

# Blessed Ivan Merz, University Student in Postwar Paris, 1920–22

(Two formative years in the short life of  
naturalized Croatian Blessed One)

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WITH INTRODUCTION BY STEPHEN SCHLOESSER

*Exactly one hundred years ago, the layman Ivan Merz finished his studies at the Sorbonne and the Institut Catholique in Paris and returned to Zagreb. Especially interested in the Liturgy and Eucharistic Adoration, he had studied French literature but also promoted the Croatian issue within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. He researched French Catholic associations and met numerous French writers and Catholic intellectuals. Upon his return home, he became the mastermind behind Catholic Action in Croatia, holding to the strict directions of Pope Pius XI. He died when he was just thirty-two years old, and was soon pronounced “the Pillar of the Church” in Croatia.*

*Keywords:* Ivan Merz, student, Sorbonne, Paris, Catholic organizations.

## Introduction:<sup>1</sup>

On June 22, 2003, Pope John Paul II beatified the Servant of God Ivan Merz (1896–1928).<sup>2</sup> The beatification took place in Banja Luka,

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1. Introduction by Schloesser.

2. “IVAN MERZ (1896–1928),” The Holy See, [https://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20030622\\_merz\\_en.htm](https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20030622_merz_en.htm), accessed July 26, 2022.

Bosnia and Herzegovina—Merz’s birthplace and childhood home. The pope’s opening remarks in his homily implicitly acknowledged the complex religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of his audience in a country with three “constituent peoples” (Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats), three official languages (Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian), and three predominant religions (Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Catholic Christian). He greeted several constituencies: the Bishop of Banja Luka and other Roman Catholic bishops and clergy, Patriarch Pavle (Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci) and other members of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, other Christian “Ecclesial Communities” of Bosnia-Herzegovina, “members of the Jewish community and Islamic community,” and, finally, “the Honorable Members of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina and all the other civil and military Authorities.”<sup>3</sup>

2003 marked nearly ten years since the Croatian War of Independence (1991–1995), the Bosnian War (1992–1995)—including the Srebrenica genocide (1995)—and other Yugoslav Wars following Yugoslavia’s dissolution at the Cold War’s end. In his speech, the Pope evoked this violent past:

From this city, marked in the course of history by so much suffering and bloodshed, I ask Almighty God to have mercy on the sins committed against humanity, human dignity and freedom also by children of the Catholic Church, and to foster in all the desire for mutual forgiveness. Only in a climate of true reconciliation will the memory of so many innocent victims and their sacrifice not be in vain, but encourage everyone to build new relationships of fraternity and understanding.<sup>4</sup>

He then invoked the importance of Merz’s example for postwar reconstruction:

The name of Ivan Merz has meant in the past a program of life and of activity *for an entire generation of young Catholics*. Today too it must do the same! Your country and your Church, dear young people, have experienced difficult times and now there is a need to work together so that *life on all levels will fully return to normal*. I therefore appeal to each of you; I

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3. Pope John Paul II, “Homily for the Mass and Beatification of the Servant of God Ivan Merz,” (homily, Banja Luka, Sunday, 22 June 2003, given during the Apostolic Voyage of His Holiness John Paul II to Bosnia and Herzegovina), [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2003/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_20030622\\_banja-luka.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20030622_banja-luka.html). Text altered for American usage.

4. Pope John Paul II, “Homily,” ¶2.

invite you not to step back, *not to yield to the temptation to become discouraged*, but to multiply initiatives which will make Bosnia-Herzegovina once more a land of reconciliation, encounter, and peace.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, quoting the book of Sirach, the pope expressed his desire that Merz's "memory will not disappear, and his name will live through all generations."<sup>6</sup>

A century after his untimely death in 1928, Merz's complex historical location makes him a suitable figure for the globalized world. He was born into a Bosnia and Herzegovina that had been occupied and later annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During the Great War, he served in the Empire's army on the Italian battlefield. After Austria-Hungary's defeat, Merz's homeland became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (officially the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" from 1918–1929) following the 1919 Paris Peace Conference that divided up the former empire.<sup>7</sup> Twenty years after Merz's death—and after yet another world war—the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1992) was established as a Cold War Soviet satellite. Its dissolution would ignite the Yugoslav Wars preceding Merz's beatification in 2003.

However, the multicultural nature of Merz's life and work goes even deeper. After military service in the Great War, he migrated from post-imperial Vienna (1919–20) to Paris (1920–22) where he earned a degree in philosophy. He then took the main ideas of his thesis—"The Influence of liturgy on French writers"—and carried them back to the recently created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. There he translated postwar French Catholic Revivalism to accommodate his native culture, establishing the "League of Young Croatian Catholics" and the "Croatian League of Eagles" within the Croatian Catholic Action Movement. Their motto reflected his French thesis on the liturgy: "Sacrifice Eucharist Apostolate."<sup>8</sup> This essay will explore Merz's formation in the postwar Parisian Catholic Revival.<sup>9</sup> Merz's cosmopolitan experience was shared by numerous other

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5. Pope John Paul II, "Homily," ¶5, emphasis original. Text altered for American usage.

6. Pope John Paul II, "Homily," ¶4, quoting Sirach 39:9.

7. See Margaret MacMillan, "Chapter 9: Yugoslavia," in: *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York, 2003), 109–24.

8. See "IVAN MERZ (1896–1928)," *The Holy See*.

9. Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919–1933* (Toronto, 2005).

figures during this transnational Catholic epoch.<sup>10</sup> The particularly Catholic arena was itself a microcosm of the much broader 1920s and 1930s context in which Paris—the capital city of the postwar French Empire—was an international crossroads, gathering people from across the globe.<sup>11</sup>

A reviewer of Edward Baring's recent study of the transnational Catholic network that fostered phenomenology notes that Baring's "globalist pluralist method founded on flux" assumes that "ideas, rather than being limited or static, speak across intellectual and cultural boundaries." As a result, "migration and mutation . . . enlarge our heritage. We are all of mixed blood now."<sup>12</sup> Ivan Merz's hybrid Croatian Catholic Revivalism, a migration and mutation of the *renouveau catholique* he encountered in postwar Paris, is one such story of "mixed blood," representative of both the 1920s and the 2020s.

### Who was Ivan Merz?

Ivan Merz<sup>13</sup> was born on December 16, 1896, in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and died on May 10, 1928, in Zagreb, Croatia. His

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10. For recent studies, see: Brenna Moore, *Kindred Spirits: Friendship and Resistance at the Edges of Modern Catholicism* (Chicago, 2021); Edward Baring, *Converts to the Real: Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA 2019); Piotr H. Kosicki, *Catholics on the Barricades: Poland, France, and "Revolution," 1891–1956* (New Haven, 2018).

11. See for example: Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad, and Mehdi Sajid, *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Transcultural Historical Perspective* (Leiden, 2016); Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third-World Nationalism* (Cambridge, UK, 2015); Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln, 2010); Natalia Starostina, "On Nostalgia and Courage: Russian Émigré Experience in Interwar Paris through the Eyes of Nadezhda Teffi," *Diasporas: Circulations, migrations, histoire*, 22 (2013) <https://journals.openedition.org/diasporas/213>; Katherine Foshko, "France's Russian Moment: Russian Émigrés in Interwar Paris and French Society" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2008); Nadia Malinovich, "Between Universalism and Particularism: Discourses of Jewish Identity in France, 1920–32," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 32, no. 1: Thematic Issue: "Shifting Boundaries, Rethinking Paradigms: The Significance of French Jewish History" (Spring, 2006), 143–63; Robert Harold Johnston, *New Mecca, New Babylon: Paris and the Russian exiles, 1920–1945* (Kingston, 1988).

12. Stephen Schloesser, "Edward Baring, *Converts to the Real: Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy*" (review), *H-France Review*, 20, no. 213 (2020), 1–7, here 2, 6, <https://h-france.net/vol20reviews/vol20no213schloesser.pdf>. The term "mixed blood" alludes to Lucien Febvre and François Crouzet, *Nous sommes des sang-mêlés: Manuel d'histoire de la civilisation française*, eds. Denis Crouzet and Élisabeth Crouzet (Paris, 2012).

13. All the materials and documents regarding Bl. Ivan Merz were collected from archives in Paris, Vienna, Trnava (Slovakia), and Prague. Today, there is only one fond (archival collection), named *OSOBNÍ DOKUMENTY BL. IVANA MERZA* (PERSONAL



Zoran Homen, *Blessed Ivan Merz*, 2003, created for the beatification of Ivan Merz. Produced with permission from the Postulation for Canonization of Blessed Ivan Merz. Original stored in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Zagreb.

father Moritz (Mavro) was a German from Plzen in what is now the Czech Republic, an Austro-Hungarian military officer, and the chief of Banja Luka railway station. His mother, Teresa Stern-Mersch, was a Hungarian Jew. The two married in Budapest on January 12, 1896.<sup>14</sup>

Being brought up in a liberal environment, Ivan (born Hans) attended both elementary school and the Grand Royal (Velika Real) high school

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DOCUMENTS OF BL. IVAN MERZ); see *Institut Catholique—Faculté des Lettres, 1921/22.*, Arhiv Bl. Ivana Merza, Filozofski fakultet Družbe Isusove, Jordanovac 110, Zagreb [The Archive of Ivan Merz, The Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus, Zagreb, Jordanovac 110], (hereafter referred to as AIM). Also, the Diary of Ivan Merz (hereafter DIM) is stored at the AIM. Accordingly, the Postulation of Bl. Ivan Merz, today the Postulation for Canonization of Bl. Ivan Merz, is also located in Zagreb, Jordanovac 110.

14. For more, see Zdravko Matić and Frano Stojić, “Moritz Merz, od Pilsena do Zagreba: Životni i ratni put jednog austrougarskog časnika” [“Moritz Merz, from Pilsen to Zagreb: Life and war time (of) one Austro-Hungarian officer”], *Historijski zbornik* [Historical Collection], 68, no. 1, (2015), 31–51.

(est. 1895) in Banja Luka. It was his professor, Ljubomir Maraković,<sup>15</sup> who first noticed his discernment and encouraged him to read literature and keep a diary. Ivan did indeed read a lot of classics, and also developed an interest in learning the Croatian, French, and German languages. When he was sixteen, he fell in love with a girl named Greta Teschner, but she tragically died in July 1913. During a visit to her parents in Travnik (Bosnia), she was raped by a Muslim man and afterwards took her own life.

This occurrence struck Ivan intensely, and he changed radically in the sense of consciousness and faith. He thought about Greta constantly. In 1915, following his parents' wishes, he began his military career at the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt, Austria. Only three months later, he left and enrolled at the University of Vienna to study Law, this time at his mother's wish. However, in March 1916, Ivan was mobilized and sent to the Italian front. His war experiences in 1917 and 1918 profoundly contributed to his spiritual maturation. Suffering, devastation, and imminent danger brought him closer to God. Before the war he had coined, as his principle of life, the phrase "Goodness-Truth-Love," and the factual miseries of war enabled him to put this philosophy into practice.

After the war, Merz departed to Vienna to study literature, this time on his own desire. According to Msgr. Marin Škarica,<sup>16</sup> during the Holy Week of 1920, he participated in the liturgical spiritual exercises held by

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15. Dr. Ljubomir Maraković (1887–1959) was a Croatian writer, literary critic and Catholic activist, one of the founders of the Croatian Catholic Movement. He graduated from German and Slavic studies in Vienna. He was the first editor of the literary magazine *Luč* [Light] and a long-time editor of the magazine *Hrvatska prosvjeta* [Croatian enlightenment]. He had a strong spiritual and cultural influence on Ivan Merz. See *Hrvatski leksikon* [Croatian Lexicon], 2 vols. (Zagreb, 1996–1997, here 1997), II, s.v. "Maraković, Ljubomir."

16. Marin Škarica (1936–2011) was a professor and dean of theology in Split and the first to write a doctoral dissertation on Merz, entitled "Ivan Merz: The Beginner of the Liturgical Movement in Croatia" (PhD diss., the Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm, Rome, 1975). The second dissertation was from Božidar Nagy, S.J. (the postulator of Merz's cause in Zagreb), entitled "Ivan Merz, a Man of Faith and an Educator for the Faith" (PhD diss., the Faculty of Theology, Pontifical Salesian University, Rome, 1978). Three more dissertations about Merz were done in later years, see Zdravko Matić, "Ivan Merz and Catholic Action in Croatia" (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2005); Stjepan Ribić, "Faith and Reason in the Life and Thought of Ivan Merz" (PhD diss., Pontifical Urban University, Rome, 2007); and Saša Cerej, "Contribution of Dr. Merz and the Croatian Aquiline Covenant to Croatian Culture, Especially Physical Culture" (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2013). More recently, see also Marija Lebedina, "Catholicism in French and Croatian Literature of the First Half of the Twentieth Century" (PhD diss., University of Zadar, 2017), <https://repozitorij.unizd.hr/islandora/object/unizd:1000>.

the famous ethnologist Wilhelm Schmidt in St. Gabriel near Mödling. A love and enthusiasm for the liturgy awakened in him, and soon he moved to Paris in order to study French literature and prepare his doctoral dissertation: *The influence of liturgy on French writers from Chateaubriand to date*.

On his return to Zagreb in 1922, he became a French language lecturer at the newly-founded Archdiocesan Grand School (Nadbiskupska velika gimnazija, est. 1922) and the first president of the Croatian Catholic Youth Association. In 1923, he received his Ph.D. at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb. With the help of prominent Catholic leaders, Dr. Merz established the Croatian League of Eagles (Hrvatski orlovski savez, H.O.S.), and introduced Catholic Action into Croatia. At the Croatian League of Eagles founding assembly, sixty associations joined, which were the core of future growth. Numerous youth and student societies were transformed into Eagles associations by changing their rules and accepting the Eagles' religious-upbringing, educational, and training systems and work methods. All of this, and especially the enthusiasm of the Eagles themselves, influenced the sudden increase in the number of associations, so that by the end of 1924, the Eagle movement had eighty-three associations. At the end of 1925, the Croatian League of Eagles had 122 associations, and by August 1926, the number had risen to 163 associations.<sup>17</sup>

Merz intensively urged for a non-partisan *Catholic Action* and for the de-politicization of the Croatian Catholic Movement. His most important contribution to the Catholic Church in Croatia is recognized in the field of liturgical renewal and Eucharistic life.

After only six short years back in his native land, Merz died of meningitis on May 10, 1928 at the age of thirty-one. Already widely regarded for his holiness, he was buried in Zagreb's renowned Mirogoj Cemetery (Groblje Mirogo) in Zagreb. Thirty years later, a procedure was initiated in 1958 to proclaim Dr. Ivan Merz blessed. On December 16, 1977, Merz's remains were transferred to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Zagreb, where he had received daily Holy Communion during the last six years of his life. On June 22, 2003, Pope John Paul II declared Dr. Ivan Merz a "Blessed" of the Catholic Church at a beatification ceremony in Merz's native Banja Luka.

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17. Zdravko Matić, "Ivan Merz, suutemeljitelj i idejni vođa hrvatskoga orlovstva" ["Ivan Merz, co-founder and ideological leader of the Croatian Eaglehood,"] *Croatica Christiana periodica*, 33 no. 63 (2009), 149–84, here 154, accessed October 16, 2022 <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/64062>.



It is not known whether Ivan Merz ever personally met his contemporary, the future Croatian Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac.<sup>18</sup> Researchers agree that both belonged to the Croatian League of Eagles and were present on August 7, 1923, in Zagreb, at the assembly of the Croatian Catholic Youth Association, when the young professor Merz was elected president. Since the twenty-five-year-old Stepinac was present in the assembly, he would certainly have heard Merz's presentations (in the following year, he entered the Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum in Rome as a seminarian studying for the priesthood). On the afternoon of June 25, 1934, six years after Ivan's death, Stepinac's first visit as the Coadjutor Archbishop (consecrated on June 24) was to visit Merz's sick mother.<sup>19</sup> Nearly a decade later, on May 9, 1943, Stepinac (now archbishop) preached a sermon on the fifteenth anniversary of Merz's death in the Cathedral church of St. Maria in Zagreb. The first public proposal for Merz's elevation soon followed. Stepinac's sermon, published in the magazine *Nedjelja* (Sunday), explicitly raised the topic of Merz's sanctity.<sup>20</sup>

Having concluded this brief overview of Merz's life, this paper now turns its focus back more particularly to his two profoundly transformative years in postwar Paris.

