In the Chicago Daily News of December 30 I find an intensely interesting piece by Paul R. Leach from Washington. "Religious Front Against Fascism Roosevelt Aim."

Cardinal Mundelein is pictured as "one of his staunchest allies in this program.

"Here it is believed that there is a definite harmony of purpose between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the White House in regard to Latin American, Spanish and Mexican relations." Leach then suggests that American Catholics and South American Catholics as well have come around to a position where they see "little to choose between the two warring factions in Spain." He goes on to say that "official opinion here now is that the embargo (against arms shipments to Spain) will remain in effect." He adds that "a victory by either the socialistically inclined Loyalists or the Nazi-Fascist-dominated rebels would have its reverberations in the New World."

What he says about the shift in the Catholic position is heartening. But many of us have known this to be true. I do hope that there is no truth in what he seems to imply about an understanding not to raise the embargo.

Mundelein's admirable stand I have long appreciated. But I should hate to think that the Church has been able to effect a strategic retreat on the Spanish question to the Mundelein reserve position and there, while making certain concessions in the way of relief to Loyalist Spain, hold out for the maintenance of the embargo and some kind of a compromise. It is to be noted in this respect that had the Republican Government its back to the wall now as it has had many times in the past, the hierarchy would most certainly do nothing to save it. But now Franco is not winning the war. And a Loyalist victory stands out as more than a possibility if Non-Intervention and the Embargo, measures which have so hampered the Republic from the start, are raised, or if only the Embargo is raised. The hierarchy are disillusioned with Franco but they are not prepared to see a Loyalist victory.

Those of us who feel so strongly about the Republican cause in Spain are always grateful for any sign of softening in the Church's attitude. But we would be deeply distressed to see the softening, however sincere, prove an effective strategic device for saving their quondam hero from final defeat.
If Paul Leach’s story in the News is true one might reasonably expect that sooner or later other Roman dignitaries might be brought around to a more tolerant view of the Administration’s stand as declared in the President’s message. If the Embargo has worked out to the advantage of aggressors, as the President says, it is difficult to see how any member of the Roman hierarchy can ask that it be kept on in the terms that the Archbishop of Baltimore employs. For a Catholic minority to ask for the maintenance of that is admittedly discriminatory and, by implication in the President’s message, dangerous to our own safety is surprising enough; but to ask for it in the name of a minority of Catholics (see the Gallup poll on opinion re Spain) is even more surprising and all too evocative of the Catholic Church’s stand on Hexioo in 1937. Then they were willing to ask us to intervene; now they ask us to maintain a neutrality that everyone, the President included, admits has worked out unfairly.

Incidentally they know little about Spain who think that compromise or mediation could be forced on either side. To date the only “hope” of mediation entertained by those unneutral who thought (?) thus to deny both the Loyalists and Franco of a victory has lain in a Franco success which would have crumpled Loyalist resistance. But had this happened or were it to happen Franco himself would accept no mediation; he has already made clear his intentions towards the 2,000,000 “criminals” in Republican Spain (see James Miller’s interview with him, United Press, November 7).

Were Franco to meet with such military reverses that mediation seemed attractive to him and he were to agree to it then — and this is my firm belief based on a rather unique acquaintance with Spanish affairs both before and since the war — then there would be uprisings behind his own lines by elements hostile to him. It should not be forgotten that “Rebel Spain” is not rebel Spain at all. One has only to chart the electoral returns of February 13, 1936, on a map of Spain to see that the great majority of the citizens in the provinces which the Generalissimo has won so painfully (remember that his Movement was to have been a coup d’etat of six or seven
days duration) voted for the Republic. And those who voted for the parties of the Right were certainly not voting for military rebellion or for the "national-syndicalist" program of the Spanish Phalanx which in the February elections, had no place on the ballots of the "Anti-Marxist Front" of Right parties.

The White Terror in Seville, Malaga, Cordova, Palma de Majorca and other capitals in "Rebel Spain" has been so frightful that I am absolutely sure that the friends and relatives of these people would take advantage of any grave weakness in Franco's setup to rise against him.

The only hope I see for restoring any kind of order in Spain lies in the Republican government. One must remember that Don Juan Negrin, though a Socialist, had never incurred the animosity of the Right to any marked degree. Even after the outbreak of the War Quisipo de Llano who was brimming over with hideous characterisations of his one-time friends Prieto, Azana (whose military aide he was) and Caballero, he had only the gentlest of reproaches for Negrin.

Negrin's thirteen points have been spread through Rebel Spain and my information is that they have made a very great impression on people there who know far better than the Franco enthusiasts of this country that there will be no peace in Spain even if Franco does win and carry out his announced plan of extermination on the Left.

There is a tendency to forget that Negrin has proposed peace with full guarantees for the vanquished, an immediate plebiscite and absolute respect for religion. What he has done on the Loyalist side has proved to the satisfaction of most people -- of the London Tablet and the Paris Temps for instance -- that he can carry out his promises. If the more resolute Catholic spokesmen in this country were more tolerant of attempts by newspapers to print the truth from Spain -- both sides -- then Catholics in this country might be satisfied too. The facts are seeping through, it is true; otherwise there would have been no 42% Catholic vote for the Loyalists in the last Gallup poll -- but no one can deny that certain Roman Catholic dignitaries are doing their best to keep them back.
When the Friends of Spanish Democracy, a very conservative crowd, sent out postcards with pictures of a Catholic funeral in Barcelona, a funeral reported in The Times (London), The New York Times, Le Temps and elsewhere, The Brooklyn Tablet said that the pictures were no doubt faked and the Friends were a "Communist" organization. One would think that they would welcome the news.