

The Papacy and the First World War

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The Prophecy of Pius X

"I can attest to the fact that His Holiness Pius X repeatedly prophesied the Great War in Europe long before the storm actually came at a time when, as far as I know, only a few, if any, ventured in a general way to express the fear that sooner or later the growing hostility between dominant and powerful nations would inevitably lead to a gruesome war with all its terrible consequences.

Already in 1911 and 1912 the Holy Father often spoke to me of the approaching conflict and more than once did so in a way which was very alarming. (...) On such occasions I asked the Holy Father what had especially aroused his attention and given rise to his fears. He always simply answered: 'Things are going badly. The Great War is coming closer.'" And when Pius' Secretary of State Merry del Val spoke about the international situation and wanted to point to signs of hope on the horizon of international affairs, the Pope would still always say the same thing. "In such cases, after the Holy Father had listened attentively to my rather optimistic observations, he would nevertheless raise his hand as if to warn and would give the following answer with unusual gravitas: 'Eminence, things are going badly. We shall not get through the year 1914.'

As I have already said, this happened many times during these years, and I still remember how I pondered over His Holiness' words when I returned to my room. I asked myself what reason he could have for indicating 1914 so definitely as the year of the coming war; but I could find no answer to it."¹

Such statements from Pius' X Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930) could perhaps be regarded as the expression of an extraordinary political acumen, but there are more astonishing witnesses of a kind of foreknowledge on the part of the Pope of the events linked to the First World War. They concern the question of the succession in the Habsburg Empire and the marriage of Archduke Karl, later Emperor Karl I (1887-1922, Emperor 1916-1918) who was then second in line to the throne.

"A deep attraction grew between Carl [Archduke Karl] and Zita [von Bourbon-Parma]. Their apparently opposite characters - the quiet, introverted Carl and the temperamental Zita - complemented each other well. Their engagement was celebrated on 13 June 1911. During the weeks before the wedding, Zita travelled to Rome with her mother, where they were given an audience with the Pope. The Holy Father congratulated them on the engagement. Then he said something that Zita was to remember into her old age²: "Now you are going to marry the heir to the throne." When the princess contradicted the Pope and said that Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the heir, Pius X insisted: "No, Carl will be the heir. (...) Whether there will be a renunciation [by Franz Ferdinand], I do not know. But one thing I do know: Carl will be the heir of Emperor Franz Joseph." The princess did not understand this and put it down to an error on the part of the Pope.

A little later, on 21 October the wedding was celebrated at Schloss Schwarzau. (...) The marriage service was conducted by Cardinal Bisleti, a close friend of the family, who remained linked to the young couple throughout his life. He read out the message of good wishes from Pius X. (...) Out of consideration for Franz Ferdinand the Cardinal left out the passage in which the Pope once again referred to his prophecy that Carl would be the heir. (...)"³

In 1954 Pius X became the most recent Pope [until the canonisations of John XXIII and John Paul II in 2013 - *transl.*] to be canonised, and one could perhaps regard his prophecies as proof of his prophetic inspiration. But regarded more soberly, they appear to represent knowledge of particular intentions and conclusions in international politics which the Pope evidently possessed. He appears to have known that some powerful people had decided that Franz Ferdinand would not accede to the throne of the Habsburgs.

At any rate, these quotations indicate that the Pope had knowledge of the deep dimensions and of the setting of direction in the underground of international politics, which were aiming towards the world war. They can provide an opportunity to illuminate the role of the Curia in international events in the decades before the First World War, in order thereby to attempt to clarify something of the background of this foreknowledge.

