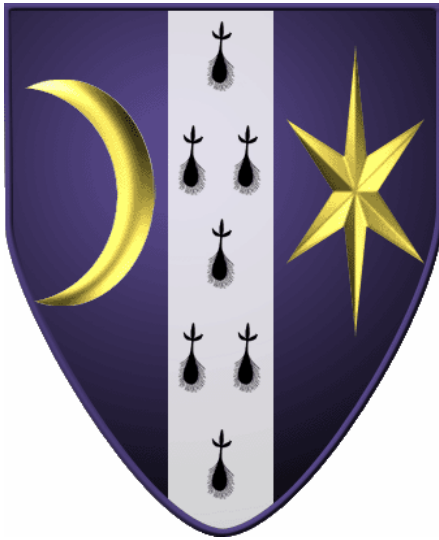


# **Pale Diplomatic Corps**

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*Note: Though this is an officially sponsored organization no member has any more standing in the Theocracy of the Pale than any other citizen.*

## **Description**

### **Knowledge is Power**

The Pale Diplomatic Corps, or PDC, is the Intelligence-gathering arm of the Theocracy as well as its corps of diplomats. The PDC reports directly to Prelate Andon Kavelle and is concerned with physical, as opposed to spiritual, threats to the Pale. It is a network of diplomats, infiltrators and agents operating outside of the Pale to safeguard the land. The PDC is ostensibly run by Prelate Andon Kavelle. The organization consists of many diplomats acting openly, but not all of its members are known, nor is it known how far their reach truly is. There may be another leader of the PDC who guides its more covert operations. The rest of this document deals primarily with the covert arm of the PDC, as all legitimate diplomats within the organization are hand-picked by Andon Kavelle or the Theocrat.

## **Culture**

Recruits are tapped for their ability to be discreet and/or diplomatic, to serve the Pale, and gather information. Members are chosen among people displaying those abilities. The Membership is more diverse and decidedly less lawful than other Palish Organizations. Holbek's original network included merchants, barmaids, minstrels, forgers, a Priest of Rao, and a highwayman concerned for his soul.

Within the organization, "Discretion" is the byword and "No Physical Evidence" the mantra. On graduation, each recruit is given a code name, normally a word for a weapon. From then on, only code names are used during official activities of the PDC. The network functions in cells, with each member rarely knowing more than five other members.

The organization is structured in tiers. New members enter as "Members" and are known as the Bishops' Ears. To advance, a Member must join and infiltrate another organization. Infiltrators form the middle tier of the org and are known as the Prelates' Eyes. A third tier of elites runs the organization; these Spymasters are known as the Theocrat's Hands for their role in covert missions for the Theocracy.

## **History**

The PDC was born with the Pale, though in three centuries it has had many names. During the time of Ceril the Relentless, the newborn Theocracy needed something to mitigate the advantages of older and larger nations that sought to dominate it. Gamgrit Holbek, one of the original Prelates, nurtured a small network to watch the movement of troops within Nyron and Urnst. The intelligence gained allowed the Theocracy to prepare for and withstand assaults from much larger armies.

For more than two centuries, the Pale Diplomatic Corps focused on gathering information on the Pale's neighbors. It was focused on external threats. It was held that Pholtus himself ensured purity within the Pale. This was proved to be a bogus assumption, when Lazarus cut down the Theocrat. The attack shocked the Council of Nine out of its complacency. As the Church Militant, the Pholtan Clergy, the Inquisition, and a small army of diviners failed to protect the Theocrat, the PDC was given an added focus on internal threats. At that time the PDC added to its already expansive external intelligence network, a division for gathering information within the Theocracy. The first thing they did was infiltrate the merchant houses. Their next step was to recruit agents from within other established organizations. And finally, they started targeting the people that

historically get their noses into everything: adventurers.

Recently, the PDC's involvement has been trimmed back as the Church Militant expands its capabilities. The PDC continues a tenuous relationship with the Church Militant for the purpose of exchanging information. And although the Church Militant has jurisdiction within the borders of the Pale, recruits are still "encouraged" (that is, required) to "get involved with" (that is, join one of) the many organizations within the Pale. This activity deepens their understanding of the Pholtan way of life.

## **The PDC and other Organizations**

The PDC has its best relations with the Prelates themselves and the Palish military organizations: the Church Militant, Prelatal Army, and Pholtan Knights Valorous. These groups are directly served and saved by the intelligence the PDC gathers.

## **Challenges**

As the covert arm of the Theocracy's defense forces, the PDC has no overt enemies within the state, although there is some rivalry with the Inquisition. Unofficially, Palish orgs are at best resigned to infiltrators within their midst. Opposition orgs, who must contend with double agents, are particularly hostile to Agents.

## **The Bishops' Ears**

New agents are responsible for surveillance of groups and individuals in the regions neighboring the Pale. These people become part of the retinue of Ambassadors, Diplomats, and Merchant companies. Upon joining an Act of Obeisance is required. Before he is trusted, each would-be member must demonstrate his devotion to the Theocracy. This requires an oral treatise on the Virtues of the Theocracy. Traditionally, this is worked on in collaboration with one other candidate. One candidate does the majority of the research, which takes one month. The other funds the research to ensure adequate work, which requires gold glories. Additionally the PDC requires periodic service at their various safe houses. Members can either meet these requirements through the expenditure of time, or they can convince (pay) one of their colleagues to work there for them. There are rumors of groups in the organization, which actually operate inside the Pale, but these are just rumors and probably shouldn't be believed.

Recently, the PDC has begun to recruit adventurers, as adventurers have a knack for being in the wrong place at the right time.

## **The Bishops' Ears**

### **Requirement**

- Character must have a home region within the Nyronnd Meta -Region
- Must Have 4 ranks in Gather Information or any Knowledge, Profession, or Craft skill
- Must swear fealty to the Pale
- Must take an oath of secrecy

### **Cost**

- Yearly Cost, 2 TU
- Ongoing Cost, Members must belong to one other non church affiliated organization. A portion of the TU requirement of this org may be waived with Triad Approval
- Ongoing Cost, The PDC requires its agents to alert it to activities that threaten the Pale. Each year, agents must report at least one NPC acting against the Theocracy. (Have your DM note this on your character sheet.)

### **Benefits**

- +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff
- +2 circumstance bonus to Gather Information
- +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate
- +2 circumstance bonus to Sense Motive
- +2 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (local - NMR)
- Access to the following mundane items -
  - Phantom Ink (T&B), Secret Compartment- Pocket (S&S), Flashpellet (T&B), Scentbreaker (S&S), Disappearing Ink (T&B), Glowpowder (T&B)
- Access to the following prestige classes–
  - Nightsong Infiltrator (CV)