

UNREVEALED FACTS ABOUT ROBERT MURPHY

BY KINGSBURY SMITH

In this article Mr. Smith presents the first detailed disclosures of what actually took place in our relations with Admiral Darlan and General de Gaulle at the time of the North African invasion. He says: "I have the approval of the State Department to write this hitherto unrevealed picture of Mr. Robert Murphy's work. I had a long talk with Mr. Murphy before he left Washington, and I quote him in this article verbatim."

Mr. Smith is the distinguished Washington correspondent whose articles dealing with affairs of the State Department have been the cause of international discussion and debate. — THE EDITORS.

ROBERT DANIEL MURPHY has become the most controversial figure in American diplomacy. Critics condemn him as a conservative reactionary who negotiated a nefarious deal secretly with the late Admiral Jean Darlan in North Africa. As American adviser on the Allied Mediterranean Commission, he was accused of responsibility for the action of the Allied military authorities in accepting the co-operation of some former Fascists in Italy and in failing to establish a true democracy in that defeated ex-enemy country. Left-wing elements in the United States are now up in arms because this fifty-year-old career diplomat has been appointed political adviser on German affairs to General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull and

his associates contend that Murphy has proved to be one of America's ace diplomatic trouble-shooters. Hull has acclaimed him as the leader in the movement that saved North Africa from German occupation and kept the Mediterranean bases out of Nazi hands. Murphy is credited not only with paving the way for the American North African expedition in November 1942, but also with having saved the lives of at least 16,000 American soldiers through the arrangement he made with Darlan.

As political adviser on German affairs to General Eisenhower with the rank of ambassador, Murphy is destined to play a prominent part in the Allied occupation and control of Germany. He will be the spokesman for American policy in respect to the treatment to be accorded a defeated

Germany. What is the truth about the background and activities of this man?

Until two years ago, Murphy was virtually unknown to the American people. Up to that time he had spent twenty-five years working quietly in the background as a servant of his country abroad. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on October 28, 1894, he came out of the West to make his own way in the world. His was not the case of the son of a rich man who is given a soft job in the diplomatic service. He started out as a lowly clerk in the Post Office Department in 1916. In his spare time he studied law, attended George Washington University, and obtained admission to the bar in the District of Columbia. He entered on his diplomatic career as a clerk in the American Legation at Berne, Switzerland, in 1917.

He has none of the reserved, stiff-shirt, snobbish mannerisms commonly associated with the professional diplomat. Affable, quick to smile, and youthful in appearance, except for his thinning hair, he looks more like a businessman than a diplomat. Although he received the Distinguished Service Medal from General Eisenhower for his work in North Africa, he remains extremely modest and is bewildered by the controversy that is raging about him. He feels that he has merely carried out, sometimes with success, the directives issued to him by the State Department and the military authorities. Ordinarily a warm-hearted, friendly sort of person, he nevertheless talks pointedly and

wastes no time with diplomatic verbiage. He considers himself a liberal, but he has no Communistic leanings. He believes the United States must work with Soviet Russia in the interests of world peace, but he is pro-American rather than pro-Russian, pro-British, or pro-French.

II

The most bitter criticism of Murphy has centered around his handling of the situation in North Africa, particularly his so-called "Deal with Darlan." Let's look at the record as it exists in the official files of the State Department, rather than in the perturbed minds of ill-informed persons.

Murphy was counsellor of the American Embassy in Paris at the time of the fall of France. He was assigned to Vichy in the same capacity when the Pétain government was established there. When the problem of preventing the Germans from occupying French North Africa and gaining control of the vital naval and air bases in that territory arose, Murphy was sent there to try diplomatically to combat the pressure which the Nazis were exerting. He helped work out an economic agreement whereby the United States would give the North African French non-military supplies, which were urgently needed, in return for assurances that the bases would be kept out of German hands. He hustled around from one end of French North Africa to the other, making friends with military and political leaders,

and trying to convince them that Germany was not going to win the war. He established listening posts around the country with American diplomatic agents, to keep watch on the activities of the Germans and Italians.

