



Marek Šmíd

Mission: Apostolic Nuncio in Prague

Czechoslovakian-Vatican
Diplomatic Relations
between 1920 and 1950

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To Zuzana, Nikodém and Dominik

Foreword

One hundred years have passed since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Czechoslovakia, when the first Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Clemente Micara, took up residence in Prague and the first Envoy of Czechoslovakia, Kamil Krofta, began his mission in Rome.

As the current successor of Archbishop Micara, I express my gratitude and appreciation to Marek Šmíd for publishing this book about the history of the Mission of the Apostolic Nuncio in Prague during the period of thirty years between the establishment of the Apostolic Nunciature, in 1920, and the cessation of its functions, in 1950.

I served as the Counselor of the Apostolic Nunciature, from 1996 until 1999, at the time when Archbishop, later Cardinal, Giovanni Coppa, was Apostolic Nuncio. After his arrival in Prague, in September 1990, he witnessed the unforgettable experience of the rebirth of both the country and the Church, after the Velvet Revolution. He served initially as Apostolic Nuncio to Czechoslovakia and then, after the first of January 1993, he continued his mission in Prague as the Pontifical Representative to the Czech Republic and at the same time as the first Apostolic Nuncio to the Slovak Republic. Following the appointment of a resident Apostolic Nuncio in Bratislava, in 1994, he remained as Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic.

When the Apostolic Nunciature reopened, after a hiatus of forty years, the premises needed a great deal of restoration and repair. In the course of the works, Archbishop Coppa decided to honor his predecessors – Archbishops Clemente Micara, Francesco Marmaggi, Pietro Ciriaci and Saverio Ritter – by taking the time to make contacts with

people, including family members, to obtain their photographs and then displaying them in a prominent place. Yet, the extant files of the Apostolic Nunciature contained little or no information about them since whatever archives existed before 1950 had been sent to the Secretariat of State.

In this light, Marek Šmíd's book, which is the fruit of extensive research, sheds invaluable light on the history of the relationship between the Holy See and Czechoslovakia and on the persons and activities of the Apostolic Nuncios who served in Prague from 1920 until 1950.

The book offers interesting insights into a crucial period in history, beginning with the establishment and consolidation of Czechoslovakia, after the end of World War I, continuing with political, social and ecclesiastical developments in the nineteen thirties and during World War II, and concluding with the first years of the Communist government and the effective ending of the mission of the Apostolic Nunciature in 1950.

The work also sheds light on some of the inner workings of the diplomatic activity of the Holy See, in the context of the evolving political and social situation between the wars, in Czechoslovakia and in Europe.

At the same time, the monograph provides a rather comprehensive view of the life of the Church during those years and of the relationship between the Apostolic Nuncios and the bishops, priests, religious and lay organizations.

At the beginning of the second century of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Czech Republic, the Mission of the Apostolic Nuncio remains much the same, namely, to make stronger and more effective the bonds of unity that exist between the Holy See and the local Churches as well as to promote and foster good relations between the Holy See and the authorities of the state. The context in which these relations exist has changed greatly. The Czech Republic is engaged not only in bilateral diplomacy but also, and if not more, in multilateral diplomacy, as a member of the United Nations Organization, the European Union and other international bodies. The life of the Church has been renewed by the Second Vatican Council and the diplomacy of the Holy See has become much more engaged as well in the multilateral field.

Just before the concluding chapter, the author made mention of the Apostolic Nuncios who have served in Prague since the reopening of the Apostolic Nunciature in 1990, namely, Archbishops Giovanni Coppa, Erwin Josef Ender, Diego Causero and Giuseppe Leanza. I consider it a privilege to follow in their footsteps and I thank Marek Šmíd for opening a window to a world that was heretofore unknown to

me personally, in the hope that his book can make its own contribution for the future of good relations in all fields between the Holy See and the Czech Republic.

