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Three Shanghai General Meetings and Catholic Publishing in the First Half of the Twentieth Century †

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Abstract: The Catholic publishing undertaking in China experienced significant growth in the first half of the twentieth century, both in the scale and in the form of organization. This effort's importance is twofold: for the Church in China back then, publications facilitated communications both inside and outside the Church; for researchers today, these files contain a vast amount of information on Catholic life, valuable for the enrichment of historical understanding. This paper uncovers the internal driving mechanism of this process through three Shanghai general meetings: the Plenary Council in 1924, the All-China General Congress of Catholic Action in 1935 and the Catholic Press Convention in 1947. The co-ordination fostered by these meetings generated resilience and efficiency for publishing activities allowing them to be sustained and to prosper during an unsettling period. The Council heralded cross-congregational and cross-national co-operation by standardizing publishing practices and forming designated central organizations. Inheriting these guidelines, Catholic journalist delegates of the Catholic Action Congress in 1935 gathered to discuss practical methods, leading to a proliferation of Catholic publications. Despite setbacks during the Sino-Japanese War, Catholic publishing quickly resumed following the Press Convention held in 1947, which reinforced collaboration regardless of affiliations through a central organization. The three general meetings not only showcase the historical trajectory of Catholic publishing, but also the constant endeavor to bridge gaps between communities.

Keywords: First Plenary Council of China; All-China General Congress of Catholic Action; Catholic Press Convention; Catholic publishing; co-ordination

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1. Introduction

1.1. Significance of the Catholic Press in China

In 1940, Dr. Rudolf Löwenthal 罗文达 of Yenching University 燕京大学, who had been conducting a serious survey of the Catholic press in China since 1936, asked what significance the religious press held for the publisher, readers and country as a whole (Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 279). Religious publications in China facilitated community-building among the co-religious and the communication of knowledge through mass-production printing methods (Bödefeld 1940, I; Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 293). These accumulated files constitute a vast collection of records of enormous value to historical understanding.

The Protestant press exemplified its general significance in the historiography of modern China. Ge Gongzhen 戈公振 (1890–1935), a pioneer in the studies of Chinese journalism, considered that the success of the 1911 Xinhai Revolution 辛亥革命, which transformed the Chinese political system from imperial to republican, hinged on the reform and revolutionary opinions popularized by newspapers (Ge 1928, p. 22). Recent scholarship of Protestant missionary periodicals has acknowledged their contributions to introducing

Western knowledge to inspire farsighted Chinese intellectuals, such as the widely studied periodical *Wanguo Gongbao* 万国公报 [Global Magazine] which was launched in 1868 (Zhao and Wu 2011, pp. 406–9).[1]

Compared with the engagement level of the Protestant press, the Catholic press seems to have missed out at the transformation stage.[2] Surveys of the Protestant press (Ku 1940, p. 126) confirmed to some extent the following claim made by Bernard Arens: "If anywhere, then certainly in China it is true that Catholic missions signify first and foremost the work of conversion and Protestant missions signify cultural activity" (Arens 1918, p. 24).

Nevertheless, despite its relative late start,[3] the Catholic press took off rapidly in the first half of the twentieth century, which did not go unnoticed. Attention has been paid to the social agenda of *Yishi Bao* 益世报 (Hsueh 2017; Song 1991; Zhao and Wu 2011, pp. 379–80), one of the major newspapers of Republican China, and the positive influences of the Catholic press during the Sino-Japanese War 抗日战争 (1937–1945) (For example, Tang and Li 2020; S. Zhang 2011; Gu 2007; Ma 2011; Deng 2022), illustrating the roles of the Catholic press in society. Considering that these outward impacts largely emerged from inner forces, an inspection of the Church initiatives of publishing could disclose more insights. Though multiple reasons have been put forward to explain the growth of the Catholic press, a more thorough examination of its intrinsic motivation is necessary to grasp the full picture.

Focusing on the agencies behind the scenes to further alter the previous impressions of Catholic inertia in cultural activities and social engagements in China, this paper aims to disclose the Church's continual endeavors in publishing work for the purpose of bridging gaps between communities and participating in the transformation of Chinese society. Adopting the perspective of three Shanghai general meetings in 1924, 1935 and 1947, it attempts to look into the Catholic co-ordinate efforts against the backdrop of the political and societal contexts in China. Utilizing mostly Catholic publications, including meeting documents and minutes, as well as certain periodicals and books as examples, it will reveal not only the process of central planning, but also its direct impacts on the growth of Catholic publishing during the relevant period of time, to complement the general understanding of the Catholic Church in modern China.

1.2. Historical Trajectory and Impetus

Thanks to the continuous and scientific work carried out by Löwenthal, the general historical trajectory of the Catholic press has been well documented.[4] Recent research derived from this concrete set of data analyzes the development and influences of the Catholic press in China (Liang and Huang 2012; Peng 2014; Zhang 2007; Zhou 2010). Scholars have reached the consensus that it burgeoned and developed in acceleration from around the 1920s, in terms of both quantity and geographical scope. For example, from 1917 to 1935, "the number of Catholic periodicals increased by 527%, from 22 to 115. While in 1917 papers were published in ten cities and towns, in 1935 the number increased to 42" (Löwenthal 1936, p. 281). In 1939, the number of papers further grew to 152 and that of places turned to 61 (Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 8). The harsh war-time situations during the Sino-Japanese War were heavy blows for publishing activities. Nevertheless, a total of 28 periodicals managed to be established from 1939 to 1943 (Löwenthal 1943, p. 672).

