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**Contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox
communities in the period from 1922 to 1936, based on archive materials from
Rome and the Vatican**

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the present research. At the present moment in history, one can notice very important aspects from the point of view of diplomatic relations that point to the development of dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. A document of the utmost importance in terms of defining the principles of building and developing the dialogue between the Orthodox Church and Catholicism is the one that was adopted at the Jubilee Council of Bishops in 2000, “Basic Principles of the Relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church to Non-Orthodoxy”¹.

It was in that spirit of “brotherly co-operation”² that the unique meeting between Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis took place in Cuba in February of 2015: not only a first-ever meeting of a Pope and a Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, but a meeting that culminated in a mutually signed declaration. The anniversary of that meeting is celebrated annually with conferences in different cities around the world, both in Europe and in Russia. These events include not only academic conferences, but also working tables and sessions of groups that make decisions on co-operation between Catholics and Orthodox Russians within the framework of international humanitarian and cultural projects.

We should also mention the ecumenical prayer meeting for peace in the Middle East on 7 July 2018, convened at the initiative of Pope Francis in the city of Bari, which was attended by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev) of Volokolamsk, then Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations (from March 2019 to June 2022). We cannot fail to mention that during the first phases of the Covid-19 pandemic that plagued the entire world, in the early stages of the pandemic that proved to be especially hard for Italy, the Russian Orthodox Church sent 8 tons of medical supplies to Puglia (southern

¹ Basic Principles of the Attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church Toward the Other Christian Confessions // Russian Orthodox Church : [official website]. URL: http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/418840.html?_ctxowner=8942 (accessed: 07.02.2024). (In Russian).

² Ibid. Paragraph 6.1.

region of Italy) to help fight the virus, as a sign of friendship, in the name of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker.

At the same time, due to the current difficult geopolitical situation, the organisation of official events and meetings between ordinary believers has become more complicated. Despite technical obstacles, meetings and contacts between representatives of the hierarchies of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church have not been interrupted. In this regard, one cannot fail to mention, as examples, the meeting of Metropolitan Anthony with Pope Francis in August 2022 and the ecumenical prayer service with a petition for peace at the relics of St. Nicholas in the basilica dedicated to him in the city of Bari in December of the same year.

All these facts demonstrate that the issue of interaction between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church and contacts between them is being addressed both at the diplomatic level and at the level of official events and even at the private level – between believers of both denominations.

As stated in the “Basic Principles of the Relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church to Non-Orthodoxy”, adopted at the Jubilee Council of Bishops in 2000, in relations between the two Churches there has often been a proselytising tendency on the part of the Catholic Church. In this regard, according to the document, only those forms of ministry of traditional Christian denominations are allowed in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, when the ministry is “carried out without proselytising and not at the expense of ‘poaching’ the faithful, especially with the use of material benefits”³.

In the period between the two world wars, as well as in the early 1940s, we can recognise the coexistence of various tendencies and tensions both within the Churches and within society: in the Catholic Church – the presence of a tendency towards proselytising and, at the same time, the beginning of a movement towards the present concept of relations with other confessions, which would find its full expression in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (especially in the “*Unitatis Redintegratio*”

³ Ibid. Paragraph 6.2.

decree) and in subsequent documents of the Catholic Church's teaching on the subject of ecumenism; in the Local Russian Orthodox Church – the need to support brothers in the Christian faith and, at the same time, the desire to preserve its own identity as the Church. During this period, both in Soviet society and in Russian emigrant communities, people, including believers, were striving to rebuild their identity in the face of new challenges of a dramatically changed life; European society, after the stress of the First World War, was being tested by the emigration of a huge mass of people who had fled or been expelled from Russia. At the same time, there was mutual understanding (we may recall, for example, the assistance provided to Russian migrants by public and church institutions), hatred for the enemy (as could be seen in the case of German civil society, which initially resisted helping Russian emigrants because of resentment caused by the recently ended First World War), and distrust.

We would like to note that, since the name “Russian Orthodox Church” became the official title of the church in 1943, with the church being referred to as the “Local Russian Orthodox Church”, within the present work we use both titles interchangeably⁴.

The analysis of historical events, which in many ways defined the ideas that were developing at the time, allows for a deeper understanding of the theoretical models and specific implementation of the dialogue between the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches.

Despite the large number of studies on the relationship and contacts between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, the topic needs further study. In this respect, the archival documents that have not been previously introduced into the scholarly discourse have great research potential. The extensive bibliography on this topic allows for an in-depth study of the context in which relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church were taking shape.

The relevance of the study is also determined by the reference to various archival materials. It should be noted that in recent years there have been numerous scientific

⁴ Civil Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church (1991) // Pravmir.ru : [portal]. URL: <https://lib.pravmir.ru/library/readbook/1338> (accessed: 09.03.2024). (In Russian).

publications on this topic, (first of all, “La politique russe du Saint-Siège (1905–1939)” by L. Pettinaroli⁵), which, of course, indicates the academic interest in this issue.

However, the existence of a vast amount of as yet unexplored archival evidence collected during the pontificate of Pius XI can provide the basis for further research in this area.

With Pope Francis opening the archival documents relating to the pontificate of Pius XII (2 March 1939 – 9 October 1958) to researchers in February 2020, we have seen a growing number of historical studies based on previously unpublished documents, as well as on new interpretations of already studied materials, and historiography has received a new impetus for further development. This has allowed researchers to access documents relating to the pontificate of Pius XI, which are kept in archival units that also contain documents relating to the pontificate of Pius XII.

Thus, the inter-church dialogue, on the one hand, and the large amount of historical and historiographical materials that have become available to researchers these days, on the other hand, speak to the relevance of the topic of our study.

Degree of development of the research topic. The analysis of contacts between the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches has been the object of many research papers in modern historiography.

Since these contacts in the first half of the 20th century had many aspects, each approach to the topic tends to either focus on a specific example, limiting itself to one prominent person in the panoply of relations between the two Churches, such as the

⁵ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe du Saint-Siège (1905–1939)*. Rome : Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2015.

studies devoted to Archbishop Bartholomew (Remov)^{6 7} and Bishop Michel d’Herbigny, SJ⁸; or focuses on a historical period defined by the duration of one or more than one pontificate, and in this broader time frame the researcher analyses the Vatican’s attitude towards the Orthodox of the Moscow Patriarchate and the related issue of the Vatican’s recognition of the Soviet Union as a new state entity. Such, for example, are the works of Angelo Tamborra, who examines the moments of confrontation and dialogue between the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches from the first half of the 19th century to the Second Vatican Council⁹, and of Laura Pettinaroli, who explores these issues in the context of the pontificate of Pius XI¹⁰.

Regarding the Papal Relief Mission (1922–1924), the main source we relied on is our monograph, which appeared in 2022 in Russian in a revised and supplemented edition after its first publication in Italian in 2020¹¹. The monograph is based on an extensive pool of archival sources drawn from the archival research we conducted in 2017–2022 in various Russian, Vatican and Italian archives. in various Russian, Vatican and Italian archives: the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Vatican Apostolic Archives (*Archivum Apostolicum Vaticanum*), the Historical Archive of the Secretariat of State

⁶ Varfolomej Remov (1888–1935). Bishop of Sergievo from 1921. In 1928 he was arrested on charges of “harbouring a spy” and in prison he signed a declaration of cooperation with the OGPU. In 1929–1935 he was the rector of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Putinki in Moscow. In 1934 he was elevated to the rank of archbishop. In 1932 he secretly converted to Catholicism. In 1935 he was arrested and accused of treason and violation of official duty towards the OGPU-NKVD. He was shot in 1935. See: Varfolomej, Remov Nikolaj Fedorovich // *Pravoslavnaya Entsiklopediya : elektronnyaya versiya*. V. 6 ; ed. by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill. URL: <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/154407.html> (accessed: 29.11.2009). (In Russian).

⁷ See: *Beglov A. L.* Archbishop Varfolomej (Remov): Argumentum advocati Dei. Abbot of the Vysoko-Petrovsky Monastery according to the archives of its parishioners // *Tserkov’ v istorii Rossii*. № 5. Moscow, 2003. P. 222—240. (In Russian).

⁸ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d’Herbigny SJ and Russia. Würzburg : Augustinus-Verlag, 1990.

⁹ See: *Tamborra A.* Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa : due secoli di confronto e dialogo : dalla Santa Alleanza ai nostri giorni. Cinisello Balsamo : Paoline, 1992. The book was translated into Russian in 2007. See: *Tamborra A.* The Catholic Church and Russian Orthodoxy. Two centuries of confrontation and dialogue. Moscow : Biblical Theological Institute of St. Andrew the Apostle, 2007. (In Russian).

¹⁰ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit.

¹¹ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous. The Famine of the 1920s : The Soviet Government and the Mission of the Holy See. Moscow : Institut Svyatogo Fomy, 2022. (In Russian).

Section for Relations with States (*Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato – Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati*), the Archive of the General Directorate of the Society of the Divine Word (*Archivio del Generalato della Società del Divin Verbo*), the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus (*Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*), and the Salesian Central Archives (*Archivio Salesiano Centrale*).

A special case in terms of the availability of literature is represented by two bibliographies on the Jesuit Michel d’Herbigny: one published in 1976 by Paul Lesourd¹², and another published by Léon Tretjakewitsch in 1990¹³. Lesourd’s research work, although the first of its kind, was based solely on part of the documents from the personal archive of d’Herbigny, provided to the scholar by the descendants of the Jesuit’s family. While Lesourd’s work offers a very positive view of the French Jesuit’s activities, Tretjakewitsch presents a rather negative perspective on the work of d’Herbigny. Judging by the rather extensive range of materials used by Tretjakewitsch, as well as by the archival documents we have drawn on and which are presented in this study, we can accept Tretjakewitsch’s point of view without any doubt, adding some comments to his position.

In 2006, researchers were granted access to documents relating to the pontificate of Pius XI held in the Vatican archives. This was a seminal moment for contemporary historiography, which certainly continues to bear fruit, given the vastness of the available documentation, which has yet to be studied and better understood in light of recent publications.

One of the most interesting publications related to the pontificate of Pius XI (1922–1939) and devoted to contacts between the Vatican and the USSR, which included contacts between Catholics and Orthodox Christians, was the 2018 issue, “Russia and the Vatican”, of the electronic academic journal, “ISTORIYA”. It presented a systematic review of documentary sources belonging to the period from 1922 to 1939¹⁴.

¹² See: Lesourd P. *Entre Rome et Moscou. Le Jésuite clandestin. Mgr d’Herbigny*. Paris : P. Lethielleux, 1976.

¹³ See: Tretjakewitsch L. *Bishop Michel d’Herbigny SJ (...)*, op. cit.

¹⁴ See: *The Journal of Education and Science “ISTORIYA”*. 2018. V. 9. Issue 4 (68).

While, on the one hand, the recent (since March 2020) open access for researchers and historians to documents relating to the pontificate of Pius XII (1939–1958) allows for a significant expansion of historiographical research on numerous topics, including the relationship between the Catholics and the Orthodox Russians in the last years of Pius XI's pontificate, on the other hand, we are still witnessing the prime of such research, which means that we will have to wait a few years to fully see the fruits of the accessibility of the Vatican archives.

In recent years, both Russian and foreign scholars have been studying the relations and contacts between the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches and the theological concepts that have served as a foundation for these relations.

In Russia, this topic is being investigated by the researchers of the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who participated in the project “Entangled Histories: Russia and the Vatican, 1917–1958”¹⁵: Leading Researcher Evgenia Sergeevna Tokareva, Leading Researcher Alexey Lvovich Beglov and others¹⁶. Besides, the issue of Christian unity in the concepts of Russian religious thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries (which was closely connected to the way interdenominational contacts were actually carried out) was addressed in a 2023 book by Elena Valeryevna Besschetnova, Associate Professor of the School of Philosophy and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Higher School of Economics National Research University¹⁷.

Thus, it can be noted that since a great deal of scientific research has been and continues to be conducted on the issues of relations and contacts between Catholics and Orthodox Russians, our work is intended to continue this movement and contribute to its

¹⁵ About the project funded by the Russian Science Foundation, see: Project Card // Russian Science Foundation: [official website]. URL: <https://rscf.ru/project/19-18-00482/> (accessed: 11.10.2023). (In Russian).

¹⁶ For the other participants in the project and its scientific achievements, see: Working Group of the project “Entangled Histories: Russia and the Vatican, 1917–1958» (RSF № 19-18-00482) // Institute of World History, RAS: [official website]. URL: <https://igh.ru/departments/86?locale=ru> (accessed: 11.10.2023). (In Russian).

¹⁷ *Besschetnova E.V.* The idea of Christian unity in Russian thought of the XIX–XX. Moscow : Kanon-Plyus, 2023.

development, starting with those elements of scientific novelty that it allows us to introduce into the academic discourse.

The purpose of the present research is the study of contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community between 1922 and 1936 based on the materials that had not been studied before, as well as new interpretations of the published research, taking into account the international context of that period.

In accordance with the purpose of the research, the thesis sets the following **objectives**:

- to analyse the attitude of the Catholic Church to the radical changes that took place in the territories of the former Tsarist Empire and the reaction of the Catholic Church to these historical challenges during the Papal Relief Mission in Russia (1922–1924);
- to analyse the ecclesiological concepts of interdenominational relations between Orthodox and Catholics in the period from 1922 to 1936;
- to analyse the trends in the contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community from 1922 to 1936 on the basis of archival materials and already published scientific studies;
- to offer a substantiated and relevant interpretation of archival materials and materials of published research within the framework of the trends identified;
- to identify the connections between historical events in the world context and the individual approaches of representatives of both denominations to the issue of contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community.

The object of the research is archival sources and published materials on contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community.

The subject of the research is the links between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community that existed between 1922 and 1936, as revealed by analysing Vatican and Roman archival materials.

Academic novelty. The thesis research introduces into the academic discourse previously unpublished archival materials (letters, reports, telegrams, notes in the

margins, drafts of official documents) of value for historical science, composed and written by citizens of different states, both clerics and laymen, both Orthodox and Catholics. In addition, a different interpretation of already known historiographical interpretations and historical facts has been offered (in some cases).

Since it is not always possible to determine with certainty to which Orthodox Church the Orthodox believers mentioned in archival materials belong, we have taken into consideration only those documents that explicitly mention members of the local Russian Orthodox Church or that are likely to refer to groups of believers who were believers of the Russian Orthodox Church, fully or partially.

These documents provide additional information on specific, individual cases and on the details of historical events, especially Orthodox Russian appeals to the Vatican after the October Revolution and support for emigrants from Russia; contacts between Orthodox Russians and Catholic members of the Papal Relief Mission operating in Russia from 1922 to 1924; the Unionist congresses in the city of Velegrad; the day of joint prayer to St. Joseph and the reaction of the Orthodox in the West to this initiative; the attempts by Catholic believers to organise cultural events and prayer meetings to ensure unity with the Orthodox and resist the spread of Soviet atheism.

The historical perspective of relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community and the analysis of historical evidence of these contacts allow us to reconstruct the actual context in which theoretical projects of dialogue between these two Churches were developed, such as the opposing ideas put forward by the Jesuit Michel d'Herbigny and the priest Sergius Bulgakov in the context of the Unionist congresses in Velegrad.

The proposed study is structurally united from within not only by historical but also by theological issues. Each of the chapters provides insight into the way in which the ecclesiological self-consciousness of Orthodox and Roman Catholics manifested itself in certain periods and circumstances. The archival data used in the thesis allow us to state with certainty that the actions of the individuals and institutions mentioned in the work were not motivated solely by socio-political reasons, but had a very specific theological basis. Each side (Orthodox and Catholic) sought to understand, on the basis of new and

rapidly changing historical conditions, how to address crucial theological questions: what are the boundaries of the Church and where do they lie? To what extent do Orthodox and Catholics' perceptions of each other correspond to reality? Are there any limits to Christian charity and can it (charity) be a tool for achieving ecclesiastical and political goals? These questions have been addressed by the Orthodox and Catholics in different ways. And the archival evidence cited demonstrates the complexity of the situation, when the same actions on the part of representatives of the Roman Catholic Church had different underlying motives. In some cases it was a sincere act of mercy, in other cases it was a desire to proselytise and to get Orthodox Christians, who were in an extremely vulnerable state, to decide to join the ranks of Greek Catholics.

The timeframe of the research spans the period from 1922, the onset of the Papal Relief Mission to those affected by famine in Russia to the end of the Congresses of Velehrad (1936).

The geographical scope of the study covers the territory of Europe and the western part of the Soviet Union, up to and including the city of Orenburg, where, from March to July 1923, the furthest from Moscow section of the Papal Relief Mission was operating.

The list of primary sources on the topic of the research determines its theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretical significance lies in the introduction of previously unpublished documents into the academic discourse, which allows us to open new pages of history. This provides an opportunity to:

- study the connections between the events of the world history and church history;
- analyse the perspectives of members of the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches on the events of that time and on the believers of the other denomination;
- have an insight into theological concepts based on certain approaches to the events presented in the sources studied, including consideration of the matter of unity between Christians of different denominations;
- consider the causes and consequences of the actions of clergy and laity of the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches;

- introduction of archival materials into the academic discourse and development of a substantiated and relevant interpretation of historical events on their basis.

Based on these provisions, the study also has **practical relevance**. The results of this study may:

- be of particular interest for education and teaching in the field of church history and external church relations;
- to serve as material for supplementing textbooks and courses in the humanities in religious educational institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church and theological departments of secular educational institutions within the framework of courses provided for Theology major in accordance to the state educational standard, including the courses on the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in the twentieth century.;
- serve as material for further research on the History of the Russian Orthodox Church in the twentieth century;
- also be used indirectly in the practical work of diplomats, as the diplomatic work is always informed by historical background and understanding.

Methodology and research methods. The study applied both general humanitarian and special historical methods to ensure maximum scientific objectivity.

The methodological basis of this study is the methodology proposed by the historiographical trend of the ‘new historical science’, the principles of objectivity, systematisation and scientific accuracy.

Following the methodology proposed by the historiographical trend of the ‘new historical science’ (La Nouvelle Histoire; also, *École des Annales*), founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, we have studied the mass trends of the period of our study, paying attention to the fates of specific individuals and their potential impact on human history.

The principle of objectivity ensured the correct treatment of the events researched.

The principle of systematisation made it possible to take into account all the factors that influenced the interdenominational encounters between Orthodox Russians and Catholics within the framework of the events we analysed. Thus, in the course of this study we have integrated the analysis of the institutional and diplomatic aspects of the

events with an analysis of the lives and activities of ordinary people as well as those at the highest level of the social and/or ecclesiastical ladder. In particular, the decisions taken at the diplomatic level by the Vatican Secretariat of State and by various political actors are analysed, as well as those who were the agents of these events: from the diplomats themselves (for example, Fr. Edmund Walsh, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri) to those who were subsequently involved in the various events (like members of the Papal Relief Mission and the Orthodox Russians in contact with them, including Patriarch Tikhon; or participants in the Velegrad Congresses, often ordinary laymen or priests interested in interdenominational issues). By using the results of these diverse analyses, we aimed at the closest possible representation of historical events and the most reliable interpretation of them.

The principle of scientific accuracy stipulated the use of a set of methods of historical science in the work.

The problem and chronology method allowed us to limit the scope of the study to a very significant period of time for the life of the Churches (from 1922 to 1936), an era when contacts between Orthodox Russians and Catholics were significant both quantitatively and qualitatively: quantitatively, considering the contacts that took place during the two-year period of the Papal Mission to help the starving in Russia (1922–1924), as well as those resulting from the significant emigration of Russians to Europe after the revolution; qualitatively, considering the theological reflections that gave rise to and nourished these relations, primarily the relationships during the congresses at the city of Velegrad.

The historical and comparative method enabled us to identify common and special features in the relations between Orthodox Russians and Catholics in the different time and place situations presented in this study.

The historical and biographical method allowed, on the basis of biographical data of representatives of clergy and laity of the Local Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches involved in the events considered in the course of the work, to show their role in the contacts between the two Churches in the period from 1922 to 1936.

The selection and interpretation of secondary sources was made by us considering which sources were acceptable in the selected works, so that the thesis would not present unsupported facts. In addition, we have paid special attention to the most recent publications on the subject so that our study would rely solely on authoritative and substantiated interpretations recognised at the level of contemporary historiographical advances.

In the course of archival research we have endeavoured to maximise the diversity of the archival material presented:

- a) records compiled by both diplomats and ordinary people;
- b) materials related to both Orthodox and Catholic believers;
- c) compiled by both representatives of state organisations and representatives of religious institutions.

It should also be noted that at present the Russian Orthodox Church has not yet decided to open the historical archive of the Department of External Church Relations to researchers. In addition, in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (hereinafter, GARF) we have not found any documents of particular interest in relation to the topic of this paper. Nevertheless, the significance of the GARF materials for our study lies in the fact that they played a central role in our monograph on the Papal Relief Mission (1922–1924), on which we relied in certain paragraphs of this paper.

This explains the predominance of documents found in the Vatican and Roman archives.

According to the method used in scientific archival research, we distinguish the following stages of the process of studying materials:

1. reading and compiling electronic index cards of each sheet;
2. analysing each document in an attempt to formulate questions related to it, which include the following:
 - a) who is the sender and who is the addressee of the document?
 - b) in which context do they act?
 - c) who might have read the document while it was being drafted or compiled?
 - d) is the information it contains reliable?

3. selection of information worth considering in relation to the topic of the thesis;
4. use of selected documents in paraphrasing and/or quotations.

Since in the course of archival research we found in documents a frequent coincidence of the notions 'Russia' and 'Soviet Union', which in historical context is expressed in the frequent use of these two terms interchangeably, as synonyms, therefore, in the present research the terms are similarly used.

Besides, the titles 'Papal See' and 'the Vatican' in the present thesis refer to the supreme leadership of the Roman Catholic Church as a subject of international law. Similarly, the expression 'Holy See' which can be found in this thesis in certain titles of publications and citations of archival documents, also designates the Vatican as a subject of international law.

Quotations from archival materials in the text of the thesis are given in Russian translation in the original text of the thesis and in English in the English text of the thesis, with the text in the original language provided in the footnotes.

Structure of the work. In order to clearly present the events and their interpretation on the basis of the document database, the work is divided into three chapters, based on the thematic unity of the presented content.

The first chapter contains an examination of the peculiarities of contacts between the Catholics and the Orthodox of the Local Russian Orthodox Church during the Papal Relief Mission to help the starving in Russia (1922–1924), the proselytising concept and activities of the priest Michel d'Herbigny, SJ (future bishop), and the assistance to Russian emigrants in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s.

The second chapter examines the specifics of contacts between representatives of the two Churches in the 1930s in the framework of cultural and prayer events organised by Catholics to encourage confessional unity and prayers for those persecuted for their faith in the USSR, as well as the struggle against the spread of the Communist atheism.

The source base of the dissertation research is extensive and consists of two groups of sources: archival fonds containing documents on the subject and object of the research, and scientific literature also on the subject and object of the research.

The basis of the source base was formed by unpublished documents from the Vatican and Roman archives, most of which are introduced into the scientific turnover for the first time.

The analysis of the documents of the fonds of the State Secretariat of 1930, the Nunciatures in Berlin, in Czechoslovakia, in Paris and in Warsaw, kept in the Vatican Apostolic Archives (*Archivum Apostolicum Vaticanum*), allowed us to study more deeply the issues of the activities of the priest Michel d'Herbigny; the Vatican's assistance to Russian emigrants in the 20s and 30s; correspondence related to the organisational moments of the Velegrad Congresses.

Consideration of the documents of the fonds of the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus (*Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*) "Russia 2001", "Russia 2003" and "Santa Sede, Diplomata, 1004", where many materials on Jesuit activities related to Russia are kept, allowed us to reveal details of the activities of the members of the papal mission in Russia, Jesuit priest Michel d'Herbigny (in the future bishop) and Jesuit priest Joseph Schweil.

The analysis of the fonds "Pontificia Commissione *Pro Russia*" of the Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (Archivio Storico della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali) made it possible to analyse in more depth the course of events related to the Velegrad Congresses.

The analysis of the documents of the Archive of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs (Archivio della Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari) related to the pontificate of Pius XI and stored in the Historical Archive of the Secretariat of the State Section for Relations with States (Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato – Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati), allowed us to consider the peculiarities of contacts of members of the papal mission in Russia (1922–1924) with Orthodox Russians.

Given the large amount of bibliography on the research topic, it was necessary to make a careful selection of the literature to be used in the future. The selected materials allowed us to further explore the inter-confessional dynamics and the spatial and temporal

context in which the archival documents under study were created. The following is a partial list of the main literature used in our work:

- *Avgustin (Nikitin), archimandrit*. Orthodox-Catholic relations. Pages of history / Archimandrit Avgustin (Nikitin). – Moscow : Izdatel'stvo Franziskanzev, 2023. – 327 p. (In Russian).
- *Besschetnova, E.V.* The idea of Christian unity in Russian thought of the XIX–XX / E.V. Besschetnova. – Moscow: Kanon-Plyus, 2023. – 265 p. (In Russian).
- *Tokareva, E.S.* Vatican and Catholics in Russia in 1920–1930: communication problems // International Conference on Communication in Multicultural Society, CMSC 2015, 6–8 December 2015, Moscow, Russian Federation. – Open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license. – URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042816316937> (accessed: 28.07.2023).
- *Cinek, F.* Velehrad víry: duchovní dějiny Velehradu / F. Cinek. – Olomouc: Lidové knihkupectví v Olomouci, 1936. – 509 s.
- Dalla Rivoluzione francese al Vaticano II e alla sua recezione (1789-2022) ; a cura di U. Dell'Orto, S. Xeres. Brescia : Morcelliana, 2022. – 560 p.
- *Del Re, N.* La Curia Romana. Lineamenti storico-giuridici / N. Del Re. – Città del Vaticano : Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998. – 708 p.
- *Pettinaroli, L.* La politique russe du Saint-Siège (1905–1939) / L. Pettinaroli. – Rome : Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2015. – 937 p.
- *Tamborra, A.* Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa : due secoli di confronto e dialogo : dalla Santa Alleanza ai nostri giorni / A. Tamborra. – Cinisello Balsamo : Paoline, 1992. – 466 p.

Archival funds containing documents on the research topic:

- Archivum Apostolicum Vaticanum, *Archivio Nunziatura Berlino*;
- Archivum Apostolicum Vaticanum, *Archivio Nunziatura Cecoslovacchia*;
- Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato — Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati, *AA.EE.SS.*;

- Archivio Storico della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, *Pontificia Commissione Pro Russia*.

Degree of reliability and approbation of the research results

The results of the study were presented for discussion as reports at the following scientific conferences:

1. 23.02.2019 – St. Philaret’s Institute (Moscow); XXV Sretenskie Readings; paper title: *The concept of worship in the experience of Fr. Luigi Giussani*. (In Russian).
2. 27.02.2019 – St. Theophane Theological Academy (Vladimir); First International Scientific and Theological Conference “The Heritage of the Christian Church: Theology, History, Culture”; paper title: *The Holy See’s Modus Operandi in Dealing with Some Requests for Assistance Sent to the Vatican*. (In Russian).
3. 23.04.2019 – Moscow Pedagogical State University, Moscow; scientific conference “Language personality: sociology and psychology of communication”; paper title: *Don Giovanni Bosco’s pedagogical conception*. (In Russian).
4. 30.03.2021 – St. Philaret’s Institute (Moscow); online scientific conference: “Modern Orthodox ecclesiology: theological foundations of the unity of the Church”; paper title: *“Take the first step”: the unity of the Church in the teachings of the Catholic Church in the 20th and 21st centuries*. (In Russian).
5. 15.02.2022 – *Administratio Apostolica Estoniensis* (Tallin), Institut Svyatogo Fomy (Moscow); online scientific conference: «Jesuit – Bishop – Martyr. Eduard Profittlich (1890–1942) on His Way to Holiness»; paper title: «Freedom to start and freedom to stay: Eduard Profittlich SJ and the Holy See».

Certain conclusions and provisions were published in the form of articles in the publications included in the List of peer-reviewed scientific publications defined by the Higher Attestation Commission under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation and in the Electronic Journal of Education and Science “ISTORIYA” of the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences:

1. *Dommarco, M.C.* The Holy See’s Modus Operandi in Dealing with Some Requests for Assistance Sent to the Vatican in the 1920s and 1930s: Based on New Archival Documents // The Journal of Education and Science “ISTORIYA”. – 2019. – V.

10. – Issue 11 (85). – URL: <https://history.jes.su/s207987840008073-9-1/> (accessed: 02.09.2023). (In Russian).
2. *Dommarco, M.C.* The church service of Fr. Edmund A. Walsh SJ in diplomatic affairs in Russia and Mexico (1922–1923, 1929) // *The Quarterly Journal of St. Philaret’s Institute*. – 2022. – № 44. – С. 161–187. (In Russian).
3. *Dommarco, M.C.* The relations between Church and state in Czechoslovakia in 1947–1949: New archival documents // *Issues of Theology*. – 2023. – Vol. 5, № 1. – P. 105–132. (In Russian).

Relevant findings and conclusions have also been published as articles in the academic journals “Christianity in the Middle East” and “AUC Theologica”:

- *Dommarco, M.C.* «Take the first step»: the unity of the Church in the teachings of the Catholic Church in the 20th and 21st centuries // *Christianity in the Middle East*. – 2022. – Vol. 6, № 2. – P. 101–111.
- *Dommarco, M.C.* Edmund A. Walsh and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association: birth and development of the papal agency // *Christianity in the Middle East*. – 2020. – № 4. – P. 17–36. (In Russian).
- *Dommarco, M.C.* Antonín Cyril Stojan (1851–1923) and the Union Congresses of Velehrad: New Documents from the Vatican Archives for a Better Understanding of His Legacy // *AUC Theologica*. — 2023. – Vol. 13, № 2. – P. 81–98.

In addition, within the framework of the research project “Entangled histories: Russia and the Vatican, 1917–1958” of the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, our monograph “Un compito eccezionale e rischioso. Il governo bolscevico e la missione della Santa Sede al tempo della carestia degli anni Venti” (“An hazardous special duty. The Bolshevik government and the mission of the Holy See at the time of the famine in the 1920s”). At the end of 2020, a book was published in Italian in co-operation with the St. Thomas Institute in Moscow and La Casa di Matriona (Seriato, Italy), and in 2022, a second edition of the monograph, revised and supplemented, in Russian with the title «Задание важное и опасное. Голод 1920–х годов: советское правительство и миссия Святого Престола», published by the St. Thomas Institute in Moscow.

Main scientific results:

1. Identification of peculiarities of the Vatican Secretariat of State's activity in connection with requests for assistance sent to the Vatican by Russian emigrants in the 20s and 30s, such as careful consideration of the identity of the sender of the request, relatively quick response to the request, and provision of assistance regardless of the confessional affiliation of the sender of the request; as well as identifying such a common feature of the activities of the Vatican Secretariat of State under the pontificates of Pius XI and Pius XII as the attention to local bishops and their opinions in the decision-making process of the Roman Curia (See: 86. *Dommarco, M.C.* The Holy See's Modus Operandi in Dealing with Some Requests for Assistance Sent to the Vatican in the 1920s and 1930s: Based on New Archival Documents // *The Journal of Education and Science "ISTORIYA"*. 2019. V. 10. Issue 11 (85). URL: <https://history.jes.su/s207987840008073-9-1/> (accessed: 02.09.2023). (In Russian)).
2. A comparison of the diplomatic missions to Russia (1922–1923) and Mexico (1929) entrusted to Fr Edmund Walsh by Pius XI allowed us to identify significant features of the Vatican's diplomatic activity that were common to two geographically different contexts. both missions were marked by religious persecution and social unrest: the Church's diplomacy sought special ways to operate officially on the territory of the state, to influence decision-making, to gain a voice and to defend its positions through charitable organisations, financial aid and influential people. (See: 89. *Dommarco, M.C.* The church service of Fr. Edmund A. Walsh SJ in diplomatic affairs in Russia and Mexico (1922–1923, 1929) // *The Quarterly Journal of St. Philaret's Institute*. 2022. № 44. C. 161–187. (In Russian); 87. *Dommarco, M.C.* The relations between Church and state in Czechoslovakia in 1947–1949: New archival documents // *Issues of Theology*. 2023. Vol. 5, № 1. P. 105–132. (In Russian)).
3. An analysis of the founding and development of one of the most important Catholic charitable organisations, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), through which Russians who emigrated to Europe after the 1917 revolution also received help. (See: 90. *Dommarco, M.C.* Edmund A. Walsh and the Catholic Near

East Welfare Association: birth and development of the papal agency // Christianity in the Middle East. – 2020. – № 4. – P. 17–36. (In Russian)).