### 1920: Merz Departs for Postwar Paris

As noted above, Ljubomir Maraković, Merz's professor at the Grand Royal (Velika Real) high school in Banja Luka, was the first to have taken note of and encouraged Merz's gifts. In October 1920, almost exactly two years after the Armistice of November 1918 that ended the Great War, Merz acted on Maraković's encouragement and left for Paris. He was

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18. Cardinal Stepinac and Pope Pius XII both advanced to high positions in the Church at a young age. In 1934, Pope Pius XI nominated the thirty-six year old Stepinac as the coadjutor archbishop of Zagreb. At that time he was the youngest bishop in the world. See Francis H. Eterovich, "Spiritual Portrait of Cardinal Stepinac," *Crown and Cross*, 14, no. 3 (September, 1962), 273–87, here 274–75. Eugenio Pacelli (Pius XII) was made bishop at age forty-one. See Ronald J. Rychlak, "Cardinal Stepinac, Pope Pius XII, and the Roman Catholic Church during the Second World War," *The Catholic Social Science Review*, 14 (2009), 367–83, here 367.

19. "Nadbiskup-koadjutor pohada bolesnu majku dr. Ivana Merza" ["Archbishop-Coadjutor attends Dr. Ivan Merz's sick mother,"] *Nedjelja* [Sunday], no. 27, July 1, 1934, p. 6.

20. Ante Jerkov cited Stepinac's sermon "Ljudi kreposti i kršćanskog savršenstva usrećuju narode" ["People of virtue and Christian perfection make nations happy,"] in his article, "Zagreb je dostojno proslavio 15. obljetnicu smrti Dr. Ivana Merza" ["Zagreb decently celebrated the 15th anniversary of Dr. Ivan Merz's death,"] *Nedjelja* [Sunday], no. 11, May 23, 1943, pp. 1–5.



accompanied by two other future Croatian scholars, Gjuro Gračanin<sup>21</sup> and Juraj Šćetinač.<sup>22</sup> Thanks to the assistance of Fr. Miroslav Vanino, S.J.,<sup>23</sup> their Parisian studies were made financially possible by the Comité catholique des Amitiés françaises (Catholic Committee of French Friendships), also known as the Amitiés Catholiques Françaises dans le Monde (French Catholic Friendships in the World), still active today.<sup>24</sup> Beginning in 1921, the Amitiés Catholiques was the postwar successor to the wartime Comité catholique de propagande française (Catholic Committee of French Propaganda Abroad) founded in 1915 by Monsignor (later Cardinal) Alfred Baudrillart, rector of the Institut Catholique de Paris.<sup>25</sup> In

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21. Đuro (Gjuro) Gračanin (1899–1973) began by studying law in Paris, but under Merz's influence he switched to philosophy in 1922, and in 1925 to pursuing his doctorate in theology studies at the Institut Catholique in Paris. After finishing his dissertation in 1929, he wrote his book, *La personnalité morale d'après Kant: Son exposé, sa critique à la lumière du Thomisme*, for which his now famous mentor, Jacques Maritain, a faculty member at the Institut Catholique since 1914, wrote the preface ([Mignard, Paris, 1929], 7–9, here 7). (For Maritain, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 80–81.) In 1954, Gračanin wrote an extensive account on philosophy and theology in Croatia for the International Theological Lexicon. See Đuro Gračanin, *Ozbiljnost nadnaravnog: Članci, eseji, studije* [The seriousness of the supernatural: Articles, essays, studies,] ed. Vladimir Lončarević, [Biblioteka Hrvatska katolička baština 20. stoljeća (Croatian Catholic Heritage Library of the Twentieth Century), 33], (Zagreb, 2018), xi–xii, 259–65.

22. Juraj Šćetinač (1898–1939) was Croatian sociologist, Doctor of Law and Economics, university professor. See *Hrvatska enciklopedija* [Croatian Encyclopedia], (Zagreb, 2007), s.v. “Šćetinač, Juraj.”

23. In 1919, Fr. Miroslav Vanino (1879–1965) launched the newspaper *Život* [Life], which has developed into the prominent *Hrvatska revija* [Croatian Review] for intellectuals. He collaborated on various magazines and published numerous articles and books, and his works were published and edited in Rudolf Koprek and Josip Rožmarić, eds., *Isusovci i hrvatski narod* [The Jesuits and the Croatian People], 2 vols. (Zagreb, 1969–1987).

24. Daniel J. Grange, “Les catholiques français et la coopération internationale durant le premier après-guerre: le Comité catholique des Amitiés françaises,” *Relations internationales*, 72, no. 1 [Division et Unité de l'Europe] (Winter, 1992), 443–74.

25. Ironically (given Merz's Austro-Hungarian origins), the propaganda committee was originally founded to counter the impression that France was an “atheistic” anti-Catholic state and that Catholics abroad should cast their sympathies with the (Catholic) Austro-Hungarian Empire and its German ally. In 1922, Baudrillart continued his effort with the launch of the annual *French Catholic Almanac*, yet another publishing effort in service of the *renouveau catholique*. See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 80–81, 96–100, 127. Alfred Baudrillart (1859–1942) held numerous positions within the Catholic Church in France. Until 1883, he was a professor of Scripture at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, at which time he moved to the Institut Catholique de Paris (where he was elected rector in 1907). In 1918, following his wide-ranging wartime campaign to rouse international support on behalf of France during the Great War, he was elected a member of the prestigious Académie Française. Soon after, he was consecrated a bishop in 1912, advanced as an archbishop in 1928, and made a Cardinal in 1935. Baudrillart wrote numerous scholarly works in the field

addition, Fr. Bruno Foretić, S.J.,<sup>26</sup> who was Merz's spiritual advisor, also tried to help Merz and his colleagues to get a scholarship. One learns from Maraković's letter to Merz that Maraković urged Fr. Vanino to contact a Mme. Maria de Springensfeld who was a close friend of Msgr. Baudrillart.<sup>27</sup> There are two references regarding Mme. Maria de Springensfeld's relation to Zagreb; one, in 1916, is a piece of correspondence in the Archdiocesan archive in Zagreb (Nadbiskupijski arhiv u Zagrebu), and other, in 1932, when she visited Zagreb, is in the context of the Therese of Lisieux case being made a Doctor of the Church.<sup>28</sup> From the same letter (September 7) of Maraković to Merz, one also learns that Mme. de Springensfeld spoke of not only three scholarships for Croatians, but five.

From another of Maraković's letters to Merz, one also learns that he urged Fr. Foretić to speak to Mme. de Springensfeld in order to ask Msgr. Baudrillart for scholarship. He knew that Springensfeld had unlimited trust in Fr. Foretić.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, Fr. Vanino agreed with Baudrillart and Abbé Eugène Beaupin,<sup>30</sup> secretary of the *Amitiés Catholiques*, to provide scholarships for the three Croatian students. Fr. Vanino was glad that Merz would be going to Paris, and he wrote the following to Fr. Foretić:

In my conversation with the young man, I realized that he understands what weight the victims bear, such weight which war demands from a soldier, especially from a Catholic soldier, who has to endure moral tor-

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of theology. See *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd ed., 14 vols. (Freiburg, 1957–68, here 1957), II, s.v. "Baudrillart, Alfred." See also Baudrillart, *Les carnets du cardinal Alfred Baudrillart*, ed. Paul Christophe, 9 vols. (Paris, 1996–2003).

26. Fr. Bruno Foretić, S.J. (1880–1945) studied philosophy and theology in Zagreb and Rome. As a priest, he dealt with pastoral work and was a spiritual leader of the Croatian League of Eagles. See *Hrvatski biografski leksikon* [Croatian Biographical Lexicon], 9 vols. (Zagreb, 1983–2021, here 1998), IV, s.v. "FORETIĆ, Bruno."

27. Maraković to Merz on September 7, 1920, stored in Zagreb, AIM; Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 101.

28. Stjepan Razum, "Pisana ostavština Janka Barlèa" ["Written Legacy of Janko Barlè,"] in: *Sveta Cecilija* [Saint Cecilia], 3–4 (2020), 38–48, here 43, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/364433>, accessed October 15, 2022.

Paul Droulers, S.J., "Le Doctorat de Sainte Therese de Lisieux propose en 1932," *Ephemerides Carmeliticæ*, 24, no. 1 (1973), 86–129, here 114, [https://www.teresianum.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ECarm\\_24\\_1973-1\\_86-129.pdf](https://www.teresianum.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ECarm_24_1973-1_86-129.pdf), accessed October 15, 2022.

29. Maraković to Merz on September 7, 1920, stored in Zagreb, AIM.

30. As a great friend of the Croatians, Beaupin visited Croatia after Merz finished his studies and returned to Zagreb where Merz hosted him. When Merz passed away, Beaupin gave a beautiful testimony about him. See DIM, n.d., p. 414, stored in Zagreb, AIM. See also Msgr. Eugène Beaupin, ed., "Yvan Merz," *Les Amitiés Catholiques Françaises*, June 15, 1928, pp. 2–5.

ment in an environment in which he is alienated from his church. When I spoke to him in Vienna, I recall, as if through a mist, vividly in my mind as he cited a passage from the *Imitation of Christ* about the saving effects of Christian endurance.<sup>31</sup> Never before had I heard such words being spoken by a layman's mouth. In my heart, I say that I was so surprised at the time that I asked myself, not having known the holy young man well enough, is it just literature [sic]. . . . I had a feeling as if someone suddenly burst into an unknown place. . . . Later I understood that this God-loving young man [had] reached a higher level of consciousness, to the level of Christian perfection in which the soul views everything from God's perspective and judges everything around itself in relation to the supernatural goal of man.<sup>32</sup>

When Merz found out about his chance to study in Paris, he was thrilled. On September 20, 1920, he obtained a passport which was valid for six months.<sup>33</sup> At that critical historical time, Croatia, having fought and been defeated as a part of Austria-Hungary's empire, was considered one of the losers of the Great War. By contrast, Serbia had emerged as a victor and considered itself the Liberator of the South Slavs. As Margaret MacMillan puts it:

[As] Austria-Hungary stumbled from one military disaster to the next, its South Slavs turned, many with reluctance, toward independence. The Serbians, temporarily chastened by defeat and by the collapse of their great protector, Russia, were more receptive to the idea of a Yugoslav state. In exile in Corfu, Serb Pašić met with Croat Trumbić and, in July 1918, the two men agreed that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, including those in Bosnia, whether Muslim or not, would be united into

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31. Thomas à Kempis, *De Imitatione Christi* (c. 1418–1427).

32. Vanino to Foretić on October 15, 1928, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original text: "Iz razgovora sam razabrao da taj mladi čovjek osjeća težinu žrtava, što ih rat zahtjeva od vojnika, napose katoličkog vojnika, koji mora trpjeti moralne muke u okolini otuđenoj Crkvi. Dok sam razgovarao s njim u Beču sjećam se kao kroz maglu, živo mi je u pameti, kako je tom prigodom citirao jedan odlomak iz 'Nasljeduj Krista' o spasonosnim učincima kršćanskog trpljenja. Nisam dotad iz laičkih ustiju čuo onakovih riječi, izrečenih s onakvim akcentom. Po duši kažem, da sam u onaj mah bio tako iznenađen, da sam se upitao, ne poznavajući dotad dovoljno svetog mladića, je li to samo literatura. . . Imao sam osjećaj kao da je netko iznenađa banuo u kraj posve tuđ. . . Kasnije sam, dakako, razumio da je bogoljubni mladić već tada stupao područjem vrhunaravnog shvaćanja i življenja, dok se napokon uspeo na onaj stepen kršćanskog savršenstva, na kojem duša sve oko sebe promatra u vidu Božjem i sve u sebi i oko sebe ocjenjuje po odnošaju svega prema vrhunaravskom cilju čovjekovom."

33. *Putovnica za inozemstvo, broj: 4432, Zagreb 20 rujna 1920* [International travel Passport. no.: 4432, September 20, 1920, Zagreb], issued by the Kraljevsko Redarstveno povjereništvo za grad Zagreb [Royal Police Trustees for City of Zagreb], stored in Zagreb, AIM.

KRALJEVSTVO SRBA, HRVATA I SLOVENACA  
ROYAUME DES SERBES, CROATES ET SLOVÈNES

U IME  
AU NOM  
NJEHOVOG VELIKANSTVA  
DE SA MAJESTÉ  
**PETRA I.**  
**PIERRE I.**  
PO MILOSTI BOŽJI I VOLJI NARODNOJ  
PAR LA GRÂCE DE DIEU ET LA VOLONTÉ DU PEUPLE  
KRALJA SRBA, HRVATA I SLOVENACA  
ROI DES SERBES, CROATES ET SLOVÈNES

izdaje se na temelju naredbe gospodina Kralja Hrvatske i Slavonije, Br. 7745, izdane u Zagrebu, 26. rujna 1920. god. na najsavjetovanijem državljaniu kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca  
il est délivré, conformément à l'arrêté du Roi n. 7745 en date du 26. Février 1920. le présent pour le sous-sé citoyen du royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes

na Sest meseca a Sest mesec.

PUTOVNICA ZA INOZEMSTVO. PASSEPORT  
Merz Ivo M. Merz Ivo  
Ivan de profession Strojnik  
Strojnik originair de Srpska  
Srpska domicilié à Zagreb  
Zagreb occupant en Primo

dat 1920 motif du voyage Studoj

Lični opis: Signalisation  
Godina rođenja 1896 ou de la naissance 1896  
ras srpski taillé srpski  
vis 180 stature 180  
oc plavi yeux bleus  
kosa plavica cheveux bruns  
nos pravilni nez droit  
usta pravilna lèvres droites  
brada gusta barbe grosse  
ostali znaci ne autres signes particuliers  
opremanje putni ne équipement

Broj 44321 — pas — 1920  
N. 44321 — pass. — 1920

Signature du titulaire  
Merz Ivo

*Putovnica za inozemstvo* (Passport) Merz Ivo (Ivan), in Zagreb, Septembre 20, 1920. Reproduced with permission.

Yugoslavia, with the king of Serbia as ruler. Union with Serbia, whatever its drawbacks, seemed less frightening than independence as, at best, a country cobbled together from Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and, at worst, two or three weak little states. Unwisely, the two sides put off discussing a constitution; the issue of federation (which the Croats and Slovenes wanted) or a unitary state (which of course Pašić wanted) was never settled. Trumbić can have had few illusions about how the Serbians saw the process of bringing together the different peoples.<sup>34</sup>

34. MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 160. See also 158: "In 1919, when the question of appointing a leader for the delegation going to Paris came up, Prince Alexander of Serbia, who was acting as regent for his senile old father, insisted on Pašić, perhaps to keep him away from Belgrade. To his considerable annoyance, Pašić found that he had to share power with a Croat, Ante Trumbić, the new foreign minister."

More precisely, the constitution was discussed more than once, but hegemonistic Serbia was, as a victor of the war, the sole decision maker. For Merz's part, he had strongly opted for the Croats, especially following the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, 1914. Merz had imagined the Archduke as a potential future democratizing force who could have brought egalitarian status to the Croats and Croatia.

