

Is Germany Ready for War?

The shelling of Almeria and the dispatching of a sizable fleet to Spain raise some questions about the state of preparations

By Martin Hall

LONG before a German naval squadron pumped hot shell into the streets of Almeria, indications were not lacking that Spain had become the focal point in Nazi international policy. For many months, the pros and cons of Nazi intervention had undergone vigorous debate among the people, within the government, and among the army leaders. In some key respects, the reactions to the Spanish conflict in these quarters provide a reliable barometer of the general state of affairs and opinion within Germany itself in respect to the future development of Nazi domestic and foreign policy.

The general press, both in Europe and America, has made a fetish of the idea that Germany is not prepared to wage war. From this followed the comforting illusion that the Nazis would not resort to war. If anything else was needed, the destruction of Almeria by Nazi gunners should go far to dispel this dangerous deception. The Nazis are prepared to begin war at this very moment. Whether it will be possible for them to emerge from a great war victorious is another question for which there is good reason to answer in the negative. The wrath of the people will end the war, though it is unlikely, as things stand, that it is enough to prevent its outbreak.

In order to estimate properly the reaction of the German people to Hitler's intervention we must bear in mind that the Nazis were prepared for intervention for some time. But for the first time since Hitler came to power, the Nazis undertook a political act of major importance without being able to employ their usual propaganda technique for creating favorable mass sentiment. Diplomatic reasons originally compelled the German government to conceal its active instigation of the rebellion and its military aid to Franco. This made it impossible from the very beginning for Goebbels's propaganda ministry to apply its usual tricks for rousing mass enthusiasm.

Previous experience was useless in this instance. The Nazis had dared to stir up popular feeling in favor of the Rhine occupation without giving a thought to diplomatic considerations because they had correctly estimated the weakness of the French and British governments. But they could not risk this method in the case of Spain. They knew perfectly well that German interests in Spain had never been of sufficiently national character to rouse the people to patriotic fervor. Now there was no German territory to be "liberated," and no German colony to be regained. German big business had only two

real interests in Spain. One was to exploit the raw materials there; the other was to encircle France as a prelude to a German attack. And this precisely was the catch. The propaganda ministry could not openly admit either of these reasons.

For the most part, the Nazi leaders have exploited the argument that the insurgents deserved German assistance because Spain had gone "Communist" in the last election. In effect, the Nazi propaganda machine has tried to project into Spain the methods whereby the Nazis themselves came to power in Germany. After four years of cohabitation with Hitlerism, the German workers have progressively grown immune to this type of propaganda, though the chief means of showing disaffection is still passive. In respect to Spain, however, many active steps of solidarity with the Spanish loyalists must be recorded.

At the very outbreak of the conflict, collections of money were made in behalf of Spanish democracy in many plants in the great German industrial centers. Under present conditions in Germany, this was an act of heroic self-sacrifice. In the large Siemens munitions factories of Berlin and, later, in the Opel auto works at Frankfurt, workers were arrested for collecting funds. They were the first victims, but their fate did not halt the campaign. Collections for Spain became so widespread in the factories of the Ruhr district that the Gestapo became frantic. It made wholesale arrests among the Ruhr workers, particularly the miners. Heavy prison sentences were handed out. In Düsseldorf, the Gestapo adopted special methods to trap the workers. Stool-pigeons were sent to miners' homes while the men were away at work. Pretending to raise money for Spain, the provocateurs ap-

pealed to the wives. Wherever the women responded to these appeals, they and their husbands were immediately arrested. Obviously the Nazi authorities regarded collections for Spain with great seriousness, but the chief result of their repressive measures was to strengthen the campaign among the workers.

Then something equally significant happened. The voice of German labor was actually heard in the Nazi press. In April of this year, the Nazi editors of the *Ruhrarbeiter*, official Labor Front organ, complained editorially about "a pile" of disturbing letters which they had been getting from the workers in the district. The editors decided that "one must have the courage to take a stand on this problem." In this heroic mood they published three letters from Ruhr workers. Two of these protested against false reports in the Nazi press about low wages in the U.S.S.R. and about alleged G.P.U. atrocities; the third letter protested Nazi propaganda against Spain.

"All the papers," this letter said, "are writing about 'Red incendiary murderers in Spain.' This is not good because every exploited worker, being deprived of all his rights, takes this as an insult to himself. When one writes about Spain, one should first of all explain the reasons for these happenings. Then an honest worker will not feel insulted." Upon this the Nazi editors commented: "And here we editors stand like simpletons!"