4. Delineating the idea of Christian unity underlying the Velegrad Congresses and identifying the role played by the Roman Curia at the Fourth and Fifth Velegrad Congresses. (See: 144. *Dommarco, M.C.* Antonín Cyril Stojan (1851–1923) and the Union Congresses of Velehrad: New Documents from the Vatican Archives for a Better Understanding of His Legacy // *AUC Theologica*. 2023. Vol. 13, № 2. P. 81–98).
5. With reference to the main doctrinal documents of the Roman Catholic Church of the XX-XXI centuries, presentation of an overview of the main features of the concept of relations with Christians belonging to other denominations. (See: 85. *Dommarco, M.C.* «Take the first step»: the unity of the Church in the teachings of the Catholic Church in the 20th and 21st centuries // *Christianity in the Middle East*. 2022. Vol. 6, № 2. P. 101–111. (In Russian)).

Propositions put forward for the defence of the research and qualification work.

Archival research allowed us to formulate the following hypotheses:

1. A deeper study of the period from 1922 to 1936 nazi, when Orthodox and Catholics met under extreme historical conditions, allows us to better uncover ecclesiological issues concerning the mutual view of the other Church (including, for Catholics, the Eastern Rite); the proselytising tendency in the Catholic Church and reactions to this approach on the part of the Orthodox; the emergence in the Catholic Church of evidence of a new approach to relations with other denominations, according to which non-Catholic Churches are recognised as having a relationship with the Orthodox; and the emergence in the Catholic Church of a new approach to relations with other denominations, according to which non-Catholic Churches are recognised as having a relationship with the Orthodox.
2. The direct contacts of the members of the papal mission to help the starving (1922–1924) with Orthodox Russians, on the one hand, helped to dispel prejudices against the Catholic Church, which, according to the members of the mission, had

taken root among the population, and on the other hand, allowed the papal envoys to become better acquainted with the beauty of the Eastern rite and to establish sincere and respectful relations not only with the Orthodox laity, but also with representatives of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church.

3. Although there was still a proselytising tendency in Rome to hope that emigrants who received material assistance would want to convert to Catholicism, the Vatican and local Catholic organisations assisting emigrants from the USSR generally did not use religious or confessional affiliation as a criterion for assistance. The Pontifical Commission *Pro Russia*, through the nunciatures, gave instructions on cases of Russian emigrants converting from Orthodoxy to Catholicism, asking the Catholic priests to whom they were addressed not to accept conversions based on the emigrant's financial situation and, in the case of conversions based on inner convictions, not to force the person to convert to the Latin rite.
4. The seven Unionist Congresses in Velegrad (first held in 1907, last in 1936) represented a unique phenomenon for the time in terms of contacts between Catholics and Orthodox, thanks to the innovative formula: "study, prayer and rejection of proselytizing". Despite the negative influence exerted in part by the French Jesuit Michel d'Herbigny, these congresses can be considered the starting point for the theoretical formulation of relations between Catholics and Orthodox, the closest to what would later be finally formulated by the Catholic Church in the Vatican II decree "*Unitatis Redintegratio*" (1964).
5. The threat of communist atheism and Bolshevik revolution, which was relevant to the whole world, was a factor in uniting Orthodox and Catholics in everyday life, as demonstrated by cultural events and prayer meetings, often organised on the model of the aforementioned Velegrad formula. Nevertheless, in many cases the Catholic organisers did not allow the Orthodox to speak freely.

1. LOCAL RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND LOCAL CATHOLIC CHURCH: CONTACTS RELATED TO CHARITY ACTIVITIES

1.1 The Orthodox and the Catholic Christians during the years of the papal mission (1922–1924) to aid the Russians suffering from famine

Immediately after the October Revolution, the Bolshevik regime began an attempt to liquidate all religious institutions that existed in the former territories of the Russian Empire, including the local Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches.

On December 11, 1917, the People's Commissariat (Narkomat) of Education of the RSFSR issued a decree on the basis of which all religious education in Russia was to be discontinued, and all of the religious educational institutions were to transfer to the full authority of the People's Commissariat of Education. Similarly, on December 16 (29), the Council of People's Commissars adopted the decree "On the dissolution of marriage" and, on December 18 (31), the decree, "On civil marriage, on children and on the keeping of civil status registers", both aimed at undermining the family and church marriages by contrasting them with civil marriage, which could be contracted an unlimited number of times and could be easily dissolved¹⁸.

¹⁸ See: *Mitrofanov G., protoierej*. Essays on the History of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Twentieth Century. Moscow : Praktika, 2021. P. 51. (In Russian); the text of the decree "On the Dissolution of Marriage" can be found in the public domain on the website of electronic resources of the Faculty of History of Lomonosov Moscow State University. See: Decree of the VTsIK and SNK on the dissolution of marriage // Library of Electronic Resources of the Faculty of History of the M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University : [portal]. URL: <https://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/17-12-16.htm> (accessed: 30.11.2023). (In Russian); the text of the decree "On civil marriage, on children and on the keeping of civil status registers" can be found in the public domain on the same website. See: Decree of the VTsIK and SNK on civil marriage, on children and on the keeping of civil status registers on civil marriage, children and the keeping of civil registers // Library of Electronic Resources of the Faculty of History of the M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University : [portal]. URL: <https://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/17-12-18.htm> (accessed: 30.11.2023). (In Russian); a full list of Soviet decrees for 1917–1918 can be found on the same website. See: Decrees of Soviet Power 1917–1918 // Library of Electronic Resources of the Faculty of History of the M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University : [portal]. URL: <https://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/index.html> (accessed: 30.11.2023). (In Russian).

The basis of the Bolsheviks' religious policy was the decree adopted by the Council of People's Commissars on January 20 (February 2) 1918, "On the freedom of conscience or on Separation of Church from State and School from Church". Being inherently inconsistent and self-contradictory, the decree established a ban on the adoption of laws restricting freedom of conscience or creating privileges for adherents of any religious faith, at the same time depriving the Church of its status as a legal entity, thus depriving it of the right of ownership of any movable and immovable property; besides, the decree prohibited the teaching of religion in state and public schools, while confirming the freedom to study the subject privately¹⁹.

As a supplement to the decree, in July of the same year, Article 65 of the Soviet Constitution declared members of the clergy and monks to be non-labouring elements, thus depriving them of certain civil rights and extending these restrictions to their children. Then, on August 24 (September 6), the People's Commissariat of Justice (Narkomyust) issued instructions for the implementation of the 20 January Decree, which placed the responsibility for parish property and certain actions of the parish priest into the hands of a group of twenty lay people of the parish ("the twenty"). In reality, this provoked tension between the rector and the laity of the group, while allowing pro-Bolshevik individuals become the members of "the twenty"²⁰.

¹⁹ See: *Mitrofanov G., protoierej. Essays on the History of the Russian Orthodox Church (...)*, op. cit. P. 53–55; the text of the decree "On the freedom of conscience" can be found in the public domain on the website of electronic resources of the Faculty of History of Lomonosov Moscow State University. See: Decree on the freedom of conscience, and on clerical and religious societies // Library of Electronic Resources of the Faculty of History of the M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University : [portal]. URL: <https://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/religion.htm> (accessed: 30.11.2023). (In Russian).

²⁰ See: *Mitrofanov G., protoierej. Essays on the History of the Russian Orthodox Church (...)*, op. cit. P. 53–55; the text of the resolution can be found in the public domain on the website "Electronic Library of Historical Documents". See: Resolution (Instructions) of the People's Commissariat of Justice of the RSFSR "On the order of implementation of the decree on the separation of church from state and school from church". 24 August 1918 // Electronic Library of Historical Documents : [portal]. URL: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/73819-postanovlenie-instruktsiya-narkomyusta-rsfsr-locale-nil-o-poryadke-provedeniya-v-zhizn-dekreta-ob-otdelenii-tserkvi-ot-gosudarstva-i-shkoly-ot-tserkvi-locale-nil-24-avgusta-1918-g#mode/inspect/page/1/zoom/4> (accessed: 30.11.2023). (In Russian).

Once the legislative and constitutional foundation for banishing or minimizing religious practice in Russia were in place, the persecution of clergy and laity of all Christian denominations began.

As a result of the Bolshevik seizure of power, the territories of the former Russian Empire acquired a new political, social and administrative status, and the governments of many countries of the world had to recognise the new revolutionary state. The then existing channels of communication between the Vatican and Catholics living in the Bolshevik-controlled territories were practically cut off. Irregular communication in the form of letters and reports took place only through intermediaries, including diplomats based in the capital or in the territories close to the border²¹.

As a subject of international law, the Vatican was treating the issue from its own position as a moral authority for Catholics around the world, at times acting as a mediator in humanitarian negotiations (such as negotiations for the exchange or release of prisoners of war)²². Thus, the recognition of the new Russia government by the leadership of the Catholic Church was linked to the Vatican's demand that Catholics be guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion in public and private spaces in the RSFSR and other socialist republics. The Vatican's recognition of the Soviet government would facilitate contacts between Catholics and Orthodox in the former territories of the Russian Empire. Indeed, without the opportunity to send representatives to Soviet territories, the missionary work of the Catholic Church in Russia would have stalled, and with it the opportunity to help persecuted Catholics and Orthodox and to build relations with the local Russian Orthodox Church.

Immediately after the October Revolution, diplomats representing Kerensky's provisional government accredited to the Vatican refused to follow the call of the RSFSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) of November 22 (December 5), 1917,

²¹ See: *Tokareva E.S.* Vatican and Catholics in Russia in 1920–1930: communication problems // International Conference on Communication in Multicultural Society, CMSC 2015, 6–8 December 2015, Moscow, Russian Federation. Open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042816316937> (accessed: 28.07.2023).

²² See, for example: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe du Saint-Siège (...), op. cit. P. 148–149; *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 101.

to work for the new government. After the discharge of diplomats, the Vatican experienced the same difficulties as other states that did not have direct diplomatic relations with Russia.²³ Although the attitude of the Roman Curia towards the members of the Russian mission to the Vatican was quite favourable, an imminent change occurred in 1924 when the Italian state recognised the USSR²⁴. Nevertheless, the Vatican tried to maintain good relations with representatives of the former government. At the same time, as noted by historian E. Karlov, regular reports on the Vatican in the documentation of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs appear only in 1920²⁵.

As is well known, the difficult geopolitical situation did not allow the prelate priest Achille Ratti to reach Russia. Sent in May 1918 to Poland and Lithuania as an apostolic visitor, on 30 June of the same year he was appointed as such for the territories of the former Tsarist Empire. Prelate Ratti's attempt to enter Russia was foiled in Pskov, which at that time was on the border of the German occupation of the Eastern territories (Ober-Ost²⁶)²⁷.

One example of indirect contacts was the presence of Western armies (especially England, France, and the United States) on Russian territory during the Civil War. Thanks to the report of the Catholic officers Charles Quénet (of the French army) and Captain Francis McCullagh (of the British army) and the Catholic priest, Fr. Ferdinand Renaud, that were sent to the Vatican, the Roman Curia was able to obtain information on the state of society in the territories of the former Russian Empire²⁸.

Besides, there are documented accounts of Vatican contacts with representatives of the white army²⁹.

²³ About this see: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 266–267.

²⁴ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 274.

²⁵ *Karlov Ju. E. Il potere sovietico e il Vaticano (1917–1924) // SSR. 2002. P. 102.*

²⁶ Abbreviation from the German Oberbefehlshaber der gesamten deutschen Streitkräfte im Osten.

²⁷ See: *Tamborra A. Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa (...)*, op. cit. P. 393–394, 397. On prelate Ratti (future Archbishop) as Apostolic Visitor of Poland and Lithuania, Apostolic Nuncio of these territories since 30 March 1919 and Apostolic Visitor of the territories of the former Tsarist Empire, see: *ibid.* P. 393–400.

²⁸ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 274–275.

²⁹ See: *ibid.* P. 275–278.

The situation inside the Bolshevik territories changed radically with the onset of the famine of the 1920s. The drought of the summer of 1921 only exacerbated the dramatic situation in the Bolshevik territories, which had been the theatre of civil war immediately after the October Revolution. Much of the transport infrastructure was destroyed, and epidemics emerged due to the spread of famine and the impossibility of adhering to preventive measures due to the shortage of medications available³⁰.

The famine of 1920–1922 had a number of consequences. This mass disaster was a severe test for the Bolshevik government. On the one hand, attempts were made to levelling the contradictions within the country; besides, Lenin saw the famine as a convenient excuse to launch a decisive attack against the Orthodox (as well as the Catholic) Church³¹. On the other hand, there were fears that the post-revolutionary political and economic structure would finally collapse. This situation forced the government, albeit briefly, to allow the establishment of local famine relief committees controlled by the central authorities and access for foreign famine relief organisations to the territory of the USSR³².

During 1921, Pope Benedict XV was interested in helping the starving people: The Vatican received many requests for help from Russians in Western countries and from Russia. The letter from Patriarch Tikhon (Belavin) to Pope Benedict XV is one of the most important documents of this kind³³.

³⁰ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 11–17.

³¹ About this see: *Mazyrin A.V.* Patriarch Tikhon's Church and the confiscation of shrines by the godless government // Tserkov'. Bogoslovie. Istorija. 2022. № 3. P. 162–176. (In Russian); *Il'in Yu. A.* March 1922: Church, Power, Society (secular view of the events of 13-15 March in Shuya, Ivanovo-Voznesenskaya province) // Bulletin of Ivanovo State University. 2008. Issue 3. P. 47–73. (In Russian).

³² See: *Codevilla G.* L'impero sovietico : 1917–1990. Milano : Jaca Book, 2016. P. 51–55; *Pascal P.* Mon Journal de Russie. Mon Etat d'Ame (1922–1926). Vol. 3. Lausanne : L'Age de l'Homme, 1982. P. 30–31; *Fischer H.H.* Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919–1923; the operations of the American Relief Administration. New York: Macmillan, 1927.

³³ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 60–62. The text of Patriarch Tikhon's address to Pope Benedict XV was published in full in *Croce G.M.* Le Saint-Siege, l'Eglise Orthodoxe et la Russie soviétique. Entre mission et diplomatie // Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. 1993. № 1 (105). P. 267–297. P. 287. About this theme see also: *Beglov A.L.* Plea for help. Letters of orthodox believers to the Pope in 1931: new documents from the Vatican archives // Vestnik PSTGU.

From October 1921 to January 1922, the Pope made every possible effort to obtain the permits necessary for Vatican representatives to enter Soviet territory, but the Vatican's efforts proved futile³⁴. The only success that the Vatican Secretariat of State achieved in negotiations with the RSFSR government was permission to send to Russia a train of 41 wagons (40 with food and 1 with rubber gloves for the People's Commissariat of Health)³⁵.

After the unexpected death of Pope Benedict XV in January 1922, Cardinal Achille Ratti was elected Pope under the name of Pius XI. And already in the first months of Pope Pius XI's pontificate, the fruits of the diplomatic work initiated by the Secretariat of State became evident.

On March 12, 1922, in the Vatican, Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri and authorised representative of the RSFSR government, head of the Soviet economic delegation to Italy from March 1921 to May 1923, Václav Vorovský³⁶, signed a 14-point agreement defining guarantees and restrictions for members of the papal humanitarian mission, which was authorised by the RSFSR government to participate in rescue operations in Soviet territories³⁷. Thus, the Vatican commissioned 12 members of various religious institutions³⁸ to manage the distribution of food, medications, and clothes to the needy. The Papal Relief Mission was deployed in the following cities: Moscow, Krasnodar, Rostov-on-Don, Dzhankoy and Evpatoria. During 5 months (from March to

Series II: Istorija. Istorija Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi. 2019. Issue. 91. P. 135–152. (In Russian); *Beglov A., Belyakova N.* “You Can Even Write to the Pope”. The Practice of Writing Letters to the Roman Pontif by the Soviet Believers // Gosudarstvo, religija, tserkov' v Rossii I za rubezhom. 2021. № 39 (4). P. 169–199. (In Russian).

³⁴ See: *Herbigny, M.* L'aide pontificale aux enfants affamés de Russie // *Orientalia Chistiana*. 1925. № 4. P. 26.

³⁵ *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 72.

³⁶ Vorovsky Vatslav Vatslavovich (1871–1923) was a Soviet diplomat, literary critic and publicist. Killed in a restaurant in Lausanne. See: Russian politician Vatslav Vatslavovich Vorovsky was born // Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library : [official website]. URL: <https://www.prlib.ru/history/619667> (accessed: 06.08.2023). (In Russian).

³⁷ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 81–83. For other major documents regulating the papal mission, see: *ibid.* P. 83–88.

³⁸ For the number of members of the papal mission, see: *ibid.* P. 88–97.

July 1923) the mission also worked in Orenburg³⁹. All members of the mission were strictly forbidden any direct way of preaching the religious faith, and were required to wear civilian attire and serve mass in their rooms behind closed doors⁴⁰.

The head of the mission was Fr. Edmund A. Walsh, SJ⁴¹ ⁴², the founder and Dean of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, the first school of international affairs ever founded in the US⁴³. Other members of the mission belonged to different countries and different religious organisations: Jesuits, Salesians, Claretians (from the Congregation of the Children of the Immaculate Heart of Mary) and Verbists (Missionaries of the Word of God) from Italy, Spain, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece⁴⁴.

During all the time of the mission work, Fr. Edmund Walsh and Fr. Edward Hermann (the head of the mission during the last few months of its work) had direct official contacts with the presidents of local governments. They acted in difficult and

³⁹ See: *ibid.* P. 109, 356–357.

⁴⁰ See: *ibid.* P. 102.

⁴¹ *Societatis Iesu.*

⁴² Edmund A. Walsh (1885–1956) was a Catholic priest and a member of the Society of Jesus (SJ). He was dean, professor, superintendent, and vice president of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University until his death in 1956. Walsh's teaching career was interrupted several times by various assignments from the Vatican, which sent him on diplomatic missions to Russia (1922–1923), Mexico (1929), and Baghdad (1931). For more on the biography of Fr Edmund Walsh, see: *Patulli Trythall M.* The Little Known Side of Fr. Edmund Walsh. His Mission to Russia in the Service of the Holy See // *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano.* 2010. № 14. P. 165–189. P. 167–168, 16; *Patulli Trythall M.* “Russia's Misfortune Offers Humanitarians a Splendid Opportunity”: Jesuits, Communism, and the Russian Famine // *Journal of Jesuit Studies.* 2018. № 5. P. 71–96; *Patulli Trythall M.* An American in Post-War Tokyo (1947–1948). Edmund A. Walsh, S.J. Visitation to the Jesuit's Japanese Mission // *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano.* 2018. № 22. P. 257–294; *Gallagher L.J.* Edmund A. Walsh, S. J. A Biography. New York : Benziger Brothers, 1962; *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), *op. cit.* P. 75–76; *Dommarco M.C.* The church service of Fr. Edmund A. Walsh SJ in diplomatic affairs in Russia and Mexico (1922–1923, 1929) // *The Quarterly Journal of St. Philaret's Institute.* 2022. № 44. C. 161–187.

⁴³ Note that the School of Foreign Service has been named after the priest Edmund Walsh since 1958 and is called the Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS).

⁴⁴ For details about the members of the mission, see: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), *op. cit.* P. 88–98.

sometimes tragic circumstances, such as the mass trial against Catholics in March of 1923.

Despite numerous attempts by the Vatican (represented by Fr. Edmund Walsh and, after December 1923, by Fr. Edward Hermann) to extend the March 1922 treaty, the Soviet government decided to terminate the papal mission and all similar foreign humanitarian missions in Soviet territories; the last papal representatives left Russia on September 18, 1924⁴⁵ ⁴⁶.

The significance and role of the papal initiative goes beyond the extent the humanitarian aid that was provided to the Soviet population. It was the only attempt of its kind (albeit unsuccessful in the long term), until the end of the 1980s, to establish a permanent Vatican mission on the territory of the USSR.

Indeed, at a time when the existence of the Soviet state was still in doubt, the question raised by the Bolshevik Revolution about the fate of the former tsarist territories sparked the hope among Catholics that the changed geopolitical conditions might be favourable – in the more or less near future – for dispatching Catholic missionaries⁴⁷.

In the words of Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, Superior-General of the Society of Jesus⁴⁸, the mission would most likely have had great religious significance, that is, the

⁴⁵ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 289.

⁴⁶ On the history of the papal mission, see: *Tokareva E.S.* Edmund Walsh, Vatican plans and Russian reality of 1922—1923 // *Rossijskaya istoriya*. 2020. № 4. P. 188–204. (In Russian); *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 299–323, 449–474; *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. On the situation of the Russian Orthodox Church after 1917, see: *Lavrov V.M.* [et al.]. The Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Patriarchate and the State in the Revolutionary Era. Moscow : Russkaya panorama, 2008; *Beglov A.L., Vasil'eva O.Yu., Zhravsky A.V.* [et al.]. The Russian Orthodox Church. 20th century. Moscow : Sretensky monastyr', 2015; *Rocucci A.* Stalin e il patriarca. La Chiesa ortodossa e il potere sovietico. Torino : Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2011; *Graziosi A.* L'URSS di Lenin e Stalin. Storia dell'Unione Sovietica, 1917–1945. Bologna : il Mulino, 2007; *Beglov A.L.* Soviet legislation regarding the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1920s–1940s: the fluctuating boundaries of legality // *Religii mira: istoriya i sovremennost'*. 2004. Moscow, 2004. P. 211–218. (In Russian).

⁴⁷ *Tamborra A.* Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa (...), op. cit. P. 404.

⁴⁸ Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (1866–1942) was the general superior of the Society of Jesus from 1915 until his death. Earlier he studied law in Vienna. He headed the Polish province, then the German and Slavic provinces under the General Curia of the Order. See: *Brezzi P.* Ledóchowski W. // *Enciclopedia italiana*. II Appendice (1949). URL: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/wlodzimierz->

charitable work carried out by Catholics of various nationalities could have attracted Orthodox Russians to Catholicism and some would have converted – it might have even spurred en masse conversion. In a document sent on March 1, 1922, from Fr. Włodzimierz Ledóchowski to Fr. Giuseppe Pizzardo, Deputy Secretary of State, we read:

“I trust that the Catholic world will realise that this is a splendid crusade of mercy for the salvation, perhaps, of the whole East, and that it can be carried out by a good organisation, to which we are quite willing to contribute our feeble powers”⁴⁹.

Even considering the religious and political perspective in which this mission emerged, it may be argued that the humanitarian function in itself was already considered by the Vatican to be a sufficient condition for its realisation. Indeed, while on the one hand, in the Roman Curia, including the General Curia of the Society of Jesus in Rome, there was the idea that relief activities could be a factor in the spread of Catholicism, on the other hand, it was believed that this could only happen by itself, through acquaintance with the members of the mission, and in no way through proselytising or any other means of actively spreading the Catholic faith.

This could be supported by several archival documents that were meant for internal use and issued to the members of the mission before their departure: guidelines, organisational and spiritual in nature, received by all members of the mission from the Vatican⁵⁰; personal instructions for Fr. Edmund Walsh⁵¹; reports from the members themselves to their rectors, like the report written in 1956 by the Fr. Aristide Simonetti,

ledochowski_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/ (accessed: 30.07.2023). Modalità di accesso: Treccani : [portale].

⁴⁹ “Credo che il mondo cattolico capirà che si tratta d’una splendida crociata di carità per salvare forse tutto l’Oriente e che si potrà ottenere con una buona organizzazione alla quale siamo prontissimi di contribuire con le nostre deboli forze”. Cit. in ARSI, *Russia* 2001, III, 12. About this document, see also: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 80–81.

⁵⁰ For instructions of a more organisational character, see: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 99–100. For instructions of a more spiritual character, see: *ibid.* P. 104–105. It is likely that these latter instructions were largely processed by the priest Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, as documents held by ARSI show, where he proposed tentative drafting to the State Secretariat. On this see: Ledóchowski – Gasparri, 19.03.1922. ARSI, *Russia* 2001, III, 31–32. For more information on these documents, see: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 79–80.

⁵¹ See: *G. Petracchi, La missione pontificia (...)*, op. cit. P. 146, text and footnote 56.

SDB⁵², who worked at Moscow section of the mission, which confirms: “The clergy, dressed in civilian attire, served Mass in their rooms behind closed doors and shuttered windows, and then hid the sacred objects back into their chests again”⁵³.

The tasks assigned to the members of the papal mission did not consist only of distributing food, medicine and clothing to the needy, but also of carrying out other assignments from the Vatican, which were sent either to Fr. Edmund Walsh or – usually through him – to all or any of the mission members.

Firstly, the head of the mission was personally given some names of people who had been persecuted by the Soviet state, who were either in prison or in need of financial support: their details were sent by the Roman Curia to Fr. Edmund Walsh, who, in his turn, involved a group of missionaries in the search for these people. When the missionaries succeeded in finding some of them, they noted it with excitement in their reports to Rome. A similar task was assigned to Fr. Aristide Simonetti, requesting the search for prisoners and missing persons in the First World War – the efforts did not yield any positive result⁵⁴.

Besides, as could be seen in the report of Fr. Edmund Walsh to Fr. Włodzimierz Ledóchowski of January 11, 1922, the American Jesuit was commissioned by the Vatican to secure the release of Patriarch Tikhon (Belavin) and facilitate his subsequent relocation to Belgium⁵⁵. Negotiations were not successful.

Moreover, Fr. Edmund Walsh succeeded in negotiating, on behalf of the Vatican, to secure and transport the relics of St. Andrew Bobola, a Polish Jesuit killed by the Cossacks in 1657⁵⁶.

The papal mission also played a key role in raising Western awareness of the anti-religious persecution taking place in the USSR against both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Thanks to the presence of papal representatives in Soviet territories, up-to-date

⁵² *Societas Sancti Francisci Salesii*, Salesians of Don Bosco.

⁵³ *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 102.

⁵⁴ See: *ibid.* P. 196–197.

⁵⁵ See: *ibid.* P. 239.

⁵⁶ See: *ibid.* P. 262–268. Andrzej Bobola was beatified by Pope Pius IX in 1853 and canonised by Pope Pius XI in 1938. See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 180, footnote 182.

information on the religious, social, economic and political situation of Soviet Russia was regularly sent from Fr. Walsh to the Secretariat of State and the Jesuit Curia in Rome, as well as to the other leaders of religious organisations, not only during the time of the work of the mission but also afterwards, when mission members could finally share about their experience openly in the West, in defiance of mail censorship.

The many direct contacts between Catholics and Orthodox, facilitated by the presence of mission members, are indeed a positive example of contact between the two Churches.

One may begin with the material support provided to the Orthodox, who, like many citizens of the Soviet Union, received food, clothing, and medications from the papal representatives; however, there was a different kind of material support meant specifically for Orthodox clergy and laity. In the report by Fr. Edmund Walsh to the State Secretariat of January 6, 1923, we learn how he paid special attention to the Orthodox clergy on the occasion of Christmas and not only provided them with food, but also ordered that flour for baking the prosphoras be made available to all priests in need and their Orthodox communities⁵⁷.

Besides, the reports to GPU (State Political Directorate, the intelligence service of the Soviet government) that can be found in the State Archive of the Russian Federation, written against Fr. Domenico Piemonte, Jesuit member and head of the Krasnodar branch of the mission, testify to his numerous meetings with clergy, including Orthodox, whom he provided with food⁵⁸. Fr. Domenico Piemonte managed to establish such a deep friendship with the local Orthodox hierarchy that when the Jesuit fell ill, the bishop of Krasnodar celebrated a solemn liturgy for his health⁵⁹.

For some mission members – at least for those deployed to Moscow, where the community of Fr. Vladimir Abrikosov was located,⁶⁰ – the direct contact with Catholic

⁵⁷ See: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 231–232.

⁵⁸ See: *ibid.* P. 189–192.

⁵⁹ Petracchi wrote about how that bishop even hugged priest Domenico Piemonte while serving the Divine Liturgy in Krasnodar. See: *Petracchi G. La missione pontificia (...)*, op. cit. P. 158.

⁶⁰ Vladimir Vladimirovich Abrikosov (1880–1966) was an Eastern Rite Catholic priest, rector of the community of Eastern Rite Catholics in Moscow (1917–1922). Ordained on 29 March 1917, in

communities of the Byzantine rite aided to rapprochement and closer acquaintance with the Eastern rite⁶¹.

In addition, unexpectedly for both the Vatican and the head of the mission, Fr. Edmund Walsh, as the authorised representative of the Vatican, had to negotiate with the Soviet government during the Moscow trial of March 1923, in attempt to secure the release or at least the commutation of the sentence of Archbishop Jan Cieplak⁶² and all Catholic priests and laymen accused of counter-revolutionary actions⁶³.

As is known, the trial ended with a death sentence for Archbishop Jan Cieplak and Monsignor Konstantin Budkiewicz⁶⁴, other priests were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment (from 5 to 10 years). The death sentence was carried out only for Fr. Budkiewicz, while Archbishop Jan Cieplak had it commuted to 10 years of imprisonment and later expulsion from the country due to pressure from public opinion⁶⁵.

September 1922 he was forced to emigrate and settled in Rome. See: *Wenger A.* Rome and Moscow, 1900–1950. Moscow : Russky put', 2000. P. 89–90. (In Russian). On the history of Eastern Rite Catholics in Russia, see: *Kozlov-Strutinsky S., Parfent'ev P.* History of the Catholic Church in Russia. Tsarskoe Selo ; St. Petersburg : Belyj kamen', 2014. P. 399–418. (In Russian).

⁶¹ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 231–232.

⁶² Jan Feliks Cieplak (1957–1926), Catholic archbishop. Ordained priest in 1881 and consecrated bishop in 1908 in St. Petersburg. He was appointed vicar bishop of the Mogilev diocese. First arrested and released in 1920, then in 1922. Arrested and sentenced to death in March 1923 with a substitute for ten years of forced labour. Exiled in 1924. See: Cieplak Jan Feliks // Saint Petersburg Encyclopaedia : historical and cultural internet portal. URL: <http://www.encspb.ru/object/2860416253?lc=ru> (accessed: 30.07.2023). (In Russian).

⁶³ On this subject see: *Beglov A.L., Tokareva E.S.* The Trial of the Catholic Clergy in 1923 in the Coverage of the Vatican Envoy in Russia // The Journal of Education and Science “ISTORIYA”. 2018. V. 9. Issue 4 (68). URL: <http://history.jes.su/s207987840002218-8-1> (accessed: 19.05.2018). (In Russian); *Dommarco M.C.* The church service (...), op. cit. P. 168–169.

⁶⁴ Konstanty Budkiewicz (1867–1923) was a Catholic bishop. After completing his studies at the Theological Catholic Imperial Academy, he was ordained in 1893. In 1903 he was appointed vicar at the parish of St. Catherine in St. Petersburg, and in 1905 he became its rector. Accused of counter-revolutionary activity at his trial in March 1923, he was sentenced to death and shot on 31 March. See: Budkiewicz, K. // “Catholic New Martyrs of Russia”. Programme of the Catholic Church in Russia : [portal]. URL: <http://catholicmartyrs.org/index.php?mod=pages&page=budkevich> (accessed: 30.07.2023). (In Russian); *Kozlov-Strutinsky S., Parfent'ev P.* History of the Catholic Church (...), op. cit. P. 352.

⁶⁵ The central role of priest Edmund Walsh in the negotiations before and during the March trial became known through the publication of Father Louis Joseph Gallagher SJ, a member of the papal humanitarian mission, and some accounts in the second volume of “La Civiltà Cattolica” in 1923. Priest Edmund

Undoubtedly, the presence of Fr. Edmund Walsh and the papal mission on Soviet territory played a key and positive role in the negotiations during the trial, although it could not prevent the execution of Fr. Konstantin Budkiewicz⁶⁶. The Vatican was fully aware of this, and when on December 17, 1923, the Congregation for Extraordinary Church Affairs convened a meeting of several cardinals to decide on the issue of *de iure* and/or *de facto*⁶⁷ recognition of the USSR, the opinion of the American Jesuit and the information received from the members of the mission were received with great attention, as evidenced in the preparatory documents for the meeting, preserved in the Vatican archives⁶⁸.

“Promemoria A”⁶⁹ prepared for the meeting of the cardinals includes notes, possibly received from Fr. Walsh himself, that there was an impression that the contacts between the Orthodox and the Catholic have improved during the mission. The document states:

Walsh’s direct involvement in the question of church property in Petrograd began from the very first days of the mission’s presence in Bolshevik territory, as evidenced by his letter to Cardinal Gasparri of 1 August 1922. See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 238–239. *Kozlov-Strutinsky S., Parfent’ev P.* History of the Catholic Church (...), op. cit. P. 358–361.

⁶⁶ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 234–262.