When, in the summer of 1942, the historic decision was reached by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to send an Anglo-American expeditionary force to drive the Axis powers out of French North Africa, Murphy went to work to pave the way for the landing. His directive from the State and War Departments was to win over as many of the French military and political leaders as he could to ensure there would be little or no resistance when the Allied landing occurred. Naturally, he could not reveal when the invasion would take place or even state definitely that the decision had been reached to move into French North Africa. He had to exercise the utmost caution in his talks with the French so that the Axis agents would not get wind of the Allied intentions.

In his efforts to win over the French, he could proceed at first only on the hypothetical basis that if the Americans and British eventually landed in France's North African possession, they would want to be sure the French military forces did not resist them. The French military leaders with whom Murphy talked did not take him seriously at first. They did not believe the United States or Britain was in any position to launch a

full-scale invasion of French North Africa at that time. They still thought Germany was going to win the war, and they wanted no abortive "raids" in French North Africa which would result in the Germans' occupying all of that territory.

Like most high-ranking officers of the French military caste, the generals in North Africa stuck to their code of honor in respect to their oath of allegiance to a central authority. They had received orders to resist the invasion of French North Africa from any quarter, Axis or Allied, and they were not disposed to agree to mutiny in some risky adventure, in the success of which they had little faith anyway.

It became apparent that the only hope of winning them over quickly at the crucial moment was to get the support of some well known French military leader who had enough prestige to order no resistance to the Allied landing and to have his order obeyed.

The Anglo-American high command decided that General Maxime Weygand would be the most suitable man. He had recently been recalled to Vichy from his post as Delegate of the Government for North Africa and military commander, at the insistence of the Germans, who were suspicious of him. Contrary to some reports, however, the Allies had not approached him while he was in North Africa. American agents did contact him in France after his recall. He was informed in the strictest confidence of the plan to occupy French North

Africa. He was offered the opportunity of joining the Allied expeditionary force and becoming the leader of France's colonial empire if he would issue the orders to cease resistance at the appropriate time. Weygand not only rejected the offer, but he also tipped off Marshal Pétain on what the Allies had in mind. It must be added, in fairness to both Weygand and Pétain, that there is no evidence that they ever passed on this information to the Germans.

It then became necessary to look for another French military leader who would command the respect of the generals in North Africa. This was no easy task. There were not many such men available. The decision was made to approach General Henri Giraud. Not noted for brilliant military leadership, he was, nevertheless, one of France's most famous modern heroes, chiefly because of his escapes from German war prisons in both the last war and this one. His almost miraculous flight from the German fortress of Königsberg had stirred the imagination of the world. It was hoped his dramatic appearance in North Africa with the Allied forces of liberation would so emotionally move the generals there that they would be willing to accept his orders. Giraud accepted the overtures made to him by American agents.

Meanwhile, Murphy was still carrying on behind the scenes in North Africa, obtaining support for the Allies. He established clandestine radio

stations for communicating with the Allied command. He also arranged for General Mark Clark's secret midnight meeting with French leaders in Algeria prior to the invasion.

The work for which he later received the Distinguished Service Medal was done, however, on the night of D Day, when the great armada of American and British convoys approached French North African shores.

Murphy's final directive from the Allied high command was to visit General Alphonse Pierre Juin, commander-in-chief of the French forces in Algeria, a few hours before the invasion and appeal to him to order no resistance.

At 12:45 A.M. November 7, 1942, Murphy went to the home of General Juin in Algiers. So well had the secret of the Allied plans been kept that the French general was asleep upstairs in his bedroom when Murphy arrived. Juin came downstairs in his pajamas.

"I am," Murphy told him, "happy to say that I have been instructed by my government to inform you that American and British armies of liberation are about to land. Within a few hours we shall land a great force to free French North Africa. I am instructed to request you in the interests of French liberty to aid us by ordering the forces under your command to offer no resistance."

Murphy, in his subsequent report to the State Department, said General Juin was highly perturbed. He said to Murphy: "You mean you are invading French territory?"