Pius X and the era of the Pius Popes

With his reign name Pius X, Giuseppe Sarto (1835-1914) had placed himself in the tradition of those popes since Pius VI (1775-1799) whose pontificate had above all been a struggle against everything that had gained the upper hand in European society in the French Revolution. Pius VI had already conceived of the Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man as a kind of insanity contrary to divine will. A similar spirit dominated the church until the Second Vatican Council 1962-1965. Popes with the name Pius, from Pius VI to Pius XII, reigned for 128 of the 185 years from 1775 to 1958. The symbolic peak of this period of the "Pius Popes" was the pronouncement of the dogma of papal infallibility in 1870 during the reign of Pius IX (1846-1878), the longest in the history of the Papacy.

In the 19th century the church found itself in a deep conflict with the ideals of the era, - which were directed towards progress, liberty and science. The kernel of this hostility was the church's denial of the ideals of spiritual freedom and of liberalism (freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion, freedom of the press). Since the church firmly believed itself to be in possession of the truth, it felt that it was completely absurd to allow to other, "false" teachings any potential equal possibilities besides its own to have an effect on people.

The more hopeless the church's position seemed with regard to the modern tendencies of the age, the more the fury of the church's defiance intensified; the more it was rejected by the spirit of the times, the more emphatically it laid claim to its absolute spiritual rulership of the world. The papal writings of a Gregory XVI (1831-1846) or a Pius IX (1846-1878) sometimes have the character of hymns of hatred and anger on the one hand and feeble, illusionary proclamations of triumph on the other.

The church in the world after 1870

With the wars in Europe between 1859 and 1870, the system of power relations in the continent that had been constructed at the Congress of Vienna in 1814/15 collapsed. This also had the effect of shattering the position of the church within the framework of European power politics.

Between 1859 and 1870 a united Italian kingdom under the House of Savoy-Piedmont emerged, which gradually deprived the church of its territorial possessions. In 1870 Italy made use of the slipstream of the Franco-Prussian War to purloin even Rome from the Papacy and to declare it the capital of the new Italy. From that point on, the Pope resided in Rome as a "prisoner in the Vatican", as he called himself. Garibaldi, the most important leader of the movement for Italian unity, had described the Pope as the "vampire of Italy", and the majority of the leaders of the cause of Italian unification were Freemasons. The new Italy offered the Papacy the guarantee of a declaration of independence in 1871, but the popes were not prepared to accept the *faits accomplis*. A period of 'cold war' began - which lasted until 1929 - between the new Italy and the Papacy, which manoeuvred to try to effect the restoration of its territorial possessions. From 1870 until c.1889 Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII repeatedly considered moving the Curia from Rome to German or Austrian territory⁴, but the Vatican never felt itself sufficiently encouraged from outside actually to do so. Such a move was always accompanied by the idea that it would be able to return to Rome at the head of a strong coalition of Powers directed against Italy and would have its territorial possessions restored. It was supposed to stir the conscience of the (Catholic and conservative) world, as it were, and force it to act. The Powers to be called on or urged to act in this way included Germany, Austria, Russia, Spain and France.

In France Napoleon III had ruled since 1848/49, and although himself stemming from a family of revolutionaries, he had depended on the church for support. It had been Napoleon III who

had prevented Italy from occupying papal Rome in 1870, and it was the collapse of Napoleon III's regime in the Franco-Prussian War which made it possible for Italian troops to occupy Rome in September 1870. In France, defeat in the War of 1870/71 led to the establishment of a republic in which Freemasons occupied the leading positions and which was constantly afflicted by waves of anti-clerical measures taken by the government.

As a result of the War of 1866, the Catholic power of the Austrian Habsburg Empire, which had had a dominant position within the German-speaking world, was knocked out of Germany and greatly weakened. A new united, German Empire emerged in 1871 under the leadership of a very Protestant Prussia. In this German Empire Catholicism fell back to the role of a minority culture, and indeed, the new German Empire showed its Protestant identity almost immediately after the establishment of the *Reich* in that it introduced legal measures that sought to reduce the independent power of the Catholic Church vis-a-vis the State. This *Kulturkampf* had the ultimate goal of limiting the influence of the Pope on German Catholics so as to undermine papal influence on internal relations in Germany; this effort completely failed, however. From the late 1870s these laws were gradually withdrawn.