⁶⁷ The Vatican consulted Professors Dionisio Anzilotti and Alessandro Corsi, specialists in international law, for advice on this complex issue. Their views were identical: at this historical stage, it was not possible to formulate an unambiguous and agreed definition of *de iure* and *de facto* recognition, although it was possible to identify some of their characteristics. Anzilotti Dionisio (1867–1950) was a lawyer and professor of international law. He was appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations in 1920 and in that capacity was instrumental in drafting the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice. See: *Nitti G.P.* Anzilotti D. // *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Vol. 3 (1961). URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/dionisio-anzilotti_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed: 31.07.2023). Modalità di accesso: Treccani : [portale]. The Vatican approached him through a private individual. ASRS, *AA.EE.SS.*, IV, Russia, pos. 659, fasc. 40, f. 59 [26]. Corsi Alessandro (1867–1950) was also a lawyer, professor of international law. He was engaged as an expert by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Italy to prepare opinions on international arbitrations. See: *Caravale M.* Corsi A. // *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Vol. 29 (1983). URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alessandro-corsi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed: 31.07.2023). – Modalità di accesso: Treccani : [portale]. The Vatican summoned him to Rome, where he came purposefully from Paris, where he was at the time. ASRS, *AA.EE.SS.*, IV, Russia, pos. 659, fasc. 40, f. 59 [26]. See: ASRS, *AA.EE.SS.*, IV, Russia, pos. 659, fasc. 40, f. 59 [26].

⁶⁸ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 323–326.

⁶⁹ See: *AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 30, fasc. 1, ff. 18–24.

“The lower classes were not informed of the papacy at all, or had a distorted idea of it; <...> they always look with distrust at everything new, at any strangers. And the papal envoys were met with some apprehension when they arrived in Russia, especially since, knowing that they were Catholics, they were considered Poles. Then the distrust gradually diminished when they saw that the Papal Mission distributed what was needed to those truly in need, without distinction of race, religion, social status or politics; unlike some other missions which focused exclusively on their fellow countrymen or people of the same faith”⁷⁰.

From the same document we learn that the Papal Mission reached Patriarch Tikhon, undoubtedly through Fr. Edmund Walsh, head of the Moscow branch, although we have not been able to find in the Vatican archives the receipts signed by the Patriarch mentioned in the document:

“Thus, Papal aid could – with care – also reach Orthodox bishops, Patriarch Tikhon himself (who issued receipts bearing his signature), noble families now destitute, those politically persecuted and, above all, Catholics, imprisoned Moscow priests, Archbishop Jan Cieplak, whom Fr. Edmund Walsh was able to visit several times in prison and bring the august Papal autograph with encouragement and blessing”⁷¹.

⁷⁰ «Il basso popolo non conosceva affatto il Papato o ne aveva una idea deformata; <...> esso guarda sempre con diffidenza ogni novità, ogni persona che non conosce. E con una certa diffidenza furono accolti gl’Inviati Pontificî al giungere in Russia, specialmente perché sapendoli cattolici furono creduti polacchi. Poi la diffidenza diminuì man mano quando videro che la Missione Pontificia distribuiva soccorsi ai veri bisognosi, senza prevenzioni di razza, di religione, di condizione sociale, di politica; a differenza di altre Missioni che dedicavano la loro attività esclusivamente ai correligionari o ai connazionali». Cit. in ASRS, *AA.EE.SS.*, IV, Russia, pos. 659, fasc. 40, f. 59 [10]. On this subject, see also: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 323.

⁷¹ «I soccorsi Pontificî poterono, così, – prudentemente – giungere anche a Vescovi ortodossi, allo stesso Patriarca Tikone, (che ha rilasciate ricevute autografe) a famiglie nobili ora in miseria, a perseguitati politici, e soprattutto ai cattolici, agl’imprigionati ecclesiastici di Mosca, all’Arcivescovo Cieplak, al quale il P. Walsh poté fare più volte visita in carcere, e recare un augusto Autografo Pontificio di incoraggiamento e di benedizione». Cit. *ibid.* On the persecution against the Catholic Church, see: *Wenger A.* *Catholiques en Russie d’après les archives du KGB 1920–1960.* Paris : Desclée de Brouwer, 1988; *Zatko J.J.* *Descent into Darkness: The Destruction of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia, 1917–1923.* Notre Dame (IN) : The University of Notre Dame Press, 1965.

In addition, after the execution of the priest Konstantin Budkiewicz, many Russians approached the members of the mission (“The mission was dogged with anxious queries”⁷²), asking if the mission was going to leave Russia in protest, but the clear will of Pope Pius XI to continue the relief efforts, expressed during the secret consistory ⁷³, demonstrated the nature of the papal mission, which does not obey the logic of mutual enmity⁷⁴.

The fact that the Vatican was interested in maintaining the mission on Soviet territory in order to create a more stable representation there is confirmed in the notes of Fr. Edmund Walsh, also found in the folder of papers prepared for the meeting of cardinals. In these notes, the head of the mission emphasised the advantages of the presence of papal representatives in the USSR:

“The presence of Papal representation at Moscow during the critical days of the trial of Archbishop Cieplak and the execution of Monsignor Budkiewicz was considered by many as being a clear disposition of Divine Providence. It was largely through the Papal Mission that the true news was conveyed to the Holy See and the outside world and the religious persecution of the Bolsheviks thus revealed in its true light. Moreover, the charity of the Holy See towards the Russian people and the demonstration of the meaning of Christian unity afforded by the members of the Papal Relief Mission, chosen as they were from many nations, has produces a profound impression on the Orthodox mind especially at this moment when they are looking for light and leadership”⁷⁵.

Alongside the deterioration of relations between Fr. Edmund Walsh and the central authorities in Moscow ⁷⁶ During 1923 there was an improvement in relations between the

⁷² «La Missione era assediata di domande ansiose». Cit. in ASRS, *AA.EE.SS.*, IV, Russia, pos. 659, fasc. 40, f. 59 [10].

⁷³ Consistory is an assembly of cardinals. Before 1983, there were three types of consistory: secret (or ordinary); public (or public, or extraordinary); and semi-public. Since 1983 there have been two types of consistory: ordinariate and extraordinary.

⁷⁴ *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 253.

⁷⁵ Cit. in ASRS, *AA.EE.SS.*, IV, Russia, pos. 659, fasc. 39, f. 44. On the Vatican’s interest in continuing the papal mission, see also: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 271–293.

⁷⁶ Priest Walsh was forced to leave the USSR in December 1923. See: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 281.

members of the mission and the local Soviet authorities, especially in some areas, who even officially expressed their gratitude to the papal envoys when these were about to leave. An example is the province of Kuban, where the head of the regional education authorities went as far as asking the mission members to stay with the assurance that they would be given freedom of religious education⁷⁷.

Besides, “Promemoria A” notes the desire of many Orthodox believers to join the Catholic Church:

“Many Orthodox priests and laymen expressed a desire to join the Catholic Church and inquired about the conditions, but on this point the envoys had categorical orders for absolute secrecy”⁷⁸.

Since the document existed for internal use only and was in no way intended to become public, it can reasonably be ruled out that the mission members violated their obligation not to preach the Gospel or proselytise⁷⁹.

Accepting *de iure* and/or *de facto* a state where the *de facto* their rights and freedom of conscience and religion were not respected was a thorny issue that cardinals and experts of the Catholic Church had different attitudes towards, as demonstrated by the minutes of the meeting of December 17⁸⁰.

Among the preparatory documents for the meeting, we should note a four-part report by Fr. Walsh submitted to the Secretariat of State on December 6, 1923⁸¹. Asking for certain guarantees for Catholics in the USSR in return, the American Jesuit advised

⁷⁷ In the document reads: «<...> E il Presidente della Pubblica Istruzione a Piatigorsk[*sic*, for *Pyatigorsk*] (Kouban)[*sic*, for *Kuban*] è giunto perfino a richiedere la presenza degli Agenti Pontifici, assicurando che avrebbe lasciato piena libertà di insegnamento religioso!». On this subject, see also: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 269.

⁷⁸ «Molti preti e laici ortodossi espressero il desiderio di entrare nella Chiesa Cattolica, e ne chiesero le condizioni, ma su questo tema gl’Inviati avevano avuto ordini categorici di assoluto riserbo». Cit. in *ASRS, AA.EE.SS., IV, Russia*, pos. 659, fasc. 40, f. 59 [14].

⁷⁹ *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 102.

⁸⁰ The minutes of the meeting, where you can read the position of each cardinal and the response of Pope Pius XI, are published in the appendix of Laura Pettinaroli’s book. See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 170–176.

⁸¹ The name of the priest Edmund Walsh can be seen in the light, it is crossed out with a black line both in the original English version (*ASRS, AA.EE.SS., IV, Russia*, pos. 659, fasc. 40, ff. 45–47^v), as well as in the copy translated into Italian (*AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 30, fasc. 1, ff. 50–54).

for the *de facto* recognition of the USSR government through an apostolic delegate sent with authority to negotiate with the Soviet government on behalf of the Vatican⁸².

On December 18, Pope Pius XI was presented with the minutes of the meeting and gave his answer: not yet to recognise the USSR *de iure*, not to send a nuncio or any other delegate of a diplomatic nature, but, on the basis of certain guarantees, to send an apostolic delegate with episcopal authority to care for souls, with all spiritual authority to help the needs of the faithful, and with authority to negotiate on behalf of the Vatican with everyone, including the Soviet government⁸³. As is well known, this did not happen until the unsuccessful mission of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny⁸⁴ that will be mentioned later on, and the Vatican, beginning the summer of 1924, turned to the diplomatic route of the nunciature in Berlin, then entrusted to Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli^{85 86}.

The complexity of the negotiations also led the Vatican to consider alternative scenarios, such as the possibility of sending priests disguised in secular clothing so as not to leave the Catholic faithful in the territory alone. This is clearly evidenced by the record of the priest Włodzimierz Ledóchowski of the audience granted to him by the pontiff on January 4, 1924:

⁸² See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 30, fasc. 1, f. 52–53.

⁸³ On this subject, see also: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 326.

⁸⁴ Herbigny Michel d' (1880–1957) was a Catholic bishop, rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute (1922–1931), Archbishop of Ilija (1926–1937), and president of the Pontifical Commission Pro Russia (1930–1934). Among the most authoritative biographical sources on Bishop Michel d'Herbigny, see: *Wenger. A. Rome et Moscou 1900–1950*. Paris : Desclée De Brouwer, 1987; *Fouilloux É. s.v. Herbigny Michel d'// DHGE. Vol. XXIII (1990)*. P. 1375–1377; see: *Tretjakewitsch L. Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...)*, op. cit. Lesourd's biography, which favourably evaluates the Jesuit's activities, is based on a weak documentary basis: *Lesourd P. Entre Rome et Moscou. Le Jésuite clandestin. Mgr d'Herbigny*. Paris : P. Lethielleux, 1976.

⁸⁵ Eugenio Pacelli (1876–1958) was pope from 2 March 1939 to 9 October 1958. From April 1917 he was nuncio in Bavaria until June 1920, when the nunciature in Berlin was established. He was thus nuncio in Bavaria and Berlin until 1925. See: *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, Indice 1278, Nota storica; *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 328.

⁸⁶ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 326–328. On 1 August, the Soviet Embassy in Berlin accepted the Vatican's invitation to hold talks with Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli, although the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, N. Krestinsky, was not instructed to do so until six months later. See: *ibid.* P. 329. About N.N. Krestinsky, see: *Krestinsky Nikolaj Nikolaevich // Great Soviet Encyclopedia 2004–2017*. URL: https://old.bigenc.ru/domestic_history/text/2109745 (accessed: 03.08.2023). (In Russian).

“[Pius XI] told me that he was pleased to see from my letter to Monsignor Pizzardo that I, too, was of the opinion that should the Holy See not come to an agreement with the Bolshevik government, missionaries disguised in secular clothing would have to go to Russia for the spiritual good of the faithful, endangering their own lives as well. Once again, I assured the Holy Father that in this case he could count on us, and that hundreds of clergymen would be ready to offer themselves for this mission”⁸⁷.

Thus, while the context in which the Papal Relief Mission to Russia was conceived was still permeated with proselytising, this paradigm of building relationships with other faiths and, in particular, with the local Russian Orthodox Church, was set aside, albeit for a limited time, considering the unexpected challenges that history posed to the Catholic Church in Russia and the specific people that members of the mission encountered in their relief work.

The evidence of this could be seen, as already mentioned in this chapter, in the numerous relations with the Orthodox clergy and believers marked by sincere friendship and affection, which the members of the mission reported in various accounts; by the support given by the papal envoys to the Orthodox priests to enable them to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and, indirectly, to their parishes and communities; by the gratitude expressed to the members of the mission by some representatives of the Orthodox hierarchy and from the local residents, who, quite logically, included Orthodox believers. Besides, the role of the head of the mission as a mediator between Catholic and Orthodox Christians on the one side and the Leninist government on the other, was also recognized in the West at the time of the events⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ «[Pio XI] Mi disse d’aver veduto con piacere dalla mia lettera a Mons. Pizzardo che anch’io sia del parere che, se la S. Sede non potrà nulla conchiudere col governo bolscevico, si dovranno mandare in Russia, per il bene spirituale dei fedeli, Missionari travestiti da secolari, esponendo anche la loro vita. Riassicurai di nuovo il S. Padre che in tal caso poteva contare su di noi e che centinaia di Padri saranno pronti ad offrirsi per questa Missione». Cit. in ARSI, Santa Sede, *Diplomata*, 1004 VI, 106. On Jesuits and communism in the period between the two world wars, see: *Petracchi G. I gesuiti e il comunismo tra le due guerre // La Chiesa cattolica e il totalitarismo. VIII giornata Luigi Firpo // Atti del convegno (Torino, 25–26 ottobre 2001) / a cura di V. Ferrone. – Firenze : Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2004. P. 142–151.*

⁸⁸ See: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit. P. 238.*

It can therefore be surmised that had the presence of papal representatives, of both diplomatic and humanitarian nature, continued, it might have had a positive impact on the situation of Orthodox believers in the USSR, through international pressure in cases of persecution against them, and could have affected the relationship between believers of both denominations, who could have benefited from direct contact with each other that would foster mutual understanding. Moreover, direct contact between the hierarchs of the local Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church would have been possible, as happened in the case of the assistance to Patriarch Tikhon mentioned above.

As we know, history took a different turn and the mission ceased to exist, but at least thanks to being under the direct control of the Secretariat of State, the mission managed to avoid the intervention of Fr. Michel d'Herbigny, a Jesuit whose activities influenced relations between Catholics and Orthodox during the pontificate of Pius XI.

1.2 Fr. Michel d'Herbigny, SJ, and his work in relation to the Russian Orthodox believers

Michel d'Herbigny, a Jesuit priest and later a bishop who played a significant role in the history of the twentieth century Church, within the years 1921 – 1933 was the key figure on the Catholic side in the endeavours aimed at reuniting the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. The volume of documents about him preserved in the Vatican archives, including papers compiled directly by him, given the French Jesuit's penchant for writing about his primary as well as secondary activities, is colossal. These archival materials of considerable scale and diverse content have not yet been used for a systematic study of the multifaceted activities of Fr. Michel d'Herbigny (future bishop) nor to clarify the unknown events of his life.

Relying on the most authoritative of the works published about him to date and on some archival documents that we have managed to discover, we will attempt to shed light on the role of the Jesuit in connection to the contacts with the Russian Orthodox believers, which he had at the height of his activity, and to enrich the data of these already known relations with additional details. Moreover, even to this day, the historiographical

evaluation of Fr. d'Herbigny's (future bishop) work, although largely negative, as shown by the work of Leon Tretjakiewisch, awaits further research that may inform us of the least documented years of his life, i.e. the years between 1933, when he was removed from Rome, to 1957, when he died.

Entering the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Amiens, France, in 1897, he followed his inclination to study and learn about Eastern Christianity from as early as 1906, when he met Fr. Paul Pierling, SJ, the author of the work, *Russia and the Holy See* («La Russie e le Saint-Siège»), published in five volumes between 1896 and 1912.⁸⁹ A few months later, on September 05, his first article about Russia, *The Spirit of a Russian*, («L'Ame d'un Russe») is published in *Études*⁹⁰, signed by a pseudonym, “de Rhybing”. The young Jesuit mails a copy of the article to the general of the order, Fr. Franz Xaver Wernz, SJ, who responded with a letter, urging d'Herbigny to pursue further his interest in Russia and Eastern Christianity⁹¹.

After completing his theological studies in Anguien (Belgium) in 1911 and publishing his famous monograph on Vladimir Soloviev, he travelled to Romania, Galicia, Croatia and Bosnia in the summer to visit territories where Uniate and Orthodox communities had been established⁹².

It was during these summer months that Fr. Michel d'Herbigny began to have more direct contact with Eastern Rite Christians in the West, not only with the communities he visited during his travels, but also with the participants in the Velegrad Congresses aimed at overcoming the mutual prejudices which, as the organisers believed, played an important role in the continuing division between the Churches. These conferences and the role of Fr. d'Herbigny in these will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. However, we would note here that, according to Tretjakiewisch's reconstruction, the strong personality of the Jesuit was manifested during the third Velegrad Conference held in the

⁸⁹ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 33.

⁹⁰ For details about the magazine, see: La revue et son histoire // *Études*. Revue de culture contemporaine : [site web officiel]. URL: <https://www.revue-etudes.com/notre-histoire> (accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁹¹ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 33–34.

⁹² See: *ibid.* P. 40–41.

summer of 1911⁹³. Father Michel d'Herbigny thus joined the community of Catholics and Orthodox (especially from the Russian Orthodox Church) working on the issue of rapprochement between the two Churches, and became one of the most influential participants at the subsequent conferences. However, the Jesuit did not simply attend the Moravian gatherings, but created a new network of links which, it was hoped, would later help to establish contact with Russian Orthodoxy.

The project conceived in Rome and endorsed by the Society of Jesus⁹⁴, was meant to equip priests who would then carry out their ministry in Russia, if they had the opportunity within the political context, or among Russian emigrants in Europe. According to Fr. d'Herbigny's proselytising concept, conversion to Catholicism in Russia and among Russians who had emigrated to Europe was to be carried out under the direction of Rome and with the help of Eastern Rite priests of various nationalities (but not from Poland and Galicia) specially trained for this mission⁹⁵. It should not be forgotten that the news of anti-religious persecution in the Soviet Union led some members of the Catholic clergy to believe that the Orthodox Church would not last long, which meant that many Christian believers would have been left without pastoral care, and that the long-term existence of the Soviet Union itself was questionable. The French Jesuit was one of those who felt the end of the Orthodox Church was very near and felt responsible for what would happen to the faithful left without clergy. Therefore, Father d'Herbigny cultivated his plans to spread Catholicism among the Russians by seeking to accredit himself as an expert on Russian affairs to the Pontiff.

For this purpose, Father Michel d'Herbigny founded a seminary in Anguien for Russian priests of the Eastern rite who had converted to Catholicism. The initiative was partly secret, and its potential opponent was the Polish Catholic clergy⁹⁶. In the first academic year (1912–1913) only one student was enrolled, but the following year there were five, including Ivan Deubner, the father of Alexander who would later on play a

⁹³ See: *ibid.* P. 49.

⁹⁴ The project was conceived primarily by Cardinal Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro. See: *ibid.*

⁹⁵ See: *ibid.* P. 125–126.

⁹⁶ See: *ibid.* P. 48, 50.

notorious and fateful role in the ecclesiastical career of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny⁹⁷. Although the seminary's work was soon interrupted by World War I, it helped the French Jesuit gain the respect of a large part of Catholic clergy and become one of the main faces of the charitable work that was carried out among Russian émigrés in Europe after the 1917 revolution⁹⁸. In fact, Father Michel d'Herbigny, in his relations with members of the Local Russian Orthodox Church, was able to act in several venues at once: the academic one, the cultural one, charity work, and in the personal relationships he maintained with numerous Orthodox Christians⁹⁹.

Already in 1920, while in Rome for the canonisation of Jeanne d'Arc, of whom he was a collateral descendant, he proposed to some members of the Congregation for the Eastern Church that Pope Benedict XV should issue an encyclical on the sufferings of the Russian people. This then took the form of a letter from Pope Benedict XV, dated 21 August 1921, and Fr. Michel d'Herbigny himself was commissioned to write the draft of this letter¹⁰⁰.

Fr. Michel d'Herbigny's ultimate involvement with the Unionists came in 1921 when he moved to Rome after he was put in charge of higher education at the Gregorian University¹⁰¹.

During his first meeting with Pope Pius XI in the spring of 1922, the French Jesuit was praised for his knowledge of the Russian world and has since become the pontiff's confidant in Eastern affairs concerning the Russians. His rise within the Roman Curia was sudden: the same year, 1922, he was appointed rector of the Oriental Papal Institute (where he was already teaching)¹⁰², and by the end of 1923 he became the consultant of the Congregation for the Eastern Church¹⁰³. While working at the Congregation, he secured the creation of a Pontifical Commission on Russia within the Congregation

⁹⁷ Alexander Deibner, a close collaborator of the priest Michel d'Herbigny, was suspected of being a Soviet spy. See: *ibid.* P. 50, 170–171; *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), *op. cit.* P. 243–247.

⁹⁸ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), *op. cit.* P. 51.

⁹⁹ See: *ibid.* P. 51–53.

¹⁰⁰ See: *ibid.* P. 61.

¹⁰¹ *Fouilloux É.* s.v. Herbigny Michel d' (...), *op. cit.* P. 1376.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), *op. cit.* P. 126.

(hereafter, PCPR)¹⁰⁴, in which he became the most influential person, both as a consultant and as its chairman¹⁰⁵. And it was within the framework of this upsurge that, as is known now, that a mission was conceived to secretly re-establish the Catholic hierarchy in Russia, and Fr. d'Herbigny was entrusted by Pope Pius XI with the mission, which later failed because all Catholic bishops were either imprisoned or expelled from Russia. To this end, in 1926, the Fr. Michel d'Herbigny was secretly ordained a bishop by Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli and, in turn, secretly ordained a bishop Pie Eugene Neveu in Moscow¹⁰⁶
107.

We will now focus on the French Jesuit's role in the distribution of aid among Russian émigrés, which he was engaged in mainly because of his prominent position in the PCPR until 1933.

The archives of the Berlin Nunciature show that since Pope Pius XI's put great trust in the French Jesuit, Bishop Michel d'Herbigny was given the authority to make the decisions to appoint key persons for assisting Russian emigrants.

¹⁰⁴ See: *ibid.* P. 280. Created by Pope Pius XI on 20 June 1925 within the Congregation for the Eastern Churches (now the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches), the PCPR became a *de iure* independent body on 6 April 1930. It was finally dissolved by Pope John Paul II on 15 January 1993. See: *Ioannes Paulus II. Motu proprio «Europae Orientalis»*. 15.01.1993 // AAS. 85 [1993]. P. 309–310; *Fouilloux É.* s.v. Herbigny Michel d' (...), *op. cit.* P. 1376.

¹⁰⁵ Bishop Michel d'Herbigny was a counsellor of the PCPR from the beginning of its establishment, and from 1930 to 1934 its chairman. See: *Fouilloux É.* s.v. Herbigny Michel d' (...), *op. cit.* P. 1376.

¹⁰⁶ Neveu Pie Eugène (1880-1957) was a Catholic bishop, Bishop of Citrus since 1926, the first Apostolic Administrator of Moscow. He was ordained a bishop on 21 April, in the Church of St. Ludovius French in private. He began to act openly as bishop on 3 October of the same year. The next day he was visited by the OGPU, which has not ceased to persecute him since then. At the same time, Bishop Pius Eugène Neve was protected by the French Embassy, where he practically lived. See: *Périer-Muzet J.-P.* Bishop Pie Neveu // Augustinians of the Assumption : [official website]. URL: <https://assumptio.com/about-us/portraits/460-bishop-pie-neveu-aa-1877-1946> (accessed: 03.08.2023).

¹⁰⁷ For Bishop Michel d'Herbigny's notes on his trip to the USSR, covering the period from 1 to 18 August, see: ARSI, *Russia* 2003, II, 22. Copy for Leduchowski. The document is dated 18.08.1926; for the records of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny's trip to the USSR, covering the period from 1 to 24 August, see: *ibid.*, 24 [1–8]. Copy for priest Włodzimierz Ledóchowski. The document is dated 24.08.1926; for the records of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny's trip to the USSR, covering the period from 26 to 30 August see: *ibid.*, 27 [1–6]. Copy for the priest Włodzimierz Ledóchowski. The document is dated 24.08.1926. On 6 September 1926, Bishop d'Herbigny informed priest Ledóchowski of the order to leave the same day. See: *ibid.*, 28 [5].

Indeed, it was his initiative to entrust Fr. Ludwig Berg¹⁰⁸ with care for Russians residing in Berlin, from October 1924 on¹⁰⁹. Berg's name had been on the radar of the Secretariat of State since at least June of that year, as evidenced by Bishop Eugenio Pacelli's letter to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri¹¹⁰. To secure the maintenance of the chosen priest, Fr. d'Herbigny arranged that half of the necessary remuneration be paid by the Vatican and the other half, by the Prussian government¹¹¹ and other church institutions¹¹².

In addition, the priest Michel d'Herbigny (future bishop) acted as an intermediary between Rome and the nunciature in organising aid to Russian emigrants in Germany under the leadership of Bishop Edward O'Rourke of Danzig, who, as will be shown in the next paragraph, was placed by Pope Pius XI at the head of the organisational commission that distributed aid to the German dioceses. According to correspondence between Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli (then Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin) and Bishop d'Herbigny, as well as between Pacelli and Bishop O'Rourke, both the Nuncio and the Bishop of Danzig were in a subordinate position to Father Michel d'Herbigny in the matter of aid to the Russians¹¹³. The Jesuit left Bishop O'Rourke relative freedom of action in organisational matters within the so-called "bureau for Russians in Berlin" («ufficio per i Russi a Berlino»)¹¹⁴.

There is also archival evidence that Bishop d'Herbigny sometimes addressed Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli directly, communicating to him certain orders of Pope Pius XI without going through the Secretariat of State, the usual channel of correspondence

¹⁰⁸ Ludwig Berg (1874–1939) was a non-Russian-speaking German priest ordained in 1898. In 1915–1918 he served as a military chaplain and afterwards in the missionary society "Franziskus-Xaverius-Missionsverein" in Aachen. He is the author of the book "The Russian Catholic Church and Orthodox Russia". See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 420; *Berg L. Russian Catholic Church and the orthodox Russia. Berlin : Germany, 1926.*

¹⁰⁹ Pacelli – Gasparri, 02.10.1924. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 28, ff. 14–15.

¹¹⁰ Pacelli – Gasparri, 26.06.1924. *Ibid.*, f. 3.

¹¹¹ Pacelli – Gasparri, 02.10.1924. *Ibid.*, ff. 14–15.

¹¹² d'Herbigny – Pacelli, 15.10.1924. *Ibid.*, f. 16.

¹¹³ d'Herbigny – Pacelli, 17.06.1927. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, fasc. 1, f. 13.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 13, 19. «The Holy Father [...] leaves to His prudence all decisions on the organisation of the bureau for Russians in Berlin» («Il Santo Padre [...] lascia alla Sua prudenza tutte le decisioni per l'organizzazione dell'ufficio per i Russi in Berlino»). *Cit. ibid.*, f. 19. D'Herbigny – Pacelli, 04.07.1927.

between the Pontiff and the nunciatures. This was the case, for example, with the Jesuit's request to Bishop Eugenio Pacelli to transport a book presented to him from Vilna to Berlin so that the nuncio could select from it volumes of interest to the Eastern Pontifical Institute and send them to Rome¹¹⁵.

On the basis of the surviving archival documents, it is easy to note the ability of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny to carry out a large amount of work, while solving the most diverse and subtle tasks, but the prelate's desire to delve into every issue concerning relations with the Orthodox Russians, in addition to an excessive desire to control everything, also testifies to a great determination to realise his concept of proselytism among the Orthodox Christians¹¹⁶. Therefore, the participation of the French Jesuit in the formation of the library of the Oriental Pontifical Institute can also be seen as a part of this project¹¹⁷.

If at the height of his power and fame (late 1930–early 1931) Bishop Michel d'Herbigny succeeded in obtaining the appointment as “*relator perpetuus*” of Pope Pius XI, i.e. in gaining access to a very limited circle of people who could be received by the pontiff without prior request for an audience and at any time, it was at this peak that the French Jesuit fell out of favour with Pope Pius XI.

This was due to a number of factors: on the one hand, the pontiff realised that the Jesuit had repeatedly abused papal authority, as the French Jesuit's ideas, statements and decisions were easily passed off as the wishes of Pope Pius XI¹¹⁸; on the other hand, from the summer of 1931 onwards, the numerous enemies he had made during his career, were working from different angles to ensure the Jesuit would lose the power he had acquired and be removed from Rome c 1934¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁵ d'Herbigny – Pacelli, 15.10.1924. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 28, f. 16.

¹¹⁶ For example, Bishop Michel d'Herbigny himself mediated between Pope Pius XI and the Russian Orthodox community in Berlin, as one of his notes of 17 August 1930 shows. See: AAV, *Segr. Stato*, anno 1930, rubr. 181, fasc. 2, ff. 173–174.

¹¹⁷ For a sharply negative assessment of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny's tendency to take on too many responsibilities, see: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 65–66.

¹¹⁸ See: *ibid.* P. 237, 278–279.

¹¹⁹ See: *ibid.* P. 274–277, 279, 281. Already in 1931, the Polish press accused Bishop Michel d'Herbigny of collaborating with the alleged Soviet spy Alexander Deibner, his secretary. The ARSI holds the texts

And it was after the removal of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny that the Pontifical Commission *Pro Russia*, through the *motu proprio* “*Quam sollicita*”, was subordinated by Pius XI to the Congregation for Extraordinary Church Affairs, and its competence was reduced only to the care of Russian Catholics of the Latin rite¹²⁰.

If in this paragraph we wanted to show the role of Bishop Michel d'Herbigny in helping Russian emigrants and his concept of this activity shaped by the desire to achieve their conversion, then further on we will consider the situation in various European countries, for which we were able to find relevant archival materials on Russian emigrants, showing different, sometimes opposite features of the Catholic Church's actions in their charity outreach to Russians.

Even if the influence of the French Jesuit did not bring to the Roman Curia a new vision of interchurch relations and maintained a tendency to proselytise, at the same time a new approach to the problem of interaction between the different Churches was emerging within the Catholic Church between the two world wars.

1.3 Vatican assistance to members of the Local Russian Orthodox Church in the 1920s and the 1930s

Immediately after the October Revolution, the well-known process of emigration of Russian intellectuals to Europe began, either by decision of the Leninist government, as in the case of the so-called “philosophical steamers”¹²¹, or by the personal initiative of

of the Italian translation of some of these articles from the Kraków newspaper “*Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*”, which were brought by Bishop Michel d'Herbigny himself to the attention of the priest Włodzimierz Ledóchowski. See: ARSI, *Russia* 2003, V, 37 [2–4].

¹²⁰ See: *Pius XI. Motu proprio «Quam sollicita»* // AAS. 27 [1935]. P. 65–67. On Russian Catholics and the Vatican in the run-up to World War II, see: *Beglov A.L., Tokareva E.S., Freeze G.* The USSR, Russian Catholics and the Vatican on the threshold of the Second World War: main events and areas of research // *The Journal of Education and Science “ISTORIYA”*. 2018. V. 9. Issue 4 (68). URL: <http://history.jes.su/s207987840002214-4-1> (accessed: 21.07.2018). (In Russian).

¹²¹ “Philosophical steamer” is a collective name for the passenger ships and trains on which prominent Russian intellectuals were expelled from the country in 1922 on the initiative of Lenin and Trotsky. See: *Annals of Moscow University // Moscow State University* : [official site]. URL: <http://letopis.msu.ru/content/es-filosofskiy-parohod> (accessed: 05.08.2023). (In Russian). On Russian emigrants living in Italy before 1917, see: *Tamborra A.* *Esuli russi in Italia dal 1905 al 1917*. Roma ; Bari : Laterza, 1977.

individuals. Thus, the number of contacts between Orthodox Russians and Catholics increased significantly, raising the question for the Catholic hierarchy of how best to respond to the material and spiritual needs of the emigrants¹²².

Drawing mainly on archival documents from the Historical Archive of the Department of State Relations of the Secretariat of State (*Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato – Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati*), the Apostolic Archive of the Vatican (*Archivum Apostolicum Vaticanum*) and the Archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome, we will analyse how the Vatican responded to requests for help from people affected by the Soviet regime.