The secrecy with which the Nazi authorities surround their Spanish adventure has resulted in large demonstrations in front of Nazi offices and of local Reichswehr headquarters. One such demonstration took place last January in Munich, another several weeks later in Düsseldorf. In both instances, women demonstrated against sending their husbands and sons to Spain as soldiers of the Reichswehr or as members of Nazi military units of the S.A. and S.S. A third demonstration of women took place in Hamburg, where a hospital had been established for wounded German soldiers brought back from Spain. The authorities made every effort to keep this hospital secret. But the story leaked out. Soon hundreds of women who had received no news from relatives fighting in Spain assembled in front of the hospital. They demanded permission to enter; they wanted to see whether their husbands, sons, or brothers were among the wounded. But Nazi police appeared on the scene and drove them back.

There have been other demonstrations, some of them open, for loyalist Spain. One of these was staged in front of the government



H. Ludwig

unemployment office in Ratibor, upper Silesia. Here a group of jobless workers erected a loudspeaker through which they shouted: "Long live the people's front! Down with Franco!" Four of them were arrested and imprisoned.

The government has not succeeded in concealing the heavy losses of German troops in Spain, but it keeps on trying to maintain secrecy. Relatives of a soldier killed in Spain receive only a brief notice from the military authorities saying that he was killed "in an accident during maneuvers" in Germany. Then an agent of the relief bureau for war victims visits the bereaved family. He warns them that they are forbidden to make the notice public or to wear mourning. If they violate this order, they will not only be severely punished, but will not receive the small pension due to families of soldiers killed in pursuance of their duties. Naturally, in spite of such threats, cases of this kind cannot be kept secret.

SUCH ARE THE REACTIONS of large sections of the German people to Spain. The army presents another picture. German military experts looked on Spain as a wonderful opportunity for testing the practical value of their war machines. German pilots ruthlessly bombed Guernica to test the efficiency of a concentrated air attack on a relatively small

town in the shortest possible time. Moreover, Goering has issued an order that every German military aviator must have four weeks' "practical" training on the Spanish front.

About six weeks ago, a very pessimistic report was brought back to Berlin. Its author and bearer was General Faupel, officially German ambassador to the Franco "government," actually commander-in-chief of the German forces in Spain. Faupel's report shocked the Nazi government and the general staff of the Reichswehr. His flat assertion that the German planes were inferior to the loyalist models resulted in an order to halt temporarily all production of airplanes and tanks of the series used in Spain until certain changes in construction can be worked out.

These reactions of some influential military authorities to Spain have had important political aspects. The Reichswehr and admiralty officials for some time have maintained that German rearmament is not yet developed enough to risk a general conflict in Spain. It is this disagreement which led to the resignation of Admiral Foerster as chief of the German fleet; he felt he could no longer assume responsibility for sending such large naval units away from home ports.

One of the most serious apprehensions of the military authorities is based on the reactions of the German civilian population to the Spanish civil war. A highly reliable

