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Hinkel, Sascha

Benedict XV and the German Episcopate

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Sascha Hinkel, Benedict XV and the German Episcopate, in: Alberto Melloni / Giovanni Cavagnini / Giulia Grossi (Hg.), *Benedict XV. A Pope in the World of the ‘Useless Slaughter’ (1914-1918)*, 2 Bde, Turnhout 2020, Bd. 2, S. 1025-1039.

1. Introduction

At first glance, an essay on Benedict XV and the German episcopate would not seem to present any particular difficulties. Jörg Ernesti has, in point of fact, recently published a new biography of the Pope ‘between the fronts’ for the German-speaking world.¹ However, in this work, the bishops are hardly ever mentioned. The same can be said for Josef Schmidlin’s classic work on the history of the popes in the modern era, published in 1936. It deals with fundamental themes such as the Pope’s peace initiative, his concern for prisoners of war or the restoration of diplomatic relations with the German Reich, but a close relationship between Benedict and the German episcopate seems to be missing.² Surprisingly, the reports of Eugenio Pacelli as Nuncio in Munich also offer modest results.³

As literature offers no clues on this issue, one may ask whether the relationship between Benedict XV and the German bishops can be considered an independent theme at all. Were contemporary critics right when, together with General Erich Ludendorff, an exponent of ethnic nationalism, they claimed that the Pope was an enemy of Germany and hence a ‘French Pope’?⁴

2. Benedict XV: a ‘French Pope’?

Three observations can be made on this topic.

- (1) In 1916, the Pope nominated three French bishops and a single German bishop, the Prince-Bishop of Wrocław, Adolf Bertram, to the College of Cardinals; however, the latter was only *in pectore*, thus a secret nomination.⁵ It was only in 1919 that this action was made public, while the Archbishop of Munich, Michael von Faulhaber, was not yet considered for the red hat.
- (2) The example of Faulhaber in particular makes it possible to understand significant differences between the German bishops and the Pope with regard to the question of peace. While he was still Bishop of Speyer, in 1914 Faulhaber described the Great War that had just erupted as ‘a textbook case of a just

¹ Jörg Ernesti, *Benedikt XV: Papst zwischen den Fronten* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2016).

² Josef Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit* (Munich: Josef Kösel & Friedrich Pustet, 1933–39), III: *Papsttum und Päpste im XX. Jahrhundert: Pius X. und Benedikt XV. (1903–1922)* (1936), pp. 277–84.

³ *Kritische Online-Edition der Nuntiaturberichte Eugenio Pacellis (1917–1929)* <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

⁴ Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte*, III, p. 195. See the documents connected to the topic ‘Äußerungen Erich Ludendorffs gegen die katholische Kirche im Hochverratsprozess nach dem Hitlerputsch’, in *Kritische Online-Edition der Nuntiaturberichte Eugenio Pacellis (1917–1929)* <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Schlagwort/10056>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

⁵ Nathalie Renoton-Beine, *La colombe et les tranchées: Benoît XV et les tentatives de paix pendant la Grande Guerre*, 2nd edn (Paris: Cerf, 2004), p. 65; Benedict XV, *Allocutio SS. D. N. Benedicti PP. XV et creatio cardinalium S. R. E., Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 8 (1916), pp. 465–77.

war’,⁶ while Benedict XV, in his first encyclical *Ad beatissimi* on 1 November of that year, stated that ‘surely there are other ways and means whereby rights can be rectified’.⁷

- (3) For the German bishops, and for their French and Belgian brother bishops, the link between nation and religion was crucial for their own self-comprehension. After the Kulturkampf, German Catholics were late in aligning themselves with the Protestant German Empire. Cardinals Felix von Hartmann of Cologne and Bertram were seen, not without reason, as bishops of the state. In 1914, they wanted to prove that they were loyal subjects, justifying the German war of aggression as a defence desired by God, whereas the Catholic universalism expressed by the Pope did not stop at national borders.⁸

However, there are also arguments against the theory that Benedict was an enemy of Germany.

- (1) In 1921, the Pope created two German cardinals, Faulhaber of Munich and the new Archbishop of Cologne, Karl Joseph Schulte,⁹ noting in the consistory that this was ‘a sign of goodwill towards [their] homeland’ as well.¹⁰
- (2) On the occasion of the conclave in 1914, the Austro-Hungarian and German cardinals voted, initially together as a block, for Giacomo Della Chiesa. During the vote, Cardinal von Hartmann clearly departed from this block to join the integrist group led by Cardinal Gaetano De Lai.¹¹ In his opinion, Della Chiesa had no chance because

(1) his election would constitute an affront to Pius X since he had been [...] Undersecretary to Rampolla and later worked along the same lines, which was why he was sent to Bologna; (2) he had an impetuous character; (3) not capable of being representative.¹²

⁶ ‘I am convinced that this military campaign will be for us, from the point of view of the ethics of war, *the textbook example of a just war*’ (‘Nach meiner Überzeugung wird dieser Feldzug in der Kriegsethik für uns *das Schulbeispiel eines gerechten Kriegs* werden’); Michael Faulhaber, *Waffen des Lichtes: Gesammelte Kriegsreden* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1915), p. 132 (emphasis in the original); Matija Gasperevic, *Die Lehre vom gerechten Krieg und die Risiken des 21. Jahrhunderts: der Präventivkrieg und die militärische humanitäre Intervention* (Munich: Universitätsbibliothek der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 2010), pp. 30–93.

⁷ Benedict XV, *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum Principis, Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 6, 18 (1914), pp. 565–81 (§ 4) <http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xv_enc_01111914_ad-beatissimi-apostolorum.html> [accessed 10 January 2019].

