

Milla Bergström & Kirsi Salonen (eds.), *The Holy See's foreign policies in inter-war Europe*, Publications of the Finnish Society of Church History 232 (Helsinki: Suomen Kirkkohistorialainen Seura 2016), 207 pp.

The end of World War I saw Europe recast in many ways. Centuries-old monarchies vacated maps for a patchwork of nation-states; unprecedented devastation exacerbated social conflicts; and the two dominant societal mindsets, liberalism and conservatism, were meeting challenges from both poles of the political landscape. In presenting eight essays on the Holy See as an international actor in the inter-war period, the editors seek to "give an overview of the framework within which the Holy See was navigating" (p. 7) the New Europe. A testimony is, thus, given that the trope of the nave of St. Peter is alive and kicking in the 21st century. A closer look at the volume reveals an introduction and seven essays, harboured in two sections that feature nationalism and Catholic peripheries; essays oscillate from 17 to 27 pages, and each has a reference list appended. It is, therefore, an open question whether one should expect a framework as promised, or case studies addressing the two significant areas of the Holy See's diplomatic activity that the editors highlight in the introductory essay. Due to the fact that most historians of the era treat church history as a periphery, this lucid chapter is much appreciated. Yet it documents the other half of the apple, i.e. that church historians sometimes oversimplify temporal affairs. A map of the "New Europe" (p. 17) reveals surprisingly few "contested areas". For example, it is completely quiet about the Wilno/Vilnius dispute that has torn two Catholic neighbours so much apart from each other that Polish-Lithuanian diplomatic relations were established only in 1938 and in tense atmosphere.

Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, a future Pope Pius XII, might well be the most discussed pontifex of the last centuries. Kirsi Salonen sketches an account of his German years (1917–1929). Through the lens of archival disposition, readers get an overview over a wide range of political and ecclesiastical affairs of urgency, from the nunciature's vantage point. It should be said that a critical online edition of its reporting is in preparation for some time already. But there is not much about Pacelli as an actor; the role of a desirably impartial rapporteur hardly adds anything to the expectations of an educated reader. Suvi Kansikas' essay on the Danzig situation in the early 1920s is a better-conceived case study. It illustrates how an irregular international status of the free city generated diplomatic agency for the Holy See. Thus, Kansikas shows that church history is likely to shed additional light on the intricacies of the Danzig problem. Milla Bergström takes her readers into the heart of the traditional East European borderland where Catholicism of Latin and Byzantine rites meets/challenges Russian and, to

a lesser extent, Armenian Orthodoxy – to the Galician city of Lwów/Lviv (Lemberg, Leopoldis) in the early 1920s. In this essay, Bergström reiterates the path towards nomination of an archbishop for an extremely complicated province, a skilled administrator able to comply with the realities of a (re-)nascent nation-state and, at the same time, to mediate in an aftermath of an inter-ethnic and inter-denominational strife. The well-documented study originates with Bergström's thesis on the Holy See and Eastern Galician problems which, against the background of this book chapter, appears to be very promising. Scholars of interwar Central Eastern Europe would no doubt welcome an English translation. The "Nationalism" section closes with an essay on the Maltese language issue during the interwar period, by Aapo Laitinen. This seemingly peripheral question threatened to yield complications for the Holy See in La Valetta, London and Rome at the same time. As regards the Vatican's relations with both great powers involved, stakes were high; no wonder that the Holy See, in pursuit of detachment, encouraged Maltese hierarchy to abstain from engagement.

Two studies address the challenges for Catholic expansion in traditionally Protestant Nordic countries that reclaimed independence from the Russian Empire in 1917/1918. While Suvi Rytti examines the concept of Finland as fertile ground for, and a stepping stone towards, the recatholization of the Nordic countries, Mikko Ketola suggests that Estonia attracted the Holy See also as a prospective "window" to Bolshevik Russia. Thus, Ketola adds a religious dimension to a well-known concept of the Baltics as a Western perceptual springboard to Russia (Soviet Union), epitomized by the Cold War historian Daniel Yergin's US "Riga Axioms". It is interesting to see how missionary activities and a more apparent Catholic presence, albeit provoking alarmist reactions in some Protestant quarters, were prone to support national independence and European connection, be it through efforts to nationalize Finnish clergy and through the reinvention of that country's pre-Reformation history, or through attempts to arrive at union with Estonian Orthodox clergy, thereby weakening its links to Russia. Laura Putinarolli studies the 1930 "Crusade of Prayers for Russia". Employing Vatican and Russian sources, she is able to sketch, in a typically Newtonian fashion, both action and reaction. Putinarolli concludes that this "crusade" was instrumental for the emergence of individual religious rights as an issue of universal appeal, a topic which is more extensively dealt with within Cold War historiography.

All in all, this volume invites to a question: What did foreign policy mean for the Holy See between the world wars?

In international relations, foreign policy is usually understood as a set of measures enacted by legitimate representatives of sovereign states, mostly

nation-states in the 20th century, and supposed to deliver desired outcomes in relations with other states so as to safeguard national interest. Holy See is an exceptional actor in this respect, for several reasons. Firstly, it reclaimed full sovereignty only in 1929 (note that the Roman Question, as vital as it was for the Vatican, is being mentioned only in passing here). Secondly, its diplomats were nationals of states which they were not representing. Moreover, their loyalty to the Holy See, i.e. a foreign power, was expected to take precedence over national sentiment. And thirdly, as presented essays illustrate, the Holy See's policies were designed to solve pending issues in many countries, very different from one another, but not directly related to these countries as actors in international politics. Only a few actions analyzed here were compatible with government-to-government negotiations, the corner-stone of foreign policy and diplomacy. In general, they tended to emerge as responses to situations that had created dilemmas as regards temporal administration of the Catholic Church as a transnational entity in particular territorial settings. Therefore, those in charge of the Holy See's foreign relations, in the Vatican and at nunciatures alike, were highly receptive to the involved states' foreign policies and domestic climate. As a consequence, actions of nunciatures, albeit occasionally with transborder effects and informed about local foreign policy imperatives, were predominantly of an inward-looking, domestic character. Their foreign policy aspects tended to be secondary.

It is a pity that the book does not have a proper closing chapter as an attempt to synthesize presented investigation and, actually, to deliver the heralded framework of the Holy See's foreign policy between the two world wars. Important regions are missing from the broader picture. For example, the Balkans where Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, a future John XXIII, served for a decade in a multiethnic and multiconfessional setting. Or, for that matter, the entire Iberian Peninsula, traditionally a Catholic bulwark, now under pressure of secularization and not exclusively orthodox indigenous reaction under the aegis of Francisco Franco or Antonio Oliveira Salazar. The French Third Republic is absent, too. These and other cases needed to be included, should the volume travel beyond a collection of loosely communicating essays. To be certain, non omnia possumus omnes. Moreover, edited volumes depend much on the network that their editors manage to get on board. *The Holy See's foreign policies in inter-war Europe* comes as an almost entirely Finnish enterprise. It documents that there is a competent cohort of contemporary church historians with specifically Catholic research interest. One should only hope for a sequel of some sort.