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Church Millennium Celebrations at Piekary Slaskie

Impressive Church celebrations took place in the small Silesian town of Piekary yesterday, Reuter and UPI reported. In spite of the police ban on pilgrims on foot, and in spite of detours difficult to negotiate by vehicles, a crowd estimated at at least 200,000 people (mostly miners and workers) gathered on "the wooded slopes of nearby Calvary Mount to hear Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski proclaim that Poland after 10 centuries had a right to be and remain a Catholic nation."

"We defend our rights, not backing down one step," the Polish Primate said. "If you respect our rights then we will respect yours," he told the state authorities without directly mentioning them. He also delivered a warning under this address: "If this balance is upset, we cannot take responsibility for the future."

So far, these have been the Cardinal's strongest pronouncements during the Church's Millennium celebrations. Here, at Piekary, he was not obliged to show utmost restraint, as was the case in Czestochowa when he acted as a papal legate.

On the other hand, and probably through pure coincidence, Pope Paul VI, speaking in Rome on the same May 22, strongly condemned Marxist atheism as a "blindness for which man and society will in the end see the gravest consequences." He also stated that the class struggle is leading toward "abolition of freedom and thus the installation of a system heavily authoritarian and tending to totalitarianism."

There seems to be little doubt that had the Pope been allowed to visit Poland on May 3, his remarks about Marxism, atheism and class struggle would -- if made at all -- have had a less militant tone. Made three weeks before the Italian local elections,

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the Pope's critical words could cost the Italian CP many a vote.

Correction:

The last paragraph of the item "State Celebrations" in SP May 16 should read as follows:

A reference critical to the Episcopate was also carried by Radio Warsaw. In a report on the rally of German expellees in Bonn on May 14, the Polish broadcasting agency stated that the expellee chairman Wenzel Jaksch and other speakers criticized the Memorandum of the German Evangelical Church on the matter of the Oder-Neisse border, "while many complimentary remarks (made by these speakers) were devoted to the messages of the Polish Episcopate to the German bishops." (The implication was that the "revanchist" expellees saw in the Polish bishops' letter a tendency to surrender the Oder-Neisse territory.)

French Foreign Minister Visits Warsaw

Maurice Couve de Murville, the French Foreign Minister, spent three days in Warsaw and one in Cracow between May 18 and 21 on a visit which -- the press stressed almost unanimously -- was the first since the war of a French Foreign Minister to Poland. The press also pointed out that Couve arrived in Warsaw having last month visited Bucharest and Sofia, a month before the planned trip of General Charles de Gaulle to Moscow.

The visit lay within a scheme of what Couve called "improvement of relations between the European states of the West and the European states of the East." This rather longish formulation came up in an interview granted Jan Zakrzewski, Polish radio and TV correspondent in Paris, on May 12. "This is the policy which we have been following for several years," Couve stressed. He also defined his visit to Poland as a "new step within the frames of this policy and in this direction."

Similar platitudes were also uttered by the French guest in Warsaw itself. "A general improvement and development of relations in all of Europe seemed to be the first essential objective on the road of peace," PAP quoted him saying on May 19, the day after the arrival in the Polish capital. "We have to exert our efforts, on both sides, because a prosperous and dynamic commercial, scientific, technical, and cultural exchange constitutes a necessary basis of our relations, in particular of our political relations," Couve assured his Polish audience.

His Polish counterpart, Adam Rapacki, seemed to sound more business-like when, on the same day, he stated that "neither Poland nor her allies think that a division of Europe is something desirable, normal and lasting." Rapacki also offered a solution "to replace this division by a system of collective security and cooperation on our continent."

Couve was less specific on this subject. Speaking at a press conference on the morning of May 21 the French Foreign Minister as quoted by PAP stated:

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"The problem is to find a solution to the German problem which would bring security for everyone. In the view of the French government what is essential, in the final account, is the unification of Germany on conditions acceptable to all."

Significantly, Couve de Murville did not make any public statement on the matter in which Poland is most acutely interested, the Oder-Neisse border. However, Angela Nacken reported for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (May 21) that Couve did refer to this matter during his talks with Rapacki, and that he simply recalled the known declaration of de Gaulle of March 1959, "without adding anything to it or going away from it." (It is at least interesting to state that this reference was not picked up by the Polish press and/or radio in any other form than by clear quote of FAZ.)