From the time of Leo XIII (1878-1903) there were more courteous relations between the Church and the German Empire, two "conservative" Powers, but ultimately, for the Church the heretical Empire remained an "enemy" which had since 1870 upturned the whole European balance of power and had given Protestantism a position of power on the continent such as it had never had since the Reformation. Prussia in itself, the dominant element in the new Empire, also appeared to the Church as the main problem: "In its origin and in its entire nature, Prussia represents a denial of Catholicism; [it is] the most intimate ally of Freemasonry (...). The hour of the downfall of the newly-baked Prussian Empire will be sounded as soon as its threats against the Church become deeds"⁵ - such were the sentiments for example in a typical article in 1871 at the beginning of the *Kulturkampf*. The condemnation of Protestantism remained as sharp as ever under Leo XIII, Pius X and their successors and was constantly repeated in many papal encyclicals.

This hostility was intensified by the fact that from 1882 Germany was allied to Italy, another enemy of the Church, in the so-called Triple Alliance. Only if Germany had changed its entire politics, if it had made itself a worldly servant of the Church, a new Holy Roman Empire, would it have been able to free itself of this role of enemy. It was called upon by Leo XIII to do so on several occasions. On the last of three visits to the Vatican by Wilhelm II, the over 90 year-old Leo XIII declared in 1903 to the baffled and uncomprehending Kaiser: "Germany would once again have to become the sword of the Church."⁶ But that would obviously have necessitated the replacement of the German Empire's Protestant identity by a Catholic one, or else one in which a Catholic cultural hegemony would have been exercised.

And although Austria-Hungary was still a thoroughly Catholic Empire and the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph remained the Catholic Emperor *par excellence* in Europe after 1870, here too the relationship to the Church after 1866 had remained problematic. The restructuring of the Habsburgs' Empire into the Double Monarchy by the *Ausgleich* (Compromise) of 1867 had brought Liberals to power in Hungary who had emerged in the Revolution of 1848. And also in the western half of the Empire, the shifting domestic political situation after the defeat of 1866 had brought anti-clerical German-speaking liberals to power for a time, until 1879. In response to the Pope's promulgation of papal infallibility in 1870 Emperor Franz Joseph cancelled the Concordat of 1855, which had secured extensive rights for the Church. In 1879, as the legacy of the Foreign Minister Gyula Andrassy, an 1848 revolutionary, the Empire entered into alliance with Germany, which bound the Habsburg Empire increasingly closely as a kind of junior partner of the mighty Protestant Empire and led to a tendency towards Protestantism or at least an "Away from Rome" movement ("*Los von Rom!*") among German-speaking Austrians. This alliance - which ran contrary to the interests of the Church - finally determined the destiny of Austria in foreign policy terms until its downfall in 1918.

The Politics of Catastrophe

While the political position of the Church had worsened catastrophically around 1870, its claims had only become ever more grandiose. The pronouncement of papal infallibility on 18

July 1870 signified a renewal of and an emphasis on the claims of the Church to actual world rulership and to a kind of superimposed leadership function also for political States - a position approaching the one which the Church had in fact had for a long time in the European state system of the Middle Ages.

The situation which resulted from this contradiction between claims and reality led to the emergence of a catastrophist policy on the part of those circles in the Curia that were accustomed to thinking in terms of global strategy. There was open speculation about a great war, in the slipstream of which the Church might be able to effect a dramatic improvement in the strength of its own position. Numerous reflections of this mood that was present in the background among circles in the Curia can be found in diplomatic reports from the decades after 1870.

