

Japanese-Vatican Entente During World War II



The original title of the article from *The Converted Catholic Magazine* is,

Japanese-Vatican Entente By J.J. Murphy

entente

noun, plural en·tentes [ahn-tahnts; French ahn-tahnt].

1 an arrangement or understanding between two or more nations agreeing to follow a particular policy with regard to affairs of international concern.

Though I lived more than half of my life in Japan (40 years) I had no idea that the Vatican supported Japan in its conquest of China, the Philippines, and other nations in the Pacific, and even formally established diplomatic relations with Japan *after* it bombed Pearl Harbor! And not only that, American Roman Catholics became traitors to their own country in their support of Japan during WW 2!

WORLD WIDE SUPREMACY by the Roman Catholic church was the dream and goal of Pope Pius XI. Counter-revolution through Catholic church alliance with Fascist powers was the means to this end. Intimate partnership and cooperation between the Vatican and European Fascism was brought about by concordats with Mussolini and Hitler. Few, however, realize that **Pius XI was as determined to join forces with Tokyo** as Germany and Italy were.

Pius XI agreed with Mussolini that the United States of America, the bulwark of democracy, was in "grave peril of collapse," as William Teeling, Catholic author, has pointed out.¹ In accordance with this belief, **Pius XI held that Japan would dominate the Orient and was determined to ally himself with the Emperor of Japan.** Teeling (p. 5) speaking of the world plans of Pope Pius XI confesses in this connection:

"The Vatican is also intensely interested in developing her relations with Japan in order to get control of the eventual

development of Christianity in those parts of China which she believes will one day come under Japanese influence.”

Soon after Mussolini had securely established his dictatorship, Pope Pius XI decided to hold a World Missionary Exhibition at Rome. This was timed not only as a publicity campaign to advertise Mussolini's 'New Italy' to international tourists and draw money into the country, but also as a demonstration to planners of World Fascism of the world-wide political power and 'intelligence service' that Catholicism could contribute to such a movement.

In an encyclical on Missions, written on the occasion of the World Missionary Exhibit at Rome, Pius XI made meaningful references that flattered Japanese ambitions. Among other things mentioned was his confidence that "the peoples who inhabit the remote regions of the East and South can hold their own easily with the European races." In addition, "the Pope broke the Vatican tradition of centuries by ordaining Oriental bishops. His partner and successor, Pius XII, carried this policy a step farther by appointing two Japanese bishops over the subjugated Koreans and later by **breaking inviolable traditions of the Vatican to establish relations with a pagan nation** – Japan.

Close cooperation between the Roman Catholic church and Japanese imperialists is not difficult to understand for those who realize **the close similarity between Roman Catholicism and Oriental paganism, especially Buddhism**. Since Imperial Japan in its expansionist policy had found the religious orders of Buddhism its most efficient propagandists and political agents in Burma and elsewhere, it was only natural that it should place even greater hopes in a successful Western religion with similar popular appeal; coupled with a far superior political organization.

Teeling (p. 245) mentions that **powerful elements behind the Japanese government were willing to work with the Vatican**. Even apart from the reasons given above this is natural enough, for a feudal country like Japan, dominated by a few wealthy families, has affinity for a highly centralized, totalitarian religion like Catholicism. But a further reason, little suspected, was the admiration of Japanese imperialists for a religion that could divinize its leader, even make its adherents believe him to be endowed from Heaven with infallibility. Catholic William Teeling in his book *Gods of To-Morrow* (p. 300) speaking of the infallibility of the Pope says:

“In 1870 there were many Catholics who disagreed and disapproved, but today, not seventy years later, in the Catholic Church no one questions this doctrine. The Japanese are exceedingly interested in this, as their whole tendency today seems to be to turn their Emperor into a sort of Pope or god who should live in retirement; and they wish to find out how the Catholics were able to get their doctrine across in such a short time to the public.”

H. G. Wells is not far from the mark when he calls the head of the Roman

Catholic church a "Shinto Pope."²

Franco Links East And West

Long before the Rome-Tokyo Berlin Axis became publicly known, plans for its three-pronged counter-Revolution were agreed upon. This 'New Order,' hailed by Pius XII in his Christmas message of 1940, aimed at the overthrow of democracy and the restoration of religious monopoly into the hands of Roman Catholicism. Strange as it may seem, **Japan agreed to back the establishment of Catholicism in the Orient.**