The young Croatian scholars had uncomfortable experiences upon arriving in Paris. Some Serbian students accused them of being followers of the ill-fated Austrian Emperor Charles I (Hungarian King Charles IV) who reigned from November 1916 until the abolition of the Habsburg monarchy in November 1918.<sup>35</sup> The local diplomat wanted to send them back, but, thanks to Msgr. Baudrillart's and Abbé Beaupin's efforts, the attempt was rebuffed. At that time, Paris hosted over six hundred Serbian Orthodox students, who often verbally attacked their relatively few Croatian Catholic counterparts. The Croatian students were also required to put a lot of effort into looking for lodgings and found two short-term housing arrangements. On October 20, 1920, thanks to the efforts of Baudrillart, they were able to move into more stable accommodations for a shared cost of 410 francs.<sup>36</sup>

### Merz's Spiritual and Religious Ripening

On December 1, 1920, Merz moved to the domicile of Mrs. J. Michaut, a woman who took care of Croatian students, at No. 1 rue Mayet in the 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, not far from the Jardin du Luxembourg.<sup>37</sup> His room charge was a much more reasonable sixty francs per month. Eight years later, from letters sent by Mrs. Michaut's daughter to Dr. Drago Čepulić in the months following Merz's death, one can discover that she regarded Merz as an authentic Christian.<sup>38</sup> She wrote,

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35. On April 1, 1922, less than four years after the end of the monarchy, Charles died at age thirty-four of complications from pneumonia. Eight decades later, on October 3, 2004, Charles was beatified by Pope John Paul II and is now venerated as Blessed Karl of Austria. For the Vatican site dedicated to his beatification, see "CHARLES OF AUSTRIA (1887–1922)," The Holy See, [https://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20041003\\_charles-austria\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20041003_charles-austria_en.html), accessed October 18, 2022.

36. Merz to Maraković on St. Josaphat's Day (i.e. November 12), 1920, Paris, stored in Zagreb, AIM.

37. DIM, April 21, 1921, stored in Zagreb, AIM.

38. Drago Čepulić (1893–1976) was an essayist and philosophical writer. See *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, s.v. "Čepulić, Drago"; and *Hrvatski leksikon*, s.v. "Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati," and s.v. "Tko je tko u NDH."

And I am delighted that you are amassing all these memories that are bound to his persona, because in Paris, in the eyes of everyone that knew him, he lived the life of a saint. . . . He had various fasts, endurance, and all his proceedings were done for the sole glory of the Lord himself. His example ascended to us who knew him for two years as we lived together continuously in our family's circle. And you may remember, Mr. Professor, how my mother scolded him at every meal about how little he ate. Every morning he attended the mass and did his communion, he could be found at the Chapelle des bénédictines on the rue Monsieur, where he went often, or at the Chapelle des Lazaristes on the rue de Sèvres. . . . We, poor sinners, could not comprehend his mortification, as he was so good and gentle to others (*lui si bon, si doux pour les autres*).<sup>39</sup>

Reflecting on Merz's membership in the Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, an association that served the poor, elderly, sick, and helpless,<sup>40</sup> Mrs. Michaut also testified:

He personally took care of a family, whom he often visited and gave a portion of his already small scholarship. On the larger feasts, in the mornings he would go visit his acquaintances, and would reside and pray with them at Holy Mass and Communion. He made great progress in his studies (completely deserved) but he never bragged about it, [and] we had to find out about his progress from other students. My poor mother was so pleased with him when he brought home his diploma which was folded in quarters. She was afraid that he would damage it, so she took it out and asked him why he folded it. She scolded him and said: If your mother saw what you did to your diploma, she would be displeased because for your parents it is a symbol of your hard work in Paris. And our dear Mr. Ivan replied: Oh, dear mother, this paper has no significance in the eyes of the dear Lord.<sup>41</sup>

For his part, Drago Ćepulić also confirmed these sentiments after Merz's death in the newspaper *Nedjelja* (Sunday): "The following words from

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39. Mrs. J. Michaut to Ćepulić on December 15, 1928, stored in Zagreb, AIM. For the chapels, see Louis Chaigne, *Les Bénédictines de la rue Monsieur: Histoire et vocation d'une chapelle* (Paris, 1950; revised edition, 1988); and Simone Zurawski, "The Chapelle des Lazaristes and Reliquary Shrine of St. Vincent de Paul, 1850 to 1860: An Exposé of Competing Aesthetic Schemes & Their Resolutions in the Alliance des Arts," *Vincentian Heritage Journal*, 36, no. 1 (2021), Article 4: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol36/iss1/4/>. The Benedictine chapel was especially renowned as a center for converts, both in the late nineteenth century and then again in the postwar period gathered around Jacques and Raïssa Maritain. See Frédéric Gugelot, *La Conversion des intellectuels au catholicisme en France, 1885–1935*, preface by Étienne Fouilloux (Paris, 1998), esp. 56 ff.

40. Albert Foucault, *La Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul: Histoire de cent ans* (Paris, 1933).

41. Mrs. J. Michaut to Ćepulić on December 15, 1928, stored in Zagreb, AIM.



the Book of Wisdom may be applied to his life: *Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa* ["Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years"] (Wisdom 4:13<sup>42</sup>). And this letter points out that Ivan was not an "ordinary" Christian, but the Christian who strived for Christian perfection."<sup>43</sup>

At the Sorbonne, Merz registered to study the history of the French language, post-seventeenth-century French poetry, seventeenth-century German literature, ancient Illyrian literature, and a tractate about the French Renaissance masters, Clément Marot and François Rabelais.<sup>44</sup> In addition, he attended classes at the Institut Catholique de Paris where he attended French, Latin, and Greek literature lectures in the Faculté des Lettres.<sup>45</sup> He was pleased with his lecturers, and in a letter to Prof. Maraković he praised Fr. Thomas Mainage, O.P., Fr. Antonin-Gilbert (born Antonin-Dalmace) Sertillanges, O.P., Msgr. Alfred Baudrillart, Abbé Georges Bertrin, and the French linguist Abbé Pierre-Jean Rousset, as extraordinary.<sup>46</sup> These lecturers facilitated his struggle for a deep piety, combining different liturgical traditions and exercises. They specifi-

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42. Translation from New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

43. Drago Čepulić, "Uspomene na dra Iv. Merza" ["Remembrances on Dr. Ivan Merz"], *Nedjelja* [Sunday], no. 6, February 10, 1929, p. 2: "Dao Gospod, da nam bude, ako je moguće, sve jasnije, da se na njegov život mogu primijeniti riječi knjige Mudrosti: *Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa*. (Sap. 4:13). I ovo nas pismo upućuje na to da Ivan nije bio baš tako 'običan' kršćanin, kako smo ga mi nazivali savjetujući mu neka se stoga ostavi neobičnih napora u težnji za kršćanskim savršenstvom."

44. Année scolaire 1920-1921, Université de Paris, Livret Universitaire, de M: Ivan Merz, stored in Zagreb, AIM. For a contemporary postwar study, see Pierre Villey, *Marot et Rabelais* (Paris, 1923).

45. Immatriculations. Institut Catholique—Faculté des Lettres, (Paris, 1921/22), stored in Zagreb, AIM.

46. Merz to Maraković on St. Josaphat's Day, November 12, 1920, Paris, stored in Zagreb, AIM. These were all important figures in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century *renouveau catholique*. See for example: L'abbé Georges Bertrin, *Les grandes figures catholiques du temps présent* (Paris, 1895); Thomas Mainage, O.P., *Les Témoins du renouveau catholique*, 6th ed. (Paris, 1919); Msgr. Alfred Baudrillart, "Pour que dure le renouveau catholique," *Revue apologetique: doctrine et faits religieux*, 35, no. 297 (1922), 193–203. In addition to his scholarly career as a philosopher, the Dominican A.-G. (born A.-D.) Sertillanges was also the director of the Dominican-sponsored Catholic Revivalist journal, *Revue des Jeunes: Organe de Pensée Catholique & Française d'Information & d'Action* [Review of the Youth: Organ of Catholic and French Thought, Information, and Action]. For name change after the Great War, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 134, and see entries throughout Schloesser's text and endnotes for publications in the *Revue des Jeunes*. See also Agnes P. Breen, "Louis Bertrand sa contribution au Renouveau Catholique en France" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1932). Abbé Pierre-Jean Rousset, professor of experimental phonetics at the Collège de France (Paris), was the publishing director of the *Revue de phonétique: organe international* from 1911 to 1922.



cally influenced him by elaborating and explaining the mystic side of human life.

Now that Merz was able to integrate artistic and aesthetic aspects into his understanding of the liturgy (one might even say his application and authentic living of the liturgy) and work only for Jesus Christ, he was able to forget earthly matters, and his evolution was finished. He was a quick learner and conceptual thinker. He easily divided and reviewed French authors through three categories: liturgical, anti-liturgical, and indifferent. His approach was influenced by the thought of Jacques Maritain who shrewdly constructed an ambiguously antimodernist ultramodernity.<sup>47</sup>

In 1922, Maritain summarized this stance in his book *Antimodern*, an early postwar work framed in remembrance of his boyhood friend Ernest Psichari, killed in the opening days of the Great War.<sup>48</sup> Maritain's combative manifesto read in part:

That which I call here anti-modern might just as well be called *ultramodern*. It is well known, in fact, that Catholicism is as *anti-modern* on

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47. Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) converted to Catholicism in 1906 and wrote more than fifty books. See Jean-Luc Barré, Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, *Beggars for Heaven*, trans. Bernard E. Doering (Notre Dame, IN, 2005); and Bernard E. Doering, *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals* (Notre Dame, IN, 1983). In the 1930s, two of Maritain's books received Croatian translations: *Religija i kultura* [Religion and Culture] in 1935, and *Andeoski naučitelj: Život i misao Sv. Tome Akvinskog* [The Angelic Doctor: The Life and Thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas] in 1936. The latter incited vehement polemics on whether Thomism was the only true Catholic philosophical worldview between the Dominican Hijacint Bošković and Franciscan Karlo Balić. Their dispute overshadowed all other research of Maritain's philosophy and some valuable contributions, especially in the works of Đuro Gračanin (who was his doctoral student), Stjepan Zimmermann, Dušan Žanko, and Bogdan Radica. See Ivan Čulo, "Recepcija Jacquesa Maritaina u Hrvatskoj tijekom 20. stoljeća" ["The Reception of Jacques Maritain in Croatia during the Twentieth Century"], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* [Contributions to the research of Croatian philosophical heritage], 43. no. 1 (2017), 89–279.

48. Jacques Maritain, *Antimoderne* (Paris, 1922). Stephen Schloesser notes: "The book's entire message—its opening manifesto, the patient lying out of hylomorphic theory, and its call to synthesize Catholicism and secular culture—was inscribed within this larger story of sacrifice and the moral imperatives incumbent on the survivors. Maritain wove his reconfiguration of Catholicism within a larger narrative of trauma and memorialization." Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 109, 162–72, here 171; cf. 109. Ernest Psichari (1883–1914) was the grandson of Ernest Renan (1823–1892), a towering figure in French intellectual life and especially notable for his *Life of Jesus* (1863). Ernest became a popular writer and soldier whose works combine militaristic sentiments with a semi-mystical religious devotion. On August 22, 1914, he was killed in the opening weeks of the Great War. See Schloesser, 73–77; cf. 84–85, 87, 89–90, 109, 171, 237–38.

account of its immovable attachment to the tradition as it is *ultramodern* on account of its bold ability to adapt itself to the new conditions erupting suddenly in the life of the world.<sup>49</sup>

These kinds of authors prevailed at Institut Catholique, while the Third French Republic's laicist Sorbonne opted for natural scientists. As a consequence, the Institut produced many converts to Catholicism.<sup>50</sup> The reception of Maritain's thought in Croatia may be traced from the beginning of the 1920s. The Croatian professor of apologetics and dogmatics, Msgr. Dr. Matija Petlić (1899–1963), introduced Maritain in 1921 as a major and important Catholic philosopher. Simultaneously in Paris, Merz was studying quite seriously Maritain's thought in his newly-published *Éléments de philosophie* (1921).<sup>51</sup> Philosophical reception of Maritain in Croatia gained prominence in the 1930s when, as a leading neo-Thomist and one of the distinguished figures of the personalist movement, he was recognized as a "Catholic leader in philosophical ideas," "the most prominent exponent of Christian philosophy," "foremost philosopher and convert," "philosophical authority," "[the] famous French philosopher," and so forth, mainly by the Catholic journals *Nova revija* [New Review], *Život* [Life], *Vrhbosna* ["Peak-Bosnia"] (published in Sarajevo), *Luč* [Light], and *Duhovni život* [Spiritual Life].

Merz cherished the Catholic intellectual atmosphere and was pleased with his studies. He wrote to his father Mavro,

In France, the Catholic spirit of the ages is lively, which is completely different from Germany. In addition to a multitude of splendid gothic churches from the XII and XIII centuries and the great literary works of the XVII century, what the church is experiencing in France today is a triumph. Most modern French thinkers and writers are convinced Catholics which we, for example, do not seem to take notice of. . . .<sup>52</sup>

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49. Maritain, *Antimoderne* (1922), quoted in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 163. See also Brooke Williams Smith, *Jacques Maritain, Antimodern or Ultramodern? An Historical Analysis of His Critics, His Thought, and His Life* (New York, 1976).

50. As Léon Gambetta famously said of the new Third Republic, "What we propose to do is to apply positivism in the political order." See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 26. For this standard rhetoric of opposition during the war, see Schloesser, 90–91.

51. Jacques Maritain, *Éléments de philosophie. I. introduction générale à la philosophie* (Paris, 1921).

52. Merz to his father Mavro on January 16, 1921, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original text: "U Francuskoj katolički duh vjekovima živo djeluje, posve drugačije, nego u Njemačkoj. Osim mnoštva divnih gotskih crkvi iz XII. i XIII. vijeka i krasnih literarnih djela iz XVII. vijeka doživljava crkva u današnjoj Francuskoj svoje trijumfe. Tako su nam npr. najveći moderni francuski mislioci i pisci uvjereni katolici, što kod nas npr. ne zapažamo."

A few days later, on January 20, 1921, he received his father's answer, which delighted him. He wrote in his diary, "My prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus have been answered. Dad confessed again after twenty years and received Holy Communion. The supernatural element converted him. Grace. Mom is still in care. The Heart of Jesus, help!" Seven years later when he was seriously ill, his mother converted only through his suffering leading up to an unsuccessful surgery. Before he died, he was happy to write down that his mother had learned the rosary easily and was able to pray "hundreds of *Our Fathers* and *Hail Mary's*."<sup>53</sup>

### Delighted with French Christian Culture

In the postwar 1920's, Paris became a European center of international culture, with numerous artistic productions and entertainment sensations. This period lasted until 1929 and was referred to as the Roaring Twenties, or the *Années folles* ("Crazy Years"). American influence was particularly strong due to the presence of expatriates after the war—especially African Americans—and Parisians began to enjoy new customs of entertainment: shows, musicals, concerts, jazz, salon events, new forms of ballets, dances, and so on.<sup>54</sup> Merz came into that vibrant atmosphere as a young Catholic intellectual, strongly interested in French Catholic literature, arts, and traditions.

At that time Catholic intellectual life in Paris sensed a new dimension of spirituality or the supernatural, due to various wartime events connecting the material (physical) and the mystical. Those conditions provided transformative experiences to many thinkers looking for the truth or absolute reality.<sup>55</sup> Merz, too, was a seeker and cared more for

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53. DIA, February 13, 1928.

54. See for example: Brooke Lindy Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture Between the World Wars* (New York, 2011); Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln, NE, 2010); Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham, 2003); William Alfred Shack, *Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story Between the Great Wars* (Berkeley, 2001); Jody Blake, *Le Tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900–1930* (University Park, PA, 1999); Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston, 1996).