The impetus accounting for this surge has been found on both international and national grounds. Given the dissemination of all kinds of ideological propaganda using modern media, the Vatican constantly stressed the urgencies and importance of the Catholic press on the global scale (Pius XI 1936; International Press Exhibition 1935). In the 1920s, as mission societies multiplied, equipped with more resources to overcome the previous lack of staff and financial backing in publishing (Arens 1925, p. 263), the intensity and degree of activities grew accordingly in China (Peng 2014). The first Apostolic Delegate to China, Celso Costantini 刚恒毅 (1876–1958), encouraged the means of an apostolate through the press, coinciding with the elimination of barriers by the National Government 中华民国国民政府 in 1928, which had previously hampered mission publishing work (Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 10).

The Republic of China in 1912 marked the official tolerance of Christianity through constitutional law.[5] In 1915, American Jesuit D. J. Kavanagh regarded the founding of the Republic as "the dividing line between a period of official hostility and of frequent persecution, and the new era of something more toleration" (Kavanagh 1915, p. 10). The National Government also gave more freedom to the press in its *Chuban Fa* 出版法 [Publication Law], officially implemented in 1930, than the Qing Empire in the *Daqing Lüli* 大清律例 [Great Qing Legal Code] and the Yuan Shikai 袁世凯 (1859–1916) government in the *Baozhi Tiaoli* 报纸条例 [Newspaper Regulations] (Ge 1928, pp. 332–33; L. Zhang 2011).

Yet, all these favorable conditions did not promote the development of publishing, if they did not take root. When it comes to the lifespan of a particular press in China, more often than not, it was reduced to the efforts of a single person. Löwenthal observed the following: "If he dies or is transferred, the continuity of the paper is not guaranteed, because it is often impossible to find an interested and capable editor or publisher" (Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 293). Not only was this a considerable waste of sporadic and duplicated efforts, but it was also unsustainable and unpredictable.

Though the management of the Catholic mission in China was divided by geographical separation according to mission societies and nationalities, publishing was too big a task for a few individuals or a single mission or certain religious orders to handle. Therefore, it required close co-operation, regardless of affiliations. A key pursuit of general meetings was to reduce such gaps, to form better unity and to facilitate co-ordination. The three general meetings all held in Shanghai[6], starting from the First Plenary Council of China (*Primum Concilium Sinense*) in 1924, not only stressed the importance of publishing in spirit, but established the principles, organizations and practices required to genuinely promote this undertaking.

2. 1924 First Plenary Council of China

2.1. "De diariis et libris"

Convened by Costantini, the Plenary Council of China officially opened in St. Ignatius Church at Xujiahui 徐家汇 (Zi-ka-wei), Shanghai, from 15 May to 12 June 1924. The Council was held in the contexts of social transformations and political fragmentation caused by warlord conflicts beginning in 1916 in China, during which the Church urgently needed strategic planning to deal with the rise of nationalism and communism, and to balance its position amid domestic situations and foreign connections. The Apostolic Delegate Costantini steered the Church to form a more consolidated foundation to address all sorts of new circumstances on the national scale as an entity. As Fr. James Edward Walsh 华理柱 M.M. (1891–1981), attending the event as Prefect Apostolic of Jiangmen 江门, retrospectively commented, "it may be said that the whole effort of the Council, generally speaking, was to co-ordinate and unify the work of the missions for the sake of mutual assistance and greater fruitfulness" (Walsh 1949, p. 611).

The specific measure to link up the missions scattered across the country was to develop a unified guideline for all missionaries to follow, using the universal *Canon Law* of 1917 as a benchmark and adapting it to the needs of China (Paul 2010, p. 271). A total of 47 out of 57 bishops attended the Assembly, who solemnly signed the *Acta* in June, manifesting the national consensus of the decisions and directives of mission work formulated during the Council. Approved by the Vatican in 1928, this set of 861 decrees and acts became the code of conduct for all the Catholic churches in China (Primum Concilium Sinense 1941).

The relevant decrees nos. 807–826, divided into four chapters, about journals and books ("*De diariis et libris*") revealed the Church's considerations and principles of publishing at that time.[7] While Protestants had long been talking about using the periodical press as one of the best means of exerting a wide influence (The Missionary Conference 1877), the primary concern of the Catholic press was to correct "the errors of other papers in dealing with Catholic questions", and to remain aloof from the discussion of local politics and local questions, so as not to enter into controversies (The Hongkong Catholic Register 1878). During the Council, effectively countering misinformation remained the main motivation

to encourage the Catholic press, but it also began to consider fostering deeper engagement with society: the overview and section 1 (decrees nos. 807–814) calls for the apostolate through the press to refute slander against the Church, including the popularization of the Chinese Catholic press and the launch of a Catholic literary movement. At the same time, it appeals to clergies and lay Catholics to collaborate on producing religious and non-religious literature, in order to attract a wider audience (Paul 2010, p. 314). Chapter VI (decrees no. 826) urges the establishment of printing plants at each vicariate (Primum Concilium Sinense 1941, p. 309).