⁸ Heinrich Missalla, *‘Gott mit uns’: die deutsche katholische Kriegspredigt 1914–1918* (Munich: Kösel, 1968); Johann Klier, *Von der Kriegspredigt zum Friedensappell: Erzbischof Michael von Faulhaber und der Erste Weltkrieg: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen katholischen Militärseelsorge* (Munich: Kommissionsverlag UNI-Druck, 1991); Hermann-Josef Scheidgen, *Deutsche Bischöfe im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991), pp. 70–89; Sascha Hinkel, *Adolf Kardinal Bertram: Kirchenpolitik im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010), pp. 93–102; Ria Blaicher, ‘Gottes Strafgericht: Hirtenbriefe der deutschen Bischöfe während des Ersten Weltkrieges’, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 62 (2014), pp. 315–28; Bernhard Lübbers, ‘“Segne die Waffen unserer Brüder!”: die Hirtenbriefe des Regensburger Bischofs Antonius von Henle aus der Zeit des Ersten Weltkrieges’, in *Regensburg im Ersten Weltkrieg: Schlaglichter auf die Geschichte einer bayerischen Provinzstadt zwischen 1914 und 1918*, ed. by Bernhard Lübbers and Stefan Reichmann (Regensburg: Morsbach, 2014), pp. 105–18. The Austrian bishops offered almost identical arguments: see Wilhelm Achleitner, *Gott im Krieg: die Theologie der österreichischen Bischöfe in den Hirtenbriefen zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997).

⁹ See *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 13, 14 (1921), pp. 521–27.

¹⁰ Friedrich Ritter von Lama, *Papst und Kurie in ihrer Politik nach dem Weltkrieg* (Illertissen: Martinusbuchhandlung, 1925), p. 207.

¹¹ Scottà believes that during the conclave Hartmann stopped voting for Della Chiesa and instead voted for the Abbot General of the Subiaco Benedictines, Cardinal Domenico Serafini, which seems very plausible. See Antonio Scottà, *Giacomo Della Chiesa arcivescovo di Bologna (1908–1914): l’ottimo noviziato’ episcopale di papa Benedetto XV* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2002), p. 574. On the election, see Josef Lenzenweger, ‘Neues Licht auf die Papstwahlen von 1914 und 1922’, *Theologisch-Praktische Quartalschrift*, 112 (1964), pp. 51–58; Maximilian Liebmann, ‘Les conclaves de Benoît XV et de Pie XI: notes du cardinal Piffil’, *La revue nouvelle*, 38, 7–8 (1963), pp. 34–52.

¹² ‘Weil 1. seine Wahl als ein Affront gegen Pius X. gedeutet würde, da [...] [er] Unterstaatssekretär des Rampolla gewesen [sei] und in seinem Sinne noch später gearbeitet habe, weshalb er auch nach Bologna kam; 2. sei er ein heftiger Charakter; 3. nicht repräsentationsfähig’; Lenzenweger, ‘Neues Licht’, p. 52; Liebmann, ‘Les conclaves’, pp. 43 ff.

It is true that on the occasion of the German dispute over trade unions¹³ Hartmann had a conciliatory approach; however, on the eve of the conclave, he clearly adopted an integrist stance.¹⁴ When, in the end, the Archbishop of Bologna, a well-known exponent of a moderate approach to the modernist crisis, was elected pope, the Cardinal Archbishop of Munich, Franz von Bettinger, who was given a chair next to Della Chiesa in the randomly selected seating of the conclave, urged him to accept.¹⁵ The Bavarian Ambassador, von Ritter zu Groenesteyn,¹⁶ reported with evident satisfaction the role played by the German cardinals during the conclave. Bettinger told him verbatim that ‘we made the Pope and the Pope knows it’.¹⁷ Then, when the Cardinal visited him to pay him homage after the election, Benedict called him ‘meus maximus amicus’ (‘my best friend’).¹⁸ Bettinger was able to speak openly to Benedict, asking him frankly to put an end to integrism; the Pope promised to do so and asked the Cardinal to keep him informed on the events in Germany.¹⁹ It is not known whether Bettinger, who died in the spring of 1917, obeyed this request because the collection of the archdiocesan archives in Munich is incomplete, and the reference literature does not provide information on this point.²⁰

- (3) Benedict cultivated a close personal relationship with his private chamberlain, the German Rudolf Gerlach, who from 1915 until his expulsion from Italy for espionage in 1917 enjoyed the unconditional trust of the Pope and served as the informal German ambassador to the Vatican.²¹

¹³ Rudolf Brack, *Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit 1900–1914* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1976).

¹⁴ ‘After dinner, there arose a sharp controversy between Bettinger and Hartmann on the trade union issue. Hartmann theoretically defended the intransigent point of view that also Protestants have to follow the instructions of the Catholic Church. There is only one truth, the Catholic one, and Christ died for all people. Bettinger supported the point of view of the unions according to which the Church had to express itself in non-religious contexts in a non-binding way’ (‘Nach dem Abendessen kam es in der Gewerkschaftsfrage zwischen Bettinger und Hartmann zu einer scharfen Kontroverse. Hartmann verteidigte theoretisch den intransigenten Standpunkt, daß auch die Protestanten den Weisungen der Kath. Kirche zu folgen haben. Es gibt nur eine Wahrheit — die Katholische und Christus ist für alle Menschen gestorben. Bettinger steht auf dem Standpunkt der Gewerkschaften, daß die Kirche auf nicht religiösem Gebiet nicht verbindlich sprechen wird’); Maximilian Liebmann, ‘Wie werden Päpste gewählt? Die Konklave von 1914 und 1922’, in *Österreich und der Heilige Stuhl im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Hans Paarhammer and Alfred Rinnerthaler (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2001), pp. 257–71 (p. 262).

