

Between Uncertainty and New Opportunities: Catholicism in Switzerland between both World Wars

The shocking experience of the First World War led to an intensification of uncertainties and ambiguities, to a fear of the future, and to processes of cultural transformation that had their origin in the decades at the turn of the 20th century. Different interpretations about the future – ranging from cultural pessimism, expectations of political and social renewal, and new semantics of collectivities, especially nationalism – collided with each other in the 1920s and 30s. These interpretations were not merely expressions of different socio-political milieus; rather, they were articulations of new conceptualizations, new semantics and new forms of cultural expression which crossed over the boundaries of different domains. Four fields with a focus on Catholicism in Switzerland have been delineated for deeper investigation as the main topic for the 2022 edition of our journal.

(1) Discourses of decadence, dissolution of values, «mass culture»

How were pessimistic cultural discourses in the wake of the First World War taken up in Swiss Catholicism? How did such discourses shape the interpretations of the post-war crisis, especially in the cultural sphere, in the debates concerning evolving forms of dance, body cult(ure), cinema – especially under American influence – and modern art and literature? How did they refer to these new forms in the media? Which processes in literature and art took place within Swiss Catholicism? What role did debates about religious and societal renewal play, and how did the emerging new religious practices – between transformation of older religious practices and the adaptation of more recent forms leading up to the postulation of radical recatholicization – manifest themselves? Episcopal pastoral letters, homilies, journals and magazines (such as the *Sonntag*) are highly relevant sources to find responses to these questions.

(2) New media and new forms of religious life and celebrations

How did technical innovations, especially in the field of media, influence, for instance, the liturgy (the Liturgical Movement, St-Cecil Choirs), religious associations and pilgrimages? How did religious communities act and present themselves in the public sphere, as for example on the radio? In this regard, a transnational perspective is of special interest. It is also of interest to consider the possibilities offered by increased travel opportunities with the use of new means of transport – as for example, the car that facilitated the journeys of the abbot of Muri-Gries, or the presence of Bishop Schweiler at the International Congresses of Christ the King in the 1930s, for instance.

(3) From «Corporatism» to «Spiritual National Defense»: Powerful sociopolitical debates

The 1920s and 1930s were the «golden age» for Swiss Catholicism from an institutional and socio-political perspective. Catholicism became politically more integrated in the State, and ecclesiastical «elites» like the bishops and the clergy found active response to their initiatives within their congregations. Concerning the broader political spectrum, influential socio-political discourses – especially «Corporatism» (and the different forms that this concept encompasses), and the discourse

about the «Spiritual National Defence» – were essentially shaped by Catholic intellectuals and politicians. These topics are explored in the third thematic field.

(4) Perceptions of fascism and representations of the Pope

The fourth thematic field investigates media discourses related to the Lateran Pacts from 1929 and to Italian fascism (both before and after the Lateran Pacts), in different Catholic milieux, as well as the question how the pope was represented and staged.

How did the Lateran Pacts influence an ultramontanist piety, given the fact that the Pope could not be presented any more as a «prisoner within the Vatican»? Was the Pope staged in a new way? What expressions and reactions can be found in art, popular culture and the media?

The above mentioned four themes should offer different links which highlight the diversity of elements that constitute the cultural history of Catholicism in Switzerland in the 1920s and 30s. Contributions with a transnational perspective are also welcome.

A number of contributions, peer-reviewed, of no more than 25,000-40'000 characters (including footnotes and spaces), framed by the editor, will constitute the main part of the *SZRKG/RSHRC* 115 (2022). Further information concerning the articles in the *SZRKG* can be found at the site: www.unifr.ch/szrkg.

Abstracts and a working title propositions with a maximum of 800 characters are to be submitted by the end of April 2021 in German, French, Italian or English, to Prof. Dr. Franziska Metzger (franziska.metzger@phlu.ch) and the scientific collaborator PD Dr. David Neuhold (david.neuhold@unifr.ch). The articles themselves should be submitted by the end of 2021.

SZRKG is published in autumn 2022, by Schwabe, Basel; and with a one-year moving wall, the articles are available in open-access versions, for example, in e-periodica.ch.

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