Meanwhile, the Council clarified that the promotion of the press was checked by the pre-inspection procedure within the Church, a major factor determining the quantity and tempo of Catholic publications. These principles were detailed in *Canon Law*, i.e., Title XXIII "*De praevia censura librorum eorumque prohibitione* [The Censorship and Prohibition of Publications]" (no. 1384–1391, 1393–1398, 1402–1403, 1405) (Jarre and Li 1943, pp. 327–33), to ensure that all publications adhered to high standards of theological accuracy, free from anything misleading and dangerous. Sections 2 and 3 (decrees nos. 815–825) faithfully communicated almost the whole section (Primum Concilium Sinense 1941, pp. 305–9).

Setting the stage for making publishing a national project by standardizing publishing practices, the Council continued to form a central organ to implement these principles. As decided in 1924, a Synodal Commission dedicated to schools, books and press was founded in 1928. This organization not only functioned to oversee the publishing activities, but more importantly also offered resources with better efficiency to local press through nationwide co-ordination.

2.2. Lumen News Service

Following the approval of the Council decrees, the Synodal Commission of Schools, Books and Press (*L.I, T.XI, C.i. De peritorum Commissione seu Comitatu pro scholis, libris et diariis*) was up and running. The committee was composed of five priests serving as president, vice president, secretary and members, selected by the Apostolic Delegate and operated under his supervision. The principal functions relating to publishing were to propagate and support the publishing and distribution of Catholic books, newspapers and translations (DECRET d'Institution de la Commission d'experts 1928).

The Commission drew up more efficient methods to merge the fault lines across scattered missions and different stages of development (Walsh 1949). At the beginning of 1935, Fr. Frederick C. Dietz 戴日辉 M.M., the Commission Secretary, founded the Lumen Press Service which issued *Agentia Lumen* 宠光通讯社, a weekly news service sending out trilingual news to newspapers and journals. Lumen played a pivotal role in coordinating the dissemination of news and information among Catholic publications. It served as a hub for editing and checking information centrally. Providing "ready-to-use" items, Lumen ensured that Catholic media could strengthen their ability to respond to contemporary issues, and on the other hand, spread Catholic news to audiences in farther places.

Löwenthal considered that the service enabled more local religious press to sustain and grow upon, as it simplified the production of contents for such papers. Moreover, having a focal point for gathering and redistributing news of Catholic interest helped to break down geographical and congregational limitations (Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 57). To boost religious press in general, he proposed a co-ordinating scheme inspired by the Lumen model: a central organization responsible for processing material and propagating its ideas, where information could be circulated in the form of a news service or printed magazines to rural districts (Löwenthal et al. 1940, pp. 293–94).

In the first year, the news agency distributed over 250 items per week, used by 50 Chinese Catholic journals and 21 foreign language journals (Zhonghua Gongjiao Jinxinghui Zongjiandu Chu 1935, p. 1). In 1940, the newsletter contained about 275 items. The Chinese issue had 8 to 10 pages, and the English–French one consisted of 12. These releases went to some 50 Catholic Chinese newspapers and periodicals, 24 Catholic and 7 non-Catholic foreign-language journals in China, 19 papers and periodicals abroad, and

7 news agencies. Catholic news from the China missions usually took up half or more of each issue; the balance consisted of Catholic news from other parts of the world (Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 31). *The Catholic Review*, the English weekly in Shanghai established in the same year as Lumen, devoted a column called "The Catholic Horizon" to draw its readers' attention to other mission events happening elsewhere in the country (Armstrong 1935, p. 3).

Another Catholic newspaper using the Lumen service was *Guanghua Bao* 光华报 [China Light] in Jinan 济南 and Wuchang 武昌. Its founder, Fr. Bonaventure Péloquin 文振华 O.F.M., gave the following feedback: "As far as *Guanghua Bao* is concerned, the invaluable services of this Service have enabled us to remove a translator from our staff, and are currently enabling us to attempt to duplicate our weekly, a move that would have been almost impossible without the service of the Lumen Press Service" (Péloquin 1935, p. 540).

Péloquin, a Canadian Franciscan, was an ardent champion of the Catholic press. In addition to the aforementioned newspaper, he had also established *Apostolicum* 神职月刊, a Chinese–Latin monthly for clergy, in Jinan. In 1935, he joined other representatives of the Catholic press at the All-China General Congress of Catholic Action 中华公教进行会全国教区代表大会 in Shanghai and delivered a speech at the Press Session. The Congress itself was a sign of growing Catholic focus on the society, and the designated Session further promoted publishing undertakings in a co-operative manner.

3. 1935 All-China General Congress of Catholic Action

3.1. Péloquin's Proposal

From 8 to 15 September 1935, the first All-China General Congress of Catholic Action was held at the auditorium of Zhengxiu Middle School 正修中学 near St. Joseph's Hospice 新普育堂 in Shanghai (Zhonghua Gongjiao Jinxinghui Zongjiandu Chu 1936). A decade after the Council, the situation in China had become more stabilized. The Nanjing Nationalist Government announced the unification of China in 1928, bringing an end to the warlord era (1916–1928). The country entered a stage of nation-building and construction, in which the Catholic Church expressed its willingness to participate.