¹⁵ Konrad Preysing, *Kardinal Bettinger: nach persönlichen Erinnerungen* (Regensburg: Manz, 1918), pp. 19 ff.

¹⁶ Jörg Zedler, *Bayern und der Vatikan: eine politische Biographie des letzten bayerischen Gesandten am Heiligen Stuhl Otto von Ritter (1909–1934)* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2013).

¹⁷ ‘Wir haben den Papst gemacht und der Papst weiß es’; Engelbert Maximilian Buxbaum, ‘Der Münchener Kardinal-Erzbischof Franz von Bettinger und das Konklave von 1914 im Urteil eines Zeitgenossen’, *Beiträge zur altbayerischen Kirchengeschichte*, 33 (1981), pp. 131–47 (p. 144).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hans Nesner, *Das Erzbistum München und Freising zur Zeit des Erzbischofs und Kardinals Franziskus von Bettinger (1909–1917)* (St Ottilien: EOS, 1987).

²¹ According to the words spoken in January 1916 by the Austrian Ambassador to the Holy See, Johann Schönburg-Hartenstein, Gerlach acted as representative of the Central Powers to the Roman Curia: ‘This young prelate owes his particular position of trust, I believe, first of all, to his simple and open nature, which perhaps, thanks to a certain righteousness, is best suited to the complex nature of the pontiff’ (‘Dieser junge Prälat verdankt seine besondere Vertrauensstellung, wie ich glaube, in erster Linie seinem einfachen und offenen Wesen, welches sich der komplizierteren Natur des Papstes vielleicht eben durch eine gewisse Geradheit am besten anzupassen weiß’); quoted in Friedrich Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan, 1846–1918*, 2 vols (Graz: Styria, 1958–60), II: *Die Pontifikate Pius’ X. und Benedikts XV. (1903–1918)* (1960), p. 271; Renoton-Beine, *La colombe et les tranchées*, pp. 59–62; Antonio Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV: la Chiesa, la Grande Guerra, la pace (1914–1922)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009), pp. 131–41; Antonio Scottà, *‘La conciliazione ufficiosa’: diario del barone Carlo Monti ‘incaricato d’affari’ del governo italiano presso la Santa Sede (1914–1922)*, 2 vols (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997); Carlotta Benedettini, ‘Le Carte Erzberger’, in *Dall’Archivio Segreto Vaticano: miscellanea di testi, saggi e inventari*, 10 vols (Vatican City: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2006–2018), VII (2004), pp. 3–102.

- (4) After the war, Benedict sent a great deal of humanitarian aid to Germany. This included substantial donations of money but also material goods, collected by the Holy See from 1920, mainly in the United States.²²

Given these elements, the Pope's alleged Germanophobia, in my opinion, offers no valid explanation of the reason why the relationship between Benedict and the German bishops has not yet become a true and proper object of study.

3. The Image and Role of the Bishops in the Perspective of the Roman Curia

If for the natural sciences a negative conclusion is fully acceptable, for the human sciences, on the contrary, it presents a challenge to be overcome: what is there to write about? Schmidlin offers a clue: the Pope sent 'prudent instructions' to the 'German hierarchy devastated by apostasy' with the goal of 'revitalizing the Church in Germany'.²³ In this way the bishops appear to be passive receivers of the pontifical instructions. It might be the key to understanding the problem.

Let us consider the image of the bishop provided in the *Codex iuris canonici* promulgated by Benedict XV in 1917. They 'are successors to the apostles and by divine institution are placed over specific Churches, which they govern with ordinary power' and they do so 'under the authority of the Roman pontiff'.²⁴ Episcopal powers are divided into the full power of the sacrament of ordination, which is indelible, and the pastoral power, which the residential bishop, but not the auxiliary bishop, has. The pastoral power, through which the reigning bishop is the legislator, judge and administrator of his diocese, can be revoked by the pope. The dependence of German bishops on the pontiff was particularly evident in the five-year faculties which the pope delegated for that length of time to the ordinary of the diocese for jurisdictional and consecratory acts.²⁵ The main issue was granting dispensations for mixed marriages, which were common in Germany.

²² See, for example, Gasparri to Schioppa, 9 February 1920 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/1747>> [accessed 10 January 2019] and Gasparri to Pacelli, 25 March 1921 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/6199>> [accessed 10 January 2019]. Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte*, III, pp. 218–26.

²³ 'The extent to which the Pope of peace, in addition to this partial exterior restoration of the German hierarchy devastated by apostasy, has at the same time done everything possible to bring about, from the warlike and spiritual plagues of swirling upheavals and decay, an internal revitalization of the Church in Germany is indicated by his prudent instructions to the German episcopacy and clergy on the reparation of damages caused by the war in Germany through religious works of Christian charity after the peace agreement' ('Wie sehr der Friedenspapst neben dieser äußerlichen Teilrestauration der durch den Glaubensabfall zerstörten deutschen Hierarchie zugleich auch nach Kräften die innerkirchliche Neubelebung Deutschlands aus den Kriegs- und Seelenwunden wirren Taumels und Niedergangs betreibt, lehren uns seine umsichtigen Weisungen an den deutschen Episkopat und Klerus über die Wiedergutmachung der Kriegsschäden in Deutschland durch religiöse Glaubenswerke nach dem Friedensschluß'); Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte*, III, pp. 282 ff. In another passage, Schmidlin repeats that 'after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June, Pope Benedict, on 15 July 1919, gave healthy advice and exhortations, in line with the times, to the German bishops that they should heal, soothe and repair the damages caused by the war as soon as possible after the definitive establishment of peace, the end of the war and the lifting of the hunger blockade, on the basis of the Catholic faith' ('Nachdem der Versailler Vertrag unterzeichnet war (28. Juni), richtete Papst Benedikt an die Bischöfe Deutschlands am 15. Juli 1919 heilsame und zeitgemäße Ratschläge und Mahnungen, um nach endlicher Herstellung des Friedens, Beendigung des Kriegs und Aufhebung der Hungerblockade auf der Grundlage des katholischen Glaubens möglichst bald die Kriegsschäden zu heilen, zu beheben und wiedergutzumachen'); Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte*, III, p. 280.