In 1877 the German ambassadors in Austria and Italy replied to questions from Bismarck who was very concerned about whether an ultramontane, i.e. hardline Catholic and anti-Prussian mood was developing in Austria: "In his answer to Bismarck's question [the German ambassador in Vienna] Count Stolberg had to acknowledge that there was no lack of intrigues and suspicions of Germany both within the Habsburg Empire and without. Among the prime hotbeds of this agitation he specified (...) Rome, where the Italian government's mistrust of the Court in Vienna was only surpassed by the anger felt at the Vatican because in Austria-Hungary it no longer possessed a helpful and willing power prepared to support its ultramontane plans.

Occasionally, Stolberg informed Bismarck, the Russian Cabinet also took part in these machinations - from which France was never far away - setting its hopes on a change in the domestic and foreign policies of the Habsburg Monarchy. The Vatican served as the glue between these different factors (...) One had the impression that a world conflagration was being stirred up so as to enable the cause of the Vatican to triumph amid the general confusion."⁷

It was often the Jesuits, that is, the Order in the Church that was the most accustomed to thinking in terms of strategy and spiritual politics, that were accused of being the ones behind such ideas, propagating or generating them. Around 1890, Schlözer, the Prussian envoy to the Holy See, who was also known as "Cardinal Schlözer" because of his good connections to the Curia, reported that "in Jesuit circles the old idea was again being advocated "that the fires of war would have to be fanned in Europe because only a general war would be able to restore the temporal power of the Papacy."⁸

The Foreign Policy of Leo XIII and Rampolla

Pius IX, the Pope who pronounced the dogma of Papal Infallibility, died in 1878 after a reign of 31 years, the longest in the history of the Papacy. He had represented the most extreme claims for the powers of the Church, but had done little to realise these claims in diplomatic and political terms. He was followed by Leo XIII (1878-1903) the "diplomat pope" who, in a very different fashion and manner, with an extraordinary number of initiatives and an extremely mobile diplomacy, made the Church a factor to be reckoned with again in the world. In the background there were, as with Pius IX, once again the Church's overweening claims to worldly power. Innocent III (1198-1216), perhaps the most powerful Pope in history, was Leo's model Pope. Like Pius IX, Leo XIII, Gioacchino Pecci (1810-1903) was of the Italian nobility. He was educated in Jesuit schools and ultimately at the papal academy for aristocratic clerics, the Curia's most important school for diplomats. He had a brother who was a member of the Society of Jesus and who later also became a cardinal.

Leo's first decade as Pope stood under the sign of a kind of reconciliation with Bismarck and the Prussian-German Empire. The "*Kulturkampf*" was gradually wound down and in May 1887 was finally and expressly declared by Leo to be over. Relations reached a high point when in 1885 Bismarck requested the Pope to act as arbiter in a colonial dispute between Spain and Germany over a group of islands in the Pacific. Leo seems to have seen in this step an actual acknowledgement of his papal supremacy and in 1886 awarded Bismarck the "Order of Christ", the highest papal decoration for services to the Church; to this day he is the only Protestant to have received it. One may well see in this grotesque award - when one considers

Bismarck's actual attitude - a sign of how ready Leo and other Popes have always been to hope for a sudden change in circumstances through a change in the mind of a particular individual. The Pope must at that time have allowed himself even if only for a short while the hope that Bismarck would now redirect Germany so that it would again become in fact the "Holy Roman Empire", the "Sword", the temporal arm of the Church. During the *Kulturkampf* Pius IX had described Bismarck as "a second Nero" and "a new Attila".

There was indeed a change in the year 1887 which took Leo's pontificate in a completely different direction. In what he himself called the most difficult decision of his pontificate, in June 1887 he named Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro (1848-1913), a Sicilian *marchese* (marquis), a candidate of the Jesuits, to be his Secretary of State. Leo XIII said of him: "Although [he's] a *marchese*, a southerner and a millionaire, he works like a slave."⁹ Rampolla too had been a student at the papal academy for aristocratic clergy and was later papal nuncio in Spain, where, amongst other things, he had devised the papal arbitration decision in the colonial dispute between Germany and Spain. Together with Rampolla, Leo XIII led the Church into a course that was so radical that it gave rise to doubts in many observers and caused others simply to distrust or deny him.

