

Spain Reinforces Burgos As Basques' Trial Opens

By RICHARD EDER

Special to The New York Times

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TRIAL OF BÁSQUES STARTS IN BURGOS

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of Spanish Police Official

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BURGOS, Spain, Dec. 3—The ornate, heavily guarded trial room of the Sixth Military District here was the quiet center of a political storm today as Spain began the court-martial of 15 Basques.

The Basques are accused in the murder of a provincial head of the Political Police, and their case has become a symbol of the continuing struggle between the Basque ethnic group and the central Government in Madrid. There have been widespread protests and petitions against the trial, in particular against the use of a military tribunal, from whose sentence there is no appeal.

The northern provinces of Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya were jammed with police reinforcements that rolled in the night. Perhaps 100,000 workers in Bilbao, San Sebastian and a dozen smaller towns were on strike to protest the court-martial.

A number of clashes, none especially serious, took place during the day. Tonight there were reports of a large demonstration in the industrial section of San Sebastian and of smaller demonstrations in Barcelona, Valencia and Seville.

As the trial opened the Government continued its search for the honorary consul of West Germany in San Sebastián, Eugen Beihl, who was kidnapped Tuesday. It is believed that the men who seized the 69-year-old businessman at his home are part of an activist movement seeking independence for the Basques.

The West German consul in Bordeaux, Christian Sell, has met with Basque exile groups in St.-Jean-de-Luz, just across the French border, notably with Telesforo de Monzón, an exile leader who has reportedly been suggested as an intermediary.

Hints of Disapproval

The leaders of E.T.A., a guerrilla group that has been the target of a long government campaign, have shown signs of strongly disapproving the kidnapping. According to Basques who have been in touch with the leaders, some of whom are in France, they take the view that it may increase the chance that death sentences will be imposed on the six defendants who are accused of direct involvement in the killing.

How strong a line the Government of Generalissimo Francisco Franco would take was not clear. The press has been allowed to give full coverage to both the kidnapping and the court-martial, and some observers viewed that as evidence that the public was being prepared for strong measures.

A Cabinet meeting will be held tomorrow and time was speculation that it might decide to impose a state of emergency. A proclamation by the Civil Governor of Guipuzcoa today strongly hinted at such a course if the ferment continued.

Meanwhile, in Burgos a cold austere Castilian city that was General Franco's headquarters during the Civil war and is second to no other city in Spain in its loyalty to the Caudillo and its abhorrence of Basques, liberals and other troublemakers, strong security

measures were taken. The 120 members of the public and the 30 or 50 journalists allowed in the courtroom were searched. During recesses they were kept in a courtyard guarded by soldiers with submachine guns.

The 16 prisoners—it has been recommended that one of them Maria Aranzazu, be set free and there is no change again since her arrest handcuffed in pairs facing the military judges. Twenty-six gray-bearded policemen stood behind them.

The defendants are accused of being active members or adherents of E.T.A. — the initials stand for the Basque words "Basque nation and liberty" — and of carrying out a number of bombings, bank robberies and the distribution of clandestine propaganda. Of the six accused of planning the killing of the police inspector, Meliton Manzanas, two and a half years ago, one, Francisco Izco, is charged with the actual shooting.

The defense lawyers asked the presiding judge Col. Mandel Ordovas, a cavalry officer and former member of an Olympic riding team, to have the handcuffs removed. The colonel, a gray-haired man with a thin mustache, asked the lieutenant of the court guard if he could guarantee security if the prisoners' hands were free. He replied in the negative, but they were loosened.

The first day was taken up with the reading of the first part of a 30,000 word summary of an investigating officer's report.

The choice of Burgos to try an organization that is an extreme but not totally unrepresentative manifestation of Basque nationalism was appropriate in a way. From the Basque point of view, at least, Castile and the authoritarian Castilian spirit have been trying them and finding them guilty for years.

The Basques, who live in the green hills and smoky towns quite differently from other Spaniards, are independent passionately democratic and devoted to choir singing strenuous exercise, the sea and their peculiar and difficult language.