55. For the postwar "génération mystique," see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 116–19; and Schloesser, "1918–1968–2018: A Tissue of Laws and Choices and Chance," *Theological Studies*, 79, no. 3 (2018), 487–519, esp. 500–06. Cf. Katherine Davies and Toby Garfitt, eds., *God's Mirror: Renewal and Engagement in French Catholic Intellectual Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2015); Brenna Moore, *Sacred Dread: Raissa Maritain, the Allure of Suffering, and the French Catholic Revival (1905–1944)* (Notre Dame, IN, 2013); and Moore, *Kindred Spirits*, cited above.

learning and the libraries than for the many amusements 1920s Paris had to offer. On one occasion he wrote to Maraković, “Due to a very pleasant library, it is more comfortable to study at [the] Institut Catholique than at [the] Sorbonne.”<sup>56</sup> He became thoroughly familiar with French modern literature thanks to these libraries, and most especially with the works of Paul Claudel, which attracted him the most.<sup>57</sup> Claudel was a towering figure and perhaps the greatest French Catholic poet of the twentieth century, and Merz soon integrated his poems in his own contemplations. During Lent of 1921, Merz translated Claudel’s famous *Le chemin de la croix* (Way of the Cross) and chronicled this in his Parisian Diary on April 23, 1921.<sup>58</sup> Merz published this translation the following year, during Lent, in the Croatian Jesuit magazine *Život* (Life).<sup>59</sup> Merz also experienced Gregorian melodies in Paris and came to consider them keys to liturgical renewal.<sup>60</sup>

In July 1921, Merz, Gračanin, and Šćetincec traveled via Bordeaux and Toulouse to Lourdes, where Merz wanted to pray to Our Lady of Lourdes to help heal his sick eyes. He prayed wholeheartedly for his vision to improve, and, on December 17, 1921, he noted this prayer in his diary: “Jesus Christ, I am asking you to heal my eyes.”<sup>61</sup> In Toulouse, on July 27–30, 1921, he attended the thirteenth annual session of the

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56. Merz to Maraković on St. Josaphat’s Day, November 12, 1920, Paris, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Radi vrlo zgodne biblioteke, ugodnije je studirati na Katoličkom institutu, nego li na Sorboni.”

57. For Claudel, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 37, 117, 132, 134, 178, 182, and 379n20.

58. Paul Claudel, *Le chemin de la croix*, ill. Jean Marchand (Paris, 1919). First published in 1911, the book went through several editions including in 1914 and 1918 (during the Great War) and in a 1919 edition with wood engraved illustrations by Jean Marchand.

59. *Le Chemin de la Croix par Paul Claudel, Avec des bois gravés au canif par Jean Marchand* (Paris, 1918), translated by Ivan Merz in “Paul Claudel: Križni put” [“Paul Claude: Way of the Cross”], *Život* [Life], no. 7, April 1922, 109–16, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/91958>, accessed October 14, 2022.

60. For the postwar plainchant (Gregorian Chant) revival at Solesmes (the return of the exiled monks from their 1901 exile in England was completed in 1922), Paris, and in the French Empire abroad, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 299–303. See also Patrick Hala, *Solesmes et les musiciens. Vol. 2: Les années 20: Claude Debussy, Erik Satie, André Caplet, Yvonne Gouverné, Roland-Manuel, André Gedalge, Louis Maingueneau, Gustave Doret* (Solesmes, 2020); Halas, ed., *Des moines dans la Grande Guerre: Solesmes, 1914–1918: Correspondence de guerre inédite* (Solesmes, 2014); and Louis Soltner, *L’abbaye de Solesmes au temps des expulsions (1880–1901)* (Solesmes, 2005).

61. DIM, December 17, 1921, p. 434, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Isuse Kriste, molim Te, da ozdraviš moje oči.”

“Semaines Sociales de France” (Social Weeks of France) movement.<sup>62</sup> An audience of several hundred from various academic fields attended the congress and a lively debate about injustice in economic relations took place.<sup>63</sup> The speakers included the prominent intellectuals Eugène Duthoit,<sup>64</sup> Georges Goyau,<sup>65</sup> Georges-Ceslas Rutten,<sup>66</sup> and Max Turmann.<sup>67</sup> Merz noted a great Christian willpower to assist the government in solving the social problems which burdened France. Long and metic-

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62. For the Semaines Sociales within the international context of Catholic Action, see Schloesser, “1918–1968–2018,” 506–08. For a contemporary account see Jean Terrel, *Les Semaines sociales* (Paris, 1923). For a centennial overview, see Jean-Dominique Durand, ed., *Les Semaines sociales de France: cent ans d’engagement social des catholiques français, 1904–2004: actes du Colloque international d’histoire, 13–16 octobre 2004, [tenu à l’] Université Jean-Moulin-Lyon 3* (Paris, 2006).

63. The theme for the 1921 assembly was “L’injustice dans le relations économique” [Injustice in Economic Relations]. Themes of all ninety-five annual sessions (from 1904 to 2021) are listed on the website of the Semaines Sociales de France, see: “L’historique des sessions des Semaines sociales de France,” Semaines Sociales de France, accessed October 18, 2022, <https://www.ssf-fr.org/page/379098-historique-des-sessions>

64. Eugène Duthoit (1869–1944) was a French jurist, Dean of the Law Faculty at the Université catholique de Lille, co-founder of the École des sciences sociales et politiques (in 1894), and president of the Semaines Sociales de France from 1914–1945. See Pierre-Yves Verkindt, “L’Engagement d’un Professeur: La Question Sociale chez Eugène Duthoit, Doyen de la Faculté Libre de Droit de Lille,” *Revue d’histoire des facultés de droit et de la science juridique*, 22 (2002), 109–32, [https://univ-droit.fr/docs/recherche/rhfd/pdf/022-2002/22-2002\\_p109-132.pdf](https://univ-droit.fr/docs/recherche/rhfd/pdf/022-2002/22-2002_p109-132.pdf), accessed January 29, 2022.

65. Georges Goyau (1869–1939), ecclesiastical historian. After studying at the *Lycée Louis le Grand* and the *École normale*, he received his university degree in history and was sent to the *École française* in Rome for further studies. During World War I, he served in the Red Cross as his physique was too frail for combat duty. From 1927–1938 he was the professor of mission history at the *Institut Catholique de Paris*. He served the Roman Congregation of Rites as a consultant in historical matters. For more, see Encyclopedia.com, s.v. “Goyau, Georges,” accessed January 28, 2022, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/goyau-georges>; and Stephen Schloesser, Review of Jérôme Grondeux’s *Georges Goyau (1869–1939): Un intellectuel catholique sous la IIIe République* [Collection de l’École Française de Rome, 38] (Rome, 2007), in *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96, no. 1 (2010), 156–57.

66. Georges-Ceslas Rutten (1875–1952, a Dominican from 1890 onwards) was Director of the General Secretariat for Social Works, Senator of Brabant Province, Belgium, and Doctor in political and social sciences. He got his doctorate in Louvain, in 1900. See Bibliothèque Nationale de France Catalogue Général, Notice de personne, s.v. “Rutten, Ceslas (1875–1952) nom en religion forme internationale,” Record ID: ark:/12148/cb124518238, <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb124518238>, accessed October 18, 2022.

67. Max Turmann (1866–1943) was Catholic sociologist and academic educated at the *École normale supérieure*. From 1919 to 1923, he collaborated with the magazine *Le Correspondant*. For more, see Bibliothèque Nationale de France Data, s.v. “Max Turmann (1866–1943),” accessed January 29, 2022, Permalink ID: <https://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb13475861b>.

ulous discussions were held, exploring causes of social injustice and creating platforms for shared activities.

Rutten's lecture especially moved him, due to his plea to pay more attention to the labor force. He argued that a worker could be won over only with the help of other workers. Therefore, the duty of every priest was to raise a number of workers, who would then continue to spread the Christian social ideas among their peers. Rutten pushed for a *Presse catholique ouvrière, journalière et indépendante*, arguing that the worker would not believe the Catholic press if it came from the *bourgeoisie*. Merz recorded Rutten's thought that "only a worker would know how to hit other *workers' tones*."<sup>68</sup>

The goal of the conference was not only to send a clear message to the French government on how to solve the accumulated problems, but also on how to address injustice towards the poorest in France.<sup>69</sup> Merz was delighted by the discipline, personal organization, involvement, and hard work of all the participants. Further, he recorded that, "The meals in the garden of the Institut Catholique are especially interesting, where alongside long tables participate hundreds of clergy, male and female laity. Thus, the *Semaine Sociale* takes on [the] character of a traveling University."<sup>70</sup>

A decade later, Gračanin, in his *Memories of Dr. Ivan Merz* (1933), specified: "Ivan incredibly quickly penetrated to the strongest intellectual circles of Paris where he swiftly met with a wide range of writers and other intellectuals. In a short period of time he learnt about a large number of French Catholic organizations. . . . [In] one day, he would visit ten or more such personalities."<sup>71</sup> Dr. Čepulić expressed similar memories:

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68. DIM, July 27, 1921, p. 420, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: "Jedino radnik zna pogoditi radnički ton."

69. These were central themes for the *Semaines Sociales de France* in the 1920s. See for example: Eugène Duthoit, *Vie économique et catholicisme. Leçons d'ouverture des semaines sociales de France. 1919–1924. Sources, principes et méthode. Le Problème de la production. L'Injustice dans la vie économique. Comment adapter l'État à ses fonctions économiques. Le Problème de population. Le Problème agraire* (Paris, 1924); Duthoit, *La Crise d'autorité: Les Symptômes. Les Causes. La Recherche des solutions. Leçon d'ouverture à la Semaine sociale de Lyon* (Saint-Amand, Cher, 1925); and Duthoit, *Comment aménager la cité française? Un plan de réformes politiques* (Paris, 1926).

70. DIM, July 27, 1921, p. 420, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: "Zanimljivi su objedi u vrtu katoličkog Instituta, gdje sudjeluje uz dugačke stolove više stotina muškog i ženskog svećeničkog i laičkog svijeta. *Semaine sociale* poprima karakter putujućeg Sveučilišta."

71. Đuro Gračanin, "Moje uspomene na ličnost dr. Ivana Merza" ["My Remembrances of the Personality of Dr. I. Merz"], *Katolički tjednik* [Catholic Weekly], no. 25, June 18, 1933,

Merz was a man who judged everything according to papal decrees. Whoever did not understand it in that way would show that he was no psychologist and did not know him. He was fighting for a pure Catholic Action, independent of any political contaminations[,] and he remained exactly the same as [when] I met him in 1921 on the way from Notre Dame de Lorette in France.<sup>72</sup>

During the celebration of the Association catholique de la Jeunesse Française (The Organization of the French Catholic Youth) Merz was thrilled to hear Msgr. Baudrillard's speech about Eastern and Western civilizations.<sup>73</sup> It broadened his horizons of the Catholic activities from the Church to all aspects of human life, and he felt the need for public life overall to be inaugurated and impregnated by, with, in, and through Jesus Christ. He also attended Abbé Beaupin's lectures about patronages<sup>74</sup> at the Catholic Institute. Most likely, it was there that he picked up the fabric of spirituality and coined his own term "harmony of souls." As he envisioned

p. 7: "Ivan je nevjerojatno brzo prodro u najjače intelektualne krugove Pariza, on se brzo upoznao s čitavim nizom književnika i drugih umnih radnika. On je u kratko vrijeme proučio velik broj francuskih katoličkih organizacija. . . . u jednom bi danu znao posjetiti po deset i više takovih ličnosti."

72. Drago Čepulić, "Uspomene na dra Iv. Merza" ["Remembrances of Dr. Ivan Merz"], *Nedjelja* [Sunday], no. 5, February 3, 1929, p. 2: "Merz je u prvom redu bio čovjek, koji je prosuđivao sve po papinskim odredbama. Tko to ne bi tako shvatio, pokazao bi, da nije nikakav psiholog i da nije njega poznavao. On je boreći se za čistu Katoličku Akciju, nezavisnu od svih političkih natruha, ostao isti, onakav kakav sam ga upoznao godine 1921. putem iz Notre Dame de Lorette u Francuskoj." For Catholic Action, see Schloesser, "1918–1968–2018," 506–10.

73. The Association catholique de la jeunesse française (ACJF) was founded in 1886. See David Colon, "Les jésuites et la Jeunesse catholique en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres," *Histoire@Politique*, 4, no. 1 (2008), 7–7 <https://doi.org/10.3917/hp.004.0007>. Yves-Marie Hilaire, "L'Association catholique de la Jeunesse française: les étapes d'une histoire (1886–1956)," *Revue du Nord*, 66, nos. 261–262, [Liber Americum: Mélanges offerts à Louis Trenard] (Apr.–Sept., 1984): 903–16; and Charles Molette, *L'ACJF (1886–1907): une prise de conscience du laïc catholique* (Paris, 1968). See also Susan B. Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France* (Durham, 2009).

74. These patronages were educational associations where young people made a vow for the continuity of charitable actions. The cornerstones of the patronages have been laid after the French Revolution when two priests, Louis Lallemand, S.J. in Marseille and Guillaume Chaminade (1761–1850, beatified 2000) in Bordeaux, dressed like workers (*Chaudronnier*), brought together young people with the aim to educate them properly. For reference with regard to Lallemand and Chaminade, see: Alois Greiler, S.M., *Jean-Claude Colin (1790–1875): Founder of the Society of Mary (Fondateur de la Société de Marie): Descriptive chronology of his life: Chronologie descriptive de sa vie* (CSC Grafica Roma, 2014), <https://www.maristsm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CHRONOLOGY-FINAL.pdf>, accessed October 16, 2022.



it, patronage encompassed a careful development of the mystic side of young people through more stages, including close association with Frédéric Ozanam and the Vincentian brothers, in order to advocate for love and acts of mercy.<sup>75</sup> This type of order pledged continuity in serving the poor, and Merz considered it to be a guideline for his future plan of action. Therefore he concluded:

The secret to the patronage's success was the spiritual exercises, so called *exercitia spiritualia*, and of tremendous benefit were *exercitia* of the schoolboys between twelve and fourteen. I was monitoring the effects of the spiritual exercises on each *young soul* and their personal feedback after intrinsic concentration. The patronages resulted in religious and moral upbringing of the young men, now ready for a concrete professional education.<sup>76</sup>

After Claudel's early impact, Merz was mostly inspired by Maritain because his philosophy offered what he had been looking for: the centrality of the Church, liturgy, and spirituality. He was envisioning the role of the layperson in bringing Christian society into the type of life that is lived through contemplation.<sup>77</sup> This stand is visible in Merz's articles published from 1922 to 1925 in *Katolički list* (Catholic Paper), *Posestrimstvo* (Sisterhood), *Luč* (Light), *Život* (Life), and *Hrvatska prosvjeta* (Croatian Enlightenment). The writings of the late Charles Péguy, who had been killed in the opening weeks of the Great War and came to be commemorated as a martyr, also influenced Merz with his deep spiritual and patriotic

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75. In 1833, the twenty-year-old Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam (1813–1853), later a literary scholar, journalist, and lawyer, co-founded the Conference of Charity, later the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, with fellow students. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on August 22, 1997. Gérard Cholvy, *Frédéric Ozanam, l'Engagement d'un intellectuel catholique au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 2004). See also Foucault, *La Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul*, cited above. As noted above, Merz was a frequent visitor to the reliquary shrine of St. Vincent de Paul in the Chapelle des Lazaristes on the rue de Sèvres. ("Lazarist" is an alternative name for the Vincentian "Congregation of the Mission" [C.M.].)