The Curia now manifestly showed its favour especially towards France. This contrasted starkly to the often anti-clerical policies of the French Third Republic, "the Freemason Republic". The Church wanted to bring about a reconciliation with France and a reconciliation between French Catholics and the French Republic. This policy of so-called *ralliement* entailed, on the one hand, the abandonment of a monarchical restoration, which had until then been the goal of conservative Catholic circles in France. They were now expected to adjust themselves to working within the republican form of the State. On the other hand, the new policy sought to make the French Republic more conservative and more anti-revolutionary through strengthening its Catholic element. The Church made a pitch for sympathies in France in that it described Rome as the Alsace-Lorraine of the Papacy, that is, the Church implicitly recognised the French claim for the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France and compared it with the papal claim for the possession of Rome.

Essentially, this policy with regard to France in relation to the papal interest in and support for the Franco-Russian alliance, which had been slowly developing since 1887, was then, from 1891-1894, formalised into a military alliance. The alliance was the central building block of the "Entente", which eventually led to the First World War. With its support for this alliance, the Holy See linked itself with a policy which had originally been conceived and set up in England in circles around the Prince of Wales, the later King Edward VII, and the leader of the Conservative Party, Lord Salisbury. From these circles the formation of a Franco-Russian alliance had been suggested to a French envoy in 1887; England would join this alliance in the case of a war against Germany. The background to this policy was evidently that it had been determined that the German Empire would in long-range strategic terms become the most dangerous opponent for the British, and Britain's most important competitor in the struggle for world domination. The Papacy had been informed of these early initiatives for a grand anti-German coalition by Lord Norfolk, a leader of English Catholicism and a friend of the Prince of Wales. These English initiatives and the developments which proceeded from them show the years 1887-1890 to have been the actual 'seed years' of the world war which later broke out in 1914.

The Vatican saw its own role in this alliance above all as a conservative guarantor power for France. Through the Church's engagement France was to be made more conservative and thereby show itself to be a more suitable alliance partner for the most conservative Power in Europe - autocratic Russia. In this sense, the Vatican sometimes proudly referred to itself as the author of the Franco-Russian Alliance.

Domenico Ferrata, papal nuncio in Paris 1891-1896 described in his memoirs how he conducted this diplomacy with the Russian Czar on the occasion of Nicholas II's visit to Paris in 1896:

"In touching on later a more comprehensive and greater question, I said to the Czar that it would be a very fortunate and advantageous thing if the policies of the Holy See and those of His Majesty were to be in complete agreement with regard to France. So just as the Holy

Father had generously placed his moral force at the service of this noble nation, so had His Majesty brought his military and political power to bear. Your Majesty, I ventured, could not have employed them in a nobler, more practical way; France, due to its largesse of spirit and the efforts of its children, is the country which has had the greatest influence on ideas which move the world; there it has its secure place and especially in everything which concerns Christian civilisation; it possesses the genius of propaganda; when it strikes out in a good direction it can perform the greatest services for mankind, and when it moves in a bad [direction] I added with a smile, it can set everything ablaze just as well - as has already happened [a reference to the French Revolutions of 1789, 1848 and 1871]. The Czar, himself smiling, gave a lively response: 'That is true, that is true'.¹⁰

Ferrata therefore suggested to the Czar that France's inclination to revolutionary activities and radicalism was actually a reason why the arch-conservative Powers, the Papacy and Czardom, should ally with the country.

It seems then that for the Vatican, this Franco-Russian alliance was just as much an alliance of the heart as was its support for the alliance also in the sense of its catastrophe-war policy that was mentioned earlier. This alliance brought Europe closer to a great war, and for the Vatican, which hoped to improve its position through such a war, that could only be right. At any rate, there are repeated statements made in the years 1888 to 1890 which show that the Vatican regarded a great European war as unavoidable in the long term and that the Curia counted on the defeat of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, Italy) in such a war.