Documents from the archives of the apostolic nunciatures in Berlin and Paris allow us to look at the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community in the period from the late 1920s to the first half of the 1930s through the private accounts of individual Orthodox Russians in Europe, as well as through the more general data of some European Catholic charitable organisations.

Our study does not pretend to draw exhaustive conclusions on the broad topic of Vatican assistance to Orthodox Russians in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, but nevertheless offers archival materials and historiographical interpretations that may shed light on the ties between Catholics and Orthodox Russians that emerged within the context of emigration.

As Laura Pettinaroli has already shown, after the revolution the Vatican put its resources at the disposal of the Russian charitable associations already existing at the time, as evidenced, for example, by the gratitude for a donation of 10,000 lire expressed in January 1922 to the Secretariat of State from Constantinople by the president of the Russian Red Cross in the Middle East. However, the Vatican soon became directly involved in providing assistance to Russian refugees at the local level, either via existing organisations operating at diocesan level or by creating new ones, looking for the most appropriate way to respond to the specific material and spiritual needs of a large group of

¹²² On this subject, see: *Russia and the Vatican. Vol. 3. Russian emigration in Europe and the Catholic Church in the interwar period* / ed. by E.S. Tokareva and A.V. Yudin. Moscow : URSS, 2014. (In Russian).

Russian emigrants. Alongside the emergence of new Catholic organisations and the transfer of care for Russians to existing charities, there was a decline in the amount of donations from the Vatican to charities not under its direct administration¹²³.

One of the first states to have felt the impact of Russian emigration was undoubtedly Czechoslovakia, due to its geographical proximity. Thanks to correspondence between the Secretariat of State and the Catholic dioceses of Czechoslovakia, preserved in the archival holdings of the respective nunciature, we learn that these dioceses took a very active part in charitable fundraisers to send to Russia, not only during the period of the papal aid mission on Soviet territory, but also in subsequent years. The last donation mentioned in the documents, related to the effects of the famine of the 1920s, was dated March 30, 1926¹²⁴.

The Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia did not act alone in favour of emigrants from the territories of the former Russian Empire, but also valued the cooperation of non-religious organisations. When in January 1925 the Nunciature in Prague received a 143-page document sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs containing information on the government's assistance to Russian and Ukrainian emigrants in Czechoslovakia, it expressed its deep satisfaction with what had been achieved¹²⁵.

Regarding the attitude towards the Orthodox of the Russian Patriarchate, it may be noted that contacts took place with both associations and individuals during the common participation of Catholic and Orthodox believers in the liturgies of the Eastern Rite.

When, on January 1, 1922, the nuncio in Prague, Bishop Clemente Micara¹²⁶, sent a request to Cardinal Gasparri for a donation for Russian Catholics arriving in Prague to support the work of Archbishop Antonín C. Stojan¹²⁷, the nuncio informed the Secretariat of State that there were about two thousand students from Russia and Slavs of various

¹²³ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 475–477.

¹²⁴ See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 35, fasc. 208, ff. 1–27. The letters are dated between 22 December 1923 and 30 March 1926.

¹²⁵ See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 47, fasc. 367, ff. 1–143.

¹²⁶ Clemente Micara (1879–1965) was a cardinal from 1946, archbishop from 1920, and nuncio in Prague (1920–1922). See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, Indice 1229; *Filippi A.* Clemente Micara. Cardinale di Santa Romana Chiesa Vescovo di Velletri. Roma : Grafo Press, 2006.

¹²⁷ About Archbishop Antonín Stojan and his Unionist activities, see below, Chapter 2.

origins in Prague, nearly all of them Orthodox¹²⁸. From a document dated April 1922, we learn that Orthodox Russian students soon united into an association called the “Association of Russian Student Organisations” and petitioned the Pope through the nunciature in Prague for economic support for their organisation, which brought together some 15,000 Russian émigré students living in Europe and Africa, divided into 26 groups¹²⁹.

A couple of years later, on December 12, 1924, the nuncio Francesco Marmaggi¹³⁰, who replaced Bishop Clemente Micara, once again approached Cardinal Pietro Gasparri to inquire about a new attempt by Orthodox Russian students (most likely from the same association) to obtain funding from the Vatican, this time through the mediation of Fr. V. Abrikosov, who travelled to the nunciature with a delegation from the association. According to what was stated in the documents of the Nunciature by Fr. Vladimir Abrikosov on 2 December 1924, the German-language and then the English edition of the book “Storming the Heavens”¹³¹ (mentioned in the paper as *Assalto del Cielo*), published by the association, illustrated the persecution of the Church that was taking place in the Soviet Union, with the plea for economic support for the translation of the publication into Italian, French, Czech, and Russian languages¹³².

¹²⁸ See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 37, fasc. 220, ff. 3–6; Zapletal F. – Micara, 29.12.1921. *Ibid.*, ff. 7–8.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 11–12. The document is dated April 1922. The collaboration between the Secretariat of State, the local episcopate and the nunciature in the decision-making process continued during the pontificate of Pius XII. See: *Dommarco M.C. The relations between Church and state in Czechoslovakia in 1947–1949: New archival documents // Issues of Theology. – 2023. – Vol. 5, № 1. – P. 105–132. (In Russian).*

¹³⁰ Marmaggi Francesco (1876–1949), cardinal from 1935, nuncio in Prague (1923–1927), nuncio in Warsaw (1928–1935). See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, Indice 1229, Nota storica; AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Varsavia*, Indice 1237A, Cenni storici; Marmaggi Francesco // *Enciclopedia online*. URL: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-marmaggi/> (accessed: 05.08.2023). Modalità di accesso: Treccani : [portale].

¹³¹ See: *The Black Book: “The Storming of Heaven”*. Collection of documentary data characterising the struggle of the Soviet communist authorities against all religion, against all confessions and churches / compiled by A.A. Valentinov. A.A. Valentinov. With an introductory article by P. Struve. Paris : Izdatel'stvo Russkogo natsional'nogo studencheskogo ob'edineniya 1925.

¹³² See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 37, fasc. 220, f. 402.

In his letter of December 12, Bishop Clemente Micara expressed to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri his doubts about the appropriateness of such economic support:

“Of course, in addition to all the other obvious caveats of the case, I had to speak to the commission of a rather delicate aspect of the proposal: encouraging the Holy See to subsidise propaganda – albeit overtly religious propaganda – against the present regime of the Soviets. It seemed to me that the students recognised this difficulty. They added, however, that in their opinion it was not impossible that the Holy See, while maintaining due confidentiality, would come to the aid of such an initiative: for example, by assuring that it would purchase a certain number of copies published in Italian, French and Russian”¹³³.

Obviously, providing funding publications of this sort against the USSR while members of the papal mission were still in Russia continuing to provide the aid to the needy could jeopardise the negotiations about the possible continuation of the papal mission in the territories of the Soviet Union¹³⁴.

While it is likely that all the nunciatures were aware of the Soviet intelligence operation, it is in this archive collection that we find an account of how espionage was viewed among Russian émigrés. The following is an excerpt from this document entitled *Bolsheviks at Work Among Russian Emigrants*:

“The Cheka’s foremost task is to demoralise the Russian emigration community, taking advantage of its material difficulties, and to recruit new agents, especially among women. You must not only keep an eye on all counter-revolutionary organisations but, when necessary, create new ones. The Chekists do not hesitate to use any means and

¹³³ «Naturalmente, oltre tutte le altre ovvie riserve del caso, ho dovuto lumeggiare alla commissione un lato abbastanza delicato della proposta: quello, cioè, d’interessare la S. Sede a sovvenzionare una propaganda – sia pur dichiaratamente religiosa – contro l’attuale regime dei “Soviet”. Mi è sembrato che gli studenti si siano resi conto di tale difficoltà. Hanno, però, soggiunto che non sarebbe impossibile, a loro avviso, di trovare un modo che permettesse alla S. Sede di venire in soccorso di siffatta iniziativa, pur tenendosi nel doveroso suo riserbo: assicurando, p. e. [per esempio – *M.C. Dommarco*], di voler acquistare un certo numero di esemplari delle proposte edizioni italiana, francese e russa». Cit. *ibid.*, f. 399.

¹³⁴ On the failure of the negotiation see: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 271–293.

easily steal, blackmail, etc. <...> The Bolshevick press itself, which no longer observes caution, expounds with the greatest frankness the methods of the Bolsheviks' deadly operations abroad, and is today the best source of information on the extent and system of Communist infiltration everywhere"¹³⁵.

The report is undated, but judging from its position among the numbered sheets, it was probably written in late 1924 – early 1925, or possibly earlier. Consequently, it is possible that the Nuncio Micara was aware of the dangers of funding such a publication when Cardinal Gasparri expressed his opinion on the matter. Because of the lack of additional archival documentation about similar requests in 1922 and 1924, we can assume that for each of them either the case was dropped or no documentation of what happened next has come down to us. Nevertheless, we can conclude that when considering the Russian youth's request for support, their confessional affiliation was not a basis for refusing funding.

Other instances of contact between Orthodox Russians and Catholics occurred while attending Eastern Rite liturgies.

As part of the support to the Eastern Rite Catholic communities, on December 3, 1925, a request was sent from the Nunciature in Prague to the Secretariat of State for 15,000 Italian lire (which would then, of course, be converted into Czechoslovak crowns) to cover the costs of serving the Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Holy Cross ¹³⁶ in Prague for Russian Catholic students, joined by some Orthodox Russian students¹³⁷. The

¹³⁵ «La ceka ha come primo compito il dovere di demoralizzare l'emigrazione russa sfruttandone le difficoltà materiali e di reclutare degli agenti nuovi, specialmente fra le donne. Si ha il dovere non solo di sorvegliare tutte le organizzazioni contro-rivoluzionarie, ma quando occorre, di crearne delle nuove. I cekisti non esitano a servirsi di tutti i mezzi e facilmente rubano, fanno ricatti ecc. <...> La stessa stampa bolscevica, che non osserva ormai più nessuna prudenza, espone i metodi dell'azione letale svolta dai bolscevichi all'estero con la massima franchezza e rappresenta oggi la migliore fonte d'informazione sulla vastità e sui sistemi di penetrazione comunista ovunque». Cit. in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 37, fasc. 220, ff. 408–409.

¹³⁶ About the church, see: *Marek P., Burek V. Pravoslavní v Československu v letech 1918–1953: příspěvek k dějinám Pravoslavné církve v českých zemích, na Slovensku a na Podkarpatské Rusi*. Brno : Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2008. S. 142–143; *Historie kostela sv. Kříže // Salesiáni Dona Boska* : [official website]. URL: <https://www.sdb.cz/kde-jsme/praha-jabok/kostel-svateho-krize/#o-kostele> (accessed: 06.08.2023).

¹³⁷ AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 37, fasc. 220, ff. 585–586.

funds were disbursed two months later¹³⁸. Similar requests were repeated several times between 1926 and 1927, and from time to time from the Congregation for the Eastern Church and from the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith¹³⁹ small subsidies would be sent¹⁴⁰.

Certainly, the Catholic side wished the Orthodox Russians would convert to Catholicism through participation in Eastern Rite Catholic liturgies, but this was not the only reason for attempting to financially support communities of Eastern Rite Russian Catholics, since they, like Catholics, needed spiritual help.

Both in Czechoslovakia and in France, organisations and individuals became active rather quickly: in Paris, in November 1921, the French Union for the Relief of Russians was founded (from June 1922, the “Association”), with prominent churchmen among its founders. In Lyon, in April 1923, several Jesuit Fathers set up the Lyon Committee for Assistance to Russian Refugees on the model of the Paris Union, whose tasks included not only material support (providing basic aid, job search and comprehensive legal assistance), but also raising awareness and awakening “sympathy and respect among the French public” for Russians living in France through the press.

The effectiveness of these organisations is beyond doubt: for example, by 1922 the Paris organisation had found work in various car factories for 3,000 people, and by 1927, i.e. during the six years of its activity, it had provided material assistance of various kinds to 17,500 needy people, which was about 40% of the Russians living in Paris. The Lyon

¹³⁸ Papadopulos – Arata, 03.02.1926. *Ibid.*, f. 587.

¹³⁹ The Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the faith is one of the four Pontifical Missionary Societies. Its mission is to support the missionary work of the Catholic Church throughout the world. See: Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the Faith. History // Pontifical Mission Societies : [official website]. URL: <https://www.ppoomm.va/en/chi-siamo/le-4-opere-missionarie/popf.html> (accessed: 06.08.2023).

¹⁴⁰ Sincero – Arata, 20.05.1926. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 37, fasc. 220, ff. 595–596; Giobbe – Arata, 31.08.1926. *Ibid.*, f. 599; Sincero – Arata, 23.12.1926. *Ibid.*, f. 656; Segni – Ritter, 30.08.1927. *Ibid.*, f. 717.

organisation, a year after its opening, assisted 1,853 Russian exiles and housed 50 of them in a dormitory¹⁴¹.

The situation in Belgium was similar, both in terms of the timing of aid and the organisation of charitable structures¹⁴².

The situation in Germany was not the same. The encounter between the Russian emigration and the German reality was quite different. In fact, alongside the chronological delay of several years in the structural organisation of the relief operations in Germany, one can also observe a strong interference of the Vatican in the management of the relief operations.

The reason, of course, is to be found in the difficult state of the German economy after the First World War, and perhaps also in a still-unresolved aversion to Russians, whom Germans regarded as enemies after the recently lost war. However, despite the absence of an initially broad and structured aid organisation, it cannot be said that there was none: as early as 1918, the German organisation Caritasverband provided financial assistance to Russian emigrants with funds received almost exclusively from Germany. In addition, on the initiative of Baroness Oettingen, who was originally from Vilnius and had converted from Orthodoxy to Catholicism in 1921, an office was set up in Berlin to assist Russian emigrants, which from 1923 was regularly supported by the Pontifical See through Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli, Nuncio in Berlin¹⁴³.

The first breakthrough in the general organisation of relief work for Russians in Germany came in 1924, when the establishment of a community of Russian Catholics in Berlin enabled the Vatican to rely on funding from priests who were entrusted with the pastoral care of the community: this was the case with priest S. Grum-Grzhimajlo, who

¹⁴¹ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 477–478; *Namazova A.S.* Catholic Church and Orthodoxy in Belgium. Assistance of Cardinal Mercier to Russian students // *Russia and the Vatican*. Vol. 3. Russian emigration in Europe and the Catholic Church in the interwar period / ed. by E.S. Tokareva and A.V. Yudin. Moscow : URSS, 2014. P. 215–227. (In Russian).

¹⁴² See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 478.

¹⁴³ See: *ibid.* P. 478–480.

received a cheque for 20,000 lire from Bishop Eugenio Pacelli to spend on Russian exiles in Berlin¹⁴⁴.

An estimate compiled by priest Ludwig Berg in October 1925 speaks of about 100,000 Russians in Berlin, of whom 60-70 were Catholic and a much smaller but unspecified number were Protestant¹⁴⁵.

The turning point came in 1927 when, at the Vatican's insistence, the work was reorganised and its funding was entrusted to Fr. Edmund Walsh through the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA¹⁴⁶). In addition, the German Ministry of the Interior undertook to pay the salaries of two staff members working with Russian emigrants. Between April 1927 and May 1928, the association assisted 935 people: financial subsidies, assistance with bureaucratic procedures and the provision of clothing were only a small part of a wide range of services provided by the organisation¹⁴⁷.

The impulse to reorganise and centralise the work of helping Russians in Germany came from Rome even before June 1927, when, in a letter dated the 20th of that month, Bishop Edward O'Rourke of Danzig wrote to Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli that he was ready to assume responsibility for the papal work of helping Russian children¹⁴⁸.

The instructions for the development of charitable activities were passed on to the nunciature in Berlin through the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission. However, archival sources point not only to Cardinal Luigi Sincero, secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, and Bishop Michel d'Herbigny, his deputy on the commission and, since 1930, the president of the commission, as the main people responsible for the project, but

¹⁴⁴ About the priest S. Grum-Grzhimajlo, see: *ibid.* P. 420.

¹⁴⁵ AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 28, fasc. 12, f. 138. The document is dated 9 October 1925. The entire report of the priest Ludwig Berg can be found *ibid.*, ff. 138–140. For priest Berg see: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 420–421.

¹⁴⁶ About the CNEWA see: *Dommarco M.C. Edmund A. Walsh and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association: birth and development of the papal agency // Christianity in the Middle East. 2020. № 4. P. 17–36.* (In Russian).

¹⁴⁷ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 479–480.

¹⁴⁸ AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, fasc. 1, f. 14. The project is presented *ibid.*, f. 15.

also to Fr. Edmund Walsh, who in the first half of 1927, submitted to Archbishop Pacelli the draft of the project that had been approved by Rome¹⁴⁹.

Thus, the second half of 1927 and the first months of 1928 were devoted to the actual realisation of the required changes. The leading role of the American Jesuit and the importance given to the local episcopate in the project of reorganising and centralising aid to the Russians in Germany is well documented in the letter of January 20, 1928, in which Cardinal Luigi Sincero asked Bishop Eugenio Pacelli to begin the operational phase of the project:

“Your Excellency is no doubt aware of the plan which was drawn up some time ago for improving the work of the organisation ‘The Russian Cause’ [in the document – ‘Opera per i Russi’] in Berlin and for extending the scope of its activities for the benefit of all Russians living in various parts of the German Republic. It was then proposed to entrust this work to all the archbishops and bishops of Germany, also in order to interest them more directly, and to place a bishop at the head of the project, and the name of the most reverend Bishop Edward O’Rourke, Bishop of Danzig, a profound expert on the people and ways of Russia, was given. Father Walsh, SJ, the president of the Catholic Social Welfare Association in the Middle East, which is responsible in the USA for raising funds to subsidise various Catholic projects for the benefit of the Middle East and Russia, has already urged that The Russian Cause in Berlin be organised on a sound basis, carrying out its charitable work for the benefit of all Russians scattered in various parts of Germany. This Pontifical Commission, finding the proposal of the Most Reverend Father Walsh most timely, asks Your Excellency to see to the best arrangement of the activity in favour of Russians, calling upon the persons whom it considers most suitable to take part in it, and entrusting its presidency to the much esteemed Most Reverend Bishop Edward O’Rourke, who I hope will accept the task. He will then announce the successful organisation of the Russian Cause to all the bishops of Germany, warmly

¹⁴⁹ d’Herbigny – Pacelli. *Ibid.*, f. 13.

appealing to their patronage and engaging them on behalf of the Holy See to work for the welfare of Russians, who are so dear to the Holy Father's heart"¹⁵⁰.

By April, Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli will have sent the bishops a final report on the Vatican's decision to set up a commission headed by O'Rourke to deal with the organisational aspects and development of humanitarian work in Catholic dioceses in Germany¹⁵¹.

However, the months of waiting did not indicate negligence or lack of willingness to help on the part of the nuncio, for Bishop Eugenio Pacelli had already expressed his inability to cope with all the requests coming to him from Rome because of the enormous amount of work for one man. When in March he received a letter from the Secretariat of State asking him to liaise with the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission on all matters concerning Russia and the Russian people, to submit reports on the political and religious situation in Russia and on Russians in emigration, and to answer a questionnaire on the same topic¹⁵², in his response to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri of March 16, 1927, Bishop

¹⁵⁰ «Senza dubbio è noto all'Eccellenza Vostra Rev.ma il progetto che fu fatto tempo addietro per una migliore sistemazione dell'Opera per i Russi a Berlino e per l'estensione della sua sfera di attività a favore di tutti i Russi dimoranti nelle varie parti della Repubblica Tedesca. Si propose allora di affidare l'opera a tutti gli Arcivescovi e Vescovi della Germania, anche per interessarli più direttamente e di metterne a capo un Vescovo e fu fatto il nome dell'Ill.mo e Rev.mo Mons. Edoardo O'Rourke, Vescovo di Danzica, profondo conoscitore delle cose e delle persone della Russia. Ora già più di una volta anche il Rev.mo P. Walsh, S.J., Presidente della Catholic Near East Welfare Association, la quale cura negli Stati Uniti la raccolta dei fondi per sussidiare le varie Opere Cattoliche a favore del prossimo Oriente e della Russia, ha fatto premure perché l'Opera dei Russi di Berlino sia organizzata su solide basi e svolga la sua azione benefica a favore di tutti i Russi sparsi per le varie parti della Germania. Questa Pontificia Commissione trovando opportunissima la proposta del Rev.mo P. Walsh, prega l'Eccellenza Vostra di curare nel modo migliore la desiderata sistemazione delle Opere per i Russi, chiamando a far parte di esse le persone che Ella giudicherà più idonee, ed affidandone la presidenza all'Ill.mo e Rev.mo Mons. Edoardo O'Rourke che spero vorrà accettare l'incarico. Poi annunzierà l'avvenuta sistemazione dell'Opera a tutti i Rev.mi Vescovi della Germania, raccomandandola caldamente alla loro protezione e interessandoli, anche a nome della Santa Sede, all'azione in favore dei russi che sta tanto a cuore al Santo Padre». Cit. *ibid.*, f. 33^{r-v}.

¹⁵¹ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 480.

¹⁵² Gasparri – Pacelli, 04.03.1927. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, fasc. 3, f. 1. Since a letter with the same date and content has been kept in the files of the Paris Nunciature, it can be concluded that this communication was sent by the Secretariat of State to all the nunciatures affected by this migration phenomenon. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Parigi*, b. 472, fasc. 737, ff. 1–3.

Eugenio Pacelli described his work in the Berlin nunciature as too much for him and asked for permission to go into seclusion¹⁵³.

As we know, the story took a completely different turn, but the document points to the likely state of overstress that the nuncio was in.

The assistance from the Vatican and all other entities associated with it (e.g. the Congregation for the Eastern Church and CNEWA) is also reflected in the name of the organisation that helped Russians, mainly children, in Danzig: the Pontifical Organisation for the Care of Russian Children¹⁵⁴.

Whereas between 1924 and 1926 more than half of the economic resources available to the Catholic Church to assist Russians in Germany came from Rome (68 per cent in 1924–1925 and 55 per cent in 1926), from 1927 onwards CNEWA's monetary resources amounted to 26 per cent of its total income and allowed for a significant increase in assistance¹⁵⁵.

There was another Catholic association that played a significant role in funding local associations to help Russians, The Catholic Union (*Catholica unio*)¹⁵⁶.

Economic assistance was not limited to basic needs, for in the expense account from May 1927 to February 1928, for example, we also find expenses for visas and passports, as well as travel expenses for many prisoners of war who asked to return home. In addition, during the same period there were many Russian language lessons for staff and 19 cases of translation of documents for emigrants are documented¹⁵⁷.

If we take into account the 1928 report, we notice that the purpose of the donations was very diverse: for example, \$3,237.3 was sent to boarding schools and residential schools of various religious institutions and \$378.28 was sent to hospitals to provide

¹⁵³ AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, fasc. 3, ff. 2–3.

¹⁵⁴ In French: Oeuvre Pontificale de secours pour les Enfants Russes; in Italian: Opera Pontificia di soccorso pei Bambini Russi a Danzica.

¹⁵⁵ On the work of the Pontifical Organisation for Aid to Russian Children, see also: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 480–482. For sources of funding 1924–1927, see *ibid.* P. 481.

¹⁵⁶ About the *Catholica Unio* see *ibid.* P. 482–483; *Tretjakewitsch L. Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...)*, op. cit. P. 205–210.

¹⁵⁷ Caritasverband report c April 1927, 13.03.1928. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, f. 1, ff. 55–57. The entire report is *ibid.*, ff. 53–58.

treatment for the sick. However, apart from general donations, the document contains records of donations of an individual or *special* nature, for example, an allowance to one Sergio Popov (in the document: “Sergio Popow”¹⁵⁸), expenses for a Christmas tree and gifts for Russian children or a subsidy for weddings and funerals¹⁵⁹.

In March 1928, Caritasverband director Heinrich Winken, lamenting the lack of funds to meet the diverse needs of Russian emigrants, made an important observation of a more general nature concerning migration flows. Although, on the one hand, the number of Russian emigrants in Berlin had slightly decreased (Winken confirmed that there were 22,000), on the other hand, their needs had increased because those who had had jewellery or money with them when they arrived in Germany had by then used it all up and joined the ranks of those in need of help¹⁶⁰.

Faced with a decrease in CNEWA’s income in 1929, which Fr. Edmund Walsh reported to Bishop Eugenio Pacelli on September 13 of that year, Pius XI asked the American Jesuit to reduce in proportion the subsidies given to the work of helping Russians in Germany¹⁶¹.

In one of the files we found in the archives of the nunciature in Berlin, concerning Senator Alexei Dmitrievich Arbuzov¹⁶², we see that assistance was also provided through a personal fund at the Nunciature¹⁶³. Although this dossier does not concern a Russian Orthodox man, since Senator Arbuzov converted to Catholicism in Russia before his expulsion from Moscow, it cannot be confidently asserted that similar funds did not exist for Orthodox Russians.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., f. 217.

¹⁵⁹ Report of the Pontifical Organisation for the Care of Russian Children for 1928. Ibid., ff. 217–218.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., f. 57.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., f. 245.

¹⁶² Alexei Dmitrievich Arbuzov (1859–1933) was a statesman of the Russian Empire, director of the Department of General Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior (1905–1914), exiled from Russia in 1922. see: *Murzanov N.A.* Dictionary of Russian Senators. 1711–1917. Materials for biographies. St. Petersburg : Dmitrij Bulanin, 2011. P. 28. (In Russian).

¹⁶³ Sincero – Pacelli, 03.03.1926. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, fasc. 1, f. 42; Sincero – Pacelli, 30.03.1928. Ibid., f. 69; Pacelli – Sincero, 28.04.1928. Ibid., f. 93.

Rome was dealing with the issue of the confessional affiliation of Russian migrants in a special way: assistance was not limited to Catholics only, as has already been shown, but each case was carefully considered, and even Catholics themselves were not automatically assisted.

If we consider the case of an appeal from a representative of Russian emigration in Europe – a request for assistance from Lyudmila Ivanovna Lyubimova – we can highlight one important point in the process of consideration of her request by the State Secretariat.

L. I. Lyubimova, the chair of the Russian Aid Committee in Paris, addressed Pope Pius XI on February 5, 1935. According to her letter, thanks to the connections of her husband, Dmitri Nikolaevich Lyubimov (who had been governor of Vilna before World War I), L. I. Lyubimova had been actively helping the Russian emigrants who had taken refuge in Poland in 1920-1922. As she emphasised in her letter, this assistance was made possible thanks to the funding from volunteers, including Pope Benedict XV, who donated 10,000 lire through Archbishop Achille Ratti, Apostolic Nuncio to Poland. The list of expenses attached to this letter from Lyubimova, was quite detailed. In 1934, the Committee's expenditure reached 50,000 francs for various services: distribution of free hot meals in canteens (up to 100 portions of soup and bread daily); distribution of clothing; assistance to emigrants in legalising their situation in France and in moving out of Paris (if they found work in another city).

The document also states that in 1934 the Committee received aid of 5,000 francs from the Paris municipality and other donations from benefactors. The tone of the letter suggests that Lyubimova was not an opponent of Catholicism; on the contrary, she showed respect for members of the Catholic Church.

To elaborate on the content of the letter, two important points can be highlighted: Mrs Lyubimova explicitly wrote that the assistance in Poland was given to all those in need, without distinction of political and religious beliefs (“Cette aide fut accordée par nous à tous les réfugiés sans aucune distinction de religion et d'origine”); and that the assistance given was not only material, but also spiritual¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶⁴ See: *Dommarco M.C.* The Holy See's Modus Operandi in Dealing with Some Requests for Assistance Sent to the Vatican in the 1920s and 1930s: Based on New Archival Documents // *The Journal of*

It is therefore safe to presume that the same situation prevailed in Paris. Thus, when the Secretariat of State approached the Nunciature in Paris, because that was where the Committee was located at the time, it can be assumed that these two points were key to the Vatican's decision on the question of assistance.

Nuncio in France Archbishop Luigi Maglione¹⁶⁵ instructed the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Paris, Emmanuel Chaptal, to make enquiries about Mrs. Lyubimova and the Committee itself. Having received accurate information a few days later, on February 20, 1935, Chaptal sent a report to Maglione, according to which, at that time, the Russian Aid Committee was, firstly, the only organisation that had provided significant assistance to Russian emigrants in Paris, and secondly, Lyubimova herself was Orthodox, but “without fanaticism” (“sens sectarisme”).

Then, having received such a positive report about her and the Committee, the Vatican decided to help the organisation: archival letters show that Pope Pius XI donated \$1,000 in 1935 and another \$1,000 in 1936, when L. I. Lyubimova again appealed to the Vatican for help.

No doubt the amount was small, but these donations should be seen in the context of all the Vatican's charitable expenditures, including those sent to people in camps in the USSR.

It was characteristic of the Vatican to provide assistance to the needy without any regard to their political and religious beliefs. It should also be noted that the Vatican supported charitable initiatives on the part of Orthodox believers, including those involving spiritual assistance. It can be assumed that the openness to people with different worldviews, including Catholics, mentioned in Bishop Emmanuel Chaptal's report in his

Education and Science “ISTORIYA”. 2019. V. 10. Issue 11 (85). URL: <https://history.jes.su/s207987840008073-9-1/> (accessed: 02.09.2023). (In Russian).

¹⁶⁵ Luigi Maglione (1877–1944) was a cardinal from 1935, titular Archbishop of Caesarea Palestina from 1920, and Vatican Secretary of State (1939–1944). See: *Malgeri F.* Maglione Luigi // *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Vol. 67 (2006). URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/luigi-maglione_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed: 07.08.2023). Modalità di accesso: Treccani : [portale].

remark that Mrs. Lyubimova was “sens sectarisme”, had a positive impact on the Vatican’s final decision¹⁶⁶.

The issue of confessional affiliation was not underestimated by Rome, which realised that some cases of willingness on the part of Russians to convert from the Orthodox faith to the Catholic one were more likely to be dictated by a state of dire need than by personal conviction.

In the Instructions of early 1929, sent out by the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission to all ordinariates¹⁶⁷ and containing general guidelines for conversion to Catholicism, concerning both laity and clergy, we read:

“...It should be prudently investigated whether the reasons which impel them to the unity of the church are spiritual and supernatural or human, such as their present constraint and unhappiness, in which case it is well to help them as far as possible, and to urge the brethren to show them mercy”¹⁶⁸.

Nevertheless, the Commission asked the ordinaries not to leave such people to fend for themselves nor turn their backs on them:

“... These should not be rejected or abandoned in the longing they feel for the Catholic Church, but entrusted and recommended to a prudent priest who will teach them

¹⁶⁶ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit.

¹⁶⁷ By the word “ordinary” we refer to Catholic bishops who govern Catholic dioceses. The full definition of “ordinary” is contained in Canon 134 of the Code of Canon Law. See: Code of Canon Law in Russian. Moscow : Institut filosofii, teologii i istorii St. Fomy, 2007 // La Santa Sede : [sito ufficiale]. URL: https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/russian/codex-iuris-canonici_russian.pdf (accessed: 08.08.2023). (In Russian).

¹⁶⁸ “<...> È necessario indagare con prudente discrezione, se i motivi per i quali sono indotti all’unità della chiesa[*sic*] siano spirituali e soprannaturali, ovvero umani[*sic*], come ad es.[*sic*] la loro strettezza e miseria attuale, nel qual caso è bene che siano aiutati, secondo il possibile, e raccomandati vivamente alla carità dei fratelli”. Cit. in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, fasc. 3, ff. 6–9. The instructions were published as a clarification of the PCPR decree of 12 January 1929, according to which all individual cases of Russians converting from Orthodoxy to Catholicism were to be brought to the attention of the PCPR or, if there was one, the local apostolic legate. However, this was not possible in a number of cases where the safety of the individual was at stake, or in cases where the conversion required a very short time for approval. The text of the decree is available in Latin. See: *Acta officiorum. Pontificia Commissio Pro Russia. Monitum de russis ad catholicam fidem redeuntibus* // AAS. 21 [1929]. P. 94.

Catholic doctrine, especially on the unity of the Church, the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, Purgatory etc.”¹⁶⁹.

Likewise, the Instructions also recommend that no one who sincerely wishes to convert to Catholicism should be forced to accept the Latin Rite:

“Once they are sufficiently prepared, instructed, and disposed, discussions should be held with them about the choice of rite, but they should not be induced against their natural inclinations to choose the Latin rite, but the dignity and beauty of the Eastern rite, and the teaching and grace of the Catholic Church in favour of the Eastern rite should be explained to them, and only if some Russians are in every way and for just reasons inclined to the Latin rite should they be admitted to it”¹⁷⁰.

It is also worth noting that the Vatican Secretariat of State and the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission did not automatically make favourable decisions on requests for assistance from Catholics: as in the case with Russians, each situation was also subjected to careful scrutiny and analysis.