76. DIM, January 28, 1921, p. 414, stored in Zagreb, AIM.

77. During the time of Merz's sojourn in Paris, Jacques had just achieved fame with *Art and Scholasticism*—significantly indebted to his wife Raïssa—which was published in 1920 directly after the Great War and would go through several revised editions in 1927, 1935, 1947, and 1965. Five years later, the same press published the Maritains' co-written book on contemplation which would also go through revised French editions (in 1933 and 1947) and which was published in 1928 in both English and German translations. See Jacques Maritain, *Art et scolastique* (Paris, 1920); and Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, *De la vie d'oraison* (Paris, 1925). See also Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 119–23, 141–62; and Schloesser, "1918–1968–2018," 504.

teaching.<sup>78</sup> Surprisingly, Merz was also inspired by the works of revolutionary syndicalist Georges Sorel (who died during Merz's second year in Paris).<sup>79</sup> Sorel, a contradictory mixture of Marxism, integral nationalism, and anarchism, is best known for his *Réflexions sur la violence: Les illusions du progrès* (Reflections on Violence: The Illusions of Progress, 1908). He had also been an unlikely onetime collaborator with Péguy at the bimonthly review *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (Fortnightly Notebooks), and in 1903, he had published *La crise de la pensée catholique* (The Crisis of Catholic Thought). Merz believed that Sorel had helped him recognize social issues and moral borders. Finally, another deceased icon of Catholic revivalism, the writer Léon Bloy,<sup>80</sup> influenced Merz by elaborating the sense of suffering and detecting the motives for conversion.

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78. For Péguy, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 37, 75, 75–77, 84–85, 84–85, 88–89, 95, and 135. “In the middle of the war, when victory seemed a distant possibility, Henri Massis tried to make sense out of the horror in *The Sacrifice, 1914–1916* (1917). In this work, Massis's entry dated 8 September 1914 reflected on the recent deaths of [Charles] Péguy, Alain-Fournier, and his dear friend [Ernest] Psichari: “There are few generations who entered into life with such a feeling of renunciation, of humility. [This generation] knew far in advance and for what reason it was born: and thus the sense of these words that one of us said one day: “We are, he said, a sacrificed generation.” Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 88.

79. Georges Eugène Sorel (1847–1922) was a French socialist and revolutionary syndicalist who developed an original and provocative theory on the positive, even creative, role of myth and violence in the historical process. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Georges Sorel,” last modified October 29, 2021, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Georges-Sorel>. Vice president of the Sociological Association in Zagreb, Dr. Ivo Pilar, regarded Sorel as a spiritual father of fascism and bolshevism during his lecture that took place at the same society on February 27, 1930. (See also the Croatian article by Ivo Pilar, “Georges Sorel, francuski socijalni filozof, duhovni otac fašizma i boljševizm a” [“Georges Sorel, French social philosopher, spiritual father of fascism and Bolshevism”], *PILAR—Časopis za društvene i humanističke studije* [PILAR—Journal of Social and Humanistic Studies], 10, no. 2 (2010), <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/97379>, accessed January 30, 2022.)

80. Léon Bloy (1846–1917) was a French novelist, critic, and polemicist, a fervent Roman Catholic convert who preached spiritual revival through suffering and poverty. As spiritual mentor to a group of friends that included the writer Joris-Karl Huysmans, philosopher Jacques Maritain, and painter Georges Rouault, Bloy influenced their reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church. Bloy's works are extremely varied in form (novels, pamphlets, journals, and exegeses), but they reveal a powerful unity of thought: through pain and destitution, man is redeemed by the Holy Spirit and is awakened to the hidden language of the universe. See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 37, 65–69, 79–80, 119, 135, 217–19, 224–25, 236, 238, 246, 272, 292, 310, 405–06n39; and Schloesser, “Revelation in History: Displaced Persons, Léon Bloy, and Exegesis of the Commonplace,” in: *Revelation and Convergence: Flannery O'Connor and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, eds. Mark Bosco and Brent Little (Washington, DC, 2017), 10–50. See also *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Léon Bloy,” last modified May 19, 2017, accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/art/diary-literature>.

### Visiting the French Catholic Organizations

In January 1921, Merz visited Mr. Gaëtan Bernoville,<sup>81</sup> the editor of the magazine *Les Lettres*, and explained his attitude regarding the Catholic International.<sup>82</sup> According to Merz, “the purpose of this organization is twofold: to raise awareness of Catholic universalism in the disciples of the whole world and to cooperate in joint cultural work and the fight against [a] common adversary. Communist and socialist students have already organized themselves internationally and they will try to pass their reform plans at all international congresses.”<sup>83</sup> Whenever he could, he attended the lectures organized by *Les Lettres*, a magazine with the ambition to popularize Christianity and intrigue people through contemporary lectures. At the beginning of 1921, Bernoville proposed the organization of a *Semaine des Écrivains Catholiques* (Catholic Writers’ Week) and formed the eighteen-member committee, engaging Maritain to spearhead the project.<sup>84</sup> The first annual Writers’ Week took place in mid-May 1921 and, in Bernoville’s words, the gathering aimed at unifying “a certain number of writers who represented the new Catholic intellectual generation.”<sup>85</sup> The rector of the Institut Catholique, Baudrillart, supported the event and gave his annual sermon for the traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit. Alluding to the Spirit’s arrival at Pentecost in the form of tongues of fire, he entitled his sermon “So that the *renouveau catholique* might endure: The Sacred Fire!” Saying that it was not necessary “to abandon our temperament”—that is, the “excessive individualism” that distinguished “all of us Latin peoples”—the rector nevertheless urged his faculty and students to “ame-

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81. Gaëtan Bernoville was the founder of the two most important instances of the “renaissance” movement, the magazine *Les Lettres* (1913–1931) and the “Catholic Writers’ Week,” which brought together Catholic writers in congress annually (1921–1927). See Hervé Serry, “Declin social et revendication identitaire: la ‘renaissance littéraire catholique’ de la première moitié du XXe siècle,” *Sociétés contemporaines*, 44, no. 4 (2001), 91–109, <https://archive.wikiwix.com/cache/index2.php?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cairn.info%2Frevue-societes-contemporaines-2001-4-page-91.htm#federation=archive.wikiwix.com>, accessed January 29, 2022.

82. DIM, January 24, 1921, p. 414, stored in Zagreb, AIM.

83. Catholic internationalism was initiated by Swiss and Dutch Catholic students, and Americans, Spaniards, French, Belgians, (Italians), Germans, Danes, Czechs, Lithuanians, Poles and Hungarians responded. The seeds of the Eucharistic movement, which were sown by Pius X, in a short time gave rise in the student youth across the world to the consciousness of supranational Catholic solidarity. Ivan Merz, “Katolička internacionalna đacka unija” [“Catholic International Student Union,”] *Narodna politika* [People’s Policy], no. 129, Zagreb, July 28, 1920, p. 2.

84. Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 126–30.

85. *Ibid.*, 126.

liorate” this individualism. “Catholics, you can, you must and you will become the Super-French [superfrançais].”<sup>86</sup> Merz compared this project to the grail because it was built on steady Church grounds.

Merz’s other meeting with the Dominicans’ *La Revue des jeunes* (Review of the Youth) was also very interesting because Henri Ghéon read some excerpts from the late Péguy’s works.<sup>87</sup> Ghéon passionately read his martyred friend Péguy’s lines, and Merz commented that, for the first time, he’d met an author who was a fan of young Catholic France. He understood Péguy’s point because Péguy placed himself in opposition to Parisian salon society and sharply criticized the intellectual revolution, which had killed the people’s faith and destroyed the concept of the nation.

Merz especially liked Péguy’s mystical poetry, observing that Péguy—who with a heavy heart had watched the decline of France—sometimes interspersed verses and irony with beautiful hymns. Another attractive characteristic of Péguy’s writing were his laments to the Virgin Mary. The spiritual life of the Virgin Mary, after the death of her Son, was shown with suggestive power. She was portrayed, not as an entirely liturgical “Mother of God,” but a French peasant mother who had lost her son.”<sup>88</sup>

Finally, Péguy also influenced Merz by arguing that the critical imperative should be the reuniting one’s own nation with Catholicism. In 1918, Abbé Louis Rouzic, a popular Catholic revivalist writer, quoted the late Péguy: “It is necessary that France continue; it is necessary that Christianity continue”—from beyond the tomb the eloquent and patriotic voice of Péguy still cries out to us. ‘But France cannot continue without Christianity, and Christianity, which does not come from us, can nevertheless only continue by us.’”<sup>89</sup>

Merz was particularly impressed by a lecture given at the Conférence Olivaint, an association of students established in 1874 in honor of the Jesuit Pierre Olivaint who had been massacred during the “Bloody Days” at

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86. *Ibid.*, 128–29.

87. For Henri Ghéon (1875–1944), see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 117–18, 127, 132, 134, 142–43, 182, 198. For Ghéon’s conversion testimonial, see Ghéon, *L’Homme nède la guerre: Témoignage d’un converti (1915): Nouvelle édition revue, suivie de fragments inédits d’un carnet spirituel (1916–1918)* (Paris, 1923).

88. DIM, January 22, 1921, p. 413, stored in Zagreb, AIM.

89. Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 95; cf. 89.

the end of the Paris Commune in 1871.<sup>90</sup> The highlighted theme of the lecture was universality, and Merz saw in this theme a Christocentric focus on Jesus Christ.<sup>91</sup> In 1921, representing Yugoslavia, Merz participated in the annual congress of the Union Catholique d'Études Internationales (U.C.E.I., Catholic Union of International Study), held in Paris from April 14–17, 1921.<sup>92</sup> Regarding this event, Merz noted:

These meetings are convenient because Catholics from different nationalities and other tendencies meet and gain a unique directive for future actions. Though, it seems to me, that a solid international Catholic work cannot be discussed until the Germans are given the right to cooperate. It seems to me, due to that reason, the Lord denied his blessing to all the other international Catholic Actions. I believe that victims will be required in order to implement that idea. The slogan of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Let me be one, just as the Father and the Son are one," is so huge that it would be necessary to establish a specific kind of order, oriented on making French Catholics and German Catholics friends. Oh Jesus, please bless the Franco-German love!<sup>93</sup>

On April 27, 1921, Merz wrote a letter about his participation in the Congress to Prof. Maraković, then president of the Croatian Catholic Seniority in Zagreb:

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90. For Olivaint see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 91–92. The Conférence Olivaint continues its mission to the present, forming youth "for public life and the art of speaking with respect for the values of independence, ambition, and eloquence." See "Conférence Olivaint," Conférence Olivaint, accessed October 7, 2022, <https://www.conferenceolivaint.fr/>

91. DIM, December 22, 1920, p. 412, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: "kristocentrični[.]"

92. "Founded in 1917 at Fribourg (Switzerland), the seat of a Catholic University, on the initiative of the late Baron de Montenach, the U.C.E.I. found wide support among the Catholic intellectuals of several countries. The first general assembly was held at Paris in November 1920. It was followed by sessions at Paris 1921, Fribourg 1922, Milan 1923, Fribourg 1924, Vienna 1926, Warsaw 1928, Fribourg 1934–5." See the entry for "Catholic Union of International Study," League of Nations Search Engine, Institute for European Global Studies, University of Basel, accessed October 7, 2022, <http://www.lonsea.de/pub/org/489>.

93. DIM, April 23, 1921, p. 417, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: "Ovakvi su sastanci zgodni jer se na taj način katolici protivnih nacionalnih i drugih tendencija, sastaju i stižu jedinstvenu direktivu akcije za budućnost. No, čini mi se, o jednom solidnom internacionalnom katoličkom radu ne može biti govora, dok se Nijemcima ne bude dalo pravo saradivanje. Čini mi se, da Gospodin Bog svim tim internacionalnim katoličkim akcijama u tom slučaju uskraćuje svoj blagoslov. Držim, da se provede jedna ideja, treba žrtava. Parola je našeg Gospodina I. H. 'Daj da bude jedno, kao što je Otac i Sin jedno,' tako velika, da bi skoro bilo potrebno osnovati stanovitu vrstu reda, koji bi se bavio time, da francuske katolike prijatelji s njemačkim katolicima. Srce Isusovo, blagoslovi francusko-njemačku ljubav!"

From newspaper clippings which I have saved for you, you have concluded that I represented Yugoslavia at the Congress of the Catholic International. The positive result of this assembly was that an objective viewpoint was made on the issue of Ireland (after the *exposé* of the Irishman and the Englishman) and the result is the following: The claims of the Irish people are legitimate, and the politics of England is condemned. The Irish people have the right to be independent and negotiate with the English as an independent people.<sup>94</sup>

In Paris, Merz did not follow only artistic and literary events, but also lectures on social, charitable, theological and anthropological achievements as well as other issues. He wanted to be acquainted with all of the events, so that he could later apply what he'd learned to his homeland's youth organizations. In Toulouse, he visited an agricultural school led by the Jesuits which aimed to generate professionals with the aim of the re-Christianization of French villages.<sup>95</sup>

Merz was particularly impressed by the spirit of living faith pervading the French clergy and French Catholic youth. He was also particularly sad when he heard some dignitaries talking about how much they hated the

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94. Merz to Maraković, April 27, 1921, Paris, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: "Iz izrezaka novina, koje Vam spremih ste jamačno razabrali, da sam zastupao Jugoslaviju na kongresu Katoličke Internacionale. Pozitivni rezultat zasjedanja je taj, da se je zauzelo objektivno stanovište o Irskom pitanju (Nakon exposea Irca i Engleza) i rezultat je sljedeći: Zahtjevi irskog naroda su posve opravdani i engleska politika se osuđuje. Irski narod ima pravo na neovisnost i on može s engleskom državom posve samostalno pregovarati."

Special mention should be made of the Legion of Mary, founded in Ireland in 1921, since it differed from the classical form of Catholic Action exemplified by the Belgian *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne* (J.O.C., Young Christian Workers) by (in the words of Roger Aubert) promoting "a direct and individually exercised apostolate devoted to purely religious ends, without taking on the outward social, cultural, and institutional wrappings of the religious society, and by the fact that it drew its members from all social classes." The J.O.C. began as an experiment in 1913 by a visionary young priest, Abbé (later Cardinal) Joseph Leo Cardijn (1882–1967). It was launched officially in 1925 and reintroduced the next year in France with some not-insubstantial modifications made by Abbé Georges Guérin (1891–1972). Pius XI encouraged the J.O.C. from the outset, ignoring the objections of those who accused it of introducing class struggle into the Church and of "rending the body of Christ." Ten years later the cardinal Secretary of State could write that, "in the eyes of the Holy Father the J.O.C. is a perfect example of the Catholic Action he has made one of the leading themes of his pontificate." Cardinal Gabriel-Marie Garrone (1901–1994) was of the opinion that the J.O.C. of the early days left its mark on Catholic Action for more than a generation. See Roger Aubert, *The Church in a Secularised Society*, [The Christian Centuries, 5], trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York, 1978), 577–78.

95. See José Ignacio García, S.J., "The Contributions of European Jesuits to Environmental Sciences," *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 3 (2016), 562–76, here, 566–68.

Germans. For him it was absurd, irrational, and unreasonable. His conclusion was that some French had problems with Christian centralism. Regarding Catholic organizations in Paris, Merz's critical judgment always started with the question: "Does the lifeline of the organization rest on original Catholic principles and in harmony with the Pope's documents?"

Of all the Catholic organizations in France, Merz specifically appreciated the work of the Eucharistic Crusade of Children founded by Jesuit Fr. Albert Bessi re.<sup>96</sup> He was surprised by the seriousness of the work of the Crusade and in his diary he noted: "At Father Bessi res' I reviewed the Apostleship of Prayer and he clarified the Children's Crusade for me. The seven-year-old children begin with asceticism and Christian propaganda among their own comrades. That is magnificent work!"<sup>97</sup> Merz was also intrigued by the organizations that were condemned or temporarily banned by the Popes. For example the *Sillon* [Furrow], a left-wing Roman Catholic movement associated with most of the clergy, was condemned by Pius X for its liberalism. Bernard Doering notes: "In the political order, the adamant anti-republicanism of Popes Pius IX and Pius X allied the Church with the reactionary antidemocratic forces. The papal condemnation of the Catholic liberal political movement *Sillon* stifled any attempts to create a *rapprochement* between the Church and contemporary politics."<sup>98</sup> Merz also surveyed the program of Action Fran aise on the other

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96. Albert Bessi res, S.J., *La Croisade des enfants, ligue eucharistique des enfants pour la victoire de la France, le salut des mourants, la pacification et la restauration chr tienne des patries* [The Children's Crusade, Eucharistic League of Children for the Victory of France, the Salvation of the Dying, the Christian Pacification and Restoration of Nations] (Toulouse, 1917). See also Bessi res, *Pour multiplier "le Saint Sacerdoce": Eucharistie et Vocation: La Croisade eucharistique des enfants et les vocations* [For the Growth of "the Holy Priesthood": Eucharist and Vocation: The Eucharistic Crusade of Children and Vocations] (Toulouse, 1925); and Bessi res, *Petit manuel de la croisade eucharistique des enfants: Approuv e et b nie par S. S. Benoit XV et S. S. Pie XI* [Small Manual of the Eucharistic Crusade of Children: Approved and blessed by His Holiness Benedict XV and His Holiness Pius XI] (Toulouse, 1925).

