(U) The religious reformer Martin Luther was subject to considerable opposition in his day from the nobility that supported the Roman Catholic Church. One of his staunchest foes was George the Bearded, Duke of Saxony, pictured.

(U) On a couple of occasions, Luther's correspondence was intercepted, read, and published. Luther, however, in the words of one historian, "was one of those men who cannot sit down tamely under a wrong...."

(U) One of Luther's letters to Dr. Link, a preacher at Nuremberg, fell into the hands of Duke George. The duke published it, accusing Luther of plotting to foment disturbances.

(U) Luther responded with a public treatise of his own. He did not admit or deny writing the letters, but said that, if they were his, Duke George's use of them was tantamount to a confession that the duke had "abstracted my property without my privity or consent." Luther questioned the right by which Duke George could take or retain another person's property. He also suggested that if the two were reversed, if Luther had acted this way with a letter of the duke's, the reformer would be in danger of losing his head.

(U) Finally, Luther quoted the commandment against theft to the duke.

(U) In another place, Luther suggested that he should have "learned how to give him such a cut over the nozzle in my answer that he would have lost all inclination for a further quest."

(U) This incident and several similar ones prompted the nineteenth century British diplomat (and sometime journalist) Eustace Clare Grenville Murray to argue for the inviolability of diplomatic correspondence and to argue against the national cryptanalytic activities of the nations of Europe. The Martin Luther incident was cited at length in his 1855 book *Embassies and Foreign Courts: A History of Diplomacy*.

(U) The stakes were too high, however. European nations continued to use their "black chambers," and some nations, such as Great Britain, which had temporarily discontinued its diplomatic cryptanalysis, resumed activities early in the twentieth century.

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