For example, when in November 1929 a priest named David (in the document, “Davide”) knocked on the door of the Carmelite convent in Lisieux, claiming that he had escaped persecution in the Soviet Union, the abbess of the convent, Sister Agnese Jesus (in the document, “suor Agnese di Gesù”), informed the Vatican (most likely the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission). In response, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri sent a telegram to the Nunciature in Paris on November 15, 1929, informing them that the priest mentioned

¹⁶⁹ “<...> Essi non siano rigettati o abbandonati a sé nel movimento che sentono verso la Chiesa Cattolica, ma affidati e raccomandati ad un prudente sacerdote, il quale insegna loro la dottrina cattolica, specialmente sull’unità della chiesa[sic], sul primato del Romano Pontefice, sull’immacolata Concezione di Maria Vergine, sul Purgatorio ecc.”. Cit. in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 27, fasc. 3, f. 7.

¹⁷⁰ “Quando siano sufficientemente preparati, istruiti e disposti, si intrattengano sulla scelta del rito, ma non si inducano gli orientali contro le loro naturali disposizioni a scegliere il rito latino, sibbene si spieghi loro la dignità e la bellezza del rito orientale, la dottrina e la grazia della Chiesa Cattolica in favore dei riti orientali, e solo nel caso che qualche russo a ragion veduta e tutto considerato e per giusto motivo propensa per il rito latino, siano ammessi in questo rito”. Cit. *ibid.*, ff. 7–8. The need to keep in the Eastern Rite those who wanted to join the Society of Jesus after conversion to Catholicism was mentioned to priest Edmund Walsh by Pope Pius XI himself, as the Jesuit reports in his account of the papal audience granted to him on 30 June 1923.

above had come from the USSR to the monastery at Lisieux and that the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission had doubts as to whether Priest David was a fraud; Cardinal Gasparri asked that those concerned be informed. Thanks to an urgent and accurately conducted investigation, the matter was resolved rather quickly: Fr. David ¹⁷¹ was in fact a Catholic priest, an Assumptionist¹⁷², and indeed fled persecution in the Soviet Union, and was a ‘fellow sufferer’ of Catholic Bishop Pius Eugène Neve, apostolic administrator of Moscow¹⁷³.

The process of dealing with each request addressed to the Vatican was in some cases very time-consuming, and the length of time depended on how much time had to be spent on thorough investigation, because it was necessary to find out whether there was really an urgent need and rule out the possibility that help could be being given to criminals or frauds of any kind.

This is illustrated by a request for assistance from a certain Hieromonk Pachomius (“Pacomio”) on June 2, 1934. Identifying himself as chairman of the Church Committee in Zurich, he addressed a letter directly to Pope Pius XI, where he described the circumstances of Bishop Seraphim’s life in Paris¹⁷⁴ as well as the circumstances of Bishop

¹⁷¹ David Mailland (1865–1932) was a Catholic priest, Assumptionist, a profound connoisseur of religious chants and languages (he spoke Turkish, Bulgarian and Russian). He was born in Trévignin, in the French canton of Aix-les-Bains. In 1899 he took perpetual vows in Plovdiv (Bulgaria). He was ordained a priest by Bishop Pius Eugène Neveu in Moscow in 1927. Due to pressure from the GPU, he was forced to leave the country on 7 October 1929. See: *Frolov V. Assumptionists in Russia and Russian Catholics: correspondence, biographies // Assumptionists and Russia (1903–2003) : Proceedings of the Colloquium (Rome, 20-22 October 2003) / ed. by A.V. Yudin. Moscow: Duchovnaya biblioteka, 2005. P. 40–41. (In Russian).*

¹⁷² This information was confirmed by both Sister Agnese Jesus and the Pontifical Commission *pro Russia*. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Parigi*, b. 472, fasc. 754, ff. 25–26.

¹⁷³ See: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit.*

¹⁷⁴ We believe it is quite reasonable to identify him with Metropolitan Seraphim (Luk’yanov), secular name Alexander Ivanovich Luk’yanov (1879–1959). From January 1927 until August 1945 he served as bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church with the seat of the cathedra in Paris. In 1937 he was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan. See: *Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia in Western Europe // Pravoslavnaya Entsiklopediya : elektronnyaya versiya. V. 19 ; ed. by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill. URL: <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/182571.html> (date of publication: 19.11.2013). (In Russian); *Kostryukov A.A. Russian Church outside Russia in 1939–1964: Administrative Structure and Relations with the Church in the Fatherland. Moscow : Izdatel’stvo PSTGU, 2015. P. 40, 137.**

Seraphim in Vienna¹⁷⁵ (in the document both are referred to as “Serafino”). According to his letter, the former lived on 80 francs a month, part of which he had to spend on the expenses of his diocese (that is, the Western European diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), while the latter lived on 50 francs a month, and his body was “reduced to a skeleton”. Father Pachomius concluded his letter by appealing to the Pope so that “Orthodoxy may know that from the See of St. Peter comes not only exhortation, instruction and teaching, but also the apostolic Agape”.

On June 12, 1934, the priest Filippo Giobbe, secretary of the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission, asked Archbishop Luigi Maglione whether the contents of the letter from Zurich could be trusted and what amount of donation would be reasonable in case of a positive decision. Bishop Emmanuel Chaptal approached two members of the Orthodox Parish Council of Paris and on June 20 sent to Archbishop Maglione a report containing quite different accounts of the circumstances of the two bishops: they were receiving between 20,000 and 25,000 francs a month, and if Bishop Seraphim in Paris needed anything, the wealthy members of the Orthodox Parish Council would in any case support him.

Likewise, the staff of the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission continued to gather information about priest Pachomio Gustavo Zirbs (in the document, “P. Pacomio Gustavo Zirbs”). On July 10, 1934, the priest Gobbe wrote to Archbishop L. Maglione that the Pontifical Commission did not approve the donation to Father Pachomio because it had received information from a reliable source that the author of the letter to the Pope was neither a rector of a church, nor the chairman of the Church Committee in Zurich, nor a hieromonk, but was instead “a professional fraudster well known to the Viennese police”¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷⁵ We believe it is quite reasonable to identify him with Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade), secular name Karl Georg Al’bert Lyade (1883–1950). On 24 February 1938, the Synod of Bishops sent Archbishop Tikhon (Lyashchenko) of Germany to retirement because of financial irregularities in his diocese. In August of the same year Bishop Seraphim (Lyade), then head of the German diocese, was elevated to the dignity of Metropolitan of Berlin and Germany by the Bishop’s Council of the ROCOR. See: *Kostryukov A.A.* Russian Church outside Russia (...), op. cit. P. 40, 57–58.

¹⁷⁶ See: *Dommarco M.C.* A Mission important and dangerous (...), op. cit.

Father Pachomius' case was not an isolated one in those years. For example, the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission also considered a request from a man who called himself "Mak Arrow". In fact, as Bishop Michel d'Herbigny discovered, his real surname was Makarov and he was involved in dubious trading operations. For this reason, Makarov received no response from a representative of the Catholic Church¹⁷⁷.

These examples demonstrate that the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission and the nunciatures were actively co-operating to deal with each individual and group request for assistance that were received.

Even though, on the one hand, in most cases the data for investigation could not be obtained within a few days, on the other hand, its reliability still helped the Vatican to make a just decision as the information became available.

The activities of the Papal See in terms of assistance to people who had been forced to leave their homeland were so wide-ranging that all instances of its involvement in their fates are not fully known to us¹⁷⁸.

If Catholic aid was not without hope of conversion from Orthodoxy to Catholicism, partly because of the strong influence of the priest Michel d'Herbigny (a future bishop), exercised mainly through the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission, all charitable activities cannot be reduced to proselytism alone, as evidenced by the Instructions of early 1929 sent by the Pontifical Commission *Pro Russia* to all ordinaries in the places that had Russian emigrant communities.

As we have shown, numerous archival sources show that the Secretariat of State and all those who co-operated with it in commissions, associations and nunciatures were carefully examining people's requests in order to prevent dangerous misunderstandings.

Moreover, the Vatican's general *modus operandi* in responding to requests from Russians did not suggest that confessional affiliation would be considered as the primary criterion in deciding whether or not to provide assistance.

Helping Russians in exile was by no means the only occasion for encounters between the Orthodox of the Russian Patriarchate and Catholics. Unionist congresses,

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ For more detailed data, see also: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 484–488.

joint prayers, and cultural initiatives as ways of countering the spread of communist atheism in the West, which we will examine in the next chapter, became a productive venue for discussion, fellowship, and interaction.

2. THE VELEGRAD CONGRESSES AND OTHER PRAYER CONVENTIONS AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES

2.1 Velegrad and the idea of Stt. Cyrill and Methodius

The encounter between Russian Orthodox emigrants and European Catholics contributed to the fact that some believers of both denominations began to strive for confessional unity. This aspiration was particularly felt in the lands of Czechoslovakia, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, had become a home for a Russian community of considerable size. Apart from the obvious factor of geographical proximity, a fundamental role was played by common Slavic roots and a common spiritual heritage – the experience of the saints of the ancient Church, Stt. Cyril and Methodius.

The question of unity was closely linked to the Vatican's attitude towards the Eastern Rite, the value of which was again recognised in Rome since the end of the sixteenth century. This occurred against the background of the increased contacts between Orthodox, Eastern Rite Catholics and Latin Rite Catholics after the Union of Lublin in 1569 and the Union of Brest in 1596. In addition, it was necessary to take into account the needs of Eastern Rite believers in the Italian peninsula, especially in the South.

In 1573, Pope Gregory XIII established the Congregation for Greek Affairs (*de rebus Graecorum*), the first permanent body concerned with the rites of the Catholic Church in the East, to promote reform among the Basilian monks of Italy and to spread Catholicism in the East.

Three years later, the first eastern collegium of the city, the Pontifical Greek College of St. Athanasius, was founded in Rome and opened to Christians of the Byzantine rite living in the southern part of the Italic peninsula, the Balkan Peninsula, the Slavic countries and the Middle East¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁹ See: Vos L. L'Archivio del Pontificio Collegio Greco di Roma / Lambert Vos // Convegno Memoria Fidei : Archivi ecclesiastici e Nuova Evangelizzazione. URL: <http://www.memoriafidei.va/content/dam/memoriafidei/documenti/18%20Vos%20-%20Comunicazione.pdf> (accessed: 10.08.2023). – Modalità di accesso : Memoria Fidei : [sito ufficiale].

After the first attempt made by Pope Clement VIII in 1599, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Congregatio de propaganda fide*), a body responsible for the evangelisation of the nations, was created in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV¹⁸⁰. Within this Congregation, Pope Urban VIII established two special Congregations: for dubious questions of the faithful of the Eastern Catholic Church (*super dubiis Orientalium*) in 1627 and for the revision of the Euchology (*super correctione Euchologii Graecorum*) in 1636¹⁸¹. The latter was replaced by Pope Clement XI in 1717 by the independent Congregation for the Correction of the Books of the Eastern Church¹⁸².

In 1862, Pope Pius IX established a new body within the Congregation for the propagation of the faith to deal with all matters related to the Eastern Rite: a special Congregation for the propagation of the faith in matters of the Eastern Rite (*Congregatio de Propaganda Fide pro negotiis ritus orientalis*). This Congregation was headed by a cardinal prefect of the Propagation of the Faith, and the two Congregations had the same cardinals as members, while the Congregation for the propagation of the faith *pro negotiis ritus orientalis* had its own secretary, counsellors, minutemen¹⁸³ and translators.

In 1878, Pope Leo XIII established a Commission for the revision and correction of the books of the Eastern Church within this Congregation. This Congregation for the propagation of the faith *pro negotiis ritus orientalis*, though independent, and with wider authority than the Congregation for the propagation of the faith, because of the union of prefectures under one head, and because of similar titles, was seen by many as an addition to the Congregation for the propagation of the faith. This caused resentment among many

¹⁸⁰ For the history of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, see also the official website. See: La Congregazione // Archivio Storico “de Propaganda Fide”. Congregazione per l’evangelizzazione dei popoli // La Santa Sede : [sito ufficiale]. URL: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cevang/archivio/it/congregazione/congregazione.html (accessed: 10.08.2023).

¹⁸¹ *Del Re N.* La Curia Romana. Lineamenti storico-giuridici. Città del Vaticano : Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998. P. 425.

¹⁸² See *ibid.* P. 399–400.

¹⁸³ A minutante is an employee of the Roman Curia responsible for compiling drafts of various types of documents.

Eastern Catholics who felt put in an inferior position to Latin Catholics and were seen as non-Christian peoples in need of evangelisation.

Thus, Pope Benedict XV abolished this special Congregation in 1917 and through *motu proprio* “*Dei providentis*”¹⁸⁴ replaced it with the Congregation for the Eastern Church (*Congregatio pro Ecclesia Orientali*)¹⁸⁵. The prefect of the Congregation was the Pope himself¹⁸⁶.

On October 15, 1917, a few days before the Bolshevik Revolution, Pope Benedict XV also established the Pontifical Oriental Institute (*Pontificium Institutum Orientale*) to deepen the understanding of the various aspects of the life of the Eastern Churches and to educate clergy suited for missionary service in the Eastern territories, including Russia.

As stated in the founding document of *Orientis Catholici*, Rome now opened “its own institution of higher education in Oriental studies”¹⁸⁷. Moreover, the institution was characterised by interdenominational openness, as not only Eastern and Latin Catholics, but also Orthodox Christians could enroll there from the very beginning¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁴ The text of the *motu proprio* «*Dei providentis*» (1 May 1917) is available in Latin. See: *Benedictus XV. Motu proprio «Dei providentis»*. 02.11.1917 // AAS. 09 I [1917]. P. 529–531.

¹⁸⁵ See: *Del Re N.* La Curia Romana (...), op. cit. P. 425–427.

¹⁸⁶ This configuration lasted until 1967, when Pope Paul VI renamed the Congregation for the Eastern Churches (*Congregatio pro Ecclesia Orientalis*) the Congregation for the Eastern Churches (*Congregatio pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus*) and appointed Cardinal Prefect Gustavo Testa to head it. On 19 March 2022, Pope Francis issued a new apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia and its service to the Church and the world, the *Praedicate evangelium*. The categories of “Congregations” and “Papal Councils” are replaced by “Dicasteries” (italics: dicasteri). On this see: Oriente cattolico Roma / a cura di G. Rigotti, R.G. Roberson C.S.P., V. Poggi S.I., R. Tafat S.I., M. Van Parys O.S.B. Roma : Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali : Valore Italiano Editore, 2017. P. 69–94. Dicastero per le Chiese Orientali : [sito ufficiale]. URL: <https://www.orientchurch.va/dicastero.html> (accessed: 10.08.2023); *Croce G.M.* Alle origini della Congregazione Orientale e del Pontificio Istituto Orientale. Il contributo di Mons. Louis Petit // *Orientalia christiana periodica*. 1987. № 53. P. 257–333; *Vasil’ C.* Lo sviluppo della posizione della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali nell’ambito della Curia Romana // *Iura Orientalia* : [website]. URL: http://www.iuraorientalia.net/IO/IO_010_2014/III_07_Vasil.pdf (accessed: 10.08.2023); *Dommarco M.C.* Edmund A. Walsh (...), op. cit. P. 20–21.

¹⁸⁷ About the history of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, see also: *Storia del P.I.O. // Pontificio Istituto Orientale* : [sito ufficiale]. URL: <https://orientale.it/it/storia/> (accessed: 10.08.2023).

¹⁸⁸ See: *Tamborra A.* Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa (...), op. cit. P. 389–393; *Braschi F.* Reviews in the Catholic periodical press of Italy about the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1917 // *Sobor and Sobornost’*: on the centenary of the beginning of the new era. Moscow : Izdatel’svo PSTGU, 2018. P. 312–325.

It was this desire, revived on the basis of their own history and events relevant to the time, to see the Eastern rite fully recognised, equal in dignity to the Latin rite, that renewed interest in what might be called Catholic Panslavism in the Czechoslovak lands¹⁸⁹. The trend towards unity among Slavic peoples in Catholic countries fulfilled the desire of many to overcome the tendency towards nationalistic division of the local Orthodox Churches, finding in the Pope a guarantor of the unity of the Slavs in the faith and in the tradition inherited from Stt. Cyril and Methodius, the saints of the ancient Church.

In 1859, under the pontificate of Pope Pius IX, consideration was given to restoring the use of Church Slavonic in the worship of the Roman Rite to the Catholic Church in Moravia and Bohemia, which had been adopted in the ninth century and then, since the end of the eighteenth century, was no longer in use¹⁹⁰. In 1880, the day of commemoration of Stt. Cyril and Methodius was included by Pope Leo XIII into the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church¹⁹¹.

Speaking specifically of Moravia, in 1892 the Archbishop of Olomouc approved the initiative of the priest Antonín Cyril Stojan¹⁹², establishing the association that was named Apostolate of Cyril and Methodius (full title being, *Apostolatus ss. Cyrilli et*

¹⁸⁹ *Kindlerová A.* L'eredità di Cirillo e Metodio e i Congressi di Velehrad // I Santi Cirillo e Metodio e la loro eredità religiosa e culturale, ponte tra Oriente e Occidente ; a cura di E. Hrabovec, P. Piatti, R. Tolomeo. Città del Vaticano : Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016. P. 251–270. P. 251–256.

¹⁹⁰ *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 165.

¹⁹¹ The text of the encyclical “*Grande Munus*” (30 September 1880) is available in Latin: see: *Leo XIII.* Littera Encyclica «Grande Munus». 30.09.1880 // ASS. 13 [1880]. P. 145–153.

¹⁹² Antonín Cyril Stojan (1851–1923) was Archbishop of Olomouc from 1921, a member of the Vienna Parliament from 1897. In 1920 he was appointed Senator of the Czechoslovak Republic. See: *Marek P.* Stojan Antonín Cyril (1851–1923). Erzbischof und Politiker // Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon : [website]. URL: https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_S/Stojan_Antonin-Cyril_1851_1923.xml (accessed: 10.08.2023); *Němec L.* Antonin Cyril Stojan, Apostle of Church Unity: Human and Spiritual Profile. New York : Don Bosco publication, 1983; Antonio Cirillo Stojan // Dicastero delle cause dei santi : [sito ufficiale]. URL: <https://www.causesanti.va/it/venerabili/antonio-cirillo-stojan.html> (accessed: 10.08.2023). About him and the Union Congresses, see also: *Dommarco M.C.* Antonín Cyril Stojan (1851–1923) and the Union Congresses of Velehrad: New Documents from the Vatican Archives for a Better Understanding of His Legacy // AUC Theologica. 2023. Vol. 13, № 2. P. 81–98.

*Methodii sub tutela Beatae Mariae Virginis*¹⁹³), whose activities were later carried out in Austria. Just two years after the foundation of the association, Pope Leo XIII in his apostolic letter “*Praeclara gratulationis*” appealed to the Slavic peoples to reunite with Rome¹⁹⁴.

In fact, as early as the 1830s, Catholic youth and priest František Sušil¹⁹⁵ gave a new impetus to the veneration of Cyril and Methodius in the seminaries of Brno and Olomouc in Bohemia, which was in line with the idea of national revivalism. Therefore, within the boundaries of the Czech revival, one can observe the formation of a Catholic movement different from the liberal one. For example, among other initiatives in the academic sphere, the National Association of Stt. Cyril and Methodius was founded in 1849 by Moravian literati. In addition, in 1850, Catholic clergymen under the leadership of the priest František Sušil founded the Legacy of Stt. Cyril and Methodius (Dědictví sv. Cyrila a Metoda). Increasing attention to the issue of unity among Christians and, in particular, unity with the Slavic Orthodox, characterised much of the activities of the association, which held hundreds of Masses each year and undertook many prayer initiatives in the name of unity¹⁹⁶. Archbishop Antonín Cyril Stojan accepted the legacy of Fr František Sušil’s and carried it on until his death in 1923, surviving decades of great social and political upheaval in Bohemia and Moravia¹⁹⁷. At Stojan’s initiative, from the late 1870s on, several pilgrimages of Slavic Catholic seminarians to Velehrad, the historical centre of veneration of Saints Cyril and Methodius, were organised. The pilgrimages included periods of personal prayerful reflection (meditation) and a series of meetings united by the theme of inter-Christian unity. In this way, the participants not

¹⁹³ Prečan – Pius XI, 19.01.1924. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 20. In Czech: Apoštolát sv. Cyrila a Metoděje pod ochranou blahoslavené Panny Marie. *Ambros P. František Dvorník, Velehrad Unionism and Church Unity // Studia Bobolanum*. 2021. № 1 (32). P. 227–240. P. 228.

¹⁹⁴ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 165–166.

¹⁹⁵ Sušil František (1804–1868) was a professor of the New Testament at the Catholic seminary in Brno, an active propagator of the Panslavist idea based on the cult of Cyril and Methodius. See: *Vychodil P. František Sušil: životopisný nástin*. Brno : Papežská knihtiskárna benediktinů rajhradských, 1898.

¹⁹⁶ *Kindlerová A. L’eredità di Cirillo e Metodio (...)*, op. cit. P. 251–270. P. 252.

¹⁹⁷ *Lami G. Storia dell’Europa Orientale. Da Napoleone alla fine della Prima guerra mondiale*. Milano ; Firenze : Le Monnier Università, 2019. P. 224–225.

only had a personal spiritual experience, but also a communal experience, getting to know young Slavic seminarians from other countries. These pilgrimages, along with a network of initiatives in which lay people also participated since the 1840s, made the holy places of Velehrad in Moravia¹⁹⁸ a natural gathering place for Slavic Catholics and Orthodox Slavs who wanted to reach a greater depth in the matter of unity¹⁹⁹. It was therefore not surprising that Velehrad was chosen as a place for shared reflection on the Christian Slavic East and the theme of unity between Catholics and Orthodox.

It was in the Apostolate of Stt. Cyril and Methodius, during a meeting of the leaders of the association held in Velehrad in the summer of 1906, that the idea of a series of so-called ‘Unionist congresses’ emerged; the author of the idea being Fr. Antonín C. Stojan (future archbishop), but no less important role was played by Catholic archbishop Franz Bauer²⁰⁰, Archbishop Leopold Prečan²⁰¹, and Metropolitan Andrej Sceptycki^{202 203}.

¹⁹⁸ For the recent history of the sanctuary, given first to the Cistercians and since 1890 to the Jesuits, see: Velehrad. Poutní místo // Informační portál poutního místa Velehrad : [website]. URL: <http://www.velehradinfo.cz/o-velehradu/> (accessed: 10.08.2023); Velehrad, santuario di // Enciclopedia Cattolica. Città del Vaticano: Ente per l’Enciclopedia Cattolica e per il libro cattolico. T. 12. [S. l. : s. n], 1954. P. 1168–1170.

¹⁹⁹ See: *Kindlerová A.* L’eredità di Cirillo e Metodio (...), op. cit. P. 252. On the Apostolate of Cyril and Methodius see: *Němec L.* Antonin Cyril Stojan (...), op. cit. P. 39–41.

²⁰⁰ Bauer Franz Salesius (1841–1915) was Archbishop of Brno from 1882 and of Olomouc from 1904. See: Bauer, Franz Salesius (1841–1915), Bischof und Kardinal // Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon : [website]. URL: https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_B/Bauer_Franz-Salesius_1841_1915.xml (accessed: 10.08.2023).

²⁰¹ Prečan Leopold (1866–1947) was Archbishop of Olomouc from 1923 until his death, he gave a strong impetus to the cultural and religious life of the diocese. A biographical note about him can be found on the website of the Archdiocese of Olomouc. See: Leopold Prečan (1923–1947) // Arcibiskupství olomoucké : [official website]. URL: <https://www.ado.cz/arcidieceze/historie/posloupnost-biskupu/leopold-precan/> (accessed: 10.08.2023).

²⁰² Šeptyc’kyj Andrej (1865–1944) was a Ukrainian Catholic archbishop, Metropolitan of Lviv (1900–1944) and founder of the Ukrainian Studite monks (1901). See: *Adlgasser F., Bihl W.-D.* Szeptycki (Šeptyc’kyj) Andrej (Andreas) von und zu Szeptyce, Metropolit // Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon : [website]. URL: https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_S/Szeptycki-Szeptyce_Andrej_1865_1944.xml (accessed: 10.08.2023).

²⁰³ Although bishop Antonín C. Stojan was not the only one dealing with unionist issues at that time, we cannot doubt his decisive role in the birth of the Velehrad Unionist Congresses, without in any way diminishing the contribution made by the other figures mentioned. On this see: *Gordillo M.* Velehrad e i suoi congressi unionistici // *La Civiltà Cattolica*. 1957. № 2 (108). P. 569–583. P. 569, 573–574;

An innovative approach to the issue of the unity of Christians coming from the Czech and Slovak lands was formulated by two Catholic intellectuals, the Ljubljana Slavist priest František Grivec and the Prague theologian priest Antonín Podlaha, who were most supportive of the writings of Bishop Antonín C. Stojan, in order to draw attention to the problem of unity not only among the intellectual elite but also among all believers. Between 1904 and 1905, they formulated the basic idea of the Velegrad Unionist movement as follows: “The possibility or impossibility of achieving unity is not our business: we do not consider such questions at all, since they are futile in themselves. It is much more important to follow the experts who declare that the study of the Christian East is useful, necessary, and still very much neglected. We rightly avoid the wording ‘(re)joining’ and speak of rapprochement, so as to avoid any misunderstanding. We need to work towards rapprochement so that the East understands us and understands us more, so that the prejudices of the East towards the West are at least slightly reduced. National prejudice, ignorance and cultural divisions also influenced the divisions within the church<...>. The study of the Christian East is important and necessary for us because, due to our geographical position, our history, our character and language, we are neighbours of the East. If we do not understand the East, we cannot fully understand our position among the educated nations and in the Catholic Church, we cannot carry on our ministry successfully, we cannot organise ourselves”²⁰⁴.

Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 192. On Stojan’s activities, see also: *Ambros P.* František Dvorník (...), op. cit. P. 208–209.

²⁰⁴ “La nostra opera non risiede nella possibilità o meno dell’unione: non affrontiamo per nulla tali questioni, poiché queste da sole sono sterili. È molto più importante seguire gli specialisti che dichiarano che lo studio dell’Oriente cristiano è utile, necessario, e finora assai trascurato. Giustamente evitiamo la dicitura “unione” e parliamo di avvicinamento, per evitare che qualcuno ci comprenda male. È necessario lavorare per l’avvicinamento, in modo che l’Oriente ci capisca e comprenda maggiormente, in modo da ridurre almeno un po’ i pregiudizi dell’Oriente nei confronti dell’Occidente. Nello scisma pesarono anche i pregiudizi nazionali, l’ignoranza e la divisione culturale <...>. Lo studio dell’Oriente cristiano è per noi importante e necessario poiché, grazie alla nostra posizione geografica, alla nostra storia, al nostro carattere e lingua, siamo vicini di casa dell’Oriente. Se non comprendiamo l’Oriente, non possiamo comprendere appieno la nostra posizione tra le nazioni colte e nella Chiesa cattolica, non potremo continuare con successo, non potremo organizzarci”. Cit. in *Kindlerová A.* L’eredità di Cirillo e Metodio (...), op. cit. P. 257–258, footnote 29. On this subject see also: *Tamborra A.* Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa (...), op. cit. P. 401–402.

Thus, it can be said that ‘study and prayer’ was the formula of the Velegrad concept of “rapprochement” of Christians, and it was voiced at numerous events of this kind. As it becomes clear, this concept distanced itself significantly from the theory and practice of proselytism, although it co-existed with it in the time period between the two world wars.

According to the historical preamble of the first Velegrad Congress, the purpose of the congresses was “to open the way to peace and harmony between East and West, to clarify controversial issues, to rectify prejudices, to attract even those with the most oppositional attitudes, to restore full friendship <...> not only to gain a thorough knowledge of the problems, but also to discuss various courses of action”²⁰⁵.

The seven Unionist Velegrad Congresses were attended not only by intellectuals, experts in Eastern Christianity, but also by Catholic priests who in their pastoral work had become close to Christians of the Eastern rite, as well as others who wished to meet with the leaders of Catholic Unionist initiatives. In order that the work should not be scattered and fruitless, it was decided not only to address the issues of Catholic-Orthodox relations directly and broadly, as indicated in the preamble quoted above, but also, beginning with the Second Congress (1909), to divide the work into theoretical and practical parts.

However, the most important in all the achievements of the congress series was the theoretical part. Moreover, while the first three congresses (1907, 1909, and 1911) presented papers on a variety of topics, each of the next four had a specific theme: the fourth and fifth had a juridical focus, the sixth had a dogmatic focus, and the seventh was devoted to the history, theological and liturgical thought of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, since 1935 (in which the congress was to be held, but was postponed to 1936) marked the 1050th anniversary of St. Methodius’ death²⁰⁶. Within the framework of the congresses, numerous sensitive issues were raised, for example, the attitude to such differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism as the problem of *Filioque*, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, etc.²⁰⁷ So while, on the one hand, the

²⁰⁵ Cit. in *Gordillo M. Velehrad (...)*, op. cit. P. 576.

²⁰⁶ See: *ibid.* P. 576 (text and footnote 20), 577.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* P. 578.

atmosphere was permeated with a desire to find a common path, on the other hand, this process did not have the traits of false irenicism.

Apart from the formula “study and prayer”, one of the main characteristics common to all seven congresses is what could be called “Slavocentrism”: the focus of the organisers was on the Slavic Orthodox Churches. As the proceedings of the Velegrad Congresses show, the only talk devoted to a non-Slavic Church took place during the Fifth Unionist Congress, when a representative of the Chaldean Catholic Church delivered a talk on epiclesis in the Syro-Chaldean Church. Slavocentrism was particularly noticeable at the first three congresses, when only the Church in Russia and Bulgaria was discussed²⁰⁸.

Immediately after the first Velegrad Congress, the Catholic press of the Austro-Hungarian Empire questioned the organisers about their support for the idea of Pan-Slavism. Therefore, in 1909, at the next congress, the organisers replied that the close attention to the Slavic Church was due to the Cyril and Methodius roots of the Christian faith of the Slavic peoples, to which most of the Christians of the East belonged, and not to the political concept of Pan-Slavism²⁰⁹.

Nevertheless, there was still caution on Rome’s part due to the Catholic Church’s desire for universality. In correspondence concerning the Fourth Congress (1924) between the minutante of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, Fr. Enrico Benedetti²¹⁰ and the Apostolic Nuncio in Prague, Archbishop F. Marmaggi, Fr. Benedetti informed the Nuncio of Rome’s desire to avoid extreme particularism: “Speaking of the Congress, the excessive particularism of Slavism should be removed from it, so that it is generally concerned with the union of those separated from the Roman Church”²¹¹.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. P. 579.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Benedetti Enrico (1874–1941) was a doctor of theology and canon law, minutante of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, chaplain of the provincial hospital for the mentally ill in Rome, then assistant to the Vatican Library. See: *Croce G.M. Kniga bytija moego (Le livre de ma vie). Mémoires autobiographiques, tome 1 (1878-1908) ; édité par G. M. Croce. Cité du Vatican : Archives Secrètes Vaticanes, 2007. P. 501, footnote 410.*

²¹¹ “Parlando del Congresso si dovrebbe togliere a questo l’eccessivo particolarismo dello slavismo, perché si occupi in genere della unione dei dissidenti alla Ch. [Chiesa. – M.C.D.] Romana”. Benedetti –

At the next Velegrad Congress in 1927, Pope Pius XI expressed a negative attitude towards the participation of the staff of the Congregation for the Eastern Church in such activities²¹². Nevertheless, his decision is not a condemnation of the Velegrad Congresses. Like Pope Pius X, Pope Pius XI continued to support such initiatives, even after the publication of the encyclical *Mortalium animos* (1928), in which the pontiff condemned the tendency to depart from the doctrinal truths of the Catholic faith in the name of uniting Christians, manifested in some ecumenical events.

However, condemnation of such a trend is not a retreat from dialogue with the Orthodox, nor does it indicate the disappearance of the desire to achieve unity with Christians of other denominations²¹³. Pope Pius XI coincides in his views with his predecessor Pope Pius X, who in 1907, blessing the second Velegrad Congress, wrote to the organisers to encourage the participants in the congress “to continue the work begun and to carry it out continuously, provided that Catholic doctrine is observed”.

In addition, as early as 1932, Pope Pius XI, in his message to the participants of the Sixth Velegrad Congress, wishing the event success, said that he expected from the Congress “considerable achievements in building up the unity of the Church”²¹⁴. The reason for the 1927 ban can be attributed to a possible attempt by Pope Pius XI to prevent false statements about the Catholic Church’s attitude toward Orthodox Christians from spreading among the faithful. In other words, Pope Pius XI probably feared that if ideas that did not conform to the doctrine of the Catholic Church were to resonate at the congress, the participation of Congregational officials in the events could be interpreted as Vatican endorsement of such ideas.