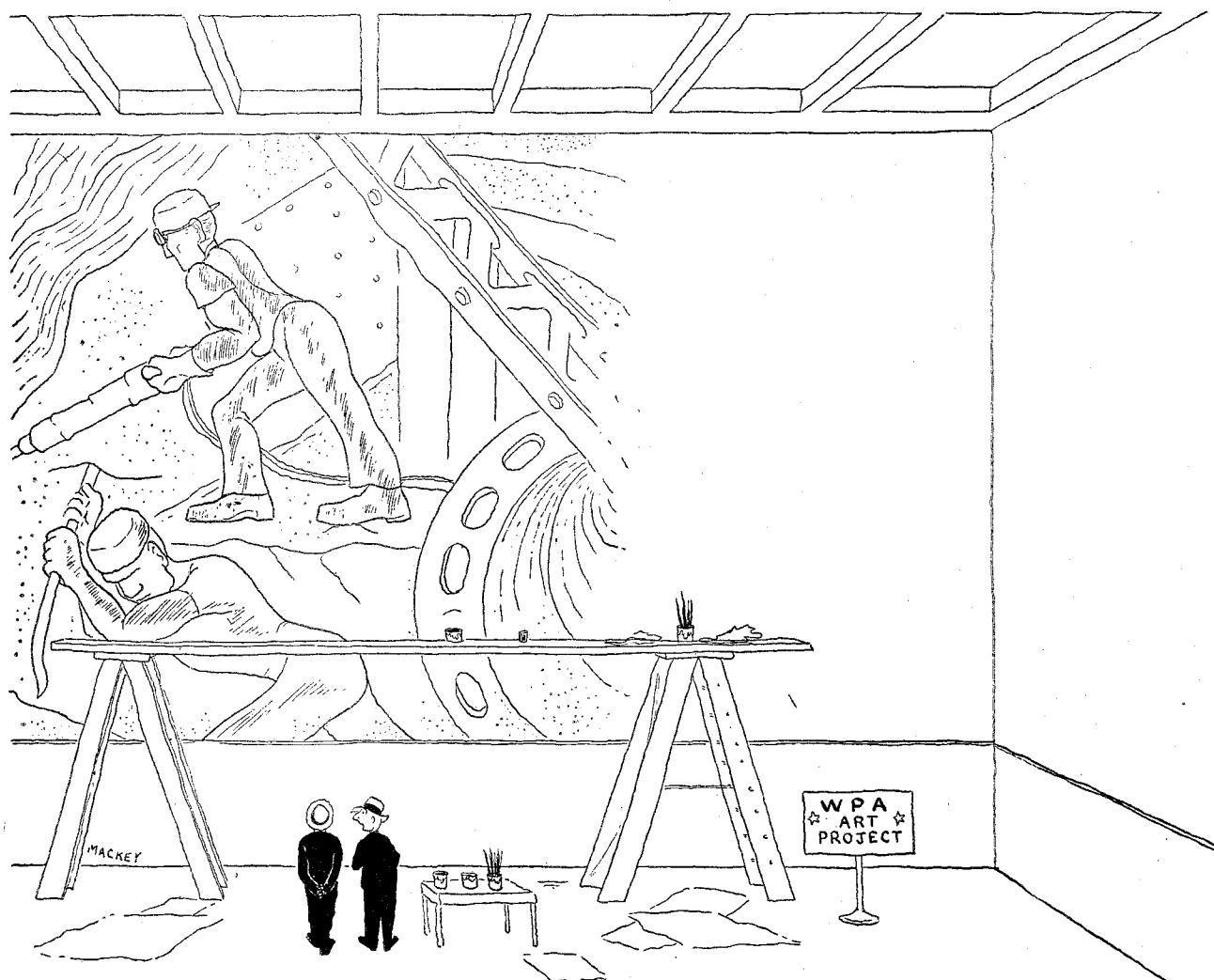
source reports that in a discussion with the cabinet in March, General von Fritsch emphasized the gravity of civilian opposition to Hitler's Spanish adventure. He warned that in event of war, the Nazi Labor Front could not sufficiently influence the workers to guarantee their faithful obedience as the trade unions had done in 1914.

Even more profound fears are expressed in a book recently published by General von Metzsch, a leading military authority. This book is entitled *The Only Protection Against Defeat*, and was brought out by the house of Ferdinand Hirt in Breslau. Issued by von Metzsch with the consent of his superiors, the book created a sensation in those sections of Berlin which follow military affairs. The author urges that if a catastrophic collapse behind the lines is to be avoided in the case of a military defeat, then the German population must be much better prepared for the effects of war, and even for the eventuality of some military failures. Von Metzsch argues that optimism and confidence can be indulged in only if they are "well protected against surprises, which in a war might be so overwhelming and nerve-racking that they would surpass human endurance."

General von Metzsch went even further. He stated with extraordinary frankness the fear with which Germany's military leaders regard the revolutionary effect of mass re-

sistance to war. In one passage he says: "War is an instrument of politics. This instrument cannot be played any more without revolutionary overtones. No warfare, at least Europe, is conceivable any longer without spark of Marxism. It is coming up here and there into an immense hatred of all that is anti-Marxian is so world-wide that we would be bitterly disappointed if we were led to believe that a future war could remain untouched by disturbances from the depths of the people."

These considerations did not deter the highest leaders of the German government from plunging Europe in a first-rate war crisis by a shocking exhibition of militaristic arrogance outside the bay of Almeria. They probably will not deter them from embarking on their "great war." But they will have a decisive bearing on the outcome.



"The rest of the appropriation got earmarked for a battleship."

John Mackey



KING CANUTE FORD STAYS THE DEEP

Scott Johnston

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The Catholic Crisis

EARLY in May, the French Catholic newspaper, *Sept*, wrote that "to condemn communism and nevertheless to treat Communists with goodness and sympathy are two things which are not mutually exclusive. This is very true in Germany at the moment, where the Communists are being bloodily persecuted. For the most part these Communists are men who are suffering and making great sacrifices for their ideals."

The writer of these lines supplied an excellent text on the persecution of the German Catholics. Substitute "catholicism and Catholics" for "communism and Communists" and the statement is just as apt. "Bloodily persecuted" and "men who are suffering and making great sacrifices for their ideals" describes German Catholics as well as Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists.