Archbishop Charles D. Balvo
Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic
January 6, 2020

1. Introduction

Research of Apostolic Nunciatures in the Czech Lands and the Personage of the Apostolic Nuncio

While research into the Apostolic Nunciatures in the 16th and 17th centuries has more than a 100-year-old tradition in the Czech Lands, research into the Nunciatures of the 20th century is almost in its beginnings. It is thus a new phenomenon which logically—with respect to the unavailable Vatican archives—could not be studied before 2006, when Pope Benedict XVI (2005–2013) made the Vatican archives available up to the pontificate of Pope Pius XI (February 1922–February 1939).

Although the first diplomatic representations were established in the 15th century, when Spain, France and the Republic of Venice appointed their permanent Envoys to the Holy See and received the Pope's Envoys (i.e., Apostolic Nuncios), representatives of the Holy See resided in Prague much later. The first residence was from the period of the Habsburg Imperial Court in Prague, i.e. from November 26, 1583, when the Apostolic Nuncio, Giovanni Francesco Bonhomini (1536–1587) relocated from Vienna to Prague to join Emperor Rudolf II (1576–1611). They remained there until November 11, 1612, when Nuncio Placido de Marra left Prague for Vienna, along with Matyáš's Court. Altogether 12 Nuncios resided at the Court of Rudolf II in Prague between 1583 and 1612. However, Nuncios had temporarily resided in Prague already before 1583, in the times of Ferdinand I. Two of them, Bartolomeo Portia (1578) and Ottavio Santacroce (1581), even died there.¹ At that time, the stay of Apostolic Nuncios in Prague was only temporary, dependent on

1 AMFA, Krofta's archive, box file number 1, Novák January 1, 1931.

the presence of the Imperial Court. When the Court relocated to Vienna, so did the Nunciature. Nuncios did not reside in Prague until 1920.

The number of representations of the Holy See increased during the 18th century, when numerous representations were established in important governments around the world.² The establishment of Nunciatures did not follow rigid rules; it rather reflected the current priorities of the Holy See. The diplomatic representations of the Holy See expanded out of Europe during the 19th century, and their number significantly increased, mainly in South America where new Nunciatures were established in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Columbia. Besides the above-mentioned Nunciature in Vienna, those in Madrid and Paris were among the oldest Nunciatures in Europe.

The rank of Apostolic Nuncio was provided for in Article IV of the Protocol of the Congress of Vienna of June 9, 1815, known as the Vienna Reglement. The Nuncio was awarded the rank of Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, making him the representative of the entire Diplomatic Corps in a host country.³ This divided the diplomatic representatives into three classes according to importance. Class I consisted of Ambassadors, (Papal) Legates and Apostolic Nuncios, all of the same rank. Class II comprised Envoys, Ministers and other persons accredited to a sovereign. Class III comprised *chargés d'affaires*, who were accredited to Ministers of Foreign Affairs. This title usually referred to diplomatic representatives in countries where the Envoy was temporarily absent.⁴ In 1818, this classification was extended by another class of ministerial residents (i.e., Plenipotentiary Ministers), whose rank was between Classes II and III. The Vienna Reglement was effective until 1961, when it was substituted by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.⁵

An Apostolic Nunciature denotes a historical form of a permanent representation of the Holy See abroad, whose titular head is an Apostolic Nuncio. The Heads of diplomatic missions are divided into three classes: 1. Ambassadors and Nuncios, 2. Envoys, Ministers and Internuncios, and 3. *chargés d'affaires*. These, however, have no influence on the rank of the diplomats as Heads of diplomatic missions. The difference is rather related to protocol, i.e. to the question of etiquette.⁶ The post of

2 De Marchi, *Le nunziature apostoliche dal 1800 al 1956*, XVI.

3 NA, MFA-NCA I, box file number 1953, sign. 725, October 28 May 5 1925.

4 Veselý, *Diplomacie*, 113.

5 Ibid., 113–114.

6 Ibid, 127.

chargé d'affaires is filled by a diplomat charged to head an office which is not held by any extraordinary or Plenipotentiary Ambassador. Unlike the Nuncio, he does not need to ask the host country for *agrément* — the Foreign Ministry of the country is only advised of his appointment. If a distinction is made between *chargé d'affaires en pied* and *chargé d'affaires ad interim*, it refers to the length of the mission. The former is appointed as a permanent Head of the office, while the latter temporarily heads the office in the absence of an extraordinary or plenipotentiary representative. The office of *chargé d'affaires* bears no relation to diplomatic ranks.