Another important feature of the Velegrad congresses was the presence of Orthodox priests and intellectuals in exile in Europe. Although most of the speakers were

Marmaggi, 05.05.1924. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 54^v. On this document, see also: *Dommarco M.C. Antonín Cyril Stojan (...)*, op. cit. P. 92.

²¹² *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 511.

²¹³ On this subject see: *Dommarco M.C. «Take the first step»: the unity of the Church in the teachings of the Catholic Church in the 20th and 21st centuries // Christianity in the Middle East. 2022. Vol. 6, № 2. P. 101–111. P. 105. (In Russian).*

²¹⁴ See: *Gordillo M. Velehrad (...)*, op. cit. P. 580–581.

Catholics, due to the proselytising concept of Fr. Michel d'Herbigny (the future bishop), as we shall see below, the conference organisers always sought the presence of Orthodox, with the exception of the first congress, which will be discussed later. The participation of the Orthodox was not only favourably received by the Vatican, but also encouraged by it. This can be read in the message of Pope Pius XI to the participants of the Fourth Velegrad Congress (1924): "It is our sincere wish that not only Catholics participate in this fruitful conference <...> but also the separated [Orthodox – *M.C.D.*] clergy"²¹⁵. Moreover, in the consistory of December 18 of that year, the Pope not only praised the undertaking, but also rejoiced at the participation of the Orthodox (calling them "separated brethren"), as well as the response that the event had outside of Velegrad for Orthodox and Catholic believers alike²¹⁶.

We have seen that, on the one hand, the emergence of new bodies in the Roman Curia to deal with matters concerning the Eastern Churches had deep roots; on the other hand, the phenomenon of the October Revolution and then the migration – forced or voluntary - of numerous Russians to the West gave a new impetus to Rome's interest in the Slavic East, reinforced by the idea that the new historical context might be favourable for the conversion of Orthodox Russians to Catholicism.

Having drawn attention to the uniqueness of the Moravian and Bohemian lands and outlined the main features of the formula of Archbishop Antonín C. Stojan and his followers, involving a combination of 'study and prayer' to achieve unity between Catholics and Orthodox, we will now look more closely at each of the seven Velegrad Congresses. We will focus mainly on those events about which we were able to find archival information that clarifies the intentions of the congress organisers and how the Orthodox and Catholic participants experienced the days of meetings on the grounds of the Moravian shrine, where, according to tradition, the tomb of St. Methodius is located.

We will limit our consideration to the seven congresses held between 1907 and 1936. However, in 1946, after the end of the Second World War, a group of theologians and experts on the East gathered anew in Velegrad in an attempt to revive in the radically

²¹⁵ Ibid. P. 581.

²¹⁶ Ibid. P. 583.

changed post-war world a desire to become more familiar with the wealth of Eastern Christianity. The awareness that with the 1936 congress the era of the Velehrad Unionist Congresses had ended was strongly felt among the participants of the 1946 meeting, so much that the event was partly devoted to the history of the congresses held in Moravia between 1909 and 1936²¹⁷.

The work of the 1946 Congress was not continued due to historical circumstances: its participants did not know that after the Nazi persecution, the communist persecution would soon follow, starting with the coup d'état of February 1948²¹⁸.

2.2 Seven Unionist Congresses in Velehrad

Let us consider the seven Velehrad Congresses in chronological order, paying special attention to the relations being formed between Catholics and Orthodox, including Orthodox Russians who were residing in Europe at the time.

The first of these congresses was held in Velehrad in 1907, but it was attended only by Catholics and was rather meant to define the programme and the goals. The congress, which was attended by 76 people²¹⁹, using Latin as the language of communication, was devoted to theological and historical matters and to discussing practical ways of bringing the Orthodox Slavs back into union with Rome. The participants received a congratulatory telegram from Pope Pius X²²⁰. Since one of the 28 resolutions adopted by the Congress was to encourage the translation into Russian of works that would promote mutual understanding and respect between Orthodox and Catholics, the congress

²¹⁷ Ibid. P. 576.

²¹⁸ See: *Pehr M.* Katolická církev v Československu 1945–1948. Katolíci mezi nacismem a komunismem: Lenin, či Kristus? Havlíčkův Brod : Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů – Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2023. S. 262–274; *Hrabovec E.* The Holy See and Czechoslovakia 1945–1948 in the Context of the Nascent Cold War // *The Journal of Education and Science “ISTORIYA”*. 2021. V. 12. Issue 8 (106). URL: <https://history.jes.su/s207987840016710-0-1/> (accessed: 26.07.2023); *Dommarco M.C.* The relations between Church and state in Czechoslovakia (...), op. cit.

²¹⁹ On the main participants, see: *Cinek F.* Velehrad víry: duchovní dějiny Velehradu. Olomouc : Lidové knihkupectví v Olomouci, 1936. S. 443. Gordillo SJ writes about 73 participants. See: *Gordillo M.* Velehrad (...), op. cit. P. 575.

²²⁰ *Kindlerová A.* L'eredità di Cirillo e Metodio (...), op. cit. P. 258, footnote 30.

participants were accused of Russophile Panslavism, and at the opening of the second Congress, held in Velehrad in 1909, it was stated that the initiative was not a missionary or Panslavist meeting, but an intellectual endeavour to begin to debunk the anti-Catholic prejudices of Orthodox theologians²²¹.

The invitees to the second Congress, which took place from 31 July to 3 August, included Russian Orthodox priests Alexei Maltsev²²², Chaplain of the Russian Empire Embassy in Berlin, and Vasilij Goecken²²³. Having delivered the paper, *Epiclesis in the Divine Service of the Latin Rite*²²⁴, Fr. Alexei Maltsev emphasised the positivity of rapprochement between Eastern and Western Christians in the light of common efforts to counter atheism. The success of this Congress, which attracted 200 participants, led to the creation of the Velehrad Academy (*Academiae Velehradensis*)²²⁵.

On July 27-29, 1911, the third Unionist Congress was held, with the same number of attendees as in 1909. Russian Orthodox theologians were forced to withdraw because of the negative reaction of many Orthodox newspapers after the speech of priest Alexei Maltsev at the 1909 Congress, for which he was accused of being too close to Catholics²²⁶. Nevertheless, Fr. Vasilij Goecken sent the text of his report, which was read out during the Congress²²⁷. At this congress, it was decided to change the title of the publication Works on Slavonic Theology («*Slavorum litterae theologicae*» published since 1905) into

²²¹ For more information on the first Velehrad Congress, see: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 192–193.

²²² Mal'tsev Alexei Petrovich (1854–1915) was an archpriest, church and public figure, translator, theologian. See: *Bertash A. Mal'tsev Alexei Petrovich // Pravoslavnaya Entsiklopediya : elektronnyaya versiya. V. 43 ; ed. by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill. URL: <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/2561766.html> (date of publication: 01.02.2021). (In Russian).*

²²³ Assistant to priest Alexei Maltsev at the Russian Embassy in Berlin. Participated in the Second Velehrad Congress with the blessing of Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) of Petrograd. See: *Cinek F. Velehrad víry (...)*. S. 445; *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 194; *Esterka P. Toward Union : the Congresses at Velehrad // Journal of Ecumenical Studies. 1971. T. 8. P. 10–51. P. 17–19.*

²²⁴ *Cinek F. Velehrad víry (...)*, op. cit. S. 445.

²²⁵ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 193–194; *Tretjakewitsch L. Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...)*, op. cit. P. 43.

²²⁶ See: *Tretjakewitsch L. Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...)*, op. cit. P. 43, text and footnote 35.

²²⁷ See: *Esterka P. Toward Union (...)*, op. cit. P. 20.

Collection of Velehrad Academy Papers («*Acta Academiae Velehradensis*»)²²⁸, sending the compendium to the Eastern Churches, including the Russian Orthodox Church, and to spread the custom of celebrating a liturgy once a month in order to achieve union between Catholics and Orthodox Christians²²⁹. This was the first of the Velehrad Congresses to be attended by Fr. Michel d’Herbigny, but his influence at an organisational level was not yet felt as much it would be at the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Congresses²³⁰.

The Fourth Congress, scheduled for the summer of 1913, was held only unofficially, due to the inability of Serbs and Bulgarians to attend. An attempt to hold the event officially the following summer also failed due to the outbreak of the First World War. In all likelihood, the number of representatives of the Local Russian Orthodox Church in this event would have been significant, as the magazine *Tserkovny Vestnik* (Church Bulletin)²³¹ invited its Orthodox readers to participate²³². When the war ended²³³, Catholic Archbishop Antonín C. Stojan scheduled an organisational meeting for August 1922 so that the Fourth Velehrad Congress could be held the following year. However, the archbishop’s health deteriorated rapidly and he died on September 29, 1923. Therefore, the fourth Congress was held in Velehrad in the summer of 1924, from 31 July to 3 August²³⁴. There were tracks of sessions at the event: theoretical, dealing with the issue

²²⁸ See: *Cinek F.* Velehrad víry (...), op. cit. S. 446; *Gordillo M.* Velehrad (...), op. cit. P. 569.

²²⁹ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 194; on the speeches delivered at the Third Velehrad Congress, see: *Cinek F.* Velehrad víry (...), op. cit. S. 446–447; for other journals that appeared in those years on the subject of the reunion of the Eastern and Western churches, see: *Esterka P.* Toward Union (...), op. cit. P. 19.

²³⁰ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d’Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 42.

²³¹ Most likely, it was referring to the St. Petersburg Church Bulletin “Voda Zhivaya”, which was founded in 1874 under the name “Church Bulletin” and was so called until 2005. See: Voda Zhivaya. St. Petersburg Church Bulletin // Drevo : open orthodox encyclopedia. URL: <https://drevo-info.ru/articles/13676783.html> (accessed: 12.08.2023). (In Russian).

²³² See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 194; *Cinek F.* Velehrad víry (...), op. cit. S. 499–510.

²³³ On the relations between the Vatican and Czechoslovakia in the post-war years see: *Hrabovec E.* La Santa Sede e la nuova Cecoslovacchia: problemi e sfide nel contesto transnazionale // Santa Sede e cattolici nel mondo postbellico (1918–1922) ; a cura di M. Agostino. Città del Vaticano : Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2020. P. 49–75.

²³⁴ *Gordillo M.* Velehrad (...), op. cit. P. 575.

of formation of church structures, and practical, looking for ways to foster unity²³⁵. According to Tretjakiewitsch's reconstruction, Fr. Michel d'Herbigny, with the blessing of Pope Pius XI, invited a number of Orthodox theologians, both laity and clergy, and demanded a decision to be made at organisational level that only Catholics should speak at the sessions²³⁶.

Nevertheless, amidst the discussions of the first day, the audience was very enthusiastic about the opinion expressed by a Russian writer, Nikolai Klimenko, one of the many Russian laymen present in Velehrad: he advocated the need to break down the wall of psychological suspicions and historical misunderstandings between the faithful of the two Churches²³⁷.

We will be examining this Congress in more detail, since, according to the catalogue of the Vatican Apostolic Archives, it is the only congress for which the archival files of the Nunciature in Czechoslovakia contain a particularly large amount of material that allows us to better understand the preparatory process and the course of events of the Fourth Congress of Velehrad²³⁸.

At the end of 1923, the then secretary to the Archbishop of Olomouc, Catholic priest S. Zela²³⁹, sent a draft of the conference programme to Archbishop A. Arata, secretary of the nunciature in Prague. The handwritten notes of Nuncio F. Marmaggi in the text

²³⁵ *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 510.

²³⁶ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 42.

²³⁷ See: *Esterka P.* Toward Union (...), op. cit. P. 25; *Cinek F.* Velehrad víry (...), op. cit. S. 505; *Hrabovec E.* Die russische Emigration in der Tschechoslowakei zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen und die katholische Kirche // *Römische Quartalschrift*. 2011. № 3/4. S. 253–277. S. 274.

²³⁸ See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247 («Congresso unionistico di Velehrad 1924»); AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 46, fasc. 340 («Corrispondenza con i Russi di Velehrad»).

²³⁹ Stanislav Zela (1893–1969) was secretary of three Olomouc archbishops (L. Skrbensko, A.C. Stojan, L. Prečan), persecuted by the Nazi regime, Archbishop of Olomouc from 1941. In 1950, as a result of a trial on a fabricated case, he was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment. He served one year, after which he was under house arrest until his death. See: *Hanuš J.* Malý slovník osobností českého katolicismu 20. století s antologií textů. Brno : Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2005. S. 175–176. On the trials against the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s, see: *Budka A.* [et al.]. Církevní procesy padesátých let : [sborník příspěvků z konference pořádané Českomoravskou generální delegaturou Řádu karmelitánů, Českou křesťanskou akademií a Ústavem pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR ve spolupráci s Arcibiskupstvím pražským 21–22.5.2002 v Praze]. Kostelní Vydří : Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2002.

indicate corrections and additions, which the Vatican diplomat handed over to the Archdiocese of Olomouc. Among the most pertinent notes is the Nuncio's proposal to add to the topics for consideration "what the Eastern [believers. – *M.C.D.*] say about the Ecumenical Council"²⁴⁰ and to consider the theoretical and practical difficulties on the road to unification through a historical approach. He expressed a negative attitude towards including the topic of the veneration of Eastern saints in the session of the congress, calling the subject 'very difficult' to discuss from a legal point of view. In addition, he noted as 'important' the matter of the presence of Protestant Christians in the Slavic lands and of the Churches not in communion with Rome in Bulgaria and Serbia, without limiting the discussion to the presence of Catholics in these lands²⁴¹.

A few days later, Archbishop L. Prečan, Stojan's successor in the Olomouc episcopal cathedra, appealed to Rome through Archbishop L. Marmaggi to forward to the Vatican a letter to the pontiff, asking Rome to support the congress planned for that summer²⁴². Prečan asked Pope Pius XI that all ordinaries of Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia be informed about the Congress and send their delegates; that the Congress be presided over by a papal legate; that the Vatican send advice, guidelines, ideas and wishes to the Congress preparatory committee; and that the Vatican encourage all ordinaries with Slavic-speaking congregations in their dioceses to establish local groups of the Apostolate of Stt. Cyril and Methodius²⁴³. At the same time, Archbishop Leopold Prečan wrote a letter to the Pontiff asking him to approve the spread of the Apostolate of Stt. Cyril and Methodius so that the activities of the association would not be limited to the Czechoslovak dioceses (at that time it was an association of diocesan jurisdiction), but would also extend to the dioceses in non-Slavic territories. The request, handed by the archbishop to the nuncio in Prague, was handed by F. Marmaggi to Cardinal Giovanni Tacci, then secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, only on March 20, that

²⁴⁰ What is meant here is Vatican Council I (8 December 1869 – 20 October 1870).

²⁴¹ Zela – Arata, 31.12.1923. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 3. Citations *ibid.* The manuscript notes are unsigned, but most likely belong to Marmaggi. On this, see also: *Dommarco M.C. Antonín Cyril Stojan (...)*, op. cit. P. 93.

²⁴² See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 9.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, f. 13.

is, two months later²⁴⁴. Since the Nuncio expressed to the Cardinal a generally favourable opinion of the Apostolate, it is safe to assume that the two-month wait was not due to hostility towards the association, but rather to practical problems, perhaps related to the workload of the Congregation. Moreover, the nuncio, having confirmed his presence at the congress, asked Tacci to send a representative of the Congregation for the Eastern Church as well²⁴⁵.

The reply from Rome did not come soon enough. Indirect traces of Archbishop L. Marmaggi's reminders about the matter were left in a letter from Fr. E. Benedetti, an employee of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, addressed to archbishop on May 5: "You, a Roman, should not wonder at the eternity of Rome; but perhaps you do not know that our Congregation is more eternal than Rome itself"²⁴⁶.

A few days later, in mid-May, came the papal blessing of the Apostolate, as well as the Vatican's favourable assessment of the congress, the work of which it hoped would continue in the future²⁴⁷. The Congregation was represented by Fr. E. Benedetti himself²⁴⁸. The approval of the association and the exchange of views between the Nunciature and the Congregation for the Eastern Church certainly played an important role in giving the event an even wider reach than the three previous congresses: this was demonstrated by the significant increase in the presence of non-Slavic participants from Germany, Great Britain and England. There was also an increase in the number of Russians present, both Catholic and Orthodox, from Paris, Prague and other centres of the Russian diaspora²⁴⁹.

Fr. Michel d'Herbigny, one of the main participants in the congress, personally raised the issue of special care in discussions with Orthodox priests and bishops in his correspondence with Cardinal Pietro Gasparri. According to a letter of June 27 from the

²⁴⁴ Prečan – Pio XI, 19.01.1924. *Ibid.*, f. 20; Marmaggi Tacci. *Ibid.*, ff. 32–36.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 32–36.

²⁴⁶ "Tu che sei Romano non dovresti meravigliarti della eternità di Roma; ma forse non sai che la nostra Congregazione è più eterna di Roma". *Cit. ibid.*, f. 54. The letter in its entirety is also there, ff. 54–55.

²⁴⁷ Benedetti – Marmaggi, 16.05.1924. *Ibid.*, f. 62; Marmaggi – Prečan, 16.05.1924. *Ibid.*, f. 63. A printed reproduction of the papal breve can be found *ibid.*, f. 89.

²⁴⁸ *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 511.*

²⁴⁹ *Gordillo M. Velehrad (...), op. cit. P. 575.*

Secretary of State to the Nuncio, the Jesuit noted that if members of the Orthodox hierarchy were to be present at the congress, not only due courtesy should be shown towards them, but caution should be exercised in order to avoid those public appearances which might appear as accepting certain dogmatic and/or practical provisions for the union or agreeing on own obligations to fulfil the conditions for the union to take place. Fr. d'Herbigny therefore suggested that discussions between Orthodox and Catholic theologians should take place in private rather than in public, so that the matters the main group would review, perhaps adopting a solution, could then be presented to the relevant authorities with a view to a possible unification of the two Christian denominations²⁵⁰. Thus, the Jesuit expressed himself to the State Secretariat in very cautious terms, not excluding, however, the possibility of discussing with the Orthodox clergy in Velehrad the most sensitive points of interdenominational dialogue.

The press covered the congress extensively, reporting the presence of more than 300 people, including a representative of the Polish Christian Democratic Party, and highlighting the presence of women among the participants²⁵¹.

According to a report dated August 7, 1924, sent by Bishop Marmaggi to the Secretary of State Cardinal Gasparri following the event, it was a congress of about 400 participants, with about a dozen Orthodox Russians in attendance. As the most important congress of its kind at the time, it opened with a message from the Pope, in which the Pontiff expressed his support for the endeavour. The Nuncio's document, a report for the internal use of the Secretariat of State, can be considered a valuable source of information on the progress of the congress²⁵². The Nuncio F. Marmaggi named the Catholic priests M.

²⁵⁰ See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 85^{r-v}. On this subject see also: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 512.

²⁵¹ Here we refer to the editions of "Lidové noviny" on 26, 30 and 31 July and 1 August. See: *ibid.* 210–213. Gordillo reports 389 people plus about 20 bishops, i.e. about 400 participants. *Gordillo M. Velehrad (...)*, op. cit. P. 575. P. Esterka, cited by L. Pettinaroli, gives the same figures. *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 510.

²⁵² AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, ff. 262–276. A detailed congress programme, including a list of participants, can be found in the brochure *ibid.*, ff. 165–205.

d’Herbigny and G. Verkhovsky²⁵³ “two outstanding persons” of the Congress: the Jesuit was “profound, balanced and convincing” in his speeches, so much so that “the various audiences repeatedly expressed their unanimous approval and sincere enthusiasm”, while Verkhovsky “knew how to be original, truthful and practical in his proposals and suggestions, even if they were presented in a form that was sometimes blunt and overly categorical”²⁵⁴. In particular, Bishop F. Marmaggi reported the Poles’ disapproval of Verkhovsky’s defence of the Byzantine rite:

“Naturally, not all of his statements – inspired by a strong desire to protect the Russian rite and an aversion to so-called ‘Latinism’ – could have been met with the approval of the large Polish representation. On the contrary, at one point Archbishop Eduard von der Ropp²⁵⁵ made Fr. M. d’Herbigny declare that the very fact that the representatives of the Polish episcopate did not stand up to oppose the speaker should not be interpreted as tacit approval of the ideas expressed by Fr. Gleb Verkhovsky”²⁵⁶.

Nevertheless, all the other participants in the Congress agreed with Verkhovsky and did not approve of the methods often practised in Poland with regard to the Unionist

²⁵³ Gleb Verkhovsky (1888–1935) was a priest. He converted to Catholicism in 1909. Married, destroying canonical norms. In 1922–23 he cooperated with the Jesuit mission in Constantinople, in 1923 he lived in Rome, where he tried to attract the attention of the Catholic hierarchy to a dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church. See: *Golovanov S.V.* Biographical directory of figures of the Russian Catholic apostolate in exile 1917–1991. Omsk : Amfora, 2015. (In Russian).

²⁵⁴ “Profondo, equilibratissimo, convincente”; “lo svariato uditorio ebbe ripetutamente a manifestare, al suo indirizzo, il proprio unanime consenso e un sincero entusiasmo”; “seppe essere originale, veritiero, pratico ne’ suoi suggerimenti e proposte, pur presentate sotto una forma talvolta rude e troppo categorica”. Citations in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 268.

²⁵⁵ Ropp Eduard von der (1851–1939) was a Catholic archbishop. Bishop of the diocese of Tiraspol (1902–1903), then of Vilna (1903–1907). From 1917 Archbishop of Mogilev and Metropolitan of the Catholic Church in Russia. Arrested in Petrograd in April 1919, he managed to be released in October of the same year through an exchange for Bolshevik Karl Radek. See: Ropp von der Eduard Yul’evich // Saint Petersburg Encyclopaedia : historical and cultural internet portal. URL: <http://www.encspb.ru/object/2860466686?lc=ru> (accessed: 12.08.2023). (In Russian).

²⁵⁶ “Naturalmente, non tutte le sue affermazioni – ispirate a un senso di estrema difesa del ritualismo russo e di repulsa del così detto “latinismo” – non potevano incontrare l’approvazione della numerosa rappresentanza polacca. A un certo punto, anzi, l’Arcivescovo de Ropp fece dichiarare dal P. d’Herbigny che, il fatto che la rappresentanza dell’Episcopato polacco non si alzava a contraddire l’oratore, non dovesse essere interpretato come una tacita approvazione delle idee esposte dal P. Werchowsky[*sic*]”. Cit. *ibid.*

problem and Catholic proselytising among the Orthodox. To avoid unpleasant incidents, the Nuncio himself asked Bishop E. von der Ropp not to speak, and the same peacemaking role was played by Archbishop L. Prečan, Fr. M. d'Herbigny and other Catholic prelates present²⁵⁷. In fact, according to an article in *Lidové noviny* (People's News), Fr. G. Verkhovsky reported that he had noticed growing xenophobia among Russian refugees in Europe and some distrust towards Catholic charity, as many were perceiving charity as proselytising work, increasingly seeing Orthodoxy as a factor of national identity²⁵⁸. Thus, despite the instructions given by Rome on the matter of conversion from Orthodoxy to Catholicism mentioned in the previous chapter, in some cases these were not correctly perceived and became a precursor of interdenominational tensions. The open discussion of the issue of proselytism and mutual misunderstanding in contacts between Orthodox and Catholics was certainly one of the achievements of the Velegrad Congress.

The event ended with the inauguration of the so-called 'Stojanov', a house for spiritual practices for laity and clergy and the venue for subsequent Unionist congresses²⁵⁹. At the conclusion of the work at the chapel, the Nuncio gave a brief speech in Latin. From the balcony, the Nuncio conveyed the Apostolic Blessing to all the gathered participants²⁶⁰. Despite a few minor downsides²⁶¹, Archbishop F. Marmaggi stated that he was very pleased with the Congress, emphasising that it had been a valuable opportunity to try to break down mutual prejudices and to continue on the road to unity²⁶².

Given the fact that the Orthodox attended the conference only as passive listeners, since, as we noted, they could only actively participate in the private discussions of the

²⁵⁷ See: *ibid.*, ff. 268–269. Cardinal P. Gasparri expressed appreciation for the peacemaking orientation of the work. See: Gasparri – Marmaggi, 24.10.1924. *Ibid.*, f. 280.

²⁵⁸ See: *ibid.*, f. 216.

²⁵⁹ For the history of the building and the first events there, see: *Cinek F. Velehrad víry (...)*, op. cit. S. 516–521; *Gordillo M. Velehrad (...)*, op. cit. P. 571.

²⁶⁰ Cit. in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, ff. 271–273.

²⁶¹ We refer to some organisational problems with the timetable, one nationalist statement that was not followed up, and an attack (without consequences) on Bishop de Ropp by a local resident on grounds of hatred of the Catholic Church. See: *ibid.*, ff. 274–276.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, f. 275.

congress, the event was not spared the protest of some intellectuals representing the Russian emigration, such as Archpriest S. Bulgakov²⁶³, N. Berdyaev²⁶⁴, A. Kartashev²⁶⁵, and G. Trubetskoy²⁶⁶ – these, although they had not been invited, sent a telegram authored by Bulgakov²⁶⁷, to explain their absence to the Congress participants²⁶⁸. It was connected not only with the problem of proselytising on the Catholic side, but also with the adoption by the First Vatican Council of the dogma of papal infallibility, the abolition of which the authors of the telegram deemed a prerequisite for continuing on the path toward unification. The contents of the telegram were quoted in the local Czech press:

²⁶³ Sergej Nikolaevich Bulgakov (1871–1944) was a philosopher, theologian, doctor of political economy, and writer. One of the most significant representatives of Orthodox thought abroad. See: Protoierej Sergej Bulgakov // Azbuka very : [website]. URL: https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Sergij_Bulgakov/ (accessed: 12.08.2023). (In Russian).

²⁶⁴ Berdyaev Nikolaj Alexandrovich (1874–1948) was a philosopher, writer, public figure. One of the most significant representatives of Orthodox thought abroad. See: *Kazaryan A.T.* Berdyaev Nikolaj Alexandrovich // *Pravoslavnaya Entsiklopediya : elektronnyaya versiya. V. 4* ; ed. by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill. – URL: <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/%D0%91%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%B5%D0%B2.html> (date of publication: 12.05.2009). (In Russian).

²⁶⁵ Kartashev Anton Vladimirovich (1875–1960) was the last chief procurator of the Synod, Minister of Confessions of the Provisional Government of Russia, historian of the Church, theologian, publicist. See: *Mitrofanov G., protoierej.* Anton Vladimirovich Kartashev: Russian theologian and church historian, statesman and public figure // *Posev.* 2002. № 10. P. 30–37 ; № 11. P. 36–42. (In Russian).

²⁶⁶ Trubetskoy Grigory Nikolaevich (1874–1930) was a prince, diplomat, publicist. Participant of the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1917–18. In exile in Austria, since 1923 in Paris. Author of the books “Red Russia and Holy Russia”, “Years of Troubles and Hopes, 1917–1919”, “Russian Diplomacy 1914–1917 and the War in the Balkans”. See: *Trubetskie // Great Russian Encyclopedia 2004–2017 : online edition : [portal].* URL: https://old.bigenc.ru/domestic_history/text/4205661 (accessed: 12.08.2023). (In Russian). The Czech newspaper “Lidové noviny” reports that N. Trubetskoy was also on the list of subscribers, although according to the reconstruction of Tretjakewitsch and Esterka he is not mentioned in the Acts of the Fourth Velehrad Congress. See: *AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 216; *Esterka P.* Toward Union (...), op. cit. P. 26; *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d’Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 184.

²⁶⁷ The telegram was sent from Paris, although Bulgakov had not yet moved there permanently at that time. The text was probably agreed with him, but sent by other signatories who had already settled in Paris.

²⁶⁸ See: *Esterka P.* Toward Union (...), op. cit. P. 25–26. On the views of S.N. Bulgakov, N.A. Berdyaev and A.V. Kartashev on the problem of Christian unity see: *Avgustin (Nikitin), archimandrit.* Orthodox-Catholic relations. Pages of history. Moscow : Izdatel’stvo Franziskanzev, 2023. P. 281–291.

“At the very time ... while the Orthodox Church was preserving in purity and integrity the ecumenical tradition of the Church, the ecclesiastical West was coming closer and closer to a system of particular ecclesiopapism, which found its expression in an exaggerated understanding of the importance of a centralised organisation of power in the life of the Church. As long as there is no opposition in Western Christianity to the overstated extension of jurisdiction, as long as the Vatican dogma of 1870 is not cancelled or *de facto* undermined, all steps towards a rapprochement between Orthodoxy and Catholicism will unfortunately encounter obstacles. Yet one such obstacle lies not only in the doctrine of infallibility, but in Unionist proselytising among Russian refugees. It invokes defensiveness and is not conducive to rapprochement”²⁶⁹.

Although the Catholic participants of the Congress almost unanimously condemned proselytising, none of them would abandon the dogma of papal infallibility, since it is a theological issue, an essential point of Catholic doctrine, i.e. a manifestation of religious self-identification, and not only a problem of establishing relations with Christians of other denominations.

The signatories of the telegram were probably not aware of the Instructions sent out to all nunciatures in territories marked by the presence of Orthodox communities, which, as already mentioned, expressly forbade the use of charity as an instrument of conversion. Nevertheless, they condemned proselytism, which until then had persisted as a concept, and sometimes as a practice, within the Catholic Church at various levels, and they were therefore supported by the majority of theologians present at the meeting.

²⁶⁹ “Nello stesso momento – è detto nella lettera – in cui la chiesa ortodossa manteneva pura e intatta la tradizione ecumenica della chiesa, l’occidente ecclesiastico cominciò ad avvicinarsi sempre più al sistema di uno speciale ecclesiopapismo, il quale trovò la sua espressione in un’esagerata valutazione dell’importanza che, nella vita della chiesa ha la centralizzazione dell’organizzazione del potere. Fino a tanto che in seno alla cristianità d’occidente non sorgerà una opposizione contro la giurisdizione ipertrofica e fino a tanto che non sarà tolto o menomato di fatto il dogma vaticano del 1870, tutti i passi diretti all’avvicinamento dell’ortodossia al cattolicesimo incontreranno, purtroppo, degli ostacoli. Ma un ostacolo, fra questi, non è soltanto la dottrina dell’infalibità, ma anche il proselitismo unionistico fra i profughi russi. Esso costringe alla difesa e non favorisce l’avvicinamento”. Cit. in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 216. Also see: *Esterka P. Toward Union (...)*, op. cit. P. 26. For more on Bulgakov’s and Berdyaev’s philosophical reflections on the theme of Christian unity, see: *Besschetnova E.V. The idea of Christian unity (...)*, op. cit. P. 181–197, 213–233.

However, despite the passive role assigned to the Orthodox during the public sessions, some Orthodox found in Velegrad a favourable ground to discuss the problem of obstacles to unity.

The press reaction to the Fourth Velegrad Congress in the press, even after the event was over, was of no small importance. Thus, Baron Konstantin Wrangel (in documents, Constantin Wrangel)²⁷⁰, a Russian Orthodox residing in Rome at the time, wrote to Archbishop L. Marmaggi on 12 September to defend himself against the accusations made against him in the Roman press:

“Upon my return here, I was surprised to learn that the press in Rome had labelled me ‘the worst enemy of the Union, who endeavours to undermine the success of the Congress’. Recalling the flattering words which you were kind enough to say to me, I take the liberty of expressing the hope that Your Excellency will be kind enough, on occasion, to correct this erroneous statement”²⁷¹.

We have not been able to find any article or newspaper clipping with the text of the accusation against the Orthodox Baron or to determine to which newspapers the letter was referring. However, Wrangel’s letter to Archbishop L. Marmaggi gives us a glimpse of a Russian Orthodox who was pleased with the Velegrad Congress and, denying the accusations against him, declared his willingness to co-operate in organising future

²⁷⁰ Baron Konstantin Wrangel acted as an intermediary between the priest Vladimir Abrikosov and the Legitimist monarchist party. See: *Golovanov S.V.* The Russian Catholic Cause. The Roman Catholic Church and Russian emigration in 1917–1991. Omsk : Amfora, 2015. P. 29. (In Russian). The author of “Die Union mit den Ostkirchen. Bericht über die Wiener Unionstagung Pfingsten, 1926” gives an account of the presentations at the conference in Vienna (24-27 May 1927), including that of Baron Wrangel, who together with other Russian Orthodox speakers criticised the proselytism of the Catholic Church. See: *Salaville S. J.* Hollnsteiner, Die Union mit den Ostkirchen. Bericht über die Wiener Unionstagung Pfingsten, 1926 // *Échos d’Orient*. 1928. T. 27, № 152. S. 501–503. S. 501. URL: https://www.persee.fr/doc/rebyz_1146-9447_1928_num_27_152_4697_t1_0501_0000_2 (accessed: 01.11.2023).