Von Papen, papal chamberlain who put Hitler into power, agreed with the Vatican that a 'neutral' Fascist Spain would be the best possible instrument for conducting the world-wide espionage of the Axis, especially in Latin America and the Philippines. Allan Chase in his recent book *Falange, The Axis Secret Army in the Americas*, shows at length this strategic value of a 'neutral' Fascist Spain. An example of how well this plan worked out in practice is found in José del Castano, Spanish Consul General at Manila who before Pearl Harbor was made head of the entire Axis spy system in the Philippines. He is still Consul General there today. Part of one of his speeches before Japan declared war is quoted by Chase (p. 14) as follows:

"Our Fascist brothers in Japan are united with us in the common struggle. When they strike, we must help them. When we strike, they will help us.' Del Castano must have repeated this a hundred times during his first week in Manila, each time using the exact words he used when he had rehearsed the few sentences for General von Faupel and those strange Nazi luminaries back in Madrid."

Those who realize the far-reaching international plotting behind the Spanish rebellion and the Franco regime will not wonder that, when the infamous news of Pearl Harbor reached the Jesuit-inspired Franco, one of his controlled newspapers, the Madrid *Informaciones*, enthusiastically stated in an editorial: "Japan has reached the limit of her patience. She could no longer tolerate the interference and the opposition of the United States... We hope Manila will be saved for Christianity."

Knowing all this and much more behind the scenes, it is not surprising that H. G. Wells in an article in the London *Sunday Dispatch* of August 30, 1942, tersely declared: "The present **Pope is in open alliance with the Japanese.**"

Jap-Vatican Teamwork

The secret alliance between the pope and the Japanese war lords was reflected in public by the growing cooperation and cordiality between them. In Japan's unjust war of aggression against China, the Vatican sent directions to its missionaries in China to cooperate with the Japanese. After the rape of Manchuria was completed, the Vatican at once gave *de facto* recognition to its Japanese puppet government, after other countries refused to do so. In 1934 the Catholic *Revue des Deux Mondes* boasted, at a time when Japan's inhumanity

was shocking the world, that "no Japanese prince or mission now passes through Rome without paying homage to the Sovereign Pontiff." In March 1934 the hypocritical Foreign Minister of Japan, Baron Matsuoka, after visiting Hitler and Mussolini, had a strictly confidential conference with Pius XI. The Pope gave him a gold medal and publicly referred to the cordiality of their relationship. Herbert Matthews knowingly reported in the N. Y. Times that this private audience "had little to do with religious affairs."

One of the concessions of doctrine that the Vatican made to adapt Catholicism to the demands of the Japanese was to declare, contrary to the well-known truth, that Shintoism is not a religion. By 1938 **the Pope gave permission to Japanese Catholics to bow in worship before the Emperor**, who claims to be of divine origin. This was done in spite of the fact that this act of homage had been forbidden for centuries by Roman Catholic doctrine.

Following the alliance with Pope Pius XI, Japan made no secret of its 'preferred treatment' of Roman Catholicism. Neither did the Catholic press hesitate to return the favor. The Catholic Times of England as early as November 3, 1934, urged its readers to think kindly of Japan because the Japanese invaders "have brought freedom from persecution to our missionaries in Manchuria and adjacent parts of China... and consented to their settlers in Brazil being instructed in the Catholic faith."

While Japanese preparations for an attack on the United States were being completed, relations between Japan and the Catholic church grew closer than ever. The *N. Y. Herald Tribune* of October 8, 1941, said:

"The Japanese government has become more cordial to the Catholic Church in the last six months than at any time in recent years..."

The same newspaper went on, to quote Rt. Rev. T. J. McDonnell, national director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith: "The Japanese have not actually granted recognition yet to any Christian sect except to that Christian Church which is known as Roman Catholic."

It should be noted that Japanese recognition of Roman Catholicism was granted in spite of the fact that its clergy in Japan is overwhelmingly non-Japanese. Further evidence of the 'closed deal' between the Vatican and Japanese Fascists is seen in the **persecution of Protestant missionaries in Japan** and Japanese-held territory. They were expelled, some after having been held incommunicado in prison for many months.

All Catholic missionaries had been assured by the Vatican that there was an understanding with Japan, that they would be well treated after the Japanese invaded and took over the Oriental countries where they were working. Catholic William Teeling (p. 245), who traveled throughout the Orient at that time, admits this:

"The feeling in China and in the Philippines amongst Catholic missionaries has been that they will get a fair deal and freedom to

push their religion, should the Japanese get control of their respective mission fields."