²⁴ *Codex iuris canonici Pii X Pontificis maximi iussu digestus, Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus*, ed. by Pietro Gasparri (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1917), p. 86 (can. 329, § 1): 'Episcopi sunt Apostolorum successores atque ex divina institutione peculiaribus ecclesiis praeficiuntur quas cum potestate ordinaria regunt sub auctoritate Romani Pontificis'. English translation in *The 1917 or Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law*, ed. by Edward N. Peters (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001), p. 132.

²⁵ Nikolaus Hilling, 'Fakultäten', *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 3 (1931), col. 941 ff.

Maintaining this image of a bishop, Benedict finally implemented the primacy of jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome over all the other bishops into canon law. In this way, Della Chiesa, a diplomat and well-known adversary of integrism, became the bearer of an ecclesiology that echoed Vatican I.²⁶

The instructions of Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri to the Munich Nuncio, Giuseppe Aversa, in November 1916, which remained valid for Pacelli, clearly reflect this image of a bishop. The nuncio was to spur the bishops to a greater commitment to the issue of the working class²⁷ and to use ‘dexterity and prudence [...] in order to maintain good relations with the episcopacy throughout the empire [...] in order to make them benevolent collaborators’.²⁸ The result was the cooperation of bishops as collaborators who were bound to follow instructions, with the envoy from the Apostolic See acting as their superior.

This conception of the episcopal office was, in turn, in tune with the provisions in the Code of Canon Law, which attributed a double function to nuncios: they represented the Holy See not only at the diplomatic level in the country to which they were sent but were also vicars of the Vicar of Christ on earth, ‘superintendents’ of the bishops and required to inform the Pope about the situation in the dioceses.²⁹

Pacelli’s management of his office of Nuncio in Munich and Berlin seems to have followed these guidelines. Hartmann was on good terms with Emperor Wilhelm II and the government of the Reich, from which he sought to profit in conformity to the intentions of the Roman Curia. He was in contact with the Holy See directly or through the Nunciature in Munich, headed by the Dominican, Andreas Frühwirth, and, from May 1917, by Pacelli. The latter had been handling the correspondence with Hartmann since the period after the outbreak of the war when he was Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs.³⁰

Hartmann took action, for example, in Berlin regarding the question of the bombardment of the Cathedral of Reims,³¹ and on the divergences concerning the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, Désiré-Joseph Mercier,³² or the Apostolic Administrator of Vilnius, Kazimierz Mikołaj

²⁶ *Pastor Aeternus*, 18 July 1870 <<https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-ix/la/documents/constitutio-dogmatica-pastor-aeternus-18-iulii-1870.html>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

²⁷ ‘It does not seem possible to put right this painful fact: greater energy on the part of the episcopacy and clergy could certainly put some brakes on it, but on the other hand it has to be considered that, given the enormous needs of the population and the very active socialist propaganda, the workers are easily enticed and they join the socialist party, or they vote for its members without joining themselves’ (‘A tale doloroso fatto non si vede come possa rimediarsi: maggiore energia da parte dell’Episcopato e del Clero potrebbe certo porre un qualche freno, ma da un’altra parte bisogna considerare che, attesi gl’ingenti bisogni della popolazione e la attivissima propaganda Socialista, gli operai si lasciano facilmente allettare e si ascrivono al partito socialista o, senza ascrivarsi, votano per i suoi aderenti’). Gasparri to Aversa, November 1916 <www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/18121> [accessed 10 January 2019]. See *Eugenio Pacelli: die Lage der Kirche in Deutschland 1929*, ed. by Hubert Wolf and Klaus Unterburger (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), p. 37.

²⁸ ‘From this, you can clearly see, Mgr Nuncio, how much dexterity and prudence is needed to maintain good relations with the episcopacy throughout the empire, with the most influent members of the Zentrum, and with other persons, in order to make them benevolent collaborators in the high task given them to always improve the condition of the Catholic Church in the various regions of Germany’ (‘Da ciò ben vede Mgr. Nunzio di quanta destrezza e prudenza debbasi far uso per mantenere buoni rapporti con tutto l’Episcopato dell’Impero, coi più influenti membri del Centro e con altri personaggi, allo scopo di renderli benevoli collaboratori dell’alto incarico affidatogli di migliorare sempre più le condizioni della Chiesa Cattolica nelle varie regioni della Germania’). Gasparri to Aversa, November 1916 <www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/18121> [accessed 10 January 2019]

²⁹ ‘1. Fovent, secundum normas a Sancta Sede receptas, relationes inter Sedem Apostolicam et civilia Gubernia apud quae legatione stabili funguntur; 2. In territorio sibi assignato advigilare debent in Ecclesiarum statum et Romanum Pontificem de eodem certiore reddere’; *Codex Iuris Canonici Pii X*, p. 72 (can. 267, § 1).

