

Abstracts

Giuseppe Maria Viscardi, *Gabriele De Rosa and the University of Salerno. Between student protests and the demands of the city (1968-1974)*

The name of Gabriele De Rosa is connected with the University of Salerno for various reasons. Firstly, he was Rector of the university in years that were crucial for the life of the country and the Italian academic world (1961-1974). Even more importantly, it was in those very years that the profile and function of the university were decided, along with its location outside the city in the Irno valley on the border with Irpinia. The pivotal document for reconstructing the history of De Rosa's relation with the university is his *La storia che non passa. Diario politico 1968-1989*. Here he describes the facts and the faces, the moods and feelings, the political and academic clashes behind the far from painless decision about where to build the university. Not in the city, as desired by the mayor of Salerno, Alfonso Menna, and not even in the Fratte area on the outskirts of the city, as the educator Roberto Mazzetti hoped, but about ten kilometres from Salerno. The debate about location took place in the full flush of the student protests and while the political forces were internally divided. On 12 March 1971, during a conference organised by the Salerno City Council and the Provincial Authority, De Rosa presented his *Proposta per una Università moderna nel Sud* in which he justified the choice of the Irno valley as the best site for 'a modern university' at the service of the territory, which would be a factor in development not only at regional level but for southern Italy as a whole. De Rosa's time in Salerno was also marked by great academic productivity: in 1971 he published the fundamental work *Vescovi, popolo e magia nel Sud*; in 1972 he organised the conference *La società religiosa nell'età moderna* in Capaccio-Paestum and founded the journal *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*.

Sonia Isidori, *'Mi parve che già s'apre porta larga di far contenti molti desiderosi dell'agiuto delle anime.'* *The establishment of the Congregation De Propaganda fide seen through the litterae indipetae of the Society of Jesus*

On 6 January 1622 Pope Gregory XV established the Congregation *De Propaganda fide* the culmination of decades of effort to materialise the papal desire

to oversee and control the missions across the world. This missionary work had contended at length with complex colonial systems due to royal patronage and had been largely entrusted to religious orders, most notably the Society of Jesus. The Jesuit leadership was reluctant to lose the order's autonomy and opposed the new cardinal-run Congregation.

However, opposition to the most important accomplishment of Gregory's pontificate was not universal within the Society of Jesus. A study of the *litterae indipetae*—letters written by individual Jesuits to the order's General to apply for the missions—shows that in the lower levels of the Society of Jesus the candidates were elated by the news that Gregory had established the Congregation *De Propaganda fide*. These Jesuits believed that this new organization and the commitment of the papacy to the missions represented an opportunity for their General to finally approve their petitions to serve aboard. This internal documentation of the Society of Jesus collected during the generalship of Muzio Vitelleschi (1615-1646) allows us to clarify this two-tiered approach to the new-born papal institution and how it changed even after Gregory's death.

Furthermore, the Jesuit petitioners expressed their support for the objectives of the Congregation *De Propaganda fide* in the missionary destinations they requested, destinations that were often solicited by the General himself. For example, many applicants requested Vitelleschi to send them to the 'northern countries'—one of the areas of greatest interest to Pope Gregory XV in his Counter-Reformation foreign policy—long after Gregory's papacy had ended.

However, the influence of Pope Gregory XV on the Jesuits' leaders did not soften their position on the Congregation: the general curia of the Society of Jesus maintained its desire for autonomy even while formally supporting the Congregation's purposes.

These considerations allow us to reconstruct a more complex and multi-layered narrative of the relationships between the papacy of Gregory XV and his successors, the Congregation *De Propaganda fide* and the Society of Jesus.

Elisa Frei, *In search of missionaries for the Qing Empire. The procurators of the Society of Jesus and their visits to Italy (17th-18th century)*

Since its foundation in 1540 the Society of Jesus has been a missionary order. Jesuits who wished to be sent to the most distant and unknown countries in the East and West Indies applied through the so-called *litterae indipetae*. This article considers the relationships that Italian Jesuits established with the procurators of the vice-province of China who periodically returned to Europe, as illustrated by the *litterae indipetae* sent at the turn of the 18th century.

On the one hand, the procurators were able to select people whom they had spoken to in person and who seemed best suited to missionary life in countries they knew well. On the other hand, their visits could stimulate the desire and vocation of many young Jesuits for missionary work.

Gennaro Mirolla, *The Catholic Movement in the Diocese of Nola from the Beginning of the Episcopate of Monsignor Egisto Domenico Melchiori (1924-1935)*

The modernly organised Catholic movement was not very widespread in southern Italy and the diocese of Nola was no exception. In this area too, the lay Catholic organisations spread unevenly, tending to exist only in the few places where there were strong figures among the priests and the laity. It is difficult to establish the origins of the Catholic movement in the church of Nola, although certain clues suggest that the beginnings can be traced to the period immediately preceding the Great War. Some attempts to set up parish councils in the diocese of Nola were made at the start of the twentieth century, but the initiatives did not last. It was not until after 1910 that parish groups of lay associates inspired by the ideals of Azione Cattolica began to emerge in a systematic manner. With the arrival in 1925 of the new diocesan bishop, Egisto Domenico Melchiori from Brescia, the church of Nola enjoyed a season of renewal. Between 1924 and 1935, Monsignor Melchiori paid special attention to the lay members of Azione Cattolica. The most significant events of this decade included: the emergence of *La Campana di S. Paolino*, a religious weekly that specifically became the mouthpiece of the Catholic movement throughout the territory subject to the jurisdiction of the local church; the convocation on 19 February 1928 of the first diocesan meeting of Azione Cattolica following the establishment in the previous year of the diocesan secretariat of the FUCI (Italian Catholic Federation of University Students).

Manuela Pellegrino, *Latvian Bishop Boļeslavs Slokāns between imprisonment, labour camps and internment in Soviet Russia. From his 'Memoirs'*

One of the strategies identified by the Russian Soviet regime to build the new model of state and society was the persecution of religion. Catholics too were victims of such persecution, and the Catholic hierarchy that the Vatican had tried to restore in Russia during the twenties became one of the main targets. One of the most important exponents of that hierarchy was the Latvian Bishop Boļeslavs Slokāns, Apostolic Administrator of Mogilėv and Minsk since 1926. After providing a historical framework of the period, focusing on the relations between the Holy See and Soviet Russia in the 1920s, this article presents Slokāns' *Memoirs* of imprisonment and exile (1927-1933), written in French and conserved in the Vatican Archives. This living testimony is added to those produced by the victims of persecutions in that period, with the personal odyssey through the Gulag system and in exile, against the background of a society forced to transform itself also in the name of State atheism.