97. Ibid. Original: "Kod P. Bessieresa sam pregledao Apostolat molitve i on mi je rastuma io Dje ju kri arsku vojnu. Djeca od 7. godina zapo inju s askezom i kr anskom propagandom me u vlastitim drugovima. Velebno djelo!" See Albert Bessi res, *Inter Lilia: figures d'enfants* ["Inter Lilia": Characters of Children] (Paris, 1921). Merz brought this book to Croatia and today it is owned by the Diocesan Library of Vara din.. See "Ex libris: Ivan Merz" (i.e. a note on the preliminary page, marking that it used to be Merz's book), Orig. Sig: 2L-II-2-28 [Original Signature], Inv. no.: M1392 [Inventory Number], Sig: 6b-I-I-44 [Today's Signature], stored in Vara din, Diocesan Library of Vara din, Collection "Ljubomir Marakovi ," Religious Literature, <http://library.foi.hr/lib/knjiga.php?B=573&H=&E=&V=&lok=&zbi=8&xitem=M01213&cupit=>, accessed February 6, 2022.

98. Doering, *Jacques Maritain*, 1–2.



side of the ideological spectrum.<sup>99</sup> Action Française was a far-right royalist organization which was led by the antidemocratic Charles Maurras who brought together the French aristocracy.<sup>100</sup> Although Maurras was not a religious believer, he used Catholicism as a means for achieving political goals.<sup>101</sup> As David Carroll writes,

Even though Maurras was never, strictly speaking, a fascist, he did for a time praise Italian fascism for accomplishing many of the political goals he felt France also had to achieve and could achieve only through the restoration of the monarchy. It would seem that there was no essential difference between Maurras's royalist nationalism and Italian fascism. It reveals that Maurras clearly recognized his own influence on the development of fascism and saw it to be an (incomplete) form of Integral Nationalism.<sup>102</sup>

Subsequently, Pope Pius XI condemned and banned Action Française in 1926, and in that way he affected the great revival of the Catholic spirit in France.<sup>103</sup> In response to the condemnation, Maritain broke with

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99. "L'Action Française and its leadership were dedicated to such principles as love of the fatherland, love of religion, love of tradition, love of material and moral order, and hatred and fear of anarchy and of the foreigner, whether internal or external. Only a king, they believed, could provide order against the forces of chaos[;] for this reason, it was imperative that all patriots, Catholics, traditionalists and men of order unite in order to restore the monarchy." Cited in Oscar L. Arnal, *Ambivalent Alliance: The Catholic Church and the Action Française, 1899–1939* (Pittsburgh, 1985), 27.

100. Charles-Marie-Photius Maurras, (1868–1952) was a French writer and political theorist, a major intellectual influence in early twentieth-century Europe whose "integral nationalism" anticipated some of the ideas of fascism. In June 1899 he was one of the founders of *L'Action française*, a review devoted to integral nationalism, which emphasized the supremacy of the state and the national interests of France, promoted the notion of a national community based on "blood and soil," and opposed the French Revolutionary ideals of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* ("liberty," "equality," and "fraternity"). See *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Charles Maurras," last modified April 16, 2022, accessed February 2, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Maurras>.

101. Michael Sutton, *Nationalism, Positivism and Catholicism: The Politics of Charles Maurras and French Catholics 1890–1914* (New York, 2002). For the classic study in English, see Eugen Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth Century France* (Stanford, 1962).

102. David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), 89–90.

103. Shortly afterwards, in 1927, Merz wrote to Msgr. Beaupin from Zagreb and expressed his satisfaction that the Holy Father had forbidden Action française, which, under the leadership of Maurras, abused Catholicism for its political goals. Completely consistent, Merz also pronounced his very critical judgment on the right-leaning "Catholic movements" in Croatia, as Maritain had in France, saying that he would be the mediator between the

Action Française and set out his position in three separate publications: *Une opinion sur Charles Maurras et le devoir des catholiques* (An Opinion About Charles Maurras and the Duty of Catholics) (1926); *Primauté du spirituel* (The Primacy of the Spiritual) (1927)—as opposed to Maurras’s slogan “La politique d’abord!” (“Politics First!”)—; and, in collaboration with Father Paul Doncoeur, S.J., *Pourquoi Rome a parlé* (Why Rome Has Spoken) (1927).<sup>104</sup> Roger Aubert summarizes the long view:

The success of the Sillon and the launching of various other equally active movements were all signs of vitality in a Catholicism which continued to lose in quantity but to gain in quality. The groups in question were often as yet very small, but they were harbingers of a change which, following the First World War, would not be slow to make itself felt.<sup>105</sup>

Talking to French Catholic intellectuals and studying the Catholic writers, the layman Merz was yearning for truth, justice, and righteousness. Afterwards, he meditated about everything, soberly arguing on many Christian fronts.

### **Merz’s Public Appearance and His Relation to the French Catholic Newspapers**

Merz was generally inspired by the Catholic movements in France, where the politics were in favor of creating such a Christocentric civilization. The Croatian students had opportunities to promote Catholic principles and publicly speak out about the relationship between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and the Catholic religious organizations. Students from Croatian domains used every opportunity to speak to the French associations and the French Catholic newspapers about suppression of the Catholic Church. Although Serbia was a traditional ally of France, in the Catholic tribunes and even in the Catholic press, such Serbian and Yugoslav politics were condemned. French Catholics resented their Orthodox brothers in Serbia for being silent about it and not speaking the language of the Gospel, a language which is known to be well-meaning to all Christians and people of good will.

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Catholic movement in Croatia and in other countries—that he desired to work as a kind of coordinator and corrector. See Nikola Mate Rošćić, “Laički apostolat Ivana Merza u svjetlu II. vatikanskog sabora” [“The Lay Apostolate of Ivan Merz in the Light of the Second Vatican Council”], *Obnovljeni život* [Renewed Life], Zagreb, 34, no. 4 (1979), 353–65 here 357.

104. Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 189. For both the Action Française movement and newspaper, see also 50–52, 72, 75, 79, 124–25, 143, 189, 194, 204, 240, 246, 250, 252–56, 269, 350nn10-and-11, 397nn19-and-25, 418n164, 407n51, 407–08n52.

105. Aubert, *The Church in a Secularised Society*, 81.

Merz's first public appearance was on April 17, 1920, at 5 rue de Cadet, the new home of the *Syndicat des employés du commerce et de l'industrie* (Union of Employees of Commerce and Industry) (SECI). Merz's appearance was likely in connection with the *Fédération française des syndicats d'employés catholiques* (French Federation of Unions of Catholic Employees) which had just been founded during a meeting of Christian syndalists at the SECI on November 1–2, 1919.<sup>106</sup> There he stressed on behalf of the students and foreign pupils that “[the] Catholic confessional organizations are those stations from which the *Republic Christiana* could be developed in the future.”<sup>107</sup> He believed that without the Gospel and the promotion of positive principles, it was not possible to build either unity or a civilization of peace. His position was that each country should work on evangelization and work on making people better. Without the unity of peace and love, there is no inter-ethnic or international cooperation.

Without maturity and a high level of responsibility and respect for one's own people, it is also not possible to respect “thy” neighbor, either. On the initiative of the Slovenian Reverend Kuhar, Croats prepared a great deal of material and illustrated documents about the attitude of the current government in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes towards the Catholic Church. From April 3 to April 7, 1921, the newspaper *Libre Parole* (Free Speech) published four articles written by its co-director, the ultra-conservative lawyer and politician Joseph Denais. Denais, who believed in the existence of a “Jewish-Masonic plot against France,” titled his series *La Yougoslavie menacée de dissolution par l'action et maçonnique anticatholique* [Yugoslavia Menaced with Dissolution by Masonic Anti-Catholic Action]. These articles caught the French public's attention by describing attempts by then-current Yugoslav authorities to resolve the issue by using various types of manipulation and politicization of the entire Yugoslav scene, one

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106. See the finding aid for the Archives of the Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT) in FranceArchives: Portail National des Archives, “Collection des publications périodiques syndicales chrétiennes, CFTC et CFDT,” accessed October 18, 2022, finding aid ID: FRCFD\_T\_CJ\_1-CJ\_40, <https://francearchives.fr/findingaid/ee271735d8abba4a9a7a949f8258dc937bf7e49a>. See also Michel Launay, “Aux Origines Du Syndicalisme Chrétien En France: Le Syndicat des Employés du Commerce et de l'Industrie, de 1887 à 1914,” *Le Mouvement Social*, 68 (1969), 35–56; and T. B. Caldwell, “The Syndicat des Employés du Commerce et de l'Industrie (1887–1919): A Pioneer French Catholic Trade Union of White-Collar Workers,” *International Review of Social History*, 11, no. 2 (1966), 228–66.

107. DIM, April 23, 1921, p. 418, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Katoličke konfesionalne organizacije one stanice iz kojih bi se imala razviti u budućnosti Republica christiana.”

such example being their attempts to resolve the Croatian national question within Yugoslavia. Some Catholic organizations were banned from working or were under the government's patronage, and most pupil, student and youth organizations had also been politicized. There was no independence from the political establishment, which aimed to run and supervise all aspects of life. Additionally in Paris, there had been attempts, through local political powers, to stop the publishing of pro-Catholic and pro-Croatian articles in newspapers. Nevertheless, the French editorial teams took a firm stance that they would prevent or delay the publication of an article only in the case of discovery of new facts about the matter being reported on, and not merely unproven slander. Later that month, on April 21, 1921, the daily *La Croix* (The Cross) also published about Yugoslavia and the relationship of the current government to the Catholic believers.

Certainly, Merz and his associates deserve credit in the development of those articles, but it is nevertheless unfortunate that at the time, a great deal of propaganda was being mouthed in *Libre Parole* as well as in *La Croix* by ultra-right antisemitic sources. Merz—a man who opposed the politicizing of the Faith to the end of his days—could not have been aware of it. In a letter dated April 27, 1921, Merz immediately informed Prof. Maraković, the president of Croatian Catholic Seniority<sup>108</sup> in Zagreb, about the actions taken:

We have dedicated the work of our club (Section of the French Students' Association) to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. On April 3, on Montmartre,<sup>109</sup> we were carrying glowing candles with the other pilgrims, and the next day a series of articles were written in the *Libre Parole* which

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108. Croatian Catholic Seniority was the central organization that was supposed to coordinate the work of the whole Croatian Catholic Movement. The members of the Seniority were prominent Catholic individuals from the ranks of the episcopate, diocesan clergy, monastics (mainly Franciscans and Dominicans) and predominantly lay people. For more information, see Daniel Patafta and Zlatko Matijević, "Hrvatski katolički seniorat (1913.–1941.): Osnovne značajke od osnutka do raspuštanja" ["Croatian Catholic Seniority (1913–1941): Basic characteristics from the establishment up to the dissolution,"] *Croatica Christiana periodica*, 44, no. 85 (2020), 133–46, here 133, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/366050>, accessed October 16, 2022.

109. Merz is drawing here a connection between the devotion to the Sacred Heart and Montmartre. The event with pilgrims would have been at the renowned Basilica of the Sacré-Coeur, i.e., the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the butte of Montmartre. Begun in 1875 as a response to the Paris Commune (1870–1871) and not completed until 1914, the basilica was consecrated in 1919, the year before Merz arrived in Paris. For the basilica's complex history, see Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley, CA, 2000).

informed the “whole world” about the state of the Church in Yugoslavia. The articles from the *Libre Parole* were reprinted in other newspapers and translated into many other languages. In addition, *La Croix* and *Democratia* wrote an article about us (which I sent you). The speech I gave to a Catholic working-class organization will be printed out in excerpts in the *Bulletin des Amiti[é]s*.<sup>110</sup> Šćetinac’s extraordinary lecture about our movement during the Great congress of French Catholic youth will be printed in the Annual.<sup>111</sup> In front of a 3,000-people-strong audience, his Excellency Cardinal [Louis-Ernest] Dubois put Yugoslav Catholic Students as a role model for young people all over the world.<sup>112</sup> So, as you see, God’s blessing always accompanies our work.<sup>113</sup>

Taking into consideration the difficult circumstances of the Catholic Church and its faithful followers in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Merz also wrote the following to Prof. Maraković in March 1921:

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110. The *Bulletin des Amitiés* likely refers to *Les Amitiés catholiques françaises: revue mensuelle*, the monthly bulletin of the Comité catholique des amitiés françaises (noted above). See Bibliothèque Nationale de France Catalogue Général, s.v. “Amitiés catholiques françaises,” Record ID: ark:/12148/cb326922953, accessed October 13, 2022, <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb326922953>

111. Merz’s reference to the “Great Congress of French Catholic Youth” likely refers to a meeting of the Association catholique de la Jeunesse française (ACJF) founded in 1886 (cited above). There are several possibilities for the reference to the “Annual”: see Bibliothèque Nationale de France Data, s.v. “Association catholique de la jeunesse française,” accessed October 13, 2022, Permalink ID: <https://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb12310404n>, and especially Bibliothèque Nationale de France Data, s.v. “Annales de la jeunesse catholique (Paris),” accessed October 13, 2022, Permalink ID: <https://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32693864q>. For 1922, see the text authored by Maurice Éblé, doctor of law, former vice-president of the ACJF, and editor-in-chief of the *Annales de la jeunesse catholique: Manuel des cercles d’études*, 3rd edition (Paris, 1922); and Victor Bucaille, *La jeunesse catholique française d’aujourd’hui* (Paris, 1924).

112. Louis-Ernest Dubois (1856–1929) was the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris from December 1920 until his death in September 1929. For Dubois’s vital role in the postwar Parisian plainchant (Gregorian Chant) revival, see Schloesser, *Jazzz Age Catholicism*, 300.

113. Merz to Maraković from Paris on April 27, 1921, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Rad našeg kluba (Sekcija francuskog đakčkog udruženja) smo posvetili Presvetom Srcu Isusovu. Dne, 3. aprila smo na Montmartu nosili s ostalim hodočasnicićima užigane svijeće, a slijedećeg dana je započela serija članaka u ‘Libre parole’ i—koja je ‘cijeli svijet’ informirala o stanju Crkve u Jugoslaviji. Iz ‘Libre parole’ su članci preštampani u druge listove i prevedeni na mnoge jezike. Osim toga, ‘Croix’ i ‘Democratia’ napisale su članak o nama (Sve sam vam poslao). Govor koji sam održao u Katoličkoj radničkoj organizaciji biće u izvancima oštampan u ‘Bulletinu des Amities,’ a Šćetinčevo vanredno uspješno predavanje o našem pokretu prigodom Velikog kongresa katoličke francuske mladeži biće po svoj prilici tiskano u *Annalima*. Osim toga je Preuzvišeni Kardinal Dubois pred publikom od 3.000 ljudi stavio Jugoslavensko Katoličko Đaštvo za uzor mladeži cijeloga svijeta. Tako eto, Božji blagoslov posvuda prati naš rad.”

