

PRIME MINISTER'S CONVERSATION WITH LORD CARRINGTON,
SUNDAY, 27 DECEMBER 1981, 12 NOON

LC I ring you up really to let you know the latest on Poland.

PM Yes, the news is very, very conflicting today, according to the Press - some saying they're talking to the Church and others saying that they really are having a massive repression.

LC I personally am inclined to think that, half-way between that is probably true. Cheysson has refused to meet on Wednesday.

PM Well I saw that, but I thought you'd got it all sorted out.

LC So did I. He agreed with me on the telephone, he then came back and said, I don't know whether Mitterrand has told him not to and so reserve their right to do their own thing, but the reason he gave was that he didn't want there to be a meeting out of which come less or only the same as we'd already said and that this would do more harm than good. I think reading between the lines he doesn't want to have a row with the Germans. There's no doubt about it, the Germans are being extremely unwilling to consider taking any measures even against the Poles, let alone the Russians, and I think that it may be that he doesn't want a row with the Germans. So what is now happening is that there is going to be a Political Directors meeting on Wednesday - I think I'll be up on Tuesday and Wednesday and see that all goes well there or at any rate be around - and then I think we shall have to see after the Political Directors meeting whether we ought to have a Foreign Ministers meeting ^{early} next week. This will depend a little bit on the Frenchman and where he stands. I think it's rather a pity really, but ...

/PM

PM Well I think it's a great pity, but I also think it's a pity you can't go ahead without the Frenchmen.

LC Yes, but it's a bit difficult to do that in terms of

PM Yes, but so long as its known, so long as its leaked - I'm now going to do counter leaking Peter, I've had enough of being leaked against me I'll have to do counter - so long as it is leaked that we've tried to call a meeting and everyone agreed except the French.

LC Well, to be fair, the Italians were not overly keen either.

PM Well they don't ... we can do without them.

LC But they were prepared to do it.

PM But its awful when you go to all the trouble ...

LC Yes, mounting it and so on ...

PM But it must be known that we tried to set one up.

LC Well, everybody does know - certainly the Americans know because I talked personally to Al Haig about it on the telephone. The only other thing that's happening is Gibraltar - I don't know if you know anything about that?

PM No.

LC They really are getting on now with the whole thing and Richard Parsons and Duran - who is the sort of Julian Bullard of the thing - had a talk just before Christmas in which Duran said that he was sending a letter about the opening of the border (proposing to send a letter about the opening of the border) and we would have to acknowledge it. Well, we had agreed that they could say some things unilaterally which we didn't necessarily agree with provided they didn't send it to us and asking for an acknowledgment.

PM Yes.

LC Well we couldn't have accepted this letter so we've sent it back to them and said don't send that, you must really amend it in a way that's acceptable. And that's all going quite well. The people in the Foreign Office today are doing that and they think we can get an acceptable letter which will mean that on the 8th with your talk with Sotelo he will announce the opening of the border on such and such a date. So I don't think that's too bad.

PM No.

LC Otherwise, there is literally nothing happening very much except the poor wretched Poles.

PM I think the Polish thing is going to get worse Peter. As winter gets worse I just think it's going to get worse and worse.

LC Unless they're so sort of beaten that they'll just sort of accept it.

/PM

PM If life is terrible, you might just as well resist. And if life is terrible and you don't resist you might just as well resist. Passive resistance, because there's nothing any Government can do against it.

LC It was quite well timed, wasn't it, what they did because it's too soon to know - I mean over Christmas and so on - it's too soon to know whether they are going to resist passively or not.

PM Well, it seemed to mean that what they were doing was the way to do it. Yes, they turn up to the factories but don't do any work.

LC Well, there are so many conflicting stories, that may be so, one doesn't know.

PM No.

LC This is going to be our problem is to get the truth out of the place.

PM Yes, you get some from the people who are coming over the border. But the most awful one was that they're kept in open detention camps.

LC And having water thrown over them, and that sort of thing.

PM Every hour, but Peter it can't be cold water because it would freeze.

LC Well, you know, I think you've got to take some of these stories with a certain amount of scepticism.

PM Well so do I, but I'm always - one took the stories out of Nazi Germany...

LC Yes, and they were true.

PM And they were true with scepticism. And that's why I'm - it's just the tyrants are the same these days, well the Communists and the Fascists were the same, and therefore there is no depths to which they cannot sink.

LC Yes, but I don't know if this chap is as bad as that. I really don't know. Certainly Gierak wasn't you know.

PM No. but didn't you say the news was it was virtually all the secret police that were doing this and not the ordinary army?

LC Well, these are some of the rumours coming out, yes.

PM And every Communist state has a secret police and in a way we have to avoid giving the impression that under Communism it was all right but under military rule it's not. And the fact was Solidarity was getting away from Communism.

LC That's right, and the military. Anyway I think we've got to keep a very close eye on things and see which way we go.

PM Yes, so do I.

/LC

LC But as things are I'll give you a ring. You're going to be at Chequers all the week are you?

PM I've got to go up on Wednesday night, because I've got to do something on the New Year for Thursday. There's no-one else doing anything. So I've got to keep it going and I've got to get presentation together. It's not my job to do Government presentation but you know when I was doing it we used to arrange for three or four people to do something. Now this week has fallen through.

LC Which is rather a bore. I can easily arrange to go on television but I don't know quite what one would say.

PM Well I'll have to go on ... either this week or next week.

LC I'm perfectly prepared to do it of course, its just ...

PM Well I shall be on on Thursday now Peter ...

LC On New Year's Day ...

PM On New Year's Eve ...

LC Well, if there's something to say I can easily get a slot, I'm not anxious to get up there and be asked 'what are you doing about it' when we've got the French ...

PM Right, well I shall say 'well we wanted to call a meeting now we're holding the Presidency but two of the big nations disagreed.

/They

PM They couldn't agree to come
Contd.

LC There was disagreement about that

PM And that's Europe, I'm afraid.

LC Don't put the finger on France.

PM No.

LC Not in public. I think, you know, it's easier to let that
be known around the backdoor to say that really.

PM O.K. Peter.

LC Sorry to bother you.

PM No bother, bye.