The lowest diplomatic rank is Attaché. It denotes a diplomat charged with a specific task or special agenda. Therefore, the Apostolic Nuncio ranks among higher (senior) diplomats. Secretaries, chargés d'affaires and Attachés are lower (junior) diplomats.⁷

Apostolic Nuncios who, since the pontificate of Pope Pius XI, have been ordained as a titular (Arch)bishops before their diplomatic mission, enjoy a number of privileges and immunities as diplomats.

The appointment of Apostolic Nuncios is determined by nomination letters, which are to be found in the Vatican Secret Archive. The host country was advised of the nomination of a Nuncio via personal correspondence or sometimes by telegram.⁸ In the case of the nomination letters not remaining preserved, specific information can be found in *Diario di Roma*, which often refers to the date of nomination letters, in *Breve*. This, however, often presents inaccurate dates of particular documents (e.g., credentials, communication with the Chancery of Apostolic Briefs, the date of departure or arrival of an Apostolic Nuncio, the date of his first letters to the Holy See). The beginning of the Nuncio's diplomatic mission is determined by a Letter of Credence (*lettere di richiamo*), according to which the Nuncio is transferred to a new position or remains at the disposal of the Holy See.⁹

Before the outbreak of WWI, there were 5 Nuncios and 11 Internuncios and Apostolic Delegates with diplomatic missions representing the Holy See abroad. Some of these diplomats were, however, in charge of several missions at a time, so the Holy See maintained contact with a great number of countries. In 1933, the number of Apostolic Nuncios

⁷ Ibid., 128–129.

⁸ De Marchi, *Le nunziature apostoliche*, XVII.

⁹ Ibid., XVIII.

and Internuncios abroad amounted to 33; even more countries had their representatives to the Holy See.¹⁰

But who was the Apostolic Nuncio, and what was the nature of his diplomatic mission? The position of Apostolic Nuncios to Prague at that time and their agenda were based on the 1917 Code of Canon Law, which was largely the work of the former Secretary of State, P. Gasparri.¹¹ The activities of the Legates of the Roman Pontiff are described in Chapter V, canons 265–270. The Pope has the right, independent of civil power, to send Legates into any country of the world, with or without ecclesiastical jurisdiction (canon 265). Among these are Apostolic Nuncios and Internuncios who foster relations between the Holy See and the governments of host countries, supervise Church conditions in host countries, informing the Holy See about them, and have other authorities delegated to them (canon 267).¹² Their mission does not end with the vacancy of the Holy See, as it does e.g. with the Secretary of State, but upon completion of their task, upon recall or resignation and acceptance by the Pope (canon 268).¹³ The length of their mission is not firmly fixed, depending on the diplomatic practice of a host country. Apostolic Nuncios and Internuncios leave the free exercise of their jurisdiction to local ordinaries. In the hierarchy of local ordinaries, Nuncios—from their title of Legate—take precedence over all ordinaries, even if they lack episcopal ordination; only Cardinals take precedence over them. If they have been ordained as bishops, Nuncios can, without the permission of ordinaries, e.g. hold pontifical masses in all their churches (canon 269).¹⁴

