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Ochab's Official Visit to Italy

State Council Chairman Edward Ochab arrived in Rome by air this morning to begin his official visit to Italy. The program of the visit stipulates "talks on subjects of interest to both countries" and the touring of a number of industrial and cultural centers of Italy, Radio Warsaw reported on April 5.

According to an RFE Special from Rome (April 4), during the three day official visit in Rome, Ochab will be guest of President Giuseppe Saragat with whom he will have talks. Ochab will leave Rome in the morning of April 8 for Cassino, to see a Polish war cemetery, then he will go to Naples for sightseeing. His further program includes visits to Florence (April 8-9), Turin and Bergamo near Milan (April 10), and Venice (April 11) from where he will return to Poland.

Ochab is accompanied by State Council Secretary Julian Horodecki, Foreign Trade Minister Witold Trampczynski, Deputy Foreign Minister Marian Naszkowski, and a group of nine officials and experts.

In connection with Ochab's stay in Rome, the main interest of the Western press centers around a possible audience by Pope Paul VI. While a Vatican spokesman once again confirmed today (cf. an RFE Special from Rome) that should Ochab request an audience it would be granted, at least two Western papers expressed serious doubts about the possibility of a meeting between the Pope and Ochab.

Angela Nacken reported from Warsaw for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (April 5) that "all the signs" lead to a conclusion that Ochab will not ask for an audience. At the present moment, direct talks on "such a high level" would be "premature" and tactically would be a bad move. Nacken also pointed out Polish disillusionment vis-a-vis the Vatican over its unchanged stand on the problem of Western Territories. Similar doubts and similar arguments appeared

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also in the Paris Catholic paper La Croix (April 5).

Polish-Vatican Relations

Against the background of the speculation on whether the Pope will receive Ochab (see preceding item), the Frankfurter Rundschau (April 6) reported from Rome that a Polish-Vatican agreement on the administration of the dioceses in Poland's Western Territories is quite likely and that it would be announced shortly. "Observers in the Vatican," the paper stated, conclude that the Vatican has made certain concessions to the Polish government, which may indirectly lead to the Vatican's recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier.

The paper linked these reports (or rumors) with the sudden departure from Rome and arrival in Bonn (on April 4) of Dieter Sattler, West German ambassador to the Vatican, and with the visit to the Vatican of Reinhold Rehs, chairman of the German Expellee Union, whose task it is -- according to the Frankfurter Rundschau -- to explain the feelings of the expellees and their reaction to a possible Vatican move which would directly or indirectly recognize the Oder-Neisse border.

It is possible that it was in connection with these West German apprehensions, that L'Osservatore Romano published on April 5 an extensive article dedicated to the patron saint of Silesia, Saint Jadwiga, wife of a Polish-Silesian duke of the 12th century. (It should be recalled that on 29 August 1965 -- cf. SR 23 August 1965 -- Polish bishops gathered at Trzebnica, in the Western Territories, to pay homage to this Polish-German saint.) Picking up the L'Osservatore Romano article, the Radio Warsaw correspondent in Rome, Ignacy Krasicki, attacked the Vatican's semi-official paper for its "anti-Polish tone" struck on the eve of Ochab's visit to Italy and for the paper's presentation of the life of Saint Jadwiga and her "mission on our Western Territories" in the light of the "nationalistic German (Church) hierarchy." Krasicki stressed that under the photograph of Saint Jadwiga L'Osservatore Romano placed an inscription: "From the church of Saint Elisabeth in Breslavia (Italian for Wroclaw), East Germany."

In the meantime, Msgr. Agostino Casaroli completed "the third and final part of his nationwide investigation," UPI reported from Warsaw (April 5) and was having a day of rest. According to UPI, Casaroli was slated to have a final talk with Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski today before leaving for Rome. Thus Casaroli's official visit is over, but it is not known whether or not he will again return to Poland. UPI stressed that Casaroli had had no talks with government officials.

Polish-Bulgarian Friendship Treaty Signed

The Polish-Bulgarian treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual aid has been signed this morning in Sofia. (It will be analysed when the text becomes available).

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It seems that there were three serious business meetings of the Polish and Bulgarian delegations: one on April 3, the second in the morning of April 4, and the third on April 5. This last meeting was one of the "representatives of the Central Committees" of the two Parties, Radio Warsaw reported today.

The Polish party visited the Bulgarian riviera on April 4 and the next day the Georgi Dimitrov Shipyards in Varna where the two Party leaders (Wladyslaw Gomulka and Todor Zhivkov) delivered speeches. On this occasion, Zhivkov stressed that between the Bulgarian and Polish CPs there is a "full unanimity of views in international matters and on the problems of the international Communist and workers' movement."

Regarding foreign policy problems, and particularly the problem which speeded up the renewal of the treaty, Radio Sofia assured its listeners that Bulgaria "takes the standpoint for the inviolability of the Oder-Neisse border and, like Poland, sees a threat in the policy of the Bonn government (which is) striving for the revision of the results created in Europe by World War II."