How can the contemporary claims of Communism and national culture be reconciled with a universal religion? How can the government of the People’s Republic of China with its claim to absolute sovereignty exist alongside the spiritual authority of the Roman Catholic church? This conflict between two centres of authority has been at the core of recent relations between the Catholic church and China. In this first book-length study of the subject, Dr Beatrice Leung analyses the interactions between China and the Holy See from 1976 to 1986.

Dr Leung examines the historic relationship between the Catholic church and China both prior to 1949 and from 1949 to 1976. She then analyses the major problems between these two institutions as they tried to establish a dialogue for future reconciliation. These include the need for the Vatican to transfer its recognition of China from Taiwan to Beijing; the role of the Pope with his spiritual leadership of Chinese Catholics; and the handling of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. The book concludes with suggestions for a basis for church–state rapprochement.

Throughout her work, Dr Leung uses Chinese language sources, both on the Catholic and Communist sides. These are supplemented by a wide range of interviews which the author has conducted in the Vatican, in Hong Kong and with members of the official and unofficial Catholic churches inside China itself.
Sino-Vatican relations: problems in conflicting authority 1976–1986

LSE MONOGRAPHS IN
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Published for The Centre for
International Studies, London School of
Economics and Political Science

Editorial Board
Michael Leifer (Chairman)
Rosalind Higgins        Antony Polonsky
Dominic Lieven          Donald Watt
James Mayall            Peter Wiles
Ian Nish                Philip Windsor

The Centre for International Studies at the London School of Economics and
Political Science was established in 1967. Its aim is to promote research on a multi-
disciplinary basis in the general field of international studies.

To this end the Centre offers visiting fellowships, sponsors research projects and
seminars and endeavours to secure the publication of manuscripts arising out of
them.

Whilst the Editorial Board accepts responsibility for recommending the inclusion of a volume
in the series, the author is alone responsible for views and opinions expressed.
LSE MONOGRAPH IN
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

BEATRICE LEUNG
Sino-Vatican relations: problems in conflicting authority 1976–1986

URI BIALER
Between East and West: Israel's foreign policy orientation 1948–1956

SELIM DERINGIL
Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War
An active neutrality

INGRID DETTER DE LUPIS
The law of war

CHO OON KHONG
The politics of oil in Indonesia: Foreign company–host government relations

JOO-HONG NAM
America’s commitment to South Korea
The first decade of the Nixon doctrine

B. J. G. MCKERCHER
The second Baldwin government and the United States, 1924–1929
Attitudes and diplomacy

ROBERT S. LITWAK
Detente and the Nixon doctrine
American foreign policy and the pursuit of stability, 1969–1976

PROGOpIS PAPASTRATIS
British policy towards Greece during the Second World War 1941–1944

PAUL BUTEUX
The politics of nuclear consultation in NATO 1965–1980

ROGER BUCKLEY
Occupation diplomacy
Britain, the United States and Japan 1945–1952

IAN NISH (editor)
Anglo-Japanese alienation 1919–1952
Papers of the Anglo-Japanese conference on the history of the Second World War

JAMES MAYALL AND CORNELIA NAVARI (editors)
The end of the post-war era
Documents on Great-Power relations, 1968–1975

MARTIN SELIGER
The Marxist conception of ideology
A critical essay

YITZHAK SHICHER
The Middle East in China’s foreign policy, 1949–1977

KENNETH J. CALDER
Britain and the origins of the New Europe 1914–1918

For a list of titles out of print please see back of book.
SINO-VATICAN RELATIONS

Problems in conflicting authority 1976–1986

BEATRICE LEUNG

Department of Political Science, University of Hong Kong

Cambridge University Press

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-38173-4 - Sino-Vatican Relations: Problems in Conflicting Authority, 1976-1986
Beatrice Leung
Frontmatter
More information
To Mr Leo F. Goodstadt, my teacher and my friend, who has encouraged me to work for Sino-Vatican reconciliation.
Contents

List of illustrations
Foreword by Michael B. Yahuda, Reader in International Relations, LSE
Preface
Abbreviations

1 Introduction

2 The cultural encounter of China and Catholicism, 1552–1949
   Return of the foreign missionaries in the nineteenth century
   The response from the Catholic church

3 The Vatican’s Ostpolitik

4 The CCP and the Catholic church before and after 1949
   Encounters before 1949

5 The religious policy of China in the modernisation era
   New development in the new era
   Religion in China after Mao
   Reasons for the greater tolerance in religious policy

6 Constraints on the freedom of the Catholic religion
   Constraints
   Church and state relations as viewed by China
   Moving towards reconciliation
   Conclusions

