of Lords in London with a detailed description of how he, the representative of His Majesty's Government, was besieged by the Gestapo in Madrid. Said he: "I had many instances in my own experience of this non-military occupation. I had the Gestapo living in the next house looking over a wall, watching every movement I made and constantly trying to suborn my domestic

staff." Of course, the democratic world in general, and Allied authorities in particular, were well aware of what was going on in Madrid. Yet the U. S. and Great Britain maintained diplomatic relations with Franco Spain. As for the Soviet Union, it has never recognized the Fascist Spanish regime. It is true that occasional frictions developed between the western democracies, on the one hand, and the Caudillo, on the other; in July, 1941, Washington even went so far as to impose an embargo on oil shipments to Spain—only to lift the embargo again a few weeks after Pearl Harbor. The general line, however, adhered to by both London and Washington, was to accept Franco's "neutrality" at its face value.

NO DOUBT this conciliatory attitude on the part of the Allies was due mostly to considerations of military expediency. The usefulness of this policy was particularly obvious at the time of the Allied invasion of North Africa. It was then that the Allied combined Chiefs of Staff insisted that every step possible be taken to keep Spain neutral and to prevent the Germans from entering the Iberian Peninsula. Years afterwards, in 1944, Churchill appeared in Commons "to speak kindly" words about Spain, which—as the former prime minister put it—had done the Allies a great service by overlooking the concentration of air and sea power at Gibraltar for the North African invasion.

At that point, however, this kind of leniency towards the Spanish brand of Nazi-Fascism was no longer in keeping with the general mood and tendency of democratic world public opinion. Mr. Churchill's pro-Franco statement was widely criticized. President Roosevelt himself, at a press conference on May 30, 1944, indicated that he disagreed with his British colleague—suggesting that Spain's conduct as a neutral had been less than satisfactory.

TWO THINGS had become clear by now: First, that the military situation no longer necessitated or justified a policy of appeasement towards Franco Spain; second, that the Spanish dictatorship was a threat to the peace of Europe. (Please turn to Page 12)