The mission of the Apostolic Nuncio was thus primarily to represent the Holy Father to all Catholics and to represent the Holy See in the host country. His task was, by his authority, to spread confidence in the Holy See, its sincerity and responsiveness, strengthen the local Catholic community, be in contact with the local clergy, and, by means of his authority, assuage any potential anti-Catholic feeling among the population. As a diplomatic Envoy of the Holy See, he was a Doyen, i.e. the spokesman of the Diplomatic Corps during ceremonial events. He protected the interests of the Catholic Church and informed the Holy

10 Hobza, *Poměr mezi státem a církví*, 134; Fuchs, *Novější papežská politika*, 286.

11 Filipazzi, “Missione ecclesiale e diplomatica dei nunzi apostolici,” 24.

12 The Code of Canon Law was created at the command of the Supreme Pontiff, Pius X, and promulgated by Pope Benedict XV; the Czech translation was carried out by František Kop et al., 92–93.

13 Ibid., 93.

14 Ibid., 8.

See about the position of Catholicism in the country. He assumed the role of observer and possible advisor of the local clergy. Without the Pope's orders, he did not intervene in the religious life and management of dioceses. From his position of titular Archbishop and Nuncio, he took precedence over the local clergy (except for the Cardinal), which enabled him to preside at Episcopal conferences.¹⁵ He was also in active contact with representatives of various religious orders and congregations in Czechoslovakia, e.g. the Benedictines, Premonstratensians, Dominicans, Capuchins, Augustinians, Jesuits, Redemptorists, Basilians, Piarists, Barefoot Carmelites, Minorites, Salesians and Cistercians, in whose affairs he also intervened.¹⁶

The position of the Apostolic Nuncio was specific in that he represented the Holy See not only to the government, but also to bishops and priests, over whom he had extensive authority.¹⁷ It is thus obvious that the left-wing press repeatedly protested at the broad scope of authority of Apostolic Nuncios, and struggled for their exclusion from the Diplomatic Corps and for restriction of their intervention in Czechoslovakia.¹⁸

During discussions about *modus vivendi* in 1927, P. Ciriaci acted quite independently, mainly because he was also a high official of the Roman Curia—Under-Secretary of the Section for Relations with States—and he was personally interested in reaching an agreement. A role was possibly also played by the retreat of the aging Secretary of State, P. Gasparri, from the everyday agenda of the protracted dispute with Czechoslovakia.¹⁹ The Nuncio also formulated statements for the Czechoslovakian government in letters, which he was instructed or indicated to do by the Holy See, often in a brief or incomplete way. He mediated contacts between the Holy See and bishops, or, more generally, the faithful in Czechoslovakia; he reported on pilgrimages to Rome and helped to co-organize them.²⁰ Unlike a mere Secretary of the Nunciature, the Apostolic Nuncio enjoyed the substantial respect of the Church hierarchy in the country and embodied a dignified representative of the Holy Father in Czechoslovakia.²¹

15 Zlámál, *Příručka českých církevních dějin*, 7:72, 75; Hrabovec, "Svatá stolice," 7.

16 Filipazzi, "Missione ecclesiale e diplomatica dei nunzi apostolici," 3.

17 AMFA, PR Vatican, 1922, Pallier August 15, 1922.

18 *České Slovo*, September 9, 1922.

19 AMFA, PR Vatican, 1927, Jelen July 22, 1927.

20 Ibid., 1931, Radimský, May 19, 1931.

21 MFA, PR Vatican, 1927, Jelen November 9, 1927.

Besides this “spiritual form of representation”, he also intervened in the political, religious and cultural affairs of the host country, primarily informing the Holy See of its domestic and foreign policy and the policy of neighboring countries, and, if necessary, communicating with neighboring Apostolic Nunciatures.²² He dealt with topical questions of Church administration, was engaged in matters of Church education and the education of clergymen, and participated in Church events. In addition to the position of Catholicism in the country, he also informed the Holy See, or, more precisely, the Secretariat of State, of events in the country, the importance and influence of particular political parties and their representatives, the foreign policy, economic and cultural situation, the social “climate”, the position of national minorities in the country, the functioning of parliament, the composition of governments, everyday political events, and of the relation of representatives of the state, government, parliament and important personages to the Catholic Church and religion. If necessary, he sent translations of relevant newspaper or magazine articles to the Vatican.²³