Along with support for the Franco-Russian alliance went an intensive campaign of papal propaganda aimed at Russia. Leo XIII had carried on an active propaganda campaign directed at the Orthodox Church. This policy was ultimately aimed at the reunion of the churches, that is, the subjugation of the Orthodox church under the jurisdiction of Rome. It did this, however, in a way that in many respects, in liturgy, ritual, the language used in church and similar questions, sought to accommodate the Orthodox. Leo first went about re-establishing diplomatic relations with Russia. From 1888 a special Russian envoy was received at the Holy See, and in 1894 this post was upgraded to a formal embassy. It is very significant that this special envoy (and later, the first ambassador to the Vatican) 1888-1896 was Alexander Izvolsky (1856-1919), who later became Russian Foreign Minister 1906-1910 and then Russian ambassador to Paris; he was always regarded by the Central Powers as having been one of the main architects of the World War. The conversations which Izvolsky had at the Holy See with the Pope and the Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla, revolved almost exclusively around topics of world politics.

Austria, which in the opinion of the Curia was far too lax in its support for the papal cause, now felt more and more a cold wind blowing from the direction of Rome. There was a kind of pressure from the Vatican for Austria to quit the Triple Alliance with Italy and Germany that was regarded as hostile to the Vatican. Rampolla said to the Austrian ambassador to the Holy See that he regretted "seeing Catholic Austria in league with the enemies of the Papacy and of the Church.", that is, in the Triple Alliance with Germany and Italy.¹¹ To the Russian ambassador Carykov in 1898 he spoke of the "complete subordination of Catholic Austria to Protestant Germany."¹²

Part of the ecclesiastical *Ostpolitik* of Leo and Rampolla was to support Slavic self-consciousness and Pan-Slavist tendencies in order to strengthen Rome's link to the Orthodox Church. Anti-Austrian Slavic nationalism within Austria-Hungary was thereby favoured; tendencies to break-up within the Habsburg empire were thus increased. For the Vatican, this was no undesirable consequence: in 1901 Rampolla said in conversation that Austria was "a State doomed for downfall".¹³ In Russia, by contrast, the Catholic Poles were simply abandoned by the Pope; he ordered them to submit themselves absolutely to the Russian State and its power.

Rampolla also conceived of the Papacy as an institution with a firm claim to a certain human leadership of the Latin nations - Italy, France and Spain. He wanted to save this leadership claim for the future in that he proceeded from a conception of a bond between the Romance and Slavic peoples, whom he saw as the peoples of the future. This alliance was to be directed against the Germanic peoples, the tendentious, hated masters of the present. At the

end of 1888 he said to the French ambassador, Lefebvre, that Europe was in danger of becoming "slaves of Germany".

Another significant element of the Leo-Rampolla period (1887-1903) was the shift towards democracy and social questions. Until then, the Church had been the most fervent representative of the *ancien regime* in Europe, of the old feudal structures and everything that remained of them. It had everywhere supported the principles of monarchy and of the old aristocracy and was now faced with the common danger of going under with them. But since these old forces had not in the end done enough since 1870 to help the Church maintain its (so-called) legitimate rights, the Pope increasingly withdrew himself from them. In many encyclicals (e.g. *Sapientiae Christianae*, 1890) Leo declared that the Church did not approve only one form of State but was prepared to acknowledge all as long as they "would maintain the respect due to religion". Rampolla spoke of "...the unmistakable democratic current of modern times to which the Church should not be hostile."¹⁴