The N. Y. Times of February 20, 1941, told how Catholic Bishop Wade refused to take refuge in British territory when the Japanese were about to take possession of the Solomon Islands. **He was so sure that the Japanese would cooperate with him that he obliged all the priests and nuns to remain there, while the rest of the whites fled before the invasion.**

In 1936, a few years before World War II became an actuality, the Vatican withdrew from Japan Archbishop Mooney, its Apostolic Delegate, because he was an American. In his place, in accordance with the new understanding, an Axis co-national, Monsignor Paul Morella, was appointed. Morella was taken directly from the Apostolic Delegation in Washington, D. C., made an archbishop and sent to Japan. In Washington he had been 'official observer' independent of the Apostolic Delegate. It is unnecessary to stress the strategic value to Japan of having at hand during a war with the United States a 'friendly neutral' who had gathered invaluable information during his many years of travel in this country and still able to keep in touch with American Fascist-minded politicians by means of the Vatican's uncensored diplomatic mail.

August 23, 1941 The Japanese American Review 5

JAPAN SANCTIONS CATHOLIC CHURCH



The picture above was taken in the Cathedral of Sakiguchi in Tokyo at the time the Reverend Peter Tatsuo Doi was consecrated the first Japanese Catholic Archbishop of the Diocese of Tokyo, succeeding Monsignor Chaubon, kneeling at his right. The event, which took place in the presence of Apostolic Delegate Monsignor Paul Morella and six Bishops caused great rejoicing among the Catholics, foreigners and Japanese. At this time the French Society of the Propagation of the Faith handed the Diocese over to the Japanese Clergy.

Prayer offered at Holy Communion. Above is shown a scene during the services, with the Archbishop in the center with his vicararies, kneeling in prayer in front of the altar out of doors. The rites were of special significance this year, coming soon after the Holy Roman Catholic Church received the first official recognition as a faith from the Education Ministry, thus settling the burning question of religion in the new order of the Empire. For many years the status of the various churches had been in doubt, but this was cleared by this sanction.



ABOVE IS A REPRODUCTION OF A SET OF PICTURES THAT APPEARED IN THIS WAY IN "THE JAPANESE AMERICAN REVIEW" OF AUGUST 23, 1941. SHORTLY BEFORE PEARL HARBOR.

The captions under each picture are the same as in original and stress the extent to which "Catholicism has received the official recognition and sanction of the 'new order' in the Japanese Empire."

Clerical Treason In The Philippines

Jesuit missionaries make a point of setting up their propaganda mills in strategic foreign localities. The Philippines were such a place. Though they are 70 per cent Roman Catholic and in no need of foreign clergy, 250 American Jesuits took up residence there for political reasons. There they took exclusive charge of the Government Observatory and Weather Bureau, a post of the greatest military importance both for us and the Japanese. Several assumed chaplaincies in the U. S. Philippine army. Others took up residence at Naga, Camarines Sur, where the Japanese made one of their first landings. In Manila they conducted a university own as *The Ateneo*. Through its radio program and their magazine *Commonweal* they continuously gibed (mocked) American democracy in general and our Government public schools in particular. In their usual reactionary way, they agitated to reduce the compulsory school age of children from 16 to 12 years. They openly advocated Fascism, holding up Salazar's government in Portugal as a model.³



In spite of the open pro-Fascist attitude of Catholic priests in the Philippines, the Government seldom took action against them. But occasionally one was arrested. Such was the case of Father Louis Bogel, located at Subic, site of a United States' naval base. He was seized for "spreading Nazi propaganda under the guise of religion," according to an *Associated Press* dispatch of January 13, 1941.

The most daring foe of democracy in the Philippines was Father Silvester Sancho, a Spanish Fascist, head of the Catholic University of Santo Tomas in Manila. Allan Chase (pp. 34, 40) tells how Sancho was the darling of the Nazi-controlled Spanish Fascist organization, called the *Falange*. He relates how Sancho visited Franco, made him honorary president of his university, and brought back to Manila a Fascist propaganda expert (to teach the doctrine of *Hispanidad*) as well as several military espionage officers under the guise of 'exchange students.' The effects of such fifth column activity is seen in the observation of Catholic William Teeling in his book *Gods of To-Morrow* (p. 235). Of his experiences among Catholics in the Philippines he admits:

"I visited schools and the Catholic University and found to my amazement that in all these places the Catholics seemed convinced that should the Japanese ever come to the Philippines their position as a Catholic Church will be untouched."

Johannes Steel, newspaper columnist, said:

"The role played by Fascist Spain and the '*Falange*' in helping Japan realize her ambitions of conquest remains one of the most

sinister features in the plot against American security in the Pacific. It is a story which no one has as yet dared to tell in full, although the facts are readily available." (N. Y. Post, Nov. 2, 1943.)