The Catholics of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes are in a difficult position because they are on the border of the East and the West—the Byzantine and Roman civilizations. The Greek schism, which created the most fertile soil for the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, has given the newly created Yugoslav state a lot of power. The State budget allocates a lot of money to the Orthodox Church for the expansion of Orthodox proselytizing propaganda in collaboration with the Freemason lodge, which was declared a state institution in Yugoslavia[,] and the State declared a war on the Catholic Church. The direct consequence of this belief is the closing down of Catholic denominational schools and the racial laws<sup>114</sup> which prevent the free development of the Catholic Church. Croats and Slovenes have for centuries defended Western civilization against the Turkish armies and thereby earned the title “antemurale Christianitatis [Bulwark of Christendom],” and are aware of their traditional duty to defend the West against the destructive eastern culture.<sup>115</sup> Their goal is to seek as many as possible to enter the light of Catholicism among the Eastern nations.<sup>116</sup>

### Merz’s Way of Reasoning

Regarding Merz’s personality, Dr. Gračanin wrote in the years following Merz’s death: “If one wants to describe Merz, there are two things that are characteristic about him, [that] he possesses an ‘unusual activeness’ and his reliance on his inner life (which includes hours of thinking/praying, often on his knees!). From the latter springs all his unusual seriousness

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114. In mentioning the term “racial laws,” Merz most likely was referring only to the Serbian policy of suppressing the Catholic faith in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

115. In 1519, Pope Leo X called Croatia the *Antemurale Christianitatis* (Croatian: *Predziđe kršćanstva*) in a letter to the Croatian ban Petar Berislavić. See Mitja Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (College Station, TX, 2003), 78.

116. Merz to Maraković from Paris on Easter’s Monday, 1921, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Katolici Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca su u teškoj položaju, jer su na granici Istoka i Zapada—bizantske i rimske civilizacije. Grčka šizma, koja je u Rusiji stvorila najprikladnije tlo za boljševičku revoluciju ima u novo osnovanoj jugoslavenskoj državi moć u svojim rukama. Pravoslavna crkva dobiva iz državne kase novac za širenje pravoslavne prozelitske propagande i ona je u zajednici sa frimasonskom ložom, koja je proglašena državnom institucijom, najavila rat Katoličkoj crkvi. Posljedica toga vjerovanja je za sada zatvaranje Katoličkih konfesionalnih škola i rasni zakoni, koji onemogućuju slobodno razvijanje Katoličke crkve. Hrvati i Slovenci su kroz vjekove branili zapadnu civilizaciju pred turskim armijama i time zaslužili pridjevak „antemurale Christianitatis”, svijesni su si još uvijek svoje tradicionalne dužnosti, da brane Zapad pred destruktivnom istočnom kulturom i da što više nastoje luč katolicizma unijeti među istočne narode.”

with which he faced problems.”<sup>117</sup> He was devout, tolerant, gentle, humble, simple, cheerful, moderate, but at the same time decisive, sturdy, courageous, pure of heart, sensible and compassionate. Merz set for himself an expression of Catholic principles which he wanted to follow in life. His maxim was “Catholic or nothing”—*Aut catholicus, aut nihil!*<sup>118</sup> In a letter to his mother who wanted her son “back . . . to normal life,”<sup>119</sup> Merz clearly stressed: “The Catholic faith is my life’s calling and it has to be the calling of every other man without any exceptions. Taking into consideration that this life is just a preparation for Eternity, all our efforts should be focused on that.”<sup>120</sup>

Writing to Marošević from Paris on Ascension Thursday, 1921, Merz stated: “If it is God’s Will, in a few years I hope that we will be able to set strong foundations for a Catholic Movement among the Croats. Now I realize how our movement is based on loose foundations, because the supernatural motives are subordinated to utilitarian ones.”<sup>121</sup> Although he was not in Zagreb at that time, he had all the information surrounding the Croatian Catholic Movement. The Croatian Catholic Movement was deeply politicized, and all the organizations were working for the interest of just one political option, the Croatian People’s Party (Hrvatska pučka stranka), which was founded by the Croatian Catholic Seniority and other members.

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117. Đuro Gračanin, “Moje uspomene na ličnost dr. Ivana Merza” [“My Memories of Dr. Ivan Merz”], *Katolički tjednik* [Catholic Weekly], no. 25, June 18, 1933, p. 7: “Ako se želi korektno pisati o Merzu, valja istaknuti dvije stvari: neobičnu aktivnost i oslonjenost na unutarnji, nevjerojatno intenzivni život (sati razmatranja, često na koljenima!). Iz ovog posljednjeg izvire sva njegova neuobičajena ozbiljnost s kojom se je suočavao s problemima.”

118. Merz’s maxim is a variation on “Aut Caesar, Aut Nihil,” i.e., “Either Emperor or Nothing.” Although the phrase possibly goes back to Julius Caesar in antiquity, it is more often associated with early moderns: Cesare Borgia (1475–1507), Ladislao I d’Angiò-Durazzo (1377–1414), and Isabella of Portugal (1503–1539), wife of Emperor Charles V (1500–1558). Merz likely encountered it while reading about Borgia; see, “Aut Caesar, Aut Nihil,” Sophies Werts Knudsen (website), September 1, 2021, <https://sophieswertsknudsen.com/aut-cesare-aut-nihil/>.

119. Teresa Merz to Merz on November 27, 1921, and November 2, 1921, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “vрати se . . . normalnom životu.”

120. Merz to his mother Teresa from Paris on November 6, 1921, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Katolička je vjera moje životno zvanje i mora to biti svakom pojedinom čovjeku bez iznimke. Budući da je ovaj život samo kratka priprava za vječnost, to je naravno, da sav naš rad ide za tim.”

121. Merz to Marošević on the Day of the Ascension of the Lord, May 5, 1921, Paris, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Ako bude volja Božja, ja se nadam, da ćemo moći za nekoliko godina postaviti snažne temelje Katoličke akcije među Hrvatima. Sada tek vidim, kako je naš pokret na labavim temeljima, jer su svrhunaravni motivi podređeni utilitarističkim.”



In another letter to Marošević sent later that year from Paris on the feast of St. Luke (October 18), Merz succinctly highlighted the largest problem of the Croatian Catholic Movement:

Catholicism is not going to spread in our nation if there are no workers, worshippers or sufferers. This is one law in the spreading of the Kingdom of Heaven on the Earth. Our movement up to date has created only the first type (worker), and we have shaped in our souls the ideal worker for the Catholic Movement. We prayed less, and we endured more when we had to. The last type is the pinnacle—imitation of the Lord's complete Sacrifice on the Cross. . . . We must comprehend the mystery of His life: which is to suffer for others.<sup>122</sup>

Perhaps the best illustration of Merz's deep religiosity and the great effort he put in the promotion of the Catholic example in Paris appears in Gračanin's 1942 letter (nearly fifteen years after Merz's death) to Fr. Josip Vrbaneč, S. J. who had been Merz's confessor after his return to Zagreb. It described the bond between Merz and Abbé Jean Pressoir, Merz's confessor at the Institut Catholique in Paris.<sup>123</sup>

Father Pressoir looked at the souls with the love with which God looks at them, and he pulled them gently upwards, always higher, but always cautiously. He tried to make them spiritually independent, so that they could manage on their own under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God's providence brought Ivan into contact with Fr. Pressoir, when Ivan was already highly ascended, under the pleasing leadership of the Holy Spirit's graciousness. Obviously, Fr. Pressoir had fully prepared and strengthened God's chosen one for the activity that was intended for him in Zagreb 1923–1928. It seems that Fr. Pressoir had brought into har-

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122. Merz to Marošević on the Feast of St. Luke, Paris, 1921, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: "Katolicizam se u nas ne će širiti, ako ne bude radnika, molitelja i patnika. To je jedan zakon u širenju Kraljevstva Božjega na zemlji. Naš pokret je stvorio do sada samo prvi tip (radnika) i mi smo stvorili u našim dušama ideal radnika za katolički pokret. Molili smo se manje, a trpili smo kad smo morali. Zadnji je tip svakako vrhunac—imitacija potpune Žrtve Spasiteljeve na Križu. . . . Treba da spoznamo misterij iz Njegova života: trpiti za druge." As noted above, Merz was strongly impressed by the writings of Léon Bloy, who had died three years before Merz's arrival in Paris. Bloy was noted for his embrace of the ancient doctrine of vicarious suffering. See citations above for Bloy in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* and Schloesser, "Revelation in History."

123. Abbé Jean Pressoir (1877–1960), a Sulpician priest and biblical scholar, had been the superior of the Séminaire des Carmes, the university seminary of the Institut catholique de Paris. The seminary had been founded in 1919, the year prior to Merz's arrival in Paris. See entry in the Archives of the Institut Catholique <https://bibliotheque-numerique.icp.fr/idurl/1/10627>

monious completeness the well-ordered calm in Ivan's God-immersed mentality, which before Paris had been developing mainly under the direct and uninterrupted guidance of the Holy Spirit, yet also that steely strength and perseverance which does not stop even against the greatest difficulties, when it comes to God's cause. This strength and perseverance is one of the most significant marks of Dr. Ivan Merz, as he was among us in Zagreb 1922/23–1928.<sup>124</sup>

On February 25, 1922, having completed his French literature studies at the Sorbonne and defended his thesis, "Evolution historique de la France" (Historical Evolution of France), Merz became a professor of literature. On April 5, 1922, he reported to Dr. Maraković:

I got my Diplôme d' études de Civilisation Française "école la mention très bien"<sup>125</sup> (Of the 300 registered students, I was the fourth). This semester, I only enrolled at the [Institut Catholique] because they exempted me from paying the tuition. I had to pay 300 francs for my exam at the Sorbonne and we did not get our scholarships during the vacation so, this semester, I did not register to study at the Sorbonne. Nevertheless, I received permission to attend the courses of the Citicien Français n'a Ecole Normale Supérieure (Prof. Roquas).<sup>126</sup> Besides that, I

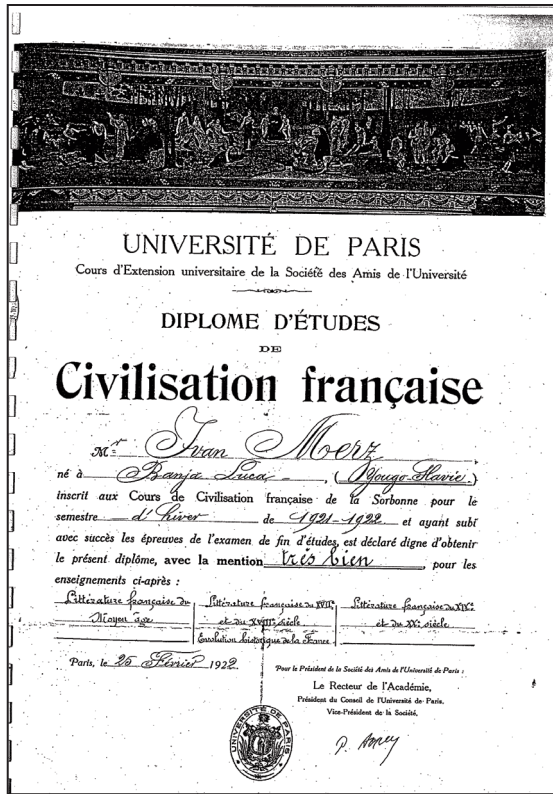
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124. Gračanin to Fr. Vrbaneč on September 27, 1942, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: "O. Pressoir gledao je na duše s onom ljubavlju, kojom ih Bog gleda, te ih je milo gore vukao, uvijek više, ali uvijek i oprezno. Nastojao je duševno osamostaliti, da se i same snađu pod vodstvom Duha Svetoga. Božja je providnost dovela Ivana u vezu s o. Pressirom, kad se već Ivan pod divnim vodstvom milosti Duha Svetoga visoko uspeo. Očito je o. Pressior trebao ovog Božjeg odabranika potpuno pripremiti i ojačati za onu djelatnost, koja mu je bila namijenjena u Zagrebu 1923–1928. Po svemu se čini, da je o. Pressior u harmonijsku cjelinu sredjene, smirene, u Boga urojnene Ivanove duševnosti, koja se do Pariza razvijala uglavnom pod izravnim i neprekinutim vodstvom Duha Svetoga, trebao unijeti još onu čeličnu jakost i ustrajnost, koja ne sustaje ni pred najvećim teškoćama, kad se radi o Božjoj stvari. Ta je jakost i ustrajnost jedna od najznačajnijih oznaka dr. Ivana Merza, kakav je bio među nama u Zagrebu 1922./23.–1928."

Gračanin's reflection could be confirmed by reading Merz's article "Sticanje podmlatka" ["Acquisition of Young Followers"], published in *Luč* [Light], 4 (1923), at pages 14–16. This was probably Ivan's most significant article in the field of the theory of apostolate, in which he outlined his apostolic methods in working with youth. See Božidar Nagy, "Proletno i jesensko hodočašće u Mariju Bistricu" ["Spring and Autumn Pilgrimage to Marija Bistrica,"] *IVAN MERZ, 1928–1978: Glasilo Postulature za beatifikaciju Dra Ivana Merza* [Journal of Postulation for the Beatification of Dr. Ivan Merz], 6, nos. 1–2, (1978), 1–52, here 40.

125. In the French system, the *diplôme mention bien* and *diplôme mention très bien* suggest equivalents of "high honors" and "highest honors."

126. The unidentified "Prof. Roquas" is likely Mario Roques (1875–1961), a prolific philologist who had published texts in pre-modern French as well as in Romanian and Albanian. A detailed biographical overview may be found in Alfred Merlin, "Notice sur la vie et les travaux de M. Mario Roques, membre de l'Académie," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie*



Mr. Ivan Merz, *Diplome D'Études de Civilisation française, Université de Paris*, Paris, 1922. Reproduced with permission.

hope that I will get the credentials from Abbé Rousselot (the founder of experimental phonetics, Professor at the Collège de France) in Historical Grammar. Regardless, all of these studies are concentrated around the fact that I would like to obtain the Doctorate in Zagreb.<sup>127</sup>

*des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 105, no. 2 (1961), 349–58, [https://www.persee.fr/doc/crai\\_0065-0536\\_1961\\_num\\_105\\_2\\_11355](https://www.persee.fr/doc/crai_0065-0536_1961_num_105_2_11355). See also the entry in Bibliothèque Nationale de France Data, s.v. “Mario Roques (1875–1961),” accessed October 13, 2022, Permalink ID: <https://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb11922571n>.

127. Merz to Maraković from Paris in April, 1922, stored in Zagreb, AIM. Original: “Dobio sam Diplôme d’ études de Civilisation Française ‘colle la mention très bien.’ (Bilo je upisano oko 300 đaka, a ja sam bio četvrti po uspjehu). U ovome semestru sam upisan samo na Katoličkom Institutu, jer su me oprostili od školarine. Za polaganje ispita na Sorbonni

After graduation, Merz focused on French literature in order to better prepare his doctoral dissertation. In 1923, Merz defended his dissertation written in French at the University of Zagreb, with the linguist Prof. Dr. Petar Skok as his director.<sup>128</sup>

On December 23, 1922, eleven months after his elevation to the papacy, Pope Pius XI promulgated his first encyclical, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio* (subtitled “On the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ”). Acting on behalf of the Croatian League of Eagles, Merz immediately took the initiative and informed all the Croatian Bishops about Catholic Action’s main principle of introducing the role of a priest as a spiritual pastor in every diocese.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, he paved the way for strong Catholic youth

morao sam da platim 300 Fr., a preko ferija nijesmo dobili štipendije, tako da se ovoga semestra nijesam upisao na Sorbonni. Ipak sam dobio dozvolu da pohadam tečajeve de Citicien Français n’a Ecole Normale Supérieure (prof. Roquas), a osim toga se nadam dobiti svjedodžbu od Abbé Rousselota (osnivač eksperimentalne fonetike, profesor na Collège de France) iz Historičke gramatike. No sav studij ide za tim, da u što kraćem roku mogu da položim doktorat u Zagrebu.”

