

RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

EAST EUROPE

● Poland

20 February 1967

SITUATION REPORT

- + More on Casaroli's Mission
- + Foreign Trade Minister's Visit to Denmark and Japan
- + Rapacki's Visit to London
- + Communist Pre-Summit Conference Meeting in Warsaw

More on Casaroli's Mission

The first official announcement on the visit to Poland of Msgr. Agostino Casaroli was made by Radio Warsaw and PAP late at night on February 16, more than two days after the Vatican emissary's arrival in the Polish capital. Quoting a Vatican spokesman, both agencies announced that Casaroli had come to Warsaw "to have talks with the Polish bishops."

The following day, the Polish Primate's Secretariat issued a communiqué on the conference of the Episcopate held on February 15 and 16. It mentioned briefly Casaroli, "now visiting in Warsaw," as the Vatican official who had handed to the Episcopate a "special blessing" of the Pope.

The Church communiqué also explained that the Episcopate conference, in which 56 bishops took part, "dealt with the realization of the Ecumenical Council directives for religious work." Reports by numerous bishop commissions were presented at the conference, among them one by the seminary studies commission.

Casaroli himself was more outspoken about his mission than either the state or the Church communiqué had been. Speaking to newsmen on February 18, at an informal gathering held, significantly, in a building that before the war was the home of the Papal Nuncio, he explained:

"My mission is ecclesiastical -- to study the problem of Catholic life, the concrete reality here, and to try and bring about an improvement in the situation."

20 February 1967

With a clear reference to the Papal Nuncio's building, he remarked to a correspondent: "You see the house is still here. Who knows about the future?"

During the interview, Casaroli did not discount some courtesy visits to Polish state officials, but said that no formal negotiations were foreseen. He said he had no information on whether or not State Council Chairman Edward Ochab would call on the Pope during his visit to Roma. "The Holy See does not initiate meetings -- it waits for a request for an audience," Casarole explained. "I have no information about such a request," he added.

According to the correspondents who attended the "informal gathering," Casaroli will move this week from Warsaw to Cracow, and then go on to all dioceses in the country, including those in the Western Territories. His visit to this area will have "no political significance," Casaroli stressed. "There are Poles there, Polish bishops, and pastoral work goes on," he explained.

His tour is to last several weeks, during which time he will have to return to Rome two or three times. His survey of the "concrete reality" will include talks with bishops and, if time allows, with clergy and lay Catholics (Reuter even claimed that among the latter he was expected to meet pro-regime Pax Catholics).

Probably under the impact of Western press speculation and local gossip, Bishop Zygmunt Choromanski, the Episcopate's secretary, warned the faithful in a sermon on February 19:

"You must be very careful and not give way to gossip. Monsignor Casaroli has come here and immediately everybody thinks that an agreement, perhaps the concordat, will be achieved soon."

In the meantime, the regime -- through informal channels -- made it clear that it viewed Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski as the main obstacle to a possible understanding between the state and Church in Poland, as well as between the state and the Vatican.

L'Unité's correspondent in Warsaw, Franco Fabiani, wrote on February 16 that the Cardinal's attitude toward the regime was a major obstacle to a Church-state agreement and that "his acts and his initiatives are those of a man who rejects every new psychological face of the Church." Fabiani also claimed that last autumn Cardinal Wyszynski banned a visit to Rome by Archbishop Boleslaw Kominek, a statement which Fabiani should know is not correct. (As already mentioned in the SR of January 23, none of the Polish bishops left the country during 1966 out of solidarity with the Cardinal.)

Quoting "informed Polish sources" and "government officials," Reuter reported from Warsaw on February 16 that a settlement may depend on the "removal of Poland's uncompromising Primate." In a clear allusion to the Cardinal, one official was even quoted saying: "It is

20 February 1967

a question of removing some intermediaries who cannot be trusted."

Similarly, Angela Nacken reported for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (February 18) that in the government's view, there were two main obstacles to an understanding between Warsaw and the Vatican: one was Cardinal Wyszynski, who "cannot be a discussion partner for the state authorities," and the second was the Vatican's stand on the Oder-Neisse line, which so far has not been acknowledged by the Holy See as a final border.