The Nazi regime cannot escape full responsibility for the street attack by Hitler youth groups against Catholic youth as the latter were coming out of a Munich church after St. Boniface services. It was to be expected that the Nazi strong-arm squads would resort to force against devout Catholics as a result of the inflammatory propaganda against Catholic "immorality" by Goebbels's "enlightenment" ministry.

There are still many Catholics in the United States who have not shaken off the illusion that the Nazis would not dare to put their co-religionists on the same plane of brutal repression as the left-wing parties. A Catholic magazine, like the *Commonweal*, stages a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden against the Spanish loyalists but rarely ever makes even editorial objection to the plight of the Catholics in Germany.

The German Catholics know better. They know that the Nazi greed for power is insatiable, that it cannot be appeased by failure to take a forthright stand. Whether they like it or not, the Nazis force the issue, even to open street fighting. As a result, Catholic resistance in Germany becomes stronger daily. "For the most part these Catholics are men who are suffering and making great sacrifices for their ideals."

Gold Steel

THUS far the spotlight has fallen on Chicago as the focal point of labor's struggle against the independent steel companies. Tom Girdler's criminal efforts to prevent collective bargaining will serve to keep Republic Steel in the headlines. But there are many other vital sectors—Youngstown, Niles, Warren—steel plants scattered through five states where determined workers have struck. Twenty-seven plants and about eighty thousand employees are involved in the C.I.O.'s fight for organization.

There is trouble brewing on many of these fronts, and strikers have begun to feel the weight of various pressure outfits. Vigilante groups are forming, designed to raise the "Red" scare against labor spokesmen. "Back to Work" committees (with quarters in local banks) are signing up so-called "loyal employees." In spite of this intimidation, strikers everywhere are showing courage and solidarity that match the heroism of Chicago's martyrs. And their bosses are not making steel.

Youngstown Sheet & Tube, with five plants and 23,500 men, is shut down. Inland's two mills, employing 11,500, are closed. Republic Steel has closed sixteen plants employing 44,000 workers. Mr. Girdler claims that his company is operating at 40 percent of capacity. Labor spokesmen laugh at this assertion, and pickets say that tar is being burned in Republic's Warren, O., plant to simulate activity. It was at Warren and Niles that the company tried landing food in aeroplanes for those employees still in the plant. And it was at Niles that frightened parents were compelled to take legal measures in order to force the release of their daughters—girls who were "detained" after hours in the Republic plant. The company denied that the girls had been "imprisoned." Republic's Buffalo plant has 700 men working—2500 are out. And from Ironwood, Mich., comes a report that two Republic mines have shut down because the company is unable to accept ore shipments. A whirlwind campaign of organization is under way in Minnesota and Michigan, with Farmer-Labor Congressman John T. Bernard directing S.W.O.C. organizers in these states.

Rapid unionization of iron-ore diggers and handlers is threatening Republic's supplies.

Meanwhile, nation-wide production of steel ingots has dropped fifteen points and financial columns reluctantly hint that some purchasers of steel may be forced to divert their future orders—away from the diehard independents.

The Challenge of Unity

THE appeal for international unity of action against fascist aggression, issued by the Socialist Party, Communist Party, and General Workers' Union of Spain, has come at a critical moment in the war to defend Spanish democracy. As the German and Italian chances for victory diminish, the fascists are resorting to increasingly open and desperate efforts to crush the people of Spain. Guernica and Almeria are indications of what may be expected from fascists stung by defeat. More necessary than ever is the disciplined unity of the workers, internationally as well as nationally, to consolidate and extend the victories over the interventionists.

Heartening, therefore, is the immediate response to the Spanish plea by George Dimitrov, spokesman for the Communist International. He proposes to the Second International and the Amsterdam trade-union international a joint conference to discuss methods of procedure in the united front against fascism. Failure of these international organizations or their national affiliates to respond to such a proposal would be a neglect in the present situation.

Will the American Socialist Party in the international workers' front porting Dimitrov's proposal?

Again on Jerome Davis

THREE outstanding nations in the education field concluded inquiries into the dismissal of Professor Jerome Davis from Yale University. The last of these inquiries, that conducted by the Tenure Committee of the National Education Association, confirms the facts and recommendations made by the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors. The weight of professional opinion is squarely behind Davis.

The N. E. A. committee criticizes the Yale officials for failing to cooperate with it, condemns the tenure policy and practice of the Yale Corp., and praises the character of Professor Davis's scholarship and teaching record. It recommends that Davis be restored to his position.

There is no doubt that the failure of the