The concept of "Catholic Action" itself, to invigorate lay participation in the apostolate of the Church, was essentially social and collective "action of the Catholic laity as a whole upon civil society as a whole" (Dietz 1935, p. 673). The 300–400 attendees of the Congress consisted of a range of social sectors nationwide. Joining the Church leaders, including Archbishop Mario Zanin 蔡宁 (1890–1958), the second Apostolic Delegate, prelates, Catholic Action chaplains, National Officers and Councilors of Catholic Action, were lay delegates representing men, women, youth, and intellectuals branches and local participants. Real time media reports of the broad-scale Congress gave the Catholic Church a fair share of publicity, fulfilling its intention to display its genuine interest in the social and moral wellbeing of the Chinese people.

At the very outset, the Congress wired the National Government with its pledge of co-operation in national reconstruction. High officials sent endorsements, including Wu Tiecheng (Wu Te-chen) 吴铁城, Mayor of Shanghai, Lin Sen 林森, Chairman of the National Government, and Kong Xiangxi (H. H. Kung) 孔祥熙, Minister of Finance, acknowledging a mutual rapprochement in national interests. By this means, the Church hoped to gain a more favorable attitude toward religion in government circles (Dietz 1935, pp. 672–76).

Given its inherently social- and public-oriented nature, the Catholic press received special attention. During the Congress, the "China's Catholic Periodical Exhibition 中华公教定期刊物展览会" was organized by the Headquarters of Catholic Action in China 中华公教进行会总监督处, accompanied by a *Special Issue* designed on the one hand to display the progress made so far, and on the other hand to attract more subscriptions (Zhonghua Gongjiao Jinxinghui Zongjiandu Chu 1935, p. 1). On the afternoon of 11 September, the Press Session took place. It brought together twenty or so delegates who were habitually engaged in press work, many of whom had hitherto known one another only by name. Speakers included Frederick Dietz of the Synodal Commission, Xu Zongze (Joseph Zi) 徐宗泽 of

Shengjiao Zazhi 圣教杂志 (*Revue Catholique*, established in 1911 Shanghai), Cai Renyu (Mark Chai) 蔡任渔 of *Women De Jiaoqu* 我们的教区 (*Our Vicariate*, established in 1935 Guangdong), Liu Huoxuan (Liu Huo-hsuan) 刘豁轩 of *Yishi Bao* 益世报 (established in 1915 Tianjin) and Bonaventure Péloquin (Catholic Body Deals with Press and Education 1935).

In his speech entitled "The Catholic Press in China 公教化刊物讨论", Péloquin began by reiterating decree nos. 807, 811 and 814 from the 1924 Council documents to justify the necessities of promoting the press as much as possible. To reap the full advantage of the activities, he proposed a practice to attain higher circulation figures without additional expenditure. In his opinion, the task at hand was not to multiply new publishing offices at the risk of running out of resources to maintain them properly, but to multiply subscriptions.

He suggested a cost-effective method to expand the reach of Catholic newspapers by duplicating successful publications in different vicariates, which meant furnishing a uniform general content for such papers to which each vicariate might simply add a few pages, as desired, of local news and announcements (Löwenthal et al. 1940, p. 57). This innovative approach implied that areas without their own Catholic newspapers could benefit from existing resources, thus enhancing the dissemination of Catholic news.

Péloquin tested his proposal by doubling *Guanghua Bao* from Jinan to Wuchang. The process received support from prelates coming from different nationalities and congregations, demonstrating the common attitudes towards his plan and attendant results.

3.2. Guanghua Bao

After arriving in Shandong 山东 in 1929, Péloquin established *Guanghua Bao* in 1933. Commissioned by the bishops of the Hunan 湖南 and Hubei 湖北 provinces, he was transferred from northern China to the south in 1935 (von Collani 2013, p. 345). Recognizing the lack of a religious paper in the two provinces, the 14 bishops decided to launch such a program. To avoid interrupting *Guanghua Bao* in Jinan, Péloquin precisely adopted the method of doubling the core contents of the Jinan edition into the Wuchang one, so as to increase the overall number of subscribers. By the time of the Congress, he was envisioning starting another edition in Chongqing 重庆 to push the paper further into south-western China (Péloquin 1935).

To launch the new edition in Wuchang, the bishops of the two provinces unanimously agreed to select a designated promoter in each vicariate. The co-operation in founding *Guanghua Bao* was not only cross-regional, but also cross-national and cross-congregational, as the 14 bishops came from eight different nationalities and were affiliated with four societies, according to the annual *Les Missions de Chine* (Lazaristes de Peit'ang 1937, pp. 287–351) (Table 1). This implementation of resource-sharing and collaboration strategically broadened the geographical reach of this Catholic publication.

Guanghua Bao in Wuchang made a significant contribution to society, especially during the Sino-Japanese War. Péloquin asserted that Catholic press should be keen on reporting societal events and communicate them to the readers, rather than just reporting religious affairs. *Guanghua Bao* carried out his direction. In 1937, the paper changed its name to *Yihua Bao* 益华报 [China Welfare] and as the war loomed larger, it formed an editorial principle of focusing on reporting war-related contents. Scholars acknowledge that the paper helped to uplift the people's morale in resisting Japanese invasion; meanwhile, the extensive wartime records are of great value to the study of the War (Wang 2016; Yihua Bao n.d.).