Allan Chase devotes the entire second chapter of his book *Falange* to showing how Franco's clerical Fascists in the Philippines enlisted to a man in the Civilian Emergency Administration as air-raid wardens and succeeded in completely upsetting it at the time of the first Japanese air raid. **The U. S. Army was forced to disband the entire civilian anti-air-raid organization within 36 hours after the war began.** Unfortunately this betrayal by the Clerical fifth-column was only part of its aid to the Japanese invaders. Demoralizing rumors of American cowardice and treachery, pro-Japanese propaganda, spying, signals to invading Japanese troop ships were other means used to help the Japanese destroy Philippine democracy.

Soon after the Japanese invasion, **"the Archbishop of Manila [Michael J. Doherty] issued a Pastoral letter calling upon all Catholics in the Philippines to stop their anti Japanese activities and to cooperate with the Japanese in their noble efforts to pacify the Archipelago."**⁴

Pearl Harbor and the other Japanese victories that followed it were enthusiastically celebrated in Franco's controlled press. A *Falange* celebration a few weeks after Pearl Harbor was held at Granada, Spain. Part of it was described as follows:⁵

"In the name of the Philippine Section of the *Falange*, Pilar Primo de Rivera accepted a formal decoration from the Japanese Government – a decoration awarded to the Philippine *Falange* for its priceless undercover aid to the Imperial Japanese Government in the capture of Manila and for a host of other services. Among the latter were fleets of trucks and buses the *Falange* had ready and waiting for the Japanese invasion troops at Lingayen, Lemon, and other points"

Japanese gratitude to the Catholic church and its Clerical Fascists was not confined to Spain. They made public acknowledgment of it even in Manila. *The Reader's Digest* at September 1943 said of the Japanese invaders of the Philippines:

"They were very solicitous about the Roman Catholic Church. On the first Sunday after landing in Manila, **Japanese soldiers marched to Mass**, filling all the churches and chapels. Armed guards of honor were placed outside each door."

The same article in *The Reader's Digest* also told how Catholic priests and nuns from Japan cooperated in winning good will for the invading troops. The Japanese Government arranged to have them brought from Japan to the Philippines on a 'pilgrimage.' The magazine commented: "The nuns received as

much publicity as a group of traveling Show girls and, were seen everywhere."

After outraging the conscience of the world by its vile deceit at Pearl Harbor, Japan badly needed some declaration of international approval to restore its moral prestige. Soon after Pearl Harbor the Vatican came to its rescue and gave it its blessing in the form of diplomatic recognition. **This formal establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan was an open insult to the United States**, not only because it was done following Pearl Harbor, but even more because it was in defiance of American and British protests. This welcoming of the bandit nation of Japan as an equal among Christian nations was termed a "benevolent gesture toward the Axis" by Paul Ghali in the *New York Post* of March 27, 1942. He added that "the Nazis will attain new support by this new and relatively easy diplomatic victory of their Oriental ally."

When Mussolini fell, the Vatican substituted for him at once by establishing direct radio communications with Tokyo. (*N. Y. Times*, August 8, 1943.) Still further support of Japan was shown in Franco's later sending of congratulations to the new puppet ruler of the Philippines.



GENERAL KEN HARADA
JAPANESE ENVOY TO THE
VATICAN

" . . . the most appreciated personal qualities"

The Rome radio on March 30, 1942, quoted "Osservatore Romano," Vatican newspaper, confirming reports that the Holy See had established diplomatic relations with Japan. General Harada, former Japanese Chargé d'Affaires at Vichy, was accepted as Tokyo's envoy to the Vatican.

Previously the State Department in Washington warned the Vatican against the move. It stressed that such collaboration would convince the Catholic world that the pope sanctioned Japan's vast conquests in the Pacific area.

"Osservatore Romano" declared that General Harada possesses "the most appreciated personal qualities."

Clerical Espionage And Its Reward

Roman Catholics in high ecclesiastical repute took part in Japanese undercover work in the United States. In spite of Catholic censorship of the

American press, a few enlightening facts have leaked out. According to the *Los Angeles Times* of January 29, 1942, Frederick Williams was indicted as a Japanese agent. This man is a prominent Roman Catholic and intimate friend of the hierarchy. He served as publicity director of the Dominican Fathers in this country. As this newspaper also noted, he figured prominently in the staging of the International Eucharistic Congress in the Philippines in 1937.