Paradoxically, this turn towards democracy was accompanied by the strongest emphasis on centralisation, hierarchy and authority within the Church; rather than a real inclination to democracy, this can be regarded as a turn towards the masses who had been discovered as a reservoir and instrument for ecclesiastical politics. In his most famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), Leo XIII took up social questions from an ecclesiastical perspective and in so doing, led the Church into a kind of competitive relationship with socialist and Marxist parties. Catholic mass political parties sprang up such as the Christian Socialists in Austria who engaged in quasi-socialist agitation in a clerical direction and in doing so, partly used anti-semitism as a bonding agent and a form of cheap propaganda.¹⁵

Rampolla became the *bête noire* of the Central Powers because of these policies. The combination of ultramontane, democratic and pro-French or pro-Russian was a nightmare. Ambassadors from the Central Powers frequently described the atmosphere of meetings with Rampolla with words such as "unfriendly", "frosty", "icy". With Leo's increasing age, Rampolla's power steadily grew. Foreign visitors have left descriptions of him which certainly give the impression of a man of substantial weight: "None of us of course could have forgotten Cardinal Rampolla - large, slim, upright, powerful in body and soul, impenetrable and cold as fate. Quite clearly a man of wonderful intellect and fully a match for all issues he had to deal with as a diplomat of the Church."¹⁶ This was how he was described by a member of an American delegation who came to the Vatican in the summer of 1903 for conversations about the Philippines. Or, in the obituary of an Austrian ambassador, one could read: "He had always made upon me the impression of a very great and significant personality who seemed to surpass the other cardinals of the Curia by a good margin. He also seemed to distinguish himself from his colleagues in that what was eminently authoritative in this man seemed to be beyond flesh and blood. He is what in modern parlance is called 'a superman'" [*Übermensch*].¹⁷

The Conclave of 1903, Pius X and Benedict XV

When Leo XIII died in 1903, much later than expected, aged 93, Rampolla went into the next conclave a favourite to succeed him. After the second vote he appeared to be heading irresistibly for the papal throne, when Prince-Bishop Cardinal Jan Puzyna de Kosielsko from Cracow read out an objection from his Emperor Franz Joseph against the election of Rampolla. Such an objection, the so-called veto, had been an informal right sometimes exercised by the rulers of the most important Catholic States - Spain, France and Austria - since the 16th century. Although not binding, the veto usually had the consequence that the designated candidate was not elected Pope. This time too, it happened that in the following votes the number of those favouring Rampolla gradually diminished. The man finally chosen was the patriarch of Venice, Giuseppe Sarto (1835-1914), who then mounted the papal throne as Pius X. He dismissed Rampolla from the office of Secretary of State.

Giuseppe Sarto was the sixth son of a postal official from the Veneto, who had started as a country priest and had risen to become archbishop of Venice in 1893 and then Cardinal. He had had no great intellectual training, had never been active diplomatically and was far from the type of those refined, highly cultivated juristically-trained Italian nobles who had mostly guided the destiny of the Church. He represented the greatest possible contrast to his

predecessor, the global political and strategic thinker Leo XIII, who was often characterised as "machievellian", and also to Rampolla. Lacking any great sense for diplomacy he did not advance his predecessor's global policy. "The politics of the Church is to make no politics" was one of his favourite sayings. While Rampolla, because of Franz Joseph's veto, must doubtless have felt confirmed in his view that Austria was no longer a State on which the Papacy could build, Pius X showed manifest goodwill to the Austrian Emperor. Rampolla remained in the Curia but in the background, where he continued to exercise his influence in many circles. He was considered a favourite for a conclave after the death of Pius X, but died before him, in December 1913.

In the conclave of 1914, which took place during the high point of the struggles on the Western Front, a Pope was elected in Cardinal Giacomo della Chiesa (1854-1922) who during his time as Secretary of State had been Rampolla's closest colleague. Ironically, he was elected especially with the help of German and Austrian cardinals. The dogmatic conservatism of Pius X, his struggle against modernism and his condemnations of Protestantism, had created so much unrest in the church in Germany that under any circumstances someone was wanted there who would slacken the reins a little.