³⁰ See, for example, the correspondence between Pacelli and Hartmann between December 1915 and July 1916, available in S.RR.SS., AA.EESS, Germany, pos. 1588, 1915–16, fasc. 839, fols 21–82. See also Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV*, pp. 196 ff.; Scottà, ‘La conciliazione ufficiosa’, I, p. 70.

³¹ Scheidgen, *Deutsche Bischöfe*, pp. 284–320; Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV*, p. 54.

³² Ludwig Volk, ‘Kardinal Mercier, der deutsche Episkopat und die Neutralitätspolitik Benedikts XV. 1914–1916’, *Stimmen der Zeit*, 192 (1974), pp. 611–30.

Michalkiewicz.³³ He also acted as an intermediary between the Curia and the government of the Reich in matters of assistance to prisoners of war³⁴ or the deportation of civilians in Belgium and in France.³⁵ It follows that the relevance of Hartmann to the Pope and the Curia diminished to the same extent that a nuncio with a firm character like Pacelli took charge in Munich. Pacelli tried to make up for the lack of a nunciature in Berlin and to establish contacts with the imperial government. In these circumstances, however, the Nuncio did not turn to Hartmann, who was considered a tenacious defender of national interests,³⁶ but rather to the diligent deputy of the Zentrum, Matthias Erzberger, with whom Pacelli had already cooperated when he was Secretary of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs.³⁷ Moreover, from the spring of 1915, Erzberger was in contact with the controversial Rudolf Gerlach, through whom the Reich leadership was able to establish direct contact with the Pope.

Erzberger was a prominent representative of the left wing of German Catholicism. He supported, on the one hand, making the German Reich both parliamentary and democratic, representing on the political level a significantly different orientation from that of Benedict XV and Pacelli. On the other hand, he advocated a peace without annexations, fully in line with the designs of the pontiff. During the preparations for the call for peace, Pacelli relied completely on the mediatory activity of Erzberger, excluding Hartmann and the entire German episcopate from the negotiations. After the failure of the initiative, the Nuncio explained himself, telling Gasparri that, like all conservative German Catholics, Hartmann would be against Erzberger.³⁸ Ultimately, Hartmann rejected the pontifical peace initiative, which coincided with Erzberger's programme, following, as did some exponents of the Zentrum and the clergy, a conservative attitude in internal politics and a pan-Germanist one in external policies. He complained to others about the fact that the Nuncio constantly dealt with Erzberger and not with him, who could have given him better information. Pacelli thus asked for the permission to visit Hartmann in Cologne because until that moment a personal meeting between the two had not yet taken place.³⁹ Although Gasparri immediately gave him permission,⁴⁰ Pacelli went to Cologne only nine months later, a clear clue of

³³ Pacelli to Gasparri, 4 January 1918 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/2129>> [accessed 10 January 2019]. On this point, see Sascha Hinkel, 'Critical Online Edition of the Nuncial Reports of Eugenio Pacelli (1917–1929)', in *Church History between Rome and Vilnius: Challenges to Christianity from the Early Modern Ages to the 20th Century*, ed. by Arūnas Streikus (Vilnius: LKMA, 2012), pp. 89–95.

³⁴ Benedict XV, *Ex quo pontificatum*, 8 November 1914 <https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/it/letters/1914/documents/hf_ben-xv_let_19141108_ex-quo-pontificatum.html> [accessed 10 January 2019]; Benedict XV, *Gratum equidem*, 18 October 1914 <https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/it/letters/1914/documents/hf_ben-xv_let_19141018_gratum-equidem.html> [accessed 10 January 2019]; Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV*, pp. 100, 110–21 and 264.

³⁵ See, for example, Pacelli to Gasparri, 29 September 1917 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/2195>> [accessed 10 January 2019] in which Pacelli sent the Holy See a letter that Hermann von Stein, Prussian Minister of War, had sent to Hartmann on 22 September 1917 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/8573>> [accessed 10 January 2019], or Pacelli to Gasparri, 10 January 1918 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/2189>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

³⁶ Ernesti, *Benedikt XV*, p. 108; Scottà, 'La conciliazione ufficiosa', I, pp. 293 ff.

³⁷ Klaus Epstein, *Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959); Hubert Wolf, 'Verlegung des Heiligen Stuhls: ein Kirchenstaat ohne Rom? Matthias Erzberger und die Römische Frage im Ersten Weltkrieg', *Rottenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte*, 11 (1992), pp. 251–70; Stefano Trinchese, 'I tentativi di pace della Germania e della Santa Sede nella I guerra mondiale: l'attività del deputato Erzberger e del diplomatico Pacelli (1916–1918)', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 35 (1997), pp. 225–55; Hubert Wolf, 'Matthias Erzberger, Nuntius Pacelli und der Vatikan; Oder: Warum der Kirchenstaat nicht nach Liechtenstein verlegt wurde', in *Matthias Erzberger: ein Demokrat in Zeiten des Hasses*, ed. by Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg and Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart (Karlsruhe: Braun, 2013), pp. 134–57 and 258–65; Benedettini, 'Le Carte Erzberger'.