Nevertheless, *Yihua*/*Guanghua Bao* had to discontinue in 1938, due to a lack of resources and an increase in cost (Yihua Bao n.d.). Though the prolonged war halted many Catholic publications, it did not stop this undertaking altogether, as it was waiting for a post-war recovery. A Press Convention 全国天主教出版会议 in 1947 convened by Archbishop Antonio Riberi 黎培理 (1897–1967), Apostolic Internuncio to China, took place in Shanghai for the third time, to converge personnel in publishing for a nationwide recuperation.

Table 1. Bishops of Hunan and Hubei provinces in 1935.

Vicariate	Nationality and Congregation	Name
	Hubei	
Hankou 汉口	Italian Franciscan	Eugène Massi 希贤
Hanyang 汉阳	Irish St. Columban	Edward J. Galvin 高尔文
Yichang 宜昌	Belgian Franciscan	Henri-Noël Gubbels 顾学德
Puqi 蒲圻	Chinese secular priest	Zhang Yunlong 张运隆
Qikou 圻口	Italian Franciscan	Raphaël Cazzanelli 佳格理
Laohekou 老河口	Italian Franciscan	Alphonse-Marie Ferrani 费乐理
Wuchang	American Franciscan	Joseph Espelage/Sylvestre 艾原道
	Hunan	
Changsha 长沙	Italian Franciscan	Giacinoto-Gaudenzio Stanchi 石道琦
Changde 常德	Spanish St. Augustinian	Ange-Diego Carbajal 翟德隆
Hengyang 衡阳	Italian Franciscan	Raphaël Ange Palazzi 柏长青
Lizhou 澧州	Spanish St. Augustinian	Hippolyte Martinez 马国珍
Yuezhou 岳州	Spanish St. Augustinian	Ange de la Calle Fontecha 高凤翔
Yuanling 沅陵	American Passionist	Cuthbert M. O'Gara 欧克澜 (Canadian)
Yongzhou 永州	Austrian Franciscan	Jean-Damascène Jesacher 德志恒

4. 1947 Catholic Press Convention

4.1. Mezzanine Stage

Fr. Fang Hao (Maurus Fang) 方豪, who represented the St. Thomas Institute 上智编译馆 at the Convention, recounted the following: "Since the 1924 Plenary Council and the 1935 All-China General Congress of Catholic Action, the Church in China has not had a national conference. For more than 10 years, anyone concerned about the affairs of the Church in China has hoped that we could co-operate in a large-scale missionary movement again." At this point, Fr. Maestrini 师人杰 P.I.M.E., acting secretary of the Press Section of the Synodal Commission, convened representatives of Catholic editors from all over China, on behalf of the Apostolic Internuncio (Fang 1947, p. 268). As this was the first meeting of this kind ever held, it was considered advisable to discuss only the question of books, leaving the subject of the periodical press for a later meeting (Catholic Press Convention 1947, p. 250).

Held in a post-war context, the Convention addressed the urgent need to revitalize Catholic publishing after the disruptions of World War II. This meeting underscored the resilience and adaptability of the Catholic press. From May 16–17, 1947, the Press Convention was held in the new residence of the Synodal Commission on No. 197 Route Ghisi (today Yueyang Road 岳阳路) in Shanghai. Over 30 delegates representing various Catholic publications gathered to devise strategies for recovery and growth (Table 2). The first Chinese Cardinal Tian Gengxin 田耕莘 sent a letter of approval in which he highlighted the necessity for better organization of the Catholic press, and exhorted all the delegates to work in great unity (Minutes of the First General Meeting of Catholic Publishers 1947, pp. 260–74). It pointed to the key outcome of the meeting: to rebuild collaboration and support among Catholic publishers.

Compared with the previous two general meetings, the Convention was much smaller in scale and attracted less attention. This was the case because, firstly, attendance was limited to Catholic publishers, while religious superiors were not invited, who would eventually be informed of the results of the meeting by circular letters. Secondly, to avoid arousing the suspicions of the anti-Catholic press, the participants were asked not to give much publicity to this meeting in newspapers and reviews (Minutes of the First General

Meeting of Catholic Publishers 1947, p. 262). Nonetheless, the Convention was no less important for the Catholic press.

Table 2. Delegates of the Press Convention in 1947.