Benedict XV (1914-1922) (della Chiesa's reign name) conducted himself with strict neutrality during the world war but could not quite suppress his satisfaction over the outcome of the conflict. Italy was on the side of the victors, so it took another ten years before the final compromise between the Curia and the Kingdom in the Lateran treaties of 1929. But both of the great heretical, schismatic empires, that of that Prussian Protestant Germans and of the Orthodox Russians had been brought down and finally collapsed, and the Habsburg empire, which in the sight of the Church had become meaningless and obsolete, had also gone under. The way forward for a resurrection of the position of the Church in the European State system was open. Benedict XV was quoted as saying after the end of the war: "This war Luther lost".

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¹ Cardinal Merry del Val, *Memories of Pope Pius X*, London: Burn Oates & Washburne 1939, pp.19-21

² Zita died in 1989 at the age of 96.

³ Stephan Beier and Eva Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg - Die Biographie*. With a Greeting from Benedict XVI. Vienna, Amalthea Verlag, 2002, 5th extended edition 2007, pp.49-50.

⁴ In the First World War, after Italy's entry into the war, the Curia had the plan for a while to move its seat to Lichtenstein, but eventually dropped the idea.

⁵ *Ellwanger Katholisches Wochenblatt*, 13.8.1871, quoted from: Walter Löhde, *Das päpstliche Rom und das deutsche Reich. Eine Dokumentation*. Hanover 1964, p.72.

⁶ Wilhelm II, *Ereignisse und Gestalten aus den Jahren 1878-1918*, Leipzig and Berlin 1922

⁷ Julius Wertheimer, *Graf Julius Andrássy. Sein Leben und seine Zeit nach ungedruckten Quellen*, Berlin 1910-1913, Vol. 3, pp.20-21.

⁸ Quoted from : E. Adamov, *Die Politik des Vatikans zur Zeit des Imperialismus*, Berlin c.1932, p.23.

⁹ Kurd von Schlözer, *Letzte römische Briefe*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1924, p.112.

¹⁰ From the memoirs of Domenico Ferrata, quoted in Ulrich Stutz, *Die päpstliche Diplomatie unter Leo XIII. nach dem Denkwürdigkeiten des Kardinals Domenico Ferrata*, Berlin 1926, p.142.

¹¹ Revertera's report of 14.11.1888, quoted in Eduard Winter, *Russland und die slavischen Völker in der Diplomatie des Vatikan 1878-1903*, Berlin 1950, p.61.

¹² Quoted in Adamov: *loc. cit.* p.61.

¹³ Friedrich Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan 1848-1918*, 2 Vols., Graz, Vienna, Cologne 1958, here Vol. II, p.171.

¹⁴ Acc. to a report of the Austrian ambassador to the Holy See, Revertera (30.3.1895) quoted in Engel-Janosi, Vol. I, p.260.

¹⁵ In general, the policies of Leo and Rampolla for the build-up of Catholic mass movements have to be seen as the actual seed of what broke over Europe after the First World War as a wave of fascism. The fascist parties were democratic - they were parties of "the little man" - but they were at the same time anti-democratic; they were opposed to the political forms that had developed out of liberalism. They were very social but also anti-socialist, and

regarded socialist-Marxist movements as their greatest enemy. They were authoritarian, hierarchical, ultra-centralist, tailor-made for single leader figures. They were strictly anti-revolutionary in their ethos, directed against the revolution of 1789 and its heritage. They were anti-materialist. They were anti-liberal, that is, against spiritual freedom, against religious or spiritual tolerance. They regarded Jews and Freemasons as their enemies - anti-semitism was used by them as a form of social bonding. In many Catholic countries - Slovakia, Croatia, Spain, and in parts of France and Belgium - fascist movements were mostly pro-clerical.

¹⁶ From: Mrs William Howard Taft, *Recollections of Full Years*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company 1914

¹⁷ Quoted in Engel-Janosi, *op cit.* II, p.170.