The Nuncio was also in personal and written contact with other diplomatic representations in Czechoslovakia, sending them greetings, condolences, publications and informing them about his arrival or departure from Prague, as a part of ordinary diplomatic practice; but he was also in contact with the faithful of all nationalities in Czechoslovakia, who often sent him correspondence.²⁴ Sometimes they unloaded their problems on him; at other times they acquainted him with important Catholic events in their places of residence (masses, concerts, lectures, congresses, theatrical performances, newspaper articles, priestly anniversaries, etc.). Alternatively, they asked for financial support for Church repairs or other subsidies. The Apostolic Nunciature then informed the Secretariat of State of the most important events via letter, report, telegram or telephone (although at first Vatican diplomats did not place much trust in the last).

Given the too wide scope of his agenda and the demanding nature of his mission in the host country, many considered the Nuncio as the creator of confessional politics in Czechoslovakia, due to his influence on internal politics. Lawyer A. Hozba even stated that “with the

²² Fuchs, *Novější papežská politika*, 288.

²³ Šmíd, “Co skrývají vatikánské archivy,” 55–62.

²⁴ VSA, Archivio Nunziatura Cecoslovacchia, busta 32, fascicolo 155, or busta 72, fascicolo 593, or busta 75, fascicolo 607.

knowledge and consent of governments and in breach of valid laws, the Pope has become co-ruler of the country."²⁵ If we could argue against this claim, Hozba admitted that there was an important factor to the Nuncio's mission—prestige.

We are aware of the breadth of the issues analyzed, and, thus, it is not our aim to cover the entire area of Czechoslovakian-Vatican relations comprehensively. This study rather represents the first major text on Apostolic Nuncios. Of course, our insight into these issues is only partial—in as far as the written sources allow. We realize that much in them has remained unwritten, that much information was conveyed orally, during personal meetings, or via telephone, and that we often cannot know what the attitudes and opinions of the representatives of the Czechoslovakian dialog with the Holy See were.

If this monograph inspires other researchers, leading for example to the beginning of systematic processing of the materials on Apostolic Nuncios in Prague on a wider European level and within the international context of the time, it will have served its purpose.

25 Hobza, *Poměr mezi státem a církví*, 184.

2. Personage of the Apostolic Nuncio and His First Diplomatic Steps in Czechoslovakia

2.1 A Brief Outline of the Religious Situation in Czechoslovakia after 1918

During the 19th century, religious life gradually decayed in almost all parts of Western and Central Europe, and Church religiosity moved to the private sector. The ideas of rationalism, empiricism, and the enlightenment directed people towards their emancipation, from traditional Christianity to modern materialism, which was even intensified by the French Revolution, destroying the idea of Christian Europe and replacing it with the idea of nationality, instigated the awakening and creation of modern European nations. By a retreat from a religious position, the State lost a key principle of collective identification²⁶.

The liberal circles, socialists, atheists, and supporters of secularization attacked the Church and the Catholic block, labeling them as conservative, monarchist, and reactionary. After the annulment of concordat with Rome, the Church was in such subjection to the State that the Czech environment perceived it as a close interconnection of political and religious goals, and called it "Austrocatholicism."²⁷ The criticism of Catholicism, often passing into sharp attacks led mainly by political parties, was an everyday occurrence.²⁸ By the end of the 19th century, the Church lost the support of wide classes of society, its influence on society weakened, and it lost the general authority it had enjoyed thus far. For many people, faith ceased to be a fundamental need, and the almost general affiliation with the Catholic Church, experienced through centuries, became a private matter.

²⁶ Bensoussan, *Europe—une passion génocidaire*, 297.

²⁷ Marek, "Ještě k problematice tzv. boje o kostely," 2.