³⁸ Pacelli to Gasparri, 22 October 1917 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/4043>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

³⁹ Pacelli to Gasparri 8 December 1917 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/225>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

⁴⁰ Gasparri to Pacelli 21 December 1917 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/3453>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

how little he trusted Hartmann as an informer.⁴¹ He met Erzberger far more frequently, who went personally to Munich when he intended to talk with Pacelli, or was summoned by him.⁴²

Faulhaber was considered someone Pacelli could trust. His notes on the papal audience granted to him on 30 December 1919 show that after the war issues of current relevance were discussed, such as the education question, the validity of concordats or the restoration of the monarchy (the opinion of the Archbishop of Munich was that it was ‘impossible to reintroduce it now’).⁴³ From them, Faulhaber’s defence of the Nuncio against the curial criticisms of the management of his job in Munich also emerges (‘Pacelli does what he can’).⁴⁴ It is also clear that the Pope had little understanding of the peculiarities of German political Catholicism: ‘Are the Catholic representatives truly active’, he asked, ‘and are they advised by the bishops? They think too much about their families; they should remain celibate and not compromise on fundamental issues’.⁴⁵ From Faulhaber’s diary entries concerning his visits to Rome, it emerges that the pontifical peace initiative was not the subject of his countless meetings.⁴⁶

⁴¹ ‘Passing through Cologne, I paid the most Eminent Cardinal Hartmann a visit, one that had been promised for a long time. Hartmann welcomed me with signs of the greatest benevolence and begged me to convey to the Holy Father the feelings of his filial devotion’ (‘Passando attraverso Colonia, ove feci la visita, già da tanto tempo promessa, all’Eminentissimo Signor Cardinale Hartmann, il quale mi accolse coi segni della più grande benevolenza e mi pregò di umiliare al Santo Padre i sentimenti della sua filiale devozione’); Pacelli to Gasparri, 30 September 1918 <<http://www.pacelli-edition.de/Dokument/482>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

⁴² VSA, Archive of the Munich Nunciature, 408, fasc. 4, fol. 307r, Erzberger to Pacelli, 30 May 1917: ‘Your Excellency, I acknowledge receipt of this morning’s dispatch. I should very much like to have gone to Munich this week; however, I have to leave tomorrow for the northern countries on a matter of urgency. However, next Monday or Tuesday I shall be in Munich. I will send a message to Your Excellency. I am very much looking forward to meeting Your Excellency as I would also like to discuss a number of important issues. But I apologize for this week, for not being able to come now, because the trip north has already been decided’ (‘Euerer Exzellenz bestätige ich den Empfang der Depesche von heute früh. Ich würde sehr gern in dieser Woche nach München gekommen sein, muß jedoch morgen in dringender Angelegenheit nach dem nördlichen Ausland abreisen. Am kommenden Montag oder Dienst[ag] werde ich mich jedoch in München einfinden. Ich werde Euerer Exzellenz noch Mitteilung zugehen lassen. Ich freue mich sehr auf die Zusammenkunft mir Euer Exzellenz, da ich auch eine Reihe von wichtigen Fragen besprechen möchte. Ich bitte mich aber für diese Woche zu entschuldigen, da ich wegen der schon festgestellten Reise nach dem Norden jetzt nicht kommen kann’); VSA, Archive of the Munich Nunciature, 409, fasc. 2, fol. 221rv, Erzberger to Pacelli, 26 September 1917: ‘This shows how much the exchange of ideas in person are absolutely necessary and important, and I declare that I am ready again, when summoned by a telegram of Your Excellency, to come immediately to talk’ (‘Es zeigt sich hier wieder, wie absolut notwendig und wie wichtig mündliche Aussprachen sind und ich erkläre mich nochmals bereit, auf telegraphischen Ruf Euerer Exzellenz sofort nach dorten zur Besprechung zu kommen’).

⁴³ ‘Unmöglich, sie jetzt zurückzuführen’; *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers (1917–1945)*, 3 vols (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1975–2002), I: 1917–1934, ed. by Ludwig Volk (1975), p. 123.

⁴⁴ ‘Pacelli tut, was er tun kann’; *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers*, I, p. 124.

⁴⁵ ‘Ob die katholischen Abgeordneten wirklich eintreten’; ‘und von den Bischöfen sich beraten lassen? Sie denken zu viel an ihre Familie, müßten Zölibatäre sein und sollten keine Kompromisse in grundsätzlichen Fragen schließen’; *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers*, I, p. 123.

⁴⁶ The diaries on the meetings and appointments of Faulhaber in the years 1911–52 are currently transcribed from the Gabelsberger shorthand and published in an online critical edition with commentary, *Kritische Online-Edition der Tagebücher Michael Kardinal von Faulhabers (1911–1952)* (<<http://www.faulhaber-edition.de>> [accessed 10 January 2019]), as part of a long-term project financed by the Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft under the academic direction of Andreas Wirsching of the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History in Munich and Hubert Wolf of the Department for Medieval and Modern Church History at the University of Münster. The entries in these diaries of Faulhaber as Bishop of Speyer in the early months of 1917 and as Archbishop of Munich and Freising in the second half of the same year, besides those from 1918 and 1919, do not permit any conclusions to be drawn about the relationship between Faulhaber and Pope Benedict. The notes from 1920–21 have not yet been transcribed. It seems that only Supreme War Court Councilor Steidle in Tournai directed the conversation towards the peace initiative: ‘Why does the Pope interfere in the question of peace?’ (‘was gehe den Papst der Frieden an’). The Archbishop did not document his own reaction (entry on 22 December 1917 https://www.faulhaber-edition.de/dokument.html?idno=10001_1917-12-22_T01 [accessed 10 January 2019]). That Faulhaber defended the pontiff from the accusation made by the German diplomat Clemens von Brentano di Tremezzo on 7 November 1917 (‘Why does the Holy Father do nothing for the Germans?’; ‘Warum der Heilige Vater nichts tue für die Deutschen?’) should not be surprising; the Archbishop in fact defended the Pope from that criticism, which was unjustified in his eyes; see entry on 7 November 1919 <

It appears, on the other hand, that Pacelli, through his Nunciature, systematically and progressively reduced the already meagre importance of the German bishops as informers of the Pope and the Curia, dominating the management of contacts between Rome and the bishops.