128. Petar Skok (1881–1956) was a Croatian linguist, Romanist, and Balkanologist who founded the Croatian Romanist Studies. He covered Roman linguistics, Indo-European studies and German studies in Vienna (1900–1904), where he received his doctorate in 1905 from Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke with a notable dissertation on the toponymic issues of Southern France. See *Hrvatska enciklopedija* [Croatian Encyclopedia], online edition (2021), s.v. “Skok Petar,” accessed January 29, 2022, <https://enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?ID=56465>. During Merz’s high school education in Banja Luka, Dr. Skok taught him philosophy and French language. Skok regarded Merz as his best disciple, and later, when Skok was a professor of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb from 1919, he supported Merz’s intellectual development.

129. Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz: život i djelovanje* [Dr. Ivan Merz: Life and Work] (Zagreb, 1932), 162. Stephen Schloesser notes the centrality of Catholic Action in Pius’s first encyclical: “However, ‘Catholic Action’ as a consolidated movement was more properly a post-Great War invention first outlined in detail by Pope Pius XI. Ten months after following Benedict XV on the papal throne (February 6, 1922) and two months after the Fascist March on Rome, Pius promulgated his encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio* (*In the Scrutable Designs of God*). ‘Finally,’ declared the pontiff, ‘We include among these fruits of piety that whole group of movements, organizations, and works so dear to Our fatherly heart which passes under the name of ‘Catholic Action,’ and in which We have been so intensely interested.’ Pius XI’s highly unexpected ascent to the papacy after the untimely death of Benedict XV had brought him face to face with the new world: Soviet Communism and the Communist International (Comintern, founded March 1919) and other effects of the 1917 October Revolution; and now too the triumph of Mussolini and the Fascists two months before *Ubi Arcano*. These new historical realities were direct (if utterly contingent) consequences of the Great War.” Schloesser, “1918–1968–2018,” 507–08. See also Schloesser, “Reproach vs. *Rapprochement*: Historical Preconditions of a Paradigm Shift in the Reform of Vatican II,” in: *50 Years On: Probing the Riches of Vatican II*, ed. David G. Schultenover (Collegeville, MN, 2015), xi–I, here xlii.

organizations under the Pope's and Bishops' explicit direction. Thanks to him, many Catholic associations were formed, but at the same time he was burdened with executive and leadership issues. In this way he was diverted from the education of members, particularly in getting across the spiritual and supernatural values of re-Christianization. Nevertheless, the best ideas survived, and soon he was pronounced the "Apostle of Croatian Youth."<sup>130</sup>

### Influences on Later Work

The time of Ivan Merz's stay in Paris was an era of a strong spiritual current in French Catholicism, greatly indebted to converts. At that time the Benedictine influence was very strong in France, and the overall atmosphere was characterized as the internal religious crisis of the European Catholic person. Although the Church in a supernatural and mystical sense had been marginalized prior to the Great War, things began to change in the postwar decade. Out of a positivist and materialistic milieu suddenly arose a hunger for the spiritual, and in that climate of conversion Merz sharpened and deepened his beliefs.

Bearing in mind his later pastoral work in Croatia, Merz chose for logical reasons his doctoral dissertation on the impact of the liturgy on French writers, from the days of Chateaubriand up to his own lifetime.<sup>131</sup> Analyzing about five hundred works by nearly sixty well-known writers, Merz concluded that the liturgy had been the national patrimony of the French people.<sup>132</sup> This profoundly influenced his activities in Croatia, where he promoted the liturgy as a basis, means, and goal of the renewal. Thanks to Merz, the ideas of the Eucharistic Youth Movement in France were transferred to the Croatian youth. These ideas were taken specifically

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130. See Ante Vukasović, Ivica Đaković, "Ivan Merz—apostol hrvatske mladeži i nebeski zaštitnik odgojne djelatnosti" ["Ivan Merz—The Apostle of Croatian Youth and Heavenly Protector of Educational Activities,"] *Napredak* [Progress], 144, no. 3 (2003), 383–93, available at [http://ivanmerz.hr/staro/knjige\\_o/Clanci/A\\_Vukasovic\\_IM\\_ap\\_hrv\\_mlad.htm](http://ivanmerz.hr/staro/knjige_o/Clanci/A_Vukasovic_IM_ap_hrv_mlad.htm), accessed October 15, 2022.

131. François René de Chateaubriand's (1768–1848) publication of *Le Génie du Christianisme* (The Genius of Christianity, 1802) is frequently cited as a pivotal moment for religion in post-revolutionary France. For the wider context of his work, see Michel Despland, "To Interpose a Little Ease: Chateaubriand on Christianity and the Modern World," *Religion & Literature*, 21, no. 2 (1989), 19–44.

132. Marin Škarica, "Ivan Merz: Promicatelj liturgijske obnove u Hrvatskoj" [Ivan Merz—Promoter of Liturgical Revival in Croatia], *Obnovljeni Život: časopis za filozofiju i religijske znanosti* [Renewed Life: Journal of Philosophy and Religious Sciences], 34, no. 4 (1979), 323–37, here 329.

from Bessièrè's Eucharistic Crusade of Children (discussed above) which Merz liked most because of its distinctly Eucharistic spirit.

So, what influence did Merz's experiences in Paris have on his later work in Croatia? Blessed Ivan Merz, as a shining example of modern holiness, has contributed to the authentic development of the Christian life of many Croatian Catholics thanks to his sojourn in Paris from 1920 to 1922. He was a herald of new times in the Church, in the liturgy, and in the Christian life in general. His studies in Paris were essential for his enormous apostolate in Croatia, and he was further encouraged by the papal encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei* such that he eventually became a forerunner of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The central ideas of the Council mostly corresponded with Merz's ideas exactly forty years earlier—emphasizing the liturgy as the source and culmination of the overall Christian life, as well as the empowerment of Catholic Action, the lay apostolate, the introduction of national languages in the liturgy, and active participation in the Mass.

Due to many organizational problems in Croatia, Merz suffered and endured torment. However, if viewed through the lens of psychoanalytical theory, his heaviest cross was loneliness, and he brought it home from Paris. He liked to steal into the solitude and silence of the Parisian churches, where his spiritual world became more real than anything that physically existed. The fruit of his loneliness was the love that led him to a communion and life with God. He himself made his way into eternity and encouraged many to do the same.

It is possible to identify some summarizing points regarding the Parisian influences on Merz's later work:

- It was only in Paris that the layman Merz deeply understood the idea and institution of the Church. Therefore, he mastered the truths of the holy faith, understanding the Holy Mass as a sacrifice that Jesus received on the Cross. In Paris, Merz began to follow and contemplate the readings from the French Missal, and that Missal remained his faithful companion until his death in Croatia.<sup>133</sup> As soon as he returned, he enthusiastically began to announce the liturgical movement and give liturgical lectures. In Paris, he formulated and harmonized the logic behind the Church and the

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133. Josip Vrbaneč, S. J., *Vitez Kristov Dr. Ivan Merz* [Knight of Christ Dr. Ivan Merz] (Zagreb, 1943), 133.

Papacy, depoliticized Catholic Action, and promoted contemplation as an essential prerequisite for his work within Catholic Action in Croatia.

- In France he fulfilled his potential in becoming a strict and virtuous modern catholic intellectual. As Dušan Žanko observed ten years after Merz's death, "He learned how to organize work and memory with extraordinarily rich files, which will be a permanent document of his immense erudition, choice of studies, perseverance and patience."<sup>134</sup> He continued with the same studying habits in Croatia, especially in translating papal encyclicals and directives (including those of Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI). His work on French literature provided him with a broad knowledge so that he could study Christian philosophy and theology in Croatia and convey the true essence of papal encyclicals. He read the Parisian newspaper *La Croix* daily, translated articles, and used them in his lectures. He always sharply criticized the works of French liberal writers from a moral and ecclesiastical point of view.

- In France he developed a deeply religious way of life, prioritizing his contemplative and transcendental life over his active life. The focus of his renewal was the Eucharistic mystery, adoration, and longing. He used the same line of effort in trying to influence members of the Croatian League of Eagles. He conveyed to young Croats that Mass and Holy Communion were the means of complete spiritual renewal.

- Merz's literary, artistic, and liturgical fields of study in France provided him with a particular transformative experience that enabled him to unite the beauty of art and liturgy. It was that experience on which he based his activities in Croatia, but he always subordinated art to the liturgy. For example, in 1925, he published the hymns of Sts. Apostles Peter and Paul, and also translated the rite for the dressing of novices by Benedictine nuns, taking care to also publish the melody. In 1927, he introduced choral singing in the church of St. Vincent in Zagreb. It was while in Paris that he fell in love with the choir, calling it "Music of the Holy Spirit." Likewise, Merz experienced the true beauty of Gregorian melodies, and in Zagreb he encouraged the Franciscans to perform the first Gregorian chant on Christmas Day in 1924. In the article on Gregorian chant published in Zagreb in 1925, entitled "Art pour Dieu" (Art for God), he mentioned as models the Benedictine monasteries in Solesmes (France) and Beuron

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134. Dušan Žanko, "Duša Dra Ivana Merza: Esej u 10-godišnjici smrti" ["The Soul of Dr. Ivan Merz: An Essay on the 10th Anniversary of His Death"], *Život* [Life], 19, no. 5, (1938), 245–73, here 262, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/90720>, accessed May 20, 2022.



(Austria), citing the words of the French Benedictine Dom Prosper Guéranger that Gregorian chant “is first among all Goods.”<sup>135</sup> According to Merz, “the sacred was created under the influence of the Holy Spirit having as model celestial melodies, and the Gregorian chant is in a certain sense a reflection of celestial melodies.”<sup>136</sup>

- Merz experienced the spirit and richness of the Liturgy following the rituals at the Benedictine Chapel on rue Monsieur, from the Lazarists on rue de Sèvres, from missionaries on rue du Bac, and at the churches of Saint-Séverin, Saint-Sulpice, and Notre-Dame, as well as the churches in Montmartre and in Clermont. After a regular monitoring of French liturgical customs, he was formed and equipped to share the same sublime liturgical experiences in Croatia.

- In Paris, Merz experienced the singing of the Mass as the ideal for the dignity of the holy rite, and later in Croatia he promoted the social characteristics of that Mass, in terms of growing love, inspiration, harmony, and mutual understanding of different social classes. Therefore, in conversations, lectures, and articles, he consistently called for the renewal of church choirs in Croatia, saying “there is no Heaven without music and singing.”

- After meticulous study of French Catholic Convert literature, he brought to Croatia the illumination and wisdom of the French manner of Catholicism. He outlined the way of the liturgical and spiritual renewal. He published more than twenty articles in various Croatian journals in which he emphasized the beauty and educational power of the liturgy, drawing from the collected French literature and his doctoral dissertation. For example, citing Paul Claudel, he asserted that “the Liturgy was one of the sources of life that can regenerate all mankind.”<sup>137</sup> He wrote about

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135. Emil Čić, “Das Zweite Vatikanum Und Die Liturgische Idee Über Die Sakrale Musik in Kroatien” [“The Second Vatican Council and the Liturgical Idea of Sacral Music in Croatia”], *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 29, no. 1 (1998), 75–90, here 88. For Dom Prosper Louis Pascal Guéranger (1805–1875) and Solesmes, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 30–32, 283, 284, 293, 294, 301, 302, 309, 405–06n39. See also Dom Guy Marie Oury, *Dom Guéranger: A Monk at the Heart of the Church 1805–1875*, trans. Hope Heaney (Fitzwilliam, NH, 2020); Louis Soltner, *Solesmes and Dom Guéranger, 1805–1875*, trans. Joseph O’Connor (Orleans, MA, 1995); and Catherine Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes* (Berkeley, CA, 1998).

136. *Ibid.* 88.

137. Ivan Merz, “Paul Claudel i liturgija” [“Paul Claudel and Liturgy”], *Hrvatska Prosvjeta* [Croatian Education], no. 9 (1923), 414–24, here 420.

Claudél's "L'Annonce faite à Marie" (The Annunciation Made to Mary) and later saw it in a Zagreb Theater in 1921, translated into Croatian as *Blagovijest*.<sup>138</sup> Merz met Henri Ghéon personally in Paris and later saw his play *Le Pauvre sous l'escalier* (The Poor Man Under the Staircase, 1920) at the Zagreb Theater in 1926.<sup>139</sup> He studied Gheon's efforts about the Catholic theater and tried to find somebody to translate his works.<sup>140</sup>

- In Paris, Merz led an ascetic and restrained life according to strict self-imposed rules. He concluded that it was suffering which had to be his "philosophy of happiness," his first impulse to conversion and also his path to Heaven. He had aching eyes and teeth; he willingly accepted pain with a soul committed to God's providence, especially during his pilgrimage to Lourdes. When quoting Joris-Karl Huysmans, Merz empowered himself as a "mystical lightning rod" which had to suffer in order to remove God's punishment that would otherwise have to fall on human civilization.<sup>141</sup> By the same analogy, he argued that Catholic Action would fail if there were not enough sufferers willing to sacrifice for others.

Ultimately the Holy Church, the Mass, and Transubstantiation became the center of Merz's life in Paris, and afterwards he showed the Croats by his own example how lay people could achieve sanctity of life if they followed Christ.

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138. Dušan Žanko, "O Božjem čovjeku" ["On God's Man"], *Nedjelja* [Sunday], no. 23, June 9, 1929, p. 4. Paul Claudel's renowned play *L'Annonce faite à Marie* (alluding to Luke 1:26–38, the Gospel scene in which the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive and bear a son) first appeared in 1912 and underwent later revisions in 1938 and 1948. For the first version and definitive version for the stage, historical notes, and documentation, see Paul Claudel, Didier Alexandre, and Michel Autrand, *Théâtre*, nouv. éd., 2 vols., [Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 72, 73] (Paris, 2011), I. The play has appeared in English translations under the title *The Tidings Brought to Mary*.

139. For this play and others see Jerome Keeler, "Henri Ghéon and His Religious Plays," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 26, no. 104 (1937), 631–40, here 637.

140. Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz, Život i djelovanje* [Dr. Ivan Merz, Life and work], (Zagreb, 1932), 137.

141. Like his onetime friend, Léon Bloy, Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848–1907) also placed the doctrine of vicarious suffering at the center of his hybrid mystical naturalist (*naturalisme mystique*) vision. See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 39–45; and C. J. T. Talar, "A Naturalistic Hagiography: J.-K. Huysmans' Sainte Lydwine de Schiedam," in: *Sanctity and Secularity during the Modernist Period: Six Perspectives on Hagiography around 1900*, eds. Lawrence Barmann and C. J. T. Talar (Bruxelles, 1999), 151–81.

## Conclusion

Two years of study in Paris influenced Merz to join the Croatian Catholic Movement and to establish a Catholic organization of students—laypersons with strong connections to the Pope. The Sorbonne and Institut Catholique immersed Merz in the French postwar *renouveau catholique* and enabled him to deeply understand the liturgy. Scrutinizing French literature made him aware of the necessity of Church reform, so that the community would feel the presence of Jesus Christ more solidly.

Merz's praying habits in Paris were vividly directed towards the liturgy. Every day, he steadily prayed and attended the Holy Mass using his personal Latin-French missal. His parents were in his prayers at all times, especially his mother, for whom he eagerly prayed to convert. Experiences with Catholic converts in Paris helped him understand the Catholic organizations whose practices he later embedded into the Croatian League of Eagles. He also managed to acquaint the French public with the situation at home, where the Serbian government had started to suppress all Catholic organizations, institutions, and communities within the newly established state.

Merz carefully dissected the Eucharistic Crusade and undertook their motto in the shorter version: "Sacrifice—Eucharist—Apostolate." This motto and the new catchphrase, "*Krist živi*" (Christ Lives), were on the fast track to being implemented within the Catholics in Croatia, but bishops and priests were slow to take initiative. Although the Catholic Church in Croatia did not find the balance between material and spiritual, Dr. Ivan Merz did. His key role in operationalizing links between Catholic organizations and the hierarchy of the Church may be a good example for lay work internationally.