"No," replied Murphy, "we are coming by invitation."

"By whose invitation?" Juin asked.

"By the invitation of General Giraud."

"Is he here?" Juin exclaimed.

"No," Murphy said, "he is at Gibraltar, but he will be here soon."

"You know my sympathies are with you," Juin said. "I want to see French North Africa and France liberated. Unfortunately, however, I am not now in a position to issue the orders you request. Admiral Darlan has arrived here unexpectedly to see his son. He is my superior. He is commander-in-chief of all French forces. He can immediately countermand any orders I issue. If he does so, the commands will respect his orders, not mine."

It was true that Darlan had arrived suddenly on the scene. Whether he came simply to visit his son, who was critically ill with infantile paralysis, or whether he suspected something was afoot, is not certain to this day. Darlan took that secret with him to his grave when he was assassinated. His arrival could easily have been a coincidence. His wife had arrived three days before him and found his son in grave danger. She may have sent an urgent message to the father to come to the bedside. On the other hand, Murphy suspects Pétain told Darlan of the information he had received from Weygand. It is highly probable that in addition to seeing his son, the Admiral intended to look into the situation in North Africa.

At any rate, he was there and Juin

was unwilling and unable to do what the Allies wanted him to do, in view of the Admiral's presence. Murphy had to think and act quickly.

"Very well," he said to Juin, "let us get Admiral Darlan here immediately. There is no time to lose. The armies may be landing at this very minute."

Darlan was staying at the nearby house of Admiral Feynard (now French naval representative in Washington). An urgent message was sent to him to come to General Juin's house. He came over within half an hour, accompanied by Admirals Feynard and Battet.

Murphy repeated to Darlan the instructions he had given Juin. The Admiral's face, Murphy recalls, turned purple with rage.

"I know the British are stupid," he said, "but I did not think you Americans would be so stupid."

Darlan feared we did not have enough strength to be successful. He also felt we should have waited until we were able to invade southern France simultaneously.

"Do you not remember," Murphy said to Darlan, "what you told Admiral Leahy in Vichy in July 1941 — that if and when the Americans had half a million men to invade France, to come to you?"

"Well, we now have that force; nearly half a million men are about to land on French North African shores. We have now come to you."

Murphy appealed to Darlan's patriotism. He emphasized that America

and Britain were taking the first step in the liberation of France.

Darlan paced the floor for fifteen minutes. Beads of perspiration rolled off his forehead. He said to Murphy:

"You know, I have taken an oath to Marshal Pétain to resist any invasion of French North African territory from any quarter. You know what it means to take an oath to your government. I have taken a solemn oath to the Marshal. He is the chief of state. I cannot violate my oath."

Murphy reminded the Admiral that he was commander-in-chief of all French forces; that he was on the spot; that there was no time for delay.

"It is your responsibility whether you like it or not," Murphy told Darlan. "Surely you do not wish to be held responsible for shedding French and American blood in the interests of the Germans."

Darlan continued to pace the floor. He insisted he could act only if Pétain ordered him to do so.

"Well," Murphy said, "what are you going to do about it? Our forces are now landing. If Marshal Pétain knew what was going on, you know he would instruct you to offer no resistance."

Darlan decided to send the Marshal a radio message asking for instructions. Of course, he never received any reply. Meanwhile, Murphy continued to argue with him.

"We talked on through the night," Murphy told the writer. "Darlan was trying to find a way out. Finally he decided he could accept an armistice.

He did so later in the morning after ascertaining the strength of our landing."

The American military authorities officially estimated that Darlan's cease fire order to the French forces saved between 16,000 and 18,000 United States casualties.

Murphy has been bitterly attacked for making a "deal" with Darlan. It has been charged that certain promises were made to the Admiral; that we agreed to keep him in power in return for his aid to us. The fact is that neither Murphy nor anyone else ever promised Darlan his life, his position or anything else.