During his stay in Poland Couve de Murville was received by the three top Polish leaders, Wladyslaw Gomulka, Edward Ochab and Jozef Cyrankiewicz.

On May 20, Couve and Rapacki signed a cultural agreement and an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation between Poland and France during the five years 1966-1970.

During the last day of his visit, May 21, Couve de Murville took part in the reopening of the French cultural center in Cracow which was closed in 1952 as an "espionage center."

Israel's Recognition of Oder-Neisse Border

Before leaving Israel for Poland (cf. SR May 12), Israel's Foreign Minister Abba Eban handed the Polish ambassador in Tel-Aviv a note in which he confirmed that Israel regards the Oder-Neisse border between Germany and Poland as definite and permanent. The note was handed in on May 6, but the fact became known to and reported by Western agencies only as late as May 13.

Although the note contained only an official confirmation of the Israeli stand, confirmed most recently in January by President Levi Eshkol, the news found a vivid response, and particularly in West Germany, if only because it came a day after the signing of a West German-Israeli agreement under which Israel received a 40 million dollar credit.

Significantly, the Polish press, always alert to any statement on the Oder-Neisse border, has so far remained silent on the note. The visit of Eban to Warsaw has been covered only by a short PAP communique released on May 13 after he paid what PAP called "a courtesy visit" to Adam Rapacki, his Polish opposite number. The official agency explained that Eban arrived for a conference of "ambassadors of Israel from socialist countries."

Poland Signs Deal with Fiat

A multi-million dollar agreement had been signed for the manufacture of Italian Fiat cars in Poland, Western press agencies reported from Warsaw on May 19.

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According to Reuter, the contract was for 40 million dollars and called for an annual output of 35 thousand Fiats. The manufacture would start next year and production would be mostly 1500 models, although some 1300 models would also be built, according to Reuter.

It is understood, said Western agencies, that the Zeran factory near Warsaw, which at present produces old-fashioned 'Warszawa'-type vehicles -- modelled on the Russian 'Pobieda' -- will be converted in stages to Fiat production.

According to the agencies, the original technical agreement with Fiat was signed in Turin last December and on May 14 a Fiat spokesman said in Rome that a final Polish-Fiat agreement would be announced shortly in Warsaw.

NYHT reported on May 20 that the production of Fiats in Poland was supposed to reach 35 thousand a year by 1970 and that the manufacture of the 'Warszawa' cars, widely used as taxis, ambulance and police cars, was due to continue.

The paper added that recently the Poles also awarded a contract to the British firm, Leylands, for diesel engines, vehicle parts, and chassis. The two contracts are expected to mean, said the paper, that in the 1970's Poland's auto market will be dominated by the Italians and its truck and bus market by the British.

These two deals will certainly in due time contribute to easing the situation on the Polish car market. In 1965 there were, on Polish roads, only 290 thousand passenger cars; 197 thousand trucks and 20 thousand buses -- all that for a population of nearly 31 million. Polish car production is insufficient to meet demands on the home market. In 1965 Poland produced only 26,400 passenger cars and about the same number of trucks. The situation is aggravated by the fact that a lack of hard currency restricts Polish imports of cars and that Poland is even trying to place its cars and trucks on some foreign markets (mostly in developing countries).

The production of 'Warszawa' cars at the Zeran factory amounts to about 15 thousand a year. These are expensive cars for Polish circumstances, costing 120 thousand zloty.

So far, no Polish comment on the deal is available.

Apparently, as far back as the end of 1957, there were already plans to modernize the car factory in Zeran. The design for an attractive car model was ordered from the fashionable Ghia firm in Turin, and Fiat agreed to supply the licence and initiate the production of its motors. By 1960, two prototypes were said to have been built at a cost of 80 thousand dollars, but nothing happened since then. Rumors had it at that time that either Gomulka changed his mind and did not like the new model any more, or else the respective ministry and the Party feared to displease the Soviets by abandoning production of the Russian car.