7 Sino-Vatican relations in the modernisation era
   The Vatican’s overtures for rapprochement
Contents

Taiwan: the bridge to Sino-Vatican rapprochement 231
The political bridge: Hong Kong 238

8 Negotiations and concerns 257
Common concerns 257
Church and state reconciliation 267
China’s domestic concerns 270
The Vatican’s major concerns 273
Negotiations 275

9 Conclusions 288

Postscript 302
Chinese political and social life between 1987 and 1989 306
Rapid development of the Chinese Catholic church 310
Sino-Vatican relations 321
Hong Kong, the bridge-church, after the massacre in Beijing 337

Appendix I Letter from a Catholic in Qinghai 346
Appendix II The English translation of ‘Document 19’, issued by the CCP central committee in 1982 348
Appendix III An open letter to the Clergy and Laity 368
Appendix IV The Vatican’s eight-point directive on dealings with China 373
Appendix V The English translation of ‘Document 3’, 1989 376
Bibliography 384
Index 400
Illustrations

1. Receiving guests at a parlour in a Catholic church in China
2. Zhao Fushan, the Deputy Director of the Chinese Social Science Academy, a Marxist theorist on religious studies (right) at an international conference in Montreal (1981)
3. Bishop Tu Shihua (left), the rector of the National Catholic Beijing Seminary, Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan (next to Tu) of Beijing and Bishop Yang Geojian (2nd from the right), the vice-president of the CPA
4. Bishop Gong Pinmei meets the Pope at the Vatican (12 May 1989)
5. Bishop Ignatius Gong Pinmei, the first Chinese Bishop of Shanghai (13 August 1950)
6. Pope Paul VI speaks to the Hong Kong Catholics on his short visit to Hong Kong (October 1969)
7. Cardinal Wu, the Cardinal designate, at the auditorium Paul VI, receives a nomination letter from Cardinal Casaroli, the Secretary of State to the Vatican
8. Bishop Wu of Hong Kong (middle) and Bishop De Costa of Macau (right) meet Bishop Dominic Deng Yiming on his first visit to Hong Kong after twenty-two years of imprisonment (1980)
9. Archbishop Dominic Deng Yiming – an official picture taken in exile
10. Bishop Dominic Deng of Guangzhou meets Pope John Paul II on his first ‘ad Limina’ visit to the Holy See (26 April 1981)
11. St Peter’s Basilica, the symbol of the Roman Catholic church, and Archbishop Deng

xi
Illustrations

12 Archbishop Deng explains himself to the Press Conference on the Papal appointment to the Archdiocese of Guangzhou (June 1981) 216
13 The Anglican Bishop K. H. Ting (right), Steering Committee Member of the National Peoples’ Congress, visiting the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Research Centre on China (1982) 242
14 In the Consistory, Pope John Paul II confers the zucchetto (skull cap) and the Beretta to Cardinal Wu of Hong Kong (28 June 1988) 248
15 Bishop of Hong Kong, Bishop John Baptist Wu (now Cardinal Wu) and his companions meet the press before their departure for the first official visit to Beijing (25 March 1985) 249
16 Ren Wuzhi, Director of Religious Affairs Bureau, State Council of PRC, visits the grave of Hong Kong’s first Catholic missionary at the Catholic Cathedral of Hong Kong (1986) 258
17 The Hong Kong and Macau Catholics held a seminar on church and state relations vis-à-vis the political transitions in 1997 and 1999 respectively (1988) 260
18 Cardinal Wu not only encouraged his Catholics to be involved in local social and political issues, but also took the lead when casting a vote in a district election in Hong Kong in March 1985 262
19 Bishop Louis Jin Luxian, Bishop of Shangai 304
Foreword

Michael B. Yahuda

It may be thought that the problems of the relations between China and the Vatican are of only marginal significance to both sides. After all only some 5–10 million Chinese out of a population of more than 1,100 million actually profess the Christian faith. The Vatican itself disposes of little effective power and there is some truth in Stalin’s cynical dismissal of the Vatican with the question ‘how many tanks does the Pope have?’ And yet the interactions between China and the Vatican have been troublesome to both sides as they have brought to the fore uncomfortable questions about their respective claims to moral authority. More broadly some of these questions illustrate graphically one of the fundamental dilemmas of contemporary international society regarding the competing claims of state sovereignty and universal human rights. How can the contemporary claims be reconciled of Communism and national culture on the one side and, on the other, those of a universal religion with a centre in Rome that is at once holy and secular in the shape of the Vatican state.