Darlan signed an armistice agreement presented to him by the American high command. That agreement has never been made public. It can now be revealed, however, that it gave General Eisenhower absolute control of all French African territories. In its all-embracing terms, it was as complete as the unconditional surrender imposed on a defeated and conquered nation. In signing it, Darlan said he felt he was justified in doing so because the Nazis had used the Allied landing in North Africa as an excuse to occupy all of France, thus violating the Franco-German armistice agreement. He also said he now wanted to do everything in his power to help the Allies defeat Germany. He used his authority to see that the terms of the agreement made with the American high command were carried out. That meant turning over to the

Allies all communications, supplies, port facilities and everything else they asked for. Darlan also authorized Pierre Boisson, governor-general of French West Africa, to turn over to the United States Navy the great naval base at Dakar. In return, we did not assure Darlan even the protection that might have saved him from assassination at the hands of a youthful fanatic a short time later.

III

We let Darlan carry on as head of French affairs in North Africa while he lived because we found that the French obeyed his orders, and we were not sure anyone else we put in command would be able to exercise such authority. When the American Government was being assailed for letting Darlan remain in command, the Admiral on several occasions voluntarily told Murphy that if he was proving a political obstacle he was prepared to relinquish his post.

Darlan later said he needed a good administrator to handle civil affairs in French North Africa. He asked if he could have Marcel Peyrouton, then French ambassador to the Argentine. As a former Vichy official, Peyrouton had acted ruthlessly to crush the resistance movement in France. He was hated by Free Frenchmen. Nevertheless, he had served previously as an administrator in French North Africa and was noted for his efficiency there. General Eisenhower and General Giraud approved Darlan's request.

The State Department tried to block the request, twice held it up, but finally it went through at the insistence of the War Department.

"At that time," Murphy said, "the Allied military authorities were prepared to deal with Jesus Christ, Mephistopheles, or anyone else who would help us drive the Axis out of North Africa with the least possible cost in American and British lives."

Murphy acted in this affair chiefly as a diplomatic messenger boy, yet he was assailed as though he alone were responsible for the selection of Peyrouton.

The most bitter criticism of the American Government, and especially of Murphy, for accepting the co-operation of Darlan, originated in General Charles de Gaulle's own Free French circles. The United States Government was accused, in effect, of stabbing Free Frenchmen in the back by making this "deal" with a leading Vichy collaborationist, against General De Gaulle's will.

At the very time that this campaign of abuse against the American Government was reaching its height of intensity, De Gaulle was telling Murphy in Casablanca that he thoroughly approved of the arrangement we made with Darlan. The only criticism he had was that we did not kick Darlan out quickly enough after we had made use of him.

Attacks were made against the American Government in connection

with the North African political situation because of alleged failure to offer the leadership of French affairs there to General de Gaulle in the early stages of our occupation. Murphy was a special target of this attack, which stemmed from the Free French as well as from General de Gaulle's supporters in this country.

The facts of the situation indicate how unjustified these criticisms were.

In January 1943, two months after the Allied landing in French North Africa, Murphy held a conference with General de Gaulle in Casablanca. The French general had come there at the American diplomat's invitation. At that time, on behalf of the Allied high command, Murphy extended to De Gaulle an invitation to take over the leadership of French affairs in North Africa and rally the colonial empire to the side of the Allies in the war.

General de Gaulle declined the offer. He said he did not think the time had arrived for him to undertake that task; that he did not have a sufficient following in French North Africa. He estimated he would be able to command at the time the support of only about 10 per cent of the population. He preferred to wait until he was sure of greater support.

When spokesmen for the State Department later referred to this 10 per cent estimate, they were ridiculed by De Gaulle's followers in this country who charged it was a deliberate underestimate of the General's strength. Despite the public beating it was tak-

ing at the time, the State Department refrained from disclosing that De Gaulle himself had made that estimate. The American Government did not want to embarrass the General nor weaken his prestige.

