

President's Secretary's File 47
Diplomatic Correspondence Box 47
Poland: Jan 1939

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

PSF Polak

*File
Personnel Confidential*

12-7-38

January 6, 1939

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 839, dated December 7, 1938 concerning Minister Beck's observations on his "balance diplomacy";

No. 842, dated December 10, 1938 concerning Minister Beck's observations on reported clash of views in upper Nazi circles;

No. 843, dated December 8, 1938 concerning Minister Beck's observations on the anti-Catholic program said to be considered by Hitler.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures:

Copies of three
despatches, as
listed

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House

COPIES

No. 843

Warsaw, December 8, 1938

Subject: Reference to my cable No. 253 of
December 5, 12 noon, sub-section (c);
Beck's reports on Hitler's reportedly
envisaged anti-Catholic program and
Beck's observations thereon.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my cable No. 253 of
December 5, 12 noon, sub-section (c), wherein I pointed out
that Danzig Gauleiter Foerster, upon his recent return to
Danzig from a visit with Hitler, had told High Commissioner
Burekhardt that when the Fuehrer had accomplished his anti-
Semitic program, he intended to apply similar methods first
against

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against the Catholics and later against the aristocracy and, of pertinent bearing, to report the substance of my recent conversation with Minister Beck.

The Minister informed me that his confidential reports corresponded in effect with what Forster had told Burekhardt, especially as regards Hitler's reportedly envisaged campaign against the Catholics. Moreover, a recent report from Munich had significantly cited a conversation between the Minister's confidential informant and the Cardinal of Munich. In effect, the Cardinal, in response to the Minister's informant's question as to whether the Cardinal believed that the Catholics in Germany were in for a bad time, stated his belief there was little hope for the position of the Catholics in Germany. When, moreover, the Minister's informant had invited the Cardinal to visit him at his home in Munich, the Cardinal had replied that, due to his long-standing friendship for the informant, he did not want, through any act of his, to bring harm to the informant, adding that the time had come when the informant's continued identification with the Cardinal would work a hardship for the informant.

The discussion then turned to the subject of Vatican policy. The Minister imparted he understood on good authority that there was an important element in high Catholic circles in Rome now urging the Vatican to adopt a policy of closer alignment with the policies of the democracies; the

actual

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actual outcome of this element's efforts remained to be seen. However, there were indications that this drive was gaining ground.

In response to my inquiry as to the Minister's opinion regarding reports that there were important Catholic circles which favored Cardinal Hlond as the eventual successor to His Holiness the Pope, Minister Beck said he seriously doubted that Cardinal Hlond would ever appear as a candidate, in the light of his Polish nationality. However, it was true that the Cardinal occupied a unique position, in terms of Catholic political considerations, in that the group under his personal influence occupied a position in upper Catholic circles between two opposition wings. Hence, the Cardinal and his group might be able to swing the balance in the selection of any candidate.

Of pertinent bearing, Danzig High Commissioner Burekhardt recently imparted to me that when recently at a school in Germany given in his honor by Himmler, a high ranking Nazi had told him Hitler's anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic leanings found their roots in the following incidents early in Hitler's career:

(a) The Jewish chairman of a judging committee of an architectural contest had, out of personal dislike, torn up the drawings in the face of Hitler's brother when the latter had presented them to the chairman for examination. This had occurred many years ago - he had borne his brother deep affection

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affection and had vowed he would "square" the incident with the Jews in later life. (Burekhardt agreed with my observation that his Nazi informant had obviously neglected to point out that Hitler had adopted the centuries-old German political game of resorting to an anti-Semitic platform as the least expensive form of political rallying point.)

(b) In earlier years a Catholic judge had sentenced Hitler to a term of imprisonment. Hitler, originally a Catholic, had turned against the Church, and had harbored a ranking against everything connected therewith ever since.

My own observations prompt me to feel that if Hitler adopts a drastic program against the Roman Catholics, he may conceivably time it with a more positive turn in his reportedly envisaged drive for an independent Ukrainian state. He and his Nazi henchmen are undoubtedly swere of mounting antipathy among the Ukrainians of the Orthodox Church against the Roman Catholic Church. In such light, Hitler might count upon gaining Ukrainian sympathy, just as Nazidom reportedly expects its anti-Semitic program to gain favor amongst the Mohawsseden populations in Hitler's envisaged eastward drive.

Respectfully yours,

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WLB/ia
(In quintuplicate)

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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A-TRUE COPY

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

file private

12-22-38

January 14, 1939

In reply refer to
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My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 854, dated December 22, 1938 concerning various aspects of Poland's position;

No. 858, dated December 22, 1938 concerning the rejection by the Polish Government of the Ukrainian Minority's demand for autonomy;

No. 859, dated December 22, 1938 concerning the position of the Jews in Poland;

✓ No. 860, dated December 23, 1938 concerning the British Ambassador's conversations with Minister Beck regarding Danzig;

No. 864, dated December 23, 1938 concerning reports that Hitler might propose the calling of a disarmament conference.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures:

Copies of five
despatches, as listed

Cordell Hull

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House

No. 859

Warsaw, December 22, 1938.

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 801, November 15, 1938; observations on current developments concerning the so-called Jewish problem in Poland.

~~SECRETARY~~
FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 801 of November 15, 1938, wherein (a) I described various developments, both current and in the making, as regards the Jewish problem; (b) to refer to my previous writings on this subject wherein I have taken frequent occasion to point out that events then in the making bore the earmarks of forerunners of a more drastic wave of anti-Semitism here; and to report the following observations upon the current turn of events in connection with the Jewish problem here.