The difficulty has been compounded in the Chinese case because of the recognition by the Vatican of the Republic of China (i.e., Taiwan) as the legitimate government of China. Alone of the states in Europe, the Vatican did not shift its recognition to the People’s Republic of China in Beijing in the 1970s. Indeed to this day the position has not changed. But, as Dr Leung shows in her wide-ranging study, the problem here has less to do with formal diplomacy than with the special character of the spiritual authority of the Catholic church and the claims to totalist authority over its citizens by the Communist government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

The Vatican’s claim to universal religious authority is challenged by the PRC’s insistence on the national autonomy of the officially
Foreword

sponsored patriotic Catholic church with its Bishops appointed separately from the apostolic succession. In the event of a possible compromise on this issue the Vatican would have to accommodate the so-called ‘underground church’ whose members for more than thirty-five years have refused to foreshow allegiance to the Holy Father in Rome. Many of those who have survived are restricted under house arrest or, still worse, suffer in labour camps. Moreover the Catholic Church would have to ensure continued pastoral access to the hundreds of thousands of its adherents on Taiwan.

For its part, the Communist party is challenged by the prospect of several million of its citizens professing spiritual loyalty to an alien authority that challenges the fundamental tenets of its ideology. In principle that conflicts with the PRC government’s claim to absolute sovereignty – a claim that has been advanced with particular vehemence because of the alleged threats of bourgeois liberalism and of an international conspiracy that seeks to undermine socialism by peaceful means. Dr Leung explores these conflicting claims on the basis of deep knowledge and thought. She charts the complex historical legacies to which the two parties are heir as necessary to an understanding of the different ways in which the problems are perceived. As befits a member of the Catholic order in Hong Kong, Dr Leung, is sensitive to the constraints affecting both sides and is yet able to suggest possible ways by which the conflict may be settled.

The appeal of this book, however, transcends the subject matter with which it is directly concerned. It can be read with profit by those with an interest in interactions between cultures as by those concerned with China, the Catholic Church and international relations.
Preface

Since 1949, religions have had problems of adjustment and accommodation with the ruling communist party in China. To some extent, this state of affairs has resulted from a Marxist distaste for religious belief. In part, it has reflected suspicions about the political role of religions in Chinese life, especially where such religions have links with the outside world, Buddhism, Islam and Catholicism being by definition ‘world religions’. In the case of the Roman Catholics these difficulties were aggravated by the institutional nature of the Vatican* and its conflicts with the Kremlin prior to the rupture in Sino-Soviet relations, its continued diplomatic relations with Taiwan and by the Chinese belief that the Vatican served the ends of foreign imperialism.

However, the CCP found it very difficult to tolerate the believers in religions who have their world-view, while they themselves being Marxist by nature take dialectical Materialism as their ideology which is the opposite to that of the religious believers. Therefore when dealing with morality the religious believers and party members have their own separate sources of inspiration. The Catholics go to the Catholic doctrine, which is based on the teaching of the Gospel, party members go to the party which points to Marxism–Leninism as the orthodox teaching.

In Deng’s era, when relaxation of economic and social policies are

* For convenience sake, the expression ‘the Vatican’ is used in all this work. As far as international law is concerned, when referring to the supreme authority of the Catholic church, the correct expression should have been: ‘The Holy See’. It is the Holy See, and not the Vatican City State, which enters into diplomatic relations with the States (even if the Vatican City State may enter certain specific international agreements, such as the Union Postale Universelle). Even after the suppression of the Pontifical States (1870) until the creation of the Vatican City State (1929), when the Holy See did not have any territorial configuration, it maintained diplomatic relations with a great number of countries and was recognised as a juridical person in international law.
practised, it is hoped that a continuing clash between these two centres of authority, which have conflicting concepts of what constitutes the true source of authority, may change into reconciliation. In its pragmatic policies in the foreign sphere the Chinese government have a role to play in the world community as well as in seeking to attain the recovery of territory such as Taiwan. The Vatican has foreign ties with Taiwan but the Chinese government’s view is that Vatican–Taiwan relations must be severed in favour of Beijing.

This study focuses primarily on the interaction between China and the Vatican as they tried to establish a dialogue as a basis for future reconciliation. The core of the conflict of authority stems from the dual character of the Vatican as both a sovereign state and the spiritual leader of a universal church. Thus at one level there is the problem of when and how the Vatican should transfer its recognition of China from Taiwan (the Republic of China) to the People’s Republic. But at another level, the problem arises as to what may be meant by the exercise of the Pope’s spiritual leadership of the Catholics in China and as to how to handle the independent Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association that rejects the authority of the Pope and those Chinese Catholics who since the 1950s have been persecuted and driven underground for refusing to disavow their allegiance to the Holy See. As both sides have attempted to develop a dialogue these problems have taken special forms, such as how bishops should be appointed, how independent can the Chinese Catholic church be and how Vatican–Taiwan relations should be severed in favour of the PRC. These and various developments in China’s new policies towards religion are examined in detail as well as the complex process of establishing Sino-Vatican communications. However, this study concludes with a consideration of the possible basis for an accommodation.

