

Nothing 'Singular' About It

BY DOROTHY THOMPSON

THE German government, in recalling the ambassador to Washington, Dr. Dieckhoff, says that he is recalled in order to "inform Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in detail regarding public sentiment in the United States and the singular attitude toward domestic events in Germany manifested in various declarations by President Roosevelt and other important United States personalities."

It is to be hoped that Dr. Dieckhoff will inform Mr. Ribbentrop that there is nothing at all "singular" in the attitude of President Roosevelt, but that on the contrary the president is acting in line with a tradition which has been consistent since the beginning of this republic.

John Quincy Adams said in 1791, "The principle that a whole nation has the right to do whatever it pleases cannot in any sense whatever be admitted as true. The eternal and immutable laws of justice and of morality are paramount to all human legislation."

Daniel Webster said on Nov. 7, 1849: "There is something on earth greater than arbitrary or despotic power, and that is the aroused indignation of the civilized world."

In 1840 our minister to Turkey, David Porter, was instructed to make strong representations to the Turkish ruler in protest against atrocities against Jews in Damascus and Rhodes, upon the express direction of President Van Buren.

In 1878 the United States cooperated with the great powers at the Congress to Berlin to obtain full and equal rights for the Jews in the Balkans. In this they were supported by the president of the congress, the great German statesman Bismarck, who declared that the clauses granting religious liberty and protecting minorities "have in view an advance in civilization against which doubtless no cabinet will have objections in principle. The assent of Germany is always given to every motion favorable to religious liberty."

In 1881 Secretary of State James G. Blaine instructed James Russell Lowell, United States minister at London, to seek English cooperation in a joint diplomatic move on behalf of the Jews in Russia.

In 1902 Secretary of State Hay protested to the Rumanian government at the express direction of President Theodore Roosevelt. The protest included these words: "The United States offers asylum to the oppressed of all lands. But its sympathy with them in no wise impairs its just liberty and right to weigh the acts of the oppressor in the light of their effects upon this country, and to judge accordingly."

In 1903, after the Kishineff massacre in Russia, President Roosevelt forwarded to the Tsar of Russia a petition of protest signed by a vast number of American citizens and accompanied it with the statement, "In any proper way by which beneficial action may be taken, it will be taken, to show the sincerity of the historic American position of treating each man on his merits without the least reference to his creed, his race, or his birthplace."

In 1911, President Taft abrogated the treaty of 1832 with Russia because of the Russian government's maltreatment of the Jews. The immediate cause was the refusal of the Russian government to recognize the passports of American citizens who were Jews.

In 1915, the United States government officially interceded in behalf of the persecuted Christians in Armenia. Representations were made to the Turkish government by Secretaries of State Bryan and Lansing and Acting Secretary of State Polk. In this case, it was Russia who asked for American intervention, "to prevent the massacre of non-combatant Armenians in Turkish territory."

One provision of the peace conference in 1919 that President Wilson was instrumental in obtaining was the adoption of treaties guaranteeing minority rights, including the protection of religious minorities. Most notable of these was the Polish minorities

treaty, which protected the civil, political and religious rights of all minority groups in such newly created states as Poland.

It was declared in this treaty that infractions of the rights of racial, religious or linguistic minorities "constitute obligations of international concern."

At the peace conference Germany gave an express pledge to the United States that she would guarantee protection of her own religious and racial minorities on the same basis as that established for the minorities of Poland. Hence, the United States is not limited to general consideration of humanity and mere intercession in connection with Germany's treatment of her racial, religious, or linguistic minorities.

And in 1923 Germany herself successfully invoked the jurisdiction of the World Court to enforce these very articles against Poland for her infringement of the rights of Germans.

The German government has itself, on occasion, "intervened" to protest against persecution in other countries. In October, 1915, the German ambassador at Constantinople delivered a note to the Turkish minister of foreign affairs saying, "The German embassy is constrained to remonstrate once more upon those horrible deeds and to decline any responsibility for the consequences they may involve . . . all the more because Germany, as a friendly power, allied to Turkey, may be considered to have approved or even instigated their acts of violence."

The United States government has shown enormous patience in dealing with German intervention in the domestic affairs of this country.

In September, 1937, at an extraordinary meeting in Stuttgart, the German foreign minister, Baron von Neurath asserted it as a principle of German policy that Germans in other countries, including the United States, would act as agents of the German government. Ernst Bohle, "leader" of the Nazi foreign organization, an official government instrument, said: "Whoever lives abroad as a German business man, is working not only for himself but primarily in the service of the German fatherland."

This statement was followed by Nazi rallies organized by Germans throughout the United States. The United States government has never recognized the right of a foreign government to organize a propaganda on our soil. In August, 1935, we threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Russia, as a result of the meeting of the comintern.

The United States has never claimed the privilege of setting up groups inside Germany or Russia or try and change the forms of government of those countries, but the German and Russian governments are both doing that on this soil, under—save the mark!—the claim of free speech.

Intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries is a direct revolutionary instrument of Nazi policy. It has gone so far as to attempt to interfere with the course of justice in France, to publicly warn Great Britain against the danger of having Duff Cooper, Winston Churchill or Anthony Eden as prime minister, to suggest a racial policy to Italy, and to attempt to dictate the foreign and domestic policies of all the small neighboring countries. And all of its interventions in every direction are backed up by the intimidation of armed force and economic reprisals.

What it is doing has no precedent in any previous German policy, but President Roosevelt's action has the precedent of our whole history.

(Copyright, 1938, New York Tribune, Inc.)