Another secret propaganda agent of Japan in this country was John C. LeClair who pleaded guilty in New York Federal Court September 8, 1943. A devout Roman Catholic, LeClair studied for his doctorate under the Jesuits at Fordham University from 1931 to 1941. Meanwhile he taught at Catholic Seton Hall College in New Jersey and later was dean of the history department at St. Francis College in Brooklyn. As a Japanese agent during the three years preceding Pearl Harbor he sent much information to Japan and wrote numerous pro-Japanese articles for publication in this country. Such an article, paid for by Japan, was published in the Jesuit magazine *America* in September 1940. It was entitled "No Friendship Wanted between the United States and Russia."

Other Catholics, like General John. F. O'Ryan, openly registered as official agents of the Japanese government.

Catholics reaped a rich reward for their aid to Fascist Japan. While Protestant missionary activity has been abolished in Japan as well as in Japanese-occupied countries, Catholic propaganda made rapid progress thanks to the backing of the Japanese Government. No Catholic missionary was interfered with, except a few Americans who were removed from strategic localities or a few others who were temporarily arrested through the mistake of some local officer. Some of these Americans have been sent back to this country, because they disobeyed orders to help out Japan. All other Catholic missionaries, including many Americans, continued their work as usual.

The Catholic Mind, a Jesuit magazine, in its July 1943 issue, admitted that out of 2,700 missionaries in the Japanese Empire "2,200 remain at their tasks." In China, which is largely occupied by Japan, 10,000 out of 13,000 missionaries continue to function as usual. The article went on to say that "in Southeastern Asia [now ruled by Japan] it is believed that hardly more than 5 per cent of 7,500 priests and Religious have been halted in their labors."

Examples of the rapid progress made by the Catholic church under Japanese rule were recorded in the *N. Y. Herald Tribune* of August 8, 1943. It told of a new "Japan Catholic Society" organized in Tokyo on July 27, 1942, in which wealthy Nitsuo Mizata of the Japanese House of Peers and other prominent people took part. Another Pan-Asiatic society called "International Friendship Society" was also recently established in Tokyo. In Japanese-controlled Inner Mongolia, a "Roman Catholic Association of Manchiang" was formed on last July 9, 1942. The paper quoted it as saying that it is "willing to cooperate most closely with the authorities and with Japan in the removal of Anglo-American influences..." It added that at the opening meeting of this society prayers were offered for a Japanese victory and a collection was taken up to buy a Japanese warship.

Appropriate thoughts to conclude this outline of Roman Catholic cooperation in the Japanese attack on Christian civilization are not hard to find. But the words of *The Chronicle*, an Episcopal magazine, in an editorial of June 1943 seem to stress a particularly urgent point:

“We remember that the Pope gave his approval to Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia, never protested against the invasion of Albania on Good Friday and showed distinct approval of General Franco who destroyed the liberal government of Spain, and has maintained diplomatic relations with all the Axis powers during this war. Those who are not for us are against us. To crown it all **the Pope established diplomatic relations with the Japanese shortly after the dastardly attack on Pearl Harbor.**”

Pope’s Curtsy To The Mikado

THE MESSAGE from Pope Pius XII’s Secretary of State quoted below was used in the broadcast of the German and Japanese governments as Vatican approval and de facto recognition of the Japanese puppet-President of the Philippines, José P. Laurel, whom Franco had recognized shortly before. The papal message, as intercepted by the United States intelligence service, was reproduced in a United Press dispatch of January 10, 1944. It was conveyed to the puppet-President by Archbishop Pinai, Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, and read as follows:

“His Eminence. Cardinal Luigi Maglione, Secretary of State to His Holiness, through the Apostolic Delegate of Japan, has given me instructions to assure Your Excellency that the Vatican received your generous telegram announcing your induction as President of the Philippines and to transmit to Your Excellency most sincere thanks for your courtesy.”

The Tokyo radio quoted Bishop Cesar Guerrero of Manila, who interpreted as follows the Vatican message as proof of the Pope’s recognition of the Japanese regime in the Philippines:

“This shows His Holiness’ regard for the Philippines. Since Vatican City is in itself a fully sovereign state. the Holy Father’s message of felicitations to President Laurel implies the Vatican’s recognition of the Philippine Republic.”

1. *The Pope in Politics* by William Teeling. page 235. All later page references to this author are found in this book, unless otherwise noted.↵
2. *Crux Ansata*, by H. G. Wells, p. 102.↵
3. *Philippine Magazine*, issues of 1941. Also see Allan Chase’s *Falange*, p. 42. All further page references to this author are to found in this book.↵
4. Allan Chase, op. cit, p. 49.↵

5. Allan Chase. op. cit, p. 48. Ct. N. Y. Times. January 11, 1942.↵