In order to place this analysis in a proper perspective, it also surveys the historical experience of China’s encounters with Christianity in general and the Catholic church in particular. Similarly, it surveys the experience of the Vatican’s encounter with other communist regimes. It shows that the historical legacy is still relevant to both sides. Finally, by way of background, we also examine the development of the policies of the Communist party towards the church and other religions from the 1920s, focusing in particular on the period from the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976.
Preface  xvii

This study is a revised version of a doctoral dissertation presented to the London School of Economics and Political Science, the University of London in 1988. In the process of writing the thesis, my deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Mr Michael Yahuda, Reader in the Department of International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science. Not only did he give guidance during the process of writing, but also made very detailed corrections and comments on each draft. Mr Leo F. Goodstadt of the Centre for Asian Studies, the University of Hong Kong, and of the Hong Kong Government’s Central Policy Unit has been my staunch friend throughout and has given valuable help in many ways. As a matter of fact, he was the one who first led me to view Sino-Vatican relations from a political angle, and promised me any kind of help for this research I needed. His promise gave me much confidence in launching into this study. Dr Rosemary Quested, former Reader in History, University of Hong Kong, who was the supervisor of my MA research at the University of Hong Kong (1980–2), took great interest in this research from beginning to end. She polished the language of the final draft of this thesis and made it readable, having to work under great stress at the final stage, when we were pressed for time.

To Father Bernard Quintus O.M.I., the Second Assistant Superior General of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (1984–7), I also owe my gratitude, for it was through his assistance and arrangements, that I was able to have interviews with the Vatican officials without difficulty. His help in translating some important Italian articles into English, and polishing the first draft of the thesis was very valuable indeed. Father Robert Murray, S.J. of Heythrop College, University of London offered his valuable help by reading some of the manuscripts and helped me in the search for the Latin text of the Papal Documents. I also thank Mr Peter Hebblethwaite, the author of In The Vatican, who led me to view the Vatican from a new angle which I never thought of.

At different periods of revision, I have had the good fortune of receiving substantial comments and warm encouragement from various sources. I would like to express my thanks to the teaching staff of the London School of Economics and Political Science, for example Mr Michael Donalan, Dr Eileen Barker, Professor Fred Halliday, Mr George Schopflin and Professor Michael Leifer. They gave their valuable advice on various points in the process of writing.
Preface

Professor Audrey Donnithorne of the Australian National University, Father L. Ladanay S.J. and Father M. Masson S.J. the former and present editors of China News Analysis kindly read the whole typescript and offered valuable suggestions for its publication. Father Joseph Garland S.J. and Fr William Joyce S.D.B. kindly gave their time and effort in polishing the text for publication. I am also grateful for the help offered, in a variety of ways, by my colleagues at the Department of Political Science, University of Hong Kong who provided stimulating suggestions and intellectual challenges on church and state relations.

The German Missio generously granted me a partial scholarship for three years so that I could have peace of mind to do this research on a full-time basis without worry about the financial problems. The Central Research Fund of the University of London assisted one of my trips to the Vatican for my interviews. I am thankful to the Superior General and the General Councillors (1985–9) of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, Hong Kong, for releasing me from my duties so that I could stay in London to do the research.

My thanks are also extended to Father Louis Tchang, the Director of the London Catholic Chinese Centre for helping me to translate Chinese names from Chinese to Pinyin. I would like to give a special thanks to Archbishop Dominic Deng Yiming, and Fr Louis Ha, the Editor General of Kung Kao Po, the Hong Kong Catholic Chinese Weekly, for allowing me to use their valuable collection of photos.

I would like to thank Mr Kamal Khan for helping with the technical problem of printing this thesis from the word processor, and Miss Cecilia Wai Yuan Wah, and Miss Linda Chow for their generous help in typing some of the manuscripts. Of course I myself am responsible for all the mistakes.

Hong Kong

B. Leung
Abbreviations

AFP       Agence France Presse
ANSA      Agenzia Nationale Stampa Associate [Associated National Press Agency] (Italy)
ASEAN     Association of South East Asian Nations
CPA       Catholic Patriotic Association (China)
CPPCC     Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
IRA       Irish Republican Army
KMT       Kuomintang
NCNA      New China News Agency [Xinhua]
NPC       National People's Congress
PLO       Palestine Liberation Organization
PRC       People's Republic of China
ROC       Republic of China (in Taiwan)