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As forecast in previous writings, the position of the Jewish community in Poland is rapidly taking a turn for the worse. Preceded by a series of articles and editorials in the Polish press treating with the problem, and in most cases emphasizing the necessity for international treatment of the Jewish problem in a global rather than a limited sense, looking to a solution in terms of large-scale emigration, the following events took place during the past 24 hours. General Skwarezynski, (Chief of OZON) and spokesman for what he numbered as 116 OZON Deputies, yesterday afternoon (December 21st) made an interpellation regarding the subject of Jewish emigration to the following effect:

On behalf of his group he took occasion to repeat with emphasis that OZON condemned any acts of peril and persecution, but contended vigorously that the number of Jews was excessive. The economic and cultural development of Poland called for large-scale Jewish emigration. Hence, they addressed the Government to ascertain what the Government intended to do in the matter. Aware of the Government's arduous study of the problem, they now wanted to have an account of what work had actually been done. More precisely, they wanted to ascertain the Government's plan (a) for emigration; (b) what territorial outlets were being considered; and (c) what financial plan was being worked out.

During that same evening, Colonel Wenda, Chief of Staff in the direction of OZON affairs, followed up the General's aforementioned interpellation by a radio

broadcast

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broadcast to the following effect: Wenda referred to the aforementioned interpellation as having marked an occasion of great consequence in that it had been the first time that the Jewish problem had been taken up officially by Parliament. In contending that this move would cause the Government to seek arrangements for mass emigration of the Jews, Wenda emphasized that this could not be done at the cost of the racial Poles. He concluded by emphasizing that it must be done, however, in order that the Polish towns, villages, industry and trade might be properly Polonized.

Another significant event which took place on the heels of the parliamentary interpellation was the sticking of large posters on the walls in various quarters of Warsaw. These posters contain in effect what might be characterized as an "invitation" for the racial Poles to omit the Jewish shops in their lists of Christmas shopping. As reason therefor the posters point out that every zloty spent in Jewish shops is a crime against the nation and the country. This part of the "invitation" concludes by emphasizing that the money of the Polish people should go to the Polish merchants. In the second part of the poster it is pointed out that there are 4 million Jews in Poland (this, of course, is in excess of the actual number). Then follows a list of statistics showing the predominance of the Jews in the trades, industry, professions, etcetera, and calling for resistance to the dominant economic position of the Jews in Poland.

Another sign of the current trend is illustrated by the efforts of Sejm Deputy, Stoch, (non-partisan)

to

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to obtain the necessary 14 signatures to enable him to present a bill aimed at the establishment of an anti-Semitic law along the following lines: (a) to classify Jews on a religious and not a racial basis; (b) all persons confessing to the Jewish Creed, or who were Jews until 1918, to be considered "temporary" citizens and to be deprived of all public rights. Exception in connection therewith to be granted in the case of those who have been recognized by the State for special merit; they and their families to be exempt. In further connection therewith, a limit of 50,000 families to be set as the maximum for those families who may be exempted from discrimination.

In connection with this projected bill, Deputy Stoch energetically endeavored for about 10 days to secure the number of signatures necessary to qualify his bill for presentation. Until yesterday afternoon he had succeeded in acquiring all but one. I understand that Deputies of the OČK Party are disinclined to support Stoch's proposal. Since OČK claims 159 out of the total of 208 seats in the Sejm, I look for OČK to wish to take a lead in the matter and to work out its own bills on the Jewish question.

In this connection I am inclined at the moment to look for the more liberal element in Government quarters, as well as the Church, to bring influence to bear on OČK circles to moderate the tone and substance of whatever bills OČK might eventually propose. In my various conversations I have gained the impression that the tendency is to model such bills after the Hungarian laws. In other words, at least the present

MOVE

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move of Government circles presages an attempt to mollify any and all legislative measures. While the Government may possibly support OZON to the extent of aiding OZON towards the enlistment of the nationalistic and anti-Semitic elements, the Government may be expected to exert vigorous efforts to avoid provoking scorn to the same degree as did Germany.

A factor which may possibly work in favor of the Jewish community is the prominence of the Socialist vote in the recent municipal elections, which should somewhat strengthen the hand of the liberal element in Government circles. On the other hand, however, the National Democrats (or ENDEK Party) likewise figured prominently in the results, a fact which might in some districts conceivably offset the Socialist gains. It is too early, however, to judge the full effect of these elections for the official figures will not be published until December 28th.

Meanwhile we may expect an intensification of pressure against the Jews. Moreover, as I anticipated a number of months ago, and so reported, I now discern that the present surge of anti-Semitism is motivated in most cases, except in the case of the inherently anti-Semitic ENDEK Party, more by a desire to force the Jewish problem here into the arena of international consideration than by an acute sense of religious hatred.

On the other hand, I am aware that while Government circles frankly ascribe the so-called Jewish problem to an overcrowded "economic room", there is a certain element in these circles who are inclined to play up the Jewish question

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question for reasons of internal political tactics - namely, to enlist the support of the anti-Semitic nationalistic element. I continue to be of the opinion that (a) repercussions of recent anti-Semitic outrages in Germany and (b) the earnest desire of leading political circles here to have the so-called Jewish problem treated globally rather than limitedly by inter-governmental conferences seeking a solution, may be expected to work increasing hardships on the Jewish community of Poland.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Draxel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/ip

(In quintuplicate)

Copy to Rublee, London.