Name	Position
Mgr. A. Riberi	Apostolic Internuncio to China 教廷驻华公使
Mgr. Paul Yu Pin 于斌	Archbishop of Nanjing 南京总主教
Rev. N. Maestrini, P.I.M.E.	Acting Secretary of the Press Section of the Synodal Commission 教务委员会出版组临时秘书 Representing the Catholic Truth Society of Hongkong and the Imprimerie de Nazareth 香港公教真理学会及香港纳匝肋印书馆代表
Rev. Fr. A. Bernard S.J. 萧濬华	Representing the Shienhsien [Xian'xian] publications 河北献县天主堂印书馆代表
Rev. Fr. P. Bertino S.S.P.	Representing the Pious Society of St. Paul 南京圣保禄会代表
Rev. Fr. Cesbron-Laveau S.J.	Representing the T'ou-se-we [Tushanwan] publications 上海土山湾印书馆代表
Mr. Zhang Tiansong (Chantisson) 张天松	Reporter for the *Yishi Bao* of Nanjing 南京益世报记者
Rev. Fr. Fang Hao (Maurus Fang)	Representing the St. Thomas Institute 上智编译馆代表
Rev. Fr. Heras S.J.	Representing the Anking [Anqing] Mission publications 安庆天主堂印书局代表
Rev. Fr. Koster S.V.D.	Representing the Fu Jen [Furen] publications 辅仁大学出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. F. Legrand C.I.C.M. 高乐康	Representing the Scheut publications 圣母圣心会（普爱堂）出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Niu Ruowang (J. Niu) 牛若望	Representing the Nanjing publications 南京教区出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Wu Zongwen (Charles Ou) C.M. 吴宗文	Representing the Lazarists publications 遣使会出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Peeters Hermes O.F.M.	Representing the Domus Franciscana publications 方济各会出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Sigfried Schneider O.F.M.	Representing the Wuchang publications 武昌教区代表
Rev. Fr. P. Pomati S.D.B.	Representing the Salesian Press, Hongkong and Macau 香港澳门慈幼会印书馆代表
Rev. Fr. Dong Shizhi (J. Tong) 董世祉	Representing the Nanjing publications 南京教区出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. M. Suppo S.D.B.	Representing the Salesian Press 慈幼会印书馆代表
Rev. Fr. Hu Chongsheng (Andreas Vu) S.D.B. 胡重生	Representing the Salesian Press 慈幼会出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Zhang Boda (Beda Tsang) S.J. 张伯达	Representing the Jesuit publications 耶稣会出版事业代表

Table 2. *Cont.*

Name	Position
Rev. Fr. Wang Rensheng (Louis Wang) S.J. 王仁生	Representing the Aurora University publications 震旦大学出版部代表
Rev. Fr. Wang Changzhi (Joseph Wang) S.J. 王昌祉	Representing the Jesuit publications 耶稣会出版事业代表
Mr. Yuan Chengpin (Joseph Yuan Zen Pin) 袁承斌	Secretary of the St. Thomas Institute 上智编译馆秘书
Dr. Ye Qiuyuan (Yeh Ch'iu-yuan Francis) 叶秋原	Representing the Catholic Truth Society of China 中国公教真理学会代表
Honorary guests and advisers	
Rev. Fr. Dumas S.J. 茅若虚	Rector of the Aurora University 震旦大学校务长
Rev. Fr. Kearney S.J. 甘雅各	Editor of *The Catholic Review* 《公教杂志》（《天主教杂志》月刊）的主编
Rev. Fr. Patrick O'Connor 奥柯诺	N.C.W.C. Correspondent in China and former President of the American Catholic Press Association 美国公教新闻社驻中国特派员及前任美国公教出版界联合会主席

The occasion served as a "mezzanine" between the pre-war stage and the post-war one, providing a foundation on which subsequent Catholic publishing endeavors were based. The meeting reached about 30 decisions divided into four parts: (1) the training of writers, (2) book production, (3) book circulation, and (4) Catholic terminology in Chinese. The participants unanimously consented to compile a general catalogue of available Catholic books, to establish libraries in every large city in China, to survey the best literature in European languages fit to be translated into Chinese, to publish a dictionary of Catholic terms in Chinese, to publish a bilingual magazine containing a review of all new books of interest to Catholics to be distributed for free, to publish a "Reading Guide" classifying books published by non-Catholic publishers, etc. (Catholic Press Convention 1947, p. 250; Minutes of the First General Meeting of Catholic Publishers 1947).

This set of elaborated guidelines was put into practice by the Catholic Central Bureau 天主教教务协进会 (1947–1951), the re-organized Synodal Commission. Though short-lived, the organization served as a national catalyst for the cultural apostolate in China (Wong 2021).

4.2. Catholic Central Bureau

Shortly after the Convention, Mgr. Jean de Vienne 文贵斌 C.M., Bishop of Tianjin, seconded the union to be formed between missionaries specializing in different aspects to promote publishing, and mentioned the following intention of the Apostolic Internuncio: "He has already presided over the Press Convention in Shanghai on 16 and 17 May, and it is said that he is thinking of reorganizing the Synodal Commission and setting up Committees" (de Vienne 1947, p. 159).

The Catholic Central Bureau, the descendent of the Synodal Commission of Schools, Books and Press, officially started on 23 December 1947, with most of its departments based in the house at No. 197 Yueyang Road, where the Press Convention was held (Wong 2021, p. 56). The organization published *China Missionary*, a monthly review "for, about and by missionaries" home and abroad, chiefly edited by François Legrand, one of the Convention participants (Legrand 1948). A number of Catholic publishing endeavors recorded in *China Missionary* referred to the directions set out by the Press Convention.