Looking at Pacelli's considerations at the end of his tenure as Nuncio in Berlin in 1929, one can draw up a list of the criteria for evaluating bishops:

(a) formation and purity of doctrine,

(b) devotion to the Holy See and to his vicar *in loco*, the Apostolic Nuncio to Berlin [thus Pacelli himself], and, finally,

(c) his character, conduct and attitude.⁴⁷

Of these criteria, 'devotion' or 'attachment' to the Holy See and formation in Rome, hence doctrinal reliability, were considered the most important. From this point of view, the ideal profile was that of the Bishop of Mainz, Ludwig Hugo, who had studied theology in Rome and whom the Nuncio himself had recommended for that office: 'He has a good philosophical and theological culture, he is very attached to the Holy See and very orthodox in doctrine'.⁴⁸

The president of the Fulda Episcopal Conference, Bertram, according to Pacelli's words, was, on the contrary, 'not easy, authoritarian and susceptible in character. In the defence of the faith against modern errors, he has often shown himself [...] not equal to the task'.⁴⁹ He "'sabotaged" all of the attempts and initiatives' to affirm Catholic action in Germany.⁵⁰ He further had 'a marked tendency to act on his own, willingly leaving aside, as far as he can, the Holy See itself (except in cases when he needs it to protect his own responsibility)'.⁵¹ Difficult characters such as Bertram did not conform to Pacelli's picture of a good bishop. On the other hand, Bertram's conception of the office of the nuncio is significant:

The Roman congregations are identified, as it were, with the Pope; for me, they are organs of the primacy; I obey them as my legitimate superiors, with a good heart. That of the nuncio is a substantially different position. Nuncios do not hold the position of the Roman congregations.⁵²

It is evident that such an interpretation of the office of the nuncio, opposed to that of supervisor of the episcopacy, as attributed to it in the Code of Canon Law, would inevitably lead to conflict.

edition.de/dokument.html?docidno = 10003_1919-11-07_T01> [accessed 10 January 2019]. Not even the notes before and after the death of Benedict XV offer ample conjectures on the personal relationship between him and the Cardinal of Munich. On 20 January, Pacelli called Faulhaber, who was busy in a meeting at the chancery, to communicate to him that the Holy Father was 'gravely ill' ('gravamente malato'); entry on 20 January 1922; EAM, NL, Faulhaber 10006, p. 93. Faulhaber remained silent about his personal feelings, but his entry on the day of the Pope's death reveals something about the Nuncio, evidently much moved by the death of the one who promoted him to that position: 'Again terrible; it is a disaster — the Nuncio did not manage to say more than that, and his voice trembled' ('Wieder terribile, è un desastro [*sic*] — mehr kann Nuntius Pacelli nicht sagen und seine Stimme zittert'); entry of 22 January 1922; EAM, NL Faulhaber 10006, p. 93.

⁴⁷ '(a) Ausbildung und Reinheit der Lehre, (b) Ergebenheit gegenüber dem Hl. Stuhl und seinem Vertreter vor Ort, dem Apostolischen Nuntius in Berlin [also Pacelli selbst], und schließlich (c) Charakter, Lebensführung und Umgangsformen'; *Eugenio Pacelli*, ed. by Wolf and Unterburger, p. 60.

⁴⁸ *Eugenio Pacelli*, ed. by Wolf and Unterburger, p. 241.

⁴⁹ *Eugenio Pacelli*, ed. by Wolf and Unterburger, p. 219.

⁵⁰ *Eugenio Pacelli*, ed. by Wolf and Unterburger, p. 221.

⁵¹ *Eugenio Pacelli*, ed. by Wolf and Unterburger, p. 223.

⁵² 'Die Römischen Kongregationen identifizieren sich sozusagen mit dem Papst, sie sind für mich Organe des Primats, ihnen also, wie meinen legitimen Vorgesetzten, gehorche ich guten Herzens. Die Position des Nuntius ist eine wesentlich andere. Die Nuntien haben nicht die Position der Römischen Kongregationen'; AAEISS, Germania 1920-21, pos. 1739, fasc. 918, fols 74r-75r, Bertram to Canon Johannes Steinmann of the Chapter of the Wrocław Cathedral, consultant of the Embassy of Germany to the Holy See, 21 November 1920. See Hinkel, *Adolf Kardinal Bertram*, p. 231.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that Bertram was not Pius XII's point of reference during World War II. The man whom the Pope trusted was, rather, the Bishop of Berlin, Konrad von Preysing, who was also promoted to bishop thanks to Pacelli. While Bertram did not obtain anything through a policy of supplication (*Eingabepolitik*) and his countless letters of protest to the most diverse offices of the Nazi regime, Preysing wanted to protest openly against the illicit methods of Hitler's state. Pius XII aligned himself on the side of Preysing in the differences among the bishops regarding the right tactic to use to fight the regime.⁵³ However, he could not encourage an unlimited offensive tactic since he himself followed Bertram's defensive tactics:

We leave it to the pastors working on the spot to assess whether, and to what extent, the danger of reprisals and means of pressure in cases of episcopal declarations [...] seem to call for reserve *ad maiora mala vitanda*. This is the reason why We also impose limits on ourselves in our messages.⁵⁴

In writing to the Bishop of Würzburg, Matthias Ehrenfried, whom he had also helped elevate to bishop, Pius XII drew a line from World War II to World War I:

In the present hour, two realities intersect: the powerful events in the extra-ecclesial field in the face of which the Pope intends to practise that reserve that imposes on him complete impartiality, on the one hand, and the duties and emergencies of the Church that require his intervention, on the other. These intersect with such frequency in a very disastrous manner, even more disastrously than in the previous world war [...]. Where the Pope would prefer to shout, he is constrained to wait and be silent; where he would like to act and help, he must wait patiently.⁵⁵

As far as the debated question of Pius XII's silence about the Holocaust is concerned, I limit myself to mentioning that the pontiff expressly defined his own attitude as a 'waiting silence'.⁵⁶

However, let us return to Pacelli's image of a good bishop. If until World War II devotion and filial attachment to the Holy See were the decisive criteria for a positive evaluation of the bishops, who should not, like Bertram, be autonomous or act without the Holy See, Pius XII suddenly overturned these criteria in the course of the war. Could he really be surprised, at that point, that only a few bishops were ready to take responsibility for an open protest against Nazism?