IV

In the Italian situation, Murphy was a member of the Allied Mediterranean Commission which was composed of representatives of the United States, Great Britain, Soviet Russia and the French Committee of National Liberation. This Commission failed to function effectively. It was supposed to act in an advisory capacity on all political problems concerning Italy. Soviet Russia, however, completely ignored it when it recognized the government of Marshal Badoglio. The British likewise were not disposed to have the Commission settle Italy's future fate too soon. Britain was unwilling to see the Italian nation recover more quickly from the war than the European nations which had fought with, rather than against, the Allies. The British further wanted to be sure that Italy remained within John Bull's sphere of influence and they feared that too much political freedom might give the Communists an opportunity to gain the upper hand in Italy. And finally military directives opposed complete freedom of political action in Italy while military operations were still under way. Thus Murphy alone cannot be held responsible for the Allied fail-

ure to purge all Fascist underlings in Italy and establish democracy there immediately.

In the light of these facts, the impartial historian of the future, I think, will be inclined to regard Robert

Murphy somewhat more as a conscientious and efficient representative of the American Government and of the American people than as the reactionary devil incarnate that his critics have pictured him.



Behind the News: III

IT is claimed that Pancho Villa, the Mexican revolutionist, once arranged a battle so the sun wouldn't be shining into the lenses of the newsreel cameramen accompanying him. This may be apocryphal, but it is possibly true considering other stories about him told by reliable observers.

Edwin C. Hill recorded how John Reed, when a correspondent for the *New York World*, wrote some *cantina* hearsay into a story of a big battle won by Villa. Correspondents of press associations, queried angrily by editors riled by Reed's scoop, responded with denials. Whereupon, Reed's editor likewise did some querying. Reed saw his job glimmering. But, inspired by *tequila* or some innate knowledge of professional revolutionists, he risked his neck to get through the lines of the belligerent armies, found Villa and explained his dilemma.

Villa expressed sympathy and became intrigued with Reed's description of the battle that didn't happen. He agreed that the tactics were sound; that such a battle *could* have taken place; that it was still within the bounds of possibility. "Señor," he said, "we can carry through this action; but it must be done immediately, to make your article convincing." So, excusing himself, he summoned his followers from their bivouac and led them through a skirmish with Carranza government forces according to specifications.

Reed's job was saved, he received congratulations on his two-day "beat", and he went on to other journalistic feats — such as writing the report of the Red Revolution, entitled *Ten Days That Shook the World*, to which Lenin gave his imprimatur.

— CLARK KINNAIRD

TOSCANINI

By ARTHUR BRONSON

POPULAR interest in that *prima donna* of the concert world, the symphony conductor, has never been keener than it is today. Articles and pictures of podium personalities fill the newspapers and magazines. Their opinions and comments on extra-musical matters dot the Sunday supplements and even occasionally make front-page news. Rumors of Serge Koussevitzky's retirement from the Boston Symphony Orchestra created enough excitement to warrant official denials to the press. The OWI flew the Philadelphia Orchestra's Eugene Ormandy to Australia last summer for a series of guest engagements purely for the morale value of the stunt.

Even in the opera house the spotlight is shifting, and the virtuoso conductor is beginning to encroach on the fame of the spoiled darlings of the singing stage. Last season the Metropolitan Opera Association felt it necessary to bolster a rather humdrum roster of singers by laying stress on the first-rate conductors it had hired, including Bruno Walter, Sir Thomas Beecham and George Szell.

Names of conductors are being used today as the names of famous opera singers have been for generations past. We hear of Stokowski's Bach, Koussevitzky's Brahms and Ormandy's Strauss as we once heard of Fremstad's Brünnhilde, Melba's Juliet, Scotti's Scarpia, or, more currently, Traubel's Isolde. But one name stands out like a mountain peak, exciting reverence among audiences, players and fellow-conductors alike. That name is Arturo Toscanini.

The wiry, little, seventy-seven-year-old Italian holds a place unique, definitive, and secure among the conductors of our time. His encyclopedic musicianship, his uncanny memory, and his electric and unerring technique have made him famous. His unwavering artistic integrity and the furious enthusiasm with which he places his superb gifts of leadership at the service of great music have made him great.

But some of the factors underlying the quality of his genius may be unfamiliar enough to warrant examination. For Toscanini is not only a greater conductor than his competi-

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