4.2.1. To Compile a General Catalogue of Available Catholic Books

The appeal in three languages attached to the "Minutes of the First General Meeting of Catholic Publishers", still from the old Synodal Commission at that time, started looking for assistance from publishers to compile a list of books intended for non-Christians. Each entry was required to be specified by its subjects, genres, styles, qualities and the targeted reader groups: young people or adults of different educational levels; city or country inhabitants; litterati of the old school or new, etc. (The Propagation of the Faith Through Books 1947).

In the following year, *China Missionary* sequenced a comprehensive list of "Books for Non-Christians", with the help of Seminarian Lu Dayuan 陆达源. It consisted of sub-sections for university students, senior middle school students, junior middle school students, adults with an upper primary school education, adults with a senior middle school education and adults of old-style education. The themes included "Holy Scripture", "Our Lord", "Apologetic", "Catholic Doctrine", "History of the Church", "Biography", "Novels", "Miscellany". All the books listed could be ordered from bookshops such as the Catholic Truth Society, the Fujen University Bookshop, and the Librairie de la Mission Catholique (Notes and Information (Books for Non-Christians) 1948; Books for Non-Christians 1948).

4.2.2. To Survey the Best Literature in European Languages Fit to Be Translated into Chinese

Recalling the decision of translating books by the Convention, Legrand solicited readers of *China Missionary* to send information concerning suitable books to be translated to the Chinese public. Beginning with French, he intended that with wider collaboration, other lists of English, German and Italian books could be prepared in the future (Legrand 1949).

To help with the selection of books, including those to translate, the "List of Works in Preparation: New Books, Translations and Re-Editions" allowed publishers wishing to begin a new publication to know which books are already under preparation. The list was made by the Catholic Truth Society of Hong Kong (List of Works in Preparation 1949).

In 1949, with the help of Fr. Xavier Bürkler S.M.B., the list of English books to be translated was prepared based on a classification of the information received. Acknowledging that it would be only the first step, the editor kept requesting readers for complementary information to improve it (English Books to be Translated into Chinese 1949, p. 679).

4.2.3. To Publish a "Reading Guide" Classifying Books Published by Non-Catholic Publishers

This objective was partially realized in 1949, thanks to the work by Fr. O. Brière 毕保郊 S.J. who published in the *Bulletin de l'Université l'Aurore* 震旦杂志 a review of the principal books in Chinese that had appeared over the last ten years. Permitted by *Bulletin*, *China Missionary* was able to publish this review in English in three sections of philosophy, sociology and literature (Book Review 1949). Though not yet a guide, it informed readers of tendencies in modern Chinese thought and gave Catholic comments.

4.2.4. To Establish Libraries in Every Large City in China

In the article "Apostolate Through Books", the periodical reminded the missionary readers of the decisions from the Press Convention and reprinted the section on book circulation in full, appealing for more efforts to accomplish them. The editor further sketched the following: "In all the large towns of China we should have at least one large Catholic bookshop with an annexed reading-room, situated in the busiest district. We also ought to have reading-libraries for the general public and others for students. In addition, each school and each hospital ought to have its own." For recommended books, the aforementioned column "Books for Non-Christian" could be consulted (Apostolate Through Books 1949).

4.2.5. To Publish a Dictionary of Catholic Terms in Chinese

A section for the Uniformity of Catholic terminology 名辞统一组 was planned from the outset of the Catholic Central Bureau, but its work barely started before the autumn of 1949 (Wong 2021, p. 56). Though little progress of this aspect could be found in *China Missionary*, Catholics engaged in publishing continued to keep this work in mind.

In September 1949, Fr. Matthew Chen Zhemin 陈哲敏 of the terminology section began the compilation of a dictionary of Chinese Catholic terminology, for the purpose of facilitating communications between writers and readers both within and outside the Church more effectively. The dictionary was anticipated to be published by the end of 1951. But the manuscripts were lost after the shutdown of the Catholic Central Bureau in June 1951 (Wong 2021, pp. 122–23).

In 1961, *Tianzhujiao Jiaoyi Cihui* 天主教教义词汇 [Vocabulary of Catholic Terms], a Chinese–English vocabulary dictionary, was published in Taizhong 台中. It was initially the appendix to the three volumes of *Examination of Catholica Doctrine: An Apologetical Survey and Guide to Christian Life* by the Jesuit writer and editor Wang Changzhi, also a participant of the Press Convention. Gathering both Catholic and other terms closely related to Catholic doctrines, the book was designed for foreign missionaries to find equivalents, as well as for Chinese Catholics to read English books or translate from one language to the other (Wang 1961, Preface).

These endeavors led by the central organization reinvigorated the post-war Catholic publishing undertakings. Due to the sudden change of political power in 1949, many of these initiatives were interrupted just before they could start, just as the dictionary of Chinese Catholic terminology project. Nevertheless, at the transitional moment, the Catholic Central Bureau maintained publication work, even reaching a remarkable peak between 1949 and 1951, when it closed. To avoid conflicts with the Communist government and to support the faith of its members, it connected missionaries with one another through the use of periodicals, and distributed apologetic booklets widely (Xiang 1963, pp. 47–49). This period marked the end of the short-term flourishing of Catholic publishing towards the first half of the twentieth century.

5. Conclusions

The co-ordination facilitated by the three Shanghai general meetings was instrumental in the development of Catholic publishing in the first half of the twentieth century, the legacies of which continue benefitting historical studies.