⁵³ Pius XII was 'grateful for the clear and direct words that you have addressed on many occasions to your faithful and, thus, to the public' ('dankbar für die klaren und offenen Worte, die du bei verschiedenen Gelegenheiten an deine Gläubigen und damit an die Öffentlichkeit gerichtet hast'); see Pius XII to Preysing, 30 April 1943, in *Die Briefe Pius' XII. an die deutschen Bischöfe, 1939–1944*, ed. by Burkhard Schneider (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1966), p. 238. On the differences within the Fulda Episcopal Conference, see Antonia Leugers, *Gegen eine Mauer des bischöflichen Schweigens: der Ausschluß für Ordensangelegenheiten und seine Widerstandskonzeption: 1941–1945* (Frankfurt a.M.: Knecht, 1996).

⁵⁴ 'Den an Ort und Stelle tätigen Oberhirten überlassen Wir es abzuwägen, ob und bis zu welchem Grade die Gefahr von Vergeltungsmaßnahmen und Druckmitteln im Falle bischöflicher Kundgebungen [...] es ratsam erscheinen lassen... *ad maiora mala vitanda* Zurückhaltung zu üben. Hier liegt einer der Gründe, warum Wir selber Uns in Unseren Kundgebungen Beschränkungen auferlegen'; Pius XII to Preysing, 30 April 1943, in *Die Briefe*, ed. by Schneider, p. 240.

⁵⁵ 'In der gegenwärtigen Stunde kreuzen sich einerseits das gewaltige Geschehen im außerkirchlichen Raum, dem gegenüber der Papst die Zurückhaltung beobachten will, die ihm die unbestechliche Unparteilichkeit auferlegt, andererseits die kirchlichen Aufgaben und Nöte, die sein Eingreifen verlangen: sie überkreuzen sich so vielfach und verhängnisvoll, verhängnisvoller noch als im vergangenen Weltkrieg [...]. Wo der Papst laut rufen möchte, ist ihm leider manchmal abwartendes Schweigen, wo er handeln und helfen möchte, geduldiges Harren geboten'; Pius XII to Ehrenfried, 20 February 1941, in *Die Briefe*, ed. by Schneider, p. 125.

⁵⁶ José M. Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust: Understanding the Controversy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002); *Pius XII and the Holocaust: Current State of Research*, ed. by David Bankier, Dan Michman and Iael Nidam-Orvieto (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2012).

4. Conclusion

What then remains regarding Benedict XV and the German bishops? Even without becoming a truly autonomous topic, it is part of the pontifical ecclesiology in the first half of the twentieth century. The Church of Benedict XV, then of Pius XII, was essentially a Church of the Pope, constituted in a monarchical sense, in which there was no place for bishops to act in a political spirit autonomously. In their dioceses, the bishops undoubtedly enjoyed full faculties for governing and the care of souls, but nothing more. The important decisions and those of a political nature were taken by the pope or by one of his vicars (the nuncio or the cardinal secretary of state). It was in this way that Bismarck and Leo XIII ended the Kulturkampf in Germany and it was in this way that Pacelli concluded the Concordat with Hitler's Reich. Independent lay people from the Zentrum or politically active bishops were not welcome. It is not surprising, therefore, that the German bishops were not asked anything about Benedict XV's peace initiative of 1917 (in fact, Nuncio Pacelli alone negotiated with Wilhelm II) and that they ultimately did not even support it.⁵⁷ Considering this recognition, it may seem rather unusual that Pius XII himself, during World War II, exhorted the German bishops to take political action and to take the initiative, something that not even he was able to achieve. Such an exhortation did, however, point the way to a new ecclesiology, confirmed at Vatican II yet not always followed consistently. However, caution is needed in recognizing in Benedict XV or Pius XII the precursors of a collegial conception that the order of bishops was in a direct line of succession to the apostles.

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⁵⁷ Hubert Wolf, ‘Der Papst als Mediator? Die Friedensinitiative Benedikts XV. von 1917 und Nuntius Pacelli’, in *Frieden stiften: Vermittlung und Konfliktlösung vom Mittelalter bis heute*, ed. by Gerd Althoff (Darmstadt: WBG, 2011), pp. 167–220.

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59. Sascha Hinkel **Benedict and the German Episcopate**

To say something about Benedict XV and the German bishops is more difficult than might be expected, not because Benedict was an enemy of the Germans but rather due to his image as a bishop that traces back to Vatican I. Receiving instructions from the Pope and his Nuncio, the bishops were excluded from Church politics. For the outgoing Nuncio in Berlin, Eugenio Pacelli, a bishop's adherence and devotion towards papal authority were the determining criteria in characterizing him. Against this backdrop, it appears utterly absurd that he, as pope, should admonish the German bishops telling them to raise a self-responsible political protest against the cruelties of the Nazi-regime.