²⁷¹ “En revenant ici j’ai appris avec surprise que la presse de Rome m’a décrit comme ‘ennemi acharné de l’Union qui s’est appliqué pour compromettre le succès du Congrès’. Me rappelant des paroles flatteuses que Vous voulûtes bien avoir à mon égard je me permet d’exprimer l’espoir que Votre Excellence voudrez bien, à l’occasion, rectifier cette assertion erronée”. Cit. in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 46, fasc. 340, f. 2^v.

congresses. The response of the Nuncio was equally warm and aimed at continued co-operation, unmarred by the slander of some journalists:

“I believe that such congresses will do much to dispel many of the prejudices which still divide the brothers of the same Christian family. We must believe this, Mr Baron, even if the press tries to show the contrary”²⁷².

Thus, the exchange of letters, albeit limited, lets us know that there was a Russian Orthodox who had a positive experience at the conference and stood against the press portraying him as an antagonist to the Velegrad initiatives.

Baron Wrangel obviously hoped that he would be able to continue the dialogue with the Catholic Church, hastening the transition from proselytism to a dialogue between the two Churches, but, as we know, the final paradigm shift had to wait until the Second Vatican Council.

The Fifth Velegrad Congress was held in the summer of 1927 (July 20 – 24), on the 1,100th anniversary of the birth of St. Cyril, the Equal-to-the-Apostles²⁷³. According to the welcoming telegram sent to the assembly by Pope Pius XI, the congress brought together twenty bishops, many priests and almost 500 participants. For the first time a cardinal was among them: the Primate of Poland, Archbishop A. Hlond²⁷⁴ ²⁷⁵. A significant place among the various talks was devoted to the topic of Russian émigré communities in Paris and Berlin²⁷⁶.

The Orthodox were again forbidden to speak at the public sessions of the conference: a strict instruction from the Congregation for the Eastern Church, given in January 1927, recommended that only the Orthodox who were well informed in the issues addressed

²⁷² “Je crois que de tels Congrès aideront beaucoup à dissiper tant de préjugés qui divisent encore les frères de la même Famille Chrétienne. Nous devons le croire, Monsieur le Baron, même s’il y a de la presse qui s’efforce de démontrer le contraire”. Cit. *ibid.*, f. 4.

²⁷³ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 510; *Cinek F.* Velehrad víry (...), op. cit. S. 555–559.

²⁷⁴ Hlond August (1881–1948) was a cardinal. Bishop of Katowice (1925–1926). Archbishop of Gniezno-Poznań and Primate of Poland from 2 June 1926 to 22 October 1948. See: *Il cardinale August J. Hlond, primate di Polonia (1881–1948). Note sul suo operato apostolico // Atti della serata di studio: Roma, 20 maggio 1999 / a cura di S. Zimniak. Roma : LAS, 1999.*

²⁷⁵ *Gordillo M.* Velehrad (...), op. cit. P. 575.

²⁷⁶ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 510–511.

should be invited to the Fifth Congress, and only to closed working sessions, not those open to the public²⁷⁷. This instruction, shared and most likely put forward by Bishop Michel d'Herbigny himself, most likely was driven by two main motives: on the one hand, given the coverage of the Unionist congresses in the media, the Vatican certainly wanted the Catholic hierarchy to avoid incidents involving theological issues; on the other hand, the Vatican could not fail to take into account the internal situation of the Russian Orthodox in exile. Indeed, the difficulties within the Local Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the breakdown in relations between Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky) and Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)²⁷⁸, which took place in 1926, complicated the process of inviting Russian Orthodox.

The complexity of this historical moment and how it affected the Velegrad Congress is demonstrated by a letter preserved in the Archive of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, from Duke George of Mecklenburg²⁷⁹ to Bishop Michel d'Herbigny. The Duke, Russian on his mother's side and a Catholic²⁸⁰, offered the Jesuit a way how the congress organisers could address the Russian Orthodox invitees after the rupture between the two metropolitans. To avoid suspicion that the Vatican had taken sides, he suggested that only personal invitations should be sent, in which it should be made clear that the offer to participate was made only because of the organisers' respect for the

²⁷⁷ See: *ibid.* P. 512, text and footnote 350; *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), *op. cit.* P. 184.

²⁷⁸ On this subject, see: *Kostryukov A.A.* Circumstances of Division between the Russian Foreign Church and the Metropolitan Evlogy in 1926 // *Yaroslavl Pedagogical Bulletin*. 2011. Vol. 1, № 4. P. 65–73. (In Russian).

²⁷⁹ Mecklenburg Georg A. H. von (1899–1963) was the son of Georg Alexander Herzog von Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Natalia Fedorovna Vanliarskaia. See: Georg Alexander Herzog von Mecklenburg // *The Peer*. Genealogical survey of the peerage of Britain as well as the royal families of Europe : [website]. URL: <http://www.thepeerage.com/p11168.htm#i111672> (accessed: 13.08.2023).

²⁸⁰ Russian Catholic speaker at the sixth Velegrad Congress. See: *Bratko – d'Herbigny*, 18.07.1932. *ACO, Pontificia Commissione Pro Russia*, pos. 397/28, b. 28, f. 6. We recall that on 27 May 1924 in Rome there was a meeting between the priest Michel d'Herbigny and Metropolitan Evlogy on the question of uniting the two Churches, during which Evlogy raised the problem of proselytism and Bishop M. d'Herbigny the problem of the anti-Catholic Orthodox press published in the West. See: *Pettinaroli L.* *La politique russe (...)*, *op. cit.* P. 499–500.

invitee personally and not because of the Vatican's sympathy for one of the two factions²⁸¹.

The sixth Velegrad Congress was held in July 1932, and the seventh, in July 1936. They were attended by 300 (including 13 abbots and bishops) and 423 people respectively²⁸². At both congresses, the so-called "expert consultations" were held for a small number of experts²⁸³.

The Sixth Congress of 1932, in which, incidentally, a Protestant participated for the first time, was largely devoted to the subject of relations with Russian Orthodoxy and the persecution suffered by the Church in Russia. Although here, too, all the papers were delivered by Catholics, the second half of one of the days was devoted to lively debate in the auditorium, and Russian was one of the languages used during the discussion. Among the ten final resolutions adopted by the congress, we may highlight a resolution proposed by Dr Evgeny Kalikin, an Orthodox Russian, against the religious persecution taking place in the USSR²⁸⁴.

Thanks to two personal letters addressed to Bishop M. d'Herbigny by the Duke of Mecklenburg and the Catholic priest, N. Bratko²⁸⁵, we learn that d'Herbigny's absence was not welcomed by the Russians present in Velegrad: they were complaining that they had come to the congress specifically to meet him and discuss their own positions and proposals for achieving the union²⁸⁶. Although we have no written testimony left by the Russian Orthodox, we have no reason to doubt the information provided by the Duke and

²⁸¹ G. von Mecklenburg – d'Herbigny, 16.06.1927. ACO, *Pontificia Commissione Pro Russia*, pos. 397/28, b. 28, f. 2^{r-v}.

²⁸² *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 690.

²⁸³ *Gordillo M.* Velehrad (...), op. cit. P. 577.

²⁸⁴ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 702–703.

²⁸⁵ Bratko Nikolaj (1896–1958) was an archpriest of the Eastern Rite Catholic Church. He took part in World War I and the Civil War, then emigrated to Europe. He converted to Catholicism in 1922 and was ordained a priest in 1927. Secretary to Bishop Michel d'Herbigny in the Pontifical Commission *Pro Russia*. See: Protoierej Nikolaj Bratko, Eastern Rite Catholic (1896–1958) // Religious activities of the Russian Abroad : bibliographic guide : [portal]. URL: http://zarubezhje.narod.ru/av/b_053.htm (accessed: 13.08.2023). (In Russian).

²⁸⁶ G. von Mecklenburg – d'Herbigny, 23.06.1932. ACO, *Pontificia Commissione Pro Russia*, pos. 397/28, b. 28, f. 5. Bratko – d'Herbigny, 18.07.1932. *Ibid.*, f. 6.

the priest, since in both letters they act as careful observers of the Congress, not shying away from criticising some of the Catholics present there²⁸⁷, and not failing to point out shortcomings at the organisational level²⁸⁸.

If the information contained in the letters of the Duke of Mecklenburg and the priest Nicholas Bratko is true, it is possible, however slightly, to downplay the criticisms of Bishop d'Herbigny, given that he had probably succeeded in establishing a relationship of mutual respect with some Orthodox Russians, despite the proselytising bias he encouraged and practiced.

Among the Russian Orthodox attendees, we may distinguish A. Kartashev, V. Vilinsky, a member of the Russian Writers and Journalists Union in Czechoslovakia²⁸⁹, Kalikin²⁹⁰, a representative of certain Russian organisations in Prague²⁹¹. Among the Russian Catholics, besides the Duke of Macklenburg himself, other representatives of the Russian emigration in Europe were present, such as priest D. Artemiev, priest V. Dlussky, Y. Maklakov, I. Puzino, and priest T. Semyatsky²⁹².

The Seventh Congress of 1936, organised by Pope Pius XI and Bishop Pacelli, with the support of the Czechoslovak authorities, who granted the participants certain privileges (from visas to discounts on railway tickets), was devoted to two main areas:

²⁸⁷ The Duke of Mecklenburg wrote to the Jesuit that it was likely that if he appeared at the congress he would be attacked by the Greek Catholics of Galicia. *Ibid.*, f. 5.

²⁸⁸ The priest emphasised the lack of what he felt was adequate time for discussion. ACO, *Pontificia Commissione Pro Russia*, pos. 397/28, b. 28, f. 6. The same notation made by Marmaggi to the Fourth Congress. AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, b. 40, fasc. 247, f. 275.

²⁸⁹ Valery Sergeevich Vilinsky (1903–1955) was a lawyer, Church historian, Doctor of Philosophy. In the summer of 1920 he fled to Romania. Since 1921 in emigration in Bulgaria. Member of the board of the Russian National Union in Bulgaria (1922), chairman of the Russian Student Union in Bulgaria (1922–1923). See: Valery Sergeevich Vilinsky // Solzhenitsyn House of Russian Abroad. A. Solzhenitsyn House of Russian Abroad : [portal]. URL: <https://www.domrz.ru/encyclopedia/vilinskiy-valeriy-sergeevich/> (accessed: 13.08.2023). (In Russian).

²⁹⁰ Yevgeny Vasilyevich Kalikin (1896–1958) was a publicist. He joined the White movement during the Civil War, then emigrated. In the 1920s and 1930s he lived in Europe, settling in Czechoslovakia. See: Kalikin Evgenij Vasil'evich // Kalikiny.ru. Family treasure trove : [portal]. URL: <http://kalikins.ru/Persons/persons13.htm> (accessed: 13.08.2023). (In Russian).

²⁹¹ ACO, *Pontificia Commissione Pro Russia*, pos. 397/28, b. 28, f. 6.

²⁹² See: *ibid.*, f. 6. On this subject, see: *Hrabovec E.* Die russische Emigration (...), op. cit. S. 269, 274. Bratko also mentions a certain priest named Meier, but no information about this person could be found.

the scientific, divided into liturgical, dogmatic and historical, and the practical, devoted to practices aimed at strengthening the union between Catholics and Orthodox. The Congress ended with the decision to convene the next congress in 1939, celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Union of Florence, but the World War II put an end to the Velegrad Unionist Congresses²⁹³.

Thus, it can be noted that, on the one hand, the concept of Archbishop Antonín C. Stojan and his associates and successors, which we can summarise by the triad “study, prayer and abandonment of proselytism”, seemed innovative for the time and anticipated the ecumenical approach that would later be articulated in detail by the Second Vatican Council. However, on the other hand, the negative influence exerted by Fr. Michel d’Herbigny after the death of Archbishop A.C. Stojan on the organisers of the congresses did not allow the innovative formula of Velegrad to fully advance and develop towards the contemporary understanding of the relationship of the Catholic Church with Christians of other denominations. Indeed, by that time the Catholic Church had not yet arrived at the clear and unambiguous formulation of the Decree on Ecumenism “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” (1964), according to which “the Spirit of Christ does not refuse to make use” of the Churches separated from Rome “as means of salvation”²⁹⁴.

In addition, if we evaluate the behaviour of the main participants of the Velegrad congresses based on the archival and bibliographic materials available to us, we note that the concept of Velegrad, even with the restrictions imposed on the Orthodox during open

²⁹³ Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 690.

²⁹⁴ “Consequently, although we believe that these Churches and separated communities suffer from certain deficiencies, they are nevertheless endowed with significance and weight in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ does not refuse to use them as means of salvation, the power of which comes from that fullness of grace and truth which is entrusted to the Catholic Church”. Decree on Ecumenism “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” // Documents of the Second Vatican Council. Moscow : Paoline, 2004. P. 171. On the current evolutionary processes of change in the Catholic Church, see: Dalla Rivoluzione francese al Vaticano II e alla sua recezione (1789–2022) ; a cura di U. Dell’Orto, S. Xeres. Brescia : Morcelliana, 2022. 1; Dommarco M.C. «Take the first step» (...), op. cit. On the position of the Russian Orthodox Church towards the Second Vatican Council, see: Avgustin (Nikitin), archimandrit. Orthodox-Catholic relations (...), op. cit. P. 292–298; Vasileva O. Russian Orthodox Church and the Second Vatican Council : [facts, events, documents]. Moscow : Lepta, 2004. P. 380.

sessions, served as a meeting ground for leading Orthodox and Catholic experts on ecclesiastical, liturgical and historical issues of the Christian East.

These initiatives were not isolated, and in general the 1930s are a particularly rich period in terms of contacts between the Russian Orthodox and the Catholics. There were many occasions for communication: series of study and prayer meetings based on the concept of the Velegrad Congresses, meetings of a purely cultural nature aimed at drawing public attention to human rights violations in the USSR and, in particular, to anti-religious persecution; joint prayer meetings for the same purpose, with the participation of representatives of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox Russian believers in exile.

Below we take a closer look at some of these events involving members of the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches, beginning with those that could be traced in the papers of the central archives of the Society of Jesus and the archives of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

2.3 The influence of Velegrad and the joint prayer on St. Joseph's Day

The cycle of the Velegrad Congresses, although unique in its kind, was not the only venue in those years that served to bring together Catholics and Orthodox, including the Russian Orthodox, in the field of culture. In Berlin, for example, there were attempts to promote Unionist aspirations, but they were not very successful. A Catholic priest, Ludwig Berg, then supervising Russian Catholics in Berlin, in one of his reports on pastoral work among the Russians, covering the period from February 15 to August 15, 1925, reports that a year and a half earlier some Orthodox Russians had established a group called *Friends of the Unity of Churches*, whose purpose was to promote better understanding between Orthodox and Catholics and to break down mutual prejudices. However, since they failed to secure a blessing from the Orthodox Bishop Tikhon

(Lyaschenko)²⁹⁵, the group had to be disbanded²⁹⁶. A few months later the initiative was taken by Berg himself, who in February 1926 organised a concert in Berlin to “establish the first contact between the Orthodox Russians and the Catholics”, inviting Bishop Tikhon to the event as well²⁹⁷.

Nevertheless, the Velegrad congresses served as a model for numerous more successful events, such as conferences in Ljubljana and Brussels (1925), Nice, Vienna and London (1926), Prague (1929), Pinsk (1930), Palermo and Syracuse (most likely both held in 1931)²⁹⁸.

Among the 350 participants of the conference in Ljubljana was Fr. Carlo Margotti, secretary of the *pro Russia* Pontifical Commission: Pope Pius XI not only blessed his presence, but even decided to finance half of the trip, although Margotti had expressed his wish to go at his own expense and in an unofficial capacity, as an expert in Oriental affairs.

However, at the Prague conference four years later, for some unclear reasons, Archbishop Pietro Ciriaci, the nuncio in Prague²⁹⁹, who had succeeded Bishop Marmaggi, considered the participation of Margotti, who had also been invited to the 1929 conference, inappropriate³⁰⁰. One can only assume that the nuncio feared that should some

²⁹⁵ Tikhon (Lyashchenko Timofej) (1875–1945) was an archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1919 he emigrated from Russia. He was Archbishop of Berlin and Germany (1936–1938). See: Archiepiskop Tikhon (Lyashchenko Timofej) (1875–1945) // Religious activities of the Russian Abroad : bibliographic guide : [portal]. URL: http://zarubezhje.narod.ru/tya/t_017.htm (accessed: 13.08.2023). (In Russian).

²⁹⁶ See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 28, f. 59. Priest Berg’s entire report is *ibid.*, ff. 55–67. About the priest Berg, see: *ibid.*, f. 3.

²⁹⁷ Cit. in AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Berlino*, b. 28, f. 295.

²⁹⁸ See: ARSI, *Russia* 2003, IV, 32 [4]. The document is dated “1931?”. *Ibid.*, [1]. It is a translation from Italian, certainly not by a native Italian speaker.

²⁹⁹ Ciriaci Pietro (1885–1966) was a cardinal from 1953, Archbishop of Tarsi from 1928, nuncio in Prague (1928–1934), nuncio in Lisbon (1934–1953). See: AAV, *Arch. Nunz. Cecoslovacchia*, Indice 1229, Nota storica; *Osbat L. Ciriaci Pietro* // *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Vol. 25 (1981). URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-ciriaci_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed: 14.08.2023). Modalità di accesso: Treccani : [portale].

³⁰⁰ See: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 510–511.

content not consistent with the Catholic faith be voiced, the presence of a Roman Curia representative could be perceived as acceptance of that content.

The Orthodox speakers could enjoy the same freedom of speech as Catholics at events that escaped the organizational involvement and direct control of Fr. Michel d'Herbigny. This positive trait can be found in the events organised by the Benedictine monk Lambert Beauduin³⁰¹ in Brussels (1925), by monk Gerard van Caloen³⁰² in Nice (1926) and two associations of Austrian and German Catholic intellectuals and scholars in Vienna in 1926³⁰³.

In this regard we may mention, for example, the talks given by Baron Konstantin Wrangel in Nice and Vienna, in which he called for the Unionist movement to be separated from the assistance given by the Catholic Church to Russian emigrants, in order to avoid the functional use which often took place for proselytising purposes. As demonstrated by the Wrangel-Marmaggi correspondence we discussed in the previous paragraph, as early as the Fourth Velegrad Congress, Wrangel evidently hoped that he would be able to continue a sincere dialogue with the Catholic Church, but Bishop Michel d'Herbigny prevented him from doing so. Returning in the summer of 1926 from a mission to the USSR, which prevented him from closely following the organisation of all Unionist congresses, the French Jesuit published an article in the journal *Orientalia Christiana*, trying to refute Wrangel, but this criticism failed to disprove the essence of the Orthodox Baron's speech³⁰⁴.

³⁰¹ Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873–1960) was a Belgian Benedictine monk, monastery founder and abbot who made the connection between the revival of Eucharistic worship and the renewal of the social conditions of industrial workers on the eve of the First World War, thus initiating the Liturgical Movement of the 20th century. See: Loonbeek R., Mortiau J. Un pionnier, Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873–1960): liturgie et unité des chrétiens : en 2 vol. Louvain-la-Neuve : Collège Érasme ; Chevetogne : Éd. de Chevetogne, 2001.

³⁰² Dom van Caloen Gérard (1853–1932) was a Belgian Benedictine liturgist, missionary, monastery founder, abbot and bishop. See: Caloen, Gérard // Biographia Benedictina (Benedictine Biography). Version vom 14.11.2019 : [website]. URL: http://www.benediktinerlexikon.de/wiki/Caloen,_G%C3%A9rard.

³⁰³ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 186–192.

³⁰⁴ See: *ibid.* P. 189–191.

The *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* contains the text of a report which the priest Joseph Schweigl, SJ³⁰⁵, then professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, delivered in Syracuse, presumably in 1931. Although we do not know whether the Orthodox were present and on what terms, this report is of no small importance because it testifies both to the continuity of the principle of “study and prayer” promoted by the Velegrad congresses and to Rome’s awareness of its own role in the struggle against Bolshevism in cultural and spiritual spheres. Within the “week of study and prayer” (“settimana di studio e di preghiera”³⁰⁶) in Sicily, the Jesuit emphasised that the development of interest in the Christian East was triggered by the Bolshevik Revolution, foreseeing the great attention that historians would pay to the subject in the future:

“The history of the pontificate of Pius XI has not yet been written, but the documents known to date suggest that the chapter ‘Pius XI and the Slavic East’ will occupy a glorious place in the history of this pontificate”³⁰⁷.

He also demonstrated a clear understanding that the relations between the Catholics and the Orthodox that had developed during the Papal Relief Mission to Russia (1922-1924) would not be the exclusive property of the historical consciousness of the two confessions, but would become an important part of the canvas of the social and political history of Russia:

“Still vividly imprinted in the memory of each of us are the efforts of the Holy See to secure freedom of worship, freedom of conscience, and free use of Church property in Russia for the Catholics separated from us and members of other denominations (1922). The memory of the charity that had saved so many millions of starving Russian children

³⁰⁵ Schweigl Joseph SJ (1894–1964) was a professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute from 1927, an expert on the Byzantine rite and the history of the Eastern Churches, and a writer. He was ordained in Krakow in 1917. Together with Fr Joseph Ledit SJ (Joseph Ledit SJ) spent a month in Russia, stopping in Odessa, Moscow and Leningrad. Their dream of opening a Catholic seminary in Russia was not realised as they were refused permission to stay. See: *Poggi V. Ivanov a Roma (1934–1949) // Europa Orientalis*. 2002. Vol. 21, № 1. P. 95–140. P. 104–106; *Poggi V. Joseph Ledit S.I. (1894–1986). Journal d’une mission en Russie (1926) // Orientalia Christiana Periodica*. 1987. № 53. P. 5–40.

³⁰⁶ ARSI, *Russia* 2003, IV, 32 [1].

³⁰⁷ “La storia del pontificato di Pio XI non è ancora scritto[*sic*], ma i documenti finora conosciuto[*sic*] lasciano prevedere che il capitolo ‘Pio XI e l’Oriente slavo’, occuperà un posto glorioso nella storia di questo pontificato”. Cit. *ibid.*, [2].

will never be erased from secular and ecclesiastical history. The prayers of the children, the touching letters preserved in the archives of the Secretariat of State, will remain an eternal monument to the papal gesture of goodwill”³⁰⁸.

In addition, Fr. Joseph Schweigl emphasised the spiritual dimension of relations between Russians and Catholics in Europe after the Bolshevik Revolution:

“So, the deeds of mercy towards the Russian people are great, but even greater is the concern for their spiritual needs. And here we see centres of spiritual and material support for Russian emigrants (900,000 people, according to the statistics of the League of Nations) being established”³⁰⁹.

For Fr. J. Schweigl, a deep study of the issues concerning the Soviet situation from a historical, legal, economic and social perspective, as well as an in-depth study of Byzantine liturgical tradition and the history of the Eastern Churches were the starting points for building unity between the Churches, which could begin with the destruction of prejudices, as the great example of Bishop Antonín Stojan with the successful Velegrad Congresses showed. The Jesuit made the following points in his address:

“Every scholarly book on the Orient or on Russia, every Russian volume that ranks with the other 32,000 volumes of the beautiful library of the Oriental Institute <...> is a step forward on the road to Unity <...>. The most beautiful works, the greatest labours are prepared in secret. It requires long preparation, lengthy consultation, and a mature reflection”³¹⁰.

³⁰⁸ “Vivi sono ancora nella memoria di tutti noi gli sforzi della Santa Sede per assicurare alla Russia dei cattolici, dei dissidenti e delle altre confessioni la libertà di culto, la libertà delle coscienze, il libero uso dei beni ecclesiastici (1922). Mai si cancellerà dalla storia civile ed ecclesiastica il ricordo di quella operosa carità che ha salvato tante[*sic*] milioni di fanciulli russi affamati. Le preghiere dei fanciulli, le lettere commoventi, che vengono conservate nell’archivio della Segreteria di Stato rimerano[*sic*] come un eterno monumento della beneficenza pontificia”. Cit. *ibid.*, [3–4].

³⁰⁹ “Grandi sono dunque le opere di carità verso il popolo russo, ma più grande è la premura per i suoi bisogni spirituali. E perciò vediamo sorgere centri di soccorso spirituale e materiale per i Russi emigrati (900 000, nelle statistiche della Società delle Nazioni)”. Cit. *ibid.*, [4].

³¹⁰ “Ciascun libro scientifico sull’Oriente o sulla Russia, ciascun volume russo che si allinea cogli altri 32.000 volumi della bella Biblioteca dell’Istituto Orientale <...> è un passo avanti sulla Unione <...>. Le opere più belle, le opere più grandiose si preparano nel secreto[*sic*]. Occorrono lunghe preparazioni, lunghe consulte, mature considerazioni <...>”. Cit. *ibid.*, [4–5]. On journals and libraries with material dealing with the Christian East, see: *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 188–192.*

The professor of the Oriental Papal Institute saw as a common beginning uniting the different activities of the Catholic Church at that historical moment, when unity with the Local Russian Orthodox Church seemed at hand, the common opposition of the Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church to the atheistic ideology that threatened to spread not only to the Soviet territories, but also to all continents:

“Not everyone can actively contribute to the reconciliation of the separated East with the Catholic Church, but everyone can pray. And so the Holy Father invited everyone to a crusade of prayer: a letter from the Roman Pontiff dated February 2, 1930. His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar considered the Mass of Propitiation in St. Peter’s Basilica on the Feast of St Joseph, and the prayer and protest of the whole Catholic world, to be very important events. Every resolution passed by Catholic organisations, every speech intended to make known the plight of Russia, every word of exhortation uttered from the pulpit, every film and every lecture, but above all, every one of those ‘Hail Marys’ said after Mass for Russia in so many thousands of Catholic churches, and then so many prayers of propitiation and so many sacrifices made by pious people dedicated to God, and this very week of prayer – what else is this, if not a significant endorsement of the Holy Father’s instructions, an effective and powerful help to the Catholics and the separated Christians of Russia, an effective means to save the West from the kind of cultural catastrophe that Bolshevism threatens to bring about?”³¹¹.

³¹¹ “Non tutti possono coll’opera concorrere alla riconciliazione dell’oriente dissidente colla Chiesa cattolica, ma tutti possono pregare. E perciò il Santo Padre invita tutti ad una crociata di preghiera: la lettera del Romano Pontefice, in data due Febbraio 1930, a S. Eminenza il Cardinale Vicario, la Messa espiatoria nella Basilica di S. Pietro nel giorno della Festa di S. Giuseppe, la preghiera e la protesta di tutto il mondo cattolico erano avvenimenti[sic] di immensa importanza. Ogni risoluzione presa delle[sic] organizzazioni[sic] cattoliche, ogni discorso diretto a far conoscere le condizioni della Russia, ogni parola di esortazione pronunciata dagli amboni, ogni film e ogni conferenza, ma innanzitutto ognuna di quelle Ave Maria, dette dopo la messa per la Russia, in tante migliaia e migliaia di chiese cattoliche e poi tante funzioni di espiazione e tante[sic] sacrifici fatti da persone pie e consacrate a Dio, e questa stessa settimana di preghiera che altro sono se non una significativa approvazione delle direttive del Santo Padre, un ajuto[sic] valido e potente per i cattolici e i dissidenti della Russia, un mezzo efficace per preservare l’Occidente da un disastro culturale simile da parte del bolscevismo minacciante?”. Cit. in ARSI, *Russia* 2003, IV, 32 [5].

Thus, on the one hand, Fr J. Schweigl openly expressed his desire for all Orthodox to accept the authority of the Pope. On the other hand, the joint prayer against the spread of the “cultural catastrophe” of Bolshevism, the Masses for the victims of religious persecution in Russia, and the cultural initiatives (events, publications, dissemination of information about the situation of the Church in the USSR) of the Catholics around the world, were examples of the driving force behind the unity of the two Churches.

The most significant event among the joint prayer initiatives was the day of prayer for Russia announced by Pope Pius XI on February 2, 1930, in a message to the Vicar General in Rome, Cardinal Basilio Pompili. In the message, the Pontiff expressed concern about the “terrible and sacrilegious crimes” against God and the souls of the faithful being committed in the Soviet Union and called on all the faithful to unite in a “crusade of prayer” on March 19, 1930, when a service will be celebrated “at the tomb of the eldest among the Apostles – a Mass of propitiation, propitiation and reparation for so many and so cruel crimes against the Divine Heart, as well as a prayer for the healing of so many souls who have undergone such severe and difficult trials, and for the alleviation of the sufferings of our beloved Russian people”³¹². The message was addressed not only to Catholics, but also to the entire Christian world, which the pontiff urged to hold similar services on St. Joseph’s Day (March 19 in the Gregorian calendar) or on other suitable days in the liturgical calendar. After its publication on 9 February in the newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano*, the document caused a great resonance both in Russia and in the West³¹³. According to Tretjakewitsch’s reconstruction, the letter was drafted by Bishop Michel d’Herbigny himself³¹⁴.

As Alexei Beglov has shown, the reaction of the Soviet authorities to the appeal of Pope Pius XI consisted not so much in a change of anti-religious policy as in the practice

³¹² The text of the chirograph of Pope Pius XI is available on the official Vatican website. See: *Pio XI. Chirografo «Ci commuovono»*. 02.02.1930 // AAS. [1930]. P. 89–93.

³¹³ Published in the newspaper “*L’Osservatore Romano*” on 9 February 1930. See: *Beglov A.L.* “Prayer Crusade” of 1930 and the reaction to it in the USSR // *The Journal of Education and Science “ISTORIYA”*. 2018. V. 9. Issue 4 (68). URL: <https://history.jes.su/s207987840002219-9-1/> (accessed: 29.07.2023). (In Russian).

³¹⁴ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d’Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 234.

of disguising religious persecution more thoroughly and in a large-scale counter-propaganda campaign in which representatives of various religions and denominations, including some hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, were forcibly involved. Beglov also analysed the reaction of the Orthodox believers, including representatives of the hierarchy, to Pope Pius XI's appeal; it gave them hope that Western Christians would help them and through their influence the persecution would ease – the hope that came to reality later³¹⁵.

Based on the materials preserved in the Vatican Apostolic Archive, let us examine how Orthodox Russians in exile responded to the Pope's call and how the day of prayer for Russia became an occasion for meetings between Orthodox and Catholics.

First of all, the documents of the Secretariat of State allow us to draw a general picture of the speed with which Pope Pius XI's message was disseminated and the reactions of the Catholic community: on the one hand, ordinaries, nuncios and apostolic delegates sent the Pope's text to all dioceses and, consequently, the appeal reached all parishes; on the other hand, reports were sent to the Vatican on the various prayer and cultural events organised for the purpose indicated by Pope Pius XI. These events were attended by people from a wide range of social backgrounds and religious denominations.

³¹⁵ See: *ibid.* On this subject see also: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), *op. cit.* P. 699–703.

Ottawa³¹⁶, Brussels³¹⁷, Kaunas³¹⁸, Budapest³¹⁹, Munich³²⁰, Marseille³²¹, Cologne³²², Innsbruck³²³, Belgrad³²⁴, Nuremberg³²⁵, Vienna³²⁶, Barreira³²⁷, and San-Francisco³²⁸ – These are only a few of the places around the world from which reports were received by the Secretariat of State, and many of them were published in the following days in the newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*³²⁹. Not all the reports explicitly mention the

³¹⁶ The Apostolic Delegate to Ottawa, Magister Andrea Cassulo, told the Secretariat of State on 10 March that Pope Pius XI's appeal had been accepted by the faithful of Canada. See: AAV, *Segr. Stato*, anno 1930, rubr. 181, fasc. 2, f. 44.

³¹⁷ Micara – Pacelli, 11.03.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 47.

³¹⁸ Bartoloni – Pacelli, 27.02.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 60.

³¹⁹ Umberto Kaldeway, nuncio pro tempore in Budapest, reported that Catholic and Protestant deputies in the Chamber of Deputies in Budapest responded positively and unanimously to Pope Pius XI's call to oppose persecution. The Catholic and non-Catholic press was in solidarity with Pope Pius XI, with the exception of the German-language liberal newspaper *Pester Lloyd*, which published an article against what it considered to be the Vatican's overly submissive policy towards the Soviet Union. See: Kaldeway – Pacelli, 17.03.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 65. Article «*Pester Lloyd*» *ibid.*, ff. 66–68.