²⁸ Marek, "Náboženství v období politické diferenciaci," 192.

As a result of this process, which was consequently rounded off by the emancipation of non-Catholic religions, the degree of confession of faith offered by the State to its population, was rapidly decreasing. What also contributed to emphasize nation over religion were European national revivals that continued to weaken the important and traditional identification principle of social groups.²⁹ The Church was perceived as an obstacle on the way to “progress”: to the assertion of civil rights, arrival of modern techniques, and development of civic society. It thereby ceased to fulfill its role of guarantor of intellectual and artistic happenings.

A common element characterizing the outbreak and course of this conflict of secular and spiritual powers in all countries was the effort to reach superiority in the character of life, thinking, and orientation of society. Whereas before the Church had held the primacy, or alternatively shared it with the State, the creation of a new form of national and centralized state of the 19th century brought about an entitlement to the monopolization of the social order, in which there was no space for an equal division of power. The Church, not willing to accept such a restriction of power, rejected it. The result of this clash between the secular and religious was thus a conflict between State and Church, a fight between the Catholic and liberal blocks, known as the *cultural fight*, e.g. in Germany, France and Austro-Hungary.

Where does one seek the causes of the transformation of religious perception and the gradual discrediting of Catholicism in the Czech environment? Due to the Counter-Reformation after the Thirty Years’ War, the majority of Czechs claimed allegiance to the Catholic faith. Despite the Recatholization of the Czechs being outwardly successful, there is apparently no reason to believe that Czech Catholicism—except for South Bohemia and a large part of Moravia—since the 17th century had been superficial, forced, and thus lukewarm and, to a large extent, rational. The tradition of late Josephinism, the essence of which was the submission of Church to State, had been deeply rooted in Bohemia and often came alive in relation to Catholicism, yet following the 19th century was considered the most confessional. Although Czech Catholic priests were instrumental in the language and cultural advancement of the wider Czech population during the national revival, the Catholic and national interests were not intertwined as they were, for example,

29 Malíř, “Sekularizace a politika,” 13.

in Poland or Ireland.³⁰ The declining influence of aristocratic classes was substituted by the growing influence of townspeople and their style. Universalism and integralism were replaced by particularism, not only of individuals (the emancipation of man), but also of nations, groups, and classes (the socialist movement).

The general degree of religiosity was also low in the Czech Lands in the 19th century, unlike in Slovakia. Many mass events which retained religious dimensions rested on tradition and largely on social customs, and the outer, formal aspect obviously overshadowed real, inner religiosity. The formality of religious life had arisen from the fact that most of the religiously indifferent Czechs under Austrian conditions would not pull out of the Catholic Church. The person who spoke intensely against the superficiality and lukewarmness of Czech religious life at the end of the 19th century was T. G. Masaryk. He criticized especially those Czechs who remained enrolled in the Catholic register, but did not integrate their religiosity into their living practice. Faithlessness remained restricted to important socialist workers and groups of intellectuals, mainly in Bohemia.³¹ On the other hand, there were only a few faithful Catholics among lay intellectuals who consciously and openly proclaimed their faith. Slovakia, which, unlike the industrial Bohemia, was an agricultural landscape, was outside of the secularization movement, thereby maintaining its religiosity and vibrant religious tradition until the 20th century.

The growing attacks by various liberal and socialist streams and other political opponents of the Latin Church in the Czech Lands from the early 20th century also had an impact on the results of the elections to the Imperial Council of the Viennese Parliament in 1911. These elections resulted in defeat to the Catholic block — in Bohemia, Czech Catholics did not win a single mandate; in Moravia, the national Catholics of Mořic Hruban together with the Christian socialists of Jan Šrámek won only seven seats.³² The favor of the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty protected Catholicism, but also linked it too much with the Austrian Monarchy, a fact which was most evident after 1918. Bohemia was short of major spiritual efforts and important personages who would transcend the district format.