For the Catholic mission in China, there was the tension between a theologically unified Church and the actual divisions caused by different societies or nationalities. Speaking of publishing undertakings and connected activities, including writing, circulating and translating, the work was too vast to be entrusted to a single mission. If given to a certain community, a task would normally be handed down to a few individuals, and become locally and temporally limited. To gain more resilience and sustain activity during an unsettling period, publishing activities needed to have a central organization of a general character, capable of co-ordinating work for mutual help and greater efficiency.

To achieve such co-ordination was inherently difficult, since it did not simply grow by itself. It was precisely the pursuit of the interrelated general meetings, by means of building supra-congregational, -regional and -national organizations to administer the Church with conscious and continuous efforts. In 1924, the First Plenary Council of China not only signposted the spirit of unity, but realized its implementation by forming common guidelines and central committees. Applied to publishing, the Synodal Commission enabled more regions to begin a periodical, with support from organizations such as the Lumen News Agency. To better carry out the principles from the Council, Catholic journalists coming from all over China met up at the All-China General Congress of Catholic Action in 1935 to discuss practical courses of action. Bonaventure Péloquin's proposal and practice of *Guanghua Bao* proved the effects and impacts of co-operation. After the war in 1947, the Press Convention gave a mezzanine platform to converge publishing endeav-

ors shattered by the hostilities and directed the joint forces to shared objectives. Succeeding the Synodal Commission, the Catholic Central Bureau led the recovery of post-war publishing activities.

Moreover, responding to the impression that Catholic missions were less invested in cultural activity compared to Protestant missions, the historical trajectory of Catholic publishing demonstrates that, though with less significant outcomes, the Catholic Church labored constantly in the cultural sphere and intensified its engagement with Chinese society. The three Shanghai general meetings presided over by the two Apostolic Delegate and the Internuncio, respectively, show the intentions, even priorities, attached to publishing from Church authorities down to frontline practitioners. While trying to reduce the gaps between different groups within the Church by means of publishing, it also had the intention to engage with society and a much wider audience, so as to eliminate barriers with other communities.

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Notes

1 *Wanguo Gongbao* was launched by Young J. Allen 林乐知 (1836–1907) in 1868 and published by Guangxue Hui 广学会 [Christian Literature Society], influential among the later 1898 Reform Movement leaders, including Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858–1927) and Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873–1929). See Bennett (1983); Chinese translation as Bennett (2014).

2 The socio-cultural activities and publishing methods adopted by the Protestant missions produced rich printed records. In particular, their relevance with the topic of "modernization" captured considerable research interests in the field of the history of Christianity in modern China, see Tao and Yang (2009, pp. 192–93).

3 The first Catholic religious periodical of the Far East was *The Hongkong Catholic Register*, established by Bishop Raimondi in 1877. By that time, Protestants already had seven periodicals, see Löwenthal (1936, p. 278) and The Missionary Conference (1877).

4 Commenced in 1935 by Fr. Frederick C. Dietz 戴日辉 M. M., Secretary of the China Synodal Commission 中国公教教育联合会 and Director of the Lumen News Service 宠光新闻社, a serious survey of the Catholic press in China had been undertaken for the first time. It was carried out for the purpose of attending the forthcoming Vatican Exposition of the World Catholic Press (*Esposizione Mondiale della Stampa Cattolica*) expected to take place in May 1936. The many periodicals and exhaustive data gathered by Dietz were handed over to Löwenthal, who later came out with the article "The Catholic Press in China" in 1936. Four years later in 1940, this article was entirely revised based on further inquiries and new materials collected, despite the on-going Sino-Japanese conflicts, and re-appeared as the first chapter of the book *The Religious Periodical Press in China*. In 1943, to record the available facts, Löwenthal provided an update to the previous survey, entitle "The Catholic Press in China (A Supplement)".

5 Although not without twists and turns, the freedom of religious belief was granted from *Zhonghua Minguo Linshi Yuefa* 中华民国临时约法 [Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China] (1912) to *Zhonghua Minguo Xianfa* 中华民国宪法 [Constitution of Republic of China] (1946), see Ma (2007).

6 Records of the three meetings convey a shared reason for choosing Shanghai as the venue: to make pilgrimage to Sheshan 佘山 following the meeting, a national Marian pilgrimage site in the proximity of Shanghai developed from the 1870s; the Sheshan sanctuary was raised by the Holy See to the rank of Minor Basilica on 12th September 1942, the only one in the Far East by then. See Primum Concilium Sinense (1941, p. 13); Zhonghua Gongjiao Jinxinghui Zongjiandu Chu (1936, p. 1); Fang (1947, p. 269). For the study of Sheshan pilgrimage, see Coomans (2018). In addition to the commercial and transportation center, Shanghai was also the print capital, being the most important city controlling the bulk of the printing paper imports; see Reed (2004); Löwenthal (1938).

7 The decrees about journals and books appear in Book (*Liber*) IV on evangelization, under Title (*Titulus*) VIII "De diariis et libris", consisting of four Chapters (*Caput*) divided into 20 clauses (nos. 807–826), see Primum Concilium Sinense (1941, pp. 303–9).

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