³²⁰ Alberto Vassallo di Torregrossa, nuncio to Munich in Bavaria, reported to the Secretariat of State the enthusiastic reaction of civil society to Pope Pius XI's address. Vassallo di Torregrossa – Pacelli, 18.03.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 73.

³²¹ Dubourg – Pio XI, 20.03.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 79.

³²² Johann Kroll, president of the Catholic Worker's Association of Cologne-Dunwald, addressed a letter to Pope Pius XI expressing the association's closeness to the Russian people. Kroll – Pio XI, 24.03.1930. *Ibid.*, ff. 84–85.

³²³ The Tyrolean Catholics of Innsbruck sent a letter to the Secretariat of State expressing their support for Pope Pius XI's appeal. *Tiroler Katholiken-Sekretariat – Segreteria di Stato*, 08.04.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 94.

³²⁴ Pellegrinetti – Segreteria di Stato, 24.03.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 101.

³²⁵ Vassallo di Torregrossa – Pacelli, 06.04.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 106.

³²⁶ The Nuncio in Vienna, Archbishop Enrico Sibilìa, reported to the Secretariat of State that the Austrian nobility had given him a letter in support of Pope Pius XI's appeal. *Sibilìa-Segreteria di Stato*, 09.05.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 145. The letter, signed by Prince Luigi Schönburg, protests against persecution in the USSR. *Sibilìa – Segreteria di Stato*, 09.05.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 145. Schönburg – Segreteria di Stato. *Ibid.*, f. 146. The Secretariat of State answered. *Segreteria di Stato – Schönburg*, 21.05.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 149.

³²⁷ The parish priest of one Catholic parish, Albertus Kolb, told the Secretariat of State that he had served Mass with the Catholic faithful in the parish church on 27 April 1930. Kolb – Segreteria di Stato, 27.04.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 157–158. *Segreteria di Stato – Kolb*, 13.06.1930. *Ibid.*, f. 159.

³²⁸ Jesuit Joseph Stack SJ reported to the Secretariat of State that students at the St. Ignatius boarding school in San Francisco (USA) received the Eucharist on 19 March during a mass in support of Russian believers. Stack – Segreteria di Stato, June 1930. *Ibid.*, f. 177.

³²⁹ We recall that it was in February-March 1930 that complex diplomatic and logistical attempts were made, involving the Secretariat of State, the Congregation for the Eastern Church, the Nunciature in Bern (whose nuncio was Archbishop Pietro di Maria) and the International Children's Aid Union, to rescue some Catholic priests (a group of more than twenty) imprisoned in the Solovki islands. See:

participation of Orthodox Russians in various Catholic initiatives, but this does not exclude the possibility that there were Orthodox Russian laymen among the participants who may not have been outwardly identifiable at the meetings. It can also be assumed that the pamphlet, *The Soviet Campaign Against God*, published by the Catholic Truth Society in London, was also distributed among the Russian migrants³³⁰.

Besides, Archbishop Ermenegildo Pellegrinetti, nuncio in Belgrade, reports that, responding to the call of Pope Pius XI, Catholics in Yugoslavia have organised a week of events on March 16 to 23³³¹: some Orthodox Russian believers might have joined them as well. The same thing happened in Belgium, as reflected in the March documents of Nuncio Clement Micara. On 11 March, Micara informed the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal E. Pacelli, that Jozef-Ernest van Roey, Archbishop of Mechelen and Primate of Belgium, had instructed that a letter he had written stressing the importance of the Pope's address be distributed to all bishops and the Catholic faithful in Belgium. Mikara commented:

“All the bishops of Belgium supported it [Pope Pius XI's protest against religious persecution in the USSR - *M.C.D.*], prescribing, in unity with the Pope, to offer prayers and Masses of propitiation. The press of all directions, and especially the Catholic press, widely disseminated the august document”³³².

On March 19, Mass, procession and blessing with the Blessed Sacrament were celebrated in support of Russia in Brussels, as well as other Western cities, along with a

Pacelli – di Maria, 25.02.1930. Ibid., f. 30; di Maria – Pacelli, 03.03.1930. Ibid., f. 34–35; Sincero – Segreteria di Stato, 21.03.1930. Ibid., f. 37; Sincero – Pacelli, 03.03.1930. Ibid., f. 38; d'Herbigny – Pacelli, 24.04.1930. Ibid., f. 40. The list of names of priests on the Solovki is contained ibid., f. 36.

³³⁰ See: ibid., f. 15.

³³¹ Pellegrinetti – Segreteria di Stato, 24.03.1930. Ibid., f. 101. Attachment not found. Pellegrinetti's account of events in Yugoslavia was published in the newspaper “L'Osservatore Romano” on 2 April 1930. Segreteria di Stato – Pellegrinetti, 19.04.1930. Ibid., f. 103.

³³² “Di essa tutti i Vescovi del Belgio si sono fatti eco, ordinando, in unione al Papa, preghiere e cerimonie di espiatione. La stampa di ogni colore, e specialmente quella cattolica, ha dato larga diffusione all'augusto documento <...>”. Cit. ibid., f. 47.

number of special events that varied from country to country: “Meetings and public sessions are also prepared by Catholic youth, university centres, etc.”³³³.

The Primate’s letter, circulated in French and German, two copies of which Archbishop C. Micara sent to the Secretariat of State³³⁴, emphasised the extra-confessional nature of religious persecution in the Soviet Union, directed ‘as much at the Orthodox as at Catholics’, since the Bolsheviks were opposed to religion in principle³³⁵. On March 19, the day when, according to the report of the priest J. Schweigl in Syracuse, in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, the choir of students of the Collegium *Russicum* sang at the liturgy presided over by Pope Pius XI³³⁶, according to information provided by Archbishop C. Micara, the solemn liturgy in the Cathedral of Stt. Michael and Gudula in Brussels was attended by “a dense crowd of believers”, politicians, and “many members of the Russian community in Brussels”³³⁷:

“Journalists recognised among them Russian Orthodox Bishop, Alexander Nemolovsky, the widow of General Wrangel ³³⁸ and the widow of late general Kortepov³³⁹ <...>. Numerous Russian students were present at the ceremony. Similar propitiatory services were held on the same day in all the churches of Belgium, each

³³³ “Si stanno poi preparando, da parte della gioventù cattolica, dai centri universitari ecc. delle adunanze e sedute pubbliche”. Cit. *ibid.*, ff. 47–48.

³³⁴ The letter in French is *ibid.*, ff. 49–50. The letter in German is *ibid.*, ff. 51–53.

³³⁵ Citations *ibid.*, f. 49.

³³⁶ See: ARSI, *Russia* 2003, IV, 32 [7].

³³⁷ “Folla compatta di fedeli”; “molti membri della colonia russa a Bruxelles”. Citations in AAV, *Segr. Stato*, anno 1930, rubr. 181, fasc. 2, f. 54.

³³⁸ Peter Nikolaevich Wrangel (1878–1928) was Major-General of the Imperial Army (from 1917), one of the main leaders of the White Movement during the Civil War. Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the Crimea and Poland (1920), and Lieutenant-General of the Volunteer Army (from 1918). In November 1920 he evacuated to Constantinople, then to Bulgaria and then to Belgium. In 1908 he married Olga Mikhailovna Ivanenko. See: *Baklanova I.S.* “The Crimea had to fall”. Russian emigre literature on the military policy of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in the South of Russia (the Russian Army) General P.N. Wrangel // *Military Historical Journal*. 2011. № 12. P. 59–64. (In Russian); Wrangel Petr Nikolaevich // Federal State Budgetary Institution of Culture “The State Historical and Memorial Museum-Reserve ‘The Battle of Stalingrad’” : [portal]. URL: <https://stalingrad-battle.ru/history/south-russia/4351/> (accessed: 15.08.2023). (In Russian).

³³⁹ The document says “Kortepoff”. No information about the general in question could be found. This is most likely due to an error in transliteration of Latin letters.

attracting large crowds. The Catholic press covered the service very extensively, and even the newspapers, usually disinterested in the subject or opposed to it, reported it widely and with a tone of sincere sympathy”³⁴⁰.

The participation of the Orthodox and representatives of society in the service in support of Russia was interpreted as a sign of the success of the initiative, and Cardinal E. Pacelli informed Archbishop C. Micara that his report would be published in the newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* on March 27³⁴¹.

On March 19 in Marseille, Orthodox Russians living in the city attended a service presided over by Archbishop Maurice-Louis Dubourg. As the archbishop wrote to Pope Pius XI, at the end of the Mass, a priest of the migrant community approached them with other Russians to ask him to convey their feelings of deep gratitude to the Pope³⁴². Through the Secretary of State Pacelli, the Pontiff was pleased to receive a message from the Orthodox Russians ³⁴³.

The pontiff's appeal in support of the Russian people against religious persecution was in general received favourably by various governments, as shown, for example, by the statement condemning the persecution adopted by the Irish Senate³⁴⁴, although there were some exceptions. In Lithuania, for example, the government banned all public demonstrations in support of the pope's appeal. As the nuncio in Kaunas, Archbishop Riccardo Bartoloni, reported on February 27, believers would participate in local services, and, as for the ban on public events by the authorities, he emphasized that the leader of the Christian Workers Party, Dr. Ambrosaitis, who called on other party leaders to

³⁴⁰ “I giornalisti hanno riconosciuto fra loro il Vescovo ortodosso Russo Alessandro Nemolowsky[sic], la vedova del generale Wrangel e quella dello scomparso generale Kortepoff[sic] <...>. A questa cerimonia assistevano numerosi studenti russi. Eguali cerimonie di espiazione hanno avuto luogo nello stesso giorno in tutte le Chiese[sic] del Belgio, dovunque col più grande concorso di popolo. La stampa cattolica ne ha dato un larghissimo resoconto, e anche i giornali indifferenti o contrari ne hanno parlato diffusamente e con accenti improntati a viva simpatia”. Cit. in AAV, *Segr. Stato*, anno 1930, rubr. 181, fasc. 2, ff. 54–55. On f. 54 gives a date of 18 March, but this is obviously a dating error.

³⁴¹ Pacelli – Micara, 03.04.1930. Ibid., f. 57.

³⁴² Dubourg – Pio XI, 20.03.1930. Ibid., f. 79.

³⁴³ Pacelli – Dubourg, 11.04.1930. Ibid., f. 81.

³⁴⁴ Letter dated 18 March 1930. Legation of Ireland to the Vatican to the Secretariat of State. Ibid., f. 29. also holds a newspaper clipping about this letter. Ibid., f. 30.

organize national demonstrations, was sent into exile for six weeks. Bartoloni interpreted this as a sign of pro-Soviet and at the same time anti-Polish politics³⁴⁵. A month later, the Vatican Secretariat of State instructed the journalists of the newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* to publish this report in the March 27 issue³⁴⁶.

Of particular interest for the study of contacts between Orthodox Russians and Catholics in the context of the initiatives put forward by the Vatican in March 1930 is a letter that 173 members of the Russian community in Rome sent to Pope Pius XI³⁴⁷.

Indeed, tensions arose in Rome between Catholics and Orthodox of the Moscow Patriarchate, since the Orthodox clergy living in the Italian capital received a refusal from the Vatican to send an official delegation to St. Peter Cathedral on March 19, 1930, led by the archbishop in liturgical vestments, receiving a permission for Orthodox clergy to attend solemn services only privately³⁴⁸. It is easy to assume that Bishop M. d'Herbigny was behind this refusal, but this did not become an obstacle to the positive perception of the Catholic initiative on the part of the Russian Orthodox community in Rome.

The first signatory of the letter to Pope Pius XI was Archimandrite Simeon (Sergey Grigorievich Narbekov), rector of the Church of St. Nicholas in Rome from 1916 to 1963³⁴⁹. Fifteen of the Russian signatories added next to their names that they were Catholics, so in all likelihood all the other signatories were Orthodox. The general opposition to violent atheism and the protection of the Russian people, uniting Catholics and Orthodox, became an opportunity for Russians in Rome not to feel lonely:

“Hope is reborn in our hearts, full of gratitude to Your Holiness, whose powerful appeal to all believers should make the struggle undertaken against the terrifying danger of the wicked activities of persecutors of all religions, destroyers of all morals, sacrilegious oppressors of our unfortunate Fatherland universal and victorious! The

³⁴⁵ Bartoloni – Pacelli, 27.02.1930. Ibid., f. 60.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., f. 62.

³⁴⁷ The document is undated, but undoubtedly dated on or shortly after 19 March. Ibid., f. 90–91.

³⁴⁸ See: *Tretjakewitsch L.* Bishop Michel d'Herbigny SJ (...), op. cit. P. 234.

³⁴⁹ See: *Pettinaroli L.* La politique russe (...), op. cit. P. 701, footnote 85. A copy of the document is quoted *ibid.*

Russian Community in Rome will be happy to join their fervent prayers to all those who offer prayers to the Almighty for His mercy”³⁵⁰.

Cardinal E. Pacelli showed the letter to the pontiff and on April 11 wrote to Archimandrite Simeon to express his gratitude for the letter to him and all members of the Russian community in Rome³⁵¹.

Children also participated in events to express solidarity with Russia, as was the case, for example, in fundraising for the Papal Relief Mission that was operating in Russia from 1922 to 1924³⁵². This is evidenced by a letter from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa from The Hague, in which he sends to Rome a list of good deeds of children from the school of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart in The Hague³⁵³.

Among the documents stored in the archives of the State Secretariat, there are personal letters of thanks. This is, for example, a letter from a certain Sergei Yanovsky (in the document, “Sergio Janowski”) living in Berlin, who on February 16, 1930 turned to Pope Pius XI to thank him for his initiative in favor of the persecuted: “For millions of expelled and humiliated people there was hope for salvation”³⁵⁴. The document does not contain any information about Yanovsky’s confessional affiliation, but it can be assumed that he was Orthodox, since Russian Catholics usually indicated their confessional affiliation, as in the case of signatures of gratitude to Pope Pius XI from the Russian community in Rome.

³⁵⁰ “L’espoir renait dans nos cœurs pleins d’actions de grâce envers Votre Sainteté dont le puissant Appel à tous les croyants doit rendre universelle et victorieuse la lutte entreprise contre l’effroyable danger de l’activité impie des persécuteurs de toute religion, destructeurs de toute morale, oppresseurs sacrilèges de notre malheureuse Patrie! La Colonie Russe de Rome sera heureuse de joindre ses ferventes prières à toutes celles qui s’élèveront vers le Tout-Puissant implorant Sa miséricorde”. Cit. in AAV, *Segr. Stato*, anno 1930, rubr. 181, fasc. 2, f. 90.

³⁵¹ Pacelli – Siméon, 11.04.1930. Ibid., f. 89. A copy of the document is cited in *Pettinaroli L. La politique russe (...)*, op. cit. P. 701, footnote 85.

³⁵² See: *Dommarco M.C. A Mission important and dangerous (...)*, op. cit. P. 119–120.

³⁵³ The letter is dated 19 April 1930. See: AAV, *Segr. Stato*, anno 1930, rubr. 181, fasc. 2, f. 134. No attachment to the letter was found. Reply from the Secretariat of State dated 9 May 1930. Ibid., f. 136.

³⁵⁴ “Per milioni di esiliati ed umiliati è comparsa una speranza di salvezza”. Cit. in AAV, *Segr. Stato*, anno 1930, rubr. 181, fasc. 1, f. 87.

After this observations of the relations between the Orthodox Russians and the Catholics, which developed after the appeal of Pope Pius XI, we may state that the papers of the Apostolic Archive of the Vatican demonstrate a positive image of solidarity of the Catholic world with Russia in terms of anti-religious persecution, and also contain information on the participation of Orthodox Russian emigrants in prayer and cultural events held in February-March 1930. Thus, the Catholics and the Orthodox, at least those who directly participated in the events and informed the Vatican about it, had united at the call of three saints of the ancient Church: St. Joseph, St. Cyril and St. Methodius. Their experiences were then replicated to inspire prayers and scholarly discussions aimed, albeit with varying degrees of success, at finding the lost unity and establishing a common front against Soviet anti-religious persecution. The concept of Archbishop Antonín Stojan, in accordance with the popular veneration of the two brothers who had evangelized the Slavic peoples, allowed him to see the idea of Stt. Cyril and Methodius as the foundation for interaction between the Catholics and the Orthodox that evolved in the first decades of the 20th century. As archival documents show, this interaction served as a source of fruitful reflection and productive scientific discussion for many of its participants. In addition, the Pope's call to all Christians to pray especially to St. Joseph, venerated in Catholicism as the patron saint of the universal Church, for an end to persecution, had ensured the success of interdenominational gatherings with a common purpose in many Western countries.

CONCLUSION

Archival documents covering the period from the beginning of Vatican aid to the starving people in Russia (1922–1924) to the end of Velegrad Congresses (1936) have revealed evidence of contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community, as well as the position of the Roman Curia and trends in its reactions to these events. They shed light on the contacts between the faithful of the two Churches, contributing to an in-depth study of a very broad topic that has already been the subject of historiographical and theological analyses.

A more detailed study of the period from 1922 to 1936 allows us to reveal more deeply the ecclesiological problematics of the topic at hand. Orthodox and Catholics met under extreme historical conditions: the help provided by members of the papal mission in Russia, the emigration of Russians to Europe, and interfaith contacts at the front and in military captivity not only allowed for a significant increase in the number of connections between Orthodox and Catholics, but also sharpened the theological issues of relations and contacts between them.

The ecclesiological issues analysed include: the idea of another Church (including, for Catholics, the Eastern Rite); the proselytising tendency in the Catholic Church and the reaction to this approach on the part of the Orthodox; and the emergence in the Catholic Church of evidence of a new approach to relations with other denominations whereby other Churches are recognised as the way of salvation for their members.

Proselytising activities on the part of Christian denominations, including the Catholic Church, which were observed during this period of time, would be recognised as inadmissible in 2000 in the document “Basic Principles of the Relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church to Non-Orthodoxy”, adopted at the Jubilee Council of Bishops, adopted at the Jubilee Council of Bishops³⁵⁵.

Nevertheless, in the same years, the Catholic Church was already beginning to show the first signs of a transition to the concept of relations with other Churches that had

³⁵⁵ See: Basic Principles (...), op. cit.

developed after Vatican II and was characterised by a definitive rejection of proselytism. It was only at Vatican II and, more precisely, in the decree on ecumenism “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” (1964) that the Catholic Church officially declared that the Churches not in communion with Rome are “saving means”³⁵⁶ for the faithful who belong to them.

In the new post-revolutionary scenario, when the survival of the Local Russian Orthodox Church after 1917 was recognised in the Vatican as doubtful, the tendency towards proselytism can be traced in some decisions and actions of the Catholic Church hierarchy towards Russian Orthodox believers.

Nevertheless, the unique papal mission of famine relief in Russia, which we have studied using materials from various archives, including the State Archive of the Russian Federation, although prepared with the hope of achieving conversion to Catholicism among the Orthodox, was not actually proselytising in nature, as evidenced by the examples of numerous contacts between Catholics and Orthodox. Indeed, the direct contacts of the members of the mission with the Russian Orthodox, on the one hand, helped to dispel prejudices against the Catholic Church, which, according to the members of the mission, had taken root among the population, and on the other hand, allowed the papal envoys to become better acquainted with the beauty of the Eastern rite and to establish sincere and respectful relations not only with the Orthodox laity, but also with representatives of the hierarchy of the local Russian Orthodox Church.

Another strand of contacts that we found in the Historical Archives of the Vatican Secretariat of State Relations, the Vatican Apostolic Archives, and the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus concerns contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community that arose in the context of Russian emigration to Europe after the 1917 revolution. Already the object of historiographical research, the instances of various contacts between the faithful of the two Churches reached significant proportions to the point where the Catholic hierarchy was faced with the question of how best to respond to the material and spiritual needs of the emigrants

³⁵⁶ Cit. in Decree on Ecumenism (...), op. cit. P. 171.

Despite the clear desire of the priest Michel d'Herbigny (future bishop) and the Catholic Church as a whole to increase the number of converts to Catholicism among Russian emigrants, some Vatican archival documents already show signs of a trend opposite to proselytism.

Firstly, the question of the confessional affiliation of emigrants from Russia was dealt with by Rome in a special way: assistance was not limited to Catholics only, each case was scrutinised and even Catholics themselves were not automatically assisted. It should also be noted that the Vatican supported charitable initiatives on the part of Orthodox believers, including those that provided for spiritual assistance, as shown, for example, by the case of Lyudmila Ivanovna Lyubimova.

Secondly, thanks to the text of the Instructions of 12 January 1929, sent by the Pontifical Commission Pro Russia to all ordinaries, we have a better understanding of how the Vatican viewed the question of the confessional affiliation of needy Russians: if it seemed to a Catholic priest that a Russian person's willingness to convert from the Orthodox faith to the Catholic faith was dictated more by a state of extreme need than by personal conviction, he could disapprove of conversion to the Catholic faith, although at the same time the Commission asked ordinaries not to leave such people to their own devices. The Instructions also recommended that no one who sincerely wished to convert to Catholicism should be forced to accept the Latin Rite.

While, on the one hand, the emergence of new bodies in the Roman Curia to deal with matters concerning the Eastern Churches has long-standing roots, on the other hand, the phenomenon of the October Revolution and then the emigration of numerous Russians to the West gave a new impetus to Rome's interest in the Slavic East, linked to the idea that the new historical context might favour the conversion of Orthodox Russians to Catholicism.

In Europe, contacts between Russian Orthodox emigrants and local Catholics contributed to the desire of some of the faithful of both Churches for confessional unity: Unionist Congresses, cultural initiatives, and joint prayers as ways of opposing the spread of communist atheism in the West became a fruitful field for discussion, communication, and various joint activities.

Due to the unique combination of the geographical factor (proximity to Russia) and the human factor (the pastoral and scholarly activities of Priest František Sušil and Archbishop Antonín Cyril Stojan), the desire for confessional unity was especially felt in the Czechoslovak lands, which received a significant Russian community. In this phenomenon of “Catholic Panslavism” in the Czechoslovak lands, the common Slavic roots and the common spiritual heritage of the ancient Church saints Cyril and Methodius played a fundamental role. Thus, the shrine of Velehrad in Moravia became a natural gathering place for Catholic Slavs and those Orthodox Slavs who wanted to deepen the rapprochement between Catholics and Orthodox within the framework of the seven Unionist congresses held between 1907 and 1936. As shown by the study of previous studies and archival documents preserved at the Nunciature Foundation in Prague, the Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, and the Rome Archives of the Society of Jesus, the concept of Archbishop A.C. Stojan, his collaborators, and the prelate of the Society of Jesus, the concept of Archbishop A.C. Stojan, his collaborators, and the prelate of the Czechoslovakia, was the most important one. Stojan, his collaborators and successors, which we can summarise with the triad “study, prayer and rejection of proselytism” as the formula of the Velehrad concept of the “rapprochement” of Christians, seemed innovative for the time.

Despite the negative influence exerted on them by the French Jesuit Michel d’Herbigny, these congresses can be considered the starting point for the theoretical formulation of a concept of the relationship between Catholics and Orthodox, closest to what would later be formulated by the Catholic Church in the Vatican II decree “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” (1964).

Although it was because of the French Jesuit’s proselytising concept that the majority of the speakers at the Unionist congresses were Catholics, Stojan’s spiritual heirs always managed to ensure that the Orthodox priests and intellectuals present at the congresses could participate in the discussions, sometimes in public, but more often in private. The participation of the Orthodox on such terms was not only favourably received by the Vatican, but was encouraged by it.

The support given to the Fourth and Fifth Unionist Congresses by the Nunciature in Prague and by the Vatican, respectively, is documented in detail in the Vatican Apostolic Archives and the Archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. The reports for internal use are valuable material for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the congresses, which were generally successful in terms of interfaith relations at the private level, despite the tensions provoked by some members of the Catholic and Orthodox press and the Polish Catholic clergy.

The cycle of the Velegrad Congresses, although unique in its kind, was not the only event devoted to interaction between Catholics and Orthodox in the field of culture. As is known, in Berlin, for example, there were attempts to promote Unionist ideas by Orthodox Russian believers and Catholic priest Ludwig Berg, but they were not very successful due to the lack of blessing from Orthodox Bishop Tikhon (Lyashchenko). Nevertheless, the Velegrad Congresses served as a model for numerous more successful events, such as the conferences in Ljubljana and Brussels (1925), Nice, Vienna and London (1926), Prague (1929), Pinsk (1930), Palermo and Syracuse (most likely both held in 1931). Although only a few of these initiatives (in Brussels in 1925, in Nice and in Vienna in 1926) were out of d'Herbigny's control, at the level of personal contacts they certainly represented an important moment for Catholic-Orthodox relations.

The speech of Priest Joseph Schweigl SJ in Syracuse, the text of which is preserved in the Rome Archive of the Society of Jesus, is significant because it testifies both to the continuity of the formula of "study and prayer" promoted by the Velegrad Congresses and to Rome's awareness of its role in the struggle against Bolshevism in cultural and spiritual senses. Although on the one hand, Fr J. Schweigl openly expressed his desire for all Orthodox to recognise the authority of the Pope, on the other hand, joint prayers for deliverance from Bolshevism, Masses for the victims of religious persecution in Russia and the cultural efforts of Catholics around the world (events, publications, dissemination of information about the situation of the Church in the USSR) were able to become the driving force behind the unity of the two different Churches.

The most significant event among the initiatives of joint prayers was the day of prayer for Russia announced by Pope Pius XI on 2 February 1930 in a message to the

Vicar General in Rome, Cardinal Basilio Pompili. In this message, the Pope called on all the faithful to worship in spiritual unity with him on 19 March 1930. The message, addressed not only to all Catholics, but to the entire Christian world, caused a great resonance both in Russia and in the West. Based on the materials kept in the Vatican Apostolic Archive, we can state that these documents provide a positive picture of the participation of Russian Orthodox emigrants in the prayer and cultural events held in February-March 1930; at least those emigrants who directly participated in the events and let the Vatican know about it.

It may be noted that in the 20s and 30s, communities of believers differing in confessional affiliation came together at the call of three saints of the ancient Church: St Joseph, St Cyril and St Methodius, who were remembered to inspire prayers and scholarly discussions aimed at finding lost unity and common opposition to Soviet anti-religious persecution.

New documents from Vatican and Roman archives, presented and analysed by us in this study, as well as reviewed scientific publications related to our topic, allowed us to obtain a broader and more detailed picture of contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community in the period from the termination of the papal mission to help the starving and until the end of the Velegrad Congresses.

The study of this period of time, characterised by both a proselytising tendency on the part of the Catholic Church and the first signs of the transition to a new theological conception of relations with other Christian denominations, which was formulated in the decree on ecumenism “*Unitatis Redintegratio*”, allows us to better understand the different conceptions of relations between the Orthodox of the Russian Orthodox Church and Catholics that grew out of this background, including the proselytism of the priest M. d’Herbigny (future bishop) and other representatives of the Catholic Church.

Given the breadth and importance of the relationship and contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox community, not only religiously but also culturally and socially, we hope that future research will further broaden and deepen our understanding of the historical and ecclesiological issues of interchurch dialogue.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

| | |
|------------|---|
| VTsIK | All-Russian Central Executive Committee |
| Narkomat | People's Commissariat |
| Narkomyust | People's Commissariat of Justice of the RSFSR |
| NKID | People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR |
| ROCOR | Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia |
| SNK | Council of People's Commissars |
| AA.EE.SS. | Segreteria di Stato, Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati, Archivio Storico, fondo Archivio della Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari – Città del Vaticano [Secretariat of State, Section for Relations with States, Historical Archive, Archive Fund of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs – Vatican City] |
| AAS | <i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis. Commentarium officiale</i> [Acts of the Apostolic See] |
| AAV | <i>Archivum Apostolicum Vaticanum</i> [Vatican Apostolic Archives] |
| ACO | Archivio della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali [Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches] |
| Arch. | Archivio [archive] |
| ARSI | <i>Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu</i> [Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus] |
| ASRS | Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato — Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati [Historical Archive of the Secretariat of State Section for Relations with States] |
| ASS | <i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i> [Acts of the Holy See] |
| b. | busta [envelope] |
| DHGE | Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques, |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| | Paris |
| f. | foglio [folio] |
| fasc. | fascicolo [folder] |
| Nunz. | Nunziatura [nunciature] |
| PCPR | Pontificia Commissione Pro Russia [Pontifical Commission <i>Pro Russia</i>] |
| Segr. Stato | Segreteria di Stato [Secretariat of State] |
| SSR | Santa Sede e Russia da Leone XIII a Pio XI. Atti del Simposio organizzato dal Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche e dall'Istituto di Storia Universale dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Mosca. Mosca, 23-25 giugno 1998, Cité du Vatican, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002, 316 p. (Atti e documenti, 15) |

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APPENDIX

Letter from Patriarch Tikhon (Belavin) to Pope Benedict XV of 5 July 1921.

AA.EE.SS., III, *Russia*, pos.1023, fasc. 371, f.10.

*Translation into English from Russian. The text in the original language follows*³⁵⁷.

Most humble Tikhon, by the grace of God
Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus',
to His Holiness Benedict, Pope of Rome

Your Holiness,

The Lord has sent a new and tremendous calamity to Russia, which has already been greatly affected by the sufferings of the past years. Indeed, both in those south and east-facing lands of our Motherland, which formerly were its breadbaskets, and in the rest of Russia, great numbers of people are dying from the most severe famine and from the epidemic diseases that usually follow famine. We have neither bread nor medicine. Therefore, our Motherland, which has been depressed and devastated by calamities to this day, so that it cannot support itself, needs the speedy help of other nations.

In the name of God, we implore your help. We have already appealed through the bishops to the peoples of Britain and North America, and now we ask Your Holiness to confirm our pleas to all the lands where the Catholic faith is

³⁵⁷ The text was published in full in 1993 by Giuseppe Maria Croce. See: *Croce G.M. Le Saint-Siege, l'Eglise Orthodoxe et la Russie soviétique (...)*, op. cit. P. 287. In 2018, Ovanes Akopyan offered his own version of the Russian translation. See: *Akopyan O. The Letter of Patriarch Tikhon to Pope Benedict XV and Other Documents on the Relations between the Holy See and the USSR in the 1920s // New Literary Observer. 2018. № 6 (154). URL: https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/novoe_literaturnoe_obozrenie/154_nlo_6_2018/article/20438/ (accessed: 02.03.2024). (In Russian). Here we offer our version of the translation with minor modifications.*

practised. We continue to implore Your Holiness to appeal to other nations for mercy and to come to the aid of Russia in such a difficult situation.

In the hope that Your Holiness will listen to the voice of the suffering Russian people and endeavour to alleviate their distress in every way that the love of Christ and divine wisdom will indicate, we pray to Almighty God to increase the love of our Churches and grant us peace and harmony, to Your Holiness we testify our love.

Most humble Tikhon,
Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'

Moscow

1921 A.D.

5 July

Humillimus Tychon, Dei Gratia
Patriarcha Mosquensis totiusque
Rossiae, Sanctissimo Benedicto, Papae
Romano

Sanctitas Vestra

Rossiae malis jam proximorum annorum vexatae Dominus novam horrendamque calamitatem immisit. Nam et in iis patriae nostrae provinciis, quae inter orientem et meridiem spectant quae antea horrea patriae nostrae erant, et in reliqua Rossia ingentem hominum multitudinem fame gravissima et morbis epidemicis, qui famem sequi solent, perire necesse est. Nec panem nec morborum remedia habemus. Itaque patriae nostrae, quum adeo malis confecta ac debilitata sit, ut sibi ipsa opem ferre non possit, aliorum populorum céleri auxilio quam maxime opus est.

In nomine Dei hoc auxilium imploramus. His igitur precibus, simul populos Britanniae et Americae Septentrionalis per Episcopos adeuntes, Vestram quoque Sanctitatem oramus, ut ad earum regionum incolas qui fidei Catholicae addicti sunt, ad preces nostras confirmandas litteras dare velit. Hoc etiam Sanctitatem Vestram rogamus, ut alios quoque populos ad misericordiam moveat, ut Rossiam in hoc tanto rerum discrimine adjuvent.

Sperantes igitur, Sanctitatem Vestram hanc pereuntis populi Rossici vocem atque implorationem curae habituram atque, ut calamitates ejus quibus cunque [*sic*] modis, quos amor Christi Vester Sapientiaque Vestra Divina monstret, levare velit, operam daturam esse, Deo Omnipotenti supplicamus, ut amorem Ecclesiarum Nostrarum augeat nobisque pacem atque consensum largiatur, Sanctitati autem Vestrae amorem Nostrum testificamur

Humillimus Tychon

Patriarcha Mosquensis totiusque Rossiae

Datum est Mosquae

anno p. Chr. MDCCCCXXI

die V mensis Julii