³⁰ Kořalka, *Češi v habsburské říši*, 87.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

³² Doležal, *Politická cesta českého katolicismu*, 7.

Czechoslovakia came into existence as a successor state to Austria-Hungary in October 1918. Its population was strongly radical due to the terrifying experience of WWI and its consequences, which significantly contributed to a harsh, often unfair, and sometimes even violent stance against the Catholic Church and the symbols of Catholicism in the Czech Lands. The liberal and socialist streams perceived the Church as an accomplice of the several-hundred-year Austrian oppression and they associated the Church's organization with the former monarchy. The first anger of a part of Czech society thus flared up after the creation of Czechoslovakia, against the backdrop of the reminders of the Habsburg's power and the influence of the Catholic Church, resulting in many valuable historical landmarks falling victim to this. Besides the most famous Marian Column in the Old Town Square in Prague, these also included the Holy Trinity Column in Slaně, other statues of saints and memorials, churches, and chapels. During the coup d'état in Prague, Prague Archbishop Pavel Huyn was on his visitation journey across West Bohemia when he became ill with Spanish Flu, and—considering his options in the new Republic, taking into account also the interests of the Church—did not return to the Czech metropolis after his recovery.³³

The leading ideas of Czechoslovakia were based on the political, religious, and social beliefs of a trio of Czechoslovakian politicians, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Edvard Beneš and Milan Rastislav Štefánik, who during WWI tirelessly agitated within a foreign political movement for the Czechoslovakian matter, trying to persuade the world's politicians about the need to break Austria-Hungary: for republicanism against the obsolete monarchism, for social radicalism supporting the economic upswing of the poorest classes, for anti-Catholicism focused against the “outdated” religion, and for Czechoslovakism based on the existence of a compact majority Czechoslovakian nation in the new Republic.³⁴ It was no surprise that, despite the declared and sometimes real claims of allegiance of the lower Catholic clergy to the national program, the creation of a new Czechoslovak Republic in the fall of 1918 was in no way positive for Catholicism. The harsh, forced, and often unfair actions towards the Church and everything Catholic filled faithful people with fear of the

33 AMFA, PR Vatican, 1921, Krofta July 3, 1921; AA. EE. SS., Austria-Ungheria, III periodo, fascicolo 567, fols. 16–17, Maglione to Gasparri November 5, 1918; Trapl, “Prýč od Říma,” 18f.

34 Balík, Hloušek, and Holzer, *Politický systém českých zemí 1848–1989*, 45.

progressive movement which, in the independent state, could strongly turn against Catholicism. If this was accepted with understanding in certain circles in the Czech Lands, in Slovakia it raised consternation.

After WWI, one million faithful left the Church, particularly in Bohemia. A part joined the newly formed national Czechoslovak Church, and a part became permanently irreligious. Strong groups of the population were in an anti-Catholic mood. Interest in studying Theology declined. Prague Archbishop Paul von Huyn and the Archbishop of Olomouc, Lev Skrbenský z Hříště, were forced to resign. The most frequently supported idea of the anti-Catholic movement was the separation of Church and State which, however, was never realized due to the resistance of Slovak Catholics and indecisiveness of some Czech political parties.³⁵ In spite of that, the Czechoslovakian parliament passed several laws restricting the influence of the Church in education and relaxing religious education, embodying the idea of separation in the 1920 Constitution. In Slovakia, no such anti-Catholic block existed, and apostasy was rather sporadic. On the contrary, traditional Slovak religiosity weakened the strength of attack against Catholicism.

³⁵ Marek, *Církevní krize*, 14.