Foreign Trade Minister's Visit to Denmark and Japan

After a brief visit to Denmark and talks on economic cooperation, Minister of Foreign Trade Witold Trampczynski arrived in Japan on February 19, the first Polish government representative at the ministerial level to visit that country since World War II, Radio Warsaw reported the same day.

Reporting on Trampczynski's arrival in Tokio at the head of a six-man mission, Reuter (February 19) said that during their one-week visit the Polish visitors would hold talks with the Japanese Foreign Minister and International Trade and Industry Minister and would be received by Prime Minister Sato. The Polish group includes the president of the Polish Chamber of Foreign Trade, Antoni Adamowicz, and the vice-chairman of the Committee for Economic Cooperation with Foreign Countries, Kazimierz Olszewski.

In a comment on Trampczynski's visit to Japan, the Tokio correspondent of The New York Times (February 20) said that, according to Japanese officials, Japan hoped that the visit would lead to the first of several long-term agreements with East European countries providing for expanded trade. It is difficult for the East Europeans, said the correspondent, to place manufactured goods in highly industrialized Japan; he cited a member of the Polish mission as saying that the Poles were not at all satisfied with the volume of Polish-Japanese trade. However, concluded the correspondent, it was expected that the bulk of Japanese imports from Poland would continue to be raw materials and food in exchange for Japanese manufactured goods and machinery.

This conclusion is supported by the initiation, last year, of Polish exports of high combustion coal to Japan, which are expected to reach over half a million tons this year (SR of January 23).

Rapacki's Visit to London

Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki is expected in London tomorrow on an official visit to Britain which will last until February 27.

His agenda, as announced by the Foreign Office on February 17, includes talks with Foreign Secretary George Brown on February 22 and 23, a luncheon with Prime Minister Harold Wilson on February 24, a meeting with opposition leader Edward Heath, a visit to Coventry on February 25 and, prior to his departure, a luncheon with the Foreign Press Association in London.

Reuter reported from London (February 18) that Rapacki would be discussing Vietnam, European security and the projected treaty

20 February 1967

to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The agency said that he was expected to renew the call for a pan-European security conference, but that he would be told, as Alexei Kosygin was a few days ago, that while Britain favors the conference in principle, it must be carefully prepared and include the United States from the start. On German reunification and related problems, Reuter continued, Britain is expected to make it clear to Rapacki that there has been no change in its stand on the problem of the Oder-Neisse line.

Commenting on the forthcoming visit, PAP (February 19) reviewed past Polish-British contacts, concentrating on trade and economic relations between the two countries. The agency stressed that Great Britain holds fourth place in Polish foreign trade and is first among the Western countries. In the years 1964-1966 a "dynamic" increase in the trade exchange took place, it said. Quoting the respective figures, PAP did not reveal that the trade balance is unfavorable for Britain. Instead, it complained that "Britain's moves in recent years to stop the liberalization process in trade constitutes an impediment in the further development of trade exchange. However, PAP continued, "great possibilities are looming in the development of industrial coproduction." The agency enumerated a number of agreements on joint production of paper-making machines, electric locomotives, Diesel engines, etc.

Communist Pre-Summit Conference Meeting in Warsaw?

A preparatory meeting of the European Communist officials, looking toward a full-scale conference in the spring, is likely to begin in Warsaw on February 22, Sidney Weiland, Reuter's correspondent in Moscow, reported on February 17. He confirmed earlier reports (cf. SR February 2) that the Polish and French Communist Parties are the prime movers behind the full-scale European meeting which, according to present plans, may be held in Helsinki in April or May.

The forthcoming Warsaw meeting will consider discussion material for the Helsinki conference and set a firm date for it. "Although China will be a dominant subject," Weiland reported, provisional agenda items include: European security (the "German problem"), Communist attitudes toward the Common Market, and cooperation between Communist and social-democratic parties. For the CPSU Yuri Andropov, Party Secretary for Liaison with ruling Communist Parties, and Boris Ponomarev, Secretary in charge of relations with Parties in "capitalist" countries, will take part in the Warsaw meeting.

Reporting from Moscow on February 17, UPI stated that of the East European ruling Parties, only the Rumanian and Yugoslav would not take part in the preparatory meeting. Both Reuter and UPI stressed that it was not clear whether all European Communist Parties would attend the Warsaw session.