2.2 Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Czechoslovakia and the Holy See

T. G. Masaryk and M. R. Štefánik in particular contributed to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the emerging Czechoslovakia, doing so through the agency of London Archbishop, Cardinal Francis Bourne. Štefánik then took care to foster relations.³⁶ The person who substantially contributed to the unification of different viewpoints of the American Catholic Czechs and Slovaks, and the formation of an attitude to the Czech liberating resistance and its direct financial support was Oldřich Zlámal, Priest and Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Cleveland, Ohio.³⁷

American Catholics turned to the Holy Father, Benedict XV, in November 1917, asking him to support the struggle for the liberation of the Czechs and Slovaks and the independent Czechoslovakian State, adding a financial gift of \$5,000 dollars. A memorandum from 26 Czech Catholic priests living in the USA, among whom were Bishop Josef M. Koudelka and the Abbot of the Czech Benedictines, Jan Jaeger, was delivered to the Apostolic delegate in the USA on November 21, 1917, in New York; yet it received no response.³⁸ They undertook this step not only due to their love of their home country, but also because they felt the need to respond to the Czech anti-Catholic elements which blamed the clergy for not being interested in the wellbeing of their country. Innocent Kestl, an American Catholic priest of Czech origin and the

³⁶ Masaryk, *Světová revoluce*, 44; Drábek, *Ž časů nedlouho zašlých*, 193.

³⁷ Zlámal, *Příručka českých církevních dějin*, 7:14–15. More about O. Zlámal in detail: Koniček, “Mons. Oldřich Zlámal,” 146–154.

³⁸ AA. EE. SS., Austria-Ungheria, III periodo, fascicolo 497, fol. 29.

President of the National Union of Czech Catholics in Chicago, headed this movement. The Vatican Secretariat of State also received information about the situation in Czechoslovakia during the war from Štefánik and Beneš.³⁹

The first step to establish diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Czechoslovakia was taken on November 8, 1918. Pope Benedict XV recognized the legitimacy of the successor states in Central Europe and called their representatives to establish diplomatic relations with the Holy See, namely through the agency of the Apostolic Nuncio to Vienna, Teodor Valfré de Bonzo.⁴⁰ Two months later, Bonzo expressed his interest in a personal audience with the Czechoslovakian President or Prime Minister, which Masaryk gladly promised.⁴¹

By the end of February 1919, Bonzo arrived in the recently created Czechoslovakia to meet with President Masaryk on March 3.⁴² Their first friendly meeting reflected a number of problems which subsequently became the subject of difficult Czechoslovakian-Vatican talks and kept the elites of both sides occupied over a long period. At the same time, these problems reflected the priorities of the Vatican policy in relation to the new State after 1918. The Holy See wanted to discuss mainly the following questions with Czechoslovakia: the filling of the Slovakian bishopric thrones and the management of Slovakia, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Holy See, the status of the field clergy, the fate of unseated bishops, the relations of the Holy See with Hungary, the filling of the Prague Archbishopric throne, the radicalism of the Czech press, the establishment of a new Faculty of Theology, relations between the Czech and German clergies, etc. Obviously, the Holy See was rather well informed about the situation in Czechoslovakia, and the Viennese Nuncio was well prepared for the meeting with Czechoslovakian political representatives.⁴³

By the end of September 1919, the Holy See decided to send the former Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Vienna, Clement Micara, to Czechoslovakia, where he was to represent the Holy See at the

39 Zlámál, *Příručka českých církevních dějin*, 7:28.

40 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis. Commentarium officiale* 10 (1918): 478–479; Buell, “France and the Vatican,” 36; Gajanová, “O poměru Vatikánu k předmnichovské republice,” 155.

41 APO, record A (audience), n. 16, nr. D3/182/19.

42 ASV, Archivio Nunziatura Cecoslovacchia, busta 12, fascicolo 44, fol. 8, Bonzo to Gasparri February 25, 1919, or 17–42 Bonzo to Gasparri March 8, 1919.

43 ASV, Archivio Nunziatura Cecoslovacchia, busta 12, fascicolo 44, fol. 15; Doležal, *Český kněz*, 66; Hájková, Quagliatová, and Vašek, *Korespondence T. G. Masaryk—Edvard Beneš*, 81.